



Annual collaborative workshop held to improve commuting safety for factory workers across Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – February 28, 2022

Around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically redefined working models across all sectors for each one of us. Many of us have the luxury of working from the comfort of our own homes, many can take safe public transportation to the office and some of us can even walk or ride a bicycle to work.

However, the reality for factory workers in Cambodia is very different. Thousands of workers continue to risk their lives to put food on the table for their families. Many of the vehicles they rely on for transport are under-maintained, unsafe, overcrowded. For workers who do not or cannot use collective transportation, the danger lies with inconsistent adherence to safety rules, hazardous drivers, and poor road infrastructure.

In 2020, road crashes among garment and footwear factory workers accounted for over 55% of the total commuting workers involved in road crashes. The high risks encountered on the road do not only impact the lives of workers, but also the lives of the 2 million family members they support.

These commuting risks are preventable. To address these dangers and work together to find solutions, AIP Foundation is hosting an annual workshop to share best practices and experiences on how we can improve commuting safety for Cambodian Workers as part of the *Prevention and Participation* program supported by VF Corporation. The workshop is further supported by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training and the National Road Safety Committee in Cambodia.

The objective of the workshop is to bring together stakeholders involved in the program implementation to promote ongoing dialogue. Representatives from factories, buyers/brands, trade unions, driver associations, Special Economic zones and national and sub-national will be invited to exchange about opportunities to collaborate. These stakeholders will identify possible actions and support factory level initiatives to address and act on specific commuting safety issues for Cambodian workers.

“This workshop provides a unique opportunity for everyone to share successful experiences for the transition from trucks to safer, seated, vehicles that are instrumental in moving forward for commuting safety for garment factory workers across Cambodia,” said Mr. Graham Cronshaw, Cambodia Country Director of VF Corporation.

AIP Foundation Cambodia staff will present on the *Prevention and Participation* program as well as the best practices criteria. The best practices criteria are based on four elements. The first is the transition to safer and seated trucks, the second is an implementation of a factory level road safety policy, the third criteria covers increasing factory workers knowledge and awareness and the final criteria is increasing helmet use.

The plenary session will allow for multiple experiences to be shared on successful transitions to safer vehicles with a parallel session on possible actions that factories can take to address specific commuting safety issues such as the use of unsafe trucks and a panel discussion on how stakeholders can support factory level initiatives to improve commuting safety for workers. The trucks that currently provide transportation to and from work are often large, flat, and very dangerous as factory workers must stand up as there is no proper seats to sit. Often, many factory workers are crammed into the trucks, causing high risk danger to their safety and well-being. There will also be a focused panel discussion on how stakeholders can support factory level initiatives to improve safety conditions for commuters.

“In order to find a solution to the dangers that garment and footwear factory workers face every day, we need the experiences and input from every stakeholder. Together, we can work to improve conditions and ensure that workers have a safe commute,” shared Kim Pagna, AIP Foundation Country Director for Cambodia.

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About the *Prevention & Participation* Program

The *P&P* program, which will take place between 2020 and 2024, will be progressively implemented at 13 factories, reaching approximately 52,000 workers and drivers across 6 provinces. The program is financially supported by VF Corporation, one of the world’s largest apparel, footwear and accessories companies founded in 1899 and aims to improve worker transport (vehicle and driver licensing), reduce dangerous driver behaviors like overtaking, distracted driving, and non-helmet wearing, and improve infrastructure and traffic management around factories. AIP Foundation will continue to work with the government for policy and legislative change. In addition, AIP Foundation will build capacity and factory support to own and sustain initiatives and identify and implement measures that promote the transition to safe and seated passenger vehicles, driven by appropriately qualified drivers.

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 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.

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