

# *Salud America!*

## Pilot Investigator Project Results

***Juntas Podemos***  
**(Together We Can):**  
**Empowering Latinas to**  
**Shape Policy to Prevent**  
**Childhood Obesity**



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



# Investigators:

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- Romel Lacson, MPH, PhD(c) - Photovoice



# Project Summary

- Work with Latina mothers to generate policy recommendations regarding opportunities for physical activity for Latino children in West Columbia, South Carolina.
- Provide a true picture of the realities associated with the barriers and opportunities for their children.
- Empower the participants by involving them in the process of collecting and analyzing data about factors that affect their children's health.



# Project Activities

- Group of 12 Latina mothers in West Columbia trained and actively using the Photo Voice technique to document factors that affect their children's health
- Interviews conducted with community stakeholders and school staff
- 3 focus groups held with an average of 8 Latinas in each group about the situations captured through Photo Voice, barriers and solutions for change, policy recommendations, and their reactions to interviews.



# Project Accruals/Data to Date

- Focus group results and analysis
- Interviews with community stakeholders and school staff
- 3 rounds of photos with corresponding analysis and discussion
- Meeting with West Columbia Community Liaison



# Focus group results

Major themes from focus groups of Latina mothers and significant photos:

**1. More participants felt like they *belonged* in their new environment than not.**

- “My home”
- “My neighborhood”, “my house”
- “My city”





Una tarde juntos, disfrutando de un espacio público para todos. An afternoon together, enjoying a public place that's for everyone.



Un día de pesca divirtiéndose sanamente al aire libre. A day of fishing, having fun in a healthy way outdoors.



Labores del hogar: ayudando y haciendo ejercicio. Housework: helping and exercising.



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Vecinos nuevos haciendo ejercicio juntos cerca a la casa.  
New neighbors exercising together near the house.

# Focus group results

## 2. Main factors/barriers affecting their children's health were:

- *Difficulty finding ways for their children to eat healthy and get exercise in current environment* . This includes lack of time, distance to public spaces, lack of transportation, and feeling that it's more “natural” in their home countries.





Una cancha de fútbol, pero a veces no podemos ir por falta de transporte. A soccer field, but sometimes we can't go for lack of transportation.

# Focus group results

- Latina mother: *“Los que trabajamos y nos vamos (llevamos) los niños donde los cuidan, no mas están viendo tele, y a ratos caminar...”*
- “Those of us that work, we take the children to where they keep them, and they just watch television and occasionally walk...”





No están comiendo saludablemente. They're not eating healthy.

# Focus group results

## 2. Main factors/barriers affecting their children's health were:

- *Lack of security/feeling safe :*
  - Not having sidewalks
  - Feeling that place is dangerous for children
  - Cars speeding/traffic
  - Single male neighbors that drink alcohol and drive too fast





*Avenida olvidada. Calle que necesita arreglo. A forgotten avenue. A street that needs fixing up.*



*Calle sin banqueta.* A street without sidewalks.



*Lote vacante en frente del bosque. Inseguridad en el barrio.* An vacant lot in front of the forest. Insecurity in the neighborhood.

# Focus group results

## 2. Main factors/barriers affecting their children's health were:

- *Effect of immigration policies/sentiments*
- Fear, lack of trust in institutions
- *“No tenemos una protección de salud como inmigrantes; siempre nos hacen menos.”*
- *“We don't have any health protection since we're immigrants; they always treat us like we're less important.”*



# Focus group results

## Final focus group: June, 2011

*“Hay un YMCA y mis hijos me dicen ‘vamos allí’...pero con eso ya viene la discriminación de que nosotros somos latinos; es el temor ahorita. La desconfianza de salir y encontrar un policía y por nuestro color, vámonos o otra cosa...la inseguridad.”*

“There’s a YMCA and my children say ‘let’s go there’... but that’s where discrimination comes in because we’re Latinos. The fear of going out and running into the police and because of our color, ‘let’s go’ or something like that...insecurity.”





*Juegos en mal estado donde a menudo no dejan jugar a los niños Latinos. Equipment in bad shape at a playground where often they don't let Latino children play.*



*Una piscina. Pero no hay muchas públicas para todos.* A pool. But there aren't many public ones for everyone to use.

# Focus group results

- *“Reporté que estaban pasando carros y entonces...para darnos duro empezaron a pararnos a nosotros y meternos a la policía...uno como hispano lo que hace es que se echa como en contra a la policía...lo que hacían era que me causaban problema a mi.”*
- “I reported that the cars were going by, and to get us back they started stopping us and turning us in to the police...when you’re Hispanic it’s like you end up head to head with the police...what they did was cause me problems.”



# Focus group results

## *Other barriers:*

- ❑ Lack of money to buy exercise equipment or nutritional foods
- ❑ Individual or cultural traditions
- ❑ Fast food is cheap and easy to get
- ❑ Lack of hygiene
- ❑ Food in schools is not nutritious





*Mucha grasa. A lot of fat.*



*Comida chatarra: ¿publicidad o salud?* Fast food: advertising or health?



*Comida no balanceada sin valor nutritivo. Unbalanced food with no nutritional value.*

# Focus group results

## 3. Solutions proposed by participants to improve children's health:

*Individual-focused solutions* : Feeling empowered to make changes on an individual/family level, including making different decisions, modeling and teaching.

- *“Pongo mas atención sobre mis niños cuando ellos salen a jugar para que no haya un accidente o algo.”*- I pay more attention to my children when they go play so there's not an accident.





*Un pasatiempo saludable. A healthy pastime.*



*Jugando al aire libre, convivir y compartir. Playing outdoors, spending time together and sharing.*

# Focus group results

- *Use resources that exist in the community to get information/help for children:*
  - Pediatricians
  - School resource person
  - WIC
  - Hospital, police, psychologist





*Comida orgánica, un proyecto en la casa.* Organic food, an in-home project.



*Verduras y vitaminas más caras que en la pulga. Vegetables and vitamins that are more expensive than at the flea market.*

# Focus group results

- *Policy changes:*
  - Idea of organizing to go talk to decision-makers (city, trailer park, school)
  - “(Debemos) ponernos de acuerdo con los demás vecinos e ir a hablar.”- We should get together with our neighbors and go talk.
  - “Organizándonos bien, todos juntos como el programa dice—juntos podemos—sí se puede...he dicho.”- By getting organized, all together like the program says-together we can- we can do it. Enough said.



# Stakeholder interviews and community feedback

- Community stakeholders (5) :
  - 2 pediatricians, community liaison, Latino community leader
  
- School/educational staff (6):
  - ESL teachers, PE teachers, state ESL coordinator'
  
- Latina mothers (6)



# Stakeholder interviews and community feedback: Perception of Latino children and physical activity

	Community stakeholders	School staff	Latina mothers
<b>Who do Latino children play with?</b>	With Latinos and non-Latinos	No separation	With Latinos and non-Latinos
<b>Amount of exercise Latino children get compared to other groups</b>	About the same	Same amount	Same amount, less formal
<b>Any differences between groups?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•More soccer</li> <li>•Less commitment/ more protection by parents</li> <li>•Get outside more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Same</li> <li>•More soccer</li> <li>•More outside play</li> </ul>	<p>“American <b>kids</b>” have more opportunities because their <b>parents</b> have more opportunities</p>



# Stakeholder interviews and community feedback

	Community stakeholders	School staff	Latina mothers
<b>Barriers to physical activities for Latino children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not as much access</li> <li>•Work/transportation</li> <li>•Don't feel accepted</li> <li>•Don't know about opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No barriers</li> <li>•Language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear/racism/experienced by parents</li> <li>•No IDs</li> <li>•Time</li> <li>•Money, transportation , safety</li> </ul>
<b>Suggestions for increasing opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Recreation centers or equipment close to neighborhoods</li> <li>•Programs that include Latino children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Same opportunities</li> <li>•Parents not knowledgeable</li> <li>•Decrease logistical barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reduce cost, transportation barriers for team activities</li> <li>•Safe parks in neighborhoods</li> <li>•Help parents understand programs and opportunities and organize</li> </ul>



# Stakeholder interviews and community feedback

- Disconnect between schools and parents
- School staff noted few barriers—felt all had same opportunities
- Community stakeholders noted need to increase opportunities for Latino families
- Mothers feel afraid, disempowered due to current situation. Would like to have more opportunities for children
- Effect anti-immigrant sentiment and laws very strong—affecting children's health



# Project Policy Implications to Date

- Stakeholders are part of the advisory group and we are working with West Columbia Community Liaison to have the pictures and analysis of the data presented by the women at different venues:
  - City of West Columbia
  - School staff (teachers, coaches)
  - Parks and Recreation officials
  - Eat Smart Move More coalition



# Project Activity Changes

- Process took longer than expected due to anti-immigrant legislation and fear in community. Working on how to present policy ideas within current reality
- West Columbia Community Liaison took extended leave of absence- major link
- Plan to present to more groups than originally stated in application, and possibly in local museum; however, we need to revisit plans for who can present



# Project Products/Publications

- Magellan scholarship (small University of South Carolina grant) to collect additional data from Latina mothers
- Submitted a manuscript: “Latina Voices on Childhood Obesity” to the Salud America! team for review



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Gracias! Questions?