

COMMUNITY YOUTH HELMET USE, THAILAND



Date started: 2008 Date finished: **On-going**

Partners: Health Services, Royal Thai Police, 120 Communities in North-Eastern Thailand

Cost/time/resources: 834,000 US\$ grant (JSDF)



Strong support from governmental agencies for community based helmet activities is being developed in Thailand. Thailand ranks among the top ten in the world in terms of crash injuries and deaths, and for the past few years, road crashes have caused over 1,000 fatalities per month and more than 80,000 serious injuries each year. Over 75% of these deaths and injuries result from motor cycle collisions.

GRSP has received a grant, via the World Bank, from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) to implement a motorcycle helmet use road safety project in Thailand. The project commenced in March 2008 and is expected to be complete by August 2009.

Summary project sheet.

Objectives and scope

This is a pilot project based on community participation and focused on increasing the rate of helmet use amongst youth (12 to 18 years) in poorer rural areas of North Eastern Thailand. The main objectives of the project are to:

- reduce the severity of head injuries and the injury related deaths due to motorcycle crashes,
- increase the use of motorcycle helmets,
- increase awareness of road safety issues, and,
- assist youth in target communities to become agents for promoting behaviour change and help influence other age groups to use helmets.

Short-term success will be measured by the increased level of observed helmet wearing in the focus areas with longer-term outcomes being measured in reduced levels of road trauma due to helmet wearing. Success will also be measured by the continued commitment of the communities to good road safety practice.

Activities

120 communities and schools have been identified in the target provinces as implementation sites. Provincial, district and community work groups have been formed and trained, and have prepared proposals for community based road safety activities aimed at increasing helmet wearing in the 12- to 18-year-old age group. These activities are funded by the project and monitored and assessed as to success, outcomes, sustainability and transportability. Workshops will also be undertaken with the community and the police to encourage cooperation and coordination between community activities and enforcement operations. Simultaneously, education programs and teacher awareness campaigns will be undertaken in the schools in the target areas. The progress and outcomes of the project are being continuously evaluated by Thammasat University.

Conclusion and main lessons learnt

The project is in early field implementation stages. However, the commitment of the communities, provincial administrations, health services and the Royal Thai police have shown that there is very strong support for community-based activities. The key lessons learnt to date is that the early engagement of all national, provincial and community stakeholders early in the project, combined with a wide and diverse program for community involvement, is the key to effective and timely implementation.

Quote: District Chief in Waeng Yai District, Khon Kaen Province

"We have to thank this foreign organisation which is concerned about the safety of our heads." -- District Chief in Waeng Yai District as part of the opening speech for the project focus group meeting in Waeng Yai.