

Action brief

# From students to nutrition leaders: the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc.'s Community Nutrition Practicum (CNP)

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<b>Country:</b>	Philippines	<b>Themes:</b>	Coordination of action through improved functional capacities	<b>Sub-themes:</b>	Strengthening the skills of key actors (communication, negotiation, leadership, planning and coordination)
<b>Date:</b>	2023				



## Overview



This action brief details the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines' banner programme, the Community Nutrition Practicum. Even before Presidential Directive 1286

regulating the practice of nutrition and dietetics in the Philippines, the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines was pioneering an undergraduate practicum course for senior nutrition students.

Strengthening the skills of future registered nutritionist-dietitians in the field of public health nutrition ensures that the future leaders in local nutrition offices are well-equipped with the skills needed to excel in leadership, communication, programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



## Objectives of the action brief

The objective of this action brief is to:

- Provide a brief overview of Community Nutrition Practicum, which trains future registered nutritionist-dietitians in the field of public health nutrition
- Outline challenges and recommendations to guide potential country adopters



## Period covered

January to December 2022.



## What would the country do differently?

- It would be important to coordinate early with local government units and to set expectations for each modality.



## What action was taken?

- The Community Nutrition Practicum, a service provided to partner universities, is the contribution of the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines to the training and development of future nutritionist-dietitians in the field of public health nutrition.
- The first group of students in 2022 were fully online, with partner communities in three cities and one municipality in the region of the national capital. However, with the slow shift to blended and face-to-face learning and as a response to requests from partner schools, the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines decided to use three modalities for the second batch of students: live-in, live-out and blended.
- This presented several challenges, including the need to formulate separate guidelines for each modality, with requirements tailor-made to fit the needs of each modality and community. Live-in students had challenges related to lodging, while live-out students had to face the hassle and expense of daily commuting. Nonetheless, the blended model proved to be successful, as students were able to have face-to-face interactions with others while still being able to conduct some activities online.







## Adaptation and Applicability

It is important to coordinate with all stakeholders and authorities who have jurisdiction in the partner communities.

In addition, monitoring visits should be conducted before and during the deployment period, and follow-up meetings should be held with partner communities and schools after the practicum.

Below are the selection criteria employed by the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines in selecting where to implement the practicum:

- Presence of emerging nutrition concerns, such as the prevalence of stunting, wasting, overweight/obesity and/or micronutrient deficiencies
- High COVID-19 vaccination rate
- Presence of at least five *barangay* nutrition scholars (volunteers responsible for delivering nutrition services and other related activities in each *barangay*, or district) to assist students
- Generally secure and safe from conflict or political unrest
- Presence of potential lodgings that could provide a stable signal and internet connection
- Access to transportation, including such infrastructure as tricycle terminals, jeepney routes and car accessibility
- Stable source of electricity and water
- Within 10 to 20 minutes of a municipal center so students could access ATMs, markets and other conveniences
- Access to health centres, hospitals or other health facilities
- Presence of cooperative officials who could assist students in planning and implementing nutrition programmes



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## Next steps

- There is potential to coordinate with all National Nutrition Council regional offices to scale up the practicum program to cover more partner schools and communities.
- Other next steps include investment in National Nutrition Council-approved tools and equipment for use in Operation Timbang Plus, the annual weighing and height measurement of all children younger than 5 to identify those who are malnourished.
- It also could be possible to use all the National Nutrition Council's existing forms and systems. Targeting a partner community in the Visayas may also be a start.



## Further information

Barangay Nutrition Scholars:



[https://lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1978/pd\\_1569\\_1978.html](https://lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1978/pd_1569_1978.html)

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