



Building capacity through the Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge

November 2022



The
George
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BOTNAR
Child Road Safety Challenge

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Introduction

Safer roads are a fundamental human right. Children on their journeys to school where they learn and develop, should not be placed in harm's way. Ensuring they get to and from school safely should therefore be at the top of the road safety agenda in all countries, but particularly those who bear the brunt of the global road safety crisis – low- and middle-income countries.

Involving civil society organizations in the development and delivery of evidence-based road safety initiatives is key to sustainable and effective programme implementation. But not all NGOs have the capacity – human and technical – to undertake large, well-financed project.

That's where a programme like the [Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge](#) (BCRSC), hosted by the [Global Road Safety Partnership](#) (GRSP) with financial support from [Fondation Botnar](#) has been playing a leading role over the last five years. To read more about the full BCRSC project, go to this [blog](#).

With the support of [The George Institute for Global Health](#), GRSP has built capacity in seven countries (Mexico, South Africa, Romania, Tunisia, Tanzania, Vietnam, India) at a system, institutional and individual level borrowed from the seven [ESSENCE](#) good principles:

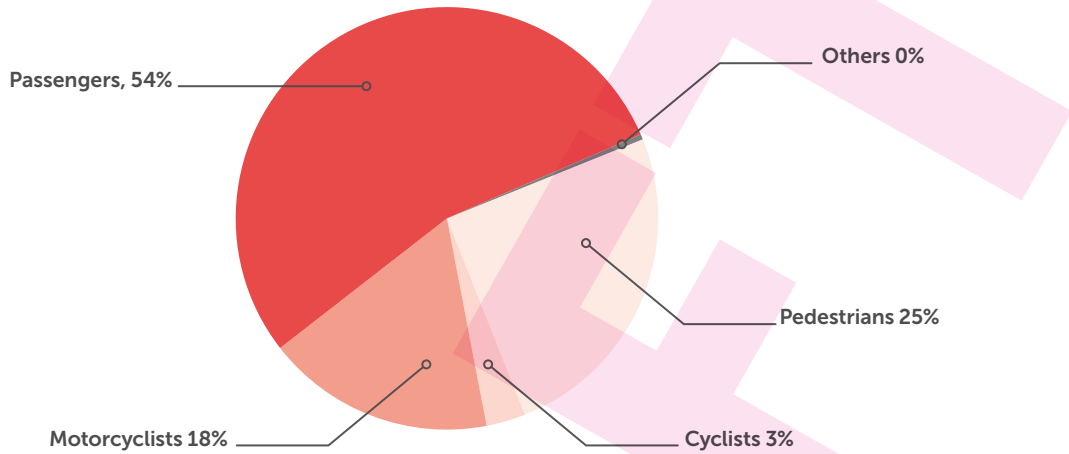
1. Collaborate, communicate and share experiences;
2. Understand the local context and evaluate the existing capacity;
3. Ensure local ownership and secure active support;
4. Build in monitoring, evaluation and learning from the start;
5. Establish robust governance and support structures, and promote effective leadership;
6. Embed strong support, supervision and mentorship structures; and
7. Think long-term, be flexible and plan for continuity.

This short case study tells the story of one of the grantees – an organization called [Les Ambassadeurs de la Sécurité Routière](#) (ASR) based in Tunis, Tunisia, and how their capacity was built to implement a large and effective project to reduce child road traffic collisions, injuries and deaths around two schools in the city.

Child road traffic deaths in Tunisia

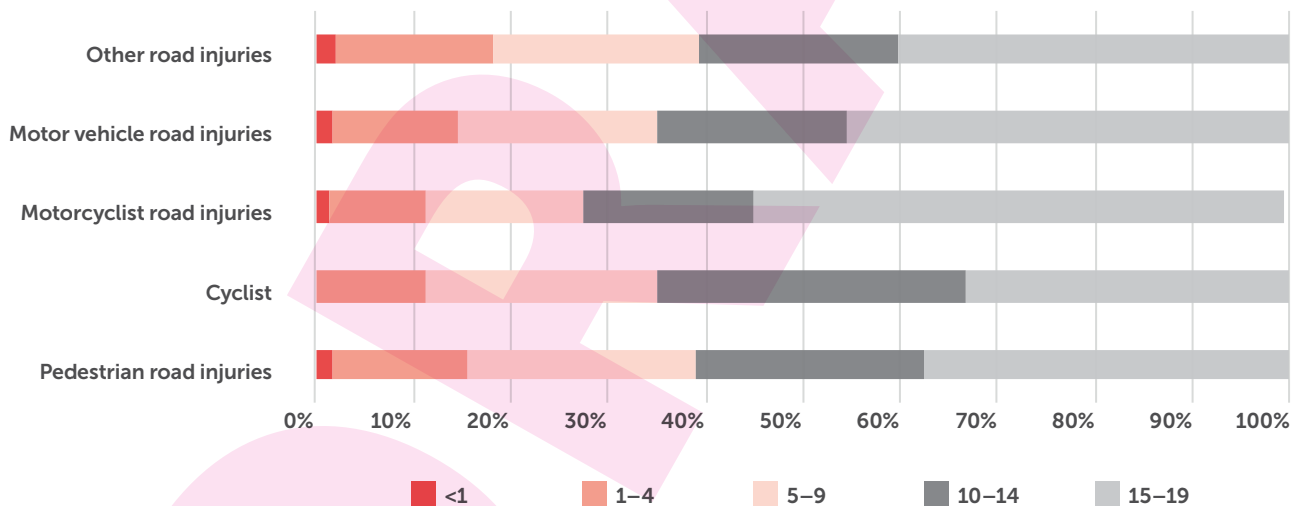
An estimated 273 children and adolescents under the age of 20 years died in road traffic crashes in Tunisia in 2019. More than half the children were fatally injured as passengers in vehicles, but a quarter were pedestrians.

Fatally injured Tunisian children <20 years by road user group (2019)



Source: Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2020. Available from <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/>

Road traffic deaths among children in Tunisia by age ranges, 2019



Just over 40% of children who died in 2019 as a result of a road traffic crash were between the ages of 5 and 14 years – the age at which many children walk to school.

Source: Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2020. Available from <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/>

In 2016, the government of Tunisia had the following road safety legislations and policies in place which include children and adolescents.

Law or regulation	Limit
Maximum urban speed limit	50 km/hr
Local authorities can modify limits	Yes
BAC limit – young or novice drivers	0 g/dl
Helmet law applies to ALL riders and passengers	Yes
Children passengers on motorcycles	Prohibited under 6 years
Children seated in front seat	Prohibited under 10 years
National child restraint law	No

Source: Global status report for road safety, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565684>, page 251

Who is ASR?

ASR was created by Afef Ben Ghenia on 5 February 2013 following the death of her brother – Nabil – in December 2011 to a speeding driver. Afef, a lawyer by training, founded the organization in order to make roads safer for all Tunisians while honoring the memory of her brother. The NGO, which was formalized by government decree N°40 on the 2nd April 2013, focuses on advocating for law changes to reduce speed and mandate seat belt wearing as well as road safety education.

ASR and the Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge

The BCRSC in Tunisia aims to reduce the incidence of road traffic crashes which involve children on their way to or from school through:

1. Advocating for a review of the decree related to a maximum of 30km/hr speed limits around school zones;
2. Improving the infrastructure around two pilot schools; and
3. Improving the traffic crash data collection system through the creation and implementation of a digitalized data collection tool.

In order to achieve these objectives, capacity needed to be built at three levels in the country, viz. at systems, organizational and individual levels.



Capacity building activities

At a systems level

Funding available for capacity development in BCRSC grant received by ASR allowed for:

- Institutional Strengthening
- External expert consultant hire;
- Additional expertise to build capacity in specific areas (e.g. M&E, infrastructure, education)

A framework to measure impact at a city level was developed and various educational webinars were held on various aspects of road safety, project and data management at a national level.

The governor of Tunis and other national level experts were invited by ASR to become involved in various global events such as the UN road safety week and the launch of the 2nd Decade of Action for Road Safety. ASR played a pivotal role in building capacity within the governor's office – a key player in policy modification and local implementation. These events also involved multiple press conferences with decision-makers. ASR was also involved in training journalists and other media personnel in responsible reporting practices which focus on prevention rather than sensational statistics.

Members of the steering committee for the Challenge in Tunis included several governmental representatives. The learning curve from the beginning of the project was steep but culminated in an informed and supportive group of policy makers and practitioners.



Building capacity at a top level was key to creating and implementing the digitalized data collection tool. More than 100 police were trained to use the tablet to collect on the spot information about all road traffic collisions. Piloting of this tool is currently in progress. It shows that the digital tool provides better information on location, is easier to document more reliable information about the collection and can be easily transferred to the Road Safety Observatory for more timely analysis.

As a result of the multisectoral and international collaboration, ASR has been recognized as an important stakeholder in road safety prevention efforts in the country. This has led to other projects with the WHO, for example, around linking multiple sources of data to provide a more comprehensive picture of the road safety problem in the country.

At an organizational level

ASR was a very small organization when it started – essentially it was a one-person team. However, following a risk assessment and financial management review undertaken by GRSP, it was decided that given the passion and commitment of the CEO, that Tunisia would be included in the Challenge.

In order to lead the Challenge, however, several institutional strengthening workshops and training programmes were held including:

- Guidance to write and develop the full proposal – ASR works primarily in French and Arabic and therefore developing a proposal in English required assistance and support;
- Negotiation process – through this process it was agreed to start small, develop a strong implementation framework and reassess after two years;
- Financial management and internal review guidance from GRSP; and
- Understand the need for monitoring and evaluation and guidance on developing indicators and a M&E framework.

After two years an assessment by GRSP revealed good compliance. The project was therefore expanded, and significantly more funds were provided for the second phase of the project. This allowed for the hiring of an assistant, paid for consultants with specific expertise (data tool development, infrastructure, education) and encouraged ASR to apply for further grants to extend their work, e.g. from the UN Road Safety Fund.

ASR also provided capacity development to stakeholders in the city – most notably to schoolteachers and children through open days and road safety education training.

Through this project ASR were able to leverage additional financial support and in-kind support from government, international agencies and the private sector.

In 2019 ASR were honoured through a [Prince Michael Awards](#) as well as a [FedEx Global NGO award](#). In accepting the award, Afef said “The 2019 FedEx Road Safety Awards represent a big jump for ASR. It will give us more responsibility and a deep motivation to aim for more achievements in road safety and to maintain the work we are already doing in Tunisia.”



At an individual level

The CEO of ASR is very passionate, eager to learn and well connected. She has been chosen to attend several training programmes, some funded by Botnar and other by other organizations – for example. Afef has attended:

- The 3rd high level ministerial meeting on road safety in Sweden in February 2020 alongside her national representatives;
- the GRSP/Johns Hopkins University [Global Leadership Course on Road Safety](#) and has subsequently been chosen as one of six alumni to be supported through the Fellowship Programme to further encourage their role as leaders in road safety during 2022-23; and
- the Global Alliance for NGOs in road safety Incubator Programme held in Budapest in March 2022.

Afef has also been elected as a spokesperson for African NGOs at the 6th Global Alliance meeting and brought the voice of African NGOs to the decision makers to strengthen the fight against road traffic crashes.

She has been invited to speak on multiple webinars to share her experiences around the Safe Systems Approach, the new Global Plan for the Decade, data collection and its impact on road safety, infrastructure and road safety, road safety education, to name just a few.

In addition to participating in multiple TV and radio shows about road safety in the country, Afef has also participated at a national conference on road traffic accidents and their impact on public health organized by the Ministry of Health in Tunisia.

All this input has helped to develop her credibility as an expert on road safety in the country and give her the confidence to interact with government officials at the highest levels in order to get the 30km/hr law around schools passed.

How ASR has used what they have learnt to improve road safety in Tunisia

The capacity built both at ASR in Tunisia and the government through the Botnar Challenge have facilitated the change in the speed law around schools (down to 30 km/hr) through Decree 151/2000. The digitalized crash database has been endorsed by the Ministry of Interior, the Traffic Police and the National Road Safety Observatory. The organization has grown both in size and expertise since the commencement of the Challenge which has been recognized internationally. This has allowed ASR to apply for further funding and collaboration in order to sustain their road safety efforts well beyond the end of the Challenge in 2022.

Conclusion

This case study illustrates a good example of how investing in a small NGO with good potential and connections has the potential to have a significant impact. A strong, clear, three-tiered capacity development plan and direct technical support are what is needed. There might have been hurdles along the way and it did not happen overnight, but the time, energy and funds are worth it to all partners – the NGO, the government, the partners (national and international) and the donor. Children in Tunisia – especially those who attend the two pilot schools – are definitely safer than they were before this programme was implemented and the police are more motivated to collect complete and correct information on crashes on the new digital data collection system which has been endorsed by the government.



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