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Engaging Aboriginal Youth in Off-Reserve Communities: A Case-Study of MAKWA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a formative evaluation of Making Aboriginal Kids Walk Away (From Tobacco Abuse) (MAKWA), an Aboriginal Youth Action Alliance (YAA) located off-reserve. The primary focus of the evaluation was to understand how to establish and operate an Aboriginal off-reserve youth engagement initiative. A total of twelve interviews were conducted with MAKWA adult and youth staff, graduated youth staff, and community partners. Questions focused on the following areas: establishing MAKWA, potential reach and impacts of the program, recruitment methods, support from internal and external sources, and benefits and challenges of the program for staff and partners.

Key Findings

Aboriginal Community Partnerships

Community partnerships were essential in understanding the Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay and developing appropriate messaging. Aboriginal groups played critical roles in developing the program, including providing input on how to recruit staff and engage Aboriginal youth. Partnering with Aboriginal agencies also provided the opportunity to reach Aboriginal populations through agency events and networks.

Youth-Friendly Policies and Practices

Flexible and youth-friendly policies are essential to accommodating youth and their needs. While a lack of such policies was initially an issue with MAKWA and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU), changes were made to better accommodate peer leaders.

Youth Advisor: Aboriginal or Strongly Familiar with Aboriginal Culture and Partners

Participants felt it was important for the program to employ a youth advisor who is Aboriginal or has a substantial understanding of Aboriginal youth and their culture to be able to connect with them. This also ensures more knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal community groups and potential partners to further MAKWA's work.

Aboriginal Representation

Aboriginal representation at Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU), through an on-site elder or Aboriginal staff, could provide a much valued perspective for MAKWA on their programming and activities. This representation could also help increase TBDHU's profile as a public health resource for Aboriginal people in the community.

Challenges

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention of peer leaders were serious challenges for MAKWA. Youth who are passionate about traditional tobacco were not easily found. Lost connections with youth from fly-in communities during summer months compromised retention.

Understanding Traditional Tobacco

A lack of understanding of the role of traditional tobacco in parts of the Thunder Bay community resulted in mistaken perceptions of MAKWA's goals at times.

Reaching Target Groups

Reaching youth outside of school activities and reaching Aboriginal people not connected to community groups has been an ongoing challenge for MAKWA.

Accomplishments

MAKWA has been involved in substantial activity with positive perceived impacts, and key informants were satisfied with the group's performance.

Penetration of Aboriginal Community Organizations

MAKWA was successful in working with Aboriginal community organizations, as demonstrated by the winning of an Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2007.

Policy Influence

At the community level, MAKWA's most sustainable impact was the approval of a bylaw on smoke free parks and beaches.

Knowledge of Traditional Tobacco

The group increased knowledge of traditional tobacco in non-Aboriginal communities. Other YAAs have expanded their knowledge and understanding of traditional tobacco, and are using their partnership with MAKWA to reach out to Aboriginal communities.

Linkages between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Communities

Locating MAKWA in the health unit gave TBDHU staff the opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal culture and traditional tobacco, and gain access to youth and Aboriginal perspectives to apply to their work when needed. With improved knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and customs, TBDHU has potential to better link with and provide needed services to the Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay.

INTRODUCTION

The Youth Action Alliance (YAA) program, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion from 2005 to 2009, is an excellent example of youth-led tobacco control initiatives geared towards preventing and reducing the use of tobacco in their communities. YAA groups have a peer-to-peer focus and engage in a variety of activities, such as presentations, advocacy work, and street marketing. A formative evaluation of the provincial program found that implementation was generally successful and that positive impacts were observed in sub-communities.¹ As a result of the formative evaluation on YAAs, questions for further exploration were raised. In 2009, OTRU published an evaluation report on YAAs for at-risk youth in underserved communities.² In 2010, the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) evaluated two Aboriginal Youth Action Alliances.

Youth who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis are at a higher risk for smoking.³ Statistics Canada data from 2006 indicate that approximately 70% of Ontario's Aboriginal population lived off-reserve, demonstrating a need for tobacco control efforts targeted towards Aboriginal populations residing in such areas.⁴ A case study of the Toronto YAA program, Tobacco Don't Own Toronto (T-DOT) found that it was challenging to reach youth who identify as Aboriginal, and that while Aboriginal youth had at one point been recruited into the group, they did not stay with the program.²

Experiences of and strategies used by Aboriginal Youth Action Alliances can help inform and provide direction on how to establish and administer youth engagement and tobacco control programming aimed at Aboriginal youth. This case study examines the experiences of Making Aboriginal Kids Walk Away (From Tobacco Abuse) (MAKWA), an Aboriginal YAA located off-reserve in Thunder Bay. A formative evaluation was conducted to inform program design and implementation and offer ideas and models on how to establish and operate an Aboriginal off-reserve youth engagement program. Objectives included evaluating perceived impacts of the group for youth, adult staff, and agencies working with the program, and for intended audiences of tobacco control work.

Some specific questions of interest were:

- How have the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) and MAKWA worked with Aboriginal agencies?
- Have the YAA program and associated resources been adapted to meet the needs of MAKWA?
- Have there been barriers to the effective implementation of the program and conduct of tobacco control work?
- What is the potential reach and impact of the group, for peer leaders, the health unit, other YAAs, and the wider community?

A second case study evaluation has been conducted with YAA MAN (Youth Action Alliance on Manitoulin Island), an on-reserve YAA, and results are published in a separate report.⁵

This report intends to facilitate discussion and knowledge exchange in the area of recruiting and conducting health promotion work with Aboriginal youth, and highlights strategies that may be adapted and implemented in other urban areas for similar groups.

METHODOLOGY

Advisory Committee

An advisory committee consisting of MAKWA adult staff and a former youth member of the group was established to guide the development and implementation of the evaluation. Advisory committee members played an integral role in developing the evaluation design, and evaluation questions, and drafting a list of potential participants.

Data Collection

Interviews

Twelve interviews were conducted with MAKWA staff, including peer leaders and adult staff, graduated peer leaders, and community partners. A list of twenty-four potential participants was drafted by MAKWA staff members at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU). The selection of interviewees ensured representation from youth staff, adult staff, and community partners. One key informant declined participation for workplace confidentiality reasons. It was difficult to establish contact with several graduated peer leaders and interviews were conducted with those who had either maintained some form of contact with staff or responded to the request for an interview.

Interviews were structured around an interview guide (Appendix A) and participants were given a copy of the questions prior to the interview. Participants were also emailed a consent form in advance which provided a detailed explanation of the evaluation purpose and protocol. Consent forms were used to obtain participants' written consent and permission to audio-record their interview (Appendix B). Peer leaders under the age of sixteen were required to submit a parental consent form prior to being interviewed. While the consent form indicated that interviewee identity would be kept confidential, it also stated it would be impossible to keep the location and YAA group anonymous.

Interview questions focused on the process involved in establishing MAKWA, potential reach and impacts of the program, recruitment methods, support from internal and external sources, and benefits and challenges of the program for staff and partners. Most interviews were conducted in-person at respective workplaces; a few were conducted over the phone. All interviews were

audio-recorded and lasted twenty minutes to an hour. All interviews were conducted by a member of the First Nations community with experience in First Nations and Aboriginal protocol and culture. Ethics approval for the study was granted by the University of Toronto.

Data Analysis

Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed. Data were organized into categories based on responses to questions and emerging themes across the interviews. Data were analyzed using NVivo software.⁶ Broader categories or themes were assigned a 'node' and sub-themes were identified and coded under these heading nodes.

Preliminary findings of data analysis were presented to advisory committee members for review and feedback. This also provided an opportunity to validate findings and allow for further learning and reflection by the advisory committee and evaluators.

FINDINGS

Establishing MAKWA

The idea for an Aboriginal Youth Action Alliance (YAA) group was put forward in response to a large and growing Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay with a high smoking rate. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) submitted a proposal for an Aboriginal youth-focused YAA as part of a larger application for funding to set up four YAA clusters. After the proposal was approved, staff sought the support and perspective of the Aboriginal community on how to establish an Aboriginal youth-focused group. Obtaining community buy-in was challenging, as there was some resistance to the idea at first. A building process was required to gain the support of Aboriginal community organizations:

Like the first few months was almost a matter of oh, what are you trying to do and how do you want to do it and is the Health Unit the best place to do that from. So we had to actually go through a building process. (Interview 5)

Partnerships were vital in the development of MAKWA. The Aboriginal Interagency Organization, Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Community Health Centre, and Multicultural Association for Thunder Bay were all approached to be partners. Partners were asked for input on various aspects of setting up MAKWA, such as how to operate the program, what type of messaging to use, and how to work with youth. They also played active and advisory roles in the recruitment of youth advisors and peer leaders. Partnerships with community organizations continued to play an important role in MAKWA's work, particularly with regard to the activities and reach of the program.

Establishing a youth program in a health unit with no previous youth engagement experience was a challenging endeavor for all four YAA clusters at TBDHU, not just MAKWA. This was found in the formative evaluation of the YAA program generally.¹ Since peer leaders attend school during the daytime, internal public health unit practices needed to change to schedule orientation for MAKWA. Acceptance and buy-in from other programs, staff, and management at the health unit were required to ensure that peer leaders were recognized as employees of TBDHU.

Lack of documented experience and guidelines directly related to the functioning of an Aboriginal youth engagement group added to the challenge of establishing and operating MAKWA.

Program Goals

The provincial YAA program focused on youth engagement, smoking prevention, and raising awareness of tobacco issues.¹ MAKWA, while incorporating these goals into its activities, specifically focused on traditional tobacco. Traditional tobacco is used in First Nations communities as a prayer offering, an offering in sweat lodges, and as medicine.⁷ On websites such as Smoke-FX, TakingITGlobal, and in TBDHU news releases, MAKWA self-describes its goals and mission as educating peers on the difference between sacred tobacco use and recreational or commercial tobacco use, encouraging Aboriginal youth to make informed decisions on healthy lifestyle choices free of tobacco industry products, and restoring pride in the role of traditional tobacco in Aboriginal culture.

Peer leaders in MAKWA described the group's mandate as educating the public on traditional tobacco use and highlighting the differences between traditional and commercial tobacco. Adult respondents acknowledged these goals and their importance to the program but added to the list youth development and peer-to-peer tobacco prevention education. A peer-to-peer approach was cited across interviews and in various contexts as being important to the success of the program as a more effective way to target youth.

Among those who mentioned youth development as a goal, a few noted that involvement in MAKWA gave youth an opportunity to be employed and develop skills. One respondent added that youth development was a necessary component of the program to give peer leaders credibility and the tools to do their job well:

Well, I think first, and not just necessarily in priority but first in terms of in order to make the program work, we had to, and still have to, provide the peer leaders with knowledge and a skill base for them to work with. So one of the goals is really just to take a brand new peer leader joining our program and not only give them tobacco information, but to give them leadership skills. To have them able to set direction, make decisions, speak to others, have a voice in the community, get them involved in leadership activities. (Interview 5)

Peer Leaders

Recruitment

A variety of methods was used to recruit peer leaders for the MAKWA program. Posters and application forms were distributed to high schools and native and non-native community organizations. Application forms were given to guidance counselors in every high school in Thunder Bay. Peer leaders put up posters in various locations, such as malls, movie theatres, and libraries. MAKWA kept a stock of application forms for peer leader and volunteer positions available at their booths at different events. Recruitment through mass media (e.g., newspapers) had been tried in the past but with little success.

Recruiting peer leaders through word of mouth appeared to be most successful, as indicated by current and past peer leaders, who were usually recruited through family and friends. A few peer leaders commented that seeing friends participate in MAKWA activities caught their interest and encouraged them to apply for the position.

Typically, program staff reached out to existing peer leaders and community contacts and their respective networks – including peer leaders involved in powwows. School guidance counselors and school staff promoted the group at schools and referred youth who were seen as potentially a good fit with the program. An adult key informant noted that many peer leaders came from schools, and that having a person in a school to champion MAKWA facilitated recruitment.

Potential candidates were interviewed by a panel usually consisting of the Tobacco Control Manager, youth advisor(s) and peer leaders. MAKWA staff members were open to hiring a diverse range of youth who displayed potential to learn and grow and had unique skills and interests, but staff often sought peer leaders with communication skills, leadership skills, and community or volunteer experience.

Hiring from different social circles broadened the potential reach of MAKWA. However, staff recognized that mainly high achievers were hired into the program:

...it's usually more natural for the ones who are a little bit already into this thing, or the sort of thing they're into, school leadership stuff and they're health conscious, they are naturally the ones who apply for jobs like these. So for every one of higher risk youth you're going to get 10 applications for someone who's already sort of into it and went through the interview process.(Interview 3)

Although the more outgoing and engaged youth stand out during the interview process as being more skilled and having the ability to produce desired results faster, a balance was struck between hiring already highly skilled youth and those whose skills could be further developed. The hiring panel made an effort to elicit information from more reticent candidates, not only to draw out their potential strengths but also to determine whether they were belonged to networks or social circles different from those of current peer leaders:

And even though they may not be the most vocal or outgoing, amongst their peers, amongst their group, they may actually be seen as a leader. They're a drummer. They're involved in the cultural expressions. They're doing it. (Interview 5)

High achieving youth were seen as more likely to be attracted to MAKWA, and community partners were also more inclined to encourage such youth to get involved and recommend them to program staff. Higher risk youth or less socially skilled youth were difficult to recruit although they might have benefited a great deal from the program. Youth who were not in school, did not frequent community centers, and were not connected to the organizations MAKWA recruits through were typically not reached by the recruitment process.

Benefits to Being a Peer Leader

An interest in the areas of tobacco control and traditional tobacco is what drew most peer leaders to MAKWA. One peer leader said that the position was related to their future career goals, while another saw it as a way to build skills.

When asked about their experiences with MAKWA, both current and past peer leaders spoke positively about the program and said they enjoyed being a part of the group. One respondent noted that being employed as a peer leader allowed for a greater contribution to society compared to other typical teenage jobs (e.g., working at grocery stores and fast food outlets). Another peer leader, who was first drawn to the position for employment and monetary benefits, described it as a 'win/win situation' because the position added to their résumé, and gave an opportunity to gain knowledge and help people. Two peer leaders found that the experience was better than they had expected, and specifically mentioned the peer leader training offered by the Youth Advocate Training Institute (YATI). One of these individuals felt that the training not only supported the peer leaders but was vital to the program's success in that it improved the synergy among group members. Group activities during training sessions where the youth had a chance

to work together and get better acquainted with each other helped them feel connected to MAKWA and its cause.

Training was seen as essential to program success, and peer leaders received ongoing training in addition to that offered by the YATI. As part of TBDHU, MAKWA staff arranged for the health promotion team to speak with peer leaders and share knowledge and resources. Peer leaders also participated in youth-led activities organized by their communities; this was seen as an opportunity to practice and improve their skills in staging events. Monthly skill building sessions were also held, either peer-to-peer or led by the youth advisor or Youth Development Specialist. An effort was made to involve peer leaders in the public health unit (PHU) or in community training where possible. Aboriginal elders were brought in to talk to the group not just about the tobacco industry, but also about sacred tobacco and its use.

Challenges to Recruiting and Retaining Peer Leaders

Two peer leaders commented that recruiting youth into the program was a challenge:

I think one of the challenges for MAKWA is its staff; we don't have that many people. Like right now there's just four [peer leaders] and [they are] all girls so I think that's one of the struggles that we need more, that we need to get more staff I think and, I mean, we tried to but it seems to be a bit of a challenge. (Interview 1)

One of the two said it was difficult to find enough Aboriginal youth who were passionate about traditional tobacco and suggested that Aboriginal youth were shy and less likely to apply to be a peer leader. Two key informants noted that peer leader retention was an issue for MAKWA and that there was a high turnover of peer leaders. At the time of the evaluation, MAKWA was staffed by four peer leaders, and the youth advisor was in the process of recruiting more. The continuous focus on new peer leader recruitment hindered the development and strengthening of a fully-staffed YAA, which might have affected MAKWA'S reach and impact:

It takes a while to not be really... to feel confident enough to belt out the messages and I don't know if all of them are at that level where they can really go out and push the envelope. (Interview 3)

One reason for the high turnover rate, suggested a key informant, could be a disruption in participation as peer leaders from fly-in communities (i.e., communities with no road access

during the summer) leave Thunder Bay for the summer. MAKWA operated year-long, and it was difficult to engage peer leaders outside Thunder Bay during the summer. Even with encouragement, these peer leaders were less active with MAKWA during the summer. The same key informant observed that peer leader retention might have been affected at times by one of the youth advisor's extended, unplanned absences. Without this key figure to provide structure to the group, youth might have left the group because of a lack of direction or loss of interest.

Youth Advisor

The MAKWA youth advisor position at TBDHU was a full-time position that required flexible working hours because working with youth typically takes place after school. Several qualities were cited as being attractive in a youth advisor: leadership; the ability to motivate and guide peer leaders to stay on task; creativity; the ability to relate to youth; approachability; understanding; organizational skills; and communication skills. Two adult key informants felt that the youth advisor should understand and support the youth development aspect of the program; i.e., support peer leaders with suggestions, guidance, and direction but allow the youth to do the leading. One of these key informants emphasized the importance of the youth advisor working on a one-on-one basis with the peer leaders:

I think what happens with the program often is that there's this ... sort of a premise to have a really high functioning group, to deliver all of these events, to get in the media, to do all these great things and so individuals that may struggle with that in the beginning often don't last long in the program and so I would recommend a youth advisor that really ... is interested in taking the time to work one-on-one with youth to really help them succeed in the program. (Interview 2)

Two key informants felt that the youth advisor should be Aboriginal; two others said that while this was not essential, the youth advisor should have a thorough understanding of Aboriginal culture and customs. Two respondents thought that Aboriginal youth advisors would be better suited to the position as they would have grown up among Aboriginal culture and customs, and would better understand Aboriginal youth. One respondent noted that Aboriginal youth tend to be quiet and reserved, and would not work well if pushed into the spotlight. These respondents believed that an Aboriginal youth advisor would take this into account.

Youth advisor awareness of resources in the Aboriginal community and connections with Aboriginal community organizations were seen as important to MAKWA's success.

Program Reach

Target Population

Although MAKWA's target audience was Aboriginal youth aged 14 to 19, they did address elementary school-aged youth. MAKWA also tried to reach the broader Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay. Ultimately, MAKWA reached both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, youth and adult. No matter the audience, MAKWA delivered a consistent core message about the differences between traditional and commercial tobacco use.

MAKWA extended its reach to First Nations communities outside Thunder Bay. A key informant suggested that MAKWA could do more here by developing partnerships outside the City of Thunder Bay in places that would benefit from traditional tobacco messaging. While this had been done in the past, it was a challenge to work with First Nations communities beyond Thunder Bay because of logistics, parental permission requirements, and additional staff and parent volunteer requirements.

As MAKWA's target population varied, so did the focus of their work – depending on Public Health Unit (PHU) objectives. However, peer leaders struggled to prioritize events in the face of multiple goals. For example, peer leaders preferred to tackle smoking in Aboriginal band offices and community centres – because this was directly related to their main target, the Aboriginal population – rather than running events focused on tobacco-free parks and beaches. These competing goals weakened MAKWA's effects.

Successes and Challenges in Reaching Target Populations

MAKWA successfully forged relationships with many Aboriginal community groups and became well-known and recognized. A major success was receiving an Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2007. It is clear that the group's partnerships with community organizations helped to extend its reach:

...those who were as passionately involved in what we do as they were in their Aboriginal issue, they understood who we were and what we were doing and they thought it was a great job of course. That, I guess would be one of our major successes there, was just infiltrating I guess the Aboriginal community within

Thunder Bay. And because of our Aboriginal youth advisor at the time... she was very tight knit with the community. So it was very, I'd say easy, to get in with the actual Aboriginal community, know what's going on, participate in their little events... (Interview 11)

Despite successes with community groups, MAKWA experienced difficulty reaching their other target audiences. One respondent indicated that the group was not well known among the mainstream Aboriginal population who were not affiliated with community groups. The respondent felt that the on-reserve Aboriginal population was easier to reach than the off-reserve Aboriginal population, which they felt was more spread out in Thunder Bay. Communicating with the Aboriginal population through media was also a challenge as they are not high users of mainstream media. However, there was some success with Aboriginal media, such as Wawatay News, which has interviewed peer leaders and published articles on MAKWA's work.

MAKWA worked closely with Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, an all-native high school, and reached Aboriginal youth attending the school. However, the group may not have reached Aboriginal youth attending other schools in Thunder Bay. MAKWA reached non-Aboriginal youth through partnering on activities and events with YETI (Youth Engaged in Tobacco-Free Initiatives, the general YAA in Thunder Bay).

A few respondents commented that youth in general can be hard to reach. Schools are a good place to reach youth, but this environment can be challenging because of the need for school board approval of activities. MAKWA did hold activities in the community, but these attracted a wider range of ages than MAKWA's target audience, and some community locations chosen to host events and booths, such as malls and parks, were not always ideal places for reaching out to youth. As well, MAKWA was restricted in where it could conduct events because it was part of a public health unit:

So like I mean, it's probably harder to reach teenagers because we can't obviously since we're with the health unit, we can't just go to concerts and stuff. (Interview 8)

Higher-risk youth were seen as being difficult to reach compared to non-high risk youth. Since much of MAKWA's work to reach youth was conducted in schools, it did not reach youth who

were not in school. A key informant noted that there is a high dropout rate among youth in the community and a high number of youth, mainly Aboriginal, are in transition between shelter housing and their homes. MAKWA did hold events and activities with The Underground Gym, a community organization for youth in transition, in order to reach higher-risk youth. Another potential avenue for reaching this population, suggested a respondent, would be through the Multicultural Youth Centre, a drop-in centre for youth in Thunder Bay that is open during the day for youth who do not attend school. Some high-risk youth were involved with MAKWA, and staff wanted them to reach out to their peers, but these youth were reluctant to approach their social circles to talk about MAKWA because of fears of being rejected:

Of course, the unfortunate part is some of them don't want to carry that flag into their social circle because that's why they're accepted there. And if they come in and make too many rocking of the boat then they may not be accepted in that circle either. (Interview 5)

Messaging

One of the challenges MAKWA faced was the lack of awareness among the general public about its mandate and about traditional tobacco. MAKWA's attempts to educate the public about traditional tobacco use often left the public confused:

Some people even thought we were encouraging tobacco use as in smoking. (Interview 11)

A key informant mentioned that MAKWA had also met Aboriginal youth who justified smoking a cigarette as praying and had to clarify and address such misconceptions.

Although MAKWA targeted both smokers and non-smokers, much of their messaging was directed to non-smokers. Smoking cessation was not seen as a central component of MAKWA's work:

Well youth will have been smoking since they were like 7 or 8 probably due to family problems or just peer pressure wanting to fit in with a certain group. I guess the challenge is that you can't just make an individual quit whenever you speak to him or her. (Interview 4)

Activities

MAKWA held various activities in schools, in the Thunder Bay community, and with aboriginal communities and groups to promote its message and increase visibility. Peer leaders were usually responsible for activity ideas, but they sometimes borrowed ideas from the other YAAs in Thunder Bay, often connecting by teleconference to share ideas and provide progress updates.

MAKWA reached out to the Aboriginal community through powwows, Little Native Hockey League, and National Aboriginal Day. MAKWA members have included powwow singers who have used their talents to show other peer leaders and target audiences the importance of traditional tobacco. At the time these interviews were conducted, peer leaders were planning to attend a local powwow to support tobacco-free sports; they were going to set up a booth, have people pledge to be tobacco-free for the weekend, and distribute MAKWA buttons.

In schools, MAKWA has set up booths and conducted events such as Black Angels (painting snow angels black and writing tobacco facts on them) and Valentine's Day Hearts (posting cut-out hearts on school walls). The Valentine's Day Hearts included information about the health effects of smoking, the similarities between cigarettes and chew tobacco, and quotes from the tobacco industry on infiltrating the youth market. The event was well-received by students:

[Peer leaders] couldn't even put them up fast enough because they were following us around reading them. (Interview 9)

At the time of this evaluation, MAKWA was in the process of working with schools to set up presentations on chew tobacco with the goal of updating the school codes of conduct to include a ban on using the product on school property.

MAKWA organized many events for the Thunder Bay community, such as Chalk Attacks (writing chalk messages on sidewalks) and postcard campaigns, and has had booths at community events like Summer in the Parks.⁸ A particularly notable activity for MAKWA was creation of an information package on chew and spit tobacco which was sent to dentists in Thunder Bay. This project earned positive feedback from some of the dentists:

...and they followed it with phone calls and some of the dentists were already practicing that, they were already talking to people who they felt were smoking or using chew and spit tobacco. But some of them weren't aware that chew and spit

tobacco was that highly used in the City of Thunder Bay so they were very receptive to the tobacco package, or the package that we sent out to the dentists, and they were like, oh my G-d, that's crazy, like one in eight kids. (Interview 9)

A few activities and strategies stand out as successful in attracting certain populations; in particular, swag given away at booths and other events attracted youth:

We set up a booth one time at some youth centre and there was like some kids there and they wanted, they kept coming back because they wanted hats and stuff and mitts and yeah, I thought it was a pretty good idea to have these things. (Interview 10)

Another way to establish themselves in the community and reach a wider audience was to draw younger children to MAKWA booths, which in turn attracted adults:

I think it's during one of our booth set-ups about tobacco-free parks and beaches. We had a lot of arts and crafts for younger children to do and when these children wanted to do some of the activities with us, their parents or the older people that were with them would come to our booth too. (Interview 4)

MAKWA partnered with the Regional Multicultural Youth Centre to organize events such as a Talent Night and a Halloween event for youth who visit the centre. MAKWA also initiated an art project with a community organization – painting garbage cans with anti-tobacco messaging and placing them around high-risk neighbourhoods in the Thunder Bay.

According to the community partners interviewed, one of the advantages of working with MAKWA and TBDHU was exposure and access to tobacco and other health-related resources. Awareness of health unit activities and programs allowed community partners to collaborate on initiatives where appropriate. Furthermore, the partnership offered a networking opportunity and opened doors to building relationships with other sections in the health unit. Few partners observed any disadvantage to working with the health unit, except for the seemingly lengthy or unnecessary processes required to allow MAKWA to use non-PHU facilities. A second criticism was that the PHU was seen as inflexible when working with youth. It was suggested that MAKWA approach youth based on their needs and concerns and present tobacco-related messages while dealing with other issues important to youth.

Perceived Impacts

Impact on Peer Leaders

Peer leaders reported that a major benefit to being a part of MAKWA was the opportunity to develop skills. One respondent noted that Aboriginal youth tend to be shy and new peer leaders found it difficult to speak with the public or share ideas freely when planning activities. To tackle this, ice breaker activities were used during meetings to get youth acquainted and feeling comfortable with each other. Many peer leaders commented on their improved leadership, communication, and public speaking skills, demonstrating that the youth development goals of the program were being met. One peer leader felt that the opportunities and experience gained through working at MAKWA would be beneficial in finding future employment. Youth also appreciated learning about tobacco control issues and sacred tobacco use. Other benefits included traveling, networking with youth across different areas, and working to “move a message.”

Impact on Youth

It is difficult to assess the impact on youth, and several respondents were unsure of how MAKWA might have affected youth in Thunder Bay. It seemed that friends of peer leaders viewed the group favourably, but this was less true for youth who smoke:

They think it's actually pretty cool. But they always just kind of get sidetracked and kind of forget about applying all the time. But no, they enjoy it. They think it's really a good thing. Yeah, they actually, well some of my friends volunteer with me. And even if they don't volunteer, they come along just for fun. (Interview 8)

Like it's kind of difficult for me because I'm around a lot of people who do smoke and like a lot of them, most of them, are from fly-in communities and it's just basically kind of difficult to get to them.

Interviewer: Because they've been smoking a while?

Yeah. It's like sometimes I think they don't really care if they don't smoke. It's kind of difficult for me to say, to see the impact amongst myself. I mean, like around me, but I do have friends who don't smoke and they tell me that they're proud of what I'm doing. (Interview 4)

Events that MAKWA organized sometimes elicited positive responses from youth. For example, the Valentine's Day Hearts event (mentioned earlier) generated a positive reaction and encouraged discussion among youth:

...people started wearing them the next day and they just put them on and were like this is really cool. So something like that has a huge impact because they took the time to read them and then they were sharing them with their friends and talking about it and just got that discussion really going. That was our one big event that I had a lot of positive feedback on and other little things like that.

(Interview 9)

A few respondents felt that youth and the community as a whole were becoming more knowledgeable, particularly about traditional tobacco, and were becoming more aware of Aboriginal culture and customs.

Impact on Other YAAs

Having an Aboriginal YAA as part of TBDHU benefited the other YAAs because it led to greater awareness on their part about traditional tobacco:

I think that the other groups with TBDHU are proud to have one of the two Aboriginal Youth Action Alliances work with them and be a part of them and it's a good thing. (Interview 3)

I think they bring an Aboriginal flavour to all the trainings that we go to or everything that we do. The most recent training in October, this past October, they had a guest speaker come in, an elder from the community come in and give teachings on traditional tobacco versus commercial tobacco, and it was really neat because even though there's a lot of Aboriginal people in the north-western kind of... in Thunder Bay and in the other Youth Action Alliances in like Dryden and Geraldton and Marathon, I don't think they've ever really experienced worrying about it because he brought in tobacco that wasn't... the speaker brought in tobacco that wasn't pumped up with chemicals in any way, so it was just traditional cut up tobacco and they were like, oh, that's what it looks like and it was just neat to see how... (Interview 9)

MAKWA had an impact on YAAs beyond TBDHU as well. The group gave a presentation on traditional tobacco at a provincial training event to an audience of peer leaders. Feedback from tobacco control programs across Ontario suggests that MAKWA's contribution to understanding of traditional tobacco has been appreciated.

Impact on Thunder Bay Public Health Unit

With an Aboriginal group as part of its health unit, TBDHU now has a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and traditions. TBDHU has also been able to create opportunities to connect with and hold events for this population. As TBDHU is not Aboriginal-focused, MAKWA'S Aboriginal staff were a resource for other PHU employees on aboriginal issues.

Similarly, PHU employees wanted a youth perspective on youth programs and events. MAKWA peer leaders were often asked to help out at certain events, offer their input on planning, and attend training sessions.

Impact on Community

Despite challenges faced in targeting the general community, there are many signs that MAKWA had an impact on the Thunder Bay community through its work – on policy, on awareness, and on media penetration.

The group collaborated with Tobacco Free Thunder Bay (a non-aboriginal YAA) to advocate for a bylaw supporting smoke free parks and beaches. This collaboration included a deputation to city council. The bylaw was ratified in June 2010.⁹

MAKWA also successfully implemented a tobacco-free sports program in Thunder Bay: the use of tobacco products is prohibited while students are wearing school team uniforms and participating in school sports.

Participating in regular events in the city, such as Summer in the Parks, provided good exposure for MAKWA. People approached its booth to give feedback on how MAKWA had increased their knowledge of by-laws and other tobacco control issues, demonstrating that the group has raised awareness of these issues in Thunder Bay. The level of participation in postcard campaigns on tobacco control issues also showed that many people were reached and educated by MAKWA:

...in regards to our postcard campaign for Tobacco-Free Parks and Beaches, we presented those to City Council and we had two nice sized boxes. So they saw that and that was in our presentation to them to add that to their list of initiatives and things to consider for laws and I think that made a big impact. (Interview 11)

One respondent noted seeing MAKWA's Tobacco-Free Parks and Beaches magnets on cars across the city, another measure of the reach of MAKWA's activities and community support for its cause.

A more robust measure of MAKWA's reach in Thunder Bay is seen by the number of media mentions on the Program Training & Consultation Centre's Media Network. MAKWA was featured 25 times in print, 19 times on the radio, and three times on television from January 2009 to August 2009.

OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL YOUTH ACTION ALLIANCE

Key Components for Development and Operation

The following components have been identified as critical in the development and operation of an off-reserve Aboriginal Youth Action Alliance:

- Aboriginal community partnerships
- Youth-friendly policies and practices
- Youth advisor who identifies as Aboriginal or is strongly familiar with Aboriginal culture
- Aboriginal representation and resources

Aboriginal Community Partnerships

It is clear from the evaluation findings that community partnerships are essential to the establishment and success of an off-reserve YAA. MAKWA relied on the support of community partners at several levels. Community partners were key players from the inception of the group, contributing to the initial development of the program and assisting with staff hiring. By having partners, and participating at their events or using their sites for MAKWA events, MAKWA was able to reach its target population. A key informant suggested that if the health unit had partnered with Aboriginal groups before the establishment of MAKWA, staff would not have had to work as hard to be accepted by the Aboriginal community. This in turn, would have opened the doors to dialogue and consultation to better understand the Aboriginal community's needs.

As with the T-DOT case study,² community agencies appear to play an important role in the YAA's functioning. Evaluation of the Not On Tobacco project geared towards American Indians reports that community partnership was one reason for the project's success.¹⁰ Community networks were vital for recruitment, and events helped to connect with the widely dispersed Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay. It is possible that Aboriginal people not connected to such agencies were being reached through activities targeted towards the general population. However, this is not certain, and there is a need to better understand and connect with this segment of the Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay.

Some felt that a public health unit was not the best place for an Aboriginal YAA, and it should have been housed in an Aboriginal organization, while others thought it was an advantage. For

TBDHU, advantages to housing MAKWA included giving health unit staff the opportunity to learn about traditional tobacco use and Aboriginal culture. For peer leaders, employment at a PHU allowed them to gain a broader perspective of public health, and have better access to PHU resources and training. Potential long-term impacts of housing an Aboriginal group in TBDHU could include better linkages between the PHU and the Aboriginal community. This is an area to consider for future evaluations.

Youth-Friendly Policies and Practices

There were advantages to running an Aboriginal YAA out of a PHU, but there was clearly a need to better engage youth employees. One of the challenges in establishing MAKWA was a lack of youth-friendly practices at the TBDHU. Health groups are not always youth-oriented, but they need to be knowledgeable about youth engagement and have flexible practices to accommodate youth and their needs so as to make YAA staff feel welcome and accepted.

MAKWA was successful on many fronts, but the recruitment and retention of peer leaders was an ongoing challenge. Key informants suggested this might be because Aboriginal youth are reluctant to participate because they are shy; because few Aboriginal youth are passionate about traditional tobacco; and because the program lacks stability due to peer leaders from fly-in communities returning home for the summer. Future research should explore strategies to better engage Aboriginal youth participation in tobacco control and similar programs, especially youth from fly-in communities.

TBDHU was not given sufficient information on best practices and strategies for engaging Aboriginal youth and establishing MAKWA. While this did not pose a major challenge, MAKWA staff did need to search for existing strategies or try new ones; in comparison, other YAAs were given more direction. Agencies invested in youth engagement initiatives with Aboriginal youth should consider creating tools that provide strategies and direction for groups that will be working with off-reserve Aboriginal communities.

Youth Advisor: Aboriginal or Strongly Familiar with Aboriginal Culture

Several key informants suggested that a youth advisor who either identifies as Aboriginal or has a deep understanding of Aboriginal people and culture can vastly impact the operation and success of an Aboriginal YAA. Knowing the culture and having grown up Aboriginal would allow

the youth advisor to make a better connection with Aboriginal peer leaders who in turn may feel better able to relate to the youth advisor. Knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and youth translates into an ability to tailor program messages and activities to the target population and ensure youth are comfortable with the group. Lastly, it is imperative that youth advisors or YAA organizers are aware of Aboriginal community organizations and connect with potential partners because much of MAKWA's work involves these partners. Interviewees felt that an Aboriginal person was more likely to have a working knowledge of such groups, community resources, and cultural events.

Aboriginal Representation and Resources

MAKWA staff expressed a need for better Aboriginal representation at TBDHU. For example, an on-site elder would not only have been useful for MAKWA to run ideas by and to offer insight into programming, but could also have helped present TBDHU as a place for Aboriginal people to visit if they needed public health services.

One way MAKWA emphasized Aboriginal representation and resources was to focus on the difference between sacred and commercial tobacco use, important for teaching youth about their culture.^{11,12} Unger & colleagues (2008) suggest that early adolescent exposure to tobacco in the absence of education about its traditional uses may lead to commercial tobacco use in the future.¹³ MAKWA's choice of messaging was thus important, considering there is much misinformation among Aboriginal youth about the traditional use of tobacco; it is a challenge to educate youth who may view smoking cigarettes as a form of prayer. While the effects of this approach are unclear, Choi et al. report that American Indian adults who believed traditional tobacco use was important were less inclined to use commercial tobacco.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

TBDHU seems to have been successful in establishing an off-reserve aboriginal YAA. Despite challenges with recruitment and retention of peer leaders, positive findings on perceived impacts, reach, and feedback from the community suggest that MAKWA was seen as a valuable program for the Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay.

In conclusion, the following are suggested as important factors in establishing and operating an off-reserve aboriginal youth engagement initiative:

Aboriginal Community Partnerships

Working with Aboriginal agencies was an essential component of MAKWA's operation. Aboriginal community organizations were involved from the program's inception. A consultative and building process was established with these agencies; they assisted in the initial development of the program and offered input into how the program should operate, the type of messaging to use, how to recruit staff for the program, and how to engage Aboriginal youth. By partnering with Aboriginal agencies, MAKWA was able to reach its target population of Aboriginal youth and extend this reach to include the broader Aboriginal population.

Youth-Friendly Policies and Practices

A lack of youth-friendly practices at TBDHU was an initial barrier to effectively implementing the program. Internal practices needed to be changed to accommodate peer leaders' schedules, which typically do not allow for orientation, training, and meetings to take place during the day. Gaining acceptance from other programs and management was also necessary to ensure peer leaders were recognized as employees of the health unit.

Youth Advisor: Aboriginal or Strongly Familiar with Aboriginal Culture and Partners

It was suggested that it would be easier to engage Aboriginal youth if the youth advisor was aboriginal or very familiar with Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal youth. This would ensure more

knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal community groups and potential partners, and facilitate MAKWA's work.

Aboriginal Representation and Resources

Aboriginal representation at TBDHU, through an on-site elder or Aboriginal staff, could be a much valued resource for MAKWA on programming and activities for aboriginal youth.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide: Thunder Bay Adult Staff

Introduction: Imagine that you have been asked to give advice, based on your experience, to a public health unit or group that would like to set up a Youth Action Alliance for youth who identify as Aboriginal or First Nations. The following questions ask about your experience and also for the advice on establishing a group similar to MAKWA.

1. Background

Can you tell me about the role you play with MAKWA?

What are the challenges of your role?

What do you enjoy?

2. Establishing MAKWA

Can you tell me about how MAKWA was established?

Who was involved?

What parts did they play?

What was challenging about establishing MAKWA?

What was easy?

3. Goals of the program

What are the main goals of MAKWA?

What are the challenges to achieving these goals?

What are the successes you've had?

4. Reach

Who do MAKWA try to reach with their activities?

Who do you feel they are reaching?

Who are they not reaching?

5. Recruitment

How did you recruit youth?

How did it go?

- Who did you recruit to your program?
- What did you look for in your peer leaders?
- Are there youth who you don't reach through your recruitment process that you would like to?

What advice would you give about recruiting youth to the program?

7. Youth Advisors

What should another PHU look for in a youth advisor?

Why?

8. Support

Other than the youth advisor, who else supports MAKWA in their work?

Other agencies or people within TBDHU?

The Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy?

9. Impacts

Can you tell me about the impact you think MAKWA may have on: other youth, the health unit, the wider community, other YAAs?

10. MAKWA and other YAAs

How is MAKWA similar to your other YAAs?

How is it different?

11. What other advice would you give to a public health unit or group that would like to set up a Youth Action Alliance for youth who identify as Aboriginal or First Nations?

Interview Guide: Graduated Peer Leaders

Introduction: This interview is intended to get an idea of your experience as a peer leader in MAKWA.

1. Background

How long were you a Peer leader with MAKWA?
What are you doing now that you've left school?

2. Recruitment

Can you remember how you first heard about MAKWA?
Why did you decide to join?
Did it turn out how you expected? In what way?

3. Goals of MAKWA

Can you remember what the goals of your group were?
What were the challenges to achieving these goals?
What were the successes you've had in trying to achieve these goals?

4. Benefits and Challenges

What were some of the benefits of being part of MAKWA?
What were some of the disadvantages?

5. Reach & Impact

What were some of the best activities you worked on while you were a peer leader?
What were the main messages that you were trying to get across?
Who did you try to reach with those messages?
Who do you think you reached? Why?
Are there groups of people or youth who were harder to reach? Who/why?
What were some of the successes you had in conducting tobacco control activities in Thunder Bay? What are some of the challenges you had in conducting tobacco control activities in Thunder Bay?
Can you tell me about the impact you think you might have had in the work you did? (On other youth, the health unit, the wider community, other YAAs?)

6. Sharing Knowledge & Advice

What advice would you give to a new peer leader in MAKWA?

Imagine that a public health unit asked for your advice on what to consider when setting up a YAA for First Nations and Aboriginal Youth. What advice would you give them?

- How should we recruit youth?
- What should we look for in a youth advisor?
- What sort of support would it be good to give the peer leaders?
- What are some of the challenges youth might face in conducting tobacco control activities?
- Do you think we need to do anything different than what we've done with other YAAs?

Interview Guide: Peer Leaders

Introduction: This interview is intended to get an idea of your experience as a peer leader in MAKWA.

1. Recruitment:

How long have you been part of MAKWA?
Can you remember how you heard about it?
Why did you decide to join?
Has it turned out how you expected? In what way?

2. Goals of the Program

What are the main goals of MAKWA?
What are the challenges to achieving these goals?
What are the successes you've had?

3. Group Function

How would you explain what MAKWA is to one of your friends?
What do your friends think of MAKWA?

4. Benefits and Challenges to being a peer leader

What have been the benefits of being a peer leader in MAKWA?
What have you found hard about being a peer leader in MAKWA?

5. Reach:

Can you tell me about some of the activities you're working on at the moment?
What are the main messages that you try to get across?
Who do you try to reach with those messages?
Who do you think you reach? Why?
Are there groups of people or youth who are harder to reach?
Who/why?
What are some of the challenges you had in conducting tobacco control activities in Thunder Bay? What have been some of your successes in conducting tobacco control activities in Thunder Bay?

Can you tell me about the impact youth think you might be having with the work you do?
(On other youth, the health unit, the wider community, other YAAs?)

6. Advice

Imagine that a public health unit wanted to start up a YAA group like MAKWA that recruited youth who identified as First Nations or Aboriginal. Based on your experiences what advice would you give them?

- How should we recruit youth?
- What should we look for in a youth advisor?
- What sort of support would it be good to give the peer leaders?
- What are some of the challenges youth might face in conducting tobacco control activities?
- Do you think we need to do anything different than what we've done with other YAAs?

Do you have any other advice you'd like to give?

Interview Guide: Adult Staff (Non-TBDHU)

Introduction: This interview is intended to get an idea of how you have worked with MAKWA. The following questions ask about your experience and also for the advice on establishing a group similar to MAKWA.

1. Can you tell me briefly about your organization and the work you do?

2. Involvement with MAKWA

Can you tell me about the role your organization plays with MAKWA?

How did you become involved with MAKWA?

3. Benefits and disadvantages in working with TBDHU & MAKWA

What are the benefits of working with TBDHU and MAKWA?

What are the disadvantages?

4. Goals of the program

What do you think are the main goals of MAKWA?

5. Reach & Impact

Who do MAKWA try to reach with their activities?

Who do you feel they are reaching?

Who are they not reaching? Why?

What is your impression of the work done by MAKWA?

6. Recruitment of Peer Leaders

Are you involved with the recruitment of youth? In what way?

How has the recruitment process gone?

7. Youth Advisors

What should another PHU look for in a youth advisor?

Why?

8. Advice

What other advice would you give to a public health unit or group that would like to set up a Youth Action Alliance for youth who identify as Aboriginal or First Nations?

What advice would you give to an agency like your own thinking about working with a Public Health Unit on a similar program?

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS

Information and Consent Form: Adult Key Informants

Title: Evaluation with MAKWA

Investigator: Dr. Robert Schwartz (416-978-3901) and Saeeda Irfan (416-978-7513)

Funder: The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) with a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion.

We would like to invite you to take part in an interview as part of a case study of the Thunder Bay Youth Action Alliance group – MAKWA.

Before you decide whether to take part in this interview, you should understand enough about the risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is known as the informed consent process.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact either Saeeda Irfan or Robert Schwartz before signing this consent form.

Background & Purpose of Evaluation

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) evaluates the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy with funding from the Ministry of Health Promotion. This study will look at the Youth Action Alliance Programme, MAKWA, funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion and run through Thunder District Health Unit.

The purpose of this evaluation is to find out how MAKWA was set up, what is working well and not so well, and what others involved in the Youth Action Alliance program might learn from MAKWA's experiences. This information could be used to inform the development of the Youth Action Alliance program across the province.

Procedures

We would like to invite you to take part in a key informant interview because of the work you do with MAKWA – or have done in the past. The interview will ask your opinion on:

- The role you play with MAKWA
- How MAKWA was established
- Support to MAKWA
- Recruitment of youth
- Resources and goals of MAKWA
- Reach of MAKWA
- Advice you would give to a health agency wanting to set up a YAA for Aboriginal/First Nations young people.

If you decide to take part, **we will send you a full list of the interview questions for you to review before the interview.** We will make a time to conduct the interview, either at your workplace or over the phone. The interview should take no longer than an hour. If you consent, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Alternatively, we will take written notes during the interview.

Voluntary Participation & Early Withdrawal

Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or you may withdraw at any time without affecting your status (employment or otherwise) within the youth program. Your manager or superior will not be informed of your decision to not participate. However, we are not able to guarantee that program staff will not learn of your decision to participate if you decide you would like the interview conducted in person.

Risks & Benefits

Except for the time required to complete the interview, there are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this interview. **You can refuse to answer any question. You can also end the interview at any time.**

Although, you may not receive any direct personal benefit from participating in this evaluation, information learned in this evaluation could assist in improving the Smoke-Free Ontario youth programs.

Confidentiality

All information obtained during the evaluation will be held in strict confidence. No personal names will be associated with data nor used in any publication or presentations of the evaluation. Upon the transcription of the interview, audio tapes will be destroyed.

There may be some limitations to the degree of privacy and confidentiality assured to you. While your position in the organization you work for will not be named, we will identify that this case study is being conducted in Thunder Bay, with MAKWA, as it will be almost impossible to keep this confidential because there are very few YAAs for Aboriginal/First Nations youth. For this reason care will be made to refer to all participants as adult staff or adult key informants, rather than your position within your organization. We will do our best to keep your identity confidential. Please respond to the questions in a manner in which you are comfortable keeping these limits in mind.

Electronic copies of data will be kept on a password protected server at OTRU at the University of Toronto and paper copies of data will be kept in a locked cabinet. This data will only be used for the evaluation described in this form.

Publication of Research findings

Quotations from interview transcripts and surveys may be used for illustrative purposes but no personal names will be used. We will indicate that this study was conducted in Thunder Bay.

Compensation

There is no compensation awarded for participating in this evaluation.

Questions

If you have any questions about the evaluation please call the investigators in charge, Saeeda Irfan (416) 978 7513 or Robert Schwartz, at (416) 978-3901.

Consent/Assent

I voluntarily consent to participate in this evaluation with the understanding I may wish to withdraw my involvement at any time without penalty. I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name (please print)	Participant Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Signature	Date

Consent for Audio-Taping the Interview

I consent to having the interview audio-taped.

_____	_____	_____
Participant (please print)	Participant Signature	Date

Information and Consent Form: Graduated and Existing Peer Leaders

Title: Evaluation with MAKWA

Evaluators: Dr. Robert Schwartz (416-978-3901) and Saeeda Irfan (416-978-7513)

Funder: The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) with a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion

We would like to invite you to take part in an interview as part of a case study of the Thunder Bay Youth Action Alliance group – MAKWA.

Before you decide whether to take part in this interview, you should understand enough about the risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is known as the informed consent process.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact either Saeeda Irfan or Robert Schwartz before signing this consent form.

Background & Purpose of Evaluation

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) evaluates the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy with funding from the Ministry of Health Promotion. This study will look at the Youth Action Alliance Programme, MAKWA, funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion and run through Thunder District Health Unit.

The purpose of this evaluation is to find out how MAKWA was set up, what is working well and not so well, and what others involved in the Youth Action Alliance program might learn from MAKWA's experiences. This information could be used to inform the development of the Youth Action Alliance program across the province.

Procedures

We would like to invite you to take part in a key informant interview because of the work you do with MAKWA – or have done in the past. The interview will ask your opinion on:

- How and why you joined MAKWA
- Goals of MAKWA
- Benefits and Challenges to being a peer leader in MAKWA
- Reach
- Advice you would give to a health agency wanting to set up a YAA for Aboriginal/First Nations young people.

If you decide to take part, **we will send you a full list of the interview questions for you to review before the interview.** We will make a time to conduct the interview, either at your workplace, home or over the phone. The interview should take no longer than an hour. If you consent, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Alternatively, we will take written notes during the interview.

Voluntary Participation & Early Withdrawal

Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or you may withdraw at any time without affecting your status (employment or otherwise) within the youth program. Your manager or superior will not be informed of your decision to not participate. However, we are not able to guarantee that program staff will not learn of your decision to participate if you decide you would like the interview conducted in person.

Risks & Benefits

Except for the time required to complete the interview, there are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this interview. **You can refuse to answer any question. You can also end the interview at any time.**

Information learned in this evaluation could assist in improving the Smoke-Free Ontario youth programs.

Confidentiality

All information obtained during the evaluation will be held in strict confidence. No personal names will be associated with data nor used in any publication or presentations of the evaluation. Upon the transcription of the interview, audio tapes will be destroyed.

There may be some limitations to the degree of privacy and confidentiality assured to you. While you will not be named, we will identify that this case study is being conducted in Thunder Bay, with MAKWA, as it will be almost impossible to keep this confidential. For this reason care will be made to refer to all participants as adult staff or adult key informants, rather than your position within your organization. We will do our best to keep your identity confidential. Please respond to the questions in a manner in which you are comfortable keeping these limits in mind.

Electronic copies of data will be kept on a password protected server at OTRU at the University of Toronto and paper copies of data will be kept in a locked cabinet. This data will only be used for the evaluation described in this form.

Publication of Research findings

Quotations from interview transcripts and surveys may be used for illustrative purposes but no personal names will be used. We will indicate that this study was conducted in Thunder Bay.

Compensation

You will receive a \$20 gift voucher in recognition of the time taken to be part of this evaluation.

Questions

If you have any questions about the evaluation please call the investigators in charge, Saeeda Irfan (416) 978 7513 or Robert Schwartz (416) 978-3901.

Consent/Assent

I voluntarily consent to participate in this evaluation with the understanding I may wish to withdraw my involvement at any time without penalty. I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant Name (please print)

Participant Signature

Date

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature

Date

Consent for Audio-Taping the Interview

I consent to having the interview audio-taped.

Participant (please print)

Participant Signature

Date

Information and Consent Form: Parental Consent for Peer Leaders Aged 16 Years and Under

Title: Evaluation with MAKWA

Evaluators: Dr. Robert Schwartz (416-978-3901) and Saeeda Irfan (416-978-7513)

Funder: The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) with a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion

We would like to invite your son or daughter to take part in an interview as part of a case study of the Thunder Bay Youth Action Alliance group – MAKWA.

Before you decide whether to consent to have your son or daughter take part in this interview, you should understand enough about the risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is known as the informed consent process.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact either Saeeda Irfan or Robert Schwartz before signing this consent form.

Background & Purpose of Evaluation

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) evaluates the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy with funding from the Ministry of Health Promotion. This study will look at the Youth Action Alliance Programme, MAKWA, funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion and run through Thunder District Health Unit.

The purpose of this evaluation is to find out how MAKWA was set up, what is working well and not so well, and what others involved in the Youth Action Alliance program might learn from MAKWA's experiences. This information could be used to inform the development of the Youth Action Alliance program across the province.

Procedures

We would like to invite your daughter or son to take part in a key informant interview because of the work they do as peer leaders in MAKWA. The interview will ask their opinion on:

- How and why they joined MAKWA
- Goals of MAKWA
- Benefits and Challenges of being a peer leader in MAKWA
- Reach
- Advice they would give to a health agency wanting to set up a YAA for Aboriginal/First Nations young people.

If you decide to consent to your daughter or son taking part, they will be sent a full list of the interview questions for them to review before the interview. We will make a time to conduct the interview, either at their workplace if we are able to make a time that we will be in Thunder Bay, or alternatively over the phone. The interview should take no longer than an hour. Your son or daughter will be able to decide if they would prefer to have their interview audio recorded and transcribed, or if they would prefer that written notes be taken during the interview.

Voluntary Participation & Early Withdrawal

Your daughter or son's participation in this evaluation is voluntary. Your child may choose not to participate and may withdraw at any time without affecting their status (employment or otherwise) within the youth program. Their manager or superior will not be informed of their decision not to participate. However, we are not able to guarantee that program staff will not learn of your child's decision to participate if they decide they would like the interview conducted in person at their site of employment as other staff may see the interview take place.

Risks & Benefits

Except for the time required to complete the interview, there are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this interview. Your child can refuse to answer any question. They may also end the interview at any time.

Although your child may not receive any direct personal benefit from participating in this evaluation, other than compensation for their time, information learned in this evaluation could assist in improving the Smoke-Free Ontario youth programs.

Confidentiality

All information obtained during the evaluation will be held in strict confidence. No personal names will be associated with data nor used in any publication or presentations of the evaluation. Upon the transcription of the interview, audio tapes will be destroyed.

There may be some limitations to the degree of privacy and confidentiality assured to your son or daughter. While they will not be named, we will identify that this case study is being conducted in Thunder Bay, with MAKWA, as it will be almost impossible to keep this confidential. We will do our best to keep your child's identity confidential. Please respond to the questions in a manner in which you are comfortable keeping these limits in mind.

Electronic copies of data will be kept on a password protected server at OTRU at the University of Toronto and paper copies of data will be kept in a locked cabinet. This data will only be used for the evaluation described in this form.

Publication of Research Findings

Quotations from interview transcripts and surveys may be used for illustrative purposes but no personal names will be used. We will indicate that this study was conducted in Thunder Bay.

Compensation

Your son or daughter will receive a fifteen dollar voucher in recognition of their time spent in completing the interview.

Questions

If you have any questions about the evaluation please call the investigator in charge, Robert Schwartz, at (416) 978-3901 or Saeeda Irfan (416) 978 7513.

Parent Consent

I consent to have my child, _____, take part in this group interview with
Child's name (please print)

the understanding that he or she may wish to withdraw at any time, prior to the publication of the final report, without affecting his or her SFO youth program status. I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

Parent Name (please print)

Parent Signature

Date

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature

Date

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