



Benalla Health, St Vincent de Paul's Society Benalla and Beechworth Correctional Centre teamed up to build wicking garden beds in people's backyards. The project aimed to reduce the reliance on emergency food relief, improve community connectivity and increase people's knowledge, confidence and skills to grow their own food at home.

A funding grant of \$5000 was given by the Central Hume Primary Care Partnership to build the garden beds with an original target for 20 beds at \$200 each. Beechworth Correctional Centre provided the labour to build the garden beds.

- To be eligible for a garden participants must
- ⇒ Live in the Benalla township
 - ⇒ Have accessed emergency food relief
 - ⇒ Be willing to give gardening a go

Garden coaches assisted individuals to grow their garden.

Evaluation

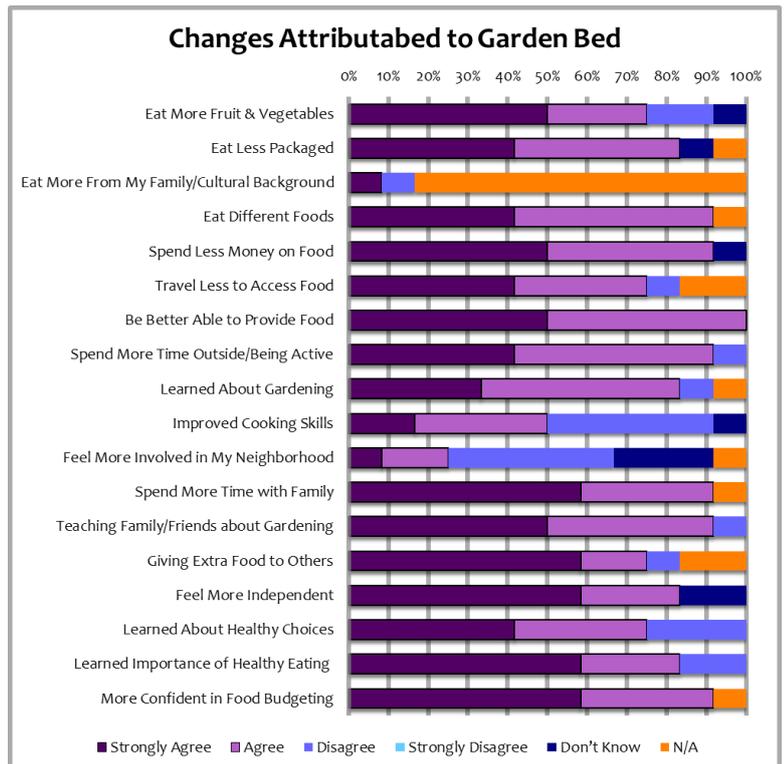
Two Charles Sturt University students evaluated the impact of the project from May-June 2016. The USDA Community Gardener Survey for Adults Template was adapted. The survey questions were asked during a home visit in an informal interview. Questions were revised for use in local primary schools, evaluating the school's mentoring role.

Results:

From October 2015 to May 2016 28 garden beds were built by Beechworth Correctional Centre. This included some for Garden coaches: 2 at the local primary school, 1 at a neighbourhood house and 1 at a Garden coach's house. Two garden coaches were involved in the project.

Surveys were conducted with 12 participants with four households, of 16 total, not available.

- ⇒ 58% reported tending to the garden daily
- ⇒ Most liked feature: ability to grow own food
- ⇒ 92% rated the experience as excellent
- ⇒ Prior to garden bed installation, 50% of participants felt unable to grow their own food due to not having the right space.



Majority felt the garden increased their fruit and vegetable consumption, with 92% foreseeing a reduction in money spent on food. 92% were also spending more time with the family. Just under half (42%) interviewed reported some degree of food insecurity in the last month leading up to the interview.



Conclusion

Participants felt the garden beds were making a positive impact on their food security. All expressed genuine Motivation to continue. The recommendation is to ensure mentoring continues to increase the likelihood of success and long term participation.

For more information contact Benalla Health on (03) 57614500

