

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP



Centre de recherche sur le sport
dans la société canadienne
Research Centre for Sport
in Canadian Society

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPORT PROGRAMS FOR FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT POPULATIONS

RIGHT TO PLAY—PROMOTING LIFE-SKILLS IN ABORIGINAL YOUTH (PLAY) PROGRAM

Right To Play is a global organization that uses the transformative power of play—playing sports, playing games—to educate and empower children facing adversity.

The Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program is a multi-faceted program designed to use sport and play as a tool to build on the strengths of Aboriginal children and youth and their communities, supporting the value of culture and identity. Each component of the PLAY program is designed in partnership with the community and aims to support children and youth to develop and strengthen essential life skills.

Initiated in 2010 with generous support from the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and other charitable donors, the PLAY program is currently run in 45 First Nation and urban Aboriginal communities.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The University of Ottawa's partnership with Right To Play and Aboriginal communities is part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council/Sport Canada funded (2012-2014) research project exploring the PLAY program through a multidisciplinary lens. Since the spring of 2010, the research team has contributed to the Right To Play initial program community assessments in the following partner communities: Sandy Lake First Nation, Moose Cree First Nation, and Wapekeka First Nation.

To date, the University of Ottawa research team has been involved in a number of PLAY program activities, including a Hockey For Development clinic, Community Mentor training workshops, and the Youth Leader Symposium, where students and professors have had the opportunity to learn more about the program through games, interviews, and focus group discussions.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The research project will look to examine the PLAY program through a variety of different approaches, in disciplines including sociology, sport psychology, and management, such as:

1. **Positive Youth Development:** Studying how participating in sport programs, and true community ownership of those programs, can foster the skills and attributes needed to achieve personal success and future leadership roles;
2. **Community Development:** Studying how participating in sport programs, and true community ownership of those programs, favors inclusion and also promotes civic engagement, community mobilization, and self-determination;
3. **Stakeholder Analysis:** Studying how existing programs are managed (i.e. program structure and implementation), with the goals of: highlighting best practices, informing policy development, and sharing results with community, funding, and implementing partners; and, to see how these enhance sustainability, promote youth development, and inform future evaluation practices.

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

To guide this process, an Aboriginal Advisory Committee comprised of Elders and members of the Aboriginal community is being created to provide support and oversight in:

- Defining relevant research questions
- Selecting participating communities
- Using appropriate research methods
- Integrating indigenous worldviews
- Ensuring the research is ethically and culturally appropriate

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP



ACCOUNTABILITY

Right To Play and the University of Ottawa are committed to developing respectful and collaborative partnerships with all participating PLAY communities. The research questions will be formed *with* participating PLAY communities so that the research design, implementation process, and findings are relevant to community needs and interests. As research questions become more defined, the team will work with PLAY partner communities to ensure that the research:

- Supports self-determination and Indigenous nation-building
- Is relevant to community needs and values
- Is respectful of Indigenous values and knowledge
- Supports Indigenous research methodologies
- Develops appropriate program designs and evaluation tools

At every stage along the way, the research team is determined to maintain an open and respectful relationship with everyone involved. The team believes that humility, generosity, patience and openness to all ideas are essential to the partnership. And, the research team is dedicated to ensuring that the research process and outcomes will be mutually beneficial to the researchers, institutions, and most importantly, communities.

BENEFITS

The research can build community capacity and assist in comprehensive policy and program planning around sport, recreation, and youth leadership development. Additionally, PLAY communities can make a positive contribution to the field of Sport For Development in Aboriginal communities (and the field more generally).

RESEARCH TEAM

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Cindy Gaudet
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HOW CAN MY COMMUNITY GET INVOLVED?

Should your community be interested in becoming involved, or want to learn more, please feel free to contact:

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