

Public Consultation

Solidarity and Social Inclusion



Towards a Third Government Action Plan

Call for briefs
Representatives of Native peoples

Submission deadline:
February 26, 2016

**Be sure
to send us your brief
no later than February 26, 2016:**

to the following address:

consultation.pauvrete.2015-2016@mess.gouv.qc.ca

or by regular mail:

**Direction des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté
et de l'action communautaire**

Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
425, Saint-Amable, 1^{er} étage
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1

Coordination and drafting

Direction des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et de l'action communautaire

Collaboration

Direction de la recherche

Graphic design and formatting

Direction des communications

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



In 2002, the Québec National Assembly unanimously adopted the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*. Since then, two government Action Plans have been implemented. I am glad to see that the measures put into place during the last decade have given renewed impetus to governmental actions. Those measures have, in particular, made it possible to move decision-making closer to affected localities and regions, increase the attractiveness of work, strengthen the social security safety net and increase the mobilization of the various stakeholders active throughout Québec.

The fight against poverty and social exclusion are a collective responsibility. That is why we are inviting you to give your opinions on how we can further those values. To contribute to our reflections as we develop the third Action Plan, we want to receive your observations, your analyses and your suggestions for solutions.

We want an Action Plan that is suited to today's Québec, one that proposes concrete actions and measures that will benefit all Quebecers.

I want to thank you for your participation in this consultation. Together, we can all contribute to making Québec society more inclusive and more equitable.

Sam Hamad

Ministre du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
et ministre responsable de la région de la Capitale-Nationale

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OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION



This consultation document has been developed to guide you in your reflection and in the preparation of a brief that you can submit for the consultation that will be held from October 28, 2015 to February 26, 2016, prior to the development of the third government Action Plan to combat poverty and social exclusion in Québec.

By submitting a brief, you can share your concerns with the Gouvernement du Québec and present the elements concerning the combat against poverty and social exclusion that you wish to call to the government's attention.

Please consult the [Web page](#) to obtain more details on the other consultation activities.

Statistics related to the realities of Native peoples in Québec have been used where available.

The objectives of the call for briefs is to:

- give representatives of the Native peoples the possibility to express themselves on the combat against poverty and social exclusion, for the purpose of identifying the priorities to be included in the next government Action Plan to combat poverty and social exclusion;
- understand the realities experienced by field workers and those who represent stakeholders concerned about the combat against poverty and social exclusion;
- learn about examples of practices that representatives of Native peoples believe are likely to move Québec society forward in the combat against poverty and social exclusion;
- contribute to providing Québec with a government Action Plan based on concerted efforts among provincial, regional and local partners and the general population.

Your reflections will guide the work required to develop the third generation of measures that will be included in the government Action Plan.

BACKGROUND OF THE CONSULTATION



The Act defines **poverty** as being:

“the condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self-sufficiency or to facilitate integration and participation in society” (section 2).

ACT TO COMBAT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Arising from a large mobilization of civil society, the [Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion](#) (the “Act”) was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly in 2002. It is intended to “guide the Government and Québec society as a whole towards a process of planning and implementing actions to combat poverty, prevent its causes, reduce its effects on individuals and families, counter social exclusion and strive towards a poverty-free Québec” (section 1). It was the first law of its kind in North America.

The Act is based on the recognition of economic and social rights in accordance with the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and is part of an international movement that makes the combat against poverty and social exclusion a struggle for human rights.

The notion that social exclusion is related to material poverty is not explicit in the Act. The Centre d’étude sur la pauvreté et l’exclusion (CEPE) proposed a definition whose validity has been confirmed by field work carried out among persons living in poverty.

“ Social exclusion results from a combination of economic, political, institutional and cultural processes, often interdependent and cumulative, that set persons or groups apart in society.

When social exclusion and poverty combine, they can mutually reinforce each other over time. Social exclusion associated with poverty can lead to limited possibilities for individuals (and thus for their families and communities) to maintain their economic self-sufficiency, which affects the integrity of their social identity, their health, education, participation in the labour market and thus in family and social relations networks. Those consequences can hinder their escape from poverty.

The mechanisms of social exclusion can be corrected by collective action and public policies. ”

CEPE, 2014, *L’exclusion sociale : construire avec celles et ceux qui la vivent*, p. 18, French only.

NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The Act established a [National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion](#) (the “Strategy”) to guide the actions of the government and society. Such actions must make it possible to intervene both on the causes and the consequences of poverty and social exclusion.

The Strategy is built on a range of actions implemented by the government, its socioeconomic partners, regional and local communities, community organizations and other actors to combat poverty and promote social inclusion. In this regard, the Gouvernement du Québec calls for citizen participation, particularly by those who are living in poverty.

The Strategy has **five objectives**:

1. Promote respect for and protection of the dignity of persons living in poverty and combat prejudices in their regard.
2. Improve the economic and social situation of persons and families living in poverty and social exclusion.
3. Reduce the inequalities that may be detrimental to social cohesion.
4. Encourage persons and families living in poverty to participate in community life and social development.
5. Develop and reinforce the sense of solidarity throughout Québec so that society as a whole may participate in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The Act defines **five axes** to orient action plans. To reach the five objectives of the Strategy, the Act prescribes that the actions taken by Québec society as a whole and by the government be based on action plans built around the following actions:

1. Preventing poverty and social exclusion, with a focus on developing the potential of individuals.
2. Strengthening the social and economic safety net.
3. Promoting access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work.
4. Promoting the involvement of society as a whole.
5. Ensuring consistent and coherent intervention at all levels.

This consultation document respects that structure. However, for the purposes of the consultation, the wording of axis 3 in the Act has been broadened to propose a more global theme of economic development. We will come back to that theme in the last section of this document.

GROUPS LIVING IN POVERTY AND HAVING SPECIFIC NEEDS

Poverty has many faces. The Act portrays that reality.

The actions taken by Québec society as a whole must take into account the **multitude and diversity of the needs of all** individuals and communities, particularly individuals and families who are over-represented in the general population because of their low incomes. In their development and implementation, these actions must take into account the specific needs of certain groups who have specific difficulties, particularly in because of age, ethnic origin or handicap. (section 7)

“ For most people, poverty is a temporary situation. However, certain groups experience or are more likely to experience persistent poverty. [...] Native peoples are one of the groups most affected by persistent poverty. ”

CCLP, 2009, *Prevention of persistent poverty*, p. 13 et 15

“ A strategy to fight poverty and social exclusion needs to focus not only on poverty, inequality and exclusion, but also on their causes and consequences. ”

CEPE, 2009, *Taking the Measure of Poverty*, p. 12.

“ [...] the persistence of low incomes is concentrated in five groups: single parents living alone, new immigrants, people with physical limitations, individuals aged 45 to 64 who are not in a family (individuals living alone) and Native persons living off reserve¹. ”

Groulx, for CEPE, 2011, *Les facteurs engendrant l'exclusion au Canada : survol de la littérature multidisciplinaire*, p. 11, French only.

“ Native persons who live on-reserve in Québec are more likely to have a low income than those who live off-reserve. The difference from one community to another are also quite large². ”

Sauvé, 2011.

The **determinants of poverty** are characterized by complex interactions that combine to form individual trajectories and life conditions. They are associated, on the one hand, with the general social context and, on the other hand, with the individual and his or her immediate environment. Thus, global consideration must be given to environmental factors, such as the existence of unequal access to goods and services, the effect of technological changes, labour market conditions (job searching, working conditions, unstable employment, etc.), the existence of prejudice and population aging. Furthermore, the determinants of poverty are also associated to the individual and his or her environment. Acquired knowledge, abilities and skills, schooling and the existence of social and family networks are examples of individual factors and close proximity.

1 Data on the persistence of low incomes for Native persons living on reserve was not available for this study.

2 M.-R. Sauvé (2011). “Les autochtones ont de meilleurs revenus hors de leur réserve”, *UdeMNouvelles*, December 12. 2011 <http://www.nouvelles.umontreal.ca/recherche/sciences-sociales-psychologie/20111212-les-autochtones-ont-de-meilleurs-revenus-hors-de-leur-reserve.html> (French only, retrieved on June 1, 2015).

THE CONSULTATION: AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

Broad public consultations preceded the development of the first two government Action Plans to combat poverty and social exclusion. Organizations representing several segments of the Native population were consulted to learn more about the specific Native problems and to contribute to our reflection on possible avenues of action.

To continue in the spirit of collective mobilization inspired by the Act and its five axes, the government is calling on actors from all sectors of society, including representatives of Native organizations, the general population, community organizations, volunteers, charitable organizations, labour unions, employers and social economy enterprises, to participate in consultation activities.

Within the framework of the consultation activities, we invite you to reflect on the issues that must be given close attention in the next government Action Plan. **You can send us your reflections in the form of a brief** that will contribute to the government's reflection and contribute to reaching the objectives that we have given ourselves in the Act, to maximize our efforts to make Québec one of the industrialized nations which has the smallest number of persons living in poverty.

To that end, we invite you to take into account the progress made over the last decade and to reflect on the issues that will be the most important over coming years with respect to combatting poverty and social exclusion.

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Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
425, Saint-Amable, 1^{er} étage
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1

POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN QUÉBEC



GOVERNMENT ACTION

To date, two government action plans have provided a framework for concrete actions to combat poverty and social exclusion in Québec.

1 2004-2009 : Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion

Covering the period from 2004 to 2010 (including a one-year prolongation), the Government Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion generated direct investments of more than \$4.5 billion.

The main measures were aimed at:

- offering better income support to families;
- fostering the economic self-sufficiency of individuals;
- improving the living conditions of individuals in situations of poverty;
- supporting the emergence of territory-based strategies against poverty and social exclusion.

To adapt the Action Plan to the realities and needs of Native communities, a measure was aimed at intensifying the dialogue with First Nations and supporting the emergence of local strategies in Native villages and reserves. (Government Action Plan 2004-2009, p. 78). Those discussions contributed to defining the regional intervention model that became one of the key measures of the second government Action Plan.

Details on the measures undertaken within the framework of the first Action Plan are presented in the five available annual reports.³ Note that the sixth report, which covers the Action Plan's period of prolongation, was included in a document entitled *Améliorer la situation économique des personnes : un engagement continu* (French only).

³ The reports can be consulted in the section *Grands dossiers/Lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale*, available at the following address: <http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/> (retrieved on October 14, 2015).

2 2010-2015 : Government Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion (PSSI)

The government's second Action Plan was build around four axes:

1. Review our standard practices and make regional and local communities key players in the decision-making process.
2. Acknowledge the value of work and foster the self-sufficiency of individuals.
3. Support the income of disadvantaged individuals.
4. Improve the living conditions of low-income individuals and families.

The second Action Plan had positive effects because of its focus on continuing certain structuring measures, such as **Child Assistance** and **work premiums**, and an impact on the organization of the combat against poverty and social exclusion, thanks to **Solidarity Alliances**.

The main measures, some of which were aimed specifically at Native concerns, included the following:

- Construction and renovation of social housing in Nunavik and a special program for home renovation, particularly in Nunavik and Kitcisakik;
- Development of public transportation and creation of the Working Group on Reducing the Cost of Living in Nunavik. The committee decided to reorient its work on the larger question of poverty;
- Work carried out by the First Nations and Inuit Consulting Committee on the labour market, in collaboration with the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale;
- Financial assistance program for hiring and providing follow-up for sport and recreation coordinators and community and citizen involvement in various Native communities;

- Solidarity Tax Credit (STC) intended to offset the regressive nature of certain taxes; one of its components was aimed at recognizing that inhabitants of Nordic villages must deal with a cost of living that is higher than elsewhere;
- Automatic annual indexing of last-resort financial assistance benefits;
- Annual minimum wage increase (\$10.55 \$ an hour as of May 1, 2015);
- Injection of \$115 million into the Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales (FQIS), \$6.6 million of which was earmarked for funding three Solidarity Alliances between the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity and the Kativik Regional Administration (KRA), the Government of the Cri Nation (GCN) and the First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC). Each Alliance has specific intervention priorities with specific Action Plans, and they are part of a global and integrated strategy.

For more information on the overall impacts of the measures set out in the second Action Plan, please consult the annual activity reports available to date.⁴

Realities changed after the first Action Plan, and the second plan was aimed at driving forward actions related to the combat against poverty and social exclusion in Québec. The time has come to take stock of the orientations that guided our actions from 2010 to 2015 and to agree on new issues to be considered in the third government Action Plan.

⁴ The reports can be consulted at the following address: <http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/plan-action/index.asp> (retrieved on October 14, 2015).

Results of the actions carried out within the framework of the national strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion – 2002-2013

The report entitled [*Résultats des actions menées dans le cadre de la Stratégie nationale de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale – 2002-2013*](#) (French only) was presented in the National Assembly on December 5, 2014 (see also section 58 of the Act).

It discusses the results obtained following implementation of actions by the government and the entire Québec community within the framework of the Strategy. The report shows the progress made by Québec society towards reaching the objectives arising from the Strategy, particularly with respect to improvements in the incomes of individuals and families living in poverty and a reduction in income differences.

You are invited, in particular, to consult chapter 1 (pages 8 to 23), which presents the actions undertaken by the government and the entire Québec community to reach the objectives flowing from the Strategy.

POVERTY AMONG QUÉBEC'S NATIVE PEOPLES: A SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION⁵

Québec has 11 Native peoples, the Inuit Nation and 10 First Nations, that make up 55 communities. Native peoples have a wide variety of cultures, traditions and socioeconomic realities.⁶

The demographic situation of the Native peoples is very different from that of the rest of Québec's population. While in general the Québec population is aging, the Native population is much younger, particularly the Inuit population.

Furthermore, the various communities are spread across the Québec territory, from Nunavik to the valley of the St. Lawrence Rivers and on the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A large number of Native persons also live outside their community of origin, in urban areas, often in difficult conditions. Urban autochtony is a growing phenomenon.

“ [The extremely high cost of living, the lack of employment and difficulties in accessing some jobs requiring specific training may be factors behind a decision to leave Nunavik.] ”

[MSSS, 2014, *Ensemble, pour éviter la rue et en sortir – Politique nationale de lutte à l'itinérance*, p. 26, French only.](#)

5 Where available, statistics concerning Native realities in Québec have been used.

6 Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale (2013). *Avis – L'emploi pour lutter contre la pauvreté : les défis à relever*, p. 30 (French only). <http://www.cclp.gouv.qc.ca/publications/index.asp?categorie=1500301#liste> and Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (2013). *Profile of the Nations*. http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/relations_autochtones/profils_nations/profil.htm (retrieved on May 15, 2015).

Highlights

- In 2015, Québec's First Nations (84,325) and the Inuit (11,999) totalled 96,324 people. On average, 31.8% of Native persons do not live in their community of affiliation (35.3% for First Nations and 7% for the Inuit).⁷
- At December 31, 2014, the Mohawk Akwesasne community had 5,663 persons living on the territory of Québec.⁸
- The First Nations and the Inuit are young populations. The median age for Québec First Nations is around 30 and the median age for the Inuit is around 21, compared to 42 for the overall population of Québec.⁹
- In 2008, the Native population aged 55 and over represented 14.7% of the total Native population, that is, around 12,800.
- In Nunavik, the population aged 55 and over will increase from 9% of the total Native population in 2011 to 16% in 2031.¹⁰
- In 2008, life expectancy at birth for the Québec population was 80.6 years. It was 66.1 in Nunavik and 77.5 in the James Bay Cree territories.¹¹
- Native persons are faced with several prejudices, particularly the erroneous idea that they are privileged in terms of taxation.¹² Moreover, many are victims of employment and housing discrimination.
- In 2011, there were 6,375 units of band housing (on reserve) and 1,875 social housing units for Native persons living off reserve. Natives living off reserve live in private market housing.¹³
- Inuit persons live in 2,464 social housing units, which account for about 80% of their housing units.
- There is a great need for housing units: both First Nations persons¹⁴ and Inuit persons¹⁵ are faced with a extreme shortage of housing units.
- In 2011, 45% of Inuit persons in Nunavik¹⁶ and 13% of First Nations persons¹⁷ were living in an overcrowded housing unit, compared with an average of 2.9% in Québec as whole.

7 Affaires autochtones et Développement du Nord Canada. The Nations 2015. *Aboriginal Peoples in Québec 2015*. Note: The population of the Québec portion of the Mohawk Akwesasne community is not included.

8 Affaires autochtones et Développement du Nord Canada. *Indian Registry System (IRS)*. CIDM 798723.

9 Statistics Canada (2012). *Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)*. Table 2. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=F&level=2&GeoCode=24#tabs1_1 (retrieved on May 19, 2015).

10 Statistics Canada, Société d'habitation du Québec Compilation <http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/docs-hmi/statistiques/population-demographie/perspectives/population/index.html#region> (retrieved on January 22, 2015).

11 MSSS (2011). *Pour guider l'action – Portrait de santé du Québec et de ses régions.*, p. 9. <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2011/11-228-01F.pdf> (retrieved on October 14, 2015) (French only).

12 P. Lepage. Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse du Québec (2009). *Aboriginal Peoples: Fact and Fiction*, 2nd ed., chapitre 6. <http://www.cdpdj.qc.ca/publications/AboriginalPeoples.pdf> (retrieved on May 20, 2015).

13 Statistics Canada. *National Household Survey, 2011*. Special compilation of the Société d'habitation du Québec.

14 Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador (2014). *The Housing Needs of First Nations in Québec and Labrador (2014)*. <http://www.apnql-afnql.com/fr/dossiers/img/logement/BesoinsLogement-2014-resume-fr-en.pdf> (retrieved on May 28, 2015).

15 According to an assessment made by the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau in 2013, there is a need for an additional 900 housing units in Nunavik. The scarcity of one-bedroom units for young people, seniors and people with specific needs is particularly severe.

16 Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*, Table 99-011-X2011035.

17 Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*, Table 99-011-X2011036.

Highlights *[continued]*

- Income inequalities are rising slightly for all Quebecers. However, in the overall North American context, Québec's situation, thanks to its public policies, place it in a favourable position in the combat to reduce poverty and income inequalities.
- **In 2013, the low-income rate based on the Market Basket Measure for Québec's aggregate population was 10.8%, which was lower than the Canadian average of 12.1%. Québec was behind Alberta (7.4%) but ahead of Ontario (14%).¹⁸**
- In 2011, the median after-tax income in Québec was lowest for Native persons (\$21,382) than for non-Native persons (\$25,665)¹⁹.
- Québec's social assistance rate²⁰ (ages 0-64) is the lowest since 1975 (6.6% in April 2015).
- Between 2010 and 2015, the number of last-resort social assistance beneficiaries declined by 8.9% for non-Native persons and increased by 1.6% for Native persons. The number of Native women receiving benefits decreased by 0.3%, compared with 10.5% for non-Native women. However, the number of Native men receiving benefits increased by 3.5%, whereas the number of non-Native men decreased by 7.3% during the same period.²¹
- Between 2003 and 2015, purchasing power was the same or higher for all households with beneficiaries of last-resort financial assistance.

Social Assistance Program:

- Independent adult: + 4.6%
- Couple with no children: + 0.5%
- Single-parent family with a three-year old child: + 16.0%
- Couple with a three-year old child: + 10.2%

Social Solidarity Program:

- Independent adult: + 2.5%
- Couple with no children: + 2.6%
- Single-parent family with a three-year old child: + 16.1%
- Couple with a three-year old child: + 17.4%

“ Since there are not many jobs in Native communities that require a secondary school diploma, it is difficult to persuade young people of the importance of obtaining a diploma. ”

CCLP, 2013, *L'emploi pour lutter contre la pauvreté : les défis à relever*, p. 33, French only; also available “ Summary - Advisory Opinion. *Employment as a means of combating poverty : Taking up the challenges* ”

18 The data for 2012 and 2013 (obtained in December 2014 and July 2015) are the result of a new survey. Therefore, they are not yet comparable to data for the period from 2002 to 2011. Statistics intends to propose a comparable data series in an overhaul scheduled for December 2015.

19 Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*. Special Société d'habitation du Québec compilation.

20 The social assistance rate is the ratio of the number of social assistance beneficiaries to the population under age 65. It is intended to measure the portion of the population that receives social assistance benefits. Since persons age 65 and over usually have access to the federal Old Age Security benefit to cover their basic needs, they are not considered to be a potential clients for social assistance.

21 Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale. Data at June 1, 2015.

Highlights *[continued]*

- In Québec, among all students leaving secondary school in 2010-2011, 21.9% left without obtaining a diploma or qualification, compared with 77% for Native students in the territories covered by agreements (79.8% for the Cree School Board, 81.7% for the Kativik School Board and 69.9% for the Naskapi school). There is no reliable data for Native persons who are not covered by an agreement.
- In 2014, the unemployment rate among Native persons at least 15 years of age (11.5%) was the higher than the rate for non-Native persons (7,7%).²²
- In 2012, more than 1,100 Inuit persons were living in Montréal, 67% of whom were originally from Nunavik; half of them were employed or pursuing studies.²³

“ Because of socioeconomic realities, it is very difficult to create meaningful jobs, that is, skilled and well paid jobs, that would allow Native persons to work in their communities. [...] For Native persons who live in urban areas, access to employment is difficult. ”

CCLP, 2013, *L'emploi pour lutter contre la pauvreté : les défis à relever*, p. 33, French only; also available “ Summary - Advisory Opinion. *Employment as a means of combating poverty : Taking up the challenges* ”

22 Statistics Canada (2015). *Labour Force Survey*. This datum refers to First Nations person living off-reserve, Métis and Inuit (including those in Nunavik).

23 MSSS (2014). *Ensemble, pour éviter la rue et en sortir – Politique nationale de lutte à l'itinérance*, p. 25 (French only). <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2013/13-846-03F.pdf> (French only, retrieved on May 19, 2015).

For Québec as a whole, the purchasing power of single-parent and two-parent families who are beneficiaries of last-resort financial aide (LRFA), calculated on the basis of disposable income, improved between 2003 and 2015. However, the purchasing power of independent adults and couples with no children remained roughly unchanged during that period.

You can consult the report entitled *Résultats des actions menées dans le cadre de la Stratégie nationale de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale – 2002-2013* (French only) and CEPE's 2013 status report²⁴ to learn more about what poverty looks like in Québec as a whole. Appendix 6 of that report has statistical portraits by region, including Nord-du-Québec – Administration régionale Kativik.

The situation of independent adults

In Québec as a whole, the low-income rate for independent adults increased from 22.8% to 27.1% between 2003 and 2011.²⁵ The increase was observed in all age categories and for both sexes. Although the rate in 2003 for all independent men ages 18 and over (24.3%) was higher than the rate for independent women (21.4%), both groups had the same rate, about 27%, in 2011.

From 2003 to 2011, according to the Market Basket Measure (MBM), the place occupied by the group of low-income independent adults within all family units increased from 36.9% to 43%.

“ [The low income rate] is a serious concern for independent adults, who account for almost half the people living in poverty and who tend to be the poorest of the poor. ”

[CEPE, 2008, *Le faible revenu au Québec : Un état de situation*, p. 5, French only.](#)

Persons living in an economic family of at least two people

Between 2003 and 2011, the low-income rate for persons living in an economic family of at least two people²⁶ (e.g., couples with no children, single-parent or two-parent families) declined slightly, from 7.7% to 7.4%. Although the low-income rate for women (7.7% in 2011) remains higher than the rate for men (7.1%), it dropped more (down 0.5 percentage points for women compared with 0.1 percentage points for men).

Low-income workers

In 2009, 2.2% of working people (for a minimum of 910 hours in the reference year) were living under the low-income cutoff based on the MBM. Among them, independent adults, people aged 25 to 44 and incapacitated persons were over-represented.²⁷

24 CEPE, 2014, *La pauvreté, les inégalités et l'exclusion sociale au Québec : État de situation 2013* (French only). http://www.cepe.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/CEPE_Etat_Situation_2013.pdf (French only, retrieved on October 14, 2015).

25 Statistics Canada has published low income rates for 2012 and 2013 that are comparable with one another. The low-income rate for independent adults increased from 27.2% in 2012 to 25% in 2013 (Statistics Canada. Table 206-0041 - Canadian Income Survey (CIS), low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas (CMAs), annual, 2012 to 2013, (CANSIM database) (retrieved on October 15, 2015).

26 The low-income rate for persons living in an economic family was 8.7% in 2012 and 7.8% in 2013 (Statistics Canada. Table 206-0041 - Canadian Income Survey (CIS), low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type, Canada, provinces and selected census metropolitan areas (CMAs), annual, 2012 to 2013, (CANSIM database) (retrieved on October 15, 2015).

27 F. Savard (2012). “ Les travailleurs à faible revenu ”, in *Le Québec économique 2012. Le point sur le revenu des Québécois*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, chapter 8, p. 229 to 252 (French only).

The reduction in social inequalities

In Québec as a whole, income inequalities have increased since 1990, but that observation must be nuanced. Among independent adults, the situation of the poorest is over-represented compared with those who are faring better, whose purchasing power increased. Among families made up of two-persons or more, purchasing power increased strongly, especially among those most well off.

With respect to social inequalities related to health, the fifth provincial report on the health status of the Québec population, published in 2011 under the direction of Québec's Chief Public Health Officer (MSSS, 2011), reaffirms that socioeconomic conditions are an important determinant of Health, as shown by the presence health-related social inequalities between disadvantaged groups and groups who are better off.²⁸

“ The inequalities that damage or social cohesion must be reduced. The first among them is income inequality, followed by inequality of access to information, employment, housing, recreation and culture, health and wellbeing, as well as persistent inequalities between men and women. ”

CCLP, 2010, *Ageing Alone: The Impact on Poverty and Social Exclusion*, p. 5.

28 MSSS (2011). *Pour guider l'action – Portrait de santé du Québec et de ses régions*, p.9. <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2011/11-228-01F.pdf> (French only, retrieved on October 14, 2015).

“ Several studies on the social determinants of health as well as population surveys show that the socioeconomic risk factors to which Native persons are exposed are extremely worrying and contribute to greater vulnerability, from a very young age. ”

MSSS, 2014, *Ensemble, pour éviter la rue et en sortir – Politique nationale de lutte à l'itinérance*, p. 24, French only.

Native populations face specific health challenges, some of which are related to the geographical isolation of some communities, difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified personnel, the difficulty in obtaining proper, healthy housing that is large enough, prejudices and discrimination, drug abuse, mental health issues and access to healthy, wholesome food.^{29,30,31,32} For example, about a quarter of Québec's Native adults and almost a third of its Native households with children are faced with food insecurity.³³

29 FNQLHSSC (2012). *First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) 2008*. Updated to February 7, 2013. <http://www.cssspnl.com/champs-intervention/secteur-recherche/enquetes-populationnelles/enquete-regionale-sante> (retrieved on May 20, 2015).

30 Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*. CANSIM, tables 99-011-X2011035 and 036.

31 Société d'habitation du Québec (2014). *Housing in Nunavik – Information Document*, 40 p. <http://www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/internet/publications/0000023767.pdf> (retrieved on May 19, 2015).

32 L.-H. Groulx, Gouvernement du Québec, CEPE (2011). *Les facteurs engendrant l'exclusion au Canada : survol de la littérature multidisciplinaire*. http://www.cepe.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/cepe_lionel-henri_groulx.pdf (French only, retrieved on May 19, 2015).

33 MESS (2014). *Résultats des actions menées dans le cadre de la Stratégie nationale de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale – 2002-2013*, p. 11. http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/ADMIN_lutte_pauvrete_R58_rapport_ministre2014.pdf (French only, retrieved on May 15, 2015).

Mobilizing communities

In the first government Action Plan, integrated regional approaches were supported to mobilize communities and encourage concerted efforts by various actors with an aim to improve the collective struggle against poverty and social exclusion. In the second plan, after numerous exchanges with stakeholders working in the various regions, the government decided to reach Solidarity Alliance agreements in each of Québec's regions to better take into account regional needs and to let the regions decide on their intervention priorities, according to their own specificities, in a spirit of solidarity and partnership.

According to the latest data available in 2013-2014, the Alliances have made it possible to support 1,048 projects funded by the FQIS, which includes 11 projects proposed by three Alliances made with First Nations. Those 11 projects, defined by each Nation, have benefitted from \$1.9 million in direct commitments from the FQIS, while contributions from partners reached \$1.3 million, bringing total funding for FQIS supported projects to \$3.2 million. The contribution level for partners accounted for 40.9% of the total investment.

Concerted efforts and community mobilization make it possible to rely on the coherence of interventions. The Solidarity Alliances have made it possible to mobilize local and regional communities and to affirm that the combat against poverty and social exclusion is a regional development priority. Nevertheless, concerted efforts and mobilization of all partners will remain a major issue in coming years.

TOWARDS A THIRD ACTION PLAN



The preceding pages have allowed us to illustrate the background for our proposed consultation to prepare a third government Action Plan, to point out certain data (where available) related to poverty and social exclusion of Native persons in Québec and to shine a light on the progress achieved in recent years, particularly thanks to measures included in the government's plan for solidarity and inclusion social.

Prior to the consultation, an initial reflection activity has made it possible to compare the contents of the axes for action set out in the Act and the nature of the measures proposed in the first two Action Plans and to identify the issues that were not included or only partially included. The reflection has brought to light some issues that could receive special attention in the next government Action Plan to combat poverty and social exclusion.

For each of the five axes, the Act gives examples of what may be issues to consider in developing the next Action Plan.

First of all we invite you to make use of those examples. Then, we call on you to prioritize them and propose any others you may want to have considered, all the while considering best practices that you would like to bring to the government's attention.

As mentioned above, to more closely reflect Native realities, **axis 3** in the Act ("promoting access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work") has been broadened to include the more general notion of economic development. Therefore, for the purpose of this document, it has become **"promoting economic development, access to work and increasing the attractiveness of work"**.

It appears that development of local Native economies in Québec is a cornerstone in combatting poverty and social exclusion.

AXIS 1

PREVENTING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION, WITH A FOCUS ON DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF INDIVIDUALS

Prevention is an important key to any action taken to combat poverty and social exclusion. It contributes to ensuring that people do not find themselves living in poverty and social exclusion, helps them get out of poverty and makes it possible to reduce the effects of living in poverty. Action must be taken early in people's lives so that they can have access to a variety of tools for ensuring their wellbeing and that of their families and develop their full potential. It is not enough to act on the consequences of poverty and social exclusion; we must give more attention to their causes and adapt our interventions accordingly.

Under section 8 of the Act, preventive action must be aimed at, in particular:

1. recognizing the family as the basic unit of personal and social development and, while respecting the role of parents, supporting families with dependent children that are at risk of long-term poverty through early and integrated intervention aimed at giving the families access to a range of services and programs adapted to their needs and to those of their children;
2. promoting school success and facilitating school and social integration of young persons, particularly the disadvantaged;
3. improving basic education and access to continuing education to enable adults to complete and update their occupational qualifications, facilitating recognition of their experience and promoting access to information and communication technologies;
4. supporting volunteer and community actions that contribute to the social inclusion of persons living in poverty;
5. recognizing the contribution of the elderly to society and supporting those living in poverty to provide them with access to a variety of services and programs adapted to their needs;
6. promoting, for persons living in poverty, access to culture, recreation and sports.

Issues related to axis 1 that could guide the development of the third Action Plan

- Access to high-quality educational services, beginning in early childhood, for low-income Native families, for example, for Native families with a handicapped child.
- Access to means of public transportation adapted to the realities of low-income households and taking into account the needs of Native persons with vulnerability factors, such as age or handicap.
- Persistence in school for young Native persons from disadvantaged environments.
- Reduction of the obstacles to participating in life-long training that includes non-standard workers and self-employed workers.
- Providing basic skills to adult Native persons (reading, writing, counting, using a computer).
- Using culture and cultural recreation to promote the inclusion of marginalized groups.
- Recognition of the role of elders in community development.

Question 1.1

Can you identify other issues that should guide the development of the third government Action Plan with respect to preventing poverty and social exclusion by promoting the development of personal potential?

Please explain.

Question 1.2

According to you, if the proposed issues and any you have added should be prioritized, which ones seem the most important to you for preventing poverty and social exclusion by promoting the development of person potential?

Why?

Question 1.3

Can you give examples of best practices to ensure the progress of our actions to prevent poverty and social exclusion by promoting the development of personal potential in a Native context?

AXIS 2

STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SAFETY NET

Since the adoption of the Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, a number of measures have been implemented to maintain or improve the income and living conditions of low-income individuals and families. The purchasing power of beneficiaries of last-resort financial assistance programs has also improved. More social housing units have been built and home renovation programs have been adopted. However, there is still work to do. We must also continue to adapt measures for improving wellbeing to the realities of Native persons with low incomes.

Under section 9 of the Act, actions to strengthen the social and economic safety net must be aimed at, in particular:

1. raising the level of income granted to persons and families living in poverty, having regard to their particular situation and the resources at their disposal to meet their essential needs;
2. encouraging low-income workers to enter or remain on the labour market, especially through work income supplements;
3. providing persons living in poverty or social exclusion with health, social and educational services that are adapted to their specific needs;
4. facilitating dignified access, for persons and families living in poverty, to a food supply that is both sufficient and nutritious, at reasonable costs, and to simple and reliable information enabling those persons and families to make enlightened dietary choices;
5. facilitating the availability of decent and affordable housing through housing assistance measures or the development of social housing for the socially disadvantaged, including the homeless, and strengthening community support for those persons.

Issues related to axis 2 that could guide the development of the third Action Plan

- Access to housing of suitable quality and size, at a reasonable cost, for low-income Native households, particularly where communities remote.
- Improvements in the continuity of health and social services for the residents of Native community not covered by agreements, particularly for remote communities and Native persons with low incomes.
- Food security for people in their own communities and physical and economic access to nutritious food in sufficient quantity (i.e., traditional food).
- Improvement in the financial capacity of people with low incomes to meet their basic needs, such as housing, food, transportation, costs to overcome handicaps, etc.
- Taking into account, in government service offers, the realities of various groups in the population of persons with low incomes, including non-standard workers and self-employed workers.

Question 2.1

Can you identify other issues that should guide the development of the third government Action Plan for strengthening the social and economic safety net?

Please explain.

Question 2.2

According to you, if the proposed issues and any you have added should be prioritized, which ones seem the most important to you for strengthening the social and economic safety net?

Why?

Question 2.3

Can you give examples of best practices to ensure the progress of our actions for strengthening the social and economic safety net in a Native context?

AXIS 3

PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF WORK

The development of local Native economies is required to generate jobs that will contribute to reducing poverty and social exclusion in both the short and long terms. Having access to employment, whenever possible, is an important dimension in everyone's personal development. It is what makes it possible for people to fully achieve and participate in society, and it is the best means for getting out of poverty. For employment to be possible, we must provide people with the tools needed to ensure their economic development and adequate training and to promote their access to the labour market. However, in coming years, labour market changes in Québec will be greatly influenced by demographic evolution. The challenges faced by men and women must be met with concrete interventions to support access to employment.

Under section 10 of the Act, as written, for the axis related to access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work, the government must act in concert with its various labour market partners and community organizations, in particular :

1. to intensify employment assistance so as to better support the communities in their efforts to create employment and, particularly in high-poverty areas in which employment assistance measures and services must be adapted to the needs of the groups identified as being more affected by poverty;
2. to favour an approach centred on community-based intervention and the integration of social and economic development ;
3. to favour, in the workplace, the social and occupational integration of persons who have particular difficulty entering the labour market, in particular persons who have an impairment or disability;
4. to enhance the quality of jobs so that the workers receive an income adequate to provide an acceptable standard of living, in comparison with the income of Québec workers generally, enjoy better employment protection against the risks of exclusion and benefit from measures enabling them to achieve a better balance between family and work.

Issues related to axis 3 that could guide the development of the third Action Plan

- Conditions that encourage entrepreneurship in Native communities.
- Conditions favourable to jobs adapted to Native realities, both in Native communities and in urban settings.
- Improvement of the conditions facilitating access to employment and employment retention for Native persons with low incomes.
- Improvement in balancing work-family, work-study and family-study and improvement of working conditions in employment sectors occupied by Native persons with low incomes.
- Development and improvement of the skills of Native persons with low incomes so as to allow labour market integration.
- Recognition of the skills acquired by Native persons.
- Support for the acquisition of work experience by people living in poverty and social exclusion, taking into account the needs of employers.
- Structured and individual accompaniment of persons with employment integration problems.
- Reduction of the obstacles to the employment integration of persons living in poverty and social exclusion.

Question 3.1

Can you identify other issues that should guide the development of the third government Action Plan for promoting economic development, access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work?

Please explain.

Question 3.2

According to you, if the proposed issues and any you have added should be prioritized, which ones seem the most important to you for promoting economic development, access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work?

Why?

Question 3.3

Can you give examples of best practices to ensure the progress of our actions for promoting economic development, access to employment and increasing the attractiveness of work in a Native context?

AXIS 4

PROMOTING THE INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

Combatting poverty and social exclusion is a collective challenge. Various governmental organizations, community organizations, ordinary citizens and businesses all have a role to play in promoting social cohesion and combatting all forms of social and material discrimination. Prejudices against people who live in poverty and social exclusion are hindrances to their full participation in society and their full personal development. Solidarity and inclusion are important values in Québec. Our interventions must be guided by those values and be aimed at lifting barriers so as to promote the involvement of all our people.

Under section 11 of the Act, actions to promote the involvement of society as a whole must provide for the inclusion of stakeholders representative of the broader Québec community. For that purpose, such actions must, in particular:

1. favour citizen participation, particularly that of persons living in poverty and social exclusion and the organizations representing them;
2. support specific local and regional initiatives for the achievement of the goals set out in the national strategy;
3. recognize the social responsibility of enterprises and include the labour market partners;
4. recognize the contribution of volunteer and community action.

Issues related to axis 4 that could guide the development of the third Action Plan

- Support for communities faced with the challenge of revitalization.
- Mobilization to reduce the stigmatization of Native persons living in poverty and social exclusion and the elimination of prejudices against them.
- Improvement in the social participation of people living in poverty in terms of their living conditions (work, school, community, sports, recreation and information and communications technologies, etc.).
- Contributions by enterprises, including social economy enterprises,³⁴ to social inclusion by promoting the social and vocational integration and insertion of Native persons living in poverty and social exclusion.
- Support for vocational insertion of Native persons with employment integration problems into enterprises and contributions by enterprises to the combat against poverty and social exclusion.

³⁴ A social economy enterprise is a cooperative, mutual association or not-for-profit organization whose main activity is the organized production of goods and services intended for its members or the community and which receives market income. Its activities are conducted in accordance with the principles of the *Social Economy Act* (democratic governance, economic viability, meeting members' or community needs, etc.).

Question 4.1

Can you identify other issues that should guide the development of the third government Action Plan for promoting the involvement of society as a whole?

Please explain.

Question 4.2

According to you, if the proposed issues and any you have added should be prioritized, which ones seem the most important to you for promoting the involvement of society as a whole?

Why?

Question 4.3

Can you give examples of best practices to ensure the progress of our actions for promoting the involvement of society as a whole in a native context?

AXIS 5

ENSURING CONSISTENT AND COHERENT INTERVENTION AT ALL LEVELS

The complexity of the issues surrounding poverty and social exclusion require the various actors to act in concrete ways and ensure coherence in the implementation of their actions, at all levels. Working in silos (compartmentalization) was been cited frequently as an obstacle to the full realization of interventions and service offers. Québec society also relies on knowledge and shared learning to improve practices, including those related to combatting poverty and social exclusion. Interventions carried out by the federal government for Native peoples must be taken into account to avoid duplication of measures.

Under section 12 of the Act, within the scope of its action to ensure consistent and coherent intervention at all levels, the Government must, in particular:

1. ensure that the policies and measures intended to help in the fight against poverty and social exclusion are complementary and coherent;
2. devise means of measuring the progress achieved and improving knowledge on poverty issues, in particular through the development of research networks, and provide for accountability and coordination mechanisms designed to ensure consistent intervention;
3. support in a durable manner innovation and adaptation of programs and services on the regional and local levels, develop coordinated action and collaboration and provide for a procedure for disseminating innovative experiments carried out;
4. remain abreast of and examine innovative approaches taken by other countries and participate in international forums;
5. with the representatives of the First Nations, discuss ways in which actions may be adapted to the particular needs of the Native peoples.

Issues related to axis 5 that could guide the development of the third Action Plan

- Coherence of actions at all levels of intervention (provincial, regional and local) and in the combat against poverty and social exclusion.
- Collaboration among the various stakeholders to take into account the diversity of the causes of social exclusion.
- Knowledge of the existing programs, structures and services in terms of the combat against poverty and social exclusion.
- Adaptation of programs and measures to Native cultural realities.

Question 5.1

Can you identify other issues that should guide the development of the third government Action Plan for ensuring consistent and coherent intervention at all levels?

Please explain.

Question 5.2

According to you, if the proposed issues and any you have added should be prioritized, which ones seem the most important to you for ensuring consistent and coherent intervention at all levels?

Why?

Question 5.3

Can you give examples of best practices to ensure the progress of our actions for ensuring consistent and coherent intervention at all levels in a Native context?

