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Tooty Fruity Vegie: development and implementation

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In this paper I will describe how we developed and implemented TFV. In the second paper I will be discussing the evaluation plan and results of the project.
The tfv project arose out of a needs assessment conducted in 1998. The community and health service staff were asked to identify 6 priority health issues. For each health issue, goals were identified for prevention, detection, treatment and rehabilitation. Resources were identified and then project strategies and evaluations were developed.

1.1 FTE only
We had an expert working party who looked at projects that would help prevent cardiovascular disease. This group consisted of staff from health, sport and recreation.
Goal Selection

- Literature review
- Considered “best bets”
- Considered equity
- Built on existing networks and strengths

One staff member conducted a lit review which examined proven interventions which would prevent some of the risk factors for CVD.

Some of the best bets were considered by the expert working party.

We wanted to ensure the project would reach disadvantaged groups – with schools we could select those schools in disadvantaged areas.
Tooty Fruity Vegie
Project Goal

To increase fruit and vegetable consumption by primary school kids in ten schools in the Northern Rivers region by end of 2000.

2 projects – migi and tfv
1600 kids exposed during 2 yr period of intervention
Equates to roughly 1100 families
All schools including independent and catholic were invited to take on the project
10 volunteered – we did lean rather heavily on schools with high numbers of ATSI student
Increasing F & V intakes reduces risk of major chronic diseases: CVD, many cancers, hypertension, stroke, NIDDM.

Positive health message.

F & V intakes decline throughout childhood.

Population health on a shoestring.

Working towards sustainability.

Spend time on this
Reducing risk factors form most of the major chronic diseases
Positive health messages are more successful then negative ones
Simple easy message

1.1 fte using schools and parent groups would make efficient use of small resources

There are opportunities for sustainable strategies such as nutrition polices in schools
Intermediate Process and Impact Indicators

- Increasing F & V promotions in schools
- Improving kid's knowledge, attitudes, access and preparation skills
- Improving parents' knowledge and preparation skills and their involvement in promotions in the school
- Improving teachers' attitudes, skills and confidence towards teaching about F & V

We wanted to get kids to want more fruit and veg and we wanted parents and canteens to provide more f and v. So we worked on all our target groups in terms of

- Attitudes
- Skills and knowledge
- Confidence
Now I’m going to talk in more detail about planning the strategies we offered schools.
Once we knew what sort of strategies worked in other areas, we consulted with representatives of stakeholder groups to get their feedback on what they thought would work in our rural and regional areas.
Each school was offered a portfolio of strategies.  
Each took up those that suited them best.  
All schools took up most strategies offered and they all came up with new ones to complement what we had suggested.
We collected and developed curriculum materials for teachers to use in class.
We used competitions for children
One school came up with the idea of a 5 minute break in the classroom at 10 am only for those children who had brought a piece of fruit or vegies from home. Other schools later used this very successfully but some schools demanded that mangoes and oranges nor be allowed into the classroom
Parent volunteers were trained to run fruit and veg cooking classes. We imported material from the kids in the kitchen cooking program that was run successfully in Western Australia.
Family-oriented Strategies

- F & V promoting activities/events for families at school
- Personalized school calendars with F & V recipes and tips
- Fridge magnets
- Competition for parents
- School newsletter articles

We piggy backed f and v promotions on other schools' events where parents were likely to be, such as sporting carnivals.

We reached most parents with tips on personalised school calendars and twice a term we wrote articles for the school newsletter.
School Environment Strategies

- Vegie gardens and fruit trees
- Working with local shops/events
- Fundraisers
- Giving feedback about lunchboxes
- Visits to growers and markets
- Providing platters/tasting
- Having a TFV project management team

Schools got into growing f and v and they did this in a variety of ways. Some grew tomatoes in self watering pots. Some raised beansprout in punnets and then made sandwiches out of them and others turned significant proportions of their gardens over tho fruit and vegies.
Canteen-oriented Strategies

- Gaining membership of NSW School Canteen Association
- Canteen promotions through special events and general presentation
- Networking with other profitable, health-oriented canteens
- Reviewing F & V content and price on menus

We concentrated with schools which had canteens on 3 or more days a week and we helped them plan promotions of f and v.

One canteen had a meal deal with baked potatoes and fruit salad that was so popular they could count on selling nothing else that day.

We also helped canteens review the pricing of f and v so that less healthy foods could subsidise f and v.
We were overwhelmed with volunteers for this program. This surprised us because we knew that school canteens almost always have trouble getting enough volunteer labour to run. We were careful about providing adequate training and appropriate equipment, support and gratitude and this may have been why we got on average 25% of parents at intervention schools volunteering.
Most school project management teams continued with a number of the TFV strategies after the 2 year intervention period finished. Most popular strategies:

- KIK cooking classes
- Fruit breaks in class
- Classroom activities

A year after we finished the program we went back and asked schools if they had continued the program. All had kept up at least some of the strategies. Some had implemented new ones, too.
I’m going to talk more about the evaluation of the project in the next paper, but I’ll say now that it was very positive – enough for us to win the minister’s award in the Baxter NSW Health Awards last year.

We now have commonwealth funding to impellent the program in 19 new school this year and nest. We’re looking at ways we can share our program with other area health services.
Thank you. I’ll have questions now, but if any of these are related to evaluation can they wait until the end of the next paper.