

Canada's Youth and the Environment During a Recession

*Economic Downturn Affecting Majority of Canada's Youth (66%)
but only 34% Say Climate Change Should Become a Lesser
Priority and Government Focus more On the Recession*



Ipsos Reid

Release Date: Monday, April 20, 2009, 8:00am EDT

Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 research professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and on-line panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada—including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country—all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group. To learn more, visit www.ipsos.ca

***For copies of other news releases, please visit
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>***

© Ipsos Reid

*Washington • New York • Chicago • Minneapolis • Seattle • San Francisco
Vancouver • Edmonton • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal*



Canada's Youth and the Environment During a Recession

Economic Downturn Affecting Majority of Canada's Youth (66%) but only 34% Say Climate Change Should Become a Lesser Priority and Government Focus more On the Recession

Toronto, ON – In the survey, conducted by Ipsos Reid for Canon Canada, two thirds (66%) of Canada's youth say the current recession is having an impact on them – with a majority (55%) revealing that the economic downturn is affecting the ability of a family member to find a job, or to find one for themselves (51%).

But whatever the apparent fallout from the current economic situation affecting themselves, their family or the country, only 34% of Canada's youth believe that climate change should become a lesser priority and that government should focus more on the recession.

In fact, Canada's youth give government both barrels: seven in 10 equally disagree that government is doing enough about the economic downturn (68%) *and* the current state of the environment (68%).

These are the findings of a poll conducted on behalf of Canon Canada from March 23 to 30, 2009. This online survey of 1029 Canadian youth aged 14-19 was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results of these polls are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's

© Ipsos Reid

composition reflects that of the actual Canadian youth population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls, however, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire adult population of Canada been polled.

The most important issues for Canada's youth today...

Perhaps not surprising because their days and likely evenings are consumed with school, when asked to rank the four leading national issues that are of importance to them personally, Canadian youth overall name education (60%) first.

But after education, the ranking is the economy and jobs (56%), the environment (44%) and healthcare (40%). There are some significant differences in terms of demographics and geography:

- Those most likely to rank education as their top personally important issue are aged 16-17 (69%)
- Those most likely to rank the economy and jobs as their top personally important issue are aged 18-19 (71%)
- Healthcare is ranked relatively the same by each of the age groupings: 14-15 (39%), 16-17 (40%) and 18-19 (42%)

- The age group most likely to embrace the environment as a top issue is the youngest age group (14-15, second choice (55%) for their top personal issue just following education as their first choice (62%))
- Youth in Alberta are more likely to choose education as their most important personal issue (67%) whereas youth in British Columbia are more likely to choose the economy and jobs as their most important personal issue (76%)
- Youth from Québec are most likely to single out healthcare as one of their top issues (54%) followed closely by youth from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (50%) and Atlantic Canada (46%)
- With the exclusion of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (33%), youth in every other province choose the environment as their third most important issue -- with youth in Alberta (46%) leading the way, followed closely behind by Québec (45%), Ontario (44%) and British Columbia/ Atlantic Canada (43%)
- There are no significant gender differences in both the overall and a specific issue rankings

A core group of roughly 42% -44% of Canada's youth are more likely to be engaged on issues related to the environment than their counterparts...

As noted above, 44% of Canada's youth rank the environment as an important issue for them personally. It's also clear from the responses throughout the entire survey there's a core group of at least 42% to 44% of Canada's youth for whom the environment resonates higher than with their counterparts.

So, what's driving this core group?

Of the 44% of Canadian youth, a full majority (71%) believe that if action isn't taken now the world will be worse off when they are in their 40s...

Of those who chose the environment as one of their top personally important issues (44%), seven in 10 (71%) indicated that they were "concerned that if people don't take action now, the world will be worse off" when they are in their late 40s. Half (47%) indicated that "people my age need to take responsibility for the environment," three in 10 (27%) indicated that they are "passionate about the outdoors and want to conserve Canada's wilderness" while one quarter (26%) indicated that "older generations are not doing enough."

Of the 44%:

- Those youth most concerned that if people don't take action now the world will be worse off when they're in their 40s (71%) are from British Columbia (81%, followed by youth in Atlantic Canada (75%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (73%); there are no significant demographic differences.
- Those youth most likely to advocate that "people my age need to take responsibility for the environment" (47%) are most likely to come from Atlantic Canada (56%) and

British Columbia (54%) and the least likely to come from Alberta (40%); while there are no significant age differences, there is a significant gender difference with 51% of female youth believing this mantra more so than male youth (43%)

- Those youth who are passionate about the outdoors and want to conserve Canada's wilderness (27%) are most likely to hail from Atlantic Canada (52%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (42%), and least likely to come from Ontario (20%); the age group least likely to identify with this emotion are those aged 16-17 (23%) whereas those aged 14-15 are most likely to identify with it (30%)
- Of those youth who believe older generations are not doing enough (26%) those most likely to take his perspective are from British Columbia/ Alberta (32%) along with those from Ontario (29%)/ Atlantic Canada (28%). Those least likely to believe this to be the case are from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (11%) and from Québec (20%)

Majority (58%) of Canada's youth are confident in the country's ability to prevent climate change...

A majority (58%) of Canada's youth are either equally (55%) or more (3%) confident in Canada's ability to prevent climate change since the economic recession has occurred, compared to 42% who are less confident. Those who are most confident (58%) and least likely to have had their confidence shaken in Canada's ability to prevent climate change since the onset of the economic recession are male (62% versus female 54%), mid-to older (60%

compared to 55% younger) and most likely from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (72%), Ontario/Alberta (59%) and British Columbia (57%).

And 43% say the current state of the environment, including climate change, affects their career decisions/choices...

Regardless of the immediate downturn in the economy, it would appear that the environment, including climate change, may affect the career decisions/choices of a sizable minority of Canada's youth.

Those most likely to believe that the current state of the environment will affect their career decisions/choices are most likely to be female (46% versus 41% male), more likely to be younger (14-15 49%, then older [16-17 and 40%, 18-19 41%]), and come from Atlantic Canada (51%) or Ontario (47%) followed by a British Columbia/Alberta (41%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (39%) and Québec (38%).

To what extent is the current economic recession affecting Canadian youth?

The economic recession is having a wide-ranging impact on Canadian youth, affecting two thirds (66%) in the ability of them or their family in taking a vacation or trip; 60% of the amount they spend on things like clothes and food; 55% in the ability of a family member to

find a job, and half (51%) in the ability to find a job for themselves. Those most likely to indicate that the downturn in the economy has affected...

- *Their ability to take a vacation/trip* (66%) are more likely to be female (72% versus male 61%) and those aged 14-17 (69%) and those from Ontario (72%), British Columbia (70%) and Atlantic Canada (68%); those areas least affect our Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%), followed by Québec (40%) and Alberta (39%).
- *The amount they spend on things like clothes and food* (60%) are more likely to be female (69% versus 52%) and from British Columbia (70%) and Ontario (60%); those least likely to be affected are from Québec (53%), followed by Atlantic Canada (45%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%) and Alberta (42%). There are no significant age differences.
- *The ability of a family member to find a job* (55%) are more likely to be female (57% versus 52% male) and from Ontario (61%) followed by British Columbia (58%), Alberta (57%) and Atlantic Canada (50%); those least likely to agree with this are from Québec (45%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%). From an age perspective older youth (18-19 61%) are more likely to identify with this view than younger youth (16-17 53%, 14-15 50%)
- *Their own ability to find a job* (51%) are more likely to be female (56% versus male 46%) and from Ontario (60%), followed by British Columbia (53%) and Alberta/Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Atlantic Canada (47%); the province/region were used are least likely to be affected in their own ability to find a job is in Québec (42%); however, there is also a significant age impact in this category -- 60% of those aged 18-

19 indicate that the current economic recession has affected their ability to find a job, followed by those aged 16-17 (51%) and those aged 14-15 (43%)

And on this latter point, it would appear that the economic downturn has affected the career decision/choices for 46% of Canada's youth -- not surprisingly, the majority of which are in the oldest age (18-19 54%) category. Of the 46%, they are most likely to be female (49% versus 43% male) and come from Ontario/Atlantic Canada (52%) or British Columbia (51%) and Alberta (48%) and least likely to hail from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%) or Québec (36%)

Despite current economic situation, only 34% of Canada's youth believe that climate change should become a lesser priority...

Whatever the fallout from the current economic situation affecting themselves, their family or the country, only 34% of Canada's youth believe that climate change should become a lesser priority and that government should focus more on the recession.

Alternatively, two thirds (66%) of Canada's youth believe climate change should remain a high priority for government even if it means less focus on the recession (36%) or government should not adjust its priorities and leave them the same as before the recession (30%).

- Those most likely to believe climate change should remain a high priority (34%) even if it means the government would focus less on the recession they are more likely to be

from the youngest group (14-15 41%), and from Atlantic Canada (43%), and Ontario/Québec (37%). There are no significant gender differences.

- Those most likely to believe that the government should not adjust its priorities but leave them the same as they were before the recession (30%) are most likely to be from the middle age group (16-17 33%) and come from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (42%) or Alberta (34%) and Ontario (33%).
- Those most likely to believe climate change should become a lesser priority (34%) are more likely to be older youth (18-19 38%) and from British Columbia (46%), Québec (36%) and Alberta (35%). There are no gender differences.

On both of these fronts, Canada's Youth feel that government isn't doing enough about the current state of the economic downturn (68%) and the environment (68%)...

Canada's youth give resounding thumbs down to the government in doing enough about the economic downturn and, quite separately, the current state of the environment. Youth across the country equally disagree that the government is doing enough about the economic downturn (68%) or the environment (68%); only 32% for each category believe that government is doing enough.

- Those youth most likely to disagree that the government is doing enough about the economic downturn are more likely to be female (72% versus male 63%), and more likely to be from Atlantic Canada (85%), Alberta (75%) and Québec (70%). Those youth most likely to believe that the government is doing enough about the economic downturn are most likely to come from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (44%) and Ontario/ -- Colombia (36%). From an age perspective, those who are youngest (73%) and oldest (68%) within the youth grouping are most likely to disagree that the government is doing enough compared to 61% of those who are aged 16-17. The latter group is also the most likely to compliment their government -- 39% agree that the government is doing enough about the economic downturn.
- Those youth most likely to disagree that the government is doing enough about the environment are more likely to be female (71% versus male 65%), and more likely to be from Québec (77%) and Ontario (69%), followed by Atlantic Canada youth (65%), Alberta youth (65%) and youth from British Columbia (63%). Those least likely to disagree that the government is doing enough about the current state of the environment (51%) and most likely to believe the government is doing enough (49%) come from Saskatchewan/Manitoba. Three quarters (73%) of youth aged 14-15 disagree that the government is doing enough about the environment followed by those aged 16-17 (67%) and aged 18-19 (65%)

But are Canadian youth themselves talking the talk?

Regardless of whether they're thumbing government or not, the survey decided to put the spotlight on young people to find out what they are personally doing about the environment already -- or what they're willing to do.

Among a selection of environmentally-friendly activities, youth respondents indicated that they are already doing the following (with significant differences identified):

- 68% -- using rechargeable batteries (Québec 77%)
- 66% -- carry a reusable shopping bag/refuse to use plastic bags (Ontario 70%, Québec 69%, Alberta 68%, aged 18-19 69%, female 70%)
- 46% -- take transit or ride a bike instead of driving a vehicle (male 48%, Québec 50%, Ontario 49%; Saskatchewan/Manitoba 27%, Atlantic Canada 30%)
- 42% -- take fewer vacations (female 45%, British Columbia 53%, Ontario 47%; Saskatchewan/Manitoba 29%)
- 36% -- repair a broken item (such as a hairdryers/iPod/cell phone) before buying a new one (18-19 41%, British Columbia 29%)
- 35% -- stop buying bottled water (female 40%, 18-19 30%, Québec 41%, Ontario 31%)
- 25% -- pay higher prices for gas (Atlantic Canada 36%, British Columbia 35% and Alberta 34%; Québec 14%)
- 19% -- volunteer for community cleanup projects (14-15 22%, Ontario/ Atlantic Canada 24%, Québec 14%)



And if they aren't already doing it, what do those who are remaining say they're willing to do? From the same list, here are the various activities in ranked order:

- 59% -- volunteer for community cleanup projects
- 46% -- repair a broken item instead of buying a new one
- 43% -- stop buying bottled water
- 33% -- take transit or ride a bike instead of driving a vehicle
- 29% -- carry a reusable shopping bag/refused to use plastic bags
- 29% -- take fewer vacations
- 27% -- use rechargeable batteries
- 16% -- pay higher prices for gas

For more information on this Factum, please contact:

*John Wright
Senior Vice President
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 324-2002*

*For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos.ca.
News Releases are available at: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>*