

Running head: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF A STRENGTH TRAINING FACILITY ON  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: CREE NATION OF CHISASIBI

Exploring the Role of a Strength Training Facility on Community Development: Cree Nation of  
Chisasibi

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### **Abstract**

Community development (CD) is viewed as a way to improve the social, physical, organizational and economic outcomes of a community. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of a strength training facility on CD and provide an insight into its impact on the community.

Qualitative research was conducted by two data collection exercises. The first was a 12-week period, while the second was one week long. A segmented thematic analysis was used to explore the data provided by three target groups and participants' observations. The findings provided insight into the facility's contribution to CD in particular, noting that a strength training facility can influence personal, economic, social, environmental and organizational outcomes within a community. The research contributes to the existing literature in leisure by providing evidence of CD from a remote First Nations community. The research reveals how arrangements for physical activities can improve the welfare of a community.

**Key words:** community development, Chisasibi, strength training facility, community leisure initiative model, First Nations, recreation and leisure.

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## **Chapter 1.0: Introduction**

The word community comes from the Latin term *communis*, which means shared by all, or many (Schulenkorf, 2012). There are different types of classifications when describing a community. The term is not limited to simply a geographical location; it also includes individual factors such as shared interests, culture, and social status (Lindsey, Stajduhar & McGuinness, 2001). Within the context of this research, it will include geographic location but also shared interests and culture. It is said, “to create and develop a community, people in groups need to engage and participate in common practices, and be committed to making decisions in cooperation with each other” (Schulenkorf, 2012, p. 3).

Community development (CD) is considered as a process of cooperation and self-help among residents of a certain location, aimed at improving physical, social and economic conditions (Chavis & Florin, 1990). CD programming can be an effective tool to improve community outcomes. Within the literature, the concept is often connected to recreation programming (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). It has been linked to being impactful in regards to certain social, physical, organizational and economic influences (Gravelle, Karlis, Adjizian & Auger, 2015).

There are various strategies that can be implemented to facilitate CD. This includes technical assistance, self-help and mixed methods. Technical assistance involves seeking external experts to help in the CD process. This strategy is undertaken when the necessary expertise is not readily available within the community (Schulenkorf, 2010). Self-help involves generating community programs based on existing community knowledge and expertise (Hunt,

1995). Community members often have an intimate knowledge of the unique characteristics of their locality. This information can be beneficial in the CD process. The third strategy is a mixed methods approach, which would include utilizing the expertise of technical assistance while taking into consideration the unique knowledge generated from self-help. This type of collaboration can be implemented to improve community outcomes (Willmott, 1988).

Within remote communities, there are certain considerations and characteristics that may make CD more challenging. These challenges include the implications associated with a remote geographical location, access to resources and under certain circumstances, a limited economy (Searle & Brayley, 1993). Therefore, the case of a remote community may provide unique insight into the evidence of these challenges.

The research discussed is important because it provides insight to an understudied population and theme. There is very little literature available, which explores CD within remote communities. The context for this research is a remote First Nations community. According to Wesley-Esquimaux and Calliou (2010), First Nations localities are often contending with the implication of two cultures, which are western and First Nation culture. First Nations leaders have been described as having the role of revitalizing and reshaping their communities (Begay, 1997).

The literature describes that CD programs have the potential to provide the necessary framework to enhance what Lawson (2005) refers to as “human health and well-being across the lifespan” (p. 140). For these reasons, it is beneficial to explore the role of recreation programs on CD within a First Nations community. This would not only add to the available research on CD, recreation and First Nations, but also provide further context for certain challenges faced by

remote or First Nations communities in the present day. In summary, there are many challenges associated with development within remote communities and First Nations communities. This research provides insight to how a remote First Nations community has taken steps towards prioritizing CD through its leadership and community programs.

### **1.1: The Community**

Chisasibi, meaning Great River in Cree, is located in James Bay, Quebec. The community is the most Northern Cree population accessible by road. The most recent Canadian census statistics illustrated a population just over 5,000 (Council & Chief, 2016). The Cree Nation of Chisasibi was officially created in 1980. Prior to this time, the members lived on a nearby island named Fort George.

The Cree Nation of Chisasibi has traditionally practiced a hunter's lifestyle. The community has strong roots to this history. For example, they have various community wide holidays that prioritize the importance of hunting and practicing their traditional lifestyle. This includes "Goose Break", and "Moose Break." Both examples last for 2 to 3 weeks during the year (Chisasibi.org, 2016). During this time, families routinely go to their remote traditional hunting grounds. Many of these traditional hunting camps are only accessible by airplane, skidoo, or boat. Therefore these holidays are not representative of typical western culture holidays, where families may travel to tropical locations. These traditional holidays are much more physically demanding, and akin to their historical lifestyle. Hunting and fishing is not only seen as a recreational activity, but also as a source of livelihood (Chisasibi.org, 2016). Hunters live an extremely demanding and physically active lifestyle. This is an example of the cultural traditions that are aligned with the Cree people of the James Bay region.

Goose Break, Moose Break, and Mamweedow are significant community celebrations, which give community members a chance to connect with their traditional lifestyle. Throughout the weeklong celebration of Mamweedow, there are shooting competitions, strength competitions, daily feasts of traditional meats, and singing and dancing gatherings. The community wide celebration represents the literal sequence of hunting. Traditionally, a hunter would shoot the animal, which would require a good shot. Then the hunter would carry the bounty of his kill back to his family to share with his community, which would require a tremendous amount of physical strength. The meat would then be traditionally cooked and consumed in the hunter's teepee or shelter. Once the family was satiated from the meal, they would engage in song and dance as a form of enjoyment and gratitude.

Mamweedow takes place outside of Chisasibi, on an island called Fort George. Fort George was where the community was previously located until 1980. The Cree people have lived in the surrounding region for many centuries but historically they were nomadic (Chisasibi.org, 2016). In 1803, the Hudson's Bay Company founded Fort George, which was established as a trading post where the Cree people would exchange their hunted pelts and traditional items. As a result, Fort George became a permanent community for the Cree people and the community grew from a few hundred in the 1800's to 2,000 in 1980. Due to the construction of the James Bay Hydroelectric Dams, the community was forced to move from the island because of the associated risks of the heightening water levels (Chisasibi.org, 2016). They have since lived inland in Chisasibi.

More in line with current western culture, within the community itself there is a state of the art strength training facility, used by over 1000 members. The facility is important because it

is the only health and fitness related environment within the community, excluding the baseball diamond, ice surface and the school gymnasium. As explained by the Elite Strength and Conditioning Camp (2016), the facility offers information and physical resources regarding health promotion and access to health professionals. This is significant because there are very limited options for community members due to the nature of the harsh weather conditions in the north.

Situated at the center of town, it acts as the hub for healthy lifestyle and physical activity promotion, while working in collaboration with other community organizations. The facility has very strong roots with the young people of the community. It acts as a positive environment where youth can come after school to stay active and spend time with friends and older community members. There are many challenges faced by youth in the community including drugs, alcohol, high school dropout, and depression. Therefore, having a positive environment like the strength training facility seems to be well received by youth. The employees of the facility provide various services to community members with the motive to teach and encourage them to practice healthy lifestyle habits. Through recreational funding and programming, the community has influenced and introduced a growing number of individuals to various forms of physical activity.

The strength training facility within the community operated within the larger recreation department. Therefore the two organizations collaborate on a daily basis. Each group has a vested interest in planning and conducting community based programs that involve physical activity. The facility represents the case for this research. The recreation department is also influential in the development and programming of the strength training facility, as it oversees

the organization. Collectively, both organizations collaborate to increase the quality of physical activity-based community programs. From this point forward, all activities, programs and events that are facilitated by the strength training facility, will be referred to as facility programs.

## **1.2: Purpose of Study**

Lawson (2005) argued that it is in the best interest of community members that CD is understood and prioritized as the benefits may contribute to an enhancement of individual well-being and the strengthening of social networks and collective identities. Additionally, recreation-based CD programming has been linked to positive impact to economic, social, organizational and environmental influences (Gravelle, et. al., 2015). Lastly, physical activities have been noted as catalysts for improving self-esteem, willingness to engage in new activities and self-development (Horn, 2008).

The following study provides unique perspective through exploring the role of recreation programming on CD, within a First Nations community. This is important because the nature of the study and its themes are understudied in the literature. This knowledge will add to the available research, and may prove to be informative to other remote and First Nations communities. As an understudied theme within First Nations research, the case could be helpful for other localities. There is a need for more literature on CD within the context of remote communities, and this case contributes to filling that void.

The purpose of the research was to explore the role of the strength training facility on CD. Additionally, the research may provide insight for other remote communities. If the facility is proven to have an impact on CD, this particular case study may provide valuable information for other remote communities that need implementation of similar programs.

In order to effectively address the purpose, the community leisure initiative model, a framework that describes the processes of CD, will be used (Gravelle, & et. al., 2015). The framework was created as a revised version of the model for recreation organizations created by Karlis, Auger and Gravelle (1996). This tool will provide the structure to explore the role of the strength training facility on CD.

### **Operational Definitions**

**Community development:** considered as a process of cooperation and self-help among residents of a certain location, aimed at improving physical, social and economic conditions (Chavis & Florin, 1990).

**The community:** refers to the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, located in James Bay, Quebec, Canada.

**The Facility:** refers to the Cree Nation of Chisasibi community strength training facility

**The community leisure initiative model:** represents the theoretical framework used, as described by Gravelle et al., (2015).

**Personal impact:** discusses the influence physical activities may have on overall self-esteem, confidence, and community engagement.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1: Community Development**

In 1968, Jack Rothman's published the "Three Models of Community Organization Practice," which officially introduced the concept of CD. It was referred to as locality development in Rothman's discussion and helped kick start the pursuit of research relating to CD in North America. CD programs are a strategy in which community leaders and planners can work to improve various characteristics of a shared group. They have been described as a means to contribute to direct social impact, which may lead to long-term social outcomes for communities (Schulenkorf, 2012). However it should be recognized that CD is an ongoing process, as the development of a locality remains ever changing due to the dynamic nature of the present time.

Christenson and Robinson (1989) described CD as "a group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation" (P. 14). Since the term was defined in literature, it has been described as a method to ultimately benefit current and future community members through numerous avenues. Whether ones motive is to benefit himself or herself or the community as a whole, CD is meant to produce positive growth. Through community member engagement, constant planning and discussion is had on basis of improving communal outcomes as a whole.

### **2.2: Leisure and Recreation**

The topic of CD is inherently connected to leisure and recreation within the context of this paper. This is due to the fact that the research topic is rooted within an activity-based facility, which is situated within the community's recreation department. Additionally, the

model being used to describe the development of strength training facility was formulated on the basis of CD research within the realm of leisure and recreation-based departments. It is important to note the distinction between leisure and recreation, yet it is also important to realize that these concepts are often interconnected within the present day. Within the context of this research, the recreation department oversees community based leisure and recreation programs. For this reason, it is important to discuss the traditional definitions of leisure and recreation.

To most effectively describe leisure, it is important to discuss work of the ancient previous scholars, whom have laid the foundation for contemporary leisure studies. Aristotle and Plato, both believed that leisure in itself was an end. Meaning, it is intrinsically rewarding and beneficial to engage in leisure (Hunnicut, 2006). Leisure is said to connect people to what it means to be human (Hunnicut, 2006). Additionally, both Aristotle and Plato believed that leisure lead to play, which was conducive to learning and improving community members (Hunnicut, 1990). Moreover, Hunnicutt (1990) asserts that engaging in leisure pursuits can further develop the participants physically, mentally, spiritually and socially.

Generally, “leisure scholars tend to consider leisure as the overall container for positive experiences and may include activity-based pursuits, as well as the state of being reflective and experiencing freedom” (Caldwell & Witt, 2011, p. 13.). Through engagement in leisure, community members can improve themselves and collectively improve the society as a whole. Leisure activities are often associated with being positive to one’s development (Hunnicut, 1990). Pieper (1952) argued that community members do not live to work, but work in order to have leisure. Scholars have continued to build a case on the importance of leisure, which is based on the notion that it provides the context for bettering oneself. In addition, leisure-based

initiatives within a community can often provide the means for increased civic engagement (Putnam, 2001). As a result, for the context of this research, leisure will be viewed as an activity-based experience, which can improve oneself and collectively a community as a whole.

Recreation refers to experiences and activities individuals engage in as a means to recreate or refresh oneself for mandatory duties such as work or civic obligations (Ap, 1986). Recreation-based activities are taken on outside of work duties as a mode of restoring. During recreation activities leisure may also be experienced. Recreation-based initiatives often provide the context and environment for individuals to become engaged in their communities. Thus engaging in leisure pursuits within the context of recreation-based initiatives allows for increased civic engagement and the introduction to larger interest based communities (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). Through actively refreshing oneself for work, community members can additionally contribute to bettering themselves and their communities.

Recreation activities can be beneficial to participants in many ways. That is why recreation is often linked to CD. Recreation and leisure has been said to have an impact on self-esteem, confidence and well-being. Horn (2008) argued that physical activity could have an influence on personal self-esteem. Additionally, physical inactivity may stunt a person's self-esteem and limit their willingness to engage in self-development (Horn, 2008). The intervention hypothesis described by Fox (2002) poses that self-development is generated through the development of physical abilities related to health, fitness and general appearance. Therefore through engagement and promotion of recreation and leisure activities, communities may increase the self-development of its members.

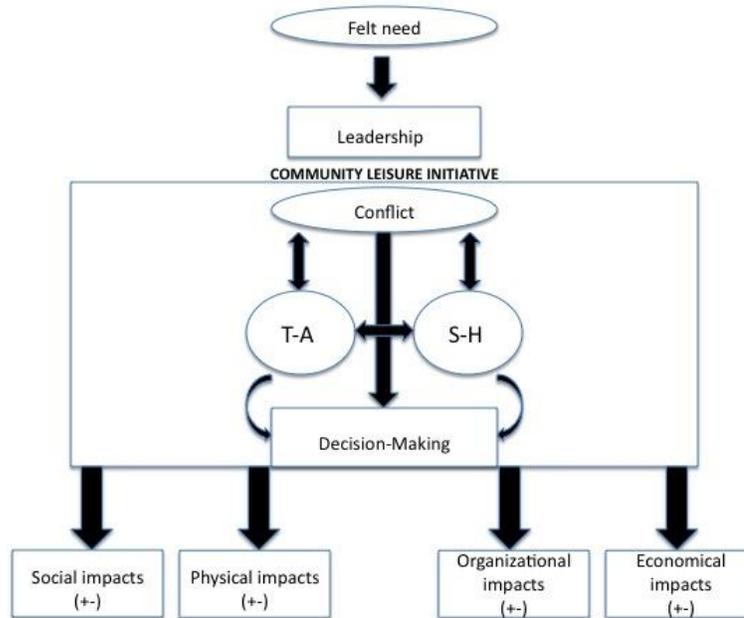
The most apparent example within community leadership is of leisure and recreation is

recreation departments. Recreation departments, according to Reid (2006), work to prioritize leisure and recreation services within a given township, city or community population.

Recreation departments often utilize CD processes as a means of developing long-term health related programs (Horn, 2008). Their responsibility is to implement both human and fiscal resources to organize programs and infrastructure to provide an outlet for recreation. Moreover, recreation departments are poised with the task to design and implement procedures that best facilitate leisure and recreation for community members. Optimal initiatives consider both daily and long-term usability and utility according to Reid (2006). For the context of this research, recreation will be referred to as an activity or experience that is used to restore or refresh individuals from their work or civic duties.

### **2.3: Community Leisure Initiative Model**

The community leisure initiative model was developed by building on the model for recreation organizations, which will be discussed below. The model for recreation organizations presented a theoretical perspective on how CD contributes within recreation programming (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). Gravelle et al. (2015) worked to reformulate the model, taking into consideration the major insights developed within CD research between 1996 and 2015. Figure 1 below shows the community leisure initiative model (Gravelle, Karlis, Adjizian & Auger, 2015).



**Figure 1: Community leisure initiative model**

#### 2.4: Development phase

The first phase provided by the model aids one's understanding of the development of the various community programs. The development phase explores why the community leaders decide and prioritize various resources, based on the needs of the community.

***Felt need.*** CD strategies are put in place to address a felt need defined by community leaders and members. Karlis, et. al. (1996) described this notion by explaining that decision-making occurs in order to address a desired change. This desired change originates mainly from a specific need, which most often directly impacts community members (Gravelle, et. al., 2015). Through working to address the need defined, community members will improve a given locality.

Felt needs are additionally described as communal demands (Bhattacharyya, 2004). The theme of felt need is grounded on the principle that, needs are logical and based on rational opinions of community members (Vayda, 1983). Demands and concerns of community members should be seriously considered due to the premise that individuals pay taxes and therefore reserve the right to express their opinions relating to their community. The literature argues that development related projects, in general, should respond to community needs as stated by Bhattacharyya (2004). Community leaders are often elected officials, within the context of the democratic systems seen in North America. It is in the best interest of elected officials to identify and address felt needs evident within a community.

## **2.5: Production Phase**

The production phase describes the various factors that influence a community program. This relates to which particular strategies affect the decision making process when formulating community programs. The factors included in the production phase include technical assistance, and self-help.

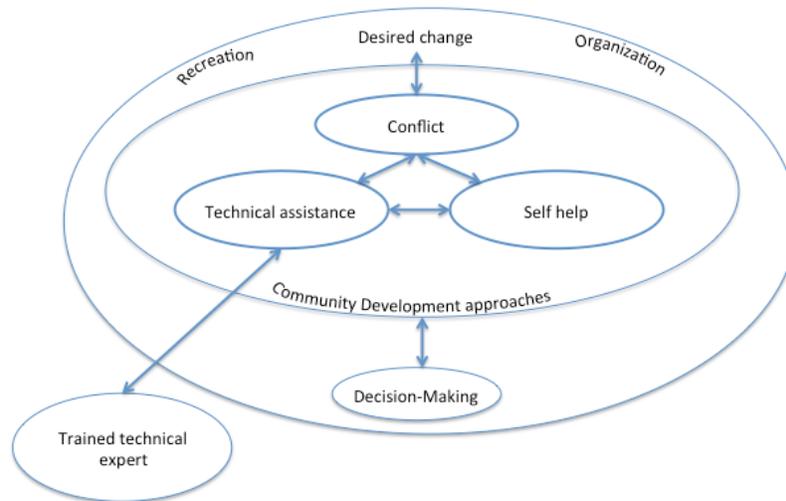
*Technical assistance.* It is important to establish effective partnerships within the context of CD. Various strategies are listed within the literature to support community programming and participation. Technical assistance is used to develop expertise that is not readily available within the community (Gravelle, et. al., 2015). Most often, these expert consultants develop partnerships through private, public or the academic sector. By enlisting in the help of outside technical assistance, communities can gain the expertise and knowledge they desire to help formulate current and future initiatives.

*Self-help.* Self-help is considered a certain type of development, which has individuals helping other individuals to fulfill social needs, as explained by Hunt (1995). This process, (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996), “assumes that people come together, examine their situation, design strategies to deal with various aspects of their environment and then implement plans for improvement” (p. 133). CD programs that employ self-help strategies involve aspects of both community participation and community empowerment. In order to most effectively address social, cultural and economic needs, the importance of community participation and community empowerment must be considered.

*Conflict.* Karlis, Auger and Gravelle (1996), also identified conflict as a factor. Conflict is a result of the struggle for power, which they assume is inherently involved due to the nature of dealing with allocated budgets and limited resources. The decision makers who possess the power will ultimately decide the best course of action by consultation through technical assistance and self-help. Within the context of CD, there is an element of conflict that influences both technical assistance and self-help measures. As there is ultimately a struggle for power due to various actors working collectively to supply policy or programs on a particular case. The leadership must consider this conflict and try to effectively use the endogenous and exogenous views and opinions to choose the most appropriate course of action (Gravelle, et. al., 2015).

It is important to note that community leaders and members understand the cultural and social intricacies that must be considered when evaluating what types of leisure and recreation

development is most appropriate. The model below discusses CD as it relates specifically to the context of conflict and recreation organizations (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996).



**Figure 2: A model for recreation organizations**

It is argued by Lawson (2005) that the benefits for both the individual and groups may include gaining an enhanced understanding of themselves and environments, developing collective identities and social solidarity, gaining resources and power, enabling individuals to achieve personal and collective goals, and enhancing individual and collective capacities to sustain their achievements. These outcomes listed are possible results associated with programs that develop a particular community. CD has been described as “a group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e. an intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, or environmental situation” (Christenson, Fendley & Robinson, 1989, p. 3). It is evident throughout the literature that engagement and participation of community members is a key component of CD and it may be such. Through community participation, resource conflict can be managed, as power is not given to a single decision maker.

Bhattacharyya (2004) emphasizes that participation remains one of the most essential aspects of CD. He describes that participation is needed in order to logically identify and address a community felt need. This notion may help in overcoming the potential conflict that occur. Without the participation of community members through self-help strategies, it would be difficult to ensure that the course of action being taken is appropriate. CD may involve conflict, yet this can be dispelled by its inclusive nature being emphasized.

## **2.6: Impact phase**

The final phase provided by the model is the impact phase, which helps in gaining a better understanding of how community programs influence social impact, physical impact, organizational impact, and economic impact. These impacts may be considered positive and or negative (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). If programming goes against public opinion and initiatives are not appropriate for a particular community, negative externalities may be associated with CD.

***Social impact.*** Social impact is related to the influence of recreational programming on social capital and social inclusion within the community (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). Within the context of a social impact, the main characteristics to consider are an increase in social capital, social networks, collective identities, and overall social inclusion. According to Putnam (2001), the term social capital at its most fundamental form indicates that social networks have significant value in relation to the maintenance and quality of a community. An increase in positive social capital is dictated by an increase in communal mutual support, cooperation and trust (Putnam,

2001). The term will be explored in depth as it summarizes the presence of social networks, collective identities and inclusion criteria.

Social networks can be organized formally through partnerships or informally on a voluntary participation basis (Putnam, 2001). There are two forms of social capital, which are listed as the bridging and or bonding of individuals or groups (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). The bridging of social capital specifically works to bring people and various groups together. The bridging described is inclusive in nature. The bonding form works to discuss intergroup relations. Exploring this concept further may help identify how the concept can have a social impact. It is evident that individuals using a shared facility are connected through a reciprocity-based relationship. Reciprocity-based relationships, as described by Gittell and Vidal (1998), are a key feature to the bonding form of social capital.

***Physical impact.*** Gravelle, et. al. (2015) explains that increased resources influence the physical space. Within the context of recreation initiatives, facilities, infrastructure, and equipment is often remodeled and replaced for community members. Green and Haines (2008), allude to the fact that the topic of CD strategies has grown in popularity due to the fact that they are employed under many circumstances. Regardless of the circumstance, financial resources most often support these strategies. The increase in resources often has an impact of the physical space and capabilities of a community. As resources increase so too will the capabilities of the physical space being utilized.

***Organizational impact.*** Organizational impacts are seen through the fostered relationships between organizations that often arise through the planning and

production of community initiatives. There are many benefits described in the literature, which emphasize the positive influence that organizational collaboration can have.

Collaboration among organizations is depicted as the sharing and exchanging of resources to increase desired outcomes (Himmelman, 2004). Through the intervention of a certain program or initiative, community organizations can effectively work together to improve their collective capacities. In many cases CD initiatives provide the ideal circumstance for inter community collaboration to occur. Community organizations generally have the best interest of the community in mind. Therefore it provides the context for mutual collaboration in order to improve outcomes for community members. Provided that organizations are working alongside one another to address the felt need identified.

Collaboration is described as benefiting access to services, and is said to be beneficial to families and community youth (Bai, Wells & Hillemeier, 2009). Collective impact is described as a type of collaboration that can be viewed within a locality. It occurs when groups from different organizations and sectors contribute to a certain initiative (Hicks, et. al., 2016). Collective impact has been beneficial to various community related subjects such as education and health care (Kania & Kramer, 2011). In addition, by working together, organizations can ensure there is not duplication of services evident within a given community. It also logically makes more sense to collaborate and pool resources to increase probability of the desired outcomes (Tseng, Liu & Wang, 2011). Furthermore, organizational impact can occur between many groups. This may include academics, government agencies, social services and community organizations, as outlined by Roman, Jenkins and Wolff (2006); Rosenbaum and Schuck (2012).

*Economic impact.* Gravelle, et. al. (2015) described the economic impact as a significant benefit to CD programming. This can be viewed through job opportunities, increased property value of homes within proximity to green spaces, the revitalization of various neighborhoods and the development of tourism (Sherer, 2006). The economic impact of recreation and leisure initiatives are not extensively documented in Canada and the literature provides little explanations on how programs influence economic outcomes in communities (Gravelle, et al., 2015). Therefore, more research is needed to understand the economic impact of CD programming.

Human capital development is related to an increase in the level of experience, competency and specialization of a workforce. This theme is a large factor in economic growth and poverty reduction (Son, 2010). Through the process of human capital development individuals become more experienced, knowledgeable and skilled employees. This development provides employees with the tools to improve individual and organizational productivity (Putnam, 2001). It is argued that the “accumulation of human capital improves labor productivity, facilitates technological innovations, increases returns to capital and makes growth more sustainable. Education increases the probability of being employed in the labor market and improves earnings capacity” (Son, 2010, p. 1). Therefore as sustainable jobs are created, employees become more skilled and dynamic in their qualities. The ongoing process of human capital development may result in the accumulation of a highly skilled workforce.

## **2.7: Remote Community Development**

There are many challenges associated with remote community development, which are enhanced due to the nature and implications of a remote location (Searle & Brayley, 1993). Rural

and remote planners face many similar challenges that urban planners do not face. Remote planning is different and most often more complex than urban planning because, “areas are complex, diverse and rapidly changing, and they have characteristics, planning needs and styles of governance that are different from those of urban and suburban areas” (Frank & Reiss, 2014, p. 389). Frank and Reiss (2014) assert that, the infrastructure necessary to provide desirable recreation opportunities are much more profitable in urban areas. There are opportunities for organizations within the private sector to capitalize on the demand for such services. The reality within remote areas is quite the opposite; due to the smaller population sizes there is very little interest for organizations in the private sector to provide services (Frank & Reiss, 2014). Community recreation departments in remote areas, therefore, have the additional challenge of dealing with smaller populations and fewer resources.

Within the literature, remote community development fringes on participation and understanding key characteristics. These characteristics include cultural, social, economic, and health related factors, that are specific to a particular location. Remote community identity, (Woods & Doeksen, 2003), is often most explained and associated with place and community. This identity is best prioritized when community programming emphasizes “place making, community building and sustainability, integrated and dynamic understanding of landscape functionality and drivers including the human and economic dimensions” (Lapping, 1989, p. 53).

The self-help technique previously described is especially important in remote locations (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). Bottom up approaches help to identify what services are most desired by community members. This technique is in opposition to what is considered western leadership approaches, which focus solely on rapid return on investments, pertaining to

economic development (Schulenkorf, 2012). CD is concerned with more holistic, community wide, objectives, that cannot be measured simply by an efficient return on investment.

The literature explains that there is often a “sense of place” associated with remote communities, which can be described as a connection between a person and a place that may influence behavior and shape experiences (Smale, 2006). There are various reasons why the concept of sense of place should be understood within the realm of CD and recreation development. It is argued that “place shifts attention to the subjective lived experience of location, to the profound meanings we ascribe to it and to the wholly human experience of place” (Smale, 2006, p. 370). In remote locations, recreation infrastructure can often provide the desired sense of place, which community members may associate with great intrinsic value. “While places might be associated with the physical locations defined as space, a space does not become a place until it achieves some deeper meaning; “it is the awareness of the spirit associated with place and the qualities it possesses” (Smale, 2006, p. 370). This idea also speaks to the everyday utility of CD programming, which can be used to facilitate long-term community wide benefits. The notion of sense of place is said to provide spiritual and traditional connections between the past and present (Smale, 2006). In addition, Johnston (1992) argues that it provides essential points to sense of self, enhances essential community functions that over time can development into something that symbolizes more than just utility value, are often made to be accessible to the public and offer the possibility for repeated use, and lastly, provide a location where people can gather and act as a community. While there are often clear limitations to resources in rural locations, sense of place is an ideal that relates community environment or infrastructure with an intrinsic value that cannot be measured through monetary or material means. This makes it especially applicable to remote locations.

The literature explains that there are main aspects to consider in relation to remote community development. These facets are involved in urban planning, but take on more significance in the remote locations. Key features listed in the research include, sustainability, design of the built and natural environments, land use planning, community engagement, regional collaboration and rural-urban linkages as highlighted by Frank and Reiss (2014). It is clear that living within an urban setting and living within a remote setting indicate fundamental differences in environment and lifestyle (Frank & Reiss, 2014). Yet, it is important to evaluate whether or not the recreational services and programs within remote areas are comparable to those within urban settings.

Furthermore, the overall size of various shared interest groups within remote areas will undoubtedly be smaller. This point alludes to the ongoing challenge within recreation departments of smaller remote communities (Reid, 2009). Community leaders often have insufficient funding and must rationally decide how to allocate resources among the space to best service members of various age, gender and interest groups (Reid, 2009). Through prioritizing community participation and engagement, it is possible to identify which areas of recreational development would be most appropriate. Through utilizing self-help techniques and technical assistance, it is possible to create a fruitful partnership that may lead to an enhancement of CD (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996).

## **2.8: First Nations Community Development**

There has been very little research on the topic of CD within First Nations communities. For this reason it is important to discuss characteristics that are relevant to the topic of CD and First Nations localities. Many communities are remote in their geographic location, which as

described enhances the challenges of typical CD methods in urban areas. Literature explains that, (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010), within the context of Aboriginal leadership and development, community leaders are constantly contending with the implications of two different cultures “western” and “First Nations”. Discussing the role of CD within Aboriginal communities is significant because, as stated by (Lawson, 2005), they have the potential to provide the necessary framework to enhance “human health and well-being across the lifespan” (p. 140).

Communities and individuals in leadership positions are dealing with the externalities associated with colonialism. Colonialism is defined Czyzewski (2010) as “the control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory or people” (p. 1). A term to describe this concept, that may more accurately portray the context within Canadian history, is called settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006). This is a tactic used by a settled state to eliminate Indigenous populations through overt and covert methods and policies (Wolfe, 2006). Due to the effects of colonialism on First Nations populations, many communal issues have arisen, which pose significant challenges to community leadership. Leaders have the vast responsibility that includes reconstruction, reuniting, reshaping and revitalizing culture and community (Begay, 1997).

Recreation and leisure services may provide the necessary infrastructure and environment to bring community members together through increased involvement, empowerment and participation (Karlis, Auger & Gravelle, 1996). Both young and old First Nations individuals face challenges in regards to daily physical activity, and culturally relevant recreational programming. The main influencer for these issues is the presence of colonialism, residential

schools, and government policies of assimilation (Wilson, et al., 2011). These factors contribute to the various challenges involved in CD programs. The literature argues and references the importance of community participation and involvement in the development of various recreational initiatives (Barnett & Kendall, 2011). Self-help strategies are especially important, as the method would ensure that culturally relevant plans are prioritized. It is also very important to involve Elders and community leaders in the development process, as they understand the unique cultural needs of the community (McKee, Clarke, Kmetic & Reading, 2009). CD programs must be suitable for community members; programs that are not appropriate will not benefit the community for long and will not be sustainable.

Physical activity based community programming, such as hockey, has been shown to be a catalyst for mobilizing First Nation community members while generating sustainable community outcomes (MacIntosh, Arellano & Forneris, 2016). Yet, it is important that the programming implemented is culturally relevant and of interest to community members. For certain remote Cree communities the sport of ice hockey is viewed as culturally relevant and an effective medium to influence positive social change (MacIntosh, et al., 2016). Additionally, strength training has been shown to be a positive contributor to social outcomes in remote Cree communities as stated by the 'Elite Strength and Conditioning Camp' (2016).

The literature provides an overview of certain best practices that are evident within various First Nations communities. Best practices are considered proven methods or techniques that can enhance the chances of desired outcomes (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). They are based off of lessons learned by a particular group, which can be passed on in order to share insightful lessons. Best practices are significant because they provide knowledge that can help

maximize the allocation of resources to best suit community needs (Plate, Foy & Krehbiel, 2009).

It is important to acknowledge the discourse associated with “best practices,” as the term is often associated with optimal organizational practices within western economic ideology (Tamini, Larue & West, 2012). It is evident that what may be considered successful within the western ideology is much different from that in First Nations communities according to Cornell (1987). In addition, it should be noted that just because something worked in one location, it does not mean that it will work in another location. Various communities have significant cultural identities and social norms that must be considered in the management and governing process (Hofstede, 1980). Identifying best practices is simply a possible technique that can be utilized to potentially provide insight between diverse groups.

As stated with regards to CD literature, a mixed methods CD approach of self-help and technical assistance can be utilized to develop appropriate programming for a community (Gravelle, et. al, 2015). Wesley-Esquimaux and Calliou (2010) have provided certain aspects that are related to First Nations leadership and planning. They explain that planning should consider “identity and culture, leadership, strategic vision and planning, governance and management, accountability and stewardship performance evaluation, and collaborations, partnerships and external relations” (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010 p. 22). It is important to have knowledge regarding what encompasses First Nations leadership, as described in the literature.

Chino and DeBruyn (2006) explain the idea of capacity building, which is framed to be specifically relevant to Indigenous research. The term has many similarities to the ideas relevant

and relatable to CD. The authors explain, with regards to capacity building, that First Nations communities need to “develop not only health care services but also the underlying theoretical frameworks and strategies for positive change. Tribes must be able to advocate for indigenous health in ways appropriate to the needs and realities of indigenous communities” (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006, 596). Literature describes various types of capacities as forms of participation, leadership, social supports, sense of community, access to resources and skills related to empowerment. CD and developing capacities are relatable terms, yet it seems that describing capacity building initiatives has significant relevance to First Nations cultures. It is argued many strategies fail because “western definitions of success and the expected benefits to the community differ greatly from tribal expectations. Western models too often assume that mainstream resources and skills exist and just need to be identified and defined on the community’s terms” (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006, 596). Overall, literature argues that there is a need for identifiable framework, which will aid in a development process for First Nations communities.

## **2.9: First Nations Recreation**

The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) has worked alongside the Aboriginal Sports Circle (ASC) to establish apprentice programs, long-term participation programs, and coaching programs (Coaching Association of Canada, 2016). The collaboration helps identify strategies to enhance communities through recreation and physical activity programs. These programs take into account the unique physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects, while teaching how healthy lifestyle practices can be achieved. The Aboriginal Long-Term Participant Development Model provided by the ASC included

various themes that should be emphasized in First Nations recreation (Aboriginal Sport for Life, 2014). The CAC and ASC collaborate to establish culturally relevant programs, which work to emphasize the physical activity.

The purpose of initiatives tailored for First Nations people is to ensure that programs are put in place to provide access in culturally relevant ways (Harvey, 2001). In addition, programs centered on physical activity provide healthy options for community members. The importance of maintaining a physically active lifestyle is stressed (Harvey, 2001). As discussed by Chino and DeBruyn (2006), First Nations recreation programs may provide capacity building efforts. First Nations communities face all the similar challenges listed by Searle and Brayley (1993) regarding limited resources due to the nature of remote localities. Harvey (2001) states that there is a need for continued support for First Nations recreation based programs and the coaching framework to encourage them.

### **2.10: Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework presented here will provide direction in structuring the research discussed. The community leisure initiative model will be used as the tool to address the primary research objective, which is to explore the role of the strength training facility in Chisasibi and its relationship to CD. The description below will clarify how and why the model will be utilized as a tool to address the research purpose.

### **2.11: Community Leisure Initiative Model**

The CD framework titled community leisure initiative model depicted by Gravelle et al., (2015), will be used as a strategic framework. The model is a theoretical perspective that explains the various stages and components of CD. The research being explored will be the first

known case that utilizes the community leisure initiative model empirically. While the purpose of the research was not to test the model, this was indirectly done through the methods utilized. The framework is significant because it encompasses the major themes associated with CD in the present day. It is designed through three phases that explain the development, production and impact of CD programming. For these reasons, the model was helpful in exploring the role of the strength training facility on CD.

The main processes involved in CD described by the model are summarized by three phases. The first section is described as the development phase, which relates to identifying a felt need. The second section is titled the production phase, which discusses the CD strategies implemented. The final stage is referred to as the impact phase, which describes four main types of community impact. Each theme, provided by the model, will be listed and described to present an overview of topics relevant to CD and recreation within the present day. By discussing the key components of the model, an enhanced explanation of CD within the context of this research will be supplied.

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### **Chapter 3.0: Methods**

The research was primarily deductive in nature, as the community leisure initiative model was used to explore the role of the strength training facility on CD within Chisasibi. Therefore, the research uses an existing model related to CD and recreation programs. The researcher utilized the segmented strategy for the thematic analysis. Within the recommendations section pertaining to the theoretical perspective, the researcher will describe how the framework could be further developed. This depiction will be based off of the research findings.

There were two methods utilized by the researcher in the data collection, which were focus groups, and participant observations. Focus groups allowed for enhanced insight on how the facility has influenced the community. Additionally, through participant observations the researcher generated field notes based on the facility, facility related documents, public documents, facility users and the community as a whole. This was done throughout the data collection periods. Collectively the methods provided the appropriate means to address the research objective.

#### **3.1: Focus Group**

Focus groups were conducted to ascertain knowledge about the strength training facility (e.g., its development, its place within the community etc.). The method was appropriate because participants could generate and share knowledge of the role of the facility within community life. As Morgan (1998) stated, “the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insight that would be less accessible without the interaction of the group” (p. 12). The statement alludes to the main strength of the method, which was its

ability to generate unique knowledge or insight. Certain understandings may not have been evident without the communication between group members that the focus group method supplied. The aim was to apply the method to create a natural setting between individuals, and probe for thematically relevant concepts, which led to increased knowledge of possible CD strategies used (Krueger, 1988).

***Sample population.*** It was important to use a sample population that has had experience with the facility. It was essential to collect data from participants that could speak in detail with regard to themes relating to the development, production and impact of the strength training facility (Gravelle, et al., 2015).

***Purposive sampling and inclusion criteria.*** Due to the context of the research it was important to collect data from individuals who had experience or high expertise regarding the development, production and impact of the strength training facility. Community members who have had direct experience with the facility and recreation department as a whole would be in a position to discuss and draw from their first-hand knowledge. This knowledge and experience was an essential component in addressing the purpose of the study.

The inclusion criteria stated that participants were required to have had experience using the facility or working within the recreation department. The criteria would ensure participants of the focus group would have some degree of involvement and understanding of the facility. This would allow them to draw from and discuss past experiences of relevance to the research objective.

***Description of participants.*** There were three focus groups targeted and conducted. The first group targeted was community leaders within the context of the

strength training facility. Leaders were considered senior recreation employees. This was characterized as employees who have been employed within the recreation department or the strength training facility for 5+ years. This group was defined as leaders, as they were significant decision makers in the development portion of the facility. Additionally, they would be able to draw from their extended experience to discuss the development, production and impact of the facility.

Afterwards, two additional focus groups were conducted. The second and third focus groups comprised of community members who utilize the strength training facility. These participants would be able to discuss the facility and how it has impacted themselves as well as how they believed it has impacted the community.

Participants were both male and female community members who ranged from 18 - 50 years old. Recruitment occurred through community members in managerial roles within the recreation department. These individuals provided information to current and past senior (5+ years) employees regarding the research. Additionally, they provided information sheets to users of the strength training facility. Research participants then contacted the researcher in order to express their interest in participating in one of the focus groups. Participants were selected on a first come first serve basis. The size of each of the three focus groups ranged between 6 - 8 individuals. This range was targeted as it was the most realistic number.

***Focus group guide.*** The construction of the focus group guide was based on the three phases of the community leisure initiative model (Gravelle, et al., 2015). The group comprising of community leaders were given questions discussing the development phase,

production phase and the impact phase of the CD strategies used. Due to their experience, these individuals were in a position to discuss each phase in detail. The focus groups, which comprised of facility members, were given questions to provoke discussion on the production and impact of facility training.

The researcher utilized three types of questions, which were main questions, probe questions and follow up questions. Due to the nature of focus groups the group discussion would follow the main questions and probe questions. Main questions were formulated to discuss themes related to CD and the facility, as referenced by the community leisure initiative model. Probe questions helped facilitate elaboration and detail on the subject matter related to main questions. These types of inquiries have been described as effective strategies to influence participants to further elaborate on significant topics (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Follow up questions were utilized to provoke responses when the discussion of the main questions and probe questions became limited.

***Distribution.*** Prior to data collection, the researcher received approval from the University of Ottawa's Office of Research Ethics and Integrity for Health Sciences (Appendix\_B). In addition, the researcher gained approval from the community recreation department and strength training facility. Information sheets providing the purpose, objectives and benefits of the study were made available at the strength training facility (Appendix C, & Appendix D). It was emphasized that participation was strictly voluntary.

Focus groups took place at the strength training facility, while the date, and time of focus groups was dictated by participant availability. The focus groups lasted between 45-60 minutes in length. Prior to the beginning of the discussion participants were presented with consent forms, which clarified the purpose, nature of participation and benefits of the study (Appendix

E). Prior to starting the focus group, the researcher clarified and answered all questions. Participants then signed consent forms. The researcher reminded all participants that all comments and information gathered would remain anonymous. In addition, it was stressed that the participants could withdraw from the research at any time. Each focus group was recorded using a computer-recording device.

### **3.2: Participant Observation**

The researcher engaged in participant observation through the 12-week data collection period. During this time, the researcher would use the strength training facility each day. Additionally, the researcher would partake in community events, holidays and social gatherings. In the evenings, the researcher would help coach various community sports teams. These experiences allowed for total immersion into the community as a contributing member. The researcher engaged in participant observation during a second phase of data collection, which took place approximately 12 weeks after the first collection was concluded. The second data collection was one week long, and provided the context for additional triangulation. The participants' observations were taken to discuss the facility, facility related documents, public documents, facility users and the community as a whole. Therefore the method provided a dynamic, wide ranging data collection on a variety of subjects.

There are two types of field notes described by Grbich (2012), which are overt and covert. Overt is considered to be when the researcher collects observations in an open manner, fully disclosing what they are doing and why. Covert, in contrast, occurs when research subjects do not know that they are being observed for data collection purposes (Grbich, 2012). The researcher engaged in overt field notes throughout both data collection periods. This method was

done informally to aid in the triangulation process of the data collected from the focus groups. By taking field notes on a wide variety of diverse situations, it would allow for better assessment in the data analysis portion (Grbich, 2012). The method was employed on a daily basis while the researcher spent time at the strength training facility. Additionally, overt field notes were also taken during experiences external to the facility. This ultimately was dependent on the daily activities experienced by the researcher with regards to community interaction.

### **3.3: Data Analysis**

The transcripts from the focus groups, along with the researcher observational notes provided the content for the analysis. Once the interviews were transcribed and the observational notes organized, a thematic analysis was conducted. The analysis conducted was deductive and inductive. Although the research primarily takes on a deductive manner, in the later chapters an inductive piece will be described. Therefore, the model guided the deductive analysis, yet it also allowed for additional themes to emerge inductively.

Grbich (2012) describes the three thematic strategies: as the block and file approach, conceptual mapping, and segmentation. The segmentation strategy, discussed at length by Grbich (2012), was undertaken for the thematic analysis. The author explains that when using the segmentation process, the researcher must first identify key words and themes from the data, and group the themes in appropriate sections (p. 65). The strength of this strategy was that it provided a detailed examination of the data, as each line is read, re-read, and if relevant, grouped appropriately. The strategy was most suitable due to the nature of compiling citations from a variety of community members from multiple focus groups, and many participants' observations. It was very beneficial in the sorting and managing of the collected data. The segmentation

process provided segmented charts, which listed the most significant citations from the focus groups in an organized and relevant manner (Appendix F). Additionally, the field notes from the researcher have been included in the segmented charts.

Gbrich (2012) argued that the weakness of segmentation is that it can provide extremely detailed accounts of the data; these portions of information could lose their context in relation to the research purpose. Therefore the researcher must chart and segment the collected data in an organized and succinct manner. In order to effectively take into consideration the weakness described, the charted information was organized in the same fashion as the community leisure initiative model. Meaning, it was broken up into the three major CD headings provided by the community leisure initiative model, which were the development, production and impact phase.

The strategy used was selected because it provides the most detailed account of the data and was the most appropriate for the sample size and methods used. Segmentation aided in producing an accurate description of the strength training facility, based on focus groups and participants' observations.

The qualitative software program Nvivo was used as an aid in the process, along with the researchers' notes. The preliminary data analysis is described as an ongoing process of an engagement, which the researcher undertakes in order to gain a deeper understanding of the values and meanings evident within the data (Grbich, 2012). Dey (1993) explains that the process begins with free association and involves writing words, phrases and topics that surface while the data collected is reviewed. The strategies described aided in the segmentation data analysis strategy.

*Trustworthiness.* Due to the nature of qualitative research there are two common validity concerns. The researcher should discuss these concerns in order to address how they were taken into consideration (Maxwell, 2013). Researcher's bias is described as the selection of data that is consistent with the researcher's goals or predeterminations, while dismissing data that does not fit (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This issue involves the subjectivity of the researcher influencing the findings. The second concern discussed in the literature is the externalities associated to with the researcher depicted as reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). This involves considering how the researchers presence may influence the researcher participants actions and or statements (Becker, 1970).

There were various validity procedures adopted to ensure the data collection process and analysis was triangulated. It was important, as a researcher, to utilize strategies to deal with possible personal biases (Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, one must understand that it is impossible to completely eliminate the influence of the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In order to address the validity concerns posed, the primary researcher adopted the following strategies of, long-term involvement, respondent validation, and triangulation.

Becker and Geer (1957) described that long-term involvement in a research setting was beneficial in a number of ways. They stated that long-term participant observation provided for a richer data set, which includes more observations, descriptions and deeper context. Through long-term involvement the researcher was in a position to make repeated observations. For these reasons long-term involvement can help rule out quick assumptions or premature notions (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher had lived on and off within the community for two years, prior to the research taking place. The researcher had previously worked in the community as a sports

coach in the summer months. Additionally, the researcher has family that lives in Chisasibi, which has led to numerous extended visits in the community. During data collection, the researcher spent the majority of his time in the community at the strength training facility. This allowed the researcher to build a rapport and additional trust with employees and facility users. By engaging in physical activity daily, the researcher built trust and relationships with numerous community members. The daily activities and schedule remained the same during the secondary research collection. These factors lead to the collection of richer data due to the additional context.

The researcher conducted a second data collection three months after the first collection. During this time the researcher utilized the strategy of respondent validation. The procedure is described as “soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from people you are studying. This is the single, most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). The strategy indirectly acts as a method of triangulation, as the researcher conducted additional field notes during this time. The observations were discussed informally and compared to the primary research collection. The secondary data collection provided the opportunity to engage in respondent validation by discussing the preliminary findings in the first data collection, with research participants.

The final strategy utilized was triangulation. Triangulation occurs through collecting information through a diverse range of methods, settings, and participants (Maxwell, 2013). By utilizing multiple focus groups and participant observations from the preliminary data collection and secondary data collection, triangulation was emphasized.

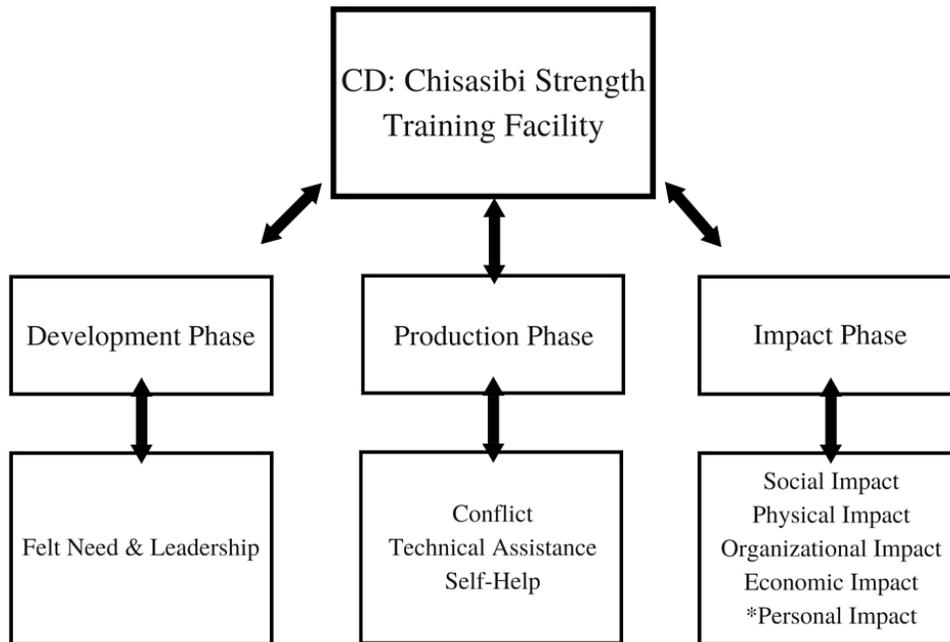
### **3.4: Methodology**

The research discussed will be rooted within qualitative research strategies. The constructivist epistemology will be referenced as an explanation on how individuals gain knowledge within the context of the research. Constructivism suggests, “one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other” (Crotty, 1998, p.58). This epistemology allows one to take into the consideration the unique knowledge of all actors (Crotty, 1998). The case study methodology will be utilized, as it offers the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular case or phenomena. Yin (1994) describes the methodology as an “inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). The literature provides many different types of case study strategies. Yin (1994) explained that there are three main types: exploratory case studies, descriptive case studies and explanatory case studies. A descriptive case study will be implemented as the methodology for this particular case. This study represents a descriptive case study as a descriptive case study is used when research goal is to predict certain events or outcomes and provide further insights into a particular case through detailed description (Yin, 1994). Drawing on the definitions provided in the literature, it would be appropriate to characterize the strategy as a descriptive case study. This is because there was a particular facility and population that was the basis for the research.

#### **Chapter 4.0: Results**

Depicted below is a diagram, which describes the order that the results will be presented in. The main subheadings from the segmentation analysis were labeled the development production and impact phase. These sections may be described as theoretical categories, which

are considered themes that have been derived from prior theory (Maxwell, 2013). The diagram portrays the headings and subheadings that will be presented within the results section.



**Figure 3: Personal impact emerged as an additional theme**

#### **4.1: Development**

The development portion of the model works to explain how individuals in leadership positions work to outline top priorities for a particular community. The first section of the model outlines the driving factors that ultimately sparked the programs or policies implemented. Through exploring the development portion one can gain a better understanding of what key motivations influenced the decision-making processes.

*Felt-need and leadership.* When exploring what was the felt need, it became clear that community members felt it was necessary to create and maintain an environment where individuals could improve their health. “We want to help people have better lifestyles, less diabetes and less obesity, a healthier community. We want to do everything we can to help people get healthier” (FG3, P2). It was explained and referenced numerous times that many community members have a sedentary lifestyle and struggle with obesity, diabetes and additional chronic disease.

Those in leadership positions understood the need to provide community members with the infrastructure to facilitate disease prevention strategies. Historically, the Cree people within the James Bay region have lived a nomadic hunting lifestyle (“History,” 2016). For centuries, these people have thrived in harsh conditions, while living an extremely physically active lifestyle. It is essential that decision makers provide the opportunity for community members to live and engage in a healthy lifestyle, as many have transitioned to living a less active lifestyle in town. This was the clearest need that was listed while exploring the development portion of the fitness center.

“I was diagnosed with diabetes, so I figured we need to do something about this. I look around, people are overweight, so I went on a campaign trying to explain how important this is. We need to prioritize it because it’s at a point where diabetes and obesity is an epidemic here for our people. I managed to convince them to give the center more money so we could manage the space, get people in here, and do things right” (FG3, P1)

In addition to addressing sedentary lifestyle, it was referenced by a few participants that being physically active and strong is important when living in the bush and practicing a

traditional lifestyle. The notion of being a strong hunter is paramount to the Cree culture within the context of Chisasibi. Throughout the community, hunting was celebrated. Many of the community's most avid hunters spent considerable time at the gym, throughout the research collection periods. The strength training facility provides the equipment, services, and infrastructure, year around, for community members to improve the physical fitness and overall strength. The link between being physically fit and being able to contribute to ones family while being in the bush was evident.

“My grandfather likes it when I go to the gym, because he knows that it transfers into the bush and hunting... you should see my grandfather's hands, they are huge! He is way stronger than I am and he has never even been to the gym. He isn't tall or anything either...he grew up in the bush so that's why he has such big hands and is in such good shape. I think he knows that if I am getting bigger and stronger from being in the gym it means Ill be more valuable when we are out hunting, or chopping wood, or like trekking long distance through the bush carrying gear...This stuff is really hard if you are out of shape so its cool to train and then be stronger in the bush” (FG2, P6)

This notion also speaks to the importance of practicing a traditional lifestyle. Within the community, Elders are viewed as with the utmost respect in the highest regard. Their voice is the most important opinion. As they are the ones whole pass on the traditional stories and lessons of their ancestors. “I think the elders like it when we workout, and play football or hockey and stuff... because it's a way to like toughen us up, they can see that we get stronger from doing that kind of stuff and I think that is why they encourage us to do it” (FG3, P2). As alluded to in

the quote above, the strength training facility is viewed as in a positive light because it provides community members with the means to prepare for the bush.

#### **4.2: Production**

*Conflict.* This theme was not discussed at length during the data collection process. It remained clear that research participants put forth strong cases as to why community groups justify the necessary funding needed for the facility. Yet, there was very little discussion of conflict in the traditional sense. “Each person discusses at length his or her support of the fitness center. In addition, each community member has expressed that they believe that prioritizing physical activity, recreation programs, and the facility is beneficial to the community as a whole” (Participant Observation, Researcher, August 1st).

The facility first began as a result of a presentation to the Chief and Band Council. When a community member wants to propose a new initiative they have the opportunity to present their idea to the Chief and Band Council. Once the presentation is concluded, the initiative is then voted on. Over eight years ago, two senior recreation employees did a presentation on why the community needed a strength training facility. The presentation went on to discuss importance of physical activity and put forth a case as to why the community should have a strength training facility. The members of the band council then voted, and over the course of the past 8 years the facility has grown and continued to receive the necessary support and resources from the Chief and Band Council. The Band Council unanimously agreed on the importance of the facility, and each person voted accordingly.

Community members agreed that giving individuals the infrastructure and services to prioritize physical activity and a healthy lifestyle was important. In addition, the facility is a

not-for-profit entity, which means its sole purpose is to service the community and give them the environment to practice a healthier lifestyle. If the facility was privately owned there may have been a larger discussion on resource conflict. In this case the consensus was that the facility was supported and it provides a significant service to the community.

***Technical assistance.*** The facility constantly seeks outside expertise to improve the products and services available. Within the realm of preventative health measures, and strength and conditioning there are constant updates from different trends and from available research. In order to ensure that the personal trainers at the facility are providing the most knowledgeable and appropriate oversight, the employees are constantly put through new certifications, courses and training sessions. In order to fill the demand for the various types of fitness classes, including yoga, MMA, kickboxing, and kettle bell, it is essential that the community have its healthcare professionals trained.

The community has a partnership with the Sports Performance Institute, which is a governing body that provides nationally recognized fitness related certifications (“Integrating Education, Science and Performance”, 2016). It was noted that the fitness and sports education company has helped certify over 30+ personal trainers and fitness instructors through the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, over the course of the past 8 years. In 2015, the community had a representative from the Canadian Weightlifting Association conduct an instructional certification course to introduce the sport of Olympic Weightlifting to the community. This was as a result of the growing demand for the sport in the community. It is clear that the facility recognizes the role of outside technical experts, and uses their input to prompt knowledge sharing for community members.

“The people that we bring in, I always tell them, we just want to learn from you. I make sure that they understand that. We are just going to get the knowledge and essential tools from them so we can do it on our own” (FG3, P2)

*Self-help.* Many programs available through the facility were identified and created through self-help measures. Community leaders and community members discussed the mutual benefits of self-help discussions. Many individuals feel that the strength training facility has open door policies. The perceived openness, allows community members to visit management and discuss their ideas informally. This process makes it simple to engage in self-help, as there is no bureaucratic process of submitting suggestions.

“We have an open door policy; people come in just to talk and hangout. After schools our offices are always packed with youth. I always have a cribbage board lying around because I know people may come in and challenge us to a crib game on coffee break. So, that is where people just walk in and say, ‘hey I have this idea, why don’t we have yoga, or MMA training or kick boxing” (FG3, P2)

When a community member thinks that they have a good idea about how to improve the delivery of services they can openly share it with those in managerial roles. Providing the products, equipment and services that is desirable by the community is the fitness center mandate. “Gym members see different things down south and ask why don’t we have that?” (FG3, P4). Once community members express a desire for certain fitness programs or classes, the facility works to fill the demand. These demands are only evident when community members come forward and provide their ideas to management. Within the community, the researcher

observed and participated in yoga classes, fitness classes, kick boxing, kettle bell classes. The fact that these options are available is a testament to the self-help strategies at work.

In summary the decision-making processes that occurred are influenced both by self-help, and technical assistance measures. Therefore programs within the context of the facility are made through a mixed methods approach. As self-help effectively identifies what the community needs are. This is successfully achieved through the open-door policy discussed. Community members know that their ideas and comments will be considered. In many cases this is what sparks new services, fitness classes, and or the purchases of new equipment. The community then brings in outside experts to teach personal trainers these identified new services or fitness classes and to provide ongoing training to help trainers be up to date with cutting edge knowledge relating to preventative health measures, and strength and conditioning.

### **4.3: Impact**

*Social impact.* There was a significant social impact discussed at length during the three focus groups. Participants each discussed how their social networks have grown and been shaped through the facility. “There are many professionals that come in after work, like teachers, nurses, doctors and dentists, you often see them with each other. I think it creates a big bond with community members who are employees here (FG3, P5). The facility was described as a desirable environment. Many community members discussed how the facility is a high traffic space. During the busiest times of the day you can come to the fitness center and see a large percentage of the community. In support of this, it was noted in both the focus groups and participant observations that the facility acts as a social club. Members stated that most community members go and meet people there, or often

times run into people while they are there “For myself I have gained many friendships from the fitness center. This was mostly with people that I already knew of, but I didn’t really know them. I have met Cree school board employees, teachers that are now my good friends” (FG3, P1). Many members explained that they have fostered a large amount of relationships that they would not have otherwise had via their participation through the facility.

***Physical impact.*** It was referenced that the equipment and environment has been improved significantly over the past 8-10 years. There were issues of cleanliness that have since been addressed. It was noted that there has been an improvement in the care and quality of the space. “Well, when we first started you’d walk in here there would be sand all over the place...priority is safety first and making sure all the equipment is working and nice and clean. Since, we have people that know what they are doing at the fitness it has really improved” (FG3, P2). Additionally, the facility is located at the center of town, which makes it a literal and figurative hub of town.

Employees discussed that there used to be one computer at the reception area, which has increased to many more devices, including ipads, laptops, and desktop computers. It was noted that the general atmosphere is much more welcoming and inviting than it was 8-10 years ago. The layout, the equipment, the services have been increased in quality. This was consistent throughout each focus group. “Now, we have, like, nice desks, laptops. So, you know, need equipment to run programs. We didn’t have any laptops and computers before, like, before, it doesn’t have anything. Everything changed” (FG1, P1).

***Organizational impact.*** Within the community the facility is well known for being a positive environment for youth and adolescence. In addition, the employees have a

reputation for being positive role models. This leads to a large organizational impact within the community as a whole, as the facility is associated with being a positive influence. In particular, the organization often works with community health groups. This is appropriate as all health organizations are ultimately attempting to contribute to increasing the state of health within the community.

“We have worked with community health; they have helped us in different ways. I think people in different organizations tell others to go to the fitness, and if they feel they are not ready to go to fitness center, we tell them to go to the walking club or the fitness classes” (FG3, P2)

There are corporate memberships available for school board workers, health workers, police, and fire department employees. Therefore the facility has numerous working relationships with other organizations. In addition, when community fundraisers and community events occur the facility often has a large presence from its employees and members. The employees are very active in volunteering and being present in the community through informal means. “Also, many of the workers in the school board, police, fire department, sports programs, and health care professionals they all get certain deals and are involved with the fitness in some way” (FG3, P2). As a result it was observed that the facility acts as a catalyst for intercommunity collaboration between various organizations.

“We have worked with community health; they have helped us in different ways. I think people in different organizations tell people to go to the fitness and if they feel they aren't ready to go to fitness center we tell them to go to the walking club or the fitness classes. Many of the workers in the school board, police, fire department, sports programs, and

health care professionals get certain deals and are involved with the fitness in some way”  
(FG 3, P2)

***Economic impact.*** It was discussed that individuals who exercise on a regular basis at the fitness center would likely be healthier employees. One research participant described that approximately 10% of the memberships are for Band Council employees. Therefore there may be an economic benefit to having employees who practice healthy lifestyle habits such as daily physical activity. This could lead to less sick days, higher work production, and work place moral. “If you look at the band employees, we have, 5-10 % of the employees are regulars here at the gym. You can ask yourself, does that help work production? Does that decrease the amount of sick days? That is because these people are here everyday” (FG. 2, P3).

The facility provides very good work opportunities for young people. It was noted that they are challenged daily through various roles and responsibilities at the facility. Each day poses unique challenges, which helps individuals improve their problem solving ability. This alludes to the fact that the work opportunities at the fitness center are very dynamic. In addition, they are able to improve their social skills, use various computer programs, which benefits their formal and informal job skills. Due to the quality of job experience, it was discussed that many young people desire to work with the facility and they often receive resumes on a daily basis of people who want to work there.

“The positions for young people here are a very active role. You interact with members all day long, answering their questions. Here I work with the computer online, helping

people register, I may have to do some cleaning duties, I will help develop classes or membership deals, there is just so much more here. It is very valuable here” (FG3, P1)

Approximately eight years ago there were only four employees working at the fitness center. Presently there are over twenty-five employees. This was made clear through participant observations via discussion and field notes of public documents. Overall, the amount of available work opportunities has increased significantly. In addition, the quality of employee has increased. Many employees have numerous formal diplomas, and certifications. This is in addition to their on the job training they have received. There is a growing, high quality workforce at the facility. It was also noted that individuals from other Cree communities come to the Chisasibi to get certifications in personal training. They become well versed in how the daily operations run within Chisasibi, and they learn from the best practices evident within the facility. Therefore not only does the center create economic benefits through jobs for their own community, but they benefit the economic outcomes of other Cree communities as well through certifications and the sharing of best practices.

“With the different certifications we do, there are many trainers in the gym. There have been over 30+ people that have been certified personal trainers through us. We had people from 2 other communities, which came for a week. All trainers passed their certification” (FG3, P2)

Lastly, it was noted that the fitness trend that seems to be occurring within the community has lead to various economic opportunities, which have benefited different organizations within the community. For example, there was an increase in the demand for athletic clothing, and training shoes. It was explained that the community store that sells athletic

shoes always seems to be sold out, because the demand from fitness members is so large. In addition, there has been an increased demand in healthy foods. As community members are becoming more conscious about healthy food choices. Therefore local grocery stores are experiencing a large demand for fresh vegetables, produce, and other healthy options.

Community members are becoming more educated on the subject of healthy and active living, and as a result many businesses have seen an economic boost and demand for related products and services.

“Well when you go to the shoe store the running shoes are always sold out... also the co-op is starting to have a much larger section for produce and healthy food because there is such a big demand for healthy food. People come here and we tell them ‘what you do outside the gym is much more than what you do in the gym’...People are becoming way more aware of the food” (FG3, P2)

***Personal impact.*** There were several discussion points alluding to the fact that community members who are involved with the facility seem to grow significantly with regards to their personal development. The personalized impact was not adequately described by any of the four impacts provided by the community leisure initiative model. Therefore it was important to depict this ongoing theme, which was influenced by the facility. “The people at the facility are extremely engaging, confident and outgoing, in contrast to people you meet outside of the center” (Participant Observation, August 1). The notion was described in facility employees, and also facility members. “Many, people their whole lives have changed, their ability to speak to other people, their confidence. This is

outside of benefits and wage, as people, they want to work here because it's a good environment and helps them grow" (FG1, P6).

Through the training facility individuals become more confident in themselves. This confidence can result in an increase in their community involvement. Additionally, it was described as a contributing factor to their overall well-being and happiness. "When people buy into this their lives improve, they are so passionate the ripple effect is clear" (FG. 3, P2). It seems that contributing within the facility provides the context and environment for the community members to improve themselves. The programs evident appear to be a catalyst for personal growth.

"When you look at how far they have come, its clear that when someone gains physical confidence and self esteem something happens and they are able to live happier lives because our employees, many are fathers now, are going to college" (FG, 3 P2)

It seems that the facility provides the context for its users and employees to strengthen their self-esteem, and perhaps confidence. These characteristics appear to have an impact on community engagement. Once a community member gains confidence in themselves they seem to increase participation in the community.

## **Chapter 5.0: Discussion**

The recommendations section will provide a commentary, which includes certain suggestions and reflections based on the findings. The section will include recommendations for the community leisure initiative model, for community leaders who may review the research for lesson drawing purposes, and for the Chisasibi recreation department.

### **5.1: Development Phase**

*Felt-need and leadership.* There was certainly a felt-need being addressed when the facility began to be prioritized over the course of the past eight years. The specific community need being addressed via the strength facility was and continues to be to provide individuals with a space to become more active, learn about health and fitness, and practice healthier life habits. According to the data collected, the reason this became a priority was to help combat obesity, diabetes, and sedentary lifestyle. “We want to help people have better lifestyles, less diabetes and less obesity, a healthier community. We want to do everything we can to help people get healthier. We take what we have and we try to do our best with it” (FG. 3, P2)

“Maybe we can help decrease obesity, disease and addiction because people need something to do... We want to help everyone get healthier... we want to help people in many ways. It’s about catering to everyone however they need too. Fitness has multiple purposes for our people” (FG. 3, P2)

According to Archer and Blair (2011), research indicates that physical activity can be effective in reducing the risk of a variety of chronic illnesses. Therefore choosing to address this concern via physical activity programs is supported by the literature. There are many factors that act as barriers to maintaining a physically active lifestyle (King & King, 2010). These barriers

include individual, environmental, and economic. Some of the most prominent individual barriers are lack of knowledge, motivation and self-efficacy (King & King, 2010). The benefits of a strength training facility is it can work to address many of the barriers that effect individuals in their quest to become more physically active.

The community facility provides knowledgeable professional to teach motivate, and improve self-efficacy in members. Environmental barriers include lack of physical infrastructure, which is necessary for physical activity. This is especially true within the context of the community, as it the most Northern Cree community in Quebec accessible by road. Therefore community members experience extremely cold temperatures, which would limit the levels of physical activity possible in the winter months. The facility provides the necessary infrastructure to allow physical activity programs to take place throughout the year. Many privately owned, for profit facilities charge large fees to use their facilities. This can limit individual's physical activity opportunities, if they do not possess the resources to pay for fees. The strength training facility in Chisasibi is not for profit, it provides very reasonable membership fees for community members. This seems to alleviate many economic barriers that may be evident in other communities.

In summary the leadership identified that there was a need to provide programs, services, and infrastructure, to increase the quality of health for community members. Research indicates that, “engagement in physical activity that results in improved cardiorespiratory fitness can contribute to reductions in health risk in overweight and obese adults” (Jakicic & Davis, 2011, p. 837). The specific need listed must address and support community members becoming more active, learning about health and fitness, and practicing healthier life habits.

Overall, the strength training facility is an effective catalyst for supporting daily physical activity. In addition, due to its characteristic's it can address many of the most common physical activity barriers listed (King & King, 2010).

In addition to the felt-need clearly indicated, that there was another factor more linked to the traditional Cree lifestyle, which indirectly influenced the importance of combatting sedentary lifestyle. As previous mentioned, First Nations villages are often contending with the implication of two cultures, which are western and traditional First Nation culture (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). First Nations leaders have been described as having the role of revitalizing and reshaping their communities (Begay, 1997). Therefore, leadership must find innovative and creative ways to influence community members to practice their traditional lifestyle. As nomadic hunters, physical strength and resiliency is key to survival. It is my opinion that the strength training facility acts as a catalyst for the community to prepare for hunting, fishing, and travelling far distances remotely under extremely harsh conditions. This notion was only briefly discussed in one focus group conducted. Yet, by being immersed in the community for an extended period of time this theme has become evident. It is consistent with the community's traditional values seen through local holidays, and hunting practices.

Living remotely, in the North, is an extremely harsh and unforgivable lifestyle. For centuries, the Cree people in the James Bay region have traditionally lived a nomadic hunting lifestyle, as explained in (Chisasibi.org, 2016). This way of life heavily prioritizes physical strength and resiliency, which is why I believe community leadership, has heavily supported the development of the strength training facility. These same characteristics of strength and resiliency are greatly influenced and developed through practicing strength training, and a physically active lifestyle. Historically, the Cree people's survival predicated off of their ability

to live a physically active lifestyle through their nomadic and hunting practices. As a result, physical and mental strength and resiliency has been a significant influencer throughout this community's past.

These themes are underlying factors that influence the support of the strength training facility. By supporting the strength training facility, community leadership is preparing its members to go into the bush, and live traditionally. Living a sedentary lifestyle does not prepare you for the bush. In fact, living a sedentary lifestyle makes you a liability in the bush, as value is often connected to physically contributing in some way to your family. "My grandfather likes it when I go to the gym, because he knows that it transfers into the bush and hunting...it means I'll be more valuable when we are out hunting" (FG2, P6). While community members may live in town and have full-time jobs, which is representative of a non-traditional lifestyle, the facility provides them with the tools to prepare for when they do live in the bush to practice their traditional ways of living. As previously indicated the felt-need was to combat sedentary lifestyle, yet taking into consideration the context and history of the community, I believe the facility also acts as a tool to foster important transferable skills and habits that are needed while living a traditional lifestyle. "I think the elders like it when we workout, and play football or hockey and stuff... because it's a way to like toughen us up, they can see that we get stronger from doing that kind of stuff and I think that is why they encourage us to do it" (FG3, P2).

This notion is significant, as it is an example of how a remote First Nations community can emphasize its health needs in the present, while connecting to its traditional lifestyle of the past. This link may be a valuable component for the development of future community programs. As it influences a discussion, which blends the most pressing needs of the present day, while also

taking into consideration the fundamental characteristics of the past ancestors. This discussion sheds light on the crossroads between what needs to be done in the present day to ensure a healthy and prosperous future, while taking into consideration the unique heritage that is intimately connected to the lifestyle, which has been practiced for centuries in the past.

## **5.2: Production Phase**

*Limited conflict.* The literature indicates the conflict often occurs when different actors are working on a variety of issues for the community, which may lead to a conflict of power and, thus resources (Gravelle, et al., 2015). Those that have more power and are given the necessary resources can act swiftly in generating programs they deem fit. They may not consult community members through self-help or outside experts. Therefore resources are allocated and those in leadership positions are given the power to act as they see fit. In contrast, self-help, and technical assistance often involves more deliberation as numerous actors and groups may be consulted in the decision making process (Gravelle, et al., 2015).

Within the context of this particular case, there was very limited conflict evident. There was little opposition in prioritizing the strength training facility. This is likely because there is a large majority of community members that support the specific need that the facility works to address on a daily basis.

There was a consensus that prioritizing the facility was need to support community members becoming more active, learning about health and fitness, and practicing healthier life habits. It is important to note that there is no other community-supported organization that works to support physical activity through expertise and infrastructure, the way that the facility does.

No other organization provides a place to exercise throughout the year. In this way, the facility has a monopoly as they hold a significant role related to health, and physical activity. This may have led to the lack of conflict evident as the facility has gained the community wide responsibility of providing the services regarding health and fitness. However, it also appears that throughout the development of the facility those in leadership positions were open to community voices and therefore a particular individual or group did not make decisions without the consultation of community members or outside experts.

*CD strategy.* The data gathered suggested that the CD approach used was a mixed methods approach. This became clear, as there was a consistent reference to the usage of self-help input and also the reliance of outsider experts to provide technical assistance when necessary. It is noted that a mixed approach often leads to the most sustainable outcomes (Gravelle, et. al., 2015). The literature also suggests that using a strategy that includes learning from local needs and experiences and also taking into consideration outside actors leads to enhanced rate of success (Klein & Fontan, 2004).

Therefore, it appears that a mixed approach is ideal as it considers the significance of both community members and also technical assistances. It may be that this marriage may lead to an appropriate middle ground, which identifies the most suitable and relevant course of action for a particular community program. This notion is especially important when dealing with the unique needs and characteristics of a First Nations community (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). Community members have significant knowledge regarding what is needed. Yet, in many cases certain types of technical expertise may not be available within the community. It is within these circumstances that technical assistance can be beneficial (Schulenkorf, 2010).

*Technical assistance.* As explained by Gravelle, et al. (2015), technical assistance is utilized to provide expertise that is not evident or available within the community. Outsider experts are used to teach and lend their experience to the community to help establish suitable programs. In many cases outsider expertise is vital for the production of various initiatives (Klein et al., 2010). There are three sources of technical assistance, they stem from the private sector, public sector and lastly academic sector (Gravelle, et al., 2015). It is becoming more and more common for community programs regarding recreation and leisure to partner with the academic sector (Hutchinson & Lord, 2012). The academic sector can provide research-based strategies that can be influential in the planning process.

“The people that we bring in, I always tell them, we just want to learn from you. You know? I make sure that they understand that. We are just going to get the knowledge and essential tools from them so we can do it on our own. This in the long run saves our community money, for our own people” (FG3, P. 1)

Due to the nature of the health and fitness industry within the present day, there are constantly new trends, strategies and research articles becoming available outlining effective ways to teach and conduct physical activity programming. In order for the facility to best serve the community, they must continue to prioritize their ongoing knowledge acquisition and expertise within the realm of health and fitness. This is done through employee certifications, and training through the help of outside experts. Many industry experts annually make arrangements with the strength training facility and their employees to organize formal and informal workshops. This method consistently improves the level of expertise available from the

employees. It is the belief of the researcher that this constant pursuit of learning and education is a major contributing factor to the ongoing success of the organization.

*Self-help.* The community members seem to work together to establish important ideas, which would contribute to positively influencing the community (Latendresse, 2009). Ninacs (2007) explains that through self-help processes social mobilization occurs, which leads to groups working together to support certain communal changes. The literature explains that this strategy can occur through networking, partnerships, advocacy groups and cooperation (Latendresse, 2009).

The main source of self-help found in the data suggested a grass roots type of community member participation. It is suggested that this type of participation occurs most often when community members work to take charge of their leisure and recreation opportunities (Thibault, 2008). The most common source of this participation within the context of the community was evident through the open-door policy within the recreation department and strength training facility. Community members consistently referenced that the open-door policy allowed for increased, open communication between members and community programmers. Additionally, the programs they do have are a representation of self-help strategies at work.

“We have an open door policy, people come in just to talk and hangout. After schools our offices are always packed with youth. I always have a cribbage board lying around because I know people may come in and challenge us to a crib game on coffee break... So, that is when someone just walks in and says, ‘hey I have this idea.’” (FG3, P.2)

Self-help strategies were implemented informally, through intercommunity dialogue. Most often community members would simply come in to speak about an idea they had about how to

better service the community through the recreation department and or the strength training facility. This may equate to members suggesting a new type of fitness class, or service. In addition it could include suggested partnerships between existing organizations to increase the health outcomes of the community.

### **5.3: Impact phase**

The impact phase discusses the various influences that arise as an output of the felt-need addressed, and the CD strategies used to produce programs. The impacts of various initiatives can be both positive and negative. Within the context of the community, and the main impacts being explored on positive associations were observed by the researcher, and discussed by individuals in the focus groups. The strongest impacts noted were social and economic. In addition, there was an ongoing trend discussed of a personalized impact related to one's involvement with the facility and their personal development. Although personal impact was not originally apart of the community leisure initiative model, it was added in order to enhance total depiction of the influence of the facility. Each impact will be explained in detail, which will discuss the positive effect of the facility community.

***Social impact.*** Community members that routinely go to the facility do so to practice a healthy active lifestyle. This may lead to developing collective identities as they are all working to improve themselves through maintaining a high level of health and fitness. This is a characteristic needed in order to build social capital (Putnam, 2001). “You will definitely meet a lot of people, like if you are working here. I met more people working here than working at the office. What I like is the good atmosphere here, positive energy” (FG 1, P1).

All community members are encouraged to practice healthy lifestyle habits through the facility regardless as age, gender, and fitness levels. The literature explains that one key aspect in describing the social impact of programs, within the context of CD, is to look at social inclusion. The services provided at the facility cater to the needs identified through self-help. Another notable feature is that members all use the same equipment and the infrastructure. This factor indirectly brings individuals together. It is in the best interest of all facility members to treat the equipment and space with respect and care.

In summary, Individual members have the opportunity to share a common platform to become more physical active due to the facility within the community. This cultivates a collective identity and strengthens the ties of the social networks that occur as a result of the facility. All community members are encouraged and welcomed to use the facility, which speaks to the social inclusion characteristic of the organization.

***Physical impact.*** Often through the creation of recreation services, the physical environment tends to increase in quality. As a program is put in place, it often gains the necessary resources to improve the space needed to address the felt need (Gravelle, et. al., 2015). If the felt need being addressed is to get individuals more active, through becoming involved in health and fitness, it is essential that the physical equipment and infrastructure is suitable and safe.

This certainly applies within the context of the strength training facility, as the quality of equipment in the space is world class. It was discussed at length within the focus groups, how much the equipment has been improved over the course of the past eight years. The researcher observed that the quality of equipment was higher than what is available at many universities

training centers. This is significant considering that the strength facility in Chisasibi is meant to serve a population of 5,000. While, in contrast, universities routinely serve tens of thousands of people at their fitness facilities.

“It's a whole lot more inviting than it used to be. I remember like five years ago, maybe, we have like one little desk in the corner. Definitely, there's been improvement in the cleanliness. For sure you get a better feel when you go in than it used to be” (FG 2, P3)

***Organizational impact.*** The organizational impact works to describe how the strength training facility collaborates and works with or also alongside other organizations in the community. This impact explores whether or not the facility has influenced intercommunity relations that otherwise may not occur.

As discussed within the social impact heading, there are two types of social capital (Gittel & Vidal, 1998). There is the bridging and bonding forms. This describes the relationship of many organizations within the community. It was found that the strength training facility welcomes working with other groups, which includes community sports teams, Band Council organizations, Cree Health Board groups, and Cree School Board groups. They do this with the mandate to increase health outcomes in the community. They do not work in a silo; they include individuals and outside groups to collaborate on a number of community programs and partnerships. Collaboration is described as a key component to positive social impact (Himmelman, 2004). It is said to benefit many actors within the community as it involves members, intercommunity organizations, businesses and various social services (Bai, Wells & Hillemeier, 2009). It was evident that the facility acts as a hub for community collaboration.

“We have worked with community health; they have helped us in different ways. I think people in different organizations tell people to go to the fitness and if they feel they aren’t ready to go to fitness center we tell them to go to the walking club or the fitness classes. Many of the workers in the school board, police, fire department, sports programs, and health care professionals get certain deals and are involved with the fitness in some way” (FG 3, P2)

As referenced by Putnam (2001), this type of social capital can take the form of formal organized partnerships and or on a voluntary participation basis. It was evident that the facility has formed organized partnerships with groups, as they routinely work with other community organizations to establish corporate memberships for employees. In addition, they collaborate on community programs with these same groups. While the facility does work on a voluntary basis, as its employees often help out with community events. In summary, they work on community initiatives on an informal basis and formal basis with other organizations. The primary researcher observed youth services groups and health organizations contributing to community partnerships. This included community sports tournaments, events, and POW wow’s. It is important to note that the two forms of social capital are not mutually exclusive (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). As they can both be occurring simultaneously within a community, which is what was clearly occurring on an ongoing basis in Chisasibi.

Some social groups form and strengthen through exclusive bonding efforts, while the bridging of various organizations and groups occurs as a means of collaboration on community projects. The literature indicates that both bonding and bridging can work in collaboration to have “powerful positive social effects” (Putnam, 2001, p. 23). It remains clear that the strength

training facility maintains a high reputation through its social, and organizational impacts on the community as a whole.

***Economic impact.*** The economic impact within the context of the strength training facility was significant. The three main sources of this type of impact were job creation, human capital development, and increased demand of healthy food options, and sports clothing.

The facility generates employment as a result of the demand within the community. In order to maintain the economy, it is essential for communities to create sustainable job opportunities as suggested by Green (2001). It was explained that eight years ago, the facility employed just four individuals. Presently, the facility employs over twenty-five community members. The quantity of job opportunities is relative to the amount of people who use the facility on a daily basis. Prior to the organization being prioritized as a means of addressing the felt need identified, there were less than two hundred active gym members. Presently there are over one thousand gym members. Therefore there is a significant growth in job opportunities, which is a reflection of the community demand for the facility and its services.

Within the context of the community, employees of the strength training facility receive annual rewards on job training, which improves their competency. In addition, personal trainers are expected to complete their certifications. These certifications ensure that trainers have high levels of expertise and understand the most effective and safe ways for members to perform exercises.

“These kids are lining up to work here because they see these role models working here.

You don’t see the people that work here out late at night or in the mornings drinking,

partying or walking around. Most of the people lining up start off as technicians where they sit at the front desk, helping with registrations and greeting people. But most of them want to work their way up” (FG 3, P4)

The facility often relies on bringing some experts into the community to teach the trainers additional knowledge and skills related to health and fitness. This helps improve the human capital development in the community. Human capital development describes the increase in experience, competency and specialization of a given workforce (Son, 2010). The increase is extremely important for economic growth and poverty reduction. Over the course of the past eight years, employees have received annual rewards on job training workshops, numerous personal training certifications and learned from health and fitness experts that provide technical assistance. This was done through the Sports Performance Institute and the Canadian Weightlifting Federation. It is important to note that a large percentage of facility employees have taken college and university courses, and many have received degrees and diplomas. This was not the case when there were only four employees working at the facility. In summary, the quality of work force evident has significantly improved in a number of ways.

As discussed in the results section, there was a clear increase in the demand for certain products relating to health and fitness. In particular it was outlined that there is a demand for sports clothing and healthier food choices. Participant two, from focus group three explained the following:

“Well when you go to the shoe store, the running shoes are always sold out. The co-op is developing a larger section for produce and healthy food because there is a big demand for healthy food. People come here and we tell them ‘what you do outside the gym is

much more than what you do in the gym.’ People are becoming way more aware of the food” (FG3, P2)

As more individuals become involved with the strength training facility, there emerge numerous economic opportunities for sports and grocery stores. The premise that emphasized within the quote provided is that while being physically active is good, your nutrition and diet is also significantly important. It is likely that this impact will continue to grow as the number of gym users increases.

***Personal Impact.*** CD literature does not explicitly discuss measurable influences related to personal impact. The CD programming prioritizes the importance of physical activity and as a result has an impact on personal development. It is argued that, “high self-esteem may conceivably provide a solid foundation from which people can be more adventurous, engaged and willing to endure the inherent risks associated with trying new things” (Horn, 2008, p. 57). This would support the data provided above as the high self-esteem discussed may lead to enhanced engagement in the community.

The intervention hypothesis provided by Fox (2002) explains that self-development occurs through developing physical abilities related to good health and physical fitness. The main principal is that participation in physical activities would enhance overall self-esteem (Horn, 2008). The intervention hypothesis would adequately describe what has occurred in the community relating to self-development through the personal impact noted. The theory has been previously used for numerous policies relating to disease prevention, physical activity encouragement and health promotion (Sallis & Owen, 1999).

“When you look at how far they have come, it is clear that when someone gains physical confidence and self-esteem something happens and they are able to live happier lives because most of our employees are fathers now but they are going to college” (FG 3, P2)

As previously discussed, the mandate of the strength training facility is to influence health lifestyle habits through physical activity and assist in disease prevention. The facility services are engineered to be inclusive, which encourages all members regardless of age, gender and fitness level to participate. This degree of participation can have an empowering effect as argued by Skinner, Zakus and Cowell (2008). Empowerment-oriented community development initiatives involve strategies that work to enhance human health and overall wellbeing (Lawson, 2005). “Many people’s lives have changed; their ability to speak to other people and their confidence. It’s a good environment and helps them grow” (FG1, P6).

It is evident that there was a clear personal impact, which occurred from the strength training facility. The impact may influence an increase in self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence. The effect stems from the increase in healthy lifestyle habits and physical activity that is associated with the strength training facility.

The personal impact discussed was a key result of the research described. It was observed that community members push themselves out of their comfort zone at the facility. It seems that the environment acted as a catalyst for enhanced participation. Additionally, it allowed people to become more confident in their physical capabilities. This appeared to have a positive impact self-esteem, in general.

The personal impact is significant because it was especially evident in the facilities employees. The employees at the strength training facility represent young community members. With the exception of those in senior management positions, the employees range in age from 18-26 years old. The facility has contributed to making these young people confident, engaged in the community, and leaders in the community. This notion is significant because soon these employees will move on from working at the strength training facility, and take on larger, more substantial leadership roles. It is the young people who are motivated, confident, and engaged in the community who will lead the community of Chisasibi in the future. It is the opinion of the research that the strength training facility has played a role in contributing to the development of its employees. As a result of the personal impact described, the facility may have helped these community members gain the necessary skill to be a better contributor to the community at large.

#### **5.4: Limitations**

While the research discussed provided a context to successfully apply the community leisure initiative model, there were limitations that will be listed. There will be three main limitations of the research described. They are related to the context of the community, research strategy undertaken and cultural limitations of the researcher. The concerns relating to the community will be explained below.

*Non generalizable.* The first limitation is that the findings are not generalizable to all remote First Nations communities. Although the facility described in Chisasibi has engaged community members to be more physically active as a means of improving their health, the CD strategies implemented may not work in every community. The researcher would argue that a large portion of the success of the organization is due to effective community

leadership, a resilient and determined workforce and well-timed, well-executed plan. Future research must take into account the unique characteristics of a locality. By understanding that the research described is non-generalizable, one adheres to taking into account the various aspects of a community, which may make it similar or dissimilar to the research explored.

*Size of data collection.* The second limitation is regarding the number of participants in the target groups. The goal was to get at least six participants in each of the three, which was achieved. It would have been more optimal if there were more participants in the groups. This would have allowed for the potential for a richer data collection.

There were many challenges associated with the data collection. It was difficult to find individuals who were willing to participate in the research. As coordinating a time with 6-8 individuals seemed to be a difficult task to complete. Many found the scheduling process difficult to overcome. It is common for people in the community to not show up for various engagements including school, work and recreation activities. This is due to a number of different reasons, which are unique to the community. Additionally, it was difficult to find community members that had an enhanced knowledge of the facility. Although many community members utilize and enjoy the facility most don't know much information about its production and development. The recreation department was very helpful in this process as their previous or past employees seemed to have an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.

In summary, it would have been optimal to have a larger data collection set. Additional focus groups and participants may have supplied a better data set. Yet, due to the nature of the research there were a total of three target groups. The researcher focused on generating a high quality data collection from a specific section of the community. The method of focus groups

proved to be the ideal setting for storytelling and narratives, which were useful in the generation of knowledge. Story telling is especially aligned with the sharing of knowledge within Cree history and culture (“Iiyiyuu Ihtuun - Traditional Ways,” 2016).

***Cultural barrier.*** Although the researcher has lived in the community, off and on, over the course of the past three years, he is still an outsider. Due to his past experiences the researcher has an enhanced knowledge of the community, its people and traditions. Yet, being acquainted with the culture and experiencing some of it does not position an outsider to understand the community to the same extent as a community member.

Therefore it is important to acknowledge the fact that an outsider of the community conducted the research. This may have impacted the research collection process and data analysis. Unfortunately, there will always be cultural barriers within the context of researching a remote First Nations locality. In order to best take into consideration this limitation, it is important as a researcher to listen to community members and be respectful at all times. As researchers, we have the privilege to be welcomed into a community. It is essential that this fact be taken into consideration when conducting research in a remote First Nations community as an outsider.

## Chapter 6.0: Recommendations & Conclusion

The objective of the research was to explore the role of the strength training facility on CD. Based on the data collected and discussion, the researcher will describe three main recommendations. The first of which will be related to the community leisure initiative model. The suggestion will discuss how the model can be further developed based on the context of Chisasibi. Additionally, there will be recommendations posed for community leaders who may review the research for lesson drawing purposes. Lastly, the researcher will discuss its suggestions to the Chisasibi recreation department and the strength training facility.

**Research model.** The community leisure initiative model does not include personal impact within the impact phase. The primary researcher recommends adding a fifth category of impact to the model, in order to best articulate the context of Chisasibi. The primary researcher found consistent evidence that the CD strategies put in place proved to have a personal impact on the community members that utilized the facility. The impact is related to increased levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth, which translates to taking on a larger role within the community. As community members foster the characteristics listed they become more active within the community and appear to be happier. This type of influence is not captured in the social, physical, organizational and economic impacts provided by the community leisure initiative model. It is important to note that this type of influence is stimulated by an increase in physical activity. The data suggested the presence of an impact that would be described as a more personalized option than the influences suggested by the community leisure initiative model. Given the model was based on context relevant specifically to recreation services.

Therefore the model could be useful in explaining the possible interpersonal impact known to be associated with increased physical activity.

***Moving Forward.*** For policy makers and leaders of other First Nations communities, the case study depicted can provide insight in a number of ways. This can be achieved through lesson drawing and from gaining enhanced expertise in CD programming. It is possible that other communities can replicate the ongoing success of the Chisasibi strength training facility in their own unique way.

The data collected and discussed within the research may prove to be beneficial for the planning of CD within other remote First Nations communities. By reviewing the findings within this document, certain lessons may be drawn with regards to community planning relating to recreation, youth services, health promotion and disease prevention. By depicting the various positive impacts, it becomes clear that the community is making incremental improvements to community outcomes. Although each community is unique and requires special consideration, the data explored in this research could provide insight into other communities in the development and production of their on CD programs.

Gaining an enhanced understanding of the community leisure initiative model may assist in the planning process of community programs. The model depicts a clear blueprint of the major considerations and themes evident within the literature relating to CD. The clarity that the model supplies may improve the strategic planning and resource allocation that is involved in the development of any recreation program.

Overall, the case describes how a First Nations community utilized the unique knowledge of its individual members to create a facility that has proven to have an impact in numerous

ways. The scholars refer to this collaboration as self-help. Yet, the case also describes how the community utilizes outside expertise to continue improving the facility. This mixed methods strategy provides real-life context for how self-help strategies and technical assistance can be utilized together to contribute to impactful community programs. This notion is valuable as remote First Nations CD programs is an under researched topic in the present day.

Striving to develop community programs, which blend the needs of the future while considering the lifestyle of the past, may be a helpful thought exercise for other remote communities to engage in when formulating future plans. This link may prove to be influential in addressing the two contending cultures of the western world and traditional First Nations culture, as discussed by Wesley-Esquimaux (2010). It is recommended that future research take into consideration this crossroads.

*Chisasibi recreation department.* There are many fundamental tenants that the community recreation department and strength training facility has done extremely successfully. This includes establishing strong relationships with youth, providing strong leadership and cultivating a motivated workforce. It is the opinion of the researcher that as long as the organizations continually succeed in prioritizing these three fundamental characteristics, they will have a very positive impact on CD.

Within the case of Chisasibi, the community leaders that are or have been involved with the development and production of the facility have strong relationships with young people. Having an intimate understanding of what young people want and need is essential to the long-term success of the organization. These relationships were cultivated and maintained through the open door policy discussed related to the self-help strategies used.

Providing programs that community members want in a sustainable and well-thought-out way is very important. This is ultimately what community leaders did within the case of the Chisasibi strength training facility, which has led to its ongoing success and popularity. Therefore in order to replicate the success of the community in other communities, it is important that those in leadership positions establish strong lines of communication with young people.

The workforce that makes up the strength training facility is truly an incredible group. They are young, Cree, resilient, self-motivated individuals who take pride and ownership over the facility and the services it provides. Therefore implementing the same strategies used within the context of this particular community will not result in overnight success. The management of the facility has done an outstanding job of motivating employees, and providing an exciting and fun workplace. What is evident within the present day is the result almost a decade of hard work related to finding the right people to buy into the mandate of the facility. The employees enjoy working there; they take pride in their work and it shows a communal support.

### **6.1: Conclusion**

The primary purpose of the research was to explore the role of the strength training facility on CD. The findings provided an insight into the facility's contribution to CD in particular, noting that a strength training facility can influence personal, economic, social, environmental and organizational outcomes within a community. The research contributes to the existing literature by providing the real life context of a remote First Nations community. There is a need within the available research to explore CD within the context of remote First Nations communities. The depiction provides an enhanced understanding of the facility development, production and impact on the community. Additionally, the insights provide knowledge

regarding how the community program contributed to CD. In order to gain this understanding, the community leisure initiative model was utilized.

It has been made clear through data collection and analysis that the model does account for many of the functions that contributed to the facility with regards to CD. The presence of some aspects of the framework was stronger than others. The framework applied made for an effective tool to gain an enhanced understanding of the strength training facility. Although, the model ultimately did not account for the personal impact of the CD strategies implemented. The researcher has suggested adding personal impact as a fifth stream to the third section of the model. More research is needed to explore whether this type of influence is present within other related circumstances. The theme would help describe the self-development element, which occurs through increased participation in physical activity, health and fitness that was evident within the community of this research.

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## Appendices

### 1: Appendix A: Focus Group guide

#### *Section A: Introduction.*

- Hello, I am Andrew from the University of Ottawa. I'd like to start off by thanking everyone for participating today.
- How is everyone today?
- I'd like to just take a moment and go around one by one, so that everyone can introduce themselves and provide a little bit of background on who they are.

#### *Section B: Development phase.*

- I'd like to gain a better understanding about the background of the strength training facility, and so, I will ask a few discussion questions about that.
- Why was the fitness center created?
- Why has its funding been prioritized?
- Do you think it was made to address a specific need for the community?
  - What need may that have been? Is it just one need? Or multiple reasons?
- Was it important to you to prioritize the funding and programming associated with the fitness center? If so why?
- How did you help facilitate the development of the fitness center?

#### *Section C: Production phase.*

- How were decisions made on how to fund and program the fitness center?
- How does the facility come up with new programs and services for its members?

- Did the community rely on consultants from outside of the community to help in its design and framework?
  - If so how?
- Did the community leadership rely on community members to help identify what was important in the production of the fitness center?
  - If so how?
- Did consultants and community member's work together to contribute to the current state of the fitness center?
  - If so how?
- How were decisions made around the funding and programming, considering the various interests and characteristics of the community?

***Section D: Impact phase.***

- Is the fitness center a social place?
  - How so?
- Do you feel the fitness center has helped you foster friendships?
- Have you met and become friends with individuals, who you maybe would not have known otherwise, through the fitness center?
  - If so how?
- Do you feel like the fitness center acts a place to socialize? If so how?
- Would you say that the gym has increased in quality over the course of the past 5 years?
- Has the environment improved?
  - If so how?
- Has the equipment improved?

- If so how?
- Has it expanded in anyway?
  - If so how?
- Do you think having the fitness center in the community center is a good usage of the space?
- Have the individuals that make up the fitness center worked with other organizations on collective projects?
  - If so how?
- Tell me about what it is like to work here?
- Has the number of employees for the fitness center increased over the years?
- Is it exciting to work here?
  - Why do you like it?
- Does the fitness center provide good work opportunities for community members? If so how?
- Do you think that the growing amount of fitness center members has contributed to an increase of business to any other organizations?
  - Is there an increase in other health related lifestyle habits? (Buying healthy foods? Sport Supplements? Fitness clothing?)

***Section E: Conclusion.***

- Is there anything anyone would like to add?
- I hope everyone enjoyed his or her experience here, and thank you again for taking the time to participate.
- If anyone has any addition questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

## 2: Appendix B: Ethics Approval

**Université d'Ottawa**  
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

**University of Ottawa**  
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: [ethics@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uOttawa.ca).

### **3: Appendix C: Recruitment Text Community Leaders**

Dear Sir or Madam;

My name is Andrew Randall, and I am a Master's student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. My reason for contacting you today is to invite you to participate in a research study, regarding the impact of the strength training facility within the community of Chisasibi. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your experience on this topic.

The premise of the study is to gain an understanding of the development, production, and impact of the strength training facility, with regards to the community as a whole. The knowledge generated would help identify the relationship between the facility and community development, within Chisasibi. In addition, the lessons gained from the experience of this community may be beneficial to the developmental processes of other remote communities. The focus group you are being invited to participate in will be comprised of senior recreation employees, which is considered any individual who has worked for the Chisasibi recreation department for 5 or more years (and is still working). These individuals will be considered leaders within the recreation department and the community of Chisasibi, due to their previous and on going service. The recreation department is extremely important to the community of Chisasibi, therefore these individuals play a vital role.

If after receiving this document you would like to participate in the study, or get more information, please contact Andrew Randall. Participants will be selected on a first come, first serve basis.

Your involvement is strictly voluntary, and you may decline without any negative consequence. The research is being done independent of the fitness center, therefore any involvement or disengagement will not influence your relationship with the facility. Should you choose to participate, your involvement would include one focus group in English, which would last approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew Randall, Master's Candidate

School of Human Kinetics

The University of Ottawa

Monsieur, Madame,

Mon nom est Andrew Randall et je suis un étudiant à la maîtrise en kinésiologie humaine à l'Université d'Ottawa. Je vous écris aujourd'hui pour vous inviter à participer à une étude de recherche concernant l'impact du centre d'entraînement sportif dans la communauté de Chisasibi. Je serais heureux d'avoir la chance de vous rencontrer afin de discuter de votre expérience sur ce sujet.

Le but de cette recherche est d'obtenir une compréhension du développement, de la production, et de l'impact d'un programme d'entraînement sportif sur l'ensemble de la communauté. Les connaissances obtenues pourraient aider à définir la relation entre le centre d'entraînement et le développement communautaire, au sein de Chisasibi. De plus, les leçons apprises suite à l'expérience de cette communauté pourraient être bénéfiques aux processus de développement

dans d'autres communautés éloignées. Le groupe de discussion pour lequel nous vous invitons à participer sera composé d'employés seniors de loisir travaillant pour le centre récréatif de Chisasibi depuis au moins 5 ans. Ils seront considérés comme des meneurs au sein du centre récréatif et de la communauté de Chisasibi de par leur service passé et actuel. Le centre récréatif est extrêmement important pour la communauté de Chisasibi, par conséquent ces individus jouent un rôle vital.

Si après avoir reçu ce document, vous aimiez confirmer votre participation à cette étude, n'hésitez pas à me contacter au à l'adresse. La sélection des participants se fera sur le principe du premier arrivé, premier servi.

Votre participation est strictement volontaire et vous êtes libre de refuser sans aucune conséquence. Cette recherche est effectuée indépendamment du centre de remise en forme, par conséquent votre décision de participer ou non à cette recherche n'aura aucune influence sur votre relation avec ce centre. Si vous choisissez de participer, votre implication va inclure un groupe de discussion, en anglais, d'une durée d'environ 45 à 60 minutes.

Je tiens à vous remercier à l'avance pour votre aide.

Sincèrement,

Andrew Randall, candidat à la maîtrise

École des sciences de l'activité physique

Université d'Ottawa

#### **4: Appendix D: Consent Form**

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Andrew Randall, and I am a Master's student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. My reason for contacting you today is to invite you to participate in a research study, regarding the impact of the strength training facility within the community of Chisasibi. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your experience on this topic.

The study aims to gain an understanding of the development, production, and impact of the strength training facility, with regards to community as a whole. The knowledge generated would help identify the relationship between the facility and community development.

The premise of the study is to gain an understanding of the development, production and impact of the strength training facility, with regards to the community. The knowledge generated would help identify the relationship between the facility and community development within Chisasibi. In addition, the lessons gained from the experience of the community may be beneficial to the developmental processes of other remote communities. The focus group you are being invited to participate in will be comprised of strength training facility members.

If after receiving this document you would like to participate in the study, or get more information, please contact Andrew Randall. Participants will be selected on a first come, first serve basis.

Your involvement is strictly voluntary, and you may decline without any negative consequence. The research is being done independent of the fitness center, therefore any involvement or disengagement will not influence your relationship with the facility. Should you choose to

participate, your involvement would include one focus group in English, which would last approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew Randall, Master's Candidate

School of Human Kinetics

The University of Ottawa

**Principal investigator:** Andrew Randall, University of Ottawa (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences), 200 Lees Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5.

**Project supervisor:** François Gravelle (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences), 125 University Street, Montpetit # 226, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Tel.: 613-562-5800 ext. 2442, Fax: 613-562-5497.

**Project Co-Investigator:** Eric MacIntosh (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences), 125 University Street, Montpetit # 373, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Tel: 613-562-5800 ext. 4242, Fax: 613-562-5497.

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in the above mentioned research study conducted by Andrew Randall. The study is being conducted as part of Mr. Randall's Master's thesis, under the supervision of Professors Gravelle and MacIntosh.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to understand and describe the impact of a strength training facility on community development. The development, production, and impact of the facility will be explored to gain a better understanding of its influence.

**Participation:** My participation will consist of taking part in a focus group, which will discuss various related topics of the facility. It will last approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour, and will have 6-8 individuals (depending on availability of other participants). The focus group will be audio recorded in order to assist in the transcription process. Participants will be selected on a first come, first served basis. Therefore after reading this document if you are interested please contact principal investigator.

**Risks:** My participation in this study will not entail any foreseeable risk, force me to divulge a piece of information about my life within the community, or jeopardize my position with the organization. The focus group is being conducted independent of the fitness center, therefore any involvement or engagement with the research will not influence or affect your relationship with the facility.

**Benefits:** My participation in this study will allow me to reflect on the facilities production, development and impact. The knowledge generated may help improve community development within other rural communities.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** I have received assurance from the researchers that all information will remain anonymous and in the locked office of the principal researcher for five years upon publication. I understand the findings will be used only for academic purposes (publication, presentation, technical report), will be compiled with other people's responses, and

will be made available upon the project's completion. Further, only the researchers will have access to the information in my responses. Due to the nature of the focus group, confidentiality and anonymity is limited to outside of the group. As individuals participating in the group discussion will listen and respond to what each other are saying. Although I will remain anonymous and no direct quotes will be used, the name of the community, and the name of the fitness facility will be made public in future publications.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate, and there will be no negative consequences of my choosing not to participate in the study. If I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. The data will be used should one choose to withdraw from the study because the nature of group discussion. It would be extremely difficult to withdrawal the comments of one individual via an audio recording.

**Acceptance:** (This process will only be taking place at the focus group session itself.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the previously mentioned research study conducted by graduate student Andrew Randall (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa) and Dr. François Gravelle (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa). I understand that by accepting to participate, I am in no way waiving my right to later withdraw from being in the focus group for the study.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researchers. If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the University of Ottawa's Protocol Officer

for Ethics in Research, Ethics Office (room 154), or contact telephone: 613-562-5387 or email:  
[ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca).

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5: Appendix E: Segmented Data Analysis I

Development
Felt Need and Leadership:

“Creating a new space and getting people that actual know what they are doing, and I wanted programs coming out of there for the community” (FG. 3, P1)

“I think the reason why they created it and prioritized it was to get people more active. The first couple years there was only a few people that would use it daily. When I first got it the total membership amount was less than 100, maybe 80. Now we have over 1,000 people registered with our gym. So, there has been a large change over the past 7-8 years” (FG. 3, P2)

“I was diagnosed with diabetes, so I figured we need to do something about this. I look around, people are overweight, so I went on a campaign trying to explain how important this is. We need to prioritize it because it’s at a point where diabetes and obesity is an epidemic here for our people. I managed to convince them to give the center more money so we could manage the space, get people in here, and do things right.” (FG. 3, P1)

“Now people are much more health conscious and eat healthier food. I think we did a really good job promoting health and fitness because we have more people walking in the community than ever. These people that started walking are now running. That’s the message I was trying to send to the band when I originally was told to look after it” (FG. 3, P4)

“In our senior hockey leagues we promoted, “Get Healthy, Keep Active!” We see a huge increase in registration. We always tell people just get out there and be active, its very important. We know that hockey is popular and is a pretty good way to stay active” (FG. 3, P3)

“We want to help people have better lifestyles, less diabetes and less obesity, a healthier community.... we want to do everything we can to help people get healthier... We take what we have and we try to do our best with it. Football Canada is using our model in other communities... Maybe we can help decrease obesity, disease and addiction because people need something to do. I think that’s what we need people to understand... That’s what we push here. We want to help everyone get healthier, its not just for sports, we want to help people in many ways. Its about catering to everyone how ever they need too. Fitness is multiple purpose for our people” (FG. 3, P2)

“I think the elders like it when we workout, and play football or hockey and stuff... because it’s a way to like toughen us up, they can see that we get stronger from doing that kind of stuff and I think that is why they encourage us to do it” (FG3, P2)

“Quality of life, man. Health, losing weight, it's a health concern. A lot of people are overweight here” (FG 2, P.1)

“My grandfather likes it when I go to the gym, because he knows that it transfers into the bush and hunting... you should see my grandfather’s hands, they are huge! He is way stronger than I am and he has never even been to the gym. He isn’t tall or anything either...he grew up in the bush so that’s why he has such big hands and is in such good shape. I think he knows that if I am getting bigger and stronger from being in the gym it means Ill be more valuable when we are out hunting, or chopping wood, or like trekking long distance through the bush carrying gear...This stuff is really hard if you are out of shape so its cool to train and then be stronger in the bush ” (FG2, P6)

“It is clear that those in leadership positions know that physical activity has a large impact on an individuals health. This seems to be the felt need that continues to drive the fitness center and recreation programs” – (Participant Observation, June 1)

“Sedentary lifestyle is the norm, the fitness center provides the infrastructure and programs to combat a sedentary lifestyle” – (Participant Observation, August 7<sup>th</sup>)

“Individuals reference problems relating to diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and sedentary lifestyle” – (Participant Observation, August 7<sup>th</sup>)

“It is clear that fitness, health, and weight lifting is prioritized in the community. The two main reasons seem to be, disease prevention and the fact that the fitness acts as a positive environment for youth, adolescent, and adults. People come to the fitness center to improve their health, have fun, and socialize” – (Participant Observation, July 30<sup>th</sup>)

“The general consensus is that the fitness center is inclusive not exclusive. Meaning, it is welcoming individuals from different age groups, gender, and social status’. The leadership wants people to have as much opportunities as possible to stay active and stay healthy. They seem very driven and passionate about this subject” – (Participant Observation, August 2<sup>nd</sup>)

### **Production**

### **Conflict:**

“We needed to prioritize it because its at a point where diabetes and obesity is an epidemic here for our people. I managed to convince them to give us more money so we could manage the space, get people in here, and do things right.” (FG. 3, P1)

“Very little conflict has been evident. Each person discusses at length his or her support of the fitness center. In addition, each community member has expressed that they believe that prioritizing physical activity, recreation programs, and the fitness center is beneficial to the community as a whole” – (Participant Observation, June 13<sup>th</sup>)

“Decisions regarding the center are consistently made through self-help, and the consultation of outside experts.” – (Participant Observation, June 29<sup>th</sup>)

“The fitness center is a not for profit organization. This seems to be evident as the programs put in place are there to service the community. The general consensus is that the fitness center should have the resources and support it needs to service the community best” – (Participant Observation, July 6<sup>th</sup>)

**Technical Assistance:**

“Yes, I would say quite abit... When I first started I was getting all kinds of proposals from companies down south wanting to do different programs for like 5 weeks, everywhere in recreation. There was a group that came in who wanted to start a program. They wanted to charge us 130,000\$ for 5 weeks, and we managed to do almost the exact same thing for 15,000\$ the following year. This is when we started our ultimate sports camp, which saved the band a lot of money” (FG3, P.1)

“We made a presentation to the band council on the resolution so that if other entities from outside the community came in they would have to discuss it with us, and we would first have to confirm that we cannot run it and create it ourselves before enlisting the help of an outside source. We would filter those funds into developing our own, for example special needs camp, sports camp, the leagues, and everything that we do is pretty much run by Cree people” (FG3, P.2)

“The people that we bring in, I always tell them, we just want to learn from you... you know? I make sure that they understand that... We are just going to get the knowledge and essential tools from them so we can do it on our own. This in the long run saves our community money, for our own people” (FG3, P.1)

“Outside influence has come in and have put a lot of ideas in the programs, in the people's mind and then, they take it and run with it. I guess, like, before...before we had all the training stuff and the other programs, it was a lot of only outside influences, you know? It was only, like, people from the recreation department would bring in, like, trainers” (FG 1, P. 3)

“Those in leadership positions really prioritize the importance of being an autonomous community, that provides job opportunities to Cree individuals. It is consistently referenced technical assistance is used only to teach people how to do things themselves. Meaning, outside experts come in to teach a skill that is not available in to community and then moving forward community members can provide that learned skill” –(Participant Observation, August 2<sup>nd</sup>)

“In weight lifting, fitness and strength and conditioning there are constantly new trends, strategies and techniques coming forward, it is very important that technical assistance is used within this industry so that the products and services being used are as effective and safe as possible” (Participant observation, August 2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Self-Help:**

“Like my office, we have an open door policy, people come in just to talk and hangout. After schools our offices are always packed with youth. I always have a cribbage board laying around because I know people wanna come in and challenge us to a crib game on coffee break... So, that’s where people just walk in and say ‘hey I have this idea, why don’t we have yoga, or MMA training or kick boxing’ ...” (FG3, P.2)

“Gym members see different things down south and ask why don’t we have that?” (FG3. P.4)

“People from other communities come here and they say “oh wow so this is what you guys are doing, I am going to speak to my community about it and maybe see if we can do something similar.” (FG, P.4)

“They wanted...years ago...they wanted, like, the bounce fit thing. It was a popular one, like, in almost all communities. And some of the community members wanted to have some here. So, we kinda collaborated there, I guess. We brought the bounce fit here. It was good at the beginning” (FG1, P2)

**Impact****Social Impact:**

“There are many professionals that come in after work, like teachers, nurses, doctors and dentists, you often see them with each other. Although these people may not work directly with each other, they come here and meet and become friends. I think it creates a big bond with community members who are employees here... In addition we always are told it is a very positive environment because everyone is greeted when they walk in...” (FG3, P5)

“I have seen these young guys that work here, I've seen them grow up... They were the type that stuck to themselves, played different types of card games and didn't say much... But now you look at them, they are out there, they have other friends through the fitness center... (FG3, P1)

“For myself I have gained many friendships from the fitness center. This was mostly with people that I already knew of, but I didn't really know them... I have met Cree school board employees, teachers that are now my good friends... So I would say yes defiantly” (FG3, P1)

“You are always speaking with people... We are a non-profit organization so it isn't all about sales.... So you have compassion for people, you want them to come in and get healthier. If they come in daily and become more active they will have a better chance of living a longer healthier life” (FG3, P2)

“You’ll definitely meet a lot of people, like, if you’re working here, like, you’ll meet a lot of people that are just working out, right? You work here. Like, I’ll compare my...when I work right now here, like, I met more people working here than working at the office. Because you don’t barely see anybody there. And it was fun working here, like...what I like is the good atmosphere here, positive energy.” (FG 1, P1)

“Yea, that's the thing, the fitness center is a social club. People just hang out there because they just wanna hang out” (FG 2, P1)

“As someone who visited to the fitness center everyday, I would defiantly state that the facility acts a location to socialize, meet new people, and foster relationships” –(Participant Observation, August 3<sup>rd</sup>)

### **Physical Impact:**

“Well, when we first started you’d walk in here there would be sand all over the place, there was people in here not having proper technique, people would be getting hurt. Since then, our priority is safety first and making sure all the equipment is working and nice and clean. Since, we have people that know what they are doing at the fitness it has really improved” (FG3, P2)

“Well its central, which is good. For many of the health care workers, I’ve heard that it’s the best location because a lot of them do come here” (FG3, P3)

“Now, we have, like, nice desks, laptops. So, you know, need equipment to run programs. We didn’t have any laptops and computers before, like, before, it doesn’t have anything. And when they arrived, that’s when everything changed” (FG1, P1)

“It's a whole lot more inviting than it used to be. I remember, like, five years ago, maybe, we have, like, one little desk in the corner. Definitely, there's been improvement in the cleanliness. And the staff, for sure, like, it's just, you get a better feel when you go in than it used to when, like, you walk in” (FG2, P3)

“The equipment and services available at the fitness center are some of the highest quality seen in North America” – (Participant Observation, August 8<sup>th</sup>)

“The space is relatively small, yet it is very well laid out. The center could use more square footage as it is extremely packed at peak hours” – (Participant Observation, July 25<sup>th</sup>)

**Organizational Impact:**

“We have worked with community health, they have helped us in different ways. I think people in different organizations tell people to go to the fitness and if they feel they aren’t ready to go to fitness center we tell them to go to the walking club or the fitness classes. Also, many of the workers in the school board, police, fire department, sports programs, and health care professionals they all get certain deals and are involved with the fitness in someway” (FG3, P2)

“The people that work at the fitness center play an active role in the community. It seems that people associate the fitness center employees in a positive manner as they often help other organizations in a variety of ways” – (Participant Observation, July 1)

**Economic Impact:**

“If you look at the band employees, we have, 5-10 % of the employees are regulars here at the gym. You can ask yourself, does that help work production? Does that decrease the amount of sick days? That is because these people are here everyday” (FG 2, P3)

“The positions for young people here, are a very active role. You interact with members all day long, answering their questions. In other communities many positions, you know people just sit there and collect checks. Like ya, I work at the fitness center, but what do you really do, you just sit there and don’t interact with anyone... Here I work with the computer online, helping people register, I may have to do some cleaning duties, ill help develop classes or membership deals, theres just so much more here. Its very valuable here.” (FG. 3, P1)

“These kids are lining up to work here. Because of what they see, these role models working here... You don’t see the people that work here out late at night or in the mornings drinking, partying, walking around... A lot of these people that are lining up, we start them off as technicians where they sit at the front desk, help with registrations and greeting people... But a lot of them want to work there way up to becoming a personal trainer you know. They want to do that, its just like a snow ball effect” (FG3, P2)

“When I first took over there was 2, and then we managed to go to 4... Currently we have 8 trainers, 10 technicians” (FG3, P2)

“With the different certifications we do, there are many trainers in the gym. There have been over 30+ people that have been certified personal trainers through us. We had people from 2 other communities, which came for a week. All trainers passed there certification” (FG3, P2)

“We have young people lining up to work here. They want to work here. They would rather work here than the gas station” (FG3, P1)

“Well when you go to the shoe store the running shoes are always sold out... also the co-op is starting to have a much larger section for produce and healthy food because there is such a big demand for healthy food. People come here and we tell them “what you do outside the gym is much more than what you do in the gym”. People are becoming way more aware of the food” (FG3, P2)

“If people are going to spend their money you want the money here in the community. If there is a demand for something, it should be available here, so that money stays here, creates jobs, and improves the community. I think its important for people to have those various economic opportunities here” (FG3, P1)

“Well, when I first started training, I think there were, like, three or four people that worked here. Not only you have the amount of employees increased but there's now, like, a pretty big interest from, like, females as well, which might have been unheard of” (FG 1, P2)

“It seems that the amount of employees has increased and also the quality of employee. Many individuals have extensive experience within the field from on the job training, personal experience and external certifications” – (Participant Observation, June 1)

**Impact Phase****Personal Impact:**

“The people that are making these impressions are young, motivated Cree people. When our youth becomes involved in a positive environment like this, they become motivated. They are going to want to get a job, they are going to want to go to university, or college, they are going to want to be help and answer questions” (FG. 2, P4)

“We have a guy who used to be a trainer who is now getting his second diploma and will become a paramedic... So that’s what we do we get them ready for bigger things, that’s what we do, a lot of the employees here are community role models...” (FG.3, P1)

“Many, people their whole lives have changed, their ability to speak to other people, their confidence... This is outside of benefits and wage, as people, they want to work here because it’s a good environment and helps them grow” (FG. 1, P6)

“It's, like, hugely beneficial, like, practical skills, like, you’re thrown into the fire...especially if, like, when you’re thrown, like, for example, like, in business, you’re thrown under pressure. You have to react to...and it kinda works on that as in being a fitness trainer, sometimes you have to motivate someone. Sometimes you have to convince them, you know? It’s a really it is...it is really beneficial in the real world...” (FG 1, P4)

“When you look at how far they have come, its clear that when someone gains physical confidence and self esteem something happens and they are able to live happier lives because

our employees, many are fathers now, are going to college... We people by into this there lives improve, they are so passionate the ripple effect is clear” (FG3, P2)

“For me, it was, you know, I was a shy guy before and, like, it forced...because I’m a personal trainer, right? I had to, like, talk to other people...and, sort of, like, be close to them. Yea, I was really uncomfortable for that, it helped my social skills and...and I’m one of the, like, I’m one of the, I guess, I could say, leaders. Because I’ve been working here and also for a long time now.” (FG 1, P2)

“Each employee has expressed in some way how they have development positively as a person through being apart of the fitness center and its programs” – (Participant Observation, August 1<sup>st</sup>)

“The individuals that work at the gym, and use the facility have expressed personal growth in development consistently. It seems that through working at the facility and or using it, they are challenged mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially in a variety of ways. Through these experience they development further as individuals” – (Participant Observation, October 28th)

“It seems as a by product of the fitness center and its programs is that employees and facility users seem to develop personally in numerous ways” – (Participant Observation, November 2<sup>nd</sup>)