



## Portable pools and the SwimSafe Thailand experience

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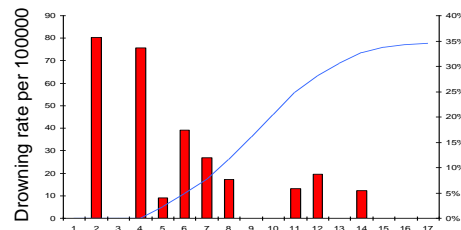
Australia - Thailand Institute  
สถาบันออสเตรเลีย - ไทย  
(2008 Established 2005)



## Child drowning in Thailand

- 2,600 Thai children die annually from drowning, about 7 each day
- Drowning is the leading cause of death for children, post-infancy
- Drowning rates are higher in rural than urban areas
- The most common locations of drowning incidents are rivers, lakes, ponds and ditches

Drowning rate versus swimming ability by age



Source: Child injury in Thailand



## The beginning...

An extension of survival swimming programs in Bangladesh and rural Chiang Rai



Identified need for safe and accessible swim teaching venues



## The portable pool



- Testing the appropriateness for rural and urban areas
- Venues - schools in urban and rural areas
  - Samut Prakan (Bangkok), Chiang Rai, Ayuthaya
  - Bangkok Patana School/Wat Pong Ploy - Bangkok



## Implementation

- SwimSafe Thailand works through primary schools to reach children aged 6-12 with survival swimming skills
- Portable pools
- Teachers trained as instructors by TLSS
- Curriculum:
  - Water safety knowledge
  - Water familiarisation
  - Basic swimming skills
  - Safe rescue techniques
  - CPR for children 8+ years



## SwimSafe graduates can...

- Swim continuously for 25m (any stroke)
- Float 90 secs (30 sec survival sequence in new venues)
- Answer basic water safety questions
- Perform safe entry/exit
- Perform CPR (8+ years)



- 15 instructors
- 350 students completed the course
- 120 children currently enrolled



## Issues

### Instructor recruitment



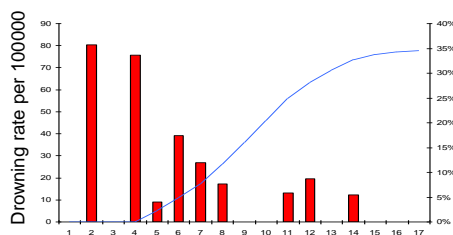
- Engaging teachers as instructors
- Lack of swimming skills among adults
- Addition to teaching portfolio
- Timetabling, regularity of classes and incorporation into school routine
- Impact on no. students taught



## ...Issues

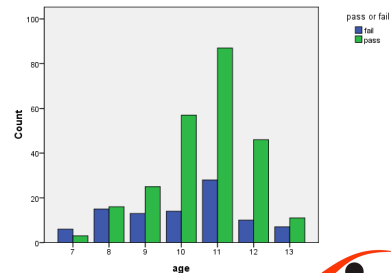
- Teaching young students
  - The absence of 6 yr olds is telling; also very few 7-8 year olds

Drowning rate versus swimming ability by age



Source: Child injury in Thailand

Overall pass by age



SwimSafe  
PROFESSIONAL SWIMMING INSTRUCTORS

## ...Issues

Portable pool structure and maintenance

- Water quality
- Training and monitoring
- Responsibility for maintenance
- Redesigned portable pool model



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## ...Issues

### Monitoring

- Distance makes monitoring in Chiang Rai very difficult



## Lessons learnt

### Program

- The need for higher level engagement and advocacy
  - Local leadership at least at the community level
  - Policymakers
  - Importance of a network of projects

### Operational

- Training focus on younger students - workshops
- Maintenance in the hands of instructors – site manager
- Monitoring – ongoing oversight by project staff
- Need for a cohort of available instructing staff – ability to operate regularly



## Achievements



- Bangkok Patana School – public/private partnerships
- Samut Prakan school has commenced construction on an in-ground pool



## ...Achievements

- Chiang Rai – on track to teaching all students from 4 schools
  - Summer program– trialling payment for classes
- Local ownership, prestige and positive community response



Thank you



**SwimSafe**

PREVENTING CHILD DROWNING

[www.swimsafe.org](http://www.swimsafe.org)