

Project Description

Sport and development programs are presumed to produce fundamental change at the individual and community level yet such a determination is complicated by a myriad of considerations regarding the type of program, the environment in which the program is operated as well as how and what to evaluate within the program.

For this research, we began by examining the use hockey for developmental purposes within First Nation communities as part of Right to Play program known as Promoting Life-skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY). The PLAY initiative was originally proposed to Right To Play by the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Shortly thereafter a formal partnership was also established with researchers in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa.

The purpose of the research collaboration was to have expertise and resources for collecting data, conducting analyses, generating reports and collaborating with the communities with the goal of producing sustainable sport programs to enhance both youth and community development. While the idea began with hockey, the program has grown considerably over the past two years as shown in this schematic.



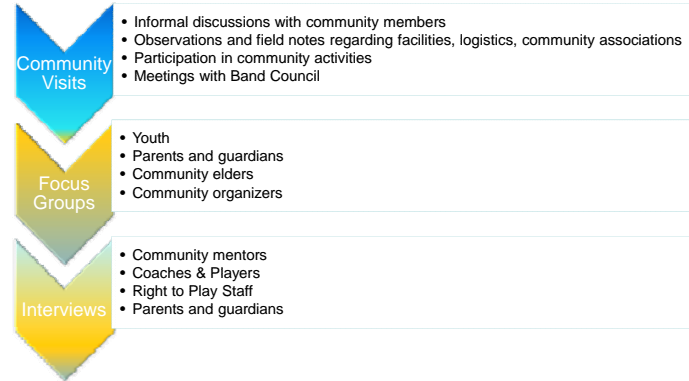
Sport and Development

The notion that engagement in sport through active participation (e.g., playing hockey) can provide more than physical health benefits (e.g., increased cardio-vascular strength) is a burgeoning area of academic and practical interest.

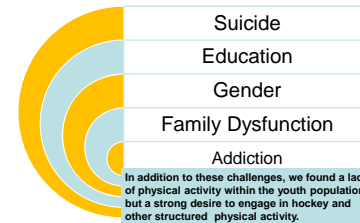
When sport is used within disadvantaged or marginalized communities, this pursuit has recently come to be known as sport and development. Indeed, the very idea that participating in sport may lead to increased life skills (e.g., confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy) and create platforms for positive societal change within the larger community (e.g., gender equality, bridging and bonding) has created academic interest and a desire to explore and examine sports' developmental impacts on individuals and communities alike (e.g., Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Kidd, 2008; Skinner & Zakus, 2008).

The capability of organizations to deliver effective sport and development programs is influenced by many internal organizational and external environmental factors (Coalter, 2010; Kidd, 2008). In fact, an array of challenges related to program delivery, monitoring, and evaluation have exposed concerns regarding the nature of sport and development programs and their likelihood of achieving sustainability (Burnett, 2009; Skinner & Zakus, 2008). In this research program, we have been documenting the challenges to building sustainable programs while also denoting the lessons learned, successes experienced, and the means by which we believe programs such as the PLAY can achieve success.

Data Collected



Psycho-social Challenges Facing Youth



Objectives of P.L.A.Y.

- Sustainability through program ownership by the communities
- Increased youth participation in sport
- Increased community engagement
- Enhanced youth development (life skills)

While the intended goals of the PLAY program may not alleviate the psycho-social challenges, they are a worthy pursuit.

Systemic Challenges

- Funding for continued programming
- Volunteer support
- Human resources (turnover of key organizational staff)
- Communication amongst partnership
- Hockey equipment needs over long term as children grow
- Transportation logistics in and outside of the community

Success Stories

- Growth of participation in hockey, in particular girls-participation year after year has increased.
- Coaches being certified.
- Moose Cree has been successful in recruiting more volunteers-assisted in gaining accreditation within the Northern Ontario Hockey Association.

Program Evolution and Learning

- Installing leadership program has been instrumental in having consistent programming to empower youth while fostering community engagement.
- Creating intergenerational hockey tournaments have brought more people together and has led to more people in the communities becoming active.
- Development of an Advisory council to partake in decision making has made collaborative efforts stronger and communication clearer

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP (est. 2010)



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