



HEALTHY PEOPLE RWANDA (HP RWANDA)

MEMBER OF THE



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New program to improve safety for school children in Rwanda

Delegates of over 20 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) members of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety from across Africa recently convened in Nairobi, Kenya. Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety is a network of more than 200 member NGOs from almost 90 countries around the world that implement programs and lobby for road safety initiatives around the world. Healthy People Rwanda is the first and only member from Rwanda. In this alliance workshop, advocates from around Africa received commitments from policy makers for road safety improvements that is set to benefit 2000 children.

The project will be rolled out in 13 countries across Africa including Rwanda with the aim of making children's school journeys safer at 20 schools by the end of 2018. The policy makers' commitment was the result of a week-long alliance advocates' training program. The training, centered around a practical safe schools project, that included collection of road safety data around a school in suburban Nairobi. The alliance advocates analyzed the data, and had the opportunity to present it, along with their recommendations to a panel which included representatives from the Kenyan Ministry of Education, the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), and the World Health Organization. The panel gave them feedback on their advocacy messages and how to engage decision makers.

The training came at a time when Healthy People Rwanda is currently implementing the First Aid Initiative Rwanda (FAIR), a project designed to reduce morbidity and mortality among children and youth due to road traffic accidents in Rwanda. As of yet, the project has seen over 8,000 students from 10 schools in Kigali receive training on road safety and first aid. The project also revealed need for more in-depth capacity building for students and the population at large as well as lays the foundation for safer roads and reduction of accidents-induced deaths.

According to Dr. Innocent Nzeyimana, the Vice President of Healthy People Rwanda, who participated in this exercise in Nairobi, the project need to be replicated in Rwanda to achieve safer schools for children.

"The project in Nairobi is equally relevant and replicable in Rwanda where an alarming 2172 people die due to road crashes every year. The rate at which accidents occur calls for collective efforts to make children safe on their journey to and from school and this can be achieved with low-cost evidence-based interventions," he said.

Dr. Nzeyimana pointed out that knowledge and tools acquired from the training can help the Rwandan government, Police, and other stakeholders in road safety to protect children, save lives, and meet the challenge of Sustainable Development Goal 3.6: to reduce road traffic fatalities by 50% by 2020.

"The training was very insightful, empowering and practical. I learnt much and I am ready to advocate for safe school zones in my country. I hope that decision-makers will cooperate as they always stand ready to support any idea which can improve the wellbeing of the population," he said.



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He explained that much as law enforcement organs put in place safety measures that make roads in Kigali relatively safe, there is still need for improvement especially in school zones to make children safer when going to or coming back from schools.

“No child should die fetching for education,” he ended

Lotte Brondum, the Executive Director of the Alliance observed that Road safety NGOs in Africa are the eyes and ears of their communities and can be valuable partners of their governments.

“We have provided these advocates with tools to gather data that will help decision makers to implement low-cost, evidence-based solutions to save children’s lives around schools.

The demonstration project we conducted in Kenya has proven to us that Alliance Advocates are fully committed, and we can’t wait to see them implement safe school zones across the continent,” he said

The Alliance Advocate training program is the flagship element of the Alliance Empowerment Program, an innovative capacity-building program, which equips members of the Alliance as leaders and advocates for road safety. Alliance Advocates are selected through a rigorous application process to identify NGO leaders with the potential to act as advocates and role models in their own countries and to the global road safety community. The achievements of previous Advocates are documented in the action brief *Walking the Talk*.

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