



creating safer streets starting where youth walk and bike



fortaleza, brazil

with the goal of building safer, healthier communities for everyone



TODAY, cities of all sizes are committing to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, often as part of Vision Zero initiatives. A growing number are focusing on improving safety for youth. Children and youth need and deserve special protection and starting with youth can be the spark that builds community support for a broader Vision Zero program. By shining a bright light on protecting children we can change the culture of road safety and create the buy-in needed to reach the goal of zero deaths.

The Vision Zero for Youth approach aims to apply Vision Zero principles to places where children and youth need it. Equity and consideration for traditionally disinvested communities is a part of each of the key components of Vision Zero for Youth:

- **INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS** to calm traffic, improve crossings, and provide safe spaces for all users.
- **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS** focused on core issues such as slowing vehicle travel speeds.
- Use of crash **DATA AND PATTERNS** to identify problems, assess risk factors and apply solutions on a systemwide level.
- **PARTNERSHIPS** with education, transportation, law enforcement, local safety and health organizations, community members, elected officials and advocates.
- **ENGAGEMENT** of the community around a culture of road safety, with an emphasis on youth empowerment.

FORTALEZA, BRAZIL:

FIRST INTERNATIONAL VISION ZERO FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

The International Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award recognizes Fortaleza in leading the way in prioritizing children's pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The purpose of the Award is to highlight noteworthy practices and inspire other cities to take bold steps to reach zero traffic deaths among children and youth.

The award is presented by the Vision Zero for Youth initiative, led by the National Center for Safe Routes to School with support from the FIA Foundation. The International Award is an expansion of an award program that began in the U.S. It is guided by the International Vision Zero for Youth Committee, comprised of international road safety organizations. Los Angeles and New York City were the first two award winners in the United States.



The city of Fortaleza, Brazil has earned much recognition for its strong priority for mobility and safety for all road users. Its child-focused practices show an appreciation for the unique importance of play and community in child development, the need for child-friendly spaces, and the opportunity to choose active transportation from an early age. By building systems with children's perspectives already in mind rather than as an afterthought, they are raising generations of thoughtful road users.

Research tells us today that the early years of life are crucial for human brain development. That's why we have been concerned about investing in the improvement of public spaces in our city, including streets and squares, for example, so that children can play and interact with friends and family. That means investing in our future. The path to a better quality of life in our society is also through safer streets.

ROBERTO CLÁUDIO, MAYOR OF FORTALEZA

CREATING A CULTURE OF WALKING AND BICYCLING

Fortaleza has implemented two innovative programs to help foster a culture of active transportation in for its young residents. Mini Bicicletar, is a bike-sharing program that provides child-sized rental bicycles with retractable training wheels. With bikes at five strategic, communal locations, its first few months of operation garnered over 6,000 rides (around 36 per day)¹.

When Fortaleza's Sunday leisure cycling lane program began in 2014, the city didn't have the strong cycling culture it has today. For many people, the Sunday leisure cycling lane was their first experience with cycling in the streets with their families. Now, the city has 23.7 kilometers of streets on this program, and it is common to see entire families cycling together with their kids using Mini Bicicletar.

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES TO DECREASE SPEED

In late 2017, city officials in Fortaleza, in concert with partners from NACTO – Global Designing Cities Initiative, the Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety, World Resources Institute, and Albert Sabin Children's Hospital targeted the roadway in front of the hospital for safety improvements (for example, raised crossings, curb extensions, and sidewalk refurbishment). For families of children with special health needs who often arrive by bus or on foot, the streets and sidewalks surrounding the facility were in such disrepair that approximately one-half were forced to walk or carry their children in the roadbeds².

After road treatments were implemented in the hospital's neighborhood:

- **TRAFFIC SPEED** dropped by **42%**
- The **NUMBER OF PEDESTRIANS** forced into the roadbed dropped by **86%**
- **ZERO** child pedestrians were forced into the roadbed



FOCUSING ON THE WHOLE CHILD

Fortaleza is reclaiming areas traditionally used only by motorized vehicles and reconceptualizing them as areas for pedestrians and embraced by communities. In 2017 Cidade da Gente (or “City of the People”), took 1,200 square meters of parking lots, roadways, and other car-centric spaces and created communal areas for recreation, education, and activity. For fifteen days, space allocation for pedestrians was increased from 29% to 73%³. The new, vibrantly painted areas for play and gathering saw a nearly 60% increase in children using the area. The short-term project was so well-received by residents, the changes remained and have been made permanent. Since 2015, the city has already reclaimed 12,000 square meters for children and all other ages.

Fortaleza’s first lady, Carolina Bezerra, leads a program called “Fortaleza Amiga da Criança,” with the goal of improving public services and spaces offered to children, particularly in neighborhoods with the greatest needs. Additionally, the Childhood Alliance – an inter-agency collaborative focused on child health and wellbeing – ensures children not only have the right to stay safe from physical harm as they travel, but that their psychosocial needs for engaging meaningfully in environments are given equal consideration when forming and guiding policy. The Alliance holds weekly meetings to ensure accountability on more than fifty projects.

PRIORITIZING YOUTH IN ROAD SAFETY POLICIES: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In Fortaleza, 55% of schoolchildren walk to school. Through a collaboration with NACTO Streets for Kids, the city will be focusing next on the journey to school.

“Caminhos da Escola,” Fortaleza’s Safe Routes to School Program brings together the benefits of low-speed zones and Cidade da Gente’s projects to improve areas around schools, combining critical safety improvements that decrease motorized traffic speeds with the bright colors and fun spaces from Cidade da Gente. This is to both protect and engage students on their way to and from school.

Fortaleza’s new Vision Zero Plan prioritizes children and youth as a crucial inroad to building cross-cutting collaborations required to create sustainable change in the community.



VISION ZERO FOR YOUTH is an initiative of the National Center for Safe Routes to School supported by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, FIA Foundation and UNC Highway Safety Research Center.

¹ <http://betterbikeshare.org/2018/01/11/bike-share-kids-brazilian-city-ahead-curve/>

² <https://globaldesigningcities.org/2018/10/24/fortaleza-cares-prioritizing-safer-access-to-albert-sabin-childrens-hospital/>

³ https://www.itdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019.05.29-Webinar-Fortaleza-ITDP_v00-1.pdf