



Lessons from an Innovative Multinational Road Safety Program

The Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge

April 2024



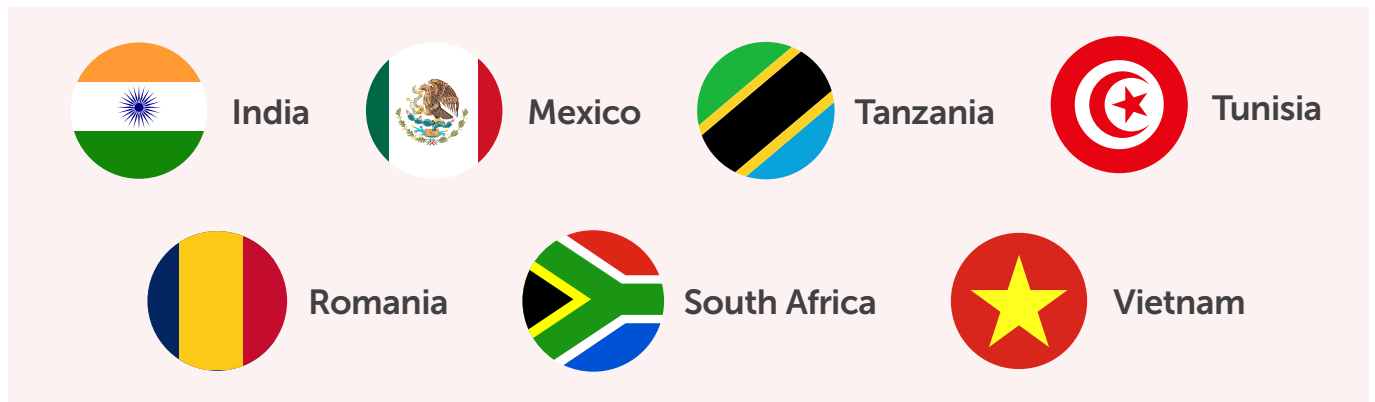
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The
George
Institute
for Global Health

BOTNAR
Child Road Safety Challenge

Managed by:  GLOBAL
ROAD SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP

The Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge (BCRSC) successfully improved road safety for children in medium-sized cities in seven low- and middle-income countries:



The Challenge is guided by core principles of evidence-based, multi-sectorial, and innovative interventions. It commenced in 2018, under the direction of Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) and Fondation Botnar, with local partners. Each project also involves active participation and collaboration between the government, civil society, and the private sector.

The experience and lessons learned from this Challenge were useful for developing and managing multi-year projects of similar characteristics, either in topics related to road safety or sustainable development, in general.

These lessons described here relate to administrative, procedural, and content-specific issues that grantees highlighted in discussions with Fondation Botnar and GRSP during the respective projects' last stages of work.

01 Allowing institutional changes and government collaboration to maximize impact through extended program durations

A confirmed five-year period was necessary to develop a comprehensive program that requires in-depth engagement. During the program, the timeline was extended from two to five years, which led to the creation of new units or subunits in grantees' organizations to attend to the project. However, this created a need for institutional changes, which were not present initially and would require additional adjustments when the program was completed. Hence, grantees would have welcomed a confirmed five year implementation period and funding during the program initiation to identify the institutional requirements, conduct long-term project planning, and develop comprehensive strategies. Similarly, closing a long-term program was, in some cases, a difficult task that involved reducing permanent staff numbers and rearranging institutional structure.

The long implementation period of the program was beneficial for conducting it with governments, given that the governments might require extended periods to obtain approvals and implement the interventions. The five-year project has enabled collaboration with more than one government agency, transcending term policies and creating authentic and lasting institutional change. Internally, having two phases within that period also helped address the issues that arose during the first phase.

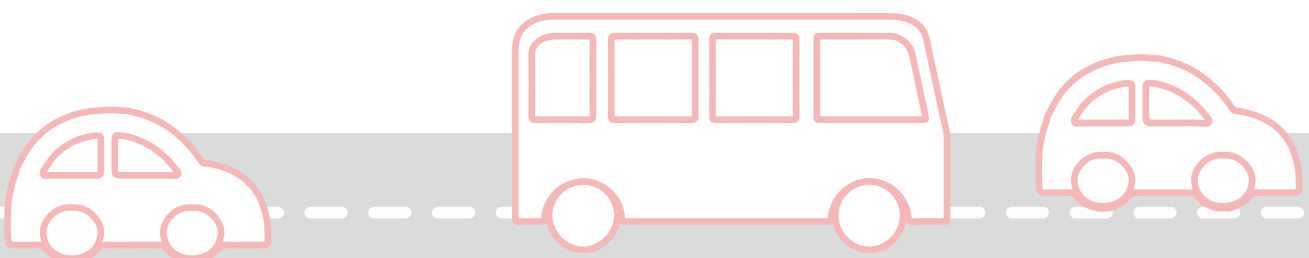
02 Providing funding to obtain buy-in and support from the governments

Governments welcomed external funding to cover the crucial funding gaps not met by their existing budgets for addressing road safety challenges. Generally, road safety grants did not cover the construction costs of physical infrastructure. However, Botnar's grant permitted the funds to be used for physical infrastructure, which was beneficial. For instance, governments witnessed the positive impacts of physical road safety infrastructure that were paid for by the grant.

The importance of infrastructure improvements in road safety cannot be overstated. While capacity building, "soft" campaigns, and policy actions could bring about change, combining them with "hard" physical infrastructure components could achieve greater impacts on reducing traffic fatalities. This can also be politically advantageous, as infrastructure can be perceived as evidence of progress and visibly improve a city's image.

03 Fostering government investment in road safety projects through collaboration

While grants helped provide the initial funds for the grantees to initiate road safety projects and advocate for changes, they might not constitute a permanent funding source for road safety projects. In the case of the BCRSC, grantees saw the government change its policies and allocate funds for road safety programs. In addition, longer projects contributed to this outcome because governments realized the need for dedicated funding for road safety projects, documented results, and collaborated with grant recipients to enhance the likelihood of achieving similar outcomes.



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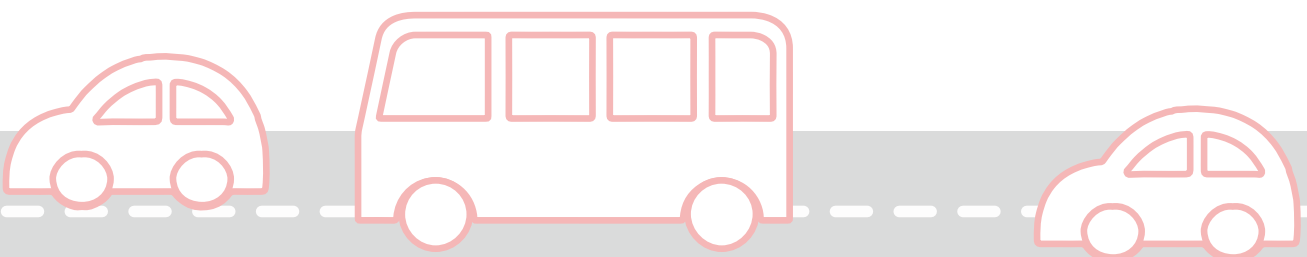
Adopting multi-sectorial and multidisciplinary collaboration to address road safety challenge

The BCRSC program applied a multi-sectorial and multidisciplinary approach that included urban and transport planners, social scientists, and other professionals' contributions to transportation projects, which were traditionally dominated by engineers. This diversity enriched the discussions and decision-making process that ultimately led to the projects contributing to road safety improvements. Additionally, the program engaged youth, incorporated inputs from stakeholders, and conducted hackathons to integrate technologies to address road safety issues further based on the needs of road users. This emphasized that engineering was not the sole solution to road safety challenges, but it also involved other measures to inform physical infrastructure designs and development. It also helped demonstrate to the government and other stakeholders that road safety initiatives must include many considerations. As the BCRSC aimed to improve road safety for children and youth, involving educational agencies or institutions were necessary to move the project forward in school areas. In addition, engaging children and youth to seek their input and having child-led activities would improve their safety and mobility based on their needs. Involving the educational agencies, institutions, and youth demonstrated a fundamental step in strengthening the project and its implementation.

05

Leveraging technologies and innovations to improve the projects' outcome

Data collection from using digital applications and other methods (photo-voice, youth forums) that applied technology was also helpful in achieving project outcomes. This was made possible by the availability of technological services and the cost reduction. For example, satellite internet could be provided to schools where no service existed before, and programmers could use the existing open-source code repositories to develop data collection tools for these projects. Innovation could lead to a more significant impact and effective scaling of project activities.



06 Navigating the communication issues through open channels via virtual platforms

Grantees highly appreciated open communication via different virtual platforms, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it could be challenging, given the wide range of time differences among the grantees (the widest difference being 13 hours between Vietnam and Mexico), making it impossible for all grantees to join a call during working hours.

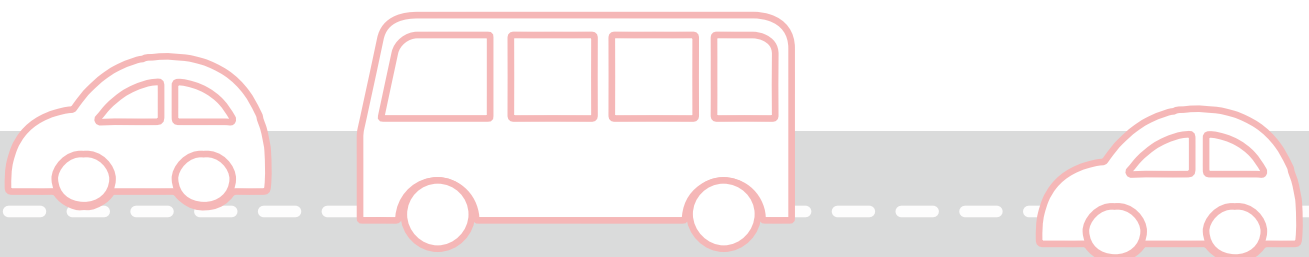
Open communication channels established among grantees could be helpful for grantees to exchange knowledge and learn about the process.

07 Transparency, openness, flexibility, and honesty between GRSP and grantees were essential to achieving goals

These traits were featured as very positive attributes of the project implementation, as they made it easier to move forward, adapt, and iterate during the process without fear of negative feedback. This was especially true during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Significant changes and adjustments in project activities were required to ensure the achievement of the objectives. Grantees acknowledged that having GRSP as an intermediary agency was highly beneficial. GRSP went above and beyond to help implement the projects smoothly. Flexibility in adjusting the activities to address implementation challenges was beneficial when facing uncertainty. In addition, proper documentation, good administration, and quick reaction times are crucial to achieving success in a project.

08 Building capacity of local stakeholders

Given the varied options from GRSP for capacity building, grantees confirmed they were a significant component of work during the program. Some happened because of other GRSP work (e.g., the Global Road Safety Leadership Course or police training), and others were specific to the BCRSC (for instance, the Community of Practice sessions). Though some challenges emerged in CoP sessions about proper timing, overall, these experiences were seen as something positive that could be further strengthened by linking universities, engaging youth more directly, and engaging other stakeholders.



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Sustainability

The BCRSC program has laid a strong foundation for improving child road safety and sustainable mobility in low- and middle-income countries. The program's progress in road safety legislation, innovation, infrastructure, and stakeholder engagement can serve as a model for scaling up to other cities, regions, and national levels. In addition, the objectives and goals of the programs align with the United Nations' Second Decade of Actions for Road Safety and contribute to achieving various Sustainable Development Goals. Emphasizing on these aspects can ensure that road safety efforts extend beyond project timelines and contribute to lasting improvements in child road safety and mobility on a broader scale. However, additional resources would be required for the program to be executed in those countries.





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