

Indigenous Youth Leadership: Engaging Peers in Physical Activity

project proposal for 2012-2013



WHY Previous successes to increase walking & cycling at high school demonstrated the importance of **social capital** in health and environmental promotion. This project aims to facilitate youth-led groups in developing events, activities and materials that will encourage teenagers (and children) to increasingly choose and enjoy daily forms of physical activity.

WHAT Indigenous youth groups in five global centres will be supported in developing events, activities and promotional materials aimed at getting their peers more physically active.

Each youth group will increase their awareness of health issues relating to routine physically activity and then turn their attention towards building skills to make physical activity (including walking & cycling) more appealing, safe and convenient for their peers.

The youth leaders will be encouraged to build on their own personal strengths, creativity and local conditions in order to contribute to a wide selection of youth-led health promotion strategies. Sharing these materials, experiences and successes will allow the youth groups to gain constructive feedback about their efforts, and to adapt each other's strategies within their own community.

Each group will develop, implement and revise at least two resources; a print resource (poster, 'zine...') and a video recording.

Groups will 'virtually' present their findings to each other.

locations of interested youth groups



recruiting local youth leaders



group-building & new skills



planning



outreach to peers



sharing successes



WHERE This project aims to benefit from a cross-national approach. Preliminary conversations about this opportunity have generated interest within locations as diverse as Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic (*Population Health*), the Western Australia outback (*Health Department*), the Menominee Indian Reservation (*Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, USA*), a Marae in Auckland, and an inner-city Vancouver high school aboriginal enrichment class.

HOW Indigenous youth groups in a variety of locations will implement a youth-led effort to increase levels of physical activity amongst their peers.

1. **Recruitment** - a small group of a 7-15 local youths will be invited to build their leadership skills in a supported effort to make physical activity (including walking & cycling) more appealing, safe and convenient for peers within their community
2. **Group Building** - welcoming, acceptance, cohesion, individual & group motivation and personal goals
3. **Support** - awareness about health promotion, daily physical activity needs and existing activities and events to encourage physical activity amongst teenagers
4. **Planning & networking** - assessment of local conditions and levels of physical activity, generate ideas and goals to engage peers in physical activity, share stories between youth groups to encourage feedback and support
5. **Implementation** - local outreach events, activities, resources, documentation, evaluation
6. **Follow-up** - opportunities for youth groups to relate their experiences, successes and learning with each other
7. **Next steps** - continue implementation to maintain higher levels of physical activity and share process with new indigenous youth groups

WHO Recruitment and outreach at each location will be co-ordinated by a local indigenous organization working towards health promotion. Costs will include the support and co-ordination of a local Youth Worker in each location. Each youth group's events, activities and resources would be dependent on local conditions and levels of funding. Activities could include cycling skills (building, racing, touring and/or maintaining a bicycle), road safety awareness (walking & cycling) and access to facilities for individual and team sports.

Project co-ordination will be led by Arthur Orsini, Youth Engagement Facilitator at Urbanthinkers. Arthur has worked on active transportation projects since 1995. The focus of his work is empowerment and creative strategies for youth leaders to engage their peers in walking and cycling activities. Arthur has worked across Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. In 2000, he received an OECD award for the first secondary school car-trip reduction program. More recently his chapter *Learning without Teaching: Youth-Led Programs to Reduce Car-Trips to School* was published in [Emancipatory Practices: Adult/Youth Engagement for Social and Environmental Justice](#) by Sense Publishers.

Arthur's architectural thesis project received a tobacco blessing from elders at the final presentation of *Mawandjihidig: the House of the First Peoples*.

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