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TRAINING ON ROAD SAFETY COMMUNICATION & REPORTING



PREPARED BY

HEALTHY PEOPLE RWANDA (HPR)

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INTRODUCTION

Every day, an alarming number of approximately 3,700 lives are tragically lost worldwide due to accidents involving various vehicles such as cars, buses, motorcycles, bicycles, trucks, and pedestrians. This grim reality highlights the urgent and alarming nature of road crashes, not only on a global scale but also specifically in Rwanda.

Recognizing the severity of the issue, several agencies have taken measures to address road safety. Despite these efforts, crashes continue to occur, revealing a gap in preventive measures including inadequate infrastructure, legislation and public awareness as significant contributing factors. This realization has attracted the attention of various agencies, prompting them to collaborate and plan effective solutions.

The two-day training workshop entitled "Dialogue on road safety communication and reporting" organized by Healthy People Rwanda (HPR), in partnership with Rwanda National Police (RNP) and Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) was held from May 18-19, 2023.

The purpose of the training was to strengthen the knowledge and skills of journalists in effectively communicating and reporting on road safety to the public. The participants included journalists from various media houses operating in Rwanda, Traffic Police officers, police officers from public relations and media department, representatives of, Rwanda Transport Development Agency, and Rwanda Biomedical Centre. The Training methodology was interactive as the panel and the trainer ensured that knowledge was not only disseminated but accurately perceived and understood by the participants and the chosen strategy engaged the participants in discussions and kept the dialogue open for feedback, queries and suggestions.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The objective of this training was to enhance the knowledge and skills of journalists in road safety and how to effectively communicate it to the population. The training aimed to equip journalists with the necessary skills to report accurately and effectively on road safety issues and to create compelling stories that can contribute to changing public behavior and attitudes towards road safety.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

The participants were: 12 Rwanda National Police staff from the Media department, 5 Traffic Police, 30 journalists, and one representative from each of the following institutions: Rwanda Transport development agency (RTDA), Rwanda Media commission (RMC) and Rwanda Biomedical center (RBC).

VENUE

The training was conducted at Rwanda National Police Headquarters, Kacyiru.



OPENING CEREMONY

The Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of operations, CP Vincent Sano emphasized the significance of road safety as a key pillar for the country's development and overall safety and security. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 1.3 million people worldwide are killed in road crashes each year, with millions more injured. In Rwanda, there were 9,468 recorded road crashes in 2022, resulting in 617 deaths and 4,840 injuries, causing extensive property damage. In just the first five months of year 2023, there have already been 250 deaths from road crashes. He said that even the loss of a single person is a huge loss to the country.

He stated that in the last 3 years measures were taken which are Increasing public awareness, setting road safety camera and strengthening cars inspection to contribute to reducing road crashes and it resulted to a positive change. He emphasized the role of the media as a catalyst for change to influence road users' behaviors.

The Chief Executive Officer of Healthy People Rwanda Dr. Innocent Nzeyimana hailed the collaboration that made the training possible.



He highlighted the burden of road crashes globally and locally, different risk factors and priority interventions that are needed to save lives. He stated that the word accident suggests that something was unavoidable and beyond control, yet the majority road crashes are preventable. He highlighted the possibility of achieving zero deaths caused by road crashes by changing behavior on the road and effectively implementing the five pillars of road safety. While advocacy efforts have been made in collaboration with the Police, such as the Gerayo Amahoro campaign, installation of speed cameras and governors in vehicles, and the placement of speed limit signs, there remains a gap in public awareness. The media has a crucial role in continuously informing the public through their platforms, advocate for change, improvement and keeping decision makers accountable.

PRESENTATION ON RWANDA TRAFFIC LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS



The Commissioner of Traffic and Road Safety ACP Gerard Mpayimana reminded the participants about legal instruments and domestic rules on road safety that prevent road crashes which are caused by users behaviors, road conditions or weather conditions, He emphasized the media's responsibility in repeatedly reminding the public which significantly affect road safety. The areas of concern emphasized were:

- Over speeding,
- Distracted driving which might be using mobile, eating shaving and applying make-up while driving,
- Safe distance between two vehicles,
- Driving under influence,
- Unlicensed drivers,
- Wrong overtaking and
- Mechanical defective vehicles

He concluded that partnerships with different actors possessing road safety knowledge is necessary to prevent crashes. The training aligned with the UN Global Road Safety Week 2023, successfully capturing the attention of journalists towards promoting sustainable transport and encouraging rethinking mobility, which serves as the theme for this year's event.



DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTIONS

During the training, journalists had the opportunity to ask questions to the panel which included representatives from the Rwanda Transport Development Agency (RTDA), Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), Rwanda Media Commission (RMC), Healthy People Rwanda (HPR), and the Commissioner for Traffic and Road Safety (CTRS). One of the questions raised was why road crashes continue to increase despite various campaigns conducted by different organizations. The answer highlighted the need for continuous advocacy, in which journalists and the media should actively participate by investing sufficient time and effort in delivering impactful messages to the public.

Other questions addressed concerns such as the lack of crossing areas for pedestrians in busy places and the parking of motorcyclists, with the assurance that measures would be implemented soon. Each panel member presented the measures their respective agencies planned to introduce or strengthen in favor of road safety.



TRAINING FACILITATOR AND PARTICIPANTS & ENGAGEMENT



Mr. Samuel Muraya, a highly motivated trainer and experienced journalist with over 20 years of experience, facilitated the training. His expertise, backed by accolades such as the URTNA Best Programme in Africa 2004 and being a two-time CNN/Multichoice African Journalist of the Year, ensured a valuable learning experience for the participants. Through evidence-based discussions and interactive sessions, the participants were engaged in creative writing and specialized reporting by teaching them how to report accurately and ethically on road safety.

He showed the participants how the pursuit and the power of story-telling can bring a positive change. By using examples, participants learned how the information on road crashes can be gathered, verified, analyzed and skillfully interpreted to create compelling narratives that resonate deeply with the audience. One key aspect Mr. Samuel emphasized is the importance of focusing on the root causes of the crash than dwelling on the victims who may have already endured suffering. This approach would not only preserve the privacy of those involved but also promotes understanding of how to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.



His session, highlighted the goal of this reporting to be fostering the culture of learning and prevention among the viewers and by doing so, the journalist have an opportunity to advocate for road policies and measures. This provoking and interactive session served as a motivation for journalists to recognize their crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions on road safety and work towards a secured movement for all in the future.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Following the training and discussions, the participants had group discussions and voluntarily came up with important Kinyarwanda statements they believed should be communicated to the public to promote road safety in Rwanda. These statements would help them advocate for road safety through their respective media outlets.



Below are some of these statements from different groups with their translation::

Kinyarwanda	English
Aho gutinda mubitaro watinda mu nzira	Delay on the road, than in the hospital
Umuvuduko ukabije urica	High speed kills
Niba utwaye,wirangara	Avoid distraction while driving. Stay focused
Umwana ntiyicara imbere	Front seat for adults only
Guhimana mumuhanda Oya	Respect others on the road, Prioritize safety
Twara iyo wemerewe	Possess the appropriate license for the vehicle you drive
Umuhanda si umuharuro	Roads are not playgrounds
Ubuziranenge ni ubuzima	Life is about avoiding mistakes on the road
Umutekano wo mumuhanda ni inshingano za buri wese	Road safety is everyone's responsibility
Abakoresha umuhanda bakwiye kudakorera ku jisho	Stay alert and drive responsibly
Ibinyabiziga bikwiye guhagarara ahabugenewe	Park vehicles in designated areas
Irinde gutara mugihe ubuzima bwawe butameze neza	Don't drive when feeling unwell

CLOSING CEREMONY

AFTER ALL SESSIONS THE HEALTHY PEOPLE RWANDA CEO EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AND HAILED THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS.



He showed the need to share information as a base to take corrective measures. He called for actions including the reduction of speed limits around school zones, the establishment of designated bicycle lanes, the enforcement of helmet standard and promoting public transportation. He kindly requested the present institutions and journalists to actively support these initiatives and to advocate for evidence based approaches.

"WE NEED TO REDUCE SPEED LIMITS AROUND SCHOOL ZONES, ESTABLISH DESIGNATED BICYCLE LANES, ENFORCE HELMET STANDARD AND PROMOTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION"

In his closing He emphasized that accidents are preventable, and the more we converse about them, the more people develop a sense of responsibility ensuring road safety.

The executive secretary of the Rwanda media commission, thanked both the Rwanda National police and Healthy people Rwanda for organizing such an event for the first time which hold a great promise and helping the media in understanding and fulfilling their responsibility. He acknowledged the importance of collaboration in advocating for road safety and promised the media's commitment to actively participate in the advocacy for road safety. He closed by emphasizing the media is a public educator and should own the road safety process moving forward.

The Commissioner of public relations and media, CP John Bosco Kabera announced that the Rwanda National Police's new initiative to provide road safety information accessible to the media. This information would assist journalists in informing the public and sending messages promoting responsible road use and is ready to collaborate with different organizations such as Healthy People Rwanda in implementing the recommended actions and monitoring the outcomes of the training, He pointed up the importance of educating Pedestrians and stated that Motorcyclists would face fines for violating pedestrians walkways to ensure that it is taken more serious with other road behaviors that can lead to accidents.



CONCLUSION

The Road Safety Communication and Reporting dialogue organized by Healthy People Rwanda in partnership with Rwanda National Police and Rwanda Media Commission provided valuable insights, discussions, and recommendations on road safety advocacy, continuous awareness, and responsible road use and concluded that by leveraging the media's role, it is possible to make significant change in promoting road safety and reducing the number of road crashes in Rwanda. It is crucial for the media to take proactive action based on the insights gained from this dialogue.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The training session was highly educative, based on the feedback and speeches from participants. It was an event that engaged people and served as a reminder of the importance of responsible advocacy. Early results were apparent shortly after the event as road safety was more talked about in local media than ever. Participants recommended that this training become a regular occurrence rather than a one-time event for continued participants' engagement.

HPR also suggests, implementing regular monitoring of the Media on road safety knowledge and impact to the public by assessing road users change of behavior and gathering information about how frequently they have heard and noticed changes compared to the time before the training.

The HPR remains committed to actively collaborate with the Rwanda National Police and other institutions in advocating for road safety and organizing other awakening events with a determination to achieve the "decade of action for road safety 2021-2030" goal of preventing at least 50% of Road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

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