



REEES

QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS
**REGIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD,
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY**



**FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION**

FACTORS FOR SUCCESS AND OBSTACLES TO EMPLOYMENT

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (REEES) aims to describe the state of development of early childhood, education, and employment among First Nations communities in Quebec. It was conducted between January 2014 and March 2015 in 20 communities of 8 nations. In all, 2,435 people (923 children age 11 and under, 472 adolescents age 12–17, and 1,041 adults age 18 and over) answered an electronic questionnaire submitted by field agents.

Data followed by “*” has a variation coefficient of 16.6% to 33.3% and must be interpreted with caution. The symbol “**” indicates a variation coefficient higher than 33.3%. This data is not published, except for estimates below 5%, which must be interpreted with caution.

In some cases, data is presented according to the respondents’ community geographic zone as defined by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada:

- Zone 1 (urban): less than 50 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 2 (rural): between 50 km and 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 3 (isolated): over 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 4 (difficult access): no year-round road access to a service centre.

Service centre: The nearest location where community members must go to access service providers, banks and government services.

In the REEES, the term “community” is used to refer to “Indian reserves.” Although officially recognized, the term “Indian reserve” is considered pejorative and has therefore been replaced by “community.”

For more information, see the REEES *Methodology* booklet.

The REEES report is divided into three sets of booklets: early childhood, education, and employment. All booklets are available in the FNQLHSSC documentation centre: <https://centredoc.cssspnql.com>.

EMPLOYMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

This report looks at factors for success and obstacles to employment among First Nations in Quebec based on the results of the Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (REEES). The REEES was conducted between January 2014 and March 2015 in 20 First Nations communities in Quebec. Data was collected from 1,041 adults living in First Nations communities in Quebec. The analysis also references data from the *Overview of Workers*, *Overview of the Unemployed*, *Educational Ambitions*, and *Basic Skills* booklets.

- Only a third of adults who did not finish high school have a job, and the proportion increases with education levels, topping out at 90% for university graduates.
- A greater proportion of those whose parents have at least a high school diploma have jobs.
- A smaller number of those who have children before age 18 have jobs.
- A greater proportion of those who describe themselves as having good basic skills have jobs.
- A third of unemployed women attribute their situation to family responsibilities.
- Two thirds of unemployed people are not looking for work.
- Band councils are the main resources used for finding a job.
- The main barrier met by job seekers is a shortage of jobs in the community.

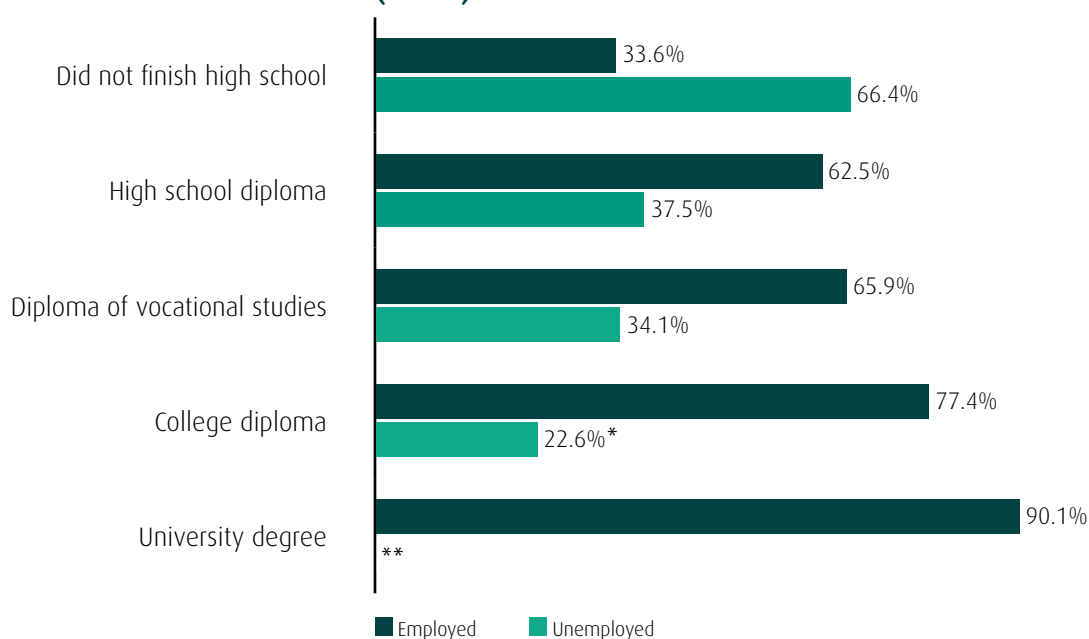


EDUCATION

Education level and employment

Respondents' level of education has a direct impact on getting a job. According to the REEES, almost half of the adults have a high school diploma (47.5%), and 41.1% did not graduate high school. Those with a university degree, a college diploma, or a diploma of vocational studies are in the minority (3.3%,* 4.1%,* and 4.0%* respectively). Figure 1 shows the strong correlation between education level and employment status. For example, a greater proportion of those with a university degree have a job (90.1%) compared to those with a college diploma (77.4%), who show a higher percentage of workers than those with a diploma of vocational studies (65.9%). A proportion of 62.5% of those with a high school diploma have a job. Other studies have found similar figures. "Research has confirmed that lower educational attainment is a statistically significant predictor of a lower level of labour force success for Aboriginal people" (Bruce & Marlin, 2012, p. 14).¹

Figure 1: Employment status of adults by education level (n=957)



Adults who did not complete high school represent 41.1% of the population, and two thirds of them are unemployed (66.4%). This group therefore makes up a big part of the population to target for employment programs. Between those without a high school diploma and those with one (Figure 1), the employed proportion doubles (from 33.6% to 62.5%). Hence, it seems crucial to keep young people in school at least until the end of high school.

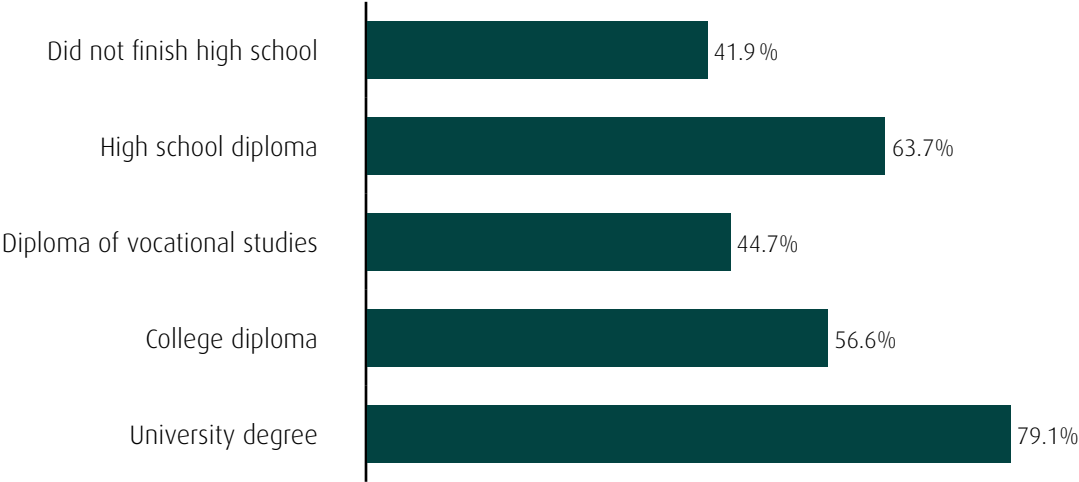
The results presented in the booklet on educational ambitions indicate that adolescents age 15–17 encounter the following three main obstacles to achieving their goals: low grades (10.8%*), lack of motivation (8.7%*), and lack of prerequisites (5.1%*). Family or mentor support in choosing a career is a factor that increases chances of success, both academically and in the transition from school to the job market.

¹Bruce and Marlin draw on Ciceri and Scott, 2006; Hull, 2005; and Kapsalis, 2006.

**Parents’ education level:
The importance of role models**

The employment proportion for adult children of less-educated mothers is 41.9%, compared to 79.1% for those with highly educated mothers (Figure 2). The significance of positive family role models or mentors who encourage young people to go on to post-secondary education and guide their transition to the job market is a factor for success widely supported in the literature (Bruce & Marlin, 2012; Noreau, Dugré, Baron, Langlois, & Guillemette, 1999).

Figure 2: Employment proportion (age 18–45) by mother’s education level (n=210)



**Support for the transition from school to the
job market: A success factor**

Young people’s perceptions of the relevance and value of education are key indicators in their career choices. The booklet on educational ambitions provided an analysis of the data on the level of education adolescents age 15–17 would like to attain. Asked about their chances of success in college or university, close to 90% of respondents think they would like to go to college or university and believe they would graduate. While 32.8% of adolescents aim to go to university, vocational training is the least popular level of education (4.9%). A greater proportion of high school graduates aspire to continue on to a university degree (43.0%*), compared to those not attending school (18.8%*). It seems that adolescents have high educational ambitions and that they are generally quite optimistic about their chances of college or university success (see the Educational Ambitions booklet). This suggests that school perseverance might be a factor to work on in optimizing the chances of a successful transition to the job market.

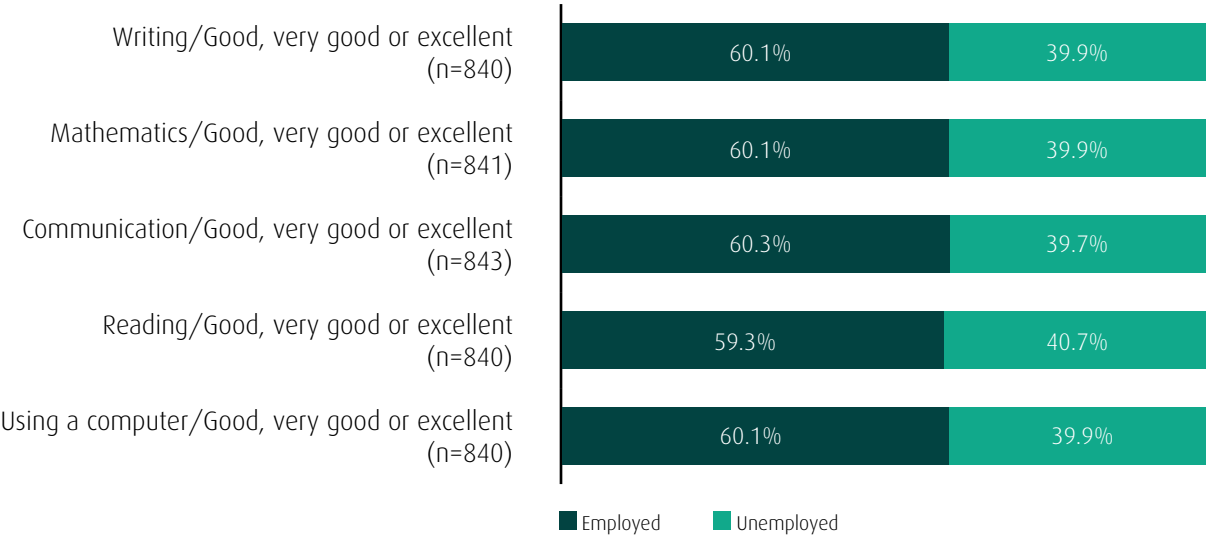
No estimate of young people’s actual ability to achieve their goals can be drawn from the survey data. Nonetheless, the findings discussed above (see “Education level and employment” under “Education”) show a big difference between young people’s current ambitions and the education levels attained by adults. It might be worthwhile to look closely at the roadblocks young people encounter in school that prevent them from fulfilling their ambitions.

SKILLS

The *Basic Skills* booklet found that the higher the education level, the higher the perceived skill level. More workers than unemployed describe their skill level as very good or excellent. There appears to be a connection between perceived skill level

and employment status. Figure 3 shows that roughly 60% of respondents describing their overall skills as good, very good or excellent have jobs.

Figure 3: Adult labour force participation by perceived skill level



AGE

The *Overview of Workers* and *Overview of the Unemployed* booklets both indicate that people age 35–44 make up the largest proportion of workers (68.6%). That matches the fact that this group has the lowest proportion of people without a high school diploma (Figure 4). On the contrary, 18–24 (59.8%) year olds and 25–34 (48.7%) year olds make up the largest proportions of unemployed. It has been suggested that young adults may enter working life later because of repeatedly dropping out and returning to school, which points to the importance of keeping young people in school and supporting them as they move into the job market.

Age of parents at birth of first child

Fewer than half (45.8%) of the people who had their first child before age 18 have jobs. The employed percentage rises to 60.2% for those who had their first child between age 25 and 35 (Figure 5). The age of parents at birth of first child thus seems to impact labour force participation.

Among the unemployed, nearly twice as many men as women are looking for work (Figure 6). It may be that childcare, looking after family members, and household tasks interfere with women's job market participation.

Figure 4: High school not completed by age (n=960)

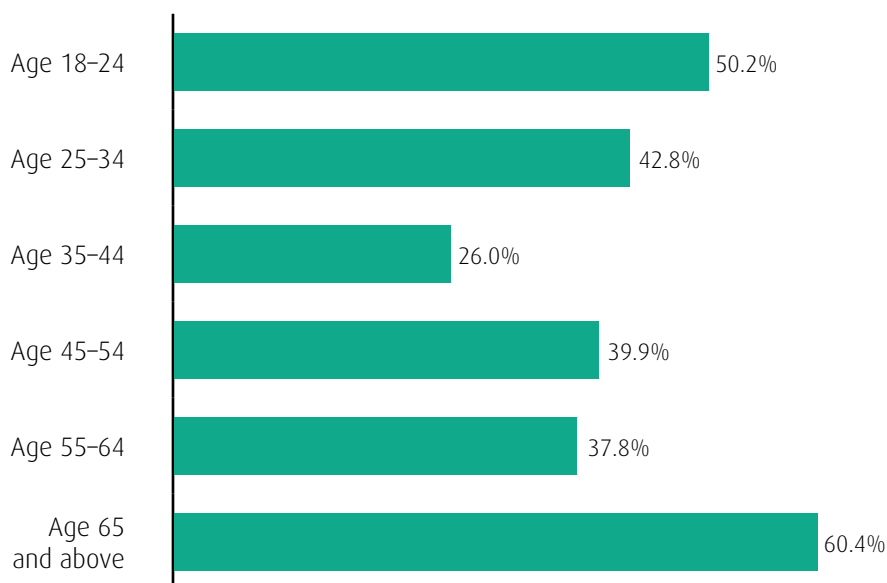


Figure 5: Labour force participation by age of parents at birth of first child (n=787)

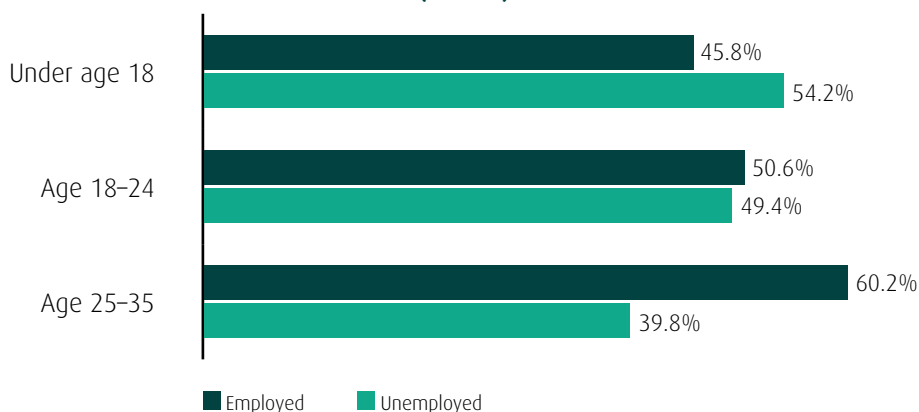
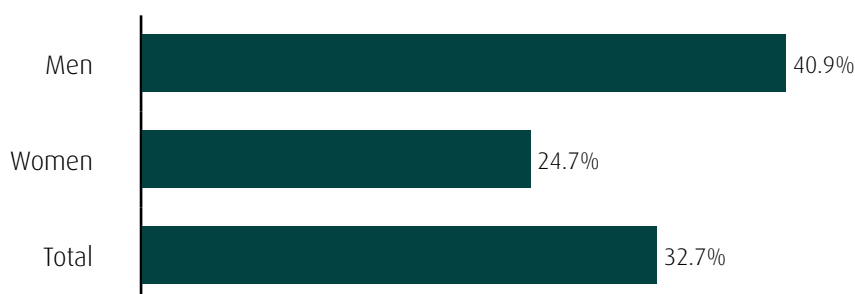


Figure 6: Breakdown of job seekers by gender (n=547)



Among the unemployed (excluding those waiting to return to a job), more women (36.6%) than men (8.4%) attribute their employment status to family responsibilities (Table 1).

Table 1: Reasons for adult unemployment (n=425)

Reason	Men	Women	Total
Retirement	25.6%	27.1%	26.5%
Family responsibilities	8.4%*	36.6%	24.8%
Casual jobs, no work available	22.4%*	10.7%*	15.6%*
Education	16.2%*	10.2%*	12.7%
Sickness or disability	14.0%*	6.2%*	9.5%*
Other	13.4%*	9.1%*	10.9%*

These findings suggest that the age at which parents have their first child and family responsibilities may be factors affecting labour market entry. A greater proportion of women than men take on family responsibilities, which makes it harder for them to start and complete post-secondary studies and get a job (ibid, p. 16²).

²Bruce and Marlin draw on Orr, Roberts, and Ross, 2008, and a study by the Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2009.



LOOKING FOR WORK

Only a third (32.7%) of the unemployed said they were looking for a job. The first place job seekers go when looking for work is the band council, with smaller numbers contacting potential employers directly, checking community bulletin boards, or asking friends or family members (Table 2). Public organizations such as employment agencies seem little used.

Table 2: Resources used by the unemployed looking for work (n=107)

Resources	Population %
Band council	56.4%
Potential employers (direct contact)	35.9%
Community bulletin boards	27.5%*
Friends and family members	26.8%*
Newspaper classified ad (taking out or answering)	14.3%*
Colleagues	13.6%*
Internet	13.5%*
First Nations organization or employment agency	13.4%*
Referral from another employer	8.8%*
Public employment agency (Service Canada Centre / Canada Employment Centre, provincial employment centre)	7.0%*

Close to half of job seekers (45.6%) see the principal employment barrier as the lack of jobs in the region, the next most-cited difficulties being the lack of education or training and the lack of experience (Table 3). This may explain why a significant percentage report not knowing what kind of job to look for. Transportation problems also affect more than one out of every ten job seekers. Lack of training, experience, and skills seem to have a negative impact on the search for a job, and the shortage of jobs is not conducive to the acquisition of skills and experience. Educated individuals therefore often find themselves in a position of having to leave the community to get experience in their field, and some do not return.



Table 3: Difficulties encountered looking for a job (n=99)

Difficulty	%
Shortage of jobs	45.6%
Lack of education or training for the jobs available	20.7%*
Lack of required experience for the jobs available	20.5%*
Not knowing what kind of job to look for	16.2%*
Not having a driver's licence or the required class of driver's licence	13.2%*
Not having transportation to work for available jobs	11.3%*
No childcare service	10.4%*
Not knowing how to write a resume or application letter	9.1%*

CONCLUSION

Data on education level and employment shows that the higher the education level, the better the chances to have a job. The proportion of people with a job is twice as high for high school graduates as it is for people without a high school diploma.

People with a university degree are the group most likely to have a job. It is nonetheless worth asking whether it is realistic to expect graduates (at whatever level) to find jobs in a community, particularly in remote regions and small communities. Would the job market in these communities be able to accommodate an influx of graduates? Job market studies would guide and ease young people's transition into the labour market.

Positive family role models and mentors, who support young people and encourage them to stay in school, in addition to guiding them in their choice of career, are an important factor in the successful transition from school to the workplace. The influence of these models might also help reduce the gap between reality and young people's educational ambitions, which do not all become.

Although graduating from school and developing skills both call for a personal commitment founded in individual responsibility, it is nonetheless important to address the impact of structural barriers (such as job shortages) as well as historical barriers on the conditions conducive to successful professional development.

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This document is also available in French and can be downloaded from the website of the FNQLHSSC at <https://centredoc.cssspnql.com>.

Photos credits: Fred Cattroll, FNHRDCQ, Doreen Picard and Shutterstock

ISBN: 978-1-77315-067-3

Legal deposit – 2017

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