

Youth Action Strategy 2005-2008

Consultation document



APRIL 2005



Québec 

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This document was produced by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, in collaboration with the primary departments and agencies involved with youth issues.

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A Word from the Premier



The purpose of a government is to see to the development of society and the well-being of its citizens. From this perspective, the State must, in all of its actions, consider the interests of youth.

Support for youth cannot be the purview of a single department. This is a critical government mission, and coordinating it must therefore be handled at the highest levels. This is why I insisted on taking on responsibility for the youth portfolio myself.

My goal is to make sure that all of Québec's young people get the security, challenges and support they need to reach their full potential, at every stage of their progress toward maturity, from infancy to graduation, from entering the job market to founding a family.

Québec's youth is culturally diverse, and blossoming. Young people inject their energy, hopes and dreams into our society, but they are also vulnerable. Eclipsed by the spirited young people who thirst for the future and are meeting the challenges of our era head on, there are young people in difficulties. We must focus on their situation, and act accordingly.

In Québec, we do a great deal for our youth and, in many areas, we have achieved very encouraging results. Yet we must strive to do more. That is why we are asking you to participate in this consultation. It will help develop the *2005-2008 Youth Action Strategy* that we will be presenting to all Québécois.

The government's strategy will focus on Québec's young people from every origin and living situation. It will be a step forward in the Québec Government's capacity and ability to support young people in achieving their ambitions and building the Québec of the future. The progress will be even more substantial if Québec society as a whole takes up the challenge of advancing the *2005-2008 Youth Action Strategy*.

I thank you in advance for your commitment to youth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Jean Charest".

Jean Charest
Premier of Québec

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INTRODUCTION



In 2000, the Québec Youth Summit helped reach a consensus about the importance of giving Québec a youth policy. The *Québec Youth Policy* was therefore released in 2001, followed by the *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan*. The plan proposed a set of measures to engage Québec society in a culture of generational renewal, to ensure the development of young people's full potential and to facilitate their access to the job market, to improve the quality of working life, to develop a sense of belonging to Québec society and, lastly, to foster exchanges with, and openness to, youth. Over the past years, efforts and resources have therefore been invested in fostering young people's engagement in Québec society.

Since the *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan* will soon come to an end, the Québec Government has begun to develop a Youth Action Strategy for the 2005-2008 period. To date, five orientations have been retained, around which the government intends to structure its actions on behalf of young people aged 35 and under for the next three years.

- Improve the support offered to young people
- Improve the health and well-being of young people
- Foster young people's educational success
- Foster young people's entry into the workforce
- Increase young people's presence in society

The goal is to ensure young people's full participation: at school, in a training project; at work, by holding down a job or completing a training program; or in the community, by making an active contribution to their community's well-being.

Moreover, a few factors will be considered in developing the *Youth Action Strategy* that will, in a way, serve as the backdrop for achieving it. The government will take into consideration the coming demographic changes which will put heavier responsibilities on the shoulders of Québec's youth, and it will work in concert with the actors present

in young people's various living environments (the school, municipality, community, leisure, etc.). It will also focus on increasing the coherence and complementarity of the services offered to young people and their families so as to intensify interventions with them. Also, since the contexts of some young people's life courses are more complex than, or culturally different from, that of the majority, the government will, through its strategic choices, strive to meet the socioeconomic and educational needs of aboriginal youth, and young people from Québec's cultural communities. Lastly, it will be sensitive to the specific needs of the regions, primarily in terms of the exodus of youth.

Given this backdrop, strategic choices have been made with respect to each of the orientations selected; these choices will help determine the actions the government will focus on for the next few years. For now, 12 strategic choices are being tabled for consultation. Means of action must be determined for each one. To this end, the government is submitting 17 questions for consideration by youths and actors who are involved with youth.

The government has two goals for this exercise. The first is to validate the orientations and strategic choices selected with young people and the various actors who work with them to ensure these orientations and choices are aligned with young people's concerns. The second goal is to fuel current reflection on the means to be implemented over the next three years.

The pages that follow contain:

- A brief description of each orientation
- A short presentation of the strategic choices
- Questions related to each of the strategic choices
- A summary of this consultation document
- A portrait of youth, in Appendix I
- A report on government interventions, in Appendix II

You may send your responses to the questions before you to the address below. Only one copy is required:

Consultation *Stratégie d'action jeunesse*

Secrétariat à la jeunesse
875, Grande Allée Est, suite RC.04
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Y8

Interested persons and bodies have until 10.06.05 at 5 p.m. to send their responses to the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, or place them online at the following address: www.jeunes.gouv.qc.ca/consultation. If you answer on a personal basis, you must provide your age and the region you live in, as well as your email address, if relevant.

If you answer on behalf of an organisation, you must indicate your name, your title, the organisation's contact information (including the email address, if relevant) as well as the fields of actions of the organisation.

For any questions related to the consultation, please call 1-800-463-5306, toll-free.

STRATEGIC CHOICES FOR YOUTH



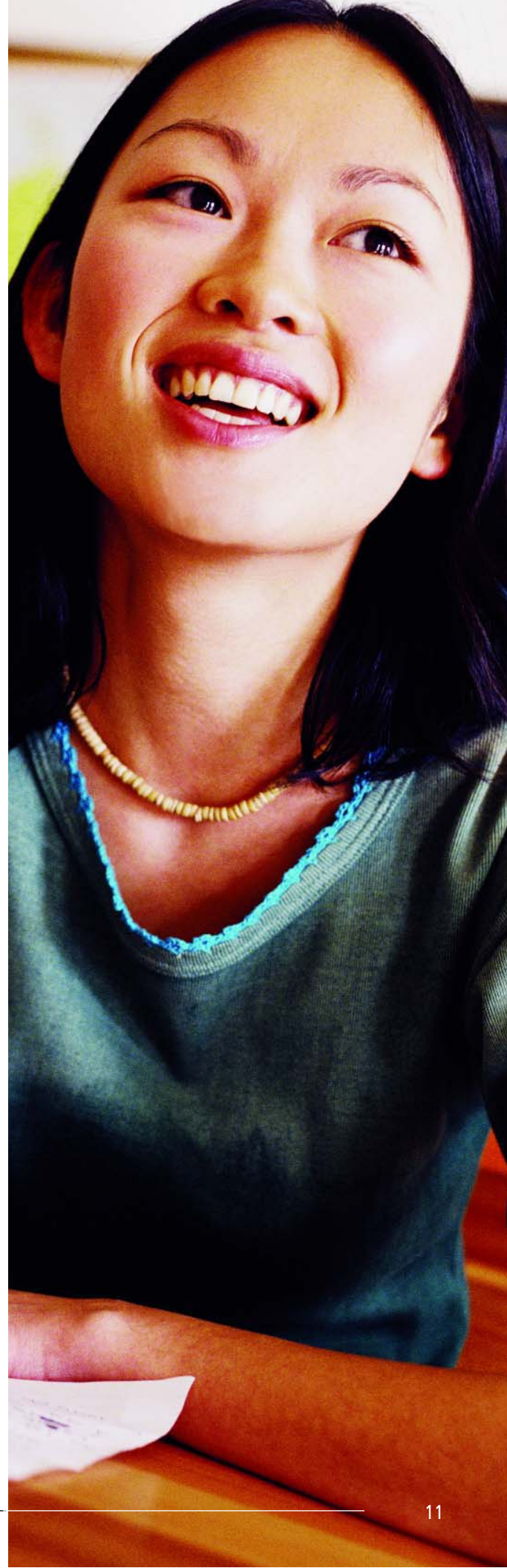
Orientation 1 : **Improve the support offered to youth**

Youth stands out through the intensity with which it must acquire, hone and enrich the knowledge and attitudes that will lead to personal, social and professional autonomy. To achieve this, young people need the support of those around them. In the vast majority of cases, families provide them with appropriate support by enabling them to carry out the projects they are interested in.

That said, in addition to the key role that families play, young people also need as much contact as possible with adults who can act as role models. These can be teachers, coaches, older people working in the same field, workers at youth centres or public agencies. Such contact can help young people make wise choices and find support when they need it.

Some young people, however, must cope with difficulties that alter their ability to integrate into society and the workforce. They then use the services offered by many public agencies or the community sector. It is therefore critical to make sure that they can access coherent, complementary services, so that no young person falls between the cracks.

Two strategic choices are likely to improve the support offered to young people. The first is based on the demographic context, and involves promoting the strengthening of intergenerational bonds. The second involves providing for greater coherence and complementarity in the services intended for youth.



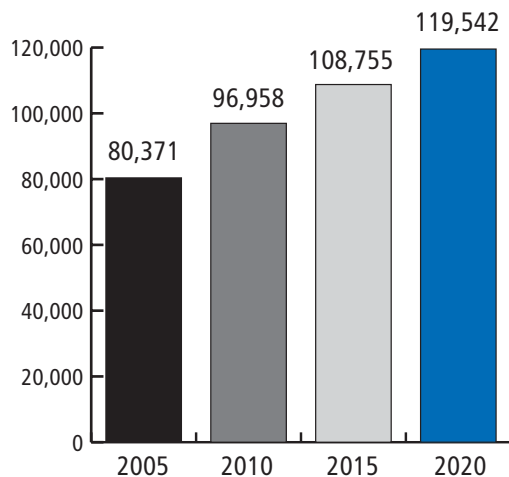
Strategic choice:
**Promote the strengthening
of intergenerational bonds**



Findings:

- In the coming years, a large number of competent people who are part of multiple networks will be retiring from the workforce.
- To ensure their development, young people need to have as much contact as possible with adults who can act as role models.

**Forecast of the number of people
retiring for 2005 to 2020**



Often, and rightly so, we emphasize the enormous transformations that will soon be marking Québec's demographics. More often than not, we then refer to the negative results associated with the transformation: the larger burden on tomorrow's workers, the aging population, and the pressure this will put on public services.

But it is important to recognize that this upheaval also contains an unprecedented opportunity. In fact, we could hope that active people, and those who will soon be retiring will, in large part, agree to work with younger people to contribute to their development and support them in their different projects.

The coming demographic context lends itself well to some experiments, such as mentorship, in order to improve the support offered to young people. Generally, mentorship is defined as an interpersonal relationship of support, exchange and learning, in which an experienced person invests the wisdom and experience he has acquired so as to foster the development of people who have skills to acquire and goals to achieve.

Questions :

- How can we promote the strengthening of intergenerational bonds?
- Could mentorship be a preferred means for strengthening intergenerational bonds? If so, how should it be developed?

Strategic choice:
**Ensure greater coherence
and complementarity among
services for youth**



Findings:

- Young people having difficulties are often facing multiple problems (family, personal, health, etc.).
- These young people must call on several agencies for support and services.
- Several departments and agencies share responsibility for youth issues.

Faced with multiple difficulties, some young people have trouble gaining autonomy, socially and professionally. Many services are, however, provided to them by a number of departments and agencies, to support them in the process of integrating with society and the workforce. Recent studies have shown that programs that deal with each specific problem separately (dropping out, violence, etc.) have a limited impact, and that new multi-sector initiatives are promising better results. Consequently, to achieve greater effectiveness, providing for the coherence and complementarity of services is critical.

In other words, we must facilitate the transition from service to service, and we must make sure there is no duplication. It is also critical for young people to be aware of the various interventions available to them. None of them must fall between the cracks. All young people must be appropriately supported in their effort to integrate into society and the workforce.

Question :

- How can we provide for greater coherence and complementarity in the services intended for youth?

Orientation 2 : Improve the health and well-being of youth

The vitality and the future of Québec's society are closely tied to the health and well-being of its youth. It is therefore important to make sure that it is fully developed. Youth is a key phase in terms of health development. It is at this time of life that we acquire and consolidate our lifestyles, for better or for worse. Too many young people adopt habits that are bad for their health, and threaten the quality of life and life expectancy. Action must be taken to counter this phenomenon.

Moreover, although the vast majority of young people are able to find all the resources they need for their health, well-being and development within their families and living environments, some young people have difficulty integrating into society. They must not simply be left to their fate. They must be supported so that they can develop to their full potential and play an active role in their community.

Finally, in Québec, too many young people in distress decide to end their lives. We must prevent these tragedies by giving young people the resources and support they need in their living environments to deal with their distress.

Given these facts, and in order to improve the health and well-being of all of Québec's youth, the *Youth Action Strategy* proposes that the following strategic choices be implemented: foster acquisition of healthy lifestyles, provide better support to young people who are having difficulty integrating into society, and combat suicide more effectively.



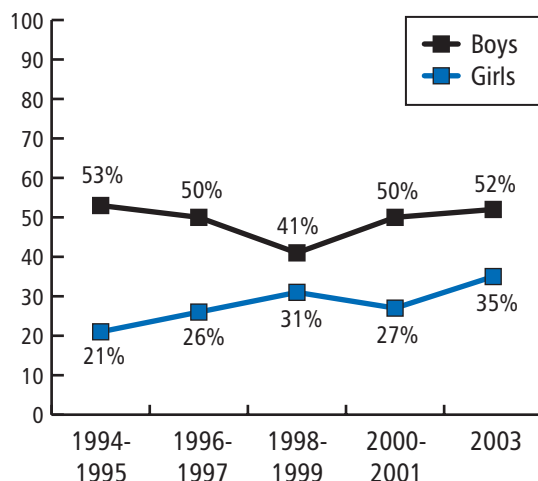
Strategic choice:
**Foster the acquisition
of healthy lifestyles**



Findings:

- Many young people aged 12 to 17 are not getting the level of physical activity recommended by specialists.
- One out of four 6 to 16 year-olds is overweight.
- 36% of 20-24 year-olds smoke.
- 35% of Secondary 5 students consume alcohol regularly.
- In 2002, 41% of high school students stated that they had taken an illegal drug at least once in the previous twelve months.
- A large number of aboriginal communities believe over-consumption of alcohol and substance abuse to be major problems.

Evolution of percentage of youth aged 12 to 17 getting the recommended level of physical activity during their leisure time, Québec, 1994-1995 to 2003



Sedentariness, poor eating habits, smoking and drug addiction-which is defined as the dependence on alcohol and legal and illegal drugs-are four bad habits that are acquired by too many young people. These bad habits are tied to a number of health problems that reduce the quality of life, and life expectancy: obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular and lung disease, cancer, etc. Moreover, drug addiction can lead to mental health problems, as well as social adjustment problems, including delinquency and homelessness.

While parents have a key role to play in educating their children so that they adopt healthy lifestyles, we must not overlook the considerable contribution in this regard by actors in various living environments. Combined actions of everyone involved is needed to help young people adopt healthy lifestyles.

In this context, we must look at the support received by the various actors working with young people to help them acquire healthy lifestyles.

Question :

- How can we better support the living environments in their efforts to encourage young people to acquire healthy lifestyles?

Strategic choice:

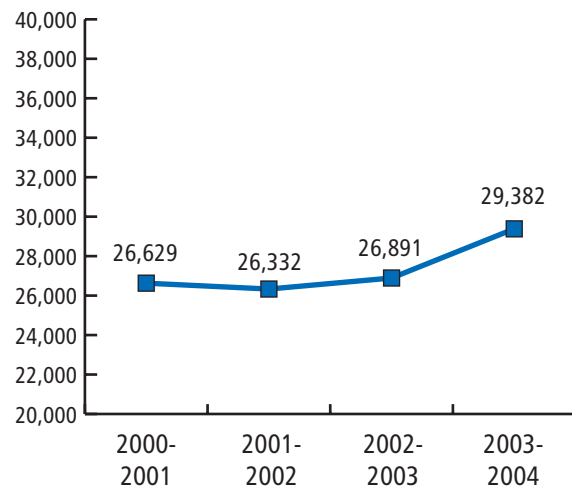
Better support young people having difficulty integrating into society



Findings

- Each year, many reports regarding young people whose safety or development is in jeopardy are retained under the *Youth Protection Act* (YPA).
- About 20,000 young offenders are monitored under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- There are 30 street gangs in Québec, most of them in Montréal.
- There has been a resurgence in the phenomenon of homelessness among young people.

Reports under the framework of the YPA for 2000-2001 to 2003-2004



Behaviour problems, delinquency, prostitution, violence and homelessness are the main social integration problems that young people are experiencing. Aside from how they influence each other, these behaviours often result from common individual, family, educational and social risk factors.

Combating these complex situations requires concerted action by various actors working in youth living environments, i.e. the health and social services centre, the local employment centre, the school, the municipality and the community. The recent reform of the health and social services network will have major repercussions for the assistance and support provided to young people in difficulty. The new health and social services centres (CSSS) will provide basic services to young people in difficulty, guiding them to the resources in the local or regional network that are most likely to be helpful. Services will be offered at CSSS premises, or at different youth living environments (schools, community organizations). Youth centres, for their part, will continue to provide services to young people whose safety and development has been compromised, as well as to those who have committed crimes and are being monitored under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

Too often, young people who are having social integration difficulties, and their families, are left to their own resources. Choosing the most appropriate intervention cannot be left solely up to them. We must ensure that these young people and their families are guided to the best resources for their needs. Efforts must also be made, in the living environments, to provide for the coherence and complementarity of the services offered to young people who are having difficulty integrating into society.

Questions :

- What means should be implemented to promote coaching for young people having difficulty integrating into society?
- How can we increase the coherence and complementarity of the services offered to young people having difficulty integrating into society?

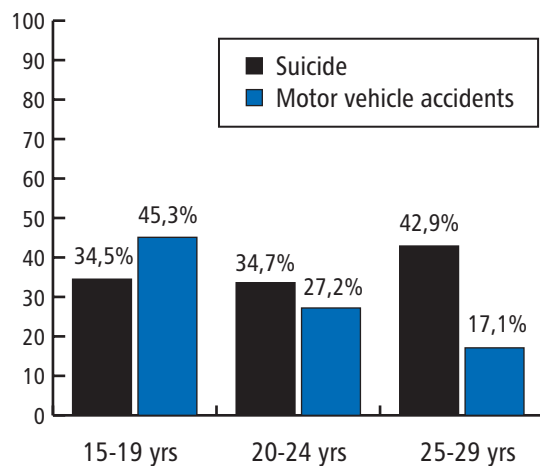
Strategic choice:
**Combat youth suicide
 more effectively**



Findings:

- Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youth aged 15 to 29.
- Specific groups of young people are more affected by this problem: young offenders, young people with mental health problems, young members of some First Nations peoples, and young homosexuals.
- The 15-24 age group is the one with the highest proportion of individuals with a high level of psychological distress.

**Main causes of death among
 15- to 29-year-olds in 2002**



No one action, no matter how effective it is, can solve the problem of youth suicide on its own. The magnitude and complexity of this problem require a global, intense, continuous intervention based on sustained involvement from actors in health care and social services. They also need contributions from other actors who work with young people.

We now know more about the factors that predispose some young people to suicide. Prior attempts, depression, prolonged or unresolved mourning, lack of social skills, family history, conflict, violence, abuse, rejection, social isolation and failure are all factors associated with youth suicide. We also know more about factors that protect against suicide, including good self-esteem, the ability to adapt, social skills, better control over access to means (control over firearms, suicide barriers on bridges), sentinel networks and self-help groups, as well as good social support (from family and peers). Lastly, it is important to provide youths throughout Québec with access to crisis services, especially for those who are the most at risk: young people in youth centres, young aboriginals, and young homosexuals. Young gays and lesbians are more at risk because it is particularly difficult to have one's homosexuality accepted during the teenage and early adult years.

Questions :

- How can we, together with actors from the various youth living environments, help strengthen the factors that protect against suicide?
- How can we make crisis services more accessible to young people, particularly higher-risk youths?

Orientation 3 : **Foster young people's educational success**

As a society, Québec must place greater recognition and value on young people's educational success. This is particularly true in a world in which knowledge holds an essential place in social, professional, civic and economic activity. Several competencies are critical to young people's development and future: thorough knowledge of basic subjects, team work, critical capacity and ethics, as well as written and spoken proficiency in their language. Academic concepts are not the only useful ones.

The educational success of Québec's young people is now, more than ever, the responsibility of a number of actors and participants. First, the family, followed by the community, then the various organizations in the environment, the government and school network, among others, undertake to offer young people the best chances for success, in an environment appropriate to expanding their capabilities and valorizing knowledge.

Simultaneously, we must remember that some young people must deal with all types of obstacles that slow them down and threaten their educational success. Sometimes, their academic careers come to an end before they have obtained the high school diploma which is, increasingly, a must for the job market and social integration. These young people need all the actors in the educational and community environments. Concerted actions and new initiatives must be implemented to reawaken their desire for success and to give them the skills they need for learning. We also need to make sure they get programs or academic and vocational paths that suit their needs and aptitudes.

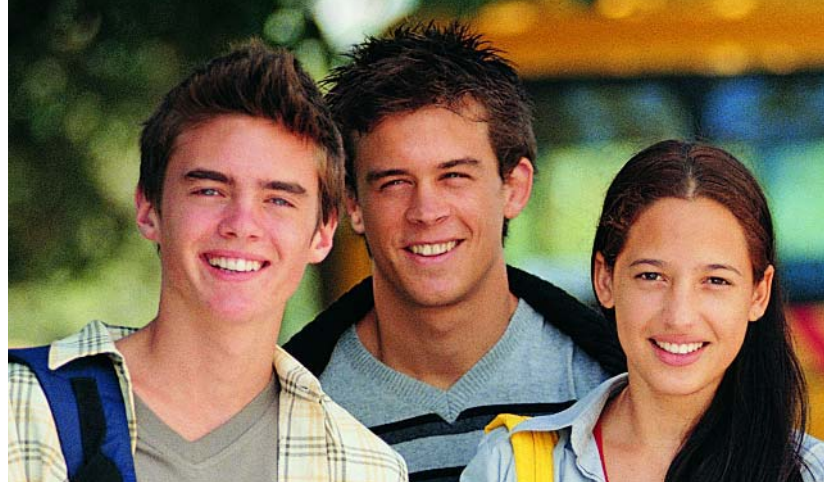
The *Youth Action Strategy* will propose the following strategic choices: Develop close ties between the teaching establishments and the living environments, and prevent dropping out more effectively.

Photo: Claudette Fontaine Coll. MEQ



Strategic choice:

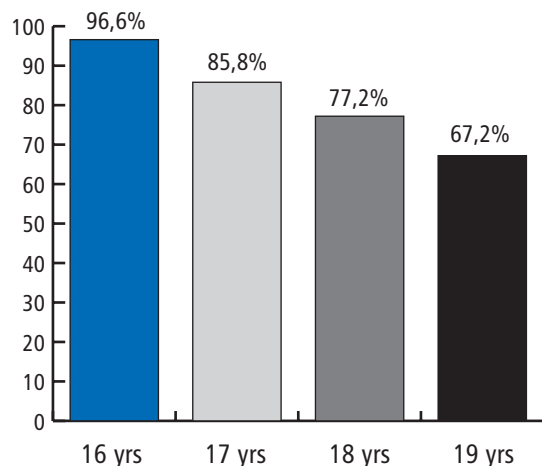
Develop close ties between the teaching establishments and the living environments



Findings:

- School is an important point of convergence for the vast majority of Québec youth.
- Due to their autonomy, the school boards and post-secondary education institutions have all the leeway they need to tailor their services to young people's various environments and needs.

School attendance by young people of 16 to 19 years old



The school is not just a place for passing on knowledge. For the young people who attend the school, it is also a living environment. It must be stimulating and welcoming. It must be able to foster the development of new skills through exploration and discovery. In seeking sustainable solutions for enabling academic success for as many students as possible, the school must continue

to take action, but it cannot do so alone. We have to go further, and contemplate broader solutions that can encompass the complexity of the problems, and all of the services offered to youth.

The school is the privileged site for intervention with young people, the hub of the neighbourhood or rural community. From this perspective, there is every reason to bring it into a partnership dynamic, one of collaboration and concerted effort. There is also reason to ask the community to get involved with youth, with the goal of ensuring greater complementarity and continuity in the services offered to young people and their families.

Demographic changes are requiring us to seek solutions to ensure access to training programs that will meet the needs of young people and the community. In particular, the colleges will, in some regions, have to deal with substantial decreases in their workforce, jeopardizing the quality of services offered to students and the continuation of those services.

In the context of the decentralization of power and valorization of local resources, these considerations require a new culture of partnership to improve the quality of teaching and to enhance education success for as many students as possible.

Question :

- What new approaches and partnerships could be contemplated for setting up solutions tailored to various living environments that meet the needs of young people and foster their educational success?

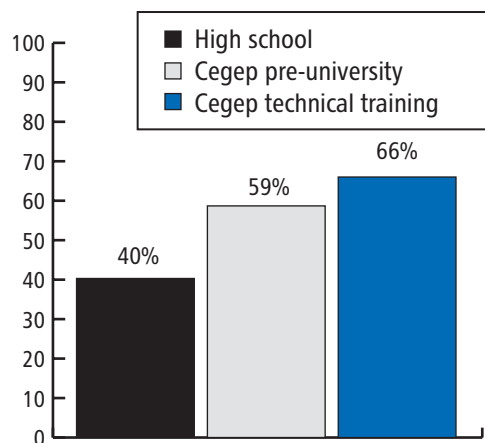
Strategic choice: Prevent dropping out more effectively



Findings:

- In 2002, the drop-out rate among 17-year-old high school students was 11%: 13.9% among boys and 7.9% among girls.
- 27.5% of students enter high school with a delay. At least 36% of these will experience a dropping out episode, whereas the proportion is only 10% for students entering high school with no delay.
- At high school and Cegep, many young people do not complete their programs within the prescribed time.
- The rate of high school diploma obtention among Cree and Inuit students, after seven years of school, was 27% and 20% respectively for the 1990 to 1995 cohorts, compared to the Québec average of 73%.

Percentage of students that do not complete their education within the prescribed time (2000-2001)



While most Québec students are successful at school, a number are having trouble. Dropping out, delays, program changes and discontinuous paths are still cause for concern. These phenomena extend the length of schooling and have a certain impact on obtaining a diploma. Young people give three major reasons for dropping out: academic reasons head the list, followed by reasons associated with work (primarily for boys) and, lastly, personal reasons (primarily for girls, who often drop out because they must take on family responsibilities or they are pregnant). Students who repeat in elementary school have a much higher risk of dropping out. This risk rises substantially with the number of years they are behind.

Moreover, there is a persistent gap between boys' and girls' academic success. The main differences noted are with respect to slow progress, learning the teaching language and rates for obtaining the high school diploma. Simplifying and facilitating young people's progress from one level to the next is another theme raised in studies on educational success and dropping out. We must continue to stress prevention, support and guidance measures, to diversify the options for training, and to customise services to young people's needs.

The issue associated with staying in school is still the help we can offer young people so that they can finish their education and make the transition to an active life and the job market with ease. There are a number of possibilities. Guiding and orienting young people to the programs that best match their needs and aptitudes can be one of them.

Question :

- What actions or initiatives should be implemented to prevent academic delays and to support staying in school and academic success?

Orientation 4 : **Foster young people's entry into the workforce**

Entering the workforce is particularly important to young people. It means the end of an important period of their life and, for them, it is one of the main ways of participating in Québec society. In all likelihood, in the next few years, major demographic pressures will transform the world of work. A large number of people will soon be leaving work and Québec's youth—who are also a smaller generation – will be required to pick up the slack.

This context must be seen as an opportunity for new workers, particularly young people, to jump on. One of the main challenges of the coming years will lie in our collective ability to institute measures for maximizing the employment rate. In other words, the number of people working must be as close as possible to the number of employable people.

To achieve this, the *Youth Action Strategy* will propose two strategic choices. The first involves improving young people's preparation for participating in the job market. The second involves providing better support for the transition to work by young people who have particular difficulty in entering the workforce.



Strategic choice:
**Improving young people's
preparation for participation
in the workforce**



Findings:

- Emploi-Québec projections show that there will be 640,000 jobs to fill by 2008. Professions that require professional or technical skills will have excellent hiring opportunities.
- Not enough high school students are attracted by high school vocational training and college technical training.
- Job opportunities will be proportionally slightly higher for jobs requiring a university degree.

Entering the job market is a key phase for young people. The move from being a student to being a worker will be easier if young people are prepared for it, if they know their rights and responsibilities, if they understand the labour market's issues and dynamics, and if they are sure of their choices and abilities. Preparing young people for a successful, sustained entry into the job market starts when they enter the school system. There, they develop their interests, discover new ones, confirm their choices, and acquire the knowledge and skills that will lead them to a satisfying career.

Along with passing on knowledge and skills, the school must guide young people toward wise career choices. Here, some enhancements could be made to the educational setting, to better prepare young people for the job market. At the moment, there is a shortage of graduates in the occupational and technical sectors. Furthermore, the promising careers available to young people will require occupational, technical or university training.

In this context, young people need to be better informed about the trainings and programs available to them so that they can make well-informed decisions and enter the job market with confidence and enthusiasm.

Question :

- What projects or actions should be initiated to better prepare young people for participating in the job market?

Strategic choice:

Provide better support for job market integration by young people having specific difficulties in entering the workforce



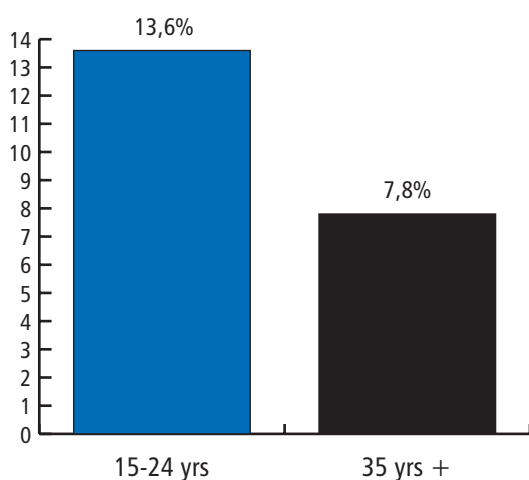
Findings:

- Some 109,459 young people used the services of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale between April 2003 and March 2004; 63.1% of them had less than a Secondary 4 education.
- In 2001 in Québec, the unemployment rate among youth aged 15 to 24 was 13.6%, while it was 7.8% for those aged 35 and over. The rate was 17.9% among young immigrants aged 15 to 24 and 19.7% among young members of visible minorities in this age group.
- In Canada in 1996, the unemployment rate among young aboriginals aged 15 to 24 was 32%.

There is a direct relationship between training acquired and unemployment or job insecurity among young adults. As the level of schooling rises, so does the employment rate. In this context, we need to pay particular attention to young people aged 16 to 24 who are undereducated or do not have any diploma. Similarly, we must focus on young people who, for one reason or another, are having trouble obtaining work, such as young people in youth centres, young aboriginals, handicapped youth, young members of visible minorities and young immigrants.

The aging of the workforce in various sectors and the resulting employment opportunities explain why public and private organizations have mobilized in favour of skill-building training for young people that will facilitate their entry into the job market.

Unemployment rate (2001)



Question :

- What means should be deployed to better support job market integration by young people having specific difficulties in entering the workforce.

Orientation 5 : Increase young people's presence in society

Many young people get involved in society and in their community's future. Their desire to help build a better world and contribute to Québec's development while achieving their own dreams is very real. Here, many young people are excelling, gaining recognition for their achievements both within Québec and beyond its borders. In spite of this, we must sustain our efforts to increase the presence of young people in society. Québec cannot overlook the fact that this commitment translates into two obligations for young people: they must be more open to the world while committing to their home society.

Increasing young people's presence in society also means that we must further accommodate youth's attachment to sustainable development, which will ensure quality of life for them all, i.e., seeking a balance between human needs and the means available for meeting these needs. Specifically, sustainable development is defined as an ongoing process for developing the living conditions of current populations that does not compromise the quality of life of future generations, environmentally, socially and economically. Young people must be connected to a global vision of sustainable development. This will motivate them to become actively involved in their communities.

Similarly, we must take into account young people's concern with dynamic, responsible use of the land, so that they will be present in all parts of Québec. The *Youth Action Strategy* will thus be structured around three strategic choices. The first involves increasing young people's presence in the world, the second fosters to increase their involvement in their communities, and the third involves encouraging young people's return to or settlement in the regions.



Strategic choice:
**Increase young people's
presence in the world**



Findings:

- Young people have a growing interest in international issues due to globalization, the cultural diversity of our societies and the spread of new information and communications technologies.
- For over 35 years, thousands of young people have enjoyed the opportunity to spend time overseas through the international mobility programs initiated by the Québec government.

Young Québécois have an insatiable desire for the world. Their aspirations for the society they want to live in attest to their constant concern with international issues, such as the solidarity that should exist between the world's countries or regions. Clearly, Québec's youth are ready to help change the world.

We can support these young people in their drive to get involved in the world in a number of ways. One way involves supporting the development of their competencies so they can understand the world better, and participate in it based on their values.

We can also facilitate the development of their aptitudes in the personal, professional, academic, linguistic, social and citizenship arenas, thus furthering the role they have to play in the world. Finally, we can offer them varied opportunities for enriching experiences, like overseas internships, and aid or volunteer programs.

Question :

- How can we increase young people's presence in the world?

Strategic choice:
**Increase young people's
involvement in their living
environments**



Findings:

- In Canada, 29% of young people have done volunteer work, but they contribute fewer hours than their elders.
- Young people are primarily involved in recreation organizations, social services, education, arts and culture.
- The number of young people who vote has declined steadily since 1960. In the April 2003 general election, Québec posted its lowest turnout rate since 1927.

Young people's involvement in their living environments takes many forms. It can occur through socialization activities, like volunteer work and participation in support groups or humanitarian organizations. It can also occur through participation in sites of influence, like pressure groups, advocacy groups and advisory bodies. Lastly, young people can also get involved in sites of power at various levels (local, regional and national).

No matter what form it takes, young people's involvement in their living environments must be encouraged, particularly as young people are expressing the desire to live in a society in which citizen participation and citizenship education will be fostered and valorized. At the same time, we must acknowledge that some groups of young people have specific needs with respect to getting involved in their respective environments. This is certainly the case with young aboriginals, and young people from the cultural communities.

We must take two tracks in increasing young people's involvement in their different living environments. First, we must encourage this tendency through enhanced social recognition. Second, we must foster young people's involvement by making them more aware of the opportunities available to them in this area.

Questions :

- How can we better acknowledge young people's involvement in their different living environments?
- How can the various living environments offer young people more tangible opportunities for involvement?

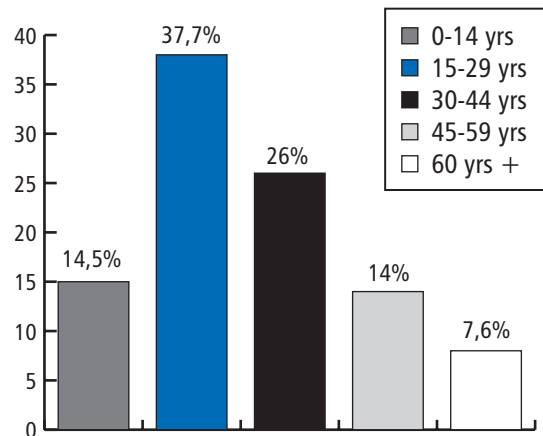
Strategic choice:
Foster young people's return to or settlement in the regions



Findings:

- In Québec, it is the 15-29 year-olds that migrate the most. In recent years, about 84,000 young people have migrated each year.
- In general, the 15-24 year-olds are drawn to the two major urban centres (Montréal and Québec City), while the 25-29 year-olds focus more on areas adjacent to the Montréal area.
- Only 11.7% of immigrants live outside the Greater Montréal area.

Migration rate in 2003-2004



Québec's young people are a mobile population. Sixteen- to 21-year-olds primarily migrate to continue their educations. For 22- to 25-year-olds, work and the search for work are the primary reasons they leave one place to settle in another. In most cases, the decision to move allows young people to achieve goals that are very important to them.

However, when young people leave the regions and do not return, they make the regions more fragile. They are taking the population's potential to renew itself with them. This then compromises the dynamic occupation of Québec's territory.

We are also gaining an increasing grasp of the reasons that young people return to or go to settle in the regions. Clearly, economic conditions and the state of the region's job market are very important. However, other factors influence young people's decision. This is particularly true for cultural activities, natural surroundings and the quality of life available for raising children.

Questions :

- How can we foster young people's return to or settlement in the regions?
- What means can we use to provide better support for the living environments so as to encourage young people to return to or settle in the regions?



CONCLUSION

Through its *Youth Action Strategy*, which will cover the years 2005-2008, the Québec government intends to improve the support offered to young people, improve their health and well-being, foster their educational success and integration into the workforce, and enhance the place they hold in society.

The coming demographic changes, the need to work in conjunction with actors from young people's many living environments and the need to provide for greater coherence and complementary among services means that we must make strategic decisions. The same is true of the need to better accommodate the situation of young people facing more complex or culturally different realities, as well as the need to respond more adequately to the aspirations of regional youth.

This consultation is a turning point in the development of the government's strategy. It offers young people and actors involved in youth issues the opportunity to take a stand on the means of action to be favoured in making the government's strategic choices for youth a reality.

SUMMARY

Orientations	Strategic Choices	Questions
<p>Improve the support offered to youth</p>	<p>Promote the strengthening of intergenerational bonds</p>	<p>How can we promote the strengthening of intergenerational bonds?</p> <p>Could mentorship be a preferred means for strengthening intergenerational bonds? If so, how should it be developed?</p>
	<p>Provide for greater coherence and complementarity in the services intended for youth</p>	<p>How can we provide for greater coherence and complementarity in the services intended for youth?</p>
<p>Improve the health and well-being of youth</p>	<p>Foster the acquisition of healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>How can we better support the living environments in their efforts to encourage young people to acquire healthy lifestyles?</p>
	<p>Better support young people having difficulty integrating into society</p>	<p>What means should be implemented to promote coaching for young people having difficulty integrating into society?</p> <p>How can we increase the coherence and complementarity of the services offered to young people who are having difficulty integrating into society?</p>
	<p>Combat youth suicide more effectively</p>	<p>How can we, together with actors from the various youth living environments, help strengthen the factors that protect against suicide?</p> <p>How can we make crisis services more accessible to young people, particularly higher-risk youths?</p>
<p>Foster young people's educational success</p>	<p>Develop close ties between the teaching establishments and the living environments</p>	<p>What new approaches and partnerships could be contemplated for setting up solutions tailored to various living environments that meet the needs of young people and foster their educational success?</p>
	<p>Prevent dropping out more effectively</p>	<p>What actions or initiatives should be implemented to prevent academic delays and support staying in school and academic success?</p>

Orientations	Strategic Choices	Questions
Foster young people's entry into the workforce	Improve young people's preparation for participation in the job market	What projects or actions should be initiated to better prepare young people for participating in the job market?
	Provide better support for job market integration by young people having specific difficulties in entering the workforce	What means should be deployed to better support job market integration by young people having specific difficulties in entering the workforce.
Increase young people's presence in society	Increase young people's presence in the world	How can we increase young people's presence in the world?
	Increase young people's involvement in their living environments	How can we better acknowledge young people's involvement in their different living environments? How can the various living environments offer young people more tangible opportunities for involvement?
	Foster young people's return to or settlement in the regions	How can we foster young people's return to or settlement in the regions? What means can we use to provide better support for the living environments so as to encourage young people to return to or settle in the regions?

APPENDIX I :
PORTRAIT OF YOUTH



Québec's population

- On July 1, 2004, Québec had a population of 7,542,760. Of this, 1,483,860 were aged 15 to 29, that is 760,393 men (51.2%) and 723,467 women (48.8%); 3,172,753 and 1,022,089 people belonged to the 30 to 64 and 65 and over age groups respectively¹.
- In recent decades, the demographic weight of the 15- to 29-year-old group has declined progressively from 29.2% in 1976 to 28.8% in 1981, then to 22.6% in 1991, and finally to 19.7% in 2001, successively². In the years to come, this level will continue to decline, but at a slower pace³.
- The working-age population is forecast to decline as of 2011. The concern is the loss of expertise with the mass retirement of older employees⁴.
- The Régie des rentes du Québec projects that, between 2005 and 2020, Québec will gain 765,549 new retirees. Between 2020 and 2055, the ranks of retirees will swell by 745,593 people. For all of these projections, both in terms of men and women, the largest group of new retirees will be the 60-year-old group⁵.



Young people's lifestyles

Physical activity

- A high proportion of Québec's population does not get the level of physical activity recommended by specialists during their leisure time. In 2003, this situation affected 63% of those aged 18 and over, and 56% of those aged 12-17. Furthermore, 26% of adults and 7% of 12- to 17-year-olds were completely sedentary during their free time⁶.
- Although adult males remain slightly more active than women in their leisure time, a substantial difference between the genders can be noted in 12- to 17-year-olds. In 2003, 52% of boys and 35% of girls reached the recommended level. Since 1994, this percentage has not changed for boys, but has gone from 21% to 35% among girls⁷.

Eating habits

- 36% of 13-year-olds and 34% of 16-year-olds do not eat breakfast every day⁸.
- Most of those aged 6 to 16 do not consume five portions of fruit and vegetables a day as recommended by *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*⁹.
- About 25% of 6- to 16-year-olds are too heavy (overweight or obese)¹⁰.

Tobacco use

- In Québec, 25% of the population aged 15 and over smokes, the highest rate in Canada. The 20- to 24-year-old group smokes the most, at 36%, while the level of smokers is 30% among the 25- to 44-year-olds and 26% among 15- to 19-year-olds. Young women aged 15 to 24 are the group with the highest rate, i.e. 32% compared to 30% for young men the same age¹¹.
- The proportion of adult smokers who started smoking before the age of 18 is 77%¹².

- The life expectancy of smokers is reduced by an average of 15 years¹³. Second-hand smoke affects 55% to 70% of non-smokers¹⁴.

Substance abuse¹⁵

- Young people begin consuming drugs and alcohol early, and their consumption practices diversify and tend to get worse over time¹⁶.
- Teenagers' alcohol consumption tends to increase with age. Thus, the proportion of alcohol consumers goes from 43% to almost 89% between Secondary 1 and Secondary 5¹⁷. During this time, the proportion of regular drinkers goes from 5.2% to 35%¹⁸. Young people aged 15 to 24 present the greatest risk for alcohol dependency at 3.9%, twice as high as the risk for those aged 25-44¹⁹.
- According to a 2002 survey of high school students, 41% had consumed an illegal drug at least once in the previous 12 months²⁰. The increase in the recreational use of psychotropic drugs is a worrisome phenomenon in Québec and around the world²¹.
- A substantial number of Québec's aboriginal communities consider the over-consumption of alcohol and substance abuse to be major problems affecting their populations²².



Young people having difficulty integrating into society

- About 112,000 requests for social services are processed per year at the health and social service centres, in the framework of the *Jeunes en difficulté* program²³.
- Québec's various youth centres receive about 100,000 requests for service a year. In 2003-2004, of this number, almost 60,000 led to a report under the *Youth Protection Act*, and about 29,000 youths were detained because it was believed that their safety or development could be in jeopardy²⁴.
- Each year, about 20,000 young people receive services in the framework of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*²⁵.
- Québec has about 30 notorious street gangs. The members they are recruiting are younger and younger. In 1985, 70% of gang members were aged 14 to 16, while 30% were between 17 and 28. In 2003, 20% were between the ages of 11 and 16, 60% were between 17 and 28, and 20% between 29 and 35²⁶.
- In recent decades, there has been resurgence in the phenomenon of youth homelessness in Québec. In 1996-1997, an estimated 4,000 young people were in this situation in Montréal and Québec City²⁷.

Youth suicide

- Suicide is mainly a problem that affects middle-aged men (aged 30-49)²⁸.
- In Québec, suicide is one of the main causes of death among young people aged 15 to 29. In 2002, 34.5% of deaths among youths aged 15 to 19 were attributable to suicide, while the figure was 34.7% for the 20-24 age group and 42.9% for the 25-29 age group. Motor vehicle accidents are the other main cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29. In 2002, car accidents were responsible for 45.3% of deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds, 27.2% for 20- to 24-year-olds, and 17.1% for 25- to 29-year-olds²⁹.

- The death rates by suicide observed for the 1999-2001 period, both genders combined, are:
 - For 15- to 19-year-olds: 18.2/100,000 young people
 - For 20- to 24-year-olds: 23.8/100,000 young people
 - For 25- to 29-year-olds: 22.3/100,000 young people³⁰
- The suicide rate among young people is growing in Québec. The 15- to 19-year-old group has seen the largest increase in its suicide rate in recent decades. This is as true for girls as it is for boys. From 1976 to 2001, the death rate by suicide among boys aged 15-19 went from 15.9 to 28.5/100,000. For the same period, the rate went from 3.4 to 7.2/100,000 for girls in the same age group³¹.
- The suicide rate for young offenders and young people with mental health problems placed in the care of youth centres is four to eight times that of Québec youth as a whole³².
- Youths in some aboriginal nations have a suicide rate that is up to six times that of Québec youth as a whole³³.
- Young homosexuals have an attempted suicide rate that is 6 to 16 times that of Québec youth as a whole³⁴.
- In 1998, the 15- to 24-year-old group had the highest proportion of people presenting suicidal ideation in the previous 12 months. The rate was 6.3% among young men, and 8.5% among young women, compared to 3.9% for the population as a whole³⁵.
- In 1998, the prevalence of suicide attempts was higher among people aged 15 to 24 than among the other age groups³⁶.
- Suicide among young people is strongly correlated with the existence of mental health problems, particularly affective disorders. According to the studies, the proportion of affected young people who die by suicide ranges from 50% to 90%³⁷.

- The 15- to 24-year-old group had the highest proportion of individuals with a high psychological distress index in 1998: 28.2% of 15- to 24-year-olds fell into the psychological distress index high category, compared to 20.2%, 19.2% and 10.7% of 25- to 44-year-olds, 45- to 64-year-olds and those aged 65 and up respectively. Moreover, young women aged 15 to 24 were more likely to suffer psychological distress, with 34% of them posting a high level of distress compared to 23% of men the same age³⁸.

Dropping out

- In 2002, the high school drop-out rate was 11% among 17-year-olds: 13.9% for boys and 7.9% for girls³⁹.
- Among the students who left non-adult general education in 2001-2002, 75% obtained a diploma or qualification, while 25% obtained neither a diploma nor a qualification, and did not re-enrol in any educational program whatsoever in 2002-2003. This does not necessarily mean that they have abandoned their educations permanently, since they can return to occupational training or adult education a few years later⁴⁰.
- In 2002-2003, the rate of delay in entering high school was, on average, 27.5%, and remained constant for the four other years of the cycle⁴¹.

School attendance

- In 2000-2001, 97% of 15-year-olds attended an educational establishment. At 16, the figure was 96.6%; 85.8% at 17; 77.2% at 18; and 67.2% at 19⁴².

First language proficiency

- In June 2003, the Secondary 5 French exam yielded an average of 67% and a pass rate of 73% in written texts. The rates were 69% and 82% for the test as a whole, which included a written portion, a reading test and an oral expression test. 76% of young men passed the test compared to 88% of young women⁴³.

Obtaining a diploma

- In 2002-2003, the rate for obtaining a first high school diploma in the youth and adult education sector was 78.8%, the lowest rate since 1990-1991. There is also a major gap between men, with an achievement rate of 71.7%, and women, with a rate of 86.2%. The rate for earning an occupational training diploma was 26.2%, that is, 28.9% for men and 23.2% for women⁴⁴. Finally, 60% of a high school student cohort obtained their diploma within the prescribed period⁴⁵.
- At the college level, the graduation rate is higher for students in the pre-university stream than for those in technical programs. About 43% of students enrolled in the pre-university stream obtained their diploma on schedule; in technical programs, the rate drops to 34%. About 22% of 2002's young technical training program graduates went on to full-time university studies the following fall⁴⁶.
- Between 1971 and 1991, the percentage of the Québec population that is over 20 and has a high school diploma has risen: Among Francophones, it has gone from 27% to 41%, and among Anglophones, it has gone from 41% to 53%⁴⁷.
- Among the Cree and Inuit, the rate for earning a high school diploma after seven years of education was 27% and 20% respectively for the 1990 to 1995 cohorts, compared to the Québec average of 73%⁴⁸.

Access to education

- In 2002-2003, access to occupational training was 16.6% for young people under 20, over half of whom already held a high school diploma. For its part, adult education draws 18.4% of youth under 20⁴⁹.
- In 2002-2003, 57.8% of young people went on to college programs: 33.4% in the pre-university stream, 17.1% in technical training, and 7.3% in welcome and transition programs⁵⁰.

- Access to university education has grown in Québec over the last 25 years. In 2003-2004, 41.1% of young people were enrolled in Bachelor's programs, 11.6% in Master's programs, and 2.4% in Ph.D. programs⁵¹.
- There are gender-based variations among young Québécois in enrolling in educational programs and obtaining a diploma. Among girls, there is a higher level of enrolment in college and university level programs, and a higher graduation rate at each level⁵².

School and work

- In 2001, 66.1% of students in high school occupational programs, 83.5% of college students, and 81.0% of university students held down a paying job during the summer⁵³.
- During the school year, 47% of students in high school occupational programs, 65% of college students, and 61.0% of university students had jobs⁵⁴.

Work injuries

- The rate of employment injury, calculated based on staff categorized as "full-time equivalent," is 5.8% among 15- to 24-year-olds and 3.7% for those aged 25 and up. The rate among 15-to 24-year-olds is two and a half times higher among men (7.9%) than women (3.0%)⁵⁵.

Unemployment

- In 2003, among 15- to 24-year-olds, the average length of employment insurance payments was 10.2 weeks. For 25- to 54-year-olds, it was 22.7 weeks⁵⁶.
- In Québec in 2001, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 13.6%, whereas it was 7.8% among those 35 and older⁵⁷. Moreover, the rate was 17.9% among young immigrants aged 15 to 24, and 19.7% for members of visible minorities in the same age group⁵⁸.

- And, when black youth alone are considered, the unemployment rate reaches 23.5%. It is higher still among those who have been in Québec for only a short time (29.1% of new arrivals)⁵⁹.
- In Canada, in 1996, the rate of unemployment among young aboriginals aged 15 to 24 was 32%⁶⁰.

Obtaining a diploma and accessing the job market

- Between 1990 and 2003, the proportion of jobs that did not require a diploma dropped from 29.5% to 16.8%⁶¹.
- In 2003, the unemployment rate among those with vocational diplomas was 11.7%, compared to 12% for those with an Attestation of Vocational Specialization and 5.6% for those with college-level technical training. Lastly, 4.9% of those with Bachelor's degrees, and 4.6% of those with Master's are in this situation⁶².
- Some 109,459 young people used the services of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale between April 2003 and March 2004; 63.1% of them had less than a Secondary 4 education⁶³.

Participation rate⁶⁴

- Young people aged 15 to 24 hold more part-time jobs than their elders aged 25 to 29 (45% compared to 14%)⁶⁵.

Employment forecasting

- For 2004 to 2008, Emploi-Québec projections show that there will be 640,000 jobs to fill. Professions requiring professional or technical skills or a university degree will have the most hiring opportunities⁶⁶.
- In 2002-2003, 79,737 people were enrolled in high school vocational training, while college technical training had some 84,674 students enrolled⁶⁷. These programs are not highly valued by high school students.
- More specifically, between 2004 and 2014, the government will hire about 16,000 new regular employees⁶⁸.

Openness to the world

- Some organizations have been offering young people the opportunity to do internships outside Québec for over 35 years. About 345 young people a year participate in the Agence Québec-Wallonie-Bruxelles youth internships, approximately 73% of the applications received⁶⁹. About 1,142 young people a year participate in the Office Québec-Amériques youth internships⁷⁰. Lastly, 432 young people participated in Québec sans frontières internships⁷¹, and 2,001 participated in those offered by the Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse⁷².

Young people and the society they live in

- 29% of young Canadians did volunteer work in 2000. On average, young volunteers donated fewer hours than those 25 and older (130 hours compared to 169 hours⁷³).
- The number of hours of volunteer work per year went from 174 hours in 1987 to 125 hours in 1997⁷⁴ and to 130 hours in 2000⁷⁵.
- Young people aged 15 to 19 show the highest level of volunteer work of all age groups⁷⁶.
- Most volunteer activities performed by young people were done within three types of organizations:
 - Research and education organizations (19% of total hours volunteered);
 - Social services (22%);
 - Arts, culture and recreational organizations (18%)⁷⁷.

Young people and elections

- In the April 2003 general election, voter turnout among young people, which has been declining steadily since 1960, fell to its lowest point since 1927⁷⁸.

- In the Québec elections held on April 14, 2003, twelve candidates aged 35 or under were elected⁷⁹, less than 10% of the caucus. Eighteen- to 35-year-olds constitute 24% of Québec's population. Yet, in the September 20, 2004 by-elections, the four candidates elected were under the age of 35, bringing the proportion of members under 35 to nearly 13% of the caucus.
- In Québec's municipalities, barely 1.3% of mayors and about 8% of councillors are under 35 years of age⁸⁰.

Youth migration

- In recent years, approximately 84,000 youths aged 15 to 29 have migrated each year⁸¹.
- The 20-29 age group usually have the highest migration rates⁸². In 2003-2004, they represented 32% of all inter-regional migrants⁸³.
- It is primarily those 15-24 who leave remote regions⁸⁴.
- Young people aged 15 to 29 migrate to urban centres and their suburbs. They choose Montréal and nearby regions, specifically the Montérégie and the National Capital Region⁸⁵.
- Some young people who had left their region were ready to return to gain such things as closer social ties, or greater ease in owning a house of their own, or closer contact with nature⁸⁶.

Immigrants to Québec

- Of the 63,350 immigrants aged 15 to 24, 55,935 live in the Montréal agglomeration, that is, 88.3%. In comparison, 46.8% of young people of that age, all origins combined, live in the Montréal area⁸⁷.

APPENDIX II : **REPORT ON GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

This section describes government intervention for young people since Québec acquired a youth policy. This report on Québec government intervention is not exhaustive. It primarily presents the measures implemented by the *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan*, in keeping with the policy's orientations.



Québec's Youth Policy

At the Québec Youth Summit held in February of 2000, participants agreed on the need to give Québec a youth policy. The *Québec Youth Policy*, titled "*Bringing Youth into Québec's Mainstream*" was released in May of 2001. It was structured around four broad orientations:

- Engaging society in a culture of generational renewal
- Ensuring young people achieve their full potential
- Facilitating access to the job market and improving the quality of working life
- Developing a sense of belonging

The policy was intended to be a reference for ensuring the coherence of all measures intended for young people. It set out the major orientations for youth, and stated the primary lines of action. The measures selected were presented in the *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan*.



The 2002-2005 Youth Action Plan

The *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan* set out the means for implementing the policy's orientations. It focused specifically on certain priority actions, i.e. the fight against academic and social dropping out, access to services and service continuity, and the coordination of government action.

Let us look at the avenues for action favoured for the first two years of the action plan.

Engaging society in a culture of generational renewal

According to the Youth Action Plan, engaging society in a culture of generational renewal meant, in particular:

[...] Make education a collective priority, ensure that the entire community builds respectful intergenerational bonds, and consistently maintain a concern for sustainable development in our methods. This means guaranteeing young people a place at the loci of decision-making and influence, and ensuring integration of the next generation and workforce planning⁸⁸.

The main purpose of the initiatives set out in the action plan was to support educational success. Therefore, nearly all of the money invested targeted the *Agir autrement* strategy developed by the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) to support the educational success of students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Launched in 2002, the *Agir autrement* strategy strives to reach over 100,000 high school students in disadvantaged areas, to promote educational success and rekindle these students' desire for education.

To support school success, three avenues for action were selected: financing research into school persistence and success, supporting integration efforts for young dropouts and providing financial assistance to part-time students. Another initiative in the action plan for engaging society in a culture of generational renewal involved rejuvenating the public service.

However, after the implementation of the Youth Action Plan, few resources were invested in raising awareness of sustainable development, promoting generational renewal, transferring skills and developing respectful intergenerational bonds, or in guaranteeing young people a place at decision-making loci.

Ensuring young people achieve their full potential

Three avenues were chosen for ensuring young people achieve their full potential. On one hand, the Youth Action Plan aimed to promote young people's access to housing, in particular through programs such as *Logement abordable Québec*, *AccèsLogis Québec*, *Revitalisation des vieux quartiers*, *Rénovation Québec* and *Réno Village*. In fact, an estimated 20% of the units built or renovated in the framework of these programs are occupied by young households.

On the other hand, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) has bolstered services for young people in difficulty in the framework of the *Strategy and Action Plan for Troubled Youth and their Families*. It consolidated the basic services for youths aged 0-17 offered at CLSCs (now CSSSs), including crisis intervention and intensive monitoring services, and bolstered access to specialized services at youth centres. Resources were also granted for implementing the new *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Also, in the framework of its strategy, the MSSS set up youth intervention teams designed to enable young people presenting complex situations or several concomitant problems, and their parents, to move smoothly and continuously from establishment to establishment within the health and social services continuum.

Lastly, the MSSS supports young parents through the *Program of Support to Young Parents*, in the Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services for Families Living in Vulnerable Situations program. For young families in which the mother is under 20 when her child is born, this intensive, continuous support program applies from the time the pregnancy is announced until the child enters school. It is designed to decrease the intergenerational

transmission of social and health problems by giving people and communities more power to act.

Two other action areas are designed to prevent social adjustment difficulties among young people: the *Talk. It's the only way to grow* campaign and the *Québec en forme* project. Note that the latter measure is designed to promote and organize physical, sports and outdoor activities to combat sedentariness, mainly among students at elementary schools in disadvantaged areas. The Fondation Lucie-et-André-Chagnon and the Québec government (through the MEQ, MSSS and MAMSL [Ministère des Affaires municipales, du Sport et du Loisir]) contribute equal shares of the financing.

And, to ensure that young people reach their full potential, the Youth Action Plan strove to put young people at the centre of the intervention, and provide for collaboration among partners so as to optimize the results and continuity of the interventions. However, in spite of numerous efforts, there is still more to be done to ensure true collaboration among partners and ensure continuity in the interventions for young people.

Facilitating access to the job market and improving the quality of working life

The Youth Action Plan put forward a set of initiatives to facilitate access to the job market and improve the quality of working life for young people. The initiatives were primarily structured around the following three themes: Reconciliation of family life with work, the fight against poverty and the development of entrepreneurial values.

The MESS (Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale) thus tried a number of intervention strategies for troubled youths under 25. Among others, it implemented the *Individualized Integration, Training and Employment Plan* for youths under age 25, and developed various projects focusing on young people's skills enhancement and workforce integration, such as the *Solidarité Jeunesse* program, launched as a research action program. Recently, the MESS renewed this program which, in close

collaboration with the Carrefours jeunesse-emploi, offers services and individualized support to young people applying for employment assistance.

Moreover, in addition to its *Young Volunteers* program, which promoted workforce integration, the MESS designed a measure called *Ma place au soleil*, designed for young mothers on employment assistance and focusing on obtaining initial qualifications. It also launched pilot projects tailored to the circumstances of street youths in Montréal and Québec City (*Espoir* projects), and participated in projects for young people at youth centres (the pilot project *Qualification des jeunes*), together with the MSSS and the Association des centres de jeunesse du Québec. This project is designed to help young people become independent and ensure they are qualified through intensive action.

For its part, the Secrétariat à la jeunesse (SAJ) developed the project *Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge*. It contains a set of measures designed to recognize school as a key component in strengthening young people's entrepreneurial culture, creating a propitious environment for the emergence of a true entrepreneurial culture among young people and providing effective, accessible strategies that are customized to the needs of youth and future entrepreneurs, enabling them to make their business projects a reality.

Developing a sense of belonging

The Youth Action Plan recognized that the sense of belonging is a key component of active citizenship and social participation. It proposed actions for supporting young people's involvement in their community, and for ensuring that youth initiatives would be well received and supported.

In the Plan's first two years of implementation, much of the money allocated to developing a sense of belonging was invested in the SAJ's creation of a Regional Youth Investment Fund, run by the regional youth forums. Resources were also allocated to the program for sports and recreation animators for aboriginal communities, as

well as the *Route verte*, to maintain bicycle path assets. Lastly, investments were made to pooling transportation services in rural areas, in the context of the Ministère des Transports' subsidy program for rural public transportation.

Overall, the Youth Action Plan mainly put forward measures for providing a stimulating milieu in all regions of Québec and for encouraging social participation by youth. Very few initiatives were created for fostering openness to the various realities around the world.

Foster exchanges with, and openness to, youth

The Youth Action Plan added another orientation to the four orientations listed in the *Québec Youth Policy*, i.e. fostering exchanges with, and openness to, youth. To this end, efforts focused primarily on developing a youth portal and improving toll-free telephone service. These two measures are designed to promote exchanges with, and openness to, youth by providing access to clear information on services for young people.

The above content shows that since the *Québec Youth Policy* was released in 2001 and the *2002-2005 Youth Action Plan* was implemented, various actions have been taken to engage society in a culture of generational renewal, ensure the development of young people's full potential and facilitate their access to the job market, improve the quality of working life, develop a sense of belonging to Québec society and foster exchanges with, and openness to, youth.

NOTES

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