



**A 5-Year Strategic Plan
to Help Guarantee the Ongoing Vitality
of Québec's English-speaking Youth
2022-2027**



March 2022

Based on a two-year priority-setting process (PSSP)

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INTRODUCTION

In 2019, with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, Y4Y Québec began a two-year process to create a 5-year Strategic Plan for English-speaking youth living in Québec. The goal was to develop a “Youth-Led Action Plan” in response to those priorities identified by the consultative process. This process included two major Youth Priority-Setting Summits, which took place in March 2021 and in November 2021, respectively. Numerous smaller consultations with youth groups throughout the province, as well as meetings with community partners, leaders, and politicians were also held. Multiple surveys were conducted online. The process culminated with the presentation of the Plan to Youth Participants and Community Observers during Y4Y’s 5th Annual Youth Forum that took place on March 19, 2022.

Prior to the advent of the pandemic, the project was to include in-person events with youth in all regions of the province, to ensure the Plan’s representativity and diversity of voices. The Youth Advisory Committee and the project coordinators worked tirelessly to adapt all activities, so that they could be conducted virtually and achieve the goal of involving youth in the Strategic Planning process. Y4Y recognizes that the work of reaching out to English-speaking youth across the province for this effort must continue, and we look forward to gathering more input on the Strategic Plan in the coming years.

The Plan is meant to articulate the needs, the issues, and the priorities of Québec’s English-speaking youth community (ages 16 – 30). It is a living document that will be reviewed and adapted over the 5-year span to reflect the changing needs within the community and the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following two years of consultations, issues related to youth retention both in the Regions and in Montréal are still at the forefront of discussions when it comes to the vitality of the English-speaking community in Québec and their sense of belonging. Preparing for and finding suitable employment, having opportunities for engagement and the need to be part of the decision-making process, were all cited as priorities throughout the consultations. A desire for more opportunities to learn French in both formal and informal settings was also presented.

Given the current socio-political situation which includes an epidemic and a war that is playing out in real time on social media, issues of health and wellbeing were at the forefront of discussions. Mental health was flagged as a major preoccupation including the need for more free services in English to support youth. Inclusion, diversity and social issues were integral to all of the discussions.

Theme 1: Employment and Professional Development

Objectives:

1. Ensure English-speaking youth are job ready and able to secure employment in Québec
2. Empower youth with the tools to support professional development
3. Ensure that there are adequate employment services for English-speaking youth both in school and in the community
4. Increase the number of mentorship and internship opportunities

Theme 2: Civic Engagement, Leadership Development and Volunteerism

Objectives:

1. Broaden youths' accessibility to decision making tables
2. Leadership Development
3. Promote Volunteerism

Theme 3: Education

Objectives:

1. Impact on School Curriculum
2. Access to French Learning

Theme 4: Health, Wellness and Civil Society

Objectives:

1. Mental Health
2. Social Issues
3. Mentorship Programs

Theme 5: Diversity and Inclusion

Objectives:

1. Inclusion and Diversity at Y4Y
2. Promoting Diversity and Inclusion through Sensitization and Education

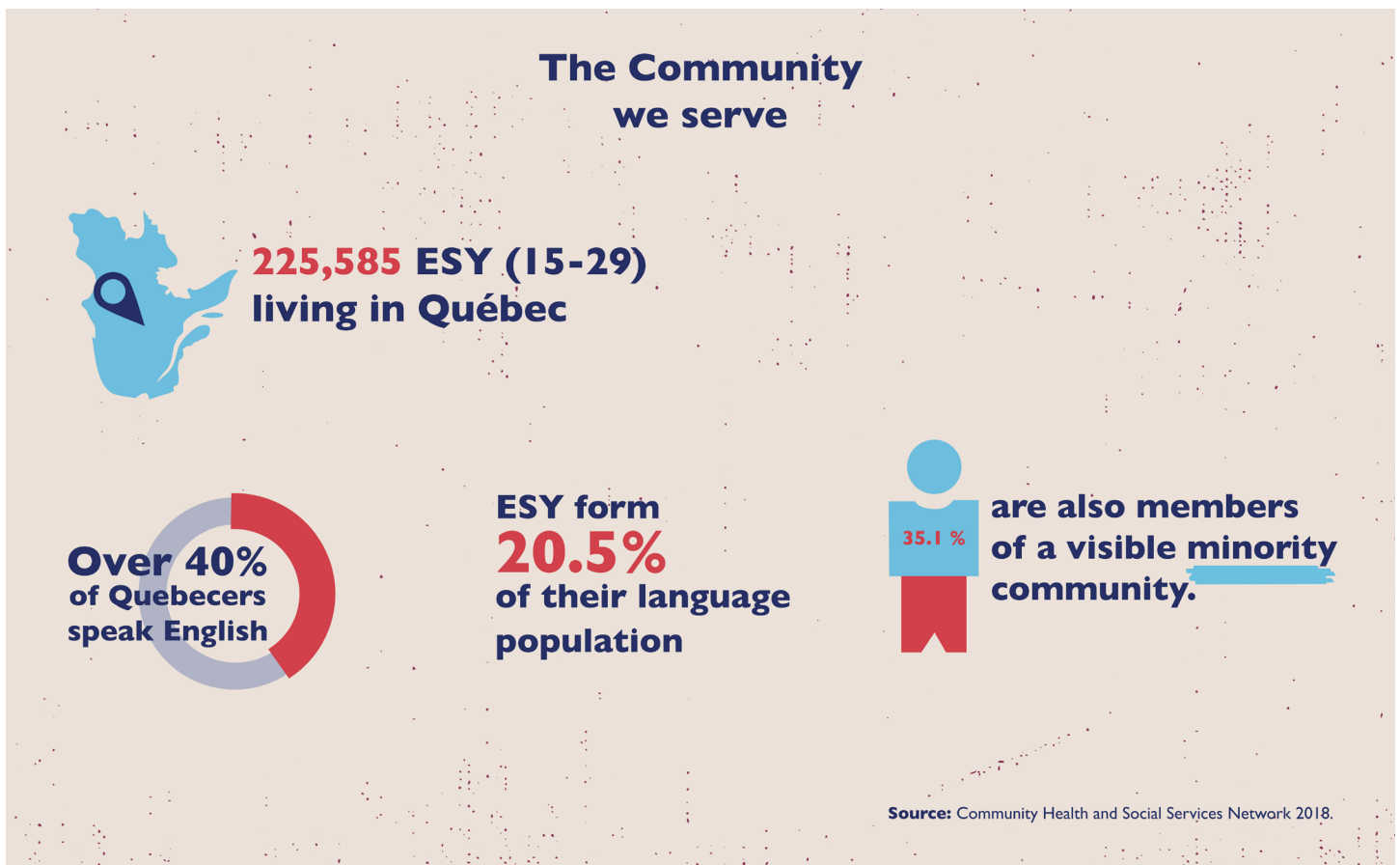
WHAT IS Y4Y QUÉBEC? AND WHAT IS ITS MISSION?

Youth for Youth Québec (Y4Y) is a non-profit organization committed to addressing the issues facing English-speaking youth (ages 16 – 30) across Québec. It aspires to create a strong sense of belonging to the community so that all youth will feel a part of Québec society.

It achieves this by:

1. Providing a platform to share information on resources, training and networking opportunities, and employment/career services for English-speaking youth via outreach to communities throughout Québec.
2. Supporting English-speaking youth in accessing support resources and networks through the help of regional ambassadors throughout Québec.

3. Providing networking opportunities for English-speaking youth in Québec, to include opportunities for engaging with the French-speaking majority in Québec.
4. Providing a vehicle for youth to take leadership roles in their community and inspire their peers to become involved in influencing public policy to ensure that all language groups are equally represented in Québec society with the goal of optimizing employability, the acquisition of French language skills as well as social and economic integration.
5. Creating a strong sense of belonging to the community so that all youth will feel a part of Québec society.



HISTORY OF Y4Y QUÉBEC

In December 2016, a group of young people came together to discuss issues specific to English-speaking youth throughout Québec.

In March 2017, with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the help of Youth Employment Services (YES), the group began to meet and start the process of forming an independent non-profit to address the specific needs of English-speaking youth (16 – 30) in Québec.

In November 2017, an interim board was set up and consultations began with youth and community partners.

In January 2018, Y4Y Québec became incorporated and celebrated its launch in March 2018. At the same time the first official Board of Directors was elected.

VALUES OF Y4Y QUÉBEC

It is important that the Strategic Plan reflects the values that guide Y4Y Québec. These values were developed as part of an earlier consultation.

RESPECT

We respect our employees, our partners, our funders, and the youth we work with.

COMMUNICATION AND MENTORSHIP

We ensure that our communications are effective and promote a culture of mentorship.

TEAM SPIRIT

We are dedicated to helping each other and working together.

INTEGRITY

We act with honesty and integrity. We strive to know and uphold the highest ethical standards.

WHAT IS THE PRIORITY-SETTING SUMMIT PROJECT (PSSP)?

The PSSP was a two-year consultation that took place between September 2020 and March 31, 2022, with youth (ages 16 – 30) throughout Québec, to identify and prioritize the issues that are facing English-speaking youth.

The aim of the PSSP was to provide Québec’s English-speaking youth with a platform to articulate their community’s needs. Activities included:

- Training workshops addressing youth leadership
- Educational activities
- Inspiring guest speakers
- Networking periods, and more

The consultations included two major Summits taking place in March 2021 and November 2021 as well as smaller consultations held throughout the province. It also included surveys and meetings with politicians, community leaders and community partners. The Plan was then presented at a Youth Forum on March 19, 2022. This document will help guide the decision-making process and planning for the future for Québec’s English-speaking youth.

PRIORITY-SETTING PROCESS

A Youth Advisory Committee was set up by Y4Y Québec and met regularly to help guide the process and to identify issues that were important to English-speaking youth living in Québec. This group was made up of diverse youth from throughout the province who met over 12 times.

An environmental scan was done.

Numerous consultations with youth from across Québec were conducted both in person and virtually over the two-year span, and surveys were distributed in person and online. Meetings were held with key stakeholders including partner organizations (see *Annex A for a list of participants and stakeholders*).

A [webpage](#) dedicated to the Youth Priority-Setting Summit was created in October 2020 (see *Annex B*), and additional promotion and informational meetings took place to ensure that the Plan reflected the diverse needs of English-speaking youth throughout the province.

March 20 – 21, 2021, the first Youth Priority-Setting Summit took place to begin the process of validating and setting a list of themes. The 2-day event included workshops, presentations, and discussions (see *Annex C for a schedule of events*).

The following themes were identified:

- Education
- Character Development
- Professional Learning
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Civic Engagement
- Employment

A SWOT analysis was created for each theme, and issues, recommendations and actions were recorded.

A survey was shared online post Summit with Québec's English-speaking youth in order to obtain additional input (see *Annex D for survey and results*).

Additional consultations took place in the Capitale-Nationale region, as well as the Montréal and North Shore Regions.

In November 13 – 14, 2021, a second Youth Priority-Setting Summit took place where youth had another opportunity to review, discuss and validate the plan. Community leaders helped animate each theme (see *Annex E for a schedule of events and leaders who animated workshops*).

A review of all the results from consultations was done and information from past briefs prepared by Y4Y Québec were incorporated into the Plan. Themes, where appropriate, were consolidated to facilitate the recommendations and to eliminate duplication.

In March 19, 2022, a final consultation took place as part of the Y4Y Youth Forum (see *Annex F for a schedule of that meeting*).

This process culminated in the creation of a **5-year Strategic Plan** to help guide the community and guarantee the ongoing vitality of Québec's English-speaking youth.

THEME 1: EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Issue:

Employment and professional development are a major concern for Québec English-speaking youth. Retention both in the Regions and Montréal are a preoccupation. Acquisition of French language skills is important and is covered both in this section, as it relates to employment and the workplace, and is also covered under the Education theme. Career development (finding and choosing a career), employment support, acquiring “soft skills” and first-time job experience were also expressed as important issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure English-speaking youth are job ready and able to secure employment in Québec

- A) Participate in discussions and consultations related to the employment needs and issues facing English-speaking youth in Montréal and the Regions.
- B) Monitor the impact of COVID-19 on youth employment by preparing briefs and participating in consultations with government, non-profits, and other relevant stakeholders.
- C) Work with government, educational institutions, business and non-profits, to ensure access to French training is available to all who need/want it both formally through schools and informally through exchange programs and events (see *Education Theme*).
- D) Monitor the impact Bill 96 may have on English-speaking youth and participate in consultations. Work with partners to ensure the needs of English-speaking youth are represented.
- E) Highlight the need for more opportunities in the public sector for English-speaking youth.
- F) Develop strategies and/or programs to encourage youth to move to or stay in the Regions.
- G) Building on existing community partnerships, make sure youth are aware of the resources available to them to help support them in their job search. Update and maintain a resource tool outlining all the programs that are available to help youth access employment and entrepreneurial support. Promote relevant job fairs on the Y4Y website.
- H) Encourage Universities and CEGEPs to offer more on campus job opportunities.

2. Empower youth with the tools to support professional development

- A) Develop and support career development early on. Work with schools to provide information on career options early on in elementary and high school.

- B) Encourage youth to participate in activities in the community (see *Civic Engagement and Volunteerism*).
- C) Create networking events that will bring youth together to share experiences and learn new skills.
- D) Work with existing service providers to create an annual career information event for high school age students.

3. Ensure that there are adequate employment services for English-speaking youth both in school and in the community

- A) Sit on employment consultation committees to ensure that the needs of English-speaking youth are represented.

4. Increase the number of mentorship and internship opportunities

- A) Partner with existing organizations in the community and work with government and business to encourage the provision of more paid internships both through school programs and the community sector.
- B) Research what mentorship and internship programs currently exist and develop a resource guide on the Y4Y website of all internship and mentorship opportunities. Help promote existing programs.

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THEME 2:
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM

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Issue:

Although many youth want to get involved in the political process and want to have an impact on society there is a clear desire to “demystify the political process”. There is also a need for there to be more opportunities for volunteering, and a need for more leadership opportunities and training. Youth want to be involved in the political process especially as it relates to issues that are important to them such as the environment, gender issues, Indigenous issues, diversity and inclusion.

OBJECTIVES

I. Broaden youths’ accessibility to decision making tables

- A) Create a Civic Engagement Committee that, along with the Board, will identify key tables and consultations that Y4Y should be part of. Provide Board and Committee governance training.

B) Destigmatize the complexity of the political process for youth by working with other non-profits to educate and provide information on the political process. Translate information when necessary. Work with partners to disseminate information on voting.

C) Maintain strong relationships with politicians and other government officials and host open Forums during elections to ensure youth issues are being addressed. Visit political offices and attend political meetings.

D) Continue to provide briefs for the government on issues important to youth.

E) Create events that will create excitement around the political process, visits to Parliament, mock government, etc.

2. Leadership Development

A) Provide and promote leadership training opportunities in both official languages.

B) Integrate individuals participating in leadership programs onto committees at Y4Y.

C) Set up a peer-to-peer mentorship program to partner new members of Y4Y.

D) Promote leadership development opportunities on the Y4Y website.

3. Promote Volunteerism

A) Create a “volunteer opportunities” section on Y4Y website which will also include a bank of volunteers.

B) Partner with other non-profits that address issues that are important to youth (Indigenous issues, education, diversity, and inclusion. environment, gender issues) to identify ways that youth can become involved.

C) Develop a volunteer incentive and retention program for Y4Y. Share findings with other groups to improve volunteer retention rates for youth.

D) Partner with other non-profits to host a volunteer fair and offer workshops on volunteering during National Volunteer Week.

THEME 3: EDUCATION

Issues:

Youth would like to have input into the educational curriculum especially where it relates to learning about indigenous issues. They would like access to French learning for everyone and have more informal opportunities to learn French. Early career information was also an issue (see *employment theme*). There was also a recognition that not everyone has access to the same educational opportunities and people in the Regions of Québec have additional challenges. Internet access was also mentioned as a barrier especially during COVID-19.

OBJECTIVES

1. Impact on School Curriculum

- A) Work with the Civic Engagement Committee and other community educational tables to critique the current curriculum especially as it relates to indigenous teachings and develop recommendations. Meet with relevant stakeholders to share findings.
- B) Participate in efforts to have more courses in the schools related to the development of “soft skills” and life skills.
- C) Ensure that the Civic Engagement Committee stays abreast of any changes to access to English education as a result of government legislation or policies.

2. Access to French Learning

- A) Represent the need for free informal French learning opportunities for all.
- B) Hold bilingual networking events to bring French and English-speaking youth together.
- C) Create a directory of where youth can access French courses and/or exchange programs that will help them learn French.

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THEME 4: HEALTH, WELLNESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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Issues:

Given rapid changes taking place in our society, health and wellness was identified as a major theme. The pandemic has led to increased mental health issues and the recognition by youth that social media has played a major role in shaping character development both positively and negatively.

OBJECTIVES

1. Mental Health

- A) Advocate for free mental health support for youth and sensitize the community to the increased need for support.
- B) Develop a resource guide on available resources in English on the Y4Y website.
- C) Partner with other non-profits working with youth to ensure access to support groups in existing programs. Train Y4Y staff on dealing with issues that may arise with members or staff and how to deescalate situations.
- D) Create social events that bring people together to break isolation. Hold a Wellness Day with mindfulness training, self-care strategies and building self-esteem.
- E) Hold events on mental health and youth and bring in experts in the field. Provide materials and resources.
- F) Create peer-to-peer support groups bringing together diverse populations. Create safe spaces for discussion.

2. Social Issues

- A) Ensure youth representation at consultations related to youth violence, sexual violence against women, indigenous rights, substance abuse, environment, and gender equality. Monitor other areas where youth could/should be involved.

3. Mentorship Programs

- A) Create an inventory of existing mentorship programs and promote them on the Y4Y website. Integrate peer-to-peer mentorship in the functioning of Y4Y.

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THEME 5: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Issues:

No one should be left behind. Issues of diversity and inclusion are inherent in all the themes. The importance of education and sensitization, as well as civic engagement to ensure systemic changes take place was a theme throughout the consultations. This covers issues related to but not limited to BIPOC, (Black, Indigenous, people of colour), gender issues, equity in the workplace, new arrivals.

OBJECTIVES

1. Inclusion and Diversity at Y4Y

A) Y4Y Québec will ensure that its Board, Committees, and members are representative of the diversity of Québec's English-speaking community. A governance model review will be conducted to ensure diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization are respected.

B) Create events that reflect the diversity of participants. Peer to peer mentorship will play a role in helping new participants feel included.

2. Promoting Diversity and Inclusion through Sensitization and Education

A) Work closely with the Civic Engagement Committee, to identify ways youth can play a role in sensitizing other youth to the issues of racism, diversity, inclusion. This could include development of a video, event, materials to be shared in schools.

B) Develop a social media campaign to expose real life experiences.

C) Work with other community partners, to develop training tools in English on inclusion and diversity that are specific to youth, and distribute through social media, and other partners.

D) Create safe spaces to discuss the issues of racism and discrimination of all types.

E) Identify Tables where youth can play a role in addressing the variety of issues important to them including but not limited to issues of racism, youth violence, bullying. Create a scale of measurement to help prioritize which issues and Tables to participate in. Participate in consultations, prepare briefs. Support other organizations that are working in these areas.



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