



SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT YOUTH

Issues and challenges, needs and interests,
strategies and promising practices

Ashukan Institute
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¹These data, while relevant and interesting, must be treated with a certain degree of caution, since not all FNIs take part in the censuses that enable these analyses to be made. Indeed, many people choose not to respond to the various censuses, while others are unable to do so for various administrative or logistical reasons.

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With the collaboration of



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION A: ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

This section of the report examines the multiple issues hindering the socio-professional integration and job retention (see definition at the beginning of the report) of young FNIs aged 15 to 35 in Quebec. Recognizing the importance of contextualizing the realities experienced by these young people, whose trajectories are often marked by singular historical, social, cultural and economic factors, this preliminary analysis aims to establish a common basis of understanding for the rest of the study.

The cross-cutting issues identified include:

- Historical legacy and intergenerational trauma: The lingering effects of residential schools manifest themselves in distrust of the education system, disruption of the transmission of traditional knowledge and increased vulnerability to social hardship.
- Socio-economic, community and family factors: Unemployment, poverty, lack of essential resources and the absence of positive role models hamper the development of individual potential and limit employment prospects.
- Racism, microaggressions, prejudice and discrimination: These phenomena, which manifest themselves in various forms, create hostile and inhospitable working environments, hindering the integration and progress of young FNIs.
- Education and the relation to education: The mismatch between school curricula and the career aspirations of young FNIs, combined with a lack of inclusion and appreciation of their prospects, contributes to a decline in motivation and learning difficulties.
- The challenges of geographic mobility and isolation: The need to leave their home environment to access post-secondary education and training often leads to isolation, a break with family and community support networks, and cultural disconnection.

Issues specific to the integration and job retention of young FNIs include:

- Use of mother tongue and difficulties in French or English: Fluency in official languages can be a major obstacle to job performance and career advancement.
- The current realities of young FNIs: Reconciling traditions and cultures with the demands of the modern world and the job market is a major challenge.
- Prerequisites for employment: Access to basic resources, such as housing, food and health services, is essential to enable young FNIs to participate fully in the job market.
- Professional experience: The lack of training opportunities and relevant experience puts young FNIs at a disadvantage when it comes to the demands of the job market.
- Cultural or value-related characteristics: Young FNIs' cultural values and perceptions of work, which sometimes differ from prevailing norms, influence their career choices and professional expectations.
- Employment within the community: Although many young FNIs prefer to work within their own communities, they may face obstacles related to nepotism and the preference given to non-indigenous for certain positions.
- Life in an urban environment: Limited access to affordable housing and childcare, combined with cultural uprooting, create significant constraints for young FNIs.
- Working in non-indigenous organizations: The cultural and linguistic disconnect, lack of awareness on the part of employers, and absence of mentoring and support relationships can lead to significant stress and a sense of failure.
- Labour market characteristics: The shortage of certain types of jobs, a lack of awareness of the services and programs available, and job requirements that do not take into account the cultural realities of young FNIs are major obstacles:

- Access to employment: Geographical distance, transportation costs, cultural and language barriers, and the lack of adapted employment support services limit opportunities for young FNIs.
- Financing services and programs: Insufficient access to financial resources has a direct impact on the ability of organizations and communities to offer quality programs and services tailored to the specific needs of young FNIs.
- Knowledge of the labour market: Lack of knowledge of the realities and opportunities of the job market, combined with a lack of mentoring and individualized support, hinders the socio-professional integration of young FNIs.
- The nature of the services and programs offered: The approach adopted in the delivery of these services does not always take into account the realities and specific needs of young FNIs, limiting the effectiveness of interventions.
- The role and place of the various players: The working world's lack of understanding of FNIs' cultures, combined with a lack of collaboration between the various players involved in their socio-professional integration, exacerbates the difficulties.

In conclusion, this section highlights the need to adopt more encompassing strategies, taking into account the individual life paths, cultural values and specific needs of each Nation, or even each community or village, in order to promote the full participation of young FNIs in the labour market.

SECTION B: YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS IN TERMS OF INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION

This section of the report analyzes the specific needs of young FNIs in terms of job insertion and retention, highlighting the cultural, identity and contextual factors that influence their career paths. Part of this analysis is structured around key stakeholder groups (communities, governments, organizations, businesses, etc.) to facilitate the formulation of targeted and realistic recommendations.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT:

- **SUPPORT FOR BASIC LIVING CONDITIONS: ACCESS TO STABLE HOUSING, HEALTHY FOOD AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS.**
- **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT: ACCESS TO ADAPTED, CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTH SERVICES.**
- **SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZING LIFE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY: ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS, ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION.**
- **QUALITY EDUCATION AT ALL STAGES: ACCESS TO ADAPTED EDUCATION, INTEGRATING THE KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES OF FNIS.**
- **FINANCING AT ALL LEVELS: ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COVER BASIC NEEDS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING.**

SPECIFIC INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION NEEDS LINKED TO CULTURE AND IDENTITY:

- **PERSONAL IDENTITY NEEDS: DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES.**
- **CULTURAL IDENTITY NEEDS: RECONNECTING WITH CULTURAL HERITAGE, STRENGTHENING CULTURAL SELF-ESTEEM AND PARTICIPATING IN COLLECTIVE PROJECTS ROOTED IN COMMUNITY VALUES.**
- **HEALING NEEDS: WORKING ON ONESELF, DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM AND CONNECTING WITH ONE'S IDENTITY.**
- **CULTURAL CONNECTION NEEDS: CULTURAL REAPPROPRIATION AND REVITALIZATION, ENHANCEMENT OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION.**

SPECIFIC INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION NEEDS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP:

- **NEEDS THAT COMMUNITIES CAN MEET: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, ROLE MODELS, SUPPORT IN THE TRANSITION FROM COMMUNITY TO URBAN ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**
- **NEEDS THAT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CAN MEET: ADAPTATION OF TEACHING METHODS, INCREASED SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, INTEGRATION OF FNIS' HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES INTO SCHOOL CURRICULA, ADAPTATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO THE REALITIES OF YOUNG FNIS, AND PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL TRAINING.**
- **NEEDS THAT SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS CAN MEET: OFFER ADAPTED PRE-EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING AND SUPPORT.**
- **NEEDS THAT EMPLOYERS CAN MEET: MENTORING, COACHING, ACCESS TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY, CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENTS AND CONDITIONS, CREATING A POSITIVE BOND WITH THE EMPLOYER AND THE ORGANIZATION, CULTURAL SAFETY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES TOWARDS RECONCILIATION AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION.**

IN CONCLUSION, THIS SECTION HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR A TRULY INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO THE SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION OF YOUNG FNIS, WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE COMPLEXITY OF THEIR NEEDS AND THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE VARIOUS PLAYERS. A TRAUMA-INFORMED, RECOVERY-FOCUSED APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL TO PROMOTE THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND FULL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY.

SECTION C: MATCHING THE JOB MARKET TO THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF YOUNG FNIS

This section of the report assesses the match between the job market and the needs and interests of young FNIs, both in and out of the community. The analysis reveals a complex picture, marked by paradoxes and entrenched inequalities, underscoring the need for concrete, innovative solutions.

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE COMMUNITY OR VILLAGE JOB MARKET

- **MISMATCH BETWEEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LOCAL MARKET NEEDS**
- **SHORTAGE OF JOBS AND SCARCITY OF POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY**
- **DIFFICULT ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**
- **INFLUENCE OF FAMILY TIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS ON ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT**
- **CONCENTRATION OF EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE BAND COUNCIL**
- **PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT (SEASONAL OR TEMPORARY JOBS)**

THE JOB MARKET OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY OR VILLAGE

- **GROWING WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF COMPANIES TO HIRE YOUNG FNIS, BUT PROGRESS INSUFFICIENT**
- **WELCOMING AND INTEGRATION PROCESS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CULTURALLY ADAPTED**
- **EXPERIENCE AND DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS CONSTITUTE A FORM OF DISCRIMINATION**
- **CULTURAL SAFETY ISSUES (DISCRIMINATION, RACISM, STEREOTYPES)**
- **LACK OF POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUNG FNIS**
- **LACK OF MATCH BETWEEN EMPLOYERS' NEEDS AND THOSE OF YOUNG PEOPLE**
- **LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

- **NON-RECIPROCAL EXPECTATIONS AND RIGIDITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

THE GLOBAL LABOUR MARKET (CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES)

- **MISMATCH BETWEEN THE ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG FNIS AND JOB MARKET OPPORTUNITIES**
- **NEED TO RETHINK THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE (SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES)**
- **LACK OF TERRITORIAL ADAPTATION OF JOB OFFERS**
- **LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS**

PRESENTATION OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- **TARGETED STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT:**
 - **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (INVESTMENTS, SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP)**
 - **ADAPTING VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS TO LOCAL MARKET NEEDS**
 - **IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE SERVICES**
 - **CREATING POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**
- **TARGETED STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS (NON-COMMUNITY CONTEXT):**
 - **ACTIVE LISTENING AND PERSONALIZED SUPPORT**
 - **COACHING AND WORKPLACE SUPPORT**
 - **SPECIFIC INDUCTION AND TRAINING PRACTICES**
 - **ADAPTING ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES AND WORKING WITH PARTNERS**
 - **MANAGING LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES**
 - **MENTORING AND CULTURAL ROLE MODELS**
 - **EMPLOYER TRAINING**
 - **CULTURAL AWARENESS PRACTICES**
 - **ADAPTING FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT (FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS, TELEWORKING)**

IN CONCLUSION, THIS SECTION HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO IMPROVE THE MATCH BETWEEN THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE NEEDS OF YOUNG FNIS. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PLAYERS, RECOGNITION OF FNIS' SKILLS AND VALUES, ADAPTATION OF PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES, AS WELL AS REGULAR MONITORING AND RIGOROUS EVALUATION OF RESULTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION.

SECTION D: STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES TO SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION OF YOUNG FNIS

This section of the report examines promising strategies and practices for promoting the integration and job retention of young FNIs, drawing on a literature review of available data, as well as testimonials from study participants. The main aim is to inform the development of more effective policies and interventions.

Improving existing programs and services

- **Education and Training Services:**
 - **Flexibility of services and financial support**

- Adaptation of teaching methods (integration of FNIs cultural conceptions, learning on the job, etc.)
- Development of community-based vocational training centers
- Improved access to information, guidance, support and coaching for learners
- Programs and services related to the transition from training to employment:
 - Structured transition support, including work integration programs
 - Quality career guidance from the start of high school
- Pre-employability and employability programs and services:
 - General improvement of access to programs and services (proactive communication, multi-channel promotion)
 - Simplification of procedures (forms, hiring processes)
 - Improvement of the form and structure of programs and services (integrated and comprehensive approach, adaptation of duration and inclusion criteria)
 - Improvement of synergy and communication between players
 - Accompaniment of FNIs youth using a personalized and iterative approach
 - Provision of psychosocial support services for the well-being of youth.
 - Development of skills (technical, general and cultural)
 - Integration of cultural considerations
 - Support for community organizations and the employers who work with them

Ensuring funding and investment as levers to support integration and job retention:

- Optimize training funding (financial access to post-secondary training, direct financial support for learners)
- Ensure financial support for pre-employability and employability programs and services (adaptation and increase of financial support, funding for coaching and progressive programs, recurrent funding for program sustainability).
- Propose funding measures for employment and personal development (financial support to facilitate access to employment, targeted and individualized funding, funding for pre-employment living conditions).
- Adopt general funding principles (promotion of culturally adapted teaching methods, investment in research, funding to raise awareness among employers and the general public).

Improving collaboration and adapting employer practices:

- Adapt recruitment and hiring practices (proactive and targeted recruitment strategies, culturally safe hiring processes, recognition of prior learning).
- Adapt welcome, support and accompaniment strategies in the workplace (personalized welcome, mentoring, peer support)
- Ensure employer awareness and training (training on the realities of FNIs and on cultural safety)
- Partnerships and collaboration with FNIs communities
- Create a culturally safe and inclusive work environment

Strengthening community participation and leadership among young people:

- Understanding the need to strengthen youth participation and community leadership (youth voice as hope, healing and vehicle for change, authentic participation)
- Strategies for fostering community leadership and youth participation (involving communities and villages, valuing youth voice, recognizing youth agency)

Implement, adapt or modify the legislative framework, policies and institutional or governance structures:

- Centralize services
- Transform political bodies and culturally adapt structures
- Change discourse and recognize specificities
- Include the territory
- Develop favorable socioeconomic policies that reflect the image of young people
- Develop specific language policies

Developing entrepreneurship:

- Cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit
- Financing initiatives
- Emphasize support
- Set up incubator and mentoring initiatives
- Developing skills

Promote aspects of culture, identity and territory:

- Valuing traditional knowledge and cultural skills
- Create culturally secure work environments
- Promote cultural and territorial entrepreneurship
- Facilitate access to local employment
- Strengthen cultural identity and sense of belonging

In conclusion, this section highlights the importance of a culturally-anchored approach to promoting the integration and job retention of young FNIs. This approach implies a profound transformation of practices, policies and structures to recognize and value the identity, values and aspirations of young FNIs.

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The in-depth study on the socio-professional integration and job retention of First Nations and Inuit (FNI) youth has identified key recommendations, based on a rigorous analysis of systemic issues, specific needs, labour market fit challenges and promising practices. Guided by the principles of respect for the rights and self-determination of FNIs, recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity, a holistic approach and the active participation of young people, these recommendations aim to transform approaches, policies and structures to foster sustainable and equitable socio-economic inclusion.

The main recommendations focus on the following areas:

2. Act on systemic issues: fight racism and discrimination, reduce socio-economic inequalities, transform the education system and combat intergenerational trauma.
3. Respond to the needs and interests of young people: support the development of personal and cultural identity, facilitate the transition to the job market and promote meaningful, rewarding employment.
4. Improve labour market adequacy: diversify the job offer in communities, fight discrimination and stereotypes in the workplace, adapt working conditions to the realities of young FNIs, and improve communication and collaboration between players.
5. Improve funding for programs and services

FOREWORD

CONTEXT OF STUDY

The importance of identifying and understanding best practices for the socio-professional integration and job retention of First Nations and Inuit (FNI) youth (see definition below) is justified by several converging factors. Firstly, the integration and retention of these young people have a direct influence on the stability and well-being of FNI communities. Indeed, access to sustainable employment contributes not only to individual fulfillment, but also to the socio-economic development of the community. Moreover, by promoting the employability of this population, it is possible to develop a skilled and diversified workforce, which represents a competitive advantage for employers as well as for the local and national economy. Employment is an essential determinant of mental health and psychological well-being, and young FNIs are no exception. Access to meaningful employment is associated with improved mental health, reduced financial stress and a better overall quality of life. What's more, this population represents a demographically expanding workforce, a trend that is set to increase over the coming decades.

DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION.

In the context of this report, socio-professional integration and job retention for young FNIs is defined as a process that goes beyond simply finding a job. It is a personalized and adapted pathway that aims to:

Promoting economic autonomy: Provide young people with the tools and opportunities they need to develop skills, access decent jobs and build sustainable careers that enable them to support themselves and their families.

Supporting personal and cultural development: Create an inclusive work environment that respects young people's cultural identity, values their traditional knowledge and enables them to develop their full personal and professional potential.

Fighting inequality and discrimination: Implement specific measures to overcome the barriers to employment faced by young FNIs, particularly in terms of training, recruitment and career progression.

Contributing to community development: Encourage young people to get involved in their communities and put their skills at the service of their nation's economic, social and cultural development.

We recognize that the notions of socio-professional integration and job retention can be instrumentalized for assimilation purposes. This is why we assert that the well-being and self-determination of young FNIs must be at the heart of any intervention in this field. Our approach aims to support their emancipation through a job market that offers them real opportunities for economic autonomy, while respecting their cultural identity and contributing to the development of their communities.

However, young FNIs frequently face significant socio-economic inequalities, manifested in higher unemployment rates, lower income levels, high occupational mobility and limited access to educational resources and employment opportunities. Identifying and implementing effective and culturally relevant socio-professional insertion and job retention practices represents a promising strategy for mitigating these disparities.

It therefore seems imperative to examine current practices, validate their effectiveness and assess their cultural relevance, with the aim of better reflecting the realities experienced by young FNIs, rather than imposing models from the majority society. These considerations go beyond quantitative and statistical analysis, and call for in-depth reflection, constructive exchanges and an innovative approach involving various stakeholders. In addition to young people, communities, employers, government bodies, support agencies and non-governmental organizations are all involved in this collaborative approach to improving the situation.

Ultimately, knowledge and application of best practices in socio-professional integration and job retention for young FNIs help promote equal opportunity, stimulate economic development, strengthen communities, foster individual and collective well-being, and create sustainable prospects for this population. This ideal situation is of paramount importance to the social justice, equity and prosperity of FNIs across Quebec and Canada. This issue prompted the FNIs' advisory committees and labour market partners to commission the Ashukan Institute to take stock of the situation.

ASHUKAN INSTITUTE

The Ashukan Institute is a certified First Nations company offering training, research and strategic consulting services on Indigenous realities. Comprising a multidisciplinary team, the organization assists institutions and companies wishing to strengthen their relations with Indigenous peoples, with a view to reconciliation and sustainable collaboration.

Inspired by the Algonquian word Ashukan, meaning “bridge”, the Ashukan Institute places at the heart of its approach the creation of links between cultures, knowledge and environments. Its expertise is based on an interdisciplinary approach rooted in the valorization of indigenous knowledge systems, in partnership with experts from scientific and community circles.

In a context where more and more organizations are taking an interest in indigenous issues, and wish to identify concrete courses of action for their managers and employees, the Ashukan Institute offers rigorous and humane support to help them understand, measure and act together.

ASSIGNED MANDATE

The First Nations and Inuit Advisory Committee and its labour market partners have decided to work jointly and in collaboration with the Youth Advisory Committee and various organizations to carry out a study aimed at documenting the best socio-professional integration and job retention practices for young FNIs (aged 15-35) with the Commission des Partenaires du Marché du Travail (CPMT). To identify these practices, two phases were carried out: a literature review and a field survey of key players, including young people. This survey quickly revealed the importance of documenting the issues experienced by young people, and then their needs. The documentation of their needs through the interview survey appeared highly relevant and was seen as an important contribution to the research, since the literature review did not allow us to identify several avenues of response. In our opinion, this is a strong and innovative point of this study. The identification of promising practices was written in direct relation to the documentation of these needs.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

- Gain a better understanding of specific issues facing young FNIs, including cultural, socio-economic and historical factors.
- Identify the needs and interests of FNIs in terms of pre-employability and employability, then determine how well the labour market matches these needs and interests.
- Document and identify past and current best practices, and then identify those that are desired and desirable, in order to bring them together in a single document.

- Determine how to adapt practices to the specific cultural contexts of these young people and be sensitive to their cultural diversity by respecting community values, in particular.

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The document is organized into five main sections, following the general introduction and the section on methodological elements: (A) youth issues, (B) their needs and interests, (C) the match between these needs and interests, and the labour market within and outside communities, then (D) the strategies and practices for integrating and maintaining young people in employment deemed effective or desirable by the participants we met, and finally (E) the main recommendations emerging from the report. This sequence reflects a progressive approach aimed at providing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by young FNIs in their journey towards professional autonomy.


Section (A), devoted to youth issues, is the essential starting point for this analysis. By identifying and describing the obstacles faced by young FNIs in terms of socio-professional integration and job retention, this section helps contextualize the needs and interests that will be explored next. It provides a realistic picture of the difficulties encountered, whether economic, social, cultural or geographical, and highlights the systemic factors that contribute to these inequalities.

Section (B) focuses on the needs and interests of young people, from an individual-centered perspective. By exploring the aspirations, motivations and values of young FNIs, both personal and cultural, this section provides a better understanding of their employment and career priorities and expectations. It highlights the diversity of backgrounds and aspirations, and underlines the importance of taking into account cultural specificities and local realities.

Section (C), which analyzes the match between young people's needs and interests and the job market, provides a bridge between individual aspirations and economic realities. This section identifies gaps between supply and demand, and highlights barriers to accessing employment for FNIs youth in and out of the community. It underscores the importance of developing skills and qualifications that are adapted to the needs of the job market, while taking into account the issues, needs and values of young people.

Next, section (D), devoted to strategies and practices for job integration and retention, proposes concrete courses of action to improve the situation of young FNIs. This is the most important part of the report. By listing the initiatives deemed effective or desirable by the participants we met, this section highlights proven approaches and promising innovations, based to a large extent on the needs of young people. It underlines the importance of collaboration between the various players (community organizations, employers, governments, etc.) and of adapting interventions to local realities.

Finally, section (E), devoted to recommendations, is the culmination of this analysis. Based on the findings of the previous sections, this section proposes concrete, targeted courses of action to improve the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNIs. These recommendations, addressed to the various players involved (governments, community organizations, employers, educational establishments, etc.), aim to respond to the issues identified, support the needs and interests of young people, foster a better match with the job market, and promote effective strategies and practices. They are formulated to be both ambitious and realistic, taking into account the constraints and opportunities specific to each context. It aims to transform the knowledge acquired into concrete action, and to contribute to improving the living conditions of young FNIs.



Throughout this report, thematic boxes enrich the main analysis by presenting contextual information and specific perspectives directly from the study participants. With the exception of the first, which provides a statistical overview, these boxes are the result of an inductive analysis of the qualitative data. They highlight salient elements of the participants' discourse, often raised spontaneously, without direct prompting from the interviewer. This spontaneous emergence gives the information a special value, suggesting its relevance and intrinsic importance in understanding the issues involved in the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNIs. In other words, the recurrence and spontaneity of these themes in the participants' narratives indicate that they constitute fundamental dimensions of their experience, deserving special attention and specific emphasis within the overall analysis.

In short, this progressive and logical organization makes it possible to build a coherent and comprehensive narrative, which starts from the issues faced by young people, explores their needs and interests, analyzes the fit with the labour market, and proposes concrete strategies to improve their situation. It offers a comprehensive and nuanced vision of the challenges and opportunities linked to the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNIs, and helps inform the decisions of the players involved.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The socio-professional integration of young FNIs is significantly different from that of their non indigenous peers, and even from that of previous generations of FNIs. To understand these differences, we need to analyze the complex relationship these young people have with work and employment, a relationship influenced by cultural, historical and social factors. Contrary to a purely economic vision of work, often dominant in traditional models of integration, the approach of young FNIs integrates a spiritual and identity-based dimension. Among other things, as one stakeholder reported, young FNIs are under pressure to preserve and strengthen their cultural and community identity, but also to fit in and meet the demands of the job market, which is sometimes far removed from their respective cultures.

Thus, according to our study, the search for a meaningful connection to their cultural identity, community and spirituality is central to their quest for personal and professional fulfillment. This need for internal coherence, to rediscover a sometimes-lost sense of meaning, manifests itself in a search for jobs that enable them not only to meet their material needs, but also to contribute actively to the revitalization of their cultures and the development of their communities. Work thus becomes a means of asserting their identity, of re-establishing a sometimes-broken link with their heritage, and a way of passing on ancestral values. This spiritual and community dimension has a profound influence on their professional choices and their expectations of the job market. They aren't just looking for a paycheck, but for a meaningful job that allows them to flourish as individuals and as members of their nation. We therefore need to look at the process of engagement for young people, and take into account their experiences that affect different facets of their lives and communities, particularly in relation to access to their territory and the knowledge associated with it.

The quote from a young Innu participant in the study, "I feel like I'm missing a piece of the puzzle to be complete and know what I can contribute to society", perfectly illustrates this quest for meaning. This "missing piece" represents the disconnect often felt between the individual and his or her cultural identity, a disconnect that may be the fruit of colonial history and assimilation policies that have long marginalized FNIs' cultures. For these young people, rediscovering this sense implies reclaiming their history, asserting their identity and taking an active part in building a future in which their values, needs and aspirations are fully recognized and integrated.

This change of perspective on work means that we need to better understand the lives of FNIs, so that we can develop programs and services that are optimally suited to their needs and interests, and socio-professional integration strategies that take into account their cultural specificities and aspirations.

However, there is much more to this study, the results of which are presented in this report. Indeed, the study on the integration and job retention of young FNIs is justified by the need for urgent and targeted intervention facing complex and persistent realities. Young FNIs are looking for deep meaning in their work, an alignment between their cultural values and their professional aspirations, a sense of belonging and contribution to their community. Ignoring this essential dimension would compromise the effectiveness of any intervention.

One of the aims of the study is to fill a gap in specific data and targeted research on the experiences of young FNIs. Indeed, there aren't many studies on the subject, and young people are very clear about their need for recognition of their realities: "It has nothing to do with the person, but we're tired of always having to explain who we are and what we need." (Young Cree, age 20). Current statistics, often aggregated and non-specific, mask the complexity of the obstacles these young people face. An in-depth analysis, incorporating the perspectives of the young people themselves, is crucial to a true and nuanced understanding of the situation. Among other things, therefore, this study makes it possible to qualify disparities, document barriers to

employment, estimate the effectiveness of existing programs, and document strategies and practices that work, or would work, according to the people we met.

Indeed, a crucial aspect of this study lies in the identification of best practices and the formulation of concrete, applicable recommendations for the players involved. The aim is to translate research findings into concrete, accessible action, by proposing tools and strategies to be implemented in communities and urban environments. The aim is to provide stakeholders in support organizations, liaison officers, social workers, guidance counselors, employers, government agents and others with concrete courses of action to better accompany young FNIs in their professional and personal journeys, emphasizing, as we shall see, the importance of internal balance. This objective includes the promotion of adapted employment programs, taking into account the cultural specificities and aspirations of young people, as well as the valorization of cultural skills and knowledge.

In addition, this study hopes to raise awareness among policy-makers and governments of the urgent need to intervene, particularly in terms of funding. It provides evidence to support more inclusive and effective public policies, and demonstrates the importance of investing in adapted employment programs, training and community support. By qualifying the social and economic cost of a sub-optimal situation of socio-professional insertion and job retention for young FNIs, the study strengthens the case for imminent and substantial intervention.

Our study also contributes to the broader goal of reconciliation and equity. By providing crucial information on barriers to employment and proposing concrete solutions, it contributes to building a fairer, more inclusive society where young FNIs have the same chances of success as their non indigenous peers. Improving their socio-professional integration is not only a social imperative, but also a strategic investment in the economic development of FNIs communities, and of Quebec as a whole. The aim of this research is therefore to inform, raise awareness and trigger concrete action to positively transform the prospects of these young people.

Finally, these justifications supporting the importance of this study also underline the importance of a comprehensive approach to socio-professional integration and job retention, which takes into account not only economic aspects, but also social, cultural and spiritual dimensions. It's about innovating in inclusive, respectful practices and strategies that enable young FNIs to reach their full potential and contribute to society, while remaining connected to their roots. Inclusion is not limited to access to employment, but requires genuine recognition and valorization of their identity and cultures. We must ensure that the programs and services we offer, or the strategies we put in place, take into account the specific needs of young FNIs, their culture and their realities; this is a right recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007), as well as in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). We firmly believe in this, and it is on this basis that this report has been written.

METHODOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

Our study used a mixed approach, combining a literature review and a field survey. This decision was justified by complementary methods, to meet the research's objectives as much as possible. For example, the literature review allowed us to identify the gaps and guide the conception of the field survey, in order to fill them.

In the first phase, we researched with two languages (French and English), renown professional and scientific articles, books, thesis and memoirs, reports and other governmental documents and Indigenous organizations, universities websites and research centers' publications. Many keywords related to workforce insertion and employment retention² were used in the following databases: Indigenous Studies Portal, ERIC, Sociological Abstract, Google Scholar, the AFN portals, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the RCAAQ, Statistics Canada, and the Canadian Research Index, in addition to Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue's search engine. The data mainly comes from Canada, United States, Australia and New-Zealand. Our initial corpus comes from around 600 documents, and 203 sources were used for the redaction of the literature review. To target the most pertinent studies, in addition to the usual strategies (use of more specific terms, synonyms and related terms, truncation and proximity operators, boolean operators, etc.), we refined our searches with the use of publication dates filters (last 15 years, with a focus on the last 10), by disciplines (especially sociology, Indigenous studies, human resources, economy and education sciences), by publication types (those mentioned above), and by country, considering in a more important matter the canadian and quebecois documents. This being said, we also examined the most relevant articles' bibliographic references to improve our lists. Finally, the redaction was done following the emergence of categories.

In the second phase, it was about interviewing (during semi-directive individual interviews and focus groups) youth and other actors that play a role in their socio-professional insertion and employment retention. Our target population was all people and organizations that are or were involved in the employment insertion and retention of FNI youth (stakeholders of various organizations, employment agents, employers, etc.), the youth from various FNI communities and those from urban centers. The sample was chosen depending on the sustainability of the organization's mission with the research themes, the level of implication of the people and the organizations in urban settings and within the communities, but most of all, according to the will and availability of the persons. Indeed, it is mostly this last criterion that, at first, oriented the number of participants, and influenced the recruitment, as well as the data collection mode (interviews vs focus groups). Next, we followed with interviews until data saturation, meaning until the new data collection didn't provide unheard-of information or significant new perspectives. The list of organizations who participated is presented on Appendix A.

Also, we have decided, notably because it is not all the participants who wanted to be identified, to keep all the names of the participants anonymous. In this text, we refer to "participants" and to "stakeholders" when the words reported are from actors who play a role with the youth. Regarding youth, for clarity purposes in relation to the nation they belong to, but also to know which age group the person belongs to when their words are reported, we have chosen to indicate the nation and the age of each youth. This decision is motivated by the interest generated by the knowledge of the age group, without being able to identify the great conclusions with the results that would link the elements with the specific age groups. Such results would

² Dont (en français) : Autochtones, Premières Nations, Inuit, emploi, jeunes, préemployabilité, employabilité, pratiques, stratégies, programmes, main-d'œuvre autochtone, attraction, rétention, maintien en emploi, insertion socioprofessionnelle, insertion socioprofessionnelle, inclusion ; et dont (en anglais) : Indigenous people, First Nations, Inuit, Aboriginal, young, employment, pre-employability, employability, practices, strategies, programs, Indigenous workforce, attraction, retention, job retention, professional integration, socio-professional integration, inclusion.

require quantitative research involving a much larger number of young people, allowing for the association of groups and general trends, particularly through the weight of inferences drawn from the sheer number of participants. In total, 71 people were interviewed, including 26 young people from 8 different nations. While the young people interviewed did not represent all eleven nations in Quebec, nor did they cover the 15-35 age group targeted by the study, we believe that the interviews conducted with service providers compensate for this limitation. Indeed, the 45 individuals we spoke with are members of, or work with, people from the eleven nations, who are primarily between 15 and 35 years old. We also believe that this data largely covers all our initial representativeness objectives. Specifically, the search for participants was conducted with our team's aim of ensuring representativeness across all 11 nations, practices targeting young people aged 15 to 35, a balanced representation of women and men, urban and community settings, remote and near-urban communities, and public and private settings.

Our approach to the interviews (questionnaire development and data analysis) is comprehensive (non-causal and non-hypothetico-deductive), and our methodology is mixed, based on the experiences of individuals and organizations, as well as a descriptive assessment of individual and collective situations. Both in the search for participants and during the interviews, we adhered to the various academic research protocols and those specific to the FNI. It is worth noting that our organization identifies as an Indigenous organization (ID1N — First Nations Identification). Indigenous people participated in the various stages of the research.

The data collected is qualitative (descriptive, informative, analytical, and interpretive); we obtained it through questionnaires developed collaboratively. Four categories of questionnaires were used: FNI organizations who support youth, employers who hire FNI youth, youth who work within or were accompanied by organizations, and members of the pilot committee, who all have various experience all of whom have varying degrees of experience in employment and work with FNI youth. The questions covered the following themes: youth interests and needs, access to employment, programs, employment integration practices and strategies, the role of communities, the importance of territory and traditional activities, collaborations, labour market impacts, professional development, and support and mentoring activities. Given the comprehensive nature of the qualitative research, other themes emerged during the research, allowing us to gather additional data (for example, on issues related to access to employment).

The data were synthesized and then analyzed using a thematic coding system. Following the initial coding of the interview notes, a phase of code grouping was undertaken to identify broader categories reflecting the shared experiences and unique perspectives of the participants. This approach, guided by a sensitivity to the nuances and complexities, particularly cultural ones, of the narratives, allowed central themes to emerge. These themes, far from being pre-established categories, were constructed inductively, based on the recurrence of certain codes and the significant connections established by the participants themselves. The objective of this phase was not to reduce the richness of the data to rigid categories, but rather to highlight the key dimensions of the participants' experience and reveal the underlying dynamics of socio-professional integration and job retention. The interpretation of the themes was conducted from a comprehensive perspective, seeking to understand the meaning that participants attribute to their experiences and the challenges they encounter. Rather than searching for causal relationships or testing pre-established hypotheses, the analysis focused on understanding the processes and mechanisms that influence the socio-professional integration and job retention of young non-professionals. The results are presented in a way that reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives expressed by the participants. Selected verbatim excerpts give a voice to the participants, allowing the reader to connect; directly with their realities.

OTHER METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Writing this report required a rigorous and ethical approach, which led us to make a methodological choice different from what we initially considered relevant before data collection and analysis. Indeed, although the issues, needs, and interests of young people are not the same, nor are the strategies or practices that work optimally the same, the data collected did not lead to the decision to categorize them. Initially, we thought we could or should "classify" young people into categories (geographic location, community or nation of origin, level of education, family socioeconomic status, more specific age group, work experience, etc.). However, given the results obtained from the analysis of the qualitative data collected, one of the most important methodological decisions we made was to abandon any categorization of young FNI people. In other words, the type of research and the data collected did not allow us to conclude that young people belonging to specific categories had a particular profile (for example, that employment was more accessible for young people with a high school diploma, that 15-20 year olds had an easier time finding a job, etc.). In fact, everything suggests that the opposite is true and that it would have been very risky to make such observations.

This option, far from being a methodological flaw, represents a deliberate and reasoned approach, motivated by various considerations. It aims to account for the complexity of lived experiences and in no way seeks to generalize the data. Therefore, while differences exist, for example, between young people with university degrees and those with different levels of education, these distinctions are not significant enough in our view, given the overall data, to justify separate categorization. Rather, the similarities in terms of issues, needs, interests, and facilitating strategies related to employment, despite differences in backgrounds and profiles, were significant enough to justify a joint analysis.

The absence of categorization is therefore based on three main considerations: methodological, cultural, and contextual. Methodologically, the richness and depth of the qualitative data collected—semi-structured interviews and focus groups—allowed for a nuanced understanding of individual experiences. The complexity of the paths, obstacles, and aspirations of young FNI transcends traditional sociodemographic categories. Forcing a categorization would have led to oversimplification and a loss of information. The chosen approach preserves the diversity of lived experiences, thus offering a more accurate representation of reality. This methodological choice, initially perceived as a challenge, nevertheless enabled an analysis that revealed the interdependence of factors influencing the socio-professional integration and retention of this group, paving the way for more comprehensive solutions. This approach thus acknowledges the inherent complexity of the realities faced by young FNI and avoids the risks of tokenization and stereotyping inherent in more rigid categorizations.

DEFINITION OF TOKENING

"Tokenization" describes the act of reducing a person to a simple symbol or cliché representing their culture or identity (in this case, FNI), instead of recognizing them as a complex and unique individual. It is somewhat like transforming a person into a "token" used to check out a diversity box or to illustrate a predefined viewpoint on FNI. This can manifest as: an excessive focus on the traditional or folkloric aspects of their culture, ignoring contemporary realities and the challenges they face; an expectation that they conform to stereotypes or idealized images of what a FNI person should be; or the instrumentalization of their identity for political, social, or economic ends, without regard for their own perspective or interests. In short, the tokenization of FNI people is a form of dehumanization that denies their individuality and reduces their identity to a mere symbol.

Moreover, the cultures of Indigenous peoples are often all-encompassing, where the individual is seen within their family, professional, community, and spiritual context. A reductive categorization would have ignored these crucial connections. In short, the Western individualistic approach underlying many categorization

models can be incompatible with these worldviews. Furthermore, in many communities, an individual's identity and well-being are closely linked to the "community". A categorization that isolates young people from their community context can lead to a misunderstanding of their needs and aspirations. Moreover, relationships between individuals and groups are central to the cultures of FNI youth. A categorization that focuses solely on individual characteristics would therefore also have risked neglecting the importance of support networks and community relationships in entering and maintaining employment. In short, in our view, any categorization, unless highly nuanced, risked perpetuating stereotypes and generalizations about FNI youth. These stereotypes would have hindered the understanding of their individual experiences and specific needs.

Finally, from a contextual perspective, the absence of categories for young people stems from the desire to highlight the systemic factors that influence access to employment for all FNI youth, regardless of their individual or personal characteristics. These factors are numerous and interconnected: colonial history, government policies, economic inequalities, systemic racism, access to services, geographic isolation, and so on. Categorization risked obscuring these systemic realities by focusing solely on individual characteristics. The approach adopted highlights the broader context in which young people's experiences are embedded, thus contextualizing the challenges they face.

Furthermore, other arguments, notably supported by the discourse of the stakeholders and young FNI we met, and subsequently deduced from our analyses, also justify our decision not to work with categories and confirm the relevance of our approach. First, categorizing young people can be inappropriate and even offensive depending on the FNI culture. Participants confirmed that young people's experiences with entering and remaining in employment are complex and multidimensional, and that categorizing them can reduce this complexity and obscure certain nuances. Our approach allows us to present the diversity of lived experiences and avoids oversimplification. Furthermore, we do not believe that the issues, needs, interests, or strategies presented can be categorized according to a single "type" of young person. Thus, our analysis focuses instead on identifying specific characteristics (for example, specific needs or issues), potentially leading to more personalized solutions rather than simply labeling them. That said, we have prioritized a reflective stance in our analyses regarding potential biases and preconceptions. We wanted to avoid a Western perspective influencing the interpretation of the data, which such categorization could have encouraged.

Finally, although we have avoided placing young people into categories, certain distinctions have nonetheless emerged from the data, particularly for specific elements. For example, Inuit youth and those from isolated communities, without road access to urban centers, exhibited particular characteristics. That said, contrary to what the context might suggest, and despite the number of Inuit interviewed, not many differences emerged in terms of socio-professional integration and job retention between First Nations and Inuit. Significant differences undoubtedly exist, but even these do not, according to the results, specifically relate to these aspects of their development. Similarly, nuances emerge for recent university graduates, those living in urban areas, or those with significant work experience. In these cases, these more obvious nuances or distinctions are presented so as not to compromise the overall approach.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this research has deepened our understanding of the issues related to the socio-professional integration and job retention of young First Nations people, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in its design and implementation. These limitations, far from calling into question the value of the results obtained, allow us to contextualize the conclusions and guide future research.

The first limitation concerns sampling. The recruitment of participants, based primarily on availability and willingness to collaborate, resulted in a non-probability sample. While this approach allowed for the collection

of rich and in-depth data from key stakeholders in the field, it raises questions about the representativeness of all young FNI in Quebec. The individuals and organizations that participated in the study may have different experiences or perspectives than those who were not included introduced a potential selection bias. Furthermore, the coverage of the eleven First Nations in Quebec is not uniform, and some age groups are less represented than others. While interviews with stakeholders helped to address this lack of representativeness, it is important to recognize that the perspectives of young people from certain First Nations and specific age groups—especially those aged 15-18—may be underrepresented. Thus, it should be noted that the parameters identified initially (during the design phase) evolved in light of the context and realities on the ground when it came time to engage with practitioners and young people. For example, the number of focus groups and individual interviews is not the same as that targeted in the research design. This type of evolution of initial parameters in research is a common phenomenon. It is explained by the ongoing adaptation of the project to realities on the ground and the needs expressed by partners. These adjustments, made in accordance with ethical principles and research protocols in Indigenous contexts (APNQL, FAQ, Asselin & Basile), aim to maintain the relevance, validity, and cultural coherence of the approach. They reflect a reflective and participatory approach where the research responsibly adapts to emerging learning and contexts.

Another limitation concerns the subjectivity inherent in qualitative analysis. The interpretation of data from interviews and focus groups relies on the researchers' expertise and judgment and can be influenced by their own biases and perspectives. Although measures were taken to ensure the rigor and validity of the analysis (e.g., thematic coding, reflexivity, inclusion of Indigenous people on the research team), it is impossible to completely eliminate subjectivity. Furthermore, the choice not to use a pre-established categorization of youth, while motivated by valid methodological and cultural considerations, may have resulted in a loss of nuance and specificity. It is possible that some significant differences between the groups of young people (for example, according to educational level, place of residence, etc.) were masked by this broader approach.

The geographic and contextual scope of the study is also a limitation. By focusing primarily on the Quebec context, the results may not be directly applicable to other regions of Canada or to other countries, where socioeconomic and cultural realities may differ. Furthermore, the issues related to socioeconomic integration and job retention are constantly evolving, and the results of this study may no longer be entirely relevant in a few years.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in literature reviews. While rigorous, the literature search may be biased towards published studies and against unpublished ones. Moreover, the focus on French and English sources may have excluded important perspectives from publications in other languages, including Spanish.

In short, these limitations underscore the complexity of research on Indigenous issues and the need for a humble and reflective approach. They call for cautious interpretation of the results and further research efforts to address the identified gaps. Future studies could, in particular, strive to include larger and more representative samples, or explore the specific practices used for certain groups of Indigenous youth. It is also essential to continue engaging in dialogue with communities to ensure that the research is conducted respectfully and relevantly, and that it contributes to improving the living conditions of Indigenous youth.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this section has outlined the methodological foundations of our research, highlighting the integration of a thorough literature review with rich and diverse qualitative fieldwork. The approach adopted has allowed us to grasp the complexity of the issues related to the socio-professional integration and job retention of Indigenous youth. The deliberate choice not to use a preconceived categorization of young people, motivated by methodological, cultural, and contextual considerations, demonstrates a desire to account for

the diversity of lived experiences and to avoid the pitfalls of simplification and stereotyping. This decision, while it may seem counterintuitive, proved essential in highlighting the systemic factors that influence access to employment for all young FNI people, regardless of their individual characteristics. While acknowledging the nuances and specificities of certain groups (for example, Inuit youth or recent university graduates), we have favored an approach that highlights the interdependence of factors and the need for solutions tailored to the complex realities of these young people.

The results presented in the following sections are the fruit of this rigorous and respectful approach, which aims to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by young Indigenous People (FNI) in their journey toward autonomy and professional fulfillment. Before moving directly to these results (five main sections), we offer a sidebar containing statistics on FNI and employment.

The inclusion of a statistical sidebar at the beginning of this report is justified by the need to establish a rigorous and factual contextual framework for analyzing the challenges related to the socio-professional integration and job retention of young people. These figures allow us to quantify the extent of the challenges faced by these young people, highlighting persistent disparities in employment rates, income, and sectoral representation. We chose to include data from Quebec and Canada, as the main data sources are Canadian. Disaggregated data from Quebec is very rare. The statistical overview thus serves as an objective point of reference, allowing us to move beyond subjective impressions and base the analysis on measurable indicators. Furthermore, these statistics offer a crucial point of comparison with other population groups, particularly non-indigenous youth, thereby revealing the systemic inequalities that hinder access to employment for young FNI. By concretely illustrating these disparities, the statistical overview reinforces the relevance and urgency of the research and justifies the need for targeted interventions tailored to the specific realities of young FNI. Finally, this quantitative overview serves as a springboard for the qualitative exploration of the experiences and perspectives of young Indigenous (FNI), providing a broader context that enriches the interpretation of data from interviews and focus groups. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this statistical portrait: it is difficult to be entirely accurate and precise. Indeed, while relevant and interesting, this data must be interpreted with caution, as not all FNI participate in the censuses used to conduct these analyses. Many choose not to respond to the various censuses, while others are unable to do so for various administrative or logistical reasons. In short, a degree of skepticism is necessary when interpreting this information.

SIDEBAR A: SOME STATISTICS

PROPORTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN FNI POPULATIONS

The challenge of FNIs population dynamics

FNIs have a demographic structure distinct from that of the Canadian and Quebec populations, characterized by a significantly higher proportion of young people. In 2006, the median age of people identifying themselves as FNIs was 27, with 30% of the population under the age of 15 (Statistics Canada, 2008). This demographic structure, already marked by a preponderance of youth, has changed slightly in 2021, with a median age of 31 and a proportion of 25% under 15 (Statistics Canada, 2023). Although aging has been observed, it remains less pronounced than in the rest of the population. A notable difference persists between First Nations and Inuit, the latter having a lower median age (25 years in 2021) than First Nations (29 years in 2021). By way of comparison, the median age of the Canadian population was 41 in 2021, with only 16% of the population under the age of 15 (Statistics Canada, 2023). In Quebec, the situation is different. In 2021, the median age of the First Nations (38) was higher than that of the rest of Canada, while that of the Inuit (25) remained comparable to national figures. The median age of the Quebec population was 42 (Statistics Canada, 2023). This demographic disparity, marked by a high proportion of young people among First Nations and Inuit compared to the general population,

poses a major challenge in terms of economic and social planning, underlining the need to anticipate the growth of the active population within these communities over the coming decades (Palesh, 2016). The scale of this challenge is accentuated by current employment rates and significant barriers to socio-professional integration.

Demographic structure of young FNIs: a reality that contrasts with the general population

An analysis of the distribution of young people (aged 15-34) within the FNIs populations reveals notable differences from the Canadian and Quebec populations. In Canada, in 2021, there were 170,915 young people (aged 15-24) belonging to a First Nation, representing 16% of the total population in this group (1,048,040 individuals) (Statistics Canada, 2023). This proportion is significantly higher than that observed in the general Canadian population (11%) for this age group (Statistics Canada, 2023). The 25-34 age group had a similar proportion (15% of the First Nations population). In 2021, Inuit had comparable proportions of young people in these two age brackets (17% in the 15-24 age bracket and 16% in the 25-34 age bracket), representing 12,170 and 10,935 individuals respectively out of a total Inuit population of 70,540 (Statistics Canada, 2023). These proportions are significantly higher than those observed in the general Canadian population (13% for the 25-34 age group). Overall, young FNIs (aged 15-34) represented around 1% of the Canadian population and 4% of the youth population in this age bracket in 2021. In Quebec, the proportion of young FNIs in the 15-34 age bracket is even higher, reaching 26% among First Nations and 33% among Inuit, compared to 23% for the overall Quebec population (Statistics Canada, 2023). In Quebec, young FNIs (aged 15-34) represented 0.4% of the total population and 1.8% of the youth population in this age group (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data underline the significant over-representation of FNIs youth compared to the general population, underscoring the crucial challenge of their socio-economic integration and the importance of economic growth and job creation on First Nations territories and in Inuit Nunangat. The massive arrival of these young people on the job market in the coming decades requires effective and adapted socio-professional integration strategies (Palesch, 2016).

FNIS YOUTH WORKFORCE IN CANADA AND QUEBEC BY AGE, GENDER AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

FNIs youth activity rate by age

Significant differences from the general population

An analysis of FNIs youth participation rates in Canada reveals significant differences from the general population. For those aged 15 and over, the activity rate for First Nations was 55.6% (employment rate: 46.3%) in 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022), compared to 63.7% (employment rate: 57.1%) for the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2023). Among Inuit, the overall participation rate was 56.6% (employment rate: 46.4%) (Statistics Canada, 2022). An analysis by age group shows significant disparities. For the 25-34 age group, labour force participation rates are higher, reaching 67% (employment rate: 54.5%) among First Nations and 66.1% (employment rate: 52.4%) among Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2022), yet remain below the rates for the Canadian population of the same age (85.1% participation rate, 76.7% employment rate). For 15-24-year-olds, on the other hand, activity rates are considerably lower, at 43.6% (employment rate: 32.5%) for First Nations and 44.9% (employment rate: 34.2%) for Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2022), compared to 60.3% (employment rate: 48.5%) for the Canadian population of the same age group (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data highlight a significant gap between the activity rates of young FNIs and those of the general population, particularly among the youngest (aged 15-24).

Contrasting activity rates for young FNIs by age in Quebec

In Quebec, the gap between the activity rates of young FNIs and those of the general population is confirmed, with variations according to ethnic group and age group. In 2022, the activity rate for First Nations aged 15 and over was 58.6% (employment rate: 53%), compared to 64.1% (employment rate: 59.3%) for the overall Quebec population (Statistics Canada, 2023). Among the Inuit, the activity rate was slightly higher, at 59.3% (employment rate: 52%) (Statistics Canada, 2022). Similar to Canadian data, the participation rate among 25–34-year-olds has risen, reaching 74.9% (employment rate: 68%) for First Nations and 69.8% (employment rate: 60.8%) for Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2022), but still below the rates for the Quebec population of the same age (87.5% participation rate, 81.7% employment rate). Among 15–24-year-olds, the activity rate is lower among FNIs, at 52.9% (employment rate: 44.5%) for First Nations and 52.2% (employment rate: 44.1%) for Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2022), compared with 65.4% (employment rate: 57.6%) for the Quebec population of the same age group (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data confirm the existence of significant disparities in activity rates between young FNIs and their non indigenous counterparts in Quebec, underlining the Need for a more in-depth analysis of the contextual factors influencing the socio-professional integration of these young people.

Influence of place of residence on employment rates of young FNIs in Quebec

Interpreting data on the activity and employment rates of young FNIs in Quebec requires a nuanced analysis, taking into account the determining influence of place of residence. According to Longo et al (2021), employment rates vary considerably depending on whether young people live in a community or an urban setting. For First Nations youth aged 15 to 24, the employment rate is significantly lower for those living in a community than for those living off-community. In Quebec, the geographic distribution of First Nations youth is relatively balanced between communities (47.2%) and urban centers (52.8%). Among young Inuit (aged 15-24), the concentration in Nunavik results in similar employment rates, whether they live in Nunavik (50.5%) or elsewhere in Quebec (51.2%). However, the small number of young Inuit living outside Nunavik (11.8%) means that a reliable statistical analysis of their urban employment rate is not possible. The majority of Inuit youth in Quebec (88.2%) live in the 14 villages of Nunavik, and the exclusion of these villages from the Labour Force Survey and the low presence of Inuit youth in other towns in Quebec preclude any accurate estimates for this group. These data underline the Need for more comprehensive and disaggregated data to better understand the employment reality of young FNIs in the different regions of Quebec.

FNIs youth employment rate by gender

Persistent disparities

An analysis of activity rates by gender reveals significant disparities among young FNIs in Canada. In the 25-34 age group, men have significantly higher participation rates than women (Statistics Canada, 2022). For First Nations, males in this age group had an activity rate of 71%, compared to 34.2% for females (Statistics Canada, 2022). This difference is also observed in the 15-24 age group, with an activity rate of 44.1% for men and 43.1% for women (Statistics Canada, 2022). It is important to note an apparent drop in the activity rate among women aged 25-34, which could be linked to work-family balance, a major issue for women in this age bracket (Anderson, 2019). However, the labour force participation rate of First Nations women increases significantly after age 35, reaching 69% among 35–44-year-olds (Statistics Canada, 2022), while it tends to stabilize among men. Among Inuit, disparities between men and women are less pronounced, with participation rates of 68.3% for men aged 25-34 and 64.1% for women in the same age bracket (Statistics Canada, 2022). For 15–24-year-olds, the rates are also close, at 44.8% for men and 44.9% for women (Statistics Canada, 2022).

Persistent inequalities

In Quebec, data from 2021 reveals persistent inequalities between men and women in the First Nations and Inuit populations. For First Nations, men aged 15-24 have an activity rate of 54.3% versus 51.5% for women, while for the 25-34 age group, the rates are 77.7% and 72.2% respectively (Statistics Canada, 2022). Among the Inuit of Quebec, males aged 15-24 have an activity rate of 54.2%, versus 50.2% for females, and the rates for the 25-34 age group are 75.9% for males and 65% for females (Statistics Canada, 2022). In all the groups studied, women are systematically less likely to be economically active than men. There is a certain stability, or even an increase, in the activity rate between the ages of 35 and 54, for both women and men. This apparent stability could be masking complex phenomena, with departures from the labour market being offset by the entry of people who were not previously participating (Anderson, 2019). This observation highlights the complexity of the factors influencing women's economic participation, and the Need for in-depth analysis to better understand these dynamics and identify interventions that could promote greater female participation in the labour market.

FNIs youth labour force participation rate by level of education

Decisive impact of education

Educational attainment has a considerable influence on the activity and employment rates of young FNIs. In all categories observed, the absence of a high school diploma or equivalent is correlated with significantly lower activity and employment rates (Statistics Canada, 2022, 2023). The higher the level of education, the greater the probability of being active and employed. A notable exception is First Nations men aged 15 to 24 with a bachelor's degree (Statistics Canada, 2022), where lower-than-average participation rates are observed.

This observation requires further analysis to determine the contributing factors. Women appear to be more disadvantaged than men by the lack of a diploma, regardless of the age group (15-24 years or 25-34 years). In Quebec, in 2021, First Nations women without a diploma had activity rates of 33% (15-24 years) and 42.2% (25-34 years) (employment rates: 26.1% and 35.8%), compared to 39.7% and 62.1% for men (employment rates: 31.5% and 52.5%) (Statistics Canada, 2023). Similar gaps, although less pronounced, are observed among Inuit women (Statistics Canada, 2022).

Obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent significantly alters this situation. In Quebec, among First Nations 15–24-year-olds with a high school diploma, the gap between male and female participation rates is minimal (0.3% difference), and the employment rate is even higher for women (Statistics Canada, 2022). A similar trend is observed in the 25-34 age group, with little difference between the sexes. Among Inuit, the gap persists, but is smaller than among young people without a diploma (Statistics Canada, 2022). Obtaining a post-secondary diploma (certificate, diploma or degree) again changes the situation, with a slight increase in the gender gap among First Nations 15–24-year-olds, then stabilization among 25–34-year-olds (Statistics Canada, 2022). Among Inuit, the gap remains more pronounced for 15–24-year-olds, but decreases for 25–34-year-olds, where women even have a higher employment rate despite a slightly lower participation rate (Statistics Canada, 2022). In Quebec, for First Nations 15–24-year-olds with a bachelor's degree, the participation and employment rates fall slightly for men and rise slightly for women (Statistics Canada, 2022). For the 25-34 age group, rates exceed 90% for both sexes. Among Inuit, rates reach or exceed 90% for women with a university degree equivalent to a bachelor's degree or less, while no men held such a degree in the sample (Statistics Canada, 2022). These data illustrate the decisive impact of educational attainment on the economic activity of young FNI, while highlighting important nuances according to gender, ethnic group and degree level.

Multidimensional analysis of the impact of educational level on the economic activity of young FNIs

Data analysis reveals a significant correlation between educational attainment and economic activity among young FNI. One major finding emerges: the absence of a high school diploma or equivalent is systematically associated with significantly lower activity and employment rates in all groups studied (Statistics Canada, 2022, 2023). This observation underlines the crucial importance of education as a determining factor in socio-professional integration. More specifically, there is a positive relationship between the level of education attained and the probability of labour market participation. The higher the level of education, the higher the rate of activity and employment. However, this relationship is not linear, and important nuances appear according to age group and gender, in particular.

A notable exception to this general trend is First Nations men aged 15 to 24 with a bachelor's degree (Statistics Canada, 2022). This group has lower activity and employment rates than the average for men in the same age group. This unexpected observation suggests the presence of specific contextual factors that merit further investigation. It is possible that difficulties in socio-professional integration in fields requiring a university degree, or barriers to accessing skilled jobs in their community, contribute to this situation. Further research is Needed to understand the reasons for this discrepancy.

Another important aspect to consider is the difference between the sexes. The data reveal that women are systematically more disadvantaged by the absence of a diploma than men, whatever the age bracket (15-24 or 25-34). In Quebec, in 2021, the difference between the participation rates of First Nations women and men without a diploma is particularly marked, especially in the 25-34 age group (Statistics Canada, 2023). This disparity could be attributed to several factors, including increased family responsibilities for women and gender bias in the labour market. Similar, albeit smaller, gaps are observed among Inuit women (Statistics Canada, 2022), underlining the persistence of gender inequalities.

Obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency certificate considerably improves the situation, significantly reducing the gap between male and female participation rates. In Quebec, among First Nations youth with a high school diploma, the gender gap is virtually zero for the 15-24 age bracket, and even reversed for the employment rate (Statistics Canada, 2022). This observation suggests that the acquisition of a minimum level of education is a determining factor in women's participation in the workforce. Among Inuit, despite having obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, the gap between male and female participation rates persists, but is less pronounced than among young people without a diploma (Statistics Canada, 2022).

Analysis of data on post-secondary graduation (certificate, diploma or degree) reveals more nuanced trends. A larger gap between First Nations men and women is observed in the 15-24 age group, followed by stabilization in the 25-34 age group (Statistics Canada, 2022). Among Inuit, a significant difference persists in the 15-24 age group, but the gap narrows in the 25-34 age group, where women have a higher employment rate, despite a slightly lower labour force participation rate (Statistics Canada, 2022). In Quebec, for First Nations 15–24-year-olds with a bachelor's degree, there was a decrease in the activity rate for men and a slight increase for women (Statistics Canada, 2022), while for 25–34-year-olds, rates exceeded 90% for both sexes. Among Inuit women in this same age bracket with a university degree equivalent to or less than a bachelor's degree, rates even reached or exceeded 100%, while no men in the sample held such a degree (Statistics Canada, 2022). These complex and nuanced data highlight the multidimensional impact of educational attainment on the economic activity of young FNIs, underscoring the Need for in-depth analysis of the factors contributing to the observed disparities between genders, ethnic groups and educational levels.

Precarity of employment and full-time work among young FNIs to shed light on inequalities

An in-depth analysis of the socio-professional integration of young FNIs is not limited to examining activity and employment rates. It is crucial to integrate a perspective that includes job insecurity, assessed here by the proportion of full-time workers in relation to the total number of workers. This factor, closely linked to other variables such as level of education and geographical context, provides a clearer picture of the persistent inequalities affecting young FNIs, even when they are employed. A low level of education, for example, is often correlated with a greater risk of precariousness, with less-skilled young people likely to hold part-time jobs or temporary contracts. Moreover, isolated geographical contexts can limit access to full-time jobs. The following analysis therefore examines the proportion of people who have worked full-time for a full year, in order to shed more light on the situation of job insecurity and its implications for young FNIs.

Analysis of job insecurity in Quebec (2020)

Despite overall activity rates similar to those of the Quebec population, data on full-time work reveal important nuances with regard to the precariousness of employment among young FNI. In 2021, 53.4% of Quebecers with employment income had worked at least 49 weeks, compared with 52.6% of First Nations and 62.6% of Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2023). These figures, based on a relatively small number of employment income recipients (51,880 First Nations and 5,715 Inuit) (Statistics Canada, 2023), should be interpreted with caution. However, an analysis by age group is particularly revealing of the precariousness among young people. Among 15–24-year-olds, only 22% of First Nations had worked full-time for the whole of 2020, compared to 49.4% of Inuit and 16.9% of Quebecers (Statistics Canada, 2023). The notable difference between First Nations and Inuit could be explained by early engagement in low-skilled jobs, linked to low levels of education (Statistics Canada, 2018a, 2018b). Among 25–54-year-olds, rates are higher, with 60.5% for First Nations, 66.7% for Inuit and 61.9% for the Quebec population having worked full-time throughout 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data, collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, must be interpreted in light of the particular economic context of that period. Primary industries (mining, forestry, fishing), which are often important in FNI communities, were relatively less affected by containment measures, which could explain the difference between sectors.

Analysis of job insecurity by gender in Quebec (2020)

A comparative analysis of full-time work rates by gender reveals a slight trend against women, for both First Nations and Inuit, in 2020. Among 15–24-year-olds, 23.6% of First Nations men with employment income had worked at least 49 weeks, compared with 20.3% of women (Statistics Canada, 2023). Among Inuit, the gap is wider, with 52.3% of men and 46% of women having worked full-time for the full year (Statistics Canada, 2023). In the Quebec population, the difference is 4.7% (19.2% for men vs. 14.5% for women) (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data confirm once again the persistence of gender inequalities in the labour market, highlighting a greater risk of precariousness for First Nations and Inuit women, underscoring the need for specific interventions to promote greater equity and job security for this segment of the population.

SECTION A: ISSUES FACED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

"We don't see many people like us at the top of the mountain, we see people pouring down, and no one's reaching out to us at the top..." (Young Cree, age 20)

INTRODUCTION

To understand the needs and interests of young people, and then better understand the strategies and practices to be implemented to support their socio-professional integration and job retention, it is necessary to recall the context in which they evolve. Indeed, consideration of these specific issues is an essential prerequisite to examining their needs and designing practices and strategies for their integration and job retention. This approach is justified by the need to contextualize the realities experienced by these young people, whose trajectories are frequently marked by singular historical, social, cultural and economic factors. Failure to take these specific contexts into account could result in unsuitable or even counter-productive solutions that fail to take into account the particular obstacles faced by young FNIs.

In short, it is ethically, methodologically and politically imperative to take into account the issues faced by young FNIs before addressing their needs and the practices of integration and job retention. It's an approach based on respect, relevance, effectiveness and social justice, which we believe ensures that the interventions subsequently proposed are culturally appropriate, trauma-sensitive, self-determination-focused and, therefore, more likely to foster the full inclusion of young FNIs within society.

For these reasons, this section explores the multiple issues hindering the socio-professional integration and job retention of young people aged 15 to 35 in Quebec's FNIs. These issues are well known and now well documented. As such, and since the main objective of this report is not to explain them in depth, they are mentioned and explained briefly. In fact, they form a common basis of understanding for the subsequent presentation of the results of our study. Several of the issues presented can be considered cross-cutting, i.e. not specific to employment, but affecting the general living conditions of young people, which directly or indirectly influence their integration or retention in employment. However, they are mainly concerned with pre-employability and employability issues, then also with cross-cutting issues, and those of education and training. Particularities specific to communities or noncommunity environments, where applicable, are presented as they arise. A summary table is provided at the end of this section.

1. CROSS-FUNCTIONAL ISSUES

1.1 Historical legacy and intergenerational trauma

The negative repercussions of residential schools remain a defining reality for current generations of FNIs (CVR, 2015; Merrill, Bruce and Marlin, 2010), even if the wounds seem less acute today: "We don't have the same barriers as our parents (having been to residential schools, for example). That said, we still experience intergenerational traumas, but we're more open and able to talk about them..." (Young Cree, age 20). The intergenerational trauma experienced manifests itself in many ways, having a lasting effect on the perception and experience of education. Indeed, school, often experienced as an instrument of forced cultural assimilation, generates distrust of the education system and a decline in self-confidence (CVR, 2015; Stewart, 2009). This institutional distrust is reinforced by the sense of isolation and alienation experienced by many young FNIs within educational institutions, preventing them from achieving their full potential (Stewart, 2009). The context of injustice and historical violence leaves deep scars, disrupting the intergenerational transmission of traditional values and knowledge, making it more difficult to reconcile cultural identity and integration into the education system (CVR, 2015). The psychological impact translates into increased vulnerability to discrimination and social difficulties, which can lead to learning difficulties and poorer school retention.

Moreover, studies on intergenerational trauma highlight the negative repercussions on mental and physical health, increasing the risk of chronic illnesses and behavioral problems that can influence school perseverance or success (CVR, 2015).

The integration and retention of young FNIs is also marked by this historical legacy of colonialism, with lasting consequences for their employment prospects (D'Antimo, 2021, Marshall et al. 2013). This legacy manifest itself in a fundamental imbalance of power, reflecting centuries of policies and practices aimed at marginalizing and controlling these communities (D'Antimo, 2021). This imbalance is reflected in economic and social structures, limiting FNIs' access to stable, well-paid jobs, often confining them to precarious, underpaid employment with no prospects for advancement. Policies of forced assimilation, notably through residential schools, not only destroyed the social and cultural structures of communities, but also inflicted deep-seated trauma leading to intergenerational repercussions on mental health, self-esteem and socialization skills, thus affecting the skills needed to find and keep a job (CVR, 2015). The transmission of this trauma manifests itself in greater vulnerability to poverty, discrimination, dependency and mental and physical health problems, all of which make access to stable employment more difficult. Lack of self-confidence, feelings of powerlessness and difficulty in establishing positive, lasting relationships on the job market are direct consequences of this historical context. What's more, even though we are seeing more and more of them, the absence of positive role models and mentors in a wide variety of jobs within and outside communities accentuates these difficulties. The transmission of this trauma manifests itself in greater vulnerability to poverty, discrimination, dependency and mental and physical health problems, all of which make access to stable employment more difficult. Lack of self-confidence, feelings of powerlessness and difficulty in establishing positive, lasting relationships on the job market are direct consequences of this historical context. What's more, even though we're seeing more and more of them, the absence of positive role models and mentors in a wide variety of jobs within and outside communities accentuates these difficulties. Lack of access to professional networks and relevant training for desired jobs in their communities, or to jobs compatible with their family responsibilities, compounds the difficulties of integration. The impact of colonialism also manifests itself in a lack of resources and infrastructure in communities, which limits local economic development and therefore employment opportunities (Government of Canada, 2019).

1.2 Personal life paths

The integration and job retention of young FNIs are affected by the complexity of their personal and family life paths, a reality inseparable from their employment situation (Fontaine-Dumais and Pinsonneault, 2021). This complexity manifests itself in family and relational life courses that are often difficult to navigate, and in a wide variety of geographical, cultural and occupational contexts that profoundly influence individual experiences (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). These young people face a range of personal challenges, including education, lifestyle habits, family conditions and health status (Cloutier, 2021; Goodleaf, 2021), which are often interrelated and contribute to difficulties in accessing and retaining employment. The presence of young children in several families, for example, makes job integration and retention more difficult, especially in sectors such as mining, which require irregular schedules and travel (Caron, 2020; Deschênes, 2022). These challenges can be compounded by the presence of pre-existing or current problems such as gambling, drug or alcohol addiction, extreme poverty (including food insecurity and homelessness), a criminal record, experiences of violence and health problems (Fontaine-Dumais and Pinsonneault, 2021). These personal and family difficulties interact with other obstacles, including individual, cultural and language barriers, and low self-esteem (FNHRDCQ, 2023), creating a set of factors that make access to employment and professional stability extremely difficult to achieve.

1.3 Socio-economic, community and family factors

Socio-economic difficulties are a major obstacle, as unemployment and poverty, major vulnerability factors (National Council of Welfare, 2007; Malatest, 2004), limit access to essential resources such as adequate housing, healthy food and healthcare. This lack of resources translates into precarious living conditions, such

as overcrowding or lack of decent housing, which have a direct impact on education and employment. What's more, family instability and the resulting social problems can seriously disrupt educational and career paths. In this difficult context, low self-esteem, often fuelled by a combination of poverty, discrimination and a lack of positive role models, hinders the development of individual potential (Jackson and Smith, 2001; Merrill, Bruce and Marlin, 2010). The absence of adequate family support, itself sometimes caused by a lack of resources or the effects of historical trauma, further compounds these difficulties. Finally, the absence or inadequacy of community role models and mentors, capable of guiding and encouraging these young people in their educational journey, amplifies the issues, potentially leading to early school leaving, difficulties in pursuing higher education and, consequently, limited employment prospects (Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Kroes, 2008; Stewart, 2009).

1.4 Racism, microaggressions, prejudice and discrimination

Racism, prejudice, microaggressions and discrimination are still today major obstacles to the integration and job retention of young people from FNIs, affecting their career paths at all levels (FNHRDCQ, 2023; Merrill, Bruce and Marlin, 2010). This phenomenon, which manifests itself in various forms, from the exchange of hurtful words to explicit systemic racism, sometimes creates hostile and inhospitable work environments, hindering both their integration and their progression (FNHRDCQ, 2023). It manifests itself not only in individual acts, but is part of deeply rooted systemic inequalities, affecting access to resources, programs and opportunities for learning and employment (CVR, 2015). Stereotypes and prejudice play a fundamental role in racial profiling, directly impacting the hiring opportunities and career prospects of young FNIs (Axta, 2019). This racial profiling often begins as early as educational institutions, leading many young FNIs to drop out of school and thus limiting the development of their human capital (Biddle et al., 2013). This phenomenon is amplified by the lack of representativeness within educational institutions and targeted professions, reinforcing the feeling of exclusion and non-membership. Discrimination also manifests itself in access to internships, limiting the acquisition of practical experience and skills essential to socio-professional integration (Conseil national du bien-être social, 2007; Malatest, 2004). Indeed, this racism, which can be described as systemic (Pidgeon et al., 2019), is perpetuated in the professional world, limiting access to positions of responsibility and professional development opportunities. FNI candidates, perceived as culturally different from the organization, can feel reclusive, misunderstood and victims of a “ghettoization” phenomenon, restricted to certain types of roles or sectors within the company (Sinclair, 2003). Then, the discrimination experienced in access to knowledge and positions of responsibility, particularly for young people from remote communities who have to move to urban areas (Vallières et al., 2021), demonstrates the persistence of inequalities in access to professional opportunities and the major challenges to be overcome to ensure true equality of opportunity. Stereotypes and prejudices have a strong influence on relationships, and Inuit people seem to be even more affected by certain stereotypes, particularly those linked to excessive alcohol consumption and homelessness. Finally, the cumulative impact of these forms of discrimination engenders a profound sense of exclusion that seriously damages young people's self-esteem and motivation, affecting recognition of one's own skills, school perseverance and chances of professional success.

1.5 Education and relationship to education

The current education system poses specific challenges for young FNIs, not least because of a mismatch between school curricula and their career aspirations, contributing to lower motivation and learning difficulties (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017). This mismatch is particularly evident in the fields of science and mathematics, which, combined with a low level of numeracy skills among a significant proportion of young FNIs (35% of 15–24-year-olds according to Statistics Canada, 2018b), considerably limits their prospects of accessing careers requiring higher levels of education. For those aspiring to skilled trades, the requirement of a high level of education, often held predominantly by the allochthonous population, creates an additional barrier (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017), accentuating inequalities in access to these professions. This situation, illustrated by the overrepresentation of FNIs in vocational education and training compared to their underrepresentation in fields requiring higher education (OECD, 2018), reflects systemic barriers to educational progression and the

development of skills Needed to access skilled jobs. Indeed, Natives are more likely to be confined to jobs or sectors that do not require a high level of qualifications or education (OECD, 2018). The majority are found in public administration (18% vs. 7.4% for non indigenous), construction (7.2% vs. 5.6% for non indigenous), forestry, fishing, mining, community care, healthcare or social assistance (13.8% vs. 12.5%) (Statistics Canada, 2015). In addition, non-linear educational paths and frequent interruptions to studies (Bruce and Marlin, 2012) make it difficult to adapt to the rigid structure of the education system (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Deschênes, 2024), a difficulty exacerbated by the lack of a coherent transition system between studies and the job market (Bruce and Marlin, 2012). Then, the lack of funding for training infrastructure and resources compounds these difficulties, limiting access to quality education and helping to maintain inequalities (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021).

It can therefore be said that the education and training of young FNIs are complex issues, influenced by various socio-economic and cultural factors that differ from those of the majority population. While the majority society model strongly values post-secondary education as the main route to employment, young FNIs express alternative training perspectives, less focused on traditional diplomas and more on practical, contextualized learning paths, including organizational learning. This perception does not imply a lack of interest in training, but rather a different apprehension of its role and relevance in their career path. That said, access to education and training represents a significant barrier to socio-professional integration for a significant number of young FNIs, not least because of the perceptions of members of the majority society. Data from the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2013) confirms that this perception is also present among young people: in 2013, a high proportion of young FNIs (48% of women and 45.5% of men aged 15 to 24) felt that lack of education and training was a barrier to employment for them, a proportion that was even higher for older age groups (52.3% of women and 58.7% of men aged 25 to 44).

It should be noted that, within the majority society, educational attainment remains a major determinant of employability, both for FNI and for the rest of the population: the labour market demands an increasingly skilled and educated workforce (Kroes, 2008; Merrill, Bruce and Marlin, 2010; Posca, 2018). In 2016 in Quebec, the rate of not holding a certificate or diploma (all levels) was significantly higher among FNI (30.5% for First Nations and 54.2% for Inuit aged 25 to 64) compared to the rest of the population (13%) (Posca, 2018). This disparity highlights a major obstacle to the recruitment and retention of FNIs in the labour market, as documented by numerous studies (Palesch, 2016; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2016; Ciceri and Scott, 2006; Conference Board of Canada, 2002; Caron et al., 2019; Brown and Fraehlich, 2012; Howard et al., 2012; Proulx et al., 2020; Vallières et al., 2021).

The gap widens further at the post-secondary level. In 2022 in Quebec, only 7.8% of First Nations and 2% of Inuit had a university degree, compared to 20.5% for the rest of the population (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022). At the national level, in 2021, the rates were slightly higher (12.9% for First Nations and 6.2% for Inuit), but still illustrate a significant gap in relation to the national average (Melvin, 2023). This under-representation in occupations requiring higher levels of education likely contributes to the lower participation and employment rates, and higher unemployment rates observed among FNIs (Su and Jin, 2023).

The nature of the jobs held by FNIs often reflects this lack of formal qualifications, placing them, despite unrecognized experience, skills and prior learning, in positions requiring a minimum level of education (OECD, 2018). This situation does not necessarily reflect a lack of skills, but may rather reflect a lack of access to more skilled jobs, or a career orientation and interests towards traditional sectors and manual trades, such as fishing (Vallières et al., 2021), forestry (Proulx et al., 2020), construction or others.

In short, improving access to education and training that is relevant and adapted to the realities and aspirations of young FNIs, as well as developing strategies that encourage the acquisition of practical experience, are crucial to reducing employment disparities and ensuring their full participation in the labour market. Yet there

are many barriers to education and training for these young people, not least because access to training for young FNIs is highly complex, and shaped by the interaction of systemic, socioeconomic, geographic, cultural, family and historical factors (Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Deschênes, 2022; Stewart, 2009).

1.6 Lack of inclusion and valuing of FNI perspectives in the education system

The lack of representation of FNI perspectives within the education system contributes significantly to the difficulties they face. Teaching and training models, often modeled on Western norms (Battiste, 2013; Campeau, 2021; Castellano, Davis and Lahache, 2000; Deschênes, 2024; First Nation Education Steering Committee, 2015; Toulouse, 2016), do not always take into account the ways of knowing and learning specific to FNI cultures. This pedagogical mismatch creates a mismatch between teaching methods and learners' learning styles, contributing to learning difficulties and school drop-out. The absence of programs adapted to the Needs and cultural aspirations of young FNIs, reflecting a lack of consideration for their traditional knowledge and worldview, contributes to a feeling of alienation and inadequacy to the system. Incorporating traditional knowledge and self-determined pedagogical approaches into the school curriculum is essential to promote true inclusion and foster greater academic success among young FNIs (Deschênes, 2024). The absence of teaching and administrative staff from FNI communities can also contribute to this lack of inclusion, by limiting understanding of the cultural realities and specific needs of these learners. Adequate representation of FNI cultures in school curricula at all levels of education is necessary, so that learners can recognize and identify with positive role models and take ownership of their learning. Thus, a truly inclusive education system must not only integrate the knowledge of FNIs, but also value the perspectives, values and learning styles specific to their cultures and languages (Deschênes, 2024).

1.7 The challenges of geographic mobility and isolation

For young FNIs living in remote communities, access to post-secondary, and in some cases secondary, education and training often requires leaving their home communities, generating significant geographic mobility and multiple consequences (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021 ; Palesch, 2016; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2018a; Thomas, 2016; Ciceri and Scott, 2006; Conference Board of Canada, 2002) (see the following box for a further explanation of the challenges associated with mobility between communities and urban environments). This forced mobility is frequently synonymous with isolation, rupture with the family and community support network, and cultural disconnection (D'Antimo, 2021; Spowart and Marshall, 2015), creating a context of significant stress that can contribute to dropping out of school. This sense of estrangement is exacerbated by conflicting family pressures, with young people having to choose between staying close to their families and pursuing further education (Jackson and Smith, 2001). Moreover, the frequent changes of schools associated with this mobility have proven negative effects on academic results (Kroes, 2008). These difficulties don't end with the completion of studies, as limited access to internships (Jeunesse de Montréal, 2016) accentuates the difficulties of integration for these young people who have had to move away from their communities. This lack of opportunities is exacerbated by the lack of access to training that combines classroom training and on-the-job learning, an approach that is particularly relevant for FNIs (Deschênes, 2022).

BOX B: MOBILITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND URBAN CENTERS

The mobility of young FNIs between communities and urban environments is a complex phenomenon that cannot be approached in a binary way. It is not simply a rural exodus to urban centers, but rather a circular mobility, where stays in communities and cities constitute distinct but interdependent phases of a personal and professional life course (Asselin and Drainville, 2020). To understand this dynamic, we need to analyze the factors that motivate these moves, as well as the conditions that foster successful integration in urban environments and eventual return to the community.

The community, and more specifically the traditional territory, represents an essential “cultural home” for many young FNI, a place of comfort and support. This cultural attachment is often stronger for family hunting grounds than for the community territory as a whole (Asselin and Drainville, 2020). However, important socioeconomic factors can push young people to leave their communities. Asselin and Drainville (2020) identify a lack of access to housing and crowded conditions in overcrowded homes as important motives. Added to this are limited employment opportunities, restricted access to specialized services (health, education), the easy presence of drugs and bullying problems. These factors contribute to the creation of unfavorable environments for young people to thrive and succeed in their communities.

Again, according to Asselin and Drainville (2020), the city, on the other hand, offers opportunities that may seem inaccessible in the community. Access to post-secondary education, a wider range of jobs and specialized services is a major attraction for young adults. This move can also enable them to develop greater autonomy and raise their children in a safer environment, away from the social pressures and intimidation that can exist within the community. What's more, urban life offers opportunities for exploration, encounters and new experiences, an important aspect of personal development. However, this mobility towards urban centers should not be seen as a definitive solution. For it to be beneficial, it must be accompanied by supportive measures.

Thus, mobility between community and city can be an asset, provided that urban environments offer adequate support and appropriate services to enable young people to optimize their stay (Clatworthy and Norris, 2007). This support must include incentives and opportunities to encourage their return to the community, such as employment opportunities and adapted services. For example, it is crucial to develop FNI institutions in urban areas to maintain culture and identity (Clatworthy and Norris, 2007; Ramirez, 2007). Moreover, the creation of “indigenous poles”, spaces and activities where cultural identities can be reinforced, is of interest (Asselin and Drainville, 2020; Ramirez, 2007). These spaces help to create a sense of belonging and community in an urban environment, counterbalancing the isolation and loss of identity that can occur when people are uprooted.

Finally, communities should also facilitate the mobility of young FNI between communities, traditional territories and urban environments. Rather than fighting this mobility (sometimes perceived as an exodus problem), it should be made easier for young people to travel to places where certain training courses are offered, and to get to workplaces (Asselin et al., 2021).

Analysis: towards a nuanced understanding of mobility and its implications

Analysis of the mobility situation raises a paradox: mobility can be a source of opportunity, but it can also exacerbate existing inequalities if not accompanied by adequate public policies. The emphasis on “return” to the community, while laudable, could mask a more fundamental question: how can we create equitable and sustainable living conditions in both communities and urban centers, enabling young FNIs to choose their place of residence and work according to their personal aspirations, without this choice being dictated by socio-economic constraints?

A real solution requires a systemic approach that integrates cultural, economic and social dimensions. It involves significant investment in community economic development, improving access to housing and essential services, and strengthening the institutions of both community and urban FNIs. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to track long-term mobility trajectories and assess the effectiveness of the various interventions put in place. Without a profound transformation of public policies and a clear political will to address inequalities, the

mobility of young FNIs will remain a symptom of a system that does not respond equitably to the needs of this population.

SUMMARY TABLE OF CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

PRINCIPAL CAUSES	MANIFESTATIONS	CONSEQUENCES
Cross-cutting issue: Historical heritage and intergenerational trauma		
Colonialism, residential schools, forced assimilation policies, loss of social and cultural structures.	Distrust of institutions, feelings of isolation, alienation, disruption of the transmission of traditional knowledge, increased vulnerability to discrimination and social difficulties, mental and physical health problems.	Learning difficulties, poor school retention, vulnerability to poverty, discrimination, addictions, mental and physical health problems, lack of self-confidence, difficulty establishing positive relationships, lack of positive role models, limited access to professional networks, lack of resources and infrastructure in communities, limited employment prospects.
Cross-cutting issue: Personal life paths		
Complex family and relational backgrounds, diverse geographical, cultural and occupational contexts, personal challenges (education, lifestyle habits, family conditions, state of health), dependency problems, extreme poverty, criminal record, experience of violence.	Difficulty navigating family and relational life courses, personal challenges in terms of education, lifestyle habits, family conditions and health status, presence of pre-existing or current problems (addictions, poverty, criminal record, violence, health problems), low self-esteem.	Difficulties accessing and maintaining employment, professional instability, individual, cultural and linguistic barriers.
Cross-cutting issue: Socioeconomic, community and family factors		
Unemployment, poverty, lack of essential resources (housing, food, healthcare), family instability, lack of adequate family support, lack of role models and community mentors.	Precarious living conditions, overcrowding or lack of decent housing, family instability, low self-esteem.	Impediments to the development of individual potential, early school leaving, difficulties in pursuing higher education, limited employment prospects.
Cross-cutting issue: Racism, microaggressions, prejudice and discrimination		
Systemic racism, entrenched inequalities, stereotypes, racial profiling, lack of representation within institutions and professions.	Hostile and inhospitable work environments, racial profiling, limitations in access to resources, programs, learning and employment opportunities, feelings of exclusion and not belonging, ghettoization, impact on interpersonal relationships, stereotypes (e.g. alcohol consumption, homelessness).	Difficulties integrating and progressing, dropping out of school, limited development of human capital, feelings of exclusion, damage to self-esteem and motivation, limited recognition of skills, all of which affect school perseverance and chances of professional success.

PRINCIPAL CAUSES	MANIFESTATIONS	CONSEQUENCES
Cross-cutting issue: Education and the relationship to education		
Mismatch between school curricula and career aspirations, low numeracy skills, high requirements for skilled trades, non-linear educational pathways, interrupted studies, lack of funding for infrastructure and resources.	Decreased motivation, learning difficulties, over-representation in vocational education, under-representation in fields requiring a higher level of education, non-linear school career paths, lack of a coherent transition system between studies and the job market.	Limited access to careers requiring higher education, high non-graduation rate, disparities at post-secondary level, limited labour market participation, lower-skilled jobs.
Cross-cutting issue: Lack of inclusion and valuing of FNI perspectives in the education system		
Teaching models modelled on Western standards, lack of programs adapted to cultural needs and aspirations, lack of teaching and administrative staff from FNI communities, inadequate representation of FNI cultures in school curricula.	Pedagogical inadequacy, mismatch between teaching methods and learning styles, feelings of alienation and inadequacy to the system.	Learning difficulties, dropping out of school, limited academic success.
Cross-cutting issue: Challenges linked to geographic mobility and isolation		
Need to leave home to access education and training, remoteness from communities, lack of support and guidance.	Isolation, rupture with family and community support networks, cultural disconnection, stress, conflicting family pressures, frequent school changes, limited access to internships.	Dropping out of school, negative effects on academic results, integration difficulties, lack of opportunities, lack of access to training that combines classroom and on-the-job learning.

2. CHALLENGES SPECIFIC TO INTEGRATING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE WORKFORCE AND KEEPING THEM THERE

The socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNIs is influenced by a number of major issues that require a nuanced understanding of the complex and interrelated factors involved in their journey. This section explores these significant issues facing these young people, highlighting the systemic and contextual obstacles that hinder their access to employment, and then their integration and retention in employment. The following presentation breaks down the issues into several distinct categories, without minimizing their complex interplay and cumulative impact on employment opportunities. It aims to shed light on the strategies and practices of the various players involved, in order to promote equitable and sustainable job integration and retention for these young people.

2.1 Use of mother tongue, and difficulties in French or English

Access to employment and retention for young FNIs are significantly affected by language issues, particularly mastery of French and English, Canada's official languages (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017; Deschênes, 2022; Jeunesse de Montréal, 2016; Côté, 2009; St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). Difficulty reading and writing in these official languages can be a major obstacle to performing job-related tasks, affecting productivity and career advancement prospects (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017; Côté, 2009). In the fisheries sector, for example, improving literacy levels is also an issue associated with the success of FNI learners in obtaining the fishing

vessel captain's certificate (Vallières, Beaudoin and Asselin, 2019). Many young FNIs are more comfortable in their mother tongue, and the transition to official languages can represent a significant challenge, requiring adequate linguistic support and recognition of the value of native languages. The impact of Bill 96 in Quebec, for example, highlights the complexity of these issues, underscoring the need to strike a balance between promoting the French language and supporting allophone communities to ensure their full participation in Quebec society and its labour market (FNHRDCQ, 2023). Language barriers can mean limited access to vocational training, labour market information and the support networks needed to find a job. For example, untranslated job offers can sometimes be incomprehensible, or contain too many or too complex words for a second-language speaker. Indeed, a lack of clarity in information or comprehension difficulties linked to language barriers can prevent young FNIs from fully understanding job requirements, application procedures, or employers' expectations. What's more, the dominance of official languages in the workplace can lead to a feeling of exclusion and marginalization for young FNI, affecting their self-confidence and ability to integrate fully. Finally, the lack of recognition and appreciation of their mother tongues in the workplace amplifies these difficulties.

2.2 The current realities of young FNIs

Young FNIs face singular realities that profoundly influence their path to integration and job retention, significantly distinguishing them from their non indigenous counterparts (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). For example, unlike the concerns often expressed by young non-Indigenous leaders, such as building a skate park, young Indigenous leaders often have to mobilize for vital and fundamental issues, such as access to drinking water and preserving the environment for future generations (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). This type of responsibility, added to the usual challenges of youth, represents an additional and significant pressure for these young community leaders. In addition to these social and environmental concerns, they must navigate between two worlds, reconciling their traditions and cultures with the demands of the modern world and the job market (D'Antimo, 2021). This complex navigation requires a great capacity for adaptation and resilience, confronting young FNI with major personal and societal transitions, requiring them to integrate new knowledge while simultaneously managing the changes and challenges of their environment (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). Furthermore, balancing work-study or work-family (or both) represents a significant challenge that requires rigorous organization and planning (FNHRDCQ, 2023). Family and community responsibilities often occupy a prominent place in the lives of young FNI, influencing their career choices and their availability on the job market. Balancing personal, family or community life and professional life therefore requires innovative approaches to meet the specific needs of these young people and promote better integration (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021).

2.3 Prerequisites for employment

Access to employment for young FNIs is conditioned by a set of factors that go beyond skills and professional experience. Several essential preconditions must be met to enable these young people to fully participate in the labour market. A first crucial element is access to basic resources, including adequate housing, sufficient food, and financial resources (Pidgeon et al., 2019). The lack of these basic resources creates a state of precariousness that significantly limits young people's ability to focus on their job search and meet the demands of the labour market. Food insecurity, for example, has direct consequences on physical and mental health, impacting concentration, motivation, and the ability to participate in job interviews and perform professional tasks. Similarly, the lack of adequate housing can lead to instability and stress, making it difficult to organize a job search and attend work regularly.

Access to physical and mental health services is also a determining factor. Many young FNI live with mental health problems, including anxiety, adjustment problems and depression, which can constitute a significant obstacle to job search and integration into the professional environment (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Anxiety about job searches, for example, is a reality experienced by many young people (Mathers, 2021), and this stress can be exacerbated by financial difficulties or housing problems. In addition,

significant disparities in communications related to employability (use of complex bureaucratic terms, recruitment and integration processes, etc.) can increase the stress experienced and constitute an additional barrier to access to employment (FNHRDCQ, 2023).

On another note, the Indian Act and its impact on taxation directly influence the socioeconomic conditions of FNI youth and their ability to access essential resources, such as housing, food and health care (FNHRDCQ, 2023). These prerequisites for employment are fundamental and directly impacted by the political issues mentioned.

Moreover, several support organizations offer pre-employability services, measures or programs that help young people prepare for and overcome these barriers to employment. Also, the provision of culturally safe services and programs is increasingly cited as an essential element in the deployment of adequate services for FNI (Blanchet-Cohen and Richardson, 2017; Blanchet-Cohen, Pinsonneault, Fontaine-Dumais, 2022; Desrochers-Arsenault, Beaudoin and Dufour, 2022; Gerlach, Browne and Greenwood, 2017). It requires the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence of stakeholders. It involves recognizing the role of colonial history and the impact of inequities on service delivery and allows for the establishment of a relationship that respects the values and knowledge of FNI by recognizing an individual's cultural identity and capacity for well-being, while supporting the systemic changes necessary to correct inequalities and eliminate discrimination (Blanchet-Cohen, Pinsonneault, Fontaine-Dumais, 2022). The operationalization of the principle of cultural safety in employment services remains poorly documented (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). However, it appears to be insufficiently developed and thus constitutes a major issue in the integration and retention of FNI youth in employment.

Finally, despite a latency period between the implementation of programs to support them and the possibility of observing their effects, the most recent programs and services seem to better meet certain needs already expressed by young people, particularly with regard to administrative support (requesting or replacing identity cards, resolving situations related to the justice system, etc.), learning resume writing techniques, acquiring initial work experience as a basis for finding a job and support in the actual search for a job (Statistics Canada, 2018b). However, other elements must be considered in order to improve the offer of job search support for FNI youth, because the lack of support (often caused by a lack of human and financial resources) is a major issue that plays a major role in the success of young people, especially when it comes to pre-employability programs.

2.4 Professional experience

Professional experience represents another significant challenge for young FNI. The lack of training opportunities and relevant experience puts them at a disadvantage in the face of labour market demands, which can lead to serious consequences, such as exclusion, economic instability, dependence on social assistance, and isolation (Côté, 2009). Direct confrontation with these realities highlights the crucial role of training internships as a lever for accessing stable, well-paid jobs that are compatible with their aspirations and lifestyles. Lack of experience is also perceived by young FNI as an obstacle to their professional development: 52.9% of women and 53% of men aged 15 to 24 reported it (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2013).

2.5 Cultural or value-related characteristics

The socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI are significantly influenced by their cultural values and perceptions of work, which sometimes differ from dominant norms (Longo, 2018; Longo, Blanchet-Cohen, and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Understanding these values is crucial for developing effective intervention strategies. For many young FNI, work is intrinsically linked to community contribution and the preservation of traditions, influencing their career choices and professional expectations. They may favor jobs that promote the maintenance of community ties, even if this situation involves less advantageous conditions. This perspective, marked by a strong sense of belonging, is not systematically considered in employment policies.

In addition, a feeling of illegitimacy and imposter syndrome are common among FNI youth, calling into question their place in the job market (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). This feeling, often linked to experiences of discrimination, leads them to doubt their right to certain positions, underestimating themselves and limiting their aspirations. For example, during interviews with young people participating in activities run by the organization Fusion Jeunesse, stakeholders reported that young people had difficulty naming their qualities (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017). Hypotheses put forward to explain this phenomenon included humility associated with one of the seven traditional Indigenous teachings (Manitoba Department of Education, 2012), or a lack of self-esteem or a negative perception that young people had of themselves or their community. This phenomenon can result in a hesitation to apply for more qualified jobs and an acceptance of precarious or underpaid jobs, despite their skills. The presence of this imposter syndrome highlights the need to create inclusive work environments that recognize and respect their cultural values, and that provide support to promote their integration and success.

Finally, other cultural factors are misunderstood by employers and mean that non indigenous approaches to work may not be suitable for FNI. These factors include the role of cultural knowledge, community priorities, sense of belonging or ties to the land, family and kinship systems, and spiritual values (Marshall et al. 2013). Similarly, values often put forward by FNI, such as the tendency to prioritize the collective, consensual decision-making processes, sharing, and the extended family, are less or poorly respected in different workplaces, which also plays a role in successful integration and retention in employment (Deschênes, 2022; Proulx, 2012).

2.6 Employment within the community

Many young people have highlighted their reluctance to leave their community or to move far from their territory for employment (Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Côté, 2009; Davey et al. 2020; Grammond and Guay, 2016; Marshall et al. 2013; OECD, 2018; Vallières, 2021). Connections to the territory, extended family, traditional activities and culture remain fundamental elements for FNI under 25 years of age and are an integral part of their identity and well-being (Grammond and Guay, 2016). Many young FNI who have left to study abroad prefer to find employment in their community of origin (Côté, 2009; Bruce and Marlin, 2012). However, it should be noted that within communities, other barriers exist against youth employment.

For example, young people aged 16 to 20 (Marshall et al. 2013) revealed barriers associated with obtaining employment in organizations led by members of their community. According to them, people who did not belong to the right circle in the community, or who did not have the right network, could find themselves disadvantaged when accessing certain work opportunities. In the context of education within First Nations communities, Deschênes (2020) identified the same issue.

In addition, other young people mentioned that non indigenous, who generally have competitive and high levels of post-secondary education, often held jobs in the health and social services sector within communities, even if they did not have the knowledge or cultural sensitivity required to provide adequate service (Marshall et al. 2013). Finally, attachment to the community and the territory inevitably affects the type or sector of employment that FNI can hope to obtain. For example, in Inuit Nunangat, if a person is not interested in the natural resources industry, the only option left is the public sector, i.e., federal, territorial and municipal administrations, health, social assistance or even education (Arriagada and Bleakney, 2019). The choices are therefore reduced.

2.7 Urban life

The urban living experience for FNI youth presents specific challenges that influence their integration and retention in employment. Access to affordable housing and childcare is often limited in urban centres, creating significant constraints for youth who must balance work, studies and family responsibilities (Government of Canada, 2019; Longo, Blanchet-Cohen & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2018a; Palesch, 2016;

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2016; Thomas, 2016). In particular, the lack of affordable housing can lead to residential instability, generating stress and uncertainty that hinder job searches and professional stability. The lack of adequate childcare poses an additional challenge for young parents, limiting their employment opportunities and increasing the risk of economic insecurity. These difficulties are compounded by the complexity of navigating an often-confusing urban environment and the resulting uprooting, leading to the loss of cultural reference points and a feeling of isolation (FNHRDCQ, 2023). This cultural uprooting can have a significant impact on self-esteem and self-confidence, thus affecting young people's ability to integrate into the labour market and develop a professional support network. Access to basic employability services, such as training programs, job search support, and placement services, is also a crucial issue in the urban context (FNHRDCQ, 2023). The lack of services adapted to the specific realities and needs of young FNI can put them at a disadvantage in the labour market, accentuating inequalities in access to opportunities. Geographic distance and a lack of familiarity with institutions and administrative procedures in urban areas create additional barriers. The lack of adequate support networks and positive cultural role models in the urban environment can also contribute to greater vulnerability to discrimination and precariousness. The result is a situation where, despite their skills and aspirations, young FNs must navigate a complex system, facing several challenges that directly affect their chances of entering and remaining in employment.

2.8 Work within non-indigenous organizations

For young FNIs, working in non-indigenous organizations presents specific challenges that go beyond technical skills and professional experience. These challenges are often linked to cultural mismatch and a lack of understanding on the part of employers (Barnett, 2008; Pidgeon et al., 2019; Sinclair, 2003), sometimes leading to racism or discrimination (Marshall et al. 2013). A first major difficulty lies in the cultural and linguistic disconnect that can exist between young FNIs and the dominant work environment (Pidgeon et al., 2019).

The lack of connection to Elders, family, and community, as well as the inability to express or act according to their cultural values at work, often leads to a feeling of isolation and alienation (Pidgeon et al., 2019). This cultural disconnect can be exacerbated by a lack of understanding from non-indigenous colleagues and managers, often due to a lack of awareness of the specific realities and needs of FNI youth (Pidgeon et al., 2019). The refusal of reasonable accommodations and the lack of efforts by employers to create an inclusive environment also contribute to the marginalization of FNI youth (Sinclair, 2003). Moreover, in reality, few Quebec employers are making targeted efforts to recruit FNIs, even though most are interested in this labour pool (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019).

Furthermore, the frequent absence of mentoring and support relationships from companies, coupled with expectations of rapid adaptation and harmonization with the dominant organizational culture, can lead to significant stress and a feeling of failure (Sinclair, 2003). This social pressure to assimilate quickly, presented as a sign of performance, can actually lead to a loss of self-confidence, demotivation and abandonment of the position (Sinclair, 2003; Burgess and Dyer, 2009). Furthermore, the weakness of cultural competencies in organizations, coupled with a limited understanding of the history and culture of FNI (Barnett, 2008), creates an environment that can deny or devalue their cultural heritage, leading to identity conflict and adjustment difficulties (Sinclair, 2013; Burgess and Dyer, 2009). Then, psychological difficulties, linked to the reconciliation between their cultural identity and the demands of a sometimes-inhospitable work environment, can have significant consequences on their well-being and their ability to maintain employment.

It should be noted that some authors mention that a climate of mistrust exists between companies in certain sectors that have historical or current conflictual relationships with FNI communities and members (Desrochers-Arsenault, Beaudoin and Dufour, 2021; Howard, Edge and Watt, 2012). Young workers are often reluctant to train for a job in a sector perceived as environmentally threatening (for example, in the mining sector) or as offering few long-term career prospects (Howard, Edge and Watt, 2012). This is the case of the forest products industry, which is often considered by young FNI as an industry in decline with an uncertain future.

Conversely, some employers in the forestry sector have little confidence in these young people, who would then not be recruited (Desrochers-Arsenault, Beaudoin and Dufour, 2021).

2.9 Characteristics of the labour market

The socio-professional integration of FNI youth is also influenced by the structural characteristics of the labour market itself. The shortage of certain types of jobs in certain regions, combined with a lack of opportunities in sectors where FNI youth could be better equipped, constitutes a significant obstacle to their economic participation (Statistics Canada, 2018a; Palesch, 2016; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2016; Thomas, 2016). This job shortage can be particularly pronounced in rural and remote communities, where employment opportunities are often limited and concentrated in traditional sectors, offering few prospects for growth or professional development. The lack of access to skilled, well-paid jobs contributes to a cycle of poverty and precariousness for many young people. In addition, the lack of awareness among young FNI of the services and programs available to promote their socio-professional integration constitutes a significant obstacle (FNHRDCQ, 2023). The lack of information and awareness of government programs, placement services and community resources dedicated to employment hinders their access to essential tools for job search and integration into the labour market. This lack of awareness may result from a lack of adequate information dissemination, language barriers, or a lack of trust in traditional institutions. The lack of professional networks and mentoring in certain sectors of activity also hinders the progress of young FNI, preventing them from developing contacts and relationships essential for their professional advancement. In addition, the requirements of certain jobs may not take into account the cultural realities and traditional skills of young FNI. Selection criteria and recruitment processes, already complex (FNHRDCQ, 2023), may then be biased, creating additional obstacles to their integration.

2.10 Access to employment

Access to employment for young FNIs is marked by significant inequalities compared to the rest of the Quebec population (FNHRDCQ, 2023). These inequalities are not simply a reflection of differences in skills or qualifications, but rather the result of a combination of systemic and contextual factors that limit their opportunities. The geographical distance between certain communities and the urban centers where jobs are concentrated is a major obstacle to access to employment (FNHRDCQ, 2023). This physical distance translates into significant costs, particularly in transportation (Government of Canada, 2019), difficulty accessing professional networks and training, and isolation that complicates the job search and integration into the labour market. For young people living in remote communities, particularly those in Nunavik, geographic remoteness can make it difficult, if not impossible, to participate in job interviews, vocational training or networking activities essential for socio-professional integration. In addition, transportation and mobility constraints can limit the availability of young FNIs, making it difficult to reconcile the demands of certain jobs with family and community responsibilities. The lack of adequate transportation infrastructure, combined with high costs, is a major barrier to the geographic mobility needed to access more diversified and better-paid jobs (Government of Canada, 2019). This inequality of access to professional opportunities contributes to maintaining a cycle of poverty and precariousness in certain communities. Geographical remoteness is often combined with cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as a lack of employment support services adapted to the specific realities of the communities, thus reinforcing inequalities in access to quality jobs. Finally, certain certifications are mandatory for certain types of employment, and exclude many FNIs directly. However, several people have acquired this experience in the community, particularly in construction: "A lot of Inuit men I know can build you a live cabin, they really have the experience, but they don't have the cards. It's a shame, because they're good at it, and it cuts them off from being able to do something they love, too." (Inuit speaker).

2.11 Financing of services and programs

Adequate funding for training, pre-employability and employability services and programs is a determining factor in the socio-professional integration of young FNIs. Insufficient access to these financial resources has a

direct impact on the ability of organizations and communities to offer quality programs and services tailored to the specific Needs of these young people (FNHRDCQ, 2023). A lack of funding translates into a limited number of vocational training services and programs, job placement services and job search support, or their unsuitability due to a lack of resources to ensure they match young people's needs, which also limits young FNIs' access to the tools and resources they need to enter the job market. Insufficient funding also results in a lack of qualified staff who are aware of the cultural realities and specific challenges faced by young FNIs. The lack of specialized human resources affects the quality of services offered and the ability to provide individualized support tailored to each person's needs. The growing demand for employability services from First Nations and Inuit members (FNHRDCQ, 2023) clearly demonstrates the crying need for increased funding to meet this growing demand and fill current gaps. The increase in demand, unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in resources, is having a congestion effect on existing services, diminishing the quality of services offered and lengthening waiting times, with a negative impact on the effectiveness of interventions. This lack of financial resources has a direct impact on the direct support given to young people (administrative assistance to complete their files, support in their research, etc.) and their ability to access stable, well-paid jobs, contributing to maintaining inequalities in access to the job market and perpetuating the cycle of poverty and precariousness in certain communities. Insufficient funding limits not only the number of programs offered, but also their scope and effectiveness, having a direct impact on the success rate of interventions and on the ability of young FNIs to enter the job market sustainably.

Finally, other elements related to service and program funding are reported by FNIs youth support organizations, which indirectly limit FNIs youth. These include the administrative burden associated with reporting and accountability, stagnant funding levels, program durations that are too short for young people, and the rigidity of the structure of certain agreements.

2.12 Knowledge of the labour market

The socio-professional integration of young FNIs is often hampered by a lack of knowledge of labour market realities and opportunities. Many young people demonstrate limited knowledge of the jobs available in their region and the skills required to access these jobs (Government of Canada, 2019; Pidgeon et al., 2019). This lack of knowledge may be linked to a lack of access to relevant information, language barriers or a lack of professional networks. Some young people may underestimate their potential and be unaware of the opportunities available to them within their community or in neighboring regions (Pidgeon et al., 2019). They may have difficulty projecting themselves into a quality job, failing to see the links between their skills, their aspirations and the jobs available on the market. This limited vision of professional opportunities may stem from an inadequate representation of the job market, a lack of positive role models and limited access to information on different careers and possible career paths. The lack of mentoring and individualized support in career planning can also contribute to this lack of awareness. Without an adequate understanding of labour market requirements and pathways to different jobs, young FNIs run the risk of moving into precarious, underpaid jobs that don't allow them to realize their full potential. The result is a mismatch between the skills and aspirations of young people and the needs of the labour market, accentuating inequalities and difficulties in socio-professional integration. In addition, note that while First Nations youth are more likely to contact potential employers directly to find a job than older adults (Statistics Canada, 2018b), in 2016 in Canada, 41% of First Nations 15–24-year-olds said they had difficulty finding a job because they didn't know what type of job to look for (Statistics Canada, 2018b).

Then, 39% of Inuit 15–24-year-olds, for their part, claimed to have had difficulty finding work because they didn't know where to look and because they didn't know what type of job to look for (Statistics Canada, 2018a). Also, more needs to be done in terms of job search and career guidance for young people (Blanchet-Cohen et al. 2022; Bran-Lopez and Moise, 2017; Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Marshall et al. 2013).

2.13 Nature of services and programs offered

The effectiveness of services and programs designed to promote the socio-professional integration of young FNIs is compromised by significant shortcomings in their design and implementation. The approach adopted in delivering these services does not always take into account the specific realities and needs of young FNIs (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Programs are sometimes conceived too broadly, failing to take sufficient account of the diversity of cultural, geographical and socio-economic contexts within communities. This generic approach limits the effectiveness of interventions and does not adequately address the specific needs of each young person. In addition, existing government structures, often rigid and hermetic (FNHRDCQ, 2023; Government of Canada, 2019), present significant limitations in terms of flexibility and adaptation to realities on the ground. Government programs are often designed according to pre-established criteria, not always reflecting the real needs of FNIs, and prioritizing compliance with government structures over community needs (Pidgeon et al., 2019). This bureaucratic rigidity hinders organizations' ability to develop innovative approaches and collective collaborations, thus limiting the potential effectiveness of interventions (Government of Canada, 2019; Pidgeon et al., 2019). The colonial bureaucracy that often characterizes these structures limits opportunities for partnerships and the co-creation of solutions with FNIs communities, organizations or governments, thus reducing the impact of programs. Current funding models, most often imposed by government, are not always adapted to community needs and limit the ability of organizations to respond effectively to youth demands (Pidgeon et al., 2019). The centralized approach to program planning and management can prevent regional particularities and the specific needs of each community from being taken into account. This rigidity in approaches and structures, combined with inadequate funding models, hinders the development of truly adapted and effective services to promote the socio-professional integration of young FNIs. Lack of flexibility and cumbersome administration limit the effectiveness of programs, and can lead to a mismatch between the services offered and the real needs of young FNIs.

On another note, regardless of the nature of the services and programs, young people need to know about them. And yet, we can observe a certain inequity when it comes to knowledge of and access to employment support resources. While some benefit from a number of employment, training and support opportunities specifically aimed at FNIs youth, many opportunities remain unknown and inaccessible for others, particularly when they do not belong to a school or post-secondary network (Marshall et al. 2013).

2.14 Misunderstanding of different players and lack of collaboration

The socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNIs is influenced by the world of work's misunderstanding of FNI cultures, fueled by prejudice, stereotypes and systemic racism on the part of some supervisors and workers (Pearson and Daff, 2013; Thiessen, 2016; FNHRDCQ, 2023). This lack of understanding of the cultural and historical realities of FNIs contributes to a lack of adequate support and guidance once in post (Mathers, 2021). Rigid systems and constraining colonial structures, which fail to take into account FNIs' perspectives, exacerbate these difficulties (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Decision-makers and society in general often underestimate the involvement of young FNIs and the persistent impact of colonization on their lives (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a), resulting in a lack of interest and support from many stakeholders. This partial vision of the reality of young FNIs is compounded by the lack of collaboration between the various actors involved in their socio-professional integration: a plurality of visions is expressed as to the social participation of young people and how actors should interact with them (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Society and businesses, often ill-informed and insensitive to the realities and history of FNIs, lack openness and understanding (Cloutier, 2021). Thus, the absence of adequate measures to foster the inclusion and support of young FNIs leads to their disengagement and accentuates inequalities (Pidgeon et al., 2019).

TABLE SUMMARIZING ISSUES SPECIFIC TO SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION

DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC OBSTACLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTION PATHS
Issue: Use of mother tongue, and difficulties in French or English		
Mastering English and French, Canada's official languages. Transition to official languages and recognition of the value of Indigenous languages. Strike a balance between promoting the French language and supporting communities to ensure their full participation in Quebec society and its job market.	Difficulty reading and writing in these official languages, affecting productivity and career advancement prospects. Limited access to vocational training, labour market information and job search support networks. Lack of clarity in information or comprehension difficulties due to language barriers.	Better language support and recognition of the value of FNIs' languages. Clarity of information and adaptation of the vocabulary of job offers. Enhancement and use of mother tongue in certain professions.
Issue: Current realities of young FNIs		
Reconciling traditions and cultures with the demands of the modern world and job market. Adaptability and resilience. Work-study or work-family balance.	Reconciling personal, family or community life with professional life, social and environmental responsibility and additional pressure for young community leaders.	Adapting the service offering to meet the specific needs of young people.
Issue: Prerequisites to employment		
Access to basic resources, including adequate housing, food and financial resources. Access to physical and mental health services. Provision of culturally safe services and programs.	Lack of basic resources, creating a state of precariousness that severely limits young people's ability to focus on finding work and meeting the demands of the job market. Stress caused by disparities in employability-related communications.	Pre-employability program, culturally safe approach to services and programs, ensuring accessibility to basic resources and information.
Issue: Professional experience		
Lack of training opportunities and relevant experience. The crucial role of apprenticeships as a lever to access stable, well-paid jobs compatible with their aspirations and lifestyles.	Lack of opportunities that place FNIs at a disadvantage when faced with the demands of the job market. Hinders professional development.	Internships, job creation, mentoring program.
Issue: Cultural or value-related characteristics		
Link to work, community contribution and preservation of traditions. Role of cultural knowledge, community priorities, sense of belonging or ties to the land, family and kinship systems, and spiritual values. Prioritize the collective,	Feelings of illegitimacy and impostor syndrome. Values often put forward by FNIs (such as the tendency to prioritize the collective, consensual decision-making processes, sharing, and the extended family) are less or poorly respected in different	Inclusive work environments that recognize and respect their cultural values, a framework that fosters their integration and success. Valuing the importance of community contribution. Adapting work environments to take FNIs' values into account.

DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC OBSTACLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTION PATHS
consensual decision-making processes, sharing, and the extended family.	workplaces. Cultural factors are misunderstood by employers.	
Issue: Employment within the community		
Maintaining ties to the land, extended family, traditional activities and culture. Obstacles associated with obtaining employment in organizations run by members of their community.	Lack of a network of influence and preference for non-natives for certain types of employment, even if they lack the cultural knowledge or sensitivity required to provide an adequate service.	Valuing FNIs' expertise, promoting equity.
Issue: Life in an urban environment		
Access to affordable housing and childcare. Complexity of navigating an urban environment. Access to basic employability services.	Lack of affordable housing, unfamiliarity with institutions and administrative procedures. Loss of cultural references and a feeling of isolation. Lack of adequate support networks and positive cultural role models in the urban environment.	Accessibility of employability support services, daycare services and housing services. Cultural valorization and measures to counter isolation.
Issue: Working within non-Indigenous organizations		
Cultural mismatch and lack of understanding on the part of employers.	Cultural and linguistic disconnect, denial of reasonable accommodation and lack of effort by employers to create an inclusive environment. Frequent lack of mentoring and support from companies. Climate of mistrust between companies in certain sectors and FNIs communities.	Cross-cultural training, mentoring, climate of trust between FNIs and companies. Reasonable accommodation.
Issue: Characteristics of the job market		
Shortage of certain types of jobs in certain regions. Access to qualified, well-paid jobs contributes to maintaining a cycle of poverty and precariousness. Demonstrate available jobs, services and programs.	Young FNIs' misunderstanding of the services and programs available to promote their socio-professional integration. Lack of professional networks and mentoring. Job requirements may not take into account the cultural realities and traditional skills of young FNIs.	Mentoring and networking services, adaptation of job requirements to take into account the cultural realities and traditional skills of young FNIs. Guidance and career choices.
Issue: Access to employment		
Significant inequalities compared to the rest of the Quebec population, the geographic distance between certain communities and urban centers	Difficult access to professional networks and training, and isolation that complicates the job search and integration into	Creation of professional networks, better access to training, easier transportation. Recognition and valorization of experience and knowledge

DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC OBSTACLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTION PATHS
where jobs are concentrated, and mandatory certifications in certain types of employment.	the job market. Transportation and mobility constraints.	acquired outside the formal system, and adaptation of certification requirements.
Issue: Funding of services and programs		
Insufficient access to these financial resources has a direct impact on the ability of organizations and communities to offer quality programs and services adapted to the specific Needs of these young people.	A lack of funding results in a limited number of vocational training services and programs, job placement services and job search support. Administrative burdens associated with reporting and accountability, stagnant funding levels, program durations that are too short for young people, or the rigidity of the structure of certain agreements.	Increased resources and funding, less red tape. Flexibility and adaptability.
Issue: Knowledge of the labour market		
Young people's difficulty in finding out what jobs are available in their region and what skills are required to access these jobs.	Access to relevant information, language barriers and lack of professional networks. Difficulty for young people to project themselves into a quality job. Misunderstanding of the requirements of the job market and how to access different jobs	Improving access to information, setting up guidance and mentoring programs, developing the potential of FNIs young people and promoting their participation in the job market.
Issue: The nature of services and programs offered		
The approach to service delivery does not always take into account the specific realities and needs of young FNIs. Existing government structures are often rigid and hermetic, and current funding models are not always adapted to community needs.	Programs are sometimes too broadly conceived, failing to take sufficient account of the diversity of cultural, geographical and socio-economic contexts within communities. Certain inequities in knowledge of and access to employment support resources.	Offer services tailored to the specific needs of young FNIs, make government structures and funding models more flexible, and increase the visibility of existing resources.
Issue: Misunderstanding between different players and lack of collaboration		
Misunderstanding of FNIs' cultures by the world of work. Underestimation by decision-makers and society of the involvement of young FNIs and the persistent impact of colonization on their lives. Lack of collaboration between the	Discrimination and stereotyping of FNIs. Lack of adequate measures to promote the inclusion and support of young FNIs, leading to their disengagement and accentuating inequalities.	Training and awareness. Increased efforts and collaboration by all to promote the inclusion and support of young FNIs.

DESCRIPTION	SPECIFIC OBSTACLES	POTENTIAL SOLUTION PATHS
various players involved in their socio-professional integration.		

CONCLUSION ON THE SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY YOUNG FNIS

An analysis of the issues surrounding the job integration and retention of young FNIs in Quebec highlights a complex web of interconnected systemic and contextual obstacles. These challenges go far beyond a simple lack of qualifications, resulting instead from a persistent colonial heritage, pervasive discrimination, poverty and lack of access to essential resources. Future research should further investigate the cumulative impact of these factors, including quantifying the effect of discrimination on career choices and wages, and assessing the effectiveness of different support programs in different cultural and geographical contexts. A comparative analysis of the experiences of young FNIs living in urban and community settings would also help to better identify the specificities of the challenges encountered and tailor interventions accordingly. Studying the resilience strategies employed by young FNIs themselves and analyzing protective factors within communities could provide clues for the development of more effective programs. According to our study, and as we demonstrate below, access to relevant and adapted education, robust socio-economic support, the active fight against racism and discrimination, and the promotion of authentically inclusive work environments remain sine qua non conditions for the full participation of these young people in the labour market. The implementation of strategies that take into account individual life paths, cultural values and the specific needs of each community is also imperative. These strategies, however, require greater collaboration between all the players involved, adequate and sustainable funding for programs and services, reform of bureaucratic structures to make them more flexible and adaptable, and a significant improvement in the cultural awareness of employers and decision-makers.

The following section explores the specific needs and interests of young FNIs, which stem largely from the issues they face. By exploring these needs and interests, both personal and cultural, this section provides a better understanding of their employment and career priorities and expectations. It highlights the diversity of career paths and aspirations, and underlines the importance of taking into account cultural specificities and local realities. It eventually leads to the development of effective and desirable strategies and practices.

SECTION B: YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS IN TERMS OF INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION

INTRODUCTION

This section presents an analysis of the specific needs of young FNIs in terms of job integration and retention, highlighting the cultural, identity and contextual factors that influence their career paths. It is based almost exclusively on data from interviews with participants. This analysis will subsequently enable us to identify levers for action and propose concrete recommendations to promote better socio-professional integration and job retention for these young people.

More specifically in the case of this section, since our report is focused on finding solutions and developing recommendations, the decision was taken to write it according to the groups of actors who can play a role in meeting the needs of young FNIs. By identifying the key players (communities, governments, organizations, businesses, etc.), we set the stage for the presentation of targeted and realistic recommendations on how each player can contribute to improving the situation. This makes the report more actionable and relevant for decision-makers and stakeholders.

Firstly, this way of organizing the text does not absolve young FNIs of their primary responsibility for their career path, and their future. They remain the primary actors in meeting their needs. Secondly, the majority of needs could be found in more than one category of actor. In this sense, our study shows that the situation of young FNIs needs to be observed and supported by collaboration between several groups of actors. Indeed, as we have pointed out in several places, resolving the challenges associated with integrating young FNIs into the workforce and keeping them there requires multi-stakeholder collaboration. By highlighting the roles and responsibilities of each player, we aim to foster a collaborative approach and emphasize the importance of partnership between different levels of government, community organizations, businesses and young people themselves. By identifying the key players and their responsibilities, we aim to make them more accountable. Each player can be held accountable for his or her contribution to satisfying needs. In addition, identifying the various players enables us to better identify the resources and capacities available to meet the Needs of young FNIs. This makes it easier to identify needs in terms of funding, training, personnel or infrastructure. Finally, given that the ultimate aim of the report is to make relevant recommendations to decision-makers in the first instance, a stakeholder-driven approach is easier for them to understand and use. It provides them with a clear framework for action and concrete recommendations on how to invest their resources and implement effective policies.

Before moving on to the presentation by stakeholder groups, this section begins with a presentation of the more general needs identified by young people, and which need to be met before we can even think about integration into employment, or even access to the training leading to it. It continues with a presentation of specific needs linked to the culture and identity (personal or cultural) of young people. To conclude this introduction, it should be noted that several people reported that FNIs, like all young people, have different needs, but that these needs are always greater than those of non-Indigenous young people, and are more difficult to meet, due to various vulnerability and risk factors, as well as the different issues specific to the integration and retention of FNIs (see the section on issues). A summary table is provided at the end of each of the three sections.

1. GENERAL NEEDS FOR PREEMPLOYMENT

Before addressing the specific needs associated with integrating and retaining young FNIs in employment, it is crucial to recognize the importance of prerequisite needs, often overlooked in the funding of pre-employability or employability programs, which are sine qua non conditions for any prospect of professional integration for many young FNIs. For them, access to employment is not simply a question of skills or training; it is intimately

linked to the satisfaction of basic needs, such as food security, adequate housing, administrative and financial difficulties, and accessible physical and mental health care. These needs represent major obstacles to educational and professional success. The absence of these fundamental elements creates a vicious circle of vulnerability, making access to training and employment extremely difficult, if not impossible. The experience of several participants demonstrates that social and economic precariousness considerably limits the ability of young FNIs to focus on their career objectives and take full advantage of socio-professional integration programs (employability, or even pre-employability programs). Thus, investment in these prior needs represents an investment in their future, and is an essential step before any intervention aimed at job integration or retention. The approach adopted in this research prioritizes an understanding of these fundamental needs in order to lay the foundations for a comprehensive and truly effective intervention. This is why we present them at the outset. It should be noted that all these needs were mentioned by young FNIs in interviews. Quotes will follow in the paragraphs dealing with specific needs.

1.1 Support for basic and general living conditions

Access to stable, secure living conditions is fundamental to enabling young FNIs to focus on their personal and professional development. This need encompasses several aspects, including residential security, access to a healthy, balanced diet, and the development of healthy lifestyle habits (sleep, hygiene). Similarly, lack of access to adequate, stable housing is a major obstacle, as many employability programs require a fixed address. Often, there is even a minimum time requirement. For example, in many cases, a person must have been living in a fixed address for at least 30 days before being able to access a given program or service. This last constraint leads to additional financial difficulties: "Financially," explains an Inuit worker, "how do you manage for programs that require you to have been in town for 1 month, if you haven't yet received your salary? Among other things, housing is seen as a way of reducing a person's instability. But stability is not defined in the same way for everyone. The phenomenon of couch surfing, frequent in this group, bears witness to the precariousness experienced by some, although it could be a choice for others. In addition, initiatives to facilitate access to affordable housing adapted to the specific needs of young FNIs, including community housing support programs, are essential for those who wish to remain in the community. In an urban context, credit investigation and housing discrimination are major systemic obstacles to consider. Indeed, in some Quebec cities such as Val-d'Or, participants report that landlords are unwilling to rent to young FNIs.

1.2 Need for physical and mental health and psychosocial support

Physical health (diabetes, infections, pregnancy follow-up, etc.) and mental health are major determinants of socio-professional success. For young FNIs, and particularly First Nations and Inuit youth living in very remote contexts, access to health services is often hampered by mistrust of the public system, notably engendered by bad experiences of family members or themselves, lack of resources adapted to their specific needs, and difficulty of geographical access. Mental health problems, such as anxiety, adjustment difficulties, depression and intergenerational trauma, are particularly prevalent and can seriously compromise their ability to participate in socio-professional integration programs. Appropriate, accessible and culturally relevant psychosocial support is therefore crucial. It is essential to deploy rapid and effective resources and services, particularly in mental health, to meet the urgent needs of young people in crisis, or to provide long-term follow-up for various other issues (being cut off from one's community, anxiety, adjustment difficulties, violent romantic relationships, dysfunctional families, etc.). Integrated services combining psychosocial support and job placement can be particularly effective. This type of psychosocial support enables personal issues to be addressed without interfering with efforts to integrate young people into society and the workplace. As such, support organizations can help young people meet these needs at an earlier stage; we discuss these specific needs below.

1.3 Need for support in organizing life outside the community

For young FNIs leaving their communities for education or employment in urban areas, organizing their new lives represents a considerable challenge. Various needs were mentioned by the young people, including the

following. Obtaining essential administrative documents (health insurance card, social insurance number, birth certificate, driver's license, etc.) can be a complex and time-consuming process. Administrative accompaniment workshops, support in obtaining the necessary documents, and support in navigating the various administrative systems are therefore important. In addition, access to affordable, quality childcare is limited, which is a major obstacle, especially for young mothers. Access to transport, essential in urban areas, is also a major challenge for these young people.

1.4 Need for quality education at all stages

"My goal was to achieve a good education for myself and my children. I wanted to be a role model for them." (Young Cree, 34). This young person's reflection highlights the importance of education for many. Indeed, access to quality education, from primary school onwards, is fundamental to breaking the cycle of poverty and marginalization. Systemic inequalities in education have a major impact on the employment prospects of young FNIs. Appropriate academic support, integration of FNIs' knowledge and values into school curricula, and special attention to learners' specific needs are essential. A quality education prepares young FNIs for the challenges of the job market, and enables them to develop the skills and knowledge they need for professional integration. We discuss below the specific needs that educational environments can or could meet.

1.5 Funding requirements at all levels

Access to adequate financial support cuts across all the other needs identified, and is crucial to their effective realization. This financial support must cover a wide range of needs, from basic necessities (housing, food, transport) to access to education and training, including primary, secondary and post-secondary levels, as well as childcare services. Without appropriate financial support, young FNIs face obstacles that are difficult to overcome, limiting their ability to access the resources they need for their personal, professional, cultural or identity development. The lack of adequate funding compromises the implementation and maintenance of support programs, health services, housing initiatives and educational support actions. Financial assistance programs tailored to community realities, including scholarships and budget management services, are essential. Investment in young FNIs is an investment in the future, and adequate funding is essential to ensure their academic success, social integration and professional fulfillment. It is imperative to mobilize the necessary resources to meet these funding needs at all levels, in order to truly support their journey towards autonomy and full social and economic participation. This need for funding is fundamental, and will recur repeatedly throughout this report. It can be met, in particular, by governments.

1.6 General remarks for support services

A number of our stakeholders stressed that, to be effective, support services must be offered on an ongoing and accessible basis. In their view, interrupting services, even temporarily, can have a significant negative impact on the well-being and progress of young FNIs. It is therefore essential to guarantee continuity of services, even in the event of a change in situation or a need for adaptation. Furthermore, in the case of group services, it is often preferable to use small groups with people who speak the same language, allowing for greater participation and individualized support. Groups that are too large can lead to the marginalization of some participants, particularly those who are shy or hesitant. As one participant put it, "those who are self-effacing in a small group are even more self-effacing in a large one".

SUMMARY TABLE OF GENERAL NEEDS FOR PREEMPLOYMENT

GENERAL NEED	DESCRIPTION	MANIFESTATION OF THE LACK OF SATISFACTION OF THIS NEED
Support for basic and general living conditions	Access to stable, safe living conditions, including residential security, access to a healthy, balanced diet, and the development of healthy lifestyle habits.	Difficulty concentrating on personal and professional development, lack of a fixed address (required by many programs),

GENERAL NEED	DESCRIPTION	MANIFESTATION OF THE LACK OF SATISFACTION OF THIS NEED
		instability, precariousness, financial difficulties. Housing discrimination.
Physical and mental health and psychosocial support	Access to adapted and culturally relevant physical and mental health services, including psychosocial support. The need for rapid and effective services, particularly in mental health, to meet urgent needs and for long-term follow-up.	Distrust of the healthcare system, limited access to services, mental health problems (anxiety, adjustment difficulties, depression, intergenerational trauma) compromising participation in socio-professional integration programs, difficulties in dealing with personal problems interfering with integration efforts.
Support in organizing life outside the community	For young FNIs leaving their communities, the need to obtain essential administrative documents, to have access to affordable, quality childcare, and to have access to urban transportation.	Complex and lengthy administrative processes, lack of childcare services, transportation difficulties, barriers to education and employment.
The need for quality education at all stages	Access to quality education from primary school onwards, with appropriate tutoring, integration of FNIs knowledge and values into curricula, and special attention to learners' specific needs.	Continuation of the cycle of poverty and marginalization, significant impact on employment prospects, lack of skills and knowledge required for professional integration.
Financing needs at every level	Access to adequate financial support covering a wide range of needs (housing, food, transportation, education, training, childcare), including financial assistance programs adapted to community realities.	Obstacles to accessing the resources needed for personal, professional, cultural or identity development, compromising the implementation and maintenance of support programs, health services, housing initiatives, and educational support actions.
General remarks for support services	Continuous, accessible services, use of small groups with people who speak the same language, individualized support.	Interruption of services, negative consequences on well-being and progress, marginalization of certain participants (especially those who are more shy or hesitant).

2. SPECIFIC NEEDS FOR INTEGRATION AND RETENTION IN EMPLOYMENT RELATED TO CULTURE AND IDENTITY

This section explores the specific needs of young FNIs in terms of job integration and retention, with a focus on the cultural and identity dimensions. We examine four fundamental aspects: the process of personal identity construction, the revitalization of their cultural heritage, the need to heal from intergenerational trauma and the strengthening of the link with their culture. These interrelated Needs are essential prerequisites for the personal development and professional success of young FNIs. Indeed, as pointed out by Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay (2021), there are a number of particularities that must be taken into account when aiming for the self-fulfillment and autonomy of young FNIs in Quebec, including cultural and

territorial belonging, worldviews specific to FNIs, the still-present effects of colonization and the challenges imposed by the reconciliation process.

The following section proposes a complementary analysis of these needs, focusing on the key players involved in meeting them, in order to offer a concrete intervention framework and promote effective collaboration between the various players. This action-oriented approach will help identify the roles and responsibilities of each player in order to optimize interventions and promote multi-stakeholder collaboration. What's more, the analysis we've carried out reveals convergences in the interests of young people. We present them in the following box, upstream of the needs in terms of integration and job retention, as they provide a better understanding of some of them (see next box).

BOX C: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE INTERESTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

INTERESTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN GENERAL

Exploring the career interests of young FNIs reveals a reality marked by considerable potential, but faced with significant systemic obstacles. Over the past twenty years, access to a greater diversity of career choices has enabled FNIs, like all young people, to dream bigger and envisage a variety of career paths. The range of interests expressed is as vast and diversified as that observed among young non-Indigenous. However, this similarity masks profound realities and significant disparities.

Contrary to popular belief that they are confined to traditional trades or community-based jobs, young FNIs express a desire to explore a wide range of professions. This desire to explore should not be overlooked, as it holds immense potential for personal and professional development. However, significant obstacles limit their opportunities. Access to trades and employers is often restricted, and the lack of FNIs role models in many professional fields reinforces this sense of inaccessibility. "It's hard to get interest when the trade isn't represented in your community." (Stakeholder).

Young FNIs often find themselves in a pioneering position, called upon to blaze new trails and blaze new paths in the world of work. "There are a lot of first times for young FNIs." (Stakeholder). This reality, far from being an insurmountable obstacle, represents an opportunity for development and innovation. However, this situation requires support and guidance tailored to their specific needs. Lack of self-knowledge, of their own interests and of the professional opportunities available to them, is a major challenge. "Young people don't know themselves. (Stakeholder). "They haven't experienced the trades enough to know what interests them." (Intervener). "They don't know what to do to find out what their Needs are, they're very anxious." (Practitioner). This lack of knowledge is often linked to a lack of role models and limited access to information on the various trades. Increased career guidance support and access to diversified work experience are therefore vital to help these young people identify their interests and realize their aspirations.

TOWARDS INTEREST CATEGORIES

Analysis of the career interests of young FNIs reveals a complexity that defies traditional occupational classifications. Career choices are not dictated solely by economic considerations or individual aspirations, but are embedded in a broad socio-cultural and geographical context. Several interconnected themes emerge, highlighting the interplay between personal aspirations, community needs and systemic constraints.

The appeal of professions linked to the land, such as geology, mycology or trapping, transcends a simple preference for outdoor activities. It's a deep-seated desire to reclaim an ancestral living space, and a connection to a cultural heritage deeply rooted in a relationship with nature. This professional choice is not independent of the need for cultural security and the maintenance of meaningful links with the community. Furthermore, this need is linked to the need to acquire specific skills to access these jobs, highlighting a concomitant need for support in terms of adapted vocational guidance and training.

The importance of community contribution is central. The desire to give back to the community, to participate in its development and to contribute to its economic self-sufficiency is a powerful driving force in career choices. This choice is closely linked to a sense of belonging and a desire to pass on traditional values and knowledge. Among other things, on the cultural front, young people express the view that standing out is not something they particularly value. In their study of FNIs youth, Pidgeon and colleagues (2019) report this quote from a participant, very meaningful to us: "We want to empower the whole community. The strengths of each member will lead to a more sustainable approach in which young people will make a long-term commitment. Young people need to be involved, not just as participants, but in shaping the model from A to Z".

This desire also manifests itself in the choice of trades such as construction, which make a tangible contribution to the well-being of communities and the development of local infrastructure. The choice of trades that do not require prolonged general training, among older young people, reflects a perception of the formal school system as inadequate or unsuited to their ways of learning and their realities. This is a criticism of a system that does not recognize their experiential achievements. For younger people, the secondary 5 diploma is seen as a necessity, illustrating the desire to acquire skills that are recognized and valued on the job market.

Interest in new technologies, far from being anecdotal, is proving to be a powerful lever for innovation and community development. The integration of new technologies into traditional professions offers interesting prospects, such as the use of drones for infrastructure inspection or the development of mobile applications for natural resource management. This need may be related to the desire to contribute to community self-sufficiency, by enabling sustainable economic development. What's more, mastering these technologies provides access to better-paid, more valued jobs, meeting the need for economic security.

The desire to occupy leadership positions testifies to the ambition and desire of young FNIs to play an active role in the development of their communities. This need is linked to a desire to exert a positive influence on their environment, to contribute to meaningful projects and to leave a positive mark on their community. It is intimately linked to the quest for identity and the desire to position themselves as key players in change. It should be noted that this desire for leadership is not incompatible with the need to work close to or within their community. Maintaining family and community ties is fundamental to their well-being and success.

That said, young urban Inuit mention their strong propensity to choose to work for an Inuit organization, whenever possible. Being with Inuit people when they're away from their villages is one of the most important factors for them when choosing a job, adding to the idea of the important need for a sense of belonging at work.

Finally, the need for financial security, expressed by the desire for a certain level of material comfort, bears witness to the often-precarious socio-economic reality of many communities.

“(For example, a 19-year-old Innu said,” Having a car change everything, it opens up possibilities.) This legitimate need should not be minimized, as it is intimately linked to the dignity and autonomy of young people. Access to well-paid jobs, with fair and equitable working conditions, is therefore essential. However, this need should not overshadow others, such as the desire to contribute to their community and to work in a field that allows them to develop culturally. The choice of some young people to stay in the community to avoid taxes, for example, illustrates the weight of immediate economic concerns and the choice to prioritize family and community solidarity. The desire to work in FNIs organizations, even in urban areas, reveals a deep-seated need for cultural belonging and recognition. Finally, it should be noted that the lack of interest in jobs dedicated to indigenization (e.g. indigenization advisor, liaison officer, etc.), particularly in non-Indigenous organizations such as universities, and the lack of specific training in this field underline the limits of current policies.

TOWARDS DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRADES

An analysis of the types of trades in which young FNIs are interested reveals significant trends, highlighting the interplay between individual aspirations, socio-economic realities and cultural values. There is a marked interest in manual trades, including mechanics, electricity, forestry and mining, heavy vehicle driving, catering and construction. This choice is influenced by several factors. Firstly, mistrust of educational institutions and language barriers are obstacles to accessing longer, more theoretical training courses. Secondly, respect for pace and a more practical, hands-on approach to learning are often preferred. Thirdly, manual trades are often linked to family traditions and experiences: “It's in our DNA: we've always seen our parents do manual work, crafts, work on the camp.” (Young Atikamekw, 32). For a young Inuit woman, this interest in manual labour is explained even differently: “I see the fruits of my labour right away,” she says. And, she adds, she doesn't need to project herself into the future: her work happens and is done every day, without thinking about the long term.

There is also significant interest in the arts (cinema, crafts, theater), underlining the fundamental role of culture and artistic expression in the lives of young FNIs. Trades related to helping people (social intervention, working with children, community intervention) are also very popular. This may reflect the values of solidarity, community and mutual support that characterize many indigenous cultures. Interest in the political and social fields reflects a desire to contribute to social change and promote the interests of their communities. Accounting, as an administrative profession, also attracts some young people.

Finally, interest in new technologies, particularly in the field of FabLab's (digitization, 3D printing, engraving), is observable, even if tempered by the fear of longer, more demanding studies. Finally, anecdotally, one participant expresses a rejection of a career as a civil servant: “In any case, being a civil servant, no, they're not interested in that!” (Federal government NP employee), suggesting in her view a desire for more concrete jobs, more directly linked to tangible results.

2.0 Needs related to personal identity

Needs related to the personal identity of young FNIs are a dimension that profoundly influences their path to employment. Before even considering socio-professional integration, a crucial process of self-discovery is required. Many testimonies point to a lack of knowledge among young people of their own aptitudes, skills and ambitions. This is particularly true of young adults, who express a sense of uncertainty about their identity and their future: "I'm afraid I'll choose something I don't like, and that I've wasted my time" (Young Innu, aged 19). This introspection is often delayed by the socio-economic and cultural realities of the communities, leaving little time and space for personal exploration. One stakeholder sums up the situation: "They don't know themselves, so they can't project themselves into the future. This need for introspection is also expressed by a 24-year-old Innu woman who prioritizes personal stability over employment: "I need to get to know myself better before working. I'm taking my time. Other testimonials highlight the need to develop a positive self-image, and to consolidate their personal and family stability: "Before working, I want to be stable: know how to manage my emotions, be better at making decisions. I've stopped using, that's a lot, but it's not everything" (Young Innu, 32). For other young people, the absence of this preliminary introspection manifests itself in despair and a lack of direction, leading to professional instability and high staff turnover. A testimonial illustrates this journey: "It took me a long time to get to know myself as a person" (Young Atikamekw, 28). This need for introspection and identity-building, in order to target needs and objectives and identify the corresponding job, is therefore an essential prerequisite for any intervention aimed at socio-professional integration (Asselin et al., 2021).

2.1 Needs related to cultural identity

Needs related to cultural identity are another central and decisive factor in young FNIs' path to employment. Beyond the acquisition of professional skills, this involves a process of identity reconstruction, reappropriation of their cultural heritage and reinforcement of their self-esteem. This need manifests itself in a deep-seated aspiration for recognition of their FNIs identity, and the opportunity to express their cultural pride. Many express a desire to regain a meaningful connection with their community and nation, stressing the importance of regular contact with their culture and territory. They want to keep the possibility of going to the land, and staying in touch with their culture, their community, their nation.

However, this process is often hampered by a shared sense of imposture, a feeling of not living up to the expectations related to their cultural identity: "In relation to my culture, I often feel as if I am not a 'real' Innu, because I don't speak my language..." (Young Innu, 19 years old). This feeling is closely linked to low self-esteem, not at the personal level, but at the cultural level. It seems that the mismatch between perceived identity and lived identity could create cognitive dissonance, a tearing between two identities that do not overlap. This dissonance could, according to some participants, lead to self-rejection and rejection of one's cultural heritage, even though this heritage constitutes, in our opinion, a major force for recognizing oneself as an individual in society, and then for recognizing one's skills in a given field. According to one speaker, the absence among young people of a positive connection with their culture, which influences the place they think they have within their community (see following box), could generate a lack of meaning and hinder their motivation to continue their studies or to integrate into the job market.

BOX D: THE PLACE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY TODAY

The question of the place and role of young FNI within their communities, and more specifically in the context of employment, raises complex and sometimes contradictory issues. This questioning, which emerges in the interviews, highlights a tension between traditions and contemporary realities, between community expectations and the individual aspirations of young people. This questioning is all the more relevant in the context of socio-professional integration, because it profoundly influences career choices and the perception of their role in the economic and social development of their communities.

A first important aspect is the tension between traditional values and practices and the realities of the contemporary world. Traditional activities often remain important for these young people alongside the occupation of paid employment offered within the labour market (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Many young people experience a certain dualism, navigating between ancestral traditions and the demands of the modern labour market.

How can we reconcile community values, cultural practices, the importance of family ties and support networks, with the demands for autonomy, individualism and competitiveness often associated with the Western world of work? In our view, this tension should not be seen as an inevitable conflict, but rather as an opportunity to create complementarity between the two worlds. Young FNIs are often at the crossroads of these two worlds, possessing both knowledge of their culture and an ability to adapt to the demands of the job market.

The space given to youth by Elders is another determining factor reported by young people. The often-high expectations of the community, which sees them as future leaders and the next guardians of culture, can create significant pressure. This pressure, combined with uncertainty about their own career paths, can be a source of anxiety and doubt. "They don't know what they want to do, but they have the pressure of being told that they are the next leaders, the next chiefs... but does that match their desires?" (Worker). It is crucial to recognize that FNI youth are not solely defined by their role within the community. They have the right to develop their own aspirations, choose their own paths, and explore various career paths.

The study suggests that young FNI people could play a crucial role in the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge and values. By navigating between the two worlds, they are able to interpret the teachings of the Elders and adapt them to contemporary realities. They are thus called upon to play a role of mediation and translation between traditions and the modern world. This perspective highlights the need for guidance and support tailored to the specific needs of young FNI people. It is important to equip them not only to successfully integrate into the workplace, but also to help them find their place within their community and contribute to its development, while respecting their individual aspirations. An approach that values their cultural identity, recognizes their skills, and offers them a space for expression and participation is essential. It is about creating an environment where young people feel valued, supported, and able to reconcile their personal aspirations with their community responsibilities. Therefore, employment should perhaps be seen as a way to contribute to the community, and not as a renunciation of traditional values.

Young people need collective projects, rooted in community values, which many stakeholders consider essential to overcome these difficulties. It is necessary to be able to reconcile modern and traditional life, as explained by some Inuit youth, who express feeling between two worlds. For example, participation in meaningful projects, which allow young people to contribute to the well-being of their community while strengthening their identity, is particularly effective. One stakeholder emphasizes the importance of participating in shared projects, of being grounded, in order to give meaning to what they do.

Another says that what they do must be aligned with their community's values to help them. Support must also foster introspective reflection, allowing young people to better know themselves and their own perspectives, among other things, explains another speaker, in order to: "Allow them to be reborn, help them ask themselves the right questions to recognize who they are, and their perspectives." The ultimate goal is to celebrate the richness and vitality of their cultures, to promote identity pride and to allow them to fully embrace their cultural heritage in order to reduce the burden of responsibility or the social pressure of being FNI (see the following box), which young people expressed in these words: "We must celebrate how our culture is great, is beautiful, is important and alive" (Young Anishinabe, 24 years old), "I want to learn to be proud of myself in my culture" (Young Innu, 32 years old).

BOX E: SOCIAL PRESSURE AND TOKENIZATION

Some FNI youth told us they experience significant social pressure to represent their community or embody FNI history in society, a burden that can negatively impact their well-being. This complex phenomenon does not reflect the experience of all FNI youth, but rather that of a subgroup influenced, according to the participants and in our experience, by various factors. The pressure appears to stem in part from often stereotypical media and social representation, imposing expectations on youth, whether they are considered "spokespeople" or have to respond to preconceived societal perceptions. The weight of colonial history, intergenerational trauma, and systemic discrimination also contribute to this sense of responsibility, with some youth feeling compelled to redress past injustices. Moreover, well-intentioned family and community pressure could become excessive if it fails to recognize the individuality of the youth and requires them to perpetuate specific traditions. Finally, the lack of diversity in the representation of FNI experiences appears to amplify this pressure, with youth feeling forced to conform to a single, ideal model (the "Indigenous"), thus limiting their unique personal and cultural expression (of their nation, or even their community). This pressure, while potentially motivating for some, can be overwhelming for others. Especially since several young people mentioned their need to be treated in a unique, non-uniform way, according to their individual background, and without necessarily having any connection to their cultural origin: "Just because I'm Indigenous doesn't mean I have to do Indigenous things." (Atikamekw youth, 22 years old).

2.2 Healing Needs

A fundamental aspect of the path toward socio-professional integration of young FNI is the need to heal intergenerational trauma. This need manifests itself on several levels. Participants reported three distinct, closely interconnected levels in particular. First, there is a need to carry out preliminary work on oneself, on one's power to act, and on the ability to verbalize lived experiences. Even before considering employment, many young people express the need to put words to their suffering and to address past wounds. According to various stakeholders, this process of verbalization and awareness is an essential prerequisite for being able to look to the future with confidence. The ability to act and make informed decisions is compromised as long as past traumas are not sufficiently addressed. Second, according to young people's testimonies, this need for healing seems closely linked to building strong self-esteem. Belief in one's own abilities and the feeling of being capable of learning are essential elements for academic and professional success. However, intergenerational trauma can seriously affect self-esteem, leading to feelings of helplessness and doubt about the future. Restoring self-esteem is therefore an essential step in the path to employment. It is a process of resilience that

allows young people to overcome obstacles and project themselves positively into a career, among other things. Finally, and thirdly, it is essential to emphasize the inextricable link between identity connection and the healing process. For many young FNI, rebuilding a strong and assertive cultural identity is fundamental to their well-being and success. This connection to their roots, their history, and their community, as we explain in the following paragraphs, provides them with a sense of belonging and legitimacy that helps them overcome difficulties and progress. Healing, building positive self-esteem, and strengthening cultural identity are thus essential prerequisites for employment integration and retention.

2.3 Need related to rapprochement with one's culture

According to the testimonies of young FNI, the path to employment is closely linked to a process of cultural reappropriation and revitalization, acting as an essential factor for balance and success. This significant need to reconnect with their cultural roots' manifests itself in several ways. First, there is an explicit desire to reconnect with their heritage, to reconnect with their community of origin, and to reconnect with the traditions and values of their ancestors, as well as with their cultural roots. This desire is a quest for identity and belonging that is fundamental to their well-being and personal development. Second, these young people express a strong need to improve their traditional or cultural knowledge and skills. This is not just about theoretical knowledge, but a practical appropriation of their culture, through learning craft techniques, ancestral practices, or current knowledge. This need to deepen their cultural knowledge is a source of personal fulfillment and an affirmation of their identity. Third, many people aspire to play an active role in preserving and transmitting their culture to future generations. The desire to keep their culture alive is a manifestation of their commitment to their community and a source of motivation. In summary, as some stakeholders express, this need for cultural revitalization is an essential prerequisite for socio-professional integration, because it contributes to building self-esteem, forging a sense of belonging and developing a strong and positive identity. They consider it so important that several organizations mention using culture as a pretext to work on employability (for example: observing and participating in the making of a birch bark canoe as a learning enterprise where work is organized in the form of a role-playing game where know-how and interpersonal skills are used; participating in sewing or dream catcher workshops; making a drum; visiting the territory, etc.).

In conclusion, the analysis of the specific needs of young FNI in terms of integration and retention in employment reveals the crucial importance of considering cultural and identity dimensions. The examination of needs related to personal identity construction, cultural revitalization, trauma healing and strengthening the connection with culture demonstrated the interdependence of these elements and their fundamental role in the path to employment. The approach adopted underlines the need for integrated interventions that consider the person as a whole, taking into account their sociocultural context and life experiences. Failure to take these aspects into account risks compromising the effectiveness of interventions and perpetuating inequalities (see in particular the section on issues). Other equally specific needs are presented in the following section, according to the group of actors most likely to be responsible for their satisfaction. Identifying key actors will make it possible to propose more targeted and effective strategies to support young FNI in their journey towards successful and sustainable socio-professional integration.

SUMMARY TABLE OF SPECIFIC NEEDS IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATION AND MAINTENANCE

GENERAL NEED	DESCRIPTION	MANIFESTATION OF THE LACK OF SATISFACTION OF THIS NEED
Personal identity needs	Lack of awareness of one's own abilities, skills, and ambitions. Need for introspection and self-discovery. Need to develop a positive self-image. Need for personal and family stability.	Uncertainty about identity and future, difficulty planning for the future, hopelessness, lack of direction, career instability, high staff turnover, difficulty identifying needs and goals.
Cultural identity needs	Aspiring to recognition of FNI identity and the ability to express cultural	Feelings of imposture, low self-esteem (at a cultural level), cognitive dissonance,

GENERAL NEED	DESCRIPTION	MANIFESTATION OF THE LACK OF SATISFACTION OF THIS NEED
Cultural identity needs	pride. Desire to regain a meaningful connection with the community and nation. Importance of regular contact with culture and territory. Need to maintain the ability to travel to the territory.	rejection of oneself and one's cultural heritage, lack of meaning, hindrance to motivation to continue studies or to integrate into the job market.
Healing Needs	The need to do preliminary work on oneself and verbalize lived experiences. The importance of building strong self-esteem. The inextricable link between identity connection and the healing process.	Inability to look to the future with confidence, difficulty acting and making informed decisions, hindrance to belief in one's own abilities, feeling of helplessness and doubt about the future, lack of resilience, difficulty projecting oneself positively into a career.
Needs related to getting closer to one's culture	A process of cultural reappropriation and revitalization. An explicit desire to reconnect with one's heritage, reconnect with one's community of origin, and reconnect with the traditions and values of their ancestors. A need to improve traditional or cultural knowledge and skills. A desire to play an active role in preserving and transmitting their culture to future generations.	Lack of balance and success, loss of self-esteem, lack of sense of belonging, difficulty developing a strong and positive identity.

3. SPECIFIC NEEDS IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATION AND MAINTENANCE ACCORDING TO THE GROUPS OF ACTORS LIKELY TO SATISFY THEM

3.1 Needs that can be met by communities or linked to communities

3.1.1 Needs related to family and community involvement

Family and community support play an important role in the employability of young FNIs, acting as a significant protective factor against difficulties related to socio-professional integration. This support manifests itself in several ways. First, family and community can facilitate access to resources and opportunities, particularly in terms of transportation. Collective travel arrangements, such as the example of five young people traveling together for one-day internships, illustrate community solidarity and the effectiveness of mutual support in the job search.

Next, family and community involvement are essential to prevent social problems that can hinder employability. By keeping young people busy and providing them with a structured environment, the community helps reduce the risks of substance use or other risky behaviors. Encouragement from parents and the community is a powerful lever for developing pride and self-confidence, essential elements for professional success. Education at home on the realities of employment, financial management, and the importance of a driver's license, for example, is a predictive factor for success: "It also starts at home. It's the parents' role to teach life dynamics related to employment, how to save, how to budget, etc., to encourage people to get their driver's license..." (Cree worker).

In addition, relational or emotional support is reported to be very important. Marshall et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of concrete and emotional support provided by family and extended family regarding the completion of studies and the development of a work ethic. For example, the sharing of experiences, tips, and tricks by community members promotes the acquisition of social and professional skills: "I asked them [my friends and family] for tips on how to speak to employers." (Atikamekw youth, 25 years old). Many FNI youth turn to their community for this type of support (Spowart and Marshall, 2015). Young FNI learners aged 16 to 20 who responded to Marshall et al.'s (2013) study spoke of both positive and negative family experiences, sometimes dating back to childhood, that had helped shape their confidence, determination, and self-efficacy in finding and maintaining employment. They also mentioned the importance of the presence of specific people who had an impact on their adjustment process, generally for the better. Sometimes seemingly insignificant gestures were highlighted as having played a major role in how they perceived their transition. Among other things, the high value placed on education by the FNI learners' families was one of the main supporting factors, alongside sobriety, family influences, family support, and being a caregiver (Merrill, Bruce, & Marlin, 2010).

Finally, the community acts as a safety net by providing support to young people in difficulty, enabling collaborative decision-making with the family when faced with problems such as substance use, burnout, or performance anxiety. Maintaining close contact with the community and family circle is therefore essential to ensure continuity of support and promote the success of young FNI in the labour market.

3.1.2 Needs related to the importance of having a role model

The lack of role models within their respective nations in professional circles represents a major obstacle to the guidance and motivation of young Inuk people. The lack of identity references, particularly obvious when the role models present in the communities are predominantly non-Inuk, creates a feeling of inaccessibility and undermines self-confidence: "I don't have the opportunity to do this job in my village, and you bring

someone from the south to do it? For a long time, I thought that it wasn't accessible to us, that we weren't capable, and that's why they brought in white people from the south." (Young Inuk, 30 years old). This lack of representation leads to a decrease in motivation and can lead to a feeling of inability to achieve certain professional goals. Also, the desire to act as a role model for future generations is expressed by some young people, highlighting a need to create intergenerational connections and fill this lack of references: "I would like to pave the way for others, but is that my place? I want to be a role model, but I haven't had one. How do you become a role model?" (Young Cree, 20 years old). Finally, the creation of mentoring and sponsorship programs involving FNI professionals appears essential in the eyes of several stakeholders in order to offer FNI youth inspiring role models and positive cultural references, thus promoting their professional orientation and integration.

3.1.3 Needs related to support in the transition between the community and the urban environment

The transition between the community and the urban environment represents a major challenge for young FNI, highlighting the crucial need for appropriate support to facilitate this often-destabilizing stage. The lack of information and reference points in an unfamiliar environment can lead to great vulnerability, accentuating the difficulties of socio-professional integration. Several interventions are necessary. First, young people need listening and referral services, such as liaison officers acting as a bridge between the community and urban resources: improving the sense of community through effective communication between the community of origin and urban organizations is desirable. Second, concrete support in transportation, particularly important for families, is essential to facilitate access to resources and employment opportunities. Third, better preparation of young people from secondary school onwards is necessary to better equip them for the realities of urban life. Presentations and conferences highlighting the successful academic and professional journeys of other young FNI can inspire and motivate. These initiatives provide a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that await them. Finally, funding programs for young university students wishing to return to their communities during the holidays, such as those offered within the Cree Nation, are important for maintaining community ties and facilitating their return to the community once their studies are completed. These measures are essential to contribute to a more harmonious transition and better professional integration of young FNI in urban areas.

3.1.4 Needs related to strengthening the community aspect

The need to strengthen community ties among young FNIs is crucial to fostering their professional success, particularly during the transition to an urban environment. Unlike the individualism often prevalent in cities, the culture within many nations values collective action and mutual support. This need for community translates into an explicit desire to create a support network, offering a sense of belonging and solidarity in an environment that can sometimes be hostile and impersonal, according to the young people we met. Initiatives promoting the development of community networks in urban areas are therefore essential. The creation of residences for young FNIs, for example, offers a safe and structured environment, while providing a fixed address, often required to access employment and training programs.

Moreover, the presence of workers in these residences allows for individualized support and guidance tailored to the specific needs of each young person, while facilitating access to community resources. This type of initiative creates a more welcoming environment and helps fill the void left by the departure of the community of origin. Strengthening the community aspect in urban areas is therefore more than just a social desire; it is a determining factor for the socio-professional success of young FNI, making it possible to better counter the effects of the transition and promote a more harmonious integration into the job market. This is a fundamental need that helps alleviate isolation, promote resilience and foster the personal and professional development of these young people.

3.1.5 Needs related to community work

The lack of employment opportunities within communities represents a major obstacle to the socio-professional integration of young FNI. The limited choice of occupations available makes it difficult to plan for the future and develop a realistic career plan. As one worker explained, "They don't have many career choices. They can't plan much." Community economic development is therefore essential to create diverse and stimulating jobs, going beyond the often-limited traditional jobs. The band council, for example, is often the only significant employer in some communities. Creating diverse jobs is therefore a priority need to encourage young people to remain in their community and enable them to contribute to its economic development.

Moreover, several needs arise in this regard. First, the need to develop distance learning, allowing young people to acquire skills sought after on the job market, is a solution to compensate for the lack of training available in the community. Areas such as post-production or screenwriting could be explored, an area of interest for many young people (see the box on youth interests). Second, the creation of jobs within communities, specifically for young people who have obtained university degrees and wish to return to work in their community, is also an essential need to be met: "It would be good for young people to start their careers within their community." (Young Cree, 34 years old). Third, there is also the need for hiring criteria to prioritize experience and acquired skills, rather than being limited to diplomas, in order to recognize talents and know-how developed in different contexts.

Finally, access to internships and diverse professional experiences, beyond traditional jobs, is crucial for enabling young people to discover different professions and gain experience. Supporting geographical mobility, allowing young people to undertake internships outside their community and expose themselves to different professional realities, is also relevant for broadening their horizons and promoting their professional integration.

3.2 Needs related to education, training or schooling, which can be met by educational establishments

Educational institutions, from primary to post-secondary, play a key role in preparing young FNI for work. However, several adaptations are necessary to better meet their specific needs. First, teaching methods must be diversified to better adapt to their learning styles: "They like to learn on the job, in a different way than what is done at school." (Stakeholder). More practical, less theoretical approaches, with gradual integration into the world of work through observation and on-the-job learning, could be favored (Deschênes, 2024). One-off training, allowing young people to train without having to relocate, is also important. Second, increased support is needed for young people with learning difficulties or special needs, such as neurodivergent youth: "More support for neurodivergent people (autism, ADHD)." Special education services and individualized educational adaptations are essential to ensure their academic success. Improving language skills, particularly in French and English, is also fundamental to promoting their access to employment. Furthermore, educational institutions can also meet the need for a safe and quiet place to study, for example, a room where adapted resources and services are provided (support specialists such as a social worker, a psychosocial or drug addiction counselor, etc.).

Integrating the historical and cultural perspectives of the FNI into school curricula is also essential, both in urban and community settings: "I would have liked to learn my history at school," explains a young Atikamekw man, 28 years old. The land-based learning approach, which values learning in connection with the territory, must be integrated, particularly in urban settings. Community learning should be recognized and valued, complementing traditional learning models. The goal is to better identify the options and careers available to young FNI and to prepare them for them. They must be exposed to a wider variety of careers, beyond traditional ones, and equipped to make informed choices (on this subject, see the box on factors that influence career choice). Aptitude tests, better support, and career guidance from a young age are therefore essential.

BOX F: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF PROFESSION

As mentioned above, the career choice of young FNI is a complex process influenced by an interaction of factors that go beyond purely economic or professional considerations. According to participants, the importance given to geographical proximity to the place of training and employment reflects a deep social and cultural reality. This choice is not simply a matter of convenience; it reflects the close bond that unites these young people with their community and their family. Furthermore, the priority given to security and a sense of belonging within the workplace highlights the vulnerability and need for support felt by these young people, who often face challenges related to discrimination and marginalization. The relative importance given to health insurance, compared to life insurance or pension funds, reveals a vision oriented towards the present and immediate needs, rather than long-term planning. This choice reflects an often-precarious socioeconomic reality, where short-term needs take precedence over long-term perspectives.

The influence of family and community needs on career choice is also a determining factor, highlighting the importance of social and cultural ties in the lives of young FNIs. This factor highlights the altruism and sense of community that characterize many FNI cultures. The preference for easily accessible work, with a simple and quick hiring process, reflects the need to facilitate entry into the job market and reduce the often complex and daunting bureaucratic and administrative barriers. The common practice of holding multiple positions within the same organization, often an FNI organization, reflects the flexibility and adaptability needed in an often-precarious economic context. This system also helps maintain close ties with the community and contribute to its development.

The desire expressed by some young people to work in a field related to their culture, even if this job does not directly correspond to their skills, underlines the importance of cultural recognition and the valorization of their identity. This needs to work in a meaningful field aligned with their values goes beyond purely material concerns. These observations highlight the need for an approach to career guidance for young FNI that takes into account not only their individual skills and aspirations, but also their social, cultural, and economic realities. Guidance programs that include geographical, family, and community considerations therefore appear to us to be more effective.

Adapting the school system to the realities of young FNIs is also essential. The assessment of educational attainment, which can be discouraging for young people with significant gaps (for example, the assessment that "classifies" the person at the level of the 4th year of primary school), requires a more individualized and caring approach, and possibly less "colonized," since the levels assessed do not necessarily correspond to the values and visions of the FNIs. Adapted literacy and remedial programs are essential to acquire the necessary knowledge and allow young people to continue their studies. Completing the 5th year of secondary school is a priority objective, with specific support for young people aged 15 to 20 towards a secondary school diploma (DES) or vocational training, and for young people aged 30 to 35 towards one-off training that meets their immediate needs.

Young people also expressed the need for additional training to be better equipped to manage their daily lives and integrate into the world of work. Training on healthy lifestyle habits (organization, budget management, punctuality), social skills (soft skills), mental health, and information technology is important. A better

understanding of the realities of the world of work, including, for example, taxation, reading a pay stub, or drug insurance, is also necessary. Finally, raising awareness about life outside the community, including the documents needed to leave their community (health insurance card, social security number, etc.), is essential to prepare young people for the transition to employment.

To promote the academic and professional success of young FNI, it is also essential to highlight their skills and achievements, and give them the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. Graduation and employment recognition ceremonies, as well as the highlighting of success stories, can serve as role models and inspiration. Recognition of prior learning is another crucial point.

Finally, it is necessary to bridge the gap between the end of school and the job market by providing better support for career guidance and increasing the visibility of the different possible options (apprenticeships, recognition of prior learning, etc.). Effective promotion of these options, with attractive visual tools, is essential to reach young people (for example, “making videos to show possible careers,” insists a young Inuk woman aged 23). Awareness-raising and ongoing training for teachers and stakeholders on the realities of FNI are also important to improve the quality of support and to avoid situations of discrimination such as the one reported by a young woman: “I explained that the teacher was speaking badly to me, but nothing was done.” (Young Inuk man, 24 years old)

Needs related to freedom and openness to the outside world can be integrated into the discussion on education and training. The desire to free themselves through training and to find their own path is a major driving force for young FNI. Access to quality education, allowing them to develop their skills and explore different career paths, is essential for them to flourish and achieve their aspirations. The opportunity to pursue studies or work outside their community, even temporarily, is a key factor in their personal and professional development. This openness to the outside world allows them to acquire new skills, gain exposure to different realities, and develop their professional network. It is important to emphasize that this need for openness to the outside world does not come at the expense of their cultural roots. On the contrary, the experience gained abroad can enrich their identity and enable them to better contribute to the development of their community upon their return. Access to geographic mobility programs, scholarships, and programs to support integration into new environments is therefore essential to support this need for openness and promote the success of young FNI. This is an often-overlooked aspect, but crucial to their long-term personal and professional development. The balance between maintaining their community ties and opening up to the outside world is a key element of their success.

3.3 Needs that can be met by support organizations

3.3.1 Needs related to pre-employability programs and services

Support organizations play a crucial role in the socio-professional integration of young FNIs, particularly those who have not completed high school. Appropriate pre-employment services are needed to prepare these young people for entry into the job market. Among other things, stakeholders report that it is essential to connect young people with the workplace before launching them into full-time employment. To achieve this, an individualized approach is essential to identify their specific needs and expectations, understand why they are not employed, and develop a personalized action plan. Support must include help in finding housing, defining a professional goal, and developing a concrete action plan to achieve this goal. It is about understanding their journey and identifying the obstacles that prevent them from accessing employment: “We need help to find our way.” (Young Innu, 21 years old).

Diverse workshops are also an essential need to promote self-discovery, motivation, and the development of social skills. “Young people have a lot of desire, but they just don’t know how to go about it.” (Young Innu, 28 years old). Offering workshops is one way to support them in developing certain skills. “The workshops on self-

knowledge and motivation helped me,” reports a young Innu woman, 34. Others, on communication and interpersonal relationships, are also important. Specific workshops for neurodivergent youth, taking into account their particular needs and the resource gaps in this area within their communities, are also necessary. To this end, visits from Elders from different nations could serve as role models and inspiration, thus meeting part of this need.

However, organizations are often limited in their capacities. A significant need is for a personalized service offering, created and led by members of the FNI communities to better meet the specific realities and cultural needs of these young people. Procedures must be adapted. Testing and support before integration into pre-employability programs would help identify objectives and better prepare young people. As mentioned previously, it is essential to work on administrative aspects, such as obtaining a driver's license or managing challenges related to geographic remoteness, even before the start of pre-employability programs. The administrative complexity and difficulties related to remoteness require special support: "Getting a driver's license in a remote area is complicated; they have to find a companion to take them to a driving center in a larger city" (Intervener).

Other needs relate to access to part-time programs, so that they are better adapted to the complex life realities of certain young people: "Part-time programs are better. I was at 3 days a week, and that allowed me to take care of everything else [administrative paperwork, challenges with the law, my children's school, etc.]" (Young Anishinabe, 34 years old). Among Inuit youth, significant needs are related to young people involved in the criminal justice system, who require even more specific support. Many have a criminal record, and this reality limits their efforts to social and professional integration. A preliminary support program would also allow young people to manage administrative aspects and challenges related to their lifestyle (healthy habits, sleep, food, stability, etc.) before starting a pre-employability program, thus allowing them to fully concentrate on their training.

3.3.2 Needs related to employability programs and services

For the majority of people interviewed, the offer of employability programs must focus on the development of essential skills and the acquisition of professional know-how, including appropriate attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. As this stakeholder reported: "We need to focus more and more on employability programs: we need to educate them about employment, including know-how, such as attitudes toward employers, etc." Among other things, corporate training programs, including virtual platforms, would better meet the needs and expectations of young people, since it constitutes a more flexible and accessible approach.

That said, the variety of job placement platforms must be expanded to allow for greater inclusivity. Young people need the criteria to be reviewed to allow for the participation of a greater number of young people, without excluding those with specific needs or particular constraints. One speaker explains that it is necessary to: "vary job placement platforms and give everyone a chance without too many stringent criteria, such as requiring 30 hours per week... or allowing people to work more than 37.5 hours if they want to." The age criterion should also be reviewed, taking into account the diversity of situations and life paths.

A better understanding of available careers is a critical need to be addressed. Young FNIs often have limited knowledge of the career opportunities available, both within and outside their community. Among other things, one worker explains, "young people are not aware of careers available in the community (such as those at the CCQ). Awareness-raising activities and company visits could help fill this information gap, allowing young people to discover the various careers available and gain a more concrete idea of the opportunities available to them. Currently, the influence of family background is significant: "They often choose based on their family, 'my cousin does that, I'm interested'..." However, it is essential to help them explore beyond their immediate

circle, through monthly visits, field trips to vocational training centers or companies, and even opportunities to observe the profession before committing to long-term training.

Indeed, the opportunity to discover a profession before committing to training is an important need. Short internship programs, allowing young people to experience a profession for a few days, could contribute to better career guidance and a reduction in the risk of dropping out during training. A bank of employers willing to host these short internships should be considered, to better address the real interests of young people and avoid less sensible choices, such as young people who choose a profession because it is practiced by someone they know: "There is a lot of word of mouth: my friend does that, so I would like that...", explains one speaker. This type of approach helps to better inform career choices and promote a better match between professional aspirations and the realities of the job market.

3.3.3 Needs related to support and accompaniment in general

The stakeholders we met shared with us various needs that needed to be met in terms of support and guidance. Among other things, in connection with the previously mentioned need for structured services and programs tailored to their specific needs, following a logical and individualized progression, stakeholders suggested various preliminary steps, which we summarize in the following sentences. According to them, a first step consists of assessing the young person's interest in socio-professional integration and verifying their eligibility for income assistance programs. A meeting with a counselor then helps identify the specific obstacles and needs of each young person. An action plan can then be developed jointly with the young person, taking into account their abilities and willingness: "It has to start with them." This plan includes support for the transition to urban life, including help with understanding the urban environment and public transportation. Counselors can then facilitate access to resources such as computers for administrative procedures or for meetings with specialists. It also includes applying for funding, administrative and professional support to facilitate access to resources and services, and more specific support, depending on the young person's background, such as training on the world of work, social media management, and acquiring a professional email. For example, as one speaker explains: "They need to be better prepared for work compared to everyday life: what does work involve?"

The plan must also include regular follow-up, not only in the event of difficulties, but also to celebrate successes and develop a bond of trust, even after the program: "I would have liked to have more follow-up after the program, to be able to see a counselor every three months, for example, or as needed." (Young person, 34 years old). Indeed, support beyond obtaining a job, considering both professional and personal aspects, appears crucial for successful dual integration. This strategy provides tools before and during employment to counteract the shortcomings in the environments and the difficulties young people face that could lead them to leave a job. This post-employment follow-up therefore supports young people in their professional integration and helps them overcome challenges that may arise.

The psychological difficulties and stress related to the transition and integration into the job market are significant, and are caused in particular by the discrimination experienced: "People are still condescending in 2025. I was made to feel as if what I was doing was never enough." (Young Atikamekw man, 28 years old). Performance anxiety, financial pressures, childcare challenges, and internal (family, community) and external (society) social pressures also generate intense stress, anxiety, and adjustment problems. "It's hard for them to see the finish line," explains a Cree worker. This stress can lead to a vicious cycle of consumption and escape. "They're searching for themselves; they don't understand their social role in their community. Quebec is very individualistic, and they try to get into this game, but they get lost in the long run, they don't succeed." (Innu speaker). Workshops on managing emotions, creating support networks among young people, and ongoing psychological support, even after entering the job market, are necessary.

Finally, emotional support and support for close family are also important needs that were reported. Access to childcare services, preferably close to training locations, is essential to allow parents to participate in the programs: "I had to take care of my son who has ADHD, and because of that, I couldn't stay in the program, I didn't have enough time." (Young Innu, 34 years old). "I have four children and I don't have a car. It was too complicated for me to follow a program. I would have needed a daycare on site." (Young Atikamekw, 24 years old).

3.4 Needs that can be met by employers

3.4.1 *Need for mentoring, coaching and support*

The importance of mentoring, coaching, and support for young FNIs cannot be overstated. This fundamental need, strongly expressed by study participants, transcends the purely technical aspects of professional learning. It involves comprehensive and personalized support that takes into account the specific cultural, linguistic, and social realities of these young people. The approach must be proactive and caring, fostering a relationship of trust and mutual respect. The employer must take the time to get to know the young person, understand their aspirations, strengths, and weaknesses, and adapt their support accordingly. It's not about imposing a career plan, but rather guiding the young person in building their own career path. As this speaker puts it, you have to "go to the young person and ask them what they want to do, rather than telling them what they're going to do."

Integration into a supportive work team is a crucial aspect of this process, considered a need by many. Young people must be welcomed into a functional and supportive structure, where they will feel supported and accompanied by their colleagues and supervisor. Gradual integration and pairing with an experienced mentor can facilitate this transition and reduce the risk of failure. The integration of a mentoring system within teams was cited by the majority of participants as a primary need. The mentor then acts as a guide, a role model, and a source of inspiration, sharing their experience and transmitting their knowledge.

Good communication is a fundamental need in this process. It is essential to ensure that the young person understands the expectations and requirements of their position, while taking into account any potential language barriers. Among other things, "Many people don't dare ask for help; they won't say if they have questions." (Intervener). Constant validation of understanding, without patronizing or paternalizing, is therefore crucial. It is important to remember that for many young people, French or English is a second language, requiring an adaptation of communication style and increased patience. One intervenor sums up the issue well: "You have to validate understanding, have them rephrase, without patronizing, without patronizing. Keep in mind that it is a second language."

Young people need regular support, not only to address challenges, but also to maintain connections and celebrate successes, as well as to develop a climate of mutual trust. Assigning a single contact person to each young person allows for individualized support and ongoing monitoring of their integration. This support should not be seen as ongoing assistance, but rather as guidance toward professional autonomy. The goal is to equip young people to manage their tasks and responsibilities independently within the organization

It is essential to take into account that for many young FNI, this may be their first job, even at a later age. "We need to make employers aware that even at 30, this may be their first job." (Stakeholder). This situation requires an adaptation of the supervisory approach, adequate training for the employer, and particular patience. Time management is also an important aspect to consider, adapting the pace of integration to the needs and abilities of each young person. One speaker stated that it is important to "give young people time, not rush them, and follow their pace." In conclusion, effective mentoring and personalized support, adapted

to the specific realities of young FNI, are determining factors in their professional success. This fundamental need, clearly expressed by the study participants, underlines the need for a caring approach, centered on the person and their personal and professional development.

3.4.2 Need to obtain positions with responsibilities

For young FNI, access to rewarding and stimulating jobs is essential for their professional development. This need goes beyond simply finding a job; it is an aspiration to exercise responsibilities and actively contribute to their workplace. Access to management positions, even without formal training, must be possible for young people who have demonstrated skills and relevant experience. Professional development must not be limited by institutional barriers or by obtaining a diploma.

That said, young people expressed that the allocation of responsibilities must be gradual and accompanied by adequate supervision. It is important to avoid overloading young people with excessive responsibilities from the moment they arrive in the company. One speaker explained the importance of: "Exercising progressive responsibilities (not on the first day) without feeling that everything rests on their shoulders." Personalized support, adapting responsibilities to the young person's abilities and learning pace, is therefore necessary to ensure their professional development and successful integration within the team.

Young FNI workers aspire to be listened to and to be able to actively contribute to improving their workplace. Their vision and perspectives, even if they differ from those of more experienced employees, must be considered and valued. One stakeholder expressed it this way: "They need to feel listened to in the changes and improvements they can make to their organization, according to their vision, even if it is different." This recognition of their ideas and contributions is essential for their motivation and long-term commitment. Autonomy is also a fundamental element. Young people want to be trusted and granted greater freedom of action in carrying out their duties: "I want to be trusted." (Atikamekw youth).

Finally, employers must be open to considering applications from young FNIs, even in the absence of formal training in the Quebec system. Experience gained in other contexts, on-the-job learning, and the demonstration of skills in the field must be recognized and valued. Young people express a deep desire to prove their abilities and willingness to learn: "Give us the chance to prove that we are capable of learning on the job." (Young Cree, 21 years old). In conclusion, access to rewarding jobs, with progressive responsibilities and adequate support, is essential to foster the development and professional success of young FNIs. Listening, trust, and recognition of their skills are determining factors in their integration and perseverance in the job market.

3.4.3 Need for cultural adaptation of environments and employment conditions

Cultural adaptation of workplaces is also an essential need to ensure the integration and retention of young FNI. This need is broken down into several interrelated aspects that must be taken into account by employers.

First, communication is often a first obstacle. Language, cultural differences, and lived experiences greatly influence how young FNIs interact in the workplace. "I would like my employer to understand that I need more time to respond, that I am not stupid, and that I may be translating in my head." (Young Inuk, 23 years old). Employers must therefore be sensitive to these realities and adapt their communication, which involves simplifying language, rephrasing questions, listening, and showing patience. Cultural awareness training for managers is essential.

In addition, young Innu people may face significant psychological challenges related to intergenerational trauma, discrimination, and uprooting. An employee assistance program (EAP) adapted to their realities is

therefore a crucial need. "I need someone who understands my reality to answer me, without having to explain everything before talking about my problem." (Young Innu, 32 years old). This EAP should include culturally sensitive workers who are able to understand their specific needs and provide them with adequate support. Access to community resources is also an important need, as is the establishment of peer support mechanisms.

For many young people, work-life balance is a major issue, especially for parents. Employers must demonstrate flexibility and understanding. This need may involve adapted schedules, special leave for important cultural events, for field trips, or the possibility of occasional remote work. Young people have expressed the need for respect for family obligations and cultural responsibilities to be integrated into company policies. This idea is also supported by several researchers (Barker, 2006; Barnett, 2008; Burgess and Dyer, 2009); if they feel listened to, they explain, this will have positive consequences on their productivity and performance.

Creating a sense of belonging within the workplace is a particularly important need expressed by the young people we met. This need is greater than for young people from the majority of the population, as integrating into a new professional environment can be challenging. Among other things, for the majority of young Quebecers, this integration often takes place within a broader social context where community and family ties, while significant, do not constitute the main pillar of their identity and support. For young FNI, the situation is fundamentally different. Their identity is often deeply rooted in their home community, where family ties and support networks are essential to their well-being. The transition to the job market therefore represents a major upheaval, sometimes a physical and always emotional distance from these essential support networks. The absence of this sense of belonging at work can then amplify the consequences of being uprooted and lacking reference points in a new environment. Isolation and feelings of marginalization can be accentuated. Therefore, creating a work environment where young FNI feel understood, accepted, and integrated is a necessity, not a luxury. It is about addressing the lack of community support networks often present in their home communities by reproducing, in the professional context, a comparable sense of security and belonging. Concrete initiatives such as the establishment of peer support groups, cultural awareness activities, and informal meeting spaces are therefore essential to counter this isolation and promote the harmonious integration of these young people. Several young people and stakeholders mentioned that it is only by meeting this fundamental need for social and cultural connection that we can truly ensure their success and long-term retention in their employment.

Finally, management practices must be adapted to take into account the cultural realities of young FNI. For the organization, this need involves valuing teamwork, promoting open and transparent communication, and adopting a participatory approach to decision-making. It is also important to recognize and value skills and experiences acquired outside the traditional school system.

3.4.4 Need a good connection with the employer and the organization

A positive connection and open communication with the employer and the organization are also essential for the professional success of young FNI. This need for listening and understanding goes beyond the formal framework of performance evaluations. It requires an active presence on the part of the employer, a willingness to take the time to get to know the young person and understand their specific needs. It is necessary to be able to "take us where we are." (Young Innu, 34 years old). Informal meetings, in a climate of trust and respect, help create a more authentic connection and encourage open communication: "The majority of young people are introverted, they won't say if it's not working, you have to be present and create a connection." (Speaker).

Formal assessment meetings can be perceived as intimidating and can hinder communication. Young people express a need to feel comfortable expressing their difficulties and needs, without fear of judgment. "You have to talk to people, tell them why things aren't going well, have good communication with colleagues, and be

open. That's what helped me a lot where I worked." I was listened to." (Atikamekw youth, 25 years old). Understanding the specific cultural needs of FNI youth is also fundamental: "I need them to better understand my cultural needs." (Anishinabe youth, 21 years old). Meeting this need can involve setting up spaces for expression, such as sharing circles, which foster a sense of community and solidarity.

Moreover, a better understanding of the needs of young FNIs by employers allows for more effective support and better adaptation of working conditions. Trust is a key element of this relationship. Young people must feel that their employer believes in their abilities and is willing to support their professional development. Using qualitative objectives, rather than numerical goals based solely on time or quantitative performance, can help create a less stressful work environment that is more conducive to success.

3.4.5 Need for cultural security

For the young FNIs we met, cultural safety in the workplace is a fundamental need that goes far beyond the material aspects of employment. It is a profound need for belonging, recognition, and respect for their cultural identity. This need manifests itself in several ways. First, the presence of FNI identity figures within the organization creates a sense of security and legitimacy. Seeing successful role models, people who share their culture and experience, allows young people to feel less isolated and more comfortable in a sometimes-intimidating professional environment. The presence of people who speak their mother tongue also facilitates communication and helps build a bond of trust.

Young people also express the need to experience cultural activities at work. Integrating cultural activities into company life, such as beading workshops, the use of sage during a morning sharing session, or other traditional activities, helps celebrate their culture and foster a sense of belonging.

Among the Inuit, a particular need for a gradual entry into the system, following the pace of the youth, was repeatedly mentioned. The young Inuit interviewed mentioned needing more time, especially for the administrative aspect.

The importance of laughter and creating a relaxed, non-judgmental atmosphere is also crucial: humor, good humor, and mutual respect are essential for developing a sense of security and trust. These initiatives contribute to a more welcoming work environment that is more conducive to the development of young FNI members.

Beyond creating a culturally safe physical environment, having colleagues who are aware of the realities of FNIs is a need expressed by the majority of young people interviewed. A zero-tolerance policy on racism and discrimination is imperative to ensure a respectful and inclusive work environment. For example, concrete initiatives implemented within the federal government can serve as examples: the creation of a welcome circle when hiring several FNI people at the same time facilitates networking and the creation of connections between new employees; then, an Indigenous employee circle provides a space for support and exchange between FNI employees, while allowing employees from these communities to have access to specific cultural support; finally, a peer-partner program, which pairs an experienced and culturally sensitive employee with a young FNI, offers personalized support and valuable assistance in navigating the professional environment.

3.4.6 Need for changes within organizations (in general, but also towards reconciliation and cultural adaptation)

Organizations, whether public or private, must undertake significant changes to better meet the needs of young FNI and promote their professional integration, in the specific context of cultural adaptation and reconciliation. These changes must aim not only to adapt management practices, but also to deeply reflect on organizational structures and underlying values.

A first observation that emerged from the interviews is the disproportionate influence of First Nations in eastern and southern Quebec on the policies and practices of organizations, to the detriment of the treaty communities. The changes made often correspond more to the cultures of the former, neglecting the specific needs of the latter.

Better communication and a clearer presentation of the services offered by organizations are needed to address the information gap among FNI youth. Thus, the gap between communities and organizations must be reduced through an effective communication strategy and the creation of closer ties between organizations and communities. Among other things, access to information and awareness of the opportunities offered by organizations are essential to encourage the participation of FNI youth.

In addition, organizations must actively work towards adapting their structures and ways of operating. Top-down approaches must be challenged in favor of more collaborative and participatory models. Policies must be adapted to better reflect the values and cultural realities of FNI youth: "Policies must be aligned with our culture and values, which are determined primarily by Elders and other people in our communities, as role models, even if they are lacking..." (Atikamekw youth, 24 years old).

Concrete examples of these adaptations include flexible schedules to allow for work-life balance (as mentioned above), recognition of family responsibilities and culturally important days. The ability to start later in the morning if the young person has children or to recognize the need to provide care to the family, for example, illustrates this necessary adaptation. In short, employers must understand the importance of the extended family for FNI (Barker, 2006; Barnett, 2008; Burgess and Dyer, 2009). Indeed, for FNI youth, success in life goes far beyond their individual aspirations and goals and is directly associated with their relationships with their extended family, Elders, peers, communities, and nations. According to Pidgeon et al. (2019), for youth, living a satisfying life encompasses the following elements: notions of belonging, a sense of security, a sense of identity, financial and human support for their educational, career, and life goals, and community participation.

In short, organizations must actively engage in a process of cultural adaptation to better meet the needs of young FNIs. This is an ongoing process that requires critical reflection on existing practices and structures, a willingness to listen and learn, and concrete adaptation of policies and practices to create inclusive and respectful work environments that allow young FNIs to flourish and fully contribute to society.

3.4.7 Need for awareness-raising, training and support for employers

Awareness-raising, training and support for employers is a need expressed by young people and by the stakeholders we met, which enables young FNI to integrate and remain in employment. Despite the progress made, discrimination in the workplace remains a major obstacle. Employers therefore need to be made more aware of the cultural realities and specific needs of young FNI. This awareness must go beyond mere declarations of intent; it must translate into a concrete understanding of the issues involved in recruiting, hiring, retaining and managing FNI employees.

Employers need to be equipped to identify available resources and to know where to find out about best practices in inclusion and diversity. Access to reliable and relevant information, including concrete examples of successful initiatives, is essential to support them in this process. A lack of knowledge about how to recruit, hire and support these young people can lead to discriminatory practices, whether unintentional or not. Specific training, adapted to the contexts and realities of different communities, should be offered to employers to enable them to better understand the cultural needs and specific challenges faced by these young people.

Tailor-made services for employers hiring young FNI are also needed. These services could include coaching in the recruitment process, advice on human resources management and support in resolving specific problems

linked to the integration of FNI employees. A directory of existing employment and mental health resources should be made available to employers, to facilitate their access to appropriate support. Ongoing support, provided by specialized counselors, is essential to help employers deal with the various situations that may arise in connection with their FNI employees.

TABLE SUMMARIZING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS IN TERMS OF INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION ACCORDING TO THE GROUPS OF PLAYERS LIKELY TO MEET THEM

NEEDS	SPECIFIC NEEDS
Main players: communities	
Family and community involvement	Support for access to resources (transportation, information), prevention of social problems, encouragement and emotional support
Importance of having role models	Presence of FNI models in professional circles, creation of mentoring and sponsorship programs, intergenerational links.
Support for the community/urban transition	Listening and referral services, transportation support, preparation of young people starting in high school, funding programs for students returning to their communities.
Strengthening the community aspect	Creation of support networks, residences for young FNI in urban areas, individualized support and access to community resources.
Developing community work	Creation of diversified and stimulating jobs within communities, development of distance learning, access to internships and diversified professional experience, recognition of skills acquired outside the school system.
Key players: educational establishments	
Adaptation of teaching methods	Diversification of teaching methods to better adapt to the learning styles of young FNI (practical approaches, gradual integration into the world of work, one-off training without relocation).
Improved support and accessibility	Increased support for learning difficulties (remedial teaching services, individualized teaching adaptations, language skills improvement), a safe and quiet place to study (premises with adapted resources and services).
Valuing culture and history	Valuing the historical and cultural perspectives of FNI in school curricula (land-based learning, recognition of community learning).
Adaptation of the school system	Caring assessment of academic level (individualized, less “colonized” approaches), adapted literacy and remedial programs, support towards completion of Secondary 5 (DES or vocational training).
Complementary training courses	Training on healthy lifestyle habits (organization, budget management, punctuality), social skills (soft skills), mental health and information technology, better understanding of the realities of the working world (taxation, reading a pay stub, insurance), awareness of life outside the community (necessary documents).
Enhancing skills and offering prospects	Highlighting skills and achievements, offering opportunities to prove their abilities, recognition of experiential learning, support for career guidance, visibility of options (apprenticeships, recognition of prior learning), awareness and training of teachers on the realities of FNI.
Opening up to the outside world through training and education	Information on available career paths, ensuring continuity after studies (training opportunities to break free from precarious employment, access to the job market).

NEEDS	SPECIFIC NEEDS
Main players: Support organizations	
Pre-employability	Customized services, created and led by members of the FNI communities to better meet the specific cultural needs and realities of these young people.
Employability	Offer programs that emphasize the development of essential skills and the acquisition of professional know-how, including appropriate attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Variety and broadening of employment integration platforms to enable greater inclusiveness.
Accompaniment and support	Services and programs structured and adapted to their specific needs, following a logical, individualized progression, and work on administrative aspects, such as obtaining a driver's license or managing the challenges of geographical remoteness, even before the pre-employability programs begin.
Main players: employers	
Mentoring, coaching and guidance	A proactive, caring approach, based on trust, mutual respect and good communication. Regular follow-up, not only in the event of difficulties, but also to maintain the link and celebrate successes.
Rewarding jobs and responsibilities	Access to rewarding and stimulating jobs, adapting their structures and ways of working. Creating inclusive and respectful work environments that enable young FNI to flourish and contribute fully to society.
Cultural adaptations of working environments and conditions	Adapted communication (simplified language, rephrasing), culturally adapted employee assistance program, flexibility for work-life balance (adapted schedules, time off for cultural events), creating a sense of belonging (support groups, cultural awareness activities), adapted management practices (valuing teamwork, open communication, participative approach).
Building trust and understanding	Commitment from the employer and the organization to an active presence, a willingness to take the time to get to know the young person and understand his or her specific needs (have formal and informal meetings, to create a safe space where difficulties and successes can be shared without fear).
Cultural security	Creation of a meeting place (culturally safe space), team members who are aware of and familiar with this cultural background (e.g. a reference person when young people join the company), implementation of rules of respect and zero tolerance of discrimination.
Culture-appropriate structure and organization	Challenging top-down approaches, towards a collaborative and participative system, in order to adapt to young people's reality. Policies that match young people's cultures and values.
Guidance and support for workplaces	Guidance and support in meeting employment needs, and in deconstructing certain myths that could hinder the recruitment of young people.

CONCLUSION ON THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF FNI YOUTH

An analysis of the needs of young FNI employees in terms of integration and job retention reveals the complexity of a reality often reduced to socio-economic indicators. Over and above the needs prior to employment (food security, housing, physical and mental health), this study highlights the crucial importance of cultural and identity-related dimensions. Simply adding services is not enough; what is needed is a profoundly transformative approach that takes into account the unique context of communities and the individual experiences of young FNI.

The often overlooked need to heal intergenerational trauma is an essential prerequisite for any prospect of socio-professional integration. Before even considering employment, a process of resilience and identity reconstruction must be initiated. This involves recognizing their experiences, valuing their cultures and re-establishing meaningful links with their communities. The strictly individualistic approach all too often dominant in socio-professional integration programs is proving inadequate. It fails to take into account certain aspects of FNI cultures, where the individual is intrinsically linked to his or her family and community.

Analysis by groups of players (communities, educational institutions, support organizations, employers, governments) underlines the interdependence of the actions required. A fragmented approach, where each player acts in isolation, is doomed to failure. Effective intervention depends on collaboration and coherent action at all levels. The empowerment of each player is essential. It is not enough to consult young FNI to “tick boxes”; their contributions must be genuinely taken into account and their ideas implemented.

An examination of the career interests of young FNI (presented in the form of various boxes) highlights a variety of aspirations that transcend traditional classifications of trades. Interest in professions related to the land, new technologies, helping relationships and community contribution, testifies to a diversity of talents and skills that must be recognized and valued. The desire to work in indigenous organizations and the preference for jobs that reconcile work and community life illustrate the importance of cultural values in their career choices. The lack of visibility of employment opportunities and the lack of information on the various trades underline the urgent need to develop appropriate orientation and training programs.

Having said that, in view of the solutions proposed, the testimony of a speaker concerning the major dangers linked to “extractionism” (the speaker's word) and clientelism: in other words, still according to her, the tendency to prioritize superficial actions, which meet administrative or political requirements, rather than the real needs of young people. We need to move away from this extractive approach and adopt a truly youth-centered approach, based on listening, collaboration and respect for young people's values and aspirations. Last but not least, creating inclusive workplaces that respect FNI cultures is an essential element in retaining young FNI employees. Culturally adapting workplaces, raising employer awareness and putting in place support mechanisms are crucial to ensuring their successful professional integration. The importance of mentoring and coaching, emphasized by the young participants, reveals the need for personalized, ongoing support.

To this end, however, the analysis of the match between the job market and the needs of young FNI employees presented in the following section reveals significant challenges, both in the community and in urban areas, in creating such inclusive and respectful environments. Among other things, in the community, the limited job offers, the mismatch between training and local needs, and the influence of social networking all contribute to an unfavorable environment. Outside the community, discrimination, stereotypes and lack of workplace adaptation are major obstacles. Cross-cutting themes, such as the mismatch between young people's aspirations and labour market offerings, the lack of territorial adaptation and the lack of communication between stakeholders, underline the need for a systemic approach. We present an analysis of these elements in the next section.

SECTION C: MATCHING THE JOB MARKET TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS

INTRODUCTION

During our study, we asked the stakeholders we met whether the labour market in and outside the community was in line with the needs and interests of young FNI employees, and asked the young people whether the labour market was in line with their needs and interests, as presented in the previous section. We define this “market” as a place of economic exchange between supply (the workforce, in this case young FNI) and demand (employers in and outside the community). For us, it is also a social space of interaction where young people seek to build their careers, and develop their skills, in order to contribute to society. At first glance, the responses obtained paint a mixed picture. Indeed, the extent to which the job market meets the needs and interests of young FNI employees is marked by contrasting discourses and complex realities. On the one hand, a dominant narrative emphasizes an evolving job market offering more and more opportunities for the young FNI generations, and a supposed opening up to new perspectives. However, the testimonies gathered also reveal another facet of this reality of a job market where discrimination and the after-effects of colonialism persist, fuelling disappointment and feelings of exclusion. As one 21-year-old Anishinabe put it: “We grew up in a disappointing society, where we were told it was ready for us, but it's not”.

This initial observation underlines the importance of a nuanced qualitative analysis of the labour market in and outside the community. It must go beyond the simple observation of employment statistics and the number of opportunities in certain environments to explore the cultural and socio-economic dimensions that shape the work experience of young FNI, and thus verify whether or not the labour market is in line with their needs and interests. The very concept of the “labour market”, inherited from a Western perspective, poses a fundamental challenge. Its relevance and applicability to FNI communities must be questioned. What is the meaning of this conceptual framework, which is often alien to traditional values and practices? How can we articulate the professional aspirations of young FNI with territorial realities, ancestral ties to the land and community value systems? These crucial questions guide the present analysis.

The vision of work and the relationship to it also differ significantly among young FNI, and thus have repercussions on the perception of a labour market that may or may not be in line with their needs. For young FNI, an immediate objective of employment is to acquire the financial resources needed to return to or remain in their communities or territories, to maintain a link essential to their cultural identity and well-being. This temporal perspective and intrinsic motivation contrasts with the long-term employment models, based on a linear career and hierarchical progression, that are often imposed by the dominant job market.

Finally, the approach to education and its relationship with employment raises important questions. Contrary to the Western view that often associates educational attainment with professional success and personal worth, this perspective is not always shared by young FNI. As one 20-year-old Cree woman put it, “Education is not an indicator of our worth, it's not in our values.” (Young Cree, 20). This discrepancy in values highlights the limits of an approach based exclusively on educational qualifications for assessing the potential and skills of young FNI. It also has a considerable influence on their perception of how well the job market matches their needs.

The following analysis explores these paradoxes by examining the specificities of the community and non-community labour markets. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing young FNI, which emerged in the course of this study, taking into account the cultural, social and economic dimensions that shape their career paths. The analysis pays particular attention to the systemic and

structural factors that contribute to inequalities in access to and integration into employment, and to retention in the social and economic space of interaction that is the labour market.

1. MATCHING THE JOB MARKET

1.1 The job market in the community

The labour market within communities faces significant structural challenges that limit opportunities for young people. Firstly, the supply of vocational training is often inadequate to meet the specific needs of the local labour market, creating a mismatch between the skills acquired and the jobs available. Among the Inuit, this discrepancy is even more exacerbated depending on the size of the village, especially in those whose size does not justify the installation of a head office for several organizations or training centers. Among other things, the shortage of jobs is a recurring problem, forcing young people to accept positions that don't correspond to their interests or aspirations. As one stakeholder put it: "It [the job they're doing] isn't what they'd like to do, so they [young people] take what's there".

This mismatch is exacerbated by the scarcity of positions of responsibility held predominantly by older people or non-Indigenous, limiting young people's access to leadership and career development roles within their communities. The community job market therefore appears ill-prepared to integrate younger generations. Diplomas obtained outside the communities are often undervalued, with employers preferring local experience. This situation creates a paradox: young people are encouraged to pursue higher education, but are faced with a lack of opportunities when they return. An Atikamekw speaker underscores this dilemma: "There's work to be done in our own structures."

Access to information on employment and training opportunities is also a major obstacle to a favorable job market. The lack of guidance and placement services tailored to the specific needs of young FNI employees contributes to a misunderstanding of existing opportunities. The social and family network then plays a decisive role in access to employment. The testimonies gathered highlight the influence of family ties and social networks on employment opportunities, illustrating a sometimes opaque and unequal system. As one young Inuk put it: "It depends on the social network, the people you know." (Young Inuk, aged 21). This observation is corroborated by others: "It depends on the connections you have (family, friends, etc.), it's sometimes very political." (Young Innu, age 21), and "In the community, it's not easy to find a job, sometimes you have to be part of the right family to get a good job." (Young Atikamekw, 28). This phenomenon, combined with the persistence of lateral violence (defined as acts of violence, intimidation and exclusion between members of the community), creates a sometimes-difficult context for young people.

The concentration of employment within the band council, often the sole employer in many communities, accentuates the precariousness of the situation. Positions are often held by more experienced people, further limiting opportunities for young people. An Atikamekw employee who decided to work outside her community describes the situation as extremely limited: "It's extremely limited in the community! There's not enough choice." Then, the lack of job diversification and the absence of positions that match young people's aspirations (for example, jobs in film or technology) contribute to a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction.

Finally, the precariousness of employment, characterized by a high proportion of seasonal or temporary jobs linked to large construction sites, does not allow young people to build a stable and lasting career. Professional success can also generate jealousy and tensions within the community, adding another layer of complexity to the professional integration of young people.

1.2 The job market outside the community

The off-community job market offers more diversified employment prospects, but the integration of young people still faces significant obstacles, limiting the market's match with their needs and interests. Although companies are showing a growing willingness to hire young FNI employees, in particular to meet labour needs in a context of shortage, progress remains insufficient. Partnerships between support organizations and employers do exist, but the commitment of companies seems conditional on the proactive involvement of young people and the implementation of effective support measures. That said, in communities located close to urban centers, access to the job market is easier, as one Uashat stakeholder points out with regard to the Innu near Sept-Îles: "There's a place for the Innu, we're stuck on Sept-Îles. For some jobs, hiring young Innu is even more advantageous for employers, because it attracts an Innu clientele."

However, despite significant progress over the past, the process of welcoming and integrating young FNI into the world of work outside the community is still not sufficiently culturally adapted. One stakeholder describes the situation as follows: "We're seeing a more present, and more updated, social shift, but the environments aren't yet secure enough for young FNI." Another participant added: "There are more opportunities than before, but nothing is perfect and it's not yet adapted enough." This observation is confirmed by a 21-year-old Cree youth: "Organizations aren't ready for us, and aren't always ready to learn who we are."

Moreover, a crucial paradox lies in the requirement of experience and diplomas often imposed on young FNI employees, which constitutes a form of age discrimination and unequal access to learning and employment opportunities, not to mention the failure to take into account their view of the value of these diplomas. Young people would like to be able to demonstrate their skills in other ways. If I don't have a diploma, "explains a 23-year-old Inuit girl," it doesn't mean I want one and couldn't. It's a choice. It's a choice."

Cultural reassurance in the workplace remains a major challenge. Despite the absence of formal hierarchies, discrimination and racism persist, as a young Inuk aged 25 testifies, referring to a non-Indigenous co-worker: "but in her attitude, you could tell she felt superior". Stereotypes concerning punctuality and consumption habits also hinder the integration of young FNI. Among other things, some of the people we met reported that companies often tend to give preference to candidates from outside the region before even considering young local FNI.

Among other challenges, the lack of positions of responsibility for young FNI is also problematic. For example, government structures appear particularly ill-adapted, accentuating the feeling of a lack of legitimacy and representativeness. In addition, the lack of connection between the needs of employers and those of young people, the non-inclusive approach to socio-professional integration and the intersectional issues linked to the diversity of needs (ADHD, autism, gender identity) are further obstacles that tend to give preference to outside candidates before even considering young FNI employees from the region.

Employers need to adapt their practices, but often seem to lack the will, know-how or understanding of the realities experienced by young FNI. One speaker emphasized this lack of commitment: "Employers' attitudes don't show that they want to think differently, and that they understand the importance of doing so." This young person's testimony also reflects this observation: "Are you ready to work with my differences and my different background? Are you ready to learn from us too?" (Young Anishinabe, 21). The lack of communication and collaboration between employers and support organizations complicates the resolution of concrete problems encountered by young people. For example, workers at one CAAQ report that very few employers or entrepreneurs come to them to say that they are experiencing situations with FNI employees, and that they need help (transportation, budgeting, etc.), so it's difficult to provide them with help to promote youth employment. That said, these same stakeholders also report that young FNI employees don't ask for help when they need it either.

Unreciprocated expectations and the rigidity of workplaces are also major obstacles to matching the job market to young people's needs. The latter express the need for a more flexible and caring environment, capable of adapting to their specific needs. A young Innu woman underscores this lack of adaptation: "You have to do what they want, and you don't feel any adaptation on their side." (Young Innu, 32). A young Cree woman adds: "[They ask] why don't we want to go 'by the book'? Because I've read the book, and I don't think it works that way" (Young Cree, age 21). As a result, the organizational welcome often leaves much to be desired, with young FNI sometimes feeling isolated and unsupported. As one 25-year-old Atikamekw youth put it, "When you're the first Indigenous person to work in an organization, it's not so welcoming."

Although some companies are implementing measures such as telecommuting or work-life balance, these initiatives remain insufficient and not widespread. Interpersonal challenges, linked to cultural differences and discrimination, hamper job retention. What's more, young FNI may feel alone in carrying the burden of FNI representation within their organization, experiencing racism, microaggressions and a lack of attention from colleagues and employers. These difficulties are often linked to the latter's ignorance and stereotypes.

Moreover, it has been reported that a lack of patience on the part of companies, who prioritize short-term profitability, prevents the coaching of less experienced young people. Long-term investment in young FNI employees is often neglected, despite the fact that it can help build loyalty and repeat business. Employers' understanding of their specific realities is limited, highlighting the need for training and awareness-raising among companies. The lack of inclusion, diversity and reconciliation programs within many companies, or the fact that those in place are not delivering the expected results, is also a limiting factor. As one Atikamekw stakeholder pointed out: "Despite the fact that more and more companies are planning measures, we're still a long way from something that's satisfactory."

Finally, the difference between job search practices in the community (networks, contacts) and outside the community (CVs, cover letters) creates an additional barrier for young FNI. Since they are not accustomed to the methods used in urban centers, they are at a disadvantage in their search, which can distort their perception of how well the job market matches their needs. Finally, the lack of preparation and support in the transition to the job market outside the community translates into difficulties in integration and professional success.

1.3 Cross-cutting and systemic challenges for the global labour market

This section examines the cross-cutting and systemic challenges that affect the positive match between the labour market and the needs and interests of young FNI employees, irrespective of the geographic context (community or non-community). These challenges underscore the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to promoting a better-matched labour market.

The first cross-cutting theme concerns the persistent mismatch between the aspirations of young FNI and what the job market has to offer. This mismatch is not simply a question of supply and demand, but rather a consequence of deeply rooted structures and values. Employers are having little success in adapting to the needs of young FNI employees. The lack of flexibility, whether in terms of working hours, work-life balance or work arrangements (telecommuting, etc.), creates a significant mismatch. Companies are looking for stable, long-term employees, without offering the necessary opportunities for young FNI employees to gain experience and develop their skills. The lack of mechanisms to try out a trade on a paid basis represents a significant barrier to career exploration.

A second major theme is the need to rethink the system as a whole. These are not just labour market issues per se, but rather deeper issues affecting social and economic structures. For example, the structure of the job market varies greatly from region to region, resulting in a mismatch between supply and demand for certain

professions. This lack of territorial adaptation affects opportunities for young FNI, who find themselves confronted with limited possibilities depending on where they live.

Finally, a third cross-cutting theme concerns the lack of communication and collaboration between stakeholders. Companies are not doing enough to publicize their job opportunities in the communities, creating an information gap that hinders access to employment for young FNI employees. What's more, less optimal practices, sometimes observed in communities, are sometimes transposed to urban environments within FNI organizations. This practice contributes to a feeling of intense competition between employees, and to human resources management that could be optimized.

Conclusion

An analysis of the match between the needs and interests of young FNI employees and the Quebec labour market reveals a complex picture marked by paradoxes and entrenched inequalities. Examination of the two contexts - community and non-community labour markets - highlights systemic challenges that go beyond simple questions of job supply and demand.

In the community, the lack of job opportunities, the mismatch between training and local needs, the influence of the social network and the precariousness of seasonal employment create an environment unfavorable to the integration of young people. The rigidity of the system and the centralization of employment within the band council limit opportunities and accentuate inequalities. There is a blatant lack of opportunities for young people, who are often forced to accept jobs that do not correspond to their aspirations.

Outside the community, while openings exist, the integration of young FNI is hampered by persistent discrimination, stereotypes and a lack of workplace adaptation. The gap between employers' expectations (experience, diplomas) and the realities experienced by young people, as well as the absence of inclusion and awareness programs, create major obstacles. There is a crying need for employers to better understand the cultural realities and specific challenges faced by these young people. Welcoming them and taking their specific needs into account (support, flexibility, adaptation time, etc.) are essential.

In short, the overall analysis confirms the need for an approach that goes beyond ad hoc interventions. The mismatch between young people's aspirations and a labour market often stuck in outdated structures and mentalities cannot be resolved by simple adjustments. We need to rethink the system as a whole, taking into account cultural, social and economic dimensions, and fostering close collaboration between communities, employers and support organizations. The following section explores more concrete ways of doing this.

TABLE SUMMARIZING THE MATCH BETWEEN THE JOB MARKET AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

CONTEXT	MAIN CHALLENGES	MANIFESTATION & CONSEQUENCES
Community labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate vocational training • Shortage of jobs • Few positions of responsibility held by young FNIs • External qualifications undervalued • Limited access to information • Influence of social and family networks (clientelism) • Concentration of employment within the band council • Job insecurity (seasonal, temporary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismatch between skills acquired and jobs available • Young people forced to accept jobs that don't match their interests • Difficult access to leadership roles • Paradox for young graduates (lack of opportunities on their return) • Misunderstanding of existing opportunities

CONTEXT	MAIN CHALLENGES	MANIFESTATION & CONSEQUENCES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opaque and unequal system of access to employment • Precarious economic situation • Frustration and dissatisfaction among young people
Off-community job market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient willingness to hire despite labour shortage • Culturally inadequate induction and integration process • Experience and diploma requirements (age discrimination and unequal access) • Cultural insecurity (discrimination, racism, stereotypes) • Lack of positions of responsibility • Lack of match between employers' and young people's needs • Inadequate employer practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient progress in integrating young FNIs • Non-reciprocal expectations and workplace rigidity • Difficulties integrating and maintaining employment • Lack of support, racism, microaggressions, isolation • Difficulty demonstrating skills other than diplomas • Inadequate employer practices
Cross-cutting and systemic challenges of the global labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent mismatch between the aspirations of young FNI and what the job market has to offer • Employers' lack of flexibility • Need to rethink the system as a whole • Regional variations in labour market structure • Lack of communication and collaboration between stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mechanisms for trying out a trade for pay • Territorial mismatch of job offers • Lack of information on job opportunities for young FNI employees

2. PRESENTATION OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

An analysis of the job market reveals a significant gap between the needs and career aspirations of these young people and the realities of the market, both in community and urban settings. In other words, according to many participants, the job market in and outside the community is not adequate to meet the needs expressed by young FNI employees. This observation, supported by testimonials, underlines the urgency of implementing concrete, innovative solutions to foster a better, sustainable match. The approach proposed here distinguishes between strategies or solutions specific to different contexts, and then describes what employers can put in place to make workplaces more in line with the needs expressed by young FNI employees.

2.1 S Targeted strategies and solutions for the community context

As noted above, the employment market in FNI communities is often characterized by a lack of economic diversification and a restricted job offer. The concentration of employment within administrative structures, such as band councils, does not allow for optimal career progression for young people, nor does it meet the diversity of their professional aspirations. A number of testimonials highlight the inadequacy of this market,

the feeling of limited opportunities and the lack of prospects. Local economic development is therefore essential to create an environment conducive to the professional fulfillment of young people, and to meet their needs. This involves significant, targeted investment in infrastructure, increased support for entrepreneurship among FNI (see next box) and sustained efforts to encourage economic diversification. The absence of diversified employment opportunities creates a vicious circle of precariousness that compromises any prospect of sustainable socio-professional integration. It is therefore imperative to act on several fronts.

BOX G: A WORD ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The literature review provided some information on the employment opportunities offered by entrepreneurship to young FNI employees. However, it was during the interviews that we were able to observe the high level of interest among young people in this area. Indeed, the majority of people we met were of the opinion that entrepreneurship should be developed within communities, despite the work that needs to be done to achieve this. Many FNI youth express the desire to have a job that will enable them to flourish within their community, such as the possibility of owning a business (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017; Bruce and Marlin, 2012). The aim is often to create an activity associated with traditional values or that would benefit the community (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017), while being their own boss.

For several FNI members, entrepreneurship is a relevant issue to be developed within the communities: "It's about time we had young people from here setting up businesses in trades that require outsiders to be hired, such as electricity and plumbing. There's room for entrepreneurship" (Atikamekw speaker). Here, too, are two eloquent quotes, to underscore the interest in which the young FNI seem to be invested.

"One of the long-term careers plans I often hear about is starting your own business. This growing interest among the target population aged 15 to 35 seems to be influenced by role models on social networks who value entrepreneurship. A recurring theme is their desire to become their own boss and not work for someone else. It also seems to respond to a need to work in an environment that fully corresponds to them, without having to be accountable to an employer." (Atikamekw stakeholder)

"It's a good way to create jobs, develop communities economically, become self-sufficient, and no longer be dependent on contractors who come to the community, and don't even hire locally." (Young Cree, 34 years old) (Atikamekw intervenor)

However, they face a number of barriers to access, particularly in terms of skills development. This box presents our findings on the potential benefits of developing entrepreneurship in the community (since, according to the data collected in this study, entrepreneurship outside the community seems less attractive to young people living outside the community), and on the challenges experienced.

Potential benefits

Entrepreneurship is emerging as a particularly relevant way forward for young FNI, especially as many communities are currently engaged in significant economic development. The testimonies gathered from young people reveal a clear vision: entrepreneurship represents a unique opportunity to take their destiny into their own hands, achieve financial autonomy and become the architects of their own success. As Vanguers (2021) points out, young FNI tend to see this kind of career as the solution to their employment problem. That said, far from being a simple career option, it's a proactive approach to shaping a future that suits them, where they can exercise

direct control over their professional activity and schedule. This aspiration to independence is forcefully expressed, as illustrated by a 22-year-old Atikamekw woman's assertion: "I'm going to make my own job, first!", underlining the determination to create one's own opportunity rather than passively wait for it to present itself, in a context where FNI still suffer from racism and employment discrimination (Ng and Gagnon, 2020). In short, entrepreneurship is emerging as a solution that allows FNI to avoid having to confront the obstacles hindering their working lives (OECD, 2019). Many have already understood this, as in recent years, according to OECD (2019), the proportion of FNI owners has increased enormously.

EXAMPLE: Job creation in the community and support for young people are also values that are regularly found among FNI entrepreneurs. For the Innu forestry entrepreneurs of Mashteuiatsh, for example, these values are often conditional on the financial profitability of their businesses (Beaudoin, 2009). The social scope of the business is often described as a characteristic element of native entrepreneurship (Bherer, Gagnon and Roberge 1989; Berkes and Adhikari 2005; Lindsay 2005; Peredo and Anderson 2006), even though many embody the needs for independence and fulfillment (Beaudoin, 2009), two fundamental characteristics of the entrepreneur (Collins et al. 2004).

Beyond the economic dimension, entrepreneurship responds to a profound need for alignment between personal values and professional activity. Young FNI people aspire to a job that is meaningful, in line with their convictions and that enables them to make a positive contribution to their community. Entrepreneurship offers the opportunity to create a work environment where they don't have to compromise their values or struggle against racism and discrimination, realities all too often encountered in the traditional job market. A 24-year-old Innu expresses this aspiration by emphasizing the importance of being able to "speak our language, integrate our values and ways of doing things", highlighting the possibility of creating a business that reflects their cultural identity and values their traditions.

Seen in this light, the idea of fostering entrepreneurship among young FNI seems to have a dual employment-promoting function: on the one hand, it enables the creation of activities that stimulate the community's economy and, on the other, it allows the emergence of businesses for which FNI are more eager to work (Beaudoin, 2009; Charest, 2012; Davey et al. 2020; Vallières et al. 2021). Davey et al. (2020) also assert that FNIs do well as entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is also proving to be a powerful driver of cultural revitalization. Young FNI are aware of the richness of their heritage, and wish to preserve it and pass it on to future generations. Entrepreneurship offers them a concrete means of integrating their culture into their professional activities, creating products and services that highlight their ancestral know-how, and contributing to the dissemination of their cultural identity. A 34-year-old Innu woman testifies to this importance: "Professional activities combined with employment keep our culture alive. Entrepreneurship thus makes it possible to preserve a space for the cultural aspect, create economic value, encourage the circularity of resources and generate jobs within the community, while strengthening the sense of belonging and cultural pride.

The desire for entrepreneurship among young FNI employees seems to be driven by a particular force, a need to adapt to the job market that stems from their experience and knowledge of local realities. Inspired by the models of success they see on social networks, and aware of the opportunities open to them, they perceive entrepreneurship as an increasingly accessible and possible path. This perception is reinforced by the diversification of the fields of activity in which they can launch themselves, ranging from traditional trades like electricity to more innovative

services like hairdressing or other professions non-existent in their communities. The young FNI employees and stakeholders we met are convinced that there is untapped potential in the communities, and that they can help fill the gaps by developing businesses that meet specific needs. In short, entrepreneurship offers young FNI a unique opportunity to create a prosperous economic future, enhance their culture, contribute to the development of their communities and overcome obstacles, while affirming their identity and realizing their full potential.

EXAMPLE: As for the beneficial effects on employment, one example has been seen with the management of commercial fisheries in which FNI now participate, and which has made Innu, Wolastoqey and Mi'gmaq fishing enterprises the second largest employer in coastal communities, after band councils (Charest, 2012). Similarly, while it is generally difficult to get employees in fish processing plants, not least because of wages and working conditions, Vallières et al. (2021) found that this difficulty is less when the company belongs to the community. The feelings of belonging, pride and motivation that these workers then feel at the idea of working for a company that is representative and charged with a sense of community seem to help improve the work climate (Davey et al. 2020; Vallières et al. 2021).

Experienced and potential challenges

Entrepreneurship, while seen as a promising path to economic empowerment for young FNI within their communities, comes up against a multitude of complex and interrelated challenges that hinder their progress and limit their potential for success. These challenges, often rooted in specific socio-economic and cultural realities, manifest themselves on many levels, from psychological barriers and lack of self-confidence to limited access to financial resources, training, support and the necessary infrastructure.

A major obstacle, often underestimated, lies in psychological barriers and lack of self-confidence. As one stakeholder points out, “I hear people talking about it [entrepreneurship], but there are too many barriers in their heads.” This observation highlights the fact that, despite the potential interest in entrepreneurship, many young FNI are held back by doubts, fears and uncertainties that prevent them from taking the plunge. Another stakeholder confirms this reality, adding, “I hear a lot of ideas, but it's seen as a big mountain to get through, scary steps, and they don't want to start the process.” This perception of an insurmountable task, combined with a lack of confidence in their ability to succeed, is a major brake on entrepreneurship. This lack of self-confidence is often linked to a lack of self-esteem and a limited perception of their skills. According to some of the stakeholders we met, there are certain characteristics of young people that limit their development of entrepreneurship: they seem to have insufficient self-esteem to do so, little confidence in their ability or skills to create their own business, and a lack of empowerment. The lack of successful role models from their own community possibly contributes to this negative perception, reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurship is an inaccessible path for them. In addition, the introverted personalities of some young people can make them less visible within the community, limiting their access to opportunities and support networks. The tendency to give up in the face of lack of support, combined with a lack of motivation and confidence in their own abilities, is another major challenge.

Another major obstacle is the lack of a well-established entrepreneurial culture within FNI communities. The spirit of entrepreneurship is difficult because there isn't this “culture” of entrepreneurship in the community. It's hard to start a business in the community, and some report that there's little room for entrepreneurship. This absence of an entrepreneurial tradition translates into a lack of social support and recognition for those who choose this path, as well as

a negative perception of enterprise as an individualistic activity and potentially in conflict with community values.

The challenges of managing interpersonal relationships within the community are another major obstacle. One difficulty is related to the fact that they have to work and hire family and community members, in an environment where everyone is close, where everyone knows each other. "Decision-making as a leader is more difficult: you hire members of your family, and of the community, how do you do it?" (Atikamekw stakeholder). Indeed, the need to hire family and community members, in a context where relationships are close and power issues are complex, can make decision-making difficult and create tensions within the company and the community. What's more, some young people feel a certain fear of being judged in the community, as they are becoming a little different from the others; this relational aspect in relation to their community gives rise to worries and hesitations about getting involved. The fear of being perceived as different or of arousing jealousy because of their success can dissuade them from starting their own business.

Difficulties in accessing the necessary knowledge and skills are another major challenge (Ng and Gagnon, 2020). Entering the system is difficult, and young people are not ready. They don't know the basic principles of economics, and they lack training and preparation (often for large-scale projects): business management, project management, financial management, and so on. They lack knowledge of the different forms of entrepreneurship (many exist, some of which don't necessarily have to be structured as a business). A lack of basic economic knowledge, combined with a lack of training in business, project and financial management, compromises their ability to develop sound business plans, manage their finances effectively and make informed decisions. Lack of knowledge of different forms of entrepreneurship, from collective entrepreneurship and cooperatives to self-employment, also limits their ability to choose the model best suited to their needs and aspirations.

What's more, the lack of support, both in terms of training and coaching, often leaves them helpless in the face of the complex and varied challenges they encounter along the way. They need help with marketing, management, budgeting, taxation, HR management, etc., and then with the often-numerous difficulties encountered along the way. The absence of successful role models from their own community deprives young FNI of concrete, inspiring examples that could encourage them to go into business for themselves. Then, as one stakeholder put it, in many communities, "The band council doesn't really help with entrepreneurship; young people are pretty much left to their own devices; they could use the council's support." The lack of support from the band council, which could play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship and providing resources and support to young entrepreneurs, is therefore in itself another major challenge. Government agencies and FNI organizations also need to raise awareness of the support measures and tools available to FNI entrepreneurs (Davey et al. 2020). Note that, according to The Conference Board of Canada - Northern and Indigenous Policy (2017), entrepreneurs are younger on the FNI side than among their non-Indigenous counterparts. Nearly 20% of FNI entrepreneurs are under the age of 25, while the figure is more like 15% for non-Indigenous in the same age bracket. Organizations that support FNI entrepreneurs need to offer more services to a younger market.

Difficulties in accessing finance are another major obstacle. Financing is difficult, and young people experience problems linked to the need for an initial capital outlay. The need for a down payment, often difficult to raise in a context of poverty and lack of resources, is a major obstacle to entrepreneurship. Difficulties in accessing bank loans, due to eligibility criteria ill-suited to the realities of FNI communities, also limit their ability to finance their businesses.

Another challenge is the lack of infrastructure and business support services in the communities. There is a lack of infrastructure to help businesses grow. The lack of shared workspaces, resource centers and specialized consulting services limits their ability to develop their businesses and benefit from an environment conducive to innovation and growth.

E Finally, an underlying challenge is the lack of awareness and interest in entrepreneurship within communities. Support organizations have few requests related to entrepreneurship; they report that it is a need that is very rarely named by members, yet it is often a matter of pre-employability support services; young people who are ready to take the plunge don't necessarily go through these organizations. The fact that entrepreneurship is a need little expressed by community members suggests a lack of awareness and interest in this path. This lack of entrepreneurial awareness may be linked to cultural factors, a lack of information, or a negative perception of entrepreneurship as an individualistic activity potentially at odds with community values. In short, the challenges faced by young FNI wishing to embark on entrepreneurship within their communities are numerous and complex.

To make this market more relevant to young people's needs, participants proposed concrete initiatives that could include the development of ecotourism businesses based on FNI knowledge and traditions, the creation of local cooperatives for the sustainable management of natural resources (forestry management, responsible fishing), or the promotion of handicrafts through marketing and sales support programs. However, some argue, these initiatives need to be accompanied by adequate financial support and personalized coaching for FNI entrepreneurs. At the same time, it is crucial to adapt vocational training programs to the specific needs of the local market. Close, ongoing collaboration between training institutions, community employers and community members are essential to identify the skills required, adapt programs accordingly and ensure their relevance. This collaboration makes it possible to create specialized training in fields such as natural resource management, traditional construction or cultural tourism, by integrating traditional knowledge and focusing on practical skills and experiential learning.

Improving access to information and guidance services is another way to optimize the match between the labour market and young people's needs, through better targeting of initial interests. Clear, accessible, multi-media information platforms (website, mobile app, printed resources) need to be set up, available in French and in the languages of the FNI. These platforms should present job offers, training opportunities and support services available in communities in a concise and relevant way. The inclusion of professional success stories from young FNI could serve as inspiration and encouragement. At the same time, personalized guidance services, offered by culturally sensitive professionals trained in the realities of young FNI, are needed to support these young people in identifying their skills, defining their career aspirations and developing a realistic career plan tailored to their needs. Practical workshops on CV and cover letter writing, adapted to the cultural context and requirements of the job market, as well as interview preparation sessions, would also be beneficial.

Last but not least, a better match involves creating positions of responsibility for young people within community organizations. Mentoring programs and targeted leadership training could enable them to acquire the skills they need to move into management positions and actively contribute to the economic development of their communities. Promoting intergenerational collaboration, through mentoring programs involving experienced seniors and young people, would enable a mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge and skills. However, to ensure the success of these initiatives, it is important to improve the housing situation in the community. Increasing the availability of low-cost accommodation is essential to enable young people to settle and work in their communities. In addition, the development of suitable workspaces is essential to enable businesses to set up and thrive in communities. Summer jobs and internships, such as government-funded day

camps, provide an opportunity to develop community-based jobs and offer more culturally adapted internship environments. Regular monitoring of young people in internships, with a follow-up agent who goes around the young people to identify problems, would provide effective support. Community economic development must be a priority, even before the development of training programs. “We can train them... but if there’s no job afterwards, what’s the point?” (Stakeholder, support organization). Partnerships between external organizations and the community are also essential to ensure the creation of permanent, diversified jobs.

2.2 Out-of-community context: targeted strategies for employers

Matching the job market to the needs and interests of young FNI employees in urban areas presents distinct challenges, including discrimination, lack of social networks and employers' misunderstanding of cultural realities. To counter these obstacles, participants shared with us various strategies that employers can implement. These strategies, although presented here in a separate framework, tie in with the needs expressed above: the need for mentoring, responsibility, cultural security and flexibility. They are particularly relevant to employers in urban settings, but also apply to some extent to those in FNI community settings. In short, although they were aimed more at employers outside the communities, they were sometimes mentioned by participants for both cases.

2.2.1 *Active listening and personalized support*

Active listening and personalized support are fundamental. This means giving young people more time and attention, better identifying their needs and interests, not having too high short-term expectations, and being open and non-judgmental. “Take us where we are”. (Young Innu, age 34). Constant dialogue, rephrasing questions and adapting communication style are important aspects. It’s crucial to regularly recalibrate young people’s interest and ambition, asking questions about their well-being, motivations and long-term aspirations within the organization.

2.2.2 *Workplace coaching and support*

Close supervision and ongoing support in the workplace are essential. The presence of a resource person within the organization, specialized in accompanying young INFs, helps answer questions, facilitate communication and offer logistical and emotional support. “Someone who takes charge of them, who accompanies them.” This support needs to be clear and well-defined, including emotional support, logistical support (particularly important for young people from remote communities), and support for managing difficult situations. Regular follow-up means that support can be adapted to young people’s changing needs, and their small successes can be celebrated.

2.2.3 *Reception and training practices*

Specific reception and training practices need to be put in place. Gradual integration into the workplace, with dedicated integration weeks, is preferable to immediate, abrupt integration. Hiring several young FNIs at the same time reduces isolation and facilitates integration. According to one stakeholder, “Hire at least two young FNI at the same time, have them work on the same shifts (reduces isolation, language barrier, etc.).” The presence of liaison officers from community organizations, or the creation of a liaison officer position within the company, facilitates communication and creates a bond of trust. Learning by doing, by directly involving young people in concrete projects, is often more effective than purely theoretical learning: “Being able to prove myself by what I do, not what I say.” (Young person).

2.2.4 *Adapting organizational practices and working with partners*

Cultural awareness, including the distribution of explanatory documents on the realities of FNI, is essential. Constant adjustments to working methods, taking into account the specific needs of young people, are necessary. Human resources management needs to be rethought, favoring a participatory approach and taking cultural realities into account. “Human relations need to be worked on: all trades can be learned... it’s HR

management that's difficult.” (Employer). Processes to recognize young people's experiential learning need to be developed. Recruitment needs to be more flexible, taking into account the specific needs of each young person, and not just the minimum criteria for access to employment.

2.2.5 Managing linguistic differences

Measures must be taken to facilitate communication with young people who do not have a perfect command of French. The presence of a bilingual employee, translated documents and clear, simple communication are essential.

2.2.6 *Mentoring and cultural models*

The integration of a mentoring program, with FNI mentors, is essential to support young people and encourage their integration. “Companies need to hire someone who can teach us the job, who we can relate to.” (Young Innu, 34). “Getting ready with someone who is Indigenous, someone who looks like me, who listens to me, who works with me and with whom I can identify.” (Young Cree, age 20). This mentoring allows for better communication, greater openness to the problems encountered and the development of a bond of trust. The mentor helps the young person understand his or her work environment and navigate through social interactions. A project-based approach involving complementary pairs can also be effective.

2.2.7 *Training for employers*

In-depth employer training is essential. This training must go beyond simple awareness-raising workshops to address cultural issues, the challenges of integrating young FNI employees, and ways of adapting management practices to better meet their needs. Training must target decision-makers and managers, and last more than a few hours. It aims to develop cultural sensitivity, better understand the values and ways of operating of young FNI, recognize their skills and combat prejudice and stereotypes. “FNI training should be mandatory for all organizations.” (Young Atikamekw, 28).

2.2.8 *Cultural awareness practices*

Integrating cultural elements into the work environment can foster a sense of belonging. Activities such as craft workshops, cultural sharing moments or presentations on FNI history and traditions can help create a more inclusive climate. It's important to make employees aware of cultural weeks and other important events in FNI employees' culture.

2.2.9 *Adapting forms of employment*

Flexible working hours and working arrangements are important. The possibility of adjusting schedules, taking time off for family or cultural obligations, and having access to telecommuting are often decisive factors in choosing a job. Several mentioned the importance of “More flexibility in schedules... days to do traditional activities, days for family obligations, giving the opportunity to go into the territory... time off to return to remote communities... work-family balance measures, depending on personal situations, including family.” However, the introduction of teleworking needs to be well supervised and done gradually, avoiding situations of isolation. Hybrid working can be a solution for balancing the benefits of telecommuting with the need for workplace support. Seasonal jobs, such as construction, trucking, mining exploration or guiding, may be more suited to the needs and interests of young FNI employees, and can provide a better work-life balance. Fly-in / Fly-out is another form of employment that can be attractive. Access to part-time jobs enables young people to gain experience while reconciling their family responsibilities.

BOX H: A WORD ON TELECOMMUTING

Telecommuting presents an interesting paradox in the context of the socio-professional integration of young FNI. The participants' speeches presented a number of particularities that we feel are important to specify in this box.

On the one hand, it offers considerable advantages, particularly for young people living in communities. Telecommuting makes it possible to reconcile work and community life, while benefiting from significant tax advantages. Not paying taxes when working from home in a community makes telecommuting jobs much more competitive with traditional jobs in communities, or those offered by the federal government, for example. However, it's crucial to recognize the limits of telecommuting, especially for less experienced young people.

Indeed, direct integration into teleworking, without sufficient support, can be detrimental. The need for mentoring, coaching and team building is particularly important before considering telecommuting. Adequate training, clear mandates and solid coaching are essential to ensure effective teleworking and avoid situations of isolation. Telecommuting should not be seen as a magic bullet, but rather as a tool that can be used strategically to foster employee retention and improve work-life balance. The challenges associated with lack of support, lack of workspace at home and the difficulty of maintaining active communications must be anticipated and managed.

On the other hand, telecommuting is not always compatible with the needs of young FNI employees in terms of teamwork and social ties. For many, face-to-face work, with small teams and regular human contact, is essential for developing a sense of belonging and team feeling. "For many, it is essential to develop a sense of belonging and team spirit. The need for humanity and community is paramount. Teleworking, as it is often perceived in the Western context, does not always meet this fundamental need. It's important to recognize that teleworking, as it has been described, doesn't always meet everyone's needs or preferences.

To overcome these difficulties, a hybrid approach, combining telecommuting and face-to-face work, may be a more appropriate solution. This approach makes it possible to benefit from the advantages of teleworking while maintaining a social bond and a sense of belonging to the team and the organization. The hybrid approach helps to gradually build a sense of belonging and develop the skills needed to work independently.

In conclusion, teleworking can be a valuable tool, but its implementation needs to be thought through and adapted to the specific needs of young FNI employees. A flexible approach that takes account of cultural realities and individual needs is essential to ensure its effectiveness and avoid situations of isolation and failure.

2.2.10 Additional considerations

It's crucial to take into account the values, specific needs and realities of communities. Flexible schedules must take into account, for example, the schedules of community services (cooperatives, daycare centers). Raising awareness of the importance of cultural vacations is essential. Initiatives such as Lunch and Learn, highlighting the culture of the FNI, can contribute to better understanding and integration. In conclusion, adapting employers' practices is essential to promote the integration and job retention of young FNI. A comprehensive, flexible and culturally sensitive approach is essential to create inclusive and stimulating workplaces.

SUMMARY TABLE OF SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS	SPECIFICATIONS
Targeted strategies and solutions for the community context	
Local Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted investment in infrastructure • Increased support for entrepreneurship (financial assistance, personalized coaching) • Economic diversification (ecotourism businesses, cooperatives for sustainable management of natural resources, promotion of handicrafts)
Adapting vocational training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close collaboration between training institutions, community employers and community members • Creation of specialized training courses (natural resource management, traditional construction, cultural tourism) • Valorization of traditional knowledge • Focus on practical skills and experiential learning
Improved access to information and guidance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, accessible, multi-media information platforms (website, mobile app, print resources) available in French and FNI languages • Concise and relevant presentation of job offers, training opportunities and support services • Career success stories from young FNI • Personalized guidance services offered by culturally sensitive professionals trained in the realities of young FNI people • Practical workshops on writing CVs and cover letters adapted to the cultural context and requirements of the job market • Interview preparation sessions
Creating positions of responsibility for young people within community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring programs and targeted leadership training • Promoting intergenerational collaboration through mentoring programs involving experienced seniors and young people
Improving living conditions to enhance employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for low-cost accommodation to promote employability • Creation of workspaces adapted to needs (to counter, among other things, issues of lateral violence)
Targeted strategies for employers outside the community	
Active listening and personalized support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving young people more time and attention • Identifying needs and interests • Managing short-term expectations

SOLUTIONS	SPECIFICATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an open, non-judgmental attitude • Constant dialogue, reformulation of questions and adaptation of communication style
Coaching and support in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of a contact person within the organization, specialized in supporting young INFs • Clear, well-defined support (emotional support, logistical support) • Regular follow-up • Help with transportation, budget management, access to day-care centers, etc.
Reception and training practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual integration into the workplace with dedicated induction weeks • Simultaneous hiring of several young FNIs • Presence of liaison officers from community organizations or creation of a liaison officer position within the company • Learning by doing and direct involvement in concrete projects
Adapting organizational practices and working with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural awareness (distribution of explanatory documents) • Ongoing adjustments to working methods to take account of young people's specific needs • Human resources management rethought with a participatory approach • Recognition of experiential learning • More flexible recruitment to meet specific needs • Introduction of processes to promote and facilitate hiring, accessibility, establishment and working relations within the organization.
Managing linguistic differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of a bilingual employee • Translated documents • Clear and simple communication
Mentoring and cultural models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of a mentoring program with FNI mentors • Importance of inspiring role models for young people to identify with
Training for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth training that goes beyond simple awareness-raising workshops • Targeting decision-makers and managers • Cultural awareness and understanding of the values and ways of operating of young FNIs • Skills recognition • Combating prejudice and stereotypes
Cultural awareness practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness-raising activities such as craft activities, cultural sharing moments or presentations on FNI history and traditions to foster a more inclusive culture • Awareness-raising among employees on important culture weeks for new FNI employees
Adapting forms of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater flexibility in working hours (leave for personal obligations, time off for personal activities, traditional activities with pay, etc.). • Possibility of telecommuting (being able to work remotely). • Setting up seasonal employment arrangements (e.g. full-time in winter, part-time in summer).

CONCLUSION ON MATCHING THE JOB MARKET TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG FNI EMPLOYEES

In conclusion, improving the match between the labour market and the needs of young FNI employees requires an integrated, all-encompassing approach. In order to optimize the impact of our strategies, we need to pay particular attention to a number of aspects. It is essential to regularly monitor the effectiveness of programs and initiatives, to adapt interventions based on the results obtained, and to continually gather feedback from young FNI, employers and community organizations. The active participation of communities at all stages, from program design to implementation, is essential to guarantee the relevance and effectiveness of our programs. Training for those involved in supporting the socio-professional integration of young FNI is also crucial, in order to develop their cultural sensitivity, their understanding of the specific realities of these young people, and their ability to provide personalized and effective support.

Evaluating the success of our initiatives must go beyond simple quantitative indicators, such as employment rates. It is important to consider qualitative indicators, such as the level of satisfaction of young FNI with their jobs, their sense of inclusion in the workplace, and their long-term job retention. Gathering qualitative data, through interviews, focus groups and case studies, would provide a deeper understanding of the experience of young FNI, and enable strategies to be adjusted accordingly.

In short, improving the match between the labour market and the needs of young FNI employees requires a long-term commitment and a multi-sectoral approach. Collaboration between the various players, recognition of the skills and values of FNI, adaptation of programs and processes, as well as regular monitoring and rigorous evaluation of results are essential to foster sustainable socio-economic inclusion and enable young FNI to realize their full professional potential and actively contribute to the richness and diversity of Quebec. The ultimate goal is to build an equitable and inclusive system, where every young FNI has the opportunity to develop professionally, and actively contribute to the economic and social development of their community and the province.

SECTION D: STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES TO SUPPORT THE SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION OF YOUNG FNI EMPLOYEES

INTRODUCTION

The previous sections have highlighted, among other things, the challenges faced by young FNI employees on their path to employment. The difficulties identified, which are often interrelated and systemic - ranging from issues related to access to education and training to prejudice and lack of employment opportunities - partly explain the high unemployment and inactivity rates among this group. To alleviate these difficulties and foster socio-economic inclusion, while ensuring that the needs, aspirations and interests expressed by young people themselves are met, it is crucial to identify and implement strategies, practices and conditions that promote not only insertion, but also job retention for these young people. This section therefore looks at best strategies and practices, drawing on two main sources: an analysis of the available literature and data, and the discourse of the people we met during the course of the study. The main aim is to inform the development of more effective policies and interventions. Some of these strategies or practices are already being implemented, but most are wishes on the part of the participants, who mention them as solutions to what they are currently experiencing, but who lack the means (lack of human and financial resources) to implement them.

These data highlight the importance of targeting interventions at the specific needs of young FNI employees. Education and vocational training emerge as central elements, as shown by data from Statistics Canada (2018b) revealing that in Canada, 38% of First Nations youth aged 15 to 24 who were inactive in 2016 were in school. This proportion varies considerably by geographic region, reaching 66% in Atlantic Canada and 27% in Manitoba. Among Inuit youth, 20% of the inactive were studying, a lower rate in Inuit Nunangat (11%) than outside (43%) (Statistics Canada, 2018a). These regional disparities underline the need to adapt interventions to specific contexts.

However, education alone is not enough. Work experience is also a crucial factor, as confirmed by Statistics Canada (2018b): among off-community First Nations youth intending to look for work, 29% felt that better education would be beneficial, while 59% said they lacked experience. One in six (17%) considered work experience to be the most important factor in finding a job. This figure, higher than that observed for other age groups, highlights the importance of developing practical training, internship and mentoring programs that combine skills acquisition and work experience.

In the preceding sections, we have also analyzed the needs and interests of young FNI employees, as expressed by themselves and those involved, as well as the match between these needs and interests and the job market. This analysis reveals a complex reality, marked by systemic challenges such as the importance of basic needs as prerequisites to any prospect of socio-professional integration, the crucial role of cultural and identity dimensions, and the diversity of the aspirations and professional interests of young FNI employees, which go beyond the stereotypes and jobs traditionally associated with their communities. These needs call for specific strategies.

In this section, we now explore strategies and practices for overcoming these challenges and meeting these needs, in order to promote the full participation of young FNI employees in the job market. In all cases, these strategies focus on meeting the needs of young FNI employees and the support organizations that work with them, rather than those of employers. The analysis will focus on several themes: improving existing programs and services, funding and financial support, collaboration and employer practices, including hiring policies,

wellness support and supportive services, community participation and leadership, legislation and governance, entrepreneurship and community economic development and, finally, cultural integration and identity and territory.

1. IMPROVE EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The first strategies and practices that work, or that are considered promising, concern the improvement of educational services, socio-professional integration programs and services (pre-employability and employability) and job retention programs and services for young FNI employees, followed by those related to the transition between the two. In addition to being based on the participants' speeches, this section of the report also stems from the analysis of the literature review, including the observation of gaps, i.e. elements that are not sufficiently documented, particularly in terms of accessibility, cultural relevance and the effectiveness of interventions. The proposed improvements include ongoing assessment and adaptation to the specific needs and interests of young FNI employees, taking into account their diverse geographical, cultural and socio-economic realities, and the various issues and difficulties they encounter, as presented in other sections of this report. However, here too, it was not possible to separate the improvements for programs and services offered solely in the community from those offered solely outside the community; indeed, they are too similar to distinguish between them (see the section on methodological considerations). Nevertheless, the data are very rich and demonstrate fairly equal optimization needs for all nations.

This section on favorable strategies and practices is divided into three parts: improving education and training services, improving programs and services specific to the transition between training and employment, and improving pre-employability and employability programs and services.

1.1 Improving education and training services

This first part proposes improvements for certain education and training services. That said, since education and training are not specifically the subject of this report, we have only reported here on the favorable strategies or practices that emerged during the interviews. However, this is by no means an exhaustive list of everything that could be done in the field of education and training to promote young people's educational and career paths. This issue would merit a study in its own right, and could be the subject of a single report. Rather, we felt it relevant to report on these elements, since they were naturally mentioned by the participants, despite the fact that no specific questions were asked about them. We see this as an illustration of the importance of an integrated approach, and also of the fact that employment-related phenomena are linked to realities that go beyond the employment relationship. We also believe that these strategies can work very well within the framework of workshops and training courses offered during pre-employability or employability programs (see the section on improving employment programs and services).

This section deals with the flexibility of services and financial support, the adaptation of teaching methods, the development of vocational training centers within communities, improved access to information, and guidance, support and coaching for learners. In addition to the quality and characteristics of these services, a number of participants mentioned a number of information points relating to the training offer in particular, and to access to training.

1.1.1 Flexibility

Significant challenges exist in terms of equitable access to quality education and training, which are essential to the socio-professional integration of young FNI. These include the rigidity of programs and the lack of financial support. To remedy this, concrete solutions need to be put in place. Participants in the study explained to us that the rigidity of training deadlines disproportionately penalizes young FNI who face family

responsibilities, geographical constraints, or difficulties related to mental health or wellbeing. Lack of flexibility can also lead to dropping out of school, reducing their chances of socio-professional integration. The adoption of more flexible programs, allowing personalized pathways and in line with the vision of adaptability of education systems promoted by the OECD (2018) is therefore a priority. This idea means enabling learners to enroll in courses at different times, adapt the duration of their studies to their needs and benefit from individualized support. Examples of good practice, including modular programs or transferable credit systems, particularly in academia, can serve as models.

1.1.2 Financial support

Since unforeseen financial circumstances can quickly jeopardize the studies of young FNIs, some participants suggest making emergency funds available to students, as a key strategy to alleviate these unforeseen circumstances and ensure student retention. In addition, a number of speakers indicated that increased funding for returning to school is essential to support those who have interrupted their studies and wish to resume them, especially in the case of student parents. This financial support reflects a recognition of the often more precarious socio-economic realities of FNI communities, and helps reduce inequalities in access to education. Funding is also needed for various situations that affect non-Indigenous less or not at all, for example, for Inuit, the need to return to their villages for family situations, while transportation conditions are very problematic (cost of plane tickets, frequent delays and cancellations, notably due to weather, need for several days to travel, etc.). Clear and accessible mechanisms for obtaining these funds must be put in place, in collaboration with the communities. Developing partnerships with financial organizations and targeted scholarship programs could also be effective solutions.

1.1.3 Teaching and training philosophies and strategies for developing employability skills

To promote the socio-professional integration of young people, we need to adopt teaching and training philosophies and strategies that take into account their cultural realities and specific needs. The extent of the distinctions between the educational or professional philosophies of the FNI and the rest of the “Western” world (Stewart, 2009, 2010) implies a rethinking of traditional approaches. Here are a few key elements worth mentioning:

Integration of FNI cultural conceptions and culturally adapted approach: Education, career exploration and vocational training should be reviewed to include FNI cultural conceptions of pedagogy and work (Stewart, 2009, 2010). These conceptions are often part of a culturally adapted approach to learning, embodying spirituality, traditional knowledge, interrelatedness and connection to community and territory (Guenette and Marshall, 2008). For example, in a career development context, this approach to learning uses familiar ways of knowing to facilitate the achievement of meaningful professional or educational goals. At the same time, it aims to affirm the learner's identity (Marshall et al., 2013). This approach recognizes the value of traditional knowledge and learning styles specific to FNI communities. Thus, integrating FNI cultural conceptions into training programs creates a more relevant and meaningful learning environment for young people. This approach fosters the affirmation of cultural identity and strengthens the bond with the community.

Indeed, according to Lavoie, Blanchet-Cohen and Bacon (2021), we need to favor an integrated approach inspired by culturally adapted pedagogies, which offer a theoretical and practical framework for developing fairer and more equitable approaches, and which value the knowledge and cultures of FNI communities. In this way, safe and caring learning environments that will help build a relationship of trust are favored (Blanchet-Cohen et al. 2022). Adopting such a critical approach makes it possible to take into account the issues of power and domination that can influence policies and programs.

Training adaptation and geographic and linguistic accessibility: To promote integration, it is relevant to adapt training to the previous learning experiences of FNI people (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Deschênes, 2022, 2024; Vallières et al., 2021). It is also important to foster on-the-job learning through direct observation of

older people by younger ones in the context of on-the-job training (Vallières, Beaudoin and Asselin, 2019), and in that of vocational training. In addition, research suggests that it should be possible to create training in the language of future FNI candidates (Vallières et al., 2021). Indeed, language and culture should never be dissociated from the training pathway (Kroes, 2008). In other words, adapting training to the cultural and linguistic realities of young NIFs is essential to their success.

EXAMPLE

The *École des pêches et de l'aquaculture du Québec (ÉPAQ)* has developed partnerships with various First Nations organizations to provide Innu-language training for Innu candidates in the region (Vallières et al., 2021).

Accessibility and cultural safety of the education system: As with the workplace (see the section on employer collaboration and practices), we need to organize an accessible and culturally safe education system for young FNI (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). This strategy involves combating discrimination and racism in schools and training centers, valuing FNI cultures and languages, and creating learning environments where young people feel respected and supported. An accessible and culturally secure education system is a key factor in the academic and professional success of young FNI.

EXAMPLE

Young people would prefer to begin their training in a culturally safe environment, before moving on to the Quebec establishment. For example, the Cégep de Jonquière, in collaboration with the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) and Kiuna College, has launched a pilot project to adapt its journalism program to FNI learners. This project enables some twenty young people to begin their training at Kiuna College, thus in a culturally relevant environment, before continuing the final three sessions at the CEGEP (Papineau, 2017).

Distance learning adapted to local realities: Expanding distance learning opportunities is an avenue to be favored, while taking into account internet connection limitations in remote areas (Pidgeon et al., 2019). That said, while distance learning has great potential to facilitate access to training for young people living in remote communities, it is essential to ensure that these programs are adapted to local realities and take into account the constraints associated with internet access, but also that the methods are suitable for young people in these contexts.

1.1.4 Adapting teaching methods

To ensure the academic success and socio-professional integration of young FNI, it is essential to rethink teaching methods. This requires an approach that takes into account the prior learning experiences of these young people, an essential consideration according to participants and several researchers (Vallières et al., 2021; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Deschênes, 2024). Innovative didactic strategies can be implemented to address the reading and writing deficiencies of certain learners. The use of visual aids, the facilitation of group discussions and the provision of reading assistance during examinations are concrete examples of effective measures (Vallières et al., 2021). In some contexts, observational learning, especially for young people who have not completed high school, is particularly relevant, as illustrated by the success of vocational fishing training in Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam (Vallières et al., 2021; Charest, Girard and Rodon, 2012). Similarly, it makes sense to promote peer mentoring, an approach that emphasizes observation, experimentation and imitation, often favored within FNI communities in comparison with conventional Western teaching methods (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Deschênes, 2022, 2024).

Adapting pedagogical methods is much more than a simple technical modification; it requires a profound reflection on educational practices and an explicit recognition of the traditional knowledge and learning styles inherent in FNI cultures. The integration of diversified pedagogical approaches, such as experiential learning, learning by doing and cooperative learning, enables a better match to the specific needs and learning styles of

these young people. Training teachers in these pedagogical methods adapted to FNI cultures is, therefore, a crucial investment. Among other ideas, the participation of Elders and community members in the educational process represents a considerable asset, enriching the learning experience and ensuring the cultural relevance of the programs. Finally, the development of teaching resources adapted to the culture and language of the FNI is a key factor in their success.

Beyond these considerations, some participants echoed the view that it is imperative to value and include the linguistic and cultural perspectives of the FNI within the Quebec educational curriculum. Creating programs that are truly adapted to their culture (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022) implies the inclusion of traditional and formal forms of education, while respecting traditional FNI teaching and learning methods, such as experiential and collective learning (Pidgeon et al., 2019). In addition, many stress the importance of ensuring safe learning environments and adapting training and assessments. The innovative initiative of the Centre de services scolaires de La Jonquière (Commission scolaire de La Jonquière, 2016) illustrates this well, with its approach combining work-study, mentoring, role-playing and learning circles.

1.1.5 Development of community vocational training centers and other strategies

To promote the socio-professional integration of young FNI, we need to consider significantly improving access to quality training. The geographical remoteness of training centers and the lack of adequate infrastructure are major obstacles. According to some participants in the study, the creation of community-based vocational training centers is a decisive solution. These centers, located in the heart of communities, enable young people to receive training while remaining rooted in their living environment, an essential factor in their well-being and success. The design of these centers must take into account cultural specificities and community needs, whether in terms of space planning, equipment or staff recruitment. Finally, improving school infrastructure (Pidgeon et al., 2019) is an essential investment in creating a stimulating and safe learning environment, encouraging student retention and access to quality training.

1.1.6 Guidance, support and personalized assistance

Successful training is not enough to guarantee the socio-professional integration of young FNI. Even during their secondary education, they need to be effectively prepared for the job market. This requires personalized guidance and support tailored to their specific needs. For a majority of the people we met, school and career guidance need to start early, so as to be able to give FNI learners specific information about the labour market, and help them find quality job opportunities during their studies (OECD, 2018), which then enables them to make informed choices and develop a realistic career project.

Several strategies can be implemented to facilitate this preparation. Career development support, implemented with a variety of approaches (D'Antimo, 2021), is essential. Preparation and support programs, offered by guidance and employment counselors (Wallace, 2019), can help young people identify their strengths, define their career goals and develop the skills they need to succeed in the job market. Real-world work experiences, such as volunteering, internships, job shadowing and networking with professionals (Lenny, 2019) offer valuable opportunities to gain experience, develop skills and forge professional connections.

EXAMPLE

The approach of the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (Hill-MacDonald, 2011), which proposes best practices to support FNI learners in their preparation for post-secondary education or vocational training, including workshops on life outside the community, represents a valuable source of inspiration.

1.1.7 Towards a systemic and sustainable approach

In conclusion, the initiatives presented in this report demonstrate that it is possible to develop effective strategies for education and training programs and services that support the socio-professional integration and

job retention of young FNI. The most promising approach is one that integrates several key elements: greater flexibility in training programs, adequate financial support, adaptation of teaching methods to the cultural and linguistic realities of the communities, and personalized support in preparing for employment and, more particularly for young people in the communities, preparing for life outside the community.

An analysis of the various strategies, coupled with comments from participants, reveals that the most successful initiatives are those that promote close collaboration between training institutions, employers, communities and families. The development of places within communities where young people can pursue their studies not only promotes access to training, but also their cultural and social anchoring, contributing to better school retention and more successful socio-professional integration. Similarly, support programs that integrate cultural aspects and take into account the specific challenges faced by young FNI are proving particularly effective.

Finally, beyond specific strategies, the analysis underlines the importance of a systemic and sustainable approach. It's not just a question of implementing one-off programs; rather, we need to make structural changes that take into account the cultural, social and economic determinants of educational success. Investing in school infrastructure, implementing inclusive public policies (more on this later) and supporting community entrepreneurship (more on this later) all contribute to creating an environment in which young FNI learners can thrive and succeed. Thus, only a concerted, long-term approach will make it possible to reduce inequalities and foster genuine socio-professional inclusion of young FNI through improved education and training services. Among other things, the training on offer is not always adapted or culturally relevant. In fact, several participants told us of an interesting paradox: abundant supply, but limited access to training (see next box).

A TRAINING OFFER AND ACCESS TO CULTURALLY ADAPTED AND RELEVANT TRAINING COURSES

Beyond the quality and characteristics of education and training services, their improvement or optimization, young people face a paradox and obstacles to access, despite an abundant supply. Yet young FNI people must have access to training that enables them to acquire the skills they need for the job market. To this end, several respondents shared their views with us, as presented below.

The paradox of abundant supply and limited access to training courses

Access to training for young FNI is characterized by a notable paradox: abundant supply coexists with limited access. While a multitude of training courses and services seem to be available, their fragmented organization and lack of coordination create a real obstacle to their appropriation by young people. This observation is corroborated by the testimonies gathered, which underline the difficulty of navigating a system perceived as disorganized and opaque. A 22-year-old Atikamekw participant sums up the situation: "You get lost in the information, there's too much. This impression of information overload is accentuated by the lack of coherence and synergy between the various organizations, each proposing its own programs without any real concertation. The absence of a clear, accessible and user-friendly centralized information platform complicates the search for relevant information and exacerbates the feeling of disorientation. The direct consequence is an often-fortuitous enrolment in training programs, leading to sometimes negative experiences, accentuated by a lack of adequate guidance. For a 19-year-old Innu youth, the feeling of being "misdirected" is significant and present in many people.

This difficulty of access is exacerbated by an often-arbitrary process for setting up and terminating programs, based on quantitative performance criteria that are not qualitatively explained. The evaluation of successes is based on indicators that are sometimes ill-adapted to the realities of individual career paths, ignoring those successes that do not translate into a diploma or

immediate employment (see Box K). This approach, which fails to take into account the subtleties of cultural contexts and the singularities of life trajectories, contributes to a feeling of injustice and devaluation. Doubts arise about the relevance and quality of certain programs, fuelled by a widespread perception of clientelism. Some organizations seem to be more concerned with the appearance and justification of funding than with the real adequacy of their offerings to the needs of young FNI employees. The expression “It’s nice to offer training to the FNI” (speaker, in a cynical tone), reflects a lack of consideration for cultural specificities and for the real impact of these programs on young people’s lives. The lack of any real assessment of needs and demand results in a training offer that doesn’t always match young people’s expectations and aspirations, reinforcing the feeling of a mismatch between supply and demand.

CLIENTELISM DEFINITION

Clientelism may manifest itself in practices where access to employment, training or support opportunities is conditional on political favors, personal ties or membership of a certain group, rather than on objective criteria of skills and qualifications. Among other things, clientelism is the practice of using one’s power or influence to grant favors or advantages to specific individuals or groups, to the detriment of the general interest and fairness. In the context of the socio-professional integration of young FNI, it can be a major obstacle to their economic development and personal fulfillment.

Barriers to access to trainings

The testimonies gathered from FNI young people and stakeholders highlight a series of obstacles that explain the low rate of access to training, despite an abundant supply. Several interrelated factors contribute to this paradoxical situation. For young people, the difficulty of projecting themselves into the future and defining their career aspirations is a major obstacle. The absence of clear reference points and a long-term vision leads to indecision, making it difficult to choose a course of training. The inadequacy of programs to meet specific community needs is another major obstacle, underlining the urgent need for a participatory approach involving communities in the design and implementation of training courses. The need to take the cultural context into account is underlined by this young person: “Training is not geared to community needs: you have to ask the communities” (Young Atikamekw, 28).

What’s more, when it comes to self-esteem, many young FNI feel that training courses are not for “them”, or that they wouldn’t be able to access them, for a variety of reasons.

The urban context, perceived as more difficult and isolating than the community environment, represents an additional obstacle for some young people. The feeling of loneliness and disconnection, expressed by one participant “I’m not as good as when I was in the community, it’s very lonely.” (Young Cree, 34), underlines the importance of adapted guidance and community support to facilitate integration in an urban environment. Access to information on available training also poses a problem. The sheer number of programs, combined with the complexity of navigating online platforms, creates an information overload that makes it difficult to find relevant information tailored to each situation. The impact of racism and negative prejudice is also highlighted. Discrimination and stereotypes can create an intimidating and hostile environment, negatively influencing the training experience and sense of belonging. Misunderstanding of the trades on offer, a lack of connection between training and job opportunities in communities, the difficulty of reconciling family obligations with the demands of training, and the lack of affordable housing in urban areas also contribute to limiting access to training. The geographic remoteness of training sites from communities, the difficulty of maintaining family and community ties, the intimidating aspect of a new environment and the need to create a lasting bond of trust with

organizations and stakeholders are all obstacles to young FNI's participation in training programs. In the Inuit context, it is almost systematically necessary to leave the village to attend training courses, and young people find this situation complicated, since they have to leave their environment and family, and even when training courses are given in other villages, they have to find accommodation, and conditions are not always easy. In short, “we need to be able to offer continuing education courses in all 14 villages”, explains one participant.

In short, barriers to accessing training are very similar to barriers to training itself, as we saw in the section on issues.

Recommendations for fair and relevant access to training courses

The findings presented in this study highlight the need for a profound transformation of the training system for young FNI, requiring a community-based approach that is deeply respectful of cultural specificities. The recommendations that follow, drawn from the testimonies gathered and the analyses carried out, aim to remedy the shortcomings identified and create fairer, more equitable and more effective access to training.

Improved access to information and guidance: The first crucial step is to improve access to information and set up an efficient, appropriate guidance system. The observation that there is an information overload and a lack of coordination between the various organizations involved calls for the creation of a centralized, user-friendly and accessible platform, bringing together all relevant training offers. This platform needs to be designed in close collaboration with the communities, using clear, simple and culturally sensitive language. It should include search tools to help identify training courses that match the needs, interests and aspirations of each young person. Detailed descriptions of training courses, including testimonials from young FNI who have already taken these courses, could help make the information more concrete and accessible. The use of visual, audio and video aids, adapted to different learning styles, is also recommended by several participants.

Improving guidance for young people, from secondary school onwards, is just as essential. Personalized guidance programs, integrated into the school curriculum and incorporating a cultural and personal dimension, need to be set up. These programs must offer individualized support throughout the process of choosing a course of study, taking into account the specific aspirations and constraints of each young person. The involvement of FNI staff who are familiar with the culture and realities of young FNI people is essential to ensure relevant and effective support. Trade discovery workshops, workplace immersion courses and one-to-one meetings with community professionals will help to clarify career choices and reduce young people's uncertainty. “It would take a guide to help young people find their way around, because there are so many [training offers].” (Stakeholder).

Adapting training and linking it to the job market: Tailoring training to the specific needs of communities and linking it to the job market are key to improving the effectiveness of the training system. Training programs must be designed in collaboration with communities, taking into account their needs and priorities. The introduction of pre-training internships will enable young people to gain a better understanding of the target trade and validate their aptitudes. It is also essential to ensure a better match between the training on offer and job opportunities in the communities. Partnerships with local employers, the creation of mentoring programs and the inclusion of practical, hands-on experience in training programs will strengthen the link between training and employment. “Young people need to see what the trade is like before they study it (real-life experience first)” (Stakeholder); this is an essential element in getting young people

interested and motivated. Integrating modules focusing on the development of entrepreneurial skills and the creation of businesses could also help create job opportunities within the communities themselves.

Strengthening guidance and support: Accompanying and supporting young people throughout their training is essential to their success. It is essential to have people who are aware of the culture of young FNI, who can communicate in their mother tongue and support them in the various aspects of their integration (housing, finance, social life). Individualized support, tailored to each young person's needs, will help overcome obstacles and maintain motivation. Mentoring programs, pairing young FNI with experienced professionals, will foster skills development and reinforce a sense of belonging. A community support network, offering a safety net and concrete help in the face of difficulties, is also essential.

Collaboration and consultation: Finally, greater collaboration between the various organizations involved in training young FNI is essential. Better coordination of efforts and concerted training planning will optimize the use of resources and guarantee a more coherent, relevant and accessible training offer. An integrated, community-based approach is essential, putting young people at the heart of the decision-making process and recognizing their cultural specificities. "We need to keep learning free. You have to teach as they learn. (Stakeholder). Regular evaluation of program effectiveness and ongoing adaptation to community needs and feedback are necessary to ensure the relevance and impact of interventions. Investment in research and evaluation will help identify best practices and guide future decisions. Adopting a community-based approach, integrating cultural, social and economic dimensions, is essential to ensure equitable and relevant access to training for young FNI and to foster their full professional development.

1.2 Improving programs and services related to the transition from training to employment

The transition from training to the job market is a major issue for young FNI (Marshall et al., 2013), and even more specifically for those living in Nunavik communities and villages, who have to leave their community life behind (see the box on mobility in section A). Targeted interventions are needed to facilitate this transition and promote their sustainable socio-professional integration. Already, it should be noted that we found very little information on this theme in the literature review, which confirms the importance of conducting research on this issue, and strengthening data collection processes on existing school-to-work transition support programs, in order to monitor their effectiveness (Bruce and Marlin, 2012). This ongoing evaluation will enable interventions to be adjusted and their impact optimized. Data analysis will enable best practices to be identified and disseminated more widely.

That said, as far as our study is concerned, the provision of structured support during the transition from training to employment, such as work integration assistance programs, even when young people are still in training, is essential; both the participants' discourses and the literature review demonstrate this (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017; Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Marshall et al., 2013). Quality career guidance offered systematically from the start of high school through to post-secondary education (Bruce and Marlin, 2012) is a key element. As several stakeholders told us, this early support enables young people to develop an informed career plan, acquire the necessary skills and prepare adequately for post-secondary education or entry into the job market.

To facilitate this transition, specific strategies can be put in place. Apprenticeships, for example, are proving to be an effective method of easing the transition of young FNI from the world of school to the world of work (OECD, 2017a). This type of apprenticeship combines theoretical training with practical experience, which promotes better socio-professional integration.

Then, several complementary actions can be taken to facilitate the school-to-work transition (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Mentoring and networking, mentioned by several stakeholders, enable young people to benefit from the experience and advice of professionals, which is crucial for navigating the world of work. Training and internships leading to employment are also relevant tools for developing the skills sought by employers and gaining relevant work experience (Civicaction, 2014). In this regard, the stakeholders we met insist that strategies involving mentoring should also include post-integration follow-up to ensure job retention.

1.3 Improving pre-employability and employability programs and services

The final paragraphs of this section focus on improving pre-employability and employability programs and services. It is at the heart of this study and constitutes one of its main objectives: what can be done to optimize these programs and services? The comments below are a summary of what was said by the participants in the study, both practitioners and young people. They express experienced practices that they believe work, and practices they consider optimal that could work, and should be implemented. Although these latter practices are well known, they are sometimes impossible to implement because of insufficient resources.

This part is divided into several sub-sections: general improvement of access to programs and services, simplification of procedures, improvement of the offer and form of programs and services, improvement of communication between players, support for young people, development of skills, integration of cultural considerations, support for organizations and employers, improvement of collaborations, and financial support.

1.3.1 *Improving access to programs and services*

Generally speaking, access to programs and services for young FNI needs to be improved (see the following box for an overview of the factors that explain the limits to this access). This requires strategies that take into account specific geographic, cultural and socio-economic realities. Already, and in general, stakeholders report the importance for young people of the existence of support programs that do not systematically involve mobility in urban areas. In the following paragraphs, we report on the strategies proposed by study participants to improve access to programs and services for young FNI.

Focus on proactive communication and multi-channel promotion: simply providing information about available jobs is not enough. A proactive, personalized approach is needed, taking into account distinct regional, linguistic and cultural contexts. A number of strategies have been mentioned. For example, translating job offers by region is an essential first step towards greater accessibility. In addition, to effectively reach young people, they report that a diversified communication strategy is imperative, and that it is necessary to inform them as early as high school, a period when they are more easily accessible, and to present them with the opportunities available to them after their studies. This strategy involves information sessions within support organizations, tailored to age groups, regions and languages.

In fact, many cite the involvement of prominent community figures, the use of word-of-mouth by ambassadors and role models, and participation in community events (job forums, fairs, pow-wows, etc.) as complementary strategies. In addition, participants indicated that promotion through the community's youth council fosters ownership and commitment among young people, and that an increased presence on social networks (TikTok, Facebook) and the use of video vignettes help reach young people on the platforms they use daily. Among the other strategies mentioned, one participant explained that it would be relevant to optimize the visibility of programs in online search algorithms. Others report that the development of a promotional plan integrated with the councils' strategic communications plan ensures maximum consistency and effectiveness. Finally, the use of community communication channels (local radio stations, council websites, etc.) enables a wider audience to be reached, according to some participants.

Optimize the format and content of communications: clarity and simplicity of messages are essential to promote better understanding. According to many young people, simplifying job ads, by avoiding superfluous information and favoring a concise, easy-to-read format, is a key measure. More personalized information sessions, in addition to advertising campaigns in all regions, improve the reach and effectiveness of the promotion. Other strategies include an eye-catching logo and an effective marketing strategy to reinforce the brand image and appeal of the programs.

Enhanced presence and strategic partnership: Our stakeholders tell us that it's crucial to ensure a physical presence and greater visibility within communities, particularly with young people living in the community who are considering outside employment, as well as with young people living outside the community who are returning to visit their families. Partnerships with Indigenous intermediary organizations (FNHRDCQ, RCAAQ, FNAESC, FNEC, band councils, etc.) also help maximize the scope of promotional efforts and better target specific community needs. These organizations can play an essential liaison role between programs and young people. According to some of the people we met, entrusting FNI members with solicitation roles not only improves communication, but also boosts young people's confidence and commitment. Finally, sharing success stories reinforces program credibility and encourages participation.

Analysis of these different aspects reveals that the effectiveness of interventions depends on a thorough understanding of the cultural and contextual realities specific to each community. Finally, according to the participants in the study, the most promising strategies are those that promote community ownership of programs, by mobilizing local leaders and using communication channels that are relevant and adapted to young people's needs and preferences.

BOX J: YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO PROGRAMS

Despite the presence of support organizations and government entities offering pre-employability and employability programs and services to FNI youth, access to these resources often proves less optimal, or even insufficient, resulting in an under-representation of FNI youth compared to other supported groups. This paradoxical situation, where programs exist but do not fully reach their target audience, raises crucial questions as to the suitability of these offerings to the specific realities and needs of young FNI employees.

In particular, young people aged between 15 and 35 seem to find themselves in a gray area, where existing programs and services are not adapted to their specific needs. This inadequacy can lead to a lack of motivation and make it difficult to mobilize young people. Stakeholders report that they are also confronted with a lack of continuity of services, and that they do not always benefit from adequate follow-up, or a smooth transition between different programs. They also encounter difficulties in accessing appropriate services, or may be excluded from targeted programs due to different eligibility criteria.

Thus, several factors contribute to this limited and sub-optimal accessibility, ranging from the logistical challenges associated with geographical remoteness to the psychological and cultural barriers that hinder young people's participation. We present them below, according to what the study participants had to say.

Factors contributing to limited access to pre-employability and employability programs and services

Sub-optimal accessibility depends on a number of factors, which can be grouped into several categories. First of all, administrative and logistical barriers hinder access to services. Young

people cannot access employment without first completing various administrative procedures, such as obtaining a Social Insurance Number (SIN) or a health insurance card. They often take a long time to do so, as these procedures can be very complex for many people. What's more, services are not available in all communities, and videoconferencing services are not yet available everywhere. A lack of information and clarity regarding programs and their eligibility requirements also contributes to this difficulty. Young people don't know about the existence of programs and services, or when they do, they don't know about the associated conditions. So, we need to publicize not only the existence of the programs, but also the conditions of the program (in the words of one Innu youth: "is it paid, is it safe, is transportation provided, etc.?"). In short, programs must not only be presented, they must also be attractive; young people must be persuaded to sign up (in particular by describing the program conditions).

Moreover, there's a huge flood of information that's often incomprehensible to young people. The language used in communication is also a limiting factor. For example, information is sometimes presented only in French, but would be better in English (depending on the nation and region). What's more, the communication channels used to disseminate information are not always adapted to the realities of young FNI. For example, as some participants explained, the use of social media is different among FNI: they ask for services and support, but don't necessarily disseminate programs and services. As a result, young people don't necessarily know where to look for what they want.

Secondly, factors linked to the young people themselves may hinder their participation in the programs. There sometimes seems to be a lack of motivation. In addition, it would be difficult to get young people to take part in employment measures; they don't seem easy to mobilize. The feeling of imposture and illegitimacy accentuates the difficulty of mobilizing them. For many of those involved, they do of course need to find their personal employment goal, but they also need to get to know themselves better first, as we mentioned in the section on young people's needs.

Then there are the young people who don't necessarily want to access support services. Some are in shock, vulnerable, with no automatic way of expressing themselves or their needs. A lack of confidence in the services offered, based on past negative experiences (of their loved ones or themselves), can also dissuade young people from participating. They don't feel confident enough to go for help, and some tell themselves that it's not for them, that they'll receive the same mistreatment as family members, and that people are still condescending in the services. Or they don't know how to access services, or don't know what the resources are. Embarrassment and fear, linked to experiences of discrimination or fear of judgment, can also be major obstacles. "Young people are embarrassed to ask, or are afraid they won't be understood," says one outreach worker. Many tell us that they experience a great deal of direct and indirect violence and indifference on the part of the Quebec population.

Factors related to service design also contribute to this situation. Services are not always adapted to the needs and realities of young FNI employees. Young people don't want or feel challenged by the services offered. For example, we talk about "reintegration", as if young people were maladjusted. But we have to ask ourselves: isn't it the service that's not adapted to the people? As this young Atikamekw woman put it: "We put the burden of adaptation on the person rather than on the service... I'm not sure it should work that way alone." (Young Anishinabe, age 30).

Also, the skills of the workforce offering the services and programs do not always seem to be optimal, according to the people we met. There is a shortage of staff to offer services, and the

turnover rate of professionals and counsellors is too high (young people need a stable reference person).

Another element is restrictive eligibility criteria and over-institutionalized programs, which can also discourage young people from participating. There are too many criteria that easily disqualify a person or limit their access. For example, the age criterion (practitioners think it's optimal to go over 35), the geographic criterion (programs are only offered for communities north of the 49th parallel), or the time criterion (the proposed durations for completing programs are often too short). For example, if you work part-time, or are a student, many programs are inaccessible. And a final point on the rigidity of programs: routines are difficult for young people, and many programs are designed around this format (annual calendar, daily schedule, etc.). For example, returning to training after the Christmas vacations is always a challenge. In short, programs are highly structured and rigid: they are less interesting for many young people, and less in tune with their visions, values or needs.

For example, pre-employment programs may not be adapted to the needs of young people who already have basic skills, but who still need support because they are leaving their community, or because they need to develop certain employability skills. As a result, pre-employment programs are less interesting for young people who experience fewer difficult situations. "I'm not going to spend 6 to 8 weeks in a workshop to get to know myself, but I still need help in employment." (Young Anishinabe, age 24). "There are a lot of services for disadvantaged and very disadvantaged young people, but what's there for the others? Then, the young people are not at the same place in their pathways, but they are mixed within the programs, which is not optimal in itself.

Finally, from the employer's point of view, access to programs can also be complex. They first need to know which program might interest them, and then which one matches their characteristics or needs. The whole process is not always clear (registration, application, forms, etc.), and then you often have to call and speak to someone to find out what the eligibility criteria are. Access to programs is more or less complex, depending on various factors: the status of the organization (NPO or other), the values of employees at all levels (importance or not of contributing to the development of young people, or enrolment in a program to obtain a subsidy), the status of the employee (student, etc.), or the type of measures or programs (summer job, part-time, etc.).

These factors combine to create a complex system where access to pre-employability and employability programs and services is far from optimal for young FNI. To improve this situation, it is essential to put in place targeted strategies that take into account these different barriers and aim to make programs more accessible, more adapted and more attractive to young FNI.

1.3.2 *Simplifying processes*

Access to programs and services is often hampered by complex and time-consuming administrative procedures. Simplifying these procedures is therefore a crucial element in improving access to services and encouraging the participation of young FNI. It was mentioned by the majority of stakeholders and by several young people, which is why we decided to make it a category in its own right. Several avenues of action can be explored.

Simplify forms and administrative processes. The complexity of administrative forms and procedures is a major obstacle for many young FNI. Simplifying these processes is essential to facilitate access to services. Clear, concise and easy-to-understand forms, available in community languages, are necessary. The use of user-

friendly, accessible digital platforms can also help simplify the process. Simplifying forms is not just a technical matter. It represents a recognition of the difficulties faced by young FNI in accessing services and resources. Complex forms can be perceived as an additional barrier, discouraging young people and limiting their participation. Simplifying administrative processes can reduce feelings of intimidation and improve the user experience.

Simplify hiring processes: Hiring processes can also be complex and intimidating for young FNIs. Simplifying these processes, with a more human and less bureaucratic approach, is important. One stakeholder explains their improved process, which she believes works better: “It’s no longer an online form that we have now, just an email has to be sent, then we have a discussion to recognize qualifications.” (Stakeholder). This simplification aims to reduce the stress and anxiety associated with the hiring process. It allows for better recognition of the skills and experience of young FNIs, by favoring a qualitative and personalized approach that takes into account their life paths and acquired skills. By simplifying processes, we create a more welcoming and less intimidating environment, encouraging greater participation of young FNI in the job market.

Relocating services: geographic accessibility to services is another crucial issue. Bringing services to the community reduces the barriers associated with geographical remoteness. Geographical remoteness, transport difficulties and the social context can hamper access to services if they are only available in urban centers or formal structures. If services can't be offered in communities, young people need to be able to travel to places where courses, training and jobs are available, which may mean covering the cost of transport or accommodation (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021).

Offer a flexible approach: a more flexible approach based on proximity and respect for each individual's rhythm maximizes the accessibility and effectiveness of interventions, and is also necessary. We need to meet young people where they feel most comfortable. As one counsellor explained in an interview: “Their anxiety is sometimes too high to just walk into my office, so I do the meetings outside, on the picnic table, or walking, etc.”. This approach helps to create a climate of trust and openness, enabling young people to express themselves more freely and confide in one another. The flexible approach represents a recognition of the socio-cultural reality of the FNI and an adaptation to specific contexts.

1.3.3 *Improving the form and structure of programs and services*

Improving the form or structure of programs and services for young FNI requires in-depth reflection on program organization, structure and success criteria. Several adaptations to the form of programs and services are necessary to better meet the specific needs of this population and to promote better socio-professional integration. We describe below those that were identified by the study participants.

Ensuring an integrated, all-encompassing approach: first of all, participants explained that the provision of integrated services, bringing together different resources in the same place, including mental health services, is paramount. An all-encompassing approach makes it easier to meet the complex needs of young people and facilitate access to the necessary resources. Many young people with FNI face significant personal, cultural, social and economic challenges (see section on challenges). Providing easy, integrated access to a range of services makes it possible to address these challenges in a holistic way, creating a safer environment that is more conducive to the success of their career plans.

Rethinking program structure to eliminate the failure effect: what's more, the current program structure, often perceived as too rigid and academic, can engender a sense of failure in young people: “They feel they can't move on to another ‘level’,” explains one stakeholder. A more flexible, less prescriptive approach is needed. Open pathways that allow young people to experiment with different aspects of employment and return to the programs if necessary are preferable. As one 28-year-old Innu woman recounts, she feels more secure this way: “I try employment, and if it doesn't work out, I can come back, because I always have a place...”. A rigid

structure, with strict levels and criteria for success, can create a climate of failure and frustration among young people. According to some participants, a more flexible approach, which values experimentation and allows greater room for maneuver, encourages perseverance and the development of autonomy.

Adapting program duration and structure: secondly, participants felt that the duration of current programs is often too short to enable young people to develop meaningful skills. In particular, “it’s hard to develop skills in a short time; for example, it lasts 26 weeks, then it cuts out.” (Stakeholder). An extension of program duration, with greater leeway on end dates, is deemed necessary. This adaptation must also take into account the realities of young people moving to urban areas: “Life in the city is more complicated than in our communities; we need more time to get used to things,” explains a 32-year-old Atikamekw youth. Progressive employability programs with part-time or progressive job offers are a solution to facilitate integration into the job market, and to meet the needs of employers who are reluctant to invest time and resources in short-term programs. “From the employer’s point of view, for employment programs that only last a few months, it’s not so interesting and profitable, despite the subsidies, to devote time to these people and they leave after 6 months because the subsidy ends.” (Stakeholder). A better articulation of the different programs (pre-employment, internship, employment) is also deemed necessary, with post-employment follow-up, to ensure a smooth and efficient transition, and to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. In addition, individualizing programs, by taking into account the personal, educational and professional background of each young person, enables a more targeted and effective approach.

Adapting inclusion criteria: program inclusion and success criteria need to be reviewed to better meet the needs of young FNI employees, and to avoid penalizing young people experiencing difficulties. “Greater flexibility in eligibility criteria is needed” (Stakeholder), with greater openness in terms of requirements criteria and an approach less focused on results and more on individual successes, particularly medium- or long-term fulfillment, mention several, if not a majority of stakeholders. For example, reports one of them: “the pre-employability program should be offered to everyone, not just those on low incomes, but to anyone looking for work”. Adapting criteria to young people’s family and personal situations is also essential. “Because of my family situation, it was very difficult to meet the minimum number of hours. We have to allow the number of hours to be based on the person’s ability.” (Young Atikamekw, age 24). Finally, three participants, including one young person, mentioned that for young people leaving youth centers, the criteria of dependence on parents up to the age of 21 should be adapted, since many young people no longer have contact with their parents and find themselves without family support.

In short, greater flexibility in the criteria means that the specific realities of young FNI can be better taken into account. Criteria that are too rigid can exclude young people who, despite their difficulties, have great potential. A more nuanced, holistic approach that assesses success on different levels and takes into account the personal and social context of young people is essential. As a solution, some stakeholders mention that when the criteria for accessing federal funding are no longer met, they switch from federal to provincial funding (and vice versa), to ensure continuity of support for young people without penalizing them for having to start the process all over again with someone they don’t know. This strategy illustrates the importance of streamlining administrative processes so as not to penalize young people due to financial constraints. It also reinforces the view held by those involved that reducing the turnover of counsellors, by assigning the same counsellor to the same young person throughout his or her career, fosters the creation of a bond of trust and more personalized, effective support and, ultimately, a better chance of success for the young person.

Revising program success criteria and measurement and evaluation indicators towards a qualitative assessment: Finally, current success criteria, which are often quantitative, fail to capture the full complexity of young people’s journeys (see the following box on program evaluation issues). A more qualitative approach is needed to assess program success. For example, as one youth worker explains, “A young person who significantly reduces his or her consumption and changes lifestyle habits, even if he or she does not complete

a program, can be considered a personal and social success. It is therefore important to revisit backers' success criteria to take account of individual progress and changes in young people's overall well-being. Analyses suggest that the evaluation of program success should not be limited to quantitative indicators, such as job placement rates. A qualitative approach that takes into account individual changes, improved well-being and the acquisition of transferable skills is essential. This means developing evaluation tools that are more sensitive to cultural contexts, and that capture the richness and complexity of young FNI's life paths.

BOX K: INDICATORS FOR MEASURING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Context

In the current context of government initiatives to promote the socio-professional integration of young FNI, success indicators tend to focus on quantitative measures such as enrolment numbers, retention rates, number of graduates and job placement. This approach, while providing easily measurable data, does not necessarily reflect the complexity and diversity of the individual journeys of young FNI, nor the realities experienced by the support organizations that accompany them. Indeed, for the latter, as well as for the young people themselves, the notion of success transcends mere numbers and encompasses qualitative dimensions often neglected by traditional indicators. This divergence of perspectives poses a major challenge, as funding for programs, and in particular their recurrence, is often conditional on the achievement of quantitative targets, creating pressure to conform results to government expectations. Support organizations believe that the number of success stories is far greater than quantitative measures can reveal, and that it would be desirable to highlight these alternative success stories, both to secure adequate funding and to recognize the progress made by young FNI. As one speaker pointed out, although young people “may drop out, they come back; seeds are planted...”, illustrating the non-linear and iterative nature of the learning and insertion process. It is therefore imperative to consider programs as learning processes, rather than as linear paths with a predefined beginning and end. This approach allows us to better understand the individual trajectories of young FNI employees, taking into account their specific needs, aspirations and obstacles. A more holistic assessment of the individual and a more qualitative evaluation of success could thus contribute to a better allocation of resources and greater recognition of the value of support programs.

Challenges and difficulties

The monitoring and evaluation of programs offered to FNI youth represents a major challenge for support organizations, faced with administrative and logistical obstacles such as lack of personnel and resources. Beyond these material constraints, a challenge of intention and collaboration emerges, linked to the divergence of perspectives between funders and support organizations regarding the definition of success. While organizations focus on supporting young people, without necessarily aiming to achieve predefined quantitative targets, funders tend to favor quantitative measures such as the number of young people who have obtained a job, or compliance with pre-employment program deadlines. This tension raises a crucial question: how can we qualitatively assess the impact of our programs? Qualitative measurement represents a challenge in itself, as it is difficult to establish a direct causal link between a program and a particular success, not least because of the complexity of the factors involved. For example, in the case of an employability program, it is difficult to determine whether success is measured by job presence, employment rate, placement rate or minimum job retention period. These measures are contested by many players, who feel that they do not do justice to the many advances made by young people who participate in the programs without necessarily “completing” them in the sense intended by backers. As Fontaine-Dumais and Pinsonneault (2021) point out, the impact of programs and services on participants' lives is not always immediate, and is not limited to integration into employment or a return to school. Along the way, practitioners observe positive

repercussions on other spheres of young people's lives, such as the development of social skills, boosted self-esteem, improved psychological well-being and the development of a sense of belonging to the community. For those working in support organizations, it is therefore essential to integrate qualitative indicators that highlight these “other” successes, in order to better account for the real impact of programs on the lives of young FNI.

Potential indicators

The potential indicators of success suggested by the study participants, most of whom work in support programs for young FNI, highlight a multidimensional conception of success that transcends the quantitative measures traditionally used by funders. These indicators, rooted in the realities experienced by young people and those involved, focus on the overall progress made, recognizing the complexity of individual paths and the diversity of aspirations. These indicators include steps towards employability, which are manifested by a set of interdependent elements. Among the elements mentioned by participants, we find various qualitative elements, such as the strengthening of cultural identity and the feeling of belonging to a group or community, the adaptation of attitudes and behaviors according to the objectives of the young people themselves, the feeling of having taken control of one's life (marital, personal, family, etc.), the improvement of psychosocial well-being (reduction of stress, anxiety, etc.), the search for housing, etc. In short, the most effective, or culturally appropriate and relevant, measures of success could prioritize the pursuit of a healing journey, or the balancing of the emotional, cultural, physical and intellectual domains of wellness, in a way that considers the whole person.

Success is also evident when a young person has a positive experience, in their own words, and there is a significant change for them, or when changes in behavior are observed on a daily basis. As one practitioner points out, success is also felt “when I feel good about them”, testifying to the importance of intuition and empathy in assessing program impact. Satisfying the young person's needs for fulfillment and self-actualization, as well as achieving the goals he or she set at the outset with stakeholders, are also important indicators of success. Progress towards autonomy and independence is also emphasized, particularly when a young person leaves income or employment assistance programs to pursue post-secondary studies, and does not return to support services. The ability of young people to choose where they want to work, and the freedom they are thus offered, also testify to the effectiveness of the programs, as expressed in the words of this stakeholder, speaking of the young people: “They succeeded when we were able to give them the freedom to choose” (Stakeholder). Of course, job retention and integration into a job that makes sense for the young person remain important indicators, as does the absence of negative comments from employers within and outside the community. Finally, the young person's ability to integrate and adapt to the job market, by understanding the codes and expectations of organizations, is also a sign of success. In short, for participants, a program can be considered effective if it has a positive impact on the lives of participants, and if it is culturally adapted and relevant to communities, above and beyond quantitative data.

Means and solutions

To support the development of relevant indicators adapted to the realities of young FNI, it is essential to take into account the comments and suggestions of participants and stakeholders. Suggestions include the need for post-training and post-program evaluations, as well as exit interviews, which are currently infrequent according to the stakeholders we met. It's also crucial to carry out evaluations with participants, during or after the program, asking them, as one speaker suggested: “What more can we do, what can we do better? What did we do that didn't work? These follow-ups should also enable us to check whether the young people are still in

employment and whether they are satisfied with their situation. The search for success stories can also help to highlight the positive impact of programs

For stakeholders, it's important not to be afraid of changing the system and getting funders to accept their own performance indicators and criteria, including providing them with qualitative reports, even when they're not explicitly requested. Stakeholders inform us of the need to have open and necessary discussions with funders on the importance of “doing things differently”, stressing that “we don't want to adapt non-Indigenous programs, we want to create our own” and that “we want to reach our targets, not the funder's”. It is also relevant to invite funders to visit program locations, to show them how the programs work and what their objectives are. In short, as Pidgeon et al (2019) point out, culturally appropriate program evaluation measures need to be developed to ensure that these programs are appropriate for the communities they serve.

Finally, for the Inuit participants interviewed, the success of the programs is also measured by their success in getting young people to benefit from the services, to come and see them. “If they come, it's because we're meeting a need, so it works, regardless of the placement outcome and job retention afterwards.” (Stakeholder Inuk). What's more, “It can take several tries before you're placed and well employed, before you've found your calling, but that doesn't mean the program doesn't work.” (Stakeholder).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of perspectives on the evaluation of socio-professional integration programs for young FNI reveals a fundamental tension between the quantitative measures favored by government bodies and the qualitative indicators valued by support organizations and the participants themselves. This divergence of perspectives underscores the need for a culturally adapted evaluation approach that takes into account the realities experienced by young FNI and the specificities of the communities they represent. It seems essential to develop qualitative indicators that highlight young people's “other” successes, such as strengthening cultural identity, improving psychosocial well-being and developing transversal skills. In this sense, potential success indicators, as suggested by participants, highlight a multidimensional conception of success, which transcends traditional quantitative measures. These indicators focus on personal, social, cultural and spiritual progress, recognizing the complexity of individual journeys and the diversity of aspirations. It is therefore imperative to take these perspectives into account when developing more relevant evaluation measures adapted to the realities of young FNI.

1.3.4 Improving synergy and communication between players

Improving pre-employability and employability programs and services also depends on synergy and effective communication between the various players involved. Improving these two aspects is crucial to optimizing access to resources, facilitating the transition to employment and improving the conditions for integration and job retention. The participants shared with us a number of strategies and practices to achieve this, which we report on below.

Optimize information dissemination for a centralized, multi-channel approach: according to study participants, the current complexity of accessing information on available programs and services is a major obstacle for young FNI. To remedy this, a centralized, multi-channel communications strategy is needed. Various ideas emerged from the interviews. The creation of a mobile application centralizing all offers and a guide to services by region, inspired by the initiatives of the FNHRDCQ, would clarify the offer and facilitate the search for information. This approach would also reinforce the consistency of messages and encourage better communication between indigenous organizations, which is often fragmented. At the same time, a clearer presentation of job offers, emphasizing the skills required for each position, would increase the attractiveness

of opportunities for young people. This improvement in the clarity of information is directly linked to the effectiveness of promotional efforts.

Improving access to information for employers through a centralized portal: access to information about available services is a major challenge for both support organizations and employers. According to one stakeholder, “Involving external partners (such as Service-Québec) to present their programs and program changes would improve this situation”. Others mention that the creation of a portal for employers, presenting clear and precise information on potential candidates, according to program criteria (urban, student, full-time or part-time, specific sectors, etc.), would facilitate recruitment and improve collaboration between support organizations and companies. Access to clear, accurate and up-to-date information is essential for employers. This centralized portal, offering an overview of potential candidates and support programs, would enable employers to better understand what's on offer and to participate more actively in the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI, by making more informed decisions. Finally, the implementation of such a tool is directly linked to the need for transparent and effective communication between the various players in the system.

1.3.5 *A personalized, personalized approach to supporting young FNIs*

The improvement of pre-employability and employability programs and services depends to a large extent on individualized support tailored to their specific needs. An iterative approach, which takes into account the complexity of individual pathways, is necessary to promote perseverance and integration into the job market. Several strategies for supporting young people were proposed by the participants in the study.

Consider early preparation for life outside the community: firstly, participants mentioned that accompanying young people in preparation for life beyond the community is necessary to improve the effectiveness of pre-employability and employability programs and services, where appropriate. Support in preparing for life after high school must not be limited to the acquisition of technical skills; it must also take into account the cultural aspects and life contexts of young FNI. Particular attention needs to be paid to the specific challenges they face, such as geographical remoteness, lack of access to resources, and difficulties linked to discrimination. Stakeholders add that adequate psychosocial support can be essential to enable them to overcome these obstacles and maintain their motivation throughout the socio-professional integration process. Collaboration with communities, families and employers is crucial to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of these support programs.

Make support part of a long-term process: data analysis suggests that support should not be seen as a one-off intervention, but as a long-term life project, with clearly defined stages and regular follow-up. It is imperative to propose a set of articulated measures, evolving progressively, and, as one participant put it, “to avoid skipping stages to prevent going back to square one”. This iterative approach translates into a qualitative and informal approach to support, with the emphasis on creating a climate of trust and closeness, adapted to the pace and needs of each young person. “Regular one-to-one meetings (e.g. every two weeks), with adjustment of individual objectives (punctuality, absenteeism, etc.), enable attentive monitoring and personalized support” (Stakeholder). This personalized approach recognizes the diversity of individual backgrounds and needs, taking into account the complexity of life situations. It also fosters the creation of a bond of trust between the young person and his or her support worker, essential for effective intervention. What's more, several counsellors have told us that it's best to start with basic administrative needs (change of address, obtaining health insurance card, SIN number, updating tax returns, etc.) to establish a bond of trust before tackling more sensitive issues or the bigger challenges facing young people (consumerism, family organization).

Maintain a direct link with stakeholders: Support must be accessible and adapted to the context in which young people live. For those involved in recruiting or working with young people living in communities, it appears that showing up in person, rather than using webinars or mailing documents, is an effective strategy for

facilitating the process and reducing anxiety. Physical presence provides direct access to information and resource people, simplifying administrative processes and reducing the risk of dropping out along the way. "Ideally, all the necessary steps should be taken quickly and directly with the same people" (Stakeholder), to avoid overloading young people with too many complex steps and multiple interlocutors. This pragmatic approach shows compassion for young people, while offering them effective support. In addition to this close accompaniment, it is crucial to develop young people's autonomy by guiding them through administrative procedures (obtaining a SIN, health insurance card, driver's license, etc.). These processes are often complex and intimidating for young people, and with the right support, they can be overcome more easily. Offering an accessible platform for virtual appointments with expert professionals (guidance counselors, mental health services, etc.) makes it possible to combine face-to-face and online approaches for greater flexibility and optimal support. Finally, according to various stakeholders, offering progressive or mixed support (part-time supported work, part-time in-house support) enables optimal adaptation to the needs and pace of each young person.

Offer mentoring: The integration of mentoring into coaching programs is an essential element that was named by the vast majority of those interviewed. Indeed, solid mentoring programs, with role models from the community (Bruce and Marlin, 2012), create important links and support networks for young people, in addition to having a role model to look up to. As one 28-year-old Innu woman explains: "It's like hunting, the first time I hunted, I was with my father, or my grandfather; I was watching, trying, etc. I had the example of how to do it, so it was easier." So having a resource person for at least a month gives young people individualized support and a role model to follow. This strategy also enables them to learn by example, acquire social skills and better adapt to the workplace. However, to ensure the sustainability and quality of coaching, "sufficient financial resources must also be made available to support mentoring and coaching efforts" (Stakeholder). Investment in coaching is an investment in the development of young FNIs and in their long-term professional success.

1.3.6 Offer psychosocial support services for young people's well-being

Psychosocial support for the well-being of young people with FNI is an essential factor in their academic and professional success. Access to adapted support services, including mental health services, counseling and psychological accompaniment, can help improve their resilience and their ability to overcome obstacles to employment. For some, they are a prerequisite for job fulfilment (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022). Although we present it in this section, this support is important in the contexts of training, carrying out pre-employability or employability programs, and then employment.

To promote the overall well-being of young people with FNI, participants report that it is essential to aim for the creation of bonds of trust with them, whatever the context. Trust is the foundation of any effective helping relationship. It enables young people to feel safe and open to those who work with them, making it easier to identify their psychosocial needs and implement appropriate support strategies. Whether it's between a teacher or trainer and young people, between a practitioner and young people, or between an employer and young people, creating bonds of trust is an essential aspect of support, promoting their well-being and facilitating their participation in insertion programs, or their commitment to employment. It is also important to create lasting relationships with young people, listen to their needs and accompany them at their own pace (Pidgeon et al., 2019; Goodleaf, 2021).

One strategy is to leverage student and other FN associations (Jeunesse de Montréal, 2016). The latter are active and play a unifying role in their communities. They include: the Cercle des Premières Nations at UQÀM; the Indigenous Resource Centre at John Abbott College; the Indigenous Students Resource Center at Concordia University; the First People's House (FPH) at McGill University; the Inuit Services of Québec at the Verdun Local Employment Centre; the First Nations Human Resources Development Service of Montreal; Native Friendship

Centres; or the Ivirtivik Centre. In addition to providing support themselves, these associations can act as relays to disseminate information on support services and create links between young people and available resources.

Finally, another strategy is to recreate a sense of community by offering a physical space that helps foster a sense of belonging and reduce isolation, which is essential for the well-being of young FNIs. For example, the Institut national des mines (2017) points out that many vocational training centers seek to recreate a sense of community for FNI learners by offering a physical space to encourage solidarity and reduce isolation. This provides a culturally meaningful space and mitigates the cultural shocks and stress associated with transition (Deschênes, 2022; Loiselle, 2010). As another example, Concordia University has created a Resource Center for FNI students, offering mentoring, social activities, and space for socialization. Although some institutions in Quebec have implemented mechanisms to foster inclusion and cultural securitization, these initiatives remain marginal and should be integrated into a provincial strategic framework (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). Lastly, although this strategy is more specifically concerned with training, it proves to be entirely appropriate in organization. Indeed, it is a strategy that employers can implement for FNI employees.

1.3.7 *Ensure skills development*

Improving pre-employability and employability programs and services also requires an approach to skills development that integrates technical, general and cultural aspects. It's not enough to acquire trade-specific skills; it's also crucial to develop transferable skills (including interpersonal and life skills, etc.), a better understanding of oneself and greater autonomy (see the following box on developing the autonomy of FNIs). For example, efforts must be made to enable young FNI who do not have a high school diploma to pursue training (Bernard, 2005). Or, we need to build the capacity of those who choose not to go to college or university, notably through programs to develop personal skills and workplace competencies (Pidgeon et al., 2019). To achieve this, several complementary strategies can be put in place, as suggested by the participants.

BOX I: DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S AUTONOMY

Autonomy is a cornerstone of personal development and socio-professional integration for young FNI. It is defined as the ability to make informed decisions, to act independently and to assume the resulting responsibilities. Yet, despite the efforts of communities, support organizations and governments, some young FNI may appear to have difficulty in fully developing their autonomy, particularly in their job search, which can hinder their academic, professional and personal development. This lack of autonomy can be attributed to a complex combination of historical, social, cultural and economic factors and issues, which have shaped the realities experienced by young FNI.

Indeed, the stakeholders we met assume that this observed lack of autonomy cannot be reduced to a simple individual deficiency, but must rather be apprehended as the result of a complex interaction between contextual factors and systemic dynamics. A first element to consider is the incompatibility between traditional approaches to job search, often perceived as “highly supervised” and “very administrative”, and the ways in which young FNI people operate. Among other things, these operating modes are linked to young people's values, such as cultural humility, which doesn't sit well with the need to “sell oneself” in interviews). This inadequacy can lead to a feeling of disconnection and disinterest, distancing them from the process of socio-professional integration. Moreover, as one Atikamekw practitioner points out, “there's no sense of urgency among young people: it's not a lack of autonomy, it's that they don't do it because it's not important or a priority for them. They put it off until tomorrow. This observation highlights the importance of taking into account the priorities and values of young FNI, which may differ from those of the conventional working world.

To improve the autonomy of young FNI, it is imperative to adopt a multidimensional, integrated approach that tackles systemic obstacles while strengthening individual and collective capacities. This approach must translate into concrete action at different levels, from education and employment to community development and psychosocial support. The participants we met suggested a number of different interventions. The first is to act upstream, starting in high school, to better support young people in their development of autonomy. As one participant put it, “this is a situation that will change with education”, highlighting the crucial role of the education system in preparing young people for adult life. It is also essential to better share tools facilitating access to employment, such as targeted job offers, service counters and job boards, in order to make information more accessible and relevant to FNI youth. In addition, it is important to continue offering services along a continuum, ensuring a smooth transition between training and employment. “As soon as we've finished training, let's get on with it” (Stakeholder), illustrating the need for ongoing, personalized support. In order to maximize the impact of existing initiatives, it is crucial to pool all employment resources and facilitate the matching of young people with professional opportunities. This includes better communication about available services and the establishment of collaborative platforms. An individualized approach is also essential, adapting interventions to the context and specific needs of each young person. In addition, it's important to get back to basics and revive traditional practices, by organizing discussion circles with Elders and young people, or beading evenings to encourage exchanges and knowledge sharing. “Bringing young people back into the circle, allowing them to recharge their batteries, and leave again” (Stakeholder), underlining the importance of cultural roots in the development of autonomy. Promoting successful role models is also a key factor, enabling young people, as some speakers put it, to “see someone like themselves with success”, as “it's hard for them to project themselves” without concrete examples. It's therefore important to surround them with people who have succeeded, and to remind them that they are capable of achieving their goals. The integration of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, can also facilitate the job search process, helping young people to create CVs and navigate online job offers. It is therefore essential to teach them how to use computers and digital tools to find a job. Offering outreach services, such as workshops in communities, or satellite offices with computers and professionals available online, can also facilitate access to information and support. Simplifying administrative processes and working with employers to draft more accessible and inclusive job offers are also important measures. Finally, it's essential to encourage young people in what they love, to give them access to resources, to show them the impact of their contribution in the community, to mobilize them on an emotional level, and to capitalize on the visibility of opportunities. In short, a comprehensive, integrated and culturally adapted approach is essential to improve the autonomy of young FNI and encourage their full participation in society.

Ensure the integrated development of technical and general skills for a context-sensitive approach: training programs must adopt an approach that integrates the development of technical skills specific to certain trades with general and transferable skills, or soft skills, essential for professional success. The acquisition of these transferable skills (communication, time management, teamwork, problem-solving, etc.) considerably improves young people's employability and their ability to adapt to the demands of the job market. At the same time, a health and wellness component, including workshops on nutrition, stress management and strategies for maintaining a healthy life balance, must also be integrated into the programs. Physical and mental well-being are fundamental to professional success. Access to general education sessions, for example on attitudes to develop in the workplace, is also essential to meet the complex needs of young people. Finally, the provision of language upgrading resources (French and English) (Jeunesse de Montréal, 2016) is particularly important for young people looking for work in urban areas, as proficiency in official languages is a determining factor in employability and social integration. Several young people have expressed this, including this 20-year-

old Cree girl: “To work in the south, you also have to speak French, and that's difficult for me, I don't understand enough.” This approach recognizes the importance of the harmonious development of skills, both technical and general, and focuses on the overall well-being of young people to better prepare them for socio-professional integration.

Propose an adapted pedagogical approach focusing on the importance of empowerment and on-the-job training: The majority of participants in the study report that programs for developing or strengthening organizational skills should favor a pedagogical approach that encourages autonomy and self-confidence. An empowering approach, with less negative feedback (or critical feedback, which can be perceived as negative for young people, especially for historical reasons and intergenerational traumas) and more encouragement, is essential for improving perseverance and self-confidence. Similarly, according to some stakeholders, more on-the-job training enables more concrete learning that is better adapted to employers' needs, thus promoting better integration into the workplace. On the other hand, some young people tell us that they prefer a less formal approach at the outset, with little formal feedback during compulsory meetings, which leaves them feeling anxious.

1.3.8 Integrating cultural considerations

As many of our stakeholders have told us, training and employment programs must take into account the cultural needs of young people. Integrating these cultural considerations is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of pre-employability and employability programs and services for FNI youth. It's not simply a question of adding cultural elements to existing programs, but rather of rethinking programs in depth so that they are truly adapted to the specific needs and realities of communities. Below, we present some of the strategies proposed by participants.

Adapting locations and approaches: offering programs, or activities within programs, on a traditional site or in the territory, whenever possible, creates a more familiar and secure learning environment for young people. Strengthening the community side and going back to the grassroots (“grassroots movement”, pyramid to circle, participatory democracy, etc.) encourages community participation and ownership of programs. Such a community-centered approach better meets the specific needs of young people and creates an environment more conducive to learning and success. Also, a collaborative approach, inspired by a participatory democracy model, emphasizes the active involvement of communities in the design and implementation of programs.

DEFINITION OF THE “GRASSROOTS” MOVEMENT:

A “grassroots” movement is an initiative that emerges from the grassroots, i.e. from community members themselves, rather than being led by outside organizations or leaders. In the context of the NIF, this movement is characterized by actions and demands that emanate directly from the concerns and aspirations of community members, often in response to local issues or perceived injustices. These movements may aim to defend territorial rights, promote cultural revitalization, improve living conditions, or make the voice of communities heard in decision-making processes. They emphasize autonomy, self-determination and the active participation of community members.

DEFINITION OF “PYRAMID TO CIRCLE”:

This expression symbolizes a paradigm shift in modes of governance and decision-making. The pyramid model represents a hierarchical structure where power is concentrated at the top and decisions are made in a top-down fashion. The circle, on the other hand, symbolizes a more egalitarian and inclusive structure, where all participants have an equal voice and decisions are taken by consensus. This expression symbolizes a paradigm shift in modes of governance and decision-making. The pyramid model represents a hierarchical structure where power is

concentrated at the top and decisions are made from the top down. The circle, on the other hand, symbolizes a more egalitarian and inclusive structure, where all participants have an equal voice and decisions are made by consensus.

DEFINITION OF “PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY”:

Participatory democracy is a model of governance that aims to strengthen citizen participation in decision-making processes, beyond regular elections. In the context of the FNI, participatory democracy means putting in place mechanisms and processes that enable community members to become actively involved in the decisions that affect them, whether at local, regional or national level. This includes public consultations, community assemblies, referendums, advisory councils, discussion forums and so on. The aim is to foster more informed, legitimate decision-making that is more respectful of the rights and interests of communities. Participatory democracy recognizes the sovereignty of FNI and their right to self-determination, and aims to create more equitable and constructive partnerships between communities and governments.

Adapting programs to cultural needs: “Training and employment programs need to take into account young people's cultural needs and interests,” explains one participant (see section on needs and interests). In this sense, an approach that integrates cultural and contextual dimensions is essential. One stakeholder reminds us that it is therefore important for programs to be run by members of the NIF, to ensure appropriate cultural support and a thorough understanding of the community's needs. Wallace (2019) and D'Antimo (2021) suggest that a life skills program that incorporates FNI worldviews could be useful for these young people. Such an approach can better meet the specific needs of young people and create a sense of belonging and security.

Offer culturally secure and relevant employment services: Employment support services must be designed to be culturally safe and relevant for FNI youth. It is essential to offer urban services oriented towards overall wellbeing and rooted in the cultures of the FNI (Fontaine-Dumais and Pinsonneault, 2021). This strategy involves adapting to local needs and allowing people to name their needs and those of their families (Maxwell and Longboat, 2021). The language used must be appropriate and services must take into account the experiences of young FNI (residential schools, racism, empowerment through learning) (Pidgeon et al., 2019). It's important to consider that, without a work-life balance model, some young FNI employees need employers who have already considered and provided for cultural accommodations (Pidgeon et al., 2019). In addition, a culturally relevant approach relies on an encompassing vision, building on learners' strengths and using a critical perspective to facilitate the transition from school to work (D'Antimo, 2021). Integrating these cultural elements into employment support services is essential to creating a welcoming environment and fostering young people's participation.

On another note, some authors suggest considering the following five pillars (Fontaine-Dumais and Pinsonneault, 2021) when offering services, in order to make them more culturally secure: 1) focusing services on the development of a person's “overall well-being”; 2) respecting young people's rhythms; 3) offering services that are integrated into a continuum of health, education, justice and early childhood services, all in the same place; 4) offering interventions that are both individual and group-based; 5) using experiential and relational modes.

1.3.9 Support community organizations and the employers who work with them

Improving pre-employability and employability programs and services requires a strong partnership and effective collaboration between community organizations, governments and employers. Adequate support for organizations and guidance for employers is essential to ensure the quality of programs and services, and to promote the integration of young people into the job market. This partnership is crucial to creating a

comprehensive support ecosystem that meets the specific needs of young people and maximizes the impact of interventions.

Offer increased and adapted support to community organizations: Community organizations play a crucial role in supporting young FNI, but their work can be hampered by a lack of adequate support from governments. The lack of clear guidelines from governments (as funders of programs and services) complicates the task of organizations and limits their capacity for action. For example, one stakeholder explains that he would like to see funders at his center, in order to work jointly, including having the opportunity to explain their needs and challenges. It is therefore essential that government departments show a genuine interest in the needs of organizations, by going out to meet with them to identify challenges and avenues for improvement. Another participant reports that “If they were more present, they would see that funding infrastructures such as larger premises to encourage small groups would enable us to offer better services in a more appropriate environment for many young people”. This collaborative approach is fundamental to creating a genuine partnership, based on trust and recognition of the essential role played by organizations in supporting young people.

For study participants, a better understanding of how funds are allocated by different ministries is also necessary to ensure better coordination and optimal use of resources. As one participant put it, it's crucial to remember that “Community organizations are not agents of government, and they don't work for government”. It is therefore essential to enable them to concentrate on their primary mission, by reducing the administrative burden and accountability. This last point was raised by a large majority of support organization stakeholders, exasperated by the extent of the accountability required.

Finally, a participant reminded us of the importance of maintaining support for organizations, even if not all their initiatives are immediately successful, as innovation and adaptation require time and resources.

Offering support to businesses and employers in partnership: The active involvement of employers is also a decisive factor in improving pre-employability and employability programs and services. It creates a bridge between the world of training and the world of work, helping to identify companies' needs and better prepare young people for integration. It's not just about hiring; it's about building a lasting partnership, based on trust, respect and mutual understanding. To encourage this involvement, and create a lasting partnership, specific support for companies is essential. Visits to companies prior to hiring (as the FNHRDCQ does) provide a better understanding of the work environment and help prepare young people for integration. This approach reduces the uncertainty and apprehension often associated with entering the job market, and better prepares young people for the demands of the job. It's crucial to get companies to become allies, “explains one speaker,” not only by hiring young FNI, but also by demonstrating a genuine desire for inclusion and support”. This strategy involves making employers aware of the specific needs of young people and the need to implement appropriate accommodations, taking into account cultural and contextual realities. Such collaboration requires transparent communication and a shared desire to foster the inclusion and success of young FNI. The success of this partnership depends on a mutual understanding of the issues and a shared desire to create an inclusive and stimulating work environment.

1.3.10 Improving collaboration for a more integrated support network

The effectiveness of pre-employability and employability programs and services depends on the quality of collaboration and partnerships between the various players involved, particularly all the support organizations, who don't always work together. A collaborative and integrated approach is essential to optimize resources, avoid redundancies and maximize the impact of interventions. Participants in the study argue that improved collaboration needs to take place at several levels, which we explore below.

Develop strategic partnerships: it is essential to establish clear and effective collaborations and partnerships between all stakeholders in the socio-professional integration process. This involves “exploring new avenues of

collaboration with non-Indigenous organizations specializing in youth employment (local employment centers, carrefours jeunesse-emploi, etc.), while avoiding duplication of services with other Indigenous organizations.” (Stakeholder). Better coordination between these different players would optimize the use of resources and avoid duplication in the services offered to young people. In addition, using the FNI inter-institutional contact network (“B2B”) to refer young people to the programs best suited to their specific needs is a particularly effective strategy, according to one participant. This approach makes it possible to better target needs and ensure more relevant and effective support.

Another strategy is to facilitate partnerships with companies to ensure that young people are directly integrated into the workforce after their training or internship: “I know that after my employability program, I'll have a job.” (Young Atikamekw, 28). To this end, some stakeholders believe that specific preparation within the company prior to hiring is necessary to reduce the risk of failure and promote better integration. This preparation helps to better understand the employer's expectations and better prepare young people for the demands of the job.

Finally, several people told us that better coordination between the various organizations offering services and programs in the community would improve the overall effectiveness of interventions and better meet young people's needs. This close collaboration between the various players is essential for creating a continuum of services and maximizing the impact of interventions.

Optimize access to information and transparency for clear, coordinated communication: Access to clear, accurate and up-to-date information on the local labour market is essential for young FNI (OECD, 2018). This information must be easily accessible and understandable for young people and the organizations that support them. Tools and platforms for better dissemination of this information are needed to overcome the current fragmentation of information, which is a major barrier to young people's participation in programs. Clear, accessible information enables young people to make informed choices and participate fully in pre-employability and employability programs and services. In addition, greater transparency about available programs and services is essential to fostering young people's trust and commitment. This strategy implies closer collaboration between the various stakeholders to ensure consistency and complementarity in the information disseminated, avoiding contradictory messages and overlapping information. “We need to reduce the number of intermediaries between government and employers to simplify access to information and resources,” explains one stakeholder. Simplifying processes and setting up an effective referral system between the various players are therefore essential to ensure greater transparency and accessibility to information, which is crucial to the overall effectiveness of interventions.

1.3.11 Taking into account additional considerations for a global and sustainable approach

In terms of improving pre-employability and employability programs and services, several additional elements that go beyond direct interventions were mentioned by study participants. Program impact, youth participation, diversification of approaches and greater data collection are essential aspects of a comprehensive and sustainable strategy that takes into account the complex realities of communities and the specific needs of young people. They are explained below.

Evaluating program impact and adopting a comprehensive community approach: it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of the impact of different programs and services on communities (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Rigorous evaluation that goes beyond traditional quantitative indicators (placement rates, etc.) and takes into account the social, cultural and economic dimensions of communities is essential to measure the real effectiveness of interventions. Financing a healthy community, for example, can include many sectors (Pidgeon et al., 2019), and the impact of programs and services must be considered in this broader context. An approach that integrates the different aspects of community development is essential for effective and sustainable intervention. It's not enough to focus solely on employment; aspects relating to health, education,

culture and the general well-being of communities must also be taken into account. A participatory impact assessment, involving communities in the evaluation process, helps to better understand local perspectives and to adapt programs to the specific realities of communities.

Involving young people in design and decision-making: Involving young people actively in organizing and making decisions about the development of programs and services is a measure named by some as a way of ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of interventions (see also the section on community participation and leadership XZY for means). Young people are the primary stakeholders in these programs, and their direct involvement in the decision-making process ensures that programs meet their needs, interests and aspirations. A participatory approach also helps to develop young people's leadership skills and gives them a sense of responsibility for their own career paths. This strategy also fosters young people's ownership of programs and enhances their commitment. It's about recognizing young people's expertise and giving them a voice in the design and implementation of programs that directly concern them.

Diversify approaches and opportunities, with an emphasis on internships: offering more internship opportunities enables young people to gain practical work experience and develop their skills; this strategy has been named several times. In addition, many programs and services already exist and can be improved or better disseminated: programs based on knowledge of the territory, study programs specially designed for FNI, indigenous cultural support service, tuition waiver policy for young people leaving the foster care system and related support programs, territorial guardian development program, Nunavut Sivuniksavut program and other programs for Inuit... They are all seen as fine initiatives, yet it is important to better coordinate these programs and make them better known to young people, by ensuring better articulation between the various services available. This is even if diversifying approaches and improving the coordination of existing programs will enable us to better respond to the diversity of needs and contexts of young FNI employees. So, it's not just a question of creating new programs, but also of optimizing existing ones and better articulating them to create an integrated continuum of services.

Data collection and analysis as a basis for continuous improvement: Collecting and analyzing research data is essential to better understand the specific needs of young FNI employees, the factors influencing their socio-professional integration and the effectiveness of different interventions. Systematic data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, with an emphasis on the qualitative, enables us to assess the impact of our programs and identify areas for improvement. This data analysis helps to guide decisions and ensure a more effective and relevant approach. Unfortunately, very little data is collected for this purpose.

Conclusion

In conclusion, improving programs and services for young FNI is essential for their socio-professional integration and job retention. The strategies proposed highlight the need for adaptability, both in terms of education and employment practices, in order to meet the unique challenges faced by these young people. Participants stress the importance of affordability, program flexibility and cultural integration in pedagogical approaches. As evidence of the need for teaching methods to evolve to include FNI knowledge, an approach focused on the real needs of young FNI employees emerges as crucial. Moreover, personalized support, which values the diversity of individual paths, appears to be a decisive lever. In the end, the synthesis of experience feedback resurrects the need for a systemic and sustainable approach that integrates the voices of young people into the design of interventions, thus creating an environment conducive to their fulfillment and professional success.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: IMPROVING EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Enhance education and training services (1.1)	
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting more flexible programs that enable personalized pathways and are in line with the vision of adaptability of education systems (OECD, 2018) • Offering learners the possibility of enrolling in courses at different times, adapting the duration of their studies to their needs and benefiting from individualized support.
Financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of emergency funds for students • Increased funding for returning to school, especially for student parents • Establish clear and accessible mechanisms for obtaining these funds, in collaboration with communities. • Develop partnerships with financial organizations and targeted scholarship programs
Teaching and training philosophies and strategies for developing employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of FNI cultural conceptions of pedagogy and work (spirituality, traditional knowledge, interrelation, connection with community and territory). • Use of an integrated approach inspired by culturally adapted pedagogies, which provide a theoretical and practical framework for developing more just and equitable approaches (Lavoie, Blanchet-Cohen and Bacon, 2021) • Tailoring training courses to previous learning experiences and learning on the job through direct observation
Adapting pedagogical methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting an approach that takes into account previous learning experiences, using visual aids, facilitating group discussions and providing reading assistance during exams. • Promotion of peer mentoring • Use of approaches that emphasize observation, experimentation and imitation
Development of community vocational training centers and other strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of community-based vocational training centers • Improving school infrastructure
Guidance, support and personalized assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer early educational and vocational guidance (starting in high school) • Career development support, preparation and support programs, and hands-on work experience (volunteering, internships, job shadowing, networking)
Systemic and sustainable approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up partnerships and collaborations between various players • Implementing actions to bring about structural change on a cultural, social and economic level
Improve programs and services related to the transition from training to employment (1.2)	

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Offer structured support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer programs to help young people integrate into the workforce, even while they are still in training. • Systematic provision of quality career guidance from the start of secondary school through to post-secondary education.
Apprenticeship work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship combining theoretical training and practical experience
Complementary actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of mentoring and networking • Training and internships leading to employment • Post-integration follow-up (insisted on by stakeholders).
Improve pre-employability and employability programs and services (1.3)	
Improving access to programs and services (1.3.1)	
Proactive communication and multi-channel promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional translation of job offers • Information for young people from secondary school onwards • Organization of personalized information sessions (age, region, language) • Involvement of key community figures • Use of word-of-mouth by ambassadors and role models • Participation in community events (job forums, pow-wows) • Promotion via the youth council • Increased presence on social networks (TikTok, Facebook) • Optimized visibility in online search algorithms • Development of a promotional plan integrated with council communication plans (consistency and effectiveness) • Use of community communication channels (local radio stations, websites)
Optimizing communications format and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplification of job ads (essential information, concise, easy-to-read format) • Organization of more personalized information sessions • Use of an eye-catching logo and effective marketing strategy (brand image, program appeal)
Increased presence and strategic partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical presence and increased visibility in communities • Partnerships with FNI intermediary organizations (FNHRDCQ, RCAAQ, etc.) • Solicitation roles for FNI members • Sharing of success stories
Simplify procedures (1.3.2)	
Simplification of forms and administrative processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, concise and accessible forms (community languages, user-friendly digital platforms)
Simplification of hiring processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and less bureaucratic approaches (fewer online forms, direct communication) • Qualitative, personalized approach, taking into account young people's life paths and acquired skills
Relocation of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based services, to reduce the barriers associated with geographical remoteness

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping young people get to training and employment sites (covering transportation or accommodation costs)
Proposing a flexible approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach based on proximity and respect for each individual's rhythm Meet young people where they feel most comfortable
Improve the form and structure of programs and services (1.3.3)	
An integrated and comprehensive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated service offering, bringing together different resources in one place (including mental health services) Comprehensive approach to personal, cultural, social and economic challenges
Program structure that eliminates the failure effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More flexible, less prescriptive approach Open-ended pathways allowing young people to experiment with different aspects of employment and to return to programs if necessary Approach focused on perseverance and the development of autonomy.
Adapting program length and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended program duration Flexibility on end dates Adaptation to the realities of young people moving to urban areas Progressive employability programs with part-time or progressive job offers Better articulation of different programs (pre-employment, internship, employment) with post-employment follow-up Individualized programs
Adapting the inclusion criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater flexibility in eligibility criteria Openness in requirements criteria Less focus on results and more on individual success (medium- to long-term development) Use of a qualitative system in which the young person is entitled to express his or her thoughts and view the course in a positive light Adaptation of criteria to family and personal situations
Improve synergy and communication between players (1.3.4)	
Optimizing information distribution for a centralized, multi-channel approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a mobile application centralizing all offers Creation of a service guide by region Simplification of job offers (skills required) Establishment of an "FNI network". Pooling of tools and skills with companies Transparency and consistency of information and messages conveyed
Improved access to information for employers through a central portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions by external partners to present programs, services and operations
A personalized, iterative approach to supporting young FNI (1.3.5)	
Early preparation for life outside the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support that goes beyond technical skills (cultural aspects, life contexts) Appropriate psychosocial support

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with communities, families and employers
Integrating support into a long-term process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post integration follow-up
Offer support to ensure communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner accessibility • Adapting support to the context of young people
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of a program that includes people from the community to exchange and learn from others who understand the realities they face.
Offer psychosocial support services for young people's well-being (1.3.6)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach aimed at creating bonds of trust, fostering a climate of security • Development of lasting relationships, listening to needs and accompanying young people at their own pace • Leveraging student and other FNI associations (rallying role, disseminating information, creating links) • Recreate a sense of community by offering a physical space that fosters a sense of belonging and reduces isolation. 	
Ensuring skills development (1.3.7)	
Integrated development of technical and general skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of specific technical skills and general/transferrable skills (communication, time management, teamwork, problem-solving) • Inclusion of health and wellness (nutrition, stress management, life balance)
Adapted teaching approach (empowerment and on-the-job training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical approach encouraging autonomy and self-confidence (empowerment) • Approach with less negative feedback and more encouragement • On-the-job training (hands-on learning adapted to employers' needs) • Less formal approach at the outset (little compulsory formal feedback)
Integrate cultural considerations (1.3.8)	
Adapting locations and approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering programs on a traditional site or in the territory • Strengthening the community aspect and going back to the grassroots (participatory democracy) • Adopting a collaborative approach, inspired by a participatory democracy model (active involvement of communities)
Adapting programs to cultural needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs that take into account young people's cultural needs and interests • Approach that integrates cultural and contextual dimensions • Programs led by FNI members, to ensure culturally appropriate support and a thorough understanding of community needs • Programs integrating a life skills approach with an adapted view of FNI knowledge
Providing culturally secure and relevant employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer urban services geared to overall wellness and rooted in FNI cultures • Adapted to local needs • Opportunity for young people to identify their needs and those of their families

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of appropriate language and acknowledgement of FNI youth experiences (residential schools, racism, empowerment through learning) • Cultural accommodations
Support community organizations and the employers who work with them (1.3.9)	
Increased, tailored support for community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased, tailored support for community organizations • Proposing clearer, more precise guidelines for community needs • Coherence between the realities of workplaces and communities, so as to see issues in action and be able to adapt and modify approaches. • Room for innovation without monetary consequences • Reduced administrative and reporting burden • Continued support for organizations, even in the event of immediate failure
Support for businesses and employers in partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of organizations • Support organizations in understanding the market and young people's needs • Conducting workplace studies to avoid prejudice and conflict
Improving collaboration for a more integrated support network (1.3.10)	
Strategic partnership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and effective collaboration between all stakeholders (non-Indigenous and Indigenous organizations) • Use of the FNI inter-institutional contact network (“B2B”) to refer young people • Partnerships with companies (direct insertion of young people into employment)
Optimized access to information and transparency for clear, coordinated communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, accurate and up-to-date information on the local labour market (accessible and understandable) • Tools and platforms for better dissemination of information • Closer collaboration between different stakeholders (consistency and complementarity of information) • Fewer intermediaries between government and employers
Take into account additional considerations for a global and sustainable approach (1.3.11)	
Evaluating program impact and adopting a comprehensive community approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth understanding of community impact (beyond quantitative indicators) • Integrated approach to health, education, culture and general community well-being • Participatory impact assessment (community involvement)
Youth participation in design and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement of young people in program organization and decision-making • Youth leadership development and empowerment • Recognition of young people's expertise
Diversification of approaches and opportunities, with emphasis on internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer and improve several programs and services, adapting them to ensure full participation of everyone in the activities offered.

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Data collection and analysis as a basis for continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembling and analyzing research data (quantitative and qualitative) to support and ensure long-term quality

2. ENSURE FUNDING AND INVESTMENT AS LEVERS TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION

In this section, we address the issue of funding to support the integration and job retention of young FNI, including funding for programs and services, which was named by almost all the stakeholders we met. Adequate, stable, sufficient and sustainable funding is essential for the integration and retention of young FNI employees. It must be guided by a collaborative approach, involving communities and stakeholders, to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of investments.

Below, we distinguish between funding measures related to training, those related to the funding of pre-employability and employability programs and services, and those more directly related to employment. We then turn to some general funding principles as discussed by the participants in the study.

2.1 Optimizing training funding

Improving financial access to post-secondary training: improving financial access to post-secondary training for young FNI is a priority (Merrill, Bruce and Marlin, 2010). As one stakeholder explained, this strategy means not considering parental assistance when assessing students' financial needs, as parents are not always in a position to provide financial support. It is also essential to make studies accessible financially, geographically and administratively (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). Among other things, offering increased financial assistance for housing outside their community while studying (Bran-Lopez and Moïse, 2017) helps reduce the obstacles associated with geographical distance. Then, granting increased financial support to students with children (Marquis, 2014) is also essential to fostering the academic success of student parents. This support must therefore be adapted to the specific realities of students, to enable them to pursue their studies and acquire the skills they need for the job market.

Offer direct financial support to learners: Giving FNI learners an amount of money to spend freely on their daily needs is one strategy among others proposed by the OECD (2018) that helps meet their immediate needs and encourages them to focus on their studies. For example, reports one stakeholder, although some environments already offer solutions to this effect (for example, shuttles are available between the community of Odanak and Kiuna College), this amount of money can be used to pay for transportation between home, daycare and the place of study, and thus facilitate access to educational institutions, reducing logistical constraints. Moreover, several participants report two other examples: the importance of giving better financial support to learners with children, and that of subsidizing housing for learners who leave their community while studying (see also Bran-Lopez and Moïse [2017]). This type of flexible support enables learners to learn to better manage their expenses and focus on their studies, without having to worry about financial difficulties.

2.2 Ensure financial support for pre-employability and employability programs and services

The socio-economic barriers often faced by young FNI (see Issues section) require specific and more appropriate financial interventions, combined with personalized and targeted support for a comprehensive and effective approach. Funding is often provided by government, and in all cases, participants expressed the need for it to be provided without donor involvement or interference. “We expect the government to be able

to support us notably through financial means, but without interfering in the means of operation or in the form of initiatives.” (Young Cree, age 30). Below, we present the explanations of the people we met that relate specifically to the financing of pre-employability and employability programs and services.

Adapt and increase financial support for programs and services: financial support must be adapted to the specific realities of young FNI and take into account the additional barriers they face. Increasing financial support offsets the financial difficulties that may hinder their participation in programs, and represents a recognition of the socio-economic challenges they face. For example, explains one participant, “relaxing the rules for obtaining social assistance, by not cutting it off for a few hours' work a week, helps support young people who are trying to balance work and study”, which is particularly relevant in the context of progressive employability programs. In addition, many mentioned the importance of remunerating young people during their participation in the programs, an offer of direct financial support that encourages their commitment, while enabling them to meet their basic needs. Or financial compensation for the time invested in pre-employability program training, to enable them to focus on their personal and professional development, without having to worry about their families' basic needs. Along the same lines, another example involves offering financial incentives such as start-up bonuses to help cover housing and food costs before the first salary, to ease the transition to employment by reducing the stress associated with financial difficulties and encouraging program participation. This financial support should not be seen as a simple measure of assistance, but rather as an essential lever for promoting equal opportunities. The aim is to create more equitable conditions to enable young FNI to participate fully in the programs and services offered, without financial concerns being a major obstacle to their success.

Financing support and progressive programs: For many stakeholders, it is essential to provide sufficient funding to ensure personalized, high-quality support, including mentoring. One participant suggests funding progressive employability programs, with part-time or progressive job offers, to better adapt to the job market and young people's individual needs. This strategy also helps to empower young people and integrate them into the world of work. Funding these progressive programs is a long-term investment in the success of young FNI and their sustainable integration into the job market. It also responds to the needs of young people who wish to integrate progressively into the urban environment.

Provide recurrent funding to ensure program continuity: In the case of the FNI: several participants explained that obtaining renewable funding and/or subsidies for the implementation of pre-employability and employability programs and services for FNI youth is a major obstacle to long-term planning and the implementation of sustainable strategies. The precariousness of funding undermines program stability, forcing organizations to devote a significant proportion of their resources to seeking new funding, to the detriment of the services offered to young people. Recurring funding would enable organizations to plan their activities, develop structured programs and maintain a stable team, which is essential for building trust with young people and ensuring effective support. International experience with social policies clearly demonstrates that funding stability is a key factor in long-term program success (OECD, 2018). Finally, predictable resources enable organizations to implement more ambitious and effective programs.

Ensuring long-term investment and proactive financing (Pidgeon et al., 2019): youth programs require long-term financial investment. It is important to rely on proper budgets, budgets that have generational impacts, and to create a regional grant program to support FNI youth initiatives. Funding should not be reactive, but proactive and preventive. It must also be sustainable and offered within a multi-year framework to continue the work we've begun.

Avoid fragmentation of funding and develop strategies to lighten the administrative burden: The complexity of managing dozens of separate programs, each with its own funding and reporting requirements, is reported by many stakeholders. This fragmentation of funding creates an excessive administrative burden, diverting human

and financial resources away from the organizations' primary objectives, namely to support young people. To lighten the administrative load, strategies are needed to simplify and streamline the grant application and management processes. Centralized digital platforms, standardized forms and reports, and a reduction in the number of intermediaries between organizations and funders would reduce the administrative burden. The adoption of a single, global funding model, based on results rather than project-based funding, could also be considered. This type of funding would enable organizations to focus on their core activities while ensuring the sustainability of their interventions.

Propose measures to finance employment and personal development

Provide financial support for concrete measures to facilitate access to employment: Improving conditions for employment or achieving pre-employment conditions requires concrete financial support, not just directly related to employment. For example, “helping with transportation between communities and urban centers” (stakeholder), “subsidizing driving lessons” (stakeholder), and “providing financial support for housing” (several stakeholders) are measures that can help reduce the financial barriers to employment. With regard to transportation in particular, we need to make it easier for young people to get to where jobs are available, which may mean covering transportation or housing costs (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). As explained earlier (see section on issues), geographic mobility is an important issue for young FNI, particularly those living in remote communities. Financial support to facilitate travel helps reduce barriers to accessing training and employment.

Improving access to daycare centers and CPEs, or even opening dedicated CPEs for FNI, is another important measure raised by several young people to support parents and enable them to reconcile work and family. However, it appears necessary to add resources to support the development of childcare places and to create childcare facilities and infrastructure (Spowart and Marshall, 2015; OECD, 2018). All these measures contribute to creating a more favorable environment for the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI, by reducing financial barriers and facilitating their access to employment.

Offer targeted, individualized financing: initiatives should not always be large-scale, but individualized, to go with the individual pathway approach according to each young person's needs. Stakeholders provide examples: allocating funds for personal development (getting to know oneself better, personal skills, etc.) enables young people to develop their self-confidence and better prepare for employment; or creating a fund dedicated to youth projects and initiatives, such as youth committees within schools and communities, fosters commitment and leadership development, particularly at community level. An individualized, targeted approach helps to better respond to young people's specific needs, and to foster their personal and professional development.

Financing living conditions prior to employment: Many of the people we met reported the need to provide funding to develop living conditions prior to employment. In their view, this strategy implies ensuring the existence of more subsidized housing, offering mental health services (anxiety, adjustment disorders, etc.) and working on social conditions within communities (violence, etc.). Indeed, more funding for community and urban housing is needed to facilitate access to employment. In short, conditions that support young people and promote their well-being.

2.3 Adopt general financing principles

Paying attention to neoliberal approaches and promoting inclusive and culturally appropriate pedagogies: Valuing education by rewarding young graduates and improving access to scholarships is an important strategy. (Marquis, 2014). However, it risks focusing on individual behavior changes rather than systemic barriers. Among other things, stakeholders point out that it rewards most of the time learners who are already able to comply with constraints with greater ease, or those who already had the personal resources to navigate

through the post-secondary education system. Thus, as Mackinnon (2015) writes, this approach may be part of a neoliberal perspective that tends to contribute to the marginalization of FNI, and then favors those with fewer needs, widening the gap between them and those with more difficulties.

Invest in research: Investing more in research is essential to better understand the complex issues facing young FNI. Research should focus on issues of intersectionality (gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), the determinants of academic and professional success, and the evaluation of existing programs and services. Research is also needed on intergenerational trauma and its impact on the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI.

Fund awareness-raising among employers and the general public: As we pointed out earlier, it's crucial to fund general awareness-raising initiatives, aimed at all milieus (schools, businesses, community organizations, etc.), to combat prejudice and discrimination against young FNI. This strategy has been named by a majority of young people who are already working. These initiatives should promote knowledge of the cultures and realities of FNI communities and encourage inclusion and respect.

Conclusion

In short, the importance of adequate and sustainable funding for the integration and job retention of young FNI employees cannot be underestimated. Secondly, a collaborative approach, involving communities, is crucial to ensure the relevance of programs. Testimonies also underline the need to improve financial access to post-secondary training, by offering support adapted to the realities of young people, particularly in terms of transportation and housing. Financial support should also be individualized to meet the unique needs of each learner, with an emphasis on long-term investment and proactive measures. By reducing the fragmentation of funding and simplifying the administrative framework, organizations will be able to concentrate on supporting young people. In this way, thoughtful and sustainable investment in financing infrastructure and services can catalyze a real transformation in employment opportunities for young FNI employees.

SUMMARY TABLE OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: SECURING FUNDING AND INVESTMENTS AS LEVERS TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION AND JOB RETENTION

STRATEGIES ET PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Optimizing training financing (2.1)	
Improving financial access to post-secondary training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not considering parents' help when assessing needs • Make studies accessible (financially, geographically, administratively) • Offer increased financial assistance for out-of-community housing and for student parents
Offer direct financial support to learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate an amount of money to be spent freely on everyday needs (transportation, childcare, housing). • Create clear and accessible mechanisms for obtaining these funds
Provide financial support for pre-employability and employability programs and services (2.2)	
Adapt and increase financial support for programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt financial support to the specific realities of young people (compensation for financial difficulties) • Make the rules for obtaining social assistance more flexible • Pay young people while they participate in programs • Compensate for time invested by offering a minimum wage
Funding support and progressive programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sufficient funding for personalized, high-quality support (including mentoring) • Fund progressive employability programs (part-time or progressive jobs)

STRATEGIES ET PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Provide recurrent funding to ensure program continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide renewable funding or grants for the implementation of long-term strategies, pre-employability and employability services for FNI youth.
Ensuring a long-term investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish long-term financial investments to support resources and services • Offer financing that is proactive and sustainable
Avoid dispersing finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use funds allocated at source, not externally
Propose measures to finance employment and personal development (2.3)	
Support financially concrete measures to facilitate access to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist transportation between communities and urban centers • Subsidize driving lessons • Financial support for housing
Offering targeted, individualized financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an offer that highlights measures to promote employment and better meet young people's needs
Promoting stable living conditions in preparation for employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create funding to provide a lifestyle and environment conducive to the maintenance, support and follow-up of young people's experiences.
Adopt general financing principles (2.4)	
Paying attention to neoliberal approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid focusing solely on individual behavior change • Avoid favoring only those with fewer needs
Investing in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research on issues of intersectionality (gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) • Conduct research on the determinants of academic and professional success • Evaluate existing programs and services • Conduct research on intergenerational trauma
Financing awareness-raising among employers and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund general awareness initiatives (schools, businesses, community organizations, etc.) • Promote knowledge of the cultures and realities of FNI communities • -Encourage inclusion and respect

3. IMPROVING COLLABORATION AND ADAPTING EMPLOYER PRACTICES

Socio-professional integration and job retention for young FNI employees also depend on the active collaboration of employers and the practices they put in place within their organizations, topics we address in this section, based on the reflections of participants and the information gathered during the literature review.

3.1 Adapting recruiting and hiring practices

The active involvement of employers and the implementation of inclusive recruitment practices are essential to promote the integration and retention of young FNI employees. Several strategies can be implemented to achieve this goal.

Focus on proactive, targeted recruitment strategies: it is important to encourage employers, managers and recruiters within Quebec companies to turn to the labour pool represented by FNIs (Blanchet-Cohen et al.,

2022; Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin, 2019; St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019). By participating in the workforce, for example by helping to fill future shortages or gaps in various fields, FNIs can positively influence the future of work in Canada (Government of Canada, 2021). Yet, it should be noted that according to a survey of over 500 medium and large companies, 85% of Canadian companies can be described as disengaged, i.e. unaware of local communities and their ability to meet workforce and business needs (Blackman, 2017).

That said, pro-FNI recruitment practices enable companies to access a talent pool whose potential is too often underestimated (Barker, 2006; Vanguers, 2021). Various strategies are possible. For example, it's a good idea to post jobs where young people from the FNI find out about them, such as on social networks, community radio stations and bulletin boards in band councils and native friendship centers (Asselin et al., 2021). Then, community promotion of "role models" (Caron, 2020) makes it possible to value successes and encourage young people to pursue their career goals. Using technologies to promote specific trades, such as mining (for example, a video highlighting and reconciling both mining employability and FNI cultures) can also be an effective strategy for attracting young people to specific industries (Caron, 2020). Finally, according to one stakeholder, since young FNI are more likely to communicate directly with potential employers via socio-numeric media, it would be in the interest of both employers and young job seekers to plan a hiring policy that takes into account the current digital infrastructures used by young FNI. In short, a proactive, targeted approach can reach young FNI where they are, and draw their attention to employment opportunities. Showcasing role models and using modern technologies helps create a positive image of the trades and encourages young people to take an interest in them.

Ensuring a culturally safe hiring process: The selection process must be culturally safe, which implies the presence of FNI members on the selection committee and the formulation of questions that focus on skills and competencies rather than diplomas and certificates (Asselin et al., 2021).

Recognizing prior learning in the workplace as part of a flexible, inclusive approach: it is imperative to develop processes for the recognition of experiential learning to value the skills acquired by young people outside the formal school system (Mamuitun Tribal Council, 2017; Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtone, 2024; and almost all study participants). This recognition helps to better identify young people's skills, enhance their experience and facilitate their socio-professional integration. It is particularly relevant in the context of young FNI who have often acquired important skills within their community, but which are not always recognized by the traditional school system. "It's important to find ways of recognizing young people's prior skills during employment, rather than requiring a diploma as a prerequisite for hiring," explains one stakeholder. This more flexible and inclusive approach enables young people to demonstrate their skills, boosting their pride, and promoting better integration into the job market.

Among other things, one stakeholder stresses the importance of recognizing experiential learning rather than relying solely on diplomas. Using a process for recognizing prior learning and skills to value young people's knowledge is an important practice for their integration (Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtone, 2024). It involves adapting methods to assess whether or not a person has what it takes for the job. However, adapting these methods does not mean lowering the standards; rather, it means finding another way of detecting in candidates the existence of skills acquired differently than through a formal school system. We also need to review training and experience requirements when hiring within organizations (Bernard, 1995; Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre en tourisme, 2024; Réal Martin, Coordinator, First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee, Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre en tourisme, 2024). We need to think differently. In addition, adapting hiring requirements or prior learning assessment measures enhances the value of skills acquired outside the formal school system, and makes it easier to identify candidates' potential. Collaboration between employers and school boards or school service centers for the recognition of prior learning of FNI employees is a promising strategy to facilitate this practice (Ciceri and Scott, 2006; Gray and Hunter, 2002; Kalb et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2016).

Formulating preferential hiring policies: it is also possible to formulate preferential selection policies that favor the hiring of community members when the company is located on their territory (Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin, 2019; Government of Canada, 2024; Vallières et al., 2021). The latter contribute to reducing inequalities and promoting the hiring of community members.

Offer administrative support and hiring assistance: One example of this practice is the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in the Yukon, where it is important to support employers in the administrative side of hiring FNI people (OECD, 2017b). One example of this practice involves the Yukon's Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. They act as intermediaries between employers and the vocational education system, and thus carry the administrative burden for employers (inclusive hiring practices, support for administrative processes, etc.), which encourages employers to take more hiring risks than they otherwise would (OECD, 2017b). Among other things, “points out one stakeholder,” many employers are SMEs, and hiring FNI resources can represent an overload for a smaller management team, which doesn't necessarily have human resources management services. Thus, administrative support and hiring coaching help reduce barriers and encourage employers to hire young NIFs. Finally, it was mentioned that hiring young FNIs in small cohorts of three or four people facilitate integration and the acquisition of experience in the form of “ongoing” coaching or training (Réal Martin, for the Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre en tourisme, 2024), which promotes integration and skills development.

3.2 Adapt reception, support and accompaniment strategies in the workplace

To help young FNI employees find and keep jobs, we need to put in place strategies for welcoming, supporting and guiding them, tailored to their specific needs. These strategies must be designed in collaboration with FNI communities and take into account their cultural and contextual realities.

Adopt sustainable and concerted strategies: From the outset, it is important to note that companies that have implemented inclusion strategies have often adopted only provisional measures, limited in scope and developed internally without taking into account the views of FNI (Blackman, 2017). To avoid this pitfall, it is essential to adopt a more sustainable and concerted approach, which involves working closely with FNI communities and taking their perspectives into account, to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. A “top-down” approach, which does not take into account young people's needs and aspirations, risks not producing the desired results.

Personalized welcome and mentoring: Designating FNI employees responsible for welcoming new FNI employees and organizing welcome events (Caron, 2020) help create a more welcoming and inclusive work environment. In addition, as we have already noted, mentoring in employment is a practice to be favored (Asselin et al., 2021; Bruce and Marlin, 2012; D'Antimo, 2021; Lenny, 2019; Pidgeon et al., 2019). Mentors can provide valuable support by accompanying young people in their job search, helping them develop their skills and encouraging them to persevere (Asselin et al., 2021). Mentoring enables the creation of a culture of lateral empowerment in which young FNIs are supported and encouraged (Pidgeon et al., 2019). This strategy could include intergenerational mentoring opportunities with elders, all in a dedicated gathering place (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Mentoring can also better support young FNI in career decision-making (Lenny, 2019) and showcase Indigenous leadership (D'Antimo, 2021). Finally, creating and maintaining strong mentoring programs and role models is essential, as the absence of these supports is seen as a source of frustration for young FNI in the workplace (Bruce and Marlin, 2012; D'Antimo, 2021).

Provide opportunities for peer support: Peer support, particularly for those without immediate family or elders in their network, is essential to the integration of young FNI (Pidgeon et al., 2019). This support helps to create a more inclusive work environment that is more conducive to the success of young FNI, and helps to break isolation and share experiences and advice. Moreover, support for first employers and those who entrusted

them with their first responsibilities is also among the practices to be favored (Pidgeon et al., 2019). This support enhances young people's skills and offers them opportunities for professional development.

3.3 Raising employer awareness and training

Investing in awareness-raising and training is key to helping young FNI employees find and keep jobs. A better understanding of the realities of the FNI, their culture and history, helps create a more inclusive and respectful work environment.

Training in the realities of FNI and cultural security: it is important to offer more training related to the realities of FNI to employers and colleagues (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019; Interviews). According to participants, programs for young FNI could include training for the employers who host them. These trainings should familiarize employers with ways to create space for FNI knowledge and perspectives (D'Antimo, 2021) and gain a better understanding of the impact of colonization (Caron, 2020). Training within organizations, for employers and colleagues on diversity and inclusion, as well as on cultural reassurance (or intercultural training), is proving necessary to support young FNI in their transition from school to the world of work (Pidgeon et al., 2019). In addition, several participants, including all Inuit stakeholders, mentioned the importance of increasing the presence of FNI trainers and offering the possibility of conducting training within communities, in order to promote better appropriation of content and create a safer learning environment.

Consider the impact of cross-cultural training on productivity and retention: thanks to the implementation of intercultural training, a company and its members will be more aware of the particularities of INF cultures and will therefore be less inclined to discriminatory behavior, which will improve the long-term productivity of young INFs, as well as their retention (OECD, 2019; Ewing et al., 2017). In fact, one stakeholder mentioned that offering incentives to companies to invest in their knowledge of the realities of FNI could encourage greater participation in training courses and promote better integration of the knowledge acquired. That said, intercultural training is more than just an awareness-raising exercise; it has a tangible impact on the productivity and retention of young FNI. Indeed, by creating a more inclusive and respectful work environment, it enables young people to flourish and contribute fully to the company's success.

3.4 Support and guidance for employers

To promote the integration and retention of young FNI employees, stakeholders stress the importance of offering a coaching service to companies, to support them in their inclusion efforts. This service should offer personalized support to employers and FNI employees, enabling them to access advice and resources to better support young people, and to discuss their concerns. The creation and dissemination of a practical guide for employers, offering concrete advice and examples of good practice, would also be a valuable tool for promoting the inclusion and success of young FNI.

3.5 Concluding agreements with local communities

To ensure the success of socio-professional integration initiatives, it is relevant to conclude employment agreements with local communities (Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin, 2019). Working closely with stakeholders from Quebec Native Friendship Centers to counter prejudice and misunderstanding of FNI realities by employers (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022) is also essential. This type of partnership creates a climate of trust and fosters a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of young FNI employees.

EXAMPLE

For example, among mining sector companies in Quebec and Nunavut, at the time of Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin's (2019) survey, projects that had signed hiring agreements with the surrounding communities had an average of 23% FNI staff (Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin, 2019). This average was less than 1% for companies without such agreements. Among companies that had entered into hiring agreements, the difficulties identified in connection with managing FNI staff related to language,

culture and managerial skills. In the case of companies without agreements, the difficulties tended to concern education, racism and equity. Unlike the projects without agreements, the companies with agreements had put in place hiring and retention strategies for FNI staff that included valuing their cultures in the workplace, as well as liaison, mentoring and internal progression programs. This type of program is said to be conducive to the hiring and retention of FNI workers (Beaudoin, 2019).

3.6 Creating a culturally safe and inclusive work environment for young FNI

Transforming workplaces: To promote the integration and retention of young FNI employees, employers must commit to transforming their organization to create a welcoming and culturally secure workplace (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022). This voluntary approach requires a rethinking of existing practices and a willingness to adapt to the realities of young people. It's not simply a matter of adding cultural elements, but of creating an environment where young people feel respected and valued.

Using social digital media as a tool for inclusion and communication: Sociometric media can be used strategically to reach out to young FNI and nurture an inclusive work climate (Kroes, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2018b; Vallières et al., 2021). These tools create a space for dialogue, sharing and cultural recognition.

Making inclusive workplaces a cultural norm: Creating inclusive workplaces is a fundamental strategy to support the inclusion of young FNI. Indigenous Works defines inclusion as an organizational state that is embraced as a cultural norm, with workplace strategies for the entire enterprise (Local Employment Planning Council 2018 [Government of Canada, 2021]). This holistic approach is essential for sustainable and meaningful inclusion. With this in mind, inclusion should not be seen as a one-off initiative, but as a long-term commitment on the part of the organization.

Offer culturally safe environments: young FNIs' sense of cultural and emotional safety in a workplace is often greatly enhanced when that workplace shares their values and ways of being (Marshall et al. 2013). To provide culturally safe environments, it is imperative to implement culturally inclusive and equitable policies within organizations (Ewing et al. 2017). Furthermore, improving the socioeconomic conditions of FNI families and communities is partly dependent on the employment integration of FNI youth, which requires the adoption of culturally safe practices within companies (Asselin et al., 2021). Thus, workplaces need to be welcoming and respectful of young FNI's cultures, and one way they can do this is by highlighting their cultures and languages within settings, to enable them to evolve in inclusive, safe and culturally relevant environments (Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). Another strategy, according to participants, is to hire liaison officers (Intervenor). These trusted individuals offer invaluable assistance to young FNI job-seekers by pointing them to available positions, helping them put together their applications, and informing companies of conditions and particularities in the community (Asselin et al., 2021). They also make the connection with urban youth, for example in Native Friendship Centers. Other examples of cultural securitization practices include: reaching a critical mass of FNI employees within an organization (Caron, 2020), organizing cultural activities, designing venues that encourage cultural practices, offering intercultural training and awareness in workplaces to facilitate mutual understanding and living-together (Asselin et al, 2021), or the development and adaptation of various culturally secure platforms for listening, expression and exchange (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021b). Finally, for the purposes of providing culturally safe environments, employers are strongly encouraged to create culturally sensitive workplaces: the ability to create a safe, culturally sensitive and welcoming workplace is essential to facilitating the integration of young FNI and enabling them to flourish (Government of Canada, 2021).

3.7 Work on employer commitment and attitudes

Beyond policies and programs, the commitment and attitudes of employers play a decisive role in the integration and retention of young FNI employees, such as creating a respectful work environment, valuing young people's skills and cultures, and putting in place appropriate support measures. Among these elements, some were particularly emphasized during the interviews, confirming the results of the literature review.

First, flexibility is essential. Employers must be flexible in allowing young FNI employees to take time off for reasons related to family obligations (Vallières et al., 2021). Adequate supervision is also crucial. Employers are urged to properly supervise young people, striking a balance between rigor (clear expectations, safe conditions, realistic objectives and measurable results) and flexibility (facilitating work-family-study balance) (Asselin et al., 2021). Employers must also offer opportunities for internal progression and support young people in achieving the necessary capabilities (Asselin et al., 2021), enabling them to develop their skills and progress in their careers. Finally, appropriate communication is essential. For example, it's important to use language and reference symbols that speak to young people, both culturally and age-wise. To this end, visual, dynamic and interactive communication is essential (Mathers, 2021). These commitments and attitudes help to create a more inclusive work environment that is more conducive to the success of young FNI.

Conclusion

Analysis of the collaborative strategies and practices presented highlights the crucial role of employers in the integration and job retention of young FNI. Beyond policies and programs, it is the concrete commitment of employers, their ability to create a culturally secure work environment and their willingness to offer adapted support that makes the difference. A proactive approach to recruitment, adapted and equitable selection processes, intercultural training and personalized support are all elements that contribute to the success of young people.

Finally, the analysis also reveals the importance of succession planning for communities. Acting on succession planning is a long-term investment for FNI communities (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Passing on knowledge, for example by encouraging young people to work in environments where they know people who can explain the trade and its characteristics, is a promising strategy. By encouraging young people to take over, we can ensure that skills and know-how are retained in the community. This approach, which values the experience and leadership of FNI employees, could be the way of the future for sustainable and meaningful socio-professional integration and job retention.

SUMMARY TABLE OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: IMPROVING COLLABORATION AND ADAPTING EMPLOYER PRACTICES

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Adapting recruitment and hiring practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use proactive recruitment techniques and target FNIs ● Post jobs in places frequented by young FNI (social networks, community radio) ● Highlight successful FNI role models ● Ensure that hiring processes are culturally safe (FNI members on committees, competency-based questions) ● Recognize experiential learning ● Develop preferential hiring policies ● Provide administrative support and hiring coaching
Adapting reception, support and accompaniment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop sustainable and concerted strategies with FNI communities ● Provide personalized welcome and mentoring ● Offer peer support

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Raising employer awareness and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training employers in the realities of FNI and cultural security • Consider the impact of cross-cultural training on productivity and retention
Support and guidance for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a support service to companies • Create and distribute a practical guide
Conclude agreements with local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in collaboration with Native Friendship Centres
Creating a culturally safe and inclusive work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming workplaces • Using digital media • Making inclusion a cultural norm • Providing culturally safe environments
Building employer commitment and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure flexibility (family obligations) • Provide adequate supervision (rigor/flexibility balance) • Offer opportunities for internal progression • Ensure appropriate communication (relevant language and symbols)

4. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

According to study participants and authors, the active participation of young FNI and the development of community leadership are essential levers or “key factors” (Intervener) in promoting their integration and retention in employment. For example, involving young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of socio-professional integration programs helps to better meet their specific needs and strengthen their commitment. The development of community leadership, meanwhile, encourages the emergence of models of success and strengthens the power of communities to act.

A participative, community leadership approach creates a virtuous circle in which young people are both the actors and beneficiaries of social and professional integration initiatives. By developing their leadership skills, young people help strengthen the social and economic fabric of their communities, while improving their own employment prospects. This approach also fosters the emergence of innovative solutions adapted to local realities, thus contributing to more sustainable and meaningful socio-professional integration.

4.1 Understanding the needs to strengthen youth participation and community leadership

As pointed out by Longo, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay (2021), changes are needed for more inclusive social and economic participation of young FNI, whether at the level of young people, organizations, businesses, educational institutions, public action or the social structures and norms surrounding Quebec society. Among other things, this greater participation ensures the relevance and effectiveness of socio-professional integration initiatives, and fosters the development of community leadership. It's all about recognizing the essential role of young people as agents of change, and valuing their unique perspectives.

Considering the voice of youth as hope, healing and a vector for change: young people characterize their voices as hopeful, healing, passionate and a vehicle for change (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021b). However, they claim that their voices are not sufficiently valued. In a survey conducted by the Chaire réseau jeunesse - Indigenous Youth component (2021), 96% of young people said they were proud to be part of their nation, and 81% felt touched by the priorities of their communities and environments. However, intervention and political environments seem to be perceived in a very different way by young people. Only 47% of young people feel

listened to by social workers, 25% feel listened to by political decision-makers, and only 7% feel strongly listened to by community leaders, advisors and decision-makers. These figures reveal a significant gap between young people's desire to get involved and their perception of being truly heard and taken into account. In this sense, one strategy is to create spaces where young people feel valued and listened to. Their active participation helps enrich programs and policies, and better respond to their specific needs.

Aiming for genuine participation and combating instrumentalization: young people tell us that they sometimes feel instrumentalized by certain players, and that they have few opportunities to participate actively in official decision-making bodies. Research corroborates these views. Indeed, according to the CRJ Indigenous Youth component study (2021b), 46% of the young people who took part don't know where to turn to voice their opinions. For now, authentic participation by FNI youth takes place within the broader historical context of consultations with Canada's FNI, which often reproduce colonial power dynamics (Vanguers, 2021). It is therefore essential to go beyond simple formal consultations and create spaces for dialogue and co-construction, where young people are genuinely involved in decision-making. That said, youth participation must not be symbolic or instrumental. It is essential to create meaningful mechanisms for consultation and participation (see next point), and to ensure that young people's opinions are genuinely taken into account in decision-making.

Develop strategies for authentic, positive consultations and meaningful participation: To create authentic and positive consultations with young people, Blanchet-Cohen, Ibarra-Lemay and Quintal-Marineau (2022) propose the following strategies and attitudes: be transparent and clear about intent, go where young people are, at a time when it works for them, be flexible, support young people by young people, create positive experiences for young people, engage community players, and take into account the reality of the players. To this can be added the importance of ensuring meaningful participation for young people (Quintal-Marineau, Blanchet-Cohen and Ibarra-Lemay, 2024). These strategies emphasize the need for an approach that is respectful, flexible and adapted to young people's realities.

Valuing young people's knowledge and skills: FNI youth possess unique knowledge and skills that can be leveraged to improve workplace inclusion practices. Their active participation helps create work environments that are more respectful and adapted to the realities of FNI communities. For example, they can provide valuable information to employers seeking to understand what it means to balance community and professional responsibilities when working in a non-FNI organization (Government of Canada, 2021).

4.2 Fostering community leadership and youth participation

Various strategies can encourage community leadership and youth participation.

Involving communities and fostering Indigenous leadership: FNI communities must be seen as inseparable from training and employment initiatives (Bruce and Marlin, 2012; Spowart and Marshall, 2015). Among other things, programs should be managed and delivered by communities as much as possible (OECD, 2018), and community involvement in program design and delivery is crucial (Bruce and Marlin, 2012). These practices involve encouraging the creation of programs and services designed for FNI, such as FNI student centers and lodges, or even educational programs (Pidgeon et al., 2019). It is also important to foster the presence of FNI members in positions of authority, such as teachers, employers and funders, and to ensure FNI representation and voice at all levels of each sector (Pidgeon et al., 2019). In addition, program leadership and governance must be stable and conducted in a spirit of partnership with other bodies of power (OECD, 2018). That said, it's worth noting that some participants mentioned the importance of employment in a political leadership context. In particular, employment, as a political tool, can participate in the reappropriation of institutions through the occupation of various decision-making positions (Quintal-Marineau and Monfette, 2021).

Valuing young people's voices and creating spaces for dialogue: Employers need to consult with young FNI employees to enable them to balance community and work responsibilities, as they know their own reality (Davey et al., 2020). Among other practices, it is important to further promote the inclusion of young people within a variety of sectors, for example by creating youth advisory councils and integrating young members into existing councils (Pidgeon et al., 2019), or creating systems that foster conversations between young people (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). As participants in the CRJ study report, we need to ensure that all voices are heard, valued and carried forward, for the benefit of the next seven generations, and that we also value young people and their cultural identity and pride (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021a). This strategy will enable us to better understand their needs and aspirations, and create more relevant and effective programs. According to one stakeholder, a youth-centered approach also fosters their empowerment and commitment to their own career paths.

Recognize young people's agency and encourage a positive approach: Instead of perceiving young people in a decontextualized way without agency, some authors propose to consider their attempts and commitment as linked to their capacities and room for maneuver (ability to negotiate with their realities at a given moment). This way of conceiving young people in their agency and strength (Dockett et al., 2017) suggests that change and its challenges are an integral part of a life course (Blanchet-Cohen, Robert-Careau and Pinsonneault, 2021).

Encouraging the next generation of community leaders: In the area of community development: stakeholders report that the creation of specific programs for the next generation within band councils, as well as programs for future managers, promote leadership development and job creation within communities. These initiatives are helping to train a new generation of FNI leaders and managers, capable of meeting the specific needs of their communities and contributing to their economic and social development.

EXAMPLE

The Rideau Hall Foundation team presented the following guiding principles for engaging FNI youth (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Not only do they add relevant elements to this section, but they also corroborate many of the elements mentioned so far.

- The ability of young FNI to navigate between the two worlds stems from their confidence in their cultural practices, which needs to be reinforced.
- The conditions for success are systemic and interrelated. They include health, education, love, financial stability and community support. The solutions must also be interrelated.
- The culturally adapted school system requires more teachers, researchers and FNI funders. What's more, it's important that all the individuals and institutions involved value and include FNI knowledge and approaches.
- The experiences of young FNI employees provide answers; they need mentoring to turn their answers into solutions.
- Relationships are the foundation for effective change. It's not about identifying good and bad relationships, but rather about finding allies who understand that battles are won by building on young people's strengths.
- Mentoring provides opportunities for young FNI to grow in their own way, rather than imposing on us.
- FNI youth want to succeed together: one young person's strength benefits all the others.

Conclusion

The comments in this section reveal the crucial importance of an inclusive approach to promote the socio-professional integration of young FNI employees and their retention in employment. Participant testimonials highlight the gap between young people's willingness to get involved and their perception of being listened to in decision-making processes. To overcome this barrier, it is essential to create spaces where their voices are valued and integrated in a meaningful way. Community leadership development is not limited to youth

participation; it also seeks to transform institutions so that they better reflect the diversity and aspirations of young people. This participatory approach not only enriches insertion programs, but also contributes to the emergence of new solutions adapted to local realities, thus strengthening both the social and economic fabric of FNI communities. By genuinely involving young people, we pave the way for their empowerment and a more promising professional future.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Understanding the needs to strengthen community participation and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize the essential role of young people as agents of change ● Valuing the voice of youth as a vehicle for hope, healing and change ● Create spaces where young people feel valued and listened to ● Aim for authentic participation and combat instrumentalization ● Develop strategies for authentic, positive consultations and meaningful participation ● Valuing young people's knowledge and skills
Promoting leadership and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involve communities and foster Indigenous leadership ● Valuing young people's voices and creating spaces for dialogue (advisory councils, youth conversations) ● Recognize young people's agency and foster a positive approach ● Promote succession within communities (programs for band councils, future managers)

5. IMPLEMENT, ADAPT OR MODIFY THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL OR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

To promote the integration and job retention of young FNI employees, strategies include putting in place a legislative framework, policies and institutional governance structures adapted to their specific realities and needs, which implies a profound transformation of traditional approaches and a willingness to culturally adapt existing structures. The following is a summary of what emerged from the interviews with participants, supplemented by elements from the literature review.

5.1 Centralizing services

Several stakeholders emphasize the need to centralize FNI services into a single department, i.e., to have everything to do with FNI centralized and grouped together in one place (a single department), rather than by ministry. "It's scattered for no reason," explains one Innu stakeholder. Current services are offered in a setting where young people can't find each other: "We need to group all the services together, we can't find each other or we have to go to too many different places, and that complicates things a lot." (Innu youth, age 21). Some stakeholders suggest that this centralized service could provide information on programs and services, as well as on available and possible trades. Then, ideally, it could enable the people offering the services to act on behalf of the young people, to make administrative requests (for identity cards, etc.) to other ministries in their place.

5.2 Transforming political bodies and adapting cultural structures

The structure of political bodies is an element often raised as a barrier for young people. They describe these formal decision-making spaces as rigid, intimidating, symbolic and exclusive (CRJ Indigenous Youth component, 2021b). It is therefore essential to modify or make more flexible the structure of political bodies. To achieve this, some contributors suggest aiming for cultural adaptation of structures, or breaking away from the current mechanics. “We can't do without young people: one foot in the territory, one foot on social networks, one foot in urban environments” (Participant). Participants report that it is therefore important to seek out other opinions and organize circular discussion sessions. We also need to pursue reconciliation efforts and develop calls to action.

5.3 Changing the discourse and recognizing specificities

One stakeholder stresses the importance of changing the way the public speaks about FNI. For example, he says, “Discrimination and prejudice still exist in the way Canada talks about FNI, as ‘people who need help’” (Wendat stakeholder). It's also important to better distinguish between services for immigrants and those for FNI in policies. Finally, the direct creation of legislation specific to diversity management would be desirable (St-Cyr and Twahirwa, 2019; Caron, Asselin and Beaudoin, 2019).

5.4 Include the territory

It is essential to include the territory in public policies on employability (Quintal-Marineau and Monfette, 2021). Recognition of the deep connection between the FNI and their territory is essential to developing relevant and effective public policies.

5.5 Developing favorable socioeconomic policies that reflect the image of young people

It is also important to create socioeconomic policies that are conducive to the integration of young FNI. This means putting in place policies that facilitate access to training, offer financial support and promote work-family-study balance (Asselin et al., 2021). Young people need to see themselves in policies, and policies need to reflect young people (Pidgeon et al., 2019). We need to change the status quo. Much deeper structural challenges to reconciliation remain, many of which relate to laws, policies and processes (Pidgeon et al., 2019).

5.6 Developing specific linguistic policies

Several participants addressed the issue of language and unsupportive, or non-existent, language policies. Speeches focused on the importance of facilitating specific language policies for young FNI. Several elements were mentioned by participants. Firstly, it's a strategy that involves recognizing the languages of FNI and acknowledging that they have a role to play in the overall political situation. We also need to provide access to English-language vocational training, and the opportunity to enroll in CEGEP in English. Giving people the chance to learn the trade in English (in training), then to learn the trade in French (in employment) can also be an effective strategy. Promoting francization, by offering French courses (using a second- or third-language approach), creating francization classes independent of immigrant services, and offering immersion opportunities in the workplace, is another promising strategy. Finally, we need to make English-language documentation available at work, use English as the language of communication on the telephone for public services, and value language translation and interpretation. “Indigenous knowledge is also linked to languages, and is understood through language.” (Young Anishinabe, age 30). Indeed, the recognition and valorization of FNI languages are essential to preserving their culture and identity. By offering services in different languages, we can better meet young people's needs and encourage their participation in Quebec society.

Conversely, FNI language courses should be made available in FNI environments. For example, a young Inuk told us how much she would like to see Inuktitut courses offered to members of her organization, in the context of Nunavik where the majority of the population speaks Inuktitut.

Conclusion

Analysis of the comments in this section highlights the importance of reforming legislative and institutional frameworks to promote the integration and retention of young people in employment. It is clear that services need to be centralized, as their current fragmentation complicates access and compromises the effectiveness of insertion efforts. In addition, political structures, often perceived as rigid and intimidating, need to be culturally adapted to enable real participation by young people. FNI-related prejudices in public discourse also need to be deconstructed; this will require significant changes in the way policies are formulated and implemented. By integrating young people's territory and linguistic specificities into policies, we not only provide adapted services, but also value their cultural identity. Thus, a profound transformation of traditional approaches is imperative to ensure that policies truly reflect the aspirations and challenges of young FNI.

SUMMARY TABLE OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: IMPLEMENTING, ADAPTING OR MODIFYING THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL OR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centralize FNI services into a single department
Political bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transform political bodies (flexibility, cultural adaptation)
Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change discourse and recognize the specificities of FNI (avoid generalizations and prejudices)
Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include the territory in public policies on employability
Socio-economic policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop favorable socioeconomic policies that reflect the image of young people (access to training, financial support, work-family-study balance).
Linguistic policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop specific language policies (language recognition, access to training in English, adapted francization, documentation in English, translation and interpretation, native language courses)

6. DEVELOP ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To develop a comprehensive and integrated strategy for the employment and retention of young FNI employees, it is imperative to integrate a component dedicated to entrepreneurship, recognizing its unique potential as a driver of economic development and empowerment within communities. The strategies, conditions and practices for doing so are numerous. They must, however, be designed to take into account the specific challenges faced by young FNI, and be based on culturally appropriate approaches that value their traditional knowledge, community values and aspirations.

Ahead of the elements presented in this section, it is vital to name the importance of giving equal attention to the education of young FNI entrepreneurs in financial literacy and capability (OECD, 2018). Observed gaps in participation and outcomes for certain groups, such as young people and women, highlight the need for enhanced support. These educational initiatives can enable entrepreneurs to make the most of their resources and manage their businesses effectively.

What's more, in a case study of a collective entrepreneurship support organization for young FNI, six key strategies were identified for reconciling entrepreneurship support in the FNI context (Fortin-Lefebvre, Awashish and Blanchet-Cohen, 2023). They are highly relevant to our results, not least because they are also

consistent with less specific job insertion and retention strategies, and also, because they were named by the people we met. We report them here:

- **Prioritizing personal development:** focus on personal development rather than the technical and normative dimensions of entrepreneurship. The aim is to strengthen the self-confidence, self-esteem and interpersonal skills of young entrepreneurs. This approach recognizes that technical skills alone are not enough to guarantee entrepreneurial success, and that personal development is a key success factor.
- **Enhancing the value of culture:** present collective entrepreneurship as a tool for transmitting culture and giving back to the community. It is essential to highlight traditional knowledge, cultural practices and community values as part of entrepreneurial activities. This approach enables young entrepreneurs to strengthen their cultural identity and create businesses that contribute to the well-being of their community.
- **Promoting collective values:** consider collective, solidarity-based and democratic values as knowledge to be passed on and integrated into the coaching program. The aim is to inculcate these values in young entrepreneurs so that they integrate them into their leadership and management of their business. This approach helps create businesses that are socially responsible and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.
- **Ensure the validity of knowledge** This approach is based on the cultural identity of the mentors, to ensure the validity of the knowledge transmitted and to create a bond of trust with the young entrepreneurs. This approach recognizes that the traditional knowledge and experiences of the FNI are valuable resources for entrepreneurship, and that it is important to value them and integrate them into coaching programs.
- **Adapting training courses:** tailor training courses to the needs identified by the young people themselves, so that learning is in line with their aspirations and the characteristics of the specific contexts of different nations and communities. This approach recognizes that the needs and aspirations of young FNI employees are diverse, and that it is important to adapt training accordingly.
- **Promoting the co-construction of knowledge:** encourage the co-construction of knowledge, leading to an egalitarian relationship between learners and trainers, recognizing the value of young entrepreneurs' knowledge and experience. This approach creates a collaborative learning environment where young entrepreneurs feel valued and respected.

A number of other strategies have also been named, which we describe below.

6.1 Cultivating entrepreneurial spirit

Among other things, it seems essential to show young people the opportunities that exist, and to present concrete examples and models of FNI entrepreneurs who have succeeded in their communities. Successful role models can inspire young people, change their perception of the feasibility of entrepreneurship and encourage them to take the plunge. It's also important to offer optional courses on entrepreneurship right from high school, to raise awareness of this path and provide young people with the necessary basic knowledge, by offering optional courses and changing the perception of feasibility. Beyond courses, we need to talk about entrepreneurship, give examples of it in all subjects and teach it as an opportunity, and discuss it with young people right from secondary school. For example, some schools are emphasizing entrepreneurship to counter the fact that there are few opportunities for community internships (employment-oriented pathway programs).

6.2 Securing funding for initiatives

It's crucial to strengthen the support program for self-employed workers by providing living allowances for pre-startup and startup, so they can focus on their project without having to worry about their basic financial

needs. For example, we need to create business services equivalent to those offered by Services Québec, but adapted to the realities and needs of FNI communities. As one stakeholder asks: "Why isn't there the equivalent of Services Québec's Service aux entreprises for communities? It is also important to strengthen the Indigenous Initiatives Fund by increasing the funding available and broadening its scope, in order to support young entrepreneurs at every stage of their project, from start-up to growth, and by allowing funding from the outset. In terms of financing, the government could also offer loans with lower interest rates. It's essential to get young people interested in entrepreneurship to actually do it, by funding initiatives to gain initial experience and develop their entrepreneurial sense (e.g. a craft business).

6.3 Emphasizing support

On another note, we need to set up teams of coaches to support young entrepreneurs from start to finish, helping them navigate administrative processes, develop their business plan, manage their finances and market their products and services. Similarly, there is a need to support existing businesses, to help them develop further or resolve ongoing difficulties. One strategy for developing their skills in this area is to encourage young people to gain work experience with other companies before starting their own business, in order to familiarize themselves with the realities of the business world. It can also mean encouraging young people to gain experience with others before starting their own business. When it comes to support, it's also a good idea to develop or work with local economic development companies to offer personalized, tailored support to young FNI entrepreneurs.

6.4 Set up incubator and mentoring initiatives

One innovative strategy involves setting up business incubators specifically for young FNI, to provide a supportive environment, resources and mentoring services to help them develop their businesses. A mentoring service for young FNI entrepreneurs is entirely appropriate, matching experienced entrepreneurs with young people who want to start their own business. Mentors can show the way, share their experiences and help young people overcome challenges. One example of an incubator is to support local initiatives that promote entrepreneurship: such as territory-based fruit-picking projects and local produce sales, which enable young people to acquire employment skills and reconnect with their territory.

6.5 Skills development

Three other strategies involve setting up training, development and leadership stimulation programs for young FNI, to help them develop the skills they need to run their businesses and contribute to the development of their communities; proposing self-employment as a form of entrepreneurship; and encouraging young people to gain experience with others before starting their own businesses.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of these strategies depends on measures being put in place to address the systemic barriers to entrepreneurial socio-economic development in FNI communities (see box on entrepreneurship). This means raising awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship among all stakeholders, and creating an environment conducive to innovation and risk-taking.

In addition, it is important to note that support organizations have few requests related to entrepreneurship. The stakeholders we met report that this is a need that is rarely mentioned by members. These are often pre-employability support services; young people who are ready to take the plunge don't necessarily go through these organizations. This may indicate a lack of entrepreneurial awareness or misunderstanding of the support services available. It is therefore essential to better inform young FNI about the opportunities and resources available.

By implementing these strategies in a coordinated manner and in collaboration with FNI communities, it is possible to create an environment conducive to the emergence of a new generation of FNI entrepreneurs,

capable of creating sustainable jobs, stimulating economic development and contributing to the well-being of their communities. It is essential to recognize that FNI also succeed as entrepreneurs, creating employment opportunities for themselves and others (Government of Canada, 2021).

Finally, existing programs need to be considered or reconsidered, in order to adapt them to the specific needs of young FNI employees. It is also essential to encourage succession planning for existing businesses, and to promote collective entrepreneurship and cooperatives.

In short, developing entrepreneurship among young FNI requires an approach that takes into account the specific challenges they face and builds on their strengths and aspirations. By implementing the strategies described above, in collaboration with FNI communities, it is possible to create an environment conducive to the emergence of a new generation of FNI entrepreneurs, capable of creating sustainable jobs, stimulating economic development and cultural revitalization, and contributing to the well-being of their communities.

SUMMARY TABLE OF STRATEGIES AND PROMISING PRACTICES: DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Emphasizing financial education and literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give equal attention to educating young FNI entrepreneurs in financial literacy and capability
Focus on different key strategies (case study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize personal development (confidence, self-esteem) • Valuing culture (transmission, contribution to the community) • Promote collective values (solidarity, democracy) • Ensure the validity of knowledge (cultural identity of mentors, bond of trust) • Adapt training courses (needs identified by young people) • Promote the co-construction of knowledge (egalitarian learner/trainer relationship)
Cultivating entrepreneurial spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show existing opportunities and present concrete models of FNI entrepreneurs • Offer optional courses on entrepreneurship starting in high school
Securing funding for initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen support program for self-employed workers (living allowances) • Create business services equivalent to those offered by Services Québec, but adapted to FNI realities • Strengthen the Indigenous Initiatives Fund (increase funding, broaden scope) • Enable low-interest government loans
Focus on support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up teams of mentors (support from the start to the end of the project) • Support existing businesses to help them grow • Encourage young people to gain work experience with other companies • Develop or work with local economic development companies (personalized support)
Setting up incubators and mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up business incubators specifically for young FNIs • Offer mentoring services (linking experienced entrepreneurs with young people) • Support local initiatives to promote entrepreneurship (pick-your-own projects, sale of local produce)

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement training, development and leadership stimulation programs • Offer self-employment as a form of entrepreneurship • Encourage young people to gain experience with others before starting their own business

7. INTEGRATE ASPECTS RELATED TO CULTURE, IDENTITY AND TERRITORY

The integration of cultural, identity and territorial aspects into the strategies for integrating and retaining young FNI employees in the workforce is one of the strategies mentioned in the interviews and highlighted in the literature review. It enables young people to achieve professional fulfillment, improve their well-being and contribute to the development of their communities. It's about recognizing and valuing their unique identity, their traditional knowledge and their deep connection to the land. If we want to build a comprehensive, integrated strategy that promotes the employment and retention of FNI youth, we need to include a component that addresses these aspects.

7.1 Promoting traditional knowledge and cultural skills

This means identifying and recognizing the skills acquired through cultural practices, traditional knowledge and life experience on the land. Activities related to the land, such as hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering, are productive activities that have the potential to generate value, while at the same time being rooted in the cultural heritage of the FNI populations, making them a key issue for the economic activity of these populations. These skills can be valorized in areas such as natural resource management, handicrafts, cultural tourism, education and health. It is important to note that land-related activities have intrinsic value in the eyes of some young FNI (Kumar et al., 2019; Laidler et al., 2009).

Another important strategy is the development of adapted training programs that incorporate traditional knowledge and cultural skills, in collaboration with local elders and experts. These programs can cover subjects such as language, history, the arts, healing practices and land management. Employment can provide a new connection or a rediscovery of one's own culture. It's important to “support us in rediscovering our culture”, explains a 24-year-old Atikamekw. Finally, mechanisms can be put in place to certify the skills acquired through cultural practices and traditional knowledge, to facilitate their recognition by employers and educational institutions.

7.2 Creating culturally safe working environments

Creating culturally-safe work environments is another crucial strategy. We've touched on this in other contexts: this strategy involves, among other things, offering awareness training on FNI culture and realities to employers and employees, in order to foster understanding, respect and inclusion. It is also important to adapt human resources management practices, policies and procedures to take into account the cultural values, traditions and specific needs of FNI employees. These ideas include flexible working hours, time off for ceremonies and cultural events, and accommodation for spiritual practices. Finally, it is essential to encourage the representation of FNI culture in the work environment, through art, music, language and cultural symbols. Stakeholders point out that young people's retention also depends on their sense of confidence and belonging, which is closely linked to the recognition of their culture and language in the workplace (a distinction between urban and community environments).

7.3 Promoting cultural and territorial entrepreneurship

As we have already mentioned, promoting cultural and territorial entrepreneurship is also an important lever. It is essential to support businesses that promote the culture, crafts and traditional knowledge of communities, by offering them access to markets, financing and specialized consulting services. We also need to develop cultural tourism, highlighting their heritage, history and traditions, and creating jobs for young people. Finally, encouraging businesses that practice sustainable management of natural resources, respecting the environment and contributing to the well-being of FNI communities, is also part of these strategies.

7.4 Facilitating access to local employment

Facilitating access to employment on the territory is another priority. For young people, the traditional territory is a safe place where knowledge and culture can be passed on (Asselin and Drainville, 2020). This strategy involves establishing partnerships with local businesses, to create employment opportunities for young FNI on their territory. It is also important to offer mobility support to young FNI who wish to work on their territory, by providing them with information on available jobs, financial aid for transport and housing, and integration support services. Finally, it makes sense to invest in infrastructure development in the region, in order to create jobs and facilitate access to essential services. As mentioned by Quintal-Marineau and Monfette (2021), this strategy also involves paying particular attention to the place occupied by the land and related activities in young people's career paths, given the centrality of this category of youth engagement. Reconnecting young people to the land and to culture fosters a sense of anchorage, belonging and self-determination.

7.5 Strengthening cultural identity and a sense of belonging

Reinforcing cultural identity and a sense of belonging is also a key element, and can be achieved through mentoring programs where elders and community leaders accompany young FNI, share their experiences and help them develop their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Although the responsibilities of FNI and non-Indigenous employers may differ at this level, it is also important to organize cultural activities, such as ceremonies, festivals, craft workshops and language courses, to enable FNI youth to connect with their culture and history. Young people feel disconnected from their community and culture (Fast et al., 2021). Yet they also attach great importance to culturally appropriate support, and feel that holistic support services - which include cultural and spiritual aspects, for example- should be present in employment (Pidgeon et al., 2019). Indeed, finding and nurturing a sense of belonging and identity is a (re)connection to culture and community. According to Fast and colleagues (2021), these acts of reappropriation give young people the opportunity to create a wider network of knowledge and resistance to the colonial paradigm, create deeper relationships with members of FNI, talk more openly with new acquaintances and become more of who they have always been. To this end, it is essential to support cultural organizations working to preserve and promote FNI cultures, by providing funding, resources and logistical support.

7.6 Involving communities and Elders

Finally, since young people express a constant desire for opportunities to learn from Elders, participate in ceremonies and share with other young FNI (Fast et al., 2021), it is central to involve communities and Elders in all stages of the process. This involves consulting them in the design and implementation of job insertion and retention strategies, to ensure that they are adapted to their needs and aspirations, by entrusting them with leadership, mentoring and training roles. All these strategies need to be evaluated regularly, in collaboration with communities, including the young people themselves, and Elders, to ensure that they are effective and meet the needs of young FNI employees.

Conclusion

By valuing these cultural, identity and territory-related aspects in job insertion and retention strategies, it is possible to create an environment conducive to the professional fulfillment of young FNI employees, strengthen their cultural identity and sense of belonging, and contribute to the sustainable development of

their communities. Culturally-related work experiences shape moments in employees' lives that deepen their connection to their culture (Spowart and Marshall, 2015).

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROMISING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES: ENHANCING ASPECTS OF CULTURE, IDENTITY AND TERRITORY

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES	SPECIFICATIONS
Enhancing traditional knowledge and cultural skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and recognize skills acquired through cultural practices, traditional knowledge and life experiences on the territory. • Develop adapted training programs that integrate traditional knowledge and cultural skills, in collaboration with elders and local experts. • Set up mechanisms for certifying skills acquired through cultural practices and traditional knowledge, to facilitate their recognition by employers and educational institutions.
Creating culturally secure work environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer awareness training to employers and employees on FNI culture and realities. • Adapt human resources practices, policies and procedures to take into account the cultural values, traditions and specific needs of FNI employees (flexible schedules, time off for ceremonies, accommodations for spiritual practices). • Encourage the representation of FNI culture in the work environment (art, music, language, cultural symbols)
Promoting cultural and territorial entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support businesses that promote local culture, crafts and traditional knowledge (access to markets, financing and specialized consulting services). • Develop cultural tourism, highlighting their heritage, history and traditions, and creating jobs for young people. • Encourage businesses that practice sustainable management of natural resources
Facilitate access to employment in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships with local businesses, to create employment opportunities for FNI employees in their area. • Offer mobility support to young FNI wishing to work on their territory (information, financial aid, accompaniment services). • Invest in the development of local infrastructures, to create jobs and facilitate access to essential services.
Strengthening cultural identity and a sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up mentoring programs where Elders and community leaders accompany young FNI, share their experiences and help them develop their cultural identity and sense of belonging. • Organize cultural activities (ceremonies, festivals, craft workshops, language courses) • Support cultural organizations working to preserve and promote FNI cultures
Involving communities and elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult them in the design and implementation of job integration and retention strategies • Assign them leadership, mentoring and training roles • Evaluate strategies on a regular basis, in collaboration with communities, including young people themselves, and elders.

CONCLUSION ON PROMISING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

An analysis of the strategies, conditions and promising practices for the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI employees reveals an essential common thread: cultural anchoring. This concept transcends the simple consideration of traditions and customs; it implies a profound transformation of approaches, policies and practices to recognize and value the identity, values and aspirations of young FNI. It's a comprehensive, transformative approach that recognizes the value of FNI cultures, fosters community autonomy and self-determination, and creates inclusive, respectful work environments. By adopting it, we can create meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for young FNI employees, while helping to build a fairer and more equitable Quebec society.

For young FNI employees, employment is more than just a source of income or a job. It is part of a continuum of activities that reflect their commitment to promoting their culture and contributing to the development of their community and nation. Employment thus becomes a means of reinforcing their cultural identity, passing on traditional knowledge and participating in the development of their community. This perspective transforms the traditional view of employment and highlights the importance of creating opportunities that enable young people to reconcile their career aspirations with their cultural and community responsibilities. This vision of employment emphasizes the need to create jobs that are meaningful to young FNI people, and that enable them to develop professionally, personally and culturally. Employers need to be aware of the importance of these dimensions, and put in place measures to support young people's commitment to their culture and community.

To achieve this, it is essential to establish new foundations between FNI and non-Indigenous employees, based on the active participation of FNI employees and enabling the inclusion of the cultural referents of young FNI employees, in order to strengthen their identity and offer them support tailored to their specific needs. A collaborative, intercultural approach helps to build bridges between cultures and foster greater mutual understanding.

SECTION E: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

This section summarizes the recommendations arising from an in-depth study on the socio-professional integration and job retention of young FNI employees. These recommendations, based on a rigorous analysis of the issues (Section A), the needs and interests (Section B), the challenges of matching the labour market to young people's needs (Section C) and existing practices (Section D), aim to guide the policies and actions of the players involved, in order to promote sustainable and equitable socio-economic inclusion for this population. They are structured around several strategic axes, which recognize the importance of cultural anchoring, multi-stakeholder collaboration and a youth-centered approach.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Before presenting the specific recommendations, it is essential to underline the guiding principles that must guide any intervention:

- Respect for FNI rights and self-determination: FNI communities must be at the heart of decisions concerning their economic and social development.
- Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity: Interventions must be adapted to the specific realities of each community, taking into account their languages and traditions.
- Inclusive approach: Employment issues must be addressed in a way that takes into account their social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions.
- Active youth participation: FNI youth must be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs and policies that affect them.
- Equity and inclusion: Interventions must aim to reduce inequalities and promote the inclusion of all young FNI, taking into account issues of intersectionality (gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.).

3. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Our specific recommendations fall into 4 groups: acting on systemic issues, meeting young people's needs, improving the match between the labour market and young people's needs, and implementing strategies and practices known to be effective. They are described briefly below, but you should return to the text of the document to grasp all their subtleties.

RECOMMENDATIONS- GROUP 1: Acting on systemic issues

Fighting racism and discrimination:

- Implement zero-tolerance policies against racism and discrimination in workplaces and educational institutions
- Fund awareness-raising campaigns to combat prejudice and stereotypes
- Support reconciliation initiatives

Reducing socio-economic inequalities:

- Improving access to affordable, quality housing
- Ensuring food security and access to adequate health services
- Combat poverty and social exclusion

Transform the education system:

- Integrate traditional knowledge and FNI perspectives into school curricula
- Adapt teaching methods to the learning styles of young FNI
- Offer personalized support to learners in difficulty

Fighting intergenerational trauma:

- Support healing and reconciliation initiatives
- Offer mental health services adapted to the needs of young FNI employees
- Promote the transmission of traditional knowledge and cultural practices

RECOMMENDATIONS- GROUP 2: Meeting the needs and interests of young people

Supporting the development of personal and cultural identity:

- Offer mentoring and sponsorship programs with positive role models from FNI communities.
- Organize cultural activities and community events to foster a sense of belonging
- Promote FNI languages and cultures in workplaces and educational institutions

Facilitating transition to the job market:

- Offer career guidance services adapted to the realities of young FNIs
- Develop practical training and work experience programs
- Support the geographic mobility of young people wishing to work outside their community

Promoting meaningful and rewarding jobs:

- Encourage employers to offer positions of responsibility and professional development opportunities
- Support cultural and territorial entrepreneurship initiatives
- Enhance the value of traditional skills and knowledge in the workplace

RECOMMENDATIONS- GROUP 3: Improve the match between the job market and young people's needs

Diversify employment opportunities in communities:

- Support local economic development and community entrepreneurship
- Create jobs in a variety of sectors, such as cultural tourism, renewable energies and information technology

Fighting discrimination and stereotypes in the workplace:

- Implement zero tolerance policies for racism and discrimination
- Offer awareness training to employers and employees on FNI culture and realities.
- Encourage diversity and inclusion in recruitment and human resources management practices

Adapting working conditions to the realities of young FNI:

- Offer flexible schedules and telecommuting opportunities
- Take into account family and community obligations
- Create a culturally safe and respectful work environment

Improve communication and collaboration between players:

- Create platforms for the exchange and sharing of information between FNI communities, employers, educational institutions and support organizations.
- Implement program and policy monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

RECOMMENDATIONS- GROUP 4: Implement known strategies and promising practices

Prioritizing cultural roots and self-determination

Integrating traditional knowledge and cultural skills:

- Develop adapted training programs that value the traditional knowledge, languages and cultural practices of the FNI.
- Put in place mechanisms for the recognition of experiential learning, in order to value skills acquired outside the formal school system.

Creating culturally safe work environments:

- Offer awareness training to employers and employees on FNI culture and realities.
- Adapt human resources management practices to take into account the cultural values and specific needs of FNI employees.
- Encourage the representation of FNI culture in the work environment.

Promoting cultural and territorial entrepreneurship:

- Support businesses that promote the culture, crafts and traditional knowledge of FNI communities.
- Develop cultural tourism by highlighting the heritage, history and traditions of the FNI.
- Encourage businesses that practice sustainable management of natural resources

Facilitating access to employment in the region:

- Establish partnerships with local businesses to create employment opportunities for FNI employees on their territory.
- Offer mobility support to young FNI wishing to work on their territory
- Invest in local infrastructure development

Strengthening cultural identity and a sense of belonging:

- Set up mentoring programs where Elders and community leaders accompany young FNI.
- Organize cultural activities to connect FNI youth to their culture and history.
- Support cultural organizations working to preserve and promote FNI cultures.

Promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination

Build strong partnerships between FNI communities, governments, educational institutions, support organizations and employers:

- Establish mechanisms for consultation and active participation of FNI communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs and policies.
- Promote communication and coordination between the various players to avoid duplication and optimize the use of resources.

Accompany and work with support organizations:

- Provide adequate and stable funding for community organizations that work with FNI youth.
- Reduce administrative and reporting burdens to allow organizations to focus on their core mission

Accompanying and supporting employers:

- Offer awareness training to employers and employees on FNI culture and realities.
- Establish mentoring and sponsorship programs for young FNI in the workplace.
- Adapt human resources management practices to take into account the cultural values and specific needs of FNI employees.

Adopting an inclusive, youth-centred approach

Considering basic needs:

- Assure Ensure access to stable housing, healthy food and physical and mental health services
- Provide adequate financial support to cover transportation, childcare and other essential expenses

Tailoring interventions:

- Adopt an individualized approach that takes into account each young person's personal, academic and professional background
- Offer personalized support tailored to their specific needs

Developing technical and transferable skills:

- Integrate the development of technical skills specific to certain trades and general skills (communication, time management, teamwork, etc.).
- Offer training in healthy lifestyle habits, budget management and information technology.

Promoting autonomy and leadership:

- Encourage youth participation in program design, implementation and evaluation
- Offer leadership training and professional development opportunities

Transform legislative, political and institutional frameworks

Centralize services:

- Centralize all FNI services in a single, accessible location

Adapting structures to cultural needs:

- Challenge top-down approaches and promote more collaborative and participatory model

Adapting policies:

- Take into account the cultural realities and specific needs of young FNI employees when developing public policies.
- Develop specific language policies to promote the recognition and valorization of FNI languages.

Include the territory:

- Acknowledging the deep-rooted link between FNI and their territory in public policies on employability

Supporting entrepreneurship and community economic development

Cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit:

- Present concrete examples and models of successful FNI entrepreneurs in their communities
- Offer optional courses on entrepreneurship starting in high school

Securing funding for initiatives:

- Strengthen support program for self-employed workers

- Increase funding available for the Indigenous Initiatives Fund

Emphasizing support:

- Set up teams of mentors to support young entrepreneurs from start to finish.

Set up incubator and mentoring initiatives:

- Create business incubators specifically for young FNI
- Offer mentoring services for young FNI entrepreneurs

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Beyond observations, towards a systemic transformation

This report has highlighted the complexity of the challenges faced by young FNI in terms of socio-professional integration and job retention. Beyond factual findings and statistical data, an in-depth analysis of systemic issues, specific needs, matching challenges and promising practices reveals the need for a profound and lasting transformation of approaches, policies and structures.

The persistence of inequalities cannot be attributed to a simple lack of qualifications or to individual factors. It is the result of a persistent colonial legacy, structural discrimination and a lack of recognition of the knowledge, values and aspirations of the FNI. Solutions cannot therefore be limited to one-off interventions or cosmetic adjustments. They require a fundamental rethinking of dominant paradigms and a clear political will to better adapt institutions and practices on a cultural level.

The study also reveals that the effectiveness of interventions depends on their ability to be anchored in the cultural and territorial realities of FNI communities. Uniform, standardized approaches, often based on Western models, are inadequate and can even be counter-productive. It is imperative to recognize the diversity of FNI cultures, languages and lifestyles, and to adapt programs and services accordingly.

The active participation of young FNI is a key element of any successful strategy. Their voice must be heard and valued at every stage of the process, from design to implementation and evaluation. It's not just a question of consulting young people, but of giving them real decision-making power and enabling them to become agents of change within their communities.

The study also highlighted the importance of collaboration and coordination between the various players involved, including FNI communities, governments, educational institutions, support organizations and employers. A fragmented approach, where each player acts in isolation, is doomed to failure. It is essential to create solid, lasting partnerships based on trust, respect and mutual recognition.

Finally, it is crucial to recognize that socio-professional integration and job retention are not an end in themselves, but rather a means of promoting the overall well-being of young FNI and the sustainable development of their communities. Interventions must therefore take into account social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions, and aim to create opportunities that enable young people to reach their full potential and contribute to the richness and diversity of Quebec society.

In conclusion, this report calls for a systemic transformation of approaches, policies and structures, in order to create a fairer, more equitable and more inclusive environment for young FNI. This is a complex and long-term challenge, requiring the sustained commitment of all stakeholders. But it is also a unique opportunity to build a better future for young FNI and for Quebec society as a whole.

ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

- Apatisiwin Skills Development, Cree Nation Government
- Camp des métiers construction ACQ
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Joliette / Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière (situé à Joliette)
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Québec
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Manicouagan
- Centre d'entraide et d'amitié autochtone de Senneterre
- Centre de développement de la main-d'œuvre huronne
- Centre multi-services MAMUK
- Comittee
- Conseil des Atikamekw de Wemotaci-développement social et de la main-d'œuvre
- Direction des relations avec les Autochtones, Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit
- First Nations Education Council
- First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec
- First Nations Quebec LAbrador Youth Network
- First Peoples Innovation Centre
- Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam
- Ivirtivik (employability services Verdun) / PS Jeunesse
- Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre
- Kativik Ilisinaliniriq
- Kativik Regional Government - Sustainable Employment Department
- Kitcisakik Anicinape Community
- La Boîte Rouge Vif
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications - Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec
- Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
- Quebec Native Women
- Santé Nunavik / Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
- Saturviit
- Service Canada, Direction de la planification, imputabilité et conseils stratégiques
- Val D'Or Native Friendship Centre
- Wapikoni

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