

An Examination of the Implementation and Effectiveness of a Digital Health Tool in Conjunction with an International Sporting Event



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THESIS

The implementation and adherence to a health program will greatly benefit from the use of an international sporting event to interest children and youth. Additionally, this model can be used as a template for future events for the betterment of children and youth across Canada.

ABSTRACT

Children's health in Canada is one of the most significant and population health issues facing Canada today. Canadian children and youth recently ranked 14th when compared to other OECD countries for Health and Safety. Canadian children experience high rates of mental health challenges, they consistently lack daily physical exercise and too often experience obesity due to poor food choices on a daily basis and experience substantial rates of chronic illness such as Type II Diabetes. Children's health in Canada is a national priority and one that all sectors (private sector, public sector, education, health) must find new and innovative solutions to address.

The City of Windsor recently held the 47th International Children's Games August 14-19th, 2013. It is this international sporting event, with its prestige, excitement and healthy living messages that provided the impetus to bring numerous community partners together to commit to and support the provincial vision of creating healthy communities as a local legacy strategy for the City of Windsor, designed to continue well beyond 2013.

In keeping with the goodwill and spirit of the ICG Games, the healthy living pledge and legacy entitled In Sport WE Are One promotes and encourages healthy, active living through physical activity, healthy eating, mental wellness and an active lifestyle, with support from individuals, civic groups, the private sector, volunteer organizations and schools.

METHODS

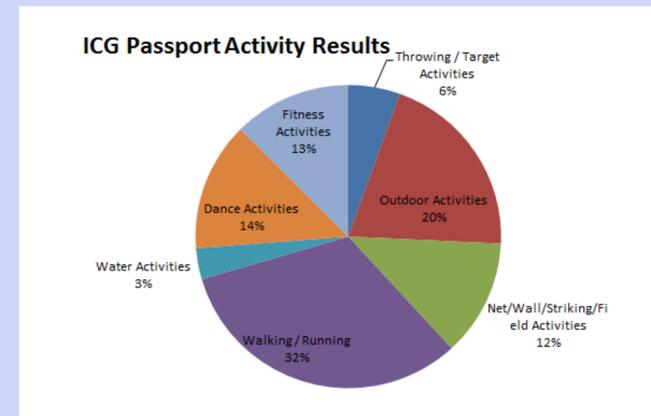
** Add info about Ability Online **

With the success of the pilot phase implemented in 11 elementary schools during the 2012-2013 school year it was evident over 5,000 students participated resulting in a cultural shift with a significant behavioural change towards healthy active living.

Students developed a high level program which centres on the development of an online *Child Health Passport Program* that engages school aged children in an online community that promotes and incentivizes children to engage in physical activity, healthy nutritional behaviors, and positive mental health behaviors that support child health from a holistic perspective.

The In Sport WE Are One legacy initiative was able to engage youth in Windsor, reflecting and showcasing the diversity of our people and our community; celebrate and inspire activism and provide volunteer opportunities amongst youth in our community; create a unique Windsor event that generated pride, fostered teamwork and built enthusiasm and support for the ICG Summer Games all while promoting the peaceful and inspirational Olympic ideals.

An online tracking tool (Ability Online) was engineered to suit kids of all abilities and allow children and youth in Windsor Essex track the In E Are One health program.



FINDINGS

The City of Windsor is now well positioned to become a Global Leader in Child Health Innovation in recognition of the In Sport WE Are One health legacy supported by the many corporate and community partnerships.

Integration of physical activity programs using international sporting events as a vehicle has a positive impact on the development, implementation and effectiveness of the program. There are also many other positive externalities on the sporting event in terms of event market exposure, brand recognition and family health benefits.

DISCUSSION

The City of Windsor is now well positioned to become a Global Leader in Child Health Innovation in recognition of the In Sport WE Are One health legacy supported by the many corporate and community partnerships.

In particular, the tremendous success of the "In Sport WE Are One" health legacy initiative which was designed to complement the hosting of the Windsor Essex 2013 International Children's Games, is one we are quite proud of. Please note, in addition to being recognized as the "Best Youth Initiative" for Festival & Events Ontario, it was determined that the level of success is now considered a benchmark for best practices within the festival and events industry. The partnerships with the school boards, health care professionals, industry and NGO's and over 5,000 students were instrumental to the outcome of this initiative. This award recognizes that Windsor continues to work collaboratively and recognizes these partners have demonstrated their will to continue our effort to enhance the lives of our residents and maintain a healthy active community.

Canada has a well-established record of creating innovative new solutions to health challenges. However, Canada ranks very poorly, relative to other OECD countries, for successful adoption of innovative technologies in the health system.

To ensure that the Passport Program engages all of the key stakeholders and industry partners, and is successful in the process of innovation adoption of the *We are One in Sport Passport Program*, a social media and public relations strategy will be developed and implemented in collaboration with the launch of the International Children's Games initiative. The Sandbox Project along with the Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation will leverage their expertise in innovation adoption and work with student teams at Ivey (Business students, Health Sciences, Health professionals) to work on the Social media strategy to support the successful implementation and testing of the passport program. The Ivey team will examine and document the uptake of the program, measure child health outcomes of student engagement with the Passport Program including the following outcomes:

- Uptake of children using the passport program
- Prevalence of physical activity by age group and gender
- Prevalence and type of nutritional health behaviors
- Prevalence and type of mental health behaviors

The social marketing strategy will disseminate the evidence for the impact of the proposed *We are One in Sport Passport Program* on child health in Windsor-Essex and widely disseminate the findings of the project to all jurisdictions in Canada. The key deliverable for this objective is the fully developed social marketing and knowledge dissemination strategy for the Passport Program to be launched by The Sandbox Project at the completion of the International Children's Games in 2013. This will align with the principles In Sport We Are One program and allow for the development of an excellent global marketing tool for Canadian government

The key deliverable and in-depth outline for this program will be expanded further with the development of the campaign by Western Ivey in years 1 and 2 of the program. This will allow for quality measurements that are specific to the project. The Sandbox Project will use this data in its educational campaigns with stakeholders, including but not limited to, health organizations, charities, not for profit organizations, parents, children and youth, all levels of government and interested individuals.

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The International Children's Games – The International Olympic Committee

Ability Online

The Sandbox Project

Western Ivey Centre For Health Innovation and Leadership

The teachers that made this project a priority and the parents who supported their children.

The students! Who worked so hard and showed these amazing results