



# World Drowning Prevention Day Uganda

25 July, 2022

**"Anyone can drown, no one should"**

In the past decade, drowning has been the cause of over 2.5 million preventable deaths. Despite the detrimental impact, there is a lack of awareness and recognition of drowning as a global public health threat. African nations, including Uganda, are disproportionately affected by unintentional drowning, with one of the most at risk groups being children and adolescents. Drowning is preventable through low-cost, collaborative interventions and research involving community engagement and partnerships.

To commemorate World Drowning Prevention Day (WDPD), the Ugandan Ministry of Health hosted an event on 25 July, 2022 at Rainbow International School in Kampala inviting key stakeholders to raise awareness and promote drowning prevention initiatives. The event, the first of its type in Uganda, was held in partnership with Ray United FC, Swim Safe Uganda, the Uganda Swimming Federation, and the University of Southern California.

## EVENT ACTIVITIES

- Exhibition water polo match and swimming races with the Ugandan National Team and youth USA Water Polo players
- Water rescue and first aid demonstrations
- Learn to swim demonstrations
- Testimonies from drowning survivors and first responders
- Speeches from high-ranking policy makers and other drowning prevention leaders
- Awards
- Celebratory Lunch



# PROGRAM

## WELCOME

- A. MOSES KALANZI, SWIM SAFE UGANDA
- B. HEATHER WIPFLI, RAY UNITED FC, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



## TESTIMONIES

- C. JOSEPHINE NAMULINDWA, SURVIVOR FROM KALANGALA ISLAND
- D. ROBERT LULE, MARINE POLICE FORCE, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF NATIONAL POLICE FORCE



## PARTNER REMARKS

- E. WINNIE NAMAGEMBE, MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT
- F. FREDERICK OPORIA, MAKERERE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
- G. HAFISA KASULE, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
- H. BRIAN MUSINGUZI, MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT



## KEY NOTE ADDRESS

- I. DR CHARLES OLARO, DIRECTOR OF CURATIVE SERVICES, MINISTRY OF HEALTH



## AWARDS

- J. DR. DIANA AKWINE, MINISTRY OF HEALTH; AIGP JOSEPH MUGISHA, NATIONAL POLICE FORCE; BOSCO OWECHO (IN MEMORIAM); BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES; MOSES KALANZI, SWIM SAFE UGANDA

# Quotes

“ Uganda has the world’s highest drowning death rate of 502 per 100,000 cases. That is 60 times higher than the estimate on the continent. ”

- **Dr Frederick Oporia, Makerere School of Public Health**

“ *Anyone can drown but no one should. Uganda is endowed with many natural resources of which 15 percent is open water bodies. Currently, there is no single policy related to drowning or safety while using water [transport].* ”

- **Moses Kalanzi, Executive Director, Swim Safe Uganda**

“ We need to teach school-age children swimming and water safety skills. We need to teach them so they can be safe. We need to manage flood risks which increase the risks of drowning and also ensure boats and life jackets are of required standards. ”

- **Winnie Namagembe, Ministry of Water and Environment**

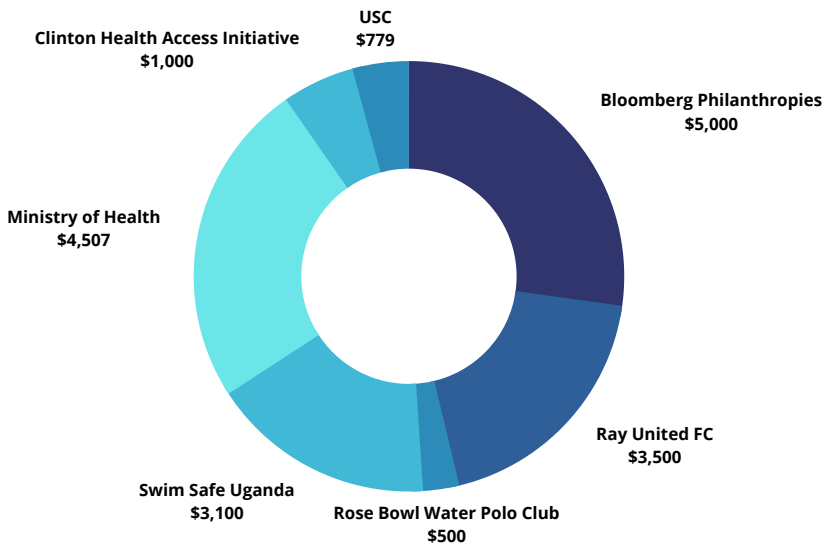
“ *About 90 percent of drowning cases in Uganda don’t survive but in other places, the number is lower at 60 percent. We must do more to protect our children and everyone should be taught how to survive in case they get in an accident on the water.* ”

- **Dr Charles Olaro, Director of Curative Services, Ministry of Health**

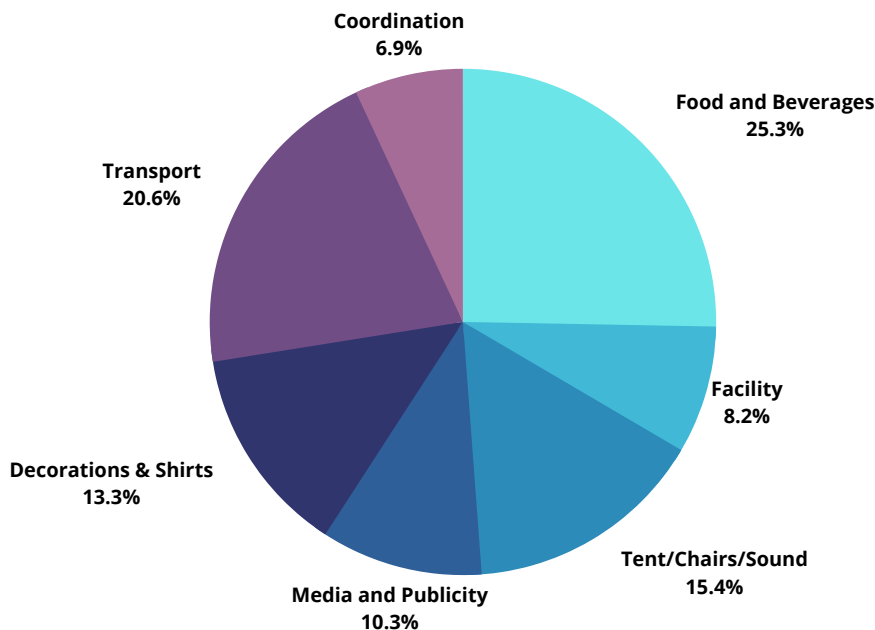


# EVENT DONORS

The event was financially supported by several national and international partners. The total amount expended for the event came to \$18,386.



# ALLOCATION OF FUNDING



The funds were allocated to the event venue and pool facilities, food and beverages for participants, event infrastructure including tents, chairs, PA system, and decoration, media and publications, transportation for special guests and community representatives, and event coordination for guests and participants.

# DROWNING PREVENTION RESEARCH

In Summer 2022, Ray United FC, in partnership with Swim Safe Uganda and the University of Southern California, led a research team to carry out a community health assessment to evaluate current drowning prevention interventions in the Mayuge district of eastern Uganda.

## CHALLENGES TO DROWNING PREVENTION

**44%** OF CHILDREN DO NOT RECEIVE DROWNING PREVENTION EDUCATION IN THEIR SCHOOLS

**54%** OF HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SWIM

**30%** OF ADULTS REPORTED BEING UNABLE TO SUPERVISE THEIR CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE IN AND AROUND THE LAKE

**25%** OF ADULTS REPORTED A LACK OF LEARN TO SWIM PROGRAMS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

## SPLASH SAFE CAMP 2022

In conjunction with WDPD, Ray United, Swim Safe Uganda, and the University of Southern California held a Splash Safe Camp to train selected youth living on Lake Victoria in water safety, drowning prevention, first aid and swim survival. The youth were also introduced to the joys of water polo through splash ball exercises and games. Camp participants each received a Splash Safe Ambassador certificate at the end of the 5-day program. The campers attended the WDPD event to demonstrate the training they were receiving and remind attendees whose lives were at stake in drowning prevention.



## ASSOCIATED PARTNER ACTIVITIES





## ADDITIONAL PARTNER ACTIVITIES

### COMMUNITY TRAINING

In the lead up to the WDPD event, the Ministry of Health, and Swim Safe Uganda ran two community first responder training programs in each Kalangla and Buvuma Island Districts. The trainings were designed to compliment the Boat Ambulances recently procured by the Ministry of Health by building a link between communities and emergency transportation services on the water. Representatives from both trainings were invited to attend the WDPD activities to learn more about the draft national strategy and advocate for more resources in their districts.



### DROWNING PREVENTION YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Swim Safe Uganda and Ray United FC, with funding support from the University of Southern California, identified and trained 30 Youth Drowning Prevention Ambassadors in Mayuge District. The training entailed community drowning prevention strategies, water safety education, survival swimming, aquatic rescue, and pre-hospital care. The Youth Ambassadors were invited to the WDPD event to formally receive their Certificates of Participation in the training program.



Keeping My  
Community Safe from  
Drowning:

hire lifeguards • Never Swim  
Alone

THROW

# MOVING FORWARD



In the days following the WDPD event, a coalition of organizations involved in hosting the event, including the Ministry of Health, Swim Safe Uganda, Ray United FC, and the University of Southern California, agreed to form a new Uganda Drowning Prevention Steering Committee which meets weekly to strategize and plan activities to advance drowning prevention research, policy and programming throughout the country.

### Coalition priorities for the next year include:

- Finalization and adoption of a national drowning prevention strategy
- Additional community assessments and data collection of drowning risks and awareness in lakeside communities throughout Uganda
- Continued training of school age children in swimming and water safety skills through splash safe camps
- Continued training of bystanders in rescue and resuscitation through community outreach and youth ambassador programs
- Increased community sensitization to drowning risks through the mass media

**Please join us in 2023 to commemorate drowning-related accidents and deaths and push for greater drowning prevention.**





# EVENT PARTNERS



**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**



**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



