

English-speaking Quebecers to Benefit from Investment Fund for Official Language Minority Communities

For immediate release

Montreal – April 28, 2016 – The Quebec Community Groups Network as well as its members and stakeholders were thrilled to announce that community sector organizations that provide direct support to more than 1 million English-speaking Quebecers could soon benefit from up to \$3 million to finance innovative projects that address the needs and priorities of English-speaking youth, seniors, and newcomers.

One third of those potential investments, some \$1 million in matching funds, are part of the Social Partnership Initiative in Official Language Minority Communities, announced Liberal MP Marc Miller on behalf of his colleague, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. The other two thirds would come from the private sector.

“Improving the lives of people in our society is why we were elected,” said Marc Miller, Member of Parliament for Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Soeurs. “I know that our work with the Quebec Community Groups Network will improve the lives of Canadians by developing stronger partnerships among communities.”

Social financing is an approach to mobilizing private capital that delivers a social dividend and an economic return to achieve social and environmental goals. Mobilizing private capital for social good creates opportunities for investors to finance projects that benefit society and for community organizations to access new sources of funds.

“Traditionally, the community sector has relied almost exclusively on the engagement and resources of government, but as discretionary funds decrease, it became clear building new partners would be key in securing long-term sustainable support for community needs,” commented QCGN’s Vice-President James Shea.

“Community sector organizations have long sought opportunities to partner with the private sector to meet challenges faced by our community,” Shea added, noting the Social Partnership Initiative in

official language minority communities that was announced as part of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities presented a clear opportunity for Quebec's English-speaking communities.

"In 2011, the QCGN began working with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), to understand social financing's opportunity within our official language minority community," said QCGN's Director General, Sylvia Martin-Laforge. Thus began a close working relationship with the department that culminates today in the announcement of the Community Innovation Fund (CIF).

Martin-Laforge explained the QCGN will act as an intermediary, activating up to \$3 million in leveraged funds towards projects that serve the needs of English-speaking youth, seniors, and newcomers. She said the QCGN, will be funded by ESDC to establish and administer the project and to help the community sector make links with private partners. QCGN will begin by working immediately with members and community stakeholders to determine the specifics on how we will manage these resources together. "We will also identify an evaluation mechanism and knowledge transfer partner from within our community's post-secondary institutions. If all goes accordingly to plan, the first funded projects should begin later this year."

"This a real opportunity for our community to take responsibility for identifying needs, building new partnerships, allocating resources, evaluating success, and learning from our combined experience with the project," said Shea. "If we are successful – and we know we will be – we will be creating new opportunities for the community sector; sustainable, predictable, and self-governed resources."

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 48 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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