



# The Road Safety Study in 2013-14

## Scope, results and recommendations

# Background

- Internationally there is serious concern about the increasing number of deaths in road traffic
- The latest WHO estimate is 1.24 million killed worldwide in road traffic in 2012
- Fatality numbers go down in highly industrialised countries, but increase in developing countries
- Risks are highest in Sub-Saharan Africa – 24 deaths per 100,000 population in 2010 to be compared with about 3 – 5 per 100,000 in the UK, Netherlands, Sweden and Germany

## ROAD ACCIDENTS CAUSE OVER 20 DEATHS ON BUCHANAN HIGHWAY



20 Killed over a 2 month period on a road that is only 140 kms and considered to be one of the "best" in the country !?

"The police report shows that both pedestrians and passengers have fallen prey to a series of fatal accidents since January 2014. Most of these accidents, according to the Police and eyewitnesses are the results of reckless driving, while some are blaming the Ministry of Public Works for not erecting speed limit signs along the road.

**"From January to February this year, five pedestrians have been hit and killed by cars plying the road while 15 others who were passengers died."**

Source: Front Page Africa, March 05, 2014

# Objectives of road safety study

1. Determine the existing structures, including policies, programs, support services, etc. to improve road safety
2. Determine factors and causes for the increasing number of motor vehicle accidents in Liberia
3. Identify the economic and medical implications of motor vehicle accidents
4. Ensure that motor vehicle operators ... do not disregard the motor vehicle and traffic laws of Liberia.
5. Determine factors responsible for young people getting actively involved with the growing commercial motorbike industry
6. Identify and assess road user's willingness to pay fees as ordinary travelers for the maintenance of public roads

# Two parts

## Socio-economic aspects

- Objectives 1,2,4,5,6
  - Household survey
  - Focus group discussion
  - Key informant interviews

Carried out by SFCG  
(Search for Common Grounds)

## Medical aspect

- Objective 3
- Literature review
- Survey of medical records for road traffic victims
- Interviews with key informants in health sector

Carried out by UL-PIRE  
(University of Liberia, Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation)

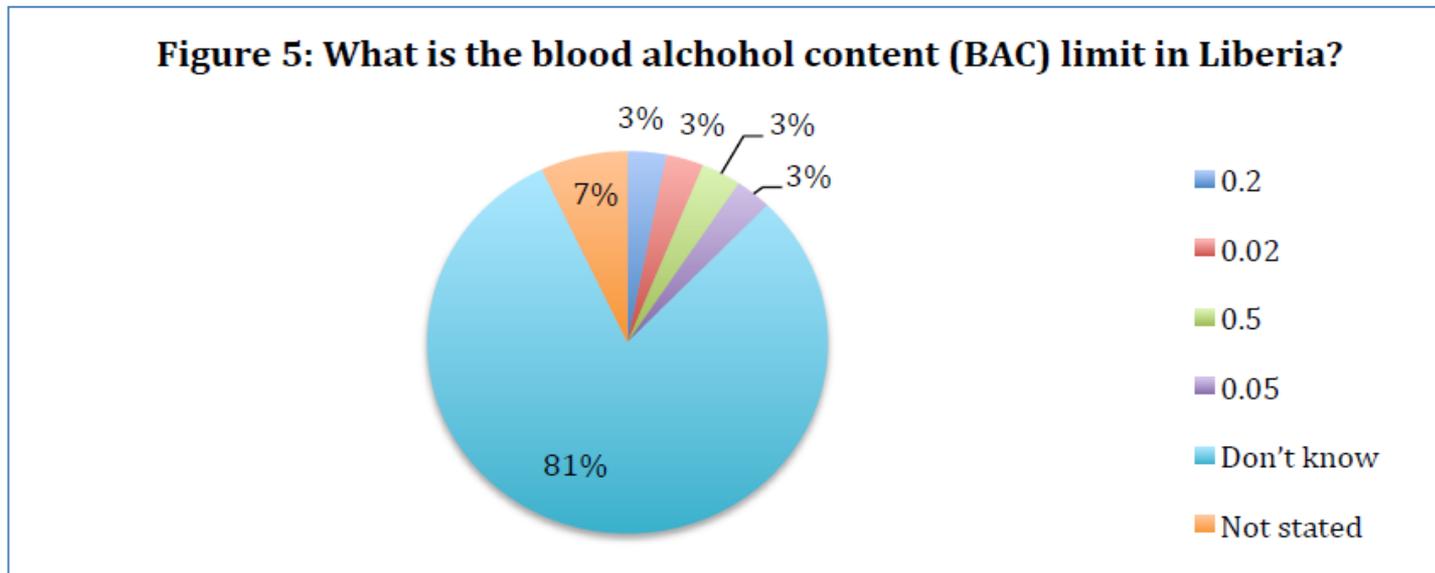
# Socio-economic Study - Scope

- Household survey
  - 5,931 respondents in all 15 counties
- Focus group discussion (FGD)
  - 27 FGDs in 8 cities in 8 counties;  
Drivers (9 FGDs), motorcyclists (9 FGDs), community men (4 FGDs), community women (5 FGDs)
- 49 key informant interviews
  - 11 truck drivers, 7 traffic/magistrate court representatives, 9 traffic police inspectors/chief of traffic, 8 road county engineers, 5 motorcycle union representatives, 8 driver union representatives, Ministry of Transport.

# Socioeconomic study - Results

## Poor knowledge about Traffic Law and regulations

- 65% think seat belt use is compulsory (it is not)
- Only about 50% know the speed limit at schools
- 81% do not know the limit for drunk driving (BAC)



# Lack of Road Safety Education

- 77% said they had no road safety education
- Of riders and drivers only 30-35% had received road safety education

Despite this, the survey shows that a majority know the benefits of seat belts and helmets and the risks with drunk driving.

However, only 40% use helmets (mainly due to the cost)

Based on survey, FGDs and interviews the study states

- ***Of all the people driving on Liberia's streets, only 38% do have a driver's license and of those 38% only 60% did pass an official test.***
- 73.5% of motorcyclists said they have no driver's license.

# Involvement in road traffic crashes

- 31.5% of the respondents stated they had been involved in 1 up to 5 crashes during a 3-year period.
- This percentage was much higher – 55.7% - for motorcyclists.

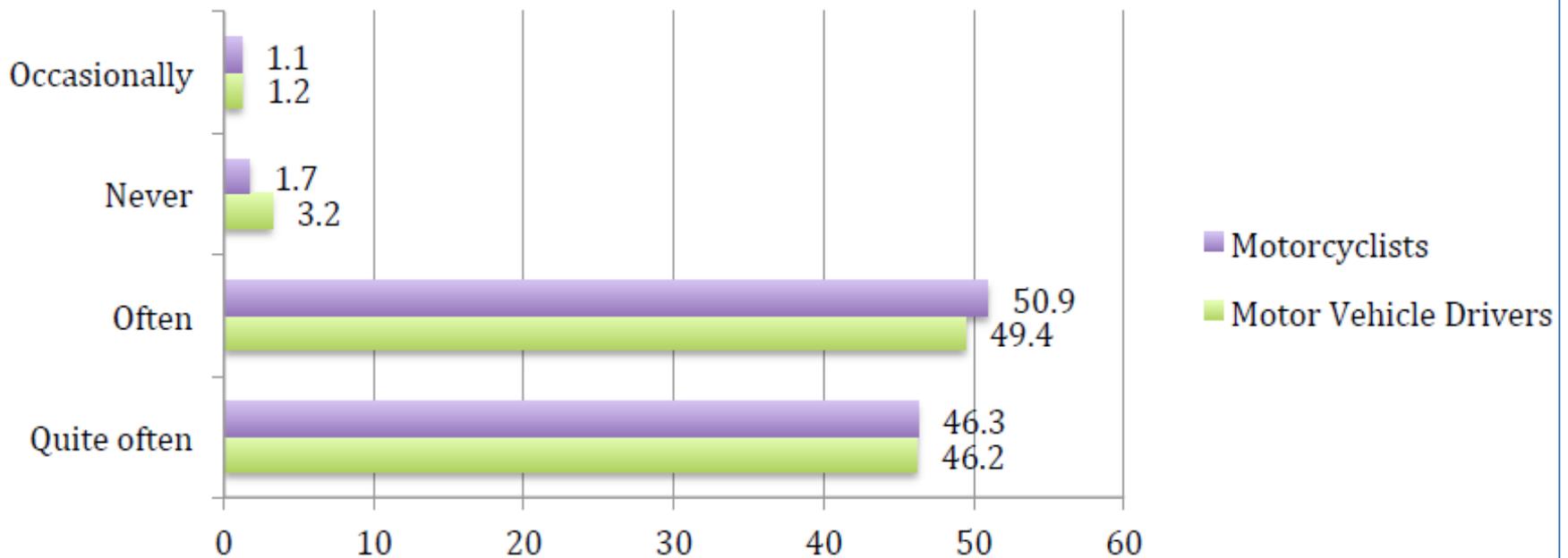
# Motorcycling (phen-phen business)

- Motorcycling is an available job for youth with little or no education
- 62% own their own motorcycle, and 36% ride one owned by somebody else
- The phen-phen business is regarded as a job only if you own the motorcycle. If not, it is looked upon as a temporary occupation. This might influence road safety attitudes.

# Non-compliance with Traffic Law

A major reason is poor, erratic Traffic Law enforcement due to illegal practices

**Figure 33: How often do you bribe the police when traffic laws are violated?**



# Revenue for maintenance of public roads (the proposed fuel levy)

- People are willing to contribute to maintenance, but only if money is used properly and for the right purpose.
- The FGDs and interviews shows clearly that there is an apparent problem of transparency and lack of accountability.

# Recommendations in the socio-economic study (1 of 3)

- Engineering:
  - During rehabilitation works, a focus should be put on all road users and not only on drivers or motorcyclists.
  - Pedestrians need to be considered too. Ideally, they should be clearly separated from the faster road users through proper sidewalks and crosswalks.
  - It is also important to have more road signs on the streets to remind drivers of speed limits in different areas.

# Recommendations in the socio-economic study (2 of 3)

- Education:
  - Every road user needs to be aware of safety rules and regulations; it is important for pedestrians as for drivers and motorcyclists in order to reduce road accidents.
  - General campaigns could be organised in this regard to reach a wide number of people, which could be done via the radio, newspaper and the TV.
  - Drivers and motorcyclists all need to have a driver's license, they need to have proper road education from an official driving school and pass an official test (where theoretical knowledge and driving skills should be tested).

# Recommendations in the socio-economic study (3 of 3)

- Enforcement:
  - None of the recommendations make sense if the enforcement of the laws and regulations cannot be guaranteed. People will continue with their incorrect behaviour because they know nothing will happen to them (except handing-over of petty cash)
  - Police needs to have resources available to ensure that the Police officers are paid a decent salary, that they have the logistical means to do their job in a proper way. Corruption cannot be stopped, if the condition of the Police remains the same

# Concluding recommendations in the socio-economic study

- Decentralised services for driver's licenses and car registrations are needed in order to simplify access for all;
- Laws need to be updated and new important safety laws introduced;
- Laws and regulations need to be properly enforced and the financial means for proper enforcement need to be made available.
- More accountability and transparency is needed with the involved government agencies and services;

# The Medical Study - Scope

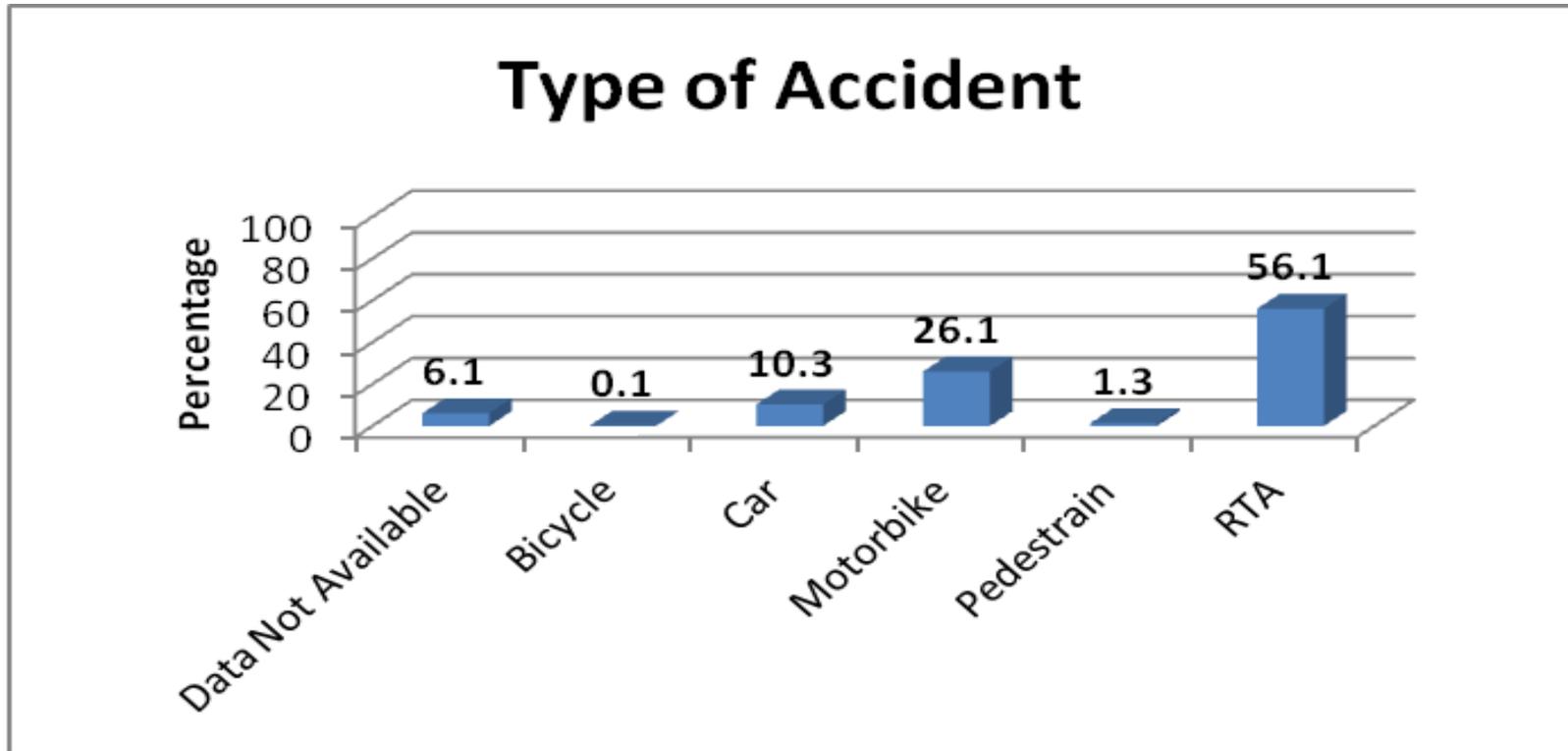
- Literature review
  - Study of relevant publications, technical reports etc on road traffic safety over the study time frame (2007-2012) and available in the country
- Hospital-Based Data Collection and analysis
  - 8,350 medical records for 2008-2012 reviewed. 13 public hospitals in 9 counties
  - Interviews with key informants in health sector (17 health workers and 16 victims of road traffic crashes/accidents.)

# Medical study – survey results

- The survey of medical records showed
  - 66% male and 33% female victims
  - Most victims in the age group 15-25 years
  - 16.3% of the 8,350 medical records were from 2008 and 30.4% from 2012
  - This means an increase from about 1,360 cases in 2008 to more than 2,500 in 2012 – an increase of more than 50%

# Medical study – survey results (cont)

## Road user travel mode of road traffic victims



RTA = Road Traffic Accident (unspecified type of travel mode)

# Medical study – health worker interviews

- Injuries caused in road traffic outnumbered other types of injuries in 9 of the visited hospitals
- Very roughly the interviews indicate that about half of those admitted has suffered serious injuries
- Relationships between the hospital, police and ambulance service described as “cordial”
- Lack of equipment (or non-functional ones) and lack of medication is common
- Delays due to distribution through Ministry of Health is a severe problem.

# Medical study – patient interviews

- None of the 16 road traffic victims interviewed were transported to hospital by ambulance.
- Length of hospital stays varied between 30 minutes and six days.
- Patients described many of the same needs from the government as those expressed by healthcare workers

# Recommendations in the medical study

- The Ministry of Transport (MOT) must restructure and reposition itself to effectively play the role of a de-facto lead and co-ordinating entity for road safety matters.
- Enforcement must be taken more seriously especially in high risk zones
- Road patrols should be intensified in urban settings and severe penalties imposed on offenders.
- Medical facilities need to be better equipped and provided with ambulances.

# Concluding remarks

- The two studies show clearly the poor road safety management in Liberia and indicate the consequences for road users
- Efficient road safety management is necessary for sustainable improvement of road safety. This is emphasised by the UN, WHO, other international organisations and donors
- Road safety must be placed high on the political agenda. Countries with success in road safety show this (Rwanda, Netherlands, France, Sweden etc)

# Structure for National Recommendations

The 5 pillars in the UN initiative of the  
Decade of Action for Road Safety



# Local Road Safety Efforts

- Community Participatory Road Safety programs should be initiated and supported
- Target activities might be
  - Safety of children from/to schools.
  - Children's traffic clubs
  - Positive social marketing for
    - Driving sober
    - Use of helmets

# Possible additional studies

--- Hard facts are needed ---

- Observations of use of helmets;
- Observations of use of seatbelts;
- Observations of speed levels;
- Inventories of pedestrian facilities (frequency, condition and use of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings etc).
- Investigations of in which situations and where and when pedestrians feel unsafe would also be valuable.
- Observations of whether pedestrians on the countryside walk facing the traffic or not.
- How often people walk in darkness is of interest, since most pedestrian fatalities occur during the dark hours.

# High-priority National Actions

- Recommendationa for high-level, high-priority actions and decisions:
  - Carry out a Road Safety Management Capacity Review to identify weaknesses in Liberian road safety organisation and propose actions. WB-GRSF has guidelines.
  - Designate a road safety authority or similar with overall responsibility for road safety – a lead agency.
  - Draft a specific road safety policy and plan to be approved by government. Use possible support from ECOWAS.
  - Update the outdated Traffic Law as rapidly as possible and ensure fair and correct Traffic Law enforcement
  - Improve reporting of and statistics on road traffic crashes. A computerised, GIS-based system is needed.