

Community Development Plan for the English-Speaking Community of Quebec 2022-2027
Environmental Scan Report: Representation Roundtable
October 2021

The Community Development Plan is a framework for collective action undertaken by the community sector of English-speaking Quebec to ensure its continued vitality. Through coordinated, strategic action, the community asserts collective control over resources allocated to it to ensure its development.

The purpose of this report is to offer a portrait of the current situation of English-speaking Quebec's Community sector with respect to the representation development area. Together with similar reports in the other three areas, this provides a framework to help the Community Development Plan produce outcomes in line with our shared priorities.

Context

In many sectors of activity, the community is not an equal partner when it comes to decisions that impact its vitality. This is attributed in part to lack of policy capacity on the side of the community as well as, in some instances, a sense of being "structured out" of the conversation.

Our underrepresentation in Quebec's civil service is seen as a significant barrier to our vitality. The proportion of Mothe Tongue English-speakers working for in the Quebec civil service has hovered around 1% since the 1970s (QUESCREN, 2019). While the representation of English speakers is higher overall in the federal civil service in Quebec, key challenges remain in certain sectors. A prime example is Correctional Services Canada, who employ over 3,500 people in Quebec and only 120 English-speakers or 3% of the workforce (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2019). One outcome of this dynamic is that government liaisons with the community lack proficiency in the language and an understanding of community experiences.

It is not only at the level of the government that representation is an issue, but also within established community structures. The Centre for Community Organizations (2012) notes that participation by English-speaking community groups in Province-wide networks was lower than at the local or regional level, indicating a gap in representation in instances that can influence policy and decision-making. The QCGN represents organizations to decision-makers, and work is necessary to align its positions to those of its partners, notably in developing sectors. Within the community itself, there are significant concerns around how effectively youth, racialized communities and regional populations are represented.

The formation of the Secretariat for Relations with English-Speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) is an important gain for community representation but it still is not a permanent, legislated body, which may limit its influence within government. Other organizations have been formed in recent years to increase our the representation of certain sectors, one notable example being the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) and its presence on an advisory committee to the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity.

What we Heard

The Community Development Priorities Survey for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 indicates some concerns organizations have around representation:

- 44/52 survey respondents prioritize initiatives to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within organizations and communities
- 39/52 survey respondents prioritize projects to help increase outreach and representation in broader consultation structures
- 31/52 survey respondents prioritize initiatives to increase the presence of English speakers in Quebec's Civil Service.

The lack of representation of English speakers in decision-making circles, and the impact this can have on community vitality, was explored extensively during consultations. Concerns include:

- Officials responsible for our community within certain ministries lack influence, because they hold multiple portfolios or have transversal responsibilities
- Consultation officers in certain sectors do not speak English and cannot adequately consult English speakers
- Where the community does have formal representation via roundtables or committees, it is unclear whether these bodies have influence within government

To guide the work of the Representation Roundtable, the QCGN proposes the following statement of objective: *Ensure that collective action is engaging and representative of the diverse communities within Quebec's English-speaking community.* Potential strategies for collective action include:

- Mapping and documenting current state of English-speaking representation
- Building policy capacity in "orphan" sectors
- Mobilizing campaigns to increase civic engagement

Additional Resources

Centre for Community Organizations. (2012). In the Know Report <https://coco-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/COCO-In-the-Know-Final-Report.pdf>

Provincial Employment Roundtable. (2019). "Closing the 12 K Gap: Improving Employment of Quebec's English-Speaking Community" <https://pertquebec.ca/closing-the-12k-gap-improving-employment-of-quebecs-english-community-conference-report/>

QCGN. (2021). "2022-2023 Community Development Priorities of the English-Speaking Community of Quebec". <https://qcgnc.ca/community-priorities/>

QUESCREN. (2019). Employment of English Speakers in Quebec's Public Service https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/quescren_QPSRPTEnglish.pdf

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (2019). Annual Report on Official Languages. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/tbs-sct/documents/values-and-ethics/official-languages/reports/2018-2019-ol-lo-eng.pdf>