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Health Statistics in the Philippines are becoming increasingly concerning. 7/10 leading causes of death in the country are associated with Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) or Chronic Diseases. The majority of NCDs are linked to common and preventable biological risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity. Unhealthy behavior such as an poor nutrition, sedentary lifestyles, smoking, alcohol and drug use also increase the risk of developing an NCD. Thus, Projects Abroad in the Philippines has streamlined its Healthy Lifestyle Programme which aims to reduce the burden of NCDs in the country, particularly in Bogu City and Northern Town of Cebu.

Prior to the implementation of the Healthy Lifestyle Programme, the Public Health Coordinator brought the volunteers to the City Health Office (CHO) – the main health centre of Bogu City for a site visit. They were shown the facilities, amenities, and the services that are readily available. They were also introduced to the local health staff headed by their supervisor, Dr. Menerva Millor. Volunteers were also able to met Dr. Renegado Palay, the assistant supervisor. During this time, Dr. Palay explained to the volunteers what services are provided to the public. He also explained what will be expected of the volunteers in the CHO, as well as the tasks and responsibilities that they have to carry out. Moreover, Dr. Palay encouraged the volunteers to participate in activities organised or initiated by healthcare initiatives such as the medical mission, outreach programme, expanded programme on immunisations and many more.

After this, the coordinator brought the volunteers to Barangay Nailon, which would be the pilot Barangay for the Healthy Lifestyle Programme. Firstly, we went to the Barangay Hall of Nailon for a meeting with the Barangay Captain, who gave volunteers an overview of the Barangay in terms of the number of sitios and its corresponding households, livelihood, and other demographic data.

Barangay Nailon

VILLAGE HEALTH SCREENING AND FAMILY HEALTH PLANNING

Name of Barangay: Nailon
Household: 1, 632
Livelihood: Fishing (90%), Farming (10%)

NAME OF SITIO	TOTAL NO. OF HOUSEHOLD	POPULATION
1. Punta	388	1,062
2. Looc	189	523
3. Guiwanon		220
4. Igsaog	61	298
5. Simbuawan	175	764
6. Tabunan	110	491
7. Sambag	72	306
8. Loverslane	137	564
9. Panabilan	335	1,280
10. Plaza	165	724

■ May – Sitio Tabunan

In May, the volunteers were able to visit two sitios in Barangay Nailon, conducting surveys on Family Health Screening and Family Health Mapping. In Sitio Tabunan, the volunteers were able to map out ten individuals as the priority

clients for a free screening and test. Likewise, the volunteers were able to identify 25 individuals as high risk clients. In addition, volunteers were tasked to come up with public health empowerment strategies by giving family-based nutritional advice to combat non-communicable diseases.

Mrs. Montejo, a resident from Sitio Tabunan, was suffering from hypertension and diabetes. Her husband, 69 years old, is a stroke victim. Both of them are considered priority clients in our list, hence her husband has already stopped working because of his condition. The couple relied on their daughter for their daily consumption.

According to 71-year-old Mrs. Lilia Montejo, “The last time I had my blood pressure, blood glucose, and cholesterol checked was four years ago. Though I was advised by my doctor to have my monthly check-ups, I was not able to follow his advice because of financial constraint.”

■ June

For the third and fourth week of June 2015, volunteers for Public Health were able to conduct Village Health Screening and Family Health Mapping in two different sitios of Barangay Nailon, namely: Sitio Plaza with a total of 165 households and Sitio Loverslane, with a total of 137 households. Volunteers were accompanied by a designated Barangay Health Worker and conducted house-to-house surveys, asking questions pertaining to NCDs. Volunteers also assessed and monitored the participants' vital signs including blood pressure, temperature, pulse rate and respiratory rate. On the following day, volunteers initiated a scheduled screening test, blood sugar and cholesterol check. Prior to this, the participants had received instructions for meal schedules in order to obtain more accurate data.

■ Sitio Plaza

We recorded data for a total number of 15 correspondents from Sitio Plaza, who were being screened for blood sugar and cholesterol. The figures do not reflect the total number of households in Sitio Plaza because volunteers need to consolidate data, giving priority to those who are at risk of suffering from hypertension or high blood pressure and diabetes. Out of 15 correspondents, 73.33% are suffering from hypertension or high-blood pressure (11 out of 15), 26.66% are at risk of suffering from diabetes (4 out of 10), and 20% have an elevated Cholesterol level (3 out of 15).

Mrs. Andrade, 45 years old and a mother of four, suffered a mild stroke at the age of 30. Since then, her blood pressure has been elevated. Her condition is aggravated as she still does laundry and farming work to supplement her husband's income as a carpenter. Though she has medication from the City Health Office, she has difficulty undergoing further exams due to financial problems. With the Projects Abroad initiative, the Healthy Lifestyle Programme, she was able to get a free screening test for blood sugar and cholesterol.



One of the volunteers for Public Health performing the screening test – Fasting Blood Sugar and Cholesterol Check the following day right after the mapping or survey.

■ Sitio Loverslane

We recorded data for a total number of 16 correspondents from Sitio Loverslane, who were being screened for blood sugar and cholesterol. The numerical data in this table does not reflect the actual number of households at Sitio Loverslane, for the same reason as with Sitio Plaza. Out of 16 clients, 87.50% are suffering from hypertension or high-blood pressure (14 out of 16), surprisingly only 6.25% are prone to diabetes (1 out of 16), and 18.75% are suffering from an elevated cholesterol level (3 out of 16).

Ms. Piasan, a 39-year-old mother of three, has been suffering from diabetes and high-blood pressure since the age of 25. She worked with laundry in order to supplement her husband's income as a fisherman in the village. Despite her condition, she needs to work hard to help her husband and provide for their family's daily needs, especially to support their children at school. She has been prescribed with medication for diabetes and high-blood pressure by her physician, but failed to sustain it due to financial constraint. Fortunately, she was one of the recipients of the Healthy Lifestyle Programme implemented by Projects Abroad. She received a free screening test and the records will be endorsed to the City Health Office.



One of the correspondents at Sitio Loverslane, Barangay Nailon, receiving free screening test – Fasting Blood Sugar and Cholesterol Check.

MEDICAL MISSION/OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Public Health Project in the Philippines, in partnership with the City Health Office, offers a decentralised healthcare approach that provides maternal and childcare, general outpatient and dental care, family planning and nutrition advice, control of specific diseases, health education, and environmental sanitation throughout the 29 barangays (villages/communities).



A volunteer from Public Health performing Random Blood Sugar Testing to one of the residents of Barangay Anonang Sur who avail different services during the Medical Mission.



Projects Abroad Volunteers for Medical Project joining the Medical Mission offering free Random Blood Sugar Monitoring to the residents of Barangay Dakit, Bogo City.

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING/SEMINARS

Public Health volunteers also participate in different workshops, training or seminars organised by Projects Abroad. They can also organise workshops, training or seminars themselves if they are qualified professionals such as nurses, doctors, and paramedics.

Volunteers for Public Health were invited to be part of the Paramedic Medical Team during the 8th Charter Day celebration that the City of Bogo held on June 16. As part of the team, their goal was to ensure safety and administer First Aid if necessary, among the participants of the Fun Run. This was just one of the activities where volunteers from Projects Abroad participated and made a big impact through their valuable contribution.

As part of the programme which aims to strengthen or reinforce the volunteer's learning and experience, volunteers from Public Health have organised a four-hour seminar and training on basic life support – First Aid and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This activity is designed to enable the participants from different sectors to understand the value, correct procedures, and legalities involved when administering basic life support. Furthermore, this will be integrated in our Health Education Campaign among different villages, schools, and colleges so as to promote awareness to every individual.



Projects Abroad volunteers for Public Health taking a pose at the ambulance of the City of Bogo during the Fun Run organized by the City Government in celebration of its 8th Charter Day.



A professional/qualified volunteer from Projects Abroad demonstrating how to perform Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION SURVEY AND CESSATION CAMPAIGN

In this particular programme, Projects Abroad volunteers for Public Health had to gather initial data in a village setting. They were also tasked to come up with public health empowerment strategies to combat smoking and alcohol intake in the locality in which they are assigned. Part of this is to create an empowerment workshop among healthcare workers to campaign for a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment. The volunteers conducted a house-to-house survey and completed a questionnaire during interviews. The following day, they disseminated pamphlets with all the necessary information about smoking and drinking. A total of 200 copies were distributed, which is part of our information dissemination campaign.

After four weeks, Projects Abroad has surveyed a total of 100 respondents in Sitio Tabunan and Sitio Punta in Barangay Nailon. On May 8, we organised a health seminar related to smoking and alcohol consumption and a cessation campaign. The event was successful and it was attended by half of the interviewed respondents and residents of the neighbouring sitios. This activity was aimed at raising awareness of the risks of smoking and drinking and providing ways to reduce or avoid this particular lifestyle.