

Hi One young world , My name is Payu , I come from Thailand

My country is a very small country, The leading cause of death is drowning, there is about 1,500 deaths per year or 5 per day. Based on statistics from the Ministry of Public Health this number is more than double those caused by automobile accidents.

When I found out about this number of death from drowning, I couldn't ignore. I decided to use my knowledge and skill in swimming to start helping children to learn how to swim.

As a young child, I can recall having difficulties concentrating and sitting still. Which lead doctors to diagnosis me with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder). However, instead of being treated with any medication my parents decided to enroll me in swimming lessons.

I committed myself to nothing but swimming, which I attribute as crucial to overcoming my ADHD symptoms. Through rigorous practice and winning numerous competitions I joined the ranks of the most famous National swimmers of Thailand. I then began to use my skill and knowledge in swimming to help other special needs children with diagnoses such as ADD, ADHD, AUTISM, CP, deafness and blindness. Determined to help, I studied sign language for a year before starting my first official project to help children to swim.

Until 2015, when I learned of the many other poor children, especially in rural areas, who are in need of swimming lessons and have the highest risk of death from drowning. Thus I began the first and only project in Thailand to teach basic swimming skills to the underprivileged, called "Walking Pool for Life." The focus is to reach those in need by providing a 5m(X)10m portable swimming pool which can be transported anywhere in the country.

It took me almost three years to realize this project. And I am hoping that there will be at least 600 children who will have learned basic swimming skills.

While attending and participating in the “ One Young World” Summit last year, I made many friends from around the world. One of them invited me to bring the “ Walking Pool for Life” Project to her hometown called “ Yala.” Yala is one of three provinces in the south of Thailand that have been embroiled in the “ South Thailand Insurgency.” This province has been a very risky and violent area that people try to avoid. No matter how dangerous though I couldn’t let it stop me from going there and giving the opportunity to poor and at-risk children to learn how to swim.

The thing I am most proud of doing during the 9 years of being a swimming teacher is that I have built a large team of swimming instructors in my own hometown. There are about 60 swimming instructors now that I have trained and nearly 5000 children whom we have taught. Almost 1200 of those children who have learned how to swim were underprivileged and or disabled. As a result the death rate of drowning in Chiang Mai, my home town, has turned green which means the number of people who die from drowning has decreased dramatically. That has made Chiang Mai one of the cities that has a low rate of death caused by drowning.

The other thing that has been so gratifying is to having had my life's story made into a film and to able to reach and inspire millions of other people in Thailand.

I am not sure if the death rate of drowning will increase or decrease in the future, but certainly, I know that those 5000 children I and my team have taught how to swim will be safe. I also hope that the death rate from drowning will not be a big part of our lives.

Thank you so much One Young world for this opportunity