

## Review

## Sport for development for Aboriginal youth in Canada: A scoping review

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### ABSTRACT

Sport for development (SFD) programmes for Aboriginal youth in communities across Canada are increasingly gaining support from both the private sector and the public sector. Despite the recent proliferation of these programmes, there has not yet been an examination of the overall body of literature that focuses on SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities within Canada. The purpose of this scoping review is thus to identify themes within the available body of literature on SFD in Aboriginal communities. We used the six-stage Arksey and O'Malley methodological framework to guide our research and identified three themes through the literature review: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship between SFD mentors/staff and programme participants, but having Aboriginal staff/mentors is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to Aboriginal communities' broader social and economical goals. Our results highlight the challenges and successes associated with SFD programme development and implementation, and also identify the numerous research gaps and opportunities for SFD scholars.

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established in 2008 as part of reconciliation efforts related to the operation of Indian residential schools from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to

1996.<sup>1</sup> Over this time period, an estimated 150,000 Aboriginal (i.e., First Nations, Inuit, and Metis) children passed through these schools.<sup>1</sup> The Eurocentric assimilation and suppression of Aboriginal children's traditions, beliefs, and ties to their family and communities through Indian residential schools has been described as "cultural genocide".<sup>1</sup> (p 1). To advance the reconciliation process between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Commission produced 94 Calls to Action. Five of those calls focused on broad aspects of sport development, sport history and education, sport policy, and sport inclusiveness. For the purposes of this research, we are particularly interested in Calls to Action 89 and 90, which among others call for policies that "promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being";<sup>2</sup> (p 10) and, "In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples."<sup>2</sup> (p 10) The current Canadian government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to take action on each of the 94 Calls to Action.<sup>3</sup> As such, Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport should be at the forefront of Canadian sport policy decisions in the near future. In particular, sport used as a tool for personal and community development will likely be prioritized due to its prominence in Canadian policy<sup>4</sup> and its increasing presence in Aboriginal communities across Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Sport for development initiatives, which have typically focused on low and middle-income communities in the global South, are becoming increasingly focused on

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disadvantaged communities located in countries typically viewed as middle-high income.<sup>5</sup> Canada is no exception. Right to Play, a prominent international SFD non-government organization, and Nike are both involved in SFD initiatives in Aboriginal communities in Canada,<sup>5</sup> as are numerous mining, oil and gas companies.<sup>6</sup> The target of these initiatives, Aboriginal children, represent one of the fastest growing demographics in Canada; approximately 28% of the 1.4 million Aboriginal peoples living in Canada are 14 and under.<sup>1</sup> Sport for development as a formal concept is relatively new in Canada; however, sport has long been used as a tool for assimilation and “development” delivered by Euro-Canadians to Aboriginal peoples.<sup>5, 7</sup> While the benefits of using sport in accomplishing development goals are often heralded as innately positive,<sup>8</sup> there is a paradoxical dearth of research that supports these claims,<sup>9</sup> particularly surrounding the outcomes of SFD initiatives targeted at Aboriginal youth in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Prior to the formal conceptualization of SFD in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, residential schools promoted sport and recreation under similar guises used by modern SFD organizations.<sup>5</sup> Due to the historical connection between “sport” and “recreation” with Aboriginal youth, and due to the varying and inconsistent terminology used within the literature and SFD organizations, we conceptualize SFD as including “recreation-based” programmes. Thus, SFD initiatives identified in this review include organizations formally conceptualized as SFD such as Right to Play, but also organizations that may use sport or recreation as part of broader youth developmental programmes. For example, Alberta’s Future Leaders Program was not established as a SFD organization, but nonetheless uses “sport, recreation, the arts and leadership development”<sup>10</sup> (p 160) to address its youth development goals. As such, Alberta’s Future Leaders Program and similar organizations are included in this study as examples of SFD programming.

Canadian sport policies continue to “encourage the promotion of sport as a tool of individual and social development in Canada”<sup>4</sup> a view reflected by the *Aboriginal Sport for Life* resource, whose authors have argued that sport can “save lives and...build healthier Aboriginal people, who contribute to healthier communities”.<sup>11</sup> (p 2) Taken together, it appears that SFD will play an integral part in future decisions regarding Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in sport. The need to better understand the existing literature on SFD is thus essential so that government policies and Aboriginal peoples’ own initiatives can be built upon the best possible information. Nevertheless, despite the recent proliferation of SFD programmes for Aboriginal youth, to our knowledge there has not yet been an examination of the overall body of

literature that focuses on SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities within Canada. As such, it may be difficult for staff of current and future programmes to build upon past successes or learn from past challenges. Thus, the purpose of this scoping review is to identify dominant themes within the available body of literature on SFD in Aboriginal communities. We used the six-stage Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> methodological framework to guide our research, and through our review of the literature, identified three themes: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship in SFD between mentors/staff and programme participants, but having Aboriginal staff/mentors is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD can only play a subsidiary role in contributing to Aboriginal communities’ broader social and economic goals. Our results highlight the challenges and successes associated with SFD programme development and implementation and also identify the numerous research gaps and opportunities for SFD scholars.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of a scoping review is to identify, summarize and disseminate the scope of literature available surrounding a broad area of research.<sup>12</sup> In particular, a scoping review is performed to “map the literature on a particular topic or research area and provide an opportunity to identify key concepts; gaps in the research; and types and sources of evidence to inform practice, policymaking, and research”.<sup>13</sup> (p 8) While there are a number of reasons for undertaking a scoping review, in this study we are guided by the research question, “what academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” We employ Daudt and colleagues’<sup>13</sup> six-stage methodological framework, which builds on work previously completed by Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> and Levac, Colquhoun, and O’Brien.<sup>14</sup> The first stage of a scoping review is to identify the research question. While Arksey and O’Malley<sup>12</sup> originally recommended a broad research question for the purposes of identifying as much literature as possible, Levac and colleagues<sup>14</sup> challenged this approach, arguing that a more clearly articulated research question would strengthen the search strategy and better guide article identification. Stage two, identifying relevant studies, requires an in-depth search of databases and journals for published studies<sup>2</sup> related to the area of research. Daudt and colleagues<sup>13</sup> noted that this stage must balance the need for comprehensiveness in one’s search with finite resources of time. Once stage two is complete, the researcher is likely very familiar with the number and types of literature available. With this knowledge, the

researcher must develop exclusion criteria in stage three to refine and narrow his or her likely large number of references. Stage four, charting the data, is an iterative process<sup>14</sup> that requires the researcher to clearly extract data in a standardized format from the literature identified in stage three. With the data presented, the researcher can then move to stage five, collating, summarizing and reporting the results to “present an overview of all material reviewed”.<sup>12</sup> (p 27) The results are then organized into themes using thematic analysis.<sup>13</sup> Arksey and O'Malley<sup>12</sup> identified stage six, involving stakeholders in the research process, as a recommended but optional stage to the scoping review process; stage six is not included in this study.

While scoping reviews can be useful in many situations, they are nevertheless open to criticism. For example, a perceived weakness of scoping reviews is that they fail to evaluate the strength of each article's results, which may lead to a misunderstanding of the actual availability of the robust sources in a field of study.<sup>15</sup> However, in a field that is relatively unexplored, or where there is a dearth of research available, a scoping review can be an essential first step in the research process that can guide future research decisions such as whether or not a systematic review should be conducted.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, by identifying the number and types of sources available and unavailable surrounding an area of research, scoping reviews can “inform practice, policymaking, and research”.<sup>13</sup> (p 8) As noted above, Aboriginal SFD will be at the forefront of Canadian sport policymaking in the near future. Considering that SFD in Aboriginal communities is a relatively unexplored topic, we believe that a scoping review is an appropriate undertaking to guide academics and policymakers in future research and policymaking decisions.

## Analysis

Following Arksey and O'Malley's<sup>12</sup> framework, we stated our research question as, “What academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” Our initial search made use of three research databases: Scopus, SportDiscus, and Sociological Abstracts. Using the search terms (Sport OR Recreation)

AND (Aboriginal OR Indigenous OR Inuit OR Metis OR First Nations) AND Canada AND Development for each of the databases, and limiting results to solely academic journals and books, we yielded sixty-one results. Aware that sources related specifically to SFD were likely missing, we expanded our search to the Search+ Function, which scans most available online databases. To ensure our results were specific to SFD, we used the terms [(Sport for development OR Sport for development and peace) AND (Aboriginal OR Indigenous OR Inuit OR Metis OR First Nations) AND Canada], which yielded a further twenty-one results. While Arksey and O'Malley<sup>12</sup> recommended that researchers physically search through academic journals for related articles, the availability of online journals since Arksey and O'Malley's publication has reduced the importance of such a step. However, due to the likelihood that some pertinent sources may be unavailable through online databases, we physically searched through five relevant edited books and found a further thirty-one references. In total, we identified ninety-two references. Next, we applied our exclusion criteria to refine the number of references. Exclusion criteria included articles and books whose main focus was on Aboriginal sport history or imagery, the environment or tourism, and articles where medical issues (e.g., musculoskeletal injuries) were the main focus. Importantly, articles focusing on sport development, rather than sport *for* development, were also excluded. While some SFD-like tendencies may exist in sport development programmes, sport development primarily refers to “increasing and possibly sustaining participation in sport”.<sup>16</sup> (p 87) With the exclusion criteria developed, we read each abstract and deleted duplicates. Thirty-four articles and book chapters remained for stage four, charting the data. We thoroughly read all thirty-four articles and book chapters and, after again applying the exclusion criteria (based on the entire article or chapter, not just the abstract, as was done in the previous stage), we excluded a further twenty-one, leaving 13 articles and book chapters for analysis. As an exception, an additional article<sup>17</sup> that was published following our literature searches was included due to its relevance to the field, increasing the total of identified studies to 14.

*Table 1 – Articles and Book Chapters Identified Through the Scoping Review*

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Bean &amp; Forneris, 2016</b>	Formative evaluation of a SFD programme.	Utilization-focused approach; semi-structured interviews and document analysis	Nunavik, northern Quebec, Canada	The Nunavik Youth Hockey Development Program (NYHDP); hockey-for development programme focused on crime prevention and positive development	A number of programme successes and challenges were identified; strong organizational structure and local involvement benefitted the programme's implementation and sustainability.

Table 1 – Continued

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Carpenter, Rothney, Mousseau, Halas, &amp; Forsyth, 2008.</b>	Develop a youth mentorship programme that supports and empowers typically disadvantaged youths.	Qualitative; community-based, participatory action research study; Circle of Courage Model	Winnipeg, Canada	“A mentoring program that incorporated physical activity, leadership training, Aboriginal youth engagement, and perceived community needs” (p. 55).	Incorporating Aboriginal values in the development and implementation of the programme is important. The programme enabled youths to attain new skills.
<b>Carpenter &amp; Halas, 2011.</b>	Overview of previously-implemented programme.	4 R’s methodology	Winnipeg, Canada	Rec and Read; community-based approach to youth mentoring and social development.	Four R’s (Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility) guide the programme’s development and implementation.
<b>Coleby &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	Discourse analysis of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media coverage of Right to Play’s Promoting Life Skills in Aboriginal youth (PLAY).	Critical discourse analysis and postcolonial theory	Northern Ontario, Canada	PLAY; “uses sport and recreation to attempt to improve the health and well being of northern Ontario’s First Nations youth” (para. 3).	Non-Aboriginal media produce colonial discourses, while Aboriginal media produce strength-based discourses.
<b>Galipeau &amp; Giles, 2014.</b>	“Understand how power, discourse, and discipline shape AFL and its cross-cultural mentoring practices” (p. 157).	Exploratory case study methodology; semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and archival research. Foucauldian discourse analysis.	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	Alberta’s Future Leaders (AFL) Programme; Aboriginal youth mentor programme that uses sport, recreation, and arts for development.	The programme risks promoting Eurocentric values due to its “colour blind” approach to programming.
<b>Gartner-Manzon &amp; Giles, 2016.</b>	“Explore if/how working for Alberta’s Future Leaders Program (AFL) in Alberta, Canada, had a lasting impact on former employees” (p. 159).	Exploratory case study, thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	AFL Programme (as above)	Mentors believe they accrued more benefits from the programme than the Aboriginal youth mentees; Domestic SFD programmes may yield similar outcomes as international programmes.
<b>Hayhurst &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	Examine the policies that created a need for SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities; how are SFD programmes addressing the need.	Postcolonial international relations feminist approach	Aboriginal communities in Canada	N/A	There is an increasing presence of international non-state (corporations and NGO’s) actors in Canadian SFD programmes.
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, Radforth, &amp; the VAFCS, 2015.</b>	Understand the experiences of urban Aboriginal women “participating in a sports, gender and development (SGD) programme” (p. 952) in Vancouver.	Postcolonial, participatory action-oriented, decolonizing girlhood approach Semi-structured interviews and photovoice, followed by thematic analysis	Vancouver, Canada	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS); A recreation programme that provides competitive sport opportunities as well as social and cultural activities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.	The girls found that attempts to improve their health and recreation often came at a cost of culture and tradition; however, the girls used the programme in ways that resisted negative stereotypes.
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, &amp; Wright, 2016a.</b>	“We examine how SDP programs target urban Indigenous young women and girls reproduce the hegemony of neoliberalism” (p.549).	Transnational postcolonial feminist participatory action research; Semi-structured interviews, sharing circle, photovoice	Vancouver, Canada and Perth, Australia	VAFCS (as above)	Neoliberal attributes were promoted with the assumption that it would help the girls’ future success.

Table 1 – Continued

Authors	Objective/Aim	Methods/Theory	Geographical region	Programme description	Key Points
<b>Hayhurst, Giles, &amp; Wright, 2016b.</b>	Analyze Aboriginal girls' experience in SDP programmes; analyze the impact of private sector involvement in SDP programming.	Postcolonial feminist intersectional approach informed by a girlhood studies perspective; semi-structured interviews	Vancouver, Canada and Perth, Australia	VAFCS (as above)	Neoliberal skills are reproduced in SDP initiatives, but these skills may have positive aspects for the girls
<b>Macintosh, Arellano, &amp; Forneris, 2016.</b>	Examine a SFD programme that uses a high cost sport in an at-risk community.	Resource dependency theory; Case study, semi-structured interviews	Northern Ontario, Canada	Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth; Hockey-for-development programme in northern Ontario.	Sport participation was central to the community, while promoting life-skills was the emphasis of the SFD organization. Limited financial resources threaten the stability of the programme. Further communication between the community and organization could have better fostered shared values and goals.
<b>Reading, Ritchie, Victor, &amp; Wilson, 2005.</b>	"Identify factors that contribute to improved health and well being of Aboriginal children and youth aged six to thirteen years through sport and recreational programmes" (p. 62).	Qualitative and quantitative; community-based health research	West coast of British Columbia, Canada	Community-based health promotion through sport and recreation.	The programme promoted youth health in previously neglected areas; Parental involvement plays a large role in youth SFD.
<b>Rose &amp; Giles, 2007.</b>	Examine if SFD programmes can enable Aboriginal youths to "become more connected to themselves, their communities, and their cultures" (p. 427).	Review of programme summaries and documents	Aboriginal communities in Alberta, Canada	AFL Programme (as above)	AFL meets best practice guidelines in terms of short- and long-term youth programming. Hiring non-Aboriginal mentors has some benefits, but more benefits could be accrued from hiring local and Aboriginal mentors.
<b>Rovito &amp; Giles, 2013.</b>	"Determine if and how OLI's staff and Board members perceive the programme to be influenced by Eurocentric ideas of programming and the impact this may in turn have on achieving Aboriginal self-determination" (p 183).	Semi-structured interviews, field notes, archival research and postcolonial theory	Northern Ontario, Canada	Outside Looking In; Give First Nations youths "opportunities to self-express through hip-hop, choreography, videography, journal writing and painting" (p. 187).	OLI contributes to Aboriginal self-determination; however, the programme should depart from Eurocentric values and incorporate Aboriginal values.

## RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, the 14 identified articles and book chapters focus on a relatively limited number of organizations in few geographical areas of Canada. Three focus on Alberta's Future Leaders (AFL) programme, which "uses sports, recreation, arts and leadership activities to provide First Nations and Métis youth with active, positive opportunities".<sup>18</sup> Alberta's Future Leaders has been operating in Aboriginal communities across Alberta since 1996.<sup>18</sup> The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society's (VAFCS) recreation programme is the subject of three of the included studies,<sup>19-21</sup> and it provides competitive sport opportunities as well as social and cultural activities for urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community

members. An Aboriginal youth mentorship programme delivering "an after-school physical activity, nutrition, and education program for children"<sup>22</sup> (p. 51) in Winnipeg, Manitoba is the focus of two articles, while Right to Play, an internationally recognized SFD organization, is the subject of two studies. Right to Play partners with Aboriginal communities in northern Ontario through its Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) programme, which is designed "to enhance education outcomes, improve peer-to-peer relationships, increase employability and improve physical and mental health amongst Aboriginal children and youth".<sup>23</sup> Reading, Ritchie, Victor, and Wilson<sup>24</sup> focused on a community-based, health-promotion-through-sport programme employed in two rural communities in British Columbia. Bean and Forneris<sup>17</sup> examined the NYHDP



operating in Nunavik, Quebec. The NYHDP has been in operation since 2006 and offers free hockey-for-development programming to youth aged 5-17 living in villages across Nunavik. The last programme examined, Outside Looking In (OLI), partners with schools in northern Ontario (though it has since expanded across Canada) to provide Aboriginal youth with the opportunity to engage in an arts and recreation development programme as part of a high school credit. While this is certainly a limited number of studies, there are nevertheless benefits that can be accrued from a few programmes receiving heightened focus. For example, since AFL has been the subject of three studies, data have been obtained from documents from the late 1990s to semi-structured interviews nearly two decades later; this allows for rich and diverse conclusions to be drawn that otherwise would not have been possible.

The iterative process of identifying and summarizing pertinent data from the 14 articles and book chapters enabled us to identify three themes: (1) there is value in cross-cultural mentorship, but having Aboriginal mentors/staff is advantageous; (2) community engagement is essential to the success of an SFD programme in Aboriginal communities; and (3) SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to broader social and economical goals. We generated codes and identified themes using Braun and Clarke's<sup>25</sup> six phases of thematic analysis. Both the rigorous methodological framework employed in this scoping review and our eventual heightened familiarization with the included articles and book chapters facilitated our thematic analysis. We identified the first theme, "there is value in cross-cultural mentorship, but having Aboriginal mentors/staff is advantageous," through the codes "diversity," "power relations," and "youth mentorship." The second theme, "the importance of community engagement in the development and implementation of SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities" coalesced from the codes "community engagement," "communication and dialogue," and "incorporating Aboriginal values." Lastly, the codes "neoliberal skills," "Eurocentric values," and "self-determination," formed our final theme, "SFD plays only a subsidiary role in contributing to broader social and economical goals."

### Cross-Cultural Mentorship

The first theme identified in the literature we reviewed is the tendency for Aboriginal SFD programmes to employ cross-cultural mentorship between programme mentors/staff and the targeted mentees. Five of the 14 articles discussed

cross-cultural mentorship, of which two<sup>22, 26</sup> were focused on the Rec and Read programme in Winnipeg, and three<sup>11, 27-28</sup> were focused on AFL. The two programmes, however, had opposing approaches to the cultural experiences of youth mentorship. Rec and Read selected Aboriginal youth as the mentors/staff while the child participants (mentees) were from diverse cultural backgrounds<sup>22</sup>; conversely, AFL employed mostly non-Aboriginal mentors/staff to mentor Aboriginal youth in Aboriginal communities.<sup>27</sup>

The contrasting approaches to mentorship through Rec and Read and AFL garnered similarly contrasting evaluations from the researchers. Carpenter and colleagues valued Rec and Read for its "opportunity to feature these young [Aboriginal] people as positive role models for the younger multicultural cohort of students".<sup>22</sup> (p 56) Indeed, the authors, who were also involved in the development and implementation of the programme, stated that one of the programme's goals was to provide urban Aboriginal youth affirmation through cross-cultural physical activity experiences.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, when non-Aboriginal mentors mentor Aboriginal youth, which was frequently the case with AFL, the colonial "power relations at work make it difficult for AFL to achieve its objectives," such as creating positive Aboriginal youth leaders through sport.<sup>27</sup> (p 162) Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> (p 443) argued that the practice of SFD organizations employing southern, non-Aboriginal youth mentors to mentor Aboriginal youths in rural communities "might be seen as suggesting that there are no candidates from the community that are up to the leadership standard".<sup>28</sup> (p 443) Through interviews with past AFL mentors/staff, Gartner-Manzon and Giles<sup>11</sup> determined that, similar to international SFD programmes<sup>29</sup>, the non-Aboriginal youth workers believed they accrued more benefit from their involvement with the programme than the intended beneficiaries: the Aboriginal youth mentees. While Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> (p 443) noted there are some important benefits to bringing non-Aboriginal mentors to Aboriginal communities to share their expertise, they argued that AFL "would only be strengthened if it hired more youth workers who already live in the [Aboriginal] communities".<sup>28</sup> (p 443) Interestingly, in the community of Moose Cree, Ontario, Right to Play employs local community members to mentor the youths engaged in the PLAY programme.<sup>30</sup> Similar practices can be found in the NYHDP, where local youths and adults are able to become certified as hockey trainers for the programme's younger participants;<sup>17</sup> both the PLAY and NYHDP programmes counter the discourse promoted through AFL's hiring practices that there is a lack of available local Aboriginal mentors.<sup>28</sup>

## Community Engagement in Programme Development and Implementation

The importance of community engagement in the development and implementation of SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities is the second theme that emerged. Of the seven SFD programmes that are examined in 13 of the 14 studies, each is lauded for its extensive collaboration with Aboriginal partners, criticized for its dearth of collaboration, or identified as having collaboration with Aboriginal partners that could be improved. The Rec and Read programme was both developed and implemented with urban Aboriginal youth to ensure the programme would reflect the needs of the community.<sup>22</sup> The NYHDP has focused on involving Inuit stakeholders “by providing opportunities for local individuals to be involved at the organizational level, specifically related to programme delivery”.<sup>17 (p 12)</sup> Similarly, the rural British Columbia health promotion through sport programmes examined by Reading and colleagues<sup>24 (p 62)</sup> were, from the outset, intended to give communities a “a sense of ownership over the programme design and implementation”.<sup>24 (p 62)</sup> While these programmes thus benefitted from extensive community engagement, other programmes, such as RTP and Outside Looking In (OLI), had some collaboration but were identified as having the potential to accrue further benefit from increasing dialogue and participation with the programmes’ community partners. For example, OLI benefits from community feedback and suggestions, yet the authors suggested OLI could further its community engagement and enable “Aboriginal peoples, but particularly youths, to create and be involved in implementing such programmes”.<sup>31 (p 197)</sup> Right to Play’s “involvement was important in bringing motivation, ice-hockey equipment, and other resources”<sup>30 (p 55)</sup> to the minor ice-hockey programme; however, the authors noted that the true catalysts for change were community leaders and mentors. To strengthen the programme’s impact, Macintosh and colleagues<sup>30</sup> suggested that mutual goals needed to be identified through clearer communication between the community and Right to Play. In an analysis of Right to Play’s representation in Canadian media, Coleby and Giles<sup>32</sup> argued that Aboriginal communities’ role and agency in the PLAY initiatives were routinely ignored and subjugated in non-Aboriginal media.

The final two programmes, AFL and the VAFCS’ recreation programmes were identified as having many strengths, but they were also criticized for the lack of community participation in their development and implementation. In writing about VAFCS’ recreation programme but also to

broader SFD programmes in general, Hayhurst and colleagues<sup>20 (p 564)</sup> argued that,

*If the young women in the program are to celebrate their Indigenous identities and work from that basis for social change, there needs to be fundamental shifts to program structure and content that would foreground Indigenous peoples and their knowledge in the development and implementation of [SFD] programs.*

In continuing with the need for SFD organizations to further and meaningfully engage with Aboriginal communities, Rose and Giles<sup>28 (p 447)</sup> argued, “greater attention needs to be given to incorporating Aboriginal values, particularly pertaining to leadership, into youth and community development initiatives”. One suggestion put forward by the authors was for AFL to collaborate with community elders in the programme’s development and implementation.

Hayhurst and Giles<sup>1</sup> analysis of Aboriginal SFD programmes in Canada recognized that the increasing trend of transnational, non-state actors “delivering” SFD programmes without community engagement fails to recognize the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Indeed, the role of SFD in furthering Aboriginal self-determination is routinely discussed in the literature and is thus our final theme.

## Sport, Development, and Self-Determination

Coalter<sup>9 (p 307)</sup> argued that while the “mythopoeic qualities of ‘sport’ might provide a symbolically unifying concept, sport-for-development will inevitably remain a subsidiary actor”<sup>9 (p 307)</sup> in areas of social and economic development. Similar scepticism of SFD’s purported abilities to effect broad social changes was apparent in the literature identified in this scoping review. In two of the programmes that were studied (OLI and VAFCS), SFD was recognized as having a potential role in furthering the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples, yet that role was described as being difficult to achieve in the face of broader structural inequalities and colonialism that continue to hinder the full realization of Aboriginal self-determination. Indeed, Rovito and Giles contended that, “while programmes like OLI can make a contribution towards self-determination, they alone are not enough”.<sup>31 (p 199)</sup> In their research with the VAFCS, Hayhurst and colleagues acknowledged that SFD programmes “have the potential to be used in ways that can promote Indigenous peoples’ self-determined goals and values”.<sup>20 (p 550)</sup> The authors also noted that the participants

valued the neoliberal skills (as the authors labelled them) they acquired through the VAFCS programme. These skills included Eurocentric leadership, which were deemed “necessary” for survival in competitive capitalism, and thus for upholding their autonomy and independence for surviving in the current economic moment. Promoting these traits, however, “can be seen on the other hand as reinforcing the colonial, patriarchal project by failing to address broader and intersecting issues”.<sup>21</sup> (p 124) It appears then, that while SFD is often lauded by organizations for its ability to promote self-determination, the literature fails to support such a discourse. A poorly developed and implemented programme that values Eurocentrism over Aboriginal values and leadership risks reaffirming colonialism.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond colonialism, and in part due to colonialism, the authors describing two programmes (AFL and RTP) used caution when identifying the role of sport in broader development goals. Rose and Giles<sup>28</sup> highlighted the important work AFL does in the communities in which its staff delivers programming, but cautioned that the programme “alone will not solve the underlying problems of social injustice. Issues of racism, suicide, poverty and violence lie within the social structure of society, and must be dealt with in and through areas in addition to sports and recreation”.<sup>28</sup> (p 447) Interestingly, without mentioning self-determination specifically, Bean and Forneris<sup>17</sup> noted that the NYHDP’s strong organizational structure gave Nunavik communities leverage to accrue funding for physical resources (e.g., arena renovations) from government and private sector partners.

## DISCUSSION

With the forthcoming policy decisions that will result from the TRC’s Calls to Action<sup>2</sup> concerning sport, combined with the support of SFD in Aboriginal communities from important documents such as *Aboriginal Sport for Life*,<sup>11</sup> there are numerous opportunities for researchers to inform these discussions; however, it is important that we enhance our understanding of the need for further research in several areas so that we can best contribute to answering the Calls to Action. Based on the results of our scoping review, below, we discuss some of these opportunities as well as further examine the structural inequalities that are often cited as barriers to promoting Aboriginal self-determination in SFD programmes, which we argue must inform in any discussion on SFD with Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal population in Canada is diverse. By legal definition, the term Aboriginal is composed of three identifying groups: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit.

Collectively, there are more than 1.4 million Aboriginal peoples living in Canada, or 4.3% of the Canadian population.<sup>33</sup> For First Nations peoples alone, there are over 600 First Nations/Indian bands in Canada who collectively speak over sixty Aboriginal languages.<sup>33</sup> There is also great geographic diversity: First Nations peoples are almost evenly split between residing in urban areas and residing on a reserve, compared to the majority of Inuit who continue to live in their distinct homeland, which covers an expansive area from Labrador to the Northwest Territories.<sup>33</sup> The diverse geographic locations of Aboriginal communities, combined with the continued effects of colonization, racism, and social inequities have an impact on a variety of factors, including health.<sup>36</sup>

The diversity in Aboriginal peoples across Canada poses both challenges and opportunities for prospective SFD programmes and researchers. First, the challenges arise due to the differences in the ways Aboriginal peoples experience sport: indeed, “sport means different things to different Aboriginal people and groups”.<sup>11</sup> (p 2) For some Aboriginal peoples, a Euro-Canadian sport like hockey can be “passionately embraced”,<sup>34</sup> (p 5), while for others, traditional games such as the Dene Games can be a site of contention over “tradition” and the politics of gender.<sup>35</sup> Without a nuanced understanding of cultural differences between Aboriginal groups, generalizations can be made from research with a particular population, which could lead to a “one-size-fits-all” approach to SFD in Aboriginal communities that hinders the pursuit of specific community and organizational objectives.<sup>17</sup> Further, research with small Aboriginal populations in remote areas might be seen as being “non-generalizable,” and thus not worthy of funding or publication. The identified research counters this claim. For example, Hayhurst and colleagues<sup>20</sup> utilized a transnational postcolonial feminist participatory action research approach to both meet community members’ self-identified needs and to strengthen knowledge shared between Aboriginal communities participating in SFD programming. Thus, such an approach can be of benefit by helping communities “learn from each other”.<sup>20</sup> (p 563). Authors employed participatory action research in two other articles/book chapters<sup>19, 22</sup> and it is a methodology that should be considered by prospective SFD scholars.

There is clearly a plethora of opportunities for further research in this area. Research areas that remain to be investigated include the differences in experiences with SFD between Aboriginal people on-reserve and Aboriginal people off-reserve, urban or otherwise. The challenge in adapting SFD programming to meet the needs of diverse Aboriginal cultures that come together in urban



communities across Canada is a particularly relevant and unstudied area of interest. Similarly, there is sparse research that investigates Aboriginal girls' and boys' experiences with SFD, the role of corporate sponsors, and the experiences of the families of Aboriginal youth who are participating in SFD programmes. In addition, future research should focus on examining how Aboriginal peoples understand, define and conceptualize 'sport for development'. It is indeed possible that – by using this term as part of our search criteria – we have missed a number of Aboriginal-driven initiatives that have similar mandates, programming, and elements of SFD but are not conceptualized as such. It is also important to note that while every effort was made to identify relevant existing sources, the relative dearth of available literature ensures that there is not yet a clear picture of what is occurring “on the ground” in SFD programmes in Aboriginal communities in Canada. While the themes identified in this review may represent the SFD programmes described in the literature, they are not necessarily representative of the numerous Aboriginal SFD initiatives operating across Canada.

Another challenge that received much focus in the identified literature relates to the structural inequalities that continue to act as barriers to SFD programming. Notably, authors<sup>5, 20-21, 28, 31</sup> pointed to factors such as racism, neoliberalism and poverty as barriers to the achievement of self-determination and other SFD goals. All of these factors can be argued to fall under the far-reaching umbrella of colonialism, which Reading and Wein noted is responsible for “producing social, political and economic inequalities”.<sup>36</sup> (p. 22) Historically, there have been examples in Canada where sport and recreation have been used as part of colonial projects (e.g., residential schools) that have re-produced these inequalities. While residential schools are no longer in operation, the reproduction of colonialism through sport is still possible, regardless of the altruistic intentions of SFD organizers and funders. It is indeed important that SFD scholars include in their results instances where unintended outcomes of SFD programmes further widen the inequalities they presumed to be closing. Reporting such unintended and undesirable outcomes “is not often appealing, but is needed to move towards a more critical and impactful use of sport in development efforts”.<sup>37</sup> (p. 573). We acknowledge, however, the difficulties in providing analyses of long-term intended vs. unintended outcomes within the financial and logistical confines of academia. Within the literature of this scoping review, Garner-Manzon and Giles<sup>10</sup> identified an unintended outcome relating to the belief by AFL's staff that they accrued more benefit than the programme's participants. While this is an important result, the authors acknowledged that investigating this outcome was beyond

the scope of their research. Sport for development leaders should be cautious of reports produced by industry stakeholders that portray SFD as overwhelmingly positive because an examination of potential negative outcomes could be missing. Thus, long-term research that can follow-up and critically analyze unintended outcomes is needed to further nuance our understanding of SFD outcomes in Aboriginal communities. An ethnographic approach has yet to be used within the Canadian SFD context, but is perhaps suitable for investigating such long-term outcomes.

Some have argued that SFD programmes for Aboriginal communities serve as mere band-aid solutions that fail to address broader social issues.<sup>28, 31</sup> Certainly, it is easier to provide children with access to soccer balls than it is to provide them with access to quality, racism-free education, healthcare, housing and social services. Yet, imagining sport as a place free from colonial intentions and that is universally “good” remains problematic and simplistic, particularly when considering SFD programmes have been identified as potential spaces where colonial relations are re-affirmed.<sup>27</sup> Future SFD scholars, practitioners, and policymakers should resist promoting and justifying SFD as a tool that in and of itself save lives and builds better communities, since this discourse dangerously detracts and distracts from the very real, complex issues affecting many Aboriginal communities in Canada, most of which certainly cannot be addressed through sport alone.

## CONCLUSION

The research question guiding this scoping review was, “what academic literature is available concerning SFD programmes for Aboriginal people in Canada?” A notable exemption from this research question was reports produced by SFD organizations or the communities with which they work. Future research should consider including these reports in their analysis to incorporate multiple perspectives. While we identified important contributions to this (relatively) recently conceptualized field of study, there is a clear need for further research that informs future sport-related policy decisions. Moving forward, it is important that executives of SFD organizations, as well as government and NGO policymakers, use restraint and realism when stating the ultimate socioeconomic goals of their programmes. As much as the efforts of SFD organizations may promote positive change within Aboriginal communities (both on and off reserve), the authors of the identified literature often argued that further collective action is needed to challenge the broader social inequalities affecting many Aboriginal communities across Canada. It may be worthwhile for SFD organizations to attempt to

work in partnership with governments, private donors, Aboriginal youth and other stakeholders to foster an open and honest dialogue to discuss the infrastructural, superstructural and procedural barriers Aboriginal SFD participants face in their day-to-day lives. Sport for development scholars can contribute to this dialogue by advocating for structural changes to the issues such as youth education, which are the purported “targets” of SFD initiatives. By critically examining these structural inequalities and barriers alongside SFD, we will be able to gain a more complete and nuanced understanding of the role SFD may play in Aboriginal peoples’ lives.

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