

## Drowning prevention education in elementary schools

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### Objective

In 2013, the Fire Department reported 64 drownings in Goiás, 68% more than in 2012 when there were 38 records. In Itumbiara, in 2012, were recorded 5 drowning deaths, 3 of them in the city and another 2 in its surroundings. In 2013, the number of deaths in Itumbiara increased to 8 drowning deaths, 4 occurring in the city and 4 in its surroundings. In order to reduce these numbers in the city of Itumbiara, it was implemented the project "Drowning Prevention Education in Elementary Schools". Unprecedented in Goiás, the project teaches children 5-12 years of age the different ways of how to relate more safely with water, preventing drowning, who at the end will take the message to their parents and caregivers.

### Methodology

The project began in February 2014 with the production of 8,000 comic books for distribution to children in Elementary Schools. Then, 17 public schools and six private schools of primary education were visited. The project was presented and a space to deliver lectures was requested. Each lecture was given by the Soldier Mônica, properly dressed up and equipped with rescue tube and fins, and had a maximum duration of 50 minutes. The lectures were divided according to the schooling level, from 1st to 5th grade of elementary school. The children watched two videos about drowning prevention, containing tips for drowning prevention at beaches and fresh water (rivers and pools) in an animation format with total duration of 12 minutes. Following the presentation of the videos an illustrated cartoon slide show was depicted to assist the discussion of the videos. The slide show was used in order to maintain a strong interaction and reaction to the children's behaviour change proposals around water we were advising. Then, followed the distribution of a comic book, which tells a story of drowning prevention in pools and rivers.

### Results

The lectures began on April 25th 2014, at the Municipal School Arcipretti Alexander, which immediately allowed to reach an audience of 267 children. Since then over 22 elementary schools were visited, although one municipal school and one private school showed no interest in the project. In total, the project reached 6150 children. Additionally, the project brought a return of spontaneous dissemination through TV channels, radio channels, local printed newspapers, site fire department, site of the Brazilian Society of Aquatic Rescue and social networks.

### Conclusion

It was evident the exceptional interest of students and teachers of the schools visited for the proposed theme and the project triggered a constructive discussion regarding the different forms of safely enjoyment of water environment. The interaction between lifeguards and children in this project also proved very important as it creates a bond and allows the dialogue between the institution and society. The Project will continue to run in the coming years in the city of Itumbiara and will be extended to its surroundings, which are cities under the responsibility of Itumbiara division due to absence of a Fire Department in their municipality. The statistics will be monitored and annually a comparative study will be conducted in order to check the result that the Project is bringing to the city and region.