

“WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU GET”

EQUIPPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND FOOD ADVERTISING SO THAT THEY CAN COMBAT UNHEALTHY FOOD CHOICES.

Context

With obesity rates among children rocketing, we have developed a unique approach which doesn't tell children what to eat but develops an awareness of the ways advertising and marketing targets them to buy food that is not good for them. This highlights the injustice and deceit underpinning much food advertising and encourages young people to 'reimagine healthy behaviour as defiance'¹ against the power of large food corporations. By engaging young people emotionally and adopting the very techniques that advertisers use, we can make a bigger impact than just educating children about healthy eating - which is very often a big turn-off.

The evidence from our evaluation and research is that this approach does have a longer-term impact on children's attitude to food.

“When we started...we didn't know about adverts telling lies...we trust[ed] them” (girl, 13 years)

“We talked about false advertising, and how brands make something seem healthy and it's really not healthy” (boy, 12 years)

“The company that makes your favourite brand of chocolatethey lie to you about the sugar in the chocolate bar...They know you're still going to buy it anyway” (girl, 13 years)

“It taught us about the bad food,and how not to live our lives badly” (boy, 13 years).

“Now I won't just look at the ad and see that looks nice and I'll buy it...I'll go into the shop and look at the ingredients” (girl, 14).

‘What You See is Not What You Get’ is an anti-junk food educational programme for young people between the ages of 8 and 18 years old and can be delivered in youth clubs, schools or other structured environments. The project increases awareness amongst young

¹ See Christopher J. Bryan, David S. Yeager, Cintia P. Hinojosa, Aimee Chabot, Holly Bergen, Mari Kawamura, and Fred Steubing, 2016. Harnessing adolescent values to motivate healthier eating. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America. Published online September 12, 2016.

people of the strategies used by food and advertising companies to persuade them to buy food, and to encourage investigation and questioning, thereby equipping them with the understanding to make better-informed food choices.

The programme consists of six sessions covering different aspects of advertising and food marketing. During the programme the children will come up with their own campaign to run in their school or youth club using slogans, cartoon characters, screen-printing and/or posters. The final shape of the campaign is led by the children.

Programme Outline

1. **Not the whole truth....** how advertising (and political campaigns) omit to tell the whole truth. What they are NOT telling you.
2. **Buy, buy, buy....** how design persuades us to buy using the eye, celebrities, humour, colour etc. to direct us to specific information.
3. **Location, location, location....** where posters etc. are placed to entice us (i.e., near schools, on buses, pavements and bus stops, near fast food outlets etc.).
4. **Designing a campaign....** different types of campaigns that use posters and other promotional material to sell an idea or product; develop the look, the place, the content of the campaign for the biggest impact.
5. **Making Promotional Materials - T-shirts/Posters/Badges/Stories**
6. **Rolling out the campaign.**



Youth Club Poster-Design



Youth Club T Shirt Screen Printing



Booking

If you would like to run an anti-junk food media literacy programme at your school or youth club, we have 3 options:

1. A free worksheet/lesson plan to accompany the film, “Where The Lies Are”
2. A one-lesson session led by Cordwainers Grow £350.
3. A six-session programme led by Cordwainers Grow (£2,000)

Call Kate on 07714 288 286 or email: hello@cordwainersgrow.org.uk for more information.



Cordwainers Grow is a community interest company providing educational and environmental projects to promote health, well-being and community cohesion. ‘Not What You Get’ is led by Kate Poland, a former BBC journalist who has worked extensively with young people on community, environment and media projects. The project was supported by Public Health, Hackney.

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