

Quality of life and health practices

 An example at the municipality of Nendaz



A survey on the occupation practices of secondary residences, and temporary settlement in the surrounding areas during the pandemic period.

 HES-SO Valais-Wallis and Municipality of Nendaz

 Summary

Introduction

Findings of the survey undertaken in Autumn 2021 by the Valais-Wallis HES-SO (the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland) in partnership with the Municipality of Nendaz.

Quality of life and health practices: A survey on the occupation practices of secondary residences (R2) and temporary settlement in the surrounding areas during the pandemic period.



The health crisis, together with the requirement to work from home that applied to a large majority of the Swiss population, meant that there was a tendency for people to move from towns to mountain regions. That temporary residence choice can be explained in several ways - including a wish to get away from densely populated areas for fear of being infected, a desire to enjoy the benefits of some peace and quiet and to make the most of the opportunity to be closer to nature, and also the opportunity to undertake physical and/or sporting activities notwithstanding the hygiene-related restrictions.

With development possibilities in mind, it is important for mountain regions to understand **the motivations behind some people's decision to spend more time at their secondary residence** as well as **what could be done to accentuate that trend** in a post-pandemic future.

Some of the findings of the survey can be found here, in a graphical form that summarise the survey undertaken in Autumn 2021 jointly with the Health and Tourism Institutes of the Valais-Wallis HES-SO.

Respondents

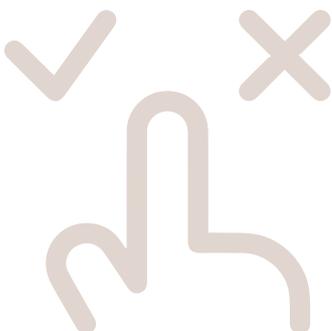
- **4388 letters were sent to owners of secondary residences**
- **1004 questionnaires were fully completed and usable (23% response rate)**

Very good response rate!

Most respondents live in Switzerland, mainly in the French-speaking cantons of Vaud, Geneva, and Neuchâtel.

3 clusters were identified:

- **C1 Family:** comprising 295 people (29%), characterised as parents caring for children, higher-education graduates, executives and managers, also French-speaking Swiss.
- **C2 45 years and over:** covering 474 people (47%), comprising mainly people aged 45 to 65 without parental responsibilities. As far as the social-professional categories are concerned, the profile is similar to the first cluster - though with more self-employed people and more workers, also including retired people living in French-speaking Switzerland.
- **C3 Retired:** comprising 235 people (23%), almost exclusively those aged 65 and over and retired. The education level is mainly secondary and higher education, and they are more likely to live in German-speaking Switzerland than those in the first and second cluster.



🔒 Lockdown

Lockdown – the March to May 2020 period – resulted in a change to people’s habits and lifestyles: just 27% of respondents did what they normally do.

26% of respondents came to their R2 more often than usual. The main reasons were equally important across each cluster, these being a more appealing environment mainly in terms of **nature**, ease of access to **physical activity**, **less pollution** and **less noise nuisance**, and also a **more favourable climate environment**.

A third of respondents said that they worked remotely from their R2.

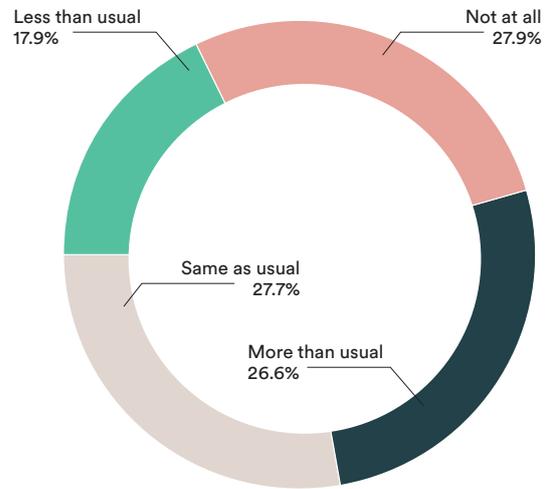
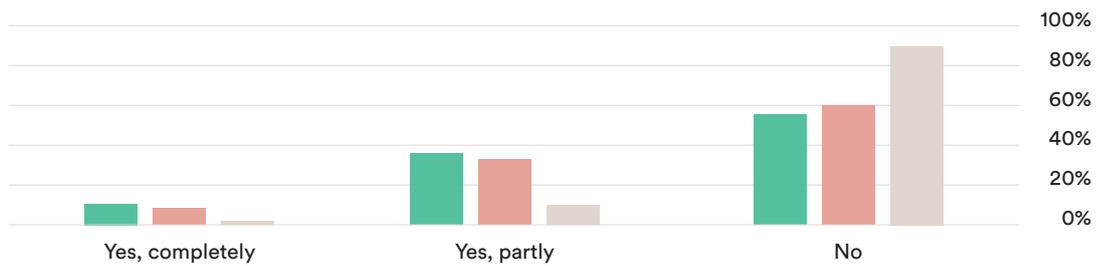


Figure 1: Frequency of visits to R2 during lockdown

Figure 2: Home-working practices during lockdown

■ Cl 1
■ Cl 2
■ Cl 3



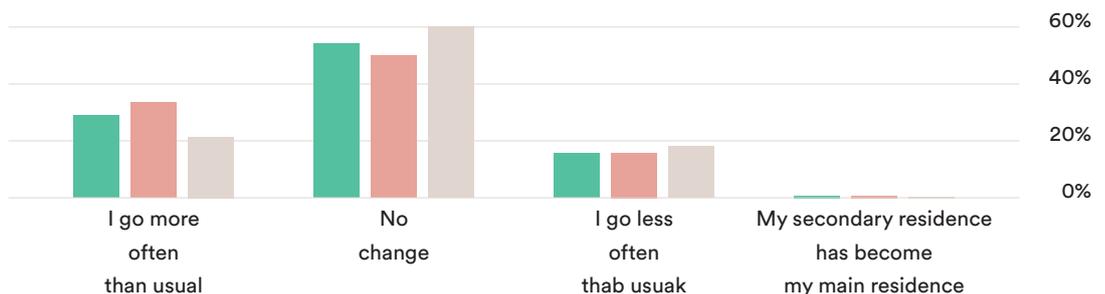
🔓 Lifting of lockdown

Following the lifting of lockdown, 50% of people said that they did not change their habits – and that was particularly the case for cluster 3 respondents. More people, however, said that they were going to their R2 residence more often than said that they were going less often.

Reasons for going to the R2 more often included **remote working opportunities**, cited by those in clusters 1 and 2, and also **quality of time spent together as a family** for those in cluster 1. The most significant reason for all respondents, though, was **ease of access to physical activity**.

Figure 3: Frequency of visits to R2 after lockdown

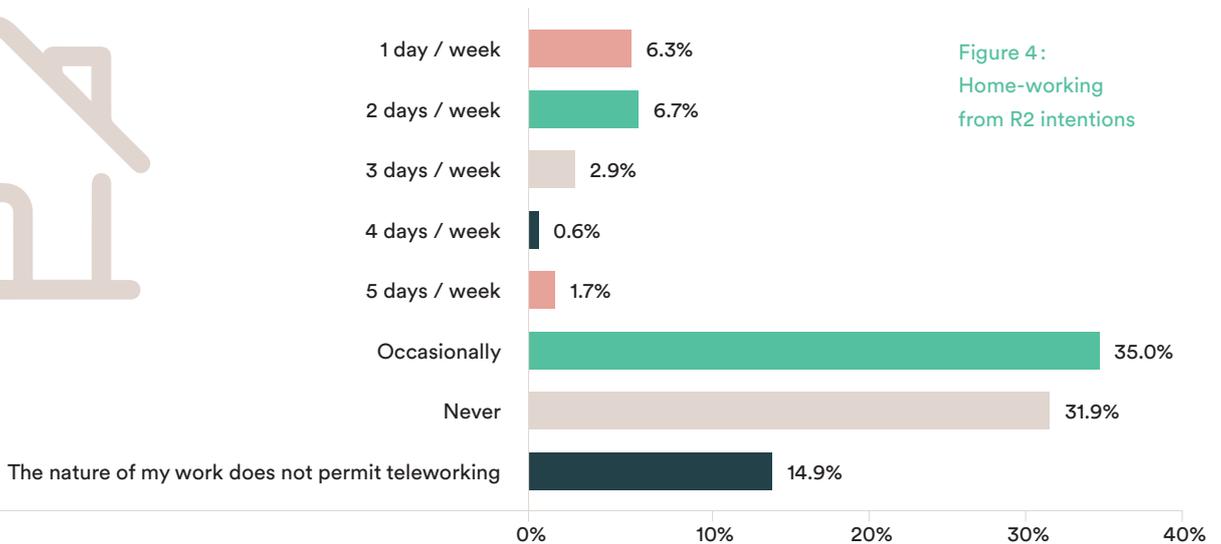
■ Cl 1
■ Cl 2
■ Cl 3



Remote working

Businesses appear to offer more remote working opportunities, say the respondents, particularly in the case of those in cluster 1.

46% of respondents say that they are unable or unwilling to remote-work from their R2; 18% say that they expect to work 1 to 5 days from home at their R2, and 35% say they do so occasionally.



Physical, well-being and cultural activities

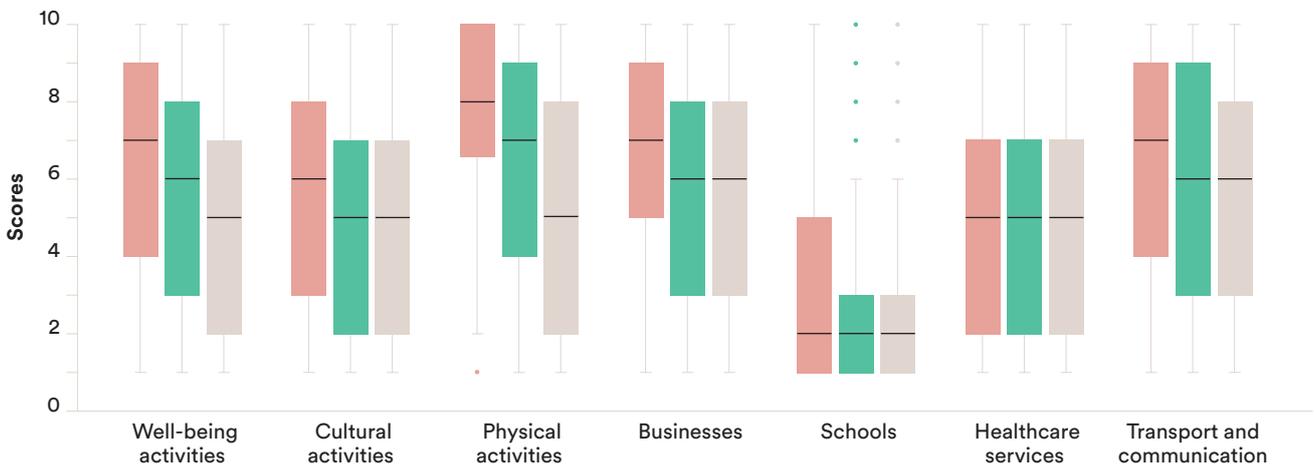
Respondents were also questioned about their propensity to use their R2 more, depending on development of different services and infrastructure.

Some importance is also given to the development of transport and communication.

Overall, the interest is more significant for the development of physical activities.

Figure: Interest of the different clusters in developing different services and infrastructures

■ CI 1 Family / ■ CI 2 45 years and over / ■ CI 3 Retired



In summary

Some elements of the conclusion are as follows

- Retired people appear to be not particularly inclined towards changing their habits and lifestyles, regardless of any proposed developments
- Proposed developments made only a small difference to people's willingness to remote-work at their R2
- Physical and cultural activity offerings are statistically linked to the willingness to use the R2 to a greater extent
 - Potential beneficial effects on people's health and on the local/regional economy
 - The benefits of developing shops and businesses and also of improving transport and communication are significant
- Main issues: to develop services while also preserving the calm, natural, peaceful and healthy environment

The analyses of the clusters suggest that interest in activities vary in line with age and family situations (mainly around parental responsibilities). Those who are younger and with parenting responsibilities state that they are more interested in the development of many activities in different domains, which could be explained by the interest in activity development that benefit them directly and also their children, or activities that can be enjoyed as a family.

Elderly people are more keen on activities that are «gentle» on the physical side, as well as those that relate to folklore on the cultural side – and also the shopping infrastructure. The findings for cluster 3 suggest also that those people are not really inclined to change their habits. Essentially, whatever kind of activity is developed will have little impact on their intention to make changes to their lifestyles, which could be explained by the fact that those people were already free to get around before lockdown, meaning that they were able to have a go at living in their R2 regardless of any work commitments.

Present literature suggests that the increased work-from-home opportunities presented by the business world means that people will be able to make different choices about their residence, influenced by the little extras and nice-to-haves such as the climate, the quality of the environment (more nature) and also varied and high-quality cultural and leisure facilities (Thisse et al., 2021).

As far as destinations are concerned, the next challenge is to develop varied offerings in the different domains as a way of safeguarding the economic health of the destinations, and even to develop them further. Those domains would include physical and well-being activities as well as infrastructure around businesses and shopping, communication, transport and health without compromising the peaceful, natural, quiet and healthy environment of those destinations.

From the report «Quality of life and health practices: A survey on the occupation practices of secondary residences, and provisional facilities in the surrounding areas during the pandemic period. An example at the municipality of Nendaz» 31 January 2022.

By: Stéphanie Hannart, scientific partner at the School of Health Sciences, Health Institute / Jérôme Küffer, research assistant, School of Management, Tourism Institute / Broccard Manu, Professor, School of Management, Tourism Institute / D' Rafael Weissbrodt, Associate Professor at the School of Health Sciences, Health Institute.

