

## **A Conversation with Margie Peden on August 13, 2013**

### **Participants:**

- Margie Peden – Coordinator, Unintentional Injury Prevention, World Health Organization
- Cari Tuna – Co-Founder, Good Ventures
- Alexander Berger – Senior Research Analyst, GiveWell

**Note:** This set of notes was compiled by GiveWell and gives an overview of the major points made by Margie Peden.

### **Summary**

GiveWell and Good Ventures spoke with Margie Peden about developing world road safety. Dr. Peden discussed the work of the World Health Organization's Unintentional Injury Prevention Team in this area, including their approach to the issue, the team's current projects and potential for expansion, and the funding landscape for road safety.

### **Unintentional Injury Prevention Team**

Dr. Peden is the Coordinator of the Unintentional Injury Prevention Team (UIP) within the World Health Organization's (WHO) Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability (VIP). UIP works largely on road safety because road traffic injuries are the leading cause of all types of injury-related deaths. Other areas of work include burns, falls, and drowning. WHO has been working on road safety since 1966, when ministers of health decided to work with ministries of transport in an attempt to minimize traffic injuries, although this work was limited before 2000. Around 2000, the Global Burden of Disease Report made it clear that road traffic collisions were a leading cause of death, so there was a shift away from ministries of transport having sole responsibility for road safety toward more multi-sectoral approaches to the issue.

### **UIP's work**

UIP coordinates road traffic injury prevention within the UN. In addition, it advises ministers of health directly on areas related to road safety, including:

- Reducing unsafe behaviors. It targets five major risk factors: drinking and driving, speed, seatbelts, motorcycle helmets, and child restraints. It assists with legislative reviews to determine how road safety laws and enforcement of these laws could be improved.
- Developing social marketing campaigns to encourage good behaviors and discourage negatives ones.
- Evaluating and improving the quality of post-accident care, from pre-hospital care to acute care to rehabilitation.

- Publishing a global status report every few years on the state of road safety around the world. UIP works with multi-sectoral groups in countries that provide information on the assessment of the quality of road safety in each country.

### **Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Road Safety Program**

Bloomberg Philanthropies is funding a consortium of partners, including UIP, to work on road safety in 10 countries. The program ran pilot projects in 2008-2009 in Mexico, Vietnam, and Cambodia. The pilot projects were a success, particularly in Vietnam, and the program was scaled-up to 10 countries. These 10 countries account for about 60% of global road traffic deaths.

The 10 countries were picked jointly by Bloomberg Philanthropies and UIP using a number of criteria, including the magnitude of the local problem, whether the country was at a "tipping point" for road safety, whether the country had good political will and governance, and whether the ministries of health and transport had the capacity to institute good practices. Within the selected countries, UIP had consultations with the ministries of health and transport and the implementing agencies to determine where the highest incidence of road traffic crashes were, and whether the capacity and political will existed to do road safety campaigns in those areas. There has been varying success in the 10 countries, with the most successful ones being those that met all of the initial criteria.

In general, UIP has found that human capacity and political will are the bottlenecks to better road safety, rather than funding. UIP works with countries to determine where capacity and will exist and funding would be useful. As the program expands, political will increases because political leaders observe the success of the program in nearby areas and research is generated on the benefits of the program.

The project has already made an impact in some countries. For instance, in one region of Russia where the program has worked, the seatbelt use rate has risen from below 50% to over 90%, and in part of Turkey it has risen from single digits to over 50%. In Vietnam, helmet usage has risen to above 90%.

One of the challenges of the program is making safety equipment, particularly child restraints and helmets affordable. Possible solutions include buyback or borrowing schemes, providing a child restraint to parents when they leave the hospital after birth (which also makes it more likely that they will make the next purchase themselves), and developing cheaper products for the developing world.

### **Potential for expansion**

UIP is currently working only in select parts of the 10 countries funded by the Bloomberg Philanthropies program. If more money was available for this work, UIP could expand its work to more cities and regions within these countries.

John Hopkins is conducting monitoring and evaluation of the Bloomberg Philanthropies program, which is currently 3.5 years into a 5-year timeline. The data will have metrics such as number of lives saved. Some data should be made public by the end of the year. UIP hopes that this data will be helpful in convincing mayors and governors to take on UIP projects.

UIP is also interested in working with megacities to improve road safety.

### **Emerging problems**

New and quickly growing problems include:

- Texting on mobile phones, which is particularly a problem in high-income countries.
- Rapidly increasing use of e-bikes, primarily in China. These are similar to “Vespas” and are large and heavy and can go up to ~50 km/hr (~30 mph), but are treated as regular bikes by the law. China has begun to export them to other countries.
- Rapidly increasing motorcycle usage in Africa and Latin America.

### **Best practices**

The second report on the global status of road safety, published earlier this year, found that there were only 28 countries (covering 7% of the world’s population) that had good road safety laws on five key risk factors and that only four countries had both optimal laws and optimal enforcement.

The countries with the best road safety records – such as Sweden, the UK, and Australia – have moved from a punitive model (where people act safely to avoid punishment) to a safety model (where people act safely because they realize that doing so is good for them).

In general many low- and middle-income countries have relatively good laws in place but weak enforcement. They are generally still in a punitive framework, and so the goal for them is to improve enforcement of their road safety laws.

Other countries still need to enact optimal road safety legislation.

### **Funding for road safety work**

UIP receives relatively little of its funding from the UN. 90% of its funds come from external sources. It was originally funded by the FIA Foundation. Recently, UIP's biggest donor has been Bloomberg Philanthropies, which has pledged \$125 million over 5 years to a consortium of partners to work on road safety. On a smaller scale, UIP has received funding from a few high-income countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands, the US, and Australia.

It is difficult to track total funding available for developing world road safety. The FIA Foundation and the Global Burden of Disease researchers have done some work on this.

### **Other people for GiveWell to talk to**

- Adnan Hyder – Professor at John Hopkins University who is leading the monitoring and evaluation of the Bloomberg Philanthropies program.

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