



UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS CASE MEDICAL CENTER/  
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***“More Skills Less Pills”:***  
**Community-Based Health Interventions for  
Mercado Global Artisans and Their Families**

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## **I. BACKGROUND:**

“More Skills Less Pills” is a program for community-driven adaption of positive attitudes and healthy behaviors for the artisans of Mercado Global (MG). The interviews with artisans on their health concerns and physical examinations in 2012 revealed: 1. their complaints about their health conditions does not necessarily match with the result of health examinations, 2. Any aches and pains are amenable to simple physical exercises and behavioral modifications even though they strongly believe pills can take care of them, and 3. Some of the pains and anxieties are manifestations of pervasive psycho-social stresses and trauma. In response to the specific needs of the population, the goal of the program is to help strengthen artisan’s self-reliance and autonomy when it comes to dealing with health problems as well as difficulties in life through the following activities:

- 1) Pain Away: a set of exercises for ”pain syndromes”,
- 2) Power To Change: Learning activities for group problem-solving skills for positive mind, and
- 3) Do-It-Together Health Education: Interactive learning sessions for health knowledge and healthy behaviors.

The More Skills Less Pills program has been piloted in the communities of La Fe and Chipiacul since September 2013.

## **II. Community Visits**

The purpose of the community visits in this trip was to generate indicators for the program evaluation and further develop action plans based on the evaluation. It is important to note that our “evaluation” focuses on the artisans’ learning about their progresses and their application of the learning to their next steps. To avoid confusion, we will use the term, “progress review” in this program. In the progress review, artisans determine what they want to review and the results will be shared with them to develop future program contents, their action plans, and further review process.

The agenda of the visits in Chipiacul and La Fe was:

- 1) Energizer, “My Corner” (which addresses conflict resolution)
- 2) Do-it-together Health Education (“A baby with high fever” for Chipiacul, “A baby with high fever” and “Irregular female bleeding” for La Fe)
- 3) Review of the roadmap to show where we are in the program
- 4) Discussions for indicator generation
- 5) Program review (self-assessment on the generated indicator statements)

## **III. FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT:**

- The artisans in Chipiacul discussed to identify indicators to review their group cohesiveness. The generated indicators are:
  1. I can talk with other people to solve problems.
  2. I am patient as a group member.
  3. I can help other people.
  4. I can find ways to argue with other people.
  5. I can play a role for the group.

Each artisan checked a smiley face if the statement applies to her and a sad face if it does not. There were more negative answers for #5 than other statements.

- The artisans in La Fe discussed to identify indicators to review their uneven levels of knowledge and skills in bag making. The generated indicator statements are:
  1. I have good communication with my group.
  2. I can explain how to make bags step-by-step.
  3. I want to teach how to make bags to new members. (statement for new members)
  4. I want to learn how to make bags from experienced members.(statement for experienced members)
  5. I practice how to make bags.

Each artisan assessed herself using a 1-10 numerical scale. All experienced members in La Fe wanted to teach bag making skills to newer members, while not all new members felt comfortable learning about it. There were variations in answers for #5 which might have to do with their time constraints or logistic difficulties.

- Based on these results, the MG coordinators will implement another team building sessions in Chipiacul and in La Fe, help experienced artisans organize training workshops on bag making and time management.
- The progress review provided us unique opportunity for our group to reflect program effectiveness and gave us insights to improve the contents of community workshops.

### **III.RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Implement annual health checkup for artisans in all eleven communities

The health checkup for artisans will not only help them understand their physical health but also provide us ideal opportunities to further refine ‘Do-it-together Health Education’ modules as well as future self-care modules.

2. Continue workshops on group-problem solving skills

Employ Power to Change (PTC) method as a tool for group-problem solving skills to further develop programs to tackle other problems in the community.

3. Develop self-care modules based on needs identified through the annual health checkup.

Pain Away (PA) program has been implemented in all artisan communities. PA is one of the examples of self-care modules to lead with the correct skills in order to tackle their health problems through self-care.

### **IV: FUTURE DIRECTION:**

MG not only provides financial independence but also invests to improve the artisans’ physical and psychological well-being. It has been proven that the primary-level education to women is the most effective intervention to save lives of children and mothers. In that sense, MG is a ‘healthcare’ non-profit focusing on training and education to artisan women. As the social entrepreneurship and cooperate responsibility have become a new norm in fashion industry around the world, empowerment for the artisans becomes an indispensable part of the social entrepreneurship program. We believe time is ripe to implement annual health checkup for artisans to strengthen our group-problem solving and self-care skills to strengthen our empowerment effort through health in MG’s community program.