

HUNGARY SEATBELTS, HUNGARY



Date started: 2004 Date finished: On-going

Partners: GRSP Hungarian Association, Traffic Police



Recent seatbelt survey shows that wearing rates are highly interlinked with campaigns and enforcement in particular. More than 70 % of all those polled in the road side survey in Hungary stated that stronger police enforcement and higher fines would seriously influence their decision to buckle up at all times. Observations carried out in areas of Budapest with high enforcement confirmed this.

GRSP Hungary Association focuses mainly on developing and implementing projects – in particular targeting key risk factors such as seatbelt wearing. In 2004, GRSP Hungary Association launched the “tomato” campaign, illustrating very graphically what happens to your body if you do not wear a seatbelt during a car crash. The campaign was repeated in subsequent years. The seat-belt campaign was scaled up in 2007 with the aim of convincing drivers and passengers to buckle up on rear seats too. The campaign was followed by a road side survey in 2008 showing that seat-belt wearing is highest on motorways and among women.

Summary project sheet.

Objectives and scope

In Hungary, seat-belts have not been used traditionally and wearing rates have been very low. This is why GRSP in Hungary chose to focus on this important key risk factor for the last 5 years.

Activities include high-profile public information campaigns combined with enforcement. Recently, an extensive national survey on seat-belt wearing in cooperation with the national Traffic Police has been conducted.

Activities

In 2007, GRSP partners launched a fourth consecutive seat-belt campaign. The campaign aimed to draw public attention to the importance of seat-belt wearing, particularly in the rear seat, and convince drivers and passengers to buckle-up. GRSP Hungary Association introduced a new image of a girl travelling as a rear seat passenger, holding her teddy bear. The campaign was broadcast with many TV spots on nationwide channels, publicity materials, public speeches and interviews on television and radio. The campaign concluded at the end of 2007.

Following the campaign, a survey on seat-belt wearing was initiated. The results were made available in early 2008. The information collected revealed that the rate of seat-belt use is highest on motorways (driver seat 72%, front seat 70%, rear seat 24%), and that women use seat-belts more often than men (between 10-15% more if in front seat and 3-5% when in the back).

Drivers noted that most frequent reasons for not using seat-belts are short trips (38%) and inconvenience (21%). Passengers gave similar responses and 20-25% admitted they simply forget to use a seat-belt. A total of 71 % of all those polled stated that stronger police enforcement and a tighter penalty system would seriously influence their decision to buckle up at all times. Observations carried out in areas of Budapest with high enforcement confirmed this.

Conclusion and main lessons learnt

The campaign and survey show that the public know they need to use the seatbelt for their own safety, but for different reasons they don't always buckle up. However with stronger enforcement and higher penalties most of the people interviewed would buckle up. International research confirms that behavioural changes are possible with repeated campaigns and strong enforcement.