

COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMMES, SA



Date started: 2006 Date finished: Continuing

Partners: South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), communities living along South Africa's national routes, Provincial Governments, Local Governments, NGOs

Cost/time/resources:

Main result so far: Involving communities yields better solutions and greater road safety awareness



GRSP ZA partner SANRAL recognise the need for a holistic approach to identify road safety issues in communities and to influence the behaviour of community members.

A process has been developed to assist communities with the identification of their local road safety challenges and to make recommendations regarding solutions they think acceptable to community members. This approach has been implemented in various communities through the use of focus group discussions and road safety assessments.

Summary project sheet.

Objectives and scope

In order to secure the safety of communities living along the national routes, SANRAL developed a process of identifying and working with and within different communities to assist them in becoming aware of their own local road safety issues.

The underpinning philosophy of community road safety programmes is that they:

- Encourage community ownership of both the issue and the solution, and thereby build confidence, capability and a positive, sustainable change in road safety attitudes and behaviour at the community level
- Provide the ability to involve particular communities that may be difficult to access by more conventional approaches
- Generate insights on local road safety issues and new ideas for road safety that can feed back into the overall road safety environment
- Enable the communities themselves to become agents of change
- Encourage the whole community to support willing compliance with safety standards and rules

Activities

The approach is multi-faceted with infrastructure, education and enforcement components. The components are put together in close collaboration with the community. After agreeing to the outline with the community Ward Councillor (reports to the mayor) and the Community Development Worker, a first meeting is called. Usually around 80-90 people show up to have a say in the road safety discussions – showing a high level of interest. A set of questions have been developed to get the feedback from the community of problematic areas and possible solutions. This is done partly because of a lack of data, and partly to get community buy-in and support of the road safety components.

Conclusion and main lessons learnt

After the community discussions, the communities map high-risk locations and a road safety assessment is done using a road safety checklist. A report is written up identifying the locations and suggesting solutions. Additional information might be collected: pedestrian counts, speed measures etc. Examples of highway improvements include addition of walkways, median barriers, bridge upgrades to accommodate pedestrians, improved lighting, signage and fencing, as well as alignments around crossings with the purpose of reducing speed.

An important outcome of this approach is the information gathered from the community, which would not have been available through the normal processes of visual assessments and data collection and analysis. At the same time, the community takes ownership of the solutions implemented to address the problem.