

Health Promotion Programme: Experience of a Secondary School

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Perayaan Sambutan Hari Keputeraan
Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan
dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam
Yang Ke-66 Tahun

*'Nikmat Kesihatan Asas Kesejahteraan
Negara'*

*'Luxury of Health is the Foundation
Nation's Welfare'*

In line with its Vision 2035, Brunei aims to be well-educated and highly-skilled. Brunei also aims to have good quality of life with dynamic and sustainable economy. In doing so, educators and students put more effort and higher priority towards teaching and learning in schools. However, some may overlook their health status, an important component to achieve Brunei's Vision 2035. Many non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, diabetes mellitus and heart diseases are caused by unhealthy lifestyles. They can be prevented through effective teaching and learning of health-related topics as well as health promotion programmes in schools. Health promotion includes the understanding of diseases, proper hygiene and maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Schools are in a good position to help young people, namely school students, to improve their eating habits and lifestyles in order to prevent the development of NCDs. This can be done by implementing effective education, policies, health

promotion programmes and support services. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), an effective school health programme can be one of the most cost-effective investments a nation can make to simultaneously improve education and health.

So far, school syllabi include lessons on nutrition, diseases, effects of tobacco and alcohol. Physical education has already been part of the curriculum for a long time. However, there are still some worrying trends reported among Brunei school students especially with the increasing rates of overweight and obesity. One in four school students in Brunei Darussalam is obese or overweight.¹ This will lead to an increase in prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Children diagnosed with Type II diabetes is increasing in Brunei.² Therefore, setting up of health promotion programmes will be crucial to addressing these problems.

In the 2012 Knowledge Convention, Sekolah Menengah Sayyidina Hasan (SMSh) or Sayyidina Hasan secondary school had the honour to be invited to share with the public their experience with the school's health promotion pro-

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gramme. This began in October 2001 when the SMSH was invited to participate in an initiative seminar held in the Pengiran Anak Puteri Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah (PAPRSB) Nursing College. In that seminar, schools were encouraged to set up a health promotion committee or club in order to promote health amongst the school citizens. In 2003, a Health Promotion Committee at SMSH comprising of several teachers was set up. The committee focused on conducting regular aerobics sessions for teachers and students, fitness tests for teachers as well as body mass index (BMI) check for students.

OFFICIAL LAUNCHING

On 19th April 2007, SMSH officially launched its Health Promotion Programme involving the whole school. Activities included a walkathon, a health exhibition, emphasis on eating fruit as well as a free health check supported by the Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam.

The main objectives of the ongoing programme are to increase the awareness among the teaching and non-teaching staff and students' on the following; a) the importance and nutritional value of breakfast, fruits and water; b) personal hygiene and cleanliness, c) to increase the awareness of teenage health problems and diseases, and d) general health habits and problems.

To date, the Health Promotion Committee has conducted many other health-related activities for the teaching and non-teaching staff, including the students. For example, some of the activities conducted for teachers were health-related talks and fitness tests in collaboration with the Physical Education (PE) Department and Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) Section. For students, the committee conducted health-related talks, exhibitions, surveys, free-fruit programme and also health check-up. Last year, vaccination for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) was also started as part of a national programme to reduce the incidence of cancers of the cervix, the second most common cancer in women in Brunei Darussalam.



Official launching and free medical check.

YEARLY ACTIVITIES

For teachers: Some of the health-related talks organised by the Health Promotion Committee or organised by the Health Promotion Committee included 'Breast Cancer Awareness' talk which was conducted by the Brunei Breast Cancer Support Group. The presenters which included breast cancer survivors shared their personal experiences with the female teachers. Participants also had hands-on opportunity to learn how to examine for breast lumps using dummy breasts models. Other talks included 'Health Juice' talks which introduced teachers to the benefits of drinking different types of fruit juices taking into account their respective health issues such as tiredness, stress, flu and so on.



Teachers' fitness test.

Table: Talks presented to students of the various years.

Year	Title and aims
7	' Personal hygiene ': stressed on the importance of general hygiene ranging from keeping cleanliness for their hair, ear, teeth, skin to attire they wear.
8	' Anti-smoking ': Harm and danger of smoking
9	' Healthy diet ' later changed to 'Food for brain'
10 and 11	' Sexually Transmitted Infections and Teenage Pregnancy '

All the teachers are also encouraged to take a fitness test which is usually done at the end of the year. The fitness test consists of six activities which includes sit-up (torso strength), pull-up of the year. The fitness test consists of six activities which includes sit-up (torso strength), pull-up (upper body strength), shuttle run (speed), long jump (leg strength), beep test (endurance) and sit and reach (flexibility). Scores are calculated and graded, and kept by the Health Promotion Committee as reference for the subsequent fitness test.

For students: Talks are carefully arranged so that all students will be exposed to different titles every year (Table).

The '*Personal Hygiene*' talk has been continually delivered to all new Year 7 students. Initially, a representative from the Ministry of Health delivered these talks, but later in 2010, teachers from the school's Health Promotion Committee took over.

The school has also taken the initiative to give out circulars to parents to encourage their children to bring fruits every Monday, the "*Fruitful*

Monday'. The parents are also encouraged to encourage their children to bring water from home. The Health Promotion Committee in collaboration with the PE Department has also been collecting students' BMI data. Currently, these data are just being kept for reference. The school will soon try to take a further step in informing the students' parents or guardians of their statuses; either underweight, overweight or obese.

At the end of each school year, the committee has also been conducting end of year activities, the '*Amazing Race*' where students are encouraged to participate in groups. In this activity, they have to complete all the check-points which include physical activities as well as knowledge-recall about health-related topics. These activities promote teamwork as well as foster friendships.

In 2012, the school conducted the '*Friendship Month*' for the first time where students wore name tags with their names to promote friendship. Talks on friendship were conducted by representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Having good relationships with peers is important as this also contributes to good mental health of the students.

OTHER NON-YEARLY ACTIVITIES

SMSH also took the initiative to hold a competition opened to teaching and non-teaching staff, and students to look for the best slogan for our school's health charter. This was won by a teacher with the winning slogan;



Fruitful Monday.

**'HASAN – Healthy and Active Students,
Assets to Nation-building'**

'Health Awareness Day' has been conducted several times. The activities includes giving out free fruits to teaching and non-teaching staff as well as students, free health check (blood pressure, glucose levels and body fats), health-related exhibition and health-related poster-making competition.

In July 2010, SMSH had the honour to receive His Royal Highness Prince Haji 'Abdul 'Azim to officiate the 'Health Awareness Week'. The programme included a sketch, singing and dance performances, a slide presentation, health-related exhibition as well as fitness tests demonstration jointly organised by the Health Promotion Committee as well as the Health Club students. The Health Club



STRETCH Camp.

was set up in May 2010 as requested by the Ministry of Education. The main aim was for the students to reach out and promote health to their peers. This club is run solely by students with the Health Promotion Committee teachers' supervision. In 2010 and 2011, the Health Club students have joined activities conducted by the Ministry of Health's Health Promotion Center such as the 'Smart Teens Reaching Everyone Towards Continuous Health (STRETCH) Camp'.

SMSH also has a CCA called 'SMSH Health Promotion CCA' which differs from the Health Club. The CCA is opened to any students who are interested in health promotion. They usually meet once a week with their respective CCA Health Promotion teachers during the CCA periods to discuss health as well as conducting aerobics sessions, cleaning the school compound and many more.

CONCLUSION

Since its formation, the Health Promotion Committee has learnt a lot and has become more organised with experience gained over the years. The committee is now working with the Cleanliness Committee especially in maintaining school cleanliness in particular the lavatories and together with the Canteen Committee in making sure that the food and drink sold in the canteen are healthy and properly prepared. Promoting health in schools will always have its challenges but we must always try as every little effort counts to achieve Brunei's 2035 Vision. We should instil the importance of maintaining health and hygiene from a very young age as the development of chronic NCDs is preventable through proper education. Apart from teaching and learning, we have to put equal importance to health promotion as this will produce students who are dynamic, knowledgeable and will be active contributors to the building of our nation, as without health, wealth is nothing.



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