

University
of Dundee



Using Creative Public Involvement & Engagement To Improve Paediatric Oral Health In The Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2024, a 4-week oral health promotion project was delivered in Roxas City in the central Visayas region of the Philippines. The WHO global oral health status report¹ highlights the country as having one of the world's highest rates of untreated severe dental caries, with a shocking prevalence of 82% amongst children upto 12yrs old². Preventative dentistry is greatly underprioritized by the Philippine government, which is shown in the extremely low 0.2US\$ per capita expenditure on dental care¹. In view of these findings, the project focussed on increasing oral health awareness¹ and providing children with access to high quality dental public health education.

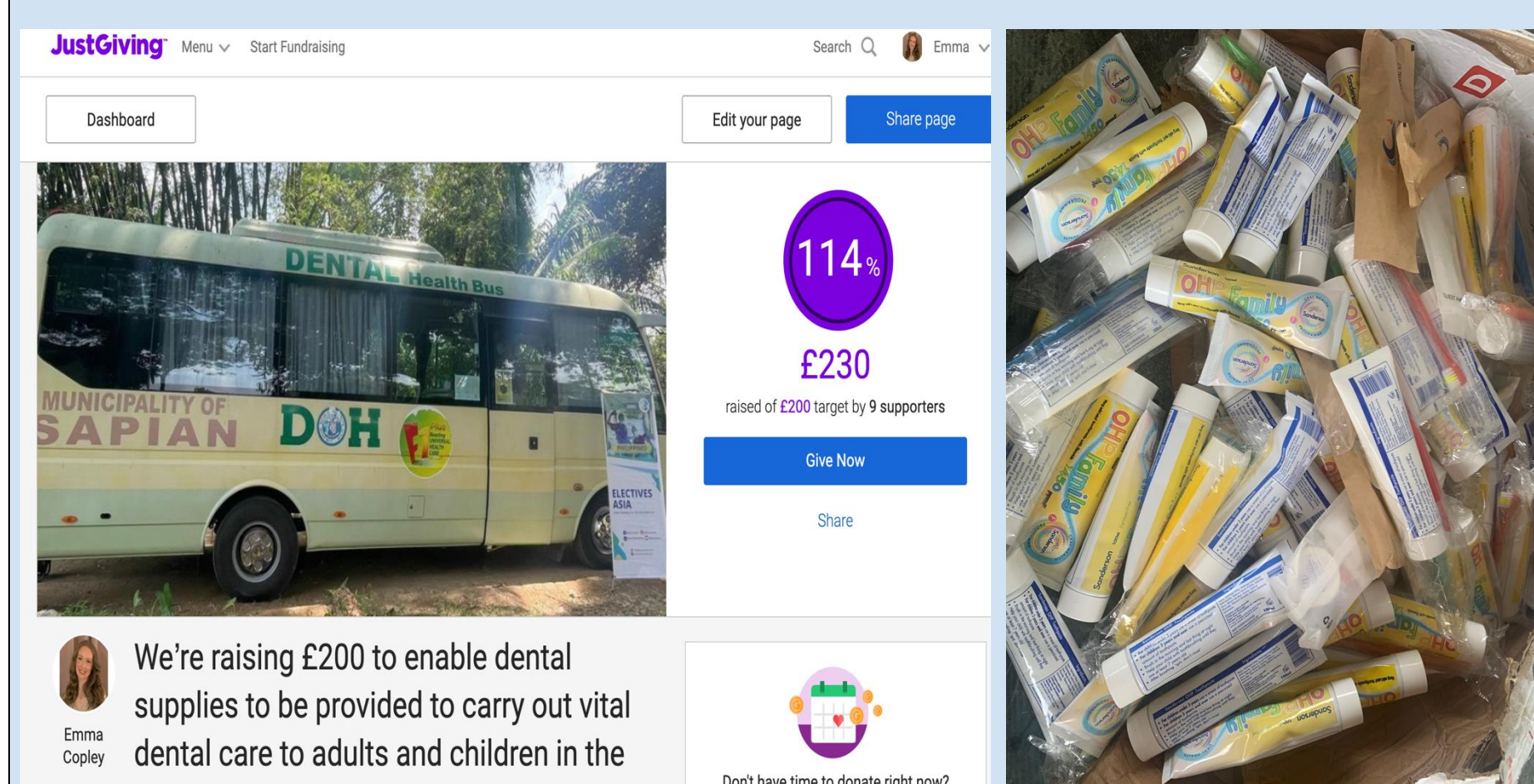
OBJECTIVES

- To volunteer for 4 weeks at a humanitarian project in the Philippines to provide dental care and prevention advice in dental hospital clinics & outreach centres to reach the most rural communities.
- To create a meaningful & engaging oral health education resource tailored to Filipino school children³.

FUNDRAISING

- JustGiving donation page was set up to share information about the project. The fundraising page also featured in the Scottish Dental Magazine⁴
- Raffle event was organised for DDH staff & students to win a pair of loupes donated by Bryant Dental.
- Childsmile kindly donated hundreds of toothbrushing packs & toothpaste supplies.

Overall, **£784 was raised** for postage and printing costs, enabling the schoolchildren to have a copy of the Filipino 'Toothy Tiger' comic and toothbrush pack [Figure 1].



Scottish
**Dental
MAGAZINE**
NEWS MAGAZINE ISSUES DIARY SUBSCRIPTIONS SCOTTS

Pledge your support for vital dental care in the Philippines

A University of Dundee dental student will be spending four weeks volunteering in Roxas City in the Philippines this summer.
Emma Copley, a fourth year student, will be part of a team of dental students and dentists providing vital dental care to children and adults in local communities.



Figure 1 – Fundraising efforts to raise donations to implement the project.

METHODS

Dundee Dental Hospital (DDH) Paediatric department currently use a quality assured resource to teach primary school children oral health prevention advice. As this comic received successful feedback, we decided the best way to conduct the oral health promotion project would be to adapt and tailor the comic to the new target Filipino population.



FILIPINO COMIC DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



JAN 2024: After receiving approval from the graphic designer & authors of the DDH comic to revise and develop the materials for a new audience, 15 Filipino schools were contacted from around Roxas City, with successful replies from 4 schools [Figure 2]. Regular communication enabled school partnerships to be established & a greater understanding of Filipino life, which helped identify cultural differences between the UK and the Philippines.



DepEd Tayo Don Amando Bayot Sr. Memorial Integrated School

Hello ma'am Emma! 😊
Thanks for reaching out. We're thrilled to be part of your oral health promotion project for our school children. Count us in! Let us know how we can help further. Looking forward to working together for their well-being. Thanks for considering us!

Figure 2: Partnership School Response



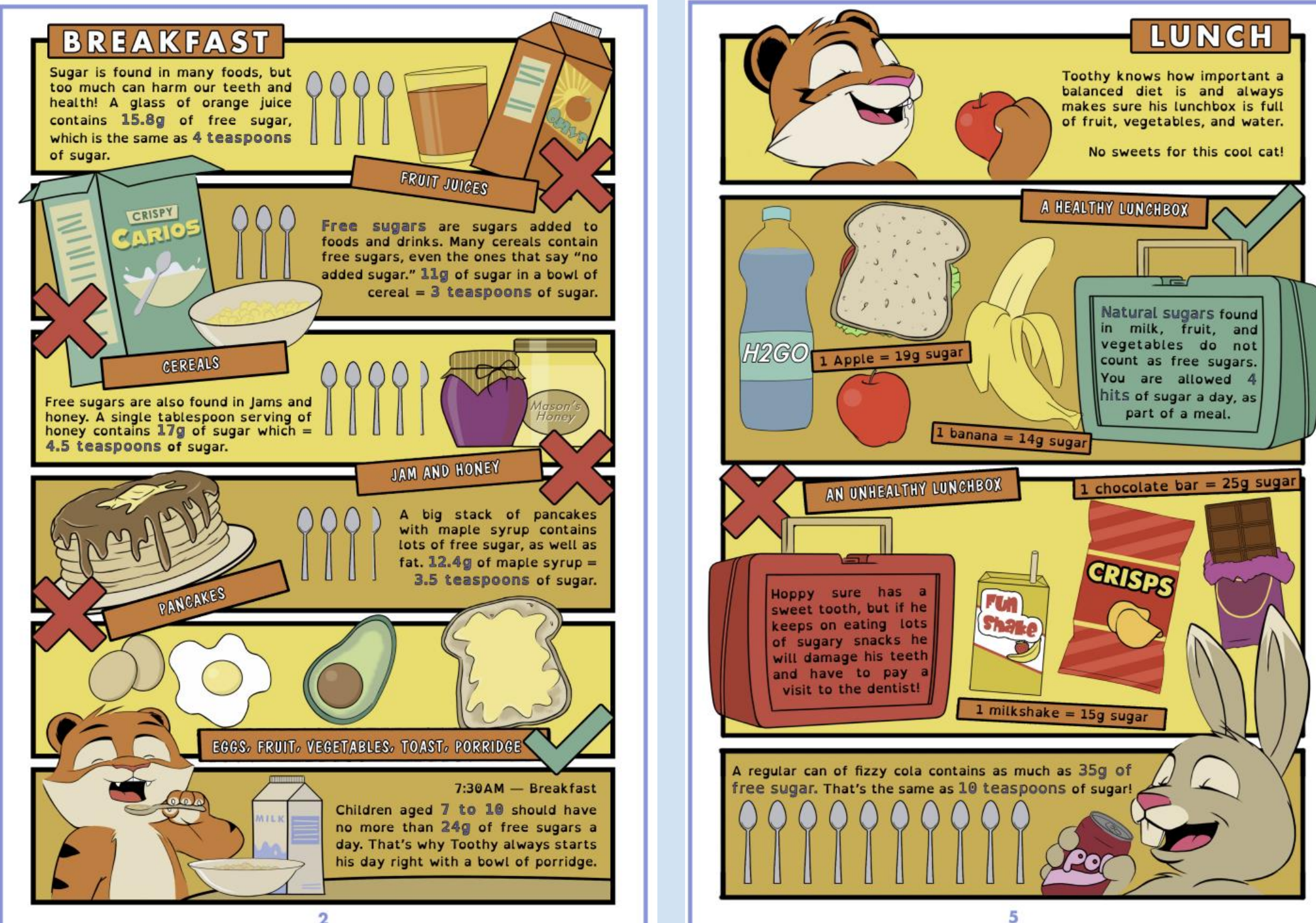
March – May 2024: DDH comic was modified to reflect dietary and cultural practices specific to the Philippines using adobe illustrator [Figure 2]. Liaising with DDH Public Health department ensured the comic remained evidence based and addressed oral health inequalities for greater public engagement.

Figure 2: Variety of Adobe Illustrator Designs included in the Filipino Comic.



June 2024: Comic transcribed into Tagalog, the native language of the Philippines & QR code link created to increase accessibility [Figure 3]. The translated comic was sent to the network of Filipino schoolteachers for sense checking & verification before distribution in the Philippines.

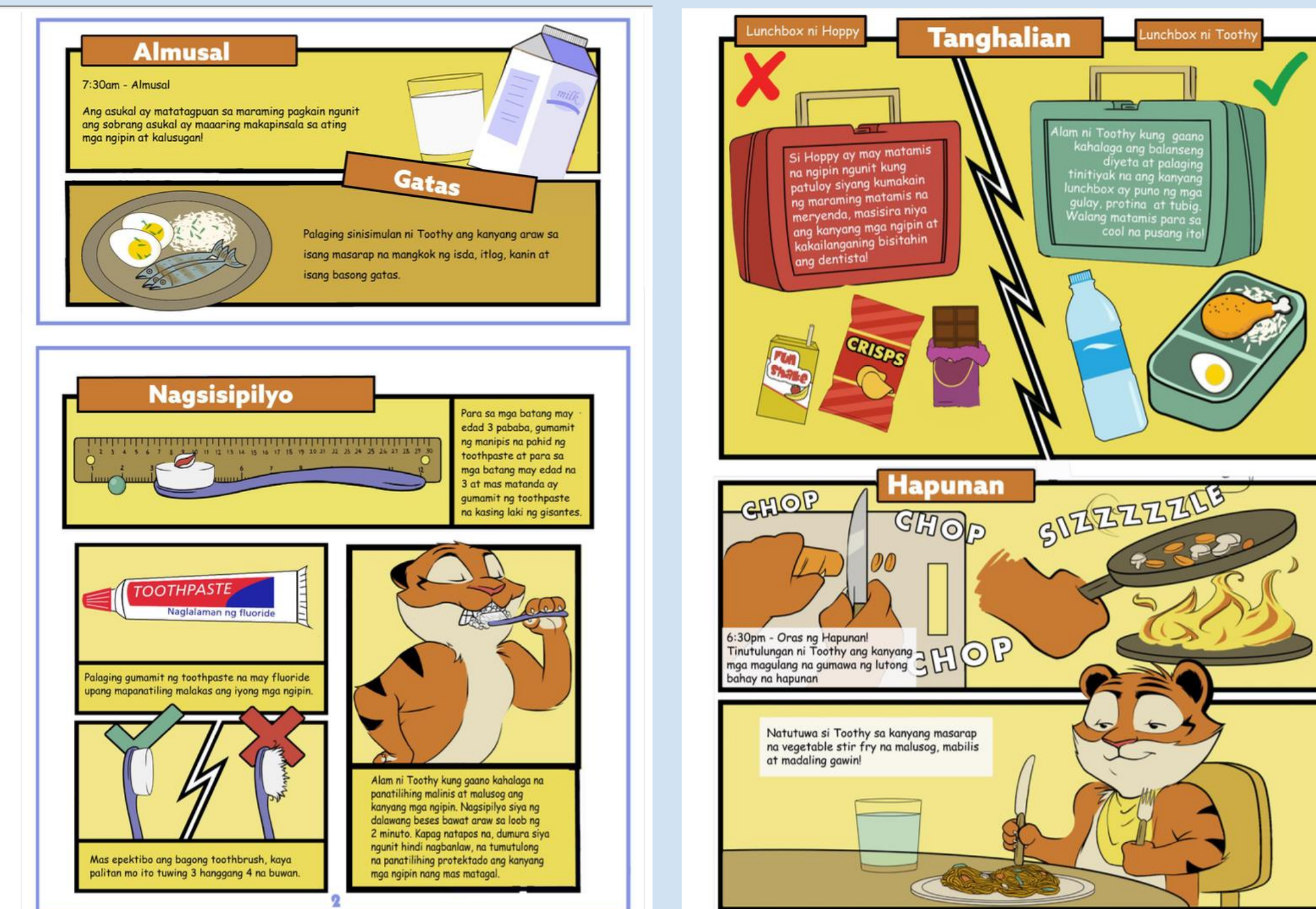
Excerpts from the Original Toothy Tiger's Pearls of Wisdom Comic used by Dundee Dental Hospital



Excerpts from the Modified 'Filipino' Toothy Tiger Comic distributed in the Philippines



Figure 3: Filipino Comic QR code



RESULTS

Oral health promotion session was delivered to 5 schools:

- 2 Day Care Centres (children 3-5yrs)
- 2 Large Elementary Schools (children 7-15yrs) [Figure 5].
- 1- Youth Group (children 12-16yrs)

Tiger hand puppet helped launch the Filipino comic and make the oral health sessions interactive and fun [Figure 6].

The comic was distributed to 424 Filipino children over the 4-week period.

All children engaged well for the duration of the sessions, and all were excited to have their own copy of the comic to take home to share oral health messages with their families.

Positive verbal feedback was received from children. The teachers asked permission to use the comic as a future classroom reading material & to have as an ongoing library resource for continued access to the oral health education content.



Figure 5: Meeting Principal of Dapdapan Elementary, Project Partnership School



Figure 6: Set up for Oral Health Promotion Session.

CONCLUSION

The project achieved its aims in providing meaningful oral health advice to improve the dental health of the Roxas city communities. We believe the enthusiasm shown by the children towards the project will help facilitate healthier habits to be developed for their futures.

This 4-week project in the Philippines was an incredibly eye opening and humbling experience which allowed us to appreciate the value of global collaboration and culturally sensitive and inclusive practice for delivering health messages to the most marginalised.

Going forwards, we want to develop the project further and tailor the comic to other languages and cultures to further increase accessibility to reach more communities.

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