



# International Perspectives on Leisure



## Arabic

تشكل العملية الناجحة في عقدها الثالث "دورة ألعاب الشتاء القطبية" (AWG) الدورات الرياضية، الثقافية، ألعاب الهوية القومية، النمو الجماعي والفردى، منافع الاداء الرياضى والثقافى، ولهذه الاحداث النصف سنوية والتي تشمل على عدد من الدول فوائدها كثيرة ويذكر هذا الملخص نتائج المحاولة الاولى للتأكيد على الفوائد الاجتماعية لهذه الألعاب، وتستغل هذه النتائج كقاعدة بيانات للحدث القادمة، مع البحوث التي تؤكد البيانات الشخصية، (المدخلات)؛ وتوثيق الفوائد الاجتماعية والشخصية؛ وأثبتت صحة الاغراض الموضحة؛ واكتشاف قيم الجنس؛ وملاحظة التوازن الدقيق بين التنافس الودى والقيم الثقافية المشتركة، واتمام كل ذلك بأحتفال الشتاء، وأشارت نتائج 548 مسح أن المدربين لهم تأثير على المشاركين بدرجة كبيرة، كما تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام التحليل العاملى لمعرفة الفوائد الاجتماعية عن طريق الاختلافات المتكررة من أجل الحصول على العوامل الخمس والتي ذكرها وتأكد نتائج هذه العوامل اهداف اصولية وضعتها لجنة (AWG) ومجالس رياضية سابقة فى كندا.

## Abstract

Now in its third decade of successful operation, the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) constitute culmination of sport, culture, national/regional identity, individual and collective growth, and benefits of sport and cultural performances. These biennial events, involving a number of countries, have many benefits. This article reported findings of the first attempt to address systematically and confirm social benefits of these games. Findings can serve as baseline data for forthcoming events with research emphasizing personal input; documenting personal, social, and community benefits; validating stated purposes; segmenting gender values; observing the subtle balance between friendly competition and shared cultural values; and capping them with a celebration of winter. Findings from 548 surveys (M=59.2%, F=40.8%) indicated peers and coaches influenced participants the most to take part. Data were analyzed using factor analyses of social benefits via varimax rotation to derive the five factors reported—positive personal experiences, socialization and cultural awareness, enhanced self-esteem and growth in personal outlook, providing healthy opportunities for youth, and sense of belonging and strengthening community ties. These factor loadings confirmed original goals established by the AWG committee and previous sport councils in Canada.

## Résumé

Maintenant dans leur troisième décennie d'opération, les «Arctic Winter Games (AWG)» constituent une mosaïque de sport, de culture, d'identité nationale/régionale, de croissance individuelle et collective et de bénéfiques au niveau des préférences sportives et culturelles. Ces événements bi-annuels impliquant plusieurs pays amènent plusieurs bienfaits. Cet article constitue un des premiers essais d'étude systématique visant à confirmer les bienfaits sociaux de ces jeux. Les résultats peuvent agir de base pour les événements à venir, fournissant des données portant sur l'investissement personnel, la documentation de bénéfices personnels, sociaux et communautaires, la validation d'objectifs proposés, la segmentation des différences entre les sexes, ainsi que l'observation et l'étude de la relation entre l'équilibre subtil existant au niveau de la compétition amicale et des valeurs culturelles partagées, le tout dans un contexte de célébration de l'hiver. Les résultats de 548 questionnaires indiquent que les pairs et les entraîneurs sont les référents personnels les plus importants au niveau de l'influence des participants à prendre part ou non à ces jeux. Les données ont été analysées par l'analyse factorielle de bénéfices sociaux à partir de rotations de types varimax permettant ainsi de dériver les cinq facteurs rapportés. Ces facteurs confirment les buts initiaux établis par le comité des (AWG) et des différents Conseils des sports du Canada dans le passé.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Arktischen Winterspiele (AWG), inzwischen im dritten Jahrzehnt ihres erfolgreichen Bestehens, sind eine Kulmination aus Sport, Kultur, nationaler und regionaler Identität, individuellen und kollektiven Wachstums sowie positiven Auswirkungen von sportlichen und kulturellen

Ereignissen. Diese zweijährig durchgeführten Spiele, an denen eine Reihe von Ländern teilnehmen, haben viele positive Auswirkungen. Der Artikel berichtet über die Ergebnisse des ersten Versuchs, die positiven sozialen Auswirkungen der Spiele systematisch zu untersuchen. Die Ergebnisse können als Ausgangsdaten für zukünftige Spiele dienen. Die Forschung betont die folgenden Aspekte: Persönlichen Einfluss; die Dokumentation von positiven Auswirkungen im persönlichen, sozialen und Gemeindebereich; die Validierung der geäußerten Ziele; unterschiedliche Wertvorstellungen von Männern und Frauen; die feine Balance zwischen freudlichem Wettbewerb und geteilten kulturellen Werten; die Zelebrierung des Winter. Die Ergebnisse von 548 Fragebögen zeigten, dass Peers sowie Trainer den größten Einfluss auf die Teilnehmer ausübten. Eine Faktorenanalyse mit Varimax Rotation ergab die ersten fünf der beschriebenen Faktoren. Die Faktorenladungen bestätigten die Ziele, die ursprünglich von der AWG-Arbeitsgruppe sowie vorherigen Sportkomitees in Kanada entwickelt wurden.

## Resumen

Los Juegos Articos de Invierno (Arctic Winter Games; AWG en sus siglas en inglés) se encuentran en su tercera década de operación exitosa. Constituyen una cumbre de deporte, cultura, identidad nacional y regional, crecimiento individual y colectivo, y beneficios de actuaciones deportivas y culturales. Estos eventos bienales incluyen varios países y ofrecen muchos beneficios. Este artículo informa sobre el primer intento de analizar sistemáticamente y confirmar los beneficios sociales de estos juegos. Los resultados pueden servir de datos de línea de base para hacer comparaciones en los eventos futuros. La investigación enfatiza la información personal; documenta beneficios personales, sociales y para la comunidad; valida los propósitos declarados; distingue entre los valores de hombres y mujeres; observa el equilibrio sutil entre competencia amistosa y valores culturales compartidos; y relaciona todo con una celebración de invierno. Los resultados de 548 cuestionarios indicaron que eran los compañeros y entrenadores quienes influyeron más a los participantes a tomar parte. Los datos fueron analizados con el empleo del análisis de factores de beneficios sociales por medio de la rotación varimax para derivar cinco factores. El uso de estos factores confirmó las metas establecidas por el Comité de los AWG y por previos Consejos del Deporte en Canadá.



## Arctic Winter Games

# ARCTIC WINTER GAMES:

## A STUDY OF BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

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### History and Purpose

**W**inter and individual participation is more about taking action on dreams, rather than standing and shivering (Rosenthal & Gleib, 1984). Sport in the north took a change for the better some 33 years ago when two visionaries, Stuart Hodgson and James Smith, then Commissioners of Canada's Northwest Territories (NWT) and Yukon, recognized need for unique northern competitions among youth of the north. Two years later (1970), government officials from Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Federal Members of Parliament (Canada) worked together to host the first *Arctic Winter Games (AWG)*. Contingents from Northern Alberta, Greenland, and the Russian Provinces of Magadan and Tyumen now participate in the games. Success over the years has in large part been due to the clear, specific, and importance of the mission and goals of the games.

The games are held biennially during the month of March. In preparation for the games, the NWT hosts regional trials, and then territorial trials to determine composition of the team.

The biennially games include 18 different sports. There are 3 categories of sports included in the games—[1] *sports with wide participation* (e.g., hockey, volleyball, cross country skiing), [2] *traditional northern sports* (Arctic sports which include Inuit and Dene Games, Inuit Wrestling, snow shoe-

ing and Dog Mushing), and [3] *emerging/potential sports*.

The International Committee promotes the following mission (role/purpose) for the games—*athletic competition, cultural exhibition, and social inter-change*.

In support of this three part mission, the governing body, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee [AWGIC] promotes the following values—*cultural awareness and understanding fair play, access and equity integrity, respect for others and self, partnerships, personal development, and community development*. These values, taken in their entirety, constitute rationale and basis for extensive support from federal, provincial/territorial/state and local governments, as well as corporate sponsors and non-government organizations.

### Study Objectives and Primary Research Emphases

**W**ithin the 28 year written history of the games, this study provided the first comprehensive database concerning *personal, social, and community benefits* of participation in the Arctic Winter Games. The research focussed on—

- \* Documenting 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;

- \* *Validating the mission (role/purpose) and values established for the games.*
- \* Identifying personal and social benefits for male and female athletes.
- \* *Identifying and understanding cultural inter-change experiences of participants.*
- \* Documenting opportunities for community development.
- \* *Eliciting means through which confidence and pride are instilled.*
- \* Validating the notion of friendly competitions while sharing cultural values.
- \* *Estimating social impacts the games have on promoting circumpolar unity through cultural understanding.*
- \* Gathering personal input from athletes for future AWGIC uses.

The Arctic Winter Games provide opportunities for coaches to develop their competencies and promote values encompassing the games, such as fair play and good sportsmanship. These games promote gender equity by including both males and females in grouped competitions.

This 1998 study was the initial examination of personal, social, and community benefits of the games. This research included development of a useful questionnaire, and was limited to surveying only NWT participants, coaches, and volunteers.



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**Table 1. Factor 1 Loadings—Excitement, Challenges and Positive Personal Experiences**  
[N=548], Alpha = .9189

Items	Factor 1 Coefficients	Factor 2 Coefficients	Factor 3 Coefficients	Factor 4 Coefficients	Factor 5 Coefficients
An opportunity to enjoy sports	.77	.17	.04	.25	.27
A chance to meet new people	.75	.23	.02	.11	.15
To have fun	.70	.25	.01	.12	.05
Provides experiences I can tell friends about later	.69	.11	.26	.09	.14
Brings happy memories	.57	.19	.33	.27	.06
Provides me with a physical challenge	.56	.10	.21	.31	.34
A chance to compete with others	.56	.09	.20	.19	.35
A chance for adventure and excitement	.55	.15	.40	.24	.21
Keeps me healthy	.52	.12	.37	.09	.17
See other communities/places	.52	.23	.28	.09	.09
See and do new things	.50	.18	.35	.39	.01
Gives me opportunities to perform and compete	.47	.35	.01	.18	.28
Helps me respect self for doing these things	.47	.29	.40	.31	.04

## Study Methodology

The researchers met with representatives from the government of the Northwest Territories and Sport North for a weeklong workshop on survey development and research methods. Using nominal group techniques, the researchers helped the team develop its own research instrument, and field-tested the draft questionnaire. Published papers on nature and scope of benefits to recreation and sport participation were also integrated into development of the questionnaire (Driver, Tinsley, and Manfredo, 1991; Wankel and Berger, 1991; Allen, 1991). Further testing and modifications were completed during and after regional trials in the NWT.

The following AWGIC goals were used as a means to organize the questionnaire content and headings—(1) **athletic competition**—“To involve as many athletes as possible either in the games themselves or in regional and territorial trials, and provide a forum of northern sport competitions for those other than elite athletes with competitive opportunities in the south.” (2) **Cultural exhibition and social interchange**—“To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, and get different groups to-

gether. To develop, amongst northern peoples, a geographic identity, and develop and maintain good relations.” (3) **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 testing the goals mentioned, a number of questions were developed to identify demographic characteristics of the population being studied, and to solicit further information on training and competition experiences. A team of staff from government and Sport North were also involved as researchers in the data collection process during regionals, territorial, and AWG's.

The research was completed in three phases leading up to the 1998 Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife, NWT.

- **Phase One.** A sample of participants who registered for the regional trials filled in surveys and returned them to a regional coordinator along with completed registration forms.

**Table 2. Factor 2 Loadings—Promotion of Socialization and Cultural Awareness** [N=548], Alpha=.9299

Items	Factor 1 Coefficients	Factor 2 Coefficients	Factor 3 Coefficients	Factor 4 Coefficients	Factor 5 Coefficients
Lets me interact with different cultures	.19	.76	.10	.24	.16
Provides for better understanding of cultures	.09	.75	.23	.19	.06
Allows me to enjoy cultural experiences	.22	.72	.29	.07	.05
Opportunity to find out something new about someone else	.20	.72	.06	.24	.14
Helps me to take pride in my culture	.30	.69	.33	.00	.07
To look up to others as good role models	.33	.61	.21	.30	.08
Helps me make new friends	.43	.61	.06	.23	.03
Helps me learn something new	.32	.56	.27	.23	.10
To be a role model for others	.14	.55	.12	.27	.30
Helps youth to act as role models for others in the community	.15	.53	.14	.41	.13
Develops pride in being from the North	.17	.53	.16	.32	.36
Involves all NWT communities	.08	.44	.40	.21	.05
To see emphasis placed on youth	.01	.40	.26	.21	.31



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**Table 3. Factor 3 Loadings—Enhanced Self-Esteem and Growth in Personal Outlook [N=548], Alpha=.8465**

Items	Factor 1 Coefficients	Factor 2 Coefficients	Factor 3 Coefficients	Factor 4 Coefficients	Factor 5 Coefficients
Makes me want to do better in school	.18	.19	.68	.01	.07
Helps me to understand myself better	.25	.15	.67	.13	.19
Helps me in my school work	.01	.14	.66	.07	.20
Brings family closer together	.11	.09	.62	.04	.37
Opportunity to enjoy nature	.22	.14	.60	.06	.09
Chance to get most out of life	.19	.26	.59	.17	.02
Allows me to be creative	.34	.12	.58	.07	.30
Provides escape from family pressure	.05	.09	.54	.15	.17

- **Phase Two.** A sample of participants at the territorial trials filled in surveys related to personal involvement.
- **Phase Three.** Involved surveying a sample of participants who competed in the 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 competitions, cultural and social interchanges, spirit of fair play, and training*. Questions also addressed *being northern, northern sports, and how the games related to uniqueness of the north*. The survey also contained personal data questions and areas where respondents could add qualitative information. In addition, several case studies and interviews, and two 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 total sample, nearly 80% of the male respondents were athletes, while 77.9% of respondents were female athletes. Respondents indicated 73% had participated in previous regional, territorial, or AWGs in the past, while 25% indicated this was their first year of competition. Ethnic backgrounds for athletes consisted of 1.6% Inuvialuit, 10% Dene, 7.4% Metis, 17.4% Inuit, 53.2% Non Aboriginal, while 10.5% provided no answers. Athletes indicated those who motivated them to become involved in the games were (respondents could check more than one category)

friends (51.3%), coaches (42.6%), other athletes and participants (42%), parents and relatives (36%), recreation leaders (16%), and teachers (14%). Approximately 9% indicated they became involved due to their own initiatives.

### Findings and Conclusions

This article reported on personal and social benefits to participation in the Arctic Games. Of interest were ways in which benefit statements were organized (structured) via responses from the athletes. Therefore, data were analyzed using factor analysis (principal component) with varimax rotation. Five factor structures were observed (eigenvalues over 1) which explained 55.8% of the variance.

**Table 4. Factor 4 Loadings—Providing Healthy, Challenging and Competitive Opportunities for Youth [N=548], Alpha=.8446**

Items	Factor 1 Coefficients	Factor 2 Coefficients	Factor 3 Coefficients	Factor 4 Coefficients	Factor 5 Coefficients
Helps youth develop skills and abilities	.26	.25	.07	.74	.08
Allows youth to be competitive	.15	.19	.06	.65	.32
Keeps youth physically fit	.09	.15	.10	.64	.08
Gets youth involved with other kids in sports	.18	.26	.13	.63	.17
Helps me to improve	.44	.01	.14	.58	.15
Helps youth to overcome anxiety of competition	.14	.24	.32	.57	.07
Challenges youth in sport	.27	.21	.01	.55	.14
Lets youth learn more about sports	.15	.37	.12	.48	.07
Gives youth control over free time	.08	.17	.28	.41	.18

**Factor one** (13 items, eigenvalue = 17.14, alpha = .9189) was titled *positive personal experiences and benefits*. This dimension contained items reflecting participant ability to enjoy sports and competitions, meet new people, benefit from good health through training, and experience adventure.

**Factor two** (13 items, eigenvalue = 3.33, alpha = .9299) was titled *socialization and cultural awareness*. This dimension represented participant appreciation and understanding of different cultures from actual experiences, and joy coming from the many and varied interactions.

**Factor three** (8 items, eigenvalue = 2.70, alpha = .8465) was entitled *enhanced self esteem and growth in personal outlook*. This dimension contained items representing participant perceptions of self, and improvement through diverse sport and cultural experiences.

**Factor four** (10 items, eigenvalue = 7.92, alpha = .8446) was titled *providing healthy opportunities for youth*. This dimension represented participant development of skills, improvement of fitness levels, and understanding of the sport in the competitive environment.



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**Table 5. Factor 5 Loadings—Sense of Belonging and Strengthening of Community Ties [N=548], Alpha=.8334**

Items	Factor 1 Coefficients	Factor 2 Coefficients	Factor 3 Coefficients	Factor 4 Coefficients	Factor 5 Coefficients
Brings my community closer together	.24	.23	.34	.05	<b>.66</b>
Brings attention to the Northwestern Territories	.37	.12	.16	.22	<b>.65</b>
Builds excitement and involvement of the people in my community	.10	.29	.01	.38	<b>.58</b>
Brings me attention from other people	.29	.02	.39	.14	<b>.48</b>
Encourages communities to support athletes who are involved	.09	.37	.06	.46	<b>.47</b>

**Factor five** (4 items, eigenvalue = 1.67, alpha = .8334) was titled *sense of belonging and strengthening of community ties*. This dimension represented respondent awareness and appreciation of the community and the place within the community.

### Conclusions and Discussion

Analyses of data (factor structure) confirmed the original goals set out by the Arctic Winter Games Committee. AWGs appeared to be the embodiment of *athlete-centered sport* where participants were "... the active subject, not the object of, sporting programs ..." (Clark, H., et al, 1994). Issues which established these separate and unique Arctic Winter Games grew out of the primary dilemma still central in sport in the north during this decade—"...equity and access..." (Kirby, S. & J. Sutcliffe, 1994). Importantly, it appeared the spirit of play, competition, inclusion, development and understanding of other people were realized through participation in the games. Furthermore, there appeared to be significant community benefits related to the concept of community development, sense of community, and building healthy lifestyles" (Anon, A Planning Framework for Sport in Canada, 1994, pg. 8).

Importantly, data provided clear rationale for generating government, corporate, and non-government sector support for AWGs. In addition, there appeared to be very strong linkages to need for community programs to support these young people, prior to, during, and after competitions. These programs are related to community devel-

opment and social service issues, as well as recreation and sport programs. Findings also correlated with findings of the Sport North report, **The Benefits of Sport in the Northwest Territories**. Specifically, sport participation (training and competition) was of great and lasting value in the lives of Northwest Territories youth.

In addition to participation, study findings supported personal benefits (child development), social and cultural benefits (leadership and reduced anti-social behaviors), economic benefits (varied health improvements and contributions of volunteers), and environmental benefits (value of sport and open space). In short findings of this study corroborated the Executive Summary quote, "*Sport is not an option. It is an essential part of our lives. It is an integral part of the social, spiritual and mental fabric of our society*" (Anon).

Confirmation of the nature and structure of these personal and community benefits provided the Arctic Winter Games International Committee an opportunity to develop appropriate training programs, coaching programs, and athletic events tailored to local athletes. Furthermore, documentation of these benefits provided the AWGIC ability to promote and fund raise for these important youth programs in the North—in search of *Winter's Essence* (Nicolson, A., 1984). Further research, using the same questionnaires and applied to participants, volunteers, and officials (coaches and community leaders) is planned.

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