CANADIAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION... in numbers

Education

The youthfulness of the Aboriginal population will continue to have many implications for various socio-economic initiatives especially in the area of education. It is well documented that education attainment promotes labour-force participation, reduces an individual's dependence on government transfers and impacts social economic status. With a particular focus on investments in education, there are opportunities to improve the overall well being of the current and future generations of Aboriginal populations.

TABLE 1: Percent with less than high school, Aboriginal Group, Canada, 2006

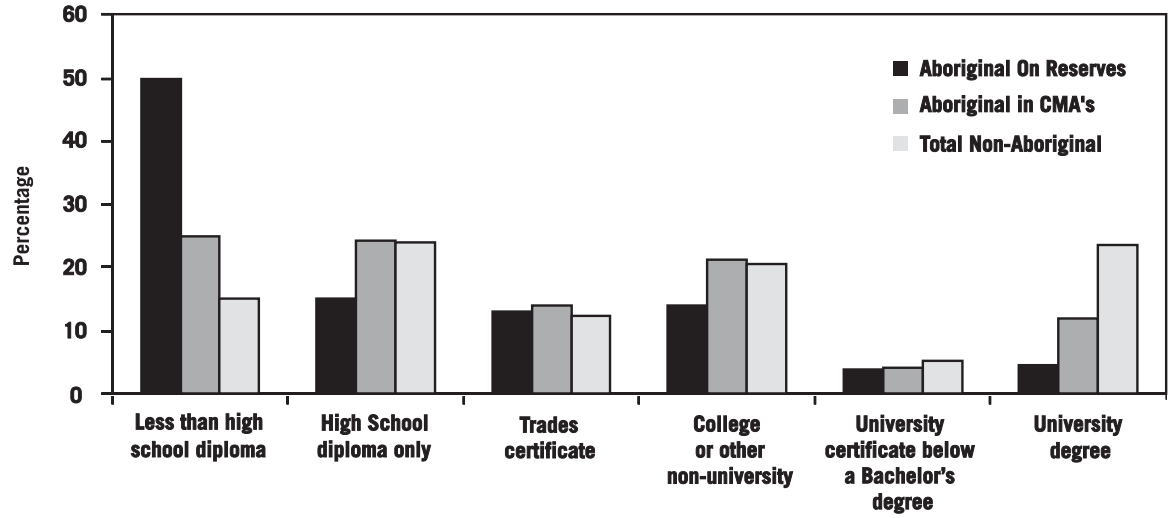
Registered Indian	39.7%
Métis	25.6%
Non-Status Indian	28.5%
Inuit	51.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

In 2006, one in three (34.1%) Aboriginal people 25-64 years of age have less than high school educational attainment compared with 14.8% of the non-Aboriginal population of the same age. The percentage of those with less than high school educational attainment varies by Aboriginal group and by area of residence (Table 1 and Figure 1).

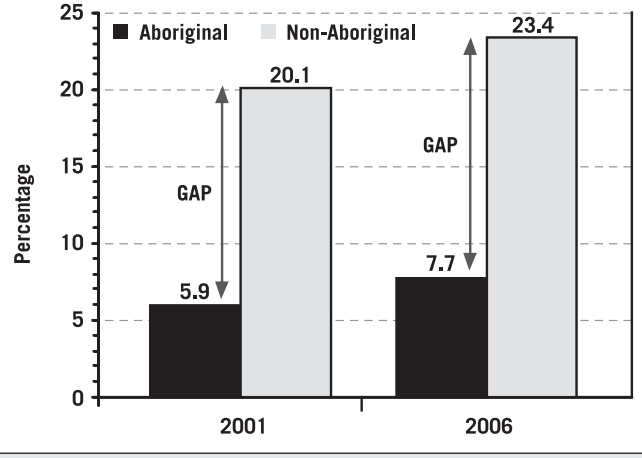
The Aboriginal population in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) fares much better than those on-reserves in terms of educational attainment. In 2006, only 24.8% of Aboriginal people in CMAs reported having less than high school compared with 49.8% on-reserves.

FIGURE 1: Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree, Population 25-64 Years, by Area of Residence, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, INAC tabulation

FIGURE 2: Percentage with a University Degree, Population 25-64 Years, Canada, 2001 and 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2008 and 2006 Censuses, INAC tabulations.

Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of working age Aboriginal people with a university degree increased slightly (from 5.9% to 7.7%). These small gains were also observed across individual Aboriginal populations as well as for Aboriginal populations living on-reserves and across major cities.

However, Aboriginal people are still less likely to have a university degree when compared with non-Aboriginal people. In fact, this gap has widened since 2001.

Jeanette Steffler and Andrea Street
Socio-Economic and Demographic Statistics Section
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada