

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Celebrating five years of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program: Prioritizing Safe School Zones to Safeguard Every Child's Journey to School across Vietnam**

PLEIKU CITY, Vietnam – October 30, 2023

Today, AIP Foundation is joining hands with the Gia Lai Traffic Safety Committee to host a celebration ceremony to mark the achievements of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program, a local initiative with global recognition. The National Traffic Safety Committee, and the Pleiku's People Committee have been invited to celebrate this special day.

#### **A local program with a global message**

The *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* (SZSZ) program aims to improve the safety of students' journeys to and from schools. As part of the Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge, the program is supported by Fondation Botnar, the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile. Launched in 2018, after five years, the SZSZ program already benefited 130,492 direct beneficiaries and 16,189,096 indirect beneficiaries that were reached.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals global agenda and the need to #rethinkmobility, SZSZ is increasingly encouraging students and their families to use sustainable means of transport - paving the way for healthier and greener cities as well as promoting safe and sustainable mobility. At its heart, the work that started in Pleiku City is a model that can be replicated both in national and global contexts to safeguard children around the world.

"The *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program has gained global recognition by addressing local road safety challenges in Pleiku and catalyzing practical and innovative evidence-based interventions through holistic improvement of school zone safety while promoting sustainable mobility and championing meaningful youth participation," shares Kim Beng Lua, Senior Officer at the Global Road Safety Partnership.

#### **5 Years of Impact in Pleiku: Establishing the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program**

Starting with two pilot schools in Pleiku City, located in the center of Vietnam, the program ended up impacting 31 primary schools in the city, with 71% of them getting the safest rating of 5 stars (Star Rating for Schools, SR4S, iRAP). Based on the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program results, the Gia Lai provincial government issued a Legal Document, regulating speed around school zones at 30 km/h on city roads or 40km/h on national roads, and calling for Pleiku City to allocate funds from the city's budget to install road modifications in school zones.

The Legal Document represents a landmark step towards defining and securing safer school zones throughout Vietnam, demonstrating the government's heightened commitment to protecting children on the roads and the growing potential for Pleiku City to serve as a model city for safe school zones nationwide. In addition, the Gia Lai government has planned to upgrade 56 schools across provincial roads and completed improvements around school zones at 12 schools so far.

“We are proud to celebrate five years of impact of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program safeguarding young students on their way to and from school. The successful achievements of the program pave the way for long-term sustainable changes across Pleiku City and for Vietnam,” shares Eva Moldovanyi, Programme Manager at Fondation Botnar.

### **A lasting legacy: from a local program to international recognition**

Among other achievements, the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program had an impact at a national and international levels:

- Approval of the first School Zone Definition by the Pleiku People’s Committee through the legal document. This Definition will apply to new schools and existing schools undergoing modifications in the city, providing better protection for students commuting to and from school.
- Approval of the first Traffic Safety E-curriculum by Ministry of Education and Training, to be used as a reference for integrated teaching and activities on traffic safety education in the primary school system nationwide.
- The national and local governments have been awarded with two international awards: The Prince Michael International Road Traffic Safety Award 2020 for great contribution to the improvement of road safety around the world, and the International Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award 2022 for noteworthy road safety practices that can inspire other cities to take bold steps to reach zero traffic deaths among children and youth in their communities.

### **A milestone to protect all youth in Vietnam: National Government of Vietnam endorses the *Safe School Zones Guide Vietnam***

Building on the national expansion of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program, the government - in partnership with the FIA Foundation and AIP Foundation - started the development of the *Safe School Zones Vietnam Guide (SSZ Guide)* in October 2021. The goal was to create a reliable blueprint to address on a larger scale the safe mobility issue around schools across the country. In August 2023, the *SSZ Guide* was endorsed by the Ministry of Transport as the first national reference material on safe school zones. The *SSZ Guide* is now a government-endorsed resource for local authorities to assess and implement solutions to improve traffic safety conditions in school zones. A national workshop on the *SSZ Guide* was organized for all transport stakeholders in Vietnam, including 63 Department of Transportation representatives from across the country who learned how to apply it in their own province in October 2023.

### **Replicability: Ensuring long-term sustainability of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program**

The work that started in Pleiku City forms a model that can be replicated in national and global contexts. Key elements include using evidence-based systems for data collection—such as the iRAP Star Rating for Schools methodology—developing local capacity in applying these technologies, forming partnerships across the public and private sectors, launching awareness campaigns designed to mobilize the public, and demonstrating the proven value of investing in road safety to governments. The *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* program's holistic approach benefits

the youngest people across Vietnam to keep them safe when traveling to access education and build their future. Building on the momentum of the *Slow Zones, Safe Zones* project, AIP Foundation and government partners will continue our efforts to replicate the safe school zone model on a national scale.

###

#### **About the Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge (BCRSC)**

The Botnar Child Road Safety Challenge programme is designed to address locally relevant road safety problems that affect children in small-and mid-sized cities in seven priority countries with practical, innovative, multi-sectorial and evidence-based interventions. The Challenge is managed by the Global Road Safety Partnership, a hosted program of the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies and based in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### **About Fondation Botnar**

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss philanthropic foundation working to improve the health and wellbeing of young people living in cities around the world. Advocating for the inclusion of youth voices and the equitable use of AI and digital technology, the foundation invests in and supports innovative programs and research, and brings together actors from across sectors to create dialogue and partnerships: [www.fondationbotnar.org](http://www.fondationbotnar.org)

#### **About the Global Road Safety Partnership**

The Global Road Safety Partnership is a hosted program of the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies and based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its mission is the sustainable reduction of road-crash death and injury in low- and middle-income countries GRSP does this by creating and supporting multisector road safety partnerships that are engaged with front-line good practice road safety interventions in countries and communities throughout the world.

#### **About AIP Foundation**

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For over 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](http://www.aip-foundation.org) or connect with us on Twitter @AIPFoundation.

<https://www.aip-foundation.org/>

#### **For Media Contact**

Victoria Jönsson-Brown  
Communications Officer

AIP Foundation

Tel: (+84) 91 598 75 84

Email: [victoria.jonsson@aipf-vietnam.org](mailto:victoria.jonsson@aipf-vietnam.org)