

## › Evaluating the changes

### Getting feedback

Once changes have been made to the canteen, it is important to assess their success. The canteen committee needs to evaluate and review the canteen policy and plan for continuous improvement. These evaluation and review activities need to be built into the planning and canteen management process.

Devising clear and comprehensive policies and plans will allow them to be used as a marker for success. Track whether the activities undertaken helped to achieve the goal of making healthy foods financially viable and sustainable in your school. Checking off the activities and timeframe that were written in the Implementation plan (see page 24) during the planning process is a fundamental step to evaluating the planned changes.

Evaluation does not have to be complex. Some evaluation approaches include the following:

#### Student support

Students can assist by:

- developing, implementing and then collating surveys aimed at fellow students and parents
- interviewing other students or writing feedback letters to the canteen staff as part of their English studies
- preparing graphs of sales of different foods over time, for example pre- and post-healthy changes, figures before and after a certain promotion or a comparison of best-selling foods.

#### Checklists

##### *General canteen management issues*

- Was volunteer recruitment implemented and successful?
- Were volunteer recognition activities organised?
- How did volunteers learn about recruitment?
- Did volunteers believe that they received adequate training and support?
- Did volunteers enjoy their work?
- Did volunteers feel like they were contributing to the promotion of healthy eating?
- Did canteen staff undergo any training?
- Was staff training beneficial? What changed in the canteen as a result of the training?

### **Financial management**

- Did sales increase, decrease or stay the same? (Investigate and document the reasons for change or lack of change.)
- What were the menu's best-sellers? Did these change from the initial needs assessment? What were the trends in sales of certain items? (For example, did sales increase in line with promotions?)
- Were there any food safety or stock issues throughout the year?
- Did the canteen invest in any new equipment? Was this beneficial?

### **Developing feedback surveys and tools**

- Adapt the survey used in the initial needs assessment process. Change questions so that they relate to information about student, parent and teacher feedback on changes to the canteen.
- When asking people for feedback and writing surveys, focus on the positive aspects.
- Look at the sample surveys available on the websites and resource manuals listed in the Other resources section of this resource.
- Include a simple tear-off comments slip in the school newsletter. People are often reluctant to complete a large survey but will provide a few comments if prompted.
- Have a feedback box in the canteen and at the school's reception desk. Provide blank paper for general comments or include a specific question such as 'What meal did you like best this term?'
- Offer incentives for feedback, such as a free lunch or a prize for completing a survey.

When evaluating the success of the canteen changes, carefully assess those changes that did not work. Could certain aspects be changed and tried again or should the idea be abandoned? If something did not work, investigate why this happened.

Evaluation should be a continual process. Information should be gathered throughout the year. Regular meetings to check progress against the Implementation plan (see page 24) should be held.

## Reviewing the canteen policy

A policy review date should be determined by the canteen committee. This should be done around the time of the school council annual general meeting. The canteen committee should review the information that has been gathered during the evaluation process and decide whether changes to the policy are needed. The committee may need to change statements, set new goals or address particular issues in the updated policy and action plan. The revised policy will need to be redrafted and submitted for feedback and the action plan updated in line with the revised policy.

## Communicating success

Communicating success is a very important part of the process of change that is often forgotten. Communicating positive outcomes will help continue to build interest and commitment from the school community and ensure ongoing success.

Ideas for communicating successes:

- Display photos of healthy canteen activities around the school or in the school newsletter. Students could create a collage.
- Write an article with a case study relating success stories for the school newsletter or website. Ask the principal to include it in the school's annual report.
- Invite the local paper to write an article about your healthy canteen.
- Submit case studies to canteen association newsletters and websites. Enter related competitions.
- Join a canteen network to share issues and ideas with other canteen workers.
- Share the results with the students. Congratulate and thank them for their healthy eating throughout the year. Acknowledge parents' contributions as well.
- Celebrate the success of the canteen. Hold a special morning tea for all those involved, including staff, volunteers, students, teachers and the broader school community.