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Strengthening Speed and Child Restraint Enforcement Capacity in the Philippines

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Abstract

Recent legislative developments in the Philippines provided opportunities to strengthen existing speed enforcement capacity and build competence in relation to enforcing child restraint use for the first time in this country. The Global Road Safety Partnership's (GRSP) Road Policing Capacity Building programme team worked closely with government and non-government agencies in the Philippines to develop and deliver a series of classroom and roadside theoretical and operational training sessions. These training sessions resulted in the establishment of a core group of trainers from within local enforcement agencies in the country. This group received initial training as well as ongoing coaching and mentoring support from GRSP to establish a sustainable model of enforcement capability development. Various training methods and curriculum topics are described, noting the importance of supporting in-country partners to determine relevant, context-specific issues according to local needs in the country. This body of work provides a useful example of mechanisms to transfer specific knowledge from the field of traffic law enforcement to police officers in a systematic way, and to build training and enforcement capacity in a sustainable manner.

Key Findings

- Legislative changes necessitated enhanced traffic enforcement capacity
- GRSP worked with in-country agencies to establish a core group of trainers
- Curriculum on speed and child restraint enforcement was developed and delivered
- Follow-up roadside coaching and ongoing support facilitated national coverage
- This is a sustainable model that is transferable to low- and middle-income country contexts

Introduction

Evidence-based road traffic laws are important, but alone, are insufficient. Equally important is the need for appropriate implementation, including sustained enforcement, to reduce crashes and associated trauma. Strengthening enforcement capacity is critical to encouraging safe road use (WHO, 2017). GRSP has collaborated with government and non-government agencies in the Philippines over a number of years to assist with implementing laws and regulations

to combat speeding and non-use of child restraint systems (CRS).

In 2018, the Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of Interior and Local Government issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) 2018-001, which clarified that Local Government Units (LGUs) are empowered to lower speed limits on all roads (including those under jurisdiction of the national government). The JMC also mandated the Land Transportation Office (LTO) be the responsible entity for training and information dissemination on speed limit setting and enforcement strategies. It further mandated the LTO to de-

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velop and disseminate a speed enforcement training module and to give priority to the training and deputation of law enforcement officers to be assigned to speed enforcement activities. The JMC provided an important opportunity to focus much-needed attention on addressing speed with evidence-based interventions across the Philippines.

Prior to the JMC approval, GRSP supported research which found that most of the 229 LGUs that were interviewed lacked understanding of their role in addressing speed, had not classified roads within their jurisdiction to set appropriate speed limits, or lacked sufficient speed detection devices and technical capacity to effectively enforce established speed limits. GRSP partners in the Philippines used the findings from that research to advocate for the development and approval of JMC 2018-001 as a critical first step in addressing speed management across the Philippines.

Following its adoption, GRSP partners in the Philippines directly engaged with LGUs to assist them in local speed limit ordinances, using a model speed limit ordinance endorsed in the JMC. GRSP in-country partner, ImagineLaw, conducted training on speed limit setting and classification, based on a training manual developed by them. This training covered classification as well as the need to procure speed limit signs and speed detection devices.

GRSP was also supporting in-country partners advocating for passage of a child restraint law, culminating in the Philippines President signing the Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act in February 2019. Through provision of technical assistance, GRSP continued supporting in-country partners to participate in the formal drafting of Implementing Rules and Regulations and was also requested to build capacity to facilitate effective enforcement of the new law. These two legislative changes (focusing on speed and CRS enforcement) presented opportunities for GRSP's Road Policing Capacity Building team to develop and deliver capacity building training to relevant enforcement agencies in the country. Prior to these legislative developments, speed enforcement was ad hoc and not conducted in a robust, sustainable manner, and CRS enforcement was non-existent because there had been no legal basis to enforce. Thus, there was ample opportunity and need to develop capacity and resourcing within the country to facilitate enforcement strengthening with a national focus.

Description of Project Work

Initial scoping was undertaken by GRSP to assess knowledge, resources, and practices to guide curriculum development to address the lack of systematic, best practice speed enforcement training. An initial assessment meeting identified an open admission of a lack of advanced knowledge or training on speed enforcement strategy and tactics. Training deficits were identified in the following areas: general widespread training in the correct evidential use of LIDAR speed detection devices, pre-deployment tests, enforcement tactics, roadside speed enforcement planning and the establishment of effective and safe speed enforcement checkpoints. The scoping process allowed for a thor-



Figure 1. Roadside coaching – speed enforcement

ough assessment of current capacity to identify training needs and inform development of a speed enforcement training package by GRSP.

GRSP worked with in-country partners to establish a core group of national police to receive training via Train-the-Trainer method. In total, 45 officers from LTO, Philippines National Police, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Pasig City, and Quezon City Traffic Management Offices received the training. Topics included Safe System principles, risks of and countermeasures to address speeding, enforcement approaches, importance and use of general and specific deterrence methods, correct evidential use of LIDAR devices, and practical recommendations to conduct effective enforcement operations. Training also included development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to promote highly visible, intelligence-led enforcement operations in a standardised manner. The SOP contained topics relating to preparations for speed enforcement operations and checkpoints including site selection, checking and maintenance of speed detection devices, safety procedures (officers and general public) at checkpoints, and data recording of speed enforcement operations.

The core group then conducted district level training, supervised by GRSP, followed by roadside observation and coaching operations to refine enforcement tactics ([Figure 1](#)). Videos of roadside coaching were produced as a permanent resource to support longer-term training needs. These instructional training videos were recorded during the local training sessions, covered local scenarios and checkpoint operations, and were distributed internally to the relevant in-country agencies to help standardise speed enforcement procedures nationally.

GRSP was also invited to develop and deliver training for the LTO on implementation of the CRS regulations focusing on topics including: practical enforcement aspects, safety belts and child restraint checks, preparation of targeted CRS operations (when and where CRS enforcement should be conducted), communication strategies with drivers/parents, and the role of media campaigns to support enforcement efforts. This work followed a similar workflow process to that described above relating to speed enforce-

ment, except that training had to be delivered online due to COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions.

A scoping assessment was undertaken to ascertain knowledge and capacity to enforce the new CRS law. During this assessment phase, the need for more knowledge among enforcers about a range of key issues was identified including: the importance of enforcement in promoting CRS uptake; how to practically enforce violations; and how to appropriately approach and communicate with offenders. It was important to impart information about the specific and sensitive form of enforcement that is required when considering CRS violations, because children are also indirectly involved in police interaction/communication. Therefore, the nature of police engagement with offenders needs to be adapted to account for these circumstances. As such, GRSP provided training on the fundamental principles of enforcement (as outlined above) as well as specific aspects relating to CRS enforcement and related communication approaches.

Outcomes and Conclusions

Short-term outcomes were that a core police group was upskilled to enable ongoing training nationally, as well as the development of a video training resource to enable consistent information transfer. Longer-term outcomes included the institutionalisation of best practise, as well as standardised speed and child restraint enforcement operations and training. Provided that sufficiently resourced, ongoing training and operations are maintained, the country should be positioned to appropriately enforce speeding and CRS use and see reductions in free travel speeds, speed-related crashes and associated trauma. At the time of writing, significant enforcement efforts have not yet occurred due to internal government issues, and therefore, evaluation of concrete road safety outcomes has not yet been possible. GRSP stands ready to actively monitor the implementation of enforcement activities and provide further assistance if necessary.

An additional benefit of this work is provision of a successful case study for improving enforcement practices in a middle-income country context. Specific aspects of this body of work are noteworthy in relation to transferable aspects for other low- or middle-income country contexts. For instance, core work elements that would be relevant for consideration by other jurisdictions seeking to establish or enhance road policing enforcement capacity include sustainability of knowledge transfer via a Train-the-Trainer methodology; initial in-person roadside coaching support by experienced road police to ensure appropriate technical knowledge and enforcement practices are embedded from inception, and the creation of video training materials to assist with longevity and continuity of consistent information exchange.

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Author Contributions

Judy Fleiter: Oversight of funding preparation and provision, monitoring of overall work, and lead drafting of the manuscript. Marcin Flieger: Oversight and management of capacity building programme development work, review of training materials and programme, review of the manuscript. Robert Susanj: Primary enforcement trainer, primary responsibility for development and delivery of all training materials, coaching and mentoring, contribution to drafting of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of interest

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Data Availability Statement

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