

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

A field survey has been conducted under the EU funded “Road Safety Education and Campaigning” project being implemented for our community.

Under the EU funded “Road Safety Education and Campaigning” project, which aims to contribute to the studies related to ensuring road safety by helping the community understand the factors that cause accidents and by increasing awareness on this issue, a field survey has been conducted to determine how the road safety issues are seen in the eyes of the community.

The survey was conducted in October in five residential areas including Nicosia, Famagusta, Kyrenia, Morphou over 300 participants of which 138 were women and 162 were men. Results of the study highlighted the following:

The first driving age is too low

The average age at which the survey respondents first drove a car is 15.72. On the basis of each settlement, the average age of first driving is similar. The youngest age of driving a car on the other hand, stands out to be 11.

Poor knowledge of the traffic rules

Only 25.37 per cent of survey participants' declared they learnt how to drive in driving schools. The remaining 74.63 per cent expressed that they had learnt from family members, friends, or on their own. This explains the lack of proper knowledge of many drivers around the streets.

People do not know the meanings of traffic signs correctly

Survey participants were shown 4 different traffic signs and were asked the meaning of these.

For Inbound Ring (Rotary Junction) sign only 46 per cent of respondents,

For Highway Cross Road Junction sign only 24 per cent of respondents,

For mandatory direction sign (Forward or To the Left only) 16 per cent of participants,

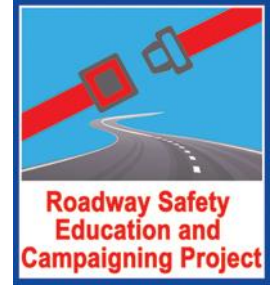
For parking is not allowed sign only 45 percent of the participants answered correctly.

The above are likely consequences of drivers not attending a driving school and the poor training quality in driving schools.



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Young people are seen as the major risk group in traffic

The participants see the drivers in 18-24 age group as the biggest risk group in traffic. This group is followed by commercial drivers and pedestrians. In general, this order is similar every where in the world. The Accident Data System records maintained by the Police interestingly indicates a remarkably high ratio of traffic accidents in which young drivers (18-24 age group) were involved; however according to the Accident Data System records, drivers between 30-35 age consist the group with the highest ratio of involvement in road accidents.

No mobiles phones while driving

Among the participants 86 per cent declared they do not use mobile phones while driving. However, violation of this rule, which is more common among male drivers, is increasing all over the world. It seems this has not yet been a very major issue for our community.

Safety belts are not used as it should be

On the one hand, 51 per cent of the participants declared they wear safety belts whenever they travel in a vehicle, but on the other hand, who said they never have, consist 33 per cent of the participants. Those who wear safety belt only while travelling on intercity roads correspond to 16 per cent of the participants. Considering the rate of injury or fatality due to road accidents, which is more than double of that in EU, use of safety belt must become a pattern.

No drunk drivers

The most gladsome result of the survey is that people are aware of the risks of drunk driving. 85 per cent of the participants declared they do not drive when they are under the influence of alcohol.

In the coming days "Road Safety Education and the Campaigning" project will be inviting all the community to participate in the "I promise" campaign and to promise to obey the traffic rules. By both the campaign materials and the training activities road safety issues will be drawn to public attention.

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