

For immediate release

QCGN to Host Conference on Community Engagement and the Integration of Newcomers

Montreal – March 13, 2017 – On March 15, 2017, the Quebec Community Groups Network will be hosting a one-day conference entitled *Community Engagement and the Successful Integration of Newcomers*. The one-day event on the eve of the National Metropolis Conference will bring together dozens of representatives from various sectors and regions to discuss how newcomers – immigrants, refugees and migrants – integrate into Quebec society through the province’s English-speaking communities and institutions.

Sponsored by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the one-day conference kicks with a workshop/panel entitled Faith-based Organizations as Integrating Factors for Newcomers that will discuss how churches, synagogues, and faith-based groups are integrating newcomers into our communities. This panel was organized in cooperation with the English-speaking Catholic Council.

“During the past 35 years, many of the English-speaking parishes in Montreal, Laval and the South Shore have operated as de facto landing pads for newcomers where English is the language of worship and interaction,” said Anna Farrow, executive Director of the English-speaking Catholic Council which helped organize the workshop. “Though most of these immigrant populations are neither French nor English-speaking, and though they are rightly working towards integration into French-speaking Quebec, many have English as their First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) and are integrating into Quebec through the English-speaking community through our churches.”

Other faith-based organizations in our community are also engaged in newcomer integration and supporting asylum seekers – most recently in the welcome of Syrian refugees. Our multi faith panel will include Alessandra Santopadre from the Archdiocese of Montreal; Pastor Eric Dyck from St. John’s Lutheran Church; Fr. Francis McKee from Jesus Light of the World Parish; Rabbi Lisa Grushcow from Temple Emanu-el-beth sholom; and Norbert Piché, the director of Jesuit Refugee Service – Canada.

Following a networking lunch, the afternoon will begin with a panel entitled *The Role of Municipalities in Welcoming Newcomers* that will discuss the growing role of our cities and towns in welcoming and integrating migrants, immigrants, and refugees and how they can partner effectively with community institutions and non-profit organizations for success in retaining newcomers. Confirmed participants for this panel include Montreal’s Deputy Mayor Mary Deros, Sherbrooke city councillor Annie Godbout, who presides over the city’s intercultural relations diversity committee, and Vera Dodic, the director of the City of Toronto’s Newcomer Office.

The conference will wrap up with a roundtable entitled *Fostering the Vitality of English-Speaking Communities in Quebec Through the Successful Integration of Newcomers*. Along with participants, this plenary panel aims to uncover innovative ways that our communities can – with the support of municipal, provincial, and federal government institutions – foster the vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec through

the successful integration of newcomers and how partnerships with community groups and institutions can better lead to positive settlement outcomes for newcomers.

This panel Chedly Belkhodja, Principal and Professor at Concordia University' School of Community and Public Affairs and David O. Johnston, Quebec representative of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

For details of QCGN's conference and the registration link, visit [our webpage](#).

The QCGN is also sponsoring a conference during the main Metropolis event that will talk about attracting and retaining foreign students. Entitled Pathways to Permanent Residence: Factors Related to Foreign Student Retention and Integration in Quebec and Canada, the workshop will bring together researchers and experts to discuss the principal factors that drive foreign students to remain in or leave Canada or their host province upon the completion of a university education.

With a focus on Quebec, participants will look at the socioeconomic and linguistic factors that attract students to Canada and contribute to their retention. This workshop will also examine the programs that facilitate international student mobility to Canada, the initial motivations for studying and living in Canada, what kind of support students secure from the university community across their period of study, and the conditions that might motivate them to remain upon the completion of their studies.

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 51 English-language community organizations across Quebec. A centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, QCGN identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

For further information:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications and Public Relations | rita.legault@qcgnc.ca
Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223 | Mobile: 514-912-6555