

REDUCING SPEEDING NEAR SCHOOLS

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA



In 2015 an estimated 3,586 people died on Zambia's roads.¹ Over a third of those killed were pedestrians, and many were in the capital city of Lusaka. The city was determined to improve road safety, and to protect children in particular, who can be especially vulnerable to road traffic injuries while walking to and from school.

It is estimated that more than 70% of school-age children in Zambia go to school by foot daily.² Children are at a high risk of being in a road traffic crash because many of Lusaka's streets do not have adequate infrastructure to support children walking to and from school. Motorists also speed and conduct unsafe driving practices near or around schools. National road traffic crash statistics report that 181 children under the age of 16 were killed as a result of road traffic crashes in 2018.

In 2017, Lusaka joined the Partnership for Healthy Cities to focus on road safety. The city collaborated with Amend, a road safety organization that implements and evaluates evidence-based programs to reduce road traffic injuries and fatalities across Africa. The city and Amend engaged the Ministries of Education and Transport, and other stakeholders, to improve road safety with traffic calming measures around two Lusaka public schools where children were considered to be at a higher risk of traffic injury. Amend completed a first set of infrastructure improvements in September 2018 after a school zones assessment. The new road design included crosswalks, speed bumps and sidewalks to slow vehicles and provide safer walking routes for schoolchildren. Speeding data was collected in the school zones before and after the interventions were implemented. Results indicated that average vehicle speeds dropped from 38 km/h to 12 km/h at one school, and from 22 km/h to 18 km/h at the second school after the improvements were made. Lusaka unveiled the improvements at a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the students, teachers, administrators and Deputy Mayor Chilando Chitangala.

In December 2019, 30 km per hour limits became regulation on urban roads across Zambia, a decrease from 40 km per hour. Mayor Miles Bwalya Sampa Lusaka has become an important ambassador for road safety, advocating for the regulation to be adopted at national level. Given that the original advocacy campaign was to place 30 km/h speed limits in school zones,

¹ http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/country_profiles/Zambia.pdf

² Based on a survey undertaken by Zambia Road Safety Trust in schools; report to be published in November 2021.

it is a particularly remarkable achievement that the new speed limit is adopted nationally across all urban roads in Zambia.

In 2019, the city of Lusaka scaled their prior work to make similar infrastructural changes at an additional two schools. The city partnered with Zambia Road Safety Trust, a local NGO and leading road safety advocate. The Mayor of Lusaka officiated the inaugurations of each school in March 2021, with their new safety designs including, painted road crossings and clear signage. A video focused on the importance of safe road behavior was initially released as part of a road safety awareness campaign. Unfortunately, the remaining series of road safety education and awareness campaigns to target approximately 6,000 children were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The city plans to continue its road safety work in the future, building on the campaign plan and other approaches to ensure that drivers will slow down and more children can safely travel to school.

Figure 1: Images of Matero primary school before and after the road safety measures were put in place.

