The Impact of First Nations Women Entrepreneurs on the Atlantic Region’s Economy

A research partnership between St. FX University and the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP)
Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP)

- Not much is known about the involvement of Aboriginal women in entrepreneurial activities
- No baseline data
- Before taking further steps to support or encourage entrepreneurship this void needed to be addressed
The research design

- Two phases:
  - Phase 1 survey (on-line)**
  - Phase 2 case studies
    - in-depth interviews with current entrepreneurs; focus group with non-entrepreneurs
Who participated?

- The on-line survey:
  - 231 First Nations women

- Community case studies:
  - Two large/two small communities
    - 39 entrepreneurs
    - 40 non-entrepreneurs
Atlantic Aboriginal women’s involvement in entrepreneurial activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrepreneurial activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently an owner of a business (in whole or part)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently not an owner of a business (in whole or part)</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously been an owner of a business</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously tried to start a business but gave up</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now trying to start a business</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No entrepreneurial involvement</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile of Businesses

- **Number of years in operation (n=71)**
  - 5 years or less - 49%
  - between 6 and 10 years - 21%
  - over 10 years 30%

- **Legal form of business (n=62)**
  - Sole proprietorship – 84%
  - Incorporated – 8%
  - Partnership – 8%
Profile of Businesses

- Location of business (n=64)
  - 70% on-reserve
  - 84% home-based
- Business has customers who are: (n=76)
  - Local 57.9%
  - In other parts of province 39.5%
  - Outside the province 36.8%
- Industry (n=66)
  - Arts, entertainment, accommodation, food & cultural 40.9%
  - Other services 34.8%
  - Wholesale, retail trade 12.1%
  - Professional, scientific & technical, education and health and social 6.1%
  - Primary 4.5%
  - Construction 1.5%
Profile of Businesses

- Number of employees (excluding respondent) (n=60)
  - Total 75
  - Full time 29
  - Part time 28
  - Casual/temporary 23
  - Aboriginal 66

- Average number of employees (excluding respondent) (n=60):
  - in total: 1.25
  - full-time .8
  - part-time employees .9
  - casual/temporary employees .8
  - Aboriginal 1.5
Distribution of Businesses by Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business size (n=60)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 employees</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 employees</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-19 employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Profile of Business Owners (n=45)

## Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed high school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some trade/technical school/community college</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/technical school/community college diploma</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Advantages of Business Ownership

1. Flexibility (in time & work): 11 responses
2. Being your own boss: 5 responses
3. More effort → more income: 4 responses
Major Disadvantages of Business Ownership

1. Funding/financial management: 4 responses
2. Uncertainty/Risk: 2 responses each

❖ Overall: fewer disadvantages listed than advantages
Business Profitability and Sales

- Profitability
  - Net Profit 87%

- Sales
  - Increased 52.2%
  - Stayed the same 43.5%
  - Decreased 4.3%
Perceptions of Success and Satisfaction

- Success (1=extremely successful, 5=not at all successful)
  - 2.48 (between ‘very’ and ‘somewhat’ successful)

- Satisfaction: (where 1=very satisfied, 5=very dissatisfied)
  - 1.75 (between ‘very’ and ‘somewhat’ satisfied)