

NUTRITION FAIR CONDUCTED IN SINDANGAN, ZDN

A Nutrition Information Fair was conducted in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte on July 23, 2009 in observance of the Nutrition Month Celebration and to bring more information to the people on the Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program. The municipality of Sindangan was chosen because it is the biggest town center of the province and it's accessible to nearby municipalities in the 2nd & 3rd districts. Moreover, Sindangan is among the top ten municipalities in the region with high prevalence of underweight children.

The nutrition fair was organized by the National Nutrition Council which serves as the secretariat of the Regional Nutrition Committee (RNC) and the Regional Anti Hunger Task Force (AHTF). The conduct of the fair was in coordination with the Provincial Nutrition Committee of Zamboanga del Norte and Municipal Nutrition Committee of Sindangan to promote good nutrition and hunger mitigation measures. The USAID Cooperating agencies the Health Pro for health promotions and communications and the A2Z for the micronutrient supplementation likewise played major roles in the holding of the Nutrition Fair as co-sponsors. A mini nutrition seminar was facilitated by resourced persons from the NNC, NDAP, A2Z and local resourced persons giving emphasis on the nutrition month theme "Wastong Nutrisyon Kailangan, Lifestyle Diseases Iwasan." Specifically, nutrition related topics on lifestyle diseases; healthy start for children; under nutrition in early life as risk factor chronic disease in adults and; environmental sanitation affecting health and nutrition status were discussed as well as other related programs and interventions that address problem of hunger and malnutrition.

To kick-off the fair, participants from the regional and local offices, NGOs and various associations including elementary students paraded around the town plaza. A short program followed with a HL to the Max exercises. The participating agencies, NGOs and associations were welcomed by no less than Sindangan Mayor and Chairman of the Municipal Nutrition Committee Hon. Bert S. Macias together with the Sanggunian Bayan members. Present in the Opening Program were the officials from the DOH-Center for Health Development, DOH-NNC, DA-Regional Field Unit, POPCOM, DOST, as well as the provincial officials of the Nutrition Office and the Integrated Provincial Health office as well as the Mindanao Area Manager of the Health Pro, and the Nutrition Project Officer of the A2Z.

Nutrition, medical, social and information services and activities were provided by the members of the RNC and AHTF. More than five hundred people from various walks of lives both adults and children were able to access two or more services during day. Booths were set up for the following services: Diet counseling and diabetes screening by the NDAP for people with NCDs like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus and other medically prescribed diets, BMI assessment and film showing of Busog Lusog was provided by the NNC, while health and diet care for pregnant women with distribution of buntis kit by the DOH-CHD. Counselling on the IYCF was also available for walk-in mom. Nutrition services e.g. Vit A supplementation and deworming as well as learning activities e.g. coloring/drawing, storytelling for the pre-school children were provided by nutrition section of the IPHO, USAID A2Z & Health Pro, and MSWDO. Medical and Dental Services were provided by the IPHO while the DepED conducted an Expanded Universal Medical and Dental Service with education information on the AH1N1 for the school children and their parents. The children feasted the whole day on milk,

micronutrient fortified arroz caldo and kalabasa enriched pan de sal and calamansi juice which were provided by the Provincial Nutrition office, A2Z, Feed the Children Philippines and the DOST through their techno assisted entrepreneurs. While the NFA made available for sale Iron Fortified Rice at P25.00/kilo to ensure that people can go home with rice.

To enhance the family's food and livelihood resources as well as skills and knowledge the DA-RFU, BFAR, PCA distributed vegetable seeds and information materials on the state of the art technologies for vegetable farming, fish culture and coconut cultivation, while the TESDA and DTI & BAWA conducted skills demonstrations on the production of kalabasa noodle, and bottled sardines respectively.

For the AHMP program component on manage population, the POPCOM distributed brochures on Responsible Parenting Movement and Natural Family Planning.

Local Food Processors, the Batayan Women's Association and Local Bakers (BAWA), Park & Go Bakeshop and Julie's Bakeshop also joined the fair by displaying and selling their locally produced products.

Aside from rendering services A2Z and Health Pro also donated balloons and buntings for display in the booths, tarpaulins and gift packs for the children.

At the end of the day the Health Pro conducted a question and answer contest trivia information on the nutrition & other services provided in the fair to evaluate and validate the information and services gathered by the people,

Through the Nutrition Fair the RNC and AHTF with other nutrition partners were able to encourage the local governments, non-government associations, private sector, and other stakeholders to put in place an enabling environment that would promote proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle behaviors among the residents of Sindangan and neighboring municipalities and to provide venue for health, nutrition and livelihood services and information to people who needed them most.

By: National Nutrition Council IX