



ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGNS – What works?

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Clarifying commonly used terms

- Campaigns – Processes to provide messages to the community for a defined period (e.g. awareness raising, education or promotion)
- Awareness raising – Attempts to increase awareness of serious crash risk from certain behaviours (e.g. speeding, drink driving or not wearing a seat belt)
- Education – Systematic processes to increase knowledge (e.g. serious crash risks from speeding)
- Promotion – Can refer to many areas of content. Most effective promotions are based on enforcement risk and penalties.
- Training – Processes to develop skills (e.g. Driving skills)

What works, what fails and why?

- Road users become safer if they change their behaviour, e.g.
 - Wearing a safety belt
 - Not speeding
- Increasing awareness alone does not necessarily change behaviours *(in the real world, it typically doesn't)*
- Raising awareness alone delivers very little if any benefits in road safety
- Education delivers limited benefits
- Campaigns promoting enforcement are often successful in reducing serious crashes



“Road users only become safer if they change their behaviour. Increasing awareness alone does not necessarily change behaviours.”

The Education Paradox

- Education works in many areas – the failure of education to improve road safety surprises most of us.
- Road safety is generally not a road user knowledge problem.
- Road safety is an infrastructure / system problem.
- Safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles will save people from death or disability if they make a mistake.
- Road safety is a motivational problem.
- Speeding is not a skills problem – it doesn't require more skill to drive slower.
- Not driving after drinking alcohol and wearing a safety belt are similarly not skills or knowledge problems.

An example of an awareness campaign



Group Discussion

- What do you think was good about this video as a road safety campaign video?
- What do you think was not so good?



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Awareness Raising – The Problem

- Provides information on crash risk of the general population which we hope is motivating – IT IS NOT
- As a result of deep psychological biases, we dismiss risk to others as not applying to us.

Optimism Bias –

The tendency to overestimate the likelihood of positive events and underestimate the likelihood of negative events.



Enforcement versus Education:

Fear of a penalty is better than fear of death: **Why?**



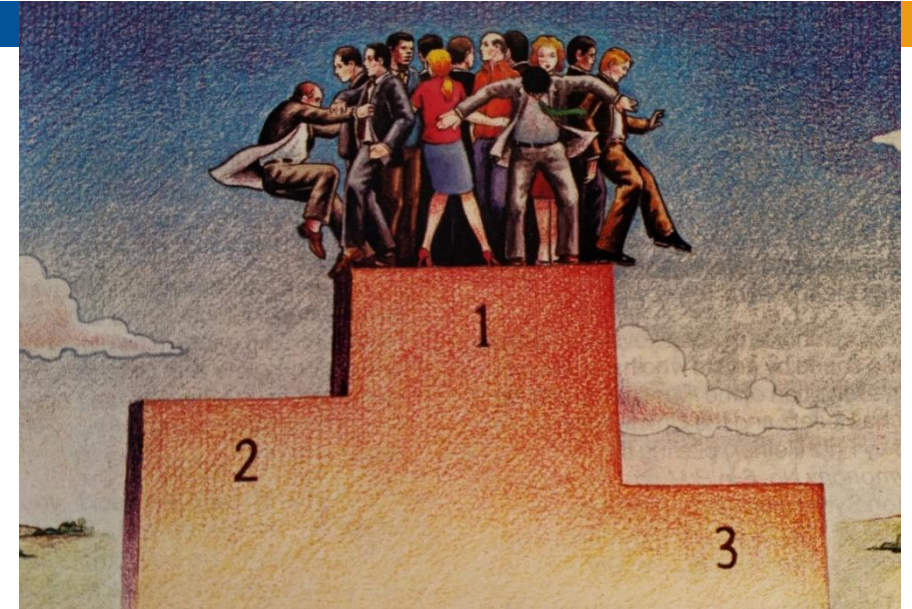
Optimism Bias - Driver-overconfidence

Drivers who rate themselves as better than average 80%
(over-confident)

Most drivers

About average

Worse than average
(cautious)
● Only 2.1%



80% of drivers rated themselves above average on a number of important characteristics. Ratings did not vary significantly across demographic categories. McCormack et al (1984)

High fear advertising is popular and does well in focus groups, **but consistently does not work.**

Don't use it



Effects of road safety campaigns on crashes

	Best estimate	95% confidence interval
General effect	-9%	(-13; -5)
Mass media alone	+1%	(-9; +12)
Mass media + enforcement	-13%	(-19; -6)
Mass media + enforcement + education	-14%	(-22; -5)
Local individualised campaigns*	-39%	(-56; -17)

*Based on a small number of studies

Source: R. Elvik, T. Vaa, A. Høy, A. Erke, M. Sørensen (Eds.), The Handbook of Road Safety Measures, 2nd revised edition Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2009



شركة الإمارات لتعليم قيادة السيارات
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PROMOTION OF ENFORCEMENT

- Promoting enforcement and the consequences of being caught often changes road user behaviour saving lives and preventing injuries.
- However – the promotion needs to be credible.
- High levels of active road policing is required.
- The effectiveness of enforcement based messages depends on:
 - Belief that the behaviour (e.g. speeding) is likely to be detected
 - Belief the penalty is unavoidable
 - Judgement that the penalty is enough to deter
 - Belief that the penalty will be applied swiftly

PUBLIC AWARENESS – SUPPORTING ENFORCEMENT

- “The effect of speed enforcement and traffic enforcement in general is substantially increased if it is supported by information targeted at the road user.” **(Williams, 1994: Erke, 2009)**
- **Communication with road users should:**
 - Emphasise safety is the goal of enforcement.
 - Explain how and why speeding causes more crashes and makes them more severe.
 - Explain enforcement method and procedures.
 - Preferably illustrate that fines revenue is used to benefit local road safety.
 - Provide feedback on interim and final results (i.e., traffic behaviours or safety).
 - Focus on risk groups (i.e., message content and medium).

WHO SUMMARY

1

Road safety campaigns influence behaviour when used in conjunction with legislation and law enforcement. However, when used in isolation education, information and publicity generally do not deliver tangible and sustained reductions in deaths and serious injuries. **WHO (2004)**

2

Important to remember that increasing awareness of road safety risk factors and prevention measures through education and social marketing campaigns is an adjunct to other measures, rather than a stand-alone solution. **WHO (2017)**

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CAMPAIGNS

- Public education and awareness programmes alone have been shown to deliver extremely mixed results.
- Key finding is that the effectiveness of campaigns on their own in terms of direct safety benefits is likely to be small.

**Road safety-related messages
that do not work!**

Drink Responsibly.
Drive **Responsibly.**



EDUCATION AND DRIVER TRAINING

- General passenger car post-licence driver training ineffective.
- Teaching children how and where to cross the road safely appears to provide benefits (*needs regular refresher training and applied to children of a suitable age*).
- School-based driver training demonstrated clearly negative results.
- May be benefits of education campaigns to raise awareness of road safety issues thereby increasing acceptance of other initiatives to improve safety (*e.g, legislation to support enforcement or improved knowledge on purchase of safe vehicles*).
- OECD reports that ad hoc activities including visits from road safety experts and enthusiasts will be relatively unsuccessful despite their popular appeal.



SUMMARY

“Enforcement based campaigns work in road safety. They work better than campaigns that are not enforcement based.”

Job 2023



Thank You!

