

# “KTM WALKS” CAMPAIGN

A campaign to create vehicle free zones in partnership with the community in their own neighbourhood for a fun, healthy, and livable environment.

Keywords:  
Public space, Children, Mobility, Community, Health

Project Partner:  
Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (RECPHC)

Location: Kathmandu City, Nepal  
Duration: 09/2014 - ongoing

## Target Issue and Target Group

Kathmandu was traditionally designed with communal spaces and infrastructure meant for walking and where the community could socialize. However, one unfortunate result of “development” is the transformation of the city into one that prioritizes motorized transportation. As a result, air and noise pollution in the city are increasing while quality of life is decreasing.

This campaign is an attempt to revive the core areas of Kathmandu by restricting motorized transportation and creating open public spaces for the people, which will protect our heritage, increase healthy mobility, and support local vendors and businesses.

Communities in various parts of Kathmandu, with over a thousand people reached by the campaign.



*The KTM Walks campaign involved the local community in planning and implementing the campaign ensuring local ownership and thus sustainability.*

## Strategies Employed within Project


Community engagement is a key strategy of this project. The long-term goal is to create local ownership, in which residents organize the campaign for themselves and their community. The involvement of the community also helps to encourage government involvement and attract media attention.


The campaign has been successful in several communities in Kathmandu and we are now aiming to expand it to other places in the city. The example set by these areas will encourage and promote active transportation and infrastructure development and in the long run help create more vehicle-free public spaces.



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## Main Activities

The main activities of the initial campaign were to meet with respective government authorities such as traffic and urban planning departments and to identify like-minded organizations to develop a project team. Then the project team organized meetings with community members in the selected communities. These meetings with the community outlined the benefits of participating in Ktm Walks. This ensured local support and allowed the project team to recruit volunteers.

On the day of the event, the project team worked with local volunteers to organize the event including protecting the area from traffic, conducting games and dancing, and setting up bicycle stations for children to practice cycling. Finally, the project team worked with the media to highlight the importance of the event and to emphasize the key messages.

The key partners of this campaign were the Heritage Department of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), Traffic Office, local clubs and groups, community leaders, like-minded organizations, and volunteers.

## Preliminary Results

This campaign was the first attempt to create pedestrian-friendly spaces in Kathmandu. The open and public spaces created by the program created an environment in which people felt free to express themselves through games, dance, and laughter. People were walking freely, children were playing and the local people used the opportunity to establish temporary micro businesses such as food stalls and craft. Tourism in the area also increased while levels of air and noise pollution were observed to decline. Moreover, because of the participation of the community and their enthusiasm, Ktm Walks continues to be replicated throughout the city with events being started in new communities.

## Impact

It is difficult for people to imagine things they have never experienced. The Ktm Walks campaign gives the community an opportunity to experience their neighbourhood without vehicles and the resulting noise and air pollution. Parents watch as their children play in the streets safely, which would have been unheard of before the campaign. Youth have the opportunity to perform and play in the streets, which normally are not welcoming places. By allowing people to experience what it is like to live once again in a traditional city, one built for people and not for motorized vehicles, we are creating community advocates for pedestrian spaces.

### Take-away Messages from the Project:

- Involve the local community – the success of our project was based on the communities' interest and willingness to participate. Involving the local community in planning and implementing the day ensured local ownership and thus sustainability.
- Mobilise volunteers - such campaigns involve a lot of different activities and so it is important to activate as many people as possible.
- Engage the media - the media plays a key role in broadening the reach of the initiative beyond the local community.

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