

***Street Wise* – Helping Protect Children on their Commutes to School**

Mai Thi Hoai Son^a, Oratai Junsuwanaruk^b, Peggy Moriarty^a, Molly Ellison^a, Mirjam Sidik^a

^aAIP Foundation, ^bAIP Foundation - Thailand

Abstract

This abstract explores the impact of introducing comprehensive motorcycle and pedestrian safety programming in a region affected by industrial activities. The program has focused efforts in Songkhla Province, an area hosting substantial oil and gas operations. With support from Chevron Corporation, AIP Foundation developed and implemented *Street Wise*, a program that introduced a multi-faceted, grassroots campaign to provide road safety education, mobilize community participation in road safety activities, and raise awareness about key road risks and methods for staying safe. The combined efforts have resulted in improved road safety behaviors and knowledge across various indicators.

Background

Thailand has the second highest road crash fatality rate in the world, with more than 36 deaths per 100,000 people (World Health Organization, 2015). Road crash injuries are the number one cause of injury-related mortality for those 10 years and older, and are the second leading cause of injury-related death for children younger than 10 (Ministry of Public Health of Thailand, 2014). An estimated 1.3 million children across Thailand ride on motorcycles regularly, but only 7 percent wear helmets, contributing to the 2,600 children killed and 72,000 injured every year in crashes (New York Magazine, 2016.).

In 2014, AIP Foundation introduced *Street Wise*, a program supported by Chevron Corporation that provided road safety education and awareness raising activities to communities in Songkhla Province, a region hosting oil and gas activities. A baseline assessment found that only 3% of children in Shinghanakorn District, Songkhla Province, wore helmets and nearly one-quarter (23%) of students had experienced a road crash in the past six months. Of these road crash victims, most were traveling by motorcycle at the time of the crash (44%), followed by pedestrian (39%) and bicycle (17%) travel. Nearly two-thirds (63%) were injured, and one in four crashes (26%) resulted in hospital visits (Rapid Asia, 2014).

Based on these findings, *Street Wise* developed a plan to address road safety through education, awareness building, and community engagement. Over two years, the program provided 14 road safety master training courses to teachers, educational staff, and police officers to build their capacities. Additionally, *Street Wise* hosted 28 extracurricular activities, ceremonies, meetings, and workshops that reinforced safety messages and engaged parents, and community stakeholders.

Methodology

The program's effectiveness was measured through a mixed-method study comprised of helmet observations using an innovative filming methodology developed with support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and student knowledge surveys. Students from six schools in grades two and four were surveyed.

Table 1. Number of students observed in this study

	Baseline (December 2014)	Mid-line (October 2015)	End-line (October 2016)
# Students Observed	517	238	394
# Students Surveyed	203	672	828

Results

Observed student helmet use increased from 3% at baseline to 38% at end-line. Observed crossing behaviors improved as well, with student crosswalk usage increasing from 29% to 91%, and the percentage of students crossing without running increased from 47% to 86%. This corresponded with a 23-percentage point increase in correct student knowledge of proper crossing behaviors. However, the percentage of children surveyed that knew the ability to see a driver does not guarantee the driver can see the pedestrian only increased from 8% to 13%. The percentage of students who knew one should cross at a corner in the absence of a crosswalk decreased from 48% to 34%.

Conclusions

Based on measured outcomes, the *Street Wise* interventions have contributed to improved safety knowledge and practices among students. Students have stronger knowledge of how to cross roads safely, are more likely to wear helmets as passengers, and are more likely to use pedestrian crossings. However, helmet use among students is still low. Future interventions may be needed to reinforce child helmet wearing awareness and practices.

References

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