

## Quebec youth lead the way to Sesquicentennial celebrations

### For Immediate Release

**Montreal – March 13, 2015** - Heading into celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation, more than six dozen English- and French-speaking young Quebecers gathered at the historic Morrin Centre in Quebec City this past weekend to reflect on Canada's history and their role in the past and future of their country.

The youth from across the province were participating in the first of three annual forums organized by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) in partnership with the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). The forum is part of *Young Quebecers Leading the Way*, a three-year project funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage's Youth Take Charge program.

Participants aged 15 to 25 from the Eastern Townships, the Gaspésie, the Outaouais, Rouyn-Noranda, the Greater Montreal area and the provincial capital region drafted a declaration on Canada's past as viewed by its future. To read the full declaration, click here: [Youth Declaration](#).

Before drafting their declarations on Sunday, youths discussed the forum's main themes in workshops in their own regions during January and February and heard from a variety of academics and experts during presentations on Saturday. Main speakers included Yves Desjardins- Siciliano, President and CEO of VIA Rail Canada; historian and author Jocelyn Létourneau, Canada's research chair on Quebec Contemporary History; and award-winning filmmaker Kevin Tierney, who participated in a discussion on French immersion following a viewing of his movie of the same name.

"The wide range of exceptional speakers contributed to high quality deliberations," commented project coordinator Alison Maynard. "Youth participants heard a former Canadian ambassador speak about Canada's role in the world and explored Canada's past treatment of Indigenous Peoples with a First Nations spokesperson. Discussions were lively, inspirational and educational. This is the kind of open dialogue our future leaders must engage in, and that's what *Young Quebecers Leading the Way* aims to make possible."

*“Young Quebecers Leading the Way* encourages our young participants to reflect on Canada’s past, present and future through the lens of history, heritage and civic engagement,” said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge, noting that participants represent the emerging leaders of Quebec society. “These youths are truly engaged and we must continue to provide them with opportunities to put forth their ideas and influence the future of our province and our country.”

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 website 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 43 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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