

1 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Chapter 1 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2008) presents the sociodemographic, socioeconomic and sociocultural characteristics of Quebec First Nations living in a community. This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 1. Therefore, it does not include all the knowledge covered by the survey, and may be open to different interpretations. To have a complete understanding of the results, the reader is invited to consult the entire chapter.

Demographic characteristics

Age

The median age of the population of Quebec's First Nations is 28 years. When compared with the median age of the entire Quebec population, which was 41 in 2006, (Statistics Canada, 2010) we understand that the population of Quebec First Nations is younger than that of Quebec. Moreover, we note that 6.2% of the First Nations population is over 65 and only 0.4% is over 85.

Population distribution by geographical zone

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has developed a classification system in four zones defined according to the geographical situation of First Nations communities. As shown in Table 1, 80% of the First Nations population lives in Zones 1 and 2.

Table 1: Total population distribution by geographical zone

Geographic Zone	N	%
Zone 1 (Urban)	17,813	61.4
Zone 2 (Rural)	5,498	18.9
Zone 3 (Isolated)	3,033	10.5
Zone 4 (Difficult access)	2,673	9.2
Total	29,017	100.0

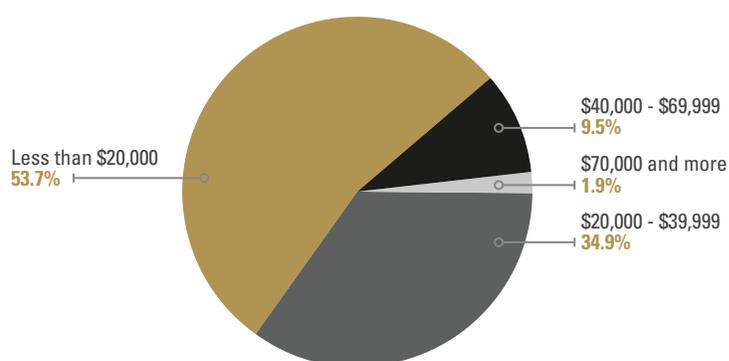
Household composition

Regarding children (0-11 years), 55% live with both of their biological parents and 32.2% live in single-parent families. Finally, 8.3% of children live in a family where neither biological parent is present. Regarding adolescents (12-17 years), 44.6% live with their biological mother and father.

Socioeconomic characteristics

In terms of income, slightly over half (53.7%) of Quebec First Nations adults in 2007 had personal income of less than \$20,000. For the same year, only 1.9% of First Nations adults earned more than \$70,000. Figure 1 shows, in percentages, the income earned by First Nations adults in 2007.

Figure 1: Personal income earned by adults in 2007 (N = 17,024)



The survey results also highlight that 69.3% of adults aged 18 to 34 and 70.3% of individuals 65 and over earned an income of less than \$20,000 in 2007. In addition, 45.2% of all First Nations adults reported having a job at the time the questionnaire was answered. Regarding household income, 34.2% of First Nations living in community lived in a household that earned less than \$20,000 in 2007.

¹ Geographic zone

Degree of geographic isolation is based on a zone system developed by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

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.

Education

At the time of the survey, less than half of First Nations adults reported having completed high school. Table 2 presents the highest level of education completed by First Nations adults.

Table 2: Level of education completed by the adult population

Level of education	N	%
Uncompleted 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
Total	19,068	100.0

Furthermore, 98.6% of school-aged children (5-11 years) were enrolled in an educational institution. As for youth (12-17 years), 83.7% confirmed that they go to school. The survey results also show that youth from Zones 1 and 2 are more likely to attend school than their counterparts in Zones 3 and 4. As for educational delay, 52.2% of youth 12-17 report having failed a school year.

Note that under the Education Act, school attendance is compulsory in Quebec until the age of 16. The proportion of young people 16-17 years attending an academic institution decreases to 67.9% (83.4% of youth aged 16 and 58.4% of those aged 17). It would appear that a large number of youth leave school between 16 and 17 years.

Sociocultural characteristics

Approximately two thirds of children (67.2%), youth (63.0%) and adults (67.0%) speak a First Nations language in their daily lives, as presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Language spoken most often in everyday life*

Language	Children	Youths	Adults
English	21.0%	26.8%	30.9%
French	55.7%	53.9%	58.1%
First Nations language	67.2%	63.0%	67.0%
Other	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%

* The respondent could choose more than one answer.

However there is a significant difference between adults based on geographical zones. Indeed, all (100%) of adults living in Zone 4 reported speaking a First Nations language compared to 55.5% of adults in Zone 1.

Moreover, most parents or 87.0% consider it “very important” or “fairly important” for their child to learn a First Nations language. Similarly, more than half of parents consider it “very important” that their child take part in traditional cultural events.

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 1 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey. For more details on the survey results, the full chapter is available at the following link: <http://www.cssspnql.com/docs/centre-de-documentation/chapitre-1-socio-démo---eng-v2.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



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