

Happy & Healthy: Nutrition for the Parikrma Soul

The Singapore International Foundation conducted the first in a series of workshops, offering simple, practical advice to communities to cook healthier, more hygienic and nutritious meals for our children

Bangalore: "You are what you eat." "Health is wealth." "Your body is a temple – treat it like one." These adages have little or no meaning if you don't have the luxury of choice when it comes to food. For the children of Parikrma and their families, a nutritious meal is all-important, since many don't know where their next meal is coming from. That's why Parikrma has partnered with the Singapore International Foundation to run a series of workshops on nutrition for our teachers, parents and children.

The three-pronged goal of the first workshop, held in January, was to **train** teachers in implementing Nutrition in the syllabus, **educate** the community on what constitutes a healthy diet and **enable** the community to provide healthier meals to their families. The simple, homemade solutions to daily issues of nutrition and hygiene received an overwhelming response from participants.

The SIF team spent time with the Parikrma community at the end of 2013, understanding the dietary habits of the families and the likes and dislikes of our children, helping to create a highly relevant program.

Back to the Basics

Starting from the very beginning, parents were introduced to the concept of a balanced diet and the importance of energy and protein in food. Moving on to solutions, they were taught about selecting and cooking nutrient-rich food and the 5-colour magic method of choosing vegetables. Simple ways of retaining the nutrients in food while cooking were explained, while pointing out faulty cooking habits.

The focus shifted to hygienic food preparation and storage, a sessions that included learning how to make an enzyme cleaner, how to purify water naturally and how to make a home-made refrigerator!

"The best part of the workshop was the enzyme cleanser which can be made at home using fruit peels, jaggery water. Instead of throwing peels we can use it to make a concentrated solution to clean floors, vessels



Simple Things: The SIF team explains how to make nutritious food and to use on infected skin I am also thinking of starting a business supplying homemade enzyme cleanser," says Mangala, mother of Thanushri (Grade 7) and Kavana (Grade 5) from Sahakaranagar.

Healing at Home

Medical consultation in the city is not only hugely expensive, and so the SIF team gave the parents simple home-made remedies for sore throats, the common cold, fever and diarrhea. A method of self-testing for vitamin deficiencies was also taught. Amazed with the simple, cost-effective ways of improving overall health and dietary habits, the parents are already looking forward to the next workshop!

Like everything we do at Parikrma, the aim of this workshop is to give our community the ability to live independently. When asked about sustainability, it is programs like this that provide the answer: that don't offer short-term solutions but provide the knowledge and ability for the Parikrma community to live healthier, richer lives.