

## *Health and Physical Education (HPE): local and global communities of practice*

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### **Abstract**

This paper shares a university health and wellbeing community initiative. The project (2011-2014) 'Best Start: A community collaborative approach to lifelong health and wellness', adopts a strengths-based approach to education. What began as a partnership seed between a university and nearby schools, quickly grew to involve Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO), the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre), Education departments and sport governing bodies. The collaborations involved pre-service teachers teaching Health and Physical Education (HPE) lessons to children from local schools, thus marrying theory with practice. The apparent pre-service teacher benefit was extended learning opportunities, as lessons provided 'hands on' practical, experiential learning and teaching. Lessons also provided local primary school children with quality swimming, sport sessions and tennis coaching (at no cost). Furthermore, professional development was delivered for classroom teachers.

Various communities were involved in curriculum and pedagogical research and reform. The project creatively optimised the resources available within a regional community through connections with the wider state of Victoria, as well as Australian and international communities. Program planning was strengthened through international research with data gathered from an England and Wales Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) awarded UK Primary Physical Education course case study (2012 and 2014). International partnerships enabled identification of unique contextual opportunities, support networks and renewed purpose. This initiative offers new directions of research and discovery in local and global education and is significant to the European Conference in Education (ECE) 2015 theme of "Education, power and empowerment: Changing and challenging communities".

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## Introduction

Participants of the Third European Conference on Education (ECE2015) organised by the International Academic Forum (IAFOR) in affiliation with global university partners, were invited to explore and question ways in which education can change, empower and challenge communities, and the ways in which communities can challenge structures and constructions of 'education'. It was suggested that 'communities' be explored in their fullest meanings. The world is perceived as a global community under the banner of the United Nations (UN) and this paper focuses specifically on the implementation of the international goals for education, health and wellbeing. The UN movement provides a focal point for governments, influencing policies and programs at all community levels: global, regional, national and local.

To implement curriculum or enact international and national health goals, community partnerships are essential. In the United Nations Governor General's synthesis report 'The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives, and protecting the planet', Ban Ki-Moon wrote:

Implementation is not just about quantity. It is also about doing things together, uniting around the problem. Inclusive partnerships must be a key feature of implementation at all levels: global, regional, national and local. We know the extent to which this can be transformative. The sustainable development goals provide a platform for aligning private action and public policies. Transformative partnerships are built upon principles and values, a shared vision and shared goals: placing people and the planet at the centre. They include the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in which mutual accountability is critical. This means principled and responsible public-private-people partnerships. (United Nations General Assembly, 2014, p. 19).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) referred to include 17 proposed goals that succeed the 2000-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG). At present, goal 3 and 4 are 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' and 'Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning', respectively. The two recurring themes of 'health and physical wellbeing' and 'community partnerships' form the core of this paper.

The health and wellbeing project, 'Best Start: A community collaborative approach to lifelong health and wellness' combined community strengths involving local and global partnerships. What began as a pathway seed quickly grew to involve an Australian university, schools, Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO), the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre), Education departments, sport governing bodies and a leading international Teacher Education university course (UK). Similarly, the strengths-based model has been adopted by Sport England 'use our school' initiative who are "committed to helping people and communities across the country create sporting habits for life"

(<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/use-our-school/>).

All local and international partnerships were initiated and developed without funding which makes this initiative appealing and tangible for teacher education globally. This distinct project espouses the power of human relations to optimise learning. In

exploring local and global communities of practice in Health and Physical Education (HPE) three underpinning themes are investigated:

- Local community health and wellbeing initiative
- Global influence and support
- Community strengths

### **Local Community Health and Wellbeing Initiative**

The collaborations involved pre-service teachers teaching ‘Health and Physical Education’ (HPE) lessons to children during their university tutorials, marrying the theory traditionally learnt in university classrooms with the experience-based knowledge located only in schools. The lack of connection between the theory and practice is recognised as a perennial problem in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses and termed the Achilles heel of education (Zeichner, 2010). Hence, a ‘hybrid space’ was created, involving “non hierarchical interplay between academic, practitioner and community expertise” (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89).

While literature discusses the advantages of the ‘hybrid space’ ideal, high quality research is limited, if not non-existent within physical education. The ‘Best Start’ program initiative provides a model through the journey experience. The story that unfolds provides an example of how the UN ideals are transformed into local schools and communities. This project is significant to educators and governments from around the world who are challenged to rethink their connections between university courses, school experiences and community health promotion.

Various communities were involved in curriculum and pedagogical research and reform. The project creatively optimised the resources available within a regional/rural community through connections with the wider state of Victoria, as well as Australian and international communities. Program planning was strengthened through international research with data gathered from an England and Wales Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) ‘Outstanding’ awarded UK Primary Physical Education course case study (2012 and 2014).

This unique local community partnership journey began in semester one, 2011 at Monash University – Gippsland campus (Figure 1). Monash University (Gippsland campus) is situated in Churchill, central Gippsland, Victoria (Australia). The Gippsland ‘Best Start’ program was deliberately designed so pre-service teacher confidence and competence could be progressively developed. Beginning with Level 1 higher education courses (first year), the students taught the content using peer teaching episodes (EDF1600 HPE in schools). This led to small group teaching experiences with children from local schools under teacher educator support, school teacher support and peer support. In Level 2 and 3 (second and third year) the pre-service teachers taught lessons to groups of children from Foundation Year to Year 6 in a chosen sport, tennis and swimming. The lessons only took place after the pre-service teachers evidenced they were prepared. The final teaching experiences were implemented independently by the students in the form of a residential camp and coaching experience within primary schools.

Community collaborations involved pre-service teachers teaching local children (Foundation – Year 6) swimming and water safety lessons (EDF2611 Experiencing Aquatic Environments), modified games (EDF1600 Health & Physical Education in

Schools), various sport sessions (netball, basketball, soccer, cricket, Aussie Rules football, tee-ball) and implementing tennis 'hot shots' (EDF3619 Sport & Physical Activity Education). University and school partnerships were timely and well received by education departments. The program was embedded within the Victorian Government 'School Centres for Teaching Excellence' (SCTE) initiative, which seeks to improve pre-service teacher education programs through stronger partnerships between schools and universities and a better integration of theory and practice. Learning and teaching involving 'quality experiences' is powerful, and as research suggests, high quality teaching has the largest impact on student learning outcomes, other than a student's socioeconomic background.

Primary education university students (ITE), who chose the Physical Education (PE) major stream, were required to study the unit EDF2611 'Experiencing Aquatic Environments'. It could also be chosen by education students as an elective. The pre-service teachers were not necessarily competent or confident swimmers but did have an interest in physical education and/or swimming. It was a requirement within this unit and also for the governing authority, Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) teacher registration that PE graduates from ITE programs in the primary school have a current teacher of swimming and water safety qualification (VIT, 2008). The unit at Gippsland campus previously required that students complete this during their own time and presented evidence of this qualification (approximate cost \$350).

The question was asked that if the students were attending a weekly one hour lecture and a two hour workshop focusing on outcomes relating to aquatics and water safety education then with a carefully designed unit workshop programme why not create a pathway identifying the swimming and water safety course units of competency? This question initiated the journey of collaboration between Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO), the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre) and external swimming instructors employed at the venue, local Primary schools and the University sector; Monash University - Gippsland. Through implementing 'hands on' practical teaching and learning experiences for the university students, subsequently the workshops enabled the provision of quality lessons at no cost for local primary school children (from a disadvantaged socioeconomic Gippsland region), who otherwise would not have received swimming lessons. This was of particular benefit as although, a considerable amount of work has been attributed to educating the Australian public about swimming and water safety awareness in a commitment to reducing drowning fatalities, research suggests that rural and isolated schools find it most difficult to conduct aquatic activities (Peden, Franklin & Larsen, 2009, p. 200). Furthermore, the best time to prepare children for safe aquatic participation and provide the skills and knowledge needed to have a lifelong safe association with water is during childhood (Royal Life Saving Society Australia, 2010).

Pathways created included the opportunity for the university students to obtain qualifications in Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) - Swim Australia Teacher (SAT), Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) Bronze Medallion (BM) and RLSSA Resuscitation (RE) courses. By becoming an endorsed service member with Lifesaving Victoria the author was qualified to endorse the BM, RE and Bronze Rescue (BR). The students were required to have current resuscitation accreditation to obtain a Swim Australia Teacher qualification, so this enabled a pathway within a pathway.

The discussion paper released in August 2011 titled ‘A tertiary education plan for Gippsland, Victoria’ (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011) was written specifically for this context using recent national and state level developments including the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review). This paper supported such pathways as it “encourages building on existing partnerships and strengthening articulation arrangements between providers” (p. 4). In the written submissions for the discussion paper specifically focussing within the Gippsland context suggests that “the need for additional training capacity and improved collaboration between providers of tertiary education and industry was identified as a major concern” (DEECD, 2011, p. 10). There are five key outcomes identified by the Gippsland tertiary education plan project, a derivative of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, and it is specifically the third key outcome that supports the swimming and water safety pathway holistic vision:

3.Improved participation in education and training more generally for the community.

As mentioned a large percentage of the Gippsland region comprises of a socio-economically disadvantaged population. The goals established at the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) were “about equity and social justice and improved learning outcomes for our most disadvantaged and isolated students” (Ewing, 2010, p. 127). Goals included:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed citizens

These goals have driven the recent Australian Curriculum reform; supported by socio critical pedagogy in education and underpinned by a socio-cultural perspective. A commitment to action in achieving these goals included: promoting world-class curriculum and assessment; and improving educational outcomes for the disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The next community collaboration involved six rural primary schools during semester one, 2012. Primary ITE university students (pre-service teachers), choosing the Physical Education (PE) major stream, also study the unit EDF3619 ‘Sport and physical activity education’. Through amendments made to this unit objectives involved the implementation of the Friday Sports program which was the second community collaboration in the ‘Best Start’ initiative. This program ran over five weeks and was the first program of this nature to be implemented within the area, where pre-service teachers were teaching HPE lessons to primary school children during tutorial time.

The Friday Sports program was designed to enable Year 5 and 6 children from the six participating schools to choose a sport that they would like to participate in during the one hour sessions over the five weeks. Each sport group consisted of 20-25 students,

were mixed sexes and mixed schools. Monash University provided the equipment, the human resource of five teacher education students per group who had planned the five week units, and collaboratively with the local health industry (local leisure and sports centre) provided the stadium and field facilities, all at no cost to schools. Subsequently, the implementation of this sport unit built relationships between Monash University (Gippsland campus) Faculty of Education and rural primary schools.

Stakeholders in the project 'Best Start: A community collaborative approach to lifelong health and wellness' included:

- the local health industry – Latrobe Leisure Churchill (Latrobe City Council);
- Australian Registered Training Organisations (RTO)
  - Australia Swim Coaches and Teachers' Association (ASCTA)
  - Swim Australia,
  - Lifesaving Victoria (Royal Life Saving Society Australia);
  - Tennis Australia
- local rural primary schools
  - Churchill Primary School
  - Churchill North Primary School
  - Hazelwood North Primary School
  - Lumen Christi Catholic Primary School
  - Thorpdale Primary School
  - Yinnar South Primary School
- Churchill Tennis club

# Best Start

## A community collaborative approach to Lifelong Health and Wellness



### Teachers of tomorrow implementing Health & Physical Education (HPE) lessons for the children of today.



- Six local rural primary schools
  - Churchill Primary School
  - Hazelwood North Primary School
  - Thorpdale Primary School
  - Churchill North Primary School
  - Lumen Christi Catholic Primary School
  - Yinnar South Primary School

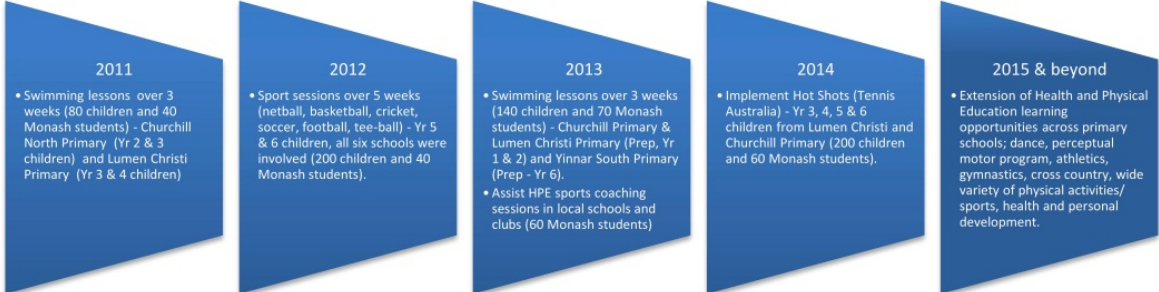


Figure 1 Best Start program (2011-2014)

## Global Influence and Support

The drive to continue providing opportunities to develop children's health, wellbeing and physical education opportunities was the localisation of The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). CRC "is the most recognised international treaty setting out the basic rights of children, along with the obligations of governments to fulfil those rights. It has been accepted and ratified by almost every country in the world." (Garvis & Pendergast, 2014, p. 8). The Convention has 54 articles which have four fundamental principles: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; survival, development and protection; and participation.

'The best interests of the child' refers to "Laws and actions affecting children should put their best interests first and benefit them in the best possible way" (Garvis & Pendergast, 2014, p. 8). The strengths-based collaborations involved HPE curriculum change for schools and university teacher education. Previous teaching experiences would often be reflected upon to maintain realistic expectations in attempt to overcome barriers, to better understand the complexities involved when dealing with many different individuals with at times different priorities, and subsequently to enable sustainability.

'Partnerships' are recommended by the United Nations (UN) for continued efforts towards equality in health and wellbeing. The year 2015 marked the end of the timeline for UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals "helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet" (United Nations, 2015, p. 3). The MDGs included:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global partnership for development

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeed the MDGs and are "are a new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years" (<http://www.theguardian.com/globaldevelopment/2015/jan/19/sustainable-development-goals-united-nations>). While these goals are to be discussed later this year, there are 17 proposed goals. Presently, the following goals are directly representative of health, wellbeing and physical education.

3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

Goal 3 and 4 of the proposed SDGs, along with goal 8 of the MDG in collaboration with the identification of 2015 as the time for global action to end poverty, *promote prosperity and wellbeing for all*, protect the environment and address climate change, espouses the significance of 'health, wellbeing and physical education' and



‘partnerships’. This UN movement provides a focal point for governments, influencing policies and programs at all levels: global, regional, national and local.

It is argued through the ‘futures-oriented’ curriculum perspective that community collaborations/ partnerships are ideal for implementing education curricula and forms guidance for education departments and governments for implementing physical education in schools and sport generally within communities. A partnership shift between universities and schools began in the USA and is occurring globally with recent reforms in Finland, Australia and UK (Department of Education and Early Childhood Education (DEECD), 2012; Douglas, 2014). Furthermore, such shifts have been experienced in (ITE) across all discipline areas.

A ‘strengths-based’ approach “supports a critical view of health education with a focus on the learner embedded within a community’s structural facilitators, assets and constraints, and is enacted through resource-oriented and competence-raising approaches to learning” (Macdonald, 2013, p. 100). Community partnerships such as ‘Best Start – a community collaborative approach to lifelong health and wellness’ are underpinned by the ‘futures oriented’ curriculum perspective. As a result experiential learning is offered where the curriculum is relevant, engaging, contemporary, physically active, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate for all stakeholders; namely university pre-service teachers (Table 1), local primary school children and classroom teachers. This is supported by research which suggests that the optimum time for children to learn and refine their motor skills and to be introduced to positive HPE experiences is as early as possible, preferably during preschool and early primary school years. Furthermore, it has been argued in literature that although Australian education policies strongly advocate HPE and physical activity, requirements do not appear to be consistently enacted. A similar ‘gap’ also exists on an international scale (Hardman, 2008). Curry argues “state governments have standards in place to ensure all children are provided the opportunity to participate in physical education classes, these are rarely met due to the absence of a specialist PE teacher in many public primary schools.” (2012, p. 17).

Table 1 accentuates the positive contribution community collaborations (across units EDF1600, EDF2611 and EDF3619) have made towards teacher preparation.

Units involving community collaborations	EDF 1600 2011 HPE in schools	EDF 1600 2012 HPE in schools	EDF 1600 2013 HPE in schools	EDF 1600 2014 HPE in schools	EDF 2611 2011 Swimming (offered biennially)	EDF 2611 2013 Swimming (offered biennially)	EDF 3619 2012 Sports/ Tennis (offered biennially)	EDF 3619 2014 Sports/ Tennis (offered biennially)
5 – strongly agree 1 – strongly disagree								
Positive contribution to practice	4.79	4.30	4.70	4.67	4.30	4.75	4.72	4.75
Previous rating (no community collaborations)	(2010) 3.92	(2010) 3.92	(2010) 3.92	(2010) 3.92	(2009) 2.33	(2009) 2.33	(2010) 2.67	(2010) 2.67

Table 1 Student Evaluation of Teaching Unit (SETU). This unit made a positive contribution to my experiences during the fieldwork/ practicum.

*\*more than 15 enrolments and 10 or more completed surveys*

International partnerships enabled identification of unique contextual opportunities, support networks and renewed purpose. Program planning, learning and teaching was guided by international research. Data was gathered from a university course in south-west England, a Primary Physical Education course case study was conducted in January 2012 and January 2014. The course was purposefully chosen as it was awarded “Outstanding” by the national regulatory authority, England and Wales Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2010/2011). Also, the major course strength explicitly stated in the review was community connections. A qualitative, interpretive study using a case study methodology was adopted to examine the successful primary education course.

The purpose of this study was to give insights into various dynamics of this award winning program. Careful analysis of data and further reflection suggests that the community connections do offer strong possibilities for course quality improvement, and therefore a strength-based approach in Health and Physical Education is conceivable (Macdonald, 2013). There are at times difficulties in this process (Douglas, 2014), however complexities appear to be minimised when the relationships are developed over a sustained period of time, where trust is built between stakeholders and not forced. Strength of partnerships is increased when the university lecturers are experienced, successful teachers and school leaders with the ability to act as hybrid teacher educators. If higher education is genuine in attempts at course improvement then intake numbers of pre-service teachers needs to be taken into consideration with regards to the quality of pastoral care.

Within this context the course was developmentally appropriate for teaching children PE in the primary school and therefore perceived as very relevant by all stakeholders. It also appeared to supplement and extend the various schools’ PE learning opportunities and not saturate or compete with existing curriculum. Head Teachers had an important role in leading and determining the PE implementation within their school, deciding how this would be enacted and by whom. Finally, funding was made available for this course and was a necessary ingredient for initiating and maintaining partnerships.

The findings did suggest within this context that there were connections between having teacher educators with teaching experience in primary schools and the partnerships established. The teacher educators were also confident and competent with the children aged 5-11 years and felt comfortable working in, with and amongst primary school educators and communities. The various stakeholders perceived themselves as ‘teachers’ working together in the best interest of the children. The findings of this UK research into a successful ITE PE primary education course enabled international findings and insights that offered support to the ‘Best Start’ Gippsland initiative. It was comforting and offered a guiding framework for continued efforts towards course improvement and stronger partnerships.

### **Community Strengths**

Equity and social justice advocated by international policy and literature which has filtered down to Australian curriculum documents, were enacted and satisfied. An apparent pre-service teacher benefit included extended learning opportunities, as lessons provided ‘hands on’ practical, experiential learning and teaching. Lessons also provided local primary school children with quality swimming, sport sessions and

tennis coaching (at no cost), creating learning experiences that they would otherwise not have had and connected them with valuable opportunities through local clubs and facilities. Furthermore, professional development was delivered for classroom teachers, assisting in developing teacher confidence and competence and subsequently promoting sustainability of children's health.

Learning and teaching over the four year 'Best Start' program (2011-2014) obtained outstanding results, as evidenced by Student Evaluations of Teaching Units (SETU) (Table 2 and 3). Quality learning and teaching improved and was achieved due to the community partnerships.

Table 2 EDF2611 Student Evaluation of Teaching Unit  
(more than 15 enrolments and 10 or more completed surveys).

Year EDF2611 offered	Overall Satisfaction with quality (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	The learning resources in this unit supported my studies (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	The feedback I received in this unit was useful (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	This unit made a positive contribution to my experiences during practicum (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	Overall impression of the ASCTA SAT course (5 – excellent, 1 – unsatisfactory)
2009	2	3.1	2.63	2.33	No course
2011 (First year of community collaboration)	4	4	4	4.3	4.7
2013 (Second year of community collaboration)	4.4	4.61	4.22	4.75	4.8
2015 (Best Start program ceased. No community collaboration)	2.6	3.17	2.86	3.63	No course

Table 3 EDF3619 Student Evaluation of Teaching Unit  
(more than 15 enrolments and 10 or more completed surveys).

Year EDF3619 offered	Overall Satisfaction with quality (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	The learning resources in this unit supported my studies (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	The feedback I received in this unit was useful (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)	This unit made a positive contribution to my experiences during practicum (5 – strongly agree, 1 – strongly disagree)
2010	2.5	3.57	3.38	2.67
2012 (First year of community collaboration)	4.56	4.67	4.56	4.72
2014 (Second year of community collaboration – 'tennis hotshots')	4.40	4.25	4.25	4.75

Another indicator of teaching and learning quality was the growth of the units. At Monash University (Gippsland) on average 55 of the 80 (69.0%) first year intake Bachelor of Primary Education students chose to study the HPE major stream during the Best Start initiative. These numbers continued throughout second and third year where they increased as much as 62% in biennial units, from 39 (2011) to 63 (2013) for swimming and remained consistent in 2014 (Table 4). Furthermore, this has been achieved with no to very limited funding and without any increase to the overall cohort enrolment intake.

Table 4 Increase in student numbers to be involved in the community collaborations.

\*Cohort enrolment intake remained constant.

<b>EDF2611</b>		<b>EDF3619</b>	
<b>Experiencing aquatic environments 'Swimming'- Enrolment numbers</b>		<b>Sport and Physical Activity Education - Enrolment numbers</b>	
<b>2011(semester 1)</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> year of partnerships)	39	<b>2012 (semester 1)</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> year of partnerships)	42
<b>2013 (semester 1)</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> year of partnerships)	63 (62% increase)	<b>2014 (semester 1)</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> year of partnerships)	58 (38% increase)

Parents came to support their children and comments from teachers, teaching assistants, parents and the children expressed their gratitude for the lessons provided. One teacher wrote; "My kids had a ball with the swimming. Like I said to you then, any time you need children feel free to approach us. We are very willing to assist." (personal communication, July 23, 2011). Another teacher stated that many parents "commented that it was good that the children were able to access the lessons and that they were free" (personal communication, June 13, 2013). The Yinnar South Primary school principal contacted the local newspaper to share the program with the wider community and was quoted in the article; "For our (students) to get one-on-one water experience is great; the parents have given really positive feedback and it's been thoroughly enjoyed by everybody" (Symons, 2013).

The Churchill Primary School Prep-Grade 2 team leader summarised the benefits of the program and gratitude within this context:

It was a fantastic opportunity for our students as many have never had formal (swimming) lessons before. The low socio-economic situation of many families in this area means that many students are not able to have the opportunity of learning about water safety with instructors. While Churchill Primary School does offer a swimming lesson program we often find that those most in need of lessons find the price too high. By offering free lessons through the University program we had 100% attendance from Prep/One/Two, which is amazing!

The children were very excited about going to the swimming lessons and were looking forward to going each time. They enjoyed getting to know their instructors and it was good to see the university students grow in their confidence of dealing with junior primary school children. Relationships between the instructors and students were just beginning to develop, so it was a shame there weren't more lessons.

We have also received many positive comments from parents about this wonderful opportunity. Many were amazed that the lessons would be offered free of charge. One family has three children in the Prep/One/Two area and normally sending all three to swimming lessons is too expensive. However, this time because they were free, all three children were able to go. Their Mum was so happy she didn't have to exclude any of her children from the lessons. (personal communication, June 13, 2013).

Tennis 'hot shots' was chosen by the author to be the focus for the 'Friday Sport Program' in the biennial unit EDF3619 Sport & Physical Activity Education (semester one 2014). Tennis Australia supplied 18 'hot shots' tennis courts, 100 racquets and 200 modified tennis balls. The 60 pre-service teachers provided four weeks of tennis 'hot shots' lessons to children from Lumen Christi (Year 3, 4, 5 & 6) and Churchill Primary (Year 5 & 6).

The overall ITE student satisfaction with the quality of the unit (Student Evaluation of Teaching Unit - SETU) received a median of 4.4 out of 5, more so, the 'positive contribution to experiences during practicum' received a median of 4.75 out of a maximum 5. University pre-service teachers shared that the best aspects of the unit was "Being able to teach children and the feeling of satisfaction when the children learn from what you taught them and when they enjoy the sport" (SETU, 2014, Q11). Another commented "I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to plan and implement lessons with the local schools. It was challenging and engaging" (SETU, 2014, Q11).

The children commented to their teachers and posted letters of thanks to the university. One boy wrote "I learnt how to backhand and it was a great program, even though I missed out on one", (personal communication, June 19, 2014). Another girl expressed her enjoyment; "I would like to say it was an awesome four weeks with our coaches and I got to learn a lot about tennis. I had a great time." (personal communication, June 19, 2014). Teachers also offered very positive feedback to the tennis program; "The program gave both students (children) and pre-service teachers a chance to develop new skills. The students (children) were always engaged and they looked forward to going." (personal communication, June 23, 2014).

### **Concluding remarks**

There were many obstacles that had to be overcome or evaded to enact what appeared on the surface to be a simple and common sense approach to optimising the health, wellbeing and physical education of community members. Diverse teaching experiences in various roles were drawn upon by the author when establishing community collaborations, these experiences along with the reassurance and support provided by the international 'outstanding' UK ITE program research, assisted and

provided the strength and drive for continuing partnerships. The intention of the program was 'in the best interest of the children' which provided motivation.

Another problem for the community collaborations was funding. It was surprising at the time that there was no funding available for either unit in Gippsland or equipment for the development of such a well-received program despite numerous applications for internal and external funding. The Health and Physical Education community collaborative lessons were espoused by the DEECD School Centre for Teaching Excellence initiative, yet this did not prosper any financial assistance. Unbeknown to all stakeholders there were plans made by Monash University and governments that offered an explanation for the lack of funds and which eventually led to the demise of the 'Best Start' program. In May 2013 Monash University announced that it was to transfer its Gippsland campus to be part of a new Federation University Australia (formally Ballarat University). This was described as a merger and occurred on 1 January 2014. Monash ceased making offers to new students, and made arrangements with Federation University for teaching its continuing students.

While the end of the 'Best Start' program was disappointing for the various stakeholders and Gippsland local community it enabled time to reflect on health and physical education: local and global communities of practice. The journey involved local and global community partnerships and models how an idea can grow into multi-dimensional strengths-based community collaborations. This paper aspires to both empower and challenge communities in optimising health and wellbeing and provides an example of how the UN ideals are transformed into local schools and communities.

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