



Lifeboats



# RNLI INTERNATIONAL AQUATIC SURVIVAL CASE FOR SUPPORT

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO REDUCE ACCIDENTAL DROWNING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### GLOBAL DROWNING – THE SILENT EPIDEMIC

Death by drowning is the world's silent epidemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 372,000 annual drowning deaths. But the real figure could be much higher. For example, the WHO estimate doesn't include deaths caused by flooding or ferry accidents.

In Africa the problem is particularly acute. In countries such as Tanzania, people depend on open water to sustain their lives and livelihoods. Lakes, canals, rivers and the open sea hold hidden dangers as men, women and children collect drinking water, bathe and earn their incomes through activities such as fishing.

Above: Playing in open water in Zanzibar puts children's lives at risk  
Below: Swimming instructor teaching children to swim on Zanzibar

### OUR RESPONSE

We are determined to help reduce global drowning. Working in partnership with other lifesaving organisations, we are developing practical and innovative drowning prevention programmes and tools that can be adapted for different environments.

Built on over 190 years of RNLI lifesaving experience, these interventions address the different requirements of culture, education and geography and are particularly suitable where resources are scarce.

### OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PANJE PROJECT

By sharing knowledge, skills and resources with like-minded organisations we can help them to reduce drowning and save lives. Our Aquatic Survival programme in Tanzania will give children the skills to stay safer in and around water.

We are developing this programme on the island of Zanzibar, off mainland Tanzania. Our partner there is the Panje Project – a respected local community organisation with whom we began working in 2013. We are helping them to create a sustainable drowning prevention programme run by local people, for local people. Longer term, we aim to share the lessons learned in Zanzibar in low-resource areas elsewhere in Africa and beyond.





### ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Aquatic Survival programme tackles drowning through prevention – in the classroom and on the beach. It puts the community at the heart of the solution, by using local teachers to educate children in water safety, and local fishermen to teach swim-survival skills. Although we have made a good start there is still plenty of work to do – ensuring the programme is sustainable and its impact measurable.

Above: Giving children the skills to stay safe in and around the water.

Below: Open water swimming lessons teach children vital survival skills

### IN THE CLASSROOM

The aim of the 1-hour classroom lesson is to enable children to understand key water safety messages through a range of fun activities including playing games, drawing and singing. Panje Project staff train teachers in water safety, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid.

### ON THE BEACH

Children are much less likely to drown if they can swim. It's that simple.

Open water swimming lessons take place at four rural locations in northern Zanzibar, at Nungwi, Kendwa, Fukuchani and Mkokotoni. Children are taught practical swimming survival techniques. They learn how to stay safe in and near water, and how to help others to stay safe.

Many of the swimming instructors are recruited from the local fishing community. Fishermen receive the equivalent of about £70 a month to teach children to swim. Fishing on Zanzibar is not a year-round activity, so the extra income fishermen get from the Aquatic Survival programme is a welcome addition to their livelihoods.







### MANAGING THE PROGRAMME

The involvement of the local community makes this a potentially sustainable lifesaving solution. The programme is run by the Panje Project with RNLI support, although our input will reduce once it is fully up and running. The Panje Project is responsible for the programme's day-to-day running, including recruitment, training and evaluation.

'We need water to live, but it takes so many lives. Our aim is simple – to prevent our children drowning. If other organisations in Africa can do the same, thousands of children will learn how to save themselves by learning how to swim and survive.'



Makame Simba, swimming instructor and local fisherman

Above: Zanzibari fishermen negotiate the surf

Below: Testing the water safety training resources in school

### IMPACT

Our experience from the pilot studies gives us confidence that the safety messages and context are appropriate. We have used the lessons learned to adjust the training and improve the training materials.

In 2015 we:

- increased the number of locations for the swimming survival programme from one beach to four
- trained 12 active and 6 standby trainers
- trained 300 teachers to deliver water safety training
- taught survival swimming skills to around 460 children.





Above: Trainee swimming instructors in the classroom  
 Below: Getting key water safety messages across in the classroom  
 Bottom: Teaching swim-survival lessons in open water



**NEXT STEPS**

The next step is to develop the Aquatic Survival programme fully, so it can be used to keep more children safe on Zanzibar and elsewhere.

Working closely with our partner the Panje Project we are helping to get the programme embedded into the school curriculum. The involvement of the Ministry of Education will be crucial for the programme's long-term success.

We recognise that children aren't the only ones to potentially benefit from swim-survival lessons. So we will be looking at extending lessons to adults, starting in Nungwi.



**PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TOWARDS THIS LIFESAVING WORK**

Your support will enable us to continue to expand our Aquatic Survival programme and help to reduce drowning in developing countries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Photos: RNLI/Mike Lavis