"I am so resilient right now": Impact of the Life Skills Journey Summer Program on Métis Program Leaders

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ABSTRACT

The authors present the impact of the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey facilitator training program. Community members, aged 16 to 32, were hired and trained to lead youth summer camps. It was hypothesized that participation in the program and employment as facilitators would have a positive impact on their individual resilience. The program and employment were designed to increase participant knowledge in key areas of resilience and skills to engage children in learning through play.

　　　Keywords: Indigenous, community-based participatory research, facilitator training, capacity building

In 2016, the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) program completed its fourth year of summer camp delivery and assessment, the culmination of a six-year community-based participatory research project. Community-based research on First Nations (one of three Canadian Indigenous peoples) youth life skills that began in 2005 led to the creation of the MSLSJ research team in 2010. A team of interdisciplinary researchers (anthropology, educational policy, physical education, human ecology, and community engagement studies) and community members shared the goal of building individual and community resiliency. Resiliency is defined as having inner strength, a mental toughness, and the capacity to bounce back, learn, and thrive when faced with challenges at both the individual and community levels (Alberta Health Services, 2017; Donnan & Hammond, 2007b). Together, we completed a needs and readiness assessment (Fletcher, Hibbert, Robertson, & Asselin, 2013), developed a community-driven youth life skills program, trained 25 program facilitators, published resources (Fletcher et al., 2015) in an open access for-

mat, and evaluated the impact on 175 summer campers aged 7-14.

The Métis are an Indigenous group in Canada, some living on self-governed lands called Métis Settlements only present in the province of Alberta. Ethically sound research with Canadian Indigenous communities has increasingly become a focus of theory and practice (Lawless, 2016; Schnarch, 2004) for those engaged in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). The ethical framework of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP), established by the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey in 1998, states that research data must be owned by and reflect the relationship of an Indigenous community to its collective cultural knowledge and their connection with the land and its surroundings (Anderson, 2009; Lawrence, 2009). Settlement members retain control over their participation in the research, collection and dissemination of data, and finances. Presentations were made to Council and motions in support of the program were voted on by Council members, providing the community and university partnership approval to proceed. While raw data is maintained on

site at the University, community members participate in decisions on data collection, presentations, publications, and reports.

MSLSJ camp facilitators were trained to implement the summer day camp program. Training (15-20 days) and employment (two months) were designed to increase participant knowledge in a number of key areas of resilience and skills to engage children in learning through play. The benefits of play include development of the brain and motor skills, the acquisition of social and emotional intelligence, problem solving skills, conflict and negotiation skills, as well as various other learnings (Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, 2011).

The modules, prioritized through community needs and readiness assessments, included community and neighborliness, communication, self-esteem, kinship, substance abuse, anger management and conflict resolution, goal setting, stress and anxiety, bullying, gang awareness, grief and loss, and spirituality/hopes and dreams. The training program used experiential learning and an active and cooperative learning environment. Informal peer feedback and a formalized rubric were used to evaluate understanding.

In this article, we present the impact of the MSLSJ facilitator training program. It was hypothesized that facilitator participation in the training program and employment as camp facilitators would have a positive impact on their individual resilience. Over time, it was increasingly apparent that community resilience was critical to the youth life skills research. Data collection and analysis evolved in order to measure individual and community resilience using the Adult Resiliency: Assessing Developmental Strengths AR:ADS) Questionnaire (Donnan & Hammond, 2007a), interviews, debriefs, focus groups, and participant observation.

METHODS

Facilitators, recruited through key community partners, were employed through the project to work full time, June to August annually, in their local community. At the request of community members, university students were hired as program facilitators in 2014 and 2015. Of the 20 Settlement-based facilitators who attended training, two have since completed post-secondary education and four have attended post-secondary institutions. Over the four years of hiring settlement-based facilitators, two were hired all four summers, two worked three summers, five worked two summers, and 11 worked for one summer. The ongoing expansion and successful retention of facilitators represented by these numbers made it possible to document the impact of facilitator training and employment over multiple years.

The University of Alberta Research Ethics Board granted research ethics approval. Motions by Settlement Councils indicate formal permission for the initiation and continuation of the research. Consent was obtained from all facilitators whose data is presented in this article. Facilitators were assured that employment was not dependent on their participation in the research component of the program and that the employers would not know whether or not they chose to participate in the research. The following steps were taken to minimize the potential employee-employer power difference: 1) facilitators were approached for informed consent through a third party, 2) consent to participate in a survey and focus groups remained sealed until employment ended, and 3) focus groups occurred after employment had ended. Pseudonyms are used for participant quotes in this article.

Quantitative Methods: Survey

The aggregate data presented here represents pre/post surveys of 23 out of 27 facilitators, completed each year between 2013 and 2016. Facilitators completed pre-program surveys on their first day of MSLSJ training. Post-program surveys, an-

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alyzed in aggregate, represent the last survey completed, regardless of year.

The YR:ADS Questionnaire (Donnan & Hammond, 2007a) is a tool for measuring the internal (individual) and external (community, family) strengths that contribute to individual resiliency. Surveys consisted of 64 questions: two demographic, 24 questions on internal resilience factors, and 38 questions on external resilience factors. Eighteen facilitators completed the pre-program survey, 21 completed the post-program survey. Over four years of implementation, facilitators were hired from five communities, including 17 residents from the four settlements of Buffalo Lake, Kikino, Fishing Lake, and Elizabeth, and six graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Alberta (Figure 1). Participants ranged from 16-32 years of age, 20 female and three male.

Boone and Boone (2012) advocate for using a t-test only with Likert scale data, as opposed to individual Likert-type items. Survey data was analyzed using the Wilcoxon rank sum test, which is used when comparing paired difference through repeated measurements on independent samples (as in a pre/post survey of the same group but different number of individuals). Like Likert-type items, nonparametric statistics result in ordinal data. Limitations to the data and circumstances include sample size and social desirability bias (Bowling, 2005), (portraying themselves, their families, or communities in a positive light), the introduction of new facilitators each year (program expansion) and blending of settlement/non-settlement perspectives. Given these limitations, the quantitative data is presented using descriptive analysis and correlated with interviews, focus groups, debriefs, and participant observation.

Qualitative Methods: Interviews, Focus Groups, Debriefs and Participant Observation

Qualitative methods served as a primary source of data and provide the majority of insight on the research impacts and outcomes. Our methodology is informed by rigorous best practices, applied so as to maximize participation by individuals from partner communities. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation evolved on the basis of community strengths and interests, ease of implementation, and project limitations. Each of the methods was implemented to be respectful of the time demands and skills of individual participants.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the camp administrator and trainer throughout training and at the conclusion of the summer camps. Semi-structured interviews encourage participants to tell the stories that are important to them,
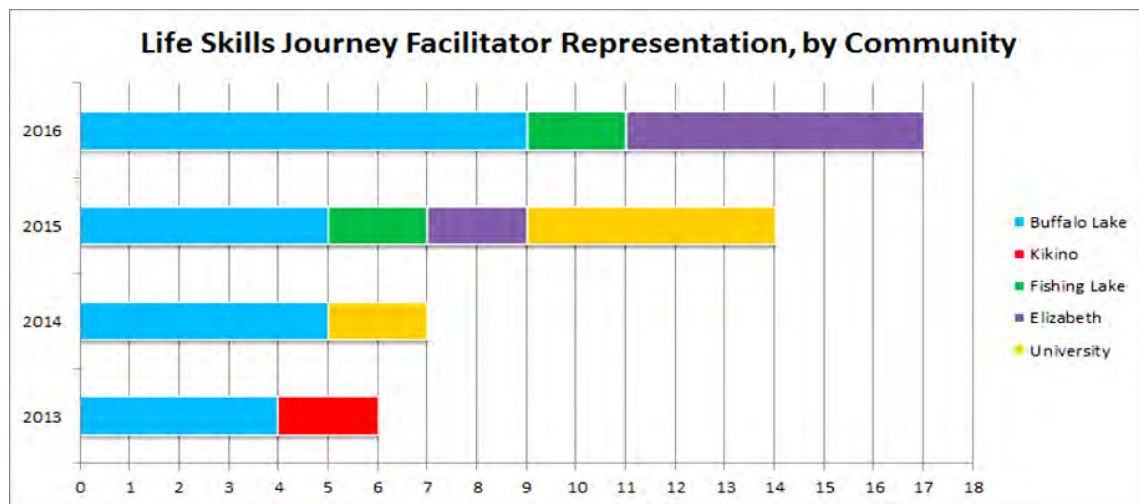

Figure 1: Life Skills Journey Facilitator Representation, by Community

with the interviewer directing the research questions (Atkinson, 1998). Focus groups were conducted with facilitators at the end of training and at the end of camp. Facilitators build strong relationships with each other through the training process as well as collective experiences during camp facilitation. Over the course of three months, they are highly engaged with each other and the camp participants. Focus groups, with actively engaged participants, are an effective method for co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1996) as well as for promoting individual and group reflection among the participants (Fletcher, Hibbert, & Hammer, 2017).

At the end of each day, facilitators participated in recorded debrief discussions. Daily debriefs, summarized by research assistants, were used for formative evaluation and immediate program revisions as well as summative evaluation. Debriefs, as a process of co-operative inquiry and reflection, were guided by questions about daily logistics, including meetings, human resources, equipment, training, and the most and least effective activities.

Focus groups and debriefs were complemented by participant observation. Participant observation parallels the principles of CBPR, recognizing that each community should be understood within its own context (Hammer, Fletcher, & Hibbert, 2017), provides depth and context, and minimizes mistaken assumptions (Kuper, 1983), which can arise from second-hand information (Lavenda & Schultz, 2012). With the limited project implementation timeframe (10 days per group), having facilitators gather program impact data proved challenging. Facilitators were largely focused on leading activities with the campers, not on reporting stories of perceived impacts on the children's resilience. Stories were shared in casual conversations that spoke to growing resilience among facilitators as well as changing relationships between facilitators and child campers. The research design was enhanced by the addition of participant observation in 2014 and 2015 (Hammer, et al., 2017), providing a complementary perspective to surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

RESULTS

Results of the quantitative and qualitative data sets are presented below, organized by theme. Descriptive analysis of the survey data is presented using changes in pre/post response frequency. The pre-survey had n=18 participants and the post-survey had n=21 participants. Facilitators were asked to respond to statements using a 5-point Likert scale that included "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree." A more critical analysis of these findings is presented through the qualitative data.

Theme 1: Internal Resiliency Factors

Overall, pre/post survey analysis of internal resiliency factors reveals a negative change in participants' internal resilience. In total, 23 out of 24 statements show a decrease in internal resiliency, five of which had statistically significant changes in population medians from pre- to post-program. These will be explored in more detail below.

While this trend may at first appear as a negative change in internal resilience, we believe that this, in fact, captures a growth in understanding of resilience and resilient behaviour and, as Owren (2019) writes, an improved understanding of the question itself. Qualitative data suggests that participation in the MSLSJ program had a positive impact on internal resiliency for community facilitators. For example, when facilitators were asked "What does resiliency mean to you?" during the 2016 post-camp focus group, their answers suggested that internal resiliency was gained through their participation in the facilitator training and camp delivery to the youth: "I am so resilient right now. For me it means that I'm able to bounce back and to make things work" (Laura, female, 32). The survey statements by sub-theme are shown in Table 1.

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The following breakdown of each sub-theme provides a more detailed analysis of internal resiliency, with statistically significant results (using the Wilcoxon rank sum test) presented first, followed by descriptive statistics for the remaining concepts.

Sub-theme 1: Social sensitivity. Three of the seven statements measuring change in the internal resiliency sub-theme of social sensitivity were statistically significant. A negative change was seen with the statements, "I feel badly when people I know are sad," "I am concerned about other people's feelings," and "I try to say things in a way that will not hurt other people's feelings." Social sensitivity is a major area of challenge, based on response frequency to "I try to say things in a way that will not hurt other people's feelings." Thirty-five percent of the "strongly agree" responses were downgraded by the post-survey. The remaining statements did not show statistically significant change. Overall decreased social sensitivity is seen in each year of the program; both frequency and mean decreased each year in the survey data.

The negative trend in the quantitative data of this sub-theme conflicts with qualitative data from post-camp facilitator focus groups where facilitators report a clear sense of caring and social sensitivity with regard to the campers, their community, and fellow facilitators: "I found it positive when parents would come and say how much the kids really enjoyed camp, the things they were learning and the content we're doing. It made me feel like we're do-

Internal Resiliency Sub-theme	Statements (statistically significant concepts in bold)
Social Sensitivity (empathy, caring, equity and social justice)	**I feel badly when people I know are sad.** I believe it is important to help others. **I try to say things in a way that will not hurt other people's feelings.** I am concerned about helping others. I believe it is important to be fair to others. **I am concerned about other people's feelings.** I believe it is important that all people are given equal opportunities.
Empowerment (safety)	I feel safe in my work as a facilitator. I feel safe even when I am at home by myself.
Self-Control (restraint and resistance skills)	I believe it is important for me to not engage in harmful behaviors. (e.g. drugs) I believe it is important for me to change my behaviors when they place me at risk. I am able to say "no" to my friends when they want me to do something I think is wrong. I try to avoid unsafe situations.
Self-Concept (self-esteem, self-efficacy, and planning & decision making)	I feel positive about my future. I am able to do many different things well. I believe that I can do things as well as other people my age. I am capable of planning ahead. **I believe my life has purpose.**
Cultural Sensitivity (spirituality, acceptance, cultural awareness)	My spiritual beliefs/values play an important role in my life I am pleased to live in a community with a strong Métis identity. **I respect the beliefs of different cultures.** I am interested in learning about the cultures of other people. I have a good understanding of other cultures. I feel that I have strong spiritual beliefs and values.

Table 1: Internal Resiliency Statements by Sub-theme

ing something good for them" (Laura, female, 32).

Contrary evidence to the negatively trending response to the statements "I am concerned about helping others" and "I am concerned about other people's feelings" is illustrated by this facilitator's comments concerning her role with the campers, "I'm trustworthy, if someone needs to come to me for something I'm not going to blab it to everyone. With all the kids around they're not going to like you and adapt to you if they can't trust you" (Dierdre, female, 17).

Sub-theme 2: Self-concept. An analysis of the sub-theme self-concept revealed only one area of significant change in population medians. When asked to respond to the statement "I believe my life has purpose," a greater portion of the participants answered "strongly agree" in the pre-survey than in the post-survey. This represents a significant and negative change to self-concept and has implications for consideration in CBPR. If we assume that the change in self-concept is, at least in part, the result of participation in the research, we must consider what our accountability is to participants who we have engaged in critical, reflective thinking.

Despite the negative trend in the survey data, qualitative data from post-camp focus groups revealed that facilitators had improved self-esteem and confidence:

> I thought I didn't have any [strengths] before I started, but I noticed that I could talk in public and I didn't think I'd be able to do public speaking in front of adults or kids. Even though I didn't know any of them I still did it. I guess that could be a strength that I didn't know I had. I guess I had more self-confidence than I thought I had. (Charity, female, 30)

Another contradictory statement to the negative trend in the survey data, which may speak directly to the question "I feel positive about my future," came from the 2016 focus group:

> It just kind of taught me how to deal with them. I grew up as an Auntie, dealing with lots of kids, but that's just more personal. You're dealing with how to go about it in a more educational setting. I want to be a teacher someday and it really motivated me. (Leona, female, 21)

Two of the remaining statements in this sub-theme, while not statistically significant, are encouraging. The statement "I am able to do many different things well" revealed a positive trend in internal resiliency. The statement "I feel positive about my future" remained unchanged, with a median of "strongly agree" for both pre/post-program responses, indicating an overall sense of hope among facilitators.

Sub-theme 3: Cultural sensitivity. This sub-theme showed a moderation of responses to statements on spirituality, acceptance, and cultural awareness. When asked to respond to the statement "I am pleased to live in a community with a strong Métis identity" and "I feel safe even when I am at home by myself," "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" responses changed to "agree" and "neutral," and "disagree" respectively for the most part. Only one of five areas revealed statistically significant change: "I respect the beliefs of different cultures," which had responses drop from "strongly agree" to "agree," consistent with an overall slight negative trend.

The highly variable quantitative data from the surveys reflects the complex nature of the sub-theme of cultural sensitivity. Many of the community facilitators have experienced discomfort, prejudice, and racism: "I feel like that was a pretty big problem for me too, transitioning from Elizabeth school from Grade 8 to Grade 9 and being surrounded by different [students]" (Leona, female, 21). Facilitators spoke about the potential benefits of campers participating at different settlements, broadening their experiences and awareness. This was often spoken in relation to the transition they would experience in the future, moving from local settlement schools to nearby

towns. With these transitions, they meet other settlement youth and experience increased occurrences of prejudice and discrimination: "It's great for the kids to see how the other community works" (Kandice, female, 20); and "letting us go to a different community would be good too, for the kids to get out and meet new friends" (Mark, male, 26).

Sub-themes 4 and 5: Self-control and empowerment. Restraint and resistance skills form the basis of most interventions delivered in schools, including but not limited to the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E., 2017) and anti-bullying efforts (see Alberta Education, 2017). Settlement partners, familiar with the content and language of these programs, consistently mention the importance of further training in these areas and the inclusion of guests in the summer camp. When asked during focus groups in both 2015 and 2016 about which types of workshops they would like to see offered in their communities, facilitators stated: "We need stuff on drugs and alcohol, more content. There's problems in every community where they want kids to be aware of the effects of it. I think drugs and alcohol would be one" (Mark, male, 26).

However, it is important to mention that the survey results show strength in these areas on both pre/post surveys. These are areas where facilitators start and end strong. For example, for the statement "I believe it is important for me to not engage in harmful behaviors" [for example, drugs], facilitators have a median of "strongly agree" for both pre/post surveys. Statements that reflect a negative trend still have a median of "agree." Some areas showed a change from more extreme to more moderate responses. In the case of "I feel safe in my work as facilitator," "strongly agree" changed to "agree," and "disagree" responses changed to "neutral." Facilitators supported this overall sense of hope in this area:

I think these kids that have taken this course from day one are going

to be more responsible when it comes to drinking and drug use once they become a teenager. You know everybody's gonna try it here and there but the things that they learn through camp are going to make them a better adult, teenager. That's what I'm hoping to see and I think it has happened with a lot of kids. (Laura, female, age 32)

Theme 2: External Resiliency Factors: Peer, Family, Community, Workplace Support

Three of the 38 external resiliency statements show statistically significant, positive change from pre- to post-survey (Table 2). These results are indicative of how challenging it is to achieve positive changes to influential sub-groups within the community including peer, family, and workplace, over a short period of time. Despite a downward trend in participants' aggregate survey responses to all 38 statements, qualitative data suggests that participation in the program did provide positive change, which may influence external resiliency for some facilitators.

Sub-theme 1: Work. Two of the five statements measuring external resiliency in the area of work environment have a statistically significant negative change to the population median. The statements were "There are clear consequences for poor behavior in my job as facilitator" and "I am in a caring environment in my job as facilitator."

Qualitative data from post-camp focus groups and interviews support the negative trend in the work environment, shaped by external factors: "It was a difficult year as there was a lot of new people, a lot of people that don't care that we had working with us" (Laura, female, 32). The following passage speaks to facilitator's expectation of fair compensation for work experience:

Me and Rachel just felt that was really unfair … because on the [employment contract] it said wages depend on experience and me and

External Resiliency Sub-theme	Statements (statistically significant concepts in bold)
Work (High expectations at work, bonding to work, caring work climate, work boundaries)	I am encouraged to set goals and work hard to achieve them in my job as facilitator. My facilitator peers encourage me to do the best I can. I care about my job as facilitator. My facilitator peers treat me with respect. The people I work with really care about me as an individual. **I am in a caring environment in my job as facilitator.** My job as a facilitator has clear rules about what is acceptable performance. **There are clear consequences for poor behavior in my job as facilitator.**
Commitment to learning (Work engagement, achievement)	I am able to balance the demands in my life. I always try to do the best I can in my role as a life skills facilitator. I try hard to get the best results I can in everything I do. I try to be successful at whatever I do. I like to take on new challenges. **I am interested in what I have to learn in my role as facilitator.**
Peer (Positive peer influence, positive peer relationships)	I know that I can count on my friends to do the right thing. I can trust my friends. I can rely on my friends. My friends behave responsibly.
Community (Caring community, community values its members, community relationships, community boundaries)	I live in a very caring community. Members of my community make me feel like I am important. Adults in my community care about the people who live there. Adults in my community make an effort to get to know each other. Members of my community have clear expectations of each other. I feel comfortable asking other members of the community for help. Members of my community care about how others in the community behave. Members of my community make me feel like I am a part of the community
Family (Caring family, family communications, high expectations in the family, adult family role models, family support, family work involvement)	My partner (or family) respects my feelings. My family gives me a lot of love. My partner (or family) always praises me when I have done something well. My partner (or family) is interested in what I have to say. My partner (or family) encourages me to set goals and work hard to achieve them. My partner (or family) encourages me to do the best I can. My partner (or family) values my opinion. My partner (or family) treats me with respect. I know I can trust my partner (or family) to be there when I need them. My partner (or family) accepts the life skills facilitator role I have chosen. My partner (or family) supports me in being successful in my role as a facilitator. My family often tells me how important I am to them.

Table 2: External Resiliency Statements by Sub-theme

Rachel, this is our fourth year and we got paid the same as first year [facilitator] and like was said, she depended on us a lot and was always asking us questions. We always had to help her to show others what to do, and that was just not fair. (Angie, female, 23)

The work environment was impacted when the transition of authority for human resources (including compensation and expectations) was moved from the University to the settlement. This transition of

ownership and control was the first step in a sustainability plan as the research phase began to wrap up. Strategies for the transition of ownership and control are required to avoid negative impacts on the work climate. Negative impacts on work engagement and achievement were also evident in sub-theme 2, commitment to learning.

Sub-theme 2: Commitment to learning. One of the five statements in the commitment to learning sub-theme, "I am interested in what I have to learn in my role as facilitator," showed statistically significant negative change. This represents one of three external resiliency sub-theme statements where, despite the population median in pre/post surveys remaining high at "strongly agree," the responses were spread from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for both pre- and post-program surveys.

The following passage provides insight into the statistically negative trend in the survey results for work engagement and achievement:

> Yeah, we had difficulties some days, even with the facilitators. We'd have facilitators that wouldn't show up or they're late every day and not doing the work, cell phones, and like I won't lie, I was on my phone too. With all the new people too it just made it a lot more. It wasn't structured how it was before as we had a lot of the same people, right. So it just made it a little bit difficult. So I think I grew from that a lot. (Laura, female, 32)

It is noteworthy that the facilitator referenced above also suggests that she was able to learn from the experience, "I grew a lot," in relation to her role as a camp facilitator.

Sub-theme 3: Peer. When validating the interpretation of results with past facilitators, the negative trend in the survey results for peer influence and relationships may reflect the stressful nature of working in a close group of people while managing a large group of children. Thus, it is important to take into consideration facilitator

fatigue at the end of the summer camp season when interpreting these survey results.

Two of the four statements on peer influences as an external resilience factor moved toward more moderate responses, with both "strongly agree" and "disagree" pre-program responses trending toward "neutral" in the post-program survey. These statements included "My facilitator peers encourage me to do the best I can," and "I know that I can count on my friends to do the right thing." The conflicting survey results are supported by qualitative data from facilitator focus groups. In this quote, the facilitator is speaking about the lack of peer support and negative influences in their relationships:

> We all helped Mark as a leader. We supported him and everything, but as soon as he wasn't allowed to be it, he took offense to it. When Debbie was it, he wouldn't help. He's like, "I'm waiting for you to do it," but it's everyone's responsibility to blow a whistle when it's time to [do] a specific thing. (Deidre, female, 17)

In contrast, qualitative data suggesting there was positive peer influence and positive relationships between facilitators also comes from another 2016 focus group:

> Well once again, these guys, the good leadership, if they seen somebody not doing something properly or somebody struggling to try to teach something, they would step in and be like, you know we can do it this way or try it this way; they'd step in and they would take over and just completely go with it. I noticed that a lot. (Laura, female, 32)

We also see a positive influence from the university facilitators who lived and worked in community in the 2014 and 2015 seasons:

> Originally I thought having just Fishing Lake and Elizabeth [community members] as facilitators would be a good idea, but I am against that idea now. I liked it way

better with Vicki, Jordan, and Abby, the different people coming in [from the University] because I feel like there's someone to break the conflict between two people from Fishing Lake or from Elizabeth. If that person was there it could break the tension. (Dierdre, female, 17)

Sub-theme 4: Community. The sub-theme community has the greatest number of downward trending responses. In fact, the pre/post median is low at "agree" for two of the eight statements, and had overall low pre-program responses. When asked to respond to the statement "Adults in my community make an effort to get to know each other," many "strongly agree" and "agree" responses changed to "neutral" and "disagree." The same change occurred with the statement: "Members of my community make me feel like I am important." There were similar changes in frequency for "Adults in my community care about the people who live there" and "Members of my community make me feel like I am a part of the community." The statement "I live in a very caring community" saw a move toward moderate responses, as both "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" responses moved toward "agree," "neutral," and "disagree."

Qualitative data from focus groups speaks to the perceived lack of a caring community and the extra work and stress that it placed on the facilitators:

Yeah whomever [at the Administration office] it is that has to deal with it. It's just one more thing, "Oh, we gotta do this, we gotta do that." I had to let somebody go and I had to do it. It shouldn't have been my job to let that person go. You know what I mean? It's not like they don't care. It's just that it was just one more responsibility to have to deal with on top of everything else, when the previous years before, you guys cared. They don't. It's just not a lot of involvement with them. Make it a priority. They're our kids. They're

your kids. They're the future. Instead of just pushing it aside, and oh they can do it. Well if it wasn't you guys that were funding stuff, we wouldn't have had it. That's almost guaranteed. People just don't care, right? Like a lot of these office people, their kids don't go. (Laura, female, 32)

Sub-theme 5: Family. Overall, the sub-theme family had a negative trend, with the median response to "My partner (or family) supports me in being successful in my role as a facilitator" pre/post change from "strongly agree" to "agree." Similarly, "My family often tells me how important I am to them" had a lower population median pre/post of "agree."

DISCUSSION

Results may be explained, in part, by the social desirability bias (Bowling 2005), wherein respondents attempt to present themselves in the most positive light. This may be particularly salient when dealing with situations where the respondents feel cultural norms are being judged. This speaks to the importance of qualitative data for a more in-depth understanding of trends.

The inconsistency between the quantitative and qualitative data is our first focus of lessons learned. We were aware of the shortcomings of importing a pre-existing measure of resiliency to a historically and culturally distinct community. However, in the absence of community specific measures, we were prepared to test and revise the tool, and were quick to incorporate additional measures. The broader implications of this study are that 1) imported measures of change require ongoing adaptation and complementary impact measures, 2) adaptation and complementary measures can provide rich insight into underestimated community dynamics, and 3) ongoing attention to the "fit" between community realities and impact measures can maximize program impact. This would apply to any research attempting to make use of existing

measurement tools that were not designed with attention to distinct community contexts.

Individual and Community Capabilities

As noted, participatory and experiential training approaches were meant to ensure that facilitators had the knowledge and confidence to teach the MSLSJ fundamentals through play and outdoor education. While the survey results and qualitative data were intended to provide evidence of facilitator resilience, the use of multiple and responsive evaluation methods drew our attention to critical insights that were overlooked both in program design and evaluation.

The resiliency model (Donnan & Hammond, 2007a) used to design our evaluation was built on the premise that there are a number of internal characteristics that contribute to individual resiliency, but equally important are characteristics external to themselves that exist in their communities, schools, and families to name a few. We have developed, delivered, and evaluated a program that attends to internal factors, including sense of self awareness, acceptance of others, and resistance skills and the provision of a positive leadership experience. We did not develop, deliver, and evaluate a program that contributed to the building of external resilience, including support from peers, family, and community. We believe this gap in program development, delivery, and evaluation has been one our greatest impediments to achieving individual resilience and our greatest challenge moving forward.

Given the challenges in documented positive changes to individual resilience and clear lack of external resilience, the following hypothesis has emerged from this research: measurable changes in individual resilience will be achieved when focused (or parallel) efforts are made to elevating external resiliency factors.

The Future: Integrating Research and Teaching for Community Resilience

Our first step in parallel community resiliency building was to offer previous community facilitators an opportunity to participate in the Indigenous Community Engagement Program (University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension). Facilitators took part in courses on community and economic development and critical thinking from an Indigenous lens. These courses provided additional learning opportunities for the community facilitators that would benefit them individually and—by extension—contribute to the sustainability of the MSLSJ program in their communities. Based on that experience, we returned to the data to prioritize ongoing learning activities. Our research findings are informing the development of courses that will be offered to facilitators, with an open door to any additional settlement members interested in attending. Wherever and whenever possible, we would suggest promoting project-related capacity building (courses, workshops, events) to all community members. This extends impact beyond the individual to the community, and increases awareness of the project.

The short-term goal of the courses is to enhance individual (internal) resilience; the long-term goal is to enhance community (external) resilience. The overall learning outcomes of the cumulative courses and the individual course learning objectives address resiliency statements in the survey that showed 1) statistically significant pre/post program results with a negative trend, 2) a low pre-program median that did not rise in a statistically significant way, and 3) a large degree of frequency spread and change.

CONCLUSION

Over four years of program implementation, with seven years of partnership, we have learned that interventions that focus on the individual, such as the children alone, cannot significantly shift internal or external resiliency for positive change to community well-being. We also learned

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that the external support to community capacity building that may be fostered through community-university collaborations are a step toward larger community-based change, given the time to develop the relationships that allow for insightful and responsive engagement.

Since 2016, there has been a shift in focus from research and service delivery to the sustainability of the MSLSJ program in the communities that host it. Current research is exploring what model(s) or strategies for program sustainability result in the successful continuance of community-based programs that have shown positive community impacts. Our current research objective aims to create an environment to evaluate learning that aligns with the community's norms by using outcome mapping, which stresses involving Boundary Partners (including community leadership) in all phases of the program, including regular communication on activities and outcomes; and address community-wide motivation for and barriers to learning, related especially to vulnerable populations. This includes developing content specifically for adult learners outside of post-secondary and delivering in communities, incorporating Indigenous theories and knowledge frameworks into this learning and research environment, and continuing to successfully balance MSLSJ service delivery and this ongoing research.

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