



Work Participation & Aspiration amongst Study Youth

Findings from Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)

Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) began in 2008 with a sample of nearly 1,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0.5-5 years and their families from 11 sites, including major cities and very remote areas across Australia. This factsheet presents key findings from the LSIC Wave 13 survey about work participation and aspiration of Study Youth (aged 12-17 years in 2020). Wave 13 interviews were conducted entirely by telephone during the COVID-19 pandemic (June to December 2020). A total of 755 families were surveyed in Wave 13, accounting for 49% of the in-scope population for the wave. The Wave 13 sample was more clustered around non-remote areas, with 40% of families from major cities, 44% from regional areas and 16% from remote and very remote areas, compared with 30%, 41% and 29%, respectively, in Wave 12.

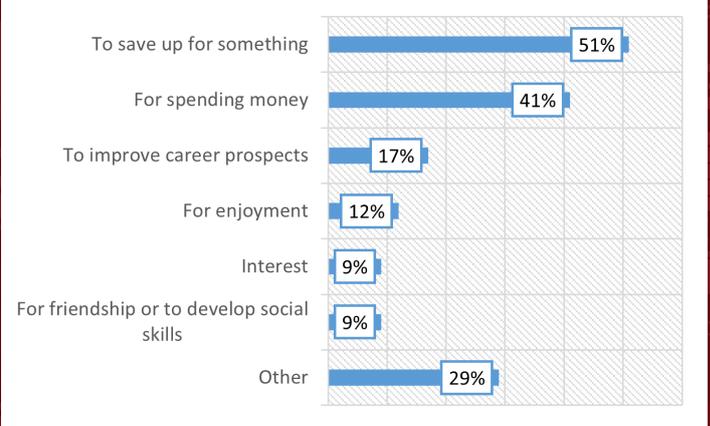
Main findings from the analysis of Wave 13 data about Study Youth’s work participation and aspiration:

- About 14% of Study Youth had undertaken paid work in 12 months before the interview working an average of 12.8 hours per week.
- Saving money (51%), having money to spend (41%) and improving career prospects (17%) were the three most common reasons for work participation.
- Most Study Youth (53%) aspire to multiple careers and skill sets.
- Study Youth’s work participation and aspiration are statistically significantly associated with demographic, socioeconomic and geographic factors.

Study Youth were asked about their participation in paid work in the last 12 months:

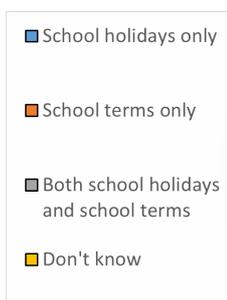
- 14% of the 750 Study Youth interviewed had done paid work.
- 70% of those who had done paid work, worked an average of 12.8 hours a week.
- Study Youth were more likely to be working if they were female, had an employed parent and lived in less remote areas.
- Evidence shows that working extended hours, usually more than five to ten hours a week, is negatively associated with academic progress and school retention (Vickers, Lamb & Hinkley, 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2005; Staff & Mortimer, 2007; Anlezark & Lim, 2011).

Main reasons Study Youth have worked in the last 12 months:



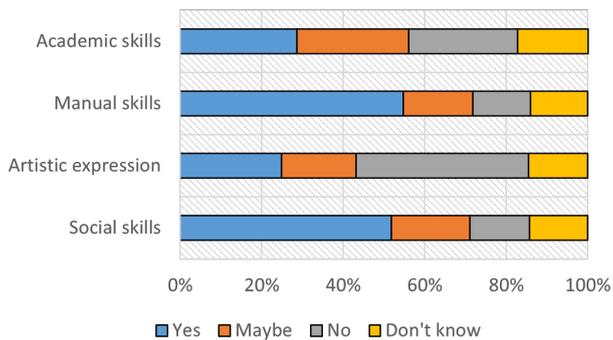
Note: The category 'Other' includes reason such as, helping family business, being encouraged by parents, supplementing family income and contributing to community.

When did Study Youth do paid work?



Most of the Study Youth in employment (82%) worked during the school term.

Survey responses show that, in the future, Study Youth would like to do work involving...



Of 710 study Youth:

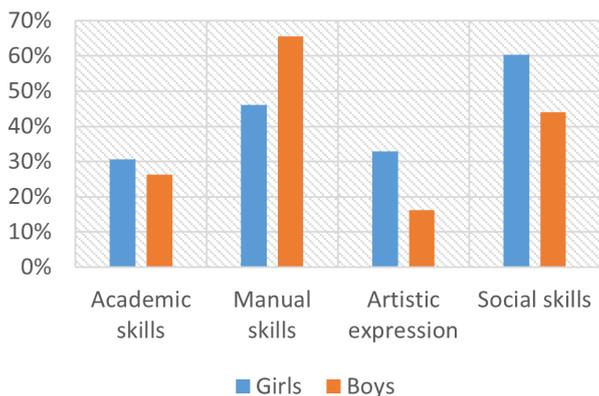
- 80% aspired for at least one job category.
- 75% aspired for multiple job categories.
- 10% did not know what job they might like to do in the future.
- About 5% did not aspire for any of the work categories.

The propensity to aspire to having a job, regardless of the type of job, was higher among Study Youth:

- with an employed parent (81%) than with non-employed parent (76%).
- in families without serious money worries (83%) than families with serious money worries (78%).
- in non-remote areas (80%) remote areas than remote areas (65%).

Patterns of work aspiration appear to differ by gender:

- Girls were more likely than boys to aspire for work involving artistic expression, social skills, and academic skills.
- Boys were more likely than girls to aspire for work involving manual skills.



Based on the findings, what needs to be done to improve occupational prospects for youth?

- Provide more financial support for students.
- Increase the presence of local-level education and employment providers.
- Support parents to enter the labour market and achieve work-life balance so that they serve as positive role models for youth.
- Understand the evolving nature of youth aspiration and support role exploration.

Please see the full report for detail on the study findings: Cooms, V., Dinku, Y., Howard-Wagner, D., Edwards, B., & Biddle, N. (2024). Footprints in Time: Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)-Wave 13 Summary Report, Australian National University, Canberra.

This summary of findings can be cited as: Cooms, V., Dinku, Y., Howard-Wagner, D., Edwards, B., & Biddle, N. (2024). Work Participation and Aspiration among Study Youth- Wave 13 Summary Report for Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), Australian National University Canberra

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