



The Alliance Empowerment Program's first cohort of international road safety NGO leaders at FedEx World Headquarters in Memphis, TN

How FedEx Connected with and Empowers the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety

In 2011, at the start of the UN-declared *Decade of Action for Road Safety*, FedEx joined the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC). The UNRSC is facilitated by the World Health Organization (WHO). It was invited by the UN to act as coordinator on road safety issues across the UN system.

The Collaboration is an informal consultative mechanism whose members are committed to road safety efforts and in particular to the implementation of the recommendations of the World report on road traffic injury prevention. The goal of the Collaboration is to facilitate international cooperation and to strengthen global and regional coordination among UN agencies and other international partners to implement UN General Assembly resolutions and the recommendations of the world report thereby supporting country programmes.

[\(http://www.who.int/roadsafety/about/en/\)](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/about/en/)

In becoming a member of the UNRSC, participating in its semiannual meetings, and joining the Safer Road Users Committee, FedEx became acquainted with a number of international road safety nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), who are also members of the UNRSC.

One of the members that FedEx began working with, as a result of our engagement with the UNRSC, has been the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety (the Alliance). This organizations is an alliance of 200 road safety NGOs working in 90 countries around the world.

The FedEx representative on the UNRSC met the Executive Director of the Alliance in 2014 and discovered that the Alliance was going to have its biennial meeting of its members in 2015. In order to become better acquainted with the organization, the FedEx representative attended the meeting. At the meeting, the NGOs set up stands so that attendees – including the host nation’s Minister of Transportation – could learn about the work of each of the NGOs around the world.

As he visited the different stands, the FedEx representative met the leaders of the various member NGOs. One leader, in explaining one of his NGO’s initiatives, shared before and after pictures of a concrete highway divider. The “before” pictures showed the divider before the NGO modified it, and the “after” pictures showed the divider once the modification was made.

On U.S. highways, when there is an off-ramp, there is often a similar concrete barrier dividing the off-ramp from the highway. There is sometimes a metal crumple zone barrier in front of the barrier, covered with reflective material. There may also be a rumble strip around it to alert drivers who may drift out of their lane. Additionally, there may be a couple big brightly colored barrels in front of it – filled with sand to absorb a vehicle’s impact. Above all of that safety infrastructure, there may be a big light illuminating the area.

In the before picture, shared with the FedEx representative, there was only the concrete barrier, no safety infrastructure at all. The NGO leader explained that after the barrier was installed, over a short period of time, some 300 vehicles had crashed into it, and more than 300 people had been killed. Along came the NGO, and they simply put a reflective strip on the barrier – an alternating red and white reflective strip – the kind you may have noticed on the back of a big truck. In the three year period since the NGO placed the strip on the barrier, there had been zero crashes. The FedEx representative asked, “How much did that cost?” The NGO leader responded, “One dollar.”

Right on the spot, the FedEx representative, a member of the FedEx Global Citizenship department, knew that while FedEx is not in a position to assist individual road safety NGOs in 90 countries, FedEx was in a position to assist the Alliance, which in turn could increase the capacity of all their members. Soon after, FedEx and the Alliance mapped out the Alliance Empowerment Program, a program engineered to benefit all of the Alliance’s members. A multiyear FedEx sponsorship was launched later that year.

In the fall of 2016, Alliance member NGO leaders from 15 countries came to FedEx headquarters in Memphis for a two-week capacity-building training workshop. Including the international road safety expert trainers, individuals from 19 countries participated in the workshop. In addition, FedEx experts from various departments including marketing, communications, safety, media relations, and others shared their expertise with the participants to help increase their knowledge and capabilities to more effectively lead and grow their NGOs.

The road safety program outcomes from the training, from this first cohort (we facilitated another such training in the fall of 2017), have been spectacular. One example: The road safety leader from one country, upon her return home – using the knowledge she gained at the workshop – saw to it that a national seatbelt law was activated. In the first two months of activation, road traffic crash deaths decreased 35% over the same period from the previous year. You may read about the outcomes of other initiatives here, in an action brief published by the Alliance: <http://roadsafetyngos.org/walking-the-talk/>



Receiving a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for the Alliance Empowerment Program: Left to right: Jon Stockton, FedEx UK VP; Prince Michael of Kent; Lotte Brondum, Executive Director of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety, and Gela Kvashilava, Board Member of the Alliance.

The training was just one component of the Alliance Empowerment Program. To learn more about the Program, please visit: <http://roadsafetyngos.org/capacity-building/>. The FedEx-sponsored program has been so successful, that FedEx was recognized alongside the Alliance, as the Alliance received, in recognition of the program, a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award – the most prestigious international road safety award – at the Savoy in London in December 2017.

The next post in this series will cover the work FedEx is supporting for the International Road Assessment Program.