

## Cambodia's Road Crisis: Effective enforcement of passenger helmet law must include children



### Crisis on the Roads

Road injury is Cambodia's most serious non-communicable health epidemic. From 2005 to 2014, registered vehicles, mostly motorcycles, increased by 385% and road deaths increased by 100%. In 2014, road crashes accounted for over **30 times MORE DEATHS** in Cambodia than malaria, dengue fever, **AND** landmines/UXOs combined. A major factor contributing to the high number of road deaths is the widespread lack of helmet use by motorcycle users.

**The young are the most vulnerable.** Those under the age of 45 – who make up the majority of the population, and who play a crucial role in shaping Cambodia's future – are the most frequent victims.

Every year, Cambodia loses hundreds of millions of US dollars due to road crashes. A recent study conducted by AIP Foundation with technical support from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that if the passenger helmet law were passed in 2014 and effectively enforced, Cambodia will have saved 561 motorcycle passengers' lives; prevented 10,574 motorcycle passengers from head injuries; and saved US \$98,618,422 by 2020.

### Government action

The United Nations recognizes road safety as a global priority: the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by world leaders in September 2015, includes two key road safety targets as part of an agenda of items described as "of critical importance for humanity".

In Cambodia, government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, and the private sector have shown growing efforts and stronger collaboration in ending this preventable crisis.

## Positive steps forward

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a new Road Traffic Law was officially promulgated, and motorcycle passengers – including children – are required to wear helmets. On July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, three sub-decrees were passed on: speed limits; the re-structuring of the National Road Safety Committee; and, fines for traffic offenders including non-helmeted drivers and passengers.

National- and District-level passenger helmet enforcement action plans were developed, and communes have formed respective road safety working groups to ensure effective implementation.

The Government has committed to a date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to begin enforcement of the new Road Traffic Law. New fine rates will be set five times higher than the old fines.



## Why is urgent action needed now?

In 2014, road crash fatalities exceeded the forecasted amount in the year, and in the first half of 2015 alone, road crashes have already claimed over 1,200 lives in Cambodia – an increase from the previous year. Urgent law enforcement of the passenger, including children, helmet law would save countless lives from life-altering injury or death.

For each day we wait to enforce the passenger helmet law, more lives are needlessly lost to tragedy.

## Why must enforcement focus on children especially?

Children have the right to live and be well protected. But they are dependents, and are therefore especially vulnerable to unsafe behavior on the roads. By enforcing child helmet use, traffic police can defend helpless lives from unnecessary dangers, and help raise a future generation of safe road users.

It is our shared responsibility – as family members, the community, and government officials – to ensure the fundamental rights of our children, 'the right to live and be protected,' are met by keeping them safe on the roads.

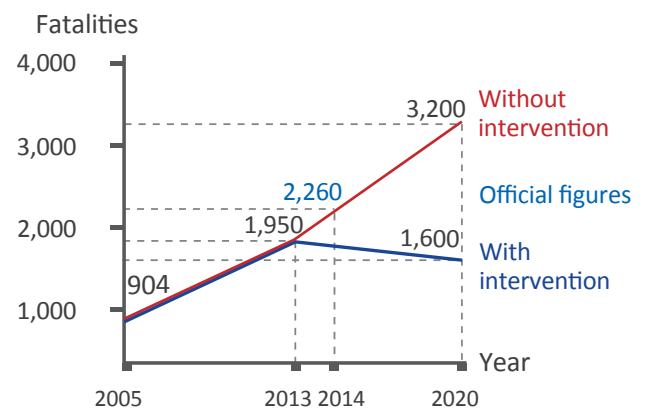
## Working together

Joint action from road safety organizations and stakeholders, including government bodies and concerned citizens, is necessary to ensure positive, meaningful impact.

AIP Foundation is implementing road safety projects with support from development partners that encompass education, capacity building, public awareness, and helmet provision to increase helmet use in Cambodia.

The Government can influence the effectiveness of these projects and other road safety efforts by upholding traffic legislation and overseeing stringent enforcement policies.

## Fatality rates and 2020 projection



Cambodia National Road Safety Committee Road Crash and Victim Information System. (2014). *2013 Annual Report: Road Crashes and Casualties in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

**Your strong support is needed now to help enforce the Road Traffic Law, saving millions of dollars and decreasing fatalities and injuries.**



Head Safe. Helmet On.

## For more information:

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