



# QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY - 2008

## Chapter 1      Sociodemographic Characteristics



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION

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We thank all those who helped prepare this portrait of the health status of First Nations of Quebec, especially all the respondents who participated within First Nations communities. We also thank all those who participated at all stages of the survey and in their realization.

Document also available in French titled: *Enquête régionale sur la santé des Premières Nations du Québec - 2008. Faits saillants.*

The masculine in this document is intended to lighten the text, and without prejudice against women.

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## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

### *Background*

The First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) is a groundbreaking survey in the area of research by and for First Nations. Completely carried out by First Nations, it is an innovative endeavour with respect to the involvement of the communities in the process, ethics and cultural adaptation of research.

The RHS is the first research project to be carried out while completely respecting the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP). These principles aim to ensure the complete involvement of the First Nations communities in all of the steps of the research.

The governance and coordination of the RHS are ensured by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) at the national level and by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) in Quebec.

This second wave of the RHS was preceded by the wave that took place in 2002 (first wave) as well as by a pilot project (1997). For the past 15 years, the RHS data has contributed to supporting the decision-makers and interveners while contributing to expanding the knowledge on the socio-sanitary situation of the First Nations. We plan on carrying out two phases following this one, which are phase 3 in 2013 and phase 4 in 2016.

1997	2002	2008	2013	2016
Pilot of the RHS	Phase 1 of the RHS	Phase 2 of the RHS	Phase 3 of the RHS	Phase 4 of the RHS
Completed	Completed	Completed		

### *Questionnaire*

Three distinct questionnaires were created for three different age groups (children, youth, adults). These questionnaires were administered in person by 63 First Nations interviewers who were trained for this purpose. In order to prevent the error risks, data entry was performed by the interviewers during the interview using laptop computers. With respect to children less than 12 years of age, the questionnaire was administered to the parent or guardian. The following table summarises the themes addressed according to each age group.

### Themes addressed in the 2008 RHS questionnaires

Themes	Children	Youth	Adults
	0 – 11 years	12 – 17 years	18 years and up
Vaccination	√		
Child care services	√		√
Demographic characteristics	√	√	√
Household characteristics	√	√	√
Education	√	√	√
Language and culture	√	√	√
Chronic diseases	√	√	√
Injuries	√	√	√
Dental care	√	√	√
Diabetes	√	√	√
Physical activity	√	√	√
Nutrition and traditional foods	√	√	√
Indian residential schools	√	√	√
Mental health		√	√
Community well-being		√	√
Smoking		√	√
Alcohol and drugs		√	√
Sexual health		√	√
Access to health care		√	√
Traditional medicine		√	√
Preventive health care			√
Housing			√
Natural caregivers			√
Depression			√
Migration			√
Employment and income			√
Gambling			√
Food security			√
Home care and limitations			√
Violence			√
State of health index			√

A total of 2 691 individual interviews were carried out (87.3% of the sampling that was initially anticipated).

0-11 years: 727 respondents (94.4% of the sampling initially anticipated).

12-17 years: 600 respondents (77.9% of the sampling initially anticipated).

18 years and up: 1 364 respondents (88.6% of the sampling initially anticipated).

### *Data collection period*

The data collection unfolded from September 2008 to February 2010 among the 21 selected communities in the Quebec region.

### *Sampling*

The RHS was carried out using a two-stage stratified sampling.

**First stage:** Classification of the communities from each nation according to their sizes among one of the following strata: small (between 75 and 299 residents); medium (between 300 and 1499 residents); large (1500 residents and up). The communities required at least 75 residents in order to be eligible. A random selection of the communities was then performed among each of the strata. With the goal of increasing statistical power, all of the large communities were invited to participate in the RHS. In the event that a stratum was represented by a single community of a given nation, it was automatically invited to participate in the survey.

**Second stage:** Breakdown of the populations of the selected communities according to eight strata established according to age and gender:

- Stratum 1: 0-11 years/male;
- Stratum 2: 0-11 years/female;
- Stratum 3: 12-17 years/male;
- Stratum 4: 12-17 years/female;
- Stratum 5: 18-54 years/male;
- Stratum 6: 18-54 years/female;
- Stratum 7: 55 years +/male;
- Stratum 8: 55 years +/female.

The individuals in each of the strata were randomly selected. This selection process was carried out using the band lists of each of the participating communities.

The number of respondents in the sampling was sufficient to allow for verifying the statistical significance of the results observed. As can be read among the survey's chapters, for the majority of the results observed, it is possible to apply the result observed in the sampling to the entire population with a margin of error of less than 5% or, depending on the case, less than 1%.

### Communities participating in the 2008 RHS

Nation (8)	Size	Community (21)	Sampling	Population	% of the pop. interrogated
Abenaki	Medium	Odanak	50	309	16.2%
Algonquin	Large	Kitigan Zibi	122	1535	7.9%
		Lac Simon	174	1403	12.4%
	Small	Pikogan	95	567	16.8%
		Timiskaming	86	604	14.2%
		Eagle Village	55	261	21.1%
Atikamekw	Large	Manawan	167	2122	7.9%
		Opitciwan	183	2117	8.6%
	Medium	Wemotaci	118	1307	9.0%
Hurons-Wendat	Medium	Wendake	111	1332	8.3%
Innus	Large	Betsiamites	252	2848	8.8%
		Mashteuiatsh	183	2022	9.1%
		Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam	246	3080	8.0%
	Medium	Matimekush-Lac John	87	729	11.9%
		Natashquan	128	916	14.0%
		Pakua Shipi	50	314	15.9%
		Unamen Shipu	96	1016	9.4%
		Small	Essipit	38	177
Mi'gmaqs	Large	Listuguj	220	2000	11.0%
	Medium	Gesgapegiag	72	608	11.8%
Mohawks	Medium	Kanesatake	94	1328	7.1%
Naskapis	Medium	Kawawachikamach	64	614	10.4%
<b>Total</b>			<b>2691</b>	<b>27209</b>	<b>9.9%</b>

## *Weighting*

All of the data presented in the RHS was weighted in order to provide an estimate with respect to the total First Nations population of Quebec living in the communities.

## *Representation limits for the Mohawk Nation*

Even though the Mohawk Nation in Quebec is made up of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and part of Akwesasne, the only community that participated in the RHS is Kanesatake. Regarding the community of Akwesasne, it was excluded from the sampling plan for the Quebec region because of the fact that the majority of its residents reside on the Ontario side of the provincial border. As for the community of Kahnawake where most of the Mohawk population of Quebec resides, it opted not to participate in the RHS. For these reasons, it is impossible to produce estimates that can be applied to the entire Mohawk Nation of Quebec.

## *Geographic zone*

Some of the RHS data is presented according to geographic zone. This refers to the degree of isolation of the respondents' communities. The degree of geographic isolation is based on a zone system developed by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

Zone 1: The community is located less than 50 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 2: The community is located between 50 km and 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 3: The community is located over 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

Zone 4: The community has no year-round road access to a service centre.

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



## HIGHLIGHTS

### *Children*


- The highest proportion of children is found in zone 3 (26.5%) and the lowest in zone 1 (18.0%). Also, the highest proportion of children is seen among the Atikamekw (27.1%) and the lowest among the Mohawks (9.9%).
- More than half of children (55.0%) live with both biological parents and 32.2% live in a single-parent family.
- Among children aged 5 to 11, 98.6% attend an academic institution.
- The Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program was taken by 39.1% of children aged 0 to 11, and 23.7% of children aged 0 to 4 at the time of the survey.
- Over two thirds (67.2%) of children speak a First Nations language daily.

### *Youth*

- The highest proportion of youth is found among the Naskapis (18.6%) and the lowest among the Abenaki (8.0%).
- 44.6% of youth live with both biological parents and 31.7% of youth live in a single-parent family.
- Among youth aged 12 to 17, 83.7% attend an academic institution. Among 16-17 year olds only, the proportion falls to 67.9%.
- Over half (52.2%) of youth have failed a school year and more boys (58.4%) than girls (45.6%) have been affected.
- Thirty-eight percent (37.7%) of youth have already had learning problems at school.
- Over six out of ten (63.0%) youth are fluent in a First Nations language.

### *Adults*

- The median age of the adult population is 41.0 years.
- Among the Abenaki, 81.0% are aged over 18, while only 56.5% of Atikamekw are over 18.
- A little over a quarter (26.8%) of adults live with more than four people, while 10.0% of them live alone.
- Over half (53.6%) of adults received a personal income of less than \$20,000, and 1.7% earned over \$70,000 in the year prior to the survey. Regarding household income, over a third (34.2%) earned less than \$20,000.
- Less than half (45.2%) of adults have a job. Among those who do not, one out of five is currently looking for a job.

- 
- One in five adults (20.5%) received employment insurance benefits during the year prior to the survey, while nearly a third of adults received social assistance.
  - Less than half of adults have a high school diploma.
  - Over two thirds of adults speak a First Nations language daily.

## *Elders*

- People aged over 65 represent 6.2% of the entire First Nations population, and those aged 85 and over represent 0.4% of the population.
- Among elders, 8.5% have gainful employment, and 70.3% of adults aged over 65 have a personal income of less than \$20,000.
- Among elders, 66.1% are fluent in a First Nations language.
- Eight-two percent (82.4%) of elders do not have a high school diploma.

## SUMMARY

This first chapter sets out the different data concerning the sociodemographic, sociocultural and socioeconomic profile of First Nations in Quebec living on a reserve. It also tries to draw a few comparisons between First Nations and the entire Quebec and Canadian population, in addition to verifying whether the goals set out in the *Quebec First Nations Health and Social Services Blueprint 2007-2017 - Closing the Gaps... Accelerating Change* (FNQLHSSC, 2007) have been met. The results indicate in particular that the First Nations population is relatively young, with over a third of adults aged under 35, that a high level of adults live with a personal income of less than \$20,000 per year, that a large part of the population does not have a high school diploma, and that less than half of adults are employed. As concerns speaking a First Nations language, over two thirds of the population speak one daily. The results obtained are therefore proof of the difficult conditions experienced by First Nations in Quebec and of the need to take action in order to find a solution.

A large proportion of First Nations members living in Quebec must deal with difficult living conditions every day. The Quebec First Nations Health and Social Services Blueprint 2007-2017. *Closing the Gaps... Accelerating Change* (FNQLHSSC, 2007), coordinated by the FNQLHSSC and done in collaboration with First Nations communities, focused primarily on improving the living conditions of First Nations for access to better health. The following elements were also targeted: reducing the material insecurity of individuals through increased income, improving high school graduation rates, reducing the unemployment rate and transmitting traditional values through increased use of ancestral languages and participation in traditional cultural events.

This first chapter draws a demographic portrait of the Quebec First Nations in 2008, in addition to establishing the socioeconomic and sociocultural situation in which that population lives. This chapter will therefore try to determine whether the goals set by the blueprint are being achieved, by comparing the results of this survey to those obtained in the RHS 2002 survey. Furthermore, this chapter will seek to determine whether inequalities continue to persist between Quebec First Nations living on reserves and all other Quebec and Canadian citizens. .



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## 1. Demographic Characteristics

### 1.1 Age and Gender

The median age of the Quebec First Nations Population in 2008 was 28.0. In comparison, the median age calculated at the time of the RHS 2002 survey was significantly lower at 25.0 years ( $p < 0.01$ ). As for the entire Quebec population, the median age was 41.0 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010) and for the Canadian population as a whole, it was 39.5 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2009a).

Regarding First Nations adults only, the median age calculated for 2008 is 41.0.

Population distribution by age shows that 6.2% of the population is over 65 and that a very low percentage lives beyond the age of 85 (0.4%). We also notice that youth under 18 constitute 33.6% of the Quebec First Nations population (Table 1).

**Table 1: Population distribution by age**

Age Group	N	%
0-5 years	2,475	8.6
6-11 years	3,544	12.3
12-17 years	3,661	12.7
18-24 years	3,281	11.4
25-34 years	3,627	12.6
35-44 years	3,888	13.5
45-54 years	4,281	14.9
55-64 years	2,232	7.8
65-74 years	1,114	3.9
75-84 years	536	1.9
85 years and over	109	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,748</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As for population distribution by gender, we notice that among adults, 50.4% are women and 49.6% are men; among youth, girls represent 48.3% and boys 51.7%; and, finally, for the age group from 0 to 11, 48.4% are girls and 51.6% are boys.

### 1.2 Population Distribution Among the Different Nations

The distribution of children, youth, adults and elders by nation indicates, first of all, that for all nations except the Mohawks<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of children is greater than the proportion of youth. The highest proportion of children is found among the Atikamekw (27.1 %), while the lowest is found among the Mohawks (9.9%). The highest proportion of youth is found among

<sup>1</sup> The Mohawks are represented only by the Kanesatake community.

the Naskapis (18.6%) and the lowest among the Abenaki (8.0%). The highest concentrations of adults aged 18 to 64 are found among the Hurons-Wendat (66.5%) and the Mohawks (66.0%). Finally, the highest proportion of elders (65 and older) is noticed among the Abenaki (22.8%) and the lowest is among the Atikamekw (3.7%) (Table 2). The differences in the distribution by age in the eight nations being studied are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

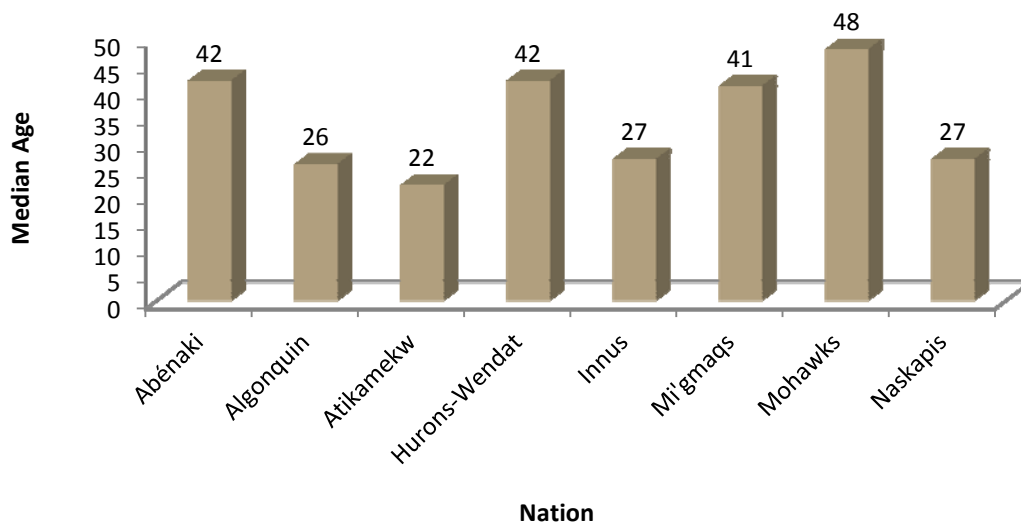
**Table 2: Population distribution for each nation (N=29,013)**

Age Group	Nation							
	Atikamekw	Mi'gmaqs	Mohawks	Innus	Naskapis	Abenaki	Algonquins	Hurons-Wendat
Children (0-11 years)	27.1%	15.9%	9.9%	20.8%	18.7%	10.9%	21.4%	14.2%
Youth (12-17 years)	16.4%	14.7%	10.1%	12.7%	18.6%	8.0%	13.6%	8.8%
Adults (18-24 years)	52.8%	61.4%	66.0%	60.9%	56.4%	58.2%	60.3%	66.5%
Elders (65 years and)	3.7%	8.0%	14.0%	5.6%	6.3%	22.8%	4.7%	10.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* \*The added percentages may be lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

Figure 1 presents the median age of the population of each nation. Although for certain nations, the median age is under 30 (Atikamekw, Innus, Naskapis and Algonquin), for others, their median age is over 40 (Mi'gmaqs, Mohawks, Abenaki and Hurons-Wendat).

**Figure 1: Median age for each nation**



### 1.3 Population Distribution by Geographical Zone

Aboriginal Affairs and North Development Canada (AANDC) has developed a classification in four zones of First Nations communities according to their geographical isolation. As shown in the following table (Table 3), the First Nations population is not distributed uniformly between these four geographical zones.

**Table 3: Total population distribution by geographical zone**

Geographical Zone	N	%
Zone 1	17,813	61.4
Zone 2	5,498	18.9
Zone 3	3,033	10.5
Zone 4	2,673	9.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,017</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The previous table shows that nearly 80.0% of the First Nations population lives in geographical zones 1 or 2. We also note that only 9.2% of the population lives in zone 4.

Concerning children, youth, adult and elder distribution in each zone, we find a greater proportion of children in zones 2 and 3 than in zones 1 and 4. A greater proportion of adults is noticed in zone 1 (62.4%). As for elders only, they represent 7.1% of the population of zone 1, 4.0% of zone 2, 4.1% of zone 3 and 5.7% of First Nations living in zone 4 (Table 4).

**Tableau 4 : Distribution de la population par zone géographique (N = 29 006)**

	Zone 1		Zone 2		Zone 3		Zone 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Enfants (0-11 ans)	3,209	18.0	1,387	25.2	803	26.5	583	21.8
Adolescents (12-17 ans)	2,222	12.5	925	16.8	437	14.4	372	13.9
Adultes (18-64 ans)	11,116	62.4	2,967	54.0	1,667	55.0	1 567	58.6
Ainés (65 ans et plus)	1,255	7.1	219	4.0	126	4.1	151	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,498</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 673</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 1.4 Marital Status

None of the questions asked to the adults enables us to know their marital status. However, according to the youth questioned, 50.2% of them live with their biological mother and father, whether or not married, and 41.7% of the youth's parents do not live together or are divorced (Table 5).

**Table 5: Marital status of youth's parents**

Marital status	N	%
Married and living together	1,356	37.0
Not married and living together	483	13.2
Not living together or separated	1,307	35.7
Divorced	220	6.0
One of them is deceased	257	7.0
Don't know / Refused / Missing information	38	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,661</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

The marital status of the youth's parents varies considerably according to geographical zone (differences are statistically significant to  $p < 0.01$ ). The following table (Table 6) actually indicates that in zone 3, 61.9% of youth's parents are married and living together, while only 29.4% of youth in zone 1 gave the same answer. Along the same lines, the parents of 17.2% of youth in zone 4 are not married and live together, compared to 7.0% of parents in zone 2.

**Table 6: Marital status of youth's parents by geographical zone**

Marital status	Zone 1		Zone 2		Zone 3		Zone 4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not married and living together	607	29.4	367	46.8	263	61.9	139	38.6
Not living together or separated	310	15.0	55	7.0	35	8.2	62	17.2
Divorced	893	43.2	237	30.2	62	14.6	115	31.9
One of them is deceased	139	6.7	51	6.5	28	6.6	5	1.4
Don't know / Refused / Missing information	103	5.0	75	9.6	31	7.3	39	10.8
Ne sait pas / Refus	16	0.8	0	0,0	6	1.4	0	0,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,068</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

## 1.5 Composition of Adult Households

The data gathered reveals the number of people included in adult households living in First Nations communities. Therefore, whereas 10.1% of adults live alone, nearly 27.0% of adults live together with more than four other people (Table 7).

**Table 7: Total number of people in adult households**

Number of people	N	%
1	1,932	10.1
2	3,203	16.8
3	3,047	16.0
4	2,019	10.6
5	1,873	9.8
6	1,412	7.4
7	810	4.2
8	468	2.5
9	182	1.0
10	223	1.2
11 and more	130	0.7
Missing data	3,769	19.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,068</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Along the same lines, the number of children and youth (0-17 years) living with adults also varies considerably. We notice that nearly 41.0% of adults do not live with children or youth, while 38.5% live with one to three minors and over 11.0% of adults live with more than four minors (Table 8).

**Table 8: Number of children and youth in adult households**

Number of children and youth	N	%
0	7,789	40.8
1	2,815	14.8
2	2,676	14.0
3	1,850	9.7
4	1,088	5.7
5	621	3.3
6 to 9	363	1.9
10 and more	54	0.3
Missing data	1,812	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,068</b>	<b>100.0</b>

More than half (55.0%) of First Nations children live with both of their biological parents. We also note that 32.2% of children live in a single-parent family, most of which are headed by a woman. Also, 8.3% of children live in a family where neither biological parent is present (Table 9).

**Table 9: Types of families in which children live**

Type of family	N	%
Biological mother only	1,848	29.4
Biological father only	178	2.8
Biological mother and father	3,458	55.0
Biological mother and step-father	267	4.2
Biological father and step-mother	18	0.3
Other type of family	519	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,288</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It should also be noted that 15.1% of children live with at least one grandparent and that 9.0% live under the same roof as at least one uncle, aunt or cousin.

Regarding youth, 44.6% live with both of their biological parents. Like the children, nearly a third live with a single-parent family (31.7%). Among youth, 14.1% live with neither biological parent (Table 10).

**Table 10: Types of families in which youth live**

Type of family	N	%
Biological mother only	992	27.1
Biological father only	169	4.6
Biological mother and father	1,632	44.6
Biological mother and step-father	291	7.9
Biological father and step-mother	62	1.7
Other type of family	515	14.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,661</b>	<b>100.0</b>

We also note that 6.0% of youth live with their mate or spouse, 10.6% of youth live with at least one grandparent, and 2.5% of youth live with their child(ren).

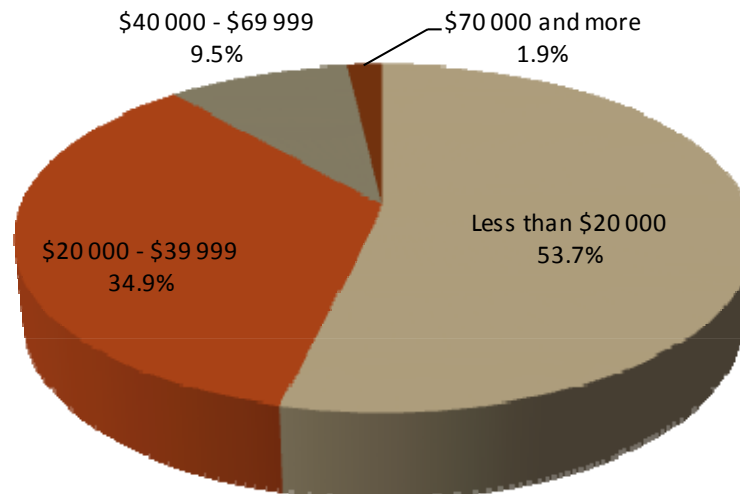
## 2. Socioeconomic Conditions

### 2.1 Personal Income

It is known that First Nations have lower socioeconomic conditions than the Quebec and Canadian population as a whole. It is also admitted that poverty is closely related to poor health (National Collaboration Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2009).

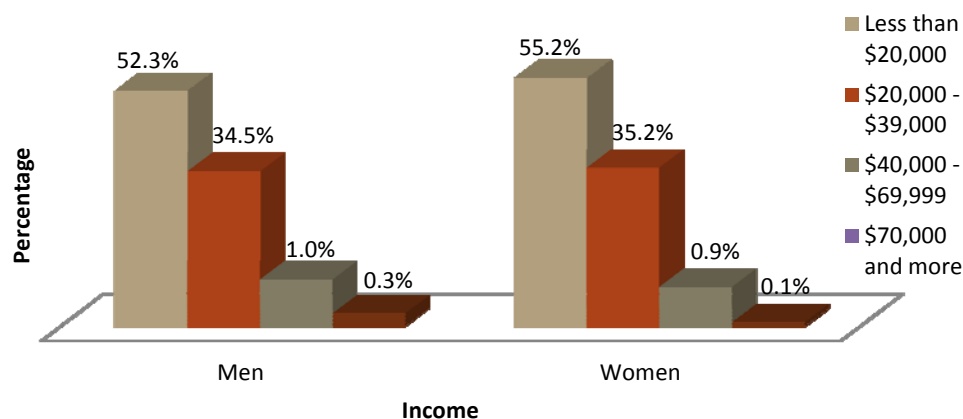
In terms of personal income, 53.7% of First Nations adults earned less than \$20,000 in 2007, the reference year proposed. Only 1.9% of adults obtained an income of more than \$70,000 during that same year (Figure 2). By comparison, when the survey was done in 2002, 60.3% of adults had earned less than \$20,000, and 0.7% had earned more than \$70,000 during the 2001 fiscal year. The statistical comparison of personal income reported in 2002 and in 2008 show a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ); the income of First Nations adults reported in 2008 was therefore higher than what was reported in 2002. Of note that it is impossible to determine whether this increase is due solely to an increase in wages pegged to inflation, or if it is due to the improved situation of the employed persons.

Figure 2: Personal income earned by adults in 2007 (N=17,024)



Significant differences are noticed between the personal income earned by men and women ( $p < 0.05$ ). More men reported an income of over \$70,000 (2.9% of men versus 0.9% of women), but more women reported an income of under \$20,000 (55.2% versus 52.3%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Personal income earned by adults in 2007 by gender



The following table compares income earned by adults according to different age groups (differences significant to  $p < 0.01$ ). Higher incomes are noticed among the 35-54 and 55-64 age brackets, than among the two other groups. We therefore notice that 69.3% of individuals aged 18-34 and 70.3% of individuals 65 and over earned an income of less than \$20,000 (Table 11).

Table 11: Personal income of adults by age

Personal Income	18-34 years	35-54 years	55-64 years	65 years and over
< \$20,000	69.3%	39.2%	49.4%	70.3%
\$20,000 - \$39,000	27.1%	43.8%	33.0%	23.4%
\$40,000 - \$69,000	3.1%	14.3%	13.8%	5.7%
Over \$70,000	0.5%	2.7%	3.7%	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*The added percentages may be lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

Income also appears to be influenced by geographical isolation ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, while 13.4% of adults earned over \$40,000 in zone 1, only 4.3% of adults earned as much in zone 4. On the other hand, a lower proportion of adults earned less than \$20,000 in zone 3 than in the three other zones (Table 12).

**Table 12: Personal income of adults by geographical zone**

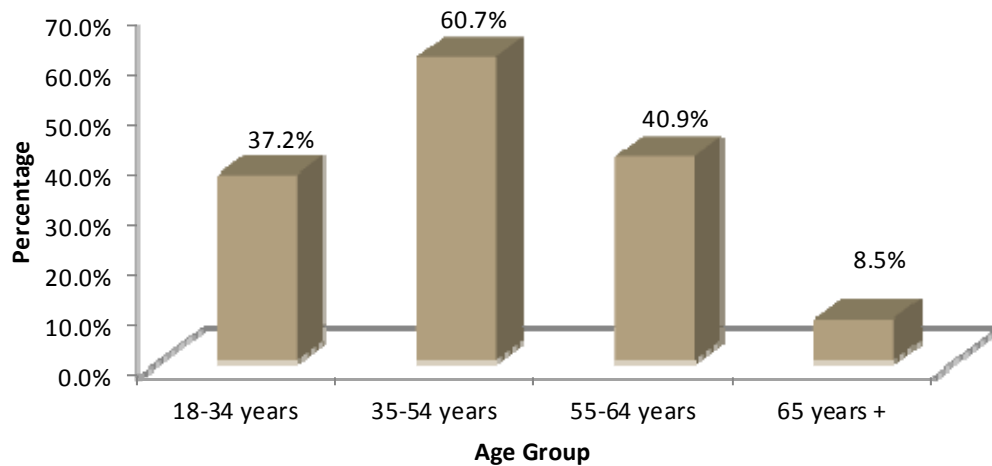
Personal Income	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
< \$20,000	53.8%	53.5%	49.9%	55.5%
\$20,000 - \$39,000	32.7%	37.6%	45.6%	40.2%
\$40,000 - \$69,000	11.3%	6.8%	4.2%	4.3%
Over \$70,000	2.1%	2.0%	0.2%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

### 2.1.1 Source of Income

Among all adults, 45.2% confirmed that they had a job at the time of the survey. More men (46.7%) than women (43.6%) have a job. The highest proportion of workers is found among adults aged 35 to 54 (60.7%) and the lowest among adults over 65 (8.5%) (Figure 4). Similarly, 44.1% of zone 1 respondents have a job, 46.5% in zone 2, 42.9% in zone 3, and, finally, this percentage jumps to 53.8% in zone 4.

**Figure 4: Proportion of adults with a job by age**



We also notice that 49.9% of mothers of children in zone 1 work and that this percentage drops to 28.7% in zone 3. Regarding the fathers, the highest percentage of workers is found in zone 4 (55.8%) and the lowest in zone 3 (32.6%). About children with two working parents, they are 34.2% in zone 1, 24.2% in zone 2, 10.3% in zone 3, and 28.8% in zone 4.

Among adults without a job, 20.6% are currently looking for work. The highest proportion of adults looking for a job is found among those aged 18 to 34 (25.8%), while only 10.8% of those aged 55 to 64 and 4.2% of elders confirmed looking for work at the time of the survey.

The proportion of adults having received an income from employment insurance in 2007 is 20.5% (25.8% among men and 15.3% among women). Depending on the geographical zone, the lowest proportion of adults having received employment insurance benefits is found in zone 2 (14.2%) and the highest in zone 4 (28.3%).

As for welfare, more than three out of ten adults (31.7%) have received this type of government aid. Also, the lowest number of respondents having received welfare is found in zone 4 (26.0%) and the highest in zone 3 (34.7%).

In 2002, 20.2% of adults received employment insurance and 23.7% received welfare.

Regarding the number of hours worked a large percentage of adults with a job work between 31 and 45 hours per week (36.8%). Few adults work more than 45 hours (3.6%) or less than 15 hours per week (2.0%) (Table 13).

**Table 13: Number of hours worked per week by adults**

<b>Number of hours worked</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 5 hours	28	0.2
5-15 hours	342	1.8
16-30 hours	529	2.8
31-45 hours	7,016	36.8
46-60 hours	465	2.4
61 hours and over	232	1.2
Not applicable	10,400	54.5
Refused	56	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,068</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 2.1.2 Field of work

The adults surveyed work in a wide range of fields. The most common are: education services (5.5%), construction (5.5%), healthcare and social assistance (4.1%), public administration (3.8%), and in the field of agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (3.1%). Of note that nearly 13.0% of respondents indicated working in a field other than those listed in the questionnaire.

First Nations adults who have a job work mostly in their community (88.2%). As such, only 2.1% of workers have a job in a community other than the one where they live, and 8.0% work outside a First Nations community (Table 14).

Table 14: Workplace location\*

Location	N	%
In the community	7,604	88.2
In a community other than the one of residence	178	2.1
Off a First Nations community	690	8.0
Other	116	1.3
Refused	37	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,625</b>	<b>100.0</b>

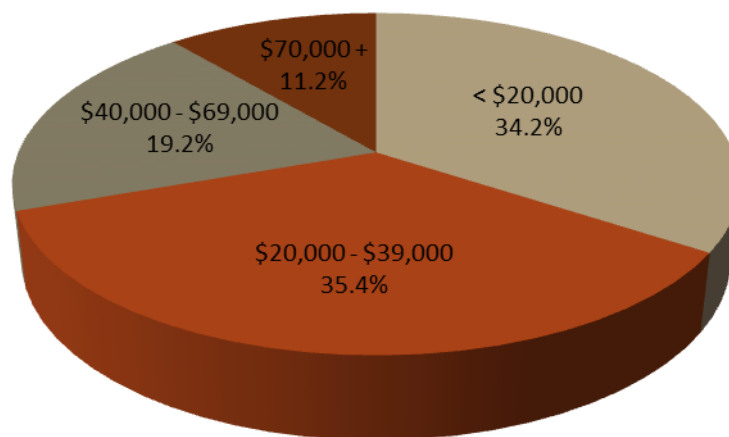
\* Only respondents who confirmed working for pay are included in this table.

## 2.2 Adult Household Income

In the year prior to the survey, 34.2% of First Nations members lived in a household earning less than \$20,000, and only 11.2% of members lived in a household with a total income of over \$70,000 (Figure 5). In 2002, the data gathered indicated that 24.7% of adults lived in a household earning less than \$20,000 during the 2001 fiscal year, and that 8.4% lived in a household with an income of over \$70,000. The difference between the household income reported in 2002 and 2008 by First Nations adults is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ); this means that adults lived in households with a higher income in 2001 than in 2007.

The national results (including all regions of Canada) associated with the RHS 2002 and 2008 surveys reveal a similar finding, namely that personal incomes have increased while household incomes have dropped, and, therefore, that more First Nations households in Canada live with less than \$20,000 a year.

Figure 5: Income earned by an adult household for the 2007 fiscal year (N=14,948)



Like with personal income, household income also appears to be correlated with the geographical isolation of communities ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, as shown in table 15, there is a greater proportion of adults living in a household earning more than \$40,000 in geographical zones 1 and 2, than in zones 3 and 4. However, fewer adults live in a household with an income of less than \$20,000 in zone 4 than in the three other zones.

**Table 15: Adult household income by geographical zone**

Income	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Less than \$20,000	34.0%	31.5%	37.2%	26.1%
\$20,000 - \$39,000	34.1%	37.0%	39.5%	53.9%
\$40,000 - \$69,000	20.8%	20.9%	13.5%	16.0%
Over \$70,000	11.2%	10.6%	9.9%	4.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

## 2.3 Education

The literature is quite clear on the fact that there are strong links between getting a high school diploma and individual health and well-being (Dyke, 2007). In the Quebec population, it is estimated that the overall high school graduation rate is 77.0% (Dyke, 2007); in the entire Canadian population, this percentage was estimated at 66.0% in 2002 (Statistics Canada, 2002).

Regarding the level of education completed by First Nations adults, we notice that 45.6% of adults indicated having completed high school studies. While for 22.8% of adults, high school is the highest level of education completed; 22.8% of adults are college or university graduates (Table 16).

**Table 16: Level of education completed by the adult population**

Niveau de scolarité	N	%
Incomplete high school studies	9,828	51.5%
High school graduate	4,338	22.8%
College graduate	2,201	11.5%
University graduate	2,154	11.3%
Missing data	547	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,068</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The data obtained reveal that the level of education completed by adults differs according to age group ( $p < 0.01$ ). The table 17 indicates that the 35-54 age group is the one with the highest number of individuals with a post-secondary school diploma, while the lowest number is found among elders aged 65 and over. Moreover, 82.4% of elders have not completed high school.

**Table 17: Level of education completed by adults, by age**

Level of education	18-34 years		35-54 years		55-64 years		65 years and over	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Uncompleted high school studies	3,871	57.7	3,599	44.7	1,042	48.1	1,316	82.4
High school graduate	1,731	25.8	1,924	23.9	545	25.1	138	8.7
College graduate	532	7.9	1,326	16.5	269	12.4	75	4.7
University graduate	578	8.6	1,197	14.9	311	14.4	67	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,712</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,046</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,596</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The level of education completed by the First Nations adult population differs slightly according to gender ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, we notice that a greater proportion of women than men has completed college or university studies. In fact, 27.2% of women have completed post-secondary education, while 19.9% of men have done the same (Table 18).

**Table 18: Level of education completed by the adult population, by gender**

Level of education	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Uncompleted high school studies	5,061	54.8	4,766	51.4
High school graduate	2,350	25.4	1,989	21.4
College graduate	735	8.0	1,466	15.8
University graduate	1,097	11.9	1,057	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,243</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,278</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values .

The level of education completed by mothers is recognized in the literature as an indicator of, among other things, the academic success of children (Alary & Simard, 2000). Based on the data gathered, we notice that, for all geographical zones, a high percentage of mothers does not have a high school diploma (difference significant to  $p < 0.01$ ). The highest proportion of mothers with a college or university diploma is found in zone 1 (27.5%) and the highest proportions of mothers with a high school diploma or less are in zones 3 (88.5%) and 4 (871%) (Table 19).

**Table 19: Level of education completed by mothers or children and youth's guardians, by geographical zone (N = 9,949)**

Level of education	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Uncompleted high school studies	47.3%	69.4%	72.6%	71.2%
High school diploma	23.6%	9.9%	15.9%	15.9%
Post-secondary studies	27.5%	18.1%	10.6%	10.8%
Refused	1.6%	2.5%	1.0%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 2.3.1 Children's Education

At the time of the survey, 98.6% of school-aged children (5-11 years) were enrolled in an educational institution. Also, 39.1% of children have already taken part in the Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program, which caters to children aged 0 to 4. More girls (42.4%) than boys (36.4%) have already taken part in this program. Among children aged 0 to 4 at the time of the survey, 23.7% have been or are currently enrolled in this program.

As a result of their academic performance, 2.0% of children skipped or advanced a grade, while 9.9 % repeated a grade (12.6% of boys and 7.1% of girls).

### 2.3.2 Youth's Education

Among youth aged 12 to 17, 83.7% confirmed that they go to school. We notice that more youth from zones 1 and 2 attend an educational institution than those living in zones 3 and 4 ( $p < 0.01$ ).

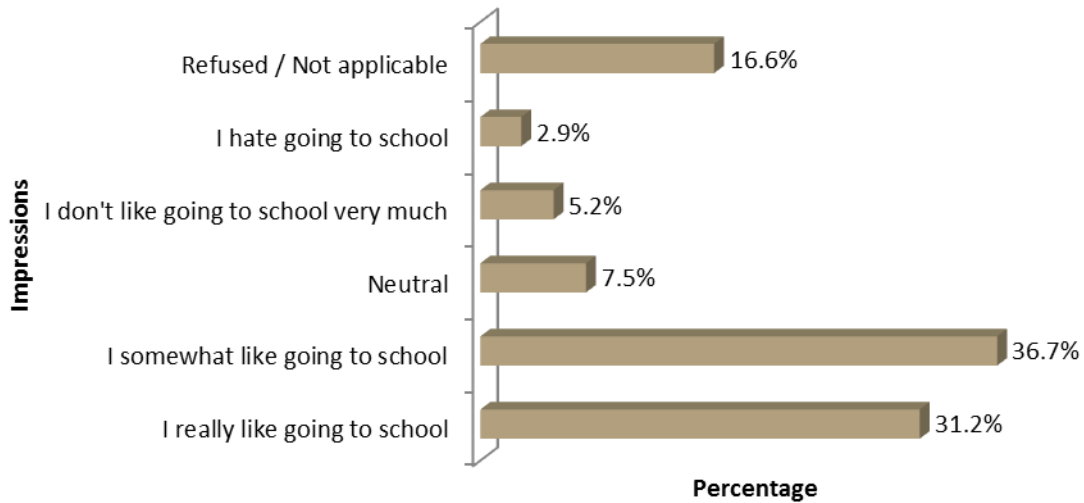
School enrolment is compulsory in Quebec until age 16. Among youth aged 16 and 17, the proportion of youth going to school is 67.9% (83.4% of youth aged 16 and 58.4% of those aged 17). Also, 71.1% of girls aged 16 and 17 are enrolled in an educational institution, while the percentage for boys of the same age is 64.7%.

Among youth aged 12 to 17, 52.2% have repeated a grade. More boys (58.4%) than girls (45.6%) confirm having been in this situation. Also, 37.7% of youth (39.7 % of boys and 35.4% of girls) answered that they have already had learning difficulties at school. The main problems identified by the youth are related to mathematics (17.6%), difficulty concentrating (12.8%), writing (12.5%) and reading (10.3%).

With respect to the level of education that youth wish to complete, we notice that 26.9% of youth would like to get a high school diploma, 19.3% are aiming for a college diploma (technical or pre-university) and, finally, 21.6% are looking to get a university diploma (bachelor, master or doctorate).

Regarding their impressions of school, more than two thirds (67.9%) like to go to school a lot or somewhat, and only 2.9% of youth state that they hate going to school (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Impression of youth about school



### 3. Sociocultural Conditions

#### 3.1 Language

The Quebec First Nations Health and Social Services Blueprint 2007-2017. Closing the Gap... Accelerating Change (FNQLHSSC, 2007) recognizes speaking a First Nations language as a determinant of health. According to a report published by Canadian Heritage (2005), there are links between the community's language, spirituality, self-esteem and well-being. Furthermore, speaking Aboriginal languages is associated with First Nations' expression of autonomy.

The data obtained indicate that nearly two thirds of children (67.2%) and adults (67.0%), and 63.0% of youth speak a First Nations language in their daily lives (Table 20).

Tableau 20 : Language spoken most often in everyday life\*

Language	Children	Youth	Adults
English	21.0%	26.8%	30.9%
French	55.7%	53.9%	58.7%
First Nations language	67.2%	63.0%	67.0%
Other	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%

\* The respondent could choose more than one answer.

Among adults, the age group that speaks a First Nations language most is the 18 to 34 year olds (68.6%). Among elders, 66.1% are fluent in a First Nation language. In the 2001 Census, 24.0% of people who declared themselves to be Aboriginals in Canada said that they could communicate in an Aboriginal language (Statistics Canada, 2009b).

For the RHS 2002 survey, the same question was asked, but respondents could only choose one answer, namely the language that they used most often. The answers obtained in 2002 and 2008 cannot, therefore, be compared.

Table 21 shows that speaking a First Nations language is closely related to the degree of isolation from urban centres ( $p < 0.01$ , except for the category "Other," where the differences between zones are not significant). So, in zone 1, 55.5% of adults speak a First Nations language fluently, while in zone 4, all adults confirmed speaking a First Nations language.

**Table 21: Language spoken most often in everyday life by adults, by geographical zone\***

Language	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
English	36.5%	19.6%	0.0%	52.8%
French	63.5%	41.5%	55.0%	56.3%
First Nations language	55.5%	83.5%	97.6%	100.0%
Other	0.4%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%

\* The respondent could choose more than one answer.

A large diversity is noticed about speaking a First Nations language based on the different nations. While all of the Naskapis questioned indicated speaking their traditional language fluently, a low percentage of Hurons-Wendat and Abenaki confirmed the same. We also notice that adults generally speak these languages more than youth and children, except among the Atikamekw and Mohawks, where children speak the language of their First Nations more than adults. We also noticed that among the Abenaki and Hurons-Wendat, children and youth do not speak the traditional language (Table 22).

**Table 22: Speaking a First Nations language daily by adults, youth and children, by nation**

Age Group	Nation							
	Atikamekw	Mi'gmaqs	Mohawks	Innus	Naskapis	Abenaki	Algonquin	Hurons-Wendat
Children	96.9%	31.7%	68.1%	79.5%	100.0%	0.0%	28.7%	0.0%
Youth	95.2%	46.6%	63.3%	73.0%	100.0%	0.0%	20.6%	0.0%
Adults	96.6%	73.0%	64.8%	80.1%	100.0%	5.7%	30.7%	1.0%

The results indicate that in all geographical zones, the daily use of at least two languages (English, French or a First Nations language) is more common than speaking only one First Nations language. We also notice that speaking a First Nations language fluently is more common in zones 2 and 3 than in zones 1 and 4 (Table 23).

**Table 23: Common use among adults of a First Nations language only or at least two languages by geographical zone (N=19,068)**

	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Speaking a First Nations language only	15.1%	47.2%	45.0%	31.8%
Speaking at least two languages	84.9%	52.8%	55.0%	68.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

Speaking only a First Nations language daily influences the personal income of adults ( $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, more adults speaking daily only a First Nations language earned an income of less than \$20,000 than adults speaking at least two languages fluently. Similarly, 2.5% of multilingual adults earned an income of over \$70,000, while the proportion is zero among adults speaking only a First Nations language (Table 24).

**Table 24: Personal income of adults based on speaking only a First Nations language fluently or speaking at least two languages (N = 17,023)**

Personal Income	Speaking a First Nations language only	Speaking at least two languages
< 20 000 \$	60.8%	51.4%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	31.8%	35.9%
\$40,000 - \$69,999	7.5%	10.2%
Over \$70,000	0.0%	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* The added percentages may be slightly lower or higher than 100%. This is due to a rounding off of values.

### 3.2 The Importance of Cultural Events in the Life of Children and Youth

The parents surveyed indicated in high proportion that it is very important (64.1%) and fairly important (22.9%) for their child to learn a First Nations language. Similarly, over half of parents find it very important for their child to take part in traditional cultural events, and nearly one third consider this aspect of their child's life as fairly important (Table 25).

**Table 25: Importance of learning a First Nations language and of traditional cultural events in the child's life according to the parent**

Level of importance	First Nations language		Traditional cultural events	
	N	%	N	%
Very important	4,028	64.1	3,192	50.8
Fairly important	1,442	22.9	2,027	32.2
Of little importance	368	5.9	643	10.2
Not important	365	5.8	219	3.5
Don't know / Refused	85	1.3	207	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,288</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,288</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Among youth, 86.5% answered that it was very important or fairly important for them to learn a First Nations language. Only, 2.1% of youth find that learning a First Nations language is not important. As concerns traditional cultural events, 76.9% of youth find that they play a very or fairly important role in their life, but we notice that only 28.3% always or almost always take part in cultural events and activities occurring in their community. For their part, 11.4% of youth indicated that they never take part in those events.

### 3.3 Transfer of Culture to Children and Youth

The transfer of culture to First Nations children and youth differs according to the nation. Therefore, regarding children, we notice that parents and grandparents play an important role in culture transfer in all nations. However, teachers seem to play a more important role among the Mi'gmaqs (81.7%) and Hurons-Wendat (78.5%). For their part, the community's elders seem to have a greater influence on children among the Mi'gmaqs (47.2%) and Mohawks (46.1%) (Table 26).

**Table 26: Individuals who help children understand their culture by nation**

	Nation							
	Atikamekw	Mi'gmaqs	Mohawks	Innus	Naskapis	Abenaki	Algonquin	Hurons-Wendat
Grandparents	72.5%	80.7%	78.6%	70.1%	76.4%	45.1%	66.8%	60.6%
Parents	76.9%	79.0%	85.8%	82.3%	80.8%	92.7%	80.2%	89.3%
Aunts and uncles	34.5%	65.3%	74.9%	36.6%	22.6%	35.4%	34.3%	35.8%
Other family members	12.2%	50.0%	75.2%	27.0%	27.1%	26.8%	27.5%	18.0%
Friends	10.2%	40.8%	28.2%	14.2%	10.8%	0.0%	3.7%	14.3%
Teachers	37.4%	81.7%	46.1%	43.2%	58.1%	20.7%	46.0%	78.5%
Community elders	12.9%	47.2%	46.1%	23.4%	17.2%	0.0%	8.5%	0.0%
Other community members	16.4%	31.2%	28.5%	13.0%	10.8%	19.5%	9.4%	25.0%
No one	0.7%	1.4%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Other	9.9%	1.6%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	12.2%	2.3%	0.0%

Youth, like children, receive help to understand their culture primarily from their parents and grandparents. Among the Mi'gmaqs and Mohawks, other family members, including aunts and uncles, also play a major role, as do friends, elders and other members of the community. Regarding teachers, youth among the Mi'gmaqs (53.4%), Mohawks (39.6%), Innus (36.7%), Abenaki (33.9%) and Algonquin (45.8%) declared in high numbers that these individuals help them understand their culture. Of note that 21.7% of Abenaki youth and 20.2% of Hurons-Wendat youth confirmed that nobody helps them understand their culture better (Table 27).

**Table 27: Individuals who help youth understand their culture by nation**

	Nation							
	Atikamekw	Mi'gmaqs	Mohawks	Innus	Naskapis	Abenakis	Algonquins	Hurons-Wendat
Grandparents	59.4%	71.2%	54.1%	61.6%	66.9%	14.5%	59.0%	20.2%
Parents	44.1%	72.4%	73.0%	68.0%	66.9%	71.0%	55.6%	55.8%
Aunts and uncles	30.5%	65.6%	60.4%	34.0%	27.4%	0.0%	27.5%	12.2%
Other family members	11.9%	57.8%	60.4%	22.1%	6.4%	7.3%	19.3%	0.0%
Friends	10.1%	47.7%	33.3%	16.2%	14.0%	0.0%	8.2%	0.0%
Teachers	8.8%	53.4%	39.6%	36.7%	21.1%	33.9%	45.8%	19.2%
Community elders	11.8%	54.6%	33.3%	22.1%	21.1%	0.0%	18.6%	0.0%
Other community members	16.3%	36.3%	60.4%	11.3%	7.0%	7.3%	12.0%	8.3%
No one	5.7%	4.9%	0.0%	2.6%	0.0%	21.7%	4.1%	20.2%
Other	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%



## DISCUSSION

The results obtained from this survey provide several findings with respect to the sociodemographic characteristics of First Nations. First, we notice that the median age of the First Nations population is over 10 years lower than the median age of the Quebec and Canadian population. In this context, it is clear that there is a low percentage of adults over 55 and a high percentage of children and youth in these communities. For example, over a quarter of the population is aged under 12 among the Atikamekw.

Household composition varies considerably in the territory of these communities. While about half of children and youth live with both their biological parents, about a third are raised in a single-parent family. The data collected does not enable us to look into shared custody in the communities, which places a limit on the results. The number of people and children living together in households also varies widely. As such, the effect of overpopulation in homes on the state of health of the occupants is discussed in the chapter dealing with housing.


The data obtained on the personal income earned by adults indicates that, even if there is a noticeable improvement compared to 2002, poverty persists in the First Nations. The data regarding household income reinforces this finding. In fact, the results regarding the income earned by households is worrisome and the next survey must look at whether households are continuing to become poorer. It appears that the individuals who earn lower incomes tend to be women, adults under 35, elders and individuals residing far from urban centres.

The results of the survey regarding employment point towards a rather worrisome situation. We notice that less than half of First Nations adults have a job. We also notice that fewer than 40% of individuals aged 18 to 34 earn income from employment. In 2008 as well, more than one in five adults received income from employment insurance, and over 37.0% received income from welfare. Compared to 2002, the percentage of employment insurance beneficiaries was roughly the same, whereas a low proportion of adults had received welfare.

The level of education completed by the First Nations adult population also reveals a situation that suggests that low income and employment levels risk persisting if no major action is taken. The answers provided by the adult respondents indicate that more than half of adults do not have a high school diploma, which is greater than the proportions found among the Quebec and Canadian populations as a whole. We also notice that a greater population of adults aged 18 to 34 has not completed high school compared to adults aged 35 to 64. This low graduation rate among adults is all the more worrying when we realize that many mothers have not graduated.

Among youth, despite a high school enrolment rate, the proportion of youth indicating that they have already repeated a year (more than half of youth) is worrisome. Likewise, more than a third (37.0%) of youth have expressed having had various learning difficulties.

Culture among the First Nations is a target element as a determinant of individual and collective well-being. Speaking a traditional language, one of the key elements linked to culture, is noticed among nearly two thirds of respondents. It will



be interesting to see how the use of these languages may change during the next phase of the survey. Major variations in knowledge of First Nations languages have also been noticed according to nation, geographical isolation zones and the personal income of individuals.

Regarding the participation of children and youth in traditional cultural events, the data inform us that these are given great importance. The transfer of culture to children and youth appears to be done by the many people around them. However, it is the parents and grandparents who play the biggest role in transferring knowledge and traditional teachings.

## CONCLUSION

The results obtained from this survey show us that the First Nations population is young with more than a third of its members being under 18 years of age. We also notice that a large proportion of First Nations has to meet its needs on income of less than \$20,000 a year, and that the proportion of graduates among this population has not reached the same proportion as among the entire Quebec and Canadian population. Although improvements have been noticed between the RHS 2002 and 2008 surveys, social and health inequalities are still an integral part of the daily life of the First Nations. Implementing actions to improve on-reserve First Nations' living conditions must remain a priority for local and regional authorities. The efforts made in this respect by all partners, including the different levels of government, regional First Nations organizations, and the communities themselves, must be maintained and increased. If concrete and constant efforts continued to be made, *The Quebec First Nations Health and Social Services Blueprint 2007-2017. Closing the Gaps... Accelerating Change* (FNQLHSSC, 2007) may see its health equity goals finally met.



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