

Chinandega residents in Nicaragua better informed about COVID-19

During the month of September, Casa Alianza Nicaragua held a series of community workshops in Chinandega aimed at providing young people and adults with clear, factual information on COVID-19, dispelling myths about the virus and providing training on healthy habits and ways to strengthen the immune system.

The workshops provided a space for participants to speak openly about their understanding of the virus and how they could decrease the incidence of its transmission. They also presented an opportunity to dispel myths and allay concerns related, for example, to the increased use of infrared thermometers in public buildings. Workshop coordinators reiterated the need for increased hygiene measures to reduce the risk of catching and spreading the virus and directed participants to Spanish-language resources online, such as the World Health Organization's website, where they could find reliable data on the subject.

The workshops also touched on the social impacts of COVID-19, including the increase in gender-based violence, substance abuse and addiction, deteriorating mental health, irregular migration and people trafficking.

A special session dedicated to boosting the immune system was well received, since participants learned about the importance of a balanced diet and exercise in maintaining their health. Additionally, they received tips on preparing nutritious meals based on ingredients and products that they already consumed – an easy way of enhancing the immune system and managing chronic diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension. Participants also received a session on managing their mental health and learned different techniques to cope with anxiety and stress.

One workshop attendee said:

This activity has been a real blessing for us. There's a lot of tension in the world, due to COVID-19, there's a lot of stress, which has been detrimental to our mental health. These workshops have allowed us to correct several erroneous ideas in regard to COVID-19. It is now our duty to share the information that we learned with others.

At the closing session, Casa Alianza distributed hygiene kits containing household and personal cleaning products to all participants to help them to prevent the virus from spreading.

The British Embassy is pleased to support this initiative aimed at tackling misinformation around and preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Nicaragua.