
PERCEPTION OF THE IMAGE OF THE CCQ AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AMONG THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION

2008 ABORIGINAL SURVEY - HIGHLIGHTS

The main goal of this study is to enable the Commission de la Construction du Québec (CCQ) to gauge its Aboriginal clientele's level of awareness of the CCQ and general perceptions of the construction industry. The study falls within the CCQ's 2006–08 strategic objective of increasing the visibility of the construction industry and its legislative framework.

Data collection, in French and English, took place between June 3 and July 16, 2008, and the response rates were 66.1% for Aboriginal workers and 41.0% for the general Aboriginal population. A total of 237 Aboriginal employees working between 2001 and 2008 and 401 individuals from the general Aboriginal population whose residential address was situated in a Aboriginal community (reserve, settlement, reserved territory) or Northern village were questioned. The maximum sampling margin of error is $\pm 5\%$.

The highlights below are taken from the report written by Écho Sondage (August 2008). The data is compared to data from a similar CCQ survey administered among all construction workers and the general population in 2008.¹

1) TARGET POPULATION

- ❖ According to Statistics Canada (2006), there are 76,995 Aboriginals in Québec, spread among 11 nations and 54 communities. The Innu (20%), Crees (18%), Mohawks (15%), and Inuit (13%) are the four largest Aboriginal nations, accounting for 66% of the total Aboriginal population in the province.
- ❖ In 2007, the CCQ had 609 active Aboriginal workers registered. Crees (40%), Innu (19%), Inuit, (13%) and Atikamekw (3%) account for 75% of the Aboriginal workers in the construction industry.

¹ *Image de l'industrie de la construction et de la CCQ auprès de sa clientèle et du grand public, 2008.*

- ❖ The target population was Aboriginal construction workers (only Inuit and First Nations members whose most recent year of work was after 2001) and the general Aboriginal population (adult individuals whose residential address was situated in an Aboriginal community or Northern village).

2) DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

- ❖ Among the 283 aboriginal workers, Crees and Innu formed the two main nations (38% and 36%, respectively), followed at a distance by Inuit (5%).
- ❖ More than one third of Aboriginal workers usually speak French at home (35%), followed by Cree (23%), English (18%), and Innu (15%). In general, English was the second language of Crees and the French the second language of Innu.
- ❖ Two thirds of Aboriginal workers are aged between 25 and 44 years (66%), while only 48% of all workers is in this age group.

The gap may be explained by the large demographic weight of young people among Aboriginals, but also by the relatively recent inclusion of Aboriginals in the industry.

- ❖ Almost one Aboriginal worker out of 5 (17%) completed a vocational training program, compared to 11 % for the general population².
- ❖ Half of Aboriginal workers (51%) do not have Secondary 5, compared to 32% for the general population³.
- ❖ Four Aboriginal workers out of 10 (39%) have five years or less of work in the construction field, and another four out of 10 (39%) have between 6 and 15 years. This proportion is compared to 32% and 35% for all workers.

We surmise that older workers are found more in out-of-construction sites in Aboriginal communities.

- ❖ Almost nine respondents out of 10 (87%) in the **general Aboriginal population** indicate that they know people in the construction field, compared to 74% in the general population.

² Population 15 year and over, *Institut de la statistique du Québec, Recensement 2001.*

³ Ibid.

3) VISIBILITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE CCQ

- ❖ The “CCQ” acronym is recognized (**spontaneously or assisted manner**⁴) by 82% of Aboriginal workers and by 42% of the general Aboriginal population, compared to 99% of all workers and 35% of the general population.

This difference may be explained by the partial integration of workers holding a hiring number or exemption certificate or by the CCQ's.

- ❖ 82% of the Aboriginal workers who know the CCQ have a positive opinion of the Commission de la construction du Québec compared to 79% among the general Aboriginal population. This proportion is of 90% among all workers and 79% in the general population.
- ❖ Still among Aboriginal workers and the general Aboriginal population that knew about the CCQ, in both groups 47% of respondents believed that the CCQ is a public or government organization, while four workers out of 10 (40%) and one third of respondents in the general Aboriginal population (35%) believed that it is a union organization. This data is not available for all workers and the general population.

This confirms our observations in the field and underlines the importance of information meetings on the role of the CCQ among members of Aboriginal communities.

- ❖ In addition, almost six Aboriginal workers out of 10 (58%) and 53% of respondents in the general Aboriginal population believe that the CCQ meets **above all** the needs of workers, just like all workers (42%) and the general population (34%)

This perception is probably coloured by Aboriginal workers who believe that the CCQ is a union organization.

- ❖ With regard to Aboriginal construction workers' perception of the organizational image of the CCQ, there were relatively high agreement rates on eight of the nine statements (between 88% and 95%), and higher than for all workers. Only the statement “The CCQ is an organization with too much power” generated a lower agreement rate than the other statements for Aboriginal workers as well as for all workers.

⁴ That is, after indicating that the letters CCQ designate the Commission de la construction du Québec.

| | <u>Aboriginal workers</u> | <u>All workers (2006)⁵</u> |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| I can trust the CCQ with my personal information | 95% | 84% |
| The CCQ provides the services that it agrees to offer | 93% | 82% |
| I can trust the CCQ to make sure that working conditions are respected and that employers declare the hours worked | 92% | 77% |
| The CCQ uses well the resources at its disposal | 92% | 79% |
| The CCQ makes sure that its staff acts impartially | 92% | 80% |
| Over all, the CCQ does excellent work | 92% | 83% |
| I can trust the CCQ to administer the construction industry workers' social benefits | 90% | 80% |
| I can trust the CCQ to develop workers' competencies, ensure that there are enough workers, and that they have the required qualifications | 88% | 74% |
| The CCQ is an organization with too much power | 74% | 46% ⁶ |

These figures seem to indicate that Aboriginal workers have a particularly high degree of trust in the CCQ, far superior to that of all workers (2006). However, these figures may also have to do with the greater propensity of Aboriginals to give positive scores during telephone interviews.

- ❖ 70% of Aboriginal workers and 65% of respondents in the general Aboriginal population agree with the statement "The CCQ proposes measures to facilitate Aboriginals' access to the construction industry."

⁵ Comparaison avec les données de l'Enquête de la satisfaction de la CCQ, 2006.

⁶ *Image de l'industrie de la construction et de la CCQ auprès de sa clientèle et du grand public*, 2008

It should be noted that the CCQ has administrative agreements only with the Cree and Inuit nations. Smaller-scale agreements exist with one Innu community (Mashteuiatsh) and one Atikamekw community (Wemotaci). However, the CCQ offers exam preparation services, recognition of hours, and customized training, which may explain, in part, the high result for this proposal.

- ❖ In addition, 50% of Aboriginal workers answered in the affirmative to the question “To your knowledge, does the CCQ have a team or resource people assigned specifically to Aboriginals?”, while in the Aboriginal population in general, this proportion dropped to 34%.

Aside from the work done by the liaison officers, most relations between the Aboriginal Affairs team and the Aboriginal communities take place at the political and administrative levels.

4) PERCEPTION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS RELATED TO THE CONSTRUCTION

INDUSTRY

- ❖ With regard to perception of the construction industry in general, there are relatively high agreement rates on nine of the 12 statements (between 84% and 95%), compared to proportions between 70% and 92% for all workers. Only the following statements had lower agreement rates among both Aboriginal workers and all workers:

| | <u>Aboriginal workers</u> | <u>All workers (2008)</u> |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| The construction industry: | | |
| Is attracting more and more young people | 76% | 64% |
| Ensures lasting jobs to its workers | 70% | 64% |
| Is a sector that is easy to enter | 61% | 46% |

We observe that for Aboriginal workers, as for all workers, the statement “The construction industry is a sector that is easy to enter” receives the lowest score.

- ❖ In addition, 57% of Aboriginal workers felt that it is “very easy” or “fairly easy” to have access to a school where construction trades are taught, no matter where one lives in Québec, compared to 68% for all workers.

However, only 16.8% of Aboriginal workers hold a DEP in their trade. In the field, Aboriginal elected representatives see access to vocational training as an important stake in ensuring the economic development of their communities.

- ❖ Also, more than half (52%) of Aboriginal workers “completely agree” with the statements “The school network offers future construction workers training that meets the industry’s need”, compared to 30% for all workers.
- ❖ In regards of upgrading, 57% of Aboriginal workers “completely agree” with the statement “The construction industry is recognized for offering its workers training that enables them to upgrade”, compared to 49% for all workers.
- ❖ 39% of Aboriginal workers say that they “agree completely” and 40% of respondents from the general Aboriginal population say that they only “partly agree” with the statement “We see more and more Aboriginals in the construction industry.”
- ❖ Nevertheless, 33% of Aboriginal workers “completely agree” and 38% of the general Aboriginal population say that they “partly agree” with the statement “The construction industry is a sector in which Aboriginals can easily find a job.”

5) CONCLUSION

The Aboriginal survey measured Aboriginals’ perception of the image of the CCQ and the construction industry for the first time. Despite their particular situation (geographically isolated communities, undeclared work in communities, etc.), Aboriginal workers are well aware of the CCQ. However, even though the CCQ has good visibility, it is not well understood: more than a third of respondents think that it is a union organization!

The results of the survey also show that the new Aboriginal Affairs team has made itself known in just a few years. Even more Aboriginal workers know about the existence of measures facilitating their access to the industry. This visibility should grow in coming years with large-scale work planned in the Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions, especially as part of the provincial government’s new “Plan Nord” program.

Finally, the data on the organizational image of the CCQ among Aboriginal workers, with results generally better than those among workers as a whole, attests to a particularly high rate of trust and satisfaction. The one sour note is that a higher proportion of Aboriginal workers feel that the CCQ has too much power. Nonetheless, these numbers, overall encouraging for the CCQ, reveal the high quality of the services offered by the

organization to its Aboriginal clientele both through its regional offices and through its different mandates.

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