



**The Working Together Initiative:
The Contribution of Sport and Physical Activity to Multiple Policy Objectives**
An Overview
July 28, 2009

What is WTI?

The Working Together Initiative (WTI) is about innovation through collaboration to achieve multiple policy objectives that require governments and NGOs to work together differently and across boundaries.

The impetus for WTI comes from the evidence and belief that sport and physical activity have an impact on health, the economy, a sense of community, national identity, and quality of life. At the same time, no single government or department is responsible for horizontal leadership and connecting to the “bigger picture” of how sport and physical activity does and can positively impact Canadian society. Achieving policy objectives increasingly demands innovations that governments cannot develop on their own.

The WTI addresses this situation by bringing together government departments that have sport and physical activity mandates, or mandates that can be impacted through sport and physical activity, with sport and physical activity sector leaders to learn how sport and physical activity can help meet diverse policy objectives. By working collaboratively, the initiative is providing valuable lessons on how to work together to meet these demands.

Our Objectives

The WTI has four objectives:

- Develop, implement and assess a number of initiatives that address multiple policy outcomes through sport and physical activity;
- Assess the knowledge gaps of each initiative and determine how best to fill them;
- Increase our knowledge about sport and physical activity as a means to meet policy objectives; and
- Learn how to more effectively work together across departmental and sectoral boundaries and capture this knowledge so that others might benefit from what was learned.

Our Principles

Two primary principles underpin the WTI: **shared leadership** and **contribution**. No single organization has the overall lead; rather, leadership is provided through collaboration. The principle of “contribution” builds on the assets, including experience and expertise, that everyone brings to the table. The organizations and communities – the “sites” – that become involved through specific initiatives (e.g. Wabano Centre, Seine River, Brampton Neighbourhood Recreation Centre) will be an integral part of the learning process in a way that supports their needs. This is a unique and innovative process of collaboration that differs from the way in which governments, NGOs, public institutions, and communities traditionally collaborate. It builds on the good work of other collaborative cross boundary initiatives and will contribute to the knowledge of what it takes to do this effectively to meet complex policy challenges.



Pilot projects with communities as prototypes for innovation

The cornerstone of the WTI is pilot projects with communities as prototypes for innovation. We are learning by doing. At this point, our target populations are children and youth specifically aboriginals and newcomers to Canada.

Criteria for Selecting Pilot Initiatives

Policy Initiatives should:

- Generate interest and commitment from several departments (in addition to PHAC, and Sport Canada) and sport and physical activity leaders;
- Have the potential to test the contribution of sport and physical activity to several policy objectives (e.g. obesity, self esteem, youth leadership, social integration of newcomers, mental health promotion etc.); and
- Make use of available resources and/or align with existing projects and resources.

Three initiatives are moving forward, each with a different combination of involvement and levels of contribution from the departments and NGOs involved:

- **Seine River/Gen 7 – Rural Aboriginal youth**
- **Newcomers Project – Urban immigrant youth (Brampton)**
- **Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health– Urban Aboriginal youth**
(See Annex for Description of pilots.)

Capturing Knowledge through Knowledge Framework Projects (KFP)

The Knowledge Framework Projects are being developed to meet the knowledge-focused objectives of the WTI. There are four separate but interconnected projects:

1. A research agenda has been struck at the Policy Research Initiative, in collaboration with Sport Canada, to provide a framework for policy-makers on how sport and recreation, in a comparative context, can be used to effectively achieve public purposes.
2. A project which addresses “knowledge gaps” through the three pilot initiatives (Seine River, Newcomers, Wabano) including determining how to service their onsite knowledge needs (evaluation etc.)
3. A “learning how to work effectively together” project that enables the WTI group to capture learnings about working together across departmental and sectoral boundaries, with the intention to share these learnings with others.
4. A potential project that captures other community knowledge about using sport and physical activity to achieve community goals in order to make connections and share knowledge. This project is still in the exploratory stage and interested participants are discussing what and how to move forward on this idea.

WTI Architecture

The WTI is led by a group of senior policy leaders from various government departments and NGOs with an interest in achieving multiple policy outcomes through sport and physical activity. As the initiative moves forward, others are invited to join, including community members from



the pilot initiatives. Each pilot initiative and the KFP projects are led by smaller working groups, drawn from members who can make a contribution.

The Public Policy Forum (PPF) is acting as a convener and steward of the group's reflective process about working together for effective collaboration. The PPF works with the WTI to ensure we all learn from the process of working together and that these learnings build upon other evidence from similar projects, that they learnings are captured and shared with a vision of replicating and scaling up these innovations.

What We've Achieved So Far

- 3 pilots funded
- Several departments and NGOS engaged in working collaboratively in communities
- Communities and community organizations engaged in pilots and Learning what it takes to do this effectively
- Learnings about working collaboratively using these principles
- Learnings about engaging the federal system effectively (Potential System changes or opportunities for change) e.g. funding approaches
- Framework for Evaluation of Pilots developed for most advanced project
- Knowledge framework projects in progress or being considered Building on research related to contribution of sport and physical activity

(More detail on specific achievements will be provided at the Working lunch)



Annex

Pilot projects with communities as prototypes for innovation.

Three initiatives are moving forward, each with a different combination of involvement and levels of contribution from the departments and NGOs involved.

Seine River/Gen 7 – Rural Aboriginal youth

This northern Ontario reserve was the site of a successful Gen7 aboriginal youth program which engaged both youth and elders, creating an intergenerational bridge. The current initiative follows up on this success by working with the community to enable more sport and physical activity of youth. Due to demonstrated readiness and community support, funding has been invested in the project from several departments and the project is launched.

Newcomers Project – Urban immigrant youth

The Newcomers project aims to aid in the integration of immigrant youth through sport and physical activity. NGOs, Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), and PHAC are working with the Brampton Neighbourhood Recreation Centre on integration of newcomers.

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health– Urban Aboriginal youth

Wabano Centre in Ottawa runs a number of successful programs for aboriginal youth. They have agreed to work with FNIHB (Health Canada) and Motivate Canada in the coming months on developing a proposal that will extend Wabano's capacity to use sport and physical activity in the community.