Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities

Action to develop capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a place-based systemic approach to enable physical activity.

What does this mean and why is it important?

Building capacity addresses the need for more resources and better infrastructure to help organisations adapt and thrive when working towards a whole systems approach. Building capability means increasing the skills and knowledge of the workforce, volunteers, and communities to work in a whole systems approach. The goal is to give communities and workforces greater opportunity to address barriers and the root causes of inequality. Developing capacity and capability is an ongoing process and can be built by cultivating community or professional networks, providing training, strengthening competence and awareness in targeted populations, and allocating resources.

Sector integration of physical activity:

- Recognise that workforces may not automatically have the attributes to work in a place-based collaborative and responsive way, and that training and recruitment strategies to build capacity and capability may be needed. Cross-functional roles (where staff work across departments or organisations) can help to build understanding and influence.
- Place staff embedded in partner organisations to train colleagues and influence their way of working.
- Facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities for organisations to connect and share with each other so as to pool resources and expertise.

Strengthening individual and community capacities:

- People experiencing inactivity may want to contribute to improvements but lack the money, time, or skills to do so. Consistent, long-term support can help them participate in place-based systemic approaches. Providing core funding and access to meeting spaces for voluntary and community organisations also encourages collaboration.

Tackling structural inequalities:

- When people face a high level of insecurity, poverty, and poor working and living conditions, physical activity may not be a priority.
- Helping communities and individuals to develop the skills and opportunities to advocate for policy changes that address the root causes of structural inequalities is difficult but crucial for creating population level change. This can be achieved through engagement with wider place-based initiatives.

How can we build capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities?

1. **Develop community and professional networks** that encourage participation and contribute valuable insights and expertise. These networks can be formal and informal.
2. **Provide training** that aligns to the values of the workforce, volunteers, and communities as well as being tailored to their specific needs.
3. **Strengthen competency and awareness** of the workforce through wide communications to support understanding and awareness of how structural inequalities influence physical inactivity and how to mitigate these inequalities.
4. **Allocate resources** fairly and proportionately to support communities, volunteers, and organisations in adopting equitable policies and practices.

Reflection questions

- How do we engage with the workforce, communities, and volunteers to understand their assets, needs and aspirations before we can build their capacity and capability?
- How do we ensure equitable training and support that engages with and captures the priorities of marginalised communities?