



BOOKLET 1

Sociodemographic profile and life course



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION

Context

The main purpose of the First Nations Labour and Employment Development (FNLED) Survey is to present a portrait of the workforce and employment situation within First Nations communities in Quebec. It focuses on the following main themes:

- > Sociodemographic profile and life course (booklet 1)
- > Culture, identity, language and wellness (booklet 2)
- > Education, skills and aspirations (booklet 3)
- > Success factors and obstacles to employment (booklet 4)
- > Occupation and employment (booklet 5)
- > Income and needs satisfaction (booklet 6)
- > Methodology (booklet 7)

The booklet **Sociodemographic profile and life course** aims to present the sociodemographic situation and some socioeconomic characteristics of individuals from First Nations living in communities in Quebec. These include:

- > The **individual characteristics** of the respondents (demography, language, education, income and employment).
- > The **parental model** of the respondents (education and occupation of the parents).
- > The **characteristics of the household** of the respondents (composition and overcrowding).
- > The **respondents' life course and specific life trajectories** (past occupations, migration, criminalization and homelessness).

This booklet goes beyond a classic sociodemographic description by attempting to demonstrate how certain elements of the life course, such as homelessness, migration or criminalization, can influence individuals and various aspects related to employability. It is in the same vein that we will focus on the influence that the parents' journey may have had on the respondents.

Methodology in brief

The FNLED Survey was carried out between March 2019 and February 2020. Out of 18 communities invited, 15 accepted to participate. As part of this survey, 1,307 individuals aged 15 to 64 responded to a questionnaire led by a field agent, for a participation rate of 81% and a proportion of 7% of all First Nations 15 to 64 years old living in the communities under study. The results presented are weighted in order to be representative of all inhabited First Nations communities in Quebec, with the exception of the Crees, who did not participate in the survey. The communities participating in the FNLED Survey are:

- > Ekuanitshit
- > Gesgapegiag
- > Kanesatake
- > Kawawachikamach
- > Kebaowek
- > Kitcisakik
- > Lac-Simon
- > Manawan
- > Pakua Shipu
- > Pessamit
- > Pikogan
- > Uashat mak Mani-Utenam
- > Unamen Shipu
- > Wemotaci
- > Wendake

Some results are presented by level of geographic isolation. To measure this isolation, the categorization established by Indigenous Services Canada was used. These categories are:

ZONE 1 (URBAN)	ZONE 2 (RURAL)	ZONE 3 (REMOTE)	ZONE 4 (SPECIAL ACCESS)	SERVICE CENTRE
The community is located within 50 km of the nearest service centre with year-round road access.	The community is located between 50 and 350 km of the nearest service centre with year-round road access.	The community is located over 350 km from the nearest service centre with year-round road access.	The community has no year-round road access to a service centre.	The nearest location where the community members must go in order to access service providers, banks and government services.

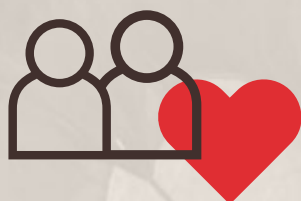
CLARIFICATIONS ON THE ESTIMATES

All results shown in the figures have lines representing confidence intervals calculated at a 95% confidence level. These lines are used to determine whether the variations shown are statistically significant. The difference between two estimates is considered statistically significant when the confidence intervals of these two estimates do not overlap.

When the estimates have a coefficient of variation ranging from 16.6% to 33.3%, they are accompanied by a “*” sign. This indicates that they should be interpreted with caution. Estimates with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3% are not published and are replaced by the sign “***”. Because the coefficient of variation is very sensitive and tends to very high values when the estimates are near 0, estimates of 5% and less with a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3% can be published, but must be interpreted with caution.

Highlights

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS



54%

of respondents said they are single.



49%

of respondents said they mainly use a First Nations language as their language of daily use.



50%

of participants said they had a job at the time of the survey.

37%

said they are married or in a common-law relationship.



49%

of respondents reported personal income of less than \$20,000 per year.



60%

of the study population does not have a high school diploma.

1%

of respondents are widowed or widowers.

PARENTAL MODEL



People whose mothers have graduated from high school are more likely to have graduated from high school or post-secondary.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS



On average, there are **4.5** individuals per household.

14% of respondents live in overcrowded housing.

67% of the participants live in a household with children and youth aged 0 to 17.

LIFE COURSE



18% of survey participants reported having criminal records.



10% indicate having had a “visible” homelessness experience and **35%** have experienced “hidden” homelessness, that is to say to have lived temporarily with a member of the family, friends, in their car or elsewhere because they did not have another place to live.



1/4 of respondents have already left their community for work.

Individual characteristics

DEMOGRAPHICS, LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to 2016 Census data, the First Nations population in Canada is growing rapidly. Although this population is young when compared to all Canadians, the median age of First Nations continues to increase. The number of First Nations people with registered Indian status increased by 30.8% from 2006 to 2016. Note that this growth is not only due to the birth rate, but also to the adoption of Bill C-3 of the federal government, which recognizes the status of

the grandchildren of women who themselves regained their status in 1985, following Bill C-31.^{1,2}

In Canada, First Nations account for 2.8% of the population.

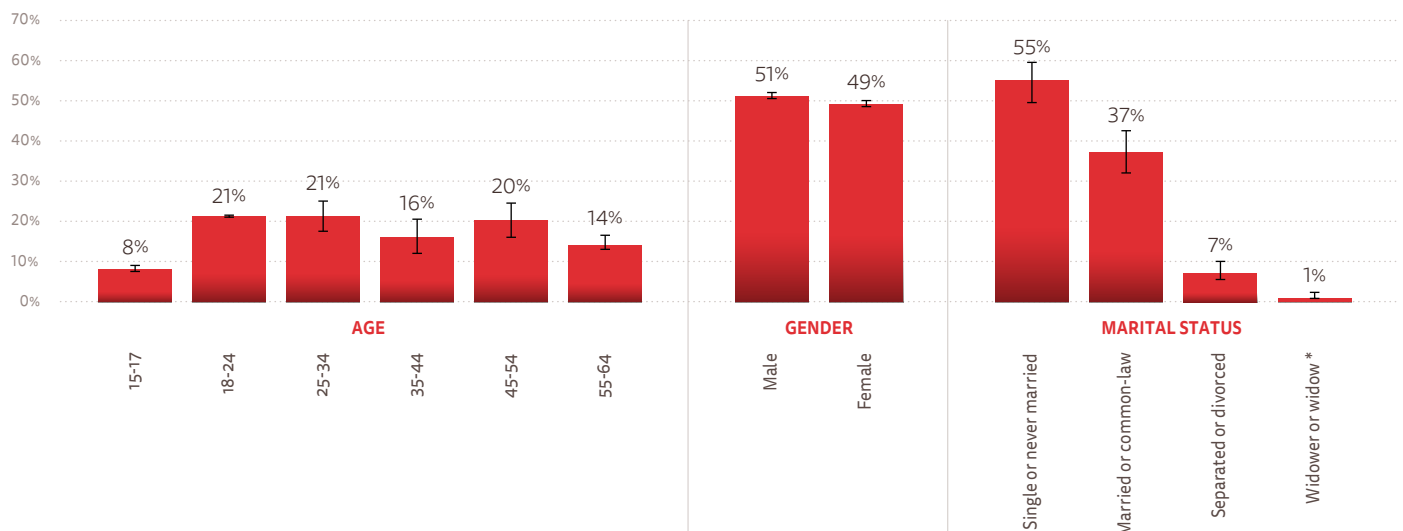
In Quebec, this proportion is 1.2%.³

In Quebec, in 2018, there were 88,817 individuals registered in the Indigenous Services Canada register. Excluding the Cree, there are 69,770 registered individuals, including 40,020 residents of a community.

The FNLED Survey includes individuals from First Nations living in communities in Quebec aged 15 to 64. This population is distributed relatively evenly based on age group and gender (**FIGURE 1**). Over half (54%) of respondents said they were single, while 37% said they were married or common-law. There are 7% of separated or divorced individuals as well as 1% of widowers or widows.

FIGURE 1

Distribution of the population by age, gender and marital status (n=1307)





LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Note: This booklet is not intended to provide a complete portrait of language, education, income and employment among First Nations. This section presents only a few descriptive statistics. These themes are discussed in more depth in other FNLED Survey booklets presented in the introduction.

The survey reveals that the language used mainly in everyday life is a First Nations language for almost half (49%) of respondents. The others use French (37%) and English (14%) on a daily basis.

The majority of individuals have not completed high school (60%). High school is the highest level of education completed for 14% of respondents, while 12% report having obtained a vocational studies

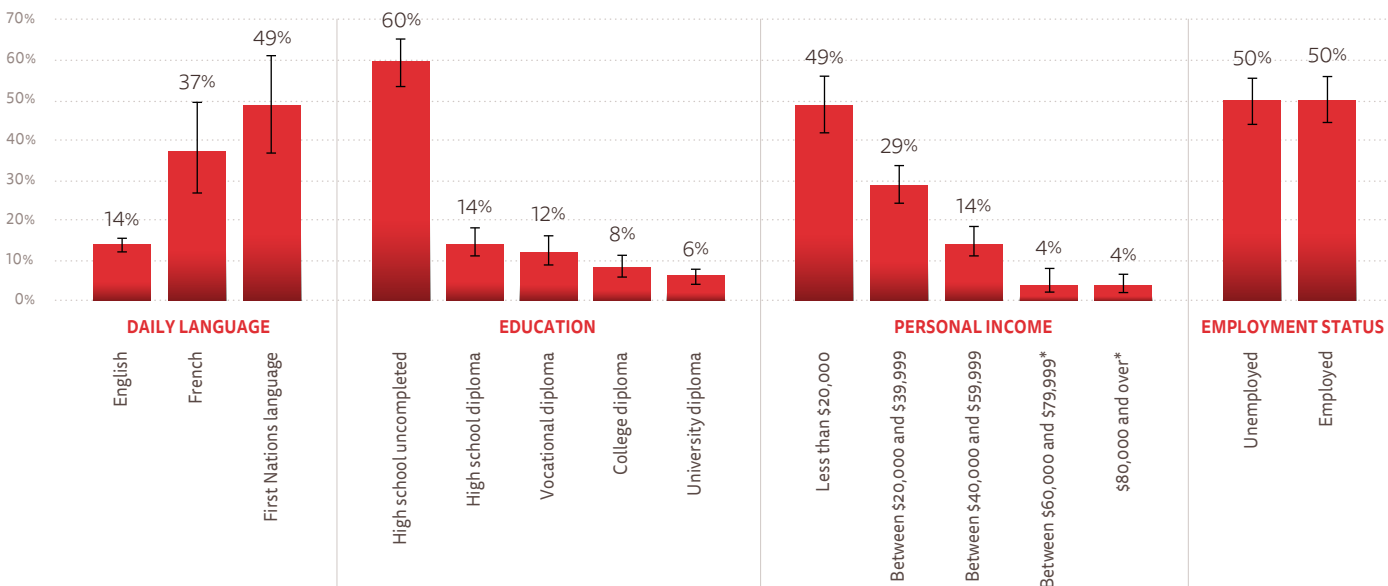
diploma. In terms of postsecondary education, 8% indicated having obtained a college diploma and 6% a university degree.

Almost half of survey participants (49%) say they have personal income of less than \$20,000 per year. More than one fourth (29%) have an income between \$20,000 and \$39,999. Individuals with personal income between \$40,000 and \$59,999 account for 14% of the population of study. A smaller

proportion (4%) reported income between \$60,000 and \$79,999 or \$80,000 and more.

Half (50%) of respondents had a job at the time of the survey, while the other half said they did not.

FIGURE 2
Daily language, education, personal income and employment status (n=1307)



Parental model

EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION OF THE PARENTS

Parental influence has a great impact on an individual's education. Data from the 2014 First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (REEES) showed that children and youths whose parents had graduated from high school performed better in school. In addition, their educational aspirations were higher.⁴

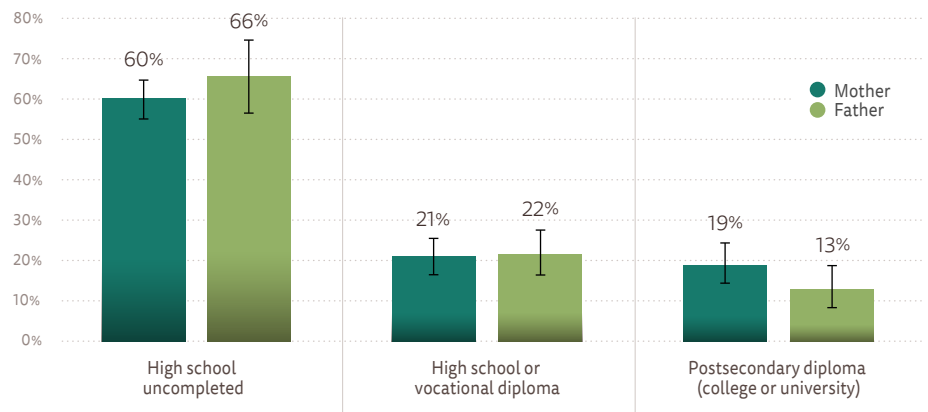
This parental influence works through various mechanisms, mainly 1) discussion and counselling; 2) the effect of their own path as a model; and 3) support, particularly financial.⁵

Some studies show that the academic results of children with working mothers are better than those with mothers at home.⁵ The influence of parents can also influence an individual's career choice.^{6,7}

Among all respondents, the majority said that their mother and father had not completed high school (60% and 66% respectively) (FIGURE 3). Almost one in five respondents has a parent who graduated from high school (21% for mothers and 22% for fathers), while 19% and 13% respectively have a mother and father with a postsecondary diploma (college or university).

FIGURE 3

Education of parents (n=1307)

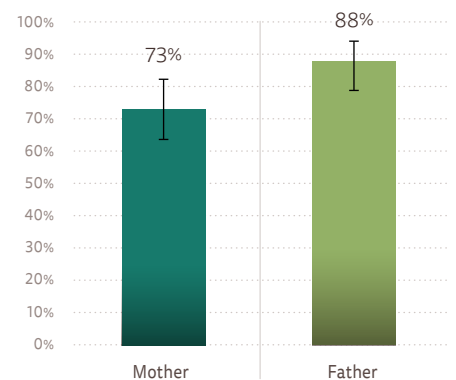


Regarding the employment status of their parents, 73% and 88% of participants said that their mother and father, respectively, had previously been employed (FIGURE 4).

Almost two thirds of respondents whose parents were employed say that they worked most of the time in a normal year (67% for mothers and 61% for fathers). About one third of them indicated that their parents experienced periods of work and other periods of unemployment (29% for mothers and 36% for fathers).

FIGURE 4

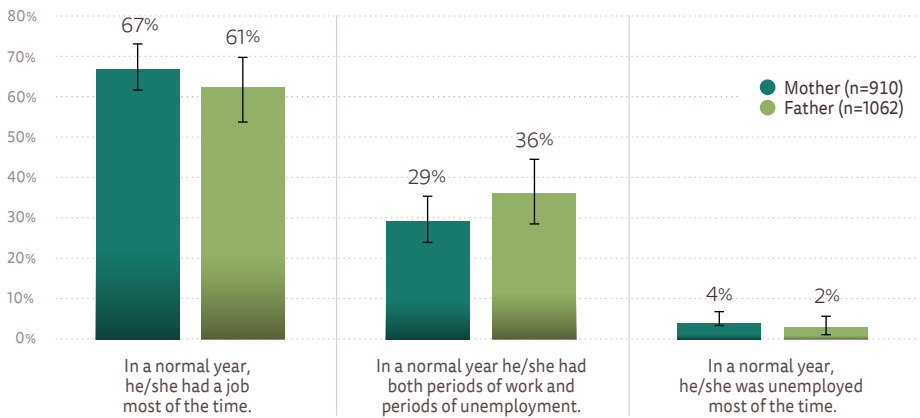
Proportion stating that their parents had ever had paid employment (n=1307)





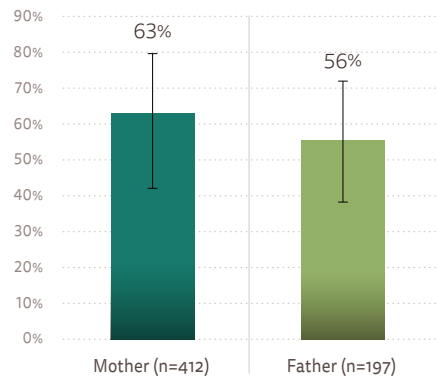
Continuing with respondents whose parents had a job, a minority said that their parents were unemployed most of the time (4% for mothers and 3% for fathers).

FIGURE 5
Employment situation best representing parents who had paid work during their adult life



Among the individuals who declared that their parents never had paid employment, 63% declared that their mother regularly engaged in activities in the territory (hunting, fishing, gathering, etc.). This proportion is 56% among fathers (FIGURE 6). This can be explained by the fact that certain traditional economic activities which are not considered as paid employment in the non-Indigenous world may have been carried out by these parents.

FIGURE 6
Regular practice of activities in the territory among parents who have not had paid work during their adult life



Respondents under 45 years old are more likely to have parents who have completed high school or postsecondary education (FIGURES 7 AND 8).

FIGURE 7
Individuals whose mother has a high school diploma or more

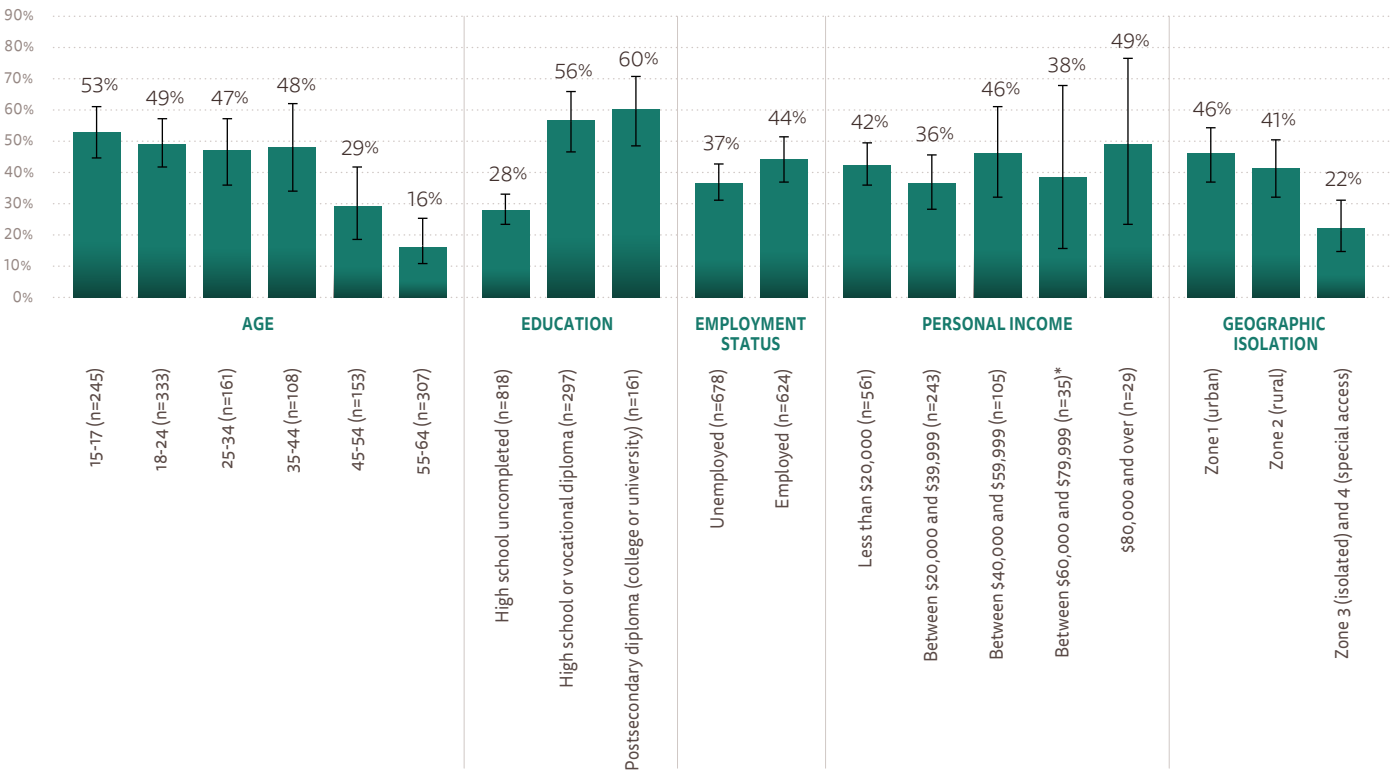
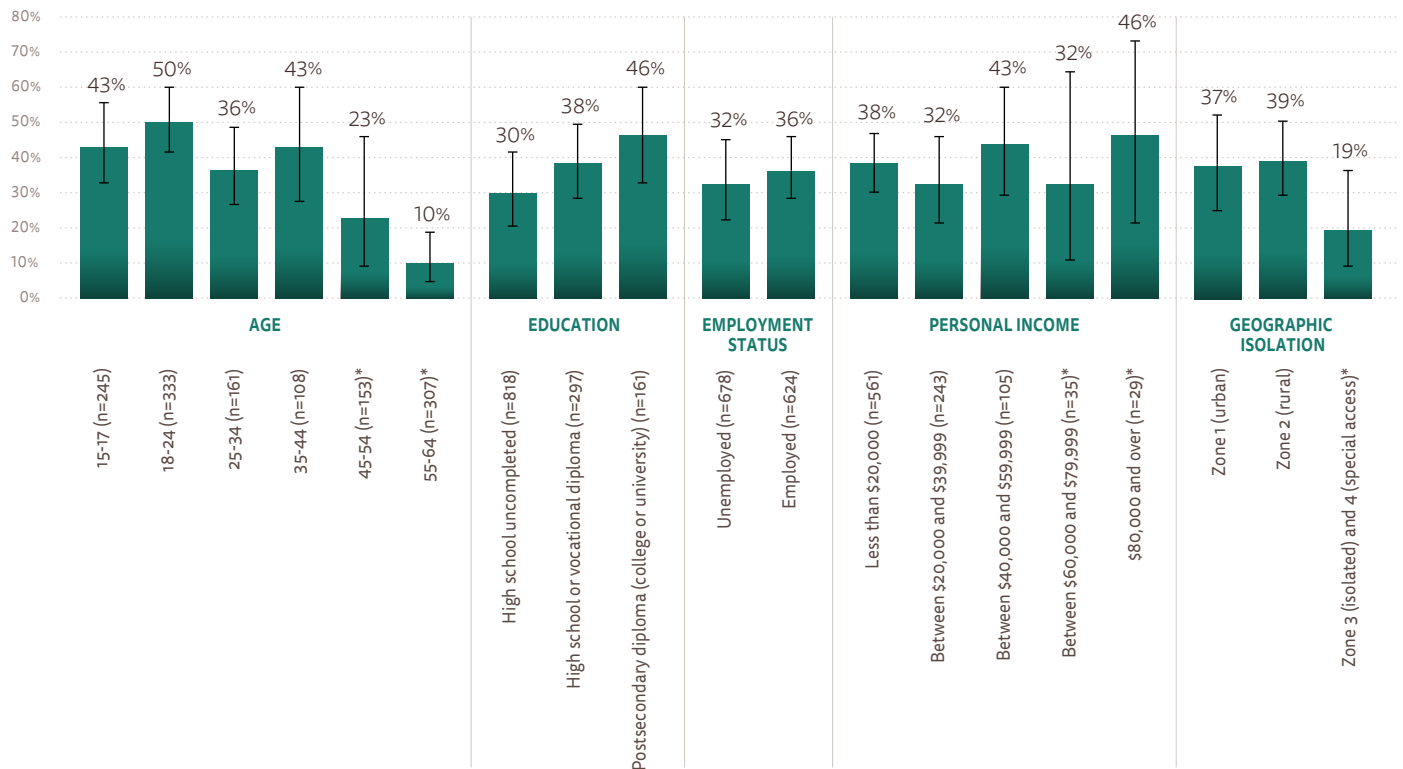


FIGURE 8

Individuals whose father has a high school diploma or more



It seems that the education of the parents has an impact on that of the respondents, mainly the education of the mother.

Among respondents who did not complete high school, 28% said their mother had graduated from high school. Among respondents with a high school diploma, this proportion doubles to 56%. Finally, 60% of postsecondary graduates said their mother had graduated from high school. This difference is significant between high school and other levels of education.

The level of education of the parents does not appear to be related to respondents' employment status and income.

Individuals whose parents have graduated from high school seem proportionately more numerous in urban and rural zones than in isolated or special access zones. This difference is statistically significant in the mother.

Household characteristics

COMPOSITION AND OVERCROWDING

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

On average, there are 4.5 individuals per household among survey respondents. This average tends to decrease slightly with age, reaching 3.3 for people 55 to 65 years old.

It appears that the number of people in the household decreases with level of education, from 4.8 among non-graduates, to 4.3 among high school graduates and to 3.3 among

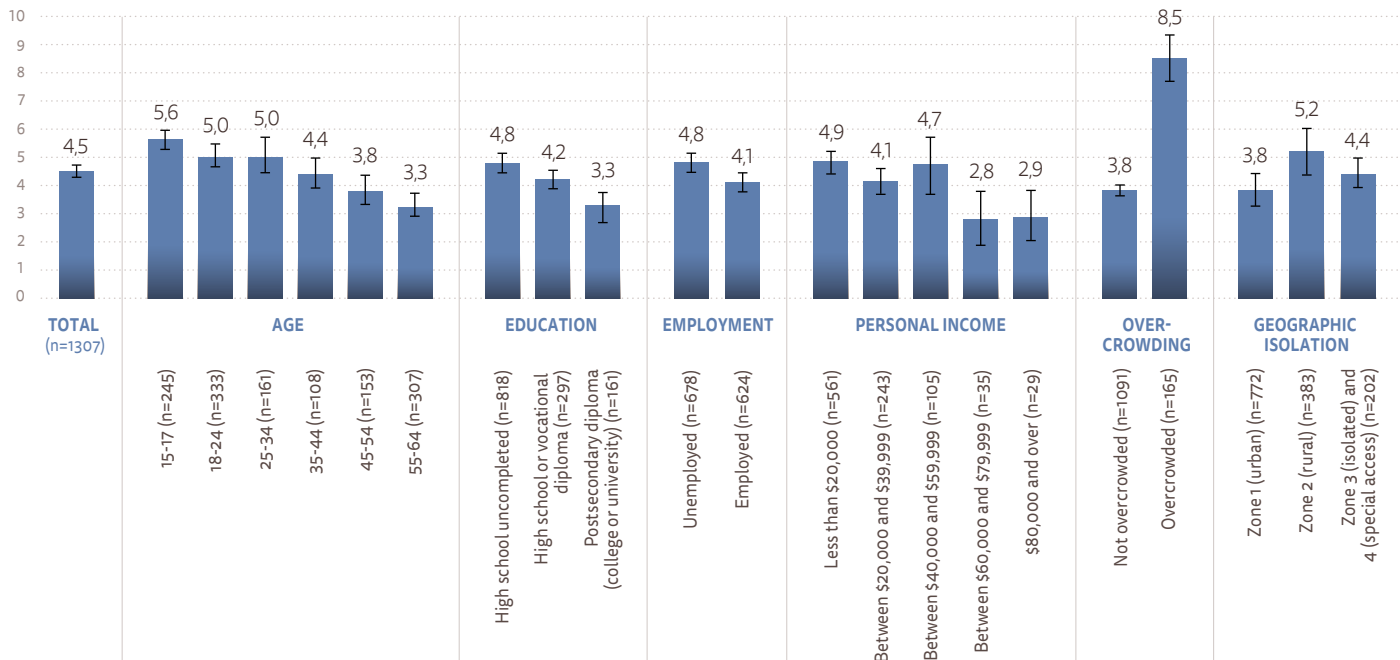
postsecondary graduates. People who are unemployed are more likely to live in households with more people.

Personal income also appears to be related to the number of individuals in the household, from 5.0 for those earning less than \$20,000 to 2.8 for those earning \$80,000 and over. Unsurprisingly, the average number of individuals in the household

is much higher in overcrowded housingⁱ (8.5) than in housing that are not overcrowded (4). Residents of rural communities (zone 2) generally live in more populated households than those living in urban or isolated/special zones (FIGURE 9).

FIGURE 9

Average number of individuals in the household



ⁱ In the FNLED Survey, housing was considered as overcrowded if there was more than one person per room.

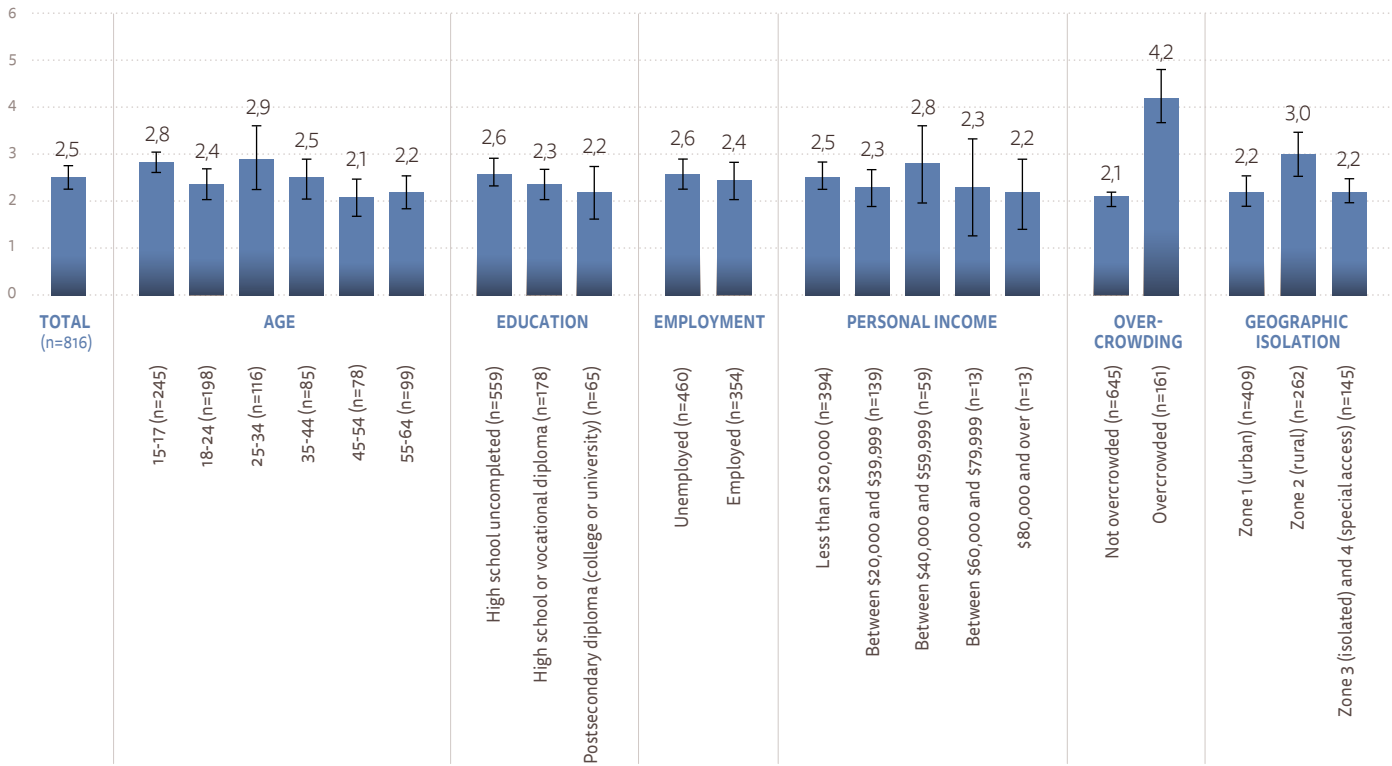


More than two thirds (67%) of survey participants live in households with young people aged 0 to 17. These households have an average of 2.5 young people (FIGURE 10).

This average does not vary significantly based on the age, level of education, employment status and personal income of respondents. There is an average of 4.1 young people in overcrowded

households, compared to 2.1 in those that are not. Individuals from rural communities (zone 2) live in households with more young people than those living in urban or isolated/special zones.

FIGURE 10
Average number of children and young people (0-17 years) in the household+



*Households with no children are not included

OVERCROWDING

According to the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, housing conditions are much worse in First Nations communities than in non-Indigenous communities. Overcrowding of housing is a problem.⁸

In many respects, household overcrowding can lead to difficulties affecting academic success and hence employment prospects. Overcrowding makes it more difficult to find a suitable place to study. Young people living in overcrowded housing are

therefore more at risk of falling behind in school or of finding themselves failing.^{4,9} Among adults, overcrowding is, among other things, associated with a higher risk of being unemployed.⁹

Overcrowding increases certain social health problems, such as poor hygienic conditions, family tensions and violence.¹⁰ In addition, it is associated with a greater risk of food insecurity.¹¹

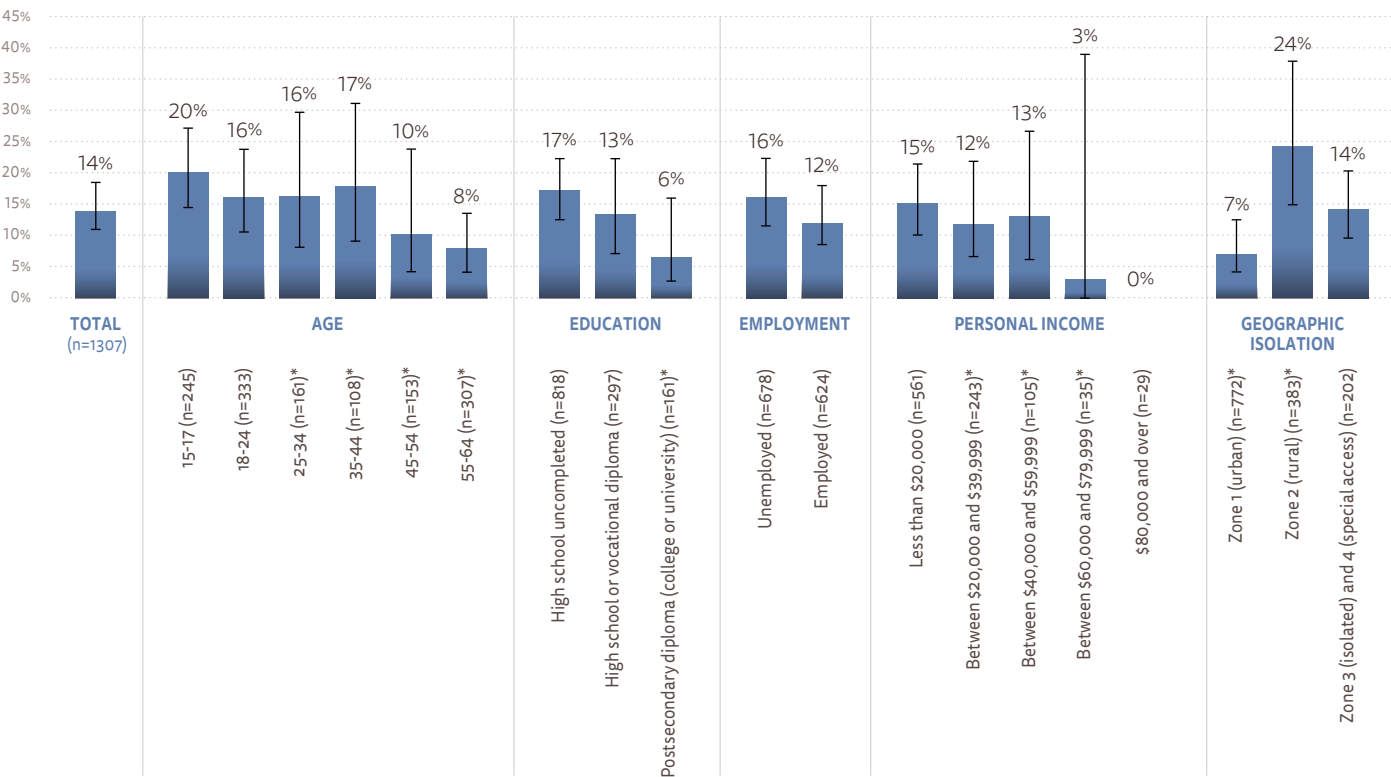
Among the respondents to the survey, 14% live in overcrowded housing (FIGURE 11). Living in

overcrowded housing is less common among older respondents and among those with higher education, a job and higher income. These associations are not, however, statistically significant.

About 25% of participants in rural areas live in overcrowded housing.

This proportion decreases to 14% for participants living in isolated/special access communities and to 7% for those living in urban communities.

FIGURE 11
Individuals living in a overcrowded household



Life course

CRIMINALIZATION, HOMELESSNESS AND RESIDENTIAL MIGRATION

The study of life courses focuses on the events, stages and transitions experienced by people in different areas of life. In the context of the FNLED Survey, the events selected are criminalization, homelessness and migratory habits.

CRIMINALIZATION

Criminal records are an obstacle to employment. In Quebec, “no one may dismiss, refuse to hire or otherwise penalize a person in his employment owing to the mere fact that he was convicted of a penal or criminal offence, if the offence was in no way connected with the employment or if the person has obtained a pardon for the offence.”¹²

A criminal record, however, remains a public document. Thus, a potential employer can access its content without having to provide prior justifications. The acceptance or rejection of an application can therefore be based on it.¹³

Although people with criminal records may be graduates or skilled, discrimination linked to criminal records seriously undermines the possibilities for professional reintegration and restricts employment choices and career development.¹³

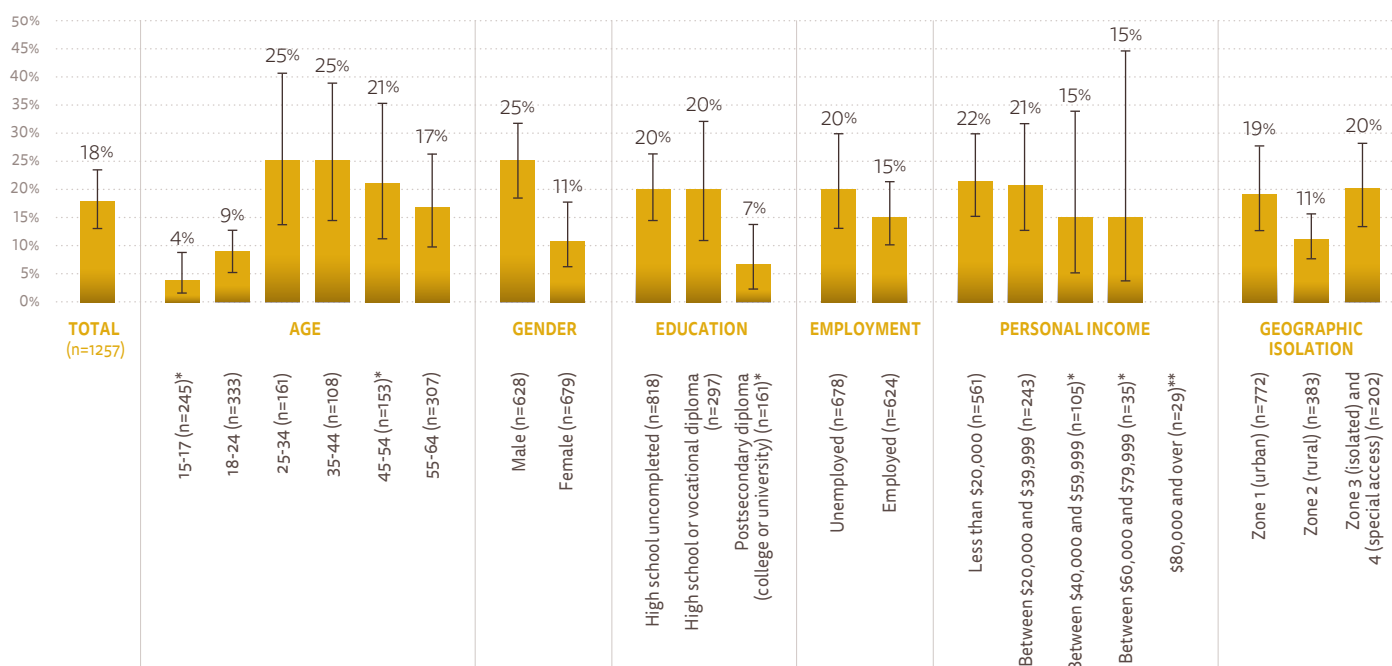
A proportion of 18% of survey participants reported having criminal records. The proportion of the criminalized population is relatively low among people 15 to 24 years old. The most criminalized age group are people 25 to 54 years old. More males than females have criminal records. People with a

postsecondary diploma are less likely than non-graduates and high school graduates to have been criminalized. The proportion of people with criminal records is lower among those with a job and/or higher income. Individuals living in rural zones are less likely to have a criminal record than those living in urban or isolated/special access zones (**FIGURE 12**).



FIGURE 12

Proportion of individuals reporting having a criminal record



HOMELESSNESS

The various census exercises of individuals experiencing visible homelessness in urban areas in Canada reveal an over-representation of Indigenous people.¹⁴ The phenomenon of homelessness among First Nations must be examined differently than among non-Indigenous because of the difficult living conditions and access to housing that persist in First Nations communities, but also because of the colonial heritage which has contributed to the imbalance of the traditional social systems.

Through the creation of Indian reserves, several traditionally nomadic Indigenous peoples were thus forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle without having previously developed a system of values and knowledge useful for this way of life.¹⁴

Although more prevalent in summer in communities, visible homelessness can be considered to be more problematic in winter due to health risks.¹⁴ The reasons that may explain this variation according to the seasons are based, among other things, on the transformation

of visible homelessness into hidden homelessness in winter,ⁱⁱ but also on the lack of services for the homeless in First Nations territories, which discourages their retention in winter.¹⁴ Some studies show that the difficulty of integrating people experiencing homelessness into the labour market is directly proportional to the time spent in the street.¹⁵

The data presented in this booklet only scratches the surface of the phenomenon of homelessness. It is essential to remember that the survey sample focuses on

ii In the FNLED Survey, hidden homelessness is defined as follows: individuals who have already had to live temporarily with a family member, friends, in a car or anywhere else at some point in their life because they had nowhere to go.

individuals living in First Nations communities. First Nations living in large urban centres are excluded from the sample.

Among the population of study, 10% reported having experienced homelessness (FIGURE 13).

This experience seems to have affected more males, people 25 to 34 years old and 45 to 54 years old as well as people living in urban zones. None of these differences are statistically significant. Being homeless is not associated with education, employment or income.

Among respondents who had experienced homelessness, 37% responded that they had experienced a period of homelessness of less than a month, 28% from one month to a year, and 35% one year and over (FIGURE 14).

FIGURE 14
Longest period of homelessness (n=107)

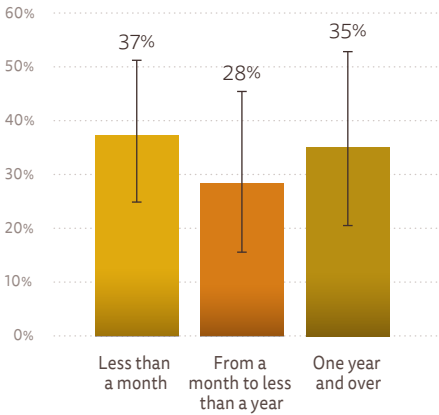
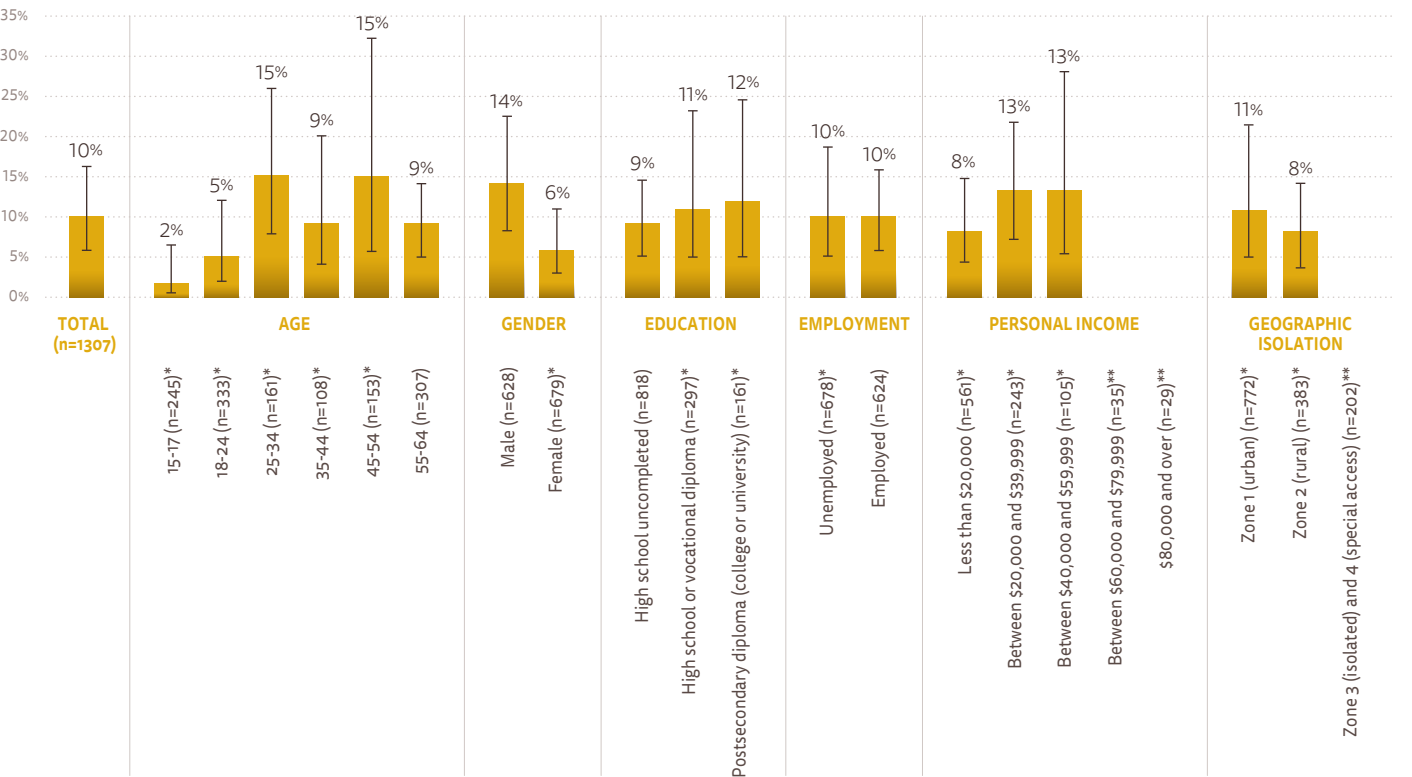


FIGURE 13
Proportion of individuals who have ever experienced homelessness



HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

In Canada, in 2014, 8% of people aged 15 and over said they had experienced having to live temporarily with a family member, friends, in their car or anywhere else at some point in their life because they had nowhere to go.

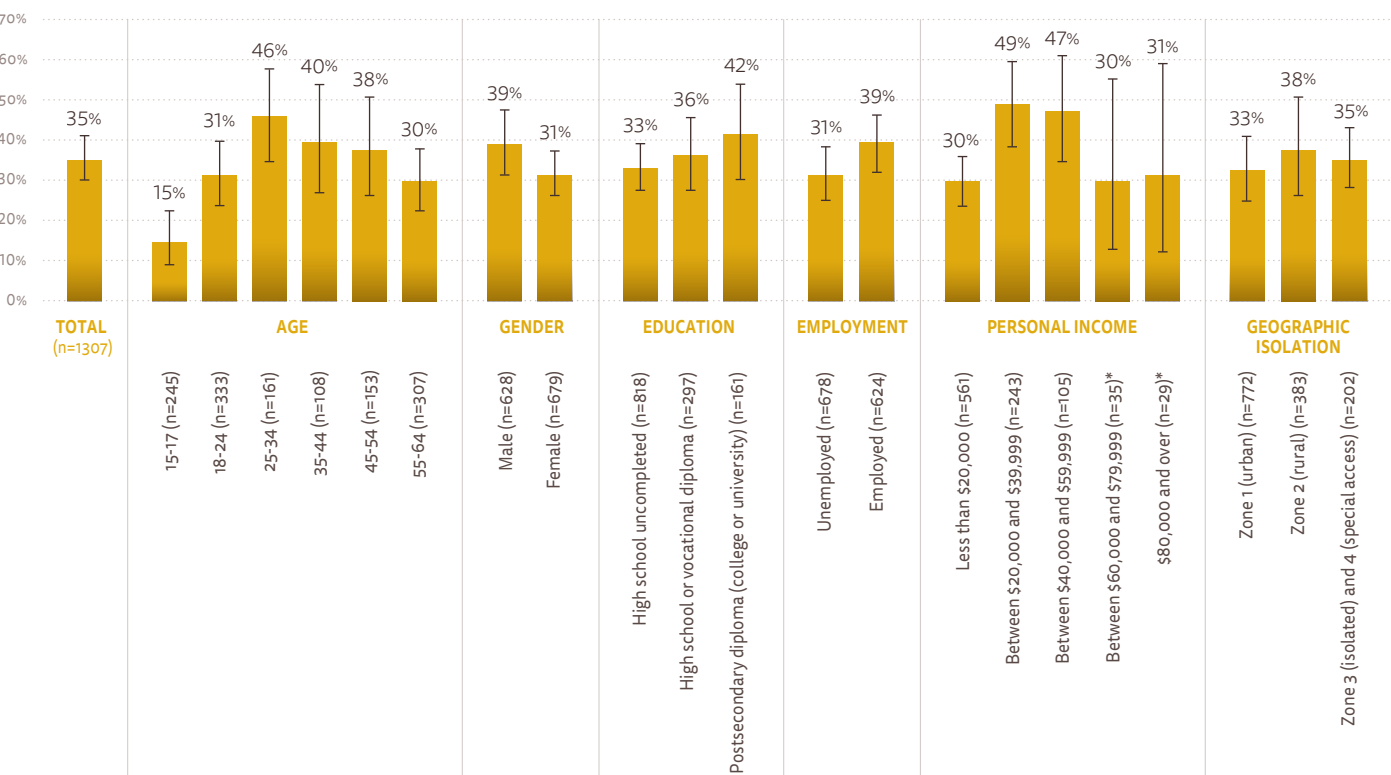
Among respondents who have experienced hidden homelessness, about one in five (18%) have experienced it for less than a year, 55% for less than a year but more than a month, and 27% for less than a month. A history of childhood abuse, frequent moves, low level

of social support, and physical or mental health conditions are risk factors associated with hidden homelessness.¹⁶

Hidden homelessness is a significant form of homelessness within First Nations communities in Quebec. This type of homelessness can be explained, among other things, by the housing crisis that is raging in many communities, by the presence of strong family values resulting in a strong sense of solidarity and by the absence of notions of property in the traditional culture.¹⁴

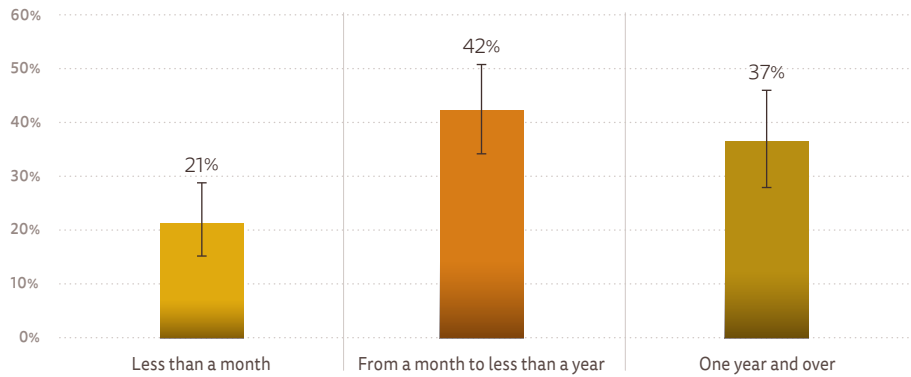
Among First Nations individuals living in communities in Quebec, 35% said they had lived temporarily with a family member, friends, in their car or elsewhere because they had no other place to live (FIGURE 15). This proportion is higher among males and people 25 to 34 years old. Although there are variations in the experience of hidden homelessness according to academic degree, income and education, these differences are not, however, statistically significant. Finally, it should be noted that hidden homelessness varies little according to geographic isolation.

FIGURE 15
Proportion of individuals who have ever experienced hidden homelessness



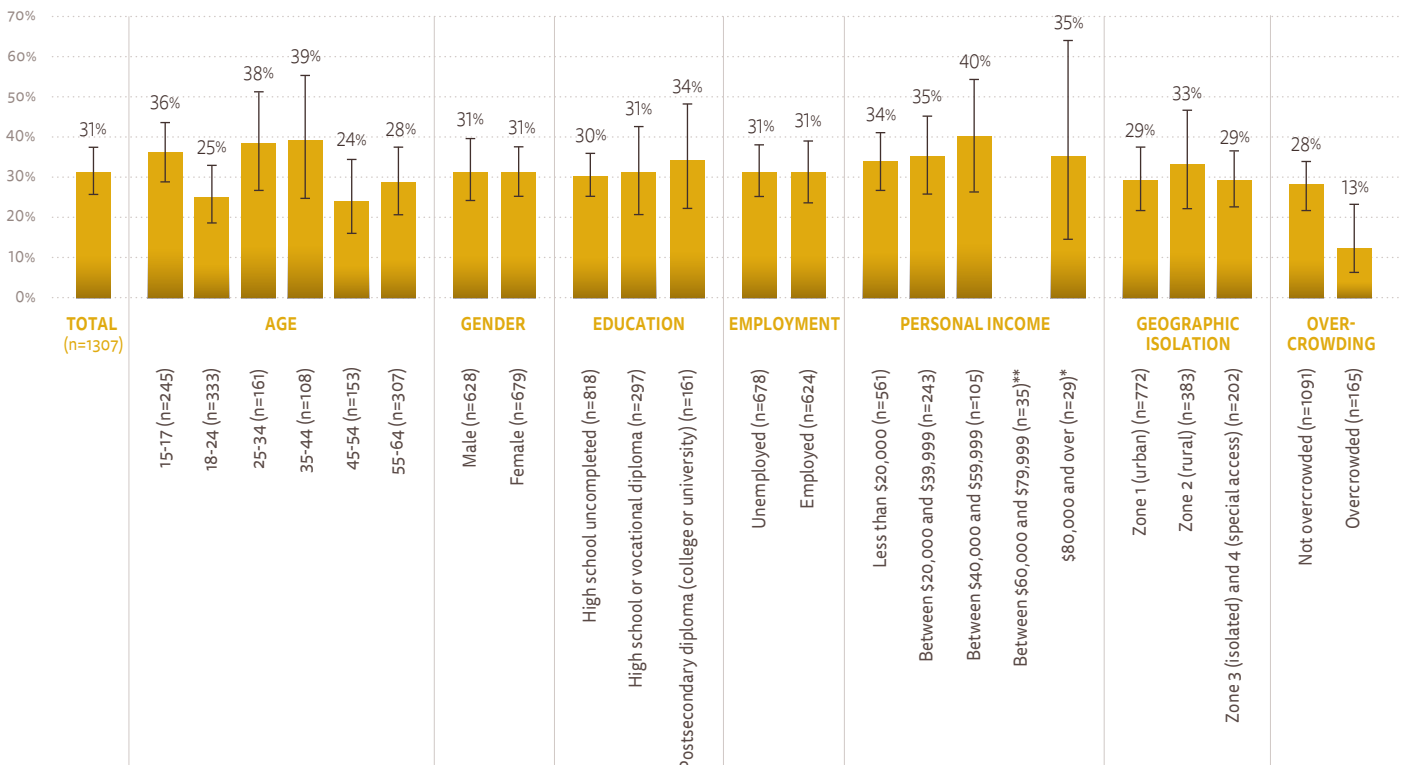
Among those who have experienced an episode of hidden homelessness, more than 40% said they had been in this situation for between a month and a year, and more than one third (37%) had experienced it for a year or more (FIGURE 16).

FIGURE 16
Longest period of hidden homelessness (n=391)



Just over 30% of respondents reported living in a household that had temporarily taken in at least one person because they had no place to live in the past year (FIGURE 17). This proportion does not vary based on age, gender, academic degree, employment status, income or geographic isolation. Although individuals living in housing that are not overcrowded seem more likely to temporarily host someone who has no place to stay, this difference is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 17
Individuals whose household has temporarily taken in at least one person (family, friend, acquaintance, etc.) because this person did not have a place to live



RESIDENTIAL MIGRATION

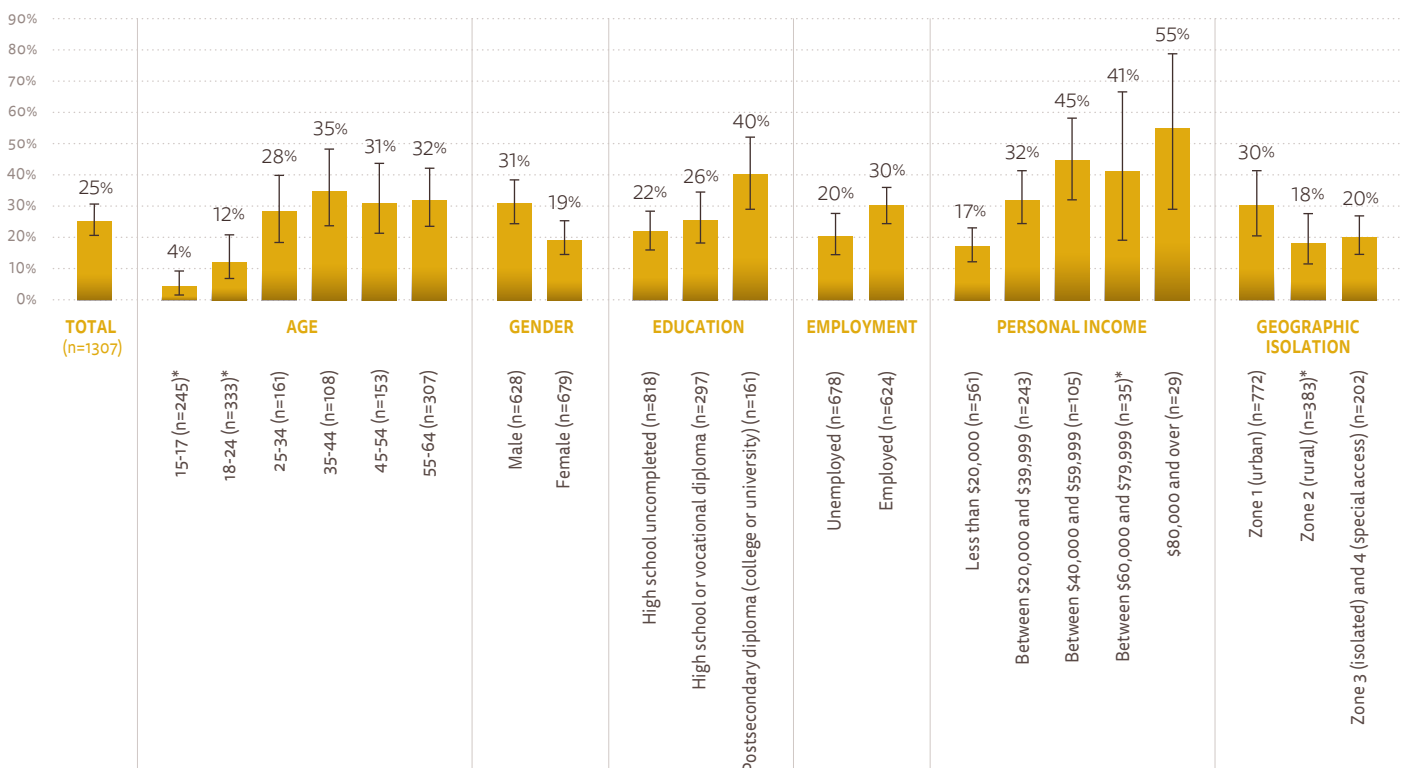
According to the Regional Health Survey (RHS) 2015, 58% of adults living in First Nations communities said they had lived outside the community at some point in their life. This proportion increases to 65% in the most isolated communities. The majority of respondents cite studies and employment as the main reasons for leaving their community, while those who return to live there cite mainly family and cultural reasons.^{17,18}

Within the framework of the FNLED Survey, one fourth of respondents stated that they had already left their community for work (FIGURE 18). This is more the case among males and people 25 years old and over. We also observe that this proportion increases with the level of education and salary.

People who were employed at the time of the survey or living in communities located in urban zones seem more likely to have already left their community for work, although this variation is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 18

Individuals who have already moved outside their community for work



Conclusion

This booklet illustrates the sociodemographic situation of First Nations living in communities in Quebec. In addition to basic demographic data, we also discussed the life course and the characteristics of a person's loved ones.

The daily language of approximately half of individuals 15 to 64 years old living in communities is a First Nations language. Efforts to revitalize and conserve these languages must be supported.

The low proportion of employed individuals, low income and low level of education are interrelated phenomena that remain significant challenges within First Nations communities. The education of parents, mainly of the mother, has an influence on the educational path of respondents. Thus, individuals whose parents are high school graduates are more likely to have a high school or postsecondary diploma themselves. It therefore seems that the life course of an individual's loved ones can have a positive influence on them, especially with regard to education. As for the high proportion of individuals who indicated that their parents had not graduated from high school, we note that for older parents, the school curriculum was not necessarily accessible or a priority at the time. Possible explanations for this include Indian residential schools, the prioritization of the traditional way of life and the occupation of the territory, language and transport barriers as well as the need to emancipate themselves from the Indian Act to access university studies.

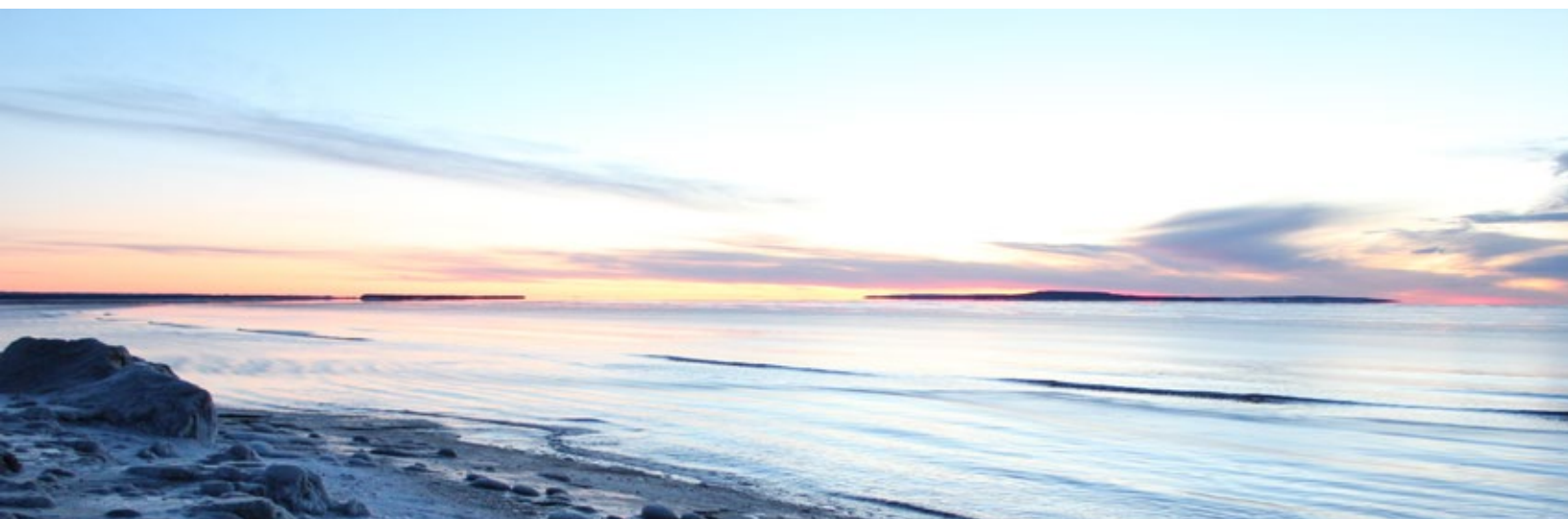
Overcrowding continues to affect a high proportion of residents of First Nations communities. For decades, communities have been grappling with this problem. It appears that the efforts made so far have not been sufficient to reverse this situation.

Certain life courses seem to have an impact on the employment prospects of individuals living in First Nations communities. Thus, the data tend to show that criminalization has a negative effect on employment status. A study has also shown that residents of First Nations communities are victims of over-criminalization in comparison with Quebecers in general.¹⁹ This phenomenon undoubtedly contributes to amplifying the impact that a criminal record can have on employment prospects.

Reintegration into the labour market is a major challenge for people experiencing homelessness. In addition, this reintegration becomes more difficult the more time is spent in the street. Hidden homelessness, a frequent phenomenon in First Nations communities, also has an impact on employability.

The poor employment prospects and the limitations to economic development in certain communities are, among other things, factors that can push a portion of the population to leave their community. This movement can have a considerable impact both for communities experiencing a population exodus and for individuals who must adapt to a different environment and develop new reference points.

This booklet shows us that First Nations are still grappling with challenges such as language retention and revitalization, homelessness, over-criminalization and overcrowding of housing. It also discusses how the family can have a positive influence, especially in education and employment. Other FNLED Survey booklets address some of these themes in more depth and are available in digital format at cssspnql.com.



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