

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**  
**Angela Xiong**

Will defend her thesis

**Participatory Design of a Comprehensive Playground Intervention  
Manual for Obesity Mitigation in Phoenix, AZ**

**Abstract**

In the past three decades alone, the United States has witnessed a dramatic rise in the prevalence of obesity and overweight in adults and children. Efforts towards obesity mitigation and prevention have produced promising recommendations and researchers and practitioners alike acknowledge that real solutions must match the complexity of the problem. Comprehensive approaches that target environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and knowledge-based factors that influence diet and physical activity are highly recommended.

However, a critical piece of the puzzle is missing: the “how”. The literature yields little in the way of *how* various stakeholder groups bridge institutional barriers to collaborate in ways that maximize resources, build upon synergies, and avoid duplication of efforts and *how* specific recommendations are actually implemented.

My thesis aims to fill this gap by presenting a practical case study that brought together obesity researchers, health professionals, neighborhood residents, and city officials to design a manual for how to create a playground obesity intervention in the Gateway District of Phoenix, Arizona. The objectives were two-fold: 1. What are the concrete steps that will allow an organization to create a playground linked with healthy kids education program that aims to increase physical activity, perceptions of safety, and community cohesion? 2. How can diverse stakeholders collaborate effectively to create such a cohesive, complex obesity intervention?

A detailed, actionable intervention manual was created through semi-structured interviews, literature review, a survey, a stakeholder engagement workshop, and an extended peer-review. This intervention manual, as well as the process itself, can serve as a transferable model for helping different organizations come together to tackle complex health challenges.

Friday, April, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

3:00 PM

WGHL 323

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Arnim Wiek, Chair

Dr. Aaron Golub, Member

Essen Otu, Member