



Case Study



Mexico's Mobility and Road Safety Law

In 2022, Mexico passed the General Law on Mobility and Road Safety (“Mobility and Road Safety Law”) incorporating child restraint systems (CRS), drink driving, helmet use, seatbelt use and speed management provisions consistent with best practices [identified by the World Health Organization](#). The new law marked a major step forward in the country’s efforts to reduce road traffic deaths by creating the legal framework necessary to advance road safety laws at the national, state and municipal levels, while also raising minimum vehicle safety standards.



Road safety advocates demanding safer streets for all - including cyclists, persons with disabilities and pedestrians.

General Law on Mobility and Road Safety Law Timeline

2012: The right to safe mobility, including safe streets, is recognized in nine Mexican states.

2014: Civil society organizations come together to advocate in favor of mobility and road safety legislation at the national level.

October 2020: Mexico’s Congress unanimously approves a constitutional amendment to establish safe mobility and road safety as a fundamental right.

2020: The Right to Safe Mobility and Road Safety is adopted as a constitutional amendment following ratification by 23 of the 32 Mexican states.

2021: The Coalición Movilidad Segura presents draft road and vehicle safety legislation to Congress, based on broad consultation across government, the private sector, academia and civil society.

May 2022: The Mobility and Road Safety legislation becomes national law, creating a legal framework to require safer roads and safer vehicles for all states.

October 2023: The National Strategy for Mobility and Road Safety 2023-2042 law goes into effect.

June 2024: 16 of 32 states in Mexico adopt lifesaving road safety policies based on the national law.

The Challenges

More than 16,000 people die every year from traffic crashes on Mexico's roads, many of them youth and children. Until 2020, safe mobility and road safety were the exclusive domain of state and municipal governments. In that year, however, Congress passed a constitutional amendment on the Right to Safe Mobility and Road Safety—the first of its kind in the region—which was quickly ratified by a majority of Mexican states. The [Coalición Movilidad Segura](#) (The Coalition for Safe Mobility) convened meetings with key parliamentarians before the vote to discuss the urgency and public support for road safety. The amendment recognizes that everyone using roads should have the right to do so safely and required the National Congress to adopt a comprehensive national law to protect that right.

A major milestone was incorporating vehicle safety provisions in mobility and road safety legislation. As a consequence, Mexico's Automotive Industry Association (AMIA, for its acronym in Spanish) led a campaign to weaken the vehicle safety standards in the legislation, claiming that the higher standards would increase vehicle costs, reduce sales and negatively impact Mexico's automobile industry. This opposition threatened to reduce the legislation's positive impact on vehicle safety.

GHAI's Role

Coalition-Building

The Mobility and Road Safety Law represents the culmination of eight years of civil society advocacy. Civil society organizations (CSOs), cyclists, activists, victims' groups, academics and other stakeholders came together to form the "Coalición Movilidad Segura" in 2021. The coalition engaged the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) to guide the development of a brand and mission statement. With the



Road safety advocates hold a "Safe Mobility Law Now" banner in an ad that features coalition branding.

support of a local facilitator and message research conducted with the public, CSOs and lawmakers, the coalition adopted a brand identity and initiated outreach to other CSOs, growing from over 50 organizational members to more than 100 between 2021 and 2024.

The coalition became an effective advocacy hub and a trusted partner to government decision-makers. With its newly established brand identity, they launched an integrated communications campaign to advocate for safer mobility and safer roads. The coalition launched numerous social media campaigns, with a focus on the right to safe mobility and a call to action to the lawmakers. They also delivered branded merchandise (such as coffee mugs and face masks) to key lawmakers with the coalition's tagline #LeyMovilidadSeguraYa (#SafeMobilityLawNow). Today, the coalition's logo is well-known and easily recognized among CSOs, lawmakers, policymakers and the public.

Delivering Evidence

The coalition convened technical experts and facilitated knowledge-sharing to bring information to policymakers. In 2021 and 2022, the coalition worked with legislators to ensure the draft bill incorporated global best practices related to CRS, drink driving, helmet use, seatbelt use, speed management provisions and vehicle safety standards. These meetings proved crucial in the face of fierce automobile industry opposition. Alongside

the [Global Road Safety Partnership](#), GHAI reviewed and revised draft legislation and provided advocacy and defense messaging related to international best practices. The [Pan American Health Organization](#) reviewed and edited technical elements of the legislation, which lent the coalition further legitimacy in its advocacy work.

Countering Opposition

GHAI worked closely with the International Legal Consortium of its parent organization, the [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#), to counter the automobile industry arguments centered on economic barriers to trade during the legislative debate. Further, GHAI and the coalition prepared a legal brief using arguments and counterarguments to maintain the draft law's strong vehicle safety standards.

Building Public Support with a Multimedia Campaign

GHAI worked with the coalition to elevate public awareness on the high number of road traffic deaths and injuries in Mexico. The coalition mobilized their base with activities that included bicycle rodadas (rallies), wherein cyclists biked to Congress to bring attention to the legislators, held meetings and called for demonstrations outside the House of Representatives and other iconic places. Social media posts showcased these activities and engaged new audiences and a broader set of stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the vehicle safety advocates staged a campaign to counter AMIA's request to dilute or otherwise remove vehicle safety standards from the proposed Mobility and Road Safety Law legislation. The campaign played on the association's acronym to create the word 'Infamia' (Infamy). Visuals with the 'Infamia' campaign called out the association's opposition to the bill, stating that they would rather save money than design safer cars consistent with U.S. and European standards.

The coalition ran an advertorial in *El Universal*, a leading daily newspaper in Mexico, advocating for the approval of the law and



The "Infamia" campaign called out the Mexico Automotive Industry Association's opposition to the bill.

with strong vehicle safety provisions. The coalition complemented the advertorial with 'Infamia' signs strategically placed close to car dealerships in Mexico, garnering attention from media and the public. Simultaneously, RefleAcciona ran a digital media advocacy campaign, targeting lawmakers.

Success

The Senate and the House passed the Mobility and Road Safety Law by April 2022. Advocates, senators and road crash survivors celebrated outside the Senate with mariachis. In May 2022, President López Obrador signed the bill into law, representing a major step forward in the country's efforts to reduce road traffic deaths and improve vehicle safety standards in Mexico.

Looking Ahead

In October 2023, the government published the National Strategy for Mobility and Road Safety 2023-2042, a new milestone toward road safety in Mexico. This National Strategy will ensure the proper interpretation, regulation and application of the Mobility and Road Safety Law at the national level. As of June 2024, sixteen states have updated their own state laws on mobility and road safety to better comply with the Mobility and Road Safety Law.



Case Study



The Mobility and Road Safety Law passed on April 5, 2022. Road safety advocates, senators and road crash survivors celebrated outside the Senate with mariachis.

Advocates continue to push for and support harmonization efforts in the remaining states and the 2,469 municipalities across the country. GHAI supports [Céntrico](#), a Mexico City-based nongovernmental organization, to develop a lawyers' network at the national, state and local levels to help ensure that newly drafted mobility and road safety legislation across the country meets international best practices that are consistent with the Mobility and Road Safety Law.

Lessons Learned

- Portraying safe mobility and road safety as one cohesive concept demonstrated that safe mobility is impossible without the proper road safety policies in place and helped lead to stronger, more comprehensive legislation.
- Amplifying the voices of families and survivors impacted by road crashes was instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of having road safety policies in place to save lives on the road. Their moving stories brought together support from the public, lawmakers and key stakeholders.
- Consistent branding enabled coalition members to identify as one movement and a part of something bigger.
- Grassroots rapid response strategies in media and in person helped to counter industry arguments in real-time.
- The coalition expanded its support by identifying target audiences that were addressed with customized messaging.
- Working with CSOs that had expertise in public policy was essential in drafting legislation that could gain support from all political parties and minimize opposition.
- Knowledge of the legal technical elements and international best practices became key to defending the language in the draft legislation.

Lessons Learned:

Demonstrating the connection between safe mobility and road safety led to stronger legislation.



The voices of crash survivors and impacted families mobilized public support.



Branding helped coalition members identify as a movement; tailored messaging helped them expand support.



CSOs' public policy and legal expertise, along with sharing of international best practices, kept the law strong and won cross-party support.



Grassroots rapid response strategies quickly countered industry arguments.



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The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) supports civil society organizations who advocate for public health policies that reduce death and disease.