



Youth Prevention I

Upstream International Living Lab

17th European Research Conference | 14 September 2023

Chair and Discussant: **Nicholas Pleace**

Amanda Buchnea, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

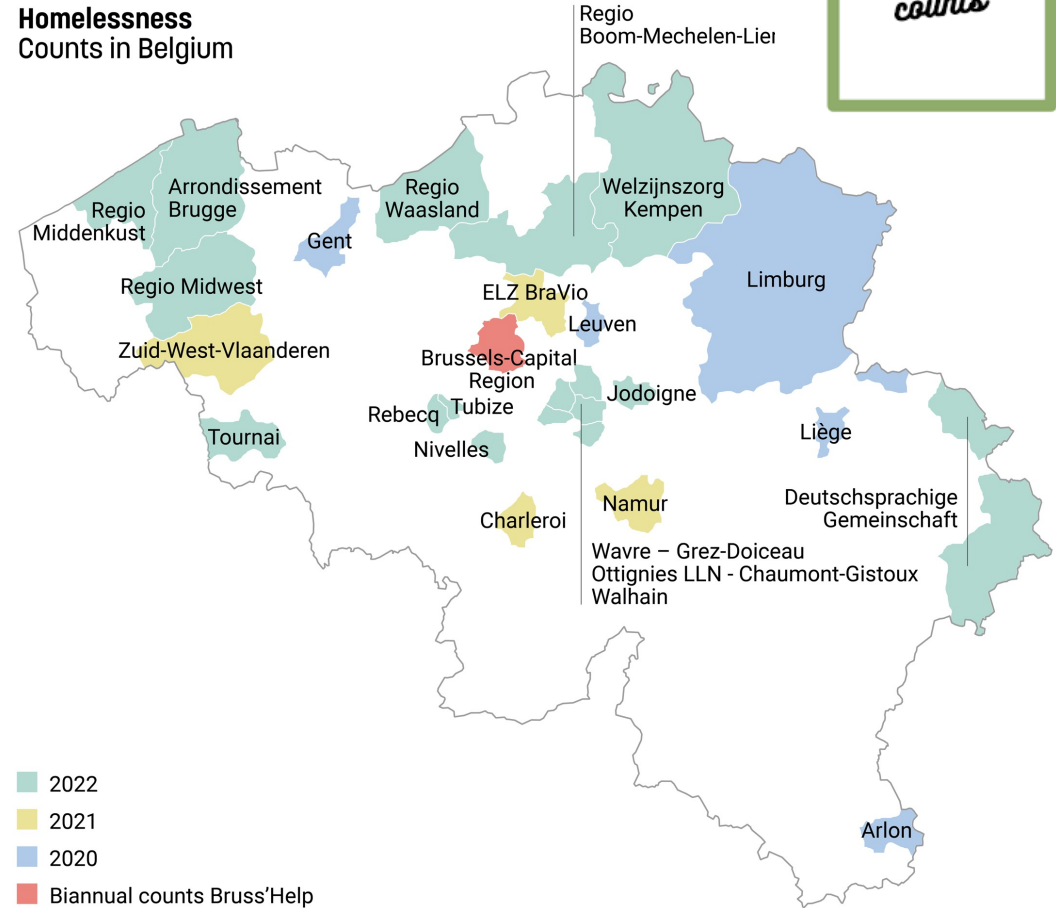
Evelien Demaerschalk, LUCAS, Centre for Care Research and Consultancy



About Us



**Homelessness
Counts in Belgium**



- 2022
- 2021
- 2020
- Biannual counts Bruss'Help



MAKING
THE SHIFT

Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

A WAY HOME
VERS UN CHEZ-SOI

CANADA



canadian
observatory on
homelessness

UN Geneva Charter
Centre of Excellence



UNECE

**YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**
York University



**Youth
Homelessness in
Belgium & Canada**

Canadian Definition of
Youth Homelessness

Canadian Definition Of Youth Homelessness

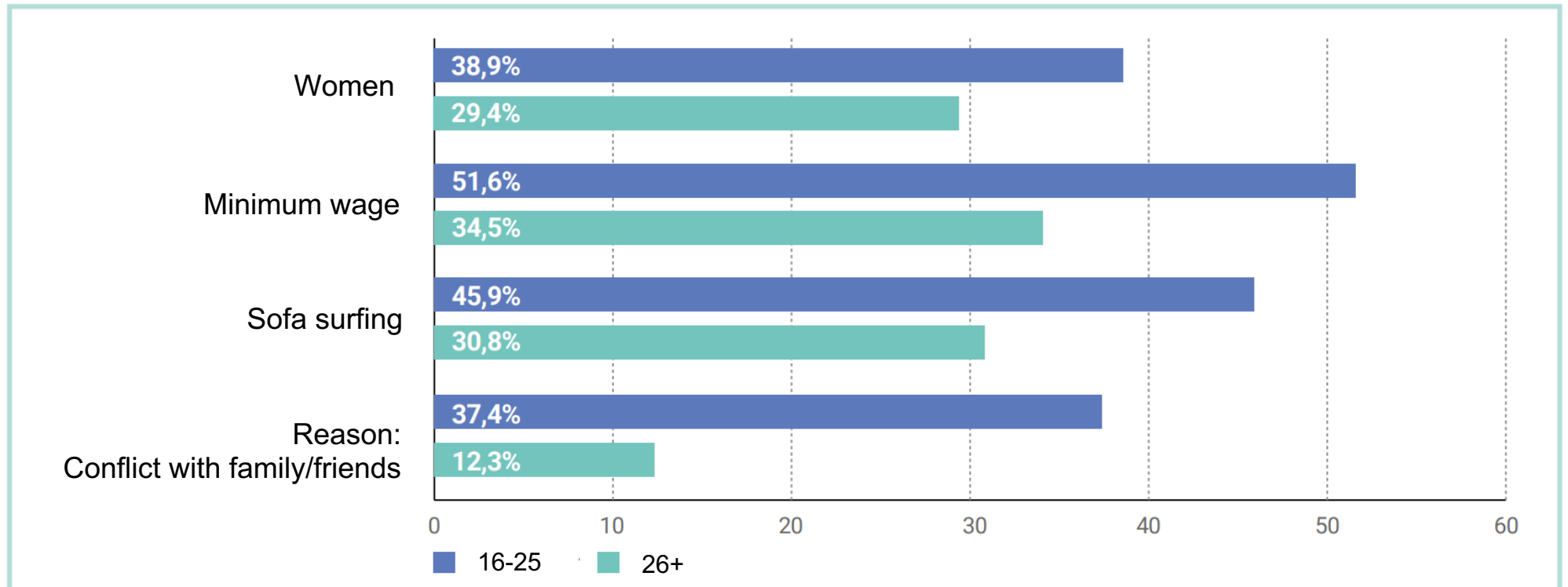
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

DEFINITION

“Youth homelessness” refers to the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence.

Youth homelessness in Belgium

19.2% *homeless youth*



**3 main
groups of
homeless
youth in
Belgium**

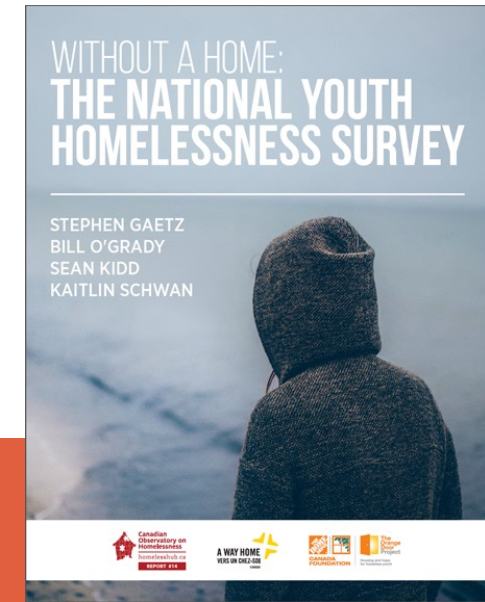
Homeless youth have
different experiences
and different needs

29.4%
Belgian, no care history

24.2%
Youth care leavers

30.4%
Newcomers

DIVERSITY



29.5%

*identified as
LGBTQ2S*

30.6%

*identified as
Indigenous*

28.2%

*identified as
racialized*

16%

*identified as
Black*

10.1%

*identified as
newcomers*

Age of first experience of homelessness

Many homeless youth became homeless before they were 16, and youth who leave home at a younger age experience greater adversity on the streets.

40.1%

were younger than 16 when they first experienced homelessness

THOSE WHO LEAVE HOME AT AN EARLY AGE ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

- Experience multiple episodes of homelessness
- Be involved with child protection services
- Be tested for ADHD
- Experience bullying
- Be victims of crime once homeless, including sexual assault
- Have greater mental health and addictions symptoms
- Experience poorer quality of life
- Attempt suicide
- Become chronically homeless



Involvement with **Child Protection services**

57.8%

*indicated some kind of
involvement with child
protection services in the past*

47.2%

*had a history of
placements in foster care
and/or group homes*

30.9% were in group
homes



Mental Health and Well-Being

Findings indicated that a total of 85.4% (942) of the youth fell in the 'high' symptom/ distress category. This is indicative, in the general Canadian population, of youth midway between inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care levels.

85.4%

of youth fell in the 'high' symptom/ distress category

42%

reported at least one suicide attempt

35.2%

reported at least one drug overdose requiring hospitalization



Criminal Victimization

PROLONGED EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

Exposure to street violence makes the impact of pre-street adversity much less relevant. This suggests that whether prior to becoming homeless young people were exposed to adversity or not, experiencing violence while homeless has a 'leveling' effect on youth mental health risk.

Exposure to sexual and physical violence on the street made youth over three times as likely to be in the high mental health risk group.



Data points to some important conclusions

First, we are waiting too long to intervene.

Second, experience of homelessness has a devastating impact on health, safety, mental health and well-being.

Third, some young people – Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, newcomer youth – experience additional burden of discrimination and exclusion.

Fourth, the emergency response does not prevent or end youth homelessness.

Fifth, our public systems are failing to prevent youth homelessness.

Sixth, people with lived experience of youth homeless strongly profess the need to shift to prevention.



Addressing homelessness in Canada



The change we want to see ...



2018 **EVERYONE COUNTS HIGHLIGHTS**

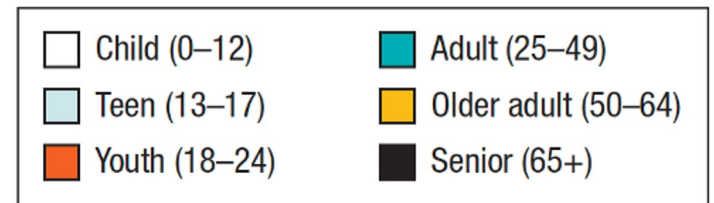
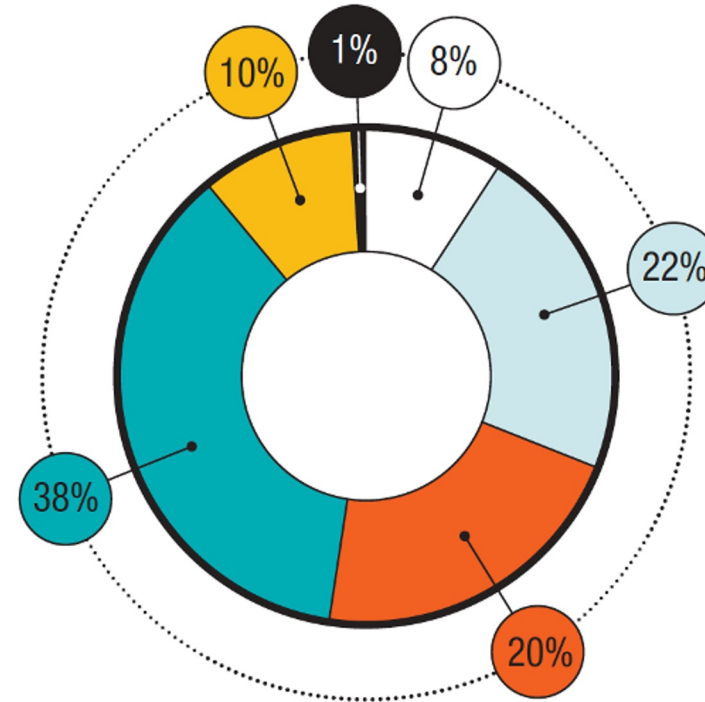
Preliminary Results from the
Second Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count
of Homelessness in Canadian Communities

Employment and Social Development Canada / Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

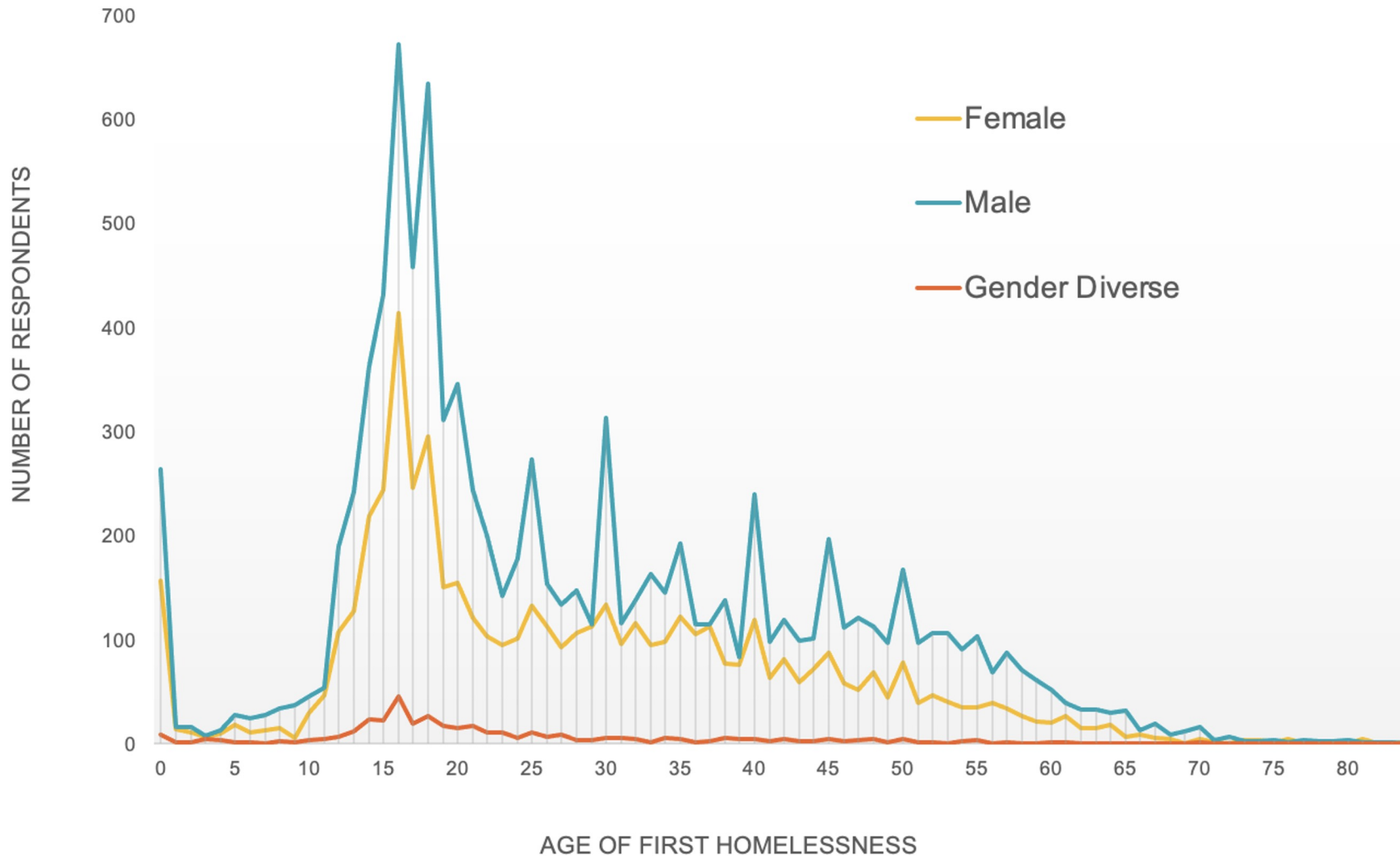
FIGURE 6 Age of First Homelessness Experience

50% First experienced homelessness before the age of 25





Selected research findings on youth (PiT 2018)



The 2018 PiT Count survey asked respondents at what age they first experienced homelessness.

Half of all respondents first experienced homelessness under the age of 25. This percentage was still high among older adults (aged 50-64) and seniors (aged 65+), with 25% first experiencing homelessness before 25.

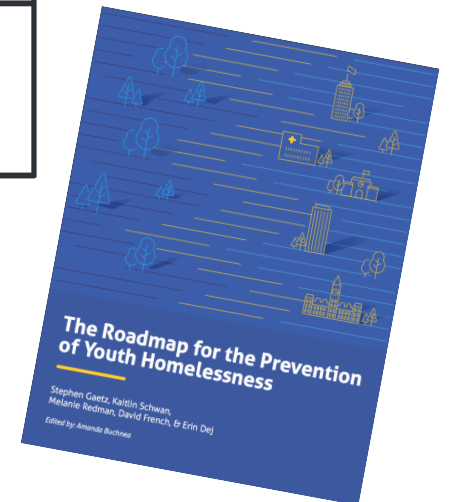
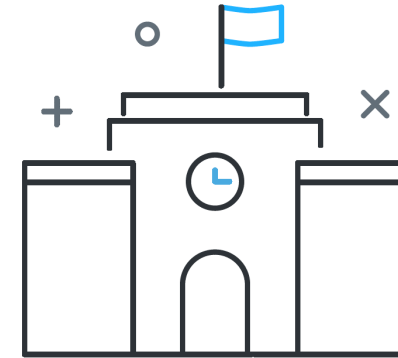
Importance of School-Based Early Intervention

“Almost everyone has, like, the one teacher that they really trusted and liked, or the one school counsellor that was cool and not scary. So it would be nice if just they got this basic training and also like, signs to look out for. And like, how to approach a student and be like, “hey, you know, how’s everything at home, everything going okay?”

Vancouver Youth

“Everything starts with me at school. You live at home and receive upbringing, but the school shapes you. You spend more time at school than at home. There should be more guidance at school.”

Flemish Youth



3

UPSTREAM

The Geelong Project

Australia



The Origin Story

Community of Schools & Services (COSS) model



Meaningful collaboration takes time ...

Parents/families
and young people

Schools

Indigenous
partners



Researchers

Service Providers



How Upstream works!



Students complete a standardized assessment;



Based on the results, students who are flagged for potential risk have the opportunity to participate in validation interviews with case managers;



Once needs are determined, a collaboratively developed care plan is established and students are connected to supports.

2

Follow up interview assessment



Results are compared with what teachers and counsellors know about who is at risk.

Based on the results, students who are flagged for potential risk have the opportunity to participate in validation interviews with case managers.

Most students identified as at risk, the school staff were not aware of.

3

Flexible Service Delivery

A 3-Tier Response

Tier 1.

Active monitoring by school staff, or a secondary consultation where a referral is made to another program or agency.

Tier 2.

Casework support, either a brief counselling-type of casework or case management by TGP

Tier 3.

'Wrap-around' case management for complex cases requiring the formal involvement of several agencies.

Young people are offered support.

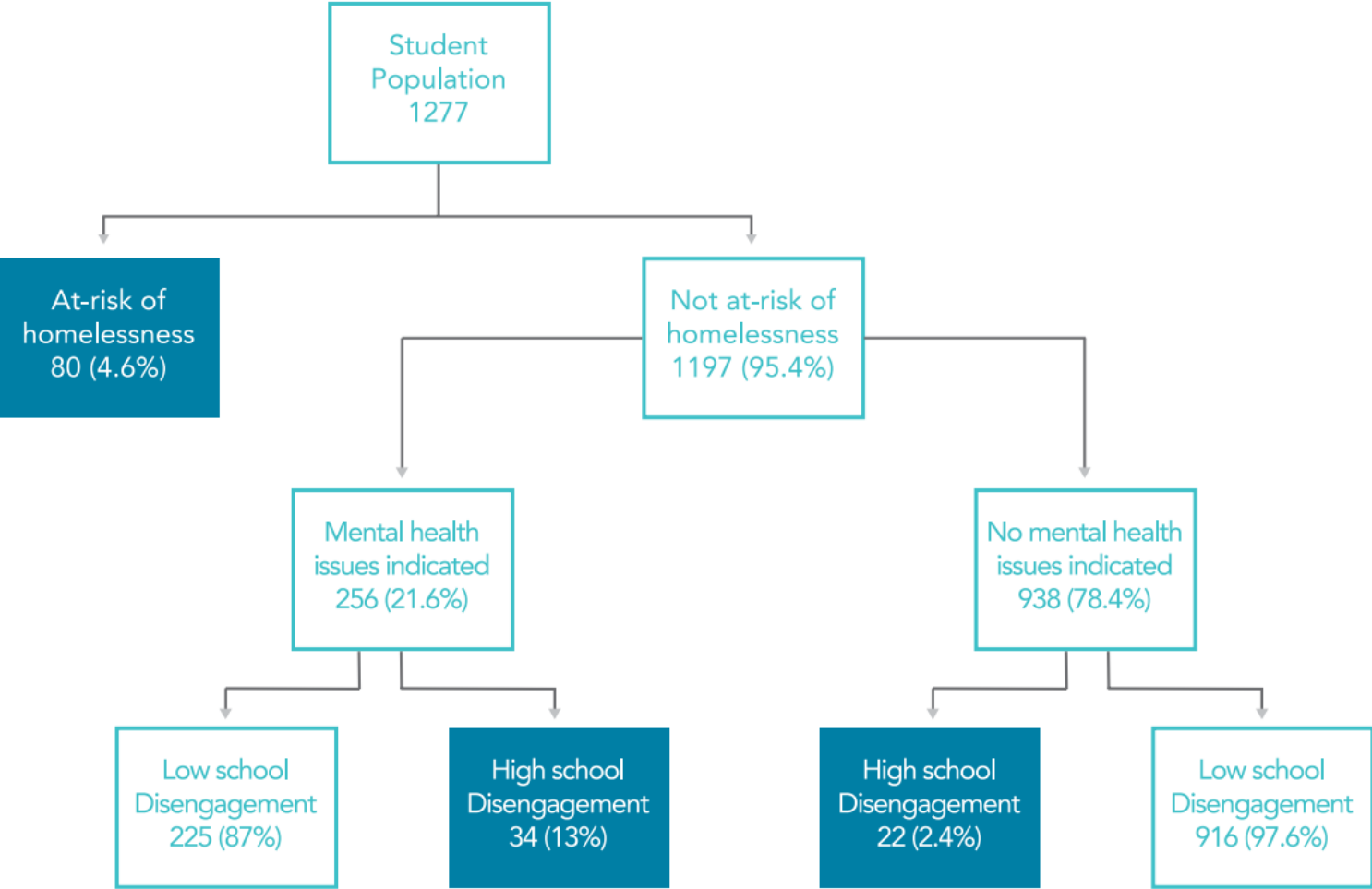
If they accept, they are referred by school staff to the community support, with a warm hand-off.

Casework is designed to:

- Stabilize the situation
- Engage young people AND families with support
- Address underlying issues
- Support appropriate referrals for additional help
- Help young people with goal setting
- Enhance attachment to school



Figure 1: Population Profile - three pilot schools, Geelong, AIAD 2017



THE
UPSTREAM
PROJECT
FLANDERS

A stylized blue graphic of water splashing or flowing, positioned between the words 'UP' and 'STREAM' in the 'UPSTREAM' line of the logo.

Upstream Flanders Set up

- Start 2023
- 3 pilots: Mechelen, Antwerp, de Kempen
- Funding:  
- Care partner 1Family1Plan (1G1P):
intersectoral collaboration
- Research partner



Upstream Flanders First steps

- Development questionnaire

Example: AIAD Upstream Australië

8. The following are some statements about your home life:

Indicate what you think is the best answer to describe your home life: - from Strongly Agree - 1, Agree - 2, Unsure - 3, Disagree - 4, and Strongly Disagree - 5.

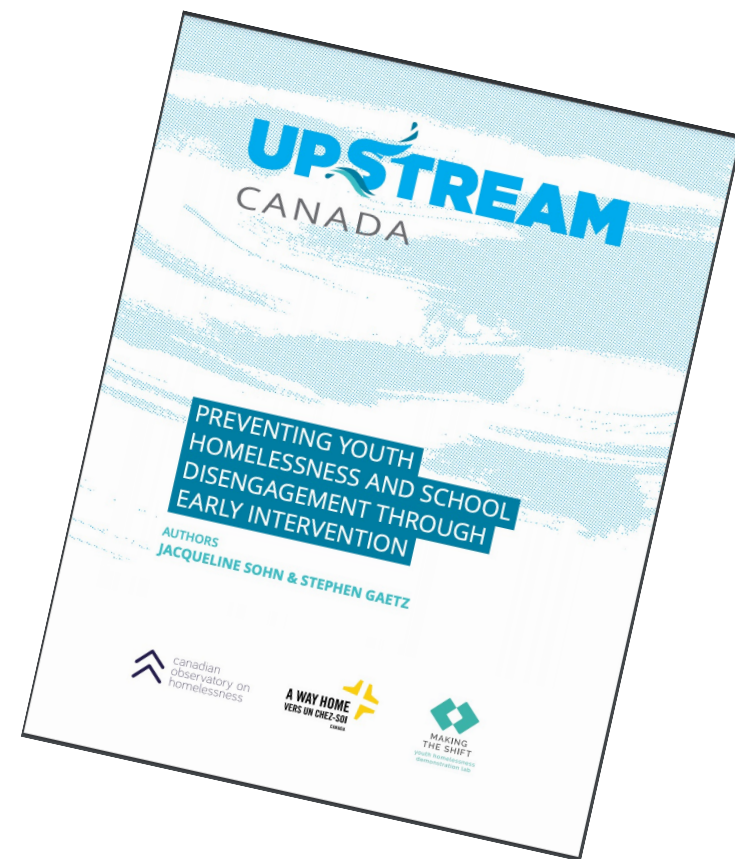
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a) I feel happy at home	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
(b) I would like to move out of home soon	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
(c) I get into lots of conflict with my parent(s) / guardian(s)	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
(d) Do you feel safe at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, definitely		<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes not safe		<input type="checkbox"/> Often not safe
(e) Have you moved out of home for any period in the past 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No		

- Set up network and start partnerships

Upstream Flanders Challenges

- Student guidance centers (CLB)
- Finding the right partners

THE UPSTREAM PROJECT CANADA



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF UPSTREAM CANADA

Risk factors for homelessness and school disengagement are not always apparent until a young person is in crisis – and sometimes, not even then. Recognizing this, Upstream Canada aims to support these students in particular, through a more proactive approach to intervention.



This collaborative approach is meant to alleviate rather than add to the social care burdens of educators.



Upstream Canada considers stakeholders as part of an ecological system.

Demonstration Projects in two mid-sized cities:

Kelowna, BC

St. John's NFLD

Results: Research Impact

KELOWNA

94%

Participation rate

(N=220)

Implementation Approach

Collaboration from the earliest stages of design

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Low-moderate needs; mixed

CONSENT PROCESS

Waiver of the requirement to obtain parental consent

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

235 (ages 13 & 14)

STUDENTS AT RISK (SNA)

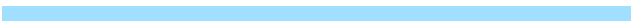
34% (N=75)

tier 3: 3% (n=6)

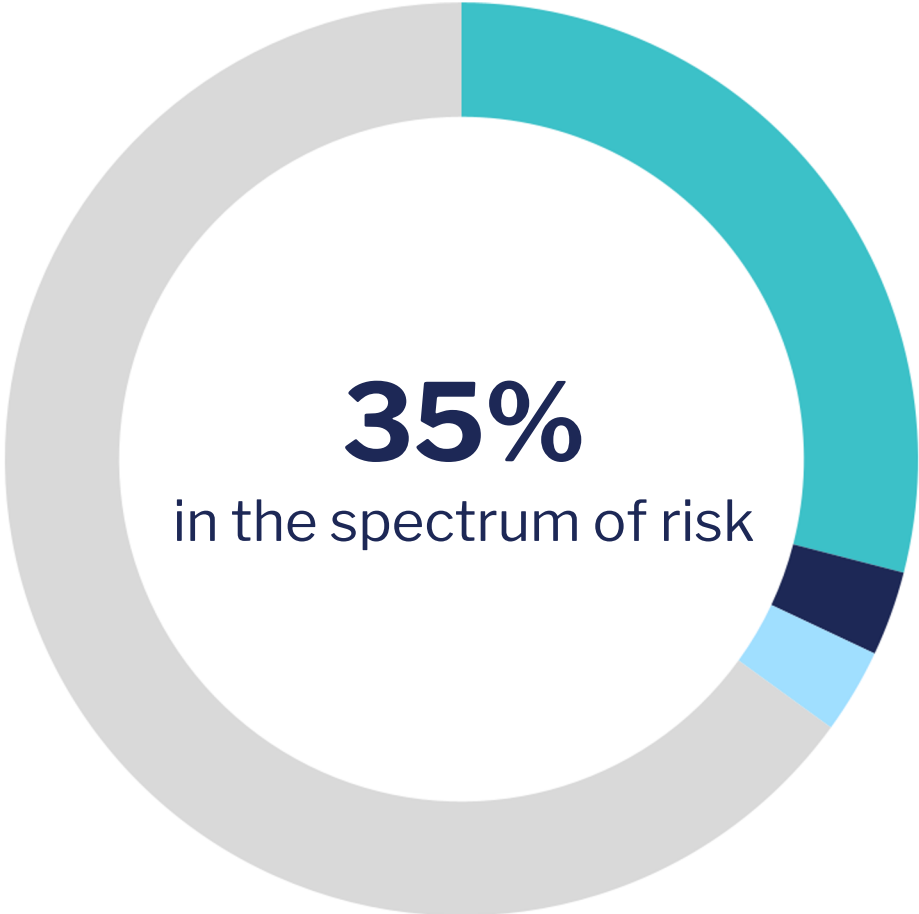
tier 2: 3% (n=6)

tier 1: 29% (n=63)

Results: Screening



KELOWNA



- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Not flagged

Risk of Homelessness & School Disengagement

Key Challenges

- **Search for ‘exemplary’ program after failed pilots**
- **School engagement challenging – schools not compelled to participate**
- **Stable Funding**
- **Taking to Scale**

4

Countries'
Adaptations of
UPSTREAM



**INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP AND
COLLABORATION:** THE
UPSTREAM INTERNATIONAL
LIVING LAB (UILL)

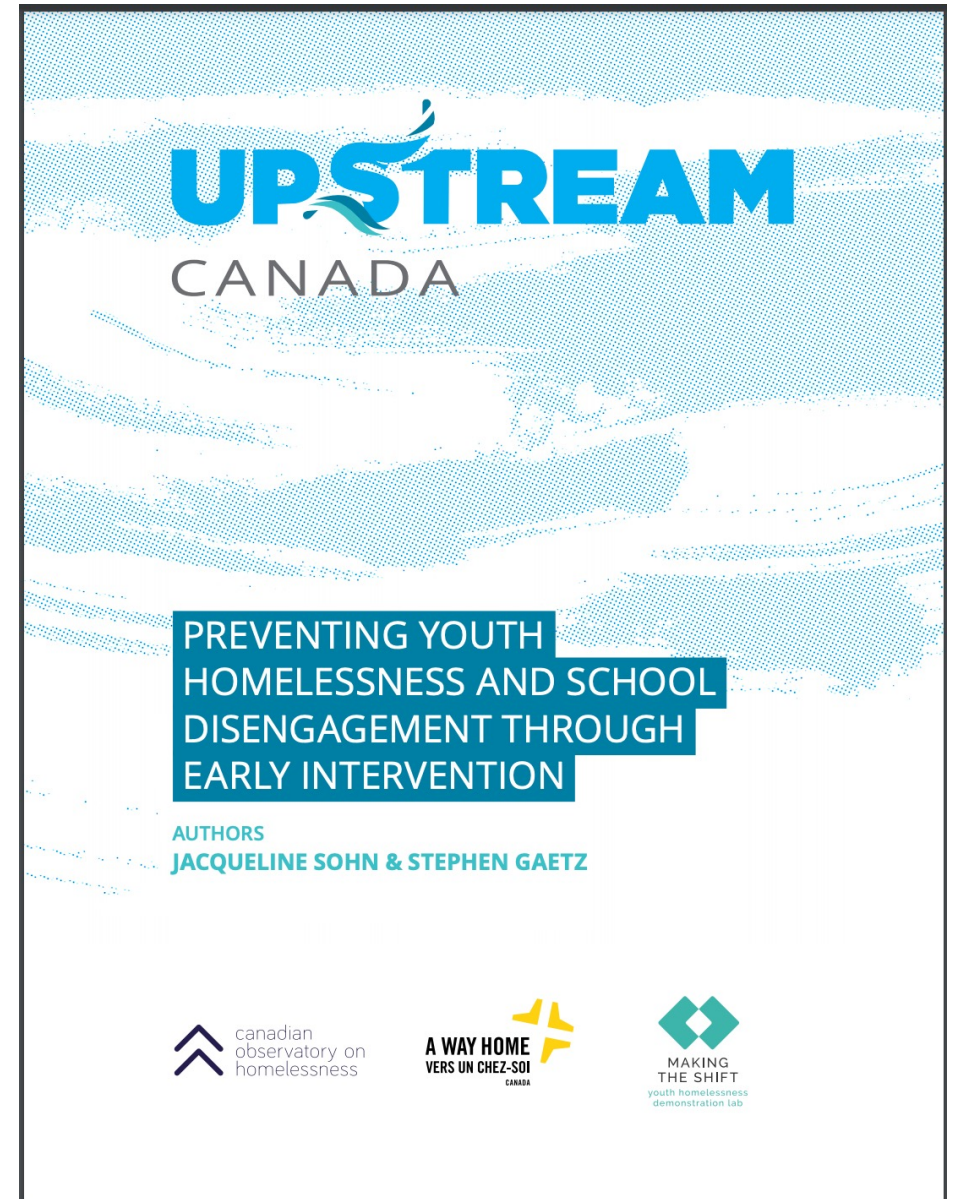
Current Partners:

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- United States
- Wales

Variations between countries

- Questionnaire
- Data ownership
- Single screening ↔ yearly follow-up

To find out more ...



ANY
QUESTIONS?



Get in Touch!

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