



Building Leadership in Rural Quebec Project **Toolkit**

A **practical** resource for groups, organizations,
and communities implementing projects
in isolated minority language communities

by Lise Palmer

Prepared for the Quebec Community Groups Network
Financial Assistance was provided by the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada



The Regional Association of
West Quebecers



**QC
GN** Quebec
Community
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Network



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Introduction

Welcome! This toolkit was created following an inspiring pilot project in which twenty-five young women - across three different rural English-speaking communities in Quebec - made a difference in their communities. At the same time, they developed their leadership skills, revitalized relationships, learned how to effect change and mobilize others, enhanced their networks, and developed confidence in themselves and each other. This toolkit contains our stories, successes, and lessons learned. It also contains samples and copies of reports, funding applications, press releases, and other tools that we hope will be useful to you in your community and leadership development efforts.

This toolkit is aimed at:

- ➔ linguistic minorities interested in best practices for rural community development
- ➔ individuals or groups who would like help developing their rural communities
- ➔ young women wishing to develop their leadership or community development skills
- ➔ community organizers, project coordinators, and other professionals

The pilot project this toolkit was based upon, and the toolkit itself, would not have been possible without dynamic and enthusiastic collaboration between multiple partners. The Quebec Community Groups Network would like to extend its gratitude and recognition to Peter MacGibbon and the Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (“3ci”), Paule Langevin and the Community Learning Centres (“CLC”) Network, consultants Lise Palmer and Brenda Rooney, Heather Stronach of the Regional Association of West Quebecers (“RAWQ”), Michelle Gagnon of the CLC-St John’s, Maria Chatterton and Cathy Brown of the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (“CASA”), and Ana Osborne, Melody Strickland, and Marie Anderson of the CLC-Netagamiou. It also appreciates and acknowledges the funding provided by Status of Women, Canada.

For further information, please see the contact information listed on the last page.

Introduction

Bienvenue! Cette trousse à outils fut créée à la suite d'un projet pilote inspirant dans le cadre duquel 25 jeunes femmes, de trois différentes communautés rurales d'expression anglaise du Québec, ont joué un rôle déterminant dans leurs communautés. La participation de ces femmes au projet leur a aussi permis de perfectionner leurs compétences en leadership, de cultiver leurs relations, d'apprendre comment effectuer des changements et mobiliser les autres, d'élargir leurs réseaux, ainsi que de bâtir leur confiance en elles-mêmes et en leurs pairs. Cette trousse à outils contient nos histoires, nos succès et les leçons que nous avons retenues. Elle contient également des échantillons et des copies de rapports, de demandes de financement, de communiqués de presse et autres outils qui, nous l'espérons, vous seront utiles dans votre communauté et dans vos efforts de perfectionnement du leadership.

Cette trousse à outils est destinée :

- aux minorités linguistiques intéressées par les pratiques exemplaires du développement des communautés rurales;
- aux personnes ou aux groupes qui aimeraient contribuer à développer leurs communautés rurales;
- aux jeunes femmes qui aimeraient perfectionner leurs compétences en leadership et en développement communautaire;
- aux animateurs communautaires, aux coordonnateurs de projets et aux autres professionnels.

L'élaboration de la trousse à outils et la réalisation du projet pilote sur lequel elle est basée n'auraient pas été possibles sans la collaboration dynamique et enthousiaste de nombreux partenaires. Le Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) voudrait exprimer sa gratitude et sa reconnaissance à Peter MacGibbon et au Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (3ci), à Paule Langevin et au réseau des centres d'apprentissage communautaire, aux conseillères Lise Palmer et Brenda Rooney, à Heather Stronach de la Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ), à Michelle Gagnon du centre d'apprentissage communautaire de St. John's, à Maria Chatterton et Cathy Brown du Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), ainsi qu'à Ana Osborne, Melody

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Strickland et Marie Anderson du centre d'apprentissage communautaire de Netagamiou. Nous tenons également à témoigner notre reconnaissance à Condition féminine Canada pour le financement fourni.

Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements, veuillez prendre connaissance des coordonnées figurant à la dernière page.

Message from the Director General

"We must be the change we wish to see." M.K. Gandhi

At the QCGN we work on many projects in a year that contribute in some direct or indirect manner to the vitality of the English-speaking Quebec. But this project was different in that we all felt it could be the beginning of something quite essential to the sustainability of our communities – active involvement of women. From the outset Lise Palmer and Brenda Rooney, the two consultants hired to coordinate the project, demonstrated the excitement and savoir-faire that we knew would produce a winner. I also had a personal interest in the project because of the subject matter.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to work on issues related to gender and race and indeed some of the most personally satisfying activities had to do with the change that occurs when women take on new challenges – whether it be opting for working in non-traditional sectors, asserting models of collaboration rather competition in their environment, or simply taking steps to making women's leadership visible. I believe that as Quebecers, living, learning and working in a minority language situation we must ensure that we take every opportunity to actively make our voices heard and play our roles in sustaining a vital English-speaking Community.

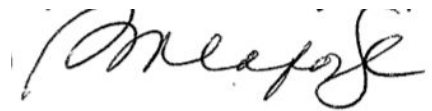
This project regrouped an impressive mix of collaborators: 28 young women across three geographical areas; teams of participants collaborating in each location; twenty-one women acting as mentors; and countless community members participating directly or indirectly in the projects through donations, volunteering and many other forms of support. All this effort and support ensured that results of the project could be implemented provincially, while being effective locally.

I can tell you that we at the QCGN are proud to have been associated with this project and the

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people who have made it happen. I sincerely hope that the results of the project will bring about more innovative strategies for our English-speaking communities.

Thank you to all of those who made this project a success!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Martin-Laforge', written in a cursive style.

SYLVIA MARTIN-LAFORGE,

Director General, Quebec Community Groups Network

Mot de la directrice générale

« *Vous devez être le changement que vous voulez voir dans ce monde.* » M.K. Gandhi

Au cours d'une année, le Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) travaille sur de nombreux projets qui contribuent directement ou indirectement à assurer la vitalité des collectivités d'expression anglaise du Québec. Ce projet était toutefois différent des autres puisque nous avons tous cru qu'il pouvait donner naissance à un mouvement particulièrement essentiel à la durabilité des collectivités : la participation active des femmes. Dès le début, Lise Palmer et Brenda Rooney, deux consultantes embauchées pour coordonner le projet, ont démontré un enthousiasme et un savoir-faire propices à la réussite du projet. De plus, je m'intéressais personnellement au projet en raison de son sujet.

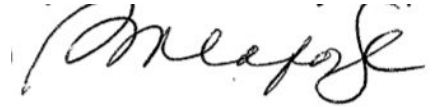
Au fil des ans, j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler sur des dossiers portant sur l'origine ethnique et sur le statut de la femme. Et certaines des activités les plus gratifiantes étaient liées aux changements qui se produisent lorsque des femmes relèvent de nouveaux défis, comme travailler dans des secteurs non traditionnels, défendre, dans leur milieu, des modèles de collaboration plutôt que de compétition ou simplement prendre des mesures afin d'augmenter la visibilité du leadership des femmes. Je crois qu'en tant que Québécoises qui vivent, apprennent et travaillent dans un contexte linguistique minoritaire, nous devons nous assurer de profiter de toutes les occasions de nous faire entendre et de contribuer à assurer la vitalité des collectivités d'expression anglaise.

Ce projet a réuni un impressionnant éventail de collaborateurs : 28 jeunes femmes provenant de trois régions géographiques, des équipes de participants à chaque endroit, 21 femmes jouant un rôle de mentor et d'innombrables membres des collectivités qui ont participé directement ou indirectement en offrant du temps, des dons ou d'autres formes de soutien. Grâce à ces efforts et à ce soutien, les résultats du projet pourront être mis en œuvre à la grandeur de la province tout en étant appropriés à l'échelle locale.

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L'équipe du QCGN est fière d'avoir participé à ce projet et d'avoir collaboré avec les personnes qui ont permis sa réalisation. J'espère sincèrement que les résultats du projet entraîneront l'élaboration d'autres stratégies novatrices pour les collectivités d'expression anglaise.

Merci à tous ceux qui ont contribué à la réussite de ce projet!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Martin-Laforge', written in a cursive style.

SYLVIA MARTIN-LAFORGE

Directrice générale, Quebec Community Groups Network

Executive Summary

Quebec's English-speaking communities face multiple types of isolation. Young women in these communities who are emerging as new leaders experience unique challenges that many conventionally designed projects fail to effectively address. Supporting the growth of these young women while contributing to effective community development in the official language minority context is a complex task. In particular, it is challenging to design projects that are structured enough for widespread delivery and efficient implementation, but flexible enough to be relevant across different communities with their unique needs. In Quebec's English-speaking communities, with its diverse challenges, isolated rural communities, and lack of cohesion, finding the balance between structure and flexibility is difficult, to say the least.

In March 2009, the Quebec Community Groups Network ("QCGN") attempted to create a project specifically for the context of Quebec's English-speaking communities that could be implemented provincially, while being effective locally. They did so by allowing each location to adapt the project to their own unique needs. It could not have been done without the collaboration of provincial and regional partners who worked together in innovative, collaborative, and creative ways to tackle these issues. The goal was not only to contribute to change, but also to carefully document and reflect upon the process we experienced, in order to learn from this project and contribute to best practices, hopefully allowing others to benefit from this initiative.

With the goals of fostering inclusion, empowerment, network development, and skill-building for young women, the program design was constantly adapted to fit emerging needs. The result was a flexible design incorporating three tiers of learning:

1. Experiential learning

At each site, participants were supported in choosing a real project to design and carry out in their community as a group. This experience would provide a real-life application for the leadership skills they were acquiring.

2. Skill-building workshops

Nine skill-building workshops were provided to participants that were relevant to challenges they were facing at that time in carrying out their community projects. Topics were adapted to site-specific needs, and were interactive. Workshops focused on fostering leadership skills and abilities

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by looking at the concept of leadership, understanding group dynamics, dealing with interpersonal conflict, and learning to assess and celebrate ourselves. They also addressed community development skills such as event planning and proposal writing.

3. Coaching and mentoring

Each participant had access to one-on-one coaching, and also received support through their site leader, who was also coached. Concurrently, a non-traditional mentoring program was established, firmly rooted in the ideas behind experiential learning. Authentic and informal relationships between young emerging leaders and more experienced community leaders were encouraged and supported through a framework consisting of regular contact, shared investment in a real task, and the provision of multiple access points.

This project involved 28 young women across three areas: the Lower North Shore, the Gaspé, and the Outaouais regions. In each location, eight to ten participants formed a collaborative team, working together to effect change in their communities, while learning about community development, leadership, and group dynamics. 21 women acted as mentors. And countless community members participated directly and indirectly in this project through donations, volunteering, and providing other support.

This toolkit is the result of our documentation and reflection during the process.

Sommaire

Les communautés d'expression anglaise du Québec font certainement face à différents types d'isolement. Les jeunes femmes issues de ces communautés qui deviennent des leaders, doivent répondre à des défis uniques pour lesquels de nombreux projets, conçus à la manière traditionnelle, n'arrivent pas à offrir un soutien efficace. La tâche consistant à favoriser la croissance de ces jeunes femmes tout en contribuant au développement des communautés en situation linguistique minoritaire est complexe. En particulier, il est difficile d'élaborer des projets qui sont à la fois assez structurés pour être réalisés à grande échelle et être mis en œuvre de façon efficiente, mais qui demeurent assez souples pour être pertinents pour les différentes communautés aux besoins uniques et variés. Au sein des communautés d'expression anglaise du Québec, qui doivent relever divers défis, comptent des communautés rurales isolées et qui manquent de cohésion, l'équilibre entre la structure et la souplesse est difficile à trouver, c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire.

En mars 2009, le Quebec Community Groups Network a tenté de créer un projet en s'adressant précisément aux communautés d'expression anglaise du Québec, qui serait mis en œuvre à l'échelle provinciale, mais qui s'appliquerait aussi à l'échelle locale. Pour ce faire, l'organisme a permis à chaque communauté d'adapter le projet à ses besoins spécifiques. Ce projet n'aurait pas pu se concrétiser sans la collaboration des partenaires de la province et des régions, qui ont travaillé ensemble de façon novatrice et créative pour s'attaquer à ces problèmes. L'objectif visé était de non seulement participer au changement, mais également de documenter avec soin les processus et d'y réfléchir, afin d'en tirer des leçons et de contribuer à l'établissement de pratiques exemplaires, en espérant que d'autres bénéficieront de cette initiative.

Étant donné l'objectif de favoriser l'inclusion, le sentiment de fierté et d'accomplissement, de même que les aptitudes en réseautage et l'acquisition de compétences chez les jeunes femmes, la conception du programme fut constamment adaptée pour répondre aux besoins émergents. Le programme final est donc souple et comprend trois volets d'apprentissage.

1. Apprentissage par l'expérience

Dans chaque communauté, les participantes ont été encouragées à choisir un vrai projet à élaborer et à réaliser en groupe. Cette expérience leur a permis de mettre en application les compétences en leadership qu'elles perfectionnaient.

2. Ateliers d'acquisition de compétences

Neuf ateliers d'acquisition de compétences furent offerts aux participantes relativement aux défis auxquels elles étaient confrontées à cette étape de la réalisation de leurs projets communautaires. Les sujets ont été adaptés aux besoins précis des communautés et formulés de façon interactive. Les ateliers, axés sur le développement de compétences et d'aptitudes en leadership, ont permis aux participantes de se pencher sur le concept de leadership, de comprendre les dynamiques de groupe, de gérer des conflits interpersonnels et d'apprendre à évaluer leur rendement et à reconnaître leurs forces. Les ateliers permettaient également de s'attaquer au perfectionnement de compétences communautaires, comme la planification d'événements et la rédaction de propositions.

3. Encadrement et mentorat

Chaque participante a eu accès à de l'encadrement individuel et a reçu du soutien du leader de sa communauté, qui était également encadré. De plus, un programme de mentorat non traditionnel, dont l'apprentissage par l'expérience constitue le fondement, fut établi. Les relations authentiques et informelles entre les jeunes leaders émergentes et les leaders d'expérience des communautés ont été favorisées par le biais de rencontres régulières, d'une implication partagée dans l'accomplissement d'un projet sur le terrain, et de l'établissement de nombreux points d'accès.

Au total, 28 jeunes femmes de trois régions (Basse-Côte-Nord, Gaspésie et Outaouais) ont participé au projet, dont 21 agissaient à titre de mentors. Dans chaque région, huit à dix participantes se sont rassemblées pour faire équipe et ont travaillé à effectuer des changements dans leurs communautés, tout en enrichissant leurs connaissances du développement communautaire, du leadership et des dynamiques de groupe. De nombreux membres des communautés interpellées ont participé directement et indirectement à ce projet en faisant des dons ou du bénévolat, ou en fournissant d'autres types de soutien.

Cette trousse à outils est le résultat de notre réflexion et s'inspire des documents que nous avons rassemblés au cours du processus.

Section 1 : overview

our story | how to use this toolkit | sources of additional support

Our story

From March to October 2009, the Quebec Community Groups Network worked with provincial and regional partners in innovative, collaborative, and creative ways to enhance the participation and inclusion of isolated young English-speaking women. The goal was not only to contribute to change, but also to carefully document and reflect upon the process we experienced, in order to learn from this project and contribute to best practices, hopefully allowing others to benefit from this initiative.

With the goals of fostering inclusion, empowerment, network development, and skill-building for young women, the program design was constantly adapted to fit emerging needs. Initially, the project was designed by the QCGN and financial support was secured by Status of Women Canada. With the input from the Carleton Centre for Community Innovation and consultant Brenda Rooney, the design was altered to be more flexible and adaptable to the differing needs in each community. This flexibility in design remained a feature throughout this project. The result incorporated three tiers of learning:

1. Experiential learning

At each site, participants were supported in choosing a real project to design and carry out in their community as a group. This experience would provide a real-life application for the leadership skills they were acquiring.

2. Skill-building workshops

Nine skill-building workshops were provided to participants that were relevant to challenges they were facing at that time in carrying out their community projects. Topics were adapted to site-specific needs, and were interactive. Workshops focused on fostering leadership skills and abilities by looking at the concept of leadership, understanding group dynamics, dealing with interpersonal conflict, and learning to assess and celebrate ourselves. They also addressed community development skills such as event planning and proposal writing.

3. Coaching and mentoring

Each participant had access to one-on-one coaching, and also received support through their site leader, who was also coached. Concurrently, a non-traditional mentoring program was established, firmly rooted in the ideas behind experiential learning. Authentic and informal relationships between young emerging leaders and more experienced community leaders were encouraged and sup-

ported through a framework consisting of regular contact, shared investment in a real task, and the provision of multiple access points.

This project involved 28 young women across three areas: the Lower North Shore, the Gaspé, and the Outaouais regions. In each location, eight to ten participants formed a collaborative team, working together to effect change in their communities, while learning about community development, leadership, and group dynamics. 21 women acted as mentors. And countless community members participated directly and indirectly in this project through donations, volunteering, and providing other support.

The following organizations played key partnership roles in the project:

- ▶ **Quebec Community Groups Network (“QCGN”)**: lead partner
- ▶ **Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (“3ci”)**: design support, project evaluation
- ▶ **Community Learning Centres Network (“CLC Network”)**: access to video-conferencing equipment
- ▶ **Regional Association of West Quebecers (“RAWQ”)**: regional partner - Outaouais region
- ▶ **CLC-St. John’s**: regional partner - Outaouais region
- ▶ **Committee for Anglophone Social Action (“CASA”)**: regional partner - Gaspé region
- ▶ **CLC-Netagamiou**: regional partner - Lower North Shore region
- ▶ **Lise Palmer**: lead consultant
- ▶ **Brenda Rooney**: consultant

project timeline

date	activity	those involved
January 2009	grant application submitted to Status of Women Canada	Quebec Community Groups Network (“QCGN”)
March 2009	The QCGN advised that the funding proposal was accepted	QCGN
March 2009	Following input from 3ci and Brenda Rooney, the project design was altered to provide greater agency for each site, a more flexible project delivery structure, and a move towards “informal” mentorship	Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (“3ci”) Brenda Rooney - consultant Lise Palmer - consultant QCGN

date	activity	those involved
April 2009	Planning; Establishment of regional partnerships; Community outreach	as above, plus: CASA CLC-Netagamiou CLC Network CLC-St. John's RAWQ
May - June 2009	Site visits with orientation sessions facilitated by consultants, during which participants and community members selected a community initiative for the young women to take on. Information provided about the project; Training workshops begin	all partners and participants
July - September 2009	Training workshop every second week for most of this period; Coaching support as needed; Mentor support as needed; Community initiatives are planned, implemented, and evaluated, ending in a community celebration	all partners and participants
October 2009	Participants and partners reflect on the process and evaluate the project	all partners and participants

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is based upon our experiences developing the leadership of young English-speaking women in isolated regions of Quebec. We hope it will be useful for those in similar contexts, and it is yet to be seen how generalizable this experience is to that of men, other age groups, linguistic groups, and levels of isolation. It is important to note that the stories and samples included in this toolkit are an offered starting place, to be improved and adapted to your local reality. Not every aspect of our project was a success, and we have attempted to show all sides of our work in a balanced way.

The toolkit can be used from start to finish, to provide you with assistance and concrete resources in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of your own community projects. It can also be used in a piecemeal fashion. If, for example, you already have a project underway and have identified a need for training on event planning, you may find the materials enclosed on event planning useful (*see the relevant workshop module in Section 5*) and you may wish to contact the trainer we used. Or you may need a sample press release that is suitable for a community newspaper (*see Section 3 and a sample press release in the Appendix document*). Whatever your needs are, this toolkit is intended to provide stories, concrete examples, and helpful resources that are applicable to the context of English-speaking Quebec and its unique strengths and challenges.

This toolkit is accompanied by the Appendix document, containing samples of documents and materials that may be useful to you in planning your own projects. We also invite you to download complete workshop modules including the agenda, handouts, and Powerpoint materials we prepared.

This document is organized into six sections, of which you are currently reading Section 1, providing general information to help you get started. You will notice that each and every section begins with a description of our process - what we did, and our experience of that process, including the lessons we learned. In Section 2, assistance is provided with the application process, including how to assess whether your organization or group has the capacity to begin the project in question, and some starting places for funding. It also includes a sample proposal and budget. Section 3 discusses the preparation phase of a project, including how to plan the steps of a project, securing the support of the community, and obtaining participants or volunteers. It includes a sample operational plan, informational pamphlet, and press release, along with educational materials on publicity and planning. Section 4 presents information about orienting participants and communities to a project, including a sample agenda for a community orientation session. The implementation of the project is documented in Section 5, and we have included outlines for nine training workshops, with links to the complete downloadable workshop modules. These materials can be used in your own workshops, or you may contact the facilitators listed, or others, to provide them. Finally, Section 6 provides help in wrapping up a project, from evaluation to celebration.

Sources of additional support

The following organizations are good sources of support in the implementation of your own similar projects. The partners who participated in the making of this toolkit are also willing to provide support and feedback to you; their contact information is listed on the last page.

- ➔ [Quebec Community Groups Network](#) for support on issues facing Quebec's Official Language Minority Community
- ➔ [Quescan's Community Activist Den](#) for concrete tools tailored to Quebec's English-speaking Community needs
- ➔ [The Centre for Community Organizations \("COCO"\)](#) for a range of support directed at Quebec's English-speaking, bilingual, and minority not-for-profit organizations
- ➔ [Map The Money](#) for funding options and ideas for Quebec's not-for-profit community
- ➔ [LEAP program](#) by the Carleton Centre for Community Innovation for training tools and resources
- ➔ [The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute](#) for tools, resources, and research specifically on minority language issues
- ➔ [The Association for Canadian Studies](#) for research on linguistic duality
- ➔ [La Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne \(FCFA\)](#) for information about the challenges faced and solutions used by our Francophone counterparts outside Quebec
- ➔ [The Community Toolbox](#) for a wide range of online community development tools, information, and resources
- ➔ [Brenda Rooney](#) for coaching and consulting on community development, facilitation, film production, and workshops
- ➔ [Lise Palmer](#) for consulting on project design, workshops, leadership development, and organizational development

Section 2: applying

our story | capacity assessment | funding | samples

Our story

The QCGN wished to create a project that would address the needs of young women living in isolated English-speaking communities in Quebec. They also wanted to enhance opportunities for emerging leadership, and to contribute to the community's understanding of best practices. Therefore, *Status of Women Canada* seemed like the ideal funders for such a project.

They began by writing a proposal to *Status of Women Canada* and submitted it, with letters of support. Upon receiving approval of their proposal, they began speaking with potential partners for the project. Early in the process, The Carleton Centre for Community Innovation and consultant Brenda Rooney suggested some changes to the project design, based on their recent experience designing and implementing the LEAP project to similarly isolated English-speaking rural communities. Through dynamic discussion, it was understood that the project could be far more effective through making it more flexible and adaptable to local needs, encouraging local ownership and engagement. Changes were made to the project, and checked with *Status of Women Canada*, which was immediately supportive.

It is hoped that the tools below will help you or your organization in securing funding, writing your application, and ensuring you are ready to carry out the initiative.

Tips for applying

1. Read the application carefully
2. Pay attention to objectives and criteria
3. Write clearly
4. Grammar and spelling count
5. Follow the guidelines with respect to length and write as succinctly as possible
6. Make sure your application is nicely presented and easy to read
7. Allow sufficient time before the deadline to write and review your application

Taken from LEAP

<http://theleapforward.ca>

Are we ready? a capacity assessment checklist

Is your group or organization ready to apply for funding for the project you have in mind? Use the following criteria to think about whether your group or organization is the best one to carry out the project at this time. If you are unable to check some criteria, perhaps you can arrange a partnership in order to address that challenge.

- Do we have the human resources (staff, volunteers) to supervise and carry out this project?
- Are our networks extensive enough to get the volunteers and support we will require?
- Can we obtain the partnerships we will need?
- Do we have the necessary expertise to run this project?
- Do we have the physical resources (i.e. space, materials) to run this project?
- Do we have the financial resources required, taking the grant application into account?
- Will the community support this issue? Is it something enough people care about?
- Will the community see us as the right group / organization to address this issue? Can we speak on behalf of the community?
- Are we able to get messages out to the community, through media or other means?
- Will our whole organization or group be in support of this project?
- Are we aware of and able to cope with risks involved?
- Do we have experience in running similar projects? If not, is there someone we can speak to?

Funding sources

Although we received our funding from *Status of Women Canada*, there are numerous government departments that assist Quebec's English-speaking community. There are also local sources of funding that our project participants applied for in their regions. However, it is quite possible to raise money for your initiative through fundraising events, private donations, and other means. For ideas and information about various methods, the following resources are available, and speak specifically to Quebec's funding context:

- ▶ [Map The Money](#)
- ▶ [Quescan](#)
- ▶ [Canadian Heritage guide](#)
- ▶ [LEAP Sources for Grant Funding](#)

Sample application

The application forms and proposal we used to obtain funding from Status of Women Canada for our project can be found in the appendix. It is not a model proposal, but in this case it was successful and may be of use in creating your own.

For help in writing a good proposal for funding, the following resources may be useful to you:

- [Take the Leap's](#) unit on "Grants and Proposal Writing"
- The complete workshop package for "Writing a Proposal and Budgeting Basics" in the appendix.

Sample budget

The budget we used to obtain funding from Status of Women Canada for our project can be found in the appendix. It is not a model proposal, but in this case it was successful and may be of use in creating your own. You can also view the workshop module listed above.

Section 3: preparation

our story | planning | securing support | selecting participants | samples

Our story

Once we had secured funding and gained approval for our requested changes to the project proposal. Our next step was to build partnerships. We began speaking to community organizations that had access to video-conferencing equipment, and to provincial partners whose mandates overlapped with the mandate of our project. Once partners were interested in participating, an allocation of funds was agreed upon according to their local needs and partnership agreements were signed.

Next, through collaborative discussion, we planned all the details of the project, creating an operational plan and a training plan. Both of these were designed to be flexible so they could be adapted to different needs as they emerged, rather than remaining rigid from this point on. This approach came in handy later on!

Publicity materials, such as pamphlets and press releases, were prepared so that community organizations in the three different regions could begin reaching out to their communities and recruiting participants. We found that getting participants interested did not happen directly through press releases or seeing the pamphlet. We found that these techniques helped spread the word about the project, but that actual recruitment occurred through one-on-one e-mails and phone calls.

Planning

Once you have established that you will go ahead with a project (usually this means obtaining funding), creating an operational plan or action plan will ensure that your project progresses in a strategic and timely way. Note that an operational or action plan details the day to day steps in a project, as opposed to a higher level strategic plan.

Our lessons learned:

- ▶ secure participants through individual e-mails and phone calls
- ▶ if participants are being recruited under 18 years old, extra outreach is required to get the support of their parents
- ▶ pamphlets and press releases help with community support
- ▶ create a plan that is flexible and expect to adapt it as you go

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In the appendix, you will find the operational plan the QCGN used for our project. Perhaps more useful will be the sample action plan created by one of our local partners, also included in the appendix.

For more information, see the complete workshop package for “Writing a Proposal and Budgeting Basics”. You can also consult the LEAP learning module on event planning, available [here](#).

Securing community interest and support

If the community knows what you are doing and supports you, your chances of success are much higher. You will have greater access to financial resources, volunteers, and other support. You are more likely to reach your target audience, no matter who that is. But for this to happen, the community has to “buy in” to what you are doing, why you are doing it, and the process you are using. This “buy-in” comes a lot easier when the community is informed early on and has multiple opportunities to participate and to influence your process.

One way to do this is through providing information, which we did through individual phone calls, networking, e-mails, press releases, and by distributing an informational pamphlet.

For more information, see the complete workshop package on “Publicity” and the publicity samples in the appendix. You can also consult the LEAP learning module on publicity and marketing in the community, available [here](#).

Selecting participants

You will need to gather people together for your project, whether they are volunteers, beneficiaries to the project, or participants. We used a worksheet taken from the LEAP website to map out our strategy for participant selection. This worksheet is available in the appendix.

For more information, see the complete workshop package on “Community Engagement”. You can also consult the LEAP learning module on recruiting and managing volunteers, available [here](#).

Samples

A copy of the informational pamphlet we used, our template press release, and the participant recruitment worksheet are enclosed in the appendix.

Section 4: orientation

our story | sample agenda & materials | tips

Our story

After securing partnerships and recruiting participants in each region, the next step for us was to hold orientation sessions. These were done at a community space in each region, organized by our local partners, and facilitated by the two project consultants. All potential participants, mentors, and other community members attended the orientation. We asked community organizations to attend who had an issue they needed help with, in case participants decided they could develop a project to address the issue. Orientation sessions were just over three hours in length, including breaks, socializing, and food.

The main goals of the orientation sessions were:

1. To provide participants, mentors, and community members with information about the project and their roles
2. To help participants and community members come to agreement on one local initiative participants would carry out over the next few months, to contribute to the community
3. To establish a Local Advisory Board to oversee the initiative and provide support; usually this is the community organization whose needs are being addressed by the participants' initiative
4. To ensure everyone understands next steps and how they can contribute

The regional initiatives chosen were exciting and far more ambitious than we expected. One community decided to revitalize a green space that had been abandoned for over a decade. The community now had no outdoor location to gather; the local seniors group had picnics at a rock quarry since it was the only sheltered location! Participants were excited about this initiative since it would provide something for all age groups, and the community members present felt the same way.

Our lessons learned:

- ▶ give people clear messages, and time, to understand how your project is different
- ▶ giving people more control over what they are doing is motivating and exciting for them
- ▶ different communities have their own strengths and challenges, so it helps to be able to adapt a project to fit with the local context
- ▶ be realistic in expectations about collaboration



Participants brainstorm project ideas in the Pontiac region

Another community decided to do a series of youth-friendly events, such as English-language movie nights and sports tournaments, in order to raise money for their local high school. Their neighbouring community aimed to raise funds to hold a festival celebrating their local history and culture. The two communities planned to collaborate with each other.

The third community set their sights on creating a cookbook featuring local recipes and regional specialties, including photos and stories from the past. The cookbook itself would promote heritage, community, and local food products; meanwhile, proceeds from the sale of the

cookbook would support the regional food bank. They aimed to raise \$1000.

We learned from the first orientation session how to better explain the project and the roles participants would play in it. At first, it was difficult to clearly communicate that participants could choose or create a local initiative that they were passionate about, and that the training and support they would receive would be tailored to their choices; it was difficult to convey the control participants had over the project as they experienced it. The facilitators were often asked, “who chooses the project?” and they had to be very clear that the participants were in the driver’s seat. Further, it



Project ideas - Lower North Shore

had to be clarified that the young women - or participants - were not being led by the more experienced women - or mentors. In fact, it was the opposite, with mentors supporting and assisting participants where appropriate, as the participants made their own

decisions together. Once the facilitators were sufficiently clear and these ideas sunk in, the increase in energy and interest in the room was palpable.

We also learned that this design works best when participants belong to one single community, instead of being members of several different ones. At one of our sites, there were members present from neighbouring communities with a long history of non-collaboration between them. In some ways, this project brought them closer together, and opened new doors to collaboration. Their projects experienced success. But they did face difficult and time-consuming challenges in overcoming these barriers.

Sample agendas

The agenda that we used to plan the facilitation of the event, and the agenda we provided to participants, are enclosed in the appendix.

Materials

To facilitate these orientation sessions, we had:

- agenda for each participant
- pamphlets describing the project
- flip-chart paper, masking tape and many markers
- sticky-notes
- food / refreshments



Participants get ready to start the project - Gaspé

Tips

If you are planning an orientation session, the following tips may be helpful:

- ➔ Include breaks and refreshments to make the event feel relaxed and social
- ➔ Use a capable facilitator who can manage a diversity of viewpoints and conflict. It is a difficult task to help a large group of people towards consensus in supporting one project that will take place in the community
- ➔ Have participants be from one community or small region instead of several communities or regions
- ➔ Spend time clearly and efficiently explaining what the project entails, focusing on the role that participants will play. It is a difficult task when there is so much flexibility and control given to participants; specific examples about previous similar projects are helpful
- ➔ Distribute agendas and have one on display



Participants, mentors, and the local delivery team - Gaspé

Section 5: implementation

our story | training

Our story

After the orientation sessions, local coordinators supported participants in deciding when and where to meet, and facilitated mentors and participants in coming together. At most sites, mentors began regularly attending meetings, but playing a quieter, more supportive role. They worked hard to ensure they were not dominating the meetings or making decisions.

Training sessions began soon afterwards. Delivered over the video-conference network to all three sites at the same time, training sessions allowed participants to discuss challenges with each other and connect over ideas and solutions. The first training session focused on how to plan a local initiative and get the necessary permission and support. Subsequent training sessions followed from that point on in a way that would support participants in carrying out their initiatives.



Video-conference training session - Pontiac

Training: nine workshops, from project planning to project evaluation

The following workshops were provided via video-conference simultaneously to the three sites. They were given, in order, as the projects progressed, and adapted as necessary to address challenges faced by participants. At the beginning of each workshop, we took the time to “check in” or follow up with each other regarding homework or tasks from the last. In this way, flow was maintained throughout the process.

The complete workshop modules are available for download, including the Powerpoint presentation and handouts for each workshop. You are free to use these materials to facilitate your

own workshops, or to hire a facilitator. You are also able to contact the original facilitator in case you would like them to lead the workshop in person or remotely. If you use these resources and adapt or change them, we only ask that you share your new and improved version back with us!

Workshop 1: writing a proposal and budgeting basics by Lise Palmer

This workshop introduces proposal writing, including how to create a basic budget, plan out a project, and write it in a cohesive and clear document that one can present to funders and partners. It also shows why a good proposal is a fundamental part of your project, and how these skills are transferable. More details are available in the appendix.

Workshop 2: presenting to a board by Ana Osborne

Following on the last, this workshop shows you how to present your proposal to a board of directors, potential funder, community partner, or other audience. It includes the process of creating speaking notes for your presentation and using Powerpoint effectively.

Workshop 3: community engagement by Brenda Rooney

Focusing on methods for small, rural communities, this workshop provides concrete tools and strategies for getting community support, engagement, obtaining resources and in-kind contributions, and explores what “community outreach” really means.

Workshop 4: publicity by Brenda Rooney

Participants learn how to create a publicity plan with a timeline, and gain skills for creating publicity tools including press releases, advertisements, posters, and using radio and online methods.

Workshop 5: progress reports by Lise Palmer

This workshop explores ways assess the strengths and challenges of your approach, and how to improve it. This information is then synthesized into a progress report that can be submitted to the person or organization overseeing your work.

Workshop 6: running effective meetings and troubleshooting in groups by Lise Palmer

With an introduction to group dynamics, this workshop helps those working with others to improve their effectiveness as a group. It includes effective meetings basics, dealing with conflict as a

Our lessons learned:

- ▶ if project participants are young, their technological skills are often outstanding. We learned that an introduction to Powerpoint was not helpful!
- ▶ the more interactive the workshops were, the better participants responded. We soon began incorporating brief exercises for each site to do in their groups during workshops
- ▶ participants gave positive feedback about any learning that they were immediately able to put into practice
- ▶ participants were finding the workload higher than expected. A short break in training helped

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normal and healthy part of working in groups, identifying strengths and challenges, and implementing positive changes.

Workshop 7: exploring leadership by Lise Palmer

This workshop provides some different ideas about the concept of leadership, how leadership can be shared, and the impact of different decision-making styles. An exploratory space is provided for participants to share and reflect with each other.

Workshop 8: event planning by Brenda Rooney

The challenges of event planning are reviewed, and participants are provided with strategies for overcoming them. This workshop shows how to create an event plan, including a schedule with individual responsibilities for clarity when planning as a group. In the context of planning a community celebration, some methods of promoting what you have done are discussed.

Workshop 9: project evaluation and wrap-up by Heather Stronach

How do you assess your project and disseminate the results of your work? This project looks at aspects of wrapping up projects, including final reports, assessment, sustainability, dissemination... and celebration!

Section 6: wrap up

our story | celebration ideas | evaluation framework | samples

Our story: celebrations, sharing, and final reports

In a matter of a few months, with a great show of community support, participants in each community had achieved amazing results. A community green-space had been created and inaugurated with a celebratory barbecue; a town festival had been held, numerous youth events, and \$500 raised for the local school; and a cookbook full of regional pride had been produced, along with \$5,000 raised for the local food bank.

Even more importantly, participants felt that they had learned something about community development, leadership, working in teams, and themselves. We heard that some participants felt more self-confident; others felt more a part of their communities; and others felt more ready to enter the job market.

On a provincial level, connections had been formed between participants and community organizations, leading to many feeling less alone in the isolation and challenges they experienced as a linguistic minority.

During our final videoconference session with all sites, entitled *Where To Go From Here*, participants discussed sustainability strategies for their projects or ways to provide closure for themselves and all their supporters, and next steps if applicable. This session also gave us the opportunity to share with each other about our experiences and lessons learned.

Sample agenda

To provide closure for your project to those who participated in it, you will probably have a final meeting of some kind. In the appendix you will find agenda for the one we held.

Sample community celebration ideas

To provide closure for your project to the entire community, and to celebrate the success of the project, you may wish to hold some sort of community celebration, party, or public event. This also showcases the skills and abilities of those who implemented the project.

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In our project, one site held an outdoor barbecue; another held a cookbook launch party, complete with tastings. It is ideal if you can hold a celebration that is related to the work you did in some way.

Sample evaluation framework

It is important to evaluate your project - strengths and challenges, what parts were successful and what parts were not, what aspects you would change for next time. It is important not only from the funder's perspective, but also so that your group or organization can learn how to improve. And, if you share your results, others can learn from your experiences. It is also important to talk about unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative, and how you would deal with the situation in future given these occurrences. Evaluations should be designed at the beginning of the project and should be ongoing.

Here is a sample group evaluation form filled out by participants at each site at the close of our project:

QCGN Group Evaluation

What are some of the positive ideas, lessons, or experiences that individuals are coming away with? Please list in point form:

How could this project have been improved in its design or delivery? Please be specific:

What was your favourite workshop, and why?

Other comments:

For more information, see the complete workshop package on "Project Evaluation and Wrap Up" in the appendix. You can also consult the Community Toolbox website on "Developing an Evaluation Plan" by clicking [here](#).

Sample final reports - local level

Final reports are almost always required by funders at the close of a project. However, writing a final report is also useful for your organization, the community, and project participants. In the appendix, you can view a sample final report from one of our sites.

For more information on how to write a report, see the complete workshop package on “Project Evaluation and Wrap Up”.

Sample final reports - for the funder

A sample final report, submitted to our funder at the close of our project, can be found in the appendix. For more information on how to write a report, see the complete workshop package on “Project Evaluation and Wrap Up”.



Success! The Pontiac team

Conclusion

our story

Our leadership project was a joy to work on for many of the partners and participants, eliciting a level of engagement, positive energy, and ownership that is not often seen in large-scale initiatives. Through discussion with partners and feedback from participants, it is clear that the flexible design allowing communities to adapt the project to their own unique needs and resources played a significant role in this success. The project provided enough structure to be helpful through the provision of workshops, several layers of support, and clear expectations; however, it retained its flexibility through informal mentoring, individualized support, and tailored workshops.

Another key to the success of this project was the way in which the project delivery team modeled the approach that was being taught to participants. In other words, as participants learned about collaborative teamwork, flexible project planning, and ongoing assessment and evaluation, they saw these principles in practice from the project delivery team. This team regularly had reflective discussions over the phone with each other, changed workshops according to feedback they received, and met participants where they were at, so to speak.

It is believed that this approach is an excellent fit for Quebec's English-speaking community ("ESCQ"), particularly in rural contexts, where the reality is so different across communities. The ESCQ is acknowledged as a particularly diverse context in which communities are fragmented, unique, and isolated. In such a context, projects that provide a central framework and support system, but contain enough flexibility for communities to adapt projects according to their local needs, are ideal.

Reaching youth can be especially challenging in any context, let alone one which presents multiple levels of isolation and exclusion. We believe that projects that reach out to youth in an individualized, empowering, and personal way - as this one did - will be more successful. It is hoped that other organizations will use this toolkit in order to experiment further with reaching different populations within the ESCQ using participatory and empowering techniques. Little action research has been done in this area, examining the efficacy of different approaches within community development for the ESCQ and linguistic minorities in general. We believe that the approach presented within this document would work with different age groups and men and women in rural contexts. We hope that others will engage in this exploratory process and share their reflections.

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