

# **INAC On-Reserve Survey**

## **Final Report**

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Strategic Planning  
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Indian and Northern Affairs Canada  
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A. →

# Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

- This survey of Aboriginal people living on-reserve in Canada was designed to provide INAC and CIO with a representative assessment of the views of First Nations people living on-reserve on two key sets of issues: 1) conditions on-reserve, and 2) optimal methods of communication from the Government of Canada. The information flowing from this research will inform the Departments' broader consultation strategies. This large, national survey is the first of its kind in Canada.
- Three eligibility requirements were set for the survey:
  - a member of an Indian band or First Nation;
  - resident (for at least some part of the year) on a reserve in Canada; and
  - being 18 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 telephone numbers. When compared to the population distribution of 368,000 or so Aboriginal people living on-reserve (from INAC), the sample frame appears to under represent residents of Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and over represent residents of BC. Beyond the primary construction of the sample frame, there was some fine-tuning to exclude some postal codes that incurred particularly high ineligibility rates during the first few days of data collection.
- The survey sample contains a total of 1,427 completed interviews with First Nations residents of reserves. The maximum margin of error associated with the overall sample is +/- 2.6 per cent, at a 95 per cent confidence interval. The survey sample was stratified to include 200 completed interviews with residents in each province (although the Atlantic Provinces were collapsed with 200 cases represented in the final sample for the whole region). Interviews were not conducted in the territories. From the sample frame built, 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.
- The questionnaire consisted of approximately 80 items and covered the following areas:
  - Overall Outlook – personal economic future, future of children;
  - Priorities for the Government of Canada – forced selection of priority areas;
  - Performance of the Government of Canada – overall and in specific areas, quality of service;
  - Communications with Government of Canada – contacting the government, qualities of contact, preferred methods of contact, awareness of toll free numbers and web site, prevalence of knowledge of how to access information from the Government of Canada, perceptions of the amount of information received;
  - Conditions on-reserve – level of democracy, standard of living, linkages to social and economic improvement;
  - Indian Act – changes to the Indian Act, factors to consider in making changes;
  - Aboriginal Day – levels of awareness and participation;
  - Internet – levels of access and usage, venue for access;
  - Demographics – involvement in community, employment – related questions, age, language, education and income.

- ❑ The questionnaire was designed in close consultation with both departments. Where possible, questions were repeated from earlier surveys with the general public for the purposes of comparison. The questionnaire was thoroughly tested prior to starting data collection. The final questionnaire required an average of 22 minutes to complete over the telephone, using trained interviewers.
- ❑ The survey was collected between August 7 and 20, 2001. The data collection took place during a period of negotiations between the First Nations' Chiefs and INAC, wherein a larger departmental consultation exercise was placed on hiatus for a period of one month. The refusal rate for the current survey, however, was only slightly higher than would be expected for a normal general public survey. Moreover, the refusal rate varied significantly by province, owing in part to the number of calls that had to be made in some provinces to obtain the required number of contacts with eligible participants. There does not appear to be large variations in responses to individual questions, however, by province. These factors signal a survey data set that is nationally representative of First Nations people living on-reserve, in spite of the period in which the survey was conducted. The overall response rate for the survey was 52 per cent. While this response rate is high, in large part because of the high rate of ineligibility in the sample<sup>1</sup>, it is nonetheless, higher than obtained for most national, general public surveys conducted today.<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ Results of the survey are presented in six thematic sections. Overall results are first presented graphically along with a brief discussion of the overall findings. Where possible, results from one of several general public surveys are also featured graphically in order to compare the views of First Nations people on-reserve to those of the broader Canadian population. These findings come from one of the recent CIO Listening to Canadians surveys or from the EKOS Rethinking Government survey. Highlights of particular First Nations sub-groups differences are then described for each survey item.
- ❑ Following the general description of overall results, comparisons to the general public and sub-group differences, there is section, describing the results of a multivariate segmentation. This was conducted in order to create a typology of First Nations people living on-reserve, in terms of their impressions of the Government of Canada and socio-economic status. The typology also takes into account peoples' views of self-government, their own community and their economic outlook.

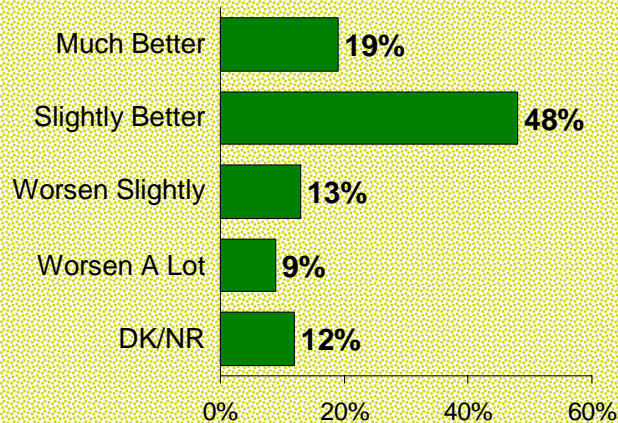
1. Ineligible contacts are typically considered as cooperative contacts in the calculation of response rates. This is a standardized method of calculation accepted by PMRS.
2. It may be possible that there is some imprecision in the calculation of the response rate owing to an imprecision in coding of the results of calls that were classified as refusals versus those that were classified as ineligible. The introduction to the survey indicated that the survey was targeting Aboriginal people living on-reserve in Canada. A very large portion of the contacts were classified as ineligible because respondents said that they did not fit the description immediately at the point of the introduction and then discontinued contact. It is difficult to be certain, however, whether these were truly individuals who were ineligible to participate or if people were taking the description as an opportunity to refuse without having to do so directly.

B. →

# Outlook and Priorities

# Economic Optimism

"Overall, thinking about your own economic future in the next 12 months, do you think it will get much better, slightly better, worsen slightly, or worsen a lot?"



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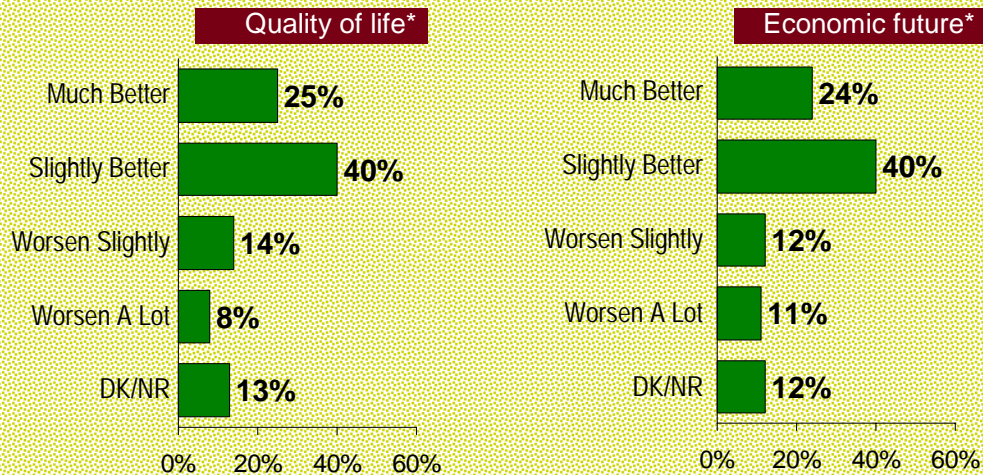
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INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- ❑ Overall, the majority of First Nations people living on-reserve are optimistic about their future economic prospects over the next 12 months; with 48 per cent believing they will be slightly better in the next 12 months and one in five saying much better.
- ❑ This looks to be a more optimistic view than is held in the general public. In the results of a nation-wide public opinion survey conducted in the spring of 2001 for Canada Information Office, only 12 per cent of the general public said "much better" and 30 per cent said "slightly better" to the same question. An additional 29 per cent said "slightly worse" and nine per cent said "much worse". Unfortunately, the results are not strictly comparable because the question given to the general public had a "same" category of which 21 per cent of respondents fell into. At the same time, it provides at least some basis for comparison with the current population.
  - Levels of optimism are linked with perceived performance of the federal government: people who think their economic prospects will be worse over the next 12 months are more likely to rate the performance of the federal government as poor.
  - Youth (under age 25) and higher income individuals are more optimistic about their economic future. Conversely, those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language and those with less involvement in their community are more likely to be pessimistic or unsure about their economic future.
  - Personal levels of optimism are also linked to perceptions of the overall standard of living of First Nations people. Those who think that First Nations' standard of living is worse compared to other Canadians have less optimism about their own economic future.

# Children's Future

"Overall, thinking about your children's ... do you think it will get much better, slightly better, worsen slightly, or worsen a lot?"



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\* 1/2 sample; overall n = 1427

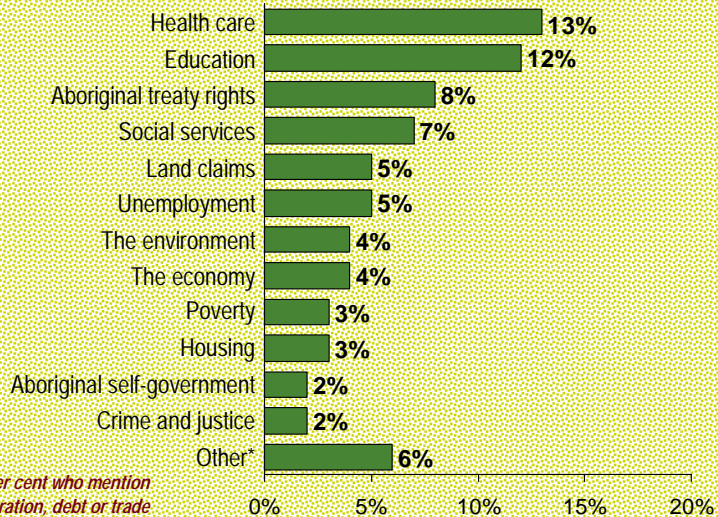
INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- The views of First Nations people living on-reserve about the future prospects for their children are presented above. The distribution of responses is similar whether respondents were asked to consider their children's "quality of life" or "economic future" and also closely reflect the results regarding personal economic outlook presented on the previous page. About two-thirds of individuals believe their children's future quality of life/economic future will be much better or slightly better.
- Children's future quality of life is rated higher by individuals with strong involvement in the community and by those who rate the performance of government as good.
  - Opinions about one's own economic future and First Nations' standard of living in general are both strongly linked to perceptions about one's children. Those who are more optimistic about their own economic future are also more likely to see a brighter future for their children. Those who believe First Nations people have a worse standard of living compared to other Canadians are more pessimistic about their children's future.



## Federal Government Priorities - Unprompted

"Thinking about the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?"



\*Includes fewer than one per cent who mention either taxes, immigration, debt or trade



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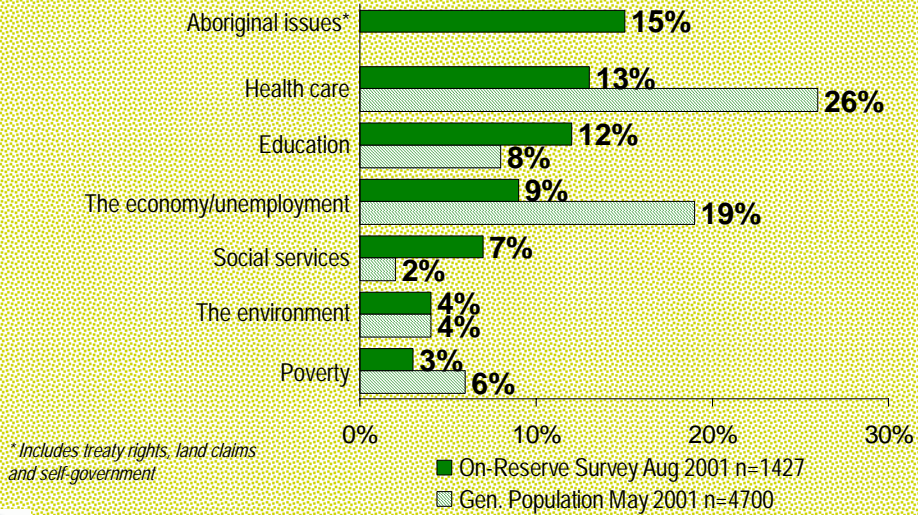
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INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- Respondents were asked (unprompted) to identify the issue that the Government of Canada should focus on most. Health care and education top the list of priorities for the federal government, being mentioned by 13 and 12 per cent, respectively. Eight per cent of respondents mentioned Aboriginal treaty rights, followed by social services (named by seven per cent). Other issues such as land claims, unemployment, the environment and the economy were mentioned by five per cent or less of respondents. Note that one-quarter of respondents did not indicate a priority (responded don't know/no response).
  - Health care was more likely to be chosen as a priority by older respondents and residents of Ontario (particularly compared to residents of Quebec and Saskatchewan). Education is a higher priority for youth, women and those with children. Those with less than a high school education place a lower priority on education.
  - Those who rate Aboriginal treaty rights as a high priority are also more likely to indicate government performance to be poor and to believe that the standard of living on-reserve compares poorly to other Canadians. There were more variations by sub-group on the priority of land claims. Land claims are a higher priority for British Columbians, upper-income respondents and those employed full-time. First Nations with greater involvement in the community, those who rate government performance as poor, those who had contact with the government in the last three months and respondents who believe the standard of living is worse on-reserve compared to other Canadians were also more likely to rate land claims as a high priority.
  - Other examples of differences by sub-group include: university-educated respondents place a higher priority on the issue of unemployment; older First Nations people (55 years or older) assign a higher priority to the environment than their younger counterparts; and there is a higher priority on the economy among those employed full-time and in a professional capacity.

## Comparing Selected Federal Government Priorities - Unprompted

"Thinking about the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?"



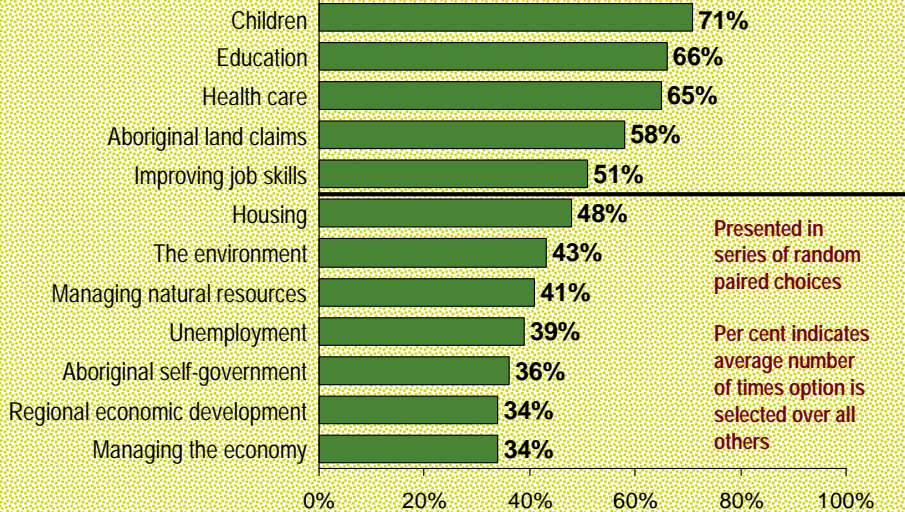
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CIO general public surveys, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- The exhibit above presents a comparison of the responses of First Nations people on-reserve and the Canadian general public in terms of priorities for the federal government. When Aboriginal priorities are collapsed together (i.e., including treaty rights, land claims and self-government), this issue represents 15 per cent of responses from the on-reserve survey. Compared to the general public, First Nations people living on-reserve are more likely to identify education and social services as a priority. The Canadian general public place a higher priority on health care and the economy/unemployment.

## Federal Government Priorities

**“Which of the following priority areas should be given the highest priority by the Government of Canada?”**



Presented in series of random paired choices

Per cent indicates average number of times option is selected over all others



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n=1427

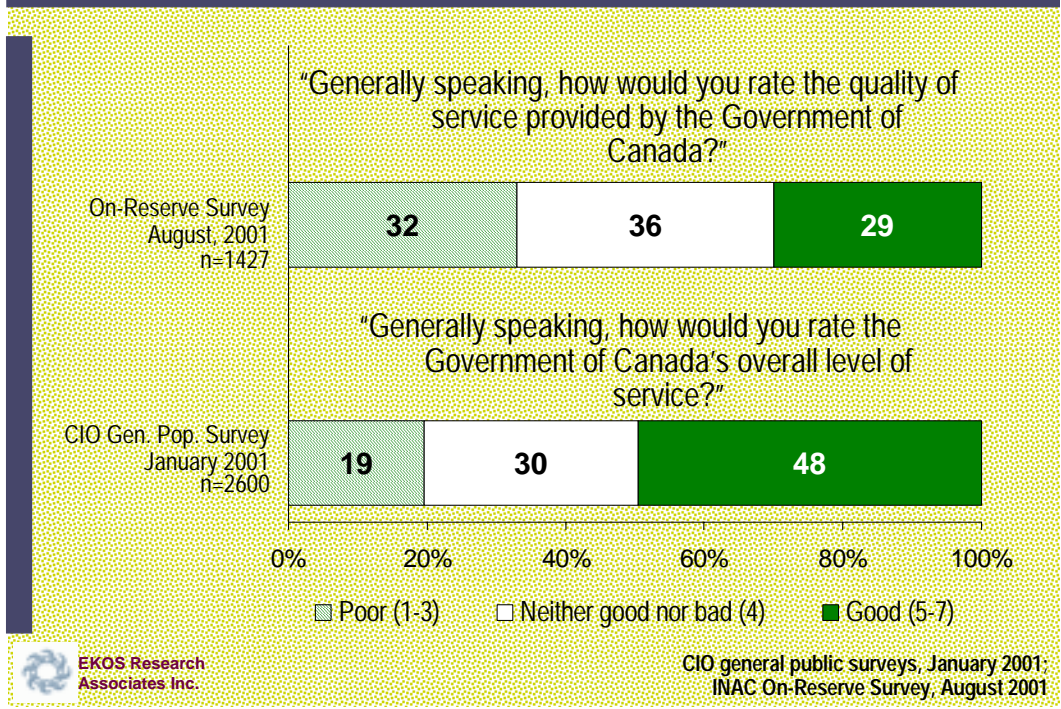
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- Respondents were offered a series of randomly paired priorities and asked to choose which should receive the higher priority by the Government of Canada. The highest priority area is children (defined as the highest proportion of times this priority was selected over its paired alternative). Education and health care received a similar ranking (each having been chosen over its paired alternative two-thirds of the time). Aboriginal land claims and improving job skills were two other priority areas selected more often than not over another alternative. Housing, the environment and natural resources, economic issues and Aboriginal self-government received lower rankings.
  - Children’s issues was selected as a priority more often by women and those with children under 18. Education was ranked as a higher priority by university-educated respondents and health care was favoured as a priority more often by older respondents.
  - Aboriginal land claims are more likely to be a priority among higher-income respondents, those employed on-reserve and those who rate government performance and First Nations standard of living on-reserve as poor. Land claims are a lower priority in BC.
  - Those with lower levels of income and education are more likely to place a priority on improving job skills.



# Impressions of the Government of Canada

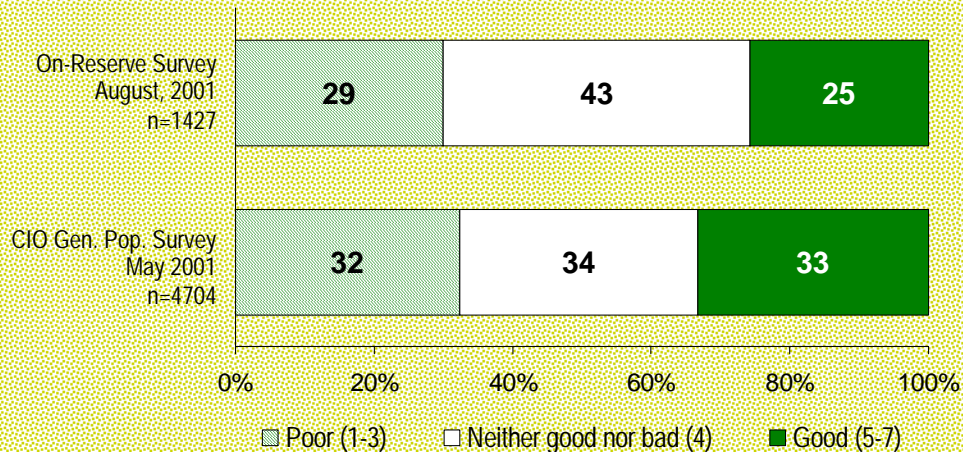
# Rating Government Service



- Three in ten individuals rated the quality of service provided by the Government of Canada as good (responding 5, 6 or 7 on a 7 point scale). One-third rated the quality of service as poor and 36 per cent chose a middle rating. The responses of First Nations people on-reserve are generally less favourable than those provided by the Canadian general public in this area. The difference in the proportion rating government quality of service as good, for example, is almost 20 percentage points. Whereas one in five Canadians overall rated the quality of government service as poor, one in three First Nations people on-reserve did so.

## Rating Government Performance

“Generally speaking, how would you rate the performance of the Government of Canada?”

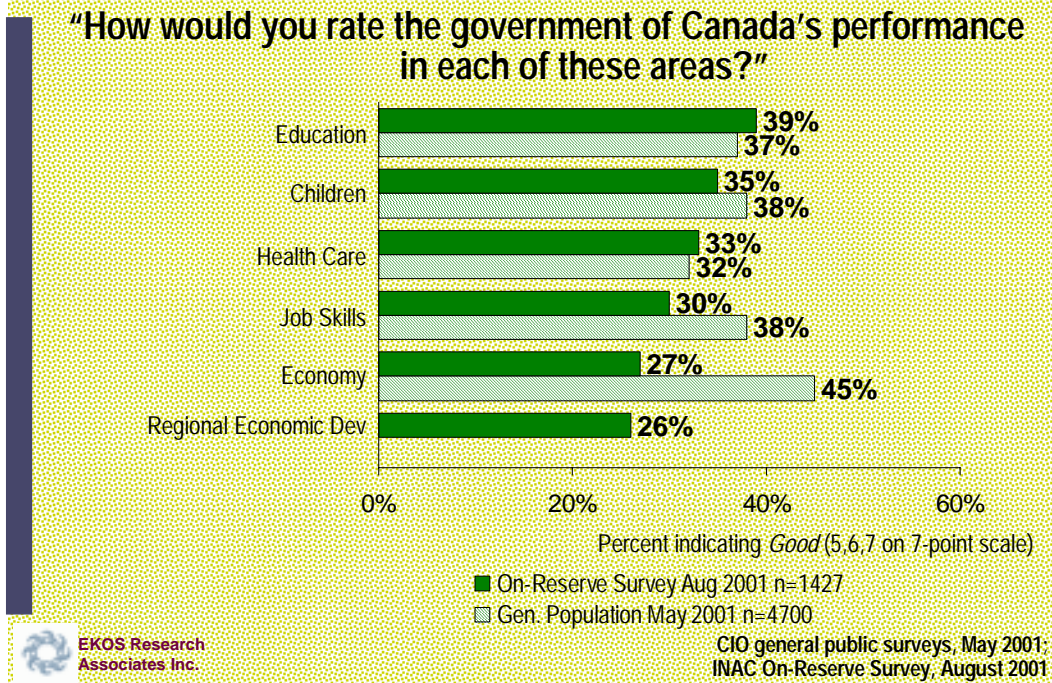


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CIO general public surveys, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- One-quarter of First Nations people living on-reserve rated the overall performance of the Government of Canada as good. While the ratings provided by First Nations people on-reserve are again less favourable than those provided by the Canadian general public, the gap is not as substantial on this indicator (a difference of eight percentage points in terms of those rating performance as good).
  - Ratings of government performance (both quality of service and overall performance) vary by age, with youth providing higher ratings of performance and service. Lower ratings of performance are provided by people with higher levels of education and income, those who are employed full-time and individuals with greater involvement in their communities and those living in urban areas.
  - Those who are more pessimistic about their own future and the standard of living of First Nations communities also provide lower ratings of government performance and quality of service. In terms of government performance only, ratings are higher among residents of the Atlantic and Saskatchewan and lower in BC.

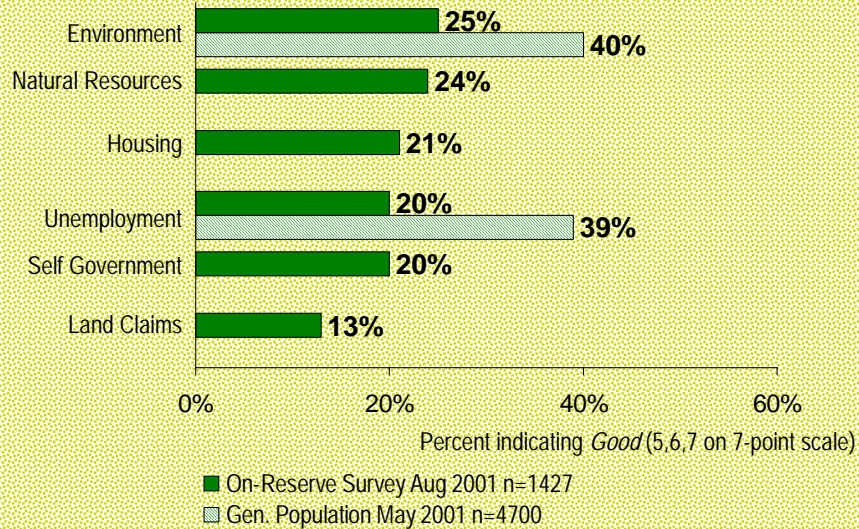
## Rating Federal Government Performance (a)



- ❑ Respondents were asked to rate the performance of the federal government in each of 12 areas. The six top-rated areas are presented above, with comparison to general population results in five of the six areas from earlier this year. (Results for the six remaining areas covered are presented on the following page.)
- ❑ Government performance is rated highest in education, children's issues and health care, with between 33 and 39 per cent of First Nations people on-reserve rating government performance as good in these areas. Areas related to the economy, development and the environment form a middle tier in terms of ratings of performance (between 24 and 30 per cent rating government performance as good). Government performance is rated poorest in the areas of housing and unemployment (one in five rating performance as good) and in areas related specifically to Aboriginal issues (self-government and land claims).
- ❑ In general, ratings of government performance are similar to, though in some cases, poorer than, ratings provided by the general public. The discrepancy is most apparent in the areas related to job skills and the economy (as well as unemployment and the environment, presented on the following page).
  - Youth (under 25 years) provide consistently more positive ratings of federal government performance compared to older residents of reserves in all of the 12 areas covered.
  - Ratings of government performance decline as levels of education and income increase (with the exception of ratings in the areas of job skills and unemployment). This relationship is similarly reflected in differences in ratings by employment status and type of employment. Often, those who are full-time employed provided poorer ratings of government performance compared to those who are employed (but not full-time) or who are not employed. Those employed in lower skill positions tend to have provided more positive ratings of government performance.

## Rating Federal Government Performance (b)

"How would you rate the government of Canada's performance in each of these areas?"



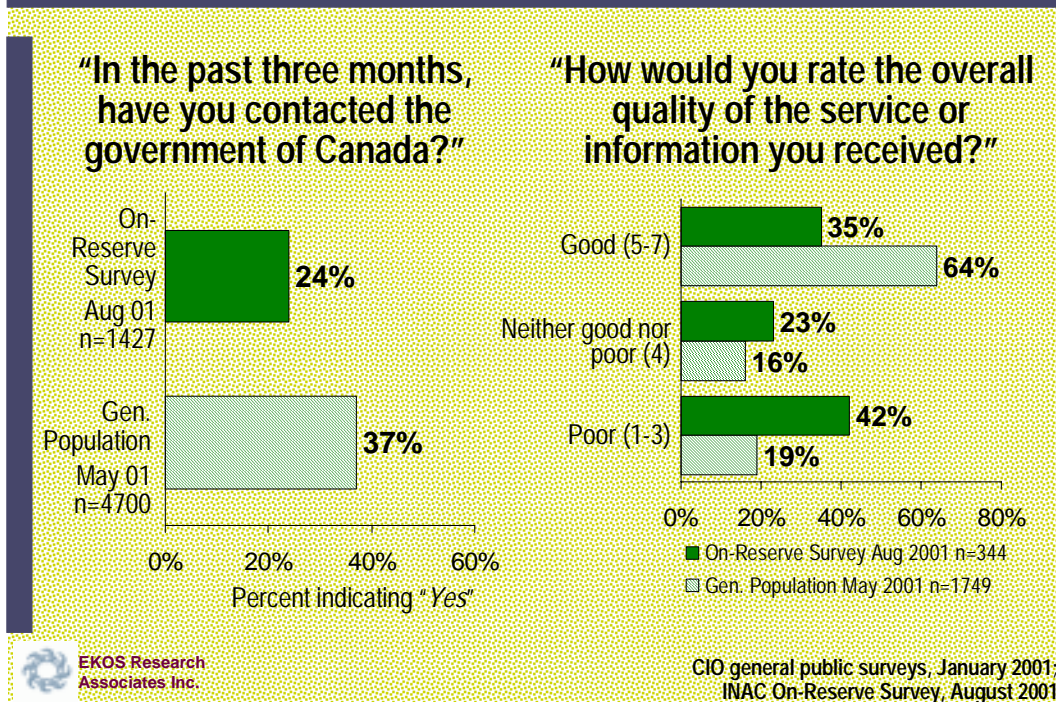
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CIO general public surveys, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- Men provided more positive ratings of government performance than women in the areas of education, the economy, regional economic development, housing and supporting self-government.
- Those who indicated a greater degree of involvement in their community generally believe the government is doing a poorer job than those not involved in their communities. This is true in the areas of children's issues, the economy, regional economic development, natural resources, housing, supporting self-government and land claims.
- Not surprisingly, respondents' ratings of government performance in specific areas parallel their ratings of government performance overall. Ratings of government performance are also consistently related to levels of economic optimism; those who are less optimistic about their personal economic future and judge the standard of living for First Nations to be worse compared to other Canadians provided poorer ratings of government performance in all of the areas mentioned.
- Recent contact with the federal government (within the last three months) is also related to poorer ratings of performance (except in the areas of jobs skills, unemployment and self-government). This points to a service issue when First Nations people are contacting the federal government. In contrast, general public surveys tend to show the reverse trend, whereby exposure to the government increases the image and satisfaction, rather than decreasing it.
- In terms of region, residents of the Atlantic region and Alberta provided more positive ratings of performance on many of the areas covered. Residents of Saskatchewan provided high ratings in the areas of education, regional economic development and land claims. Those living on-reserve in BC provided more negative ratings compared to those in other provinces (particularly in areas related to education, health care and regional economic development). Poorest ratings of government performance in supporting self-government were provided by Ontarians. Those living on-reserve in urban areas are significantly more inclined to view the Government of Canada's performance negatively on settling Aboriginal land claims and managing natural resources.



## Contact with the Government of Canada



- ❑ One in four (24 per cent) have contacted the Government of Canada in the past three months. This is notably fewer than the proportion among the general population surveyed in May 2001, where 37 per cent indicated that they had recently contacted the federal government.
  - The level of contact with the Government of Canada is significantly lower among youth (18-25) and older (55 and older) populations.
  - Aboriginal Canadians with higher levels of education and higher household incomes are more likely to have been in recent contact with the Government of Canada.
  - Respondents who are active in their community, those who rated the federal government’s performance as poor and those who believe that the standard of living among First Nations people is much worse than Canadians in general are all significantly more likely to have contacted the government in the past three months. A greater proportion of Aboriginal Canadians living on-reserve in urban areas have contacted the government recently (35 per cent).
- ❑ A plurality (42 per cent) of Aboriginal people living on-reserve rated the overall quality of the service that was provided by the Government of Canada as poor while approximately one in four indicated that the level of service was average, neither good nor bad. Just over one in three (35 per cent) feel that the quality of the service that they received was good.
  - There is a significant generation gap in the perception of the overall quality of service and information from the government. Respondents under the age of 35 are twice as likely as those over 35 to have rated the overall quality of the service or information as good.
  - Those who rated the quality of service or information that they received as poor are also more likely to be pessimistic about the economy and negative about the overall performance of the federal government.

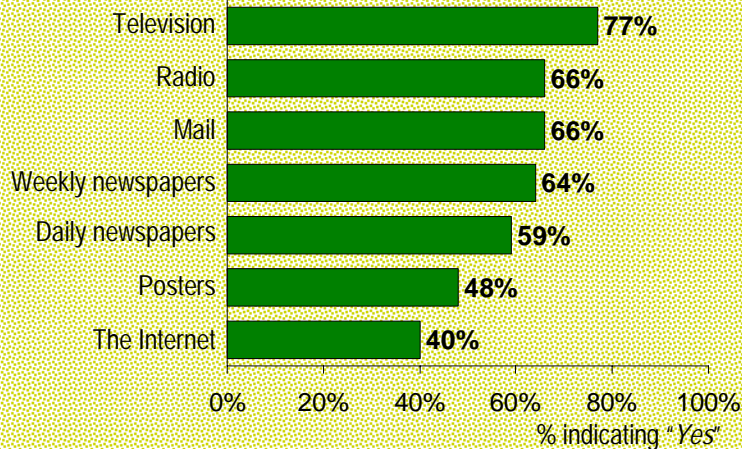
- ❑ The level of satisfaction with service is notably lower when compared to the general population. In May 2001, a majority of Canadians (64 per cent) indicated that they were generally satisfied with the quality of service they received from the Government of Canada.
- ❑ Evidence gathered from the latest Canada Information Office general public survey would suggest that the level of satisfaction with service from the Government of Canada increases with the frequency of contacts. Within the current population, the reverse relationship seems to be true. People who have had contact with the federal government in the past three months are systematically and significantly less satisfied with government service and performance.

D. →

## Communication with the Government of Canada

## Communications from the Government of Canada

"There are a number of ways the Government of Canada can provide information to Canadians. Are the following ways useful to you?"



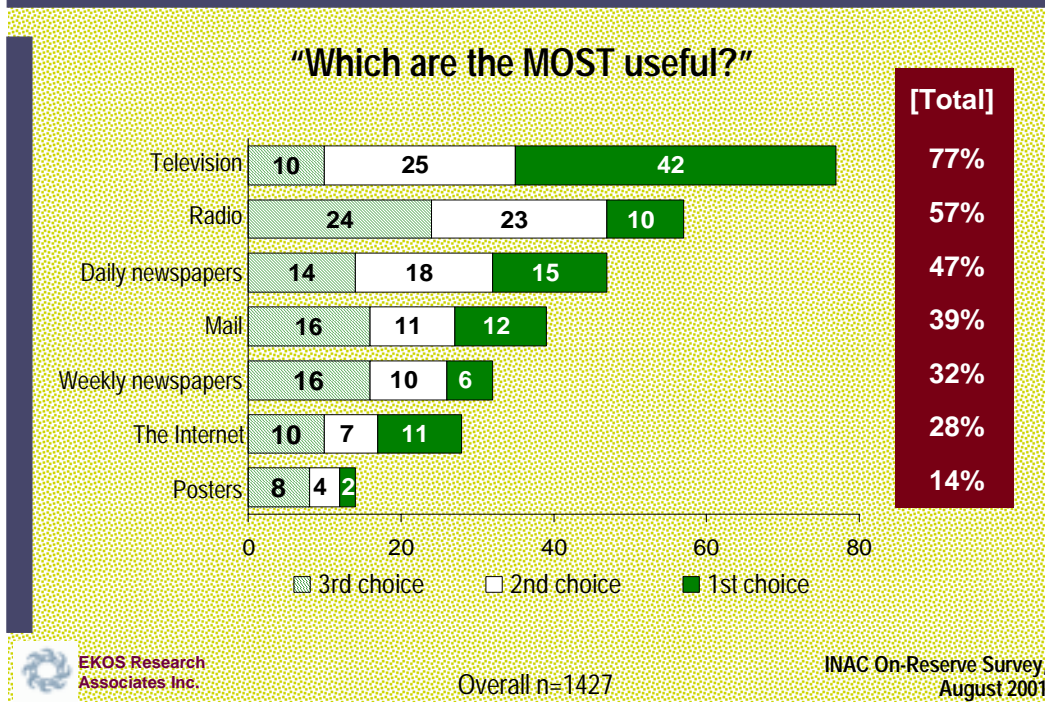
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n=1427

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- Participants were asked to determine the usefulness of a number of different ways the Government of Canada can provide information to Canadians. More specifically, they were to indicate if these methods of communication are useful to them. Television rates highest, with more than three out of four (77 per cent) indicating it a useful means for the federal government to provide information to them. On the other hand, it is also the most expensive and may or may not be cost efficient. Two out of three identified radio and mail as useful, with weekly and daily newspapers also garnering high levels of backing (64 and 59 per cent, respectively). Respondents are evenly split (48 per cent) on the usefulness of posters to display information. The Internet is rated as useful by four in ten overall, with distinct patterns along age, education and income lines.
  - As expected, the perceived usefulness of the Internet is significantly higher among those with higher household incomes. The age factor shows a significant decline in usefulness among those over the age of 55. More important, however, may be the link to the level of education. People who have less than a complete high school education show a significant decline in the perceived usefulness of the Internet as a means for the Government of Canada to provide information to them. Regionally, the level of interest in the Internet is highest in the Atlantic provinces and lowest in Manitoba.
  - Compared to older age groups, particularly seniors, youth (aged 18-25) indicated significantly more interest in weekly and daily newspapers as a means of receiving information from the Government.
  - The interest in posters is higher among Albertans and among women. Women are also more likely to find useful information from the government received by mail.

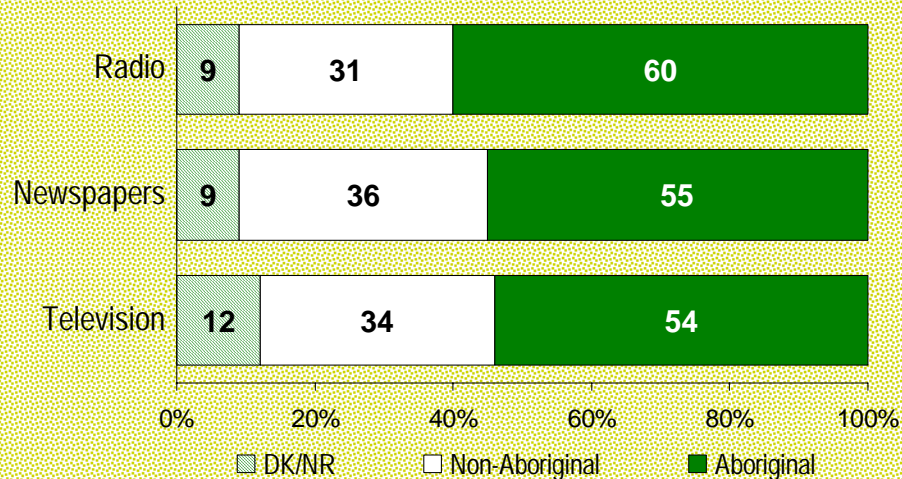
## Most Useful Means of Communication



- ❑ In order to gauge the relative usefulness and preferred means of communication with the Government of Canada, participants were asked to identify the first, second and third most useful ways of receiving information from the federal government.
- ❑ Television rated highest by a large margin, with a strong plurality (42 per cent) selecting it as the most useful means of communication from the government. Furthermore, three out of four rated television among the top three ways the Government of Canada can provide information to Canadians. Radio is the second choice overall, with nearly one in two rating it either second or third most useful means of communication for the government. Daily newspapers rated well as the most useful means of communication, second only to television as the most preferred method for the government to provide information. The level of interest in the mail, weekly newspapers or the Internet wanes in comparison. Few selected posters as one of their preferred ways of receiving information from the Government of Canada.
  - There are a few regional differences in the preferred means of communication. While television is rated highest overall, radio is most popular in Saskatchewan and daily newspapers fare significantly better in Alberta and in Manitoba.
  - Television rates significantly higher in some key demographic groups, notably in the oldest age cohort and those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language.

## Aboriginal Media

“Would you prefer to receive information from the government of Canada through Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal ...?”



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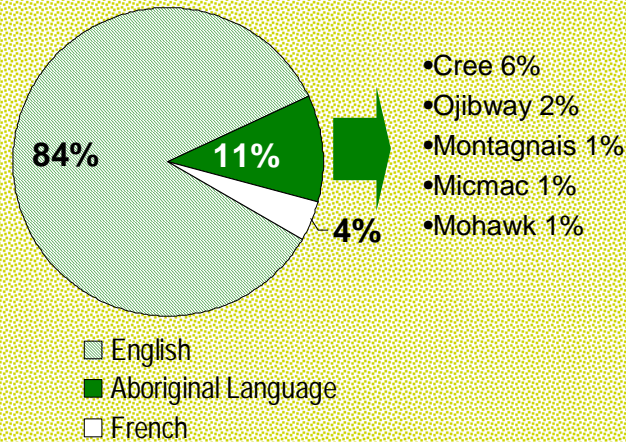
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- Given a choice between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources for receiving information from the Government of Canada, a majority chose Aboriginal media, whether television, radio or newspapers, as the preferred source. The widest gap is in radio, where Aboriginal radio is selected over non-Aboriginal radio by a margin of two to one. Just over one in two selected Aboriginal newspapers (55 per cent) and television (54 per cent).
  - The preference for Aboriginal television and radio for receiving information from the Government of Canada is significantly stronger among those with lower levels of education and household incomes. More importantly, the preference for Aboriginal television and radio is strongest among those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language.
  - The preference for Aboriginal radio is significantly lower among reserve residents in urban areas.
  - Regionally, Quebecers are more evenly split between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal television. Also, a greater proportion of those from Ontario and the Atlantic regions would prefer to receive information from the Government of Canada through non-Aboriginal radio. The preference for Aboriginal newspapers is greatest in Manitoba (63 per cent).

## Language Preferences

**“In what language would you like to receive information from the Government of Canada?”**



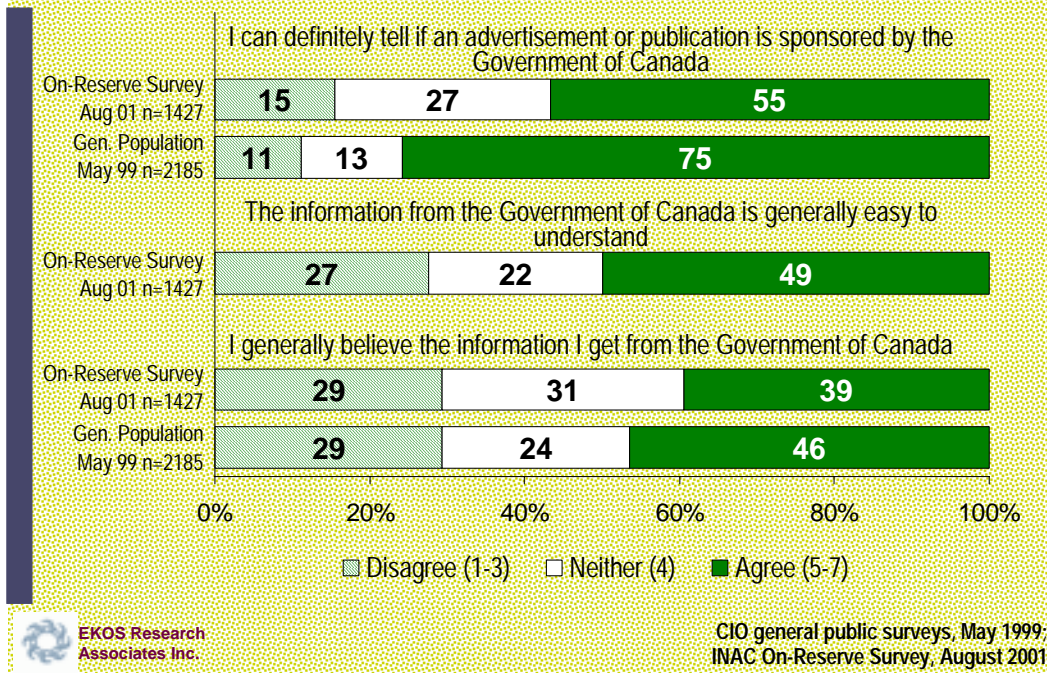
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- A very strong majority of Aboriginal people living on-reserve would prefer to receive information from the Government of Canada in English (84 per cent overall, including 52 per cent in Quebec). One in three in Quebec (34 per cent) say that they would like to receive information from the federal government in French. Just over one in ten (11 per cent) indicated that they would like to receive this information in a native language, notably six per cent overall who indicated Cree (22 per cent in Saskatchewan).
  - There is little difference among age groups in the language preference. A higher proportion of women, higher income earners and those employed off the reserve would prefer to receive information from the Government of Canada in English.
  - Among those whose first language is an Aboriginal language, there is a stronger preference for receiving information from the Government of Canada in an Aboriginal language (approximately 20 per cent).

## Information from the Government of Canada



- ❑ A majority of Aboriginal First Nations people living on-reserve (55 per cent) believe that they can easily discern if an advertisement or publication is sponsored by the Government of Canada. The level of brand recognition for the Government of Canada's advertisements or publications is considerably lower, however, compared to the results from a general population survey conducted two years prior (75 per cent in the May 1999 CIO general public survey).
  - There are important regional and demographic differences to note on this item. Aboriginal Canadians from Manitoba and Saskatchewan are significantly less likely than those from British Columbia or Quebec to know if the Government of Canada sponsors an advertisement or publication. The level of recognition is also higher among those living in urban areas and those with higher levels of education and household incomes, although never quite reaching the rates found in the general population survey.
  - Those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language, as well as Aboriginal Canadians in the older age cohort, have more difficulty recognizing when an advertisement or publication is sponsored by the Government of Canada.
  - People who have come in contact with the Government in the past three months and those who believe that the federal government is doing a good job are more likely to recognize if an advertisement or publication is from the Government of Canada.
- ❑ A Somewhat lower proportion (49 per cent) indicated that the information from the Government of Canada is easy to understand. In fact, more than one in four (27 per cent) tend to disagree with that statement.
  - Younger Aboriginal Canadians have a greater tendency to believe that the information they receive from the Government of Canada is easy to understand.
- ❑ Those who are gloomy about the economic future and rated the federal government's performance as poor are among those most likely to have expressed concern about the clarity of the information they receive from the Government of Canada.

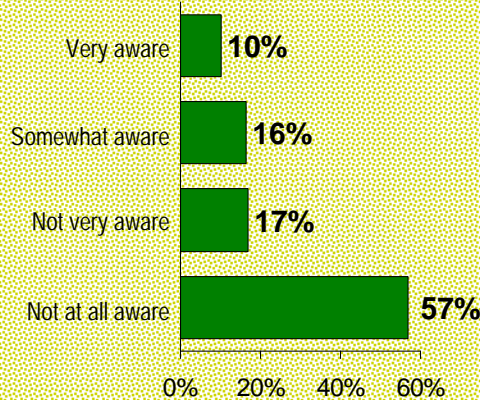


- There is an even split in the perceived credibility of the information from the Government of Canada. While a slight plurality (39 per cent) generally tends to believe the information that they receive, a significant proportion of people living on a reserve are either negative (29 per cent) or are neutral (31 per cent) about the credibility and believability of the information that they receive from the Government of Canada. Compared to the results from the general population survey in May 1999, the degree of uncertainty about the believability of the information from the federal government is slightly higher among the Aboriginal population.
  - Aboriginal Canadians under the age of 35 are far more likely than their older counterparts to believe the information they get from the Government of Canada.
- Not surprisingly, those who are positive about the economic prospects, the standard of living on-reserve and the overall performance of the federal government are all more likely to believe the information from the Government of Canada.

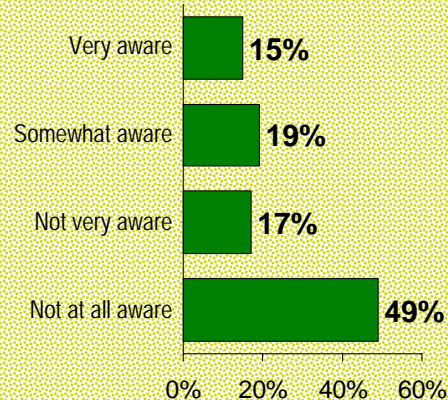
# Awareness of Toll-Free Numbers

"Would you say you are very aware, somewhat aware, not very aware or not at all aware of the toll-free number ...?"

## On First Nations governance\*



## Of the Government of Canada\*



EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

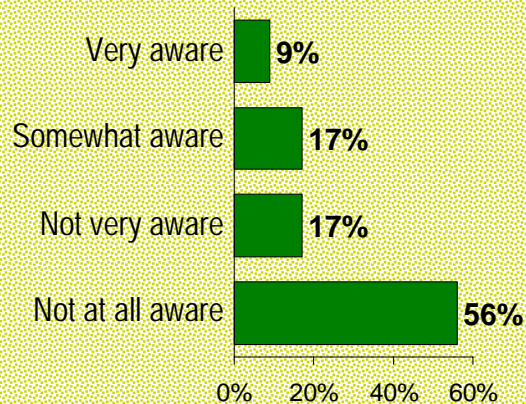
\* 1/2 sample; overall n = 1427

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- ❑ Besides measuring how messages from the Government of Canada are being received, the survey also looks at the ways Aboriginal people living on-reserve get in touch with the federal government when seeking information.
- ❑ The level of awareness of the federal government's toll free numbers is only moderate. One in four (26 per cent) are aware of the First Nations governance number, whereas one in three (34 per cent) are aware of the Government of Canada toll free number.
- ❑ The most recent CIO general public survey (May 2001) inquired whether they were aware of the Government of Canada's main toll free telephone number. Compared to the population on-reserve, a similar proportion (33 per cent) indicated that they were.
  - It is interesting to note that the level of awareness of the toll-free number on First Nations governance is highest among those with lower levels of education (30 per cent among those with less than a high school diploma are aware of the number) and those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language. Awareness is also significantly higher among those who are not employed.
  - Familiarity with the Government of Canada's toll free number, on the other hand, is significantly higher among those who have completed a high school education. Aboriginal Canadians who have been in contact with the federal government in the past three months and those who are very involved in their community also tend to be more familiar with this number. More Albertans are aware (44 per cent), whereas significantly fewer in Ontario (26 per cent) are familiar with the toll-free number.

## Awareness of Web Site

“Would you say you are very aware, somewhat aware, not very aware or not at all aware of the government main web site for Aboriginal Canadians?”



EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

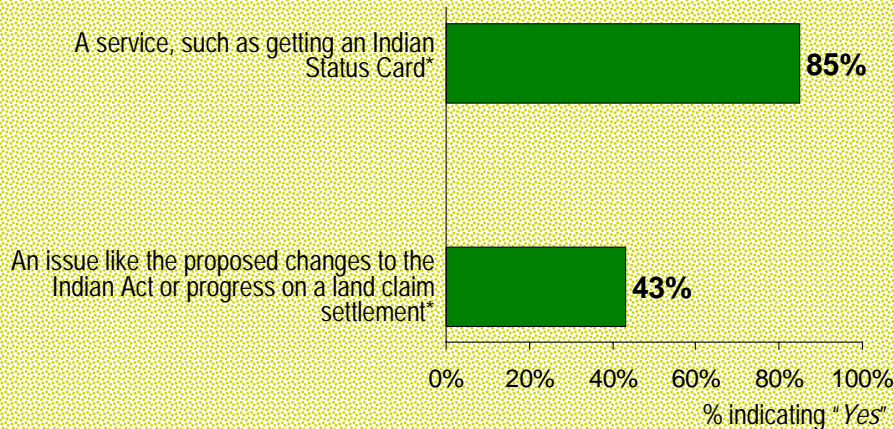
n=1427

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- The level of awareness of the federal government's main web site for Aboriginal Canadians is the same as the awareness of the toll-free telephone number on First Nations governance. One in four (26 per cent) indicated that they are aware, with 17 per cent saying that they are not very aware and a majority (56 per cent) indicating that they are not at all aware of the Government of Canada's main web site for Aboriginal people.
  - Besides the significant drop among those over the age of 55, lower household incomes and less education are significant factors in the declining level of awareness of the Government of Canada's main web site for Aboriginal people.
  - Heavy Internet users and people who are very involved in their community are among those most likely to be aware of the web site. Those who believe that the federal government is doing a good job and those who have recently contacted the government are also more likely to be aware of the main government web site for Aboriginal people.

## Getting Information from the Government

"Would you know where to go to get information from the government of Canada about ...?"



EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

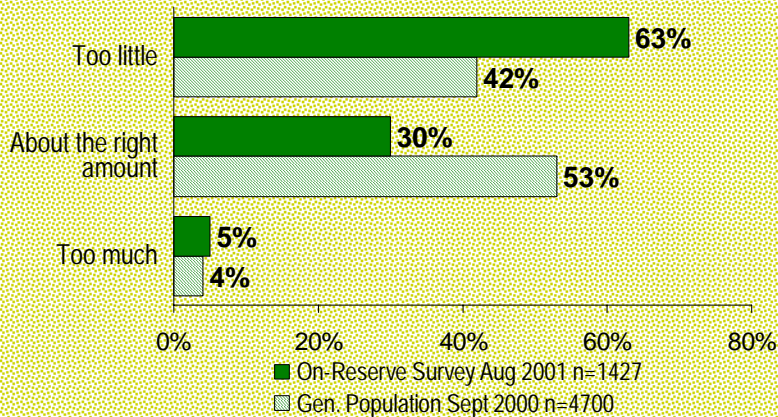
\*½ sample, overall n=1427

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- ❑ Knowledge about where to get information from the Government of Canada about a service, such as obtaining an Indian Status Card, is widespread (85 per cent indicated that they would know where to go to get this information).
  - Approximately one in five reserve residents in Manitoba (21 per cent) are unaware how to get information from the Government about a service. The level of knowledge is also somewhat lower among those with low levels of education, and those employed in semi-skilled positions.
- ❑ Knowledge of how to access information from the Government of Canada on an issue relating to changes to the Indian Act or progress on land claim settlements is not as widespread. Fewer than one in two (43 per cent) indicated that they would know where to go to get information from the government on these types of issues.
  - There are strong regional differences in the response patterns. While nearly two out of three from Quebec would know where to get information from the Government of Canada about a specific issue relating to Aboriginal affairs, only one in three in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are cognizant of where to get this type of information.
  - The level of knowledge on where and how to access this type of information is significantly higher among the university-educated (63 per cent, compared to 38 per cent among those who do not have a high school diploma). Aboriginal Canadians who are very active in their community and those who have recently contacted the government are also more likely to know where to get information from the government on specific Aboriginal issues.
  - Those who know where to get information tend to be more optimistic about the economy and the performance of the federal government in general.

## Quantity of Information from the Government of Canada

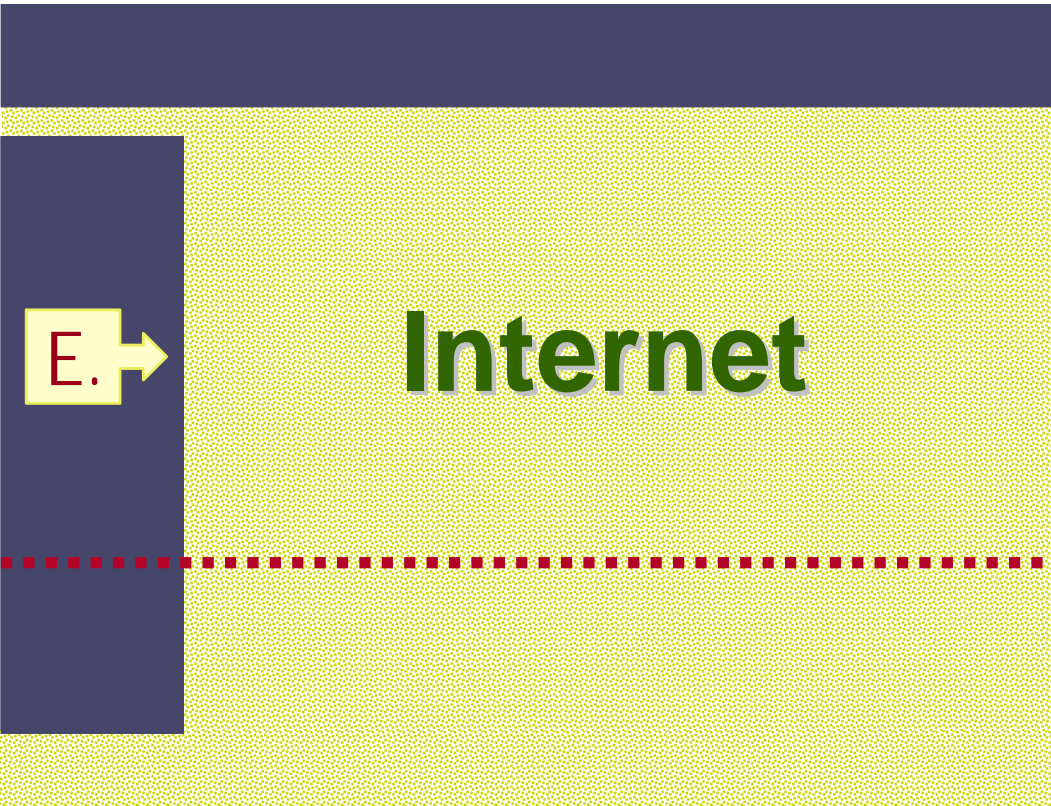
**“Thinking about the information you receive from the government of Canada, would you say that you receive too much, too little or about the right amount of information?”**



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

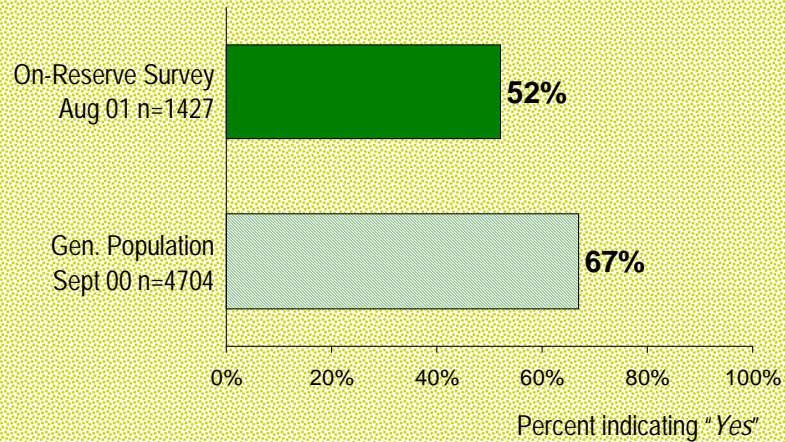
CIO general public surveys, September 2000;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- ❑ There is a clear demand for receiving more information from the Government of Canada. Whereas a slim majority of the general public (53 per cent) think that they receive about the right amount of information from the Government of Canada (September 2000), a stronger proportion of Aboriginal people living on-reserve feel that they receive too little information (63 per cent). Very few believe that they receive too much information from the federal government.
- ❑ This striking contrast between Aboriginal people and other Canadians may perhaps be explained, at least in part, by some of the gaps in the level of recognition of advertisements and publications from the federal government, the clarity of the message and the general believability of the information. Also, while most Aboriginal Canadians are familiar with accessing information regarding a particular government service, there is a clear indication that more complex information is more difficult to obtain.
  - Youth (aged 18-25) are more likely to think that they receive the right amount of information from the Government of Canada.
- ❑ There is a strong appetite for information among the more dissatisfied segments of the population. Those with a pessimistic outlook on the economy, a negative view of the performance of the federal government and the standard of living on-reserve are far more likely than others to have indicated that they receive too little information from the Government of Canada.



## Access to the Internet

"Do you have access to the Internet?"

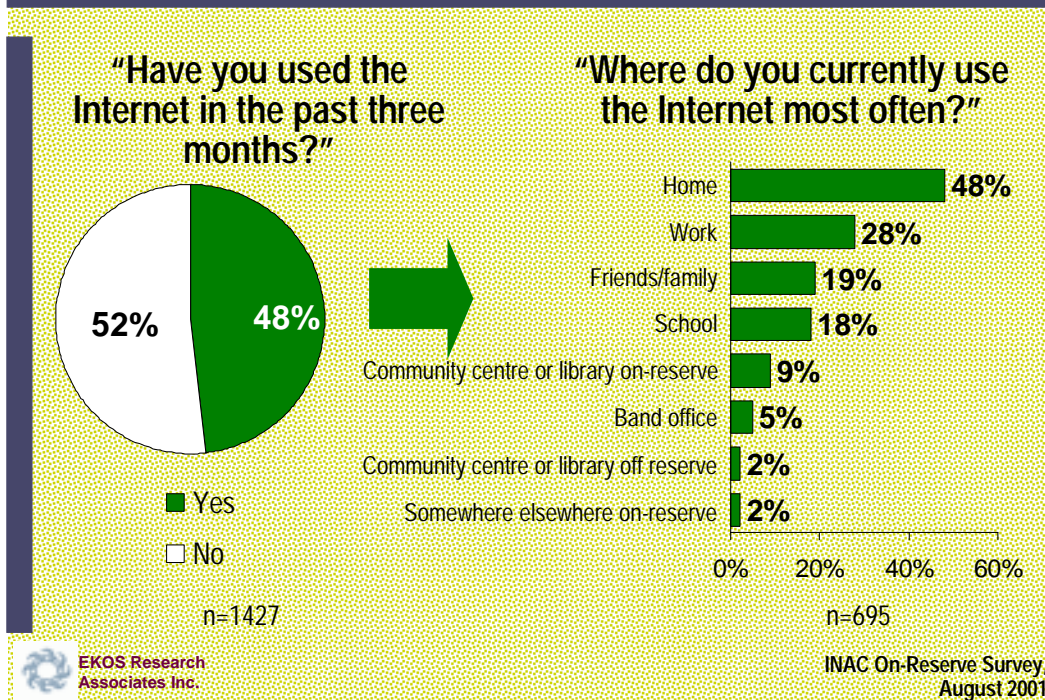


 EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

CIO general public surveys, September 2000;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- Overall, more than half (52 per cent) of on-reserve respondents reported that they have access to the Internet, as compared to two out of three members of the general public (67 per cent) surveyed in 2000.
  - Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic regions have higher rates of Internet penetration. Access to the Internet is also greater among younger Canadians (34 years and under), those with a high school diploma or higher, and individuals with higher household incomes.
  - There is a higher proportion of Internet users among those whose first language is English.
  - A higher proportion of Internet users include professionals, those with full-time employment and individuals who reported that they are very involved in their community.
  - These individuals are also more apt to consider that their economic futures will be better in the next twelve months but rated the overall performance of the Government to be poor.

## Recent Internet Use

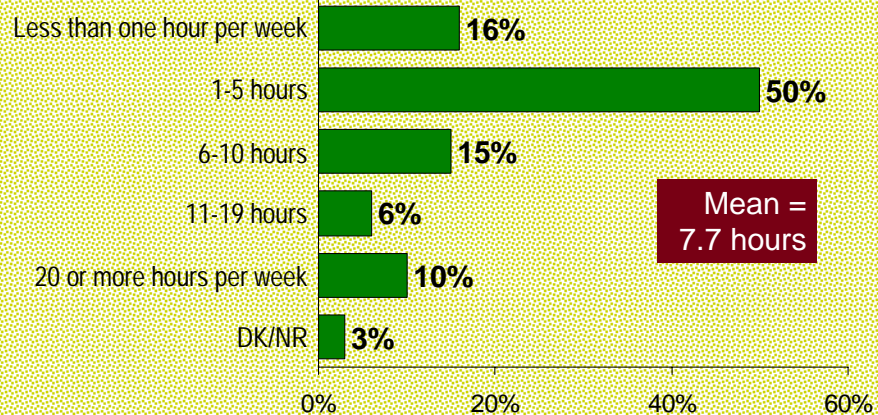


- ❑ Most people who reported that have access to the Internet can also be classified as Internet users. On the whole, nearly half (48 per cent) of reserve residents have used the Internet in the past three months. The proportion is higher (57 per cent) among residents in urban areas.
- ❑ The most likely place to use the Internet is at home, cited by 48 per cent of residents on-reserve. Fewer than one in three (28 per cent) cited work as the place they most often use the Internet. Slightly fewer than one in five cited friends/family (19 per cent) and school (18 per cent). (Note that the eligibility criteria specified a lower age limit of 18 or the usage at school might be higher still.) A small proportion use the Internet at a community center or library on-reserve (nine per cent), at the band office (five per cent), or somewhere elsewhere on-reserve (two per cent). This is nonetheless, significantly higher than the proportion in the general public who rely on public access to the net.
  - Residents from Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic regions are more likely than others to use the Internet from home. Home Internet users are more likely to have household income greater than \$40,000 and are also more apt to be employed off-reserve.
  - Those who primarily use the Internet from work include a higher proportion of individuals who live in British Columbia. They are more likely to be 34 to 54 years of age, have higher education and household incomes.
  - Individuals who use the Internet at school tend to be less than 25 years of age and report low household incomes. A higher proportion live in Alberta or Manitoba. They are most likely to be labourers or not employed.
- ❑ A higher proportion who use the Internet at friends' or families' residences tend to be younger and have lower levels of education and income. They are also less involved in their community.



## Frequency of Internet Use

"On average, how many hours per week do you use the Internet?"



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Associates Inc.

n=695

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

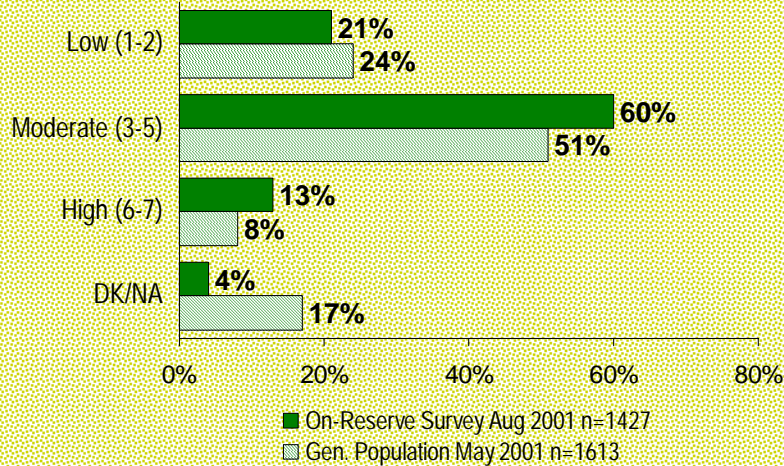
- On average, people living on-reserve reported using the Internet an average of 7.7 hours per week. This is a somewhat lower intensity of usage compared with the general public at roughly 10 hours per week. A majority of respondents reported using the Internet 1-5 hours per week (50 per cent), while more than one in six reported using the Internet less than one hour per week (16 per cent) or six to ten hours per week (15 per cent). A small percentage reported using the Internet more than 10 hours per week.
  - Those indicating that they use the Internet six hours or more per week are also more likely to have Internet access at home.



# Conditions on- reserve

## System of Governance on-reserve

"How democratic would you say the system of governance on-reserve in Canada is?"



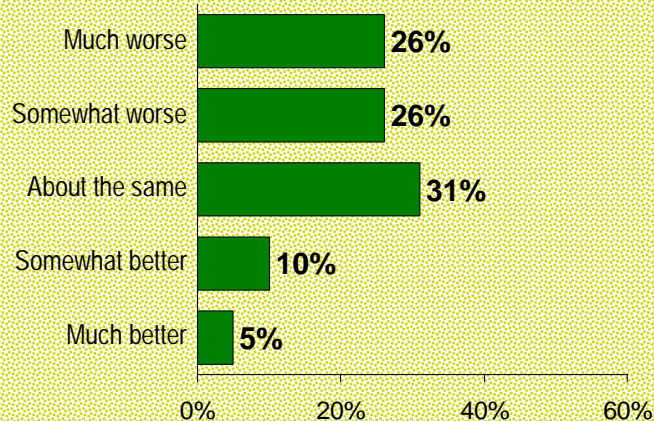
EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

Rethinking Government, May 2001:  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- ❑ The system of governance on-reserve is seen as moderately democratic overall, with the majority providing a rating of 3, 4, or 5 on the 7-point scale.
- ❑ The First Nations view is just slightly more favourable than that of the general public. Whereas almost three-quarters of First Nations respondents rate reserve governance as moderate to highly democratic, 59 per cent of Canadians in general do so.
  - First Nations people with a more negative view of their system of governance tend to live in urban areas, to be 35-54 years of age, report higher levels of income and education and work in a skilled or professional capacity. They also have a predominantly more negative view on other issues, such as the performance of the Government of Canada, their own economic future and the standard of living of First Nations on-reserve compared with other Canadians. Those who provide a poorer rating of the democratic nature of reserve governance are also more likely than other First Nations people living on-reserve to have contacted the federal government in the past three months.
  - First Nations people with a more positive view of the system of governance tend to be men, those who are highly involved in their community and have a positive outlook on other things such as reserve standard of living and federal government performance.
- ❑ As expected, First Nations respondents are far more likely to have a view on this issue than the general public.

## Standard of Living of First Nations People

"Generally speaking, do you think that the overall standard of living of First Nations people is better or worse than other Canadians or is it about the same?"



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Associates Inc.

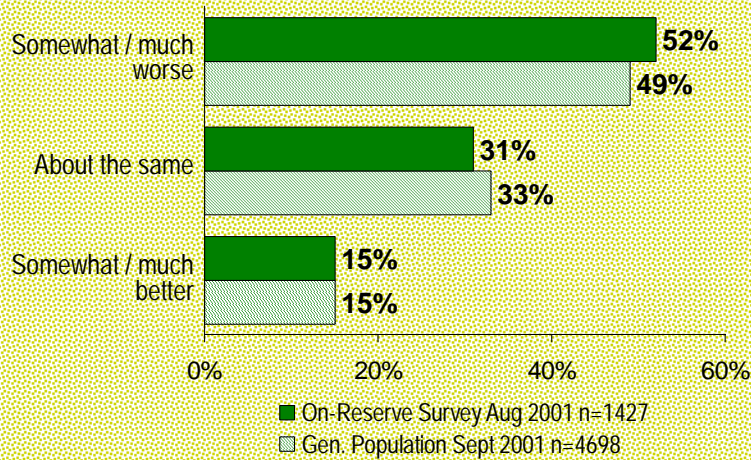
n=1427

INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

- ❑ The predominant perception is that the overall standard of living of First Nations people living on-reserve is considerably worse compared to other Canadians. One in four people living on-reserve believe that their standard of living is much worse and an additional one in four believe it to be somewhat worse.
- ❑ Only 15 per cent believe their standard of living to be better than the average Canadian.
  - First Nations people with the most negative outlook on their standard of living are more likely to be living in Ontario, 35-54 years of age, and have the highest level of education and income. They are also more apt to be fully engaged in the labour market, particularly in a professional capacity and have access to the Internet at work. Their outlook is more pessimistic in other areas as well (i.e., personal economic future and performance of the federal government). They are more likely to have had contact with the federal government in the past three months. Also, people who report English as their mother tongue tend to believe the on-reserve standard of living is worse compared to other Canadians.
  - The most positive view of the standard of living on-reserve tends to come from residents of Quebec and the Atlantic, people under the age of 25, and those who are not employed or are employed in the capacity of labourer. Their positive outlook on this indicator coincides with a more optimistic outlook generally. People with an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue tend to be more positive in their assessment of the comparative standard of living on-reserve.

## Standard of Living of First Nations People

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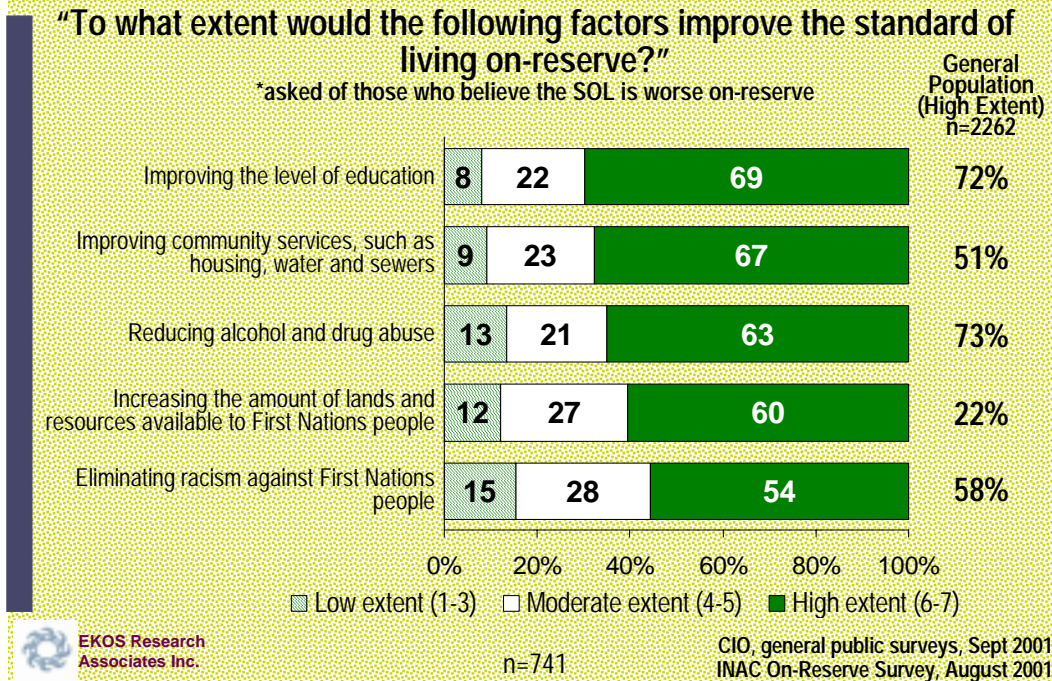


 EKOS Research  
Associates Inc.

CIO, general public survey  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

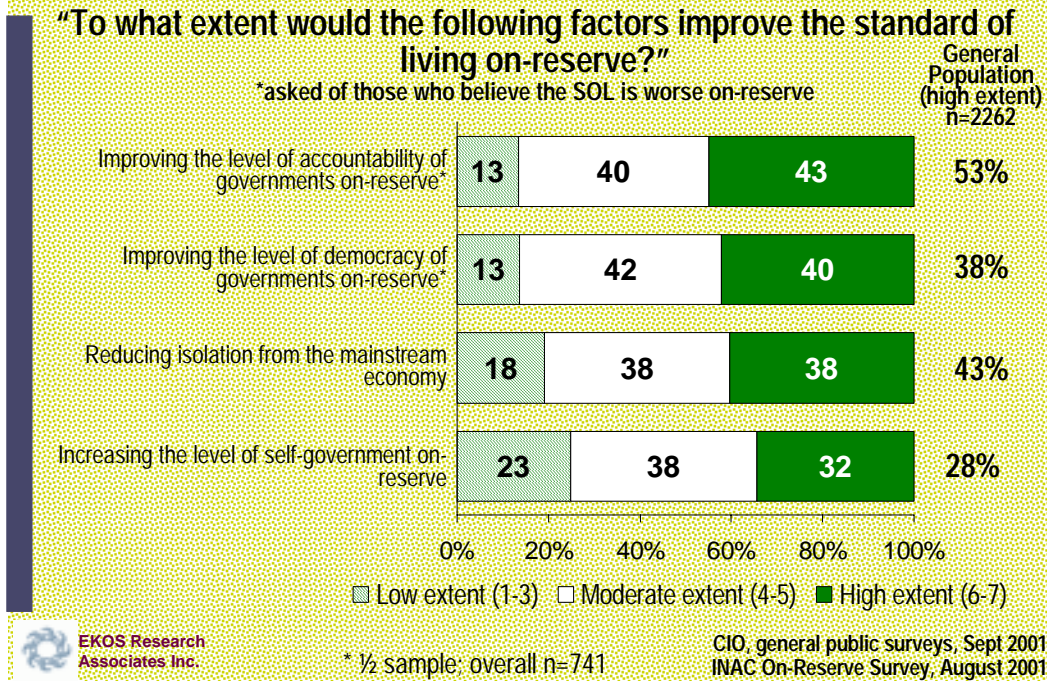
- The perception of First Nations people living on-reserve is basically the same as that of other Canadians regarding the comparative standard of living on-reserve. Almost one in three Aboriginal respondents believe that the standard of living on-reserve is about the same as for other Canadians. First Nations people are also as likely as other Canadians to believe the standard of living on-reserve to be much worse than other Canadians.

## Improving the Standard of Living on-reserve (a)



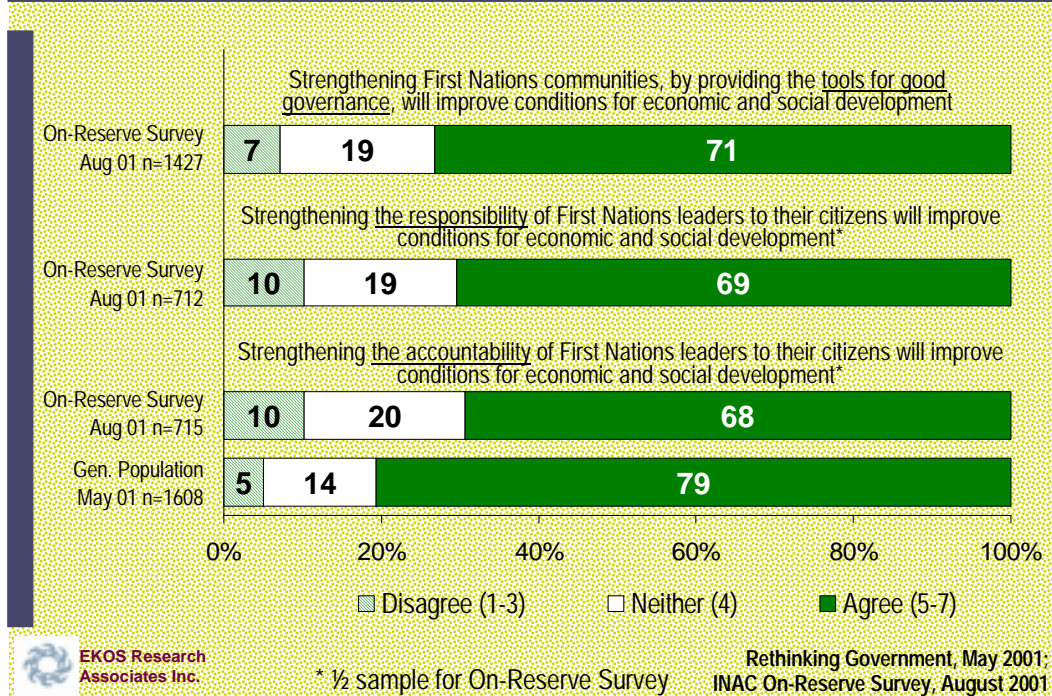
- According to a majority of First Nations people living on-reserve, the standard of living is most directly affected by basic elements such as access to good education and community services, reducing drug and alcohol abuse and increasing the amount of land and resources available to First Nations people. This is followed by the need to eliminate racism, felt to be a key element to improving the standard of living on-reserve by slightly over half of the population.
- Similar (but higher) emphasis is placed on most of these elements from the general public. The exceptions are improving community services and increasing lands and resources available. This is seen as far less important from the broader public perspective.
  - With respect to improving education, a greater proportion of college-educated individuals, those in urban areas, those reporting higher household incomes and people working in a professional capacity rated education as an important factor. This is also the case with people who are heavy Internet users and individuals who have recently had contact with the federal government. Improving education is least likely to be an important factor for older individuals (55 and over) and those with the lowest levels of education and income.
  - Basic community services are viewed as important ingredients in improving standard of living for proportionately more reserve residents with children and those with a college level of education. These services are seen as less important by individuals with less than a high school level of education and people who are rarely involved in their communities. Saskatchewan residents are also slightly less apt to feel that these basic services are important, compared with residents of other provinces.
  - Reducing drug and alcohol abuse is viewed as a more important factor by those in urban areas as well as those who regard the comparative standard of living on-reserve as poor. It is viewed as a less importance factor in improving the standard of living by those with less than a high school level of education, people under 25 years of age and those with no involvement in their community.
  - Additional land and resources is seen as an important factor by a greater proportion of residents of the Atlantic, households with children, residents in urban areas, as well as those involved in their communities, professionals, people with access to the Internet at work and those who rate the performance of the federal government as poor and their own future economic prospects as poor.

## Improving the Standard of Living on-reserve (b)



- ❑ Lesser elements of concern in the standard of living equation are improving accountability and democracy of governments on-reserve, as well as reducing isolation from the mainstream economy. Self-government is seen as the least important factor in improving the standard of living of First Nations people on-reserve. This would seem to indicate a general emphasis toward human capital and basic services, rather than political or legal in terms of factors that determine standard of living on-reserve.
- ❑ Accountability is seen as slightly more important from the public perspective . Other elements are seen in a similar way to the Aboriginal point of view.
  - Improving the accountability of governments on-reserve is viewed as an important linkage to the standard of living according to a higher proportion of individuals between the ages of 35 and 54, as well as people who are involved in their communities and those who believe that the standard of living is lower on-reserve than elsewhere in Canada.
  - When people are asked about improving the democracy of governments on-reserve, the intensity of rating is higher only for those who perceive the standard of living on-reserve to be lower.
  - Reducing isolation from the mainstream economy is seen as an influential factor by a larger proportion of residents from BC, as well as households with children, men and people with at least a high school level of education. There is also a relationship with those holding positive views of federal government performance.
  - Increasing self-government is seen as important in improving the standard of living on-reserve by a larger share of residents from Quebec, as well as younger residents of reserves and households with children. People who are very involved in their community and those with a positive view of their own economic future are also more apt to believe that self-government will have an important impact on standard of living.

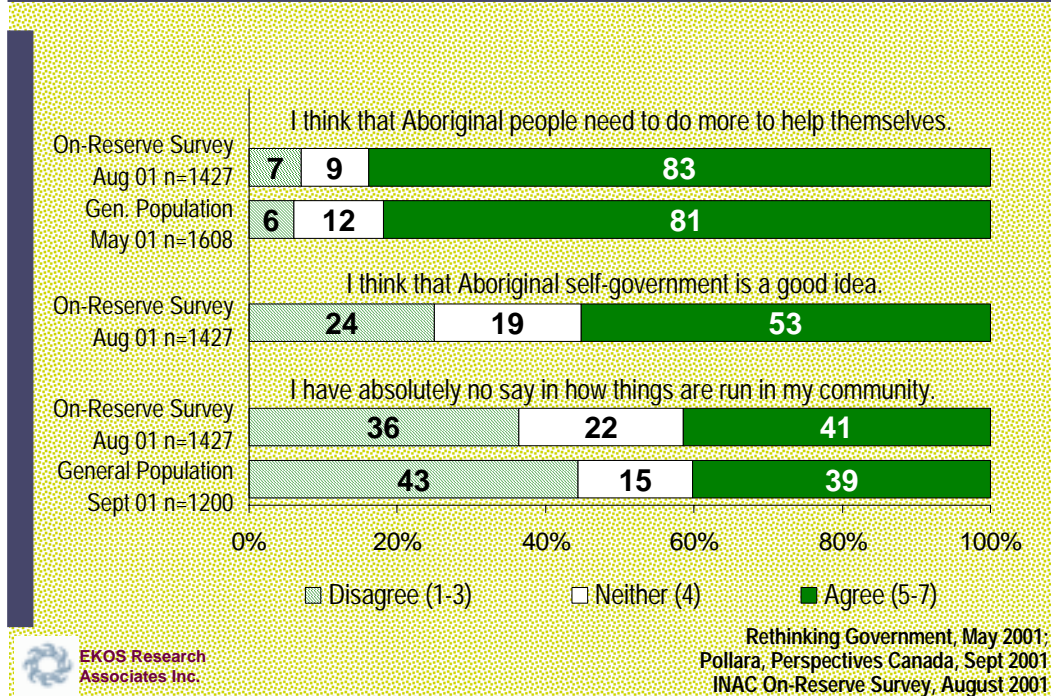
## Linkages to Economic and Social Development



- ❑ Almost three in four respondents agree that providing the tools for good governance will improve conditions for economic and social development.
  - Most likely to agree with this statement are the university and college educated, those reporting higher household incomes, people employed in a professional capacity and those with access to the Internet at work. Also, those who are very involved in their community tend to agree, as do those having an optimistic outlook on their economic future and the performance of the government. On the other hand, people who agree also tend to believe that the comparative standard of living on-reserve is poor. These individuals are also more apt to have had contact with the government in the past three months.
  - Most likely to disagree are those with a high school or less than high school education and those working in a labourer or semi-skilled capacity.
- ❑ Improving conditions for economic and social development by strengthening the accountability/responsibility of First Nations leaders is a statement that 68 to 69 per cent agree with.
  - Those most apt to agree are residents of the Atlantic, the college-educated, those reporting higher household incomes and the employed (particularly those working in a professional capacity). This is also the case with those closely involved in their community, as well as individuals with a positive view of their economic future. People who believe that the standard of living on-reserve is lower are also more likely to agree with this statement, as do those who have had contact with the government in the past three months.
- ❑ The Canadian general public are more likely than First Nations people on-reserve to agree that strengthening accountability of First Nations leaders will lead to economic and social improvements (a difference of 11 percentage points).



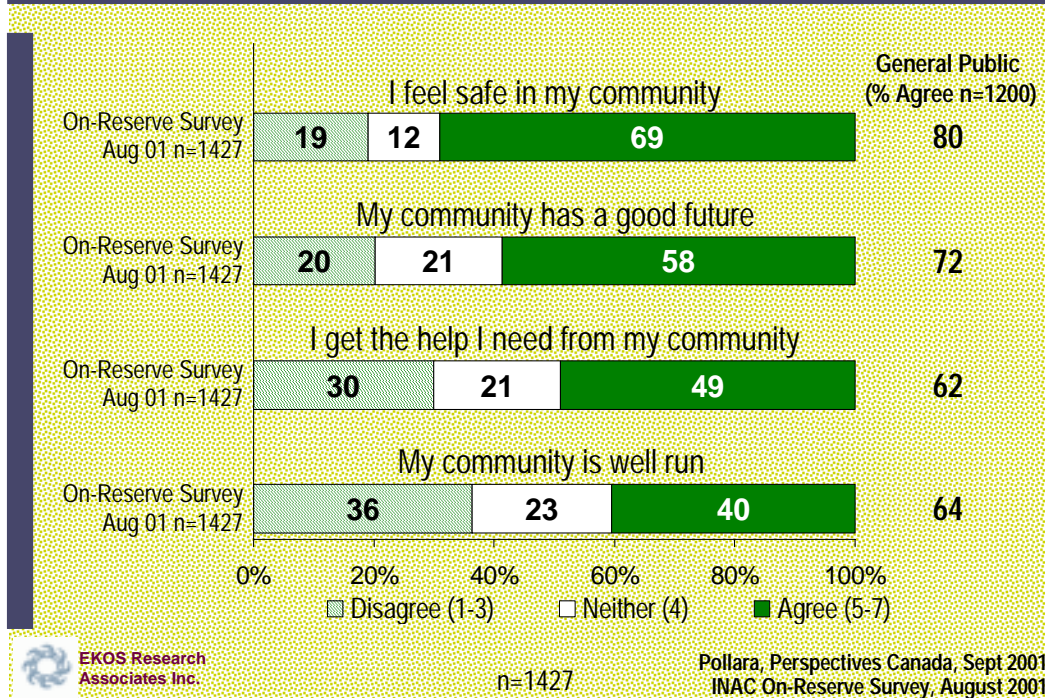
# Views on Independence for First Nations People



- ❑ There is a high level of agreement, both in the survey of First Nations living on-reserve and the general public that Aboriginal people need to do more to help themselves. Given this level of agreement (83 per cent), it is also not surprising to find that there is no significant variation in outlook by sub-group.
- ❑ Roughly half of First Nations people believe that self-government is a good idea, with one in four saying that it is not.
  - Those who are more likely to believe that self-government is a good idea are residents of Quebec and the Atlantic, people under 25 years of age and those reporting the highest levels of income and education. Men and households without children are also more apt to support self-government, as are the fully employed and people who have access to the Internet at work. Individuals who are very involved in their communities are also more likely to agree with this statement, as are those with a more positive outlook with regard to their own economic future and performance of the federal government.
  - People who are less likely to agree with the idea of self-government are residents of Alberta, older individuals (55 and over), those with less than a high school education, women, households with children and those not in the labour force. Individuals who have not had any involvement in their community also tend not to support self-government in as high proportions, as do non-users of the Internet and those with a less optimistic outlook on their own economic future. There is a slight overrepresentation of individuals who have recently had contact with the government among those who do not support the idea of self-government.
- ❑ Four in ten respondents agree that they have no say in how their community is run. Just over one-third disagree with this statement. This is very similar to the view from the broader general public, however the latter is somewhat more likely to say that they have no say.
  - Among people who agree that they have no say in how their communities are run are a higher proportion of individuals reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, older respondents (55 and over), those out of the labour force, and people who are not involved in their community.

- Conversely, people who believe that they do have a say in how their communities are run are people with English as a mother tongue, Quebecers, 25 to 34 year olds, those reporting higher household incomes, the employed (particularly in a professional capacity) and individuals who are heavily involved in their community. There is also an overrepresentation of people who rate the performance of the federal government and the comparative standard of living on-reserve as poor. These individuals are also more likely to have had contact with the government in the past three months. There is also a higher proportion of individuals with access to the Internet at home.

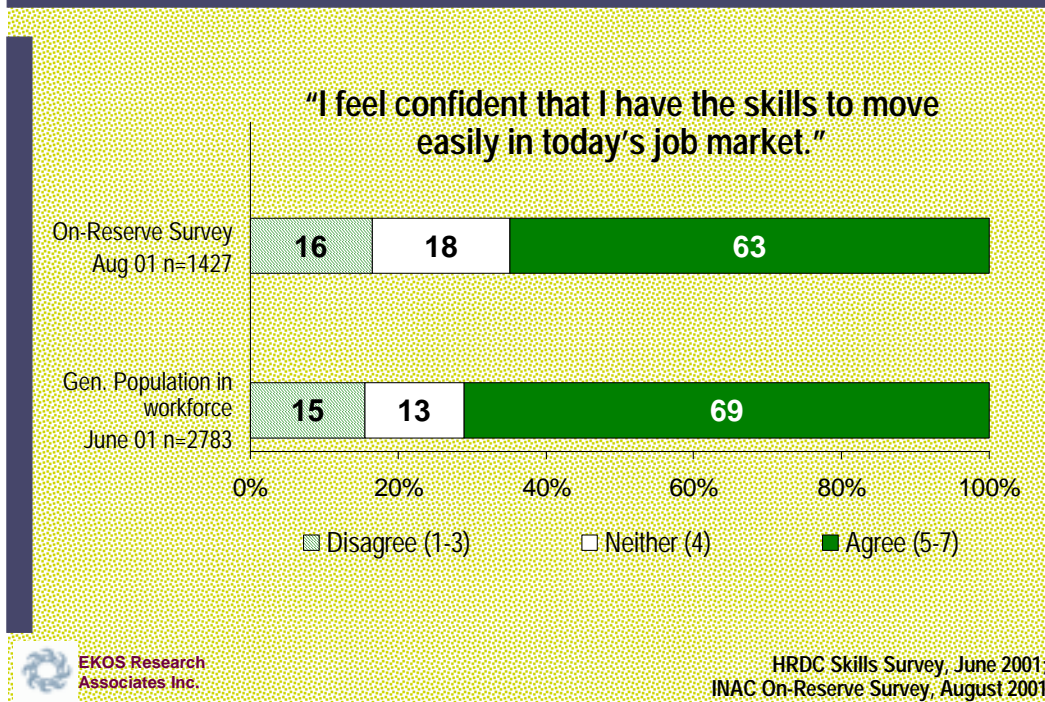
# First Nations Communities



- The majority of Aboriginal people living on-reserve feel safe in their communities. Fewer than one in five disagree with this statement. The view is somewhat lower, however, than the results found in the general public, where four in five feel safe and only one in eight disagree.
  - People more likely to feel safe in their communities are individuals with English as a mother tongue, residents of Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces and people reporting the lowest levels of education (less than high school). Men are also more likely to feel safe compared to women. A feeling of safety in one's community also coincides with a positive outlook with respect to one's economic future.
  - Those who feel least safe are women, people with an Aboriginal mother tongue, residents of Alberta, and people with a generally more negative outlook on their economic future, the standard of living on-reserve and those who rate the performance of the federal government as poor. These people are also more apt to have had contact with the federal government at some point in the past three months.
- The next items do not look quite as positive, with just over half agreeing that their community has a good future and one in three believe that their communities are not well run and that they do not get the help that they need. The results in the general public are considerably more positive on both of these items.
  - People who are more apt to believe that their community has a good future are individuals between the ages of 25 and 34, men, those involved in their community and those with a positive outlook in terms of government performance, standard of living on-reserve and their own economic future. People least likely to view their communities this way are 35-54 year olds, women, those not involved in their community, not in the labour force and/or rating their economic prospects and First Nations comparative standard of living as poor.

- Individuals who are most likely to believe that their communities are well run are residents of the Atlantic, people working on-reserve or very involved with their community and those with a positive outlook in terms of economic future and conditions on-reserve. Those with a more negative view are residents of Alberta and Manitoba, the university-educated, households with children, those not involved in their community and people with a negative outlook on their own economic future and the comparative standard of living on-reserve.
- About one half believe that they get the help they need from their community, which is slightly lower than the results from the general public, where only 62 per cent agree.
  - In terms of getting the help they need, residents of Ontario and the Atlantic are the most positive, along with people whose mother tongue is English. Individuals under 25 years of age, those with a college level of education and households without children also tend to be the most positive with respect to getting help. People who are partially (but not fully) employed are also more positive than people who are fully employed as well as those outside of the labour force. Men are also slightly more positive than women on this item. Perhaps not surprisingly, people who are heavily involved in their community report getting the help they need as do those with a generally most positive outlook on other things (such as economic future, government performance and First Nations standard of living).
  - People who feel that they are not getting the help they need (i.e., tended to disagree with the item) are individuals with an Aboriginal mother tongue, residents of Alberta, the university educated, women (although only a slight difference), those not involved in their community and those with a predominantly more negative outlook in a variety of areas.

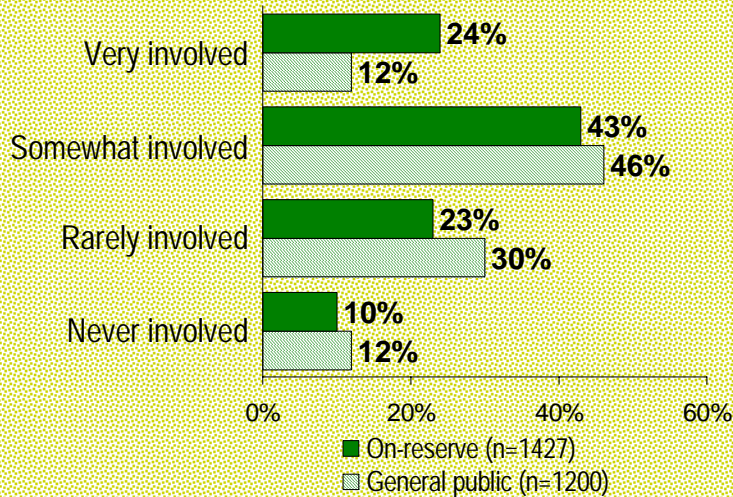
# Confidence in Job Skills



- With respect to confidence in labour market skills, First Nations people living on-reserve are only slightly less confident than other Canadians. Unfortunately, the perception would seem to disagree with the reality if the education and income information reported in this survey is any indication. It is interesting to note, however, that while First Nations people report significantly lower levels of employment and education than other Canadians, they perceive themselves to be as able to move easily in today's job market.
  - Individuals reporting English as a mother tongue are more confident, as are 25 to 34 year olds, those with a college or university level of education and/or reporting incomes in the middle to upper ranges (\$20,000 and above). This is also the case with people who are fully employed, particularly in a professional capacity and those who are very involved in their community.
  - People most apt to lack confidence are those with an Aboriginal mother tongue, those reporting the lowest education and household incomes, the semi-skilled or individuals who are out of the labour force altogether, and individuals who report that they are rarely involved in their communities. Women are also slightly less confident than men in terms of workforce skills.

## Community Involvement

"Which of the following best describes your past involvement in your community?"

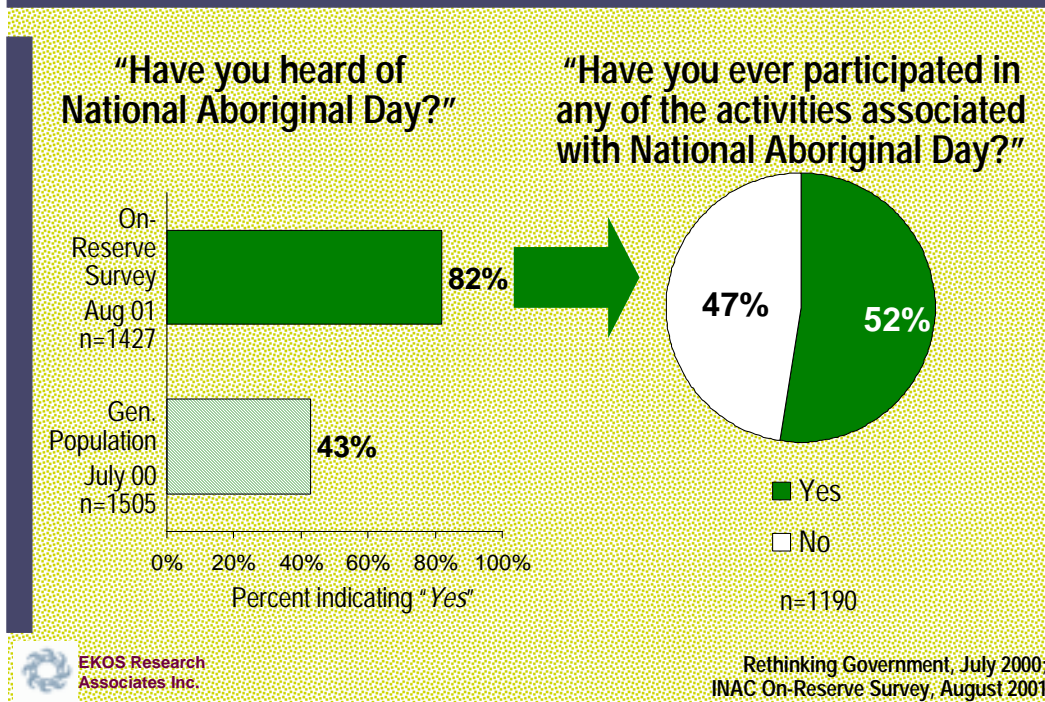


EKOS Research  
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Pollara, Perspectives Canada, Sept 2001  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- Overall, a majority of residents of Aboriginal reserves are somewhat involved in their community (43 per cent). Fewer than one in four respondents report that they are very involved (24 per cent), while a similar proportion are rarely involved (23 per cent). One in ten indicated that they are never involved in their community. This shows a similar, if slightly more involved, population than is typically seen in the broader Canadian public, where only 12 per cent are very involved and 30 per cent are rarely involved.
  - A higher proportion of those from British Columbia and Atlantic Canada indicated that they are very involved in their community. Among the more active are individuals over the age of 35, professionals, people employed on-reserve and those with a university education and higher household incomes. A high proportion of these individuals have Internet access at work.
  - People who are involved in their community are also more likely to have contacted the Government in the last three months. They are more apt to consider the standard of living on-reserve to be much worse and the performance of the federal government to be poor.
  - Individuals who reported that they have been somewhat involved with community activities include a high proportion of those with a college education and those who work as labourers or in semi-skilled jobs.
- Younger Aboriginal Canadians (25 years and under), as well as those over the age of 55, tend to be less involved in their community. The level of community involvement is also lowest on Saskatchewan and Albertan reserves. Those who never get involved in their community tend to be more pessimistic about their economic future. Overall, those living in urban areas report greater involvement in their community (82 per cent are at least somewhat involved).

# National Aboriginal Day



- ❑ The majority of on-reserve respondents (82 per cent) indicated that they have heard of National Aboriginal Day, as compared to approximately one in four (43 per cent) members of the general public in 2000.
  - Those who indicated familiarity with National Aboriginal Day include a greater proportion of residents from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. They are more likely to have completed a high school level education or higher and to have reported a household income greater than \$40,000.
  - People most familiar with National Aboriginal Day are professionals, living in urban areas, those who are very involved in their community and those who had contact with the government within the last three months. They are also more likely to have Internet access at home.
- ❑ People whose first language is other than English (in particular those who indicate an Aboriginal language) are less familiar with National Aboriginal Day.
- ❑ Slightly more than half (52 per cent) of those familiar with National Aboriginal Day indicated that they have participated in activities associated with this day.
  - The rate of participation in National Aboriginal Day activities is highest in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces and among those with higher levels of education.
  - A higher proportion of these individuals include professionals, those with full-time employment and respondents who reported that they are very involved in their community.
- ❑ People who have participated in National Aboriginal Day activities are also more likely to consider the standard of living on-reserve to be much worse compared to other Canadians.

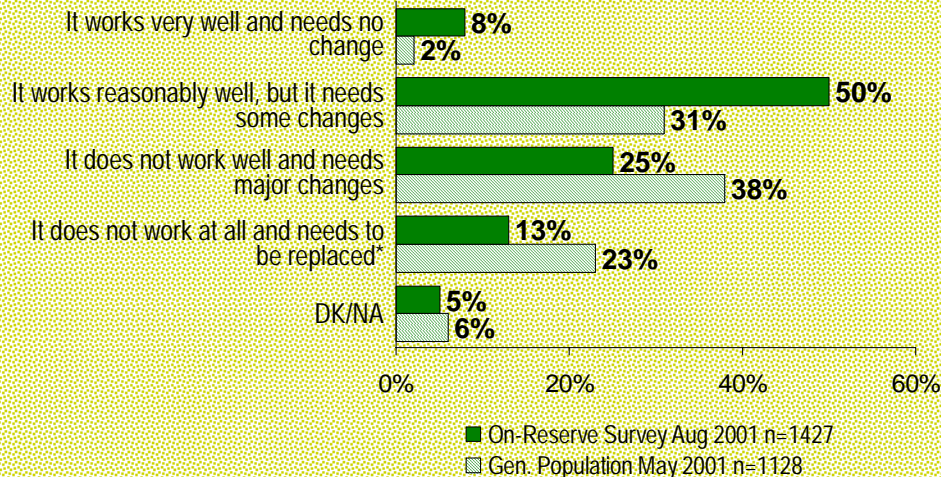


# Indian Act



## Views on the Indian Act

**“Based on what you know or have heard, which of the following best describes your view of the Indian Act”**



\* ½ sample in On-Reserve Survey



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When “abolished” is inserted for “replaced”,  
10 per cent select this option

Rethinking Government, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

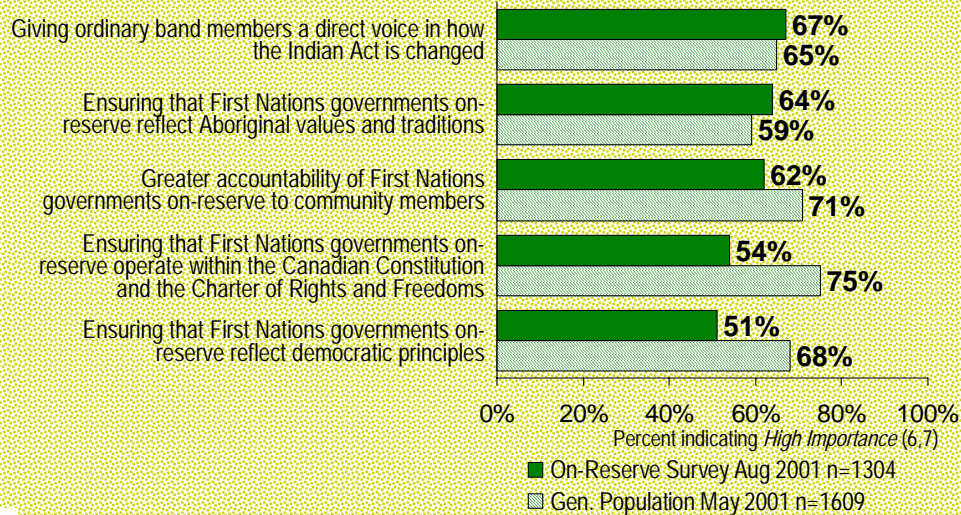
- ❑ The predominant view among First Nations people living on-reserve is that the Indian Act works reasonably well and needs some revisions. Only eight per cent believe that the Act is fine the way it is. An additional 25 per cent believe that the Act needs major revisions.
- ❑ Fewer than one in six feel that the Act should be replaced. When the word “replaced” is changed to “abolished” the percentage drops even farther, to 10 per cent. An even smaller minority prefer the status quo.
- ❑ Unfortunately, the telephone survey took place within a window where there was considerable discussion about federal government consultations on the issue of governance and the Indian Act. It is impossible to gauge the effect this had on responses to this question.
- ❑ The First Nations view regarding the Indian Act is considerably less critical than the view of the general public. While the majority of both the general public and First Nations people living on-reserve favour changing the Indian Act, the general public are more likely to favour major changes while First Nations respondents are more likely to indicate the Act needs some (but no major) changes.
  - First Nations people who are more inclined to believe that the Act needs no change whatsoever are residents of Alberta and the Atlantic, those under 25 years of age and people with a more positive view in other areas (e.g., standard of living, personal economic future, performance of the federal government). There is also a greater tendency for people with an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue to feel this way.
  - Individuals who are more apt to view the Act as needing some changes are residents of the Atlantic, people under 25, those reporting the lowest household incomes, individuals working in the capacity of a labourer and those with a more positive outlook in general. There is also a greater proportion of men feeling this way compared with women. People reporting English as their mother tongue tend to believe the Act needs some changes.

- People with a more negative outlook with regard to the Indian Act, believing it to require major changes are somewhat more likely to be 35 to 54 years of age, individuals who have access to the Internet at work and those with a consistently less optimistic view of personal economic prospects, First Nations standard of living on-reserve and government performance. There is also a slightly higher proportion of women in this group.
- Individuals with the most negative view regarding the Indian Act are more apt to be 35 to 54, report the highest household incomes (\$40,000 and above) and a university level of education. They are more highly represented in Quebec and among the fully employed . They tend to report being very involved in their community and generally have a negative attitude on other matters.

# Changes in the Indian Act

**"How important are each of the following when it comes to making changes to the Indian Act?"**

*\*asked of those who believe the Indian Act needs changes*

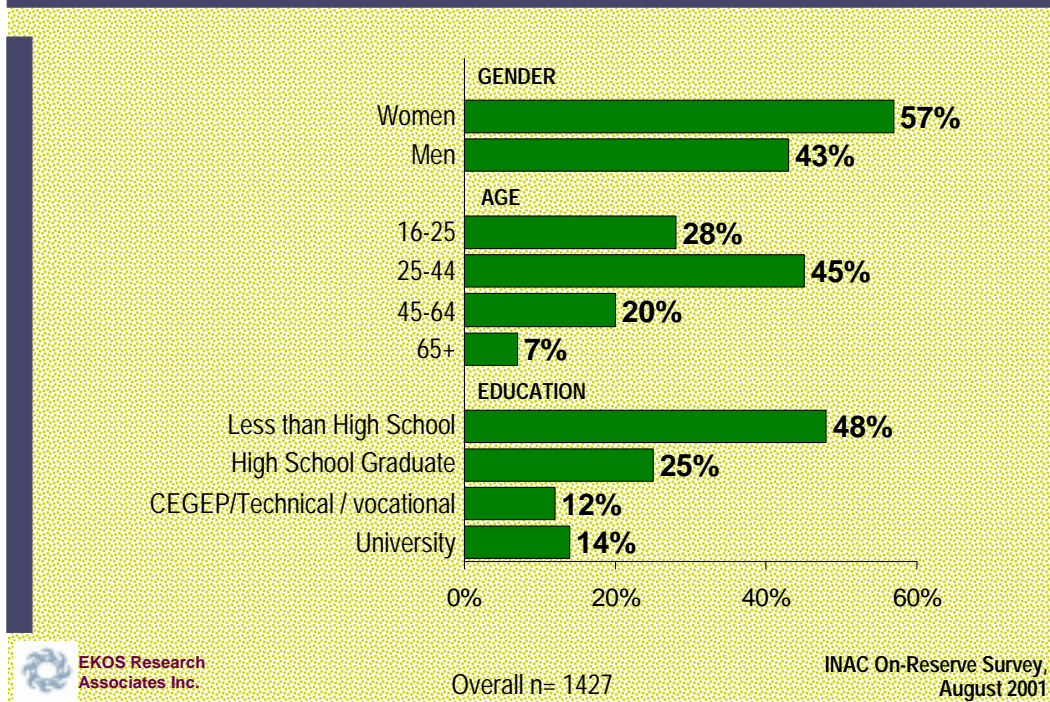


**EKOS Research Associates Inc.**

**Rethinking Government, May 2001:  
 INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001**

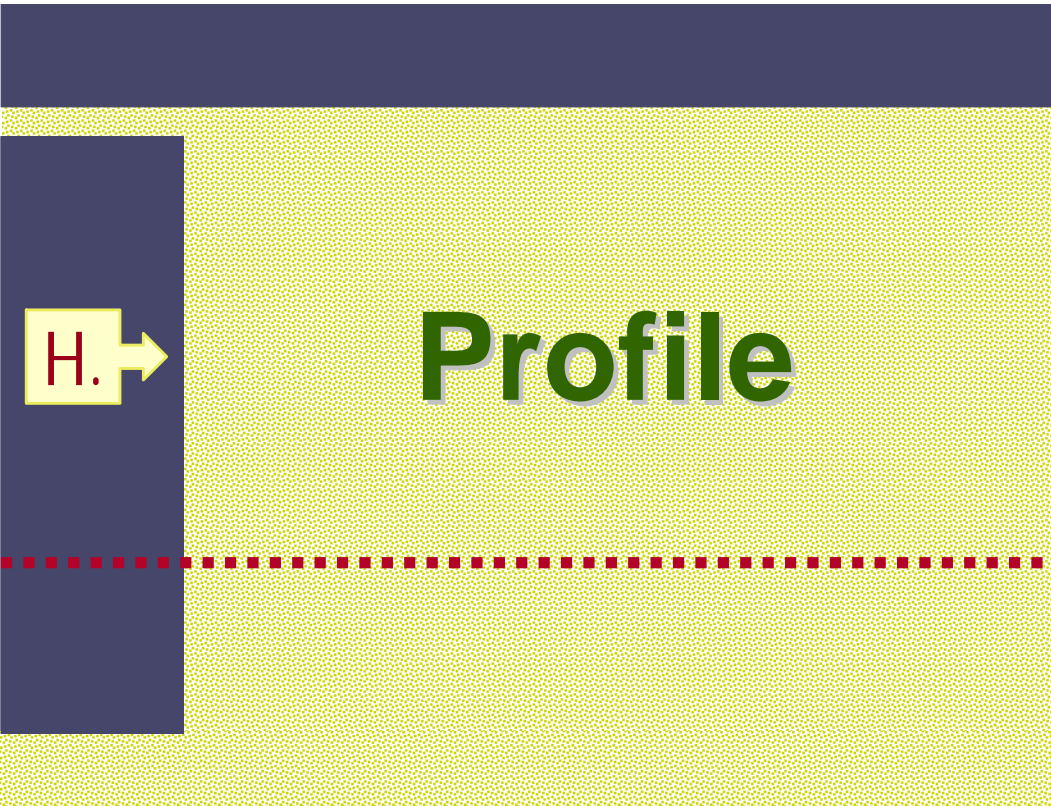
- Ensuring grassroots involvement would seem to be the top order of the day when it comes to making changes to the Indian Act. Of the five items, giving band members a voice, reflecting Aboriginal values and traditions and greater accountability to band members all figure prominently, with 62 to 67 per cent rating these as important factors to consider in making changes to the Indian Act. Although still considered to be important factors by more than half, operating within the Constitution and Charter of Rights and reflecting democratic principles are not considered to be important by as many First Nations living on-reserve.
- Fewer than 10 per cent rated any given item of the five as not very important (1 or 2 on the 7-point scale).
  - The profile of individuals who are most likely to rate a particular factor as important is remarkably similar across all five items. First Nations people between the ages of 35 and 54 rate each item most highly, along with people reporting higher levels of education and household income, those who are fully employed (particularly in a professional capacity), and those who reported having Internet access at work. Women also figure more prominently among those rating each of the five items as important.
  - These individuals also tend to be highly involved in their community and perceive both comparative standard of living of people on-reserve and performance of the federal government to be poor. They are also considerably more likely to have had contact with the federal government in the past three months.

## Demographic Characteristics (a)

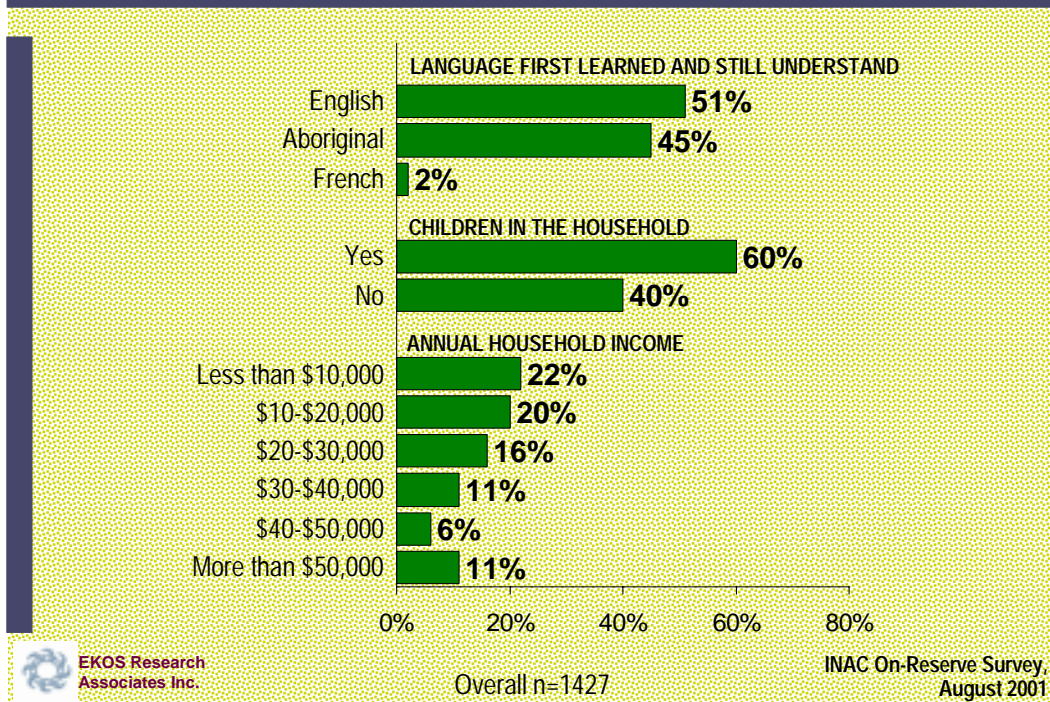


- ❑ A slight majority of respondents to the survey are women (57 per cent). The final results of the survey were consequently weighted to restore the sample to represent proportions by gender.
- ❑ The plurality of respondents to the survey (45 per cent) are 25-44 years of age. More than one in four are 16-24 years of age. One in five respondents are 45 to 64 years old and fewer than one in ten are 65 years of age or older. This represents a slight under sampling of both the youngest and oldest age cohorts. The survey data were consequently weighted to restore the sample to a normal age distribution for an Aboriginal population living on-reserve.
  - The youngest age cohort (18 to 24 year-olds) includes a high proportion of individuals from Alberta and Saskatchewan reserves. They are most likely to have a high school education and to have reported English as their mother tongue. These individuals are more apt to work as labourers, working less than full-time or reporting no employment. They are also likely to have had normal involvement in their community and have Internet access at a location other than home or work.
  - Respondents between 25 and 34 years of age include a high proportion of residents from Manitoba reservations. These individuals tend to be the most educated, reporting a technical or university education and have children at home. They are also more apt to have contacted the Government within the last three months.
  - Those between 35 and 44 years of age include a high proportion of professionals and those who work full-time.

- Respondents between 45 and 54 years of age include a high proportion with a university education and higher household incomes. They are more likely to be employed full-time and have had a high level of community involvement. They are also more apt to view the standard of living on-reserve as much worse than other Canadians and the performance of the federal government as poor.
- ❑ Respondents 55 years and older are less likely to be employed and to use the Internet. There is also a disproportionate number of older residents living on-reserve in Ontario. They are among the most likely to report an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue.
- ❑ Approximately half (48 per cent) of people living on-reserve have less than a high school education. One in four have graduated from high school. Approximately one in seven have a university-level education (14 per cent) and slightly fewer have an education from a CEGEP, technical or vocational school (12 per cent).
- ❑ People in the oldest age cohort and those living in Saskatchewan tend to have the least education. These individuals have little to no involvement in their community. They are also more apt to have an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue, be non-users of the Internet and believe that the standard of living on-reserve is better compared to the average Canadian.
- ❑ Respondents who indicate some high school education are more likely to be under 25 years of age and have a household income of less than \$20,000. They tend to be employed as labourers or unemployed. A higher proportion of high school graduates are also under 25 years of age, however, they tend to have moderate household incomes.
- ❑ Whereas a greater proportion of respondents with technical, vocational, college or a CEGEP education live in Quebec and Ontario, a higher proportion with a university-level education live in the Atlantic region. College and university graduates are more apt to report higher household incomes, work as professionals and live on-reserve in urban areas. They are also more likely to have Internet access at home and to have contacted the Government of Canada within the last three months.



## Demographic Characteristics (b)



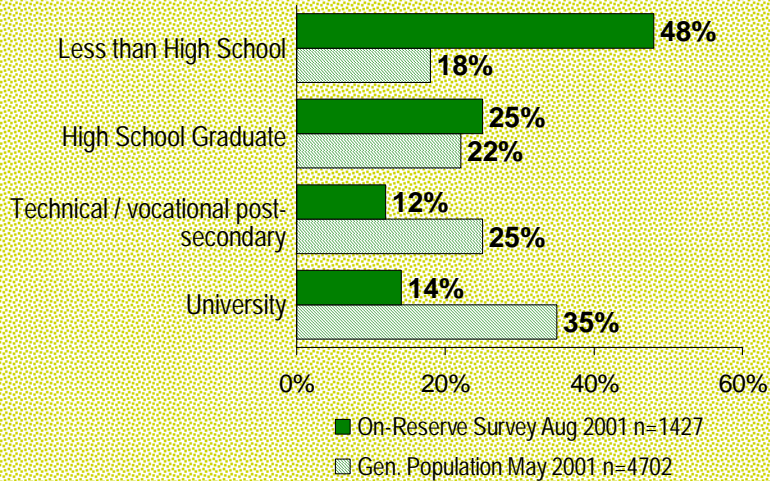
- ❑ Half (51 per cent) of respondents cited English as the first language they learned and still understand. A surprisingly high proportion (45 per cent) of respondents cited an Aboriginal language and very few cited French.
  - People with English as their first language tend to include younger adults (34 years and under) and those with a high school or technical education. These individuals are more likely to live on-reserve in British Columbia and Ontario and in urban areas. They are also more apt to be employed off-reserve and have some involvement in community activities. They are also likely to view the standard of living on-reserve as somewhat worse than other Canadians.
  - Respondents who cited an Aboriginal language as their first language tend to be 55 years and older and have less than a high school education. They are also more apt to hold semi-skilled jobs and be pessimistic about the economic future.
- ❑ Six in ten households have children.
  - Aboriginal women are more likely than men to have children under the age of 18 years of age living at home. Having children at home is also more prevalent among residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the employed (full-time) and those with a university education.
- ❑ More than one in five respondents (22 per cent) reported an annual household income of less than \$10,000, with a further 20 per cent indicating an income between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Just over one in four (27 per cent) reported a household income of \$20,000 to \$40,000. A dwindling proportion (six per cent) have an income of \$40,000 to \$50,000 with just over one in ten (11 per cent) having incomes greater than \$50,000.
  - A high proportion indicating a household income of less than \$10,000 tend to include those 55 years of age and older, those with less than a high school education and respondents whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language. They are also more likely to live in Alberta or Saskatchewan. These individuals are more apt to be unemployed, be pessimistic about their economic future, and rarely or never participate in their community. Few are Internet users.

- Those with a college or university education are more likely to have household incomes of at least \$30,000. Those with higher incomes are most likely to be professionals and report full-time employment. They are also more apt to have Internet access from work and to have been in contact with the Government of Canada within the past three months. Those with higher household incomes are more involved in their community and tend to believe that the standard of living on-reserve is much worse than other Canadians experience.



## Education Profile

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



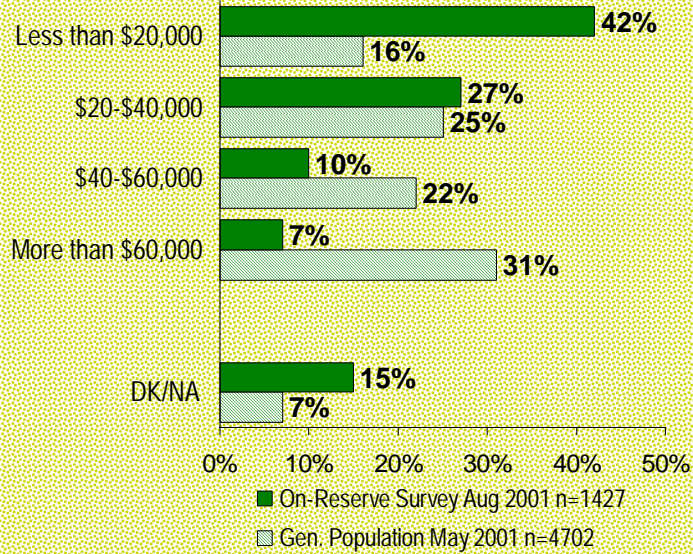
**EKOS Research Associates Inc.**

CIO general public surveys, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- Although it is not surprising to see that Aboriginal people living on-reserve have less education than other Canadians, it is surprising to see just how dramatic the contrast is. There is a large gap between the proportion of the general population (18 per cent) and those from the current population (48 per cent) with less than a high school education. Similar proportions have a high school education. One in four members of the general public have a degree from a technical or vocational post-secondary school, as compared to one in eight Aboriginal residents of reserves. Likewise, more than one third of the general population report having a university education (35 per cent), as compared to 14 per cent of on-reserve population.

# Income Profile

"What is your total household income from all sources?"



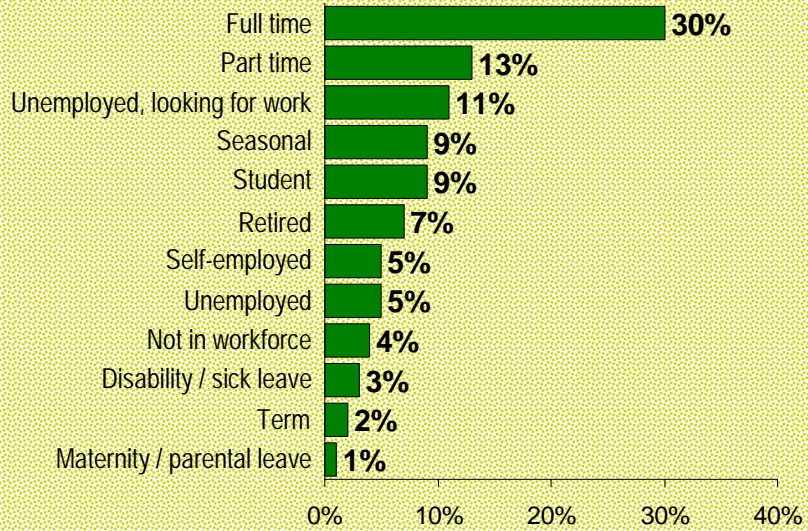
EKOS Research Associates Inc.

CIO general public surveys, May 2001;  
INAC On-Reserve Survey, August 2001

- There is a very large gap in the household incomes between the two populations. A much greater proportion of Aboriginal respondents (69 per cent) reported household incomes of less than \$30,000 as compared to respondents from general population (41 per cent).

# Employment Status

“What is your current employment status?”

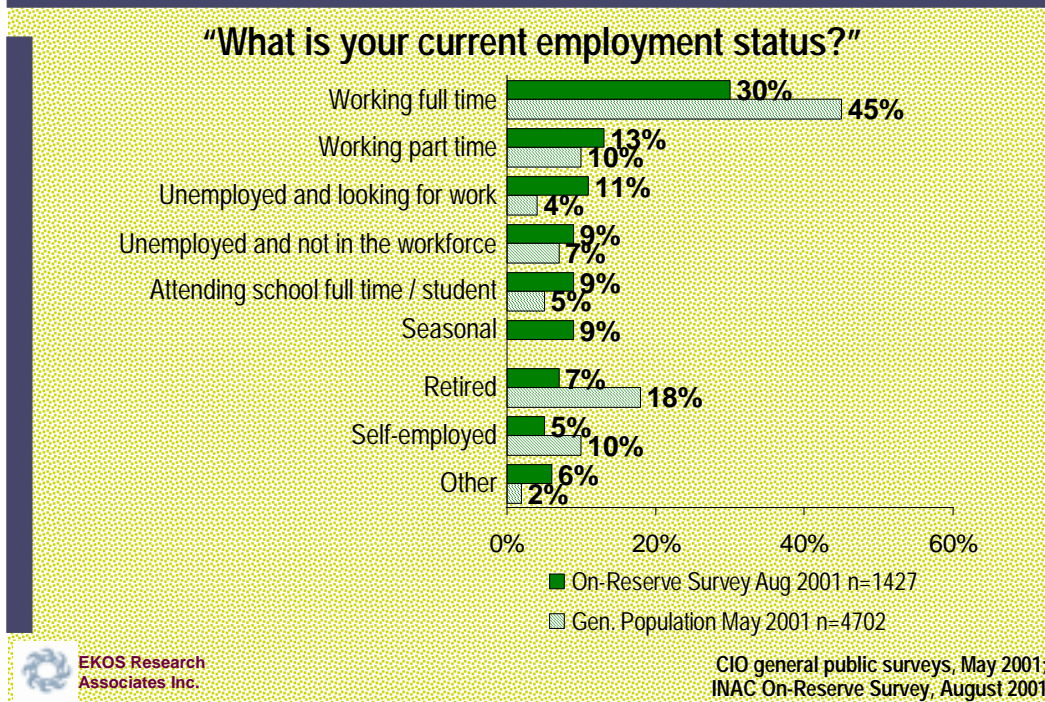


 EKOS Research Associates Inc.

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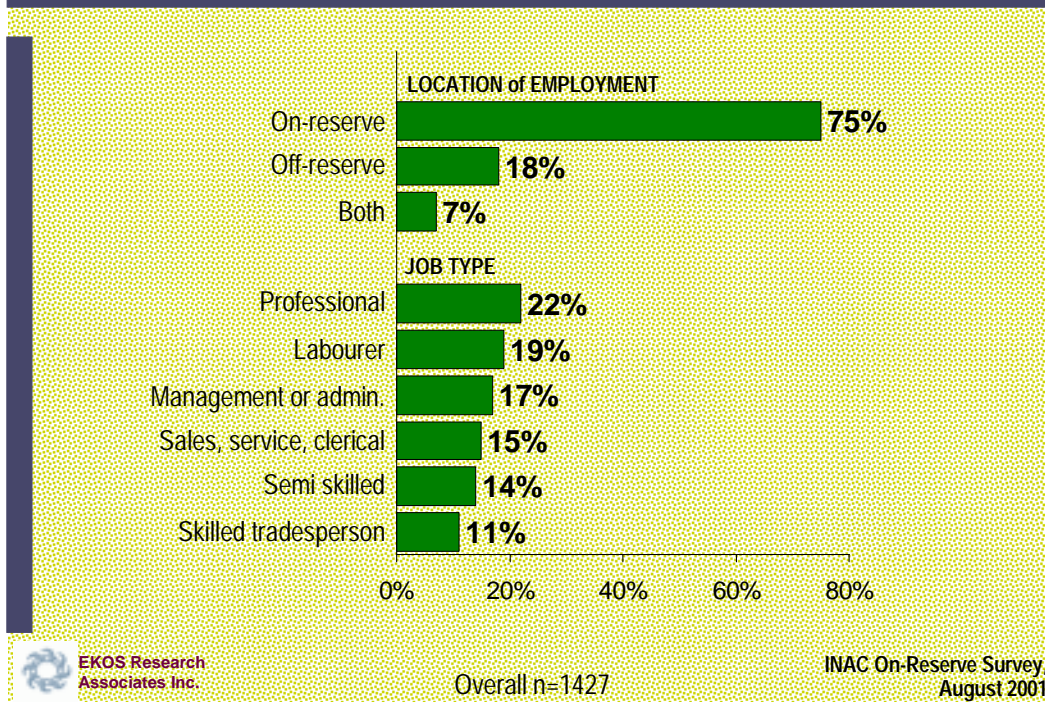
INAC On-Reserve Survey,  
August 2001

## Comparing Employment Status



- There is only a slightly smaller proportion of Aboriginals residents of reserves in the labour force (59 per cent) than is the case for the rest of the general public (65 per cent). On the other hand, larger portions of the labour force in the reserve population are employed in part-time or seasonal positions (and more are unemployed). There is also a significantly smaller proportion that classify themselves as retired compared to the general public (seven per cent versus 18 per cent).
  - Respondents who reported full-time employment include a high proportion of those with a college or university education and those who report household incomes of more than \$20,000. These individuals are most likely to be professionals, work on-reserve and have Internet access at work. They tend to be very involved in their community and view the standard of living on-reserve as worse than for the average Canadian.
  - A high proportion of those who work part-time are under 25 years of age. These are people who are working in larger proportions of labour or semi-skilled jobs.
  - People with seasonal employment tend to live in the Atlantic region. They are most likely to work off-reserve.
  - A high proportion of the unemployed tend to live in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and more likely to have reported household incomes of less than \$20,000.

## Location / Type of Employment



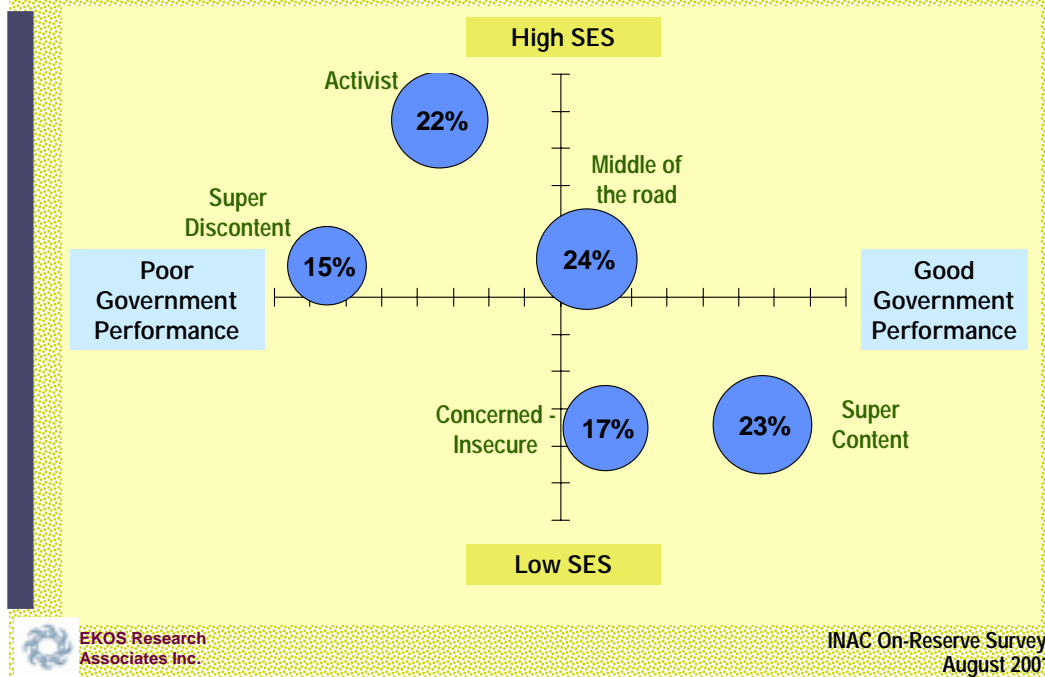
- ❑ Three in four members of the Aboriginal work force are employed on the reserve.
  - A higher proportion working on-reserve tend to live in Manitoba or the Atlantic region. They include a higher proportion of women, professionals and those with a very high level of community involvement. Employment on-reserve is higher among those whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language.
  - A greater proportion from Saskatchewan reported working off-reserve. Off-reserve employment is more likely to include labour and skilled employment.
  - Those who work both on and off-reserve tend to include a high proportion of older Canadians (55 years and older) in professional occupations.
- ❑ Similar proportions of respondents reported themselves to be a professional (22 per cent) or labourer (19 per cent). Approximately one in seven report themselves to be in management or administration, sales, service or clerical or, semi skilled. Slightly more than one in ten reported themselves to be a skilled tradesperson.
- ❑ Labourers are more likely to be men, under 25 years of age, have a high school education or less, with household incomes of less than \$20,000. They are also more likely to view the performance of the Government of Canada as average and the standard of living on-reserve as the same or better as the average Canadian's.
- ❑ A high proportion of semi-skilled jobs are held by men, those 55 years and older, those with less than a high school education. They tend not to hold full-time employment and report household incomes less than \$20,000.
- ❑ More women, those under 25 and Aboriginal people from Quebec reported working in sales, service or clerical jobs.

- ❑ A high proportion working in professional jobs tend to be between 35 and 54 years of age, have a university education with household incomes greater than \$40,000. They are also more likely to have full-time employment and be very active in their community. They are more apt to have Internet access at work, to have contacted the Government of Canada within the past three months and believe that the standard of living on-reserve is much worse.
- ❑ A high proportion of women and those with a college education reported management or administrative employment. These individuals are also more apt to have full-time employment, higher household incomes and Internet access at work. Likewise, a high proportion have contacted the government within the past three months and perceive the standard of living on-reserve to be worse than for other Canadians.



# Segmentation of First Nations Population On-Reserve

## Typology of Aboriginal Canadians Living On-Reserve



- ❑ In order to get a stronger sense of some of the consistent and prevalent attitudinal and behavioural factors among the responses to the survey, a segmentation analysis of the population was conducted based on a number of variables. A broad variety of items were included exploring First Nations people's attitudes towards the performance of the Government of Canada (in general and specifically with respect to dealing with Aboriginal issues) and impressions left by communications from the Government of Canada, as well as their feeling towards Aboriginal self-government, their own communities and their economic outlook. The first step was to conduct a factor analysis (principle component analysis) on a number of variables to extract the underlying dimensions. These results were then tested on a number of reliability measures and subsequently explored through a cluster analysis.
- ❑ The cluster analysis resulted in a five-cluster solution. These clusters or segments of the First Nations population living on-reserve are presented here graphically with a description of each segment to follow.

### Super Content

- ❑ This group constitutes nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) of the population. The *Super Content* are characterized by an unusually positive outlook, on all issues across the board. They hold a very positive image of the Government of Canada (GOC), both in terms of their regard for government performance (in general and on Aboriginal issues), as well as their view of communications from the Government of Canada. They support the concept of self-government and its ability to improve the standard of living of First Nations people. They also hold a very positive view of their community, perceiving that they get the help they need/their community is safe and that their community is well run/has a good future. They also profess an above average economic outlook for themselves and their children. Perhaps the most ironic facet of this group, however, is that they are at the bottom end in terms of their socio-economic status (e.g., with less than a high school level of education).



- ❑ This group is represented by a higher proportion of men, as well as the youngest residents in the community (under 25 years of age). They are least likely to be engaged in the workforce full-time (with a slightly higher than average proportion that are students). Among the employed in this group, however, there is a higher than average proportion of labourers. In spite of these factors, they are optimistic that they have the skills to move easily in today's job market.
- ❑ With respect to communications, they are likely to report that they would know where to get information from the GOC about an issue like the proposed changes to the Indian Act. They are also most likely to think that they receive about the right amount of information from the Government of Canada. They are one of two groups least likely to have contacted the government in the past three months.
- ❑ This group tends to believe that they are on par with the rest of Canada in terms of standard of living.
- ❑ They display very positive views regarding the level of democracy in their community. They are also most likely to think that the Indian Act works reasonably well and needs only minor changes.
- ❑ It is possible that this group, more than any other, was largely influenced by cultural barriers in responding to the survey. The response profile, particularly in light of the economic status, indicates that they may have felt a pressure to respond positively to all elements of the survey.

#### **Super Discontent**

- ❑ The antithesis of the first group is the *Super Discontent*, represented by 15 per cent of the population. This group holds the most negative views across the board. They view the federal government very poorly, in terms of performance (in general and on Aboriginal issues) and communications. They also do not support self-government and do not believe that their communities are doing very well. Their economic outlook is poor, in spite of the fact that they have at least an average socio-economic status. In fact, there is a higher than average proportion with a university education, although, their household income is not necessarily very high (in part because of a higher number of retired individuals in this group).
- ❑ This group is over-represented by women and by those over 45 years of age. They are more likely than other groups to have learned an Aboriginal language first. There is a slightly higher than average proportion that are searching for a job, however, they do not have a lot of confidence in their skills to move easily in today's job market. They are least likely to be Internet users.
- ❑ They tend to report that do not know where to get information from the government of Canada in more complex, issue-related areas. They tend to think that there is too little information provided by the Government of Canada, even though they are most likely to have contacted the government in the past three months.
- ❑ Other attitudes regarding conditions on their reserve are equally negative. They do not believe that their government on the reserve is democratic at all and do not think that they have any say in their community. They have the worst outlook regarding their comparative standard of living on-reserve (relative to rest of Canada). They also tend to think that the Indian Act does not work well/at all and should be replaced or abolished. They tend not to have been highly involved in activities in their community.

### **Middle of the Road**

- ❑ This group constitutes one-quarter (24 per cent) of the population, and expresses average opinions on most issues in the survey. Individuals in this group are just marginally more positive than average with regard to the Government of Canada, its performance and communications. This is also true of their support of self-government. They hold a middle of the road view with regard to the qualities of their community in terms of safety/support and its organization/futures and in terms of economic prospects (theirs and their children's). They show a slightly higher than average level of education and have no strongly distinguishing demographic characteristics.
- ❑ They tend to report that they know where to get information from the government of Canada for a simple service-related issue such as obtaining a status card. On the other hand, they are one of two groups least likely to have contact the government in the past three months.
- ❑ They generally agree that the government on the reserve is somewhat democratic and feel that they have a say in how their communities are run. They are most apt to believe that the standard of living on-reserve is somewhat worse than elsewhere in Canada. They tend not to have been highly involved in community activities in the past.

### **Concerned Insecure**

- ❑ The *Concerned Insecure* segment encapsulates 17 per cent of the population. This group is slightly above average in their (positive) impressions of the Government of Canada, both in terms of performance and communications. They have a very negative view, however, about a number of aspects of their community and their own lives. They do not support self-government and they feel negative about their communities (in terms of safety/getting assistance or how well it is run/its future), as well as their economic prospects (for themselves and their children). The latter would seem to reflect a fairly realistic view, given that they are the second lowest group with respect to socio-economic status.
- ❑ This group is over-represented by women and people aged 35-44. They tend to have some high school and work in sales, services, and clerical jobs. These jobs also have a high tendency to be seasonal. They do not express much confidence in their job skills and do not believe that they can move easily in today's job market. They are less likely to be Internet users and most likely to have children under the age of 18. There is a slight over-representation by homemakers in this group.
- ❑ Perhaps surprisingly (given their negative view of their communities), they tend to believe that their community is on par with the rest of Canada in terms of standard of living. They are also characterized by a low involvement in community

### **Activists**

This group is the antithesis of the *Concerned Insecure* and make up 22 per cent of the population. They are very negative in their view of the Government of Canada, both in terms of performance and communications (although less so in the area of communications than with respect to performance). They have a very positive view, however, about aspects of their community and their own lives. They are strong supporters of self-government and they feel very positively about their communities (in terms of safety/getting assistance or how well it is run/its future). Their views about their economic prospects are also positive, although less so. Notably, this group has the highest socio-economic status of any residents living on-reserve.

This group is over-represented by men, with people who are more likely to be in the 45-54 age range. As a group they are highly employed (on a full-time basis) in the labour market and are slightly more likely to be found in professional and management positions. They express the highest confidence in their work-place skills and their ability to move easily in today's job market. They tend to have at least some university or an undergraduate level of education. This group has the highest proportion of Internet use. They are least likely of all of the groups to report having children in the household.

With respect to communications, they tend to believe that they receive too little information from the Government of Canada. They are likely to have contacted the government in the past three months.

They are the group second most likely (behind the Super Discontent) to think that the standard of living on-reserve is considerably worse than that experienced by the rest of Canada. They believe that their system of governance is at least moderately democratic and that they have a say in how their community is run. They are the most supportive of major changes to the Indian Act, saying that it does not work at all in its current state. They are characterized by the highest levels of participation in activities associated with their community. As evidenced by that, they have the highest awareness of Aboriginal Day and are most apt to have participated in Aboriginal Day activities.

Although the survey did not ask about involvement on band councils, it would seem probable that this group is largely representative of individuals who currently, have in the past, or will at some point in the future, serve on band councils in their community.

### **Qualitative Comparison with General Public**

- We do not have a direct comparison with a similar typology from the general public, using the same survey items as were applied in the current typology, however, there have been sufficient typologies run for the Canadian public that we can draw some loose comparisons with the population at large. In some ways, the most extreme of these groups (the *Super Content* and *Super Discontent*) or opposite what you would expect in the general public. Typically the lower socio-economic group is the most discontented (particularly with government performance and services), while the upper most socio-economic group is the most content. People in the general public who are very involved in their community (such as the *Activists*) tend to have a fairly negative view of their community (although one might also expect them to also hold a negative view of government, which the *Activists* do). *The Middle of the Road* and *Concerned-Insecure*, on the other hand, do appear to be somewhat more familiar segments of the general public.

J. →

# Summary

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## SUMMARY

- ❑ This first of its kind survey of First Nations on-reserve has examined a variety of issues ranging from governance to quality of life and economic optimism, as well as perceptions of the Government of Canada and methods of communications with people living on-reserve. The survey also affords an opportunity to compare the attitudes of First Nations people on-reserve with those of the Canadian general public. Following are the key highlights of themes emerging from the survey.
- ❑ In all surveys measuring public perceptions and opinion, there are sub-group patterns that can paint a more detailed and, in some cases, slightly different picture from the overall results. One of the overarching themes in the current survey results is a very strong dichotomy in attitudes of First Nations population living on-reserve based on socio-economic status (SES). Contrary to what one might expect to find in the general public, there is a considerably more positive view reported by that portion of reserve residents with a lower SES. Far more negative views are expressed by the upper SES segments on-reserve. Further analysis of the results revealed a number of distinct groups, which are clustered based on their attitudes towards self-government, their assessment of the Government of Canada, feelings towards their community and their economic outlook.

### Economic Outlook

- ❑ Rated economic optimism would seem to be more positive among First Nations Canadians living on-reserve compared to the general public. Respondents' perceptions of their children's future quality of life or economic future are also optimistic. The sense of optimism is strongest in the lower SES segments.
- ❑ A similarly high proportion of First Nations people living on-reserve say that they have confidence in their job skills – also surprising, given the lower overall level of education and income in this population (which are considerably lower compared to the broader Canadian public). There is a split on this item based on SES, with lower SES respondents expressing more confidence. This is consistent with the generally more positive view of the lower SES segment throughout the survey results, however counterintuitive.
- ❑ Priorities for government (both prompted and unprompted) find health care and education at the top (as with the general public), followed by treaty rights and social services. It is perhaps not surprising that, taken together, the perceived priority of specifically Aboriginal issues is very high, particularly when compared to the general public.

### Perceptions of Government

- ❑ The overall perception of the quality of service and the performance of the Government of Canada is far less favourable among First Nations Canadians living on-reserve than can be found in the general public (by almost 20 percentage points). Whereas one in five Canadians overall rate the quality of government service as poor, one in three First Nations people on-reserve do so. These differences hold true when looking at specific issue areas as well (e.g., education, children, health care). The widest gaps in ratings of performance compared with the general public are found in the areas of job skills, the economy, unemployment and the environment.
- ❑ In contrast to the general population, those most likely to give a poor rating on government performance have a higher socio-economic status. A poorer rating is also linked to a more negative view regarding the comparative standard of living on-reserve and one's own economic future. Government performance is also rated lower by those most involved in their community on-reserve. As well, increased awareness and recent contact with the federal government is linked to a lower assessment of the government's performance.

- ❑ The latter finding suggests the possibility of a service issue that may need to be addressed, since the poorer rating may be *resulting from* the contact. On the other hand, the on-reserve group most likely to contact the government is also the group with the most negative view on a variety of issues. As well, there may be fundamental differences in the types of information and services that are typically accessed by the two groups (i.e., First Nations people living on-reserve may be more apt to be asking about services that are regulatory in nature).

### Communications

- ❑ A considerably smaller portion of the First Nations population on-reserve has contacted the Government of Canada compared with the general public (24 per cent vs. 37 per cent). This small proportion masks a huge gap, however, between lower and upper SES groups, with upper SES having had considerably more contact. There is also quite a poor impression left by this contact, given that almost half rated it as poor (42 per cent versus 19 per cent in the general public).
- ❑ The perceived need for more information from government is much higher among First Nations on-reserve than that expressed by the general population. There is also a strong correlation between having contacted the government and the belief that more information is needed.
- ❑ Awareness of conduits to the Government of Canada (toll free telephone lines, specific web sites for aboriginal issues) is fairly low. While most feel that they would know where to access information about relatively straightforward, service-related issues (e.g., getting an Indian Status Card), less than half would know where to find information on more complex, conceptual matters (e.g., changes to the Indian Act).
- ❑ Television is perceived to be by far the most useful method of receiving information from the Government of Canada. There is strong, but decreasing support for communications by radio, daily newspapers, mail and weekly newspapers, in that order. Fewer than half find posters and the Internet to be useful means of getting information from the government. (The latter is surprisingly low given that over half of the population are users of the Internet.) Aboriginal media is preferred at a rate of almost two to one over English media in each of radio, television and newspapers. The preferred language of communications, however, is English, with only one in ten preferring an Aboriginal language.
- ❑ Recognition of advertisements from the Government of Canada is considerably lower among First Nations people living on-reserve than the general population. Recognition is higher among those reserve residents that have recently been in contact with the federal government. About half of the respondent population find information from the Government of Canada to be easy to understand.
- ❑ The level of believability of information originating from the Government of Canada is surprisingly high, and only somewhat lower than in the general public. This overall level of believability, however, also masks a fairly strong SES dichotomy, which has lower SES segments of the population rating the believability of information much higher than upper SES segments.
- ❑ Given the relatively lower levels of income and education in the First Nations population on-reserve, it is surprising to find that access to and usage of the Internet on-reserve is as high as it is at 52 per cent (compared with 66-68 per cent in the general population). The gap is somewhat less evident in urban areas and among upper SES segments, reflecting the digital divide found in the broader Canadian population. There is much higher access to the Internet from the community (library/community centre, board office, etc.) than is the case in the general public.

### Conditions On-Reserve

- ❑ First Nations people on-reserve and the general public share very similar views regarding the comparative standard of living on-reserve, with the majority in both groups believing that conditions are worse on-reserve. Those with the highest SES are more likely to view conditions on-reserve as worse. It is perhaps surprising, however to see First Nations people providing a somewhat more optimistic view than the general public.
- ❑ The factors identified as most likely to improve the standard of living on-reserve lean toward human capital investment (e.g., education) and basic needs (e.g., community services) and away from the political and legal (e.g., accountability and democracy in the system of governance on-reserve). There is an overwhelmingly shared view (in both the First Nations and broader populations) that Aboriginal people need to do more to help themselves.
- ❑ Despite having identified a lower standard of living on-reserve, some of the aspects relating to the quality of life in First Nations communities are quite positive. The communities are generally regarded as safe, with a good future. Fewer believe that they get the help that they need, however, and there is a split in the proportion that believes that their community is well run, versus those that believe that it is not well run.

### Governance

- ❑ Much like the general public, there is a majority perception among First Nations people on-reserve that local governance is moderately democratic. The typology indicates that there are two relatively upper SES groups, however, with opposing views on this issue. There is a less involved, older, generally more pessimistic group that views the local government as less democratic. There is also an involved group with negative views toward the federal government, but very strong positive views towards their local government. The remainder falls in the middle (with the most positive being the younger, lower SES group). There is a considerably smaller proportion, however, that report that they have a say in how their community is run (four in ten), with an almost equal proportion saying that they do not have a voice in these matters.
- ❑ Approximately one in two First Nations people living on-reserve view self-government as a good idea. As with the assessment of government, feelings about community and personal economic outlook, the views on self-government are distinctly divided. Those most keen on the merits of self-government include both the economically secure *Activists* and the *Super Contented* with very low socio-economic status.
- ❑ Overall views in Canada on the Indian Act show overwhelming support for change although there is more reluctance among First Nations people living on-reserve for a complete overhaul and replacement of the Act compared to the general public. Once again, the SES dichotomy exists in responses to this item, with upper SES people believing in the need for a complete overhaul, and lower SES believing the Act to be largely acceptable the way it is, with some revisions.
- ❑ The priorities in setting changes to the Indian Act are notably different among First Nations living on-reserve compared to the general population. Whereas the general public place a premium on changing the Indian Act to reflect democratic principles and principles in the Constitution and Charter, First Nations rate giving band members a voice and reflecting Aboriginal values as more important in guiding changes to the Indian Act. This would seem to reflect a strong leaning towards grassroots consultation on the part of reserve residents.

## General Profiling

- ❑ Although the level of participation varies widely, most indicate that they are at least somewhat involved in their community. The stronger the level of involvement, the worse the image of the Government of Canada and the better the image of their own community.
- ❑ Reported levels of income and education are significantly lower than can be found in the general public. The employment rate, however, is only somewhat lower (57 versus 64 per cent). On the other hand, employment in the First Nations community on-reserve tends to be more part-time and seasonal in nature compared with the general public. Three in four residents in the labour force are employed on the reserve. One in six community residents consider themselves to be unemployed.
- ❑ A comprehensive socio-demographic profile of the on-reserve population highlights the contrasts in education, income, and, to some extent, employment status with the general population. These variables were also used extensively to create a profile of the different clusters from the segmentation analysis, showing how the demographic characteristics were distributed among the identified sub-populations of on-reserve Aboriginal Canadians.
- ❑ The multivariate typology suggests five relatively distinct groups. There is a young, lower SES group that views the world through rose-colored glasses (or felt pressured to respond positively to most of the questionnaire). There is an older, slightly higher than average SES group that views the world through a harsh lens of criticism and hardship. There is a group at the top end of the SES scale who are very active in their community, are negative in their impression of the Government of Canada and positive in their views about their community, and how it is run. There is a largely lower SES group that is positive in their impressions of the Government of Canada, but less positive about their community and how it is run. Lastly there is a middle of the road group that reflects more closely the overall results of the survey. These are all recognizable groups: the young and inexperienced; the older and critical; the band council members and those closely aligned with them; the mothers of children, with concerns about the community; and the average community member with no distinguishing features.

## Bottom Line

- ❑ Overall, there is a striking similarity between the general public and the First Nations population living on-reserve.
- ❑ There is, however, substantially lower satisfaction with (and general impression of) the Government of Canada than is found in the general public, by a factor of 50 per cent.
- ❑ There are several issues regarding recent contact with the Government of Canada worth noting. First, those with the least contact are the least sophisticated and perhaps in the greatest need of information and assistance from the federal government. Although they may be getting this information and assistance indirectly through their band councils, they are lacking in direct contact. Second, contact with the government seems to lead to lower levels of satisfaction with both the service and performance of the government. In addition, it is those with the greatest contact, that indicate the greatest need for additional information coming from the government.
- ❑ There are strong social class effects at play, which are the reverse of the patterns that one would expect to find in the general public. The less affluent and least in contact with government are the members of the community with the most positive outlook across the board.
- ❑ Similarly, there are large generation gaps, with the youngest expressing the most positive views, whereas older members of the community are far more negative.



- ❑ Generally, the most sophisticated members of the community (with higher levels of education, involved in their community, in contact with the government and plugged into the Internet) have the most negative views about the Government of Canada and their own conditions on-reserve.
- ❑ Priorities, while similar to that of the general public, is a more diversified list than expressed by the general public. There are added concerns about issues specific to the Aboriginal population, along with a possible perception of more issues and problems to tackle in this community.
- ❑ The greatest emphasis is placed on areas of human capital investment, such as education, children and job skills, as well as basic infrastructure needs such as water, sewers and housing. There seems to be less importance placed on political and legal issues such as accountability and democracy of local governments.

### **Implications for Future Research**

- ❑ In addition to issue areas not covered in this first survey of First Nations people living on-reserve, there are implications for further investigation that arise from the results of this current work:
  - Better understanding of why the Government of Canada is perceived so poorly within this community and areas of particular concern.
  - More details regarding the credibility of government information. (e.g., What sources are most believable/credible? Which ones are not and why not?)
  - Greater exploration of the relationship between contacting the government and getting information and services from the government (directly or indirectly), and how this is linked to a lower level of satisfaction.
  - Greater distinction between the Government of Canada in general and INAC specifically in perceptions of image and performance.
  - Better understanding of youth and their positive outlook. Are they really so positive or is this an artifact of the survey? If this optimism is a true reflection of the sentiment of the young in the community, is this due to inexperience or something else?
  - The results show limited differences by region. Subsequent surveys should rely on additional characteristics of residents' locations in the analysis. Differences in results should be explored, for example, based on the size of the community and its distance from major urban centres and other reserves.
  - Greater exploration of the rationale for setting human capital investment and basic infrastructure as the highest priorities (e.g., What specific issues within these two broad areas are of concern and why?)
- ❑ Some of these issues will be best explored in another telephone survey focusing on these different study questions. Other areas, however, may be better examined from a qualitative (i.e., focus group) setting. Perhaps the next step might be a limited exploration of a few of these issues in a small number of focus groups (e.g., two with youth and four with adults). The results of this exercise could then be examined in conjunction with the current results and used in the design of the next telephone survey conducted with this population.