

6 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Chapter 6 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS, 2008) summarizes the views of respondents on the well-being of their community. This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 6. 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.

In the context of the survey, community well-being refers to perceptions of First Nations about the strengths and challenges present in their community. More specifically, community well-being depends on the strength of a community grouped into three categories: 1) the social aspects, including the strengths represented by culture, language and family values; 2) the domains of politics, economy, health and education, which includes access to education and health programs, leadership and the health of the economy; 3) low rate of suicide, crime and drug abuse.

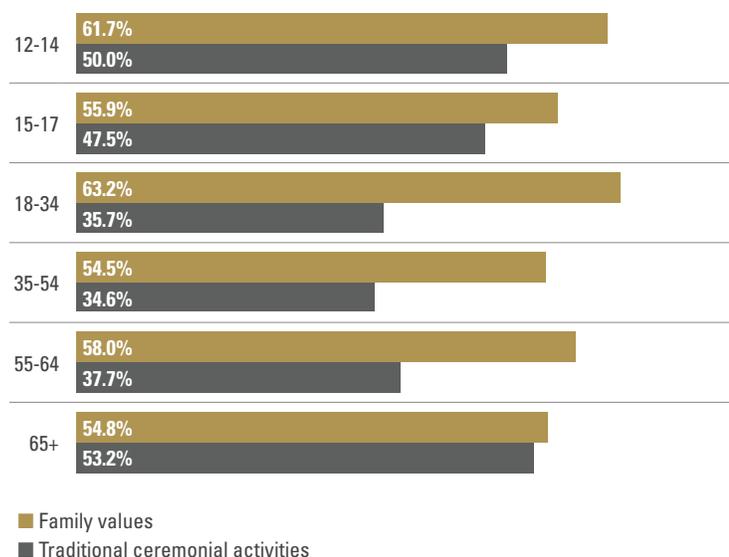
Community strengths

Strengths pertaining to social aspects

As shown in Figure 1, more than half of respondents in all age groups say that family values are their community's main strength.

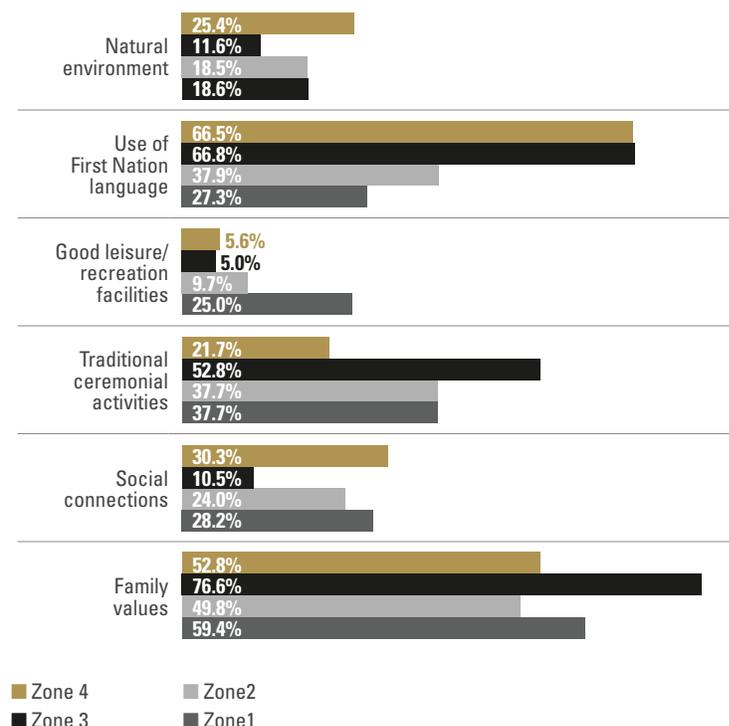
Regarding traditional activities and ceremonies, there are significant differences in perception between the age groups (Figure 1). Elders (age 65 and up) and youths (age 12-14) are the two largest groups to perceive traditional activities as a community strength, while adults aged 35-54 were less likely to feel this way (34.6%).

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents who agree that family values and traditional activities are their community's main strength, by age group



As shown in Figure 2, respondents' opinions about their community's main strengths also vary based on the geographical zone¹ inhabited by them. For example, adults living in Zone 3 (semi-isolated) are more inclined to consider family values among the key strengths of their community (76.6%) than their counterparts living in Zone 2 (rural) (49.8%).

Figure 2: Proportion of adults who believe that the following statements are part of their community's strengths, based on geographic zone



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.

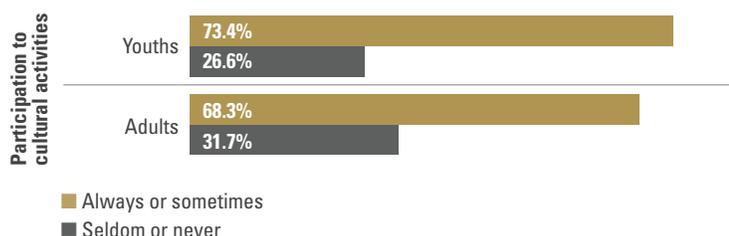
Zone 3: The community is located over 350 km from a service centre with year-round road access.

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.

Participation in cultural activities is also an indicator of the level of community well-being. Overall, many respondents participate in cultural activities. However, youths (73.4%) seem to be more involved in cultural activities than adults (68.3%). Please refer to Figure 3 below.

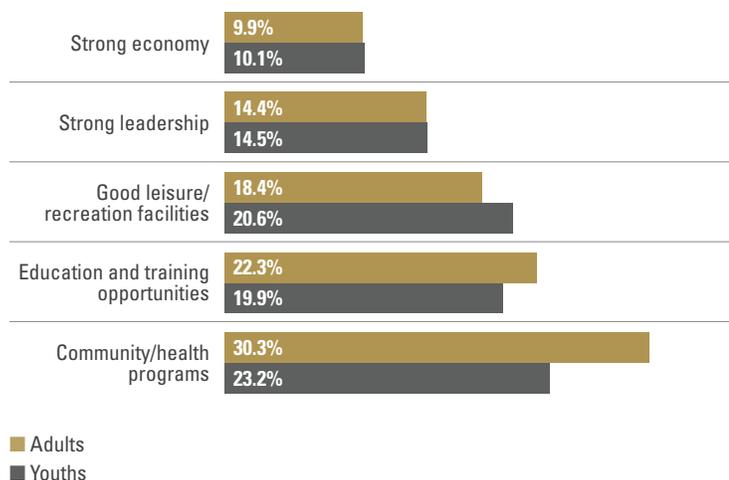
Figure 3: Proportion of youths and adults who participate in their community's cultural activities



Strengths pertaining to politics, economy, health and education

Overall, First Nations are much less likely to mention politics, the economy, health and education as strengths present in their community, compared with the social aspects of well-being outlined above. For example, only 10.1% of youths believe that a strong economy is one of the strengths of their community. This proportion increases when asked if strong leadership is a strength of their community (14.5%). Adults (18 and older) are more likely (30.3%) to consider health and community programs as community strengths. Please refer to Figure 4.

Figure 4: Proportion of youths and adults who believe that statements about politics, economy, health or education are part of their community's strengths



Challenges present within the community

Regarding the main challenges to overcome in their community, the majority of youths (82.1%) and adults (84.3%) believe that alcoholism and drug abuse are among them. Other challenges mentioned by the majority of adults are related to the housing shortage (53.6%) and limited employment opportunities (53.8%). In a different way, youths are more likely than adults to indicate that the loss of the culture is a challenge for the community (38.4% vs. 26%).

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 6 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-6---eng.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

