



**FIRST REPORT**  
**SwimSafe Danang – 2010-2011**  
**A Drowning Prevention Program**  
**supported by the Australian Government**

**Presented by:**  
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### Background

SwimSafe aims to prevent drowning among children aged 6-12 years in Asia. The program was developed by the Royal Life Saving Society-Australia (RLSSA) and The Alliance for Safe Children (TASC) in response to overwhelming evidence that drowning is the leading killer of children in Asia, post infancy. Working with national partners in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Vietnam, SwimSafe is increasing community awareness of drowning risks and teaching children practical survival swimming skills. These skills can confer lifelong protection against drowning.

Since 2009 SwimSafe Danang has adopted a unique approach to providing children with access to swimming lessons by employing ten low-technology portable pools located at primary schools (as well as natural beach venues and an in-ground hospital rehabilitation pool). Assessment of the suitability of the portable swimming pools is ongoing with a view to determining whether they are a viable and cost effective option to extend survival swimming courses across both urban and rural Vietnam.

In 2010, with Australian Government support, SwimSafe Danang is on track to bringing survival swimming lessons to 5,000 primary school students across the province (in addition to the nearly 5,000 students taught in the pilot year). As of August 2010, towards the end of the summer vacation program during which SwimSafe Danang operates at capacity, the program is successfully engaging local partners and communities and developing local capacity to provide quality survival swimming classes and developing children's ability to protect themselves from drowning.

### Report Highlights

- SwimSafe Vacation Program well attended, 2501 in first six week cycle. More detailed analysis of results will be provided in next report.
- Project engagement with stakeholders has resulted in improvements to infrastructure, creative solutions from principals including incorporation of survival swimming lessons into school program and expansion of after school program planning
- SwimSafe curriculum reviewed and adjusted based on community, instructor and technical feedback
- SwimSafe Danang hosted Vietnamese Government National Survival Swimming Policy leadership group in 7 day training and development workshop in June 2010 with the view to replicating program in other regions across Vietnam.
- Involvement of Australian lead trainers has resulted in designation of nine local SwimSafe master trainers who now are taking the lead in training/mentoring of SwimSafe workforce and counterparts from across the regions.
- SwimSafe Danang program presented to the Australian industry at the Australian Water Safety Conference, and the AUSTSWIM National Conference.

### Achievements

Key Area:	Stakeholder Engagement
<b>Specific Objective:</b>	To engage key stakeholders in the development and implementation of the program in Danang. These key stakeholders include but are not limited to; program partners, policy makers, government officials, administrators, trainers, parents and participants.
<b>Funded Components (Output)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Management of key partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close and continued cooperation between RLSSA, TASC and the Hanoi School of Public Health (HSPH).</li><li>• Regular meetings, cooperation and planning with the Danang Departments of</li></ul>

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	<p>Education and Health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts executed with Danang Department of Education.</li> <li>• Meetings with District Education Officers</li> <li>• Contract with Son Tra Life Guard Service (beach venue)</li> <li>• Public statements of support from Danang People's Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement of school principals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School principals engaged at all stages of the process and assuming an increasingly leadership role in program implementation.</li> <li>• Individual (usually school principal) identified at each venue to coordinate project. Contracts executed with each venue coordinator detailing responsibilities and payment process.</li> </ul>
<b>Central Government engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is considering adopting the SwimSafe curriculum as a core strategy for child drowning prevention for Vietnam.</li> <li>• Training workshop conducted in July 2010 with 14 teachers from other provinces to evaluate the program's potential as a national drowning prevention program.</li> <li>• Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) developed between Hanoi School of Public Health (HSPH) and MOET regarding the SwimSafe program. The MoU identifies TASC/RLSSA/HSPH as technically responsible for the program monitoring process.</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA), as chairs of the National Policy on Child Drowning Prevention, have been briefed on the program and potential links to the national survival swimming policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Area: Drowning Prevention Program</b>	
<b>Specific Objective:</b>	To develop, implement and review the survival swimming program in 12 venues and reaching at least 6,000 students.
<b>Funded Components (Outputs)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Implementation plan</b>	<p>An implementation plan guided recommencement of the SwimSafe Danang program in 2010. The plan comprised of several components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracts – executed with key stakeholders to ensure clear identification of roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Comprehensive review of SwimSafe Danang curricula - conducted by RLSSA and TASC. Adjustments were targeted at catering for all levels of swimming ability, streamlining teaching and assessment processes and ensuring appropriateness of testing criteria.</li> <li>• Training - new and returning SwimSafe instructors were trained in the revised curriculum through a series of Training of Trainer and instructor training workshops in April-May 2010.</li> <li>• Venue preparation - each venue was re-assessed for its infrastructure needs, (pool base, shade cover, water source, electrical source, filtration system, and pool security) and significant improvements made to better support maintenance and the continuous use of pools.</li> <li>• Training in maintenance and water quality also provided prior to program commencement in 2010.</li> </ul>
<b>Vacation program implementation</b>	<p>SwimSafe Danang 2010 began in May 2010 across 12 locations – 10 primary school portable pool venues, one in-ground pool and at 1 beach venue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,501 children enrolled in the first 6 week training cycle, completed in July 2010.</li> <li>• Classes operated Monday-Saturday in the early morning and late afternoon, avoiding the midday heat and sun.</li> <li>• The second cycle of training began in mid July. The program is on track to reach or</li> </ul>

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	<p>exceed 6,000 children when the after-school sessions are completed in late October.</p> <p>Preliminary analysis of data collected thus far shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children tested: 2319 total tested; 52% boys; 48 % girls</li> <li>• 53 % of the children were 9 years or younger.</li> <li>• The overall pass rate for all applicable tested skills tested was 52.8%. Unsurprisingly, older children had higher success rates on the tests than younger children.</li> <li>• Percent who passed survival skills test: 55 %;</li> <li>• Percent who passed swimming test of 25 metres: 60 %;</li> <li>• Percent who swam 10-24 metres: 26%</li> </ul>
<b>After school program implementation</b>	<p>An after school program is planned at all portable pool venues and the rehabilitation hospital pool following the vacation period (late August). Two schools have also indicated a desire to operate morning (before school) SwimSafe classes which will increase the number of students participating.</p>

<b>Key Area:</b>	<b>SwimSafe Trainer Support</b>
<b>Specific Objective:</b>	To supervise, mentor and increase the capacity of the network of SwimSafe trainers. This objective includes recruitment and remuneration, as well as the investigation of sustainability measures for future program implementation.
<b>Funded Components (Outputs)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Deliver train the trainer workshop and support activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop conducted by RLSSA certified trainer for 22 'Trainer of Trainers' (TOTs) in late April 2010. Training focused on adjustments to the curricula since 2009.</li> <li>• The TOT group ran a series of three instructor training workshops for an additional 80 teachers. This included approximately 10 teachers new to the program since 2009. New instructors were partnered with experienced teachers in the first round of the 2010 program.</li> </ul>
<b>Trainer supervision mentoring and support</b>	<p>On two occasions, certified RLSSA trainers have visited Danang to provide mentoring and support to the core group of TOT SwimSafe instructors through curriculum update and skills building workshops. As a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 instructors have been certified as qualified Instructor Trainers for SwimSafe Vietnam.</li> <li>• This group now represents a TOT Advisory Group, an enhanced training resource for SwimSafe Danang, and they have become a potential training resource for any new SwimSafe Programs in Vietnam.</li> <li>• Professional Standards Guidelines for the SwimSafe (Danang) Trainer accreditation scheme have been drafted which offer clear criteria for trainer and instructor certification.</li> </ul>
<b>Trainer recruitment and remuneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just over 100 teachers and lifeguards were recruited as SwimSafe instructors for the 2010 season. The majority of these returned after being part of the program in 2009.</li> <li>• Instructors are currently remunerated by the SwimSafe Program.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Area:</b>	<b>SwimSafe Venue Management</b>
<b>Specific Objective:</b>	To develop and implement the venue management, safety and security plan across the 12 SwimSafe venues.

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<b>Funded Components (Outputs)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Development of venue management plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2010 venue management plan identifies an individual point of liaison for the program team at each location. This person (generally the school principal) is responsible for managing all aspects of program implementation at their venue, including logistics, venue preparation, class scheduling and payment of instructors.</li> <li>A locally resourced model for venue preparation and management has been developed. This includes standards for construction of pool venues and portable pools, as well as conduct of operations and filtration.</li> </ul>
<b>Development of safety and security plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All pool venues have appropriate pool fencing and shade covers. Teacher/student ratios are in place as a safety standard as well as a teaching effectiveness measure. Ratios are adjusted at beach locations.</li> <li>All instructors are certified in CPR and must have a mobile telephone at hand at all times.</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation of venue management, safety and security plan</b>	<p>Venue preparation for the 2010 SwimSafe program included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New pool filtration systems installed at 8 venues</li> <li>Hardier (weather resistant) permanent sunshades at 5 venues</li> <li>Bases for pools laid at 5 venues</li> <li>Improvements to pool security, water systems, and electrical systems at all venues</li> <li>Every SwimSafe school has benefitted from this infrastructure upgrade. While these are not recurring costs, maintenance will be an ongoing issue.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Area:</b>	<b>Building Capacity</b>
<b>Specific Objective:</b>	To utilise SwimSafe Danang as a demonstration project in coordination with the World Conference on Drowning Prevention (WCDP) activities to raise awareness of Australian government support and build capacity in Vietnam, Australia and other Low and Middle Income Countries.
<b>Funded Components (Outputs)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
<b>Program launch event(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch events at individual locations brought together members of the district governing authorities, the school administration, and the community to recognise the start of the summer program.</li> </ul>
<b>PR &amp; Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least two feature articles on the program have appeared in the local Danang press.</li> <li>SwimSafe was featured as a continuation at the Safe Danang Project close out workshop in May attended by senior local government officials including the Vice Chair of the Danang People's Committee. Press coverage of the meeting was extensive.</li> <li>Facilitated initial plans for SwimSafe launch with Minister Smith, which was subsequently cancelled due to election.</li> </ul>
<b>Visibility and recognition of Australian Government contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banners at each venue acknowledge Australian Government contribution to the program.</li> <li>SwimSafe T-Shirts provided to each graduate include Aus Aid logo.</li> <li>AusAID support recognised on SwimSafe website <a href="http://www.swimsafe.org">www.swimsafe.org</a>.</li> <li>SwimSafe Danang is closely linked with another Australian Government supported regional project, the International Drowning Research Centre in Dhaka, Bangladesh.</li> </ul>
<b>Linking SwimSafe to WCDP activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans are in place to include a SwimSafe Danang interactive workshop component in the WCDP program. The interactive workshop will allow representatives from a number of countries and organisations to participate in a workshop aimed at</li> </ul>

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### **Linking SwimSafe to Vietnamese Government Agenda**

- building capacity to design and implement similar initiatives.
- MOET is considering adopting the SwimSafe curriculum as a core strategy for child drowning prevention for Vietnam.
- With a small training grant from UNICEF, in late July MOET brought 14 candidates from provinces with high drowning rates to participate in SwimSafe training.
  - Training was conducted by core group of 9 Danang TOTs (with RLSSA support)
  - The MoU between MOET and HSPH regarding SwimSafe Danang and the curriculum deepens ties between the program and the Vietnamese Government agenda on drowning prevention.

### **Issues**

#### **Program**

- Preliminary data collected from first cycle of vacation program shows significantly lower pass rates for younger students (aged 6-8 years).
- While expected to a degree from children in the earlier stages of development, ongoing curriculum review is necessary to assess appropriateness for children of all ages.

#### **Operational**

- Water quality in portable pools - Despite improvements since 2009 (including local sourcing of quality filtration systems), chemical imbalances and debris in the water associated with high rotation of people through the pools continues to pose a problem.
- RLSSA has provided technical support and advice and the program is testing a number of solutions across the 10 venues as an ongoing component of its operational research.
- Safety and security - Upgrades to pool sites have improved pool security, preventing unsupervised children from accessing the area.
- SwimSafe Danang is working closely with school principals to monitor and ensure appropriate use of the pools.

#### **Strategic**

- SwimSafe Danang builds the drowning prevention capacity of individuals and communities. These skills are a highly valuable resource.
- Anecdotal evidence of the SwimSafe curricula being used outside the scope of the program is concerning. Standards of safety and security are an absolute priority of the program and unauthorised use of the curricula poses a number of risks.
- In response, TASC has worked with the Hanoi School of Public Health to generate a MoU with MOET regarding the application of the SwimSafe curricula:
  - Further application requires adequate monitoring by qualified swimming instructors before certification of other programs can be granted.
  - TASC and RLSSA are technically responsible for advising on the content of the monitoring process.
  - SwimSafe Danang certified trainers represent the Vietnamese technically qualified persons capable of assessing the teaching proficiency of other SwimSafe program teachers.
- RLSSA is also developing a blueprint to help regulate the establishment of new survival swimming programs. This will be an internationally recognised framework of program standards.

### **Planned activities**

In the second half of 2010, SwimSafe Danang will:

- Complete the second round of vacation program with an anticipated participation of 2500 children
- Complete a detailed analysis of results from vacation program for future adjustment, reporting and changes to curriculum



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- Develop and implement plans for the after school program, including negotiation with schools on timing, volume and community contribution to costs
- Consider options for use of portable pool resources over the winter period including option to maintain 5 pools in key areas considering increased investment in associated infrastructure; shade, fencing, change rooms
- Continue to plan and prepare for WCDP including seeking abstracts from SwimSafe Danang partners, preparation for interactive workshop
- Continue to work with Vietnamese Government partners on developing national policy on drowning prevention including the survival swimming policy
- Support field exchange with partners from Philippines and potentially Cambodia
- Generation of marketing materials for fundraising program
- Initiate discussions with partners regarding future arrangements including community and government contributions to program sustainability.

### Sustainability

The following points relate to project impact and sustainability:

- Royal Life Saving has secured Overseas Aid Gift Deductibility Status (OAGDS) and been gazetted as an overseas relief fund
- Royal Life Saving has commenced planning for fundraising for child drowning prevention including SwimSafe Danang as a key priority.
- Royal Life Saving has commenced negotiations with key industry partners regarding fundraising strategies
- Royal Life Saving incorporated SwimSafe Danang into sponsorship strategy for World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2011
- Royal Life Saving has partnered with Vietnamese Government's survival swimming policy in order to exchange knowledge and expertise and assist in planning for national implementation of stated policy
- Royal Life Saving has initiated discussion with local partners on potential contributions in future years including supervision, security and instructor costs, and including discussion of strategies to increase community contributions
- Royal Life Saving secured trainer and volunteer participation in program in partnership with RLSS New South Wales Branch
- Royal Life Saving secured two volunteer positions under the VIDA program for 2011. Volunteers will provide trainer mentoring and support to local master trainers and instructors. Recruitment is underway and VIDAs will be in country in March 2011
- Royal Life Saving has made board and branch board presentations to deepen organisational commitment and secure financial contributions to program

### Comment

The Danang community has embraced SwimSafe Danang in 2010 with a growing awareness of its own capacity to address the issue of child drowning. Enthusiasm and commitment to the program exist at all levels, from the Departments of Education and Health to school communities, parents and the participating children themselves. At the policy level, SwimSafe partners are actively engaged in MOET's development of a national policy on drowning prevention and the Danang program is considered a pilot model for the rest of Vietnam.

The after school SwimSafe program will begin at the end of August in all but beach venues. This program is important for integrating SwimSafe activities into regular school activities and the desire of at least two schools to introduce additional morning classes is a clear indicator that this process is well underway.

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In a similar display of community engagement in the program, in August the SwimSafe Danang team were invited on separate occasions by two Danang districts to attend weekend outings together with school staff and district officials as an expression of the communities' appreciation towards the program.

The SwimSafe instructors are the backbone of the program, becoming a community resource for water safety and a public relations outreach for the program. Their continued enthusiasm significantly contributes to parental understanding about survival swimming.

This is an important time to be involved in drowning prevention in Asia. There is a growing recognition of the need for action on drowning on the world stage, and SwimSafe partners are a driving force in the Asian region. With AusAID support, RLSSA, TASC and the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) have established the International Drowning Research Centre in 2010 and TASC and RLSSA are now focusing efforts on preparation for the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Danang in May 2011, an event also sponsored by AusAID. SwimSafe Danang is integral to each of these initiatives and the reach of regional efforts to reduce child mortality from drowning.

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