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Report of the Priority Setting Steering Committee related to the 2018 Community Consultation

September 2018
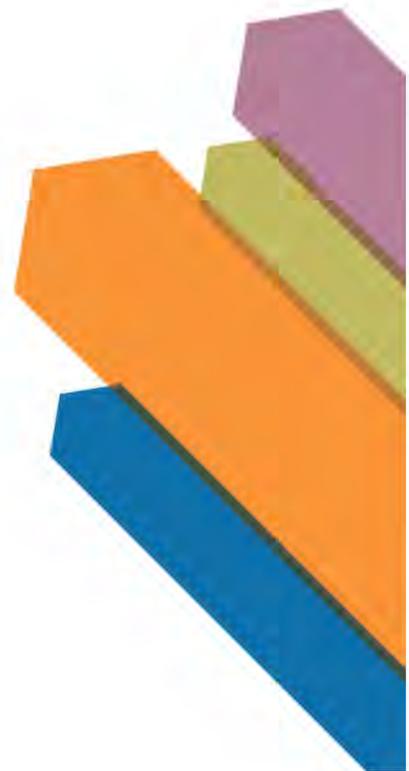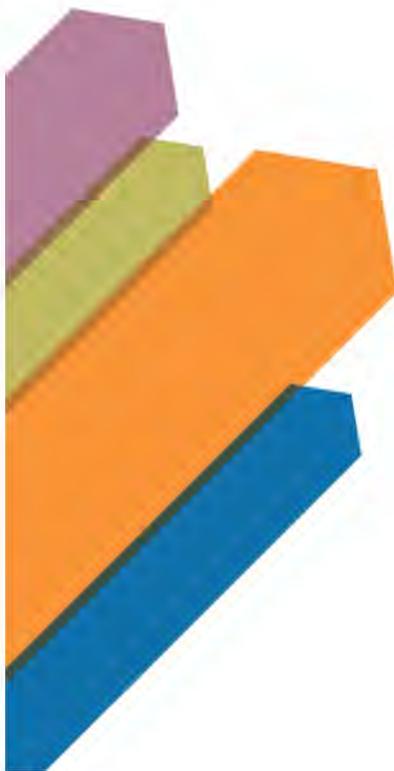
Introduction

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 contained in the Action Plan, the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH), was provided resources to increase the amount of funds available to the community sector through the Cooperation with the Community Sector – Development of Official Language Communities program, and, a development fund was 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 of action for the distribution of new money destined to 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 established in 2011 as a standing committee of the QCGN Board, with a mandate to undertake community consultations to collect and collate the development priorities of English-speaking Quebec. The QCGN Board agreed June 16 to reconstitute the PSSC, with Gerald Cutting (QCGN Vice-president) as chair, and QCGN Board members Christopher Neal and Sharleen Sullivan as members. PSSC membership was thereafter expanded – in accordance with its original mandate and the authority of Board granted on June 16 – to include John Buck, Tiffany Callender, Mario Clarke, Marlene Jennings, Guy Rodgers, and Michael Udy.

The time available was constrained by the need to ensure the community's principles and priorities would be incorporated into the FY 2019/20 funding cycle, and to prevent delays on the distribution of new money. An accelerated summer consultation process was organized to enable the PSSC to report to PCH by end-September on the community's principles and priorities of action for the distribution of resources. Care was taken to ensure an inclusive process that targeted funded and unfunded community sector organizations, including self-identified regional associations, sector organizations, and groups serving under-served and vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the PSSC took care to use reliable data-collection techniques; data that was vetted with the help of outside experts to produce core principles as well as updated and validated priorities for action to guide the allocation of additional funding.

Given the time constraints, the PSSC chose at this point not to provide specific recommendations related to the allocation or distribution of funding.

Over the past year, the vitality of English-speaking Quebec has been the subject of interest and investment by the Governments of Canada and Quebec. These developments are beginning to address the consequences of years of inequity and neglect. The community views these developments as an opportunity to ensure that the diversity of Quebec's English-speaking community is reflected in new investments. The community insists on having a voice in the

distribution of these investments based on a true partnership with governments, ensuring community-driven managed growth that enables all communities to equitably benefit and share ownership in their development.

In this spirit, the following principles related to the distribution of funding directed towards enhancing the vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec are offered:

Principles

1. **Equity**
   a. English-speaking Quebec insists on participation and consultation in the disbursement of public resources directed to enhance its vitality. It is uncomfortable with systems that create competition within the community sector and embraces approaches that are based on cooperation and collaboration.
   b. Community sector organizations supporting under-served and under-represented English-speaking communities who are not funded need money as well as the support and encouragement of existing funded community sector organizations. And existing funded organizations must be provided with the resources that ensure their long-term sustainability.
   c. Managed growth is the key to achieving equitable funding across the community sector serving English-speaking Quebec. A growth plan must be developed by the community sector under the leadership of the PSSC. This plan would support a renewed community development plan and contain mechanisms for the community sector to control growth. It would also prevent duplication of effort, encourage cooperation, and facilitate the sharing of resources, experience, and knowledge.
   d. Key principles for a growth plan, and for distributing funding until a plan is developed, are:
      i. Currently funded community sector organizations must be properly funded to meet their operational needs. This includes indexation of program funding.

      ii. A portion of new resources must be reserved for developing new capacity, expanding the number of funded groups, and ensuring the equitable distribution of resources to core funded organizations across different English-speaking communities.
2. **Diversity**
   a. English-speaking Quebec is a community of communities, whose identity has evolved and grown more diverse over the past 50 years. New government funding announcements and increased allocations to existing programs offer opportunities to ensure the capacity of English-speaking communities, in all their diversity, to equitably and sustainability benefit from positive measures to enhance their vitality.

b. Funding should promote the inclusion of communities that feel the effects of exclusion and isolation from other English-speaking communities and Quebec society as a whole.
    i. Our community understands diversity to include communities defined, among other things, by:
        1. A mother tongue other than English, but whose first official language spoken in English;
        2. LGBTQ;
        3. Religious faith;
        4. Visible minority;
        5. Age;
        6. Physical and/or developmental or psychiatric disability;
        7. Geographic isolation and/or dispersed populations;
        8. Gender; and,
        9. Socio-economic situation.

3. **Flexibility**
    a. English-speaking Quebec is a large community of communities, spread over a large geographic area. English-speaking Quebecers have layered identities and needs. Community sector organizations serving these communities and individuals therefore face unique challenges and opportunities. Funding criteria must be flexible to allow local organizations and institutions who serve and represent these communities to develop tailored strategies that address specific challenges.
    b. Programs must be adaptable to local community sector capacity. For example, data is not available for low-density or highly-dispersed communities, and many communities are under-studied. As a result, imposing requirements on organizations such as demanding a strong evidenced-based argument for funding can become a barrier that has the effect of excluding some organizations from receiving needed support.

4. **Accountability**
    a. The community sector understands the fiduciary responsibility it has in the expenditure of public funds and welcomes accountability mechanisms. However, accountability must have minimal impact on the community sectors' operational activities. English-speaking Quebec welcomes initiatives that simplify reporting requirements, along with the process to apply for funding.
    b. Government and its partners must be completely transparent and accountable for the resources they commit and expend to enhance the community's vitality. This transparency must extend to recipients of transfers, including the provincial government and community sector organizations. (This includes visibility, in real-time of applications, contribution agreements, and reports related to transfers to the community sector)
    c. Government must engage the community sector as a trusted partner in the community development process. This includes not only sharing information but

permitting the community to actively monitor related funding and participate in allocation decisions and processes.

5. **Address Vulnerability to Achieve Vitality**
   a. English-speaking Quebec accepts Canadian Heritage's *Frame of Reference for the Vitality of Official Language Minority Communities* as the basis of determining vulnerability and achieving community vitality. The following nuances are noted:
      i. The model does not adequately address the heterogenous nature of English-speaking Quebec, nor provide a way to describe the intersectional vulnerability of different communities. Vulnerability and vitality must be understood as a continuum with multiple factors such as demographics, the impact of living in urban, rural and semi-urban regions, age, gender, immigration status, sexuality, ability, race and ethnic background contributing to layered challenges and solutions; and,
      ii. The model assumes that communities are visible, when many are not for reasons of exclusion, density, isolation, and capacity. Evaluation, consultation, and research often misses these most vulnerable communities, or minimizes their needs, or forces solutions designed for larger groups with a stronger voice.
   b. Funding should be exclusively targeted to organizations who explicitly identify as English-speaking community sector organizations addressing vulnerabilities of English-speaking communities within a nuanced understanding of the Vitality Framework.

6. **Partnerships and Collective Impact**
   a. The community sector serving English-speaking Quebec prefers to work in partnership with similar-minded organizations to achieve common objectives. Projects that incorporate collective impact should be encouraged, and the resources to travel, meet, and plan collaborative projects provided. This approach reduces competition among community sector organizations.
   b. The community sector welcomes opportunities to share pooled expertise, especially in areas like: language rights; human resource management; translation; the management of funding, i.e. grant writing, applications, reporting, and evaluation.
   c. Scalable projects (where an idea is incubated in one community and then best-practices shared and replicated elsewhere in the wider community) are welcome, provided they remain flexible and responsive to the needs of individual communities.
      i. This approach requires that many more groups have the policy and community development capacity required to develop and carry out scalable projects.
   d. Mentoring and leadership development, with cross-sector and community exposure, is critical not only to establishing a collaborative and well-networked community, but to the sustainability of the community sector.

e. Particular effort must be made to bridge the gap between community sector organizations serving populations in Montreal, and those working in communities identifying as regional. There is an immediate need to build partnerships between urban and region-based organizations working on similar issues, to achieve greater representativeness, effective programming, and coordinated advocacy efforts. In no way should this be construed as restricting the efforts of individual English-speaking communities to build organic specialized capacity in their priority sectors.

7. **Assert Rights**
    a. For several years, English-speaking Quebec was considered an "inconvenient minority", existing at the nexus of Canada-Quebec relations; a "political orphan" whose needs were overlooked rather than met as provincial authorities saw English as a threat to Quebec's dominant French-speaking character.
    b. The contribution of English-speaking Quebec and value to the province's future economic success are now being recognized. The first steps towards a closer relationship between our community and the provincial government have been taken.
    c. There is still a need for the community sector to maintain multi-faceted policy capacity, creating an *evidence base* upon which to protect and defend language rights and enhance vitality.
    d. For a variety of reasons, English-speaking Quebec has not broadly developed this capacity and there are significant gaps in key areas. As a result, we are unable to articulate our needs in an evidenced-based way, and lack identifiable and dedicated community expertise in some sectors. This makes it difficult for English-speaking community organizations to explain and promote themselves and their issues to the larger Quebec society; to build political will to meet their needs; and defend their rights.
    e. There should always be an aspect of capacity building, knowledge development and sharing attached to funded activities.

Priorities for Action

The PSSC agreed to frame the priorities for action collected during the consultation within the framework of the six strategic priorities contained within the most recent community development plan, [2012 – 2017 Community Priorities and Enabling Strategies of the English-speaking Community of Quebec](). The examples provided are a snapshot of the community needs and priorities expressed in the survey, and through the focus groups.

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.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Access to public services was by far the most common response submitted as a priority of action. This included access to:
    - Health and social services (including mental health services)
    - Employment
    - Economic development
    - Education
    - Early childhood education (school readiness)

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.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Strengthen intra-community sector cooperation mechanisms and increase opportunities to work together through:
    - Activities between specialized and generalist community sector organizations and community institutions
    - In-person networking opportunities
    - Enhance collaboration with partners to effectively support the English-speaking community
    - Intra-community communications network
- Increase funding to build the capacity of community sector organizations to maintain internal outreach, and to connect with other community sector organizations.
    - Fund satellite offices for organizations serving large geographic areas
- Provide predictable and sustainable (core) funding that is indexed to inflation, and that covers all organizational operational activities.
    - Coordination between different levels of government, and within government, in development and administration of support programs
    - Simplified access to resources (application and reporting processes)
    - Reduced administrative burden (reporting)
- Program funding is preferred over project funding.
- Broaden revenue streams to include involvement of private partners.
    - Fundraising planning and operations
- Human resource planning and development.
    - Attraction and retention of HR to implement strategic and operational plans
    - Professional development and training of staff and volunteers
    - Leadership and succession planning and development
        - Internship programs
- Communications planning and operations.
    - Support the role of community sector organizations as a contact/entry point for local English-speaking communities.

- Develop understanding and appreciation by both members of the public (English and French) and Francophone community sector organizations of the role played by English-speaking Quebec's institutions and community sector organizations.
    - Translation services
- Policy and research capacity
    - Enhance ability to develop evidenced-based priorities and represent needs to supporting stakeholders.
        - Capacity to match complex public partner programs to community needs
        - Capacity to communicate community needs to government partners in policy terms
    - Local (sector) knowledge mobilization
- Development of scalable data products that permit users to target specific populations
- Governance and management consultants
- Marketing tools and expertise.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: Greater access to employment, educational opportunities, and higher levels of bilingualism will support the economic prosperity of English-speaking Quebecers thus improving the resilience of our communities.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Economic opportunity
    - Urban and Rural economic development
    - Agri food
    - Arts
    - STEM
    - Tourism
- Structured opportunities to learn, improve, and retain French
- Youth engagement and retention
- Increased educational opportunities in remote and marginalized communities
- Attraction and retention of newcomers, especially those from other regions of Canada

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.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Local community information in English
    - Media (local and regional news)
- Support for community initiatives that foster vitality through arts, culture and heritage activities, especially in cooperation with education partners
    - Prevent or mitigate social isolation
- Community meeting spaces i.e.
    - Senior wellness centres

- - Youth centres
- Recreation opportunities and facilities
- Transportation assistance to help people connect within dispersed communities
- Networking or 'joining opportunities'
- Enhanced visibility for the diverse English-speaking community's cultural expression such as published literary work, performance art such as theatre, music, film and dance, as well as painting and sculpture.

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.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Nurture diverse leaders. Among the tools that need to be developed is leadership by and for the English-speaking community. We need to nurture leaders who are representative of the layered racial, ethnic and religious diversity of Quebec's English-speaking community, who can build bridges and partnerships within it and with like-minded groups outside it, advocate publicly on the community's behalf, and take up cudgels for it with all levels of government.
- Identity, belonging, and engagement (ownership) not only youth, but all members of the community (feeling part of a larger community)
- Improve connections between English-speakers, their organizations, and the broader community, for better understanding and a stronger community
  - Develop and foster volunteer engagement
    - Leadership training
- Increase internal awareness of the needs and priorities of the English-speaking community and inspire/encourage community-based research by making data accessible
  - Research teams and projects featuring community-based co-creators (i.e. research within community (ies), and between colleges and universities and the community sector)
  - Create/support opportunities/mechanisms for knowledge dissemination
    - Research centres
    - Newsletters
    - Research tools (bibliographies, fine demographic data sets)
    - Foster an acceptance and appreciation of English-speaking Quebec by members of the public
- Intrinsic and extrinsic recognition of community's (ies') contribution(s) to Canadian and Quebec society
  - Strong heritage and cultural institutions that are managed and controlled by English-speaking Quebecers
    - Youth engagement and leadership opportunities
    - Volunteer support and training

- Opportunities to work with the Francophone majority community to build bridges and improve understanding
    - Initiatives to increase the involvement of English-speaking Quebecers in the governance/operations of Francophone community sector organizations (crosspollination)

STRONG INSTITUTIONS: Healthy institutions are the cornerstone of a dynamic community. Maintaining and supporting existing institutions and establishing new ones will strengthen our communities.

Summer 2018 Consultation:
- Leadership, management development and succession to ensure that English-speaking Quebecers manage and control their own community institutions
- Seed new institutions to serve traditionally excluded communities
- Increase enrolment in English schools
- Increase involvement in the governance of English schools, including voter participation in school board elections

Methodology

The PSSC designed a community consultation process with two data-collection tools: a survey; and a series of focus groups.

Survey: The PSSC designed a survey that was sent to 195 recipients representing more than 80 community sector organizations, QCGN Members, Community Innovation Fund (CIF) recipients and other community stakeholders on July 19. The survey asked participants to rate a list of guiding principles, developed from a related discussion paper prepared by Canadian Heritage, and the frame of reference for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities (appended). It also sought open-ended responses on the main priorities of the respondent's associated community, and the five top organizational needs the respondent's organization needed to address these priorities.

The survey was opened by 100 recipients, with 65 responses submitted by the survey's deadline of August 10.

A summary of the survey's results prepared for the PSSC is appended.

Focus Groups: In addition to the survey, five focus groups were conducted. The facilitator and note taker for these focus groups were external contractors who worked with PSSC members to prepare the questions the groups considered. A member of the PSSC attended each of the focus groups to observe and provide background information.

The notes from each of the focus groups, as well as a summary note are appended.

Sense-making: After the survey results were collected, and the focus groups held, the PSSC met for a day and a half, for a facilitated sense-making exercise. The exercise was designed by a sub-committee of the PSSC working with the contracted facilitator. The PSSC also invited a small group of external resource people, invited for their experience and expertise, to help interpret the survey and focus group data.

The PSSC and resource people met on the evening of August 22 to review the survey data and focus groups results. They reconvened on the morning of August 23, and through a facilitated process structured themes and produced seven principles. The PSSC met on its own on the afternoon of August 23 to further outline the principles and provide guidance on structuring priorities of action.

This report draws on the results of these activities to present the community's consolidated principles and priorities of action related to PCH's increased funding.

Annexes:

    A. Notes from the 2018 Community Priorities Survey
    B. #1 Focus Group Notes
    C. #2 Focus Group Notes
    D. #3 Focus Group Notes
    E. #4 Focus Group Notes
    F. #5 Focus Group Notes
    G. Sense Making Day Notes 2018.08.23

(Annexes available to participants and researchers upon request. Please write us at communitypriorities@qcgn.ca.)