

Presentation

January 31, 2025

Missing Pieces Data and Canada's Criminal Justice System

I'm about to be bored by multiple charts and graphs!!"



Relax. There isn't enough demographic data available to create anything of value



We do have small snapshots, tidbits and a few secondary sources.



Statistics Canada:

Provides comprehensive data on crime rates, incarceration, pretrial detention, and demographics of the criminal justice system (Juristat).

- Adult correctional statistics in Canada”
- Overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the Canadian criminal justice system”
- Youth and the criminal justice system

Correctional Service Canada (CSC):

Data on federally incarcerated individuals, mental health, recidivism, and rehabilitation programs.

Key Reports:

- Profile of Offenders in Federal Custody
- Indigenous Offenders: Correctional Results

Public Safety Canada:

Reports on criminal justice policies, trends in incarceration, and public safety initiatives.

Key Publications:

- Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview
- Research on recidivism and reintegration



Lack of Data Transparency in Canada

Comparative Analysis:

- Canada publishes less detailed data on incarceration and demographics compared to jurisdictions like the U.S., U.K., and Australia.

Challenges:

- Privacy laws limit granular data sharing.
- Fragmentation between federal and provincial systems creates inconsistencies.
- Limited investment in data collection and publication.

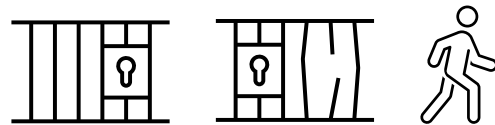
Consequences:

- Hinders public accountability and advocacy efforts.
- Reduces ability to address systemic issues effectively

Canada's Incarceration Rates

National Stats:

- Federal incarceration: ~14,071 individuals.
- Provincial/territorial incarceration: ~23,423 individuals.
- Combined incarceration rate: ~104.4 per 100,000 adults.



Ontario Stats:

- Average daily population in Ontario jails: ~8,889. Toronto Stats
- Toronto South Detention Centre houses ~1,100 inmates.

Barriers to Reintegration - Criminal Records in Canada

Total Number of Criminal Records:

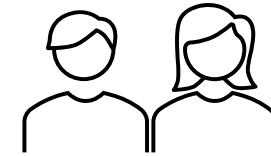
- Over 3.8 million Canadians have criminal records.

Percentage of Population:

- Approximately 10% of the Canadian population has a criminal record.

Gender Breakdown:

- Men: 85% of individuals with criminal records.
- Women: 15% of individuals with criminal records.



Barriers Created:

- Employment: Criminal records limit job opportunities. Estimates are that 27% of jobs require a criminal records check. Increasing over time
- Housing: Many face difficulty securing stable housing.

Reform Opportunities:

- Record suspensions (pardons) can improve reintegration chances.
- Advocacy for reduced systemic barriers.

Demographic Breakdown

Indigenous Representation:

- 5% of the general population but 30% of federally incarcerated individuals.
- Indigenous women: 42% of the female prison population.

Black Representation:

- 4.3% of the population but 9% of the federal prison population.
- In Structured Intervention Units: 16.3% are Black.

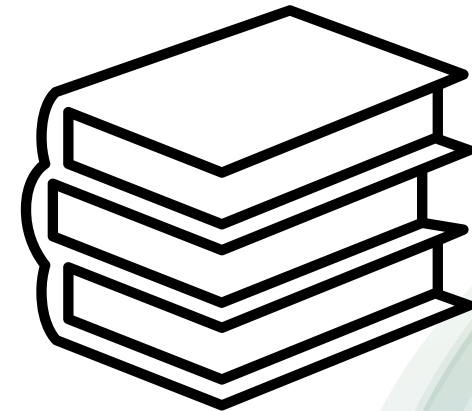
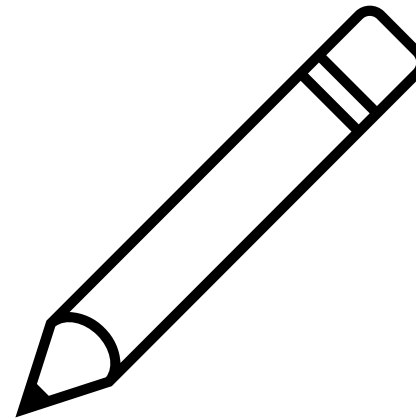
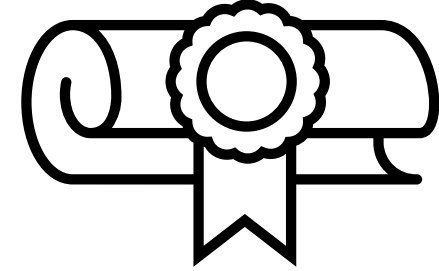
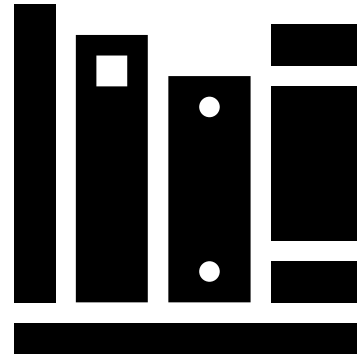
Education and Literacy Levels

Low Education Levels:

- 65% of incarcerated individuals have less than Grade 8 education.
- 54% have not completed high school (Grade 10 or below).

Literacy Challenges:

- Many inmates lack basic literacy skills, hindering rehabilitation and reintegration.



Education and Literacy Levels (Part 2)



Low Education Levels:

- 65% of incarcerated individuals have less than Grade 8 education.
- 54% have not completed high school (Grade 10 or below).

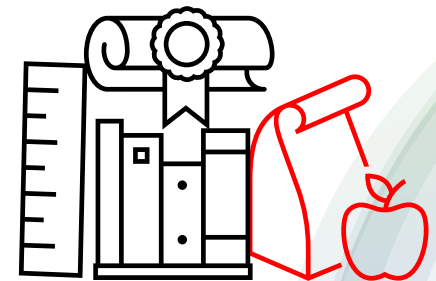
Gender Breakdown:

- Men: A majority of male inmates have not completed high school.
- Women: Approximately one-third of female inmates have less than a Grade 9 education.

Age Distribution:

- Most inmates without high school education are between 25 and 34 years old.

Caveat. Some of the data is over 20 years old!



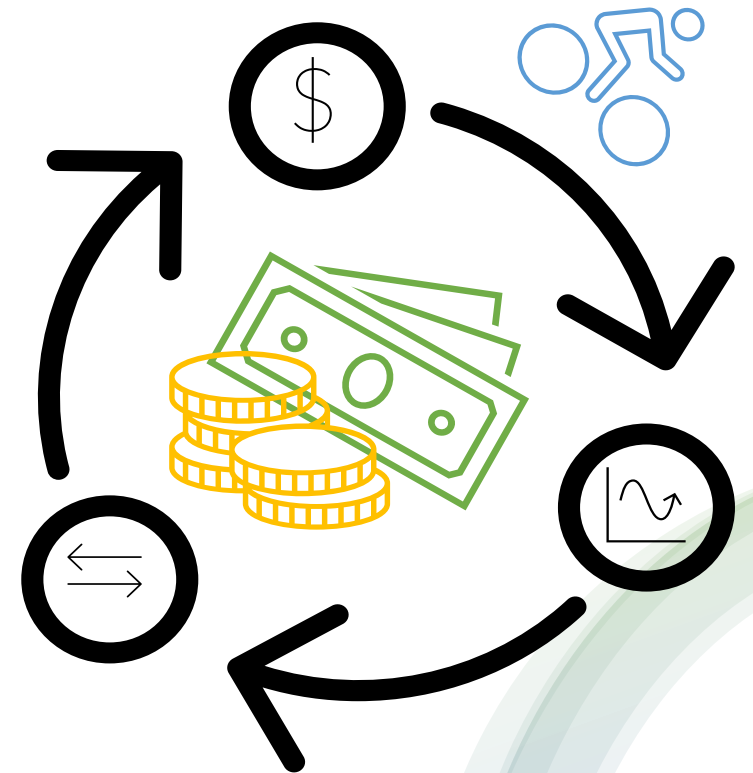
Income and Socioeconomic Factors

Income Levels:

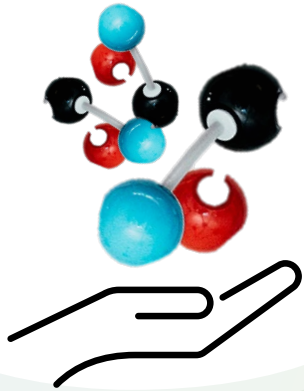
- Most incarcerated individuals come from low-income backgrounds.
- Pre-incarceration unemployment is common (~60%).

Poverty and Crime Cycle:

- Poverty contributes to survival crimes (e.g., theft).
- Post-incarceration, criminal records limit job opportunities.



Mental Health and Substance Use



Mental Health:

- 70% of incarcerated individuals have mental health conditions.

Substance Use Disorders:

- 80% have histories of substance abuse.

Effectiveness of Education Programs

Positive Outcomes

Recidivism Reduction

Research consistently shows that inmates who participate in vocational programs are less likely to reoffend. For example:

- A Correctional Service Canada (CSC) Study found that **CORCAN participants had a 10% lower recidivism rate** compared to non-participants
- Skills learned through vocational programs provide economic independence, which helps break the cycle of crime

Employment Post-Release

Vocational programs equip inmates with certifications and job-ready skills that improve employability. For example:

- **CORCAN** participants are more likely to secure employment upon release compared to those that do not participate
- Many programs partner with industry organizations, providing direct pathways to employment after release.

Rehabilitation and Self-Worth:

- Learning practical skills and improve self-esteem and gives inmates a sense of purpose, which can be a crucial component of rehabilitation



Barriers to Effectiveness

Stigma: Despite certifications, many employers are reluctant to hire individuals with a criminal record

Skills Mismatch: Some programs train inmates for industries with limited job opportunities or evolving demands, making skills less relevant

Limited Access: Due to funding, geographic disparities, and program capacity, not all inmates benefit from these interventions

Short Program Duration: Many programs are too short to fully prepare inmates for high-demand trades or advanced certifications.

Key Challenges in Vocational Program Delivery

1

Funding Limitations:

- Vocational programs are resource-intensive, requiring equipment, certified instructors and partnerships with industry bodies
- Federal programs like CORCAN receive better funding, but provincial programs often struggle with consistent support

2

Participation Rates:

- The number of inmates enrolled in vocational programs is relatively low compared to the overall prison population. In Canada, only a fraction of inmates participate in CORCAN programs, and even fewer in provincial programs

3

Program Accessibility:

- Women and Indigenous inmates often have less access to vocational training tailored to their needs
- Indigenous inmates, who are overrepresented in the prison system, would benefit greatly from culturally relevant vocational training aligned with traditional skills and community needs

4

Comparison to U.S. Programs

Canadian programs are **less common and less comprehensive** compared to the U.S., where initiatives like the Second Chance Pell Grant and large-scale vocational programs are well-funded. The U.S. also tracks program outcomes more systematically, enabling better evaluation of effectiveness.

High School Equivalency



Improved Employment Opportunity

- A GED certificate is recognized as equivalent to a high school diploma by most employers, increasing post-release employment prospects
- Inmates with a GED are more likely to secure stable, higher-paying jobs compared to those without any formal education.

Reduced Recidivism:

- Studies in Canada and the U.S. show that educational attainment, including earning a GED, reduces the likelihood of reoffending. This is because education improves problem-solving skills, self-esteem and economic independence.
- A U.S. meta-analysis found that inmates who earned a GED were **30% less likely to reoffend** compared to those who did not participate in educational programs.

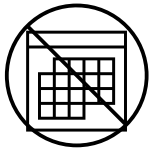


Barriers to Effectiveness



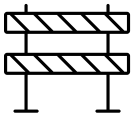
Literacy Levels:

- Many inmates lack the foundational literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in GED preparation courses. This can discourage participation or completion.



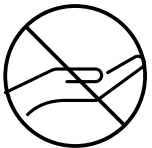
Short Sentences:

- In provincial institutions, the average sentence is often too short for inmates to prepare for and complete the GED exam.



Lack of Post-Release Support:

- Even after earning a GED, many former inmates struggle to find opportunities to build on their education due to stigma or financial barriers.



Gender and Indigenous Representation in GED Programs

Women Inmates:

- Women are less likely than men to access GED programs in prison, largely because fewer correctional facilities house women, limiting educational resources tailored to and for them
- For the women who do complete the GED, it can be particularly transformative, as women often face greater barriers to employment and reintegration.

Indigenous Inmates:

- Indigenous inmates, who are disproportionately represented in Canadian prisons, benefit significantly from education programs, including the GED
- However, there are calls for more culturally relevant education programs to address the unique needs and experiences of Indigenous inmates.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME
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