

FROM IRRELEVANCE TO SUPPORTING STI AND HIV/AIDS AWARENESS

Because of the training she is now one of the most supportive and understanding dorm managers...

Mrs. Kh. Doljin has been working as a manager of dormitory #1 of the State Pedagogical University for the last 15 years. Each year she manages about 400 dormitory students, who come from various parts of Mongolia to study in the capital city. She openly shared her first experience of meeting ADRA staff and how she was very negative towards them in her dormitory because STI prevention and awareness activities among the students seemed very irrelevant to her, and she had a lack of understanding of these kinds of topics. Her whole perception of the project idea and activities completely changed after she attended a two-day training session conducted for the dormitory managers last October. She says that the training was very participatory and practical, and also very useful. Because of the training Mrs. Doljin is now one of the most supportive and understanding dorm managers that the project is working with. Now, all she wants to do is support student initiated activities. She does this by providing them with training spaces and helping to coordinate the students and student council's activities to reach as many students



Mrs Kh. Doljin (right) and a fellow dormitory manager, at an ADRA-run training session

as possible. She believes that preventative sexual and reproductive health education among dorm students is in great need.

The Safe Choices project began on the 1st of October 2008, and aims to decrease the incidence of STI's and HIV/Aids among young people living in university and college dormitories in Ulaanbaatar. In close collaboration with relevant organizations, the project has been disseminating information to students about HIV/Aids and STI's, and is helping them to make safe choices that minimise the chance of contracting HIV/Aids or STI's. Within one year, the project has made some significant

achievements. We were able to reach approximately 10,000 students in 33 dormitories through our 20, trained, student peer-educators and 760 health volunteers by conducting training and information sessions on various topics that are relevant to the every day lives of the young people, and correcting common misconceptions among students about STI's, HIV/AIDS and reproductive and sexual health.

The "Safe Choice" project, October 2008-September 2011, funded by ADRA Germany and the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



"WHAT'S THE MATTER? I WILL BE FRIEND WITH CIGARETTES AS LONG AS I AM LIVING."

It was only after she graduated from university and started working as a journalist, that Gerelee* took up smoking. Her attitude towards smoking was, "What's the matter? I will be friends with cigarettes as long as I am living."

Then, Gerelee had the opportunity to attend a Health Education Against Tobacco (HEAT) project meeting and seminar for journalists. After the training she started to think about quitting smoking because of what she had learnt and heard during the seminar, but it was difficult for her because she had been smoking for 10 years. Gerelee contacted our project staff for advice and information about how to quit smoking. On her first attempt, she stayed away from cigarettes for one to two hours before she couldn't control herself any longer and started to smoke again to try and get relief. After this initial attempt

she tried to quit smoking numerous times, but was always unsuccessful.

Recently she came to a journalists meeting and proudly told the HEAT team that she had quit smoking three months ago! She said that her body didn't demand nicotine after she quit, but rather her mind did. So the most difficult thing was to tell her mind that she didn't need the cigarettes, and to have the willpower to stay away from smoking. Just three months later, her skin is looking more radiant and she seems to be almost glowing!

Gerelee is currently the department director of one of the leading daily newspapers in Mongolia. This is yet another success story from the ADRA Australia funded, Health Education Against Tobacco project.

*name changed for privacy

The Health Education Against Tobacco project is running from July 2008-June 2011 and is funded by ADRA Australia and AusAid.



Journalists comparing the differences between the lungs of a smoker and a non-smoker.



Journalists discussing the effects of tobacco use at a HEAT seminar

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ADRA MONGOLIA ANNUAL REVIEW 2009

The ADRA Mongolia 2009 Annual Review has been printed and is ready for distribution both in English and in Mongolian. The annual review is a record of all of the projects which were undertaken during 2009 by ADRA Mongolia, as well as a financial record of how money was spent. You can find a copy of the English

2009 Annual Review on the ADRA Mongolia website at www.adra.org.mn

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