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taking it ON!

# Police are people too

Changing an organisation is tough. Imagine then the challenge of transforming the culture of traffic policing worldwide, with the aim of helping to save 5 million lives. One group of leaders is prepared to 'Take it ON!'

By Paul Stewart

ON-Brand partners™





# Epidemic on wheels...

On 13th April 2009, Adela Maria Gutierrez of Oaxaca, Mexico became the first reported fatality from Swine Flu, and this new 'pandemic' captured world-wide attention. In the weeks that followed the media, medical scientists, and political leaders were all mobilised at an extraordinary pace. Within a month 62 people were confirmed dead.

In the same period over 115,000 people will have been killed on 'roads' often with devastating impacts for families and communities. A further 4.2 million will have been maimed or seriously injured. And it will get worse, much worse – road deaths are projected to be the leading cause of premature death of children aged five and above by 2015. Yet, this 'epidemic on wheels' barely registers any interest across the international media or political leaders.

Here, Paul Stewart, CEO of ON-Brand Partners™ writes about his experiences at the recent 'Make Roads Safe' conference in Rome, working alongside a group of the world's most senior police leaders as they start the journey to transform the culture of policing worldwide. In the process they aim to be part of a solution that will save five million lives over the next 10 years.

...let's take it ON!

≡ MAKE ROADS SAFE

**Make Roads Safe is calling for a 'decade of action' to reduce deaths and injuries on the roads.**

## CALL FOR A DECADE OF ACTION FOR ROAD SAFETY ROME, 5-6 MAY 2009



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As I checked my watch, it was 12.44pm, 5th May 2009. The moment I felt a sea-change in mood across the 150 delegates in the room. The moment I felt a wave of emotion move from one person to the next.

The moment I felt the first twinge of personal ‘belief’ that this monumental challenge was achievable. We could truly make a difference in the world. In fact we had to.

**It was the ‘Make Roads Safe’ conference in Rome, the launch of the second report sponsored by the Commission for Global Road Safety (CGRS).** The report is calling for the United Nations to mandate a ‘decade of action’ to reduce deaths and injuries occurring on the roads.

The issue, the challenge and the opportunity, have already been well positioned by a series of key dignitaries: **HRH Prince Michael of Kent, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen** (Former Secretary General of NATO, now Chairman of CGRS), **Jamal Saghiri** (Director Energy, Transport and Water, The World Bank), **Antonio Tajani** (Transport Commissioner, European Commission), **John Nasasira** (Minister of Transport Uganda) amongst others.

**The logic is compelling, the conclusion is obvious – something ‘should’ be done about this hidden epidemic. But action is not driven by logic, it’s driven through emotion<sup>1</sup>.** It’s a basic tenet of human psychology, and a principle that underpins all our transformation strategies.

And at 12.44pm the contagion of emotion<sup>2</sup> permeates through the room like a warm, yet slightly unsettling breeze, and the process of social change accelerates – a tipping point. It is a small but significant step forward, and reinforces to me the approach we need to follow – build positive momentum through the ‘meaningful purpose’ and then drive results in relation to the ‘goals’.



Image: FIA Foundation



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/

<sup>1</sup> Donald Calne (world renowned Neurologist), best articulates the point, “The fundamental difference between reason and emotion. Reason leads us to conclusions, emotion leads us to action”. *Within Reason: Rationality and Human Behaviour* (Pantheon, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> The ‘emotional contagion’ affect is well established theory within social psychology where there is a tendency to catch and feel the emotions of others.



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/

The catalyst is **Michelle Yeoh** – international movie star, the ‘Bond girl’ with Pierce Brosnan in ‘Tomorrow Never Dies’, star of ‘Memoirs of a Geisha’ and ‘Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon’. She’s stunningly attractive and an action specialist, so no doubt her picture adorns many boys and girls’ bedroom walls. But her aura is more than skin deep and goes beyond the make-believe of movies. She has a presence that draws you in. And I would soon discover that she has the intelligence, authenticity and passion that makes her a compelling activist for this cause.

Michelle Yeoh is the Global Ambassador of **Make Roads Safe**. For the past year she has travelled the world with renowned film-maker Richard Stanley visiting countries heavily afflicted by trauma of road crashes. **Together they have uncovered the human side of the personal tragedies, and are highlighting the ignorance, ambivalence, even arrogance of policy makers and leaders towards what is now one of the top 10 killers in the world.** They are both here to premiere the powerful and compelling documentary: *‘Turning Point – A journey on the world’s killer roads’*.<sup>3</sup>

**Prior to lunch we are given just a taste by being shown the trailer to the documentary.** The full screening, plus a panel

discussion (including our ‘Captain’ – Rob Robinson), would follow later in the afternoon. **The trailer is only four minutes long at most, but the impact is profound.**

It takes us to South Africa, on the outskirts of Johannesburg in the heart of black communities. The poverty is striking, and the extent of the development issues for this nation, with which New Zealand has a close affinity, are there for all to see. And traffic safety goes right to the heart of the issue.

A high speed, multi-lane road has been built right through this community, effectively separating the ‘homes’ from the school. Traffic is racing by in both directions, as young vulnerable children dart across the road through the smallest of gaps in the traffic. No crossings, no lights, no consideration by the road designers (or indeed drivers) towards the rights of other road users. No wonder then, that **up to 70% of road related deaths in many developing countries are pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists**.<sup>4</sup> After all, this scenario is not the exception. Increasingly, it is the way of life in many countries around the world.

The camera pans back to Michelle who is shaking her head. Her words disturb me.

**“Somewhere in the world, at this very moment, sadly, there is a child that is hurt or killed, just because they are going to school. For god’s sake, we must stop this!”**



refer: www.makeroadssafe.org

<sup>3</sup> This documentary was played on BBC World in early May. The preview can be found at [www.makeroadssafe.org](http://www.makeroadssafe.org)

<sup>4</sup> See for example *Make Roads Safe – a decade of action for road safety* (Commission for Global Road Safety, 2009)



In that instant, I feel a great empathy for this cause. There's an 'aha' as it suddenly dawns on me that I was one of those children. In 1969 at the age of 3, I had been bowled over by a car near our family home. My injuries were remarkably light considering the weight of impact. To be honest I never really think about it, because apart from a few vague memories of the moments leading up to the 'accident', I have no recollection of it – the car, the impact, the hospitalisation or the long rehabilitation. But I know that it still haunts my mother. I remember that whenever she introduced me to new people, even in my adult life, she would describe me as "the 'bonus baby'<sup>5</sup>, and the one we almost lost". Every time she spoke those words I could see the emotion in her face, hear it in her voice.

I can feel that same emotion around me in the room where I now sit. Unconsciously, I turn slightly to my left. Peter Fitzgerald, the former Deputy Police Commissioner for Ireland's National Police Service, is there. Peter is your archetypal Irishman, full of good humour and great stories. But in this moment, the tears are welling up in his eyes. I'm not surprised he is personally affected. His son, also a policeman, was tragically killed when the car in which he was travelling crashed while responding to an 'incident'.

Since that time, **Peter has been a powerful advocate and leader within Irish and international policing to bring a stronger focus to policing services around traffic law enforcement.** In a number of countries he has positively influenced procedures, regulations and resource allocation to change the nature of policing. But none of that matters now. This moment is personal, not professional. Finally the tears are such that he is forced to pull a handkerchief from his pocket and wipe his cheeks. No small matter for a senior policeman amongst his peers.

To my right is **Sir Keith Povey** – a Yorkshireman, and formerly Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Constabulary in the UK. Behind me is **Minze Beuving** from the Netherlands, former Chief Commissioner of Police and former Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief, Royal Netherlands Marechaussee. Two seats to his left is **Ken Moroney**, retired Police Commissioner of New South Wales, Australia. Between them is our 'Captain', **Rob Robinson**, former Police Commissioner for New Zealand and the man that the World Bank has asked to lead the establishment of a 'global road safety law enforcement network'.

**Together, these esteemed police leaders will make up the core of the 'Law Enforcement Action Panel' (LEAP)** which will oversee the development and implementation of a strategy to transfer knowledge and drive cultural change across policing jurisdictions throughout the world.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from Rob, whom I, along with my team, have been working with for some months, I had only met the others the evening before. I don't know their stories, no doubt they would be uncovered later. Personal stories and experiences would be critical – not just around road safety, but also in relation to leadership and organisational change within policing. They would help provide the insights and ideas needed to shape our approach.<sup>7</sup>

But now is a time for self-reflection, not talking. These men are all being 'moved by emotion' in this moment, their interest and personal commitment to road safety growing by the second.

**A key piece in the 'solution' jigsaw is there for me to see – make it personal. Police are people too.**

*L to R: Peter Fitzgerald, Sir Keith Povey, Minze Beuving, Ken Moroney, Rob Robinson*

<sup>5</sup> I was the result of a mid-60s failure in the newly released contraceptive pill! This was all the more amusing because my father was the local pharmacist and both he and the local doctor thought that by putting their wives on the pill, it would help to alleviate the nervousness that women were having. Both women ended up pregnant!

<sup>6</sup> The establishment of the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) is a key step in creating the International Road Policing Organisation (RoadPol) which will coordinate the police response to the road safety issue.

<sup>7</sup> Increasingly, narrative-based technologies, which allow patterns of change to be identified and nurtured in processes of social change, are becoming increasingly used in complex strategies such as cultural transformation and development issues.



My personal journey to Rome had begun on 15th October 2008. That was the day I met Rob Robinson. Rob had been invited to ‘Executive Stretch’ a regular forum that ON-Brand Partners hosts three or four times a year. We wanted to bring together a diverse group of the most senior leaders across a range of industries and professions.

As the world grappled with the implications of the global financial crisis and economic recession, the focus of this particular event was ‘Succeeding in Tough Times’. During that event Rob would demonstrate his honesty, integrity and courage by speaking openly about some of the challenges he had faced (and, in part, failed with), in leading change within the New Zealand Police. **It was clear he had all the hallmarks of a respected, emotionally intelligent leader – a critical success factor for any transformation process.** He was someone people would listen to and follow.<sup>8</sup>

Rob had flown to Auckland especially for the event. He arrived early and struck up conversation with some of our team including **Grant Costello**, who was driving the development of our new **ON2net system**<sup>9</sup> – an online collaboration and knowledge management system built around the social networking principles that drive Web2.0 sites. During the discussion Rob referred to the challenge he had taken on. He was interested in our thoughts and ideas around global collaboration and knowledge transfer, as well as the system.

It was a chance meeting from which a mutual passion and rapport developed. He explained that there was growing international impetus to focus on the issue of road safety throughout the world.

Our first reaction – probably it’s just another health issue on a long list of priorities. Does it really warrant much attention? But dig a little deeper and the facts convey a startling story.

### Once ignored, road traffic injuries are now increasingly recognised as a global development issue and a public health disaster:

**1.3 million lives** were lost on the road in 2008, **11 million lives** have been lost since 2000

Each year **260,000 children die** on the road and another **1 million** are seriously injured

**50 million** are maimed or seriously injured every year

The economic cost is **over half a trillion dollars** per annum

For many low- and middle-income countries, the **economic cost** is **greater than all the international aid they receive**

Do nothing, and **the issue will almost double in size** over the next 10 years.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Our experience suggests that the quality of ‘leadership’ at the very top is a critical success factor for complex ‘transformation’ strategies. Typically, these leaders have high empathy, social awareness and self esteem. They also remain very open to learning. Logically, they are adept at conceptualising integration at an organisational level.

<sup>9</sup> The ON2net is a technology ON-Brand Partners has specifically developed to enhance the process of knowledge transfer and collaboration within organisations. It provides a powerful conduit to face-to-face interventions allowing conversations to also be shaped in a virtual space – transcending geographic and time barriers.

<sup>10</sup> There is a rapidly growing body of research and literature uncovering the scale of the problem. Refer for example, ‘*Make Roads Safe – A decade of action*’ (Commission for Global Road Safety), which can be downloaded from [www.makeroadssafe.org](http://www.makeroadssafe.org)





It's not just a health problem it's an issue of basic human rights. It's also an economic development challenge of the highest order.

In developing countries the highest proportion of casualties are boys and young men. By 2050 the number of cars in the world will have quadrupled, but even by 2020 road-related deaths are projected to be the single biggest killer of men aged 15-40 years in the world – bigger than HIV Aids, bigger than Malaria, bigger than Coronary disease.

Usually, these casualties are the income earners, and more often than not, each time one of these men (or boys) is killed or disabled, the entire family unit is thrown into poverty. Hence the strong interest from the World Bank.

**How can it be that such a major issue can go virtually unnoticed?** During the Rome conference it was impossible not to draw comparisons with the 'Swine Flu Pandemic'. Constant media coverage and an immediate global response. Hell, Barack Obama even made a request for US\$1.5bn in emergency funding for vaccines. At that precise point, a month after Swine Flu first appeared in Mexico, there had been 5,200 reported cases globally and just 62 deaths.<sup>11</sup>

**By comparison, in those 30 days or so, over 115,000 people would have been killed on the roads with a further 4.2 million maimed or seriously injured.**

### Road deaths truly are the 'hidden epidemic'.

In part, the reason is that each 'tragedy' is an isolated, disconnected incident. In part it's because, sadly, the majority of deaths and injuries are in low- and middle-income countries where life seems to have lesser value. And, in part, it's because **there is an underlying sense of 'fatalism' around traffic 'accidents' – despite the fact that the vast majority are totally preventable.**

Regardless, it has not made its way to the issue list of the key international institutions. Back in the late 1990s, when the United Nations set down its 'Millennium Development Goals', somehow traffic safety slipped through the net. I'm told that it fell between the cracks of 'Health' and 'Transport' portfolios – a powerful example of how an 'organisational structure', by creating siloed focus and 'self interest', can inadvertently drive a mismatch between goals and purpose, and misapplication of resources.

Belatedly, the FIA (Federation Internationale de L'Automobile), the not-for-profit body responsible for professional motorsport (Formula One is their flagship) and the coordinating body for 'Automobile Associations' around the globe had taken up the mantle. One of the first steps was to establish the 'Commission for Global Road Safety'<sup>12</sup> headed by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen. Through determination and hard work, momentum and support has grown. The World Bank is now firmly on-board, with Tony Bliss<sup>13</sup> and Marc Shotten at the forefront.



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/

<sup>11</sup> 'WHO warns of swine flu threatening to become pandemic' – Associated Press (Yahoo news, 20th May 2009).

<sup>12</sup> For further information, go to [www.commissionforglobalroadsafety.com](http://www.commissionforglobalroadsafety.com)

<sup>13</sup> Tony Bliss is a former senior manager with New Zealand's Land Transport Safety Authority (now Land Transport NZ) who made a major contribution to the scientific analysis, thinking and policy that provided significant gains in reducing road deaths in our own country through the 1990s. During this period road deaths in New Zealand were reduced by over 50%, due to a concerted and integrated 'education and enforcement' strategy.

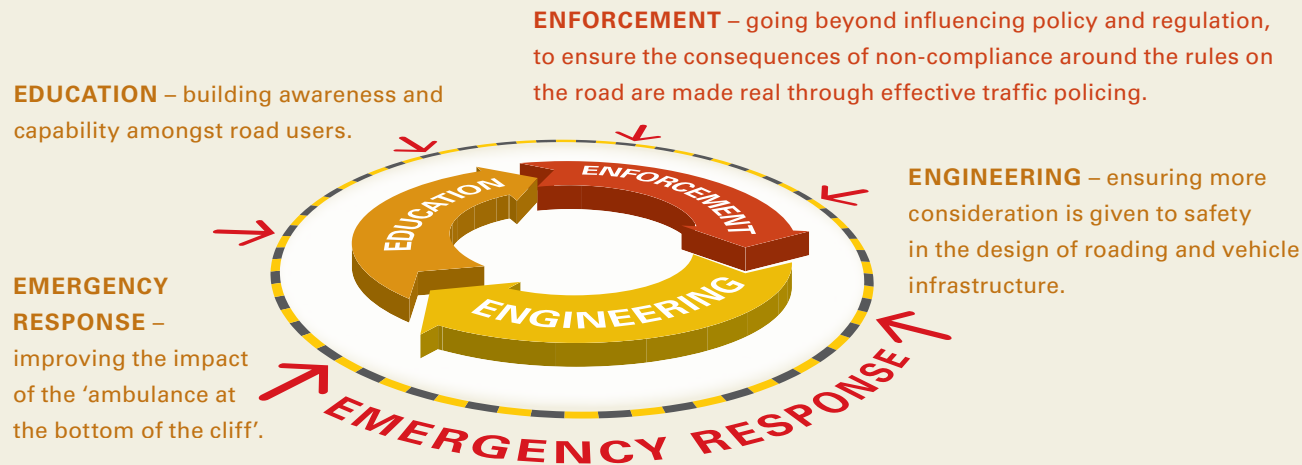
In 2008, the UN passed a resolution calling for the first ever 'Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety' to be held in Moscow during November 2009. The UN have asked that progress is to be reported back to the General Assembly in 2010. It is hoped that the UN will endorse a 'Decade of Action' at that point.

**The goal is incredibly ambitious – to halve the number of road deaths globally by 2020**, compared to current projections. **If successful, that will save over 5 million lives and deliver well over US\$3trn in economic value.**

The strategy is based on an 'integrated systems approach', built around four key pillars:

The first three pillars are relatively well advanced. But for some time the 'Enforcement' pillar had not been embraced. Everyone knew it was an important piece in the solution, and **the research is unequivocal – effective law enforcement delivers results and saves lives.**<sup>14</sup> Many of the advanced, industrialised countries have made tremendous progress on this front.

But, no-one had had the wherewithal to grasp the nettle and have a crack on a global scale. Given the immense challenges that exist within 'policing cultures' in low- and middle-income countries, many believed it was just too tough. That was until Tony Bliss contacted Rob in 2007 and piqued his interest. Since then Rob has, almost single-handedly, been leading the crusade to tackle the 'Enforcement' pillar.



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Photo credit: Make Roads Safe campaign

Top: Family walking along side of the road in Costa Rica.  
Bottom: Zebra crossing is painted on a road in Costa Rica.

<sup>14</sup> Along with the many industrialised countries which have made significant advances, a small number of low- and middle-income countries such as Costa Rica and Russia have also made progress. Here improved Policing has been a key contributor to reduced death and crash rates.



Soon after our first meeting, Rob flew back to Auckland and spent the best part of a day with us talking. Other sessions would follow. His vision was absorbing. The clarity of his thinking was compelling.

At the heart of the challenge lies the objective to transfer the knowledge from those policing jurisdictions in the industrialised countries that have made some meaningful progress, to those jurisdictions in the 'low- and middle-income' countries where the knowledge and experience is desperately needed. In addition, the focus would be around leadership development – getting sustainable results at the coal-face would require a top-down approach of building commitment at the highest level, and equipping mid-level leaders with the skills and tools to drive change. These ideas resonated strongly with our own experiences as executive leaders and consultants.

His motivation also goes beyond 'road safety'. He sees it as an opportunity to fundamentally improve the professionalism of policing everywhere, and to strengthen the connection with local community that ultimately effective policing is dependent upon.

This is an enormous challenge – a strategy implementation and cultural transformation process of the highest magnitude.

Our first step was to develop a brief concept document, outlining the underlying principles and approach that might be applied to tackle the 'dual' tasks of knowledge transfer and culture change.

For Rob's vision for the International Road Policing Organisation (RoadPol) to be effective, we will have to transform the culture of policing in a number of ways. We have to build cultures of collaboration, learning, trust and mutual value.

I use the plural (cultures) deliberately, because while every policing jurisdiction throughout the world is somehow bonded through a common mission and core values (which operate to very varying extents), each will need to be approached as a unique challenge. If we were to look for a 'best practice' model somewhere in the world, cookie-cutter it and impose it on the 'target' countries (low- and middle-income nations), then we have lost the battle from the beginning. This is a paradigm shift we will need to overcome.

Behind me I knew I had a talented and passionate team – a group that I believe is the equal of any in the world for this type of work. We also have a powerful network of partners to draw upon. We have applied our skills to a diverse range of strategic challenges, primarily in the financial services area and, importantly, across multiple cultures.<sup>15</sup> More often than not our approaches were considered innovative, pioneering, and pragmatic. In all cases, the results have been very positive.

Yet this is different. It is an altogether bigger scale – scarcely imaginable to me a few years ago. But it was too good an opportunity to pass up. The intellectual challenge it would provide was stretching and fascinating. But above all it was incredibly meaningful work that would make a difference in the world. We talked about it as a team, and committed to support Rob in any way we could.

<sup>15</sup> Those initiatives have included long-term customer experience transformation strategies, launching an Islamic Bank aimed at the 'young and smart' in Asia, and business turn-arounds. We had also been supporting TMI International, a global training and consulting organisation to build alignment and collaboration across a network of over 35 countries.



### Successful transformation – a different mindset

The dual tasks of ‘knowledge transfer’ and ‘culture’ for RoadPol are inextricably linked. Many knowledge management projects have failed, not due to a lack of a ‘system’ or assertive ‘central management’, but because they have ignored the central premise – greater sharing of knowledge depends upon a change in human behaviour within the organisational system. It means creating a new culture of collaboration.<sup>16</sup> Knowledge transfer strategies should therefore be approached as a cultural transformation challenge.

Cultural transformation is underpinned by social change. Too often people look for the solution in a box, and never get the nub of what drives individual and collective ‘behaviour’. My strong view is that traditional management development and thinking resides too much in the classic ‘problem-solving’ space. Bring in the expert to analyse the problem, build a detailed roadmap to ‘close the gap’, and execute with belligerent project management disciplines in place.

While that works well in the purely rational space, culture transformation doesn’t fit this model (hence why 60-70% of these change strategies fail). Changing human behaviour is complex and fluid, more like an evolving weather pattern rather than a complicated piece of machinery. It requires an emergent strategy, one where you learn as you go, where you identify broad patterns of behaviour, and influence

them rather than try to control them. It’s a process of social change that is unpredictable in nature. Cause and effect is often clear in retrospect, but the past is not a reliable predictor of the future. So, you must be open to learning and refining as you go, nurturing the positive behavioural patterns as they emerge and disrupting any negative ones. And you must PULL (through ‘hearts and minds’) more than you PUSH (through systems and processes), particularly in the early stages.

As an economist in the 1990s, the ‘complexity’ of social behaviour is something I intuitively understood. Mainly that was by recognising the failures of that discipline – ‘rational man’ is a useful theoretical concept but not much related to reality. But it was in the early 2000s, when I was introduced to Shawn Callahan (Anecdote.com), when the first coherent framework was provided to me. Shawn had been part of the Cynefin Institute<sup>17</sup> – established in the 1990s by IBM to develop new ways to pioneer the advance knowledge management and strategy implementation. He has become a specialist in ‘narrative-based’ technologies and change through collaboration.

Since then, our approach has become an amalgam of those concepts, and many others from fields of social psychology, strategic management, communications woven together with our own ideas and learnings.



Images: [www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/)

Top: Cardinal Cheli and Michelle Yeoh at the Vatican.  
Bottom: Felipe Massa, Lord Robertson and Michelle Yeoh at the Rome Make Roads Safe Conference.

<sup>16</sup> For a good summary of the challenge, refer to whitepaper ‘Building a collaborative workplace’ – Shawn Callahan, Mark Schenk and Nancy White. It can be found at [www.anecdote.com](http://www.anecdote.com)

<sup>17</sup> Shawn Callahan’s excellent writings on these subjects can be found on his blogging space at [www.anecdote.com](http://www.anecdote.com)



Less than six months later Rob and I are in Rome. The LEAP members are convening for the initial meeting. Indeed, the concept of RoadPol is being advanced for the very first time on an international stage.

By now we had distilled the challenge into a digestible framework. **We'd established some core strategic principles, and a set of behavioural guide-rails (Interact, Inform, Inspire) that would underpin our approach to social change**, and developed a pretty compelling communications document to start to get the message out around the critical role of law enforcement in the context of the broader solution.

As 'facilitator' of the LEAP group (or the 'rudder' as the LEAP team renamed me), my objectives for the first intervention were straightforward:

- For us all to learn more about the issue,
- Look for areas of strength across the other 'E' pillars that we could leverage, and
- Explore the key principles for design and delivery for an effective Enforcement strategy.



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadsafe/

Rob Robinson leads the RoadPol discussion

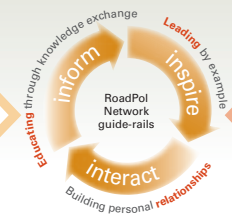
**Tangible**  
Processes and policies



**Intangible**  
Hearts and minds

Law enforcement – changing culture

**Supporting law enforcement agencies to meet societies road safety expectations**  
**Outcome:** Prioritise and deliver meaningful resolutions that make a positive difference



**Building motivation around the purpose of policing, and value to society**  
**Outcome:** Shift mindsets of police in relation to vision and values

It was important to build an initial consensus and commitment from the LEAP team. From the outset Rob had identified that **'what works in policing collaboration' is based upon deep personal and professional relationships** – trust and respect is critical within the culture of police.

And crucially, it was important to position and launch RoadPol positively to the wider 'Make Roads Safe' community, because their advocacy and support would be important to our success.

The underlying process would be based upon our core OBP philosophy – **shaping conversations**.<sup>18</sup> In a nutshell, we would Interact, Inform and Inspire.

<sup>18</sup> The fields of psychology and counseling, and their approaches to dealing with individual behavioural issues, are fundamental to ON-Brand Partners' philosophy around the alignment of organisational behaviour to vision, brand and strategy. Our premise is that 'patterns of behaviour' within an organisational culture are driven by deeply embedded 'mindsets'. In order to (re)align behaviours, we must change/create appropriate mindsets, a process which is stimulated through leaders 'shaping conversations' across the organisation.

**As I look back now, we can certainly tick the boxes around those objectives. We have momentum:**

- We learnt that there is leading-edge thinking being applied in the areas of Engineering and Education – such as the ‘multi-sector partnership’ frameworks being advanced by Booz Allen and others.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there is very sophisticated application of safe ‘systems thinking’ in roading design
- We saw some extraordinary examples of success – such as the ‘universal helmet programme in Vietnam’ which on its own has seen helmet use rise from 3% to 99%, reducing road deaths by 12% and injuries by 24%<sup>20</sup>
- We experienced a growing awareness and willingness of technical specialists, healthcare workers, politicians, bureaucrats, celebrities and civil leaders towards global road safety. We felt confident we were witnessing the early stages of an awakening on the issue.

And RoadPol was launched on a powerful footing. Our ‘Captain’ Rob, did a superb job in his limited time in front on the conference plenum – a panel discussion on ‘day one’, and a short presentation on ‘day two’.

Leading into it, we had discussed the potential challenges, and in particular the risk that many delegates could be apprehensive about the influence of policing – bearing in mind that police forces in many, particularly ‘low- and middle-income’, countries are not trusted, nor respected. Our answer was to try and bring a very ‘human face’ to policing from the outset.

Asked to provide his reaction to the ‘Turning Point’ documentary, Rob spoke about the challenges around the human tragedy police must face every day in their role at the coal-face of road crashes. And he told a very personal story (see box) which spoke volumes of his character, passion, and that yes, ‘Police are people too’. Not surprisingly, within hours Richard Stanley was interviewing Rob on tape, honing in on his story, his experiences and his ambitions. RoadPol will undoubtedly feature prominently in future documentaries.



**She could have been my daughter!**

“I can vividly recall an experience as a young constable. I had to attend to the mortuary proceedings following a fatality from a car crash. In front of me lay the body of a very young girl, an innocent child who should have had her whole life ahead of her. She was the same age as my daughter Kate. As I thought about her grieving parents, I couldn’t help but think how lucky I was as a father. I could so easily be in their shoes. When I finished, I drove straight to my home to just check in with my wife Isabel and Kate.

Later that night, after I finished my shift, I arrived home again. Kate was already asleep and I went in and sat next to her. The hours passed by as the images of the day stayed with me, and I could not bring myself to leave her. In the end, I just lay down on the floor next to her cot and slept the night there.”

*Rob Robinson speaks at Make Roads Safe – Rome (5th May 2009)*



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadsafe/

*Helmets saving lives in Vietnam*

<sup>19</sup> See for example ‘Megacom-munities – How leaders of government, business and non-profits can tackle today’s global challenges together’ by Mark Gerencser et al (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

<sup>20</sup>This is a great case study of an integrated strategy in action. A mandatory helmet law was passed in 2001, yet usage was stuck at 3% until 2007. The Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP), working in conjunction with local legislators and scientists developed a new ‘tropical helmet’ style of helmet (produced by the Protec Helmet factory), which overcame a significant barrier – discomfort. It was supported by a wide-ranging public education programme and enforcement strategy. The economic benefits for Vietnam are already estimated to be US\$900m. See ‘Make Roads Safe – a Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2009’ for full case study.

Yes, Police are people too. They have friends and families like all of us. And everyday police men and women have to personally confront the tragedy and human cost of road crashes. At their best they are fully committed to the true 'purpose of policing'.

That 'purpose' is not to solve or prevent crime – that's a means to an end – rather it is underpinned by a uniform mission:

**'To uphold the lawful rights of citizens, allowing active participation in their communities'.**

Sometimes 'traffic enforcement' falls down the priority list of tasks, as police work towards that mission. Resources are scarce, and crimes such as burglary, assault, murder and drug trafficking are considered more urgent and indeed, *more sexy*. Traffic policing is not 'sexy'. Neither is it covered by the Crimes Act in most countries – breaking traffic laws is not a crime, just an offence.

Connecting the vision of 'traffic enforcement' back to that police mission will be important in building alignment and engagement of police leaders throughout the world. Their role would be critical to making meaningful and sustainable progress in changing the behaviours of road-users.

Indeed, we had all witnessed a wonderful example of the challenge in shaping social behaviours during the conference (refer box).



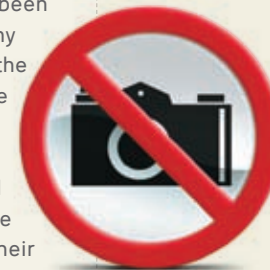
**The Vatican – a flash of insight**

As part of the 'Make Roads Safe' conference, the delegates had been privileged to be hosted on a 'private tour' and 'formal dinner in the Vatican museum' (the first time the latter had been offered to an outside group).

There was so much visual stimulus and information to take in, and that was all the more difficult by what we saw occurring around us. At the start of the tour we had been told that 'flash photography' was not allowed in many parts of the buildings – the purpose was to preserve the precious and delicate paintings and artefacts for future generations. However, despite the very clear signs, and two direct warnings from our guide, one of the group (not a LEAP team member I'll add), continued to use his flash, albeit surreptitiously. By the time we reached the Sistine Chapel, others too were using their flash. The number of flashes grew and grew to the point it looked like the paparazzi on a celebrity photo-shoot.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, the LEAP team knew that with just a little enforcement (maybe the confiscation of a camera or two), the group behaviour would almost certainly have been very different.

*LEAP Team observations – The Vatican (5th May 2009)*



<sup>21</sup> This is a good example of some classical social psychology concepts in action – based around 'social proof', the 'emergent norm theory of crowds' and, quite possibly, the 'diffusion of responsibility'. These concepts have been pioneered since the 1960s. A good place to start is the best-seller *'The Tipping Point'* – Malcolm Gladwell (Abacus 2001).

During his presentation to the conference the next day, Rob used the 'Vatican flash' anecdote and made a powerful point to the delegates. There was an uneasy movement in the room (after all a good number had been the offenders), but the point had been made. Changing social behaviour does require an aspect of consequence. If drivers' behaviours are to change, 'law enforcement' has to be firmly in the mix.



During the closed-door workshop of the LEAP team, which immediately followed the conference, we started to sketch out the journey forward. It was a rich and constructive dialogue, shaped in a uniquely police-type way.

**Amongst many things, we concluded that:**

- While the issue is not 'sexy' (it does not have instant appeal), it is 'seductive'. So buy-in will occur through what we say and how we say it;
- In 'matching' high-income countries with low-income countries we will need to carefully evaluate fit;
- It's a 'complex' issue that will be driven through learning and emergent strategies rather than presuming 'best practice' in one country will work in another;
- 'To create is to own', so we need to involve them from the outset if we want to develop commitment rather than force compliance.

Following Rome, the LEAP team will soon meet again to undertake the more intensive work around designing the strategy.

Others will provide support, including **Lord John Stevens** (retired Commissioner of the UK Metropolitan Police Service) and **Khoo Boon Hui** (President of Interpol). LEAP will also be represented at the **Moscow Ministerial Conference in November**.

From there we will build the tools and frameworks needed, and identify a small number of countries through which we will initiate the pilot process during 2010.

As we wrapped up our workshop, I told the LEAP team what a privilege it had been to work with them. I explained that I had felt somewhat in awe of the stature of the group, the Sirs, The Lords, the positions they had held and the successes they had achieved.

I mentioned that Chris from my team had suggested I start with an ice-breaker, "Let's all tell a secret". They roared with laughter. After the laughter died down, Minze said,

"You should not feel in anyway intimidated by us. You said it yourself...  
...Police are people too."

**Paul Stewart**, July 2009



Image: www.flickr.com/photos/makeroadssafe/

RoadPol members review the latest Make Roads Safe report

## About Paul Stewart



*Paul is what happens when you mix a former bank Chief Economist, GM Strategy, dynamic speaker, cultural transformation expert, international author and rugby enthusiast together!*

*Known for his creative approach to the development of aligned and engaged organisations, Paul is respected for his highly developed analytical capabilities, the capacity to build systematically from what is known today, and to conceptualise and deliver possibilities for the future.*

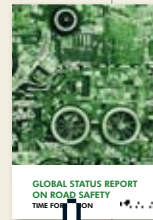
*He founded, and is CEO of ON-Brand Partners, a business consultancy that offers a fresh, pragmatic approach to strategy implementation and maximising organisational performance. Paul is often referred to as the 'CEO-Talker'. His role sees him working directly with CEOs throughout the world, helping them to integrate their strategy and vision by aligning and engaging all organisational functions.*

*If you want compelling conversations at the top table and a path to true strategy integration, invite Paul in for a few hours and see what happens!*

Contact him at [pauls@onbrandpartners.com](mailto:pauls@onbrandpartners.com)

### MORE →

The Global Status Report on Road Safety from WHO clearly calls for greater Police Enforcement of Road Safety laws.



### MORE →

The 2009 Make Roads Safe report confirms the need for greater Enforcement, and announces the formation of RoadPol.



### MORE →

The Police Leadership Saves Lives on the Roads document provides more detail about RoadPol.



# Pass it on so we can 'take it ON!'

The success of RoadPol and the Make Roads Safe campaign will depend upon the awareness and support we can all generate around the globe. Please forward this document to anyone you feel would be interested in improving road safety and helping to save five million lives.

## Thankyou

## Join us as friends of RoadPol...

If you would like to stay in touch with the RoadPol journey, and even contribute to shaping the conversations around this challenge, we would welcome you to email us at [friends@RoadPol.org](mailto:friends@RoadPol.org)

