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HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

Projects Abroad Philippines is streamlining a Healthy Lifestyle Programme, which aims to reduce the cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart diseases, cancer and cardiovascular diseases in the country (particularly in Bogo City, San Remegio, and other Northern towns on Cebu Island).

According to the Department of Health in the Philippines, NCDs currently make up 7 out of the 10 leading causes of death in the country. These diseases are linked to common and preventable biological risk-factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and being overweight. They are also associated with certain behavioural risk factors, such as an unhealthy diet and poor nutrition, physical inactivity and the use of tobacco, alcohol and other harmful drugs.

Under the Healthy Lifestyle Programme, volunteers help to implement five different intervention strategies in the village setting. These intervention strategies are:

1. Family Health Mapping/Village Health Screening
2. Family Health Empowerment Programme – House-to-house Intervention
3. Healthy Food Behaviours – Eating Real Food Challenge
4. Healthy Cooking Recipe Books/Compilation – Cheap Recipes Under 250Php
5. Health Promotion and Awareness Campaign

■ Activities and Accomplishments:

1. Family Health Mapping/Health Screening

- a. Volunteers conducted house-to-house surveys of people in the villages (Barangay Poblacion, Tacup and Bagtik) using the NCDs High Risk Assessment Form.
- b. After completing the health survey, volunteers had to carefully evaluate all the data collected in order to identify individuals who are at risk of suffering from NCDs.
- c. Once at-risk individuals were identified, volunteers conducted health screenings with these individuals. The screenings included checking vital signs, blood pressure and blood sugar. Volunteers also calculated the Body Mass Index (BMI) of at-risk individuals using measurements of height and weight.

MONTH	TOTAL NO. OF INDIVIDUALS SCREENED	TOTAL NO. OF HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS
January	94	42
February	95	58
March	45	32

From January to March, Projects Abroad was able to reach out to 3 barangays in San Remegio. Using the NCDs High Risk Assessment Form, volunteers screened 234 individuals. Out of those 234 people screened, a total of 132 individuals were identified as high risk for suffering from NCDs.

2. Family Health Empowerment Program – House-to-house intervention

- a. Volunteers carefully evaluated the results of the health screenings and came up with a Public Health Empowerment Strategy to fight NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and cancer.
- b. They also reviewed the health-related attitudes and behaviours of members of the screened families. Volunteers conducted dietary pattern surveys and collected food journal entries from each family visited.

Note: Patients who were identified as diabetic or hypertensive were automatically referred to the Health Centre to see the doctor. Once diagnosed, these patients were then immediately registered as members of the SADIAH (San Remegio Against Diabetes and Hypertension) club wherein they are monitored by the Barangay Health Workers every week.



Volunteers conduct health checks in a local community



A volunteer conducting a house-to-house survey



Volunteers taking height and weight measurements for BMI calculations



Volunteers screening people for NCD risk

3. Healthy Food Behaviours – Eating real food challenge

- Volunteers identified local, natural foods (e.g. whole grains) and introduced these foods to the families they visited in the village.
- Volunteers also motivated members of the families to refrain from eating processed foods (e.g. canned goods).
- In January, the volunteers went to Purok Sinaguelas and started the community garden project.

4. Healthy Cooking Recipe Books/Compilation – Cheap Recipes Under 250Php

- Volunteers studied the nutritional content of the local food available and then created recipes that can be integrated with mother and child nutrition.
- Volunteers introduced these recipes to the locals during a cooking demonstration and nutrition class.
- Volunteers integrated their recipes to create a recipe book.

MONTH	RECIPES TRANSMITTED	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
January	60	60
February	105	105
March	35	35

A total of 200 people received copies of these recipes. During the cooking demonstration, the volunteers also conducted a feeding programme for the children who were there. In total, 280 children benefited from the feeding programme.

5. Health Promotion and Awareness Campaign

- a. Volunteers identified areas (villages/schools) that would most benefit from the Health Promotion Awareness Campaign.
- b. They ran workshops which focused specifically on nutrition, hygiene, alcohol and smoking.

LOCATION	TOPICS	PARTICIPANTS
Purok Sineguelas	Community gardening: composting and use of organic pesticide	45
Rural Health Centre	ECG training	25
Barangay Calambua	Dental hygiene	50
Barangay Victoria	Anti-rabies information drive	60

For this quarter, the volunteers were able to reach out to a total of 170 participants. They were also able to share 50 sets of toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste to children.



Volunteers giving a healthcare presentation to people in the local community



A demonstration with ECG equipment



Volunteers receiving ECG training

■ Other Activities:

In addition to the main components of the Healthy Lifestyle Programme, volunteers took part in a number of other important activities in the Rural Health Centre.

Medical and Dental Mission – Volunteers took part in helping a total of 150 patients in Barangay Calambua and about 130 patients in Barangay Bagtik.

Expanded Immunization Program – Volunteers went with nurses and midwives to conduct Immunization Programmes in the different barangays of the municipality. In three months, they assisted in a total of 14 barangays.



A volunteer checking the health of a baby

Anti-Dengue Drive campaign of San Remegio – Volunteers identified and destroyed possible mosquito breeding grounds to reduce the risk of dengue fever in these areas.



Volunteers on the Anti-Dengue Drive in San Remegio



Volunteers identify a pool of stagnant water as a possible mosquito breeding area



Volunteers working to create a healthier environment



Volunteers destroying mosquito breeding grounds

■ Issues and/or Activities Not Accomplished and Actions Taken:

1. Healthy Food Behaviour/Healthy Cooking Recipe

- To make the cooking demonstrations more effective, it would be beneficial for volunteers to become more familiar with the local produce and the recipes recommended in the programme.
- We would like to continue expanding the number of healthy recipes that can be shared with local individuals.

2. Other Matters

- It is important that volunteers are provided with accurate information during the induction process. For the programme to be most effective, they need to know exactly what to expect during their placement.

■ Objectives for Next Month:

1. Enhance or strengthen the activities of the Healthy Lifestyle Programme.
2. Reach out to a new Purok.
3. Constant communication, proper channelling, and networking remain important components that contribute to the success of the program.
4. Increase the number of volunteers with medical expertise who sign up.