

# Road Safety Best Practice Communication Guide

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) supports governments to implement best practice road safety interventions and reduce traffic injury and death around the world. Vital Strategies helps governments develop and implement behavior change campaigns to promote safer driving and compliance with traffic regulations.

Well-designed, well-executed mass media campaigns can change road users' risky behaviors—especially when effectively combined with best practice enforcement—and, over time, change social norms.<sup>1,2</sup>

Mass media campaigns are strategically developed to reach a large number of people with carefully designed communication messages through media channels such as television, radio, print, outdoor billboards, digital or social media. Effective campaigns should run intensively for at least four consecutive weeks. Road safety mass media campaigns are designed to raise concern about the health, legal, economic and personal consequences of unsafe behaviors on the road and to motivate compliance with regulations, as well as encourage support for new road safety policies or laws. For long-term improvements, mass media campaigns should be an integral part of a comprehensive strategy involving multiple sectors and incorporating vehicle safety, road user behavior, the road environment, evidence-based planning and effective enforcement of traffic laws. These are the key elements of World Health Organization's systemic approach to road safety.<sup>13</sup>

## Five Key Risk Factors Prioritized by WHO



### SPEEDING

The speed at which motor vehicles travel is at the core of the road traffic injury problem. Speed influences both the risk of having a crash and the severity of consequences resulting from a crash.

- The higher the speed of a vehicle, the shorter the time a driver has to stop and avoid a crash.<sup>3</sup>
- A car travelling at 50 km/h will typically require 13 meters to stop, while a car travelling at 40 km/h will stop in less than 8.5 meters.<sup>3</sup>
- Pedestrians have a 90% chance of surviving car crashes at 30 km/h or below, but less than a 50% chance at 45 km/h or above.<sup>4</sup>



### DRINK DRIVING

- In low- and middle-income countries, about one- to two-thirds of fatally injured drivers had consumed alcohol before the crash (33% to 69%).<sup>5</sup>
- The risk of being involved in a crash rises significantly at a blood alcohol content of 0.04 g/dl.<sup>5</sup>
- Alcohol reduces a driver's visual acuity and ability to concentrate, and impairs reaction time, resulting in crashes that could have been avoided.<sup>5</sup>



### NOT WEARING HELMETS, OR WEARING THEM IMPROPERLY

- Users of motorized two-wheelers who do not wear helmets are three times more likely to sustain head injuries in a crash compared to those properly wearing helmets.<sup>6</sup>
- Helmet use does not have adverse effects on neck injuries, visibility or the ability to drive safely in traffic.



### NOT USING SEAT BELTS

- Seat-belts are an effective safety tool that not only save lives, but also significantly reduce the severity of injury that a vehicle occupant may have otherwise sustained if they were not wearing the device.
- Around half of all deaths of front seat occupants could be prevented through the correct use of seat-belts.<sup>3</sup>



### NOT USING CHILD RESTRAINTS

- Use of the appropriate type of restraint for a child's age, height, weight and physical limitations reduces death of children by between 50% and 75%.<sup>3</sup>

# Mass Media Campaign Development Framework

Best practice campaigns use data at every step of the campaign cycle from message testing and development to broadcast and evaluation. The campaign process below outlines eight steps for developing, implementing and evaluating a road safety mass media campaign. A full cycle of this process usually takes about six months to complete.

## Phase 1. CAMPAIGN PLANNING

### 1. Situational analysis and partnership building

- Gather and analyze literature on evidence to clearly define the road safety problem to be addressed, and identify the objectives and target audience for the campaign based on this evidence;
- Identify relevant policies and regulations and how this campaign will integrate with these policies;
- Identify factors (facilitators and barriers for change) contributing to and influencing this road safety problem;
- Identify key stakeholders for this campaign and how support can be built for the campaign amongst these stakeholders;
- Identify key influencers for the targeted behavior and organizations or individuals who could potentially be recruited as partners for the campaign;

### 2. Target audience identification and analysis

- Identify what is known about the target audience's current knowledge, attitudes and intentions relating to the targeted behavior;
- Assess potential options for effectively reaching and engaging the target audience through broadcast and digital media channels, as well as community events and settings.

### 3. Developing campaign objectives

- Develop specific target audience behavioral objectives and communication objectives for the campaign;
  - o What increases or decreases in these specific road safety behaviors are required amongst the target audience in order to achieve the campaign goal?
  - o What changes in knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and intentions are required amongst the target audience in order to increase the likelihood of achieving the designated behavioral objectives?
  - o What is the logic for considering that these changes in knowledge, beliefs, attitudes will prompt changes in road safety intentions and behavior?

### 4. Formulating campaign plan

- Develop a comprehensive work plan incorporating required activities, timeline and who is responsible for undertaking which activities;
- Plan message testing research to design effective communication messages and materials;
- Decide on the most effective format of communication materials;
- Develop the campaign evaluation framework;
- Identify and assess potential vendors to research, produce and implement the campaign;

- Identify valuable media contacts.

### 5. Assembling resources

- Estimate all available resources (human, financial, technical) to devote toward developing and implementing the campaign to achieve the campaign goal;
- Ensure a sufficient budget is allocated for the campaign as well as researching free and pro-bono opportunities such as donated airtime;
- Assess internal capacity and initiate any required capacity building training.

## Phase II. CAMPAIGN PRODUCTION

### 6. Message Testing Research

Undertake message testing research with the target audience for the campaign to identify the most effective messages and communication styles to influence changes in the targeted road safety behavior.

#### Focus groups

Message testing research is designed to generate insights and feedback from target audiences regarding different potential communication messages and styles to influence the targeted road safety behavior.

- The goal is to identify powerful communication concepts/messages that resonate with target audiences in terms of comprehension, acceptability, credibility, relevance, intention to change behavior, new information and the potential effectiveness of each PSA.
- This research also identifies aspects of the communication concepts/messages that could be improved, including irrelevant content and any problems with the language used in voiceovers or screen text.
- A professional research agency should be hired to do message testing. As a rule, this study incorporates quantitative (individual rating questionnaire) and qualitative (group discussion) methodologies.
- Normally, 10 focus groups are conducted with 10 participants each. Groups should be segmented by age, gender, socio-economic level and type of road user.
- The message testing outcomes will guide development of campaign materials for television, as well as supporting radio, outdoor and social media content.

#### Types of messages to consider for message testing research

It is valuable to test several types of messages to identify the most effective approach for the campaign target audience.

- Health risks associated with risky behavior: loss of life or loss of quality of life;
- Increasing perceptions of risk of crash and severity of consequences associated with risky behavior;
- Benefits of correct road safety behavior: *A properly buckled helmet can save a life;*
- Impact on family (including socio-economic consequences): *If something happened to you, what would become of your family?*
- Consequences for vulnerable road users (explore regret and guilt): *What would be the impact on you if you hurt a child or ruined someone's future life opportunities? How could you live with that consequence?*

- Key information about legal and administrative consequences of violations;
- Increasing perceptions of risk of detection and raise concern of being caught by the police.

### 7. Design and produce campaign communication materials

As a rule, you will need a 30 second video, a shorter (10-15 second) version with subtitles in the local language for social media, a 30 second radio PSA, and layouts for out-of-home placement, including billboards.

#### Key features of effective media materials <sup>7,8</sup>

Across BIGRS countries, campaigns with strong emotional engagement and clear depiction of health consequences have been highly rated in message testing studies. Lifestyle and personal testimonials have been found more impactful than humorous and metaphoric execution styles.

Key considerations:

- Allow the viewer to identify with the primary character in the PSA;
- Ensure relevance of the situation depicted, relevant portrayal of characters and location are critical;
- Depict a clear link between the unsafe road user behavior and the resulting negative consequences;
- Clearly depict the idea of a crash being preventable to increase perceptions of self-efficacy;
- Ensure that the depiction of a crash is credible and does not suggest the victim of the crash (such as a pedestrian) was responsible in any way;
- Illustrate that even a relatively small amount of alcohol use, or exceeding the speed limit by a modest amount, increases the risk of road crash;
- Avoid depicting a driver being obviously drunk or highly exceeding the speed limit as drivers will easily dismiss the message as being not relevant to them;
- Feature a prominent expert or doctor explaining science of speeding;
- Ensure crash scenes are depicted in a credible manner;
- For helmet/seat-belt use, clearly show (visually and audibly) proper use of the safety device (*include "clicking" sound*)
- Using the technique of repeating/rewinding identical scenarios that compare consequences with and without protective road safety behaviors has worked effectively for helmet and seat-belt use;
- Suffering is often an effective deterrent to reckless behavior than death.

## PHASE III. DISSEMINATION

### 8. Solidify media placement

Effective dissemination of evidence-based road safety messages through mass-reach media channels, television in particular, can achieve meaningful changes in population-level awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Research-based media planning and buying of paid media broadcast spots, including the channels selected, and how the media budget is allocated across channels, is an integral part of an overall campaign implementation strategy.

#### Recommendations for effective media planning

- Focus on one risk factor per mass media campaign;
- Plan mass media during a period of increased risky behavior, and when the police are conducting a targeted enforcement operation;
- Air each phase of a media campaign for a period of at least four consecutive weeks;

- Focus on media channels that achieve the highest reach with the target audience. Television broadcast remains the primary communication channel, as it allows for the delivery of strong messages with through audio-visual communication to maximize communication effectiveness and emotional impact. Television broadcast can be effectively supported and reinforced by radio, out-of-home, digital channels and social media. Consider supplementing TV campaigns with posters displayed in places where the target audience congregates and can see the campaign message without being distracted from driving (eg. at the back of public transportation, at gas stations or police stations).
- Hire a professional media planner and ensure adequate levels of exposure of the campaign to the target audience. Plan for at least 75% of the target audience to see the campaign message at least three times in a campaign phase.

### 9. Use social media

Social media can be used to complement mass media campaigns and offers a way to highly target audiences to reach specific demographics in specific areas.

#### Recommendations for effective social media

- Consider using established social media accounts, such as existing partner/health depart
- Set a promotion budget to boost content rather than relying on organic reach.
- Plan content for the duration of campaign period, three to four posts per week over the campaign period.
- Video is the most effective in reach and engagement on Facebook. Include a mix of short and longer videos, including shorter edits of the main PSA
- Mix types of messages (see Box 2.) but promote the main PSA with a higher budget and over a longer period.
- The benchmark for a full view-through-rate is 20–22 percent for video posts, and for a click through rate is around 0.8% for healthcare-related issues for link posts.

### 10. Engage media for campaign implementation

Implement earned media strategies to amplify campaign messages and increase recognition of the importance of the campaign.

- Highlight the campaign with a press launch event to engage journalists;
- Invite high-level officials from various agencies to speak at the press event;
- Prepare materials that encourage journalists to provide in-depth, informed media stories and amplify the campaign message, such as fact sheets;
- Provide journalists with useful angles for media coverage including statistics, best practices, personal stories, information on economic burdens and enforcement operations;
- Prepare speakers to talk to the press and reinforce key campaign messages. Speakers might include city officials, traffic police, road safety experts, emergency room doctors, victims and their family members;
- Amplify enforcement through the media. Coordinate with police to arrange media visits to checkpoints. Identify enforcement spokespersons to speak with media.

### 11. Monitor the effective implementation of the campaign

- Review and monitor campaign implementation to ensure the media plan and schedule is being followed;

- Monitor earned media coverage and social media statistics;
- Adjust the media plan as needed for additional reach and earned media work for in-depth coverage.

**Extend campaign implementation by linking closely with law enforcement on the targeted road safety campaign behavior and with community-level campaign reinforcement activities.**

## **PHASE IV. CAMPAIGN EVALUATION**

### **12. Conduct post campaign evaluation study.**

It is important to measure the impact of road safety mass media campaigns on knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behaviors, in relation to the specific behavioral and communication objectives of the campaign.

- Hire a professional research agency to conduct a baseline study, just before the campaign goes on air, to set up baseline indicators on self-reported knowledge, attitudes, social norms, intentions and behavior against campaign objectives and other relevant road safety perceptions and behaviors;
- Conduct an end-line study just after the campaign goes off air to measure campaign recall and response, as well as changes from baseline indicators on knowledge, attitudes, social norms, intentions and behaviors;
- Supplement these findings with other relevant secondary data sources;
- Summarize learnings from the baseline and end-line studies to apply them to future campaign development and implementation;
- Use findings of the evaluation for writing technical papers for journals and contribution to addressing the evidence gap relating to effectiveness of road safety mass media campaigns in low- and middle-income countries.

### **13. Conduct a review of the process of developing, implementing and evaluating the campaign.**

- Identify which parts of the campaign process worked well and where there are opportunities for improvement for the next campaign;
- Identify any necessary changes in campaign messages, communication materials, media channels and community engagement strategies to improve the next campaign phase;
- Use findings of the campaign evaluation to advocate for sustained mass media campaigns on traditional and digital media channels.
- Use campaign evaluation findings to advocate for regular mass media campaigns on traditional media channels. Changing behavior and social norms require sustained efforts.

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