

Survey on Quebec social policies

50% of Quebecers are afraid of becoming poor and almost a third consider that they already are

Montreal, September 30, 2015 – **A survey conducted by Léger for the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation found that half of all Quebecers fear poverty and believe that, along with the educational success of Quebec’s children, fighting poverty must continue to be a priority for public decision-makers.**

Conducted with a total of 2,006 respondents in June 2015, the survey on Quebecers’ aspirations in the area of social policy revealed their anxiety with respect to poverty. A total of 31% of those surveyed consider themselves to be poor, while 50% said they were afraid of becoming poor. The corresponding figure for parents with children between 0 and 5 was somewhat higher, at 59%.

According to survey results, the ingredients considered to be essential for a good quality of life include various aspects of a healthy lifestyle (71% of respondents mentioned these factors), a happy family and social life (56%) and a good financial situation (48%). Fifty-nine per cent of respondents said they were moderately satisfied with their quality of life, while 26% claimed to be very satisfied and 14%, not very satisfied.

In comparison with our neighbours south of the border, 52% of respondents think that quality of life in Quebec is better than in the United States, while 32% consider it to be similar. In comparison with other Canadian provinces, 55% of respondents believe that Quebec’s quality of life is similar to that in the rest of Canada, 21% think it is worse and 18%, better. However, 48% of Quebecers feel that their quality of life has deteriorated over the past 10 years, and 75% believe that major changes will be needed in our society to ensure that our quality of life does not decline in the future. Opinions on the future of Quebec were mitigated: 48% were pessimistic, while 44% were optimistic.

While recognizing that responsibility for various social issues is shared by individuals and the government, 83% of respondents consider that public programs, services and social policies make a significant contribution to their quality of life. The majority of respondents believe that Quebecers have a collective responsibility in preventing poverty (61%), providing support for senior citizens (59%), supporting those most in need (57%), ensuring that individuals have a minimum level of income (56%), and ensuring the academic success of children and young people (45%). Respondents felt, however, that responsibilities should be shared in the areas of early childhood development and parental support.

When asked to which programs they would be prepared to contribute more, 50% of respondents mentioned those focused on academic success in primary and secondary school, improved social services for those most in need, and improved public pension plans.

It is interesting to note that 72% of respondents think that eliminating poverty should be a priority for public decision-makers, and that 84% consider that success in school should be another, with 60% mentioning the development of children between 0 and 5. Health, education and economic development topped the list of government priorities, followed closely by support for those most in need and environmental issues.

Opinion was divided on Quebec's financial capacity to maintain or develop its social policies. Although 55% of individuals surveyed responded that Quebec has the means to maintain its current social policies, 37% said they were worried about the province's financial capacity to do so. Ideas on how to deal with our budgetary challenges were varied: some respondents opted for increased tariffs (40%), while others would prefer to raise income taxes (15%) or consumer taxes (25%).

According to Claude Chagnon, President of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, "it is very useful to take the pulse of the population at a time when significant collective choices are being made. The choices that we make as a society will inevitably have an impact on our ability to prevent poverty and promote childhood development—from the very youngest age, right through school until adulthood—with all the repercussions that will have on Quebec's economy and quality of life." This perspective is even more relevant when we see that 81% of survey respondents do not feel that their point of view is sufficiently taken into consideration in the decisions that are made by various levels of government.

Read the survey results (in French only):

http://fondationchagnon.org/media/117015/fondation-lucie-et-andre-chagnon_etude-sur-les-aspirations-quebecoises_p.pdf

About the survey

This online survey was conducted between June 16 and June 21, 2015 by Léger with a representative sample of 2,006 Quebecers aged 18 and over who were able to express their opinions in French or English. With the addition of data from Statistics Canada, results were weighted based on sex, age, language spoken at home, education and presence of children at home in order to ensure the sample accurately represented the entire population being studied.

The purpose of the survey was to record Quebecers' opinions and aspirations with respect to the following issues:

- their own quality of life and the quality of life in the province as a whole
- factors that have an influence on them, including various social policies
- individual and collective responsibilities
- the collective choices currently faced by Quebec
- the contribution of various actors to our quality of life

About the Foundation

The mission of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation is to prevent poverty by contributing to the educational success of young people living in Quebec from conception to age 17 by helping them to develop their full potential. To do so, it supports local and regional mobilization in areas that are critical to educational success: early childhood development and student retention. The Foundation also provides support for awareness activities and tools for parents and Quebec society as a whole. www.fondationchagnon.org

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Sources:

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