

Arctic Winter Games

2014

Fairbanks, Alaska, United States



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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, the Sapmi people of Northern Scandinavia and the Russian Province of Yamal now participate 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 biennially usually during the month of March. Prior to the start of the Games, participating contingents will determine which athletes will be participating on their representative teams at the Games. Several teams have a selection process which is used to determine the composition of their teams for the Games. This process is conducted by holding regional trials and then territorial trials. The regional trials are normally held in November/December while the territorial trials are held in January, preceding the actual games.

Introduction

The AWG is designed to include the promotion of 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 (Inuit games, Dene games, snowshoeing, dog mushing, Inuit wrestling), and emerging/potential sports. Overall, in 2014 there were more than 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 for the Arctic Winter Games promotes the following mission (role/purpose) in the Games:

- **Athletic Competition**: “To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games themselves or in the team trials - and to provide a forum of 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 of youth, 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.”

Introduction

In support of this three part mission; the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) promotes the following values of:

Cultural diversity awareness and understanding

Fair play

Access and equity

Integrity

Respect for self and others

Partnerships

Personal development

Community enhancement

In support of this three-part mission, the Arctic Winter Game supports the development of competent certified coaches who play a key role in promoting these values and operating principles.

The games allow both male and female participants to improve their skills and develop personal values and traits that enhance their self-esteem and thus their ability to have success in other aspects of their lives.

Introduction

Overall, the findings of this study are very encouraging and give a strong rationale for the continued development, advancement, and support for the Arctic Winter Games. The results have been consistent with the aforementioned mission and values of the Games as established by the International Committee. This study is the fourth initial examination of the personal, social and community benefits of the Games. This research focused on the use of a questionnaire developed and tested in the 1998 Arctic Winter Games. Since then, this survey has been revised and updated on several occasions.

Importantly, the data is conclusive and provides a clear rationale for generating non-governmental organization (NGO), government and private support for future Arctic Winter Games. The Games do not take place in a vacuum. There appears to be very strong linkages to the need for community programs to support these young people 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.

History

Background to the Study of Personal and Social Benefits

In 1969 three visionaries, Stuart Hodgson and James Smith, then Commissioners of Canada's Northwest Territories and Yukon, and Governor Wally Hickel of Alaska recognized the need for unique northern competitions and cultural exchanges amongst the youth of the north. One year later (1970), government officials from Yukon, Northwest Territories, Federal Members of the Canadian Parliament, and Alaska worked together to sponsor the first Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife, NT, taking place over roughly one week. Today, contingents from Greenland, Sapmi of northern Scandinavia, and the Russian Province of Yamalia, and now participate 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 restricted to youth of the circumpolar region of the arctic. The success of the Arctic Winter Games over the years has in large part been due to the clarity, specificity, and importance of the mission and goals of the games.

History

The Games are held biennially during the month of March, switching to a new location each time the Games are held. The various participating contingents prepare for the Games often times in their own ways. For example, several teams will hold regional trials and then final territorial trials in order to determine the composition of their Arctic Winter Games team, whereas other regions may not hold any sort of qualifying events for the Games. The opportunity to compete in the Games means that athletes come representing a wide range of communities. In the NWT alone, athletes in the regional, territorial and final Arctic Winter Games represent over 40 hamlets, towns, villages and communities. Most of the participants come from isolated communities. For the 2014 games, over 100 hamlets, towns, villages and communities from the arctic region were represented.

History

The Games are designed to promote traditional aboriginal games, sports and cultural activities based upon survival in the north. There are three categories of sports that are included in the Games: sports with wide participation (e.g. hockey, volleyball, soccer, cross country skiing), traditional northern sports (Arctic Sports which include Inuit and Dene games such as Alaskan high kick, wrestling), and emerging/potential sports (such as snowboarding, table tennis etc.). In the 2014 Arctic Winter Games in Fairbanks, Alaska, United States 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 Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) provides for 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. These values, taken in their entirety, constitute rationale and basis for extensive support from government, NGO's and businesses. Specifically, involvement in the Games does suggest that a number of important social, personal and community benefits are realized.

History

The findings of this study are very encouraging and show strong rationale for the continued development and advancement of the Games. The findings of our research 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 Arctic Winter Games as noted in the publication “Arctic Winter Games – The History and Organization.” As this study was the second examination of the personal, social and community benefits of the Games, this research focused on the continued use of a meaningful questionnaire and was distributed to all participants and a small number of coaches in attendance for the Fairbanks Alaska Arctic Winter Games. This study was expanded to include the participants from all of the contingents, whereas the initial study, which was conducted over a six-year study period, collected data only from the contingents that could speak English and were from the Northwest Territories. Participants, for which English was not their primary language, were still given the opportunity to answer and respond to the questionnaire.

History

Importantly, the data provides a clear rationale for generating NGO, government and private support for the Arctic Winter Games. In addition, there appears to be very strong linkages to the need for community programs to support these young people 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. Specifically, that sport participation (training and competition) is a major feature in the lives of young people from all of the participating contingents at the Arctic Winter Games.

AWG Goals

1. *Athletic Competition*: “To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games or in the trials, and to provide a forum of northern sport competition.”
2. *Cultural Exhibition & Social Interchange*: “To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, to get different groups together, to develop and maintain good relations amongst northern people.”
3. *Spirit of Fair Play*: “To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity.”



Primary Research Questions

1. What is the most exciting or important thing about being here for the Games?
2. How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?
3. In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

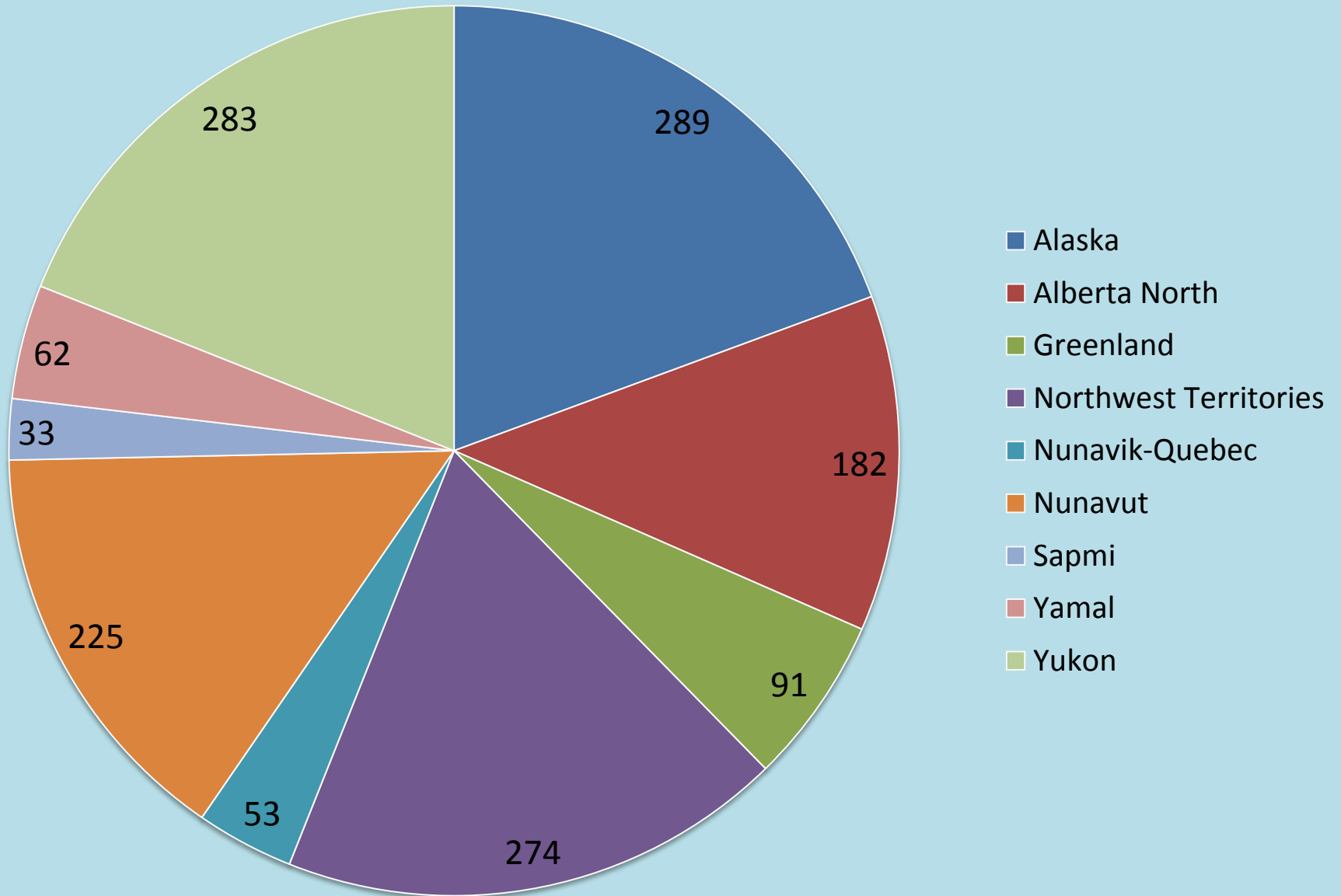
The results show that there were consistent answers among all athletes, regardless of what team they were representing. Athletes, coaches and spectators representing the northern people seems to have similar beliefs and values. The following pages show selected answers to the above three questions from athletes, coaches and spectators, sectioned by team affiliation.

Overview

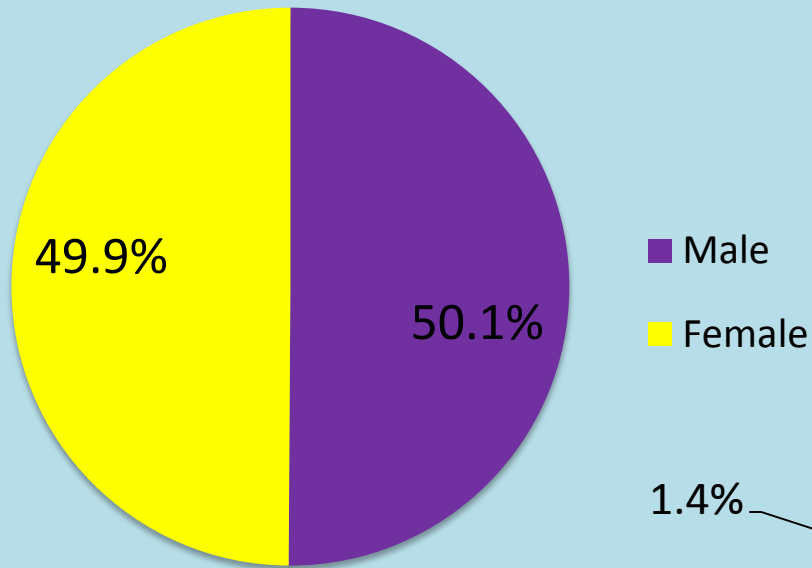
The 43rd bi-annual Arctic Winter Games were held in Fairbanks, Alaska, United States from Saturday, March 15, 2014 through Saturday, March 22, 2012. Participants from all over the Arctic North gathered in celebration of sport and community. Not only were athletic competitions held throughout the week, participants, coaches, and spectators were given the opportunity to be a part of cultural experiences from different regions. With almost 1,500 athlete participants, the Arctic Winter Games are becoming more popular among the people of the Arctic North.



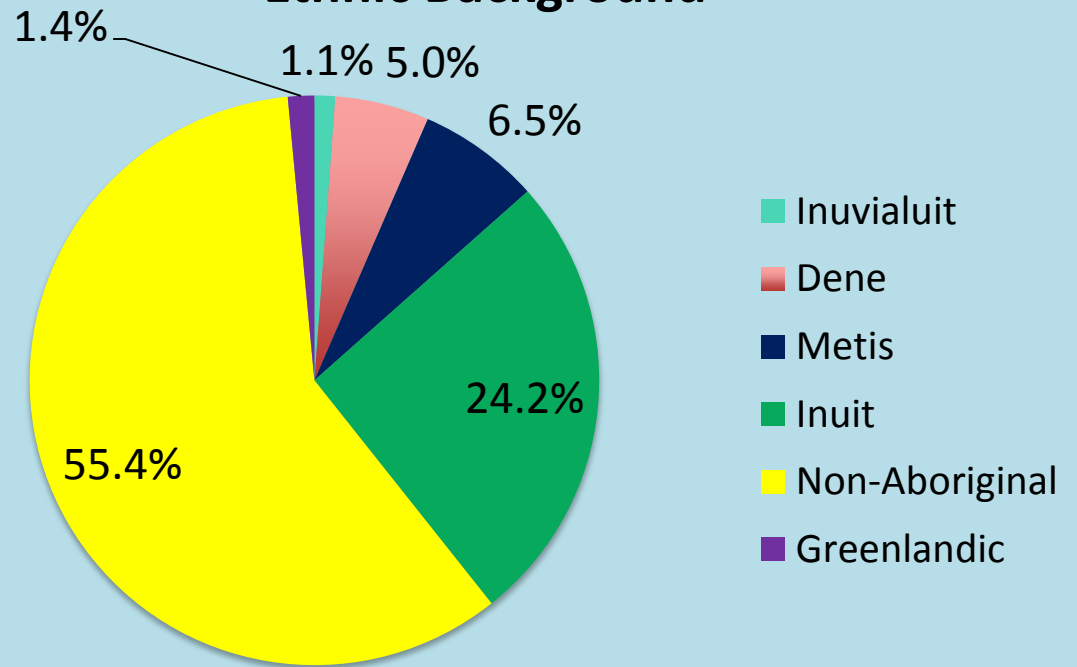
Number of Athlete Participants



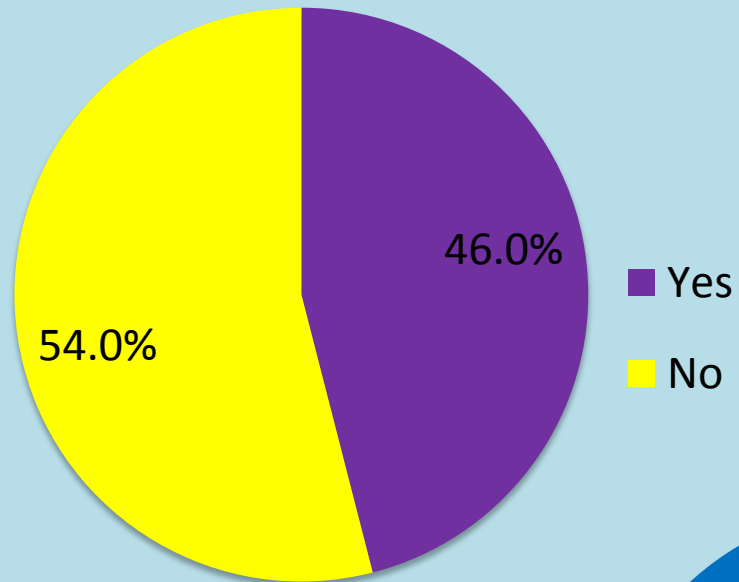
Gender



Ethnic Background



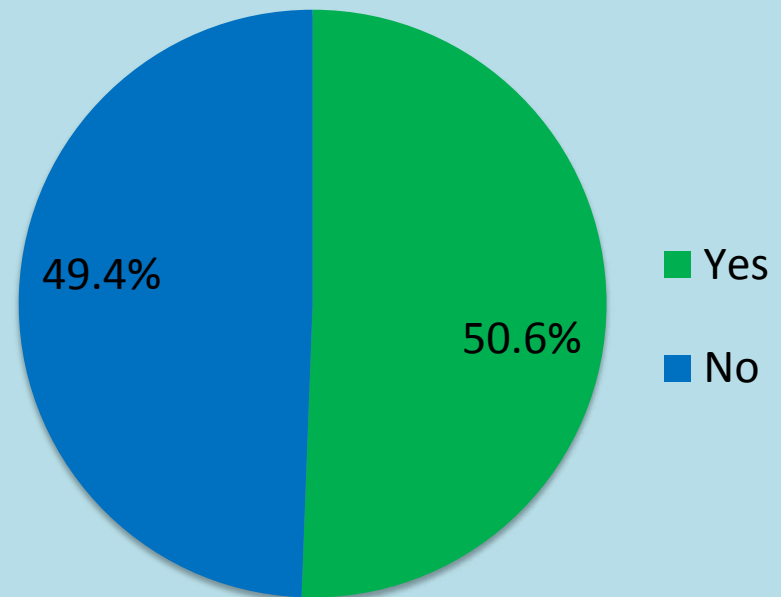
Parents or Relatives Participation as an Athlete in the Games



■ Yes

■ No

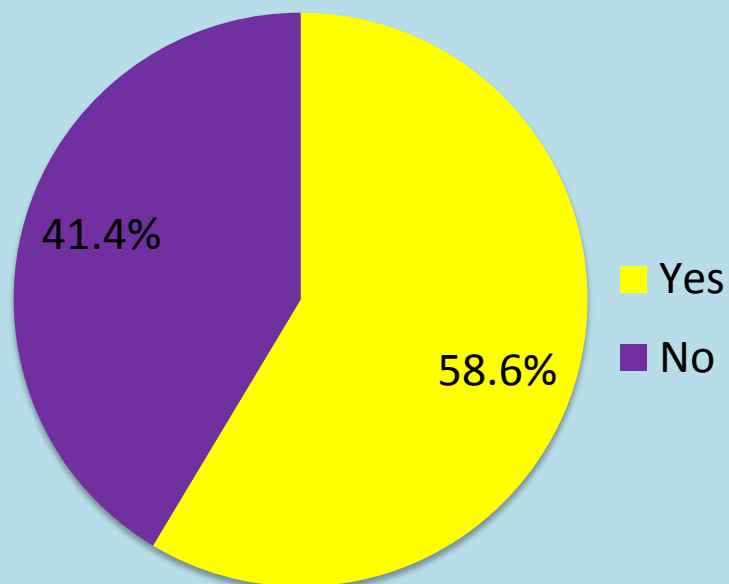
Participation in Past Arctic Winter Games



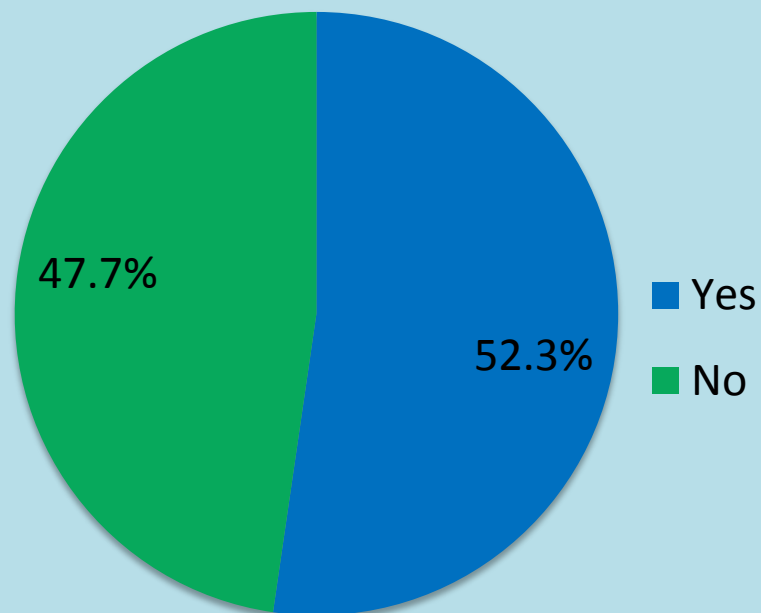
■ Yes

■ No

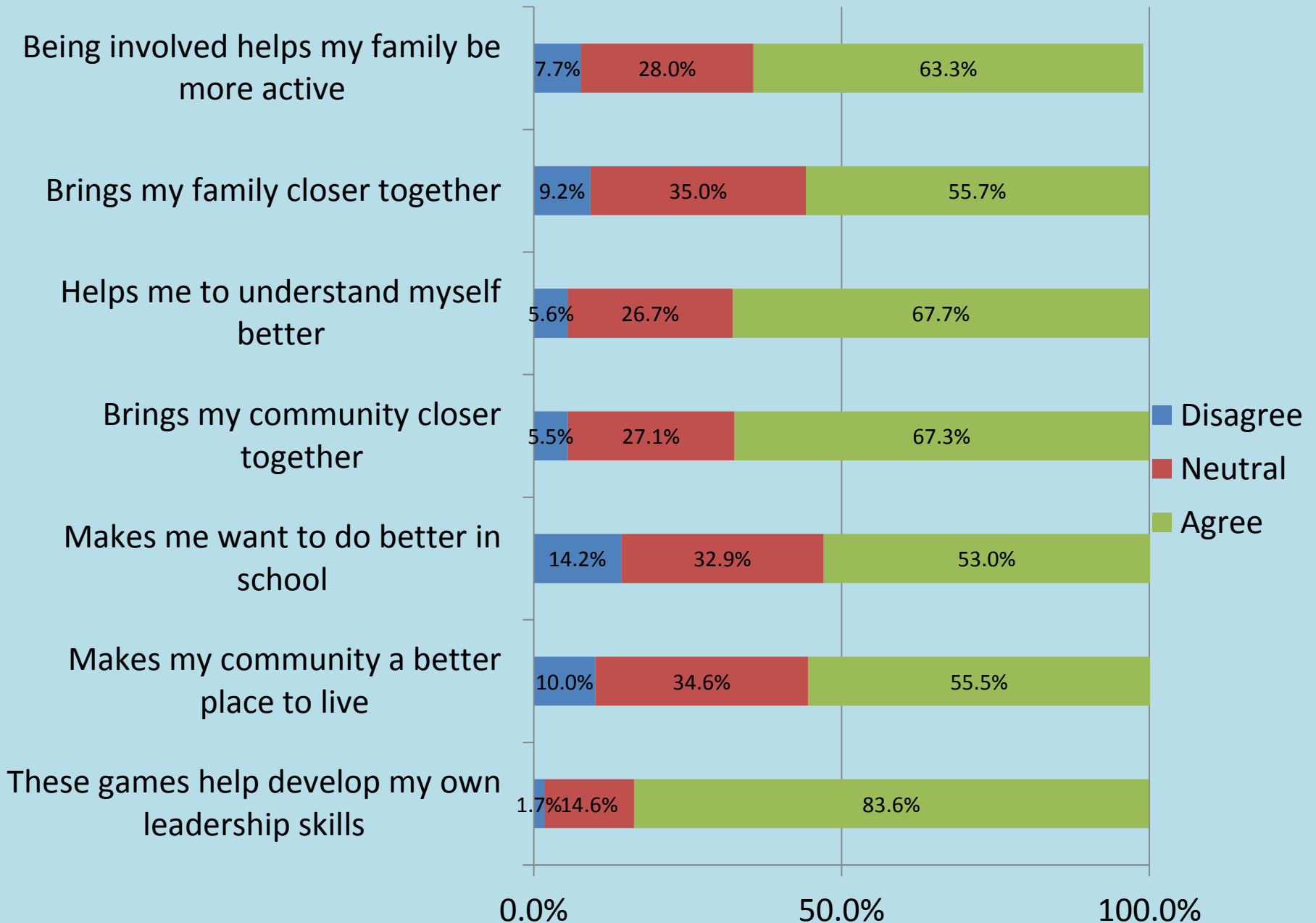
Percent Who Volunteer for Special or Community Events



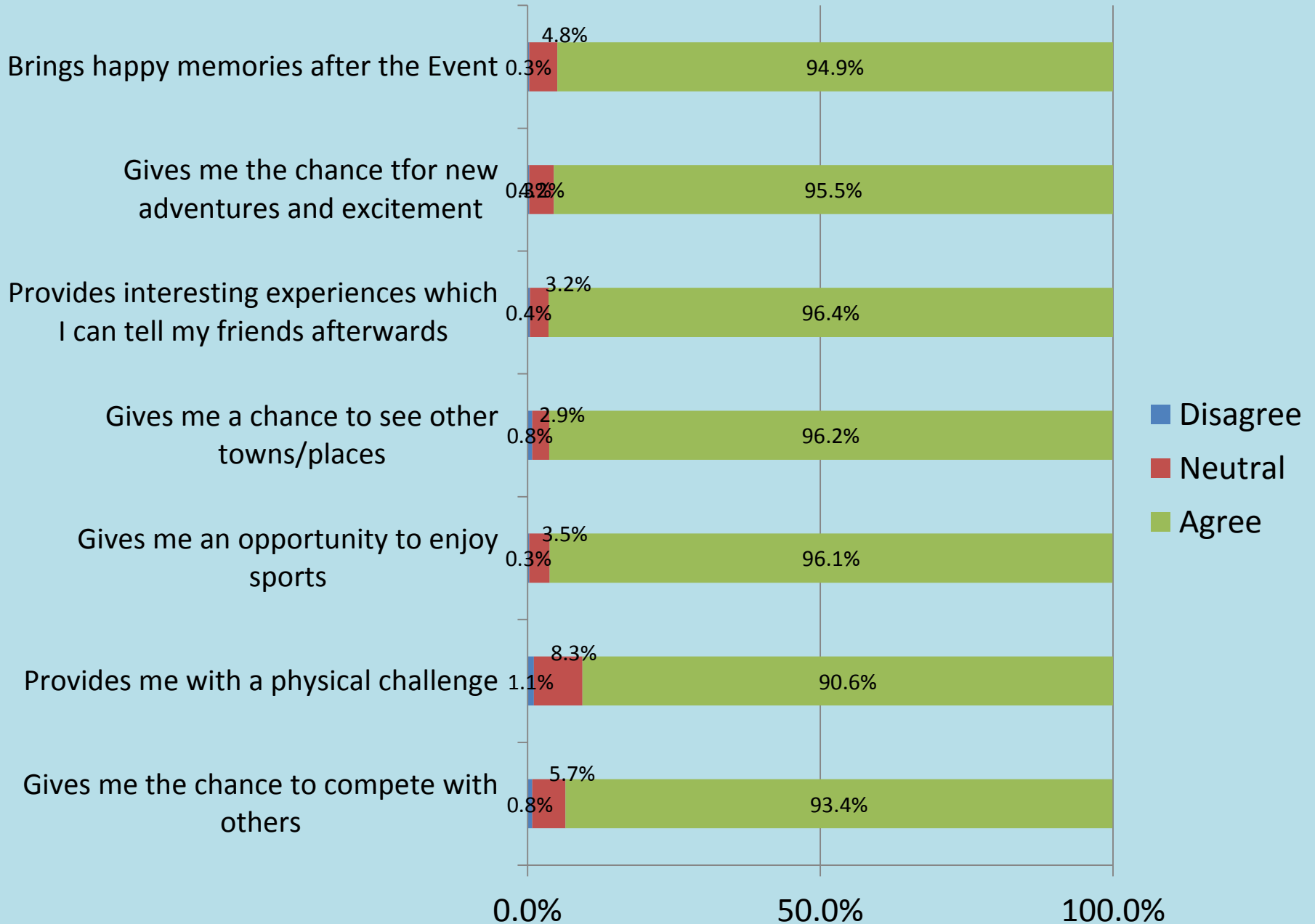
Involvement in these Games Helped Become a Volunteer



Community, Family, and Personal Benefits



New and Challenging Experiences



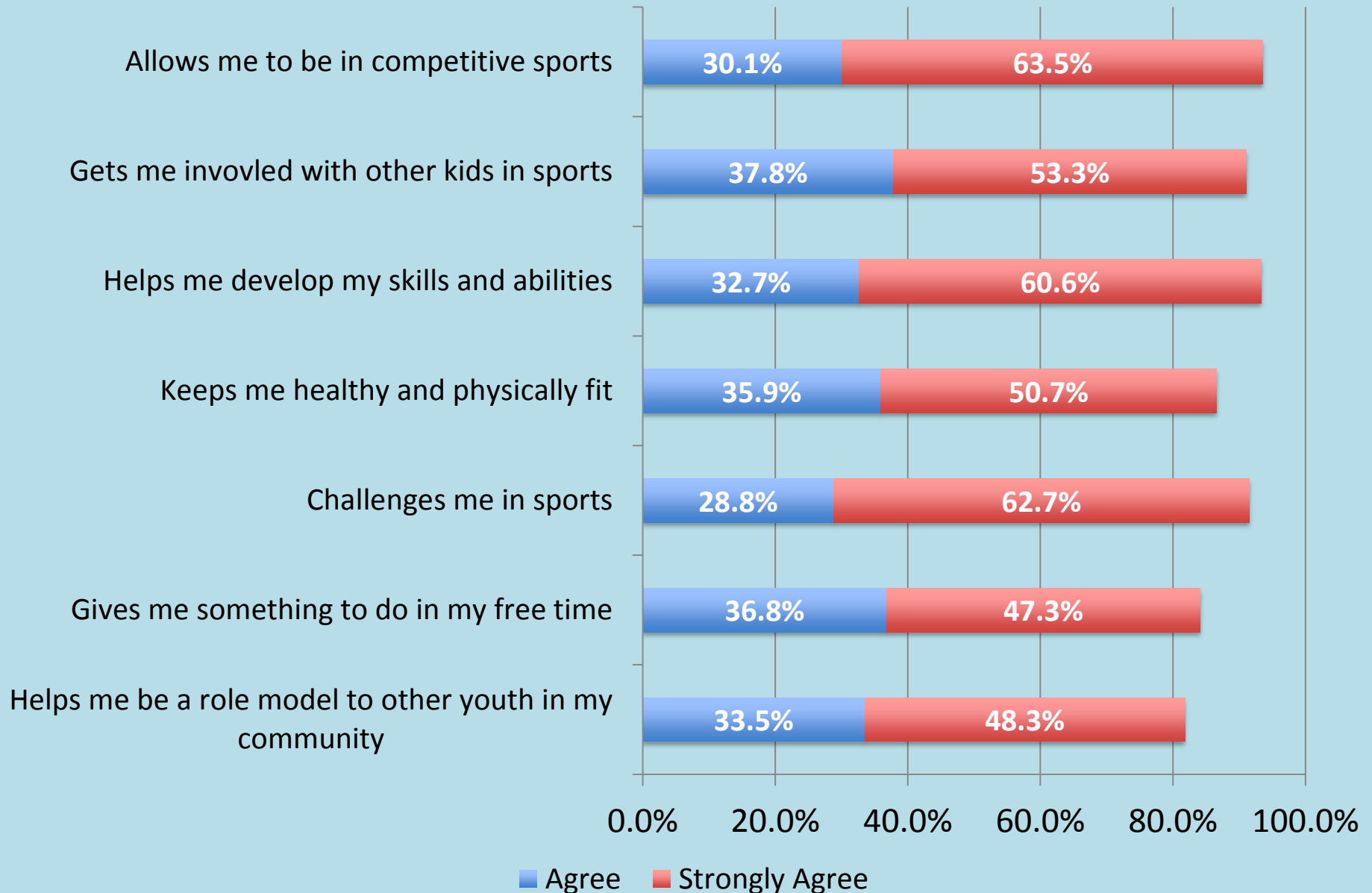
Overview

Throughout the week of the Arctic Winter Games, March 15 – March 22, 2014, participants and coaches were given a survey that collected information regarding their participation in the Games. As already noted, there were three main goals of the Arctic Winter Games:

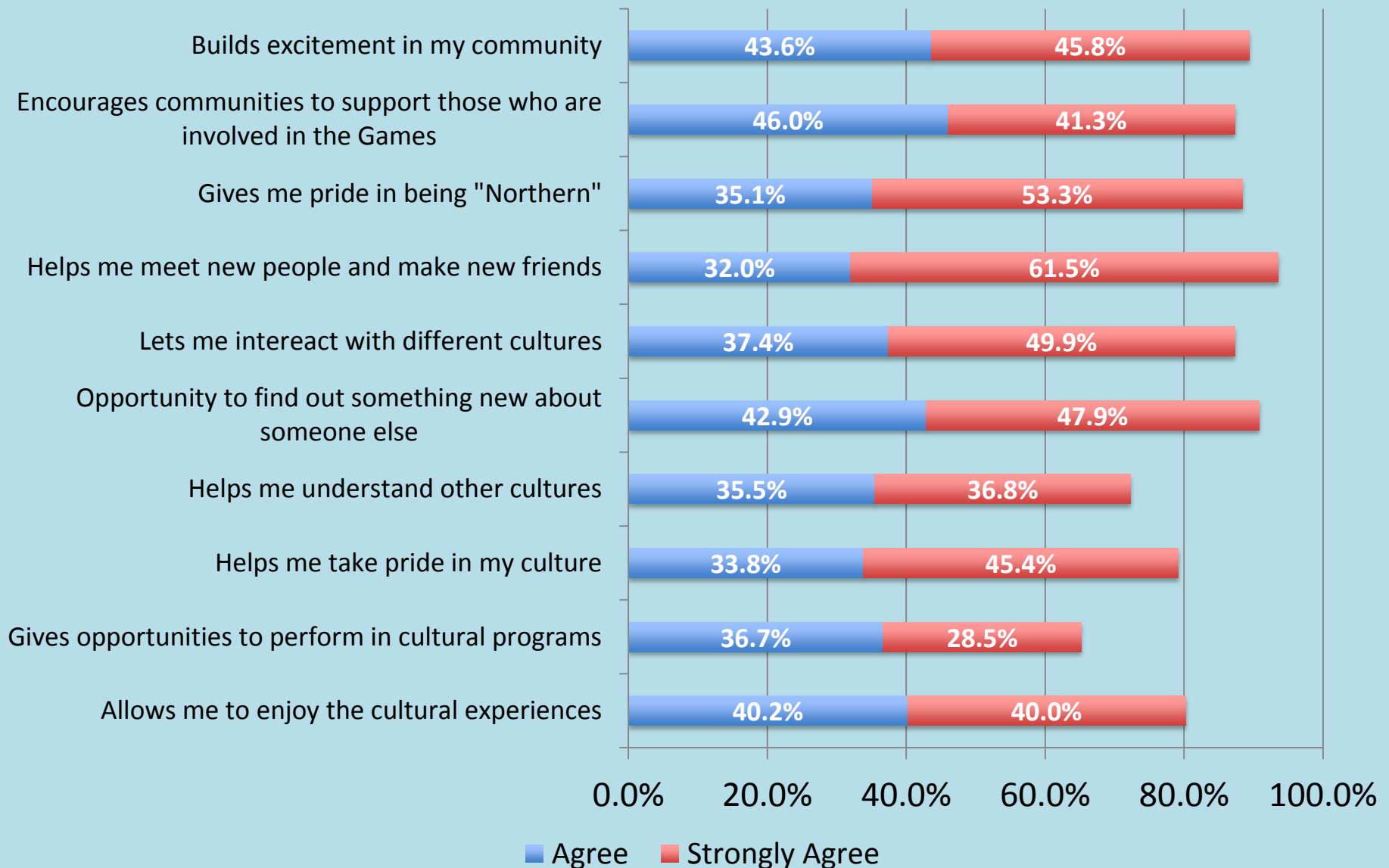
- **Athletic Competition**: “To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games themselves or in the team trials - and to provide a forum of competition for those other than elite athletes with competitive opportunities in the south.”
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The three goals were the basis for the questions on the survey. The four charts on the next three pages will visually show the percentage of participants and coaches to “agreed” and “strongly agreed” to each question.

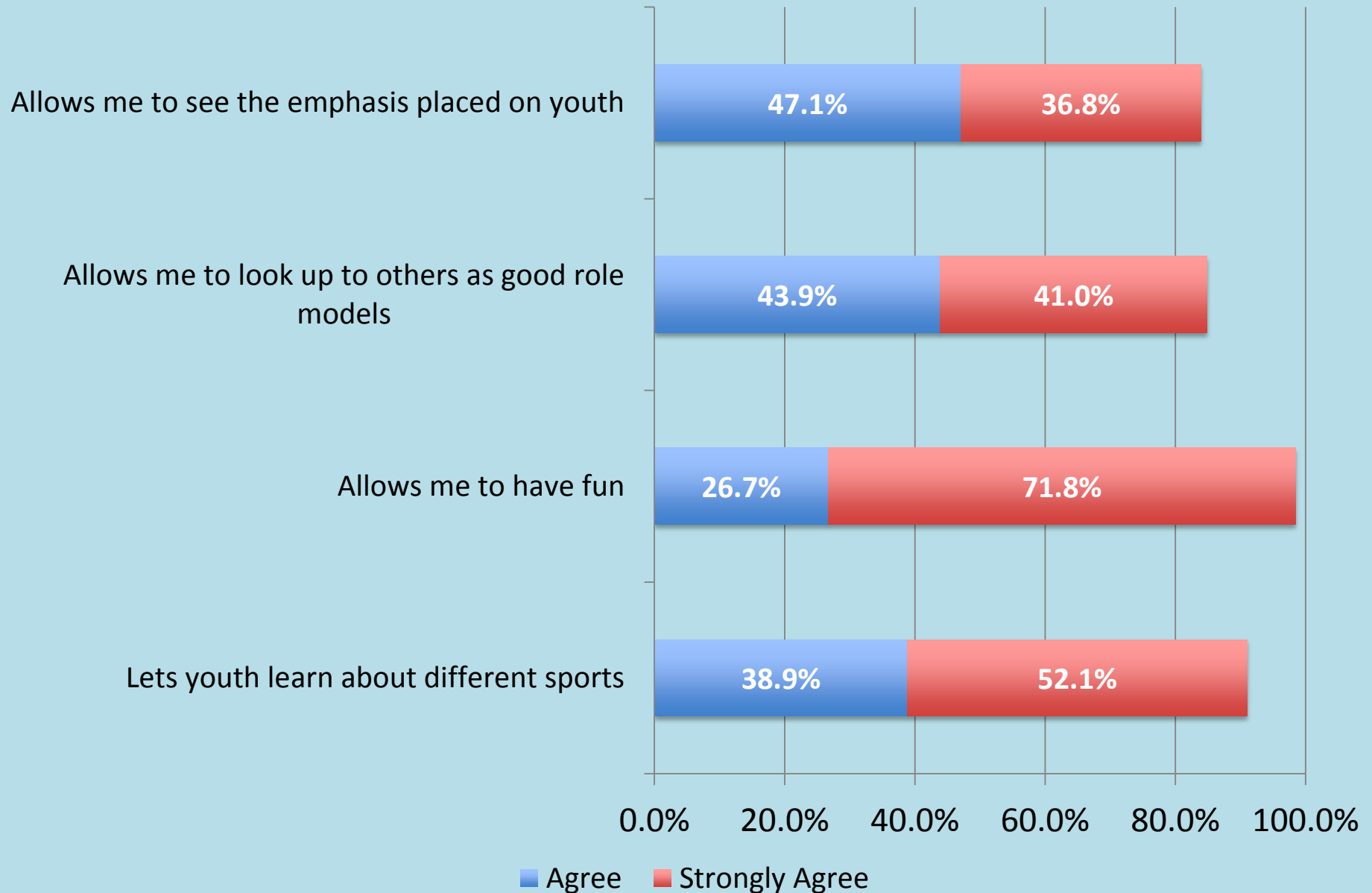
**Goal 1: To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games or in the trials,
and to provide a forum of northern sport competition:**



Goal 2: To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, to get different groups together, to develop and maintain good relations amongst northern people:



Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Alaska



Team Alaska was represented by **289** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Alaska is a permanent member and has been participating in the Games since 1970.

What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"I get the opportunity to meet new people from around the world, and I get to watch and learn from these others." - Athlete

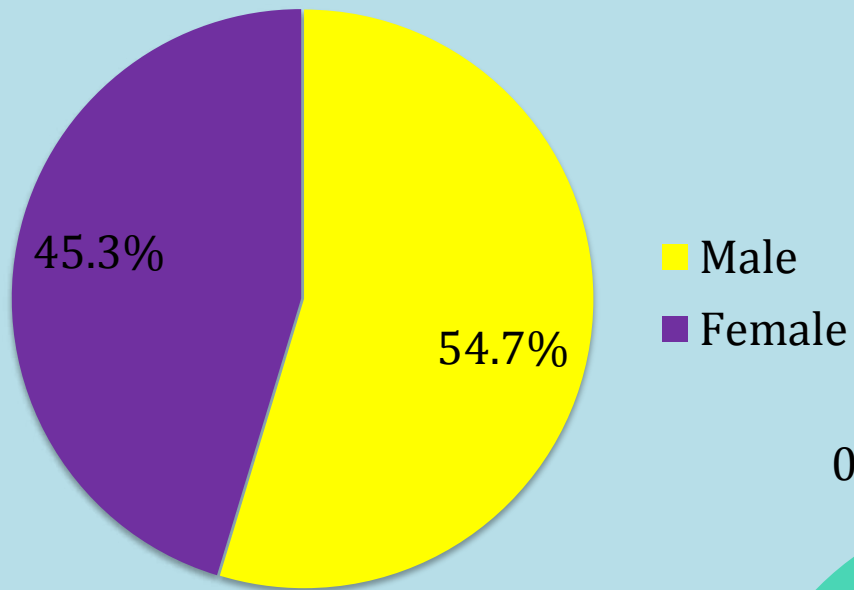
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

"This is the largest demonstration of community and respect through sport in the world." -Spectator

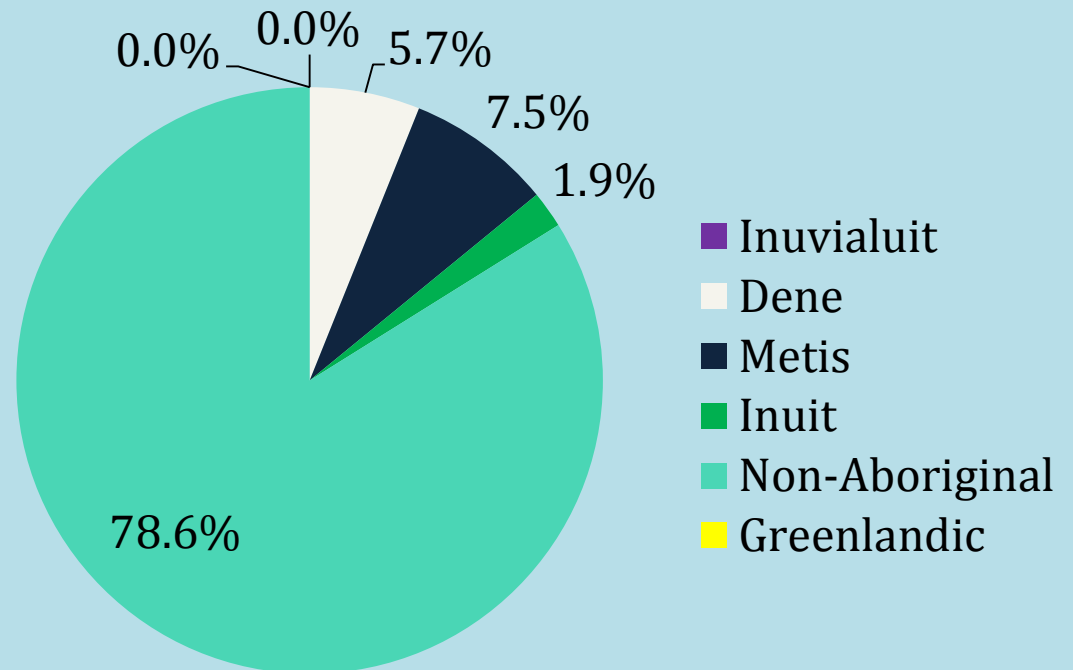
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

"Experience to remember for the rest of my life" - Athlete

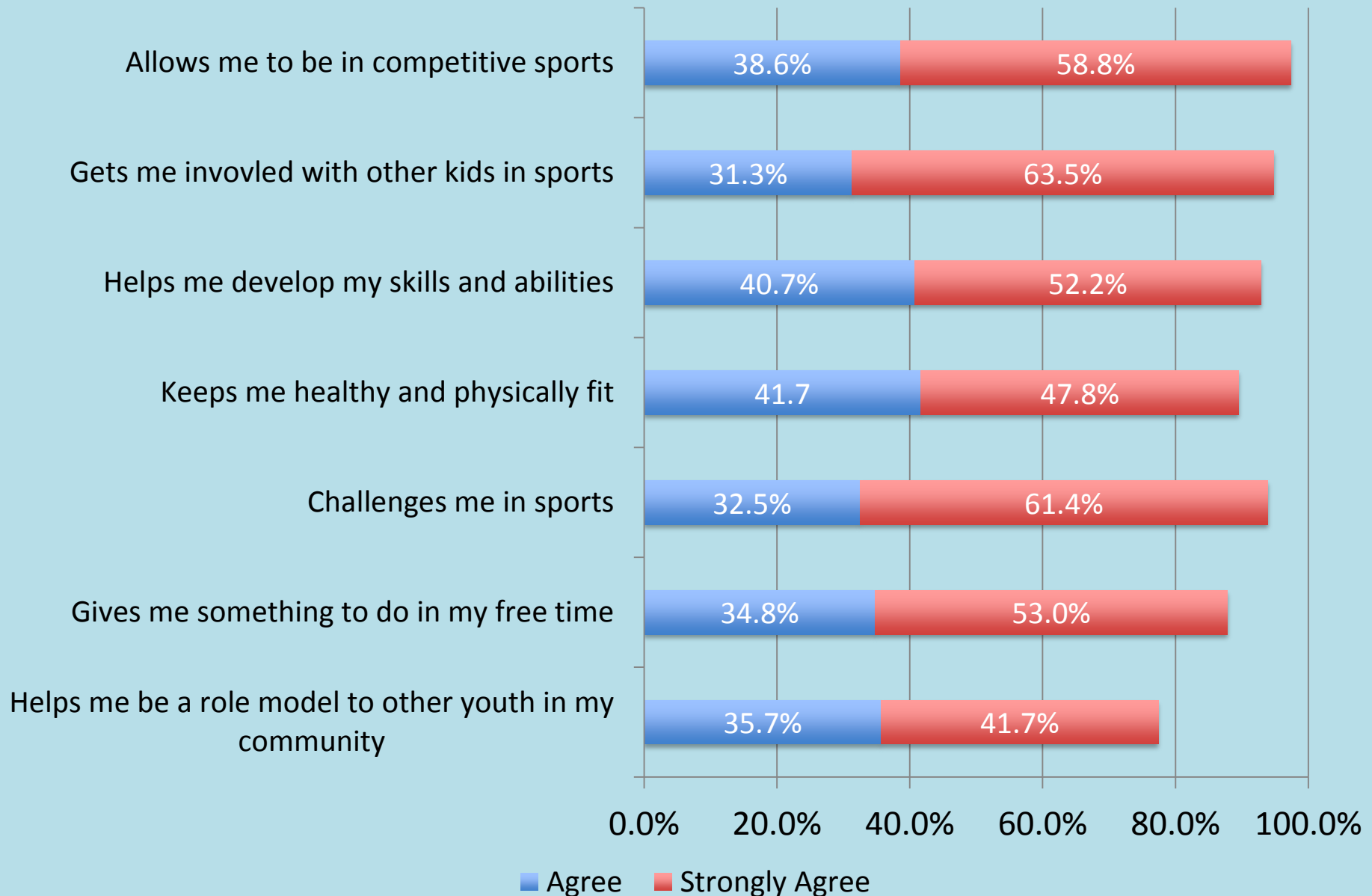
Gender



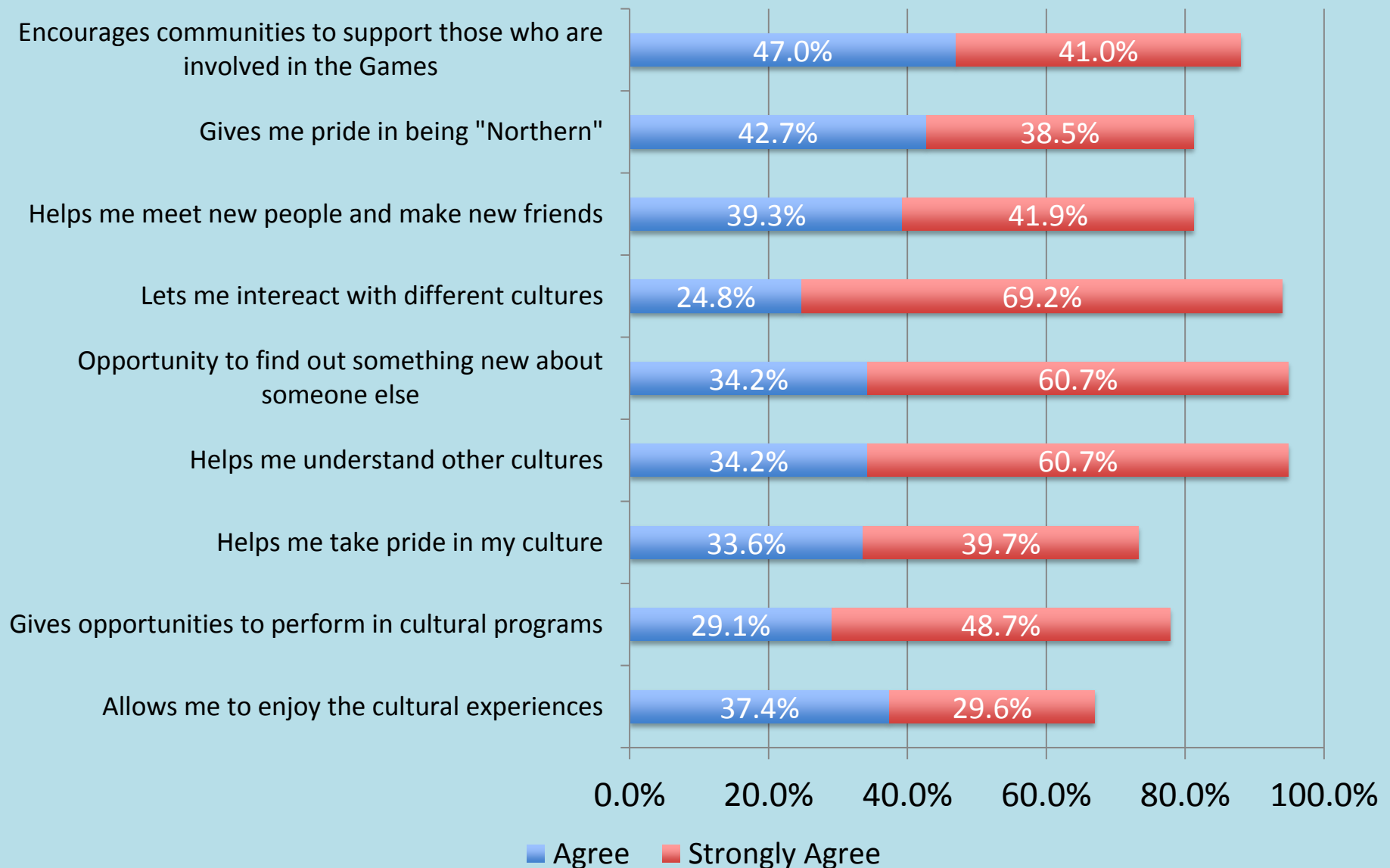
Ethnicity



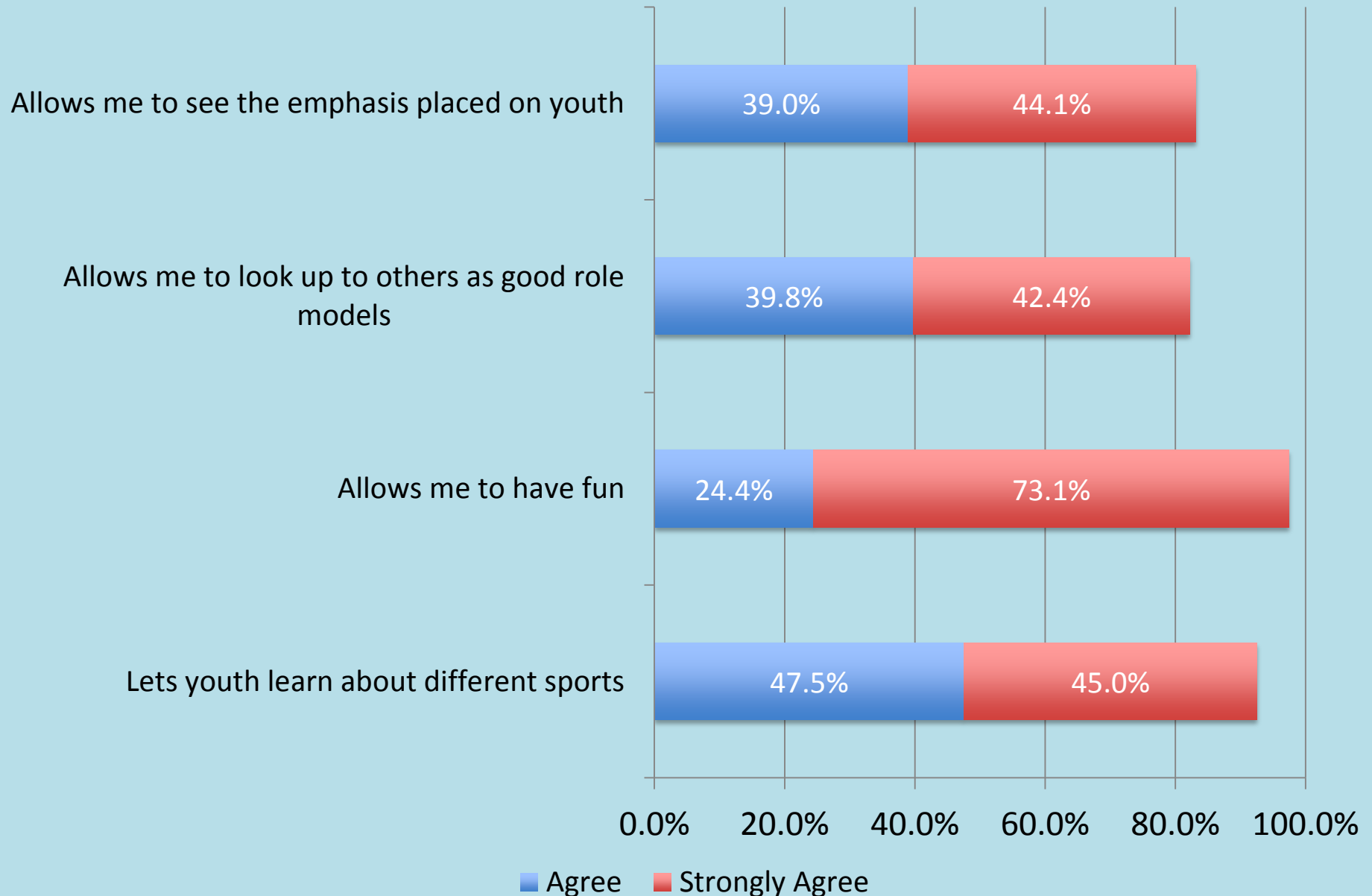
**Goal 1: To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games or in the trials,
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Goal 2: To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, to get different groups together, to develop and maintain good relations amongst northern people:



Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Alberta North

Team Alberta North was represented by **182** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Ever since the 1986 Arctic Winter Games, Alberta North has had a strong representative team.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

This is a week to remember, embrace the experience!- Athlete

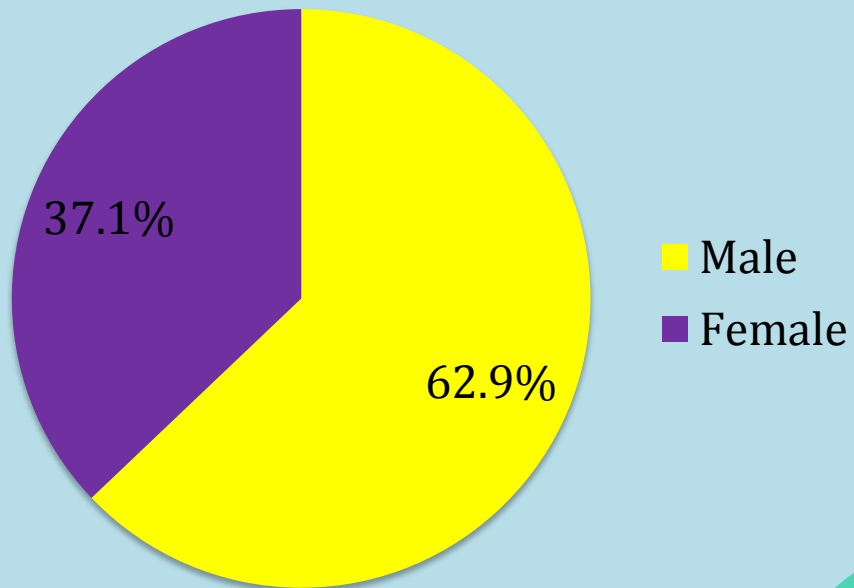
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

"The Arctic Winter Games provide a truly unique opportunity for athletes of the North to come together and bond."- Athlete

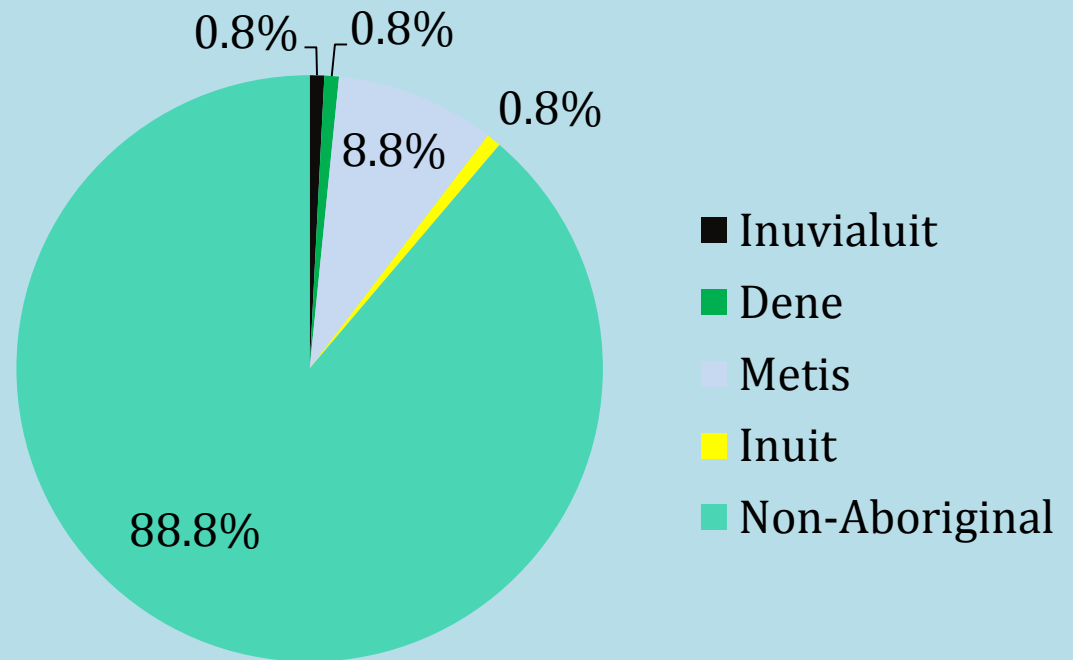
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

*"The Games encourage more connection between the world."
- Athlete*

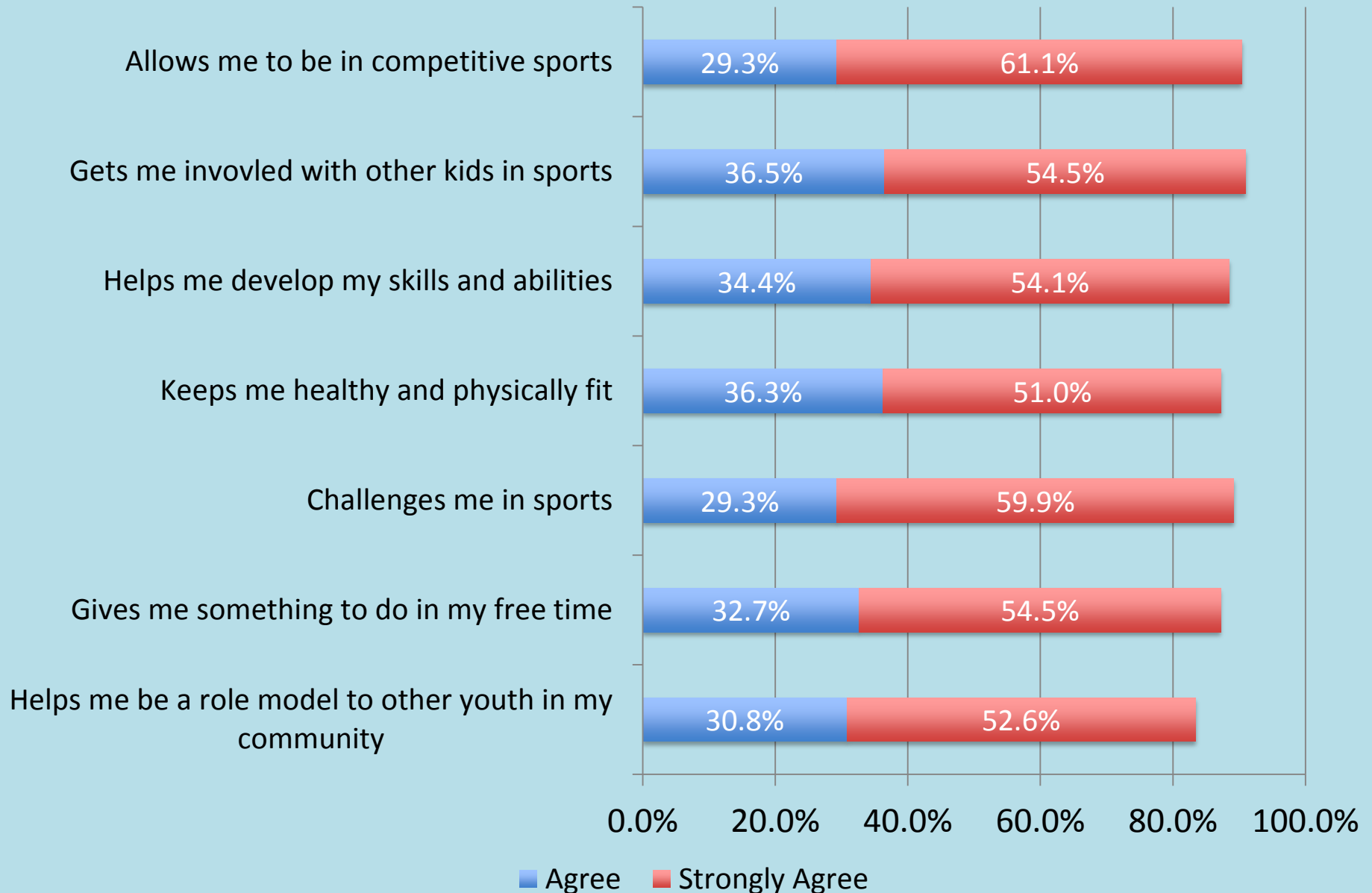
Gender



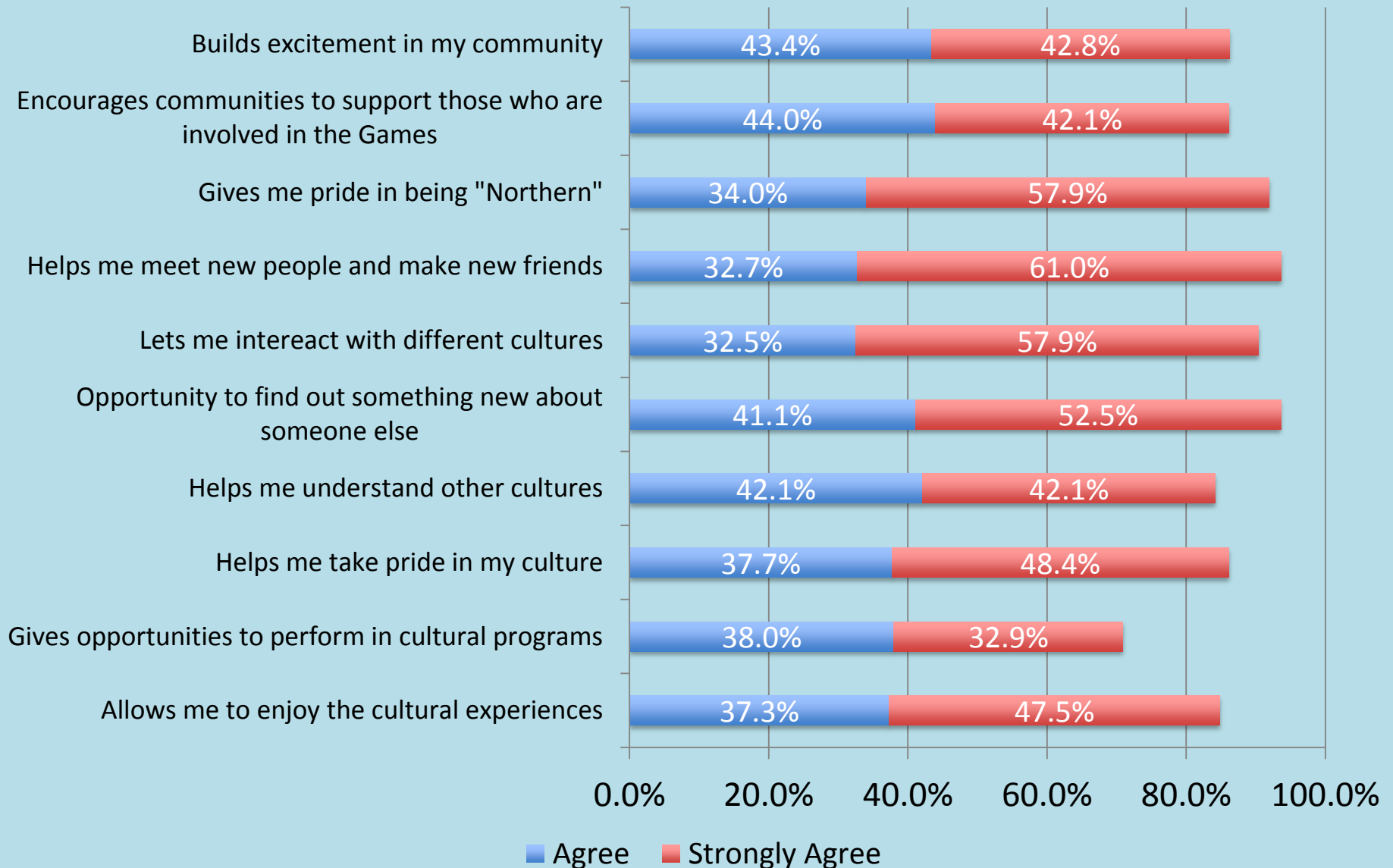
Ethnicity



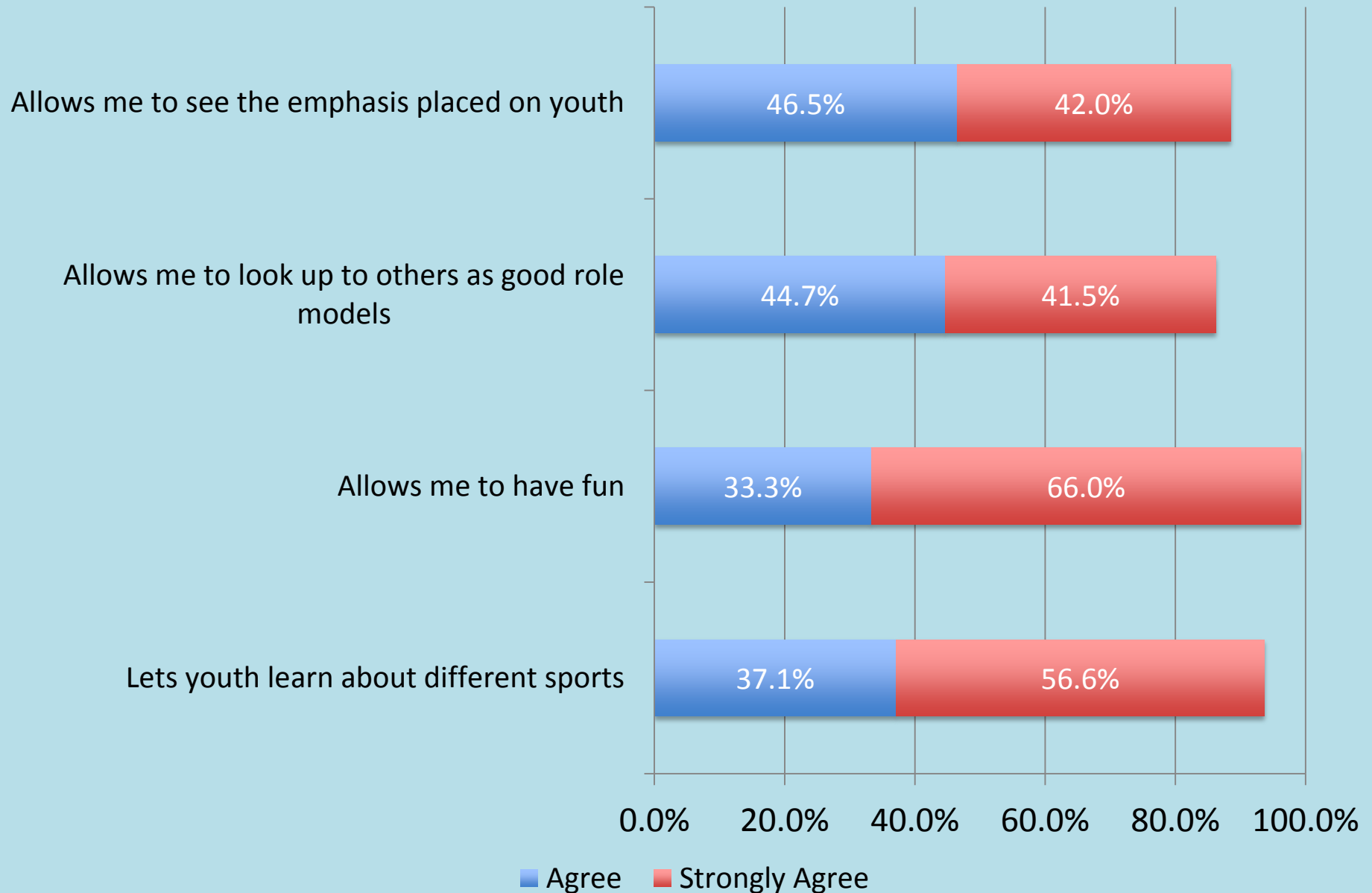
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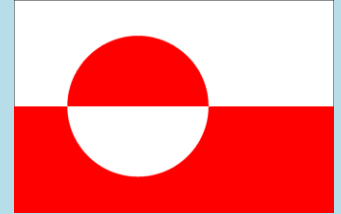


Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Greenland

Team Greenland was represented by **91** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Since 1990, Team Greenland has participated in the Games.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"I've learned a lot about how to get better at my sport." - Athlete

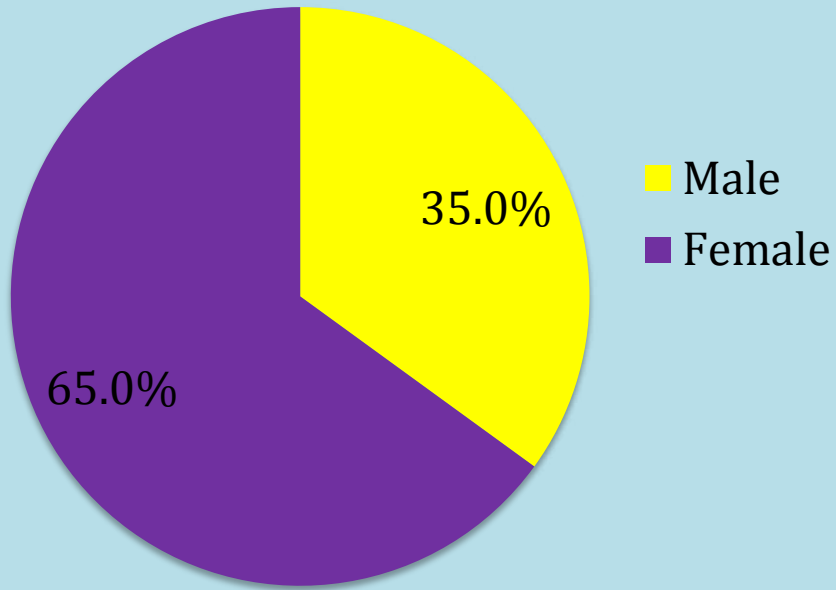
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

*"So far, it has been an amazing adventure coming to the games."
- Athlete*

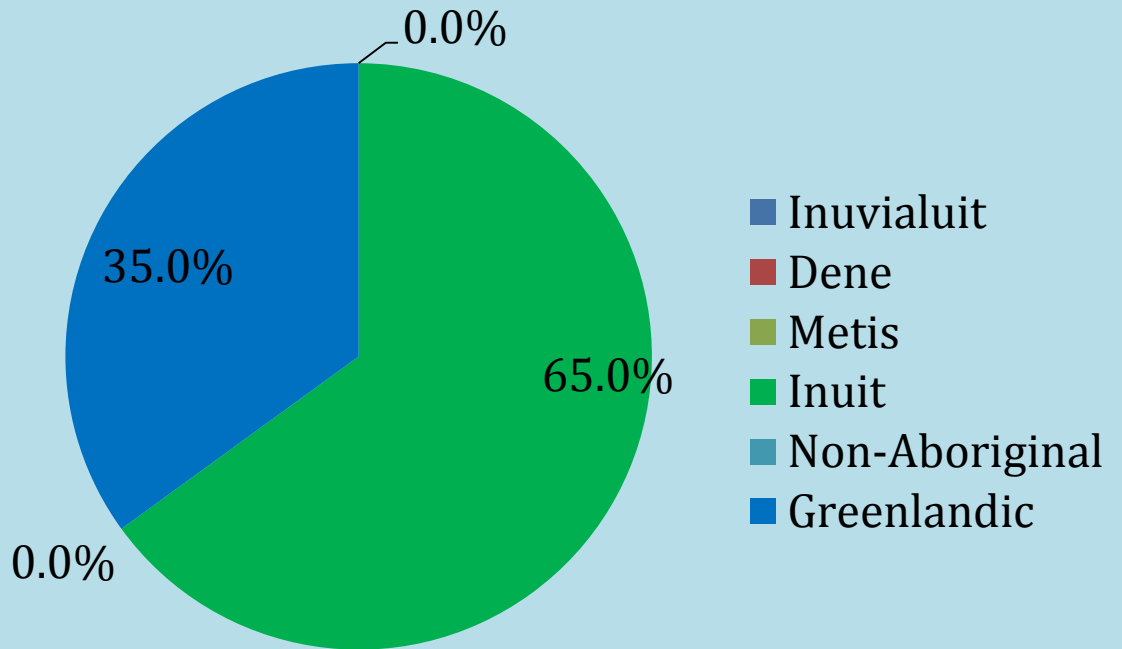
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

*"The arctic winter games help make young people better athletes and individuals."
- Athlete*

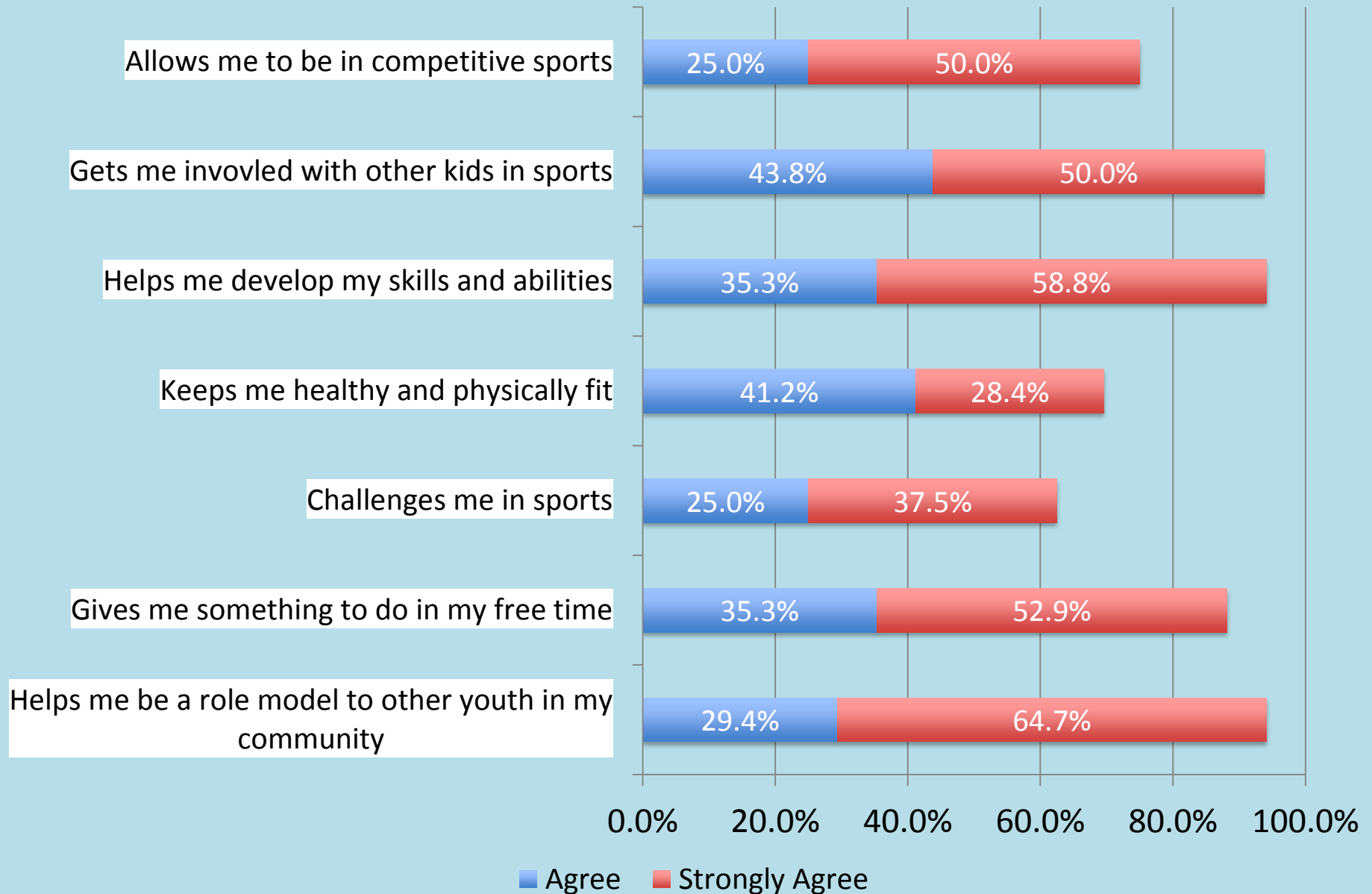
Gender



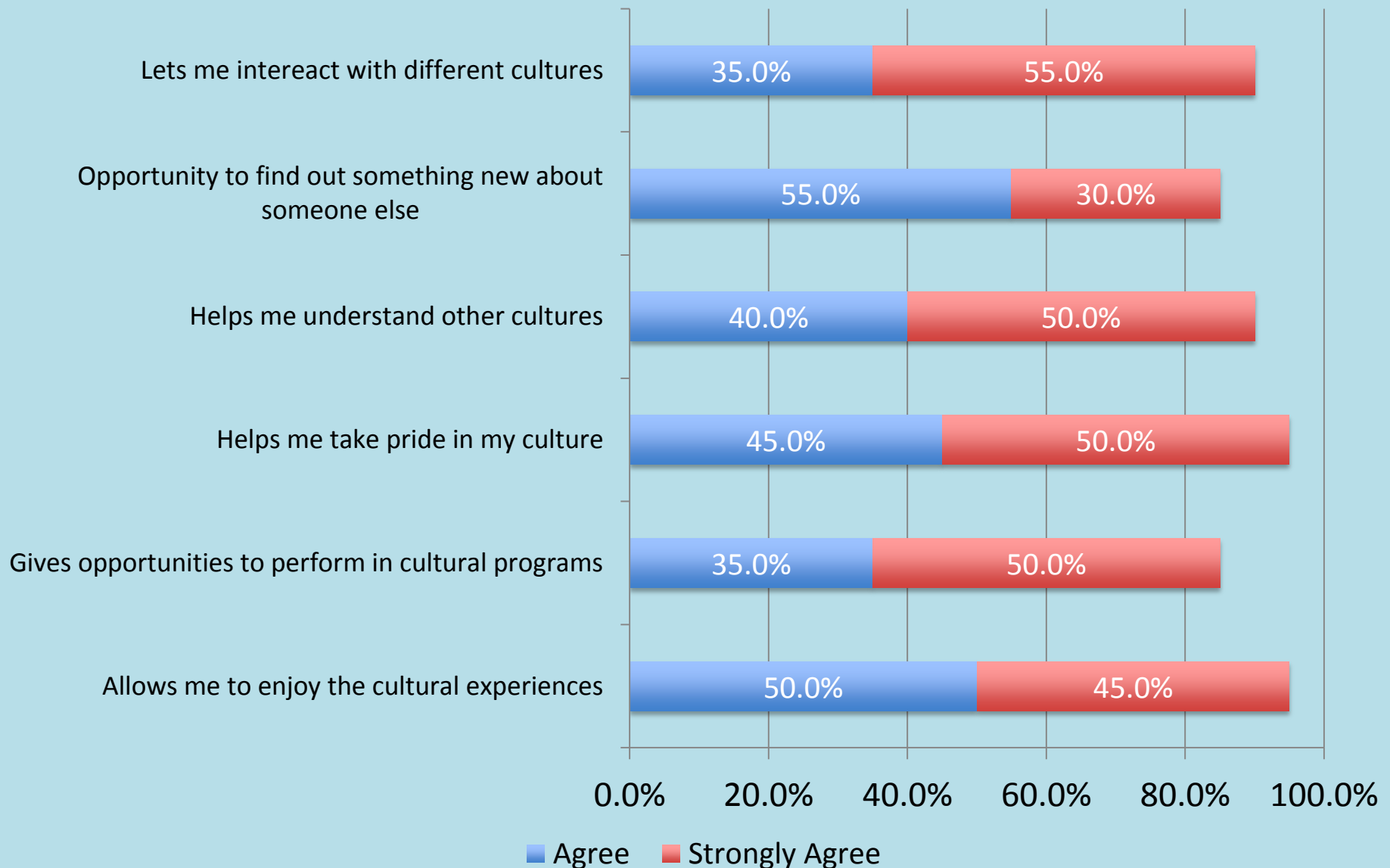
Ethnicity



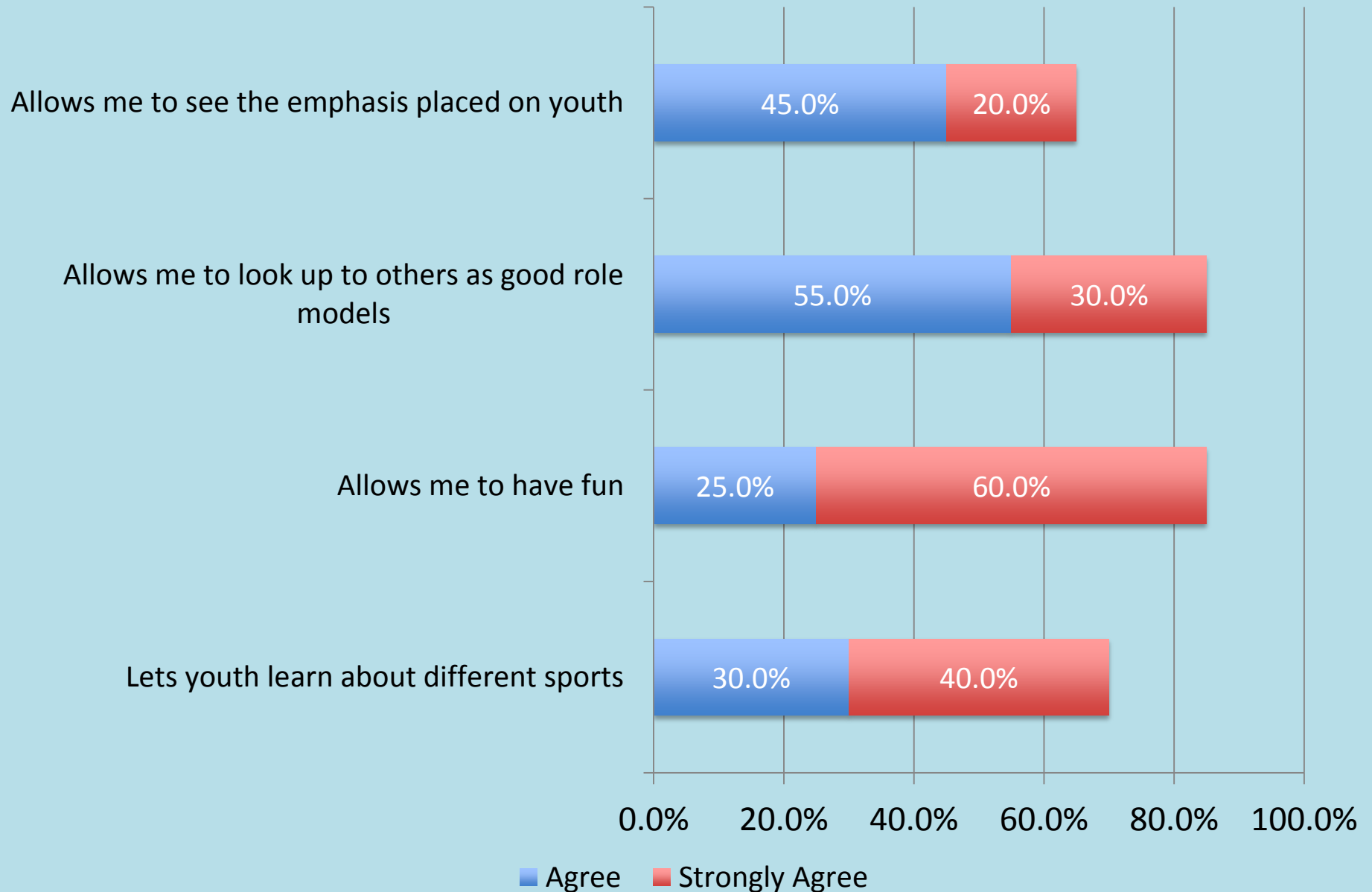
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Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Northwest Territories

Team Northwest Territories was represented by 274 athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. The Northwest Territories was a founding member of the Games in 1970 and are a permanent member.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"It's a wonderful experience, lovely different things combined like culture and tradition ."
- Athlete

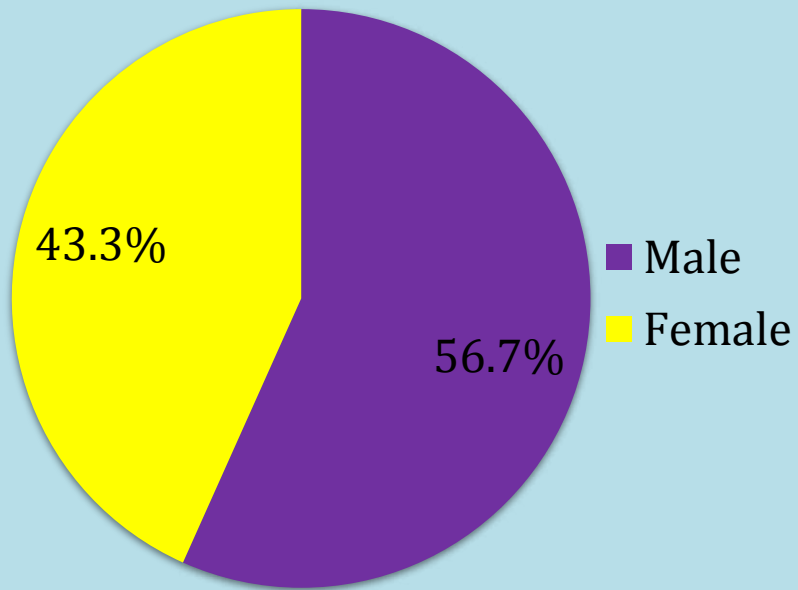
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

"It is a surreal feeling, I love the chance to travel."
- Athlete

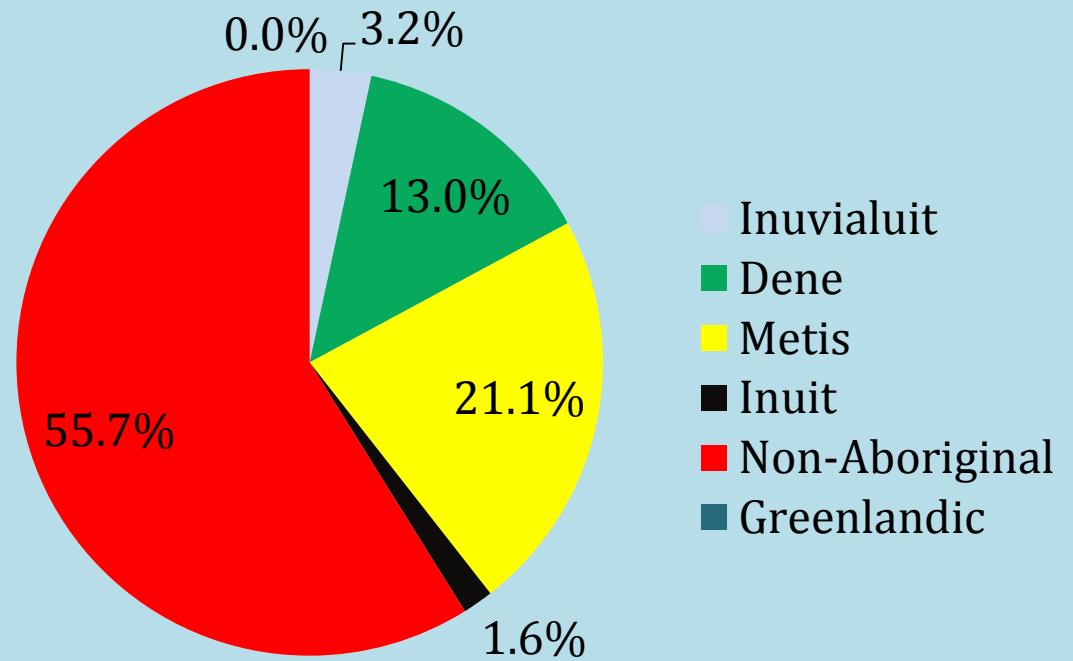
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

"Youth feel obligated to stick to soccer and stay away from drugs."
- Athlete

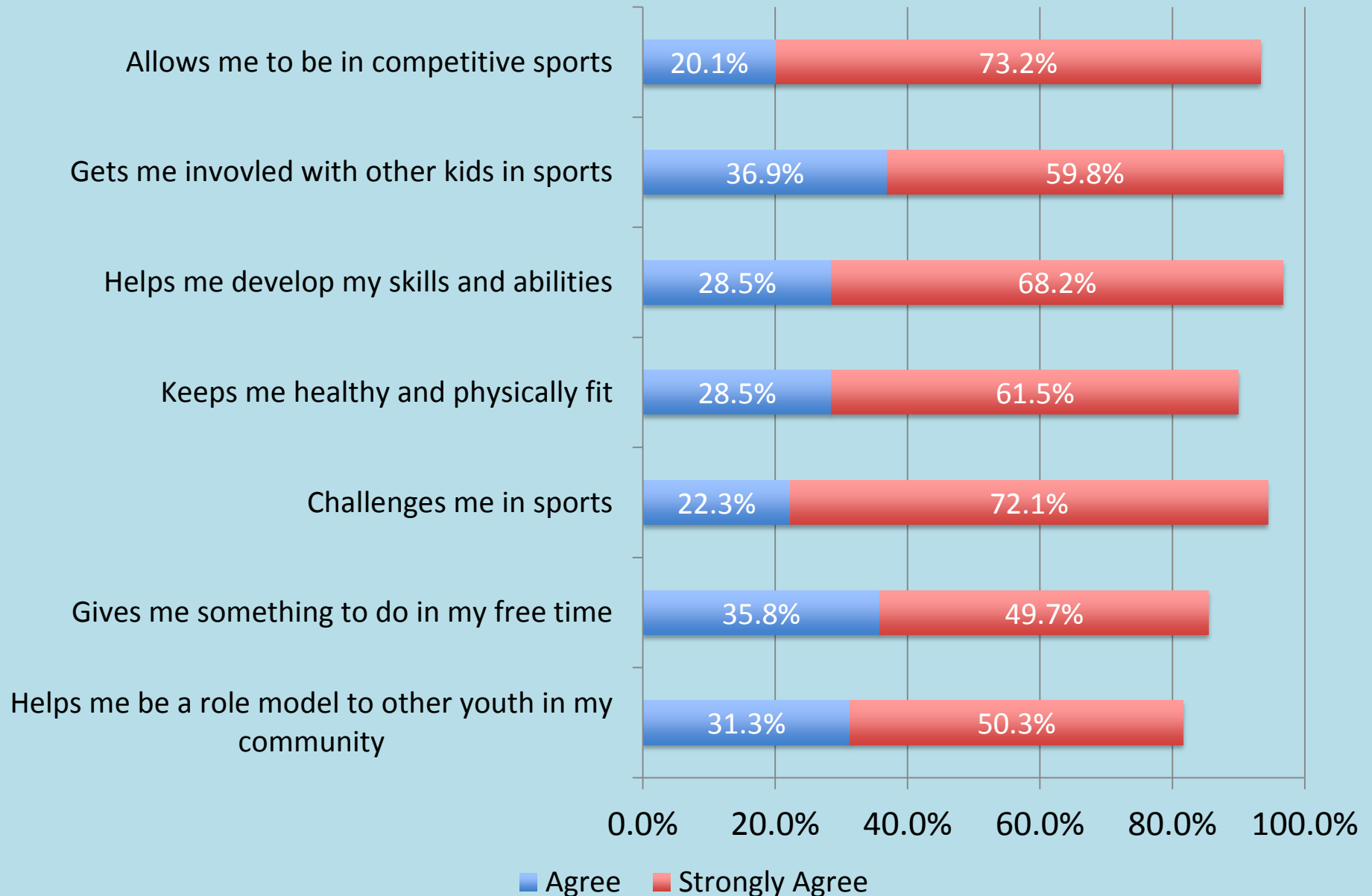
Gender



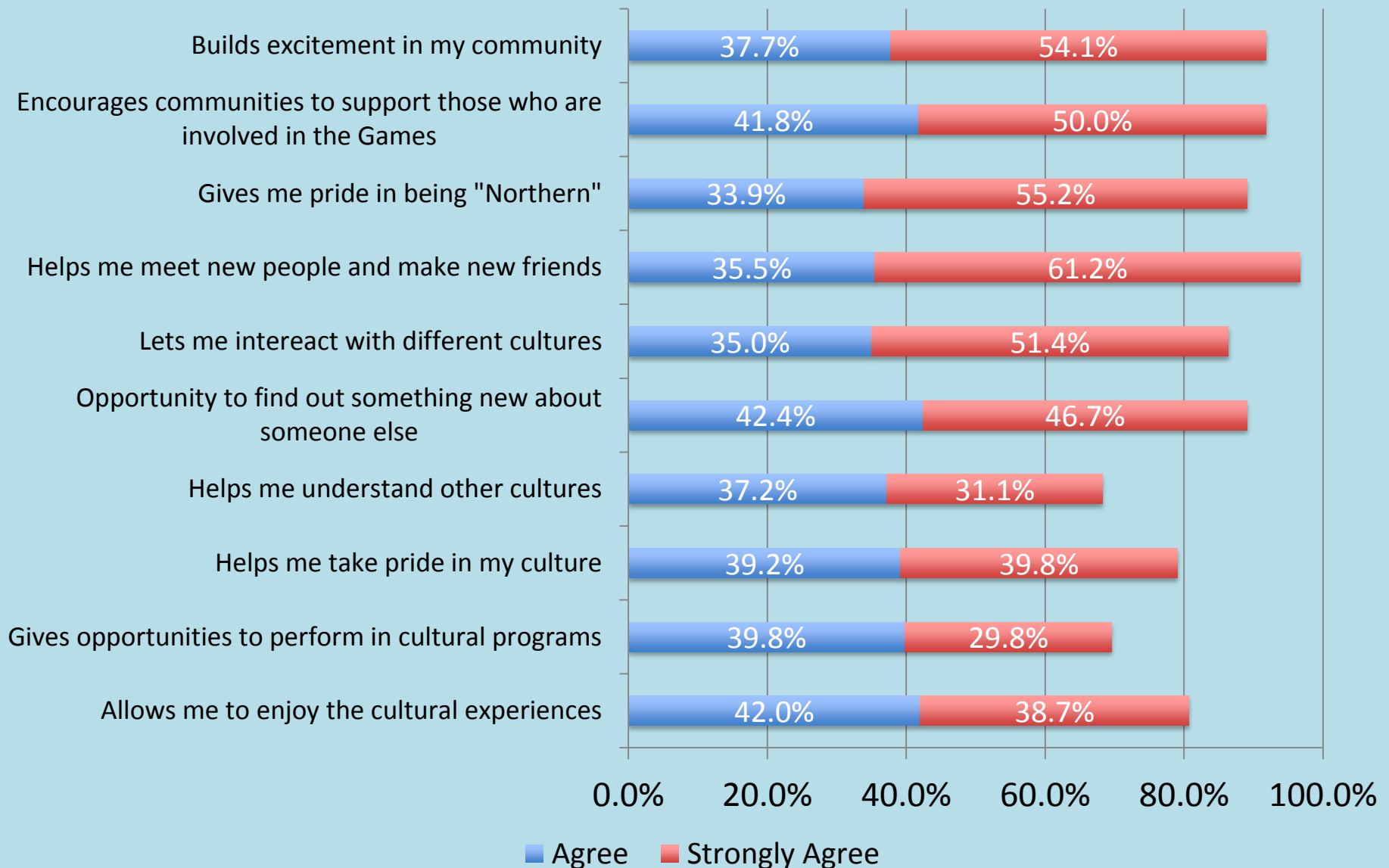
Ethnicity



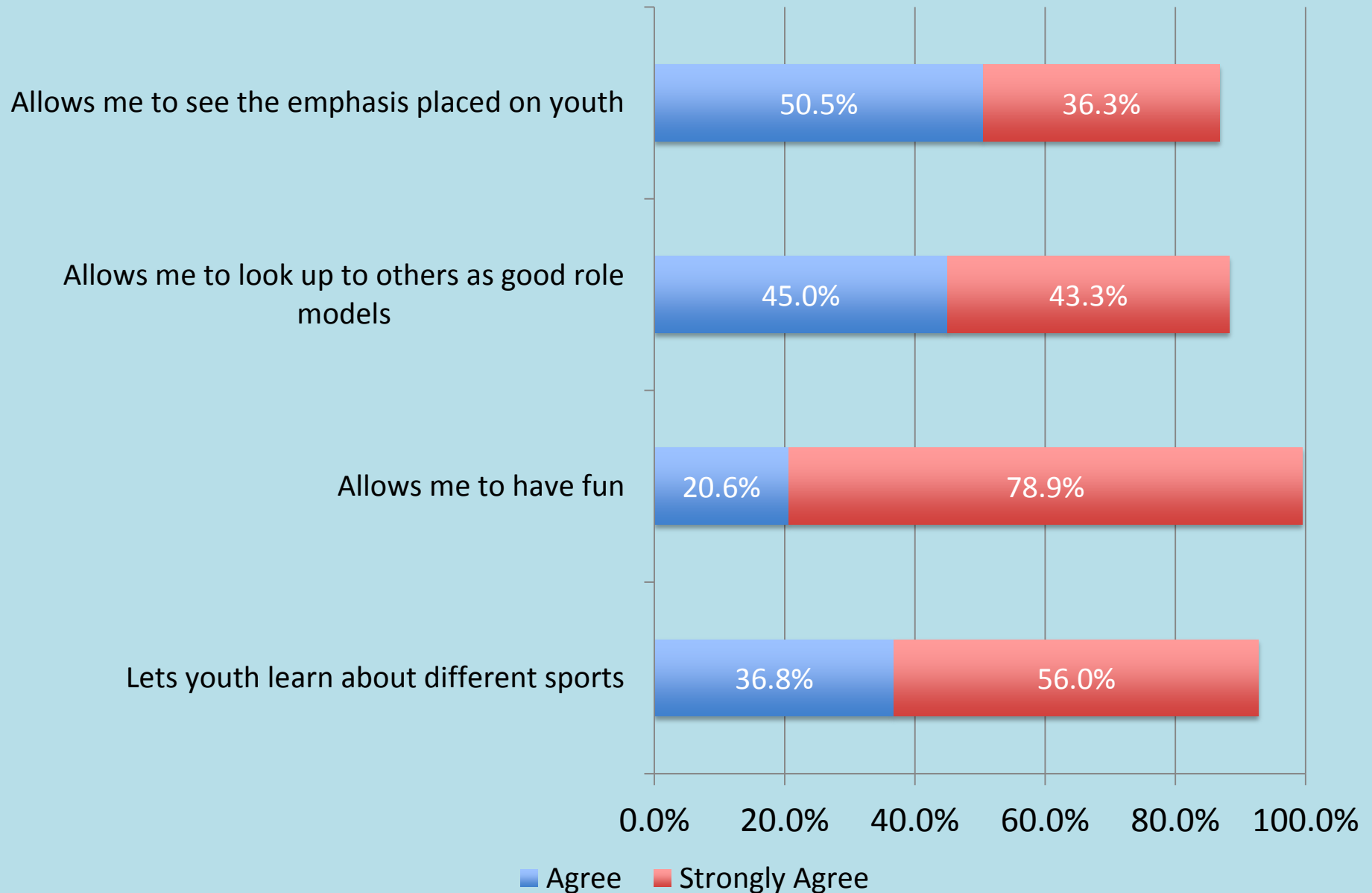
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Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Nunavik–Quebec

Team Nunavik-Quebec was represented by **53** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Team Nunavik-Quebec has sent athletes to represent their territory in 1972, 1974, 1976, 1986, and every other year since 2000.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"Representing my contingent and wearing our colors." - Athlete

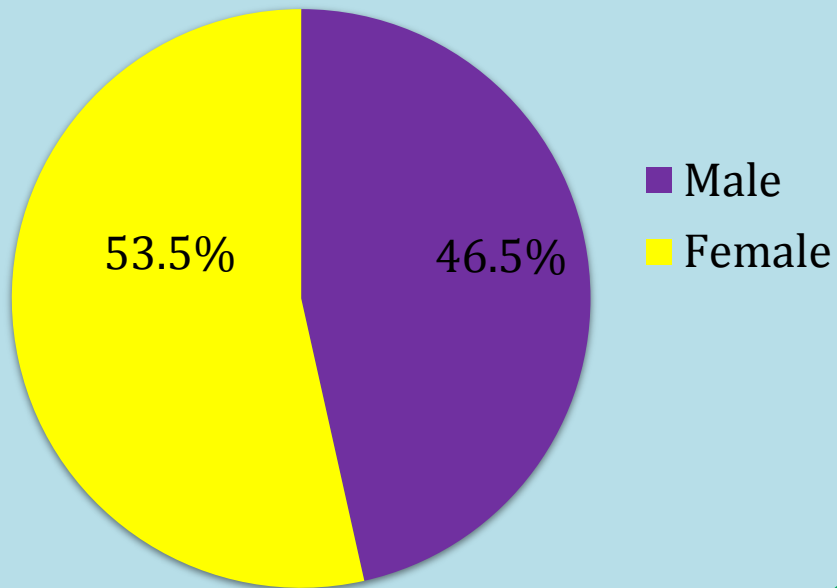
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

*"I have made new friends, and I developed new skills."
- Athlete*

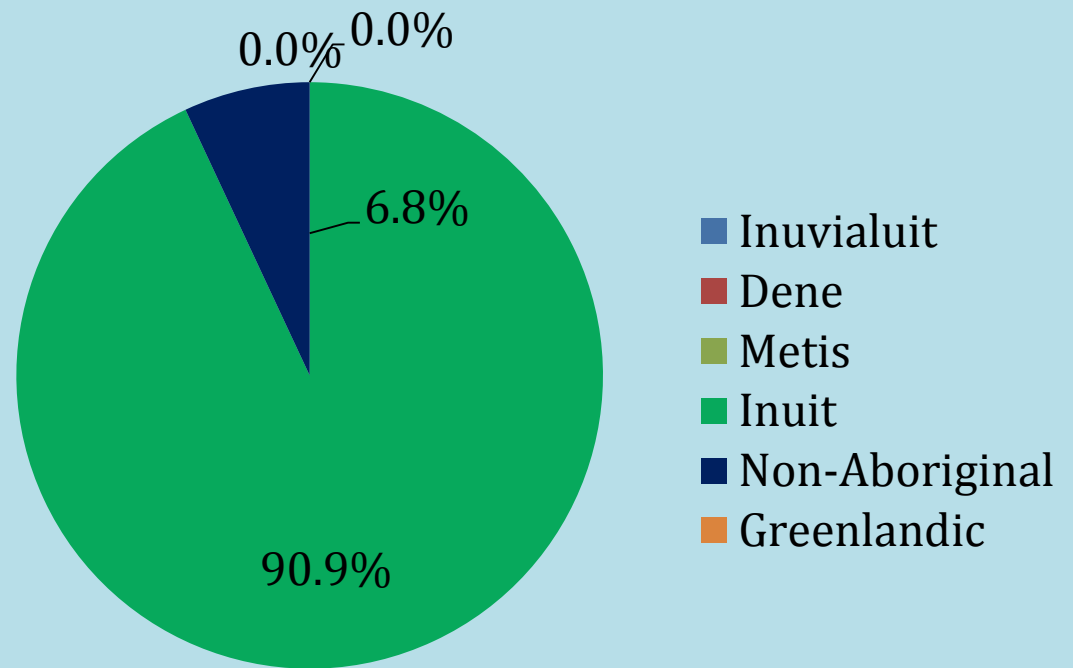
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

*"The Arctic Sports are part of my culture, so it allows us more opportunities to learn about ourselves."
- Athlete*

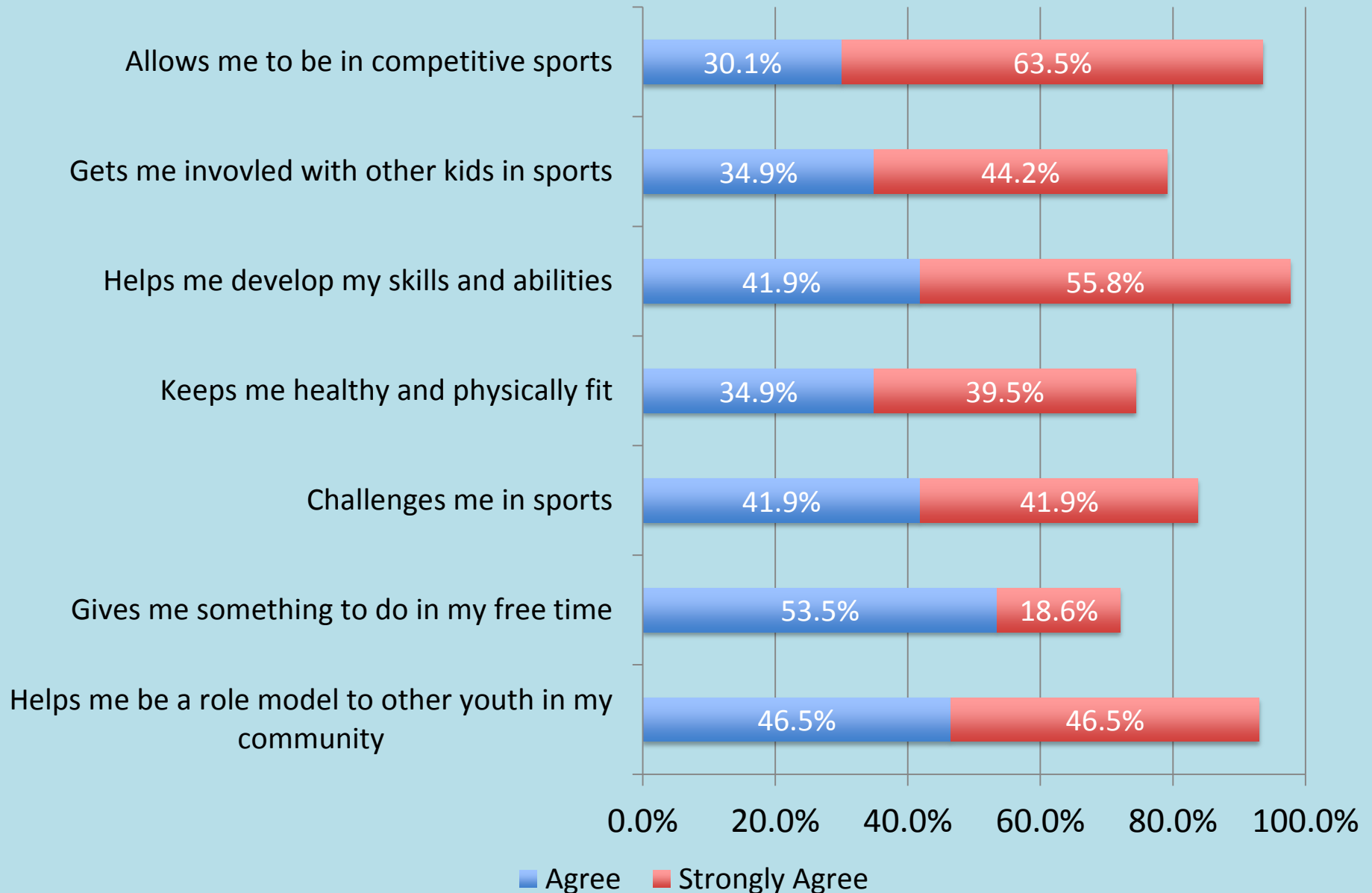
Gender



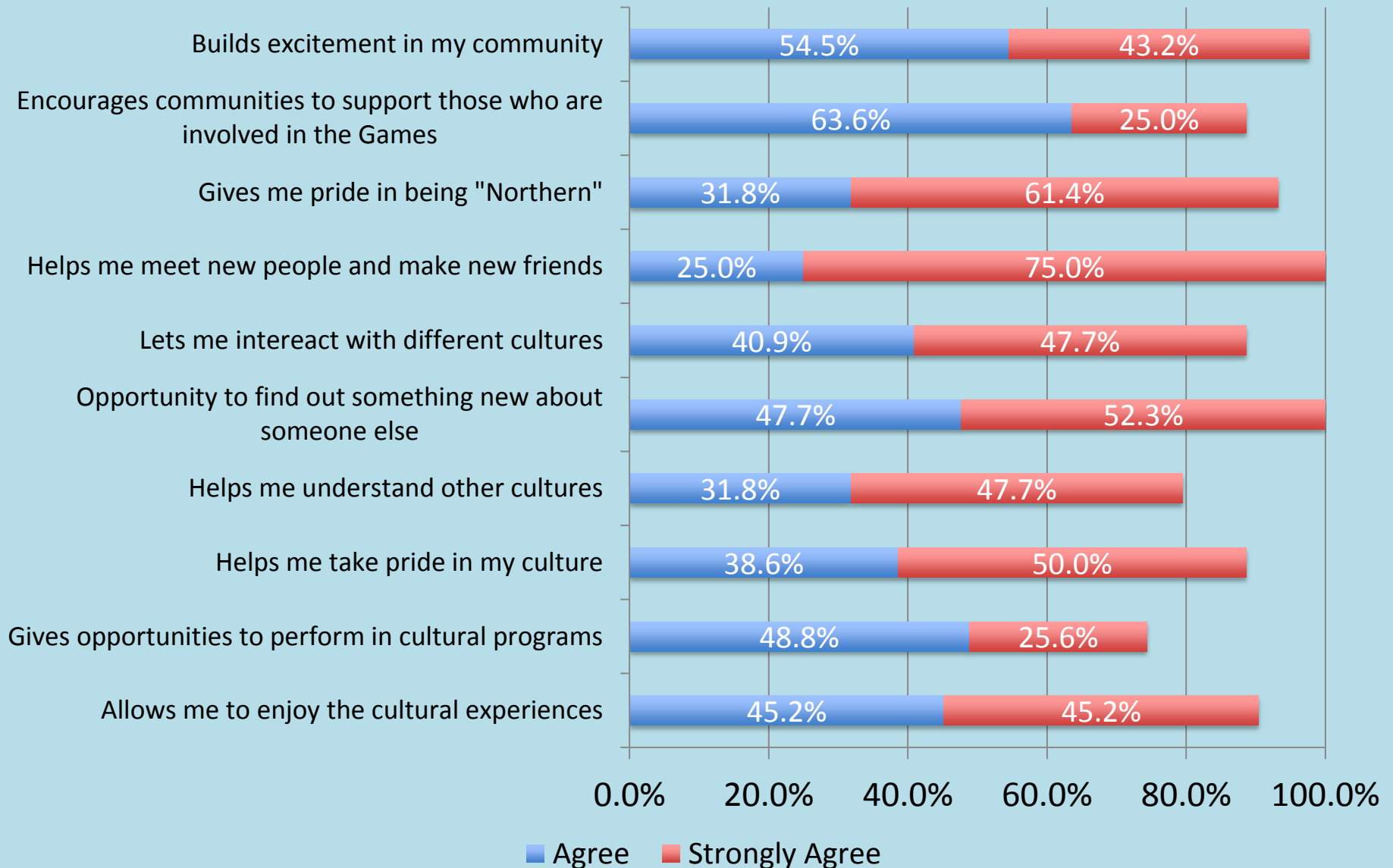
Ethnicity



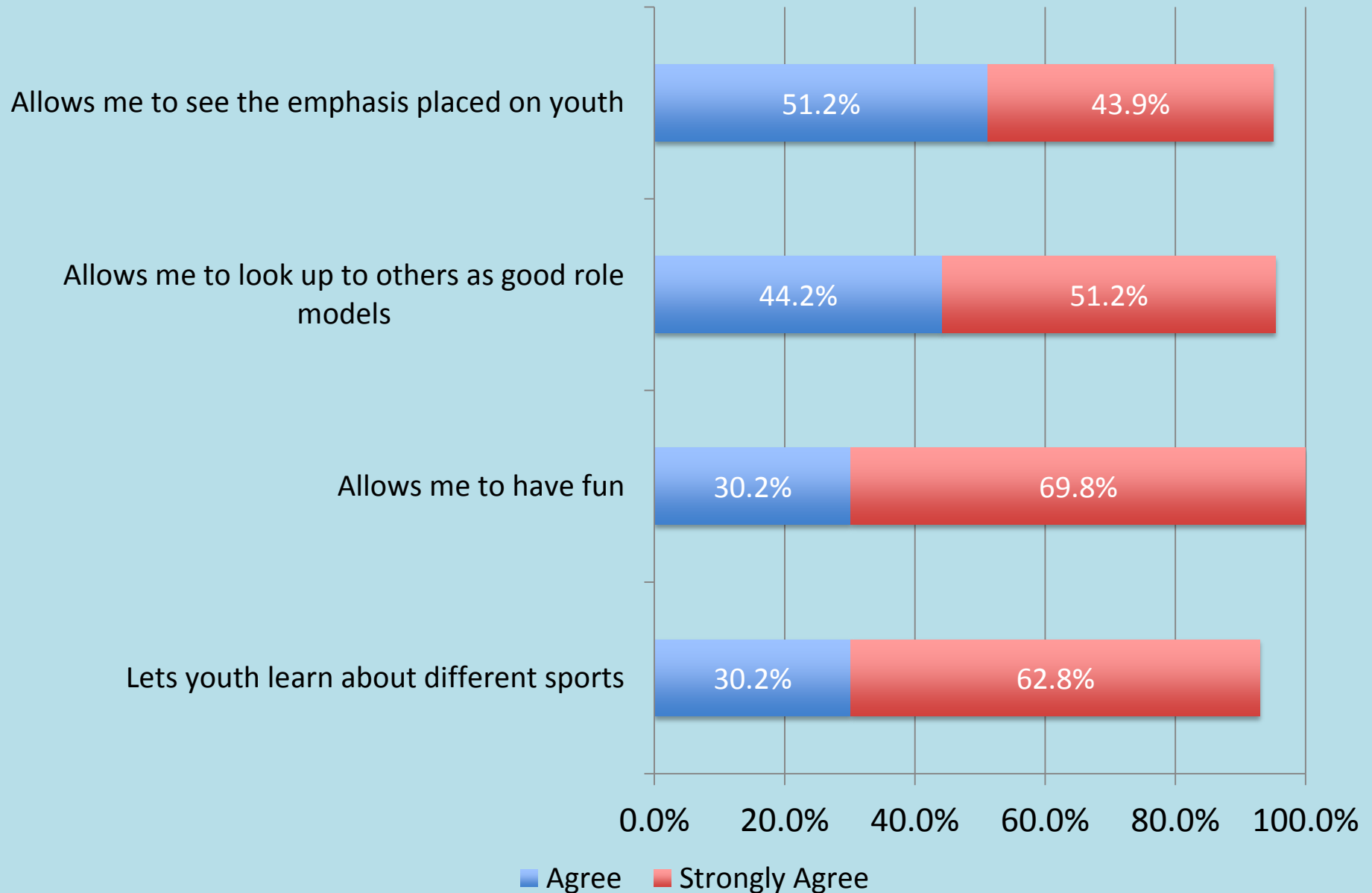
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Nunavut

Team Nunavut was represented by **225** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. The first representation in the Arctic Winter Games for Team Nunavut was in 2000 and they have competed every other year since then.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"It is a lot of fun and a great experience. So much to share and a lot of friends to make from everywhere."
- Athlete

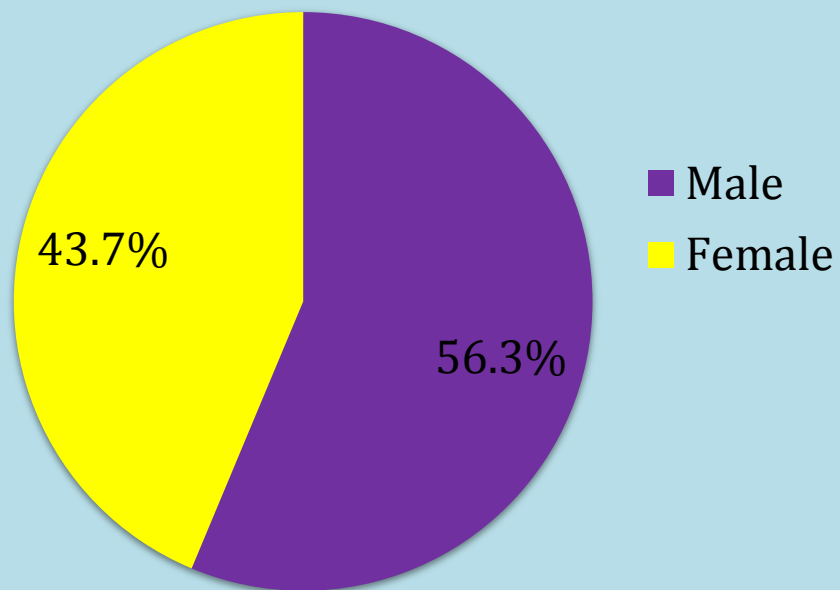
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

"I have more appreciation for sports, while also experiencing new sports."
- Athlete

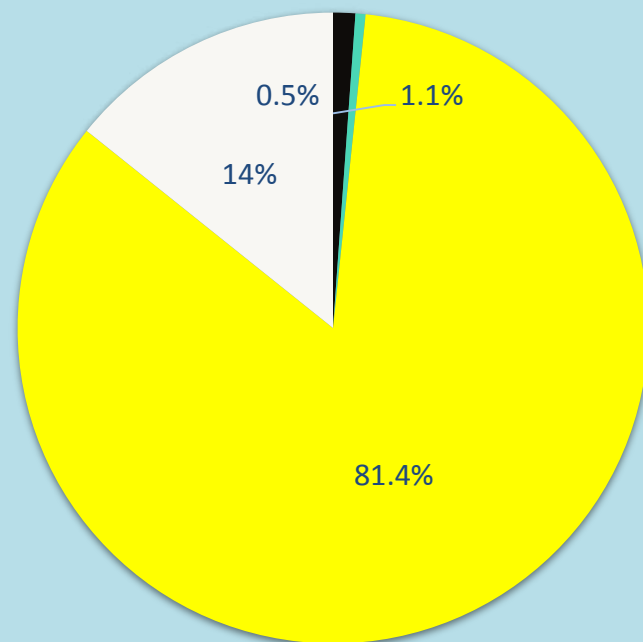
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

"The games give me something to look forward to and train for during the winter."
- Athlete

Gender

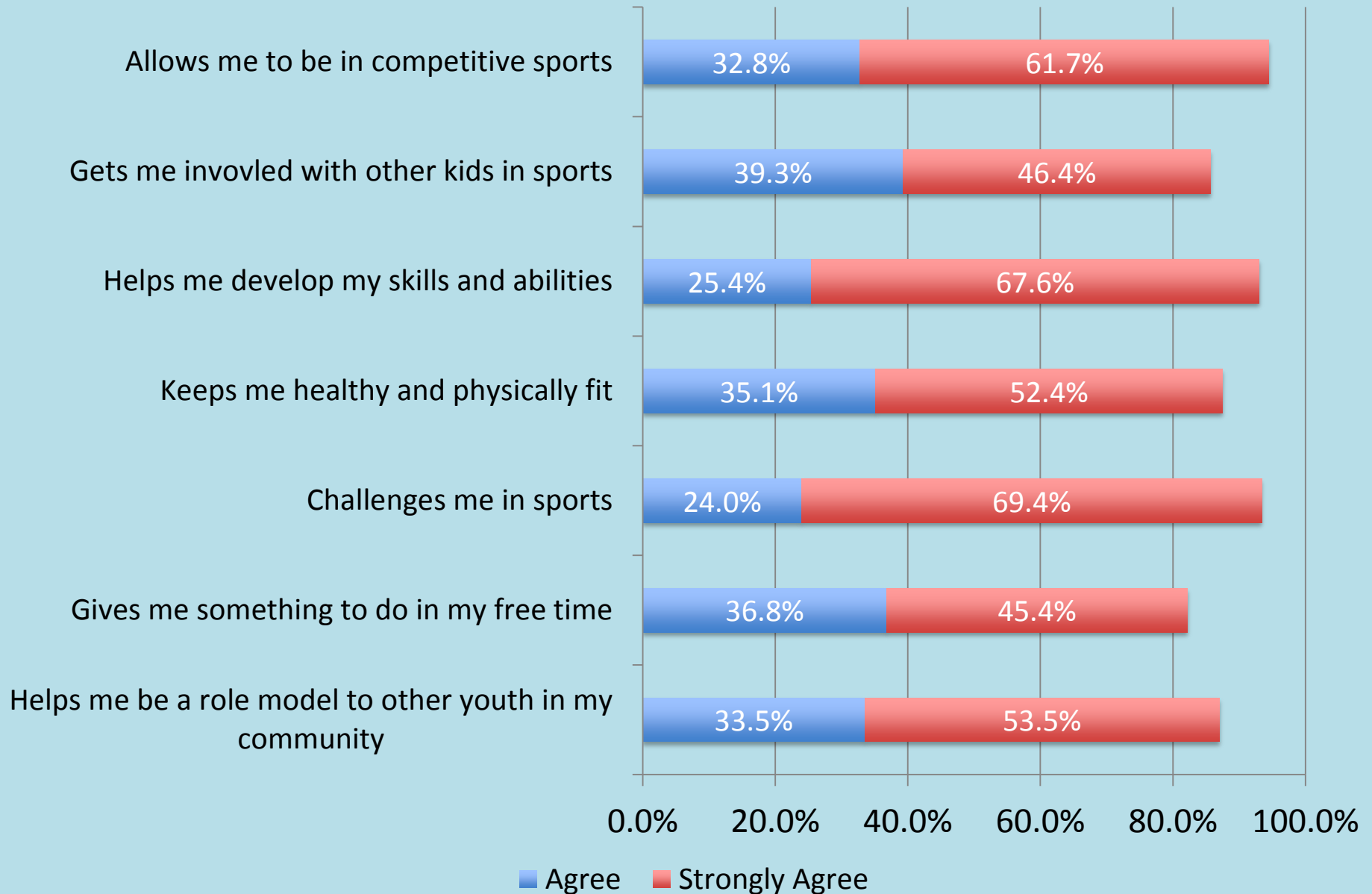


Ethnicity

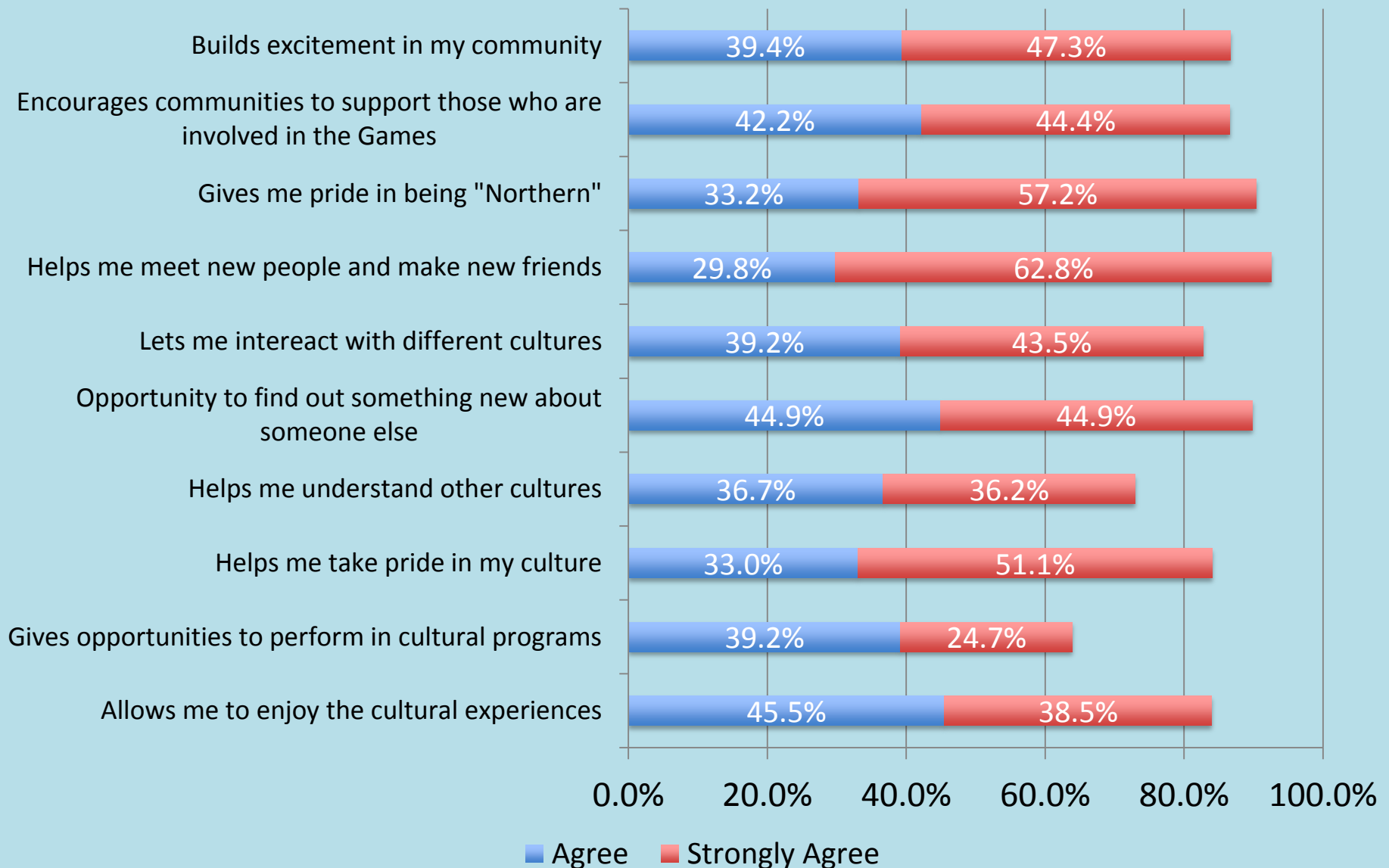


■ Inuvialuit ■ Dene ■ Metis ■ Inuit ■ Non-Aboriginal ■ Greenlandic

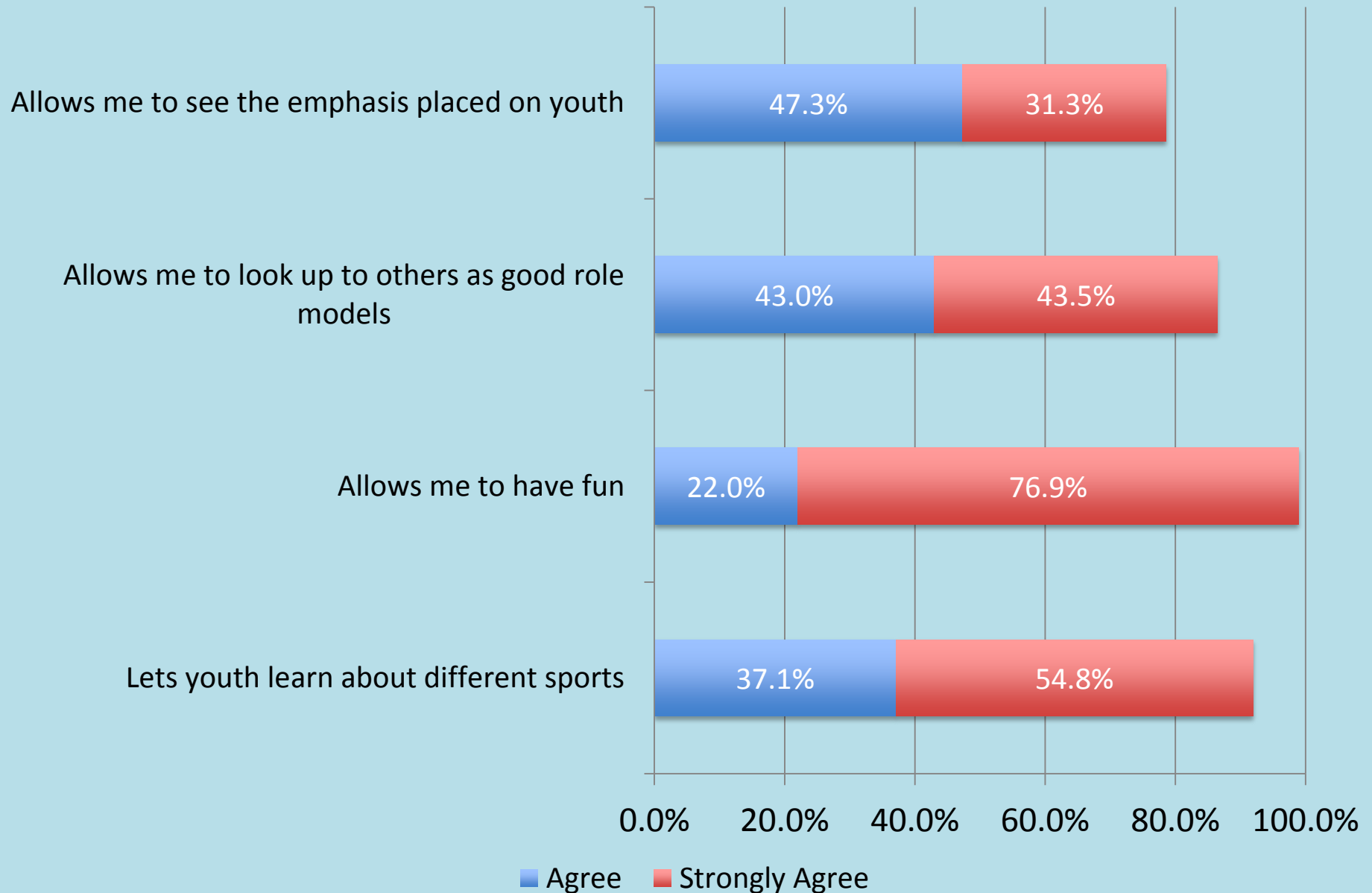
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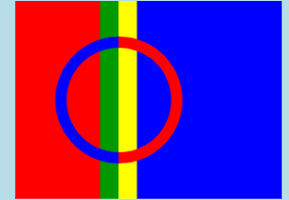


Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Sapmi

Team Sapmi was represented by 33 athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Although a small representation, Team Sapmi has been a strong representative since their first year of participation in 2004.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"Being together as a team." - Athlete

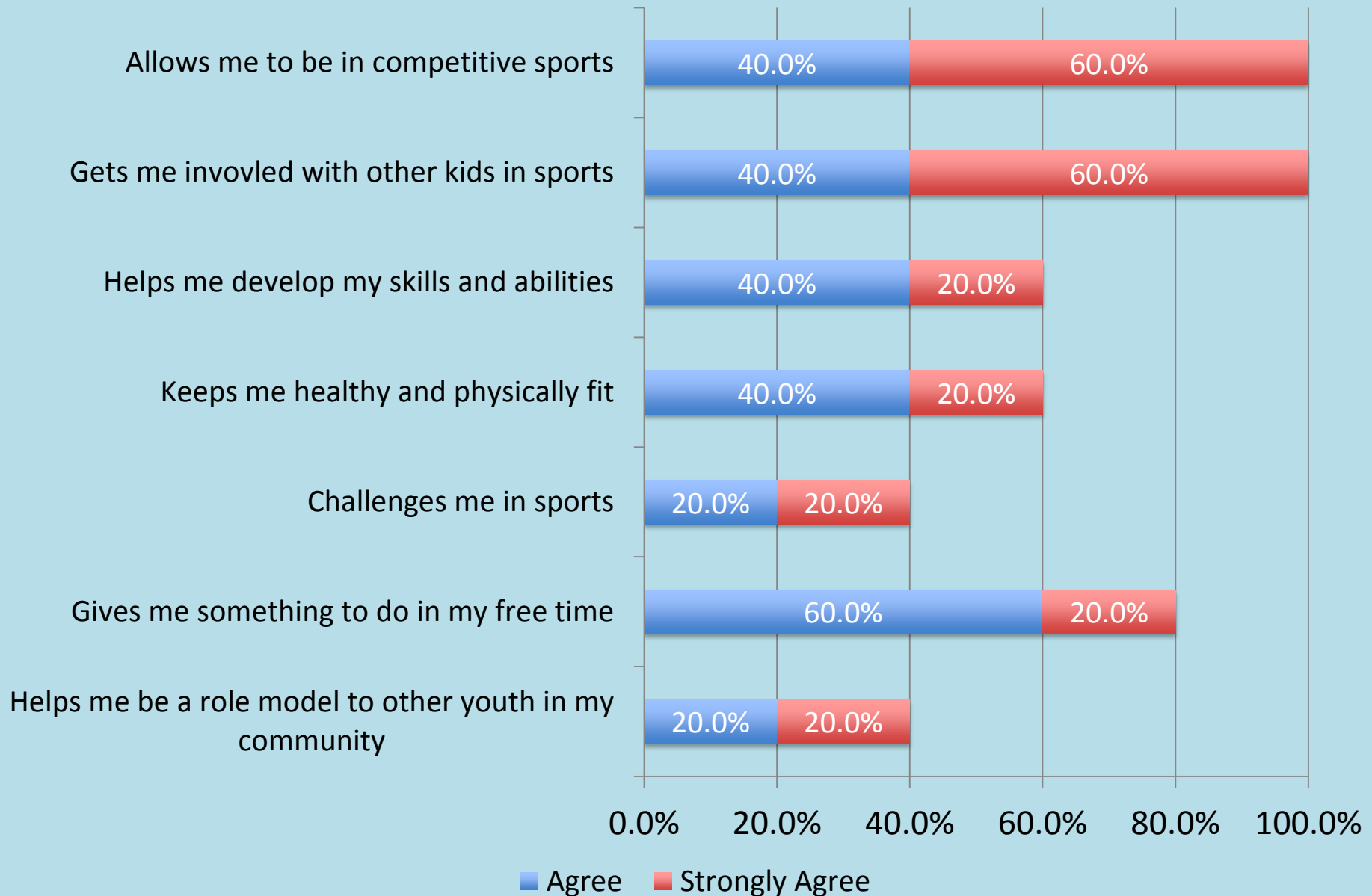
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

*"I have noticed that people are very similar no matter where they are from."
- Spectator*

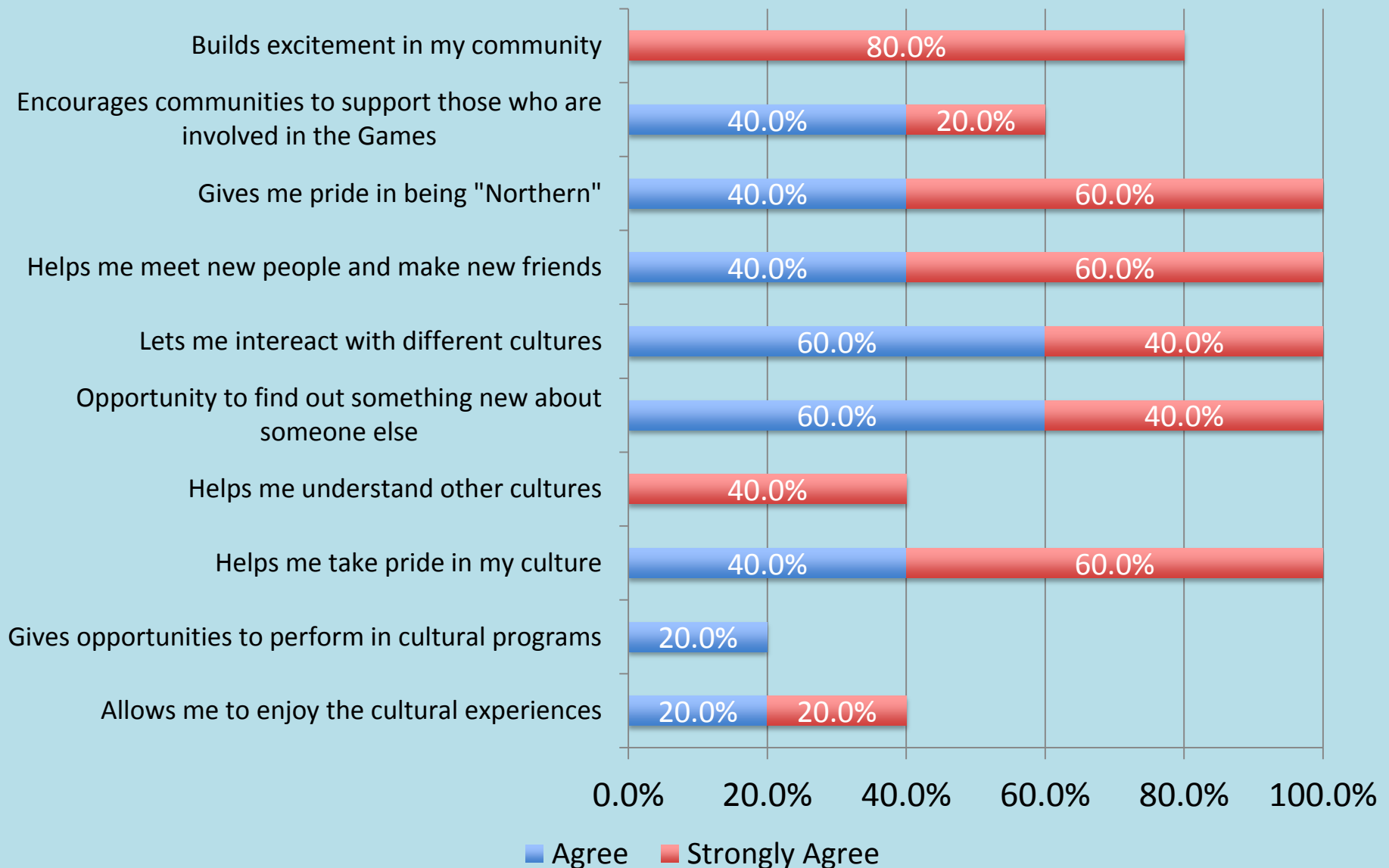
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

*"They encourage people to have a healthy lifestyle."
- Athlete*

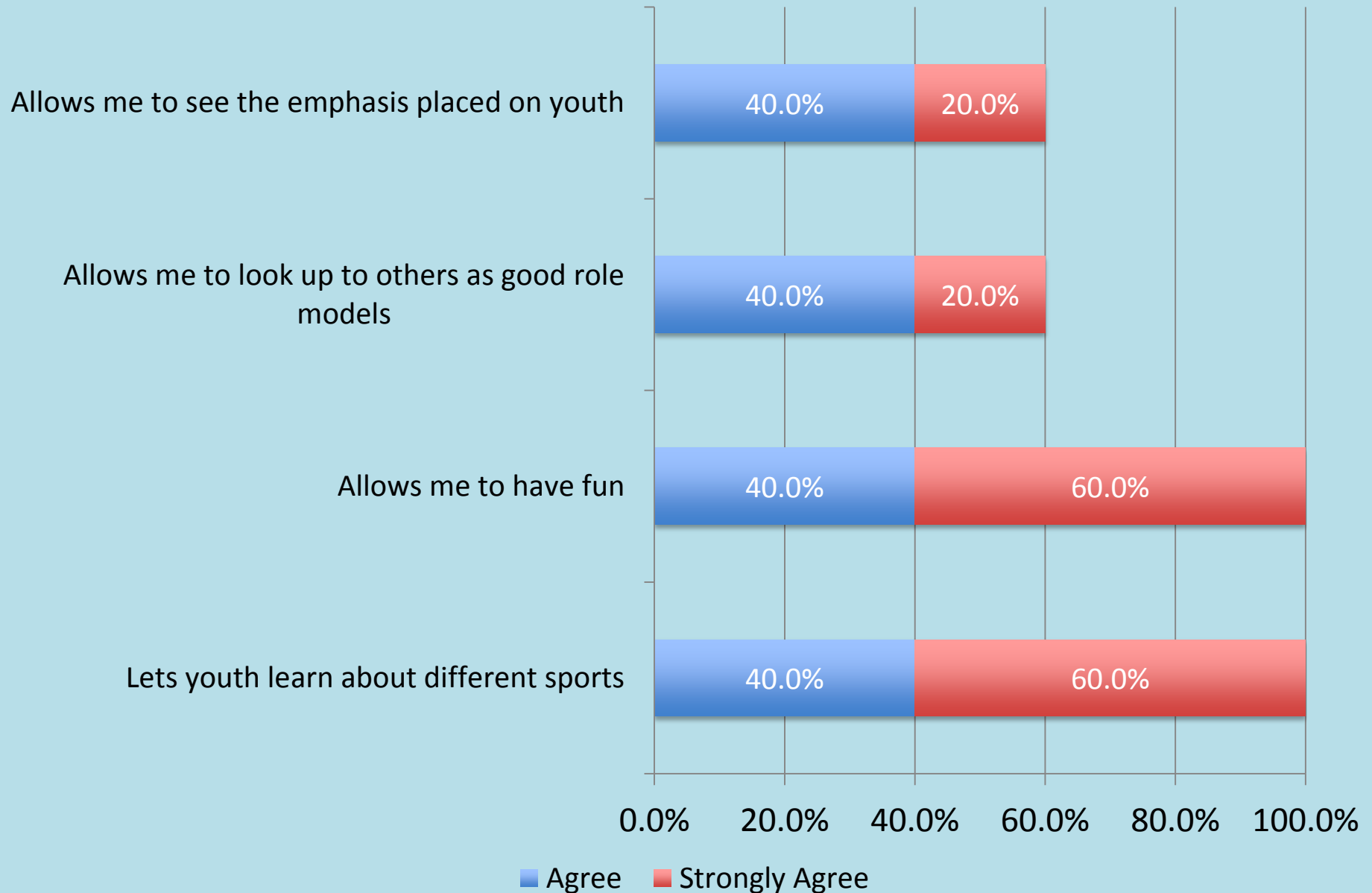
**Goal 1: To involve as many athletes as possible either in the Games or in the trials,
and to provide a forum of northern sport competition:**



Goal 2: To promote indigenous cultural activities and exhibitions, to get different groups together, to develop and maintain good relations amongst northern people:



Goal 3: To encourage maximum participation by all ages, and all walks of life in a broad range of athletic activity:



Yamal

Team Yamal was represented by 62 athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Team Yamal started competing as part of the Tyumen team in 1992; split from them in 2004, and since 2006 has been the only team to represent Russia.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

“Thank you for the great experience, wonderfully hospitable. Thanks Alaska! .” - Coach

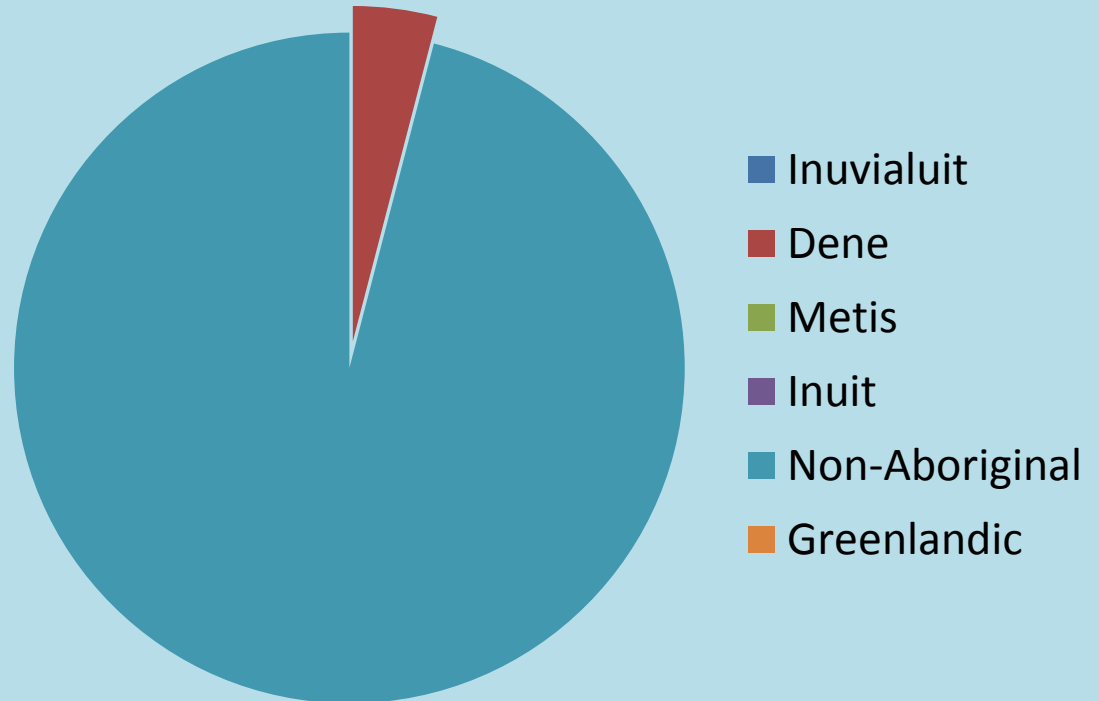
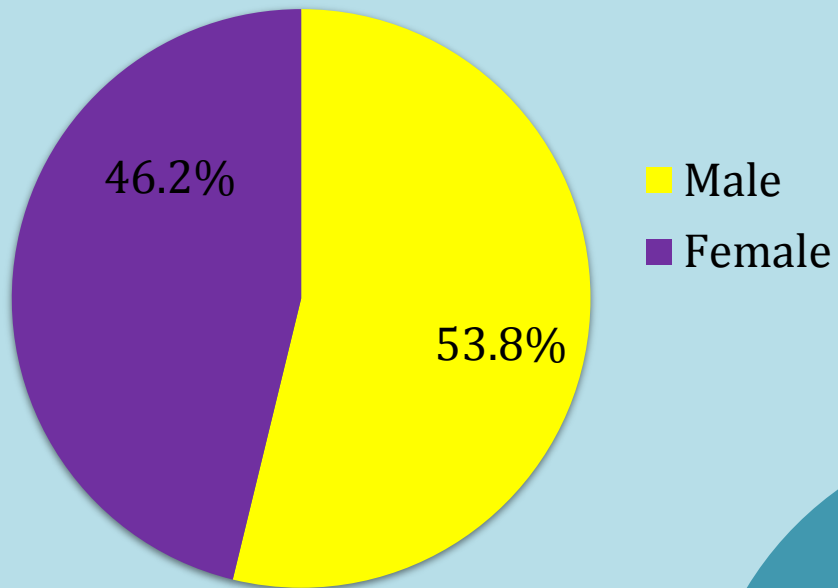
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

*“Being exposed to different cultures and people.”
- Athlete*

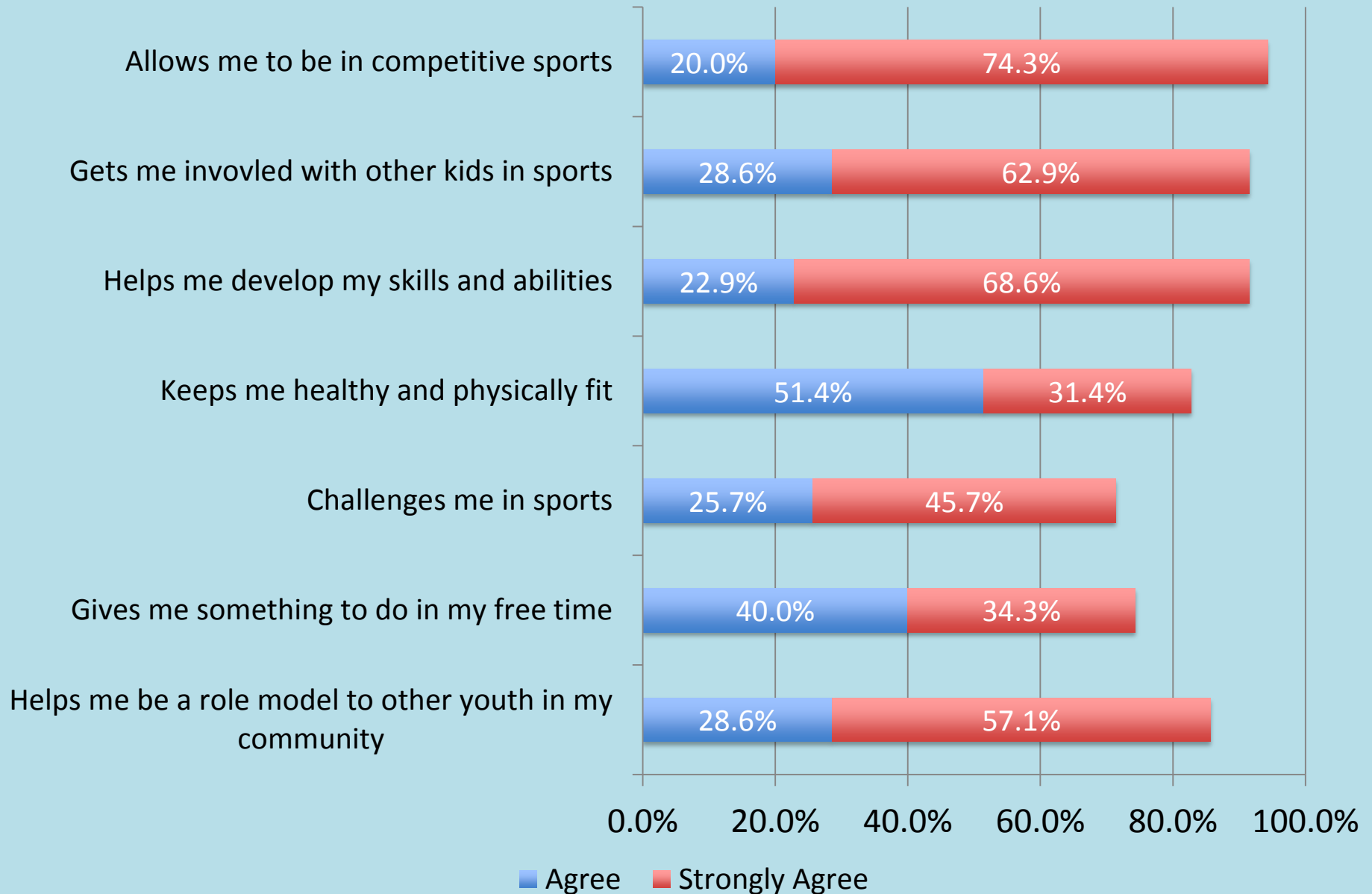
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

“Telling my friends about the different cultures, lifestyles and sports.” - Athlete

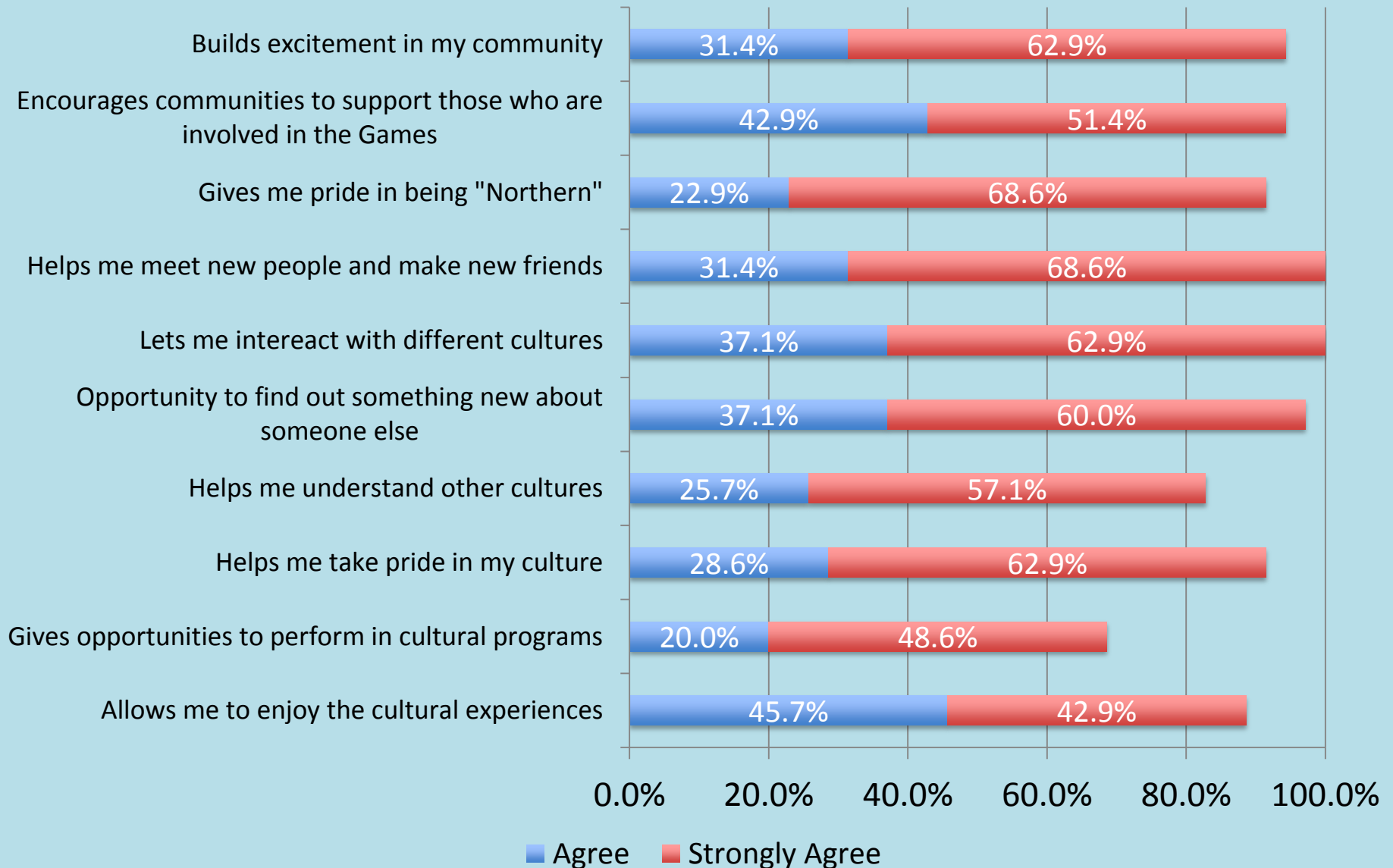
Gender



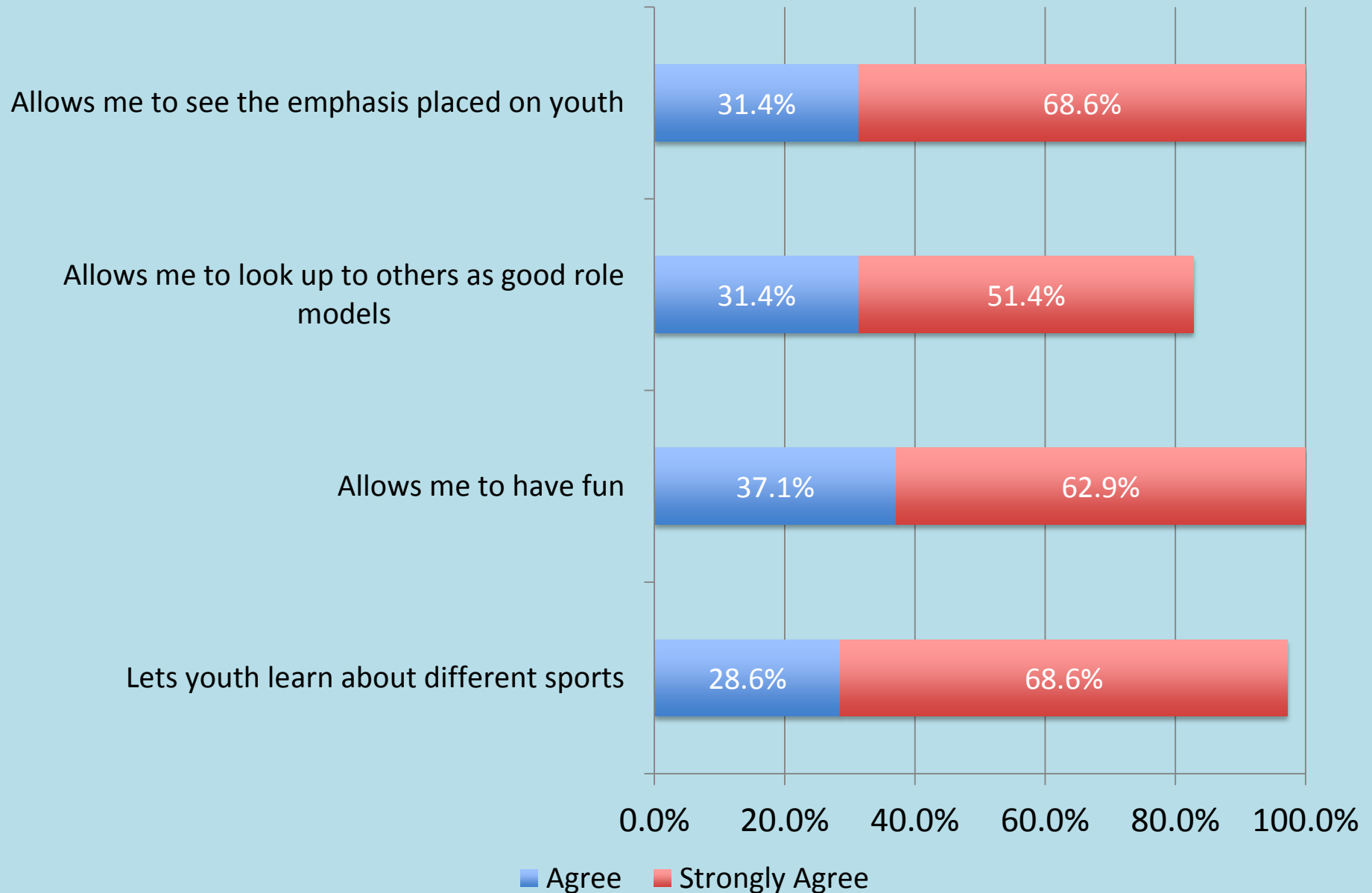
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Yukon

Team Yukon was represented by **283** athletes at the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. The people of Yukon were very excited to be selected as hosts for this year's Arctic Winter Games. They have been a permanent member since 1970.



What is the most exciting or important things about being here for the Games?

"Seeing up and coming youth try to make it to the top." - Spectator

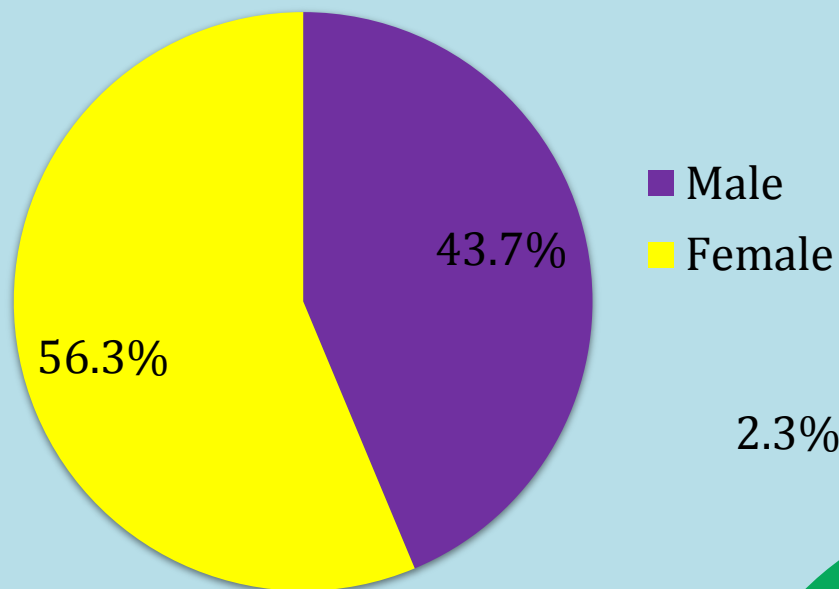
How has your life changed by being involved in the Games?

*"The competition has helped me become a better athlete and person."
- Athlete*

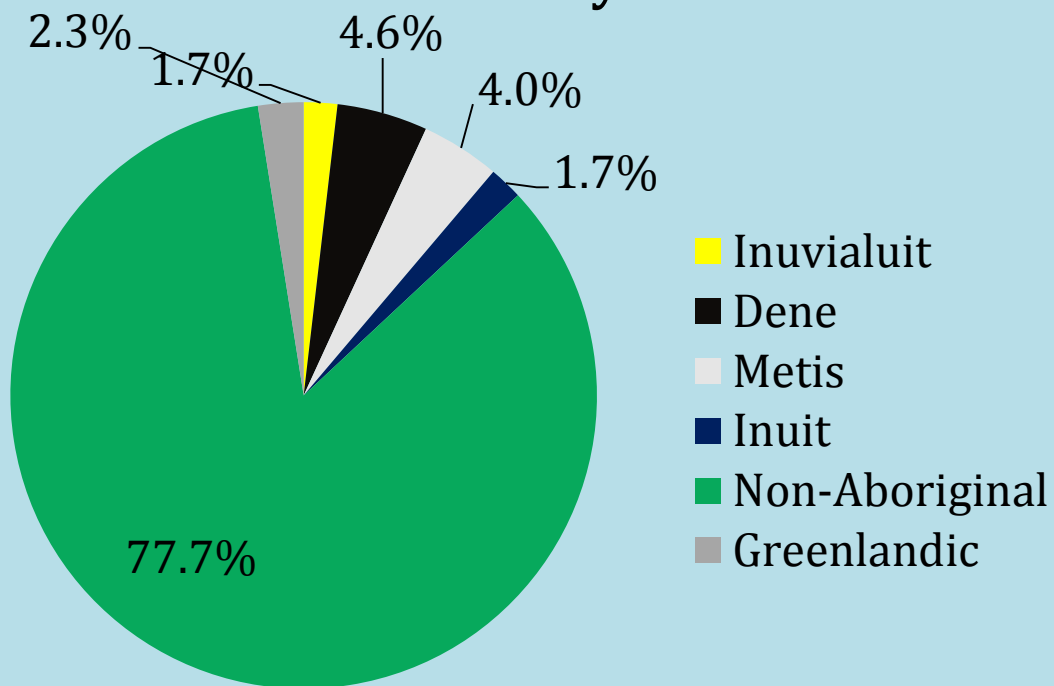
In what ways have the Games changed life for young people in your town/community?

*"Youth that participate in the games develop international tolerance."
- Coach*

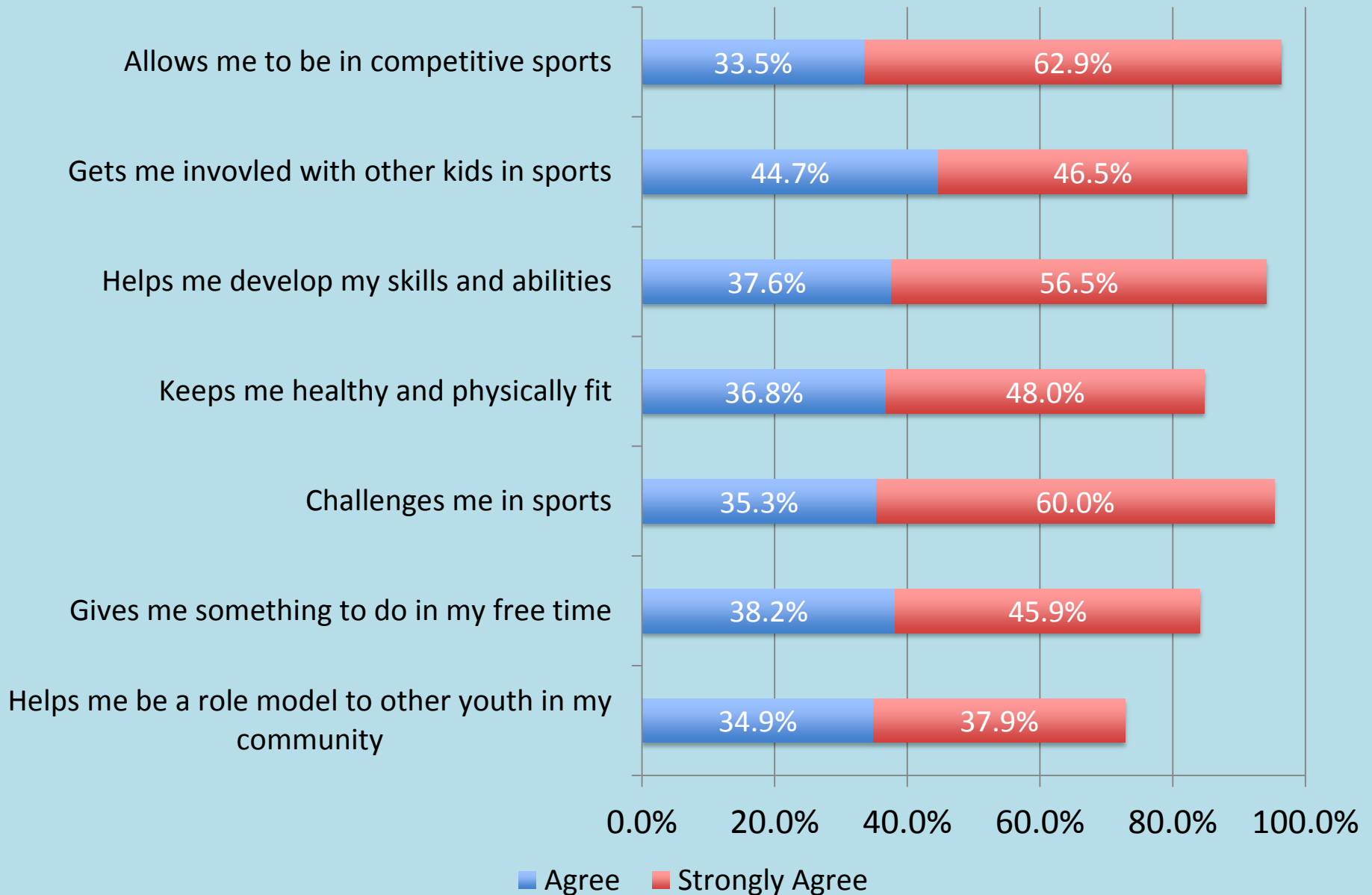
Gender



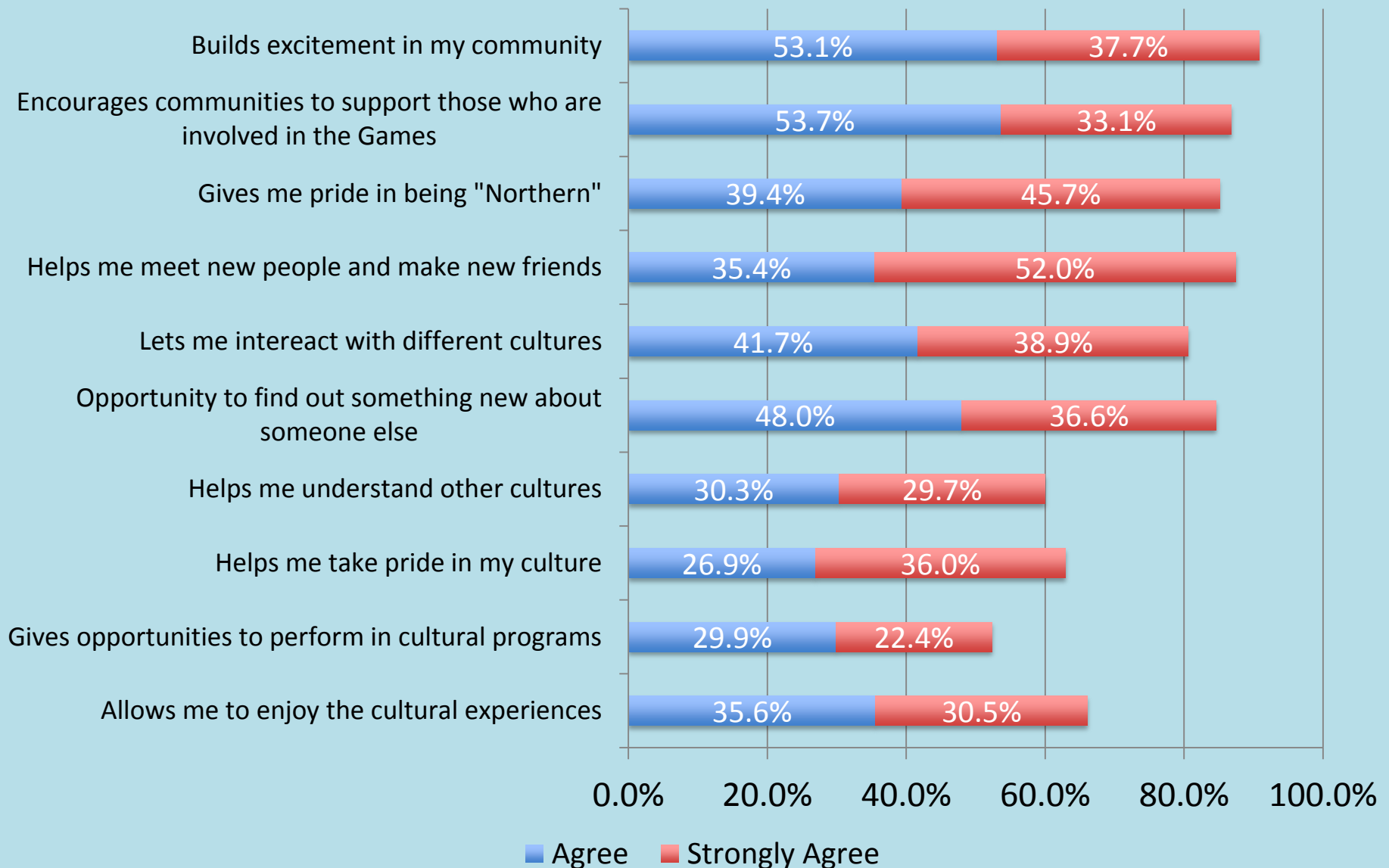
Ethnicity



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