Summary
General introduction

This thesis reports on several studies into the evaluation of Integrated Community-wide Intervention Approaches (ICIA). The thesis aimed to i) explore the evaluation framework of the integrated community-wide intervention approach to prevent overweight and obesity in children, ii) to gain an understanding of barriers to and facilitators of programme evaluation of ICIA and iii) based upon this information, we aimed to develop recommendations about how to facilitate evaluation of ICIA. This thesis starts with a general introduction in Chapter 1, in which the importance of overweight prevention in children is highlighted. Moreover in this chapter the need for comprehensive multi-level and multi-setting oriented programmes to address all reciprocal determinants of childhood overweight and obesity is introduced. Finally, the introduction stipulates that programme evaluation is important to improve complex programmes, to establish sustainable community partnerships, to assess goal achievement and to inform and influence decision-makers. Even though we understand that evaluation is indispensable and that it needs to be tailored to each specific programme because its design depends upon available resource, success definition from stakeholders and its purpose we would like to understand better how to do that and what is needed to do it.

Summary of findings

To illustrate what an Integrated Community-wide Intervention Approaches looks like a qualitative retrospective study with interviews and document analysis were conducted in EPODE communities combined with group discussions with the EPODE scientific advisory. This qualitative study, as described in Chapter 2, resulted in insight in the dynamics and key elements of the French EPODE approach, depicted in a concise logic model. This model, the EPODE logic model, showed the four critical components of this ICIA (i.e. political commitment, public-private partnerships, social marketing principles and scientific evaluation and dissemination) and its aim to increase the percentage of children on a healthy weight through the offer of multiple activities, intersectoral collaboration and community capacity resulting in changes in the individuals behaviour and attitude and changes in the environment.

The EPODE logic model was used as a reference for the CIAO studies, whose design is described in Chapter 3. The aim of CIAO is to gain 1) theoretical and practical insight of
necessary political support to the Integrated Community-wide Intervention Approach, 2) insight in and tools supportive to parental education, 3) insight in challenges of, methods and tools supportive to implementation, 4) a better scope and blueprints on the use of social marketing within ICIA and 5) the outline of ICIA evaluation including its contributing or restricting factors. Five Dutch Academic Collaborative Centres (ACCs) work together to study these aims. The studies as presented in the following chapters are part of CIAO.

In **Chapter 4** a comprehensive four-phase appraisal process of evaluation frameworks for Integrated Community-wide Intervention Approaches is described. Twenty-five evaluation frameworks were initially included. Only six of those were appraised in the fourth phase on specified requirements (i.e. presence of advice on resources generation and allocation, information on capacity building, information on the use and development of a logic model, advice on design issues, possibilities of altering evaluation tactics following emergent design and information on dissemination of results), the others did not meet the third phase criteria. Not only did the definition of necessary requirements supported our understanding of the evaluation process of ICIA’s and its challenges it also showed limitations of several evaluation frameworks. Most of the evaluation frameworks lacked information on resource generation and allocation and on the importance of organizational change as part of building evaluation capacity. One of the best scoring evaluation frameworks from this appraisal was used as a base for the evaluation framework of the JOGG-approach in the Netherlands. Subsequently the experiences of the first six municipalities to adopt the JOGG-approach were added to this evaluation framework. This guiding evaluation framework was renamed Evaluation Manual and offered to all JOGG programme managers and epidemiologists through a private web environment and was used as a means of evaluation training.

**Chapter 5** is a translation of a Dutch non-reviewed article and presents the findings of an expert meeting on the Evaluation Framework for the Integrated Community-wide Intervention Approach to prevent overweight. This article presents a view on the development process of the Evaluation Framework. The aim of the expert meeting was to achieve consensus on purpose, audience, content, design, dissemination and ownership of the ICIA Evaluation Framework, to gain knowledge of instruments available in the field and to obtain support for (future use) of the ICIA Evaluation Framework. Twenty-seven experts from science, practice and policy participated in the expert meeting. The experts believe that an
Evaluation Framework can improve the quality of ICIAs and would be able to harmonize and standardize evaluation methods. The Evaluation Framework should consist of 1) a ‘planning tool’ including a roadmap of the organization and implementation of the evaluation supplemented with supportive instruments and 2) a ‘toolbox’ with an overview of targets, indicators, outcome measures, best practices and measuring instruments. Furthermore, the experts advised the development of a digital tool. The suggested ‘planning tool’ became the Evaluation Manual and the ‘toolbox’ was inserted in the Evaluation Manual.

Regarding the factors contributing to or restricting the evaluation of community-wide interventions approaches we conducted two studies. Chapter 6 describes a qualitative study on these factors among programme managers and epidemiologists involved in the JOGG-approach. Furthermore, the use and usability of evaluation tools provided to the JOGG-programme managers and involved epidemiologists are studied as well as perception of their use by experts in implementation and evaluation of health promotion programmes. Findings showed that evaluation is hampered by insufficient time, budget and experience with ICIAs, lack of leadership in evaluation planning and implementation and limited advocacy for evaluation. Managers did not prioritise process evaluation nor the involvement of stakeholders or invest in evaluation capacity building. Provided evaluation tools are considered necessary but too comprehensive considering limited resources.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of a case study of two JOGG-municipalities. In this qualitative study triangulation of interviews with programme managers, epidemiologists, policy makers and aldermen, observations and document analysis was done. Limited time and financial budget were again inhibiting factors to the evaluation of the ICIA. However, a lack of evaluation knowledge and a negative attitude towards evaluation and limited communication with key-stakeholders preceded this limiting budget. Facilitators to evaluation of ICIA were sufficient communication on evaluation between involved professionals and shared support from all stakeholders at strategic and tactical level to evaluate the programme. To enhance evaluation capacity tailored training is in place combined with competence enhancing tools. More communication on evaluation at strategic level can stimulate the conduct of evaluation.
General discussion

Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes the main findings and reflects on the three major themes of this thesis: the use and relevance of a logic model, the expectations and use of evaluation tools, and barriers to and facilitators of ICIA evaluation. Subsequently the strengths and limitations of the thesis are discussed and recommendations for practice, policy, education and future research are presented. To prevent overweight and obesity in children integrated community-wide intervention approaches are needed. To improve these approaches programme evaluation that commences at the development phase of the ICIA and engages stakeholders is necessary. However, multiple barriers at individual (e.g. negative attitude towards evaluation, evaluation knowledge and skills), programme (e.g. evaluation not embedded in programme planning, limited use of evaluation findings, engagement of stakeholders) and organisational level (e.g. limited demand of programme evaluation, no resources allocated for evaluation, evaluative thinking not embedded throughout organization) hinder the programme evaluation of ICIA. Stimulating are the communication on evaluation between involved professionals and shared support from all stakeholders at strategic and tactical level to evaluate the programme. To enhance evaluation capacity tailored training is in place combined with competence enhancing tools and more communication on evaluation at strategic level. We recommend local governments, funders and public organisations to prioritize and invest in programme evaluation, in evaluation capacity building and in future research to sustainable support systems.