

## Report from the Executive Director

The year 2003-2004 marks the end of the five-year project with Canadian Heritage for the funding of the QCGN. 2003-2004 is also the last year of the Canada-Community Agreement signed by the QCGN and Canadian Heritage which was the source of program funding to all QCGN members and of project funding throughout the English-speaking communities of Quebec.



Over the past year, Canadian Heritage and the QCGN have participated in the evaluation of both the QCGN itself and the Canada-Community Agreement to measure the changes brought about in our community by Canadian Heritage's investment.

For the complete evaluation, I would refer you to the Canadian Heritage website and hope that many people take the time to read this very important report.

However, in this report, I would like to review the major QCGN activities and projects of 2003-2004.

### QCGN INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

1. The Health and Social Services Networking and Partnership Initiative (HSSNPI), which has been a major undertaking for the QCGN over this past year, is an official program of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

The HSSNPI seeks to enhance access to, and develop a better array of health and social services for English-speaking communities in Quebec. It is a 5 year, \$4.3 million program funded under Health Canada's *Contribution Program to Improve Access to Health Services for Official Language Minority Communities*.

The HSSNPI was initiated following the 2002 Report of Health Canada's Consultative Committee for English-speaking Minority Communities which recommended a multi-year plan to improve access to health and social services in English in Quebec. The report emphasized the need for effective community-public sector partnerships and underlined the importance of paying special attention to the specific service delivery challenges of more isolated and demographically weak English-speaking communities.

## Report from the Executive Director (Continued...)

The purpose of the HSSNPI is to build the networking and partnership capacities of English-speaking communities so as to improve access to health and social services by:

- Generating and sharing information and knowledge regarding the health and social service needs and priorities of English- Speaking Quebecers
- Creating provincial, regional and local networks composed of community and public sector representatives, which will design more effective and coordinated service delivery models for specific English-speaking communities and, as a result, deliver more responsive and efficient services to their populations
- Share lessons learned and best practices with regard to building community capacity and enhancing access to health and social services in English

Because funding for this program was received at the very end of the financial year, many of the activities were focused on the development of the program itself. However, in close collaboration with the CHSSN, a Provincial Network to help successful program applicants design and implement a regional, local or sector network units was established. With the Townshippers' a regional demonstration project in Estrie was created, which can be used as a model for network unit development in other communities.

With this support in place, the HSSNPI can now expand to other English-speaking communities in Quebec and effect tangible changes in our communities.

2. The Global Development Planning Process for the English-speaking communities of Quebec has produced a comprehensive Consultation Document of priorities for development and has begun the process of broad community consultation on this document.

Early last summer, the QCGN sponsored an Intersectoral Conference which brought together over 100 volunteers (who had contributed to the creation of eight sector plans representing priority sectors for development across the province: Arts & Culture, Employment, Heritage, Education & Training, Health & Social Services, Media, Visibility & Leadership, and Youth) to participate in a collective discussion on community vision and main development strategies for the English-speaking communities of Quebec.



## Report from the Executive Director (Continued...)

The Consultation Document is the basis for consultation with the grass-roots members of our community, as well as the institutional leadership, to be held this fall in over 22 areas of the province. Consultation will also be through web-based input. These discussions will seek the endorsement of the GDP by the English-speaking minority and the final result will provide a framework to guide development decisions over the coming years.

The Global Development Plan will certainly effect change in the English-speaking communities throughout Quebec. It is an extraordinary opportunity to mobilize and integrate resources and talents, to create and strengthen networks, to give experience and visibility to a new generation of leaders, and to develop improved institutional leadership. The goal is not simply to reflect a past identity, but to invent enhanced community capacity and project a sense of dynamism and exhilaration as partners in Quebec's future.

3. Within the scope of a QCGN project to create a Preliminary Research Inventory and of holding a Research Roundtable, the QCGN undertook to assess the research capacity of Quebec's English-speaking communities and assemble the community capacity and infrastructure for future development in research and development, through the creation of a generalized and wide-ranging assessment of the sector (needs, stakeholders, current initiatives) to determine the current state of research both within and about the English-speaking communities of Quebec and to propose the immediate next steps to further develop research capacity in and on Quebec's English-speaking communities.

Thirty people from the government, community and academic sectors attended the roundtable discussions on the current situation with regards to research capacity and potential future directions. Participants ended the day by proposing immediate next steps to further develop research capacity in and on Quebec's English-speaking communities which included: establish a steering committee; obtain funding for the next steps; conduct background research for the next steps; and create a permanent research structure.

Once again, the QCGN has taken the first important steps towards building sustainable, infrastructure for community governance of the English linguistic minority of Quebec.

## Report from the Executive Director (Continued...)

4. Finally, in a project entitled *Proposal for an Information and Communications Technologies Development Corporation for the English Speaking Community*, the QCGN undertook to determine the generalized, current state of information technology usage in ESC and the community capacity and infrastructure for future development in the information technology and communications (ICT) sector.

Based on these findings, the assessment of needs developed by the Forum on Information Technology held in 2001 and the recommended priority actions pertaining to information technology in the Global Development Plan, a working group developed a comprehensive report which lays out "The case for an ICT Development Corporation – 'AngloNet'". There was consensus around the need for an entity such as 'AngloNet', and the benefits that such an entity could contribute to ICT development.

The timing is right for the QCGN to proceed with further outreach and engagement with the aim of taking formal steps towards the creation of 'AngloNet'.

### QCGN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

The QCGN has also been an active participant in the consultations led by the Privy Council concerning the effectiveness of the Government Action Plan for Official Languages. QCGN members and other representatives of the English-speaking community have met on several occasions with government officials and Ministers to provide input and suggestions about the effect of the Action Plan on our communities.

The QCGN has clearly stated that the Canadian government must facilitate the development of infrastructure to promote growth in the English-speaking communities of Quebec and stop the demographic decline, if the Government Action Plan is to have sustainable results in the English-speaking communities of Quebec.

The QCGN membership has also participated in consultations for the strategic planning at Justice Canada, Industry Canada and Economic Development Canada. This interaction has resulted in the formation of consultative committees at Justice Canada to enable the department to better understand the challenges of the community when developing programs and policy.

The QCGN has also participated in the Evaluation Committee of the IPOLC Memorandum of Understanding between the Canada Council for the Arts and Canadian Heritage. The important investment by both departments has definitely had a structuring impact in the Anglophone arts community. It has also become an important initiative in the arts and culture community.



## **Report from the Executive Director (Continued...)**

The QCGN met several times with the Commissioner of Official Languages and her officials to share information about the activities of the QCGN and the state of affairs within the English-speaking community. QCGN members also participated in an examination of the present Official Languages Act and suggestions for improvement of the Act.

QCGN representatives have participated in Research symposiums concerning linguistic minority communities in Canada.

### **QCGN PARTICIPATION IN JOINT COMMITTEES WITH GOVERNMENT**

The QCGN participated in the selection of candidates of a National Coordination Committee from within the English-speaking communities of Quebec and the first meeting held last fall.

The general mandate of this committee is to work together with representatives of the entire Department of Canadian Heritage to orient the policies, programs and services of the Department in order to promote the development and enhance the vitality of the Canada's minority English-speaking population.

The committee is involved, notably, in coordination, information and liaison activities between Canadian Heritage and the English-speaking for all pertinent sectors of the Department, not just Official Languages. Membership through the QCGN includes the different elements of the English-speaking community and reflects regional representation, sectoral representation including education, media, arts and culture, youth.

The QCGN has also participated in the Discussion Group on the Revision of the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations over the past year. This group is composed of representatives of the English-speaking and Francophone linguistic minority communities, Treasury Board, Privy Council, Canadian Heritage and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. The mandate of this group is to review the results of the application of the 2001 Census data and the effect on Part IV of the OL Act concerning the concept of "significant demand" as it is applied to federal institutions subject to the Act.

Following the interventions of committee members and Treasury Board Officials, all federal institutions which are concerned have committed to either preserve the service, consider adjustments to service delivery or find a solution acceptable to everyone. Work is ongoing for this committee.

## Report from the Executive Director (Continued...)

Generally, the QCGN has held meetings, sponsored activities and shared information, supported internal committees (such as the member-services committee), spoken out in support of the English-speaking community on various occasions and generally endeavored to serve the QCGN members and the English-speaking communities of Quebec.

The year has been extremely busy but also extremely rewarding!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Committee, especially our President, Mr. Martin Murphy, for their leadership and support.

Also a sincere thank you to the QCGN Staff for their energy and commitment to a job well done! – Christiane St-Laurent, who left us in December, Denise Giguère, who joined us in February and Sandra Vallée who is always there when I need her.

Deborah Hook  
QCGN Executive Director  
June, 2004