



Strategic Research La recherche stratégique

Indigenous Youth

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Key Findings:

- While the proportion of Indigenous youth aged 15-29 with some type of post-secondary certification increased between 2006 and 2011 from 19% to 21%, the increase among Non-Indigenous youth was greater during the same period.
- Compared to the Non-Indigenous population, the Indigenous population had lower attendance rates, especially among younger age groups, suggesting Indigenous people spent less time at school when compared to non-Indigenous people.
- The employment rate for Indigenous youth rose with increased educational certification. For instance, 24% of those with no certification were employed as compared to 56% of those with high school and 76% of those with university certifications.

Introduction

Education is critical for social and economic progress. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with higher levels of employment and income. It often shapes an individual's occupational and career choices. Employment and income differences between individuals and groups tend to decrease as education increases in the form of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

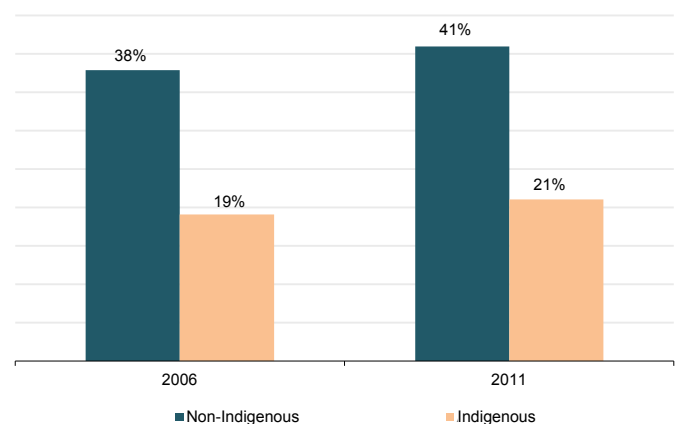
Because of increasing numbers of Indigenous youth, historic weaknesses in the education of Indigenous children and youth, and the importance of this growing population to the labour force, this summary focuses on Indigenous youth, 15 to 29 years old. This period covers the ages when the majority of youth complete their education and transition to the labour market. The findings summarized here are taken from a larger study of Indigenous post-secondary education and the labour market completed for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

Main Findings

The proportion of Indigenous youth with post-secondary education increased

Between 2006 and 2011 the educational levels of Indigenous youth aged 15-29 increased. At the same time the proportion of Non-Indigenous youth with post-secondary certification showed a slightly larger increase from about 38% to 41%. (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion of the 15-29 Year Old Population with any Post-Secondary Certification by Identity, Canada, 2006 & 2011



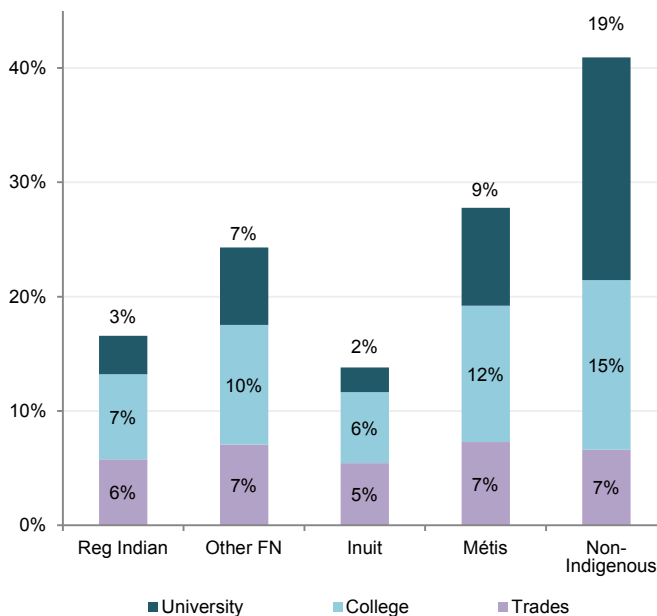
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006; National Household Survey, 2011.

Differences among identity groups

There were substantial differences among youth in different Indigenous identity groups with regard to post-secondary certification. While 28% of Métis youth and 24% of Other First Nations (non-status) youth had some type of post-secondary certification, around 17% of Registered Indian youth and around 14% of Inuit youth had post-secondary certification. In comparison, 41% of Non-Indigenous youth had post-secondary certification.

The differences among identity groups were larger for higher levels of certification, especially university certification. While 9% of Métis youth and 7% of Other First Nations (non-status) youth held university certification, only 3% of Registered Indian youth and 2% of Inuit youth had the same level of certification. In comparison, 19% of Non-Indigenous youth had university certification (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Population 15-29 Years Old with Post Secondary Certification by Type and Identity, Canada, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

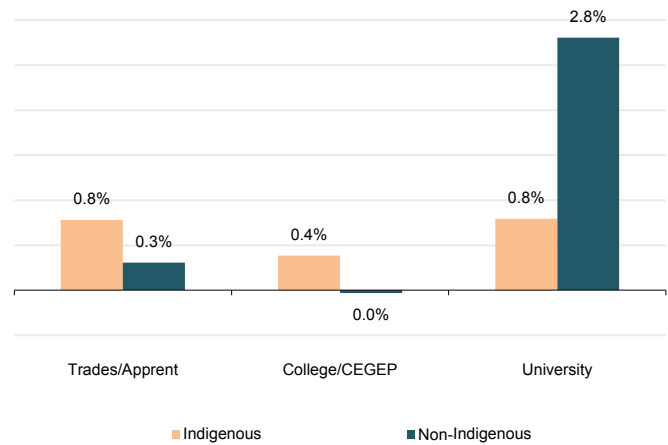
Increasing proportion of Indigenous youth with college and university certification

There was some growth in the percent of Indigenous youth with all types of post-secondary certification including trades or apprenticeship (increase of 0.8%), college (increase of 0.4%) and university (increase of 0.8%). In contrast, among the Non-Indigenous population most of the increase was in university level certification (Figure 3).

Indigenous attendance rates are low

Compared to the Non-Indigenous population, the Indigenous population had lower attendance rates, especially among younger age groups. Among the 15-19 year old population, for

Figure 3: Change in the Proportion of the 15-29 Year Old Population with Post-Secondary Certification by Type and Identity, Canada, 2006-2011



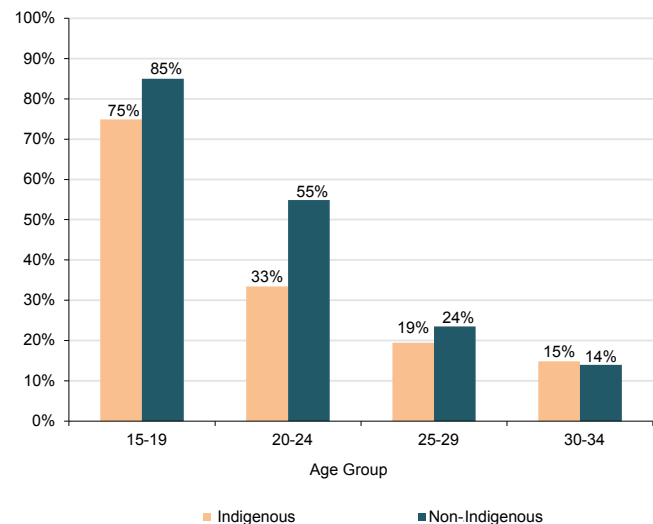
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

example, Indigenous attendance rates were 10% lower than Non-Indigenous rates. Among the 20-24 year-old population, the difference was 22%. The difference in attendance rates was smaller for the 25-29 year-old population. After the age of 30, Indigenous attendance rates were slightly higher than Non-Indigenous attendance rates. This suggests that, on average, Indigenous people spent less time at school when compared to non-Indigenous people (Figure 4).

Indigenous youth are a growing segment of the labour force

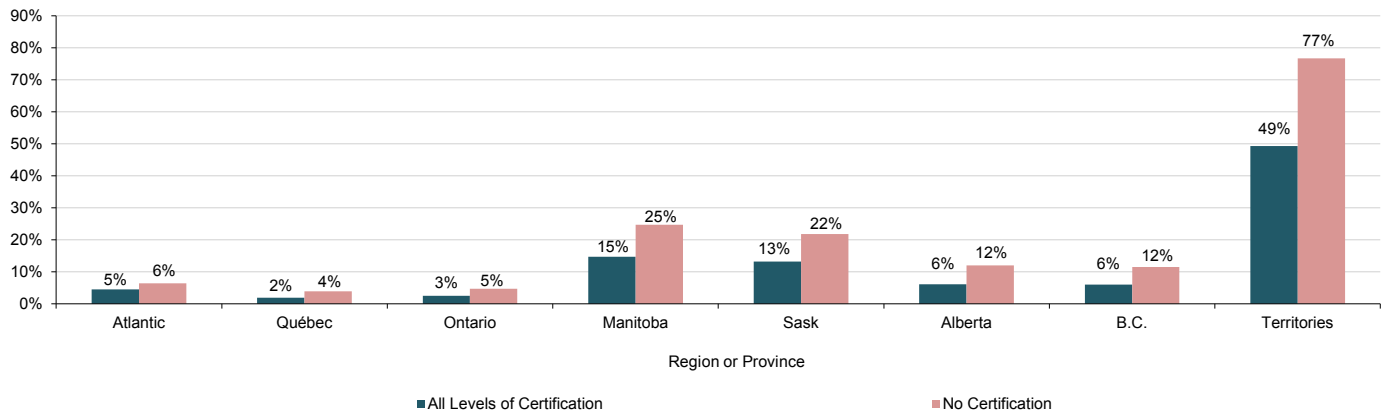
The Indigenous youth labour force in Canada is growing fast. For example, the Registered Indian youth population

Figure 4: Proportion of the Population Attending any Level of School by Identity and Age, Canada, 2010-2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Figure 5: Proportion of Indigenous Labour Force Participants Aged 15-29 Years Old, by Region or Province and Highest Level of Certification, Canada 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

increased by 14% between 2006 and 2011, while the Non-Indigenous youth population increased by only 4%. In 2011, 4% of labour force participants in Canada were Indigenous. Importantly, there were large variations across the country. For instance, 49% of young labour force participants in the northern Territories region were Indigenous. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan 15% and 13%, respectively, of young labour force participants were Indigenous (Figure 5).

Indigenous youth were more likely to lack certification

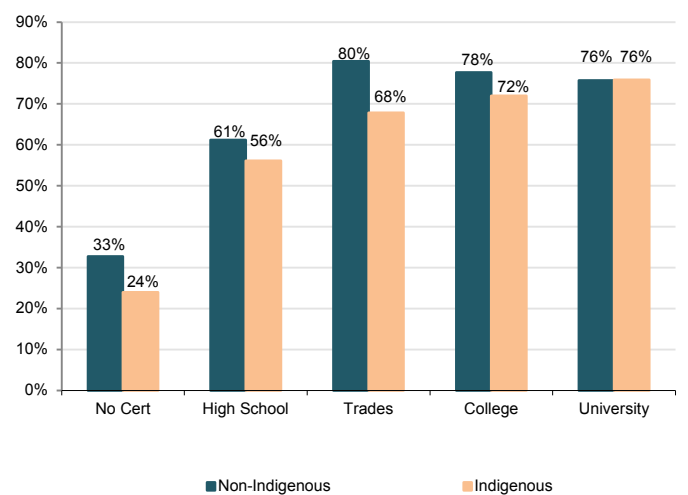
The growing importance of Indigenous youth in the labour market is impacted by the fact that many lack certification. In the northern Territories region 77% of young labour force participants who lacked certification in 2011 were Indigenous. In Manitoba 25% and in Saskatchewan 22% of young labour force participants lacking certification in 2011 were Indigenous. In Alberta and British Columbia about 12% of young labour force participants lacking certification were Indigenous (Figure 5).

Employment rates of Indigenous youth increased dramatically with certification

The employment rate is the proportion of the population who are employed. The employment rate for Indigenous youth increases as educational certification increased. The employment rate of Indigenous youth with high school certification (56%) was much higher than the employment rate of those without any certification (24%). Indigenous youth employment rates continued to increase with more education, reaching 76% among those with a university degree (Figure 6).

The employment rates of Indigenous youth were generally lower than those of Non-Indigenous youth, but differences in employment rates became smaller as educational levels increased. The employment rates were the same for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous youth holding university degrees.

Figure 6: Employment Rates of the 15-29 Year Old Population by Identity and Highest Level of Certification, Canada, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Conclusion

The findings of this study on Indigenous youth and post-secondary education point to the opportunities and challenges in incorporating the young Indigenous population into the Canadian labour force.

On the one hand, Indigenous youths' educational attainment increased between 2006 and 2011. In addition, a higher proportion of Indigenous youth are now completing post-secondary programs. Those Indigenous youth who received post-secondary credentials are having greater labour market success. This population forms a significant source of labour for the Canadian economy, given the growing numbers of Indigenous youth actively participating in the labour market and their increasing educational levels. This is especially so in the western provinces and in northern Canada.

On the other hand, attendance rates and educational attainment levels of Indigenous youth remained well below Canadian averages. While they are participating in the labour market, many Indigenous youth lack the credentials needed to achieve greater success.

About the Researcher

This research brief is based on a study completed in 2015 by Jeremy Hull, a Winnipeg-based research consultant. The study was commissioned in recognition of the importance of post-secondary education both to the well-being of Indigenous people and to the health of the Canadian economy. It is the fifth in a series of reports based on the 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006 Censuses and the 2011 National Household Survey. The full report, entitled “Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Labour Market Outcomes in Canada Based on Data from the 2011 National Household Survey,” is available at the Strategic Research Directorate’s GCpedia site and through the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada library.

Notes on Methodology

The data used in this summary come from the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2006 Census of Population. Comparisons are made among ‘identity groups’ based on self-reported identity and Indian registration status or membership in a First Nation. Identity groups include the Registered Indian, Other First Nations (non-status Indian), Métis, Inuk, and non-Indigenous populations. The 2011 National Household Survey defines post-secondary educational attainment as including three main types of certification: 1) an apprenticeship or trades certificate; 2) a college, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma; or; 3) a university certificate or degree. Attendance rates are calculated as the number of respondents who reported attending any level of an educational program at any time during the previous year divided by the total population. Finally, the Indigenous population is younger than the non-Indigenous population, which is more evenly distributed across the age ranges defined for youth.

For more information contact: Reserche-Research@Canada.ca

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada at:

CommunicationsPublications@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

www.canada.ca/indigenous-northern-affairs

1-800-567-9604 TTY only 1-866-553-0554

QS-7134-000-EE-A1 Catalogue: R3-233/2016E-PDF ISBN: 978-0-660-04238-1

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of
Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2015

This Publication is also available in French under the title:

Jeunes autochtones : éducation postsecondaire et marché du travail