



# Saving Lives: Drowning Prevention

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death among children globally, especially in Asia and Africa. The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) supports governments to test and implement proven drowning prevention interventions and works with local communities to create awareness and generate demand for services to achieve sustainable drowning prevention programs.



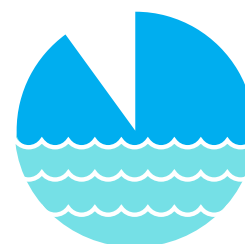
Children learning to swim in Vietnam.

## Activities

We work with governments to develop successful national drowning prevention programs, including survival swim training and water safety education and childcare centers. This includes:

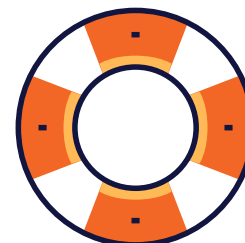
- Facilitating country ownership and handover from international donors, creating a sustainable solution.
- Designing an evidence-based pilot program, evaluate and use the proven impacts to advocate that governments scale-up, sustain and fund the program.
- Building local capacity to educate the public, media and stakeholders about the problem of drowning, effective interventions and the need to fund them.

Where we work:  
Bangladesh and Vietnam



90%

of drowning deaths occur in  
low to middle income countries



235,000

people die of drowning  
each year



For **children under 15 in Vietnam**  
and **under 5 in Bangladesh**,  
drowning is the leading  
cause of death



## Program Profile

**Government officials and CSO leaders attend a high-level consultation with national journalists on child drowning prevention.**



## Our Impact

- In **Bangladesh**, advocacy by GHAI and its partners ensured the sustainability of a community childcare program that reduced drowning deaths by 88% among children under four. The Bangladesh government took ownership of the program in 2022, approving a budget to expand it by threefold to support 8,000 community-based childcare centers and provide funds for survival swim lessons for 360,000 children 6-10 years old.
- In **Vietnam**, GHAI is partnering with the government, the World Health Organization and local experts to design, implement and sustain a national drowning prevention program that had trained 669 instructors and enrolled 14,460 children by April 2022. The partnership has led to increased co-funding at the national and provincial levels every year since the program began in 2017.

**“Our team met a father whose family lives in a remote area of Vietnam. This father brings his children to the closest pool, 20 kilometers away, so they can participate in the program. He did not have a chance to learn to swim as a child and still cannot swim. He wants his daughter to learn so that he will not have to worry about her drowning when she is playing near a river or stream.”**

**– Giang Bui, GHAI, Vietnam**

## Success Story

### The challenge:

In Vietnam’s Dong Thap province, a study found that 89% of child drowning cases occurred in rivers and could largely be prevented through interventions such as survival swim lessons and water safety education.

### GHAI’s role:

GHAI worked with the Department of Child Affairs and the local Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to increase awareness and public demand for lifesaving interventions and build political commitment and ownership. As a result of the collaboration, between 2019 and 2021 the province trained 105 local instructors, who in turn trained 4,500 children on survival swimming and 7,500 children on water safety.

### Results:

In 2021, Dong Thap People’s Committee formally approved US\$500,000 over five years to support child drowning prevention—five times more funding than the national program had provided to the province. These funds will be used to reduce the child drowning rate by 10% by providing survival swim training for at least 100,000 children.

## Global Health Advocacy Incubator



@IncubatorGHAI



info@advocacyincubator.org



advocacyincubator.org

1400 I St. NW, Suite 1200,  
Washington, DC 20005 USA

The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) supports civil society organizations advocating for public health policies that reduce death and disease.

We bring a proven advocacy approach and a global network of local partners, built on a 20-year track record of success across multiple issues in more than 60 countries.