

# Using the RE-AIM framework to evaluate the impact of a sport for development program serving marginalized youth

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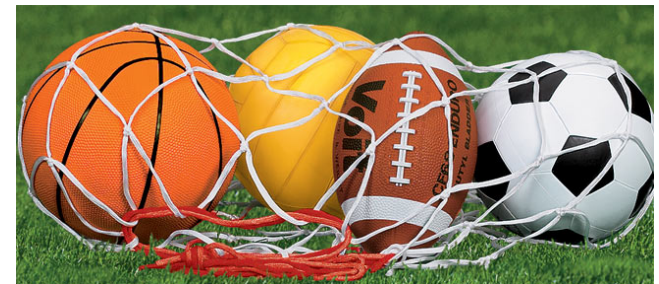
# Sport for Development (SFD)

Youth sport can provide a healthy and developmental context for young people (e.g. Draper, & Coalter, 2016; Bruening, Clark, & Mudrick, 2015)

- Youth learn from their interactions with the social contexts that they are involved in, and the caring adults who act as support and navigators within these contexts

(Holt, 2016; Carson & Gould, 2008)

- Sport programs are a natural setting for positive youth development and can be altered to increase developmental educational, health-related, and social outcomes (Holt, 2016)



# Marginalized/side-lined youth

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Nearly 1.2 million Canadian youth younger than 18 (~17.0%) lived in a low-income household in 2015

(Shina, 2012)

- Less likely to perform well in school leading to drop out (14% from secondary school)

(Brown & Tam, 2017)

- More likely to experience physical and mental health issues

(Bennett & Favaro, 2018)

- More likely to engage in delinquent behaviour including either acts of violence, acts against property or the sale of drugs

(Savoie, 2007)

# Who are ‘*sidelined*’ youth?

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Disengagement from healthy participation in school activity:

- Low credit accumulation (Brown & Tam, 2017; Nols et al., 2017)
- Feeling unsupported (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013)
- Low attendance (Brown & Tam, 2017)
- Delinquent behaviour (Savoie, 2007; Spruit et al., 2018))



# Ahead of the Game (AOTG)

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A not-for-profit organization which aims to provide ‘side-lined’ youth with the support and resources they need to get back in the game.

- Goal: re-engage disengaged youth
- One-on one and group mentorship through themed weekly programs (Identity, communication, etc.)
- Increase self-confidence, develop leadership skills, and become engaged, contributing members of their community

**AHEAD OF  
THE GAME**

# SFD and Program Evaluation

- Typically, researchers external to the program development use surveys to explore participant and program outcomes; however, little to no research has been done performing a full evaluation

(Atsbury & Leeuw, 2010; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom)

- Funder's expectations for program evaluation
  - Reporting of program impact through rigorous scientific evaluation in order to be eligible for continued funding (e.g., Ontario Trillium Foundation)



# RE-AIM Framework

Used to inform the implementation and evaluation of programs

5 factors:

- **Reach:** proportion and representativeness of the target group (individual level)
- **Effectiveness:** impact on intended and unintended outcomes (individual-level)
- **Adoption:** proportion and representativeness of the target staff and settings (organizational-level)
- **Implementation:** program fidelity, costs and program adaptations; use of program strategies (individual and organizational levels)
- **Maintenance:** long-term effects (behaviour change) and program sustainability (individual and organizational levels)

(Glasgow et al., 1999; Glasgow & Estabrooks, 2018)

- Operationalized RE-AIM and used it to evaluate the collective impact of community-based, peer mentorship programs for people with spinal cord Injury  
(Shaw et al., 2019)
- RE-AIM has been applied to evaluate individual programs (typically in healthcare) but seldom used to evaluate the collective impact of community-based, SFD programs

**AHEAD OF  
THE GAME**



# Purpose

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This case study used the RE-AIM approach to evaluate the *Ahead of the Game* (AOTG) Youth Mentoring program facilitated at schools in the Peel District School Board.

1. Operationalize RE-AIM
2. Use it as an evaluation tool



# AOTG's Evaluation Methods

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## AOTG Standard Evaluation:

- Data collected by school staff in the form of online surveys and self-report questionnaires at each AOTG program
- Program facilitators also complete post-session summaries



## RE-AIM Program Evaluation:

- Data from 19 different schools who took part in the AOTG program within the past 7 years (Fall 2012-Winter 2019) were analyzed
- Criteria from all five RE-AIM factors were operationalized to evaluate the AOTG programs on an individual and organizational (i.e., school) level

# Reach

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## *Operationalized as:*

- Total # of students within the program
- Demographics of the program participants (i.e., age and self-identified gender)

## *Outcomes*

- $N = 1,551$  Peel district students have participated
- Males:  $n = 1318$  (~85%); females:  $n = 233$  (~15%)
- Ages 14 to 19 years old

# Effectiveness

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*Operationalized as an increase in engagement in healthy participation in school activity:*

- Earning credits
- Feeling supported
- Attending school/class
- Decreased instances of delinquent behaviour
- Engagement in the program

Program outcomes based on:

- Students who have not earned 16 credits by age 16 are 80% less likely to earn high school diploma within 5 years of enrolment
- Students absent for more than 20% in Grade 10 (over one day a week) dropped out by the end of Year 5

(Brown, 2008)

# Effectiveness

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## *Outcomes*

- Overall increase in class attendance
- Overall decrease in reports of delinquent behaviour and suspensions
- Participants reported increased conflict resolution (~89%), and anger management skills (~90%)

Main reasons for participants' engagement in the AOTG program were:

- supportive environment (~30%)
- opportunity to build positive relationships (~25%)
- opportunity to receive mentorship (~23%)
- opportunity to learn life skills (~22%)

# Adoption

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*Operationalized at the setting level as:*

- Total # of secondary schools who adopted the program in proportion to the total # of secondary schools in Peel
- Total # of Peel secondary schools in impoverished neighbourhoods that adopted the program in proportion to the total # of Peel secondary schools in impoverished neighbourhoods

*Operationalized at the facilitator level as:*

- Total # of school staff directly involved with the program
- Total # of program staff directly involved with the

organization

# Adoption

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## *Outcomes*

### ***Setting***

- 19/42 (~45%) secondary schools in the Peel District School Board have adopted the AOTG program
- 11/14 (~79%) secondary schools in the impoverished neighbourhoods in Peel

### ***Staff***

- 92 school staff (teachers, and administration)
- 12 AOTG mentors, 3 AOTG staff



Is not quite clear what AOTG's evaluation is (are your referring to session summaries)? If so, then how are you able to determine the extent of program delivery if summaries were

ion

the full (12 weeks, 10 themes) AOTG program was completed at each site

## *Outcomes*

- 15/19 (~79%) of the sites carried out the program curriculum in its entirety (12 weeks, 10 themes)
- 5/19 (~26%) sites carried out the program longer than the prescribed 12 weeks
- 3/19 (16%) sites also administered AOTG's evaluation component which includes pre and post online surveys, and attendance records



# Maintenance

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*Operationalized as* the number of times the AOTG program was repeated at a particular school.

## *Outcomes*

- 14/19 (~74%) schools have had the program at their school multiple times:
  - 9 schools have adopted the program twice
  - 1 school three times
  - 1 school four times
  - 3 schools five or more times

Currently, 7 Peel schools are taking part in the program:

- 6 secondary schools, 1 elementary school
- 24 school staff and administrators, 2 AOTG mentors

# Conclusion

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- This study extends the literature on the diverse pragmatic uses of the RE-AIM framework by demonstrating its application to a community-based SFD program for marginalized youth.
- Using RE-AIM, we were able to provide preliminary information regarding the impact of one such SFD program in the region of Peel (Ontario, Canada).
- This evaluation provides suggestions towards the operationalization of multiple variables and measurement of impact of SFD programs in the community.
- It also closes the research to practice gap that challenges many community organizations obligated to report impact to funders.

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