



ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH THE ALBERTA SPORT AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND PROJECT

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ASRAB

- The Alberta Sports and Recreation Association for the Blind (ASRAB) is a provincial non-profit charitable membership-based organization.
- ASRAB's mission contends that the mission is enacted by “providing development and competitive sport programs; collaborating with others who share [their] vision; and promoting the abilities of the blind and visually impaired to actively participate in a broad spectrum of sport and recreation programs”

The Reality

- “816,250 (3.2%) of Canadians aged 15 plus report having a seeing limitation” (Leisure Information Network, 2013).
- There are potentially 28,094 individuals in Edmonton who could be engaged with ASRAB.

The Issue

- “There is a group of 6 very committed participants in our adult programs in Edmonton” (ASRAB Executive Director, personal communication, April 6, 2016).



THE RESEARCH QUESTION

What strategies can The Alberta Sports and Recreation Association for the Blind adopt to increase participation in their active living programs in Edmonton?

METHODOLOGIES

Online Survey

Focus Group

One on One
Interviews

LITERATURE REVIEW TOPICS

Positive Enablers to Physical Activity

Positive motivators to physical activity.
Perceptions and feelings towards physical activity.

Facilitators to Recruit Non-Participants

Defining participant engagement.
Identifying strategies and facilitators to participant engagement.

Ecological Factors Affecting Recruitment and Retention of Participants

Models describing ecological factors.
Environmental factors affecting participation.
Personal factors affecting participation.

STUDY FINDINGS: THEMES

Awareness &
Engagement

Defining
Physical
Activity

Successful
Programs

Program
Alternatives

Benefits of
Physical
Activity
Programs

AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH ASRAB PROGRAMMING

- 5 of 9 non active participants had heard of ASRAB
- 8 non active participants had participated in ASRAB programs 10-20 years ago
- Partners unaware of ASRAB programming
- Active participants became involved via social mechanisms
- Social conformation / belonging & confidence building.
- Engage with medical sector
- Awareness – social media
- Accessibility concerns (Transportation/facility)



THEME TWO
DEFINING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Participant
Definition

Activity Type

Social



THEME THREE

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

- Active participants – Recreation, Exercise & Outdoor Pursuits
- Program progression, scheduling & variety
- Social aspect of programs
- Transportation – largest facilitator
- Resource allocation to support programming



THEME FOUR
PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

- Staff/Board & Non active participants - unaware
- Try it nights
- Environmental Scan
- Non active participants – Exercise, Recreation & competitive sport



THEME FIVE
DEFINING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sense of belonging /
understanding

Physical & Mental health
benefits

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

Communication & Awareness

Word of mouth was the most effective means to communicating active living opportunities for active and non-active participants. Awareness of active living opportunities was very low amongst non-active participants as well as for sector organizations that these non-active participants engage with.

Engagement & Partnership Strategies

All the active and non-active participants felt it would be important for ASRAB to consider new and existing partners in the sector and to develop a partnership and engagement strategy for those organizations.

Informing Successful Programs

The most reported need was to have a variety of different programming and a variety in the scheduling of that programming.

Accessibility Considerations

The largest factor all participants noted that would facilitate and incentivize participation was transportation. Marston and Golledge (2003) noted that "the inability to travel independently and to interact with the wider world is one of the most significant handicaps that persons with visual impairments (that is, are blind or have low vision) experience" (p. 475).



RECOMMENDATION ONE

DEFINE ACTIVE LIVING

- ASRAB should consider defining what active living programs means to their mission and vision, which will help clarify organizational operations. This definition will then help to provide clear messaging for participant and partner organization recruitment.
- A common global definition of active living is “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure“ (World Health Organization, 2017).

RECOMMENDATION TWO

ALIGN RESOURCES TO ACTIVE LIVING PROGRAMS

- The desire of participants was to achieve a more equitable share of the resources for active living programs.
- Active living is half of the mandate of ASRAB, so the leadership should investigate a more equitable share of the resources between the sport and active living pillars.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN & MEMBER SURVEY

- To help expand active living programming, ASRAB could conduct an environmental scan to identify potential and existing community partners. These partners can be defined as “various parties who may affect the form, progress and outcomes of a project or organization” (Ward, S., Chapman, C. (2008) p. 564).
- Through conducting the member survey, individuals in the blind/visually impaired community could note all the organizations they feel are key organizations in their lives as well as those influencers to their participation behaviours.



RECOMMENDATION FOUR

DEVELOP INCENTIVES FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- The largest facilitator noted by participants was transportation assistance. Marston and Golledge (2003) noted that “the inability to travel independently and to interact with the wider world is one of the most significant handicaps that persons with visual impairments (that is, are blind or have low vision) experience” (p. 475).
- ASRAB could explore corporate rates on taxi companies, vehicle leases, taxi alternative companies, or sponsorships to support this recommendation.



RECOMMENDATION FIVE

DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL AND AWARENESS RESOURCES

- Education and awareness resources could be produced to provide to partner organizations, current and potential participants, and partner organizations.
- Pollard, Simpson, Lamarue, and Keefe (2003) noted that “lack of awareness of low vision services was an issue that was consistently discussed” (p. 324).

IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Action research on sport pillar

Partnership strategy development
in sector – action research



Questions?