

Project Village health volunteers reduce sugary drinks in Na San Subdistrict, Phra Phrom District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

Situation: Sweetened beverage consumption is a health behavior issue contributing to chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. Na San Subdistrict has focused on health behavior modification among community health leaders, specifically Village Health Volunteers (VHVs). A survey of VHVs revealed that 50% consumed sweet foods, and many consumed over 12 servings of rice daily. These habits contributed to chronic conditions like hypertension (15.83%), diabetes (7.20%), heart disease (0.44%), and stroke (0.69%). Furthermore, the number of sweetened beverage shops in the community has been increasing annually, with 70% of VHVs consuming at least one sweetened drink daily. This situation led to a behavioral modification initiative aimed at reducing VHV sweetened beverage intake, with the goal of limiting sugar consumption to no more than 6 teaspoons per day and encouraging local shops to reduce sugar in beverages.

Process and Activities: A working group comprising 15 representatives from various community networks was established to plan and monitor efforts to reduce sweetened beverage consumption. The group conducted a survey of VHV sweetened beverage consumption behaviors and initiated a behavioral change program using the "STOP SWEET FOR HEALTH" Line OA application. The program involved training VHVs on reducing sweetened beverage consumption and monitoring progress every two months. The application was also extended to VHV family members and community networks.

Collaborating Partners: Key partners included healthcare personnel from Phra Phreng Subdistrict Health Promoting Hospital, who provided training on reducing sweetened beverage consumption and guided VHVs on using the application for behavior tracking. Community leaders, such as village heads, deputy village heads, and the senior citizens' association, participated in monitoring and encouraging VHVs to reduce their sweetened beverage intake. Five local beverage vendors also collaborated by reducing sugar levels in their drinks, making healthier options more accessible to the community.

Results: Among the 100 VHVs, 56 regularly consumed sweetened beverages. Out of these, 50 VHVs successfully reduced their intake, representing 89%. Additionally, 45 VHVs (80.35%)

limited their sweetened beverage intake to half a glass per day (with no more than 6 teaspoons of sugar). Moreover, 10 out of 14 local sweetened beverage shops (71%) reduced the amount of sugar added to their drinks for customers.