

Increasing Community Capacity to Prevent Childhood Obesity:
challenges, lessons learnt and results from the
Romp & Chomp intervention project.



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Project Aim



- To increase the capacity of the Geelong community to promote healthy eating and active play and to achieve healthy weight in children less than 5 years of age.
- Target group: **12,000** children in City of Greater Geelong
- 2005 - 2008
- Funding: **\$AUD 111,200**



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Program implementation



- Barwon Health
- City of Greater Geelong
- Geelong Kindergarten Association
- Dental Health Services Victoria
- Health Promotion Unit Leisure Networks
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services
- Deakin University
- Bellarine Community Health
- Kids-Go for your life



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Action plan objectives



- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| ↑ Active Play | vs. | ↓ Television | } Behavioural objectives |
| ↑ Active transport | vs. | ↓ Car transport | |
| ↑ Fruit & Veg | vs. | ↓ Crisps/ED snacks | |
| ↑ Water | vs. | ↓ Sweet drinks | |
| ✓ Integrated pop. growth monitoring program | | | |
| ✓ Start Right Eat Right training in LDC | | | |
| ✓ Structured Active Play in ECS | | | |
| ✓ Awareness campaign | | | } Standard objectives |
| ✓ Monitoring and evaluation | | | |
| ✓ Community capacity | | | |



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Capacity Building



“The development of knowledge, skills, commitment, structures, systems and leadership to enable effective health promotion”(Smith, Tang et al. 2006).



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Methods



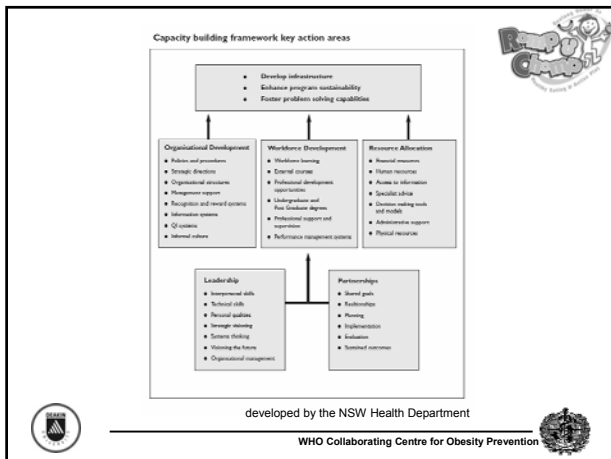
Triangulation (Mixed Methods Evaluation)

- 1. Action Plan Assessment**
 - Mapped intended actions from the *Romp & Chomp* action plan into the 5 domains of the NSW Capacity Building framework (Simmons et al.)
- 2. Key informant interviews**
 - 16 interviews with key informants (KIs) were conducted.
- 3. Community Capacity Index (CCI)**
 - Quantitative assessment of community capacity (at the end of the project)



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Results

Action plan assessment

NSW Framework Domains	Score per domain
Partnerships	21/53 (40%)
Leadership	0/53 (0%)
Resource Allocation	12/53 (23%)
Workforce development	4/53 (8%)
Organisational Development	16/53 (30%)

Score: proportion of actions in the action plan per NSW Framework domain

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Results & Learnings

Partnerships

- Partners identified & Partnerships established
- The more partners got involved, the more difficult & complex

"...we're dealing with large organisations and inevitability multiple personalities with different ideas about how things should be done"

"Like I had things I have to do to meet my target, and they have things they have to do, so it's like everyone trying to compete in a sense..."

"If it was Romp & Chomp alone...then we might have done 5 kinders, Smiles 4 Miles partnership was really important because they provide us with resources"

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Results & Learnings

Partnerships

- ! Strategies to enhance collaboration across/within organisations
- ! Clear and formal structures for communications
- ! Clear roles and responsibilities
- ! Assess performance of partnerships through formal process
- ! Address issues as they arise

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Results & Learnings

Leadership

- A perception of lack of leadership on several levels
"the steering committee who never met, never did much steering"
- lack of communication and direction
- staff resignations and changes
→ frustrations and negative feelings

- ! Specific training in leadership for project leaders
- ! Strategies to increase group cohesion & team building

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Results & Learnings:

Resources

- A lack of resources and funding → frustrations
 - Common feeling of pride about the achievements made
 - Lack of funding is always a reality

"Try it on a shoestring budget...in some ways it was an advantage because that's closer to the real world"

- Resource reallocation & In-kind support
→ not evenly distributed?

- ! More transparent resource allocation & documented contributions

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Results & Learnings

Workforce Development

- Policies in Early Childhood Services
 - Active Play into training early childhood workers (TAFE)
 - “...that's sustainable, all early childhood workers are going to learn about structured active play within the program and then they'll get out to the settings”
 - Training Allied Health professionals: health promotion in community settings
 - “...to use their health promotion time...I think it's a very smart way of reorienting the existing health services to prevention...”
 - Establishment of Children's Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group
- ! Sustainability of various capacity building activities in planning → benefit the community



Summary

- ✓ Did the R&C project achieve the project aim?
 - Yes, there was a clear increase in capacity.
- ✓ Broad representation of projects and organisations:
 - strong credentials at problem solving
 - addressing health issues within the community.



Summary

- ✓ Important lessons (priority):
 - ! Project management
 - ! Leadership (training & team building)
 - ! Enhance collaboration
 - ! Funding (transparency)
 - ! Formal structures and processes (communication & responsibilities)
 - Assess throughout the life of the project.
- ✓ Recommendation:
 - Use Capacity Building Framework for development and monitoring of action plans*



As one of the interviewees stated:

“Despite the difficulties...that kind of collaboration is what we need to do more and we just need to get better at it”

