



BUILDING BRIDGES: FINAL REPORT ON THE 2019 CONSULTATIONS

2019 Consultation with Organizations Serving English-speaking
Communities on the Priorities and Orientations of the Secrétariat
aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

Frances Ravensbergen, PhD. for the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

DECEMBER 10, 2020



BUILDING BRIDGES: FINAL REPORT ON THE 2019 CONSULTATIONS

**2019 Consultation with Organizations Serving English-speaking
Communities on the Priorities and Orientations of the Secrétariat
aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise**

Frances Ravensbergen, PhD. for the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

DECEMBER 10, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	3
The Secretariat	3
The Consultations	3
Evaluation and Validation of the Consultation Process	4
Post-session Evaluations	4
Validation Session	6
FINDINGS	7
Key Findings - Community	7
Low capacity to access government services for English-speaking Quebecers	7
Challenges for organizations to access government funding programs	8
French-language capacity remains a challenge for English-speaking Quebecers	9
The relationship with the Francophone majority is complex	10
Key Findings - Government	10
Perceived lack of transparency around federal-provincial funding transfers	10
Participation in the public service needs substantial attention	11
Key Findings - Secrétariat	11
Bridge building and strengthening community-government relations	11
The Secrétariat should be solidified and the funding program expanded	11
Findings by Sector	12
Health and Social Services	12
Education	12
Municipalities	13
Employment	13

Community sector	14
Arts & culture, heritage and communications	14
Research	15
Justice	15
Special measures	15
Findings on the Mandate, Orientations and Priorities for the Secrétariat	15
Build bridges between the English-speaking community organizations and Government of Québec	15
Build capacity of English-speaking community organizations to help them understand, navigate and secure funding (particularly for non-profits)	16
Play a (not THE) role in direct funding of the English-speaking communities	16
Sensitize, educate and advise other government departments about the realities and needs of the English-speaking communities	16
Other findings regarding the Secrétariat	16
Priority Measures and Needs Identified by Participants	17
Accessing Services	17
Funding Needs	18
CONCLUSION	19
APPENDICES	21
Annex 1 Consultation Sessions — location and participation	21
Annex 2 Participants by Sector of Activity and Region	22
Annex 3 Consultation Questions	24
Topic 1 - Development and role of institutions, associations and community networks	24
Topic 2 - Policies, programs and services of the Government of Québec	24
Topic 3 - Orientations and priorities of the Secrétariat	24



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2019, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (the "Secrétariat") consulted with its community and institutional stakeholders in a series of 11 sessions. Overall, more than three hundred community leaders representing more than 140 organizations and institutions participated in the consultation, which gave them an opportunity to provide input on priorities and orientations for the Secrétariat¹.

Main observations voiced by the representatives who participated in the different regional and sectoral meetings:

- Support for access to government services, specifically health services, is an important priority for English-speaking Quebecers.
- There is a pressing need to improve access to government funding for non-profit organizations serving the English-speaking communities.
- Stakeholders also strongly voiced their desire to be recognized and included in Québec society, including a desire to improve French language skills.
- Concern was expressed about transparency of Canada-Québec funding transfers, particularly in the areas of education and employability and about the low participation of English speakers in Québec's public service.
- Specific challenges were identified for health & social services, education, employment, arts & culture and heritage as well as for municipalities, the community sector and other areas.

Consultation participants expressed support for the work of the Secrétariat to date, wanting to see it build bridges between the English-speaking communities and the Government of Québec and for the Secrétariat itself to be accorded a more permanent status within government. There is a desire to see the Secrétariat fund capacity-building within the organizations of the English-speaking communities.

By way of follow-up to the consultation, the Secrétariat has begun preparing for bilateral briefings with key departments to follow up on the findings of the consultation and will participate actively in the work towards a new *Plan d'action gouvernemental sur l'action communautaire* (MTESS). Requests were also submitted for consideration for the 2020 budget.

¹ In all, 142 different organizations and 212 individuals participated in the consultations. Some individuals participated in more than one session and some organizations had more than one participant at consultation sessions.





INTRODUCTION

The Secretariat

The Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (the Secrétariat) was created in the fall of 2017 and launched at the Morrin Centre in Québec City on November 24th, 2017. In the winter of 2018 there was an initial consultation with organizations serving the English-speaking communities to gather input for its start-up work.

Following its first full year of operation, the Secrétariat organized a broadly-based consultation in the fall of 2019 to allow it to take the pulse of the English-speaking communities it works with. The primary goal of the consultation was to receive community input on the priorities and orientations for the work of the Secrétariat. A consultant was hired to facilitate the consultation sessions and write a report. This report shares the findings from the consultation.

3

The Consultations

The consultations were held from September 5th to November 15th. In all, eleven sessions (eight regional consultations, one online regional consultation, one intersectoral consultation, and an online validation session) were held across Québec with the participation of over 300 community leaders². Most of the consultation sessions spanned three hours³. A list of locations, regions and participation rates in each consultation session can be found in Annex 1 and a breakdown of participants by sector and region can be found in Annex 2.

Participants were asked to comment on three main topics, as follows:

- The development and role of institutions, associations and community networks.
- The policies, programs and services of the government of Québec.
- Orientations and priorities for the Secrétariat.

² It should be noted that many participants spoke about the work and reality and needs of other organizations they are involved in, thereby creating an even wider representation of the views of leaders in the English-speaking communities.

³ The online consultation lasted two hours and the sectoral consultation lasted a full day.

Each of these topics in turn contained three sub-topics, inviting participants to reflect on the current situation, problems and challenges, as well as success stories and best practices and avenues for future actions in each of the topic areas. The consultation questions can be found in Annex 3.

The metaphor of “building bridges” was used during the consultations. The Secrétariat was positioned as a builder of bridges between the English-speaking communities and the Government of Québec.

Secrétariat staff attended the consultations to hear first-hand what the community had to say and to network with participants. Christopher Skeete, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers and Eric Jabbari, Political Advisor to the Premier, were present at all consultation sessions.

The consultation sessions were recorded and transcribed and a report with the themes raised was written for each consultation session. Each report included participants’ comments from the post-its (put on a visual of a bridge at the back of the room)⁴. All of this data, along with some additional information sent to the consultant and comments on the evaluation form, were collated and analyzed to write this report.

Eight key findings were identified. Other findings were grouped by sector and weighted for relative importance according to consultation participants. To support its follow-up work, the Secrétariat was provided with a report with the individual comments submitted under each finding.

Each consultation session was followed by a networking session, except for the on-line sessions and the sectoral consultation (where the networking session was held the evening before). This allowed for informal networking between Secrétariat staff along with Christopher Skeete and consultation participants. In some cases, elected officials and partners were invited to the networking sessions.

For most of the consultations, one or more regional organization was asked to “host” the session. This involved finding a meeting space, providing input into the invitation list, providing logistical support and organizing the networking session. The local host organizations were reimbursed by the Secrétariat for the costs associated with their logistical support.

Six of the nine regional sessions were held in English-language institutions or in the offices of community organizations (3 CEGEPs, 2 municipal buildings, 1 community organization).

Evaluation and Validation of the Consultation Process

Post-session Evaluations

An online evaluation was sent to all participants following each consultation session. Of the 307 participants, just under half responded (147 or 48%).

Participants were asked to provide feedback on:

- the organization, content and usefulness of the session;
- their awareness of the Secrétariat;

⁴ Upon assessment of the first consultation it was decided to also ask participants to identify, on a large post-it, their one key message to the Secrétariat.

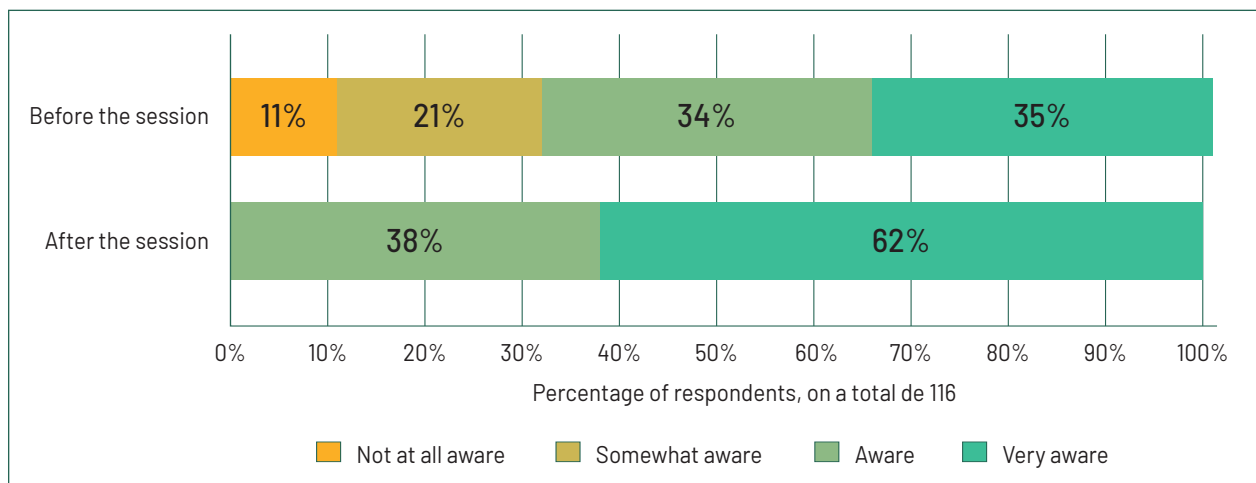
- their assessment of their opportunity to provide input into the orientations and priorities of the Secrétariat.

Respondents rated the consultation highly.

- 92% of respondents were satisfied with the overall organization of the session.
- Respondents were particularly satisfied with the facilitation of the sessions (99%, with 76% being very satisfied).
- The invitation and registration process had the lowest level of satisfaction (84%).
- Respondents generally found the content useful (84% and over).
- The most useful content was the overview of the Secrétariat (97%).

Awareness of the Secrétariat’s work was rated at 100% after the consultation with nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents describing themselves as “very aware” of the Secrétariat and its work. This level of awareness increased substantially through the consultations, rising from 69% who were aware and only 35% who were “very aware” prior to the consultation session.

Awareness of the Secrétariat’s work before and after the consultation session



A very high majority (96%) of respondents agreed that the consultation session provided them with an opportunity to provide input into the orientations and priorities of the Secrétariat.

Comments were also collated and analyzed. Comments about the content of the consultation have been integrated into the reports. A few comments about the organization of the consultation were identified. They were raised by only a few people but are important to consider for future consultations. They were:

- There was some confusion about who was invited to attend and that the registration process was too short.
- Some participants commented that half a day was too short for the consultation and that there was enough material to warrant a full day.

Overall, the fast pace of the consultation (10 sessions in just over 10 weeks) did not impede good participation from regions, sectors and organizations/ institutions. Consultation participants were generally quite satisfied with the process.

Validation Session

An online session was held on December 6th to permit participations to validate the key findings from the consultations. In all, more than 60 individuals from 55 organizations participated in the validation session⁵. The consultant presented a PowerPoint setting out a summary of the key findings from the consultation.

An evaluation form was sent to each registration address immediately after the validation session. The 31 responses returned showed strong support for the consultant's presentation of the consultation findings. Participants were virtually unanimous in their view that the validation session was useful.

- All respondents agreed that the presentation of the results was useful (81% thought that it was very useful);
- Nearly all (97%) found that the session on the orientations and priorities was useful (87% agreed that it was very useful);
- A large majority (97%) agreed that the consultant's overview of the 2019 consultation process was useful (55% found it very useful).

Validation session participants were virtually unanimous (97-100%) that the Secrétariat should focus its energies on the eight key findings which are discussed in the Findings section of this report. The role of the Secrétariat in building bridges between community and government, the reinforcement of its funding program, and its work to make other government funding programs available, received unanimous support from respondents, with 27 of 31 (87%) in complete agreement. There was also very strong support for the Secrétariat to work to improve access to services in English for individuals (100% agreed, with 77% showing complete agreement).

When asked about the particular sectors on which the Secrétariat should concentrate its efforts, education, health and social services, employability and the community sector received the highest level of support. The municipal and arts/culture/heritage/communications sectors also received substantial support with lower levels being reported for research and access to justice.

⁵ There were 56 organization registrations with at least seven sites hosting a small group.



FINDINGS

Key Findings - Community

Low capacity to access government services for English-speaking Quebecers

Lack of access to services, in particular because of being a language minority, was raised in most consultation sessions. Examples to illustrate how vulnerable citizens are falling through the cracks were given:

- Wait lists of over two years to see a psychologist, speech therapist or social worker.
- Citizens being sent back to the community organization which had originally referred the client to the public service provider because of a lack of English-speaking psychologists, the lack of home care workers who speak English and youth protection services lacking English-speaking social workers.
- Improper diagnosis or limited communication because of the low level of spoken English for some professionals.

Examples of the negative impact of the lack of services in English were shared, including: inappropriate medications being prescribed; the lost window for speech therapy being most helpful to a child; vulnerable hospitalized seniors becoming more stressed and agitated.

Participants also spoke about the impact on community organizations as they try to support citizens attempting to access services yet are unable to access the specific professional services required.

In particular, **following the 2015 re-organization of the Health and Social Services system**, it is harder for citizens to access services. Participants spoke about how the re-organization is still creating constant turnover in staffing in the health sector, making access to services even more precarious.

The **delays in adopting Regional Access Programs** have exacerbated the problems.

The **shortage of professionals** was specifically raised. Examples included: inability to fill teacher positions, school police liaison officer position open for two years, educational technician positions not being filled, nurse/social worker/mental health worker positions going unfilled or experiencing high rates of turnover. These examples go beyond the general concerns in Québec with access to doctors; they identify the acute state of the needs of the English-speaking communities not being met.

Government services not providing documentation in English was highlighted. Primarily, there were concerns raised over the lack of English signs in health and social service institutions, the lack of health information documents in English and information sheets on medications not being available in English.

Concern was raised about the inability of many **municipalities to provide basic information** about services in English to community members.

Challenges for organizations to access government funding programs

Funding criteria often do not reflect the reality of the local situation. Many English-speaking community organizations are required to be multi-sectoral because of the small numbers of English speakers in the service area. They offer services for many population groups (such as youth, seniors and families), often across several sectors (such as health, leisure and employment). This does not correspond to Government of Québec funding structure that provides funding mostly via departments focused on one population group or one sector.

As well, funding criteria often requires a minimum number of participants. In smaller communities, this is next to impossible to guarantee, particularly at the start of a new program. It was suggested that there is often an 'urban-centric' approach to funding requirements.

Distance between communities not being taken into account by the funding programs was also raised as another example of an "urban-centric" approach. The cost of staff travelling to communities or the transportation costs to bring participants to a program are often not acknowledged in funding programs.

Few English-speaking community organizations receive core funding for their global mission. Most organizations serving English-speaking Quebecers were not at the table when SACAIS funding (Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome et aux initiatives sociales) was established in 2000. There has also been a tendency for English-speaking community organizations to look to the federal government for funding. Organizations are now approaching the Government of Québec in increasing numbers.

Project funding is problematic. Because of the lack of core funding, project funding is the fallback funding for programs that are often not short term and should be funded longer term. This makes the requirement to be "innovative" difficult and the ability to offer a continuity of services almost impossible. Organizations shared examples of creative projects they have developed to work with this reality.

Most project funding is for one year. It also requires hiring short-term and, often, part-time staff. This creates job insecurity for staff, who leave for full-time or more secure jobs when they can, leaving the organization with the continual challenge of hiring and orienting new staff.

Project funding is also problematic because it is often allocated late in the year and without allowance to be completed during the next financial year, making it hard to complete the objectives.

Consultation participants said the 10% allocated for administrative costs is not enough.

Small organizations have the additional burden of not having the human resources to spend time applying for funding nor knowing where to go for funding because their network is not as extensive as those of larger organizations.

It was noted that many English-speaking community organizations do not have access to PSOC funding (Programme soutien aux organismes communautaires) because of the funding criteria. As the largest source of government funding, this puts many English-speaking community organizations and the clientele that



they serve at a disadvantage. Many participants recounted examples where PSOC-funded organizations were unable to provide services in English to individuals who would have otherwise have benefitted from such services.

Some English-speaking community organizations are not aware of government funding structures and programs and many have difficulty navigating government departments and agencies. English-speaking community organizations are not always present at the levels where funding is discussed (e.g.: local tables); at times because of their limited ability to speak French and at times because of lack of human resources and the distances needed to travel to participate.

Some do not understand the funding structure and funding requirements. There were some specific examples given of organizations that did not realize, until recently, that they needed to be a non-profit to qualify for funding. Lastly, consultation participants said that their limited capacity to work in French means they don't fully understand the funding structures.

A limited capacity to work in French also means that writing grant applications in French takes more time and often costs more (translation time and costs, or precious volunteer time). Some participants expressed confusion about whether they are required to submit grant applications in French and expressed concern that an application submitted in English would be rejected. Examples of government departments refusing to accept an application written in English were shared by participants.

Government departments are sometimes unclear and inconsistent with their information about funding programs. Many organizations are confused about where to go for funding, in part because government departments do not always give a clear message about what they will fund. This may be in part because they do not understand the reality of the English-speaking communities and do not know what to do with an organization that covers multi-sectoral issues and diverse population groups. Although examples were given of good relationships with departments within the Government of Québec and English-speaking community organizations, there were also examples of problems. Several focused on an apparent lack of coordination between or within departments; there was a sense that many government departments work in silos and don't communicate with each other. An example was given of an organization being told the funding program no longer existed when an access to Information request showed that it was still in effect.

It was noted that some departments are beginning to send English-speaking community organizations directly to the Secrétariat when it seems clear that they should be the source of funding.

Historical and arts organizations identified a particular challenge they have in securing funding. Their needs, in part, include the need for infrastructure support.

Lastly, the lack of critical mass in terms of population numbers and a differentiated dispersion across Québec means that **English-speaking Quebecers do not fall easily into the majority Francophone map of territories.** This makes it more challenging for the funder because the English-speaking community organization may cover multiple territories or parts of territories with their services.

Involving organizations when writing policies and designing programs would alleviate many of these challenges.

French-language capacity remains a challenge for English-speaking Quebecers

There is a strong desire within the English-speaking communities to increase their capacity to function in French. Consultation participants spoke about their ability, and the ability of their family members and organizational participants, to speak French. They also spoke about how it is not enough. Lack of vocabulary, ease with the language and comfort speaking a second language were identified as barriers.

Access to French language training programs is limited or costly to do privately. There was some confusion about which French-as-a-second-language programs are available to non-immigrant English-speaking Quebecers.

Specific challenges were raised for those seeking to enter the workforce being rejected because of their limited French-language ability. The particular challenges for youth seeking to enter the workforce were raised. There was also concern expressed for older English-speaking adults wanting to improve their French so that they could access services more readily.

Many French-language training service delivery models were suggested, including inexpensive online courses. The idea of having a 'certification' to be able to have the specific vocabulary and to feel comfortable speaking French in specific workplaces was put forward. Several participants clearly pointed out that this is not about assimilation, but about being practical and being able to continue to live in Québec as an English speaker.

The relationship with the Francophone majority is complex

Some participants spoke about the increasingly positive relationships they and their organizations have with individuals in the majority Francophone community. However, there was a deeper and more emotional discussion about feeling not welcomed, not understood, believing they are being seen as 'the enemy' and the feeling of having the contributions of the English-speaking communities, historic and present-day, rejected or minimized. There was a sense that there is not a strong, positive identity for English-speaking communities. People spoke about youth continuing to leave Québec to find jobs elsewhere and suggested that a low sense of belonging may have contributed to that trend.

During the consultations, there was intensive media scrutiny of some of the government's initiatives, such as Bill 40 on school organization and governance and the act respecting the laicity of the State.

Some consultation participants voiced concerns with the direction of public policy, namely the potential for the restriction of access to services in the English language, while other expressed their frustration with Québec's linguistic legislation.

There was a strong desire for the English-speaking communities to be recognized and included in Québec society.

Key Findings - Government

Perceived lack of transparency around federal-provincial funding transfers

Participants expressed concern about federal transfer payments. They spoke about the Canada-Québec Agreement in education and the employment programs currently being transferred to Emploi-Québec.

Many participants asked for transparency about where the Canada-Québec Agreement in education fund is spent.

Participants are looking for a stronger relationship with Emploi-Québec to ensure that the unique realities of the English-speaking communities are taken into account in the design of employment programs.

Participation in the public service needs substantial attention

There was a very strong and clear message that the English-speaking communities want to have more English speakers employed in the public service of Québec.

The low rate of participation in Québec's civil service is an important issue in both symbolic and practical terms. Firstly, the persistent low participation level can contribute to a sense of exclusion. It contributes to the perception of youth that the government is not intended for them. The absence of English-speaking Quebecers in the Québec civil service has an impact on employment for the English-speaking communities. It also means there are few people who can make the English-speaking communities aware about government. Lastly, hiring English-speaking Quebecers could contribute to the general awareness about the English-speaking communities within government.

Key Findings - Secrétariat

Bridge building and strengthening community-government relations

Consultation participants would like to have stronger and more stable relationships with departments in the government; with those departments taking more responsibility to engage with the English-speaking communities.

They would like to see the Secrétariat build more bridges between the English-speaking community organizations/institutions and the Government of Québec. The goal is for the English-speaking community organizations/institutions to become partners with government, no longer needing bridges involving the Secrétariat.

Many examples were given of how this could be achieved; some informal (ex. luncheon meetings with deputy ministers and community leaders), some formal and some legislated. The idea of a "platform for continued dialogue" between the English-speaking communities' leadership and the government was suggested.

The Secrétariat should be solidified and the funding program expanded

Participants said that the work of the Secrétariat cannot be accomplished with a short-term mandate and that it should be recognized as a permanent entity within government. This involves securing long term funding for its existence.

Participants cited the importance of the Secrétariat's role in the direct funding of English-speaking community organizations. Some participants advocated for much of the funding for English-speaking organizations to be delivered via the Secrétariat. Most recognized the importance of "not creating a parallel government" but rather funding pockets of work that strengthen capacity in the English-speaking communities and/or help it access other government funding through successful piloting of programs, doing evidence-based research, documenting good practice, etc. The role is for the Secrétariat to play a (not THE) role in direct funding of English-speaking community organizations.

Participants spoke about the positive impact that current Secrétariat funding is having on the ground, particularly in the areas of capacity building for English-speaking community organizations and access to information and services for English speakers.

There was some interest in having the Secrétariat become more regionally accessible.

Participants re-iterated the importance of the Secrétariat sharing research and statistical data.

Findings by Sector

There were a number of other important findings that can be grouped by sectors that mirror government departments. They are shared below in the approximate order of the frequency that issues were raised, by how many different participants / organizations raised each topic, and by how strongly each topic was spoken about. The specific findings about population groups (e.g.: youth, seniors) are documented within the findings by sectors.

Health and Social Services

There was an overarching concern about access to health and social services (which have already been elaborated on in the key findings). Additionally, there was a specific concern, noted throughout the consultation sessions, about the lack of access to **mental health services** and the need for these services to be available in a transversal way: within community organizations, schools, through the arts, etc.

The challenges for **isolated seniors** were also raised specifically. The important role that Wellness Centres are beginning to play in improving the situation of isolated English-speaking seniors was mentioned frequently and the attendant desire to identify a funding source for this cost-effective solution. ITMAV funding was identified as an excellent program for reaching seniors but needing some changes in the criteria to meet the needs of English-speaking communities.

There was a strong desire to have language testing exemptions for staff whose sole function would be to service English-speaking Quebecers (e.g.: school social workers, personal care attendants, etc.).

Education

Participants expressed pride in their schools and school boards. Numerous examples were given of the exemplary achievements of the English-language school system, including high rates of graduation. Some voiced their apprehension about the impact of Bill 40. They felt that there was a lack of appreciation for the role of school boards within a minority context.

The inability to hire staff is a serious challenge. Teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers and educational technician positions are not filled in a timely manner. This has a serious impact on the ability to provide a comprehensive education for English-speaking children.

Community Learning Centres (CLCs) were identified as playing an important role within communities but in a fragile state because of their funding needs.

There are many challenges with transportation. Some students spend hours commuting to school on a daily basis because of the vast territory a school covers. Covering the cost of staff travelling to satellite facilities and board members coming together for a meeting is expensive in the rural and prohibitive in isolated regions. Distance education and online meetings are part of the solution but require high speed internet. Examples of high levels of success and reaching many people with distance education programs were shared.



Changes are desired in curriculum; particularly in how the history of Québec is taught. Participants want to see the contribution of the English-speaking communities included in the curriculum.

There is also a desire to have students graduate with stronger abilities and greater ease speaking French. There is a specific need for more French-language training in vocational programs.

All this is needed to prepare English-speaking youth better for work in Québec in French.

Other areas spoken about include:

- Flexibility needed in the funding formula.
- Students leaving the regions to access post-secondary education because there are no post-secondary options locally (even online) and they are not comfortable learning in French.
- There are a limited number of cultural trips paid for by the Ministère de l'Éducation and there are limitations on the cultural experiences that qualify. This also adversely affects English cultural institutions who don't qualify as cultural trip destinations by schools.
- Wanting to see the 'Special Measures' become more permanent.
- Concerns about how post-secondary funds are being deployed for the English-language sector.
- A small but significant reality from the Magdalen Islands was highlighted. Youth, as young as 13, are leaving school to work in the fishing industry.
- The desire to have the English-speaking community recognized as a 'region' in education, particularly in terms of planning professional training courses.

Municipalities

Some municipalities have limited capacity of staff and/or elected officials to work in French. This raises challenges when receiving directives from the government and in trying to access training programs. Consultation participants also spoke about the difficulty of applying in French for project funds.

In other municipalities there is a desire to provide municipal information in English but often the capacity to do so is lacking. As a result, English-speaking residents are under-informed.

Lastly, consultation participants spoke about their desire to collaborate more amongst themselves as municipalities that work in English.

Employment

There are high levels of unemployment among English-speaking Quebecers. A "brain-drain" has been documented. There are specific challenges to keeping English-speaking youth in Québec.

Emploi-Québec is often seen as unresponsive to the needs and concerns of English-speaking Quebecers. There is a desire to work more with Francophone businesses to create employment opportunities. Several successful examples were given.

Promoting bilingualism among English-speaking Quebecers, encouraging entrepreneurship, looking at the social economy, and ensuring that funds for employment training are successfully transferred to English organizations were all suggestions made by consultation participants. There is a desire for the Secrétariat to become more active in supporting strategies for increased employment in the English-speaking communities.

The lack of employment for English speakers in government, as well as the lack of government offices in remote regions, reduces the job opportunities for English-speaking Quebecers. On a positive note, the Center for Technology Transfer (Lower North Shore) is promising practice for job creation.

Community sector

The unique needs and realities of “minorities within a minority” English-speaking communities requires specific approaches. In particular, the consultation heard about how the history and context of the English-speaking Black community requires acknowledgement and community development initiatives specific to that community. Similarly, the needs of English-speaking Quebecers in the LGBTQ + community require greater attention.

There was a reminder to recognize and work more fully with diversity within the English-speaking communities and recognize them as communities in the plural rather than as a single entity.

There was a sense that the English-speaking community organizations find themselves stronger than in the past but still in need of capacity building:

- It is difficult to fill staff positions in English-speaking organizations, often because of funding realities (short-term, part time, low paid jobs mostly without benefits).
- They cover large territories with multiple involvements but mostly with small infrastructures.
- Many of the leaders in English-speaking organizations are approaching retirement age. Succession training is needed.
- It appears to be increasingly difficult to find volunteers (in particular for several historical organizations). This may be due to a lack of critical mass.

Consultation participants said there is some work to do with coordination within the organizations of the English-speaking communities. There was some concern raised from local and regional organizations that they don't feel well connected to some sector organizations or that the sectoral organizations are not working for their needs. There was a desire to organize and network more among the English-speaking community organizations.

Arts & culture, heritage and communications

Funding and building capacity to meet accreditation standards and to access further funding is needed to preserve English-speaking communities' heritage. Stronger relationships need to be built with civil servants across different departments. Participants shared concerns about the difficulties in working with Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the Régie du bâtiment du Québec to find the correct balance between preserving the built heritage while respecting modern building codes.

The English-speaking communities require resources to provide culture, in Montreal by developing new institutions and renovating existing theatre arts infrastructure, and beyond Montreal by offering cultural arts programs in English in all of the regions. The arts can work with other sectors such as health and social services and education and across population groups. Amateur theatre should be more fully recognized for its contribution to communities.

Several consultation participants noted the continuing loss of institutions; in some communities the school is the only English institution left. Many institutions require French-language skills to sit on the board of directors. This has led to boards of directors of historically Anglophone institutions being dominated by Francophones; therefore not necessarily representing the needs of the English-speaking communities. There was a plea to save what the communities have.



The important role of print media for the English-speaking communities was raised at several consultations. Community organizations spoke about its significance for information sharing and community building, particularly for older adults who do not access the internet. Numerous suggestions were made for preserving print media. The legal incorporation of many English newspapers (private) was identified as an impediment to the support being undertaken by the government to support (non-profit) newspapers.

The importance of having high speed internet throughout all regions of Québec was raised; specifically to support the capacity to offer online training.

Research

Participants spoke about the need for statistics to assist with the planning and delivery of programs and services. They requested that the Secrétariat continue to disseminate research information. They would like to see the promotion of measures that encourage English-speaking community members with an interest in research to see the English-speaking communities as a promising area to work in.

Research needs were also identified. Most importantly: research on the trajectory of post-secondary graduates and statistics on the number of English-speaking Quebecers in the judicial system.

Justice

It is essential to have access to justice in English. The need for statistical data on English-speaking Quebecers in courts and justice bodies was highlighted as a first important step in this work.

Special measures

There was a request for special measures for the North Shore, in particular for the Lower North Shore due to its isolation and its institutional and socio-economic challenges. During the consultation the Government of Québec announced specific funding for the Outaouais region. Incentives to encourage English-speaking Quebecers to move back to isolated regions were identified.

Findings on the Mandate, Orientations and Priorities for the Secrétariat

There was support for the current mandate of the Secrétariat. This was a specific focus of the day-long sectoral consultation.

Consultation participants identified the following activities as key priorities and orientations for the Secrétariat:

The top four orientations and priorities that were identified are presented as follows.

Build bridges between the English-speaking community organizations and Government of Québec

To have the Secrétariat create opportunities for English-speaking community organizations to interact with government officials directly. These opportunities could help dispel myths and build bridges.

The idea of a “platform for continued dialogue” between the leadership of English-speaking communities and government was suggested. The goal is for the English-speaking community organizations to become partners with government, no longer needing bridges involving the Secrétariat.

Build capacity of English-speaking community organizations to help them understand, navigate and secure funding (particularly for non-profits)

It was suggested that this work could include having a database or newsletter on funding sources as well as pro-actively informing organizations about new funding sources.

Play a (not THE) role in direct funding of the English-speaking communities

Some participants advocated for much of the funding for English-speaking organizations to be delivered via the Secrétariat. Many recognized the importance of “*not creating a parallel government*” but rather funding pockets of work that strengthen capacity in the English-speaking communities and/or help the English-speaking community organizations access other government funding through successful piloting of programs, doing evidence-based research, documenting good practice, etc.

Sensitize, educate and advise other government departments about the realities and needs of the English-speaking communities

Some key messages consultation participants would like to see transmitted include:

- The changed reality of what an English-speaking Quebecer is (myth breaking, give statistics and stories).
- Providing data on different realities in each region and sub-region.
- Advising departments on the obstacles that English-speaking communities face in their efforts to access programs and services.

There was a specific request for the Secrétariat to be more engaged with the Ministère de l'Éducation. There was support for the work being done on community action via the *Plan d'action gouvernemental en matière d'action communautaire*.

Other findings regarding the Secrétariat

In addition to the four key findings regarding the role of the Secrétariat, participants also identified a need to continue building awareness on the role and mandate of the Secrétariat. This covers both inside and outside government, specifically,

- **with English-speaking community organizations** - To explain what the Secrétariat could and should do within its mandate and size, to share the work it does (beyond funding), and to let the English-speaking communities know of its successes, and
- **with Government of Québec departments** - Reminding departments that the Secrétariat is not the “go to” funding source for everything in English. Share information on the work being done by the Secrétariat.



Participants saw the need for the Secrétariat over the long term and would like to see long term funding to ensure that the Secrétariat can continue to support the development of good relationships between English-speaking community organizations and institutions and the Government of Québec.

Consultation participants also wished to see a continuing role for the Secrétariat in sharing research results and statistical data and sharing information on transfers from the federal government to the Government of Québec.

Other items identified that have not already been specifically mentioned in this report:

- **Staying connected with the English-speaking communities** to ensure the views and needs of English-speaking communities are reflected in government policies and programs and to show us the work being done by the Secrétariat. This includes suggestions to come out to the regions to meet with organizations and to have more direct relationships with formal structures in the English-speaking communities (e.g.: Health and Social Services Regional Access Committees).
- **Promoting the English-speaking communities within Québec.** Work to create a more inclusive society by promoting dialogue between English and French in Québec via culture and making Quebecers aware of English-speaking contributions to Québec through the means the Secrétariat has (Website, etc.).
- **"Bringing diversity into the room"**. Reach out to all facets of the English-speaking communities (i.e.: Black, immigrant communities, etc.).

Priority Measures and Needs Identified by Participants

One of the consultation objectives was to identify tangible measures that could be considered by the Secrétariat and the Government of Québec to improve the situation of English speaking Quebecers. This section summarizes what participants said in this regard.

Accessing Services

Measures to improve access to services in English:

- The public service should view bilingualism as an asset.
- More training in English is offered to government staff.
- The requirement to speak some English is put in job descriptions for jobs that require contact with the English-speaking communities.
- More on-line training is offered to help people become fully certified (teachers, social workers, special education technicians, etc.).

Giving exceptions to requiring French certification in specific situations:

- Standards for French competency should be considered in light of specific environments/clientele (e.g.: a social worker in a school, a speech therapist).
- Institutions which do not have official bilingual status should be allowed to give placements to McGill students.

Support measures to assist with navigating the government system:

- Providing accessible signage in health and social service institutions, health information documents in English and information sheets on medications in English.
- Basic information about municipal services be provided in English.
- The Patient Navigator program be expanded. This program provides bilingual staff, hired by community organizations, to help unilingual English speakers navigate the health system. It currently exists in Québec City and serves populations in eastern Québec.
- The position of Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for access to health services should be created.

Funding Needs

Community Learning Centres, Senior Wellness Centres, mental health programs, building renovation projects, funding for historical societies and museums, special funds for the Lower North Shore (including access to the Gas Tax Fund), more access to the PSOC (Programme soutien aux organismes communautaires), adapted ITMAV funding, programs for adults aged 21 and over with special needs, LGBTQ+ support services, and other region-or organization-specific funding.

- Access to core funding. Flexibility in programs needed to improve access (numbers, length, language of grant submission or funding for translation). Clarifying when grants must be submitted in French.
- Building a bridge for English-speaking employment programs to work with Emploi-Québec.

Increasing French-language capacity through access to French-as-a-second-language courses at no or reasonable cost and with a priority given to workplace French.

Improving the relationship with the Francophone majority by highlighting the English-speaking communities' contributions to Québec through:

- Sharing "how our bilingualism is a huge asset we bring".
- Making changes to the high school history curriculum.
- Promoting dialogue between English and French via culture.
- Having the Secrétariat promote the English-speaking communities within Québec with the long term goal of creating an inclusive society.

Federal-provincial funding transparency through sharing information on transfer payments (Youth employment programs transferred to Emploi-Québec, federal transfer payments for education).

Participation in the public service through hiring from the English-speaking communities.





CONCLUSION

This wide-ranging consultation with organizations and institutions of the English-speaking communities of Québec highlighted the need for enhanced access to services for English speakers, funding for community services that is reflective of the reality of English-speaking communities, and a desire among the English-speaking communities to not only stay in Québec but to fully participate in Québec society, through employment, the arts and community life.

There is a strong desire for English speakers to be hired by the Québec public service. There is also a desire that the Government of Québec be more transparent about federal-provincial funding transfers.

There was support given for the mandate of the Secrétariat. Orientations and priorities were identified. Participants spoke of the need to build bridges and enhance knowledge between and with English-speaking organizations and the Government of Québec. Long term funding for the Secrétariat, including funds to respond to specific needs of English-speaking organizations, was seen as important.

There is a desire for an ongoing relationship between the Secrétariat and the English-speaking organizations and institutions.

As a builder of bridges, the Secrétariat has already begun implementing findings from the consultation. Bilateral briefings of key departments on the consultation results are being organized. Input is being provided towards the *Plan d'action gouvernementale sur l'action communautaire* (MTESS). Measures are being developed for consideration in the 2020 budget. Participation in the Conférences administratives régionales will build awareness of the Secrétariat and of the English-speaking communities.

The Secrétariat has committed to informing and updating the English-speaking community organizations and institutions on its work moving forward. This will be done through meetings and via the website.





APPENDICES

Annex 1 Consultation Sessions — location and participation

2019 Consultation Sessions

Date	Regions	Location	Organizations	Participants
2019-09-05	Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	New Carlisle	23	24
2019-09-27	Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Côte-Nord, Mauricie, Centre-du-Québec	Québec	17	19
2019-10-07	Montérégie	Saint-Lambert	20	24
2019-10-16	Laval, Lanaudière, Laurentides	Laval	12	23
2019-10-17	RTS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, RTS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, RTS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	Montréal	21	26
2019-10-18	RTS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, RTS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	Pointe-Claire	15	20
2019-10-25	Estrie	Sherbrooke	20	24
2019-11-01	Outaouais, Abitibi-Témiscamingue	Gatineau	17	28
2019-11-08	Other regions	Online	10	16
2019-11-15	Intersectoral	Québec	34	40
2019-12-06	Validation session	Online	56	62

Note : Overall, there were 306 participants (or 212 individuals) in the eleven consultation sessions. Some individuals participated in more than one session and some organizations had more than one participant at various sessions. In all, 142 different organizations participated in the consultations.

Annex 2 Participants by Sector of Activity and Region

Participants by Sector

Sector	Org.	Participants
Community development	44	127
Education	20	27
Health and social services	39	70
Culture and communications	6	22
Government	21	42
Economy	11	16
Research and policy	1	2
Total	142	306

Participants by Region

Sector	Org.	Participants
RTS du Bas-Saint-Laurent	1	3
RTS de la Capitale-Nationale	10	21
RTS de la Mauricie-et-du-Centre-du-Québec	1	4
RTS de l'Estrie – CHU de Sherbrooke	18	28
RTS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	8	10
RTS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	15	51
RTS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	9	17
RTS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	4	4
RTS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal	4	7
RTS de l'Outaouais	14	20
RTS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue	1	10
RTS de la Côte-Nord	7	22
RTS de Laval	17	26
RTS de la Montérégie-Ouest	3	5
RTS de la Montérégie-Centre	1	3
RTS de la Gaspésie	5	17

Sector	Org.	Participants
RTS de la Montérégie-Est	2	8
RTS des Îles	4	9
RTS des Laurentides	11	17
RTS de Chaudière-Appalaches	3	4
RTS de Lanaudière	4	20
Total	142	306

The RTS is a territorial network of services in the health and social services sector.

Annex 3 Consultation Questions

Topic 1 – Development and role of institutions, associations and community networks

- Are English-speaking communities, through their institutions, associations and networks, in a sufficiently strong position to successfully meet the challenges and/or opportunities that exist in your region/sector of activity?
- Can you provide any examples of successful initiatives or strategies implemented by communities to specifically serve the interests of the English-speaking communities in your region/sector?
- How can institutions, associations and community networks react more effectively to the challenges and opportunities that may be available in your region/sector?

Topic 2 – Policies, programs and services of the Government of Québec

- Are the Government of Québec's existing policies, programs and services properly adapted to the situation and challenges facing the English-speaking population in your region/sector?
- Can you provide any examples of successful initiatives or approaches that government or public institutions have introduced to deal with the specific situation of English-speaking communities in your region/sector?
- Can you suggest any specific ways in which the government approach could be adapted to respond more effectively to the needs and challenges of English-speaking communities in your region/sector?

Topic 3 – Orientations and priorities of the Secrétariat

- In pursuing its mission, to what extent should the Secrétariat focus on your own region/sector?
- Are there any particular approaches in your region or sector, or ways to encourage organizations to work together or with the government that could be applied in other regions/sectors?
- Are there any possibilities for inter-departmental or inter-governmental actions that the Secrétariat should explore with respect to your region or sector?

Note : For the Sectoral consultation participants were asked to speak more specifically about partnerships.

