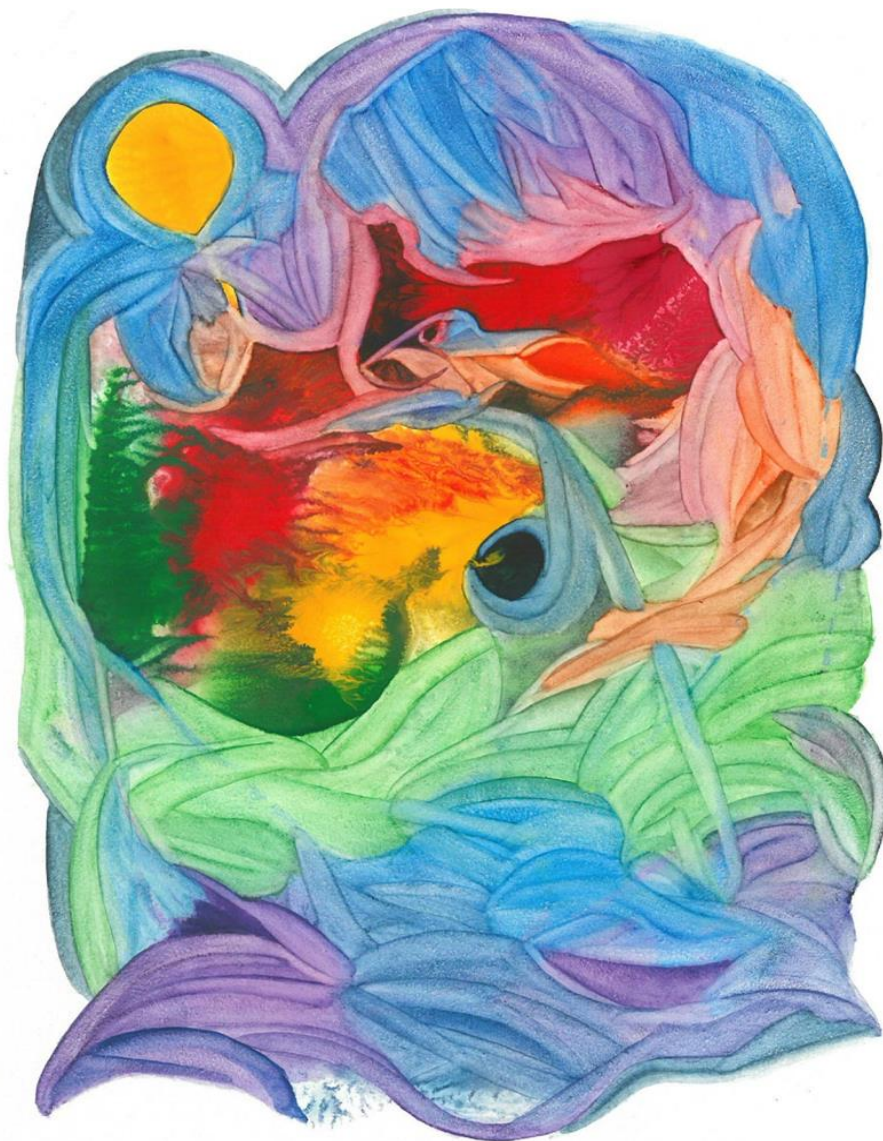


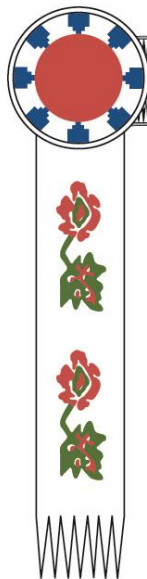
# **Resource Development Sector Barriers and Opportunities**

## **Summary of the Findings of the Aboriginal Women Literature Review and Survey Results**



**Prepared by:**

**The Native Women's Association of Canada  
February 2015**



## Native Women's Association of Canada

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women within First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Canadian societies. As a national organization representing Aboriginal women since 1974, NWAC's mandate is to achieve equality for all Aboriginal women in Canada.

The Native Women's Association of Canada would like to acknowledge contributions from the Aboriginal women respondents of the Barriers and Opportunities in the Resource Development Sector (BORDS) Survey.

The Native Women's Association of Canada would also like to acknowledge contributions from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) for this project.

# Canada

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<b>Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)</b> Satellite Office 1 Nicholas St., 9 <sup>th</sup> Floor Ottawa, ON Tel: 613-722-3033 Toll Free: 1-800-461-4043 Fax: 613-722-7687 Website: <a href="http://www.nwac.ca">www.nwac.ca</a>	<b>Head Office:</b> 155 International Road, Unit #4 Akwesasne, ON K6H 5R7
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## Content

Introduction .....	4
Background .....	5
Methodology.....	6
Challenges and Limitations .....	7
Summary of Findings and Results .....	9
Literature Review .....	9
Aboriginal Women Survey Findings .....	12
Identity Profiles: Gender, Age, Aboriginal Ancestry, Education Level .....	13
Resource Development: Familiarity, Employment, Location, & Perspectives.....	15
Perspectives of Resource Development Projects .....	19
Aboriginal Women and Resource Development Projects.....	26
Barriers and Projected Opportunities.....	30
Conclusions .....	32
Recommendations .....	35
Awareness.....	36
The Content and Focus .....	37
The Home.....	37
The Workplace .....	38
Skills.....	39
Appendix A: Aboriginal Women BORDS Questionnaire .....	40
Appendix B—Bibliography .....	48

## Introduction

According to the Federal government's Action Plan, the energy, mining and forestry industries provide over \$30 billion a year in revenue to governments. About 950,000 Canadians currently work in natural resources sectors.

Another 850,000 in every province and territory work in industries that service the sector. In total, the natural resource sector provides ten (10) percent of all jobs in Canada.

*In 2013, natural resource exports totalled \$235 billion. There are also hundreds of major resource projects currently underway or planned over the next ten years, worth approximately \$675 billion in investment. Source: Natural Resources Canada 2014*

From coast to coast, natural resource jobs are in every part of Canada — in rural communities, in the North and in Aboriginal communities. Today, more than thirty thousand (30,000) Aboriginal people work in energy, mining, and forestry jobs throughout Canada, making the sector the leading private sector employer of Aboriginal people. Jobs in the natural resource sector are generally high paying, with the potential for developmental growth. The natural resource sector is also cyclical, with world commodity prices affecting the sector's growth rate. This cyclical nature can impact job security and the current drop in oil prices how volatile this sector can be.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has reported that by the year 2020, Canada will be short one million workers in the natural resource sector. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) believes that Aboriginal

women can play integral roles in this industry by filling the growing need for skilled workers in the sector. For this to happen, employers in the industry must be made aware that with proper training and environments that are

*In 2006, 47% of Aboriginal women between 25 and 54 had completed postsecondary school, up from 41% in 2001. This higher rate of completed postsecondary schooling among women was seen for First Nations, Métis and Inuit women. Source: Statistics Canada 2006*

supportive, Aboriginal women can fill these labour shortages. In addition, Aboriginal women need to be made aware of these non-traditional employment opportunities so that they can become active participants in this sector.

To ensure that Aboriginal women are considered within these economic opportunities, NWAC has acted as a lead facilitator in this engagement process by initiating a project entitled, **The Barriers and Opportunities in the Resource Development Sector (BORDS).**

## Background

In September of 2014, NWAC received funding from the department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The purpose of this project was to identify barriers and opportunities in the resource development sector by conducting:

- an environmental scan of the Aboriginal activities of companies in the resource development sector;
- an online survey of Aboriginal women's perceptions of the barriers and opportunities in the sector; and
- an online survey of resource development companies' perceptions of the barriers and opportunities in doing business with Aboriginal people and the employment of Aboriginal women in jobs associated with the industry.

It was decided during the project that a preliminary literature review would be conducted in order to round out the research.

The purpose of this research was to lay the foundation for an informal engagement session to be held with Aboriginal women and resource sector corporate leaders in March 2015. The intent of this engagement session was to broaden the dialogue regarding how the socio-economic well-being of Aboriginal women can be improved by projects within the resource development sector, and how employing increasing numbers of Aboriginal women can benefit the natural resource sector.

A literature search was conducted for the purpose of the BORDS project. The intent of this survey and the preliminary literature review was to determine and identify:

- Barriers Aboriginal women are experiencing in doing business or becoming employed in the resource development sector;
- Opportunities in the resource development sector for employing or improving the well-being of Aboriginal women and their communities;
- Companies involved in directly employing Aboriginal women;
- What has been done to help Aboriginal women participate in these projects;
- The impacts of resource development on Aboriginal women; and
- The types of training to ensure Aboriginal women's participation in these projects.

In addition, it is anticipated that the project will assist NWAC in developing partnerships with resource development companies to:

- Work with resource development companies to alleviate or eliminate the barriers associated with the employment of Aboriginal women;
- Raise the awareness of career and employment opportunities within Canada's natural resource sector;
- Build a bridge to link Aboriginal women to these employment opportunities;
- Ensure the safety and security of Aboriginal women and their children; and
- Dispel the stereotypes and myths associated with these economic development projects.

By supporting Aboriginal community and business participation in resource development projects, NWAC seeks to enhance the economic well-being of Aboriginal women. To supplement the environmental scan and literature review, NWAC developed two surveys. The first survey was directed at Aboriginal women, and the second survey was geared toward resource development companies. The results of the Aboriginal women's survey will be rolled into this report and will be used to identify how Aboriginal women view the barriers and opportunities within the sector. The results of the corporate survey will be included in another report.

It is anticipated that the information gathered through the research will guide NWAC and the resource sector leadership in the next phase of the BORDS project, namely the engagement session. This report covers the methodology and findings of the survey directed at Aboriginal women and the literature review.

## Methodology

The first step in determining the barriers and opportunities experienced by Aboriginal women in the resource development sector was finding information to guide the creation process of the survey. A preliminary literature review was conducted for this purpose. An online keyword search was utilized to locate information on Aboriginal women's participation in the industry. The following phrases and keywords were run through the Google Scholar search engine:

- Aboriginal women in the labour market;
- Native women in natural resources;



- Aboriginal participation in resource development;
- Aboriginal women and economic development in the resource sector; and
- Barriers preventing Aboriginal women from participating in the resource development sector.

The keyword search provided sources with information that would then be used as the framework for the making of the Aboriginal women's BORDS survey. It garnered information in the form of articles, research reports, interviews, and roundtables with the opinions and experiences of Aboriginal women. These sources gave direction to the survey questions because they directly discussed the barriers and opportunities that Aboriginal women underwent when seeking employment or working in the resource development sector. The sources were then compiled in a bibliography, which can be found in Appendix B.

Using this valuable information, the survey questions were developed in varying styles and formats to ensure that the answers gathered from survey participants were consistent. Many of the ideas and sentiments appear multiple times throughout the survey but have simply been reworded. This would guarantee that information from respondents was well-rounded and that each barrier or opportunity is explored from many angles.

The survey was then disseminated through all of NWAC's communication pathways and by word of mouth. NWAC staff was asked to forward the questionnaire to all of their contacts as well as post the survey to their social media accounts. Many NWAC staff members had connections to Aboriginal women through their projects, and this proved to be an effective method of reaching the target audience. Similarly, the questionnaire was posted to the NWAC Facebook account on a weekly basis to remind followers to fill out the survey. To increase the reach of the survey, the link was also deployed through NWAC's Youth Engagement Network, which includes a list of post-secondary Aboriginal resource centres and Aboriginal youth who are interested in participating in NWAC's activities.

## Challenges and Limitations

The process of collecting responses revealed limitations in the web survey's methodology. The web tool used to host the survey was called FluidSurvey. Each response was available to view and analyze from the website's dashboard along with overall statistics on the survey's completion. A review of these statistics showed that there was a completion rate of just under fifty-one percent (51%) for the majority of the weeks that the survey was open.

A closer evaluation of each individual response revealed that FluidSurvey was categorizing replies as incomplete, even if questions left blank were set as optional. This led to a misleading completion rate, because many responses simply left their contact information blank, while still providing full answers for every other question. FluidSurvey did not provide a way to adjust this setting when it came time to analyze the responses. It is important to keep this limitation in mind when studying the survey's results.

The survey results are useful for identifying some specific steps and studies that may be used to increase the level of Aboriginal women working in the resource development sector. As the awareness of working in a remote mine or even generally in renewable energy, gas or forestry sector is lacking, the identification of specific barriers to working in the industry would be a difficult step for the majority of the respondents.



## Summary of Findings and Results

### Literature Review

As previously indicated, a literature review was conducted for the purpose of designing the surveys. An online keyword search was utilized to locate information on Aboriginal women's participation in the industry. Phrases and keywords were run through the Google Scholar search engine, which included:

- Aboriginal women in the labour market;
- Aboriginal women in the resource development industry;
- Barriers to women in the mining industry;
- Native women in natural resources;
- Skills shortages in the resource development sector;
- Aboriginal participation in resource development;
- Aboriginal women and economic development in the resource sector; and
- Barriers preventing Aboriginal women from participating in the resource development sector.

The literature search suggested that there is growing support for increasing the participation of Aboriginal women in resource development sector. The sector is projecting a looming skills shortage, as a lack of skilled professionals, an aging workforce, and unfavourable immigration policies make it hard for companies to fill vacant roles with qualified candidates. If nothing changes, the pending skills shortage could have a devastating effect on Canada's overall economy which continues to rely on natural resource industries.

Sources like the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health and the Status of Women as well as some mining companies such as BHP Billiton and Goldcorp maintain that, if given the opportunity for proper training and gainful employment, Aboriginal women thrive. They state that if Aboriginal women

***According to 2006 census data, females accounted for only 14.0% of all Aboriginal employees in the mining sector, showing a slight increase from 11.5% in 2001. Even though Aboriginal women in mining were more likely than Aboriginal men to have post-secondary qualifications, they earned average incomes of approximately \$15, 500 less than men. In addition, despite their higher education levels, Aboriginal women tend to occupy or are offered traditional gender positions such as: housekeeping cooking or administrative work while their male counterparts are employed in higher paying, technical roles.***

can overcome the barriers that prevent them from entering non-traditional employment opportunities, they are able to retain employment that benefits them, their families, the company that employs them and the community in which they reside.

The literature search indicated that there are various socio-economic barriers that prevented Aboriginal women from obtaining or keeping employment in the resource development industry. This list of barriers was determined through direct discussion with Aboriginal women workers and through the literature search.

### ***The main barriers cited included:***

- Difficulties in obtaining relevant hands-on workplace experience and/or job readiness skills due to geographic, financial and educational constraints;
- Lack of a solid educational base – issues with literacy and numeracy;
- Lack of suitable housing;
- In remote areas, a lack of life skills or understanding of matters such as public transportation, bank accounts, etc.;
- Limited experience with generally accepted workplace expectations i.e. regular attendance, on-time arrival, etc.;
- Personal, family and community challenges that include pressures to return to the home community;
- Challenges related to balancing culture and traditions with the natural resource sector;
- Few role models or mentors within the industry;
- Lack of affordable or accessible childcare;
- Workplace harassment;
- Gender and race-based discrimination; and
- Health and safety.

Two reports, **Ramp-Up: A Study of The Status of Women in Canada's Mining and Exploration Sector** and **Building Canada's Innovation Economy: Best Practices for Supporting Women in Non-Traditional Sectors** stated that the future success of the resource development sector depends on the involvement of underrepresented groups, especially Aboriginal women. For this to happen, these reports suggested that specific programs needed to be developed to help guide Aboriginal women into the resource development labour market. They further state

that employers in the industry need to be aware of the barriers that prevent Aboriginal women's participation and gave recommendations on how to bridge this gap. They stressed that training and career development of women in trades should be a future emphasis of resource development companies.

In the Electricity Sector Councils' report entitled **"Aboriginal Initiatives Participation Project"**, the Council made a series of observations regarding the lack of Aboriginal employees in that sector. The report stated that generally, there has been limited awareness among Aboriginal people of the various career opportunities within the natural resource sector, and from the industry's standpoint, there is a lack of understanding of how to successfully identify and hire qualified Aboriginal candidates.



Unfortunately, even today, despite the progress made towards improving the lives of Aboriginal women, education levels can be generally significantly lower than the non-Aboriginal population, impacting their ability to enter skilled occupations. For most people, job training and apprenticeships are challenging. They become even more difficult to complete if a worker's educational background is not solid. Literacy and numeracy issues are often quoted as barriers to skilled occupations in the natural resource sector, and support for adult basic education training, as well as skills and capacity development, remain a priority for most Aboriginal communities.

Many Aboriginal women reside in communities that are located close to natural resource development projects, offering resource companies an excellent opportunity to save on transportation costs and improve employee retention by using the local labour force. However, when Aboriginal women need to move for job training or employment, it can create personal, social and financial demands on top of the challenges of the training. Issues faced include a feeling of:

- Isolation and loneliness;
- Continuing "pull" back to support family and community;
- Being overwhelmed with urban realities such as bank accounts and public transportation;

- Reduced income while training;
- Additional living expenses;
- Training challenges due to limited literacy or educational background, in addition to the steep learning curve faced by any new hire or trainee; and
- Finally, limited relevant workplace experience can make it difficult for Aboriginal women to successfully compete for opportunities.

Additionally, some Aboriginal people are concerned that resource development projects bring with them a myriad of additional social issues that may add to the existing social challenges in a community. Mining communities are known for having a lot of disposable income, and also for some of the negative consequences of that income, namely increased alcohol consumption, drug abuse, prostitution and domestic violence. In some remote areas, there are also significant concerns about the impacts of bringing outsiders to the area upon the indigenous language and culture.

In Canada, most new mining ventures are located in remote areas. While prior to the mid 1980's it was common to build a town site to service a new mine, this is no longer the norm. Today, the workforce generally resides at a camp built near the mine, working twelve hour shifts for one or two weeks and heading home for one or two weeks off. This pattern of shift work can cause significant disruption in family life since workers are absent for approximately half of the time, working on-site. Many Aboriginal people see this pattern plus a significant increase in disposable income as causes of family breakdowns, increasing violence, alcohol and drug abuse in the community. To dispute this belief, there is some suggestion in a study conducted by Susan Clifford (B.Sc., Hons.) from the University of Australia in regard to remote fly-in mining operations that concluded that working in these projects does not create negative impacts on home life. However, in the same study, she recognizes that remote operations do increase the impact of pre-existing negative issues in the home.

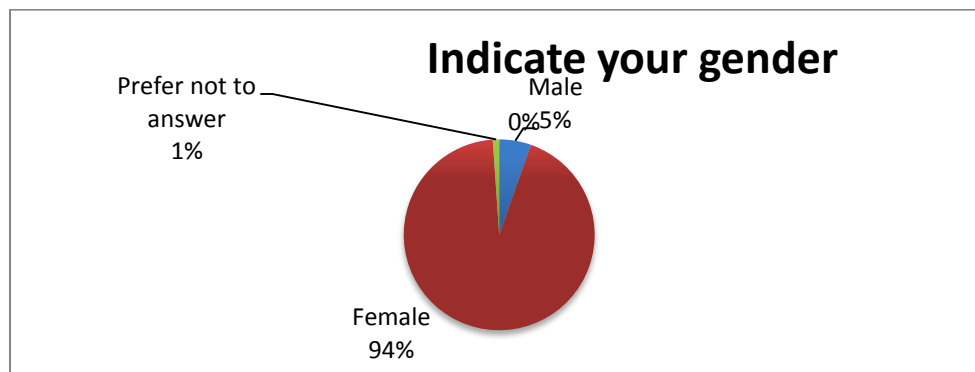
### **Aboriginal Women Survey Findings**

An online survey was conducted by NWAC of Aboriginal women's perceptions of the barriers and opportunities within the resource development sector. There were a total of 185 respondents who participated in the survey. The findings are given below in the subcategories of:

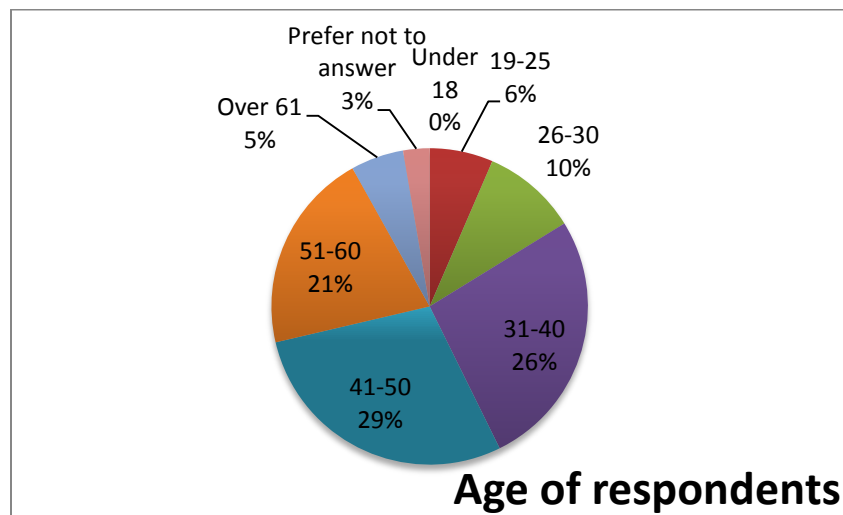
- Identity;
- Relationship to resource development; and
- Perspectives to resource development.

## Identity Profiles: Gender, Age, Aboriginal Ancestry, Education Level

The survey began by asking participants to indicate their gender, age, Aboriginal ancestry and highest achieved education level. Out of the 185 responses, 173 participants indicated their gender as female, 10 participants indicated their gender as male, and 2 participants preferred not to answer. The survey responses to the question regarding gender are shown in the following chart.



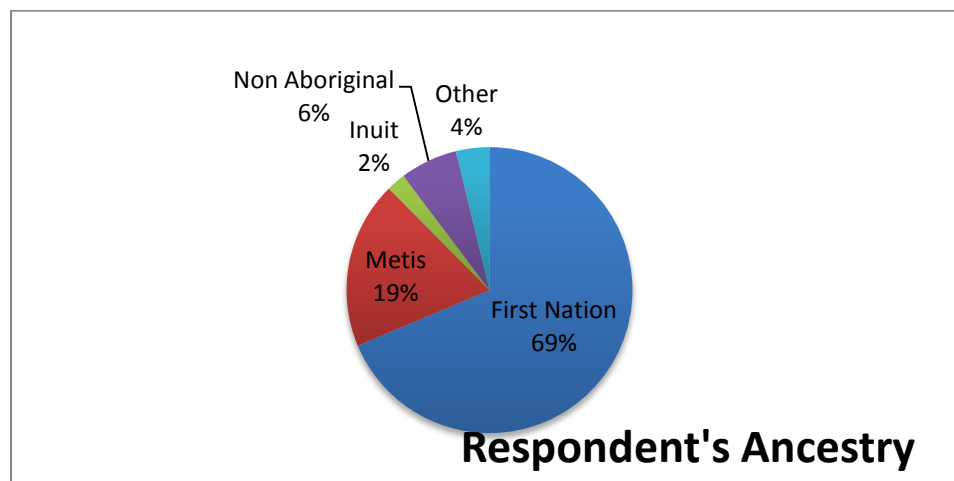
The findings indicated that the majority (75.6%) of survey participants are between the ages of 31 and 60. This goes in hand with the research project because this age group of participants may have the most information regarding barriers and opportunities within employment, as they are the age group that is most likely employed or looking for a job.



In terms of Aboriginal ancestry identification, there is a degree of diversity present within the survey participants. Out of the 185 participants, a majority (127) of participants self-

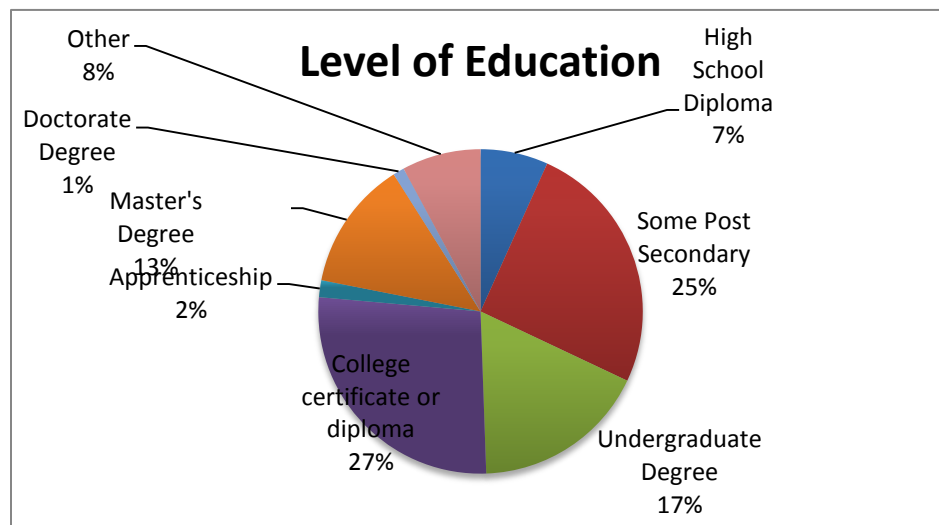
identify as First Nations followed by a minority of Métis (35), non-Aboriginal (12), Inuit (4), non-status, (2), First Nation non-status (1), Anishinaabe (1), Qualipu (1), Algonquin (1), and Haudenosaunee (1). A majority of participants self-identifying as First Nation is critical for producing significant research findings in regard to Aboriginal women's perceptions of barriers and opportunities that Aboriginal people face within the resource development sector.

Of significance when a person is self-identifying is the concept that Canada's indigenous populations are not homogenous, and more people are starting to identify their ancestry more specifically. In this question, five people identified the specific Nation to which they belong rather than identifying as a First Nations person.



As indicated in the following chart, the highest level of education achieved of 178 participants is a college certificate or diploma (48), followed by some post-secondary (45), an undergraduate degree (31), and a Master's degree (23). The minority of survey respondents fell under other (14), high school diploma (12), apprenticeship (3), and Doctorate degree (2).

These responses indicate that Aboriginal women are seeking higher levels of education. However, answers that would be more relevant for increasing participation in natural resource extraction would be the type of education. It would be interesting to see if any of the education paths include science subjects such as mining, engineering, geology, hydro-geology, environmental studies, or the trades such as millwrights, carpenters, electricians, heavy equipment operators and equipment maintenance. Many of these lines of education could lead to a career in the resource extraction industries.



## Resource Development: Familiarity, Employment, Location, & Perspectives

The second section of the survey sought details regarding the participants' relationship to the resource development sector. The number of participants who completed this section of the survey ranged from 69-165.

The participants were asked to give their familiarity with the resource development sector. In the following chart, it can be observed that out of 165 answers, close to 50% were familiar with the resource sector, which suggests that there is significant unfamiliarity with the sector among the respondents.

1. Are you familiar with the resource development sector? (Please check one response)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes (1)	<div style="width: 49.1%;"></div>	49.1%	81
No (2)	<div style="width: 40.6%;"></div>	40.6%	67
Don't know. (3)	<div style="width: 10.3%;"></div>	10.3%	17
Total Responses			165

As found in the following survey question, a majority (66.1%) of participants indicated they have not been employed in any of the resource development sectors. A minority (33.3%) of participants indicated they have been employed in other sectors (15.2%), oil and gas (11.5%), mining (9.7%), forestry (9.1%) and electricity (3.0%). There are 25 participants within the other



category that specified their employment. Out of these 25 answers, 8 participants indicated they have been employed with other resource development sectors such as fisheries (2), green energy (1), and potash (1). Note that the potash sector should be included as part of the mining sector.

2. Have you ever been employed in any one of the following sectors? (Please check all that apply)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Mining (1)		9.7%	16
Oil and Gas (2)		11.5%	19
Forestry (3)		9.1%	15
Electricity (4)		3.0%	5
Other, please specify... (5)		15.2%	25
None of the above. (6)		66.1%	109
Total Responses			165

Out of the 25 answers regarding types of employment, a few of the participants indicated that their employment was a negotiating (1) and consulting (1) role within a variety of sectors. There were 17 participants who indicated other employment such as education (2), government (2), and First Nations leadership (1).








A second part of this survey question was directed towards the participants who previously indicated that they have had employment within the resource sector. Out of 69 answers, a majority of participants indicated the type of job as administrative (28) and as other (20), where participants specified a variety of job types such as consultant (2), food and beverage (2), negotiator (1), board representative (1), wildlife technician (1), emergency communications (1) and liaison (1).






The survey participants that indicated that they have worked within the resource sector could be divided into temporary and full time work. A number of positions, such as consultant, negotiator, board representative and liaison probably are defined time-frame positions, whereas the positions of wildlife technician,

emergency communications, and food and beverage are likely operational positions and are on a full time basis.





This breakdown between the positions suggests that the early stages of resource project development require experienced professionals to work on behalf of an Aboriginal community and once these specific jobs are completed, they generally move on to other projects. The remaining operational positions appear to fall into a category that is very specific to the relationship between the aboriginal community and the project proponent. The survey seems to have failed to attract a significant amount of Aboriginal women who are in the natural resource sector, or it suggests that there are not a lot Aboriginal women who are employed within natural resource extraction operations.

2a. If yes, what type of job? (Please check all that apply)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Administrative (1)		40.6%	28
Skilled Trades (2)		10.1%	7
General Labour (3)		21.7%	15
Management (4)		14.5%	10
Construction (5)		8.7%	6
Executive (6)		13.0%	9
Other, please specify... (7)		29.0%	20
Total Responses			69

As shown in following chart, out of the 162 respondents to this question, 92 of the participants have lived in or near a community where there was a resource development project and 39 participants have not, leaving 31 participants who are unsure.

3. Have you ever lived in or near a community where there was a resource development project? (Please check one response)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes (1)		56.8%	92
No (2)		24.1%	39
Don't know. (3)		19.1%	31
Total Responses			162

The participants were asked if they believe that resource development projects such as mining, forestry, oil and gas, etc. bring positive results to Aboriginal women and their communities. The answers of yes, no, and maybe are all close in numbers, as can be seen on following chart. Out of 162 responses, a majority (58) answered maybe, followed by 54 who answered no, 32 who answered yes, and 18 who answered don't know.

4. Do you believe that resource development projects such as mining, forestry, oil and gas, etc. bring positive results to Aboriginal women and their communities? (Please check one response)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes (1)		19.8%	32
No (2)		33.3%	54
Maybe (3)		35.8%	58
Don't know. (4)		11.1%	18
Total Responses			162

The survey asked two follow-up questions where the participants could indicate the types of positive and/or negative results that they believe resource development projects have on Aboriginal women and their communities.

The positive results can be categorized into employment opportunities, economic opportunities, community development and self-empowerment. A majority (51 out of 64) of participants said that employment opportunity is a positive result. Many participants further elaborated on their answers stating that employment provides the ability to care for family, can lead to further education, financial stability, and self-sufficiency. The second most popular answer (12) given, which was related to that of employment, is the benefit of community economic development. The final common answer, given by 6 participants, is self-empowerment. Participants further stated that self-empowerment can be gained from the ability to be role a model to the community youth, and from moving away from the negative stereotypes (such as unemployment) that are held against Aboriginal women.

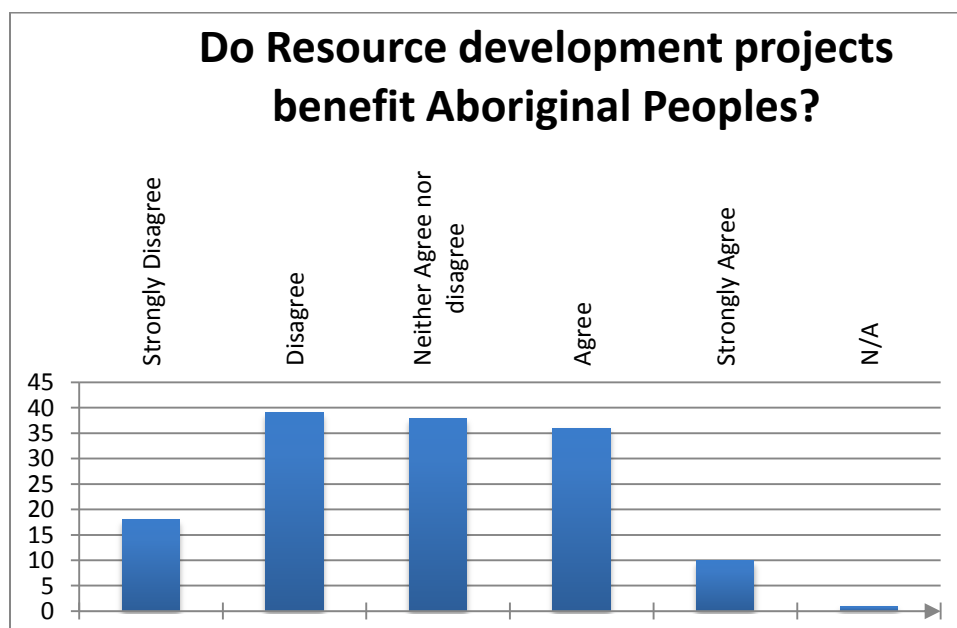
***"In theory, it should bring economic development into the community. And in theory the benefits should impact Aboriginal women and their families."***  
**--Survey Respondent**

The second follow-up question asked participants to indicate the barriers that they feel Aboriginal women and their communities face from resource development projects. The most common answers, out of a total of 82, may be categorized into concerns about environmental

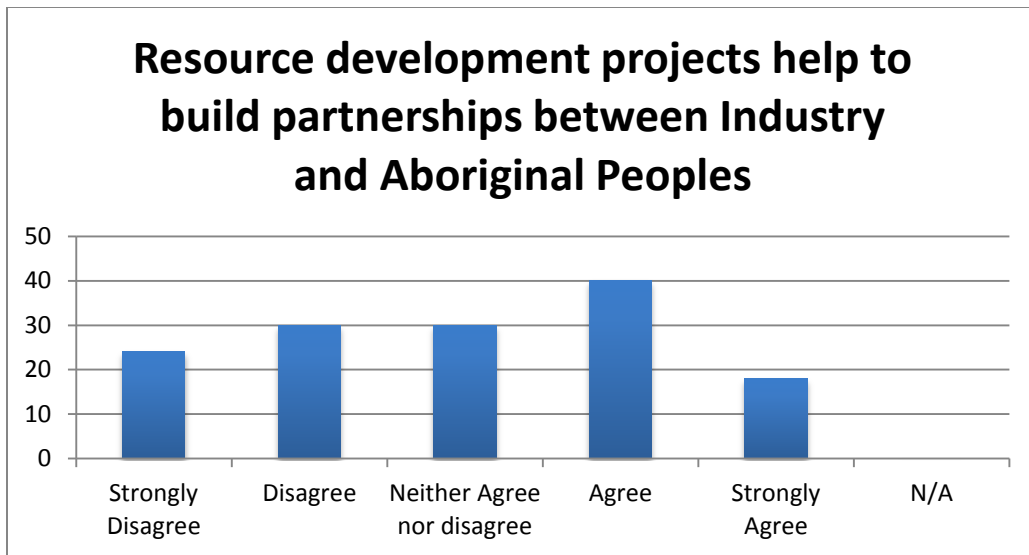
degradation (42), violence and inequality against women (31), inadequate child support (8), and drug and alcohol abuse (1).

## Perspectives of Resource Development Projects

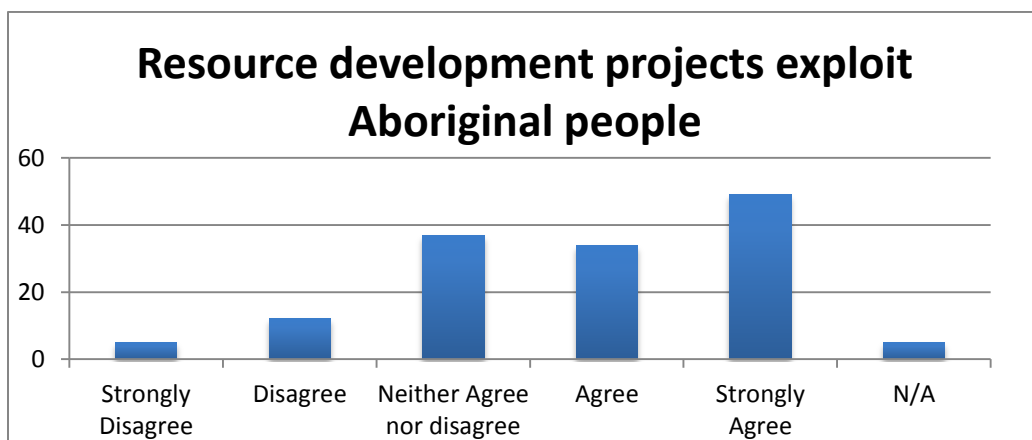
Further questions were asked in order to develop an understanding of the participant's perspectives on resource development. A total of 142 people responded to these questions, by choosing whether they agree or disagree with certain statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least amount of agreement and 5 being the highest. The respondents were also able to answer that the question is not applicable.



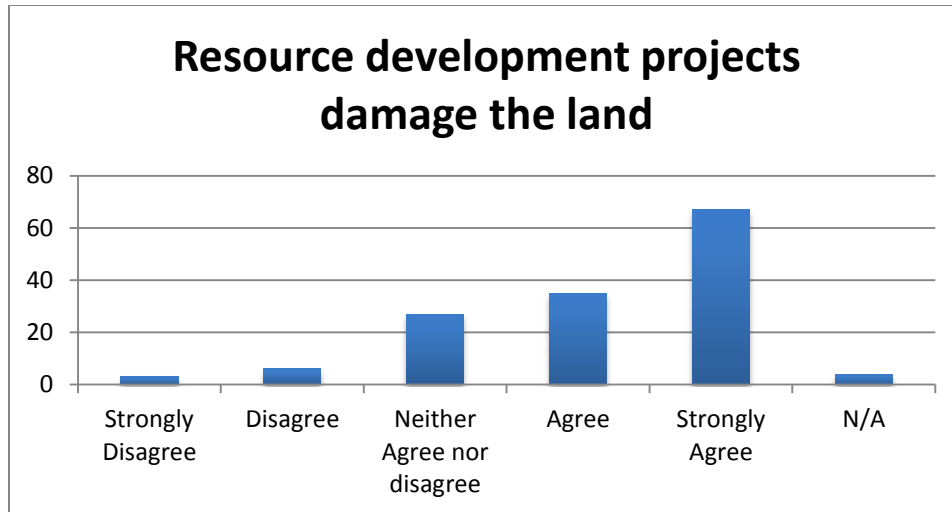
The belief by the respondents of whether or not resource development is beneficial is mixed and perhaps even muddling, as middle answers from disagree, to neutral to agree each have approximately 25% of the responses. Thus, the perspective in this case seems to be overwhelmingly--maybe. However, a significant amount of respondents (22.7%) are of the view that resource development does not support the communities.



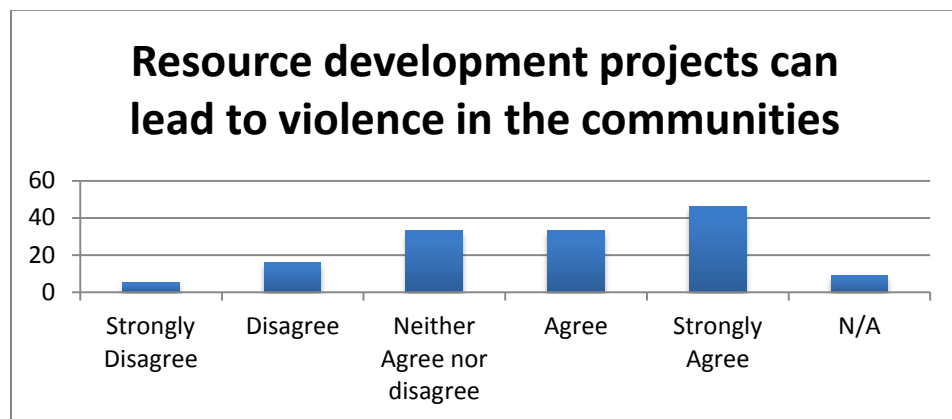
Again, the responses are not cut and dried as the view by the respondents overall is again, “maybe it is and maybe it is not”. However, it would be of interest and more useful to see if the perspective has changed over time.



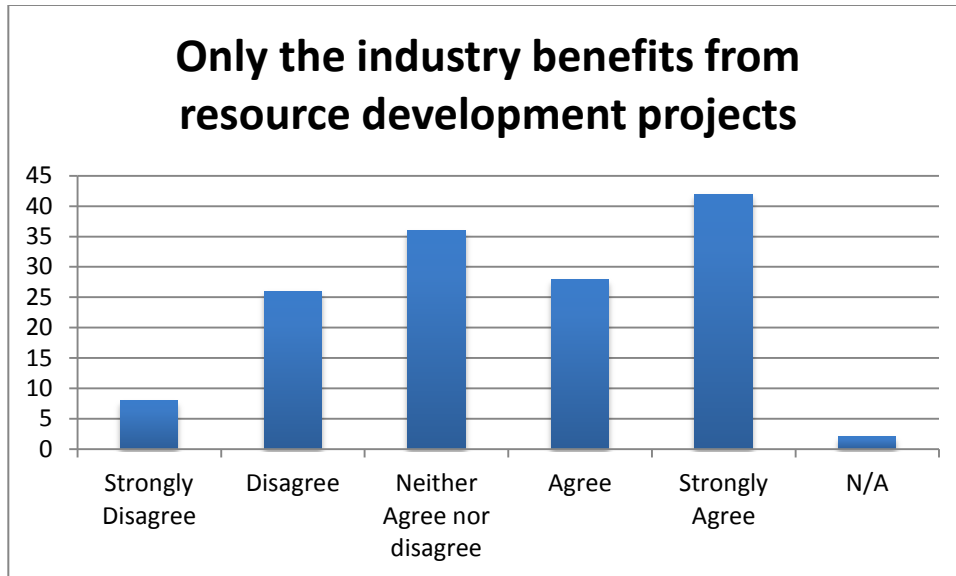
This is a significant response and suggests that there is a strong belief that industry is taking advantage of Aboriginal people. The “in agreement” responses of numbers 4 and 5 suggest 58% of the respondents see the industry taking advantage of Aboriginal people. The middle response of number 3 implies that the respondents were ambivalent towards resource development projects and that their opinions may be swayed in either direction with more information.



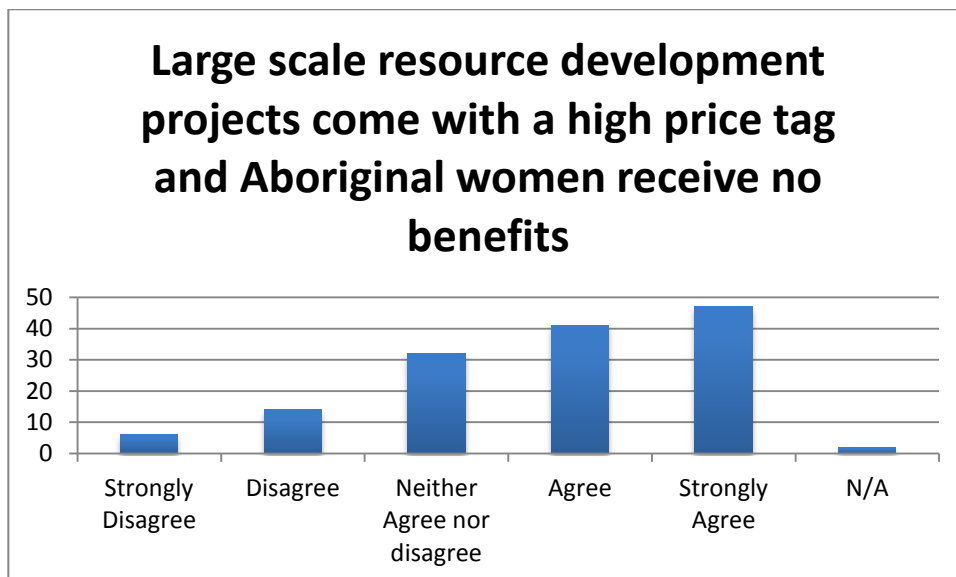
It can be observed that the respondents overwhelmingly believe that resource development harms the land, with 74.5% respondents in categories 4 to 5. Another 18% indicated that they were undecided (neither agree nor disagree) on whether or not these projects cause damage to the land.



A total of 80% of the respondents somewhat agree and very much agree with this statement, meaning that a majority of the Aboriginal women who participated believe that resource development projects lead to violence in surrounding communities.



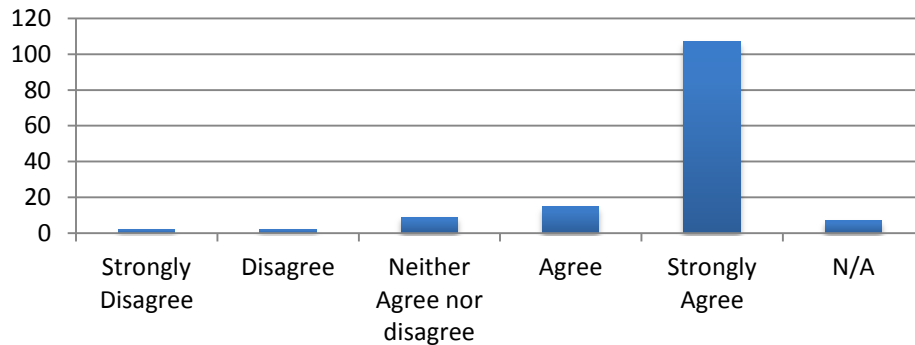
The majority view of the respondents is that only the industry benefits from resource development. Almost 50% of the respondents believe this statement, with the middling view of #3 occupying another 25.4% of the responses.



60% of the respondents believe with a high degree of conviction that Aboriginal women do not receive benefits from large-scale resource developments. The middling view is still high, with a response of indifference with the statement sitting at 22%. Significantly, outright disagreement with this statement is only 4.2% and general disagreement is only 10%.

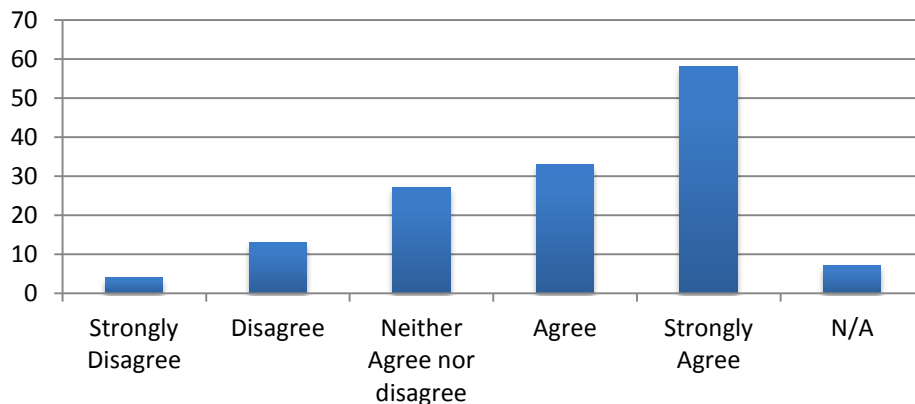


### **Aboriginal people are the stewards of the land and must be consulted on resource development projects.**



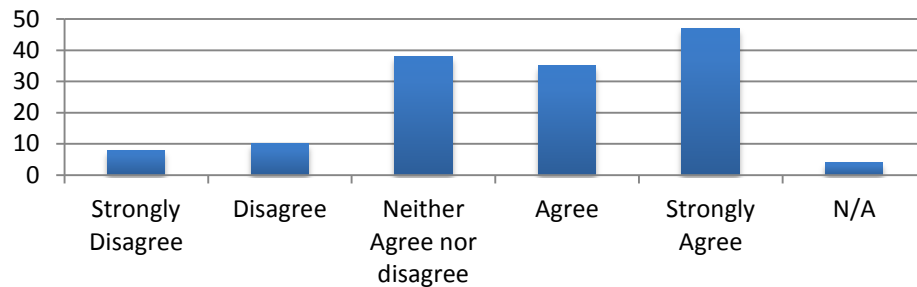
Of the respondents, only 1.4% totally disagree with the statement. A further 1.4% somewhat disagree, with the overwhelming response of 86% of respondents agreeing with the statement that Aboriginal people are stewards of the land and must be consulted. Recent Supreme Court of Canada cases support this belief.

### **Benefits to Aboriginal people and communities are short term.**



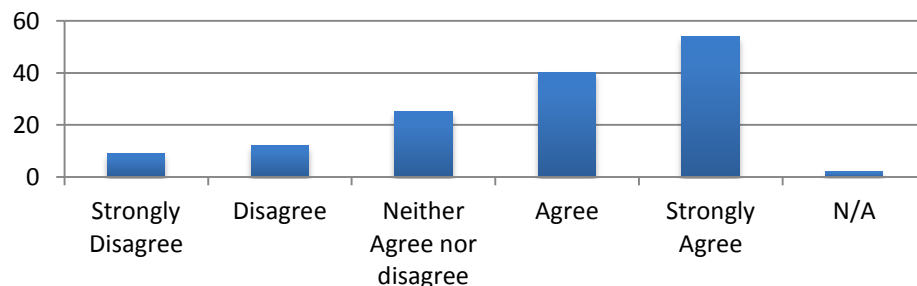
The majority of the respondents believe this statement to be true; with 64% indicating that they either agree or strongly agree that the benefits of resource development projects to Aboriginal people are short term.

**Economic booms and busts of resource development projects create few benefits to Aboriginal people.**

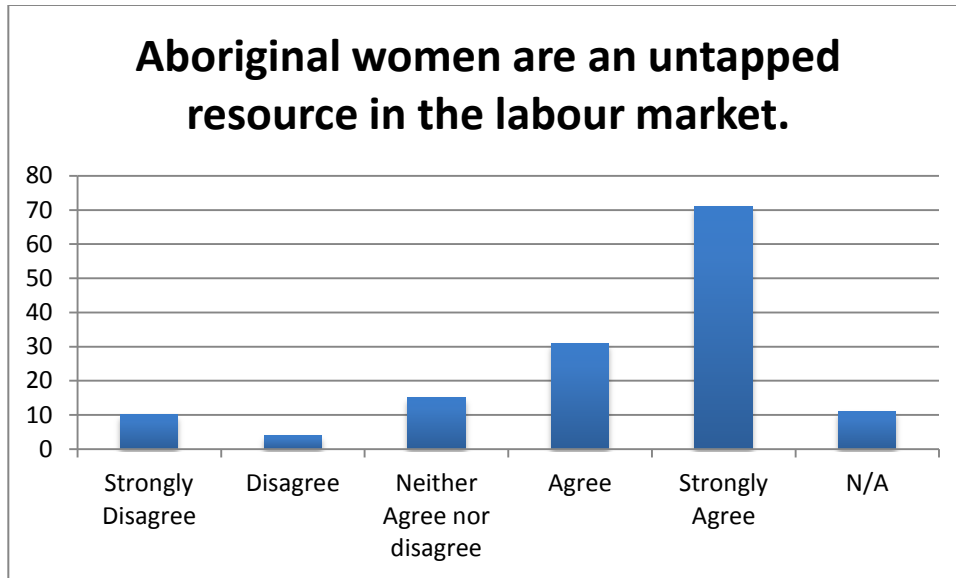


When response numbers 4 to 5 are tallied, almost 60% of the responses agree with the statement that the boom and bust cycle of resource development creates few benefits to Aboriginal people. Again, there seems to be a high rate of indifference towards this statement with 26% of respondents indicating that they neither agree nor disagree.

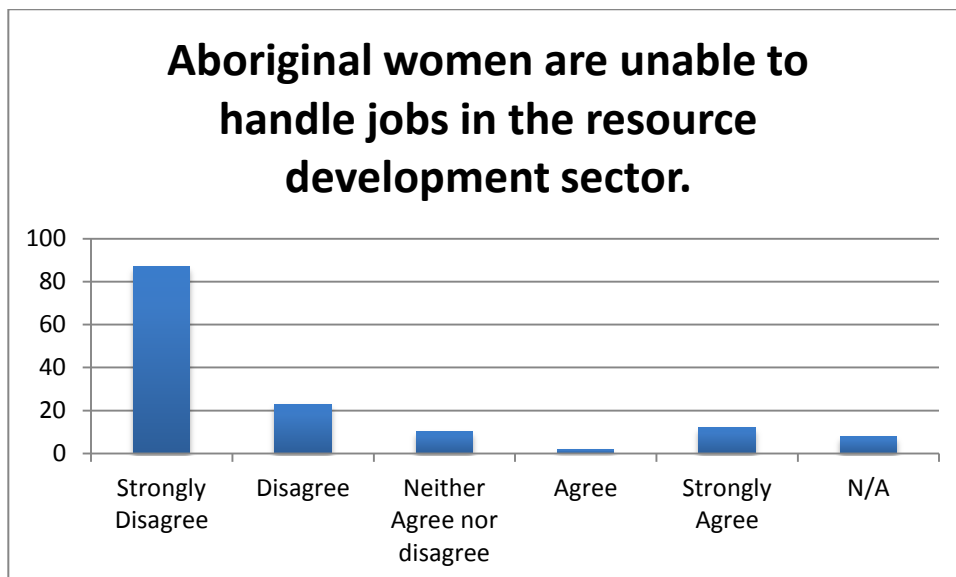
**Resource development projects are beneficial if Aboriginal people receive the skills and training they need to participate in the labour market.**



Over 66% of the respondents strongly agree with this statement.



This statement is believed to be true by over almost 80% of the respondents. 50% of the total respondents agree very strongly that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women are an untapped resource.



Over 75% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Overall, a majority of participants agreed that natural resource development projects exploit Aboriginal people (34.5%), damage the land (47.2%), can lead to violence in the communities (32.4%), and that Aboriginal women are an untapped resource in the labour market (50.0%).

Regarding the potential benefits of natural resource development projects, a majority (27.5%) of survey participants disagreed that resource development projects benefit Aboriginal peoples and that only the companies benefit (29.6%). A majority of respondents agreed that Aboriginal women do not benefit (33.1%), community benefits are short term (40.8%), economic booms in the project create few benefits for Aboriginal people (33.1%), and that projects are beneficial if Aboriginal people receive the skills and training necessary to participate in the labour market (38%), and partnerships between industry and Aboriginal peoples are built (28.2%).

### **Aboriginal Women and Resource Development Projects**

The next section of the survey dealt more directly with Aboriginal women's involvement in resource development projects. The participants were asked to rank from 1-5 of what they believe is needed to increase Aboriginal women's participation in resource development projects. The list of options can be seen below.

1. What are the five top supports that are needed to increase Aboriginal women's participation in resource development projects? (Please select 5)



Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Develop pre-employment training programs. (1)		62.0%	67
Deliver financial literacy workshops. (2)		15.7%	17
Provide support to small businesses. (3)		14.8%	16
Provide investment support to entrepreneurs. (4)		17.6%	19
Create daycare facilities. (5)		63.0%	68
Invest in recreational facilities for youth. (6)		15.7%	17
Create jobs with flexible work hours. (7)		50.0%	54
Encourage participation in the workplace. (8)		14.8%	16
Provide information on types of careers available. (9)		15.7%	17
Provide information on educational or physical requirements of jobs in the industry. (10)		13.0%	14
Offer well-paying jobs. (11)		50.9%	55
Provide mentorship programs. (12)		32.4%	35
Housing for remote employment opportunities. (13)		27.8%	30
Partnerships with Aboriginal governments. (14)		22.2%	24
Provide corporations with Aboriginal awareness workshops. (15)		19.4%	21
Create safe work environments for Aboriginal women. (16)		54.6%	59
Other, please specify... (17)		9.3%	10
Total Responses			108

Of the top five options that were selected the most often include:



- create daycare facilities (63%);
- develop pre-employment training programs (62%);
- create safe work environments for Aboriginal women (54.6%);
- offer well-paying jobs (50.9%); and
- create jobs with flexible work hours (50%).

There was an option for participants to give their own answer and a few of these included the need for companies to change their mindset, give long term employment opportunities, and employ both women and men who believe in equality of the sexes.

The survey asked participants if they are aware of any pre-employment programs that can assist Aboriginal women in entering into non-traditional jobs in the resource development sector. As shown below, 62 survey respondents answered no, and 51 answered yes.

2. Are you aware of any pre-employment programs that can assist Aboriginal women in entering into non-traditional jobs in the resource development? (Please check one response)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes (1)		45.1%	51
No (2)		54.9%	62
Total Responses			113

When asked should companies have an understanding of Aboriginal culture, nearly a hundred percent of the respondents answered yes.

3. Should resource development companies have an understanding of Aboriginal cultures? (Please check one response)			
Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes (1)		99.1%	112
No (2)		0.9%	1
Total Responses			113

The participants were then asked to give their opinions on how it can be ensured that Aboriginal women receive the skills and training they need in order to participate in resource development projects. Out of the 103 answers, there are three common threads.

The first thread is that resource development companies need to provide funded education and paid training to Aboriginal women (44). The companies also need to take the family needs of many Aboriginal women into consideration and help fund needs such as child daycare. The companies also need to have mentors on-site and offer counselling.

***"There is a need for specific knowledge and skills transfer that are meaningful and long-term in nature."***  
***--Survey Respondent***

The second common thread is that companies need to consult with the women in communities (26). Resource development companies need to develop partnerships with women in communities, and with Aboriginal women's organizations. Once these partnerships are formed, a strategy needs to be developed with the goal of minimizing barriers against Aboriginal women in the resource development sector. Through these partnerships, companies would be able to listen to the needs of women in the workplace such as: enforced equality in the workplace, cultural understanding, to be given an opportunity to take on leadership roles, and the need to be respected. Companies need to seek Aboriginal women's feedback routinely throughout the work period, which can help in meeting their needs and concerns.

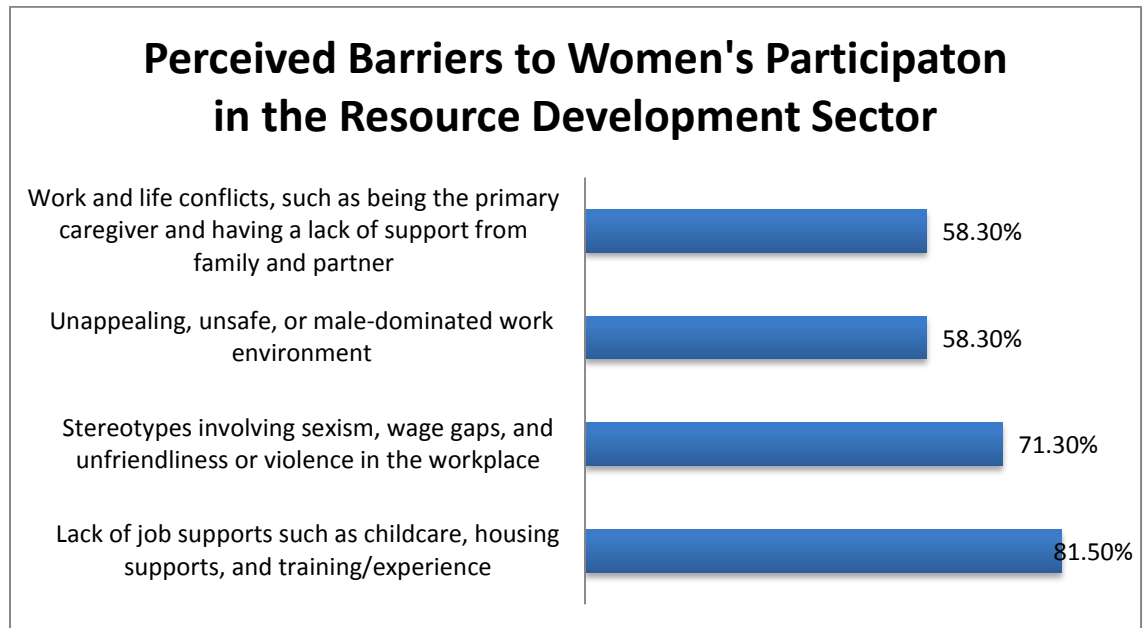
The final common thread found is that of the need for awareness of opportunities (20). Many Aboriginal women tend to not be aware of career paths and job opportunities in the resource sector, but this can change with the help of targeted recruitment, social networking, community workshops, and the introduction to resource development curriculum in high schools. These efforts need to promote the instructions of the basic skills needed, how to apply, and a need to provide women with information on how they can prepare for the job.

The outliers of these common threads include answers such as; unsupportive, unknown, and that Aboriginal women should be seeking more traditional type employment that does not harm the land.



## Barriers and Projected Opportunities

Based on the research, the four 4 major barriers that prevent Aboriginal women from participating in resource development projects are:



These four items while recognized as primary barriers should not take away from the lower response rate for other significant reasons, as follows:

- Lack of industry and job opportunities, or not know what jobs are available (36.1%)
- Having to relocate to isolated communities (35.2%)
- Conflicts with traditional values (31.5%)
- Women's negative perspectives of working in non-traditional jobs (ie. Jobs in resource development are unfeminine) (21.3%)
- Lack of housing support (37.5%)

A few participants specified their answers as drug/alcohol abuse, cultural and generational issues, and unsupportive.

The survey, in a different question format, asked again for participants to indicate their ideas on what may prevent Aboriginal women from participating in the resource development projects. A majority of participants agreed that relocating to isolated communities (34.8%), sexism and unfriendliness (33%), unsafe or unappealing work



environments (33%), and that the jobs create work-life conflicts (32.1%). A majority also strongly agreed that lack of childcare (46.4%), lack of training (37.5%), and lack of housing supports (37.5%) prevent Aboriginal women from working in the sector.

When asked what opportunities resource development projects can bring to Aboriginal women, the survey results indicate that many participants believe that there are many potential opportunities. Although, this question is unclear on whether it is insinuating that projects already do provide these benefits, or is it insinuating that projects need to provide these benefits. From results, and previous participant input, the participants seem to answer the latter.

Each opportunity option was chosen by a large amount of participants. The top five answers were: new job opportunity (75.9%), training programs (68.8%), higher wages (67.9%), pre-employment training programs (62.5%), and economic growth in the community (61.6%). The final option gives participants to specify their opinion where many disagreed with any benefits, and many furthered the benefits already given such as the company needing to fund training and education programs.

6. What are some of the opportunities that resource development projects can bring to Aboriginal women and their communities? (Please select all that apply)

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
New community facilities/building. (1)		53.6%	60
New roads. (2)		29.5%	33
Training programs. (3)		68.8%	77
Competitive compensation/benefits. (4)		59.8%	67
New job opportunities. (5)		75.9%	85
On-site daycare facilities. (6)		50.9%	57
Higher wages. (7)		67.9%	76
Healthcare benefits. (8)		49.1%	55
Pre-employment training programs. (9)		62.5%	70
Youth programs. (10)		41.1%	46
Ensure further Aboriginal consultation. (11)		50.0%	56
Economic growth in the community. (12)		61.6%	69
Other, please specify... (13)		15.2%	17
Total Responses			112

The survey, in a different question format, asked again for participants to indicate what resource development projects can bring to Aboriginal women and their communities. A majority of participants all agreed that projects; can bring new job opportunity and higher wages (46.4%), can create new roads and facilities in communities of Aboriginal women (31.5%), can provide women with healthcare benefits (36%), can offer training programs to women (37.8%), can provide women with on-site daycare facilities and youth programs (34.2%), can spur economic growth in Aboriginal communities (39.6%), and can help ensure further consultation with Aboriginal people (61.2%).

## Conclusions

The views of the survey respondents suggest that there is a significant lack of knowledge regarding the benefits arising from, and about potential career opportunities within the resource development sector for Aboriginal women. The generality of the survey resulted in answers that were middle of the road, suggesting that more study should be conducted on specific aspects related to Aboriginal women and the resource development sector.

The respondents of the survey were asked if they have worked in the resource extraction industry, and of the 109 who answered, two thirds have never been employed in these sectors. However, the survey also indicates that almost 57% of respondents have lived in close proximity to a natural resource development, so have some awareness. When asked whether natural resource development has brought positive benefits to the community, only 20% of respondents thought so; 33% thought not, and 36% do not know one way or the other. The survey did indicate that if an opportunity is made available to them, a significant amount of Aboriginal women would seek employment/careers in the resource extraction industries if a number of real and/or perceived barriers were eliminated.

**“When asked whether natural resource development has brought positive benefits to the community, only 20% of respondents thought so; 33% thought not, and 36% do not know one way or the other.”**

The survey results suggest that there are significant perceptual barriers that may stop Aboriginal women from even trying to enter the workforce in the resource development sector. The barriers to recruiting Aboriginal women are varied, but generally include a lack of awareness or knowledge of the career opportunities, difficulties in obtaining relevant hands on workplace experience and/or job readiness skills, issues with literacy and numeracy, lack of suitable housing, personal, family and community challenges that include pressures to return to the home community, few role models or mentors within the industry, lack of affordable or accessible childcare, and gender and race-based discrimination.

The following four barriers were acknowledged by 60% to 80% of the respondents as significant barriers to employment in resource extraction industries:

- 1. Lack of job supports such; childcare, housing support, training and experience.**
- 2. Stereo types involving, sexism, wage gaps, and unfriendliness or violence in the workplace.**
- 3. Work life conflicts such as: being the primary caregiver, and lack of support from family and partner.**
- 4. Unappealing, unsafe or male dominated work environments.**

In addition to these main four categories of barriers, there are other barriers that were identified by 20 to 36% of the respondents, which include:

- 1. Lack of industry and/or job opportunities or not knowing what jobs are available.**
- 2. The perception that resource extraction conflicts with aboriginal traditional values.**
- 3. Women's concerns about the challenges related to working in non-traditional occupations.**

Generally, Aboriginal women have indicated that, while they do not believe that they have seen much in the way of positive benefits to the communities and to themselves from resource extraction industries, if given the opportunity to participate in this segment of the wage economy, and if the appropriate family support and training was made available to them, they would see the industry as a viable career option.

## Recommendations

The survey results can be used to set out a path forward to increase the level of participation of Aboriginal women in the natural resource development industry. The survey identified a number of barriers that are preventing Aboriginal women from entering the natural resource development work environment, and suggests a number of specific actions that could be taken to increase the level of participation.

The study participants described at least four types and sources of barriers, and identified four potential areas of focus for NWAC when working with various levels of governments (Aboriginal, Federal, Provincial, and the Territories), the corporations that comprise the natural resource development sector, and most importantly, Aboriginal women.

**Awareness:** The respondents' knowledge of the resource development sector is quite low, and effort could be spent on specific public relations/awareness initiatives.

**The Home:** The study indicates that there is general lack of support for Aboriginal women entering the resource development sector workforce. These supports generally include life skills development, childcare, and family support. There is also a significant voice to the concept that natural resource development may conflict with Aboriginal traditional values.

**The Workplace:** The study suggests that Aboriginal women experience sexism, wage gaps, and general lack of support in the workplace.

**Skills:** The majority of the respondents are not aware of the skills and knowledge necessary to work in the natural resource development sector.

A strategic focus on these four areas with the various players in the industry should serve to make the natural resource sector a place that more women would want to work. A focused effort could be based on the identified barriers to work for Aboriginal women. If the barriers that serve to make it difficult for Aboriginal woman are removed or significantly reduced, it would make employment opportunities in the natural resource sector a viable choice for a career. Aboriginal women would be able to obtain and retain employment that benefits them, their families, the company that employs them, and the community in which they reside.

## Awareness

Raising awareness is a multi-faceted issue that needs to be addressed on an ongoing basis with both collective target audiences and specific groups of people in mind. These stories would talk about the importance of Aboriginal women entering the workplace and the barriers that are in place that stop Aboriginal women from partaking in the higher wage components of the various sectors.

The communication strategy would start with a wide audience and then be scoped for specific sectors distributed through sectoral media. This ongoing information flow, with targeted information, would continue in the public media but would also focus discussion with various stake holder groups for a body such as The Native Women's Association of Canada.

### **Awareness Campaign General Outline**

#### **Multi-Faceted Communication Plan**

**Produce success stories in various media sources to raise the issue of Natural Resource Development and the Barriers for Aboriginal Women to partake in this sector, and also the advantages of Aboriginal women participation in the natural resource wage economy.**

#### **Specific Targeted Communications the next step**



#### **Outcome**

**The potential outcome of this type of campaign would increase the level of knowledge of the issue. With targeted follow-up, these actions could create internal discussion of the issue within the various communication targets. This would prepare the various tables for wider discussions regarding policy and program development.**



## The Content and Focus

The content and focus of campaign to increase the level of participation of Aboriginal women must have information that is well developed and delivered in an effective manner. Successful program and policy development does not happen in a communication vacuum, the level of awareness in the general public is usually necessary to achieve success, however, a key to this is to ensure that the wider public message is focused for each of the identified target groups. There general areas of focus: The Home, The Workplace, and Skills Development need to be maintained and clarified for each of the target audiences.

### The Home

As indicated in the survey, a very significant barrier to entering the natural resource sector for women are issues related to home. The issues raised in the survey have been a very difficult challenge to overcome over the years, however, these issues must continue to be worked on in order to lessen the impact to ensure that Aboriginal women have the opportunity to enter the work force. The following elements need to be brought forward for discussion with each of the identified groups, and the subject of discussion must include the following elements when discussing increasing participation in this sector:

#### **Child Care**

- Daycare facilities in community or at the job site at reasonable cost.

#### **Family Support**

- How can families and partners help?
- How can the Aboriginal Community Government help?
- How can the provincial, territorial, and federal governments help?
- How can the private sector help?

#### **Flexible Work Hours**

- To be more in tune with the role of women in the family.

## The Workplace

A number of issues were identified in the study that suggests Aboriginal women have experienced sexism, wage gaps, and general lack of support in the workplace.

- **Why do these issues exist?**

- Men see women as taking their jobs;
- The non-Aboriginal work force see jobs for Aboriginal people as hand-outs;
- Management does not strongly support Aboriginal women in the workplace.

- **What can project proponents do to help?**

- Cross cultural training in workplace;
- Pre-employment training;
- Proper skills development programs;
- Management must publically support Aboriginal women in the workplace programming;
- When issues emerge against Aboriginal women in workplace, management must take appropriate action; and
- Career development paths for Aboriginal women be identified and offered.

- **Is there a role for government? Yes, definitely yes:**

- Governments can assist Aboriginal women by:
  - Assisting Aboriginal women to acquire skills through specific programming;
  - Assist Aboriginal communities to provide appropriate day care to fit work schedules in the resource sectors;
  - Insist the private sector make real sustained efforts to employ Aboriginal women; and
  - Provide incentives to the private sector to make the workplace better for Aboriginal women.

- **What can Aboriginal governments do to help?**

- In negotiations between Aboriginal communities and the private sector proponent, women's issues should be addressed in a stand-alone chapter of an agreement.
- Provide in community support of women working outside of the community.

## Skills

The acquiring of the appropriate skills, experience and education for working in the natural resource sector is a key factor in maintaining a job and career in this sector. As noted in the introduction the natural resource sector is a significant contributor of jobs and economic activity to the Canadian economy, yet this survey suggests that Aboriginal Women do not see the benefit of this activity in their communities or for themselves; how does this change?

- Aboriginal Women must have access to information regarding the skills requirement in the natural resource extraction industries, whether it be in grade school, high school, or around the community. This information is necessary for anybody making decisions on how they want to participate in the wage economy. All governments and the private sector should prepare information for use by Aboriginal women regarding the job and career opportunities in the private sector.
- The natural resource industry should identify job training and career development opportunities within their operations.
- Skills training career path opportunities should be identified in a unique chapter of agreements between communities and project proponents.

## Appendix A: Aboriginal Women BORDS Questionnaire

Jobs in the resource development sector make up 10 percent of all jobs in Canada. At NWAC, we believe that Aboriginal women can be integral players in the industry by filling these employment opportunities through training programs that connect them with resource development companies.

The following series of questions have been designed to assist us in understanding Aboriginal women's views on resource development. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated, and will assist NWAC in developing programs and policies to ensure Aboriginal women benefit from resource development activities in and around their communities. The resource development sector includes the following types of industries: mining, oil and gas, forestry, hydro-electric, etc.

### Part One

Before we begin this questionnaire, we need to ask you some information about your background. This information will be used so that we may be able to understand how different people view the resource development sector. Please note that any personal information you provide will be used solely for this study.

1. Please indicate your gender.

	Female
	Male
	No response

2. What age category do you fit into?

	Under 18 years old
	19 to 25 years old
	26 to 30 years old
	31 to 40 years old
	41 to 50 years old
	51 to 60 years old
	over 61 years old
	No response

3. Please indicate your Aboriginal ancestry.

	First Nation
	Métis
	Inuit
	Non-aboriginal
	Other (Please Specify)
	None of the above

4. Please indicate the highest level of education you have achieved.

	High School Diploma
	Some post-secondary (college or university)
	Undergraduate degree
	College certificate or diploma
	Apprenticeship
	Master's degree
	Doctorate degree
	Other, please specify...

### **Part Two**

Please place an X in the box that best reflects your answer to the following questions.

1. Are you familiar with the resource development sector? (Please check one response)

	Yes
	No
	Don't Know

2. Have you ever been employed in any one of the following sectors? (Please check all that apply)

	Mining
	Oil and Gas
	Forestry
	Electricity
	Other (Please Specify)
	None of the above

- 2a. If yes, what type of job? (Please check all that apply)

	Administrative
	Skilled trades
	General Labour
	Management
	Construction
	Other (Please Specify)

3. Have you ever lived in or near a community where there was a resource development project? (Please check one response)

	Yes
	No
	Don't Know

4. Do you believe that resource development projects such as mining, forestry, oil and gas, etc. bring positive results to Aboriginal women and their communities? (Please check one response)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know

If yes, what type of positive results?


If no, what do you feel are the negative results?


### **Part Three**

For the following questions, please select the rating which best reflects your response to the following items. Rate these items on a 1 to 5 scale where:

1 = ***Strongly disagree***, or the lowest, most negative impression

2 = ***Disagree***

3 = ***Neither agree or disagree (I am on the fence)***

4 = ***Agree***

5 = ***Strongly agree***, or the highest, most positive impression

N/A = Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to you.

Perspectives on Resource Development Projects	Rating					
	Strongly Disagree		On the Fence		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Resource development projects benefit Aboriginal peoples.						

Resource development projects help to build partnerships between industry and Aboriginal peoples.						
Resource development projects exploit Aboriginal people.						
Resource development projects damage the land.						
Resource development projects can lead to violence in the communities.						

<b>Perspectives on Resource Development Projects Part 2</b>	<b>Rating</b>					
	Strongly Disagree		On the Fence		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Only industry benefits from resource development projects.						
Large scale resource development projects come with a high price tag and Aboriginal women receive no benefits.						
Aboriginal people are the stewards of the land and must be consulted on resource development projects.						
Benefits to Aboriginal people and communities are short term.						
Economic booms and busts of the resource development projects create few benefits to Aboriginal people.						
Resource development projects are beneficial if Aboriginal people receive the skills and training they need to participate in the labour market.						
Aboriginal women are an untapped resource in the labour market.						
Aboriginal women are unable to handle jobs in the resource development sector.						

#### **Part Four**

Please answer the following questions as instructed.

1. What are the five top supports that are needed to increase Aboriginal women's participation in resource development projects? (Please select 5)

	Develop pre-employment training programs
	Deliver financial literacy workshops
	Provide support to small businesses
	Provide investment support to entrepreneurs
	Create daycare facilities
	Invest in recreational facilities for youth
	Create jobs with flexible work hours
	Encourage participation in job
	Provide information on types of careers available
	Provide information on educational or physical requirements of jobs in the industry
	Offer well-paying jobs
	Provide mentorship programs
	Housing for remote employment opportunities
	Partnerships with Aboriginal governments
	Provide corporations with Aboriginal awareness workshops
	Create safe work environments for Aboriginal women
	Other –

- 2 Are you aware of any pre-employment programs that can assist Aboriginal women in entering into non-traditional jobs in the resource development? (Please check one response)

	Yes
	No

3. Should resource development companies have an understanding of Aboriginal cultures? (Please check one response)

	Yes
	No

4. How can we ensure that Aboriginal women receive the skills and training they need to participate in resource development projects?

--




5. Select the top four largest barriers that prevent Aboriginal women from participating in resource development projects. (Please select only 4)

	Stereotypes involving sexism, wage gaps, and unfriendliness or violence in the workplace.
	Women's negative perspectives of working in non-traditional jobs (ie. Jobs in resource development are unfeminine).
	Unappealing, unsafe, or male-dominated work environments.
	Having to relocate to isolated communities.
	Lack of job supports such as childcare, housing supports, and training/experience.
	Lack of industry and job opportunities, or not knowing what jobs are available.
	Work-life conflicts such as being the primary caregiver and lack of support from family and partner.
	Conflicts with traditional values.

6. What are some of the opportunities that resource development projects can bring to Aboriginal women and their communities? (Please select all that apply)

	New community facilities/building
	New roads
	Training programs
	Competitive compensation/benefits
	New job opportunities
	On-site daycare facilities
	Higher wages
	Healthcare benefits
	Pre-employment training programs
	Youth programs
	Ensure further Aboriginal consultation
	Economic growth in community
	Other –

7. For the following questions, please select the rating which best reflects your response to the following items. Rate these items on a 1 to 5 scale where:

1 = **Strongly disagree**, or the lowest, most negative impression

2 = **Disagree**

3 = **Neither agree or disagree (I am on the fence)**

4 = **Agree**

5 = **Strongly agree**, or the highest, most positive impression

N/A = Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to you.

Barriers to Aboriginal Women	Rating					
	Strongly Disagree		On the Fence		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Sexism and unfriendliness in the workplace prevent Aboriginal women from participating in resource development projects.						
Aboriginal women do not want to work in non-traditional jobs or jobs that are male-dominated.						
Unsafe or unappealing work environments prevent Aboriginal women from participating.						
Violence in the workplace prevents Aboriginal women from participating.						
Relocating to isolated communities prevents Aboriginal women from participating.						
Lack of housing supports for Aboriginal women prevents them from participating.						
Resource development project jobs create work-life conflicts that prevent Aboriginal women from participating.						
Lack of training prevents Aboriginal women from participating.						
Resource development jobs conflict with traditional values that prevent Aboriginal women from participating.						
Lack of childcare supports prevents Aboriginal women from participating.						

Positive Benefits to Aboriginal Women	Rating					
	Strongly Disagree		On the Fence		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Resource development projects provide Aboriginal women with new job opportunities and higher wages.						
Resource development projects create new roads and						

facilities in the communities of Aboriginal women.						
Resource development jobs provide Aboriginal women with healthcare benefits.						
Resource development jobs offer training programs to Aboriginal women.						
Resource development jobs provide Aboriginal women with on-site daycare facilities and youth programs.						
Resource development projects spur economic growth in Aboriginal communities.						
Resource development projects help ensure further consultation with Aboriginal people.						

8. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?


Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

1a. Would you like to be notified of other NWAC projects?

	Yes
	No

1b. If yes, please provide us with your contact information.

Name:	
Phone Number	
Email Address	

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