Community Active Measures (CAM)
Youth Leadership Survey – 2010-2011
Highlights Report

Managed and Prepared by:
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(SCTC)
A. BACKGROUND

The 2010-2011 Community Active Measures (CAM) Youth Leadership Survey is the first of its kind undertaken within the First Nations community of Manitoba. The primary purpose of the survey was to focus on items to help quantify the obstacles and challenges facing First Nations youth (15-30 years of age) regarding employment and education. Areas also included: background information/demographics, health, community and culture. This report highlights information resulting from the 2010-2011 survey.

It is hoped that the information gathered from this survey will enable First Nation policy makers and program developers on a national level to understand the factors that challenge the employability of First Nation youth. As such, this information will be used to improve any current and existing programs, as well impact the development of future programs and active measures that enhance employability skills and create pathways away from income assistance. This statistical survey data will also be used to create a “Youth Involvement and Leadership in Active Measures” Guidebook as well as a final report. The guidebook will function as a tool for youth to use to identify programs and services that aid with education and employment.

B. ADMINISTRATION AND ANALYSIS

The Swampy Cree Tribal Council (SCTC) team including the CAM Representatives developed the survey. The survey utilized a combination of web-based and paper version of the questionnaire. The web-based version was developed and hosted through FluidSurveys Online Survey Software. The paper version was formatted to match the web-based survey as closely as possible so that all data could be entered and made available for analysis in one place.

Youth gained access to the web-based survey or were asked to complete it in on the paper version. Completed paper forms were returned or forwarded to the CAM Representatives for entering into FluidSurveys Online Survey Software and analysis. There were 907 survey entries into the FluidSurvey database, after review of data for duplicate entries and consent number it was determined that the survey was completed by 883 individuals representing 54 communities.

Unless otherwise stated, the discussion focuses on notable outcomes from those that responded to the items in the questionnaire. The detailed tables appended provide a complete review of the data collected for respondents overall as well as by Northern and Southern Manitoba regions and Tribal Council/Independent Community.
C. LIMITATIONS

The information presented in this report is a reflection of the respondents’ perceptions of their situation and therefore may be susceptible to inaccuracies.

Results are limited to where respondents completed items. While some items had intentional skips to later questions, there are instances where items were skipped when they should not have or where respondents chose not to provide the information for personal reasons.

The following report is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of all of the information, but rather an overview.

D. DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP

- There were 883 youth completing the survey (3 did not provide age) with a mean age of 21. While the intended age range for this project was 15 to 30, ages of those completing the survey ranged from 14 to 36, with 11 14-year olds, 2 31-year olds, and one 36-year old.

- Females were slightly over represented at 55% of all respondents.

- As expected due to the target population, the youth represented were overwhelmingly “Status Indian” (96%). There was a small representation by “Non-status Indian” (35), Metis (.3%), and non-Aboriginal (.5%).

- The most common used language amongst youth was English (80%), with 1 in 10 using a First Nations language and another 1 in 10 using a combination.

- The average household had four adults and three youth under the age of 18 living in the home.

- Though designated as “youth”, 40% were themselves parents/guardians to children under the age of 12.
The majority of respondents were from Northern communities (61%), with the largest representation coming from independent communities (25%) or from the Swampy Cree Tribal Council (23%).

With 42% of the youth indicating that they were recipients of Income Assistance (IA), it was interesting that only 26% reported that their parent or guardian was a recipient of IA. When asked how long the youth had been a recipient of IA 21% of all respondents, half of those receiving IA, reported 1 to 2 years and the remaining ranging from 3 to 23 years.
A. Education

- With four out of every five youth reporting that they were encouraged to attend school by their parents/guardian less than half (47%) were currently attending. This implies other factors are at work keeping youth from attending school.

- With over half of all youth not attending school there were a variety of reasons provided as to why they were not able to attend. The most frequently reported obstacles to attending school out of the whole population were: Childcare (25%), Transportation (21%), Financial (20%), Boredom (17%), and Peer Pressure (14%). Interestingly enough the largest write-in response, though representing only 4% of the population, was Employment.

- It is not that surprising that the number one reason for not attending school is lack of childcare considering that 40% of the youth themselves have children under the age of 12.

- In relation to the 21% of those that named Transportation as an obstacle to attending school, 40% of all respondents indicated that their school is/was located in a neighboring First Nation or in a town outside the First Nation they live in. This emphasizes the need for either local (or closer) schools or better transportation.

- With 17% of youth that reported boredom as a major obstacle to attending school, it is not surprising that 13% of youth dislike school somewhat or very much. The positive side of this is that 87% have at least a somewhat favorable view of school.

- When asked what barriers they have been exposed to at school in the past six months, youth reported the following as common items: too many distractions at home (20%), too many distractions at school (18%), age differences (18%), difficulty with math (17%), and trouble adjusting to change (15%).

- The majority of youth (55%) reported “some high school” as their highest level of education, with 23% having their high school diploma or equivalent, and 17% with at least some post-secondary education or training.
While 1 in 4 of all youth (24%) had a shortsighted view of their educational goals and only looked as far as completing from their current grade, 21% intend to graduate from high school (or equivalent), and another 58% intend to complete a post-secondary degree or training program in the trades.

There were 45% of youth that had an opportunity to attend a job/business fair through their school, however when asked what their career plans were, the highest response was that they did not know (22%).

Half of all youth indicated that there were one or more training opportunities in their community though 63% reported that they were not aware of education or training programs in their community offered through Income Assistance.

B. Employment

With a third (34%) of youth reporting that they were currently employed, it is interesting that only one in twenty-five (4%) had reported employment as an obstacle to attending school.

Though 66% of youth were not currently employed, 55% of youth were also looking for employment. This implies that not being employed has not had a sizable impact on keeping youth from looking to find work.

With two out of three of all youth not employed there were a variety of reasons provided as to why they were not currently employed. The most frequently reported obstacles to employment out of the whole population were: Lack of Jobs (25%), Education/Training (18%), Childcare (16%), and Transportation (16%).

Response was low for disabilities as barriers to employment or education: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (1%), Physical Disability with 2%, Mental Disability with 2%, and Learning Disability of 4%. Though it is possible that there are you that are undiagnosed with one of these conditions and do not know it.

C. Support

Sixty-five percent of youth reported that there was a support system available to them when needed including companionship, assistance, guidance, and other types of support.
D. Residential Schools and Colonization of First Nations Peoples

- With approximately 3 out of 5 youth (57%) reporting being aware of the impacts of colonization on First Nations peoples, there were still 2 out of 5 that did not know. This implies a possible gap in teaching/learning the history of one's own people.

- Fifty-five percent of youth are the child or grandchild of a residential school survivor. However, another 16% are unsure and do not know enough about their family to answer this question. That means approximately 1 in 7 First Nations youth are uninformed as to their family's history on this matter.

- When asked if residential schools had negatively impacted their personal well-being there was a nearly even split between Yes (37%), No (35%), and Don't Know (28%).

- With approximately two out of every five youth being negatively impacted as a result of residential schools there were a variety of consequences provided. The most frequently reported consequences of residential schools on personal well-being were: Loss of Language (29%), Loss of Cultural Identity (23%), Loss of Traditional Religion/Spirituality (21%). These being reports of self-impact, not community, speaks to the importance of heritage and culture to individuals; people that have lost touch with where they come from also lose touch with the importance of the here and now.

E. Community Challenges

- Youth expressed that they were concerned about the challenges facing their communities. Virtually all of the challenges listed in the survey elicited a 20% or higher response rate as a "MAIN Challenge" to their community.

- The number one concern reported above and beyond all others facing communities was alcohol and drug abuse (72%). With this being such a high level of concern, it seems that it could be difficult to successfully address the other listed concerns without addressing addictions.

- Housing was the second highest reported concern for communities (58%).
Employment Opportunities (52%), Education/Training Opportunities (41%), and Funding (48%) as concerns all speak to a perceived lack of prospects for communities.

Related to the addictions concern is an expressed concern over “Gang Activity” (43%). This also probably brings in related fears over safety.

Suicide (31%) and Health (20%) concerns note that the mental and physical well-being of youth, their families, and communities need to be addressed.

Culture (26%) and “Control Over Decisions” (25%) are other areas of concern that are not unexpected considering reports of being impacted through the loss of traditional language, culture and spirituality.

F. Community Strengths

Strengths for communities were not reported at nearly the same level as challenges, however there were some positive items where challenges were met with strengths.

The top reported strength for communities “support for sports and recreation” (49%); this goes toward the importance of the enjoyment of life and as an outlet to reduce stresses imposed by hardships.

Education and Training Programs (40%) were reported as a strength at nearly the same level as Education and Training Opportunities (41%) as a challenge.

Responses for Cultural Events (37%) as a strength outweigh lack of culture as a challenge (26%).

The strength of Community Police (34%) likely addresses in part the concern over Gang Activity (43%).

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Support Programs (28%) were reported as a strength, but only at a third of the level of reported concern over Alcohol and Drug Abuse (76%). This implies that at some level the highest reported challenge is being addressed, but that the level of support is falling short of the actual problem.
G. Northern / Southern Differences

- The only differences approaching statistical significance between Northern and Southern communities were related to educational factors.

- Youth in Northern communities reported a 10% higher level of school attendance (Cramer’s V = 0.094, p = 0.005).

- Youth in Northern communities reported a 7% higher level of parent/caregiver encouragement to attend school (Cramer’s V = 0.089, p = 0.009).

- Youth in Northern communities reported a 40% higher level of their school being located in the First Nations they live in (Cramer’s V = 0.393, p < 0.00000001).

- Youth in Southern communities reported a 14% higher level of their school providing an opportunity to attend a job/business fair (Cramer’s V = 0.161, p < 0.00005).
IN CONCLUSION

The 2010-2011 Community Active Measures (CAM) Youth Leadership Survey has provided a wealth of information related to obstacles and challenges facing First Nations youth. This is only the first step toward addressing the issues facing today's youth.

Regarding employment and education there are a number of issues that can be possibly addressed. The hardest to address may be a perceived or real "lack of opportunity" for both training and employment; with this in mind, awareness of possible opportunities, where available should be capitalized on. However, two common concerns related to education and employment that might be addressed at an easier level than "opportunity", are childcare and transportation.

The obstacles and challenges facing First Nations youth go beyond a "lack of opportunity" however. There is a need to address underling issues as well, such as a loss of cultural identity, addictions, and even boredom of school or life in general.

There are positive items of note that should be taken away from the results of this survey as well. Most parents or guardians (80%) encourage their children to attend school and 58% of youth intend to complete a post-secondary degree or training program in the trades. Supports need to be put in place to help these youth obtain their goal. Though two thirds of youth were not currently employed, over half (55%) were encouraged to keep looking for employment.

It is now up to First Nation policy makers and program developers to determine how this information can be best put to use. The colloquialism that "the children are our future" is all the more true for small communities, especially those facing difficult challenges.
IN SUMMARY

- Forty-two percent of youth are recipients of Income Assistance with a mean duration of over three years.

- Less than half (47%) of youth in Manitoba First Nations communities currently attend school.

- The main obstacles to attending school are Childcare (25%), Transportation (21%), and Financial (20%).

- Sixty-three percent of respondents reported that they were not aware of education or training programs in their community offered through IA.

- A third (34%) of youth reported that they were currently employed.

- Some of the most frequently reported obstacles to employment were related to the same issues with not attending school: Education/Training (18%), Childcare (16%), Transportation (16%), and Lack of Jobs (25%).

- Disabilities were not a highly reported issue related to finding employment.

- In spite of life’s difficulties, 2 out of 3 youth reported that there was a support system available to them (65%) when needed.

- Forty-seven percent of youth were not aware of the impacts of colonization and 1 in 7 First Nations youth were uninformed as to if their parents or grandparents were forced to attend residential schools.

- Loss of Language (29%), Loss of Cultural Identity (23%), and Loss of Traditional Religion/Spirituality (21%) were the most frequently reported consequences of residential schools on the personal the well-being of today’s First Nations youth.

- Challenges to communities were highly reported with Alcohol and Drug Abuse (72%), Housing (58%), Employment Opportunities (52%), Education/Training Opportunities (41%), and Funding (48%) as the most common.

- Strengths for communities were not reported at nearly the same level as challenges. The top reported strength for communities were Support for Sports and Recreation (49%), Education and Training Programs (40%), Cultural Events (37%), Community Police (34%), and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Support Programs (26%).

- There were minimal differences between Northern/Southern communities, with the exception of school attendance, parent/caregiver encouragement to attend school, schools located within First Nations, and opportunity to attend a job/business fair.