

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Post-school education and labour force participation in Canada and Australia

This description created:	January 2009
Project no.	NY08103
Theme:	Students and individuals – Learner groups – Young people Students and individuals – Careers and pathways – Pathways after compulsory education
Project type:	Research – national managed research program
Project approach:	Quantitative
Time frame:	February 2009 – October 2009
Principal researchers:	A/Prof Siobhan Austen – Women in Social and Economic Research, Curtin Business School A/Prof Fiona MacPhail, University of Northern British Columbia
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LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH (LSAY) RESEARCH INNOVATION AND EXPANSION FUND ANALYSIS GRANTS PROGRAM:

This project has been funded under the Research Innovation and Expansion Fund (RIEF) Analysis Grants Program. The RIEF has been established to provide researchers with the opportunity to use data from the LSAY and to widen the community of researchers with experience in this data. The Analysis Grants Program is one element of the RIEF and complements the broader LSAY Analytical Program (www.lsay.edu.au) being conducted by NCVER on behalf of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

The key topic of this research project will be a comparative analysis of the transitions of male and female high-school leavers into post-school education in Canada and Australia; and the transitions of young men and women from education into the labour market (including into full time and part time work) in each country. This analysis will be complemented by a study of the retention of school leavers and others in paid employment and a review of approaches to the provision of post-school education in each country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the different characteristics of the post-school educational and labour market transitions of young Australian and Canadian men and women?
2. What differences in these transitions are associated with differences in the provision of non-university post-school educational opportunities?
3. What policy-relevant lessons are available to Australia from Canada's experience with post-school education?

METHODOLOGY:

There are two main stages to the project:

- ❖ *Literature review, data familiarisation and interrogation*
A review of literature will be conducted (relating to the issue of the labour supply of youth with low educational attainment) from national and international perspectives. This stage will also involve the researchers becoming familiar with and interrogating the LSAY and YITS (Canadian *Youth in Transition Survey*) data.

The data sets to be used in this project are: LSAY 1995 Year 9 cohort (main Australian data source); LSAY 1998 Year 9 cohort; YITS 2000 18-20 year old cohort (main Canadian data source); YITS 2000 15 year old cohort.

- ❖ *Statistical analysis*
To investigate the first two research questions a detailed statistical analysis of training and employment transitions using data (separately) from the LSAY and Canadian YITS will be undertaken. The LSAY and YITS contain detailed comparable data that is collected annually on participation in vocational and other educational courses by school leavers and on the qualifications attained. With the LSAY 1995 Year 9 cohort, labour market outcomes of those youth can now be tracked into their mid-20s, by which time the vast majority have completed their main post-school education activity and (where applicable) are in the early years of their careers. Equivalent tracking is possible with the YITS and therefore, a detailed comparison of the pathways between Australian and Canadian youth can be made. Importantly, the data also contain scores from standard maths and literacy tests undertaken in Year 9, which will permit analysis of the importance of VET as a pathway to work and in determining participation rates for women of different levels of literacy and years of school completed.

THE ORGANISATION:

The Women in Social & Economic Research (WiSER) research unit was founded in April 1999 in response to a growing void in the gender analysis of the economic and social policy issues that confront women. As an inter-disciplinary unit WiSER brings together feminist and pro-feminist researchers and doctoral students with backgrounds in economics, industrial relations, law, leadership, marketing, management, social policy and social work.

The unit's research work is supported through various research grants and consulting opportunities. Research findings are disseminated through WiSER working papers, WiSER reports, peer reviewed journal publications, conferences and public submissions. Further details on WiSER events, WiSER research programs and WiSER research reports and papers may be found at: www.cbs.curtin.edu.au/wiser