



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **In Cambodia, stricter helmet law enforcement would result in many lives saved**

*28 April, 2016 – Phnom Penh, Cambodia*

After years of concerted efforts, January 2016 saw the start of enforcement for the new Road Traffic Law in Cambodia. The law has already resulted in helmet use rates among motorcycle passengers reaching a record level of 29.9% in target areas where AIP Foundation implements its projects. This success goes hand in hand, however, with the fact that rates remain at a low 15% during the critical period of the night when most road crashes typically occur. This is coupled with the fact that the deployment of traffic police is not yet as robust as was initially envisioned. If stronger enforcement came into the equation, it is likely that rates could climb much higher and reach universal status.

Even without full enforcement, the strengthening of the helmet law has had a net positive effect - despite the fact that law enforcement currently excludes child passengers, child passenger helmet use has jumped from 0.06% to 28.7% in target communes since the beginning of the year. AIP Foundation's *Head Safe. Helmet On.* (HSHO) program strongly emphasizes the importance of helmets for children as especially vulnerable road users and includes components such as primary school road safety education and child helmet donations. Driver helmet rates have also seen an increase from 63% at baseline to 77% in target communes in January 2016.

Universal helmet use could translate to real savings for a country increasingly plagued by road injuries and deaths. Before HSHO kicked off, AIP Foundation conducted an in-depth life and costs-savings analysis. If the passenger helmet law had been passed in 2014 and enforced in the beginning of 2015, helmet use rates among passengers were estimated to have increased from 7% to 55% in 2015 and by 5% each following year, reaching 80% by 2020. If this had been the case, roughly 561 fatalities would have been prevented, 10,574 head injuries would have been avoided, and US\$98,618,422 would have been saved between 2015 and 2020.

A public survey conducted under HSHO in August 2015 found that the number one reason people give for not wearing a helmet is that they are traveling for a short distance, while the second most-common excuse is that of not owning a helmet to begin with. These responses were collected despite 91% of respondents indicating knowledge of the passenger helmet law.

It is clear that much work remains to be done. While AIP Foundation acknowledges and applauds the headway made by the Government of Cambodia and numerous road safety stakeholders, we encourage stronger commitment to stringent, targeted enforcement nationwide, coupled with public awareness campaigns, until full compliance is achieved.

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### **About AIP Foundation**

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low- and middle-income countries. Since 1999, AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit [www.aip-foundation.org](http://www.aip-foundation.org) or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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