



PRESS RELEASE

AIP Foundation and USAID partner to save Cambodia millions of dollars

8 August 2014 – Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The nonprofit organization Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation has been awarded US\$635,993 by the Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) program at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Supported by the National Road Safety Committee (NRSC) and Ministry of Interior (MOI), the grant will fund AIP Foundation's two-year project, "Head Safe. Helmet On." to increase helmet use in Cambodia. Additional financial and in-kind support worth over US\$650,000 is being contributed by the FIA Foundation/Road Safety Fund, The UPS Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and AIP Foundation.

Today, AIP Foundation introduced and shared the project's activities at a nationwide stakeholder workshop in Phnom Penh. The workshop was attended by approximately 55 stakeholders including H.E Poeu Maly, Secretary General of the National Road Safety Committee, H.E Major General Him Yan, Director of Order Department of the Ministry of Interior, national and provincial government officials, and international agencies.

"Road traffic crashes are a global public health crisis, particularly in Cambodia, killing more people than landmines or malaria," said H.E Major General Him Yan, Director of Order Department of the Ministry of Interior. "In 2013 alone, road crashes caused 14,227 injuries, cut short 1,950 lives - mostly of young people, and cost the nation approximately US\$337 million, equivalent to 2.1 percent of its GDP."

In Cambodia, motorcycles are the primary mode of transportation. Their drivers and passenger make up the highest portion of all road fatalities. In 2013, 62 percent of these victims perished from traumatic head injury. "Often surviving is worse," says Mirjam Sidik, CEO of AIP Foundation. "Many injuries cause life-long disabilities creating a sudden need for permanent care. In addition to the personal pain and suffering, this negatively impacts families, the public health system, and society in general," she adds.

According to the Cochrane Collaboration, helmets are a proven way to increase survivability in a crash, reducing the risk of fatality by 42 percent and injury by 69 percent. In Cambodia, helmets are compulsory for drivers, but not for passengers. Disturbingly, only 9 percent of passengers wear helmets.

"'Head Safe. Helmet On.' aims to increase passenger helmet rates in targeted communes of Phnom Penh, Kandal, and Kampong Speu to 30 percent within the first year, and to 80 percent in the second year, thereby preventing thousands of unnecessary road crash injuries and fatalities while saving Cambodia tens of millions of dollars," said Pagna Kim, Country Director of AIP Foundation.

The project goals will be accomplished through a series of three, mutually-reinforcing components:

1. A school-based helmet program that creates a new generation of safer road users;
2. A communications campaign that uses mass media to change behavior; and

3. An advocacy campaign that accelerates critically needed legislative change.

“The introduction of this project to Cambodia comes at a right time as the Government increases efforts to pass the road traffic law, possibly in the near future. This will enforce helmet use for motorcycle passengers, including children,” said H.E Poeu Maly, Secretary General of the National Road Safety Committee.

The project is modeled after an AIP Foundation intervention in Vietnam that helped bring about a national helmet wearing law in 2007. This resulted in 1,557 lives saved, 2,495 injuries prevented, and savings of US\$52 million to the Vietnamese government and people in lost output, medical, and human costs within the first year.

“Head Safe. Helmet On.” will directly benefit 222,445 Cambodians through the distribution of helmets and road safety education, and indirectly benefit another 1,634,555 during the project period. The USAID-DIV investment of US\$635,993 intends to generate savings of more than US\$1.7 million for the Cambodian government. If the funding is sustained over the course of 10 years, it is projected that the return on investment will increase from US\$2.8 to US\$14.9. In other words, for every dollar spent, US\$14.9 will be saved.

The design of the components will be based on findings from assessments conducted at the onset of the project. Intensive monitoring throughout implementation, particularly quarterly helmet use observations utilizing a video method, and evaluation midway through the project and upon completion will be conducted. This will demonstrate progress, highlight challenges, allow for adjustments, and contribute to future project expansion.

About the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation:

The Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low- and middle-income countries. For more than 15 years AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit asiainjury.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

About USAID Development Innovation Ventures (DIV):

USAID’s Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) is an investment platform that finds, tests, and scales new solutions to development challenges around the world. For more information, visit www.usaid.gov/div and follow us on Twitter @DIVatUSAID.

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