



What are the main gaps in road safety training in African countries?

Aslak Fyhri*¹, Torkel Bjørnskau¹, Laxman Singh Bisht², Haneen Farah²,
Jaqueline Masaki³, Enoch Frederick Sam⁴

*lead presenter: aslak.fyhri@toi.no

¹ The Institute of Transport Economics, Norway

² Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

³ University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

⁴ University of Education Winneba, Ghana

Keywords: Road safety, Capacity Building, Safe system, African countries, European countries

Background

The AfroSafe project is funded by EU Horizon 2020 program and aims to make a significant progress in promoting the Safe System *modus operandi* within the road safety work context in African countries. This is reached by exposing the local practitioners and decision makers to the state-of-the-art knowledge and practices within road safety management based on Safe System principles, focusing on safe vehicles, safe infrastructure, safe road users and post-crash responses. The long-term goal is a system free from death and serious injury. The fundamental principles of Safe System are universal, yet there are many ways to implement them. To combat the argument ‘this works in Europe, but Africa is different’, AfroSAFE works on translating the tools and practices adopted in Europe to the African context, as well as supporting them by sharing necessary knowledge, tools and methods for road safety improvement—adjusted to the African conditions and in tight cooperation with the local actors. An important task in AfroSafe has been to identify the gaps in education and training in the African countries when benchmarked with the Safe System Approach.

Aim

This study aims to identify the gaps in education and training in selected African countries when benchmarked with the Safe System Approach, and compare the situation with the European countries that are world leading in road safety and early adopters of the Safe System Approach (i.e. the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden).

Method

To structure the information about training activities we have used the five pillars¹ of Safe System described in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety (WHO, 2011).

1. Road Safety Management
2. Safe Infrastructure
3. Safe Vehicles
4. Safe Road User Behaviour
5. Post-crash Care

In addition, we chose to identify what we have called key *target groups* within each pillar. These target groups can be defined as “the most important actors for instigating a Safe Systems approach for a given pillar”. We used a mix of desk research interviews and a semi structured survey to collect facts and figures for each country, i.e. Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Results

The first gap that we have identified is a lack of multidisciplinary approach and a notable absence of integrated training and diverse relevant disciplines such as public health, law, and social sciences in *road safety management* education.

The second gap is a lack of systematic education and training in the African countries regarding the elements of the Safe System approach. In the African countries there are no short courses in *road infrastructure* safety management (RISM).

The third gap we have observed is the lack of consumer awareness about *safe vehicles* and inadequate vehicle inspection training.

Existing road safety *driver training education* programs focus on lower-order skills rather than on higher-order skills, which maybe can be identified as the most important training gap that we have identified.

Finally, we have found that *post-crash care* suffers not so much from poor training, but from a sheer lack of staff, specialized training, equipment for first responders and technical support.

In our conference presentation we will show concrete numbers that exemplify differences in the amount of trained staff, to support these general results.

Conclusions

To sum up, the pillar-wise identified gaps suggests that African countries may benefit from developing more structured and comprehensive training programs, aligned with the Safe System approach. It is important to realize that the training needs and requirements of the road safety professional will change over time. In our second presentation at the conference we will give recommendations to reduce the gaps in education and training in the African countries when benchmarked with the Safe System Approach. These recommendations can also be useful when developing a road safety course curriculum for professionals in a knowledge centre such as a centre of excellence.