**PROXIMITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The Proximity and Social Inclusion theme refers to the territorial approach, government services, participation and social inclusion, justice, climate change and energy transition. You can choose to answer one or more of the questions. You can answer directly in the questionnaire and use as many pages as you need.

Once the questionnaire is completed, please send it in Word format to the following address plp4@mtess.gouv.qc.ca.

We also invite you to consider some elements during your reflection:

* The goals and directions of the [Act to combat poverty and social exclusion](https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/L-7#:~:text=La%20pr%C3%A9sente%20loi%20vise%20%C3%A0,vers%20un%20Qu%C3%A9bec%20sans%20pauvret%C3%A9.).
* The realities experienced by women and men or by overrepresented groups in the population living in poverty and social exclusion, namely [ADS+](https://www.quebec.ca/en/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/droits-liberte/gender-equality/gender-based-analysis).
* The egalitarian, sustainable and health-promoting nature of the proposals.
* The different levels of intervention: local, regional and national.
* Knowledge development (research, statistics and evaluation).
* The cross-sectoral approach in defining problems and finding solutions.

We thank you for your cooperation.

Your opinion matters.

Identify the organization or municipality you represent.\*

\* Identification of citizens who wish to complete the questionnaires is not required.

**The territorial approach**

[Translation] “The regions have assets, resources, energy, and their own “genius” to mobilize in order to make Québec a territorial mosaic in which each component contributes to the strength and prosperity of the province as a whole”.[[1]](#endnote-2)

In order to achieve the full development of Québec society, the Québec government has adopted programs and measures that are adjusted according to different levels of territorial intervention, whether local, regional or national. These programs are designed to address various societal issues.

This desire to tailor interventions to the reality and challenges of the regions was specifically embodied in the Alliances pour la solidarité measure, implemented as part of the government’s last two action plans in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. To maximize the results or to complement their interventions for the benefit of people living in poverty throughout Québec, new measures may be required.

**Some statistics**

* In 2019, the distribution of low-income[[2]](#endnote-3) after-tax rates for all families by administrative region revealed some disparities.
* The regions with the highest concentrations of low-income families relative to their population are Nord-du-Québec (18.4% of families in the region) and Montréal (15.5% of families in the region). The region with the fewest low-income families relative to its population is Chaudière-Appalaches (5.3% of families in the region).[[3]](#endnote-4)

**QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH**

Question 1

In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty and social exclusion in your surroundings or municipality, or at the regional level?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions in matters of territorial interventions that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty and social exclusion across the territory?

Question3

What other points could you make in connection with the issues of decentralization and collaboration as it relates to supporting people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain population groups living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups living in the same situation and face greater barriers in accessing territorial interventions?

**Government Services**

People living in poverty and social exclusion may have difficulty accessing government programs and services. Many of them are discouraged by the complexity of the administrative procedures to apply for assistance or to access the financial programs and tax credits to which they are entitled.

Non-take-up means not applying for the help you need and are entitled to. Lack of information about available programs and services, difficulty in understanding them, processing times, and modes of communication are among the main difficulties encountered (e.g., access to digital technologies).[[4]](#endnote-5)

People living in poverty often express the need for support in accessing government programs and services. [[5]](#endnote-6)

**Some statistics**

* Barriers faced by low-income people include inadequate literacy, distance from government offices, too many forms to fill out, reluctance to disclose personal information, and lack of a bank account.[[6]](#endnote-7)
* The pandemic has highlighted the digital inequities of people in poverty, with income having the greatest impact on Internet access:[[7]](#endnote-8)
	+ In 2020, 12% of Québec households with an annual income of less than $20,000 did not have an Internet connection.[[8]](#endnote-9)
	+ Low-income households are also less well equipped with technological devices and those they do have are of lower quality.[[9]](#endnote-10)

**QUESTIONS RELATED TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Question 1

In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty and social exclusion in relation to access to government services?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions that could improve access to government services for people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other points could you make in connection with access to government services as it relates to supporting people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain groups in the population living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups in the same situation and face greater barriers to accessing government services?

**Social participation and inclusion**

Social exclusion is [translation] “the result of a set of economic, political, institutional and cultural processes, often interdependent and cumulative,” which isolate individuals or groups.[[10]](#endnote-11) In general, poverty is a major risk factor for social exclusion and this exclusion is a crucial barrier to escaping poverty.[[11]](#endnote-12)

The [Act to combat poverty and social exclusion](https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cs/L-7#:~:text=La%20pr%C3%A9sente%20loi%20vise%20%C3%A0,vers%20un%20Qu%C3%A9bec%20sans%20pauvret%C3%A9.) recognizes in its preamble that “persons living in poverty and social exclusion are the first to act to improve their situation and that of their families, and whereas such improvement is linked to the social, cultural and economic development of the entire community.”

Social and economic inclusion requires solutions that support social participation and recognize the different forms of social participation in carrying out the daily activities that a person is called upon to perform in society.[[12]](#endnote-13) Social participation also suggests addressing poverty and social exclusion by involving those who are not heard in the development of policies that affect their lives. By providing them with the resources and support to participate, citizens have some level of control.[[13]](#endnote-14)

**Some statistics**

* “Epidemiological studies have established social participation as a factor associated with positive health outcomes for seniors. ... Greater social participation was positively associated with self-perceived health and negatively associated with loneliness and life dissatisfaction. ... Frequently reported barriers to social participation included limitations, being too busy, personal or family responsibilities, and not wanting to go alone to activities.”[[14]](#endnote-15)
* In a survey of public attitudes toward people experiencing poverty, three quarters of respondents (75%) agreed (strongly or somewhat) with the statement that [translation] “Poor people should try harder to get by.”[[15]](#endnote-16)

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION**

Question 1

What difficulties do you think people living in poverty and social exclusion face in terms of participation and social inclusion?

Question 2

What are the specific courses of action or solutions that could improve participation and social inclusion for people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other points could you make in relation to participation and social inclusion for people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain population groups living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups living in the same situation and face greater barriers in matters of participation and social inclusion?

**Justice**

People living in poverty may have difficulty accessing legal services to assert their rights due to, among other things, the cost[[16]](#endnote-17) or complexity of legal proceedings. It was to remedy these accessibility problems that the Legal Aid Act was adopted in Québec.[[17]](#endnote-18)

People who are socially disaffected, such as those who are or may be homeless and those with mental health or substance abuse problems, are over-represented in the courts.[[18]](#endnote-19)

Adapting services and legal procedures to the reality of people living in poverty and social exclusion therefore means finding solutions that are additional to the conventional legal process.[[19]](#endnote-20)

**Some statistics**

* In 2019-2020, 26,139 accused or convicted persons were placed in the care of Québec Correctional Services. Of these, about 10% had physical or mental health problems.
* In 2019-2020, an average of 4,345 people were incarcerated daily in Québec. In particular, those without a degree and those living alone have much higher incarceration rates than the general population.[[20]](#endnote-21)
* Results of a survey conducted for the Department of Justice indicates that 59% of respondents consider the justice system to be not very or not at all accessible because of the costs associated with the court process.[[21]](#endnote-22)

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO JUSTICE**

Question 1

In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty and social exclusion when accessing the justice system?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions that could improve access to the justice system for people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other points could you make in connection with the justice system as it relates to supporting people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain population groups living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups living in the same situation and face greater barriers in accessing the justice system?

**Climate change and energy transition**

The consequences, frequency, intensity and unpredictability of climate changehave impacts on socio-economic inequalities. [Translation] “In urban areas, low-income people tend to live within an urban heat island, near sources of pollution (e.g., urban highway, industrial district), and in a greater proportion, in unventilated or non-air-conditioned housing.”[[22]](#endnote-23) As another example, “property damage or job loss during an extreme weather event will generally affect low-income individuals more, since the costs incurred represent a larger portion of their overall income.”[[23]](#endnote-24)

The energy transition[[24]](#endnote-25) aims to eliminate overconsumption and energy waste.[[25]](#endnote-26) This suggests that the energy transition has different impacts on households depending on factors related to low income, occupancy, or factors external to the household, including housing and appliance energy inefficiency, type of energy supply and its cost. Because of their generally higher costs, individual eco-responsible actions, such as consuming products with reduced environmental impacts, are often out of reach for people living in poverty. In addition, fuel poverty occurs when a person cannot meet their energy needs due to lack of resources, when they go without other essential goods or services to pay their energy bills, or when they cannot pay their energy bills.[[26]](#endnote-27)

**Some statistics**

* In 2017, between 6% and 19% of Canadian households were living in energy poverty.[[27]](#endnote-28)
* In Québec, people with lower incomes were 20% more likely to seek medical attention during extreme heat.[[28]](#endnote-29)

**QUESTIONS RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENERGY TRANSITION**

Question 1

In your opinion, what are the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty and social exclusion in relation to the impacts of climate change and the energy transition?

Question 2

What are the courses of action or solutions related to climate change and the needs related to the energy transition that could improve the living conditions of people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 3

What other comments could you make about the issues of climate change and those around energy transition and on how they affect people living in poverty and social exclusion?

Question 4

Have you found or do you think that certain groups in the population living in poverty and social exclusion are more affected than other groups living in the same situation and face greater barriers with regard to climate change and the energy transition?

Appendices

**Examples of government strategies and action plans**

**associated with the Proximity and Inclusion theme**

* [Stratégie gouvernementale pour assurer l’occupation et la vitalité des territoires 2018-2022 – Pour des municipalités et des régions encore plus fortes](https://www.mamh.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/publications/occupation_territoire/strategie_ovt_2018-2022.pdf)(Stratégie actualisée)
* [Plan d’action gouvernement en action communautaire 2022-2027](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/sacais/action-communautaire/plan-action.asp)
* [Stratégie gouvernementale en action bénévole 2016-2022](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/Broch_Strategie-action-benevole_2016-2022.pdf) (prolongée)
* [Mise en œuvre 2021-2024 de la politique À part entière : Pour un véritable exercice du droit à l’égalité](https://www.ophq.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/centre_documentaire/Bilans/RAP_mise-oeuvre-APE-2021-2024.pdf)
* [Politique-cadre d’électrification et de changements climatiques, le Plan pour une économie verte 2030](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/environnement/publications-adm/plan-economie-verte/plan-economie-verte-2030.pdf)
* [Stratégie gouvernementale de développement durable 2015-2020](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/environnement/publications-adm/developpement-durable/strategie-dd-2015-2020.pdf) (prolongée)
* [Plans d’action de développement durable des ministères et organismes](https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/politiques-orientations/developpement-durable/strategie-gouvernementale)

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