



Project Bhasa - Ending the drowning epidemic

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The George Institute
for Global Health

Facts:

- There are 44 deaths each day due to drowning amongst children aged 1-17 years in Bangladesh.
- 72% of the land area of Bangladesh is under water each year.
- With a population of over 8 million, the Barisal Division is one of the most vulnerable areas in Bangladesh - all of its six districts are affected by water-related hazards and disasters.

Partners:

Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh
ciprb.org



The George Institute for Global Health

Supporters:

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute, UK
RNLI.org/international



Background:

- Drowning deaths in low- and middle-income countries are not related to leisure activities. People have high exposure to the risks associated with open water as they go about their daily lives: collecting water, bathing, fishing and commuting.
- Drowning deaths mostly occur in rural areas, away from hospitals and out of the sight of policy makers. To end this silent epidemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) now recommends all countries develop national drowning reduction plans.

Aims:

- Dramatically reduce rates of drowning in the Barisal Division through an integrated and evidence-based approach, using and adapting existing interventions.
- Institutionalise interventions through partnerships, securing government ownership and resources to deliver sustainable change.
- Capture project learning to develop guidelines which will assist other regions and countries to introduce their own comprehensive drowning reduction strategies.

Methods:

1. Conduct of a 400,000 person household survey, determining the size and scale of the problem in terms of deaths, disability, and social impact.
2. Suite of qualitative studies to better understand the context of burden and barriers in implementation of drowning reduction intervention.
3. Implementation and evaluation of evidence based interventions. These could include: SwimSafe (survival swimming), Anchal (crèche), flood rescue, first responders, community awareness and education, school water safety lessons, early warning systems, ferry safety, occupational safety and policy development.

Outputs:

- Create the first comprehensive drowning reduction strategy in Bangladesh, turning a WHO recommendation into practice.
- Systematic evaluation of the project will guide development of national strategies in other low and middle income country settings.

Contact:

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