



BULLETIN

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FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

International experiences with comprehensive and effective road safety campaigns

Background

Low- and middle- income countries account for approximately 85% of all traffic accident deaths and injuries. The Latin American and Caribbean has one of the highest fatality rates in the world (15.01 fatalities per 100,000 people), and without urgent action this rate is expected to rise to 31 per 100,000 by 2020.¹

ECLAC has conducted many studies² drawing attention to the urgent need for pursuing comprehensive public policies aimed at addressing the problem and the challenge it poses to sustainable development in the region. It has also underscored the importance of coordinated and decisive action between the public and private sectors, to craft comprehensive solutions that are sustainable over time. In this, the multidisciplinary and participatory preparation of Road Safety Plans has proven to be an effective way to reduce road traffic accidents. Countries that have taken this approach have reduced their primary indicators by up to 50%, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) in its 2009 study.

Running safety campaigns that have been created using a multi-sectoral approach and framed within a national road safety policy is one element in supporting the setting of traffic accident reduction targets, and it also strengthens the actions of the State, the private sector, and civil society in this regard. This bulletin explores some of the technical considerations for launching an effective road safety campaign based on international

Road safety campaigns have proven to be an effective measure for reducing road traffic accidents, when they are conducted as part of national public policy and backed up with other complementary measures, such as legislation and effective enforcement.

This issue of the FAL bulletin analyses the main characteristics of public policy and of the design of road safety campaigns, using six international (Latin American and European) experiences.

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Background



I. Public policy elements for an effective road safety campaign



II. Technical elements for an effective road safety campaign



III. Cases of road safety campaigns



IV. Recommendations



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

¹ WHO, Global status report on road safety, 2009.

² For a full list of studies conducted by ECLAC see www.tinyurl.com/3sm6bpf.

experiences and recent Latin American cases. It has been prepared as part of efforts to support the “Decade of Action for Road Safety” for the period 2011–2020, which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution A/RES/64/255 with a view to stabilizing then reducing the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional, and global levels.

I. Public policy elements for an effective road safety campaign

Clarifying the difference between drivers’ education and road safety campaigns is the first step. The former aims to promote knowledge and understanding of traffic rules in order to improve drivers’ skills through formal training.³ By contrast, road safety campaigns seek to change dangerous behaviour by drivers by delivering persuasive information that appeals to the public’s reason and emotion. They aim to eliminate dangerous practices such as drinking and driving, speeding and non-use of seatbelts or helmets.

International experience has shown that the first step in creating a successful road safety campaign is to implement it jointly with a national action plan or strategy that sets an explicit target for reducing fatalities or morbidity in road traffic accidents. A campaign alone does not curb accidents; reducing fatalities and injuries depends on the campaign working together with a series of other coordinated measures, which are sustained over time. The isolated implementation of a campaign could overlook important considerations on emphasis, target groups, and behaviours that the road safety plan seeks to influence. It may also sap resources and energy, since an isolated action does not directly produce significant reductions⁴ in the medium and long terms. In addition, empirical evidence demonstrates that the most effective road safety campaigns are those that have been comprehensively designed and are underpinned by strict enforcement measures implemented by the proper authorities, thus reinforcing the effectiveness of the campaign.

It is very important to combine these two measures, because the two mechanisms for potentially addressing dangerous behaviour are:

- external control, carried out by a body with the legal authority and legitimacy to do so; and

³ European Commission (2007), “Summary and publication of best practices in road safety in the member states: Best Practices in road safety. Handbook for Measures at the Country Level”.

⁴ Nazif, J.I. (2010), Practical guide for designing and implementing comprehensive road safety policies, taking into account the role of infrastructure. Infrastructure and Natural Resources Series. ECLAC. ISSN 1680- 9025. Santiago, Chile, August, ECLAC.

- internal or self-control, i.e. the decision by drivers or environmental persuasion to change their own behaviour, without the need for the State to take coercive action.

International experience⁵ also demonstrates the need for overlapping complementary measures—including legislation, penalties and fines, effective law enforcement, and road safety campaigns—to achieve lasting changes in behaviour.

II. Technical elements for an effective road safety campaign

According to different European institutions, road safety publicity should deliver clear, brief, and precise messages. The campaign should be run through different media including radio, television, printed advertisements and Internet to ensure that the message is always present.⁶

European institutions also underscore the importance of focusing on the specific behaviours that often cause fatal accidents, as a way to optimize resources and maximize the impact of the intervention.

International experience also points to the importance of an in-depth understanding of the context and rationale behind the triggers of dangerous road behaviour. This way the campaign can promote prevention measures that directly target people’s motivation for behaving they way they do. The recommendations for successfully tackling this process are: (i) analyse the situation; (ii) identify problems; (iii) define and establish goals; (iv) formulate strategies; and (v) assess the results of the measures taken.

Finally, an effective campaign needs a communications strategy capable of informing and convincing its audience. Therefore, it is essential to establish a baseline prior to intervention to correctly assess campaign results; the campaign will only be effective insofar as the general public supports it, validates it, and changes dangerous behaviours.

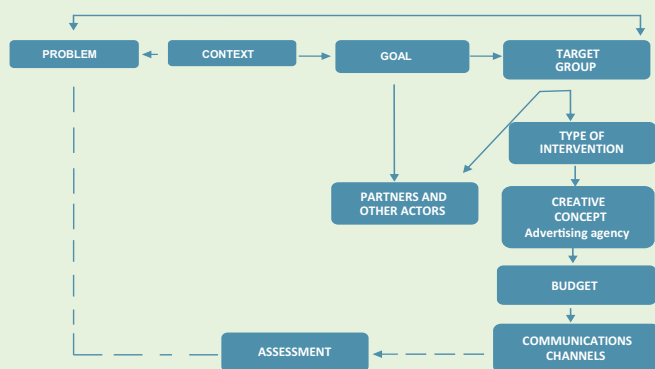
Figure 1 shows that a road safety campaign starts with the identification of a problem that affects a target group—the interaction between the group and the objective helps to identify the reasons or motives behind potentially dangerous behaviour (context). Second, the

⁵ For the case of the United States, see: Elder R., Shults R., Sleet D. Nichols J. Thompson R., Rajab, W. and Task Force on Community Preventive Services (2004), Effectiveness of Mass Media Campaigns for Reducing Drinking and Driving and Alcohol-Involved Crashes A Systematic Review. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 27(1): (57–65). For the case of Norway, see: Elvik, R. (2000), Evaluating the Effectiveness of Norway’s “Speak Out!” Road Safety Campaign. The Logic of Causal Inference in Road Safety Evaluation Studies. Transportation Research Record 1717 (66-75).

⁶ European Commission (2007), “Summary and publication of best practices in road safety in the member states: Best Practices in road safety. Handbook for Measures at the Country Level”.

campaign identifies the actors and/or stakeholders who must collectively define the rationale to be presented to advertising agencies so that they can come up with a creative concept on which the campaign will be built. This concept will determine the campaign's main message, which the appropriate media will convey, according to the available resources. Finding a balance between the proposed goals and the allocation of cash resources is important for accurately calibrating expectations about the results. Finally, the process should include an assessment in order to measure the campaign's impact, either directly (road safety attitudes and behaviours) or indirectly (fatality and injury rates), and to draw lessons learned for future interventions.

Figure 1
MODEL FOR AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN



Source: Based on Foundation of Social Communication, Barbara Krol/Pawel Prochenko, 2004.

Figure 1 shows that a road safety campaign starts with the identification of a problem that affects a target group—the interaction between the group and the objective helps to identify the reasons or motives behind potentially dangerous behaviour (context). Second, the campaign identifies the actors and/or stakeholders who must collectively define the rationale to be presented to advertising agencies so that they can come up with a creative concept on which the campaign will be built. This concept will determine the campaign's main message, which the appropriate media will convey, according to the available resources. Finding a balance between the proposed goals and the allocation of cash resources is important for accurately calibrating expectations about the results. Finally, the process should include an assessment in order to measure the campaign's impact, either directly (road safety attitudes and behaviours) or

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The Belgian Road Safety Institute recommends that the message should cover at least the following six aspects:⁷

1. Convince the target group that the threat is severe and that has very serious consequences, for example: "Speeding is dangerous and has deadly consequences."
2. Convince the target group that the threat applies to them, i.e. that it could happen to them or someone close to them.
3. Consider the possible "benefits" that the dangerous behaviour offers the target group in order to create arguments to discourage it.
4. Offer a true alternative to dangerous behaviour, in order to offer the target group a way to increase their sense of self-control.
5. Consider the cost of safe behaviour, and, wherever possible, reduce it or make it equal⁸ to dangerous behaviour.
6. Provide evidence of an effective response to ensure that people believe in its effectiveness and will maintain it over time.

Marketing professionals should be involved in creating the campaign to ensure that the message is persuasive and the campaign coherent and sustainable over time, since this is the only way to elicit behavioural changes and maintain them in the long term.

Understanding the environment in which the road safety campaigns are set is also important. Although cities and countries share some traffic accident patterns, clearly the number or severity of incidents is a function of a series of quantifiable factors, such as motorization rates, road infrastructure and vehicle safety device development, and health and emergency services response time, as well as aspects of the social context, e.g. prevailing driving styles, habits and lifestyles, among other factors.

Nevertheless, the increasingly global nature of the media makes it possible to share experiences and coordinate regional campaigns to raise awareness in different countries of the need for road safety action. Even with regional coordination, however, particular messages must be worked into local or national campaigns to tailor the specific message to the local context and to the particular

⁷ The World Bank has developed an alternative approach with its document: "The design and evaluation of road safety publicity campaigns".

⁸ Institut Belge pour la Sécurité Routière (IBSR) (2009), Campaigns and Awareness Raising Strategies in Traffic Safety.



conditions in the country and its states or regions. By way of example, the “Bob” campaign conducted in Belgium and the Netherlands is described in the next section.

III. Cases of road safety campaigns

Belgium and the Netherlands: “Bob”

This campaign initially began as a road safety campaign in Belgium and, given its success, was subsequently extended to the Netherlands. The success of the campaign may be credited to the introduction of the “Bob” concept—the person who does not drink alcohol because he or she is the designated driver. The message is simple and direct: before anyone drinks, people must choose who will stay sober to drive everyone to their respective destinations, making a point of showing that alcohol is not needed to have fun, that is, Bob has a good time too.

The campaign design for the Netherlands began in 2001⁹ with a pre-test to determine if it would be as effective as in Belgium. On the basis of this work, by 2003 part of the creative concept had been adjusted: the campaign would target specific areas and would be backed up with nationwide measures to enhance its effectiveness. One of the first achievements was to bring together different campaigns that were being conducted for the same purpose, but whose effectiveness was limited because they were fragmented between different organizations and geographical areas. The campaign combined the efforts of different public actors—including the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, the police force and the 3VO road safety organization—with private-sector engagement by importers and producers of beer, wine, and liquor, sports clubs and the Ford Motor Company.

The goal of the campaign was to reduce the number of drivers under the influence. To do so it worked to develop acceptance of the “Bob” concept as a healthy and fun alternative for parties; raise awareness of the structural problems of driving under the influence of alcohol; and improve behaviour in alcohol-serving establishments. Prior

studies had found that the activities and places for alcohol consumption varied by age: people between the ages of 18 and 35 attended parties in public areas or in pubs, while those between the ages of 35 and 50 were more likely to consume alcohol in friends’ homes. Among other strategies, the campaign used television, the Internet, roadside messages, a simulator for demonstrating the effects of alcohol on driving, and two vehicles that travelled around the country.

The assessment of this campaign yielded the following findings:

1. 85% of the public polled recognized the concept of Bob.
2. 88% had a positive attitude towards the Bob alternative.
3. 66% felt that under no circumstances should Bob drink alcohol.
4. 90% were convinced that Bob could have a good time at the respective parties.
5. Only 4% thought that Bob would not fit in or have fun without alcohol.

Comprehensive control measures were taken in conjunction with the campaign and this also helped to change drivers’ attitudes toward drinking. Specifically, more than 1,500,000 sobriety tests were conducted in 2003, with nearly 40,000 people caught driving under the influence.

Poland: “Even 100 years are not enough”

The campaign “Even 100 years are not enough” was a project developed by local and national stakeholders in Poland to help discourage drink-driving the city of Lublin, using means that coordinated Polish law with European Union recommendations. The campaign was part of the GAMBIT¹⁰ National Road Safety Programme, which acknowledges that alcohol is one of the main contributing factors to road traffic accidents in Poland. In 2007 alone, nearly 13.9% of fatalities in Poland were associated with drink-driving. The GAMBIT programme therefore set the target of reducing all drinking-related road traffic fatalities by 6% through a series of measures, including road safety campaigns, stronger legislation and more law enforcement, among other synergies.

The campaign was launched in Lublin, a university city with a percentage of road traffic accidents above the national average and particularly associated with drink-driving. According to 2007 statistics, nearly 7.3% of all

⁹ “Euro Bob” European Designated Driver Campaign against Drinking and Driving 2001-2002 - FINAL REPORT, 2002.

¹⁰ See: GAMBIT (2000), www.krbrd.gov.pl/gambit/gambit_2005.htm The National Road Safety Programme, The National Road Safety Council, Warsaw, Poland.

road traffic accidents in Lublin involved drivers under the influence of alcohol.

Before designing the campaign, qualitative and quantitative studies were done to establish the different elements it should include. On this basis, a Poland-specific message was prepared. This analysis helped to select the advertisements that would speak most effectively to young people and to establish a baseline for road safety behaviours and attitudes in Lublin, which would then be used to gauge the campaign's effectiveness once completed.

The creative concept was based on drivers' responsibility for other people's lives and the long-term consequences of driving under the influence, in which guilt can be even worse than a life sentence. The television advertisement recreated typical youth situations, which involved celebrating with alcohol and later irresponsibly driving a motor vehicle. One of the key aspects of the campaign was the good choice of a jingle encapsulating the creative concept: "Even 100 years are not enough to pay for someone's life. Drinking? Don't drive! Use your sense."

The campaign was carried in the different media commonly viewed by young people. For example, Internet banners on pages often visited by students; posters in the bathrooms of clubs, bars, restaurants and other premises frequented by members of the target group; and advertisements on television and in movie theatres.

Finally, there was a quantitative assessment to measure the campaign's impact on attitudes to drink-driving. The interview group was the same as that used for the baseline study, giving a more accurate impact assessment. The sample was also representative of the population targeted by the campaign. The main findings indicated that the campaign was effective because of improvements in the following aspects:

1. The number of people who said they had been driven by someone under the influence of alcohol fell from 29% to 16%.
2. In this group of young people, the percentage which felt that safe driving required the total absence of alcohol rose from 63% to 78%.
3. After the campaign, nearly 50% of the target group stated that their attitudes toward drink-driving had changed.
4. Nearly 82% said they would try to prevent others from drinking and driving.

Chile: "I'm still waiting for you" and "On the highway, headlights on"

These initiatives involved different stakeholders in the Chilean community, including the National Traffic Safety Commission (CONASET), the Chilean police force, the printed media and several representatives of the private sector associated with road safety promotion.

The campaign "I'm still waiting for you" unfolded over three years (2007-2010), during which time safe behaviour was promoted on city, rural, and intercity roads. The campaign targeted attitudes towards drink-driving, use of seatbelts, speeding and other behaviours, by getting people to identify with the message based on age or their family status (for example, with or without children). The campaign was implemented through different audiovisual media, including radio messages, advertisements in high circulation newspapers, and interactive Internet schemes with specific information for every kind of road user.

CONASET conducted a quantitative assessment of this campaign and compared the results among different areas, since two independent evaluations were done: one in the city of Antofagasta in northern Chile and the other in Valparaiso, a port city in the central region. Nevertheless, the assessment covered only aspects such as campaign quality and recall levels and did not analyse the campaign's direct impact on reducing road traffic accidents. Even so, some aspects of the campaign were redesigned on the basis of the assessments and the messages were refocused in cases where the public did not find them effective.

The campaign "On the highway, headlights on" was undertaken to inform the public about the new regulation requiring drivers to turn on headlights during the day on urban highways as a preventive measure. Unlike for the previous campaign, this time the assessment measured both the qualitative impact —finding a recall level of 80%¹¹— and the coverage of the campaign, in which it found a level of almost 56.8%¹² for the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, a value that supports determination of the impact on road traffic incidents.

One of the arguments demonstrated in support of the measure was that vehicles with their headlights on during daylight hours are more visible to other vehicles and pedestrians. Vehicles and pedestrians then have better visual information to enable them to operate harmoniously within the transportation system, leading to significantly fewer collisions and run-over accidents. The Chilean police

¹¹ "Assessment Report of Communicational Campaigns Done in Santiago and Concepcion" CONASET, 2008.

¹² "Traffic Safety Analysis using the Traffic Safety Index (INSETRA): Sustainable dimension, Individual Components, Metropolitan Region," CONASET, 2008.

force directly supported this campaign and began to enforce the measure as soon as the regulations mandating the use of headlights on urban highways were passed. Posters, decals, fliers, and other audiovisual media were used.

Colombia: “Epidemic of excuses” and “Road Intelligence”

The “Epidemic of excuses” campaign was carried out by the Road Prevention Fund (FPV), a private-sector Colombian organization which is working on a systemic scheme for addressing road safety challenges in the Colombian interior. This particular campaign arose after a series of efforts to identify Colombians’ perception of road safety revealed that Colombians were not self-critical when it came to their own driving, i.e. they did not believe they were capable of negligent or reckless driving. This failure to identify dangerous behaviour constituted a serious obstacle to implementing a successful road safety campaign. Accordingly, FPV designed its campaign around excuses given for alcohol consumption, speeding, and other pretexts commonly used by Colombians to justify their unsafe driving habits. The campaign design aimed to raise awareness that a problem existed and that individuals had to play a part in solving it. The idea was to make drivers identify with the problem and take responsibility for their actions within the transport system. The campaign included printed and audiovisual materials (radio messages and television commercials) and used an interactive Internet program to make drivers aware of their driving styles.

Following on from the concepts introduced by the “Epidemic of excuses” campaign, a new campaign, “Road Intelligence”, was created to directly link the excuses identified with possible solutions. The aim here was to build positive habits and a new style of interrelation on Colombia’s streets and highways, through a comprehensive proposal in which the message appealed to drivers’ road safety intelligence. One of the innovations of this campaign is that the concept of road intelligence is understood as a characteristic which everyone has.

Like the first campaign, “Road Intelligence” was implemented through different audiovisual media. Its main results included:

- More than 95% of Colombians have had contact with the campaign;
- The use of “Road Intelligence” symbols is associated with an intention to improve individual behaviour (86%) as well as the behaviour of others (67%);
- Nearly 84.9% of people interviewed felt that the “Road Intelligence” campaign completely changed their behaviour behind the wheel; and

- 70% of people interviewed witnessed a change in the behaviours, associating the new conduct with prudence, compliance, and responsibility.¹³

The Ministry of Transport and the Colombian police force also participated actively in the campaign. However, the absence of a prior baseline made it impossible to assess the campaign’s direct impact on reducing accidents. This is very important: road safety campaigns should not only be tied to a national plan and promote the participation of the public and private sectors and civil society, but they should also be linked to reduction targets, on the understanding that the campaign’s actions are supported by other measures, which together help to curb the number of road traffic fatalities and injuries.

One important aspect of the FPV strategy was that it acknowledged the overall combined impact of the different elements influencing the driving culture, while maintaining the same message over time. Of particular note were the studies carried out on the emotional factors which not only facilitate recollection of a specific campaign, but can also influence changes in driver behaviour, with emphasis being given to positive feelings over negative sentiments such as fear of road traffic accidents. The strategy, then, was to treat the campaign targets rationally and thus modify dangerous behaviours in order to achieve sustainable improvements in road safety indicators.¹⁴

Costa Rica: “Use seatbelts for love”

According to a report drafted by the FIA Foundation, in the 1990s legislation on mandatory seatbelt use in Costa Rica was questioned to such a degree that the law was revoked, making seatbelt use voluntary, with user rates approaching 24%.

As a result of the increase in road traffic accidents and low seatbelt use, between the fourth quarter of 2003 and the third of 2004, the Ministry of Transport, the FIA Foundation, the National Road Safety Board, the National Insurance Institute and the Automobile Club of Costa Rica designed a national campaign to re-legitimize and legislate on seatbelt use in Costa Rica. This effort came to fruition in May 2004, when new legislation was enacted requiring all front- and rear-seat passengers of automobiles to wear seat belts.¹⁵

The campaign focused on the concept of love and responsibility and the campaign symbol was a heart

¹³ See: FPV, “Colombia is overcoming its epidemic of excuses,” Bogota, March, 2011.

¹⁴ The information related to the Road Prevention Fund comes from studies conducted by this institution and from an interview granted by Claudia Puente, the professional in charge of this process.

¹⁵ See: http://www.fiafoundation.org/publications/Documents/por%20amor_es.pdf.

wearing a seatbelt. The aim was to increase seatbelt use to 70%. The advertising included two television commercials about seatbelt use and two more about the duties of traffic police, to show Costa Ricans their role in road safety. This was vitally important because it conferred legitimacy on enforcement from the public's point of view. The campaign also used radio messages and field exercises with a crash simulator to demonstrate the need for seatbelts. Strenuous efforts were made to convince Costa Rica's parliament of the urgent need to pass a mandatory seatbelt law for front and rear seat passengers, in addition to mandatory safety seats for infants.

Quantitative studies identified the rates of seatbelt use prior and subsequent to the campaign. After the campaign, a national survey conducted in August 2003 confirmed that thanks to the astute combination of the mandatory seatbelt law, enforcement by traffic police and a media campaign, the rate of seatbelt use rose to 82%, well above the campaign target.

Mexico: "Be aware at the wheel. Thanks for saving my life!"

In Mexico, traffic accidents are the main cause of death for young people aged 15 to 29. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the State Board for Accident Prevention (CEPAJ) of the Jalisco Secretariat of Health (SSJ), the Jalisco Secretariat of Roads and Transport, and the Jalisco Highway Police launched a joint campaign targeting young people who would frequent night spots on the weekends, focusing specifically on the youth in Guadalajara's Metropolitan Belt (ZMG). An advertising agency handled the creative concept and disseminated advertisements in different media, in addition to a group of promoters who distributed information and music tailored to young people's tastes. Furthermore, different bars supported the work with their own electronic music activities conveying messages of prevention, and they also prepared a non-alcoholic "awareness" drink, while posting awareness-raising stickers in their bathrooms. Road safety demonstrations made use of a road accident dummy which also provided important information about seatbelt use.

One of this strategy's significant results was young people's positive response to message about not drinking and driving. There were 23 activities and two special events from the inauguration and closure. In all, the organizers created 12 versions of the "awareness" drink and delivered

nearly 32,000 fliers; 15,000 badges; 5,000 candies; 4,200 bracelets; 4,000 bottles of water; 850 T-shirts; 150 mugs; 48 stickers; and 25 blankets; all these souvenirs carried the campaign's image and preventive messages.

The executive summary of the campaign report states that as a result of the campaign together with other actions targeting the same objective, drink-driving-related road accident fatalities among young people fell by nearly 15% in 2009, compared to 2008. Nevertheless, the methodology's lack of an initial baseline and methodology for establishing these values hinder verification of the campaign's direct impact on the reductions cited by the authorities.

IV. Recommendations

The international experiences discussed in this bulletin point to the need to integrate road safety campaigns into a national road safety plan to ensure coherence and sustainability over time. It is also crucial to ascertain the situation before the campaign in order to assess its results and effectiveness in reducing the accident rate among the target group. This is one of the weakest elements in Latin America, where the absence of statistics and baselines hinders accurate assessment of campaign effectiveness in reducing road traffic indicators. This shortcoming also makes it difficult to extract lessons for making future interventions even more effective. Another important point is that the two-pronged approach—awareness campaign and effective enforcement—strengthens public action and significantly reduces accidents, achieving sustainable changes in drivers' behaviour.

These six campaigns involve multiple government authorities and the private sector and seek to combine efforts to craft a comprehensive and therefore more effective intervention. In addition, every one of the experiences discussed here chose a specific target group, in order to make the campaign more effective and focus on the type of behaviour that produces most fatalities and injuries, and thus maximize the social returns. Finally, every plan was framed within a national road safety plan and its creative concepts were designed professionally by advertising agencies. Campaign success depended not only on design and implementation, but also on synergies with other complementary measures such as law enforcement, highway control and education.

