

Road Safety Management

Information Note 4: The Extent of Business Sector Participation

Background

In July 2000, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and Ross Silcock to undertake a review of road safety management focusing on four key aspects, namely:

- how road safety activities are organized and coordinated;
- the role and effectiveness of road safety strategic/ action plans;
- how road safety is funded; and
- the extent to which the business sector participates in and promotes road safety.

Thirteen case studies (Bangladesh, Bangalore (India), Chile, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, UK, Victoria (Australia), Zambia) were used to identify and examine good practice. The case studies sought to include different regions, levels of motorization and structures of road safety management in both Low Income Countries (LIC) and High Income Countries (HIC).

Four information notes have been produced by GRSP based on the original report presented to DFID. Each note focuses on one of these aspects of road safety management. There are, however, several overarching principles which apply in all LICs and set a context for the reviews:

- awareness of the road safety problem must be raised in the public, the political and the professional arenas before actions can take place on a serious scale;
- there is a general lack of institutional capacity and of adequately trained staff; and
- road safety is as much a social, economic and public health issue as it is a transport issue. Partnerships between government departments, business and civil society recognize this, and offer a constructive way forward.

This review of road safety organization focused on both the justification for business involvement and the different types of participation.

Why does business get involved?

Although business often opposes interventions designed to improve road safety – for example, restrictions on driver's hours – they also initiate and support a wide range of interventions designed to improve road safety. There are several reasons for this:

- *Cost savings.* Large fleet operators can save substantial sums of money by reducing the number of times their

vehicles are involved in road crashes. They may also save vehicle-operating costs from safer driving practices.

- *Market development and branding.* Some companies are willing to demonstrate the value of their safety products to persuade others to use them. Likewise, some companies use their reputation for safety as part of their brand identification.
- *Company reputation and quality assurance.* Some companies view fleet safety as part of total quality management. This involves influencing the need for road transport, how road transport is implemented and the choice of vehicles, equipment and fuel.
- *Legal requirements under occupational health and safety laws.* Many HICs have laws and regulations which treat business vehicles as part of the workplace. The vehicles therefore have to be of safe design, well maintained and safe to use.
- *Safety culture and a sense of social responsibility.* Many companies voluntarily go beyond the health and safety requirements imposed by national legislation. They may even adopt the goal of having no work-related accidents, including road crashes, and apply this to all their employees, including sub-contractors.

These objectives are typically handled by different parts of the organization and it is possible to have different departments within the same organization concurrently supporting separate road safety interventions.

Business involvement in road safety can be grouped under the following five headings: (i) providing management support and expertise; (ii) investing in vehicle safety and improved operating practices; (iii) corporate sponsorship; (iv) undertaking research and design; and (v) providing support through professional and trade associations. Each is discussed below. The examples cited are not exhaustive, but serve to indicate the type and range of business involvement in both LICs and HICs.

Management support and expertise

Business has a lot to offer in terms of management and marketing. National Road Safety Councils (NRSCs) often include representatives of the business community and they sometimes play a lead role. Their input has encouraged operations along commercial lines, innovation and emphasis on understanding what their 'customers' need. The business sector is actively involved in the NRSC boards in countries such as Fiji, Ghana, Zambia and New Zealand. In India, the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF)

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is led by Infosys, a major computer software company. Likewise, a local road safety NGO in Ghana is chaired by a representative from the private sector, while 3M acts as the local secretariat for the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) in South Africa.

Vehicle safety and improved operating practices

Business tends to focus on three main interventions: (i) driver training and testing; (ii) corporate risk management; and (iii) vehicle safety.

Driver training and testing

Many businesses consider driver competence as central to their road safety strategy. A number of countries also operate National Safe Driving Award Schemes to encourage safe driving. Some UK businesses carry out their own driver tests when a new driver is hired and provide defensive driver training courses to promote road safety and reduce road crash costs. There is little evidence of businesses attempting to improve safety by rewarding drivers with zero insurance claims.

Corporate risk management

Some businesses carry out internal audits of road safety practices and then distribute guidance on best practice throughout the company. All fatal collisions involving Shell (SIEP), or its contractors, are investigated locally and then reviewed by head office. Information gained from these investigations is regularly disseminated throughout the company and its contractors. Some car manufacturers and oil companies provide training for senior managers to help improve road safety. For example, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro provides a course on traffic accident reduction in public transport for bus company managers.

Vehicle safety

The number and severity of road casualties can be reduced by fitting seat belts and ensuring that they are used. In addition, many fleet operators carry out regular inspections of their vehicles, together with spot checks on vehicles and employee driving licenses. Speed limiters (devices to control maximum speed) have been installed on some vehicles. Reduced insurance premiums often apply to vehicles that include features that improve the driver's ability to maintain control of the vehicle under adverse conditions. Both Sweden and New Zealand have encouraged companies to adopt explicit safety policies with regard to the purchase and hire of vehicles.

Corporate sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship tends to focus on five main topics: (i) road safety education and knowledge transfer; (ii) road safety publicity and awareness campaigns; (iii) enforcement campaigns; (iv) driver training and awareness; and (v) direct investment in remedial measures.

Road safety education and knowledge transfer

The oil companies are major contributors to child road safety education programs. They provide resource materials and also invest directly in road safety education. Such programs are well developed in the UK and Germany. In India, Bahrain Petroleum and Eicher Motors (a local vehicle manufacturer), sponsored a workshop on safety in transporting school children. Eicher Motors also sponsored a workshop on the safe transport of school children by rickshaw, which led to road safety guidelines for schools and transport departments throughout the country.

In Europe, 3M has sponsored a booklet to help traffic engineers plan road signs and markings. In India, there are also examples of road signs being funded by the private sector through advertising revenues linked to displays on the signs.

Road safety awareness campaigns

These campaigns may either attempt to change underlying driver behavior, or to build public support for related enforcement campaigns. In the UK, initiatives have included co-financing for taxi services and late night buses to take inebriated drivers home and provision of free non-alcoholic drinks to designated drivers. They have also included production of educational and publicity materials, together with a code of practice on the naming, packaging and merchandising of alcoholic

SHELL

Shell Ghana introduced a driver-training program in 1997 after its contractors were involved in 19 fatal accidents. Originally limited to contractors, the program has grown in terms of both services and a partnership with Mobil. The Shell facility for defensive driver training and vehicle inspection (with the country's only brake roller tester), has been renamed Petroleum Road Transport Safety Ltd. and has tested more than 800 drivers. There are plans to extend the service to other locations in the country and to involve other petrol companies and large transporters. Defensive driver training has been provided to both staff and contractors working for Shell International Exploration and Production (SIEP) in Nigeria, Gabon, Thailand, Oman, Syria, Egypt and Venezuela.

beverages. Although much of the above is not directly transferable to LICs, the principle of obtaining funds from manufacturers to highlight areas of concern through public awareness campaigns remains valid.

Enforcement campaigns

In addition to the traditional sponsorship of vehicles and equipment, businesses also work in partnership with the police. The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (Canada) has invested heavily in traffic law enforcement, including additional highway patrolling and red light cameras. The New Zealand Police received four compulsory breath-testing buses provided by the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC). In the UK, Barclays Bank provided a bank manager for 13 months in 1999 to coordinate Leicestershire Constabulary's Target 2000 casualty reduction strategy. Business management skills have been used to help build partnerships with outside agencies, as well as to collate casualty and collision data, develop action plans, establish working parties and produce management information.

Direct sponsorship of the police is less common in LICs. However, in Delhi, vehicle manufacturer, Maruti Udyog Ltd, has sponsored Interceptor patrol vehicles. Elsewhere in India, Infosys has donated police vehicles and breathalyzers to the police in the city of Bangalore. Infosys is also involved in a road safety partnership with local NGOs, BATF and the Federation of Karnataka Lorry Owners Association.

Driver training and awareness

The private sector operates numerous driving schools and provides individual driving instructors. It also sponsors driving competitions to encourage safer driving. Since 1992, the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) in India has been holding road safety competitions, sponsored by a local car manufacturer, for Delhi bus drivers, the traffic police and school children. In Central and Eastern Europe, private businesses, NGOs, the police and research institutes, have worked together to offer defensive driver training programs for truck drivers and have highlighted the role of driver fatigue in road accidents. Romania and Hungary are likewise using a series of demonstration projects to promote the use of tachographs to improve the safety of heavy vehicles. Cycle and motorcycle training is currently sponsored by several NGOs. The Road Safety Academy established by Shell, Malaysia, helped to train the volunteers who operate the Emergency Motorcycle Unit (EMU) of the Malaysia Red Crescent Society.

Remedial measures

Insurance companies and suppliers have begun to invest in remedial measures. Since 1998, one of the largest US motor insurers has provided funds to improve hazardous locations, based on an analysis of their claims data. The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (Canada) invests in engineering improvements at hazardous locations and also supports speed control and red light camera programs. Likewise, 3M sponsors demonstration programs designed to illustrate the impact of better signing and marking, particularly at night.

Research and design

The private sector has had a major impact on the development and design of safer road surfaces and better road signs, markings and crash barriers. They include the anti-skid road surface material developed by Shell (UK), together with 3M's longstanding work on reflective materials. Some businesses have made safety an integral part of their corporate image and have invested substantial sums of money in developing safer products. For example, Volvo recently built and opened a new state-of-the-art safety center in Sweden, capable of conducting computer simulations, component tests, crash simulations, and full scale side and head-on car impact tests.

A number of business associations also support research on road safety. Their funding typically comes from the insurance industry, corporate sponsorship, grants and levies imposed on vehicle insurance premiums. They support research into the factors which cause and affect road crashes, together with research on road safety publicity and education campaigns.

The business sector also supports research on the impact of road crashes on the health sector. Preliminary research is being carried out into the medical costs of road crashes in Ghana, while in the city of Bangalore (India), research is looking into how effective safety helmets are in reducing the severity of head injuries in crashes involving two-wheelers.

Professional and trade associations

Some professional associations actively develop design guidelines and provide technical advice. For example, the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) has produced guidelines on Road Safety Audits and Urban Safety Management. Such associations also promote networking, development of industry standards and

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offer training programs. Trade associations also play an important role. Local road haulage associations promote road safety in Hungary and Romania, where they have been working with the police and insurance companies to provide better driver information and training. In India, IRTE holds road safety competitions for children, public service vehicle drivers and the police with support from a local vehicle manufacturer. The South African Optometrists Association operates a program entitled 'Eye Sense for your License' which offers free vision screenings for people renewing their drivers' licenses. The program has not only reduced waiting times and increased the frequency of eye checks, but has enabled bi-focal wearers to be accurately tested.

Lessons learned

Although road safety is usually regarded as a government responsibility, this review has shown that private business supports a wide range of road safety interventions, particularly driver training and vehicle inspection. Road safety strategies based on a partnership between the public and private sectors offers considerable potential.

The financial discipline, emphasis on innovation and management skills available from the private sector are a valuable resource. These skills can be of great value to National Road Safety Councils.

Large fleet operators have developed risk management strategies that include a focus on road safety. Other operators can potentially benefit from adopting similar strategies.

Private business sponsors a range of road safety interventions. The motivation for this involvement goes beyond corporate public relations. It extends to market development, branding, a sense of corporate responsibility, and a simple concern to serve customers by supporting safer roads.

Occupational health and safety legislation that treats vehicles as part of the workplace has had a major impact on the way businesses develop and apply road safety policies. It typically leads to improved vehicle safety, better driver recruitment policies and more rigorous driver training.

Innovative and outstanding contributions to road safety are often recognized and rewarded by the business sector. An independent association should act as the lead agency for national and regional awards and seek sponsorship for the awards from the business community.

Key messages — business participation in road safety

- Encourage business involvement by establishing a consultative working group under the main agency responsible for road safety. Treating business as a key partner is likely to result in a stronger road safety strategy.
- Recognize the managerial skills of business and build partnerships to make best use of these skills.
- Adopt best practice from the business sector's risk management strategies and encourage the best fleet operators to offer driver training to others.
- Match potential business sponsors for road safety programs to build long-term commitment and to ensure sustainable benefits.
- Invite the business community to sponsor awards and competitions to promote and enhance road safety.
- Use health and safety legislation to ensure that fleet operators act responsibly with respect to their employees and other road users.

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The work described in this information note was undertaken with funding provided by the UK Department for International Development. The full report forms part of the research program of the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) in association with Ross Silcock (see TRL Report PR/INT/219/01). This summary is produced by GRSP in order to promote widespread access to the knowledge developed through this DFID-funded research.

DFID Department for International Development



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