

## **Love Your Child – Provide a Helmet: Vietnam Takes Action to Protect Children on Motorbikes**

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### **Abstract**

This abstract examines the implementation of the National Child Helmet Action Plan (NCHAP) and explores the effect it has had on promoting child helmet use in Vietnam since its launch in January 2015. Key activities of the NCHAP include public awareness-raising and mass media communications on child helmet use, school-based education, and increased police enforcement on a national scale to crack down on violations of the child helmet regulation. The plan is supported by many organizations, including AIP Foundation, Global Road Safety Partnership, FIA Foundation, World Health Organization, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and The UPS Foundation. (98 words)

### **Background**

In Vietnam, road crashes kill an estimated 22,000 people each year and injure over 400,000 more (WHO, 2015). Motorcycles are the primary mode of transport; in 2016, there were approximately 93 million people in Vietnam and over 47 million motorbikes (Vietnam NTSC, 2016). Nearly 60% of road deaths in Vietnam involve a motorcyclist, with almost 80% of these deaths attributed to head injuries (Hoa NP, et al., 2012). Children are particularly vulnerable: most do not wear helmets, and annually, around 2,000 children die in road crashes (Vietnam Traffic Police, 2016)

Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of death by 42% and injury by 69% in the event of a crash (Lui BC, et al., 2008). Motorcycle helmet use has been compulsory in Vietnam for adults since 2007 and children since 2010. However, the law has not been policed effectively and child helmet use remains significantly lower than that of adults (WHO, 2009; Nguyen HT, et al., 2012; Nguyen PN, et al., 2013).

The Vietnamese Government launched NCHAP in 2015 to raise awareness about the child helmet law, shift attitudes towards child helmet use, and increase compliance with the regulation. NCHAP activities include public awareness campaigns, enhanced enforcement, and the approval and implementation of school guidelines for child helmet use (Vietnam NTSC, 2015).

### **Method**

Evaluations of NCHAP were organized in Hanoi, Danang, and Ho Chi Minh City. Filmed helmet observations were conducted at 100 schools. Pre-implementation observations were conducted in March 2014 (31,677 students). Subsequent observations were conducted in April 2015 (30,750 students), December 2015 (38,225 students), and May 2016 (24,123 students). Two cross-sectional evaluation surveys were conducted in November 2015 and May 2016 with nine hundred parents from 45 schools to measure the effectiveness of NCHAP's communication activities, which disseminated the key message, "Love your child, provide a helmet."

### **Results**

Prior to implementation of NCHAP, 36.1% of students were observed wearing helmets. The first post-implementation observation was conducted in April 2015, one week after an increased police

enforcement effort, and showed that the child helmet wearing rate had nearly doubled (69.3%). The helmet wearing rate fell to 49.8% by December 2015 and slightly increased to 51.3% by May 2016.

Based on a cross-sectional evaluation survey of communication activities, 95% of parents reported awareness of the child helmet law, 82% had heard the key NCHAP message, and 97% believed that helmets protect children on the roads. However, only 70% of parents knew the minimum required age for child helmet use and only 45% of parents always put a helmet on their child. For those whose children did not wear a helmet, parents reported forgetting to check to make sure their child did so.

## Conclusions

A preliminary evaluation of NCHAP indicates that it contributed to increased awareness of child helmet use. After implementation of NCHAP, children are more likely to wear helmets; however, the helmet use rate remains low. The first post initiative measurement recorded the highest child helmet use rate at 69.3%. This suggests that increased enforcement is required for sustained, increased child helmet usage. (500 words)

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