

Action for Road Safety in Azad Jammu Kashmir

KDF – Briefing paper May 2015

Introduction

According to the World Health Organisation report every day more than 500 children and young people around the world under the age of 18 years die from road traffic accidents and 186,300 people die each year. The rates of road traffic death among children are three times higher in developing than in developed countries. The road traffic injury ranks among the top 4 causes of death for children under 5 years and is number 1 killer of young people between the ages of 15-17 years, (WHO, 2015).

In the Pakistan administered Azad Jammu Kashmir every other day a person dies due to road traffic collisions (RTC). The AJK Police data on major road traffic accidents suggests that 698 people died and 3540 people injured from 1492 accidents during (2011-14).

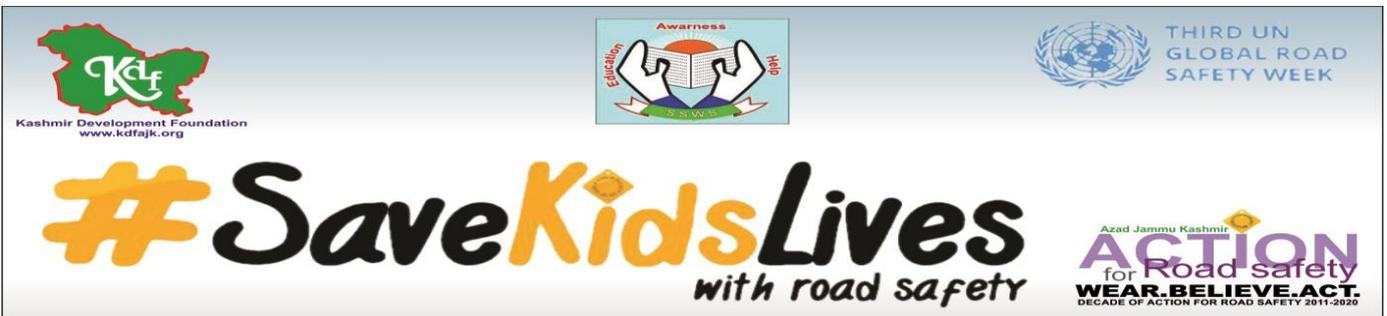
Our analysis of the data suggests that in district Poonch: one of the 10 districts of AJK where young motorcyclist often drive without wearing a helmet were involved in 35% of RTCs.

The increasing trend of risk taking behaviour among young drivers and motorcyclists, who are driving most of the time without any proper driver's training and licence on poorly constructed and maintained roads in the mountainous region, is a recipe for disaster and a major concern for road safety in Azad Jammu Kashmir.

There is generally a lack of coordination between civil society and local government departments to raise awareness on road safety and address fundamental issues and causes of road traffic accidents. There is no multi-agency collaboration in data collection and management for recording all types of road traffic collisions and their analysis to ascertain the impact on the victims and people affected by RTCs within AJK. Only AJK Police collects some statistics of major road traffic collisions and look for fault, there is no independent organisation or multiagency overview and analysis of the RTC data to understand underlying causes such as road design, surface conditions, hazard signs, faulty traffic signals etc and make recommendations on systematic changes to prevent similar incidents reoccurring.

The capacity of AJK health department and voluntary services to respond accident and emergency calls is very limited and where it exists often does not provide positive outcomes due to lack of emergency planning and preparedness to provide a coordinated response. The emergency treatment and wider health and wellbeing of the people affected by RTC's and rehabilitation of disabled victims of road traffic accidents is a major challenge.

Therefore, [Kashmir Development Foundation](#) (KDF) in partnership with local civil society and youth organisations such as Students Social Welfare Society (SSWS) has launched "[Action for Road Safety –Azad Jammu Kashmir](#)" campaign to mark the Third UN Road Safety Week (4-10 May 2015) as part of the [Decade of Action for Road safety 2011-2020](#) to raise awareness and start a meaningful dialogue between civil society and all the key stakeholders to take action for road safety in Azad Jammu Kashmir.



Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir Campaign Aims and Objectives

The Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir campaign aims to advance awareness on road safety by encouraging people and institutions to work in partnership for the following objectives:

- 1- To empower the voices of all road users through public policy advocacy and engagement in the development of Azad Jammu Kashmir road safety strategy and action plan for improvements in the road's condition and traffic management systems to reduce the number of injuries and deaths due to road traffic accidents.
- 2- To design, develop and manage road safety education and training programmes.
- 3- To advance road safety awareness campaign through community action and using broadcast, print, electronic and social media, and by encouraging motorcyclist to wear helmet and all road users to follow the road traffic rules.
- 4- To establish networks for enhancing partnerships working between government departments and civil society to support people affected by road traffic accidents.

Action for Road Safety Campaign 4th -11 May 2015

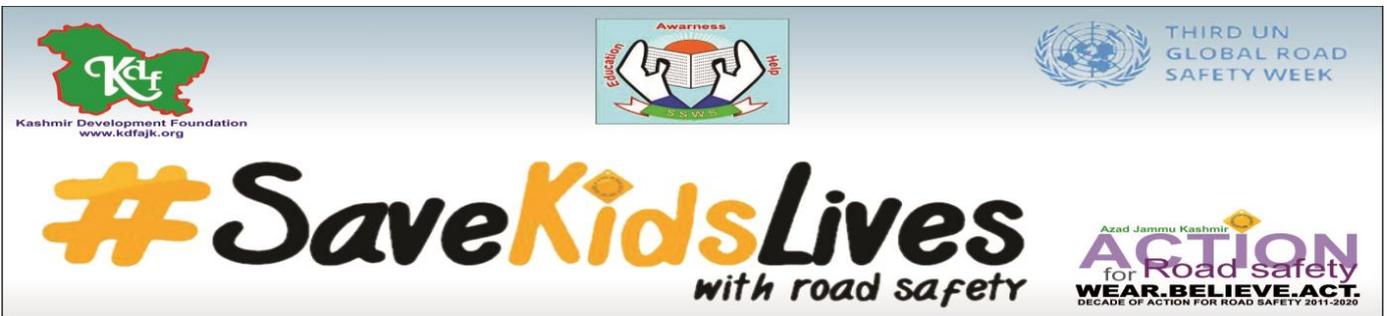
The week long **Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir** campaign started on 4th May 2015 in the District Poonch, AJK has directly engaged over 850 young people through a range of activities including special talks during school assemblies within three schools and road safety awareness walks in five towns (Paniola, Thorar, Hajira, Banjosa, Rawalakot).

150 people in the District including local administration officials, business community, youth groups, representatives of transport workers unions, press clubs, civil society organisations, religious institutions and social and political activists signed [#SaveKidsLives Child Declaration](#) and pledged to support the aims and objectives of the Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir campaign.

During the Road Safety week (4-11 May) a very well-coordinated media campaign has significantly contributed in raising road safety awareness and dissemination of the road safety messages within all sections of the society through social media, newspapers adverts, and live interviews in the popular talk shows on local FM Radio. Our analysis of the dedicated "[Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir](#)" Facebook page found that we reached 22115 people in total and 5407 people liked, commented, shared or clicked on the campaign posts.

Furthermore, the District Mufti has recorded an on-line video message in support of the Action for Road Safety Campaign and wrote a letter to the Imams of 30 Mosques advising them to include Road Safety awareness in their Friday prayer sermons' on 8th May 2015. The Deputy Commissioner - Poonch, Assistant Commissioner Hajira, Inspector Traffic Police Rawalakot, Principal P.G Degree College Rawalakot, Degree College Thorar, Head teachers of private colleges and schools, President all AJK Traders Union and civil society activists also recorded their video messages in support of the campaign that were uploaded and widely shared across social media networks. This media strategy helped the campaign in its outreach to over 23,175 people in District Poonch and beyond.

KDF Head Office: H.No 461, St. No 7A, Phase 5, Ghori Town, Islamabad – 47331 Tel: +92-3215488098



Follow up actions

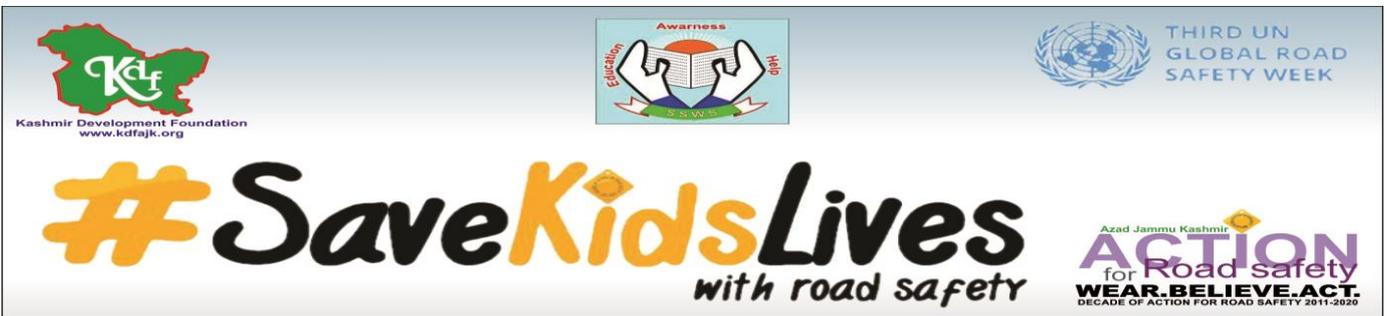
Our capacity is limited but we are committed to advance "Action for Road Safety – Azad Jammu Kashmir through working in partnership with stakeholders and community voluntary action. Going forward we endeavour to take following actions for achievement of the aims and objectives of our campaign.

- 1- We seek assistance from local, national and international organisations to build our capacity to develop an advancing Road safety awareness project across all the regions of our State.
- 2- Establish networks and partnerships with all key stakeholders to develop a coordinated approach on Road Safety.
- 3- Keep all the people and volunteers engaged in this year campaign updated on the progress and share relevant information to advance the knowledge and awareness on Road safety.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback from our engagement with a range of civil society stakeholders and key government official through meetings, road safety awareness walks and special talks during school assemblies and social media interactions as part of KDF and SSWS joint pilot project during Third UN Road Safety Week (4-11 May 2015) in District Poonch, Azad Jammu Kashmir, we recommend that:

- 1- The Azad Government of the State of Jammu Kashmir identify a lead agency in government to work in partnership with all stakeholders to develop AJK road safety strategy and action plan;
- 2- The local administration in each District undertake a comprehensive road safety risk assessment of all the local, PWD maintained roads and highways within all districts of AJK to ensure that the road design and surface condition is safe for public use and meet the pre-requisite of ISO 39001:2012, *Road traffic safety (RTS) management systems*
- 3- The Highways and local government departments ensure that all the roads and highways in AJK should be constructed, upgraded and maintained according to the internationally accepted road design and safety standards such as AASHTO Road Design Guidelines
- 4- AJK Traffic and Motorway Police to work in partnership with civil society organisation to raise road safety awareness by strictly implementing licence checking schemes, developing road traffic safety management plans near schools and colleges, and assist in establishing driving training schools within each Tehsil and Municipal committee jurisdiction.
- 5- AJK Transport Authority to introduce Vehicle Testing and Road worthiness Test for all private, public and goods transport vehicles to ensure safety for all road users and make public liability insurance mandatory for all types of motor transport in AJK.



- 6- Health Department to ensure all Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Tehsil Headquarters Hospital's staff appropriately trained and equipped in handling accident and emergency and provision of rehabilitation services for the victims of Road Traffic injuries.
- 7- AJK Social Welfare Department to provide appropriate support through care and rehabilitation pathways to enable disabled victims of road traffic injuries in their early recovery and rehabilitation.
- 8- AJK Education department to make road safety awareness a part of primary school curriculum and all school and colleges in the public, private and community sector as well as religious institutions to deliver road safety awareness and first aid training for staff and students.

[Kashmir Development Foundation](http://www.kdfajk.org) would welcome opportunities for further engagement and partnership working with all the stakeholders to take action for road safety.

If you need further information, please contact: Shakeeb Farooq – Campaign Coordinator,
E-mail: shakeeb@kdfajk.org

Thank you,

Sardar Aftab Khan - Executive Director

Kashmir Development Foundation

E-mail: kdfajk@gmail.com

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