



PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE

Closing the 12k Gap: Improving
Employment for Quebec's English
Community – Conference Report



An initiative of Youth Employment Services

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report on employment and employability challenges facing the English-speaking community in Quebec and recommendations on how to address them was prepared by Youth Employment Services (YES) and the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT).

As a not-for-profit organization, YES' mission is to enrich the community by providing English-language support services to help Quebecers find employment and start and grow businesses. YES' passion is to help people in its community reach their potential. At its core, it is focused on helping its clients develop a personal career or business strategy and giving them the skills and confidence to execute.

PERT is a non-profit organization focused on addressing employment and employability challenges facing the English-speaking community in Québec through the mobilization of knowledge and resources. Through engagement and collaboration PERT strives to support interested actors to create solutions which can enhance the economic vitality of not only the English-speaking community, but all Quebecers.

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Steering Committee

- James Hughes (Chair) - Executive Lead, Government and Partner Relations – McConnell Foundation
- Aki Tchitacov – Executive Director – Youth Employment Services (YES)
- André Rousseau - General Manager – Cible Retour à l'Emploi
- Cathy Brown - Executive Director – Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
- Darlene Hnatchuk - Director, Career Planning Services (CaPS) – McGill University
- Dave McKenzie - Founder & Coordinator, Community Service Initiative – Concordia University
- Chuck Halliday - Coordinator of Community & Business – New Frontiers School Board
- Pino Di Iola - Chief Executive Officer – Beaver Tails Canada Inc. & Moozoo Juices
- Valérie Roy - Executive Director – Alliance des centre-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)
- John Buck - President & Chief Executive Officer – Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)

Conference Committee

- Iris Unger (Chair) - Project Consultant – Provincial Employment Roundtable
- Aki Tchitacov - Executive Director – Youth Employment Services (YES)
- Nina Kim - Project Manager – Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)
- Cathy Brown - Executive Director – Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
- Catherine Stace - Career Advisor – Career & Planning Services (CaPS), McGill University
- Julia Stein - Career Advisor – Career & Planning Services (CAPS), Concordia University
- Laurie-Katheryne Allard - Project Manager – Alliance des centre-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)
- Lois Liverman - Director, Employment and Business – Agence Ometz
- Annalise Iten - Director, Job Search – Youth Employment Services (YES)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE (PERT) PROJECT	5
EXECUTIVE STATEMENT	6
PROJECT & HISTORY	9
Table 1: Members of the Steering Committee	10
Table 2: Members of the PERT Conference Committee	12
CLOSING THE 12K GAP: IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT FOR QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY	13
Table 3: Panel Discussants	14
RECOMMENDATIONS	15
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	17
Programs	17
French Second Language	24
Government	26
Employers	27
Education	28
ANNEXE 1: CHALLENGES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKERS IN QUEBEC	29
Challenges for Job Seekers	29
Challenges for Community Organizations	31
Challenges for Employers	32
Challenges for Regional Communities	33
Challenges for the Education Sector	34

THE PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE (PERT) PROJECT

Youth Employment Services (YES) is pleased to have secured funding from the Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) to build a stronger network of English service organizations working in employability. The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) project aims to address three important employment issues facing English speakers in Quebec:

- According to the 2016 Census, there were approximately 12,000 more unemployed English-speaking individuals than there were French-speaking persons relative to the proportion of each language group within the total population;
- More than half of English speakers born in Quebec now live outside the province. Those with higher educational attainment are more likely to leave.
- The effects of the Covid-19 crisis on Québec's economy have the possibility of disproportionately affecting the English-speaking population and increasing long-standing systemic employment issues facing the community.

Led by YES, a larger network of stakeholders (community groups, associations, educational institutions, employers, government agencies, etc.) will be developed over the next two years and mobilized to address these issues through the deployment of a comprehensive approach to carry out research, develop policy and program options and facilitate new partnerships.

The ultimate goal is to forge a new, independent non-profit organization focusing on the employability issues affecting the English-speaking community and engaging all levels of policy makers and program deliverers with a view to educate, influence, partner with and ensure adequate resources for the employability actors in our community. This will also involve mobilizing community support for employment programs during times of crisis, for example responding to the unique employment challenges the English-speaking community is currently facing with regards to Covid-19. The new organization will not deliver client services, but rather collaborate with current providers with the goal of enhancing and expanding their programs which are essential to the vitality of the community.

EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

The English-speaking community in Québec represents a sizeable portion of society, assessed as being 13.7% of the total population and spread out across each of the province's 17 administrative regions.¹ The size of the English-speaking population makes it the largest minority language community within a Canadian province, as well as a significant component of Québec's overall demographics. Furthermore, the English-speaking community in Québec is incredibly diverse in terms of ethnic background, religious affiliation, and educational and income levels.²

Over the course of the last year the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) has mobilized individuals and organizations of the English-speaking community to provide insight concerning the major issues and challenges their communities are facing with regards to employment and employability. This involved reaching out to over 300 stakeholders from the English-speaking community, performing surveys with community leaders, organizations and businesses, as well as holding a conference to find policy solutions which would address the most pressing employment challenges facing the community.

The following report is the result of the work undertaken by the PERT team to date and involves insight from leaders from the education, community, and business sectors. As part of our community consultations, PERT brought together ninety-six individuals from fifty-eight different organizations and institution to work on addressing the most pressing employment issues facing the English-speaking community. The recommendations found in this report are the culmination of the consultations with the minority language community and represent a number of actionable solutions to the most pressing employment issues which stakeholders can respond to in the short, medium, and long term. These solutions are especially important in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, as the employment issues facing the community are exacerbated by the increased health and social services pressures Québec is facing during the pandemic, especially as they pertain to an already at-risk community.

There are a number of recommendations which require specific attention, as they were identified as having the greatest impact on the community and should be focused upon. First, French language training continues to be the greatest barrier to an English-speakers ability to find, maintain, and advance within the Quebec workforce. Poor or inadequate achievement levels of French, especially after secondary school, as well as low levels of satisfaction and confidence in English-speakers ability to function professionally in French, bars a large number of English-speakers from successfully integrating into the labour market.³ This leads to low employment numbers, poor career progression, and an outward migration of talent from the province. There are a number of ways to respond to this challenge. Free French language training available to all first official language spoken English-speakers living in Quebec, for example, would provide individuals with the ability to access crucial language training

¹ StatsCan. (2017). *English, French and official language minorities in Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, Statistic Canada. Available at: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016011/98-200-x2016011-eng.cfm>

² Canadian Heritage. (2011). *A Portrait of the English-speaking Communities in Québec*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, Heritage Canada – Official Languages Support Programs Branch, pg. 2-5. Available at: [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/com-com.nsf/wwpj/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf/\\$file/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/com-com.nsf/wwpj/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf/$file/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf)

³ CHSSN. (2016). *Baseline Data report 2015-2016: 2015 CHSSN-CROP Survey on Community Vitality – Findings on English-speaking Community Vitality across Key Sectors*. Quebec: Community Health and Social Services Network. <http://veq.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2015-2016-CHSSN-Community-Vitality-Survey.pdf>

programs and facilitate their integration into the economy. Currently, language training programs are only available to a select set of individuals, for example newly arrived immigrants and foreign students, yet not available to individuals who are permanent residents of Quebec. Additionally, assistance for individuals looking to work in Quebec, not only from overseas but also from other Canadian provinces, is vital for lessening the gap between outward and inward migration and improving workforce talent retention. Finally, continued language support for integration within professional orders, such as medicine, engineering, and law, would help retain and integrate top talent from the English-speaking community.

Another key issue which was identified concerns improvements in the integration of English-speakers within the Quebec public service. The trend for public service participation for the English-speaking community has hovered around 1% annually, with very little deviation or improvement.⁴ This is all despite the fact that there are three world class English universities which offer accomplished public policy programs and possess departments that graduate qualified talent every year.⁵ Improving the integration of English-speakers through proactive measures, as well as drawing talent from the public policy schools at English institutions, would help improve participation of the English minority linguistic group, as well as diversify the public sector workforce. This has been done successfully by the Government of Quebec for minority representation and can be adapted for the community.⁶

Apart from public service representation and language training issues, the community has also identified challenges when it comes to employment program development and delivery. First, they have indicated that programs are not always accessible by minority community groups, for example the barriers imposed by stringent criteria, administrative, or success metrics requirements. The common issue is that many government funded programs are made without taking into account the situation of the minority linguistic community, and that because of this they are very difficult to access by community groups. For example, issues with geographic distance and critical mass for minority community members often makes them ineligible for employment funding programs, forcing them to use funding from other sources to provide employment services. This is a major issue, as a number of the regions of Quebec do not provide English language employment services through other organizations or have only one organization providing service over a large geographic area which makes these services inaccessible for many individuals not in that organization's direct vicinity.⁷

Critical mass presents another hurdle for organizations looking to provide employment services, as many communities do not have access to the necessary numbers of individuals required under employment programs. This is particularly difficult for a minority linguistic population which has varying population numbers based on the administrative region. Some English-speaking communities, especially outside of

⁴ Celine Cooper, Patrick Donovan, & Lorraine O'Donnell. (2019). *Employment of English Speakers in Quebec's Public Service*. Montréal: Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN). Available at: http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/scpa/quescren/docs/Quescren_QPSRPTEnglish.pdf; Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor. (2019). *Nombre de personne à la fin de l'exercice financier entre mars 2015 et mars 2019*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, pg. 18. https://www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/PDF/effectif_fonction_publicque/1819/effectif_1519.pdf

⁵ The École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP) in Québec City provides an entry point for students looking for training to enter the public service, however, is primarily geared towards French-speakers.

⁶ Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor. (2019). *Nombre de personne à la fin de l'exercice financier entre mars 2015 et mars 2019*.

⁷ Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale. (2019). *Portrait du soutien financier gouvernemental verse aux organismes communautaires 2017-2018*. Québec: Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale. Available at: <https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/sacais/soutien-financier/action-communautaire/portrait-du-soutien-financier.asp>

the Montreal metropolitan area, are extremely small in size, and may not have the necessary number of participants for a full program when compared with the French community. Furthermore, the costs associated with bringing together enough participants, either in person or electronically, may not be feasible under current program criteria.

Both these program accessibility issues tie in directly to questions around flexibility within current government programs, which are not created to take into account specific issues which a minority community faces. Allowing for more flexibility in the services that organizations can offer so that they can create their own, community tailored, community programs was a major issue for many of the organizations consulted and would greatly benefit the integration of the English-speaking community into the local economy.⁸

In addition to flexibility, sustainability of programs was also raised by organizations which highlighted the need to continue to develop and improve on successful existing programs.⁹ There have been a number of programs which have been successful over their two- or three-year funding cycles but were then discontinued for new 'innovative' programs. Programs should be improved as they evolve; however, the discontinuation of successful programs for new ones creates a program environment that is chaotic for organizations to follow, as well as presents disruption in their ability to continuously deliver services.

The recommendations found in this report help address some of these issues, as well as provide workable solutions for the English-speaking community to address the associated challenges and have a meaningful impact on the employment and employability of the community. The conference also illustrated the fact that these challenges have long existed in the community, and now is an opportune time to address them in collaboration with partners to bring meaningful, positive, change to the Quebec landscape. The responsibility to address these challenges does not rest solely on the shoulders of the government, but rather requires participation from all members of the community to come together and work in unison in order to move forward for the benefit of Quebec as a whole.



⁸ Chaput, Maria & Champagne, Andrée. (2011). *The Vitality of Quebec's English-speaking Communities: From Myth to Reality*. Ottawa: Senate Committee on Official Language. Available at: <https://sencanada.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/ollo/rep/rep02oct11-e.pdf>; Emploi-Québec. (2019). *Guide opérationnel de gestion des ententes de service et de reddition de comptes: services Québec et ressources externes*. Québec : Government of Québec. https://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/guide_mesures_services/07_Recours_ressources_externes/7_5_guide_operationnel_reddition_comptes/7_5_Guide_operationnel_pour_la_reddition_de_comptes.pdf

⁹ CHSSN. (2016). *Baseline Data report 2015-2016*.

PROJECT & HISTORY

In March of 2019 Youth Employment Services (YES) entered into a formal contract with the Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) to guide the development of the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT). YES organized a management team to help guide the development of the project, which included James Hughes, Executive Lead of Government and Partner Relations at the McConnell Foundation; Aki Tchitacov, Executive Director of YES; Iris Unger, past Executive Director of YES and now an independent consultant; and Hugh Maynard, President of Qu'anglo Communications & Consulting. The management team immediately conducted a number of activities which lay the foundations for the PERT project, including the drafting of major 'Issues & Challenges' (Annex 1) facing the English-speaking community, reaching out and establishing the Steering Committee, and hiring a project manager to oversee the development of the project.

The project officially began in early May 2019 with the first meeting of the PERT Steering Committee. The Steering Committee members (Table 1) are individuals who work in a number of different sectors of the English-speaking community with regards to employment – Community Employment Service Providers, Regional Community Organizations, Business Partners, Educational Institutions, and Provincial Organizations. The Steering Committee's main role has been to guide the development of the project, including oversight of research programs, outreach initiatives, and eventual incorporation of an independent organization geared towards responding to employment and employability challenges in the future.



Table 1: Members of the Steering Committee

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER	TITLE AND ORGANIZATION	SECTORAL GROUP
James Hughes – Chair	Executive Lead, Government and Partner Relations – McConnell Foundation	Provincial Organization
Aki Tchitacov	Executive Director – Youth Employment Services (YES)	Community Employment Service Provider
André Rousseau	General Manager – Cible Retour à l’Emploi	Community Employment Service Provider
Cathy Brown	Executive Director – Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)	Regional Community Organization
Darlene Hnatchuk	Director, Career Planning Services (CaPS) – McGill University	Educational Institution
Dave McKenzie	Founder & Coordinator, Community Service Initiative – Concordia University	Educational Institution
Chuck Halliday	Coordinator of Community & Business – New Frontiers School Board	Educational Institution
Pino Di Iola	Chief Executive Officer – Beaver Tails Canada Inc. & Moozoo Juices	Business Partner
Valérie Roy	Executive Director – Alliance des centre-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)	Provincial Organization
John Buck	President & Chief Executive Officer – Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)	Provincial Organization

The majority of the work performed by the PERT team from May until November of 2019 included the creation and dissemination of a complete research program looking at employment constraints within the English-speaking community, reaching out to community members throughout the province to inform them of the project and form partnerships, and gathering community input concerning the ‘Issues & Challenges’ (Annex 1). Over the course of the summer over 300 individuals from more than 200 organizations were made aware of the project, given information on the issues and challenges facing the

community, and asked if they would like to participate in future programs. The research program, along with a questionnaire tailored to each of the stakeholder groups, was disseminated to all the individuals who were contacted as none of them indicated that they would not like to contribute.

The results from the questionnaires were analyzed by the management team to help inform the development of the outreach program in the fall of 2019, as well as tailor the content of the first major deliverable – a conference on employment issues facing the English-speaking community. The most significant issues identified through the questionnaires were lack of resources – both material and intangible - available to English organizations to provide employment services, language barriers when trying to enter the workforce, a lack of flexibility in programming, and lack of recognition of the linguistic challenges facing the minority community in Québec.

Outreach and community surveys represented half of the work done over the course of the summer. With identification and validation of the major challenges facing the community having been completed in June, the PERT team moved towards conducting an extensive review of existing quantitative and qualitative data on the English-speaking community in Quebec. One key question which came up was the locations of where English language employment services were being offered in Quebec. The research, using 2016 Census Data from the Government of Canada and cross referenced with the information from Emploi-Québec's Répertoire des organismes spécialisés en employabilité, found that of over 400 organizations which provide employment services in Quebec, only 89 market their services in both languages, with only 1, Youth Employment Services, providing dedicated support specifically to the English-speaking community. Based on community feedback, even though organizations market that they provide service in English, many do not have the resources to do so. Furthermore, in seven (7) of the seventeen (17) administrative regions of Quebec there were no marketed bilingual services offered, illustrating a direct gap in the provision of services for the English-speaking community.

The project also identified a number of other themes related to employment through the research collected. Provincial public service representation has continued to remain stagnant at less than one percent, and there is a visible lack of upper management individuals who identify as having English as their first official language spoken. Furthermore, while hiring practices have sought to increase minority representation within the public service, this proactive approach has not been extended to the English-speaking community. Hiring rates, year after year, for English-speakers remains low within the public service, despite members of the community reporting high levels of bilingualism.

With a solid foundation of organizations interested in the project, as well as a strong multi-sectoral Steering Committee, the project began preparations for an employment conference to be held in the fall of 2019. The first step in this process was to identify stakeholders who could help with the organization of the conference and ensure that community voices were properly represented. This led to the creation of a Conference Committee (Table 2) whose mandate was to oversee the topics and themes of the conference, prepare activities and materials, and provide outreach and support for conference participants.

Table 2: Members of the PERT Conference Committee

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBER	TITLE AND ORGANIZATION
Iris Unger – Chair	Project Consultant – Provincial Employment Roundtable
Aki Tchitacov	Executive Director – Youth Employment Services (YES)
Nina Kim	Project Manager – Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)
Cathy Brown	Executive Director – Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
Catherine Stace	Career Advisor – Career & Planning Services (CaPS), McGill University
Julia Stein	Career Advisor – Career & Planning Services (CAPS), Concordia University
Laurie-Katheryne Allard	Project Manager – Alliance des centre-conseils en emploi (AXTRA)
Lois Liverman	Director, Employment and Business – Agence Ometz
Annalise Iten	Director, Job Search – Youth Employment Services (YES)

The Conference Committee first met at the beginning of the summer of 2019 to discuss what major themes should be addressed, as well as what content would be most relevant to the community to inform about, and potentially address, issues of employment facing the English-speaking community. The members agreed that positioning the conference to develop concrete solutions, rather than simply being an expression of the issues, would be the most constructive use of the time, and decided to develop an exercise which could help develop policy recommendations that would be presented to relevant stakeholders. The themes of the conference revolved around the major issues and challenges identified during the research portion of the project, vetted not only by members of the conference committee but also the community at large.

CLOSING THE 12K GAP: IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT FOR QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

On November 22, 2019, the Provincial Employment Roundtable brought together 96 members of the community representing 58 unique organizations to discuss issues and challenges facing the English-speaking community with regards to employment, as well as draft recommendations on key issues identified during the summer of 2019. As previously mentioned, the participants expressed a desire to produce actionable solutions which the community could present to the Government of Québec to address as part of a collaborative framework.

The conference format was divided between expert panel discussions and two recommendations exercises. The conference began with a keynote speech from Dr. Christopher Ragan, an expert in public policy and economics at McGill University, who provided background related to the policy process and potential pitfalls that might be experienced. Dr. Ragan was followed by Richard St-Pierre, Directeur Général of the Direction générale des politiques d'emploi, de la planification et du marché du travail at the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS), who presented on the employment programs available under Emploi-Québec, as well as changes being undertaken within the government ministry to make programs more effective and efficient for community groups.

The background information presented by Mr. St-Pierre was useful in transitioning into the panel discussion on issues and challenges facing the English-speaking community which included Cathy Brown, Alelie Ocampo, John McMahon, André Rousseau, Tania Callender, and Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell (their titles and organizations can be found in Table X). The panel speakers discussed a set of prepared topics, as well as fielded questions from the audience around employment issues. The expert panel helped to ground the discussions for later in the day, as well as introduce members of the audience to different experiences which expanded their knowledge of challenges facing the community.

The panel was followed by the first working group session which organized groups based on their respective sectorial groupings – employment service providers, community groups, educational institutions, and businesses. This first working group session focused on specific issues and challenges facing each of the sectors, with sector members developing a list of solutions which could address them. The working group session used a modified policy canvas model which identified the main issue, the risks, the relevant stakeholders, and the resources needed to develop a solution (See Annex 4). The process helped guide the group members through the process of creating solutions, as well as ensured that the variety of experiences around the table were clearly outlined to make the solutions as representative as possible.

Table 3: Panel Discussants

NAME	TITLE AND ORGANIZATION
Cathy Brown	Executive Director – Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
Alelie Ocampo	Career Edge Program Manager – Inclusive Recruitment RBC Recruitment
John McMahon	Director General – Vanier College
André Rousseau	Executive Director – Cible Retour à l’Emploi
Tania Callender	Executive Director – African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN)
Lorraine O’Donnell	Public Affairs Coordinator/Researcher – Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN)

Following the first working group session the conference participants heard from the the Ministre de Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Hon. Jean Boulet, who delivered a speech on improvements his ministry was looking to make to increase employment of English-speakers in the province. This included an important announcement, specifically that the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT) would conduct a study on the employment challenges facing the community, with the goal being the creation of a formal consultation committee for the English-speaking community with regards to employment and employability.

Christopher Skeete, Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers and the MNA for Sainte-Rose, followed the Hon. Jean Boulet with a speech on the role of the Secretariat for relations with English- speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) and the Quebec government’s vision for relations with the English-speaking community. Mr. Skeete highlighted the importance of the English-speaking community in Quebec, as well as the continued efforts being undertaken by the SRQEA to build bridges between the community and the Government of Québec.

The two presentations by the Government of Quebec representatives were followed by the second working group session. While the first working group session focused on sector specific issues, the second one took a multi-stakeholder approach to a set of general issues facing the community. Representatives of different sectoral groups were mixed together, allowing for a more holistic set of solutions to be presented.

The conference concluded with a presentation by Aki Tchitacov, Executive Director for YES, and the Chairperson of PERT, James Hughes, who both provided participants with information on next steps for the project. Moving forward, PERT will be looking for ways to respond to employment challenges through the generation of research, supporting community organizations in addressing employment issues, and engaging with interested stakeholders to build a more comprehensive network of actors who can work on solutions and improve the economic vitality of the English-speaking community in Québec.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The working group sessions were the main vehicle for the participants to elaborate solutions, providing them with a forum where they could share their experiences and discuss ways in which they can respond to issues on a case-by-case basis. More importantly, the use of the working group sessions was to facilitate brain-storming for community-based solutions which could be presented to government. Participants were assigned tables in the morning based on their primary sector of interest, which included education, employment service providers, community groups, and businesses. The afternoon session was also pre-assigned to ensure a mixture of sectoral actors and to minimize the chances that there was group overlap. Major issues were presented to the groups. The groups were asked to fill out a policy canvas, based on the Digital Policy Model Canvas developed by the World Economic Forum, which helped them brainstorm solutions for the specific issues.¹⁰

Some of the issues which the groups tackled included:

1. Employment service providers often have stringent eligibility requirements over who they can service. Are these requirements necessary? If so, how would you change them to better serve your community?
2. English-speaking post-secondary and vocational educational institutions in Québec are largely concentrated in the greater Montreal area, making postsecondary and vocational education difficult to access for certain communities. How would you go about reducing the distance barriers associated with English-speakers finding education?
3. Working relationships with governments are often an issue for community groups when it comes to providing employment assistance to community members. What are the barriers when it comes to working with government bodies, and what could be proposed to improve this relationship?
4. Programs are available from other organizations to help prepare individuals for the workforce. What programs or initiatives would be the most relevant in preparing future employees for positions within the Quebec economy? What skills need to be prepared, and how?

The afternoon session mixed the sectoral groups together and tackled more general questions. Unlike the morning session, the afternoon session saw a total of five questions being answered, with groups choosing at random which questions they would like to tackle. These included the following:

1. English-speakers have, historically, been underrepresented within the provincial public service. What policies, programs, or initiatives, would help boost representation of English-speakers within the provincial public service?
2. While many organizations provide important services to the English-speaking community, there are constraints to which limit the types of services they can provide. What actions need to be

¹⁰ A link to the original policy canvas and the methodology can be found here: <https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/digital-policy-playbook-2017-approaches-to-national-digital-governance>

taken to increase and improve collaboration between organizations which have complimentary services?

3. Employment issues facing the English-speaking community have not received commensurate attention by the provincial government, despite higher unemployment rates and lowering average incomes. What is needed to improve English-speaking employment in the province from a government level?
4. Outmigration of English-speakers from Quebec is a continual problem which weakens local economies, especially in the regions and in certain sectors. What could be done to deal with this issue, and how can it be tailored specifically to the English-speaking community so that they can find employment?
5. French language skills continue to remain the greatest barrier facing English-speakers when finding employment. What changes, from a systemic level, need to be brought forward to improve the acquisition of French language skills by English-speakers?

With the number of participants in each group being between 4-6 members, both in the morning and afternoon sessions, the participants had the chance to complete at least two of the questions during each session. The afternoon session saw lower completion rates as the generalized nature of the exercise contributed to more in-depth discussions about the issues and challenges, as well as the sharing of diverse experiences.

By the end of both working group sessions the participants had completed a total of thirty-seven usable policy canvases which could be used by the PERT team to create recommendations. The recommendations were compiled under a master list and edited to ensure consistency.

The recommendations from the conference can be found summarized below, with each of them including a brief explanation of the recommendation, its impact on the English-speaking community, and the time frame in which it could be adopted. The recommendations were outlined as being for the short, medium or long-term, and represent a range of recommendations which address the most significant issues facing the English-speaking community with regards to employment.

It should be noted that responsibility to implement the recommendations listed below does not fall with any one actor, but are rather tailored as collaborative measures which require mobilization and support from a range of stakeholders. While many of the recommendations do focus on government programs, policies, or services, there is ample opportunity to mobilize community actors to address them in a collaborative way.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT-TERM = 1-2 YEARS

MEDIUM-TERM = 3-5 YEARS

LONG-TERM = 5 YEARS +

Programs

RECOMMENDATION	TERM
<p>1. Increased flexibility of employment programs to allow English-speaking community groups to develop adaptable programming for their communities. Allow more flexibility with regard to age, employment, education, and residency eligibility with Government funded programs when providing employment services to minority language community members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of funding for employment programs in Québec is managed by centralized governmental departments who have specific criteria and formulas for the distribution of financial resources (based on age, numbers serviced, demographics, etc.). While these funding programs may work for majority linguistic community members, they do not respond to the specific needs of the minority linguistic community. Stringent reporting requirements, including age, employment and education status, and residency effectively bar minority linguistic community members from being able to access services, as organizations are unable to provide assistance which is recognized under their funding agreements. For the majority linguistic population there are multiple options within each administrative region for primary service in French, however, there are many fewer options available in English – in some cases some regions have no services in English. Creating funding systems which recognize the unique position of English-speakers, allowing the organizations to offer more expansive service to their community members, would help improve English-speakers access to services and increase community group’s ability to target all members of their community. 	Short-term
<p>2. Maintain current levels of funding through Emploi-Québec and provide equitable funding for English-speaking organizations to ensure that they are able to deliver services to their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite representing 13.7% of the Québec population, the amount of funding available to the community for employment is not reflective of the population weight. For the 2017-2018 funding cycle it is estimated that less than 3% of MTESS funding for employment was distributed to organizations providing service to English-speakers. Furthermore, the limited funding available for employment services is concentrated on the Island of Montreal, with community organizations in many administrative regions – organizations which provide the primary point of service for employment assistance –receiving little or no employment funding from the MTESS. Maintaining the current funding levels, as well as ensuring that the English-speaking community is recognized during program consideration and development, can help improve the capabilities of organizations interested in aiding minority linguistic community integration into the Quebec economy. 	Short-term

<p>3. Increase funding for programs which provide aid in transitioning individuals from the educational sector into the employment sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition between school and the workforce is an important period of an individual's life in being able to find a meaningful career path for them. Despite this, English-speakers face barriers when entering the workforce after school, especially in the disciplines in which they studied, as they have lower levels of income attainment when preparing to make this transition. Experiential learning, such as on the job training, mentorships, and job shadowing while at school are effective ways to help individuals transition into the workforce and find meaningful employment. Investing in more transitional programs for students would help prepare them for workforce integration, as well as ensure that they are retained within the province. The educational institutions, businesses, and community groups have the experience and knowledge to be able to implement these programs and address these transitional needs. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>4. Increase support for transitional and 'bridging' programs for English-speakers looking to enter or re-enter the workforce at any point of their career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the transition from school into the workforce is important, the transition from one type of work to another is also of specific importance for individuals. When one economic sector sees a downturn it can lead to significant members of the population out of work. The English-speaking population, already facing limited employment opportunities, can be hit especially hard by these changes in the provincial economy. For example, a large number of the English-speaking population are employed in seasonal work, especially in the regions, and see varying rates of unemployment depending on the season. Providing assistance to individuals while they are working, as well as helping them transition from one sector to another through training, would help alleviate the pressures on the Québec economy resulting from these periods of low-employment, as well as aid community members to transition to new work sectors to ensure economic sustainability. 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>5. Increase support for vulnerable sectors of the English-speaking population and ensure that organizations have the proper tools (resources, training, and programs) to effectively serve them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexity of issues being brought forward to employment practitioners, including issues of mental health, learning difficulties, poverty, language issues, and physical disabilities from unemployed members of the English-speaking community continues to increase. The resources available to organizations, either in the form of material or intangible resources, are not always adequate for dealing with these issues. While the resources to deal with these issues are available for French community members, adequate services in English are limited, or non-existent, in many organizations. Increasing resources for organizations dealing with these issues, and promoting active and formal collaboration between existing services to fill in gaps would help respond to these issues. This can include, for example, collaborative funding programs targeting client issues, referral systems, language training, mental health and disability training, and more flexible programming. 	<p>Medium-term</p>

<p>6. Invest in long-term programs which have proven to be effective at helping English-speaking individuals find employment throughout the province, rather than create new ones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the range of issues facing the English-speaking community, employment programs are often specifically tailored for the needs of the community, based on various indicators such as age, education, and geographic location, for instance. Creating programs from the needs of the clients, rather than pre-established generalized criteria, has proven successful in responding to specific causes for unemployment amongst community members. However, despite the success of these community-driven programs, support from public partners is not always sustainable, and many successful programs are cancelled due to changes in public priorities. This leaves the recipients of these programs, primarily the community, without access to these successful pilot programs. Furthermore, programs which are cancelled increase pressures on the organizations to find alternatives, leading to wasted time and resources in developing new programs. 	Short-term
<p>7. Increase support for internship, mentorship, and workplace training programs in English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internships, mentorships and workplace training programs have consistently been found to increase an individual's ability to not only attain meaningful employment but also contribute to advancement within the workforce. Despite the positive effects of these programs, many are difficult to access, or are given secondary importance to initial employment assistance. Programs currently available to businesses, for example, require a number of bureaucratic steps which dissuade companies from accessing them. Furthermore, these subsidized programs do not always address the specific needs of companies or individuals, as they have stringent requirements which are not suitable to capabilities, experiences, and/or needs. Simplifying these programs from the reporting side, as well as increasing investment into expanding them, would help individuals not only integrate into the workforce, but also succeed in advancing their careers. 	Medium-term
<p>8. Support employment training programs at the earliest age possible, including during pre-secondary, secondary and post-secondary phases of education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping individuals understand employment opportunities at an early age is important for helping them plan their futures, as well as begins developing their skills for future workforce integration. Currently employment assistance is focused on individuals as they leave school, especially CEGEP and university, however there are a number of successful programs which cultivate interest in different markets at an earlier age. There are business incubators targeting children between the age of 12 to 18 to help them develop business plans, provide mentorship, and guide them through the intricacies of setting up their own business. These programs are useful at introducing children to successful business practices, and give them the tools to begin thinking about their careers in the future. More training programs, especially ones which prepare children with business-critical soft-skills such as negotiation, conflict resolution, and risk analysis are critical for helping develop Québec's future workforce and spurring innovation. 	Short-term

<p>9. For individuals choosing to migrate from the regions to metropolitan areas for education or employment, support for social and cultural onboarding programs should be more accessible so that they are able to transition as seamlessly as possible, as well as programs to assist them in returning to the regions should they choose to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major metropolitan areas of Québec are focal points for education and employment for English-speakers as they have the highest concentrations of the linguistic community and its institutions. Despite this, the transition from regional areas to these larger cities is not always seamless, and the ability to integrate within a new social and economic environment can put significant mental stress on individuals, leading to burnout and loss of investments. For example, a number of regional partners indicated that youth from their regions moved to Montreal for post-secondary education, but were quickly overwhelmed by the change in environment. All of a sudden they need to find lodging, understand how to navigate the city, find new social resources, and find employment. In many of the cases the lack of assistance for integration led to the individuals returning home without completing their education, yet still having invested considerable financial and personal resources. Support for programs which help individuals with integration and access resources when they travel to metropolitan centers is needed to make the change more sustainable. Furthermore, programs which help individuals continue to access resources and opportunities in their home regions, especially if they are looking to move back, are also lacking. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>10. Support programs which address the issue of geographic distance in the regions (cost of travel, local access, distance education, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs of travel within the regions are a significant barrier for employment for English-speakers. Services are less centralized in many administrative regions of Québec, forcing individuals to make considerable financial investments to access them. For those without access to transport it is virtually impossible for them to access services without assistance, or to pursue employment opportunities – especially if there are already limited opportunities. Furthermore, post-secondary education for English-speakers is concentrated in a few select areas of Québec, making travel to these institutions another major financial consideration for the community. Advancement in distance education, as well as distance communication platforms, has helped alleviate some of these geographic barriers, however, they continue to persist as one of the major reasons for underemployment of the community. There are a number of solutions for the community, including providing financial or tax incentives to help them with geographic distance issues, improving access to services at more locations within the regions, and increasing access to distance education opportunities. 	<p>Short-term</p>

<p>11. Provide more support for economic and employment programs in the regions to enhance community vitality and support the identity of the English-speaking community. This includes, in part, supporting collaborative efforts between the English and French communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional English-speaking organizations working in the area of employment face a number of unique challenges related to their geographic position, including: having generalist mandates that do not provide them with recognition as actors eligible for employment funding; large geographic territories covering multiple administrative and/or sub-regional boundaries which spread their services thin; having majority language organizations in their region who are funded for employment services yet do not provide services to the English-speaking community. This is problematic, as some regional English-speaking organizations have little in the way of experience or expertise with regards to employment issues and programs, resulting in some regions having no employment services available to community members. The conference participants recommend changes to program parameters that will allow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with experience/expertise to become eligible for regional employment funding programs; • Program incentives or resources that support the provision of English language services or support where English-speaking organizations do not have the means to provide such services; and, • A framework that encourages and supports collaboration between English and French organizations within a region, and (in lieu of or alongside this) collaboration/support/services to be provided by other English-speaking organizations from outside the region (cross-boundary partnerships, distance delivery). 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>12. Support training programs to facilitate integration of English-speakers into the workforce, including internships, mentorships, and professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A first opportunity to acquire a profession related to one's training or education is often key to a fulfilling career. Getting 'through the door' is always a challenge but even more so for English-speakers. This is due to perceived lack of French language competency, being absent from social networks that provide information on job contacts, and out of province qualifications, amongst other factors. Integration of English-speakers into the workforce could be facilitated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting employers with the provision of F2L training for employees on the job; • expanding internship and mentoring programs for English-speakers; and • longer or more flexible grace periods for accommodating out of province qualifications. 	<p>Medium-term</p>

<p>13. Support programs and initiatives which focus on long-term retention of employees within the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional economies are often reliant on seasonal employment cycles which contribute to periods of lay-off and dependence on employment insurance. Employers have few alternatives to support the retention of employee's year-round, forcing employees to either move away to find more stable employment opportunities or become dependent on a cycle of intermittent employment supplemented by extended periods drawing employment insurance benefits. To facilitate longer-term retention of employees in the regions, there is a need for support programs and initiatives which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support skills training programs for employers and employees so that they can continue to operate during low season periods within their region – either in the same profession or in another one. • Support continued employment, such as job sharing or partial return to work, without penalizing equivalent Employment Insurance payments to incentivize workers to maintain employment. • Support programs for employers which allow for the exchange of employees during different seasonal periods. 	Short-term
<p>14. Encourage partnerships between community employment organizations and employers to assist in the search, placement, and support for potential employees during their job search.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups are often on the 'front line' of interaction with individuals within the territory that they serve. Through these front-line activities, community groups generate a lot of information about who is looking for work or seeking new opportunities, a particularly valuable resource for French language businesses that are unfamiliar with the English-speaking communities in which they operate. Improved partnerships between community organizations and businesses to share information and channel prospective employees helps businesses to fill vacant positions and provides English-speakers with more opportunities to find work. 	Medium-term
<p>15. Promote entrepreneurship programs for English-speakers and support these programs with employment measures to help entrepreneurs build and grow their businesses within their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English-speakers have a higher tendency to be self-employed, yet it is not clear whether this is a tendency to become entrepreneurs and start their own business, or if they become self-employed as a last resort when all other options for work have been exhausted. Either way, English-speakers are well-positioned to take advantage of their self-employment through support and programs for entrepreneurship when they are available. More support for these self-employment programs is needed, especially outside of the Montreal metropolitan area, not only for the English community but for the French one as well. 	Medium-term
<p>16. Remove restrictions around immigrants from being serviced by employment service providers in English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are restrictions in current funding programs on who is able to access employment services in English. Immigrants and foreign students are unable to use English employment services, and if organizations do service them they are not recognized clients under the existing system. Instead, these individuals are placed with organizations who operate almost exclusively in French and to which the immigrant clients face issues in communicating their needs adequately. While integration within Québec society requires training in French, many new arrivals have English as their first official language spoken and experience difficulties in accessing services when they are learning French. Being able to access English employment services in parallel to learning French would help them in finding employment and integrating into the Quebec economy faster. 	Short-term

<p>17. Remove restrictions from individuals attending school from being serviced by Employment Service Providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current system places responsibility on transitioning students into the workforce largely on educational institutions, such as CEGEPs and universities. These institutions do act as a first step in helping students find employment through career assistance programs, however, the services currently offered are not always available to every student. Community organizations who provide employment services have additional programs and resources which can be mobilized to complement the existing services in the education sector, yet they are not able to provide services to individuals in school due to eligibility restrictions. Allowing for parallel service while a student is enrolled in a CEGEP or university would allow them to access complementary services and increase their chances of finding employment. This is crucial for easing issues of transition into the workforce that many English-speaking Quebecers face. 	Short-term
<p>18. Increase assistance for organizations to promote/advertise their services within their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-speaking organizations work in a linguistic minority context, which means that their services and programs are not as well-known as those offered to the majority population. To ensure that the employment programs and services that are available in English have adequate promotion, employment organizations require additional support for marketing and advertising. One way that this can be achieved is by having a repertoire of organizations, along with their locations, which provide employment services in English. 	Short-term
<p>19. Ensure that all regions have the organizational capacity to dedicate services to providing employment assistance to English-speaking Quebecers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a limited number of employment programs offered to English-speaking Quebecers in the Quebec regions, with some regions having no services available to the community. Groups which provide service to linguistic majority community members do not always have the tools or resources to deliver services in English, forcing community organizations to fill in the gaps. English community groups often lack the resources to be able to fill this gap, and face challenges in building their capacity to develop their own programs. Requirements for minimum participant numbers, as well as geographic distance, create barriers for program or capacity development which result in services being delivered informally. Furthermore, resources to access service providers at a distance, for example from English employment services in Montreal, are not developed. At a minimum each region of Quebec should have at least one organization that can provide employment services in English, and there should be assistance to build the capacity of organizations to be able to create and expand employment programs tailored for their community. 	Short-term
<p>20. Support programs which not only aid individuals with their employment needs, but also help them integrate into the labour force. This includes French language training, social, and cultural programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the English-speaking individuals who are part of the 12K job deficit are those who face multiple barriers to employment above and beyond those specifically related to job skills. French language skills continues to be the largest barrier for English-speakers entering into the job market, as well as challenges with social skills and different cultural backgrounds. These do not fall under traditional employment programs, yet they require significant attention in the form of time and resources to address. French second language training programs, as well as social and cultural adjustment programs, available to English-speakers would help these individuals integrate more seamlessly into the workforce. 	Long-term

<p>21. Provide support for soft skills training programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft skill training and development is something which is often overlooked or taken for granted. However, soft skills are consistently seen as one of the major tools available to individuals to help them succeed in the workforce. Soft skills training, not only during a person's education but also while individuals are looking for work or employed, would help develop competencies in these skills. This can include programs specifically tailored towards negotiation, team work, and conflict resolution within a professional environment. Community groups, educational institutions, and business can work together to develop and support collaborative projects which address the soft skills gap. 	Medium-term
<p>22. Officially recognize the English-speaking community as a distinctive minority group in Quebec and ensure that programs and initiatives provided by actors in the employment sector are adapted to this reality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some minority groups are recognized under government policies and programs, oftentimes the English-speaking community is not, despite evidence illustrating that they face unique barriers. Recognition that the community experiences specific barriers, and formal inclusion of this recognition during program development and implementation is critical for ensuring that solutions address the fundamental issues facing the community. Generalized programs, especially those which are tailored for majority linguistic communities, cannot be applied to linguistic minority communities in the same way, as has been seen in other provinces which have minority linguistic populations. 	Long-term

French Second Language

<p>23. Provide free and accessible French language training for all Quebecers, irrespective of their age, education status, employment status, residency status, or level of language knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite having requirements to undergo French language training in elementary and secondary school, many English-speakers indicate that their French language skills are not perceived to be at a professional level. This creates a barrier when they are looking for employment, causing them to look for self-employment alternatives or leave the province. Opening up free French-language training to English-speakers in Quebec, as well as those wishing to move to the province, would aid in the retention and integration of the population, while at the same time provide the tools to expand knowledge of the French language with the minority population. 	Medium-term
<p>24. Provide, and strengthen, French language training programs for specific professions to ensure that individuals can understand professional vernacular – ex: law, engineering, healthcare, technical trades, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an adequate level of French proficiency in a person's professional background is extremely important for finding employment in Quebec; however, for English-speakers finishing their education or moving to Québec from another country there are very few programs tailored for this transition. If an English-speaker does not have the French professional vernacular necessary to work in their area of expertise it dissuades them from working in that industry. Increasing access to training programs for professional-specific French available to English-speakers would aid in this integration, while at the same time promoting increased use of French in the workplace. 	Medium-term

<p>25. Increase French-language training support for professional orders (engineering, law, etc.) so that English-speakers are better prepared for their competency exams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional recognition by Québec orders, for example law, engineering, and medicine, requires a certain level of French-language proficiency. For those whose first official language is English, and who have trained in their first official language, they face challenges in being able to pass these proficiency tests. If an individual cannot pass the proficiency test for their professional order they will be less likely to practice in their area of expertise, and may choose to move to another province where the tests are solely in English. Language training programs for preparation for these proficiency tests, available to those who wish to join the professional orders, would help prepare individuals for these requirements. Furthermore, having transitional programs, where individuals can practice their profession while also learning French, would help lower the barriers facing professional accreditation based on language. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>26. Support French-language training programs that are able to be delivered at a distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many English-speaking communities in the regions exist in linguistic isolation, that is to say the residents of these communities have few or limited opportunities to use and practice French language training given the geographic and social isolation from surrounding majority language communities. The small size of the population of these regional communities also make it a challenge to organize local programs or host in-person classes. In addition to making French classes free and more accessible for all, investments in technology can be used to help those in both more remote and urban areas access language training. 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>27. Provide more support for French language training programs while English-speakers are in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While there are mandatory minimums for French second language (F2L) education at the primary, secondary and college levels, there is a general perception that these are insufficient for securing employment in many sectors/professions, hence the increasing tendency of English-speakers to send their children to French language schools. Increased and improved levels of F2L education and (employment specific) training is required to maintain and encourage enrollment in English language schools as well as to better prepare graduates for employment in a context where adequate French language capability is essential. This can be done during university education, either as part of curriculums to teach professional-specific vernacular, or through complementary services. 	<p>Short-term</p>

Government

<p>28. Create support programs for English-speakers in the Quebec public service to help them advance professionally and ensure they are retained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite numerous government commitments to increase the level of English-speakers in the Quebec civil service, these employment levels have remained largely unchanged for over 40 years – hovering around 1% of the total Quebec public service. Conversely, there is a perception amongst English speakers that they should not bother to apply as they will not be accepted, meaning that there is work to be done on the community side to increase awareness of these opportunities. So, a push and pull strategy is required to change the situation; the push element would be a program to assist English-speakers in applying for positions in the civil service (skill and F2L competency assessment, development, and support, for example); the pull part would be a Quebec government policy to establish mandatory offerings to the English-speaking community. The English-language universities have established schools of public policy whose students could be directed into the provincial public service. 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>29. Ensure that government departments have internal policies tailored for collaborating with the English-speaking community, and that programs, funding, and policies reflect the unique linguistic position the community faces with regards to employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emploi-Quebec is the primary community employment funder for the Government of Québec, however, there is minimal engagement between the department and English community organizations. Community groups which do provide employment services in English under Emploi-Québec have limited input concerning the creation of policies and programs which directly affect the community. Because of this, programs and policies are not tailored for the English-speaking community, and do not have the intended effect of aiding them in finding employment. An example are the critical mass requirements for many Emploi-Québec programs. Many employment programs have minimum participant requirements which severely disadvantage smaller communities from receiving support. To respond to these issues there needs to be a two-pronged response. First, government departments need to recognize programs and policies specifically tailored for the English-speaking community. This can be achieved, in large part, by having formal research, analysis, and reporting mechanisms led by the English-speaking community to identify gaps and provide potential solutions to government partners. The creation of a Conseil consultatif under the CPMT is a start in this direction; however, further and extensive interaction between community representatives and government departments is crucial for ensuring continuous positive dialogue. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>30. Promote formal recognition within Quebec society that the English-speaking community is an important part of the province’s vitality, and that they face specific and linguistic barriers with regards to employment which require distinctive responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until the creation of the Secretariat aux relations avec les Québécois d’expression anglaise (SRQEA), there was limited formal recognition of the English-speaking community besides the areas of health care and education. The SRQEA has been an important first step to expanding and formalizing the recognition of the English-speaking community with Government of Québec actors, as well as bringing the specific needs of the community to the attention of key ministries. Despite this, there is a need to legislate the SQREA as a permanent government body in order to build bridges between the community and government actors. 	<p>Long-term</p>

<p>31. Support a formal representative process to inform and consult with government actors on issues related to employment in the English-speaking community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The announcement of a Conseil consultatif is a good first-step in ensuring English-speakers have a formal mechanism to work with government actors to identify and respond to employment issues facing the community. Continual support of formal mechanisms such as this, as well as expanding them to other government departments that have an influence and impact on employability issues, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Innovation, would help respond to issues facing the community through informed consultation. Additionally, being able to sit as a representative at the National Table. 	Short-term
<p>32. Ensure that English-speakers are included in formal consultations related to the economy and labor market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of formal consultation mechanisms the Government of Quebec uses when making decisions concerning economic and labor market changes. Understanding the experience of English-speakers, especially when it comes to issues and challenges, should be an integral part of the decision-making process at the highest level to ensure that the community is involved. Recognizing provincial community bodies, such as the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT), and including them during these consultations can help increase access to information on the community and mobilize potential solutions. 	Short-term

Employers

<p>33. Provide support to employers for French language training programs for employees, as well as support profession-specific language programs for English-speakers. This can, in large part, include formal partnerships between employers and community organizations to provide these types of services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French language ability is one of the principal barriers for English-speaking community members in being able to advance within the workforce. Of the government funded French language training programs currently available in Québec, the majority of these are tailored for individuals who are not employed. This creates a barrier for career advancement for many English-speakers, as knowledge of French is needed to succeed and advance within the Quebec economy. Providing language training for individuals who are employed will provide them with greater ability to advance, as well as increase the amount of French being used in the workplace. 	Medium-term
<p>34. Provide assistance to employers and employees when it comes to transportation costs – especially in the regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 3% of the English-speaking community of Quebec lives outside of urban centers and often in isolated geographic pockets in rural and remote areas of the province. While facing large distances for access to services, programs and employment opportunities, the lack of affordable transportation options is a factor that hinders the mobility of those seeking work in travelling to other locations. Assistance programs for travel costs while an individual is looking for work, or even when employed, would facilitate access to training and jobs. 	Short-term

Education

<p>35. Provide support to increase the capacity of educational institutions in the regions with job training programs, including investments for the expansion and enhancement of educational structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational institutions provide the first point for many individuals in helping them find employment as they transition into the workforce. Despite this there are often a lack of English language employment training programs offered at many educational institutions – especially in the regions. Building capacity of educational institutions to provide employment training programs in English, in collaboration with community and business partners, would aid in their transition into the workforce. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>36. Provide support for English-language educational programs which can be delivered at a distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to access educational programs is a major barrier for individuals not residing in major urban centers. Many English-speaking communities around the province face significant geographic distance issues for accessing education in their first official language spoken. Furthermore, because of their small demographic weight in many of the regions, French institutions are unable to offer the services in English. Increasing support for distance education, especially through providing material support to communities, would help alleviate the issues individuals face accessing education. Furthermore, urban populations can also benefit from distance delivery programs (QFA, 1996) to overcome constraints of time (busy work and family life) or cover specialty topics in their learning endeavors without the need for a physical presence. 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>37. Support adaptive programs which assist English-speakers during the transition from education into the workforce. This can include placements, internships, and mentorship programs while the students are still at school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition from education into the workforce is identified as a pivotal moment in an individual’s career and their ability to enter into the workforce in the discipline in which they have studied. Improving support for internship and mentoring programs will not only support work experience and transitions, they will also provide exposure to the reality of the Quebec job market, in particular the necessity to have adequate French language abilities. 	<p>Medium-term</p>
<p>38. Support direct research within post-secondary institutions to measure retention challenges of English-speaking Quebecers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exodus of English-speakers from Quebec that started in the late 1970s may have subsided from initial levels, yet the outward migration of English-speakers – especially post-secondary graduates – has continued, resulting in a brain drain of talented youth from the province. Research is needed to quantify and qualify this outwards migration of English-speakers so that effective measures can be devised and implemented to stem the flow and ensure that Quebecers who study in the province will also remain here to find employment. 	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>39. Work with educational institutions to create and improve employment and career counselling programs, not only at the post-secondary level, but at the primary and secondary levels as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of the consultations and surveys conducted by PERT revealed that employment and career counselling programs in English were lacking in availability at all educational levels. As this is the first step to individuals working towards a future career, it is imperative that institutions are given the tools and resources necessary to aid their students in understanding the workforce and making decisions concerning their future careers. 	<p>Medium-term</p>

ANNEXE 1

Challenges Related to Employment for English-speakers in Quebec

YES is pleased to have secured funding from the Secretariat for Relations with English Speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) to build a collaborative network of English organizations to respond to employment issues facing the English-speaking community in Quebec. The ultimate goal is to forge a new, independent non-profit organization focusing on the employability issues affecting the English-speaking community and engaging all levels of policy makers with a view to educate, influence, partner with and ensure adequate resources for the employability actors in our community.

Below you will find a number of the identified issues facing the English-speaking community with regards to employment. As a collaborative project, we ask if you could provide insight on which of the issues are most pressing to your community members, offer narrative examples, and add any additional challenges which are not included on this list.

CHALLENGES FOR JOB SEEKERS

Language Skills

English-speakers are often at a disadvantage when it comes to job prospects in Quebec even if they are bilingual. Visible minorities, immigrants, those with mental illness, and those with disabilities often face additional challenges when seeking employment.

Skills Gap

The skills gap is a key driver of unemployment and underemployment in Quebec. There is a growing mismatch in employers needs and the skills, training, and education that English-speakers are receiving.

Soft Skills Missing

Increasingly employers are finding it difficult to recruit individuals with adequately developed soft skills, such as creativity, teamwork, problem solving, and effective communication.

Newcomers

New arrivals whose first official language is English often end up leaving the province because they can't afford language classes. Furthermore, professional accreditation remains an issue, especially in terms of costs and language requirements. Finally, recent immigrants are often told by the government there are jobs, however, many find that once they reach Quebec the jobs are difficult to access.

Preparing Youth with Practical Experience

There is a significant lack of experiential learning opportunities available to English-speaking youth, effectively weakening their chances of economic integration as they have little-to-no practical work experience.

Underrepresented Populations

There is sometimes a perception of racism and/or discrimination during the hiring process. This, coupled with issues of systemic poverty and lack of networks, further complicates the employment issue and creates an added barrier for the English-speaking community.

Increase in Mental Health Issues

Quebec's English-speaking youth—particularly the unemployed and students—are displaying high levels of psychological distress related to joblessness.

Outmigration

Many qualified candidates leave the province for a variety of reasons (including language), and there is a perception that there are more opportunities elsewhere.

Relocated families having difficulties adjusting to Quebec

Quebec is becoming a hub for an increasing number of technology companies due to tax incentives and access to talent. Lots of young, creative people are coming to Montreal for the tech industry, however, their partners and families are struggling due to language issues, schooling, and lack of work permits, often resulting in them leaving the province after a short period of time.

GIG Economy

An increasing number of people are choosing (or forced) to be part of temporary economies to make ends meet. Greater protections of this workforce are needed.

Public Sector Jobs

It is difficult for English-speakers to get public sector jobs in Quebec—a longstanding issue.

Women in STEM

Women continue to face systemic challenges within the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics industries.

CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Working with more challenging clients

Although the unemployment rate is low, those currently unemployed are often those who face greater barriers when seeking employment (mental health, visible minority, language issues, and disabilities), placing a greater strain on employment and community organizations.

Finding English-speaking career counsellors is a challenge

There are no English career counselling programs/degrees/accreditations in Quebec at any of the universities (There are some courses as part of other degrees). It is difficult to find qualified people to work as career counsellors, resulting in an uneven level of competency and a lack of professional standards for the profession. This, coupled with on-average lower compensation packages and competition from businesses and universities makes it increasingly difficult for community organizations to find qualified talent.

Government Funding programs to employment organizations

Government programs and funding to organizations are not flexible and often do not fit the specific needs of organizations working with the English community. Emploi-Québec has a monopoly on funding for employment programs and doesn't always provide the type of assistance that organizations in the English-speaking community need.

Programming /funding often unstable and not enough investment in internships.

The Provincial government funding and reporting process is tedious and hierarchical, and is not done in a way which promotes a partnership. The Federal governments youth programs (Career Focus and Skills Links specifically) are very effective but not stable.

Lack of official government representation

Organizations serving the English-speaking community don't have an official voice with the Provincial government and their specific issues are not always heard as they are often not invited to be part of decision-making process.

Emploi-Québec

There are often issues for English speakers when dealing with agents at Emploi-Québec offices.

CHALLENGES FOR EMPLOYERS

Skills Gap

The skills gap is a key driver of unemployment and underemployment in Quebec. There is a mismatch in what employers need and the skills, training, and education that people are receiving.

Soft Skills Missing

Employers are looking for individuals with soft skills, such as creativity, teamwork, problem solving, and effective communication. These skills are currently lacking.

Employer-Employee Expectations

Quebec youth are facing deepening trends toward temporary and contract work, as well as unnecessary discrepancies regarding job and salary expectations and work environment. Employers often want the perfect candidate for a position, leading them to overlook candidates who do not exactly fit their requirements, but would still excel in the position.

Language

Employers often advertise jobs requiring full-bilingualism or superior French skills, when in fact the job does not actually need such strict language requirements.

Labour Shortages

In some areas, especially in the regions, there is a serious labour shortage. Employers are looking for workers, but have difficulty finding employees, or do not have the resources to train them on the job.

CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Lack of French language skills

Despite being surrounded by French-speakers, some regional English-speaking communities exist in socio-geographic isolation leading some youth to enter the job market without an adequate level of bilingualism.

Diversion away from work by EI programs

A large portion of the economy in the regions is linked to seasonal activities (fishery, forestry, mining, agriculture), creating a culture of seasonal work supplemented by off-season employment insurance benefits. This makes it hard to motivate people to seek off-season employment and develop complementary skill sets.

Lack of youth work experience

There are fewer “small” jobs, or they are often located significant distances away, for youth looking to gain work experience from part-time employment.

Emploi-Québec criteria not adapted to small ESCs

Smaller communities often cannot muster the minimum number of participants for training programs and generally the Emploi-Québec criteria are not adapted to small populations of English-speakers.

Lack of adult education training programs

Many regions do not have an English language adult education or vocational training centre, forcing potential participants to relocate to other parts of the province even for a DEP or short-term courses.

CHALLENGES FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Geographic Distance

Many technical, vocational, and post-secondary institutions are hard to access geographically, leading to students having to relocate if they want to study. The costs associated with relocation are a barrier, and oftentimes individuals who relocate for study do not immediately return to their hometowns.

Retention of graduates

A large number of English-speaking graduates from post-secondary institutions are choosing to relocate to other provinces in search of work, leading to a drain of post-secondary educated English-speaking Quebecers.

Work placements

Work placements during ones education are a useful way in building career skills, however, many educational institutions are finding it difficult finding placements, or do not have the resources to support placements.

French language training

Many youth feel that their French language skills are not at an adequate level to make them competitive when looking for employment.

Foreign Students

Foreign students face difficulties remaining in Quebec once they've graduated, and while there are some programs in place which provide them with an option to stay, they are short and often undesirable to employers.