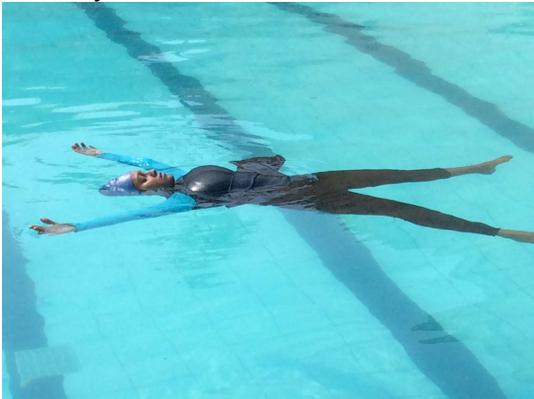


The Project's Year began with a rare visit – a peacock on our sea wall. But what makes the picture interesting is not the glory of the bird but the optical lens effect of each, huge, musket-ball sized drop of rain showing the world in upside down perfection.



Christina, the Project Founder, likes perfection and no more so than in water, beginning with a perfect Star Float, the 100% survival-safe, Float-and-Breathe FAB position for every one of our swimmers in Sri Lanka.



Achieving this perfect balance of buoyancy and body is the key to guaranteed breathing with zero expenditure of effort – the aquatic equivalent of being able to stand up before you learn to walk - and the key to swimming effortlessly because you know the water holds you up. Explaining, demonstrating and discovering that this is a skill that can be easily achieved in a set of carefully sequenced steps before a single stroke is attempted. This is what differentiates our program from the mainstream beginner swimming teaching. Delivering the skill requires the teacher to be in the water, hands supporting the student.



First-off for the year was a Crash Course to get 15 ladies, 8 seen here, being given their Water Safety Brief before getting out of their saris and into their swimsuits every day.



Daily lessons make for far more rapid progress than weekly ones. These women have had to work really hard to break out of their husbands' declarations that they cannot be spared the time out of their domestic chores. Concurrent with this was the arrival of a UK volunteer swim teacher, Anna. Her task was three-fold: give intense English lessons to our in-country manager, Vinila; assist with the Crash Course and learn how to turn non-English-speaking non-swimmers into safe, competent, back-floaters and then swimmers, taking local culture into account.

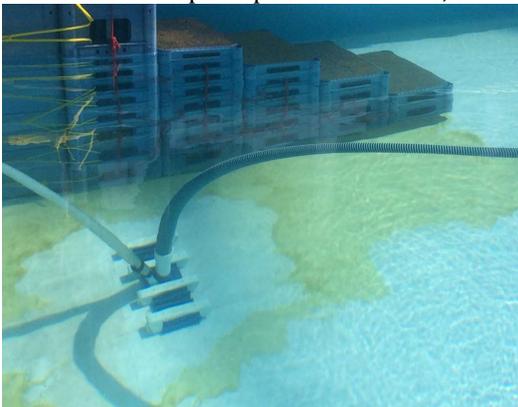


We, in turn, introduced Anna, here, to pool maintenance, local culture and sight-seeing. Volunteering has given Anna much food for thought about what is needed to set up her own swim project in some needy place. We thank her for her work and wish her well. In parallel with this, we have been focused on assisting our Vinila develop a fee-paying swim school for children under the age of 13



as part of our plan to make the Project in Sri Lanka financially independent by end 2018.

For safety reasons, children must be tall enough so that, when they stand in the pool, their heads will be above the water level; the children for private lessons are checked-off against this measuring stick. Water quality management too is a constant challenge, balancing acidity and alkalinity at the correct level for chlorination to work. And a top-up with mains water can result in a surge of clay and algae deposit from pipes repaired miles away; in the picture below, Vinila has been introduced to alum flocculent and the need to vacuum the settled sediment out to waste and not choke up the pool filter. Here, she



vacuuming-up algae from in front of our pool steps, note, made from recycled Pepsi crates.

In order to expand output, training teachers is our top priority. Four of our current students showed early talent and so, over a period of several weeks, we ran a UK Swimming Teachers Association Student Swimming Teacher Course, the first rung up the international recognition ladder. The course marks the beginning of transition from swimmer to teacher, introducing concepts of how people learn, duty of care, risk assessment, safety, lesson preparation, conduct and planning, all under supervision.



The course includes pool rescue and CPR, and thus provides lifesaving cover as well as teaching. We spread the course over both our locations: Ahangama with its 1 metre deep, 12 metre pool, and Galle with its 25 metre 2.4 metre deep pool. The latter enables us to use our Drowning Manikin to certify our students cleared to perform full depth pool rescues.

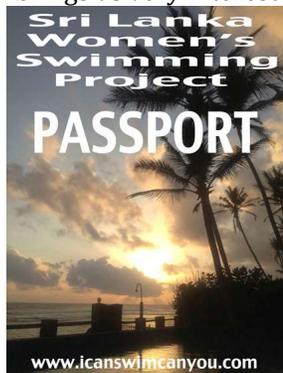
Once our four Student Teachers graduate, it means that we can do those all important one-on-one initial learn to Float-and-Breathe lessons four learners at a time. It also enables them to help Vinila meet and greet new students, answer enquires from women wishing to swim, take the register and help to record the Survival Swimming progress of the students in their Pool Swimming Passports. Finally, they act as the poolside safety monitors while lessons are in progress.



In April, came Graduation Day and four proud women under Vinila all gained their STA Student Swimming Teacher Certificates beneath the manikin they have all rescued.



The fifth girl, in the middle, is a 'special'; she is an undergraduate in marine biology, who could not swim but needed to, in order to go snorkeling safely on her field trips. Drowning Prevention brings us very interesting people.



Our *Swim Passport* is the personal document which contains the 30 progressive aquatic competency skills that non-swimmers need to acquire in order to be certified that, in any swimming pool, they can safely Float-and-Breathe for 10 minutes and swim 100 metres without touching the pool sides, ends or bottom and then climb out unaided. Of course, if they want to swim in the sea, they will need to learn about waves, tides, rips, & safety, and float longer and swim further in order to get a *Sea Visa* for their *Passports*.

In May, we were delighted to see that the Royal National Lifesaving Institution released

a superb Drowning Prevention Video, making Float-and-Breathe the first action to take on falling into water unintentionally, thus bringing FAB forward to international level.

And in June, we were very honored to become part of Speedo's *Swim Generation*. Meanwhile, throughout these activities at the Project's Headquarters at Ahangama, weekly women's swimming has continued to take place in the Jetwing Community Pool in the city of Galle without interruption.

Then, in July, a crisis!

Despite our best efforts to protect and preserve the iron frame of our 12 m portable pool, it gave way to the ravages of saltwater corrosion from the sea spray just over our sea wall. As one corner began to collapse, it over-stressed the top seam of the longest side. Between the huge tear and the frame bending over, a 50-ton mini-tsunami swept into the garden as the pool emptied in one, down to the last inch, leaving the swim mirror like a window on the floor.



Luckily our rooms were built on stilts and the water quickly drained away into the sand.



Despite this catastrophic event, August has turned out to be a good month. Speedo will fund a new pool and we have identified an identical model with a saltwater-resistant stainless steel frame in China. Now, all we need is a ship to bring it. *Thank You, Speedo.*