

Assembling the case and the coalition to achieve road safety's SDG health target

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In January 2016 the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or 'Global Goals' came into force. (Details on the Sustainable Development Goals are available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>). Together with the 'Paris Agreement' on Climate Change agreed in December 2015 (UNFCCC, 2015), the Global Goals define the international social, development, health and environmental agenda to 2030. The decision by negotiators from 190 countries, endorsed by world leaders, to include an ambitious and accelerated road safety target – set for 2020 – in the Global Goals demonstrates a recognition of the scale of this appalling human epidemic and the need for urgent action to reduce the toll of death, injury, misery and economic waste road crashes leave in their wake.

As with all SDG targets, the means of implementation and financing will be key to effective delivery, and moving from words on a communique to measurable action on the ground. For the road safety sector there are three key challenges:

- To secure sufficient international catalytic financing to assist governments of middle- and low-income countries to take the initial steps – building the

institutional capacity, political will and evidence base - necessary to unlock sustainable sources of domestic funding to deliver long-term road safety strategies;

- To persuade finance ministers and private investors of the strong case for investment in safe and sustainable transport modes; that this isn't an optional extra, but should be mainstreamed into every transportation and land-planning decision;
- To integrate road safety and sustainable transport into the new financing mechanisms intended to support delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals and the climate change agenda.

Road safety is primarily an area of national competency, and ultimately has to be delivered by national, state/province, and local government. In the countries where road traffic injuries are on a sustained downward path this has been achieved by long-term political commitment, delivered through funded strategies driven by lead agencies or government departments with clearly delineated responsibilities and accountabilities for road safety working cooperatively on infrastructure; vehicle standards

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and maintenance; driver training and licensing; public awareness and police enforcement; and through wider public health strategies (OECD and International Transport Forum, 2008). Funding is typically provided through a combination of general taxation, road user charges and taxes, insurance levies, penalty charges (for example from speed cameras) and through public/private finance initiatives.

However, in the context of developing countries with limited road safety capacity, there is a vital need for international catalytic financing to support the development of national road safety capacity reviews; political and technical institutional development; initial steps towards effective data management; strategy development; and demonstration projects; that can translate proven interventions to local circumstances. Taking these steps can create an enabling environment in which sustainable political support for long-term action to improve road safety, with the revenue streams to back it, becomes possible.

Financing for catalytic action

In 2006 the Commission for Global Road Safety, building on the recommendations of the WHO/World Bank World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention, estimated that around US\$30 million of annual funding was the minimum required to effectively resource a strategic catalytic action plan (Commission for Global Road Safety, 2006). For a decade, the Commission, led by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen (now Chairman of the FIA Foundation), advocated for a higher profile for road safety within the UN system; for closer cooperation between the multilateral development banks and greater effort to ensure road safety is integral to all MDB-funded road infrastructure projects; and for inclusion of road traffic injury prevention within the international sustainable development agenda. It achieved a large measure of success in seeing each of these recommendations implemented. But in the major area of international catalytic financing, particularly, much remains to do.

Currently the only multi-donor global fund working to deliver the kind of strategic catalytic investment recommended by the Commission for Global Road Safety is the Global Road Safety Facility, launched in 2006 and hosted at the World Bank. The Facility, initially established with funding from the World Bank, the FIA Foundation, the Governments of Sweden and the Netherlands, and latterly from Australia, the UK and Bloomberg Philanthropies, deploys c. US\$3 million a year (in addition to the Bloomberg funded work of GRSF in 10 cities and 5 countries) and has a strong focus on ‘Safe System’ delivery (Bliss & Breen, 2009). Funding is principally used to support capacity building, provide technical assistance and improve road infrastructure safety. In the first six years of operation funding was channeled to more than 30 countries, often integrated into Bank projects, and the Facility estimates that this catalytic support leveraged over US\$500 million specifically committed to road safety investments (World Bank, 2013).

The other main sources of globally coordinated funding for road safety, supporting international, regional and national capacity building include philanthropic public health donors led by Bloomberg Philanthropies, and also including the FIA Foundation and the MAPFRE Foundation (see www.bloomberg.org, www.fiafoundation.org and www.fundacionmapfre.org for detail on these sources). Overall funding from these philanthropies is estimated to exceed US\$20 million a year and finances a range of interventions, including national advocacy focused on legislative change; safety testing initiatives like the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) and the Global New Car Assessment Programme (Global NCAP), designed to generate demand for technical improvements and to advise on solutions; and pump-priming to support international road safety processes (www.irap.net and www.globalncap.org).

Private sector-supported initiatives currently include the Global Road Safety Initiative, a consortium of several private sector companies hosted by the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), providing c. US\$1 million a year for demonstration projects and technical assistance (www.roadsafetyfund.org). GRSP also manages an advocacy grant programme on behalf of Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Road Safety Fund, a collaboration between the FIA Foundation and the World Health Organization, raising c.US\$1 million a year from private sector donations to support demonstration projects and advocacy by NGOs in developing countries (www.grsproadsafety.org). It is difficult to estimate the aggregated value of other road safety investments by donors within countries. Many OECD DAC governments provide support for road safety, either as part of broader development aid programmes or through discretionary grants by embassies. Some major corporate donors, for example FedEx, Johnson & Johnson and UPS Foundation, contribute significant grants supporting NGO activities. Most major car manufacturers have corporate social responsibility programmes and/or foundations working in their major market territories, although these typically focus on driver training and related areas, or child road safety education, rather than on capacity building.

It is generally accepted within the international road safety community that catalytic financing is needed if developing countries are to make real progress (WHO, 2011). The FIA Foundation’s perspective as a donor is that there is significant un-met demand from LMIC governments and NGOs, and that some of the international agencies tasked with leading the fight against road traffic injuries – particularly the World Health Organization, but also the UN Economic Commission for Europe and other UN regional commissions – are also under-funded and generally under-resourced to work on road safety. Generating additional international funding for road safety should be a priority.

Securing health funding for a health target

With the inclusion of a road safety target within the Health Goal of the new SDGs we should see an accompanying paradigm shift in thinking within the global donor community about road traffic injury prevention as a public health objective. The larger spread of health targets

included in the SDGs, compared with the relatively narrow focus of the MDGs, should in theory result in a more proportionate share of available global funding to different health issues. As recent research by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) shows, the MDGs were accompanied by an unprecedented increase in both development assistance for health (DAH) and overall global health funding (IHME, 2014). In 2013, DAH spending amounted to US\$31.1 billion, five times more than in 1990. The IHME ‘Financing Global Health’ report finds that this development assistance has been overwhelmingly focused on meeting the MDG targets: “Rapid growth was largely driven by massive investments aimed at advancing these goals, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and child and maternal mortality, realized in the establishment of public-private partnerships”, IHME concludes. By comparison non-communicable diseases received just \$377 million (although the share is rising) while funding for injury prevention is so low that it doesn’t even merit its own line item.

Health financing can play an important role in catalysing global road safety, as the contribution made by Bloomberg Philanthropies since 2010 demonstrates (Bloomberg Philanthropies, 2014). By including a road safety target within the health objectives of the SDGs, governments are recognising the scale of the health burden – which ranks alongside HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. Few road safety activists would argue that road safety needs the multi-billions of dollars of international aid that these other global killers receive. But there is certainly a compelling case for significantly increasing DAH for this neglected epidemic of road traffic injury. However, in order to secure health funding, the road safety community needs to do a better job of explaining the impact of road traffic injuries and the costs of trauma care on the health sector in developing countries, and needs to be more imaginative about connecting road traffic injury prevention solutions to other health agendas.

For example, there should be a strong communality of interest between action to reduce non-communicable diseases and tackle the obesity epidemic, and action to improve road safety and provide safe, accessible infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists (WHO, 2014). The same is true of health-related strategies to improve urban air quality and respond to climate change (Commission on Climate and the Economy, 2015). The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing has recommended ‘mobilizing all resources in an integrated manner’ (UN, 2014). In this spirit here are strong alliances that can be built between road safety and those advocating for and funding a range of pressing health, social and environmental issues.

Building the health case for transport investment

Making a strong health case for investment in road safety is also key to securing large scale, sustained funding for road safety from the public and private sectors at national level.

The transportation sector, whether through government infrastructure investment, private sector financing, or a combination of the two, is where the majority of spending that will define the safety of roads is, and will continue to be, sourced. Unlike many health issues, which have a direct line of accountability from government to implementing health agency to health outcome, road traffic injuries are a health issue solved primarily by transport planning, infrastructure and vehicle engineering, and police enforcement solutions. Accountability and ownership are diffuse, and too often no one claims full responsibility. Broader mobility or economic objectives (like shorter travel times on higher speed roads) can contradict, and be prioritised ahead of, road safety needs.

More must be done to close the circle between transport, health and finance decision-makers by more effective measurement and communication of the cost-effectiveness and impact of road safety interventions for improved health outcomes and reduced health sector costs. The narrative needs to move away from considering safer road design and related measures as an optional extra ‘cost’, instead recognising an integrated road safety approach as an essential investment by properly calculating, and allocating its benefit, to human health. Research already shows that road traffic injury interventions are a cost-effective way of reducing Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) (Bishai & Hyder, 2006) and as such have a valid part to play in reducing the overall health burden. We know that targeted interventions such as improved road design on ‘high risk’ roads in lower income countries can have a benefit to cost ratio of more than 10 (iRap, 2013). The challenge is to persuade the transport and finance ministry that it is worth investing a bit more today in order to reap rewards in health cost savings tomorrow.

Working towards realising the true value of road safety investment is the purpose of the FIA Foundation’s 2015 report ‘*Breaking the Deadlock: A social impact investment lens on reducing costs of road trauma and unlocking capital for road safety*’ (FIA, 2015), commissioned from Social Finance and Impact Strategist, and the work-stream on social impact investing for road safety that it launched. Social Impact Bonds and other ‘innovative financing’ mechanisms may play a role in releasing new sources of primarily private sector funding (and development bonds could also be an effective way to deliver health objectives in low-income countries in the area of road safety). In the context of the SDGs, public/private ‘blended financing’ of this kind is recommended for consideration by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (UN, 2014) and in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda agreed at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 (UN, 2015).

But the Social Finance/Impact Strategist report also suggests that the discipline of designing a project that meets the exacting expectations of a private investor, structured in a way that makes transparent the different types of social beneficiary so that metrics - on which repayment schedules would be predicated - are clearly defined, would identify the health and social benefits of a road safety scheme in a

way to transparently demonstrate value for money. Early results from research and data analysis being undertaken in Australia and Cambodia as part of the FIA Foundation's social impact project suggest the argument will be compelling.

Engaging new partners and donors

In many ways the global road safety community is well prepared for the SDGs. As a result of the work that went into securing and promoting the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, it has a series of UN General Assembly resolutions (the latest being debated in April 2016) recognising the scale of the problem, and mandating some areas of action; it has a Global Plan which provides a basic roadmap for international, regional and national strategies; it has a 2010 baseline of road traffic fatalities from which to measure progress, and the bi-annual WHO Global Status Reports to provide that measurement (WHO, 2015); it has a small, but active, core of governments, in evidence at the 2nd High Level Conference on Road Safety, held in Brasilia in November 2015, which have worked to support and advance each new step forward.

A vibrant UN Road Safety Collaboration, including governments, multilateral institutions, NGOs, foundations and private sector companies, acts as a loose coordinating and motivational body and meets – hosted by WHO – twice a year (<http://www.who.int/roadsafety/about/en>). There is an increasingly organised and vocal NGO Alliance, providing vital civil society pressure nationally and internationally (<http://www.roadsafetyngos.org>) and there is now a UN Special Envoy for Road Safety, appointed by the Secretary General, with a mandate to “mobilize sustained political commitment towards making road safety a priority; to advocate and raise awareness about the United Nations road safety legal instruments; share established road safety good practices; and generate adequate funding for advocacy efforts through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors” (see UN announcement at <http://www.unecf.org>). In 2015 the #SaveKidsLives campaign, built around a ‘Child Declaration’ and involving hundreds of NGOs and many private sector companies, demonstrated the growing maturity and reach of the global road safety community. The campaign succeeded in attracting more than a million signatures for the Child Declaration, and in 2016 is renewing the effort by focusing on holding governments and institutions to account for delivering the SDG target (www.savekidslives2020.org).

Because the challenge now is to build on these hard-won achievements by expanding the circle of bilateral donors, institutions and agencies, health foundations and private sector partners willing to work for and invest in global road safety, and ensuring that road traffic injury prevention is mainstreamed as part of new policy frameworks, including national reporting frameworks, and financing mechanisms established to deliver the SDGs. (see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556> for further detail). What are the steps needed to make this happen?

Firstly, we need to secure greater efforts by institutional leaders to cheerlead for road safety and build higher level and sustained political attention. While WHO's Director General Margaret Chan attended the Brasilia High Level Conference and spoke about the urgency of action (Chan, 2015), road safety remains an issue on the margins of her organisation. Similarly, while the President of the World Bank, Jim Kim, has spoken of the need for action on road traffic injuries (Kim, 2013), such interventions are extremely rare. UNICEF has only recently begun to engage, despite road traffic crashes being a leading cause of death for children and the number one cause of death worldwide for adolescents (UNICEF, 2015). Yet ensuring action at national level, particularly in developing countries with many competing and pressing social and health concerns, relies on a positive feedback loop with global policy leaders constantly reinforcing the need to act.

The global road safety community also needs to further develop the strong evidence base and practical examples of scaled interventions that will persuade bilateral donors, public health foundations and the private sector to join, or launch, efforts for road traffic injury prevention. Wherever possible the global road safety community should seek to identify synergies with other SDG objectives. Social impact investing, with its requirement for transparent metrics, could facilitate development of a clear model of health and other social benefit outcomes.

Practical initiatives, able to demonstrate proven results and positioned to collaborate effectively with partners beyond the traditional global road safety community, are a priority. Some such well-established programmes exist, and have been discussed above. Typically they have benefitted from long-term strategic philanthropic support, which enables staff and expertise to be developed and allows time to prove theories, build networks in developing countries, and demonstrate real delivery. This is the case, for example, with both iRAP and Global NCAP.

For the FIA Foundation, a key priority is to develop a similar approach in the area of child health, focusing on particular areas which impact on the way children use transportation and streets. This includes speed legislation and traffic enforcement; provision of safe infrastructure such as sidewalks and crossings; attention to the quality and affordable availability of school transport; and promoting safe and healthy journeys to school – whether travelling on foot, by bicycle, by bus or on a motorbike or in a car. The FIA Foundation is working with several partners, such as UNICEF, UNEP and the World Resources Institute to realise this objective (see www.fiafoundation.org; www.unep.org or www.wrirosscities.org/news/wri-ross-center-and-fia-foundation-announce-partnership-make-cities-safer-design for more detail on these initiatives).

A Global Fund for road safety

To encourage donors to invest strategically, the global road safety community should offer a united front, and an obvious place to convene. There is currently discussion, led by the UN-ECE, on developing a new UN global fund

that can provide a secure destination for new funds with high standards of governance and accountability; a strong strategic direction for catalytic capacity building efforts; and the credibility to succeed as a broad-based multi-donor platform. This new fund, if approved, could complement or integrate the work of the Global Road Safety Facility, which has achieved a significant leverage effect with core resources of less than \$3 million per year.

Whatever framework emerges to coordinate catalytic financing for road safety, a priority should be to coordinate with other relevant financing mechanisms designed to support implementation of the SDGs. The new World Bank Global Infrastructure Facility (World Bank, 2014); the Global Environment Facility, with a remit for partnering on urban design and sustainable transport (www.thegef.org/gef/climate_change) and the new Africa50 Infrastructure Fund (www.afdb.org), for example, should be potential partners for joint funding initiatives or technical partnerships. Integrating road safety expertise into the operations of these major SDG financing mechanisms would release new funding flows for road traffic injury prevention and improve the quality and investment return of infrastructure projects.

With an agreed global fund in place, there will be an urgent need to build on road safety's inclusion in the SDGs by launching an unprecedented fundraising campaign to secure new large-scale pledges for catalytic road safety. The new 'FIA High Level Panel for Road Safety', mainly comprised of influential global business leaders, has the potential to be a powerful fundraising voice reaching an audience of global CEOs and political leaders (www.roadsafety2030.com). The proposed UN Conference on Sustainable Transport and the Habitat III Conference both in 2016; (see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/transport> and www.habitat3.org); international business and development fora such as the World Economic Forum and Clinton Global Initiative; as well as the on-going SDG events and processes can all provide high impact policy opportunities to promote the case for financing global road safety.

Conclusion

Being part of the SDGs brings real opportunities to integrate road safety with other agendas, particularly in relation to health, cities and the environment, and to demand stronger political commitment to achieve the new SDG targets. New pledges of financial support for international catalytic activity to support sustained national action must be one outcome. This will be best achieved by providing clear evidence of the health and related economic benefits of road safety interventions; and using this evidence to fundraise for strategic and coordinated action, delivered through a credible global fund. Practical, evidence-based initiatives, particularly those that straddle multiple policy areas and integrate road safety into wider (and better financed) agendas, should be well positioned to capitalise on the exciting new opportunities which these Global Goals present.

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Road Safety: a step towards achieving the Global Goals

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Summary

Business as usual is not an option if the International Community is to succeed in delivering the Global Goals. Target 3.6 on Road Safety requires a significant uplift in pace of work, a geographical focus that is appropriately balanced between low income and middle income countries, different partners (including climate change and urbanisation networks), different ways of working (particularly with a focus on girls and women) and strong leadership from WHO to ensure a co-ordinated approach that learns from current research and builds on existing evidence.

Introduction

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development give us a framework to work towards eradicating poverty. The Global Goals came into effect to achieve an end to poverty, combat climate change and fight injustice and inequality by 2030. Goals 3, 9 and 11 have transport related targets. Inclusion of target 3.6 (under Goal 3 Health: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages): “By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents” is an acknowledgement of the importance of road safety in delivering the Global Goals.

The UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK’s work to end extreme poverty. We’re ending the need for aid by creating Jobs; unlocking the potential of girls and women; and helping to save lives when humanitarian emergencies hit. DFID works directly in 28 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The UN states that *‘If we are to achieve the Global Goals by 2030 we must start by empowering girls and women. Goals that work for women and girls are goals that will work for the world’*. This is a priority for DFID. To achieve the Global Goals and focus on girls and women the transport community will therefore need to increase focus of delivery of road safety and transport more broadly.

Road safety as a priority

The facts and figures speak for themselves. A few examples to highlight are noted below:

- Road crashes claim 1.25 million lives and injure 78 million people each year - many remain disabled for life. The vast majority of casualties occur in low and middle income countries; many are children.
- Road accidents are the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 globally.
- 90% of road crash deaths occur in low and middle income countries (World Health Organisation 2009).
- Road crashes now kill more people each year than HIV, tuberculosis, or malaria (World Bank and University of Washington, 2014).
- The recent WHO report on “Preventing disease through healthy environments” shows unintentional injuries, including road traffic deaths, as one of the top three causes of environment-related deaths (WHO, 2016).

The WHO Status Report 2015 highlights that the situation is worst in low-income countries, where rates are more than double those in high-income countries and where there are a disproportionate number of deaths relative to the (lower) level of motorisation. Specifically on the issue of geographical focus the data in the 2015 WHO Status Report shows that LICs now have worse fatality rates than MICs. This was not the case in the 2010 Status Report and, with this new data, the work of key global road safety players should be balanced appropriately between LICs and MICs.

Officially launched in May 2011, the UN Decade for Action on Road Safety is now at its mid-point in time but not progress. The Global Goal target 3.6 on Road Safety is set to galvanise action and the pace of delivery.