

INDIA

Mumbai



Intervention area: Road Safety

City action: Collaboration with an external network to build capacity on road safety

Road crashes result in over 150 000 fatalities annually in India, making them one of the country's main causes of death.ⁱ According to the Ministry of State Transport and Highways, Maharashtra state has one of the worst rates of road crash deaths and injuries in the country. As the state capital of Maharashtra and the second-largest city in India, Mumbai is well positioned to lead the way in measures to reduce road deaths.

Many Mumbai citizens rely on public transport to commute to and from work, and move around their city, which is one of the most densely populated in the world. Pedestrians are exposed to dangerous road conditions and tragically account for more than half of road deaths.ⁱⁱ This preventable and devastating situation has increasingly led citizens to demand safer roads and more public transport options. In response, several institutions are now working to combat road fatalities, including different city agencies and state and national-level government departments.

To leverage Mumbai's strong political will and increase local capacity, the Mumbai authorities partnered with the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) in 2015. This brought with it a scientific approach to road safety, and provided insight on some of the best practices from across the world. Under the leadership of the Municipal Corporation for Greater Mumbai (MCGM), diverse city and state-level agencies have come together with global expert organizations participating in BIGRS to reduce road deaths and injuries.

To date over 180 km of Mumbai's road network has been assessed for safety. The subsequent recommendations have been incorporated into existing infrastructure design efforts to make

immediate changes, and shape future designs on roads scheduled for maintenance over the coming years. Five high-risk intersections, as well as several main thoroughfares across the city have already been rebuilt to improve safety. These infrastructure treatments have demonstrated to national and state governments how roads can be made safer through simple changes to existing designs. They have also been welcomed by citizens who now feel safer.

In partnership with BIGRS, Mumbai has measured progress by gathering and analysing data that had previously been difficult to access. The city now has specific data on victim demographics, as well as conditions in the environments where crashes take place. The initiative is also evaluating infrastructure improvements to understand what works well and what does not. These evaluations, prepared soon after every infrastructure intervention, help the city government understand how infrastructure interventions can save lives, which then helps ensure that future infrastructure works are designed with safety a paramount concern. Biannual observational studies, where researchers stand on street corners and monitor helmet wearing, seat-belt wearing, and other risk factors, have also helped initiative stakeholders to make evidence-based intervention decisions.

Where observational studies have identified specific high-risk behaviours, police enforcement has been enhanced through coaching, standard operating procedure recommendations, and evidence-based police training curricula. Since 2015, over 950 government officials, including civic officials, engineers and police officers, have received expert training on key road safety risk factors and techniques, including the enforcement of legislation related to drink-driving, speeding, helmet wearing, seat-belt wearing, safer infrastructure design, and other best practices. This has helped the city to enforce the law more effectively, and to build a safer city.

The public perception of law enforcement and urban redesign is also critical. Globally, reduced speed limits, increased fines and enforcement, and speed bumps can often create citizens' resistance, but mass and earned media can help to build citizen buy-in and understanding that these interventions really save lives. Large-scale campaigns have been run across Mumbai to support efforts to save lives – in one campaign, 118 billboards with road safety messages were displayed in areas where specific risks were prevalent. The initiative has also directly worked to change journalists' perceptions through training to help them understand that road deaths cannot always be blamed on the casualties, but that legislative, enforcement, and infrastructure efforts are needed in order to prevent them. This more nuanced understanding has changed how the media reports road crashes. Since 2015, BIGRS and the MCGM have had over 260 positive media reports highlighting the city's road safety progress.

The role of coordination has also been critical to saving lives. Since 2015, BIGRS' work in Mumbai has strived to coordinate the work of multiple city, state, and national government agencies with that of international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This coordination effort involves designated coordination focal points, annual road safety forums, and annual multi-stakeholder work plans that include multiple city and state agencies, and international partners, all working together. This collaborative approach has been applauded in the sector for

creating a high-impact environment for road safety efforts. The coordination has resulted in the participation of high-level officials from the state and city governments including the Chief Minister's Office of Maharashtra, the Transport Department of Maharashtra, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai's departments of roads and health, the Mumbai Traffic Control Branch, Regional Transport Office, and Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport.

Lives have been saved by the city's actions. According to observational studies, the city has seen a drastic improvement in helmet wearing, with an 11% increase in correct helmet wearing. Additionally, since the initiative began in 2015, Mumbai has succeeded in reducing the number of road crash fatalities by 22%.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Global status report on road safety 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. License: CC BYNC-SA 3.0 IGO.

ⁱⁱ Mumbai Road Safety Annual Report – 2018 key findings. Mumbai: Bloomberg Initiative on Global Road Safety, 2019 (<https://archive.org/details/mumbairoadsafetyreport2018keyfindings/page/n1>, accessed 19 September 2019).

ⁱⁱⁱ Mumbai Road Safety Annual Report – 2018, *ibid*.