10 YEARS OF SAVING LIVES
ROAD SAFETY CAPACITY
BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

In partnership with
The Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport (EASST) is an independent UK-registered charity working to promote road safety and sustainable mobility across Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus and South-East Europe. Charity number: 1133552.

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Ten years ago my main focus was to organise the FIA Foundation Road Safety Scholarship Programme. I had many friends in Eastern Europe and countries that were once part of the Soviet Union - talented young leaders I had worked with as one-time Director of the John Smith Memorial Trust, a good governance leadership course attracting the best and brightest young professionals from the region. These included road safety leaders supported by the FIA Foundation: people like Poghos Shahinyan from Armenia and Gela Kvashilava from Georgia, who worked tirelessly but found it an uphill struggle to get their governments to act to reduce high road casualties.

EASST grew from these talented young leaders. They asked us to build a regional network to support their efforts - allowing an exchange of international expertise and building a forum for sharing best practice. They asked, and the FIA Foundation listened. With the backing of the Foundation, EASST was established in June 2009 and successfully registered as a UK charity in January 2010. Starting from just five countries, our network has expanded to include 14 continues, growing in its regional influence and reach. The link with the FIA and their work to support road safety remains strong: five of our partner organisations are FIA-affiliated clubs and others have strong working links with local clubs in their countries.

Looking back at the past ten years, I can speak for all EASST’s Trustees and staff in expressing our pride in what our partners have achieved. Our mission - to make road travel safer, greener and more sustainable for future generations - faces major challenges as described in this report. But we have also seen some tremendous successes in each of our partner countries. Our objective of creating an active, regional network that feeds progress in road safety and gives strength to all its members has certainly been realised.

We would not have achieved these successes without the support of our sponsors, in particular the FIA Foundation. We are proud to be one of their core partners, collaborating on the Child Health Initiative and many other campaigns. We are also hugely grateful to the Alexander Mosley Charitable Trust for their sponsorship of our training and capacity building. We have been privileged to have worked closely with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other International Financial Institutions in carrying out national and regional projects with the input of our local partners. We have strong collaborations with the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and IRU Academy, Kier Group plc, FedEx, the Safer Roads Foundation and Shell Group, along with many other local project partners and sponsors. We have also had strong support for our work from the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, World Health Organisation, UNECE, International Transport Forum (ITF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). EASST would like to thank all of them (and many others not listed here) for their invaluable assistance and for sharing our goals.

Emma MacLennan
Director, EASST

1 FIA Foundation, https://www.fiafoundation.org
2 Former FIA Foundation Scholars who are now EASST partners and staff include Vusal Rajabli and Alag Huseynli of Azerbaijan, Serghei Diaconu, Tatiana Mhaliova and Virginia Mandalac of Moldova, Chnara Kasambetova of Kyrgyzstan, Yegor Kalashnikov and Oksana Romanukha of Ukraine, Irina Potyakina of Belarus, Vadim Melnikov of Russia, Anna Voulgaridou of Greece, and EASST’s Dmitry Sambuk and Emily Carr.
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT EASST

The Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport (EASST) is a regional partnership of local organisations aiming to reduce road casualties and promote sustainable transport choices. Starting in 2009 with just five partners, 10 years on EASST now spans 14 countries across Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe.

EASST was established to nurture homegrown expertise and leadership in a region with a shared history and common need to improve road safety and mobility. Its core ethos is that local ownership of an issue is essential for sustainable change. Sending in international experts is not enough - local expertise, champions and leadership are vital. The existence of EASST means there are people on the ground permanently who can sustain efforts and influence the road safety agenda. They are the ones with the local knowledge and insight into what challenges their countries face, and how to overcome them.

“Every day we see our partners growing in skills, experience and expertise. We are enormously proud of the impact they are having in their countries.”

Emma MacLennan, Founder and Director of EASST

EASST also provides space for networking and cross-border cooperation. The annual EASST all-partners meeting offers an opportunity to get together, share experiences, discuss strategy, and learn from each other. It is a time when partners renew their ties, share skills and best practice, discuss common obstacles and learn how to improve their results.

The success of the EASST model is that its partners are not only being recognised as the local experts and leaders on road safety and sustainability, they are also seen as international experts. They are frequently called upon to speak about their experiences and achievements at both a regional and global level. Their road safety successes are being celebrated, and their projects are winning international awards.

EASST is a member of the UN Global Road Safety Collaboration; has consultative status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations; is a supporter of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) and UN Sustainable Development Goals; and backs renewed targets to reduce road deaths globally by 50 per cent by 2030. EASST brings a regional voice to the global road safety debate, and is a key player on this critical development issue.

“Our core ethos is that local ownership of an issue is essential for sustainable change. Sending in international experts is not enough - we need local expertise, champions and leadership.”

Emma MacLennan, Founder and Director of EASST

All EASST partners are country-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the field of road safety. EASST supports these organisations through training and small mentored grants to develop projects that meet the needs of local communities and make a measurable, lasting impact on reducing road death and injury.
THE EASST REGION

The EASST region is extremely rich in history, culture, landscape, and warm hospitality. However, it is also challenging and complex: politically, economically, and geographically. These factors can exacerbate existing road safety problems and hinder progress, making the need to address road safety on both a regional and national level more urgent.

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Most of the countries in which EASST works were once part of the Soviet Union, gaining their independence in 1991. As newly independent states they had to engage in a rapid process of state-building and economic transition. Governmental structures, rule of law, and economic systems have all undergone a process of reform that is ongoing. Even civil society was a new concept, so that listening to and involving NGOs and communities in policy development was not generally done. In this context, the majority of EASST countries are still developing the institutions necessary for effective road safety management.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also gave rise to frozen conflicts, bitter civil wars, and political instability in many countries. A number of EASST countries have on-going regional conflicts that hamper investment and development, while civil war has had a devastating impact on others. Political instability has been another factor in making progress difficult. For example, in Kyrgyzstan there have been 13 Prime Ministers since EASST was established in 2009 (including Acting Prime Ministers) and 33 in total since independence.

This environment makes achieving sustainable road safety reforms an on-going battle. Legislative gaps can take time to fill, laws can be difficult to enforce, and political attention is frequently diverted elsewhere.

ROAD SAFETY GLOBALLY AND REGIONALLY

Road safety has long been neglected as a serious development issue despite the fact that road traffic injury is now the leading cause of death for children and young people globally, and the 8th leading cause of death overall.4

In EASST partner countries, the rate of road fatalities averages 15.9 people per 100,000 population - significantly higher than the European average (9.3/100,000). The number of those who survive but whose lives are permanently affected by serious injury and disability is higher still.5

5 Ibid.
ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The majority of EASST countries are economies in transition. For reasons highlighted above, it can be difficult to attract international investment into the region. Corruption in public institutions - including the police and judicial system - has also been a barrier to development in some cases.

Nevertheless, many countries in the region have seen economic growth over the past 10 years. This has led to a rapid rise in the region’s vehicle fleet, particularly private cars. All countries have seen major developments in their road infrastructure, leading to far higher speeds on highways and urban roads. This rapid motorisation has outstripped developments in legislation, enforcement, public awareness and health & safety protections, creating a more dangerous situation on the roads.

Unsafe roads also pose a significant drain on economic resources. In the EASST region alone, the economic cost of road casualties is around USD 200 billion annually.6 The greatest share of mortality and long-term disability caused by road crashes is among the working age population (15 - 65 years).7 The loss of family breadwinners, the additional burden of care for the injured, and the loss of their economic contribution make road casualties a major cause of poverty.

As well as saving lives, safe roads have a vital role to play in economic development and should warrant urgent political attention. Allowing for the safe movement of people and vehicles can improve investment, trade, and tourism, thereby providing a better quality of life for everyone.

GEOGRAPHIC AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES

In addition to political and economic challenges, many areas within the EASST region are forced to contend with a harsh natural environment and extreme climate change. Connecting Western Europe and Asia, the region is also a major trade route with high volumes of trucks and freight passing through daily. Remote villages and towns are particularly vulnerable to road risk with typically poorer levels of infrastructure, scant resources for enforcement and limited access for emergency services.

Six EASST partner countries have over 50% mountain land mass: Armenia (85.6%), Azerbaijan (60%), Georgia (85%), Greece (60%), Kyrgyzstan (90.7%), Tajikistan (91.9%). In higher income countries relatively small populations inhabit mountainous regions, but in developing countries, particularly in Asia, this is not the case.8 In these countries earthquakes and natural disasters are also not uncommon, with floods and landslides regularly affecting road routes.

The Pamir Highway (M41) through Tajikistan, for example, is a main trade route across the mountains of Central Asia and one of the most dangerous roads in the world. Sections of the road are unpaved, narrow, steep and at high risk of flooding and landslides, with deep canyons at the road edge. For a low-income country, maintaining and ensuring safety on such difficult roads is an enormous challenge.

The long cold winters experienced by many EASST countries also present significant risks. A report published by EASST and PA Road Safety Kyrgyzstan in 2018 found that in the city of Bishkek, 87 per cent of all pedestrian deaths occur in the winter months when conditions are worst and days are shortest.9 These risks combine to pose life threatening and life limiting dangers to local people and must be addressed as a matter of priority.

This report will look at some of EASST’s main achievements over the last 10 years from improvements in enforcement, education and engineering, to post-crash response and inclusive mobility. It will also discuss the challenges faced in the region, and how EASST seeks to address these challenges.

8 Grid Adrenal, Distribution of Mountain Area and Population, (2012), http://www.grida.no/resources/5033
INTERVIEW: Poghos Shahinyan, Founder and Director of the Armenian NGO, National Road Safety Council, was also one of the founding members of EASST. In this interview he talks about what inspired EASST, to what extent the vision has been realised, and why the work is so important.

**For you, what inspired EASST?**

Ten years ago, the field was empty. There had been several attempts by different organisations to improve road safety in the region. I had been working with them, but after each intervention they were finished. There was no capacity to carry on in the country.

We needed representatives in the region - passionate people who could champion road safety in their own country. It’s about personality. This is what EASST has. Even if there were no funds, EASST partners would still try to do something, anything, because they are passionate about the issue.

We all come from one family, the Soviet Union. We all got independence and faced the same issues, the same problems. To share the successes and pitfalls, the obstacles: that was basically the idea behind EASST.

**10 years on, has your vision been realised?**

It’s not only knowledge-sharing and capacity building: EASST is a survival tool. Not just for the organisations supported by EASST, but for the countries as well.

Now, nobody can say that there is no road safety capacity in our countries. Today I can say that it is one of the strongest organisations in this part of the world.

**In your opinion, why is the work EASST does so important?**

Usually when we talk to people about the necessity of road safety measures they say, “This will never happen to me.”

But let’s have a look at who we are. We are not only individuals. We are surrounded by people, surrounded by friends and family members. What if something happens to them? Will it hurt us? Yes.

So we ask, “What do you think if something happens to you? Will it hurt your family?” The answer is always “yes”. So our work takes care of people and protects those we love.
ROAD SAFETY
GOVERNANCE & IMPACT

THE NEED FOR STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY

Road safety is fundamentally an issue of social justice. Ninety per cent of all road fatalities occur in low and middle-income countries and half of all road deaths are among vulnerable road users. Road fatalities exacerbate poverty and inequality, and road injuries can be life-changing; destroying an individual’s quality of life and opportunities.

Involving civil society in the development and delivery of road safety is therefore not only a matter of justice and inclusiveness; it is essential for effective and sustainable casualty reduction. It is a smart use of local road safety resources.

Every road death can be prevented by adopting a Safe System approach. This means shifting the emphasis of road safety management away from the notion that ‘human error’ causes crashes, and towards the idea of ‘forgiving’ and people-centred infrastructure designed to prevent death and injury. According to the International Transport Forum “effective leadership for a paradigm shift must also be sustained and focused on not only bringing the different stakeholders together, but also on keeping them together and leading them through the change process.”

In a survey conducted by EASST, 70 per cent of partners rated the level of road safety management in their countries 10 years ago as either poor (46%) or very bad (24%). Decision makers and policy makers showed little interest. There was no systematic approach to road safety management and there was a lack of coordination between stakeholders. This led to poor enforcement of traffic laws, corruption, a lack of government resources for road safety, roads falling into a bad state of repair, and, as we have seen, a high rate of road fatalities and serious injuries.

Building the capacity of civil society organisations is critical to implementing a Safe System. The influence of politicians and policymakers is only ever as long their term in office. Moreover, road safety is a multi-agency, multi-sectorial issue. It involves communication and cooperation between local and national government, transport agencies, traffic police, education and health departments and private industry, as well as local communities and road users. The priorities of these stakeholders can clash, resulting in numerous conflicting, short-term agendas being implemented simultaneously.

“As an NGO we create a platform for all stakeholders and decision-makers to get together and discuss issues through meetings or roundtable discussions. Most of the time the representatives of these agencies say they don’t have the opportunity to get together and share their concerns, share their experience and knowledge, and to see where there’s a gap. So when you bring them altogether, you create a platform where you can discuss why problems are happening, how we can move forward and how we can improve.”

National Automobile Club of Azerbaijan

11 Ibid, p. 36.
In this context, civil society organisations can provide the leadership and continuity needed to ensure sustainable and meaningful change. They help keep road safety on the government agenda and unite stakeholders with a common goal. They have a unique perspective on the impact of policies on local communities - and in particular on vulnerable road users - that is absolutely essential to good road safety outcomes. Strong, independent local civil society organisations with road safety expertise are indispensable.

It is EASST’s goal to build the capacity of local NGOs in the 14 countries in which it works to fulfil this role. Being part of the EASST network means its partners have access to financial support, training and expertise as well as international experience and best practice. All EASST partners view the network as an invaluable resource that has helped grow their organisation’s influence in road safety management in their countries.

"EASST involvement and support of our activities has significantly improved our image and influence in the country. EASST is present in all our initiatives offering support (financial, material, experience, specialist, etc.). For our local authorities it is very important to see that an NGO has an international organisation’s support.”

Automobile Club of Moldova

Many partners value EASST as a ‘family’ within which they receive encouragement and guidance to develop and expand their organisation and activities. EASST strives to help its partners attend international conferences and events supporting them to develop their expertise, and share their own perspectives and experiences.

Partnership and cross-border networking are at the foundation of EASST. Partners learn from one another to shape and develop new project ideas and initiatives based on what has or hasn’t worked elsewhere. They share resources and methodologies without the need to reinvent the wheel, often saving significant amounts of time and money. The ability to show local authorities the work being done elsewhere also helps partners advocate for change and builds confidence in their ability to deliver.

“Through EASST’s support we are able to participate in international and world conferences. A few years ago, it was the Second Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Brazil. It is usually difficult for us, for an organisation from our part of the world, to go there. But by going there, we could participate in the decision making process and in the development of the next global agenda on road safety.”

Young Generation of Tajikistan

The work of EASST partners is contributing to progress in the region. According to data taken from the World Health Organisation Global Status Report on Road Safety, 12 out of 14 EASST countries have seen a decline in the rate of road deaths since 2013 – with rates in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reducing significantly. On average, there has been a regional decrease in the average rate of road deaths from 17.9 people per 100,000 population (2015 report) to 15.9 (2018 report). As key players in road safety in these countries, EASST partners have played a significant role in these developments. However there is still a long way to go.

“We have our own different issues, but we also have similar issues and if one country has already found a great solution, instead starting from zero, we can we learn from their experience and adapt it for our own country.”

Global Shapers Ulaanbaatar Hub, Mongolia
**INTERVIEW:** The Public Association ‘Road Safety’ in Kyrgyzstan was established with an EASST grant in April 2012. Representing the first and only dedicated road safety NGO in the country, its Director Chinara Kasmambetova has been a leading voice in driving forward the road safety agenda.

**What prompted you to set up PA Road Safety?**

The partnership of EASST countries existed already. I wanted to do something about the issue. When I established our organisation and started work I realised more and more the seriousness of the issue for my country. When looking at the figures, mortality rate or crash rate, you want to do something to change the situation. You just imagine all of these people: the tragedy of it. So you start with some minor steps, and you see it brings some results and so you carry on.

**In what ways has EASST helped and supported you to develop PA Road Safety?**

When we started, every aspect of this work was very new to me. I started to explore everything at the same time: how to address this issue with the government, which policies I should focus on, what sort of projects to develop. I got a lot of experience and of course, if there was anything I wanted to explore, I could contact EASST at anytime.

For the first four years it was only me working in the organisation. I was taking every opportunity to develop and build my knowledge and experience in the road safety area. I learned from the other EASST partner organisations and this gave me ideas and inspiration; from that point of view EASST support is great. Internationally, EASST has also helped us to understand the global road safety issues, connect us with global organisations, and support us to participate in international meetings. This has helped my organisation grow on the international scene and to develop and strengthen our international relations.

The continuous annual grant programme from EASST has supported me and based on this support I have been able to develop my own activities and develop my organisation. This is really needed for the sustainability of your activities and your NGO.

**Since its establishment, how has the role of PA Road Safety developed in terms of promoting road safety in Kyrgyzstan?**

From year to year we are writing project proposals, implementing projects, participating in global activities, and developing our own activities. In all this work we collaborate closely with state organisations like the Mayor’s Office, the Traffic Police or the Ministry of Internal Affairs: various stakeholders. They started to know us more and more and, as a result, we started to get invited to high profile conferences and seminars. Every time we go somewhere we raise the road safety issue. We highlight the
seriousness of it and what needs to be done. We point to experiences of other countries and global trends. We show that we are the local professionals in this area.

Now we are involved in many working groups and commissions, all related to road safety. This helps push our work forward. We always make sure we are not just critical, but bring practical suggestions for improvement.

The transport sector is historically seen as being male-dominated. How well represented are women in the sector in Kyrgyzstan?

It’s mostly men. Sometimes I am the only woman on panels and working groups. In fact it is very unusual that I am from an NGO in the road safety area and a woman. Sometimes I am approached by people saying, “We are surprised that you are working in this area and you are a woman because it is a difficult area.” But you just need to push very strongly and work with everybody. It is actually a uniqueness of EASST that it gives strong opportunities to everybody, men and women, to develop themselves and their organisation.

What would you say have been your main achievements?

Definitely working as part of the group of organisations and state departments to develop a document called the “Complex of measures to be taken in the area of road safety in the Kyrgyz Republic”. This document was signed by the President in 2017 and many of the recommended actions have started being implemented. At this moment we are part of a working group of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which is drafting a National Strategy on Road Safety.

Road safety has been raised to the top of the political agenda and I can say with confidence that I have been a part of this process. I am constantly invited to talk on the radio and on TV. Now, everybody talks about road safety. There are many changes going on and it’s a good result to have been a part of raising this issue to the top level.
ENFORCEMENT AND LEGISLATION

Effective road policing is a critical component of the Safe System approach to road safety. However good enforcement is only possible if it is backed up by effective legislation and public confidence in the police. These are all core issues for EASST and its partners.

EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement is essential to tackling key risks such as the non-use of seat belts and child restraints, speeding, and drink driving. A professional, well-trained police force ensures reliable data collection that underpins road safety strategy and policy development. Good enforcement and positive, proactive policing - involving local communities - are vital for identifying local risks, monitoring progress and encouraging safe road use.

The EASST region faces several challenges when it comes to road safety enforcement. In many cases, police forces lack the financial and technical capacity to carry out effective enforcement operations. Essential equipment such as speed cameras or breathalysers is greatly needed in many countries, and equipment can be so poorly calibrated that it does not stand up in a court of law. Training in all areas of road policing is needed; for example, in data management, communication, enforcement strategies, crash scene investigation and many other issues. Police corruption can also be an issue.

All countries suffer from corruption in some form. Corruption can destroy public support for road policing. It consumes resources and distorts data on road incidents and casualties. According to Transparency International’s 2017 Global Corruption Barometer, police and public officials are considered the most corrupt institutions and groups in society. In the Commonwealth of Independent States (which covers many EASST countries) the rate of reported bribery is the joint-highest globally.\(^\text{12}\) It is likely that road police are particularly culpable given their very low salaries, poor working conditions, and access and opportunities to stop and solicit members of the public.

EASST aims to address these issues by supporting road police forces with advice, equipment and training in road safety enforcement. Sharing cross border experiences helps forces - which may be undermined by poor resources and a lack of public confidence - to develop strategies for effective road policing. EASST Regional Director (and honorary President of the Automobile Club of Moldova (ACM)), Serghei Diaconu, meets regularly with local road police and other ‘blue light’ services across the region to share the Moldovan experience of successful police reform (see below). He helps forces analyse their specific conditions and formulate tailored strategies that will meet the needs of their country.

“Corruption undermines effective enforcement like a virus which starts small but eventually kills its host … corruption can destroy public support for road policing. It consumes resources and distorts data.”

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, KT, GCMG, honFRSE, PC

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LEGISLATION & REFORM

In addition to supporting police directly, EASST and its partners are continually advocating for improved road safety legislation and practices, whilst also building awareness of the benefits to individuals and communities of following the rules of the road. Since 2009 EASST has contributed to significant reforms in the region.

In Georgia in 2011 the Partnership for Road Safety (PfRS) spearheaded efforts to improve seat belt legislation to include the mandatory use of seat belts on motorways and other major roads. Through careful research, building a network of support that extended to some of the biggest businesses in the country as well as other local NGOs, and delivering targeted national media campaigns, PfRS were able to get the issue onto the government’s agenda. They organised high-level meetings presenting to ministers and other key decision makers the social and economic costs of not using seat-belts, and established a working group to draft the legislation.

As a result of these efforts, seat belt use in the front seat became obligatory on all national roads. In the first six months, seat-belt use in the front seat increased from just 1 per cent to over 95 per cent (now stabilised to around 70 per cent). PfRS are currently working in partnership with FIA members the Georgian Automobile Sport Federation to enhance enforcement and to take this legislation further, calling for the mandatory use of child car seats and other restraints. They are using the success of their advocacy campaign to train other countries facing similar issues, contributing to the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety’s webinar series on road safety advocacy and road risk.

National and regional road safety strategies also play a significant role in establishing a mandate for reform. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, EASST partners have each provided expertise and advice on their respective national strategies and are busy monitoring implementation. Regionally, in 2016 EASST and its partners from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan played a role in developing the road safety strategy of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation programme (CAREC), overseen by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which covers: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People’s Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with Georgia participating as an observer and new member.13

POLICE-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is enormous value in proactive road safety enforcement, particularly when combined with community involvement and local public awareness campaigns.14 Positive policing also improves public awareness and respect for the work of the traffic police in enforcing road safety laws.

For these reasons every EASST partner works closely with the traffic police, involving them in their work with communities to prevent casualties. In some cases, such as Tajikistan, partners have a formal partnership agreement with the traffic police, supporting training and educational work, and data collection efforts.

EASST partners also work with the police to run regular road safety campaigns. In 2012 in Belarus, the Belarusian Auto Moto Touring Club (BKA) saw a 13 per cent increase in seat belt wearing rates within six months of their campaign. In Tajikistan in 2017, the Young Generation of Tajikistan’s national seat belt campaign supported by the EBRD resulted in an increase in wearing rates from 13 per cent to 21 per cent. The impact of such short-term campaigns is indicative of what can be achieved if awareness raising on these kinds of issues was sustained.

Rather than focusing on penalising drivers and collecting fines, both the public and police can see the benefits of engaging in educational activities and raising awareness to prevent road casualties. The majority of EASST partners believe that despite the challenges, road safety enforcement has improved in the last 10 years - although all admit there is much still to do.

13 Find out more at https://www.carecprogram.org/
14 See for example Ted Miller, Michael Blewden and Jia-fang Zhang, Cost savings from a sustained compulsory breath testing and media campaign in New Zealand, Accident Analysis and Prevention 36 (2004) 783–794.
CASE STUDY: Police reform in Moldova

One of the first projects completed by EASST in 2010 involved a series of exchange visits between specialists on road policing from Moldova, the UK and Georgia. The project was organised by EASST working with its partners in Moldova and Georgia, the Automobile Club of Moldova (ACM) and Partnership for Road Safety (PIRS).

The project came at the request of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, who wanted to address issues of corruption within the road police force as part of implementing an effective National Road Safety Strategy. The aim of the project, which was supported by the World Bank, was to provide an indication of where problems lie and recommend solutions for improving road safety enforcement and ending corruption in road policing. The project had the full backing of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Moldovan Ministry for Internal Affairs and Chief of Police. In 2013, the ACM and EASST received a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for their role in the project which ultimately led to the wholesale reform of road policing in Moldova.

The teams assembled by EASST - including senior, operational road police from the UK and Georgia - found the Moldovan road police to be desperately under-resourced and poorly trained, with virtually no enforcement equipment, very low salaries and 10-year old, uncomfortable uniforms. Their morale and self-esteem were extremely poor. Communications and strategic direction were also sorely lacking.

There was a particular interest in learning from the Georgian example where road police corruption had been all but eradicated in 2003. During the exchange, Moldovan police delegates were hosted by the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs who covered in detail the reform process and the work done by each police unit. Delegates were shown examples of patrol vehicles and equipment, and visited the training academy to learn how the traffic police were striving for ever-higher training benchmarks for their officers. As a post-Soviet country, the Georgian example was particularly useful to Moldova as it demonstrated that bribery and corruption were not ingrained, and that change was possible.

The UK provided insight into the use of technology in road policing, how to promote police ethics and professional conduct, as well as ideas for effective road safety enforcement. While police corruption is at a low level in the UK, cases of corruption do occur. The project sought to study how, once corruption has been eliminated, it can then be kept at bay.

As a result, the Moldovan authorities gained an insight into ways to reform and professionalise their road police. A project report was published including recommendations by both UK and Georgian delegations. This formed the basis of the police reform bill that was eventually adopted by the Government of Moldova. It is worth noting that the biggest factor that led to the success of the project was the political support it received from the highest levels of government and police.

Within just two years there had been reforms of the Driver Examination Centres in all major cities, making the ‘purchase’ of driving licences virtually impossible, and a programme of community policing, including road safety sessions in schools was introduced.

Shortly thereafter EASST partner Serghei Diaconu, then President of the ACM, was appointed as Head of the Road Traffic Police and subsequently Deputy Minister of Interior. In these roles, at great personal and professional risk, Serghei took a zero tolerance approach to implementing reform. Under his leadership, over 30 per cent of the traffic police force was replaced with younger, well-trained officers.

as well as significantly more female officers. Speed cameras were installed along major routes. The ancient Soviet police vehicle fleet was replaced with new patrol vehicles fitted with cameras. Officers received new uniforms, new equipment, and increased salaries. A new anti-bribery unit was set up within the police and all officers received anti-bribery and corruption training.  

“Public confidence in the traffic police increased from less than 10% to 57%.”

Nationwide campaigns were launched to inform people that bribery would no longer be tolerated. The ‘White Night’ campaign was established as a new model of police operation to tackle drink driving. It involved setting up check points on major roads and stopping every car to breath test the driver. Media and TV stations were invited to witness and report these events. On just the first night, 97 drunk drivers were caught including two public prosecutors, four police officers, two customs officials and a diplomat. The campaign sent a clear public message that every one was equal and that even people in positions of authority would not be immune to the new penalties. It also reaped huge reductions in cases of drink driving - from 14 per cent to less than 3 per cent.

At the same time, a new traffic police unit was built, the National Patrolling Inspectorate (NPI), to work with local communities and develop preventative actions to reduce road traffic violations. Public confidence in the traffic police increased from less than 10 per cent to 57 per cent. What’s more, the rate of traffic violations has decreased and the rate of road casualties has almost halved: showing that tackling corruption and improving police capacity for enforcement really can save lives.

16 The majority of these reforms were funded through the European Union, US Embassy to Moldova and the UK Embassy to Moldova.

“We can proudly say that EASST and the pilot project we launched in 2010 provided the start of this huge reform. It’s because of the small steps we took in 2010, that now in 2018 we are reporting significant decreases in road deaths and serious injuries in Moldova.”

Serghei Diaconu, former Head of the Moldovan Road Traffic Police
The way to ensure safer roads and healthier streets is to design and build public spaces to meet the needs of people. For too long, street design and road construction have focused on motorised vehicles above all other road users. Pedestrian safety has been considered as a secondary or tertiary issue, if considered at all. Across the world there are examples of roads being widened to allow more cars to move at higher speeds: leading to more congestion, rising levels of air pollution and increased rates of traffic collisions.

Projects that involve the construction or expansion of roads can have a significant social impact on nearby communities. In some situations, a new road may be built through a village or town introducing larger, faster moving vehicles to the environment. Many road deaths - particularly children and other vulnerable road users - could be avoided by proper stakeholder engagement and community consultation; by non-motorised road user audits at all stages of design and construction; and by better training and instruction of local engineers and officials.

When new roads are built or old ones rehabilitated and modernised, stakeholder engagement, community consultation and awareness raising efforts are essential. Road users such as the elderly, children, young adults, families with pushchairs, people with disabilities and farmers in villages are most at risk from poor design, yet least likely to be asked their opinions. Even local businesses are rarely consulted.

Both during and after construction, awareness-raising is also needed to prepare local communities for the new risks they will face, particularly (as is typical) when speeds and vehicle volumes are dramatically higher than on the old road. Similarly, involving the road police is essential to assist with speed management.

For drivers too, road infrastructure that is people-centred and forgiving of ‘human mistakes’ is fundamental to achieving a Safe System and reducing road casualties. These concepts, including the importance of stakeholder consultation for avoiding lethal errors, can be new to engineering students and professionals working in EASST countries. Improving their training and awareness is needed to avoid dangerous design and implementation errors being replicated in the future.

Over the past 10 years EASST has worked in close partnership with leading multi-lateral development banks such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank to ensure that the needs of local communities are listened to, considered and addressed as part of road development projects. EASST has also worked with local universities and municipal engineers to improve engineering skills and understanding of the needs of all road users.

“I decided to establish an organisation, the Partnership for Road Safety. In this title ‘partnership’ is the key word for me. I learned that if you want to be successful in road safety: it cannot only be the police involved, it cannot only be involving those working in infrastructure, it cannot only be educating drivers or pedestrians or kids. It must be, and should be, a real partnership between the stakeholders. It should be a bottom up approach.”

Gela Kvashilava, Partnership for Road Safety, Georgia
SAFE VILLAGES AND SAFE CITIES

In Ukraine, neglecting the social and safety impact of road development had tragic consequences for communities living and working along the M06 motorway connecting Kiev to the European border when it was reconstructed in the early 2000s. The route, which quite literally cut villages in half, led to thousands of people needing to cross a major highway several times a day just to go about their daily lives - to go to school, visit relatives, tend to farmland etc. For many, the only means of crossing safely was via a footbridge above the road. However, this was impractical for farmers moving livestock between their farms; or elderly and disabled people, and parents with pushchairs who were unable to use the stairs. In the winter months the bridges were often impassable due to heavy snow and ice.

Recognising the risks to local villagers, in 2013, the EBRD and EASST developed a project with the Road Safety Support Foundation (RSSF) in Ukraine to help local people manage this change to their environment and keep safe pending road engineering improvements. Starting from the bottom up, the project took a three-tiered approach: working at the village level, regional/city level and national level. The aim was to give a voice to the local communities and bring stakeholders together to build long-term partnerships that would ensure safer roads for everyone.

Police data was used to identify the six most high-risk villages along the M06 route, EASST and the RSSF then organised public meetings and events to better understand the challenges the new road was posing, and to help local people and the road police develop strategies to mitigate these risks.

One of the biggest issues being faced was by local farmers who used or crossed the road regularly with their livestock. These journeys were occurring early in the morning and late evening when it was dark, making the farmers’ lack of visibility a serious hazard in the fast moving traffic. To address this problem, EASST established what is now its award-winning donations programme: sourcing disused high-visibility (hi-viz) vests and other PPE (personal protective equipment).

“Just before we started this project there was a terrible incident on that road [M06] when a farmer riding with his horse and cart at night was hit by a speeding driver. The driver didn’t notice the farmer in the dark. The horse flew about 100 metres and died. This was a typical situation at the time.”

Oksana Romanukha, Road Safety Support Foundation, Ukraine
In Tajikistan in 2016, EASST and the Young Generation of Tajikistan (YGT), supported by the ADB, identified five high-risk villages exposed in the development of the A377 highway. In addition to awareness campaigns, consultation and training, a road risk assessment was conducted around village schools with the help of EASST Advisory Board member and engineering consultant, Tony Pearce. The assessment highlighted a significant lack of safety infrastructure including the absence of road signs warning drivers of school crossings, or signs indicating speed limits. As a result vehicles were often passing schools at speeds of over 70kmph. To make key project stakeholders aware of these issues so they could be rectified in the next phase of construction, the YGT organised the country’s first National Road Safety Conference bringing together high-level decision makers to emphasise the importance of community engagement in road construction projects.

Similar work has also been carried out by EASST and the YGT in Tajikistan’s capital, Dushanbe, as part of the EBRD’s reconstruction of the M41 highway (Somoni Avenue), which runs through the city centre. The project included a non-motorised road user survey and stakeholder engagement to identify affected businesses, residents, and road users and to assess the impact of the proposed scheme based on local needs. Following on from this, in 2018 with the added support of the Safer Roads Foundation (SRF) and in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, the Dushanbe Mayor’s Office and city Traffic Police, 160 very high-visibility street signs have been installed at 40 high-risk crossings in the city - the first of 200 new signs destined to make Tajikistan’s capital safer. Now new crossings will be installed at high-risk locations, supported by the SRF, EBRD, YGT and EASST.

Local road safety NGOs and civil society play a fundamental role in ensuring stakeholder engagement is done correctly. Simply by being local, they know the area, the main stakeholders, and how to communicate locally most effectively. EASST partners have the technical expertise to be asking the right questions and raising the most important issues. These skills make them invaluable for regional road safety.

“160 very high-visibility street signs have been installed at 40 high-risk crossings in Dushanbe – the first of 200 new signs destined to make Tajikistan’s capital safer.”
PEOPLE-CENTRED STREET DESIGN

In EASST countries vulnerable road users (i.e. pedestrians and cyclists) account for 36 per cent of all road fatalities - significantly higher than the global average.\textsuperscript{17} Pedestrian safety needs to be addressed urgently, but a lack of reliable localised data related to pedestrian risk means it is difficult, if not impossible, to provide meaningful evidence-based solutions. In 2016, the National Automobile Club of Azerbaijan sought to close this data gap and asked EASST to support them in implementing the country’s first needs assessment on pedestrian safety.

The project surveyed 1200 pedestrians in 12 districts of Baku with the aim of taking a closer look at some of the most pressing risk factors, along with mechanisms for their mitigation.\textsuperscript{18} Fifteen percent of interviewees stated that they had been hit by a vehicle at some point in their life. Over half believed that the main risk to pedestrian safety in the city was a lack of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings (followed by speeding and aggressive behaviour by drivers (40%)). Furthermore, 47 per cent stated that when they disobey street signs or lights it is because the lights/crossings are either not available, inaccessible, or too far. Having this better understanding of pedestrian behaviour helps inform future policy actions and civil society initiatives to most benefit those at risk.

In Kyrgyzstan a groundbreaking study conducted by EASST and PA Road Safety in 2018, supported by the British Embassy in Bishkek,

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\begin{quote}
“Really making people aware, making pedestrians take responsibility, making drivers take more care to watch out for pedestrians, is going to have a real impact in terms of making the development of this country much better, much quicker.”
\end{quote}

HE Robin Ord-Smith, British Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan
revealed the high risk to pedestrians from roads designed primarily for vehicles rather than people. In 2017 alone pedestrians accounted for almost 50 per cent of all road fatalities in Bishkek, and nearly one in four of these road victims (22 per cent) was a child under the age of 16. Most revealing was the finding that just 15 crossing points in Bishkek accounted for one in eight of all pedestrian deaths and injuries. Working closely with the Bishkek and Republican police to analyse and map this data for the first time, the project received support from the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Bishkek, who both recognised the urgency of the situation - setting up a special Working Group to address these issues. The Mayor’s Office agreed to immediately install traffic lights at the Vitebskaya crossroad and share with EASST the details of 30 further locations for inspection. These locations were analysed by EASST, and with the help of the Safer Roads Foundation, EASST, PA Road Safety and the UK Embassy, five of the most high-risk road crossings are being improved in early 2019.

A people-centred approach to road engineering is the only way road casualties can be reduced permanently. Since 2017 EASST has been working closely with the EBRD and ADB in Central Asia to train the next generation of road engineers and lecturers at technical universities as well as municipal and Ministry of Transport engineering experts to improve their approach to road safety - in particular training in road safety audits, non-motorised road user audits and stakeholder engagement. In September 2018, supported by the Banks, the road safety syllabus devised by EASST Expertise’s Matt Chamberlain and Phil Jordan was incorporated into the Master’s Degree course on transport engineering at the Tajikistan Technical University.

EASST has also been working with the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) to implement their street transformation methodology in the region. The aim is to empower a coalition of cities to adopt transportation policies based on street designs that take a people-centred approach, prioritising walking, cycling, and the use of public transport.20

“Over 7,000 items of high visibility clothing, child car seats, medical equipment, worth approximately £40,000, have been donated to EASST partners across the region.”

In 2017 with the support of EASST, Tatiana Mihailova from the Automobile Club of Moldova joined NACTO’s Global Designing Cities Initiative as a Knowledge-Exchange Fellow at the Designing Cities conference in Chicago, USA and then accompanied them to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where she was able to witness at first hand (and take part in) an on-site temporary transformation of a high-risk road – demonstrating the impact of simple design improvements. In 2019 Tatiana will be using this experience to implement the first transformation in the EASST region along one of the busiest and most high-risk roads in Chisinau with the support of the United Nations Development Programme.

“A lot of pedestrians are actually crossing away from the infrastructure. So some of the recommendations that we’re taking forward to the Working Group for further discussion are infrastructure improvements just to make sure that we’re actually providing the crossing in the right place.”

Matt Chamberlain, Director of EASST Expertise on Bishkek pedestrian safety

In a region where reliable road safety data can be hard to come by, EASST partners play a vital role in ensuring projects and interventions are data-driven. Whether by collecting the data themselves, or working with traffic police and other public authorities to analyse and present existing data effectively, EASST partners help to ensure that projects are well-targeted and resource-effective. By drawing needed attention to vulnerable road users, they are making it more likely that those who design roads and transport systems listen to the needs of the local communities being served.

20 For more information visit https://globaldesigningcities.org/
ABOUT: The EASST Donations Programme

EASST’s award-winning Donations Programme was first established in response to the need for hi-viz materials by rural farmers in Ukraine and Moldova. It was found that UK companies and local authorities had stores of surplus PPE they were seeking to dispose of responsibly, including hi-viz clothing and other materials. Rather than sending these items to landfill, EASST began collecting and shipping them to its partners for use in their projects working with local communities.

To date, over 7,000 items worth approximately £40,000 have been donated, primarily by Kier Group and Kent County Council, and shipped to EASST partners across the region. The programme has grown to include a network of actors who facilitate the donation of good-quality, disused stock - now extended to medical equipment and child car seats - on an on-going basis.

Before shipping, all donations are carefully examined and catalogued to ensure they are clean, safe and fit for purpose. In the case of child car seats, EASST has worked with the AA to develop comprehensive safety checking procedures and has trained volunteers to carry out the checks. Where donations are suitable, EASST has worked with UK prison services to prepare items for delivery.

The programme not only provides essential lifesaving equipment to countries with very limited resources, but also enhances every aspect of EASST’s work. EASST partners carefully match donations with recipients to ensure they are used to maximum effect. Where possible, shipments are linked to projects where they can add value over and above their own core use. For example, helping to build positive and effective relationships with police (developing community road policing), emergency services, municipal authorities, and governments. These strong relationships enable EASST to tackle challenging issues and entrenched attitudes, and enhance the reach and influence of its projects and lifesaving work. In partnership with Kier Group, the Donations Programme has won four consecutive Green Apple awards for environmental best practice (2015-18), and in 2018 won an International CSR Gold Award.

In 2019 we hope to develop the Programme further, working with the Belarusian Auto Moto Touring Club and the Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities. Unsuitable donations (they could be ripped, or an irregular size) would be recycled into ‘mascots’ or tags for school bags and coats to promote children’s visibility and safety on the roads.

“In the last five years Kier and EASST have developed an amazing working partnership. We have collected, cleaned and delivered over 7,000 items of hi-vis clothing, around 100 children’s car seats and numerous other items of road safety equipment.

I am personally very proud of what we have achieved and I know that Kier are too.”

Jamie Edmonds, Senior Environmental Manager, Kier
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Road safety awareness is a key element of a Safe System approach to ensuring safer roads and zero road deaths. Understanding the impact of speeding, drink driving or not wearing a seat belt helps people make safer choices and is a cornerstone of safer road user behaviour.

From children to business managers, since 2009 EASST partners have run awareness campaigns and delivered road safety training at all levels.

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT ROAD SAFETY

Keeping safe on the road is a vital life skill. As a global partner of the Child Health Initiative, EASST aims to ensure a safe and healthy journey to and from school for every child by 2030 as part of their right to receive an education, breathe clean air and travel safely.

There is a strand of thinking that it is not the responsibility of children to keep themselves safe but of society not to put them in danger. While EASST agrees that teaching children alone is not enough, children’s road safety education is essential as part of an overall strategy for reducing road risk. Children are also able to take road safety lessons home to parents and influence their decisions and family habits.

Prior to 2014, the road safety educational materials typically used in EASST partner countries focused largely on teaching children ‘the rules of the road’ i.e. speed limits, recognising street signs, and knowing the law. In almost every country, the materials produced were the same whether the child was 5 or 15 years old, and relied on memorisation rather than engagement with the issues. The EASST Road Safety Education Pack was developed as a response to this: to introduce child-centred and locally relevant teaching materials that both children and teachers can enjoy.

The EASST Road Safety Education Pack is a free, global teaching resource that provides stimulating and engaging activities to introduce road safety messages and behaviours to kids. The pack has been developed in co-operation with EASST partners as well as UK and international road safety experts, including the UK Government’s Think! Campaign, the charity Brake, and YOURS (Youth for Road Safety). It has been specifically tailored to reflect the risks, challenges, and conditions in low and middle-income countries in an age-appropriate way.

The topics in each section of the pack vary according to age group, but they all relate to the key principles of road safety. It uses exercises and activities that are fun and engaging, taking children on a journey from being a young toddler crossing the road holding their mother’s hand, right through to being an independent young adult travelling alone or with friends.

EASST partners have been using the pack to transform road safety education. Each partner has tailored the pack for use in their country: translating it into local languages and using local names and idiom so it looks and feels like a locally-produced resource. As of early 2019 it is available in 10 languages (not only from the EASST region), and is being translated into others. The pack has been used to teach over 15,000 children the basic skills of road safety as well as training teachers, police officers, parents, and others, to deliver effective and relevant road safety education year after year.

ROAD SAFETY IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

EASST partners have also been using the pack as an advocacy tool for the inclusion of age-appropriate road safety education into the school curriculum.
“As of 2019 the EASST Road Safety Education Pack is available in 10 languages and has been used to teach over 15,000 school children the basic principles of road safety.”

CASE STUDIES: Using the EASST Road Safety Education Pack

KAZAKHSTAN

In Kazakhstan, eighteen hours per school year are dedicated to road safety teaching. However, teachers have little in the way of resources or training to support this part of their work. Children’s road safety knowledge is also very much based on a theoretical understanding, with little awareness of how to apply this to their real-life situation. For example, when EASST asked children in rural villages how they would cross a road, they said that they would go to the zebra crossing and wait for the ‘green man’, despite there being no traffic lights, zebras or signalised crossings in the local area.

The modern, engaging and relevant techniques used in the Education Pack therefore were welcomed when EASST first introduced it to nine schools in Kazakhstan. The children gave the training sessions good feedback, with 95 per cent of 500 children saying that they would recommend the training to a friend. Every school visit involved lively and interactive sessions covering key messages such as how to cross roads safely, being visible at night, the importance of wearing seat belts, and avoiding peer pressure.

EASST also presented the pack to the Director of Education for the Aktobe Oblast and the Aktobe traffic police who were both impressed with the quality of the pack, the range of activities, and ages covered. The Department of Education offered its support, agreeing to promote the pack on its website in Russian and Kazakh. The police also promised the active involvement of the Juvenile Police Officers who are based in schools and lead on safety education.

GREECE

Make Roads Safe Hellas (MRSH) have been using the pack in the Chania municipality of Crete since 2014.

According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority, one in two children injured on the roads in 2014 were pedestrians walking without adult supervision, with one in three failing to use designated pedestrian crossings. For those injured in cars, 70 per cent were in cars not fitted with child restraints, and of the 10 per cent of children who were injured as cyclists, almost none wore a helmet.

To reduce children’s road risk, the EASST Road Safety Education Pack is being used by MRSW to introduce children and young people to basic road safety principles through simple, fun, educational activities such as painting, storytelling and interactive games. A particular favourite amongst pre-school children is the pedestrian crossing carpet, where they can practice what they have learned. Each child is given a specific role, holding up cards showing different vehicles or dressing up as traffic wardens and acting as pedestrians to practice how to Stop, Look and Listen when crossing the road.

Endorsed by both the Municipality of Chania and the Ministry of Education, the Education Pack has reached over 2,000 children to date and was voted by teachers as the number 1 initiative introduced in schools in 2016. It is now being used by the Hellenic Motor Museum in Athens as part of their education programme which provides road safety training for local schools to support the national curriculum.
In Armenia the National Road Safety Council NGO (NRSC) have spent years participating in parliamentary hearings and organising meetings with the Ministry of Education and local authorities to highlight the necessity of road safety education as part of the process of changing the attitudes and behaviour of road users. Through their membership of the working group to develop Armenia’s National Road Safety Strategy, the NRSC succeeded in including education as a key component of the National Road Safety 5-Year Action Plan (2018-2022). In February 2018, the Minister of Education and Science passed a decree stating that road safety education will be introduced into the school curriculum across the country for all children in grades 1-4. The Ministry has since been consulting with the NRSC to develop the methodology of these lessons using the EASST Road Safety Education Pack.

The Automobile Club of Moldova have seen similar success with the EASST Education Pack being voted in by the Road Safety Parliamentary Platform as part of the national curriculum in 2018.

CAMPAIGNS AND ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS TRAINING

One of the biggest challenges to road safety is a belief that “it won’t happen to me.” In EASST partner countries (and elsewhere), people are often ignorant of the life-saving value of wearing a seat-belt, using a child restraint or reducing their speeds. From focus groups and surveys conducted by EASST partners, commonly-held notions included the belief that, without a seat belt, you can jump out of a vehicle in time to avoid injury or driving off a cliff in a crash; that children are safe in their parents’ arms; that skilled drivers drive quickly; and that seat belts aren’t necessary in the back seat. Breaking people out of these mind-sets and informing them of the consequences of their actions is a challenge all road safety NGOs have to contend with.

Participating in global campaigns, such as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims or the UN Global Road Safety Weeks is a

“We wanted to put together a pack which actually reflected children’s everyday realities. To teach them about the hazards on the roads, teach them awareness, and teach them how to make safe choices.”

Emily Carr, Donations and Project Coordinator, EASST
useful way of engaging with the public and reinforcing the importance of following the rules of the road. EASST partners frequently host public events and make media appearances in the context of these campaigns to raise awareness. They build on the messages year-round through courses and workshops for local groups, including parents, businesses and local authorities on issues ranging from speeding, to the use of child restraints, and eco-driving.

In 2014/15 EASST and the ACM implemented a ground-breaking pilot programme in Moldova to see if ‘Speed Awareness’ courses operated by the Road Police for drivers could have an impact on driving behaviour. The project, supported by the US Embassy in Moldova and EU TRACECA II Road Safety Programme, developed a tailor-made course for speed offenders in Moldova, modelled on the UK’s unique National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS). The project saw significant changes in participants’ attitudes towards speeding. At the start of the course participants, who were speed offenders, were relatively tolerant of speeding believing that it was culturally acceptable. By the end, however, most had recognised that it was morally wrong to speed and committed to changing how they drive - a significant predictor of future speeding behaviour. Moldova is now looking to implement legislative reform to enable such courses to become part of road policing.

Supported by the EBRD, in 2016/17 in Tajikistan EASST and the YGT conducted a year-long seat belt awareness-raising campaign in collaboration with the Road Police, that included observational surveys of over 10,000 drivers, focus groups and targeted, intensive media messaging on the importance of seat belts and child restraints. As a result, seat belt wearing rates for car occupants in Dushanbe increased from 12.9 to 21 per cent. This was largely due to a significant increase in drivers’ wearing belts, from 22.5 to 36 per cent. Sadly, seat belt wearing rates amongst back seat passengers - almost none of whom wear belts - were unchanged. The YGT’s survey work also found that 60 per cent of back seats in cars do not have working seat belts. EASST and the YGT are continuing to focus on these issues, including training for traffic police and advocacy for improved legislation.

“We created EASST Academy purely thinking about what would be the best way to deliver accessible and affordable road safety training and how can we share it with our partners and with people in the countries where we operate.”

Dmitry Sambuk, Director of Development and Education, EASST

EASST ACADEMY

EASST’s belief in the power of education has led it to develop EASST Academy, an online road safety training platform hosting free or affordable courses developed by EASST (and others, such as the Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit and the IRU Academy). It is open to anyone interested in learning more about road safety and sustainable mobility whether they are policy makers, fleet managers, researchers, educators or the general public.

In 2018, EASST developed a short-course on eco-driving which was piloted in Tajikistan with the support of the EBRD Special Shareholders Fund. The course was a huge success with public and private transport fleets, and generated further demands for training. As such, the course, aimed primarily at professional drivers and fleet managers, will soon feature on the EASST Academy site. The course sets out the case for eco-driving – showing the differences it can make in fuel consumption and providing advice on fuel-saving techniques such as driving smoothly; journey preparation; vehicle maintenance; and tips for better driving habits. These techniques also mean safer driving - reducing average speeds, avoiding sharp braking and cutting down on driver fatigue.
CASE STUDY: Protecting street children from road risk in Georgia

In Georgia it is estimated that around 2,500 children are living on the streets. Like in most countries, official data does not record the number of street children involved in road traffic collisions. Yet any resident in most big cities around the world can attest to the vulnerability of these children who congregate near traffic lights and road crossings, and walk between lanes of traffic.

In 2017, the Partnership for Road Safety (PfRS) in Georgia conducted the world’s first study into the risks faced by street children on the road. They also provided life-saving road safety training to these vulnerable children, and, with the support of EASST and the FIA Foundation, developed the first evidence-based strategy for protecting street children from road risk.

As part of the PfRS study, 32 high-risk areas were identified where it was found that over 60 per cent of street children spend three hours or more outside every day, mainly at night. They are therefore not only more exposed to increased risks of being involved in a collision, but also to the respiratory health effects caused by exposure to high levels of congestion.

Overcrowded roads and speeding were cited by a number of children as amongst the biggest dangers they face. One in four admitted to having been involved in a road traffic collision at some point in their lives - an astonishing level of risk. To help protect street children from road risk, the PfRS worked closely with the Department of Transport at Tbilisi City Hall to put child safety at the heart of their transport strategy.

The Transport Department now sees air-pollution and road congestion as the number one issue for children’s health and have committed to doing something about it. New traffic lights and safety islands have been installed at road safety “black spots” making roads safer for pedestrians. The promotion of sustainable transport options has become a top policy priority. This agenda has seen the introduction of a new fleet of gas-fuelled buses in Tbilisi as well as the city’s first cycle route. In conjunction with improved enforcement of traffic regulations, the system is already having an effect, with children reporting that in some areas roads are getting safer.

Initial research conducted by PfRS found that street children in Georgia had a very low level of awareness in terms of knowing how to cross roads in areas where there are no crossings, or how to walk safely in areas with no pavements. Some did not know how to read traffic lights, or even which side to look first while crossing the road. Information about wearing bright clothing at night or using reflectors was entirely new. A core element of the project therefore was to work directly with street children to provide basic road safety education.

The PfRS devised a programme of road safety training for Day & Night Centres in three cities. As many of the children have little schooling and are unable to read or write, visual and activity-based methods were developed focusing on core road safety messages and real life experiences. The children were encouraged to think about their own role in the road safety process, with a focus on pedestrian safety and visibility at night. At the end of the each session, they were given reflectors and other accessories designed to keep them safe and visible.

Throughout the project, the PfRS worked closely with the Social Service Agency within the Ministry of Health, whose responsibility it is to look after street children in Georgia. The Department sees road risk as a significant danger for the children they work with, and were keen to see road safety education permanently embedded within the services they provide.

To achieve this, special training sessions were held for social workers and outreach workers in how to deliver road safety education to kids, so that every child can get the vital knowledge they need to keep safe.
OCCUPATIONAL ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) each year around two million people lose their lives through occupational accidents or diseases globally. Not only is this an unacceptable human toll but preventable work-related injuries also cost the global economy $2.8 trillion in lost working hours, medical compensation and rehabilitation. Health and safety at work is vitally important, and this includes road safety.

With the growth of online retail, occupational road risk is becoming a growing area of concern as more and more businesses deliver their products by road. Yet, as Adrian Walsh, Director of RoadSafe, highlights in his introduction to the EASST Academy Road Safety at Work Online Course for Managers, “many business managers do not realise that the single biggest risk to their business is the people they employ who drive for work”.

For many people, driving is the most dangerous thing they do while at work. With one in three road crashes involving someone driving for work, better management of occupational road risk could play a very significant role in achieving the SDG road safety targets and meeting renewed targets to cut road traffic deaths by 50 per cent by 2030. The World Health Organisation Save LIVES road safety technical package calls for ‘leadership in fleet safety’ to both reduce road casualties and encourage public transport use.

The cost of a road traffic collision involving just one company vehicle can have a significant impact on a company’s profits. Commercially, in the UK, for every £1 recovered through insurance after a crash an additional £8.53 is lost in uninsured expenses. These so-called ‘hidden costs’ might include losses due to late or missed deliveries, absent staff and even brand reputational damage. Expand this on a national scale, and the cost of poor road safety management can be devastating, particularly for low and middle-income countries where vehicle fleets are often old, insurance cover is poor, and there is little in the way of driver or fleet management training.

EASST decided to address this issue in 2013 by developing a course to improve knowledge and skills in managing occupational road risk in low and middle income countries. The course was produced in partnership with Cranfield University, drawing upon the expertise of Dr Lisa Dorn, Associate Professor of Driver Behaviour at Cranfield University, and Adrian Walsh, Chairman of the UN Road Safety Collaboration Working Group on Occupational Road Safety (and a member of the EASST Advisory Board).

The first course took place in London with the participation of EASST partners and colleagues from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine and the UK. The course benefited from the input of road safety champions from companies involved in the ‘Driving for Better Business’ campaign including Tesco.com, Arval, Amey, Skanska, Shell and the Freight Transport Association. It gave participants insight into the importance of work-place road safety and the relatively easy steps companies, NGOs and governments can take to improve occupational road safety management.

ROAD SAFETY AT WORK: ONLINE COURSE FOR MANAGERS

Building on this experience, EASST wanted to develop a resource to reach out to fleet managers in its partner countries and beyond, delivering industry expertise in a way that was both accessible and affordable. In partnership

with Cranfield University and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) Academy, the ‘Road Safety at Work: Online Course for Managers’ was launched via the EASST Academy online education platform in 2016.

Taught by leading professionals in the field, the course - which is currently available in English, Russian and Kazakh - helps managers enhance their knowledge and develop the skills needed to set up, run and monitor an effective road safety management strategy. It describes how fleet safety can help cut insurance costs, reduce the damage to vehicles and goods, get better staff retention and achieve significant reductions in working time lost through road collisions. Practical examples of fleet management systems and best practice are used throughout, so that users can learn from real experiences and build achievable strategies to improve fleet safety management in their companies based on their needs and resources.

WORK-PLACE ROAD SAFETY AS COMMON PRACTICE

To reduce road fatalities on the scale needed to meet UN targets, road safety management needs to be embedded as common practice in every work-place. To this end, in 2018, EASST and the Belarusian Auto Moto Touring Club hosted a roundtable with fleet managers, business owners, and government representatives from Minsk to highlight the importance of, and vital need for, more robust fleet safety management.

EASST demonstrated how companies and businesses in Belarus can play their part to improve fleet safety management through better training. EASST Academy delivered a special ‘blended’ version of the Road Safety at Work: Online Course for Managers including video-lectures, as well as interactive sessions on financial management and grey fleets with course instructor Andy Price, followed by a lively discussion. The course included guidance for managers on how to make the case for fleet safety management in their companies, and how to design and implement an action plan to properly manage road risk in the work-place.

In 2019 EASST Director Emma MacLennan joined the new Standards Committee of Global Fleet Champions, a not-for-profit campaign administered by Brake, the road safety charity. The Standards Committee will work to promote good fleet practice around the globe, including in countries currently facing some of the greatest challenges. Where good fleet management is practised, it has been shown to have a strong impact on fleet safety, reducing the number and financial cost of collisions as well as the number of deaths and injuries.

“The cooperation established with EASST in the development of the Road Safety at Work programme has been outstanding. Our cooperation went well beyond developing an interactive and innovative e-learning platform, we joined efforts in making sure the programme would be disseminated broadly and ultimately reach its objective to make road transport operations safer. I greatly value our cooperation with EASST and its great team which is set to continue in the future.”

Patrick Philipp, Director of Certification & Standards, IRU
CASE STUDY: Safe Driving for Life campaign

In 2012, a serious bus crash in Moldova put the issue of safer public transport high on the political agenda. A report by the trolley bus company, I.M. Regia Transport Electric (RTEC), identified that there had been 178 road crashes in 2011 alone involving more than half the fleet, 41 per cent of which were the fault of trolleybus drivers. Another survey found that maxi-taxis were also involved in a high number of collisions - resulting in 227 injuries and 7 deaths in Chisinau that year. Building upon a momentum for action, the Automobile Club of Moldova (ACM), EASST & the EBRD launched a ‘Safe Driving for Life’ campaign to introduce policies to improve fleet road safety management in Moldova and reduce the number of occupational road casualties. The project aimed to improve the ability of fleet managers to avoid road risks, better manage driver behaviour, and reduce the human and financial costs of road collisions.

Since then, the group has continued to meet regularly and has implemented impressive improvements to fleet management practices in Moldova - including better monitoring of costs and road incidents, better testing of drivers and vehicles, better communication with drivers, steps to improve motivation and training, and safer forecourt design. Based on data from the Transport Department of Chisinau Municipality (backed by police data) the overall result by the end of 2016 had been a 33 per cent decline in public transport collisions, and a 38 per cent decline in both fatalities and serious injuries involving public transport vehicles.

“Between 2012 and 2016, the Transport Department saw a 38% decline in both fatalities and serious injuries involving public transport vehicles”

Supported by the ACM, the private company Gas Natural Fenosa in particular has had remarkable and measurable success in improving road safety. They have become one of the few companies in Moldova to adopt and implement a sustained programme of fleet safety management and training for its employees. To date through regular monitoring of company performance, insurance claims and other indicators, they have seen a 37 per cent drop in the number of road crashes involving Fenosa vehicles and a financial saving of almost €400,000.

In 2017 the project was recognised by His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent as a “good example of sound sustained achievement over several years producing a strong programme with demonstrated results in both injury prevention and costs avoided”, receiving an International Prince Michael Road Safety award.

At the launch of the campaign, with input from the Kent County Council ‘Driving for Better Business’ programme and the Freight Transport Association, local business leaders, public officials and fleet managers in Moldova all signed a ‘Safe Driving for Life’ pledge. They agreed a common approach to reducing the cost of crashes and injuries and – by popular local demand - formed the country’s first Occupational Road Safety Working Party.

In 2013 the Working Party visited the UK as part of a road safety study tour supported by EASST and the EBRD. The visit gave them an opportunity to learn first-hand about the practical application of occupational road safety policies, observing how leading UK-based companies reduce road risk.
POST-CRASH RESPONSE

Post-crash response is vital to saving lives and has been an essential Pillar within the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. By giving someone first aid within the first 10 minutes after a crash, their chances of surviving increase by 60-70 per cent.

Unfortunately, despite often highly motivated and capable crews, post-crash care is generally poorly resourced in the EASST region. In Tajikistan, most emergency rescue vehicles are over 20 years old and sparsely equipped, and fewer than 11 per cent of seriously injured road victims are transported to hospital by ambulance.

Improving capacity for emergency response and post-crash care can make a vast difference to saving lives. In 2016 the WHO estimated that improving emergency care “could address over half of the deaths in low and middle income countries”. For this reason, one of EASST’s core aims is to build resilience and capacity for emergency response across the region: to improve post-crash response and save lives.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

In July 2012, EASST and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, with the support of the UK Embassy in Kiev, donated two fully equipped fire appliances along with much-needed fire suits, equipment and training to the town of Korosten near Chernobyl in Ukraine, replacing the local fire station’s Soviet era appliances and worn uniforms. The donations consisted of de-commissioned equipment from the UK which had come to the end of its shelf life but was still safe and perfectly useable. In the past, such equipment would have been sent for scrap, but through this project and subsequent projects, many items are being reused and re-purposed around the world where they are vitally needed.

The initial donations to Korosten have been supplemented and replenished over the years with additional deliveries and renewed training. As a result, despite being a relatively small crew in a remote area, the Korosten fire fighters are frequently called to large-scale incidents due to their enhanced capability and response times. In 2015 they were called to a large forest fire towards the Chernobyl exclusion zone where they worked for two days to stop the fire’s development in an area that could have triggered a humanitarian and ecological disaster.

EASST and Kent Fire & Rescue are now collaborating with the Lviv Institute for Fire Safety, the main institution providing training for fire fighters in western and central Ukraine. The aim is to develop their coordination with other emergency service agencies (police and ambulance) to further improve their capacity for emergency response, specifically road crash response. Previously, each agency (police, fire and ambulance service) would work from their own action plan to respond to road traffic collisions, with no joint agreements or training programmes. Following a mission by EASST in 2016 and a demonstration by Kent Fire and Rescue on the importance of partnership working for casualty reduction, the services established a joint working group with named representatives from each agency to develop a programme of partnership working for casualty reduction. The working group also includes EASST partners, Road Safety Support Foundation, and the local authorities. The Lviv Institute now hopes to open a dedicated training centre for the emergency services where they can develop joint response plans. EASST is supporting this through the donation of a ‘transformer car’ in 2019 - an essential teaching resource for road traffic collision rescue, and for joint fire, police and ambulance personnel training at simulated crash scenes.

23 The donation included parts to enable the changing of the steering mechanism from right to left hand side.
IMPROVING CAPACITY FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Since 2015, with the support of DfID and the UK Embassy in Tajikistan - and under the umbrella of FIRE AID - EASST has been implementing a project in Tajikistan with SESHAA working in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and supported by the Young Generation of Tajikistan. Tajikistan is the poorest country in Central Asia, and the fire service is tragically underequipped. During an initial visit to the country the project team visited a fire station housing just a single 25-year old vehicle to serve 50 villages and a key international road connecting Tajikistan to neighbouring countries.

The Chief of the Republican Fire Service warmly welcomed the initiative to improve the country’s capacity for emergency response. Within six months the first donation of fire-fighting PPE and medical equipment was delivered, along with ‘train the trainer’ instruction on how the equipment should be used. This was supplemented in 2016 with hydraulic extrication equipment essential for road crash response, and additional training by UK volunteer firefighters in emergency post-crash medical care.

In 2017, a convoy of three fire appliances and an ambulance were driven over 4,000 miles through from the UK to Tajikistan. These donations, along with other equipment and ‘train the trainer’ instruction on road crash response, were delivered by UK firefighters to create Tajikistan’s first ever cadre of road crash response trainers.

This support is already helping Tajik emergency services respond to disasters faster, safer and more effectively. In 2019, a second convoy of vehicles is being delivered along with training by Women in the Fire Service (a UK based organisation) to provide basic mountain rescue and first aid skills to women in rural communities in the Pamir Mountains - an area of increasing tourism but remote and difficult for emergency services to access - as well as rope rescue training by SESHAA (vital when vehicles drive over cliffs). The training will help save lives during the ‘golden hour’ of emergency rescue to prolong life until other emergency services arrive.

“Since 2014 FIRE AID has delivered over 200 fire appliances, 10 water rescue boats, 10 ambulances, three 4x4 response vehicles, two Incident Response Units and over 2,000 sets of Breathing Apparatus as well as training over 5,000 firefighters in over 50 countries.”
ABOUT: FIRE AID

EASST’s initial collaboration with Kent Fire and Rescue Service in Ukraine in 2012 was the catalyst for the development of a new humanitarian rescue organisation – FIRE AID.

FIRE AID and International Development is an umbrella organisation of fire and rescue organisations carrying out humanitarian projects in low and middle-income countries. Its members deliver ethical and sustainable donations of fire and rescue equipment and training to emergency services, including a particular focus on post-crash response.

It was founded in 2014 by EASST, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Operation Florian, the Staffordshire Emergency Services Humanitarian Aid Association (SESHAA), the UK Rescue Organisation (UKRO) and Blythswood Care, and became a registered UK charity in 2017. Its Steering Committee now includes the National Fire Chiefs Council, Asian Fire Services Association, Women in the Fire Service and the World Rescue Organisation.

Within five years FIRE AID has grown to include 30 member organisations and has delivered projects in over 50 countries worldwide. FIRE AID also facilitates a central database for sharing equipment donated by UK Fire and Rescue Services, saving useable but redundant fire and rescue kit and in-date medical equipment from being scrapped.

The support of UK fire services is essential to FIRE AID’s work. UK Fire and Rescue Services have donated more than 200 fire trucks, 2000 breathing apparatus sets, and many hundreds of uniforms and other personal protective equipment to FIRE AID projects. Moreover, they support serving firefighters to volunteer on projects, sharing their valuable knowledge and skills with over 5,000 firefighters from emergency services facing huge challenges in other countries. This is an important aspect of FIRE AID’s work – no equipment is donated without training, monitoring and care to ensure it is not wasted, including training in maintenance and ensuring the availability of spare parts and adequate storage facilities.

FIRE AID also offers UK firefighters fantastic development and learning opportunities, as well as building professional relationships and collaboration between UK fire services – so the UK benefits too.

As a founding member of FIRE AID, EASST has worked with other member organisations to deliver equipment and training to Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine to improve post-crash response and save saveable lives.

“South Wales Fire and Rescue Service takes great satisfaction in gifting ‘end of life’ appliances and equipment which has now become part of our core business. Gifting to FIRE AID is both environmentally and morally the best outcome that we can achieve and we hope to maintain this policy and relationship for as long as possible.”

Richard Prendergast, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

“I am delighted to celebrate the results of our joint project in partnership with EASST to strengthen the capabilities of emergency service personnel on both banks of Nistru River. We are proud to be able to share the best of UK practices and experience in emergency response and we are already seeing results: over 200 lives have been saved.”

HE Lucy Joyce, British Ambassador to Moldova
THE NEXT 10 YEARS: MAKING ROAD SAFETY SUSTAINABLE

Many cities across the EASST region have problems with traffic congestion and a dominant ‘car culture’ that plays a significant role in rising levels of air pollution and road traffic collisions. This is a serious cause for concern as, with rapidly growing vehicle fleets, CO2 levels are expected to rise substantially by 2030 unless policy and behavioural changes take place immediately.

EASST’s sustainable mobility projects encourage cleaner and more welcoming streets by promoting eco-driving, cycling, public transport use, and smart street design for inclusive pedestrian friendly cities. This not only makes streets safer and cities healthier places to be - it also provides better opportunities for tourism and local business making cities more prosperous and sustainable for the future.

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE MOBILITY

People with disabilities represent 15 per cent of the global population, not counting anyone with a temporary injury or health problem that limits their mobility. Every year up to 50 million people are injured on the world’s roads and an estimated 30 per cent remain permanently disabled. Road injury is not just a major cause of permanent disability: people with disabilities are more at risk on the roads, and in many cases are isolated and excluded due to inaccessible transport systems and public spaces.

The UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities sets out “the importance of accessibility to the physical, economic and cultural environment… enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.” This means access to education, employment, cultural experiences and social interaction. Likewise, the New Urban Agenda invites “measures to improve road safety and integrate it into sustainable mobility and transport infrastructure planning and design.” UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.2 calls on member states to provide: “accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety… with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations...” by 2030.

Since 2016, EASST has been working to address issues of inclusivity and accessibility and achieve these goals. To find out more about the transport and mobility needs of people with disabilities in the region, EASST has supported its partners to reach out to disability groups and organisations and conduct surveys on the relationship between disability, mobility and road risk. So far, projects have been completed in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova. While each has highlighted individual country issues, all have shown that road infrastructure and public transport in the EASST region is currently not fit for purpose - or is absent entirely - when it comes to meeting the needs of people with disabilities. As a result, many people never leave their immediate local communities to enjoy the cities where they live.

EASST has published the results of these surveys along with recommendations for policy-makers in four country reports. These are being used to advocate for the design and implementation of accessible and sustainable transport systems for all.
construction of inclusive public spaces and transport in the EASST region.25

Cities accessible to people with disabilities are safer and more user-friendly for families with pushchairs, elderly people, women, children, and even tourists. Well-planned walkways boost customer footfall for businesses, increase retail sales and help local employment and incomes. Accessible cities make people - not cars - the first priority, and in so doing are better for all road users.

25 The reports can be downloaded at https://www.easst.co.uk/disability-mobility-road-risk/

DISABILITY, MOBILITY & ROAD RISK: INDICATIVE STATISTICS

In Moldova 51% experience difficulties using public transport.

In Belarus 52% face difficulties entering and leaving their homes.

In Kyrgyzstan 93% never use public transport because of poor accessibility.

In Azerbaijan 56% think travelling by metro is impossible and inaccessible.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT CHOICES

To make cities truly sustainable, the dominance of private cars needs to be challenged. For this to occur, viable alternative transport choices must be available. Public transport vehicles need to run safely and efficiently; infrastructure needs to be safe and accessible for non-motorised road users such as pedestrians and cyclists; and cleaner transport choices need to be prioritised.

In Georgia, 70 per cent of air pollution is caused by road traffic. Most vehicles are over 10 years old and poorly maintained. Because older and poorly maintained vehicles are more polluting, there is a significant impact on air quality levels, particularly in densely populated cities like Tbilisi.

In 2014, the Partnership for Road Safety (PfRS) launched an innovative citizens’ action project with Ecovision and Elva Community Engagement, sponsored by the East West Management Institute and USAID. The aim was to build public support for cleaner transport choices by monitoring air quality and promoting alternative modes of transport. The project was the first of its kind to be implemented in Georgia. Working with volunteers including school-children, scientists, government representatives and members of the public, ‘Air Quality Eggs’ (an innovative air quality monitoring technology) were used to track air quality levels in local areas. PfRS used the results to draft a series of policy recommendations to make Georgia’s air cleaner. They also delivered a public awareness campaign encouraging people to take up cycling, use public transport, walk, or even adapt their driving style to increase fuel efficiency.

Improving urban transport management has been a priority for PfRS ever since. Since 2016 they have been working in close collaboration with the Transport Department of Tbilisi City Hall to make cycling safer and easier in the city. Together they have evaluated and mapped the streetscape - identifying where new cycle lanes and bike stands could be placed and lobbying for these. In 2018 Tbilisi was transformed from a city with zero cycling infrastructure to having a 12km cycling network and more than 70 new bicycle parking spaces.
CASE STUDY: Championing a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities in Belarus

In 2016, the Belarusian Auto Moto Touring Club (BKA) surveyed over 1,000 disabled people and their carers in order to identify the needs, desires and problems they face as drivers, pedestrians and public transport users.

The survey found that among the top problems faced by disabled people was winning the right to drive due to discriminatory restrictions on driving licenses. For those who did drive, parking was a significant barrier to mobility, with a lack of designated parking places and poor enforcement.

Ninety per cent of pedestrians with physical impairments reported difficulties in using so-called ‘facilities for disabled people’ at walk-through tunnels and bus stations, as well as issues with the general road environment such as the absence of ramps and the height of kerbs. Around four out of five of those surveyed reported problems accessing public transport and taxis. Significantly, social attitudes were perceived as one of the main problems faced by all. Nearly a third of people with sensory impairments reported finding it difficult to ask others for assistance, stating that most people seem indifferent when they see a person with disabilities having trouble.

The report included key recommendations for public authorities, explaining why building more accessible public spaces will go a long way towards creating a safer and more inclusive environment for disabled people that is free from discrimination.

Since the report was published, the BKA have formed a close working partnership with the Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities (BelAPDiIMI). Together they have continued to campaign for disabled people’s rights when it comes to safe and accessible mobility. As a result of the project, the BKA now make a special effort to employ people with disabilities in their call centre for roadside assistance.

To help promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and break down a prevailing stereotype that people with disabilities are helpless, the BKA have created an adapted version of the EASST Road Safety Education Pack which they are using to deliver a joint educational programme on road safety for both disabled and non-disabled children. Children and young people with and without disabilities are learning together how to behave safely on the road, assisting them to become more independent as young adults.

The first regional summit on Disability, Mobility and Road Risk was hosted by the BKA and EASST in Minsk in October 2018, involving international and local experts. The summit discussed the impact of poor mobility on social and economic development, and highlighted practical solutions for improving mobility for all. In particular, the meeting addressed the importance of including people with disabilities from the start in planning the development of roads, public transport infrastructure, public buildings and housing to ensure accessible mobility. The conference united representatives from government departments such as the police and Ministry of Health, with stakeholders from the transport sector and civil society. There was a strong representation of people with disabilities from a range of disability groups based in Minsk, who also contributed to the dialogue on this vital issue.

In 2019, the BKA will continue to champion disability rights by working with BelAPDiIMI to offer training to the people they support. They plan to recycle hi-viz materials donated to EASST into ‘mascots’ or tags for school book bags to promote children’s visibility and safety on the roads. With EASST support, the BKA will also conduct research into international best practice in teaching road safety to children with specific physical disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments.
These developments have been complemented by PfRS’s work with schools and universities to promote the health benefits of cycling. Over 2,000 young people have learned how to stay safe on their bikes – emphasising the importance of following the rules of the road, wearing helmets, and visibility. Monthly bicycle marches through the streets of Tbilisi have seen a critical mass of young people, as well as representatives of Tbilisi City Hall and the media, demonstrate the growing popularity of cycling in the city.

PfRS have also been making an impact on a national level. In 2017 they contributed to the development of Georgia’s first National Strategy and Policy Framework on Sustainable Urban Transport to encourage the development of low carbon urban transport systems and improve the quality, accessibility and sustainability of urban transport in Georgia.26

These achievements, in the words of PfRS Chairman Gela Kvashilava, “we are inviting people onto the streets again.” By widening and improving walkways and cycle lanes, developing more riverside parks and attractions, and reducing adjacent highway speeds and volumes, more pedestrians and cyclists are being attracted as is common in other major cities. Of course, much more remains to be done.

ADDRESSING ROAD SAFETY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Making public transport convenient, efficient and sustainable means meeting the needs of those who use it most. In almost every world region, women are the majority of public transport users and a minority of private car drivers. Sadly, many women feel that public transport is not safe.

Evidence shows that if given the choice, many women would opt to travel by private car rather than public transport due to safety concerns. Ultimately, this impacts public transport services, and can lead to more traffic and less safe roads.27

One reason for this could be that the transport sector tends to be dominated by male decision-makers. Roads, living spaces and transport services are often designed with men and motor vehicles in mind, rather than to meet the mobility needs of women. If transport infrastructure were designed by and for women, all road users would benefit, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Roads would cease to be dominated by low-occupancy private vehicles, leading to fewer road casualties, less congestion and a healthier environment.

EASST has been building the capacity of female leaders in road safety across the region since its establishment, and many are now global experts. In 2018 EASST launched a new Gender Parity and Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that gender issues are considered in all its projects. All EASST partners have committed to supporting this policy through the delivery of gender responsive programmes, and have signed up to the EASST Minsk Gender Declaration (2018), which states that:

“We as EASST partners are committed to maintaining an institutional culture that ensures gender parity and equal opportunities in all our work as well as leading in the delivery of gender-responsive programmes to benefit all people.”

One example of this is the recent work by EASST partners in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, supported by the EBRD, in which survey data on the use of seat belts and child car seats has been gathered and analysed from a gender perspective. In both Dushanbe and Bishkek, women were much less likely to be drivers and far more likely to travel as back seat passengers than men. Back seat passengers are much more likely to travel without a seat belt (often because there are no working belts in back seats), making women more at risk than men from being injured in a crash. Globally women are also more likely to act as caregivers for children, elderly relatives or people with disabilities.28 A focus on raising women’s awareness of the importance of seat belt use and child car seats is therefore vital. Armed with this knowledge, EASST partners are able to target their campaigns to specific women’s groups, as well as more widely, to reduce road risk.

26 For more on the National Strategy and Policy Framework on Sustainable Urban Transport visit http://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/prescenter/pressreleases/2017/05/19/national-discussion-about-sustainable-urban-transport-kicks-off.html
28 https://www.carersworldwide.org
Thanks in part to EASST and its partners, over the past 10 years road safety has been increasingly recognised as a serious issue for development both nationally and regionally. EASST partners have all played a role in significant reforms in their countries. While huge challenges remain, overall road fatalities in the region have decreased since the start of the UN Decade of Action, particularly in the context of rapidly increasing motorisation.

EASST is proud that its partners have gained international recognition for their achievements, winning no fewer than six Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards. All are local road safety leaders, achieving real, lasting progress in their countries in policy, practice and changing local attitudes.

EASST is determined to maintain this momentum and support its partners to achieve more. Road safety remains under-resourced globally, and even more so in the EASST region. Across all pillars of the UN Decade of Action - from road safety management to post-crash care - fundamental improvements are needed if we are to meet the SDG road safety targets and aim for further improvement by 2030.

By supporting a network of locally-based, home-grown road safety activists and professionals, EASST has laid strong foundations for addressing preventable deaths and injuries on the roads across a region facing enormous geographic, political, social and economic challenges. EASST partners are able to sustain road safety as a public priority, each working closely and flexibly with key stakeholders in the region to achieve needed reforms. In road safety the job is never done – but every achievement is a further milestone towards a much safer and happier future for the region.

EASST’s core ethos is that local ownership of an issue is essential for sustainable change. Looking forward to the next 10 years, EASST plans to build on and expand its partnerships - regionally and internationally - to achieve its mission for safer, cleaner and more inclusive mobility for all.
STAFF & TRUSTEES

Emma MacLennan
Director
Emma is the founder and Director of EASST. She has extensive experience as an expert in donor-funded road safety projects in the region.

Emily Carr
Donations & Project Coordinator
Emily manages a range of projects, including the EASST Road Safety Education Pack and Donations Programme.

Serghei Diaconu
Regional Director
Serghei develops EASST’s in-country projects with a particular focus on post-crash response and road safety enforcement.

Claire Hoyland
Post-crash response & resilience Officer
Claire coordinates FIRE AID, and is focused on improving post-crash response in EASST’s region of work.

Dmitry Sambuk
Director of Development & Education
Dmitry focuses on capacity building of EASST partners and manages the EASST Academy online platform.

Corrine Vibert
Office and Communications Manager
Corrine oversees EASST’s grant giving, finance and admin and is responsible for promoting the work of EASST and its partners.

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Whitty
Chair, Trust Board
Former UK Road Safety Minister & Under Secretary of State in the Department of the Environment

Lawrence Sherwin
Deputy Chair, Trust Board
Former Deputy Head of Communications, EBRD

Lord Dubs of Battersea
Trust Board
Former Road Safety Minister, Northern Ireland

Sheila Fitzpatrick MBE
Trust Board
General Practitioner and specialist in occupational chest medicine

Kate McMahon OBE
Trust Board
Former Head of Road Safety Strategy, UK Department for Transport

Margie Peden
Trust Board
Senior Researcher, George Institute for Global Health UK, and former Coordinator UIP unit at the WHO

Nigel Peters OBE
Trust Board
Former Director of British Expertise International
EASST PARTNERS

ALBANIA
Automobile Club Albania (ACA)

ARMENIA
National Road Safety Council NGO

AZERBAIJAN
National Automobile Club of Azerbaijan (AMAK)
HAYAT NGO

BELARUS
Belarusian Auto Moto Touring Club (BKA)

GEORGIA
Partnership for Road Safety (PfRS)

GREECE
Make Roads Safe Hellas

KAZAKHSTAN
Common Road NGO

KYRGYZSTAN
Public Association Road Safety

LATVIA
Latvian Auto-Moto Society (LAMB)

MOLDOVA
Automobile Club of Moldova (ACM)
Protect MD

MONGOLIA
Global Shapers Ulaanbaatar Hub

RUSSIA
Road Safety Russia NGO

TAJIKISTAN
Young Generation of Tajikistan (YGT)

UKRAINE
Road Safety Support Foundation (RSSF)