



The World Bank & Road Safety in Latin America and The Caribbean

Overview

The lack of road safety in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) results in nearly 130,000 deaths and six million injuries per year. The regional road traffic fatality rate stands at 19.2 per 100,000 people, with the number of deaths stabilizing over the last few years as of 2015. Road deaths have also become the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 to 44. Aside from the human cost, each country in the region also suffers from the economic burden of road traffic injuries (RTI), which costs the economies of LAC anywhere between 3-6% of GDP, depending on the country. As the region further develops, it is clear that the lack of road safety is a major development obstacle for further reducing poverty and boosting inclusive growth. While the Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) and the World Bank have been involved in many road safety successes in LAC, there is far more work to be done to meet the Sustainable Development Goal and UN Decade of Action goal to halve road deaths by 2020. The GRSF and World Bank stand ready to support any country in the region with a desire to decrease road traffic fatalities, injuries, and economic costs.

Challenges

Three major challenges are the most likely to prevent LAC from achieving the UN Decade of Action's goal of halving road traffic fatalities by 2020 (assuming no action is taken). These challenges include:

1. Poor Road Infrastructure Safety and Conditions

On most of the road networks in LAC, there is not enough safe road infrastructure. Many old roads lack the appropriate safe infrastructure engineering, and many of the newer roads and highways have been built without substantial road safety considerations. While important progress is being made in several countries, more needs to be done.

2. Lack of Compliance with Key Risk Factors

In LAC, road users have a very low rate of compliance around key risk factors including, but not limited to, seat

belt and helmet use, laws involving speed and drunk-driving, and other risks. A lack of enforcement by traffic police further encourages the lack of compliance with traffic laws by road users to continue.

3. Vulnerable Road Users (Pedestrians, Cyclists, Motorcyclists)

Urban road infrastructure along with other parts of the road network are often not well built to accommodate pedestrians or cyclists. Whether a lack of safe crossings for pedestrians or little to no isolated bicycle lanes for cyclists, safer infrastructure engineering can improve the predicament of vulnerable road users. Pedestrians, for example, cross the street outside of the crossing lane, or do not wait for the light signaling their right of way. Finally, poor driver behavior (such as speeding or drunk-driving) also puts pedestrians and cyclists at grave risk.

Opportunities

The identified challenges also present unique opportunities for improving road safety and reducing fatalities and injuries. Some of these opportunities include:

1. Improving the Safety of Road Infrastructure

There are important steps that need to be taken to improve the safety of road infrastructure in LAC in a substantial and sustainable way. First, the high risk roads on the regional road network must be surveyed and assessed via road safety audits, iRAP surveys, or other forms of recognized infrastructure safety assessments that can help identify the gaps and the respective solutions. GRSF, in collaboration with its partners like iRAP, has developed expertise in this regard and stands ready to assist countries in LAC looking to improve the safety of their road infrastructure.

Secondly, road safety officials in each country need to be trained (and in turn train others at the local level) to design and implement safe infrastructure engineering solutions. Knowledge sharing, such as the effective dissemination of best practice manuals for road safety infrastructure design and management, is also essential. GRSF has conducted and supported many effective safe infrastructure engineering trainings and publications and stands ready to serve as a resource for any country in LAC looking to further develop its technical knowledge and capacity.

Thirdly, creating the political will and dedicated funding to improve road infrastructure safety will be paramount. The recommendations made from road infrastructure assess-

ments must be funded and implemented in order to see concrete results. Significant improvements in the infrastructure safety often represent the "low hanging fruit" for reducing fatalities significantly and quickly. Countries seeking to fund such interventions may contact GRSF to assist in providing innovative approaches to funding, as well as to help support the best practices in implementation.

2. Addressing Road User Behavior and Enforcement

Education is critical for creating sustainable changes in road user behavior. Marketing and awareness campaigns are also essential to awaken a sense of urgency and mold a new cultural outlook towards road safety. Mandatory and well designed and implemented driver and trucker licensing systems, based on international best practice, are also vital in improving road user behavior and creating a system of rights and accountabilities. Police training, the procurement of enforcement-related equipment, and a package of incentives to lessen corruption on compliance of road safety risk factors is also an important side of the equation. Finally, technologies that can be incorporated into vehicles or onto the larger system to prevent or discourage drunk-driving, speeding, lack of seatbelt use, and other measures, are also crucial. GRSF has the resources to help countries in the region improve school based road safety programs, training for enforcement, guidance on drivers licensing systems, and vehicle safety regulations.

3. Addressing Vulnerable Road Users

Infrastructure in urban and inter-urban areas with high volumes of pedestrians and cyclists must be designed to protect

these vulnerable road users. Measures to improve the safety of motorcyclists on highways and inter-urban roads are also essential. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems must provide commuters with safe access to and from bus stops. Police must also enforce violations by pedestrians or cyclists as substantially as they enforce violations by drivers. GRSF is available to provide additional resources and support to help improve road safety for vulnerable road users.

The World Bank’s Road Safety Portfolio in LAC

Between fiscal years 2006 and 2015, the World Bank has lent US \$179 million for road safety interventions in Latin America, through its transport lending projects. This US \$179 million in road safety lending has supported 19 transport projects, of which most are still active. No other institution has made an investment of this magnitude to improve LAC’s road safety. Furthermore, the World Bank-led Global Road Safety Facility has funded seven road safety management capacity reviews, four infrastructure assessments, and various training workshops and other technical assistance in order to leverage US \$120 million of the World Bank’s US \$179 million in road safety lending in the region.

Road Safety Success in LAC

While there are dozens of small and large-scale road safety successes in Latin America and the Caribbean, three success stories are highlighted below.

Increasing road safety in Argentina

In fiscal year 2010, the World Bank, with GRSF support, launched a \$38.5 million road safety project in Argentina.

This stand-alone road safety loan executed by the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV) is contributing to the reduction of road traffic injuries and fatalities in Argentina through the strengthening of the country’s institutional framework and management capacity for road safety, and the reduction of road crashes on selected pilot corridors.

The project strongly contributes to the development of a safe system or integral approach in Argentina and has three main components, including:

- 1) Institutional Capacity Building
- 2) Demonstration Corridors and Incentive Fund Program
- 3) Road Safety Monitoring and Evaluation System within the National Road Safety Observatory

The Project is achieving important results, including:

- ✓ A 35% reduction of road traffic fatalities in selected pilot corridors
- ✓ The strengthening of Argentina’s institutional framework and management capacity for road safety
- ✓ A 12% national reduction in the “road traffic death” rate for every 100,000 inhabitants from 2008 to 2014
- ✓ A 50% national reduction of deaths per 10,000 vehicles during that same period
- ✓ An increase of 36% in the “seat-belt wearing national rate for drivers” from 2011 to 2014
- ✓ An increase in the “motorcycle helmet wearing rate” from 39% to 62% in the same period

Due to this success in Argentina, Latin American and the Caribbean can look to a local role model in order to reduce



road traffic deaths, injuries, and their associated economic costs. Furthermore, the region now better understands the value of GRSF and the World Bank as road safety leaders that are ready to implement similar road safety projects in countries with the desire to reduce road fatalities and injuries.

Harmonizing regional data: The Ibero-American Road Safety Observatory (OISEVI)

The Ibero-American Road Safety Observatory (OISEVI) is a regional road safety observatory that brings together the highest road safety authorities across Latin America and the Caribbean. The GRSF and World Bank played an important role in its establishment back in 2011. The OISEVI's main objective is to share relevant information about road safety indicators and best practices concerning policy-making, planning and other topics related to road safety. The program also links the 22 participating countries, including Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and others, to the IRTAD resources on harmonized data collection methods to create a regional road safety database.

OISEVI also provides annual reports consolidating regional road safety data and holds annual training workshops for national data collection teams. It also produces baseline data to analyze behavioral changes in pilot countries on specific risk factors (use of seat belts, distraction factors, use of child restraints, drunk-driving). Furthermore, OISEVI is undertaking advocacy efforts for the creation of national road safety observatories and lead agencies in several countries. All of these initiatives, which should have positive long-term results for road safety in the region, were influenced by, and made possible with, the support of the Global Road Safety Facility. GRSF is ready to provide similar support to other regions seeking to emulate the success of this regional road safety observatory in their own country or region.

Establishing a New Road Safety Lead Agency in Colombia

The Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) provided a grant to the Colombian government to review the road safety management capacity of the country and support the creation of a National Road Safety Agency. The report developed also served to shape the national law that created a new Colombian Road Safety Lead Agency.

In addition to the continued local technical support, the Bank team directly met with officials at implementing agencies, providing technical advice and opening avenues for knowledge sharing among these entities. It also mobilized technical experts in different areas and facilitated dialogue amongst technical staff at the Ministry of Transport, the National Planning Department and Congress. In multiple instances, the Bank deployed international road safety specialists and also provided a supplemental layer of support to inter-agency coordination through its convening power and the design of supervision missions and trainings.

GRSF's support has not only influenced the creation of a national road safety lead agency, but has helped leverage road safety lending independent of the World Bank. This successful experience with GRSF and World Bank support constitutes a key milestone for improving road safety management in Colombia, and can be replicated in other countries in the region.

Going Forward

In this second half of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, the LAC region should aim to strike a balance between substantially reducing fatalities in a short period of time, while simultaneously developing national management capacities to ensure the sustainability of road safety interventions and outcomes.

The substantial improvement in the safety of road infrastructure can greatly reduce fatalities and serious injuries if the infrastructure is well assessed, and if the recommendations of such assessments are fully funded and incorporated into the design of roads. Training and capacity building around safer road infrastructure will also be needed to ensure greater sustainability.

Several LAC countries (including but not limited to Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil) are well positioned to develop their own national road assessment programs. Other countries would also benefit from such programs, which could lead to a Latin America/Caribbean Road Assessment program. Continued support and expansion of OISEVI's activities will also be essential to enhance data collection, analysis, and the harmonization of standards regionally. Compliance with key risk factors must be enforced by well-trained police forces, even as education and awareness raising bring about a cultural change regarding road behavior. The move toward safer vehicles and efficient systems of post-crash emergency care remains important as well.

The World Bank and the Global Road Safety Facility stand ready to help any country in the region committed to reducing its road traffic injuries and fatalities. The time for action is now, as challenges turn into opportunities, and opportunities turn into well-designed interventions that will make road traffic injuries and fatalities nothing more than a drive down the memory lane.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Mauricio O. Ríos Ibáñez,

Communications Officer

Email : mrrios@worldbankgroup.org

Cell: +1.123.234.1234