



Wayne Miller & Heather Yeatman

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Who is being served?

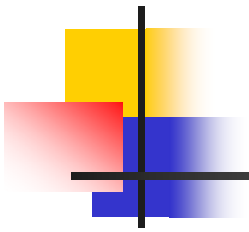
A critical view of national school
breakfast program outcomes
utilising empowerment evaluation



School Breakfast Programs

Argument for:

‘Studies show up to (large %) of children skip/go without breakfast.’



National Nutrition Survey (1995) (Eat breakfast < 5x per week)

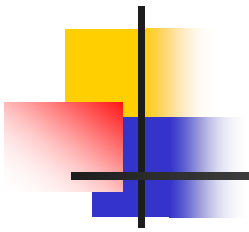
2-11 years	7%
12-15 years	21%
16-18 years	32%



School Breakfast Programs

Questions re practice:

- Shifting motivations
- Promotion of program at the expense of objections



Key program activities addressed at each pilot site

<i>Group</i>	<i>Key GSBC activity</i>
Sydney A	<i>Providing a healthy breakfast to children in greatest need</i>
Sydney B	Positively changing or influencing the eating habits of children
Western Sydney	Local and school community adopts changed attitudes and behaviour towards breakfast/Gaining community support



Key activities (cont.)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Key GSBC activity</i>
Western NSW A	Improving the life skills of children attending the GSBC/Social interaction in the GSBC environment
Western NSW B	Recruiting, training and retaining volunteers
Western NSW C	Improving the learning capacity/learning environment of children attending the GSBC



Serving kids a 'healthy' breakfast

Average nutrient uptake:

Total food used in 1 month (less waste)

Divided by

Number of meals consumed in 1 month



Immediate 'average' benefit to children

- Reduce consumption of honey
- Increase consumption of fibre with change to wholemeal bread
- Increased consumption of cereal



Serving the program

Instrument uptake:

- Greatest needs and stigma survey
- Food habits survey (Positively changing and influencing the eating habits of children survey)
- Social behaviour and learning capacity survey



Serving the program through evaluation activity

Capacity building

- Volunteers at northern beaches' school planning follow-up investigation re average nutrient uptake
- Club personnel at WNSW pilot site planning promotion of breakfast service in response to finding re breakfast skipping



Serving the program through evaluation activity

Organisational learning

- Two instruments developed during the project used in a nation-wide 'roll-out'
- High probability of it being a one-off
- Little evidence of empowerment evaluation as evaluation tool gaining traction



Serving the program through evaluation activity

Accountability

- The evaluator (and team)
- The GSBC community
- The major sponsor



Accountability of evaluator/s

Expectations

1. Trains community members to hold themselves accountable
2. Places the evaluation in the hands of community members to enable them to learn to hold themselves accountable
3. Holds the funder accountable for agreements with the community in terms of community control of the evaluation (and program implementation)
4. Serves as a coach rather than dominating or controlling the evaluation

<i>Level</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>High</i>	
<i>Medium</i>	<p><i>2. 150 program personnel contributed to the empowerment evaluation with 43 being directly involved in planning the development and dissemination of evaluation instruments designed to gather data about the key program activities chosen for investigation however holding themselves accountable for ongoing evaluation was not widely demonstrated.</i></p> <p><i>4. Mixed success was achieved as evaluation coach. When enthusiasm demonstrated at pilot sites diminished I had to take over development of all but one of the evaluation instruments to avoid the project stalling.</i></p>
<i>Low</i>	<p><i>1. Training of GSBC community members in empowerment evaluation and in the use of the evaluation tools developed was not able to be implemented in a way that would foster sustainability of the early promise the evaluation process demonstrated.</i></p> <p><i>3. The major sponsor instigated the evaluation project and with the program manager agreed to support the use of the empowerment evaluation approach. However tension developed when community participants in the evaluation appeared to be driving the evaluation agenda. This made it difficult to hold the funder and program manager accountable for earlier agreements that had been made.</i></p>



Accountability of GSBC community

Expectations

1. Holds each member accountable for implementing the program and conducting the evaluation
2. Holds the evaluator accountable for serving as a coach and critical friend and not dominating or controlling the direction or implementation of the evaluation
3. Holds the funder accountable for governance and ownership arrangements (*I was not privy to such discussions but it is interesting to note that toward the end of 2007 Coles replaced Sanitarium as major sponsor of the GSBC program*)

<i>Level</i>	<i>Result</i>
High	1. Strong commitment to accountability was demonstrated by volunteers at a northern beaches pilot site and by volunteers and principals at one site in Western NSW.
Medium	2. Some involved in the evaluation at pilot sites expressed that they would be happy for me to take control, particularly of the development of evaluation instruments. Others expressed that had I taken control they would not have been so inclined to be part of the process.
Low	1. The program manager was unable to guarantee commitment to the evaluation process by all within the GSBC community.



Accountability of major sponsor/s

Expectations

1. Holds the community accountable for promised results
2. Holds the evaluator accountable for assisting the community in accomplishing its objectives
3. Holds itself accountable for supporting these efforts in a manner that is realistic and obtainable

<i>Level</i>	<i>Result</i>
High	3. The commitment to evaluation results by the major sponsor was demonstrated by providing significant unbudgeted funding for the evaluation work done at pilot sites towards the end of 2006.
Medium	
Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Toward the end of the project, in spite of the efforts of the major sponsor and the evaluation team it seemed that commitments made by the program managers with respect to evaluation results were not to eventuate.2. Early enthusiasm for trial results and development of a sustainable evaluation methodology appears to have given way to using selected evaluation results for short term promotional gains.



Some final thoughts

- Involvement of volunteers and teachers in data assembly
- Improvements were made at the point of delivery
- Evaluation capacity created in program personnel
- Program staff committed to the well-being of the children they serve