SAFETY INITIATIVES IN THE RURAL EASTERN CAPE
WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON
NATIONAL ROUTE R61 SECTION 8

PETER HENDERSON Pr Eng
Hatch Goba (PTY) Ltd
BACKGROUND

- Draft document - Practical Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities on Higher Order Roads

- Project scope - The construction of roadworks, structures and facilities relating to vehicular and pedestrian safety along National Route R61 Section 8
LOCATION

Eastern Cape Region
COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

- High unemployment
- High poverty rate
- 50 – 60 % on the population relies on Government Grants
- Low skills base
- Female headed households
- Under performing Local Municipalities
TYPICAL SAFETY ISSUES
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SAFETY SOLUTIONS

• Focused on areas of conflict
• You can’t design for random conflict events
SAFETY SOLUTIONS

- Overpass (vehicular, agricultural and pedestrian)
- Underpass (vehicular and agricultural)
- Interchange
- Dual carriageway
- Taxi ranks
- Closing of illegal accesses
- Formalising of legal accesses
- Community access roads
- Pedestrian walkways
AT-GRADE CROSSING
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PROPOSED SOLUTION

Holistic approach

- Driver behaviour
- Pedestrian behaviour
DRIVER BEHAVIOUR

- Close illegal access points and combine them
- Alert the driver to a conflict point
  - Deviate the traffic
  - Visual change
  - Physical change
  - Audible change
PEDESTRIAN BEHAVIOUR

• Provide on-going traffic safety programs
• Pedestrians need to be able to hear the approaching vehicles
• Where possible remove the pedestrians from the road
IS IT WORKING?

• Delays due to relocations and land purchases
• Pedestrian awareness initiatives are providing positive results
Eight pupils have died crossing road

By SIKHO NTHOBANE
Mthatha Bureau

A FIVE-year-old boy was killed while trying to cross the notorious N2 yesterday morning.

The boy was with his 14-year-old cousin, who was rushed to Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha in a serious condition.

The two had been crossing the road to catch a taxi to school when a car struck them around 7am in Machinene village less than a kilometre from Viedgesville outside Mthatha.

The dead boy had been identified as Mthabisi Mtynduutho, a Grade R pupil. His injured cousin is Bongiwe Mtynduutho, a Grade 10 pupil at Kwanusia High School.

Residents who spoke to the Daily Dispatch yesterday said eight school children had died crossing the road since last year. The most recent tragedy brings the number to nine.

Last month, a seven-year-old boy was rushed to hospital after a car struck him between Mthatha and Tolo. He was crossing the national road on his way to school.

The N2, which cuts through the heart of the Transkei, was declared the country’s most dangerous road in 2009 due to the high number of accidents.

Earlier this year, the Dispatch reported that a British website named it as one of the most deadly roads in the world.

A devastated Nomikheko Mtynduutho said she was in Kolobadu when she heard that her nephew had been killed.

“This is really painful for us. That road is very wide and there are no obstructions whether you’re coming from Mthatha or going towards that direction. There’s no way someone can claim they did not see a child crossing the road.”

Arrive Alive Eastern Cape provincial spokesman Tshogo Mchana said the two children had been struck by a VW Citi Golf travelling from Mthatha. Young Mthabisi reportedly died on impact.

“The driver of the two was immediately taken to hospital with fractures to his right leg and head injuries.”

Mchana said the car was driven by a female teacher, who was on her way to school at the time of the accident. She has not been arrested but a case of culpable homicide is being investigated.

The Daily Dispatch visited the scene less than an hour after the accident. Traffic officers were busy directing traffic.

The driver was at the scene and was visibly shaken. She said she had been on her way to Mthatha.

Angry parents from Mthatha yesterday put the blame squarely on the shoulders of government authorities for failing to heed their desperate pleas for speed bumps on that stretch of road.

“This road is destroying our children,” said a village ward committee member Nondo Nkomo. “It’s been the same thing for many years.”

Another villager, Siviwele Kobo, said while most of the children killed had been from Springsvale Junior Secondary School in the village, Springsvale teachers confirmed that many of their children had been hit by cars while crossing the road.

“It’s rare that they survive,” said the school’s head of department Nokubaliso Madyiti.

Another teacher Headman Qungqo said the situation was starting to affect their enrolment figures as parents opted to take their children to other schools. He said the school had also requested speed bumps but to no avail.

The national Department of Transport could not be reached for comment yesterday.

However, Mchana told villagers they would set up a meeting with the South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral) to find remedial action for the road.

Traffic officers would monitor the section of road until a lasting solution was found. — nhlobo@dailypatch.co.za
LESSONS LEARNT

• Road safety initiatives are complex problems to address

• Require both hard and soft engineering solutions

• Conventional solutions are generally not enough, creative solutions that deal specific social realities are required

• The initiatives will need to be evaluated periodically to see if the social drivers and traffic demands are still relevant, and if not, then solutions need to be amended