

SwimSafe

aiding children to save themselves from risk of drowning



Why SwimSafe?

Drowning is one of the major causes of death among children in both high & lower-middle-income countries. World Health Organisation (WHO) counts annually over 320,000 drowning deaths worldwide while BHIS-2016 revealed around 14,500 deaths in Bangladesh of children under 18 each year. In Bangladesh, children usually learn swimming in unsafe open water bodies without the supervision of adults or any qualified swimming instructors. To protect children from drowning, CIPRB has designed the survival swimming teaching program “SwimSafe”, which is a copyright programme of the organization, now has been recommended by WHO. The SwimSafe intervention was found 96% protective.

Modified Pond – venue for swimming learning

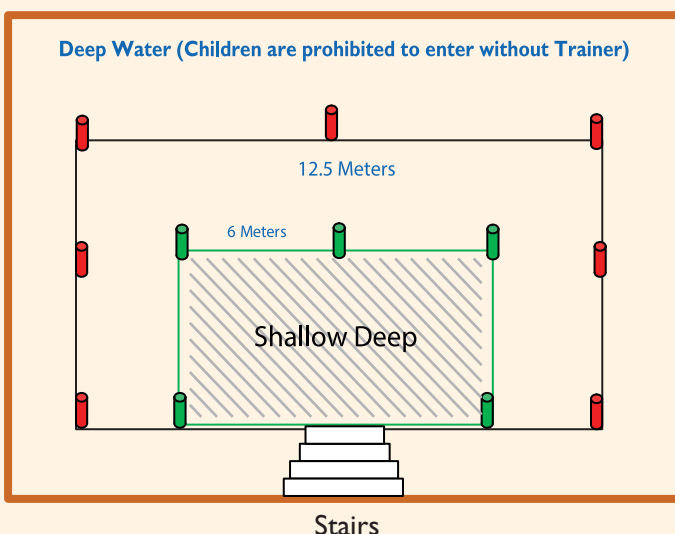
Rural ponds are not safe for children. To ensure safety the ponds are modified by a bamboo infrastructure. The structure has two compartments, the shallow and deep water compartments. The depth of the shallow water is 60-70 cm/24-30 inches, which is equivalent to 6-10-year-old children's waist or chest height, which is considered as drowning risk-free for those children. Children learn the preliminary skills including push, glide, kick, arm pull and floating in the shallow area. The outer deep water compartment is secured by a bamboo fencing. This outer deep water is for swimming 25 metres and treading or floating 30 seconds.

Ponds are selected at the rural communities with support of local elites for swimming teaching. Clean water with no fish farming and no sewerage line on the pond are the main criteria of ponds selection.

Portable swimming pools are suitable for teaching swimming to the urban children.

Standard of Swimming

According to international swimming standard if a child aged 6-10 years can swim 25 metres without any support, float for 30 seconds and can perform land-based rescue is certified as a swim graduate.



Community Swimming Instructor (CSI)

CSIs are selected from communities following specific set of capacities to teach swimming to children in selected ponds from the same locality. CSIs are equipped on conducting swimming teaching for children through intensive 5-day training by SwimSafe Master Trainers. CIPRB has developed a group of SwimSafe Master Trainers with technical cooperation from Bangladesh Swimming Federation.

Community Led Management of SwimSafe

CIPRB has formed a community-based committee named Village Injury Prevention Committee (VIPC) comprises of the local elected representative, religious leader, school teacher, Anchal Maa and CSI. VIPC members meet in monthly meeting where Project Coordinator/ Upazila Coordinator along with the Supervisors join.. Issues regarding swimming teaching activities, first aid, injury risk reduction, and practical solutions for implementation problems are discussed in such meetings to run the intervention. CSIs do organize parents' awareness sessions immediate before starting swimming teaching batch while the Supervisors of the SwimSafe centres facilitate the sessions, which usually being organized near the SwimSafe centre.



Swimming Learning Process

Children are provided swimming teaching by a trained CSIs following SwimSafe manual in modified structures engaging two CSIs – one male and one female who conduct sessions separately. Each batch comprises of 15-25 children with around 50% girls. CSI divides 15 children into three groups having 5 children who are trained for 30 minutes each day. Generally CSI-to-child ratio is 1:5 while in case of disabled children the ratio is 1:1.

Swimming Skills

There are 21 steps to learn swimming. Children need about 2 weeks to learn swimming skills. Children are require to fulfill a set of graduation criteria to become SwimSafe graduate.

