

THE GRANDMOTHER

PROJECT

The Grandmother Project is an American non-profit (501c3) organization

Bulletin

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Grandmothers: A Resource for Community Health Programs GMP Training in Nicaragua

The Grandmother Project (GMP) aims to increase the effectiveness of community programs that promote children and women's health and well-being by making them more culturally relevant. GMP promotes *grandmother-inclusive programs* that:

- build on grandmothers' culturally-defined role as family teachers and guides
- involve grandmothers as resource persons in community programs
- promote the use of participatory, adult learning methods with community groups
- encourage communities to combine positive "traditional" and "modern" practices
- strengthen intergenerational communication

In March 2007 two workshops were conducted in Nicaragua, with representatives of 22 non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the Ministry of Health, to introduce them to *grandmother-inclusive programming*. The workshops were organized with NICASALUD, a local consortium of NGOs.

The workshop goal was: to introduce participants to *grandmother-inclusive programming* and discuss ways to involve grandmothers as key actors in community health and nutrition programs. According to participants, none of their organizations had previously involved grandmothers, often viewed as an "obstacle" and "too old to learn." The workshops helped participants see grandmothers as a *resource* for community programs.

Workshop topics included:

- Roles of grandmothers across non-western cultures
- Biases against grandmothers' ability to learn and change
- Steps in the *grandmother-inclusive methodology* for community programs
- Participatory, culturally-adapted communication methods to stimulate community dialogue and learning
- Methods for identification and training of grandmother leaders
- Positive results of grandmother inclusion from projects in several countries

Next steps...

- *Some of the organizations that participated in these workshops are already developing grandmother-inclusive strategies in their community programs.*
- *The Grandmother Project hopes to carry out similar training on grandmother-inclusive programming with non-profit organizations in West Africa and Central America during the coming year.*



"The knowledge and expertise of grandmothers represents an invaluable resource for community health programs. They are anxious to learn, to increase their knowledge and to share it with their families and communities. I am convinced that they should be involved in all community health programs."

Gertrudis Medrano, NICASALUD, Managua, Nicaragua

Participatory, adult learning methods were used to stimulate discussion of grandmothers' roles in family health/nutrition and ways to involve them in community programs.

Feedback from workshop participants showed increased recognition of the *grandmother resource*:

"The approach to working with grandmothers proposed in this workshop is very useful as it acknowledges and encourages them to share their knowledge and experiences and also allows them to learn. Involving and teaching grandmothers can contribute to improving the quality of life both of families and of grandmothers themselves."

Armida Rocha Pargas, Project Concern International

We believe that the grandmother-inclusive approach can be used in all developing countries. It can be adopted in programs that deal with all activities in which grandmothers play a role, namely health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, early childhood development and female genital mutilation (in African countries in which it exists).

Grandmother Project offers technical assistance and training to development organizations and training schools related to planning, implementation and evaluation of grandmother-inclusive programs.

⇒ Please contact grandmotherproject@hotmail.com if you have a comment or wish to unsubscribe.

⇒ Please visit our website: www.grandmotherproject.com for more information about how you can support or collaborate with GMP.