Strategic Priorities Forum

2018 – 2019 Priorities of the English-speaking

Community of Quebec

and

Annual Report of the

Priority Setting Steering Committee

Executive Summary

Introduction

In September 2011, the Quebec Community Groups Networks launched The Strategic Priorities Forum, a standing five-year cyclical process to identify common priorities ensuring a vital and sustainable future for Quebec's English-speaking communities and to collectively pursue enabling strategies to achieve community goals over five years. In this capacity, the QCGN established a nine-member Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC), a permanent Committee of QCGN's Board of Directors, to assist the community with the governance of the Strategic Priorities Forum.

The PSSC's purpose it is to collect, analyze, prioritize and articulate the common needs, priorities and issues of the community and its constituents and to communicate its findings to constituents, partners and stakeholders including government, to engage in collective action. Members serving on the PSSC are representatives of the broader community and do not represent a particular sector or region.

In 2011-2012, a vast and diverse pool of community groups, individuals and institutions from Quebec's English-speaking community participated in a comprehensive consultative process to determine common priorities and strategies to achieve future collective goals. In March of 2012, the process culminated in a Community Priority Setting Conference. Through consensus achieved at the conference, the PSSC signed the Declaration of the English-speaking Community of Quebec articulating six evolving common development priorities that would contribute to ensuring a vital and sustainable future for the English-speaking Communities of Quebec, namely:

1. Access to Services in English
2. Community Building
3. Economic Prosperity
4. Identity and Renewal
5. Leadership and Representation
6. Strong Institutions

Following the conference, the PSSC provided a Community Development Plan entitled **2012 – 2017 Community Priorities and Enabling Strategies of the English-speaking Community of Quebec**, clearly defining the priorities, the enabling strategies for their attainment and proposing a process for self-evaluation and validation over the next five years. Broadly embraced by the community, the document remains the primary reference for the ongoing activities of the PSSC.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the PSSC's efforts monitoring the six evolving community priorities through an online survey and strategic consultations in 2017. The survey results provide a portrait of the activities undertaken in the current fiscal year, identify needs that are underserved and sectors of service that are under-developed, and, identify the plans developed by the various groups and organizations for addressing these needs. An analysis of the responses informs the PSSC and enables it to identify the priority needs and issues of concern for the English-speaking community of Quebec for the upcoming fiscal year. By virtue of its mandate, the PSSC reports its findings to federal, provincial and municipal government agencies and departments as well as to community stakeholders.

Results of the 2017 Strategic Priorities Online Survey

Survey Respondents

4 Korners Family Resource Centre

Black Community Resource Center (BCRC)

Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)

Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)

Contactivity Centre

Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)

English Community Organization of Lanaudiere

Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)

English-Language Arts Network (ELAN)

English-Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC)

Montérégie West Community Network

Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn Noranda

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN)

Quebec Drama Federation (QDF)

Vision Gaspé Percé Now

Voice of English Quebec (VEQ)

Youth and Parents Agape Association Inc. (Agape)

2018 – 2019 Priorities of the English-speaking Community of Quebec

Every year the Priority Setting Steering Committee conducts a survey to identify priorities of the Quebec's English-speaking community for the coming year.

The goals of the annual survey are threefold:

1. To see how organizations are linking to the six high level over-arching priorities established during the Community Priority Setting Conference.
2. To see how the community benefitted from and attached to these six priorities.
3. To identify the program and project priorities of the community sector in support of the English-speaking community for the coming year.

Following an analysis of the survey results, the PSSC and QCGN extracted the following "annual priorities" to transmit to government and other stakeholders in order to influence policies and programs that will contribute to maintaining a vital and sustainable English-speaking community in Quebec.

The following represent the community's development priorities for the 2018-2019 fiscal year presented by Strategic Priority. It is noted that, not surprisingly, many of these priorities are similar or identical to those identified for the 2017 – 2018 fiscal year given the ongoing nature of certain needs in the community. It is further noted that there is an emphasis on the needs of youth, including young adults and aboriginal youth, parents and seniors. There is, as well, a concern for dealing with isolation in its various manifestations for people of all ages, for general health and wellness issues and for a general better understanding of legal issues. The needs of recent arrivals, youth and young families with children in particular, are of concern. These priorities are not presented in order of importance.

Access to Services in English - *Increased access to services and government information in English in all aspects of daily living is a pressing issue. The ability of individuals in our community to make informed decisions depends on our capacity to understand options and implications in English.*

1. Projects that increase access to services in English, particularly in health, social services and education, and projects that help reach more under-served families and individuals.
2. Projects that serve vulnerable populations such as people suffering from mental health issues; isolated seniors; youth in distress; aboriginal youth; new arrivals; and, isolated caregivers.
3. Health promotion fairs and other projects to improve information about government services, especially local services and activities in English, and improve access to them.
4. Strengthening resource-centers and improving activities and services to better serve the English-speaking population's needs in areas such as health, the law, culture and lifelong learning.
5. Projects that support English-speaking seniors and caregivers as well as projects that provide translation and accompaniment services for seniors dealing with French-only communications from government and other sources, including the Internet.
6. Projects that support collaborations with senior's organizations and institutions, that identify and respond to communication needs and that support socialization opportunities for English-speaking seniors in Quebec.
7. Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI) and McGill partnership activities.
8. Projects and programs that provide access to quality lifelong learning opportunities for all ages, employment services and workforce integration services in English.

Community Building - *Developing relationships by fostering greater collaboration and networking among English-speaking organizations and the broader community, diversifying resources, and sharing and developing expertise will make our communities stronger.*

1. Projects and activities that allow groups to maintain ties with members, to continue to build their communities and to serve their constituents, including children under 5 years old, new arrivals and francophone partners.
2. Programming, workshops and community partnerships that assist youth and in particular, youth with special needs. Increased consideration for travel and transportation costs is required.
3. Projects designed to take advantage of new media as traditional media institutions decline.
4. Projects that support and promote volunteerism at all levels including the local, neighbourhood level. Recruiting, training and retaining volunteers are increasingly challenging.

5. Workshops and activities that support employability, civic participation, as well as the health and, education and the personal development of youth and young adults in cultural, immigrant and aboriginal communities.
6. Activities that promote interaction between seniors and youth, and which increase the capacity of individuals in both groups to create cultural media products unique to the English-speaking community.
7. Programs that expand videoconference education programs and distance learning opportunities for people of all ages.
8. Community support initiatives that not only support the English-speaking community but also improve interactions and mutual support between the ESCQ and other cultural communities.
9. Mentorship projects to mobilize artists, writers and actors in Quebec's English-speaking community in social development issues.

Economic Prosperity - *Greater access to employment and educational opportunities and higher levels of bilingualism will support the economic prosperity of English-speaking Quebecers thus improving the resilience of our communities.*

1. Projects and activities using an integrated approach that leverages community resources to maximize lifelong learning opportunities for single mothers, low income families, disengaged youth, isolated seniors, newcomers and aboriginals.
2. Employment networking activities in Montreal and the regions; one on one services such as counseling, coaching and mentorship; workshops; French classes, and placement services.
3. Projects that contribute to economic prosperity through hiring youth and retaining graduates.
4. Conferences, workshops and other networking opportunities that encourage and develop the entrepreneurial skills of English-speakers including artists, women and youth.
5. Projects and activities that assist English-speaking community members and entrepreneurs to communicate effectively with provincial and municipal authorities on issues of employment and business development in the public sector.
6. Projects and activities that explore social financing initiatives and that assist groups in diversifying their funding sources.

Identity and Renewal - *Nurturing a strong sense of belonging, expressing our identity, enhancing our visibility, and working towards a Quebec society that embraces diversity will ensure the renewal of our communities.*

1. Support for retention projects including those that target high school, CEGEP and university students.
2. Newcomers projects to provide orientation and integration opportunities and that nurture a sense of belonging to Quebec's English-speaking community
3. Projects that support our youth and young artists and performers (promote local career opportunities; promote local talent; develop leadership abilities, as well as their sense of belonging and self-confidence).
4. Awareness campaigns on issues effecting youth from cultural minority communities as well as culturally sensitive and relevant activities to enhance their academic achievement. The black community in Montreal feels particularly under-resourced in the face of its multifaceted challenges.
5. Cultural and history projects and other community activities that promote identity and support community involvement and renewal as well as heritage projects that underscore some of the challenges that cultural communities face in trying to uncover their identity/history.

6. Support for touring projects that connect Quebec's artists and performers, institutions and populations in the regions.
7. Support for theatre that is accessible to all, regardless of income, culture, language, age or education.
8. Support for projects that promote the work of local artists, authors, photographers and videographers through promotion and the publication and exhibits of anthologies of original works.
9. Projects that explore the place and identity of English-speaking Quebecers of all cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds.
10. Activities and events that celebrate the English-speaking community in all of its diversity and underline its contributions to Quebec.

Leadership and Representation - *Promoting leadership development at all levels, with an emphasis on youth engagement, and encouraging volunteerism will ensure we are an integral part of Quebec and Canadian society.*

1. Public forums and activities that support collaboration and community actions to ensure collective impact on community priorities.
2. Projects and activities that support and encourage networking with public and community partners to ensure that the English-speaking community is represented and visible and that the needs of the community are taken into account by decision makers at all levels.
3. Participation in regional government agencies, administrative bodies and tables to ensure English-speakers are represented in key local institutions and organizations.
4. Projects and activities that build and foster youth leadership via volunteerism and educational programs.
5. Research that explores cultural diversity in all of its forms and expressions.
6. Activities that identify potential future community leaders and provide support, sponsorship, mentorship and participation opportunities on the governance structures of institutions, organizations and government bodies and agencies.
7. Projects that encourage federal and provincial departments and agencies to gather relevant data and provide it to the English-speaking community to encourage greater mutual collaboration as envisaged in the official languages act.

Strong Institutions - *Healthy institutions are the cornerstone of a dynamic community. Maintaining and supporting existing institutions and establishing new ones will strengthen our communities.*

1. Projects that encourage and support collaboration between community organizations and education, health and social service institutions, including hospitals.
2. Projects that raise awareness regarding educational issues that affect the community as well as workshops to strengthen leadership skills for English-speaking parents who sit on School Boards, Governing Boards and Home and School committees.
3. Support for strategic planning and consulting with the English community to allow groups to renew their knowledge of the needs and priorities of their communities and to share this knowledge.
4. Projects with education, health and other government institutions to maintain and enhance their capacity to provide English–language services.
5. Projects that engage youth and encourage active participation in community development activities, projects and initiatives.
6. Funding projects to maintain heritage buildings in the community that are home to community institutions.

7. Projects that raise the profile of and appreciation for the English-speaking community, its institutions, its values, its current and historic contributions to society in the eyes of the general population as well as of federal, provincial, municipal governments and their agencies and that elicit increased recognition, support and resources.

Final Observations of the PSSC

The six strategic priorities once more figure prominently and universally in the planning and delivery of the activities and services provided by the organizations that responded to the 2017 PSSC Survey. There remains a high degree of alignment between the strategic priorities and the vision, mission and mandate of these organizations. All six priorities are addressed in substantive ways in the activities offered in 2016 – 2017. The validity and utility of the six priorities have the strong endorsement of the respondents.

The concerns related to funding from traditional sources are clearly in evidence in the responses to the survey; these have also been expressed in informal exchanges with various groups throughout the year. In response to the financial constraints felt by many organizations there has been an observed tendency to increased partnerships as well as an engagement with non-traditional funding sources. New arrivals seeking services in English represent a new and growing challenge. Current resources are inadequate to respond to recognized needs in many communities. For collective action to develop further, project funding from traditional sources should acknowledge these trends and encourage and support their development.

Interdepartmental and intradepartmental as well as intergovernmental cooperation continues to be needed to address evidenced gaps in policies and services. There is a need for greater support for English=speaking community organizations from the provincial government. Many identified community priorities and needs remain underserved or unaddressed.