

**FORMAL OPINION ON THE RELEVANCE OF DEVELOPING A MINISTERIAL STRATEGY FOR THE
SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT PEOPLE**

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUEBEC



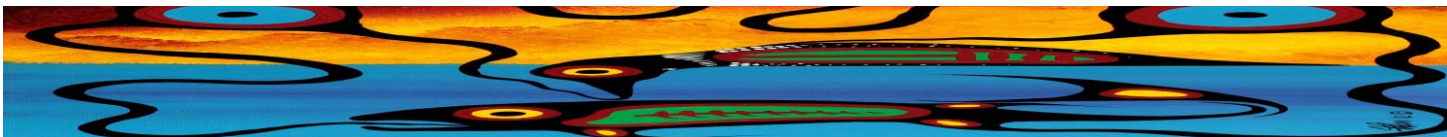
FNILMAC

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT LABOUR MARKET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Formal Opinion Submitted by the First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee to
the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail***

Formal Opinion, June 28, 2013

**Commission
des partenaires
du marché du travail**
Québec 



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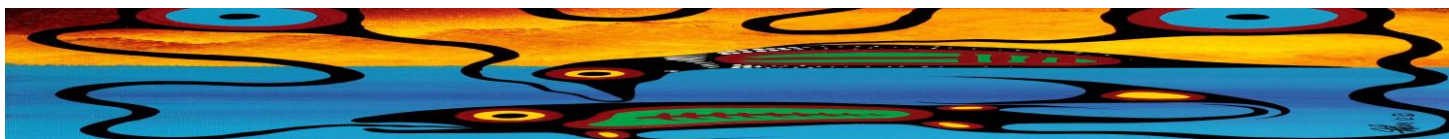


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1. Forward

Although Quebec society is based on values of openness, it is clear that few actions have been taken with regard to the full participation of First Nations and Inuit people in the labour market.

Given the significant challenges related to the employment integration of the members of Aboriginal communities in Quebec;

Given the needs in terms of Aboriginal community-based economic development;

Given the limitations of the current workforce development programs that are offered;

Given the needs related to the labour shortage challenges in Quebec;

Given the importance of standardizing the employment services and making them accessible to the Aboriginal communities;

It is essential to develop a concerted and specific strategy in response to the needs of First Nations and Inuit people in order to contribute to the development of the Aboriginal people of Quebec.

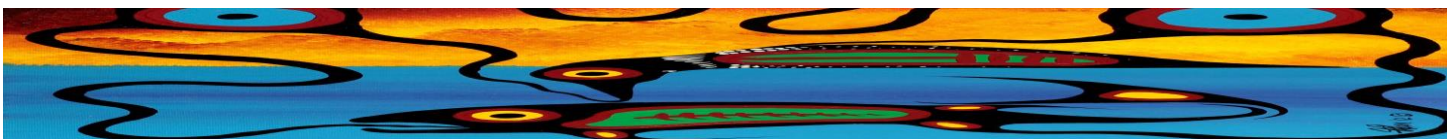
The development and implementation of a ministerial strategy for the socio-professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people must address the current gaps in order to foster the inclusion of Aboriginal people. While policies and strategies are developed to offer suitable support measures to clients with known integration difficulties, such as immigrants, women, persons with disabilities, youth, in view of facilitating their integration into Quebec society, the inclusion of First Nations and Inuit people in the world of work should be recognized as a priority by the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS)*.

This is even more difficult to conceive when one takes into account the fact that First Nations and Inuit people are neighbours of the Quebec citizens. The majority live in resource regions and wish to remain there while these same regions are experiencing labour shortages.

Though the signing of specific agreements as well as agreements arising from major hydroelectric projects in Quebec allowed the implementation of special measures for the inclusion of First Nations and Inuit people in the Quebec companies concerned, it too often remains that these partnerships are based more on the company's orientation towards increasing its market share than on the principle of inclusion.

The inclusion of First Nations and Inuit people in the Quebec labour market requires a firm commitment from all stakeholders of Quebec society to undertake the actions needed for its realization. This in itself represents a social project for which the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* must provide leadership.

The population boom experienced by the First Nations and Inuit people of Quebec also requires immediate action on the part of Quebec stakeholders in order to avoid further deterioration of the labour market situation.



Once Quebec society accepts the principle that First Nations and Inuit people can represent a significant benefit in the establishment of a new social contract based on their full participation in the economic development of Quebec, the basic premises for the initiation of serious steps will then be present. The First Nations and Inuit people will thus be able to combine their economic participation and the exercise of their rights.

2. First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee

This opinion was prepared and submitted by the four signatories of Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreements relating to employment. The *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* endorsed the establishment of a First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee in December 2009 and the Committee has been in operation since February 2010. The Committee is composed of: *four permanent members, organizations invited to sit as associate members and governmental and paragonmental agencies.*

➤The four permanent member holders of Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreements are: the Cree Regional Authority (CRA), the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ), the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and the Algonquin Nation Human Resources and Sustainable Development Corporation (ANHRSDC).

➤The current associate members have voting rights and are composed of: the *Institut Tshakapesh* (formerly the *Institut culturel et éducatif Montagnais*), the *Syndicat des Métallos* of the FTQ, the *Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ)*, Quebec Native Women (QNW), the *Association des employés du nord québécois (AENQ)* teachers and support staff-members of the CSQ, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), and the *Conseil sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre économie sociale et action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC)*

➤The current observer members are: the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport (MELS)*, le *Secrétariat des Affaires Autochtones (SAA)* and Service Canada. The *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT)* sits as an observer and plays a supervisory role within the committee.

➤The four First Nations and Inuit jurisdictional groups provide labour market programs and services to all First Nations and Inuit communities in Quebec. They have become the points of reference for Aboriginal employment development. Aboriginal people who live in urban areas of Quebec are provided labour market programs and services through the federal government's Urban Strategy which is under the responsibility of the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec. The First Nations and Inuit communities also provide additional funding to serve their respective urban members.

The Advisory Committee possesses a thorough understanding of the constraints and needs of persons at risk of underemployment and is thus better positioned to provide opinions and recommendations to the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail*, the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité social* and the *Emploi-Québec* agency, concerning strategies, measures and services to be provided or developed so that Aboriginal people can improve their employability status to access and maintain employment.



This opinion on the relevance of a strategy for the socio-professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people falls within the mission and responsibilities of the four jurisdictional organizations of the Advisory Committee.

“For information purposes, the framework document of the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* states that the Advisory Committee is therefore the preferred interlocutor for promoting the interests of First Nations and Inuit clients who are removed from the labour market and for supporting, through its opinions and recommendations, the employment integration, reintegration or maintenance of these persons. These clients require intervention from public employment services or social solidarity services due to their personal situations in relation to the labour market, existing barriers and limitations, social conditions, demands and conditions of the labour market, changing circumstances of each individual, availability of resources and support needed for each of them to reintegrate the labour market. To this end, the Committee may:

- propose new courses of action, strategies, and initiatives to be experimented or implemented in the area of labour and employment;
- propose sub-groups that require priority assistance from public employment services because of their issues.
- participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the intervention methods that are used.



3. Labour Market-Related Issues

Various factors such as talent, skills, education level of the workforce and the dynamism of the business environment have contributed to Quebec's economic prosperity. The imminent labour shortage could very well be the greatest challenge we will face in terms of long-term economic prosperity and productivity. Together, we must examine our current labour market development approaches, including the policies related to First Nations and Inuit people.

The structural and social issues underlying the underemployment of Aboriginal people in Quebec remain numerous and varied. We must address many of the issues related to underemployment in the context of a broader socio-economic framework. Socio-economic issues include the literacy rate, health, training, education, justice, housing, discrimination, racial undertones and attitudes, poverty and community development.

There is a close correlation between the socio-economic circumstances of many Aboriginal communities and the job readiness of their residents.

There are three major Aboriginal client groups: those *very far-removed from the labour market and faced with numerous barriers, those removed from the labour market and those who have employment potential.

As the problems and barriers are complex and difficult to resolve, Aboriginal organizations do not always have the knowledge, skills, financial resources and tools required to build partnerships and mobilize the members of their communities.

First Nations and Inuit people do not have access to winning employment behavioural models. Remote Aboriginal communities do not always have the infrastructure needed to support entrepreneurship. Aboriginals must move to urban centres for jobs and then can no longer count on the family and community networks, which consequently contributes to the emergence of integration problems.

There are many barriers that limit labour market integration. Employers are skeptical about being able to recruit good Aboriginal candidates who have sustained interest in following their training programs. The Aboriginal organizations that have employment and training-related mandates are spread across the province and their entry points and organizational protocols are unknown. Many employers are not fully aware of the procedures required to establish partnerships with the Aboriginal communities.

In short, learning among Aboriginals goes far beyond the boundaries of the classroom and requires an adapted provision of services to encompass the knowledge and basic skills that are acquired throughout life within the family and community.

*In an Aboriginal context, there are clients who are far-removed from the labour market.

The opinion on the relevance of developing a ministerial strategy for the socio-professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people is supported by two portraits of clients, found separately attached as an annex.



Information is included on First Nations and Inuit people in relation the labour market in Quebec and other regions:

- on the situation of Quebec as a whole: comparison of key labour market indicators with the rest of Canada (key performance indicators and performance gaps);
- on trends in the last two censuses for the period of 2001 and 2006 and 2007 to 2011 according to the Labour Force Survey;
- on the findings and comments of studies gathered together by the First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee; on the 17 administrative regions of Quebec: FNI rankings in each of the regions and identification of main gaps in relation to the labour market indicators; on the socio-economic characteristics of the First Nations: labour market participation by age, gender, education and identification of gaps; on employment income in relation to employment status, occupational groups and industry sectors.



3.1 Key Findings Relating to Employment and Training

3.1.1 • The First Nations and Inuit demographic structure is made up of a high proportion of youth who are currently, or will soon be of working age. This finding indicates that in the short-term, there will be a substantial increase in terms of people seeking employment.

3.1.2 • The barriers related to the access to education and community economic development contribute to labour market integration problems.

3.1.3 • First Nations and Inuit members have difficulty in meeting the criteria for admission to technical and vocational training programs and find it difficult to complete these programs.

3.1.4 • The lack of intervention tools, continuing training and labour market information for Aboriginal employment counsellors does not facilitate the labour market integration of Aboriginal people.

3.1.5 • The significant educational gap between First Nations, Inuit and non-Aboriginal people.

3.1.6 • The high rates of school dropout and academic failure at all levels of education limit integration abilities.

3.1.7 • The absence of second-level services to support academic success has an impact on the dropout and graduation rates.

3.1.8 • The existence of prejudices, stereotypes, ignorance and non-recognition of First Nations and Inuit culture by a large portion of the Quebec population and businesses.

3.1.9 • The programs have a positive effect on the attitude of clients towards finding and keeping a job, but true change requires time and repeated interventions.



3.2 Issues and Constraints

Past efforts to increase First Nations and Inuit participation in the workforce have had mixed success, which reflects the many challenges facing employers and Aboriginal workers. Here is a summary of some of these challenges:

3.2.1 on the demand side

- Employers are not familiar with the potential Aboriginal workforce or do not have ready access to resources that can point them in the right direction and they need information.
- Employers are skeptical about finding Aboriginal employees who are motivated and interested in participating in orientation and training programs.
- Stereotypes and prejudices may limit the interest of employers in hiring Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people must also overcome their own prejudices towards non-Aboriginal people.
- Employers turn to outside resources in order to meet certain needs in terms of labour instead of investing in the development of the local workforce consisting of First Nations and Inuit people.

3.2.2 on the supply side

- Aboriginal employment centres must accelerate their efforts in order to accommodate the wave of Aboriginals who will be reaching working age within the next ten years.
- Aboriginal career and employment centres that have the mandate of providing training and obtaining employment opportunities for Aboriginals are spread out and are experiencing a dropout rate of 50% and higher.
- Aboriginals are ill-prepared for employment because of low education levels and this could interfere with their efforts to develop and acquire skills.
- Widespread poverty restricts the ability to participate in the labour market and is accompanied by a range of social problems, not to mention problems related to health and development.
- Geographical remoteness and the absence of certain Aboriginal groups in several major economic sectors constitute obstacles that must be addressed.
- Career and development centres, schools and school boards for Aboriginal people are limited in their organizational capacity to provide adequate services, which affects their ability to deliver programs and services to address their problems or to establish partnerships and links with employers. The frontline services are not enough. There are few, or no Aboriginal employability-related organizations that can provide services that are complementary to the current services provided by the agreement holders.



The large cohort of Aboriginal youth represents both a challenge and an opportunity. If a large proportion of Aboriginal youth do not pursue their education or do not hold jobs, it will increase the cost of social services and the pressures on the organizations that provide them assistance, which will have an impact on individuals and on communities.

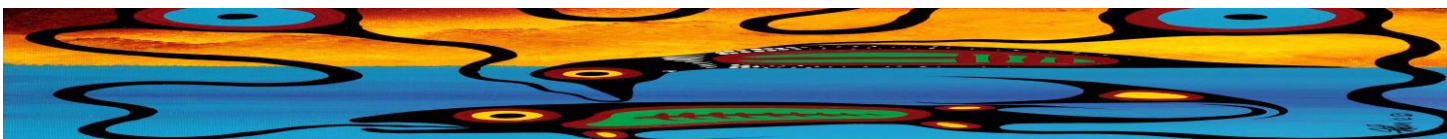
Regarding Aboriginal persons with disabilities, the lack of expertise, limited resources and significant financial needs required for this clientele compromises the delivery of programs and services intended for them.

As for women, the agreement signatories for the development of Aboriginal human resources (ASETS) are making great efforts to help them overcome labour market integration barriers and to encourage them to participate in training initiatives, including in the area of non-traditional trades.

3.2.3 Causes of the Current Disparity in the Levels of Labour Market Participation

The current situations of the First Nations and Inuit communities are not all the same. Some communities are located near urban centres, some are located in rural agricultural areas and others are located in remote and/or northern regions. Some have already experienced the first wave of industrial exploitation of resources while others have only recently experienced the benefits of development. However, the communities located in the south as well as in the north have similar difficulties in relation to participating in the economy.

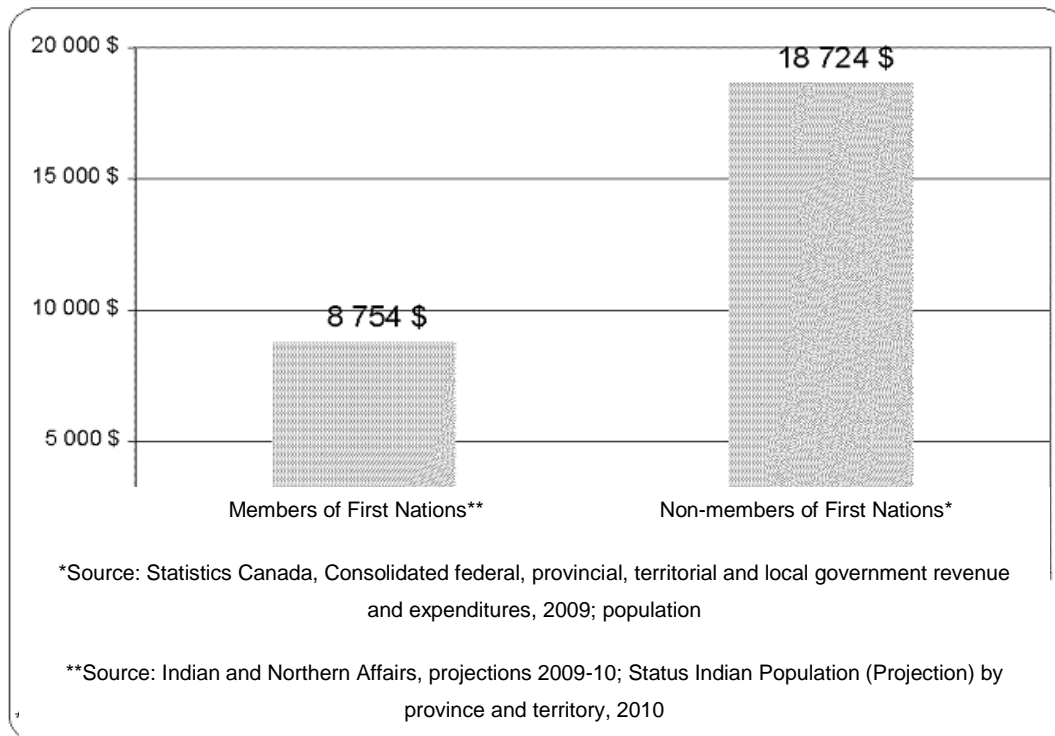
Aboriginal clients continue to face barriers and the employment organizations in Quebec, namely the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) holders, are struggling to meet the needs relating to a lack of education and work experience, transportation, childcare, health, transition toward urban areas, substance abuse, coping skills, poverty, inadequate housing, isolation and remoteness. However, the main employment barriers remain the lack of basic education and the lack of professional skills (Ex.: mandatory specialized certificates). The clients of remote and northern communities are increasingly faced with the lack of economic development at the local level, and therefore, real job opportunities.



4. Statistical Overview of the Situation Average

Figure 1: Total financing per person by all orders of governments, 2010

Figure 1: Financement total par personne et par tous les ordres de gouvernements, 2010



In spite of all the difficulties faced by Aboriginal people, the total funding per Aboriginal person by all levels of government is less than half the funding granted to non-Aboriginal persons. This disparity does not favour the integration of First Nations and Inuit people in the social and economic development of their respective regions.

The isolation of reserves and other enclaves located in regions where development opportunities are often limited, forces First Nations and Inuit people to leave their community of origin in order to seek employment and business opportunities once the limited number of available jobs in the community have been filled.

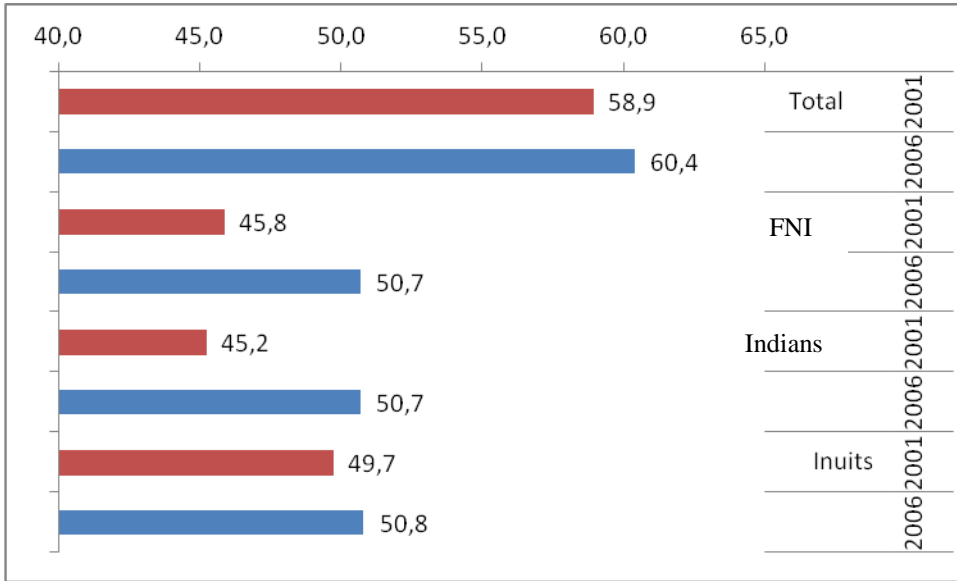
As one will see in examining the portrait of the clientele, the other causes of disparity are related to language, culture, education and training, racism and poverty.

In comparing the education level, employment rate and family income with the rest of the Quebec population, the analyses confirm that the rates pertaining to education, employment and income remain lower than those of the Quebec population. These are gaps that First Nations and Inuit communities wish to reduce.



Figure 2

Employment rate of FNI, Indians and Inuit and of the entire population, Quebec, 2001 and 2006



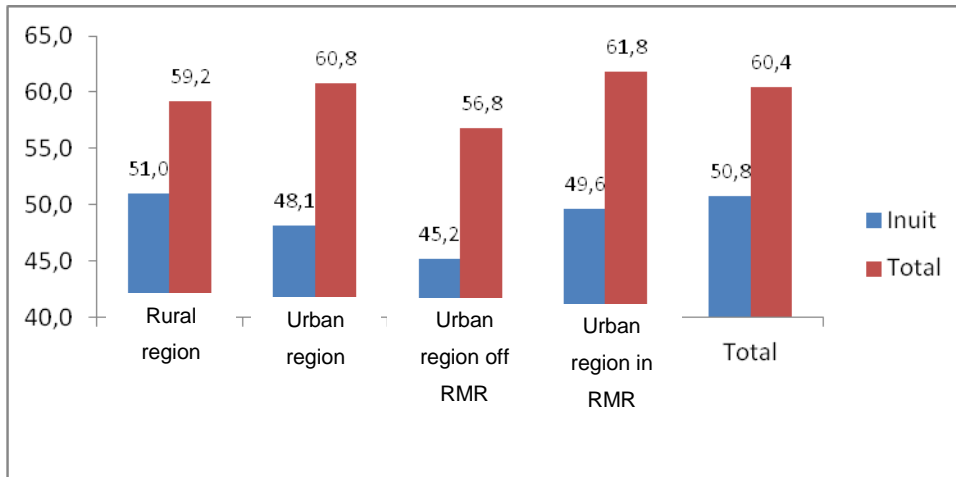
In Quebec, the FNI employment rates are lower and the FNI unemployment rates are higher than those of the total general population. These gaps are also observed in Canada as a whole and in each of the provinces.

As the First Nations and Inuit populations are more affected by unemployment (16.1% compared to 7% for the general population), there is an impact on their employment rate, which is only 50.7%, a difference of nearly ten points with the total population (60.4%). The Canadian situation is similar for the two FNI groups but the differences are even more pronounced, since nearly 14 percentage points separate the FNI employment rate from that of the total Canadian population.



Figure 3

Employment rate among the Inuit and the total population by region of residence, Quebec, 2006

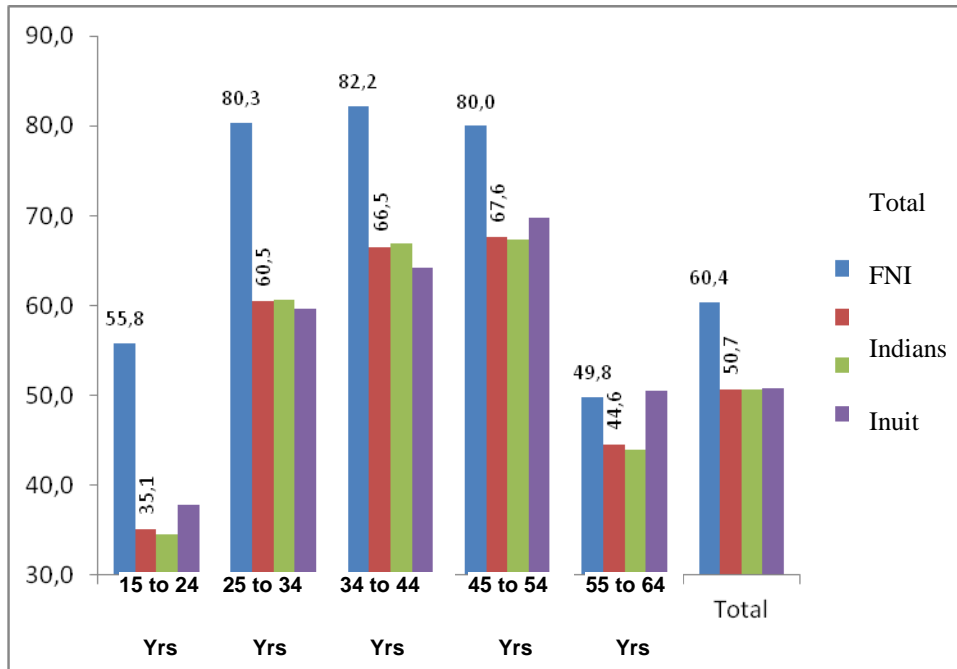


When Aboriginals are located in a reserve, their labour market indicators are significantly less to their advantage than those observed for Aboriginals in large urban centres. The former have a lower employment rate (44.9%, Figure 4) and workforce participation rate (57.9%) and a higher unemployment rate (22%) than those estimated for Aboriginals living in large urban centres, having the highest employment rate (60.1%) among Aboriginals and the lowest unemployment rate (8.7%).



Figure 4

Employment rate of FNI, Indians and Inuit of the entire population by age group, Québec, 2006



A difference of more than 20 percentage points separates the employment rate of FNI youth of 15 to 24 years of age from that of the total Quebec youth population (55.8%). This gap is even more pronounced for Indian youth. For the 25 to 34 age group, this gap persists in the employment rate and decreases slightly for the 35 to 44 age group (a difference of 15.7 percentage points). Two-thirds (66.5%) of FNI persons of this age group have employment opportunities while among the total Quebec population of the same age group, the employment rate is 82.2%. They also have a low probability of being unemployed (6%) compared to FNI persons (13.7%).

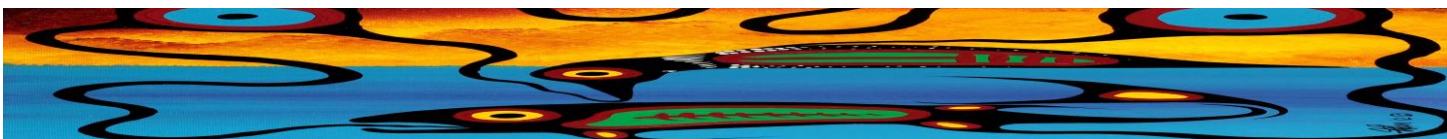
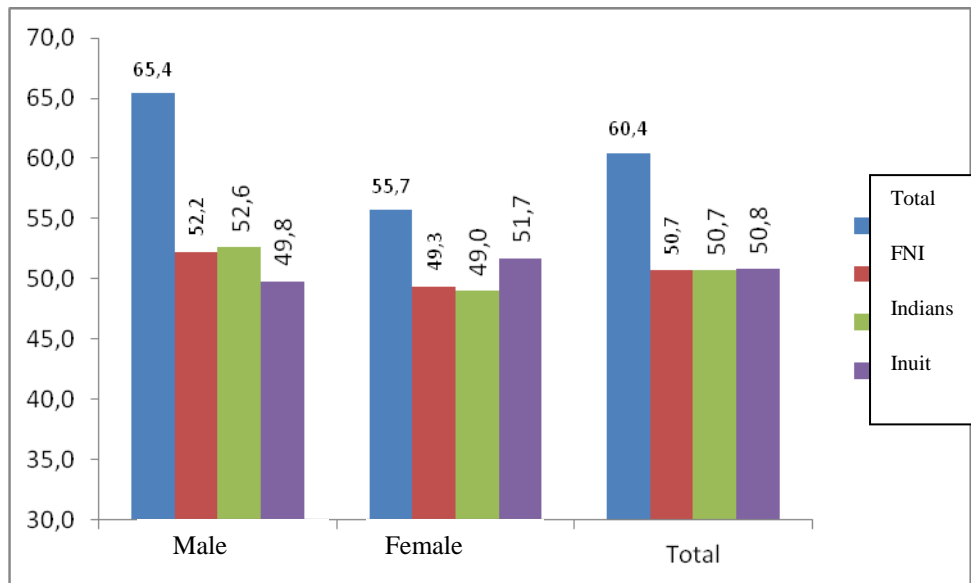


Figure 5

Employment rate of FNI, Indians and Inuit of the total population by sex, Québec, 2006



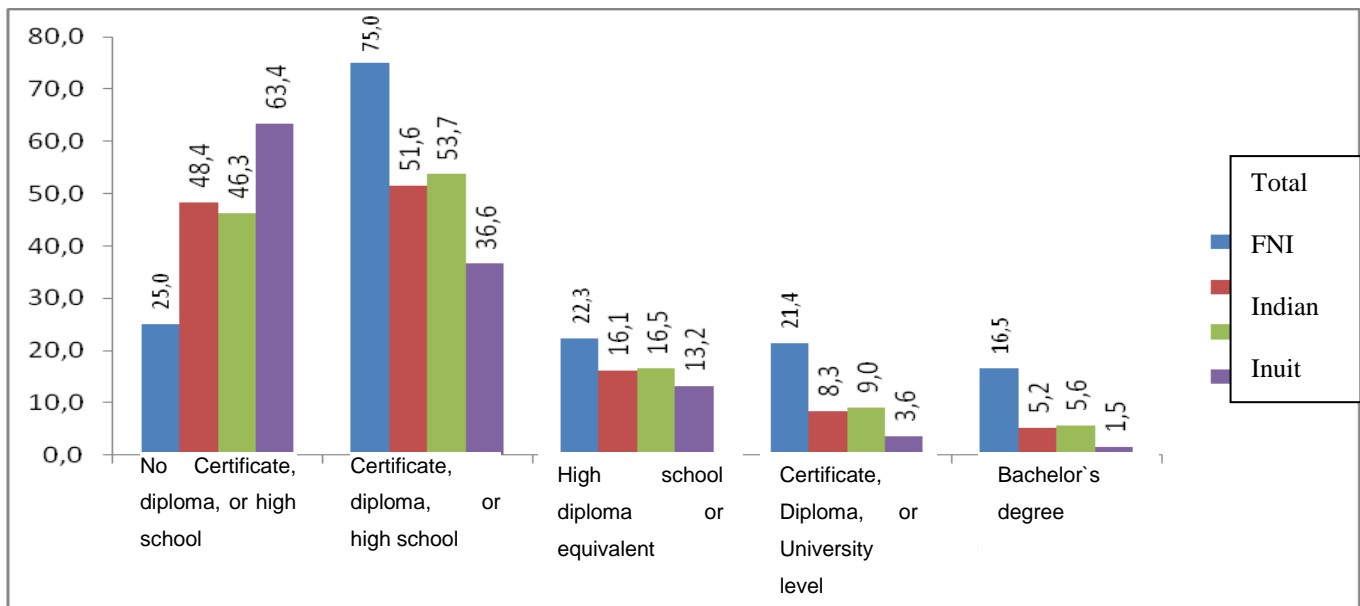
Whether it consists of a First Nations or Inuit man or woman, the difference between the indicators for FNI persons and those of the total general population are almost always to the disadvantage for FNI persons. And these differences are even more unfavourable to the FNI men than the FNI women.

For FNI women, the gap in the employment rate compared to that of the men is lower than that observed for the total population. Thus, the gap, which is 2.0 percentage points between the female employment rate (49.3%) and the male employment rate (52.2%), is narrower than that observed for the total general population, at 9.7 percentage points. The male employment rate in Quebec was estimated at 65.4% in 2006 and that of women was 55.7%.



Figure 6

Distribution of the population of FNI, Indian, Inuit and the general population by level of education, Québec, 2006

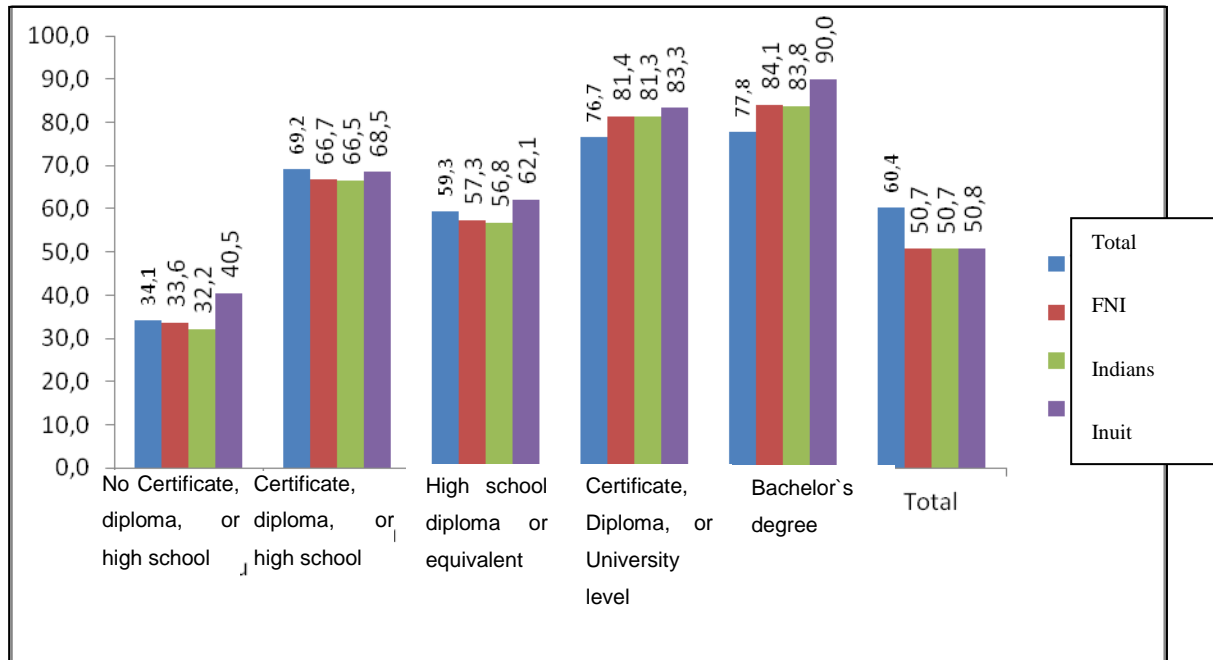


More present among the low education levels, FNI people start off disadvantaged on the labour market. Whether or not they hold a diploma, they less often have a job. First Nations and Inuit people are more likely to be employed if they have a university diploma than the total university graduates in Quebec but, at the same time, they are more affected by unemployment. Very few FNI persons obtain a university diploma (8.3% in comparison to the general population 21.4%).



Figure 7

FNI employment rate, Indians and Inuit and the population as a whole according to the education level, Quebec, 2006

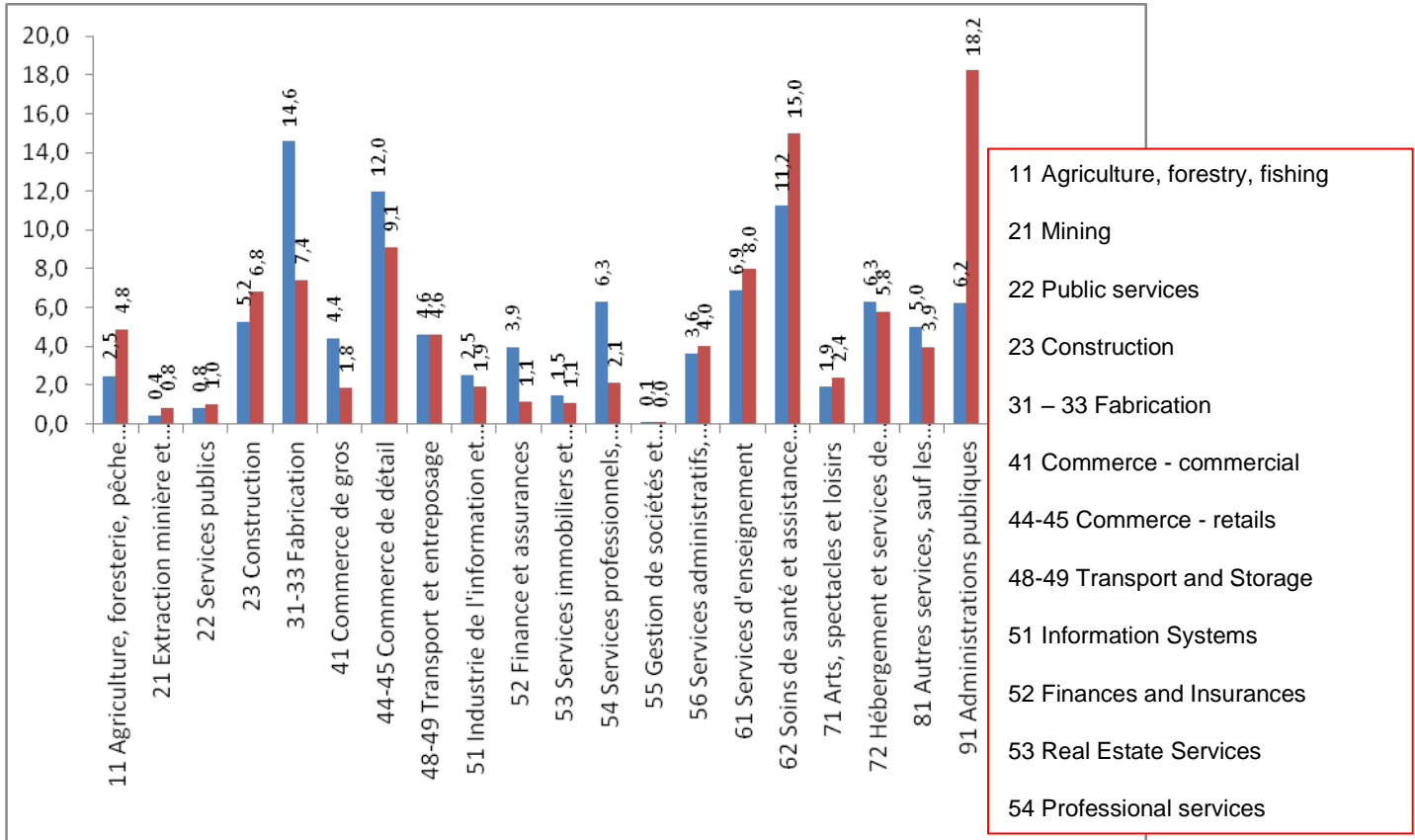


A very high proportion of FNI people, nearly half (48.4%) of the population of 15 years of age or older, do not hold a diploma and these persons have very few opportunities to access employment (employment rate of 33.6%). By obtaining a secondary school diploma or the equivalent and higher, the employment rate doubles (66.7%), but only half the FNI persons (51.6%) hold one. Indians (53.7%) and even more the Inuit (36.6%) are limited in their access to the labour market or to other levels of education, few having reached the graduation level.



Figure 8

Distribution of the population of FNI, Indian, Inuit and the general population by sector of economic activity, Quebec, 2006

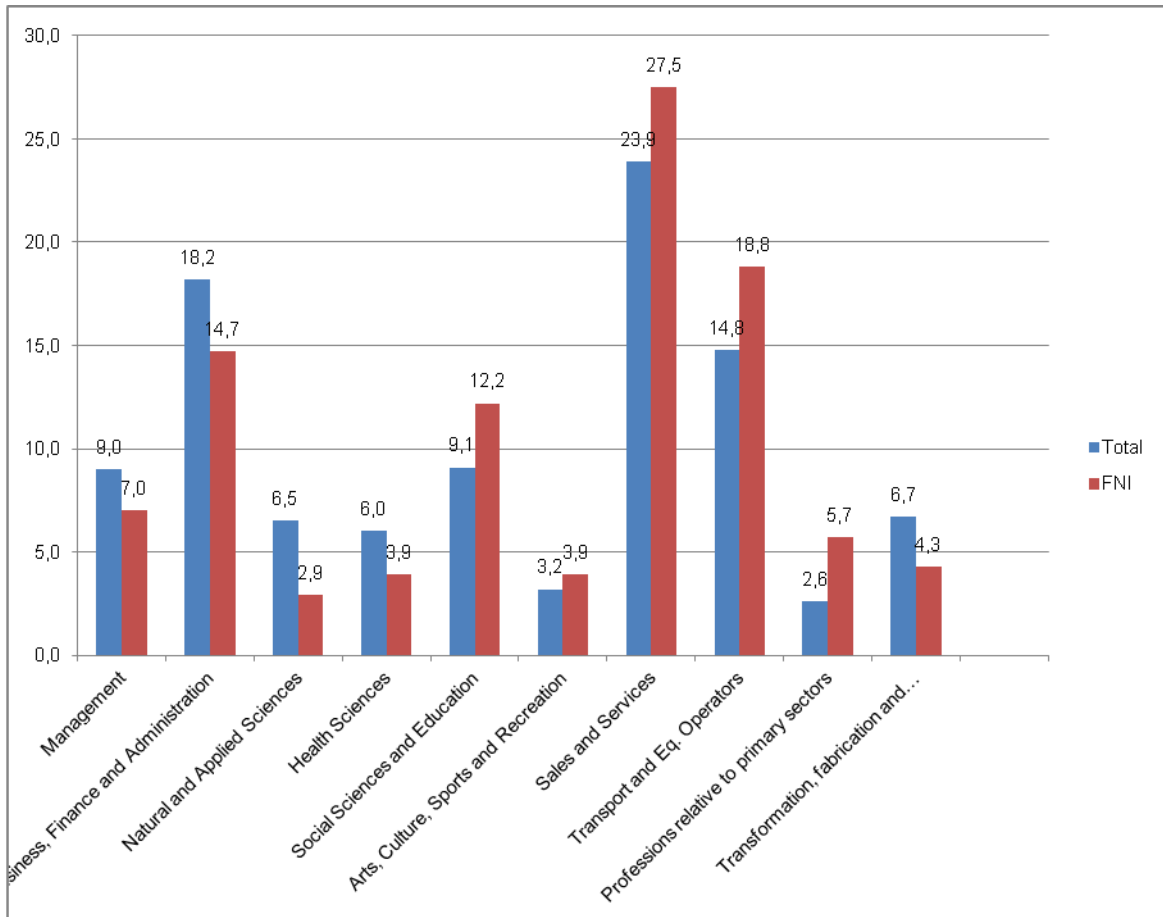


The 31,575 FNI persons employed in 2006 were mainly found in the four major sectors of the economy, namely public administration (18.2% compared to 6.2% for the total employed Quebec population), health care and social assistance (15% compared to 11.2%), retail trade (9.1% compared to 12%) and educational services (8% compared to 6.9%). These four major service sectors therefore include more than half the employed FNI persons (50.3%) while for the general population, the equivalent portion is slightly less than one-third (36.3%).



Figure 9

Population distribution of FNI, Indian, Inuit and the general population by occupational group, Quebec, 2006



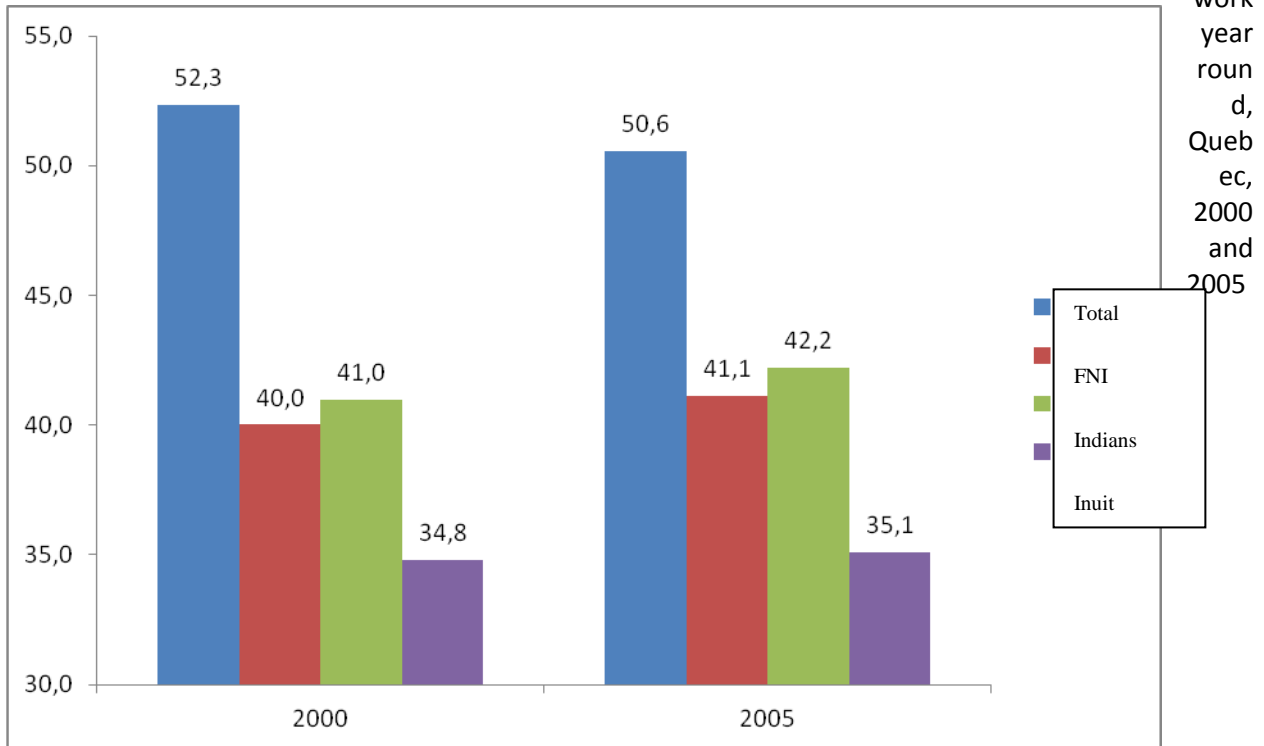
Two occupational groups dominate the FNI employment structure, both for Indians and the Inuit: they include sales and services which compose more than a quarter of the jobs held by FNI persons (27.5%), a higher proportion than that of the total employed population (23.9%). The occupational group, ranking second, includes jobs related to trades, transportation and equipment operators (18%), and a proportion exceeding that of the total general population (14.8%).

But FNI persons are relatively less present in jobs related to business, finance and administration (14.7% compared to 18%) and management (7% compared to 9%). Occupations in health, natural and applied sciences and in processing are other examples of occupational groups where FNI persons hold a lower proportion of jobs than that observed in the employment structure of the total general population.



Figure 10

Distribution of FNI, Indian, Inuit population and the general population according to the share of full-time work year round, Quebec, 2000 and 2005



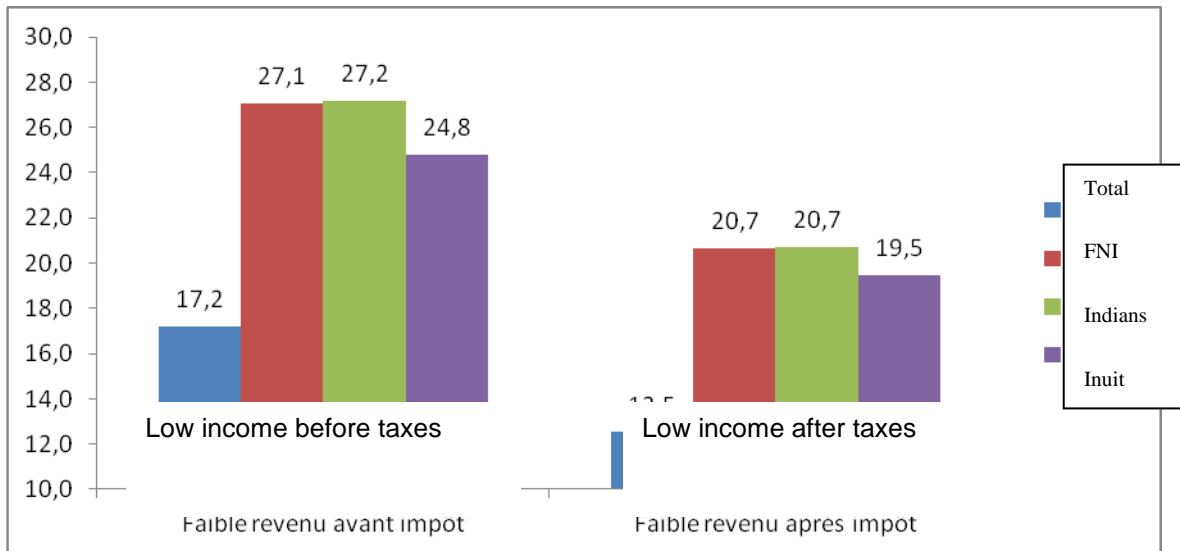
A smaller portion of FNI workers (41.1% in 2005 or 14,695 FNI persons out of 35,725) held year-round full-time employment. This portion was lower for the Inuit (35.2%) than that for Indians (42.2%). Overall, the average employment income of Indians (\$24,305) and of the Inuit (\$24,441) represents three-quarters of the average income of the total general population (\$32,639).

Between 2000 and 2005, the portion of persons working full-time year-round increased by one percentage point for FNI persons, from 40% to 41.1%. The opposite phenomenon occurred among the total general population (from 52.3% in 2000 to 50.6% in 2005).



Figure 11

Distribution (%) of the population of FN, Indian, Inuit and the general population according to the incidence of low income before and after tax, Quebec, 2005



Nearly one in five (20.7%, Figure 11) of FNI persons is considered poor or low-income. This proportion exceeds that of the total general population (12.5%) by eight percentage points. The incidence of poverty is slightly higher for Indians (20.7%) than for the Inuit. Income taxes have a more significant redistributive effect for FNI persons than for the total general population. The low-income rate drops by 4.7 percentage points before and after tax for the total population (from 17.2% to 12.5%) while the decrease exceeds 6 percentage points for FNI people, which is 6.5 points for Indians (from 27.2% to 20.7%) and 5.3 points for the Inuit (from 24.8% to 19.5%).

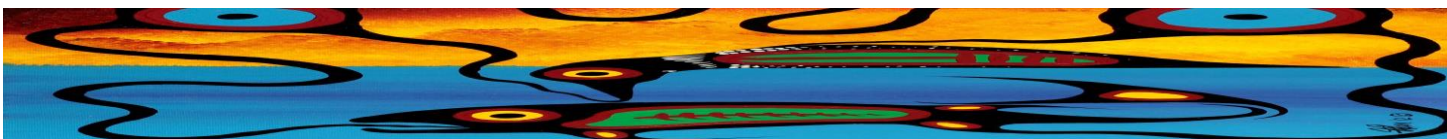
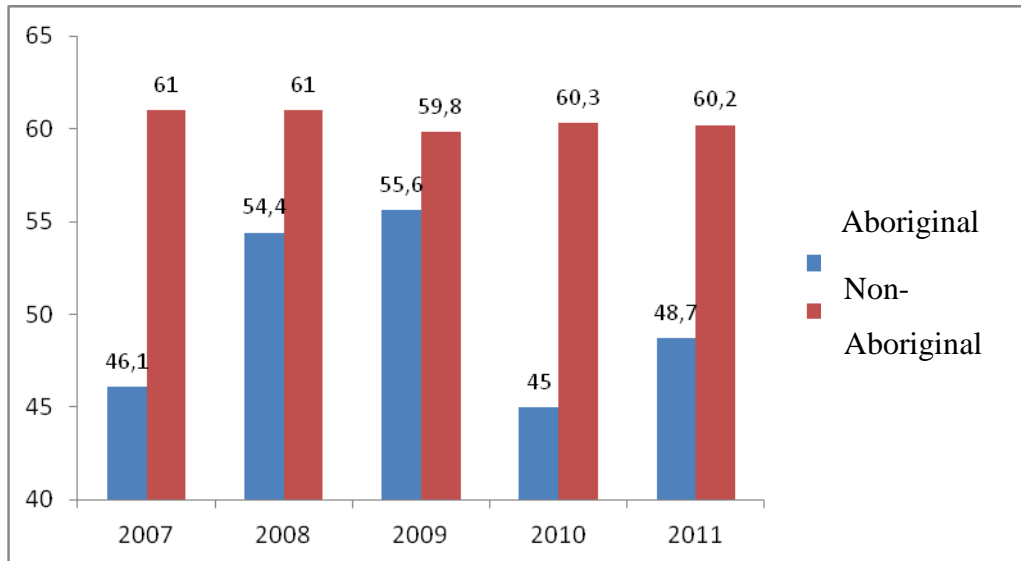


Figure 12

Employment rate by Aboriginal identity, Quebec, 2007 to 2011



The recession of 2009 had a greater effect on the Aboriginal population and this is reflected in job losses in 2010, which were not all recovered in 2011. As illustrated in the chart, the employment rate (45%) decreased in 2010 and only just returned to its level of five years ago. The participation rate also reflected a more difficult participation in the labour market, a decrease of nearly 10 percentage points occurred in this rate between 2009 (62.2%) and 2010 (53.2%).

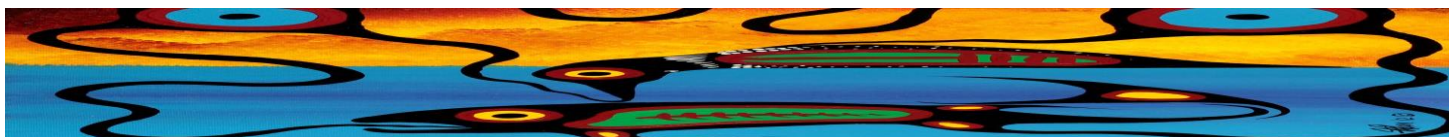
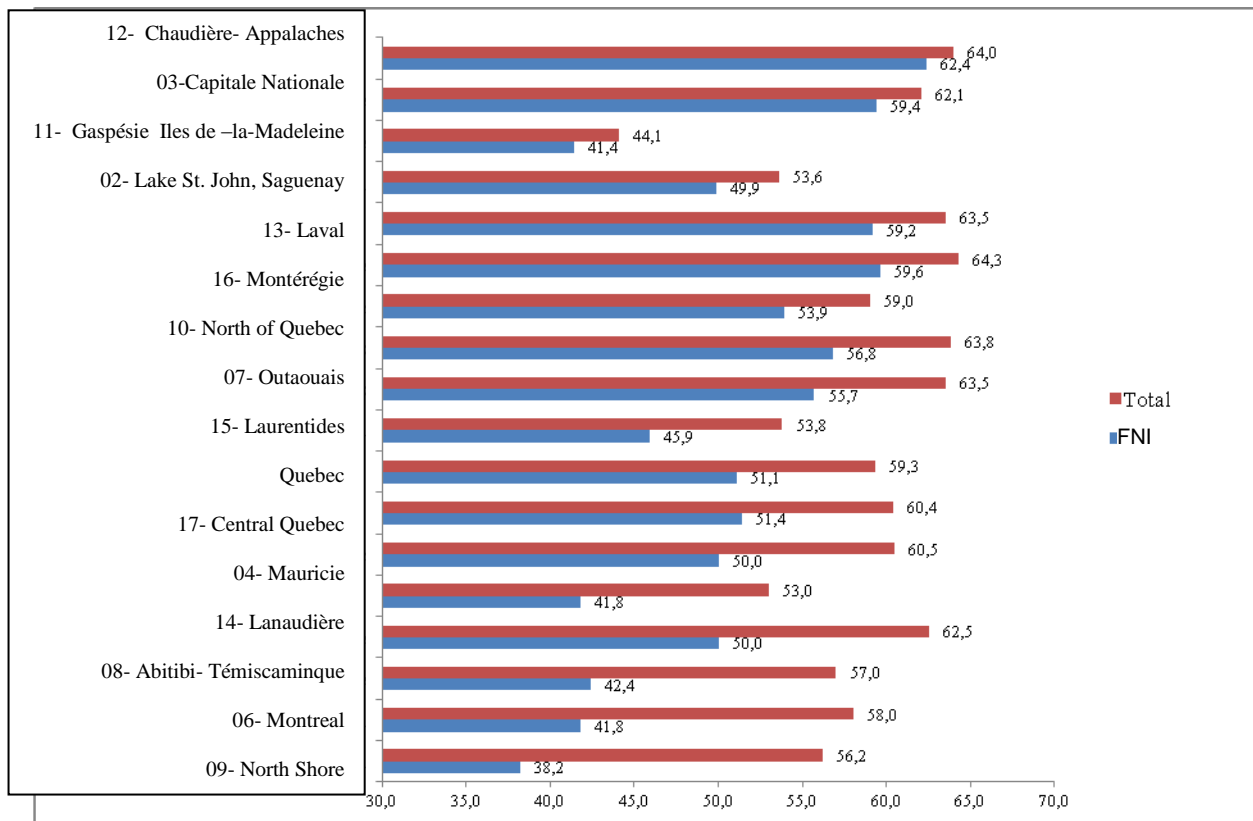


Figure 13

Ranking of regions according to the gap in employment rates between Aboriginal people and the overall population, Quebec, 2006



An examination of the regional labour markets leads to the conclusion that, in all 17 administrative regions, the Aboriginal employment rate is lower than that of the total general population and the unemployment rate is higher. In certain regions, such as the Côte-Nord (18 percentage points), Montreal (16.2 percentage points) and Abitibi-Témiscamingue (14.6 percentage points), the gap between the Aboriginal employment rate and that of the total general population is the highest in Quebec. It is also on the Côte-Nord that the largest gap exists between the Aboriginal unemployment rate (29%) and that of the total general population (12%), which is 17 percentage points.



4.1 Findings Derived from the Analysis of Statistical Data

The gaps between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals for the key labour market indicators are significant.

4.1.1 The differences are observed mainly in relation to education, location and availability of jobs on the territories, language, income, type of jobs held (sectors, occupations and duration).

4.1.2 Build on education and school attendance, fight against school dropout; intensify on-the-job training and the availability of workplace internships.

4.1.3 Raise awareness about FNI realities among the employers and population in each region; encourage employers to hire these workers and examine the possibility of including Aboriginals in the Equal Access to Employment programs and of enhancing the existing programs.

4.1.4 First Nations and Inuit people on the labour market in Quebec must cope with a number of disadvantages and barriers when they enter the labour market and wish to access employment. Access to employment, regardless of whether or not high skills are required, as well as job retention on the labour market were analyzed within this study and have been examined from several angles.

4.1.5 The FNI population has been growing rapidly for several years, causing additional challenges in regards to their labour market integration. This rapid population growth has an effect on the demand for governmental services, such as education, health, social services, work, to which the adjustment of the supply is slow and difficult.

4.1.6 Another challenge involves that of low education which is associated to high dropout rates and low graduation rates. Only a small portion of even the younger FNI generations (15 to 44 years of age) obtain a secondary school diploma and few join the university ranks. Accumulated years of lagging in this respect and the efforts made to reduce this gap in education illustrate the magnitude of the task needed to improve the skills of FNI persons who wish to access more skilled jobs.

4.1.7 Changing trends in the labour market, both from 2001 to 2006 and from 2007 to 2011, indicate that the situation is slow in improving for FNI people and increased resources will be required to reduce the gaps in labour market participation and to improve the potential and use of this rapidly growing workforce.

4.1.8 FNI people are faced with other barriers. Language barriers can be significant when it involves holding a position that requires French or improving one's skills in this language. The location of FNI people may also impose serious limits on their participation in the labour market. The scarcity of available jobs in many northern communities and the weak local employment structures in many



Aboriginal territories or reserves, often located far from the larger urban centres, require greater territorial mobility to break out from underemployment and unemployment.

4.1.9 Some regions and communities of Quebec are faced with more significant gaps in labour market indicators regarding the FNI population and the general population. These gaps require more sustained efforts in terms of intervention. Based on the detailed portrait that was produced for three regions of Quebec where a large portion of the FNI population is concentrated, it was possible to illustrate the significant intercommunity gaps, which by the same fact, reflects that use of the local workforce is far from optimum. The high unemployment rates and low employment rates that co-exist provide an idea of the magnitude of the gaps to be filled.

4.1.10 A strategy that aims to correct this situation should include focus areas pertaining to training and employment integration as part of a comprehensive approach to resolve issues related to social and economic underdevelopment.

4.1.11 The development of FNI human capital will also have to take three components into account, namely first, the bridging of the accumulated historical lag, secondly the rectification of the current situation in many communities, and thirdly, the response to future needs relating to the rapidly expanding population.

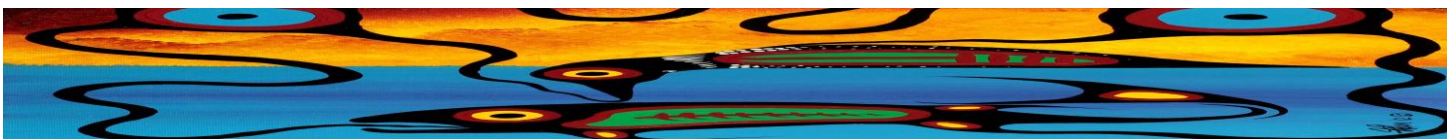
4.1.12 The FNI youth, of which a high proportion dropout out of school and do not complete their secondary studies, are more unemployed and have a lower employment rate than the general youth population of Quebec. They will have to overcome significant barriers in order to return to school or to integrate the labour market. The low levels of work experience and insufficient skills limit them in their integration and employment process. To remedy this problem experienced by the youth, encouragement towards staying in school, attending college and university, becomes part of the solution along with the development of innovative ways to promote the implementation of workplace internships and on-the-job training activities.

4.1.13 The demand for workers by employers often meets with an unskilled workforce and in limited numbers when it involves filling more skilled positions. These limited pools require greater openness in order to resolve the difficulties related to the hiring and promotion of FNI persons. Various incentives and means could be implemented to support the awareness of employers and workers' federations in order to secure their collaboration and ensure better integration and use of the FNI potential. An expansion or enhancement of the Equal Access to Employment programs may also support this disadvantaged group.

4.1.14 As the gaps observed in the various labour market indicators are quite significant, the ministerial strategy for the socio-professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people could also include realistic objectives with regard to reducing these gaps within a reasonable period of time.



4.1.15 To ensure that the desired results are achieved, the implementation of enhanced follow-up and reporting mechanisms should be part of a ministerial strategy. The development of a system to project the needs in terms of the Aboriginal workforce and the analysis of information drawn from various surveys and censuses such as the information already accessible through administrative records could complete the tools that must be developed to support the implementation of the strategy.



5. Current Employment Services

This section describes the various employment interventions carried out by Service Canada, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the four jurisdictional groups that hold agreements for employment services.

5.1 Emploi-Québec Interventions

This section describes the various interventions of the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* and *Emploi-Québec* for Aboriginals. *Emploi-Québec* considers that its action must be complementary only to the federal agreements signed with the jurisdictional groups, with the exception of those already covered by an agreement.

In March 2004, the Inuit signed the “Sivunirmut” Agreement with the Quebec government under which *Emploi-Québec* delegates the Kativik Regional Government the responsibility of managing and delivering employment measures and services including apprenticeship, trade and occupation certification programs. The annual amount allocated to the KRG under this agreement is \$1.4 million. In addition, an annual amount of \$620,000 is also granted for the implementation of services for youth between ages 16 and 35. Annual indexing is included based on a formula set forth in the Agreement as well as the reopening of the Agreement every five years until its expiry in 2027.

In 2002, the Cree Nation signed the Agreement Concerning a New Relationship between the Government of Quebec and the Crees of Quebec, commonly called the “Peace of the Braves” which gives them, for a 50-year period, certain responsibilities related to economic and community development; responsibilities that were granted to the Quebec government through the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. This means that *Emploi-Québec*, during that time period, does not have to assume the responsibility of providing the Cree Nation specific training programs and hiring and placement services. It is to be noted that Quebec, upon the signing of the Agreement, committed to paying an annual amount of \$70 million, indexed according to a formula set forth in the Agreement.

In 2009, the Naskapi, for their part, signed the Partnership Agreement on Economic and Community Development, under which an amount of \$7 million, indexed according to a formula set forth in the Agreement, is paid to them by the Quebec government on an annual basis until 2034. The Agreement also provides that *Quebec will maintain for the Naskapi beneficiaries, access to regular programs, subject to usual application criteria of these programs.*

The first two agreements stem from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975). The last agreement stems from the North-Eastern Quebec Agreement (1978).



5.1.1 Emploi-Québec Guidelines Regarding Services to Aboriginal People

While taking into consideration the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (Cree and Inuit), the North-Eastern Quebec Agreement (Naskapi) as well as the First Nations that are not covered by an agreement and fall under the federal jurisdiction, *Emploi-Québec* established the following guidelines with regard to services to Aboriginal people:

- *Emploi-Québec* is supportive of Aboriginal people;
- However, the responsibility primarily rests with the federal government (Article 91(24) of the Constitution Act of 1867);
- *Emploi-Québec* takes complementary action and avoids duplication of funding;
- The decision to intervene rests with the local provincial structures.

In this context, here are a few commitments of the MESS that contribute to improving the conditions of Aboriginals in terms of employment, workforce development and social solidarity.

5.1.2 Actions Taken with Regard to Employment and Workforce Development, Committees

- *Emploi-Québec* participates in a working committee on labour market information (LMI) as well as in a working committee with the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec in order to provide follow-up on the commitments of the Mashteuiatsh Forum regarding public employment services.
- At the request of the Aboriginal Nations of Quebec, a **First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee** was established by the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* at the end of 2009. The funding granted to the Committee is \$90,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013.

5.1.3 Agreements

It should be noted that these agreements are primarily intended for Aboriginals living off-reserve or outside the community. However, these services may be provided to Aboriginals living on-reserve if they are eligible for employment insurance or are EI recipients.

- *Emploi-Québec*, as a partner of the federal government's Urban Strategy, renewed an agreement with the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec as part of the "Employment-Assistance Services" measure for a three-year period (in effect since June 2010). In comparison with the previous agreement, the funding increased from \$1,332,000 to \$1,846,500, or \$615,000 per year. It includes funding for the follow-up agents of the Urban Service Centres of Montreal, Quebec, Val-d'Or and Sept-Îles, even if the latter has not yet received funding from the federal government.



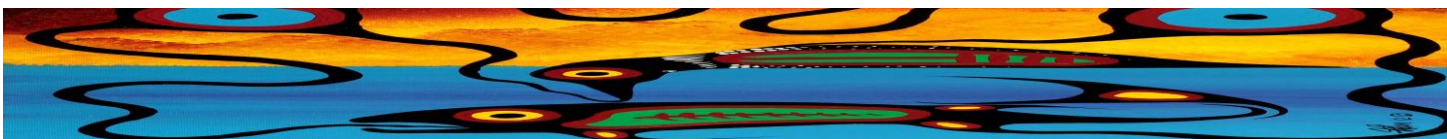
- *Emploi-Québec* signed an agreement with the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec for \$44,147 for fiscal year 2012-2013, for the purpose of hiring an employability development officer at the Val-d'Or Urban Service Centre (Abitibi-Temiscamingue), again within the framework of the federal Urban Strategy.
- As a part of the measure *Jeunes en action* (during their socio-professional integration process, support is provided to youth who are removed from the labour market), a coordination agreement was signed with the *Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones* as well as five MOU with the Native Friendship Centres of Val-d'Or (the agreement includes service to clients of the Senneterre Native Friendship Centre since April 2011), La Tuque, Quebec, Sept-Îles and Saguenay (Chicoutimi).
- Since 2008, *Emploi-Québec* has been signing an annual agreement of \$55,000 with the Kativik Regional Government for the purpose of hiring an employability development agent for its Inuit clientele in urban areas. The Verdun *Emploi-Québec* office houses this agent.

5.1.4 **Emploi-Québec Complementary Interventions for Aboriginal People**

- For the past several years (each fall), the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec has been calling on *Emploi-Québec* when the federal funding for the Urban Strategy becomes exhausted. *Emploi-Québec* then accepts to take over by welcoming urban clients who are referred to its services by the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec, under certain conditions related to the budget capacity of the local employment centres concerned.
- In 2010-2011, *Emploi-Québec* disbursed \$6.7 million for services provided to Aboriginal persons and businesses.

5.1.5 **In Relation to the Development of Northern Regions**

- *Emploi-Québec* signed an agreement with the Cree Nation to fund a major project allowing 418 Cree persons to benefit from vocational and technical training in identified trades. In total, *Emploi-Québec* agreed to grant \$6.2 million as partner in a project evaluated at \$42 million; the remaining \$35.8 million being funded by the Cree, private businesses and the government of Canada. The project, launched in January 2010, ended on March 31, 2013.
- *Emploi-Québec* also contributed to a major project to support the hiring and training of 310 Inuit employees at the Xstrata Raglan Mine (*Emploi-Québec's* contribution aimed 170 persons). As negotiated with the Kativik Regional Government, *Emploi-Québec* agreed to contribute up to a maximum of \$2.8 million for this \$30 million project, about 10%.
- In view of having closer links with Aboriginal people, *Emploi-Québec* will be hiring Aboriginal resources to intervene with First Nations and Inuit people. These additional resources will intervene in a special manner with Aboriginal clients.
- Seven persons will be called on to represent the First Nations and the Inuit in the *Groupe des partenaires Emploi – Plan Nord* established by the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*.



5.1.6 In Relation to Social Solidarity

In the wake of the First Nations Socioeconomic Forum held in 2006, the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada signed, in July 2010, the "Framework Agreement for Improving the Administration and Delivery of Income Assistance for First Nation Communities in Quebec". A tripartite working committee is in charge of proposing solutions to the various issues raised.

Several measures of the Quebec government's Action Plan for Solidarity and Social Inclusion are specifically intended for Aboriginals. Two of these measures are under the responsibility of the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*:

1. The *Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales* supports the development of solidarity alliances in Aboriginal communities: \$3.3 million were made available for the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission, \$1.6 million for the Kativik Regional Government and \$1.7 million for the Cree Regional Authority.

Within the national budget of the *Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales*, an amount of \$102,000 was allocated to the *Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec* to adequately document the different courses of life and to further examine the problems experienced by Aboriginals.

2. The First Nations and the Inuit are members of the *Groupe des partenaires pour la solidarité*.

5.2 Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) Interventions

Service Canada

The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) was implemented on April 1, 2009 to foster Aboriginal labour market integration. Under the AHRDS, Canada provides financial assistance to Aboriginal organizations to fund the costs of human resource development programs that are designed and adapted to their respective clienteles since 1999:

- skills development programs to help Aboriginal people to obtain meaningful and sustainable employment;
- special programs to assist Aboriginal youth to make successful transitions from school to work or to support their return to school;
- Child care programs, etc...

In fact, the AHRDS serves as a platform to provide a wide range of support measures and programs relating to the labour market, including the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICC), the



Youth Employment Strategy, the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities and the programs provided through Part II of the Employment Insurance Act such as the Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSM) programs.

Since its implementation in 1999, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) (ASETS) holders have been able to design programs facilitating client access to culturally-adapted employment programs and services as well as important support services such as child care services. Thus, the Strategy has helped First Nations and Inuit men and women to prepare for the labour market, to find a job and to maintain it.

The ASETS agreement holders are of the opinion that the AHRDS adequately meets the employment-related needs of Aboriginal people through the implementation of flexible programs and services that take cultural differences into account.

In addition, the ASETS agreement holders say that many of their interventions with clients are not funded such as counselling and numerous “informal” services are not captured in the administrative data and thus are not funded by HRSDC/Service Canada such as employment referrals.

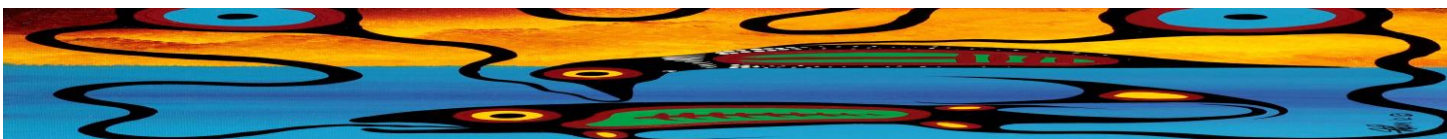
5.2.1 Organizational Capacity

Under the AHRDS, the ASETS agreement holders implement many activities related to organizational capacity building and planning. They mainly consist of workshops and staff training, regular staff meetings and off-site courses and meetings. However, the allocated funding is clearly insufficient. In addition, information technology, the creation and updating of databases as well as staff turnover are a few of the main challenges faced by the ASETS agreement holders and which may have an influence on skills development. Moreover, it is not uncommon that trained employees leave to join other employers of the public and private sectors who offer higher wages.

The ASETS agreement holders believe that the development of organizational capacity is crucial and requires continuous intervention if the delivery of services and management of activities are to be improved and strengthened in order to achieve meaningful results.

5.2.2 Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Youth, persons with disabilities and women face various barriers with regard to the labour market. In general, the majority of ASETS agreement holders provide specific programs for the youth. However, most of them do not provide any programs specifically intended for women or persons with disabilities, and when programs do exist, they are very limited in scope. These two groups therefore receive services through the regular programs.



5.2.3 First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI)

The primary objective of the FNICCI program is to provide child care services to First Nations and Inuit parents in order to allow them to participate in training programs or to access a job. In addition, the FNICCI supports the harmonious development of children through a holistic approach based on quality, accessible and affordable child care services.

Daycare centres have a significant impact in Aboriginal communities: positive effects on the psychosocial development of children, access to regular and healthy meals, harmonious transition to school and maintenance of language and culture. In addition, the development of self-confidence, the positive socialization for the children and the important role that continues to be given to health are other notable successes.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the child care services also receive funding from other sources, the current level of funding limits the number of children that can be accommodated by the centres. This is all the more true for Aboriginals who live off-reserve and/or in urban areas.

5.2.4 Partnerships

In the past, there was little interest in the establishment of partnerships with businesses and industries under the programs provided by the AHRDS. Employers rarely participated in the design of training programs, nor would they let the ASETS agreement holders know of their needs in terms of human resources. In addition, the directors of secondary schools and the income support programs had no link with the ASETS agreement holders, and thus, the coordination of client needs with learning and employment opportunities was lacking.

But over time, the ASETS agreement holders implemented a wide range of successful partnership initiatives and complementary program activities. They were able to forge links with the various levels of government and with educational organizations and training institutions. There are also partnerships with employers who participate in wage subsidy programs. In almost all cases, the ASETS agreement holders have developed strong and effective links with community groups and the public administration sectors of their communities.

The great success of the “Workforce Connex” event held in Val-d’Or in May 2007 must be mentioned here. This two-day symposium attended by key labour market stakeholders, from both the public and private sectors, unions, social economy enterprises and Aboriginal employment organizations was an innovative initiative designed to create and strengthen fruitful and lasting partnerships.

Today, the ASETS agreement holders have become references for the development of Aboriginal human resources. However, a limited number of signatories have established formal partnership agreements due to limited room for financial maneuver and because all the resources are devoted to providing



services to clients. In fact, the ability of the ASETS agreement holders to take advantage of industry-related opportunities would be greater if it were not for the daily budgetary pressures and local priorities. Geographical isolation also represents an obstacle in the establishment of partnerships.

5.2.5 AHRDS Evaluation

According to evaluations conducted by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), it appears that the programs mainly used are “Skills Development” and “Employment-Assistance Services” and that when the majority of interventions are completed, one-third of the clients access a job.

A literature review of these evaluations shows that the main lessons learned and best practices include:

- importance of completing secondary studies and implementing programs for the prevention of school dropout as well as for the transition from school to the workplace;
- consolidation and integration of services within the community, including the integration of social-assistance, employment and training services;
- vocational training programs have mixed results if they do not address the social and structural barriers facing Aboriginal people. Longer-term programs to develop knowledge and skills and to provide additional support, especially with regard to housing, are also needed;
- importance of support measures in terms of child care;
- ensure that programs meet the needs of urban Aboriginal people, including single-window service delivery as well as other programs and support measures;
- ensure community development and active participation of the community in the design and development of labour market programs for Aboriginal people;
- implementation of an effective case management system for social welfare recipients, requiring the integration of the delivery of available programs and services.

5.2.6 Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)

The AHRDS was to end on March 31, 2009 but was extended until September 30, 2010. It was replaced by a new strategy that allowed ASETS agreement holders to continue the work undertaken with their clients.

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) was implemented on October 1st, 2010. While allowing Aboriginal organizations to provide the same type of employment programs, the ASETS focuses on three strategic pillars: demand-driven skills development, partnerships, and accountability for improved results. Under the ASETS, the Aboriginal agreement holders conduct a labour market analysis through a strategic planning process and determine the programs and services to provide to meet the labour demand.

In the way it is designed, the ASETS strongly promotes partnerships and the financial contribution of partners. Strategic business plans identify potential partnerships and cost-sharing arrangements with



the private sector and governmental, municipal, educational and public organizations in order to maximize as much as possible the investments in the development of Aboriginal human capital. These plans also describe how the programs and services take into account the specific difficulties of women, youth and persons with disabilities who face multiple employment barriers.

The ASETS insists on the fact that the development of skills should be in line with the labour market demand. The ASETS agreement holders are strongly encouraged to determine types of training according to higher-paying jobs, improvement of career opportunities and decreased reliance on income support. Finally, given the important role it plays as a support measure for Aboriginal men and women on the labour market, the continued support in the area of child care is an important basis for the ASETS.

The new Strategy therefore allows applying innovating solutions in sectors that need improvement: the aim is to better harmonize the priorities of the Aboriginal communities with those of the federal and provincial governments; strengthen the link between skills development and employment as to improve access to economic development opportunities; improve the partnerships with the public and private sectors; support the infrastructure of case-management systems and the reporting of performance-related data.

Source: Service Canada



6. Analysis of the Current Employment Services

There is increasingly less flexibility in the management of federal agreements, even for Nations covered by agreements. The ASETS led Aboriginal organizations to take greater responsibility in terms of strategic planning, partnership development and accountability; however, it provides the same level of funding as the AHRDS of 1999. Given the increase in the cost of living and the growing demographic needs of the clients, it becomes imperative to consolidate other funding sources and to develop strategies that place greater reliance on the expertise of labour market partners. Together, it is urgent to establish winning conditions to foster labour market integration of Aboriginal people, especially for the youth.

The employment and training programs for urban clients are limited, especially for the Inuit who in spite of continuous requests to the federal government, receive no specific funding for their urban clients. Even if *Emploi-Québec* funds a position in the urban area, it does not grant any specific funding for integration programs for urban Inuit clients. The ASETS does not offer services that are equivalent to the *Emploi-Québec* programs and services that are provided to the general population.

It is very difficult to obtain funding for employability organizations that would offer social reintegration services. The existing organizations receive recurrent funding but do not serve Aboriginal clients or do so on an intermittent basis and in an inadequate manner. There are gaps between the provision of services offered by the public administration sector to the general population and the provision of services offered to Aboriginal people.

Although in general, the programs and services help Aboriginal participants to gain work-related skills, abilities and self-confidence, there are still many areas to be improved, such as the need to increase partnerships with the private sector and the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* and to ensure that employment programs are aligned with economic opportunities. Nevertheless, in all the regions of Quebec, ASETS holders have established structures for the delivery of programs and services including a network of service points that are supported in their operations by a regional office that provides expertise and advice.

Accessing vocational training or acquiring skills remain difficult for Aboriginal people. In Quebec, the *MESS* and its agency, *Emploi-Québec*, are key leaders in the area of skills development and in linking workers with employers. However, the departmental position with regard to services for Aboriginals is that they are under the jurisdiction of the federal government and, therefore, the province does not have to compensate for the role that should be played by federal government authorities with regard to Aboriginal people.

A common vision must be established with regard to the contribution of the Quebec public network towards Aboriginal people; a general policy on the participation of Aboriginal people in Quebec's economy. Eventually, criteria and regulatory measures would have to be established to guide the actions of the governmental departments regarding services to Aboriginal people.



7. Best Practices in the Area of Employment and Training

Access to vocational training and skills development as well as job retention, remain difficult for Aboriginals. However, some initiatives put forward in certain regions are worth mentioning.

7.1 Enterprise-Based Training and Use of the WAP (Workplace Apprenticeship Program)

Workplace training is becoming more associated to the learning modes of the First Nations and Inuit people, which is that of “hands-on learning”. For example, learning programs using this approach with the Inuit workforce, through Emploi-Québec, are currently providing interesting results and it would be beneficial to ensure further support to these programs.

These programs are offered for various trades, such as apprentice miners. They are very well-designed and are used for persons who do not have the prerequisites to enrol in vocational and technical training programs.

It is to be noted, however, that it is difficult to involve the private sector due to a lack of knowledge about the medium-term benefits that can be drawn from them. Yet, a study conducted by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) shows that for every dollar invested in apprenticeships provides a return on investments of \$0.38.

The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) developed for the Sanajitt (construction trades), apprenticeship booklets similar to those of the Emploi-Québec program. One of the components of the Tamatumani project, to which the KRG is closely associated, promotes the use of the WAP as much as possible. One of the keys of success is the establishment of partnerships with employers, such as the mining companies.

Enterprise-based training remains the preferred channel for First Nations in order to allow the largest possible number of citizens to take part in the economic activities of Quebec.

Though the fact is established in First Nations and Inuit communities, all will agree that a strategy of this magnitude requires a strong commitment from the private sector as well as from governments. The involvement of stakeholders such as regional councils of labour market partners remains essential to the success of such an initiative.

These stakeholders have the authorities and legitimacy to be able to ensure the establishment of conditions for success in their respective regions, minimum conditions that will allow the implementation of such an initiative.

There would then have to be some reflection on the optimal use that can be derived from various types of programs, which could support such an approach. Imagine enterprise-based training projects, funded in partnerships, by funding from the MELS, MESS and Emploi-Québec for apprenticeship, by funding from businesses through the 1% Rule, employability programs under First Nations and Inuit authority, etc.

The creation of sectorial funds dedicated to the skills development of the First Nations and Inuit population could also allow greater support from large enterprise.



7.2 Adapted Essential Skills for Inuit Clients Removed from the Labour Market

The KRG has established the Ivirtivik project in Verdun in the Montreal area. The project uses the essential skills programs and an amalgam of other programs, with a duration extending beyond one year, in order to reach the urban Inuit clients who are very far-removed from the labour market. Collaborative efforts with the *Regroupement québécois des organismes pour le développement de l'employabilité (RQODE)* have been established. A similar project has also been implemented by the *Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones (RCAAQ)* in Val-d'Or as well as by the First Nation Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ) in Montreal.

Regarding the development and upgrading of skills, the initiatives are recent for First Nations and Inuit clients. We believe, however, that this approach for clients who are removed from the labour market, is a very interesting and priority avenue in the area of First Nations and Inuit workforce skills development and especially if we are able to count on a strong commitment from Quebec businesses to initiate a process for the inclusion of First Nations and Inuit people in the Quebec labour market. This measure should however be linked with a workplace training component to ensure that the necessary skills are acquired by the First Nations and Inuit workforce in collaboration with the interested employers.

7.3 Work-Study Programs

A few work-study programs have been implemented, including a daycare workers program in Nunavik. This Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS) has allowed the creation of 240 jobs for women in Nunavik within the 10 past years.

In addition, given the fact that work-study programs and workplace training systems are learning modes favoured by our citizens, businesses could benefit from these meet their needs.

7.4 Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi (Youth Employment Services)

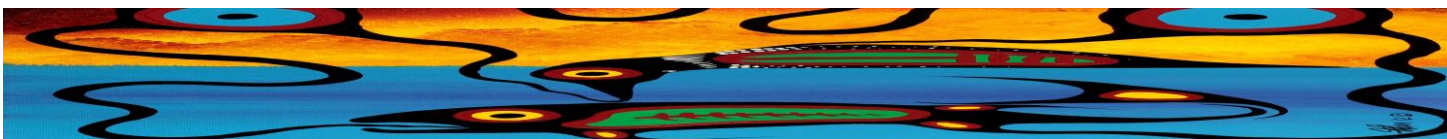
Even if this service was difficult to implement, it proves to be successful because it allows reaching the youth. The KRG has extensive flexibility in implementing the service and this allows realizing innovative projects.

7.5 Purchase of Training Program Places

ABORIGINAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

This training program was offered by the *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue* and 7 places out of a total of 23 were purchased. The *Development des Ressources humaines Abitibiwinni-Kitcisakik (DRHAK)* integrated 3 participants from the community of Abitibiwinni and 4 participants from the community of Kitcisakik.

The Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS) program in Aboriginal Early Childhood Education combines the skills identified and determined within a workshop related to the analysis of the work situation of Aboriginal early childhood educators. The program was then validated with workplace representatives, Aboriginal organizations, cegeps and the *Office des services de garde à l'enfance du Québec*. A diploma recognized by the *ministère de l'Éducation* confirms successful completion of the program.



SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ABORIGINAL CONTEXTS

This training program, offered by the *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, allowed the purchase of 2 places out of a total of 14. The Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS) program in Special Education in Aboriginal contexts is based on a curriculum developed for adult clients wishing to return to school. It is designed according to the needs and realities of the local/regional labour market. It also aims the acquisition of skills related to specific work functions. A diploma recognized by the *ministère de l'Éducation* confirms successful completion of the program.

In addition, the Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS) formula allows adaptations that foster higher learning for Aboriginal clients. Therefore, this program will be developed according to the needs of the communities and will be adapted for young Aboriginal adults.

The partnership enabled the implementation of the adapted programs that are defined according to skills and based on objectives and standards. It was also designed according to an approach that takes factors such as training needs, work situation and general objectives of technical training into consideration.

Several funding partners supported the training programs: *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, the *Centre local d'emploi*, the Val-d'Or Urban Service Centre of the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ), and the *Développement des Ressources humaines Abitibiwinni-Kitcisakik (DRHAK)*.

7.6 Adult Basic Education (Satellite Class)

This project is primarily intended for clients returning to school and who are having difficulty in completing their secondary studies in an autonomous manner. It ensures close supervision of the participants in order to help them succeed based on the principle that with good work practices, punctuality and constant efforts, it is relatively easy to successfully complete their school year.

Thus, a follow-up agent sees to assisting each student by ensuring support at the social, family and personal levels in order to resolve any issues that may hinder his academic success. Each participant signs a commitment agreement which lists the obligations of each of the parties involved. Penalties are incurred for any participant who leaves the program without valid reasons.

The adult basic education program thus began in September 2012 with a total of 75 students, at various academic levels. From this number, 29 students completed their courses and 7 students graduated. Among these, 3 students began a vocational training program. The reasons why 39 students withdrew or quit the program are related to social, family and personal problems. A fair percentage of them will be working this summer.

Here are the funding partners who supported the adult basic education program in Val-d'Or and Amos: the *Centre l'Horizon* (Val-d'Or adult education) through the *Commission scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois*, the *Centre de formation générale Harricana* (Amos adult education) through the *Commission scolaire Harricana*, the Income Security services of Kitcisakik, the Income Security services of Abitibiwinni, the Val-d'Or Urban Service Centre of the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of



Quebec (FNHRDCQ), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the *Développement des Ressources humaines Abitibiwinni-Kitcisakik (DRHAK)*.

These partners are essential for the continuity of the program, both in terms of their financial participation and their ongoing support.

7.7 Socio-Professional Insertion Project

Building Together! - Socio-Professional Insertion for Aboriginals in Montreal, First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ)

This social insertion and employment integration project constitutes a complementary program and service to the Montreal Urban Service Centre and contributes to the strengthening of its existing capacities. The project provides dynamic support to persons who are far-removed from the labour market to help them achieve autonomy and thus promote their personal and professional development. The projects allow the development of local, regional and national partnerships for the implementation of a project that involves the community.

The general objectives are:

- Maintain the employment integration and support project for urban Aboriginal clients in order to enable them to undertake significant changes in their lives.
- Provide them assistance in dealing with personal, family and professional difficulties in the urban area.
- Promote conditions that will help them to pursue and successfully complete their secondary studies in the adult sector through school preparation courses.
- Increase the job readiness of the clients in order to achieve employment parity as quickly as possible.
- Prepare and help urban clients to define a career project;
- Develop partnerships in order to build together the skills development of Montreal Aboriginal people.

To date, 41 participants finished the integration program. Among those, only 4 withdrew from the program, 9 returned to school, 25 integrated employment, 3 became self-employed and 4 are seeking a job.

7.8 Employability-Training-Education Working Committee

Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK

The Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK was established through the collaborative efforts of various Aboriginal communities and organizations interested in working to develop solutions to address gaps in services to Aboriginal people living in the greater Montreal area.



The Employability-Training-Education Working Committee is part of the NETWORK. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month.

The Working Committee's mission is to ensure Aboriginal people (First Nations and Métis) of the greater Montreal area accessibility to programs and services that will help them achieve their full academic and professional potential, to improve the services provided to our clients and improve the services offered to service providers. The Committee distributes information on services and programs relating to employability, training and education.

7.9 Education Initiatives

Among the initiatives of the FNHRDCQ, the development of regional adult education centres in First Nations communities of Quebec must be emphasized. Indeed, the Kitci Amik Centre, located in the Anishnabe community of Lac-Simon, opened its doors in September 2012 and welcomed more than thirty students in its first year of operation. For its part, the Kahnawake-Listuguj regional centre, which has two campuses, will open its doors in September 2013 and expects to welcome more than sixty students.

The two centres were established through the collaborative efforts of the First Nations organizations that work in education and training, namely the First Nations Education Council, *Institut Tshakapesh* and FNHRDCQ. Together, these organizations developed the First Nations Adult Education School Council that oversees the implementation and management of the regional centres.

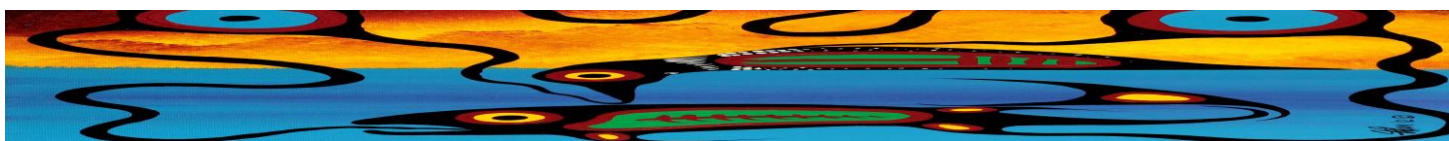
This initiative stems from commitments of the Socioeconomic Forum of 2006 where the MELS made a commitment to facilitate the development of the centres. Since then, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) also endorsed the initiative and provide significant financial support. This federal and provincial sponsorship helps to better meet the particular needs of the clients of these centres.

Literacy, pre-secondary, first-cycle and second-cycle secondary level courses are offered to adult students in order for them to obtain a Diploma of Secondary Studies or to meet the requirements to enrol in vocational training or a semi-skilled trade program. All Aboriginals of Quebec are welcome at these centres, which one will recall, are *regional* centres.

7.10 Vocational Training Centre for Aboriginals in Construction Trades (VCTACT)

The VCTACT is a school for Aboriginals that offers vocational training leading to the construction industry. The VCTACT is able to offer all of the training programs associated with the industry.

Created in 2009 under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program, the VCTACT does not have its own infrastructure. This virtual school for Aboriginals has a team of professionals who coordinate training activities in all parts of the province in collaboration with the various Aboriginal communities and with existing vocational training centres. These partnerships not only make this training more accessible to Aboriginals, but also allow structures to be created that encourage the success of Aboriginal students and their integration into the job market.



Under the responsibility of the *Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM)*, the Vocational Training Centre for Aboriginals in Construction Trades (VTCACT) offers bilingual training services and does not have its own infrastructure. In fact, it is a coordination unit that distributes students or cohorts of students to existing training centres throughout Quebec.

The VTCACT collaborates with the various signatories of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) to recruit Aboriginal candidates, whether they reside in or outside a community. Recruitment may be conducted in several Aboriginal communities simultaneously in order to build a cohort.

To offer training programs to all Aboriginals in Quebec, the VTCACT must develop agreements with the different training centres, in the province of Quebec, that will be hosting the training. The VTCACT may also conclude agreements directly with Aboriginal communities that have the infrastructure required to offer certain training programs on site.

The uniqueness of the VTCACT lies in student supervision and follow-up.

7.11 Success Stories

A young 17 year old girl, at Secondary I level, approached the Gespeg Local First Nations Commission to apply for funding to pursue her secondary education; at her age, she was not eligible for income security. Given that our services are based on a single-window system, we were able to help her and motivate her until she obtained her Diploma of Secondary Studies three years later. Her agent helped in selecting a vocational training program based on her aspirations and in finding accommodation in the city where the training was given. Two years later, she returned to the community to work as a professional in computers.

A man of 60 years who was illiterate participated in an intensive training project for seasonal workers offered by the Gespeg Nation in partnership with the LFNC and the *Collège Frontière* group. Six months into the program, he was able to read 3rd grade primary-level texts. Throughout his life, he was a seasonal worker, was unemployed or was an income security recipient. Now, he is more self-confident in everything he does and is planning to seek lasting employment in order to improve his quality of life.

Sonia, an Innu of Pessamit, mother of four children, returned to school. She successfully completed a professional cooking training program and obtained a Diploma of Vocational Studies. Afterwards, she benefited from an employability measure to work in a restaurant. She is still working for the same employer.

Chanook, an Atikamekw of Wemotaci, successfully completed a hotel reception training program and obtained a Diploma of Vocational Studies. Following her training, she secured a job in a large hotel in Quebec.

Following a career change, Stéphan, an Innu of Mashteuiatsh, successfully completed a truck driver training program and obtained a Diploma of Vocational Studies. He was hired as soon as he completed his training. He currently works as driver for an employer in the region.



Daniel, from Kuujjuaq, is the first Inuit to obtain a master electrician license. After a period of time at *Cégep Marie-Victorin*, Daniel decided to take a course in industrial electricity in Quebec. He later completed his apprenticeship through an *Emploi-Québec* program and accumulated the required 8,000 hours at Raglan Mine, which allowed him to take the exam and become an electrical contractor in Kuujjuaq. Daniel mentioned that his success is due to his studies, determination and work as well as to the support from his family, the KRG and his employers.

8. Recommendations and Potential Solutions

Whereas, the First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee (FNILMAC) recommends to the *Ministère de l'emploi et de la solidarité sociale (MESS)*(Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity) with the support of the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT)*(Labour Market Partners Commission) and *Emploi-Québec*, to develop a ministerial strategy for the social and professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people into the Quebec labour market, the FNILMAC recommends that the following solutions be included as part of the Ministerial Strategy:

Core Principles

The mandate of developing the First Nations and Inuit workforce and labour market remains that of Aboriginal governments and concerned organizations. Roles and responsibilities must therefore be defined from the outset.

Since there is no distinction made by Aboriginal governments and organizations as to the place of residence of First Nations and Inuit citizens, the Ministerial Strategy must be applicable to all First Nations and Inuit populations in Quebec.

The Ministerial Strategy must be without prejudice to the existing agreements of Aboriginal governments and organizations, whether these agreements are provincial, federal, corporate or otherwise.

Given the distinct status of the First Nations and Inuit, some recommendations may relate more to a particular group, although they have all been formulated to be as generic and inclusive as possible.

General

That the *MESS* develop and implement a Ministerial Strategy in collaboration with key governmental partners (provincial, federal and Aboriginal) as well as with organizations responsible for the development of the FNI workforce and labour market in order to ensure the social and professional integration of First Nations and Inuit people.



That, through the *Ministerial Strategy for the Social and Professional Integration of First Nations and Inuit People into the Labour Market*, the *MESS* recognizes and affirms the importance of increasing First Nations and Inuit participation in both the Quebec labour market and economic development.

That, through this *Ministerial Strategy*, the *MESS* recognizes and affirms the importance of investing in the development of the First Nations and Inuit workforce, labour market and entrepreneurship.

That the *MESS* support the development and improvement of pre-employment and employability measures and services that will respond to the specific problems of First Nations and Inuit people – including the standardization of *Emploi-Québec* services and the agency's relationships with Aboriginal organizations.

That the *MESS* financially support longer-term programs that aim to improve knowledge and skills and ensure additional support (housing, daycare, transportation, psychosocial support, etc.) when needed.

That the *MESS* ensure the active participation of First Nations and Inuit people in regional development on the basis of an equal relationship, by inviting the First Nations and Inuit to sit on Regional Councils of Labour Market Partners, which shall include the employment integration of First Nations and Inuit in their respective priorities and implement the necessary mechanisms to bridge the gap between the employment rates of FNI and non-Aboriginal people.

That the *MESS*, *Emploi-Québec*, the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* and Regional Councils of Labour Market Partners see to increasing the match between the FNI labour supply and the workforce shortage in the industry.

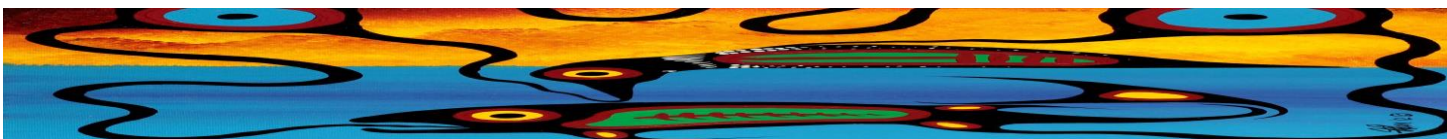
That the *MESS* become involved in the studies and research that will help guide the training and employment integration of First Nations and Inuit people, in collaboration with organizations representative of Aboriginal people.

That the *MESS* assess its past commitments towards the First Nations and the Inuit in the area of employment and training and take the necessary measures to ensure that latent or partially achieved commitments are carried out in a timely manner.

Training

That the *MESS* take extensive action in the area of training (adult education, vocational training, pre-employment) for First Nations and Inuit people by establishing *MESS*, *MELS*, AANDC, First Nations and Inuit partnerships that support the employment pathway of First Nations and Inuit learners, whether it is through income support, adaptation of Quebec educational services, development of institutions, participant follow-up by Aboriginal agents, etc., for clients living in communities as well as those living in urban areas.

That the *MESS* carry out an accurate diagnosis of First Nations and Inuit training needs, for each group, Nation and region concerned.



That the *MESS* support workplace training programs for First Nations and Inuit and explore the feasibility of these trainings or certifications being granted appropriate educational recognition and being recorded as course credits in order to foster the attainment of a diploma recognized by the *MELS*.

That the *MESS* and the *CCQ (Commission de la construction du Québec)* allow First Nations and Inuit inclusion in construction trades through a particular status, coupled with an awareness campaign for employers and workers against racism in the workplace.

That the *MESS* contribute to the implementation of a First Nations and Inuit entrepreneurship school in order to support the economic development of Aboriginal communities, while ensuring the adaptation of content to regional and community realities (in a context of weak local economy, for example) and to prioritize the training of community economic development agents.

Employment Integration and Retention

That the *MESS* seek a firm commitment from all labour market stakeholders to take every measure to promote and ensure the employment integration and retention of First Nations and Inuit people who wish to be part of the Quebec labour market.

That the *MESS* reserve specific budgets in order to allow First Nations and Inuit people to achieve employment parity while ensuring that its financial participation is not conditional upon federal funding.

That the *MESS*, along with the *MELS*, in the fight against First Nations and Inuit school dropout, invest particularly in the area of career choice and guidance as well as in sports, recreation and healthy lifestyles, as a means to address poverty.

That the *MESS* contribute financially to the implementation and maintenance of social and professional reinsertion and integration enterprises and organizations for First Nations and Inuit people.

That the *MESS* contribute financially to job fairs that would bring together businesses from a region and the communities with which they have business relationships, and who in turn will be invited to establish collaborative agreements in order to increase placements.

That the *MESS* establish a First Nations and Inuit employment integration and retention committee in order to allow the First Nations and the Inuit to develop tools and to test intervention strategies in order to increase labour market integration and ensure the employment retention of Aboriginal people of Quebec.



Programs and Services

That the *MESS* support community development and the active participation of communities in the design and development of labour market programs for First Nations and Inuit people.

That the *MESS* implement an effective case management system for income security recipients requiring the integration of the delivery of available programs and services, and thus establish a link with income security services, both in the communities and the urban and rural areas.

That the *MESS* implement an awareness campaign along with training workshops for government officials as well as stakeholders and staff who work for the government and employability-related organizations in order increase awareness with regard to First Nations and Inuit realities.



Frank Polson, Artist

First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee

