COOKING CHALLENGE:
A STRATEGY TO COMMUNICATE THE PRINCIPLES OF PINGGANG PINOY® FOOD GUIDE

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BACKGROUND
The Pinggang Pinoy® is the next-generation food guide to help Filipinos acquire healthy eating habits to attain optimum nutrition. It conveys simply the concept of eating a variety of foods in the right proportions to help meet the individual’s energy and nutrient needs. Considering its potential as a useful advocacy tool for healthy eating habits, the Pinggang Pinoy® Cooking Challenge was organized and conducted as a strategy to educate mothers and caregivers who have the key role in managing family meals and influencing eating behavior.

OBJECTIVE
The project aimed to create awareness on Pinggang Pinoy® as a tool in preparing healthy, cost-effective, and creative meals.

METHODS
01 The cooking challenge included information-motivation campaign which covered the modules on nutrition education and principles of Pinggang Pinoy®, food safety, meal planning and food costing. Pre-test and post-test on Pinggang Pinoy® principles were given to the participants to gauge the level of knowledge gained.

02 Recipe entries were screened by nutritionist-dietitian project team members according to its ingredients, procedure, cost, and estimated energy and nutrient composition of meals calculated using the iFNRI Menu Eval Plus.

03 Coaching and mentoring reviewed the participants of the principles they learned from the training and to help them further improve their recipes.

04 Practice cooking aimed to give the participants a “feel” of the actual cooking challenge.

05 Cooking challenge was held. The one-day meal entries following the Pinggang Pinoy was judged according to the following criteria: Nutritional Aspect, Palatability, Originality of recipe/meals, Use of locally available ingredients, Cost, Visual presentation, and Work habits.
RESULTS
Sixty mothers and caregivers of children-participants of the Unilever supplementary feeding program in the cities of Taguig and Manila joined the cooking challenge. Majority of the participants were housewives, high school graduates, and are within the 31 to 40 years age group. The pre-test and post-test was evaluated using the paired t-test to determine if the means of scores for baseline and end line were significantly different. Fifty-nine participants completed the pre- and post-test. Mean baseline score was 14.1 while mean end line score was at 16.4 showed that there was a significant difference on the paired mean differences in pre- and post-test scores (-2.30 points p-value <0.001). The cooking challenge generated a total of 12 one-day Pinggang Pinoy® meals that included local and foreign-inspired dishes. It showcased the participants’ cooking skills following the Pinggang Pinoy® principles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The Pinggang Pinoy® Cooking Challenge created awareness and increased the knowledge of mothers and caregivers on Pinggang Pinoy®. It was an effective strategy to communicate the Pinggang Pinoy® principles. Replication of such activity and standardization of recipe entries for publication are recommended.

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