

THE 2030 QUÉBEC

YOUTH

POLICY

**WORKING TOGETHER FOR CURRENT
AND FUTURE GENERATIONS**

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Message from the Premier



Each generation contributes new ways of seeing, doing and being that enable societies to innovate, grow and prosper. Today's young Quebecers are creative, dynamic and open to the world. They have embraced the new technologies and integrated them into their everyday lives.

These young people have the power to lead Québec to new heights. The Québec government's role is thus to support them and give them the necessary resources to enable them to take their rightful place and achieve their full potential.

All of the government's decisions must include this concern for young people. That is why we have elaborated *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*, which will guide government departments and bodies and determine the government's strategic priorities for the next 15 years.

To carry out the policy, we have engaged over the past two years in an extensive consultation with various groups and youth organizations. We have examined the perspectives and orientations that they propose and have taken them into account throughout the elaboration process. Together, we have established this new policy to define a unifying perspective in the interest of young people because a society that banks on its young people is a society focused on the future that has every chance of growing.

As my predecessors Robert Bourassa and Jean Charest have done, I have decided to assume responsibility for all youth-related questions. I will attentively monitor the rollout of this policy, which puts Québec young people at the forefront of the challenges that we are facing. Let us continue to work together to build a prosperous, innovative Québec.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'P' and 'C'.

Philippe Couillard

Message from the Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier (youth)



The first objective of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* is to respond to the concerns, fears and demands of young people. We also want it to reflect their desire to obtain support and advice to prepare for their future, attain their objectives and fulfill their dreams.

During the consultations leading to the drafting of this new government policy, we heard from young people and organizations from different socioeconomic environments throughout Québec. We heard young people destabilized by bullying and from disadvantaged backgrounds but also from young people involved in their communities, open to the world and full of hope as regards their ability to achieve fulfillment and change the world.

We must support, assist and encourage all of these young people, which is why we have decided to elaborate *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*. This new tool will enable our government to guide young people in their journey toward autonomy by offering them stimulating environments and helping them in their learning, initiatives and life projects.

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy confirms that the government is prioritizing support for young people and their self-fulfilment, participation in democratic life and successful entry into working life. Together, we are continuing to support Québec young people and help them educate themselves, discover their potential and thus build the Québec of the future.

Young people are at the forefront of our concerns and this policy confirms it by bolstering the support offered to this generation. Like you, I am full of hope. After all, we are advancing together, now and for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karine V." followed by a horizontal line.

Karine Vallières

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Healthy lifestyles in a safe environment	13
1.1 Foster healthy dietary habits	14
1.2 Encourage a physically active way of life	17
1.3 Focus on mental health problems	18
1.4 Promote healthy, safe behaviour	20
1.5 Promote harmonious interpersonal relationships and egalitarian relationships	23
2. A school environment that promotes student retention and educational success	27
2.1 Increase student retention, graduation rates and the qualification of young people at risk of dropping out	30
2.2 Support access to and participation in extracurricular activities	33
2.3 Foster access to educational and vocational guidance services	34
2.4 Emphasize occupational and technical training	35
2.5 Encourage access to higher education	36
3. Young people committed to culture, the community and society	39
3.1 Encourage civic engagement	42
3.2 Support participation in cultural activities	44
3.3 Broaden opportunities to engage in volunteer work	46
3.4 Promote intergenerational dialogue and intercultural relations	47
3.5 Encourage environmentally responsible behaviour	50
4. Young people ready to work and an economy ready to accept them	55
4.1 Integrate into the labour market young people in difficulty and young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training	57
4.2 Ensure fairer treatment for young people in the workplace	60
4.3 Promote balance between work, family responsibilities and study	61
4.4 Foster the mobility of young people in the regions, in Canada and abroad	62
4.5 Take advantage of employment opportunities in all regions of Québec	63



5. Support for young entrepreneurs and the new generation of workers..... 67

5.1 Encourage young people to adopt an entrepreneurship culture69

5.2 Support young people’s business startups 72

5.3 Facilitate business transfers, in particular in respect of family businesses 74

5.4 Support young agricultural entrepreneurs 75

5.5 Facilitate access by young people to decision-making bodies and prepare
the new generation of workers 76

Conclusion 77

The implementation of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* 79

Figures

FIGURE 1	Transition between school attendance and the work environment, 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015	3
FIGURE 2	Change in the situation of young people in private households, as a proportion, according to three age groups, Québec, 2011	4
FIGURE 3	Weight status of 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2013	15
FIGURE 4	Level of physical leisure activity and transportation among 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2013	17
FIGURE 5	Secondary school graduation or qualification rate, young people or young adults under 20 years of age, by sex, Québec, 2000-2001 to 2012-2013	29
FIGURE 6	Proportion of 20-29 year-olds attending CEGEP or university by age, sex and study program, Québec, 2011-2012 school year	36
FIGURE 7	Breakdown of the population by age group, Québec, 1971 to 2015	40
FIGURE 8	Change in the duration of the active working life of an individual in 1970 and in 2009	48
FIGURE 9	Labour force participation rate by age group, Québec, 2000 to 2015	56
FIGURE 10	Breakdown of NEETs, in figures and as a percentage, by age group, 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015	58
	Breakdown of NEETs, in figures and as a percentage, by status, 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015	58
	Breakdown of adult last-resort financial assistance beneficiaries under 30 years of age by program, in figures and as a percentage, Québec, 2014-2015	58
FIGURE 11	Number of entrepreneurs 15 to 29 years of age according to the presence of paid help, Québec, 2014	68
	Entry rate of entrepreneurs by age group, Québec, 2014	68
	Number of entrepreneurs 15 to 29 years of age, Québec and the rest of Canada, 2014	68
FIGURE 12	Change in the entry rate of entrepreneurs by age group, Québec, 1976 to 2014	72

Introduction

Fifteen years after the first Québec youth policy, the government is unveiling a new policy devoted to young people based on a context and challenges that have changed considerably since the early 2000s.

Numerous changes

Demographic balance in Québec society is changing rapidly with a reduction in the relative weight of young people but also through the accelerated replacement of the labour force by young people.

The advent of the new information and communications technologies is transforming entire sectors of the economy and affecting everyday life, for a start that of young people, who are especially accustomed to new modes of communication and consumption. The growth of the emerging economies is affecting the global economy and posing new challenges in an open economy like Québec's.

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy takes into account these numerous changes. It is based on the challenges and realities of today and in the coming years.

A policy for young people

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy is aimed at Québec young people between 15 and 29 years of age, although this definition of the young people concerned by government action should not be interpreted rigidly: certain provisions in the policy will apply before the age of 15 and others will continue after the age of 29. The initiatives in the youth policy can come into play among young people under 15 years of age when preventive interventions are necessary and can extend up to the age of 35 in the case, for example, of initiatives designed to support specific transitions.

The policy will enable Québec young people to fully play their rightful role today as citizens in the development of the Québec of tomorrow.



A policy for Québec society as a whole

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy is also aimed at Québec society as a whole.

It invites all Quebecers to take a new look at young people, focus on their perspectives and the key directions that they propose and consider them in their decision-making processes.

The government is using the policy to emphasize that the challenges stemming from demographic changes must be met through intergenerational dialogue, bearing in mind regional characteristics.

Youth is a period that implies numerous transitions and possibilities for commitment to Québec's development

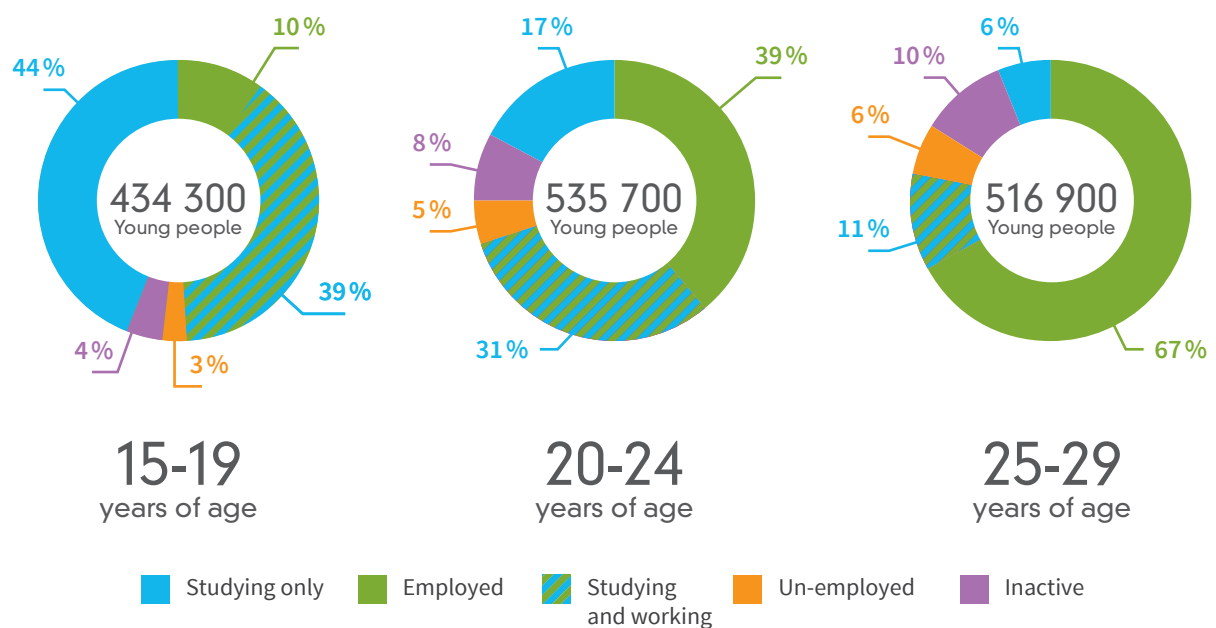
Youth can be defined as the passage from childhood to adulthood and to personal and social autonomy and autonomy as citizens through numerous transitions between the ages of 15 and 29.

During adolescence, the desire to assert one's autonomy emerges but it is during youth, its extension, that individuals gradually find the means to genuinely attain it. For the Québec government, this desire begins at the age of 15 when young people must make educational choices that will affect their acquired knowledge and personal and working lives. It is also around this age that young people start to gradually become more involved in resolving the challenges specific to their community. They can become leaders or represent their peers in secondary school, CEGEP or university. They know that they will soon be responsible, like the rest of the population, for participating in societal choices through their commitment and involvement as citizens.

The vast majority of individuals are in their 30s when they are completing or complete the transition to autonomy. Most young people have by then completed an initial school path, are employed and have acquired some occupational experience (Figure 1). They have experienced the legal changes that characterize the passage to adulthood and have often started a family (Figure 2). The Québec government therefore deems that youth ends at the age of 30 or so.

FIGURE 1

Transition between school attendance and the work environment,
15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015¹

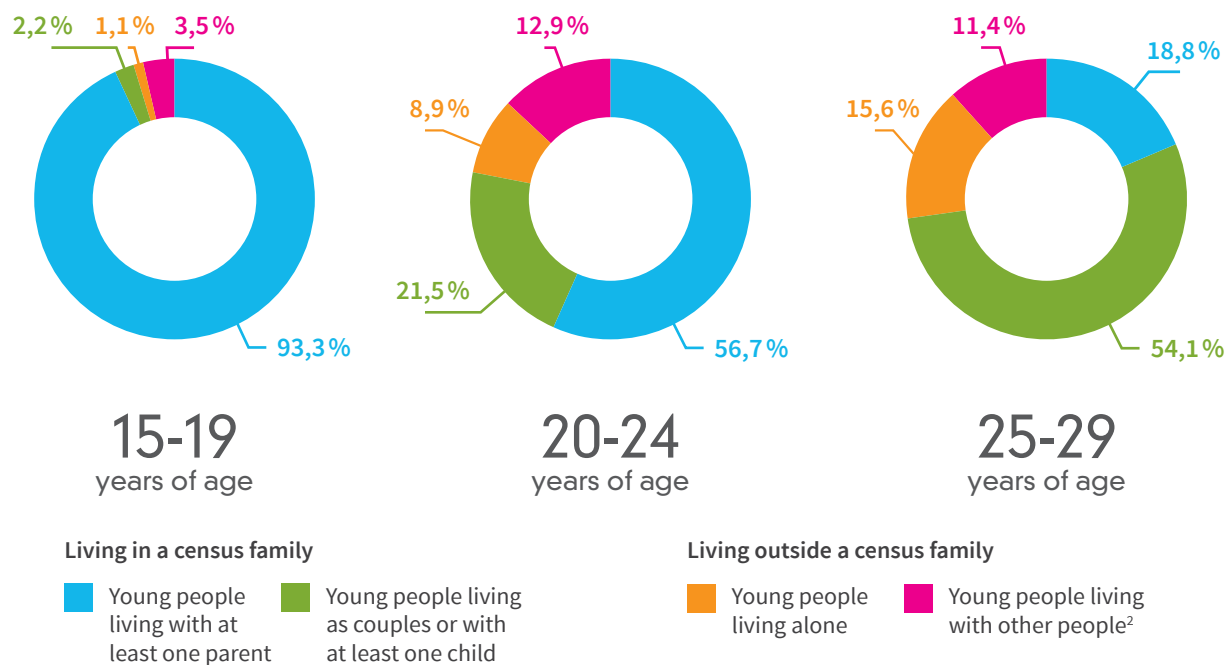


¹ Eight-month average depending on the school year (September 2014 to April 2015).

Notes: The "Studying and working" category includes students who are actively seeking employment. Individuals in the "Inactive," "Unemployed" and "Employed categories" are not studying.

FIGURE 2

Change in the situation of young people in private households,¹
as a proportion, according to three age groups, Québec, 2011



¹ A private household comprises a person or group of people who occupy the same private dwelling unit. In 2011, more than 99% of 15-64 year-olds were living in this type of household in Québec.

² With relatives or non-relatives.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census.

In short, youth is a period of intense learning of all sorts, adaptation to an array of new situations, personal self-fulfilment, decisive encounters and the discovery of passions and callings. It is desirable for such transitions to occur as smoothly as possible so that each young person is able to achieve fulfillment and contribute to Québec's development.

A frame of reference

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy is collaborative and integrated and takes into account regional distinctiveness. It will serve as a guide for the government and its partners over the next 15 years. Through the policy, the government is adopting a frame of reference that will guide the elaboration and the implementation of public policies and programs.

It affords the government an opportunity to give new impetus to its intervention aimed at young people. Through *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*, the government is rethinking its ways of doing things and its relations with the partners concerned.

By making public *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*, the government is reaffirming the importance that it attaches to Québec young people, the questions that concern them, the challenges that they must face and the opportunities available to them.

The Premier is directly responsible for the policy

The Premier is directly responsible for *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*, which will be implemented within the framework of five-year action strategies, including action strategies aimed exclusively at Québec's Aboriginal peoples. Young Aboriginal people can thus target the challenges specific to them and prioritize the means to intervene adapted to their situation.



An extensive consultation

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy stems from an extensive consultation that has mobilized since 2013 young people, interveners, organizations and the groups concerned.



The government's approach: an extensive consultation

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy draws on an extensive consultation spread over two years.

A regional tour

In 2013, the Secrétariat à la jeunesse organized a regional consultative tour in which nearly 4 000 young people and interveners from all over Québec participated. The consultation was also aimed at Aboriginal young people.

Ensemble pour les générations futures

In June 2015, the government unveiled *Ensemble pour les générations futures*, a document that served as the basis for a consultation of groups and individuals concerned by changing youth. More than 200 organizations and individuals submitted briefs within the framework of the consultation.

The September 24, 2014 round-table forum

On September 24, 2015, the consultation continued with a round-table forum attended by the Premier and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier (youth). The forum assembled 100 representatives of more than 70 organizations and MNAs delegated by the parties represented in the National Assembly. During the forum, the representatives of the main organizations expressed their opinions on the key directions and contents of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*.

The consultation process ended on October 1, 2015.

Three principles

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy hinges on three principles that apply to all of its areas of intervention.

The pluralistic nature of the Québec nation

Its pluralistic nature sets the Québec nation apart. It comprises a majority of French-speakers and includes numerous minorities, including an English-speaking community and several ethnocultural minorities. The Québec government also recognizes 11 Aboriginal nations living in Québec.

All of these components are contributing to Québec's social and cultural fabric, occasionally as a result of a lengthy, shared history. The implementation of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* will take into account this pluralism.

Gender equality

The second principle seeks the establishment and maintenance in Québec of gender equality regardless of socioeconomic background, colour or ethnocultural or linguistic affiliation, religion, sex, gender or sexual orientation, and without reference to a disability of whatsoever description.

The establishment and maintenance of gender equality depend on dialogue between all groups in society and, in particular, between individuals of different generations.

Coherent, integrated, innovative government action

The third principle concerns the coherence of the entire array of the policies, strategies and universal regular services of Québec government departments and bodies.

Government action must be innovative in order to take into account constantly changing contexts and knowledge. Each generation of young people possesses its specific characteristics. The government and its partners must take them into account when they implement their programs and services.



General objective

Based on new realities and the principles enunciated earlier, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* is based on a **general objective** that guides the elaboration and implementation of the entire array of initiatives aimed at young people.

Guide young people in their path toward autonomy against a backdrop of demographic changes so that they contribute fully to shaping Québec today and in the future

The general objective of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* is to guide young people in their path to autonomy against a backdrop of demographic changes so that they contribute fully to building Québec now and in the future.

The successful attainment of personal and social autonomy and autonomy as citizens is a crucial challenge for each young person. Québec's future also depends on such success: this path must enable young people to participate fully in Québec's development and thus be prepared to take over from preceding generations to build Québec's future by contributing their perspectives, skills and projects.

From a demographic standpoint, 2023 will mark a turning point for Québec. Individuals 65 years of age or over will outnumber young people under 20 years of age. This demographic situation poses a challenge for young people and for Québec overall. In this context, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* seeks to contribute to the acceleration of the integration of young people into the labour force, their participation in collective decision-making and the search for solutions geared to intergenerational fairness.

Two key directions

To achieve this general objective, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* is based on two **key directions** from which **five strategic priorities** stem.

The two key directions are indicated below.

Offer young people stimulating, healthy, safe, open living and other environments

The environments in which young people develop profoundly affect their lifestyles, choices and personal experience. *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* seeks to create and maintain stimulating, healthy, safe, open living and other environments that motivate young people to successfully make the transition to autonomy and commit themselves to the future of Québec society.

Support the learning, initiatives and life projects of young people

Through *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* the government intends to concretely guide and support the learning and initiatives of young people and the development of their potential. The government also wants to help them define and carry out their life projects by relying on the services already offered to entire population, appropriately orienting the impending service offer, and rounding out such support with additional initiatives adapted to their specific needs.



Five strategic priorities

The five strategic priorities adopted stem logically from the general objective and the two key directions mentioned earlier. The five strategic priorities of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* are:

- **healthy lifestyles in a safe environment;**
- **a school environment that promotes student retention and educational success;**
- **young people committed to culture, the community and society;**
- **young people ready to work and an economy ready to accept them;**
- **support for young entrepreneurs and the new generation of workers.**

Each of the strategic priorities comprises five objectives. *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* breaks each objective into several specific objectives, which will serve as reference points in the context of the elaboration of the forthcoming youth action strategies.



The particular situation of Aboriginal youth

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy takes into account the particular situation of Aboriginal youth, which differs in many respects from the challenges that Québec young people overall are facing.

A young society

From a demographic standpoint, Aboriginal young people represent a significant, growing part of their communities. According to the 2011 Census, nearly 50% of Québec's Aboriginal population was 29 years of age or under.¹ By way of comparison, young people 29 years of age or under accounted for roughly 35% of Québec's population at that time.¹ This situation affords Aboriginal young people a unique opportunity to become leaders in their communities and thereby actively contribute to community development.

Clearly defined needs

During the consultations in which they participated, Aboriginal young people sent a very clear message: culture is at the forefront of their reflections and demands. The realization of projects to promote cultures and languages is a priority and is conditional on intergenerational bonds in the community.

Aboriginal young people are more extensively contending with worrisome problems such as dependency, violence, mental health, dropping out of school, unemployment and access to housing.

The geographic isolation of certain communities is also posing major challenges that are concretely reflected in the supply of fresh, affordable quality food and access to efficient, affordable Internet service.

Outside the communities, Aboriginal young people are often the victims of prejudice and discrimination, which affects their integration into the employment market and access to housing. Moreover, the lack of programs, services, resources and tools adapted to their culture to help them is a critical issue to be considered when Aboriginal young people settle in urban environments to work, study, receive healthcare or for any other reason.

1. 2011 Census, Statistics Canada.

FIRST
STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

Healthy lifestyles in a safe environment

The **first strategic priority** of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* seeks to ensure that Québec young people acquire healthy lifestyles in a safe environment.

The health and well-being of young people underpins self-fulfilment and personal and family success

Healthy lifestyles are the best way to ensure the health and well-being of young people. The government is relying on a preventive approach in order to inculcate from a very early age personal health practice that promotes the maintenance of good physical and mental health.

The lifestyles of young people are largely shaped by the environments in which they live and develop. The government thus hopes to ensure that young people live in safe environments that allow them to achieve fulfillment and solidly build their future.

To facilitate the acquisition of a healthy way of life in a safe environment, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* hinges on five objectives:

- **foster** healthy dietary habits;
- **encourage** a physically active way of life;
- **focus** on mental health problems;
- **promote** healthy, safe behaviour;
- **promote** harmonious interpersonal relationships and egalitarian relationships.

1.1 Foster healthy dietary habits

An individual's health depends largely on diet.

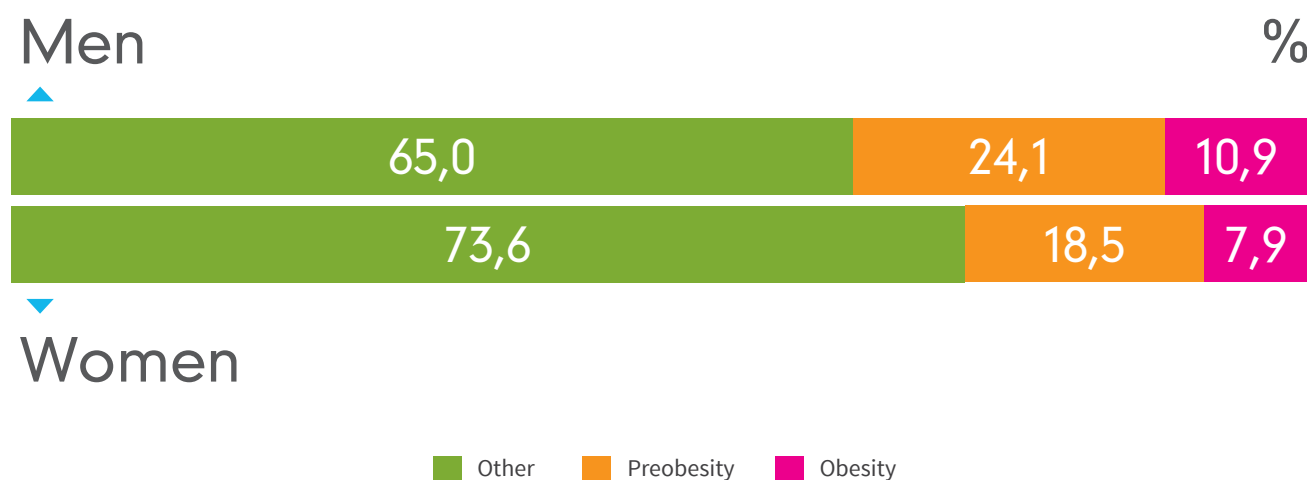
Every day, the food consumed provides most of the energy and nutrients necessary to live and attend to one's affairs. The choice of food consumed depends, in particular, on the personal environment and the food supply.

The most common problems

Preobesity and obesity are the most common diet-related health problems among young people (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Weight status of 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2013



Source: Statistics Canada, *Canadian Community Health Survey*, shared file, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Such problems can stem from overconsumption of processed, high-calorie foods with little nutritional value such as sugary drinks. They are also attributable to an increase in the size of the portions consumed. Furthermore, the consumption of fruits and vegetables by young people is fairly limited.



The risk of serious health problems

Such dietary habits are increasingly prevalent among young people. If they continue over time, they can lead to serious health problems.

Persistent excess weight in adulthood has an especially significant impact on health. Overweight increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, certain types of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

A healthy diet helps to maintain good general health and individual well-being.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to adopt healthy eating habits;**
- **contribute to the accessibility of nutritious food.**

1.2 Encourage a physically active way of life

Along with diet, physical activity and sports are another decisive factor of an individual's physical health.

A physically active way of life helps improve an individual's physical and psychological condition. Such a way of life can have a beneficial impact on academic and occupational performance. What is more, it helps to prevent serious illness throughout our lives.

The benefits of physical activities

Physical activities, in particular outdoor activities, promote socialization, reduce a feeling of isolation and facilitate the acquisition of interpersonal skills.

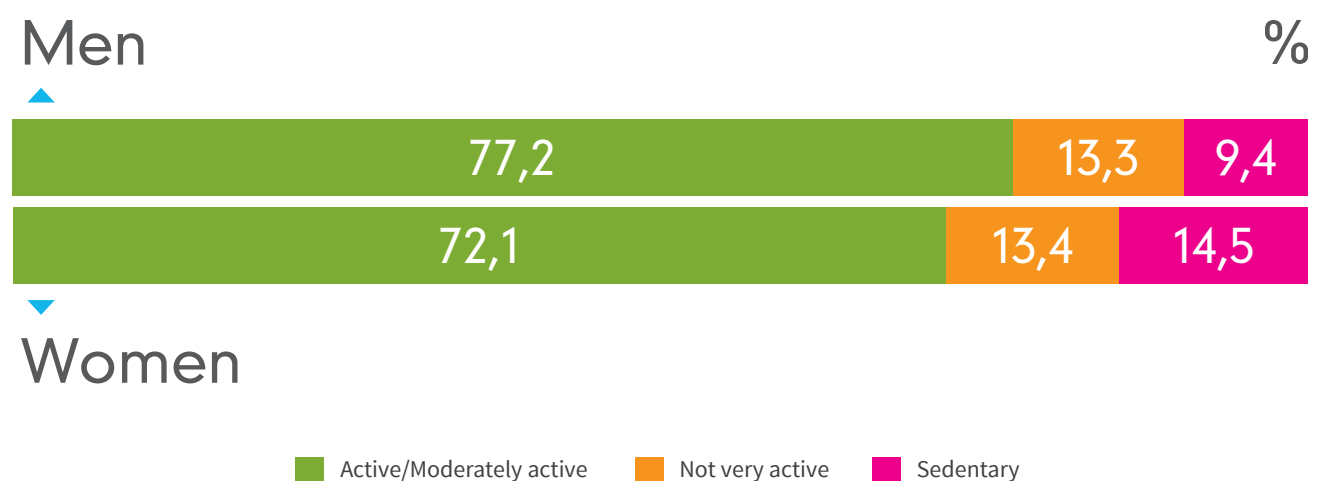
Children who engage in outdoor physical activities are twice as active, spend less time sitting and play for longer periods of time.

The challenges to be met

Young people have engaged increasingly in physical activities and sports in recent years. In 2013, three young people out of four were active or moderately active, depending on the level of physical leisure activity and transportation among 15-29 year-olds (Figure 4). However, sedentary activities such as the time spent in front of a screen, are also on the rise.

FIGURE 4

Level of physical leisure activity and transportation among 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2013





Moreover, physical environments should be organized to better promote the safe development of active travel by cycling or walking.

Regular physical activities, especially outdoor activities, help to maintain good general health and individual well-being.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to adopt a physically active way of life;**
- **promote physical activities.**

1.3 Focus on mental health problems

Young people stand out from other age groups because they generally enjoy good physical health. However, from the standpoint of mental health, some young people can be especially vulnerable.

Several indicators reveal psychological fragility such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders and addiction problems. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are also reported. Adult mental disorders often begin during childhood or adolescence.

Mental health problems can affect the physical health and well-being of young people, their productivity in the workplace and at school, their relationships with their friends and families, and sometimes even their lives.

Several factors

Mental health problems are linked to several factors.

Among the risk factors, mention should be made of individual characteristics such as heredity, and social phenomena such as poverty, drug addiction, stigmatization, violence, and social and community isolation.

The key recognized protective factors are the reinforcement of self-esteem, resilience, participation in society, and integration into the social environment.

Prejudices and stereotypes

The response to mental health problems comes up against prejudices and taboos to a greater extent than is true of physical health problems.

The question of mental health is often a private matter and is not discussed, in particular because of certain social norms and the isolation of the individuals affected.

Men are generally less likely to consult a health professional than women are to find a solution to emotional and mental health problems. This phenomenon clearly illustrates the weight of cultural norms in the treatment of mental illness.

The importance of a more receptive cultural environment

The weakening of prejudices and taboos implies a cultural environment that is more receptive to mental health problems.

Questions related to mental health are little discussed in our society, which affects young people contending with such problems, some of whom do not instinctively seek the assistance that they need.

We must help young people to express their unease and to request assistance and support to deal with it.

We can do so by focusing on the cultural environment and ensuring that mental health problems are less stigmatized.

Balanced mental health is essential to maintain good general health and individual well-being.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **heighten awareness among young people of mental health problems;**
- **help to create sociocultural environments that are more receptive to such problems.**

1.4 Promote healthy, safe behaviour

It is during youth that habits that are harmful to health are usually adopted, which will ultimately have a serious physical, social and psychological impact. Young people are also sometimes inclined to adopt unsafe behaviour that can have serious consequences.

The adoption of lifelong healthy, safe behaviour is conditional on the promotion of such behaviour among young people.

A tobacco-free way of life

A tobacco-free way of life is one healthy behaviour to promote. Most smokers take up the habit during their youth.

Smoking is the leading avoidable cause of death in Québec as it is in the rest of the world. It also directly causes numerous chronic diseases.

Enlightened consumption of alcohol, drugs, energy drinks and the non-medical use of drugs

Alcohol abuse is rising and is most frequent among 18-35 year-olds. It is linked to other at-risk behaviour for health and is defined as consumption equivalent to or greater than five drinks for men and four drinks for women at a given time at least once a month.

For the past decade, alcohol abuse has been on the rise among young people although regular consumption has declined.

Alcohol abuse is a serious health risk. Furthermore, it is often linked to dangerous driving, delinquency, drug consumption, and unprotected sex.

Cannabis is the most widely consumed drug. The non-medical use of drugs has also been observed and such medications serve as substitutes for several drugs.

Energy drinks are subject to massive marketing. They are readily available at all times and at affordable prices. They contain a lot of sugar, more than the daily recommended amount of caffeine for young people and stimulants whose full effects are unknown.

In 2010 and 2011, one secondary school student in 10 consumed energy drinks every day, seven adolescents and CEGEP students in 10 consumed them regularly, and three young people in five consumed two or more drinks per month.

Safe, healthy sexual behaviours

The adoption by young people of healthy, safe sexual behaviour is another major challenge.

In the absence of such behaviour, at a time when they are experiencing a period of intense learning, young people risk having to contend with serious problems. Mention should be made of unwanted pregnancies, sexual assault, violence in romantic relationships, and sexually transmitted and blood-borne diseases.

The promotion of healthy, safe behaviours

Young people can be encouraged to reduce their at-risk behaviour through public policies and to reduce the impact of such behaviour on their health and well-being.

We can do so by emphasizing prevention and investing in the promotion of healthy behaviour. We must focus, in particular, on those young people who are the most vulnerable to harmful behaviour and habits and avoid stigmatizing them, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those suffering from mental health problems.

At-risk behaviour undermines the overall health status and well-being of individuals.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **heighten awareness among young people of the benefits of healthy, safe behaviour;**
- **contribute to the promotion of a tobacco-free way of life;**
- **foster the development of the ability among young people to make enlightened choices concerning drinking, drugs and energy drinks;**
- **support the promotion of healthy, safe sexual behaviour;**
- **monitor changes in the behaviour of young people that can undermine their health or safety.**



THE HEALTH PREVENTION AND ANTI-SMOKING POLICY

The health prevention policy

While Quebecers' health status has improved overall in recent decades, several avoidable problems persist. The prevalence of chronic diseases and mental health problems is a significant burden, especially in the context of the ageing of the population.

To maintain and enhance Quebecers' health and quality of life, the government will shortly unveil its health prevention policy, which is intended to enhance Quebecers' state of health and quality of life and reduce social inequities in health by focusing on the acquisition of abilities, community development, enhanced living conditions, and the reinforcement of prevention.

Smoking is a serious public health problem

Smoking is the leading avoidable cause of death. Deaths stemming from smoking are mainly due to numerous chronic diseases for which it is one of the key risk factors.

Significant gains have been achieved since 1998, when the *Tobacco Act* was adopted. However, the pace of decline in smoking has slowed since 2006. What is more, changing trends have affected smoking, such as the presence of numerous flavoured tobacco products marketed by the tobacco industry that particularly affect young people and the popularity of new products such as e-cigarettes.

In 2015, the National Assembly of Québec adopted the *Act to bolster tobacco control*, through which the government is pursuing the fight against smoking by implementing measures designed, in particular, to better protect young people from the hazards of tobacco smoke in the environment and threats stemming from tobacco dependence by making products less accessible to them and less attractive.

Generally speaking, the measures target the “denormalization” of tobacco products and smoking to curb the propensity among young people to take up smoking.

1.5 Promote harmonious interpersonal relationships and egalitarian relationships

The establishment and maintenance in Québec of egalitarian relationships between Quebecers without any distinction whatsoever is one of the principles that underpins *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy*. Prejudices and ignorance in relation to differences are the source of conflictual relationships in society and stigmatization and discrimination.

Failure to respect others is also apparent in bullying, which has increased in scope through cyberbullying by means of the information and communications technologies.

Act from a very early age

The principle of equality and respect for others must be inculcated and assimilated from a very early age and must first be reflected in relationships that young people maintain with each other.

Anti-bullying programs are one government action implemented to promote equality and respect for others among young people.

Harmonious interpersonal relationships and egalitarian relationships help to maintain good general health and individual well-being.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to act respectfully without discrimination or prejudice;**
- **contribute to the establishment of environments that support respect for all individuals and their dignity, in particular through anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying programs;**
- **foster knowledge among young people of their basic rights and those of all Quebecers, especially as regards privacy.**

THE CONCERTED ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT AND COUNTER BULLYING

In 2015, the government unveiled the *Concerted Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Bullying 2015-2018: Together Against Bullying, A Shared Responsibility*, which stems, in particular, from targeted consultations among young people.

The government is committed to mobilizing society as a whole

The action plan pursues the government's commitment to combat bullying at all ages and in all environments, including cyberspace. Through the action plan, the government's objective is to build a respectful, safe, benevolent society for individuals of all ages that is receptive to differences and highly diverse.

One key direction in the action plan is to mobilize Québec society overall to prevent bullying through the promotion of appropriate behaviour to ensure that everyone can grow and live in a healthy, safe environment.

Target all living environments

All too often, the impact on the school success of young people who are bullied is reported, such as learning difficulties and concentration problems, absenteeism and dropping out, as well as social relations and delinquency. It is thus essential to maintain initiatives aimed at young people and the action plan extends them to all living environments.

Young people already benefit from the initiatives of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur and its partners to prevent and reduce bullying in the school environment. They will now benefit from new initiatives that target other facets of their lives, such as sports, where new efforts will be made to promote sportsmanship.

Awareness-raising

The prevention of bullying depends on heightened awareness of the phenomenon. Various measures in the action plan specially target young people, including, for example, awareness-raising concerning homophobia or transphobia, which is especially prevalent in secondary schools, and behaviour toward young handicapped individuals.

Furthermore, one of the strategies aimed at reaching young people implies a presence in the social media on different platforms to make them more aware of the importance of adopting respectful relationships and acting promptly when they witness or are the victims of bullying.

SECOND STRATEGIC PRIORITY

A school environment that promotes student retention and educational success

The **second strategic priority** in *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* concerns the school system and, more generally, the environment offered to Québec young people, which, more than ever, are fostering perseverance and educational success.



A crucial period

The school path is a crucial period for young people. The school system offers them the tools and means necessary to learn, obtain qualifications, discover and develop their skills and thus prepare to successfully undertake working life.

The school environment also represents for young people an essential environment for socialization that enables them to build on a solid footing their future lives as citizens.

Significant progress but more needs to be done

Over the past decade, significant progress has been achieved from the standpoint of student retention and school success: the graduation or qualification rate among young people under 20 years of age rose from 66.8% in 2002-2003 to 74.7% in 2012-2013 (Figure 5). However, more needs to be done, especially among young boys, to attain the government's target of an 80% graduation and qualification rate by 2020 among under-20 year-olds.

In recent years, other difficulties have arisen at all levels of the education system because of the growing proportion of young people with handicaps or adjustment or learning difficulties.

The challenges posed by the new technologies and the attractiveness of the labour market

The rapid advent of the new information and communications technologies is posing challenges but also offering worthwhile opportunities. The new technologies must be integrated as quickly as possible into knowledge acquisition. At the same time, they make learning modes more stimulating for young people.

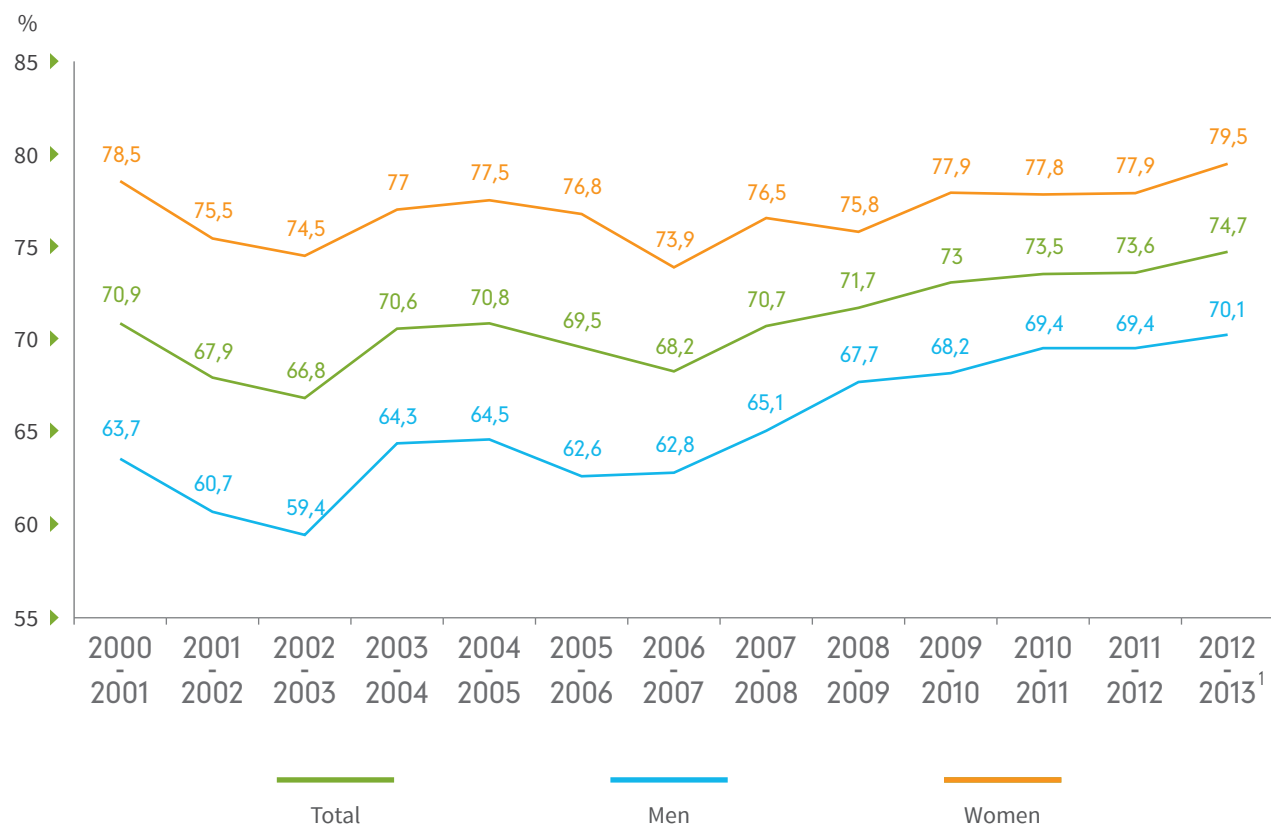
It must be noted that the attractiveness of the labour market is another challenge to be overcome to promote student retention. A labour market that offers readily accessible jobs is often an attractive choice for young people, to the detriment of further study. Indeed, it has been observed that a robust economy and a low unemployment rate can encourage a greater number of young people to leave school before they obtain a diploma or qualification. This poses a challenge to be met since such choices have a long-term impact on individuals' lives but also on the productivity of the Québec economy overall.

To enable young people to benefit from a school environment that promotes student retention and educational success, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following objectives :

- **increase** student retention, graduation rates and the qualification of young people at risk of dropping out;
- **support** access to and participation in extracurricular activities;
- **foster** access to educational and vocational guidance services;
- **emphasize** occupational and technical training;
- **encourage** access to higher education.

FIGURE 5

Secondary school graduation or qualification rate, young people or young adults under 20 years of age, by sex, Québec, 2000-2001 to 2012-2013



¹ Estimates.

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, *Indicateurs de l'éducation - Édition 2014*.



2.1 Increase student retention, graduation rates and the qualification of young people at risk of dropping out

Education is the best way for young people to acquire the knowledge, know-how and personal skills that will enable them to satisfy their needs and those of their loved ones and, more generally, attain their full potential.

Education offers the tools necessary to acquire knowledge that is essential to enter the labour market but also lifelong means to learn and adapt.

An array of factors affect leaving school prematurely

An array of factors can lead a young person to leave school prematurely, including personal or familial reasons, lifestyle, health problems or socioeconomic situation.

A strong labour market is another challenge to be met as regards student retention. Young people are often tempted to quit school before they finish their studies because of the possibility of benefiting from short-term remunerative employment.

Despite this temptation, we must encourage them to finish their studies to obtain a diploma or a qualification. At the same time, we must heighten awareness among employers of the importance of encouraging student retention and educational success and thereby encourage them to better match their hiring policies concerning young people and the demands of education.

Problems that do not affect all young people equally

The problem of student retention does not affect all Québec young people equally and varies from one region to the next. It affects boys and girls differently. Such disparities require targeted, adapted responses.

The problems of student retention and educational success are especially acute in disadvantaged homes, among handicapped students or those experiencing adjustment or learning difficulties, and among Aboriginal young people.

Dropping out of school can be linked to other circumstances, such as the mental health of young people, bullying, lifestyles and employability. Efforts to combat dropping out of school must thus be defined bearing in mind these numerous factors.

Numerous responses

Dropping out of school can be addressed by numerous responses, including support from the new information and communications technologies, in particular because young people are attracted to them.

Dropping out represents a significant social challenge. Student retention among young people and, in particular, those at risk of dropping out, must receive special attention because of its impact on the future of the individuals concerned.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **in addition to the initiatives implemented in the school system, explore the means of encouraging young people at risk of dropping out to pursue their studies until they obtain an initial diploma or qualification;**
- **encourage local and regional initiatives to support student retention and educational success;**
- **encourage young people who have dropped out of school before they obtained a diploma or a qualification to resume their studies.**



THE ACTION STRATEGY ON STUDENT RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS: I CARE ABOUT SCHOOL! – ALL TOGETHER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

For several years, the government and the educational milieu have allocated substantial resources to combat dropping out. In 2009, the government launched the action strategy *I Care About School!* focusing on student retention and school success.

This strategy hinges on three courses of action:

- recognition of the importance of the parents' and the community's role in promoting education and guiding young people;
- early detection throughout the student's learning path and intervention adapted to each environment and each student;
- measures focusing on reading and mathematics and learning related to behaviour, interpersonal relationships and lifestyles and, lastly, the student's level of school engagement and extracurricular involvement.

The action strategy set as a target an increase by 2020 to 80% in the graduation or qualification rate of young people under 20 years of age. Progress has been made in this respect but effort is still required to attain the target.

The Québec Economic Plan 2016-2017 reiterates the importance that the government attaches to education and higher education from the standpoint of Québec's economic and social development. Provision was made for additional investments in direct services for students in the *Plan for Success in Education and Higher Education* announced at that time.

2.2 Support access to and participation in extracurricular activities

An environment that is not confined to the framework of the educational institution promotes student retention.

More diversified, attractive study programs enhance persistence in school. A physically active way of life, broader participation in cultural life and civic engagement also reduce the risk of dropping out of school.

Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities are a good way to enhance the school environment of young people by making it more interesting and stimulating. Such activities bolster young people's self-esteem, enhance the school's social climate and a sense of belonging. They also enable students to acquire abilities and skills that complement the school curriculum.

The extracurricular activities offered to young people must be accessible in the environments that young people frequent such as the school, of course, but also sporting, cultural and community environments. It is essential that such activities be adapted to young people's situations, needs and interests.

Extracurricular activities foster student retention and educational success.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **foster diversified extracurricular activities that are accessible to everyone;**
- **recognize the achievements linked to participation by young people in extracurricular activities;**
- **encourage young people at risk of dropping out to participate in extracurricular activities.**



2.3 Foster access to educational and vocational guidance services

When the time comes, young people face numerous choices concerning studies to be undertaken, school paths to be adopted and trades or occupations to consider.

For many young people who are undecided about their future career, making an enlightened choice poses a challenge. What is more, such indecision is often one of the key reasons for quitting school. All young people hope to have at their disposal tools to better know themselves, explore their fields of interest and learn more about current and future employment opportunities.

Educational and vocational guidance

Educational and vocational guidance satisfies this need.

It enables young people to better determine which fields motivate them, better grasp labour market needs and learn about future employment prospects. It also enables young people to learn about non-traditional occupations. In this way, they have the necessary tools to establish a link between the training offered and career opportunities.

Educational and vocational guidance is offered in many forms, all of which contribute to helping young people to choose their career plans.

Educational and vocational guidance promotes further study and the smooth operation of the labour market against a backdrop of increasingly scarce manpower.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **support orientation activities accessible to young people, from secondary school to university;**
- **encourage young people to rely on educational and vocational guidance, above all in the case of those uncertain about study programs and career choices.**

2.4 Emphasize occupational and technical training

Occupational and technical training are qualification pathways that offer worthwhile employment prospects. They lead to fulfilling, well-paid trades, which are essential to the smooth functioning of several sectors of the Québec economy.

Significant efforts and enduring prejudices

Several job opportunities exist in fields in which occupational or technical training is necessary. To better match the needs of the labour market and skills, the government has made a significant effort to emphasize such training among young people.

Despite the government's initiatives to this effect, occupational and technical training is still subject to unfavourable prejudice. Too few students and their parents are aware of the programs and the attendant employment prospects.

We must pursue our efforts.

- We must better publicize the considerable diversity of existing training and pathways adapted both to young people's and the labour market's needs.
- We must also promote initiatives aimed at making such training more accessible.
- Moreover, we must encourage a better balance between training and employment by emphasizing occupational and technical training in fields where current and future manpower needs are especially significant.

The promotion of occupational and technical training can contribute to the school success of certain young people.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

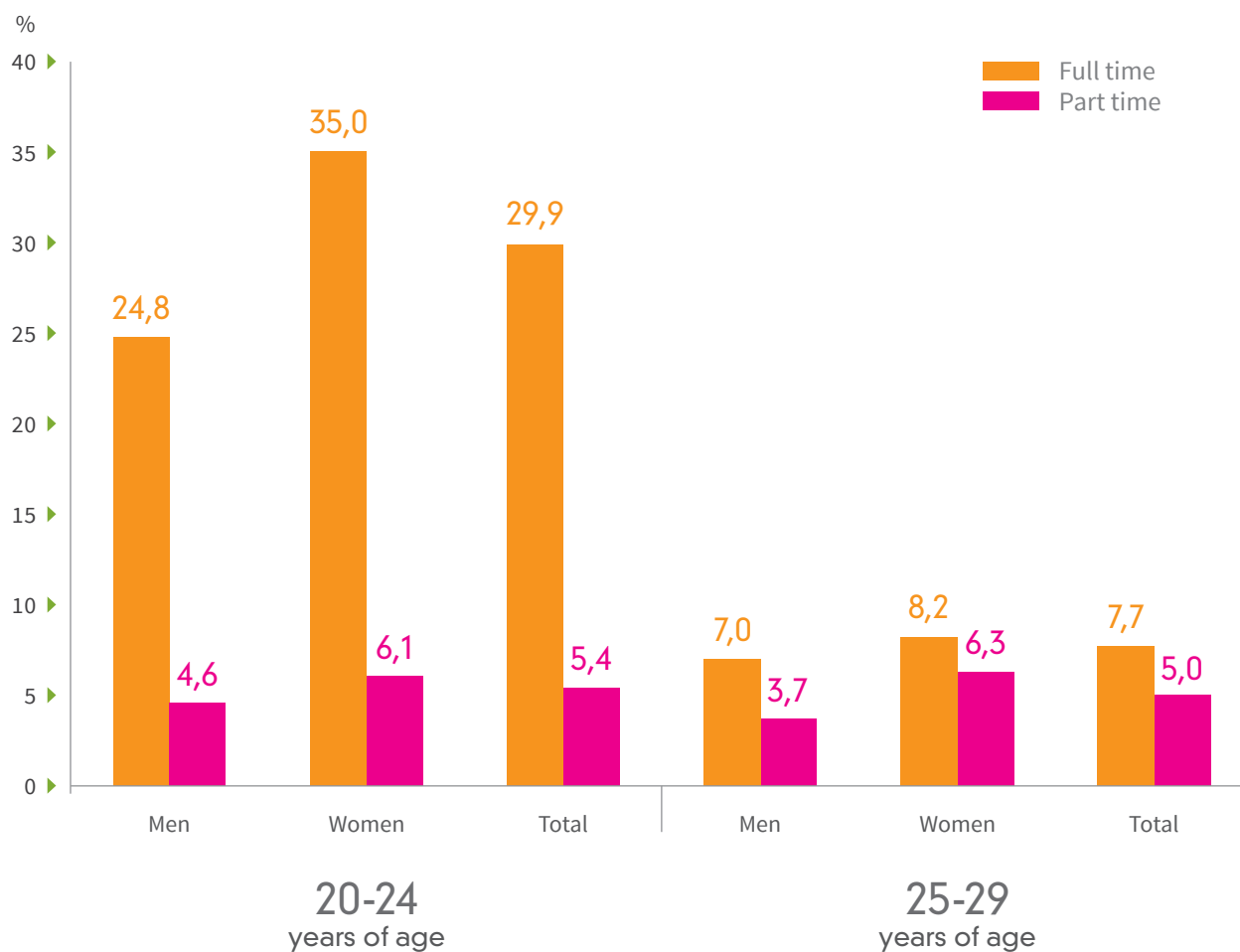
- **encourage young people to consider learning paths in occupational and technical training, in particular through awareness-raising and information activities;**
- **contribute to the establishment of environments that foster access to occupational and technical training, especially through the promotion of the implementation of innovative training programs.**

2.5 Encourage access to higher education

In 2011-2012, roughly one young person between 17 and 19 years of age in two attended a postsecondary establishment full time (data not presented), compared with 30% among 20-24 year-olds (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6

Proportion¹ of 20-29 year-olds attending CEGEP or university by age, sex and study program, Québec, 2011-2012 school year



¹ The proportions are calculated by dividing the school population of a given age as of September 30 of the school year under way by the population of the same age on the same date.

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, *Indicateurs de l'éducation - Édition 2014*, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

For many young people, postsecondary studies are an important factor of perseverance throughout their school path.

Higher education at the CEGEP and university level is a lever for individual social mobility and a higher education degree is an important professional asset. For the community, higher education provides a knowledge development tool and is a factor in economic prosperity.

Several factors affect access to higher education

Access to higher education depends on various considerations. In Québec, CEGEP students do not pay tuition and university tuition fees are among the lowest in Canada. Loans and grants are available. From a geographic standpoint and despite the establishment of CEGEPs and universities throughout Québec, distance can make higher education less accessible. However, the new information technologies are facilitating distance training.

Sociocultural determinants such as family, linguistic and social traits also affect access to higher education.

Furthermore, growing numbers of students are following atypical paths that combine studies, work and family responsibilities.

The accessibility of higher education is an important factor of individual and collective prosperity.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **foster accessibility to higher education for all young people who have the desire and the ability to engage in such studies;**
- **study the dynamics of the bridges between the different levels of education and implement innovations in this respect.**

THIRD
STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

Young people committed to culture, the community and society

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy includes
a **third strategic priority** devoted
to the place that young people occupy
in the community.

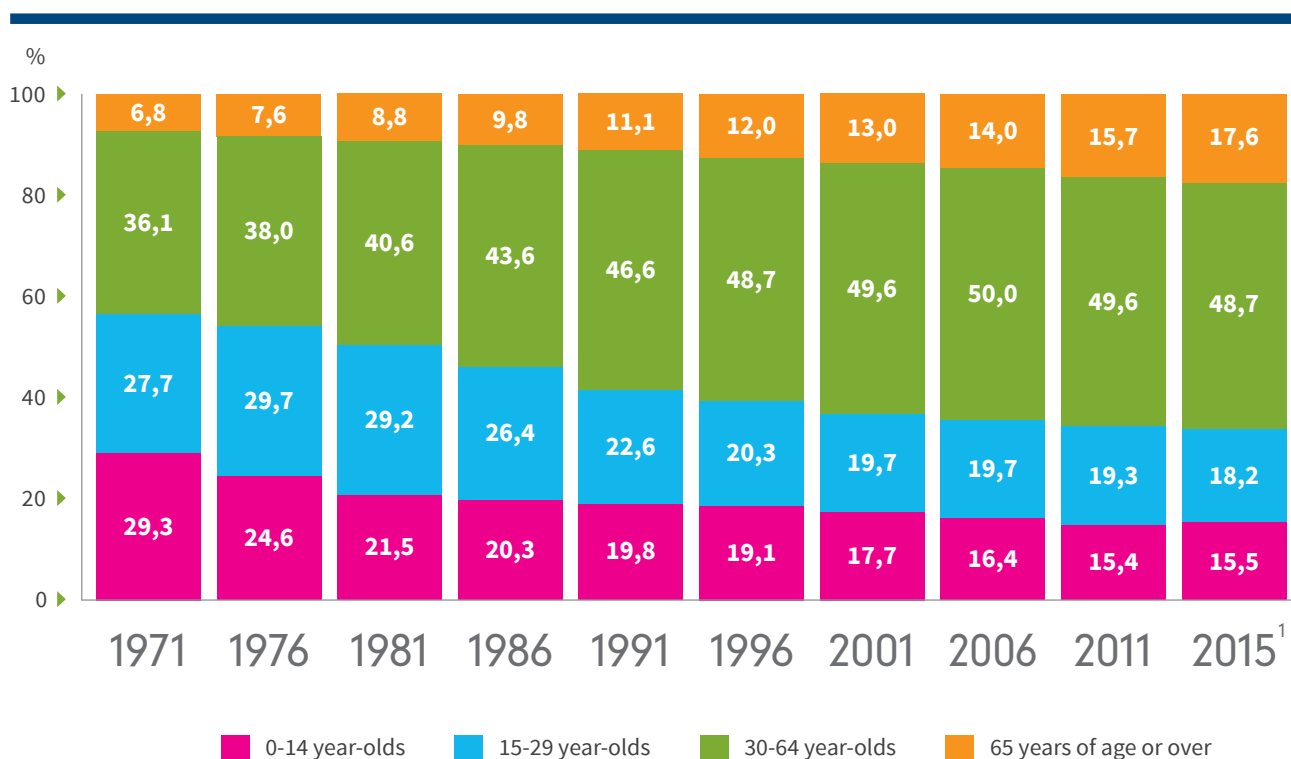
A new demographic situation

The demographic changes now under way mean that young people no longer have the sheer weight of numbers (Figure 7) that they did in the decades following World War II. In 2003, there were more Quebecers 65 years of age or over than young people under 20 years of age (ISQ, 2014).

This new demographic situation has arisen in a profoundly altered global context including the major environmental challenges that the planet must meet, the opening of borders and technological upheavals that are transforming the nature of communications.

FIGURE 7

Breakdown of the population by age group, Québec, 1971 to 2015



¹ Preliminary data.

Source: Statistics Canada, *Demographic Estimates*, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Declining influence but new means

Young people exert less influence than they did several decades ago to call attention to their aspirations and influence collective choices. On the other hand, they are able to take full advantage of technological changes, which they have integrated from early childhood into their way of life.

The modern-day world hinges on instantaneity, connectivity and responsiveness. The technological tools that convey these phenomena are increasingly centred on the individualization and the atomization of experience.

Paradoxically, the same tools also facilitate the establishment of ties and networks outside traditional circles. They bolster the sense of belonging to communities made up of individuals living all over the planet and promote mobilization in respect of specific challenges.

Listen to young people and give them a voice

Through *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* the government wishes to ensure that Québec society listens to young people, facilitates their contribution to collective debate and puts to good use their contribution to the solutions to be adopted in the future.

As full-fledged citizens, young people must have a voice in their communities in order to influence their development. They represent the future and can thus contribute to defining a society in their own image in which they feel fully integrated throughout their lives.

A commitment to culture, the community and society

Citizen engagement reflects the aspirations of young people for a common social blueprint. A commitment to culture is an ideal way to open up to the world and contribute to its future development by instilling in it their creativity.

Through this commitment, young people can make themselves heard in their community and initiate in practical terms a citizen engagement approach.

The commitment by young people to culture, the community and society affects them directly. Such a commitment underpins social inclusion, supports student retention, facilitates educational success and potentially leads to easier integration into the world of work.

Such a commitment is expressed in many ways, in particular through projects that unite young people and other citizens, thereby allowing for intergenerational reconciliation in fields as diverse as health, well-being or the environment.

To encourage young people to commit themselves to culture, the community and society, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following objectives:

- **encourage** civic engagement;
- **support** participation in cultural activities;
- **broaden** opportunities to engage in volunteer work;
- **promote** intergenerational dialogue and intercultural relations;
- **encourage** environmentally responsible behaviour.

3.1 Encourage civic engagement

Citizen engagement and civic engagement help to integrate young people into the community, establish and bolster a sense of belonging and an awareness of what can be achieved when individuals involve themselves in practical terms in the community.

The participation and commitment of young people are essential to Québec democracy. They make it easier to grasp the needs and wishes of young people and integrate them more extensively into collective decision-making.

Participation and commitment

There exists a difference of involvement between participation and commitment. Participation corresponds to an ad hoc relatively limited personal investment in relation to commitment, which is synonymous with broader responsibilities over a longer period of time.

The participation and commitment of young people in their communities are a practical means of ensuring that they exert significant influence. Civic engagement allows young people to assert their ideas and interests despite a reduction in their relative numbers.

The means available to foster commitment by young people

Several means are available to foster citizen engagement and civic engagement among young people.

The information and communications technologies make it possible to reach young people and inform them of political events that may affect them and the attendant possibilities for action. They foster their mobilization.

The existence and availability of places for participation facilitate the involvement of young people from different backgrounds and fields of interest.

Citizen engagement and civic engagement contribute to integrating young people into the community and enable society as a whole to benefit from a contribution that is vital for the future.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to commit themselves to their communities;**
- **encourage young people to exercise their right to vote, especially by inviting them early on to simulation exercises;**
- **contribute to the establishment of environments in which young people are listened to and know that their contribution will have an impact;**
- **encourage projects focusing on citizen engagement and those that enable young people to acquire leadership skills.**



3.2 Support participation in cultural activities

Young people are imbued with the culture of their society, which is enriched by contacts with other cultures, in particular through the information and communications technologies that are now accessible.

Culture is part of the references through which young people understand the world in which they live and in which they plan their futures. It materializes in numerous forms.

A form of expression and a forum for discussion

For young people, culture is often an ideal form of expression and a focal point for meeting and exchanging views with other young people. Participation in artistic and cultural activities thus contributes to reducing the isolation of young people, establishing networks and resolving conflicts.

By enriching their cultural experience, young people open up to the world, build on their abilities and develop their creative potential.

To enrich Québec culture, we must create environments that promote expression through the artistic creation of young people.

Participation in cultural life contributes to the development of the potential of young people and facilitates their integration into society.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to participate in cultural activities;**
- **facilitate access to cultural activities by young people;**
- **contribute to the establishment of environments that foster diversified cultural expression.**

THE FUTURE QUÉBEC CULTURAL AND THE QUÉBEC DIGITAL CULTURE PLAN

The future Québec cultural policy

The renewal of Québec's cultural policy was officially launched in February 2016 and began with a broad public consultation conducted in all regions of Québec. The current cultural policy was launched in 1992. The future policy, slated for release in 2017, can draw on the current policy bearing in mind new realities, including changing cultural practices, globalization, demographic changes, cultural diversity and the advent of technologies.

The Québec Digital Culture Plan

On September 29, 2014, the government unveiled *The Québec Digital Culture Plan*, which reflects a global reality: digital technology is transforming artistic disciplines, opening up markets, increasing the means of production and dissemination and drastically changing business models.

Prepared in collaboration with interveners in the culture and communications sectors, *The Québec Digital Culture Plan* enables them to make a harmonious transition to the digital environment.

The plan comprises three strategic priorities:

- the creation of digital cultural content;
- innovation to adapt to the digital culture;
- the dissemination of digital cultural content to ensure its accessibility.

Young people have adopted from an early age the new information and communications technologies. They will, therefore, be in a good position to take advantage of *The Québec Digital Culture Plan* and the possibilities thus offered in different sectors of cultural activity. Québec young people who are already active in these sectors will thus contribute directly to adapting Québec cultural production and creation to the new technological realities.



3.3 Broaden opportunities to engage in volunteer work

By engaging in volunteer work, young people are contributing their strengths to their communities.

Volunteer work is a form of freely chosen commitment that is usually long term and represents a sustained investment by the volunteer.

Young people who voluntarily commit themselves benefit from the recognition of the individuals supported by their efforts. Such young people can take advantage of voluntary activities to acquire skills or better grasp their own potential. This commitment also bolsters their sense of belonging and usefulness to society.

A gateway to other forms of participation

Volunteer work is a gateway to other forms of participation that can lead young people to engage in stimulating experiences in Québec or elsewhere.

A commitment by young people to volunteer work also enhances a community's perception of young people.

Voluntary initiatives open up to young people stimulating perspectives and enhance the image of young people in the community that benefits from them.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **broaden opportunities to engage in volunteer work;**
- **promote recognition of young people's commitment to volunteer work..**

3.4 Promote intergenerational dialogue and intercultural relations

Young people who are committed to culture, the community and society contribute directly to the establishment of close relations between the generations and to the reinforcement of harmonious intercultural relations.

Intergenerational dialogue

There is an underlying concern in modern democracies concerning intergenerational fairness. It is clear to the government that dialogue, collaboration and intergenerational sharing are the key that will enable Québec to meet the challenges that demographic change is posing.

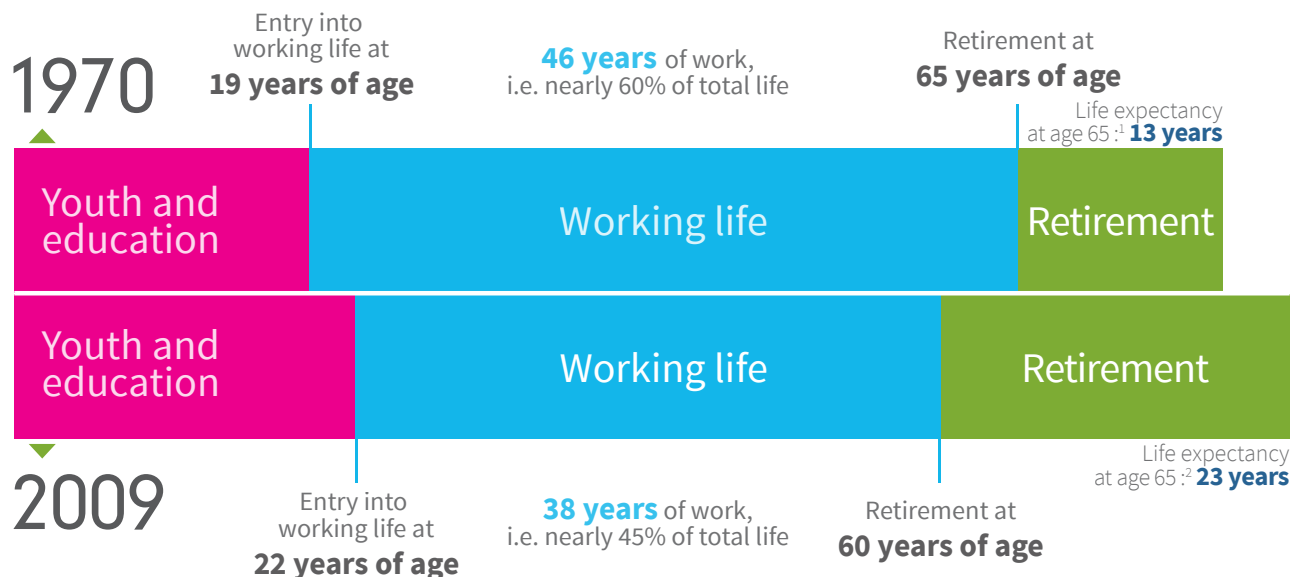
Dialogue is essential given the challenges to be met

Intergenerational dialogue is essential to meet the economic, social and political challenges stemming from demographic changes.

- From an economic standpoint, if Québec wishes to maintain and fund services, it must create wealth from a labour force that is dwindling in relation to previous years (Figure 8).
- From a social standpoint the question of the breakdown of services offered to each generation will arise.
- From a political standpoint, the concerns and needs of growing numbers of seniors will orient debate and public measures. Conversely, young people will have difficulty asserting their priorities and aspirations because of their declining demographic weight.

FIGURE 8

Change in the duration of the active working life of an individual in 1970 and in 2009



¹ Life expectancy for men has been used to better reflect the composition of the labor market at the time. For a woman, life expectancy at age 65 in 1970 was 17 years.

² Life expectancy for men was used for comparison purposes with the year 1970. For a woman, life expectancy at age 65 in 2009 was nearly 26 years.

Source: D'Amours et al. (2013). *Innover pour pérenniser le système de retraite*.

Solidarity, understanding and the creation of joint projects

Intergenerational dialogue will establish itself to maintain solidarity and an understanding of the experience of different age groups and to define solutions that concern all generations.

This dialogue will facilitate an enriching exchange of experiences between the generations. It will facilitate the new generation of workers through training and guidance for young people.

One current demographic reality is that seniors are living longer in good health. They can thus share in better conditions their know-how and knowledge with young people.

Intergenerational dialogue leads in practical terms to the creation of shared initiatives focusing on shared interests, such as environmental preservation. Such initiatives allow participants of different ages to share knowledge and skills.

Intercultural relations

Young people who are involved in Québec society today are also putting a lot of effort into promoting harmonious intercultural relations.

Québec is banking on immigration to support its population growth and this determination will be maintained in the coming years. Future population growth will stem, by and large, from immigration, a situation that is contributing directly to increasing the diversity of Québec society.

The ability to dialogue respectfully and mutual understanding will enable Québec to benefit fully from this new reality.

Intergenerational dialogue and broader solidarity between individuals of different ages are the best means of responding to the economic, social and political challenges stemming from demographic changes.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **foster the establishment of positive intergenerational relations that are enriching for everyone;**
- **encourage the establishment of solidarity between Quebecers of all generations and all origins;**
- **contribute to the establishment of environments that build bridges between the generations and promote mentoring and linkage activities.**



3.5 Encourage environmentally responsible behaviour

The state of the planet is an important question for Québec young people and for young people the world over.

Environmental issues

Climate change is certainly one of the phenomena whose consequences are the most serious and the hardest to reverse.

However, it is not the only environmental challenge that we are facing. The development of sustainable agriculture, the conservation of biophysical environments and the species that live there, and air and water quality are other worrisome environmental issues. Among the responses to be promoted, local, responsible consumption and the reduction of residual matter, including a reduction of food waste, require awareness-raising among young people and in society as a whole.

Motivation to be put into practice

Young people are more aware of environmental issues than the population at large. They are motivated to modify their consumption in order to respect the environment. For many young people, the environment is a priority theme in collective debates.

However, we must recognize that among Quebecers overall, young people are not the most inclined to adopt environmentally responsible behaviour. They consume local products and adopt active transportation but their consumption habits should more extensively reflect their concern for the environment. Broader dissemination of information on responsible consumption can contribute to such awareness.

The adoption of environmentally responsible behaviour will enable young people to reflect in practical terms in their consumption habits their concern for environmental questions.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage young people to adopt every day a way of life centred on environmentally responsible behaviour;**
- **support initiatives that emphasize environmentally responsible behaviour and its positive environmental impacts.**



TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Tackling climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. Climate change stemming from human activities and its impact on ecosystems will modify young people's environment throughout their lives. We know that certain consequences of such change are already perceptible but that others can be avoided if remedial measures are adopted in time.

The younger generations are already largely aware of the issues at stake and it will soon be incumbent upon them to make the necessary decisions.

In Québec, through the education system, the government is banking on young people to become multiplying agents among their peers and families. Within the framework of its *2013-2020 Action Plan on Climate Change*, the government will also promote the mobilization of stakeholders in Québec society, including young people, in respect of climate change.

The Paris Climate Change Conference 2015 of the *United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change*

Québec young people participated in the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) under the *United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change* held in Paris from November 30 to December 12, 2015. In particular, they had an opportunity to engage in discussions with the Québec Premier at that time.

The *United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change* is an international treaty that was opened for signature at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in June 1992. The signatory States (the “parties”) undertook to limit global warming. The Conferences of the Parties are held annually to ensure the implementation of the Framework Agreement and to define, in concrete terms, the new stages in its application.

The young people who attended the Paris Climate Change Conference were privileged witnesses at the historic event at which 195 countries concluded an international agreement aimed at maintaining by 2100 warming below 2°C in relation to the preindustrial era.

Québec also announced at the conference its support for young people's initiatives to tackle climate change. By focusing on climate change with young people, both to reduce emissions and with respect of adaptation measures, Québec can thus help the very individuals who must confront this colossal challenge in order to manage it.

Tackling climate change is a long-term challenge that affects all generations and implies that young people today must take up the torch. It is through education, dialogue, creativity and ingenuity that the challenge can be met.

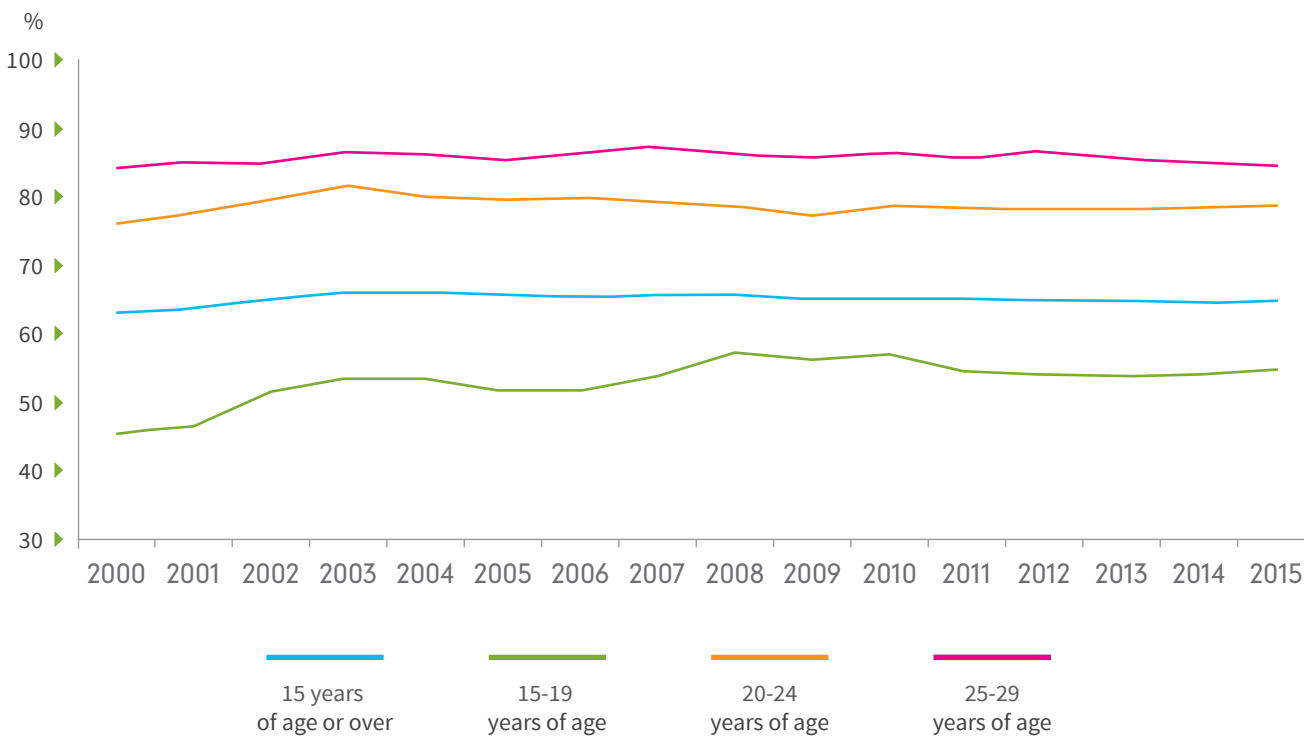
FOURTH STRATEGIC PRIORITY

An individual's first job or the establishment of a first business is an essential step in the path leading to autonomy and full participation in society. By entering the labour market, young people acquire the possibility of earning a living and contributing directly to collective prosperity.

The labour force participation rate of young people rose from 2000 to 2015 (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9

Labour force participation rate by age group, Québec, 2000 to 2015



Source: Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey, 2015*, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

To help young people prepare to enter the labour market and prepare the labour market to accept them, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* is targeting the following objectives:

- **integrate** into the labour market young people in difficulty and young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training;
- **ensure** fairer treatment for young people in the workplace;
- **promote** balance between work, family responsibilities and study;
- **foster** job mobility in the regions, in Canada and abroad;
- **take advantage** of employment opportunities in all regions of Québec.

4.1 Integrate into the labour market young people in difficulty and young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training

The transition from studies to employment is one of the most important stages that young people must accomplish to attain full autonomy.

Young people in difficulty

Most young people successfully surmount this stage and what are only short-lived obstacles. However, some young people experience persistent difficulties that prevent them from integrating the labour market.

They are sometimes marginalized to varying degrees, occasionally reliant on last-resort financial assistance or are in an awkward position when they are neither employed, studying nor receiving training.

In 2014-2015, 182 500 young people were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET). This group includes most of the 62 530 young adults under 30 years of age receiving last-resort financial assistance (Figure 10).

Assistance to integrate the labour market

We must help these young people overcome the problems that they are facing, since integration into the labour market is often the best means of solving the problems at the source. Finding and keeping a job reduce the risk of poverty and exclusion. We must, therefore, offer specific support to young people from unstable environments or those who have not finished secondary school or vocational training.

The current demographic context encourages initiatives aimed at integrating young people in difficulty into the employment market. Demand for labour is high and these young people have the necessary potential to satisfy market needs.

Integration into the employment market of young people in difficulty is an ideal way to release them from poverty and exclusion. It also responds to certain labour market needs.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objective:

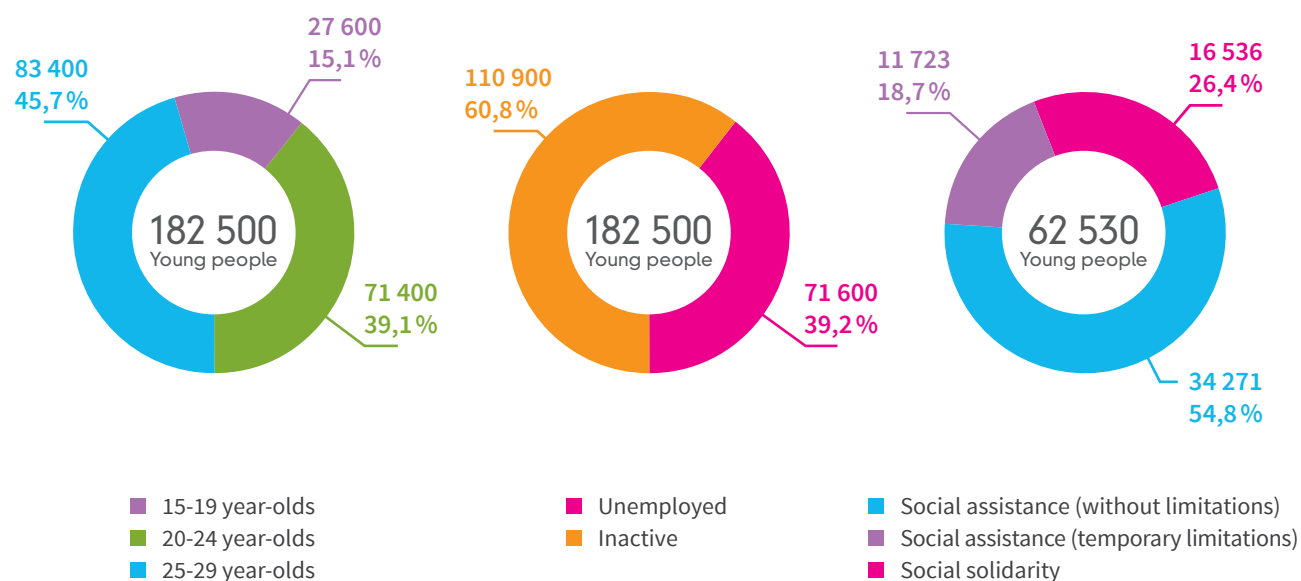
- **support the integration into the labour market of young people in difficulty and young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training.**

FIGURE 10

Breakdown of NEETs, in figures and as a percentage, by age group, 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015¹

Breakdown of NEETs, in figures and as a percentage, according to status, 15-29 year-olds, Québec, 2014-2015²

Breakdown of adult last-resort financial assistance beneficiaries under 30 years of age depending on the program, in figures and as a percentage, Québec, 2014-2015³



¹ Eight-month average depending on the school year (September 2014 to April 2015).

Source: Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, 2015, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

² Eight-month average depending on the school year (September 2014 to April 2015).

Source: Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, 2015, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

³ Eight-month average depending on the school year (September 2014 to April 2015).

Source: Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, *Rapport statistique sur la clientèle des programmes d'assistance sociale*, September 2014 to April 2015, adapted by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse.

GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN FOR SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AND MATCHING TRAINING TO EMPLOYMENT

Québec is facing an ageing population and the growing scarcity of skilled labour. It will be essential to meet this demographic and economic challenge to ensure greater prosperity. The response to workforce needs will come, by and large, from young people.

Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion

Employment is one of the best means to enable individuals to escape poverty permanently and enhance their standard of living. It is also an important factor of social inclusion.

Accordingly, the *Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion 2010-2015*, which lies within the scope of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, seeks, in particular, to promote work and foster individual autonomy.

Consequently, the work incentive is an effective tool to combat poverty and social exclusion, and government action is intended to make work more attractive and profitable for low-income individuals and offer the necessary services and measures to those who need them to facilitate their self-fulfilment and their integration into the labour market.

In order to encourage as many people as possible to enter the labour market government action is focusing, in particular, on training, especially training designed to satisfy labour market needs, and the socio-professional integration of immigrants.

If employment is the most effective way to combat economic exclusion, the training and education of young people are essential prerequisites to increase their chances of entering the labour market. In this respect, it goes without saying that efforts to combat dropping out of school and the reinforcement of persistence in school are priorities and are contributing directly to efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Matching training to employment

One of the key challenges that Québec will have to meet in the coming years will be to train skilled workers who can satisfy labour market needs.

Accordingly, for several years government measures have sought to better match training and such needs. The measures rely, in particular, on labour market information and the needs of businesses, the availability of in-company internships and optimum collaboration by all interveners, including the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail.



4.2 Ensure fairer treatment for young people in the workplace

Remuneration and working conditions improve in most organizations with experience and seniority. The labour market functions accordingly in the case of unionized businesses or organizations whose collective agreements almost always make provision for regular improvements in working conditions in the course of employment.

However, it is important that disparities between the employment situations of old and new staff not stem from unfair decisions based on age. To this end, since 2001 the *Act respecting labour standards* has prohibited several orphan clauses.

We must now focus on provisions likely to compromise fairness between male and female workers to avoid placing a burden on workers starting their careers, many of them young people.

We must ensure that young people receive fair remuneration and treatment on the employment market. We must put an end to disparities in the treatment and remuneration that they receive because of their age.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objective:

- **study the dynamic of employment among young people to pinpoint possible injustices and establish the means to end them.**

4.3 Promote balance between work, family responsibilities and study

The balance between work and family responsibilities is one of the main concerns of young workers with children, some of whom are also studying. A postsecondary degree or diploma is much sought-after by students and their future employers, which requires an often difficult balance between the demands of study, the obligation to work to earn income and the arrival of a first child.

Worthwhile initiatives

Workplaces and educational institutions have implemented worthwhile initiatives. However, it is important to enhance knowledge on the applicable measures, especially as regards the use of the new technologies. Awareness-raising measures must also be pursued to encourage the adoption of good habits with respect to work-family-study balance.

A number of employers want to be better equipped to help young people achieve work-family-study balance. Employers and educational institutions must be made aware of the difficulties that young people have to overcome. It is in their interests to help them succeed in their first years of active life.

Growing numbers of young parents must balance work, the initial obligations of autonomous family life and study. We must help young parents to achieve such balance, on which hinges academic success, the pursuit of ongoing training, access to a long-lasting job, or starting a family.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objective:

- **support initiatives to promote balance between work, family responsibilities and study.**



4.4 Foster the mobility of young people in the regions, in Canada and abroad

Experience acquired elsewhere in Québec, in Canada or abroad offers young people unique learning opportunities. It enables them to meet young people and other individuals with different backgrounds, cultures and training. Such experience sustains the ability to adapt and understand other people and to develop the communications skills that will be essential for the rest of their lives.

Highly useful experience

Experience outside the milieu of origin will be highly useful in the lives of young people from all backgrounds. Québec's cultural landscape will continue to diversify in the coming decades. International exchanges will intensify. In an economy as open as Québec's is, the acquisition of experience outside Québec will be a major advantage to benefit from personal development and a stimulating, fulfilling job.

Mobility projects can be equally worthwhile in Québec. It is in the interests of young people to discover other regions, above all if such discoveries lead to genuine integration into the host community.

Young people's experience in the regions, in Canada or in other countries affords them discoveries and enrichment from which they will benefit throughout their active lives.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage and support young people who wish to gain experience outside their region, in particular by proposing internship programs and education experiences;**
- **support opportunities for young people to acquire diversified experience in Québec, in Canada and elsewhere in the world.**

4.5 Take advantage of employment opportunities in all regions of Québec

Québec comprises a diversified array of regions offering especially varied employment opportunities. Québec young people must take advantage of this diversity and variety when they prepare for the future.

The challenge facing the regions is to publicize among young people the potential and opportunities that they offer, whether specific manpower needs or opportunities to create or transfer businesses.

Such efforts must target, in particular, young immigrants who are often less informed than other Québec young people of the possibilities that Québec's regions offer.

Employment opportunities exist throughout Québec. It is important for young people to be informed of them in order to take advantage of them.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **better inform young people of employment opportunities in Québec's regions and promote matching between training and employment;**
- **focus in particular on information intended for young immigrants on opportunities in the regions.**

THE QUÉBEC POLICY ON IMMIGRATION, PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

The Québec government recently launched *The Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation and Inclusion*, which seeks to recognize Québec's diversity and the contribution that immigrants make and to promote Québec's vitality and prosperity and the vitality of its territory. It hinges on several foundations, including an intercultural approach that emphasizes the importance of receptiveness to diversity, the role of the French language and fair access without discrimination to Québec society's resources, services and shared institutions.

A significant place for young people

Young people figure prominently in the new policy. They account for the majority of applications for immigration: between 65% and 75% of all immigrant applicants are under 35 years of age. In the new policy, the government will thus pay special attention to the integration of young people and their employability.

The new policy will also include initiatives focusing on the occupancy and vitality of territories through immigration and the integration of immigrants in Québec's regions experiencing manpower shortages.

FIFTH
STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

The ambition to establish a business or take over an existing business

Many Québec young people have the ambition of quickly setting up their own business or taking over an existing business in order to give concrete expression to a business perspective in which they believe deeply. They are prepared to take risks to create jobs and activities based on their ideas.

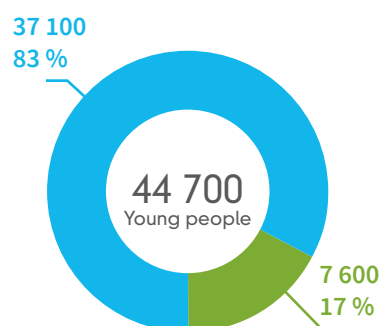
The businesses that these young people wish to create or take over can be private firms or social economy enterprises.

For their projects to succeed, the young people need financial support. They must also benefit from strategic advice and know-how concerning both the business area in question and business management or financing.

In 2014, there were nearly 45 000 entrepreneurs between 15 and 29 years of age in Québec. Furthermore, young people of that age are especially numerous in going into business (Figure 11).

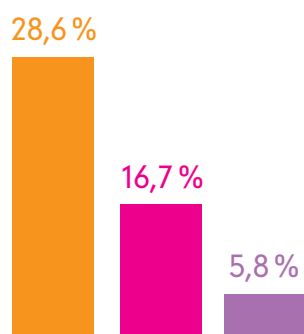
FIGURE 11

Number of entrepreneurs 15 to 29 years of age according to the presence of paid help, Québec, 2014



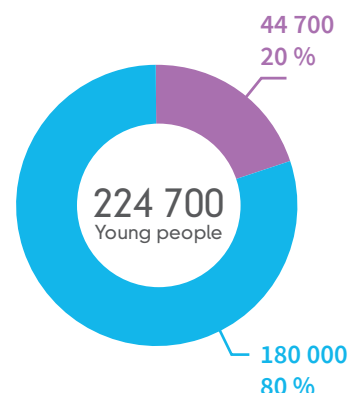
■ Without employees
■ With employees

Entry rate of entrepreneurs¹ by age group, Québec, 2014



■ 15 - 29 year-olds
■ 30 - 39 year-olds
■ 40 years of age or over

Number of entrepreneurs 15 to 29 years of age, Québec and the rest of Canada, 2014



■ Rest of Canada
■ Québec

¹ Entry rate of entrepreneurs: the number of entrepreneurs in an age group who acquired this status within the 12 previous months divided by the total number of active entrepreneurs in the same age group during the year.

Note: The term “entrepreneurs” in this compilation refers to individuals that Statistics Canada’s *Labour Force Survey* identifies as self-employed workers (except non-remunerated family workers). Such individuals may hire other people (entrepreneurs with employees) or may not do so (entrepreneurs without employees).

Source: Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, 2014, public-use microdata file, adapted by the Direction des politiques et de l’analyse économique in the Ministère de l’Économie, de la Science et de l’Innovation.

To support youth entrepreneurship and the new generation of workers, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* has adopted the following objectives:

- **encourage** young people to adopt an entrepreneurship culture;
- **support** young people's business startups;
- **facilitate** business transfers, in particular in respect of family businesses;
- **support** young agricultural entrepreneurs;
- **facilitate** access by young people to decision-making bodies and prepare the new generation of workers.

5.1 Encourage young people to adopt an entrepreneurship culture

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), whose vitality and development are directly tied to the quality of entrepreneurship, underpin to a large extent the Québec economy.

SMEs and their officers create and maintain jobs in all regions of Québec, invest in new activities and foster innovation. Québec's prosperity thus depends, to a large extent, on the quality of entrepreneurship.

In the coming years, a significant number of business executives will retire. In the case of SMEs, this transition in leadership implies serious risks. The younger generations have the opportunity to take over.

The entrepreneurship culture

The entrepreneurship culture promotes the creation of businesses or takeovers of existing businesses. The culture is built, among other things, by means of practical experience gained through projects. Such experience enables young people to better perceive and understand the role of the entrepreneur, grasp the inherent challenges and, possibly, have a desire to go into business.

Educational institutions are the ideal environments in which to spawn entrepreneurship. In this way, young people explore and discover their abilities and the options open to them in the future.



The promotion of the entrepreneurship culture has other impacts on the training of young people. Young people initiated into the entrepreneurship culture develop their autonomy, action skill, sense of responsibility and daring.

Québec has everything to gain by encouraging the entrepreneurship culture among young people. Our future economic prosperity depends, by and large, on the quality of the entrepreneurs of tomorrow. The entrepreneurship culture develops abilities and personal qualities that are very valuable in working life.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **promote the entrepreneurship culture among young people through projects that facilitate practical experience such as cooperative projects and the promotion of programs and initiatives in the schools and in postsecondary educational institutions;**
- **propose to young people a positive image of entrepreneurship.**

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2015-2020

The Social Economy Action Plan 2015-2020: **Collective entrepreneurship**

The Social Economy Action Plan 2015-2020, which stems from the *Social Economy Act*, seeks to support the full contribution of social economy enterprises to the Québec economy and their response to the challenges that Québec is facing. The action plan is intended, in particular, to support collective entrepreneurship as one of the solutions to business successions.

Collective transfers can offer an appropriate solution to business shutdowns or relocations. In such instances, groups of workers or communities join forces to buy the business for sale and become its collective owners.

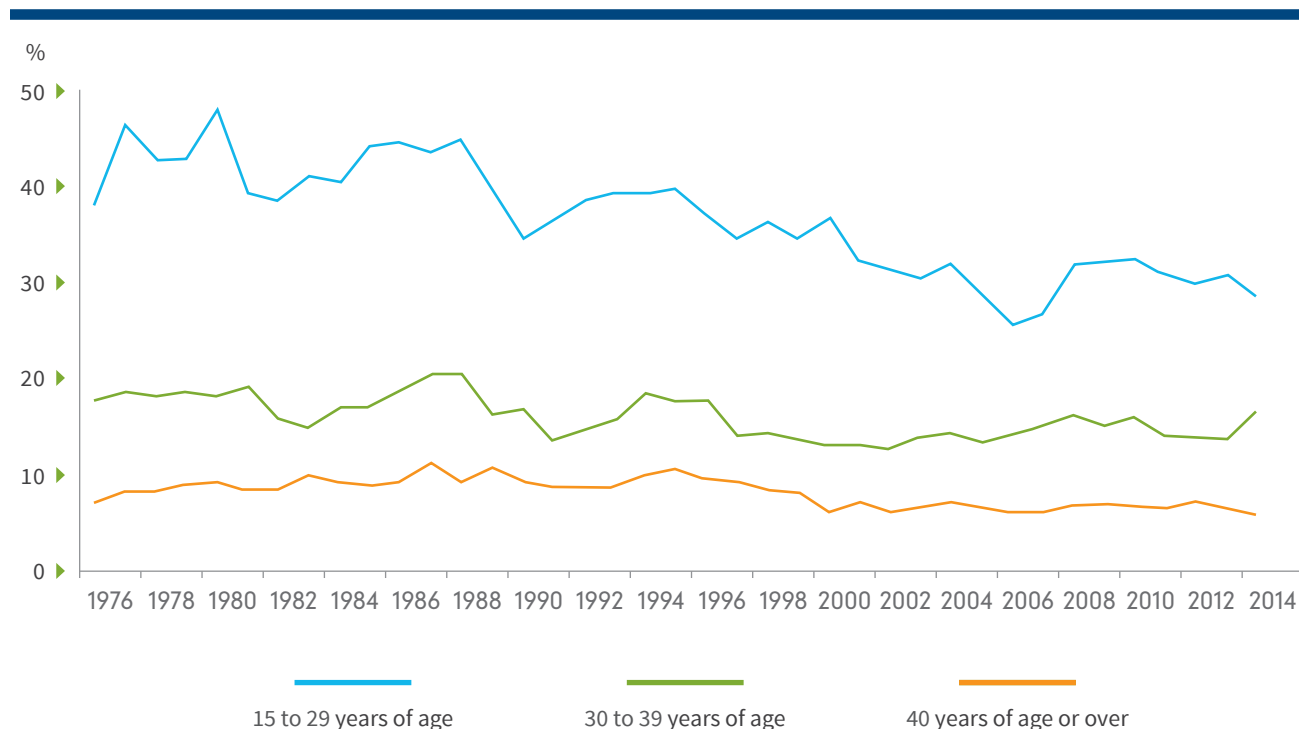
In another perspective, the new generation of workers in social economy enterprises also poses a challenge, especially in the context of the ageing of the population. The involvement of young people in social economy enterprises is, therefore, essential.

5.2 Support young people's business startups

While the entry rate of young entrepreneurs declined during the period (Figure 12), many young people continue to express the desire to start a business.

FIGURE 12

Change in the entry rate of entrepreneurs¹ by age group, Québec, 1976 to 2014



¹ Entry rate of entrepreneurs: the number of entrepreneurs in an age group who acquired this status within the 12 previous months divided by the total number of active entrepreneurs in the same age group during the year.

Note: The term “entrepreneurs” in this compilation refers to individuals that Statistics Canada’s *Labour Force Survey* identifies as self-employed workers (except non-remunerated family workers). Such individuals may hire other people (entrepreneurs with employees) or may not do so (entrepreneurs without employees).

Source: Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, 2014, public-use microdata file, adapted by the Direction des politiques et de l’analyse économique in the Ministère de l’Économie, de la Science et de l’Innovation.

This desire is often abandoned along the way. A business startup hinges on solid intentions, a quality project and personal skills but also on conditions over which young people have little control, such as the market, access to financing or a knowledge of public support, the regulatory framework or accessible infrastructure.

The government will support young people who wish to start a business, in particular by adapting to their situations.

Young people wishing to start a business must be supported in their projects in order to take into account the specific conditions that they are facing because of their age and level of experience.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objective:

- **encourage young people to act upon their desire to start a business through reception, orientation and mentoring services and referrals to the support offered in their region.**



5.3 Facilitate business transfers, especially in the case of family businesses

The impending retirement of a significant number of business executives is an opportunity for young people wishing to go into business. Growing numbers of young people want to become entrepreneurs by taking over an existing business, which is sometimes easier than creating a new business from scratch.

In the current demographic context, business transfer opportunities are numerous. On the other hand, it is not easy for young people to learn about existing opportunities then to contact business owners who wish to sell.

Business transfers pose a specific challenge, which young people must be better prepared to meet. However, business transfers to the younger generations are the most natural avenue to ensure the long-term survival of many Québec firms.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **inform young people about business transfer opportunities;**
- **promote access by young people to the services offered in respect of business transfers;**
- **adapt existing services to young people's needs.**

5.4 Support young agricultural entrepreneurs

Agriculture is an important sector of the Québec economy. It partially satisfies Quebecers' food requirements and also contributes to exports. Farming activities are found throughout Québec and ensure dynamic land occupancy. Agriculture is thus contributing directly to the economic and social vitality of rural communities in Québec overall.

A number of Québec young people want to become agricultural entrepreneurs. Numerous socioeconomic phenomena have altered the traditional profile of agriculture. Accordingly, high costs have made access to assets and farmland difficult. What is more, various constraints related to the business environment, in particular because of fluctuating prices and growing competition stemming from market globalization, are all challenges that young agricultural entrepreneurs or those wishing to become agricultural entrepreneurs through the transfer and start-up of an agricultural enterprise are facing.

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy encourages young agricultural entrepreneurs in their projects.

The new generation of workers is a key element to ensure the future of Québec agriculture. Young agricultural entrepreneurs must be able to benefit from a business environment that is conducive to their establishment.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **encourage the rapid development of a new generation of farmers;**
- **contribute to transforming business environments so that they foster the creation and transfer of agricultural enterprises.**

5.5 Facilitate access by young people to decision-making bodies and prepare the new generation of workers

Few young people are found in decision-making bodies such as boards of directors and corporate business boards and in non-governmental organizations.

Their presence is even more limited in the case of young women, young people from the visible minorities and Aboriginal young people.

To remedy the situation, we must first help Québec young people to train as decision-makers and administrators by enabling them to quickly assume their first responsibilities and acquire the requisite qualifications to make enlightened decisions.

We must then encourage young people to target decision-making positions and ensure that their age is not an obstacle to their seeking such positions.

Training a new generation of administrators will enable young people to develop their leadership abilities and ensure that society as a whole benefits from the contribution made by a new generation.

For this reason, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* includes the following specific objectives:

- **enable young people to quickly assume their first responsibilities;**
- **promote training offerings for decision-makers or administrators aimed at Québec young people;**
- **encourage young people to apply for decision-making positions and facilitate their access to such positions.**

Conclusion

Through *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy: Working Together for Present and Future Generations*, the government is defining the framework for its initiatives aimed at young people in light of five strategic priorities.

- The government intends to ensure that Québec young people acquire healthy lifestyles in a safe environment.
- More than ever, the school environment offered to Québec young people must foster perseverance and educational success.
- The government wishes to encourage Québec young people to more broadly commit themselves to culture, the community and society.
- Young people must be prepared for work and the economy must be prepared to accept them.
- Lastly, the government intends to support young people wishing to start a business, take over a business or participate in decision-making bodies.

The strategic priorities include a series of specific objectives that clarify the import of the desired government action. In this way, the government hopes to promote, in particular, healthy dietary habits, enhance student retention, encourage citizen engagement, promote employability and work-family life-study balance, and thus support the entrepreneurship culture among young people.

A unique direction

All of the strategic priorities are geared to offering young people a stimulating, healthy, safe, open environment and to fostering learning and their projects.

The general objective is clear: the goal is to help Québec young people accelerate the numerous transitions that they undergo from childhood to adulthood to ensure that they possess the skills necessary to successfully attain autonomy. They will then be able to take over from the previous generations to contribute to shaping the Québec of tomorrow for current and future generations.

The implementation of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy 2030*

The Premier is responsible for the policy

The Premier is responsible for the application of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* supported, to this end, by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, which will ensure governmental coordination of the policy. An interdepartmental committee comprising representatives of the public administration is also playing a role in monitoring the policy.

The Secrétariat à la jeunesse plays two roles in the governance of *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* stemming directly from two facets of its mission:

- it advises the government on youth-related questions;
In its advisory role, the Secrétariat must oversee the implementation of mechanisms to ensure the application of the policy to all government decisions affecting young people or their environments.
- it plays a leadership and coordination role in the implementation of youth action strategies.

From the standpoint of interdepartmental coordination, *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* renews the use of the youth impact clause in the briefs submitted to Cabinet in order to highlight the current and future impacts on young people of public policies.



Five-year youth action strategies

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy is being implemented by means of five-year youth action strategies containing targeted measures integrated into or that complement the programs, measures and services of government departments and bodies.

Government departments, public bodies and non-governmental organizations that can offer them directly to young people will implement the attendant programs, measures and services. *The Youth Action Strategy* can grant the requisite funds to adapt existing service offers to the specific needs of young people or to diversify such offers in various fields of action in keeping with the objectives stipulated in the policy.

The evaluation of the *Youth Action Strategy* and its key programs, measures and services will hinge on the best practices in the realm of evaluation, in particular those promoted by the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor.

A network of partners

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy has been elaborated in collaboration with young people, the organizations that represent them or that offer them services, and expert panels.

To maintain synergy during the policy's implementation, the Secrétariat à la jeunesse will invite these partners to periodic meetings to take stock of follow-up to the policy.

The role of Quebecers

The 2030 Québec Youth Policy is intended for everyone who can also contribute to the success of Québec young people, i.e. all groups and individuals who are committed to Québec's future and wish to invest in its young people. It is eminently desirable for Québec philanthropists and those who provide them with the means to act to become familiar with this policy, among other things in light of the remarkable consultations from which most of its content is derived.

More broadly speaking, Québec businesses, organizations of all sizes and kinds and Quebecers have a contribution to make to create environments that will enable young people to take advantage of the support that they deserve and need.

Young people

The future of young people belongs to them and they will shape it with the support of their families and community interveners.

It is, therefore, entirely desirable for *The 2030 Québec Youth Policy* to herald the beginning of new ideas, projects and dialogues that will ensure that Québec young people enjoy the best conditions in which to attain their autonomy, achieve self-fulfillment and build, in turn, Québec's future.

THE 2030 QUÉBEC YOUTH POLICY, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

*The 2030 Québec Youth Policy reflects the priorities of the World Programme of Action for Youth that the United Nations launched in 1995 and the *Stratégie jeunesse de la Francophonie 2015-2022*, adopted in December 2014 at the Sommet de Dakar. In this context, the Québec government will actively promote Québec's experience in this regard among the international organizations concerned.*

The *Stratégie jeunesse de la Francophonie 2015-2022*

The *Stratégie jeunesse de la Francophonie 2015-2022* seeks to bolster and coordinate the initiatives of all of its stakeholders. It encourages the adherence and commitment of French-speaking young people so that they shape their own destiny and achieve self-fulfilment by taking advantage of the French language's tremendous potential, bearing in mind the values that underpin the French-speaking world, first and foremost solidarity, peace and respect for democracy and human rights. It emphasizes the promotion of occupational and technical training, entrepreneurship and the mobility of young people.

The agreement signed between Québec and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

In keeping with the strategy, Québec confirmed in June 2015 its determination to pursue its leadership role in the realm of youth at the international level by signing with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie a collaboration agreement focusing on the development of know-how pertaining to youth policies in the French-speaking countries.

Québec's contribution will make it possible to inventory best practices related to youth policies in the French-speaking world, in particular to promote the elaboration of tools and training material for the member governments of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

