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With more than 50 percent of the world’s population living in cities and a projected increase to 70 percent by 2030, ensuring safe urban road infrastructure and mobility has become one of the most critical development challenges of the 21st century. This is especially the case in low- and middle-income countries’ (LMICs) urban areas where most public streets are designed primarily or exclusively for vehicle-users, leaving pedestrians and cyclists exposed to unnecessary and preventable road dangers.

Already home to more than 90 percent of the 1.3 million global traffic fatalities and 20 to 50 million road injuries, LMICs are particularly hard hit by road mortality and morbidity with more than half of these avoidable deaths and injuries happening in its rapidly growing cities and urban areas. In New Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata’s metropolitan areas, for example, over 40 percent of pedestrians are struck by vehicles (WRI 2015). Thus, as the volume of road users increases in urban areas, the social and economic consequences of road crashes are foreseen to grow.

To combat this epidemic, Bloomberg Philanthropies committed US$125 million in road
safety funding over a five-year period in 2015. As part of the Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) partnership, the World Bank hosted GRSF has been working with its partners on improving road safety infrastructure, legislation, and overall road safety management in five selected LMICs as well as in Accra, Addis Ababa, Bandung, Bangkok, Bogota, Ho Chi Minh City, Fortaleza, Mumbai, Sao Paulo and Shanghai. These efforts are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals’ road safety target of halving road deaths by 2020 as well as Bloomberg’s philanthropic mission.

GRSF’S role within the Initiative:

As part of the BIGRS partnership (2015-2019), GRSF oversees assessments of road infrastructure for safety, delivers training, contributes road safety data system development, and conducts socio-economic analysis on the costs of deaths and injuries in a selected cohort of countries and cities.

More than two years into the initiative and in collaboration with the international Road Safety Assessment Program (iRAP), the team has assessed 8,023 km of high-risk roads and trained more than 2,500 government officials. This work has also leveraged more than US$135 million in committed funding from governments to implement GRSF’s project recommendations.

GRSF, along with its partners, will continue to work together and upscale its activities to protect road users from preventable deaths and injuries on unsafe roads under the BIGRS.

RECENT GRSF/BIGRS EVENT PARTICIPATION:

August 21-25 Fundamentals of Road Safety Planning, Design, and Engineering in Bandung: GRSF and NACTO GDCI prepared a four-and-a-half-day long workshop designed to transfer international good practices on the aforementioned topics to decision makers, road safety champions, and practitioners in Bandung and West Java Province.

October 2-8 Road Safety Week in Bogota: GRSF participated, along with iRAP and BIGRS partners, in a series of road safety week events including forming part of an international expert panel on speed management, site visits to several sites in the city to see interventions resulting from the collaboration with BIGRS partners, mass media campaigns supported by BIGRS, and a road safety hackathon.

November 27-28 Speed Management Workshop in Bangkok: With the aim of reducing the number of road fatalities in Thailand (second highest in the world), the GRSF participated in a workshop organized by the country’s Traffic Police Division. The aim of this workshop was to increase the capacity of the Royal Thai Police, Bangkok Metropolitan Police, and other national stakeholders on speed management.