Cutcut Creek Project: A Response to the Prevention of Child Drowning in the Philippines

Authors: Ma. Theresa A. Perez
          Amalia Rolloque
          Rafael Consunji, MD
An NGO

Vision: to prevent unintentional injuries in children 14 years old & below

Since 2004

Uses 3Es as framework

Strong advocacies on Injury Prevention worldwide
Drowning – the 2nd leading cause of death in Filipino children

Kills more children than TB, malnutrition, diarrhea, cancer or meningitis
**Background**

**Drowning Estimates**

**Worldwide Estimates** (WHO 2004):

- **388,000**
  - Drowning deaths in 2004

- **35% = 135,800**
  - Children ≤14 years

**Philippine Estimates**

- SKP research findings of 1963-2003 documents review (2010)

- **3,000**
  - Filipinos die due to drowning annually

- **35% = 1,050**
  - ~ 3 deaths/day
  - Children ≤14 years
DROWNING: 2nd leading cause of death for children 1-14 y.o.

1 in 30 Filipino kids’ deaths is from DROWNING  

(Kid = 0-14 years old)

1 in 20 Filipino toddlers’ deaths is from DROWNING  

(Toddler = 1-4 years old)
Background

- Through the study period, 1963-2003, drowning mortality rates have remained largely unchanged, belying its under-recognition as a public health priority.
- At least 10.5% of drowning deaths can be attributed to maritime disasters.
- Children are invisible victims of maritime disasters (i.e. periodical accounts only present aggregate sums of casualties)
- Boys age 1-4 years are nearly twice more likely to die from drowning when compared to girls of the same age group (1.5 times).
Background

Reported Maritime Disasters


Proportion of drowning deaths attributable to selected maritime disasters

Number of deaths

Other causes of drowning deaths

Maritime disaster casualties
Background Community Survey Results

- Over 90% of drowning incidents result in death.
- 80% of drowning deaths happen to males.
- Children make up 45.1% of all victims.
- Most common site for drowning: open water (sea, lake, river and creeks) in 77% of drowning cases in Los Baños & Iligan City.
- Observed risk factors for drowning in children:
  - lack of adult supervision;
  - absence of precautionary barriers & signs in risky areas;
  - lack of swimming skills in the victims.
- Under-reporting due to local burial customs.
Cutcut Creek
SKP Response for Drowning Prevention

🎉 Worked with WHO, DOH & other stakeholders
🎉 Implemented the Cutcut Creek Project
Cutcut Creek Project Implementation

- Handled site assessment
- Called for stakeholders/parents’ meeting
- Interviewed parents and children
- Built a wire fence around jump off point of children
- Placed No Swimming signs
Children interview results

- 85% were males
- 77% of kids lived within the neighborhood
- 100% thought the creek was dirty

Unpleasant experiences of children

- 59% got sick
- 41% spanked by parents
- 32% scolded by others

Pleasant experiences

- 50% really enjoyed swimming and fishing
- Not paying entrance fees to swim
Results/Outcomes

- Lack of awareness of drowning prevention among barangay officials
- Fatalistic attitude of parents
- Children would swim when it rained and creek fills up
- 86% of kids would comply with No Swimming signage but 14% would look for other swimming holes nearby
- 85% of kids recognized objections of their parents to swimming in the creek
Significance/Contribution to the Field

- Provided initial community-based data on attitudes of parents and children on drowning
- Demonstrated the lack of awareness on drowning as a leading cause of death to children and the need for advocacy and IEC materials on this issue
- Showed that a physical barrier significantly stops children from accessing the creek
Safe Kids
Philippines

Maraming Salamat

A Member Of
SAFE KIDS WORLDWIDE™