



VEQ
Voice of English-speaking Québec



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Committee on Official Languages



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Mission Statement

The Voice of English-speaking Québec is an autonomous, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of a dynamic English-speaking community in the Greater Québec and Chaudière-Appalaches region and to the promotion of its interests.

Goals

The following four roles characterize VEQ's goals and all its actions:

1. Act as a hub of information for the English-speaking Community
2. Foster community cohesiveness
3. Support the development of the community
4. Promote the interests of the community

The English-speaking community of the Greater Quebec City region ... some key statistics

- Population of 12 375
- 1.8% of the total population
- 1 hospital, 1 health and social services centre, 1 cegep, 3 high schools, 7 elementary schools
- More than 60 groups and organizations serving the community
- Every 5 years 25% of our region's population is renewed by newcomers.



The Quebec City Way: a Community Philosophy

- A small and dynamic, integrated but not assimilated community
- Thinking outside the BOX
- Partnership between English organizations and also with the French majority
- Strong institutions = Strong community
- A strong culture of community involvement



Challenges faced by Quebec City's English-speaking community

1. Youth

- Out-migration
- Limited education opportunities in English
- Low level of French written proficiency
- Negative perception of their capacity to be competitive in a French-first job market
- Negative perception of the importance of bilingualism in the job market

Challenges faced by Quebec City's English-speaking community

2. Seniors

2.1 Active seniors (50-65)

- Lacking targeted services/activities in English
- Social Isolation

2.2 Older seniors (65+)

- Limited language skills causes difficulties with long-term care facilities
- Geographical dispersion causes social isolation
- Family exodus
- Lack of services aimed at maintaining seniors' autonomy

Challenges faced by Quebec City's English-speaking community

3. Community

- Aging Population
- Limited cultural and recreational activities in English
- Community organizations are under financed or not financed at all which jeopardizes their existence
- Under financing of community groups places added pressure on foundations serving our community

Challenges faced by Quebec City's English-speaking community

3. Community

The English-speaking community doesn't receive the same quality and variety of services as the French majority

- Limited access to services in English in many governmental departments especially at the provincial level
- Most youth services only available in French
- The only CEGEP without an amphitheatre in our region is the English CEGEP
- English-speaking day care services badly lacking

Challenges faced by Quebec City's English-speaking community

4. English-speaking and Allophone Newcomers

- Linguistic barrier
- Social isolation
- Employability
- Significant lack of information on available services

The promotion of bilingualism and newcomers' integration project: a case study of what governments and communities should do to enhance linguistic minority communities' vitality

- **Funders**
 - City of Quebec
 - Department of Canadian Heritage
 - Citadel Foundation
- **Partners**
 - Cegep St. Lawrence
 - Central Quebec School Board
 - Morrin Centre
 - Jeffery Hale Community Services
 - VEQ

The promotion of bilingualism and newcomers' integration project: a case study of what governments and communities should do to enhance linguistic minority communities

- **The objectives**

- Facilitate newcomers' integration into the English-speaking community and larger francophone majority
- Develop new services that directly respond to the needs of newcomers before and after their arrival
- Develop new services that respond to the needs of employers who recruit newcomers

The promotion of bilingualism and newcomers' integration project:
a case study of what governments and communities should do to
enhance linguistic minority communities

- **The initiatives**

- Twinning program between Anglophones and Francophones
- Cultural and social bilingual activities
- Information sessions for new English-speaking employees and their families, implemented within companies
- Monthly e-bulletin for newcomers

Government of Canada: areas requiring more investment and priority intervention

- Youth: Employability services, promotion of bilingualism, training opportunities
- Seniors: Services aimed at helping seniors maintain their autonomy, cultural and recreational activities in English
- Community: Training and development opportunities for volunteers and volunteer-driven community organizations
- Newcomers: Additional resources for integration and adaptation services for newcomers and employers who recruit them
- Employability: Implement economic development and employability services for the English-speaking community in the different regions of Quebec

Government of Quebec

- Currently not funded by the provincial government
- Lack of thorough consultation by the provincial government
- Investments clearly insufficient

Networking among English-speaking communities in the different regions of Quebec

The success

- The networking and partnership initiative under the leadership of the CHSSN is unanimously recognized as a successful model

The challenge

- Important need for networking opportunities for organizations located off the Island not currently addressed

Relationship between Quebec City's English-speaking community and the French-speaking majority

The Quebec City Way

- A relationship based on partnership, dialogue, and mutual understanding

The keys to this success

- 30 years of focusing on collaboration instead of competition and opposition
- The English-speaking community is seen as an asset and not as a threat
- A growing regional need for bilingual resources
- An integrated but not assimilated linguistic minority

Conclusion

- Consultations by federal departments and agencies have to take place with grassroots community organizations in Montreal and in the regions
- Because of the demographic situation of our community we will need major investments for our seniors population – a sector currently lacking resources and services
- If we wish to have English-speaking communities outside of Montreal in this province tomorrow, we will need more youth, newcomers and employability services in the regions off the Island in the near future

Conclusion

- On behalf of the English-speaking community and the Voice of English-speaking Québec, I would like to thank you all for your time and for this opportunity to present the issues and challenges affecting our minority community