



## Strategic Research La recherche stratégique

# 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey

## Gender Differences in Inuit Education and Employment

### Key Findings:

- Higher education results in higher income ranges for Inuit high school completers and leavers, especially for those holding a trades certificate or a college diploma.
- Inuit women are more likely than Inuit men to have completed high school.
- Inuit women are more likely than Inuit men to plan to further their educations.
- Child care and family responsibilities were most often cited by Inuit women as reasons for leaving high school or postsecondary programs.

### Introduction

The 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a national survey of First Nations living off-reserve, Métis, and Inuit aged six years and over. The Survey was conducted by Statistics Canada and reached over 38,000 Aboriginal respondents across Canada, for a 76% response rate.

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

profiles of labour force activity. For added context, the report incorporates some comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, using comparative statistics on the non-Aboriginal population from the 2011 National Household Survey<sup>2</sup>.

This strategic research brief provides an overview of key findings for Inuit respondents with respect to gender differences in educational and labour force outcomes. This is one in a series of three separate research briefs on gender differences among Aboriginal groups in Canada. Two other research briefs focus on gender differences for education and employment of First Nations respondents living off-reserve and Métis respondents.

### Background

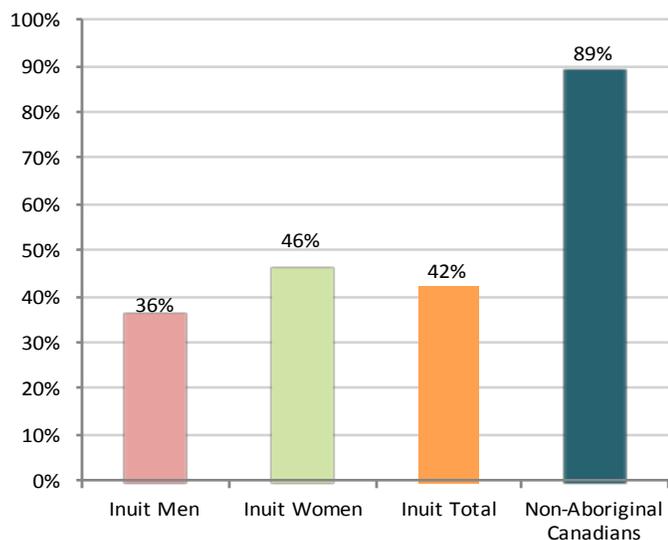
Inuit in Canada are unique. They have a different culture, different knowledge, and different beliefs than other Aboriginal Canadians. Historically, Inuit lands covered almost one-third of Canada’s land-mass, ranging from the eastern coast of Labrador, to the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, and to the west in the eastern part of the Yukon Territory. In 2011, the National Household Survey found that there were 59,445 persons identifying as Inuit in Canada, representing 4.2% of the total Aboriginal population and 0.2% of the total Canadian Population. Almost three quarters of the Inuit population resides in Inuit Nunangat (“the Inuit homeland”): Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

### Key Findings

#### Completers and leavers

The following is a description of the educational pathways of male and female Inuit respondents to the 2012 APS aged 18 to 44. This analysis is broken down by those that completed their education (“completers”) and those that had not (“leavers”). The 2012 APS found that 42% of Inuit respondents completed the requirements for a high school

**Figure 1: Proportion Inuit and non-Aboriginals Aged 18-44 Holding a High School Diploma or Equivalent by Gender, Canada, 2011-2012.**



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

diploma. Female Inuit respondents (46%) were much more likely to have a high school diploma than male Inuit (36%) respondents (Figure 1).

### Age at completion

The average age for high school completion among Inuit males and females is 18.3 years, which is slightly older for high school graduation in Canada at 18 years. The majority of Inuit completers did so through attendance at a high school as opposed to other means (distance education), with no differences by gender. The majority of Inuit completers (85%) finished high school with no breaks in their education, including 87% of male completers and 84% of female completers. At the time of the APS, around 5% of Inuit respondents were enrolled in a high school equivalency program. There was little difference by gender with around 3% of male and around 8% of female Inuit leavers enrolled in such programs. Just over half of all Inuit leavers were enrolled in an adult high school.

### Reasons for leaving high school

Inuit leavers averaged 17.1 years of age when last attending high school, with no significant gender differences. However, Inuit women were more likely than Inuit men to leave high school multiple times, 40% versus 28%, respectively. The main reason Inuit respondents gave for leaving high school was different by gender: Inuit female respondents cited pregnancy or the need to care for their own children most often (38%), while Inuit male respondents cited school problems (22%), lack of interest (15%), and wanting to work (11%).

### Barriers to further education

The 2012 APS also asked Inuit respondents 18 to 44 about their plans to continue their education in the future and

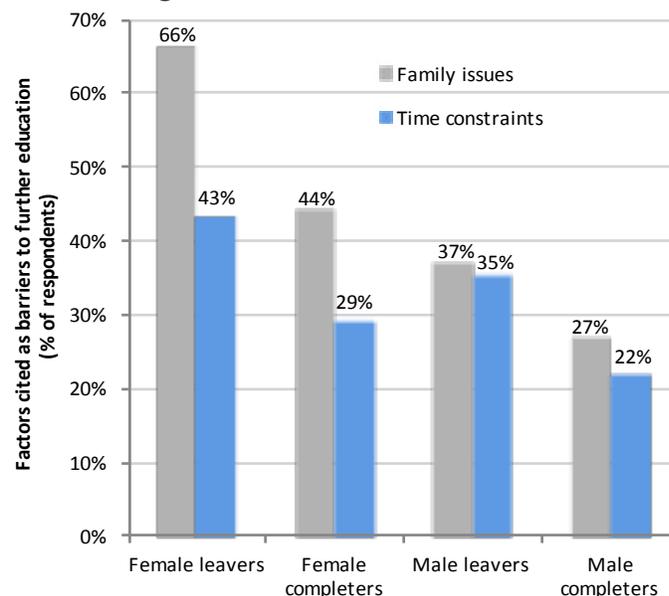
obstacles to additional schooling. The factors keeping high school completers and leavers from furthering their education differed. Gender differences were also found. As Figure 2 shows, 66% of female Inuit leavers identified family issues as an obstacle. This rate was higher for female leavers than for female completers (44%), male leavers (37%), and male completers (27%). Additionally, more female leavers (43%) cited time constraints (too busy, no time to study) than female completers (29%) as a reason for not furthering their studies. The difference between male leavers and completers with respect to time constraints were 35% and 22%, respectively (Figure 2).

### Postsecondary education profile

The 2012 APS also reports that 26% of Inuit respondents aged 18 to 44 held a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree. Comparatively, the 2011 NHS found that 64% of non-Aboriginal persons in Canada in the same age group had postsecondary credentials. Around 5% of Inuit respondents were attending postsecondary institutions for the first time in 2012. Otherwise, 9% of Inuit respondents had started but did not complete postsecondary education and 61% had never attended postsecondary institutions.

While the postsecondary education profile for Inuit males and females were similar, there are some gender differences as well as differences by age groups. For instance, Inuit men were significantly more likely than Inuit women to have trade certificates (50% versus around 18%), as opposed to a college diploma or university degree. With regard to age group differences, those Inuit respondents aged 18 to 24 were less likely than those 25 to 44 to have completed postsecondary education (9% versus 34%) but they were more likely to be

**Figure 2: Barriers to Further Education for Inuit Male and Female High School Completers and Leavers, Aged 18-44.**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

attending postsecondary institutions for the first time (9% versus 2%).

### Relocation for postsecondary studies

Since there are a limited number of post-secondary institutions situated within Inuit Nunangat, many Inuit students relocate for postsecondary studies. The 2012 APS shows that 50% of Inuit with postsecondary credentials had to move to pursue education at this level. However, the proportion that moved varied by the type of credential sought: 85% holding a university degree had to move compared to 38% holding a trades certificate and 45% holding a college diploma. A higher percentage of Inuit women hold university credentials (5.1% versus 2.8%). This suggests that they moved more often for educational purposes than did Inuit men.

### Reasons for leaving postsecondary programs

Inuit respondents who started but never completed postsecondary education were asked why they did not complete their studies. Their answers suggest some gender differences, as was the case for leaving high school. Reasons given for leaving postsecondary programs include: pregnancy or caring for their children (around 16%), other family responsibilities (around 18%), lack of interest or motivation (around 12%), courses were too hard (around 10%), got a job or wanted to work (around 8%), and being away from home was too difficult (around 6%).

### Plans for further education

Among all Inuit respondents 18 to 44 year of age, 55% reported having plans to continue educational activities. An additional 5% were uncertain about such plans. There was no

significant difference regarding such plans among high school completers and leavers (51% and 59% respectively). Yet, Inuit women were more likely than Inuit men to plan further education (62% versus 46%). Unsurprisingly, respondents aged 18 to 24 were more likely to plan further education than those aged 25 to 44 (61% versus 52%).

Finally, unemployed Inuit respondents aged 18 to 44 were mostly likely to plan furthering their education (71%) as compared to employed Inuit (52%), and those not in the labour force (54%). There was no significant gender difference regarding plans to further education among Inuit respondents aged 25 to 44, who were either unemployed or not in the labour force.

### Employment

At the time of the 2012 APS, 71% of Inuit high school completers were employed, 9% were unemployed but looking for a job, while 20% were not in the labour force (neither looking for work nor employed). The profile for leavers was different: 44% were employed, 17% were not, and 39% had left the labour force.

The 2012 APS shows that the higher the level of education of both completers and leavers, the more likely they would be employed. Among both Inuit completers and leavers, women were almost as likely as men to have a job. The 2012 APS found that the majority of employed Inuit completers (84%) and leavers (81%) were working full time. Yet, for the leavers, employed Inuit men were more likely than employed Inuit women to work at least 30 hours a week (88% versus 73%).

### Inuit income ranges

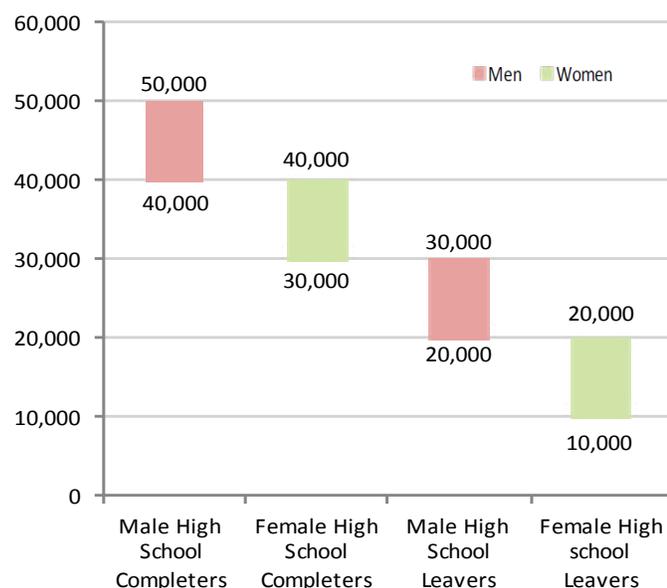
There were gender differences observed in median<sup>3</sup> income ranges for Inuit workers. Among all Inuit high school completers, women reported a median income range of \$30,000 to \$40,000, while men reported a range between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Leavers experienced significant drops in income, with women leavers' median income ranging between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and men leavers' median income ranging between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (Figure 3).

Educational completion results in higher income levels. This is especially so for postsecondary education. While no gender analysis is provided in the original report, Inuit men and women who only completed high school had a lower median income range, from \$20,000 to \$30,000, while Inuit with a trades certificates or a college diploma reported incomes ranging between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

### Non-participation in the labour force

Similarly to the reasons noted above for leaving either high school or postsecondary programs, one of the main reasons for Inuit respondents' non-participation in the labour force was a lack of work available in the area or suited to their skills (23%). The second most commonly cited reason for non-participation in the labour force was caring for children

**Figure 3: Median Income Ranges by Gender among Inuit High School Completers and Leavers.**



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

(around 17% of all Inuit respondents). Gender differences were noted, too. Around 26% of Inuit women 18 to 44 years of age cited child care as the reason they were not looking for work, while around 31% of Inuit men cited a lack of available work.

Often, participation in some traditional activities can supplement or substitute income gained through the labour market. Such activities might include hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering wild plants; making clothing and foot wear; and, making and selling or trading arts and crafts. The 2012 APS found that 84% of Inuit adults took part in at least one traditional activity over the past year. Around 20% of all Inuit respondents participated in these events for monetary gain. However, male leavers were more likely than female leavers to engage in traditional activities for money or as supplementary income (28% versus 18%). There were no significant gender differences among Inuit completers.

## Conclusion

The 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey shows that all Inuit respondents who completed their education had higher levels of employment and median income ranges. This is especially so for those holding postsecondary credentials. In addition, Inuit women were more likely than Inuit men to have completed high school as well as to have plans to further their education. However, Inuit women were more likely to have left their educational path as a result of child and family care responsibilities, while men are more likely to have cited a lack of motivation or a desire to enter the labour force.

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## Notes

1. Statistics Canada defines school “leavers” as persons who had not obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent and was not attending an elementary or high school at the time of the survey. It is important to note that individuals enrolled in a high school equivalency program when they were interviewed for the APS are also considered “leavers”. It is also important to recognize that some “leavers” may return to school in the future and obtain high school credentials. Furthermore, high school graduation may not be the highest level of education of “leavers”, as some may also have a trades certificate, college diploma, or university degree.
2. It was possible to report both single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal Identity questions in the National Household Survey (NHS) and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). The NHS data are based on single responses only, while the APS data represent a combination of single and multiple responses.
3. Because personal employment income was reported in ranges, a median income range is calculated. The “median range” is the category for which the cumulative percentage of reporting respondents came closest to 50%.

## Disclaimer

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

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

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