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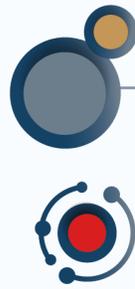
Regional Development Network
Réseau de Développement Régional

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Réunir les
communautés régionales
D'EXPRESSION ANGLAISE DU QUÉBEC

Connecting
QUEBEC'S REGIONAL
ENGLISH-SPEAKING
Communities

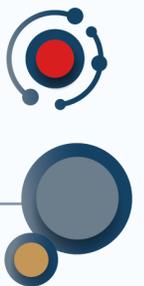


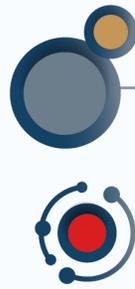
BRIEF HISTORY

The Regional Development Network (RDN) was founded in 2019 to respond to the need for effective representation and engaged involvement in enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of English-speaking communities across Quebec that work within a defined territory.

The organizations serving these communities face multiple socio-economic challenges in fulfilling their mandates. Often portrayed as ‘generalist’ organizations, they face funding constraints while dealing with community needs and issues in multiple sectors, within numerous jurisdictions and in a minority language setting that is often not recognized. In addition, many organizations must carry out their work over a large territory while serving isolated populations.

In this context, it was determined that there is a need for a network of ‘regional’ organizations serving the English-speaking communities of Quebec for the purposes of networking, collaboration and representation to support the individual organizations in the work they endeavor to carry out.





Note that the mission, vision and values below is a draft as of September 2021 while RDN's strategic plan is being finalized.

MISSION

RDN enhances and maintains the vitality of the English-speaking population of the regions of Quebec by building organizational capacity and representing the community's interests to a variety of stakeholders.

VISION

The regional English-speaking communities of Quebec are vital linguistic minorities that actively participate in and contribute to the social, economic, cultural, and political fabric of the province of Quebec.

VALUES

Identity

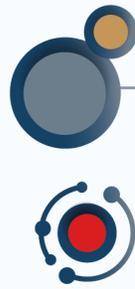
Strengthening and promoting the community's unique characteristics and assets is an important aspect to ensuring a strong and vibrant community.

Inclusion

By working together, the French and English-speaking communities of the province can appreciate and recognize cultural and linguistic contributions, nurture their capacities, and make positive contributions to our communities.

Equity

A proactive role in representation through awareness and knowledge development will help partners develop policies and programs that ensure the community's equitable access to resources and opportunities.



OBJECTIVES

- Act, on behalf of its member organizations, as a point of interaction with the various actors involved in the field of community development, including government, institutions and other organizations.
- Provide a forum for dialogue and discussion on issues related to the socio-economic development of the communities served by member organizations;
- Provide support to member organizations in achieving their objectives related to community development, including research, training, expertise and coordination;
- Foster and facilitate collaborative initiatives that will contribute to the socio-economic development of the communities served by member organizations.

MAIN ACTIVITIES



Coordination



Planning



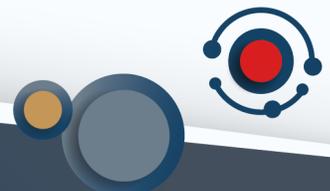
Representation



Communications



Funding



TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I sat to write my very first President's Message, I reflected on the last year. I had to take a few deep breaths and collect my spirits because, let's be honest; it has been quite the roller coaster ride. 2020 challenged us in ways we never thought possible.

It suddenly dawned on me however, that during what is in reality, a very short time, particularly in the life of a new network like ours, that a lot was accomplished by RDN. Our progress is monumental when you consider that RDN's Executive Director was hired in August 2020, during the pandemic.

In what has been a time like no other in living memory, and a period of extreme uncertainty, I consider myself lucky to have had the privilege of witnessing extraordinary creativity, great resilience and innovation, and to have worked alongside such committed volunteers and staff.

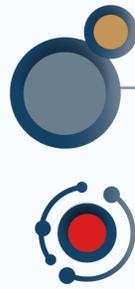
In the very capable hands of our Executive Director, Cathy Brown, and her dedicated team, RDN has already begun to have an impact in many regions of the province by learning about its member organizations and the communities they serve, and by helping them build capacity, one virtual meeting at a time.

Knowledge is central to everything we do. Knowledge about the needs of our members related to the socio-economic development of their communities allows RDN to be effective in its interventions with various stakeholders. We are beginning to build a knowledge base that will only be enhanced as time goes on, and will serve as the foundation for all of our actions.

In these pages, you will read about RDN's many accomplishments during the year. Some of those include the signature of a contract with the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise for core funding to support RDN's mission; the network welcoming new member organizations and beginning the creation of regional profiles. The launch of a strategic planning process, and our first Members Meeting.

I cannot say enough about how proud I am of all that has been accomplished and how honored I am to have been part of it. I am excited for what the future holds and feel privileged to have a front-row seat.

Sincerely,
Brigitte Wellens



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

With RDN's first year of operations behind us, I am filled with gratitude and admiration for everyone who played a part in this amazing journey. Who would have thought that a new provincial organization would emerge during a year of such uncertainty and isolation?

As a result of public health directives, including the fact that we could not travel or hold in-person meetings, RDN had time to focus on setting up a new not-for-profit organization. While most of the world was working from home, RDN was busy searching for office space.

I am very grateful and appreciative of the time that I spent with the SRQEA team, as we worked collaboratively to design RDN's core funding, as well as ERCC Phase 2, the Employment Strategy and the Social Economy initiative (SEENet). The amount of knowledge and expertise that was shared with me will support RDN for years to come. Thank you to the staff of the SRQEA for your time and support over the past 12 months.

For over 20 years, the CHSSN has been a very strong pillar in the English-speaking community when it comes to training and development. I am grateful for the ongoing mentoring, many hours of support, and the knowledge that you passed on during this critical time in RDN's development.

To the Board of Directors, it has been an amazing ride, with the creation of by-laws, a board manual, employee handbook, strategic planning, membership development and the branding of RDN. Despite everyone's busy schedules, we managed to make significant progress within a short period. Thank you for your ongoing support and I am looking forward to another year of new growth for RDN and the community organizations that we work with.

On a final note, I would like to stress that RDN has engaged three employees in the last four months of 2020-2021, during a time when human resources were very hard to recruit, but we did it! RDN's success this year is thanks to all of the hard work and dedication from the staff. Thank you for embarking on this new adventure with us all.

Sincerely,
Cathy Brown



YEAR IN REVIEW

CHSSN - ERCC PHASE 1 (2020-2021)

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) supported the ERCC initiative in phase 1, which was funded by the SRQEA.

ERCC funding supported RDN in establishing its initial infrastructure (office), human resources, operations and governance. The project funding also supported RDN in recruiting additional members and allowed RDN to expand its reach provincially. A website, communication tool and knowledge product was designed to inform federal, provincial and regional stakeholders about RDN. To achieve this, RDN worked with CHSSN and the SRQEA to build its capacity to function as a credible, representative and provincial organization.

Objectives

- Act, on behalf of its member organizations, as a point of interaction with the various actors involved in the field of socio-economic development, including governments, institutions and other organizations.
- Provide a forum for dialogue and discussion on issues related to the socio-economic development of the communities served by member organizations;
- Provide support to member organizations in achieving their objectives related to socio-economic development, including research, training, expertise and coordination;
- Foster and facilitate collaborative initiatives that will contribute to the socio-economic development of the communities served by member organizations.



YEAR IN REVIEW

CHSSN - ERCC PHASE 1 (2020-2021)

Overall outputs

- Hired an Executive Director - August 3, 2020
- New office set up and incorporation of non-profit
- Designed Policies and Procedures with the RDN board
 - Policies and Procedures document created and approved by the Board of Directors - October 7, 2021
 - Employee handbook created and approved by the board
 - Membership guidelines created and approved by the board
 - Board handbook created and approved by the board
- Recruited 5 additional community organizations as members
 - "Value Added to Members" and "Who we are" document created
- Five Board of Directors meetings held via Zoom
- Mentoring by CHSSN on building community capacity
 - Received over 120 hours of mentoring from CHSSN
- RDN has set priorities for 2020-2021
 - The Board of Directors has agreed that priorities for RDN will focus on the ERCC initiative, the Employment Strategy, and the Social Economy project
- Website and communication plan created
 - Designed promotional materials
- Began communications and representation with federal, provincial, and regional stakeholders





YEAR IN REVIEW

SRQEA - CORE FUNDING

Through its core funding with the SRQEA, RDN supports a network of English-language community organizations across Québec in their socio-economic development and in building bridges with community stakeholders and the government of Québec.

RDN will work to build bridges between English-speaking community organizations and ministries such as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH), the Ministry of Economy and Innovation (MEI), the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ).

RDN will support its membership in developing their expertise in creating or strengthening their relationships with the Quebec government and municipalities. It will provide the organizations in its network with key information related to government mandates and programs to support them in their efforts to improve socio-economic development and increase access to services.

It will represent English-speaking organizations to government (ministers, senior officials, and elected representatives) by providing factual information on English-speaking communities, raising awareness of the challenges faced by these communities, the gaps in services they face, and their contributions to Quebec society.

RDN will act as a key advisory body to government on behalf of its membership by providing briefs, participating in committees, and submitting research reports. In addition, RDN is establishing direct links between the English-speaking community and Quebec ministries so that the government and the communities have the necessary knowledge to improve access to government projects and programs. RDN is also building relationships with English- and French-language non-governmental organizations to foster greater collaboration and stronger partnerships.



YEAR IN REVIEW

SRQEA - CORE FUNDING

Objectives

- To build RDN's capacity to support its members in socio-economic development and to effectively work towards their mission
- To develop RDN's capacity to manage province-wide initiatives on behalf of a network of regional organizations
- To build effective relationships with key departments of the Government of Quebec
- To build effective relationships and partnerships with both French and English non-governmental organizations

Overall outputs

- Admin Assistant hired - December 14, 2020
- Development Agent hired - January 18, 2021
- Communication plan created and marketing and promotional materials designed and purchased
- Membership policy developed and disseminated
 - 5 new member community organizations
- Acquired expertise in managing provincial initiatives through professional development and by creating an action plan with the support of provincial organizations
- Strategic Plan currently being finalized
- Professional development session offered to RDN member organizations (First session regarding pay equity)



YEAR IN REVIEW

SRQEA - ERCC PHASE 2 (2021-2023)

RDN supports the SRQEA in the implementation of Phase 2 of the ERCC initiative by:

- Continuing outreach to organizations serving English-speaking communities;
- Supporting the maintenance and expansion of satellite offices in the regions;
- Assisting regional organizations in identifying key socio-economic sectors and developing programming in these sectors;
- Enabling regional organizations to develop relationships with key provincial entities.

Overall outputs

- Collaborated with and advised the SRQEA in the development and implementation of the ERCC phase 2 contribution agreements with ERCC organizations
 - 25 meetings with SRQEA to develop a framework for the agreements with the ERCC organizations
- 15-20 work plans reviewed and recommendations provided
- 80 hours of meetings CHSSN to facilitate successful transfer and management of the ERCC initiative



YEAR IN REVIEW

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The SROEA has identified 11 regional organizations to receive funds to help bridge the gaps that currently exist in their community's employment landscape. RDN has been mandated to support these 11 community organizations with the Employment Strategy that is designed to connect English-speakers with employment services in the region, often offered exclusively in French.

Work plans have been developed with the 11 funded community organizations to increase employability services for English-speakers in MRCs around the province, to facilitate partnership with the francophone community, to create a knowledge base, and to encourage youth to participate in this initiative.

Objectives

- Improve access to employability services to English-speaking youth by developing, maintaining and evolving the capacity of Carrefour jeunesse-emploi organizations to offer employability services to English-speaking youth.
- Improve access to employability services to English-speakers outside the youth sector by providing support for designated organizations currently involved in employment activities to evolve and update their existing level of service.
- Explore opportunities to support the expansion of employability services to English-speakers in designated MRCs where English-speakers face employability challenges by participating with the majority-language community on local and regional tables pertaining to employability.

Overall outputs

- Agreements have been signed with organizations covering 11 RTS areas throughout Quebec
- Work plans reviewed
- Three meetings with PERT to improve information sharing for the provincial employment strategy



YEAR IN REVIEW

SOCIAL ECONOMY

RDN's Social and Solidarity Economy for English speakers Network (SEENet) will focus on creating meaningful employment with social impact that leads to community vitality for English-speaking communities in Quebec. RDN's SEENet will develop partnerships, advance knowledge, and leverage resources in order to promote entrepreneurial approaches and build capacity for various actors within the social and solidarity economy in English-speaking communities. The initiative is being funded by the SRQEA. Major partners include Concordia University, the Coopérative de développement régional du Québec (CDRQ) and the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

As SEENet is still in its early stages of development, RDN aims to:

- To establish an English language support program for the social economy
- To promote the social economy to the English-speaking community of Quebec
- To support the emergence of an entrepreneurial development model based on the social economy
- To participate in the advancement of knowledge and research on the social economy

Stay tuned to see how RDN efforts will lead to the creation of a social economy hub for English-speaking communities across Québec.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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DAVID BALLAM – **Development Agent**
OLIVIA CHAMPAGNE – **Social Economy Officer**
JANO STEFFEN – **Executive Assistant**

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Thank you to our funders!

**Secrétariat aux relations
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