

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New “Empowering Safety” program launches in Myanmar to save lives and change road culture

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The *Empowering Safety* program, implemented by AIP Foundation and supported by the Puma Energy Foundation, will launch in Myanmar this August. The program aims to increase child helmet use, improve driving skills among youth, and promote multi-sectoral advocacy efforts to reduce road crash injuries and fatalities in Yangon and Mandalay, over the next year. This will be a vital first step towards strengthening road safety policies within organizations and communities in order to create a safer road culture for all.

“We are proud to support AIP’s launch of *Empowering Safety* program as road safety is a core value and strategic operational axe for the Puma Energy Foundation. We look forward to seeing the positive impact that the program will engender on the lives of Myanmar’s citizens, with a special attention to younger generations. In AIP, we have found a valuable partner whose experience will help drive meaningful changes to road culture and, crucially, improve the prevention of road crashes injuries and deaths”, says Vincent Faber, Executive Director of the Puma Energy Foundation.

According to the World Health Organization, 10,540 lives are lost on Myanmar’s roads each year. One of the simplest and most effective measures that can be taken to prevent road fatalities is to use a helmet. Generally, motorcycle helmet use in Myanmar is still low, with 61.8% of drivers and 51.5% percent of passengers wearing helmets, according to a study done in 2019. Helmet use among children was as low as 2% in some schools in Mandalay, based on filmed helmet observations conducted in 2019.

Empowering Safety seeks to directly address this issue by improving helmet access and encouraging its use. Over the course of the next year, the program will distribute high-quality helmets to 2,600 students and 200 teachers at three schools in Mandalay.

In order to build up the capacity of young and inexperienced drivers, who are an at-risk road user group, the program will also educate 1,790 university students and teachers on the importance of helmet use and the life-threatening consequences of high-risk road behaviors, such as distracted or drunk driving. A select group of students will also be trained as Youth Ambassadors for Road Safety (YARS) to take ownership of road safety issues within their campuses and communities.

To further promote public awareness of road safety, the program will also host educational road safety workshops across civil society organizations, universities, and private sector companies to increase

knowledge of road crash prevention strategies. These workshops will be coupled with a series of informative public awareness campaigns across media channels that are estimated to reach 430,000 people and further contribute to a collective road safety culture. A broad-reaching *Road Safety Network* will consist of representatives from the government, private sector, civil society, and academia to develop road safety policies within workplaces, organize local road safety campaigns, and positively engage Burmese road users.

“Educating youth and empowering students to speak up about road safety is integral to road crash prevention and behavior change. Through the Ambassador program, we will ensure that students’ voices are heard and that they feel empowered as a force for positive change,” said Pagna Kim, AIP Foundation Myanmar Program Director.

The newly launched *Empowering Safety* program builds off of AIP Foundation’s positive impact and is highly supported by key stakeholders in Myanmar, including the Myanmar Organization for Road Safety (MoRS).

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation has a demonstrated history of successfully implementing its road safety initiatives in Myanmar, including a school-based education program that has been ongoing in 2017.

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For more than 20 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.

About Empowering Safety

In 2020, AIP Foundation launched the *Empowering Safety* program to increase child helmet use, promote safer behaviors among young and inexperienced drivers, and advocate for improved road safety policies in Myanmar, with the support of the [Puma Energy Foundation](#). The program targets at-risk communities by distributing quality helmets and education to students, implementing public awareness campaigns, and conducting workshops to improve public knowledge of road safety.

Empowering Safety also leverages the establishment of a road safety network with participation of representatives from the government, private sector, civil society, and academia to develop and implement organizational road safety policies. The program works to empower youth and builds the capacity of selected students at target universities to serve as road safety ambassadors on their campuses and in their communities.

About Puma Energy Foundation



The Puma Energy Foundation works to improve the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable communities in countries where Puma Energy operates. The Foundation partners with local NGOs which champion lasting change in the areas of Fair and Sustainable Employment and Clean and Safe Logistics. Discover more: www.pumaenergyfoundation.org

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