

# MBOKO CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION OF WA

## Healthy Cooking, Healthy Eating

### Project Date

Jan 2012 — July 2012

### Target Group

Members of the Central African community in Metropolitan Perth

### Background

The Mboko Children Association of WA is non-profit organisation which sought to be part of the Swap It, Don't Stop It campaign to encourage healthy lifestyles for Africans living in Perth. Two representatives attended information sessions about the campaign and grants in October 2011.

### Project Objectives

- Increase the number of people from Central Africa swapping traditional meals for those using healthier ingredients
- Encourage healthy food choices and cooking methods
- Promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness about healthy weight among the wider African community

### Methods

- Six community workers trained with FoodCents, a not-for-profit organisation which addresses nutrition issues in low-income groups.
- Trainers were recruited to deliver community workshops for the African community. The Cancer Council and the Multicultural Services Centre of WA (MSCWA) assisted

- Invitations to workshops were distributed to churches where members of the community worship, and to organisations they attend. Emails and telephone were also used to generate interest

### What happened?

- Eight workshops were held by the community trainers, each attended by an average of 16 people
- Budgeting, food labels and healthy eating pyramids, plus Swap It messages, were promoted at these workshops
- Two supermarket tours were held to explain healthy food options
- A family community event which included a cooking demonstration, dancing and physical activities was held in June in the northern Perth suburb of Balga

### Results

- Participants at the workshops learnt some easy ways to modify African and Australian dishes to make them healthier with, for example, reduced quantities of salt and oil and an increase in vegetables.
- The training participants promoted the program's principles to other African organisations, such as the Maendeleo Organisation, and the Omega Pentecostal Church.
- An article about the program was published in The West Australian newspaper in November 2011
- Turnout at the community event was hampered by bad weather, though almost 50 still attended



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continued



## Feedback

- The workshops and supermarket tours were regarded as a success
- A small group survey conducted after the workshops indicated participants had learnt and understood low-cost healthy food options, and found the program enjoyable
- One Rwandan-born mother-of-two said she'd found foods in Australia "totally different" and described the lessons she'd learned at the workshop as "amazing". She'd cut down the amount of oil she used in cooking and had learned new recipes using ingredients she didn't know about previously.

## What Now?

- Continue the message of healthy foods in an informal way through education amongst the community and church congregations
- Continue to educate about the types of foods available in Australia and how they are used in making healthy meals
- Seek more funding from other sources to hold more nutrition workshops

## Contact

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