

September 21, 2007

Making Connections and Broadening Horizons The Contribution of Sport and Physical Activity in Canada

*September 7th senior policy leaders follow-up to June 21st roundtable
and May 23rd Sport and Physical Activity Interchange*

Building on the May 23rd Sport and Physical Activity Interchange: The two sessions that have followed the initial gathering in late May have allowed participants to further strengthen relationships and better identify common interests and goals. Linking sport and physical activity to broader policy objectives, one of the key ideas that emerged from the Interchange, has become a guiding principle of the initiative. As well, the key themes of social cohesion and social integration within vulnerable populations have become a focus of action.

Outcomes in Brief:

- § Affirmed commitment to develop sport and physical activity as a means to create conditions that will foster achievement of wider policy objectives
- § Agreed to focus on children and youth, narrowed to three target populations: rural aboriginals, urban aboriginals, and immigrants
- § Determined to develop ideas focused on target populations, with a goal to eventually engaging in one or more pilot projects
- § Established that it was important to be conscious of the “knowledge gap” and how it might be filled
- § Agreed that the PPF should continue to play a role as a neutral facilitator

Working together and moving forward...Next steps:

- § Identify: policy objectives for the three target populations, possible pilot projects, and knowledge gaps
- § Reconvene on October 23rd to consider results of above

Background/Purpose of meeting

On September 7th, the Public Policy Forum (PPF) hosted a roundtable lunch with a group of senior policy leaders from across sport and physical activity sectors and from government departments. The discussion was held to build upon progress made at the meeting held on June 21st and the Sport and Physical Activity Interchange on May 23rd. It was intended that participants would come to the roundtable with ideas and initiatives that the group can move forward with, either to build on existing projects or to develop new ones. The purpose of the September roundtable was to address the questions raised at the previous meeting:

- ⇒ With such an interest in working together and learning through collaboration, how will we frame the policy considerations (re: issues, audiences, places) and provide focus for the group?
- ⇒ What ideas or initiatives for pilot projects do we have in mind to build on or develop anew?
- ⇒ How will we develop a new initiative(s) and/or connect to existing initiatives?
- ⇒ Does a mechanism need to be built or allowed to surface so that we can bring the various leaders and organizations together?

Outcomes

It was generally agreed that this initiative would have 3 different objectives/purposes:

- To test and learn from an innovative process of working together (across government and with sport and physical activity leaders and others) to meet multiple policy goals.
- To demonstrate that sport and physical activity actually can have an impact and what that impact is)
- To build the knowledge framework – that is, to identify the knowledge gaps and do research that helps to fill these gaps.

It is important to note that these three objectives can be pursued concurrently.

Proposed Principles to guide the initiative:

Participants articulated a number of principles to anchor this initiative and provide direction as it moves forward:

- By developing one or more pilot projects together, a “test model” can be developed that can be applied to other policy goals
- Starting smaller to facilitate learning so that eventually, the idea can be broadened to other areas
- Sport and physical activity are means to create conditions that will foster achievement of wider objectives

- Projects and initiatives must be chosen while keeping in mind the mandates and goals of potential partners
- Participants bring different interests to the table: some will be most interested in knowledge and research, while others will be interested in implementing initiatives and the model this provides for future action

Three areas/populations we agreed to work on together:

- The group agreed to focus their goals by first choosing a broad category: Children and youth was the consensus choice. We will develop pilot(s) to target this population.
- This was narrowed by selecting three target populations within the broad category of children and youth:
 - Aboriginals – Urban
 - Aboriginals – Rural and remote
 - Newcomers to Canada
- It is important to note that sport and physical activity will be the tools or methods by which these populations will be targeted.
- It was recognized that these target populations do not encompass all possibilities but they would provide good opportunities for testing the potential use of sport and physical activity to achieve other policy objectives, and for learning how to work effectively together to leverage the contribution of S & PA to policy goals.

Question guiding the initiative

- How can sport and physical activity, as tools or instruments, influence policy outcomes in these three areas?

Mechanism for working on this together:

- The PPF has been asked to act as a neutral convenor and steward that will guide the process over the next period.
- At this stage, it was agreed to keep working in the larger group.
- Participants agreed to do some work on their own and feed these into PPF in preparation for the next steps prior to the next meeting in order to develop possible ideas. (see below)

Next steps:

1. Identify a) policy objectives, e.g. reduced obesity, social integration, mental health promotion, crime prevention etc. for the three target populations; b) desired outcomes; and c) knowledge gaps we are trying to fill (where possible).
2. Identify existing initiatives that are related
3. Identify who else needs to be in the “room” to work with us on this project (e.g. youth organizations, other NGOs)
4. All participants are to send their ideas to the PPF (John Macaulay – john.macaulay@ppforum.ca) by October 5
5. The PPF will compile these for the next meeting as the starting point for discussions.
6. Reconvene this larger group on October 23rd to consider results of above (after the Sport Leadership Conference event in Halifax)

Other Considerations related to learning process

- PRI (as part of their Youth project) is interested in understanding the relationship between sport and physical activity to things like sense of belonging and values, and practical application of an integrated approach to youth.
- It is important to identify the knowledge gaps. What questions are we trying to answer with these initiatives?
- The project should work on a knowledge framework and test ideas as the projects proceed. Some will be most interested in Knowledge and research and others in testing and working on initiatives.
- CIHR guidelines may have something to offer here

For action by all by October 5

1. Identify:
 - a. policy objectives for the three target populations, e.g. reduced obesity, social integration (to be refined), mental health promotion, crime prevention etc.
 - b. proposed pilot projects/initiatives to address policy objectives (existing or new)
 - c. knowledge gaps we are trying to fill (where possible).

Please forward ideas to John Macaulay, Research Associate at the Public Policy Forum (email: john.macaulay@ppforum.ca)

2. Reconvene on October 23rd to consider results of above (after the Sport event in Halifax)

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