

## Grandma joins 4Ps FDS program

Mandaluyong City--- Sitting along with a group of mothers aged 25 to 55, Aida Garcia, 64, from Barangay Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City is listening intently to the volunteer parent leader discussing the importance of health and nutrition during a Family Development Session (FDS) on Thursday morning here.

She, together with other Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries, attends monthly sessions where topics on family strengthening, responsible parenthood, health and nutrition.

Speaking before them is Darlene Gara, 42, from Barangay Plain View, a volunteer for the city's Task Force TB where she is discussing the contagious, dreaded disease tuberculosis.

*"Ako ay laging dumadalo sa mga FDS dahil marami akong natututunan na pwedeng i-apply sa bahay at ibahagi sa ibang mga miyembro (I always attend the FDS because I learn a lot which I apply at home and share to fellow Pantawid members)," Garcia said.*

Aside from the topics mentioned, also discussed during FDS are skills-related livelihood trainings, which Lola Aida has taken special interest in.



*"Ang pinakanatatandaan kong topic na diniscuss ay yung tungkol sa pagmamasahé at eto ay nagagamit ko pa sa aking*

*mga apo at pwede ko ring pagkakitaan (The topic I remember the most is about massage, and I am able to use this on my grandkids and can also be a source of income)," Garcia added.*

**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.** Beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program from Brgy. Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City attend a Family Development Session today. The FDS is a component of the Pantawid Pamilya program that teaches beneficiaries on topics such as strengthening family relationship, health and education and disaster preparedness among others.

Lola Aida's family is among the 4.2 million beneficiaries of the government's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) for 6 years now. She is among the 4,078 active household beneficiaries in her barangay.

Lola Aida is a solo parent, having lost her husband years ago and taking sole responsibility with the caring of their kids. Now that her children are of working age, she has proceeded to taking care of her children's kids.

Through the program's monthly FDS, Lola Aida also learned the value of saving and has proudly shared that they have around P30,000 savings which she intends to use for her grandchildren's education.

### ***Health Priority***

A few seats away from Aida is Remedios Diaz, 54, another beneficiary of the program since 2013. She shares that the program helps her in providing for the educational needs of her four school-aged children, especially since she only earns P400 a day from selling 'kakanin.'

As she listens in today's topic, a lot of her views on health, particularly on tuberculosis, are corrected.

*"May kapitbahay kaming namatay sa TB at lahat ng kanyang kasama sa bahay ay naging positibo sa TB. Hindi sila nagpapagamot, at kaming mga kapitbahay ay natatakot na makihalubilo sa kanila (Our neighbor died of TB and all of the members of their household are diagnosed with the same disease. They are not undergoing any treatment, and we are afraid to mingle with them),"* shared Diaz.

With what she learned from the session, Diaz is excited to go home.

*"Pupuntahan ko kaagad sa bahay 'yung kapitbahay namin para kumbinsihing magpagamot, (As soon as I go home, I'll advise my neighbors to get checked and start medication),"* she said.

### ***A Decade Long Endeavour***

The Pantawid Program started in 2009 and since then has catered to 1,715,433 beneficiaries from Luzon, 1,605,659 from Mindanao and 862,311 beneficiaries from Visayas for a total of 4,183,403 beneficiaries nationwide.

These beneficiaries receive cash grants for the health and education of children aged zero to 18 in exchange for their compliance to program conditions including the children's 85% monthly school attendance, children's monthly health checkup, pregnant women's pre and post-natal checkup and parents' monthly attendance to FDS.

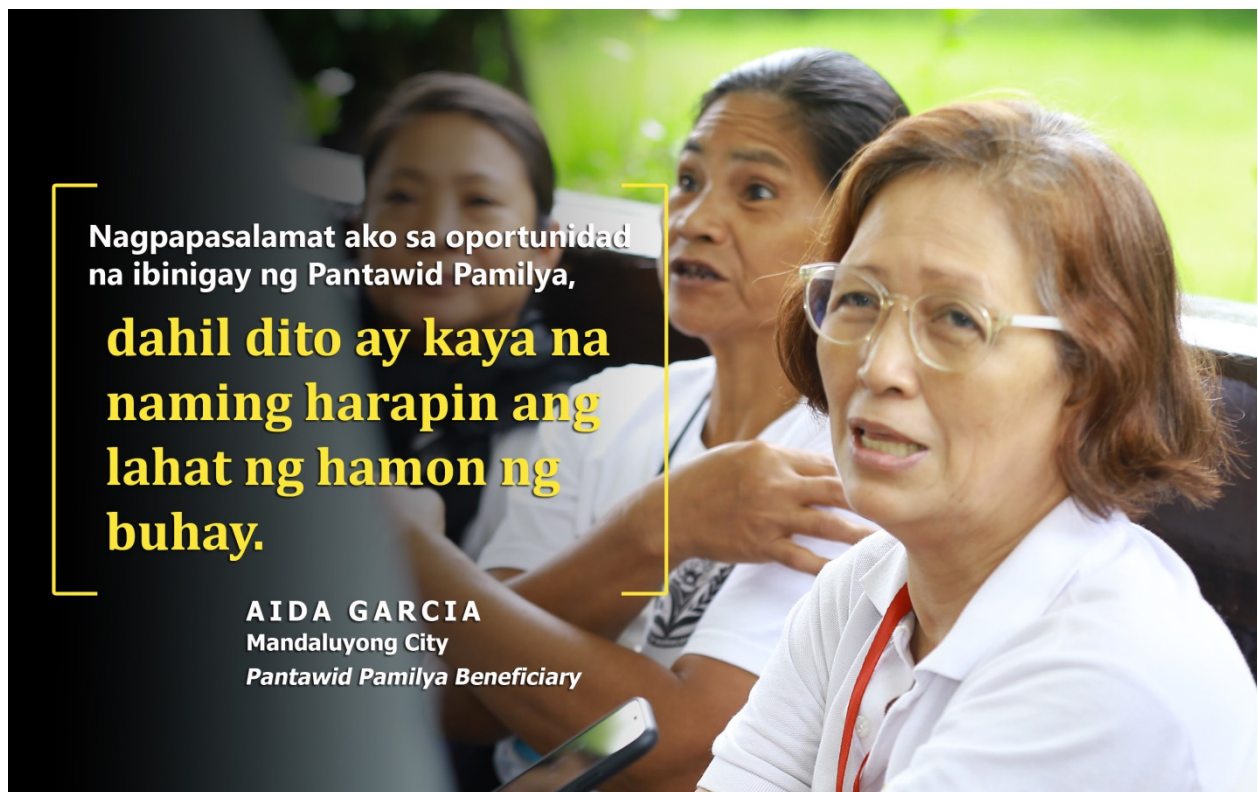
Among the countries implementing a conditional cash transfer scheme, only the Philippines incorporates the FDS as an added measure of addressing the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

### ***The Outlook***

Through the Pantawid Pamilya, Lola Aida and Remedios confidently share that they are now equipped with knowledge and skills to handle the rigors of life and to thrive even after the program.

They both bared that their experiences with Pantawid are integral to what they have become and will continue to be advocates of the program for as long as they can.

*"Gusto ko lang magpasalamat sa Pantawid sa oportunidad na kanilang ibinigay at dahil dito ay kaya na naming harapin ang lahat ng hamon ng buhay (We are grateful for the opportunity given to us by Pantawid and now we are able to face any challenge life may bring), Lola Aida closes. ###*



## **Team Troopa:**

1. Rhaydz Barcia
2. Joseph Constantine J. Arceo
3. Rovheen Conrad M. Bandola
4. Chester Carlo M. Trinidad
5. Noemee Jane M. Mayor