

Promoting Health Environment in Secondary School Settings FINAL REPORT

The National Youth Health Organization (NYHO) - the national network of health clubs within secondary school - is one of the programmes developed by the Adolescent and Young Adult Health and Wellness Unit, from the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with partner ministries and other stakeholders. There are now over 72 health clubs in the network. One of the goals of this programme is to develop advocacy strategies on adolescent health and well being and to empower students to be agents of change.

The network is represented in 9 out of 10 regions in Guyana. Eighteen Regional Representatives: one teacher and one student from each of the nine regions are annually elected by their peers during the National Youth Camp. These regional representatives meet at the Ministry of Health every 2 months, under the supervision of the programme coordinator, to discuss needs and plan strategic actions to empower the students respecting the regional aspects and taking in consideration the students' interest.

As part of the activities for 2006, a technical collaboration was established between MOH, through the Adolescent and Young Adult Health and Wellness Unit and PAHO, through its Health Environmental Officer, to empower members of Health Club to become agents of change, enhancing the health environment in schools and communities as an activity of the School Health Clubs. Two areas of actions were chosen: Household Water Treatment and Recycling/Management of Solid Waste.

This report contains information on goals, tasks and outcomes of this technical collaboration.

Promoting Health Environment in Secondary School Settings

Objective: To enhance country capacity on environmental health by empowering young Guyanese, teachers and students members of the National Youth Health Organization, to become community agents of change.

Activities developed:

1. Meeting to discuss strategy:

The MOH, through the Adolescent and Young Adult Health and Wellness Unit identified Promoting Health Environment in Secondary School Settings as an area to enhance, responding to regional demand after teachers and students were exposed to the importance of drinking safe water and learned feasible ways to make water safer to drink, when PAHO facilitated a session during the 2005 National Youth Camp (figure 1 to 3), attended by around hundred students. A meeting was held at the MOH with the Director of Adolescent Health Unit, MOH; the coordinator of the National Youth Health Organization and the Environmental Health Advisor from PAHO to discuss ways of enhancing youth knowledge on Environmental Health, as part of a series of meetings to discuss the MOH priorities and activities for 2006.



2. Technical collaboration discussed, approved and signed by the Ministry of Health and PAHO.
3. Work plan developed focusing on two areas of actions: Household Water Treatment and Recycling/Management of Solid Waste. All nine regions were included, targeting the sensitization of 270 youth nationwide as agents of change (30 per region). PAHO provided technical assistance, donation of kits and bins and support for hiring a project assistant (3 months). Financial support from the MOH

came under a multi-agency agreement to support Health Club Activities, including UNICEF, USAID and UNESCO. Activities will include:

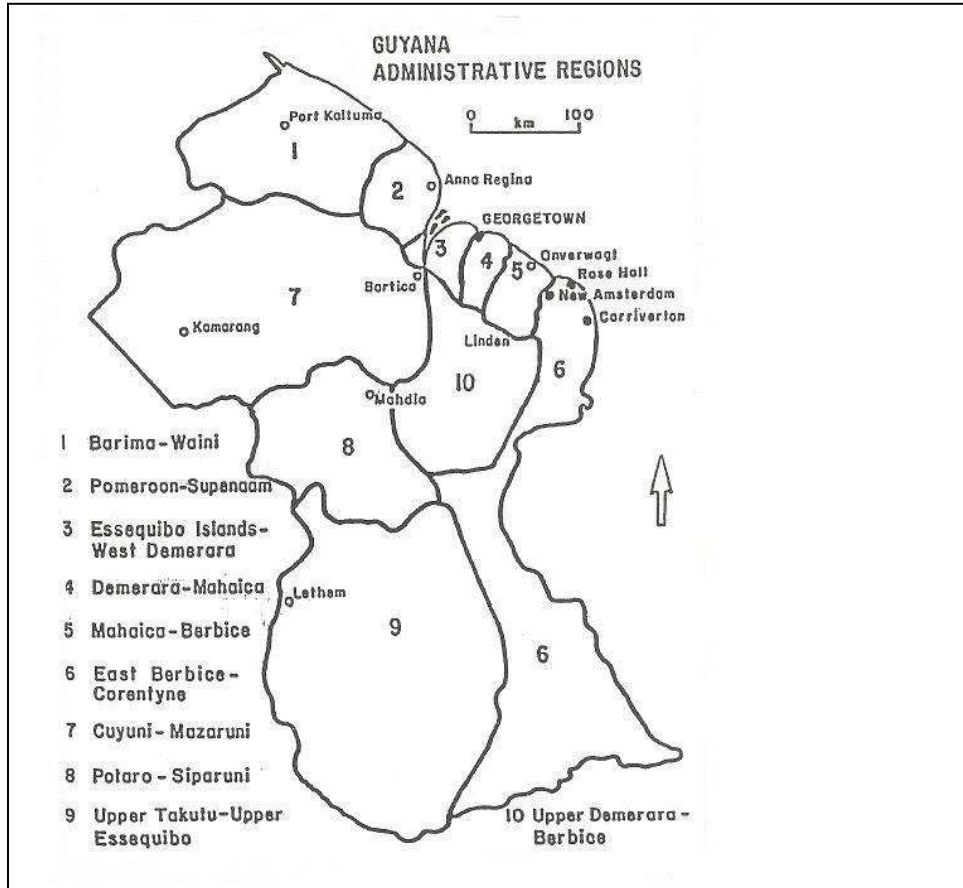
- Sensitization session with Regional Representatives of the 9 regions with Health Clubs during the regular meeting with Ms Agam.
- Household Water Treatment Capacity building workshop in nine regions, involving teachers and students who are members of Health Clubs
- Distribution of Kits
- Development of chart to report on the measurements/activities by teachers and students who are members of Health Clubs
- Evaluation of reports and follow-up.
- Follow-up workshops, according to the results from the reports at National and Regional camps and Regions, if needed.

Solid Waste Treatment:

- Capacity building workshop in nine regions, involving teachers and students who are members of Health Clubs
- Identification of further motivations to good management: sell plastic bottles as a way to raise funds for health clubs, build composting to use for kitchen gardens, “cleanest school” competitions
- Development of chart to report on the measurements/activities by teachers and students who are members of Health Clubs
- Evaluation of reports and follow-up.
- Donation of garbage bins (initially 1 per region)
- Follow-up workshops, according to the results from the reports at National and Regional camps and Regions, if needed.

4. A sensitization session, facilitated by PAHO, was held at the Regional Representative Meeting, on April 2006 at the Ministry of Health. Eighteen representatives of the National Youth Health Organization attended, from 9 Guyanese Regions. The workplan was discussed and tasks were assigned.
5. Two young Guyanese were identified and trained by PAHO to facilitate the workshops using the peer-education approach.
6. One short-term project assistant was identified and trained by the Adolescent Health Unit/MOH and hired with PAHO support to work closely with the Regional Representatives and students.
7. Nine workshops on Household Water Treatment and 9 on Recycling and Management of Solid Waste were delivered in all regions represented in the National Youth Health Organization (Reg 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 10). A total of 38

teachers and 470 students, who are members of Health Clubs, attended the workshops and were sensitized as agents of change.



Household Water Treatment and Recycling and Management of Solid Waste workshops

It was an initiative by the Ministry of Health with the support of PAHO, one of our partners in the battle of improving healthy lifestyle among youths in Guyana. This project was done in 9 out of the 10 regions to sensitize youths about proper water treatment and recycling and better management of their solid waste, through capacity building. A total of 38 teachers and 470 students, who are members of Health Clubs, attended the workshops and were sensitized as agents of change.

In order to implementing proper use of water, a water testing kit was given to each region and a toolkit for teachers was also given to each school that was present at the sessions. Garbage bins were also donated to some school to help encourage better waste disposal.

The Regional Representatives of the National Youth Health Organisation was given the task of reporting to the Ministry of Health on the monitoring of the project. Thus a monitoring form was given to each school to measure the level of chlorine in the water over a period of three months.

Recommendations were also given to each region for further motivations to good management: sell plastic bottles as a way to raise funds for health clubs, build composting to use for kitchen gardens, raising funds for school projects (composting sale) and “cleanest school” competitions.

Region 1

Region 1 is one of the most remote region in Guyana with restrict access to the other Guyanese regions and to Georgetown (see Map). Transportation is done mostly by air, demanding overnight stay to wait for next schedule flight, which increases the cost and reduce the number of interventions in the region. It is also a region with a high incidence of Malaria. The Household Water Treatment and Recycling and Management of Solid Waste workshops were held on the 7th of October 2006 at the Sports Center in Mabaruma. A total of 55 students and 1 teacher attended.

The region was experiencing difficulties accessing potable water on a regular basis, what made difficult to the students to submit the report, as it was designed in the workplan. However, the workshop and the discussions raised important issues related to the regional needs.



Region 2



Region 2 is reachable by boat from Parika, crossing the Essequibo River (see Map).

The workshops were held on the 27th September 2006 at the 8th of May Secondary School in Essequibo. A total of 50 students and 2 teachers attended from two schools; 8th of May Secondary and Cotton Field Secondary School. Problems related to the color of the water tanks were discussed. It was clarified that the water is rich on water in Region 2, and special ways to treat this water were discussed. Also, the school that was holding the workshop had a kitchen garden which raised the interested in the waste composing.



Workshop overview and bin and kit donation by MOH and PAHO representatives

Region 3

Region 3 is one hour drive from Georgetown (see Map). This workshop was held on the 20th October 2006 at the Unique Academy in West Coast Demerara. A total of 50 students and 6 teachers attended from three schools; Unique Academy Zeeburg Secondary School and Essequibo Islands Secondary.

Region 4

This session was done on 25th October 2006, at the St. Johns College in Georgetown. A total of 60 students and 3 teachers attended from four schools with health clubs; St. John College, Charles Town Secondary, Christ Church Secondary and Kingstown Community High.

Region 5

These regional workshops on Household water treatment and Recycling and management of solid waste was held at the Rossignol Secondary School on the 10th November 2006. Present were 60 health club students and 3 teachers from two school; Rossignol Secondary and Mahaicony Secondary.

Region 6

At this regional workshop on Household water treatment, recycling and management of solid waste was held at the Port Mourant Community High on the 13th October 2006 at 13:00 hours. Present were 50 health club students and 10 teachers from five school; Lower Corentyne Secondary, Tutorial Secondary, J.C Chandi Singh Secondary, Port Mourant Community High and Winifred Gaskin Secondary.

Region 7

Region 7 is accessible by boat, crossing the Essequibo river, after traveling by road from Georgetown to Parika, region 3 (see Map). These workshops were the first to be done at the Bartica Secondary School on the 12th May 2006. Present were the students of the Bartica Secondary School Health club and the Regional Representative.



Region 9

Region 9 is another remote region. Lethem, the main town in the region, is around 12 hours drive from Georgetown, and requires overnight stay. Students' access between schools in Region 9 is also difficult and some of them needed to overnight in Lethem to attend the workshop . This session was done on 16 October 2006, at the St. Ignatius Secondary School in Lethem. A total of 50 students and 3 teachers attended from two schools with health clubs; St. Ignatius Secondary and Annai Secondary School.

Region 10

The Household water treatment and the Recycling and management of solid waste workshops were held on the 9th October 2006 at the Sports Club in Linden. A total of 45 students and 7 teachers attended from four schools with health Clubs; Linden Foundation, St. Aidens Primary Top School, New Silver City Secondary School and Mckenzie Secondary School.

Special Thanks

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