



## Case Study

# From Dangerous Roads to Safe Journeys: Uganda's Historic Win for School Zone Safety



Uganda's government launched Africa's first-ever National Safe School Zones Guide in May 2025, answering a call from advocates to protect children on their journeys to and from school.



**According to the Uganda Police Force's 2024 Annual Crime Report, nearly 500 children under 11 were killed in road crashes, while another 861 sustained serious injuries.**

Uganda's Vice President Jessica Alupo signs the School Zone Safety Guide in support of making roads safer for children.

## The Safe School Zones Guide

At dawn in the suburbs of Kampala, a group of students in bright yellow uniforms wait at a busy roadside, cars and boda bodas (motorcycle taxis) rushing past. Until recently, this daily journey was a life-or-death risk. That danger—and the voices of parents, teachers and survivors—sparked a movement that led to Uganda's first national Safe School Zones Guide.

In Uganda, years of collaborative, community-driven advocacy for road safety came to a turning point in May 2025. At the nation's first-ever Road Safety Forum, Vice President Jessica Alupo stood before a room of policymakers, advocates and community leaders to unveil the [Safe School Zones Guide](#) — Africa's first national

GHAI partner Safe Transport and Survivors Support Uganda (STASSU) produced [this video](#) to promote the Safe School Zone guide at the national road safety forum and other various events and on social media.



## Case Study

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framework dedicated to protecting children on their journeys to and from school. From bustling city streets to rural roads, a safer path to school is no longer just an aspiration in Uganda—it is becoming mandatory.

### The Challenge

Globally, road crashes are the leading cause of death for young people ages 5–29. In Uganda, the risk is even more pressing: nearly 80% of the population is under the age of 25, and many of them face daily dangers on the road. These deaths and injuries are preventable—with political will and effective policies.

For children in particular, the journey to school can be perilous. Speeding vehicles, reckless boda bodas and a lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure can turn a simple walk to class into a life-threatening ordeal. The numbers tell a devastating story. According to the Uganda Police Force's 2024 Annual Crime Report, nearly 500 children under 11 were killed in road crashes, while another 861 sustained serious injuries. Behind every statistic lies an empty seat in a classroom, grieving families and futures forever altered. The ripple effects of unsafe roads extend far beyond individuals—touching schools, communities and the nation at large.

Uganda took important steps, including updating regulations on seat belts, drink driving and helmets in 2023. But advocates recognized that these reforms alone would not be enough without targeted speed management policies that are aligned with global best practices. Speeding, by both cars and motorcycle taxis, remains the leading cause of crashes in Uganda. In response to this reality, civil society organizations (CSOs) launched the Safe School Zones campaign—a bold movement to secure safer streets for children and all pedestrians.

### GHAI's Role

Since 2021, the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) has partnered with the Road Safety Advocacy Coalition of Uganda (ROSACU) to

advance the movement for safer roads. Guided by the belief that those closest to the issue are best positioned to shape solutions, GHAI has amplified the voices of advocates working on the frontlines of advancing road safety policies. Together, they have ensured that community leaders and road crash survivors are not just heard but actively involved in formulating policies that save lives while also sharing their expertise, personal testimonies and cultivating champions among policymakers across ministries, departments and agencies.

### Scaling Coalitions for Sustainability

GHAI enabled ROSACU to expand from five founding CSOs in 2021 to more than 35 organizations by 2025. Through governance, policy and advocacy training, GHAI helped Uganda's road safety movement bring together a broad spectrum of voices—from media advocates and human rights defenders to survivor-led and youth-focused organizations.

Working closely with Ministry of Works and Transport and other key stakeholders, the Coalition has achieved notable road safety policy wins, including aligning national drink driving, helmet, seatbelt and child restraint policies with global best practice. In 2023, to ensure the sustainability of these evidence-based policies, the Coalition successfully advocated for a 10-fold budget increase for road safety initiatives.

GHAI also designed a series of capacity-strengthening workshops to sustain the Coalition's advocacy impact and reach in road safety policy. Workshop activities included guidance on policy change objectives, developing the Safer School Zones campaign, creating media engagement strategies, stakeholder mapping and facilitating access to decision-makers.

The Safer School Zones campaign was spearheaded by [Safe Transport and Survivors Support Uganda](#) STASSU, formerly HOVITA (Hope for Victims of Traffic Accidents), one of ROSACU's founding members. To maximize support for the campaign, the Coalition organized strategic consultations with policymakers, parents, teachers, school administrators and youth. These conversations created a platform for community leaders to voice their safety concerns for children and collectively identify actions

## Case Study

**When survivors, parents and policymakers come together, change moves from possibility to policy. Uganda's Safe School Zones Guide proves what's possible through collaboration.**

needed to better protect young people. As a result of these consultations, a technical working group for school zone safety was established, co-led by the Ministry of Works and Transport and Transport together with STASSU.

### Technical Support

To build political will for the Safe School Zones Guide, the technical working group brought together representatives from key ministries, including Works and Transport, Education, Gender, Public Service and Local Government, as well as road safety partners such as [Global Road Safety Partnership](#) (GRSP) and [World Resources Institute](#) (WRI). Facilitated by GHAI, this unprecedented inter-agency coordination embedded road safety into Uganda's education reforms, ensuring broad institutional ownership.

GHAI provided technical guidance on the development of the Safe School Zones Guide, drawing on evidence and lessons learned from other regions that have successfully implemented similar policies, such as Pleiku City, Vietnam. It is also informed by the Star Rating for Schools tool developed by the International Road Assessment Program. The guide adapts these best practices to Uganda's unique context through actionable recommendations for both national and local policymakers, including reducing speed limits to 30 km/h in school zones, improving signage, expanding pedestrian walkways and increasing community engagement with teachers, parents, school administrators and students. The Guide emphasizes that advocates, community leaders, educators, students and policymakers all have a role to play in creating safer streets for every child.

### Media Advocacy

GHAI strengthened the coalition's media advocacy capacity through a series of "train-the-trainer" workshops on the essential elements of effective communications campaigns. These workshops equipped advocates with tools to integrate storytelling as a powerful strategy to amplify the voices of survivors and their families, empowering them to share stories of resilience and hope.

In partnership with STASSU, GHAI helped create engaging multimedia content—including

infographics, [videos](#) and [social media campaigns](#)—to raise awareness and urgency around the need for safer school zones. This content featured:

- Infographics highlighting data on child road injuries and fatalities.
- Short videos exposing infrastructure gaps near schools.
- Powerful testimonials from students sharing their daily experiences of navigating unsafe roads.

Survivor and youth voices reframed the issue from statistics into urgent, human-centered stories, strengthening both political will and public ownership. The campaign was launched across Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp to maximize engagement.

## Results

The guide was unveiled in May 2025 by the Vice President of Uganda during Uganda's inaugural Road Safety Conference, hosted by ROSACU in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Transport. In her address, the Vice President reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting children and pledged full support for implementing this landmark policy framework nationwide.

Later in June, advocates celebrated a second milestone. The Ministry of Education and Sports formally integrated the Safe School Zones Guide into its Standing Orders under the new Uganda Education Reforms and Rules (2025). This mandates:

- Safe speed limits of 30 km/h around all schools.
- Child-friendly infrastructure and speed-calming measures.
- School safety audits using the Star Rating for Schools tool.

By embedding these measures in national policy, Uganda became a trailblazer in child road safety across Africa.





## Case Study



Members of the Road Safety Advocacy Coalition alongside Vice President Jessica Alupo, Minister of Works and Transport Katumba Wamala, Commissioner for Transport Safety and Regulation, Winstone Katushabe, Members of Parliament, Uganda Police Force, road safety partners from Kampala Capital City Authority, and other key stakeholders at the launch of Uganda's School Zone Safety Guide.

To sustain this progress, STASSU is working with the Ministries of Education, Works and Transport, parents, teachers and community members to establish a National Community Coordination Platform. This Platform will oversee implementation of the guide, prioritize high-risk school zones for intervention and promote accountability to ensure commitments translate into safer roads for every child.

### Lessons Learned

**Cross-Country Learning:** Advocates performed desk reviews and landscape assessments to gather insights from other regions that have adopted similar safety measures in their school districts. This evidence-based data allowed them to make a case to policymakers for the urgency of a safer school zones policy in Uganda.

**Champion Cultivation:** Cultivating champions across multiple ministries, departments and agencies ensured ownership beyond one administration, embedding reforms in government systems and sustaining advocacy momentum. Champions within government including the Ministry of Education and Sports, among others, were key to driving policy progress.

**Community Engagement and Leadership:** Embedding survivor and youth voices ensured the campaign was not only impactful but sustainable, anchoring advocacy in lived realities and community leadership. This included those most affected: parents, teachers, administrators and students.



**Safe School Zones mandates in Uganda's Education Reforms and Rules:**



**Safe speed limits of 30 km/h around all schools**



**Child-friendly infrastructure and speed-calming measures**



**School safety audits using the Star Rating for Schools tool**

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