

THE UNIDOS INITIATIVE

Mobilizing to Eliminate Barriers to Health
and Healthcare in Farmworker Communities



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and organizations came together to make the Unidos project a success.

Farmworker Justice would like to acknowledge the Bristol Meyers Squibb Foundation's *Specialty Care for Vulnerable Populations* initiative that provided critical funding and technical support for the Unidos project for the past three years.

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A special thanks to Dr. Susan Boiko, who provided educational training for staff and community health workers and led the screening efforts since the inception of the project.

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And finally, to all of the farmworkers that gave their time, knowledge and support to the project, and for their willingness to embrace learning about skin cancer and sharing their stories,
GRACIAS!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Farmworkers work long hours under the hot sun, exposing themselves to harmful UV rays. Because of the nature of their work they are often unable to stay out of the sun during the day. Additionally, they are exposed to harmful pesticide residues in their work, which exacerbates the likelihood of developing certain types of skin cancers. A lack of easy access to bathrooms and hand-washing facilities makes the recommended consistent application of sunscreens more problematic, and high outdoor temperatures make covering up with significant layers of clothing challenging, leaving many farmworkers virtually unprotected from the sun's harmful rays.

With support from the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation *Specialty Care for Vulnerable Populations* initiative, Farmworker Justice (FJ), Campesinos Sin Fronteras (CSF), and Vista Community Clinic (VCC), implemented a community mobilization demonstration project titled: *Unidos Eliminado Barreras para la Prevención de Cáncer de la Piel* or Unidos (United Eliminating Barriers to Skin Cancer Prevention) that promoted community integration and reduction of skin cancer among farmworkers and their families in Yuma County, Arizona and North San Diego County, California¹. Community mobilization is a culturally competent, community-based, and community driven strategy that brings multiple stakeholders together to build momentum around a priority issue in specific farmworker communities. A broad spectrum of community partners collaboratively strategize, problem-solve and identify resources to bring critical information and resources to address the issue. In the case of the Unidos project, skin cancer prevention, screening, detection and follow up care was the initial focus of the mobilization efforts. Additional program components were subsequently added.

From 2017 through 2018, VCC and CSF reached 106,220 people with skin cancer promotion/awareness education. During this time, 201 community members participated in skin cancer screenings with 46 referrals for biopsies and/or treatment.



Promotores de salud lead a community outreach event providing skin cancer education.

¹ In addition, Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) participated in the first year of the Unidos project.

Residents in rural areas experience a shortage of specialty care providers. For this reason, telehealth can be a promising strategy to alleviate the deficit of specialty care services. Telehealth technology employs communication and information technologies to provide or support long distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration (1).

In an effort to explore viable options to increase access and utilization of needed services among farmworkers, an additional component was added to the Unidos initiative where FJ, CSF, and VCC collaborated with the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School (CHLPI) to research and develop an issue brief – *The Promise of Telehealth Strategies to Increase Access to Quality Healthcare in Rural America*. The brief explores the potential for telehealth to enhance access and quality of care in rural communities of the US and calls for policy change that will encourage and increase responsible telehealth initiatives.

Finally, in 2018, the *Unidos* team, with support from the Center for Health Equity Research (CHER) at Northern Arizona University, conducted a situational analysis and needs assessment (SA/NA) on the feasibility of and needed resources for the development and implementation of a tele-dermatology/telehealth initiative in North San Diego County and Yuma/ San Luis, AZ. The process generated a report – *Understanding Opportunities for Telehealth Services in Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Communities* – which summarizes the findings from the SA/NA and makes recommendations for the development of telehealth initiatives in farmworker communities.



A volunteer dermatologist examines a farmworker's skin at a free screening event.

The current report *The Unidos Initiative: Mobilizing to Eliminate Barriers to Health and Healthcare in Farmworker Communities* summarizes the processes, findings outcomes, and impact of the skin cancer prevention component of the Unidos initiative. The report identifies program gaps/needs and discusses recommendations for building on the successes of this unique project.

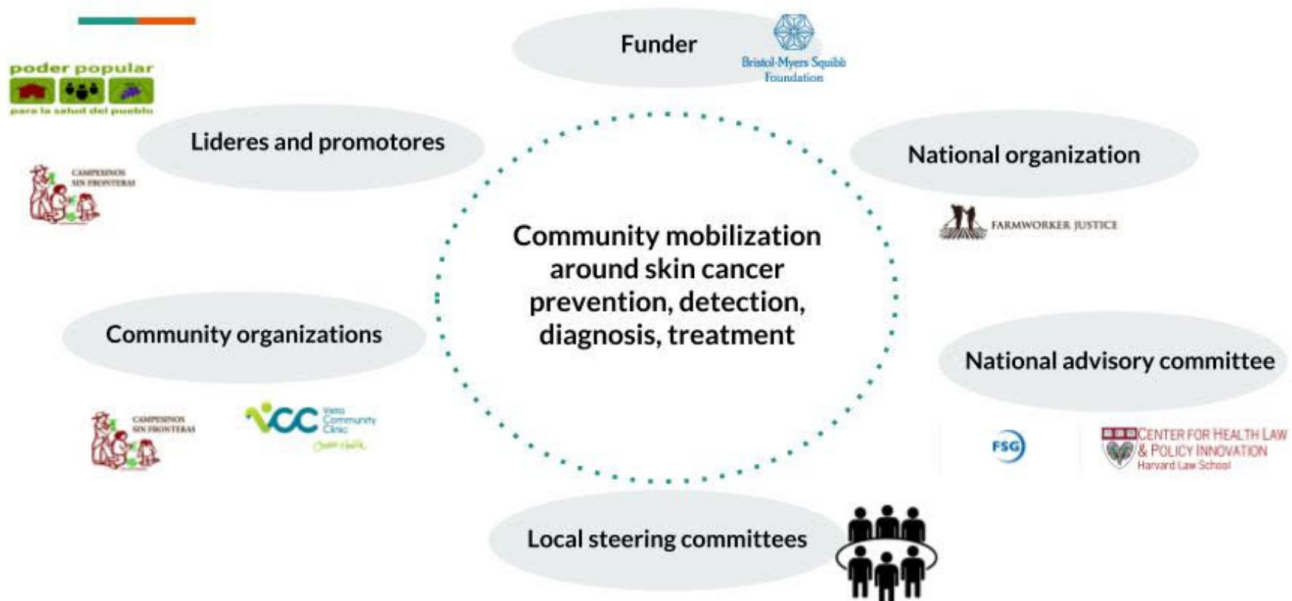
Farmworker Justice (FJ) is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to empower migrant and seasonal farmworkers to improve their living and working conditions, immigration status, health, occupational safety, and access to justice.

Vista Community Clinic (VCC) VCC is recognized as a key regional health provider with seven state-of-the-art clinics treating more than 60,000 patients each year. Its innovative model of community health provides low cost, high quality health care to the residents of San Diego, Riverside and Orange County communities.

Campesinos Sin Fronteras (CSF) Based in Yuma, AZ, CSF promotes self-sustainability to farmworkers and low- to moderate-income individuals by providing and facilitating access to health, behavioral health and social services as well as housing rehabilitation, counseling, education and workforce development programs.

HOW DOES COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION WORK FOR THE UNIDOS PROJECT?

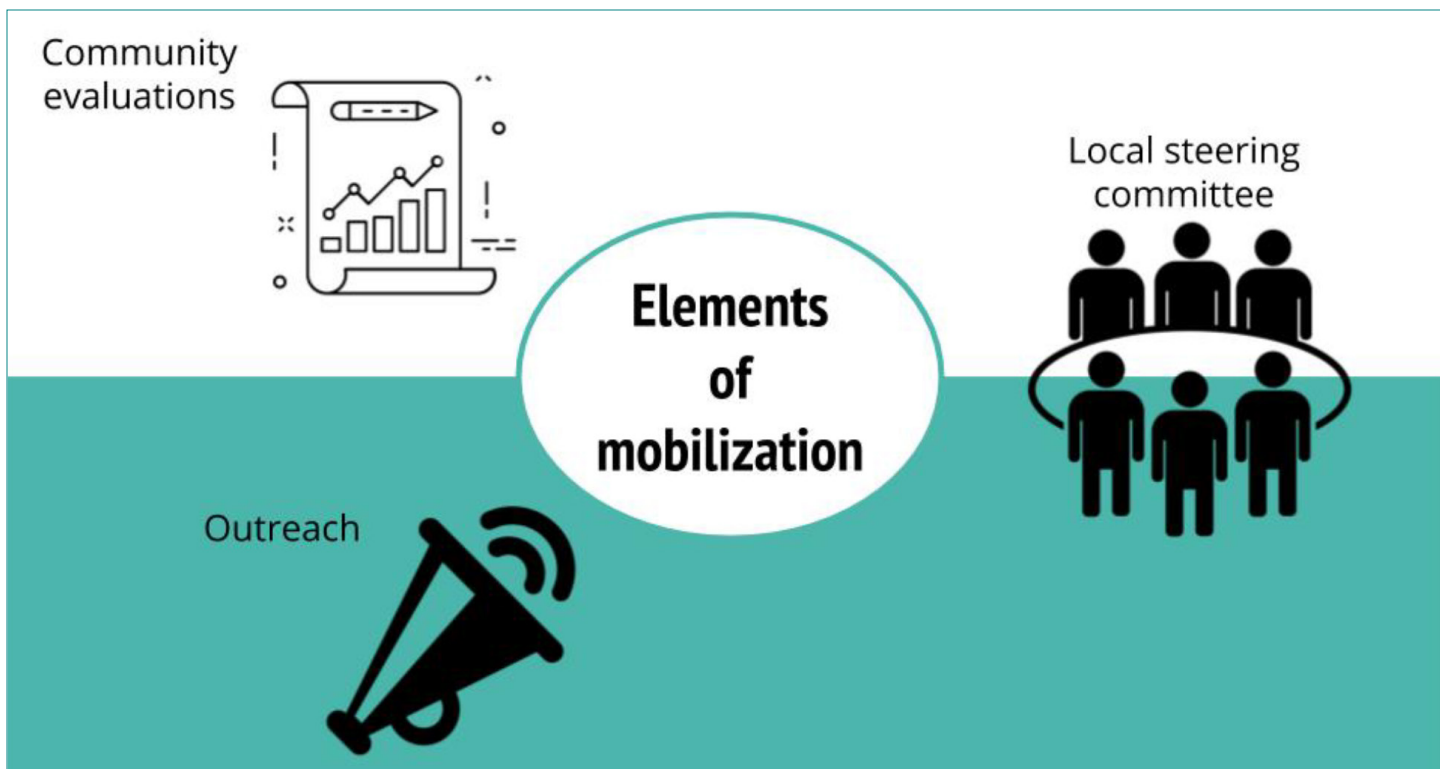
Community mobilization is an innovative strategy that brings multiple stakeholders together to build momentum around the topic of skin cancer in specific farmworker communities. Community partners collaboratively strategize, problem solve and identify community resources to bring critical information and resources to their communities to prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat skin cancer.



Community mobilization around skin cancer is the central and unifying force of Unidos, providing a common goal for the diverse stakeholders to work towards. The chart above identifies the various national and local groups that came together to make Unidos fruitful and successful in the communities it served.



A líder comunitario analyzes resources through a community mapping activity.



Farmworker Justice and local community partners Vista Community Clinic and Campesinos Sin Fronteras worked intensively together over the course of three years to raise awareness and create positive impact around skin cancer in two distinct farmworker communities. At the inception of Unidos a National Advisory Committee was formed to provide guidance and feedback on the overall aims of the project. Partners such as the American Academy of Dermatology played an important role in helping to convey an understanding of the complexities surrounding skin cancer. Local steering committees were convened by both VCC and CSF and included a diverse array of stakeholders that helped to inform the progress of the project within each community.

Dermatologists, local media, community-based farmworker-serving organizations were all included in these important monthly meetings. VCC was an important founding member of the Farmworker Care Coalition, which convened a monthly meeting comprised of members from the sectors above. Some important partners for the Unidos project were California Rural Legal Assistance, who hosted community forums where VCC would frequently attend to speak about upcoming Unidos events; the Mexican Consulate, a partner in community outreach events; and a local dermatologist, who participated in most of the screening events hosted by VCC. CSF benefitted from similar partnerships in their own community for their Unidos efforts. They convened a Leadership Committee formed to help inform in Unidos efforts, coming together to review materials, discuss outreach strategies and problem-solve. Members of CSF's Leadership Committee included Arizona Rural Legal Services, Yuma Cancer Center, and several local dermatologists who were interested in the project and assisted in the screening events.



A volunteer dermatologist leads a skin cancer education event.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Community Health Workers (CHW) were perhaps the most critical component of the Unidos project. CHWs are known as *promotores de salud* with Campesinos Sin Fronteras and *líderes comunitarios* with Vista Community Clinic. The *promotores* and *líderes* were the essential link between the project goals and the community. *Promotores* and *líderes* brought education on skin cancer to their fellow community members, helped to organize and bring to fruition the skin cancer screening events and provided a critical level of comfort and accessibility to the farmworker community.



WHY ARE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS SO IMPORTANT?

Language, shared cultural identity and an understanding of challenges faced by community members make community health workers a critical part of community-driven projects.

“We know where to find farmworkers in our communities because many of us have been farmworkers ourselves. So we know how to talk about subjects that can be painful or uncomfortable. And we can do this in Spanish, which is the language we all use, so that it’s more comfortable for all of us together.”
(VCC *líder comunitario*)



Promotores de salud gather information from farmworkers about to be screened at an event hosted by Campesinos Sin Fronteras.

CHWs can either be paid staff or community volunteers. Unidos was comprised of CHWs from both models, and the most critical shared theme from Unidos' CHWs was their clear dedication to their communities and willingness to go work long and late hours to be sure that they connected with the most hard-to-reach farmworkers in their communities.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN ACTION

"There is a rancho that we visit far out in the canyon. This is a place where the workers really struggle in getting into town to buy groceries or do laundry. If they have a clinic appointment we can help them get transportation into town where they can visit the clinic and get some of their other important errands done" (VCC *líder comunitario*)

"I've been doing outreach in my community for many years and I have seen so many hard situations that farmworker families are facing. Because I know so many of the people in the community I've been able to have conversations about subjects that can be really tough or uncomfortable." (CSF *promotor de salud*)

WHERE DO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS DO THEIR OUTREACH?

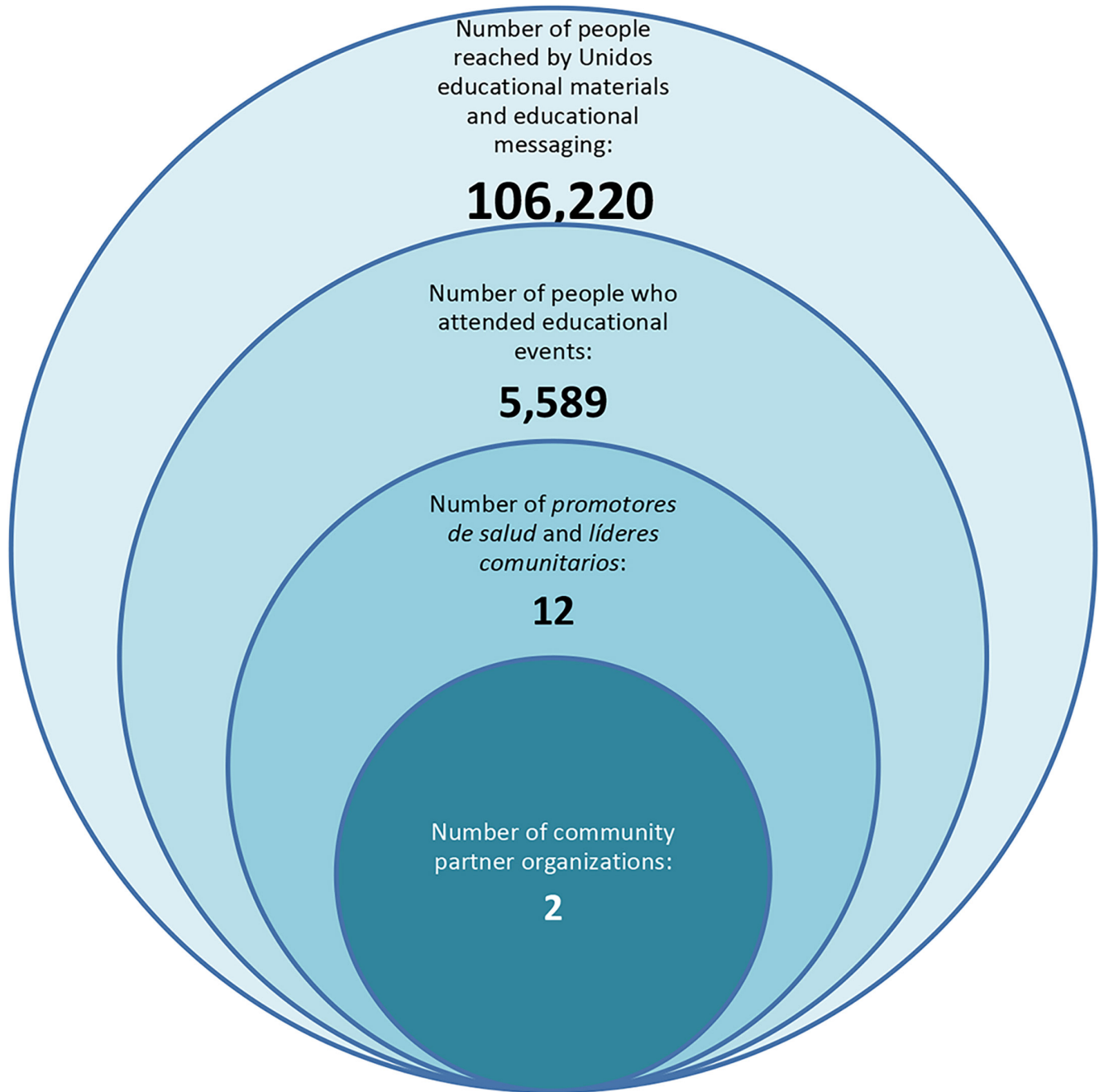
CHWs think innovatively to reach community members. They travel to individual homes, set up tables in popular laundromats and tiendas on weekends, visit schools, churches, food banks, and local organizations providing support services, present at parent meetings and community forums. In short, CHWs reach deep into their communities to spread their important messages.

Don Jose and Don Eduardo, experienced outreach workers with VCC, have led their clinic's efforts to provide vital transportation to patients in North San Diego County for several decades. They visit farmworkers in the fields during their breaks and tell them about upcoming health fairs that provide free screenings; they visit far-flung houses tucked deep in the canyon to check on a community member's progress with their diabetes program; they pick up workers and bring them to the clinic for scheduled appointments and then return them home once they are done.

"I love the work I do here. When a *compañero* rides in the car with me we are able to talk about many things. Maybe they felt scared to come into the clinic but in the car we joke around together and talk about serious things too. It's a good opportunity for us to connect. And the next time they need help they don't feel so scared to ask," Don Eduardo says, describing his outreach work in the communities.

With the introduction of the Unidos project, Don Jose and Don Eduardo were able to expand their outreach efforts, visiting the far-reaching and isolated communities surrounding Vista, and cultivating relationships with ranchos and farmworkers that were previously beyond their reach. As these relationships deepened and a strong level of trust formed, VCC was able to organize a health fair to provide much-needed screenings to a previously hard-to-reach community of farmworkers.

EDUCATION AND SCREENING SUMMARY



From 2017 through 2018, **106,220** people were indirectly reached by VCC and CSF with skin cancer education, and **5589** were directly reached with skin cancer education.

During this time period **201** community members participated in screenings and of these, **46** were referred on for follow-up care in the form of biopsies and/or treatment.

Indirect education means participants received information from a community partner about skin cancer and/or Unidos, but did not have a face-to-face interaction with a community partner, CHW, or provider about either of these topics.



An example of the type of creative materials developed by community partners for the Unidos project.

Examples of indirect education include distributed Unidos materials (such as the Unidos fotonovela, “Con la Lupa en la Piel”), the estimated audience of various television stations and/or newspapers running spots for Unidos (for example, CSF’s spot for their local Telemundo station reached an estimated audience of 100,000 in AZ and border towns in Mexico), and estimated attendees at health fairs who may pass by the Unidos table.

Direct education includes face-to-face interactions between a patient/participant and a provider, community partner representative, and/or CHW. This may include a formal presentation to a group of participants, a one-on-one interaction at a health fair educational booth, or an informal presentation (on a bus, for example).

Community partners varied in their approach to bringing these types of education to farmworker populations in the area. Restricted by the extreme summer heat in Yuma, CSF was creative with the type and timing of the outreach efforts they employed. CSF reached a large number of people via materials and collaborations with local media outlets, and made an effort to integrate other programming in their institution with Unidos work. Their chronic disease and Familias Sanas programs, for example, all received Unidos outreach.

VCC, on the other hand, made concentrated efforts to engage in direct education by holding education events. VCC also developed a successful “mini health fair” model in which they grouped Unidos screening events with other basic healthcare screenings in order to maximize the public’s exposure to skin cancer education.

It proved difficult to integrate Unidos programming with other work due to limited capacity of volunteer *líderes* staff. *Líderes* made many schedule accommodations and extensive time commitments to make direct education events and outreach work, but were ultimately limited by their roles as volunteers.

Campesinos Sin Fronteras te invita
A realizarte exámenes de detección temprana de Cáncer de Piel

Totalmente ¡GRATIS!
Además información para tener una piel saludable

Martes 31 de Julio, 2018
12:00pm-1:00pm Presentación
1:00pm-5:pm Exámenes
Los exámenes serán proporcionados por:
Centro de Oncología de Yuma
Dr. Gordon Grado (Radio-Oncólogo)
Dr. Siavosh Vakilian (Radio-Oncólogo)

Si no tienes seguro médico, no importa! Asiste y revísate
Para mayor información comunicarse al:
(928) 627-1060
(928) 627-5995

Te esperamos en la Biblioteca Principal de Yuma, AZ
2951 S. 21st Dr.
Yuma, AZ. 85364

Salon “A”

Colorful materials advertising an upcoming screening event.

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE WITH COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

In the Unidos project, community mobilization provided a flexible and innovative model for addressing challenges related to skin cancer education, screening, diagnosis, and treatment in the community.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN ACTION

Lack of knowledge/awareness about skin cancer: were farmworkers going to consider this an important health topic when they already experience so many pressing concerns and this was a relatively new topic for many farmworker communities?

- The Unidos team brought resources and focus brought to a health topic that was not well understood in the community and had not been receiving adequate attention.
- Increased education around skin cancer risks, prevention and screening at community and mi-grant health centers.
- Increased awareness of skin cancer related resources available, particularly those in Spanish language.
- Created training materials for community health workers around skin cancer.
- Created tools for community mobilization around issue of skin cancer.

Lack of health insurance/inability to become insured.

- Identified and partnered with local dermatologists willing to donate their time to community members at large.
- Organized health fairs and free screening events for all community members.
- Connected community members able to become insured with local organizations that could facilitate this process.
- Increased awareness of the value of telemedicine, specifically tele-dermatology for improving farmworker health. Identifying the great potential of “store and forward” technology for skin cancer screening and recommendations for care.

Distance to reach specialty care: FJ’s Situational Analysis and Needs Assessment found that accessing specialty care was challenging throughout farmworker communities. The lack of dermatologists and the distance needed to travel to reach a dermatologist was daunting for community members.

- Organized health fairs directly at farms and easily-accessed community locations to facilitate potential for attendance for those without transportation.
- Partnered with local organizations and networks of volunteers to assist in transportation to screening events.

Time: Farmworkers work long days and are often unable to take time off from work without feeling that their job is at risk. Taken in conjunction with the distance needed to travel to reach specialty care this could be both overwhelming and prohibitory for farmworkers in the designated communities.

- Scheduled screening events, health fairs, and individual follow-up appointments around the schedules of community members.
- Mobilized partner organizations, including the Mexican Consulate, around the issue of skin cancer. This project provides a jumping off point for Farmworker Justice to collaborate with the various organizations on other health issues in the future.

WHAT WERE THE GREATEST IMPACTS OF THE UNIDOS PROJECT IN THE COMMUNITY?

- Increased awareness, prevention and diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer among community members in North San Diego and Yuma counties.
- Capacity building and opportunities for empowerment for staff at local organizations.
- Creation and strengthening of partnerships/relationships among organizations serving the farmworker population and “knitting together systems of care,” with particular success in forging connections between community health centers and specialty medical care providers.
- Community mobilization around the topic of skin cancer.

FUTURE HOPES AND PLANS

Unidos successfully mobilized local intermediary agencies, individual collaborators, and farmworker communities in Yuma, AZ, and North San Diego County, CA to promote an increased understanding of skin cancer among farmworker and their families, and facilitated action steps to intervene along each step of the pathway to skin cancer prevention and treatment, from screening to referrals to skin cancer specialty care and, in some instances, care for other dermatologic conditions or diseases/conditions.



Campeños Sin Fronteras hosts a World Café as part of the needs assessment process.

The information that was used to inform and guide the process and interventions was gathered by CHWs at each of the two local partner organizations through a systematic application of a community-based and driven situational analysis and needs assessment. Community members took on the roles of active participants in determining and prioritizing their needs and wishes. Two local steering committees (LSCs) were convened which actively and continually participated in providing feedback, guidance, and assistance in the planning and implementation of Unidos.

While Unidos focused on skin cancer, a multitude of health and other needs and priorities were identified, and when possible, were addressed directly by the Unidos team or with support from LSC members and/or other collaborators. As planned, Unidos supported the community mobilization, which can in turn serve as a platform through which other needs and wishes of the community can be addressed. This presents an opportunity to build on a solid and proven platform for developing different types of interventions and programs, including those which address the social and environmental determinants of health specifically relevant to farmworkers and their families.



Examples of immediate program opportunities that can build on Unidos include:

- Integrate interventions that can address one or more of the community's priorities/needs/wishes (as identified and defined not only by the incidence and prevalence of the disease/condition or issue, but also by the community members themselves) including health and wellness, housing, transportation, economic/employment.
- Support and expand the work of the LSCs to include greater representation and focus from policy/decision makers, academia, "payers" and the philanthropic community.
- Build on the initial work conducted by the Unidos team to explore and develop interventions to increase access to and utilization of health and health care services and programs by farmworkers and their families, including the appropriate and responsible use of telehealth. The two reports developed by the Unidos team – *The Promise of Telehealth Strategies to Increase Access to Quality Healthcare in Rural America* and *Understanding Opportunities for Telehealth Services in Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Communities* provide specific policy and program recommendations. Copies are available on the FJ web site, www.farmworkerjustice.org.
- Increase support for implementing culturally competent and linguistically appropriate interventions that will continue to test, expand, and sustain the community mobilization approach.
- Conduct more applied research to better identify how interventions, including telehealth services could best meet the needs, realities and wishes of farmworker communities and to inform policy and program initiatives.
- Support the local, regional, and national dissemination and sharing of the process and findings of the Unidos Initiative to inform and influence decision/policy makers and individuals looking to develop and/or improve social and health services.
- Leverage and dedicate additional funding to support local and national organizations that not only have the technical and content knowledge and experience, but most importantly have the first-hand experience, cultural/ language competency, and credibility/history of working for an with farmworker communities.







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