

Our3021 Case Studies



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Preface

The Our3021 team acknowledges that most of the following case studies from the Our3021 project were written by the community members who led the corresponding project.

The case studies in this report draw on various events, workshops, trainings and broader promotions. Together, they capture a snapshot of the range, varied depth and sustainability of community initiated and led projects. We hope these stories and project examples provide a further understanding of the impact Our3021 has had on the health and wellbeing of individuals and neighbourhoods involved in the project.

For further information on the Our3021 project, please refer to the Our3021 Evaluation Summary Report 2015 and 2016 and the Our3021 Evaluation Report from the 2016 semi-structured interviews and focus group.



Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the many great works of the community members who willingly contributed their time and commitment to the various projects rolled out as a part of the four year Our3021 project. This document only captures seven projects of the many that were planned and implemented by individuals and groups who stepped forward to become leaders in their community.

While every effort has been made to acknowledge the many informal and formal partnerships made by community members with other clubs, businesses and organisations to successfully implement their projects, provide training and achieve sustainability, we apologise if some connections are not reflected.

We also gratefully acknowledge the work of the various project workers and partner organisations who supported and assisted in ensuring the success of Our3021.

Table of Contents

Preface	2
Project Background	4
Our3021 Project	4
Partner Organisations	4
Project Summary	4
Aims	4
Overview	4
Monitoring and Evaluation	4
Results	5
Key Learning Points	5
Conclusions	5
Case Studies	6
New Change	7
Beautiful Brimbank	10
Enjoy Zumba	14
Tripod	16
Working in Schools	17
Iraqi Kitchen	18
Humans of Brimbank	21

Project Background

Our3021 Project

Our3021 supports those living in the Brimbank area in Melbourne's western suburbs, who want to create a project to improve the health and wellbeing of their community. Our3021 takes a strengths-based approach by supporting community to turn their ideas into actions.

Partner Organisations

Our3021 is a four year project (2013-2017) driven by an innovative workforce partnership between four organisations: HealthWest Partnership, IPC Health, cohealth and Brimbank City Council

Project Summary

Aims

Our3021 aims to improve the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of communities in the west. This is a four year project (2013-17) involving a shared management partnership model.

Overview

The project engaged with community members who self-identified as leaders. These leaders went on to develop small-scale projects with the support of Our3021 staff, including: training, project planning assistance, partnership opportunities and a small amount of seed funding.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Our3021 project was externally evaluated in its second and third year using an action research model. The fourth year was evaluated in-house with a mixture of interviews and focus groups to assess the community's engagement and the impacts of Our3021 in the community. The resulting thematic analysis of each year of the project evaluation helped show the effectiveness of the project's partnership model and the impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals involved in the project.

Quantitative indicators		Number
2014-15 Projects	Total project proposals received	25
	Approved projects	20
	Projects proceeded	13
	Completed projects	7
2015-16 Projects	Projects continuing from 2014	6
	Total project proposals received	23
	Approved projects	12
	Projects completed	3
	Projects ongoing	11
Training 2014-16	Number of training provided	8
	Number of community members trained	102
Community Engagement 2014-16	Presentations to networks and groups	9
	Facebook likes	47
	Number of community forums	3
	Total participants at community forums	45
Project dissemination 2014-16	Conference presentations	2
	Media releases	13
	Newspaper articles	3
	Radio announcements related to the projects	4
	Films produced	3
	Films featured in film festivals	2

Table A – Quantitative data illustrating project outputs

The key themes from these evaluations included: direct impacts on community participants, strengths and challenges of the partnership model, strength of community participation, and emerging evidence of empowerment for health and wellbeing.

Results

Our3021 recruited a new cohort of community participants in 2014 and 2015. A total of 20 project proposals were received and 12 new projects were approved (Table A). Project leads were provided with training and support around project management, budgeting, cultural awareness and team work. As well as opportunities to come together with other project leads through community forums.

- 500 community members engaged over the course of 2013-2016
- 28 project proposals received from individuals and groups from various demographics
- 7 community catch-ups held between 2014-2016
- 24 community projects delivered

Key Learning Points

1. A co-managed partnership model allows for greater reach and impact for the resources available.
2. A strength- based approach enables communities to turn their own ideas into actions.
3. Our3021 enabled individuals to recognise their potential and create stronger empowered communities in Melbourne's west.

Conclusions

The case studies included in this document complement the data, documentation and evaluation of the Our3021 projects.

Case studies were an important element of this project because of the wide-range and different nature of many of the projects (Table B). They also provided a reflective opportunity for project leaders who wrote the case studies and had to consider the key learnings and major outcomes of their own projects.

Projects	2014-15	2015-16
Food and nutrition	2	3
Physical activity	4	2
Mental wellbeing including social connection and health relationships	3	3
Safety/environment	3	1
Employment	0	1
Arts	1	2
Total	13	12

Table B - Health and wellbeing projects

Case Studies



New Change

Aim

Our vision is to empower, motivate and educate young women to achieve self-confidence and embrace their individuality.

Project description

New Change were supported jointly by Our3021 and Brimbank Youth Services. Membership consisted mainly of young South-Sudanese-Australian women, aged between 17 and 21. Meetings provided an opportunity for the New Change group to explore and develop possible project ideas and management skills. As well as, build their knowledge around sexual and reproductive health, prevention of violence against women and respectful relationships.

Target audience

Many of the New Change group members were in and out of crisis during their involvement in the project. Numerous referrals were made to specialist housing, counselling, employment and education support services. Support around employment, Centrelink and education was also provided by Brimbank Youth Services. This high level of support was critical to ensuring New Change group members' ongoing participation in the project.

Process

A range of training and support was provided for the New Change group, in addition to Our3021 training. This included two 'expert panels' where the young women presented their ideas and sought feedback from workers with expertise on sexuality and respectful relationships programs, B-Confident public speaking training, and opportunities to volunteer on events such as "Y" the ABC youth sexual health forum and the Butterfly Foundation body image workshops.

The All Girls Day event was a workshop around sexual health and respectful relationships delivered by the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health. Feedback forms were completed by attendees of the All Girls Day and 75% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident to tackle issues in their lives about sexual health and relationships.

In addition to planning and organising the All Girls Day event, the New Change group met with the Victorian Multicultural Youth Commissioner to consult around experiences of racism and multiculturalism, and also consulted with Brimbank Youth Services to provide information around relevancy of sexuality and relationship materials for young people. In addition, some of the New Change group members were employed by Brimbank Youth Services to consult with other young people around environmental changes in St Albans.

A New Change group member was awarded Brimbank Young Citizen of the Year for her community work, including her role in New Change.

Target Population

Young South-Sudanese women.

Key Points

- Several workshops and trainings around sexual and reproductive health.
- "All Girl Day" focused on respectful relations.
- Ongoing support via Brimbank Youth Services.

Outcomes

Over the 11 months the young women were involved in the project they reported increases across all domains, most notably a 29% increase in competence, and 27% increases in confidence and contribution.

Skill development

The New Change group was evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Positive Youth Development Index was used to measure changes across six domains.

A focus group was also held with group members and they reported that involvement in the group impacted them in a range of ways including skill development, development of professional networks, increases in group work skills and confidence, content knowledge around sex and relationships that enabled them to become peer mentors for other young women and inspiring them to undertake more community and volunteer work in Australia and overseas. A number of the young women are currently studying youth work, community development or community services.

Take away message

The New Change group continues to meet, supported by Brimbank Youth Services and are exploring opportunities to work with cohealth Arts Generator.



Beautiful Brimbank

Project description

Beautiful Brimbank develops projects to reduce litter in Sunshine CBD and reduce its impact on local waterways, specifically the Kororoit Creek. We aim to increase awareness of, and personal responsibility for, litter through art and education.

Project background

A group of like-minded local women, who were active in the community, got together to start a grassroots litter action campaign.

Process

Applying for Our3021 funding was the start of the process for Beautiful Brimbank. We had thousands of ideas and attended very useful workshops through Our3021 that helped us to boil our ideas down from thousands to three main projects. Our initial ideas were:

- A drain art education project.
- To seek funding for Gross Pollutant Traps to be installed along the creek.
- To create a recycling hub at The Marketplace carpark in Sunshine.

After a few organisational setbacks and the realisation of how much would be involved in even these three projects, we ended up focusing on the one project: drain art and education. Because of other commitments, the original four person team was whittled down to Jodie and Jessica, who had developed a great working relationship. We quickly decided on the group name 'Beautiful Brimbank', as that name expressed what we wanted to see for our beloved Sunshine and surrounding area.

Receiving the funding from Our3021 gave us the confidence to apply for more funding and at the recommendation of Martha Ragg, the community liaison from Brimbank City Environment Department, we joined the Friends of Kororoit Creek (FOKC) so that we could apply for the Victorian State

Target Population

Residents and businesses of Brimbank.

Key Points

- Partnerships with Brimbank City Council, Small Business Association, local artists and groups.
- Auspices by Friends of Kororoit Creek.

Government Litter Hotspots grant through FOKC auspicing. We completed the complicated and lengthy application - the 'Love Where You Live' drain art and education project. We were welcomed to the FOKC with open arms and set ourselves up as the 'little sister' litter arm of the group.

We organised social litter pick-ups along the creek and also organised three large scale clean ups - 'Take It to the Streets', 'Take It to the Streets II' and 'Clean Up Australia Day'. We had a great turn out at each event, collected over 100 bags of litter and had very positive feedback on social media - the Sunshine Facebook page (run by Jodie and her partner Luke). We made a short film of the Take It to the Streets event which had around 250 views.

We made a short film for the 2015 Sunshine Short Film Festival, 'What's The World Coming To?' and asked the organisers of the festival if we could have a stall in the foyer, show the film at the beginning of the festival and make a speech to the 400 strong crowd.

By this stage, the office bearers of the FOKC asked if we would step up to take roles in the group. Jessica said "yes!?" and suddenly became president of the FOKC. Beautiful Brimbank and the FOKC became auspiced at this stage.



Figure 1. 'Love Where You Live' Logos by local artist Liz Dagleish



**Figure 2. Artist Liz Dalglish, Hugo, Georgia, Jessica Gerger, Lana, Jodie Williams and former Sunshine Business Association president Bruce White with one of the new bins.
Photo: Joe Mastroianni**

Meanwhile, we helped organise an ‘Earth Day’ event on the Kororoit Creek with Sunshine Heights Primary School and Sunshine Primary School. With Melbourne Water funding, the students planted 500 shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. The FOKC ran a ‘Waterwatch’ tent, we had Roberto the Connie tram conductor give out his local wildlife cards which talk about the birds and animals indigenous to the area, local musicians ‘The Legless Lizards’ and Peter Joseph Head performed and Beautiful Brimbank did a litter treasure hunt workshop. It was a hugely successful day and we will be doing it again next year.

By now we had received our State Government litter hotspot funding and commissioned artwork from two local artists, Kim Fleming and Liz Dalglish. Kim created an illustration to

be turned into a mural, decals for schools and to decorate any available wall in Brimbank (figure 3). Liz Dalglish created the ‘Love Where You Live’ logo (figure. 1).

During this time we worked with the SBA to develop the bin wraps to cover 77 bins in Sunshine CBD. We had an article published in the Star Weekly about the project (figure. 2)

Going forward we are now working on a mural for the back of the Westpac building on Hampshire Rd in Sunshine, and a ‘Butt it, Bin it’ cigarette mascot ‘Barry’ who will give out portable ashtrays to smokers who might needs them. We have more events lined up for 2016 including a ‘Love Your Station Day’ where we will clean up Sunshine Station.

We started developing a relationship with the Sunshine Business Association (SBA) and the town centre manager from Brimbank City Council (BCC) to see how we could work together on our ‘Love Where You Live’ drain art and education project.

Our original ideas of installing decals on the footpath near the street drains was not something that the SBA and BCC were keen on, as they were attempting to declutter Sunshine CBD. However, another of our ideas was doing anti-litter bin wraps. The SBA had recently launched beautiful festive bin wraps for other projects and wanted to do an anti-litter bin wrap. We decided to work together on the project.

Outcomes

We have a working relationship with the Friends of Kororoit Creek (FOKC) and are now auspiced by this long standing organisation through which we have the ability to seek funding and reach a wider audience. The website www.fokc.org.au, which we were instrumental in turning into a vibrant hub of information, has all our shared events, blogs and information on it.

Local designer Luke Duggan from Effortless Web (www.effortlessweb.com.au) put many volunteer hours into creating this site and our commitment to providing content has increased the online presence of both our host organisation, FOKC's original projects and our anti-litter projects.

Jodie and Jessica have been instrumental in putting together a marketing and information strategy for the FOKC. The FOKC have several sub-groups, which now also includes Beautiful Brimbank – the anti-litter arm of FOKC. As president of the FOKC, Jessica sends out a monthly newsletter to inform subscribers about the month's activity of these sub-groups. This goes out to 250 people which promotes Beautiful Brimbank's projects, along with the growing number of planting projects the FOKC is involved in. This subscription increases by about 6% each month, with an average of 1 new contact each day.

Through the Sunshine Facebook Group we are able to reach an audience of 3,427 members, which is also growing daily. This is the main social media platform that FOKC promote on. As part of the marketing and information strategy, events that are posted on the FOKC website are also promoted through this active, local group.

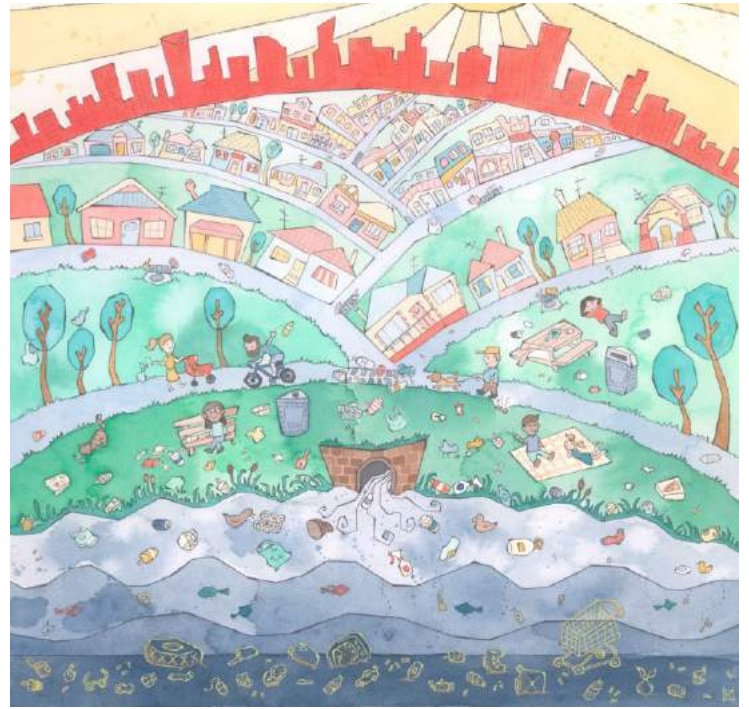


Fig 3. Illustration by local artist Kim Fleming

It has been a great help to have volunteers from within FOKC take on these marketing roles.

Marketing includes adding events to online community calendars, such as the Brimbank City Council website and also including Brimbank & North West StarWeekly, which has a circulation of 64,167.

Partnerships with local government and local business were formed to embark on mutually beneficial projects. The Sunshine Business Association is an example of one of those partnerships, which has a membership of 420 businesses and services that we were able to reach via this relationship.



Figure 4. 'Take It to the Streets'

111 bags of landfill were collected, along with 92 bags of recycling and 249 syringes. This was done with the assistance of 351 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of just under 9 weeks of full time work by one person.

We engaged two local artists and one local dressmaker on our 'Barry the Butt' project.

We reached 380 school children with an anti-litter message. Our project has appeared in local newspapers several times throughout the year.

Skills development

We have developed better technical skills with website maintenance, blogging and promotion. We have learned how to approach groups and businesses with confidence. We have learned how to get the local press on side and how to write a press release. We have attended a number of Our3021 workshops that helped us with working on streamlining our ideas and working with other community groups.

This has also helped us be culturally inclusive in a proactive way which encourages similar behaviour and inclusivity from others. We have become good networkers. We have learned how to run events and make sure people feel appreciated before, during and after the event. We have also become much more savvy when it comes to writing grant proposals.

Take away message

For us, the thing that stands out the most, is that when you develop relationships in the community with a true desire to make change for the better, you can achieve great things. Working collaboratively towards a common goal can have its challenges but ultimately it is hugely satisfying. Thank you Our3021.

Enablers

- Community - developing strong relationships with local government, businesses, schools and community groups.
- Passion and Energy - everyone we have worked with has been extremely passionate and people who are passionate make things happen.
- Support - this includes family, friends and community members that supported and believed in the idea.
- Generosity - of time, funds and support from everyone we have worked with.



Challenges

- We observed that working with a group can have its challenges. We have been slowly learning how to deal with different personalities and develop frameworks for dealing with conflict when it arises.
- We have started to create a work/life balance, whereas initially we were spending far too much time on the project.
- We learned that we don't to reply to every email, query or phone call instantly. Nothing is that urgent!
- We realised that we can't do everything at once. We have to choose projects carefully and do them well.

Enjoy Zumba

Aim

A well connected and healthy community, to improve people's social connectedness, confidence and physical health.

Project description

Zumba is a dance fitness program which involves dancing and aerobic elements. Everyone is able to participate. This project aims to involve local people who live in the St Albans area.

Project background

We talked to parents at Stevensville Primary School and friends who live in the St Albans area and they all loved the idea of having a Zumba class. This project will bring local people together to do physical activities and have fun. This will help people stay healthy and socially connected.

Outcomes

- People bring friends to class
- Fitness and social motivation through regular attendance
- New friendships developed
- Children of the school introduced to Zumba and wanted to do their own classes
- Approached by other ladies to help
- Set-up Zumba classes at other schools

Skills development

- Teamwork
- Event organisation/management
- Project management (e.g. how to write a project application)
- Mental and physical wellbeing (e.g. form the exercise and socialisation)

Target Population

Socially isolated cultural and linguistically diverse women.

Key Points

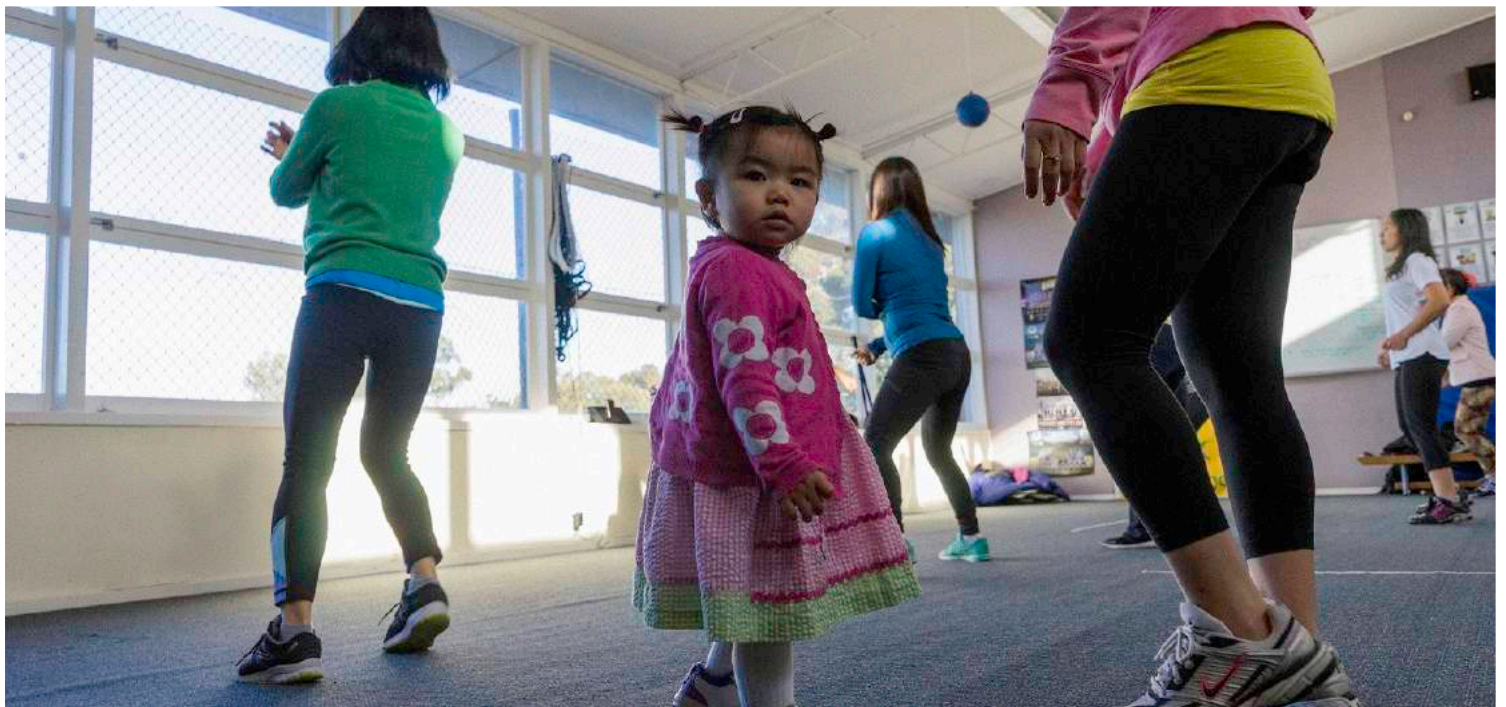
- The school as a venue is seen as a 'safe-place.'
- Good timing for women who drop their children off at school.
- At-risk and isolated women highly unlikely to attend public or private gym exercise groups.

Process

Zumba was a fun, easy exercise form. It helped the female participants feel happy and exercise in a safe environment with other ladies. Tran, the community project lead said "it's good for people's mental health and it helps them relax. Zumba is an opportunity for people to have fun".

The proposal for Zumba classes was submitted to the Our3021 project team for approval, as a project plan. It was agreed that although there was other similar exercise classes and clubs available in the area, the target audience of females from various multicultural background do not access these services because they do not feel comfortable, safe or have enough confidence.

On approval of the project, a venue needed to be found. Stevensville Primary School agreed to hold the class in a sports and recreation room during school hours. There was an initial problem with an unreliable Zumba instructor during the projects pilot.



The new instructor ensured the success of the project, with her enthusiasm and great classes. The Zumba classes became very successful with between 10-15 participants each week. The classes ran over four school terms on Friday mornings and were often full classes.

Key learnings

A key enabler of the Zumba classes' success was the partnership with Stevensville Primary School, which provided the group with the venue free of charge and allowed for a safe a familiar location for the participants.

Take away message

The Zumba classes were very popular and allowed for an easy, accessible and fun vehicle for exercise. The classes relied strongly on the support from the local community hub coordinator, the reliability of the instructor, the availability of the venue and the word-of-mouth between participants. The project was highly successful in terms of increasing physical activity for an at-risk population and working as a socialisation for the women's and grand-mothers.

The classes were also successful in acting as a pilot for parent targeted exercise programs at schools. As the project lead was approached about how to set-up other classes at other schools.

Enablers

- Promote the project among parents of Stevensville Primary School via weekly newsletters.
- Word of mouth among friends.
- Distribution of flyers to local people.
- Social media (e.g. invite friends via Facebook).
- Promote via Westvale community centre.
- SBS Radio (Vietnamese channel).



Challenges

- Time flexibility - the Zumba participants frequently came late to the classes, due to children, travel and time commitments. This was helped by the instructor starting later, so the ladies didn't miss their warm up.
- Access to venue - although the room used on school ground allows for a safe a familiar setting the room soon became very full with classes regular getting over a dozen ladies.
- Zumba teacher commitment - the initial instructor contracted was not reliable, came late and cancelled classes. This confused the participants and resulted in low attendance. A new Zumba instructor was found and her professionalism and enthusiasm helped solve this challenge.
- Use of English - many community participants had challenges communicating. This was not a large challenge for the instructor due to the medium of the exercise classes, clear visual cues and music. However for the project team there was a need to be flexible, use help to translate.



Tripod

Aim

The objective of the project was to promote social inclusion by creating a space for elderly and people with a disability to come together, socialise, meet new people and create artwork.

Project background

Tripod is an art-based project promoting health & wellbeing with a focus on social inclusion for marginalized elderly people and adults with a disability.

Project description

Project lead and art facilitator, was supported by the Our3021 staff to establish the project. Tripod ran over nine weeks and was offered to participants free of charge, at the Sunshine Art Spaces Gallery.

The art-based activities involved pottery making and painting.

Outcomes

Despite the small number of participants, Tripod was successful in achieving its objective. Feedback showed that all participants enjoyed the workshops and the creative process, and would like to recommend Tripod to their peers.

The most enjoyable element identified by participants was meeting new people, making new friends and socialising.

Target Population

Elderly, adults living with a disability and socially isolated people.

Key Points

- Very well received.
- Strong push for the program to continue and build a larger crowd.

Future developments of Tripod could include providing employment for artists and make such programs more financially accessible to elderly and people with disabilities.

Take away message

One of the support staff noted how wonderful it was “seeing the elderly people being able to express their creativity and being engaged and stimulated”.

In regards to sustainability, the project will run again in 2017.

Connecting the project lead with the West Sunshine Neighbourhood House and the Economic Development team within Brimbank Council, may very well be a positive step to reaching some of the identified sustainability goals.



Working in Schools

Young People as a priority group

Young people were identified as a priority group to engage in the Our3021 project due to higher than average numbers of people under 30 in Brimbank, and due to high rates of young people not engaged in education or employment.

Process

The project team, building on the previous work of cohealth trialled a peer education model. Young people were recruited by Brimbank Youth Services and worked with Our3021 project team members to develop a visioning session (based on the Health Champions orientation session) that would encourage participants to imagine their community was the healthiest and happiest in Australia, and to consider what actions they could take to achieve their vision of the happiest and healthiest community.

Target Population

Young school-aged people

Key Points

- Project discontinued because of questions around project time aligning with school terms, commitment to long-term projects and concerns around managing risk in accordance with school policy.
- Students developed ideas and project planning skills.

Schools were identified by the project team and Brimbank Youth Services as the quickest and most effective way to engage groups of young people. Visioning sessions were run at two schools, both in classes that were required to undertake community based projects as part of their assessment; the Year 9 class at St Albans Secondary College and the Year 12 VCAL class at Sunshine College. St Albans Secondary School and Sunshine College were approached after receiving promotional material through a local network.

The decision about whether to proceed with Our3021 and to align the project with school-based assessment was made by the teachers to fit with school procedures and curriculum outcomes. St Albans Secondary College declined to continue with Our3021, mostly due to timing and concerns about how long a community based project would take. Sunshine College students completed their project plans, but did not reach implementation due a range of factors, primarily time constraints, managing risks in accordance with school policy and identifying appropriate suppliers. An open invitation was extended to students to participate independently if interested.

Outcomes and skill development

Despite not reaching implementation, the students developed skills and some outcomes were achieved which contributed to the project's goal:

- All students contributed ideas on what they believe is a healthy community.
- Students developed project planning skills, evidenced by clear, concise and thought out project plans.
- Students were mentored to make professional phone calls and send professional emails.
- Several students attended an employment forum at the Visy Hub following their attendance at the Our3021 planning day enabling broader community connections and skill development.
- An increased level of student confidence in future participation and project delivery was observed.

Key learnings for future practice

There were significant learnings from the six months of working with Sunshine College:

- Working within a school requires a significant time commitment, and progress is slow – often the class will only meet once a week. A project of this scale would need to begin at the start of the year and ideally time out of class would need to be scheduled also.
- Flexibility is required to fit in with the school's times
- Expectations and requirements from both the school and the community organisation should be outlined at the beginning, including potential risks. Drawing up an MOU or similar document would be useful.
- Progress and outcomes are highly dependent on the class teacher – a good relationship with clear communication and mutually shared expectations is necessary.
- Parental permission is required for project implementation (excursions) and takes considerable time to obtain.

Take away message

- Consider engagement of young people independently and outside of school hours.
- Working with schools engages 12 – 18 year olds, consider additional strategies for engaging young people aged 18 – 25.
- Continue to use school setting for engagement of young people aged 12 – 18, particularly for consultation.
- Projects in a school setting should commence in term 1 and align with the school curriculum with clear processes and mutual understanding around risk management, or schools should be used for recruitment, but projects occur outside of school hours.

Student Profile: Amit (name has been changed)

Amit is a VCAL student from Sunshine College who is involved in other projects in the St Albans community. Amit was part of a group of students who were planning a project to run a soccer clinic with primary school students. He was involved in the planning stage of this project and demonstrated initiative and foresight in his planning. Along with a small group of other students, he made contact with Brimbank Youth Services following the planning workshop at the Visy Hub and attended an employment forum.

In discussions in class, Amit expressed interest in a career where he could “help other young people with their projects” – i.e. youth work or community development work. A referral was made to another employment event at the Visy Hub where young people could talk with youth workers and community development workers. A further referral was made to the Brimbank Youth Arts and Events Network.

At this stage, Amit has not taken up the referral to join the Youth Arts Network as he is busy seeking employment, but he remains in contact with Brimbank Youth Services.



Figure 1: Student Project Plan

Enablers

- Engaging young people as peer facilitators. This was particularly effective where the peer facilitators were known and respected by the audience.
- The Our3021 Project model fitted well with the VCAL assessment requirements.
- Brimbank Youth Services' existing relationships with young people and with schools.
- Using the Visy Hub for a project planning session with the students both built connections with Brimbank Youth Services and other services located on site. Taking the students out of the school environment and having this session externally also enabled the students to work differently than they would have in the classroom. Feedback from this session demonstrated that the students valued their interactions with each other; their highlights included 'everyone working together' and 'everyone sharing their opinion'.
- Having project planning sessions during school classes maximised youth participation.



Challenges

- Not being able to do more initial consultation with young people on the project model and engagement strategies due to time constraints.
- Not having a clear understanding of school's expectations.
- Different practice approaches than the classroom teacher.
- Different perceptions of risk and risk management than the school.
- Having to fit with school's timelines.
- Compulsory participation as part of class activity impacts on student motivation.



Iraqi Kitchen

Project description

The Iraqi Kitchen is a cooking program which promotes healthy eating among participants and their families. When people cook together, they are not only eating healthier, they are also learning skills, meeting their neighbours and building connections.

Target Group

Women from Arabic backgrounds were identified as a priority group to engage with Our3021 in 2015. The Iraqi community is one of the new and emerging communities within Brimbank municipality. The community experiences a range of challenges including access to services, unemployment, language barriers, access to education and other related challenges encountered along the settlement journey.

Process

After initial conversations with an Our3021 project team member, the project leader submitted an expression of interest that outlined the objectives of the Iraqi cooking program. Limited awareness of healthy eating options in the community was identified as a health concern. After migrating to Australia many community members have found some of the Iraqi traditional food items are not available. As a result, they have to adjust to the new environment and food, some of which is unhealthy. There is a growing concern that unhealthy eating habits are increasing the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and other related diseases in the community.

As a result, the Iraqi community require support and training in identifying and preparing locally available healthy foods.

This project allows women to learn about healthy food, acquire valuable cooking skills and improve eating habits. The benefits of this project also extend further by providing

Target Population

Socially isolated Arabic women.

Key Points

- Useful cooking, safe food handling and project skills.
- Social and relationship building.
- Cultural celebration through food.

The cooking program is modelled on adult learning principles and will encourage active participation of women. It is designed to cover essential skills including theory, planning, networking and practical cooking skills by preparing and cooking different dishes.

women with 'social' space to gather, support each other, share stories and celebrate their food culture. This also helps the Iraqi women connect with other local community groups, to build strong and connected communities in the future - a key goal of the Our3021 project.

Skills development

The approval of the project proposal paved the way for the Iraqi group to attend project planning training workshops, organised by the Our3021 project team. Six women and one man attended the planning workshop. Most of the group spoke little to no English, anticipating this as a barrier, the Our3021 project team hired a professional interpreter to assist with translation during the training session. Having an interpreter in the room allowed the women to speak in their local language and not be restricted by language barriers.





Enablers

- Support - one-to-one meeting with project team members and support during planning and project implementation phase.
- Commitment - by the project led to support her community. The project lead says “my commitment is to help refugees and new arrivals make the transition to a new life a lot healthier and less stressful”. Without the project lead’s commitment to mobilise and encourage Iraqi women to participate, the project would not have taken off the ground.
- Connections - The Jesuit Community College has been a critical partner in this project. Jesuit College provided the Iraqi group with food handling training and a trainer/instructor for the cooking program free of charge. Without these, the costs of the program would not have been covered within the start-up budget provided by the Our3021 project. In addition, the Jesuit Community College will continue to work with the Iraqi women beyond the cooking program to build their capacity and skills (e.g. by supporting women who wish to pursue training or employment pathways).
- Flexibility - most women had indicated that they were unable to go to Collingwood for the Food Handling certificate training, and without the flexibility of the trainer to provide training locally (in Sunshine) the project could have stalled.
- Accessibility – without an accessible venue for the trainings and workshops, it would have been a lot harder to engage with the women.
- Interpreters – Using interpreters reduced language barriers and facilitated the learning process.



Challenges

- Finding appropriate venues for the group, particularly an accessible and suitable kitchen.
- Finding an instructor/trainer within the limited budget was a major problem. The coming on board of Jesuit Community College and their willingness to fund the trainer through their budget was a great outcome for the project (total cost for trainer and preparation time about \$2000).
- The project lead had to commit a lot of time. The project lead has worked hard to mobilise and encourage the group to be involved. Without her passion and commitment the project would not have materialised.

Benefits:

- Sharing responsibilities in buying food and preparations in the kitchen.
- Working with a qualified cooking trainer/instructor the women will plan meals, cook and eat together.
- Encouraged to connect with other groups and improve their networks.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the group to further refine their project ideas. This included highlighting key activities, timelines as well as developing a budget. All this was undertaken with the assistance of the facilitator and the Our3021 project team members. In addition, the group had an opportunity to socialise, connect, hear experiences and stories from the diverse participants of the Our3021 projects.

The project lead summed up the benefits of the training when she said “Through this course, women developed their curiosity, creativity, self-discipline, and self-respect, and learnt about science and other cultures, all while developing critical cooking skills”

The group also undertook a 3 day Food Handling course provided by Jesuit Community College free of charge (valued at \$1300). At this training, women learnt about the nutritional values of food and multiple ways to prepare healthy food. Childcare and language interpretation service was also provided. A volunteer female interpreter provided support to facilitate the learning process.

- 13 women attended the 3 day course in December 2015. Of these, 5 women were presented with certificates of participation after successfully meeting all the course requirements
- The remainder (8 women) have not yet attained competency level required for the course, particularly the English language requirements.
- This training has been helpful in a number of ways as the project lead noted “I believe that learning to eat well is fundamental to our kids’ future success and the health of our communities”.
- The training also provided a good foundation for women interested in attaining accredited qualifications in hospitality services.

Cooking program (May to June 2016)

Jesuit Community College will provide a trainer/instructor free of charge to work with the Iraqi group to develop and implement a 10 week cooking program from May to June 2016. The total cost in-kind for trainer and preparation time is about \$2000.

Key learnings

There are important learnings to be drawn from working and engaging with the Iraqi group.

- The support needs for the group are moderate to high compared to other groups previously engaged by the Our3021 project. As a result, there are higher demands on staff time.
- The need for childcare; transport and interpreters need to be well informed in advance allowing staff to book cost-effective services.
- Flexibility is required to reach out and engage with emerging and/or marginalised groups. For example, this project had to fit in with the project lead’s and women’s schedules. Most of the women involved in the cooking program have school aged children and they also have to undertake English language lessons as part of their Centrelink obligations. This means that the fixed timeframes (for engagement and project implementation) set by Our3021 did not always work for groups like this one.
- Skills development is a vital component in the success of the program as most participants would not be able to undertake the program without training.
- Progress can be slow (in the short term) as up skilling of participants is necessary before the actual program begins. However, the medium-to-long term outcomes include many benefits: such as an empowerment of participants through skills development.
- More time is required for relationship and capacity building processes

Take away message

Reflecting on her journey so far, the project lead said ‘There was a very big challenge ... I had to re-energise and encourage them to attend the sessions, which took over my work and family time!’

Humans of Brimbank

Project description

Humans of Brimbank is a photo voice inspired photography project that aims to create connections in the form of exhibitions.

Project background

Mehak approached Our3021 with an idea to celebrate the cultural diversity within Brimbank. The Hillside teen said she was inspired after discovering students at her university did not know much about the western suburbs.

Process

Mehak submitted an expression of interest that briefly outlined her idea and its intended purpose. The responses outlined how Mehak envisions a happy, healthy and socially connected community, who would be involved, and what skills and experience Mehak was likely to get from running this project. Once Mehak's idea for a more socially connected community was approved by the project team she was invited to a project planning workshop. During the workshop, Mehak was able to refine and plan her key activities for 2014-2015.

Mehak allocated 10 months for gathering stories and portraits as well as planning an exhibition to showcase her work. The initial approach was based around conversations with strangers on streets, parks, community centres and other public locations. This made up the first few pictures of the collection. The second set of stories and portraits were as a result of contacting local community groups and inviting them to wear traditional clothes, or present traditional artefacts they can speak about. She said: "I prepared a series of questions to act as prompts in gathering the stories, which

Target Population

Residents of Brimbank, young people and diverse communities.

Key Points

- Training in cultural awareness and project management.
- Partnerships with local government, local businesses and local clubs.
- Project continued into a 2nd phase with a youth committee.
- Skill development and empowerment of project lead.

were extremely useful when participants had little or nothing to say. These ranged from general questions about their day e.g. "How are you today? How's your day going?" to more personal questions e.g. "What do you like about living here?" and "Tell me about your culture" and a few reflective questions such as "What advice would you give your younger self?" and "What's been the happiest moment of your life?"

In the midst of the collection phase, word about the project started to pick up in the local area and Mehak was approached by two local newspapers for a story. Mehak was also contacted by local property developers River Valley Estate, based in Sunshine North who were eager to get involved with the local community and offered to exhibit the pictures and stories at their information centre.



Mehak also applied for space through the Hunt Club Community Arts Centre (Deer Park). The application was accepted and the Sunshine Arts Spaces (Sunshine) was to be the venue for Mehak's second exhibition. Mehak noted that: "I was quite keen to have the pictures set up in a public space where community members were able to interact and meet each other as well as the people in the pictures. Moreover, I want Humans of Brimbank to become an exhaustive catalogue of the Council's inhabitants. Therefore, I had to think of a method to collate the pictures in real-time but also keep public access open. As it was not possible to have them on display and keep adding to them in the exhibition spaces, I opened a Facebook page where I could keep adding more pictures and still keep it available for people to connect"

Outcomes

Mehak stated that "Giving community members the opportunity to meet and mingle through the exhibitions but also symbolically with the people in the pictures helped to create a sense of social connectedness. They were able to connect with them on the basis of their stories and "meet these people without actually meeting them."

Partnerships with local government and local business was formed to deliver exhibitions in different parts of Brimbank. River Valley Estate supported the Sunshine North exhibition and Brimbank City Council supported the Sunshine Arts Space exhibition.

- During the opening night 20-30 people attended each exhibition.
- Mehak's project has appeared in local newspapers several times throughout the year

Skills development

Mehak noted "Our3021 ran professional development workshops that I found quite beneficial and was able to learn a lot from. Some of them include project planning workshops, cross-cultural communication and team work workshops. In addition to this, being involved with Our3021 gave me the opportunity to showcase my work and expose my talents, as well as meet many people from different cultural backgrounds, with whom I hope to have made positive interactions."

Key learnings

Mehak said "Through this project, I have learnt a number of skills and I'm confident that they can be applied to overcome challenges in future practice".

Mehak observed that "considering I was approaching strangers on my own, safety was an element I had to be mindful of. This was overcome by asking a family member or friend to accompany me on my trips".

Take away message

Mehak said "through this project, I have learnt a number of skills and I'm confident that they can be applied to overcome future challenges. I have also learnt the importance of awareness. People who were aware of the project were more willing to participate than those who weren't. To keep people interested, it is important to keep reminding them of the aims and purpose of your project to ensure higher levels of participation".



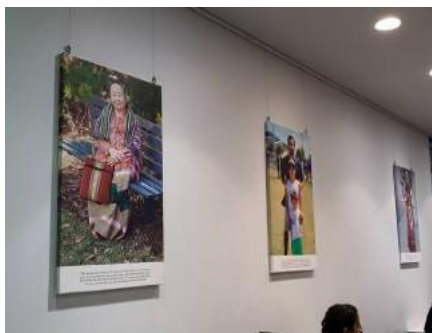
Enablers

- Support - This includes family, friends and community members that supported and believed in the idea.
- Network - Community catch ups, events and individual contacts is a good place to start when planning and spreading the word about your project.
- Passion - Mehak writes “my passion about bringing positive change to people’s lives and their community meant getting to know people around me too. This was the foundation and the driving factor to keep it going.”



Challenges

- The photo voice idea is relatively new and taking into account the demographics of Brimbank, it would have often come across as intimidating to community members to be approached by a stranger with a camera.
- I had to be aware of the sensitivity of confidential information that I was being given by participants and also create a level of trust for them to feel comfortable with sharing their personal information.
- Many individuals rejected the idea and offer to participate. Often this was even before I could explain what the project was and sometimes I was mistaken to be salesperson who was going to ask for money for the pictures.
- Brimbank is one of the most multicultural councils in Victoria, which was one of the motives of the project but also a challenge. I often came across individuals that were unable to clearly understand/communicate because of the language barrier and hence refused to participate.
- As a full time university student and a casual worker, I found it difficult to commit a large amount of time to the project at various times and sometimes found the process exhaustive.





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