GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON PRIMARY PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

ASSESSING AND PLANNING FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AMONG YOUTH

GOOD PRACTICE STATEMENTS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

World Health Organisation
Mental Health And Substance Dependence
Noncommunicable Diseases And Mental Health
Geneva

UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime
Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation Unit
Division For Operations
Vienna

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Introduction

The representatives of the local partners of the UNDCP/WHO Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse working in the Philippines met to share their experiences on assessing and planning for substance abuse prevention in Manila from 10 to 13 June 2002. The statements contained in this document were identified by the participants as best describing their own experience in five different aspects of assessing and planning for substance abuse prevention. The following participated.

Representatives of local partners

Mr Fernando 'Tots' P Rico	Addictus-Phils Inc.
Ms Julie Itaas	Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.
Ms Cerila B Salibio	Childhope Asia Philippines, Inc.
Ms Arceli Omberga	Foundation for Adolescent Development, Inc.
Mr Dennis Baceda	Foundation for Drug Information and Communication, Inc.
Ms Marilou Batayola	Higala Association, Inc.
Ms Ruth Montojo	Kahayag Foundation, Inc.
Ms Evelyn S. Galang	Kapitran Komunidad People's Coalition (KKPC)
Ms Faustina Carreon	Kaugmaon Center for Children's Concerns Foundation, Inc.
Mr Job E. Saramago	Kauswagan Community Social and Development Center
Ms Anita Morales	Metsa Foundation, Inc.
Mr Marvin Capco	Red Cross Youth Department, The National Philippine Red Cross

Observers

Ms Lilia Dulay	Chief, Preventive Education, Training and Information Division, Dangerous Drugs Board
Mr Masakuza Kawabe	Technical Officer, Prevention of Substance Abuse, WHO

Ms Cheril Rabanillo	Director, PHILCADSA

Secretariat

Mr Marco Ambrazado	Philippine Red Cross National Youth Council
Ms Giovanna Campello	UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit, Vienna
Ms Nadia Gasbarrini	UNODC Regional Office for Belarus and Russia, Moscow
Mr Rustom Mariono	Philippine Red Cross National Youth Council
Mr Romeo 'The Magnificent' S. Orilla	Philippine National Red Cross
Mr Gary Roberts	Canadian Center on Substance Abuse
Ms Katie Walker	UNODC Country Office, Hanoi

Collecting existing and new information

What works

1. Be clear with the information you need, and start with the information you have in your organization before looking for existing and new information outside your organization. (***)
2. Gathering new information can be facilitated with good rapport and trust with intended partners, which can be established through activities such as courtesy calls, meetings, community immersion and observation. (***)
3. Community immersion and observation methods can provide good qualitative information on community mechanisms and resources.
4. In data gathering, resourcefulness is essential, but it is helpful to have (or cultivate) contacts with organizations holding vital information on the nature of the problem and also concerning available resources and existing interventions. (X)
5. Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are user-friendly tools that can provide new information that can be easily interpreted. (***)
    - Key Informant Interview is an effective information gathering method. Why?
        - Identify key persons who are knowledgeable, honest and credible
        - Dealing with very knowledgeable sources
        - Can validate data from other sources
        - Can probe for more information
    - How?
        - Send formal communication through letters to community officials and person-in-charge
        - Set appointment for a meeting
        - Ensure confidentiality
        - Consider the attitudes of interviewer (e.g. Friendly, pro-people, non-judgmental, unassuming)
        - Set the tone

        - Take care to listen rather that talk because of limited time
    - Focus Group Discussion is a particularly effective information gathering method. Why?
        - Not threatening
        - Participatory
        - Natural way of telling a story
        - The information is firsthand
        - Spontaneously done in the language of the group
        - Provides natural opportunity to correct misconceptions and give information
    - How?
        - Do it in conducive place
        - Greet the participants
        - Know the participants by name
        - Begin with activities to get to know each other
        - Encourage maximum participation
6. Use youth-to-youth approach:
    - Conduct planning sessions among the youth
    - Ask youth to draft the questionnaires with supervision of youth worker

What doesn't work well

1. Although written survey is an adequate tool for data gathering, in practice it is a long, time consuming and expensive practice.

Involving youth in collecting information

What works

1. Understand the prevailing culture and practices of the targeted young people prior to gathering data through Key Informant Interviews, Immersion, FGD etc.
2. Provide comprehensive orientation and appropriate training for the young people to be involved in data gathering: (***)
   - Introduce the organization's substance abuse project and its similar past experience.
   - Ensure they understand the objectives of the program/ data collection and are committed to conducting the activity.
   - Include training in collecting information, and how to use survey tools.
   - Use practical approaches like simulations and role-plays on how to ask questions.
3. Continue to build rapport and trust with youth data gatherers by conducting a series of group sessions involving teambuilding or recreational activities identified by the youth. (***)
4. Ensure the security of data gatherers and informants by seeking assistance from proper authorities or by holding a session in a safe environment, possibly outside the community.
5. The collection of information in an informal setting accompanied by other activities helps to render more valid information. (X)
6. Affirm the participation of the youth by acknowledging the importance of their presence during the meeting and telling them that their involvement and information are critical to arriving at a good understanding of the drug situation. (***)
7. In conducting informal interviews, it helps a lot to begin with safe, comfortable topics and to use an indirect line of questioning.
8. When in the course of gathering information, it becomes apparent that a young person is in personal danger that you are not in a position to directly help with:
   - Provide immediate and ongoing support to the child/ youth

- Refer and take the person to those best able to respond to the situation
- Give great attention and respect to the wishes of the child, even when their solutions appear different to our idea of what is best -- and carefully consider any actions that are contrary to those wishes.

9. During Focus Group Discussions facilitated by youth, the role of adult/ worker is as an observer and supporter if difficulties arise.

What doesn't work well

1. If questions are posed in a very direct manner, respondents tend to be defensive, timid or intimidated.
2. Allowing young key informants time to prepare their responses can result in "manufactured" rather than accurate responses.
3. If facilitators of Focus Group Discussions forget to be culturally relevant or out of context on the social situation of the area.

Using the local situation assessment to mobilize the community

What works

1. The Community should be informed about the result of the Local Situation Assessment for maximum opportunity for mobilization and basis for appropriate action planning. (***)
2. Available community resources should be identified (Moment, Materials, Money and Manpower). Don't raise the community's hopes high in case adequate funding does not become available; however, it is important that alternate attempts be made to meet needs identified through the local assessment.
3. In mobilization, a support system of community groups needs to be in place (i.e. community steering committee, parents consent). (***)
4. Existing community organizations should be identified and mobilized to support the project; mobilization should not be limited to the local community but also include key organizations and government units in a broader network.
5. In mobilization, the needs of the target partners need to be considered (i.e. time, effort required, etc). (***)
6. Maintaining a focus on the issues and the goals rather than on questions of funding will help a lot in increasing the participation of others.
7. It's important to be flexible and be ready to adapt plans. (X)
8. In mobilizing parents:
    - Use one to one approach with mom or dad
    - Use other parents
    - Give them a personal invitation
    - Invite them to your events
    - Or, if unsuccessful, decide to move on
9. In mobilizing teachers:
    - Need to respect schedule of school (only Saturday and Sunday)

- Principals are a good entry point in organizing youth organization in the school

Challenges

1. Difficult to hold meeting with youth and barangay officials together in the beginning/ best to hold separate meeting with youth.
2. Sometimes the commitment of barangay officials is delayed/ hold a series of meetings with them to more fully orient them.
3. Priority of others may not be the same as the priorities of the project/ help them to address their priorities (e.g. referrals).

Involving the youth in planning

What works

1. Youth involvement in planning is more fruitful and facilitative if they have been involved in the Local Situation Assessment.
2. Giving full trust and confidence in the youth capacities encourages them.
3. Providing training to youth on how to do a simple action plan encourages them to yield a successful project. (***)
4. Support of the community strengthens the youth's resolve to be more actively involved.
5. The role of an adult needs to be as a facilitator and guide to the planning (e.g. providing a framework such as SMART).
6. Principle of "transparency" needs to be observed. For example, limitations of the project (i.e. financial requirements, acceptable interventions, etc. of the project funded) need to be made clear to the youth participants for proper guidance in planning.
7. There needs to be sufficient time for the whole planning process -- from the Local Situation Assessments to development of program and action plans -- to maximize quality involvement of the youth. (***)
8. Support Income Generating Plans (IGP's) designed by the youth themselves. (X)
9. Methodology used in planning should be creative and should accommodate the personal limitations of the youth participants (e.g. using role play, workshops, skits, drawings). A secretary may be assigned to each group so that the participants will not have to worry about writing. (***)
10. Introduce to the youth other perspectives to the problem or to dealing with the problem through creative means (e.g. stories).

Challenges

1. Parents deny what's actually going on in the community.
2. Indifference of the other community members.

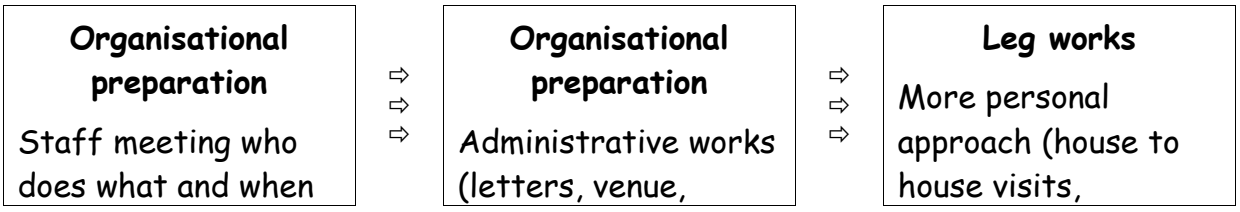
What doesn't work

1. Young people tend to become inactive when youth adviser/ s are pushy or take the lead in deciding for them.

Involving the community in planning

What works

1. Early involvement of the community enhances the feeling of ownership of the project.
2. Employ personal approaches to involving community members (e.g. individual and house-to-house visits). (***)
3. Involve all sectors in the community in the planning, whether through formal planning sessions or well-documented informal consultations (e.g. small group meetings, individual talks).
4. Principle of transparency is appreciated and minimizes suspicion.
5. Establish ownership of the project during the planning sessions through workshops (i.e. determine who does what). (***)
6. The contributions of the different sectors should be brought into the final plans.
7. Conduct final planning with all sectors involved- the output becomes a blueprint for the program implementation plan.



8. When possible, formalize the partnerships to ensure participation and support of each of the stakeholders (e.g. through signing of

Memorandum of Agreement [MOA] or a Letter of Understanding [LOU]). This serves to remind partners of their accountability and responsibility and may influence non-supportive sectors in the community to become involved in the project. (***)

Challenges

1. Lack of local council funding support despite the fact that their funds are intended for community.

The statements include rankings

(***) most important good practices
(X) least important good practices