

Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)

Impacts and opportunities: Results from a discussion of CLUES' work in the Twin Cities and southeast metropolitan areas

In 2013, CLUES received funding from the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes to improve the health of residents in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and greater Minnesota. CLUES' work has primarily focused on working with businesses and organizations within the Latino community to adopt policies related to tobacco control, healthy eating, and active living. The organization has worked with multi-unit housing complexes, schools, churches, businesses, and child care centers within the Latino community to adopt smoke-free policies. CLUES has also worked with mercados, restaurants, and other establishments to adopt healthy eating policies, and has coordinated with other businesses and organizations to adopt active living policies involving the installation of bike racks or incorporating more physical activity into institutional practices. In addition, CLUES has worked closely with the Latino Student Wellness Program (LSWP) at Minnesota State University-Mankato to promote healthy eating and active living on campus through educational campaigns, partnerships with other student organizations, and policy changes.

In December 2014, a group of 8 project stakeholders were invited to a Ripple Effect Mapping discussion about the project's impact in the community. The discussion participants were made up of CLUES staff, members of LSWP, a rural community health worker, and representatives from businesses and organizations that had adopted policies related to tobacco control, healthy eating, and active living. The event was facilitated in both English and Spanish. The discussion was intended not only to provide the participants a chance to consider the project's success in achieving its intended goals, but also to identify the indirect or unexpected project impacts.

What is Ripple Effect Mapping?

Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) is an evaluation tool used to better understand the intended and unintended impacts of a project. It is particularly helpful when evaluating complex initiatives that both influence, and are impacted by, the community. REM is a facilitated discussion with project staff and local stakeholders that creates a visual "mind map" during the discussion, showing the linkages between program activities and resulting changes in the community.

This approach is intended to help demonstrate the project's impacts more holistically and to describe the degree to which different types of impacts are observed by project staff and community stakeholders.

PROJECT IMPACTS

During the discussion, all participants had opportunities to describe CLUES' achievements and to discuss the indirect impacts of their work. The participants grouped each of these observed impacts into three main types of changes that had taken place as a result of the project: new policies and practices, new or strengthened relationships between organizations, and new approaches for reaching communities. Participants were not asked to rank the relative importance of these impacts in relationship to one another. However, the graphic included in this summary does show how many times the participants identified a change in each key area and offers a few examples of key impacts identified by the participants. A summary of the discussion related to each area of change is also included in this document, and the specific impacts identified by the participants during the mind mapping exercise are listed in the appendix.

Ripple Effect Mapping: CLUES

IMPLEMENTING NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES

BUILDING OR STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS AMONG ORGANIZATIONS

The Latino Student Wellness Program (LSWP) at Minnesota State University - Mankato has strengthened its relationship with Student Health Services on campus as a resource for health information.

13%

LSWP has expanded its membership and collaborated with five other student organizations to implement new healthy food policies.

CLUES' policy work with a charter school serving Latino families has also led school staff to make more referrals to CLUES' services.

REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES IN NEW WAYS

LSWP has led campaigns to motivate students to participate in intramural sports and drink more water.

LSWP has built connections with students from Mexico and Central America through its weekly meetings.

In rural communities, a CLUES community health worker has held monthly events and activities related to the harms of tobacco, the importance of breast cancer exams, wellness, and other health issues.

A participant working with CLUES to implement healthy food policies at his establishments also accessed CLUES services in the past as a new immigrant and feels committed to giving back to his community through continuing work with CLUES.

CLUES

58%

A mercado and restaurant owner has been bringing in more vegetables and fruits and trying to eliminate using lard and other fats in cooking at his establishments.

Rural community health workers have worked with local partners to adopt smoke-free policies in buildings and healthy food policies in stores.

LSWP has been serving healthy foods at its weekly meetings and campaigned to adopt a healthy food policy in the open kitchen on campus where students can cook and prepare food.

A charter school serving Latino families has adopted a smoke-free policy on school grounds and an active living policy involving the installation of bike racks.

A pastor has adopted a smoke-free policy at his church, as well as a smoke-free and healthy food policy at his mercado, and has since combined the smoke-free campaign at this church with his food donation program.

CLUES has worked with three Latino-owned restaurants under the Healthy Restaurant Initiative with the City of Minneapolis to market and modify three plates at each restaurant to be healthier.

Implementing new policies and practices

More than half (58%) of the impacts identified by the group participants related to new policies and practices. CLUES has worked with mercados and restaurants, churches, charter schools, and universities in both rural and urban communities to adopt health-related policies. An owner of a mercado and restaurant shared that he had adjusted the menu offerings at his restaurant to include more fruits and vegetables, use less lard, and reduce other fats as a result of adopting a healthy eating policy. In his mercado he began pre-packaging fruit slices as well as cut-up vegetables and meat for guisos (i.e. soup). He has provided guidance to customers about how to make traditional foods healthier, and has noticed that parents are buying more fruit. In addition, he reported that he has not had to significantly raise prices in making these adjustments and shared that he is committed to making healthy food affordable.

CLUES has also worked with three Latino-owned restaurants under the Healthy Restaurant Initiative with the City of Minneapolis. Through the initiative, the restaurant owners work with a nutritionist to modify three house plates to be healthier. The initiative also helps restaurant owners develop table tents and menu inserts to advertise the new plates, and incentivizes the purchase of measuring cups and providing appropriate portion sizes.

CLUES has also worked with a pastor to adopt a smoke-free policy at his church, as well as smoke-free and healthy eating policies at his mercado. The pastor recently combined advertising of the smoke-free policy with that for their food-donation program with a sign outside of the church saying “We Exchange Smoking for Healthy Food” and has observed a decline in smoking on church grounds. CLUES has also partnered with Adelante College Prep – Hiawatha Academies, a charter school serving Latino families, to adopt a smoke-free policy on school grounds and an active living policy involving the installation of bike racks. A school staff member who participated in the discussion observed that more children and teachers are biking to school since the bike racks have been installed.

In rural communities, community health workers from CLUES have worked with local partners to identify places where there are heavy smokers and worked with property managers to adopt smoke-free policies outside of the buildings. The community health workers have also worked with Latino-owned stores in rural communities to adopt healthy eating policies to move produce closer to the front of the store.

Through work with CLUES, LSWP at Minnesota State University – Mankato advocated to have the campus’s open kitchen, where students are able to cook and prepare food, implement a healthy food policy, making healthier foods available to students. LSWP has also begun serving healthy foods at their weekly meetings.

What we do is cut the [fruits] for those kids so that people have more cravings to eat healthy foods. Some of the people didn't buy it because it was whole and too much for a person and in cutting them it made it easier for them to eat.

The idea for putting up the sign saying “We Exchange Smoking for Healthy Food” came out of the fact that many people, when the church was closed, would smoke at the church's steps. The days that we had services, similarly, they would come to the church to smoke. We already had the food donation program... so we tried to do a strategy to attract more communities to participate from the sidewalk. By the sidewalk, we put the signs saying 'We Exchange Smoking for Food' and now we don't see many smokers. But we do see people coming and they laugh and they say they are not smoking anymore but they come to bring their food.

I have noticed that there are now more kids that are taking bikes to school until it got really chilly. In general, we see more students and also see more teachers riding bikes. Also for the church community across from the school... they use our bike racks to park bikes for their events.

It was a process of teaching the [LSWP members] that it takes the same amount of time to open up a bag of chips to eat an apple. There were changes, they came about slowly, in small steps, but now students are asking about what fruits and vegetables [we] are going to eat [at the meetings]. They are looking forward to having those.



Reaching out to communities in new ways

Group participants also detailed ways that they were reaching out to communities in new ways to promote healthy practices. LSWP developed two campaigns to motivate students to drink more water and participate in intramural sports, establishing soccer and volleyball teams and doing a presentation on the benefits of physical activity. LSWP has also engaged students from Mexico and Central America in their weekly meetings, and the program has heard that the students have continued to practice some of the healthy eating and active living behaviors after returning to their home countries.

A community health worker has also been reaching out to residents in rural communities through monthly events and activities to bring attention to the harms of tobacco, the importance of breast cancer exams, general wellness, and other health issues.

In addition, a mercado and restaurant owner who has worked with CLUES to adopt healthy eating policies at his establishments observed that he had first become connected to CLUES as a new immigrant himself through their English language classes. The owner shared that working with CLUES on the healthy eating policy was a way to give back to both CLUES and the Latino community.

Many [rural Latino residents] just arrived and aren't participating in any events in the community because of the language barriers. We try to go to their houses to give them information and invite them to come and that's where they meet other people and I think they make friends and we have seen that their mental health has improved because [they] aren't as depressed as they were before... With the resources that [we] give them, we connect them to other services.

I'm an immigrant that came without much and without education... I am very grateful, because even though you don't know it, being a part of CLUES was a part of my growth and now it is my turn to give back to my community. Now I'm committed to working with this organization, with the CLUES headquarters in support of whatever activity, participating in events, donating food to the Aging Well Services in St. Paul, donating healthy foods...I am very grateful to organizations like CLUES, that even though you can't see the impact, what they have done in the community, valuing our life trajectories, this is what helps us to improve ourselves.



Building or strengthening connections among organizations

New or strengthened connections among organizations was another theme that emerged from the discussion. LSWP has developed relationships with five other student organizations, working with them to adopt policies to offer healthy food and water at their meetings. LSWP has also built a stronger relationship with CLUES and Student Health Services at Minnesota State University – Mankato, as both have provided the program with resources such as data, Power Point presentations, and other materials they could use in their outreach efforts.

In addition, as a result of its policy work with the charter school, CLUES has been providing additional information to the school about its services so that school staff can refer families to different resources and events at the organization.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Participants' responses during the discussion underscore the strong relationships CLUES has established in its health equity efforts. The following questions may be helpful for CLUES to consider in planning its future work:

- How can CLUES build upon the relationships it has created with businesses, organizations, and LSWP to further advance policy, systems, and environmental changes?
- Are there opportunities to work with other sectors in the Latino community to enact smoke-free, healthy eating, or active living policies that have not already been engaged?
- What challenges has CLUES encountered in engaging different sectors? How can CLUES effectively attend to these challenges?

APPENDIX: Project impacts identified by discussion participants



IMPLEMENTING NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A mercado and restaurant owner has been bringing in more vegetables and fruits and trying to eliminate using lard and other fats in cooking at the restaurant.

"What we do is cut the [fruits] for those kids so that people have more cravings to eat healthy foods. Some of the people didn't buy it because it was whole and too much for a person and in cutting them it made it easier for them to eat." - Mercado and restaurant owner

The owner has observed that parents are buying more watermelons, pineapples, papayas and other fruits.

Similarly, the owner started pre-packaging cut up vegetables and meat for guisos (i.e. soup) so that customers did not have to buy the whole vegetables separately and chop them themselves.

The owner has also made changes to his menu and began offering instruction to customers on how to make traditional foods healthier.

The owner has adjusted a recipe for nopales, marinating and grilling them to cut the acidity. "So when you eat it, it tastes a lot better than meat." -Restaurant and mercado owner

The owner has begun offering cactus salad and different Mexican salsas, including pico de gallo, red sauces, green sauces, and other hot sauces, which are traditional foods that are also healthy.

The owner has also helped people prepare taco meat in a healthier way so that they are eating more of the meat than the fat.

The owner is also working to reduce the fat in the chorizo and bread that is offered.

"The prices didn't go up very much. On a personal level, we are trying to reduce prices so that people can have access to healthier food and be healthier." - Mercado and restaurant owner

In rural communities, which have more factories and tend to have higher rates of heavy smokers, CLUES worked with local partners to identify places where there were more heavy smokers by looking for places with cigarette butts in the parking lots and outside of buildings.

The team educated the owners and helped them adopt a non-smoking policy and put up no smoking signs outside the buildings.

"One of the things that I've noticed from my work with CLUES, the quality of life has been raised in the Latino community in the rural area due to our work." - Rural community health worker

The same team of rural community health workers also noticed that there was a lot of junk food, such as chicharrones and french fries, at the front of Latino-owned stores.

The team talked to the owners and helped them adopt a policy to move produce to the front of the store so that it was the first thing that people saw when they entered the store.

LSWP began serving healthy foods at their weekly meetings, such as fruit, vegetables and water instead of chips and even held a smoothie night at one of their meetings.

"It was a process of teaching the [members] that it takes the same amount of time to open up a bag of chips to eat an apple. They were changes, they came about slowly, in small steps, but now students are asking about what fruits and vegetables [we] are going to eat. They are looking forward to having those." -LSWP member

An urban community health worker from CLUES has worked with Adelante College Prep - Hiawatha Academies, a charter school serving Latino families, to adopt a no smoking policy on school grounds.

A school staff member has noticed a decrease in people smoking at a bus stop near the school as well.

Through this initiative, the charter school has also adopted an active living policy involving the installation of bike racks.

"I have noticed that there are now more kids that are taking bikes to school until it got really chilly. In general, we see more students and also see more teachers riding bikes. Also for the church community across from the school... they use our bike racks to park bikes for their events." - Charter school staff member

The charter school staff member also observed that seeing bike racks in the community inspires a sense of safety.

CLUES has also approached the church about adopting a smoke-free policy but they have so far declined because many members of the church community, including some church staff, smoke.

LSWP has worked with the Multi-cultural Office on campus to adopt a healthy food policy in the open kitchen, which is a kitchen students can use to cook and prepare food. Previously, less healthy foods had been made available in the kitchen such as french fries and chips.

In adopting this policy, LSWP members worked with the directors of the program, including Latino Affairs, Asian American Affairs, and Native American Affairs, and these groups have since adopted policies themselves to only have healthy food and water at their meetings.

Pastor adopted a smoke-free policy at his church after having worked with CLUES in other areas, and adopting tobacco and healthy eating policies at his mercado, including moving junk food closer to the back of the store.

"I've known Cesar Orjuela for a long time. We would have breakfast and we got together and I didn't know what CLUES was and he impacted me with all of the information about them. That gave us the desire to continue the programs." - Pastor

As a result of this relationship, the church has been able to connect members of its community to homeownership and English language programs offered by CLUES.

The church has a food donation program as well and they recently combined this program with their smoke-free policy. The church posted a sign on the sidewalk saying "We Exchange Smoking for Healthy Food" to advertise the food donation program to church members and passers-by, and to publicize the smoke-free policy so people wouldn't smoke on the church grounds.

"The idea for putting up the sign saying 'We Exchange Smoking for Healthy Food' came out of the fact that many people, when the church was closed, would smoke at the churches steps. The days that we had services, similarly, they would come to the church to smoke. We already had the food donation program... so we tried to do a strategy to attract more communities to participate from the sidewalk. By the sidewalk, we put the signs saying 'We Exchange Smoking for Food' and now we don't see many smokers. But we do see people coming and they laugh and they say they are not smoking anymore but they come to bring their food." - Pastor

The pastor has seen the decreased consumption of tobacco in both adults and youth.

The church has also collected about 5,000 lbs of food per month, which is donated to Second Harvest Heartland.

CLUES has worked with three Latino-owned restaurants under the Healthy Restaurant Initiative with the City of Minneapolis to create a healthier menu.

Under the initiative, the restaurants modified three house plates with the recommendations of a nutritionist and input from the restaurant owner.

The initiative also provides support for restaurant owners to market the healthy dishes through table tents and menu inserts.

The initiative also incentivizes restaurant owners to purchase measuring cups for their recipes and serve appropriate portion sizes.

CLUES had previously worked with these three restaurants to adopt tobacco-free policies at their establishments, and the organization was able to build on those relationships to help the restaurants become involved in this initiative.



REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES IN NEW WAYS

LSWP began a campaign to motivate students to participate in intramural sports.

LSWP found that students' initial responses were that they did not have time for sports, because they had classes or had to study. "They would say, 'I have to watch TV.'" - LSWP member

LSWP decided to pay to have male, female, and co-ed soccer and volleyball teams, including jerseys and gear for people to play. The teams were intramural and so participated in university-wide competitions.

At first, members of LSWP were afraid we would not be able to fill the groups, but many students showed up. "They started to see the importance of participating and I think it was because they saw their friends and wanted to be competitive with their friends." - LSWP member

The teams also started scheming to only speak Spanish during the game so that their competitors would not understand their strategies.

LSWP also did a presentation for students about the benefits of physical activity.

At the beginning of the year, LSWP was trying to figure out new ways of having an impact on the lives of students on campus and noticed that many students were buying junk food in the times between classes in their busy days.

"We started to ask them why not just buy water instead. They said that they felt that it was a waste of money to buy a water bottle, why wouldn't you drink a soda. When we started to promote the drinking of the water, we started to see that the person didn't like the water. They were like, 'I have my Pepsi' and weren't into it." - LSWP member

LSWP started doing presentations for students and made videos on the benefits of drinking water and the consequences of not consuming water.

"Many didn't know that [drinking water] helps provide more oxygen to your brain and helps with your well-being, you feel better. It was hard, but little by little they started to drink more water, but it was difficult." - LSWP member

LSWP has made new connections with students from Mexico and Central America.

Thirty Masters-level students from an exchange program in Mexico began coming to the weekly meetings of the LSWP.

The students from Mexico were older than most of the LSWP members and "it was very enriching for them to tell us that they felt very proud of us and the youth and Latino students that [we] were having such an impact on the university." - LSWP member

The students from Mexico they had a farewell party before returning to Mexico where they cooked traditional foods for the LSWP members but included more fruits and vegetables and used healthier oils. When the group all cleaned up, the exchange students "even said that we have to use the broom instead of the vacuum" to promote more physical activity. - LSWP member

The exchange students have since returned to Mexico and LSWP has received emails from some of them that they are now buying water instead of soda and are bringing some of the knowledge and practices they learned through LSWP to their communities.

LSWP has also had more recent international student members from Central America. "When they come here, they don't always know what the options are, and so when they come to the Tertulias [discussion groups through LSWP], they start to see that there are other people who speak Spanish and that they can share with. That gives them a feeling of belonging to the community. A big part of those who participate are international students." - LSWP member

Through CLUES, a rural community health worker has held monthly events and activities related to the harms of tobacco, the importance of breast cancer exams, wellness, and other health issues in rural Minnesota communities.

"Many who participate in the community are people who just arrived and aren't participating in any events in the community because of the language barriers. We try to go to their houses to give them information and invite them to come and that's where they meet other people and I think they make friends and we have seen that their mental health has improved because [they] aren't as depressed as they were before. It's an opportunity to share and to vent and oftentimes there are people who think that they have had the worst happen to them, and with the resources that [we] give them, we connect them to other services." - Rural community mental health worker

"On another note, I'm an immigrant that came without much and without education. I have been here for more than 30 years, thanks to organizations like CLUES, it has impacted my life. When I came to Los Angeles and then to Chicago – I went to English classes and when I came to Minnesota, I said that I can't go to school, but I went to the other CLUES location... I am very grateful, because even though you don't know it, being a part of CLUES was a part of my growth and now it is my turn to give back to my community. Now I'm committed to working with this organization, with the CLUES headquarters in support of whatever activity, participating in events, donating food to the Aging Well Services in St. Paul, donating healthy foods. Even though sometimes it's difficult, because the elders also have to like the food. I am very grateful to organizations like CLUES, that even though you can't see the impact, what they have done in the community, valuing our life trajectories, this is what helps us to improve ourselves. I just wanted to say thank you for your work." - Mercado and restaurant owner



BUILDING OR STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS AMONG ORGANIZATIONS

LSWP has developed stronger connections to Minnesota State University - Mankato Student Health Services which they did not have before as a result of this initiative.

When LSWP started, the five leaders had general knowledge of healthy living but did not feel that they were well-informed enough to teach other students.

CLUES and Minnesota State University - Mankato Student Health Services have helped provide data, Power Point presentations, and other materials that LSWP did not already have.

The collaboration with CLUES has helped LSWP expand its membership from 10-15 members to about 30-35 members.

LSWP collaborated with five other student organizations (the American Indian Student Association; Chicano-Latino American Student Association; Ethnic Studies Student Organization; Hmong Student Association; the Latino Student Wellness Program; Minnesota State University - Mankato Men's Volleyball Club).

LSWP members sent e-mails, called, and attended meetings with each of the student organizations.

The six student organizations adopted policies of having water and fruit in their weekly meetings.

As a result of this initiative, the staff of CLUES are now passing along information to Adelante College Prep - Hiawatha Academies where tobacco and active living policies were adopted so that staff at the school can refer families to different resources and events at CLUES.