Aboriginal Women and Jobs: Challenges and Issues for Employability Programs in Quebec

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- the extent to which the methodology used and the data collected support the analysis and recommendations; and
- the original contribution the report would make to existing work on this subject, and its usefulness to equality-seeking organizations, advocacy communities, government policy makers, researchers and other target audiences.

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ACRONYMS

ABC	Aboriginal Business Canada
AFAQ	Association des femmes autochtones du Québec
AFNQL	Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador
AMAM	Association de la main-d'oeuvre autochtone de Montréal
APTE	Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi
AWPI	Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative
CHRDFNQ	Commission on Human Resources Development for the First Nations of Quebec
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
EDCAW	Economic Development for Canadian Aboriginal Women
EIC	Employment and Immigration Canada
FNQLHSSC	First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
INRS	Institut national de la recherche scientifique
LAMB	Local Aboriginal Management Board
LFNC	Local First Nation Commissions
MEQ	Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec
MSRQ	Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu du Québec
PAIE	Programme d'aide à l'intégration en emploi
PWGSC	Public Works and Government Services Canada
QNBD	Quebec Native Business Directory
RCAAQ	Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
SSC	Supply and Services Canada
UAEI	Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative
WEP	Work Experience Program

PREFACE

Good public policy depends on good policy research. In recognition of this, Status of Women Canada instituted the Policy Research Fund in 1996. It supports independent policy research on issues linked to the public policy agenda and in need of gender-based analysis. Our objective is to enhance public debate on gender equality issues and to enable individuals, organizations, policy makers and policy analysts to participate more effectively in the development of policy.

The focus of the research may be on long-term, emerging policy issues or short-term, urgent policy issues that require an analysis of their gender implications. Funding is awarded through an open, competitive call for proposals. A non-governmental, external committee plays a key role in identifying policy research priorities, selecting research proposals for funding and evaluating the final report.

This paper emanated from a call for proposals in April 1997 to study the gender dimensions of the relationship between the changing role of the state and the changing nature of women's paid and unpaid work and their vulnerability to poverty. Researchers were asked to identify policy gaps and new policy questions or trends, to propose frameworks for the evaluation, analysis and critique of existing policies, and to develop pragmatic alternatives to existing policies or new policy options.

Seven research projects were funded by Status of Women Canada on this issue. They examine Canadian legislation surrounding women who work at home for pay, work and Aboriginal women, the social vs. the economic gain associated with the social economy, women in the garment industry, disability-related policies, restructuring and regulatory competition in the call centre industry and the relationship between unpaid work and macro-economic policies. A complete list of the research projects is included at the end of this report.

We thank all the researchers for their contribution to the public policy debate.

ABOUT LE PARTENARIAT MIKIMON

Le Partenariat Mikimon brings together the Association des femmes autochtones du Québec (AFAQ) and the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS)-Culture et Société. This partnership was formed to clarify labour market challenges and issues for Aboriginal women, and to propose solutions. The partnership capitalizes on the work, experience and concerns of workers, resource persons and researchers, and conducts direct consultations with Aboriginal women both inside and outside the labour market.

Since 1974, AFAQ has campaigned for legal, political, social and economic equality for women. The Association is also dedicated to promoting Aboriginal women in the public arena, as well as combatting violence and enhancing living conditions for Aboriginal people in general. Over the years, AFAQ has developed an effective, decentralized operating structure and now has more than 3,000 members from Quebec's 11 First Nations.

INRS-Culture et Société, one of nine INRS research centres, is an academic institution affiliated with the Université du Québec. In 1996, INRS-Culture et Société created a studies section devoted exclusively to Aboriginal issues; this gives priority to collaborative and participatory research with Aboriginal populations and organizations.

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The team wholeheartedly thanks the women who gave time for interviews, in Montréal as well as the regions, and who generously shared their experiences and aspirations.

The researchers are grateful to the resource persons in various Aboriginal organizations and in government for their receptiveness and willingness to supply a wide range of information on employability programs and management of these programs.

The team wishes to thank as well all those who directly or indirectly facilitated the research and contributed to its successful completion.

Finally, the Partenariat team is indebted to Status of Women Canada, especially staff in the Research Branch, for their financial assistance, interest and support — all essential to completion of this study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a study conducted by Le Partenariat Mikimon for Status of Women Canada between October 1997 and March 1999. It constitutes an initial assessment of the utilization and effectiveness of employment, job access and training programs among Aboriginal women in the province of Quebec. The study's first sample focuses on Aboriginal women living in Montréal; the second sample focuses on women from three Aboriginal communities living in the regions.

Three specific objectives provided the impetus for the investigation. All have been achieved, by gathering new information on many problems linked to employability, and by giving a voice to the women involved.

The first objective was to describe the situation of Aboriginal women with regard to employment and especially employability programs. This led to a detailed profile of clients participating in various existing programs, and to renewed interest generated by the lives and educational/career paths of these women.

The second objective involved defining the specific needs of Aboriginal women in the area of training and jobs. These needs are numerous and varied. Programs may occasionally meet them for a limited time, by providing a pay cheque or a job and remedial education. However, the very structure of these programs, the fact that they are fairly short-lived and their scant success in teaching a real trade actually exacerbate, in some ways, the insecurity already so characteristic of all aspects of the informants' lives.

Finally, the study's third objective was to identify approaches for analysis and deliberation, in order to promote employability among Aboriginal women. The interest shown in the paths taken by women, the rethinking of how communities interact with the outside world, the actual difficulties encountered by women striving to function in a non-Aboriginal world, their stated need for guidance, and the need to reformulate the problem of specially tailored programs to date have received little attention in the literature, but definitely have social relevance.

The information we compiled revealed in particular that employability programs meet various needs of Aboriginal women clients in Montréal and the regions. Among those needs are earning a living, earning enough income to cover the cost of daily necessities, participating in community activities through training programs delivered in communities and, finally, being together with other Aboriginal people in either the city or the regions.

The study also discovered that a very large proportion (more than 80 percent) of the training programs followed by informants in Montréal when the interviews were conducted, as well as the jobs they held, were within Aboriginal organizations. This finding obviously is open to discussion and can be directly attributed to the way informants were selected, but it can also be viewed as a sign of the emergence of an Aboriginal job market in the heart of Montréal. Since the Aboriginal population is growing and services are expanding, it comes as no surprise that

new jobs are being created and logically are attracting some of the Aboriginal people seeking employment. This truly constitutes a new trend since these organizations did not even exist until recently, and there is every indication that their number will grow in coming years.

One final point should be mentioned: programs specially tailored to Aboriginal clients. In the literature, especially the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), the need to develop specific programs for Aboriginal people is mentioned countless times. Yet there is a lack of information on the potential structure, content and focus of these programs.

In the view of informants, this type of program includes only Aboriginal people, thereby avoiding comparisons with non-Aboriginals based on educational attainment or other factors that may result in discrimination. Special training programs are not without their own difficulties, however, the most worrisome being lower admission standards to open programs to applicants with a definite interest but lacking the basic education generally required. The qualifications earned therefore often provide access to job opportunities only in the Aboriginal community. As a result, this training does not foster genuine entry into the labour market, although it does definitely promote community integration.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations based on various concerns, including the acquisition of knowledge, the dissemination of that knowledge or the implementation of employability pilot programs. Since the most effective solutions will emerge from joint action and dialogue, the recommendations target all the parties involved: public servants, Aboriginal people, researchers and professionals in the field.

INTRODUCTION

Terms of Reference and Objectives

This report presents the findings of a study conducted by Le Partenariat Mikimon for Status of Women Canada between October 1997 and March 1999, which essentially sought to provide an initial assessment of the utilization and effectiveness of employment, job access and training programs among Aboriginal women in the province of Quebec.[1] The study's first sample focused on Aboriginal women living in Montréal, and the second sample focused on women from three Aboriginal communities living in the regions.

The study had three main objectives:

- to obtain accurate information on the situation of Aboriginal women with regard to employment and especially employability programs;[2]
- to determine the specific needs of Aboriginal women in the area of training and jobs; and
- to identify approaches for analysis and deliberation, in order to promote employability among Aboriginal women.

To achieve these objectives, a number of research activities had to be carried out, including:

- several series of semi-directed interviews;
- a review of the literature;
- a survey of programs and an assessment of their content;
- an assessment of the utilization rate for programs targeted;
- an assessment of the difficulties faced by women living in Montréal or the regions;
- an assessment of the factors that contribute to success of a program;
- a profile of various employment and unemployment experiences in Montréal and the regions;
- a description of women's employment needs and expectations.

Research Questions

To date, very few studies have addressed the issue of employability among Aboriginal people, much less Aboriginal women. Yet entry into the labour market is a concern constantly voiced by Aboriginal leaders and a shared objective of government authorities and Aboriginal organizations and associations across Canada.

Rapid growth of the Aboriginal population (which is increasing twice as fast as Canada's general population) and the predominance of young people (56 percent of the Aboriginal population is under age 24, compared with 35 percent of Canada's population) are placing

considerable pressure on the job market. It is estimated, in fact, that some 80,000 jobs are now needed to meet current demand and about 15,000 more jobs will have to be created each year to absorb young Aboriginal workers entering the labour market. By 2015, some 62 percent of the Aboriginal population on reserves will be of working age, up from barely 53 percent in 1996 (RCAP, 1996).

The shortage of jobs and the resulting high unemployment rate (on the order of 50 percent in some communities) definitely pose major obstacles to improved employability among Aboriginal people, especially Aboriginal women. However, other factors must also be considered (RCAP, 1996; MSRQ, 1995; Statistics Canada, 1993): a skewed job structure in communities; low education levels; lack of information about jobs available; unsuitable training programs; problems with labour services; a shortage of child care services; and discriminatory behaviour.

Furthermore, since the mid-1990s, government's role has been changing, partly through budget constraints and public service job cuts. Several studies have already revealed that these measures exacerbate the unstable working conditions of women (short-term jobs, part-time jobs, low wages, irregular hours), directly contributing to greater poverty among women and thus among children and other dependants.

Aboriginal women living in cities, whether Montréal, Québec, Hull, Val d'Or or Sept-Îles, are already affected by the scarcity of jobs and must now cope with job cuts and the gradual disappearance of various occupations (cashiers, clerks, secretaries, etc.) in the service sector. With fewer jobs available, unemployment is rising and so are poverty and the demand for assistance. Although this has been the reality faced by many other Quebec women as well, Aboriginal women are often faced with a host of additional challenges. They are often the target of discrimination and scorn prompted by their appearance or difficulty in speaking English or French. Many have also come to the city to flee violence and abuse of all types, and in most cases, their life in the city is characterized by isolation and a glaring lack of a broad range of resources.

In communities, the changing role of government has had a different effect on a labour market that is already quite complex. The new workplace reality can be attributed primarily to the fact that government is now transferring administration and management of services to band councils and, in some cases, to local or regional Aboriginal organizations. It is not existing jobs that are being cut but rather the service sector, which is becoming so saturated that women (as well as men) must create their own jobs. Yet in this area, women have several limitations: child care services in communities are poorly organized or non-existent; women often bear sole responsibility for homemaking; they have twice as many children on average as non-Aboriginal women; teenaged mothers are at least five times as numerous in Aboriginal communities as in the Quebec population; and women and children are the leading victims of the violence plaguing all communities.

Many questions arise from these circumstances:

- Are employability programs still effective?

- What needs do they address?
- Are these the needs of Aboriginal women?
- Are they sufficient to support, guide or even redirect clients directly affected by the chronic job shortage and the changes now in progress?
- Do they provide a launch pad for entry into the labour market, or do they instead help to create a new type of clientele, one that rotates through a sequence of programs?
- Could programs better suited to Aboriginal realities speed up access to the workplace?
- Would such programs generate better results?

The Partenariat Mikimon team examined these questions from the perspective of Aboriginal women who face these obstacles every day, whether they live in Montréal or in communities in the regions.

In semi-directed interviews, these women spoke of their work experience, their education, their progress in the labour market and their participation in job access programs or training programs. Their statements as well as the socio-demographic data they provided were carefully recorded, compiled and analysed. More than 20 resource persons (employment officers or teaching staff) were also consulted in person during the survey.

Methodology

This study by the Partenariat Mikimon is based on qualitative, quantitative and documentary information. The qualitative data were compiled from 93 semi-directed interviews of people in three separate samples. The first part of the survey was conducted in Montréal while the second part took place in the regions, in three Aboriginal communities (one Montagnais-Innu community and two Algonquin communities) and in nearby towns in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the North Shore. The quantitative data were compiled from socio-demographic information gathered in the interviews. This information was systematically tabulated on recording sheets specially developed for the purpose. The documentary information was recorded following a review of the recent literature generally covering employment and employability of Aboriginal people in Canada and Quebec.

Establishment of Samples

Identification of informants

In Montréal, contacting potential informants in itself proved to be a lengthy, trying exercise. More than 125 people were approached to discuss their potential participation in the study. The team drew up an initial list of people likely to take part in the study, based on information provided by employment centres or Aboriginal organizations. Since this information is confidential, the organizations required that the women involved consent to disclosure before granting the research team access. In addition, the researchers tapped into the personal networks of several Aboriginal women (relatives, friends, co-workers).

The team devoted considerable time trying to contact these people, many of whom had no telephone. Dozens of appointments were postponed or cancelled. Despite the repeated explanations provided by members of the Partenariat team, many women were worried about the potential consequences of their participation in the survey. Would their allowances be stopped, would they be penalized in some way, would their statements be turned against them or their families, or would a violent spouse be able to track them down? This gave the team direct experience, to some extent, of the isolation and lack of resources faced by many women, the severe culture shock they feel and the daily fear in which many live.

In the regions, the situation was very different since the community is a familiar world. In many cases, once knowledge spread of the survey, the women themselves contacted the research team to express interest in participating and being heard.

Selection of informants

Two main criteria governed selection of informants in Montréal and the regions:[3]
(1) participation in at least one employability or training program over the past five years; and (2) age category. For this second criterion, the team sought representation from all five-year brackets between ages 15 and 60 (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of informants in Montréal and the regions, by age

Place of Origin	Age Category								
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55 +
Montréal									
Program participant (26)	1	4	4	2	7	6	1	1	-
Non-participant (5)	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	1
Men (2)	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total (33)	**2**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**1**	**3**	**1**
Regions									
Program participant (34)	4	4	4	2	6	3	5	3	3
Non-participant (3)	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
Man (1)	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
Total (38)	**4**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**3**	**7**	**5**	**3**

Following these parameters, we met with 26 women in Montréal for interviews that lasted an average of 90 minutes; 65 percent were conducted in French and 23 percent in English — aside from three conducted in an Aboriginal language (Table 2). A third criterion was used to establish the Montréal sample: membership in one of Quebec’s First Nations. A representative sample was the goal here, given the relevance of affiliation for Aboriginal women living in an urban area (this aspect will be further discussed later in the report).

In the regions, 34 interviews were conducted with women living in three Aboriginal communities and, in a few cases, the surrounding area. On average, these interviews also lasted 90 minutes and were conducted primarily in French (Table 2). Membership in a First

Nation was not a selection criterion in the regions since members of a given community all belong to the same First Nation.

For comparison purposes, eight interviews were also conducted with Aboriginal women who had never taken a training or employment program, and with three men who had taken part in such a program (Table 1).

A final information source was a series of 22 interviews conducted with resource persons both in Montréal and the regions. At the start of the survey, the team had planned to consult about 10 resource persons to obtain information on programs and services available to Aboriginal clients (Table 3). From one organization to the next, from program to program, the number of interviews eventually doubled. Employers, teachers and local administrators, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were added to the original sample. Their comments proved essential to placing Aboriginal women's living conditions into a fuller context in the family, the community, school and the workplace. The team met with a total of 14 women and 8 men. Of these, 14 work in government or para-governmental agencies, while the other 8 work for Aboriginal organizations.

Table 2: Distribution of informants in Montréal and the regions, by language of interview

Place of Origin	**French**		**English**	**Number**	**Aboriginal**	
	Number	**%**	Number	**%**	Number	**%**
Montréal						
Program participant (26)	17	65	6	23	3	12
Non-participant (5)	4	80	1	20	-	-
Men (2)	2	100	-	0	-	-
Regions						
Program participant (34)	31	91	1	3	2	6
Non-participant (3)	3	100	-	0	-	-
Man (1)	1	100	-	0	-	-

Table 3: Distribution of sample of resource persons by sex, origin and employer

Place of Origin	**Sex**		**Origin**		**Employer**	
	F	M	Aborig.	Non-Ab.	Gov't. or para-gov'tal organization	Aboriginal organization
Montréal (6)	5	1	3	3	2	4
Regions (16)	9	7	7	9	12	4
Total	**14**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**14**	**8**

Data Gathering

Qualitative data

The semi-directed interviews were conducted using a guide with six themes for discussion. Each theme, divided into a series of sub-themes, was discussed with the informants (Table 4). The sub-themes were used to guide the interview and facilitate the work of the researchers by addressing the central theme from various angles. However, the emphasis placed on different themes varied from one informant to the next, reflecting the diversity in age, personal profile and experience. All the interviews were transcribed and entered on computer; interviews conducted in an Aboriginal language were translated before transcription.

To conduct interviews in Aboriginal communities, the research team remained in the communities for several weeks. In all, two people spent a total of two months in the field.

Table 4: List of themes and sub-themes in interview guide

Programs	**Workplace**	**Residential History**
- Participation - Description of programs - Accessibility and initiatives - Length - Allowances and wages - Specific needs of Aboriginal people - Assessment	- Employment history - Description of jobs - Length - Work relations - Relations with non-Aboriginal people - Wages and working conditions - Difficulties experienced - Importance placed on work - Aspirations - Assessment	- Number of moves - Time lived at each address - Reasons for moving - Choice of residence - Assessment
Education	**Family Life**	**Social Networks**
- Level of education - Education history - Guidance from family - Relations with teachers and peers - Importance placed on education - Assessment	- Balancing work and family - Maternity - Child care - Supervision of children - Relations with spouse - Assessment	- Links with family - Links with community - Contacts with others - Knowledge and use of support and mutual assistance networks - Assessment

Socio-demographic data

Socio-demographic data were also recorded during interviews. The first part of the meeting generally was devoted to recording this information on the fact sheets designed for this purpose. The sheets were not simply descriptive but were also used during interviews to guide the discussion. Similarly, after each interview, they were used as a follow-up and control log for representation of the various samples being formed. Finally, once all data had been gathered, they yielded information to support and round out analysis of informants' statements.

Documentary information

The literature on the themes of employment and employability among Aboriginal women is very limited. This truly is an emerging field of knowledge. Data on the Aboriginal population in general obviously is available, but do not necessarily reflect the contemporary situation of

women, much less that of women in urban areas. Although rarely placed in context, these data obviously provide some indications, but the information that could provide more details and interpretation has yet to be assembled (Stout and Kipling, 1998). The team did consult the sources available, especially some of the findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996) as well as the findings of the Survey of Aboriginal Peoples (Statistics Canada, 1993), in order to draw up a documentary portrait of the education and employment situation of Aboriginal women.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data gathered from the semi-directed interviews were subjected to content analysis. This approach is commonly used in the field of social research, and involved three processing steps in our study: (1) tabulation, in which each interview is divided into segments identified by a theme and several sub-themes, where applicable; (2) thematization, which groups together all segments linked to a given theme within a given interview to produce a brief abstract; and (3) categorization, which uses transversal processing to examine the theme, in this instance for all interviews, on the basis of age, sex, ethnic group or other relevant variables.

Ethical Considerations

In keeping with the code of ethics for social research and with the recommendations of the INRS ethics committee, the anonymity of the respondents and resource persons as well as the confidentiality of their statements have been maintained. A special procedure was even developed for this purpose before the start of the survey. Each person interviewed signed a consent form with anonymity and confidentiality clauses clearly explained, and listing the circumstances under which that person's statements ultimately could be used or cited. In no case can the origin of any statement used be identified, since the names were coded during processing and analysis.

In addition, the anonymity was extended to the communities studied. Since these are small communities and since we met with a very small number of persons, the researchers considered it important not to disclose the names of the communities, in order to avoid any generalizations or premature/inappropriate conclusions. The survey was conducted with individuals and in no way was it used to develop a portrait of any community that hosted the Partenariat team.

Organization of the Report and Presentation of Findings

This report is divided into two chapters, each addressing one aspect of the issue of employability programs in which Aboriginal women participate in Montréal and the regions.

Chapter 1 begins with a sketch of the Aboriginal population of Quebec and an overview of the state of employment and education among Aboriginal women. This background based on documentary sources provides an introduction not only to the chapter but also to the report as a whole. The chapter continues with a profile of the programs' clientele by age, origin (from a First Nation in southern Quebec, near major cities, in a rural area or outlying region), level of education, etc. The findings presented are then discussed in light of the

documentary information and statements by informants. The chapter ends with a presentation of the main points.

Chapter 2 covers program utilization and effectiveness. The presentation is also based on the socio-demographic data gathered during interviews and on the statements of informants. In addition, the views of resource persons on programs and their utilization/effectiveness are analysed. The second-to-last section of the chapter focuses on the issue of programs tailored to an Aboriginal clientele. The final section presents the main points of the chapter.

The conclusion summarizes the major thrusts of the study and ends with a series of recommendations. Three appendices complete the report. The first contains a map showing the location of Aboriginal communities and First Nations in Quebec. The second contains a detailed list of the people interviewed. The last presents tables summarizing the information on major employment, job access and training programs discussed throughout the study conducted by the Partenariat Mikimon.

1: PORTRAITS OF WOMEN

The Aboriginal Population of Quebec: Demographic and Socio-Economic Benchmarks

General Characteristics

On January 1, 1998, the Aboriginal population of Quebec consisted of 72,795 people[4] living in 54 communities or villages; 51.8 percent were women (QNBD, 1998). This population consists of 11 different First Nations, each forming one or more communities, as well as the Inuit living in northern areas of the province (Table 5). The population varies considerably from one First Nation to another and from one community to the next, even within the same First Nation.

For example, the Mohawk, Cree and Montagnais-Innu groups each have a population exceeding 12,000. The Naskapi and Maliseet, each with a population of 570, and the Abenaki with some 1,890 people, are the smallest First Nations. More than half of all communities have a population of less than 1,500. However, the population of the Mohawk village of Kahnawake (located on the outskirts of Montréal) now exceeds 8,500, and the Montagnais-Innu village of Mashteuiatsh, on Lac Saint-Jean, has a population of about 4,300; these are the largest communities (QNBD, 1998).

Quebec's First Nations are scattered throughout the province, in remote regions, rural areas and on the edge of major cities (see map in Appendix 1). The Cree live in the James Bay region of western Quebec, the Montagnais-Innu are concentrated along the North Shore, and the Naskapi live in a village about 15 kilometres from the former mining town of Schefferville. The Algonquin live in southwestern Quebec, the Témiscamingue area and the Outaouais. The Atikamekw are located in Haute-Mauricie, the Mi'Kmaq in the interior of the Gaspé peninsula, the Maliseet[5] on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River near Rivière-du-Loup, the Huron-Wendat on the outskirts of Québec City, the Abenaki near Sorel, and the Mohawk in southern Quebec near Montréal, Oka and Cornwall, Ontario. The Inuit are settled in 14 villages along the shores of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay (QNBD, 1998).

The Aboriginal population of Montréal

Official statistics indicate that the Aboriginal population consists of residents of communities (or reserves[6]), who represent 73.2 percent of the total, and people living outside these locations — that is, off reserve (26.8 percent). Based on these percentages, almost 20,000 Aboriginal people live outside their community of origin or an Amerindian or Inuit community. Of these, some 16,000 people (75 percent) live in Montréal (QNBD, 1998).

Table 5: Aboriginal population of Quebec, 1998

First Nation Community	Resident		Non-Resident		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Abenaki	**367**	**19.4**	**1,520**	**80.6**	**1,887**
Odanak	295	17.6	1,380	82.4	1,675
Wôlinak	72	34.0	140	66.0	212
Algonquin	**4,490**	**56.2**	**3,493**	**43.8**	**7,983**
Eagle Village (Kipawa)	217	37.3	365	62.7	582
Grand Lac Victoria (Kitcisakik)	266	81.1	62	18.9	328
Hunter's Point	0	0.0	223	100.0	223
Kitigan Zibi	1,407	59.7	949	40.3	2,356
Rapid Lake	407	75.8	130	24.2	537
Lac Simon	987	80.5	239	19.5	1,226
Pikogan	425	58.7	299	41.3	724
Timiskaming	465	33.0	943	67.0	1,408
Winneway	316	52.8	283	47.2	599
Atikamekw	**3,970**	**81.0**	**931**	**19.0**	**4,901**
Manawan	1,508	84.4	278	15.6	1,786
Obedjiwan	1,562	83.0	319	17.0	1,881
Weymontachie	900	72.9	334	27.1	1,234
Cree	**10,402**	**83.7**	**2,032**	**16.3**	**12,434**
Chisasibi	2,905	94.5	170	5.5	3,075
Eastmain	486	87.6	69	12.4	555
Mistissini	2,492	78.0	701	22.0	3,193
Nemaska	420	94.4	25	5.6	445
Oujé-Bougoumou	N/A		N/A		N/A
Waskaganish	1,526	77.1	452	22.9	1,978
Waswanipi	980	69.2	437	30.8	1,417
Wemindji	995	86.6	154	13.4	1,149
Whapmagoostui	598	96.1	24	3.9	622
Huron-Wendat	**1,093**	**39.1**	**1,700**	**60.9**	**2,793**
Village-des-Hurons / Wendake	1,093	39.1	1,700	60.9	2,793
Maliseet	**1**	**0.2**	**569**	**99.8**	**570**
Cacouna / Whitworth	1	0.2	569	99.8	570
Mi'Kmaq	**2,505**	**57.2**	**1,873**	**42.8**	**4,378**
Gaspé	2	0.4	463	99.6	465
Gesgapegiag	464	44.7	575	55.3	1,039
Listuguj	2,039	70.9	835	29.1	2,874
Mohawk	**12,452**	**84.5**	**2,285**	**15.5**	**14,737**
Kahnawake	6,957	81.0	1,633	19.0	8,590
Kanesatake	1,285	68.1	602	31.9	1,887
Akwesasne	4,210	98.8	50	1.2	4,260

Table 5 (cont'd)

First Nation Community	Resident No.	Resident %	Non-resident No.	Non-resident %	Total
Montagnais-Innu	**9,574**	**69.5**	**4,204**	**30.5**	**13,778**
Betsiamites	2,308	77.1	687	22.9	2,995
Les Escoumins	179	47.9	195	52.1	374
La Romaine	831	93.8	55	6.2	886
Mashteuiatsh	1,811	41.5	2,556	58.5	4,367
Mingan	418	96.5	15	3.5	433
Natashquan	682	90.1	75	9.9	757
Pakua Shipi	227	98.3	4	1.7	231
Matimekosh / Lac-John	632	91.2	61	8.8	693
Uashat / Maliotenam	2,486	81.7	556	18.3	3,042
Naskapi	**506**	**88.9**	**63**	**11.1**	**569**
Kawawachikamach	506	88.9	63	11.1	569
Sub-total, Amerindians	**45,360**	**70.8**	**18,670**	**29.2**	**64,030**
Inuit					
Akulivik	370	95.4	18	4.6	388
Aupaluk	149	87.6	21	12.4	170
Chisasibi (Kiggaluk)	55	88.7	7	11.3	62
Inukjuak	1,132	92.2	96	7.8	1,228
Ivujivik	268	95.7	12	4.3	280
Kangiqsualujjuaq	602	97.1	18	2.9	620
Kangiqsujuaq	427	91.2	41	8.8	468
Kangirsuk	373	85.9	61	14.1	434
Kuujjuaq	1,321	89.9	149	10.1	1,470
Kuujjuarapik	476	75.6	154	24.4	630
Povungnituk	1,133	94.4	67	5.6	1,200
Quaqtaq	252	85.1	44	14.9	296
Salluit	933	90.9	93	9.1	1,026
Tasiujaq	188	94.0	12	6.0	200
Taqpangajuk	0	0.0	43	100.0	43
Umiujaq	228	91.2	22	8.8	250
Sub-total, Inuit	**7,907**	**90.2**	**858**	**9.8**	**8,765**
Total Aboriginal population	**53,267**	**73.2**	**19,528**	**26.8**	**72,795**

Sources:
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec; federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Cited in Quebec Native Business Directory, 1998.

The statistics clearly do not provide a complete picture of the demographic situation of the Aboriginal population not residing in communities, or residing in major cities, since many people are not included in official counts. This is often true of Métis and non-status Indians, who constitute a floating population difficult to characterize and even harder to locate.

According to Statistics Canada's Survey of Aboriginal Peoples (1993), the Aboriginal population of Montréal for all origins combined exceeded 44,000 in 1991. This number included Aboriginal people of whom both parents were Aboriginal, as well as those with a

single parent of Amerindian or Inuit origin. Compared with data from the previous census (1986), this figure represents an increase of 100 percent. In contrast, data from the 1996 census indicate a population of some 10,000 Aboriginal people in the greater metropolitan area (Statistics Canada, 1998), much lower than in 1991. The difference apparently is attributable to a change in the definition of ethnic origin for Aboriginal people.[7]

As long as the Aboriginal population of Montréal and other cities (Hull, Québec, La Tuque, Val d'Or, etc.) has not been counted in a special census, it will be difficult to track the composition and growth of this group. In any case, the population is fairly large and consists of a majority (approaching 65 percent) of women and children, most of whom have fled the climate of violence and insecurity in communities.[8]

The current wave of Aboriginal migration to cities in Quebec in many ways resembles that of Amerindians in the United States to major American cities starting in the late 1950s. In Canada, the exodus began in the West and Central Canada in the late 1960s, and continued in massive proportions until the early 1980s. It has since continued at a slower pace (McCaskill, 1981). In Quebec, the movement is more recent: it began to intensify in the late 1980s and remains strong early in 2000.

Life in the Communities

The *Indian Act* grants individual Aboriginal people special status.[9] Collectively, for Indian bands, the Act defines the land base for reserves or Indian institutions, where the bands in question usually live. However, the differences between Aboriginal people and Quebeckers or Canadians do not stop there, but also extend to historical, social, economic and cultural factors.

For example, an Aboriginal community consists of people who usually share a common history, common ancestors and common origins. By comparison, the population of small villages in Quebec is more diverse: residents may come from all areas of the province or elsewhere in Canada, and their presence in the community may vary considerably over the years. In addition, the social units in Aboriginal communities are different: on average, Aboriginal families have twice as many children as Quebec families. While multi-generation families (several generations living under the same roof) are quite rare in modern-day Quebec, they are common in Amerindian and Inuit communities. Single-parent families, like teenage mothers, are more common as well. It is estimated that one Aboriginal child in three under 15 years of age lives with only one parent, usually the mother (Statistics Canada, 1998). Aboriginal communities have five to six times as many teenage mothers.

Major differences also characterize economic life and production relationships. A majority of Amerindian communities and all Inuit communities engage in a mixed economy, with salaried activities closely intertwined with hunting and fishing.

Tradition and heritage in Aboriginal communities are not based on the same social practices and learning methods as in non-Aboriginal society, nor are the values, standards and rules of behaviour that govern community life. Cultural benchmarks differ as well, and codes are not the same. In brief, lifestyles are very different. It therefore comes as no surprise to find that

solutions which may help Quebeckers find a job, develop the economy or start a business are not necessarily suited to Aboriginal people. Moreover, major differences emerge even within the Aboriginal population, if only in language and religion.

Further, most Aboriginal communities in Quebec (particularly Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Montagnais-Innu, Naskapi and Inuit communities) are fairly new, since the process of establishing permanent settlements (sedentarization) shot forward in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Department of Indian Affairs began delivering housing, education and health services to Aboriginal people. Before that, groups of hunters, generally consisting of four or five families (20 to 30 people on average), followed a nomadic lifestyle, moving with the changing seasons and occasionally visiting trading posts and religious missions. Dozens if not hundreds of people linked by blood or marriage might attend gatherings in summer. Sedentarization led to sweeping and irrevocable changes by creating artificial communities of families and groups not used to living together, certainly not on a permanent basis.

In the recent history of Aboriginal people, the consequences and complexity of this transition from nomadic to sedentary life have been seriously underestimated. They were also poorly understood in the short, medium and long term, and their impact was underestimated for individuals, families and communities. Some of these consequences, especially those involving the physical conditions of life and sanitary conditions, were positive: for example, infant mortality declined, life expectancy rose, famine disappeared and health services improved. However, the effects on social and economic life, as well as interpersonal and intergenerational relations, are still being felt today. Community life today appears to be less harmonious than two or three decades ago, and in many respects progress achieved in earlier years has been lost:

- Violence is increasing, along with the number of associated deaths (accidents, suicides, assaults), driving a decline in life expectancy (already some 10 years below that for Canadians as a whole) even though it was rising until the late 1980s.

- Alcoholism and drug addiction are becoming more common, and affecting a growing number of children and young people.

- Women who leave their community for the city often have a higher-than-average education, thus driving down the level of education in communities and depriving them of a significant portion of their dynamic strength.

- The elderly, more numerous than in the past, often become isolated within their community.

A Documentary Portrait of Education and Employment among Aboriginal Women

Sources of Information

One finding is immediately clear: scientists in Canada and Quebec have paid little attention to date to the living conditions of Aboriginal women, as individuals or as a social group. Although studies on this subject have grown in number since the 1980s, many gaps remain. Stout and Kipling (1998), authors of a recent review of the literature on Aboriginal women,

lament above all that important themes have been studied very little for all intents and purposes. This is particularly true of employment, education, economic development and the circumstances of Aboriginal women in cities. They also find that most research focuses on the sectoral study of social problems (delinquency, alcoholism, suicide, violence) or women's health (pregnancy, diet). These studies are definitely important but the authors stress the lack of an overall perspective for grasping and understanding the phenomena studied in all their complexity. They believe this situation limits the identification of effective solutions:

> Among those with a stake in the issues and challenges facing Aboriginal women in Canada, it has become something of an axiom to say this is a population in which mainstream policy makers and academic researchers show very little interest. Thus, very little material has been produced which explores, in a substantive fashion, these women's lives, problems and strengths. (Stout and Kipling, 1998:11)

Of the sources available, the Survey of Aboriginal Peoples conducted by Statistics Canada (1993) using the 1991 census data still remains the main reference for several reasons. First, this is a major survey covering the entire Aboriginal population in Canada, including status and non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit. It also addresses a host of themes subjected to multivariate analysis, such as by sex, age, region of origin or subjects' place of residence. Most studies of Aboriginal men and women produced since then refer to the findings of this survey (including some sources consulted by the Partenariat team: RCAP, 1996; Gill et al., 1995; DIAND, 1996).

Although it provides a unique source of information, the Survey does suffer from some limitations. Many Aboriginal people and sometimes entire communities refused to take part in the 1991 census. Furthermore, Aboriginal people living in shelters or community housing and those with no fixed address were not counted. Another drawback of the Survey of Aboriginal Peoples is the fact it is now rather dated and that the 1996 census data, by Statistics Canada's own admission, are not always comparable with the 1991 results because the definition of ethnic origin, as pointed out in note 7, is no longer the same.

The brief portrait of the education and employment status of Aboriginal women in Quebec presented in the following pages does in fact make use of information from the Survey of Aboriginal Peoples, either directly as first-hand data, or through second-hand analyses. Moreover, while there is little Canadian literature on Quebec, even scarcer are works by Quebeckers on the province's population of Aboriginal women and the topics covered by this report. Two government sources do stand out, however, although neither presents a complete picture of the situation. The first is a study conducted by the Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu du Québec (1995), which focuses generally on Cree, Inuit and other Aboriginal people in urban areas. The second develops a statistical portrait of the educational status of the Aboriginal population based on data from the 1996 Census of Canada (MEQ, 1998).

Education

In all fields of study, the percentage of Aboriginal people with a certificate or diploma is about half, and often less, than that observed for Canada's population as a whole (RCAP, 1996). In the 1996 census, 61 percent of Aboriginal people over 15 years of age had no high school diploma (compared with 35 percent for Canada as a whole). Those with a high school diploma as their highest level of education represented 8 percent of Aboriginals and 22 percent of Canadians as a whole. In addition, 3.6 percent of the Aboriginal population held a university degree, compared with 18.6 percent of Canadians (MEQ, 1998). It appears that young Aboriginal people lag behind as early as elementary school, and by the time they enter high school, this lag is compounded by a high drop-out rate. From a statistical viewpoint, the situation is worsening over time. The proportion of Aboriginal people 15 years old and over with at least nine years of education dropped from 46 percent in 1991 to 40 percent in 1996 (MEQ, 1998).

For women in particular, changes have also emerged in recent years. The level of education for Aboriginal women rose substantially between 1970 and 1990, following the trend for all Canadian women. In contrast to patterns observed in most Western countries, while men generally have more education than women, the reverse holds true within the Aboriginal population, especially for post-secondary education. In 1991, for example, 13.3 percent of Aboriginal women reported taking university courses, compared with 11.1 percent of their male counterparts (DIAND, 1996; Stout and Kipling, 1998).

This difference between First Nations men and women is mainly attributable to a different pattern of education. More Aboriginal women (42.5 percent) than men (31 percent) return to high school or obtain equivalency certificates (RCAP, 1996). More women than men also continue on to post-secondary education. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) reports that more women return to school because more drop out when young, especially for family reasons. Yet their graduation rate barely exceeds that for men, which means that a higher percentage of women fail to complete their schooling.

The differences observed in the Aboriginal population with regard to education are not based solely on sex. The profile of Canadian Aboriginal women also varies depending on whether they are status Indians, Inuit or Métis, and whether they live on or off a reserve. Inuit women rarely enrol in university (just 2.5 percent); they fall behind status Indian women on reserves (6.6 percent), Métis women (6.8 percent) and status women living off reserve (11.8 percent) (DIAND, 1996).

The education profile of Aboriginal women in Quebec generally resembles that of all Aboriginal women in Canada. In Quebec as in Canada as a whole, First Nations women are more likely to take post-secondary courses than men, although their completion rate is fairly similar.

Similar to the national pattern, the level of education of Aboriginal women in Quebec is also higher among those living off reserve. The figures do not differ significantly for high school graduates on and off reserve (46 and 47 percent respectively among women over 15 years of age), but there is a sharper difference for post-secondary education. The proportion of Aboriginal women living off reserve who have taken post-secondary courses (35 percent) is

double that of women living on reserve (17 percent); the university graduation rate is also higher among women living off reserve (6.3 percent) than on reserve (1.4 percent). The education profile of Métis women is similar to that of Indian women living off reserve. Inuit women have even less education than Indian women living on reserve. In brief, these data are comparable to those obtained for the rest of Canada (Gill et al., 1995).

Closer comparison of education levels for Aboriginal women in Quebec and in Canada does, however, reveal some differences. One finding is that more Aboriginal women in Quebec than in Canada have a low level of education. For example, the proportion of Aboriginal women with less than nine years' education is higher in Quebec (21.5 percent) than in Canada as a whole (15.1 percent) (Gill et al., 1995).

Differences are also evident in the area of post-secondary education, since 11.2 percent of Aboriginal women in Quebec have undertaken some studies at this level (compared with 15.5 percent in Canada) and 14.7 percent have earned a college diploma or certificate (17.6 percent for Canada). At first glance, these figures suggest that Aboriginal women in Quebec are less educated than those across Canada. Yet the situation differs for university degrees: 3.5 percent of Aboriginal women in Quebec hold a university degree compared with just 2.9 percent of Aboriginal women in Canada as a whole (Gill et al., 1995); this is evidence of a lower post-secondary drop-out rate in Quebec.

Employment and Its Subsidiary Features

Labour market participation

The labour force participation rate for Aboriginal people in Quebec is 53.7 percent, while it exceeds 62 percent in the rest of the country (DIAND, 1996). Despite being generally more educated than men, fewer Aboriginal women hold a job (47.1 percent compared with 57.1 percent of men). This disparity (10 percent) between men and women is smaller, however, than that observed elsewhere in Canada among the non-Aboriginal population (15 percent) (DIAND, 1996).

Aboriginal women also post a lower unemployment rate (17.7 percent) than their male counterparts (20.8 percent) — unlike in the rest of Canada, where the unemployment rate is comparable for men (9.8 percent) and women (9.9 percent). This is attributable to the fact that Aboriginal women enter the labour force less often than men, seek a job less often and are less available for a job than their male counterparts, because of their role in the family. Their low unemployment rate does suggest, however, greater ease in finding a job when they return to the labour force and a tendency to keep their job longer (RCAP, 1996).

The employment status of First Nations women in Quebec generally resembles that of Aboriginal women in Canada as a whole. Like their counterparts across the country, Aboriginal women in Quebec post lower labour force participation rates and employment rates than the non-Aboriginal population as a whole, and also than Aboriginal men in the province. Aboriginal women in Quebec also post lower unemployment rates than their male counterparts (Gill et al., 1995). In addition, the participation rate for Aboriginal women off reserve is about 50.9 percent, compared with 36 percent for women on reserves. Employment

(49.3 percent) and unemployment (21.2 percent) rates for Métis women are comparable to those of women off reserve (Gill et al., 1995).

Social Assistance

Reliance on social assistance is another a relevant indicator when studying employment. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), also using the 1991 census data, reports high registration rates for social assistance among Aboriginal people in Canada (28.6 percent). This figure rises to 41.5 percent for Indians on reserves, a sharp increase over the 1981 rate of 37.4 percent. During the same period, however, reliance on social assistance by the non-Aboriginal population also rose sharply from 5.7 to 9.7 percent. Further, social assistance in Aboriginal communities is characterized by long periods of reliance and the absence of links with the job market.

The data on social assistance are not broken down by sex but data on government transfer payments (including social assistance) provide some basis for comparison. These transfer payments contribute to the income of 42 percent of status Indian women, a proportion similar to their male counterparts but higher than the 20.8 percent rate for other Canadian women (DIAND, 1996).

A study conducted by Quebec's Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu (1995) on a segment of Quebec's Aboriginal population (in this instance, the Cree, Inuit, and Aboriginal people in urban areas) also cites differences between the profile of Aboriginal recipients of social assistance and that of the Quebec population as a whole. The Aboriginal clientele is younger, less educated and more often consists of families with children. Children are the most common reason why Aboriginal clients are not available for work. This reason is given by 77 percent of Aboriginal women and 16 percent of Aboriginal men.

In addition, the Quebec study reveals that Aboriginal women remain on social assistance longer than their male counterparts: 12 percent of women have been receiving benefits for 10 years or more, compared with less than 9 percent of men. Aboriginal women are over-represented as well among clients on social assistance (60 percent); the proportion is just 51 percent for Quebec women.

Income

Although Aboriginal women have more education and lower unemployment rates, their annual income of $11,900 is less than the $17,400 earned by Aboriginal men (DIAND, 1996). Many factors may explain this phenomenon. More First Nations women than men (2.1 and 1.3 percent respectively) report no income (DIAND, 1996; Stout and Kipling, 1998). Aboriginal women are more often trapped in low-paying jobs, such as office jobs and service sector positions. They are also more likely to hold part-time jobs (RCAP, 1996). More women than men (40.7 and 29.6 percent respectively) report annual income of less than $10,000. This gender disparity is consistent, however, with that observed in Canada as a whole, where 30.1 percent of non-Aboriginal women and 17 percent of non-Aboriginal men report income of less than $10,000. The disparity between earnings of men and women on reserves averages 20 percent. Among non-Aboriginal people, men earn as much as 40 percent more than women (DIAND, 1996).

While income is linked to gender and living on or off a reserve, it also varies by level of education and age. The average income of First Nations women with less than nine years' education is $8,759, compared with $11,214 for those with a high school diploma and $21,080 for those with a university education (DIAND, 1996). Among the population aged 15 and over, income rises proportionally with age up to 45. Aboriginal women 15 to 24 years old earn the lowest income ($7,148), while those 35 to 44 years old have the highest average income ($17,851). Incomes decline between ages 45 and 64 (averaging $14,962 for the 45 to 49 age bracket) and further still beyond age 65 ($12,097).

The income status of Aboriginal women in Quebec resembles that of Aboriginal women in Canada. Some 61.8 percent of Aboriginal women in Quebec report annual income of under $10,000, compared with 42.7 percent of men. In Canada, the proportions are 60.3 percent for women and 47.1 percent for men. The figure is 70.3 percent for women on reserves, compared with 56 percent for women off reserves; the proportion is similar for Métis women (58.4 percent) but 65.1 percent for Inuit women.

Obstacles to Employment

The Survey of Aboriginal Peoples (Statistics Canada, 1993) also examined the obstacles faced by Aboriginal people seeking a job (Table 6).

Table 6: Obstacles to employment reported by people identifying themselves as Aboriginal (ages 15 and over), by region and sex (%)

Obstacles	Total Canada	Far North	Near North		South			Women		Men	
			R.*	O.R.*	R.	O.R. Cities	O.R. R.A.*	Can.	Que.	Can.	Que.
Scarcity or lack of jobs	66.4	71.3	77.1	64.3	76.1	57.2	73.2	60.6	62.7	69.9	70.2
Education — experience not relevant	42.1	38.3	39.7	43.2	42.1	44.0	40.4	41.8	36.1	40.4	36.2
Lack of information	26.2	22.5	31.4	22.6	34.0	24.3	24.2	24.2	19.0	27.9	22.2
Aboriginal identity	17.7	11.8	20.5	17.5	25.0	17.3	11.4	15.6	9.6	16.8	12.4
Shortage of child care services	9.9	9.9	8.7	11.1	8.6	9.2	8.9	14.1	10.1	3.4	2.8
Other obstacles	9.8	7.1	5.5	7.2	8.1	13.0	10.9	11.5	14.1	9.0	8.7

Note:
* R = on reserve; O.R. = off reserve; R.A. = rural areas.

Source:
Survey of Aboriginal Peoples: A compilation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)

Scarcity of jobs

Although the perception of obstacles to employment varies considerably between regions, scarcity of jobs is far and away the main obstacle cited across the country (by 57 to 77 percent of respondents). Most affected by this situation (77.1 percent) appear to be Aboriginal people on reserves in the Near North, men (70 percent on average) more than women (61 percent on average).[10]

According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), growth of private enterprise should be promoted as a way of improving the situation. Not only would this approach create jobs, it would also stimulate the local economy by boosting consumer spending on reserves. However, entrepreneurship is not easy for women. A study by Economic Development for Canadian Aboriginal Women (EDCAW, 1993) indicates that difficulty in dealing with credit institutions or obtaining start-up capital, and the lack of training in business finance and management pose the main obstacles facing women wanting to start a business. These problems are also faced by Aboriginal men (Collins, 1997), but are compounded in the case of women by the sexist preconception that business is the exclusive domain of men (EDCAW, 1993). The work of the Steering Committee of the Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Labour Force project (1993) also highlights the fact that most Aboriginal women in the labour market face sexism and racism.

The Royal Commission also points out with regard to the shortage of jobs that a significant proportion (sometimes reaching 60 percent) of jobs available on reserves are held by non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people hold most top management positions (90 percent) but are poorly represented in middle management and professional services. Both on and off reserves, Aboriginal people have difficulty meeting the required qualifications and skills.

The gap between skills and job requirements

On average, 40 percent of respondents, regardless of region or sex, identified lack of education or relevant studies as the second most important obstacle to successful entry into the labour market. The high school drop-out rate is high among Aboriginal people. Women drop out primarily because they become pregnant — at a younger age in Aboriginal communities than anywhere else in Canada. As we have already seen, however, more women than men return to high school and continue on to post-secondary education (RCAP, 1996).

Lack of information on jobs

More than one fourth of respondents to the Survey of Aboriginal Peoples noted that lack of information about jobs also posed a major obstacle. There appears to be a huge gap to close between potential employers with no Aboriginal employees and no knowledge of Aboriginal communities, on the one hand, and Aboriginal people seeking a job, on the other hand, who have little knowledge of employers and no contact with them.

Studies have also shown that only a few of the jobs available off reserve are publicly advertised (RCAP, 1996). Personal contacts and networks therefore are very important in searching for a job. Through these networks, job seekers generally learn about new openings and how to apply. Off reserve, Aboriginal people have little knowledge of these networks.

Discrimination

Among Aboriginal people on reserves in southern Canada, 25 percent say they have encountered forms of discrimination linked to their identity when seeking employment, compared with 17.3 percent of Aboriginal people off reserves and 11.8 percent of those living in the Far North.

The specific obstacles faced by Aboriginal employees in this regard are the results of racism rooted in old, deeply established stereotypes as well as a workplace that generally feels foreign to them. Cultural conflicts in the workplace can be traced to differences between Aboriginal cultures and organizational cultures in the areas of interpersonal relations, decision-making processes, leadership principles and the organization of work. In training settings, there is also a conflict between learning methods and various teaching techniques that would require curriculums more adapted to Aboriginal culture (RCAP, 1996).

Shortage of child care services

Lack of child care services does not pose a major obstacle to employment even for women since 10 percent (on average) of male and female respondents linked this to a specific obstacle. In cities, however, where there are many single-parent Aboriginal women who cannot rely on the support of an extended family or the reserve, child care can become a real headache.

On reserves, the situation is different but no less trying, primarily because of the rigidity of existing regulations. Some requirements governing the issue of licences, for example, are impossible to meet, especially in the area of staff qualifications and facilities. Other requirements are inappropriate to an Aboriginal setting, such as the requirement to fence in play areas or use cradles rather than the more common hammocks for infants. Entailing additional constraints are lack of training and experience in managing child care centres, and lack of interest or support from male Aboriginal leaders (RCAP, 1996).

Other obstacles

Other obstacles cited in the literature include the high rate of reliance by Aboriginal peoples on social assistance, attributable to under-employment and under-education; this also constitutes an obstacle to employment (RCAP, 1996; FNQLHSSC, 1997). This dependence is a consequence of the dispossession and marginalization of Aboriginal people, and is so deeply rooted on reserve that it has taken on special meaning:

> [translation] Today, the concept of last resort, as defined in the philosophy of social assistance programs, no longer carries the same social connotation in Aboriginal circles. Social assistance is viewed as permanent and unrelated to the principle of social rehabilitation. Instead it is an integral part of the addictive habit of receiving cash compensation for Aboriginal people's loss of connection with the land, and loss of their culture and purpose in life. (FNQLHSSC, 1997:10)

Other studies have also shown that the different attitudes of Aboriginal people toward school, work or a pay cheque make it harder for them to fit in when they hold a job in a non-Aboriginal setting. Bernard (1997), who has studied the specific situation of Cree workers in the James Bay region, points out that the very concept of work is different in a Northern setting. Holding a job or earning a degree is not linked to the same objectives of personal growth shared by many Quebec residents. A pay cheque, for example, is viewed by many Cree as a means to the end of going hunting or fishing. These differences are sometimes misinterpreted by non-Aboriginal people, who often conclude that Aboriginal people lack ambition and have no interest in work or education.

Issues of linguistic proficiency may also constitute an obstacle to employment and training, since English or French is a second if not a third language for most Aboriginal people. This often places serious limitations on reading and writing skills.

Aboriginal Women in Montréal: Profile of Program Clientele

The Aboriginal population of Montréal does not necessarily live in a specific neighbourhood or area of the city; it is scattered throughout the metropolitan area, and not confined solely to the City of Montréal proper (which was the case about 10 years ago). Aboriginal people increasingly live throughout the Greater Montréal area, including inner suburbs such as Longueuil or Saint-Lambert. This dispersal is no doubt explained by the fact that the Aboriginal population is extremely diverse, consisting of people from all the First Nations of Quebec, of Inuit, and even of Amerindians from other provinces of Canada or the United States.

Aboriginal people are generally viewed from the outside as a homogeneous group, especially because of their small numbers. Yet the Montagnais-Innu are very different from the Inuit and Huron-Wendat, and usually have very limited knowledge of the lifestyles and customs of these other ethnic groups; the Cree or Atikamekw are no more familiar with the Abenaki. Linguistic diversity also complicates matters since some 58 percent of Quebec's Aboriginal people speak English as a second language, while 25 percent report French as their second language and 17 percent speak only an Aboriginal language (Maurais, 1992).

These conditions contribute greatly to the isolation and culture shock experienced, in the authors' opinion, by Aboriginal people in Montréal, especially women and their children. As noted in the introduction, the Partenariat team was regularly confronted with this situation throughout the study.

The next few pages of this report are devoted to the profile of the Montréal sample. The profile is developed under six information headings: age category and ethnic group; marital and family status; mother tongue and language of work; education; occupation at time of interview; and annual personal income. These data were gathered during interviews with the aim of better defining the link to employment and education.

Age Category and Ethnic Group

As stated earlier, the sample of Aboriginal women in Montréal[11] consists of 26 people ranging from 17 to 51 years of age; 42 percent of the sample is under 35 while 54 percent is between age 35 and 50 (Table 7). Although the research team wanted to achieve a representative sample by age category, 50 percent of the sample is between 35 and 45 years old. The sample therefore is much too limited to support conclusions regarding certain specific demographic features; it does, however, provide some valuable indications about the program clientele.

In the sample, 24 of the 26 informants are status Indians under the provisions of the *Indian Act*, while the other two are a Métis and a non-status Indian. Of the 26 informants, 22 come from a Quebec First Nation, two others are Inuit from Northern Quebec (Nunavik) while the last two are from a First Nation in another province. Almost all these women (21 of 26) were

born in their own community, while 2 with only one Aboriginal parent were born nearby; only 3 of the women were born in the city. Their presence in Montréal is generally the result of many moves: three fourths of the informants lived in at least three different cities or villages before settling in or returning to Montréal. While a few (7) have lived in the city for less than a year, 13 women have been there for more than five years. Age does not appear to be related to the number of places where a woman has lived, but 75 percent of informants who have lived in at least three places come from rural communities, a remote region or outside Quebec.

Table 7: Distribution of sample of informants in urban areas, by age

Age Category	Number	Percentage
15-19 years	1	3.9
20-24 years	4	15.4
25-29 years	4	15.4
30-34 years	2	7.6
35-39 years	7	26.9
40-44 years	6	23.0
45-49 years	1	3.9
50-54 years	1	3.9
Total	**26**	**100**

Table 8: Distribution of sample of informants in urban areas, by ethnic group

First Nation or Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
Abenaki	1	3.9
Algonquin	3	11.5
Atikamekw	2	7.7
Cree	1	3.9
Huron-Wendat	3	11.5
Maliseet	0	0.0
Mi'Kmaq	1	3.9
Mohawk	2	7.7
Montagnais-Innu	8	30.6
Naskapi	1	3.9
Inuit	2	7.7
Other	2	7.7
Total	**26**	**100**

With the exception of the Maliseet, each of Quebec's First Nations is represented in the sample (Table 8). However, most numerous are Montagnais-Innu informants (30 percent), followed by Algonquin (11 percent), Huron-Wendat (11 percent), Atikamekw (8 percent), Mohawk (8 percent), Inuit (8 percent), Aboriginal people from other provinces (8 percent), Abenaki (4 percent), Cree (4 percent), Mi'Kmaq (4 percent) and Naskapi (4 percent).

Marital and Family Status

Of the Montréal informants, 38 percent are single while 31 percent live in common-law relationships. Few are married (12 percent) or separated (19 percent) (Table 9). A correlation between age and marital status reveals that younger women are more likely to be single or living in common-law relationships, while older women are more often married or separated.

Surprisingly, 50 percent of informants have no children — a situation found in most age categories, not just the youngest (Table 9). Ten of these 13 women are single, while the other 3 have a partner. Women with a partner who have children (27 percent of the sample) are concentrated in the 30-44 age category. Most have only one child. Single-parent women (4 of 26, or 15 percent) are all over 35 years old and have two or more children.

Although we must repeat that the sample is small, these findings are nevertheless unusual since Aboriginal women have a fertility rate twice that of the rest of the population and since the teen motherhood rate is five times higher.

Table 9: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age, marital status and number of children

Age Category	Marital Status				Number of Children					
	Single	Married	Common-law	Separated/ Divorced	None	1	2	3	4	5+
15-19 years	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	2	-	1	1	4	-	-	-	-	-
25-29 years	2	-	1	1	4	-	-	-	-	-
30-34 years	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	3	-	3	1	2	3	1	-	-	1
40-44 years	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	-	-
45-49 years	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
50-54 years	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Total	**10**	**3**	**8**	**5**	**13**	**6**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Percentage	**38**	**12**	**31**	**19**	**50**	**23**	**11**	**8**	**4**	**4**

The fact that 50 percent of informants have no children does not automatically mean that these women are living alone in Montréal. In fact, 20 of 26 women share their home with at least one other person: a child, spouse, parent or housemate. Most of those living alone are under 30 years old. No informant lives in a household of more than four people. Ethnic group appears to have no special impact on the number of persons in a household.

Mother Tongue and Language of Work

In 13 of 26 cases (50 percent), the informants' mother tongue is an Aboriginal language. The remainder break down as follows: French is the mother tongue of 7, English is the native language of 4, and 2 informants have two mother tongues (an Aboriginal language and either French or English).

There is no specific correlation between age and mother tongue, and use of the Aboriginal language is not restricted to a specific age group. On the other hand, three fourths of women over 40 years of age speak an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue (Table 10).

Table 10: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and mother tongue

Age Category	Aboriginal Language	French	English	Aboriginal Language + French/English
15-19 years	-	1	-	-
20-24 years	2	-	1	1
25-29 years	1	2	-	1
30-34 years	1	1	-	-
35-39 years	3	2	2	-
40-44 years	4	1	1	-
45-49 years	1	-	-	-
50-54 years	1	-	-	-
Total	**13**	**7**	**4**	**2**
Percentage	**50**	**27**	**15**	**8**

A correlation can be drawn, however, between the First Nation to which a person belongs and mother tongue (Table 11). Women with an Aboriginal mother tongue come primarily from communities in rural areas or remote regions. Women with French as their mother tongue belong to the Abenaki, Huron-Wendat, Mohawk and Montagnais-Innu groups. Women with English as their mother tongue are Mohawk or Mi'Kmaq, or come from other provinces of Canada. The informants with two mother tongues have one non-Aboriginal parent.

French is the language of work for 38 percent of informants, English for 16 percent, French and English for 35 percent, and an Aboriginal language plus French or English for 12 percent. Neither age nor ethnic group appears to have a specific influence on the language of work (Table 12).

Education

Of the 26 informants in Montréal, 11 (42 percent) had a high school diploma. Five others had completed some high school but have not graduated. A total of 10 women had taken post-secondary courses at some time. It should be noted, however, that under the equivalency system in effect in colleges and universities, several informants in the post-secondary categories had not necessarily obtained lower-level diplomas. In any event, it appears that 6 (23 percent) reached the college level and 4 others (16 percent) the university level. Half of these earned a degree while the others hold an attestation of studies or a certificate. The fields of study chosen by the informants are all related to social science, the humanities and the arts (sociology, literature, communications, theatre). The technical sector (in this instance, hotel management) has a very low representation.

The age of informants bears no special relationship to education, since the average age of the women who have taken post-secondary courses is 36, while those with no post-secondary education have an average age of 34 (Table 13).

Table 11: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by ethnic group and mother tongue

First Nation or Ethnic Group	Aboriginal Language	French	English	Aboriginal Language + French/English
Abenaki	-	1	-	-
Algonquin	3	-	-	-
Atikamekw	2	-	-	-
Cree	-	-	-	1
Huron-Wendat	-	3	-	-
Mi'Kmaq	-	-	1	-
Mohawk	-	1	1	-
Montagnais-Innu	5	2	-	1
Naskapi	1	-	-	-
Inuit	2	-	-	-
Other	-	-	2	-
Total	**13**	**7**	**4**	**2**
Percentage	**50**	**27**	**15**	**8**

Table 12: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by ethnic group and language of work

First Nation or Ethnic Group	French	English	French and English	Aboriginal Language	Aboriginal Language + French/English
Abenaki	-	-	1	-	-
Algonquin	2	-	1	-	-
Atikamekw	1	-	-	-	1
Cree	2	-	-	-	1
Huron-Wendat	-	-	1	-	-
Mi'Kmaq	-	-	1	-	-
Mohawk	-	1	1	-	-
Montagnais-Innu	5	-	2	-	1
Naskapi	-	1	-	-	-
Inuit	-	1	1	-	-
Other	-	1	1	-	-
Total	**10**	**4**	**9**	**0**	**3**
Percentage	**38**	**15**	**35**	**0**	**12**

Table 13: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and education

Age Category	High School Not Completed	High School Diploma	Colleges Courses*	College Diploma	University Courses*	niversity Degree
15-19 years	-	1	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	-	3	1	-	-	-
25-29 years	-	2	-	1	-	1
30-34 years	1	-	-	-	1	-
35-39 years	-	4	2	-	-	1
40-44 years	4	-	-	1	1	-
45-49 years	-	1	-	-	-	-
50-54 years	-	-	-	1	-	-
Total	**5**	**11**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**
Percentage	**19**	**42**	**11.5**	**11.5**	**8**	**8**

Note:
* Program started but not completed.

Ethnic group, however, clearly plays a role in whether a person pursues a college or university education. The least educated women come primarily from the Atikamekw, Cree, Naskapi, Inuit and Algonquin groups, while the most educated are from the Abenaki, Huron-Wendat and Montagnais-Innu First Nations (Table 14).

Table 14: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by ethnic group and education

First Nation or Ethnic Group	High School Not Completed	High School Diploma	College Courses*	College Diploma	University Courses*	University Degree
Abenaki	-	-	-	-	1	-
Algonquin	1	2	-	-	-	-
Atikamekw	2	-	-	-	-	-
Cree	-	1	-	-	-	-
Huron-Wendat	-	1	-	-	1	1
Mi'Kmaq	-	-	1	-	-	-
Mohawk	1	1	-	-	-	-
Montagnais-Innu	-	3	1	3	-	1
Naskapi	-	1	-	-	-	-
Inuit	1	1	-	-	-	-
Other	-	1	1	-	-	-
Total	**5**	**11**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**
Percentage	**19**	**42**	**11.5**	**11.5**	**8**	**8**

* Program started but not completed.

Mother tongue also appears to be a determinant of post-secondary education. Of the 10 women with post-secondary experience, only 3 speak an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue:

the 3 who attended college. The 4 women who attended university, whether they graduated or not, all speak French as their mother tongue (Table 15).

Table 15: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by mother tongue and education

Mother Tongue	High School Not Completed	High School Diploma	College Courses*	College Diploma	University Courses*	University Degree
Aboriginal	4	7	1	2	-	-
French	-	2	-	-	2	2
English	1	1	2	-	-	-
Aboriginal and French/English	-	1	-	1	-	-
Total	**5**	**11**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**
Percentage	**19**	**42**	**11.5**	**11.5**	**8**	**8**

Note:
* Program started but not completed.

Occupation at Time of Interview

Close to 70 percent of the sample, or 18 of 26 women, held a job at the time of the interview; 5 women were in school and 3 were unemployed. In 8 of 10 cases, the jobs were obtained through a program and a large proportion (83 percent) were full-time jobs. At the time of the interview, the proportion of women enrolled in school who were program participants drops to one in five. These women were mainly under 35 years of age (Table 16).

Table 16: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and occupation at time of interview

Age Category	Employed		In School		No Occupation
	With program	No program	With program	No program	
15-19 years	-	-	-	1	-
20-24 years	2	-	-	2	-
25-29 years	3	-	-	1	-
30-34 years	1	-	1	-	-
35-39 years	5	1	-	-	1
40-44 years	2	2	-	-	2
45-49 years	-	1	-	-	-
50-54 years	1	-	-	-	-
Total	**14**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**3**
Percentage	**54**	**15**	**4**	**15**	**12**

Given the nature of the sample, it is no surprise to find that the 83 percent of the women with a job were employed by an Aboriginal organization. These were mainly service-sector jobs (office work, administration or teaching) in community organizations (72 percent) or, in a smaller number of cases, government or para-governmental agencies (17 percent) (Table 18). Analysis by age category and ethnic group reveals no special relationship to the job held at

the time of the interview (Tables 16 and 17). It must be noted, however, that the unemployed women were between the ages of 35 and 44 (Table 16). Furthermore, the jobs in non-Aboriginal companies or organizations were held by women belonging to First Nations with French or English as their mother tongue.

Table 17: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by First Nation or ethnic group and occupation at time of interview

First Nation or Ethnic Group	Employed		In School		No Occupation
	With program	No program	With program	No program	
Abenaki	1	-	-	-	-
Algonquin	1	1	-	-	1
Atikamekw	-	1	1	-	-
Cree	1	-	-	-	-
Huron-Wendat	1	2	-	-	-
Mi'Kmaq	-	-	-	1	-
Mohawk	2	-	-	-	-
Montagnais-Innu	5	-	-	2	1
Naskapi	-	-	-	1	-
Inuit	1	-	-	-	1
Other	2	-	-	-	-
Total	**14**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**3**
Percentage	**54**	**15**	**4**	**15**	**12**

Annual Personal Income

The data on informants' income (Table 19) show annual earnings of less than $12,000 for 13 of 26 women (50 percent of sample). By contrast, 10 women reported annual income exceeding $20,000. Fifty percent of the income was obtained from programs. We also find that participation in a program (regardless of type) does not necessarily relegate clients to low-paying jobs (Table 20).

The data also reveal a slight upward trend in income with increasing education. In several cases, however, higher income is not linked solely to holding a degree or having more education. Women with less education could also earn an annual income exceeding $20,000. This was true of 5 of the 16 women with no post-secondary education (Table 21).

Age does appear, however, to have a direct impact on income. In the category of income under $12,000 are primarily young informants; in the category over $20,000 are women aged 35 and up. In the middle income categories ($12,000 to $30,000), however, all age categories are represented (Table 19). Finally, at first glance, ethnic origin appears to have no influence on income. Low income is reported by women from all First Nations, but higher incomes are observed among the Abenaki, Algonquin, Huron-Wendat, Montagnais-Innu, Inuit, and Aboriginal people from other provinces.

Table 18: Distribution of employed persons (urban areas), by age and employer category

Age Category	Government or Para-Governmental Agencies	Community Organizations	Self-Employed
15-19 years	-	-	-
20-24 years	-	2	-
25-29 years	1	2	-
30-34 years	-	1	-
35-39 years	1	4	1
40-44 years	-	3	1
45-49 years	-	1	-
50-54 years	1	-	-
Total	**3**	**13**	**2**
Percentage	**17**	**72**	**11**

Table 19: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and annual personal income

Age Category	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
15-19 years	1	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	2	1	-	1	-
25-29 years	2	-	1	1	-
30-34 years	1	-	-	1	-
35-39 years	1	1	-	4	1
40-44 years	1	3	2	-	-
45-49 years	-	-	-	-	1
50-54 years	-	-	-	-	1
Total	**8**	**5**	**3**	**7**	**3**
Percentage	**31**	**19**	**11.5**	**27**	**11.5**

Table 20: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by main source of income and annual personal income

Primary Source of Income	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
Salary (non-program)	-	-	2	-	2
Program	3	3	1	5	1
Education allowance	3	1	-	-	-
Employment insurance	-	-	-	2	-
Social assistance	2	1	-	-	-
Total	**8**	**5**	**3**	**7**	**3**
Percentage	**31**	**19**	**11.5**	**27**	**11.5**

Table 21: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by education and annual personal income

Education	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
High school not completed	2	2	1	-	-
High school diploma	4	2	-	4	1
College studies not completed	2	-	-	1	-
College diploma	-	1	1	-	1
University studies not completed	-	-	1	1	-
University degree	-	-	-	1	1
Total	**8**	**5**	**3**	**7**	**3**
Percentage	**31**	**19**	**11.5**	**27**	**11.5**

Aboriginal Women in the Regions: Profile of Program Clientele

The three communities surveyed were the Montagnais-Innu community on the North Shore, and two Algonquin communities in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. These communities have provincial highway access and resemble dozens of other Aboriginal communities in rural areas of Quebec.

The average income per resident in these communities ($11,000 to $12,000) falls below the national average for Aboriginal people (about $15,000). The labour force participation rate, which ranges from 33 to 43 percent, is at least 20 percent below the Quebec average (Statistics Canada, 1998) and also falls short of the average for Aboriginal communities. Although the participation rate in rural Quebec generally falls below that in major cities, the rate for these Aboriginal communities is also lower than that for neighbouring towns.

The low rates are generally the result of a chronic shortage of jobs, which are concentrated primarily in the public service sector (administration, teaching, health care and social services), as well as inadequate education among individuals and weak development of private enterprise and the commercial sector.

As in the previous section, the regional sample has been profiled under six headings: age category and ethnic group; marital and family status; mother tongue and language of work; education; occupation at time of interview; and annual personal income.

Age Category and Ethnic Group

The age of the 34 informants ranged from 15 to 62 and was fairly representative within each age category in the sample (Table 22).[12] Women under 30 make up 36 percent of the sample, while those 30 to 44 years old and those over 44 each account for 32 percent of the total. All these women are status Indians under the *Indian Act*. Half the sample consists of Montagnais-Innu women living on the North Shore, and the other half are Algonquin women in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Eighty-five percent of these women (29 of 34) live in a

community (Table 23). The 5 other women in the sample live near an Aboriginal community, in a neighbouring town, and each has one non-Aboriginal parent.

Although most informants now live in their community of birth, half have lived for varying periods in other Aboriginal communities or elsewhere. In 11 of 34 cases, the women have lived in more than four different places. Education is the reason they temporarily left their home community, although family reasons were also cited.

Table 22: Distribution of sample in regions, by age

Age Category	Number	Percentage
15-19 years	4	11.8
20-24 years	4	11.8
25-29 years	4	11.8
30-34 years	2	5.8
35-39 years	6	17.7
40-44 years	3	8.8
45-49 years	5	14.7
50-54 years	3	8.8
55 years +	3	8.8
Total	**34**	**100**

Table 23: Distribution of sample in regions, by place of origin

Place of origin	Number	Percentage
Montagnais community	14	41.2
Algonquin communities	15	44.1
Outside community	5	14.7
Total	**34**	**100**

Marital and Family Status

Practically one fourth of women in the regional sample (24 percent) are single, compared with 38 percent in the Montréal sample. The difference is about the same for women in common-law relationships (21 percent in regions and 31 percent in urban areas). However, the proportion of married women is higher in the regions (26 percent) than in Montréal (12 percent). For separated or divorced women, the proportions are comparable. Single women and those living in common-law relationships are generally younger (under 30) than married or separated women (ages 30 to 62).

The family status of informants also differs from that in Montréal. Few are single without children (18 percent, compared with 38 percent). Women living in a relationship without children are even less common (3 percent compared with 27 percent in the city). An equal proportion, however, live in a relationship with children (29 percent in the regions and 27 percent in Montréal) (Table 24). Family arrangements do differ, however: informants in the regions are more likely to be single parents (23 percent compared with 15 percent in the city) or members of a blended family (18 percent).

Single women and those in a relationship without children are young (under 30), while single parents are 35 or over. Women living with their children and grandchildren are over 40. Finally, women in the regions have an average of 2.7 children, while the average in Montréal is just 1.2. There are variations, however, within the regional sample. Women living in a community have more children than those outside a community (Table 25).

Number of children, family structure and place of residence also have an impact on the number of people living under the same roof. Households average 4.3 people in the regions, 3.0 people outside communities and 2.6 people in Montréal.

Table 24: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and number of children

Age Category	None	1	2	3	4	5 +
15-19 years	4	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	2	1	-	-	1	-
25-29 years	1	-	2	1	-	-
30-34 years	-	1	1	-	-	-
35-39 years	-	-	2	2	1	1
40-44 years	-	-	-	1	1	1
45-49 years	-	-	-	2	2	1
50-54 years	-	-	-	1	1	1
55 years +	-	-	-	1	-	2
Total	**7**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**6**
Percentage	**20**	**6**	**14**	**24**	**18**	**18**

Table 25: Distribution of sample in regions, by place of origin, number of children and marital status

Place of Origin	Number of Children						Marital Status				
	0	1	2	3	4	5+	Single	Married	Common-law	Sep./div.	Widow
Montagnais comm.	3	-	1	4	3	3	3	2	4	3	2
Algonquin comm.	3	1	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	1
Outside comm.	1	1	1	2	-	-	1	2	1	1	-
Total	**7**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**6**	**8**	**7**	**9**	**7**	**3**
Percentage	**20**	**6**	**14**	**24**	**18**	**18**	**24**	**20.5**	**26**	**20.5**	**9**

Mother Tongue and Language of Work

In 29 of 34 cases (85 percent), informants in the regions have an Aboriginal mother tongue (Table 26); the proportion in Montréal is 50 percent. Women indicating two mother tongues (Aboriginal and French/English), like those in urban areas, have one non-Aboriginal parent.

The same sort of differences can be detected for the language of work (Table 27). In 76 percent of cases, compared with 12 percent in Montréal, the informant's Aboriginal language is spoken at work, most of the time along with French or English (with most of the women being over 35). Younger women speak French more often at work.

Table 26: Distribution of sample in regions, by place of origin and mother tongue

Place of Origin	Aboriginal Language	French	English	Aboriginal Language + French/English
Montagnais comm.	13	-	-	1
Algonquin comm.	15	-	-	-
Outside comm.	1	2	2	-
Total	**29**	**2**	**2**	**1**
Percentage	**85**	**6**	**6**	**3**

Table 27: Distribution of sample in regions, by place of origin and language of work

Place of Origin	French	English	French and English	Aboriginal Language	Aboriginal Language + French/English
Montagnais comm.	1	-	-	5	4
Algonquin comm.	2	-	-	-	12
Outside comm.	2	-	2	-	1
Total	**5**	**0**	**2**	**5**	**17**
Percentage	**17**	**0**	**7**	**17**	**59**

Education

Overall, informants in the regions have less education than those living in Montréal. Almost three fifths of informants (61 percent) have not completed high school, compared with one fifth (19 percent) in Montréal. Only 6 of 34 informants graduated from high school. Two of 34 women hold an attestation of college studies; not an actual diploma, this is proof of equivalency obtained by informants without a high school diploma. Three informants obtained a college diploma. Like informants in urban areas, those in the regions with post-secondary credits have studied primarily in social science and the humanities. Study in technical fields is mainly in health care and education.

No informant had a university degree but two had obtained an attestation of Aboriginal teacher training (a non-university-level diploma since there is no college prerequisite), which allows them to teach in an Aboriginal community.

More than in Montréal, age is a determinant of education. For example, women with no more than elementary schooling are all over 45 years old. Women with some high school education but no diploma cover all age groups but are concentrated in the 35-to-54 bracket. High school and college graduates are mostly younger women (under 35) (Table 28).

There is little difference in the level of education of women living in a community and those living nearby. There also appears to be no correlation between mother tongue and education, in contrast to our findings for Montréal. Women in the regions living outside the community whose mother tongue is French or English have a level of education comparable to that of women whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language. We do find a slight difference, however, between Montagnais-Innu and Algonquin informants. Close to half of the Algonquin women have not completed high school. This number drops to one in three among Montagnais-Innu women.

Table 28: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and education

Age Category	Elementary School	High School Not Completed	High School Diploma	College Courses*	College Diploma	Teacher Training
15-19 years	-	1	3	-	-	-
20-24 years	-	2	-	-	1	1
25-29 years	-	1	1	1	1	-
30-34 years	-	-	1	-	1	-
35-39 years	-	5	1	-	-	-
40-44 years	-	2	-	1	-	-
45-49 years	2	2	-	-	-	1
50 54 years	2	1	-	-	-	-
55 years +	3	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**7**	**14**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**2**
Percentage	**20**	**41**	**18**	**6**	**9**	**6**

Note:
* Program started but not completed.

Occupation at Time of Interview

More than two thirds of informants (70 percent) held a job at the time of the interview. This proportion is comparable to observations in Montréal. However, slightly more informants in the regions than in the city take occupational training courses (24 percent compared with 19 percent in Montréal). Only 2 of 34 informants had no job at the time of the interview. Age appears to have no special impact on whether a woman holds a job. However, jobs linked to an employability program appear to be held primarily by women aged 35 or under (Table 29).

It is interesting to note that two fifths of jobs in the regions are linked to programs, compared with three fifths in Montréal. The situation is different for studies linked to training programs; these cases are much more common in the regions (three in four jobs) than in Montréal (one in five).

The type of job held by informants in the regions differs as well from that in Montréal. Although also linked to services, the range of jobs is more varied in the regions than in Montréal: in addition to office work and jobs related to education and administration, women work as rangers, truck drivers, dental assistants, cooks, visiting homemakers, receptionists, factory employees, craftspeople, etc. The proportion of full-time jobs, at just 63 percent in the regions (Table 30), also differs from Montréal (83 percent). The percentage of part-time or seasonal jobs therefore is higher in the regions. Finally, in the regions as well as Montréal, an Aboriginal organization is the employer in over 80 percent of cases.

Women in the regions often work in local government (38 percent) or for organizations reporting directly to the band council (school, health care and social services, community radio, public safety). In contrast to informants in Montréal (72 percent), few informants in the regions (13 percent) work for community organizations, which are located outside the community. There are also few self-employed women (8 percent) and factory employees

(4 percent). Age appears to have no real impact on type of employer, although we did find a strong presence of women over 40 in local government (Table 31).

Table 29: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and occupation at time of interview

Age Category	Employed		In School		No Occupation
	With program	No program	With program	No program	
15-19 years	1	-	-	2	1
20-24 years	3	-	1	-	-
25-29 years	1	2	1	-	-
30-34 years	1	1	-	-	-
35-39 years	2	1	3	-	-
40-44 years	-	3	-	-	-
45-49 years	-	4	-	-	1
50-54 years	1	1	1	-	-
55 years +	1	2	-	-	-
Total	**10**	**14**	**6**	**2**	**2**
Percentage	**29**	**41**	**18**	**6**	**6**

Table 30: Distribution of sample in regions, by place of origin and type of job

Place of Origin	Full-Time	Part-Time	Seasonal	On call
Montagnais community	5	2	-	1
Algonquin communities	6	5	-	-
Outside community	4	-	1	-
Total	**15**	**7**	**1**	**1**
Percentage	**63**	**29**	**4**	**4**

Annual Personal Income

The situation for annual income also is quite different in the regions. Sixty percent of informants report average annual income of less than $12,000, compared with 50 percent in Montréal. In the over-$20,000 bracket, the proportion in the regions is 32 percent compared with 38.5 percent in Montréal (Table 32). On average, then, incomes in the regions are slightly lower than in Montréal.

More informants in the regions (45 percent) than in Montréal (19 percent) derive most of their income from a salary in a job not related to a program. This situation is probably attributable to the smaller number of job access programs available in the regions. The contribution of programs to informants' income therefore is smaller: 16 percent receive job access program benefits, compared with 42 percent in Montréal. Similar to the situation observed in Montréal, employment programs do not relegate women to low-paying job categories. At the same time, earning a salary (outside a program) does not automatically mean having a higher income than through a program (Table 33).

Table 31: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and employer category

Age Category	Band School	Health Care and Social Services	Community Radio	Public Safety	Local Government	Community Organizations	Para-Gov'tal Agency	Self-Employed	Manufacturing
15-19 years	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
25-29 years	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
30-34 years	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
35-39 years	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
40-44 years	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
45-49 years	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
50-54 years	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
55 years +	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-
Total	**2**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**
Percentage	**8**	**13**	**8**	**4**	**38**	**13**	**4**	**8**	**4**

Table 32: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and annual personal income

Age category	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
15-19 years	2	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	1	2	-	1	-
25-29 years	-	-	1	2	1
30-34 years	-	1	-	1	-
35-39 years	3	2	-	1	-
40-44 years	2	1	-	-	-
45-49 years	1	1	1	1	1
50-54 years	2	-	-	1	-
55 years +	1	-	-	2	-
Total	**12**	**7**	**2**	**9**	**2**
Percentage	**38**	**22**	**6**	**28**	**6**

The percentage of social assistance recipients is slightly higher in the regions (19 percent) than in Montréal (12 percent), regardless of whether informants take part in a job access program. A slim proportion of informants (7 percent) in Montréal and the regions receive employment insurance (with or without a program) as their main source of income. The proportions are also the same (13 percent) for women receiving an education allowance.

Age has a special effect on income. Salaries outside a program are earned primarily by women over 40 years old. Younger women instead earn their income from job access programs, education allowances or training programs paid for in part by social assistance.

Even more noticeably than in Montréal, informants' education appears to have little impact on their income (Table 34). Women over age 45 with no high school diploma report salaries of more than $20,000 while younger, more educated women report income under $6,000. Place of residence appears to have more correlation to income: women outside the community (although few in number in our sample) declare higher incomes.

Table 33: Distribution of sample in regions, by main source of income and annual personal income

Main Source of Income	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
Salary (no program)	3	3	1	5	2
Program	2	1	-	3	-
Education allowance	2	1	1	-	-
Employment insurance	1	1	-	1	-
Social assistance	4	1	-	-	-
Total	**12**	**7**	**2**	**9**	**2**
Percentage	**38**	**22**	**6**	**28**	**6**

Table 34: Distribution of sample in regions, by education and annual personal income

Education	Under $6,000	$6,000 - $12,000	$13,000 - $20,000	$21,000 - $30,000	Over $30,000
Elementary education	3	1	1	2	-
High school not completed	6	4	-	4	-
High school diploma	1	1	-	2	-
College not completed	1	-	1	-	-
College diploma	-	1	-	1	1
Teacher training	1	-	-	-	1
Total	**12**	**7**	**2**	**9**	**2**
Percentage	**38**	**22**	**6**	**28**	**6**

Clientele Profiles in Perspective

This section departs from presentation of results of the survey conducted by the Partenariat Mikimon. Before we move on to assessment of participation by Aboriginal women in employability programs, the authors first conduct a brief review of the literature in light of the survey findings. The themes of education and employment are then documented from the information provided by the informants in the interviews.

A Parallel between the Data from the Literature and the Survey Findings

The findings presented in the two preceding sections have allowed us to develop a quantitative profile of the samples formed during the survey conducted by the Partenariat Mikimon. We have seen that the literature does not provide all the necessary information to place each of these new results into proper context. The samples are also fairly small. The data therefore remain preliminary and it would be risky to attempt to extrapolate from them

beyond the actual survey. Some of the results, however, have been matched with data from the literature, and in some cases similarities emerge. In many others, by contrast, new data have been revealed that at least qualify the thrust of certain interpretations.

The differences identified in the survey between the profiles of women living on and off reserve in the number of children (fewer off reserve), mother tongue (more often English or French than an Aboriginal language off reserve), education and income (higher off reserve), are mirrored in the literature. On the other hand, the link established between speaking English or French as mother tongue and studying at university is fairly new, to the best of the authors' knowledge. Similarly, the information that half the women in the urban sample have no children (where age does not fully account for this situation) comes as a surprise since we know that Aboriginal women, on the whole, have higher fertility rates than Quebec women as a whole. We must consider, however, whether this is a particular characteristic of women in employability programs.

In the area of family status, the profile of the women interviewed also differs from the trends identified in the literature. There are many reports that women living in the city are more likely to be single parents than women in the communities (Gill et al., 1995; Potvin, 1991); our survey found instead that single-parent families are more common in the regions than in Montréal.

The survey findings on mobility and change of residence open other new avenues. They suggest in particular that women on reserves move more often than indicated by data in the literature. It is commonly believed that Aboriginal women off reserve generally move more than women on reserves (DIAND, 1996). The survey suggests that, among program clients at least, geographic location has no influence on the fairly significant ability of women to change residence.

Mobility of Aboriginal people has always been studied in terms of the geographic site represented by the reserve: they lived either on or off the reserve. This is reflected in the reference categories in the body of statistical data, which make an overall distinction between Indians on and off reserves. This also leads to the common perception that even now, fewer women on reserves change their residence. The living conditions of Aboriginal people have changed, however, as have the interactions between city, region and reserve.

The fact that these reference categories generally disregard the new living conditions of Amerindians or Inuit has major consequences for research. Consider, for example, the category of Indian women off reserves: a woman living in a rural village next to the reserve is generally given the same statistical profile as one living in a large city or major metropolitan area, since both are living off their reserve. In other words, the use of statistical data also entails certain limits and may lead to conclusions that do not necessarily reflect the reality. For this reason, we opted for a survey that combines quantitative and qualitative data.

Finally, we commonly find in the literature that more education makes it easier to find a job and earn a higher income. One situation highlighted in our sample of women in the regions (several with very little education have a job and earn a higher-than-average salary) opens

the way to new analysis of this factor. In fact, age rather than education appears to be a determining factor in many cases. Given the role of the elderly in Aboriginal societies and the respect they are generally shown as wise and experienced people, it should come as no surprise that age has a different effect, even for employment. A broader survey on this topic might lead to a new understanding of the very structure of the job market in Aboriginal communities.

Informants' Comments about Education and Employment

On the basis of the information gathered in the survey, the team saw a need to address the issue of client groups in qualitative terms. Education, for example, involves more than holding a diploma. Mobility also may not be a simple of matter of the number of places where a person has lived. The work world cannot always be summed up by a participation rate. To define more effectively both the context in which employment or training programs are delivered and the paths of the women who enter these programs, the Partenariat team turned its attention to the education history of these women, their experience in the work world and their personal history.

Education history

With only a few exceptions, the education history of all informants essentially is characterized by frequent moves and repeated interruption of their studies. This is a far cry from the linear path so common in the rest of Canada.

Two specific situations shed new light on moves: first, the residential school experience,[13] shared by most informants over 35 years old, whether they now live in Montréal or in the regions; second, the need to leave the community to pursue post-secondary education. The latter situation particularly concerns younger women since all communities now have an elementary and a secondary school, with only very rare exceptions. In both cases, however, the requirement to leave community and family is a present and determining factor. In the past, children had to leave at a very young age, for very long periods, once they reached school age. The informants' memories of this experience are marked by sadness and disappointment. Today children leave at a later age to attend college, but this is still a requirement faced by most graduates of Aboriginal high schools, who must take upgrading courses to be accepted into college.

A second aspect shapes the informants' education history: repeated interruption of their education. Even more than mobility, interruption of studies at some point forms an integral part of their school experience. Many boys drop out and many girls become pregnant; the number of young people who do not finish high school by age 18 can easily reach 90 percent. And among those who do and who decide to obtain a post-secondary education, very few do not interrupt their studies several times along the way.

For many young informants in our samples, there is a considerable difference between the effort required in high school and in college. Of all the events that marked their education, they found this transition the hardest. Not only is the coursework more demanding in college but work has to be submitted by specific deadlines, something for which they say they were

not prepared. Shyness also often prevents them from seeking assistance or advice, with the result that they drop out.

Repeated interruption of studies also accounts for the phenomenon of returning to school, mentioned in the literature, and explains the popularity of remedial programs in many communities. In addition, a growing number of women whose children are grown return to school to upgrade their training.

Employment history

The employment history of informants parallels the non-linear path of their education history. The women have held many different jobs, interspersed with periods of unemployment or social assistance, breaks to raise children, and returns to school. This situation is characteristic of women over 35 years old and those with little education. A few also reported that they were coping with personal problems (divorce, alcoholism, mourning) that affected their participation in the labour market.

This checkered history may also be attributable to a lack of jobs. In Montréal, where there are more jobs, informants in the same age categories have more periods of employment than women in the regions. They also experience fewer and shorter periods without work, and earn higher incomes.

A closer look at employment history, however, reveals that the concept of a career or the ability to choose an occupation are fairly new issues. The young women spoke of their education and work in these terms, especially those with French or English as their mother tongue, who often have one non-Aboriginal parent.

It would also be difficult to talk about the employment history of Aboriginal women without addressing the issue of child care. The Survey of Aboriginal Peoples (Statistics Canada, 1993) shows that the lack of child care services is considered an obstacle to employment by 14 percent of Aboriginal women in Canada. Two patterns involving child care emerge from the Partenariat Mikimon survey. In the regions, informants paid little attention to this issue. For most, the issue of child care appears to cause no difficulty or be perceived as an obstacle: a close family member (mother, sister, niece, spouse, etc.) takes on this responsibility, often without requiring payment. Several comments by informants even give the impression that working while raising children is a matter of course. The concept of double duty did not arise in the interviews with informants.

The pattern is quite different for informants living in Montréal. Their remarks are closer to those usually reported in the literature: problems in finding a child care solution, fatigue, stress, feelings of guilt, etc. City life appears to exert more pressure on working mothers. Women living in Montréal also believe that the situation would have been easier if they had stayed in their community, where they believe that someone they know would have cared for their children, and they would have entrusted their children to that person with no misgivings.

Personal History
The theme of personal history is also woven through the issue of employability, whether in terms of frequent changes of residence, self-esteem, the need for support and supervision, or the discrimination and violence inflicted on many women. None of these problems is simple and each takes on a particular focus depending on the age, personal experience and living environment of the informants.

Informants from the regions and Montréal have lived in many places, as we have already pointed out. On average, they have lived in three or four different places for periods ranging from a few months to a few years. They often move to continue their education but give other reasons as well, especially a move by the family, placement in a foster home, the search for a job in the city, fleeing a violent spouse, etc.

This is by no means an isolated phenomenon, but in fact is common to all informants: women in the regions have sometimes lived in major cities such as Montréal and Québec before returning to their community, while the women in Montréal, most of them born in a community, have made frequent moves to and from that community and the city, sometimes living in other places as well. The singular nature of their educational and employment history must also be viewed in light of the high mobility of these women. Leaving their community, settling outside, and returning only to leave again obviously will affect their educational and employment history.

Another facet revealed by the survey involves the delicate issue of social problems. During the interviews, although no specific questions were asked about this issue, women in the regions spoke at length about alcoholism, drugs, spousal or family violence, divorce, parental negligence, assault, incest or rape. These problems are inherent in all their life experiences, whether as part of their education or employment history. They say that these situations, all equally trying and traumatizing, undermined their self-confidence and assurance in dealing with the outside world. Entering a non-Aboriginal workplace or school, where proficiency in a second language is essential, then poses a challenge that many cannot overcome alone.

When they look at their past experience (dropping out of school, losing a job), many of the women find that at some times they could have used more support and encouragement from their close family. They add that they had precious few role models to inspire them as young people. However, women who obtained a post-secondary education or who hold a job in their community say that they had this support and, more important, are now aware that they serve as role models for younger generations.

Main Points and Summary of the Chapter

The main purpose of this chapter was to describe and profile the female Aboriginal clientele of employability programs in Montréal and the regions. Although the samples are small, analysis of them allowed us to document certain current trends and to reveal new situations or, at the very least, to draw attention to less well-known information. The findings of the analysis are summarized under 20 headings.

Although 81 percent of Aboriginal women in Montréal are originally from an Aboriginal community, their family status differs in many respects from that of women in the regions.

They have fewer children (an average of 1.2 compared with 2.7 in the regions). This is primarily because the number of women without children is higher in Montréal (1 in 2) than in the regions (1 in 5). The number of single women is also higher in Montréal, and women in Montréal generally tend to be younger than women in the regions.

Before moving to Montréal, informants lived in several places.

Their presence in Montréal is usually the end result of several moves: three fourths of informants have lived in at least three different cities before settling in or returning to Montréal. Informants originally from rural or isolated communities (in a proportion of 75 percent) have lived in the greatest number of places. Half of informants from the regions had lived in several places, even though 85 percent lived in their community of origin at the time of the interview.

Mother tongue is a determining factor in whether a woman pursues a post-secondary education.

The data gathered in Montréal are clear: 7 of 10 women with some post-secondary education speak French or English as their mother tongue. French is the mother tongue of all 4 women in the Montréal sample who had attended university.

Bilingualism (French and English) is very common among the female Aboriginal clientele in Montréal.

A high rate of bilingualism at work was observed among informants in Montréal: 35 percent use French and English in their work. A high rate of bilingualism (Aboriginal language and French/English) was also observed in the regions (59 percent).

On average, Aboriginal women in Montréal have more education than those in the communities.

One fifth of informants in Montréal have not completed high school; this proportion rises to two thirds in the regions. In addition, 38 percent of women in Montréal have some post-secondary education; this drops to 21 percent in the regions. Four women in Montréal with university experience hold a certificate or degree, while in the regions 2 informants have obtained an Aboriginal teaching certificate.

In the regions, although education levels are generally lower than in Montréal, younger and older women have sharply differing profiles.

All informants in the regions with some post-secondary education are under 35 years old. Women with no more than an elementary education are over 45 years old.

The educational history of informants in urban areas and in the regions is heavily marked by numerous changes of residence and frequent interruptions in their studies.

Eight of 10 women have attended school outside their community. Two thirds of informants dropped out of school and then returned at some later time. For most, this situation occurred more than once.

The jobs held by 78 percent of women in Montréal were obtained through an employability program.

At the time of the interview, 18 of 26 women had a job. In 14 cases, this job had been obtained through a program.

The jobs held by 42 percent of women in the regions were obtained through an employability program.

At the time of the interview, 24 of 34 women in the regions had a job and 10 of these had obtained that job through a program.

Full-time jobs are more common in Montréal than in the regions.

The job held at the time of the interview was a full-time position for 83 percent of the women in Montréal and 63 percent of those in the regions.

Participation in a program does not necessarily relegate women in Montréal or the regions to low-paying job sectors.

In Montréal and the regions, half of women with annual personal income of over $20,000 take part in an employability program. For 33 percent, programs provide access to higher income than do jobs outside a program.

In the regions, age more than education has an impact on whether a woman earns an annual income of more than $20,000.

In Montréal, a correlation can be established between education and income; for example, women who have not completed high school earn personal income of less than $20,000. The situation differs in the regions: Among the women over 45 years old, most of whom have not graduated from high school, half report income of more than $20,000. Younger women with a high school or college diploma in turn report income of less than $12,000.

In Montréal, 83 percent of informants are employed by an Aboriginal organization.

The specific nature of the samples partly accounts for these results. In Montréal, informants were recruited primarily from within Aboriginal organizations. However, Aboriginal organizations have only recently become active in the heart of Montréal as employers. There is every indication that with the growing Aboriginal population, new jobs will be created in these organizations in coming years. This constitutes a new job market.

In the regions, 80 percent of informants are employed by an Aboriginal organization.

The situation is even less surprising in the regions. The job market in Aboriginal communities, although often limited, has still grown slightly in recent years with devolution of responsibilities and transfer of services to local and regional authorities.

Many informants have had a checkered employment history.

Many informants have an employment history interspersed with periods of unemployment or social assistance, time off to care for children and repeated returns to studies. This situation is especially characteristic of women over 35 and those with little education.

Balancing work and family appears to pose no major difficulty for most informants in the regions.

For most informants in the regions, the issue of child care is easily resolved: a close family member can care for the children. The situation is different for informants from Montréal. They reported problems in finding child care, plus the fatigue and stress connected with doing double duty, feelings of guilt over having to place their children in daycare, etc.

Place of origin more than ethnic group constitutes a differentiation factor among female Aboriginal clients.

Major differences were observed in the profile of women from communities in the regions or in isolated areas compared with women from communities in southern Quebec. These differences arise primarily in education (less on average for the first group), mother tongue (Aboriginal) and work experience (more limited).

In Montréal, age is a factor that differentiates female Aboriginal clients.

A woman’s age probably has an impact on occupation, income and family life. Compared with their elders, women under 35 generally have a higher level of education and more attend school full time, while fewer are single parents. On the other hand, their average income is below that of older women.

In the regions, age is also a factor that differentiates female Aboriginal clients.

Women over the age of 35 in the regions are more likely to be single parents. Annual personal income is also higher in these age groups. In the area of employment, these women have a large presence in local government.

Many informants would like more support and guidance from their close family in their educational and occupational endeavours.

When they consider their past experiences (dropping out of school, losing a job), many informants find that they would have liked more support from their close family. Those who continued on to post-secondary education or those who easily found a job state that they had this type of support.

2: PROGRAM UTILIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

Some Information about the Programs

Programs Available

Most employability programs now available were introduced as part of the measures developed in the 1980s by the federal government to promote full employment and equal opportunity. With the goal of generally integrating all Canadians into the labour market, these programs specifically target certain client groups that have usually experienced greater difficulty achieving integration: young people, women, visible minorities, under-educated people, the poor and Aboriginal people.

The *Employment Equity Act,* passed in 1986 and amended in 1996, is an excellent example of such measures; it encourages private organizations under federal jurisdiction, as well as the Public Service of Canada, to hire members of visible minorities, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and women (HRDC, 1998).

The employability programs in which the Aboriginal women we interviewed participate fall into three categories: (1) employment and job access programs; (2) training programs; and (3) business assistance programs (Table 35).

Employment and job access programs

Employment and job access programs provide various client groups with paid employment for a specific period, depending on whether these people seek to re-enter the labour market following an absence of a few years, have little or no work experience, or hope to find a job in a specific sector. There are also employment programs that specifically target young people and students.

For recipients of social assistance planning to return to the labour market, Quebec's Programme d'aide à l'intégration en emploi (PAIE) and the federal Work Experience Program (WEP), for example, facilitate access to temporary or term positions (usually for three to six months) in public or private organizations, or band councils in the case of Aboriginal candidates. The job opportunities are varied: home help, building caretaking, office work, tree planting, trail cutting, etc.

The jobs are generally combined with basic practical training. For the duration of the job, the candidate receives social assistance benefits, which are topped up by the employer. At the end of the program, the person keeps the job or is offered another position by the employer.

Qualified clients with more education or some prior work experience may be directly integrated into a work environment. Such a person then receives a salary paid partly by the employer and partly by the program; Health Canada's Careers in Health program or the Employment Insurance Section 25 program are two examples. In the Employment Equity program, the salary may be paid totally by the employer. The programs last from three months to two years, depending on the circumstances.

Specific job access programs also target young people who have completed their education (or are no longer legally required to attend school). This is the case for some measures under the Youth Strategy — the job promotion project developed by HRDC to place young people under 30 years of age. The program covers the full salary (minimum wage) in the case of measures targeting young graduates.

Youth Strategy also provides a Summer Career Placements program (previously the Challenge/ SEED program) for students registered full time in a secondary or post-secondary institution. Although in principle these jobs must be linked to the participant's field of study, more often than not they are office jobs or outdoor activities which young Aboriginal people can access during the summer.

Table 35: Employability programs: type and classification[14]

General Category	Type of Program	Measures
Employment Job access	Employment re-entry	PAIE (Programme d'aide à l'intégration en emploi) WEP (Work Experience Program) UAEI (Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative)
	Job entry	Employment Equity Careers in Health (Health Canada) Employment Insurance Section 25
	Youth employment	Youth Strategy Work experience for young people
Training	Remedial education, back to school, trade courses	APTE (Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi) UAEI (Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative) AWPI (Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative)
	Science camp Entrepreneurial awareness	Youth Strategy
Business assistance	Start-up	ABC (Aboriginal Business Canada)
	Operation	Business assistance loan from Quebec's Ministère du Travail et de la Solidarité

Training programs

Training programs are just as numerous and varied as employment and job access programs, and generally target recipients of social assistance or employment insurance.

One example in Quebec is the Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi (APTE) program, intended for social assistance recipients. Under this program, people fit for work but lacking the necessary resources to provide for themselves and their families can obtain additional financial assistance to cover costs related to child care, transportation if needed, purchase of equipment, etc. The program provides several types of measures designed to enhance employability: training measures, preparatory measures for re-entering the labour market, community activities, etc.

In Aboriginal communities, remedial education courses or trade courses (cooking, carpentry, child care techniques, etc.) are most popular. When the training is provided right in the community, the courses draw a good number of people (usually at least 10 or so). Quite often, this type of training meets specific needs: opening a restaurant (cooking courses) or a daycare centre (child care techniques). However, a person may also submit a request for specific training outside his or her community, and the related costs are then covered by the program.

Training is also available through the Youth Strategy. Young people attending high school full time have an opportunity to take part in a science camp or take entrepreneurial courses outside regular school times (evenings or summer), but they receive no allowance.[15]

Business assistance programs

A third category of programs targets a very specific clientele: applicants who already own a business or have plans to start one in the very near future. If the participant meets the program's eligibility requirements, technical or financial assistance in the form of a grant may be provided to fund start-up of the business or its operations (wage subsidies, for example). Applications may be submitted to several government agencies or authorities: band councils, Welfare, Fonds de lutte à la pauvreté, Department of Indian Affairs, Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative.

Program Administration and Management

Employability programs, and especially training programs, are not a new phenomenon in Aboriginal communities. In the 1960s and 1970s, economic development was spearheaded by DIAND. The goal was clearly to promote self-supporting communities. Courses of all types were provided across Canada on crafts, tent making, baking, plumbing, electrical work, operating heavy machinery, accounting, etc. These courses definitely were an overall success, not because they almost all promoted economic independence or creation of permanent jobs, but really because they generated synergy within the communities. Roughly the same situation is now occurring with group training.

Starting in the 1980s, growing pressure was exerted by Aboriginal organizations wanting to take control of their economic development, but it was not until the early 1990s that the process of devolution of power really began, with Pathways to Success. This strategy of transferring responsibility for training and employment services intended for Aboriginal clients was part of general government initiatives to develop Canada's labour force, with government partners active in some capacity in the field of employment and training (SSC, 1989; EIC, 1990).

The strategy specifically advocated decentralization of services. To this end, budgets for Pathways to Success were administered by Local Aboriginal Management Boards (LAMBs), which also set local training priorities and identified types of target client groups, as well as distributing available funds based on needs, such as orientation, assistance for job seekers, preparation for interviews and skills assessment.

In effect from 1991 to 1996, the Pathways to Success strategy was perceived by the Government of Canada as well as Aboriginal authorities as a transitional phase toward full administration of employment-related matters by Aboriginal people. During this period, the Government of Canada hoped to serve as consultant and funding agency, while gradually withdrawing from the field (DIAND, 1995; PWGSC, 1997).

In 1996, acting on its commitments, the Government of Canada concluded a series of framework agreements on employment with the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. The national agreements led to the development of regional bilateral agreements with First Nations. To date, more than 50 bilateral agreements have been signed in Canada.

The regional bilateral agreement with the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) was signed in January 1996 (CHRDFNQ, 1997). Since then, funds granted to most Aboriginal people in Quebec to fund employment or training projects have been administered by the Commission on Human Resources Development for the First Nations of Quebec (CHRDFNQ), a component of AFNQL. Programs previously managed under Pathways to Success are now the responsibility of CHRDFNQ. This organization has also taken over management of the Aboriginal component of the Youth Strategy, which includes five programs specifically targeting young Inuit and young First Nations Indians.

The agreement ratified with AFNQL covers some 30 Aboriginal communities from nine First Nations (Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Huron-Wendat, Mi'Kmaq, Maliseet, Mohawk, Montagnais-Innu and Naskapi). It also applies to Aboriginal people living in Montréal and Québec. The Inuit communities, the Cree First Nation and three Algonquin communities decided, however, to sign their own separate agreements.

CHRDFNQ focuses on integrating Aboriginal people into the labour market. Members of this organization are the Local First Nation Commissions (LFNC) representing 29 communities, two urban areas (Montréal[16] and Québec), the Regroupement des centres d'amitiés Autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) and AFAQ.

The LFNCs function like the former LAMBs under Pathways to Success. They also often employ the same staff. The local boards set priorities, determine the types of recipients and decide how much money is allocated to various services. The various LFNCs are urged to forge and maintain mutual links so as to exchange ideas and approaches to action. To this end, they share common objectives and promote joint employability measures (Whiteduck, 1996):

- *Support and advice*. This measure strives to provide employment officers with complete, relevant information on the labour market so that they can guide clients effectively.

- *Training and development*. This measure enables clients to acquire the personal and job skills required for the type of job sought.

- *Labour force stabilization*. This measure targets employers so that they can adapt to changes in the labour market by upgrading their employees' skills, hiring more workers, etc.

- *Employability*. This measure strives to give unemployed people the means to facilitate their entry into the labour market. It is also designed to encourage the creation of local businesses and partnerships likely to stimulate job creation.

Many challenges are associated with implementing the regional bilateral agreement; these must be addressed in large part by local officers — that is, two or three people in each community, rarely more. They are expected to have thorough knowledge of the local, regional and provincial labour market, become familiar with the many existing programs, create tools to assist clients, receive and process applications, ensure case follow-up, promote partnerships with potential employers, manage budgets, and draft administrative reports, financial records and assessments.

Aboriginal people living outside a community pose a special challenge. The funds allocated for this client group represent about 8 percent of the total budget for the agreement. This is a small amount given official figures indicating that more than 20 percent of the Aboriginal population falls into this category. Furthermore, only Montréal and Québec are currently covered by the agreement. Growing numbers of Aboriginal clients in the cities of Hull, La Tuque and Val d'Or therefore will not benefit.

The federal government, however, continues to play an important role in managing several programs: Careers in Health (Health Canada), Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative (HRDC), the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (DIAND), Native Employment Program (DIAND), the Aboriginal Masters Program (DIAND), and others. The Government of Canada also handles some responsibilities related to application of the *Employment Equity Act* (HRDC). Administration of these programs may also be governed by ad hoc agreements with Aboriginal authorities. This is true of the Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative, administered in Quebec by AFAQ.

Participation in Employability Programs

The next section of this report deals with utilization of employability programs. Since one criterion used for selecting informants was prior participation in at least one program in recent years, the emphasis is placed on the nature and type of utilization informants make of programs available to them.

In Montréal

The survey findings on participation in programs are clear: employability programs are very popular in urban areas since the 26 informants took part in 89 different programs, an average of 3.4 per informant.[17] A small proportion (19 percent) had participated in only one program. Participation in two, three or four programs was the experience of 15 of 26 informants, a proportion of 57 percent; in six cases, informants actually participated in five or more programs (Table 36).

A correlation between participation rate and age reveals that women under 40 years of age have taken part in more programs than their older colleagues (Table 36). This is confirmed by analysis of the data gathered on women who have never participated in employability programs: three out of four are over 50 and six out of eight are over 40. A correlation can also be made between participation and membership in a First Nation. As Table 37 shows, women who have participated in a large number of programs (five or more) come from rural and isolated communities.

Table 36: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and participation in employability programs (all types combined)

Age Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15-19 years	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-
25-29 years	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
30-34 years	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	-
40-44 years	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	1
45-49 years	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
50-54 years	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**5**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**2**
Percentage	**19**	**15**	**23**	**19**	**12**	**0**	**4**	**8**

Table 37: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by ethnic group and participation in employability programs (all types combined)

First Nation or Ethnic Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Abenaki	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Algonquin	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Atikamekw	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cree	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Huron-Wendat	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Mi'Kmaq	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mohawk	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montagnais-Innu	-	1	3	1	-	-	1	2
Naskapi	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Inuit	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Other	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	**5**	**4**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**2**
Percentage	**19**	**15**	**23**	**19**	**12**	**0**	**4**	**8**

Of all the programs in which informants participated, those related to employment and job access appear to have generated the most interest, since 85 percent of respondents reported participating in such programs at least once (Table 38). Training programs attracted fewer participants in Montréal (35 percent) (Table 39). Only two cases of participation in business assistance programs were recorded in the sample.

Table 38: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and participation in employment and job access programs (student, youth, back-to-work, labour market entry)

Age Category	No Participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15-19 years	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
25-29 years	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
30-34 years	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	1	2	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
40-44 years	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
45-49 years	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50-54 years	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**4**	**7**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**
Percentage	**15**	**27**	**8**	**23**	**11**	**4**	**0**	**8**	**4**

In the employment program category, measures targeting entry and re-entry draw attention since 69 percent (derivative calculation) of informants participated at least once in such programs. These are used primarily by women 20 to 44 years old. The Employment Equity Program has little presence in the sample since only three women took advantage of this opportunity.

In addition, 35 percent of informants enrolled in programs for students, either in their community or during a stay in Montréal. Most young and middle-aged women had participated in more than one student program. Most come from rural or isolated communities: Algonquin, Cree, Montagnais-Innu and Naskapi. The Youth Strategy programs, which include student jobs and jobs for young people as well as science camps, are generally more popular with women under 30 from isolated communities.

Table 39: Distribution of sample in urban areas, by age and participation in training programs (including remedial education, job training and youth training)

Age Category	No Participation	1	2	3	4	5
15-19 years	-	1	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	2	2	-	-	-	-
25-29 years	4	-	-	-	-	-
30-34 years	1	-	1	-	-	-
35-39 years	5	1	-	1	-	-
40-44 years	4	-	1	1	-	-
45-49 years	-	-	-	-	-	1
50-54 years	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**17**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1**
Percentage	**65**	**15**	**8**	**8**	**0**	**4**

In the Regions

Informants in the regions took part in a total of 105 programs, with an average participation rate of 3.0 programs per informant — a lower proportion than city dwellers, who post an average of 3.4 programs. There appear to be no major differences in participation by age category or place of residence (in or outside the community) (Tables 40 and 41).

Employment and job access programs in the regions (Table 42) reached fewer informants (56 percent) than training programs (71 percent) (Table 43). It must be pointed out, however, that informants each participated more often in employment and job access programs (often three, four or even five times) than in training programs.

When we compare the data gathered in the regions and Montréal, we find major differences in participation in the various types of programs. For example, 71 percent of informants in the regions said they had already taken part at least once in a training program; this was true of only 29 percent of women in Montréal. In contrast, employment and job access programs draw fewer participants in the regions (56 percent) than in the city (85 percent). Business assistance programs are used little in either the regions (6 percent) or Montréal (8 percent).

A difference emerges between informants in communities and those living near communities, in the type of programs. The second group participates more in employment programs than women in the communities, although equal numbers take part in training programs.

Table 40: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and participation in employability programs (all types combined)

Number Age Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15-19 years	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
25-29 years	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34 years	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40-44 years	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
45-49 years	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
50-54 years	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
55 years +	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	**11**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**-**	**-**	**1**
Percentage	**32**	**23**	**12**	**3**	**12**	**3**	**6**	**6**	**-**	**-**	**3**

Table 41: Distribution of sample in regions, by ethnic group and participation in employability programs (all types combined)

First Nation or Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Montagnais comm.	5	5	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-
Algonquin comms.	6	1	3	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	-
Outside comm.	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	**11**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**-**	**-**	**1**
Percentage	**32**	**23**	**12**	**3**	**12**	**3**	**6**	**6**	**-**	**-**	**3**

Table 42: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and participation in employment and job access programs (student, youth, back-to-work, labour market entry)

Number Age Category	No Participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15-19 years	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
25-29 years	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
30-34 years	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40-44 years	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45-49 years	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50-54 years	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 years +	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**15**	**9**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**2**
Percentage	**44**	**26**	**12**	**3**	**6**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3**	**-**	**-**	**6**

Among employment programs, those related to re-entry and entry generated the most interest among women in the regions: 47 percent of this group participated in such programs at least

once. This proportion is lower than in Montréal (69 percent). Youth Strategy employment programs were also used less in the regions (15 percent) than in Montréal (35 percent). The fact that these jobs are reserved on a priority basis for students enrolled full time, with a good academic record, may explain their greater popularity among more educated clients in the city. The Employment Equity Program is not well known in the regions. Only two women participated, and they had grown up and lived outside the community.

Among training programs, job training (especially remedial courses) drew interest among informants in the regions: 56 percent participated at least once, while 24 percent of women participated more than once. In addition, women in the Montagnais-Innu community (in a proportion of two in three) participated more than Algonquin informants (a proportion of one in two) (Table 43).

Age appears to have an impact on participation as well as frequency of participation. Very young women do not participate in this program; the others participate in growing numbers as they age. Informants in the regions also participated in remedial education programs in a slightly higher proportion (18 percent) than women in the city (15 percent). Age also appears to have an impact here since the programs are used more by middle-aged women (ages 35 to 39) and older women (ages 50 to 54). Youth Strategy training programs are used little in the regions (6 percent).

Table 43: Distribution of sample in regions, by age and participation in training programs (including remedial education, job training and youth training)

Age Category	No Participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15-19 years	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-24 years	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-29 years	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34 years	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
35-39 years	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
40-44 years	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45-49 years	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1
50-54 years	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
55 years +	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**10**	**13**	**7**	**2**	**1**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1**
Percentage	**29**	**38**	**21**	**6**	**3**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3**

Informants' Comments on Programs

The third section of this chapter is based on qualitative data. The informants' comments on program utilization and effectiveness are analysed in terms of 10 themes:

- accessibility and eligibility;
- interest;
- duration;

- dropping out;
- allowances;
- employment programs in a non-Aboriginal workplace;
- training programs in a non-Aboriginal setting;
- programs in an Aboriginal setting;
- benefits of employment and job access programs; and
- benefits of training programs.

Although the analysis reflects both sets of information available to the research team, the presentation of findings on the following pages does not adhere to the city/regions duality. The sets of information are not distinct enough to warrant separate presentation. Some themes, however, preoccupied one sample more than the other, and this is indicated where applicable. The theme of accessibility, for example, provides content much more relevant for informants in Montréal since in a community, which essentially is a closed environment, information about available programs circulates much more easily.

Similarly, the comments by informants on programs have not been grouped by whether they were favourable or not. The authors instead sought, through the experiences of informants, to identify the nature of the issues raised by employability programs and, by extension, entry into the labour market.

Accessibility and Eligibility

Do programs reach a clientele already informed of their existence, a clientele already in contact with Aboriginal organizations that manage budgets and administer those programs? The analysis clearly reveals two specific patterns among informants in Montréal: pre-existing contacts with the organizations in question and interpersonal networks:

> *I started here doing volunteer work. Then when the program opened up, they asked me if I was interested in working here. (M-39-F-37)*[18]

> *I usually called people I knew and it always happened to be at the right time. Now they said: "Ah! There may be something for you in that place. Give your name." So I gave my name. And that's how it happened. (M-04-F-38)*

In the regions, and especially in the communities, information moves quickly among relatives and friends; this is usually how informants heard about training available or opportunities for obtaining a job through a program:

> *It was [X] who told me about that course. He told me to go sign up, I would be good at it [child care techniques]. It's true, I've always liked children. So I put my name down. (R-10-F-25)*

Women also learn about the existence of a program, however, through local employment centres, which hand out pamphlets door to door in communities, use bulletin boards in public buildings or distribute information via community radio.
Informants quite clearly encountered no major obstacle in accessing not so much the information as the actual programs. At worst, they talked about having a hard time when a potential employer requested an interview with the applicant:

> *Yes, I have gone through many interviews . . . it's not always easy. I was never prepared. Today you have to prepare, but back then, I didn't know how to prepare. Interviews are torture, especially the first time you go out to work. When you say, "I want to work, I don't want to stay on Welfare for the rest of my life." Sometimes, you know, there are questions like "What are your strengths?" "I don't have any! But I do have lots of shortcomings." (Laughs.) (M-28-F-38)*

As a rule, though, registration formalities are facilitated by the intake agency, especially when it is an Aboriginal organization. And this is especially true when the main condition for eligibility is precisely being an Aboriginal person.

> *At first, I didn't know that AMAM, the Association de la main-d'oeuvre Autochtone de Montréal, existed. She asked me, "Would you be interested in working for the project? You'd start in May. You'd be paid through a grant from AMAM." I didn't even know it existed. And like the other program for Aboriginal women, I didn't know they provided grants for working women. Another person told me about it. These were things I didn't know about. (M-41-F-27)*

The situation becomes more problematic and thus more complex when eligibility conditions are tied to education and skills, or to administrative considerations. Since the pool of available jobs is limited, clients cannot always be offered a job directly related to their education.

> *Like when I was working for the Equity Program, I was offered permanent status in my position, but that wasn't at all what I wanted to do. I felt no fulfilment from what I was doing and I told myself I was capable of doing more, so I handed in my resignation. (M-30-F-30)*

In the area of education, however, informants have had to turn a job down much more often because they lacked the required education. The main requirement is usually a diploma. Even when only a high school diploma is required, as we have seen, this can pose a major obstacle, especially in the regions and generally for older women, whether in Montréal or a region.

The eligibility conditions that generated the most comments and least understanding were clearly those linked to administrative restrictions. As a rule, informants have more trouble accepting exclusion from a program (Section 25 for example) because they do not qualify for employment insurance or have not received benefits over the past three years, or because they have received training in the past year (which disqualifies them for a second). Some say

they want to work, but the system does not help them by recognizing the efforts they make to get out of their situation.

Interest

The dissatisfaction created by eligibility criteria is probably exacerbated by the fact that the very concept of a program is often unclear to informants. This is shown by the large number who stated, when first contacted, that they had never participated in programs. In the course of the conversation, it was discovered that many women had in fact participated in not just one but several programs. In contrast, some informants made little distinction between a job training program and a personal development or yoga course, for example.

When the issue was examined in greater depth during interviews, it became clear that regardless of its nature, the job access program was often seen as a job, not a step to be completed, an opportunity to learn. It came as no surprise then to find that very few informants knew the name of the program in which they were registered, much less the name of the organization that sponsored them. Nor were we surprised to find that the administrative restrictions faced by some occasionally gave rise to misunderstanding and dissatisfaction.

Informants also did not know the source of their salary. Perhaps the band council? Maybe the Department of Indian Affairs? Recent transfers of program administration from government bodies to Aboriginal authorities were totally unknown, and informants even appeared to have little concern about such matters.

The job access program *is* truly perceived as a job. It is an available job, the same as any other job for which applicants are sought. This is a perception shared, although to varying degrees, by informants in urban areas as well as the regions. It is no doubt based, however, on past experience in communities. Women who come to the city, except for those very young, already have job experience or training in their community of origin. This experience colours their view of the working world, even after many years in the city.

The information provided by a few resource persons also documents this phenomenon, since they estimate that at some periods of the year, more than 50 percent of the labour force in a given community is enrolled in one program or another. There are so few jobs available, they explain, that clients seize any opportunity to work.

Viewed from outside, interest in employment programs therefore is strong, but in reality the interest is in the work, the salary and the self-fulfilment provided by the job obtained. Informants in the regions, like the other women in their community, accept jobs that are available regardless of the arrangements or the type of work offered. They have no trepidation about working in a wide range of trades in the construction industry, appliance repair or even driving heavy vehicles. Some women living in a community in fact fear only one thing: landing and not being able to turn down a job outside their community:

> *After our internship, after our training, they asked us if we could work as replacements outside. It wasn't for me because I can't drive. If they called me*

> *in the morning, I still couldn't get there because I don't drive. I might be willing to work outside later, when my children can take care of themselves, but my goal is to work here. . . . Our people are shy, maybe because we live here, on our own. And when we go outside, we're afraid of speaking French poorly. (R-09-F-40)*
>
> *Even if my job here had not worked out, I wouldn't have been willing to work outside. I've always thought that rent for an apartment costs a lot. At the time, my man asked me, "How about going to go work in James Bay?" There were openings. "We'll make good money." But I didn't want to. In the same way, my old employers asked me to go work outside. There still were no openings here, I wasn't earning a big salary at the time, but I said no, I preferred to stay here with my small salary than go there and pay rent. I was against that. My place is here. (R-18-F-45)*
>
> *Q: Would you like to find a job outside?*
> *A: Oh, no! Things are not that bad. I'll apply here, but I won't go looking for a job there. And I have my house. I've just moved in: I wouldn't want to leave right away. (R-10-F-25)*
>
> *Q: If you had work outside, would you go?*
> *A: No. My place is here. (R-58-F-42)*
>
> *Q: Would you have liked to go live elsewhere?*
> *A: No. I like it better here.*
> *Q: If you were offered paid work outside, would you go?*
> *A: No. I'm only happy at home. (R-55-F-39)*

The opposite behaviour (leaving the community), however, is also observed among women in the city. Despite this paradox, the interest in work is equally strong in Montréal and the regions. The fact that many women work as volunteers in various Aboriginal organizations before being officially hired through a program clearly illustrates this.

The interest in training programs is not as great, since they are clearly seen for what they are: a temporary measure, a transition between two situations. The fact that these programs provide structure, especially in the communities, and generally provide a group for informants contributes directly to their popularity.

Duration

Few comments were made about the duration, except that employment programs generally are too short, according to some informants. However, they complain not so much about the duration of programs as their temporary nature. In contrast to informants' expectations, employment programs do not necessarily lead to a regular job. Similar dissatisfaction was more evident among informants in Montréal, and more often among young women in the regions.

Several cases of informants who met the job requirements but were still let go at the end of a program were identified during the survey; the employer replaced them with other candidates to avoid having to pay a salary. Although some later found another job, several returned to employment insurance or even social assistance where the program was too short and disqualified them for employment insurance. Some informants even moved from one program to another to keep a job they liked:

> *I stayed with the agency providing the program. That helped me continue but I would always remain on projects: Section 25, the PAIE program, Section 25, the PAIE program. If you wanted to keep working with these agencies, to promote them, you had to do this because they had no money to pay for a real job. (M-26-F-38)*

> *I find that programs are a measure that doesn't let you be independent. You just have to look for a job, and afterwards you're unemployed again. There's no stability. It's a stopgap measure. (M-04-F-38)*

Dropping Out

Dropping out is another aspect little discussed by the informants (barely 10 percent of all informants talked about this). Few reported dropping out of a program, yet the resource persons indicate that this is a common phenomenon (discussed later).

When informants did talk about it, however, they cited external factors to justify their decision to drop out of a course or their exclusion from it:

> *I dropped out after I suffered a great loss, a family member died. Where I was working, they had no understanding of what I was going through. They actually fired me. I didn't necessarily want to quit, I was there to stay even if I didn't find it all that interesting. Admittedly, I wasn't at all successful in fitting in with the others. (M-26-F-38)*

> *Well, I was kicked out of the program. I had the knowledge required to do the work. I had a good relationship with my boss, who was an Aboriginal person, but I lost a lot of that closeness. I admittedly lost a lot of it because of my interaction with a co-worker who caused me to lose some of my self-confidence. It was a personality conflict. I had communication problems. That was the biggest problem I ran into. And I always have trouble coming in on time. (M-50-F-28)*

> *I didn't like it so I left. . . . I threw it all away and I left the others working where I was. . . . I used to drink a lot. . . . Now I'm through with that foolishness! (Laughs.) (R-65-F-46)*

> *I liked the program. It was supposed to last three months but I left after one month. I was just 16 years old, all I cared about was having fun, taking drugs, sniffing. . . . I can't hide the fact I have problems. Even though I was*

> *in a detox centre, I still have problems with substance abuse. I'm not yet on the right track to finding my way out. (R-60-F-17)*

Allowances

Although a few informants reported (sometimes as a joke!) being attracted to a program by the salary, they rarely broached this topic on their own. The fact that they were paid to take part in a program appeared to be taken for granted. The money they would receive constituted a plus, as long as it was more than welfare benefits. In the regions, they even accept that some programs pay more than others: for example, employment insurance programs pay a higher allowance than social assistance programs for the same work. A different picture, however, was again presented by the resource persons, who believe the salary or allowance is a major incentive for participating in programs, especially training programs.

Thus, the strong popularity of training programs in the regions must be examined in terms of the key role of the allowance. After dropping out of high school, many young women (and young men in some cases) resume studies later through (paid) adult education programs:

> *I dropped out in secondary II. . . . I was no longer interested in going to school. . . . I told my teachers, "I'm quitting school, and anyway I'll enrol in adult courses." It's true, I know people who graduated from high school as adults, and they were paid to study. (R-53-F-22)*

In communities where training programs are more numerous and accessible, informants were quick to enrol in several programs, as we have seen earlier in this chapter:

> *For training, we had to come in each time. We had times to come in, five days a week. We had to do that. We always got paid every two weeks; we had to work 40 hours every two weeks. (R-65-F-46)*

Employment Programs in a Non-Aboriginal Workplace

Although most programs took place in an Aboriginal setting (either in the communities or Montréal), about 10 informants worked elsewhere — particularly women who took part in the Employment Equity Program. When asked to talk about their experience, they readily focused on everything surrounding the program: the workplace, routine, schedules, working relations, atmosphere, etc.:

> *My personal priorities are contact between employer and employee. Always working as a team is important. If I don't have that, there's no communication, I can't work because I don't know where I'm headed in the work. (M-25-F-40)*

Of all aspects linked to holding a job, human relations appear to be the most important. Interpersonal conflicts are perceived as especially unpleasant, but in the women's own opinion, these situations are just as unpleasant in an Aboriginal setting. There are differences, however, between the two environments: in Montréal for example, the work world is considered more

stressful, competitive, structured, rigid, disciplined and individualistic. People constantly have to prove themselves, some women noted:

> *Among the whites, there are a lot of little concerns, the minor details are very important. They are very stressed. Especially in the banks. There is a lot of competition. Among Aboriginal people, it's not as bad. (M-35-F-23)*

On the other hand, there are more jobs and a broader range of jobs in non-Aboriginal settings, and they provide an opportunity to gain more experience. Working relationships can also be more harmonious, and finally, punctuality is important:

> *But I have also met wonderful non-Aboriginal people who helped me a lot. They supported my efforts and encouraged me. (M-30-F-30)*
>
> *The whites are more open, better communicators. I've learned that with them. (R-71-F-38)*
>
> *Yes, arriving on time is important. But sometimes I'm late, it's not easy walking from one time to another, especially for an Aboriginal person. I find it hard. (M-25-F-40)*
>
> *I arrive too early . . . because we start at 9:00 and I arrive at 8:30. Yes, it's important to arrive on time because even if you're hired on contract, your name is still there. You get noticed, even if people don't tell you, they see you coming. Act so they can rely on you or count on you. (M-35-F-23)*

Discrimination, a topic always likely to arise in non-Aboriginal settings, seems not to be a constant during programs. At worst, informants have to tolerate what they themselves describe as unpleasant remarks:

> *Well, you know sometimes, some people will say, "Oh, you got the job because you're a woman and you checked the box for Aboriginal." That happens. I find that really bothersome. I say to myself, "Yes, well, that may help in the Equity Program but what can I do? That's the way it is. On the other hand, I have the skills for the job. They're not going to take me just because I checked off two boxes if I can't do the job right." Sometimes that happens and I find it very bothersome when it does. But I let them say what they like. Listen, it's their problem. They're the ones who are unhappy. I just do my work as best I can. (M-30-F-30)*

These experiences working in a non-Aboriginal setting, as well as their consequences, were reported in 8 of 10 cases by women whose mother tongue is French. Half have a non-Aboriginal parent and several have spent most of their life outside a community. They were already familiar with the "world of the whites," as they call it. Women in the communities were more reserved in their assessment of the world of the whites — quite often, they claimed, out of fear of losing their identity.

Training Programs in a Non-Aboriginal Environment
The situation is somewhat different for training programs in a non-Aboriginal environment. The experience was shared in this instance by some 15 informants from the city as well as the regions, living in a community as well as outside. When they had a genuine interest in job training, they were quick to enrol, even if they had to attend classes along with non-Aboriginal people. Some showed no reluctance, despite experiences of isolation and discrimination as children in elementary school — experiences fortunately not repeated in their training program:

> *I learned a lot from the whites, both in work terms and personally. Before that, I was a very shy person, very withdrawn. . . . Then with all the programs I took, it helped me open up, and in the International Tournament [of a training program], we had to speak in front of 100 to 5,000 students. . . . These types of things taught me how to grow. When I was in school with Amerindians, you know them all and it seems you think only about having fun, so you fool around more than when you're alone with whites. When you're all alone in a class with non-Aboriginal people, you tend to pay more attention and you concentrate more to try to understand. (R-66-F-30)*

Employment Programs and Training Programs in an Aboriginal Environment
The vast majority of informants in urban areas and in regions participated in programs in Aboriginal settings. They said they liked feeling close to their family, roots and culture. In Montréal in particular, informants repeatedly stressed the importance of working with other Aboriginal people:

> *What I really like is to be in contact with Aboriginal people, that's something important for me. (M-24-F-49)*

> *What I like best about my work is when I see Aboriginal people together, having fun together. (M-39-F-37)*

> *Yes, I liked my work, I was with people I knew. They were all people from my community. (M-31-F-40)*

Informants able to compare this environment with that of non-Aboriginal people all stressed the more relaxed atmosphere that prevails and the flexible work rules in an Aboriginal setting. Yet the comparisons remain and Aboriginal workplaces are not automatically free of all types of pitfalls:

> *Working with Aboriginal people, you laugh a lot. That's what I like. That's what's good about Aboriginal people. (M-35-F-23)*

> *People are very flexible here. I'm not like a secretary or receptionist where you have to be there. Initially, we had talked about me working at home two days a week. And the hours are not a problem either. For example, I worked from 9:00 to 4:30, but now my man has to start work earlier. He works evenings. So I asked my boss, "Can I come in from 8:30 to 4:00?" and she*

said: "That's not a problem. As long as the work is done, I trust you." And it's all women, they know what it's like to raise children. I don't have to feel ill at ease about missing a day because my daughter is sick. I can ask them and feel good about it. (M-30-F-30)

Yes, it's not the same. I think the pace with Aboriginal people is smoother and more relaxed. You take the time to breathe and do what you have to do. Of course there are rush jobs, like anywhere else, but they place more importance on the person. You have more fun doing what you're doing, it's more comfortable. (M-30-F-30)

You don't manage your time in the same way. When I organize activities, I'm always rushed with deadlines and tight timetables. The difficulty with Aboriginal people may be in getting answers. Waiting until people take up files. You know, in summer, there aren't many people, people take vacation. In the fall, they have their hunting and fishing trip. There may be that. I always had to set up and complete things with deadlines. You always end up too late with the project. You should start the project a little earlier. And people don't think about that. (M-33-F-42)

What I find difficult in the communities is the comments made by others. Some tell you, "You have more education . . . you have more job opportunities outside your community, you shouldn't be here." It's a little hard to take from your own community.
(M-04-F-38)

In the city, there's lots of work. In Aboriginal communities, there's much less. You have more choice in the city, I would say. And in an Aboriginal setting, interpersonal and family relations are a bigger factor in selecting the candidate — "Oh, you know so-and-so" — and at the interview, if there's one person who doesn't like you or vice versa, you might not get the work or the job. That's a major shortcoming in the area of employment in Aboriginal communities. Although the same thing happens in small towns in Quebec. But in the city, you don't have that aspect. You'll have a reporting structure with a very clearly established decision-making process, selection panel, etc. (M-33-F-42)

Benefits of Employment and Job Access Programs

Even though employment and job access programs, in the opinion of many informants, do not always lead to a stable job (although this does sometimes happen), there are still significant benefits. Programs provided an opportunity to get out of the house, rebuild self-confidence and learn about personal skills and interests in work and training:

I was on welfare after my husband died. I said to myself, "We were never on welfare when my husband was alive, I can't settle for that. I have to work." That's how I got into training for tree planting. What did I get out of it? Well first, it brought in money. It was also satisfying. I was happy to leave for

work in the morning. Now I look at those trees and they're this high. And I'm always proud: I'm the one who planted those trees. . . . Afterwards, I felt like enrolling in the cooking program. (R-12-F-62)

Several informants noted the importance of work experience gained in a program, later helping them in their search for a job. Informants in Montréal also reported that the links they forged at work helped them connect into a job network:

I also had contacts with other people working in the field. Then at one point, I was able to land small contracts here and there, thanks to them. Of course these are temporary measures. But some are positive. It's temporary but on the other hand it lets you make contacts in preparation for looking for a job. (M-04-F-38)

I was very lucky, I skipped a lot of steps, and I was hired without completing my internship. . . . For the program, they had found us an employer for our internships. As soon as he saw my c.v., I was called for an interview and he hired me. . . . After a certain number of hours, I'll have permanent status. (R-64-F-28)

Benefits of Training Programs

Training provides another type of satisfaction. It gave rise to very few critical comments. Training is actually viewed as a first step to a better life, whether financially or personally. In addition to the diploma, training leads to pride, sometimes a job, often enough interest to continue efforts and search for a job. Expectations do vary, however, between younger, more educated informants living in Montréal and older, less educated women living in a community. The first group is more demanding than the second. The distinctions merit consideration:

I was proud of myself. Just imagine! I had actually finished something. After that, well, I found myself a job, not the job I wanted but it doesn't matter, I was so happy to be doing something. (R-18-F-45)

When I passed my literacy course last year, I made 76.5 out of 100. I was happy. And I told my son, "I passed my exam." I can tell you my son was happy. My oldest son said, "Congratulations, Mom!" (R-23-F-50)

Reference Persons' Comments on Programs

As indicated in the introduction, 22 resource persons[19] in Montréal and the regions were consulted during the survey by the Partenariat Mikimon. Half were Aboriginal people and almost two thirds were women. Their remarks were also analysed under a number of themes — in most cases, the same ones as in the analysis of informants' comments. The approach to these themes varies, however, given resource persons' professional involvement in the world of work or education. Six themes are discussed in this section:

- accessibility and eligibility;

- interest, duration and dropping out;
- allowances;
- the work world;
- benefits of employability programs; and
- program management.

Accessibility and Eligibility
In the opinion of the resource persons, the program accessibility and eligibility difficulties faced by women had to do not with overly rigid requirements but rather with the specific characteristics of Aboriginal clients, especially the lack of education, work experience and self-confidence. The language issue, which was not cited at all by informants, also imposes serious limitations, according to the resource persons:

> *For Aboriginal people, the difficulties in accessing programs are the same that pose obstacles to employment. First, they lack education as well as work experience. Language is also a problem. We must recognize too the presence of racism in some organizations but not everywhere, since some are open. The major problem, however, is lack of confidence, the basis of all the other problems. Some people start on-the-job training through a program but drop out because they don't feel up to the task. Lack of confidence is really what's stopping them. (PR-15-H-NA)*[20]

> *I have worked for many years as a counsellor at the Employment Centre and I can tell you that Aboriginal clients will make very little use of existing services, such as those of Emploi-Québec. Aboriginal people make little use of these services but might use them more if they knew that it was a place specifically for Aboriginal people. (PR-21-F-A)*

Interest, Duration and Dropping Out
The interest shown by participants in a specific program is considered by all the resource persons an indispensable condition for its success. They point out, however, that this interest is not solely the responsibility of participants. It is viewed as one of the program outcomes, an actual component of the program. Thus, employers and instructors also have a duty to ensure that interest is maintained.

Aboriginal women apparently show more interest than men under the same circumstances. Women are even inclined in some cases to choose programs that pay less because their stated objective is to improve their life and that of their children (PR-01-F-NA; PR-03-F-A; PR-04-F-A; PR-21-F-A):

> *I find that the women are more willing to work than the men. . . . When I see people at the Centre, even people from the community whom I know, there are women who are more capable of finding a job than the men because the type of work a woman seeks is clerical office work, or something similar that is more accessible. But would a man want to be a clerk in an office? No. That*

is considered women's work. It's not easy for them to go through the process of finding a job or seeking training. We also see that the women who come to Montréal come to get an education, live a better life than in their community, escape from violence and so on. They come here for a better life and they have a clear objective. . . . I find that most of the women try to do something because it's for their children or themselves. (PR-04-F-A)

We have seen that informants discussed the theme of dropping out very little. According to the resource persons, dropping out is quite common and is seen as an expression of declining interest rather than lack of perseverance. The difficulty of finding one's bearing's in a new area and the lack of examples to follow in their community also appear to have a destabilizing effect on the women (PR-11-H-NA; PR-10-FA). Moreover, programs specifically for Aboriginal people appear to generate more interest among participants (PR-07-F-NA; PR-13-F-NA; PR-15-H-NA).

The resource persons also differ from informants in their comments on the length of programs. In their view, short programs are preferable to those that are too long, discouraging many participants (PR-03-F-A; PR-21-F-A). Short programs would be more popular, for example, with women returning to the labour market after an extended absence (PR-03-F-A):

What I do if someone has been on welfare for a long time, the top priority with these women is to encourage them to take training. This often is not very easy. We'll find training that will actually help them find a job afterwards. This is a mix of computer skills and other tools to teach them how to become organized, find child care, draw up a budget, things like that. The course is for 2 weeks. We adapt a program that would normally take 10 weeks to make a 2-week program. One thing we find with these women is that programs for six months or 52 consecutive weeks pose a problem. The drop-out rate is too high. So we start with little steps in our programs, specifically to prevent drop-outs, because six months is often too long for these women. (PR-03-F-A)

However, participants do not always drop out of a program for the same reasons. A few women among the most educated are sometimes offered better-paying jobs right in the Aboriginal community:

Even with programs such as Employment Equity, the problem often has to do with keeping Aboriginal people in a position. They often get more attractive offers outside the departments, in Aboriginal organizations or band councils, for example. Aboriginal people with a job in the public service belong to a group of educated, often politicized, individuals in high demand in Aboriginal political organizations. They are offered better salaries and conditions than in the department, and often positions with more responsibility. Aboriginal people do not stay long in positions in the departments, which explains their lower representation. Aboriginal people often apply for senior, managerial or executive positions even if they lack the formal training, because they held

> *similar positions in their community. They have "natural" leadership abilities, for example, which are not recognized in the public service. In any event, companies must do more to recruit Aboriginal people and people with disabilities. Employers often insist that education and language problems pose major obstacles to hiring Aboriginal people. Many employers find all sorts of good reasons for not hiring Aboriginal people. (PR-05-H-NA)*

Allowances

All the resource persons agreed that financial allowances or benefits paid to people taking a program serve as an incentive: this is a major factor encouraging people to enrol in any program. Most people apparently would not enrol if they were paid no allowance, whether they live in the city or a region.

This view held by resource persons, however, must be qualified. Although they cite this motivation for enrolling in a program, it should not be regarded as specific to Aboriginal people. It is entirely legitimate for the allowance received through a program to be a key factor since the ultimate objective is to earn a living (and perhaps support dependants).

If we remember here that in Aboriginal communities, where jobs are scarce, participation in a program is considered a job, there are even more reasons for the financial component to play a significant role. What really matters in the end is the ability to earn a living. Many sources confirm that in Aboriginal communities, having money that can be spent to meet one's needs carries a high value, even more than having a job. There is no doubt that a more thorough study of the concept of money would make a relevant contribution to the analysis.

The Work World

Fitting into a workplace or group, feeling comfortable there and developing good relations with others are all important factors in the development of people taking a job access program. These factors generally help maintain interest in a program. Analysis of our interviews reveals the importance of the environment for informants, often more than the work to be done or the course itself. The resource persons also discussed this point and several stated that integration into the workplace was one of the keys to the smooth operation of programs.

When people participating in a job access program lack the necessary tools to integrate into their new work environment, especially if this is a non-Aboriginal setting, they gradually become isolated and eventually drop out of the program:

> *Aboriginal people often feel isolated or ill at ease because they are unable to fit in. So one morning they just stop showing up. That was the problem. Since she did not adapt well to her work environment, she always felt a bit sidelined and one morning she just lost interest, which I can understand. In her place, I too would lose interest and would clearly want to do something else. For the individual, this was not an interesting experience. (PR-17-H-A)*

In the opinion of many of the resource persons, Aboriginal clients have a greater need to develop a bond of trust in order to integrate and function as part of a group. Since most Aboriginal people have already experienced discrimination, especially at school, this has undermined their self-confidence. Women, however, appear to fit into a group more easily than men, even a non-Aboriginal group. They are described as more open and experience less difficulty in communicating than Aboriginal men (PR-01-F-NA; PR-03-F-A; PR-04-F-A; PR-08-H-NA; PR-21-F-A).

Benefits of Employment and Training Programs

Employment programs do not always immediately lead to a regular job. Most resource persons consider this a foregone conclusion, since the issue of employment in Aboriginal settings is too broad and extends beyond the scope of programs. However, where certain conditions are met (sustained interest, integration into the group or work environment), a program may take on a broader scope and even achieve its prime objective over the longer term.

The sense of worth and pride felt by women taking and completing a program are the benefits most often mentioned both by informants (especially in the regions) and resource persons (of all origins and ethnic identities, as well as both sexes). Sense of worth and pride are important because they lie at the very core of the employment problem. Women participating in employability programs often initially display low self-esteem. They sometimes feel incapable of functioning in the work world. Enrolling in and completing a program motivates them to continue their efforts toward obtaining a job:

> *Employment problems cannot be solved with programs. If programs succeed at least in restoring people's self-confidence, sparking their interest in returning to school or taking control of their life, this is a big battle that has been won. (PR-01-F-NA)*

There are other benefits beyond a sense of pride. Participants are paid and gain work experience that will serve them in future (PR-10-F-A; PR-13-F-NA; PR-15-H-NA; PR-21-F-A). Similarly, summer programs for students provide jobs for many, but they also create an incentive for succeeding in school because they require a good academic record (PR-13-F-NA).

When a person drops out, however, because of a failure to integrate or lack of the necessary skills, the effects are much less positive, for the participant of course but also for everyone else working directly or indirectly to make programs run smoothly. When a participant drops out of an employment program in the private sector, thereafter it is very difficult to interest the employer again in another program. The resource persons' efforts to forge links with employers go for nothing. These experiences also reinforce negative preconceptions about Aboriginal people:

> *I set up arrangements and we invested effort and money in things that didn't work out. The employer was very disappointed and I'll have a lot of trouble placing a second or third participant. So we have to be very careful. I can understand that employers must be open to training people, but we can't ask them to do the impossible. We have to come to them with candidates who*

> *have a minimum level. Because in addition to problems of shyness and adapting to a group, you have certain work-related problems because there is a minor education shortfall. (PR-17-H-A)*
>
> *Aboriginal people lack work experience and this often results in a lack of interest in work. Even Aboriginal private-sector companies here do not hire many Aboriginal people. Their concern is profitability. This sometimes discourages us too, we make every effort to start up employment programs with the private sector. We guide people, we train them, we find them a placement and they drop out. Sometimes we're very discouraged. (PR-14-F-A)*

Program Management

The recent changes affecting management of programs, which now are administered locally by Aboriginal organizations, have had several positive effects in the opinion of resource persons. They report that the programs have greater flexibility because client needs take precedence over those of companies.

The new structures provide greater flexibility in terms of program management, candidate eligibility and exploration of new approaches in the labour market. Candidate job placements appear to increase as a result. The changes have a greater impact on staff, however, increasing their workload and responsibilities compared with the Pathways to Success era. Staff also need training, according to several resource persons.

Programs Tailored to Aboriginal Clients?

One solution strongly advanced in recent years to facilitate integration of Aboriginal clients into the labour market is the approach of tailoring employability programs to Aboriginal culture and learning methods (RCAP, 1996; MSRQ, 1995). This concept has been present throughout this study and has been examined from various angles. However, the theme is vast and extends beyond the immediate framework of the study, although it was raised in the remarks of many informants and resource persons. In fact, on a broader scale, it refers to the issue of self-dependence and, in the view of Aboriginal people, the ability to determine the type of services best suited to meeting their needs.

For purposes of this report, however, the research team gathered a range of views on the issue, presented in this section. Standing out from all the others is one specific case in the regions that was a success in the opinion of everyone involved. This was a training course in child care techniques offered in the three communities covered by the survey. By describing and documenting this experience in particular, the authors hope to illustrate through an actual case the challenges now faced in training and employability in an Aboriginal community.

Reaction of Informants in Montréal and the Regions

Informants in Montréal define a program tailored to Aboriginal clients in unequivocal terms: Such a program serves only Aboriginal clients. The program first must meet their powerful

need to be with other Aboriginal people, an especially important need in the city, where they live in a very different world from their community of origin. They claim to feel better understood among Aboriginal people and less intimidated, and this facilitates their progress in a job or training:

> *I would say that an Aboriginal program is useful because our needs are not the same. We're made a certain way, we have lived a certain way in a community, then we land in the city and we have to adapt, reshape ourselves. It's hard because the other person often doesn't understand what an Aboriginal person may experience outside her village. That's often why there is a lack of communication between employer and employee. (M-25-F-40)*
>
> *The training I received was exclusively for Aboriginal people. The people were attentive to us. One of us was Inuit and from a distant place. The other students and staff could understand what she was experiencing. (M-37-F-36)*
>
> *Yes, they're always useful [programs for Aboriginal people], that's for sure, but there must be different programs in the communities and in the city. Programs should be adapted to these settings. There are also specific factors in the city. Among Aboriginal people in urban areas, there are French speakers and English speakers, and some people are between the two because they speak both languages. . . . Aboriginal people in the city are harder to reach because they don't have an Aboriginal ghetto, if we could call it that. They are harder to reach and more mobile as well. (M-04-F-38)*

Informants in the regions, like those in the city, also believe that adapted programs are those for Aboriginal people only. The issue differs for them, however, since in the community, the need to be with other Aboriginal people is not expressed in such terms; it is a prerequisite of the very structure of the community. When they are faced with the outside world, a new pattern of interpersonal relations emerges and the challenges shake their identity. When they sense that their identity is threatened, the need to be in a familiar environment, where the cultural and social referents are unchanged, is more keenly felt.

This situation illustrates that the employment and training needs of Aboriginal people, while basically different from those of Quebeckers or Canadians, also vary within the group. Apparently reflecting this clear need to work in familiar surroundings is the phenomenon described in Chapter 1: the very high proportion of informants in Montréal now holding jobs (whether obtained through a program or not) in Aboriginal community organizations. Familiar surroundings quite clearly appear to be an environment populated by other Aboriginal people.

Reaction of Resource Persons

The theme of programs tailored to Aboriginal clients was discussed at much greater length by the resource persons. This is an issue they ponder each day in the performance of their professional responsibilities and duties. Their perspective is more analytical and focuses on the desire to design solutions suited to integrating Aboriginal clients into the labour market.

Opinions differ enough, however, to be discussed under three headings: the clientele, eligibility conditions and training content.

The clientele

In terms of the clientele, Aboriginal people's desire to remain within their own group appears to have a strong impact on the success rate of tailored programs: the drop-out rate definitely is lower (PR-21-F-A; PR-15-H-NA; PR-17-H-A). Candidate selection is simpler because all the files examined are similar. For example, since most Aboriginal people are shy and reserved in the opinion of many resource persons, they are at a disadvantage in a standard interview:

> *I think that one of the other characteristics specific to many Aboriginal people is shyness. These are shy people who perhaps are not used to diving in. Aboriginal people do not like to sell themselves or boast a lot, while we know that the job market now requires people to do exactly that. But the motivation is the same. It just isn't expressed in the same way. You could conduct interviews with 10 people, 8 non-Aboriginal and 2 Aboriginal people, and I'm virtually certain that in a standard selection process, I know my 2 people will not be selected. After working in the field, however, you start to develop a type of sixth sense that a specific person, through her approach, is truly demonstrating her interest. You quite often move beyond the shyness and beyond language. (PR-17-H-A)*

Furthermore, in employment or training, people find it easier to fit in when a group is homogeneous. It is easier for teachers, employers or counsellors to adapt their approach when Aboriginal people make up most of a group. Because they are with other Aboriginal people, participants progress better, and feel more comfortable and more self-confident. Teachers notice this right away. Some college professors say they have conducted experiments with panel discussions in mixed classes and classes consisting only of Aboriginal people. The results are convincing. In mixed classes, the Aboriginal students experience great difficulty speaking in front of others, and some skip class or actually drop the course. In the Aboriginal-only class, the students speak, laugh and show no reluctance to voice their opinion.

This solution also entails its share of challenges, as noted by the resource persons themselves. Creating more homogeneous groups is not especially conducive to integrating Aboriginal people into the general labour market. Although they perform better within their own environment, the job market is such that sooner or later they have no choice but to leave that environment (PR-08-H-NA; PR-17-H-A; PR-15-H-NA), unless there are enough jobs some day in Aboriginal communities or organizations to absorb the entire Aboriginal work force available, something highly unlikely.

The example of training provided in the communities also draws attention to the tangible impact at the community level. It appears to be unnecessarily expensive to provide job training to 15 people when the community will never be able to employ more than 1 or 2.

Eligibility conditions

The theme of tailoring programs to client needs is closely related to making eligibility conditions more flexible so more people can access an employment or training program. In some cases, greater flexibility in factors such as program length, for example, appears to keep down the number of drop-outs.

Lowering academic requirements to increase interest also appears to be an option considered by many resource persons, given the particular education history of these clients. And it seems to have produced positive results in many instances (PR-03-F-A; PR-17-H-A; PR-21-F-A; PR-15-H-NA).

However, a number of resource persons caution that these solutions risk providing second-rate training and lowering quality on the pretext of adapting to client needs. Most admit that there is no single, easy solution to the problem:

> *We obviously have to ask the community [in the regions] to be prepared to hire Aboriginal people. But in my view, Aboriginal people must be prepared to come part of the way to improve . . . their conditions for accessing jobs, by upgrading their education, for example. They must be prepared to make efforts that may require a lot to adapt to a job. Because in my opinion, we often ask the community to adapt, but both sides must adapt. I believe there may currently be a rather unrealistic attitude prevailing now, which holds that the non-Aboriginal community must always adapt to Aboriginal clients. This may be, but I believe in turn that the other side must come part of the way. Each must do its own part. I really like to say that we each have to pull our own weight. (PR-03-F-A)*

Training content

Programs tailored to Aboriginal clients also affect training content. Several resource persons noticed that before many women job seekers could directly enter the labour market, they first had to master basic skills — such things as how to behave at an interview, preparing a curriculum vitae, gaining a measure of self-confidence, managing one's time and budget, etc. Resource persons therefore often direct clients to transition programs:

> *The labour market search and entry program exists because none of our Aboriginal clients is ready to enter the labour market right away. There is a lack of confidence, self-esteem and work experience. So our program targets these clients. We try to give them the basic tools, through personal development courses for example, to develop their sense of independence and responsibility before placing them in on-the-job training. (PR-21-F-A)*

Aboriginal clients also often require more support and supervision. Non-Aboriginal teachers and employers must realize this and act accordingly.

The Case of Training in Daycare Techniques

In the mid-1990s, a major round of consultations revealed the existence of considerable needs for child care services in Aboriginal communities in Quebec (Ross et al., 1995). The

recommendations emerging from these consultations stressed the need to establish daycare centres and early childhood assistance services, and to train specialized Aboriginal staff to ensure their effectiveness. Steps were taken in this direction in many communities, especially to meet training needs. This training took several forms, depending on the community and the resources available on site or nearby: training delivered in the community; training delivered in a college with no special arrangements for Aboriginal clients (college courses accredited by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec); and training delivered in a college with content adapted to Aboriginal clients.

At the time of the Partenariat Mikimon survey in the regions, it happened that the three communities surveyed had tried out two of these approaches and the outcome, in the unanimous opinion of the informants and resource persons, had been extremely positive. In one case, participants had obtained training directly in a college, but in a class made up solely of Aboriginal people, while in the other, training was provided right in the community.

The success of this training was assessed first in terms of participation. Although the programs were fairly long (9 months in one case and 14 in the other), 90 percent of participants completed their training. However, the success is also due to the fact that candidates were selected primarily on the basis of interest and personal ability rather than academic record (this was a college-level course and several applicants had not completed high school or even elementary school):

> *I had long dreamt of taking this course [in child care techniques]. If I hadn't been shy when I left high school, I would have gone to Jonquière to take the course. But this field also had quotas and required high marks, which I didn't have. I was sure I wouldn't be accepted there. So when I learned there was a program [in child care techniques] just for Aboriginal people, I jumped at the chance. (R-10-F-25)*

The fact that the instruction was adapted was also viewed by organizers as a factor in the program's success: the practical component immediately followed the theory courses. This "skill-based" approach was modelled on the course previously given by the Cree in the James Bay region:

> *The principle is to apply theory immediately. We talk about something in the morning and in the afternoon we bring in children so the students can see what we're talking about in tangible terms. . . . The result is that they try things at home with their own children. Then they come and tell me, "You know, what you taught me the other day, I saw it with my own child." They take new ideas home, new approaches. They are much more assertive than at the start, now they have something to say, they have learned something, they know something, they have gained confidence. These are women who have learned from these courses to be assertive, at home and in the community as well. (PR-20-F-NA)*

> *Compared with other students who pick up the subject matter easily, I don't find school easy. The child care courses were right for me, easy to understand. More so than in high school. The approach wasn't the same, nor was the way it was taught. We had theory but we also had a lot of practice, that's what was different. (R-09-F-40)*

Finally, the follow-up provided by organizers and teachers helped reinforce the self-confidence and self-assurance of many participants:

> *You don't recognize them any more. When they first came here, they didn't talk much but just looked down at the floor. Now they come in and say hello to me. They laugh, they're in a good mood. (PR-17-H-A)*

These women now have a better chance of finding a job, according to the resource persons. This training definitely was closely linked to the fact that daycare centres would be created in the communities, so specialized staff would be required. In fact, most participants now work in their community, but they still have acquired various skills that they can use in other settings:

> *These women will be ready to work in any environment and handle even more, because in addition to the courses in child care techniques, they took courses in early childhood services. The course is recognized by the Department, and is included in the legislation on daycare services and early childhood centres. (PR-20-F-NA)*

Main Points and Summary of the Chapter

To conclude this chapter, we will recall its two main objectives: (1) to provide an assessment of program utilization by the female Aboriginal population in Montréal and in the regions; and (2) to present an assessment of program effectiveness, based on the statements by informants as well as resource persons. In the same way as for Chapter 1, the results in this chapter are gathered under 22 headings.

Each of the 60 informants participated on average in at least three employability programs.

Whether in Montréal or the regions, participation in employability programs is very high. For all categories combined, informants participated overall in 193 programs.

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Informants in Montréal who are originally from rural or isolated areas participate in more programs than those from southern Quebec.

All the women who participated in five or more programs came from First Nations in the Subarctic (Montagnais-Innu, Algonquin, Cree). Montréal informants who had never taken part in a program originated in three of five cases from southern Quebec.

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A majority of informants in Montréal participate in job access programs.

In Montréal, 85 percent of informants participated in job access programs. These were mainly job entry programs, which attracted city dwellers aged 20 to 44.

A majority of informants in the regions participate in job training programs.

Among informants in the regions, 71 percent participated in at least one training program. In Montréal the figure was only 29 percent. Job training programs were the most popular in the regions, where they attracted more than half of the women. These women were over the age of 20 and lived in their ethnic group's community. Remedial education courses also reached slightly more women in the regions: 18 percent compared with 15 percent in the city. These were mainly women aged 35 to 54.

More informants in Montréal than in the regions participate in employment programs for students.

Student employment programs were used by 35 percent of informants in Montréal, compared with 15 percent in the regions. In both cases, the programs reached primarily women under the age of 30. In Montréal, women from rural and isolated communities participated more than those from urban communities or communities adjacent to cities.

Very few informants participated in the Employment Equity Program.

In the regions as well as Montréal, only 6 of 60 informants participated in the Employment Equity Program. These women had a specific profile. In the regions, they were women living outside a community, with one non-Aboriginal parent and French/English as their mother tongue. In Montréal, the women were also more familiar with the non-Aboriginal world; they originated from communities near a city or non-Aboriginal village, and in two out of three cases they spoke French as their mother tongue.

Very few informants participated in business assistance programs.

Participation in business assistance programs was very low in both samples (7 percent). Such programs currently appear ill suited to the needs of Aboriginal clients.

Enrolment in programs poses no problems for most informants.

No informant reported experiencing special difficulties when enrolling in an employability program. They learned about the program through their own network or through existing contacts with organizations; where the second case applied, the organization in question facilitated the enrolment process.

Many informants regarded the program as a regular job.

Few informants could recall the names of the programs in which they had participated and generally did not know the organizations that sponsored them. Instead, they remembered the job itself, the duties they had to perform and their co-workers. Several thought they had never participated in a program, but it was discovered in the course of the interview that they had participated, in some instances repeatedly.

Employment programs are considered too short by some women in Montréal.

Some informants believe that employment programs are too short. They claim they do not have enough time to gain all the necessary experience to be hired for a job in future. The short duration of the program also does not allow them to accumulate enough weeks of work to qualify for employment insurance.

Employment programs do not lead to sufficient job stability, in the opinion of women in Montréal and young women in the regions.

Although they met the requirements for the job obtained through a program, some informants in Montréal, as well as the youngest women in the regions, complained that they were not hired at the end of the program. In some cases, employers replaced them with other candidates. In other cases, they managed to keep their job for a certain time by skipping from program to program.

The positive benefits of employability programs are described by informants in terms of pride and self-esteem.

Resource persons as well as informants (especially in the regions) view employability programs as an opportunity for women to get out of the home, restore their self-confidence and identify their needs and desires more effectively with regard to the work world.

A large proportion of employment programs (78 percent) and training programs (68 percent) are delivered in Aboriginal settings.

Most of the employment and training programs in which informants in Montréal and the regions took part were delivered in Aboriginal settings or with a group that consisted mostly of Aboriginal people. In the regions, 85 percent of employment programs were conducted in an Aboriginal setting, compared with 62 percent of training programs. In Montréal, however, 82 percent of training programs were carried out in an Aboriginal setting, compared with 73 percent of employment programs.

Work experiences in an Aboriginal setting were rated by informants in terms of mutual assistance and emotional support.

Programs in an Aboriginal setting are opportunities for informants, especially in Montréal, to return to their roots and culture. They also like the relaxed atmosphere and flexible work rules.

The work experiences in a non-Aboriginal setting were considered positive despite the more stressful, rigid and competitive atmosphere, in the opinion of informants.

Informants noted that jobs in a non-Aboriginal setting are more numerous and diversified. They liked gaining work experience in this setting, where human relations can also be harmonious.

Female Aboriginal clients show more flexibility and interest in programs than Aboriginal men, according to the resource persons.

Female clients are said to show greater flexibility and adaptability in programs. Some women are even willing to take part in programs that pay less, since their priority is to gain experience and improve their quality of life as well as that of their children.

Dropping out is a major cause of program failure, according to the resource persons.

Many resource persons report frequent drop-outs. Programs for Aboriginal people alone do appear, however, to generate more interest among participants.

The process of devolving power has promoted the establishment of programs more consistent with the needs of Aboriginal clients, in the opinion of most resource persons.

Local administration of programs allows people working in Aboriginal employment centres to respond more effectively to the special needs of these clients. This greater flexibility leads to greater participation in the various programs and to better job placements.

Training programs directly targeting Aboriginal clients meet a clear need of this group to be together.

This need was voiced by informants as well as resource persons. Although stated in different terms by informants in the regions (because they live in an Aboriginal environment), it is still an operative need and programs provide an opportunity to meet it. Further, it appears that programs for Aboriginal people only (or with a large Aboriginal majority) prove more successful.

Job search and labour market entry programs directly address the needs of Aboriginal clients.

Many women seeking a job must learn basic skills before they are ready to actually enter the labour market. These skills include how to behave at an interview, preparing a curriculum vitae, gaining some self-confidence, managing one's time and budget, etc. Resource persons therefore often direct clients to transition programs.

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The concept of programs tailored to Aboriginal culture essentially involves exclusive participation by Aboriginal people, in the opinion of informants.

All the women consulted clearly indicated that an adapted program is one with only Aboriginal participants. This environment makes it easier to overcome shyness and build self-confidence and self-assurance.

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The concept of programs adapted to Aboriginal culture gives consideration to candidates' education and work history, according to the resource persons.

In this approach, clients are often directed to transition programs before directly entering job access programs.

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CONCLUSION

At the end of this report, we should focus on some of the main findings that emerge from our analysis.[21] Like the report itself, these findings have been grouped under two headings: those related to clients participating in employability programs and those focusing on the nature, implementation, operation and scope of the programs. Beyond the socio-demographic information that characterizes client groups, two differentiation factors (place of origin and age) and two convergence factors (mobility and special paths) are especially evident. We should also remember that programs are very popular in Montréal as well as the regions, and that in Montréal programs are conducted primarily within Aboriginal organizations. To identify new avenues for deliberation, the question of programs tailored to this clientele is discussed briefly in light of the overall study findings. The conclusion ends with a brief review of the study's objectives.

Client Groups

Most Aboriginal communities in Quebec are located in rural or isolated areas. The data gathered in the survey clearly show that the informants interviewed in Montréal who originate from these communities, whether Montagnais-Innu, Cree, Inuit, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Mi'Kmaq or Naskapi, do not have the same needs or the same history as informants from communities in southern Quebec (Abenaki, Mohawk, Huron-Wendat). The first difference between these client groups therefore is geographic. A second age-related difference, however, applies among informants in Montréal as well as those in the regions. Clear differences emerged between the profiles of older women, who generally have less education, and those of the youngest women. These groups do not express their needs in the same terms, nor do they share the same objectives. For example, returning to school at 40 years of age poses different challenges from at age 20, even in the communities. Similarly, obtaining a first job at age 35 or 40 entails different challenges from at age 20.

In addition, these data, which clearly show that clients in Montréal are generally more educated than those in the regions, confirm a trend identified in the literature (especially in Gill et al., 1995): women who leave their communities are among the most educated, thereby depriving those communities of their growing strengths in many areas.

Mobility is a key point of convergence. As we have seen, female clients are highly mobile, not only in Montréal (where they have gravitated after several moves), but also in the regions. This mobility among women in the communities (called reserve Indians in the literature) has not been extensively documented to date. Thus, the information obtained in the Partenariat Mikimon survey opens the door to new questions. For example, although the differences between living in an urban area and living in a community have not totally disappeared, can we still claim today that the two worlds are as mutually exclusive as they once were? The sharp distinction between the reserve and the outside world may now be viewed differently. Perhaps the two worlds could be considered complementary rather than opposites.

Young Aboriginal people who wish to continue their education eventually must leave their community. For most, leaving is difficult and all too often results in failure as they drop out of school. Similarly, women who leave their community to escape violence often feel ostracized when they enter the outside world (whether in a town near the community or in a major urban area). Leaving is always difficult regardless of the specifics involved. The prospect of renewing links (personal, structural, administrative) between people in the communities and those living outside (whether temporarily or permanently) seems to be an avenue worth exploring.

In many respects, mobility is also linked to the unique histories shared by most informants. The accounts gathered from those in the Montréal sample and those in the regions speak very eloquently. These histories reflect a continual state of flux that appears to be increasingly common to most informants and accepted by them. The women now know that it will be harder for them than for non-Aboriginal women to complete their education, find and keep a job, etc. Can we assume that this perception deeply colours their life history and actually increases their likelihood of dropping out of school or the work world? The informants often talked about the slope they must climb, which seems so steep that they become discouraged even before starting a new training program or taking a new direction in life.

Program Operation and Scope

The information presented in the two chapters of this report shows that employability programs meet a wide range of needs for Aboriginal women in Montréal and the regions, especially the need of all informants in both samples to earn a living, the need for sufficient income to cover all household expenses, the need to participate in community activities in the case of training programs in communities, and the need to be among Aboriginal people, either in the city or the regions.

The programs no doubt offset the chronic shortage of jobs in communities and clients' lack of training; they also mitigate the problems faced by Aboriginal women living in Montréal in their search for a job. Given this and their heavy utilization, we can also deduce that they are successful and very popular. On the other hand, we must question whether the needs they meet and the roles they fill are truly those for which they were created and are delivered throughout Canada.

In principle, programs are designed to facilitate entry into the labour market. However, there is no indication anywhere how long this facilitation phase should last. Nor does anything challenge the concept of labour market. We have seen that large numbers of informants enrol in programs, not just because jobs are scarce but also and especially because most are in a very particular situation in which reliance on a program is not a one-time phenomenon or a transitional support measure. The program becomes one of many components in a much broader phenomenon that encompasses an informant's entire life. The perception of informants that the program *is* a job is very important in this regard. We have also seen the extent to which the problems of employment, education and living conditions are closely linked. Many resource persons concur and stress that the issue of employment among

Aboriginal people is much too complex to be resolved solely through employability programs, no matter how numerous.

Without a flourishing job market, the scope of programs is limited by the effect of economic circumstances: they are designed to promote job entry, but the job market targeted is too weak and lacks resilience. This poses a definite paradox. The challenge becomes one of simultaneously helping to consolidate or revitalize a job market able to make room for Aboriginal people. Once again, the survey findings lead to new approaches: for example, the fact that a significant portion (more than 80 percent) of training placements and jobs held by informants in Montréal at the time of the interviews are in Aboriginal organizations is very enlightening. We could no doubt discuss this finding and attribute it directly to the way informants have been selected. But this does not rule out the possibility that it may signal the start of an Aboriginal job market in the heart of Montréal. As the Aboriginal population grows and services expand, it comes as no surprise that new jobs are created, and these logically are filled by some of the Aboriginal people seeking a job. This truly constitutes a new trend since the very existence of these organizations is a recent development and there is every reason to believe that their number will grow in coming years.

The situation in the regions is also instructive in this respect. From the example of training in child care techniques, we have seen the extent to which the co-ordination of training and job creation can be very productive and beneficial.

The Issue of Programs Tailored to Aboriginal Clients

The statements in the preceding paragraphs provide the perfect introduction to a final point, which directly raises the issue of programs specially tailored to Aboriginal clients. In the literature, especially in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the need to develop specific programs for Aboriginal people is cited countless times. However, information is lacking on the structure, content and ultimate thrusts of these programs.

In the view of informants, this type of program serves only Aboriginal people. This rules out comparison with the non-Aboriginal population on the basis of academic records, as well as confrontations that may result in discrimination. As we have seen in the case of training in child care techniques, placing participants in an exclusively Aboriginal group has an extremely positive impact on the actual training, course attendance and participant interest. The circumstances were very favourable, however, since a job was practically guaranteed upon completion of the training. But we can still draw inspiration from this experience, not only in the regions, but also in Montréal.

Tailored training programs do carry their share of challenges, of course, and the greatest concern is the relaxation of eligibility conditions to admit clients with a strong interest but lacking the education generally required. The diplomas earned therefore provide access to jobs only in an Aboriginal environment; and the training does not actually promote entry into the job market, although it certainly does promote integration into the community.

Tailored programs do continue to raise a thorny problem in the case of employment or job access in a non-Aboriginal environment. The employers involved are not always prepared to consider criteria other than a diploma or to make an exception for Aboriginal people. One more problem is created by the fact that an Aboriginal person in a program in this setting ultimately is alone (with few exceptions) in an unfamiliar environment. Must we raise the awareness of employers likely to participate in these programs? Should we provide more transition programs focusing on familiarization with the non-Aboriginal world? The very low participation of Aboriginal women in the Employment Equity Program, for example, clearly illustrates this situation. These programs often target more educated clients (already scarcer among Aboriginal people); in particular, they take place almost entirely outside an Aboriginal setting. The difficulties faced in a non-Aboriginal environment by the vast majority of women we interviewed are so daunting that none of the existing programs appears suited to meeting this need effectively.

In a sense, the problem of tailored programs clearly highlights the successful or unsuccessful interaction between two cultures and two worlds. This is a twofold problem, however: there is no doubt that very different traditions, heritage and histories must be considered, while at the same time adjustments must be made in the other direction since the interaction constitutes the link between the two sides.

Review of Objectives

Three specific objectives drove the survey conducted by the Partenariat Mikimon. All were achieved, by fostering the discovery of new information on the many problems linked to employability, and by giving a voice to the women involved.

The first objective, to describe the situation of Aboriginal women with regard to employment and especially employability programs, led to a detailed characterization of the clients who participate in the various existing programs and to renewed interest in the life, education and work histories of these women.

The second objective was to define the specific training and employment needs of Aboriginal women. These needs are many and varied; the programs sometimes meet them for a limited time by paying a salary and providing a job or remedial courses. The very structure of the programs, however, along with the fact that they are fairly short and rarely lead to genuine occupational training, actually exacerbates to some extent the insecurity that already marks every aspect of the informants' lives.

The study's third and final objective was to identify approaches for analysis and deliberation to support the cause of employability among Aboriginal women. The interest shown in women's histories, the approach of rethinking the interaction between the community and the outside world, the real problems experienced by women in functioning in a non-Aboriginal world, their stated need for guidance and the need to reconsider the issue of tailored programs — all are new approaches little documented in the literature to date, with undeniable social relevance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations emerging from the Partenariat Mikimon survey seek to address various types of needs that should be met to provide significant support to the cause of employability among Aboriginal women. They target the acquisition of new knowledge, the dissemination of that knowledge, heightened awareness among and guidance for clients, and the introduction of employability pilot programs. Since the most effective and innovative solutions will be found through concerted action and dialogue, the recommendations speak to all key players in this field: public servants, Aboriginal people, researchers and professional workers.

Acquisition of Knowledge

- ***Continue*** acquiring new knowledge on the theme of Aboriginal women and employment, through partnerships with researchers' research and action networks, professional workers in the Aboriginal sector and resource persons in government. The following themes could be targeted in particular: the concept of a career and enhancing the value of education among Aboriginal people; employment among young Aboriginal women; entrepreneurship among Aboriginal women; and the experience of Aboriginal women in Quebec with the Employment Equity Program.

- ***Encourage*** participatory and collaborative research focused on developing solutions based on the themes identified.

- ***Target*** the creation of data banks at the provincial level, as well as for First Nations and Aboriginal organizations interested in employment and the labour force.

- ***Facilitate*** the dissemination of knowledge to Aboriginal organizations.

Information, Training and Awareness Raising

- ***Create*** multipartite working committees in Montréal and the regions, with representatives of Aboriginal organizations and the private/public sectors, to improve the exchange of information between the parties and to define and implement new guidance, support and follow-up mechanisms for Aboriginal clients.

- ***Promote*** awareness-raising activities with the Aboriginal organizations concerned, as well as new communications tools targeting program clients in Quebec, to meet clients' crucial need for information about programs, their role and scope.

- ***Institute*** ad hoc training sessions for staff of Aboriginal organizations working in the area of employability.

Experimentation

- ***Develop*** a new type of program for Aboriginal women as part of a pilot project, teaching a trade while familiarizing participants with the non-Aboriginal labour market and the labour market in communities. The program could be based on an improved tutoring approach (master-apprentice) and could extend over several years. It would target clients in communities as well as the city.

- ***Commission*** a multipartite committee to study the relevance of building genuine bridges in the area of work between communities and the cities where Aboriginal people live.

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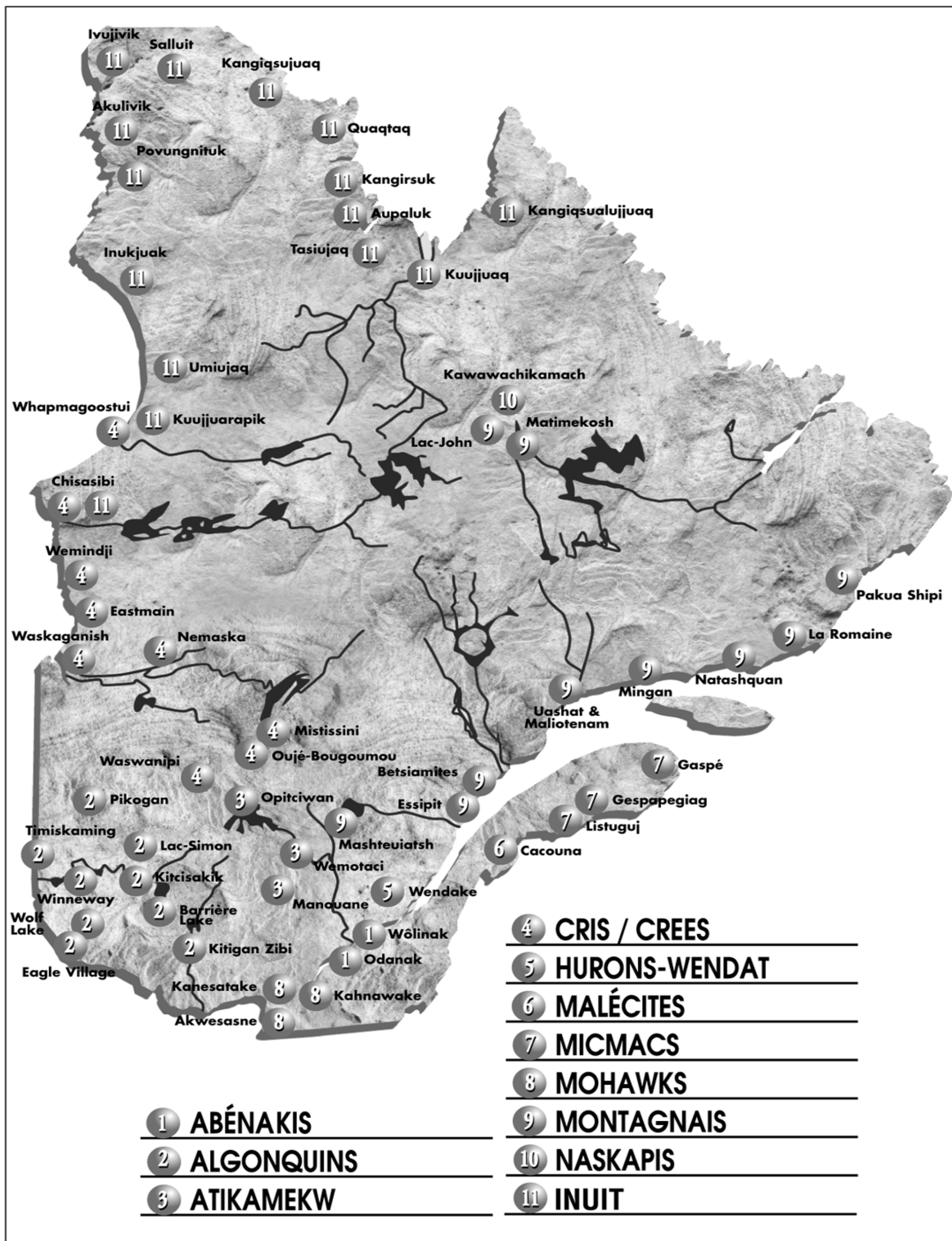
APPENDIX 1: MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND FIRST NATIONS IN QUEBEC



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APPENDIX 2: INFORMANTS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

A: Informants in Urban Sample

Code	Age	First Nation or Ethnic Group	Mother Tongue	Area of Activity	Education	No. of Children	Family Status
M-01-F-33	33	Atikamekw	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary II	0	Common-law
M-02-F-40	40	Mohawk	English	Secretarial	Grade 10	2	Married
M-03-F-36	36	Other	English	Administration	College	1	Single parent
M-04-F-38	38	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Unemployed	Secondary V	1	Single parent
M-05-F-26	26	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary V	0	Single
M-24-F-49	49	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	Secondary V	4	Single parent
M-25-F-40	40	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Unemployed	College D.C.S.	0	Divorced
M-26-F-38	38	Huron	French	Art	Secondary V	0	Single
M-28-F-38	38	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Administration	College	2	Common-law
M-29-F-20	20	Mi'Kmaq	English	In school	College	0	Single
M-30-F-30	30	Abenaki	French	Community	University Bach. equivalent	1	Common-law
M-31-F-40	40	Atikamekw	Aboriginal	Business	Secondary III	1	Blended
M-32-F-27	27	Montagnais-Innu	French and Aboriginal	Film	College D.C.S.	0	Single
M-33-F-42	42	Huron	French	Community	University Certificate	1	Single parent
M-35-F-23	23	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Community	Secondary V	0	Single
M-36-F-40	40	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Secretarial	Secondary I	2	Married
M-37-F-36	36	Huron	French	Education	University Doctorate	1	Common-law
M-39-F-37	37	Other	English	Community	Secondary V	0	Single
M-41-F-27	27	Montagnais-Innu	French	Community	University Bachelor	0	Single
M-42-F-21	21	Cree	Aboriginal and English	Administration	Secondary V	0	Married
M-43-F-38	38	Inuit	Aboriginal	Secretarial	Secondary V	5	Common-law
M-44-F-51	51	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Research	College D.C.S.	3	Single parent
M-45-F-17	17	Montagnais-Innu	French	Student	Secondary V	0	Single
M-48-F-20	20	Naskapi	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary V	0	Single
M-50-F-28	28	Mohawk	French	Community	Secondary V	0	Single
M-51-F-40	40	Inuit	Aboriginal	Unemployed	Secondary III	3	Common-law

B: Informants in Regional Sample

Code	Age	First Nation or Ethnic Group	Mother Tongue	Area of Activity	Education	No. of Children	Family Status
R-07-F-45	45	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Unemployed	Secondary II	3	Divorced
R-08-F-15	15	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal and French	In school	Secondary V	0	Single
R-09-F-40	40	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Education	College Attestation	4	Common-law
R-10-F-25	25	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	In school	College Attestation	3	Common-law
R-11-F-24	24	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Education	Aboriginal teacher training	0	Single
R-12-F-62	62	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Administration	Grade 7	5	Widow
R-13-F-16	16	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary V	0	Single
R-14-F-42	42	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Health	Grade 10	3	Blended
R-16-F-60	60	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Crafts	Grade 7	3	Divorced
R-17-F-51	51	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Crafts	Grade 6	4	Married
R-18-F-45	45	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Education	Grade 11	6	Single parent
R-20-F-39	39	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Social work	Secondary II	4	Single parent
R-21-F-39	39	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary V	2	Common-law
R-23-F-50	50	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	In school	Grade 7	5	Married
R-52-F-35	35	Algonquin	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary I	3	Common-law
R-53-F-22	22	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Communications	Secondary II	1	Single parent
R-54-F-48	48	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	Grade 6	4	Married
R-55-F-39	39	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Maintenance	Secondary I	2	Common-law
R-56-F-45	45	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Education	Aboriginal teacher training	3	Single parent
R-57-F-24	24	Algonquin	French	Community	College D.C.S.	0	Common-law
R-58-F-42	42	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Maintenance	Secondary II	6	Blended
R-59-F-58	58	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	Grade 6	5	Married
R-60-F-17	17	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Unemployed	Secondary III	0	Single
R-61-F-28	28	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	Secondary V	0	Single
R-62-F-34	34	Algonquin	English	Gov't. services	Secondary V	1	Common-law
R-63-F-24	24	Algonquin	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary III	4	Common-law
R-64-F-28	28	Algonquin	French	Manufacturing	Secondary II	2	Common-law
R-65-F-46	46	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Education	Grade 6	4	Divorced
R-66-F-30	30	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	College D.C.S.	2	Common-law
R-67-F-25	25	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Health	College D.C.S.	2	Common-law
R-68-F-18	18	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Police	Secondary V	0	Single
R-69-F-37	37	Algonquin	Aboriginal	In school	Secondary II	7	Widow
R-70-F-51	51	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Community	Secondary I	3	Single parent
R-71-F-38	38	Cree	English	Community	Secondary IV	3	Single parent

C: Resource Persons

Code	Place of Origin	Sex	Identity	Area of Activity	Type of Organization
PR-01-F-NA	Montréal	F	Non-Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-02-F-A	Montréal	F	Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-03-F-A	Montréal	F	Aboriginal	Community	Aboriginal
PR-04-F-A	Montréal	F	Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-05-H-NA	Montréal	M	Non-Aboriginal	Government	Non-Aboriginal
PR-06-F-NA	Montréal	F	Non-Aboriginal	Government	Non-Aboriginal
PR-07-F-NA	Region	F	Non-Aboriginal	Educational institution	Non-Aboriginal
PR-08-H-NA	Region	M	Non-Aboriginal	Educational institution	Non-Aboriginal
PR-09-F-A	Region	F	Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-10-F-A	Region	F	Aboriginal	Social development	Aboriginal
PR-11-H-NA	Region	M	Non-Aboriginal	Educational institution	Aboriginal
PR-12-H-A	Region	M	Aboriginal	Economic development	Aboriginal
PR-13-F-NA	Region	F	Non-Aboriginal	Government	Non-Aboriginal
PR-14-F-A	Region	F	Aboriginal	Community	Aboriginal
PR-15-H-NA	Region	M	Non-Aboriginal	Government	Non-Aboriginal
PR-16-H-NA	Region	M	Non-Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-17-H-A	Region	M	Aboriginal	Employment & training	Aboriginal
PR-18-F-NA	Region	F	Non-Aboriginal	Educational institution	Aboriginal
PR-19-F-A	Region	F	Aboriginal	Educational institution	Aboriginal
PR-20-F-NA	Region	F	Non-Aboriginal	Skills training	Aboriginal
PR-21-F-A	Region	F	Aboriginal	Skills training	Aboriginal
PR-22-H-NA	Region	M	Non-Aboriginal	Educational institution	Aboriginal

D: Informants Who Have Not Participated in Any Program, and Participating Informants

Code	Sex	Age	Place of Origin	First Nation	Mother Tongue	Area of Activity	Education	No. of Children	Family Status
X-06-F-38	F	38	Region	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Education	University Bachelor	2	Single parent
X-15-F-46	F	46	Region	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Justice	University Bachelor	0	Single
X-19-F-50	F	50	Region	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Education	Aboriginal teacher training	4	Married
X-22-H-37	M	37	Region	Montagnais-Innu	Aboriginal	Construction	Secondary V	2	Married
X-27-F-31	F	31	Montréal	Montagnais-Innu	French	Administration	University Bachelor	1	Single parent
X-34-F-50	F	50	Montréal	Abenaki	French	Community	Grade 13	2	Single parent
X-38-F-50	F	50	Montréal	Other	English	Community	Secondary V	4	Single parent
X-40-F-40	F	40	Montréal	Abenaki	English	Unemployed	University Bachelor	2	Single parent
X-46-H-15	M	15	Montréal	Montagnais-Innu	French	Unemployed	Secondary II	0	Single
X-47-F-66	F	66	Montréal	Abenaki	French	Art	Grade l2	1	Single
X-49-H-42	M	42	Montréal	Algonquin	Aboriginal	Administration	Secondary IV	2	Shared custody

APPENDIX 3: DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Employment Equity
Implementation date: 1986, amended in 1996
Government affiliation: HRDC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>Clientele</td><td>Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Employment Equity Act encourages private organizations under federal jurisdiction as well as the Public Service of Canada to develop hiring policies specially designed for the target groups identified. Their action plan must specify implementation methods, objectives and forecast deadlines for integrating members of these groups usually under-represented in the labour force into their staff. The organizations must detail their progress in this area in their annual report.</td><td>Women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal people of Canada</td><td>Although satisfactory results have been obtained for women and visible minorities following implementation of the Act, the program assessment conducted in 1996 clearly showed that the situation remains difficult for Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities, who remain under-represented in the labour force:

The representation of Aboriginal people in the experienced labour force as a whole stood at 2.1 per cent in 1986, compared with representation of 0.66 per cent in the companies covered by the act in 1987. By 1993, this proportion had increased to 1.04 per cent. This is an improvement, to be sure, but by that time the proportion of Aboriginal people in the experienced labour force had also risen — from 2.1 per cent in 1986 to 3 per cent in 1991 (and presumably higher still since then). Thus, the gap between the target and the reality has, in fact, widened rather than narrowed. (RCAP, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 936)

Aboriginal representation in organizations covered by the Act is concentrated in two or three departments specifically involved in Aboriginal issues. In 1993, it appears that many Aboriginal people recruited by employers quit their position that same year. Aboriginal people have the highest turnover rate of the four target groups. This situation is due in part to the fact that they hold low-paying positions with little responsibility and little opportunity for advancement, and to the fact that Aboriginal people feel out of place in these work environments, where there are great differences between Aboriginal cultures and the organizational cultures in such areas as personal relations, decision-making processes, leadership principles and the organization of work. Aboriginal people are especially uncomfortable with bureaucratic jargon and government formalities. They believe the public service leaves little room for independence or creativity.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Sources:
• RCAP, 1996, Vol. 2
• PR-05-H-NA</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Pathways to Success
Implementation date: 1991-1996
Government affiliation: HRDC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>Clientele</td><td>Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>In the late 1980s, as part of a review of its approaches to employment and training, the federal government drew up a labour force development strategy in association with the private sector and other partners, to improve planning of training services. Aboriginal people were brought into this process a short time later through a complementary but separate approach called Pathways to Success. This program was allocated a budget of $200 million, administered by Local Aboriginal Management Boards (LAMBs) affiliated with regional and national authorities representing more than 80 percent of the Aboriginal population. LAMBs set training priorities for their region and selected potential recipients. They supervised the use and distribution of budgets for the various services: orientation, support for job applicants, interview preparation, skills assessment.</td><td>Aboriginal population of Canada</td><td>Although this strategy decentralized decision making in the field of training, apparently the boards experienced difficulties because of the divergent interests of the various parties: Métis, First Nations, women in urban areas, etc. The desire to represent everyone’s interests in the field of training seems to have led to some fragmentation of programs. This lack of a comprehensive, integrated vision and the focus on meeting local needs seems to have diminished the overall effectiveness of Pathways to Success.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Sources:
• Employment and Immigration Canada, 1990
• RCAP, 1996, Vol. 2</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">APTE programs: PAIE — WEP — Remedial education — Back to school
Implementation date: based on income security registration
Government affiliation: The APTE program is managed by MSRQ.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>Clientele</td><td>Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>The APTE program provides financial assistance to people fit for work who lack adequate resources to meet their needs and those of their families. It makes up the difference between essential household needs and the resources available. The program promotes entry or re-entry of social assistance recipients into the labour market through various measures designed to enhance employability. These measures fall into three categories: (1) training (remedial education, return to post-secondary studies, training courses, etc.);
(2) preparation for a return to work (on-the-job training, PAIE, external labour force services); and
(3) community activities (youth volunteers, WEP).</td><td>All Quebec residents receiving social assistance benefits. The Aboriginal population represents less than 1 percent of recipients. The Department provides funding and administers the program for the Inuit, Cree and Amerindians living outside a community who identify themselves as Aboriginal when applying for social assistance. For all other Amerindian communities in Quebec, funding for last resort assistance is provided by the federal government and administered by the band councils.</td><td>Five main obstacles were described (MSRQ, 1995), not for the actual programs but for integrating Aboriginal people into the labour market:
• A very limited job market in Aboriginal communities, because of weak economic development.
• A skewed employment structure characterized by heavy dependence on government.
• Rising (but still low) levels of education (education is known to be a major factor for entering the job market).
• Unadapted training programs. For Aboriginal people to become truly active in the labour market, their literacy and basic job training needs must be met. Grade 12 knowledge or basic skills are required to enter job training programs, such as federal programs. A major criticism of these programs by Aboriginal groups is that they are not tailored to Aboriginal culture. Learning styles of Aboriginal people, more closely linked to practical activities and experience in and out of the classroom, are ill suited to programs designed for the general population.
• Difficulties with labour force services. Some difficulties may be attributable to cultural differences between Aboriginal people and staff of Canada Employment Centres.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Source:
• MRSQ, 1995</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Youth Strategy (Aboriginal component)
Implementation date: 1996
Government affiliation: Before 1996, the Aboriginal component of the Youth Strategy was administered by the Canada Human Resources Branch. Since 1996, in Quebec, the various Aboriginal authorities, such as the Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais (ICEM), Administration Régionale Crie, Administration Régionale Kativik, Commission scolaire naskapie, Commission on Human Resources Development for the First Nations of Quebec (CHRDFNQ), and Centre éducatif des Premières Nations (CEPN), are responsible for managing funds.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>Clientele</td><td>Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>The general program is intended for all young Canadians, but a specific component targets Aboriginal people. Five employment or training programs are designed for young Inuit and Amerindians: (1) the summer career program; (2) the work-study program; (3) the work experience program; (4) the science and technology camps program; and (5) the entrepreneurship program.</td><td>Inuit and Amerindian youth from First Nations of Quebec, ages 15 to 29</td><td>No assessment of this program is currently available. According to CHRDFNQ, however, young people pose a special problem. Youth in Aboriginal communities are hard to reach because they often lack motivation and have little confidence in themselves and their future. They integrate poorly into employability programs because they often do not meet the minimum criteria in terms of qualifications and interest. CHRDFNQ therefore set up a special program in 1997 to meet the needs of young people, using Youth Strategy funds. This program supervises about 30 young people in each of the 28 communities served by the Commission.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Sources:
• DIAND, 1998
• PR-01-F-NA</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)
Implementation date: Launched in 1991, AWPI was renewed and expanded in 1996.
Government affiliation: AWPI is the joint responsibility of DIAND and Treasury Board Secretariat.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Description</td><td>Clientele</td><td>Assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>AWPI promotes the entry of Aboriginal people into the labour market. AWPI conducts various activities designed to help employers as well as Aboriginal people in job promotion, recruitment and continued employment of staff. AWPI activities in Quebec include participation in labour force training projects, organization of conferences on job growth, updating projects that promote education among Aboriginal youth, and development of special interest in careers of the future.</td><td>Canadian employers and Aboriginal people of Canada</td><td>No information available</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Sources:
• DIAND, 1997
• PR-06-F-NA</td></tr>
</table>

Commission on Human Resources Development for the First Nations of Quebec (CHRDFNQ) Implementation date: April 1996 Government affiliation: a component of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL)		
Description	**Clientele**	**Assessment**
To act on its commitments under Pathways to Success, the Government of Canada signed a series of framework agreements on employment with the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. These national agreements led to the development of regional bilateral agreements with First Nations. To date, more than 50 bilateral agreements have been signed across Canada. The regional bilateral agreement with AFNQL was signed in January 1996. Since that time, the funds granted to most Aboriginal people in Quebec for employment or training projects have been administered by CHRDFNQ. Programs previously managed as part of the Pathways to Success strategy are now the responsibility of CHRDFNQ.	29 Aboriginal communities in eight First Nations (Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Huron, Mi'Kmaq, Mohawk, Montagnais-Innu and Naskapi). The agreement also covers Aboriginal people living in Montréal and Québec.	A positive aspect of this agreement is decentralization of power. Local Aboriginal Management Boards (LAMBs) now set training priorities, select the recipients of this training and decide how much money is allocated to certain employment services. Communities therefore have greater flexibility in meeting the special needs of their clients. Many challenges are associated with implementing the regional bilateral agreement; these fall largely on the shoulders of local officers — that is, two or three people in each community, rarely more. They are expected to have thorough knowledge of the local, regional and provincial labour market, become familiar with the many existing programs, create tools to assist clients, accept and process applications, ensure case follow-up, promote partnerships with potential employers, manage budgets, and draft administrative reports, financial records and assessments, etc. A particular challenge is posed by Aboriginal people living outside a community. The funds allocated for this client group represent about 8 percent of the total budget for the agreement, while official sources estimate this sector at 20 percent. Furthermore, the agreement currently covers only Montréal and Québec. Growing numbers of clients in Hull, La Tuque and Val d'Or therefore receive no benefit.
Sources: • Green, 1998 • Whiteduck, 1996 • CHRDFNQ, 1997		

Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative Implementation date: 1996 Government affiliation: Funds are provided by HRDC.		
Description	**Clientele**	**Assessment**
Since 1996, to meet the employment needs of Aboriginal people in urban areas, financial assistance has been granted to three organizations by Human Resources Development Canada (National Association of Friendship Centres, Native Women's Association of Canada, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples) to fund job creation and training projects. The objective of the Association des femmes autochtones du Québec (AFAQ) is to assist 34 women and create some 20 jobs for them. The AFAQ program has three components: training, employment and small business assistance. AFAQ first identifies women's needs based on their education and work history, and then directs them to one of these components. For example, training or remedial courses are offered to women with little education who have not held a job for a long time. Applications and files are handled case by case. Guidance and follow-up for the women are program priorities. Women enrolled in the program are guided and assisted in their search for employment and training, and receive financial support.	Aboriginal people in urban areas	AFAQ programs have encountered different problems in the various cities where employment programs are available. The job placement rate, for example, is lower in Montréal than in Québec. Aboriginal people living in Montréal do not form a homogeneous group, which makes it difficult to establish employment programs tailored to their specific needs. The general objectives of these programs, however, appear to be met in Montréal as well as other cities. Targeting women in urban areas addresses a genuine need. These growing numbers of women often lack access to employability programs delivered in the communities. Case-by-case processing of files and follow-up also contribute to the program's effectiveness. Despite all the problems Aboriginal women may encounter in their search for employment, growing numbers appear to be more interested than Aboriginal men in participating in various employability programs.
Sources: • HRDC, 1997 • PR-03-F-A		

Careers in Health for Indians and Inuit Implementation date: 1989 Government affiliation: Health Canada		
Description	**Clientele**	**Assessment**
This program seeks to encourage and supports participation by Aboriginal people interested in job training or para-professional training in the health field. The preferred approaches are scholarships and registration in community or employment programs.	Aboriginal people of Canada. Depending on the program, specific education may be required.	No information currently available
Source: • Health Canada, 1996		

NOTES

[1] The term Aboriginal is used in the generic sense, to designate the Amerindian, Inuit and Métis populations as a whole. Other terms are used to designate various categories of people within the overall Aboriginal population of Canada and Quebec (for example, status and non-status Indians); details are provided in Chapter 1 of this report.

[2] Employability programs include employment, job access, training and business assistance programs. The generic term is used to designate all these programs.

[3] Appendix 2 lists the socio-demographic characteristics of each sample formed for the survey.

[4] This figure, drawn from the Quebec Native Business Directory (1998), is based on data from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec and the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It indicates the number of status Indians registered under the *Indian Act.* This number excludes second-generation Métis and non-status Indians, but includes Inuit.

[5] Although the Maliseet have reserve lands, the entire community lives elsewhere.

[6] In Quebec, it is common practice to talk about Aboriginal communities rather than Indian reserves, especially since many Aboriginal villages in the province are not reserves under the Act. In the Partenariat Mikimon survey, the term "community" was generally used; the situation is different in the survey of the literature, which usually refers to Indians on and off reserve.

[7] In the 1991 census, all people who reported at least one Aboriginal parent were considered Aboriginal. In 1996, respondents had to identify themselves directly with at least one of three Aboriginal groups: North American Indians, Métis or Inuit (Statistics Canada, 1993).

[8] The Partenariat Mikimon believes that for all origins combined, the Aboriginal population of Montréal is currently between 25,000 and 30,000. Most of these people come from Aboriginal communities in Quebec, but a growing number of Aboriginal people from other provinces of Canada and from the United States are swelling the ranks.

[9] The *Indian Act* establishes an administrative and legal framework for Indians and defines the trusteeship that governs them. This system applies to all aspects of life for individual Indians and Indian bands (health, education, political and administrative structure, land tenure, etc.). Under the Act, every person recognized as an Indian is granted the special status of Registered Indian. The Act also governs the status of Métis and non-status Indians. Until the latest amendment of the Act in 1985, the vast majority of the non-status Indians were in fact Indian women whose status had been removed after they married a non-Indian. This legal provision was especially discriminatory since a non-Indian woman who married a Registered Indian was automatically granted the status of a Registered Indian. Accordingly, in addition to

making Indians second-class citizens subject to discrimination, the actual letter of the Act entrenched a second type of discrimination by legitimizing male-female inequality, recognizing only paternal descent and denying Indian women married to a non-Indian the right to live on a reserve and thus to access basic services. Only after a 20-year struggle by Aboriginal women's associations in Canada, primarily the Association des femmes autochtones du Québec, and several court cases, did Bill C-31, passed in 1985, abolish the provisions legitimizing this sexual discrimination. Since that date, some previously excluded women and their Métis descendants have been able to return to their original band and in some cases have even returned to live on a reserve. However, not all Indian bands governed by band councils (also covered by the *Indian Act*) have adopted the same measures to welcome these women. As a result, many women are still subject to discrimination by local authorities (AFAQ, 1993).

[10] In outlying regions, this situation is not limited to the Aboriginal population.

[11] The sample in question consisted of informants who had participated in employability programs. As indicated in the introduction, detailed lists of the samples are presented in the Appendix.

[12] A detailed list of informants from the regions is provided in Appendix 2.

[13] Starting in the 1950s and until the late 1970s, many Amerindian children in Quebec and Canada were sent — usually by force — to residential schools for the education to which they were entitled "like all other children in the country." Uprooted, isolated in an environment where they were unfamiliar with the benchmarks and codes, educated in a foreign language, often living far from their home from September to June, these children of years gone by are now adults in their thirties, forties or fifties, for whom school remains an extremely painful and bitter memory.

[14] A detailed description of each program is provided in Appendix 3.

[15] Students who receive an allowance from the band council in their community for post-secondary education are not deemed to be participants in a training program.

[16] In Montréal at the time of the survey, the Association de la main-d'oeuvre autochtone de Montréal (AMAM) was responsible for managing and implementing employability programs.

[17] It must be noted, however, that many participated in programs while living in a community or during a return to a community for a brief period (in summer, for example).

[18] As indicated earlier, a code has been assigned to each informant to maintain anonymity; the code M-39-F-37 indicates a member of the urban sample (M), interview no. 39, and a woman (F) 37 years old. The same code was used in the regions with the letter "R" to indicate the origin.

[19] A detailed list of resource persons interviewed is provided in Appendix 2.

[20] In the case of resource persons (PR), the code indicates the interview number (17), sex (H = man; F = woman) and ethnic identity (A = Aboriginal; NA = non-Aboriginal).

[21] Since the specific results are summarized at the end of each chapter, our intention is not to repeat information that has already been placed in broader context. The objective in this conclusion instead is to highlight key factors in the analysis on which the questions raised in this final section are based.

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* Some of these papers are still in progress and not all titles are finalized.