

Case Study

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Hub

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Case Study 1: Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Hub



Victoria, Australia

Overview

The Broadmeadows community, within the Hume region in Victoria, is considered low socio-economic, with poor social support networks and high unemployment¹. There is also a large culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population; for example, in 2016, 65% of high school students did not have English as a first language³.

Established in 2009, the hub brings together four primary schools, along with other services for children and families. The hub is part of the Communities for Children strategy, aimed at building a greater sense of belonging for children and families through offering a range of services to the community⁶.



Source: Danthonia Designs

Note that no consultation has been undertaken for this case study, and therefore the information contained in this case study is based on desktop research.

Context/setting



Education



Health



Community Services



Brownfield



Urban



Public

Service mix



Education, including primary school and kindergarten^{1,2,4}

Health, including maternal and child health visits⁶

Community services, including adult English classes, financial management classes, driving license classes, and info sessions in multiple languages by Centrelink^{1,2,6}

Level of integration

Integration across services is on an ad hoc basis. There is evidence of collaboration and sharing spaces and contracts for cleaning, telephones, the canteen and electricity⁵

Site characteristics



Brownfield, the hub was established following the merger of four local primary schools²
Urban

Funding



Public, funding for the Communities for Children initiative administered through the (then) Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Partners (inc. lead agency)

Lead agency: Broadmeadows UnitingCare

Partners: Unable to be confirmed through desk top research

Foundations for success

This hub exhibits two key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



Collaborative and detailed planning



Measurement

Collaborative and detailed planning

Creating and maintaining relationships with various stakeholders was reported to be an important success factor⁶. This included a strong focus on engaging with families; for instance, the parental ambassadors program provides parents the opportunity to volunteer and lead various events, as well as encouraging community input into decision making^{2,6}.

Measurement

The Communities for Children and wider Broadmeadows regeneration project have been evaluated. More specific to the hub, there are also a range of existing available case studies. Measuring outcomes allowed the hub to demonstrate their value and positive contributions to the community.

Outcomes

Reduced operating costs

Partnerships have enabled external agencies to use shared spaces for mutual benefit, such as the local dance school teacher assisting with the school dance program in return for the use of the multipurpose room without charge⁵. Moreover, economies of scale were achieved through the sharing of contracts for cleaning, telephones, the canteen and electricity⁵.

Service awareness and access

There was anecdotal evidence of increased family engagement in the range of community services offered. The collocation of various services increases the awareness of other complementary services. There was a higher reported attendance at parent-teacher conversation days.

Community networks, cohesion and engagement

The range of services provided by the hub has helped to break down social isolation and increase networks for CALD populations. For example, a single mother with poor English skills was able to improve her English through a range of workshops offered at the hub. Services helped to build her networks and confidence, and inspired her to complete a TAFE course in community services².

Educational outcomes

It was acknowledged that having adjacent services spanning the educational spectrum, from early years to TAFE, demonstrates the continuum of education to families in a non-confrontational way, encouraging a smoother transition for both children and families^{5,6}. There is also evidence of improved learning outcomes for children and better early support for children's development needs across the Broadmeadows area^{4,6}. It was also noted that the establishment of the hub helped with attracting a higher calibre of staff⁶.

Civic involvement

As mentioned above, there was enhanced parental engagement with the parental ambassadors program, which allowed parents a channel through which they could contribute to the ongoing activities of the hub⁶.

Lessons

- Relationships with stakeholders are important to establish and continuously monitor over the project. The parental ambassadors program is a good example of engaging the community to help shape the project to meet community needs. This engagement should be ongoing and service delivery should be flexible so as to respond to the changing needs of the community
- Marketing and promoting the services and events offered by the hub is important to spread awareness, which acts as a precursor to many of the social benefits that accrue to the community. Observed methods of marketing services and events include hosting large event days, signs, posters and newsletters, which are translated into languages appropriate for the community

References

1. The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, 2012, Primary schools and community hubs
2. Centre for Community Child Health, 2017, Exploring the impact of community hubs on school readiness, full report
3. My School, Broadmeadows Valley Primary School, 2016, <https://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/108314/BroadmeadowsValleyPrimarySchool/45016/2016>
4. Community hubs, 2017, Broadmeadows Valley Primary Hub, <http://www.communityhubs.org.au/hubs/broadmeadows-valley-primary-hub/>
5. Urbis, 2014, Co-location and other integration initiatives strategic evaluation
6. Uniting Care, Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital, 2010, Communities for Children In Broadmeadows

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