

Quebec Community Groups Network

Executive Director's Report 2002-2003

The year 2002-2003 has once again been an exciting year of growth and development for the QCGN. Through the many activities undertaken over the past year, we have re-enforced the solidarity among our members and extended our outreach past the QCGN membership into the broader English-speaking community of Quebec.

The QCGN members, the Executive and the QCGN staff have worked hard to contribute to the development and enhancement of the vitality of the English-language minority communities throughout Quebec, which is, in fact, the mission of the QCGN.

Within the scope of our mission, the two main activity areas are coordination and networking and national representation. Coordination and networking involve activities aimed at increasing the English-speaking community's capacity to foster a coordinated and effective approach to our community development. Through national representation, the QCGN aims to develop effective representation of the English-speaking community of Quebec with government officials at all levels.

As you read the following report, I believe that in reviewing the activities of the past year, you will agree that the QCGN has been faithful to its mission throughout a successful and productive year of 2002-2003.

In 2001, the QCGN set before itself a Strategic Plan to focus its actions over three years. This plan encompassed a three parts:

- (1) refining of the mission, mandate and orientation of the QCGN,
- (2) the development of QCGN services and support to member groups and
- (3) the development of a funding strategy.

As of today, we are well on our way to accomplishing the three objectives that were set out.

(1) To better reflect the mission and mandate of the QCGN and to clarify the rules of governance, the QCGN bylaws have been modified, pending ratification at the 2002-03 AGM. The changes include the acceptance by the members to abide by the by-laws, accept the mission and mandate of the QCGN and remain committed to furthering the objectives of the QCGN and abiding by the QCGN Constitution. Moreover, in the proposed by-laws, membership in the QCGN may be suspended or revoked, under clearly stated conditions, if the member does not fulfill its obligations or commits an act considered to be harmful, unworthy or contrary to the interests and activities of the QCGN. Other proposed changes stipulate that the property and business of the QCGN will be managed by a

Board of Directors, consisting of one director to represent each member. The qualification and mechanics of how each member will designate a director to the Board of Directors is clearly stipulated. Also, the conditions under which a director may be removed are also included. Finally, the changes clarify and re-enforce the executive powers of the Executive.

The Executive has also revised the Policies and Procedures of the QCGN for the healthy management of the association, to be implemented in 2003-04 following ratification by the QCGN membership.

(2) To develop services and support to member groups, the QCGN has formed a Member Services Committee. This committee reviewed the results of the questionnaire sent to all QCGN members which gives a snapshot of the needs for professional, volunteer and organizational development expressed by the members. They have produced an initial report and list of priorities to be acted upon.

(3) The development of a funding strategy has included various elements over the past year. Activities have included changes to the process of program funding to better correspond to the objectives of results-based management, changes to the process of project funding to improve the quality of the projects being funded and progress towards the creation of a Global Development Plan for the determination of community development objectives and actions in the English-speaking community of Quebec.

With regard to program funding, the Program Funding Committee has worked very hard to develop an Evaluation Grid for Program Funding Applications. Many hours and much expertise were invested in the creation of this grid, which will contribute to the strengthening of the QCGN member organizations and will lead to stronger community development. A very sincere thanks to Chuck Childs, Peter Quilliams and Jim Carter for the countless hours they devoted to the development of the grid and then to the assessment of the program funding applications. Also to Sheila Goldbloom and Kevin Saville for their participation in the assessment process. Thanks also to Beverley Caplan, Astri Thorvik and Jill Varley, from the PCH regional office, who also went above and beyond the call of duty and worked with the community members in the development of the program funding assessment tools and the assessment process.

Thanks to Rachel Garber, Claire Helman, Riva Heft and Jane Needles for the many hours spent assessing the project funding applications. This committee also reviewed the evaluation process and has made recommendations which will promote quality applications and ensure that the Development Fund is used more equitably to meet needs throughout Quebec by distributing funds to proposals from a greater number of groups.

Work on the Global Development Planning process has been a major part of the activities of the QCGN over the past year. Considerable enthusiasm and interest have been generated for the Global Development Plan, the development of which has also become an important mobilizing force for our communities as we find our place in the modern Quebec and Canadian context. This Plan, in its final version, will serve as a key instrument for consultation and negotiations and also as the foundation for developing the capacity of our communities to deal effectively with governments.

The Steering Committee composed of the Chairs of the 8 Sector Task Forces and the resource team, under the able direction of the Chairperson, Hugh Maynard, has devoted many hours to the GDP process over this past year.

Each Sector Chair recruited 10 to 12 individuals who are actively engaged in their respective sector and the English-speaking community to sit on their task force. Every task force then held a one-day session to define the vision, priorities and potential partners in their particular sector. These discussions were then developed into sector plans.

Task force members subsequently participated in a successful Intersectoral Conference to collectively share the sectoral plans, develop a common vision for the English-speaking communities of Quebec and work out main development strategies. At the conference, discussion also concerned the successful implementation of the GDP and how to take it to the English-speaking community-at-large for consultation.

The interest and enthusiasm by all who are involved in the GDP process have remained high as this process unfolds. Many questions and important discussions about the state of our communities and institutions and the vision for the future have been part of this important progression towards change. The enthusiasm and involvement by all the actors has been particularly positive.

Many thanks to Hugh Maynard, Jane Needles, James Hughes, Charles Bury, Peter Riordon, Marion Standish, Ed Labaree and Jennifer Johnson-Blouin, our Task Force Chairs. Also, hearty thanks to the many volunteers who have been part of the GDP process and Task Forces. A special recognition of a job well done to Susan Grundy, the lead consultant and to COCo and QLN for their expertise in the GDP process.

The Strategic plan calls for the development of communication plan. As a first step, the QCGN website is in development and will be operational in the summer of 2003. This site will provide information about the QCGN, QCGN member organizations and the English-speaking communities throughout Quebec and will serve as a vehicle for exchange of information between QCGN members

The QCGN has been involved in many other activities which focused on developing a more solid partnership with federal government departments.

The QCGN has been an active participant in the elaboration of the Action Plan for Official Languages – The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality by the Canadian government. The QCGN submitted a diagnosis of the situation of English-speakers in Quebec with suggestions for change to support the communities throughout Quebec to Minister Stéphane Dion, responsible for this Action Plan. The document is entitled "Suggesting Change, The Situation of the English-speaking Minority of Quebec and proposals for change. The QCGN has also been an working partner with the Privy Council Office as the consultation and activities in the plan have unfolded by assuming the necessary leadership on behalf of the community and by bringing into the process, the elements of our community that will be the most effective in the full implementation of this Action Plan for the whole English-speaking community. The QCGN is also involved in building the Ministerial Consultation committee and process which will measure the success of the implementation of the Action Plan in the English-speaking communities of Quebec.

Following the publication of the Health Canada Community Advisory's report for improving access to Health and Social Services in English, QCGN members, in conjunction with the committee, worked closely with Health Canada in the development of the part of the Dion Action Plan to provide English-speaking minority communities with access to health services in their language.

The QCGN is also involved in the creation of a coordination committee or renewal of the partnership between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the English-speaking community. This committee will strive to insure that the minority English-speaking communities are made aware of issues specific to PCH and its mandate and that PCH senior management and department officials are aware of challenges and concerns of English-language minority communities. This committee will also make certain that English-speaking community and PCH cooperate in the strategic objectives of PCH and identify strategies for long-term community development.

Justice Canada, in the development of its new Strategic Plan for Official Languages invited the QCGN to participate in the consultation. Feedback from the QCGN membership confirmed that there is little knowledge about access to justice in English in Quebec and the issues that arise. Also, the participation of the English-speaking communities of Quebec in programs sponsored by Justice Canada is minimal. There is, however, a huge potential for development in this sector and a willingness on the part of Justice Canada to work with the QCGN membership to promote better use of their programs.

In the arts sector, the QCGN continues to work with the Canada Council in encouraging English-speaking artists from Montreal and the mainland to become

more familiar with the Canada Council and its services and to stimulate development of the Arts industry in English Quebec. Telefilm Canada has signed an agreement with the QCGN to conduct a study on the state of independent English-speaking television and film producers and industry in Quebec.

The active participation of the Community Committee for increased participation in the Public Service has ceased, however the QCGN remains committed to working with government partners to increase the participation of English-speakers in the provincial and federal public services. The QCGN has met with the President of the Federal Treasury Board, Mme Lucienne Robillard to sensitize her to the existing problem of under-representation, present suggestions for solutions to this problem and to demonstrate the QCGN's willingness to work closely with the federal government. We have also worked with various government departments and Canada Post to give suggestions on increasing participation.

The QCGN continues to circulate job postings in the federal and provincial governments on a regular basis and to offer information and support to English-speaking candidates.

The QCGN President and various members of the Executive have met with the Commissioner of Official Languages and her officials to discuss on-going concerns of the English-speaking community.

As the Canada-Quebec Agreement on Education is to be renewed in the upcoming year, the QCGN has met with Mr Noel Burke, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education for services to the English-speaking community, to discuss community participation in the negotiation process. The QCGN will remain vigilant and active in this process and will lend its support to Mr Burke as the negotiation with the federal government continues.

The QCGN is committed to outreach to other community associations that are not part of the QCGN. New working relationships with Youth Employment Services of Montreal, EPOC Montreal, the Community Table, COCo and their network, the QLN, to name a few, has proven to be particularly enriching and has brought new perspective to discussions around the QCGN table. QCGN members and staff have participated in various conferences dealing with diversity, minority communities, and language rights in Canada.

Membership in the Court Challenges Program by the QCGN has proven to be especially enlightening. Knowledge of the opportunities that this program offers and a review of some legal cases supported by Court Challenges by Me Sylvie Leger at a recent QCGN meeting proved very interesting for members. There is much potential for members of English-speaking communities in Quebec to use this program to better understand their minority rights in Canada and the possibilities for recourse.

The QCGN supported Bill C-407 in June and again in October (Bill C-202), sponsored by Mauril Bélanger, M.P, An Act to amend the Canada Health Act to add a sixth principle of linguistic duality and will present Brief to House of Commons Standing Committee re the sixth principle in the Canada Health Act.

The QCGN has met regularly with Treasury Board/Privy Council representatives and representatives of the Francophone minority communities in Ottawa since the fall of 2002 to use of the data from the most recent decennial census of Canada to determine if, according to certain provisions of the Regulations, services to the public should be offered in both official languages at federal offices and service points. This review is to ensure that members of official languages minority communities receive services from the federal institutions in the official languages of their choice where required by the Act and the Regulations.

The President of the QCGN presented a Brief on Immigration to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

This annual report highlights the broad strokes of QCGN activities for 2002-2003.

While the QCGN has been very active over the past year, when one looks at the upcoming activities such as Negotiations for renewal of Canada Community Agreement 2004-2009, the continuing development of Global Development Plan, the implantation of the Dion Action Plan – 2004-2009, participation in the various coordination and advisory committees, outreach to the larger English-speaking community and associations and IPOLC activities, next year promises to be very exciting.

In closing, I would like to express a sincere thank you to our QCGN President, Mr Martin Murphy, for his leadership of the QCGN and his support to the Secretariat throughout this past year. Also thanks to the Executive for their input, support and leadership and to all the representatives of QCGN members with whom I have worked, as it has been a stimulating and rewarding experience.

Finally, a sincere thanks to Sandra Vallee and Christiane St-Laurent for their invaluable support this past year. Special thanks and good-bye to Susanne Bergman.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Hook
Executive Director QCGN
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