

PRESS RELEASE

Media plays important role in passenger helmet law enforcement

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With the upcoming passenger helmet law enforcement scheduled for 1 January 2016, in which motorcyclists will be fined for their passengers who are not wearing helmets, journalists are gearing up to raise greater awareness and promote helmet use. Media has the unique ability to communicate with the wider public to influence for good—it can play a vital role in cultivating a healthy road safety culture. AIP Foundation, with support from the FIA Foundation, organized a workshop to train journalists on how to best cover road safety topics and on fact-based, public-interest reporting.

The workshop was attended by 40 journalists representing print, online, television, and radio media. Among the attendees were H.E Keam Marethya from the Ministry of Information; Mr. Chhoun Voun, Permanence Deputy Secretariat General of the National Road Safety Committee; H.E Ty Long, Deputy of the Department of Traffic Police and Public Order of the National Police; and the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ).

At the workshop, journalists built upon their knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively cover road safety, specifically focusing on the enforcement of the new passenger helmet law, to better reach the community. Participants also drafted a year-long plan of topics and approaches to guide an active, informal network of journalists to promote universal helmet use through media.

Pagna Kim, AIP Foundation Cambodia Country Director said, “Road crashes comprise Cambodia’s most serious non-communicable health crisis, accounting for over 30 times more deaths than landmines, malaria, and dengue fever combined. Six lives are lost each day and the most affected are young people who use motorcycles. A major factor contributing to the high number of road deaths is the widespread lack of helmet use by motorcycle passengers, including children. We hope that this workshop can inspire and equip reporters to spread awareness about this important issue—media engagement is necessary to promote helmet use.”

“Media has the potential to bring widespread awareness about this important milestone in Cambodian road safety. When the public understands the changes in the law, the community is able practice good, and now mandatory, road safety habits. It is important for the media to know how to bring helmet use messages to the people for effective outreach and implementation. Workshops like the one today improve the media’s capacity,” said H.E Keam Marethya from the Ministry of Information.

H.E Maj Ty Long, Deputy of the Department of Traffic Police said, “For effective implementation, the public must first know about the new passenger helmet law and the consequences of violating it. The law has changed and police will begin fining motorcyclists 15,000 riels, a five-fold increase from previous penalties, for non-helmeted passengers. The media is instrumental in spreading awareness. This event helps the media know how to best spread the message so that police can enforce the updated law.”

“Consistent coverage of road safety is a vital part of changing the unsafe attitudes and behaviors of motorcycle passengers, especially children. Reporting on this issue can save lives. Workshops like the one today are instrumental in helping reporters better understand road safety topics and in renewing journalists’ commitment to reporting on road safety and the importance of helmet use,” said Khorn Champa, Journalist from Thmey Thmey.

The “Agents for Change” project strives to build the media and policymakers’ capacity through forums, workshops, trainings, and award incentives. Previous key activities of “Agents for Change” include a policymaker training workshop

held in May 2015, a journalist training workshop in September 2015, and an award ceremony for effective road safety communications.

“The ‘Agents for Change’ project is an innovative approach to gaining media support for increased passenger and child helmet use. We expect that along with journalists, all provinces can have a clear action plan to spread awareness about upcoming enforcement and to continue promoting helmet use to save more lives,” said Mr. Chhoun Voun, Permanence Deputy Secretariat General of the National Road Safety Committee.

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About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low- and middle-income countries. For more than 16 years AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit www.aip-foundation.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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