

Nunavik's labour market and educational attainment paradox ^[1]

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Source: Centre for the Study of Living Standards

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Jul 2016

AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Abstract

Nunavik, the northern Québec region of Inuit Nunangat, had stronger labour market performance than the other three Inuit Nunangat regions between 1996 and 2011. For example, Nunavik's employment rate was 54.1 per cent in 2011, while the aggregate employment rate for Inuit Nunangat excluding Nunavik was only 42.9 per cent. Nunavik enjoyed this higher employment rate despite the fact that its Inuit population had, on average, 0.2 fewer years of schooling than Inuit Nunangat as a whole. In this paper, we examine a number of factors that could explain this paradox. Of all the factors examined, public sector job provision and child care availability and cost appear to have the most important impact on Nunavik's labour market outcomes. First, Nunavik's public sector, representing two-thirds of the experienced labour force, is a more important component of the overall economy than the public sector in the other three Inuit Nunangat regions, where it represents approximately half of the experienced labour force. Second, due to the implementation of the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative and the Québec Government's family policies in the late-1990s, Nunavik has the greatest availability of child care services and the lowest daily child care fee of the four Inuit Nunangat regions. Both the ample supply of child care and the low cost have contributed to large increases in female labour force participation since 1996 (7.4 percentage points).

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: aboriginal ^[4]

women's labour force participation ^[5]

Women ^[6]

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