



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# Australian Sport Outreach Program (ASOP)

## Pacific Country Programs

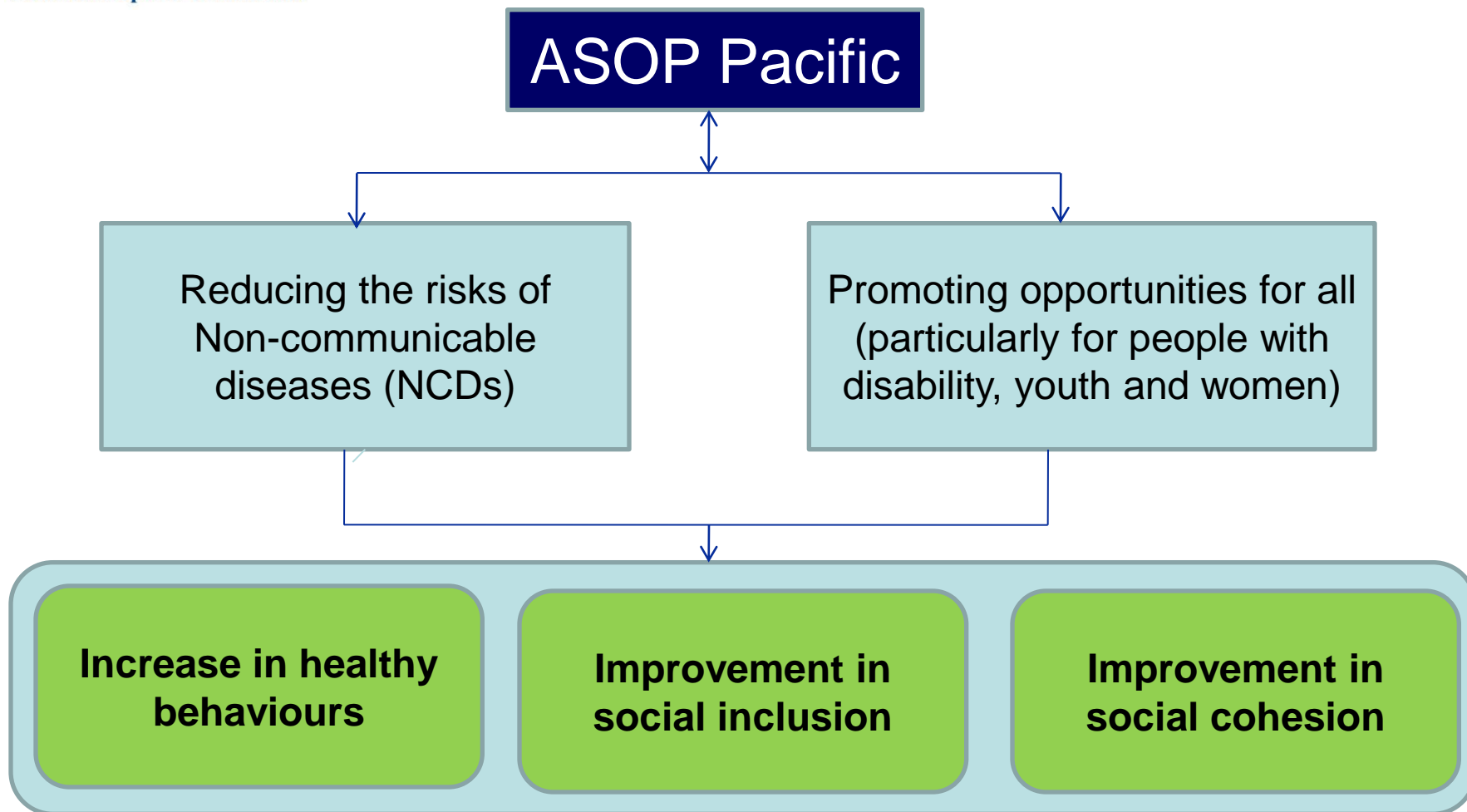
### Research findings



[www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)



# Purpose of the Pacific Country Programs







Nauru



Kiribati



Solomon Islands



Samoa



Vanuatu



Fiji



Tonga

AS  
Co

fic

# The research



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Research Purpose

To contribute to the **evidence base**  
for the **case for sport in a**  
**development context** through  
research.

- Many claims about the power of sport to contribute to social outcomes but a lack of sound evidence
- Policy-makers lack information to make decisions
- Aim to address empirical vacuum and provide information for policy-makers to make evidence-based decisions about future investments



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Research questions

## **Saving lives**

How, and to what extent, have the ASOP Pacific Country Programs contributed to a growth in *sustained healthy behaviours*?

## **Opportunities for all**

How, and to what extent, have the ASOP Pacific Country Programs contributed to *improving social inclusion*?

## **Effective Governance**

How, and to what extent, have the ASOP Pacific Country Programs contributed to *improving social cohesion*?



# Research approach

## **Mixed-method approach**

- quantitative and qualitative activities

## **Conducted in three different ethnic and geographical contexts**

- Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia
- across all three program objectives

## **Transferability of research**

- allows for generalisations to be made about other ASOP programs in similar contexts



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Research approach

<b>How, and to what extent, has ASOP contributed to:</b>	<b>Nauru</b>	<b>Vanuatu</b>	<b>Tonga</b>
<b>A growth in sustained healthy behaviours?</b>	Qualitative and Quantitative	Qualitative and Quantitative	Qualitative and Quantitative
<b>Improving social cohesion?</b>	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
<b>Improving social inclusion?</b>	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative



# Research Findings



# Sustained healthy behaviours

## Pacific context

### NCDs are:

- leading causes of death and disability
- responsible for 75% of all deaths
- a major and growing burden on local health systems
- a major threat to the development potential of the region
- Physical inactivity is the fourth-leading risk factor for global mortality

**We need development approaches that are proven to work to address this crisis**



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Statistics



## Nauru

- 82% are overweight or obese
- 16% have diabetes
- 79% have raised risk of NCDs
- 38% describe their health as poor



## Tonga

- 92% are overweight or obese (94% females)
- 61% have raised risk of NCDs



## Vanuatu

- 51% are overweight or obese (56% females)
- 47% of men smoke
- 29% are hypertensive



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# What we are looking for?

## Increased knowledge and awareness

- Understanding of the links between inactivity and NCDs

## Attitudinal change

- Increased self-efficacy to participate in physical activity
- Increased risk perceptions of physical inactivity
- Increased behavioural intentions to engage in healthy behaviour

## Behaviour change

- Increased participation in physical activity
- Improved diets
- Decreased consumption of alcohol and tobacco



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# Research Approach

## Quantitative research

Nationally representative  
surveys

***Tonga:*** face to face street  
intercept survey of **1,192**  
women aged 15-45 years

***Nauru:*** household-based  
door-to-door survey of **525**  
men and women aged 15-  
59 years



## Qualitative research

***Tonga, Nauru, & Vanuatu:***

Semi-structured interviews with  
program stakeholders and  
program participants



**Increased knowledge  
and awareness**

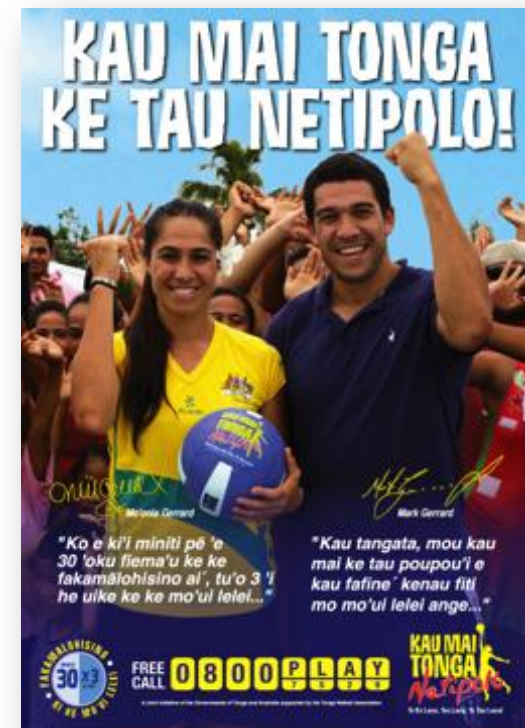


Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

## Tonga

- Integrated mass media campaign aimed at getting more Tongan women physically active
- 90% of women (15 – 45) recalled the campaign
- 70% recall of “C’mon Tonga, let’s play netball”
- 52% recall of “Just 30 minutes of simple exercises 3 times a week will help you stay fit and healthy”
- Those who participated in physical activity for 3 or more days significantly more likely to be aware of the campaign



**Key finding:** The campaign reached its target audience and had a positive impact on physical activity levels

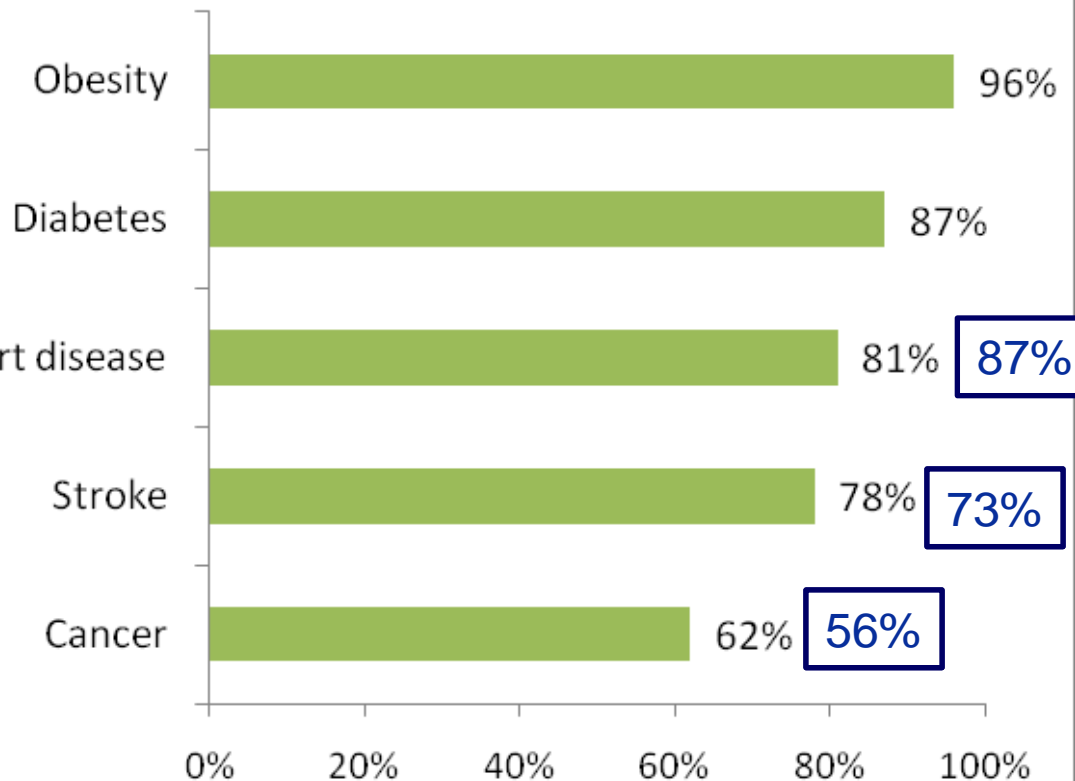


# Tonga

## Link between medical conditions and a lack of physical activity

Those who are more aware are more likely to participate in physical activity

Those who did not participate in physical activity were less likely to know of the risks

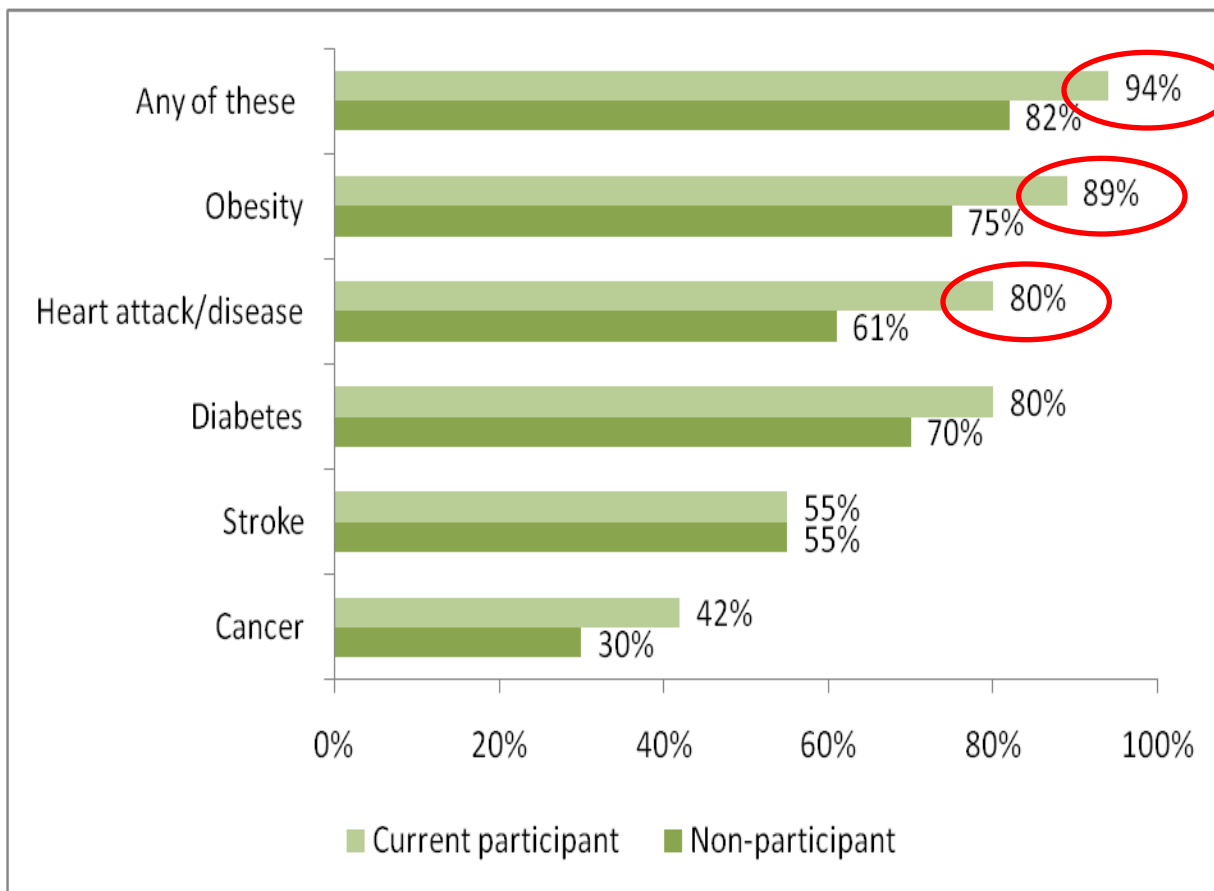


Tongan women aged 15-45 years



# Nauru

## Link between medical conditions and a lack of physical activity



**Attitudinal change**





# Tonga

Strong positive attitudes towards involvement in recreational physical activity

Rational



Emotional



Physical activity is something they should do rather than something they like to do



# Tonga



- 80% of women perceive that people important to them would approve of their participation in physical activity
- 80% held strong perception of their ability to participate in physical activity
- 90% of Tongan women want to exercise regularly
- Significant shift from the dominant expectation that married women should stay at home and complete chores and care for their children and families
- Indicates that the campaign message of “*Men should support their women*” may have been successful in changing attitudes of gate keepers



# Tonga

- Quantitative data supported by qualitative evidence

*“Some of the women in our village were anti-social, we hardly saw them. Joining KMT, most of the time, these women were the first to come to the netball court for training. They come before the kids even blow the whistle and I know that their husbands are the one’s encouraging them.”*

*“People in our village support us in different ways:...volunteer to provide coffee;... transport us during tournaments; ... prepare food for the team.”*

*“Our community is very supportive of our team and we get most support from our Town Officer and District Officer – they take the lead in supporting sports in our district and our communities too.”*

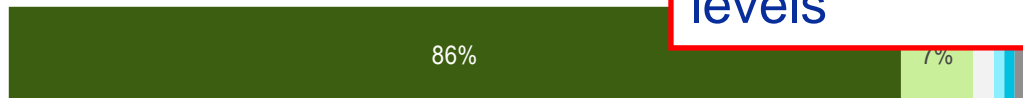


# Tonga

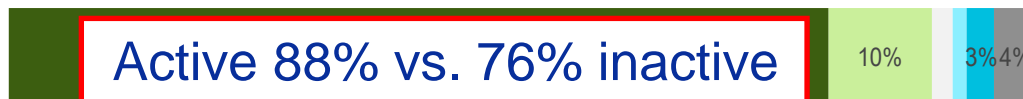
## Risk perception

Raised risk perception has had a positive impact on physical activity levels

The announcements made me  
FEEL CONCERNED about the effects  
of my physical inactivity on my health



The announcements provided  
NEW INFORMATION for me



The announcements made me  
STOP and THINK

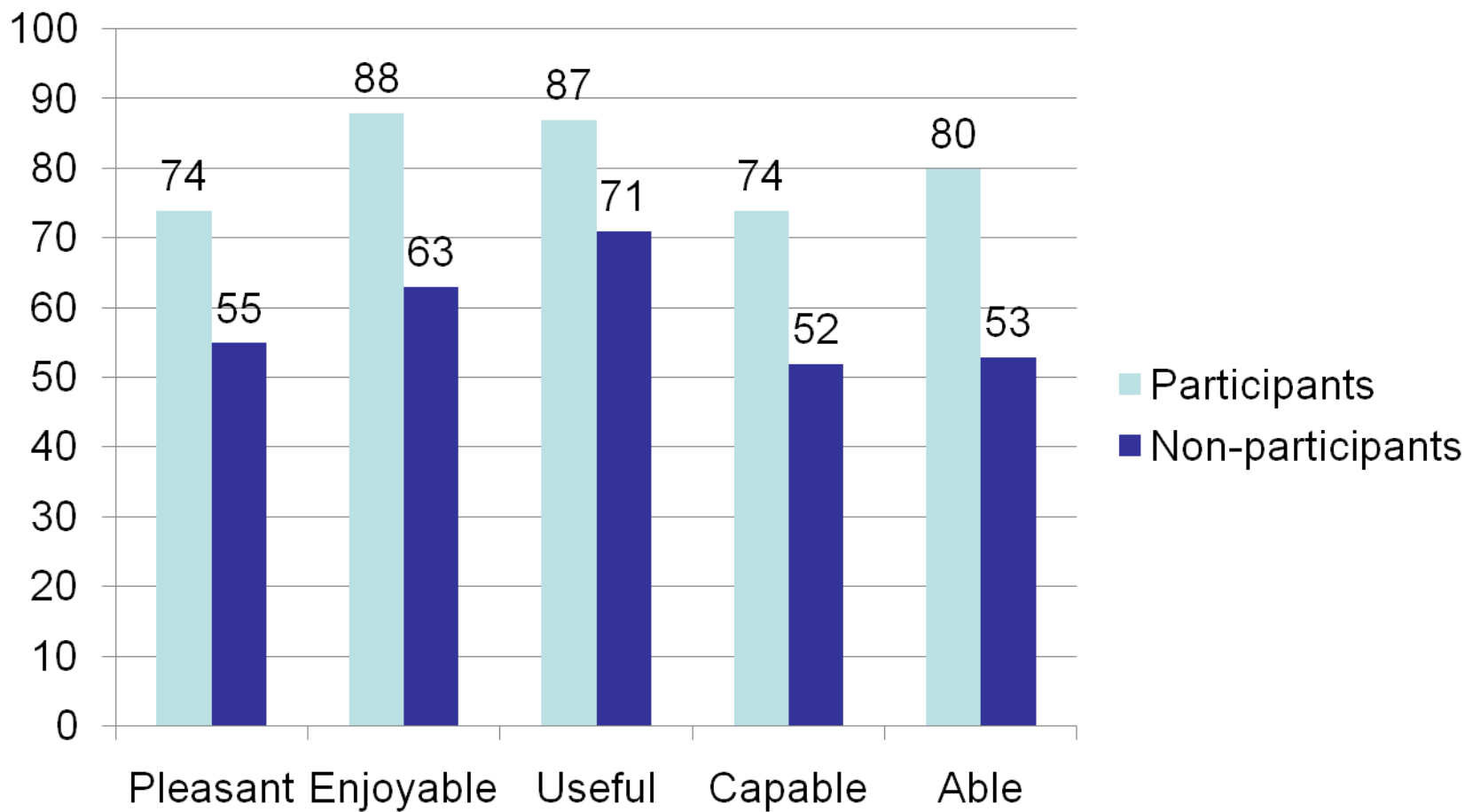


0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Strongly agree Somewhat Agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



# Nauru





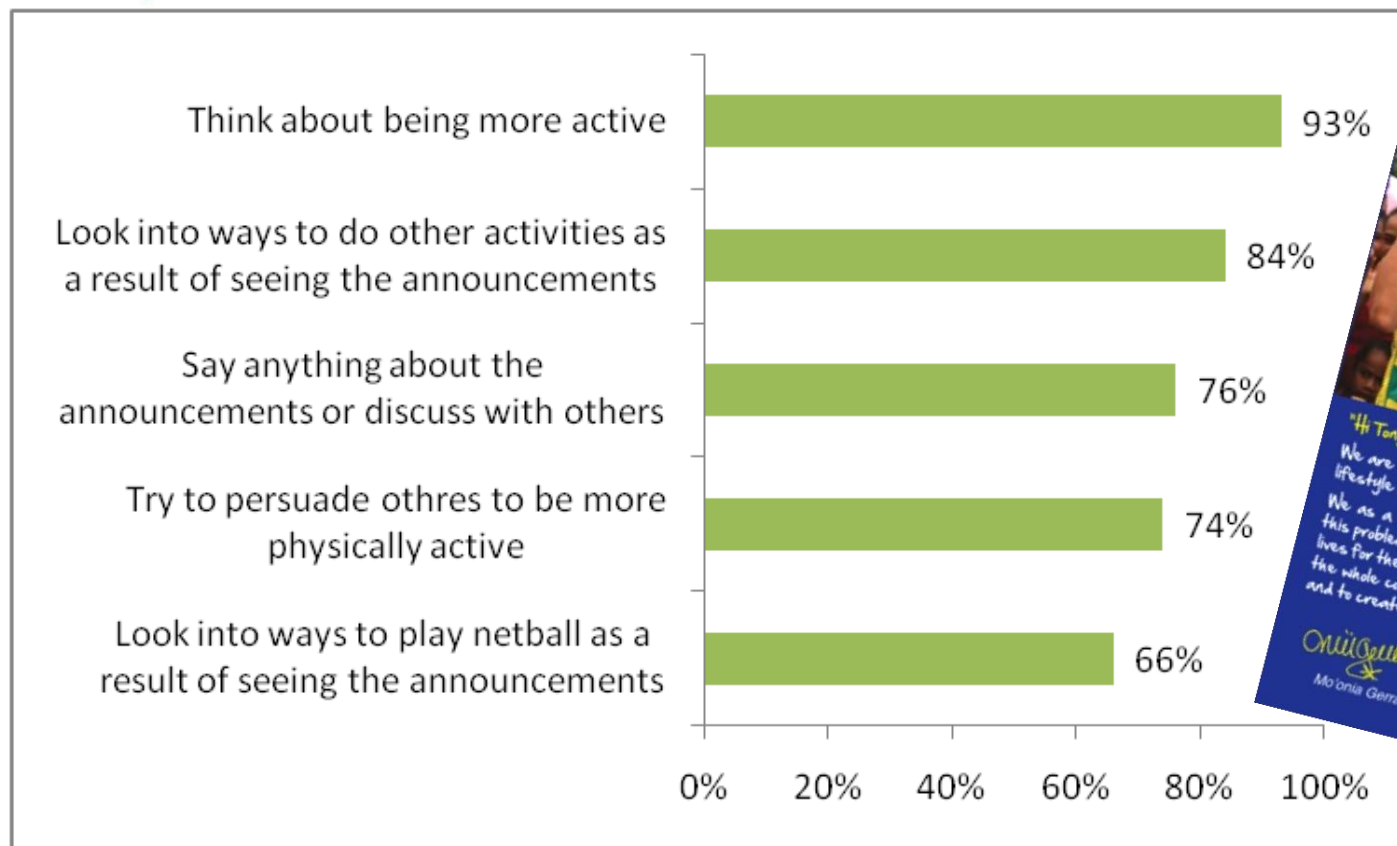
# Behavioural intention



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Tonga



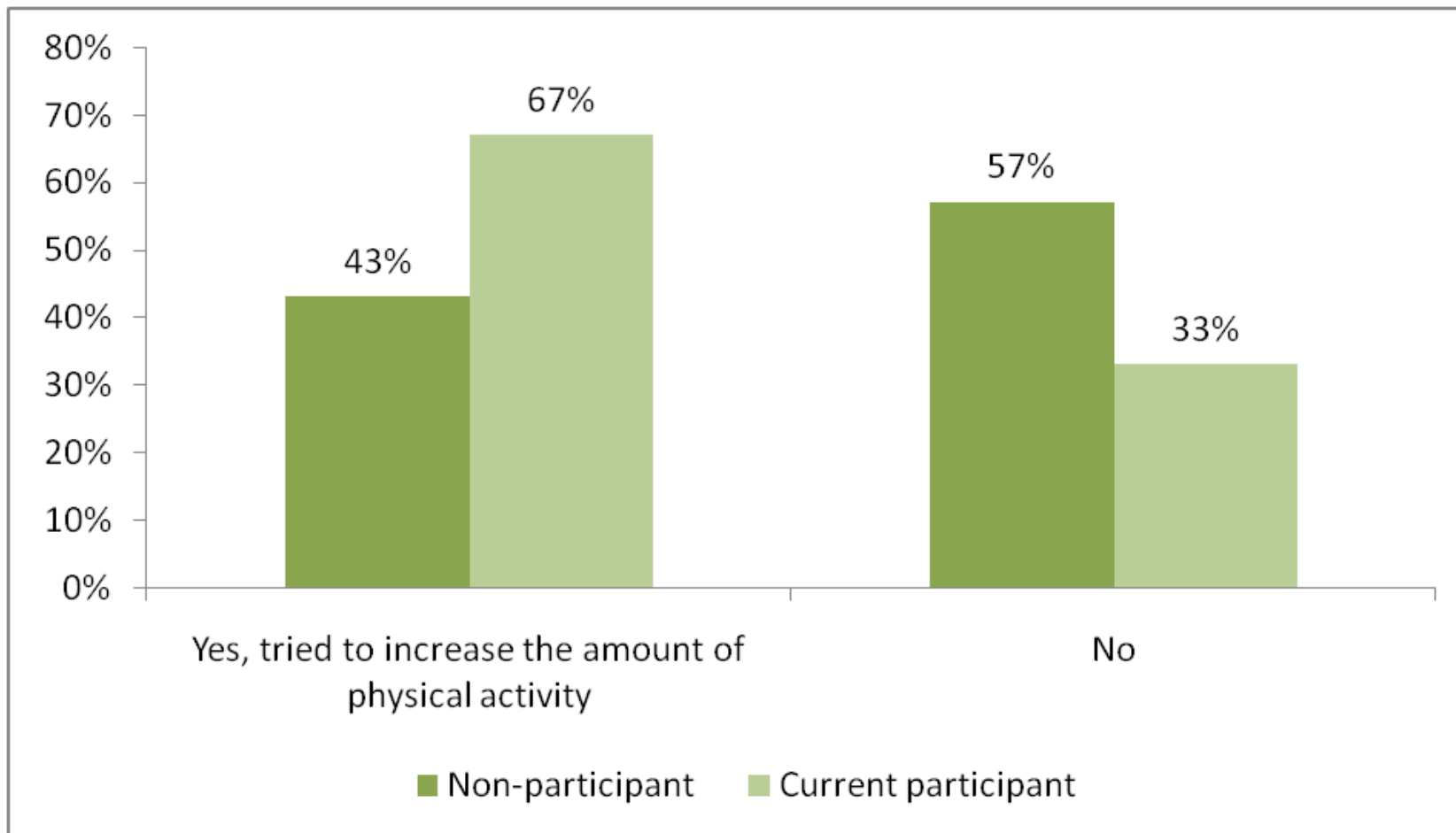
FREE  
CALL

0 8 0 0 P L A Y  
7 5 2 9

21% called info line (240 women)  
98% found it useful



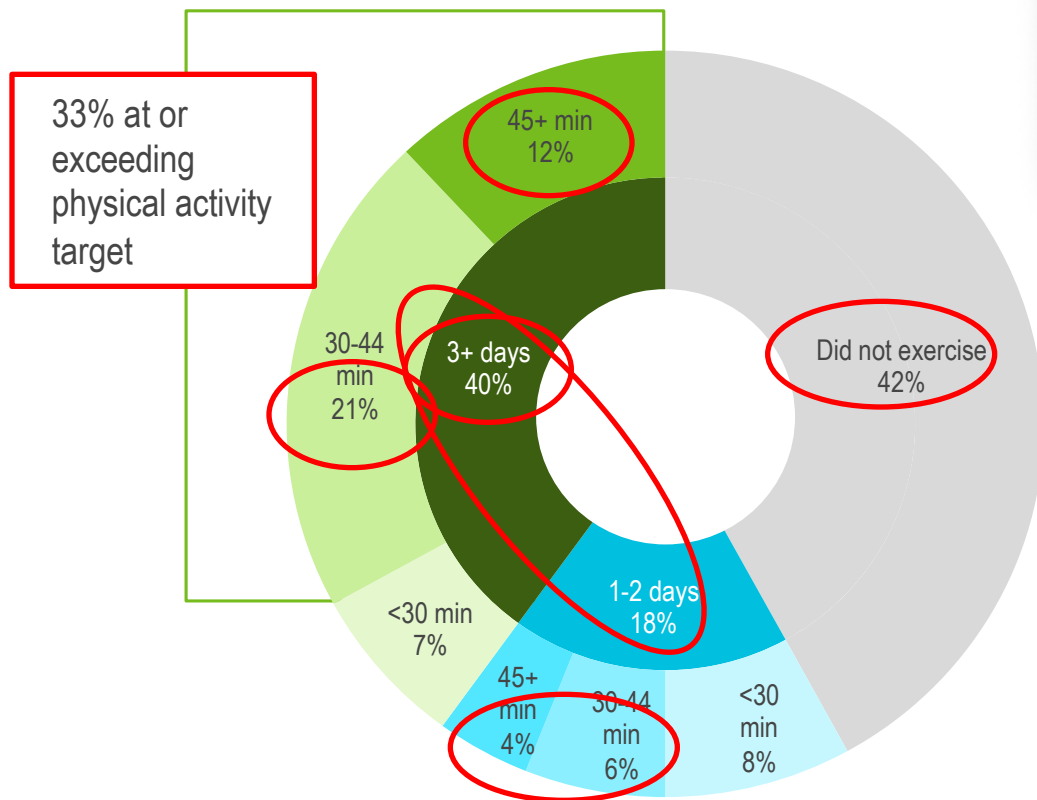
# Nauru



**Behavioural change**



# Tonga



## STEPS 2004

- 55% of women have low total physical activity (which includes work, transport and recreation)
- 92% of women engage in no vigorous physical activity at all
- Women participated an average of only 6.3 minutes of recreational physical activity per day







Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Netball activity in Tonga

- 33% of physically active women participated in netball (20% of all women aged 15-45)
- 85% spent more than 30 mins training and playing netball (vigorous)
- 29% are doing more physical activity than 4 months previously (coinciding with the campaign)
- However, 41% doing less physical activity (12% apparent net reduction)
- Unexpected finding as other sources of data (qualitative research, monitoring data) indicate there was a marked increase in netball
- Discrepancies likely due to timing of research and seasonality of netball



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Nauru - physical activity

- 19% are participants in Ep'on Keramen (23% males and 14% females)

## Retention rate:

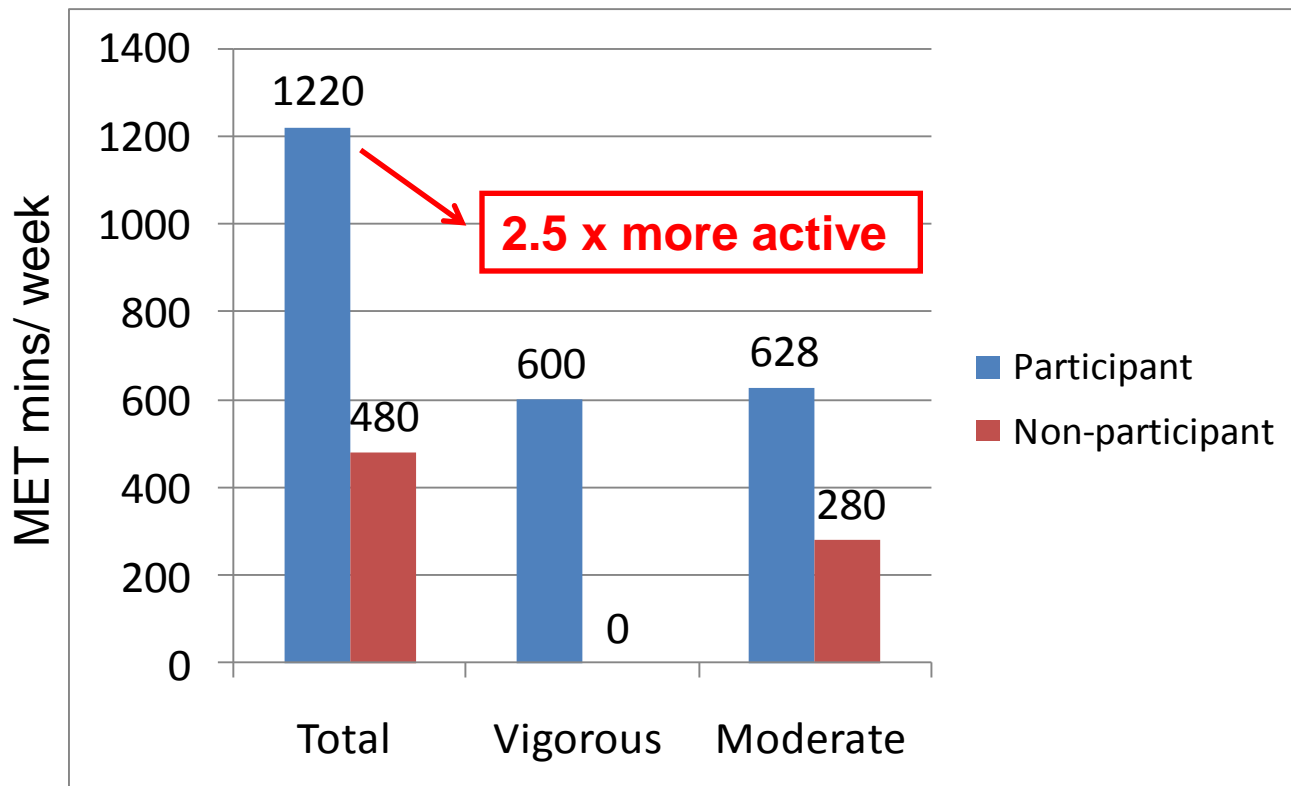
- 61% who ever participated in an EK activities continue to participate in the program
- Retention rate highest for males 20-34 (69%)
- Lowest for females 35 years+ (70%)

*"My community has moved forward. It was changed to an active community... Never have I seen Nauru as active since EK's inception"*

*"Now when you go around the island, you see all these different activities. Before EK, you would not see many people outdoors."*



# Nauru



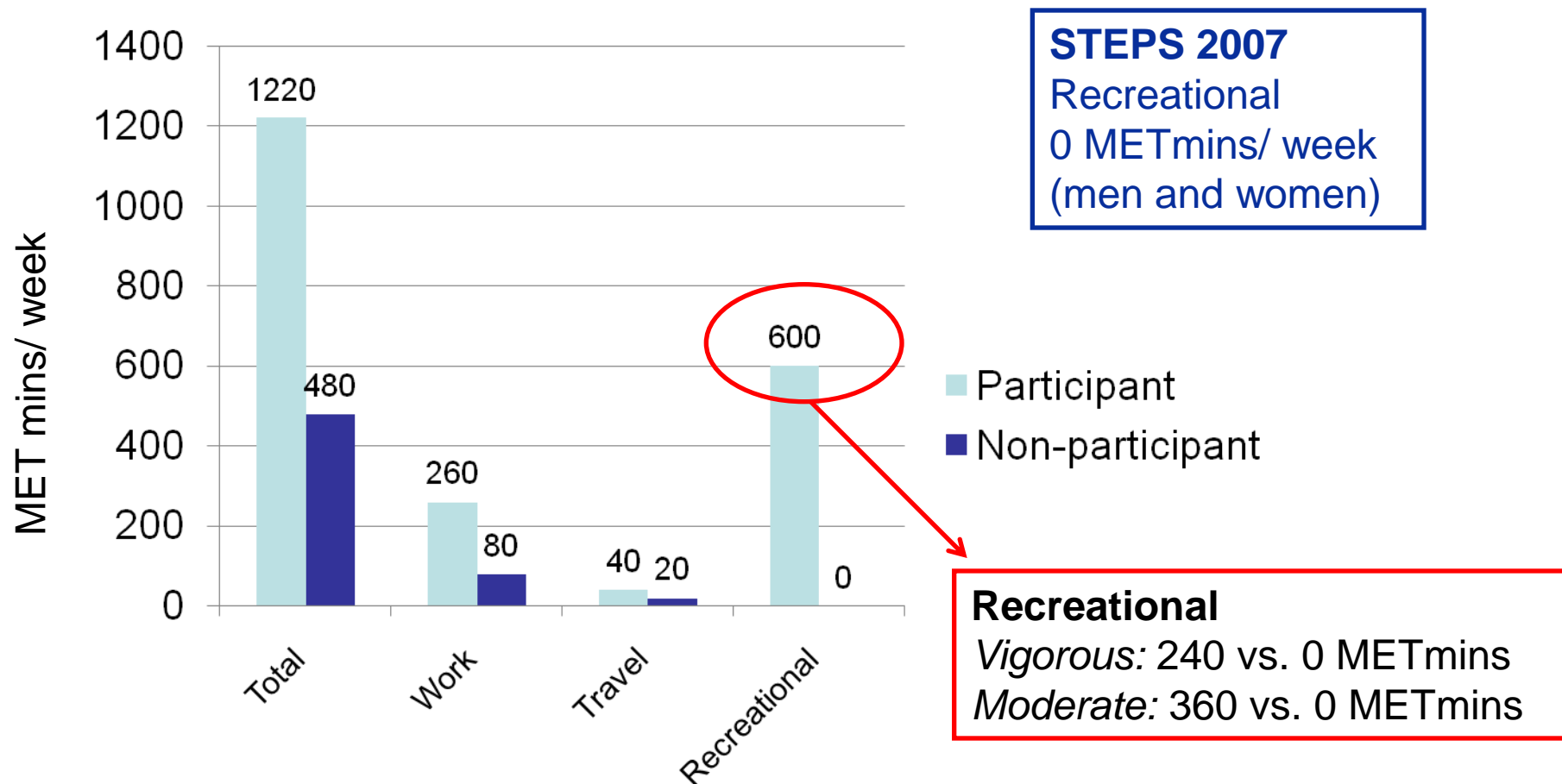
## STEPS 2007

- 16.5% of Nauruans are physically inactive
- Both men and women reported 0 METmins/week in vigorous physical activity

MET (Metabolic Equivalent) is the ratio of the activity metabolic rate to the resting metabolic rate  
Moderate activities (cycling/walking for transport) are considered to be 4 METs  
Vigorous activities are considered to be 8 METs



# Nauru





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Nauru - improved diets

- 29% report that they have increased the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat
- 79% indicate that they know about which foods are healthy/unhealthy (71% non-participants)
- 82% say they have the ability to choose healthy food (73% non-participants)

*“(EK program) allows us to do exercise. Without EK, we would have been sitting around, just eating food”*





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Nauru - improved diets

- Only 51% say they have a healthy diet despite 82% saying that they have access to choose healthy foods
- No significant difference in actual fruit and vegetable intake (0.62 for current participants vs. 0.64 for non-participants)
- Qualitative research indicates a reduction in the consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks, especially sugar-sweetened drinks.
- However, consumption of soft drinks and 'cold coffee' was actually highest among participants (1.4 vs. 1.1 mean units of soft drink and 3.4 vs. 2.3 cold coffee)
- Indicates a gap between knowledge and action and the need for more education on what constitutes a healthy diet



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Tonga – improved diets

*Joining KMT has been a life changing program; my weight before joining netball was over 160kg and has dropped now to 111kg only. I know the benefit of involving in KMT, I have reduced consumption and focus on physical activity and drinking water now that I'm more active and healthy."*

- Older women (30 years and over) also noted that the opportunities to be physically active gave them more energy to complete their daily household tasks
- Important finding in a country where women play important roles in households

*"I was overweight and now I lose a lot of weight because of being involved in the KMT program (ASOP Tonga). I still need to lose more weight...It has changed the way I think about my health a lot – although it's not easy, I now know I have to give up on a lot of food I used to like before because I was fat and obese"*



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Nauru – reduced smoking

- 40% of surveyed currently smoke
- 97% of those smoke daily (16-17 cigarettes/day)
- Lower smoking rate among participants (37%)
- Significantly lower than STEPS (53%)
- 38% stating they had decreased the amount of tobacco they smoked since participating in EK

*“The boredom is what we don’t want because when they are bored, that’s when they go back into their anti-social activities... like a lot of drinking ‘cos out of boredom, smoking, we have a high rate of young smokers in the island.”*





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Vanuatu – reduced smoking

- Nabanga has contributed to a rise in awareness of the negative effects of tobacco consumption amongst younger males
- Interviewees spoke of reducing smoking during the football season or quitting all together
- A main reason for reducing or quitting smoking was to be fitter so they could play football at a more intense level
- Issues such as cancer or other conditions were not mentioned!



“Smoking is banned during Nabanga activities and this ban is enforced by Chiefs and others during games”.



# Nauru - drinking



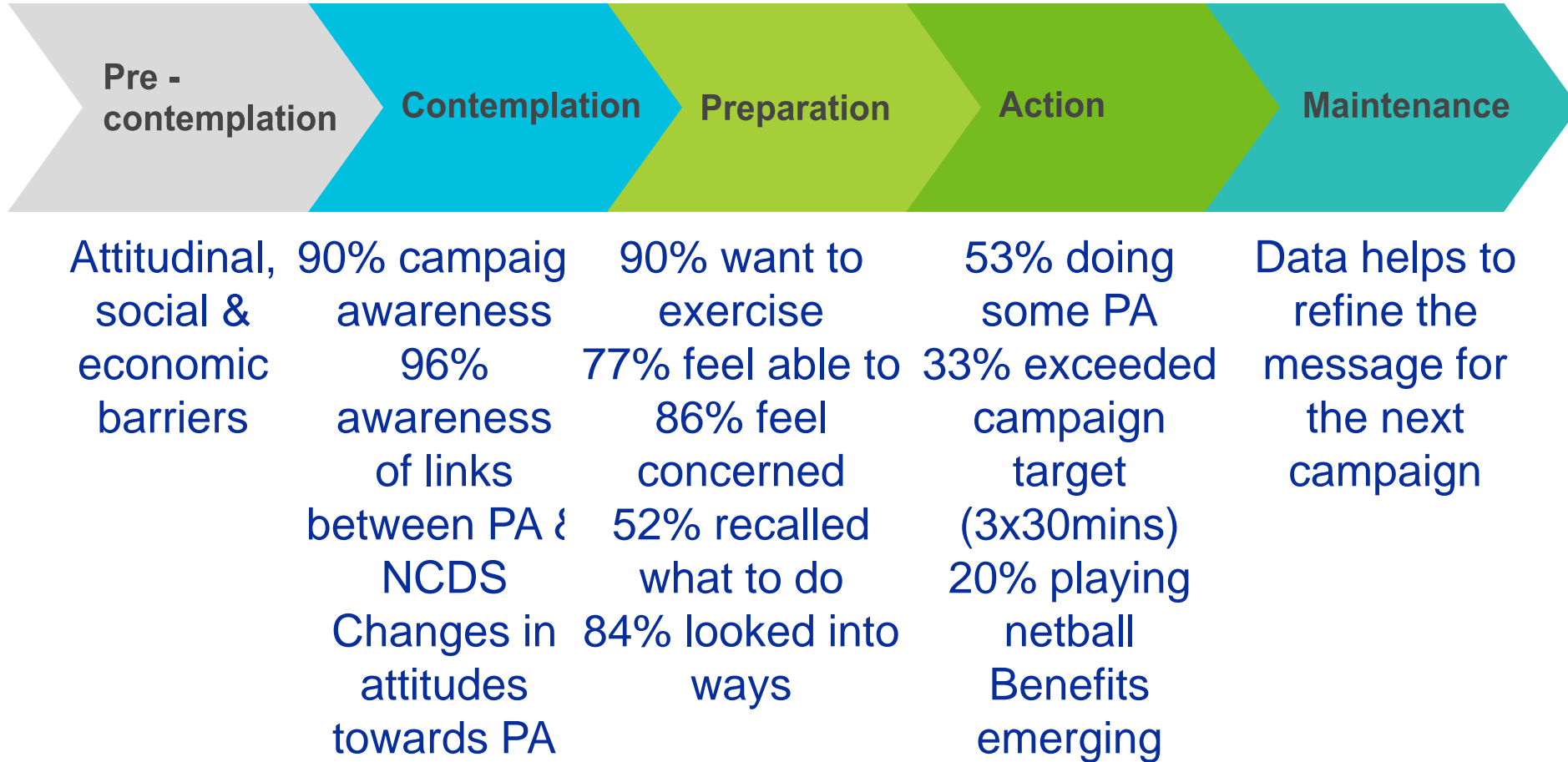
- 48% stated that they had decreased the amount of alcohol they drink since participating in EK
- However, actual alcohol consumption largely similar between participants and non-participants
- More non-participants said they could not have fun with friends without drinking (19% compared to 9%)

*“EK activities are a time to leave behind the waste-of-time things”*

*“Youth no longer had time to go out drinking.”*



# Prochaska's model of behaviour change



**Improved social  
inclusion**



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Context in Pacific

## Disability

- People with disability are among the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries
- Est. 17% of people in the Pacific have some form of disability
- Disability and impairment is expected to rise with NCD crisis
- A lack of physical accessibility and social attitudes towards disability mean that people with disability are often left out of community life.

## Gender equality

- Women in the Pacific are severely underrepresented in leadership and decision-making
- Less than 5% of women in parliament (18.4% world average)
- Pacific women are significantly more at risk of acquiring NCDs than men



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Vanuatu - Disability

## Benefits for participants (mostly children)

- Increase in confidence and self-efficacy
- Desire to play more sport
- Expanded their social networks, helping to build confidence
- Playing sport with able-bodied children allowed them to make more friends

## Benefits for parents/carers

- Increase in awareness of their child's capability
- Greater engagement with their child
- Feel more supported by their community in care of their child

## Changes within the community

- Community activities are being modified to encourage greater participation of children with disability
- Attitudes in the village have changed for the better



*"It's about merging social inclusion. It's about bringing people together and also giving out the information people need to know and bring people together and get people to enjoy sports."*



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Improved gender equality

- Providing women and girls with unique opportunities to develop their leadership skills

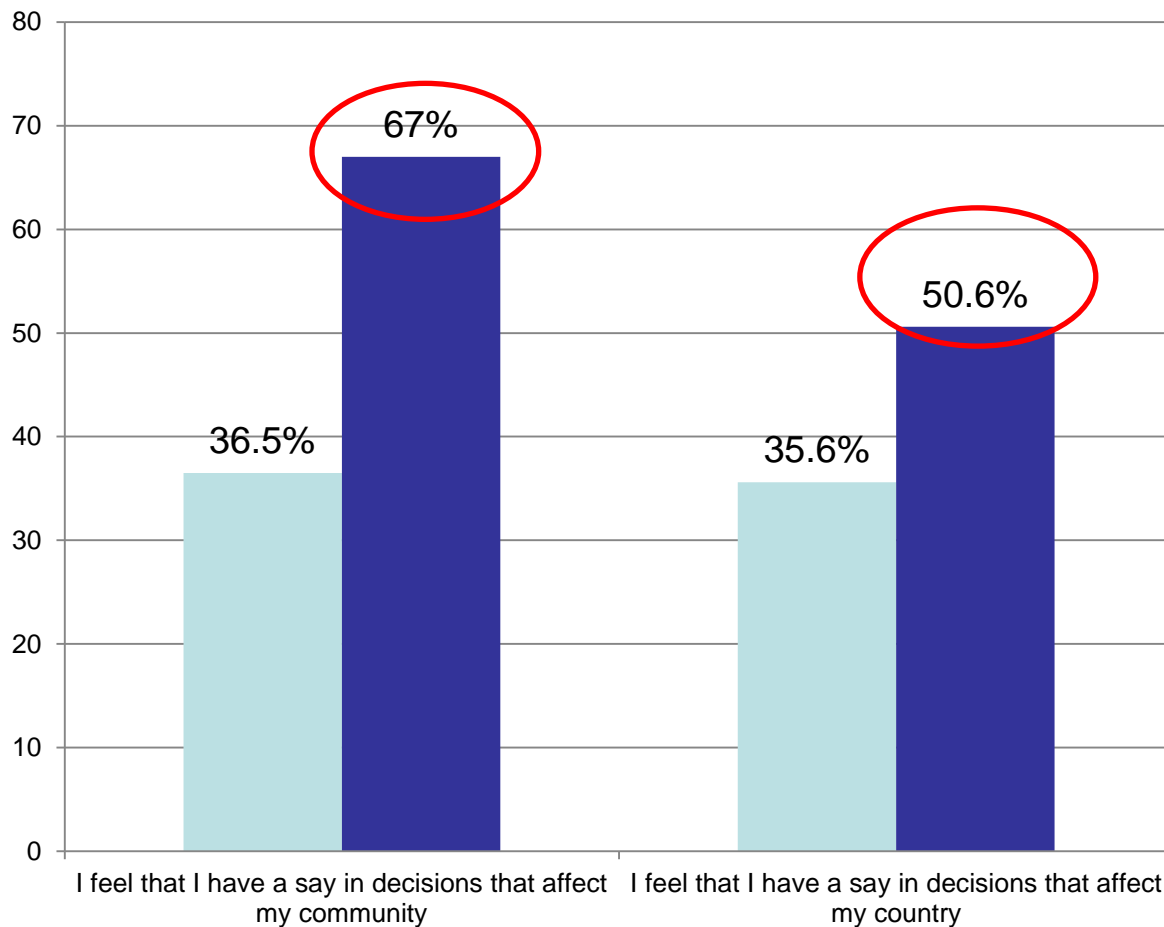
*“I have more friends now; I didn’t know that I have leadership ability, now if you see, there’s always young people in my house; since we joined KMT early this year, I was enthused in getting people in and I earned the respect of the young people and their parents trust me” - Tonga*

- Empowering women and girls to be more involved in decision-making.

*“Now I have more friends because of KMT. I am able to organise things easily without being scared” - Tonga*



# Female decision-making: Nauru



*"Through EK, I have a voice. My voice is heard"*  
Female participant from Nauru

■ Female Non-participants  
■ Female Participants





# Number of National Women MPs in Pacific Parliaments

Country	No of MPs	No of women	%
Cook Islands	24	3	12.5%
Federated States of Micronesia	14	0	0.0%
Fiji	103	13	12.6%
Kiribati	46	4	8.7%
Marshall Is	33	1	3.0%
Nauru	18	0	0.0%
Niue	20	3	6.7%
Palau	16	0	0.0%
PNG	111	3	2.7%
Samoa	49	2	4.1%
Solomon Is	50	1	2.0%
Tonga	28	1	3.6%
Tuvalu	15	1	6.7%
Vanuatu	52	0	0.0%

**Global  
average:  
18.4%**



# Equal access to health

- Advancing equal access to preventative health services
- Empowering women to make decisions about their own health

*"I'm healthier now. There's a small change in my body size and I can feel a big improvements in my life."*

*"Women in our Golden team have improved and change the mindset towards their involvement in sports – they don't care if they are married, fat, how many kids they have, they fully participate in netball because they want to be active and healthy."*



**Improved social  
cohesion**



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Pacific context

- Growing youth bulge (20% of population)
- Link between high youth populations and increased probability of conflict
- Lack of employment opportunities and economic hardship leading to growing rates of youth disaffection and powerlessness
- Involvement of a minority but increasing number of urban youth in crime and violence seen as a potential security risk
- Coupled with existing and potential conflicts over land
- Could lead to adverse impacts on political stability and development achievement in the region





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Vanuatu – social cohesion

- Nabanga has fostered social cohesion on an island suffering from a chronic legal and cultural dispute
- Dispute between 2 villages over the traditional owners of the lagoon:
  - restricted movement around the island
  - limited social interaction between groups
  - open confrontation and violence between younger males
- Bringing people together regularly through sport has transformed social relations on the island – *unintended outcome*
- Sport competitions have become important neutral sites, creating a true sense of community unity – support from Chiefs/ religious leaders





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Nauru – social cohesion

- EK has built a model for community-driven sporting interaction
- The program has helped overcome the history of sport-related violence on the island (AFL ban from 2006-2009)
- Provided opportunities for different communities to play together in a fun manner
- Emphasis on fair play and positive sportsmanship

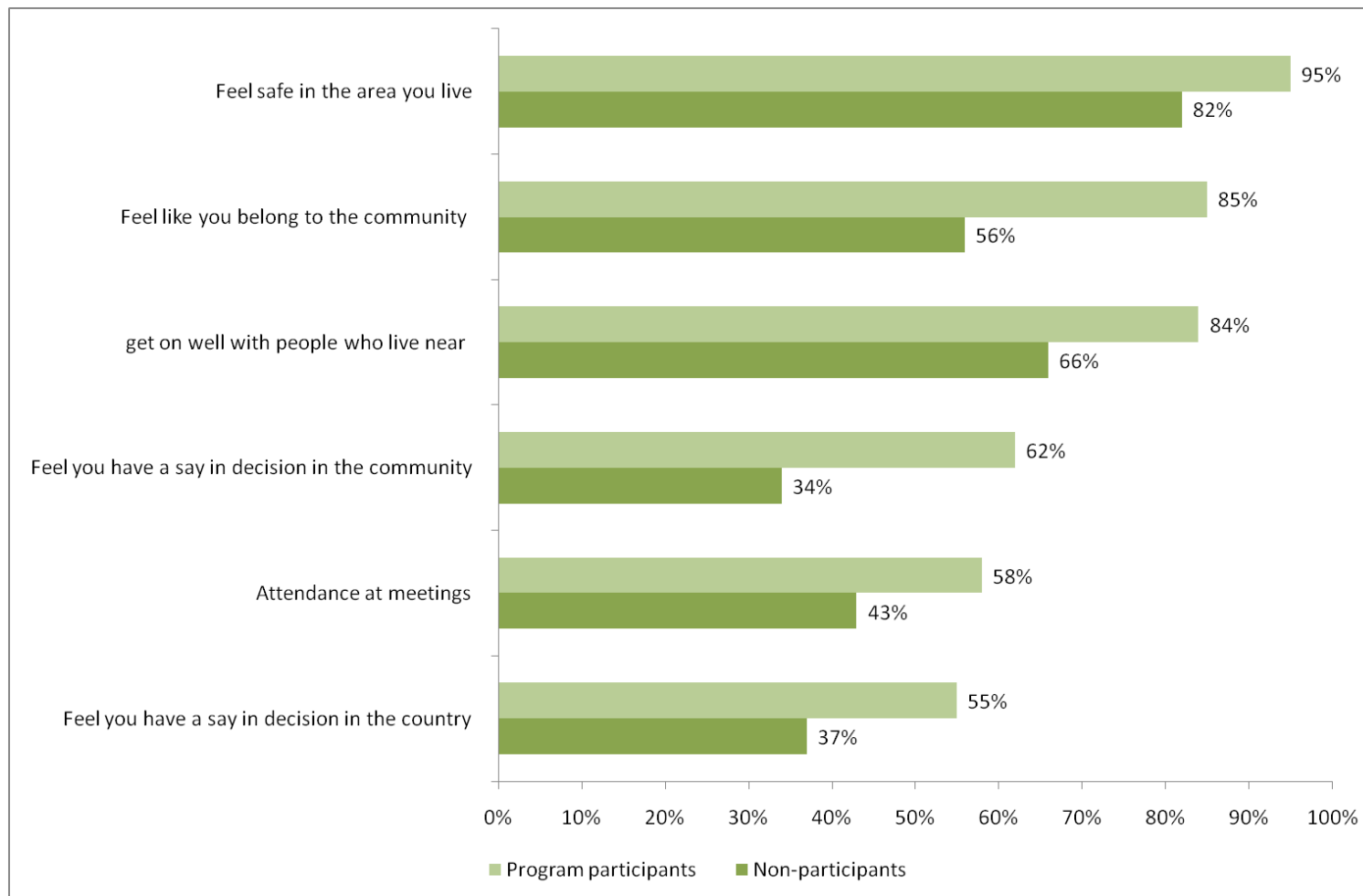
*“EK helps build up communities, and as volunteers we help them build (communities) up”*

*“People get awards for sportsmanship. We make it a big thing. And people are disqualified if they don’t show good sportsmanship”*

*“We are encouraged to show respect for others, especially fairness and accepting others the way they are.”*



# Nauru – social cohesion



# Conclusions





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Conclusions

## The ASOP Country Programs by:

- making people more aware of the risks of physical inactivity
- providing opportunities for people to be more active more often
- having a positive impact on other health-related behaviours, such as improved diets and reduced smoking and drinking

*Contributing to reducing some of the major risk factors of NCDs*



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Conclusions

## The ASOP Country Programs by:

- helping to build the confidence and self-esteem of people with disability
- providing opportunities for them to interact with their families and communities
- contributing to breaking down barriers and changing negative attitudes

*Contributing to greater inclusion of people with disability in community life*



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

# Conclusions

## The ASOP Country Programs by:

- providing women and girls with unique opportunities to develop their leadership skills
- empowering women and girls be more involved in decision-making

*Contributing to improved gender equality*



# Conclusions

## The ASOP Country Programs by:

- bringing people together in new ways
- fostering a sense of fair play and unity
- providing alternatives to anti-social behaviour

*Contributing to safer, more cohesive communities*



# Therefore...

There is conclusive evidence that **Development-through-sport** can make a significant contribution to healthier, more inclusive and more cohesive communities in the Pacific



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# For more information



**Please contact:**

Dr Allison Simons  
ASOP Pacific Country Program Manager

[Allison.Simons@ausport.gov.au](mailto:Allison.Simons@ausport.gov.au)