

**Priority Setting Steering Committee Phase II  
Recommendations to the  
Department of Canadian Heritage**

November 2018



## Background

In March 2018, the Government of Canada renewed its official languages strategy, called the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future*. Amongst other investments in the Action Plan, the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) announced increased funding for English-language minority community organizations in Quebec. This increase is to be delivered through the Official Languages Funding Programs in two sub-components: 1) Cooperation with the Community Sector; and 2) a new Development Fund established specifically for English-speaking Quebec.

In May 2018, the Minister of Canadian Heritage requested that representative organizations provide input on behalf of Canada's official language minority communities, on principles and priorities for action and to guide decisions on the allocation of new financial resources for programs and projects undertaken by and for these communities through her Department. The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) – English-speaking Quebec's official interlocutor with PCH – accepted this task, and at a special meeting of its Board of Directors on June 16, tasked the Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) with undertaking the work.

The PSSC was asked to oversee a consultation process seeking the views of the community. This consultation was conducted in two parts:

Part 1: June – September 2018, responses to a survey questionnaire, followed by five structured conversations with focus groups of community representatives provided guidance for a two-day meeting by a working group convened to collate, analyze and synthesize the inputs. A report was prepared that summarized key principles and priorities for action that emerged from the consultation. *The Report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee Related to the 2018 Community Consultation* (The Report can be reviewed at Annexe A) was tabled the QCGN Board of Directors, on September 7, 2018, after which it was shared with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Part 2: September – November 2018. Subsequent to the above report, a resolution was passed by the QCGN Board asking the PSSC to continue this work, translating the principles and identified priorities into more specific recommendations for allocations of additional funding, covering areas of activity, constituencies, and criteria for grants and contributions to organizations. These recommendations were to cover both Cooperation with the Community Sector – Development of Official Language Communities; and the new dedicated fund for English-speaking minority communities in Quebec.

## Methodology

- The PSSC convened to develop a plan to produce a report with recommendations for PCH
- A working group of the PSSC was formed to develop a survey format.
- A survey proposing a funding framework was circulated to 159 QCGN members and stakeholders.
- Responses were collected from October 22 to November 6, 2018.
- 55 members and stakeholder organizations — which included 73 percent of QCGN's members — responded to the survey.

- Survey results were discussed with the PSSC.
- A report-writing subgroup of the PSSC was convened to refine the data and produce a draft report.
- The PSSC reconvened to finalize the report and then consulted with Canadian Heritage prior to making a final recommendation.

### **Recommendations for the Department of Canadian Heritage**

The PSSC proposes the following framework for funding in 2019-2020.

#### **Recommendation 1**

- **100% of the Cooperation with the Community Sector Sub-component be allocated to program funding.**
  - When allocating resources, PCH should be guided by the Priorities and Principles identified in *The Report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee related to the 2018 Community Consultation* from Part 1..

#### **Recommendation 2**

**100% of the new dedicated fund for English-Speaking Minority Communities in Quebec be allocated to Projects, and furthermore that;**

- 20 percent of this envelope be dedicated to Collaborative Projects (see considerations and observations below).
  - When considering allocations for collaborative projects that priority be given to those delivering in the outcome areas highlighted in the consultation survey, notably in:
    - Reducing Seniors' Isolation
    - Increasing Youth Engagement
- 10 percent of this envelope be dedicated to cover the cost of a strategic planning exercise culminating in production of a five-year Growth Plan (see below for more details) that would guide PCH financing until FY2023, as well as define community goals, informing conversations with other funders, public and private.
  - When allocating resources, PCH should be guided by the Priorities and Principles identified in *The Report*.

This is the PSSC's understanding of what the effect would be:

#### **Cooperation with the Community Sector**

*Starting baseline* (17/18 before 20% push) \$2.7 million

*End baseline* (22/23) \$4.71 million dedicated to program funding.

This represents a \$1.99 million (per year) increase to program funding in FY 22/23 from the starting core funding baseline of \$2.7 million in FY 17/18, a 73% increase.

#### **Development Fund**

Starting baseline (17/18) \$680k

End baseline (22/23) \$1.3 million (Development Fund)

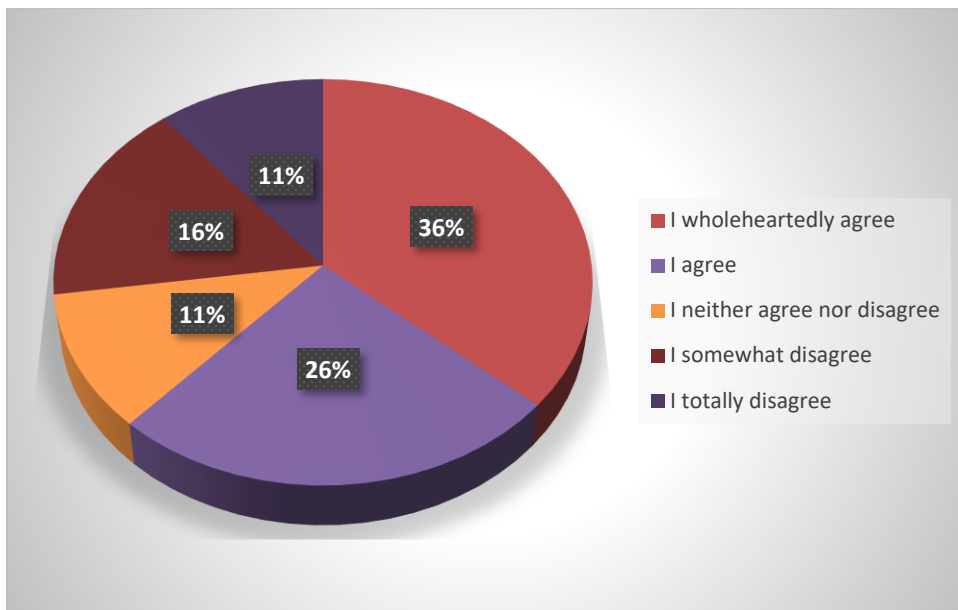
This represents a 92% increase in available project funding to the community sector.

The PSSC acknowledges and welcomes additional funding as announced in these envelopes, but stresses that, despite these increases, there remains gaps in capacity amongst organizations working to support the English Speaking Minority Communities of Quebec.

These recommendations should be understood within the context of *The Report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee 2018 (Annexe A)* principles (Equity, Diversity, Flexibility, Accountability, Vulnerability, Partnerships & Collective Impact and Asserting Rights) and priorities (Access to Services in English, Community Building, Economic Prosperity, Identity and Renewal, Leadership and Representation and Strong Institutions).

### Rationale

The survey revealed majority support for this, **notably 62 percent of respondents agreed with this framework;**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I wholeheartedly agree	36.36%	20
I agree	25.45%	14
I neither agree nor disagree	10.91%	6
I somewhat disagree	16.36%	9
I totally disagree	10.91%	6

Over the years and again this summer, member organizations have highlighted a need for increased and sustainable core funding. **Program** funding is essential to organizations providing essential services to vulnerable populations, as it enables them to plan and sustain services, often requiring staff, to clients — often low-income, aged and/or isolated, children and youth in school or seeking jobs, among others — who depend on these services. Support for this recommendation amongst members was strong, **including 62 per cent of survey respondents:**

*'Program funding from the Government of Canada would make a world of difference for our organization. Our finances are fragile, and we live hand to mouth.'*

*'Funding mostly comes by the way of projects which creates a perpetual treadmill of funding searches and project creation in a desperate attempt to continue to exist'*

*'Securing core\program funding is notoriously difficult for organizations... we all have core business to attend to carry out our basic mandate in our respective communities'*

*'Any increase in the amount of core program funding available to non-profits serving the English-Speaking community of Quebec would be greatly welcomed'*

Additionally, of those who disagreed with the proposed format, most agreed with the fundamental principle of increasing program funding:

*'Significant increases in core funding lets us work on projects in a structuring way'*

*'We believe the majority of funding should always be for program'*

*'Our organization has no issue with this recommendation whatsoever. We are in complete agreement with the creation of a dedicated fund for projects serving English-speaking Quebec. We also agree with the suggestion that new moneys be allocated to increases in core funding – both for existing recipients and for new organizations.'*

The report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee related to the 2018 Community Consultation further supports the community need for program funding distribution under the principle of *Equity* stating that *'Currently funded community Sector organizations must be properly funded to meet operational needs'*

**Project** funding gives organizations flexibility to respond to new and emerging concerns, to work in collaboration and develop partnerships with other organizations, thereby gaining access to knowledge, skills and resources they need to respond to the demands of a a changing environment. Many organizations in our survey highlighted their reliance on and support for continued and increased project funding:

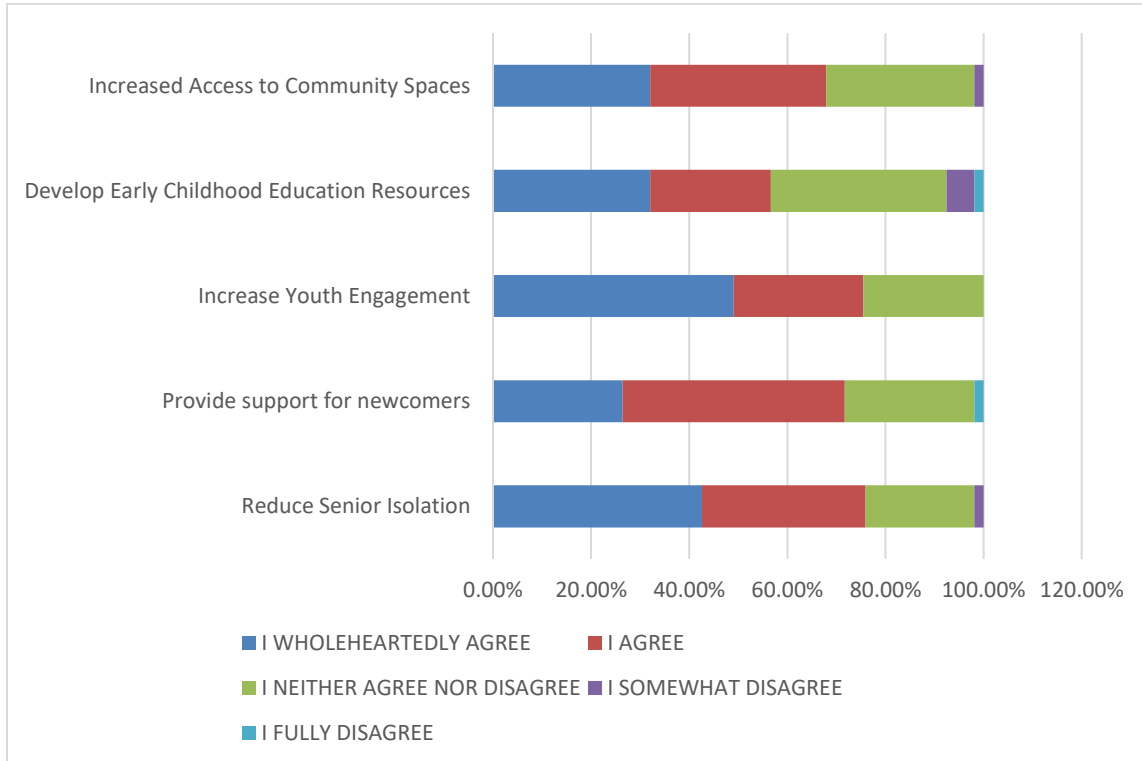
*'We understand the benefits of project funding (allowing) organizations to get creative and find new ways to address new and old challenges to their communities'*

*'Projects funding is vital to us being able to carry out our activities and services'*

*The Report* highlights Partnerships and Collective Impact as one of its key principles for action. This is to encourage organizations to leverage funding, work with like-minded organizations to achieve common

objectives, share knowledge and resources, foster mentoring and leadership development. Such partnerships would seek not only to make more efficient use of community resources, but also to boost cooperation among organizations.

Survey respondents were asked to identify two to three priority outcomes areas for consideration in any Collaborative Projects. The goals of **Reducing Seniors Isolation and Increasing Youth Engagement** received the highest levels of endorsement from respondents, followed by **Providing support for newcomers**. Organizations were asked to cite examples of existing or ‘ready to roll’ projects in these areas on which communities could work together.



	I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE	I AGREE	I NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	I SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	I FULLY DISAGREE
Reduce Senior Isolation	42.59%	33.33%	22.22%	1.85%	0.00%
	23	18	12	1	0
Provide support for newcomers	26.42%	45.28%	26.42%	0.00%	1.89%
	14	24	14	0	1
Increase Youth Engagement	49.06%	26.42%	24.53%	0.00%	0.00%
	26	14	13	0	0
Develop Early Childhood	32.08%	24.53%	35.85%	5.66%	1.89%

Education Resources	17	13	19	3	1
Increased Access to Community Spaces	32.08%	35.85%	30.19%	1.89%	0.00%
	17	19	16	1	0

## Further Considerations

In the process of communication and messaging of new funds and in funding allocation, the PSSC recommends that PCH consider the following key points:

### Vulnerability

The PSSC stresses that funding should be prioritized for communities, within which there are individuals and groups, that are most vulnerable. Some of these may face multiple challenges and the intersectionality of these, for example, struggling with the effects of marginalization, discrimination, exclusion and isolation from other English-speaking minority communities and Quebec society as a whole including, but not limited to, populations who are:

- In rural and remote communities whose geographic isolation and/or dispersed populations, results in reduced access to essential and important services and resources;
- Low-income or unemployed, with few marketable skills, in urban, suburban and rural communities;
- Unable to speak or understand French, or whose mother tongue is other than English, but for whom English is the Official Language best understood and spoken;
- LGBTQ;
- Of visible minorities by race, ethnicity, religion or national origin;
- Aged and/or fragile, or having limited mobility;
- Suffering a physical and/or developmental or psychiatric disability;
- Women; and,
- In precarious socio-economic situations.

Over the years, PCH funding has traditionally recognized the vulnerability in the English-speaking minority communities of Quebec to fill the gaps in policy development as well as in program and service delivery areas across the province with attention to rural and remote areas. This remains the focus for *the Investing in our Future: Action Plan for Official Languages*. Despite this focus, there remain large gaps and insufficient funding to accomplish this important work. The PSSC recognizes the unique challenges and vulnerability faced by these communities and the work of PCH in this area and recommends that PCH sustain and increase support for organizations involved in this crucial work.

The surveys conducted for the PSSC highlighted the challenges faced by community members who are 'Minorities within the English-speaking minority'. These include, English-speaking blacks who often contend with race-based discrimination, and suffer some degree of social and economic isolation based on race as well as language. Robust, targeted and well-funded efforts are needed to support such communities' drive to move from vulnerability to vitality.

## **Collaborative Projects**

- The definition of ‘Collaborative Projects’ should be clear and inclusive of a variety of interpretations and mechanisms. This could include both inter-regional and intra-regional projects.
- It needs to be recognized that partnerships are more difficult for certain regions as there are fewer potential partners. PCH often looks for partnerships, this can be to the detriment of remote and/or regional organizations who face challenges leveraging funds.
- In selecting partners, organizations need flexibility. They should be free to choose the partners that are the best fit available, without constraints imposed on them. For example, in some settings, English-speaking groups may choose to set up partnerships with Francophone organizations.

**Sustainability** is a key concern for members, and increased funding can help to address it. The PSSC notes that organizations supporting the English-Speaking minority communities of Quebec by providing multiple services, including some essential ones, to vulnerable populations, are doing so with scarce resources. Survey respondents highlighted:

*‘securing core\program funding is notoriously difficult for organizations’*

The PSSC therefore asks that Canadian Heritage consider:

### **Who can access funding?**

- That groups who currently receive core funding and deliver essential services be able to maintain their funding and be able to apply to increase their funding levels to strengthen their organizations.
- That existing and new groups who do not currently receive sustainable program funding be able to apply and that the criteria for applications be made clear.
- Until a more detailed structure can be provided on funding allocation, the PSSC recommends that PCH refer to the principles and priorities for action outlined in our *Report* from Part 1 for guidance.

### **Flexibility**

- That PCH consider the diversity of organizations involved in this work and recognize the challenges some groups face when attempting to access funding. For example, organizations in rural and remote communities may find it more challenging to find partners for collaboration.

*‘I have always found PCH makes it difficult or impossible for us to access any funding, I would prefer flexibility’*

## **Growth Plan**

**The following comments apply to the funding years beginning in 2020.**



The English-Speaking minority communities of Quebec are diverse and face challenges that are both specific and shared. Categorizing our organizations and networks is not simple. Some organizations deliver a wide range of services, including community support, advocacy, community engagement, programming and various sectoral services. Some support minorities within the minority such as racialized or immigrant groups. Some are defined by their geography (localized), others provide service to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people in both rural and remote and urban settings, due to migration. Some work across the province stretching staff, volunteers and resources from urban centres to surrounding regions, while others act as network groups and many support massively marginalized populations. Setting priorities for such a variety of groups and constituencies is a complex task.

Within these recommendations, the PSSC seeks to promote the inclusion of groups that feel the effects of exclusion and/or isolation from other English-speaking minority communities and/or Quebec society as a whole. The PSSC wishes to do so whilst *'favouring evidence-based and grassroots-driven policy decisions'*. Given the short time frame for recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019/2020, and taking into account the diverse make-up of members and community groups, a broader community-driven conversation about how to adequately define vulnerability is needed. The PSSC sees the opportunity within the growth plan to create a mechanism to address vulnerability in our community of communities in its various forms notably:

- *'Mainstream priorities that do not necessarily meet the needs of enclave minority communities.'*
- References in the *Action Plan for Official Languages* as it relates to the dedicated fund for English-speaking minority communities in Quebec, notably as it refers to *'particularly the more than 215,000 people who live outside of the Greater Montreal region to address the unique challenges they face to maintain a community life'*.

The *PSSC 2018 Community Consultation Report* stressed that English-speaking minority Quebec community member organizations including stakeholders and QCGN members insists on participation and consultation in the distribution of investments based on an authentic partnership with governments, ensuring community-driven, managed growth that enables all communities to equitably benefit and share ownership in their development.

The PSSC recognizes that recommendations on funding distribution for the fiscal year 2019\2020 needed to be accomplished in a short time frame to fit with Government funding distribution timelines. This has not allowed for a fully comprehensive, community driven consultation process. As such, this report is recommending that a growth plan must be developed by the community sector under the leadership of the PSSC.

Additionally, the recent survey confirmed broad support for the development of this growth plan:

*'I feel this recommendation needs more consultation and information to the different sectors and community organizations that are funded under the cooperation with the community sector fund in order to make the best possible decision to benefit all.'*

#### **Key considerations for the development of the Growth Plan:**

- **Goal.** Would seek to produce an evidence-based community engaged consultation to establish a community led framework for funding distribution for Fiscal Year 2021 onwards.

- **Complexity** of issues on the ground. Create a mechanism to evaluate the larger funding needs of the community to address developing and ongoing needs.
- **Methodology.** A strategic planning exercise is proposed, including analysis of relevant demographic statistics, as well as funding sources and distribution over time, facilitated workshops and/or focus groups, consultation of stakeholders and relevant experts, culminating with a rigorous consensus-building exercise to produce a five-year plan.
- **Timeline.** The growth plan consultation would occur over a 12-18 month period.
- **Funding.** The PSSC recognizes that any truly consultative and community-led process needs to be properly funded and supported. The recommendation to allocate 10% of the new Development Fund towards this would support the staffing and logistical considerations of the above process. Given the unique and varied geography of our communities, the fund would also support travel, accommodations and other expenses to ensure representative and thorough engagement of members. Through their Director of Community Development, QCGN would provide in kind staff support for logistics, coordination, advice and guidance.

### **Advocacy**

The English-Speaking Minority Communities of Quebec experience large gaps in service provision. Our communities are lacking the breadth of support offered to French speaking minorities outside of Quebec. Our communities also frequently do not hold control of our institutions and do not have adequate policy support in many areas. The PSSC sees an opportunity to move forward working to support advocacy to better connect the ESCQ with other departments identified in the Action Plan.