

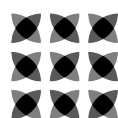


Co-designing rural community interventions for healthier choices

RESEARCH MATERIALS

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Disclaimer

The opinions in this report reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Centre for Social Impact or the funder.



ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

This document presents a portfolio of research materials that were developed as part of the collaborative research project between researchers at the Centre for Social Impact Flinders (formerly at the University of South Australia) and The Barossa Co-op, a large regional retailer in South Australia. The project team was awarded funding through Wellbeing SA (formerly SA Health), under the SA Healthy Towns Challenge grant scheme.

The aim of this portfolio of research documents is to disseminate high-quality bespoke research materials developed during the project to enrich the body of knowledge on co-design methods. The intension is to better equip academic and practitioner community with practical tools and guidance on conducting co-design research. The authors share the materials as open access and free of charge.

Users are strongly encouraged to reference the citation/DOI provided on page 1.

The research materials included in this portfolio are:

- **This introductory document**
- **Co-design workshop guide** – detailed step-by-step instructions for planning and conducting co-design workshops; and
- **Co-design ideas booklet** – visually appealing collection of prompts and questions that co-design participants work through to sensitise them to the topic (healthy food and lifestyle choices in rural communities) and prompt them with relevant ideas and possible solutions that would stimulate their own creativity.

Companion documents

This portfolio should be used in conjunction with the following related documents, including two academic peer review articles and a research report:

- [Bogomolova, S., Carins, J., Dietrich, T., Bogomolov, T., & Dollman, J. \(2021\). Encouraging healthier choices in supermarkets: a co-design approach. European Journal of Marketing, 55\(9\), 2439-2463. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2020-0143](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2020-0143)
- [Carins, J., & Bogomolova, S. \(2021\). Co-designing a community-wide approach to encouraging healthier food choices. Appetite, 162, Article 105167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2021.105167](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2021.105167)
- Bogomolova, Svetlana and Carins, Julia (2023), Strategies for supporting healthier choices: co-design with rural communities and practitioners. Research report. Centre for Social Impact, Flinders University. Adelaide.

About the project

According to a SA Government survey, rural South Australians experience higher rates of chronic diseases than metropolitan adults. This can be partly explained by lower levels of exercise in rural communities and prevalence of unhealthier food and lifestyle choices.

Aiming to curb this situation, SA Health announced a SA Healthy Towns Challenge grant scheme to support programs in rural SA communities that promote healthier choices. The Barossa Co-op in partnership with researchers won a grant from this scheme.

The first stage of this project was to design and conduct co-design workshops with consumers (Co-op members and wider community) and staff to generate as many as possible ideas.

The researchers adopted the co-design framework developed by Social Marketing @ Griffith (e.g. Durl et al 2017), implementing it as follows:

- **Step 1: Resourcing** – the research team partners with The Barossa Co-op and applied for and was awarded the SA Healthy Towns Challenge grant;
- **Step 2: Planning** – through a series of research and partnership meetings/discussions program plan was developed, including the development of the discussion guide and booklet of ideas, following extensive search of academic and grey (industry examples) literature; university ethics approval was granted;
- **Step 3: Recruitment of participants** – The Barossa Co-op offered to facilitate advertisement and recruitment of participants through their channels – local newspaper, facebook account and informal networks; researchers provided recruitment information and materials approved by the ethics committee;
- **Step 4: Sensitizing during the co-design workshops** – the Booklet of ideas was provided to each participant to first think about and express their own likes/dislikes about past examples in the booklet; this process also activated the relevant schemas, memories and ideas in participants’ minds to prepare them for expression their own creative ideas;
- **Step 5: Facilitation** – the researcher arranged participants in small groups of 3-4 people, and guided them through the task of developing their own interventions/campaigns – in a way that would appeal and be effective for people like themselves (leveraging participants as experts of their own lives);
- **Step 6: Data collation/analysis/Reflection/Evaluation** – all the data was captured (via photos of the created idea ‘mud maps’/butcher papers (see report) and completed booklets; entered and analysed for key themes and ideas. Researchers summarised key results in a report and discussed with The Barossa Co-op management. This resulted in a development of a new campaign ‘A Healthy Choice’, which was implemented, run and evaluated (see publications). The partnership team have reflected on the results of the campaign and developed recommendations for future roll outs. At the time of writing (November 2023), The Co-op management is planning to develop and run the next wave of this campaign, leveraging the ideas developed during the co-design.

Co-design method

Co-design is a novel scientific method of qualitative data collection. Traditional methods of consumer research include focus groups, where researchers ask consumers questions in a group setting, and reflect on the findings during a strategy design process that occurs later, in isolation from the consumers.

Co-design workshops are viewed as a major improvement on focus groups, allowing consumers to contribute to strategy design as experts in their own experiences. During co-design, consumers are stimulated through discussions and various techniques to develop and communicate creative solutions using pictures from magazines, coloured pens, scissors and glue. This process results in colourful ‘mud maps’ or concept boards on butcher’s paper (see examples in the report).

At Steps 3-5, Barossa residents were invited through social media and the local newspaper to attend co-design workshops conducted by the researchers at the Barossa Fresh supermarket in Nuriootpa. The University Human Ethics committee approved the project.

The workshops lasted about 90 minutes and included the following tasks:

- Text completion tasks to activate relevant memories and words in participants’ minds;
- Discussion on past experiences of making healthier and not so healthy choices;

- Providing individual feedback on strategies from previous campaigns indicating which of them they liked, disliked or felt neutral about (researchers presented 28 ideas covering seven broad themes – see Appendix 1 for a full list);
- Elaborating on like/dislike of previous strategies by sharing with others in small groups;
- Creating their own campaign ideas in the form of colourful ‘mud maps’;
- Providing demographic characteristics (in the booklets).

A total of 24 consumers, representative of the Barossa adult population (ranging in age, gender, family status, household size and Co-op membership duration), took part in four co-design sessions. Participants were reimbursed for their time with The Barossa Co-op vouchers.

The consumer workshops were followed by one employee workshop, attended by eight employees representing most stores of the Barossa Co-op, including: Barossa Fresh (formerly Foodland), Fresh Café, Mitre 10, SportsPower, Betta Home Living, Orchard Lane, and Barossa Co-op marketing function. The employees also provided their feedback on past ideas, created their own ‘mud map’ and, additionally, voted on the ideas generated by the consumers focusing on feasibility and likely impact.



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