

PRESS RELEASE

Slow Zones, Safe Zones launches road modifications and new public awareness campaign in Pleiku City

20 February, 2019- Pleiku City, Gia Lai Province, Vietnam

AIP Foundation collaborated with the Gia Lai Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) to celebrate the launch of a new public awareness campaign and school zone road modifications in Pleiku City as part of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program – the first-ever pilot program to reduce speed in school zones in Vietnam, supported by Fondation Botnar and the Global Road Safety Partnership. At the ceremony at Phan Dang Luu Primary School, over 1200 teachers, students, and parents of the school attended in addition to government stakeholders from the National TSC, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Gia Lai TSC, the Gia Lai Department of Education and Training, the Gia Lai Department of Transport, and the Gia Lai Traffic Police. Additionally, representatives from all 32 primary schools in Pleiku, KOVA Paint, the Global Road Safety Partnership, and AIP Foundation attended the ceremony.

Slow Zones, Safe Zones focuses on speed reduction and school zone safety through construction of tailored school-zone modifications like speed bumps, road markings, speed reduction signs, and sidewalks; design and implementation of a road safety public awareness campaign to promote positive road user behaviors, paired with increased law enforcement; development and testing of a nationally-applicable road safety e-curriculum; and advocacy to provincial government to support and scale program activities throughout Pleiku City and Gia Lai province.

In Pleiku City, school zones are often located along national and provincial roads and there are no safety parameters in place to protect pedestrians, namely schoolchildren commuting to and from school, from road crashes. In addition, the current speed limits for these roads are rather high with a minimum of 50km/hour. In response to this, *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* installed raised crosswalks, rumble strips, refuge islands, traffic lights, road markings, speed reduction and school zone signs, and new sidewalks at two schools thus far. Additionally through *Slow Zones, Safe Zones*, a school zone speed limit of 30 km/h was implemented in Vietnam for the first time.

“Because of the new speed signs and modifications by our school, I feel much safer going to school” said Thái Thị Như Ngọc, a grade 5 student at Phan Dang Luu Primary School. “Before, it was very difficult to get to school. Cars would speed by very fast and would not stop for crossing students like me. I was afraid I would be hit by a vehicle, but now with speed signs and a new crosswalk, it is easier and safer to get to school.”

In addition to the school zone modifications, *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* also celebrated the launch of its public awareness campaign featuring billboards and a television public service announcement (PSA) entitled “The Wheel.” In the PSA, we see the story of a young girl who becomes paralyzed after being struck by a carelessly speeding motorcycle on her way home from school. The PSA explores the implications of reckless driving on the lives of those most vulnerable, young children, and hopes to emphasize the importance of slowing down while driving in order to protect one another and to avoid possible consequences such as those faced by the young girl.

“With school zone modifications already in place at two program schools, we are excited to continue improving road environments at primary schools in Pleiku city” said Mrs. Trinh To Oanh, representative of the Global Road Safety Partnership in Vietnam. “Coupled with the public awareness campaigns and police trainings, these modifications will influence the road safety culture of Pleiku for the better and prevent crashes, injuries, and deaths”.

According to Ms. Trinh Thu Ha, Deputy Chief of Secretariat of the National Traffic Safety Committee, “Speed is a main contributor to road crashes in Vietnam. People are not aware of the dangers it has for themselves and those around them. Reducing speed can save lives. With this program, we seek to educate people, change their behaviors, and save lives.”

