

**Foodbank WA – School
Breakfast Program
Research**

**FOOD SENSATIONS
ADDITIONAL REPORT**

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Prepared for:
Foodbank WA

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1. Foodbank Food Sensations Programme

1.1. Current Programme

The Food Sensations Programme had been experienced by over half of the children who responded to the questionnaire and one of the metro Case Study schools in the research. Overall, the response to the programme was very positive from both students and teaching staff. Feedback from stakeholders indicated that it was perceived as a natural route for Foodbank to extend its role in schools and was the only known organisation to be implementing the Food Sensations programme with children.

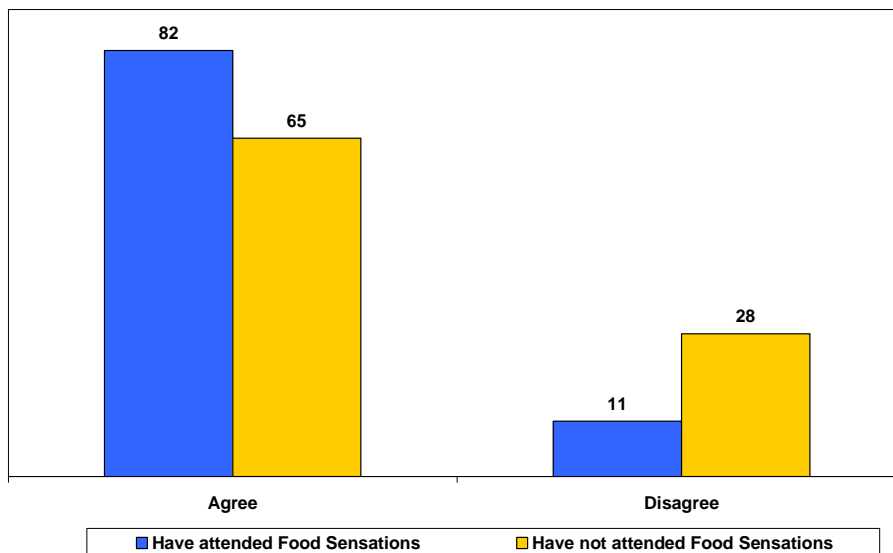
Participants

Children who had participated in the Food Sensations programme reported a high level of enjoyment (84% said they enjoyed it), finding it fun and interesting to learn new skills. A high proportion claimed that it had made them think more about what they ate (72%), and also that it had encouraged them to change their behaviour and eat healthier foods (79%).

One of the key attitude differences between those students who had attended Food Sensations versus those who had not, was the level of agreement that it was 'easy to eat vegetables every day' (see below chart). 82% of students who had attended Food Sensations felt that it was easy to eat vegetables every day, while only 65% of those who had not attended Food Sensations felt that it was easy to eat vegetables every day. This suggests that the programme had a positive impact on students' ideas and ways to eat more vegetables.

Do you Agree or Disagree that it's easy to eat vegetables every day?

% of Respondents



Source: Foodbank Student Questionnaire, August 2010.

The key learnings taken from the programme were around healthy foods and which foods to eat most or least. This indicates that the programme succeeded in reinforcing key healthy eating messages.

Teachers

The teachers and Principal at the school who had undertaken the Food Sensations programme had a very positive experience to report. The teachers felt it was important that it fitted into the curriculum and complemented what the children had already been taught on nutrition – *“The kids loved it, and we could incorporate it into what we were doing about nutrition, it was all healthy eating so it really fitted”*. Teachers also were more receptive to a programme which involved minimal effort on their part - *“Foodbank came in and did cooking lessons with the class – it was great ... all we had to do was provide a couple of bowls of hot water and they got on with it.”*

The programme was felt to build essential skills around cooking and hygiene, but also to teach students to take responsibility for their own food preparation and encourage them to try new foods and especially fruit or vegetables which were new to them.

1.2. Awareness of Foodbank’s Food Sensations programme

In the case study schools which had not undertaken the Food Sensations programme there was a lack of awareness that Foodbank offered the programme, and in fact a general lack of knowledge around Foodbank’s other programmes such as ‘Skip Rope, Not Breakfast’ and the ‘Fantastic Fruit & Veg’ game. There was also a general feeling from teachers and other staff in the remote and regional areas that such a programme would not be available for them because of their location, and that it would only be run for metro schools.

However, when the programme was explained by the researchers the concept was very well-received by teachers and staff. They felt that it would be advantageous to have the programme in the school and could see the benefits for the students so were very open to the programme idea, with the only caveat being that it fitted with the curriculum and did not take up too much classroom time. This suggests that there is potential to roll the programme out to a greater number of schools.

1.3. Programme limitations

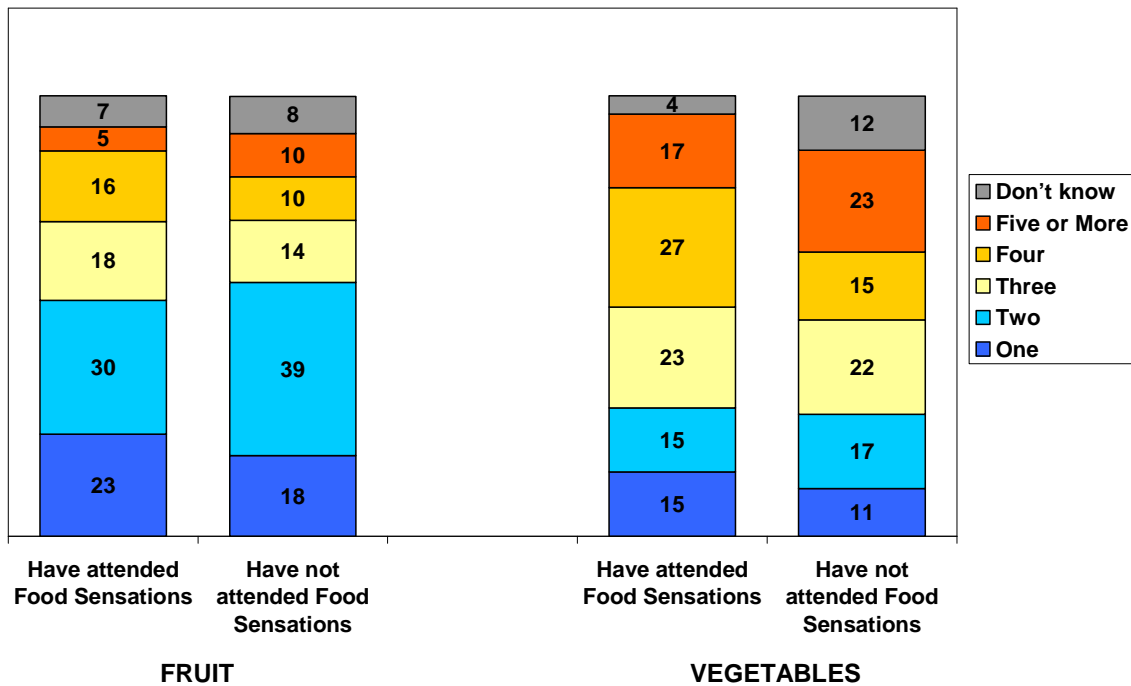
Behaviour Change

A number of the stakeholders and Principals did express some concern about the lack of impact the Food Sensations programme would have on behaviour change (either short or longer term) given that it consisted of only one session with the students. This is supported by the fact that, while there is *intention* to change behaviour among students who have participated in the programme, there is no evidence from the data that they are actually eating a better diet or more fruit and vegetables.

The chart below indicates that there is no significant difference between those students who have attended the Food Sensations programme, and those who have not, in the number of fruit and vegetables students claim to be eating.

**How many pieces of fruit do you usually eat each day?
How many serves of vegetables do you usually eat each day?**

% of Respondents



Source: Foodbank Student Questionnaire, August 2010.

Potential Models

There was a general recognition that, although involving children was a very positive step, in order to actually change behaviour in the home, the wider family needed to be involved. It was also felt by a number of the stakeholders that in order to have any real impact on behaviours, the Food Sensations programme needed to be a longer term programme with a far greater number of interventions. It was recognised that this would require a significantly higher level of funding and stakeholders suggested three models that Foodbank could follow:-

1. Greater depth in fewer schools

Foodbank could concentrate its resources on implementing a longer, more in-depth Food Sensations programme which focussed on changing behaviours in a small number of schools. This was felt to have the advantage of being able to actually change behaviours – but would considerably reduce the number of schools Foodbank would be able to offer the programme to.

2. Train professional school staff to implement the programme

Under this model Foodbank would set up a training programme for school staff e.g. School Canteen cooks or School Nutritionists, to learn how to implement the Food

Sensations programme in their own school. This could be done either via events arranged by Foodbank, or at other events where these staff would be likely to attend e.g. the School Canteen Conference. The trained staff could then run a number of sessions as deemed appropriate for the individual school and the programme messages would be reinforced by the meals served in the canteen. This has the advantage of being a cost-effective method of reaching a large number of schools and students, however some schools (especially smaller schools and those in remote or regional areas) may not have suitable staff or a canteen or equipped room where the programme can take place.

3. Develop further links with local organisations

Foodbank could utilise existing, and develop new, links with locally-based organisations who already work with communities in the area of nutrition to help deliver a Food Sensations programme with greater longevity which is able to affect behaviours at the family level by incorporating children with parents and other family members. Foodbank could provide not only the food for such a programme, but also the framework and education materials besides utilising its existing links with schools to gain access to the educational environment. The potential downside to this approach is that it could prove to be fragmented with patchy coverage, depending on the existence of appropriate organisations in the local area.

1.4. Recommendations

The Food Sensations programme gained positive feedback from those who had participated, and staff at the schools who had not participated were open to the idea of Foodbank running the programme in their school. It was also felt by stakeholders that this was a natural route for Foodbank to extend its influence. It is therefore recommended that Foodbank continue with the Food Sensations programme but take steps to broaden its reach and maximise its effect on behaviour change.

1.4.1. Retain positive aspects

Fit with curriculum teaching

It was noted that teaching staff felt it was vital that any programme on nutrition should fit with the curriculum and be complementary to existing teaching. The current programme was felt to fulfil these criteria well and therefore this should be maintained in any future programmes.

Minimal teacher input

Another aspect of the current programme which assisted with staff 'buy-in' was the limited amount of teacher input required. It was important to teachers that they were not required to do extra preparation and work, and that everything was provided by the programme co-ordinators.

Enjoyable for students

The current programme was rated highly by the students as being fun and interesting and this was key to ensuring messages were understood and retained by students, besides creating demand from the students for further sessions. This is a key element of the current programme which it is important to retain.

1.4.2. Effect behaviour change

Develop links with existing organisations

The biggest challenge for the Food Sensations programme is to drive behaviour change among participants. It was apparent from the research that there were a number of other organisations locally who were working within the community to effect behaviour change in the area of nutrition and healthy diet e.g. Kimberley Population Health. It was felt by a number of the research participants that these organisations would be open, and indeed very responsive, to greater involvement and support from Foodbank.

We therefore recommend that Foodbank investigates an approach to establish and develop further links with these organisations to help deliver a more holistic and longer term Food Sensations programme. This approach will have the benefits of:

- Delivering more effective behaviour change outcomes in both the short and long term.
- Being a cost-effective method of reaching a significant proportion of people with an in-depth programme.
- Providing a greater level of stability and surety for existing programmes.

The research suggests that implementing this approach could be a successful way to deliver a more effective and efficient Food Sensations programme with a greater depth of impact and broader reach.