

Tonga Health

Promotion Foundation

Promoting an active and healthy Tonga

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TongaHealth



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A woman attends an aerobics class at Teufaiva stadium, Nuku'alofa. TongaHealth funds and supports regular and free physical activity programs throughout all Island groups in the Kingdom.

Who are we?

History

Tonga Health Promotion Foundation (TongaHealth) was established by the Health Promotion Foundation Act 2007 as an independent body to act as a link between the community, NGOs, and the Government to promote health by fighting Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). This is the government's initiative to address the NCDs crisis in Tonga.

The problem of NCDs is at a critical level in Tonga. With an increasing number of Tongans being affected by heart disease, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and smoking-related illnesses, TongaHealth was established to combat this burden of disease and promote healthy lifestyle changes throughout Tonga.

TongaHealth uses evidence-based approaches to increase the knowledge, skills and resources of key organisations through advocacy for and promotion of healthy environments and healthy living.

Vision & Values

Our vision is for a healthy Tonga where everyone is responsible for promoting health and everyone shares in the benefits of a healthy population.

TongaHealth is guided by the following values: Partnership and Collaboration; Respect and Trustworthiness; Transparency and Accountability; Commitment; Innovation; and Health Equity.



TongaHealth's Monica Tu'ipulotu talks to church leaders in Neiafu, Vava'u, about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating in reducing one's risk of developing NCDs.

TongaHealth builds partnerships with community leaders to establish support and trust within different populations and areas.

TongaHealth pursues its vision to promote a healthy population and reduce the burden of NCDs by:

- Funding activities, through competitive grants schemes and sponsorships, to increase the capacity of organisations, communities and individuals to improve health. Grant-making programs are open to NGOs, government institutions, church and community organisations, on a competitive basis, according to published eligibility criteria. The allocation of grants are based upon an assessment of project proposals against published funding criteria.
- Acting as a catalyst or advocate for the development of health promoting policies, programs and environments, based on sound evidence;
- Designing and conducting social marketing campaigns, in partnership with other health promotion organisations, to communicate healthy messages for behaviour change to the whole population through TV, radio, print media and other activities;
- Giving particular focus to key settings and population groups and remote areas where inequalities exist.



A participant takes part in a TongaHealth funded netball competition in Pangai, Ha'apai.

TongaHealth is committed to extending its health promotion activities to remote areas where inequalities exist.

Priority Areas

TongaHealth focuses on four priorities for program delivery:

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Tobacco control
- Reduction of harm from alcohol misuse

These priorities are aligned with and complement Tonga's national public health priorities, specifically the National Strategy to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases, Tonga 2010-15. In addition, they are guided by the following milestones:

- Tonga recognised the urgency of reducing NCDs through the Tonga Commitment 2003.
- Tonga signed the WHO international Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2003
- In February 2010, the second National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (2010-2015) was launched.
- The reversal of NCDs in Tonga is included as a target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Tonga to be achieved by 2015



Women in Ha'atafu village, Tongatapu, attend a full-day Healthy Lifestyle workshop facilitated by TongaHealth staff.

TongaHealth delivered Healthy Lifestyle and Obesity Prevention workshops across the three main island groups of Tonga in 2012.



Malia Folau is congratulated by Lord Tangi, former Minister of Health, after receiving the Dr Tapa Scholarship. Malia will complete a Bachelor of Public Health at Fiji National University. She will be joined by four other scholarship recipients. TongaHealth's Dr Tapa Scholarship funds tuition, accommodation, and living costs for each recipient and aims to build the capacity of Tonga's health promotion workforce.

I. Healthy Eating

Mai e Nima (Give me Five)

TongaHealth supports and funds the *Mai e Nima* campaign, which encourages primary school students to consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

In addition, TongaHealth has supported the development of *Healthy Eating Teaching Resource* kits, at the request of the Mai e Nima Task Force Committee, to be used throughout primary schools in the Kingdom. The Mai e Nima concept is taught in all primary schools and further strengthened by mascots.

Community Gardening Program

TongaHealth provides grants to villages wishing to access seedlings, fencing and other resources to grow a variety of vegetables and fruits in their gardens. The aim of this initiative is to increase the consumption of protective and health promoting foods among Tongan families throughout all Island groups in the Kingdom. To ensure sustainability, each household is encouraged to plant eight local vegetables and fruits in their residential garden for easy access throughout the year.



Students from 'Atele Primary School watch a performance by the *Mai e Nima* (Give me Five) healthy eating mascots, Anapo and Pekalo.



1,856 households have participated in TongaHealth's Community Gardening Program since 2009. Families are provided with seedlings and gardening equipment to grow at least eight different vegetables and fruits in their garden.

2. Physical Activity

Healthy villages and workplaces

TongaHealth sponsors three Community Champions (and five assistants) to deliver regular fitness classes within villages. Over 550 individuals from churches, workplaces and villages participated in these classes in 2012.

Aerobics instructor training workshops

TongaHealth funds 7-day intensive Aerobics Instructor Training Workshops to encourage individuals to deliver physical activity programs in their local communities. 32 individuals from Tongatapu and Vava'u graduated from the training program in early 2013, with more expected throughout the year.

Grants and sponsorship

TongaHealth provided over 61 grants and sponsorships within villages, churches, schools and workplaces to purchase their own sports equipment for physical activity events.



Men from Sia'atoutai village participate in an aerobics class facilitated by TongaHealth Community Champion Ma'afu Palu. These one hour classes are attended by between 60-100 participants each week. Each participant's weight monitored on a monthly basis.



55,779 individuals have been reached through
TongaHealth's physical activity sponsorship program.

3. Tobacco control

Smoke-free areas

TongaHealth has funded the placement of over 2000 non-smoking signs in public places such as churches, markets, community halls, hospitals, restaurants, and bars throughout Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai, 'Eua and the Niuas.

Authorised officers monitor non-compliance by businesses and individuals and enforce fines according to the Tobacco Control Act 2000.

Policy advocacy

TongaHealth has worked closely with the Tobacco Control Sub-Committee and within the Blue Ribbon campaign to expand smoke-free places to include restaurants and bars.

In addition, TongaHealth continues to advocate for legislative changes to increase taxes on tobacco within the Kingdom.



Numerous public places, such as the market in Nuku'alofa, have been designated non-smoking areas.

4. Alcohol misuse

Don't Drink & Drive campaign

TongaHealth works with the Tongan Police Service to inform the public about the risks of drinking and driving.

Policy advocacy

TongaHealth supports the Alcohol Sub-Committee in funding advocacy efforts to restrict the marketing and advertising of alcohol within the Kingdom.



The harmful health effects of excess alcohol consumption have been highlighted by TongaHealth through TV, radio and print media.

Media & Communications

TongaHealth uses a variety of mediums to distribute health promotion messages to the community, including:

- Weekly 30 minute Healthy Lifestyle TV and Radio programs
- Newspaper advertisements and articles
- TV and Radio spots
- Youtube, Facebook and an online website
- Billboards

All regions in the Kingdom, including remote areas in the outer islands, are reached through print-media and radio, while Tongatapu and Vava'u have access to regular television programs and advertising.

In addition, TongaHealth sponsors healthy lifestyle media initiatives undertaken by other community organisations.



Nurse Lupe Kaihea appears on a TongaHealth TV spot warning about the consequences of not caring for your health.

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www.youtube.com/user/TongaHealth

www.tongahealth.org.to



Image: TongaHealth Community Champion, Rodney Havea (right), runs one of his afternoon aerobics classes in Ma'ufanga, Nuku'alofa.