

**Perceptions  
of the  
North Slave Métis  
Regarding the  
Socio-Economic  
Effects  
of Diamond Mining  
DRAFT  
2005  
DCAB Toolkit Survey**

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## **I. Introduction**

In the 1999 Comprehensive Study Report (CSR) of the Diavik Diamonds Project, under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA), the Responsible Authorities determined that a follow-up program was required to confirm the accuracy of predictions and track the fulfillment of commitments regarding socioeconomic benefits, and to ensure the success of the proposed mitigation measures, before the project could go ahead. As a result, the Socio-economic Monitoring Agreement (SEMA) was signed in October 1999, which established the Diavik Project Communities Group Advisory Board (DCAB) and set out the monitoring responsibilities of each of the Parties and Signatories.

As a Party to the SEMA, and as a Member of the DCAB, the North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA) has committed to report on and interpret socio-economic effects of the Diavik Diamonds Project on its members, including employment and training, each July 31, and January 31. NSMA's representative on DCAB is committed to report on community level experiences regarding socio-economic effects. Under the SEMA, the categories of effects to be monitored include:

- Non-traditional economy
- Cultural well-being, traditional economy, land and resource use
- Social stability and community wellness
- Net effects on government
- Sustainable development and economic diversification

As part of their 2002-2004 Work-plan, DCAB developed a set of indicators to be measured, and a "Toolkit" to guide how the community level research was conducted. The Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Lutselke' Dene First Nation then conducted "pilot projects" between 2003 and 2005 to test out the methodology and refine the indicators. As part of the 2004-2007 work plan, DCAB supported each of the Member communities to conduct a "baseline" survey of experiences and perceptions in their communities regarding the socio-economic impacts of the Diavik Diamond Project. NSMA submitted a proposal on July 26, 2005, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 was given the go-ahead to administer this survey to its members, following the Toolkit approach, and using a selection of the suggested DCAB indicators. This document reports the results of that survey, provides an interpretation of the results, and makes recommendations for further action.

## II. Methodology

### i. Preparation.

NSMA advertised for a qualified social scientist to develop, conduct, and report on the survey according to the DCAB toolkit, the proposal which NSMA submitted and DCAB approved, and according to a statement of work. The statement of work is attached as **appendix #1**. NSMA's proposal is attached as **appendix #2**, and the budget as **appendix #3**. An unsigned draft of the contribution agreement between NSMA and DCAB is also attached as **appendix #4**. The Scientific Research Licence from the Aurora Research Institute is attached as **appendix #5**. A copy of the Ethical Review and confidentiality forms are attached as **appendix #6**.

The contractor who submitted the successful bid was provided with an assistant, the most up-to-date NSMA membership list available, the survey form used for a previously conducted NSMA socioeconomic survey (which is attached as **appendix #7**), the DCAB Toolkit, and the DCAB Indicators Report.

### ii. Procedure.

The researcher held focus groups with NSMA leaders and elders in the communities of Rae and Yellowknife to determine which indicators were most appropriate, to decide on the survey method, and to craft the wording of the survey questions. A structured interview design was selected as the most appropriate survey method, and delivered over the phone, although a few surveys were done in person, and a few were also filled out and returned by mail. The survey consisted of a mix of multiple choice questions, and open-ended commentary.

Participants were contacted by phone, introduced to the nature of the current study and asked if they would like to participate. Arrangements were then made to conduct the telephone interview either at the initial time of contact, or at a time convenient to the participant. To begin the interview, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, the researchers' guarantee of confidentiality of data, and their eligibility for a \$50.00 honorarium for participating in the study. Interviewers read each question as outlined in the survey and recorded participants' responses in the spaces provided. In the case of open-ended questions, participants' responses were read back to them to ensure accurate interpretation of their responses and these were then recorded in point form by the interviewer.

Following data checking and cleaning, responses were coded and entered into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Most survey questions called for nominal responses and therefore results presented are predominantly proportional. Not all figures in the following analyses are derived

from the total number of respondents as individuals were given the option of answering only those questions with which they felt comfortable. Additionally, not all survey questions were directly applicable to every participant.

Several open-ended survey questions sought to explore NSMA members' issues with the diamond mine industry and the role the NSMA should play in promoting health and family wellness. Due to the exploratory nature of these open-ended interview questions, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as an approach to this analysis (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). IPA's aim is to explore the participant's view of the topic under investigation (Smith, et al., 1999). IPA is a relevant means of analysis if a research project is centred on exploring the experiences of individuals and its greatest asset has been its ability to reveal unanticipated phenomena (Shaw, 2001). The methods of data collection used with IPA are more flexible, allowing participants to discuss experiences which the researcher may not expect (Shaw, 2001). This means that researchers using IPA are able to investigate phenomena from a new perspective by learning from those who are experiencing it (Shaw). IPA allows the participants to tell their own stories about their experiences without being biased by predetermined notions that research presents to them. In this sense, the research becomes very much the work of the participants (Shaw).

Another valuable benefit of IPA is its capacity to investigate human experience within a cultural context. It places emphasis upon the contextual factors that are at work within an individual's life. The implications of this are that IPA can reveal and deal with both the idiosyncrasies of individuals' experiences and those elements that are shared by others (Shaw, 2001). These are integrated to form a series of accounts which tell a comprehensive story of the subject being investigated (Shaw, 2001).

The researcher prepared a draft report which was submitted in the spring of 2006, and circulated for review among participants of the focus groups. Feedback was provided to the researcher, and preparation of a second draft was commenced. At this time, the researcher suffered a family tragedy and the report was left incomplete. Several attempts to communicate with the researcher failed over the summer and fall of 2006. A second contractor, this time a writer, was engaged in the spring of 2007 to bring the report into a format suitable for submission. A first draft was submitted for review to NSMA staff and focus group members. While the review of contractor two's first draft was under review, contractor one was located. An error in an email address was discovered to be the reason for the lengthy delay in communication, as answers had been delivered to an NSMA staff member who was no longer employed with NSMA. Contractor two then forwarded her draft two for review. Since the budget had long ago been spent for this project, it now became the job of NSMA staff to take the two reports, both in second draft stage, edit and merge them into one cohesive piece of work, and to obtain the approval of the NSMA

focus groups and participants before submission to DCAB. In order to satisfy the request of DCAB to have NSMA's report in time for their annual report preparation, this draft is being submitted before the entire vetting process is complete. Although individual participants have approved sections of the document, the full document has not yet been presented to the group as a whole. This current document must remain in draft form until the community meeting to vet the document is completed.

The actual data, with individually identifiable details removed, has been provided to DCAB, in the strictest of confidence. NSMA expects the GNWT, also in the strictest of confidence, to assist DCAB in conducting statistical analysis on the data and providing an interpretation for use in DCAB's 2006-07 annual report.

### **iii. Participants.**

At the time of this survey, which was the fall of 2005, there were 408 eligible adults on NSMA's membership list. The researcher attempted to contact all members to invite them to participate in the survey. NSMA had planned to survey as many as 350 members, however, only 150 members were actually contacted, due to the address and phone numbers on the membership list being out of date, and people being away at work or school or on holidays. Most of the members that were contacted declined to be interviewed due to numerous competing commitments. Several commented that the \$50 honorarium was not adequately respectful of the value of their very scarce free time. The researcher succeeded, after much effort, in interviewing only 50 members. Thus, only about 12 % of the eligible adult NSMA members were surveyed.

Of the 50 respondents, 24 were male and 26 female. Of the 36 (72%) participants who revealed their age, the survey population age ranged from 19 to 82 years, with a mean average of 45 years and a standard deviation of 17.86 years. NSMA members under the age of 16 were not interviewed. Most participants (45) were residing in Yellowknife, two in Behchoko (Rae Edzo), and three in communities outside of the Northwest Territories.

**III. Results.**

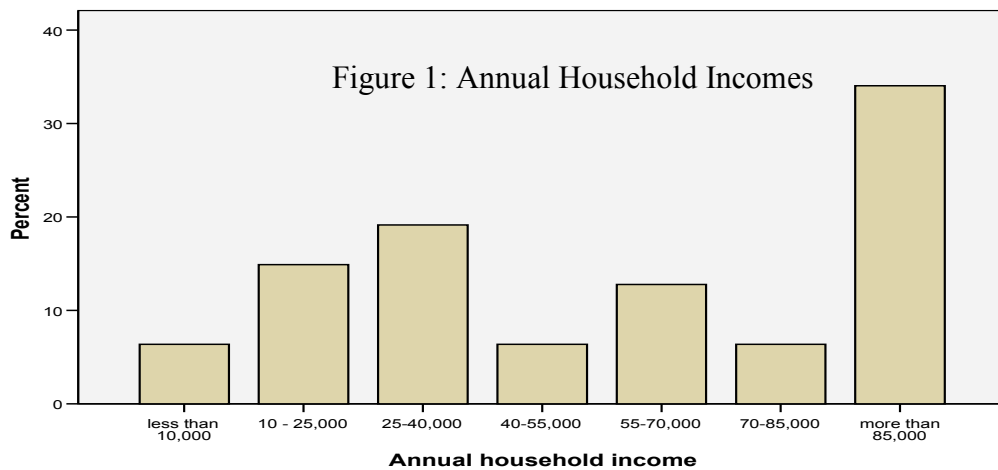
**i. Economic Well-Being.**

Typical SEIA indicators of a community’s economic well-being include: income, employment levels, education levels, business, and dependence on income assistance (Stevenson, Thoms, Johnson, & Cardinal, 2004). Aboriginal communities also require the consideration of the community’s traditional economy (Stevenson et al., 2004).

Economic well-being was assessed through survey items focusing on members’ experiences in the formal economy, such as current employment status, location and field of employment, satisfaction with job opportunities, their success with applying for jobs within the diamond mine industry, preference for location and type of work, major sources of income. “Traditional” economic indicators were assessed via survey items covering hunting, fishing, berry picking, ownership of equipment for harvesting, cultural craft-making, and wood harvesting.

**a. Income, Education, and Employment.**

A total of 32% of participants indicated their annual household income to be at levels of greater than \$85,000 per year. Responses also indicated 18% earn household incomes of \$25,000 - \$40,000/year, and 14% earn \$10,000 – \$25,000/year. 38% of respondents reported household earnings of less than \$40,000 per year, and 44% earned less than \$55,000 per year.





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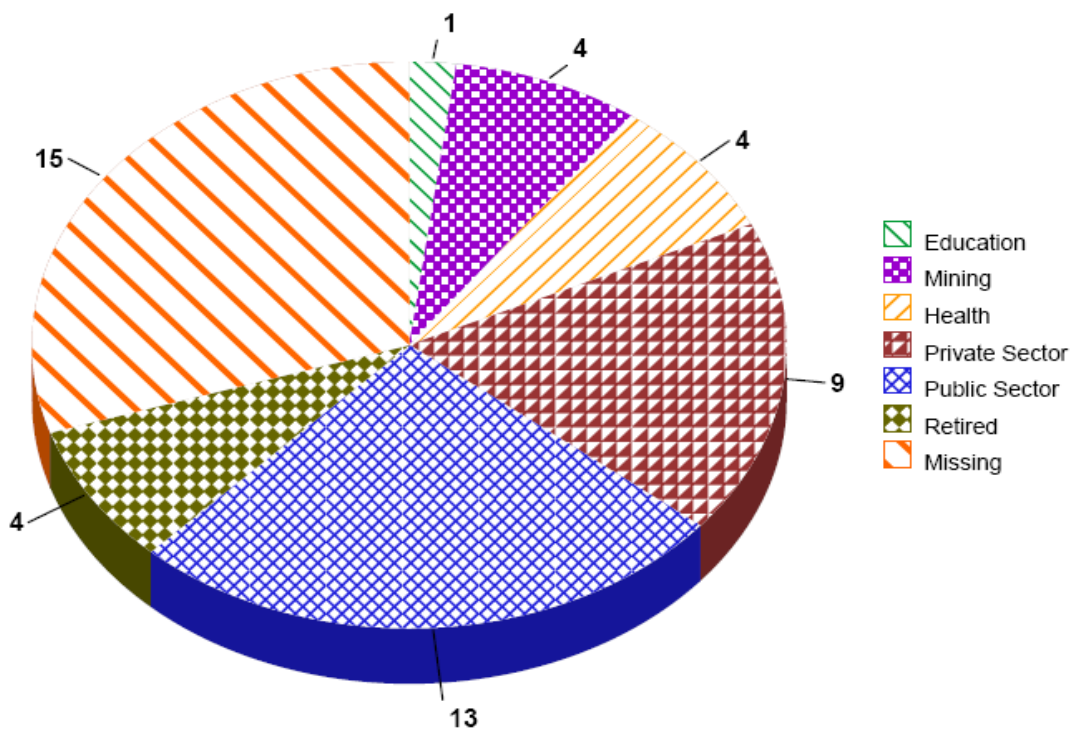
When asked to indicate sources of income, 62% of participants indicated wage employment. Another 12% indicated they were self-employed, and another 10% indicated government assistance as a source of income.

Participants in the current study had achieved a variety of levels of education. The most frequently reported level of education attained was graduating high school (34%). Another 24% had attained a college certificate, and 12% had attained a trade certificate. Additionally, nearly a quarter of the participants (22%) indicated they were “very interested” in obtaining training or education for the diamond mining industry. The majority, 42%, indicated they were “somewhat interested” and 16% indicated they were “not interested”.

Findings from the current study indicate that 70% of participants were employed, with 64% employed full-time. The 25% who were unemployed included 8% who were retired. More than half (62%) of those who were unemployed were male.

Participants were employed equally by the public (26%) and private (26%) sectors. Of those employed in the private sector, 4 individuals (3%) were employed by the mining industry with jobs at Diavik or BHP. There number of respondents working at the mines was equal to those who were retired and to those working in the health field.

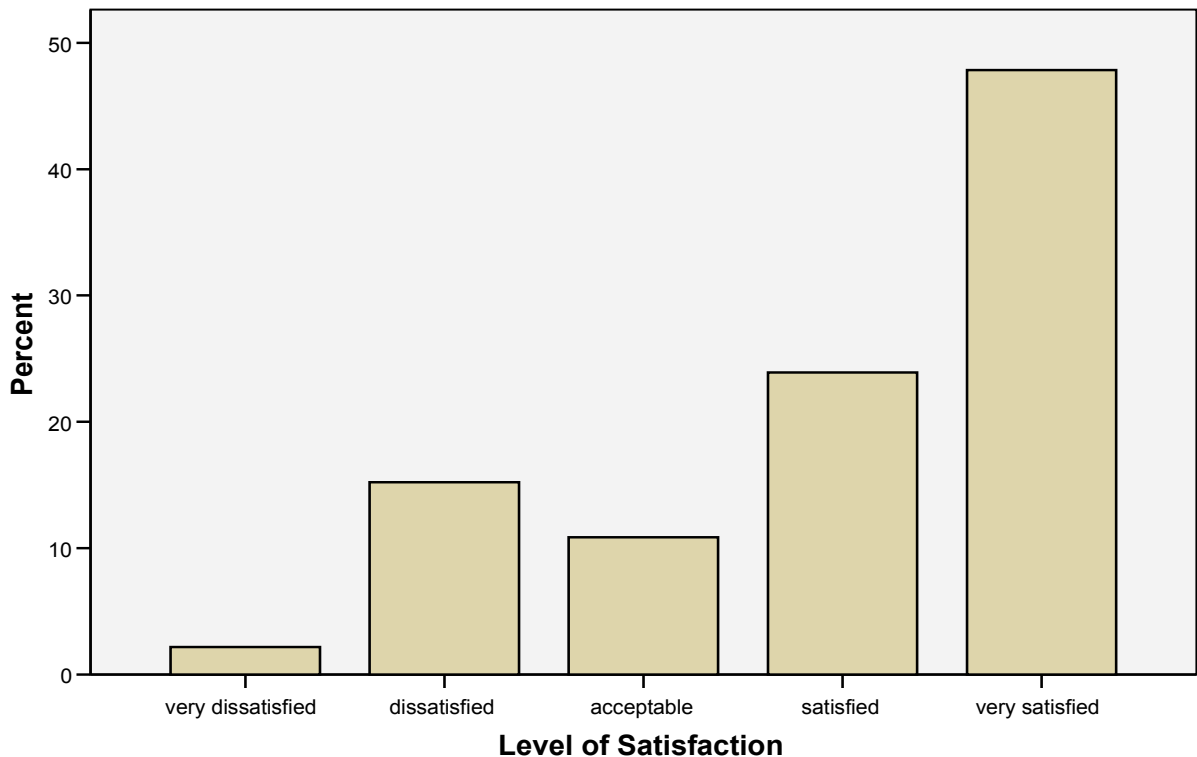
Figure 2: Employment Frequency by Sector.



When asked what type of work was desired, approximately half (52%) indicated they wanted permanent work. Another 20% indicated they wanted office work. When asked where they would prefer to work, results indicated 70% of participants desired to find work within their own community. Additionally, 50% of those who responded indicated they could not cope with a shift rotation. A majority of participants (62%) indicated they had not applied for employment at any of the diamond mines in the area. Of the 28% who did apply, 53% had applied to DDMI. Only 22% of those who applied indicated they were granted an interview by any mine, but all who were interviewed were successful in securing employment.

Overall, participants are satisfied with job opportunities within their region, with 72% of participants indicating a response of either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”.

Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with job opportunities



**b. Traditional Economic Activities**

The “traditional economy” is considered to be the economic value of goods and services, whether for sale or personal use, derived from traditional activities (Stevenson et al., 2004). NSMA members’ participation in a traditional economy was assessed by survey items examining hunting, consumption, trapping, firewood harvesting, fishing, berry picking, sale of arts or crafts, and possession of equipment associated with these activities.

A total of 76% indicated they engaged in these specific traditional economic activities. Participant responses indicated nearly half (44%) hunt, but nearly equal proportions (46%) do not. Caribou and moose were the most commonly hunted game animals. Consumption from hunting was primarily used for one’s own family (58%), but was also given to relatives (20%) and the community (10%). No participants admitted to selling any of their harvest, but none denied doing so, either. Very few participants (8%) indicated they trapped, while the majority of participants indicated they did not (76%). Less than half (42%) of participants indicated they harvested firewood, and 34% of those did so for their own use. Fishing was engaged in by just over half of participants (51%), and 22% indicated they fished once a month during the summer. Berry picking occurred once a year for 40% of the sample, while 38% indicated they never went berry picking.

As far as being in possession of the necessary equipment to engage in traditional economic activities, 28% owned a boat, 20% owned nets, 44% owned a snowmobile, 22% owned a cabin, 42% owned guns, 22% owned an ATV, and 72% owned a vehicle. Over half (58%) of participants sampled indicated they did not make arts or craft items, but 36% indicated they did.

**ii. Social Stability and Community Wellness.**

Of primary importance to a community’s stability and health are current housing levels, and indicators of physical and/or mental health. Typical SEIA indicators are personal health, drug/alcohol consumption, family abuse, violence and housing. The current study examined stability indicators of satisfaction with housing and perceptions of diamond mine industry effects on housing costs. Overall health of the community was assessed via one survey item examining participant perceptions of the health status of their community as a whole. Additional survey items assessed tobacco use, and perceptions of diamond mine industry impacts on rates of alcohol/drug use, gambling, and violence/abuse within their community.

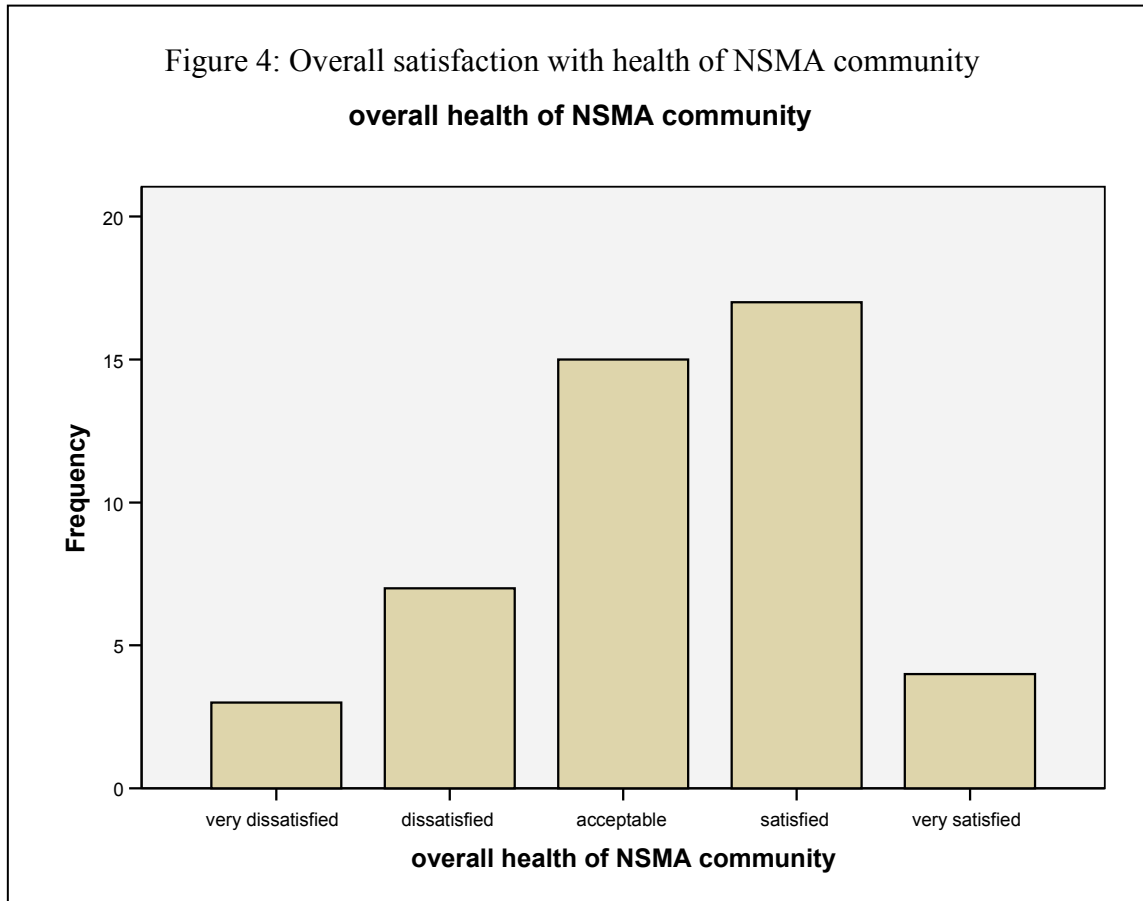
**a. Social Stability.**

Social stability was assessed by examining participant satisfaction with housing in their community and perceptions of diamond mine industry effects on housing costs. One survey item asked participants to indicate their level of satisfaction with current state of their “dwelling, house, apartment or other”. Possible response options ranged from “1 = very dissatisfied”, to “5 = very satisfied”. The second question was a yes/no response item.

Overall, 86% of participants indicated they felt diamond mining industry had lead to increased housing costs, another 6% indicated “maybe”. No participants indicated the diamond industry had *not* contributed to higher housing costs. Participants also indicated approval of current housing, with 34% endorsing “very satisfied”, 30% indicating “satisfied”, another 20% indicating housing was “acceptable” and only 4% indicating they were “very dissatisfied” with current housing in their community.

**b. Overall Community Wellness.**

Participants were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, the overall health of the North Slave Métis community. Response options ranged from “1 = very dissatisfied” to “5 = very satisfied”. As figure 6 illustrates, participants’ views were mixed, but generally positive, on the health of the community. Only 8% indicated they were “very satisfied”, while 34% felt they were “satisfied”. Another 30% found the current health of their community “acceptable” and 14% were “dissatisfied” with the overall health of their community. 50% of those who responded stated that they could not cope with work that involved shift rotation.



Overall health was also assessed via one survey item which examined rates of tobacco use among NSMA members sampled. When asked if they had ever used tobacco products, 30% of participants indicated yes. Of these, 16% estimated their use to be heavy, and 30% indicated their use to be moderate. Participants' average length of time as a smoker was approximately 20 years ( $M = 19.86$ ;  $SD = 11.61$ ).

Generally, participants felt the diamond mine industry had lead to increased rates in each of the four categories given. Nearly half (48%) of participants indicated the diamond mine industry had lead to increased use of alcohol, a large percentage, 72%, indicated it had lead to increased drug use, 38% indicated it had lead to more gambling, and 46% indicated violence and abuse had increased as well. Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 show the perceived impact of diamond mining on alcohol use, drugs, violence and abuse, and gambling, respectively.

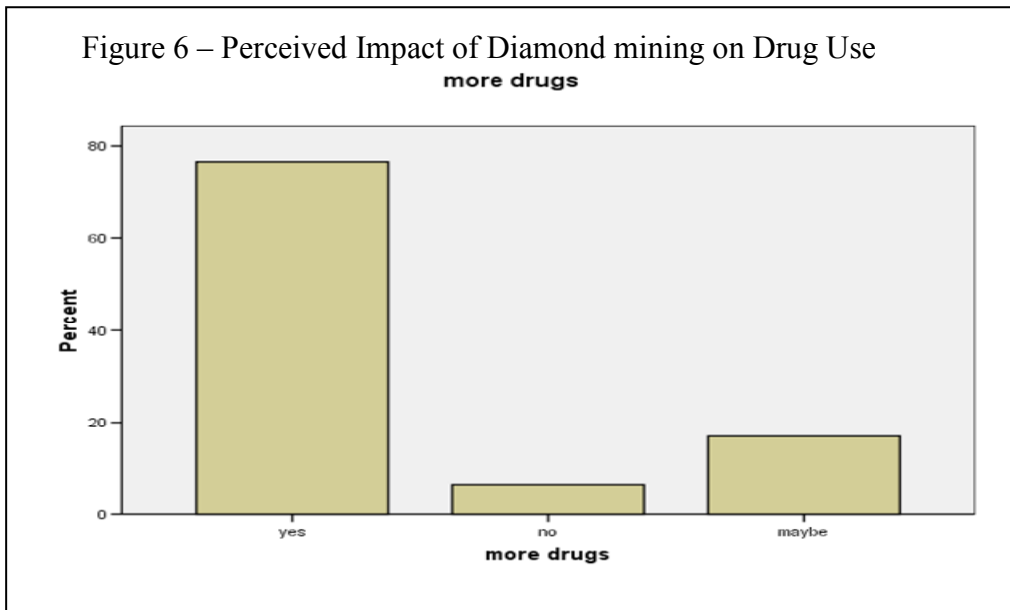
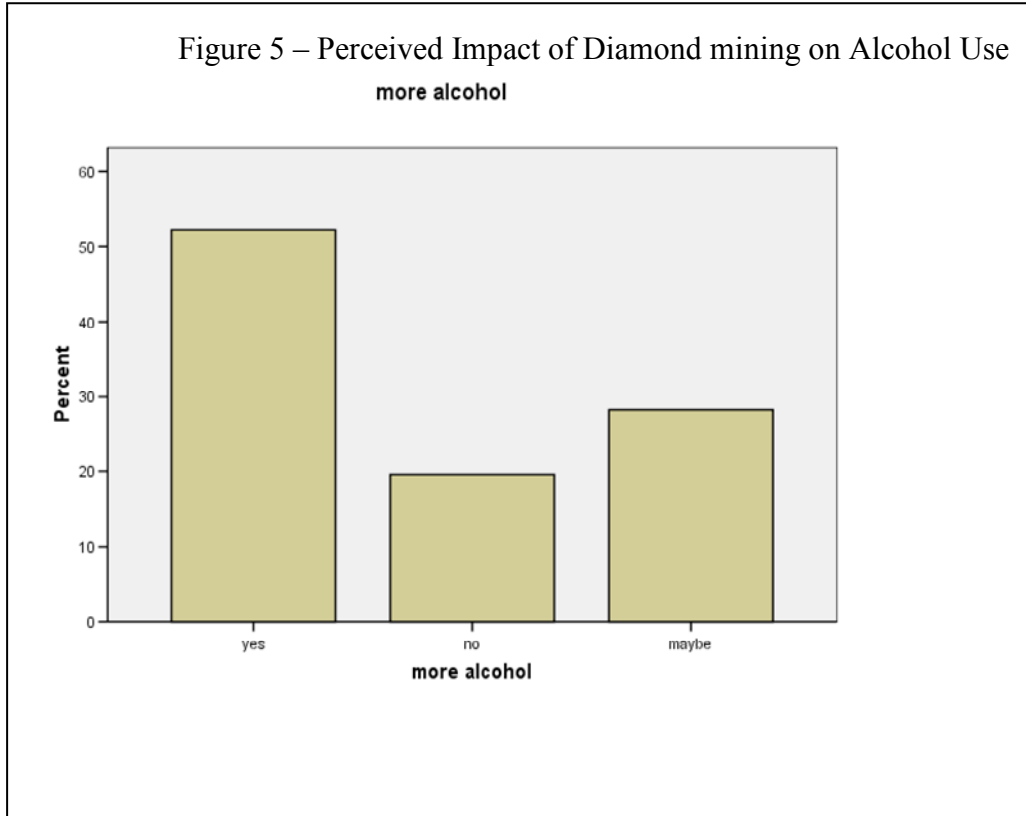


Figure 7 – Perceived Impact of Diamond mining on Violence and Abuse

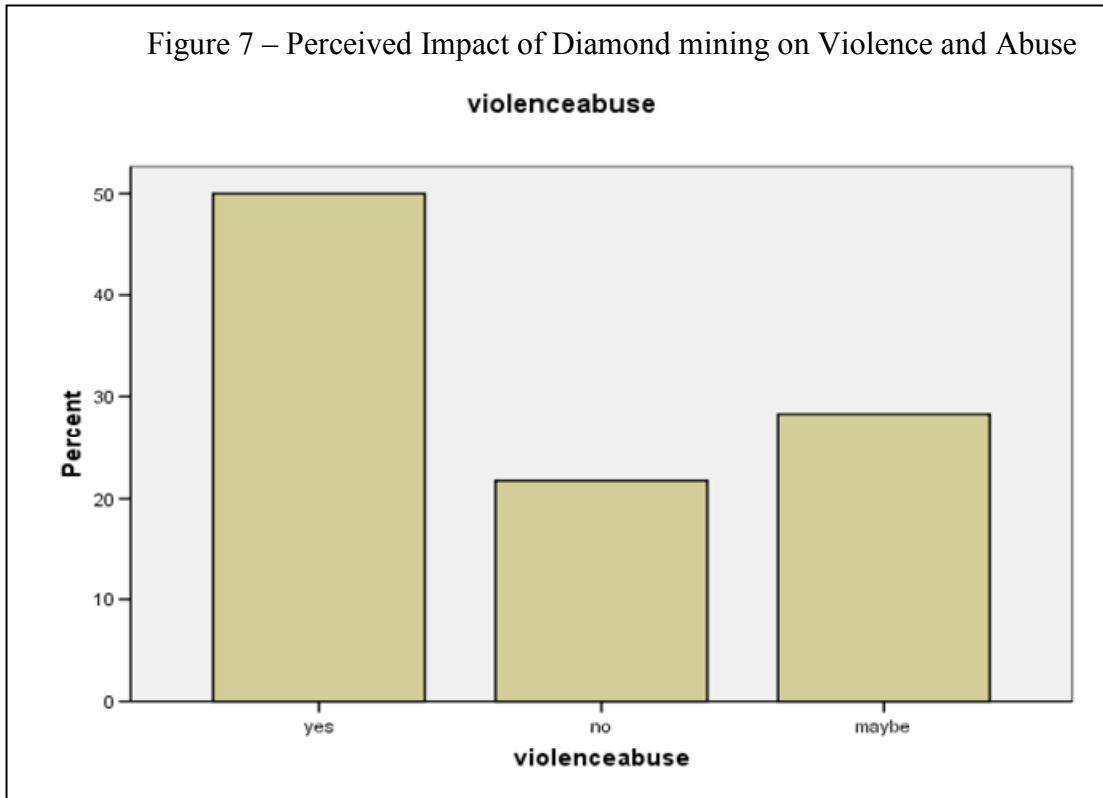
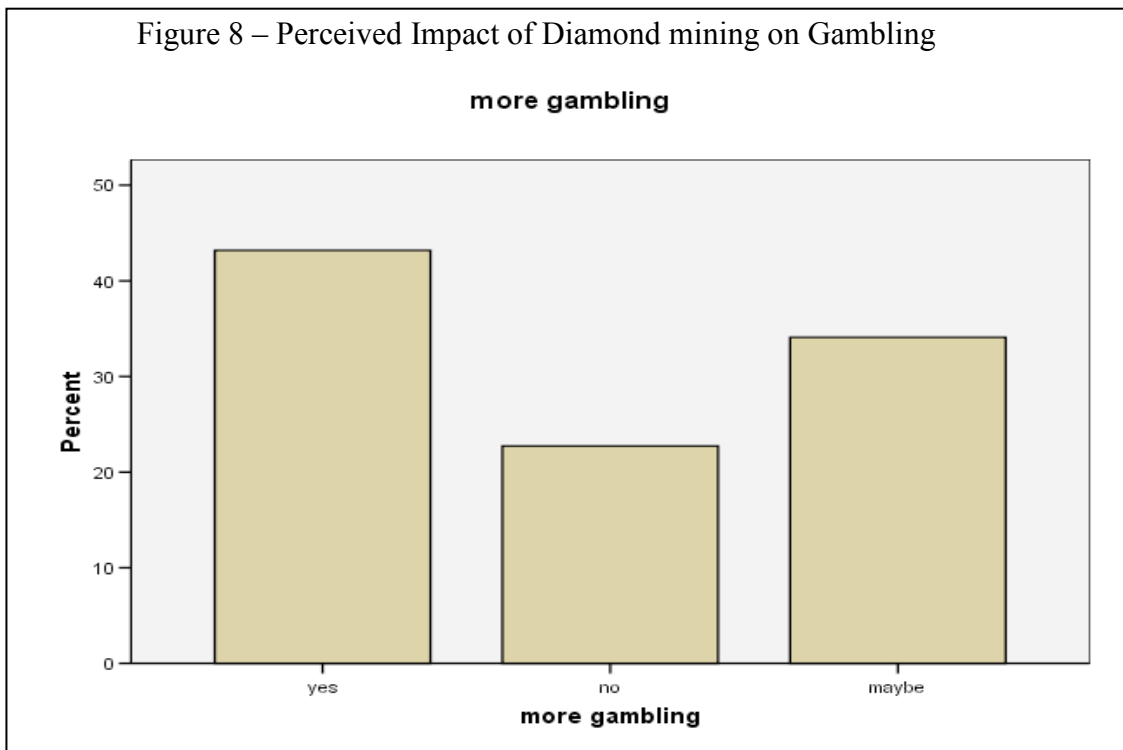


Figure 8 – Perceived Impact of Diamond mining on Gambling



**iii. Cultural Well-Being.**

Members of the NSMA share a common cultural heritage including language, artistic expression, traditional forms of land use, and forms of sharing this culture (Stevenson, Thoms, Johnson, & Cardinal, 2002). Conventional indicators of cultural well-being include levels of traditional land use, engagement in traditional customs, use of language, internal sharing (resources, knowledge etc.), transmission of culture, and resiliency in the face of continued acculturative processes (Stevenson, et al., 2002). In the current study, participants were asked a series of questions examining the overall perceived impact of diamond industry employment on Métis culture, experiences of workplace discrimination, engagement in cultural activities, time spent on the land, consumption of country food, language capabilities (Michif), possession of Metis cultural clothing or crafts, fiddle playing, and learning about Métis culture.

**a. Perceived Impact of Mining on Métis Culture**

Participants were asked to indicate, yes or no, whether they thought the diamond mine industry had affected time spent on land, consumption of country food, and Métis culture in general.

When asked whether diamond mining affected time spent on the land, equal proportions of responses indicated yes (28%) and no (28%). For consumption of country food, 36% indicated there was no impact, and 20% indicated there was. Response rates for these two items were roughly half (56%) of the sample. When asked specifically if they thought employment in the diamond mining industry would have a significant impact on Métis culture, 42% indicated yes and 28% indicated no impact. Responses were equally mixed when participants were asked if they felt working in the diamond mines had contributed to fewer people attending cultural events: 42% indicated they agreed with this statement, and 32% disagreed.

When asked whether they had experienced discrimination in the workplace, 42% of the sample indicated they had, while 52% indicated they had not experienced discrimination at work. Of those who indicated they had, 43% indicated it was due to their aboriginal ethnicity and 19% indicated that the discrimination had been based on gender. Of the 3 participants currently employed in the diamond mining industry, 1 indicated the occurrence of discrimination at a current place of employment.

The theme of discrimination within the diamond mine workplace emerged more clearly through the open-ended questions. One participant expressed this directly. Another expressed the need for mining environments to recognize the Métis as a distinct group. This recognition included the need for diamond mines to be



aware of the impacts of the residential school system, and the resulting inequality involved in not overlooking Aboriginal criminal records. Workplace discrimination was also perceived by participants in the lack of advancement for equally qualified Aboriginal employees, and in Aboriginals being given most of the hard labor tasks. The quotes below illustrate the impressions of the NSMA community with regards to discrimination in the workplace, and its cultural impact on Métis culture:

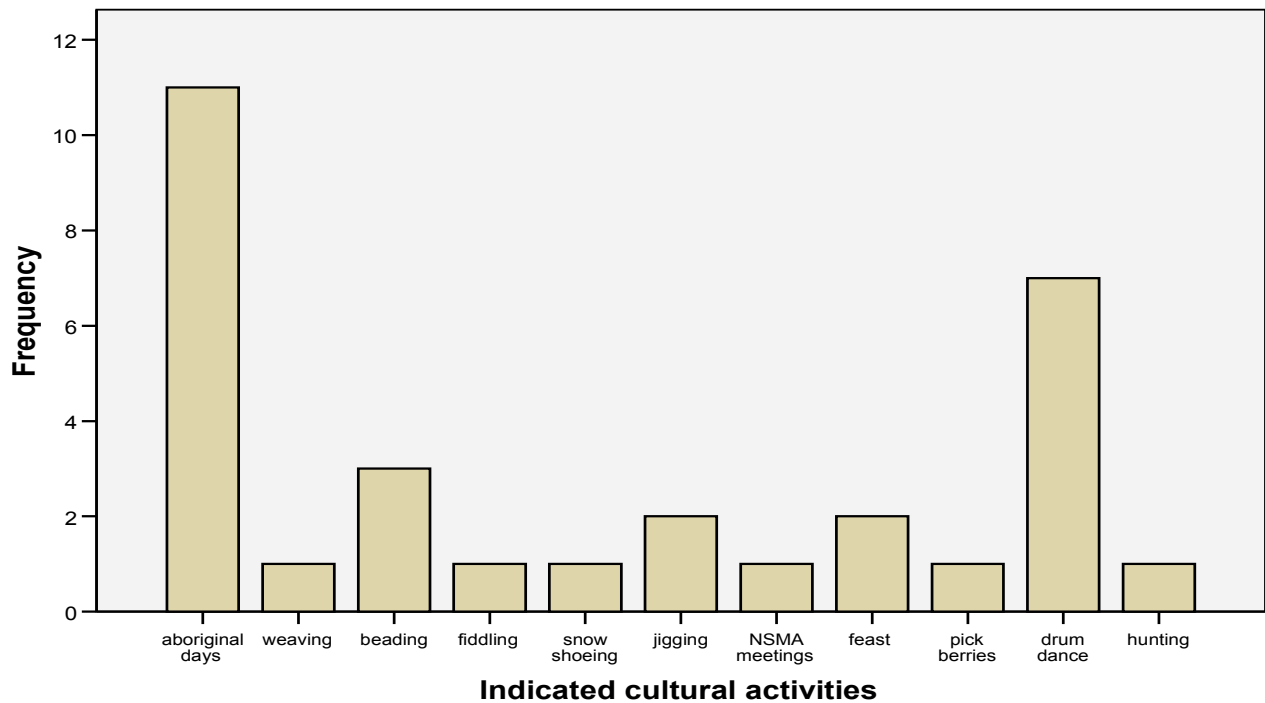
- *“People [are] discriminated [against] because of being Aboriginal”*
- *“Diamond mines need to recognize them [Métis] as a distinct group”*
- *“Mines create barriers, [they] say Aboriginal people whine too much, mines don’t recognize “residential school effects” ... lots of aboriginals have minor criminal records and then they can’t work at the mine – like impaired – mines overlook white people’s criminal records!”*
- *“[My] Brother was pre-trained NSMA, works very hard and applies self – never gets advancements – non-aboriginal southern gets advancement instead – same education, same training”*
- *“[I] Feel that because of being Aboriginal, the mine doesn’t feel I get advancement there because I am Aboriginal and not because I work hard”*
- *“Training teaches go nowhere jobs! No advancements.”*
- *“[The mines are] Giving all hard labor to Aboriginals, not much promotion for Aboriginals”.*
- *“There is no system to train people in management”*

#### **b. Cultural Activity**

When asked whether employment in the diamond industry will have a significant impact on Métis culture, 42% said yes, 36% said no, and 56% were undecided or did not respond.

Participants were asked to indicate the top three cultural activities in which they participated. Responses included weaving, beading, fiddling, snowshoeing, jigging, attending NSMA meetings, feasts, berry picking, sweats, drying meat, attending pow wows, making bannock, bush camping, watching cultural performances, handgames, animal hide preparation, and hunting. The most frequently indicated activities were Aboriginal Days (22%) and drum dances (14%). See Figure 9 for representation of cultural activities indicated.

Figure 9 - Cultural activities indicated



From a variety of other cultural knowledge indicators, the majority of respondents indicated they did not possess or engage in these activities. The majority of respondents (76%) indicated they did not speak Michif, did not own a sash (56%), did not own a shawl (86%), did not own other Métis clothing (60%), make Metis crafts (84%), and did not play the fiddle (90%). Just over half of participants (56%) indicated they would like to own a sash, shawl, or other Métis clothing.

Transmission of Métis culture was largely done through the family as this is where the majority (34%) of participants indicated they had learned their culture. Another 22% indicated they had learned it from their mother. Grandparents, parents and the community were also recurring responses for sources of cultural learning. Parents (“dad or mom”) were the most frequently indicated (20%) source of cultural learning for Métis children. Family (16%) was the next most frequently indicated source of cultural learning for children. About half the participants did not respond to this item, and one responded that their children are not learning Métis culture anywhere.

**iv. Net Effects on Government**

A number of open ended and specific questions distributed throughout the survey were intended to find out what the North Slave Métis People expected of their government, the NSMA. Questions focused on issues of cultural identity, community health, and the role NSMA should play.

**a. NSMA Role in Cultural Identity Social Cohesion**

When asked what role the NSMA should play, the primary themes that emerged were that of greater cohesion, support and connectedness among the members of the NSMA, a greater focus on cultural maintenance. Specific suggestions were made for NSMA to play a greater role in family events, to provide more opportunities for gatherings, and to help with the challenges a family might face. Participant responses often indicated that the NSMA should adopt a role of fostering greater connectedness through communication and support among NSMA members, and by encouraging a greater transmission of cultural knowledge and educating children in Métis culture.

The final question of the survey asked participants to share what issues they thought the NSMA should give priority to. Responses were very similar to the earlier question examining the role the NSMA should adopt for family health and wellness. Comments ranged from fostering a sense of togetherness to practical applications such as newsletters for improving direct communication. Many participants called for cultural education and for greater involvement/utilization of elders' wisdom and storytelling. Others expressed the need for the NSMA to focus on traditional cultural practices such as sharing meat and one participant suggested the NSMA should adopt the role of elders in teaching children. When asked if participants thought the NSMA should allocate resources to teach members about the bush and Métis traditional skills, 84% indicated they should. The following quotes illustrate community views about the role NSMA should take in maintaining cultural identity and promoting social cohesion:

- *“Community not connected – get more involved...”*
- *“More involvement needed, no communication with members.”*
- *“Active, letting people know what’s going on in the organization.”*
- *“If we could call NSMA a family, work on bringing everyone together...form a good community of NSMA members.”*
- *“Use Old Rae for family gatherings, make it available to those families who work in mines, hunting, feasts etc...promote culture & health, kids need to learn more about culture because it’s not taught in schools.”*

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- *“Make organization stronger, community in agreement”*
- *“Stop fighting, get back to business”*
- *“Treat all members equally, stop favoritism”*
- *“More contact with members”*
- *“Keep members info up to date”*
- *“Communication – advertising/newsletters to let members know what’s going on”*
- *“Get members more involved with NSMA”*
- *“Get along together”*
- *“Métis working together as it should be”*
- *“Be united”*
- *“No communication with NSMA”*
- *“Ensure members are satisfied – take care of members”*
- *“Focus on community desires, not individual ones”*
- *“Communication – advertise general meetings”*
- *“Teaching culture” “Teach culture & tradition to kids”*
- *“Assume role of elders and teach children”*
- *“Hunting/community share program”*
- *“Teach kids more about tradition”*
- *“More use of elders/story time”*
- *“More Métis culture in schools”*
- *“Cultural education” “Elders programs”*
- *“Culture - Preserve elders’ stories”*
- *“Teaching Métis culture”*
- *“Promote more Métis culture at all times, not just for elections”*

### **b. NSMA Role in Community Health and Well-being**

One open-ended question asked participants to share their views on whether the NSMA should play a role in family health and wellness, and if so, what this role should be. Participant response was strongly affirmative when asked “should the NSMA have a role to play in promoting family health and wellness?” A majority of 88% indicated they felt the NSMA should play a role in promoting these issues. Over half (59%) of the 41 who responded indicated roles dealing with health care or the provision of health programs of some form. The primary role that participants suggested for the NSMA was around provision of health programs to deal with specific health challenges. Primary among these challenges was drug and alcohol abuse. Programming called for by participants included promotion of healthy lifestyles and support services for families through initiatives such as health clinics, life skills training, addictions prevention and counseling, prenatal education and

counseling. The following quotes illustrate the views of the participants regarding the role NSMA should play in promoting community health and wellbeing:

- *“Make sure some families less fortunate with money are ok with the basics like food until they get a job”*
- *“Information package/support groups to deal with health problems...”*
- *“NSMA [should] become involved by making services available like health clinic (elders, kids), help with housing and education and drugs & alcohol”*
- *“Have a program for members hooked on crack...”*
- *“Getting people to stop drinking – kids running around crazy [because of] crack and alcohol”*
- *“Young mothers, drugs, alcohol, health awareness – drink/drugs/crack (babies), intervene in crack/drug problem”*
- *“Offer counseling & supportive resources”*
- *“Health/addictions”*
- *“Family violence”*
- *“Support services for family”*
- *“Guidance/life skills”*
- *“Counselor on mine site for aboriginal people to talk to when being discriminated against”*
- *“Crack addiction”*
- *“Prevention programs”*
- *“Family problems”*

**v. Sustainable Development and Economic Diversification.**

Economic diversification is generally expected to contribute to economic sustainability. As part of the assessment of the NSMA community’s economic well-being, the current study also assessed the diversification of NSMA members’ economic activities through survey items which examined participant ownership of businesses, type of business, business revenue, and projected effects of diamond mine closure on participants’ businesses.

An open-ended question gave participants the opportunity to present issues about the diamond mining industry not covered by the survey. Concerns regarding socio-cultural and bio-physical sustainability were revealed during the open ended questions throughout the survey, and particularly when the participants were asked to share their views on whether there were any issues about the diamond mine

industry not covered by the survey they wished to bring to the attention of the NSMA.

**a. Economic Diversification.**

Participant responses indicated 36% owned or had owned their own business. Business ownership was for a mean length of time of 9.7 years ( $SD = 10.36$ ). The type of businesses were 6% mine contract, 12% registered with Business Incentive Policy (BIP), and 8% were registered as a Métis-owned business. When diamond mine closure occurred, 8% indicated their business revenue would stay the same, 2% indicated business revenue would improve and 2% indicated they felt it would decrease. Responses to questions in previous sections regarding employment preferences, educational interests, and discrimination in the workplace, indicates that the diversification of training opportunities and the resulting employment options is less than expected.

**b. Bio-Cultural Sustainability.**

Members expressed generalized concern regarding the future environmental impacts of the diamond mining industry based on past experiences with previous mines. Concerns for local game acknowledged Métis dependence on country foods, and concerns for the impacts of contaminated water and snow on animal and human health. This concern for the future was also expressed in terms of the quality of local water supplies, both for its current monitoring and future quality. Concern was also expressed over current mining practices involving explosives. One participant expressed how the mines were using more than allowed for in the original agreement. The following quotes illustrate the range of responses:

- *“...who is going to clean mine when it closes...like the mess the last mines left...are they going to leave a mess?”*
- *“Don’t like the way the mines monitor water; should be an independent company carrying this out so the true facts are produced”*
- *“Water quality...[is it] safe? Will it affect the water in the coming years?”*
- *“[the] environment for caribou...waste water mine use...chemicals or rust [are] dump[ed]on the land”*
- *“winter snow [is] really yellow and caribou walk in it, eating snow...some caribou eat it and get sick, stagger around. People eat the sick caribou, maybe people get sick. People [should] go*

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*and see what is happening to [the] land and caribou, tours are only on the inside and show people only the good, not the bad.”*

- *“...too many explosives used, this was not the original agreement, they are doing way more than agreed to...mines carrying on way too much...”*

### III. Discussion

#### i. Economic Well-being

##### a. Income, Employment and Education

During the environmental assessment of the Diavik Diamond Project, it was predicted that the employment and income effects of the project would be positive and long lasting. There were expected to be over 2,300 person-years (558 direct, 1,300 indirect, and 450 induced) of employment for NWT residents during the construction phase of the project, and NWT labour income was expected to increase by \$154.5M. A significant proportion of that employment and income is intended to go to Aboriginal People, including the NSMA. Diavik predicted that 40% (164) of the 411 start-up jobs would go to Aboriginals, and has committed to strive for 100% northern and Aboriginal employment over the life of the mine. Diavik predicted a drop in the NWT employment rate from 20% to 16%.

Unfortunately, there was no baseline survey conducted on the NSMA community prior to the construction of BHP's Ekati Diamond Mine in 1996, or prior to the construction of the Diavik Diamond Mine in 1999. The earliest socioeconomic baseline data available were collected between 2000-2002 during the De Beers Snap Lake environmental assessment. At that time, Ekati was already in operation, and Diavik was approaching completion of construction. The 2002 study is therefore an imperfect "baseline" against which to measure the impacts of the Diavik Project, but we must use it because it is the only information we have that differentiates between NSMA members and other "Yellowknifers" or "aboriginals".

There appears to be a remarkable difference between NSMA members and other Yellowknife residents when it comes to average family incomes. Despite the fact that NSMA's current (2005) study and the 2002 baseline study did not actually collect data on average family incomes, we can approximate the average household income by multiplying the mid range value of each household income range by the frequency with which the range was selected and dividing it by the number of families who responded. By this method, the average NSMA family income in 2005 was \$42,225, up from \$39,166 in 2002. Both, however are alarmingly close to the poverty line, and far below the "average" Yellowknife household. According to the Government of the Northwest Territories' 2005 Communities and Diamonds Report (GNWT 2005), the average family income in Yellowknife grew from \$82,541 in 1994 to \$106,953 in 2002 and \$107,534 in 2003. Despite the lack of precision in the calculation of average NSMA family incomes, and the possibility that this comparison may be between take-home pay (NSMA) and Gross income (GNWT) the differences are still of a magnitude to be considered significant and should be investigated further. To further improve the quality of the data in the future, the categories should be mutually exclusive.



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The current (2005) survey did not investigate household composition, but the household income distribution “curve” shown in Figure 1 (pg. 5) suggests that there may be a break between one income and two income households in the \$40,000 - \$70,000 income range. This assumption is further supported by the 2002 survey which found that 43% of NSMA households depended on a single income. Another possible explanation is that the mid range income households have increased their incomes into the higher income categories, while the households (ie: single parents) in the lower ranges have not moved up to fill the vacant niches. In other words, income disparity may be increasing between those who are and those who are not able to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Neither the 2002 baseline survey nor the current survey asked respondents about their individual incomes. Therefore, we are unable to make the potentially useful comparison between the average income of all Yellowknife residents, and the average incomes of residents of small “aboriginal communities” as compared to NSMA members. The Government of the Northwest Territories 2005 Communities and Diamonds Report indicates that the average income of a person living in Yellowknife remained relatively steady at about \$34,000 per year from 1994 through to 1998, and that it then increased to \$42,572 in 2003. The rate of increase was about \$1,300 per year for 1999 and 2000, and then about \$3,000 per year in 2001, and 2002. The increase in income between 2002 and 2003 was only \$572. It would also be very interesting to know whether these income increases were evenly distributed throughout the population, or which sub-populations were affected disproportionately.

The unemployment rate of the NSMA community also exhibits a significant difference from the general Yellowknife population. Based on data from the current study, North Slave Métis experience unemployment rates (25-26%) much higher than the national average of 6.3% (Statistics Canada website, 2006), and the general Yellowknife unemployment level of 5% (GNWT 2005). While the GNWT (2005) report found that the Yellowknife unemployment rate had not changed much since 1989, the NSMA unemployment rate appears to have increased from 21% to 25% between 2002 and 2005. In fact, the number of NSMA members employed at the mines decreased by half between 2002 (6%) and 2005 (3%). Only one current survey participant reported being employed at Diavik. If we extrapolate from the approximate 10% survey of the NSMA population to the whole population, the estimated ten jobs is well below the 50 jobs (1/3 of the predicted aboriginal jobs) predicted during the environmental assessment. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in the smaller local communities (which are predominantly aboriginal, including Métis) has decreased from about 45% in 1989, to about 20% in 2001, but back up to 28% in 2004.

Thus, it appears that NSMA members have more in common with the Aboriginal people in small local communities than they do with Yellowknife residents when it comes to employment rates, and perhaps also with regards to household income. However, it does appear that the smaller communities may have experienced a much greater reduction in unemployment relative to NSMA due to the differences in initial rates.

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Paradoxically, there is no notable difference in education levels between the NSMA community and the Yellowknife community. The GNWT (2005) study reports that the percentage of Yellowknife residents over 20 years of age with high school or greater has remained relatively steady since 1989, at around 80%. The NSMA 2002 baseline study found that 79% of NSMA members had grade 12 or better, and the current study indicates that 78% have grade 12 or better. Likewise, roughly the same number of NSMA members reported having a university degree or college diploma in 2002 (33%) and in 2005 (32%). Neither the NSMA community nor the Yellowknife population has demonstrated any noticeable improvements in educational levels since mining began, despite the expressed interest of 64% of NSMA members in obtaining additional education or training to participate in the mining industry.

There is however a very noticeable difference in education levels between NSMA members and the general Aboriginal population of the NWT. NWT Bureau of Education (1999) statistics reveal that 54.4% of the NWT Aboriginal population has less than a grade 12 education, and that 25.6% have less than a grade nine. If the Métis component of the Aboriginal population (roughly 33%) was removed from the analysis, the percentage without a grade 12 would be closer to 68% of Aboriginal population.

It is therefore apparent that educational level can not explain the observed differences in household income and unemployment rates between the general Yellowknife population and the NSMA community. It is equally apparent that education level does not explain the similar levels of unemployment (and presumably household incomes) between NSMA members and the other Aboriginal residents of “small local communities”. Another incongruous result of the current study is that while 64% of the respondents indicated that they were “very” or “somewhat” interested in obtaining training or education in order to work in the diamond industry, only 28% had actually applied for a job with a mine. Most did not get an interview, but all those who were interviewed (22% of those who applied) did get the job.

A couple of potential explanations for these incongruent results are revealed in the current study. First of all, 70% of NSMA members prefer to work in their home community (near their families) and 72% report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current employment opportunities, while at the same time expressing an inability (50%) to cope with shift work. Supporting this interpretation there is evidence that while economic diversification is occurring for the Metis, it is not strongly or obviously related to the mining industry. Furthermore, there is a degree of concern about diamond mine impacts to the environment. One might infer that the Métis are either consciously or unconsciously choosing to retain their traditional (and socially stable) mix of economic activities, rather than switching their focus to mining related occupations, which may be viewed as temporary, unreliable and unsustainable. If work in the diamond mining industry is seen as having a negative impact on water quality and local game, as expressed by participants in the current study, then members of the North Slave Métis may become averse to seeking employment there. Beyond the obvious physical health implications of consuming tainted

fish and game, this may also create potential for division within the community between those NSMA members who actively seek or prosper from work in the mines and those NSMA members who intentionally do not out of concern for the environment. This may, in part, help to explain why a large portion of participants (80%) indicated they were interested in applying for employment within the diamond mine industry, yet over half (62%) had not done so.

A second possible explanation is that the low levels of income and employment for the Métis are a result of actual or perceived discrimination. Close to half of participants in the current survey indicated they had been discriminated at work on the basis of their race or sex. Unfortunately, the survey failed to differentiate between positive and negative discrimination. Since the goal of the socio-economic agreement, and the participation agreements is to promote aboriginal employment, education, and business opportunities this is a serious oversight. If the agreements were working as predicted, all NSMA members should have experienced preference (ie: positive discrimination) to some degree. Nevertheless, it appears that the participants in the current study conceptualized discrimination in its negative connotation, as evidenced by the open-ended responses to the question examining issues in the diamond mining industry not covered by the survey. Participants thought, despite equal levels of training and experience, they were not advancing at an equal rate as non-Aboriginal diamond mine employees. Additionally, institutional forms of racism were made evident by comments indicating there were no training programs for Aboriginals in mine management positions, and that Aboriginal workers seemed to get all jobs requiring the heaviest physical labor.

Whatever the explanation for the low levels of mine related employment and income, despite high levels of education and interest, this study reveals that employment and income benefits are not materializing for NSMA members in an equitable manner as predicted. This in turn indicates a need to find ways other than employment, business, or training in mining in mining related industries, to compensate NSMA members for the removal of their non-renewable mineral resources.

**b. “Traditional” Economic Activities**

During environmental assessment, Diavik predicted that in-migration of workers may change harvesting patterns and result in competition for lands and resources. A considerable weakness in the current study’s design is the failure to assess or account for this in any way. This study does confirm that most (76%) NSMA members continue to practice “traditional economic activities”, although there has been a significant (16%) decline from the 88% reported in the 2002 baseline study. Since most NSMA members currently reside within the city of Yellowknife, there may be a relationship between the decrease in traditional economic activity related to the increase in numbers of non-aboriginal residents and increased acculturation, competition, and physical and cultural displacement from these activities.

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Another weakness in the design of this study is the culturally inappropriate distinction between “non-traditional” versus “traditional” economic activity which may well apply to the Tlicho and Akaitcho Peoples in the region, but which is meaningless for the Métis. The Métis have always practiced, and continue to practice, the same “mixed” subsistence and commercial economy since their ethno genesis several hundred years ago in this region. For example, the “Old Patriarch”, one of the founding fathers of the North Slave Métis People, Francois Beaulieu, opened the first mine in the area around 1800, and maintained a monopoly on the salt trade throughout the region for many years. He and his family, and many other members of the Métis community conducted this mining business at the same time as hunting, fishing, trapping, and logging commercially and for personal consumption, and while also working for wages whenever convenient and profitable. Mining is not a “new” economic activity for the North Slave Métis. On a superficial level, a different mineral has become fashionable, but more importantly, the main difference between traditional Métis mining and the current mining activity in the region is that the Métis are no longer in control of the terms and conditions of the development, including the pace and prioritization of development options, the fees to be charged for the resource, and the allocation of the benefits. During the environmental assessment, this issue was raised repeatedly and assessed as significant by the NSMA, but was ignored by the “responsible authorities”.

It is noteworthy, also, to point out that none (0%) of the interviewees answered the survey question about whether they sold the proceeds of their harvest. This can be easily explained by the long term denial by the Government of their aboriginal rights to do so, and the threat of fines, imprisonment, and disqualification from jobs requiring clean criminal records should they admit to practicing this aspect of their culture.

Even though DCAB, Stevenson et al. (2002) and the researchers for the current study have made some efforts to consult with local NSMA members for development of key indicators, it appears that inadequate research and consideration has been devoted to describing a full spectrum of NSMA cultural practices for use in the DCAB toolkit. Many traditional activities characteristic of Métis, such as dog mushing, trading, guiding, and interpreting, have been omitted. If Métis men’s traditional occupations of guiding (e.g. claim staking, tourism), expediting and provisioning (e.g. mail delivery, stocking, warehousing, equipment and supplies sales) and so on, were counted, and if the women’s activities of food preparation, medical care, spiritual cultural and practical education, clothing manufacture, and so on, were included, the results might have shown that many more, and perhaps all, Métis continue practicing their traditional activities and culture.

Additionally, a culturally, and economically, important language characteristic of Métis is their multilingualism in the business languages used around them to facilitate their primary cultural activity of facilitating trade. The current study would have been well-served by examining French and English bilingualism, as well as ability to speak Chip and Dogrib.

## ii. Social Stability & Community Wellness

The main impacts predicted by the Diavik environmental assessment with regards to social stability and community wellness were related to the positive effects of income and education, and the negative effects of rotation cycles, migration, rising expectations over a sustainable level, and misuse of money.

### a. Social Stability

The most significant finding of the current study is that the majority of participants felt the diamond mining industry had contributed to increased housing costs, and none thought that it had not. Yet the number of participants “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current dwelling has increased significantly from 46% in 2002, to 64% now. Since housing was found to be “not affordable” for at least 1/3 of the NSMA population in 2002, it is unfortunate that the current study did not investigate this issue.

It is also unfortunate that other important aspects of social stability, such as family and community support networks, quality of leadership, feelings of belonging, and so on were not addressed. One very important question which has not been asked is whether or not mining affects community cohesion, competition for resources and traditional sharing. Some of these issues are addressed, in part, in other parts of the survey. In particular, the comments of members in the open-ended questions indicated a strong desire for NSMA to do something to increase community connection, communication, cooperation, and to “*stop fighting, get back to business*”, “*Focus on community desires, not individual ones*”, and “*Treat all members equally, stop favoritism*”. There seems to be an impression among some unknown proportion of members that the benefits of diamond mining are not being allocated fairly, and that jealousy is harming the community.

### b. Overall Community Wellness

It seems that drug and alcohol related challenges to the North Slave Métis community remain one of their largest concerns. The baseline study reported 95% of participants indicated drugs had a negative impact on their community and another 96% indicated the same for alcohol. The current study observed strong opinions on the part of those sampled that the diamond mining industry had increased a variety of negative community health outcomes. Across indicators of alcohol, drug use, violence and gambling, participants generally indicated these had increased as a result of the diamond mining industry. Most prevalent among these indicators was increased drug use. Nearly three quarters of the sample indicated it had increased. This sentiment is paralleled by the prevalence of responses to open-ended survey questions regarding the role the NSMA

should play in family health and wellness. It is prevalent also in participants' raising issues they wanted the NSMA to be aware of. A recurring theme among responses was the need for the NSMA to provide health programs in the area of addictions, drug education and prevention.

Nevertheless, the current study found that nearly half of participants rated the "overall health of their community" as generally satisfactory or acceptable (46%).

### **iii. Cultural Well-being**

During environmental assessment, Diavik reported difficulty in attempting to assess what the impacts of the project might be on cultural well-being. Potential negative impacts predicted were an erosion of the strength of Aboriginal language use due to working in an English only environment, changes to culture due to a transition from a mixed to industrial economy, and potential alienation of lands and resources from aboriginal use due to in migration, changes in recreational patterns, and competition. There was also recognition of potential positive impacts resulting from the predicted availability of extra income and the two week rotation schedule enabling more time on the land.

#### **a. Perceived Impacts of Mining on Métis culture**

The current survey has contributed little to clarifying the issues. Very few participants responded to these items, and no clear trend is revealed. This is likely due to the confusing wording of these particular items, as it was not clear whether "impact" meant a positive or negative change, or both. Only one participant reported a positive impact, and it is quite possible that most participants expected "impacts" to be something negative.

The Socioeconomic Agreement and each of the Participation Agreements are intended to ensure that there are positive impacts resulting from preferential hiring, training, and business opportunities, all of which can be defined as workplace discrimination (or reverse-discrimination). Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether it is a good thing or bad that 42% of the sample reported experiencing discrimination. In the future, questions should be more carefully designed to find out whether impacts are seen as positive or negative, in addition to whether or not an impact has been perceived.

The open-ended questions did, however, provide very clear and unambiguous evidence that at least some unquantified portion of the sample had experienced the negative impacts of racial discrimination at work. The impacts of discrimination need to be much more fully investigated in the future, including the possibility that racial discrimination may be a factor in the observed inequalities in employment and household income. Mitigation methods need to be developed.

#### **b. Cultural Activity**

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According to the GNWT (2005) report, about 25% of the aboriginal persons in Yellowknife could speak an aboriginal language in 2004. This number has declined from 35% in 1989. Other NWT communities have seen a drop from 50% speakers in 1989 to less than 40% in 2004. The small local communities are maintaining a relatively stable 90-95% ability to speak their language. In stark contrast, only 7% of NSMA's 2005 survey respondents indicated that they could speak Michif. This is less than half the proportion (15%) that was able to speak it in the 2002 survey, and far below the other aboriginal groups. If there is going to be any attempt to preserve this unique language, that attempt must be made soon. It may already be too late. If so, it should at least be documented before it disappears completely.

Although Métis language traditions certainly include Michif at the very core, there is also the distinctive Métis ability to converse in the multiple languages of local trade and commerce. Future surveys should also investigate the number of other languages spoken by Métis.

Generally, participants reported very little engagement in cultural activity. Only 62% identified any cultural activity they do participate in, with a single day (Aboriginal Day) being the most frequently reported "cultural" activity, at 22%. This is a significant drop from the 88% who reported participating in cultural activities in 2002. The baseline study also reported that 76% of participants felt certain features of their culture had already been lost. They commented on the loss of fiddlers, not enough families doing things together, and a loss of unity, language, and traditional knowledge. Many stated the frequency of Métis gatherings had diminished, and that a "sense of community" had been lost. It would appear that loss of culture and community connections remain a challenge to North Slave Métis' cultural well-being.

Despite the fact that 56% of respondents stated they would like to own items of traditional Métis clothing, most of them did not. While only half of the respondents indicated that their children were learning about the Métis from any source, this information is of limited value without knowing how many of them are parents.

Nevertheless, it appears that NSMA members are losing their language, and other aspects of their culture, at an alarming and inequitable rate. This loss of culture may partially explain why a more complete spectrum of Métis cultural activities were not listed or considered as "Métis". Participants' concern for the loss of culture and lack of opportunities to formally transmit Metis culture was very apparent throughout the baseline study of 2002 and the current study. Action needs to be taken to reverse this trend.

The fact that no respondents admitted to, or denied, the sale of harvested items, despite the assurances of confidentiality in the survey, indicates that there may be a fear of reprisals against practicing traditional Métis culture. Some historic traditional practices, such as the sale of wild meat, polygamy and even occupation of their own traditional lands, have been made illegal, and in other cases the Métis have been subjected to racism, discrimination and inequitable treatment (such as withholding Indian Act benefits, failure to settle comprehensive land claims, and punishment for speaking aboriginal languages in residential

schools). These past and present injustices likely contribute to expectations of and perceptions of discrimination. These unique characteristics and vulnerabilities of the Métis community need to be more adequately understood so that additional acculturative pressures can be properly managed.

**iv. Net Effects on Government**

During environmental assessment, the effects on government services and infrastructure were not particularly well defined, but were predicted to be small relative to benefits received, and offset by reductions in social assistance payments, taxes, and royalty payments. Only the Federal and Territorial Governments were considered governments, although the potential burden on NSMA's limited capacity was pointed out in *Can't Live Without Work* (1999).

To summarize qualitative analysis, it appeared NSMA members were concerned about three areas in their community and called for their NSMA representatives to take an active role in addressing these concerns: Programming for health, cultural education, and greater connectedness among themselves. Because these themes appeared in two separate open-ended survey questions, it appears they are very important to members.

**a. NSMA Role in Cultural Identity and Social Cohesion**

Currently, participants perceive their community to be divided, uninformed, and lacking a cultural cohesion. This is exemplified by the recurring comments calling for greater opportunities for gatherings, connectedness among NSMA members, and more initiative for utilizing elders' knowledge in teaching Métis culture. Lending support to this is the overwhelming majority of participants who indicated the NSMA should allocate resources to teach its members about the bush and traditional skills.

**b. NSMA Role in Community Health and Well-Being**

Recurring statements regarding the need for services to address drug and alcohol abuse are echoed by the strong response rates which indicated that NSMA participants largely felt drug abuse had increased since the advent of the diamond mining industry. Addictions and health services are normally delivered by the Territorial Government, but it is apparent that NSMA members do not feel they are receiving adequate service. NSMA will have to investigate how they can meet their members' expectations.

**v. Sustainable Development and Economic Diversification**

During environmental assessment, the development of a secondary diamond cutting industry was suggested, but not required. The GNWT (2005) report mentions only one



secondary industry under the sustainable development and economic diversification heading, when it states there are four diamond processing plants in the NWT.

**a. Socio- Economic Diversification..**

It appears that there are perceived to be less business opportunities and training than expected, but much better data is needed in order to investigate this possibility further.

**b. Bio-Cultural Sustainability.**

It appears that there is a notable level of concern about the environmental viability of mining. This lack of trust and cynicism may flow in part from past history, but may still be affecting the ability of NSMA members to benefit from the current project. Something should be done to further define the concerns, and if possible alleviate them. Educating NSMA members about the role of Diavik's other monitoring agency – the Environmental Monitoring Agency Board (EMAB) might be a good start.

It is clear that NSMA members do not feel culturally secure, or powerful when it comes to decisions which affect them. This is a long term problem that will need a lot of work to solve, and Diavik will only be able to do so much. However, it deserves some effort to investigate what Diavik, and DCAB might be able to do.

**vi. Overall Conclusions.**

This survey represents a good effort to find out what NSMA members are experiencing with regards to the Diavik Diamond project. Some of the most useful information is that with regards to the inequitable employment and household income levels, and the information about the loss of culture. It is also useful as a test run to see how the toolkit worked for a Métis community. Further work is required on developing indicators, making them more specific and meaningful, and standardizing survey questions between Diavik, GNWT, and all the Aboriginal Parties so that the data are comparable.

This actual survey could be considered to be biased due to the poor response rate. It is likely that people with higher incomes, and therefore likely busier lives were less motivated to participate due to the perceived "cheapness" of the honoraria, and the relatively large time commitment.

#### IV. Recommendations

*These recommendations are presented in no particular order, and are subject to change following the community vetting process yet to be completed on this finished document.*

- Survey honoraria need to be higher. This survey may be biased to those low income members who were less busy and needed the money more.
- Metis input into indicators needs to be stronger
- There needs to be some coordination between the mines, governments, and FN on what to measure and how = more work on indicators...
- We need a better definition of what is “traditional” economy for Métis.
- We need a stronger definition of what constitutes engagement in Metis cultural activity.
- Subsequent studies should work toward improving methodology regarding sample size, conciseness of survey items.
- If household income is to be surveyed, then household size and number of incomes needs also to be collected. Average income would perhaps be a more useful measure, combined with unemployment rate... if possible to collect data.
- Increases in income should be normalized to subtract inflation so that real increases in earnings could be seen, and so that the number of people put below the poverty line could be examined.
- Age classes, and income ranges should be standardized between the various agencies collecting data so they can be compared (ie: avoid problems of comparing net income versus gross income, and household versus individual)
- Questions about impacts should ask the direction and magnitude of change, not just presence absence.
- GNWT must gather data specific to the NSMA community, and not make the dubious assumption that the socio-economic status of the Yellowknife population reflects the NSMA population.
- We must find out why our unemployment rate is so high!!!!
- There must be an attempt to document Micheif, if not preserve it.
- Action must be taken immediately to prevent further loss of culture
- Subsequent SEIA studies to be representative of the entire spectrum of Metis life and culture. A more accurate examination of NSMA cultural wellness must be made with stronger methodology/higher quality assessment tools.
- The NSMA to improve its level of connectedness/communication with its members to foster a sense of inclusion and mutual understanding.

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- DDMI to address institutionalized racism within the training and operational areas of its organization and work to provide training/advancement to NSMA employees in areas of management and supervision.
- DDMI to immediately consult local communities and investigate its impact on the local environment, specifically traditional Metis subsistence game animals and water quality, to ensure no deleterious effects are occurring.
- DDMI to communicate and adequately educate local community members on its current pollution control practices and its plans for environmental remediation once the mine is closed.
- DDMI and the NSMA to work together to accurately assess the perceived increase in incidents of drug, alcohol, gambling and violence within the NSMA community.
- The NSMA to act to engage and provide for its members assistance/programming in areas of cultural and community wellbeing. Most notably in the areas of cultural education, and social connectedness. (e.g. more family and community gatherings, education of Metis culture, Michif language, inclusion of elder wisdom and teachings).
- The NSMA to consult and provide for its members assistance/programming in areas of community health and wellness. (e.g. health programs for substance addictions, alcohol and drug awareness, domestic violence and abuse counseling, financial assistance, provision of food during times of unemployment/hardship).

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