

PRESS RELEASE

Friendly spirits visit Phnom Penh to remind motorcycle passengers to wear their helmets

2 April, 2015—Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Spirits were spotted in the streets of Phnom Penh today. Stopping traffic and speaking road safety messages, they were visiting not to scare, but to protect the public. Victims of road crash head injuries, the spirits were reminding drivers to protect their lives by ensuring they and their passengers always wear helmets.

These friendly spirits not only visit riders on the street, but on TVs across Cambodia. The “visit” was part of the launch of a new campaign supporting the dissemination and implementation of the new Road Traffic Law. The campaign incorporates media-, street-, and community-based approaches to improve helmet safety in Cambodia. In the TV commercial, spirits tell a motorcyclist to put helmets on his wife and son. The message of the commercial is, “Protect your passengers’ lives. Make sure they wear helmets.”

The campaign is part of AIP Foundation’s “Head Safe. Helmet On.” project supported by USAID-Development Innovation Ventures and others and will contribute to the goal of increasing passenger helmet use rates to 80% in target communes by 2016. Over 120 participants attended today’s launch in Phnom Penh where government officials from National level, Phnom Penh, Kandal, and Kampong Speu Provinces watched the first airing of the campaign’s TV commercial before taking to the streets to watch the spirits speak to un-helmeted riders. The spirits then distributed helmet vouchers to motorcycle passengers.

His Excellency Major General Lay Bunthorn, Senior Representative of General Commissariat of National Police, said, “Consistent helmet use is a message that needs to reach all motorcyclists. Using spirits on the streets made a lasting impression to riders; we hope the same will happen through the radio, television, and billboard road safety messages. Along with enforcement, this behavior influencing campaign plays a crucial role in inspiring passengers to wear helmets: the more we strategically communicate, the more behavior will be changed.”

Ms. Mirjam Sidik, CEO of AIP Foundation, said that the campaign is being implemented at a crucial time. “We are working in tandem with the new law in order to make a greater impact among passengers. The campaign will inform the public of the new law while striving to change current behaviors around helmet use,” she explained.

As part of the street- and community-based campaign components, AIP Foundation will coordinate with local police, commune council members, and volunteers to reach even more motorcycle passengers. Non-helmeted passengers and children will be stopped at police check points, informed of the new law, and receive subsidized helmet vouchers provided by AIP Foundation. Additionally, youth volunteers will communicate with individual community members about the passenger helmet mandate.

“Each year, road crashes in Cambodia kill more people than malaria, dengue fever, and landmines—*combined*,” said His Excellency Poeu Maly, Secretary General of the National Road Safety Committee. “We believe an effective campaign can reach a wide audience and positively influence Cambodians to make safer, smarter decisions while on the road.”

Watch the TV Commercial [here](#).

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About the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation

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 www.asiainjury.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

About the “Head Safe. Helmet On.” Project

“Head Safe. Helmet On.” is a two-year project, sponsored by [USAID-DIV](#) with additional financial and in-kind support from the FIA Foundation/Road Safety Fund, The UPS Foundation, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to increase passenger helmet use in Cambodia. AIP Foundation aims to improve nationwide helmet wearing awareness through the project by providing school children and teachers with quality helmets and road safety education, developing public awareness campaigns, and advocating for the enforcement of the passenger helmet law.

For more information:

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