

# BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY

## SAHEL ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE



Partners for Security in Senegal and Burkina Faso:  
Improving Road Safety



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Improving Road Safety**

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# ACRONYMS

<b>CCJ</b>	Conseil Communal de la Jeunesse (Community Youth Council)
<b>CDD</b>	Comité Départemental de Développement (Departmental Development Committee)
<b>COPIL</b>	Comité de Pilotage (Steering Committee)
<b>CRD</b>	Comité Régional de Développement (Regional Development Committee)
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DSF</b>	Defense and Security Forces
<b>FOSEC</b>	Fondation pour la Sécurité du Citoyen (Citizens' Security Foundation)
<b>Jakarta</b>	Motorcycle taxis in Senegal
<b>LMC</b>	Local Monitoring Committee
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>PWA-S</b>	Partners West Africa-Senegal
<b>SRSI</b>	Sahel Road Safety Initiative

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The lack of road safety in the Sahel region puts significant numbers of citizens at risk. On average, more citizens experience injury or death from road accidents in the Sahel than other regions around the globe. This is mainly due to the lack of respect for traffic rules, high traffic volumes, and coincident traffic of human-, animal, and machine-powered vehicles. Road travelers in the region are also exposed to broader security risks. Robberies, extortions, kidnappings, and abuses are increasingly common along the region's key traffic routes. With the Sahel conflict unfolding, illicit traders increasingly use the roads for trafficking of goods and persons and violent extremists stage roadside attacks on civilians.

Law enforcement agencies are responding to these risks, but their policies and practices lack public trust. Citizens view police and gendarmerie as corrupt and ineffective. They feel that security measures are excessive demonstrations of authority that do not adequately address their day-to-day needs. Rather than relying on law enforcement, citizens prefer to either resort to self-defense, which risks fueling further violence, or continue to live without protection.

To improve public trust in police and gendarmerie, **PartnersGlobal**, in collaboration with Partners West Africa–Senegal (PWA-S) and the Fondation pour la Sécurité Citoyen (Citizens' Security Foundation – FOSEC) in Burkina Faso, implemented a four-year project funded by the United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) in 13 local communities in Senegal and Burkina Faso. The first phase, known as Roadmaps to Security in Senegal and Burkina Faso was implemented from 2017-2018; the second phase, known as the Sahel Road Safety Initiative (SRSI) lasted from 2019-2021.

The project adopted a two-pronged approach aimed at 1) strengthening the capacities of law enforcement personnel to engage with communities and jointly address road safety issues, and 2) building citizens' trust in law enforcement. Through this strategy, the project established a continuing dialogue between each country's police and gendarmerie and their local communities, including women and youth, to identify, plan and implement permanent and locally appropriate solutions to road safety problems. Through innovative project activities and collaborative engagement, citizens and law enforcement came together to jointly address a myriad of security issues along the roadways,



Meeting with local authorities in Cinkansé. (Burkina Faso)

including challenges related to corruption, drug trafficking, illicit trade, illegal migration, and terrorism.

In both countries, the project paved the way for citizens and law enforcement actors to jointly identify solutions to road safety issues and contribute to improving citizens' perceptions

of the integrity and effectiveness of law enforcement. This publication presents a set of best practices which can inform future road safety initiatives and other efforts to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they have promised to serve and protect.

## BEST PRACTICES

### 1. Prioritize a participatory approach

The most effective way for law enforcement to address citizen security needs is to empower citizens to propose their own solutions and implement these together with police and gendarmerie. This project built in mechanisms that ensure maximum local ownership throughout the entire project cycle:

2. Initial citizen surveys investigated citizens' perceptions of security challenges and priorities and their perception of the current response by law enforcement.
3. Validation workshops with key stakeholders ensured buy-in for the assessment.
4. Co-design workshops led local actors through a facilitated process in which they identified community-specific security needs and solutions to address them.
5. Validation workshops with key stakeholders garnered commitment to participate in the implementation of activities.
6. Local Monitoring Committees (LMCs), formed by volunteer citizens (e.g., municipal authorities, transporters' unions, women and youth associations, traditional leaders) guided the implementation of activities and evaluated progress against defined objectives.
7. Continued reflection or diagnostic activities (e.g., joint learning opportunities, M&E data analysis, or exploratory community walks -see box), provided feedback on progress on objectives and bases for potential adaptations in design and implementation.

*“We were effectively involved in all the activities that we have had to conduct... first we went through workshops and then held plenary sessions with all the actors involved in road safety (the police, cart drivers, etc.). We set up the activities that were going to happen. We initiated all the activities that we carried out at municipal level in Saint Louis.”*

*- A Local Monitoring Committee member*

### ***Involvement of the project's beneficiaries in decision making on security issues***

The evaluation team surveyed project participants on the efficiency of the collaboration. Over 70% of participants in Senegal confirmed that they were involved in decision making, while the figure was approximately 90% in Burkina Faso.



DSF and community members during the exploratory walk in Niangoloko. (Burkina Faso)

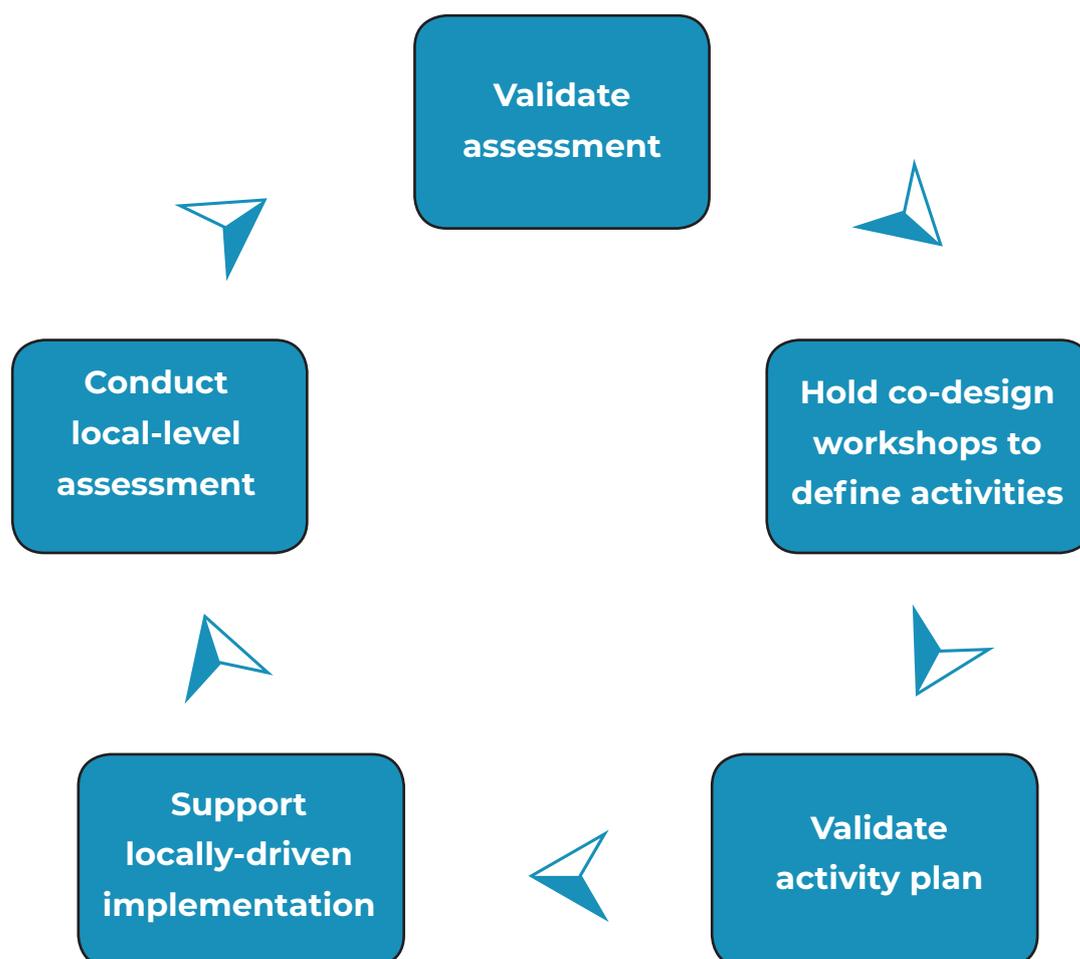


Figure 1. The participatory locally-driven approach to programming.



A member of the local monitoring committee and community leader speaks at the Road Safety Forum in Louga. (Senegal)

## 2. Apply context-specific solutions

Road safety needs differ in each community and therefore require context-specific solutions. Although the security themes identified across the 13 communities showed some similarities, there were important differences between Senegal and Burkina Faso and, within each country, each community placed slightly different emphases on the problems faced and how to address them. For example, in Tambacounda, Senegal, accidents

by motorcycle drivers were the biggest concern, whereas citizens in Léo, Burkina Faso focused more on the harmful effects of drug and alcohol. In Cinkansé, Burkina Faso citizens were most concerned about the activities of violent extremist groups in the area.

Based on a citizen-informed, practical understanding of the situation in each community, the project team developed possible options for

### ***The “exploratory walk” as a diagnostic and advocacy tool***

The *marche exploratoire* (exploratory walk) is a diagnostic and advocacy tool developed by SRSI to assess citizen security needs, identify solutions and sensitize participants to issues of road safety. With the support of project staff, a group of volunteer citizens and law enforcement agents crisscrossed localities on foot and engaged other citizens in conversations about security issues. In Niangoloko, Burkina Faso, this tool helped to identify priority concerns of residents, such as speeding by motorcyclists, improper parking, damaged roads, and inadequate road signage. These citizen-law enforcement teams also gathered residents’ proposals on how to address the issues or concern and raised awareness among residents to encourage behavior that promotes road safety.



The Governor of Louga (Bouya AMAR) speaks at the Road Safety Forum in Louga. (Senegal)

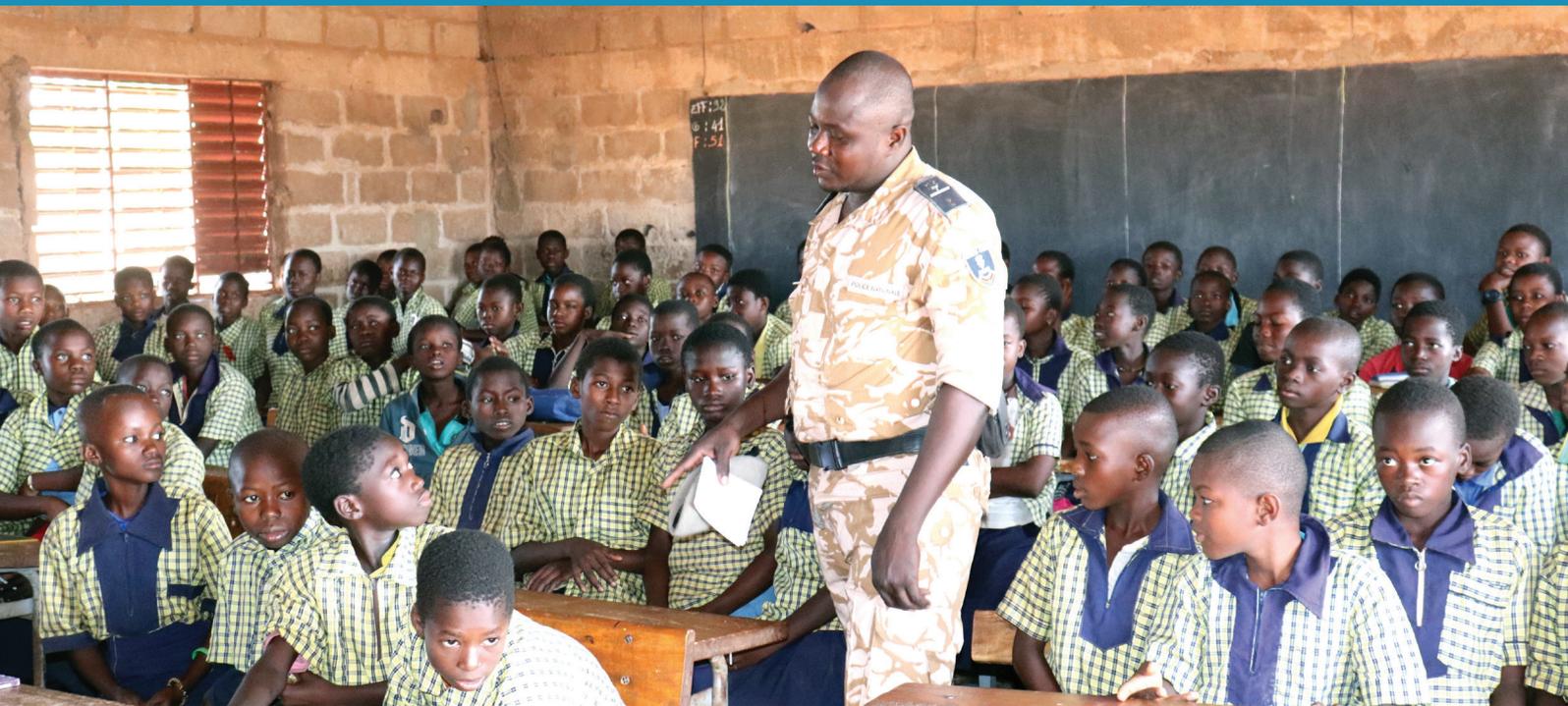
tailored activities and interventions that would lead to solutions to identified challenges -- or measurable progress toward such solutions. Thanks to the project's locally-driven approach, communities were able to identify the specific solution that best addressed each of their priority needs and implement these solutions jointly with police and gendarmerie. For example, the local monitoring committee in Tambacounda decided to organize a training of trainers for motorcycle drivers; the committee in Léo designed thematic debates, theatrical performances, and radio broadcast on how to prevent drug abuse among youth; and the committee in Cinkansé held community workshops on early warning signs of violent extremist activity.

### **3. Build a broad coalition for road safety**

For participatory mechanisms to be effective, they must represent the varied interests of distinct groups in the community. The project enabled a broad range of actors to interact

#### **Participation of *ad hoc* government structures in Senegal**

**The Departmental Development Committee (*Comité de développement départementale - DDC*) and the Regional Development Committee (*Comité de développement régionale - CRD*) are governance structures that convene on an ad hoc basis to respond to particular issues that affect communities within their administrative boundaries. They bring together the most significant departmental or regional government actors in and are convened by the Governor or Prefect. In Ziguinchor, Kaolack, Tambacounda, Fatick, and Mbour these structures advised on and legitimized the development of Road Safety Action Plans.**



DSF members visit a school in Niangoloko. (Burkina Faso)

with police and gendarmerie, including the transport sector (e.g., motorcycle, bus, or truck driver associations), traditional and religious authorities, civil society, educators, hunters, small business owners or employees (e.g., shopkeepers, seamstresses, hairdressers, and dock workers), women, and youth to participate in activities. This was achieved by strategic outreach to these groups and by tailoring some activities to their specific needs (e.g., some open door events in Burkina Faso were for women only). Support of national and local government authorities was also key. In each country, project partners worked with designated focal points in relevant ministries, who provided the necessary endorsement for engagement at the local level. Within each community, mayors and prefects showed exceptional commitment to contribute to the design of activities, provide endorsements, and participate in implementation. In Senegal, ad hoc departmental and regional structures

also participated. The strong commitment by these government bodies provided additional legitimacy to the project.

#### **4. Engage women and children using a conflict-sensitive approach**

Women in the Sahel are often underrepresented when security initiatives are designed, yet they frequently suffer disproportionately the effects of corruption and crime. The project prioritized the participation of women, keeping in mind the potential risks to their safety due to reprisals. Women initially hesitated to attend community-based events with law enforcement agencies, such as open door events or soccer games. Activities which were specifically designed for female participants, for example, selected thematic debates or women-only road safety trainings, helped removed those barriers and created safe spaces for women to interact with law enforcement agencies. During these interactions,



Group picture after a soccer game between DSF and civilians. (Burkina Faso)

the women consistently provided unique, useful insights and advice on security issues.

Children and young people are most vulnerable to the dangers of the road and often lack opportunities to engage with police and gendarmerie. Through school visits, the project sensitized children to traffic- and criminality-related risks along the roads and provided them with a first positive encounter with law enforcement agents. Students showed significant interest in the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement agents and volunteered to stage theatrical performances about road safety issues. Some of them also set up Road Safety Clubs to promote awareness of traffic issues, in collaboration with the LMCs, and to discuss issues of particular relevance to youth such as drug use. Project staff, LMC members and teachers prepared law enforcement agents

### ***Best practice in designing school visits***

1. Hold preparatory workshops with law enforcement, school staff, and project team.
2. Involve all school actors in the design of the visits (administrative staff, principals, teachers, assistants).
3. Design age-appropriate presentation modules that can be adapted to different types of students (primary vs. secondary school).
4. Use drawings and experiential methodologies (e.g., role plays) to make learning content more accessible.
5. Define rules of engagement (dress code, etc.) for police officers using a Do No Harm approach.



Presentation of the Land Use Control Department at the Road Safety Forum in Saint Louis. (Senegal)

for these visits and ensure a “Do No Harm” approach.

### 5. Use a cross-border approach

Border areas with high traffic density not only have a higher incidence of traffic accidents, but such areas also provide passage to criminals and migrants and thus tend to face a more complex set of road security issues. For these reasons, the project team strategically selected border areas as project locations. For example, Tambacounda is a hub for a large number of trucks traveling regularly between Senegal and Mali; this truck volume contributes to road accidents, but is also linked to problems with prostitution, illicit trafficking, and illegal migration. Ziguinchor, which has more than 10,000 motorbike taxi drivers, has a high rate of road accidents, but the porous borders to the south have also encouraged illicit trafficking and illegal migration. In such

locations, positive relations between citizens and law enforcement had an even greater impact on community safety.

### 6. Prepare both sides for engagement: Incentives, expectations, and skills

Active participation by law enforcement and community members determined the success of this project. To elicit and sustain commitment on both sides, it was important to provide incentives. On the law enforcement side, senior-level political will and a formal recognition of volunteer service through certificates motivated agents to participate. In the future, changes to evaluation systems that incentivize improved police–community relations could provide additional reasons. Many community volunteers showed an exceptional level of personal dedication. To sustain their commitment and broaden community support even further, non-financial



Theatre performance in Léo. (Burkina Faso)

benefits, such as practical training and skill-building, could be offered in addition to better service delivery by law enforcement.

Both sides also need realistic, mutually understood expectations and relevant skills to engage successfully. Community members often have unrealistic expectations that law enforcement will solve their problems immediately. Law enforcement officers often lack training in traditional peacebuilding skills such as communication, negotiation, or mediation. Preparatory meetings and trainings helped prepare both sides for dialogues and other group encounters.

## 7. Open safe spaces for dialogue

Facilitated dialogues were an ideal mechanism for law enforcement and community members to come together. In each country, these dialogues were held in culturally appropriate format, e.g., tea debates or caravan roadshows in Senegal or thematic conferences in Burkina Faso. Facilitators played a crucial role in setting a friendly and inclusive tone for the encounter, and making sure that community

members felt safe when voicing concerns or expressing ideas. **PartnersGlobal** provided facilitation training to local project partners and LMCs, which these actors then passed on to other community members. At every dialogue, a local facilitator accepted by the community introduced the agenda and enabled respectful exchange.

### ***Theatrical productions to promote road safety***

**In Burkina Faso, ensembles of 12 volunteer students staged performances on the themes of road safety, drug use, early warning, and cooperation with police and gendarmerie. The performances brought across important advocacy messages, attracting hundreds of participants.**



Awareness-raising activity on illegal occupation of public roads and road insecurity during the COVID-19 in Saint Louis. (Senegal)

In both countries, citizens actively engaged in the discussions. For many, it was a first opportunity to engage with law enforcement personnel unrelated to a violation of the law.

Another useful mechanism was organizing socio-cultural events, such as soccer games, theatrical performances, and community fairs. These activities provide a different context for encounters between law enforcement agents and citizens, which helps reframe their relationship. They are also effective tools for raising awareness and changing attitudes to promote road safety.

## 8. Create lasting local structures

The need to involve communities at the grassroots level and create a tool for partnership and consultation was a priority from the start of the project. The LMCs set up in each project locations gave communities the responsibility

to develop, manage, implement, and monitor project actions.

Another project structure, the national-level steering committee, provided the overall strategic direction and guidance to the local level initiatives in each country. In Senegal, the steering included representatives of six Ministries, the truck driver union (*Union des Routiers du Sénégal*), the International Association of Public Transport, and the Union of Transport Workers. In Burkina Faso, the steering committee comprised retired heads of Ministry of Security, Police and Gendarmerie as well as members of the National Anti-Corruption Network. The Steering Committee convened regularly during the entire project period.

Over the course of the project, several LMCs changed their status from a project structure to a registered association and received commitments



Certificate awards ceremony for the local monitoring committee at Pô. (Burkina Faso)

for budgets by the local mayor's office. This will allow the members to continue to design road safety initiatives beyond the life of the project. In addition to giving rise to these new structures, the project has also strengthened already-existing structures. For example, the association of motorcycle taxi drivers in Kaloack grew from 220 to 400 members during the project period. The additional membership fees allowed the association to purchase mutual health insurance for its members.

### **9. Promote road safety legislation and policies that strengthen trust between law enforcement and citizens**

Over the past five years, there have been marked improvements in the regulatory road safety framework in Senegal and Burkina Faso and its implementation. Some of these changes

confirm the success of the project's approach. The formalization of rules for Jakarta drivers in Senegal happened because law enforcement officers and citizens came together as part of this project to jointly implement policies that reduced the high numbers of accidents caused by the drivers. Awareness of traffic rules in neighborhoods in Burkina Faso increased, because youth networks and law enforcement agents jointly educated citizens about the rules.

The set-up of a road safety government agency in Senegal and a police inspection body in Burkina Faso, with mandates to improve road security and corruption among the police, are promising new developments. These bodies can protect citizens effectively if law enforcement actors and citizens continue to work together to make these structures functional, transparent, accountable and service-oriented.



A mototaxi driver speaks at the Road Safety Forum in Matam. (Senegal)

## 10. Remain adaptive and flexible

The project evolved and was adapted in response to locally identified needs, broader contextual developments and evidence emerging from the program. Monitoring and evaluation data and reflection sessions held at the local, national, and regional levels provided lessons learned and recommendations for adaptations. When the global pandemic broke out, COVID-19 awareness and prevention campaigns were integrated into the activities. Frequent consultation with local committees, scenario-based contingency plans, brainstorming sessions, as well as regular communication between implementing partners, have all made this flexible approach possible.

## 11. Share experiences and lessons learned widely

Project participants shared results and lessons learned with a broad multi-sectoral audience during Share Fair events, which helped gain broader support for the promotion of road safety. The event featured exchanges, panels, and presentations highlighting positive results and discussion forums on road safety and broader

security issues. In each country, more than a hundred diplomats, government officials, senior law enforcement officials, and members of civil society shared knowledge and lessons learned and took away lessons to inform their own approaches to road safety and related issues. The Share Fairs were also an occasion for project participants to celebrate and an opportunity for institutions to exhibit and demonstrate their tools and instruments. The events elevated the issue of road safety and increased the involvement of stakeholders to make the achievements of the project more sustainable.

## 12. Protect the legitimacy of local CSOs

This project was able to garner such broad community-based support thanks to the high degree of legitimacy of the two local civil society organizations (CSOs): PWA-S in Senegal and FOSEC in Burkina Faso. Both CSOs have developed long-standing relationships with a wide range of local actors and were able to mobilize thousands of actors to help organize, promote and/or participate in the project activities. Local actors trust local CSOs because



Soccer match between police and civilians at Louga. (Senegal)

they believe these organizations understand their needs and cater to them without any hidden agendas. Local CSOs are largely viewed as independent bodies that represent neither the government nor any political party.

When working with police and gendarmerie, local CSOs may sometimes be seen as overly ‘close’ to the government and at risk of becoming ‘co-opted’, i.e., heavily influenced by government interests that contradict the interests of their constituents. To avoid perceptions of co-optation, it is useful for local CSOs to formulate an engagement policy which lays out how they will maintain a distance from law enforcement agencies during the implementation of activities. The policy should include broader principles as well as practicalities of the engagement. Adhering to such a policy and sharing it with constituents can help protect the legitimacy and independence of CSOs.

### **13. Strengthen local CSOs ability to implement programs**

Senegalese and Burkinabe CSOs played a central role in advocating for and supporting more inclusive, transparent, and accountable

approaches to road safety among law enforcement. They mobilized constituents and built capacities and skills among law enforcement and local communities. They provided space for road safety actors to convene and helped build new alliances and networks to promote road safety at the local and national levels. They changed the attitudes of law enforcement and community actors and pushed for reforms in road safety legislation, policies and practices. They were also able to transmit local level road safety concerns to the national and sub-national levels and helped localize the road safety agendas that emerged from both levels. International actors and donors should continue to support these efforts. The best ways to support local civil society include 1) supporting them to remain legitimate and active despite increasing efforts by governments to restrict their work, 2) providing them with independence in project design and implementation, and 3) making available flexible funding mechanisms that allow them to adapt their activities to evolving local needs.

#### 14. Leverage trust-based and locally-led relationships between international and local partners

International partners can add value to each phase of the project. They can provide ideas for project design and anticipate unintended consequences based on cross-country experience, transmit technical skills, and advise on best practices and donor compliance. This know-how complements the legitimacy, connections, political awareness, and context-specific expertise of local organizations. However, international-local partnerships will only come to full fruition under certain conditions. First, each party must recognize and appreciate the

value the other party brings to the partnership. Building authentic trust and mutual respect takes years of collaboration and consistent, open communication. Second, international partners must be willing to make a long-term commitment to building up local leadership and accountability. Many international development organizations serve strictly as intermediaries between local stakeholders and donors. Only those who work alongside their local counterparts in authentic, equal partnership can advance the goal of locally-led development by helping to strengthen the skills and capabilities of local partners to lead projects from initiation to implementation and reporting.

\* \* \*

There is still a journey ahead to ensure law enforcement agencies in the Sahel effectively promote road safety for all citizens in accountable ways, but the practices described here will help promote approaches and partnerships that provide better protection to communities and can be applied across the Sahel region and beyond.



Focus group with local and municipal authorities, Police and Gendarmerie, representatives of car-terers, motorcycle drivers, women's associations, and others. (Senegal)



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