



Strategic Research La recherche stratégique

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey at a Glance: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Key Findings:

- Early findings underscore the economic benefits of education.
- Family and peer attitudes towards education are strongly related to educational success.

Introduction

The 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), conducted by Statistics Canada, is a national survey of First Nations living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit people aged six years and over. There were over 28,000 Aboriginal respondents across Canada, making for a 76% response rate to the survey.

“The education and employment experiences of First Nations people living off reserve, Inuit, and Métis: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey” was published by Statistics Canada on November 25, 2013. It is the first release of data from the 2012 APS. The report describes education and employment experiences of respondents who completed high school (“completers”) and respondents who did not complete high school (“leavers”) aged 18 to 44. See end note for a definition of “leaver”. It includes an analysis of personal, family, and school-related experiences during the last year of school and offers education-focused profiles of labour force activity.

For added context, the report incorporates some comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, using comparative statistics on the non-Aboriginal population from the 2011 National Household Survey.

This strategic research brief provides an overview of key findings from the first public release of information from the 2012 APS. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Canada will publish additional research briefs based on the 2012 APS. Upcoming research briefs will offer in-depth analyses of the school-related experiences of high school completers and leavers, on the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal people living off-reserve, and on other key findings revealed by the survey.

Main Findings

Economic benefits of education

The 2012 APS allows for an in-depth analysis of labour market outcomes based on whether individuals finished high school or not. It was found that

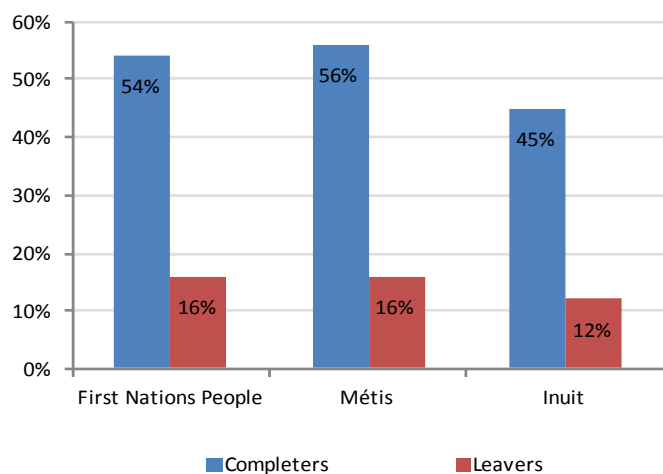
- Between 71% and 80% of high school completers were employed, compared to between 44% and 61% of leavers (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Employment Status by Aboriginal Group, 18-44



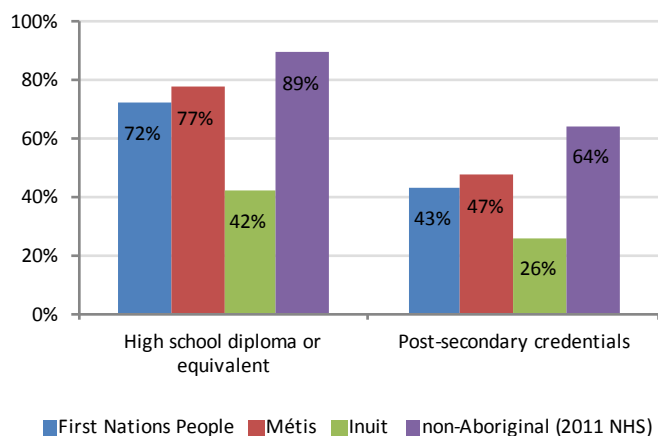
Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

Figure 2: Proportion of Post-Secondary Graduates by Aboriginal Group



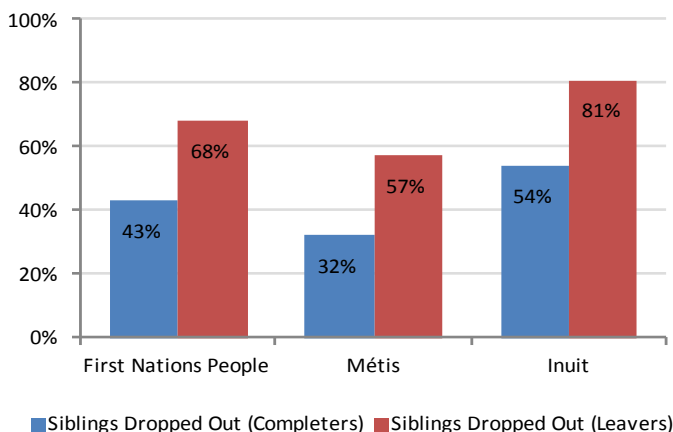
Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012

Figure 3: Educational Attainment by Aboriginal Group



Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; and, the 2011 National Household Survey.

Figure 4: Impact of Siblings on High School Completion by Aboriginal Group



Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

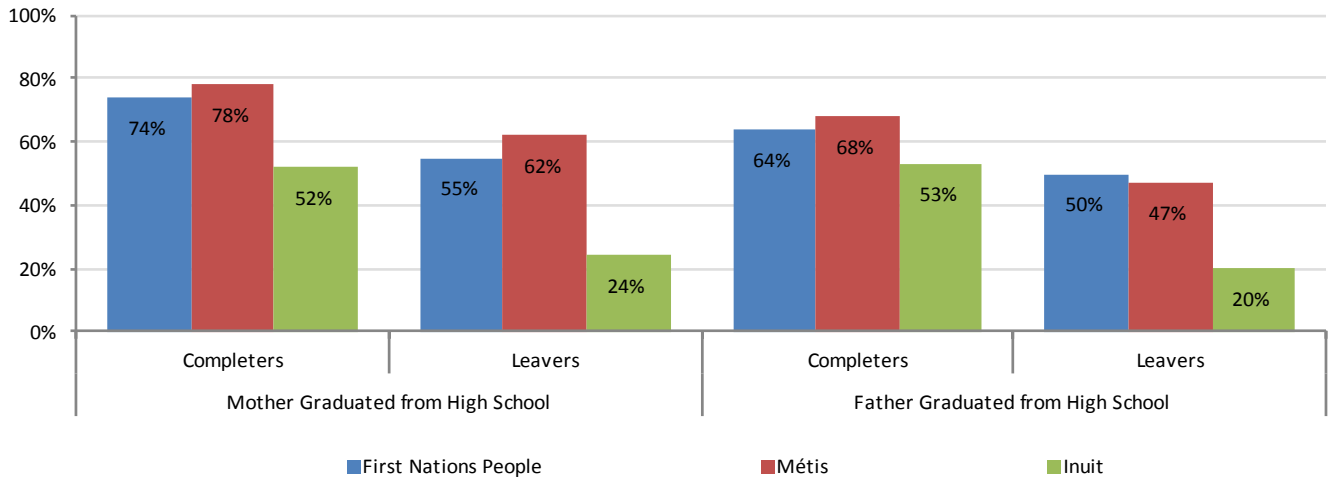
- First Nation male leavers were more likely than female leavers to be working (59% vs. 37%), except for those with trades certificates or college diplomas, where men and women were equally likely to be employed. There were no important differences by gender for First Nations completers. This is also true for Inuit completers and leavers and for Métis completers. Métis male leavers were much more likely to be working than female leavers (72% vs. 50%).
- High school completers were roughly 3.5 times more likely to have post-secondary credentials than leavers (Figure 2).
- Despite having not completed the requirements for a high school diploma, almost 40% of First Nations leavers who were employed had more than a high school education. Employment rates among Métis and Inuit leavers with more than a high school education were approximately 33% and 28%, respectively.
- For First Nations people living off reserve and Métis, the median employment income range for completers was \$10,000 higher than that of leavers. For Inuit completers, the median income range was \$20,000 higher.

Different populations, different paths

While the economic benefits of education are apparent, the educational experiences and outcomes of Aboriginal peoples vary widely. For instance:

- Educational attainment varies across populations: 72% of First Nations people living off reserve, 77% of Métis, and 42% of Inuit aged 18 to 44 had a high school diploma or equivalent. In comparison, the 2011 National Household Survey revealed that 89% of the non-Aboriginal population had at least a high school diploma (Figure 3).
- Although the majority of Aboriginal high school completers finished school without interruptions, a significant minority had different experiences. About 85% of First Nations and Inuit completers followed an uninterrupted path through school. However, ten percent of First Nations and of Inuit completers left school once before returning and completing their education and five percent left more than once. Among Métis completers, 91% followed a direct path through school, another six percent left once, and three percent had multiple departures.
- Across all groups, the reasons given for leaving school differed by gender. Aboriginal women cited pregnancy or wanting to care for their own children as the main reason (26% for First Nations, 38% for Inuit, and 25% for Métis). For male respondents, the desire to work was cited most often by First Nations and Métis (22% and 21%), while 22% of Inuit males cited school problems most often.

Figure 5: Parental Impact on High School Completion by Aboriginal Group



Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

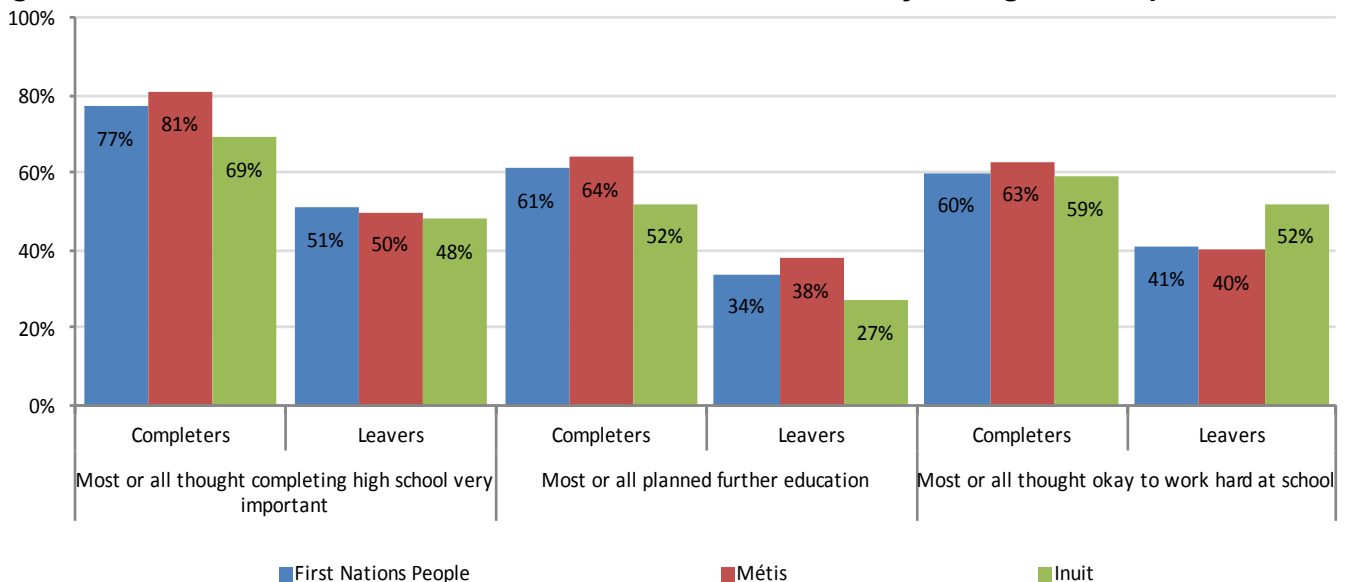
- A higher percentage of First Nations and Métis women had post secondary credentials as compared to their male counterparts (49% vs. 36% for First Nations and 51% vs. 42% for Métis). However, First Nations and Métis men were more likely than women to have a trades certificate (45% vs. 14% for First Nations and 42% vs. 15% for Métis), while women were more likely than men to have a college diploma (52% vs. 35% for First Nations and 48% vs. 32% for Métis) or a university degree (29% vs. 17% for First Nations and 20% vs. 19% for Métis). There were no important differences by gender in post secondary credentials reported by Inuit respondents.
- The majority of First Nations (61%), Métis (62%), and Inuit (85%) respondents with a university degree

were required to leave home in order to complete their program. Additionally, more than a third of First Nations and Métis university graduates made at least some use of distance education to complete their programs.

Influence of family and peers

An analysis of the family school experiences of high school completers and leavers found that success in school is strongly related to the educational success of parents and siblings. Figure 4 shows that high school leavers were more likely to report having one or more siblings drop out of school. Figure 5 shows that Aboriginal high school completers were more likely to have parents with at least a high school diploma.

Figure 6: Characteristics of close Friends in Last Year of School by Aboriginal Group, 18-44



Source: Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

Peer influences also appear to play a role in school success. Completers were more likely than leavers to report that their friends thought completing high school was important. Completers were also more likely than leavers to have many friends who thought it was okay to work hard at school. Finally, completers were almost twice as likely as leavers to have reported that most or all of their friends plan to pursue further education (Figure 6).

Future Research

The 2012 APS provides important insights into the well-being of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, particularly in terms of determinants of educational and labour market success. In 2014-15, the Strategic Research Directorate will publish more “APS at a Glance” strategic research briefs. Each will examine factors contributing to high school completion, PSE enrollment and completion, and labour market attachment. There will also be a more in-depth analysis of the experiences of Aboriginal adults who left school and then returned and successfully completed their education.

The 2012 APS is part of a broader survey program called “the Surveys on Aboriginal People” or SOAP. The SOAP program was designed to collect policy relevant information for all Aboriginal populations across Canada. Alongside Statistics Canada’s 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, a similar survey called the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES) is being conducted by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) on reserve and in northern First Nations communities. Results from the FNREEES will be available in 2015.

Note

Statistics Canada defines school “leavers” as persons who had not obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent and was not attending an elementary or high school at the time of the survey. It is important to note that individuals enrolled in a high school equivalency program when they were interviewed for the APS are also considered “leavers”. It is also important to recognize that some “leavers” may return to school in the future and obtain high school credentials. Furthermore, high school graduation may not be the highest level of education of “leavers”, as some may also have a trades certificate, college diploma, or university degree.

About the Original Report

This research brief is based on the first Statistics Canada publication using data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. The report “The education and employment experiences of First Nations people living off reserve, Inuit, and Métis: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey” is available as a web page or in PDF format.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of

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