

Perla Pichardo, MD - Field Report
San Miguel de Allende Integrated Community Health Program
November, 2025

Introduction

My name is Perla Pichardo. I am 29 years old, and I am a doctor. One day in June, I decided to become part of Concern America and fulfill my dream of being a volunteer. I am in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico, serving as an advisor to 35 health promoters who are in their second year of studies.

From my first day with the organization, I had the opportunity to visit the communities, and I saw the main challenges their residents face (arid land, water scarcity, and poor access to health services). However, the promoters showed me their enthusiasm and willingness to help and continue learning despite the adversities, and that motivated me to believe in the project, but above all, to trust again in the kindness that exists in people.



Image 1. The community of San Cayetano, viewed from the church bell tower.



Image 2. Pigs raised by a promoter in her community.



Image 3. An afternoon walk on a community visit.



Image 4. Educational talk on the importance of women's health to a community group.

Training Course

From August 11 to 15, the “Pregnancy and Birth” course was held at the Community Center in the locality of San Cayetano. We had as a guest, Alison, a midwife with many years of experience, who taught the group about providing prenatal care, describing the changes in the woman’s body as well as baby growth and development, detecting and treating preclampsia and gestational diabetes, attending a birth, how to properly examine the newborn, and many other topics related to pregnancy and delivery. It is important to highlight that these topics were approached from a natural, emotional, well-being, and spiritual perspective, with the goal of creating a more positive and empowering experience for the mother, contributing to a more harmonious and satisfying birth.

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There was emphasis on the connection between the woman's mind, body, and spirit and that of the baby, cultivating a deep bond that is nurtured and strengthened throughout the entire pregnancy process. Fear, anxiety, and a predominantly negative clinical focus were set aside.

This led several promoters to raise their hands and share their personal experiences; most of them were stories of obstetric violence, which created a somber atmosphere, but for some promoters, it was an opportunity for emotional release, letting go of guilt, and internal healing.

Topics related to complications or illnesses during pregnancy were addressed by the doctor, while the aspects of nutrition and breastfeeding were taught by the coordinator, Pilar. Both adapted the topics into a practical, simple, and dynamic methodology so that the promoters could understand them and later share them with their patients. I trust that what the promoters learned will be helpful for the pregnant women they care for, allowing them to face this process with greater calm, confidence, and serenity.



Image 5. Alison explaining a baby's movements en utero.



Image 6. Alison exploring a baby's position.



Image 7. Explanation of the diagnosis and treatment of urinary tract infections during pregnancy.

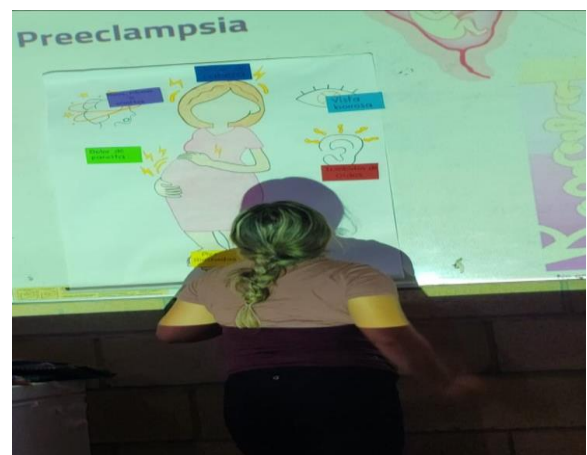


Image 7. Promoters recognizing the symptoms of preeclampsia.

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Image 8. Promoters practicing how to accompany a patient during a difficult time.



Image 9. Promotores made pelvic models to better understand anatomy during pregnancy.

Later in October (from the 13th to the 17th), we met again, this time to cover the “Accidents and Trauma” course, to help the promoters learn how to act in common situations in their communities (bleeding control, wound management, performing sutures, abscess drainage, care for fractures or burns, identifying agrochemical poisonings, and providing first aid for bites and stings from venomous animals in their regions). We were fortunate to have the participation of field team member Susana, who stands out for her extensive medical knowledge and long trajectory with Concern America; her experience was undoubtedly key in making the course practical and enriching for all the promoters. We also had the visit of Dr. Elodia, a researcher and dentist from the National Institute of Public Health, who worked tirelessly supporting the various activities throughout the week. Her skill in suturing techniques allowed her to mentor several promoters during the hands-on sessions.

The promoters learned to suture on sponges and then practiced and refined their stitches for several hours on deceased pigs. It was incredible to see the perseverance of each one of the promoters, who did not stop practicing until they felt satisfied with their work. Many of them demonstrated great skill and were able to advance to higher levels of complexity, performing tendon and cartilage repair or suturing difficult areas such as the eyes.



Image 10. Promoters practicing sutures in sponges (laceration simulations).



Image 11. Promoter suturing on pig skin.

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Image 12. Promoters suturing on pig skin.



Image 13. Promoters practicing sutures on cartilage and eyes.



Image 14. Promoters practicing anesthesia injections (finger blocking technique).



Image 15. Promoters learning to immobilize fractures.

Community Visits

In September, we visited nine different communities where there are promotor students. The attendance of people seeking consultations allows the promoters to apply the knowledge they have acquired, continue practicing techniques or procedures, and develop their medical care skills. At the end of the consultation, and if time permits, I suggested that we hold a discussion or feedback session to delve into relevant aspects of the cases attended, answer questions, or explain the reasoning behind the approach or the decisions regarding the treatments provided, among other things.

For my part, visiting the communities allows me to understand the risk factors affecting their neighbors, the most frequent illnesses for which they seek care, and to support the promoters with what they find difficult or have forgotten, as well as to advise them on complex cases beyond their scope. When no patients attend the consultation, we use the time to create fictional clinical cases for them to solve, address questions about various topics, and practice with one another.

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Without a doubt, time spent in the community helps me identify areas of opportunity to work on, connect with the promoters, and interact with their families and community environment.



Image 16. Discussion and feedback session after consults.



Image 17. Explanation to the promoters for examining a painful shoulder.



Image 18. Accompaniment of a promoter on a home visit to a patient with heart failure + diabetes + high blood pressure.



Image 19. Accompaniment of a promoter on a home visit to a patient with venous insufficiency + high blood pressure + depression, who has been abandoned by family members.



Image 20. Promoter performing a complete examination on a patient; in the end, benign prostatic hyperplasia was diagnosed.



Image 21. Promoters doing a health consult.

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Image 22. Four-year-old child diagnosed with acute pharyngitis and tonsillar hypertrophy, which served to explain to the promoters the difference between this condition and a tonsillar abscess.



Image 23. Promoters washing out a patient's ear.

Other Activities

The Water School, coordinated by the NGO 'Caminos de Agua' and the CSO 'INANA,' invited us to accompany them on the weekend of October 25 and 26, because their students would begin community work in their respective localities. Each activity will be different for each person, which is why it is important to identify risk factors, current health status, and any physical–functional restrictions or limitations.

Three of the promoters performed medical exams on 30 students; at the end, we issued recommendations or medical indications according to each person's results, to prevent accidents, illnesses, or complications during their community activities. We also provided suggestions for the school to consider in order to safeguard the well-being of their students jointly.

The activity allowed the promoters to practice important aspects of physical examination, such as heart and lung sounds, which is essential for sharpening their listening skills.



Image 24. Branches or areas for carrying out community work.



Image 25. Promotezr doing a health consult with a student from the Water School.



Image 26. Promoters doing health consultations with students from the Water School.