



Fall 2003 Survey of First Nations People Living On-reserve

INTEGRATED FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

Indian and Northern Affairs

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 TELEPHONE SURVEY

This is the fourth large, national survey with First Nations people living on-reserve. These surveys have been conducted since August of 2001 and are the first of their kind in Canada. Results of the first survey were released in the fall of 2001. The second survey was released in May of 2002. The third survey was released in January of 2003. The current survey was designed to provide research partners in this study with a representative assessment of the views of First Nations people living on-reserve on a number of key issue areas. These include: 1) general attitudes regarding government priorities and views about performance of the Government of Canada; 2) views about education of First Nations youth (on- and off-reserve); 3) views about employment and youth employment specifically; 4) viewership and general attitudes related to the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN); and 5) patterns of behaviour and attitudes related to use of marijuana.

Three respondent eligibility requirements were set for the survey (as was the case in the previous three):

- a member of an Indian Band or First Nation;
- resident (for at least some part of the year) on a reserve in Canada; and
- 16 years of age or over.

The sample frame was built on the basis of selected postal codes in Canada. These postal codes were associated with all census sub-divisions (CSDs) identified by Statistics Canada as being a reserve or from the physical locations of the 630 or so Band offices across Canada. Once an exhaustive list of postal codes was created, the associated telephone numbers from all phone books in Canada were pulled. This list of telephone numbers included approximately 120,000 numbers. When compared to the population distribution of 368,000 or so First Nations people living on-reserve (from the Indian and Northern Affairs 2000 Register for On-Reserve residents, excluding the Territories), the sample frame appeared to under represent residents of Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and over represent residents of British Columbia. The sampling frame was further refined to exclude some postal codes that incurred particularly high ineligibility rates during the first few days of data collection. Finally, cross-referencing was conducted to ensure that the CSDs of First Nations reserves that did not participate in the Statistics Canada 1996 Census (77 reserves) or in the 2001 Census (32 reserves) were included in the frame.

The survey sample contains a total of 1,606 completed interviews with First Nations residents living on-reserve. This includes an oversample of 200 youth, over and above the youth cases included in the core 1,400 interviews. The maximum margin of error associated with the overall sample is +/- 2.4 per cent, at a 95 per cent confidence interval. The survey sample was stratified to include roughly 200 completed

interviews with residents in each of the Atlantic region, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, whereas 250 cases were targeted in Ontario and Manitoba. From the sampling frame, telephone numbers were randomly drawn within the specified stratification. Each of the seven provincial/regional strata of 200 cases carries a margin of error of a maximum of +/- 6.9 per cent, while Ontario and Manitoba carry an error rate of +/-6.2 per cent.

The questionnaire was designed in close consultation with each participating department and was thoroughly tested prior to starting data collection. Testing involved conducting over 30 interviews by telephone with First Nations respondents. The final questionnaire required an average of 21 minutes to complete over the telephone, using trained interviewers.

The survey was conducted between October 20 and November 11, 2003. The overall response rate for the survey was 44 per cent. This response rate is very high. In fact, it is higher than obtained for most national, general public surveys conducted today, which typically range between 20 and 30 per cent. The rate of refusal was particularly low at just over two refusals per completed interview. In the general public, there are typically three to four refusals per completed interview.

1.2 FOCUS GROUPS

Eight focus groups with First Nations youth living in First Nations communities were conducted. The groups were segmented according to age and gender in an effort to increase participants' level of comfort in discussing a number of sensitive issues (e.g., un-stated paternity) and to ensure a degree of common life experience around education and the labour market. The groups were conducted as outlined below.

Focus Group Location and Composition

LOCATION	Male 16-19 years	Male 20-24 years	Female 16-19 years	Female 20-24
Fredericton, NB		1		1
Thunder Bay, ON	1		1	
Brandon, MB		1		1
Edmonton, AB	1		1	
TOTAL	2	2	2	2

A total of 12 people were recruited for each of the focus groups in order to ensure the participation of seven to eight people in each session. In addition to the age requirement, two recruitment questions were used to determine eligibility:

- Self-identification as belonging to a First Nation; and

- Have lived on-reserve for the majority of the past year.¹

All of the groups lasted two hours and were conducted in English. All but the Edmonton groups, which took place in a dedicated focus group facility, were held in hotel meeting rooms. All groups were audiotaped. As is customary in focus group research, participants were offered a cash gift (i.e., \$65.00) as an incentive for participating in the research.

The issues covered in the focus groups were wide ranging, but particular attention was paid to discussing the barriers to academic and labour market success faced by youth, along with the opportunities they have. Other issues included overall sense of optimism/pessimism about the future, meaning of the terms self-sufficiency/self-reliance, and knowledge and awareness of government post-secondary education (PSE) funding and other programs. Questions of un-stated paternity and knowledge and awareness of the *Indian Act* were also examined. These study issues were identified in consultation with INAC officials and incorporated into two focus group moderator's guides (one for each of 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 years old First Nations youth).

It should be kept in mind when considering the qualitative results that, while the focus groups featured a good cross-section of individuals, they (and, therefore, the findings drawn from them) may not be said to be statistically representative of the larger target population. This *caveat* is particularly important in light of the heterogeneity of First Nations communities.

¹ A number of participants, notably in Fredericton and Thunder Bay, had recently moved off the reserve usually in order to attend school. They nevertheless considered their parents' house on the reserve as their home. It is also noteworthy that close to half of the participants in the Fredericton groups attended university.

2. ISSUES, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PERFORMANCE

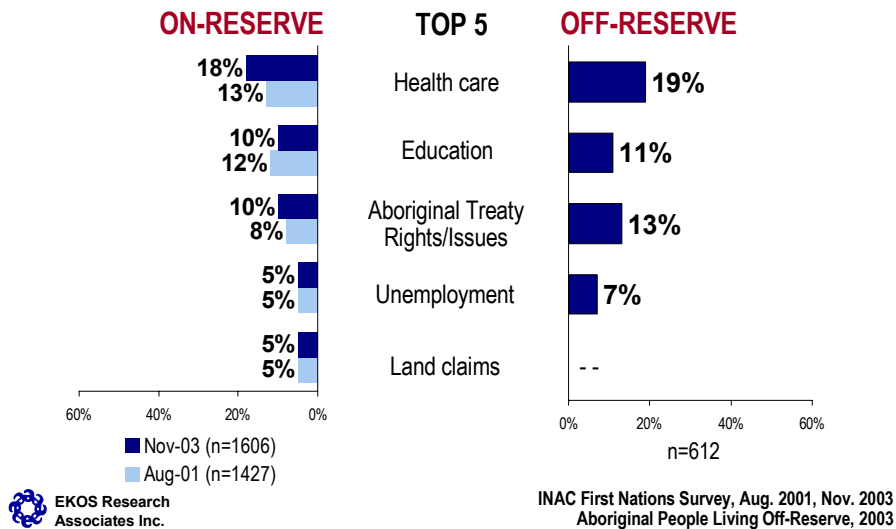
2.1 ISSUES FACING CANADA

With respect to issues the Government of Canada should focus on, health care, education, and Aboriginal treaty rights are considered to be at the fore, according to First Nations people living on-reserve. Health care is considered to be the most important issue for the federal government, according to 18 per cent, while 10 per cent each identify education and Aboriginal treaty rights as the most important issues. Smaller proportions identify unemployment or settling land claims as the central issue (five per cent in each). A host of other issues are also identified by a small minority, including the economy, poverty, the environment, crime and justice, and self-government. The importance placed on health care has increased (from 13 to 18 per cent) since the first survey in 2001.

The results regarding health care and education are virtually identical to those found among Aboriginal people living off-reserve. Aboriginal treaty rights and issues are somewhat more important to the off-reserve population than to First Nations people on-reserve (13 per cent versus 10 per cent of those on-reserve), whereas land claims are not seen as an important issue for federal government focus off-reserve.

Issues Facing Canada

“Thinking about the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?” [unprompted]



- First Nations people on-reserve in BC and Atlantic Canada are more likely to consider unemployment to be the top issue (nine per cent do) than elsewhere in the country. Residents in Alberta place less emphasis on health care as the most critical issue than the rest of Canada.
- Women are more likely than men to emphasize education and poverty as the most important issues for the Canadian government to address.
- Health care and Aboriginal treaty rights are more critical issues among those with university education.
- Youth are least likely to identify health care as the most important issue to address, while those 55 and over are most likely to do so. Youth are also less likely to identify land claims, housing, and treaty rights as the most critical issue to address. In fact, they are far more likely to not respond or not know (41 per cent).
- Health care is an issue of greater concern for those in economically affluent communities, while those that reside in remote, economically depressed areas are more likely to say they do not know.

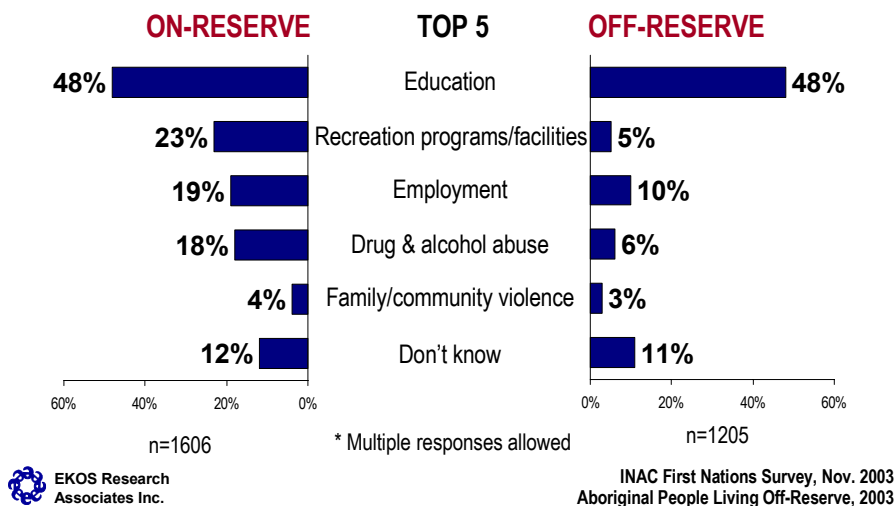
2.2 ISSUES FACING FIRST NATIONS YOUTH

Turning to issues facing Aboriginal young people, half of First Nations people living on-reserve (48 per cent) consider education to be the central issue on which the Government of Canada should focus. Recreation programs and facilities are seen as a distant second priority (23 per cent), followed by employment (19 per cent), and drug and alcohol abuse (18 per cent). A smaller proportion (eight per cent) identified community health services as the top youth issue for federal government focus. Other issues facing youth identified by a small proportion include: family and community violence (four per cent); housing (four per cent); teenage pregnancy (three per cent); heritage/culture (three per cent); and getting youth off streets and out of trouble (three per cent).

Education of youth is seen as equally important in the Aboriginal off-reserve population. The latter four issues identified by First Nations people on-reserve (violence, day-care and parenting services, drug and alcohol abuse, community health services) are far less likely to be identified as top issues by Aboriginal people living off-reserve.

Issues Facing Aboriginal Youth

“Thinking about the issues facing Canada’s **Aboriginal young people** specifically, who are living on/off reserve, what would you say the Government of Canada should focus on?” [unprompted]*

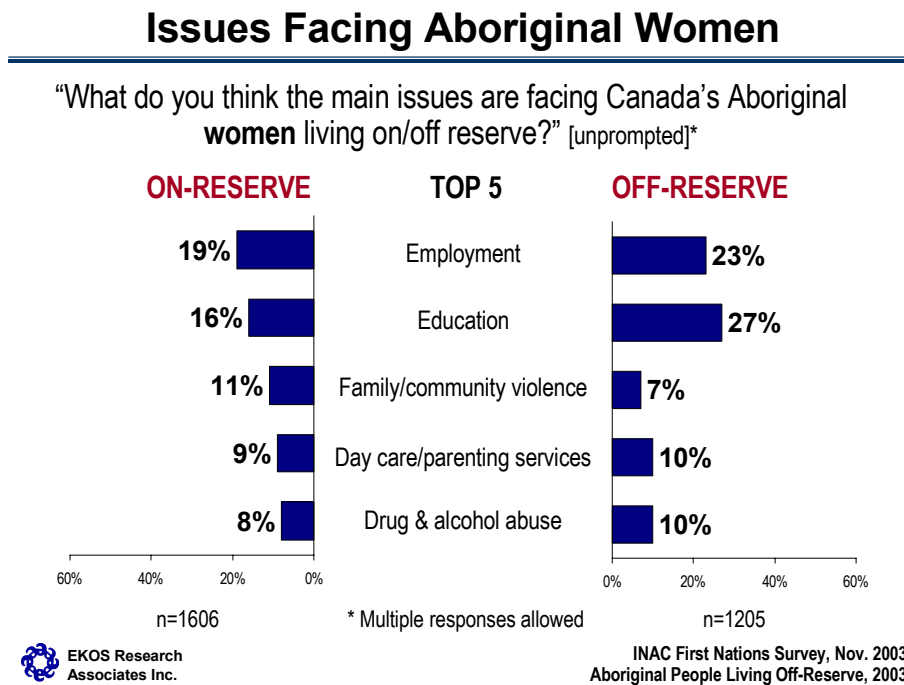


- There is significant regional variation in the identification of the most critical issue facing youth. Greater emphasis is placed on education in British Columbia compared with the rest of the country. Drug and alcohol abuse is more likely to be identified as a key issue in Alberta, Quebec and Atlantic Canada and least likely to be mentioned in Ontario. Recreation programs and facilities are identified more often by residents of Manitoba and Ontario, and least often in Alberta and Quebec.
- Parents are more likely to see a strong need for recreation programs and facilities (23 per cent versus 16 per cent of people without children).
- The university-educated are more likely than those less educated to identify education, as well as drug and alcohol abuse as critical.
- Anglophones place a stronger emphasis on education than people with another mother tongue.
- Interestingly, youth themselves are least likely to point to a specific issue and are more likely to say they do not know (22 per cent did not know/not respond).
- Economically affluent communities place a greater emphasis on education and recreation programs or facilities, compared to those that are more economically depressed where housing is more likely to be emphasized.

- Urban residents are more likely to identify education and drug and alcohol abuse as an important government focus, while those living in remote areas are more likely to say they do not know what the priority should be.

2.3 ISSUES FACING WOMEN

Employment is considered to be the foremost issue facing women living on-reserve, followed by education (mentioned by 19 and 16 per cent, respectively). Family/community violence is considered to be the main issue facing women on-reserve according to 11 per cent, followed closely by day-care and parenting services (considered the main issue by nine per cent) and drug and alcohol abuse (eight per cent).



By comparison, education is mentioned more frequently as an issue for Aboriginal women living off-reserve, followed closely by employment. A somewhat smaller proportion of Aboriginal people living off-reserve identified family and community violence as the most important issue facing Aboriginal women (seven per cent versus 11 per cent of those on-reserve), whereas day care and drug and alcohol abuse are seen as important by similar proportions of both populations.

Other issues identified (not shown in chart) by a smaller number of First Nations people on-reserve include poverty (seven per cent), services and information for single parents (six per cent), housing,

community health services, and status issues and equality (five per cent in each), as well as discrimination and pregnancy or family planning (four per cent in each).

- Residents in Quebec are less likely than First Nations people in other provinces to identify education as the primary issue facing Aboriginal women, whereas drug and alcohol abuse and family or community violence are more central issues in Quebec than elsewhere in the country. Employment is also less likely to be identified as the primary issue facing women in Ontario and Atlantic Canada, whereas this issue has greater emphasis in the west, particularly in Saskatchewan.
- Women are more likely than men to identify employment and education as key issues. Men are less likely to provide a response.
- Community health services and family or community violence, as well as poverty are issues that are emphasized more often by respondents with high household incomes (\$50,000 or more). Youth with household incomes exceeding \$30,000 are more likely to identify drug and alcohol abuse and pregnancy or family planning as critical issues.
- Employment, education, day care services, poverty, and violence are each identified as key issues by a greater proportion of First Nations people with university education.
- The employed also place a stronger emphasis on employment and education, compared with those who are not working.
- Status/equality is more often seen as the key issue among those in urban, economically affluent communities, whereas those living in remote, more economically depressed communities were less apt to provide a response.

2.4 PRIORITIES

a) Survey Research

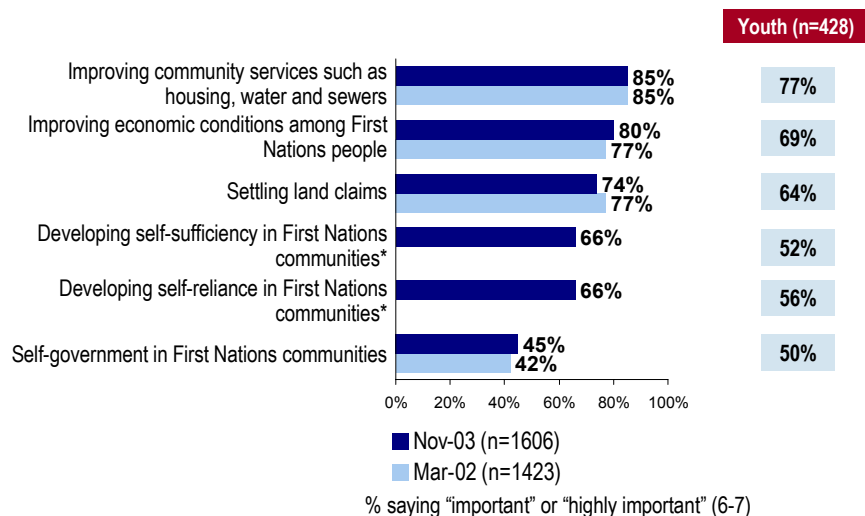
First Nations people rate a wide variety of issues as important to themselves personally, and for First Nations people overall. Half of the survey respondents were asked this set of questions in the context of their own experience, while the other half were asked about the importance for First Nations people more globally. It is interesting to note, however, that this variation in wording made no difference in responses.

Improving community services and economic conditions are seen as the most important priorities (with 85 and 80 per cent of First Nations people rating these as a six or seven on the seven point scale). Settling land claims is also very important to three in four residents. Self-reliance/self-sufficiency are rated a third level priority (half of the sample was asked about self-sufficiency and half was asked about self-reliance, although there is no difference in the resulting responses). Self-government is considered important by a much lower proportion of First Nations people living on-reserve (45 per cent).

The priorities of First Nations people on-reserve have changed very little since early 2002. The importance placed on improving community services is identical, and the importance placed on other priorities (improving economic conditions, settling land claims, and self-government) has changed only slightly.

Priorities

“How important is ... to First Nations people/you personally?”



- The importance accorded to settling land claims is higher among those with higher incomes (\$50,000 or more), but also higher among those with the least education (grade eight or less). Residents in the Atlantic provinces rated settling land claims a higher priority, while those living in remote areas provided a lower rating.
- Residents with the lowest incomes (below \$10,000) and the least education (primary school or less) are less likely than upper socio-economic residents to consider improving economic conditions to be important. The same pattern is reflected in employment status, with the employed placing greater emphasis on this issue than those who are not working. Oddly, respondents in communities with moderate to high levels of economic health are more likely than others to consider improving economic conditions to be important.
- The importance accorded to developing self-reliance increases with educational attainment and household income, and is greater among those aged 35 and older. Developing self-sufficiency is also much more likely to be perceived as important by people with a university education. Greater emphasis is also placed on self-sufficiency/self-reliance in British Columbia. The importance of developing self-reliance and self-sufficiency is rated more highly among those in economically affluent communities.
- Settling land claims, improving economic conditions, improving community services and developing self-reliance/self-sufficiency are less likely to be perceived as important by youth, and importance increases with age across the population. Youth are far more likely than adults to consider self-government important (50 per cent).
- Settling land claims is less likely to be perceived as important by the unemployed.
- Self-government is less important to residents of Alberta and British Columbia than elsewhere in the country.
- Improving economic conditions among First Nations people is considered more important in British Columbia, and less important in Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.
- Improving community conditions is far less important in Quebec, and consequently, among Francophones. On the other hand, it is more important among residents in small to medium sized communities (501-1000 residents) with a moderate level of economic health.
- Anglophones are far more concerned with improving economic conditions than Francophones or those with an Aboriginal first language.

b) Focus Group Findings

The focus group discussions examined participants' views about the most pressing needs of their community and of youth. Many participants, often unprompted, spoke of the crucial importance of role models to the success of young people. There was also agreement that parents are in the best position to influence children. Reflecting on their personal experiences, most said that they did not "really have" a role

model or anyone in particular that they looked up to. Those who did, tended to credit one or both of their parents, usually the father, for their success in staying/succeeding in school and avoiding the pitfalls (e.g., drug and alcohol addiction) that many of their friends had fallen into: "My parents were on me all the time. I had to go to school and I had to do my homework. My dad was involved." "We had a curfew. I had to be in by 10. My friends could stay out but I couldn't."

In addition to being involved in their life, some participants said that one of their parents or a close relative was someone they looked up to: "My father has a Master's degree. I really look up to him. He's the reason I'm in university." "I look up to my grandmother. She is a very educated women; that's very rare for someone her age." "My father is an addictions councillor. He's a role model for me because I want to be a social worker." Indeed, to the extent that participants had role models, they seemed to look up to family members who possess education and/or work in occupations they respected (e.g., professionals, artists, skilled trades people).

According to participants, having even one parent who was actively involved in their child's life and who could be counted on for support is uncommon on their reserve. The challenge went beyond the fact that there was a dearth of role models for First Nations youth. More troubling was that many adults on-reserve, including parents, were seen as setting a very poor example for children. In fact, participants tended to express a significant amount of anger, and, at times, disgust towards the adults living in their community. They felt that too few parents value education, even to the point where some resent the fact that other community members are educated: "A lot of them didn't go to school. They might have grade 10 or eight, like my parents. I went to school, but my brother doesn't and they just let him." "There's a lot of gossip on-reserve and if people come back with education, instead of looking up to them, they'll put them down and say things like he thinks he's better than everyone now."

Fairly widespread addiction among adults was said to be having predictable impacts on children and youth: "What kind of an environment is it when you see your grade six teacher doing a line of coke at your uncle's place?" "If you want to know what 'self-reliance' means, go ask the kids on my reserve who have to rely on themselves to get food and stuff because their parents are out partying all the time."

Many participants pointed to their Band Chief and/or Council members as setting a particularly bad example for children and youth. Sometimes limited by a lack of education, drug and/or alcohol abuse, or involved in blatant corruption, the poor example set by some community leaders was described as particularly troubling because these people are seen by youth as enjoying respect, privilege and material success despite their problems and indulgences: "The first problem is the lack of education. We had a Chief who could hardly read, but he had a nice house and drove a nice truck. So who needs education?"

It is important to note that participants did not condemn all, or even most of their local leaders. It was simply that participants felt community leaders' elevated status and position of influence within the community behoved them to set a positive example for children. The fact that some did not do so just seemed particularly egregious.

When asked about their personal potential for serving as a role model for youth on-reserve, most agreed, though sometimes vaguely, that they would like to play that role some day. Some reiterated a more general desire to “contribute” or “improve” the quality of life on-reserve, especially where children are concerned. At the same time, many potential role models admitted feeling that they needed to “achieve something” in order to earn respect: “I have to finish my education. Right now I don’t see why kids would look up to me.”

Compounding what participants agreed is a general lack of role models in their community, is the tendency among First Nations young people who might be worthy of emulation to leave the reserve. A majority of participants expressed, often emphatically, a desire to move away. This view was generally more prevalent and strongly held among those who seemed to have greater potential for labour market success: “I want to get the hell out of there. I’m in second year at UNB, once I get my BA I want to do an MBA and then move to Toronto to work in the financial sector.” “I’m going to stay on the reserve and live with my mom. She helps me raise my kids.”

Not all of the potentially best and brightest wanted to forsake the reserve, however. As mentioned, some want to contribute something: “I don’t want to live there or anything like that, but I want to work with the kids to try to give them a chance at a better life.” A few others are quite committed: “Once I finish school I want to run for Chief. Young people like us who have education need to take over, it’s the only way anything will ever change.” There was general agreement, however, that “taking over” was much easier said than done. Reserve life, particularly politics, participants explained, is characterized by a dogged defence of the status quo and of the promotion of conformity. Achievement, it seems, particularly when gained outside of the community (e.g., attending university), is often viewed with suspicion and resentment: “People have done that, they’ve gotten educated and come back, but unless you’re part of the right family you have no chance.”

In further exploring the issue of priorities for First Nations people living on-reserve, focus group participants were asked to discuss their understanding of the terms “self-sufficiency” and “self-reliance.” These two terms were introduced as part of a word association game that began by having people spontaneously associate words that came to mind when other more familiar words such as Miami, Hockey, Hollywood and Britney Spears, were raised by the moderator. The terms self-sufficiency and self-reliance are generally well understood. Quite a few participants expressed doubt that they knew what the words meant, but more often than not, their definition proved to be right: “I have no idea what this means. All I can think is that it means you can do things for yourself, you don’t need to rely on anybody.” On their own, the terms are seen as positive. Everyone, it was felt, should strive to be as self-sufficient or self-reliant as possible.

Placed in different contexts, however, the words often took on different connotations and elicited divergent reactions from participants. In a hypothetical scenario in which a First Nations leader stated that First Nations people should strive for self-sufficiency, most participants agreed: “It’s true, we should be self-sufficient. I hate the fact that we have to depend on government for everything.” Only a few were critical: “I think that Chiefs need to clean-up their own act before telling us what to do.” A second

scenario, in which the Prime Minister or Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs stated that the Government was committed to working with First Nations people towards self-sufficiency usually elicited suspicion and resentment. For most, it was not so much that such a statement from a senior representative of the Government represented a threat to treaty rights and benefits, rather, it was that the suggestion was “insulting” and paternalistic. Indeed, some participants reacted with a fair bit of emotion: “The Government is telling us that we need to be self-sufficient! Who is it that introduced drugs and alcohol to us? Who is it that told us that our beliefs and language were something to be ashamed of? Who is it that abused us in residential schools? Now we have to be self-sufficient? Maybe, but they have no right to tell us this.”

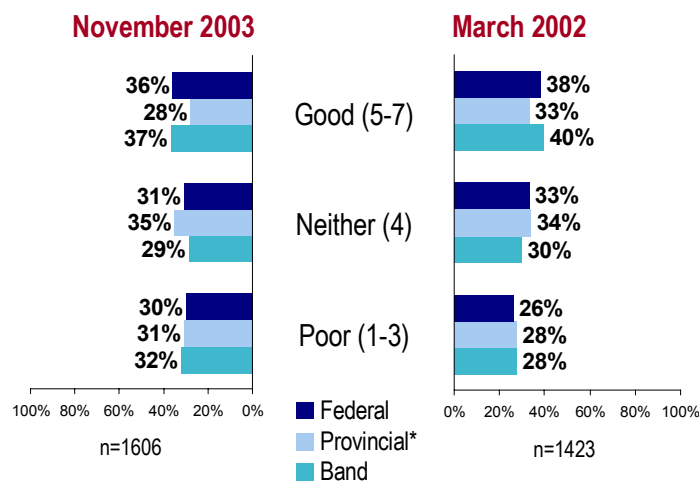
2.5 PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT

First Nations people are divided in their assessment of the performance of the three levels of government: federal, provincial, and Band. Roughly one-third (30, 31 and 32 per cent) rated the performance of their federal, provincial and Band governments as poor. Just over one-third rated the performance of their federal and Band governments as good (36 and 37 per cent, respectively). Provincial governments receive the least favourable ratings, with 28 per cent rating the performance of this level of government as good and over one-third (35 per cent) rating it as neither poor nor good.

The assessment of government performance by First Nations people has declined somewhat in the last year and a half. A slightly higher proportion of First Nations people rated the current performance of all three levels of government as poor when compared to 2002, and a slightly lower proportion rated the current performance of all three levels of government as good, although results for provincial performance have dropped more.

Three Levels of Government Performance

“How would you rate the overall performance of the/your ... government?”



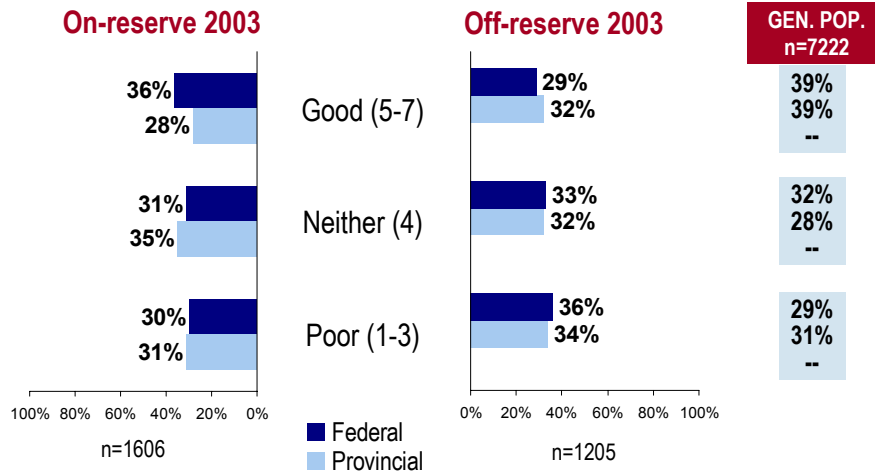
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* half-sample in 2002

INAC First Nations Survey, Mar. 2002, Nov. 2003

Three Levels of Government Performance (Compared to Other Populations)

“How would you rate the overall performance of your ... government?”



 EKOS Research Associates Inc.

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003
Aboriginal People Living Off-Reserve, 2003
Communication Canada, Sept. 2002

First Nations people on-reserve are slightly more favourable in their assessment of the federal government and marginally less favourable towards their provincial government than are Aboriginal people off-reserve. First Nations people (both on- and off-reserve) are slightly less favourable towards both levels of government than the general Canadian population.

- Youth tend to be much more positive about federal and provincial governments, while those aged 35 to 54 are least positive. Youth are also more positive about the performance of their Band government.
- Residents of British Columbia are less favourable in their assessment of the federal government, while those in Atlantic Canada are the most favourable. Residents of British Columbia are also most likely to rate the performance of their provincial government as poor, whereas residents of Alberta are the most positive about their provincial government's performance.
- Alberta residents are far more likely to rate the performance of their Band government as poor, whereas the highest rating is found in the Atlantic region.
- The assessment of the performance of federal and provincial governments declines with income and educational attainment, and is also lowest among the employed and those with Internet access.
- Those with a university education are also more likely to rate the performance of their Band government as poor, as do the employed. Criticism is also highest in the 25-34 age group.

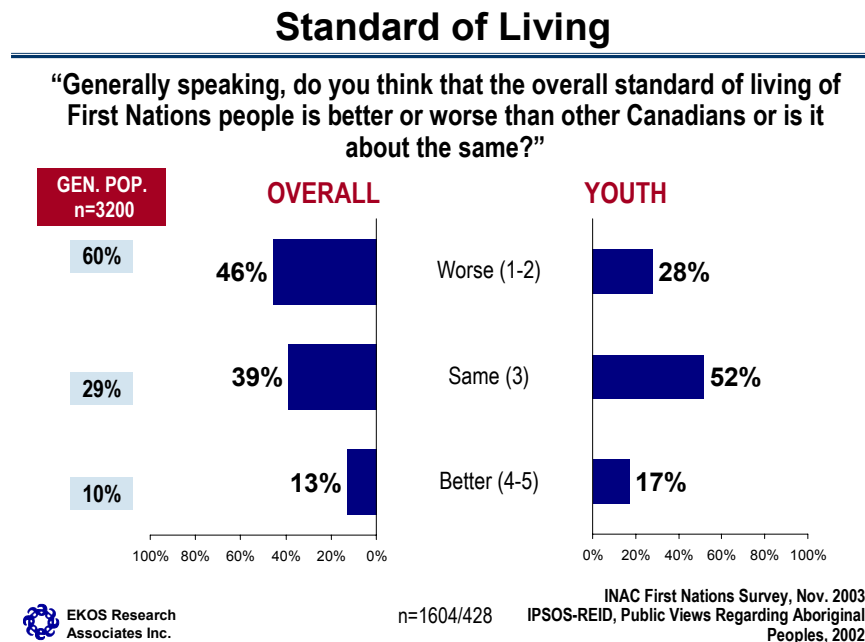
- Respondents in economically affluent, urban communities are less favourable in their assessment of federal and provincial governments, whereas those in rural communities with a moderate level of economic health are less positive in their assessments of their Band government.

2.6 STANDARD OF LIVING AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

a) Survey Research

Half of First Nations people on-reserve believe that the overall standard of living of First Nations people is worse than other Canadians, and only 13 per cent think that it is better than other Canadians. First Nations youth are more optimistic than adults, as just over half of youth believe that the standard of living of First Nations people is the same as that of other Canadians, and just over one-quarter (28 per cent) believe that it is worse.

While the view of standard of living of First Nations people is fairly pessimistic, it is not as negative as the view espoused by the general public. Almost two in three members of the public believe that First Nations people have a lower comparable standard of living than other Canadians.

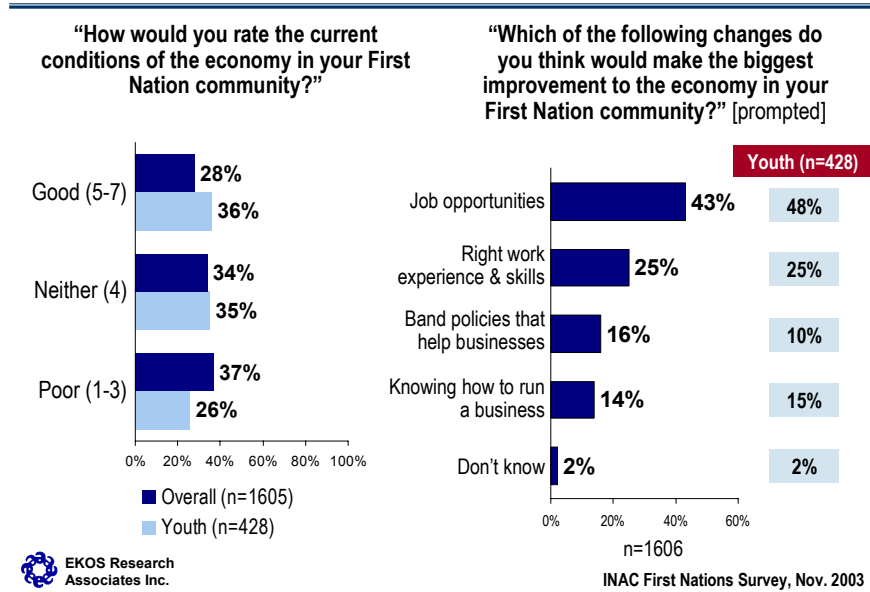


- First Nations people living on-reserve in Quebec and Atlantic Canada are marginally more likely to believe that the standard of living of First Nations people is better, and those in Saskatchewan are more likely to state that it is the same as other Canadians.
- The assessment of how the standard of living of First Nations people compares to other Canadians declines with income (35 per cent of those with incomes below \$10,000 think it is worse, versus 66 per cent of those with incomes above \$50,000). The same is true of educational attainment; 33 per cent of those with primary school education believe First Nations standard of living on-reserve is worse, versus 70 per cent of those with university education.
- Anglophones, the employed, the 35 to 54 age group and Internet users (who are all typically more educated and affluent) are also more likely to believe that the standard of living of First Nations people is worse than other Canadians.
- Residents in remote areas are not as pessimistic as those in other areas and are more apt to say that their standard of living is the same as other Canadians.

First Nations people are divided in their assessment of the current economic conditions in their First Nation community. Less than one-third (28 per cent) describe the current economic conditions as good, while over one-third (37 per cent) describe current conditions as poor, and a similar proportion (34 per cent) feel they are neither good nor poor.

Again, youth are more positive in their outlook on this issue, being more apt to describe the economic conditions as good (36 per cent do, versus 28 per cent of the overall sample).

Current Economic Conditions



- Views about current economic conditions are linked to education; those with university education and those with Internet access are most likely to rate the current economic conditions of their First Nation community as poor.
- Alberta residents are most likely to describe the economic conditions of their community as poor, while those in Quebec tend to have a more neutral view and residents of Atlantic Canada tend to be more positive.
- Those who are not in the labour force are less likely to describe current economic conditions as poor.

Respondents were also asked to indicate which of a number of different changes would make the biggest improvement to the economy in their First Nation community. The change most First Nations people believe would make the biggest improvement to the economy in their community is job opportunities (43 per cent). One-quarter (25 per cent) believe that the right work experience and skills would make the biggest improvement to the economy in their community, and a smaller number identify Band policies that help businesses (16 per cent) or knowing how to run a business (14 per cent) as the changes which would

most improve their First Nation community economy. Youth are more likely than adults to feel that increased job opportunities is the one change which would make the biggest improvement to the economy in their community.

- Residents of British Columbia are more likely than other residents to identify the right work experience and skills as the most beneficial change, while those in Quebec are more likely to identify Band policies which help business and least likely to identify job opportunities as the most helpful changes.
- Those with the lowest incomes (less than \$10,000), and the unemployed are more likely to identify job opportunities as the change that would make the biggest improvement.

b) Focus Group Findings

The issues of on-reserve standard of living and economic conditions were explored in the focus groups, with participants expressing less than positive views. Life on-reserve was invariably described as “boring”, particularly for teenagers and “little kids”. Organized activities (e.g., hockey), recreational facilities and most other things that had once given young people “things to do” in the community have been cut back or abandoned: “The kids vandalized and burned it and it was never replaced.” “No one wants to get involved to organize stuff for the youth in the community.”²

The benefits of reserve life were said to mainly revolve around financial benefits (e.g., “free” rent and hydro, tax exemption, “cheap” cigarettes and gasoline) and closeness among extended family members and friends. For some, a “quiet”, rural lifestyle, relatively close to nature is the main advantage. The drawbacks of living on-reserve outweigh the benefits in the eyes of most participants. In addition to boredom, numerous forms of isolation (e.g., economic, cultural, educational, physical), drug and alcohol abuse and poor living conditions (e.g., overcrowded/substandard housing, contaminated drinking water) make life difficult for many young people. Even the closeness of community members, biological and otherwise, could also be a source of consternation: “Everybody knows everybody else’s business.” “People gossip and backstab all the time.”

Participants “hoped” that life on their reserve would improve in the future and some could point to examples of progress: “We have a new Chief and he’s making a lot of improvements.” “This guy’s Band handles money really well.” “We’re getting 200 new houses built.” “They’re building a new school.” Signs of social, economic and spiritual decay, however, suggest to even the most optimistic person that “things are going to get worse before they get better.”

² As documented in past research, volunteerism on-reserve appears to be relatively low. There is an expectation that people will be paid for their involvement.

2.7 ABORIGINAL GOVERNANCE REFORM

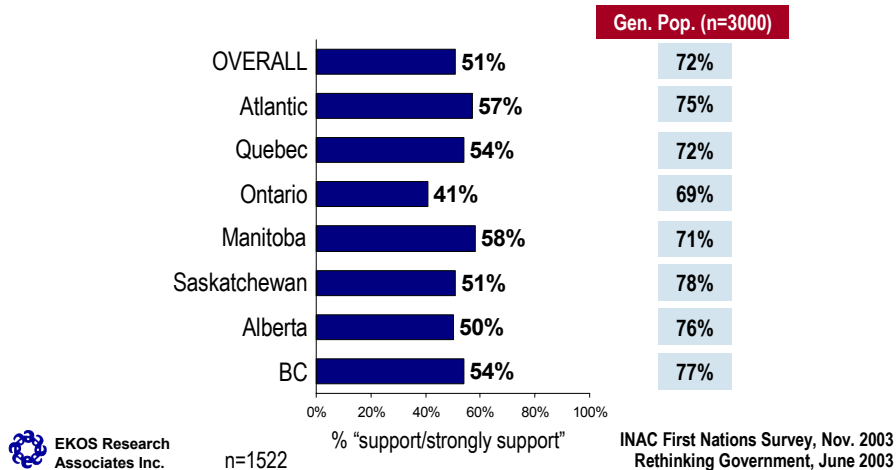
First Nations people living on-reserve were asked to indicate whether they would support or oppose the federal government initiative to reform Aboriginal governance (see specific wording in chart). Overall, half (51 per cent) of First Nations people living on-reserve support this initiative, four in ten (39 per cent) oppose, and the balance (10 per cent) is undecided.

Support for Aboriginal governance reform is much more divided among First Nations people than it is in the wider Canadian public, as close to three-quarters of the overall Canadian population (72 per cent) support this reform.

Aboriginal Governance Reform

"The Government of Canada recently introduced legislation to change the way that Aboriginal Band councils operate on reserves to ensure that Band councils are accountable to the Aboriginal people who are their Band members.

Some representatives of First Nations would say that this legislation is unnecessary and is not the Government's jurisdiction. Would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the federal government initiative to reform Aboriginal governance?"



- Opposition is greater among reserve residents in Ontario (where half oppose), and support is higher in Manitoba.
- Those with Internet access are much more likely to oppose the initiative, while those without Internet access are more likely to be undecided.
- Those with primary school education are less likely to oppose the initiative but are more likely to be undecided (not know or not respond).
- Youth and those who are not in the labour force are more likely to be undecided (not know or not respond).

Aboriginal governance was explored to a limited extent in the focus groups in a discussion of participants' knowledge and awareness of the *Indian Act*. Almost all participants had heard of the Act and a surprising number said that they had read at least part of it. Despite their awareness of it, participants had difficulty explaining what the Act was about. Most chose not to hazard a guess: "I've heard of it, but I couldn't tell you what it is." Some thought it was a tool of oppression: "It's what the Government uses to keep us down." Most of those who ventured an opinion about the Act described it as the set of rules and regulations that governs the relationship between the federal government and First Nations people or "Indians". In this sense, some described it as a form of macro treaty: "It has our rights."

When asked if they thought it should be abolished, significantly altered or remain unchanged, many participants seemed to have conflicting, albeit ill-defined, views about the Act's merits. Most have a feeling that the Act contains nefarious and racist elements, while at the same time likely safeguarding their "rights". In the end, participants agreed that they would have to better understand the *Indian Act* before they could comment on its worth and relevance.

3. EDUCATION

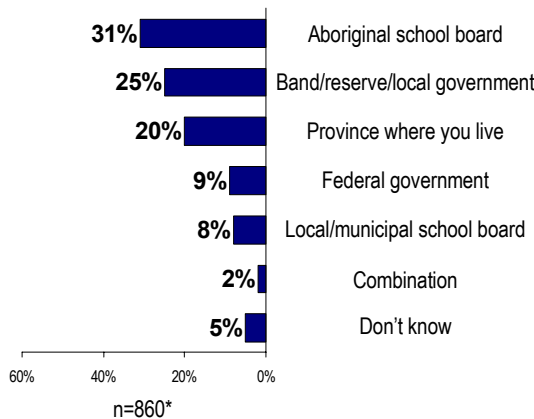
3.1 EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

In terms of organizations that should play a central role in First Nations schools, reserve residents have the greatest confidence in Aboriginal school boards, for both determining the curriculum and establishing minimum standards of education in the classroom. One in three (31 per cent) said Aboriginal school boards should decide what is to be taught and how, and 28 per cent said they should be in charge of determining minimum standards in the schools. In terms of the curriculum specifically, Band/reserve/local governments are the next most popular choice, according to one in four, followed closely by the province (20 per cent).

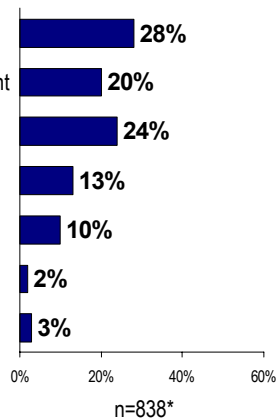
As for determining minimum standards, the province is the second choice (favoured by 24 per cent of reserve residents), followed by Band/reserve/local government (20 per cent). Approximately one in ten also think that the federal government (13 per cent) and the local/municipal school board (10 per cent) have a role to play. Dividing the responsibilities among all of the parties is the least popular option, chosen by only two per cent of respondents in the case of curriculum and minimum standards.

Educational Responsibility

“Who do you think should be responsible for deciding **what should be taught** in the classroom and how it should be taught to students in your First Nation community?” [prompted]



“Who do you think should be responsible for deciding what the **minimum standards** of education should be in the classroom in your First Nation community?” [prompted]



*Half sample

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

There are a number of interesting demographic patterns in terms of responsibility for **determining what is taught in the classroom and how**:

- Compared to those with other educational backgrounds, college graduates have less confidence in the **Band/reserve/local government** to determine what is taught in the classroom and how. Confidence is also lower among those who are more positive in their evaluations of current economic conditions in their community. The unemployed, on the other hand, are more likely to favour the Band/reserve/local government having responsibility. This is also true in economically depressed, small, remote communities.
- Residents of Manitoba, as well as men in First Nations communities are more likely than their counterparts to say that **their province** should be responsible for what should be taught in the classroom, as are Anglophones, Internet users, those who are positive about their community's economic conditions and those in communities with a moderate level of economic health. On the other hand, respondents of lower socio-economic status are less likely than those with greater incomes and levels of educational attainment to say that their province should take a role in determining the curriculum for the students.
- A role for the **federal government** is more apt to be favoured by those with less education, as well as by First Nations residents who speak Ojibway (compared with those reporting other mother tongues).
- College-educated First Nations people are more inclined to think that the **local/municipal school board** should determine the curriculum.
- **The Aboriginal school board** is favoured more in large, urban locations.

There are also some demographic variations in terms of who First Nations people living on-reserve think should have responsibility for **setting minimum standards** in the classroom in First Nations communities:

- **Aboriginal school boards** are given greater support by women compared to men.
- Respondents with household incomes of \$20-29,000 are more likely than those with other income levels to say that **their province** should be in charge of setting minimum standards in the classroom, as are male youth. This is also true for those who provide poor ratings of their community's economy and who feel that the improvement to the local economy would be best realized by knowing how to run a business. Residents in Quebec are less likely than those in other provinces to think that their province should be responsible for determining minimum standards for the classroom (12 per cent compared to 22-29 per cent), as are those with the lowest level of educational attainment (15 per cent compared to 23-31 per cent with a higher than elementary school level of education).
- Compared to the other provinces, First Nations residents in Saskatchewan are more likely to think that **Band/reserve/local government** should play a role in determining minimum

standards for the classroom, as are respondents in the 45 to 54 age group. Youth with an Aboriginal mother tongue, are more likely than Anglophone youth to want the Band/reserve/local government to take a role.

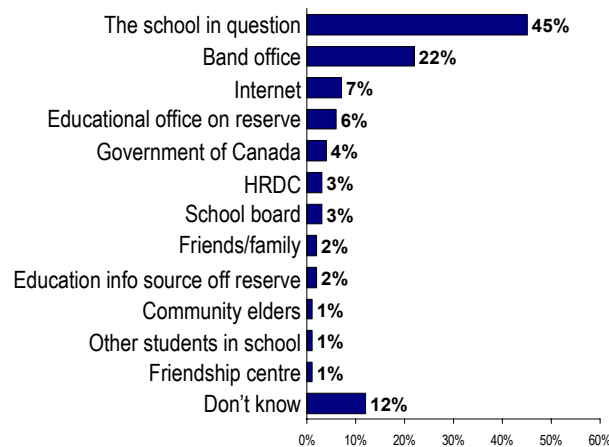
- Reserve residents living in Quebec are much more in favour of a role for a **local/municipal school board** than residents of other provinces, as are Francophones and youth with the least education. This is also more often the case with First Nations people who see the ability to run a business as a key to better economic conditions.

3.2 UPGRADING EDUCATION

First Nations people on-reserve would be most likely to obtain information on how to return to school or to upgrade their education from the school itself (45 per cent). The Band office is seen as a distant second, and other options were mentioned by seven per cent or fewer.

Educational Upgrade

“If you wanted to go back to school or upgrade your education, where would you go to get information about how to do it?” [unprompted]



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n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Residents of Alberta are much more likely than the rest of the country to say that they would **visit the school in question** if they wanted information on how to return to school, while residents of Quebec are least likely to pursue this course of action. Parents, respondents with a university education, youth, and those in rural areas are also more likely to go to the school directly to obtain this type of information, as are those who feel that their province should be responsible for deciding what should be taught in schools and how. Those who feel that the Band/reserve/local government should be responsible for the content are less apt to visit the school directly.

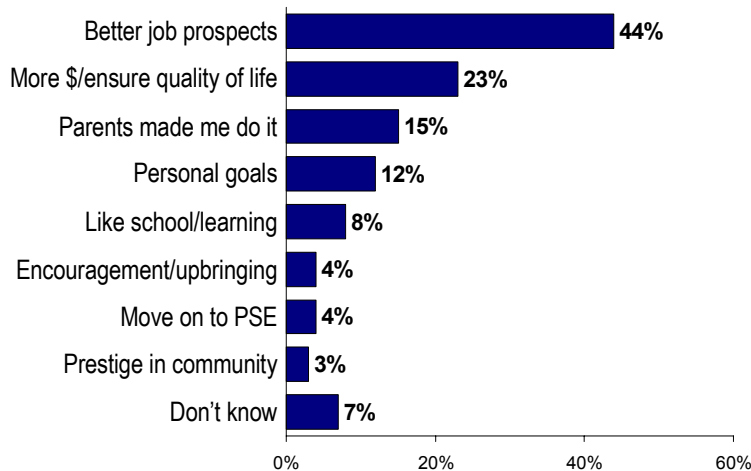
- Those living on-reserve in British Columbia and Saskatchewan are much more likely than residents of other provinces to **go to their Band office** for information on upgrading their education, as are those who feel that the Band/reserve/local government should be responsible for deciding the minimum standards of education in First Nations communities. Support for use of the Band office for information decreases with level of educational attainment and is also lower among youth and Internet users.
- Respondents with higher socio-economic status are much more inclined to use the **Internet** to obtain information on how to upgrade their education than First Nations with less income or education. Among youth specifically, it is residents of reserves in the Western region of Canada that are more inclined to use the Internet as an information source.
- Those less likely to know where to go for information include: Ontario residents, men, youth, seniors and those not in the labour force.

3.3 REASONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL DECISION (COMPLETION)

Among high school graduates, the opportunity for better job prospects stands out as the most popular reason for completing their education (44 per cent). Needing to make more money/ensure a better quality of life is a distant second (23 per cent), followed by having parents who insisted they complete their schooling (15 per cent) and making it a personal goal (12 per cent). Fewer than one in ten reserve residents cite other motivating factors.

Reasons for High School Decision (Completion)

“Many people do not finish high school. May I ask what your own reasons were for choosing to complete high school?” [unprompted]



- Reserve residents reporting the lowest annual incomes (\$10-19,000) are significantly more likely than those earning higher salaries to say that they completed high school in order to have **better prospects for employment**. The college-educated are also more likely than those with a university education to think that finishing high school would provide them with better job opportunities.
- Residents of Saskatchewan, as well as those with a university education are more likely to say they chose to complete high school so that they would **earn more money and ensure a better quality of life** for themselves.
- Residents of the Atlantic region, respondents of higher socio-economic standing and youth are all more likely than others to say that they finished high school at their **parents'** urging.
- Reserve residents who are between 45 and 54 are more likely than younger and older residents, to say that completing high school was a **personal goal** (17 per cent compared to seven per cent of seniors).
- Relative to others, Francophones are much more likely to say that they were motivated to complete high school because they **like school and learning** in general.

Focus group participants pointed to the availability and quality of alternative schools and programs as an important element in their decision to complete high school. Many participants have graduated, are currently attending or are planning on enrolling in an alternative high school program. These programs were said to include Internet-based adult education, correspondence school, public adult high school and Aboriginal adult high school. Those who had graduated from alternative programs, as well as current attendees, spoke highly of their experience. Many said that these programs had given them an important second or last chance at getting a high school diploma (or equivalency). Having dropped out or been expelled from one or more public schools, the right alternative program provided them with a learning environment that was more suited to them: "The Internet school is great. It's not like regular school; people leave you alone. I'm not getting into any fights there." Quite a few noted that they found adult high school much easier, sometimes because they had matured after a period of instability or hardship: "I got into drugs and then I had to do some time in an institution. But I got straightened out. I got my grade 12 and now I want to go to college." "The adult high school's not too bad. They haven't kicked me out yet."

In some of the groups, there was debate about the merits of "Native high schools" (i.e., high schools located on-reserve or in the city for Aboriginal/First Nations youth). Participants were divided. Some participants felt that the benefits outweighed potential drawbacks: a better learning atmosphere, free of anti-Aboriginal racism, a curriculum that reflected Aboriginal traditions, culture and history, and the benefit of learning from Aboriginal teachers (as long as they had proper credentials). While other participants acknowledged these benefits, they were quite concerned about two issues. First, they worried that the quality of education would, like in current reserve schools, be substandard. Second, and more broadly, they were bothered by the symbolism and implications of having a completely "separate system" available to First Nations/Aboriginal youth. It conjured images of Apartheid and continued isolation: "We already have

separate health care and we have separate places to live. We need less separateness, not more.” “We can’t spend our whole lives hiding. Sooner or later we have to get out there.” Some tied the two concerns together: “I think if we have separate schools the government will under-fund them, just like they under-fund everything else.”

The link between education and quality of life and labour market success was also re-iterated in the focus groups. If participants had concerns about the future of their reserve, most were generally optimistic about their personal future. All placed a great deal of importance on education. Specifically, participants tied education to their future prosperity and happiness: “If you don’t get an education, you won’t get a good job and then you won’t have a good life.” A high school education was seen as a minimum requirement, one that everyone has to have. Many participants were still in high school, in an alternative high school program (e.g., Internet-based adult education, correspondence, public adult high school, Aboriginal adult high school) or had dropped out. In all but one or two cases, participants vowed to obtain their high school diploma: “I’m definitely going back, I just need to motivate myself” and the majority aspired to completing PSE.

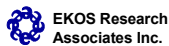
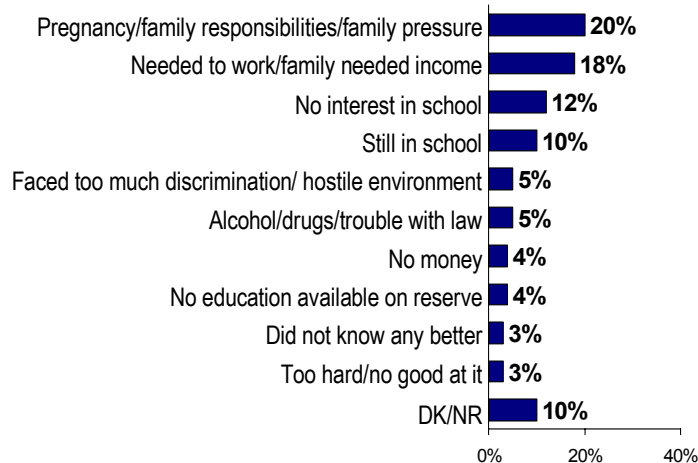
3.4 REASONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL DECISION (NO COMPLETION)

a) Survey Research

For First Nations residents who did not graduate from high school, pregnancy/family responsibility is the most common explanation given (20 per cent), followed closely by needing to work/have an income (18 per cent). At least one in ten First Nations residents also say that they do not have a high school diploma because they have no interest in school or that they are still in school. Some of the other reasons provided include: facing too much discrimination; having alcohol or drug problems that got them in trouble with the law; not having any money; not having educational opportunities on the reserve; not knowing any better or feeling that it was too hard or that they were not good at it. One in ten respondents did not provide a reason for why they did not complete school.

Reasons for High School Decision (No completion)

“Many people do not finish high school. May I ask what your own reasons were for not completing high school?” [unprompted]



n=742; those without HS diploma
Only responses chosen by 3% or more shown

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Not surprisingly, women (33 per cent compared to nine per cent of men) and parents (23 per cent compared to eight per cent of non-parents) are most likely to say that they did not finish high school due to **pregnancy/family responsibilities**. Those between the ages of 25 and 34, people who speak Cree as a first language, and those with the lowest salaries are also considerably more likely to cite this reason. Among youth specifically, it is residents of Saskatchewan and those who do not use the Internet who stand out as reporting family responsibilities or pregnancy as the main reason for not completing high school.
- Residents from Quebec are particularly more likely than those from other regions to say that they did not complete high school because they **needed to work/bring in an income**. First Nations adults, and those over 55 in particular, are also more likely than youth to have this response (34 per cent compared to eight per cent of youth), as are men (27 per cent compared to eight per cent of women), the employed, those without children in the home and the least educated, relative to their counterparts.

b) Focus Group Findings

The focus group discussions explored in more detail barriers to First Nations reserve residents completing their education. The inferior quality of reserve school education was identified among focus group participants as a significant obstacle. Most participants had spent at least one or two years attending school on-reserve, with many having completed both their primary schooling and junior high (e.g., up to grade nine) on-reserve. A few had only attended “city school”.

Everyone agreed that the quality of education provided by reserve schools is inferior to that of “city schools” (i.e., public or Catholic schools located off-reserve). Remarkably, participants across the groups provided a common unprompted assessment of the degree of lag: two years. “I’d say we’re two years behind.” “We were doing grade four work in grade six.” “I went to reserve school, then city school then back to reserve school. When I came back, I was the smartest kid in the class. I was way ahead.”

According to participants, it is not just that the curriculum of reserve schools is “slow”, but that the quality of teaching is also said to be inconsistent and the demands and expectations that teachers placed on students is low. Participants often characterized the reserve school classroom as lacking focus and “discipline”: “Basically you could do whatever you wanted. Teachers did not care.” “It did not matter if you did your homework.” Some participants were under the impression that the teachers at their reserve school lacked qualifications or skill: “We had a white teacher and she was a real teacher, she tried to have discipline, but one of the kids made up this story that the teacher hit him and the teacher got fired. They put a Native teacher in there, but he let us do whatever we wanted.”

Participants lamented the fact that by the time they and other kids had to integrate into a city school in Grade 10, not only were they two years behind, but they also lacked discipline and focus. In short, all felt that they were completely ill-prepared.

Focus group participants also pointed to the challenges of culture shock, racism and stereotyping in completing their education. Despite the fact that most participants grew up within a 15 to 45 minute drive of an urban centre, quite a few spoke of the “culture shock” they experienced when they first arrived at city school. Usually speaking from personal experience, they indicated that many children live in relative isolation until they become old enough to drive or attend school off the reserve: “It’s only 20 minutes, but it can be a different world. If you’re 12 years old, you’re going into town once in a while, but you’re shopping, you’re not really interacting with anyone.” Participants also pointed out that there were relatively few other Aboriginal youth in their classes or even their school.

The two-year lag behind their classmates (noted earlier) is a predicament that made social integration and academic success difficult: “Well, they put me in special ed. right away. I was in there with four other kids. I felt like a complete loser. I was the stupid Indian kid. I dropped-out in three months.” Many participants also spoke about how teachers singled them out and/or humiliated them: “I had a class with another Native kid in it and the teacher sat us together, sort of separately.” “There was bottle of Lysol or Windex in class and one of the kids asked what that was for and the teacher said that it was for me to drink. Everyone thought it was funny and the teacher said that it was just a joke, but I didn’t think it was funny.” Participants also found that many teachers came to have lower expectations of children from reserve communities: “Some teachers assume that you’re dumb or that you don’t care about doing well. They just left me alone. They would correct the other kids, but I always had to ask for them to look at my homework.” But it wasn’t just that some teachers would not or could not always make the extra effort required to reach out to a child who is significantly behind his/her classmates. Rather, as many participants agreed, some teachers would automatically “write off” as inferior youth that came from reserve communities: “It’s true that I was behind. But I wasn’t dumb. I’m not dumb. I caught up. But they just thought I was a stupid Indian.”

Other factors identified by some participants as impeding their success in school and/or the labour market included: a lack of motivation; access to childcare; and access to transportation. Concern about having the grades required for acceptance into a PSE program was mentioned by relatively few aspiring PSE students. Some appeared unconcerned because they expected equity programs to ease their entrance: "It's easier to get in if you're First Nation." Most others were focused on securing smaller victories (e.g., enrolling in high school, avoiding conflict, getting passing grades).

Participants also highlighted financial barriers to PSE. Most indicated that despite access to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) (discussed below), paying for school, particularly for their living expenses, was or would be challenging.

Four key factors: drugs and alcohol, poor reserve schools, culture shock/racism and a lack of parental involvement and role models were described by participants as converging, along with a few other secondary challenges, to make success in high school for youth coming from reserves very difficult to achieve. Discouraged, humiliated and often ostracized, many quickly turned to alcohol and drugs: "I stopped going and started to party." Others rebelled or lashed out: "I'd get called names like 'bush nigger'. I was fighting all the time. They kicked me out."

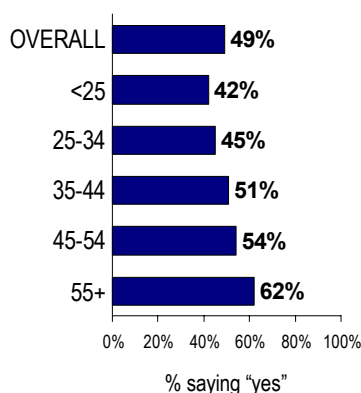
The staggering magnitude of the challenges faced by people living on-reserve, when coupled with the apparent tendency for the communities' most promising young people to migrate, suggested to participants that life on-reserve might continue to be difficult for some time, though no one appeared willing to give up hope: "It's still my home."

3.5 AWARENESS OF EDUCATION FUNDING

There is a fairly high level of awareness among First Nations people of a federal government funding program available to First Nations people wanting to pursue an education at the post-secondary level. Overall, respondents were evenly split with just under half (49 per cent) saying that they knew about the program that covers the cost of a college or university education.

Awareness of Education Funding

“The federal government has an education funding program in place for First Nations people. This program pays the cost of a college or university education for First Nations people wanting to continue their education at the post-secondary level. Were you aware that this federal program existed?”



n=1606

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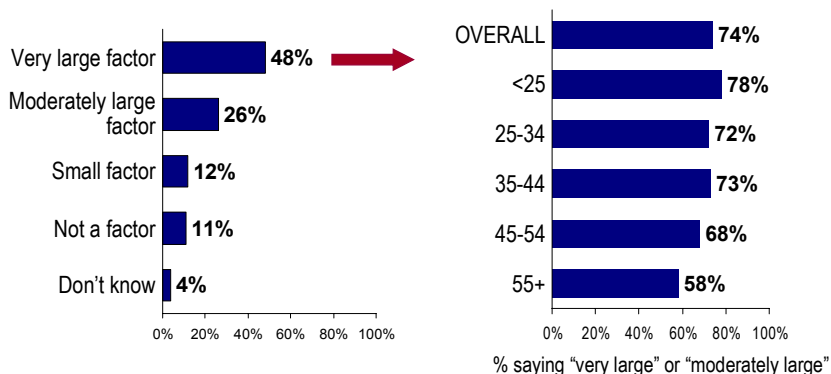
- Awareness of the federal government's post-secondary education fund for First Nations people increases with age, with the oldest residents (those 55 years of age or older) being most aware of the program (62 per cent compared to 42 per cent of youth).
- Reserve residents who are more likely to have been aware of the post-secondary education funding program include:
 - ◇ Anglophones (relative to those with an Aboriginal mother tongue);
 - ◇ Internet users;
 - ◇ women;
 - ◇ the employed;
 - ◇ those with a higher socio-economic status;
 - ◇ those in economically affluent, urban communities; and

- ◇ residents from Atlantic Canada, Ontario and Quebec.

Survey respondents who were aware of the program and have post-secondary education were asked how much of a factor this program was in their decision to continue their education. Other survey respondents were asked how much of a factor it would have been in people's decision to attend post-secondary school. Nearly one in two (48 per cent) say that it was or would have been a very large factor and approximately one-quarter (26 per cent) say that it was or would have been a moderately large factor. A minority of respondents say that it was or would have been a small factor (12 per cent) or not a factor at all (11 per cent).

Awareness of Education Funding (by age category)

“To what extent would you say the existence of this federal program was/would have been a factor in your decision to continue your education at the university or college level? Would you say it was/would have been...?”



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n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Youth are most likely to say that federal funding would have been a moderate to a very large factor in their decision to attend university or college (78 per cent compared to 58-72 per cent of adults in the different age categories).
- Awareness is lower among residents of less affluent, rural communities.
- Residents of Quebec and those not currently in the labour force are more likely to say that knowing about the existence of this federal education funding program would have been a moderately large factor in their decision to attend college or university.
- Reserve residents who speak an Aboriginal language other than Cree or Ojibway are more likely to say that being aware of the program would only be a small factor in their education decisions and those who are not parents are far more likely to say that knowing about the program would not have been a factor at all.

Youth participants in the focus group discussions exhibited a very high degree of awareness and knowledge of government funded programs, particularly the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). With very few exceptions, participants knew that they could obtain a significant amount of funding to pay for PSE: "They pay for tuition, books and you get a living allowance, \$645.00 I'm pretty sure." Even those who are years away from PSE (e.g., having a grade 10 education and not enrolled in a study program) are aware of the program and seem to draw motivation from it: "Obviously I have to get my grade 12 and I'm going to give myself a kick in the butt to do it, but I want to go to college. I'm going to feel bad if I don't take advantage of that program."

As mentioned in the discussion of schooling challenges, participants expressed general concerns about "paying for school." Specifically, participants often expressed dismay or surprise at the amount of assistance afforded by the program. Many wondered how and why the government expected them to struggle to pay for school. Acknowledging that the program paid for tuition and books, they questioned the amount provided for living expenses: "How do they expect us to live on about \$650.00 per month? You have to pay rent, food, transportation." It seems that because the PSSSP provides a "living allowance", many assumed that the amount should and would be sufficient to "live on" (i.e., cover all reasonable expenses). Despite their concern, it is very important to note that very few, if any participants, felt that a lack of finances would actually prevent them from attending a post-secondary learning institution, albeit perhaps not their preferred institution. Some were struggling, but were in school: "I'm living on Mr. Noodle right now" and finance all of their studies through the PSSSP. A few planned to look to part-time jobs, or expected to get help from their parents to make ends meet.

It is noteworthy that few participants, including those who are hoping to attend college and university in the fall of 2004, have been proactive in planning how they will support themselves while going to school: "I didn't realize exactly how much I would get until I was ready to go." Indeed, participants explained that people learned of the details of the PSSSP only after their acceptance into a university or college program: "You go to the Band Office and they say: 'apply and come back if you get in'. Then you rush back when you get in and they do the paperwork." Even though the amount that is usually obtained through the program seems to be both consistent and well known to people in the community, few seem to plan to make up for any potential funding shortfall. As a result, many students may be forced to rely on PSSSP funding as their sole means of support.

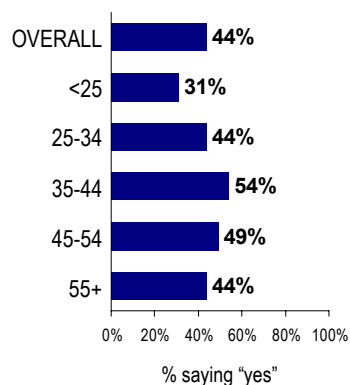
While participant awareness of student loan programs is fairly high, no one wants or expects to apply for this type of assistance: "I would if I had to, but I won't need to." It is also worth noting that a few participants have obtained or plan to enquire about bursaries and scholarships, but most have little awareness of these funding avenues.

3.6 RETURNING TO HIGH SCHOOL

A large portion of First Nations people living on-reserve who had completed some education beyond elementary school report that they have gone back to high school to upgrade some of their skills (44 per cent). Overall, adults between the ages of 35-44 are most likely to have returned to school for this reason (54 per cent compared to 31 per cent of youth).

Returning to High School

“Sometimes adults go back to high school to upgrade some specific skills. Have you ever done that?”



n=1092; excludes current students

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

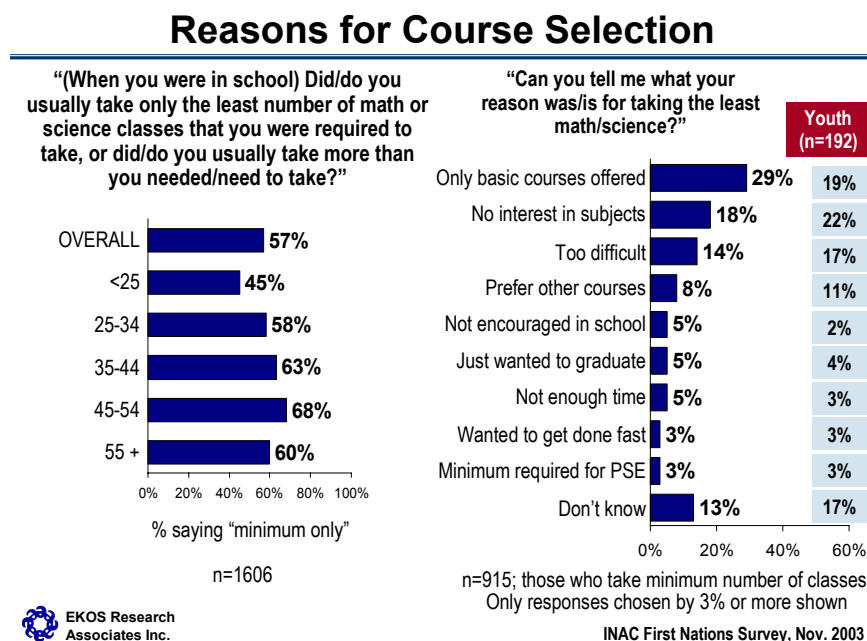
Reserve residents more likely to have returned to school in order to upgrade their skills include:

- ◇ those living in Alberta;
- ◇ those between the ages of 35-44;
- ◇ those who speak Aboriginal languages other than Cree or Ojibway;
- ◇ the employed; and
- ◇ youth living in Quebec (42 per cent).

Those in remote communities are less likely to have done so.

3.7 REASONS FOR COURSE SELECTION

More than half (57 per cent) of reserve residents say that, when in school, they took only the math and sciences courses required to graduate. When asked why they had taken just the minimum, the most common response was that only basic courses were offered (29 per cent), followed by not being interested in the subject matter (18 per cent) and finding those subjects too difficult (14 per cent).



- Reserve residents who are more likely to have only taken the minimum number of math and sciences courses required include: those between the ages of 35-54; the employed; and women. This is also more common in economically affluent communities. Youth are considerably less likely to avoid math and science courses and more likely to have these courses available to them than their older counterparts did some years ago. Among youth specifically, Anglophone youth are least likely to have taken the minimum math and science courses in school. Those who provide positive ratings of the current economic conditions in their community are more apt to have taken additional math and science classes.

There is a great deal of variation in terms of reasons provided for taking only the minimum number of courses:

- Adults, particularly those over 55 years of age, are more likely to say that **only the basic courses were offered** (45 per cent of seniors compared to 19 per cent of youth), as are residents with less than a high school education and those who speak Ojibway.

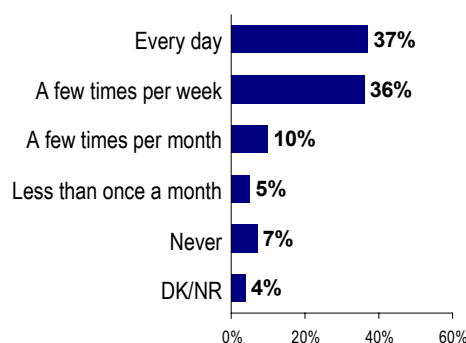
- Residents in British Columbia and Ontario are more likely than those living in other regions of the country to say that they were **not interested in the subject**. Anglophones and employed youth are also more likely than others to cite lack of interest as the reason why they did not pursue math and science beyond the basic level.
- The university-educated are more apt to say that they **prefer other courses**.
- Youth who live in Western Canada, as well as those who are employed are slightly more likely than their counterparts to say that they were **not encouraged in school**.
- Those in economically depressed communities are less apt to indicate a particular reason for taking only the minimum number of courses.

3.8 READING TO CHILDREN

Nearly three-quarters of First Nations people say that they read to their children at least a few times each week (37 per cent read to them every day). Only seven per cent say they never read to their children.

Reading to Children

“How often do you read to your children? Would that be...?”



n=743 (respondents with children)

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Women are more likely than men to report that they read to their children every day.
- Those with higher levels of education are more apt to say they read to their children at least a few times a week, as are those who cited education as the most important priority for the Government of Canada.
- Those who feel that the federal government should be responsible for deciding the minimum standards of education in First Nations classrooms tend to read to their children less often.
- Youth and people between 45 and 54 also are more likely to say they never read to their children.
- Residents in urban, economically affluent communities are more likely to say they read to their children every day.

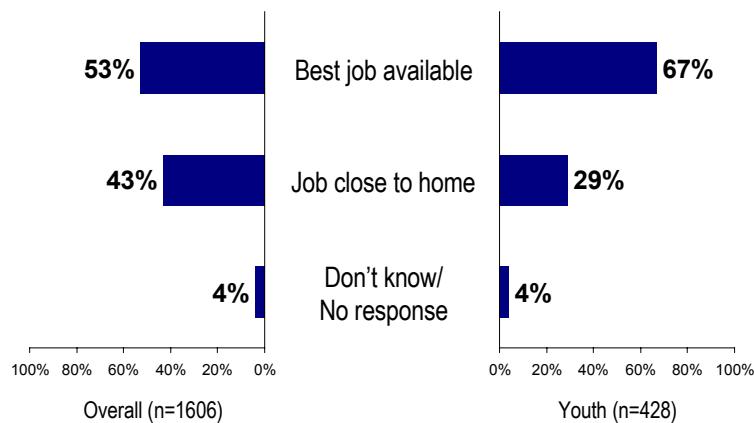
4. EMPLOYMENT

4.1 EMPLOYMENT CHOICES

First Nations residents are divided on the issue of whether they are willing to leave home for employment. Slightly more than half (53 per cent) indicated that they would prefer to have the best job available, rather than settle for a less than ideal job because it is closer to home. Four in ten (43 per cent), however, indicated that they would prefer to be working closer to home even if it is not the best job available.

Employment Choices

“In your opinion, is it better to have a job that is close to home, even if it is not the best job available or is it better to have the best job available, even if it is not close to home?”



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INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Employment preferences are linked to age. First Nations youth are much more likely than adults to look for the best job available. Among adults, those between the ages of 25 and 44 have the greatest preference for staying close to home. Overall, Internet users are also typically more interested in the best job, perhaps driven by the response of youth who are more apt to be Internet users.
- The employed also indicate a higher preference for staying close to home, while those not in the labour force are more motivated to seek out the best job available.
- First Nations people with a college level of education are more likely to sacrifice the best available job for one closer to home.

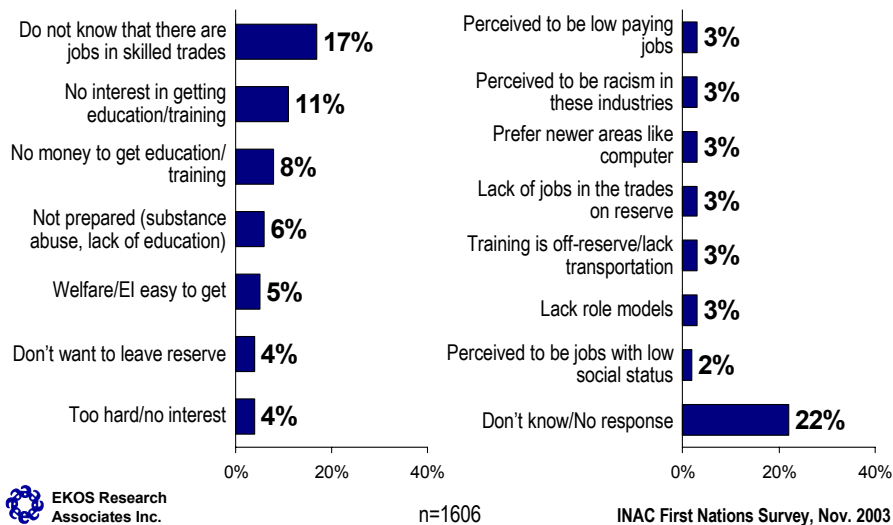
- Those who cited education as the top priority for the Government of Canada, and those who feel that proper work experience and skills are the best means to improve the local economy, are more likely to look for the best job available.

4.2 REASONS FOR NOT PURSUING JOBS IN SKILLED TRADES

First Nations people living on-reserve identify a number of reasons why Aboriginal youth are not pursuing jobs in the skilled trades. One in six believe that the primary reason is a lack of awareness about the availability of jobs and approximately one in ten believe that First Nations youth either do not have any interest in training (11 per cent) or that they cannot afford to take the training (eight per cent). Other reasons include a lack of preparation for training (including such conditions as alcohol and drug abuse, teen pregnancy and lack of required education), the ease of obtaining Social Assistance or Employment Insurance and a desire to remain on the reserve. It should be noted that almost one in four (22 per cent) respondents were not able to provide a reason for First Nations youth not pursuing jobs in the skilled trades.

Reasons for Not Training in Skilled Trades

“Many people don’t realize that there are lots of good-paying jobs opening up in the skilled trades such as plumbing, carpentry and auto mechanics. Why do you think that First Nations youth are not pursuing jobs in the skilled trades?” [unprompted]



- Residents in Manitoba are more likely than those elsewhere in the country to believe that lack of financial resources is the main reason for youth not pursuing jobs in the skilled trades.
- Residents in Saskatchewan are somewhat more likely than others across Canada to think that youth are not prepared for such training because of substance abuse and other problems.

Residents in the Atlantic region place more emphasis than residents in other parts of the country on the ease of getting Welfare and EI as the main reason.

- Those who have access to the Internet and those with a college education are more likely than others to say that the main reason is the lack of job awareness.
- Residents in the least affluent, remote communities are less able to provide any explanation as to why First Nations youth are not pursuing jobs in the skilled trades.
- There are no large gender differences in the responses.

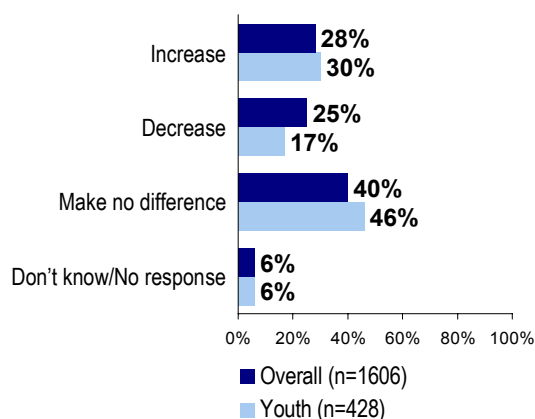
In the focus groups, many participants wanted to work as professionals, in fields such as education, social work or health. About an equal number aspire to entrepreneurship and several noted that they want to work in the criminal justice system (e.g., police, lawyer). Other fields and occupations were mentioned, notably in the culture/arts sector (e.g., photography, painting, sound recording). A few participants indicated that they are either currently or are planning to pursue a trade (e.g., transport truck driving, mechanics, carpentry, electronics). When asked broadly if they had or would ever consider a career in trades, some participants (mostly men) said that they had. Generally, however, the trades are seen as providing only moderate income and most feel that they should set their sights higher: "It's the sort of thing you might consider falling back on."

4.3 ETHNIC INFLUENCE ON TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

There is no clear consensus on whether being a First Nations person has an impact on the availability of training. Four in ten do not think their First Nation heritage has an impact on the availability of training opportunities. On the other hand, three in ten (28 per cent) feel that they have a better chance of getting training and one-quarter (25 per cent) think that their chances are lower due to their heritage.

Influence on Training Opportunities

“Do you feel being a member of a First Nation increases, decreases or makes no difference to young people’s chances of getting the training that they need for a good job?”



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INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

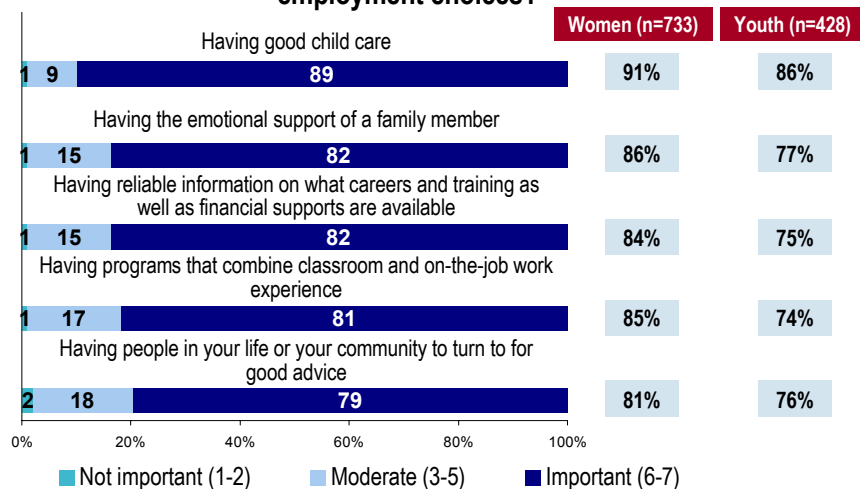
- First Nations youth are less likely to perceive an effect of First Nations status on their ability to get job training. By contrast, adults tend to see diminished opportunities as a result of being a First Nations person, which stands out most strongly in the 45 to 54 age group. This same pattern is also reflected with level of education and income, with the most affluent perceiving decreased opportunities.
- Internet users and the employed are more likely than other First Nations people to think that they have fewer opportunities for training. This does not hold true, however, among youth who are generally more optimistic about their opportunities for training.
- Residents of Ontario are the most pessimistic across the country regarding training opportunities.
- Residents of moderately affluent communities are less likely to perceive an effect on their training opportunities.

4.4 FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT CHOICES

When asked about a variety of factors affecting employment choices for First Nations people, access to good child care stood out as the most important consideration in employment decisions (rated important by 89 per cent), followed by emotional support from family and access to reliable job market information (82 per cent each). Approximately eight in ten also place a high value on co-op job programs (81 per cent) and having people in their life or community to turn to for good advice (79 per cent).

Factors Affecting Employment Choices

“How important is ...in helping First Nations people to make employment choices?”



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Associates Inc.

n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Those who are currently employed are more likely than the unemployed to cite the importance of good child care.
- Women are more likely than men to consider the emotional support of family an important factor in their employment choices. This sentiment also increases with age and level of education. Those whose mother tongue is Ojibway are slightly less likely to value emotional support from family than First Nations people with other mother tongues.
- The importance of reliable job market information increases with level of education and age. Employed First Nations people also place higher value than the unemployed on this information, as do Anglophones.

- Women are more likely than men to value co-op programs. This is also true for those with higher levels of education and income, as well as Anglophones. Youth are less likely than adults to consider co-op programs to be an important factor.
- First Nations people who earn between \$30,000 and \$49,000 are more apt to consider having people to turn to for good advice an important element in their employment choices, as are Anglophones. Those who are unemployed are somewhat less likely to do so.
- Residents from the most affluent communities rate most factors more important than residents of other communities.

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of summer work experience and career awareness in labour market success. Personal experiences with programs vary. A few have benefited from work-placement and/or resume preparation programs. The main experience which participants had was with a summer employment program sponsored by government, but administered by the Band. A few participants in Fredericton, Thunder Bay and Brandon were familiar with it, but almost everyone in the Edmonton groups had participated in it. Overall, these people found the experience disappointing. They described the program as a half-hearted attempt to provide youth with useful work experience. Rather than experiencing meaningful work assignments, participants said, youth were given “odd jobs” to do around their reserve (e.g., pick-up garbage, watch kids in a pool or playground). In some instances, even these menial tasks were abandoned: “It would be hot, so they would say: ‘It’s too hot to work.’ We would just play volleyball most days.” “We would get paid, but we didn’t learn anything.” “We were supposed to have workshops, and for about two days we did, but after that we just did what we wanted.” One participant obtained what she considered to be useful work experience: “I worked as a receptionist at the treatment centre all summer, but I had to really ask them to give me a real job.”

In retrospect, participants wished that they had worked at “real” jobs: It would have been “less fun, but at least I could have something to put on my resume.” Across the groups, participants showed moderate to high interest in programs designed to provide them with meaningful work experience, particularly in a career field of interest to them. Some noted that such programs are particularly relevant to youth on-reserve who often have trouble finding work, particularly work that interests them: “It’s sort of like we’re stuck. There’s no job on-reserve and if you don’t have a car, it’s pretty hard to work in town.”

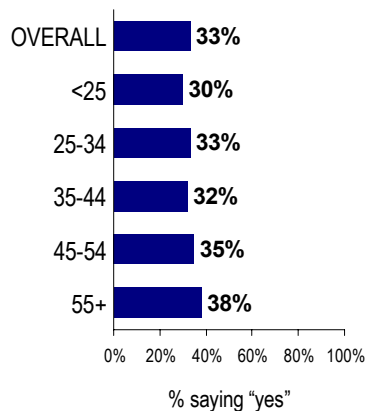
4.5 ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (AHRDS)

a) Awareness of AHRDS

Awareness of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy is only moderate. One in three First Nations people living on-reserve (33 per cent) have heard of the Strategy (in a prompted survey question).

Awareness of AHRDS

“Have you ever heard of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy?”



- Awareness of the AHRDS increases with level of income and education, and also increases marginally with age. Those over 55 years of age are most aware, compared with younger First Nations people.
- Those who have access to the Internet are also somewhat more likely to be aware of the program than those who do not have Internet access, as are residents from the most affluent communities.
- Awareness of the AHRDS is higher among those who are also aware of federal government funding for post-secondary education.

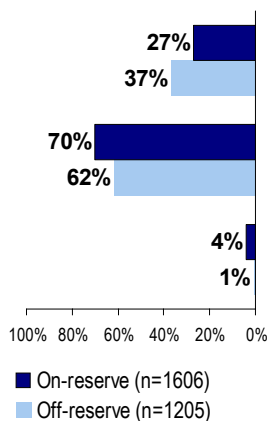
5. PARKS CANADA

When asked, more than one-quarter of First Nations reserve residents (27 per cent) said that they have considered Parks Canada as a possible source of employment for themselves. This is lower than the proportion of respondents that said they have considered Parks Canada as a possible employer for First Nations youth (43 per cent).

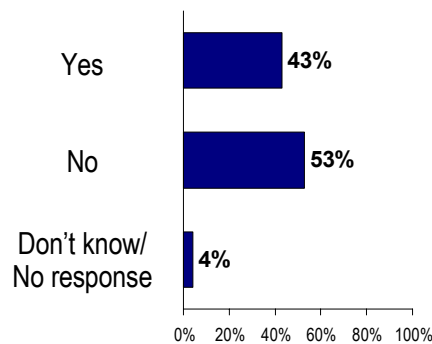
Generally speaking, First Nations people living on-reserve hold similar attitudes and levels of knowledge about Parks Canada as those living off-reserve (see below). Residents on-reserve are, however, somewhat less likely to have considered working for Parks Canada.

Employment with Parks Canada

“Have you ever thought of Parks Canada as a possible source of employment for yourself?”



“Before this survey, had you considered Parks Canada as a possible source of employment for First Nations youth?”



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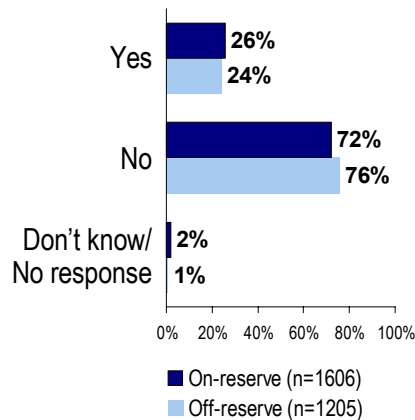
- Residents in Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan) are more likely than those in Ontario or Quebec to have thought of Parks Canada as a possible employer.
- Women are less apt than men to have considered working for Parks Canada, as are Francophones.
- Rural residents are more likely than those in remote areas to have considered Parks Canada as a possible employer, as are those who feel that knowing how to run a business is the best way to improve the economy in their First Nations community.

- Those most apt to have considered Parks Canada as a source of employment for youth are residents of British Columbia and Alberta, as well as people over 45 years of age.
- Residents of Ontario and Quebec are least apt to have considered Parks Canada as a source of employment for youth, as are parents and youth themselves.

One-quarter of respondents (26 per cent) said that they have seen advertising or promotional material from Parks Canada about employment possibilities, which is consistent with the awareness reported among First Nations people living off-reserve.

Parks Canada Advertising

“Have you seen any advertising or other promotion by Parks Canada about employment possibilities?”



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INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003
Aboriginal People Living Off-Reserve, June 2003

- First Nations people with a university level of education are more apt to have seen advertising about employment possibilities at Parks Canada. Adults, particularly those over the age of 45, are more likely than youth to have seen any advertising, as are people with Internet access and those in the largest communities.
- Those who have seen the advertising by Parks Canada are more apt to have considered the organization as a possible employer for First Nations youth.

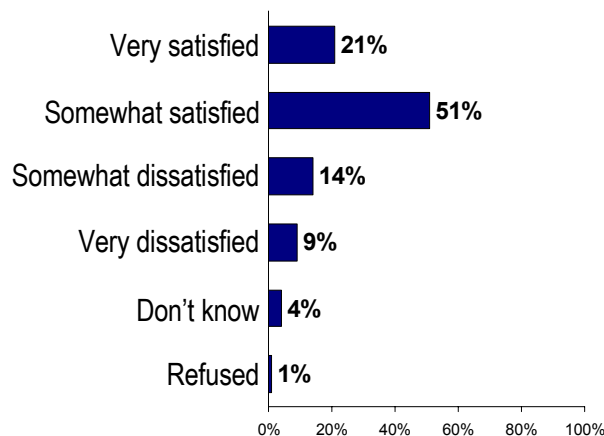
6. TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

6.1 SATISFACTION WITH TV PROGRAMMING

First Nations people living on-reserve are generally satisfied with the television programming available to them. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) are at least somewhat satisfied (21 per cent “very” satisfied), while one-quarter (23 per cent) say that they are less than satisfied with their television programming.

Satisfaction with TV Programming

“How would you rate your satisfaction with the choice of television programming overall? Are you...”



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n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

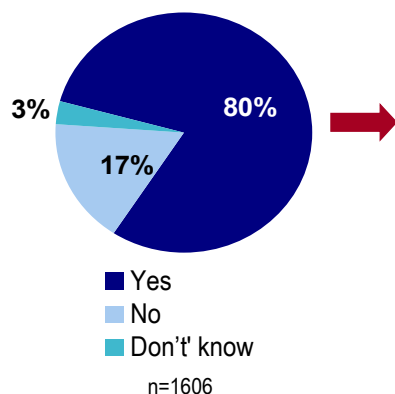
- Respondents' level of education is linked to satisfaction with TV programming. Whereas 33 per cent of those with an eighth grade education or less are very happy with their programming, 14 per cent of those with a university level of education are very satisfied.
- Youth lean towards moderate satisfaction, whereas adults are somewhat less satisfied, particularly among those between the ages of 45 and 54.
- Satisfaction declines with use of the Internet.

6.2 ABORIGINAL PEOPLES TELEVISION NETWORK (APTN)

A large majority of First Nations people (80 per cent) indicate that the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is available to them in their home. One-quarter (24 per cent) of those who receive the station watch it as often as possible and 43 per cent watch it sometimes. Six per cent of First Nations people living on-reserve report that they never watch the network.

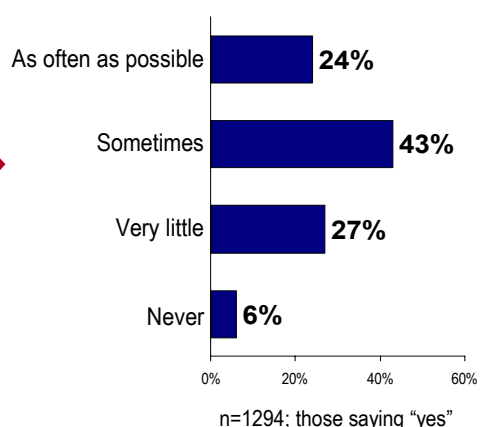
Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

“APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network is a broadcast service created in Canada for and by Aboriginal persons. Are you able to get this television station in your home?”



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

“How often do you watch APTN?”



INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Reception of APTN is highest in the Atlantic region and lowest in Alberta.
- Residents in the Atlantic region also watch the station with greater frequency, while those in British Columbia and Quebec are more apt than others across the country to report moderate viewing frequency. Residents of Alberta are more likely to say that they watch APTN very little, relative to other First Nations people.
- Access to the station is higher among those with higher levels of income, as well as Internet users.
- The employed are more likely than those not in the labour force to receive APTN in their home.
- Frequency of viewing APTN increases significantly with age.

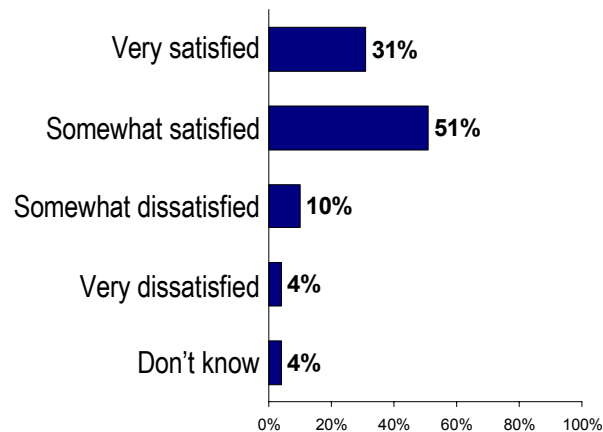
- First Nations people whose mother tongue is Ojibway or another Aboriginal language (other than Cree) are more likely than Anglophones to watch the station as much as possible.
- Respondents who do not have children in the household, those who are disabled and those who do not have access to the Internet are also more likely to watch APTN as much as possible, all likely driven by the fact that seniors are the most dedicated audience.

6.3 SATISFACTION WITH APTN PROGRAMMING

In general, the APTN viewing audience demonstrates high levels of satisfaction with the programming. Eight in ten (82 per cent) are at least somewhat satisfied (31 per cent “very” satisfied) and only 14 per cent are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with APTN Programming

“How would you rate your satisfaction with the programming on APTN? Are you...”



n=1292; those who get the APTN station

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- Regionally, satisfaction is highest in the Atlantic region and Saskatchewan and lowest in British Columbia.
- Those with the lowest levels of education are most satisfied with the programming on APTN, as are those who feel that First Nations people have a standard of living comparable to that of Canadians in general.

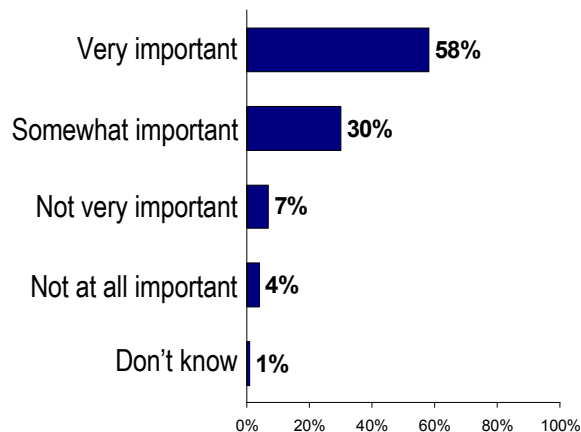
- Satisfaction is higher among those who do not have access to the Internet and whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language other than Cree or Ojibway.
- Satisfaction with APTN programming would seem to increase viewing frequency since those who are more satisfied watch it more often than those who rarely or never watch it.

6.4 IMPORTANCE OF ABORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

In addition to the high level of satisfaction with the programming, First Nations people living on-reserve generally feel that the APTN serves an important function for Aboriginal people. Nearly nine in ten (88 per cent) feel that it is very or somewhat important to have a station giving access to a range of Aboriginal languages. One in ten (11 per cent) do not believe Aboriginal programming is important.

Importance of Aboriginal Programming

**“How would you describe the importance of having a television station that gives you access to a range of Aboriginal languages?
Is it...”**



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n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- First Nations people living in Saskatchewan or the Atlantic place a greater emphasis on having access to Aboriginal languages on APTN, as do people reporting the lowest household incomes. Those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language are also more likely to place great value on the access to Aboriginal languages provided by APTN than Anglophones and Francophones.

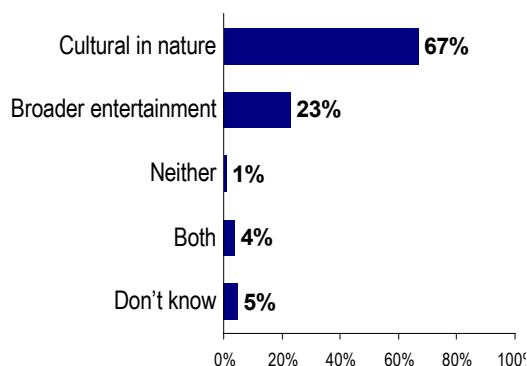
- Residents who do not have children in the household and those with the least education are somewhat less apt to see access to other Aboriginal languages through APTN as important, as is the case with First Nations people over the age of 55.
- Access to a range of Aboriginal languages would seem to be a pivotal point, given that its importance coincides with increased satisfaction and viewing for many First Nations people. That is, people who see this role for APTN as important are more apt to report that they are satisfied with the programming and that they watch the station often.
- Residents who feel that the overall standard of living of First Nations people is better than Canadians in general are less apt to see access to other Aboriginal languages through APTN as important.

6.5 SUGGESTED FOCUS OF APTN

The majority of First Nations residents (67 per cent) feel that APTN should provide programming that is exclusively focused on Aboriginal culture. Only one-quarter (23 per cent) feel that the APTN should broaden its scope to include programming that does not solely reflect Aboriginal themes.

Suggested Focus of APTN

“Do you think that APTN should focus on programs that have cultural focus, that is providing exclusively Aboriginal-themed programs and stories or should APTN offer broader entertainment programming that is not necessarily Aboriginal-themed?”



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Associates Inc.

n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

- First Nations women are more likely than men to prefer exclusive Aboriginal programming on APTN. Those who are more apt to favour broader programming are residents of Ontario and residents over the age of 55.
- People who expressed a preference for cultural programming tend to watch APTN more often and are more satisfied with the programming. Infrequent viewers, those who do not see the importance of having exposure to a range of Aboriginal languages, those who feel that First Nations people have a higher standard of living than Canadians in general and those who are less satisfied with APTN programming show less of a preference for cultural programming.

6.6 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

While the focus groups did not address APTN programming specifically, issues around access to Aboriginal culture in general were explored. At various points in the focus group discussions, participants expressed a desire to learn more about their Aboriginal culture. They expressed an interest in knowing

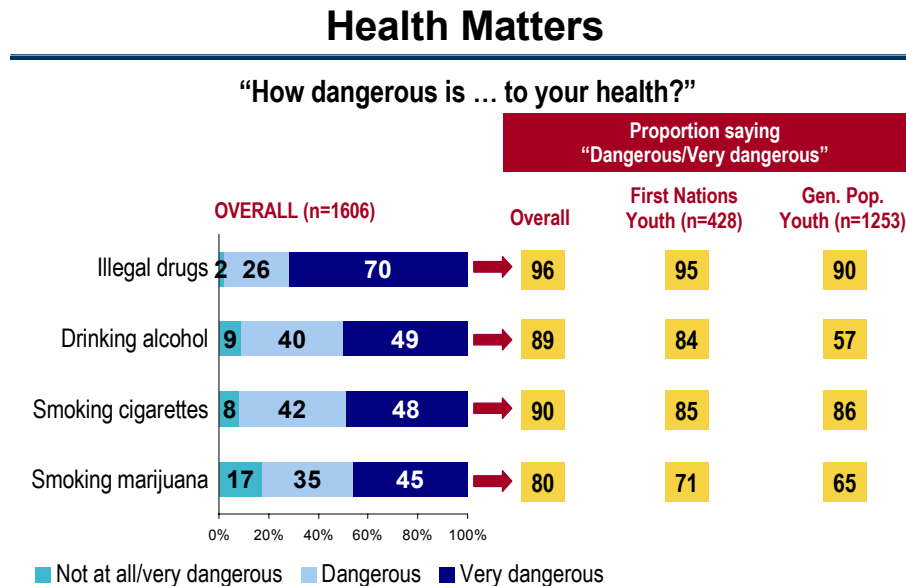
about aspects such as their language, history, art and traditional hunting and healing practices. They noted that currently, relatively few people are able to teach them about such things, except for maybe the odd relative or acquaintance who could give them a glimpse of their culture and history: "My father can still write Cree." "We still have Sweats." Participants seemed to be looking for something more formal or systematic, imparted through school classes or as part of government programs designed to help youth develop skills. Participants explained that their desire to learn about their history and culture is based on more than mere curiosity or a quest for self-discovery. Rather, it has to do with instilling confidence and self-esteem, something they see as key to young people's ability to overcome some of the barriers they face in school, the workplace and the "outside world" in general. In the absence of programs, pedagogical or otherwise, designed to impart First Nations youth with knowledge about their history and culture, they, like other Canadians draw on popular culture, replete with negative stereotypes and myths which serve to undermine self-esteem, not build it: "People see us as drunks and drug addicts and bums on welfare. It's hard not to see us as that too sometimes. It wasn't always like that though. We helped the Europeans when they came, they couldn't have survived without us. For example, we taught them to make small fires in winter to warm themselves instead of the big bonfires they would make. You can't get close enough to those to get warm. We have a lot to be proud of but we need to know about the past, and not from white people, but from our own people."

7. HEALTH ISSUES

7.1 PERCEIVED HEALTH DANGERS

Looking at the danger that a number of different substances are perceived to pose to their health, illegal drugs are seen to represent the greatest danger; virtually every one (96 per cent) rated these dangerous or very dangerous to their health. Alcohol and cigarettes are perceived to represent similar levels of danger (89 and 90 per cent, respectively). Marijuana is perceived to present the least danger, although 80 rate it dangerous or very dangerous to their health and only 17 per cent believe it is not at all or not very dangerous.

Youth are less likely than adults to perceive any of these substances as very dangerous, and are more likely than adults to perceive cigarette smoking, drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana as not particularly dangerous.



First Nations youth surveyed range in age from 16-24. GP youth range from 12-19 years of age.



INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003
Health Canada Youth Survey, Sept. 2003

- Quebec residents (and consequently, Francophones) are least concerned across the country about the health risk of alcohol, while residents of Alberta are the most concerned about the dangers of drinking alcohol.

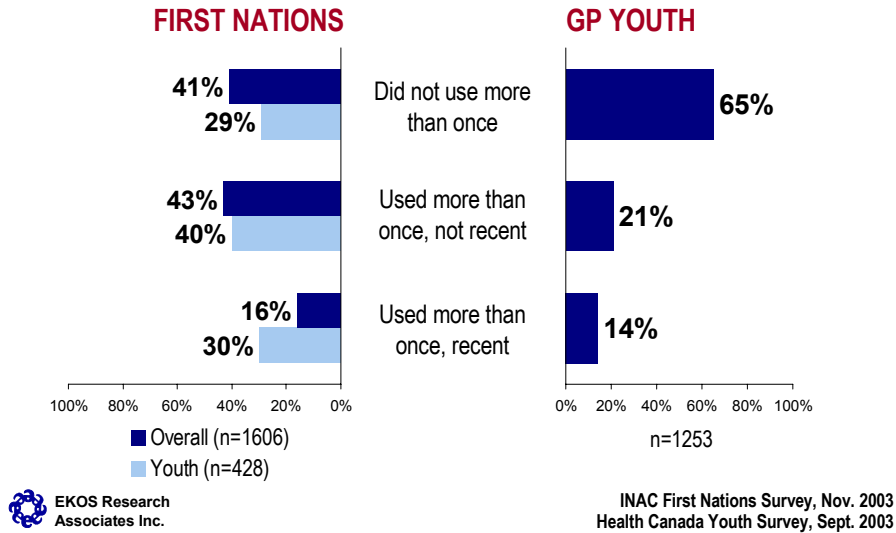
- Women and parents are more concerned about the risks associated with alcohol or smoking marijuana. Women are also more concerned about the health risks of illegal drugs than men.
- People with a physical disability are more likely to view alcohol consumption as very dangerous.
- The perception of the danger of alcohol, illegal drugs or marijuana increases with age.
- Those with the lowest incomes (under \$10,000) are less concerned about the risks of smoking cigarettes and are also the least concerned about the health risks of illegal drugs than their more affluent counterparts.
- First Nations people with a university education are more troubled about the health risks of illegal drugs than people with less education.
- Internet users are more likely to perceive alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs as very dangerous to their health.
- Residents of economically affluent communities are more likely to perceive cigarettes and marijuana to be very dangerous to their health.
- Those in remote communities are less worried about the hazards of smoking cigarettes and illegal drugs than residents of other communities, while rural residents are more concerned about the dangers of alcohol.

7.2 MARIJUANA USE

Roughly four in ten First Nations people have either never tried marijuana or tried it only once (41 per cent). Over half of First Nations people living on-reserve report that they have used marijuana more than once (59 per cent). Overall, 43 per cent of all First Nations people report that they have not used marijuana recently (within the last 30 days), whereas 40 per cent of First Nations youth have not tried marijuana recently. Youth have a greater propensity than adults towards recent as well as repeated use of marijuana (30 per cent of youth have used marijuana more than once and in the last 30 days, versus 16 per cent of adults). This rate of use is higher than in the general youth population in Canada (14 per cent).

Repeated Marijuana Use

“Have you tried marijuana more than once? If so, within the past 30 days?”



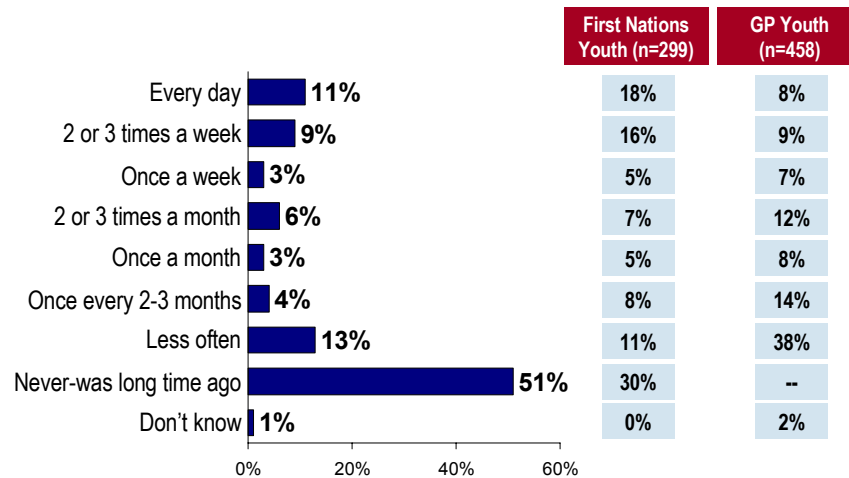
- Parents, men, Anglophones, the unemployed, and those with Internet access have a higher incidence of repeated marijuana use. Those with primary school education, a disability, women, and Francophones are less likely to report repeated use.
- Men, those with high school education, and the unemployed have a higher incidence of recent marijuana use. Women, those with college or university education, and people over the age of 35 are all less likely to report recent use.
- Residents in moderately affluent communities report a higher incidence of repeated marijuana use.
- Recent marijuana use is higher among those who indicated that they have not returned to school to upgrade their skills and who usually took more than the required number of math and science classes. (Both of these relationships are likely driven by age, with youth being more recent users of marijuana, less apt to have already upgraded, and more likely to be taking more math and science.)

Half of the marijuana users indicated that they have not used marijuana in a long time, and that they are not current regular users. One in ten (11 per cent) stated that they use marijuana every day, and a similar proportion (12 per cent) use it on a weekly basis (between one and three times a week). Close to one in ten (nine per cent) use marijuana on a monthly basis (between one and three times a month), and 17 per cent use it less often than that.

- Youth are more likely to be daily or weekly users, while adults are much more likely to have stated that they have not used marijuana in a long time or have never used it. Rates of daily/weekly use among First Nations youth are substantially higher compared to youth in Canada overall.

Frequency of Marijuana Use

“Earlier, you told me that you have tried marijuana more than once.
How often do you use marijuana? Do you use it...”



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=910; First Nations people who used marijuana

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003
Health Canada Youth Survey, Sept. 2003

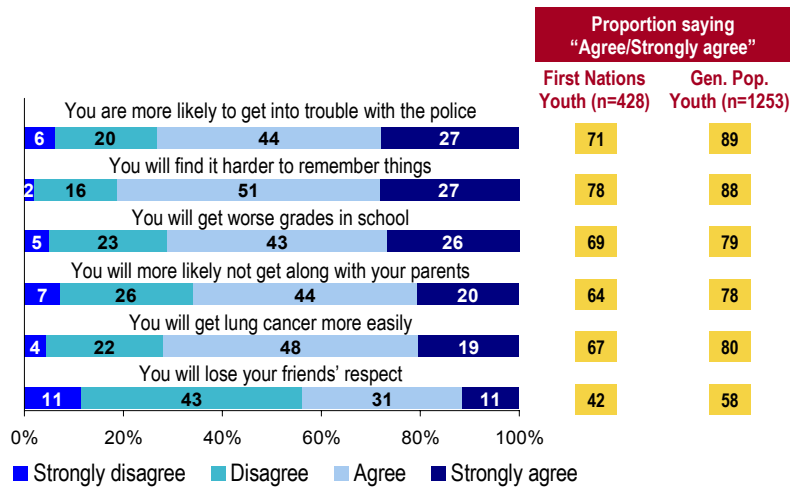
- Frequency of marijuana use is linked to income; those with incomes of \$30,000 or more are more likely not to have used marijuana in a long time. The unemployed are more likely than the employed to be daily users.
- Similarly, those with college or university education report lower levels of use and those with some high school education are more frequent users (daily or weekly).
- Youth in Manitoba, and male youth are more likely to have stated that they are daily users.

In examining youth opinions regarding a number of statements dealing with the effects of regular marijuana use, three-quarters of youth (78 per cent) agree or strongly agree that they will find it harder to remember things if they use marijuana regularly, and roughly seven in ten agree or strongly agree that they are more likely to get into trouble with police (71 per cent) or will get worse grades in school

(69 per cent). Close to two-thirds agree that they can get lung cancer more easily as a result of regular marijuana use (67 per cent) or that they will be less likely to get along with their parents (64 per cent). Regardless of these results, a significant portion of youth also disagree that there are serious health, social or educational consequences related to regular marijuana use. Furthermore, less than half (42 per cent) agree that they will lose the respect of their friends if they use marijuana regularly, suggesting that there is little peer pressure to discourage this activity. First Nations youth on-reserve also rate the consequences of regular use of marijuana as less serious than youth in Canada overall.

Effects of Marijuana Use

“How strongly do you agree with each of the following statements?”



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=428 (Youth)

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003
Health Canada Youth Survey, Sept. 2003

- Youth with children in their household are more concerned about the effects of regular marijuana use on their memory, their grades in school, how they get along with their parents, and whether they have the respect of friends.
- Youth in Quebec are least concerned about the effects of marijuana use on their memory or their relationship with their parents. Youth in Saskatchewan are more likely to agree that they will lose the respect of their friends.
- Agreement that regular use can lead to lung cancer more easily increases with household income.
- Women are also more likely to agree that regular marijuana use has a negative impact on memory and on school grades.
- Residents in moderately affluent communities are more apt to agree that marijuana use will lead to poor grades in school.

- Urban residents are more apt to believe that marijuana use will lead to increased trouble with the police.

7.3 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

The biggest health concern among focus group participants, by far, is the increasing drug and alcohol abuse among members of the community, particularly young people. Described by one participant as a “cancer” hollowing out her community, it is difficult to overstate the extent of the problem in the eyes of participants.

Many observed an alarming trend towards drug and alcohol use at a younger age, including the use of hard drugs: “You’ve got lots of 10, 12 year old kids getting wasted.” Quite a few participants alarmingly reported that one or two new forms of drug abuse have taken hold in their community: prescription pain medication in a few communities and crack cocaine in others, each drug with its own insidious traits.

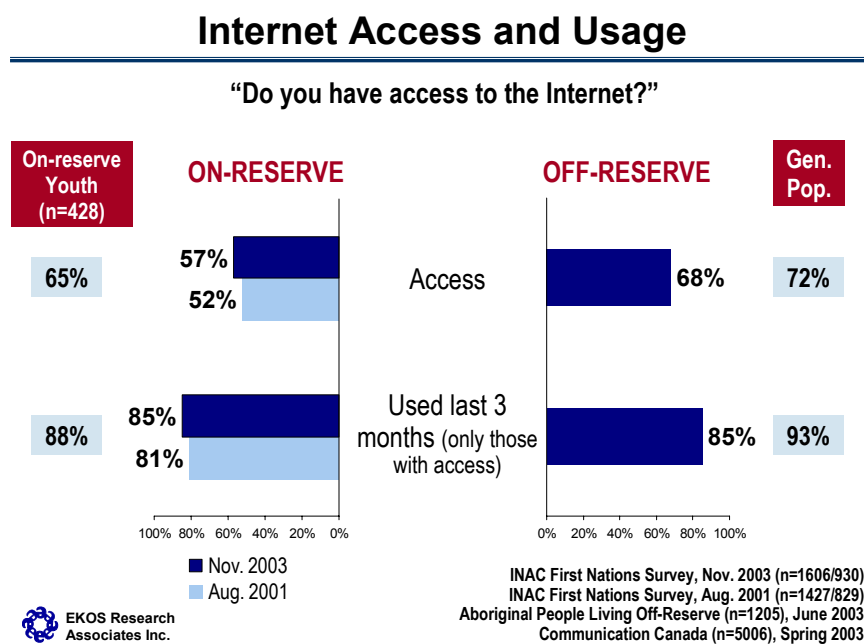
Prescription drugs, it was explained, have the unique characteristic of being “free” to community members because they are covered under the First Nations health plan. It seems that a forceful complaint of back pain to a physician (or to a number of them) can produce a supply of powerful drugs which can be “dealt” to other members of the community: “Even old people are getting in on it, because they can get prescriptions easy.” The devastating effects of crack cocaine on individuals and inner-city communities are well documented. One group of participants estimated that between 25 and 50 per cent of their community members had used this drug: “Every household, every family is affected.” “My sister was my role model, she wanted to be a cop, but now she’s a crack head.” “My brother’s a crack head, he has to steal to pay for it. The cops are looking for him.” “My sister sold her truck, she went through about \$11,000.00 in a week. I figure that’s what the truck was worth.”

It was apparent that most participants are currently or had at one time used drugs and/or alcohol regularly (often euphemistically referred to as “partying”), but in relatively moderate amounts. Regardless of one’s level of consumption, all feared falling into the maelstrom of addiction: “I don’t drink or smoke. Never have, but I worry about it, especially when I get depressed. It’s all around me.”

8. INTERNET ACCESS

Over half of First Nations residents report access to the Internet (57 per cent). This represents a small, but steady increase since August 2001 (at 52 per cent). Access to the Internet is significantly higher among youth (65 per cent). Access is lower on-reserve than it is among Aboriginal people living off-reserve (68 per cent) or among the Canadian general public (72 per cent).

Of those First Nations people who have Internet access, most (85 per cent) have used the Internet within the last three months. Again, this has changed only slightly in the last two years (up from 81 per cent). Recent usage is identical to that reported by Aboriginal people off-reserve, but lower than recent usage within the Canadian general public (93 per cent).



- Access to the Internet is higher in Atlantic Canada, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, and lower in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- Parents, Anglophones, and the employed report higher levels of access to the Internet than their counterparts. People with a physical disability and those who report Cree as a mother tongue report a lower level of access.
- Access to the Internet increases with income (from 40 per cent of those with incomes below \$10,000 to 82 per cent of those with incomes over \$50,000), and with education (from 26 per cent of those with primary school education to 79 per cent of those with university education).

Recent usage among those with access (within the previous three months) also increases with income and education.

- Youth report greater levels of Internet access, compared to those over 55. Those over 55 with access are also less likely to have used the Internet in the last three months. Among youth, women are more likely to have used the Internet in the last three months.
- Access to the Internet is higher among the more economically affluent communities.

9. INDIAN STATUS FOR CHILDREN

The issue of Indian Status for children was not covered in the telephone survey of First Nations people living on-reserve. The following results are drawn from the qualitative research. For most parents in the groups, as well as for focus group participants generally, the issue of Indian Status is straightforward: it is important to register a child in order to ensure that they are eligible for rights and benefits, particularly prescription drugs. "Kids are sick all the time. For the first while she could go on my plan, but it's best that they get their own number as soon as possible." Many participants and most parents had heard of the Indian Register and they described the process for registering children as simple: "You fill out a form and bring it to the Band Office." Participants felt that there is high awareness of the importance of registering children and of the process for doing so: "Mothers would know this because of the prescriptions."

In terms of the issue of un-stated paternity - the omission of paternal information/signature on some registration forms - participants were asked to put forward possible explanations for this. There was consensus that the cause for omission likely has to do with problems in the relationship between the parents: 1) the mother is unsure of who the child's father is, 2) the mother does not want the community to know who the child's father is, and 3) the parents are estranged/on bad terms: "If the mother hates the father then she won't put his name on it". In addition, participants noted that a girl/woman might include the information of her current boyfriend/husband on the form, rather than the biological father's: "Sometimes the guy doesn't know it's not really his. Sometimes he knows and he's okay with it because he is prepared to raise it." Participants also acknowledged that some parents might simply forget to register their child, or more likely procrastinate. A few women also pointed out that some fathers simply refuse to acknowledge that a child is theirs: "What's a women supposed to do? The father says it's not his and wants nothing to do with it. You ask the guys in the next focus group about that one." Overall, the discussion of un-stated paternity supports the analysis conducted by INAC.³

While some participants, particularly women, had an impressive grasp of complex Status issues, few could anticipate the ramifications of un-stated paternity (e.g., dilution of Status). Once explained, however, the consequences were fairly well understood, considering the complex and, for most hypothetical, nature of the issue.

³ *Factors Contributing to Un-stated Paternity*: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Ottawa, 2003.

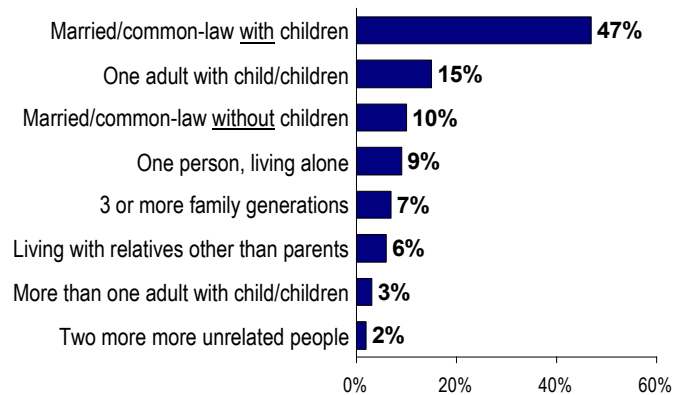
10. PROFILE

10.1 HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Two-thirds (65 per cent) of respondents indicated that they have children living at home and one in five (19 per cent) are living alone or married without any children. These results are virtually the same as those profiled in 2002.

Household Type

“Which of the following types best describes your current household?”

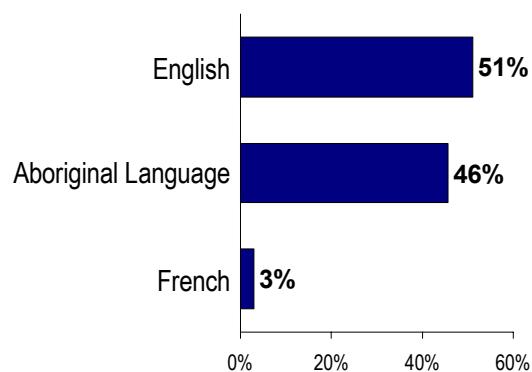


10.2 FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNED

In terms of mother tongue, 51 per cent of respondents speak English as a first language, 46 per cent an Aboriginal language (including Cree, Mic Mac, Ojibway and other languages), and three per cent French. These results are the same as those collected in 2002.

First Language Learned

“What is the language you first learned in childhood and still understand?”

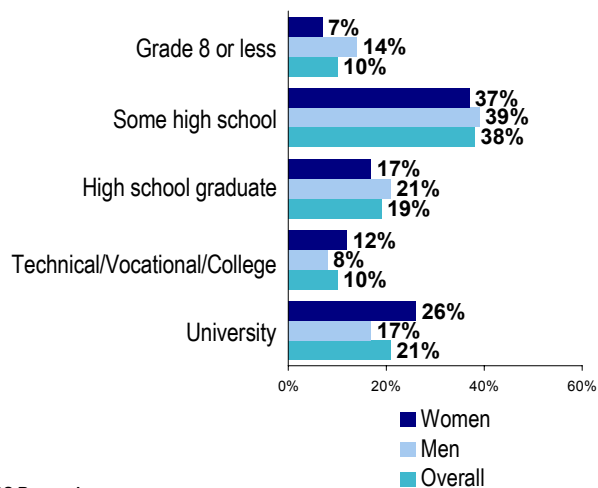


10.3 EDUCATION

Forty-eight per cent of the sample indicated less than high school education, with 19 per cent having completed high school. A total of 31 per cent of the sample reported a post-secondary level of education. These results are similar to the 2002 profile, although the 2002 sample profile showed a marginally higher level of education.

Education

“What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?”



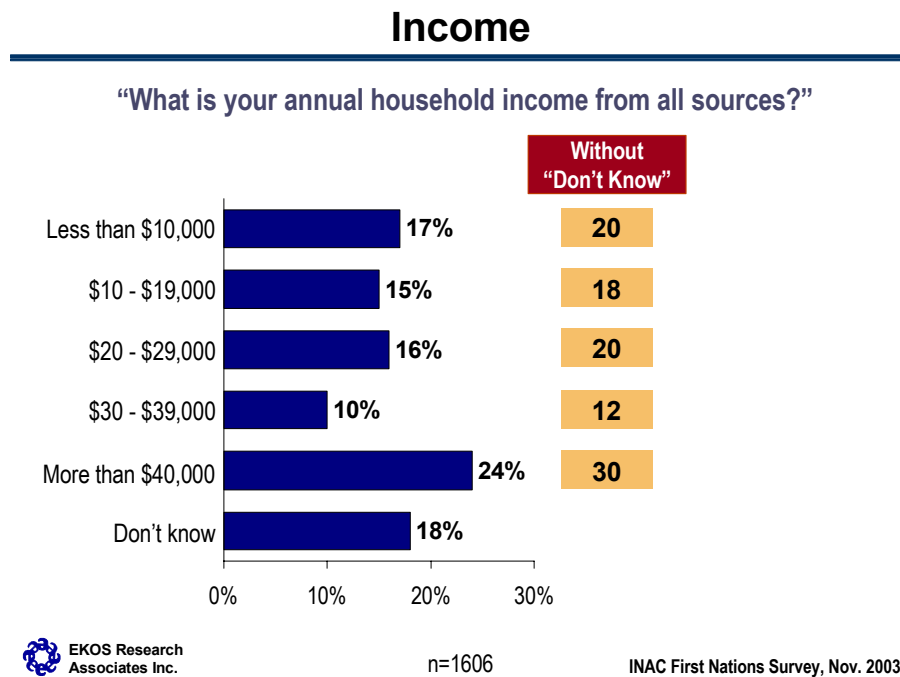
EKOS Research
Associates Inc.

n=1606

INAC First Nations Survey, Nov. 2003

10.4 INCOME

With respect to income, one-third reported an annual household income of less than \$20,000. One-quarter reported top incomes of \$40,000 and above. These results are also similar to the picture from 2002.

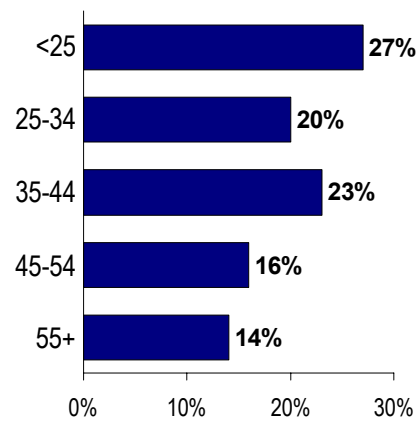


10.5 AGE

The age distribution is quite similar to the 2002 figures, with the exception of an intended over sampling of youth. In 2002, there were significantly fewer youth (15 per cent) and more individuals over 55 (19 per cent).

Age (Unweighted)

“What is your age, please?”

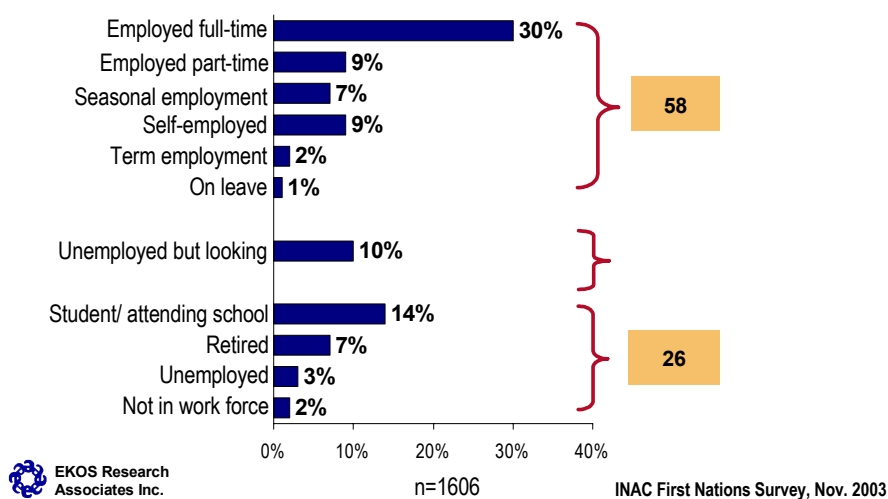


10.6 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

In terms of employment, 58 per cent of the sample indicated that they are currently employed in some capacity, 10 per cent are unemployed (but in the labour force), 14 per cent are students, and nine per cent are out of the work force (retired or homemakers) and two per cent are unemployed but not in the labour force. Compared with the survey profile of 2002, there are currently fewer individuals who are employed full-time (37 per cent in 2002) and more students (nine per cent in 2002).

Employment Status

“Which of the following categories best described your CURRENT employment status?”



11. SUMMARY

11.1 ISSUES, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PERFORMANCE

First Nations people living-on-reserve, like Aboriginal people living off-reserve, consider health care, education and Aboriginal treaty rights to be the overall priority issues on which the federal government should focus. The focus on health care, in particular, has gone up since 2001. In comparison, Canadians overall place even greater importance on health care as a priority, and consider the economy and unemployment to be the next most critical issues for Government attention.

Education is considered to be the most important issue facing First Nations youth that the Government of Canada should tackle. This is followed by recreation programs, which outweigh even employment and drug and alcohol abuse, which follow in third and fourth place. Employment and education are identified as the most important issues facing First Nations women living on-reserve. Violence in the family and in the community are listed as a third issue. By comparison, education is the top issue for the off-reserve female population.

The vast majority of First Nations people on-reserve consider improving economic conditions, improving community services and settling land claims to be the most pressing needs, both on a personal level and to First Nations people overall. This is followed by self-reliance/self-sufficiency, which is a lower order of priority. Self-government is also considered important by a slim majority, although it is nonetheless in last place in the configuration of issues provided. Youth are more supportive of the need for self-government than adults in First Nations communities. This overall ranking of priorities has changed very little since the last First Nations Survey (March 2002).

The terms “self-sufficiency” and “self-reliance” were explored in more detail in the focus groups and found to be generally understood by most. Those with familiarity see them as synonymous and mainly positive objectives for both individuals and communities. Reaction to the words can change significantly based on the context in which they are used: If suggested by a First Nations leader as an overall goal for First Nations people, the terms continue to be seen positively by most. If suggested by the Government, however, support/approval turns to resentment for some.

First Nations people are divided in their assessment of the performance of their Band, provincial, and federal governments, with similar proportions rating the performance of each level of government as poor and good. The performance of the federal government is ranked in the same way as the performance of the Band government. Provincial governments receive the least favourable performance ratings. Furthermore, the assessment of provincial government performance by First Nations people has declined somewhat since the previous INAC First Nations Survey (March 2002). The results for the federal

government are similar to those espoused by the general public and more positive than the views expressed by the Aboriginal off-reserve population.

Many First Nations people hold a bleak view of their current standard of living and the economic conditions in their communities, and compare them unfavourably to the rest of the country. Half of First Nations people living on-reserve believe that their overall standard of living compares poorly to the remainder of Canada, and over one-third believe that current economic conditions in their community are poor. The assessment of standard of living and current economic conditions declines with educational attainment. Youth provide more positive ratings than adults in the survey. However, in the focus groups, youth participants consistently described reserve life as difficult, where success, material and otherwise, can only be achieved by overcoming significant obstacles. Many participants further predicted that conditions will worsen before they improve.

Additional job opportunities is most often identified as the change that would make the biggest difference to economic conditions in First Nations communities, followed by the development of appropriate work experience and skills.

Support for the federal government initiative to reform Aboriginal governance is moderate among First Nations people on-reserve, with only half demonstrating support for this proposal. Support for this initiative is much stronger within the Canadian population overall. Support is strongest in Manitoba and the Atlantic region and lowest in Ontario.

Internet access is available to just over half of First Nations people on-reserve, and access has slowly but steadily increased over the past two years. This level of access is, nonetheless, considerably lower than what is reported in the Aboriginal population living off-reserve and among the broader Canadian public.

a) Education

Respondents most often favoured an Aboriginal school board to be responsible for overseeing what is taught in schools on-reserve and how it is taught, as well as for setting minimum standards for education (although the province comes a close second when it comes to standards). The Band is the second most popular option for determining what is taught and how it is delivered, particularly among the less affluent and educated. The federal government is not an obvious choice for either area, according to most First Nations residents, nor is the local school board.

School is by far the most obvious choice as a source of information on going back to school or upgrading one's education, particularly among youth and parents, as well as among the more educated. This is followed by the Band office as a source of information, particularly among the less affluent and educated, as well as in the West. Again the federal government is not seen as an obvious choice for information. Surprisingly, even the Internet is not a primary source of information (although people

suggesting that they would go to the school itself may, nonetheless, intend to pursue the matter through the particular school's website).

Motivating factors for completing high school, according to many of those who did, are improved job prospects and the ability to command a better wage. Parents pushing for education is also a modest factor. Another one in five also indicated that it was a personal goal or that they enjoy school. Barriers to completing one's high school education include family obligations and the need for money, followed by a lack of interest in school. Discrimination in school was also reported, but by a relatively small percentage of First Nations people (five per cent of those who did not complete high school), as was drugs and alcohol.

According to focus group participants, four key factors converge to make success in high school for youth coming from reserves very difficult to achieve: 1) widespread drug and alcohol use/abuse on-reserve, 2) the poor quality of education provided by reserve schools, 3) culture shock/racism felt when one moves from reserve to public school, and 4) a lack of parental involvement and role models. Setbacks during this relatively early phase of the life cycle have predictably negative impacts on one's chances of success in the labour market and society in general.

Awareness of potential funding for post-secondary education is moderately high, with one in two First Nations people indicating that they know about federal funding (in a prompted question, which would incur some natural inflation in response). This awareness increases with age, which is somewhat surprising. About half of First Nations people who pursued post-secondary education and were aware of this type of funding said that this played a relatively large factor in their decision to attend school, indicating that the funding is playing a strong role in education, particularly among today's youth.

This was confirmed in the focus groups where there was a high level of knowledge, awareness and up-take of the PSSSP. The program gives people hope and provides them with something concrete to aim at. Other factors identified as helping First Nations youth overcome barriers to achieving their educational and career/employment objectives included a solid appreciation of the linkages between quality of life, gainful employment and education and the availability of good alternative schools and programs for completing high school.

Just under half of First Nations adults report that they have gone back to high school at some point to upgrade their skills. This is highest in the 35 to 44 age segment. The tendency to take only the minimum math and science courses is coming down over the generations, with today's youth being the least likely to say that they take only the minimum required. Among the reasons for taking only the minimum number of math and science classes is that the courses were not offered, that there was no interest in these subjects, or that these course are too difficult.

b) Employment

First Nations people living on-reserve are divided in their views about pursuing employment that provides the opportunity to stay within the community versus one that is optimal in other ways (e.g., quality of the job itself). Naturally, this is driven, in large part, by life cycle, and individual and family needs. Youth are the most open to taking the best job available, even if it takes them away from the community, while those who are 25 to 44 (who typically have children in the home) are more inclined than other age groups to work near home. The unemployed are also more driven to take the best job available, even if it takes them away from home.

The views about why youth do not pursue training in skilled trades are varied and interesting. A fundamental lack of awareness seems to be the most obvious explanation for many people, followed by a lack of interest in pursuing any type of training. Some also espoused a lack of funding for training, as well as a variety of issues pointing to a lack of preparedness to pursue training.

There is also division in the perception of equality of training opportunities. The largest portion of First Nations people believe that they have the same chances as anyone else to obtain training, and equal proportions fall on either (i.e., the higher versus lower) side of the scale. Youth are less pessimistic than others about their chances of obtaining training, while those who are 45 to 54 are the most pessimistic about training opportunities for First Nations people. Generally, the more educated and affluent are more negative in their point of view.

A wide variety of factors are seen to have an influence on employment choices in the First Nations community. At the top of the list is childcare, even among youth. All of the elements posed in the survey (support, information, practical training) are seen as being similarly influential on employment decision-making.

Awareness of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) is moderate, given that fully one in three report that they are aware. The measurement is taken from a prompted style of question, however (and therefore is likely inflated at least somewhat). The more educated and affluent, as well as older First Nations people and residents of communities that are at the higher end of the well-being index are all more aware of the AHRDS. Awareness also coincides with awareness of the availability of funding for post-secondary education.

c) Parks Canada

Roughly one in four First Nations residents have thought about Parks Canada as a source of employment. This is more concentrated in the West than it is in the East, as well as among men and residents of rural communities. The inclination to think about Parks Canada as an employer is not as high among First Nations communities as it is among Aboriginal people living off-reserve.

A high proportion of First Nations people have considered Parks Canada as an employer for youth, particularly in the West. Surprisingly, this is lower among youth themselves and among people with children in the home.

About one in four First Nations people report that they have seen advertisements about Parks Canada employment opportunities. This is higher among the more affluent and educated, as well as among 45 to 64 year old residents of reserves. The impact of the ads seems to be limited, from the evidence in this survey, as people who have seen the ads are no more likely to say that they have considered Parks Canada as a source of employment.

d) Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)

Most First Nations people report that they receive the signal for APTN in their homes, though just over half of First Nations people report receiving and watching APTN “at least sometimes.” Overall, one in three individuals who receive it say that they watch APTN “very little.” Reception and frequency of watching the station is highest in the Atlantic region and lowest in Alberta. It is also most popular with people over 55 years of age and First Nations residents who report an Aboriginal first language.

While satisfaction with television programming in general is only moderately high, satisfaction with APTN programming specifically, as rated by those who watch it, is high at 82 per cent. In fact, almost one in three overall rated themselves as “very satisfied.” Satisfaction is highest in the Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan, as well as among the less educated and affluent, and those with an Aboriginal mother tongue. Regionally, satisfaction is lowest in British Columbia.

The views about the role of APTN in bringing the Aboriginal culture and language to First Nations homes are strong. Virtually everyone agrees that this is an important role for the station to play. In fact, over half of First Nations people believe this function to be “very important.” This view, not surprisingly, reflects the pattern found with viewing and satisfaction. Residents of the Atlantic region and Saskatchewan, as well as the less affluent and individuals reporting an Aboriginal first language, are also more concerned with the role of APTN in bringing Aboriginal languages into the home.

Similarly, most First Nations people believe that the content and focus of APTN should be exclusively Aboriginal in nature (particularly women, people over 55 and residents of Ontario). Relatively few see the need for a broader line-up, including non-Aboriginal programming.

e) Use of Marijuana

Illegal drugs, alcohol and cigarettes are all viewed as harmful by a majority of First Nations people living on-reserve. Most also consider marijuana harmful to their health. Although these substances

are considered dangerous by the majority, this perception is much weaker among youth, and increases significantly with age.

Marijuana usage is fairly common among First Nations people, with over half reporting that they have used this substance more than once, and one in six report using marijuana in the month before the survey. Again, usage is much more frequent among youth. Furthermore, a significant proportion of marijuana users report using this drug daily or weekly.

While over two-thirds of First Nations youth agree that there are negative consequences associated with using marijuana (such as memory lapses, run-ins with police, increased risk of lung cancer, and impacts on parental relationships), a significant portion disagree, suggesting that they do not believe that there are serious consequences related to regular marijuana use, and little peer pressure to discourage the activity.

f) Other Issues

The findings on un-stated paternity support the analysis conducted by INAC concerning potential causes.

Knowledge of the *Indian Act* is mixed in so far as everyone has heard of it, but few feel knowledgeable enough to comment on its merits.