

HELMETS PROGRAMME, CAMBODIA



Date started: 2006 Date finished: On-going

Partners: Handicap International Belgium (HIB), National Road Safety Committee (NRSC)

Cost/time/resources: 227,600 CHF



The systems approach to helmet wearing in Cambodia has improved helmet wearing rates. According to the government, the law of January 1st 2009 has already increased helmet use from 8% to more than 50% in Phnom Penh in February 2009 confirming that change of legislation and increased public education and enforcement have major impact on behavioural change. This recent development is hugely important as Cambodia's economy has boomed lately, with more people migrating to urban centres and purchasing motorcycles. Before change of legislation 4 people died on Cambodia's roads every day, motorcycle riders counting for 72% of road traffic casualties.

Summary project sheet.

Objectives and scope

This year, Cambodia took an important step. On January 1, 2009, a new law went into effect that requires all motorcycle riders to wear helmets or face a fine. The law is the result of coordinated efforts between the government and civil society, including Handicap International Belgium (HIB) and GRSP, to develop and implement a National Helmet Action Plan. The plan follows a systems approach with multiple elements focusing on:

- Public information and education
- Enforcement including training of police
- Development of tougher helmet standards
- Subsidised helmets programme for police and school children.

Activities

To promote helmet wearing nationwide, the NRSC in collaboration with HIB/GRSP ran a public awareness campaign in 2008. The campaign sought to increase awareness of road users on: the benefits of helmet wearing; the correct way to wear them; good helmet wearing habits, and respect of the law.

In support of National Traffic Police efforts to enforce the helmet law, HIB and GRSP have helped develop helmet enforcement strategies and offered training on practical enforcement procedures (built up using a train-the-trainer concept).

Helmet quality is also a key issue. It is estimated that two thirds of the helmets used in Cambodia are below acceptable standards. In response, GRSP and HIB have been working with the NRSC on development of new national helmet standards.

In an effort to set an example of good practice, 1,900 helmets were distributed to all traffic police officers in the country. To encourage students, 2,000 helmets were subsidized in 4 secondary schools in Phnom.

Conclusion and main lessons learnt

According to the government, the law has already increased helmet use from as low as 8% in 2004 to more than 50% in February 2009 in Phnom Penh showing how change of legislation and increased public education and enforcement have a major positive impact on change of behaviour.

Quote: Sareth, a villager along the national road

"I like the helmet TV spot, and now all of my family members have helmets and wear it every time we travel by motorbike."