

small bytes for big change

BANANA BYTES REPORT Overview



ARTSPOKES January 2018

The full report can be viewed at www.artspokes.com

Banana Bytes (BBytes) was a pilot campaign to promote healthier eating in new imaginative ways which would have a real impact on people's lives. The campaign took place in Tower Hamlets, East London where 41% of children are overweight or obese by age 11 and a third of the population is Bangladeshi.

The aim was to involve schools, parents and local organisations to ensure the campaign reached the community in an accessible way in keeping with their culture and budget. In total 122 children and 30 parents from 4 primary schools took part during 2014-15 to create their own specific Healthy Eating Campaign. Artists were on hand to stimulate new creative ways of reaching people through design, video and digital art. The Banana Bytes web site acted as the public 'face' of the Campaign and shared information across schools.

The five main themes participants chose were:

- Cooking and healthy recipes, including healthy tips and a guide to measuring
- Promoting healthy snacking
- Helping and encouraging families to check food labels
- Informing on the hidden sugars in 'healthy' foods & drinks
- The 'low-down' on fats focusing on the very popular Perfect Fried Chicken

The schools created a twenty-page recipe book, two Snack Recipe booklets, two short videos and ten posters, all designed for an ESL (English as a Second Language) audience.

In total 2000 recipe booklets and multiple copies of the videos were shared with families and local organizations through Idea Stores (libraries), Health Centres, an employment advice centre, press, You-Tube, cinema, television and events. They could also be downloaded from the web site. The campaign had the backing of the existing borough Healthy Eating provision and during the campaign local health organizations supported projects with talks, health information and advice.

We estimate that the campaign reached at least 4,000 families in the local community and 300,000 in the wider community through Bangla TV and daily video showings at the local cinema. In the feedback sessions, families told us that they found the Campaign information very appealing, easy to understand, useful and an effective way of changing behaviour with 90% choosing Good-Very Good in the Questionnaires.

A campaign such as Banana Bytes shows that an imaginative approach powered by and geared to the local community has a definite impact on groups which have a very high rate of obesity and which fall outside the reach of national campaigns.

Banana Bytes cost 15K. When compared with the 8 billion spent by the NHS on one single obesity related disease – Type 2 Diabetes – the cost of rolling out Banana Bytes type campaigns across London would be very cost effective.

A special thank you to the staff, children and parents who welcomed Banana Bytes into their schools, took part enthusiastically, contributed ideas and shaped this project with their understanding of local need. Banana Bytes is their project and is built on their knowledge.