

Creating a healthier world.

“Ambiente limpio es ambiente sano”
(Clean environment is a healthy environment):
Environmental health education in Ngäbe-Buglé Indigenous population

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AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
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Creating a healthier world. Objectives

Demonstrate the application of community participation in the development of culturally sensitive material for health education.

Describe the outcomes of an environmental health education intervention.

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Arlene Calvo, PhD

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

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Creating a healthier world. **Background**

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graph TD; A[Exacerbating Factors for Poverty] --- B[Growing Population]; A --- C[Extreme poverty]; A --- D[Access to services]; A --- E[Poor child health]; B --- C; E --- F[Poor maternal health]
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Creating a healthier world. **Background**

The Ngäbe-Buglé is the largest indigenous population in Panama with 156,747 inhabitants. This rural population lives in extreme poverty with difficult mountainous geography that isolates and exacerbates health disparities.

Lack of resources, information, and access to services contribute to inadequate management of community surrounding environment impacting public health outcomes.

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Creating a healthier world. **Implementation**

Formative research using qualitative and quantitative methods guided a train-the-trainer participatory process to educate community Promotores to disseminate education messages to their respective communities.

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Creating a healthier world. **Implementation**


Each health promoter trained completed **pre-post testing questionnaires** and received an educational kit (culturally appropriate flipchart, report forms, water-proof bag).



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Creating a healthier world. **Implementation**

Health Promoters delivered health trainings in their communities for 6 months
(Avg. 2/month/promoter)



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Creating a healthier world. **Implementation**

Promotores en Acción
(Health promoters in action)



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Creating a healthier world. Results

The environment as a health topic was the second most requested theme (44%).

Environment focused on indoor and outdoor sanitation, management of garbage and latrines, and accident prevention in the house.

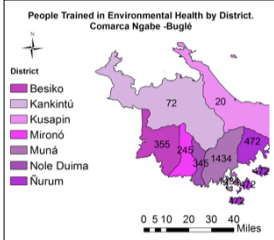


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Creating a healthier world. Results

78 lay Promotores reached a total of 7,000 community members educated over a one-year period.

2,238 received training focused on the topic of the environment and impact on health.



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Creating a healthier world. Results

Topic	Percent of Correct Responses		
	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Hand washing	41	55	14
Bathroom usage	100	95	-5
Boiling water appropriately	41	59	18
Water storage	9	36	27
Healthy eating	77	82	5
Environment	68	77	9
Waste management	73	91	18
Role of the midwife	68	82	14
Pregnancy/prenatal care	91	82	-9
Domestic violence	32	77	45

Post-knowledge evaluation resulted in improved measures regarding proper water storage and garbage disposal.

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Why does this project matter?

- The examination of important health themes as determined by community with training of health promoters using culturally appropriate material increased knowledge and community engagement to improve practiced norms in the community.
- The community involvement maximizes sustainability of efforts in combating specific health disparities in regions with limited resources and geographic difficulty.

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