

Ethiopian Child Road Safety Training Programme

Update, August 2008

JeCCDO, a large indigenous NGO in Ethiopia, has just entered into a partnership with the Ethiopian National Road Safety Coordination Office (NRSCO) to develop a new type of practical child pedestrian training. This will be completely different from anything done in the country before and is modelled on Kerbcraft safety training from the UK. Steer Davies Gleave have kindly agreed to fund this work.

After selecting Bahir Dar, in the Northern Ethiopian Amhara region, for the pilot programme, we met with key stakeholders to introduce our work and to learn from their views and experiences. Stakeholders included the regional road safety committee, the local traffic police, other local and regional government officials and community leaders. We also carried out a study with community members to assess the awareness of road safety and the implications of traffic accidents.

We launched the pilot programme on 29 July 2008. The launch gained substantial media coverage – including airtime on both national television and local radio. The pilot will now be carefully monitored and evaluated and will inform the finalisation and expansion of practical road safety education for children in Ethiopia.

Background

Traffic is the ninth biggest killer in the world and is predicted to become the third by 2020¹. Ethiopia has some of the most dangerous roads in the world – with death rates one hundred and twenty times higher than in the UK and almost four times worse than neighbouring Kenya. In addition, the Ethiopian Roads Authority estimates that as few as half of all casualties are actually reported to the police and recorded².

Unlike the UK, in Ethiopia there is no comprehensive system of road safety education for children. There is also a lack of awareness of safety issues and as a result very little demand from the public for improved safety of driver behaviour, enforcement or road design.



Map of Ethiopia with Bahir Dar's location

¹ World Health Organisation

² Ethiopian Roads Authority (2005) 'How safe are Ethiopian roads?' p iv

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Objectives of this project

1. The development of a practical child road safety programme for Ethiopia.
2. Subsequent roll out of this scheme across Ethiopia through our partnership with the NRSCO.
3. Wider advocacy on road safety through:
 - a. media coverage, in particular radio broadcasts;
 - b. community events and discussions; and
 - c. child road safety poster competitions.

The JeCCDO child road safety programme

Until recently, road safety education across the globe has been predominantly classroom-based, focussing on teaching children a list of instructions (look left, right, listen etc) which they are then expected to apply themselves on the road.

However, research has now revealed the greater knowledge does not necessarily translate into actions and to change behaviour children need to learn how to apply what they learn in realistic situations³.

In Ethiopia road safety education is rare, but where it does exist it is still very theoretical, often based on materials from more developed counties and is therefore inappropriate for the local situation.

With the financial support of Steer Davies Gleave, JeCCDO and the NRSCO are piloting a six-week long child road safety training programme. This project is very

different to previous attempts at teaching road safety because:

- it is practical, teaching children how to cross real roads;
- it is appropriate – using local roads that children negotiate daily; and
- it will be managed by the community and it therefore is sustainable.

Following the evaluation of the pilot the programme will be finalized and expanded.

Partners

Throughout this project JeCCDO will be working closely with the **Ethiopian National Road Safety Coordination Office (NRSCO)**.

During the pilot, we will be collaborating with the **Amhara regional branch of the NRSCO** and the **Bahir Dar city traffic police**, both of whom are keen to be involved in the project.



JeCCDO staff with Bahir Dar traffic police

The first year of the project is being funded by **Steer Davies Gleave**.

Road safety situation in Bahir Dar: Findings from community and stakeholder study

To better understand the nature and impact of traffic accidents on the community in our pilot area we carried out a study. The study included the following components:

³ Thomson J.A, Tolmie A, Foot H.C and McLaren B, (1996) Child Development and the Aims of Road Safety Education: A Review and Analysis. Road Safety Research Report No.1, Department of Transport, UK.



- A questionnaire with 36 children between the ages of 7 and 12 years.
- Focus group discussions with community leaders
- Interviews and meetings with:
 - The Amhara Regional Road Safety Committee.
 - The Head of Education for the Bahir Dar Traffic Police and other officers.
 - The Head of Bahir Dar Millennium Bureau.

Our study focused on the:

1. Causes of accidents;
2. Frequency of accidents;
3. Wider impact of accidents; and
4. Experiences of road safety education.

1. Causes of accidents

Accidents were attributed to a range of causes including poor driving, unsafe road design, corruption among the police and licensing authorities and dangerous pedestrian behaviour. In particular children and people from surrounding rural areas were thought to have the most unsafe pedestrian behaviour.

This was backed up by statistics from the traffic police suggesting that these two groups were the most at risk of death and injury, particularly on market days.

Community leaders, some of whom had lived in the area for 50 years, explained that the growth of traffic and population was not being matched with adequate education or traffic management.

2. Frequency of accidents

Accidents were very common. 25% of the children interviewed had been hit by a vehicle of some sort at least once (including animal-drawn carts and bicycles). 47% knew of someone close to them who had been in an accident. The most commonly cited injuries were minor injuries, serious bleeding and

broken bones. Two children knew of people who had lost limbs in traffic accidents.

The community leaders confirmed that accidents are a regular challenge for the community. *One knew of six accidents (five of which were fatal) in his community in the past three months.*

All participants in the study stated that accidents were increasing rapidly. A point supported by data from the regional government (see table 1)

Table 1: Death and injuries in Amhara region

| Injuries | 2004/5 | 2007/8 | % change |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Death | 456 | 565 | +24% |
| Serious | 654 | 855 | +31% |
| Slight | 988 | 1300 | +32% |
| Total | 2,098 | 2,720 | +30% |

3. Wider impact of accidents

In addition to the obvious impacts of death or injury, community leaders cited economic impacts as a major concern. This was particularly the case where a major breadwinner was killed or injured.

One child told JeCCDO that he was hit by a minibus while petty trading after school, near the road. As a result of his accident he not only hurt his head and lost a lot of blood, but he also lost all the items he was selling.

There was also considerable concern regarding psychological impacts of accidents, mainly due to ongoing and common discrimination against people with disabilities.

Several community leaders cited examples of children who had been orphaned through traffic accidents. In one case a child had been sent to an orphanage after her mother was so badly injured that she could no longer afford physically nor financially to care for her daughter.

4. Experiences of road safety education

71% of children reported that someone has discussed crossing roads with them. This was most commonly a teacher, followed by parents. However, only 25% of children had ever been shown how to cross the road by anyone.

All stakeholders agreed that practical training would be a vast improvement on current levels of road safety education.

The launch of the pilot

Three volunteers were selected from the local community. They were then given two days of training covering the NRSCO programme, as well as on how to carry out safety/risk audits and how to ensure the safety of themselves and the children. Volunteers were also taught how to implement the monitoring system for the pilot.

Following training each volunteer recruited three children for the pilot. The first session was carried out extremely successfully. The fluorescent jackets, worn for safety reasons also attracted great attention and numerous members of the public were very interested in the programme. On road training therefore, proved to be a successful way of raising awareness and interest in road safety among the wider public.



The practical road safety training in action

Media coverage

Ethiopian National Television and local radio (which broadcasts across a region of several hundred thousand people) attended the launch of the pilot programme.

Ethiopian Television showed a short report of the training on national television on 1 August 2008. This was of great value due to its wide geographical coverage. However, across the country FM radio is by far the most popular media.

JeCCDO's twenty-minute live broadcast on FM radio at the launch of the pilot programme was an excellent opportunity to widely transmit road safety messages.

The programme interviewed volunteers, children and JeCCDO staff about the programme and road safety in general. Further, the radio journalists noted that they were delighted to work on a positive road safety story. Prior to this they said they had repetitively spent their time reporting the grim details of local accidents.



National Television interviews a participant

In addition, JeCCDO staff were invited to attend and present at the Amhara Region annual road safety conference. This proved

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to be a fantastic opportunity to engage further stakeholders and was also filmed for national television.

Summary of achievements

- Stakeholders from both national and regional government, as well as community leaders engaged.
- Partnership established with National Road Safety Coordination Office.
- Detailed study of road safety issues in Bahir Dar completed.
- Volunteer and children recruited and trained for pilot.
- Pilot launched successfully and monitoring underway.
- Profile of road safety increased through media coverage of the programme.



Children and a tutor discuss road safety

What next?

Following the completion of the six-week pilot the programme will be evaluated, modified if necessary and finalised. After the final manual is published in Amharic (the major language of Ethiopia) the programme will be expanded through JeCCDO's intervention areas and through our partnership with the NRSCO.

In the meantime JeCCDO will continue to work to improve awareness of and action on road safety issues through:

- Designing a special feature road safety radio programme to be broadcast on FM radio in 4 areas (including Addis Ababa)
- Promoting community dialogue around road safety issues as the first step to empowering communities to lobby for safer conditions.
- Working with schools, (e.g. developing classroom materials and running poster competitions).
- Endeavouring to find further partner organisations to build advocacy work.