

Mobilising for a Decade of Action

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Abstract

Community programmes are a practical and successful way of promoting road safety in a targeted and sustainable way. Community programmes are particularly fruitful in rural and suburban areas where the communities may be stronger and regular enforcement is harder to implement due to limited police resources. At the heart of all community – based campaigns is the need ‘to increase public awareness – as such they are most effective if based on sound educational principles.

1.0 Ownership/empowerment

In many areas of public health, "top down" intervention alone can have limited effect, whereas **community partnership** promotes a ‘sense of ownership’, which so often proves to be the key agent for change. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies states in their handbook on “Community based health and first aid in action” (<http://www.ifrc.org/what/health/firstaid/tools.asp>) that: “Community-based volunteers can help their communities identify priority needs and solve their own problems..... Community participation helps to increase community ownership and to make the programmes more sustainable. At the same time family and community members are empowered.”

2.0 Management input

Community participation can occur at different levels. In Malaysia a “Code of Practice” has been introduced in order to increase safety helmet compliance, and sustain the self-regulatory aspect of helmet use. It acts as a complimentary step to the already available helmet law. The publication: “Code of Practice, Community based programme: Safety Helmet” published by MIROS/GRSP/JKJR (<http://www.miros.gov.my/publications/CBPSH%20for%20Web%2022Feb08.pdf>) addresses five major stages; coordination and management, advocacy and distribution, advice operations, enforcement, and evaluation. The community has very important roles in every task. It has local knowledge on issues, often develops its own solutions and knows how to propose changes in order to be successful.

3.0 Technical input

In the city of Tshwane in South Africa, the involvement of the community is a crucial step in the development of road safety interventions (<http://www.gtkp.com/uploads/public/documents/Knowledge/RoadSafetyBooknew.pdf>). The community is a valuable source of information for identifying hazardous locations, particularly when accident statistics are inadequate. The community provides information on locations where accidents often occur and are part of offering solutions and developing measures aimed at addressing safety issues. These measures would take the form of engineering improvements, or other measures such as education and information campaigns. They have proven that to ensure the success of a project, it is essential to secure community acceptance of the project before it is implemented. A community needs to understand why certain measures are implemented as well as the safety benefits of these measures.

4.0 Advocacy/awareness

Community and civil society groups play a very strong role in advocacy being the voice of the people and have long had the ear of governments. In many developing countries the local radio station can, for example, have massive education influence and reach the communities at large.

On a global level, the United Nations often ask lobby groups for advice and invite them to be members of working groups. Their influence on policy making should not be underestimated. Click <http://www.gtkp.com/sectors.asp?step=4&typeOfPage=0&contentID=2658> for more information on road safety advocacy.

5.0 Enforcement

Local communities can assist traffic police by providing additional information on the location and circumstances of unreported crashes, as well as identifying locations where crashes are 'waiting to happen', and where offences such as illegal turns or speeding, are a problem.

The community can support the traffic police in a variety of other ways, including, volunteering as traffic wardens to assist pedestrians and control traffic, and campaigning for greater (police) priority to be given to road safety by the public. In Delhi, the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) <http://www.irte.com/> have introduced traffic wardens in India and offers training to both police officer and student volunteers.

Road safety campaigns should never be introduced without the involvement of The Police. For example, 'drink - drive' campaigns create a better community understanding why the enforcement is needed. Communities can also help the police in through post – crash support for victims and their families. For more information click here (<http://www.grsproadsafety.org/themes/default/pdfs/Community%20final.pdf>)

Community- Based Campaign Examples

One good example of community based road safety is found in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) www.brac.net, is the largest NGO in Bangladesh, has become active in promoting traffic safety. Following a number of staff being injured and killed in road crashes, BRAC developed an in-house road safety training programme. BRAC has also promoted road safety through community education programmes showing that behavioural changes and increase in road safety knowledge are possible if local people and resources are actively involved in the identification, prioritization, planning, designing and implementation. The percentage of pedestrians in one location walking on the correct side facing traffic of the road increased from 5 to 66% after the intervention. [Link to Report](http://www.gtkp.com/knowledge.asp?step=4&contentid=3898&) (<http://www.gtkp.com/knowledge.asp?step=4&contentid=3898&>)

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) together with the Global Road Safety Partnership, CSIR, BRAC and IRTE has developed a set of "Guidelines for conducting community road safety education programmes in developing countries" http://www.gtkp.com/uploads/public/documents/knowledge/679134361_Guidelines%20for%20Conducting%20Community%20Road%20Safety%20Education%20in%20Developing%20Countries.pdf providing practitioners with tools on how to conduct community programmes. The guidelines include case studies.

6.0 Links:

IFRC Community based health and first aid in action.

<http://www.ifrc.org/what/health/firstaid/tools.asp>) Code of practice: Community Based Programme: Safety Helmet

<http://www.miros.gov.my/publications/CBPSH%20for%20Web%2022Feb08.pdf>)

City of Tshwane road safety master plan

<http://www.gtkp.com/uploads/public/documents/Knowledge/RoadSafetyBooknew.pdf>

Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) India <http://www.irte.com/>

GRSP Community policing

<http://www.grsproadsafety.org/themes/default/pdfs/Community%20final.pdf>

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) www.brac.net

DFID guidelines on community road safety education programmes

http://www.gtkp.com/uploads/public/documents/knowledge/679134361_Guidelines%20for%20Conducting%20Community%20Road%20Safety%20Education%20in%20Developing%20Countries.pdf

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