



Leadership workshop targets trade unions to advocate for factory workers' safety

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The USAID Labor Rights in Cambodia (LRIC) project, implemented by Solidarity Center, is supporting a series of leadership workshops for 80 trade union representatives to promote more equitable factory working conditions, including safer commutes for employees. Solidarity Center's partner, the AIP Foundation, conducted the first workshop today, articulating a vision of safety policies to protect factory workers on the roads as part of the *Commuting Safety for Cambodian Workers* program. This includes driver training; access to life-saving helmets for workers who commute *via* motorcycle; free motorcycle safety trainings for all workers; a transition from trucks to passenger vehicles; and the adoption of road safety policies implemented factory-wide. The workshop generated discussions among union leaders, who planned actions to support these outcomes.

In 2019, commuting garment and footwear factory workers were involved in 698 road crashes, equal to more than 58 crashes per month. Tragically, 15 workers died and 138 sustained serious injuries. Furthermore, road crashes also do not only impact the lives of workers but also the lives of the 2 million family members they support, and the productivity of factories which rely on their labor.

Cambodia's garment sector growth over the last decade worker safety has been impressive, but worker safety has lagged behind due in no small part to the hazards of commuting to work, which have resulted in high numbers of injuries and fatalities.

"We have seen the horrible effects of road crashes on our workers and their families. Families should not have to suffer the tremendous pain of losing a loved one to a road crash death. Even though injured workers receive support from the National Social Security Fund, it is still important to understand that a non-fatal road crash can have significantly detrimental impacts. This trade union leadership workshop is very important, which would help to find ways to contribute to make our workers' commuting safer as well as to identify new key initiatives to address the current commuting safety challenges," said H.E Heng Sophannarith, High Representative of Minister of Labor and Vocational Training.

"We hope this workshop will help find solutions to ensure safer transportation for workers in all labor sectors," said USAID Cambodia Mission Director Veena Reddy.

"Trade union leaders play a key role in advocating on behalf of their members for more decent working conditions, including workers' safety. This includes the means by which factory workers commute to work. We hope that through these educational workshops, Trade Unions will feel empowered to speak up about commuting safety issues, and call for brands and factories to make worker safety and wellbeing a priority" said Pagna Kim, Country Director of AIP.

"Addressing the rights and safety of workers is not a one-solution approach. It relies on the commitment and collaboration of safety leaders, industry stakeholders, and trade unions and partners, as well as



tangible changes, like the provision of safe transport, high-quality helmets, and educational workshops that can improve the lives of workers,” said William Conklin, Solidarity Center Cambodia Country Director.

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About USAID

USAID was founded in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy and serves as the lead agency of the U.S. Government for foreign assistance. Since 1992, USAID has invested over \$1 billion toward Cambodia’s development.

About the Solidarity Center

The Solidarity Center is the largest U.S.-based international worker rights organization helping workers attain safe and healthy workplaces, family-supporting wages, dignity on the job and greater equity at work and in their community.

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For more than 18 years, AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit www.aip-foundation.org or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

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