



## Quebec Youth to Discuss Their Place in Canada at Second Annual Youth Forum

### For Immediate Release

**Montreal – March 1, 2016** – Dozens of youth from throughout the province have been taking part in regional workshops to prepare for the second annual Young Quebecers Leading the Way provincial forum which will take place next week at Montreal’s Concordia University.

Led by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), in partnership with the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS), Young Quebecers Leading the Way is a three-year project funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage’s Youth Take Charge program. The project, which involves youth in celebrations around Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, encourages participants to reflect on Canada’s past, present and future and develop a stronger attachment to their country through civic engagement.

“Young Quebecers Leading the Way oversees three annual youth forums where English- and French-speaking youth aged 15 to 25 get a chance to offer their views on the significance of youth engagement in shaping their country,” explained project coordinator Alison Maynard, noting this year’s theme *Quebec Youth Speak About Canada Today* will be examined through six lenses: Indigenous Peoples; Canadian Identity; Politics and Democracy; Social Issues and the Environment; Canada in the World; and Economy.

“The Government of Canada is proud to invest in this project—and to give young Canadians the opportunity to learn more about their country and become active and engaged citizens,” said the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage. “Forums and regional workshops will put our youth at the heart of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Canada’s Confederation, and of the future we need to prepare together.”

New to the annual forum this year will be a couple of activities with project partner INM, which is hosting its 8<sup>th</sup> annual École d’hiver that same weekend at Dawson College. Participants in the two events will link up for a joint launch on Friday evening as well as a dinner and a show on Saturday evening.

The youths will wrap up discussion on Sunday drafting a declaration on their perception. “It’s exciting to see our youth come together, in both official languages, to debate major issues from their unique perspective. It inspires confidence in our leaders of tomorrow,” observed QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge.

“Two dimensions of this project are dear to INM. Firstly, we encourage dialogue between young English- and French-speaking Quebecers which is essential improved mutual understanding,” commented Michel Venne, Director General of INM. “Also, we encourage youth to get involved in society. Without civic participation, societies wither and become fragmented.”

“Given that Quebec youth are generally more engaged socially than politically, with the highest numbers of volunteers but the fewest youth voters, initiatives like Young Quebecers Leading the Way are extremely encouraging, especially when they are relevant for reflecting about our country’s future,” added ACS Executive Vice-President, Jack Jedwab.

An interactive, bilingual website has been created to act as a platform for outreach and networking, encouraging youth to engage with one another and learn from the projects’ achievements. To explore the site visit [www.youthleadingway150.org](http://www.youthleadingway150.org).

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 48 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

**Source:**

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