

**A R C T I C
W I N T E R
G A M E S**

**The 1998 Arctic Winter Games
A Study of the Benefits of Participation**

Prepared by

Dr. Samuel V. Lankford
World Leisure & Recreation Association Professional Services (WPS)
And
Program for Community Recreation, Tourism Research & Service
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
Sam.Lankford@uni.edu

Dr. Larry L. Neal
Pacific Northwest Area Representative
World Leisure & Recreation Association Professional Services (WPS)
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403
LLNEAL@oregon.uoregon.edu

Prepared for and Supported by

Arctic Winter Games International Committee
NWT Municipal and Community Affairs
Sport North
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada

November, 1998
Section 1

Arctic Winter Games: A Study of the Benefits of Participation

Introduction

In 1970, Government Officials from Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territories (NWT) and Federal Members of Parliament worked together to host the first Arctic Winter Games (AWG). Further, contingents from Northern Alberta, Greenland, and the Russian Provinces of Magadan, and Tyumen now participates in the games. The goal of the games has remained the same over the years: to furnish the opportunity through sport, the social and cultural meeting of northern peoples regardless of language, race or creed.

The Games are held biannually during the month of March. In preparation for the Games, regional trials and then final territorial trials are held to determine the composition of the AWG Teams. Regional Trials are normally held in November/December while Territorial trials are held in January preceding the Games. In the NWT's, over 50 hamlets, towns, villages and communities are represented by athletes in the regional, territorial and final AWG's.

The Games are designed to promote traditional aboriginal games based upon survival in the north. There are three categories of sports that are included in the Games: major sports, northern sports (Arctic Sports), and emerging/potential sports. Overall, in 1998 there were 18 different sporting events. The Games offer a venue where developing athletes from across the north meet to enhance their athletic skills and to share their respective cultures.

The International Committee promotes the following mission (role/purpose) in the games:

- A. athletic competition
- B. cultural exhibition and,
- C. social inter-change.

In support of this three part mission; the International committee promotes the following values of:

1. cultural awareness and understanding
2. fair play
3. access and equity
4. integrity
5. respect for others and self
6. partnerships
7. personal development
8. community development

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) provides for certified coaches who promote the values and operating principles. These games allow both male and females to improve their skills and develop personal values and traits that enhance their ability to succeed in life.

The findings of this study are very encouraging and show strong rationale for the continued development and advancement of the Games. The findings support the above mentioned mission and values of the Games as established by the International Committee. The findings of this report validate the benefits of the AWG's as noted in the publication "Arctic Winter Games – The History and Organization." As this study is the initial examination of the personal, social and community benefits of the Games (as opposed to previous economic impact studies), this research focussed on the development of a meaningful questionnaire and was limited to the NWT participants, coaches and volunteers.

Importantly, the data provide a clear rationale for generating NGO, government and private support for the AWG's. In addition, there appears to be very strong linkages to the need for community programs to support these young people both prior to, during and after the competitions. These programs are related to community development and social service issues as well as recreation and sport programs. The findings also correlate with the findings of the Sport North report "The Benefits of Sport in the Northwest Territories." Specifically, that sport participation (training and competition) is a major feature in the lives of young people in the Northwest Territories.

Study Objectives and Primary Research Questions

Within the twenty eight year (28 year) history of the Games, this study provides the first comprehensive data base concerning the personal, social and community benefits of participation in the Arctic Winter Games. The research focussed on:

1. documenting the personal, social and community benefits of involvement for participants, volunteers, community leaders and coaches in the Arctic Winter Games and regional trials leading up to the Games;
2. validating the mission (role/purpose) and values established for the Games;
3. identifying the personal and social benefits for male and female athletes;
4. identifying and understanding the cultural inter-change experiences of the participants;
5. documenting the opportunities of community development, confidence and pride;
6. validating the notion of friendly competition while sharing cultural values;
7. estimating the social impact the Games have on promoting northern unity and cultural understanding; and
8. gathering personal input from athletes for future AWGIC's use.

Study Methodology

The researcher's met with Canadian Northwest Territories representatives for a week long workshop on survey development and research methods. Using nominal group techniques, the researcher's helped the team develop a draft research instrument and field tested the questionnaire. Further testing and modifications were completed during and after the regional trials in the NWT. A team of staff from MACA and Sport North of NWT were also involved as researchers in the data collection process during the regionals, territorials and final AWG's. Without this dedication and support, the large sample (n=548) would have been impossible. Athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers, community leaders and business people were asked to participate in the study. The data in this report reflect these perceptions. In keeping close to the study objectives, the bulk of the surveys were completed by athletes.

The research was completed in three phases leading up to the 1998 Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife, NWT. Phase One: all participants who registered for the Regional Trials filled in a survey and returned it to their Regional Co-ordinator along with their completed registration form. Phase Two: a sample of the participants at the Territorial Trials filled in a survey related to their involvement at this level. Phase Three: involved surveying a sample of the participants who competed in the actual Arctic Winter Games hosted in Yellowknife, March 15-22, 1998.

The research team collected 548 surveys, which were entered on the computer and analyzed. The survey explored issues relative to athletic competition, cultural and social interchange, spirit of fair play, and training. Questions also addressed "being northern," and "northern sports" and how the Games related to the uniqueness of the north. The survey also contained personal data questions and areas where the respondent could add qualitative information. In addition, several case studies and interviews and 2 focus group sessions were completed to help better understand the overall scope and impact of the games on the groups being studied.

Males made up 59.2% of the sample while females made up 40.8% of the sample. Nearly 80% (79%) of the male respondents were athletes, while 77.9% were female athletes. Respondents indicated that 73% have participated in previous regional, territorial or AWG's in the past, while 24.8% indicated this was their first year of competition. The ethnic background for the athletes consisted of: 1.6% Inuvialuit; 10% Dene; 7.4% Metis; 17.4% Inuit; 53.2% Non Aboriginal; while 10.5% provided no answer. Athletes indicated those that motivated them to become involved in the games were friends (51.3%); coaches (42.6%); other athletes and participants (42%); recreation leaders (16%); and teachers (14%). Approximately 9% indicated they became involved due to their own initiative.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized around the main themes of the Arctic Winter Games: 1) to provide a forum of northern sport competition; 2) to promote cultural activities and exhibitions; 3) to develop a sense of being northern; and 4) to encourage fair play and promote participation among all walks of life in a broad range of activities. A series of questions were developed around these themes. The following section describes the findings to the above themes in graphic form. Specifically, comparisons are made between male and female respondents, and athletes and others (coaches, volunteers etc). Additionally, comparisons on the questions also included an examination of athletes who participated in the regional and territorial trials and the final AWG's. These comparisons were made to highlight the fact that participation in any or all of these athletic events promotes personal and social well being.

The following AWGIC goals were used as a means to organize the questionnaire and subsequent report.

- **Athletic Competition**: “To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games themselves or in the Regional and Territorial Trials, and to provide a forum of northern sport competition for those other than elite athletes with competitive opportunities in the south.”
- **Cultural Exhibition & Social Interchange**: “To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, and to get different groups together.” To develop, amongst northern peoples, a geographic identity and to develop and maintain good relations.”
- **Spirit of Fair Play**: “The fundamental purpose is to encourage maximum participation by all ages, cultures and walks of life in a broad range of athletic activities. The Games are to exemplify the spirit of fair play during the Games week.”

In addition to a series of questions that test the goals mentioned above, a number of questions were developed to identify demographic characteristics of the population being studied and to further solicit information on training and competition experiences. Of particular interest and importance are a series of questions related to community development and pride. These are contained in a separate section. These questions and findings are addressed in detail below.

***NOTE:** All responses in the figures are within a margin of error of +/-5%. Therefore in the interpretation of the tables and graphs, a finding that notes 65% of the females indicated that competition is fun, the finding could be as high as 70% or as low as 60%.*

A. *Personal and Community Benefits of Athletic Competition*

This section of the report details the findings with regard to athletic competition from a personal point of view. A series of questions were developed around the following goal that is derived from the AWGIC's guidelines. Of importance to this research was the testing and validating of the idea of competition and involvement of all athletes, not just elite athletes. This AWGIC goal is as follows:

- The goal of athletic competition for the Arctic Winter Games, and regional and territorial trials is **to involve as many as possible either in the Games or Trials, and to provide a forum of northern sport competition** for those other than elite athletes.

A series of questions relative to the competitiveness of the games, developmental skills, learning about sports, and challenges of competition are addressed in the following graphs. It is important to note the relationships to competition when viewing these findings. Although some minor differences exist, there appear to be tendencies when viewing the data by gender, athlete and non-athlete (volunteer, officials, coaches) and place/level of competition (Regional Trials, Territorial Trials, and AWG's).

Questions were developed using information from Sport North staff, Municipal and Community Affairs staff, interviews with coaches and athletes, the literature on sport and competition and pre-testing the items. Importantly, the following information on competition should be viewed within a broad context of competition, sport and young athletes. It would appear that the personal and community benefits derived from competition in the training and games is positive. Furthermore, the goal of the Arctic Winter Games International Committee seems to be supported in view of these findings.

A. Competition and the Games

The pattern of male and female findings relative to *allowing youth to be competitive* is nearly even in the distribution of scores (see below). Additionally, slightly more non-athletes than athletes indicated that the games promote competitiveness. Respondents also indicated that involvement in the actual Arctic Winter Games themselves allow for more opportunities to be competitive. This finding makes intuitive sense in that the competition is greater at the Games level, rather than the regional or territorial level. In addition, community pride and sense of being from the North play into the competitive nature of the events.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the degree to which participation in the games and preparation (training) for the games allows them to become involved with other youth. The following graphics indicate that this is the case. The Games, Trials, Regionals and the practices allow the youth to make friends and socialize in a structured supervised setting. The data suggest that the AWG's allow for more involvement possibly due to the length of the games and the number of athletes and spectators. Additionally, the females and non-athletes (coaches, volunteers and officials) indicated slightly more so that the opportunity of involvement with other kids existed due to participation in the Games.

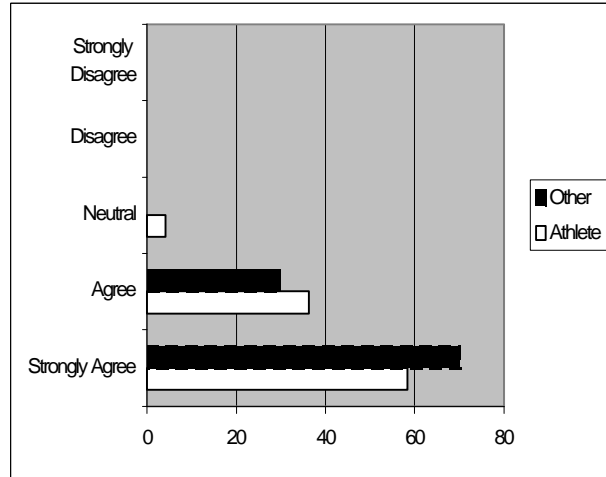
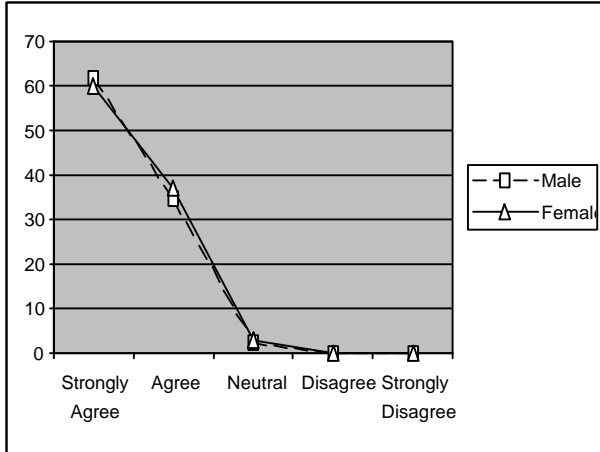
Of interest to the research team and MACA was whether or not the Games and preparation for the games allowed the participants to learn more about sports. As compared to the other data presented above, there were slightly more respondents who indicated they were not sure (neutral) on learning about sports through their involvement. It also appears that the Regional trials seem to promote slightly more learning opportunities about sports than the other two competitions.

The data support the notion that the youth learn more about sports, develop skills and abilities, keep physically fit, are challenged due to competition, provide something to do during free time, and become role models. Importantly, these positive personal, social and community benefits are observed in both male and female populations whether or not it is during the regional and territorial trials, or the actual Games.

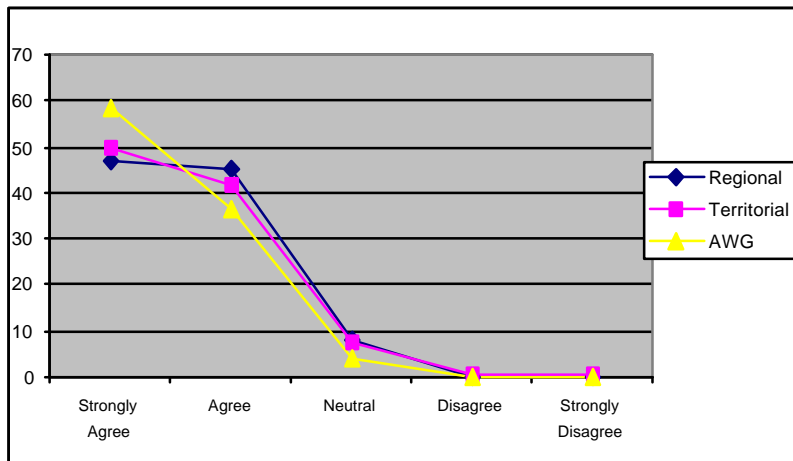
Participants were asked to provide comments about the athletic competition for the Games. The following represents the range of comments (full details are in the appendix):

1. Not only for you, the games are important for adults in being role models
2. We should not take adults out of the Games
3. The competition and Games are great
4. The Games provide opportunities that do not normally exist in the NWT's
5. Encourage more people to get involved
6. Bring in more provinces, i.e. Northern B.C.
7. There should be more places for competition
8. Competitive, yet very friendly for all involved
9. Youth in all sports, delete adults in Arctic, Dene, Biathlons and Snowshoeing
10. It is very exciting to compete against people from other communities, provinces and territories
11. Competition is great, however, I think it is more important to focus on meeting people from other places, exploring the cultures and having fun
12. Always do your best and have fun
13. It was good, it was fun, it was cool
14. It would be nice if all teams showed sportsmanship, even if the competition is hard
15. Learned great team building skills and all were good sports

Participation In The Games Allows Youth To Be Competitive
by Male/Female and Athlete/Other for the Yellowknife AWG's

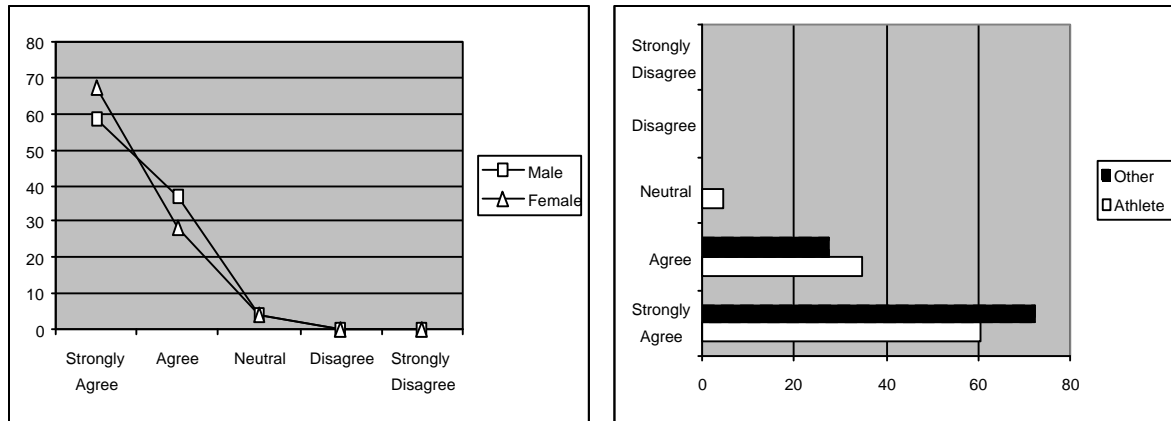


Participation In The Games Allows Youth To Be Competitive
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

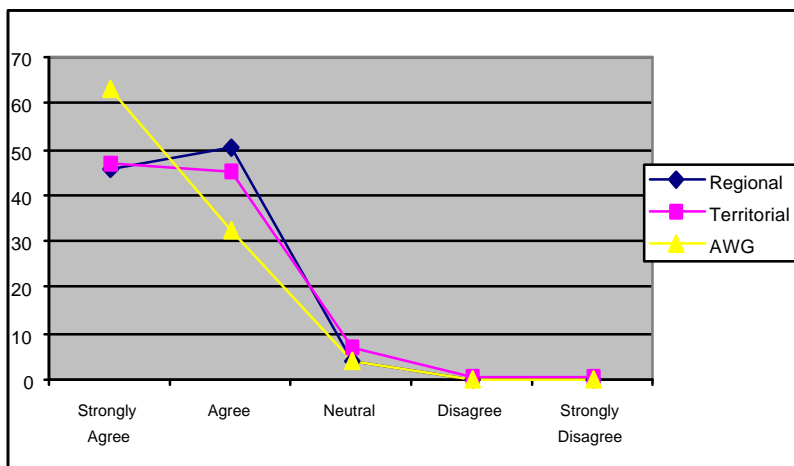


B. Involvement With Other Youth

Participation Gets Youth Involved With Other Kids In Sports
By Male and Female; Athlete and Other

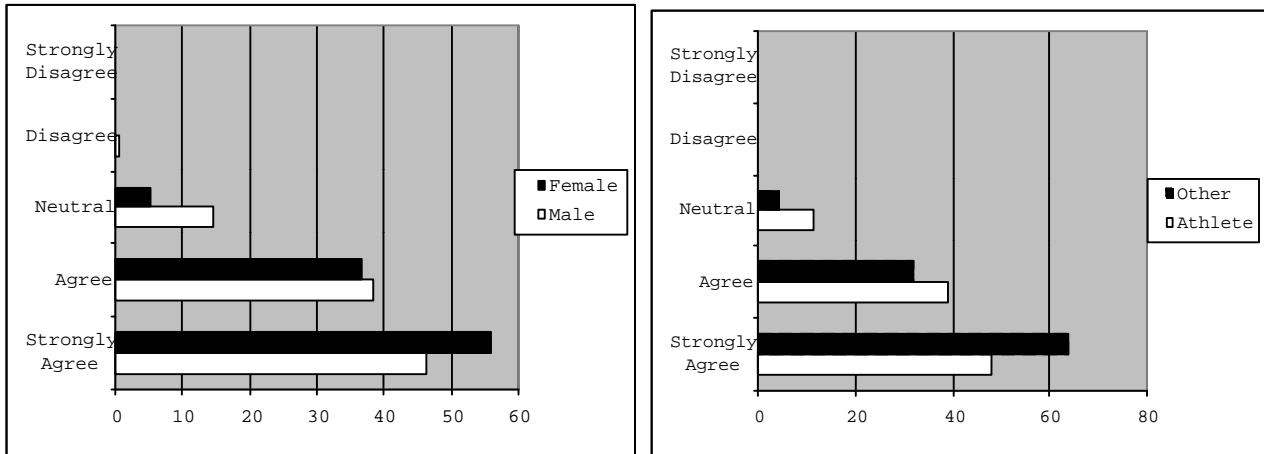


Participation Gets Youth Involved With Other Kids In Sports
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

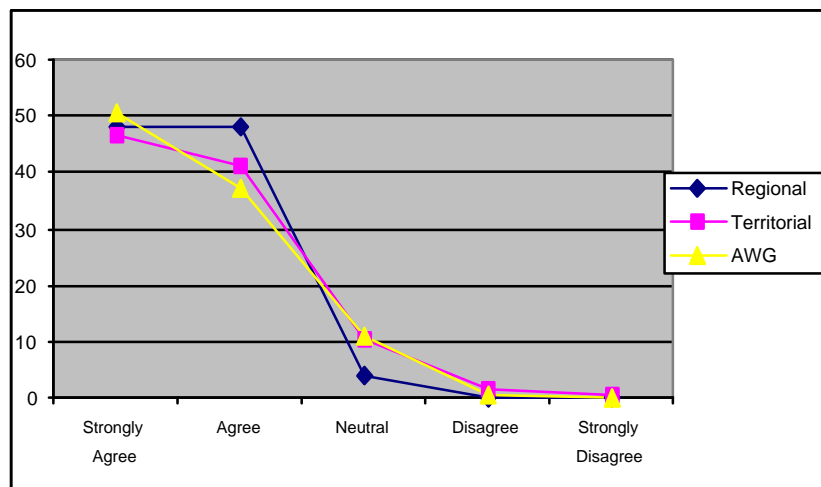


C. Competition Helps Youth Learn About Sports

Lets Youth Learn More About Sports
By Male, Female, Athlete and Other

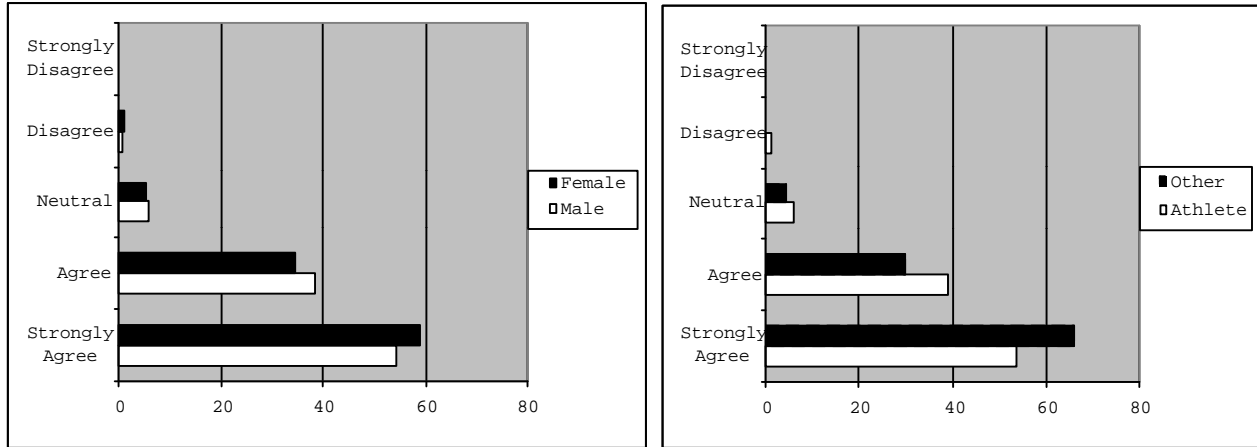


Lets Youth Learn More About Sports
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

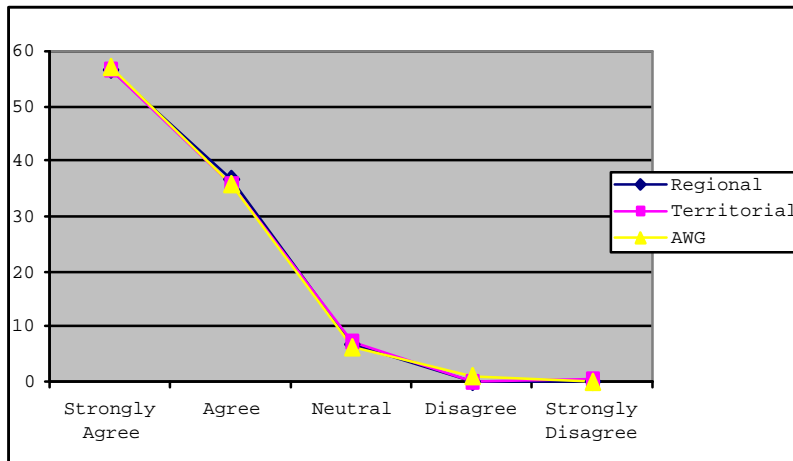


D. Competition Helps Develop Skills & Abilities

Helps Youth Develop Skills And Abilities

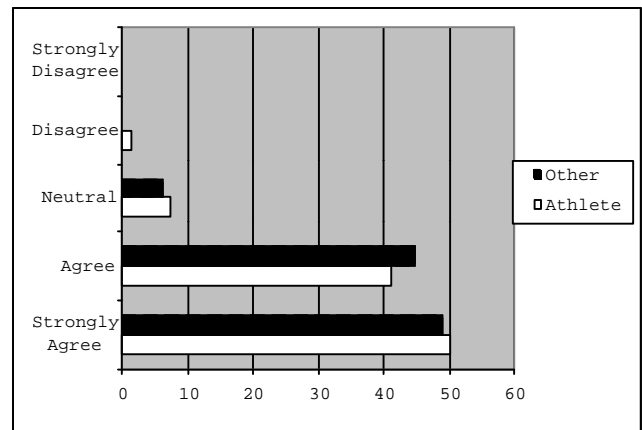
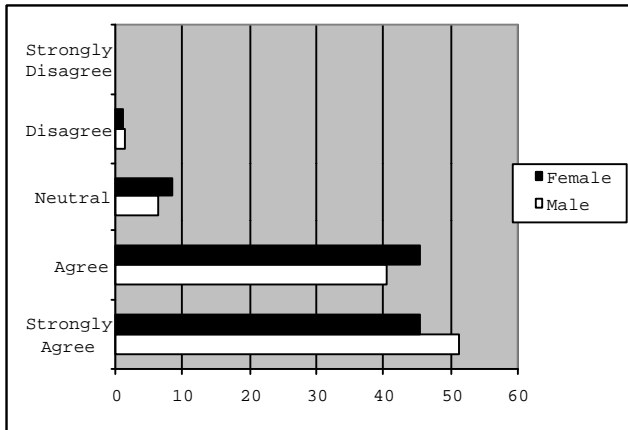


Helps Youth Develop Skills And Abilities by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

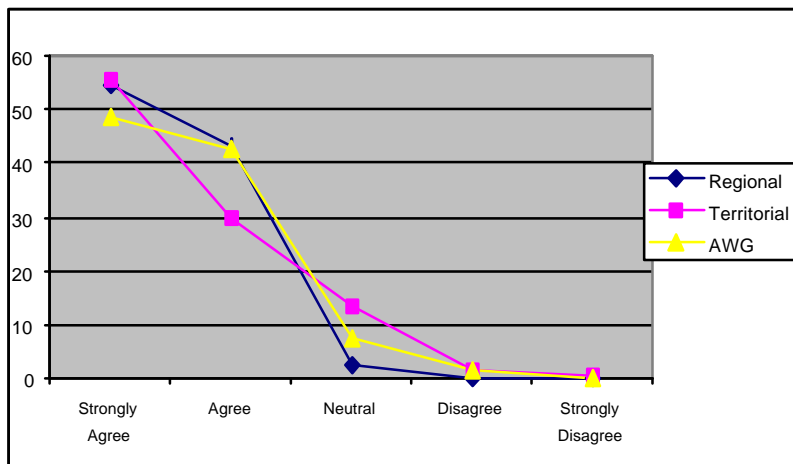


E. Competition Helps Youth Keep Fit

Keeps Youth Physically Fit

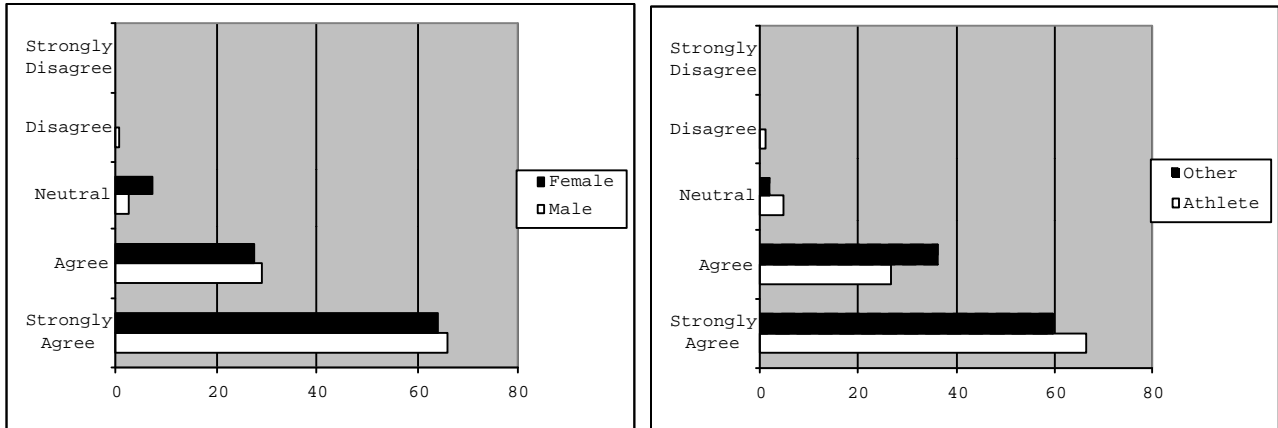


Keeps Youth Physically Fit
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

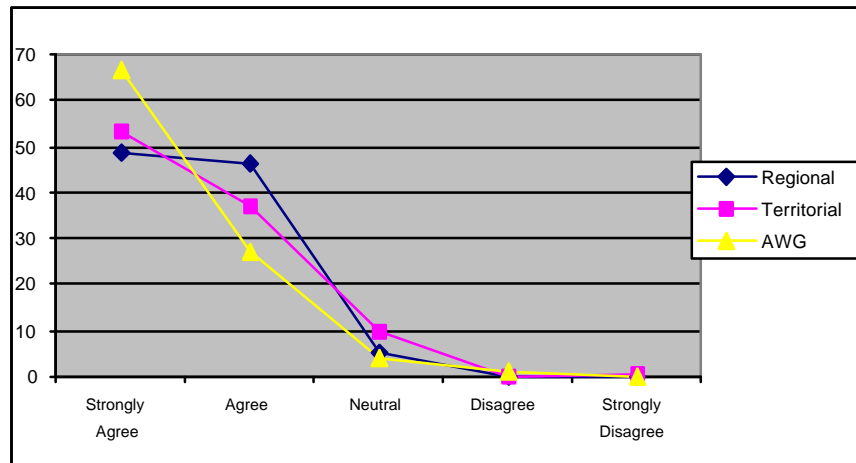


F. The Competition Challenges Youth In Sports

Challenges Youth In Sports

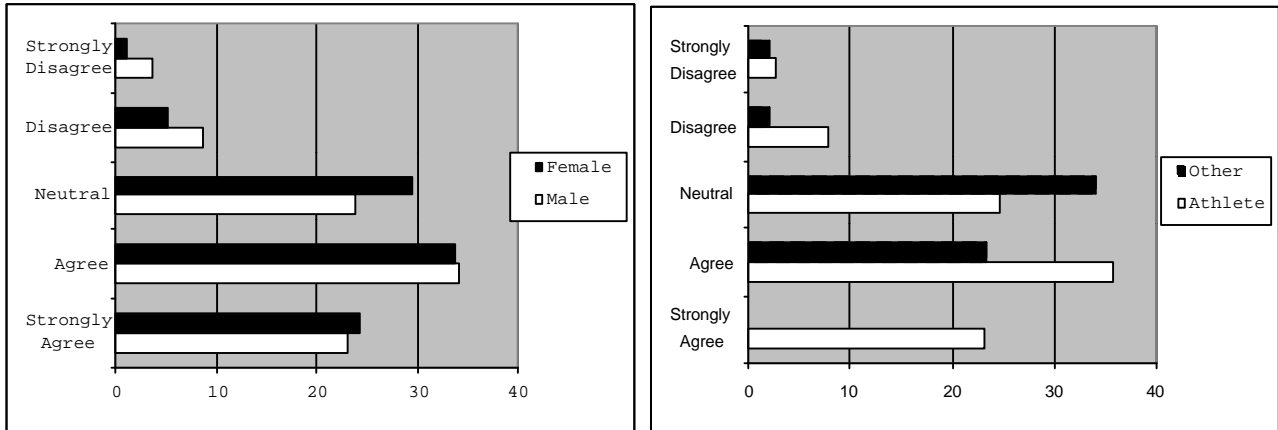


Challenges Youth In Sports by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

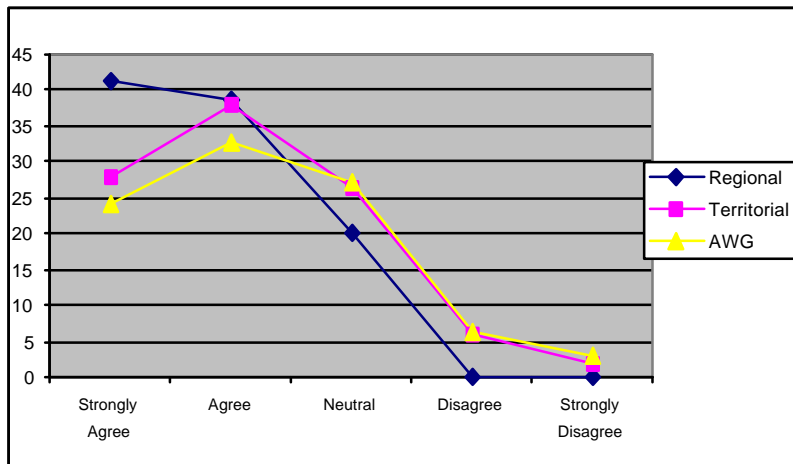


F. Competition Provides A Chance for Youth to Control Their Free Time

Gives Youth Control Over Their Free Time

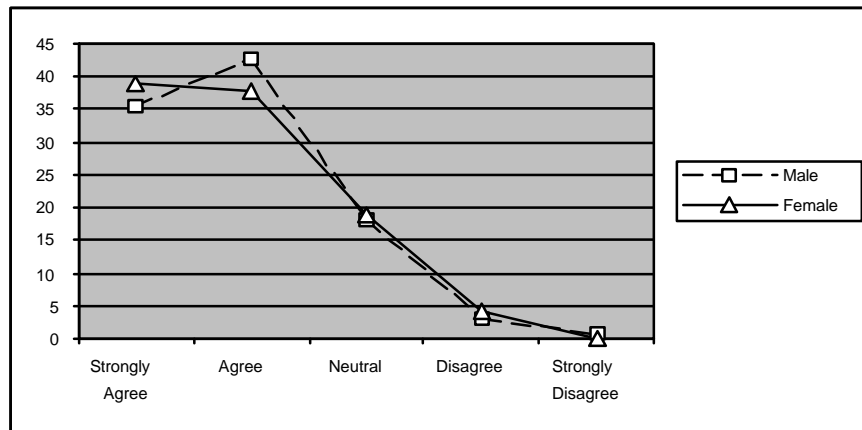


Gives Youth Control Over Their Free Time by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

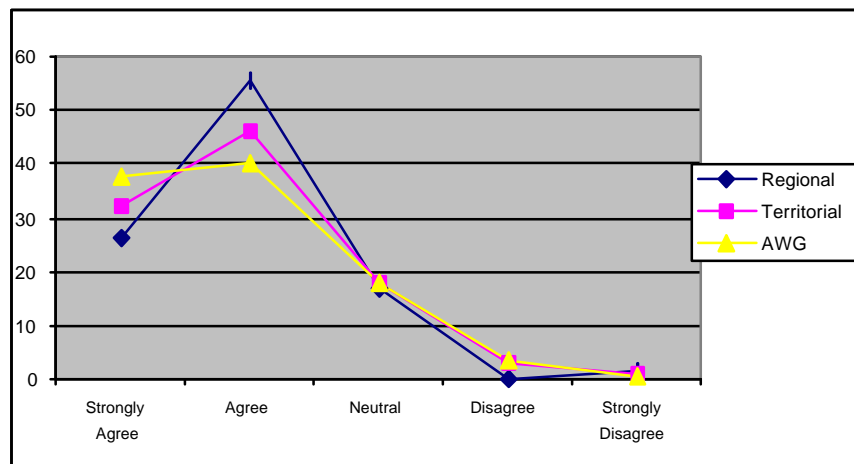


G. Experience Helps Youth Overcome Anxiety/Nervousness of Competition

Helps Youth to Learn How to Overcome the Anxiety (or Nervousness) of Competition

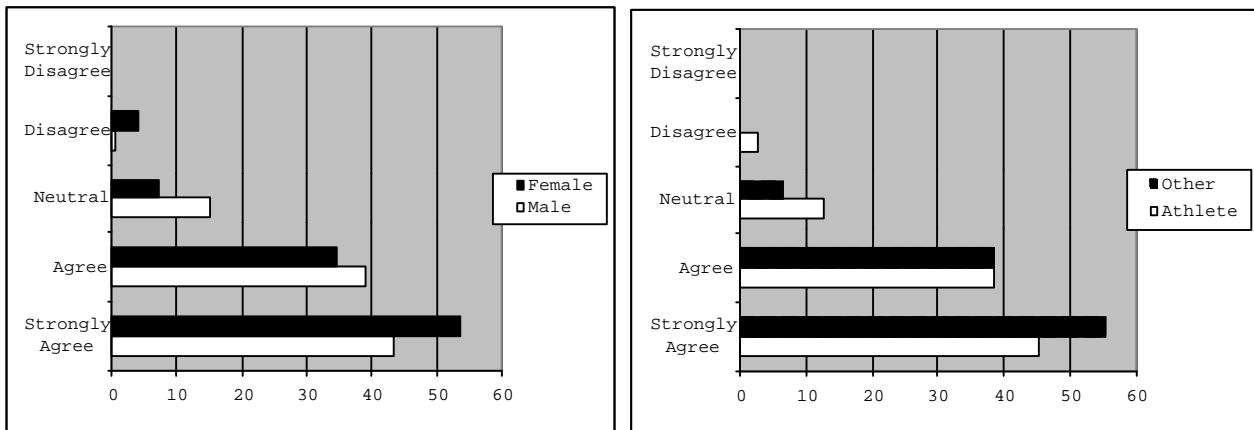


Helps Youth to Learn How to Overcome the Anxiety (or Nervousness) of Competition by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

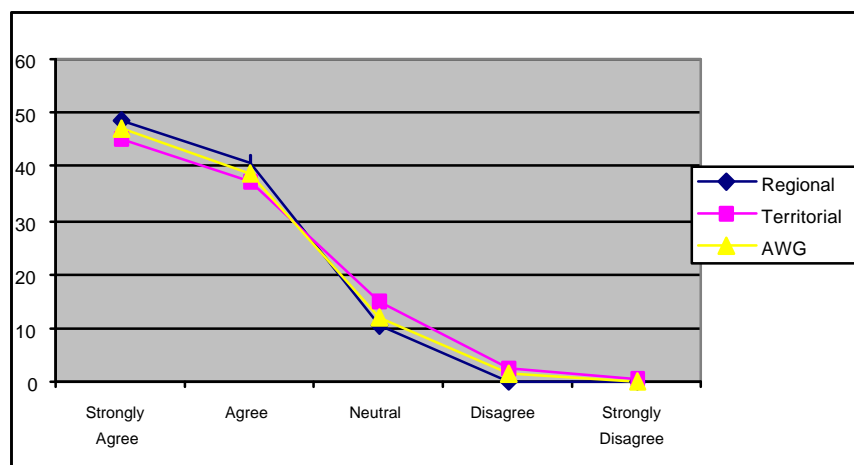


H. Experience Helps Youth Act As A Role Model

Helps Youth To Act As A Role Model (Person Who Can Be Looked Up To) To Other Youth In My Community



Helps Youth To Act As A Role Model (Person Who Can Be Looked Up To) To Other Youths In My Community by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's



II. Cultural Exhibition & Social Interchange: Personal and Community Benefits

Another goal of the Arctic Winter Games is cultural and social interchange. Specifically, “To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, to get different groups together, to develop and maintain good relations amongst northern people.” The following section addresses issues and opportunities related to this cultural and social interchange goal.

Respondents clearly indicated that the training, trials and competition have provided significant opportunities to get to know other cultures and ways of life. Importantly, they experienced cultural and social interchange situations unlike any in their past or possibly in their future. When asked to express this in their own words, the following comments were recorded (see appendix for full descriptions):

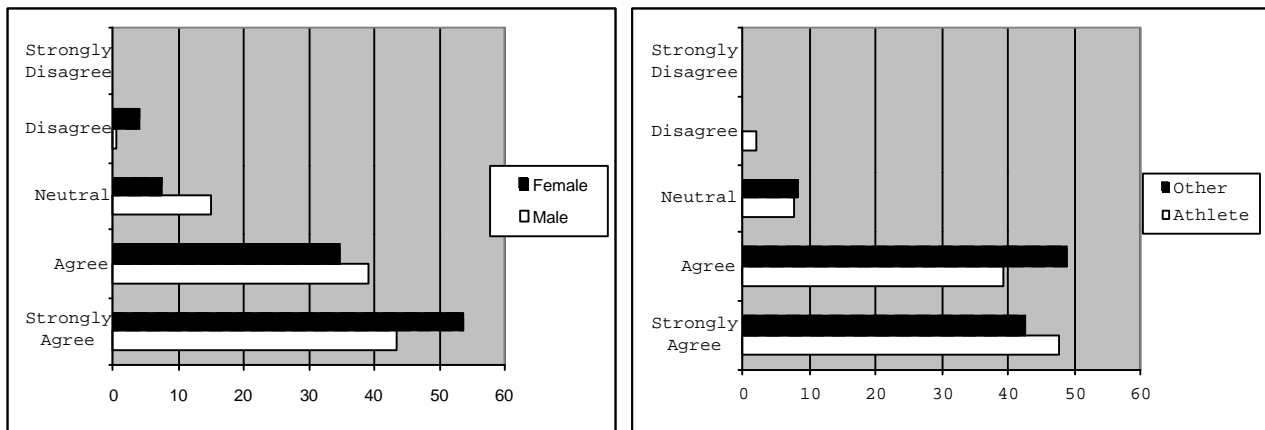
1. The sports and traditions are found only in the north and the AWG's allow people to try/see and continue these traditions
2. It helps people show their culture
3. They contain sports not practiced elsewhere
4. Having the cultural shows enhances the experience
5. If the AWG's do not promote our culture and sports, they will die in the community
6. Because there are so many different cultures, we can all work together
7. Increases the chances of “people remembering”
8. Gives kids a chance to learn from older kids, good to mix jr. and sr.
9. By exposing them to the games and cultures, an awareness is made that is not done in everyday life in the villages
10. Some sports would not be practiced anywhere in the north if not for the Games
11. Gives other people a chance to understand our culture
12. Brings us together and builds traditional cultures
13. It challenges the kids and gives them something to work towards which encourages other kids to participate

- 14. Always have the people from Russia to share their culture
- 15. You watch and you learn
- 16. We have to keep them going!

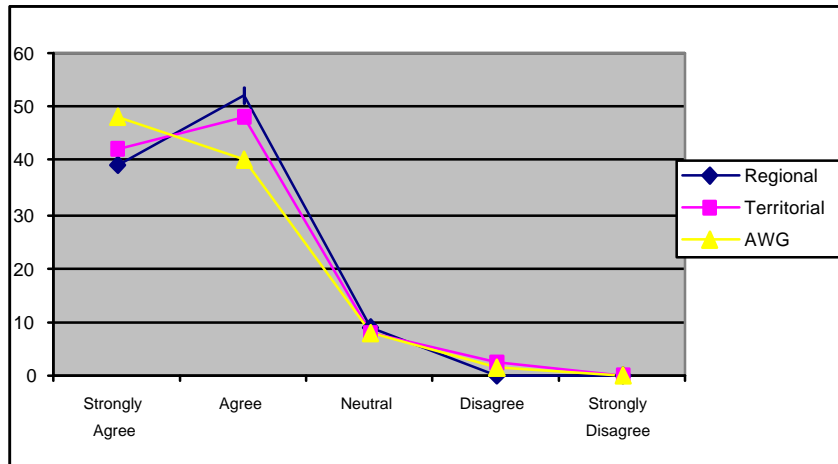
The following graphs present the quantitative results of the questions that address cultural and social interchange. Positive outcomes were expressed for building excitement and involvement of people in the community; supporting athletes; involvement of all communities; having pride in being Northern; making new friends; and interacting with and understanding other cultures. Importantly, the respondents indicated that the cultural program aspect of the Games were very important, and that their involvement with the games do significantly increase their desire to become involved in other community events in their village.

A. Involvement in Games Promotes Involvement of People in the Community

Builds Excitement and Involvement Of The People In My Community

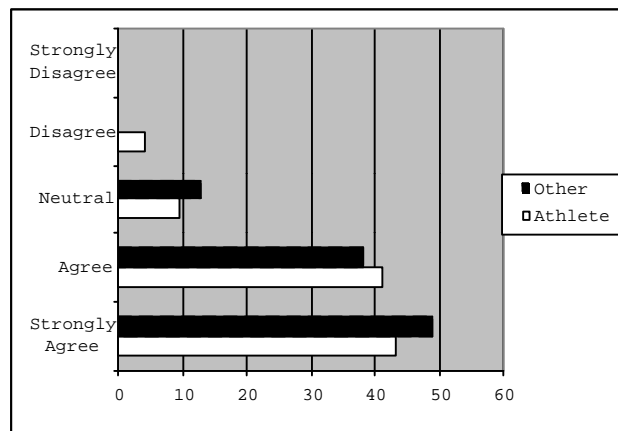
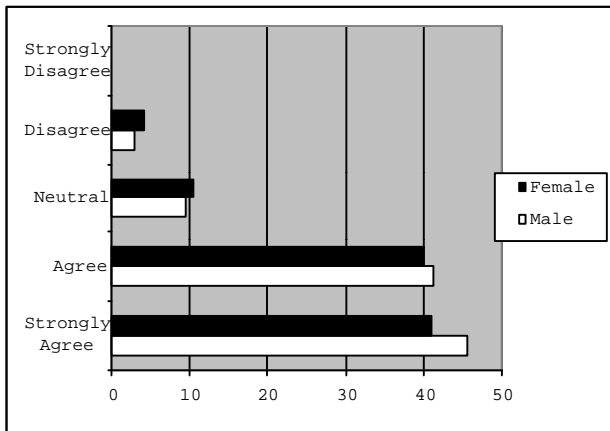


**Builds Excitement and Involvement Of The People In My Community
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's**

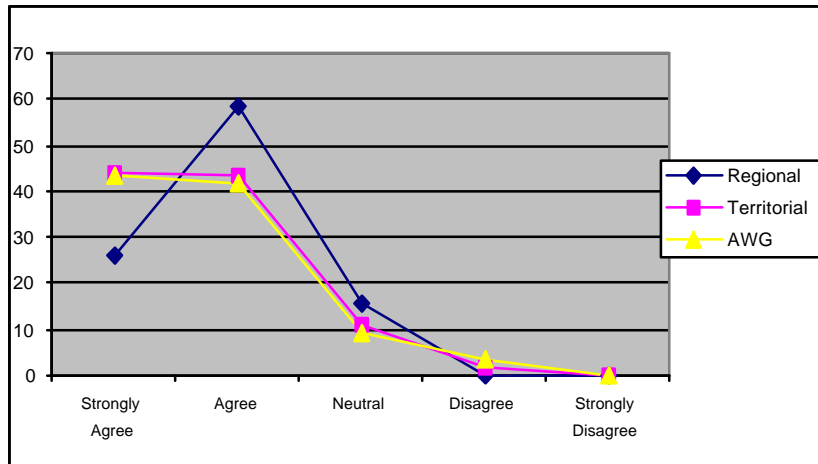


B. The Games and Training Help Support Athletes in the Community

Encourages Communities To Support Residents Who Are Involved

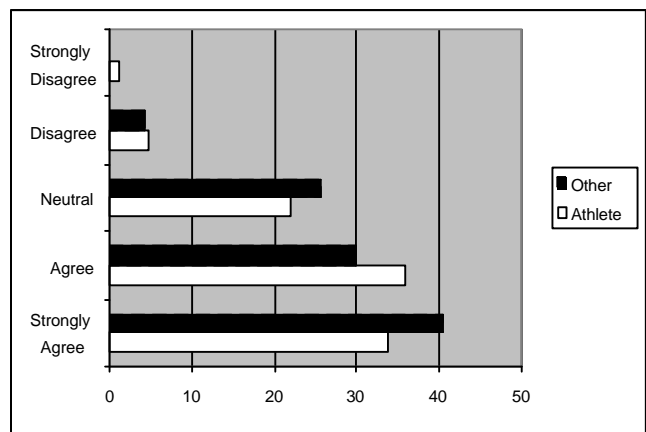
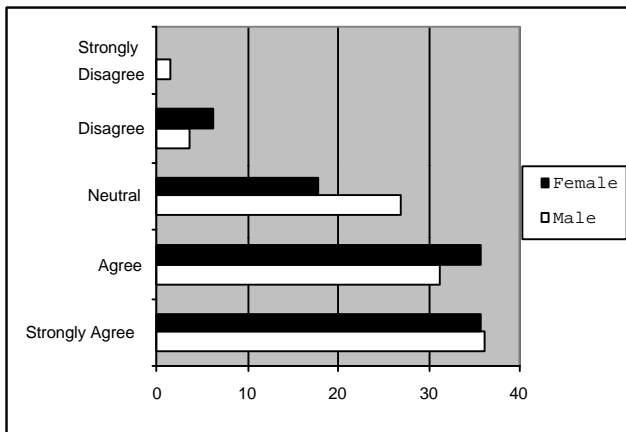


Encourages Communities To Support Residents Who Are Involved
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

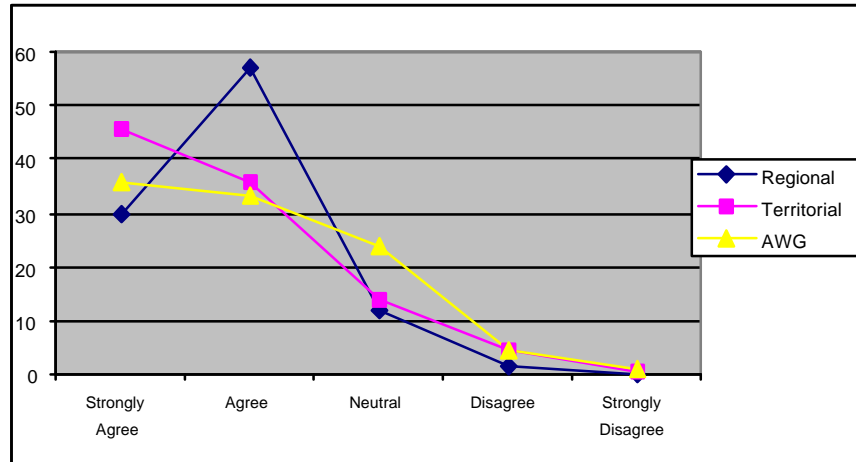


C. Promotes Involvement of All Communities

Involves All the NWT Communities

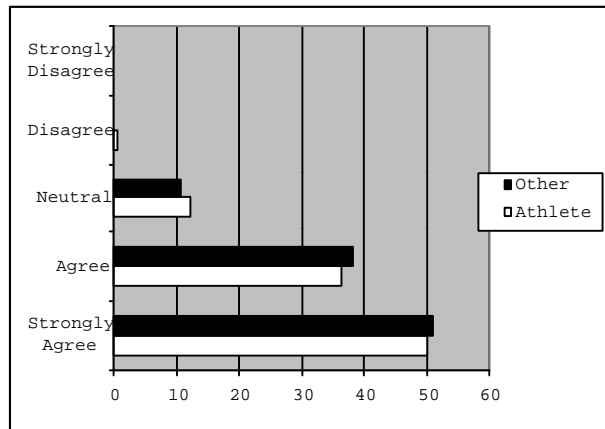
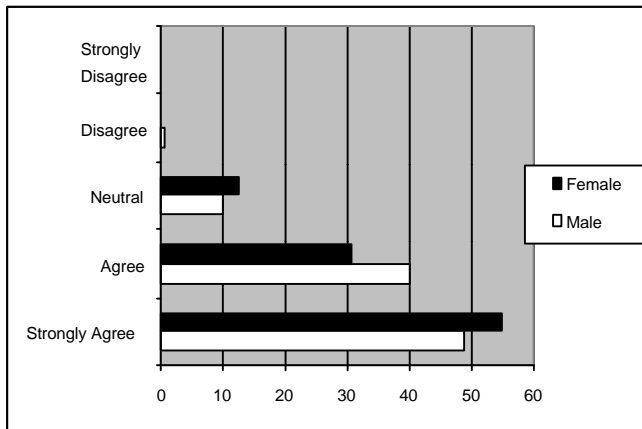


Involves All the NWT Communities
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

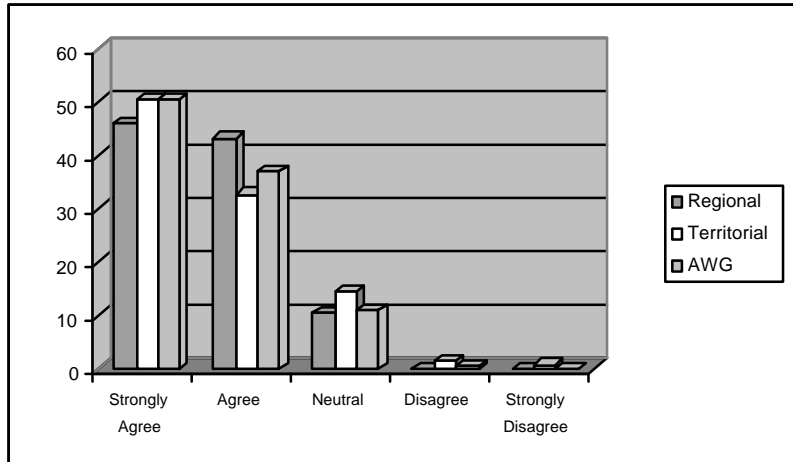


D. Promotes Pride in Being Northern

Develops Pride In Being From The North

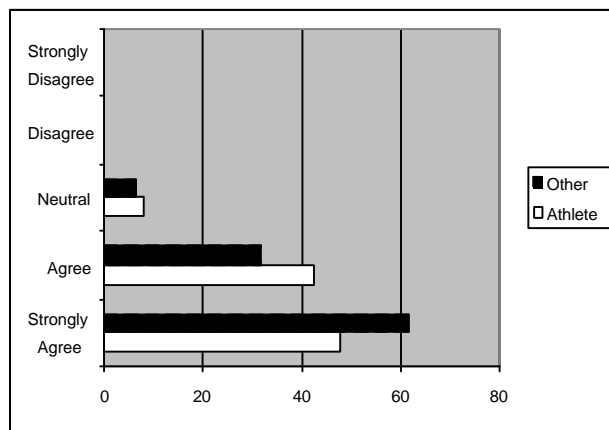
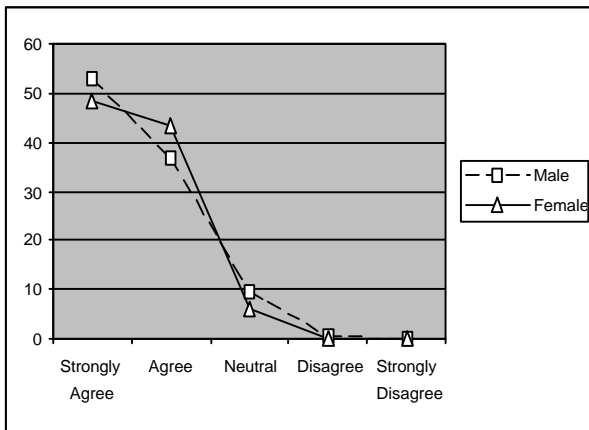


Develops Pride In Being From The North by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

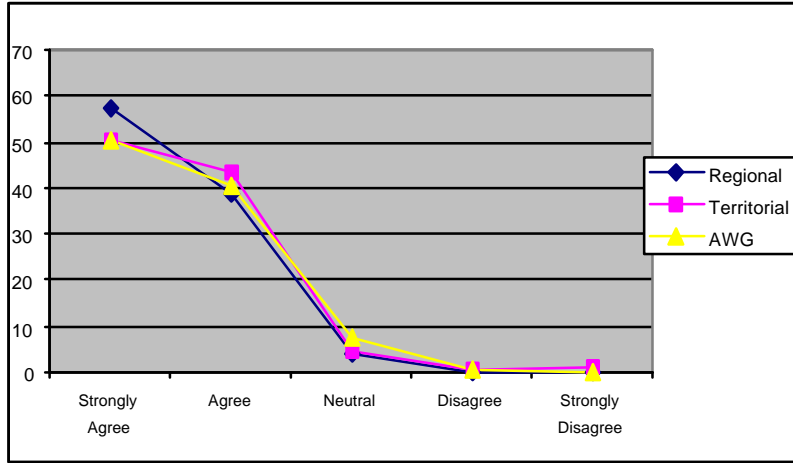


E. Fosters the Making of New Friendships

Helps Me Make New Friends

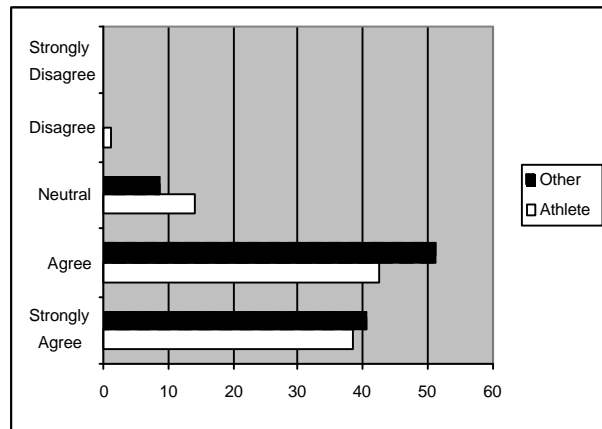
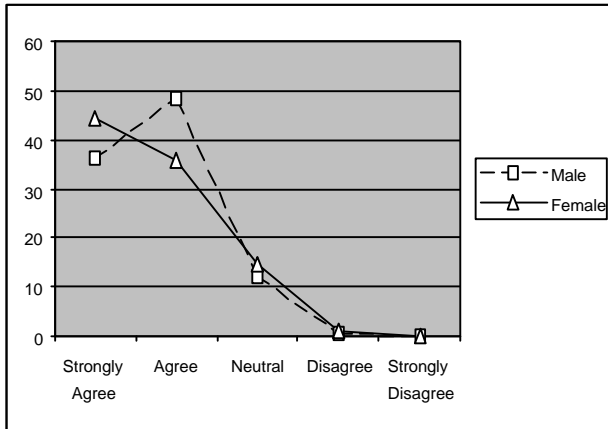


Helps Me Make New Friends by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

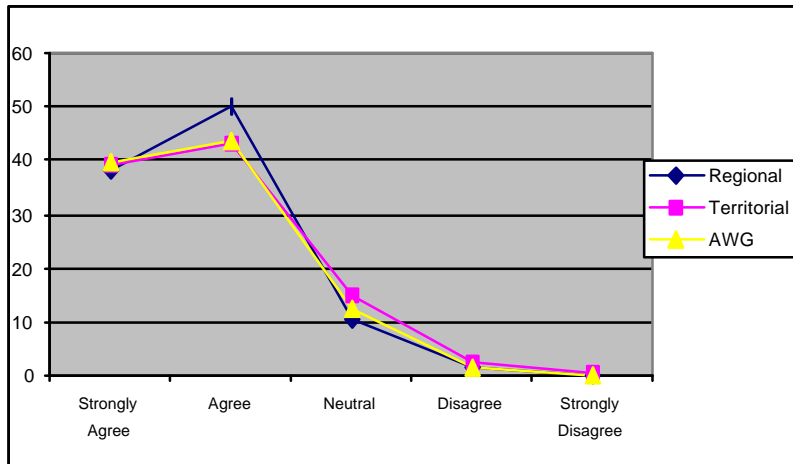


F. Promotes Interaction with Different Cultures

Lets Me Interact With Different Cultures

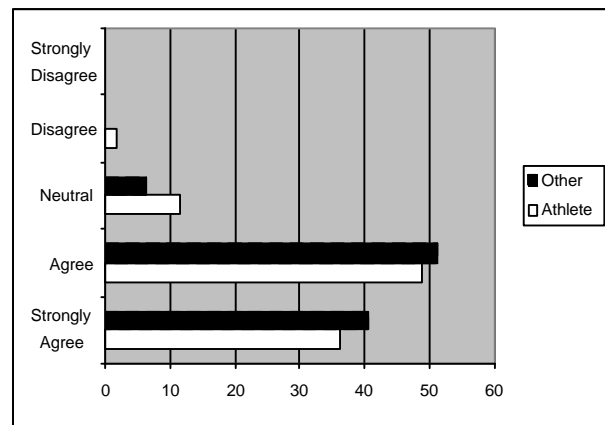
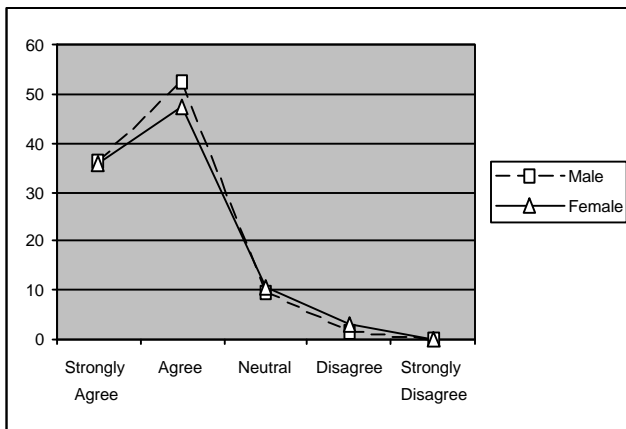


Lets Me Interact With Different Cultures
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

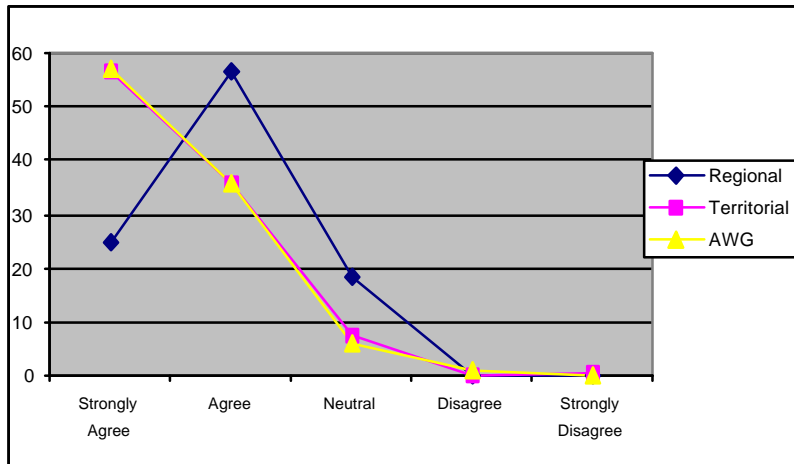


G. Fosters Opportunities to Meet Others

Gives Me The Opportunity To Find Out Something New About Someone Else

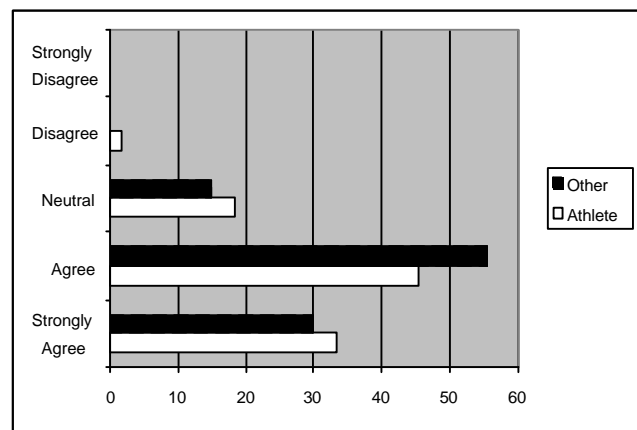
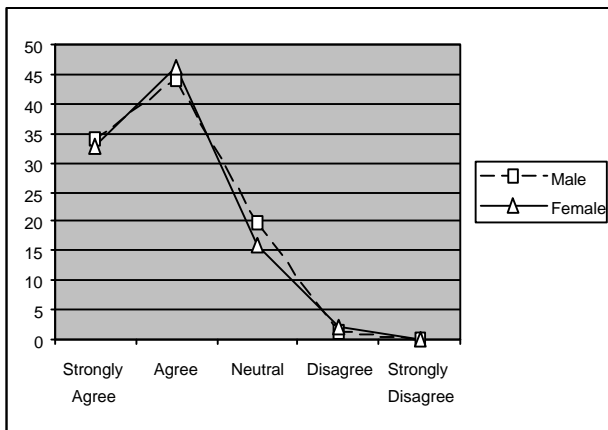


Gives Me The Opportunity To Find Out Something New About Someone Else
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

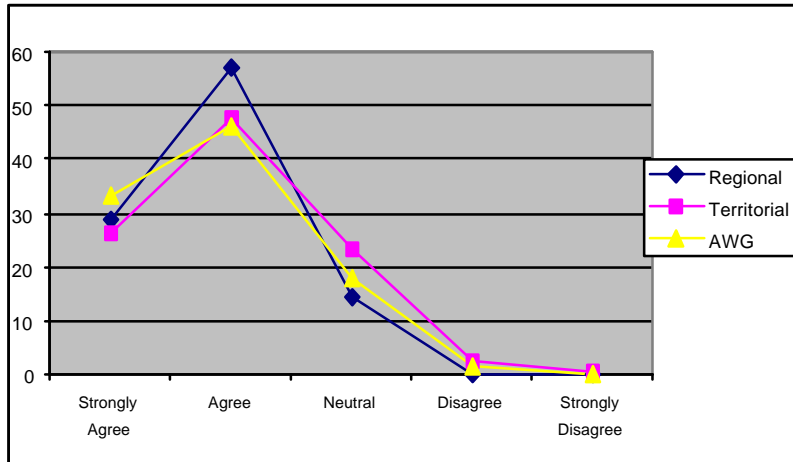


H. Provides Understanding of Other Cultures

Provides For Better Understanding Of Other Cultures

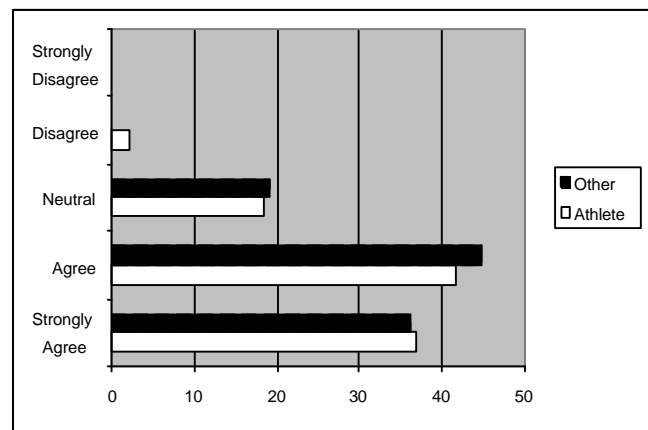
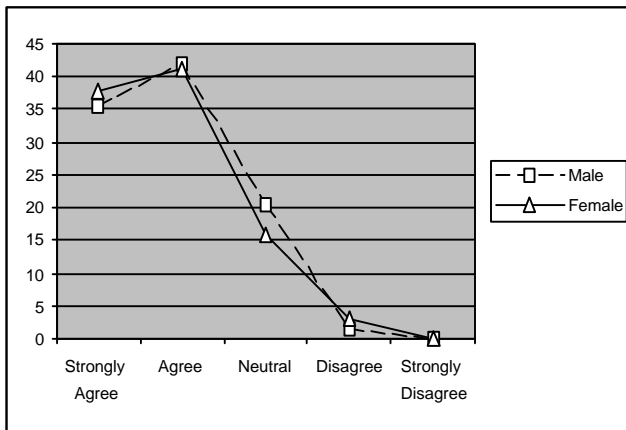


Provides For Better Understanding Of Other Cultures
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

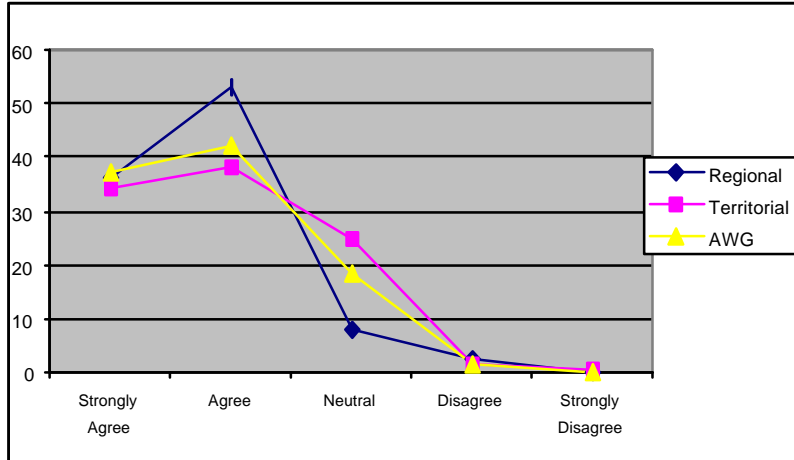


I. Develops Pride in Culture

Helps Me Take Pride In My Culture

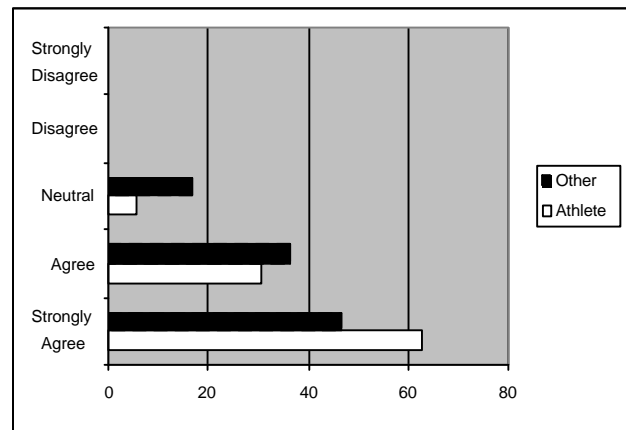
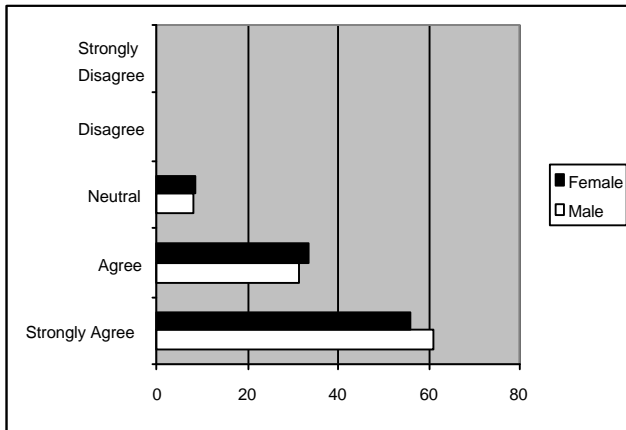


Helps Me Take Pride In My Culture by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

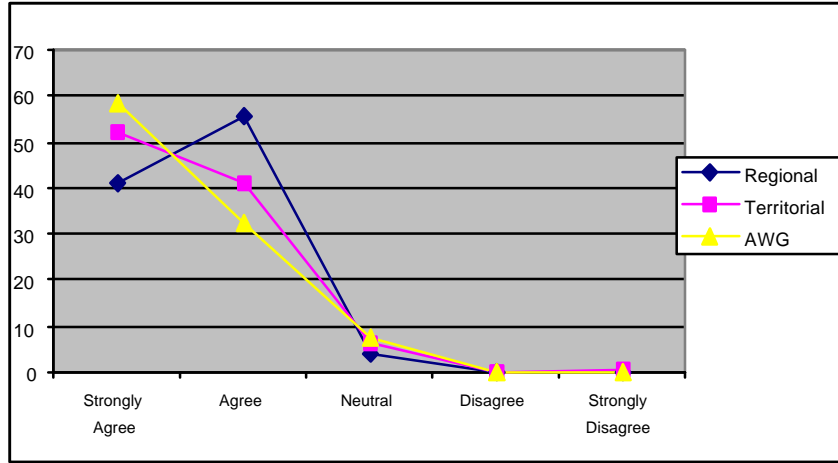


D. J. Provides Opportunities to Compete

Gives Me Opportunities To Perform/Compete

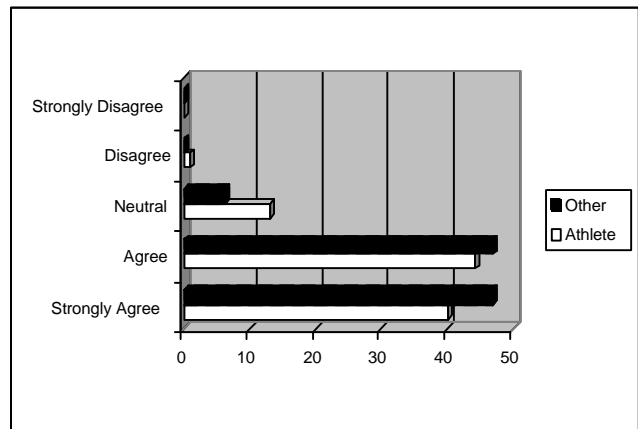
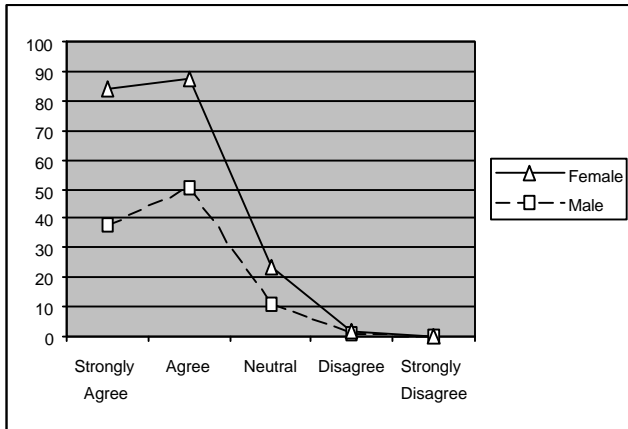


Gives Me Opportunities To Perform/Compete
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

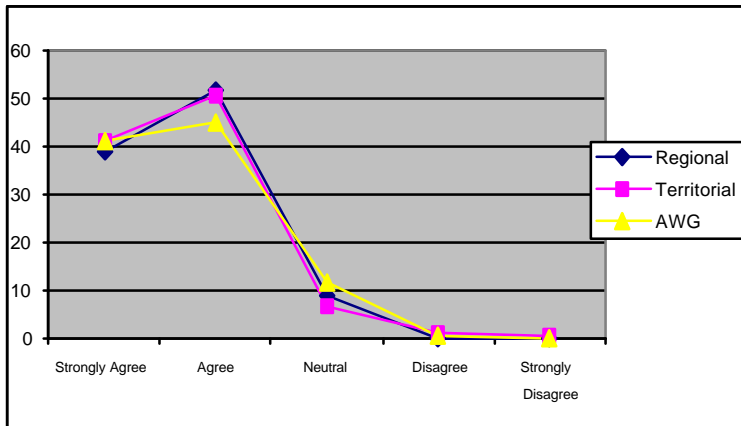


L. Provides Opportunities to Learn Something New

Helps Me Learn Something New

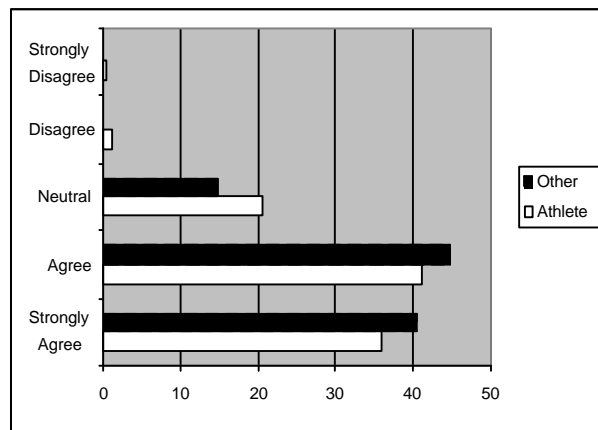
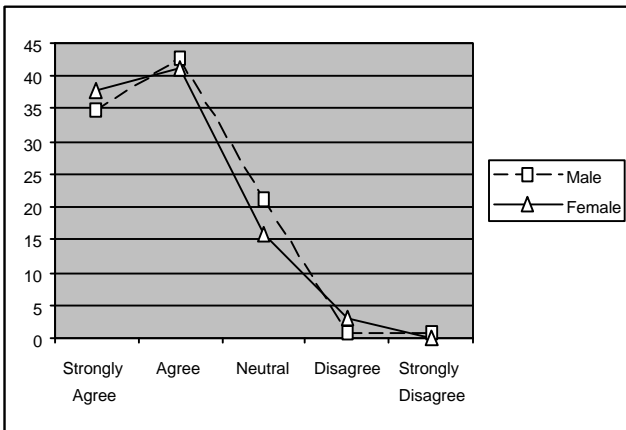


Helps Me Learn Something New By Regional, Territorial and AWG Participants

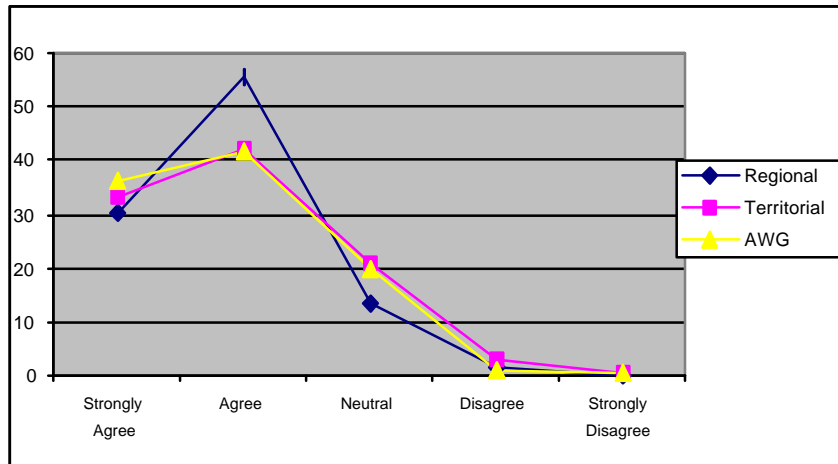


M. Promotes Cultural Experiences

Allows Me To Enjoy The Cultural Experiences

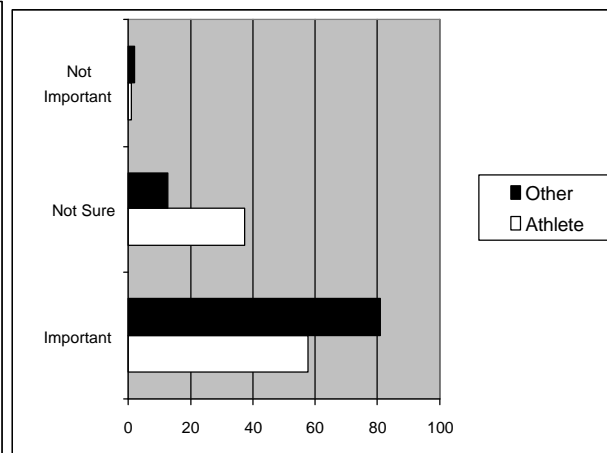
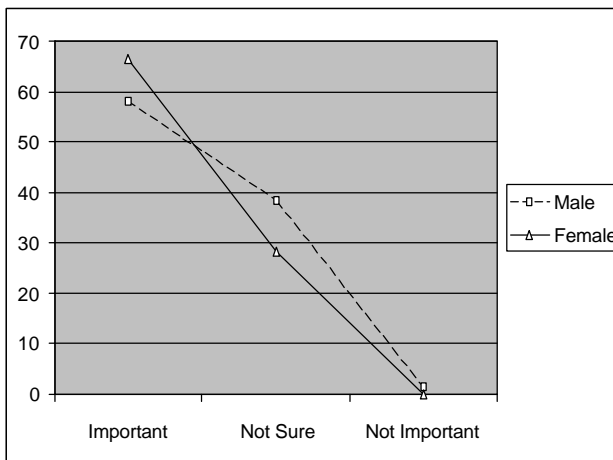


Allows Me To Enjoy The Cultural Experiences
by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

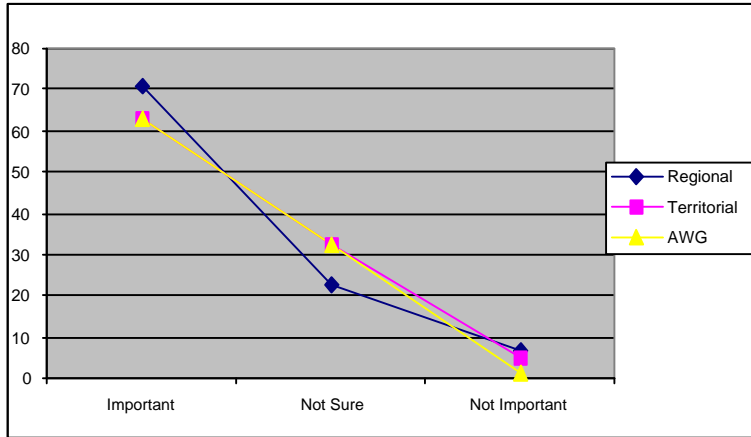


N. The Importance of Cultural Program to the Game Experience

How Important Is The Cultural Program To The Games?

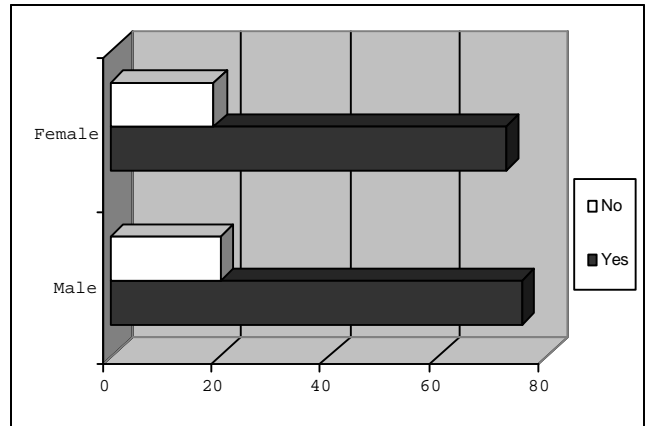
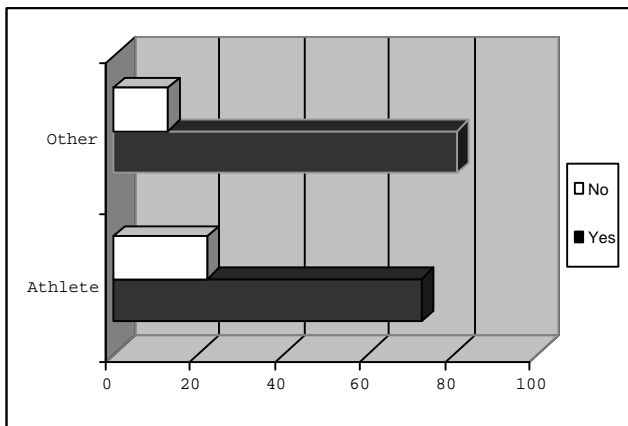


How Important is the Cultural Program to the Games? by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's



O. Promotion of Community Involvement

Does Involvement In the Games Increase Your Desire To Be Involved In Other Events In Your Community?



Does Involvement In the Games Increase Your Desire To Be Involved by Regional, Territorial and Yellowknife AWG's

