

Initiating the Provision of Adolescent Reproductive Health Information and Services (ARHIS) to Communities in Quezon City, Beginning with District 2

Authors : Erickson Bernardo, Caridad Pineda

Abstract : The project Adolescent Reproductive Health Information and Services (ARHIS) is a nine-month pilot project which intends to bridge the existing gap between reproductive health information and services, particularly with regard to family planning and HIV, among adolescent boys and girls aged 10-19 years in the 2nd Congressional District of Quezon City, in the Philippines. It aims to increase adolescents' and young people's awareness about their reproductive health concerns and at the same time make a wide range of reproductive health (RH) services accessible and available to them. A number of methodologies were utilized in the implementation of the project. At the onset, a baseline survey was conducted by community mobilizers to gather a situational analysis of adolescents' and young people's issues and concerns. The results of this survey were then presented in a multi-stakeholders' meeting to gather community support and foster their involvement. Further, interactive learning sessions (ILS) on a variety of reproductive health topics, among young people, parents and community leaders based on the results of the baseline survey was conducted. With regard to reproductive health service provision, both facility-based delivery and conduct of outreach activities were employed. In the span of nine months, the project was able to yield the following results: • A total of 521 adolescents and youth (AY) were reached by ILS on puberty, responsible relationships, teenage pregnancy, family planning, as well as HIV & AIDS. • A total of 218 parents and community leaders were informed of AY RH-related issues and concerns. • More than 350 AYs availed of a wide range of FP services including pills - both combined oral and progestin-only, and progestin-only injectables and implants. • More than 380 AYs availed of condoms as means of STI and HIV prevention. A noble initiative of the project is the utilization of a "condom distributor", a youth leader who has been educated about STI and HIV prevention as well as correct condom use, as the focal point for condom access in the community. • A total of 25 young people, parents, and community leaders were identified as ARHIS champions who have been instrumental in the achievement of project deliverables through their dedication and commitment to support the project. The concept of adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) remains to be a major challenge in the Philippine context. This is due to the fact that majority of Filipinos are still not keen on discussing issues and concerns related to ASRH, albeit the alarming number of teenage pregnancies and the rapid increase of HIV cases among 15- 24 year olds. In addition, Republic Act 10354 or the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, requires minor adolescents to present a written parental consent prior to accessing RH services. However, with the involvement and support of parents and key community stakeholders, these barriers may be addressed. The project has demonstrated how adolescents and young people yearn for reproductive health information and services.

Keywords : adolescent sexual reproductive health, barriers to access, reproductive health information and services, teenage pregnancies

Conference Title : ICRHFP 2018 : International Conference on Reproductive Health and Family Planning

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : March 15-16, 2018