

New Publications on Reproductive Health



NEW PUBLICATIONS ON
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Notes by Diwata A. Reyes*

Women and Health Care Practices in the Philippines.

Edited by Carolyn I. Sobritchea. Manila Reproductive Health, Rights, and Ethics Center for Studies and Training (ReproCen), 2004, 220pp.
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This book contains four papers from the ReproCen-Ford Foundation research project that aims to identify the different problems in the delivery of health care services in the country.

In the research report “The Impact of Reproductive Health Programs on the Attitudes, Perceptions and Practices of Field Implementers,” Reynaldo Imperial and Fe Ricon present the results of the study they conducted in seven municipalities in the provinces of Apayao, Ifugao and Kalinga. The authors note the field implementors improved attitude on the following: their patients and their work, the ethics of handling health records and health examination results, and men’s participation and involvement in the promotion of health and well-being of women and the family. In addition, the field implementers’ perception about themselves also improved. Because they gained self-confidence, they claimed to have better interpersonal skills making them more capable of helping clients make the right choice.

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The second paper in this collection is the study by Magdalena Cabaraban and Sharon Linog "Women's Experiences in Charity Health Care: Some Legal and Ethical Implications." In this research, they focused on patients who gave birth, needed post-abortion care, or had reproductive tract infections. The authors attempted to answer the question "Does the prevailing state of charity health care respond to women's reproductive health needs, rights, and abide by ethical principles of care giving?" They also examined the meanings that patients associate with the term "charity health care." Documented in this report are many cases where hospital principles of quality service had not been observed.

In the study of Merci Llarinas-Angeles, "Towards an Ethic of Care for VAW Survivors: Three Case Studies of Programs and Services." the strengths and limitations of the selected community-based programs for victims of violence are analyzed. It focused on these organizations: (1) the VAW Committees of the Kapisanan para sa Kagalingan ng Kababaihan ng Angeles, (2) the Ing Makababaying Aksyon, and (3) the Haven National Center for Women of the Department of Social Work and Development. Research findings show that victims of abuse should not only be given counseling and therapy. What they need more are legal assistance and opportunities that would give them economic independence. The author argues for an integrated approach in addressing VAW, recommending that both government and non-government agencies share data "to come out with joint efforts to define the needs of the VAW survivors from a gendered, ethical and human rights perspectives."

The last paper in this volume comes from the Women's Health Care Foundation (WHCF). Their research "Women's Experiences in and Perceptions of Community-Based Reproductive Health Services," focused on Barangay 649 in Baseco Port Area, Manila and Barangay UP Campus in Quezon City. Both areas

are served by a clinic maintained by the WHCF. The study describes and analyzes the experiences and views of women who came to these clinics. Focus group discussions reveal that women go to the nearest health center for their reproductive health needs. However, because only midwives and nurses run these centers, most of the women perceive that the quality of service given is not at par with services rendered in facilities with doctors. The paper also recommends that the education and training of health service providers include gender sensitivity and gender awareness so women's issues are considered in the delivery of services.

*Communicating Reproductive Health to the Youth:
Good Practices by Philippine NGOs.*

By Carolyn I. Sobritchea and Maria Theresa D. Ujano-Batangan.
Demographic Research and Development Foundation, 2004.
ISBN: 971-9012-04-8

This volume presents the highlights of the case studies in phase II of the project “Adolescent Reproductive Health Research and Program Assessment” conducted by the research team of Drs. Carolyn I. Sobritchea and Maria Theresa D. Ujano-Batangan.

The first phase of this research “identified the forms, features and levels of sexual and reproductive risks of adolescents, the causes of those risks, and appropriate interventions.” The research team interviewed selected adolescent reproductive health (ARH) experts, reviewed related studies, and conducted focus group discussions among program implementers and adolescents across the country. For phase II, the researchers focused on the ARH programs of ten non-government organizations (NGOs) chosen by the ARH expert-participants in phase I and by representatives of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the funding agency.

The organizations discussed in this report are the following: (1) Kabalaka Development Foundation, Inc. (KDFI); (2) Remedios AIDS Foundation; (3) Higala Association; (4) Kabalikat ng Pamilyang Pilipino; (5) Trade Union Congress of the Philippines; (6) the Women’s Health Care Foundation, Inc.; (7) the Training, Research Information for Development Specialists Foundation or Tri-Dev; (8) Save the Children Foundation (SCF-US); (9) PATH-Feed the Children Philippines (FTC); and (10) DKT Philippines.

1. *Kabalaka Development Foundation, Inc.* Established by civic-minded hacienda owners and sugar planters in Negros Occidental during the height of the sugar crisis in 1983, this social development organization conceptualized the Youth for Life program as a result of the study they commissioned in 2000 to come up with a holistic program for adolescents. The Youth for Life project's major objectives are: to delay marriage among adolescents, decrease drug use and teen-age pregnancies, and increase livelihood opportunities for the youth.

2. *Remedios AIDS Foundation (RAF)*. Organized in 1991 to provide HIV services to vulnerable groups, RAF has expanded the scope of its programs. For this project, RAF's goal was to expand its existing adolescent reproductive health services in the Tutuban Youth Zone in Manila and establish another mall-based youth center in Cebu City. Among the project components are the "continuous training of the staff and peer facilities, development of 'innovative' ARH IEC materials and installation of sustainability mechanisms for the Youth Zone."

3. *Higala Association*. Formed by social activists initially as a self-help group, Higala evolved into an organization that aimed to address issues affecting the youth in Davao City. Among these are: substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, "gangsterism," and the *buntog* phenomena (or "free sex" among teenagers). They implemented their project "Enhancing Adolescent Reproductive Health Through Child Participation" in 2001-2003.

4. *Kabalikat ng Pamilyang Pilipino*. Their recent project "Increasing Demand for Adolescent Reproductive Health Services Through Outreach Programs" focused on Quezon City communities. Included in their target population are four high schools and five barangays. Kabalikat conducted a survey and organized youth assemblies as part of this project.

5. *Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)*. The largest confederation of workers in the country, TUCP's involvement in reproductive health started in 1984. It currently implements two major projects, the Promotion of RH Program in the Workplace and the Reproductive Health Project for the Working Youth. Among the thrusts of their program are the following: fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, delivering innovative RH services for workers, and responding to youth reproductive health challenges.

6. *Women's Health Care Foundation, Inc.* The goal of the WHCF's Youth Volunteers for Reproductive Health project is to address the unmet reproductive health needs of women and youth by giving services and appropriate information in ten urban poor communities in Metro Manila. Among the projects' specific objectives are: decrease the pregnancy rate among the youth, decrease the incidence of reproductive tract infections including HIV/AIDS, increase the age level of their first sexual experience; and decrease the rate of adolescent maternal mortality.

7. *Training Research Information for Development Specialists Foundation or Tri-Dev*. Tri-Dev's mission is to empower the youth and "at-risk" populations like women, children and sex workers. It organized the Youth Educators and Advocates for Reproductive Health (YEAH) to help address the ARH needs of both in-school and out-of-school youth. Among the project's components are: developing links with local government units, Sanguniang Kabataan, schools, health centers and NGOs; developing IEC materials for adolescents, training adolescent poor educators and adult facilitators as ARH advocates, and involving the youth in insuring the financial sustainability of the project.

8. *Save the Children Foundation (SCF-US)*. In 2002, SCF conceptualized the Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health

(ARSH) Project. Among the objectives are: to improve the quality and accessibility of ARSH services in government health centers; to improve the socio-political/institutional environment supportive of ARSH; and to improve the adolescents' level of knowledge, attitudes and skills

9. *PATH-Feed the Children Philippines (FTC)*. Their program on adolescent reproductive health focused on educating the community with the help of peer educators and community-based distributors (or family planning commodities). The youth peer educators were asked to teach reproductive health and family planning to 15 to 19 year olds. The aim is to help the target group resist unwanted sex, delay the age of first sexual encounter, and for the sexually active, practice safe sex.

10. *DKT Philippines*. One of DKT's goals is to promote responsible use of contraceptives among the youth to help address the problem of adolescent pregnancies and abortions. It organized "Frenzy Circle," a loose network of young people who keep in touch through the Frenzy Website, short message service technology, and special events. Frenzy Circle serves as a venue for promoting responsible sexual behavior and condom use to prevent unwanted pregnancies among the youth.

In this volume, the authors examined the objectives of the ARH programs of these NGOs, assessed the appropriateness of the strategies and activities they implemented, and highlighted their strengths and good practices as well as their weaknesses and the challenges they face. The authors list some of the elements that contributed to the effectiveness and sustainability of these NGOs' ARH programs. Among these are: generating baseline data for program development, organizing and mobilizing the young people; organizing and mobilizing communities for ARH promotion; forging partnerships with local government units

and youth organizations, developing innovative strategic frameworks; using results-based planning methodology; and networking and sharing of experiences.

Among the recommendations that the authors present are the following: give additional training to project implementers on the process involved in monitoring and evaluation; continue fostering initiatives of the youth; conduct training programs to further develop the youth to ensure the sustainability of the ARH programs; insure the involvement of the youth in ARH promotion; make the psychological development of adolescents a part of the training content; develop a well defined training paradigm to foster the step-ladder approach in capacitating youth volunteers; develop parenting programs for both social and biological parents to train adult caregivers sensitive to the needs of adolescents; conduct impact evaluation across organizations to determine the effects of ARH intervention and its cost-effectiveness; and sustain contact with partner organizations to further facilitate the sharing of lessons learned in program implementation.