

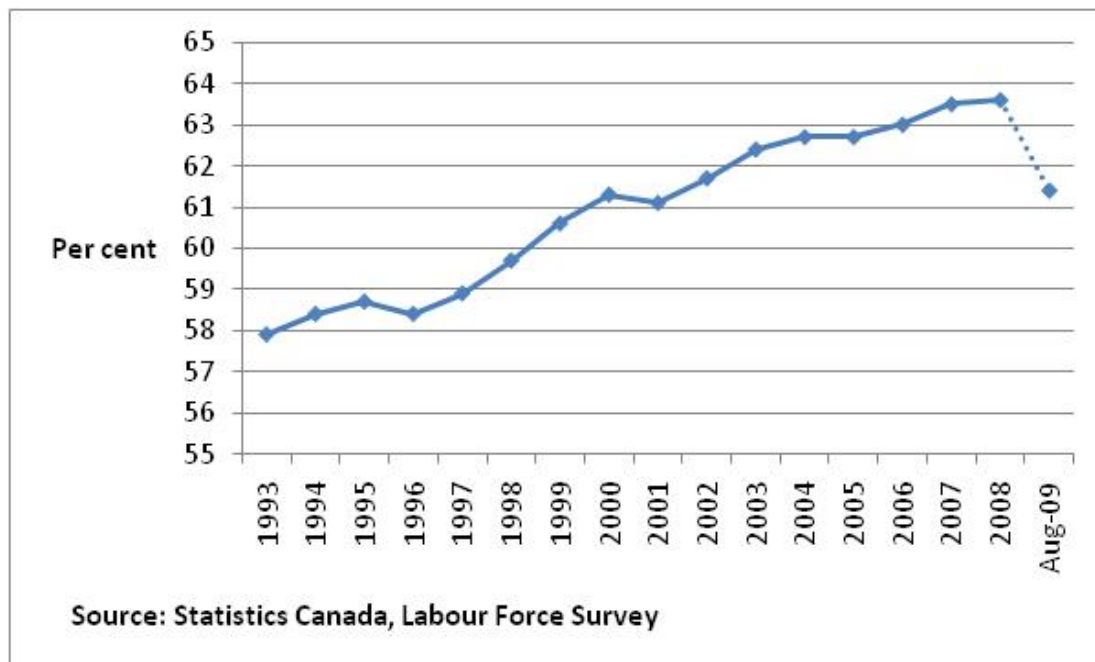


Canada's Vital Signs 2009: Research Findings

Work

Reaching record highs only to fall again rapidly, Canada's employment rate has been on a roller-coaster over the past year. Where 2008 began by setting new national highs in job creation and employment participation,ⁱ it ended with Canadian families and communities struggling to cope with the rapid erosion of job security and stability due to the onset of a global economic recession. Canada's 2008 employment rate at 63.6 per cent was slightly improved over 2007 (+ 0.1 per cent), reflecting employment gains early in 2008 that have since been lost.ⁱⁱ Until 2008 Canada's employment rate had shown steady improvement since 1993,ⁱⁱⁱ but since October 2008 it has fallen back to a level last seen in 2002.

Chart 1: Employment Rate in Canada, 1987-2009



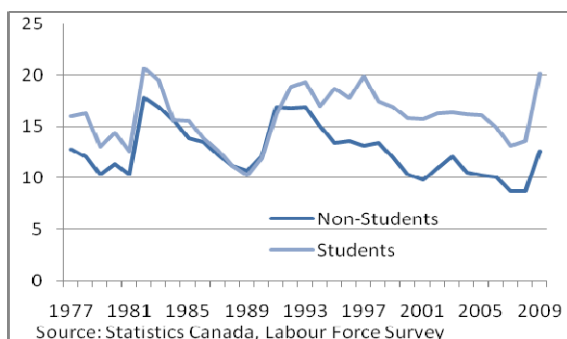
Gap between Rich and Poor

Income inequality in Canada has been growing and current economic challenges run the risk of worsening the trend. A number of measures indicate that the income gap between the richest and poorest in Canada has increased over the past 25 years as, during good economic times and bad, high income earners have gained while lower income earners have seen their wages stagnate or worse, fall.^{iv} In 1980, a family at the 90th percentile of the income distribution earned 15 times the income of a family at the 10th percentile. By 2000, a 90th percentile family earned 32 times as much as a 10th percentile family.^v

Getting Started

Young workers face the worst job market in their lifetimes. In this challenging job market, young workers (aged 15-24) are especially vulnerable. The impact of the recession on their job prospects has been immediate and severe. In 2008, the youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24) was 11.6 per cent, up from 11.2 per cent in 2007 and is growing at a faster rate than unemployment in the general population. Between 2007 and 2008, the percentage-point increase in the youth unemployment rate was four times the percentage-point increase in the overall unemployment rate. So far in 2009 (August) employment among youths has been falling faster than in any other age group and the youth unemployment rate has soared to 16.3 per cent. Among students looking for summer jobs, 19.2 per cent were unemployed this summer and for those who found work, the average number of work hours, at 23.4 hours per week, was the lowest in more than 30 years.^{vi}

Chart 2: Unemployment Rate for Students and Non-Students, Ages 15-24, July, 1977-2009, Unadjusted for Seasonality



Health

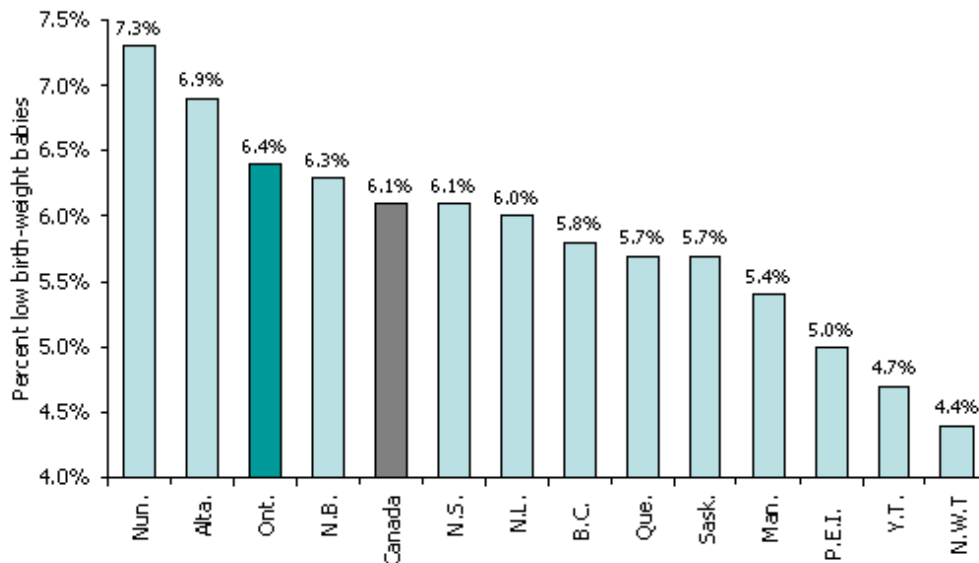
The causes of low birth weight are changing and incidence is rising. Low birth weight (< 2,500 grams or 5.5 lbs.) has long been considered an important indicator of population health because it's linked to a range of child health concerns, including learning difficulties, vision and respiratory problems and need for special medical care. Between 2002 and 2008, the incidence of low birth weight in Canada increased from 5.7 per cent to 6.1 per cent.

Some factors that have historically contributed to low-birth weight are declining across the country, including smoking among pregnant women and incidence of teenage pregnancy. Other contributing factors, however, are rising. Increasing maternal age, use of assisted reproductive technologies, multiple births and use of obstetric intervention like induced labour and caesarean delivery have resulted in a steadily increasing rate of pre-term births. Incidence of pre-term births has increased by 17% over the past 10 years (1995-2004).

It's important to note, however, that the incidence of babies being born small for their gestational age has declined by almost 23% in the same time period.^{vii} In other words, an increasing number of low birth-weight babies are not small for their age...they're just born too early.

A regional exception to this is Nunavut where the incidence of low-birth weight and pre-term birth are higher^{viii}, as is the rate of teen pregnancy,^{ix} and smoking among pregnant women.^x It's reported that in northern communities, incidence of high birth weight (> 4,000 grams or 8.8 lbs.), which can also harm babies' health, may be caused by high rates of maternal diabetes and obesity.^{xi} With severely limited health-care services, including the worst access to a family physician in Canada^{xii}, Nunavut's infant mortality rate is more than three times the national rate^{xiii}.

Percent low birth-weight babies, by province and territory, 2005-06^{xiv}



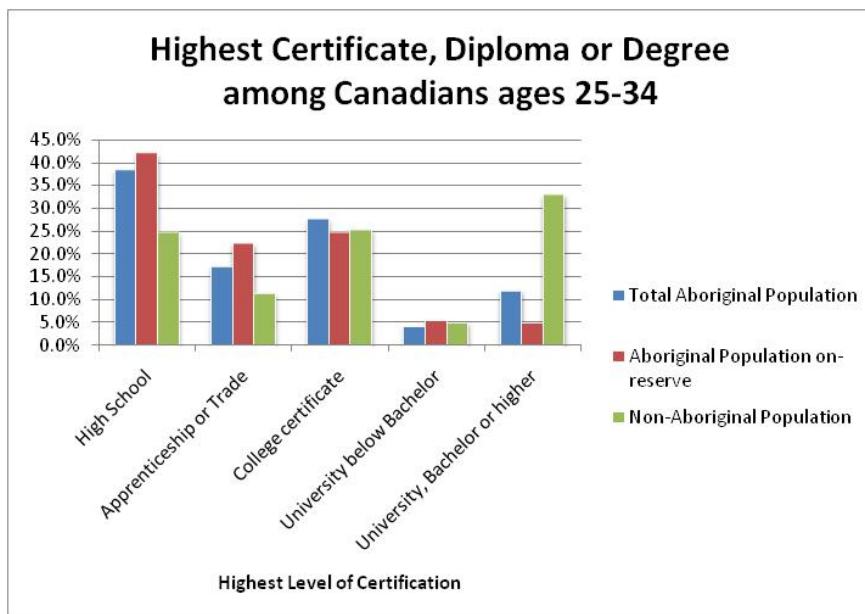
Learning

Especially on reserve and in Nunavut, Aboriginal students are attending and completing high school at much lower rates than the non-Aboriginal population. The high school completion rate of Aboriginal Canadians (15 and older) in 2006 was 56.3 per cent overall, compared to the non-Aboriginal rate of 76.9 per cent. This disparity comes at a high individual and societal cost, including lost productivity, earnings, employment and life prospects.

Of particular concern are the low high school completion rates of the Inuit population at only 39.3 per cent and of on-reserve Aboriginal Canadians at 40.5 per cent. In comparison, Aboriginal Canadians living off-reserve have a high school completion rate of 61.5 per cent. Aboriginal youth (ages 15-19) even attend school at a lower rate (71.3 per cent in 2006) than non-Aboriginal youth (81 per cent) with the lowest attendance in Nunavut (65.8 per cent) and Alberta (65.9 per cent).

When we look at the young adult population (ages 25-34), 90 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians have completed their high school certificate or a level of post-secondary education, while only 68 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians have done so (and only 49 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians living on-reserve). Among high school graduates in this age group, Aboriginal students pursue post-secondary education at rates comparable to, or higher than, the non-Aboriginal population in colleges and apprenticeships, but remain under-represented in university programs:

- High school is the highest completed level of education for more Aboriginal Canadians (38.5 per cent) than non-Aboriginal Canadians (24.8 per cent);
- A much higher proportion of non-Aboriginal Canadians (33 per cent) complete university degrees than Aboriginal Canadians (12 per cent). Only 5 per cent of Aboriginal young adults on reserve complete a university education;
- Double the proportion of young Aboriginal Canadians on-reserve (22.4 per cent) have completed an apprenticeship in a skilled trade, compared to 11.5 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians;
- College attendance is evenly distributed, with 25.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians, 27.7 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians and 24.8 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians on-reserve having completed a college certificate.^{xv}



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Source: 2006 Census

Housing

While current economic conditions may bring some relief, so far this decade, housing has become less and less affordable. Diminishing housing affordability has been of ongoing concern across Canada as home prices have continued to rise faster than incomes. From 2000-2006, the national

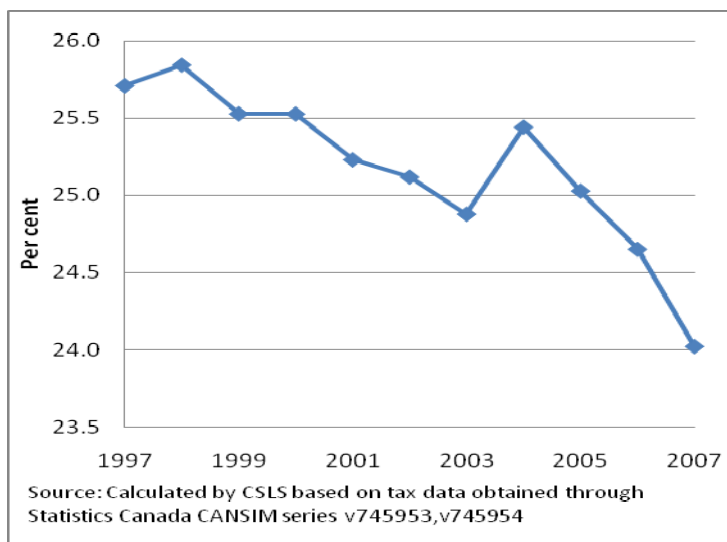
gross income shelter ratio, which represents the average home price as a multiple of median family pre-tax income, rose from 3.23 in 2000 to 4.35 in 2006, a significant decrease in housing affordability. Growth in the ratio since 2003 has been greatest in western Vital Signs communities like Calgary and lowest in Ottawa, Saint John and Sudbury. Kelowna, Toronto and Victoria were the Vital Signs communities with the least affordable housing, with ratios of house prices to income above 5.0 in 2006. With the recession's squeeze on jobs, but only modest impact on house prices, housing affordability remains an area of concern as we look ahead.^{xvii}

Belonging and Leadership

Fewer donors are giving more. Over the past 10 years, from 1997-2007, Canada's charities benefited from a doubling of charitable donations from \$4.3 billion in 1997^{xviii} to over \$8.6 billion in 2007.^{xix} But this has come as a result of larger gifts from a smaller proportion of the population. While the median value of charitable donations increased from \$170 in 1997 to \$250 in 2007, the proportion of tax filers declaring charitable donations decreased from 25.7 per cent to 24.0 per cent.

Among Vital Signs communities, there was a wide variation in the proportion of tax filers declaring charitable donations. Oakville had the highest proportion, at 31.2 per cent in 2007. Ottawa and Guelph-Wellington followed closely with 29.9 per cent and 29.3 per cent respectively. Grand Forks, Red Deer and Medicine Hat had the three lowest proportions at 20.0 per cent, 22.6 per cent and 23.8 per cent, respectively. With increasing reliance on the generosity of a smaller proportion of the population, what has yet to be seen is the impact of the recession on these crucial donors.

Charitable Donors as a Proportion of Tax Filers in Canada, 1997-2007



Safety

Canada continues to become safer with large declines in the most violent crimes. Canada continues its 15-year trend of steadily declining violent crime, including homicide, attempted murder, assault, sexual offences, abduction and robbery. At 932 incidents per 100,000 population in 2008, violent crime has fallen 12 per cent overall since 1991, with the largest declines in the most violent offences. Assault and robbery accounted for 98.5 per cent of all violent crimes in Canada in 2008. Since 1991, both have declined, by 10.5 per cent and 18.3 per cent respectively.

Among Vital Signs communities, Guelph-Wellington, Ottawa and Kitchener all had violent crime rates of less than 600 incidents per 100,000 people in 2008. Kelowna had the highest incidence at 1,532 per 100,000, followed by Saint John (1,463). All Vital Signs communities have experienced declines in violent crime except Saint John and Kelowna.

Environment

Widespread adoption of recycling shows Canadians' willingness to do their part for the environment. The Blue Box is less than 30 years old^{xx}, but in that time Canada has become a nation of recyclers of glass, paper, metal and plastic. By 2007, recycling programs reached 94 per cent of Canadians and 98 per cent of people with access to a recycling program do recycle. These figures are relatively consistent from region to region, however, Saint John experienced a decline in its recycling rate from 92 per cent in 2006 to 84 per cent in 2007.

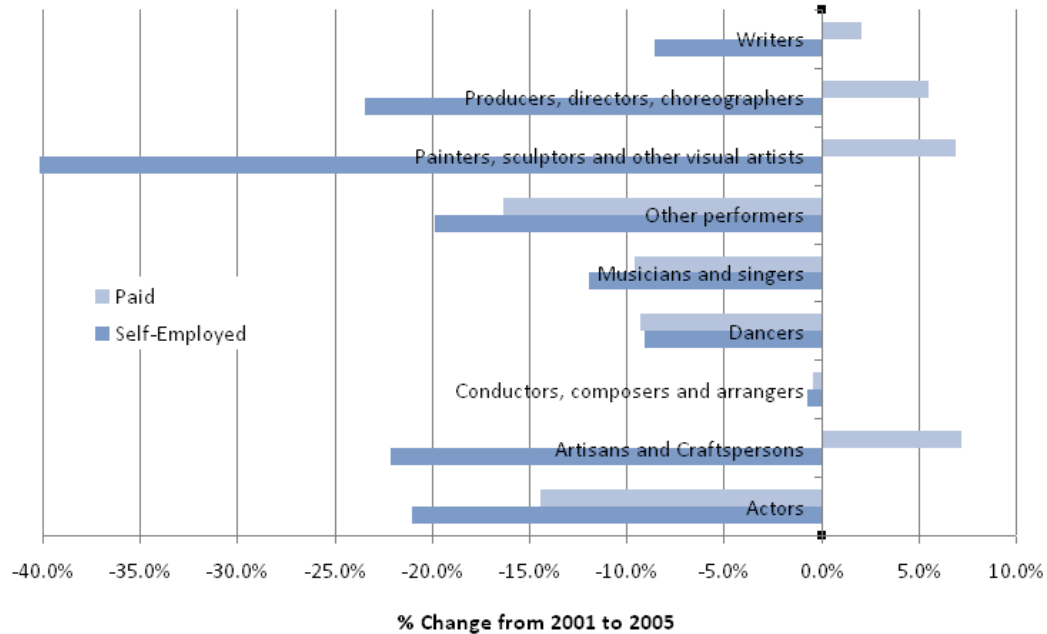
Arts and Culture

Canada's global economic prospects rest in part on the economic prospects of our arts and culture workers. The United Nations reports that "creativity, knowledge and access to information are increasingly recognized as powerful engines driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalizing world..."^{xxi} Canada's ability to foster a thriving 'creative economy' that promotes innovation and original ideas affects our economic competitiveness.

One important component of this is how we support our cultural workers. In 2005, Canada counted 96,215 full-time, full-year workers involved in a wide range of professional occupations in arts and culture, including librarians, curators and journalists.^{xxii} Their median earnings for full-year, full-time work were \$44,010 in 2005, down from \$44,823 in 2000.^{xxiii}

Canada's cultural workforce is significantly larger, however when self-employed artists, representing 42 per cent of Canada's artists, are included. A closer look at nine of the arts professions and including the earnings of self-employed artists reveal average earnings of only \$21,606 in 2005. Self-employed artists earned less than paid workers in seven of the nine professions and earnings fell in most occupations between 2001 and 2005. ^{xxiv}

Change in average earnings of self-employed and paid artists from 2001 to 2005



ⁱ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080307/dq080307a-eng.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/subjects-sujets/labour-travail/lfs-epa/lfs-epa-eng.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=13>

^{iv} <http://growinggap.ca/files/QuarterCenturyofInequality.pdf>

^v http://www.growinggap.ca/files/Canadas%20Rich%20and%20Poor_1.pdf

^{vi} <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/subjects-sujets/labour-travail/lfs-epa/lfs-epa-eng.htm>

^{vii} <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2008/cphr-rsps/index-eng.php>

Additional: <http://www.sourceoecd.org/pdf/societyataglance2009/812009011e-07-03.pdf>

^{viii} http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/products/too_early_too_small_en.pdf

^{ix} http://www.beststart.org/events/detail/bsannualconf08/presentations/PC1_mckay.pdf

x <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2009/02/03/nu-births.html>

xi http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/16-3/a_e.html

xii

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/180/3/284?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=nunavut&andorexactfulltext=and&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&sortspec=date&resourcectype=HWCIT>

xiii <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2008/cphorsphc-respcacsp/cphorsphc-respcacsp06c-eng.php>

xiv

http://www.healthsystemfacts.com/Client/OHA/HSF_LP4W_LND_WebStation.nsf/page/Percent+low+birth-weight+babies+by+province+and+territory+2005-06+large

xv

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census06/data/topics/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2006&PID=97686&GID=614135&METH=1&APATH=3&PTYPE=88971&THEME=75&AID=&FREE=0&FOCUS=&VID=&GC=99&GK=NA&RL=0&TPL=NA&SUB=&d1=0&d2=1&d3=0&d4=4&d5=0>, and
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census06/data/topics/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2006&PID=97686&GID=614135&METH=1&APATH=3&PTYPE=88971&THEME=75&AID=&FREE=0&FOCUS=&VID=&GC=99&GK=NA&RL=0&TPL=NA&SUB=&d1=0&d2=7&d3=0&d4=4&d5=0>

xvi Excel file Comparative Educational Attainment drawn from Statistics Canada, 2006 Census,

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census06/data/topics/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2006&PID=97686&GID=614135&METH=1&APATH=3&PTYPE=88971&THEME=75&AID=&FREE=0&FOCUS=&VID=&GC=99&GK=NA&RL=0&TPL=NA&SUB=&d1=0&d2=1&d3=1&d4=4&d5=0>

xvii <http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/pdf/20090416-housing.pdf>

xviii <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/981203/dq981203-eng.htm#ART1>

xix <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/081104/dq081104b-eng.htm>

xx First introduced in Kitchener, Ontario in 1981,

<http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Reports/we%20recycle.pdf>

xxi http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082ceroverview_en.pdf

xxii The full list includes: Librarians, Conservators and curators, Archivists, Authors and writers, Editors, Journalists, Public relations and communications professionals, Translators, terminologists and interpreters, Producers, directors, choreographers, Conductors, composers and arrangers, Musicians and singers, Dancers, Actors and comedians, Painters, sculptors and other visual artists

xxiii <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/highlights/earnings/Table801.cfm?SR=1>

xxiv http://www.hillstrategies.com/docs/Artists_Canada2006.pdf