

Canadians are divided over whether we're all born with an equal chance to succeed in the country: there is an important generational divide on the answer

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Introduction

December 10th will mark the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is considered a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. Although Canada was initially hesitant to sign on to the Declaration it did end up being a signatory in 1948. The Canadian connection to the UN declaration is usually associated with John Peters Humphrey the first Director of the UN Division of Human Rights and the principal drafter of the Declaration.

To mark the 75th Anniversary of the UN Declaration, the Association for Canadian Studies asked Leger Marketing to conduct a survey of Canadians that looked at knowledge of the Canadian Charter of Rights, at those rights that Canadians feel are currently most in need of protection. Finally, we asked a question on whether Canadians felt we're all born with an equal chance to succeed in the country, a variation on Article 1 of the UN Declaration which states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights..."

Methodology

The Leger survey was conducted during the week of September 25th, 2023 for the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute via web panel with 1502 Canadians. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1502 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

A majority of Canadians think that everyone in Canada is born with an equal opportunity to succeed though there is a considerable gap in this regard between those under 35 and those over that age

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed. - Please answer yes or no to the following.	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>= 75
Yes	52.1%	32.0%	36.1%	51.0%	54.5%	60.5%	62.7%	69.7%
No	41.6%	55.6%	56.6%	42.1%	37.0%	36.5%	33.0%	28.7%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	6.3%	12.4%	7.2%	6.9%	8.5%	3.0%	4.3%	1.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

British Columbians are most likely to think that everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed in Canada, Quebecers are least likely to think so.

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed.	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Yes	61.2%	52.1%	51.0%	55.4%	39.2%	59.4%
No	30.6%	38.9%	41.7%	38.9%	56.2%	34.7%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8.1%	9.0%	7.3%	5.7%	4.6%	5.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Across various identity based groups there is agreement that everyone in Canada is born with an equal opportunity to succeed though francophones feel otherwise

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed. - Please answer yes or no to the following.	Visible Minority	Not a Visible Minority	Born in Canada	Born Outside of Canada	French	English	Other
Yes	49.3%	52.9%	50.7%	57.1%	37.9%	56.7%	64.3%
No	43.5%	41.7%	43.9%	33.3%	57.0%	37.8%	20.2%
I don't know	7.2%	5.3%	5.4%	9.6%	5.0%	5.4%	15.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chinese and South Asian origin Canadians are divided on the extent to which they believe everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed. - Please answer yes or no to the following.	South Asian	Chinese
Yes	52.1%	46.2%
No	41.8%	45.2%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	6.1%	8.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Income does not play a major role in the extent to which people believe that everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed.	Among the following categories, which one best reflects the total income, before taxes, of all the members of your household in 2022?					
	\$19,999 or less	Between \$20,000 and \$39,999	Between \$40,000 and \$59,999	Between \$60,000 and \$79,999	Between \$80,000 and \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Yes	50.5%	54.9%	52.3%	56.0%	55.5%	52.3%
No	42.7%	38.4%	41.0%	40.8%	40.9%	42.5%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	6.8%	6.8%	6.7%	3.1%	3.6%	5.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Educational Attainment has little impact on the extent to which Canadians believe that In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed.

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed. - Please answer yes or no to the following.	High school, general or vocational (8 to 12 years)	College (pre-university, technical training, certificate, accreditation or advanced diploma (13-15 years))	University certificates and diplomas	University Bachelor (including classical studies)
Yes	53.6%	54.1%	52.1%	50.4%
No	38.9%	40.8%	45.2%	43.9%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	7.6%	5.1%	2.7%	5.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Those self assessing as lower class are least likely to feel that in Canada everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed. - Please answer yes or no to the following.	Most people see themselves as belonging to a particular social or economic class. Which of the following classes would you say you belong to?			
	Lower class	Lower middle class	Middle class	Upper middle class
Yes	42.2%	50.3%	55.9%	48.3%
No	51.7%	44.4%	38.3%	47.1%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	6.0%	5.3%	5.8%	4.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Where one situates themselves on the ideological spectrum has a profound impact on the extent to which they believe that in Canada everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed

In Canada, everyone is born with an equal opportunity to succeed	In thinking about the ideological spectrum, how would you situate yourself?				
	Right	Right of centre	Centre	Left of centre	Left
Yes	73.8%	63.0%	60.7%	39.1%	34.3%
No	21.3%	34.7%	33.1%	55.7%	64.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	5.0%	2.3%	6.2%	5.1%	1.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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