

Systemic Factor: Education and Employment Outcomes

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Educational Systems as a Social Determinant of Health

"Education is correlated to most of the key life outcomes of an individual: employment, earnings, poverty levels, physical and mental health, well-being, social-mobility, criminality and more."

The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health reports:

"Adequate education has a profound impact on employment, income, and living conditions (Gluz & Moyano, 2013; Stávková et al., 2012). Well-educated parents not only earn higher incomes, thereby improving stem determinants for their own and their children's health, but also pass along a tradition of education to the next generation (Bonikowska, 2020; Chan & Boliver, 2013; Liu et al., 2018; Sheikh, 2015). Education has also been correlated with optimal child development, as well as mitigating some of the effects of poor child development on adult health (Andersen, 2014)... During the gradual closure of Indian Residential Schools, there was an increase in Indigenous student attendance in provincial and territorial schools. Métis and non-status youth were required to attend regular provincial and territorial schools as soon as they became established. Between the 1970s and the early 2000s, Inuit and individual First Nations slowly gained more control over education; they hired more Indigenous teachers, developed culturally relevant curricula and teaching resources, and promoted a resurgence of Indigenous language instruction. By 2013, 500 band-operated schools were serving about 65% of the on reserve student population (Filice, 2018). Despite this progress, a 2016 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation report revealed that First Nations students received 30% less government funding than non-Indigenous students (Porter, 2016). This inequitable funding has resulted in fewer educational resources, libraries, and technologies, as well as a lack of competitive salaries to recruit and retain teachers. First Nations child advocate Dr. Cindy Blackstock suggests that this discrimination has played a major role in the lower education completion rates among First Nations youth (as cited in Irvine, 2004)... Preschool programs have demonstrated the most favorable "return on investment" among Indigenous children. Yet, in 2018, the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve program only served about 20% of First Nations children because of eligibility and was not available to children with special needs (Barrera, 2018). Although the benefits of culturally relevant curricula have been shown to retain Indigenous students, within mainstream high schools, most curricula continue to lack focus on Indigenous content and pedagogy (Anderson, 2004; Battiste, 2002; Kovach & Montgomery, 2019). Since the 1960s, there has been a slow but steady increase in Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education in Canada. Even though university level attainment has increased, a gap continues to exist among Indigenous Peoples, caused in many cases by economic and social challenges.8 As efforts to include Indigenous programming, studies, and courses in postsecondary education are ongoing, they have not kept pace with the educational needs of Indigenous post-secondary students (Arvidson, 2020; Restoule et al., 2013; Scowcroft, 2015)."ii

"In 2023, about three-quarters (74.3%) of Indigenous people aged 25 to 54 in Canada were employed, compared to 85.1% of the non-Indigenous population in that age group. The differences between populations were highest for those with the least amounts of education – for those with less than high school, levels of employment were 46% for Indigenous people compared to 64% for non-Indigenous people, whereas 84% of Indigenous people and 88.2% of non-Indigenous peoples were employed. For the Prairie region, patterns were similar – overall employment rates for those aged 25 to 54 were 73.8% among Indigenous people and 85.4% for non-Indigenous people. For those with less than high school, 49.9% of Indigenous people and 67.1% of non-Indigenous people were employed. Employment levels for those whose highest levels of educational attainment were high school graduation or some post-secondary education were 67.8% among Indigenous people and 80.5% for non-Indigenous people. For those who had

completed post-secondary education, 85.1% of Indigenous people, compared to 88.3% of non-Indigenous people, were employed. "iii

"In 2021 [in Saskatchewan], there were 1,810 credentials awarded to graduates who self-declared as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Between 2017 and 2021 Saskatchewan has experienced a 17.7 per cent decrease in the number of Indigenous students graduating from public post-secondary institutions. This decrease has persisted over the past three years, driven most significantly by a decrease in Certificates awarded, which in 2021 was less than half the number awarded in 2018. The COVID- 19 pandemic also disproportionally affected Indigenous students, which led to a significant decrease in credentials awarded in 2020 and 2021. However, significant increases in credentials awarded to Indigenous graduates over the last five years have occurred at the Diploma (35.0 per cent increase) and Bachelor's Degree (25.0 per cent increase) levels."

"Overall comparisons demonstrate that [Indigenous] people fare considerably less well than other Canadians with respect to educational attainment, but these patterns cannot be understood without reference to complex sets of relationships. These include interactions between education and socio-economic factors such as family income, employment, and neighbourhood conditions as well as broader factors related to Canada's history of colonization."

Education and Income Variants between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples

"In terms of average income, Statistics Canada provides data broken down by those who have achieved an educational certificate or diploma less than that of a Bachelor's degree from a University, equal to a Bachelor's degree from a University, and greater than a Bachelor's degree from a University. The numbers for both Canada and Saskatchewan are troubling, to say the least. Data is presented for years 2000 and 2005 and for those 15 years of age and older. In Canada, average yearly income (before taxes) for a member of the public with non-[Indigenous] identity who had obtained certification or diploma less than a Bachelor's degree, in 2000 and 2005 respectively, was \$29,143 and \$30,401. All things equal, the average for a Canadian of [Indigenous] identity would be \$20,448 and \$22,531, in those years respectively—70% and 74% of what the average non-[Indigenous] Canadian would have made. For those with a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, the values were \$51,416 and \$53,030 for the non-[Indigenous] populous; \$39,524 and \$42,410 for [Indigenous] Canadians—77% and 80%. For non-[Indigenous] identity Canadians with a level of education higher than a Bachelor's degree, the values were \$68,193 in 2000 and \$69,382 in 2005. For [Indigenous] Canadians with the same qualifications the values were \$49,551 and \$51,088—or 73% and 74% of an average income for other Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2006b)."

"In 2021, Saskatchewan residents earned an average annual earnings premium of:

- \$9,520 from obtaining a high school diploma compared to no high school completion;
- an additional \$8,260 for obtaining a post-secondary certificate or diploma;
- an additional \$12,230 for obtaining a bachelor's degree, and
- an additional \$12,230 for obtaining a graduate or professional degree above the bachelor's level.

This means that a person with a degree above the Bachelor's level earned an average of \$42,240 more each year than a person without a high school diploma." vii

"Compared to non-Indigenous residents of the province [Saskatchewan], the earnings premium is higher for Indigenous people at every level of educational attainment except for a post-secondary certificate or diploma. It is significantly higher at the university levels. Among those without a high school diploma, Indigenous people in Saskatchewan earn significantly less than non-Indigenous people (only 75% as much), but this gap closes with each level of higher education attained. Indigenous people make 81% of the earnings of non-Indigenous people with a high school diploma, 83% with a post-secondary certificate or diploma, and 97% with a bachelor's degree. For those who have attained a degree above the bachelor's level, Indigenous people earn more on average than non- Indigenous people with the same level of education."

"While income levels are frequently less than 80% of what the average non-[Indigenous] Canadian might expect, residents of Saskatchewan of [Indigenous] identity could often expect even less than their non-[Indigenous] counterparts in the years under investigation. In 2000, the average income for a non-[Indigenous] resident of Saskatchewan with less than a Bachelor's degree was \$27,297; in 2005 it was \$29,328. For an [Indigenous] resident, the average was \$16,931, then \$18,392 in 2005. These figures are both well below the Canadian average and measure at only 62% and 63% of Saskatchewan-resident counterparts. For those with more than a Bachelor's degree in Saskatchewan the numbers show 69% and 65% of non-[Indigenous] income in 2000 and 2005—meaning that the wage gap increased between these two years in favour of non-[Indigenous] Saskatchewan residents during this timeframe. Only for those [Indigenous] residents with a Bachelor's degree is parity found, but only in terms of percentage of non-[Indigenous] Saskatchewan average annual income when compared against the similar percentage for Canada in general. That is to say, [Indigenous] residents of Saskatchewan still show average incomes significantly less than their non-[Indigenous] neighbours, but less so than when focus is pulled back and Canada-wide data are used. These numbers are shown in [Figure 1.1, attached below]."

FIG 1.1: Average Annual Income Disparities between Certified Canadians of Aboriginal Identity and Non-Aboriginal Identity in 2000 and 2005.

			2000		2005			
		Non-Aboriginal Average Annual Income	Aboriginal Average Annual Income	Aboriginal Average Income as Percentage of Non-Aboriginal Average Income	Non-Aboriginal Average Annual Income	Aboriginal Average Annual Income	Aboriginal Average Income as Percentage of Non-Aboriginal Average Income	
Canada	< BA or Equivalent	\$29,143	\$20,448	0.70	\$30,401	\$22,531	1 0.74	
	BA or Equivalent	\$51,416	\$39,524	0.77	\$53,030	\$42,410	0.80	
	> BA or Equivalent	\$68,193	\$49,551	0.73	\$69,382	\$51,088	0.74	
Saskatchewan	< BA or Equivalent	\$27,297	\$16,931	0.62	\$29,328	\$18,392	0.63	
	BA or Equivalent	\$45,345	\$35,152	0.78	\$49,620	\$41,838	0.84	
	> BA or Equivalent	\$66,616	\$46,234	0.69	\$71,117	\$46,522	0.65	

Figure 1.1 ^x

"Grim as the disparity the statistics above portray, the larger context offered elsewhere demonstrates that [Indigenous] identity Canadians achieve certification at levels significantly below non-[Indigenous] Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2006c). Data released in the 2006 Census show that [Indigenous] Canadians represented roughly 3% of Canadians 15 years of age or older. Of that population age range, 56% of Canadians of [Indigenous] identity hold a certificate or diploma (including high school diploma) less than a Bachelor's degree—for non-[Indigenous] identity Canadians the same is true of 77%. Four percent of [Indigenous] Canadians held a Bachelor's degree from a University in 2005; while for non-[Indigenous] Canadians the proportion was 12%. Just over 1.7% of [Indigenous] Identity Canadians held a degree above the level of a Bachelor's (including professional degrees in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and 11 optometry; as well as Master's and earned Doctoral degrees). For non-[Indigenous] Canadians, 6.7% hold these higher level degrees (Statistics Canada, 2006c)."xi

The data presented indicates:

"(a) Canadians of [Indigenous] identity are 27.3% less likely than non-[Indigenous] Canadians to hold less than a Bachelor's degree or equivalent—but for those who do, they can expect to make 26% less annual income than non-[Indigenous] Canadians; (b) Canadians of [Indigenous] identity are 66.6% less likely than non-[Indigenous] Canadians to hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent—but for those who do, they can expect to make 20% less annual income than non-[Indigenous] Canadians; and (c) Canadians of [Indigenous] identity are 74.7% less likely than non-[Indigenous] Canadians to hold a degree at a level greater than a Bachelor's—but for those who do, they can expect to make 26% less annual income than their non-[Indigenous] counterparts with identical qualifications."xii

"A large body of research suggests that the pervasive disadvantage experienced by Saskatchewan's [Indigenous] peoples emanates from, and is reflected in, poor educational achievement normalized by the legacy of colonialism (Battiste, 2005; Bell, 2004; Carr-Stewart, 2001; Richards 2008). This legacy has created intergenerational disparities, which impede educational progress among many [Indigenous] students, leading to the reproduction of low socio-economic status in succeeding generations. That [Indigenous] people benefit the least from publicly funded education has long been suspected, but the degree to which race influences educational outcomes has become abundantly clear over the past decade with the collection of detailed data on student achievement by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Especially troubling are recent statistics indicating that while over 82% of Saskatchewan's non-[Indigenous] students graduate from Grade 12 only 32.5% of [Indigenous] students achieve a high school diploma (Government of Saskatchewan, 2010). Completion rates for [Indigenous] students attending provincial schools in the North or First Nation controlled schools on reserve are even lower, at less than 30%." (emphasis added)^{xiii}

"Furthermore, those [Indigenous] students who did complete high school on average score between 20–30% lower on standardized tests than other students, impeding their progression to post-secondary education or technical training. Overall [according to statistics from the Government of Saskatchewan, 2010), approximately 53% of Saskatchewan's [Indigenous] population over the age of 15 have less than Grade 12 education, compared to 38% of the non-[Indigenous] population. About 26% of [Indigenous] people have completed post-secondary education, compared to 41% of the non-[Indigenous] population."xiv

"For all groups, nothing matters more for class mobility than education, particularly for exiting lower socioeconomic status and joining the upper class1; for most groups, middle-income attainment is largely independent of education. However, educational benefits are not uniformly distributed across identity groups. A curious result is that Status First Nation people with a college diploma or a university

degree below the bachelor's level have a higher likelihood of being economically disadvantaged. However, having at least a bachelor's degree increases their likelihood of being in the higher income group. Although having at least a bachelor's degree is an advantage to all groups, some benefit more than others. Most notably, a bachelor's degree or higher makes membership in the middle-or upper income groups more likely among Status First Nations. However, non-Indigenous and Métis people appear to benefit the most from post-secondary education from the apprenticeship level up to at least a bachelor's degree. Among Inuit, having at least a college diploma is an almost a necessary condition for higher income attainment."xxv

FIG 1.2: Highest level of education among adults aged 25 to 64 years, by Indigenous identity and gender, 2021.

Highest level of education	Indigenous			First Nations (single identity)		Métis (single identity)		Inuit (single identity)				
	Total	Men+	Women+	Total	Men+	Women+	Total	Men+	Women+	Total	Men+	Women+
								percen	tage			
No certificate, diploma or degree	22.3	25.8	19.1	26.0	30.0	22.6	14.8	17.8	12.0	43.7	47.0	40.6
High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate	28.5	29.8	27.4	28.6	29.9	27.5	28.9	30.4	27.6	22.7	21.7	23.6
Postsecondary qualification (including certificate, diploma or degree)	49.2	44.4	53.5	45.3	40.1	49.9	56.3	51.9	60.4	33.6	31.2	35.8
Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor level	36.3	35.4	37.1	34.0	32.7	35.2	40.6	40.2	41.0	27.4	27.5	27.3
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	11.0	16.2	6.4	10.4	15.0	6.4	12.1	18.2	6.6	8.8	13.2	4.8
College, CEGEP or other non- university certificate or diploma	22.6	17.4	27.3	20.9	15.9	25.3	25.8	20.1	31.0	17.2	13.3	20.6
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	2.6	1.8	3.4	2.7	1.8	3.5	2.7	1.9	3.4	1.4	0.9	1.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.9	9.0	16.4	11.3	7.4	14.7	15.7	11.7	19.5	6.2	3.7	8.5

In 2022, Statistics Canada provided an updated breakdown of Indigenous education levels as of 2021.

Figure 1.2xvi

FIG 1.3: Highest certificate, diploma, or degree, population ages 25-64, in Saskatchewan in 2021

Highest certificate, diploma, or degree	Men (ages 25	5-64)	Women (ages 25-64)			
Saskatchewan	Indigenous Identity (% of total)	Non- Indigenous (% of total)	Indigenous Identity (% of total)	Non-Indigenous (% of total)		
None	31.1	10.5	21.0	6.0		
High school diploma or equivalent	33.0	32.4	32.0	27.4		
Apprenticeship/trades certificate or diploma	15.9	16.3	6.3	5.5		
College or other non- university certificate or diploma	11.1	14.0	21.4	24.5		
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's degree	1.9	2.9	3.7	4.0		
University degree (Bachelor's degree or higher)	7.1	23.9	15.5	32.7		
All levels	100	100	100	100		

Figure 1.3xvii

<u>Inequitable Funding between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Education Models Creates</u> <u>Disadvantage</u>

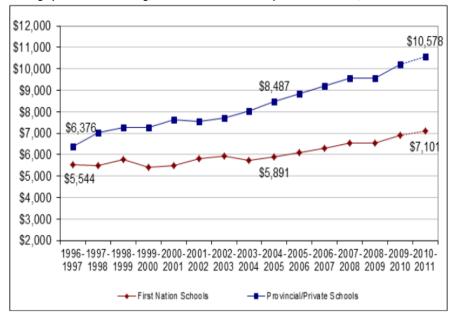
"Section 93 of the Canadian constitution assigned jurisdiction over education to the provinces, resulting in the establishment of secular and denominational publicly funded systems, regulated by provincial Ministries of Education, in most provinces, including Saskatchewan. However, section 91–24 of the constitution assigned responsibility to the federal government for 'Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians.' Thus the federal Indian Act subsequently became the all encompassing mechanism for fulfilling Canada's treaty obligations (including education) in all matters related to First Nations people (Carr-Stewart, 2001). Thus two education systems – a federal system for Indigenous peoples and provincial/state systems for all others – were established in Saskatchewan and 'educational delivery, standards, expectations, and modes of schooling and educational attainment were significantly different for students in each system' (Barman, Hebert & McCaskill, 1996 cited by Carr-Stewart and Steeves, 2009, p. 4)."

Total Canada

**Total Canada*

FIG 1.4

Average per-student funding, First Nation schools and provincial schools, 1996-2011⁵⁴



^{*} Per-student funding is calculated using the following formula: Core Funding allocated by Federal Government for First Nation education (FN school OR provincial/private school) / Nominal roll (FN school OR provincial/private school). Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Financial Information (1996-2011); Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Nominal roll statistics (1996-2011)

Figure 1.4:

"In 1996, **AANDC** [Aboriginal **Affairs** and Northern Development provided, Canada] average, \$5,544 per-student to First Nation schools. This was up to 15% less than what INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada] provided to First **Nations** attending Provincial or Private schools. Since 1996, the funding discrepancy has grown to an average of nearly \$3,500 less per-student. This means that AANDC now provides nearly 50% more funding to First Nations attending Provincial or Private schools than to those attending First Nation schools."xix

"This funding shortfall [between the years of 1996-2011] does not include costs needed to support the educational components of a 21st century school system that are currently missing from INAC's funding. This includes such basic services as: School libraries Technology (computers, connectivity, data systems); Sports and recreation; Vocational training; First Nations languages; School board-like services."xx

In recent years the federal government has committed to reducing these funding discrepancies. However, recent estimates indicate that ongoing shortfalls estimated at about \$3,000 to \$5,000 per student, per year have resulted in "deleterious consequences for First Nation students and schools" associated with high teacher turnover, outdated technologies and teaching resources, and serious problems with school facilities and infrastructures.^{xxi}

"Education in Canada falls under provincial/territorial jurisdiction, with the exception of education on reserve. The current federal policy objective is to provide First Nation children on reserve with 'elementary and secondary education programs comparable to those required in provincial schools by the statutes, regulations or policies of the province in which the reserve is located' (AANDC, 2013)... This means that schools on reserve are held to the same standards and delivery expectations as schools off reserve. Yet schools on reserves are funded inequitably given unique community needs resulting from issues such as, but not limited to, isolation and intergenerational trauma from the residential school system... First Nation children on reserve are underfunded \$2,000-\$3,000 per child (FNCFCS, 2013; AFN, 2010). Unlike provincial schools, the federal government provides: \$0 for libraries; \$0 for computers,

software and teacher training; \$0 for extracurricular activities; \$0 for First Nation data management systems; \$0 for 2nd and 3rd level services (including core funding for special education, school boards, governance and education research); \$0 for endangered languages; \$0 for principals, directors, pedagogical support, and the development of culturally-appropriate curricula (AFN, 2010; FNCFCS, 2013). ... In 2010/2011, AANDC provided \$1.5 billion in funding for First Nation education on reserve and \$304 million for building construction and maintenance. The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released a report in 2009 with an analysis of actual costs for the delivery of education, finding that schools on reserve are systematically underfunded by less than half (58%) of the actual costs needed to provide equal and equitable access to safe schools and education (Rajekar & Mathilakath, 2009)."xxiii

Barriers to Post-Secondary Funding

"While there are post-secondary funding programs for all three Indigenous groups [First Nations, Inuit, and Metis], not all students will access this funding because more students apply than can be funded. If Indigenous students cannot access funding through one of these three programs [Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy, Inuit Post-Secondary Education Program, Post-Secondary Student Support Program for First Nations] their options to attend post-secondary are limited. Lack of generational wealth among many Indigenous families has limited the ability to put money aside for their children to attend college or university. Although scholarships and bursaries are available to Indigenous students, these are very competitive, and only a select few will receive an award. Indigenous students are also reluctant to apply for a government loan such as the Canada Student Loans Program either because they are unaware that they are eligible or because they do not want to incur student debt.... There is a belief that all Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions are getting a 'free' education; however, this is not true. Not all Indigenous students are eligible for funding through one of the aforementioned funding streams. It is important to note that 'Federal support for [post-secondary education] is aimed at Status (Registered) Indians and Inuit; Métis and non-Status Indians are not eligible for funding under these programs.' Additionally, the increasing population has put a tremendous strain on the limited resources."xxiii

"The challenge of achieving educational parity so [Indigenous] people can participate fully in Canadian society, both in terms of employment and wellbeing, is one of long standing. Ladson-Billings (2006) emphasized that by ignoring historical educational inequities the United States is now facing an education debt of major proportions. These insights have direct application to the intergenerational consequences of educational disadvantage and cultural and cognitive dissonance experienced by [Indigenous] peoples in the Saskatchewan context. Papillon & Cosentino, (2004) and many others have clearly established that hegemonic practices rooted in colonial and neocolonial mindsets have impeded [Indigenous] educational attainment and the accumulated education debt has contributed to economic marginalization and the development of an intergenerational state of dependency and distrust on the part of [Indigenous] people. This education debt has profound implications for the future of the province of Saskatchewan given that the links between education, employment, income, and wellbeing have been substantially documented (Howe, 2002, 2011; Mendelson, 2006). Improving educational outcomes, especially attaining a high school diploma, is critical to labour force attachment, which is the main prerequisite to alleviating the poverty and eliminating the wider disparities in quality of life experienced by [Indigenous] people in the province. While not discounting deeper systemic issues and the barriers posed by enduring prejudice, a large body of evidence points to the immediate economic and social benefits that attaining a high school diploma confers upon [Indigenous] people (Howe, 2002, 2006, 2011; Mendelson, 2006; Sharpe et al., 2009). Achieving greater educational parity and labour force attachment for [Indigenous] residents of Saskatchewan is also critical to sustaining cross-cultural harmony and social

cohesion in a context where racial animosity is already problematic. Educational success is also critical to the retention and vitalization of [Indigenous] languages and cultures and to the realization of [Indigenous] people's aspirations for greater self-determination." xxiv

Saskatchewan: Child Poverty Rates and Income Inequality

The following charts provide a statistical breakdown of average child poverty rates in Saskatchewan, for the years 2019 (by city) and 2020 (by province, most recent statistical data compiled by Campaign 2000). Further breakdown on First Nations and Métis child poverty rates come from 2016 Census data.

FIG. 1.5 Poverty rates for all ages and children, Saskatchewan cities, 2019

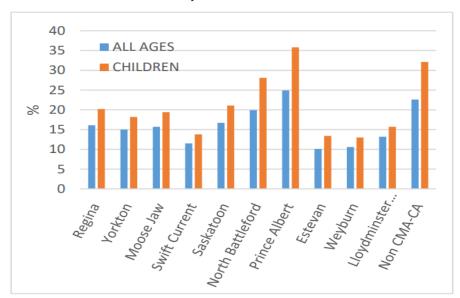


Figure 1.5xxv

Note: Non-CMA, non-Census Metropolitan Area, refers to Saskatchewan outside the nine cities. Source: Statistics Canada, 2019.

FIGURE 1.6 – Child Poverty Rates Across Canada, Under 18, 2020

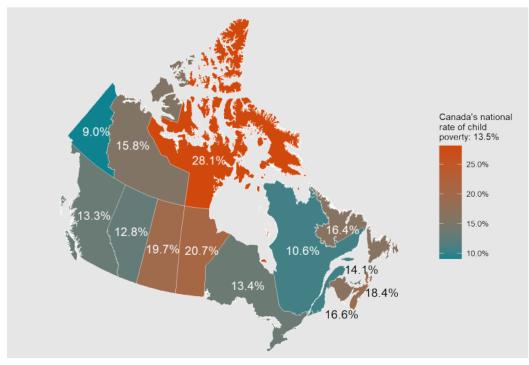


Figure 1.6xxvi

The poverty rate in Saskatchewan (2020) for children under the age of 6 is even higher, at 22.2%.

Source: Statistics Canada, Centre of Income and Socioeconomic Well-Being Statistics, Annual Income Estimates for Census Families and Individuals (T1 Family File), Custom Tabulation.

Source: Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0018-01. After-tax income status of tax filers and dependents based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition (T1FF), 2020.

- The most recent statistics on Indigenous Child Poverty rates come from 2016, "Saskatchewan and Manitoba have the highest child poverty rate for status First Nations children living on reserve—an astounding 65% of these children live in poverty." xxvii
- The poverty rates for First Nations children living off reserve, according to the 2016 Census, was 50%. **xviii*
- In 2016, "Among those families indicating they were Métis, 28.4 per cent were in low-income households." xxix

"Higher levels of income inequality are associated with increased levels of many social problems including higher homicide rates, increased rates of mental illness and lower life expectancy, over and above the direct effects of poverty. Researchers have suggested that there is now enough evidence to conclude that income inequality causes worse population health. Income inequality is correlated to several negative outcomes for children such as increased bullying and lower overall well-being."xxx

"Work should be a pathway out of poverty but many working adults are unable to meet their basic needs. Many issues contribute to inequities of work in Canada: precarious, low-paying jobs, and the disproportionate impact on racialized women; pay inequity embedded in the structure of the care economy; intersecting barriers related to immigration status, race, and gender; and an inadequate Employment Insurance (EI) system. Many parents with lived experience of poverty reported that their employment income did not allow them to meet their needs. Nearly 60% of minimum wage workers are women, 31% are immigrants (up from 21% a decade earlier), and 34% have a post-secondary degree or higher. The

failure to collect data disaggregated by race means that there is no data about the proportion of racialized minimum wage workers today. The overlap between minimum wage and precarious work is also worth noting -31.9% of all part-time workers earn minimum wage. Poor or no benefits are often a feature of precarious and part-time work adding an additional burden on workers in these jobs."*xxxi

<u>Inequitable Education Outcomes: Correlations with Poverty, Child Apprehension, Homelessness, and Incarceration</u>

As demonstrated, education outcomes for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people in Saskatchewan vary considerably. First, we see this evidenced through disparities in High School graduation rates gathered by the Ministry of Education (SK) in 2010; 82% for non-Indigenous students versus 32.5% for Indigenous students, respectively.**xxxii* Secondly, the difference in average income earned by Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with equivalent educational qualifications is demonstrably large. Not only is Saskatchewan failing to support its Indigenous children and youth who are enrolled in school, but systemic discrimination, racism, and prejudice result in lower average incomes for Indigenous graduates (high school & post-secondary) in their adult years. Inequitable outcomes are therefore both measured in terms of education-rates and earned average income.

"...[I]nequitable educational outcomes have profound implications for the future of the province of Saskatchewan given that the links between education, employment, income, and wellbeing have been substantially documented (Howe, 2002, 2011; Mendelson, 2006). Improving educational outcomes, especially attaining a high school diploma, is critical to labour force attachment, which is the main prerequisite to alleviating the poverty and eliminating the wider disparities in quality of life experienced by [Indigenous] people. While not discounting deeper systemic issues and the barriers posed by pervasive prejudice, a large body of evidence points to the immediate economic and social benefits that attaining a high school diploma confers upon [Indigenous] people (Howe, 2002, 2006, 2011; Mendelson, 2006; Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe, & Cowan, 2009)."xxxiii

"The concept of the school to prison pipeline refers to systemic setbacks that gradually shepherd students away from positive school connections and academic success and into increasing criminal activity."

"[Socio-economic] deprivation has profound, wide-ranging and long term effects on children, as Hunter and Douglas (2006) attested:

'Poverty can do both immediate and lasting harm to children. Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to lack adequate food, clothing and basic health care, live in substandard housing and poorly resourced neighbourhoods, become victims of crime and violence, be less successful in school, suffer ill health and have shortened life spans.""xxxv

"Actualizing self-determination and ending settler colonialism can only happen if poverty is eradicated and the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples are realized. Forceful separation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples from their lands, cultures, communities and families is a direct result of ongoing settler colonialism. During consultations Campaign 2000 held over the past year, Indigenous participants noted that 'a huge part of poverty is the loss of culture,' (emphasis added) and this loss contributes to ongoing intergenerational trauma. Community members noted that living in poverty is itself traumatic, and that communities without poverty would be able to heal from trauma. The connections between colonialism and intergenerational trauma are deep."xxxxvi

"Poverty often directly contributes to child apprehension, particularly for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, for whom racism and stigma mean that poverty is perceived as neglect rather than a consequence of government policies. In 2020, First Nations, Inuit and Métis children made up 7.7% of all children under the age of 14 but 53.8% of the population of children in foster care [National average]. This is an increase from 52.2% in 2015. First Nations children are 17 times more likely to be apprehended into the child welfare system than non-Indigenous children... Reports published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission describe the intergenerational effects of the trauma inflicted by the Residential School System and Sixties Scoop on First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, contributing to high poverty rates and overrepresentation in the child welfare system. Racism and discrimination in the child welfare system also continue to persist, similarly affecting rates of child apprehension."xxxxvii

"The effects of the child welfare system persist even after childhood. First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth ageing out of child welfare systems are often left with no support while navigating trauma. Such a lack of support can lead directly to experiences of poverty and homelessness; in Vancouver, it is estimated that roughly half of First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth who age out of care experience homelessness, including hidden homelessness." "xxxviii"

"Homelessness includes hidden homelessness, which can involve living with friends or relatives (i.e., "couch-surfing"), living in unsafe housing due to domestic or gender-based violence or staying in a hotel or other such temporary housing. This form of homelessness is more prevalent among women, gender-diverse people, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, im/migrants and refugees and young people."xxxix

"For many, each interaction with the criminal justice system brings a unique set of life circumstances. These interactions can lead to housing instability and can exacerbate existing mental health and addictions issues, creating a cycle between homelessness and incarceration. The causal relationships between housing, mental health and addictions, and justice issues are complex, as the presence of one can ignite a concern in the other two areas. Homelessness [and housing insecurity] and mental health are closely connected, where the presence of one increases the likelihood of the other. Individuals who are homeless and have mental health and/or addictions issues are then more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. The broader social determinants of health also reinforce these issues as poverty and social inequality can create or exacerbate housing and mental health and addictions issues, and the likelihood of criminal justice contact. ... Stigma around mental health and addictions issues, homelessness and criminal justice involvement can further affect a person's ability to access necessary services and support. This stigma can often lead to discrimination. For example, landlords may discriminate against these populations for having criminal records, showing past patterns of disruptive behaviour, having multiple complex social and health care needs, and potentially having poor tenancy histories. This creates barriers for individuals in accessing supportive housing, and therefore it is often why the "justice-informed" lens is missing from many housing-related initiatives and funding opportunities."xl

Measuring Education and Employment Variables in Incarcerated Populations

Educational and employment inequities are easily measured in incarcerated populations. This draws a clear relational connection between incarceration/re-incarceration, employment factors, and education levels.

For federally incarcerated persons: "At the federal level, the CSC is doing little better in addressing the educational needs of prisoners (75 percent of whom are without a high school diploma)—despite a

legal mandate to provide education. For example, the CSC itself has noted that they must better address the needs of prisoners with learning disabilities, and improve and adequately staff correctional libraries. Compounding the problem, in 2015-2016, the Correctional Service of Canada cut their educational spending by 10 percent. Furthermore, to our knowledge, there are no grants in Canada similar to the Pell Grants in the U.S., which provide assistance to prisoners who wish to enrol in an educational program upon release. (emphasis added)"xli

"A high percentage of inmates have had negative experiences in formal educational systems; many have dropped out, and most have had difficulty finding legitimate employment or have never held a steady job. In reality, nearly three-quarters (72%) of federally sentenced individuals have some need for education or employment; 54% of the incarcerated population have less than a grade 10 education and 62% of federally sentenced men were unemployed at the time of their arrest. (emphasis added)"xlii

"Approximately 78% of federally sentenced Indigenous women had moderate to high employment/education needs at intake." xiiii

The fact that 75% of federally incarcerated persons are without a high school diploma, and 72% have some need for education/employment is an obvious reflection that education levels, namely lower educational attainment, is directly linked to experiences of incarceration. CSC's inability to provide adequate educational training, and budgetary cuts to education spending, indicate that prison may not be an effective environment for individuals in need of further skills-based training. Needless to say, similar education/employment levels of incarcerated persons would be reflected in provincially operated prisons, of which there is limited data. Additionally, what limited programming that is available in Federal centres may not be offered in provincial centres, creating further service barriers. These are important considerations when trying to determine if incarceration will be the most appropriate response for an individual, or if alternative resolutions that include integrated services, educational programming, and support planning may better affect 'reintegration.'

Furthermore, "Sapers et al. (2018) further examined the mindset and attitude of staff working at correctional facilities in Ontario and identified how many staff had negative attitudes and stereotypical ideologies towards inmates and their potential from a deficit lens seeing them as incapable or incompetent of learning and rehabilitating back into the community. For example, one experienced officer interviewed stated, "the only special programs should be those that deal with mental health issue...all others are a waste of time and focus". As part of their recommendations, Sapers et al. (2018) suggested more education and training for staff to prioritize effective access and support around programs and services offered within correctional facilities which aligns with promoting the goal of rehabilitating inmates. This is important as negative stereotypical attitudes expressed via actions and words by staff towards inmates can lead to further conflict and escalating incidents of violence."xlv

Even though this recent evidence comes from an Ontario-based study, it is logical to infer that similar stigmatic mindsets and attitudes are apparent within staff at Saskatchewan's correctional facilities. This is especially concerning behaviour when we realize correctional staff are responsible for writing Pre-Sentence Reports and other psychological/behavioural assessments that determine an individual's risk factors for recidivism. Viewing individuals through a deficit lens undermines their chances at rehabilitation and reintegration; this is because the systems and staff 'intended' to help them are causing further victimization. To reiterate, "This is important as negative stereotypical attitudes expressed via actions and words by staff towards inmates can lead to further conflict and escalating incidents of violence." xlvi

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