



AGIR DANS SON MILIEU

A project from the Centre St-Pierre



A stylized, layered illustration in shades of yellow and white. It depicts a village with a central church featuring a tall steeple. In the foreground, there are stylized figures of people, including a woman with long hair on the left and a man on the right, both looking towards the center. The background shows more buildings and trees, creating a sense of depth and community.

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THE “AGIR DANS SON MILIEU” [ACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY] PROJECT, WHICH HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE MARCH 2008, HAS CREATED A NETWORK TO SUPPORT THE SHARING, ADAPTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATED URBAN REVITALIZATION PRACTICES IN VARIOUS TOWNS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS IN QUEBEC.

SOCIAL INNOVATION COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

This initiative of the Centre St-Pierre is based on an original knowledge transfer model that encourages the transfer of practices between counterpart organizations. The main purpose behind the creation and maintenance of this community of practice was to promote the sharing of knowledge acquired and tested on the ground. This project documents these experiments in writing and on video. The community of practice operated through a combination of in-person meetings and communication via an online teamwork platform.

PARTNERS

To carry out this project, the Centre St-Pierre and Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières / ÉCOF – CDÉC de Trois-Rivières [Trois-Rivières’ old town initiative / Trois-Rivières community economic development corporation] decided to combine forces and pool their complementary expertise. Six other partners have joined them:

- **Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont (Montreal)** [Rosemont community development corporation];
- **Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec** [Quebec City community economic development corporation];
- **Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield** [partners for revitalization of old neighbourhoods of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield];

- **Revitalisation des quartiers St-Marc / Christ-Roi (Shawinigan)** [revitalization of St-Marc / Christ-Roi neighbourhoods];
- **Solidarité Ahuntsic (Montreal);**
- **Solidarité Mercier-Est (Montreal).**

The Réseau québécois en innovation sociale (RQIS) [Quebec social innovation network], set up by the Université du Québec, has also supported the project. RQIS’ mandate is to develop tools to support networking and knowledge transfer between research institutions and practitioners. RQIS has sometimes worked to assist social innovation projects in this area. In accordance with its mandate, RQIS is providing the online teamwork platform. It also supports use and appropriation of this platform by the facilitation team and project partners.

RESEARCHERS INVOLVED IN PROJECT

This community of practice also has benefited from the observations and analytic insight provided by Lise St-Germain and Frédéric Lesemann. Lise St-Germain is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Social Sciences at the Université de Montréal and coordinator of the new Centre de recherche sociale appliquée [applied social research centre]. Ms St-Germain has long been involved in community economic development, the social economy and popular literacy education. She is interested in ways to promote participation in the fight against poverty, based on an integrated territorial approach. She has also been mandated by the Centre St-Pierre to conduct a participatory evaluation of the project. Frédéric Lesemann taught and did research in the field of social policy at the Université de Montréal for

24 years before moving to the culture and society section of Quebec's Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS).

DOCUMENTED PRACTICES

Fourteen projects and innovative practices have been documented in fact sheets found in this document and also in videos available on the Website: <http://www.uquebec.ca/ptc/adsm>. Among those practices, we find:

■ Forum populaire citoyen [popular citizen's forum]

Citizen consultation and mobilization in Montreal's Rosemont district served to set action priorities for improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood, in conjunction with stakeholders and organizations.

■ Cafés urbains d'information et de consultation [consultation and information urban cafés]

This is another citizen mobilization activity: citizens are brought together, informed and consulted on a theme related to improving the quality of life in their neighbourhood (environment; employment; economic, social and community development; recreation; etc.).

■ Commodus Capitale-Nationale-Services pour concilier travail-famille et vie personnelle [work/life/family balance services]

This collaborative effort by community actors, which grew out of the effort to revitalize the Saint-Roch district and was then expanded to other Quebec City neighbourhoods, led to the creation of a solidarity co-op, which brokers services to corporate employees in order to promote work/life/family balance.

■ Limoilou Pluriel-Concertation du milieu pour favoriser l'intégration des personnes immigrantes [community joint action to promote immigrant integration]

A number of actors (the Cégep, the district, community and government organizations, etc.) came together to carry out a joint action plan to attract immigrants to this Quebec City neighbourhood and facilitate their reception and integration.

■ Bulletin communautaire de quartier [community newsletter]

A citizens' committee is producing a monthly newsletter for residents of depressed neighbourhoods of Trois-Rivières, which is being used by the entire community network to publicize its activities and services. It has been distributed to 10,000 households every month for the past five years, giving citizens a newsletter produced by them and dealing with issues that affect them.

■ Société immobilière communautaire [community housing corporation]

This project supports low-income people, especially young couples, tenants and young families, who want to buy and live in a house in one of Trois-Rivières' first neighbourhoods, by means of coordination with and contributions from community partners. The aim is to increase the number of resident homeowners in these neighbourhoods and thereby to help improve the living environment.

■ Muséologie d'intervention sociale [social museology]

Young drop-outs are responsible for mounting an exhibition (photos, urban installation, mobile exhibit on inflatable structures) and putting together a book in order to reach the public and raise awareness of the situation of young people. The project is being carried out in coordination with 75 community partners. It gives the drop-outs a chance to prove that they have a place in the town. In addition to building self-esteem and

self-confidence, the project restores the youths' pride by giving them a chance to contribute something to the community.

■ **Visites guidées d'un quartier** [neighbourhood tours]

This project consists of conducting guided tours of a neighbourhood and publishing a guide booklet. It is being implemented by a citizens' and partners' committee (le Comité du patrimoine des anciens quartiers – old town heritage committee) that is working to stop the deterioration of the urban environment and preserve the built heritage and the architectural character of old neighbourhoods of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, while restoring residents' pride.

■ **Maison de répit** [respite-care centre]

This project, which grew out of community consultation and citizen mobilization, led to the creation of a respite-care centre that offers child-care services from 6:00 p.m. Friday to 12:00 a.m. Saturday, and drop-in care on weekday afternoons. These services complement those already offered at daycare centres. They make it possible for parents to go out and have a break. A variety of activities designed to improve parents' parenting skills are also being organized.

■ **Murales de quartier** [neighbourhood murals]

Two murals, one on the theme "Ma vie de quartier" [life in my neighbourhood] and the other on the theme "Imagine," were produced in order to liven up walls in a state of disrepair on a busy neighbourhood corner. The works are the result of joint effort and the contributions of talented youths, taking into account the comments of passers-by. These murals offer opportunities for organized activities testing people's knowledge about well-known local sites. They help to enhance the urban environment and to restore residents' sense of belonging and pride.

■ **Approche intégrée de développement social du quartier** [integrated approach to neighbourhood social development]

This is a community consultation and citizen mobilization effort aimed at fighting poverty in five parts of Montreal's Ahuntsic district. It has resulted in the creation of two community centres and local projects that bring together public and community players, supported by advisory committees that include citizens. It offers services related to immigrant integration, housing, food, etc.

■ **Centre communautaire** [community centre]

This project, which grew out of community consultation and mobilization efforts, led to the creation of a socio-economic corporation and the opening of a community centre. The aim was to address the lack of space for community organizations in the neighbourhood. In addition to housing, some 20 organizations and self-employed workers offering a variety of activities for local residents, it provides a gathering place for citizens.

■ **Café urbain sur la création de murales** [urban café on mural creation]

This type of citizen mobilization activity, used for many years by the *Table de concertation de Mercier-Est* [Mercier-Est joint action table] in Montreal, serves to bring together, inform and consult citizens on various subjects of concern. In this case, citizens are being consulted on the choice of sites and murals to be created in the neighbourhood as part of a mural project designed to improve the quality of the urban environment.

■ **Évaluation des activités de concertation et de mobilisation** [assessment of joint action and mobilization activities]

This evaluation process, carried out in partnership with a group of university research fellows, aims at improving joint action practices. The evaluation includes, among other things, a compilation of comments made in interviews with many community and institutional players and citizens, as well as a general description of the consultation and coordination process, the creation of a committee to look at governance, and recommendations for changes to governance rules and policies.

TRANSFER OF PRACTICES

Each partner chose one of these practices in order to adapt it to its local circumstances and implement it in the course of the year. The Centre St-Pierre is also supporting them in the process of transferring practices to the different communities.

The CDC Rosemont has chosen to import neighbourhood guided tours and to develop the project with elementary school children. The children will also be visited by the adolescents involved in the Valleyfield social museology project, who will pass on the expertise they have acquired.

The CDÉC de Québec has chosen urban cafés as a means for consulting citizens who sit on the boards of local social economy corporations. It wants to know more about their volunteer involvement and their training and support needs.

Démarche de revitalisation de Trois-Rivières has chosen the guided neighbourhood tours developed by PRAQ in Valleyfield. The first tours will be conducted this summer. In addition to offering guided tours with an accompanying guide booklet, development of another approach using an audio guide is being considered.

Solidarité Mercier-Est is preparing and organizing a forum on local and social development, largely based on the “Forum populaire” held in the Rosemont district. Solidarité Mercier-Est wants to consult local citizens and partner organizations on action priorities for the neighbourhood.

Solidarité Ahuntsic has chosen to set up a respite-care centre for single mothers in one part of its district, similar to the one in Shawinigan. Child-care services will be available on Friday evening and Saturday morning, among other times.

Revitalisation des quartiers St-Marc et Christ-Roi in Shawinigan is undertaking a social museology project with young drop-outs, modeled after the Valleyfield project. It is too early to say whether it will produce a photo exhibit or a play, but the process and the work based on this practice are well advanced.

Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) in Valleyfield has chosen to set up a community property management corporation, similar to the one in Trois-Rivières, to encourage local residents to become resident homeowners. Its existing expertise in building inspection is being applied and extended to the challenge of the renovations required to maintain and improve a property.

PROJECT DISSEMINATION

Project outputs include:

7 fact sheets on the partner organizations;

14 fact sheets on the practices and projects;

7 videos on the partner organizations;

14 videos on the practices and projects;

1 online teamwork platform.

By making these practices better known, the Centre St-Pierre hopes to support the dissemination of these innovative experiences throughout the entire province. Indeed, the Internet site of “Agir dans son milieu” is now available to the general public at the following address: <http://www.quebec.ca/ptc/adsm>

This project was made possible thanks to the financial support of the **Social Development Partnership Program of the government of Canada**. The opinions and interpretations appearing in the publications relating to this project are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the government of Canada.

— Centre St-Pierre, MARCH 2009



Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont à Montréal

Rosemont community development corporation (Montreal)

Its projects and its practices



Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont

Rosemont community development corporation



Founded in 1988, the Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont, formerly the Comité de vie du quartier Rosemont (COVIQ), is a grouping of community organizations working in that sector of Montreal in various fields of activity in the pursuit of a common goal, namely, that of enhancing the quality of life, both individual and collective, of the citizens of Rosemont, and this, in a perspective of social change.

Its territory of action is bordered by Iberville Street to the west and Lacordaire Street to the east, Bélanger and Sherbrooke Streets, respectively to the north and south. Number of inhabitants according to the 2006 census: 82,090.

The CDC seeks to ensure the active participation of the community movement in neighbourhood life. Most of its members are community organizations sharing a common goal, namely, that of improving the quality of life of the residents of the neighbourhood and of fighting poverty. To this end, it works jointly and in collaboration with its partners in the field: the five members of its Board of Directors meet every three weeks; its general assemblies, on average two yearly, serve to discuss neighbourhood issues; its working committees are very active, and, if need be, dinner and informational meetings are held. The CDC comprises 30 individual members, as well as 20 member-groups.

ITS MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS ARE:

- the housing and cohabitation of various community organizations under the same roof;
- the bringing together and development of joint action between community organizations;
- the organization of mobilization actions: a first in 1998 stemming from a desire to prioritize and target local interventions, a second in 2006 titled Décider Rosemont ensemble [deciding Rosemont together] whose main aim was to broaden the field of action, make a greater effort to consult the milieu and develop a citizens' approach, again through prioritizing local targets for intervention;
- the creation of Urban Cafés under the slogan Citoyens prenez place, [Citizens, Step Up!] a consultative approach on the future and quality of life of the neighbourhood (mini questionnaire, focus groups), citizens' forum (World Café formula), forum on adoption of neighbourhood priorities (by representatives of organizations and institutions active in the field, as well as concerned citizens), community work, various activities (information, awareness, exchanges, film-conference, petitions, etc.).

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PRACTICE

FORUM
POPULAIRE CITOYEN

[POPULAR CITIZEN'S FORUM]

Organization: Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont

Contact: Rébecca Beauvais

PROJECT

Organization of a *Forum populaire citoyen* [popular citizens' forum] that will allow citizens to discuss the priorities identified in prior consultations.

CONTEXT

The Forum populaire citoyen is part of the first year's concerted action, Décider Rosemont ensemble, bringing together some 30 members. This consultation of partners and citizens must be done according to an action plan developed over a six-month period (from May to October). It foresees the implementation of a citizens' advisory committee, the distribution of questionnaires, the holding of urban cafés and focus-groups among subsidized housing residents, the young, etc.

These actions sound out the priorities of citizens in regard to six major issues; Arts and Culture, Employment and Local Economic Development, Environment, Social Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty, Leisure, Democratic Life and Citizenship in Rosemont.

All these consultations are then brought together in a Forum populaire citoyen that tries to draw out the priorities and eventually lead to a Priorities Adoption Forum that, in turn, brings

together community-based or institutional workers from the field, as well as citizens, to adopt the priorities.

PARTNERS AND ACTORS

The Organizing Committee for this action is formed by the Corporation de Développement Communautaire (CDC) Rosemont, the Société de Développement Environnemental de Rosemont (SODER), the Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) Lucille-Teasdale, the Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) Rosemont/La Petite-Patrie and the Arrondissement [Borough] Rosemont/La Petite-Patrie.

Centraide subsidized the hiring of a project leader chosen by the CDC Rosemont for the entire action. The Advisory Committee is composed of 12 citizens. Other partners took part, lending the use of their premises for citizen consultation and exchange meetings: the Parrainage civique les Marronniers, Mon petit café de quartier, Mousse-Café and the Carrefour communautaire L'Entre-Gens.

Each partner organization appointed a representative to the Forum Organizing Committee. The committee is supported by the Project Leader. Two members of the Organizing Committee also sit on the Advisory Committee (with the Project Leader and the 12 citizens). These two committees had been working parallel courses (the Organizing Committee met 14 times between June 1 and November 1, 2006), the meetings serving primarily to inform citizens about the action plan, the results, or to validate the orientation and decisions to be taken in organizing the action and related activities, such as the Forum populaire.

This action, directed towards all residents of the Rosemont territory (82,090 people according to 2006 data of the CSSS Lucille-Teasdale) brought together 75 citizens.

IMPLEMENTATION

The preliminary stage of the Forum populaire citoyen was to collate and process the results of the consultations, urban cafés, questionnaires, and focus-groups. Afterwards, the type of forum and workshops had to be determined. How were we to proceed knowing that some people speak all the time, others now and then, while still others never do unless asked directly to do so?

The citizens and those working on the ground decided to call on an outside source for meeting mediation in order to allow all participants to express themselves and speak out, as well as to ensure attaining the following objectives: to broaden the field of action, to consult the milieu and develop a citizens' approach by prioritizing local targets for intervention.

We also had to find common ground for the two committees who had been following parallel paths between May and November: the Forum Organizing Committee and the Advisory Committee of citizens that had separately availed themselves of the action and its contents.

We then had to decide when it would be best to hold the Forum, keeping in mind that we hoped to reach and have the greatest possible number of people attend. We therefore chose a Saturday. In the same vein, we also had to find an appropriate venue, one that would best lend itself to the desired type of meeting.

In the end, the “world café” formula was retained. This is a friendly formula by which people gather around a table and a blank sheet of paper in groups of 4, 5 or 6. Each group is assigned a theme in the form of open questions. Each group



works the questions and provides its answers. The group then breaks up, its members go on and form a new group with members from other teams and take up a partially completed sheet. The new members take stock of the existing answers, pursue the question further and write down their own reflections. Thus does each member of each group have the opportunity to express himself on each issue. Ideas cross over, come together, and other ideas come to light. This process ends with a plenary session whose purpose is not to summarize the entirety of the reflections but rather to allow those involved to roam around and see all that was written regarding the various themes.

Once the organization of the Forum is underway, the time is come for promotion, dissemination and mobilization. A mobilization was already under way since the process was launched, by word of mouth. Posters promoting the event had been put up on billboards of various community groups. The event was publicized in the local paper and, to reach out and involve citizens outside the network, we used bicycles to which were attached coroplasts to catch their attention and had flyers printed for distribution. The bicycles circulated in the commercial and residential streets of the neighbourhood and the flyers made available in various locations. The importance of the image projected by the promotional material must be highlighted. We must plan in accordance with the targeted objectives. For example, the slogan, *Citoyens, prenez place*, selected and used in this instance, really hit home, if we go by the response of citizens. It well described the nature and objectives of the event.

DIFFICULTIES

The time estimated necessary for the consultation process (6 months) was clearly too short, especially for citizens who had not considered the process and had to familiarize themselves with it, understand it and take part in the decisional process. We also had to compete with other local activities that forced the postponement of the Forum.

Another difficulty surfaced while citizens and community workers were learning to work together. We had to deal with diversity within the citizens' group and within the ranks of the workers, not to mention between the two groups. The Advisory Committee which had set out with a group of 12 citizens finished with 9. There were difficulties, right from the start, in clearly establishing the role and exact mandate of the Committee. Not everyone shared the same vision for the mandate. Were the citizens present only to validate the Organizing Committee's decisions and ensure oversight of the process? Or should they have a more active role to play, join in the process, perhaps even adapt it as it progressed. Was the Organizing Committee transitory in the consultation stage or were the citizens expected to take part during the entire course of the process?

Other difficulties stem from the fact that some of those present came from different backgrounds and did not share a similar culture while others were members of political parties (internal tensions and with certain elected officials at the local level), etc. This all had to be sorted out, we had to agree on objectives and the role of the Committee. This was achieved as a "work in progress" and brought about changes in the process itself: citizen involvement, merging of the Organizing and Advisory Committees (both met on four occasions between November 9 and December 14, 2006, to organize, among other things, the Forum to adopt the priorities and the assessment of the first stage of the action).

The experience eventually created cohesion within the Committee as every one settled in. We too were left wondering: is the commitment of the organizations real or is it, in fact, the personal commitment of its individual representatives? We felt real support from the CSSS through the presence of its highly committed and mobilized community organizers on various committees. From the borough too came sound commitment and financial support for the consultations. A delegate from the borough was present at the Organizing Committee throughout the entire process.

These people were allies to us. They helped us brush aside certain resistance. We clearly feel that we are working within a process where the legitimacy of such an action must be demonstrated. The experience also allowed us to realize that mobilizing those working in the field is just as difficult as mobilizing citizens.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

Preparing this forum demanded that its organizers strive to learn how to process the results of the many consultations conducted beforehand: how do we identify what is a priority? Is the number of interventions on a given subject the only determining factor? Should interventions of diverse nature be highlighted?

This also became grounds for questioning how to best adapt and renew the ways things were normally done to better and more efficiently reach field workers and citizens: How far should we go in adapting work schedules? Should we abandon the 9 to 5, and work weekends and evenings? In our desire to adapt to the realities of each, changes had to be made, for example in the vocabulary used, by citizens among themselves, by the field workers, and between the two groups. The times we overcame our difficulties were moments of great satisfaction which, as stated earlier, also served to heighten the level of cohesion.

After the Forum, the way we operate will change. The two committees (Organizing and Advisory) will continue to work together. The definition of the following step, the “Priorities Adoption Forum”, has changed. We expected that citizens would take part in selecting the priorities but how would the priorities then be implemented? The traditional model would see joint action tables and groups take on these priorities. The Forum has completely set this approach on its ear. We have come to believe that a citizen can play this role just as easily as an organization or a table. We have also come to believe that we must have integration of citizen participation in the organization and decision making process not only beforehand but also afterwards. Is this a viable option? We don’t know yet. It’s in the doing that we will find the answer.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

More time must be allowed for us to do things. Moreover, better planning in scheduling the events would certainly have helped. This would have prevented us from having to postpone the Forum. On the other hand, we must not impede the intensity of the mobilization effort.

TRANSFERABILITY

It is an experience that is easily transferred, so long as it is adapted to the community in accordance to its participants and the issues.

PRACTICE

CAFÉS URBAINS

[URBAN CAFÉS] (ROSEMONT)

Organization: Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont

Contact: Julie Laloire

PROJECT

This initiative is a citizen mobilization effort that, through a series of meetings, provides citizens with an opportunity to express themselves on a variety of subjects regarding their preoccupations about the neighbourhood.

This project forms part of a greater joint action initiative “Décider Rosemont ensemble”. The six poles of this initiative, Art and Culture, Employment and Local Economic Development, Leisure, Social Solidarity and the Fight against

Poverty, Environment, and Democratic Life and Citizenship in Rosemont are the themes discussed at the meetings of the Urban Cafés. The Urban Café allows for the creation of a direct link between citizens and community organizations. It is a venue that allows citizens to voice their preoccupations in the aim of developing actions to improve the quality in the neighbourhood. It also serves to mobilize citizens on the eve or during the run-up of a citizens’ forum.

PARTNERS

The partners at the launch of the project were the Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) de Rosemont, the Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) Lucille-Teasdale, the Société de développement environnemental de Rosemont (SODER), the Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) Rosemont/Petite-Patrie and the Arrondissement Rosemont/La Petite Patrie. Other partners joined the project providing venues for the meetings. These partners were: Parrainage civique Les Marronniers—Mon petit café de quartier, Mousse-Café et le Carrefour communautaire L’Entre-Gens.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Urban Cafés project was created by the Organizing Committee of the joint action effort “Décider Rosemont ensemble” for the purpose of allowing citizens of the borough of Rosemont/La-Petite-Patrie the chance to express their preoccupations in regard of the six principal poles of the initiative. The identification of these concerns allows initiative stakeholders to target the changes to be effected to improve the quality of life of residents of the borough. The Organizing Committee was thus inspired to revisit the experience of a similar nature conducted in other Montreal neighbourhoods (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Mercier-Est).



Six Urban Cafés were held over a period of five weeks. Each meeting provided the opportunity to present the joint action effort, to hear guest-speakers, and to discuss three main issues, namely, whether the presentation and the information provided by the guest-speakers well represented the situation in Rosemont, the solutions, as well as the proposed actions and strategies to improve the situation. At each meeting, citizens were also invited to pursue their involvement until the citizens' forum be held.

Within the framework of the project, the Organizing Committee had to establish relationships of cooperation with various partners in order to hold the meetings. For the Urban Cafés to be more accessible to the general population of the territory we service, partner sites were identified throughout the territory, but also, in accordance to the theme of the meeting.

In order to reach and invite citizens to take part in the meetings, our various partners disseminated the information through their respective networks. Postcards were distributed to announce the event and announcements placed in the local paper.

A person was hired to carry out the project. Hired within the framework of the joint action project, this person was responsible for coordinating the overall planning, organization and implementation of the Urban Cafés. This person also works in collaboration with our partners sitting on the Organizing Committee. The position is funded by Centraide, the CSSS Lucille-Teasdale and the Arrondissement Rosemont/La-Petite-Patrie.

ACTORS

The Organizing Committee is composed of the Corporation de développement communautaire de Rosemont, the Centre de santé et de services sociaux Lucille-Teasdale, the Société de développement environnemental de Rosemont, the Corporation de développement économique communautaire Rosemont-Petite-Patrie and the Arrondissement Rosemont-La-Petite-Patrie. Other partners, mentioned earlier, also contributed to the project. Among the actors must also be mentioned our financial partners such as Centraide that contributed to the hiring of the project organizer.

DIFFICULTIES

The frequency at which the meetings were held, six in five weeks, constituted an important challenge. This rhythm created pressure on staff members, but also on citizen mobilization.

Another difficulty was finding adapted and diversified venues for the meetings. New skills had to be developed to meet the needs of the project. For example, personnel had to develop competencies for direct dealings with citizens, in processing data, and as facilitators.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

The project gave rise to some beautiful moments, among which was the mobilization of citizens, as well as their enthusiasm.

The fact that the project was born of a much larger joint action effort was also an important mobilizing element. All the organizers signed onto the project and were enthused by it.

Lastly, the direct contact with citizens created a powerful, energizing and enriching effect on the organizers.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The Urban Cafés project introduced a new dynamic for joint action. Greater importance is now given to citizen involvement. The Urban Cafés allowed organizers to integrate working directly with citizens residing in the borough and to develop a concern for a citizens' approach in the overall process, at the planning, decision-making and organization stages.

TRANSFERABILITY

The Urban Cafés are a project that can be transferred to other sectors by adapting the meetings to the communities in terms of their participants and the issues at hand.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

If we were to do this project again, more time would have to be given to planning and organizing the meetings. Those would also be scheduled over a longer period in order to, indeed, allow for their better planning and organization.



Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec

Quebec City community economic development corporation

Its projects and its practices



Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec

Quebec City community economic development corporation



The CDÉC de Québec is a community economic development corporation whose mission is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of citizens from neighbourhoods under revitalization by inviting and supporting various sustainable community-based economic development projects.

For the CDÉC de Québec, revitalization of these neighbourhoods is achieved by the creation of new micro-businesses and the maintenance/creation of local employment. A community-based economic development of targeted neighbourhoods is an important element of this revitalization initiative that involves the direct mobilization of local players.

From the Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre (CAMO)... to the Comité provisoire... the Carrefour de relance de l'économie et de l'emploi du Centre de Québec (CRÉECQ)... the Corporation de développement économique communautaire, under all these names, the CDÉC de Québec has succeeded, since its inception in December 1993, in navigating the waves of circumstances and hold its course in dealing with the needs of the community, in rallying the active forces around its structuring projects, and in innovating and building networks. In short, it has remained the bearer of community economic development

in its milieu and thus allowed for the improvement of the quality of life of the residents of its territory.

Today, with all its acquired expertise, the CDÉC de Québec pursues its mission of helping neighbourhoods under revitalization with even greater vigor. Its mission consists mainly in creating and maintaining sustainable employment and developing skills for the residents of the Quebec central region in consultation with the milieu and various governmental bodies.

OUR TERRITORY

The neighbourhoods we service are: Duberger-Les Saules, Vanier, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Roch, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Vieux-Limoilou, Lairet, Maizerets, Saint-Rodrigue and Giffard.

OUR SERVICES

The CDÉC de Québec offers services grouped around four main poles of action: accessibility to sustainable quality employment; mobilization of neighbourhoods; vitality of economic activity; and access to affordable quality housing.

ADVISORY SERVICES AND COACHING

- To support projects that improve the economy, the community or social and professional integration
- To support organizations in search of funding
- To assist in drafting portfolios

RÉSEAU D'INVESTISSEMENT SOCIAL DU QUÉBEC (RISQ) [QUEBEC SOCIAL INVESTMENT NETWORK] – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This financial aid in the form of cash advances supports promoters in their efforts, providing them with access to consultants and specialists to conduct the studies necessary for the further development of their projects. The scale of investment is of \$1,000 to \$5,000 (sometimes more). It is reimbursable only upon completion of the project and bears no interest. The cash contribution required of the project promoter is 10%. There is a \$50 front end fee to open a file. Examples of admissible projects are: pointed analyses required for a business plan, development or restructuring plans, market studies or product analysis.

Requests for technical assistance are processed by the CDÉC de Québec. Requests can therefore be sent directly to the CDÉC de Québec. For more

details, contact us by telephone at 418.525.5526 or by e-mail at: gdorval@cdecdequebec.qc.ca.

MOBILIZATION

- To awaken the interest and concern of players to the socio-economic issues of the neighbourhoods.
- To involve local resources in the developmental choices of the neighbourhoods.

Research and Development

- To gain a better understanding of the territory
- To launch innovative initiatives in collaboration with local resources
- To identify opportunities for development.



A Few Major Realizations

- Creation of a Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre (CAMO) [committee for manpower adaptation];
- Tabling of a report and recommendations to the City of Quebec, the governments of Quebec and Canada promoting the implementation of the CDÉC in the central neighbourhoods of Quebec City;
- Creation of two funds of investment capital: Les Cercles d'emprunt de Québec and Le Fonds d'emprunt économique communautaire (Québec);
- Founding member of La Solide Centre-ville;
- Awareness inquest (collaborative inquest on poverty in the central neighbourhoods and instigation of local action);
- Collective support for the implementation of the École nationale d'administration publique (ÉNAP) in the Saint-Roch district;
- Welcoming new arrivals in the Saint-Roch district (TQS, ÉNAP);
- Creation and launch of the Centre de veille et de référence des régions 03-12 : Stratégie Contact;
- Creation and launch of the Société de la rivière Saint-Charles, an organization that encourages the community to take up the development of social, environmental, and economic activities surrounding the implementation of the Parc linéaire, the re-naturalization and clean-up of the Saint-Charles River;
- Many salons (5) exposing the existence and nature of the various services offered by businesses in the field of social economics or specializing in the environment;

- Organization of training sessions (strategic management of OBNL, time management, social profitability indicators, etc.), public debates and conferences, many with Quebec City mayoral candidates during the last municipal elections;
- Study of the needs of employees and employers of the Saint-Roch district; caretaking services project transformed by the creation of a solidarity cooperative offering services in the greater Quebec City region that allow the reconciliation of work/daily life/family (Commodus Capitale-Nationale).

To realize these projects, the CDÉC can now rely on:

- 10 full-time employees (four development agents, two ATI project leaders, three support staff and a director general)
- An annual average of four trainees
- An annual budget of \$715,000
- A Board of Directors that meets every six weeks composed of 17 people, five of them from the Executive Committee
- An audit committee of three individuals (not from the Board of Directors), meeting twice yearly
- Various other permanent or provisional committees

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PRACTICE

COMMODUS CAPITALE-NATIONALE COOPÉRATIVE DE SOLIDARITÉ

[SOLIDARITY CO-OP]

Organization: Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec

Contact: Guy Dorval

PROJECT

The solidarity cooperative known as Commodus Capitale-Nationale is a service broker for salaried employees looking to reconcile work /life/ family. It offers employers and their employees a wide range of personal services that lighten the burden of everyday life. The services are available at work or near the workplace or home. There are seven types of services:

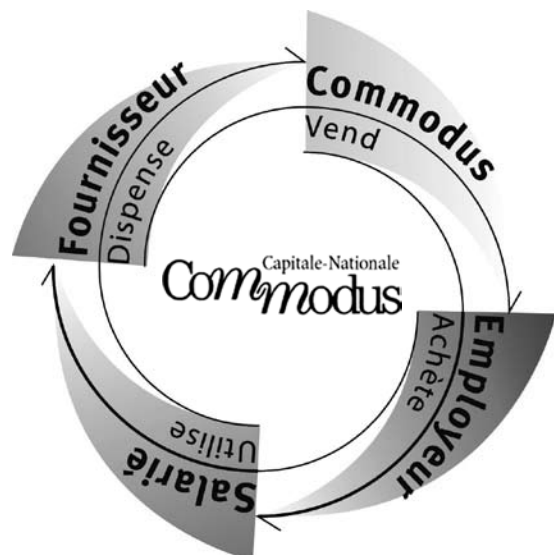
1. Support for the family, children and the elderly (Ex.: organizing a children's party at home).
2. Home services (Ex.: housework and light manual labour)
3. Errand runner and find-all services (Ex.: bringing clothing to the cleaner)
4. Transportation and moving (Ex.: car pooling)
5. Administrator and public writer (Ex.: financial planner)
6. Health and well-being (Ex.: seated massage)
7. Food services (Ex.: lunch-box service)

CONTEXT

The creation of Commodus Capitale-Nationale was born of a study conducted between September 2005 and September 2007 on the development of services in proximity to the workers of the Saint-Roch district. The study stemmed directly from the desire to revitalize that part of the city.

The study sought more precisely to gauge the interests and needs of businesses and workers of the Saint-Roch district, in order to have small service providers of the district to answer those needs. Over 300 questionnaires were distributed to employers and the results spoke eloquently in regard to the interests and needs.

However, we quickly came to realize that there were not a sufficient number of workers in the district to make a caretaking service profitable. At that moment, we became aware of a Quebec-based project of social franchises whose main national franchiser had begun activities on an experimental basis on the island of Montreal and its surrounding area, with the intention to extend services to the entire province through the sale of franchises.



PARTNERS AND ACTORS

The Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec took on various partners in order to form a working committee for the launch of a franchise, thus mobilizing the necessary expertise and various resources to make the project come to light. Among these partners were:

- Développement économique Canada (financial service),
- the Centre local de développement (CLD) de Québec (technical support, financial and consultant services),
- the Coopérative de développement régional, Québec-Appalaches (CDRQA), (technical support and consultant services),
- Emploi Québec (financing and client referrals),
- Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ) de la Capitale-Nationale (financial and consultant services),
- GRH Ressources humaines (private industry involvement, referral and consultant services, customer and new client referrals)
- The City of Québec (financial and consultant services),
- les Gens d'affaires Place Royale/Vieux-Port (consultant and referral services),
- Groupe Perspective (private industry involvement, referral and consultant services),
- Inter-Marché Saint-Roch (private industry involvement, referral and consultant services),
- Parc Technologique du Québec Métropolitain (advice and referrals),
- Bureau de la Capitale-Nationale (BCN, financing),
- the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins (line of credit financing),
- the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC) of Québec Chaudière-Appalaches.

Lastly, the CDEC de Québec also made available its technical and consultant support to the project.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation comprised four stages. The first consisted of meetings with the franchiser and potential clients, as well as the creation of the working committee. During the second stage, the business plan was drafted. There then followed the first committee meetings, as well as the first efforts at obtaining financing, not to mention the development of promotional tools and decisions regarding the legal structure. The fourth stage saw us move to the creation of the cooperative and everything that it entailed, such as first meetings with suppliers and potential clients, and submitting requests for financing.

We are currently awaiting answers from other sources of financing, as well as other offers of basic services in addition to those by the franchiser. A representative was hired in September 2008 to ensure the service offer spreads throughout Quebec City, l'Ancienne-Lorette, Saint-Augustin, as well as the Wendake territory. The official launch of the cooperative was held at the tail-end of 2008.

DIFFICULTIES

We mainly encountered difficulties while conducting the study in the Saint-Roch district, before we threw in with the franchiser, Commodus. Indeed, we experienced many delays and disappointments in the course of these two years. For example, following the initial contact with employers, the first pre-testing questionnaires remitted to employees proved difficult and the response negative, as filling out the questionnaire demanded too much time. Afterwards, we found ourselves listed on a French Website specialized in offering services to workers. We also had to be insistent and spend a considerable amount of time convincing human resources directors of the targeted businesses to meet with us, even more so, to arrange for all the firm's employees to complete a questionnaire.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

In order to see positive impact in the milieu, the CDÉC mandated a development agent (half-time basis) for the implementation, the start-up, and the development of this business. The evaluation of the impact in the milieu was put off to a later date. Moreover, we wanted to help facilitate the conciliation of work/life/family of workers while simultaneously promoting the creation, maintenance and consolidation of non- or little specialized employment in our neighbourhoods under revitalization. Among the many elements of satisfaction, let us mention:

- how well received the project was by most partners, which allowed us to bring together over 15 of them (and obtain debt-free financing except for the credit line);
- the involvement of various market economy businesses, most notably of human resources specialists which allowed us to better understand the concept of the service offer with a mind to improving the quality of life and reconciling work/life/family.
- the privileged partnership with the franchiser, its proximity to the franchisee, the quality of the information provided as well as the efficiency of the transactional platform, and the complicity developed along the way;
- the welcome the project received by employers, service providers and employees during our meetings was undoubtedly the factor that proved the most encouraging of all;
- the willingness of the Parc technologique de Québec to become an active partner and member of the cooperative;
- the decision of the Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ) de la Capitale-Nationale to be the first financial supporter, as well as the positive answer of the other partners mentioned above in regard to financial support;
- and many others.

FINANCING

The total cost of the project is approximately \$168,000.

We await answers in that regard:

- \$15,000 from the Bureau de la Capitale-Nationale

Financing obtained:

- \$35,000 from the Fonds de développement régional de la Conférence régionale des élus (CRE) de la Capitale-Nationale
- \$5,000 from the Fonds régional d'investissement jeunesse (FRI) de la Capitale-Nationale
- \$30,000 from the Centre local de développement (CLD) de Québec
- \$10,000 from the Centre local d'emploi des Quartiers-Historiques
- \$5,000 in the form of a line of credit from the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins
- \$37,750 investment from the CDÉC de Québec (part time human resource and material resource) by way of its agreement with Développement économique Canada
- \$10,700 in shares and contributions
- \$1,500 invested by the Groupe Perspective

The remainder comes from various revenues generated by the cooperative.



TRANSFERABILITY

The Commodus Capitale-Nationale project can be adapted and transferred to various milieus. In fact, Commodus Capitale-Nationale has indicated to the franchiser that it agrees to support the new collective initiatives that so request it.

The basic premises, such as the importance of partnerships and implementation within the milieu, are essential, no matter where the project is undertaken. We must, however, adapt the operational means and management in accordance with the local realities and the pool of potential suppliers and employers.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

Although the process we used took longer than expected, it remains the best way to conduct this project. However, in order to save time, we would not delay having the franchiser, Commodus, join the project.

Our association with various private and financial partners ready to help with the project proved to be a guarantor of success for the start-up and launch of the cooperative. Were we to do it again, efforts to form these associations would very quickly be initiated.

PRACTICE

COMITÉ LIMOILLOU PLURIEL

Community joint action to promote immigrant integration

Organization: Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) de Québec

Contact: Martine Cazes

PROJECT

The Limoilou Pluriel Committee stemmed from determination on the part of various local actors to promote social, economic, communal, and professional integration of immigrants within the borough of Limoilou in Quebec City. Immigrants account for 6% of the borough's total population, estimated at slightly more than 45,000 people. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of immigrants increased some 40%. It is also noteworthy that 13% of the immigrant population of Quebec City resides in the borough of Limoilou.

Today, the purpose of the committee is to understand and answer the basic needs of these newcomers. Among those needs, let us mention their orientation and integration into a new living environment (including intercultural awareness and rapprochement), and a continuum of personalized and accessible services relating to communication, production and distribution of information about resources in the community. Linking all those services is a challenge that we dealt with early on.

The work of the committee consists mostly of coordinating the procedures immigrants have to undertake with the complementary services offered by various partners.

PARTNERS

At first, the Limoilou Pluriel Committee was an initiative originating from two main partners: the borough of Limoilou (represented by Ms Sylvie Fournier) and the Cégep Limoilou (represented by Mr François Godbout and Mr Michel Saucier). On March 30, 2005, they gathered for a first day of discussion with the following goals in mind:

- To acquire a better knowledge of the services offered to immigrants and foreign students by institutions and organizations within the territory;
- To identify facilitating factors and obstacles playing a role in the attraction and retention of immigrants and foreign students;
- To determine local action to undertake to facilitate the integration of immigrant citizens;
- To identify strategies for a greater convergence of already existing local actions;
- To promote the emergence of new practices that may provide a direction to municipal actions;
- To specify the particular needs already expressed by immigrants and foreign students, and to identify the organizations and networks that can best answer those needs.

To the initiator's surprise, this gathering attracted 42 participants from 24 organizations.

Following the meeting, the Limoilou Pluriel Committee was officially created. It was then composed of representatives of the Cégep Limoilou, of the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de la Vieille-Capitale (CSSSVC), of the Centre Louis-Jolliet (adult training centre managed by the regional School Board), and of citizens, both men and women, having immigrated to Quebec. The CDÉC and the Commissariat aux relations internationales de la Ville de Québec (CRI) joined as observers.

From the beginning, several organizations clustered around Limoilou Pluriel and supported this concerted initiative. Some of these organizations were providing newcomers guidance and referral to appropriate resources, setting up information or training workshops, as well as various type of services. Later on, other partners joined in and most of them became involved in various working committees. All together, about twenty organizations are associated with Limoilou Pluriel: community organizations, immigration services, and other groups working in literacy training, job readiness, health, etc. Institutions, recreation centres, youth groups, and police services are also associated with this initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION

In March 2005, a day of discussion was held on attraction and retention of immigrants and foreign students. Among the numerous findings, the following were identified and focused on:

- Lack of knowledge regarding cultural differences, and the particular needs of immigrants
- Lack of awareness in the population in general, and employers in particular
- Lack of knowledge about organizations and services provided
- Lack of information networks
- Necessity to integrate immigrants into initiatives dealing with immigration issues
- Insufficient duration of francization programs

In October 2005, the mandate of the Limoilou Pluriel Committee consists of:

- promoting information sharing with regard to immigrants' needs, as well as activities and services offered to them;

- finding a meeting place to exchange and reflect on the various initiatives relating to immigrants' reception and integration;
- developing a common perspective on the values and principles underlying actions;
- acting as a watchdog on the issues of immigrants' reception and integration.

"Immigration" is even a priority for the borough of Limoilou, as stated in its 2005-2008 business plan: "To define, in collaboration with our main partners, a strategy to mobilize the community around the issue of immigration."

From May to November 2006, five thematic meetings were organized by way of consensus building activities. Called *Rencontres Plurielles*, these meetings brought together each time an average of 27 participants to discuss the following topics:

- Reception and integration of immigrants
- Integration of children and teenagers
- Francization
- Integration in the workplace
- Intercultural rapprochement and neighbourhood life

In November 2006, focus groups were held with immigrants residing in Limoilou. Discussions involved their experience in terms of reception and integration in the neighbourhoods, as well as their particular needs as immigrants.

In January 2007, a review of the findings identified three poles of action:

- intercultural awareness and rapprochement,
- knowledge development for resources and information networks, and
- neighbourhood coaching.

Some time later, on April 25, 2007, a large meeting was organized, with numerous workshops to discuss and consider the basis of an action plan. As a result, three working committees were put into place – one per pole – to define an action plan. A coordination committee was set up to support the three working committees.

The action plan was finalized during the period between September 2007 and June 2008. In the mean time, other activities took place: welcoming meetings, preparation of an index of resources, application for funds from the Programme d'actions régionales en immigration (PARI), a program managed by the Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ) de la Capitale-Nationale for the hiring of a pivot-worker, appointed in the fall of 2008. The pivot-worker's mandate is to greet newcomers, provide referrals, support and coaching (of immigrants towards the local community as much as of the local community towards immigrants), and accomplish intercultural mediation.

From the summer of 2008 to the spring of 2009, the coordinating committee evolved to become the change management committee, in order to support the restructuring of the Limoilou Pluriel Committee.

An important meeting is planned for May 2009 where stakeholders will take stock of the achievements and map the next action plan.

ACTORS

The main actors are:

- The borough of Limoilou
- The Cégep Limoilou
- Emploi-Québec
- The CDÉC of Québec City
- The Centre Louis-Joliet
- The Centre de santé et de services sociaux de la Vieille-Capitale.

DIFFICULTIES

The three committees have worked on their action plan, operating independently from each other. There have been a few meetings of the coordinating committee in order to share the work of each working committee. As a result, three action plans were developed on different basis and, at first glance, they did not appear easy to combine. Each pole (intercultural awareness and rapprochement, knowledge of resources and information networks, and neighbourhood coaching) was perceived differently and sometimes overlapped. In short, much communication was required to better understand one another, harmonize each group's work, and produce a coherent document.

At this time, we are working at developing a formal structure for Limoilou Pluriel. Without necessarily going for a legal constitution, members feel the need to set the structure in writing to define and clearly sketch out the actors' roles. To carry out this undertaking, a Change Management Committee was created.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

Beautiful moments have been the Rencontres Plurielles when all stakeholders on the issue of immigration gathered to share ideas. This consensus building event was very exciting. When the first actions were launched, giving life to the action plan, were also great moments. For example, we should mention the first welcome meeting, the launching of the index of resources and the hiring of the pivot-worker. Lastly, the process set in place has not only allowed us to offer a continuum of services, but has also brought partners to innovate in their approach.



CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The borough of Limoilou has gained a collective force dealing with immigration issues and resources. This joint action also allows the establishment of ground-breaking projects in the borough. The best example is certainly the hiring of the pivot-worker. This “let's do it together” approach is particularly innovative. Financing for

the hiring comes on the one hand from Limoilou Pluriel (thanks to a grant from the program PARI of the CRÉ de la Capitale-Nationale, and on the other hand from the Comité de prévention de la criminalité de Limoilou [crime prevention committee of Limoilou]. Both committees joined together and shared resources in order to appoint the pivot-worker and set up a management committee composed of members from both groups. Furthermore, the project was established in such a way that the worker is employed by the Centre Multiethnique de Québec, but is located at the office of the borough of Limoilou. This is an example of joint action that involves many organizations!

Peripheral impact also resulted from our initiative. Let us mention a pilot project that combines, on a three-year basis, activities of francization, professional training and socio-professional integration, right there in Limoilou. This project involves the collaboration of the Centre Louis-Jolliet, the Cégep Limoilou and the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) [Quebec immigration department].

Clearly, this project brought people and organizations from the community to better know each other and attune their actions.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

From the start, leadership should be better defined in order to better stay the chosen course. When leadership is not clearly defined, a lot of time can be lost. In hindsight, we noticed that all were saying that they were sharing leadership, but nobody was truly seizing it. Also, a strategy should rapidly be defined to obtain the cooperation of organizations that work directly with immigrants.

It is not always easy to share a common goal and forget our own, and often self-motivated, objectives as an organization. It would be essential, there too, that each stakeholder be mobilized towards the needs of immigrants, and not alter the approach by falling back on his or her own needs, or by looking after his or her organization's own interests.

TRANSFERABILITY

Transferable elements for the implementation of such an initiative are primarily the mobilization and consensus building approaches. More precisely, it is the manner by which consensus is built around a targeted situation, allowing the group to move forward, while maintaining the same mobilization to effectively answer the needs of the community.

CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF A SIMILAR PROJECT

- Clear leadership
- The sharing of our respective knowledge and resources
- A common objective
- Mobilizing organizations and citizens
- A will to resolve a local problem, beyond stakeholders' self-motivated interests

Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières

Trois-Rivières' old town initiative

Its projects and its practices



Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières

Trois-Rivières' old town initiative



OBJECTIVES AND MISSION

The action of the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières (DPQTR) deals with the implementation of structuring projects seeking an integrated revitalization in a specific territory, namely, that of the first neighbourhoods. The action centers on land-use management, the environment, safety, citizen participation, community economic development, employment, job training, socio-professional insertion, housing, community life, highlighting of built, cultural and social heritage, as well as proximity services.

TERRITORY OF ACTION

Active in the city of Trois-Rivières, the 9th largest city in Quebec with a population of 126,000 and covering an area of 288 sq. km, the DPQTR works specifically in the 11 founding neighbourhoods of Trois-Rivières. These are old working-class neighbourhoods: Notre-Dame, Sainte-Cécile, Saint-Eugène, Sainte-Famille, Saint-François-d'Assise, Saint-Gabriel-Archange, Saint-Lazare, Sainte-Madeleine, Sainte-Marguerite (eastern part), Saint-Philippe and Saint-Sacrement (southern part). A total of 32,000 souls reside in these 11 neighbourhoods.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE AND POTENTIAL

- 45% of households are low-income
- low school attendance rate
- over 20% of residents spend 30% of their revenue on housing, 10% spend up to 80%
- in some sectors, over 50% of households have but a single member.

Today, many plants have shut down and economic activity is now more than ever concentrated in the service industry. Despite this fact, the old working-class neighbourhoods hold great promise. Among these, let us mention the strong feeling of belonging of the local population, the important presence of community resources and the dynamic nature of small businesses (over 1,000). Despite the persistent poverty, the community resources and the vigor of the social economic businesses play a significant role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

REALIZATIONS

Many projects have seen the light of day since the launch of the DPQTR:

- Les vélos de quartier [neighbourhood bicycles]: This project seeks to promote access to “green” transportation by making available from May to October a fleet of 200 reconditioned bicycles lent to the local population at various points in the city.
- La Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers [community housing corporation]: This project had set itself many objectives. First, it sought to facilitate access to property ownership for low-income earners. Secondly, it

sought to attract owner-occupants to the first neighbourhoods in order to promote development and increase the feeling of belonging. Last, the project encourages the arrival of young families who tend to abandon these neighbourhoods in favor of surrounding ones.

- Les jardins communautaires [community gardens]: Three community gardens were added to the landscape of the first neighbourhoods. Members of the community gardens have access to training activities, can join a committee that oversees the gardening, and take part in social activities dealing with food safety.
- La Grande fête de l'entraide, de la formation et de l'emploi [mutual aid, training and employment fair]: This is an annual event that brings together, in a same activity, self-help and community organizations, community and institutional training organizations, employment groups and employers looking to hire. In the course of the day, over 3,000 people come to meet these organizations.
- La maison de quartier Saint-Philippe [Saint-Philippe community house] and Le local de quartier du secteur Cap [Cap sector community centre]: These projects not only provide citizens with an opportunity to socialize but also to participate in activities that certain organizations offer to meet their needs.

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PRACTICE

BULLETIN COMMUNAUTAIRE DE QUARTIER

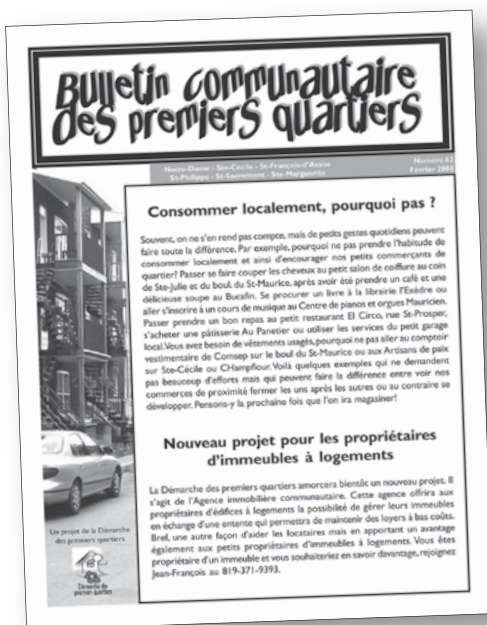
[COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER]

Organization: Démarche de revitalisation des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières

Contact: Florence Pauquay

PROJECT

The project entails producing and distributing a monthly community information bulletin. Citizens are involved in the production process. Called the Bulletin communautaire des premiers quartiers, it runs 12 pages. It is published monthly, except in July and August. If money runs short, as it sometimes does, the December and January issues are merged into one. It has a circulation of 9,200 and has been going strong for seven years now.



CONTEXT

The community bulletin project was born of a broad study conducted with citizens by the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières (DRPQ T-R) organization, a grouping of partners that work together for the good of the less advantaged neighbourhoods of the territory. This consultation brought to the fore the need for a communication tool that could act as a link between the various organizations. The team from the daily e-journal *Tour d'y Voir* (TDV) wanted to publish a news bulletin with a more local reach. Team members therefore initiated the project, which the DRPQ T-R later joined.

PARTNERS AND ACTORS

The editorial committee meets twice for each issue; the first meeting to review the subjects to be covered; the second to correct the texts and look over the design. The committee comprises 6 to 7 citizens. Involvement varies from one member to the next. Some supply photos, others, ideas, some volunteer for the editorial committee, and lastly, some go so far as to write features because, as time goes by, they discover an interest for a given subject. Beyond the editing and writing, somebody also deals with the printer.

IMPLEMENTATION

The community journal was launched by the *Tour d'Y Voir*. Afterwards, the Démarche signed on. At the start, the journal mainly announced activities taking place within the Démarche. It dealt mostly with the resources that gravitated around this initiative. It also gathered and disseminated related information.

We then came to recognize that citizens had to be present on the newsletter. Those already involved in the committee then launched a recruitment initiative and placed announcements to that

effect in the newsletter, stressing that any one could write and contribute to the Bulletin.

The Démarche and the citizens committee now manage the Bulletin and the community network that uses it. At first, the Bulletin was created with Publisher software, photocopied and stapled. Now it is produced with Page Maker software and reproduced by a printer. The quality of the publishing has greatly improved.

At the outset, the Bulletin was distributed in the Publisac (property of Groupe Transcontinental which owns various neighbourhood and regional weeklies, printing facilities and a distribution network). The Bulletin was distributed door-to-door along with pamphlets and advertisements of all kind. The advantage of this method of delivery was its speed. On the other hand, we know some people do not even open the Publisac bag. This is why we now use the services of a small company that hires people who receive a small supplemental income to their welfare benefits. When we changed our method of distribution, we noticed an increase in the number of readers, as more and more people would call to tell us they were happy to receive this “new” Bulletin, while we were in fact publishing the 52nd issue.

DIFFICULTIES

One problem is ensuring proper distribution. With our current method, it is difficult to determine whether each household receives a copy. Consequently, a bit of verification is required. We have yet to find the best method to ensure every targeted household receives a copy. Obviously, financing remains a major hurdle, were it only to cover production costs. Another problem surfaced, that of managing the quantity of proposed articles or getting people to respect deadlines or the drop-time of going to press, as set beforehand with the organizations and citizens. This difficulty, however, constitutes a rather pleasant one.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

Those who write or participate in the correction meetings do not necessarily have very good writing skills or mastery of the written word. However, they see in their participation an opportunity to better their skills. For some, the meeting becomes a writing workshop. As for the coordination, without having effected any direct change, the experience serves to highlight the fact that, sometimes, it takes more time to work with the volunteers involved in the production of the Bulletin than to do everything for them. The process then takes on as much importance as the result.

As for the organizations that gravitate around the Démarche, they have developed the reflex, perhaps even the habit, of using the Bulletin as a source of information and tool for promotion and awareness. It isn't easy to measure the direct impact of an information bulletin on the local population, but two years ago, the TDV conducted a study of the readership that revealed that some 80% of households of 2-3 people read the Bulletin. For us, the proof is in the number of calls for information we receive after each publication of an issue. It is very encouraging to see how widely read the Bulletin is, without mentioning the pride and sense of belonging that citizens participating in the project develop. This became all very clear at an event marking the publication of the Bulletin's fiftieth issue.

FINANCING

Among all the activities conducted within the Démarche des premiers quartiers project, it is the most costly. It requires some \$2,000 per issue to publish 9,200 copies of the Bulletin. It generates no revenues. These costs are assumed by the Démarche, as well as paying the salary of the person responsible who works about one week a month on the Bulletin. The advertisements that the Bulletin runs are free. Now and again, some are paid for, that of the Société St-Jean Baptiste for example. At one time, we tried to solicit local

businesses, but the results obtained were not worth the time and energy expended. Moreover, we don't want to overload the Bulletin with ads. On the other hand, the City of Trois-Rivières contributes by financing six issues yearly.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

If we had to do it again, we would solicit citizen participation from the outset to make them feel even more involved. An ideal situation would have us finding stable and recurrent funding from the very beginning.

TRANSFERABILITY

The project itself is readily transferable, so long as the necessary budget is available. The format in which the content is presented is visually pleasing and nicely spaced. We also have an agreement with the city whose model could be used elsewhere. The approach, which includes calling citizens and other organizations to participate, is also easily transferred to other projects.

PRACTICE

SOCIÉTÉ IMMOBILIÈRE COMMUNAUTAIRE

[COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION]

Organization: Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières

Contact: Florence Pauquay

PROJECT

The Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers is a project undertaken by the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières (DPQ T-R). This project is a concrete way of addressing the issue of housing and, on a larger scale, the issue of real estate in the targeted neighbourhoods by the DPQ T-R.

The Société immobilière communautaire allows tenants who do not have sufficient funds to make the initial deposit for a mortgage application to do so and provides them with support throughout the process. The Société is a first step towards helping people find their way through the process of acquiring real estate before their file is sent on to the principal partner in the project, the Caisse populaire Desjardins Laviolette [credit union].

The Société immobilière communautaire thus provides low income individuals access to real estate ownership, while simultaneously increasing the number of buildings belonging to owner-occupants in the first neighbourhoods of Trois-Rivières. It is already widely known that owner-occupants are generally much more attentive to the upkeep of their properties. This is very important when we consider that 80% of residents in these neighbourhoods are tenants and that 20% of owners live outside the neighbourhood.

In the past three years, the Société immobilière has made it possible for 20 households to become owners of their own homes. The number of people who could be helped in this way is, however, much greater.

PARTNERS

The Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers has the Caisse populaire Desjardins Laviolette as partner. The latter makes \$50,000 available yearly to cover the administrative costs of the initial deposits and evaluation of buildings. A close collaboration has developed between the contact person of the Caisse and that of the DPQ T-R, which facilitates the follow-up of files.

During the initial implementation stages of the project, the Caisse Laviolette also did important work with the Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL) [CHMC] in order to set the foundations of a new way of doing things in line with what in fact is the Société immobilière communautaire. Indeed, the Caisse Laviolette has now helped many others "caisses" to put in place a similar system.

The Centre d'intervention budgétaire et sociale de la Mauricie (CIBES) is also an important partner in the project as it provides support to those for whom managing a budget may seem a bit arduous a task.

IMPLEMENTATION

At the beginning, the housing project was to see the light as a purchasing body. The lack of capital is the reason the project became what it is today, the Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers. This orientation better addressed the needs revealed by the work of the integrated revitalization that was done: increasing the number of owner-occupant in the first neighbourhoods. Partnership agreements were negotiated with the Caisse Laviolette.

In order to announce the good news, the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières held a news conference and notice was given throughout the first neighbourhoods. At the start, the Démarche held a few information meetings to present the project to citizens. It quickly came to realize that details proper to specific situations always came to the fore during these meetings and that, consequently, it was best to meet people on an individual basis.

With the submission of the first project to the CHMC, the DPQ T-R found it had to negotiate specific terms. As the project moved forward, the organization began to see the limits and possibilities of the project. For example, there is no starting point if an applicant does not have a good credit rating. Furthermore, instructions have to be clearer regarding the monies they have at the Caisse, monies used as an RRSP. We quickly realized that some people do all sorts of spins because suddenly they no longer have that money in the bank. Therefore we must be wary of some people who would take advantage of the implemented system. It is, however, relatively easy for financial institutions to make verifications.

In time, the DPQ T-R has grown to better recognize the project's "target clientele", namely, young couples and tenants who want to own the building they have been living in for years.

In this sense, the project as offered by the Société immobilière communautaire does not address all situations. For example, people on welfare do not have the means to make mortgage payments and so are by the very fact excluded from the project. There is also the risk of speculation in certain areas, that prices will rise with demand, and that the acquisition of property could thus become inaccessible to a great many people. In short, it is an interesting tool but it has its limits. We have to learn how to act and use our tools in concert with other types of action (examples: public housing, public property, etc.). Incidentally, the DPQ R-R is presently at work developing other programs that the Société immobilière communautaire might offer to complete the work it has undertaken.

The face-to-face meetings and resulting questions led to the creation by the Société immobilière of a first information document that traces the various steps leading to the purchase of a property. As the project evolves, promoters are progressively taking over the overall process.

To call on the Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers, applicants must not already be homeowners. They must be intent on becoming owners of property within the boundaries of a specific area, namely, that of the first neighbourhoods of Trois-Rivières, and they must have access to credit. They must have the financial means to purchase property but not sufficient funds to make the initial deposit and obtain a loan. After the first meeting, applicants have an overview of the entire purchasing process and can then decide whether they want to embark upon such an adventure.

The Société immobilière communautaire will accompany them in the process up until they come to the stage of submitting a loan application at the Caisse. The Société takes charge of having the evaluation and inspection done. In this way, we can ensure the quality and value of the building purchased. The Société immobilière communautaire will guide applicants through the preparation of the file they must submit to the Caisse, specifically in regard to having the necessary papers on hand for the loan application.

There are those who, after the initial meeting, decide to withdraw, recognizing that the program is not for them, at least for the time being. Their decision to withdraw can be the result, for example, of having too many credit cards or having a card with too high a balance. Others move forward but are eventually screened out sometimes simply because they have not yet found the right house.

ACTORS

The Société immobilière communautaire is a project carried by the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières. We should say, however, that the Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers is a non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors whose members are linked to the Démarche des premiers quartiers.

The Caisse Laviolette and the Centre d'intervention budgétaire et sociale de la Mauricie are also important players. The Caisse Laviolette provides financial support, most notably by bearing the administrative costs of initial deposits and evaluation of the buildings. The Centre d'intervention budgétaire et sociale de la Mauricie offers advice to citizens who have trouble managing a budget.

DIFFICULTIES

One of the current challenges is to consolidate promotional efforts in order to make the project known beyond the first neighbourhoods and, in this way, broaden its promotional base.

The time allotted to the project is also an important element. The individual meetings can take up to an hour. A year can see between forty to seventy meetings held, with as many hours required to conduct them. Time is also needed for the follow-up with evaluators, inspectors, realtors, etc, which can represent up to two hours for each ongoing file. This workload varies from month to month but the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières dedicates some 100 hours a year to the Société immobilière communautaire project alone.

Another difficulty is that the CMHC had to act as soon as the first mortgage applications were submitted in order to prevent speculation. Waiting periods of many weeks led to a way of doing things that includes terms for the reimbursement of donations. That is to say that a person having purchased a house with the assistance of the Société immobilière and who shortly afterwards sells it, must reimburse the financial assistance received.

There are many notions to be aware of in this field, and very little specific training to be had to facilitate the management of this type of organization. The fact that we had to learn through experience demands more time.

It is also difficult for the Démarche to assess the results of the project. Time does not allow for the evaluation of the neighbourhood insertion, for example. It would be interesting to assess the impact beyond simply acceding to property ownership, specifically on the personal, financial and organizational levels.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

The most beautiful moment was the signing of the first mortgage, a sign that the project had come together.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The Société immobilière communautaire project is a concrete means for the Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières to act on housing. The changes engendered by the project act on an individual basis. People who had been tenants have now become homeowners. The project also allowed for more owner-occupants in the first neighbourhoods, who, we believe, are more mindful of their buildings. This obviously can be seen in the upkeep of the buildings.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

The Démarche des premiers quartiers de Trois-Rivières would try to find another form of funding to pay for its staff member. This element is an important one as presently that person is paid from our operating budget. The financial support from the Caisse is indispensable to cover the administrative costs of the initial deposits, but it does not cover the time put in, nor the promotional and printing costs.

It would also be interesting to provide the staff member of the Société immobilière communautaire with training with a realtor, and this, before the submission of the first applications. It would also be helpful to establish a business relationship with a notary the Société could work with on a regular basis. Lastly, negotiations should be conducted to have a second Caisse enter into partnership with the project. This would allow the Société immobilière communautaire des premiers quartiers to not be captive to a single financial institution.

TRANSFERABILITY

The approach, the way of doing things, as well as the partners.

Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

*Partners for revitalization of old neighbourhoods
of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield*

Its projects and its practices



Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

Partners for revitalization of old neighbourhoods of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield



PARTENAIRES POUR LA REVITALISATION
DES ANCIENS QUARTIERS

This organization seeks to support the development of concrete actions, of structuring initiatives and projects that contribute to the revitalization of the municipality of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield (the Bellerive Ouest, Sainte-Cécile and Sacré-Cœur neighbourhoods in particular). With an area of 100 sq. km and a population of 40,056 residents, Salaberry-de-Valleyfield is part of the MRC of Beauharnois-Salaberry and is its main industrial pole.

Although only incorporated in 2001, the PRAQ was launched long before (1996-1997) and became involved in many files, themselves launched as a result of the findings of the Seigneurie de Beauharnois CLSC [community and social local service centre], and actions undertaken in collaboration with residents of the milieu to fight poverty in the mid-70s. One of these findings highlighted the fact that this area was more economically disadvantaged than the surrounding areas, and that this poverty was structural. Major problems are observed in all age groups and all neighbourhoods. Data from the Profil socioéconomique [socio-economic profile] revealed that 20% of the overall population of the city was low income and that 32% of households had but one member. It was also stated that the problem

could not be tackled alone because poverty is a multi-faceted, varied and complex phenomenon that, notably, involves cultural barriers.

OBJECTIVES

Along with the main objective of revitalizing the old neighbourhoods of the municipality of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, the PRAQ also aims:

- to improve the living conditions of the citizens of the old neighbourhoods
- to meld the initiative into a revitalization process (Villes et Villages en santé – Healthy Towns and Villages)
- to favor a more efficient distribution of financial resources.
- to more clearly define the respective partnership agreements
- to empower individuals by providing them with the means to exercise more control over their health, well-being and living conditions
- to articulate and support initiatives by partners and actors for development around five main poles: housing, health, employment, education and community life.

The actions now undertaken or supported by the PRAQ to revitalize the milieu fall into one of the five following poles:

- **Urban planning.** On that matter, the PRAQ hopes to rally citizens around concrete projects that will embellish and have a positive impact on a given sector, its parks, green spaces, tree planting and community gardens.
- **Housing.** This pole seeks to mobilize the community around projects that aim to improve the cleanliness of residences by landlords, tenants and the immediate community. Many partners have joined the effort to attack the lasting problems of sanitation that greatly affects the quality of life and health of the territory inhabitants. Noteworthy: 83% of tenants reserve over 30% of their income for housing in the central neighbourhoods.
- **Support for Schooling.** Efforts on that plan aim to promote scholastic success for grade school students and to lend support to their parents. This is very important in light of the fact that 40% of the population did not graduate from high-school and that the dropout rate is around 40%. Five neighbourhood schools have been targeted by way of the disadvantage indicators of the ministère de l'Éducation, des Loisirs et du Sport [Department of Education, Leisure and Sports]. To achieve this, the PRAQ has relied on various initiatives integrated into neighbourhood and community life. Many partners have signed on to the project: the administration of the five schools, the supplementary services of the School Board, the Table jeunesse [youth issue table], the CLSC and other community organizations.
- **Social Integration.** On that matter, the PRAQ and its partners plan on developing a transversal approach that would allow both the social reintegration and the development of competencies of the sector's residents, young people, long-unemployed and single-parent families. Emploi-Québec and Service Canada are first-line partners who are eagerly joined by community resources.

- **Citizen Participation.** With this pole, we seek to establish links between the organizations and residents, to provide them with the necessary tools and guide them in the realization of their projects, thus allowing them to build networks of solidarity and create opportunities for citizen participation. The PRAQ regularly goes door-to-door in order to fully understand the viewpoints and needs of residents or to bring them greater awareness about certain issues, but also to mobilize those who would like to get involved in community life.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

At the beginning of the past century, economic development was driven by the construction of the Beauharnois canal and the lumber industry. The Montreal Cotton Company, a spinning mill established in the 1870s, was also an important industry as it was the principal employer in Valleyfield for many decades. As with so many other cities whose industrial base rested on textiles, Salaberry-de-Valleyfield has witnessed an industrial decline since the 60s with the advent of synthetic fibers. This decline spread and went on to hit other major industrial sectors in the 80s and onward to today. It affects the socio-economic dynamics of the region to this day. So it was that Goodyear has recently experienced a slowdown and Gildan shut down in 2006. Although these sectors are still threatened by international competition today, textile, rubber and plastics are still the principal motors of economic activity in the region.

Many decisive actions have been launched and developed these past few years to try and counter poverty:

- The development of poles of community action (1994-1995) that can be summarized as follows: 1) to act in terms of a central determining problem, 2) to adopt an orientation that will direct activities and create self-multiplying effects, 3) to develop strategic and structuring actions (empowerment, community action, consciousness-raising with our partners, etc.);

- The draft, publication and distribution of 500 copies of a population profile (1999) used in a discussion tour of our partners;
- The suggestion of the CLSC for an action plan addressing the various problems that would rally our partners (city centres, low income population, school success, etc.).

The creation of PRAQ was born of the willingness of the various players involved in community development to act together and in a new way, combining ideas, projects, the views and aspirations of residents, with the orientations and resources of the socio-economic and political representatives. It also stems from an initiative that saw a variety of concrete action in the fight against poverty launched between 1995 and 1998.

- The creation of a housing committee, the Comité Logement de Valleyfield (CLV), by the CLSC, shortly after the 1995 municipal elections;
- The participation of PRAQ and of the City in the Programme de revitalisation des vieux quartiers [revitalization of old neighbourhoods program] in 1996-1997;
- A grant awarded to the CLV and the Groupe de ressources techniques (GRT) by the Société d'Habitation du Québec (SHQ) after the presentation of a public housing project;
- The sharing of common case files between the PRAQ, community groups, the City and the CLSC (private residences, the Ice Storm, etc.) in 1998;
- The consensus over diagnostic results of a study bearing on the state of housing in the old neighbourhoods (1998). In 1999, over 100 participants and four focus groups delve deeper into the issue, confirming and better defining the diagnostic. This yields an inventory of possible action.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Production of a practical guide on how to maintain a healthy house
- Signing of a framework for action by eight partners (May 2, 2000)
- Social Museology Project (exhibitions, books, etc.) titled *Ma ville, ma vision, mon avenir* [my town, my vision, my future], in collaboration with the Musée de Société des Deux-Rives that is involving 10 young people each year since 2006
- Écoles en santé Project [healthy schools project]—*Moi, je fais partie d'une bonne gang!* [I'm in the good gang!] crime prevention initiative in collaboration with la Maison des jeunes [youth centre].
- Presentation of a PRAQ initiative before the City of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield to create a committee to draft a housing policy.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

PRAQ has five full-time employees that occupy the following positions: coordination, assistant to coordination, two project leaders and one building inspector. The organization does not benefit from any form of recurrent core funding. Come rain or shine, it obtains financing through the realization of contracts and projects, and from grants received from the municipal sector and the federal government.

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PRACTICE

MUSÉOLOGIE D'INTERVENTION SOCIALE

[SOCIAL MUSEOLOGY]

Organization: Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

Contact: Julie Bergevin

PROJECT

This project of museology as social intervention is called *Ma ville, ma vision, mon avenir* [my town, my vision, my future]. It concerns itself with the question of young people dropping out of school who are the adults of tomorrow, as well as with the residents of the old neighbourhoods who often harbor certain prejudices towards these young drop-outs. This project aims to be innovative, as it seeks to both break down the barriers of social intervention and the roles a museum traditionally plays in its milieu.

Each year, and this since 2006 (the year the project was launched), 10 socially marginalized young people between the ages of 15 and 25 participate during six months in workshops dealing with culture, self-knowledge and knowledge about the milieu. Employment workshops are also available to them. They can visit schools, businesses and community organizations, as well as museums or cultural sites. They are invited to experience various (some 30) types of volunteer work.

They spend 30 hours weekly at the community house, days, evenings or weekends according to a varying schedule. Moreover, they are coached by professional photographers and writers to

assist them to prepare, in four months, a public exhibition of their works. They must organize a press conference and be ready to give a guided tour of their exhibition.

The project aims to show these young drop-outs that they have a place in society and that culture can be their best ally, even when things are going badly, as it can give them back some pride, help them develop self-esteem and confidence. It also invites them to create for themselves a vision of the society that surrounds them and learn about the region's heritage in a different way.

Through this project, adults are also invited to reflect on their attitude towards these so-called marginalized youths and become aware of the darker side of this region. More broadly, the adults are asked to take stock of and consider their responsibilities as citizens.



CONTEXT

The project was born of a study on the state of housing in the older neighbourhoods, conducted by the Comité Logement de Valleyfield (CLV) in 1998. The findings of the study were later supported and more clearly defined by four focus groups held in 1999. In 2000, the housing committee was joined by seven other partners who agreed on and signed a plan for action.

The diagnosis developed after the study allowed us to recognize, among other things, the following in regard to the reality of the old neighbourhoods of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield: violence is prevalent, and the school drop-out rate is high. When a city lives with hunger and violence on a daily basis, we must transform the negative energies that so easily thrive in such a milieu into positive energies in order to move forward. We must also consider culture in a different light. It can become a conduit or vehicle by which and through which each and everyone can be invited to surpass themselves and rise above the difficulties we must all face, together or by ourselves.

The idea for the PRAQ to work in collaboration with the Musée de société des Deux-Rives came from the openness and visionary spirit of its director, who had been looking to innovate and develop activities for his territory in view of the already restricted space available to the museum itself. For two years, both organizations had been looking for an opportunity to present itself to enable them to move forward. The opportunity finally surfaced thanks to Service Canada that offers funding for projects for youths. And so, the two organizations joined forces to make a joint request and work together to create a cultural event that would involve the old neighbourhoods, as well as young people from that milieu.

For its part, the city of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield had been looking to develop the cultural component in order to reach young people whose interests do not run to the many sports activities the city offers. It naturally agreed to join the two project initiators to collaborate and help manage this project. After two years of gestation

and hard work, the project was launched thanks to the perseverance of the three partners and the Programme Connexion compétences [Skills Links Program] of Service Canada.

FUNDING, ACTORS, PARTNERS

An amount of \$150,000 is awarded each year, coming for the most part from Service Canada, within the framework of the Connexion compétences program. This sum is managed jointly by the City, the Musée and the community organization. The 10 participating young people receive an allowance equivalent to 30 hours per week at the minimum wage. Partners to the project increasingly provide services free of charge. For example, for graphic design, we are asked to pay the printing costs free of any surcharge for the training offered our young people in this domain, as is the case with the photographer. The entry fee to the museum is often waived for our group. Consequently, we frequently have a budget surplus at year's end.

Seventy-five partners from the milieu have gathered around this project. Among these are many community organizations, private enterprises (businesses, industrial plants), schools, the city of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, including the Public Security Service, the CLSC, elected officials, etc.

The Musée de société des Deux-Rives is the principal partner. Its role consists of producing the exhibition and the books, as well as organizing visits to other museums and showing the youngsters how to conduct a guided tour of their own exhibition. The City is also an important partner facilitating the availability of premises, funding, human resources, and financial support for the organization of a press conference and a presentation of this project to outside parties (such as the Union des municipalités du Québec, and the municipalities of Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières, Vancouver, Vienna, etc.).

IMPLEMENTATION

Beyond the two years of gestation, it must be said that the overall theme of the project *Ma ville, ma vision, mon avenir* has, over the past three years, taken on a wholly different tint each and every year. Themes emerge as a result of brainstorming sessions between the various promoters. The themes are selected according to the forthcoming events and the message we want to pass on to the community.

In 2006, it was *La vision changeante* [changing vision]. That year, the youngsters snapped 1,200 photographs representing their vision of the city and environment. The first set of pictures showed the good side of things. Afterwards, they were invited to show things the way they really saw them, to show their daily experiences. They did such a praiseworthy job of it that the mayor was rebuffed for his suggestion that certain photos should be removed. In the course of this first year, the youngsters put together a book of their photographs

with an accompanying text that they wrote themselves. The exhibition was presented in a shopping centre.

The second year, the selected theme was *Unir les différences* [uniting differences]. The youngsters had to interview three people who suffered prejudice because of their difference. They had to conduct these interviews with strangers and draft a text with the material gleaned from the interviews. One of the youngsters, who could not read nor write properly, still managed to complete the task. Obviously, the project coach corrected his spelling and deciphered his meaning, but he nonetheless wrote the initial draft. The exhibition adopted the shape of a giant fresco of 1,600 sq ft placed against the wall of a filtration plant in front of which 125,000 cars drive past every week.

The third year, which is just beginning, the chosen theme calls residents to *Se retrouver, se rassembler* [come together, get together]. The young people's mission consists in convincing residents that it is



time to put an end to neighbourhood feuds and one-upmanship, to bear down and join together as a community. They will exhibit their works on inflatable structures and, instead of a book, they will put together a packet-collection of post cards. The postcard format was chosen to create a link with young people throughout the province and the world, including Cameroon, Morocco and India. The project is also being undertaken in India.

We draw the attention of young people and recruit them through the production and distribution of various advertisements (posters and communiqués in newspapers) and promotional material to community organizations. The School Board, a street worker, the Carrefour jeunesse emploi (CJE), the CLSC, as well as participants in prior projects also lend a hand for the important task of recruitment. We must also organize information meetings that are then followed by individual interviews. The creation of a homogeneous group is the guiding principle in the selection of participants. The first week of the project starts with supervisory staff members welcoming the group and presenting the various aspects of the project the team will be dealing with in the six months to come.

REQUIRED HUMAN RESOURCES

To drive such a project requires a team. The first year, two individuals coordinated the project: one from PRAQ, another from the museum, namely, a full-time social worker and a part-time museology worker. The second year saw the addition of another part-time worker to assume the duties relating to employability. The tasks assigned to that worker consisted in establishing contacts with local resources, the Carrefour jeunesse emploi (CJE), as well as organizing visits to schools and businesses.

Moreover, at the request of the young people who took part in the project the first two years, the services of a professional artist were retained to offer art courses this year. This artist is now a member of the team, working one day a week. After workshops and conferences dealing with

various themes, such as homosexuality or drug addiction, for example, she proposes the young people express the emotions they feel, working with clay or by way of other mediums.

The young people are recruited by street-workers and other community services. There is one overriding criterion for selection, and that is that the young person wants to do the project for his own reasons and is willing to prove to himself that he can succeed, stick with it and see it to its end. If he joins just to please his nagging mother who is fed up seeing him lounge about aimlessly, or a social worker who doesn't know what to do about him...Sorry, no go! It is he who must show initiative and convince us of his interest.

To monitor and coach these youngsters, six workers are now required: one social worker who accompanies the young full-time, an employment officer, an art specialist and a museologist who work part-time, and two project coordinators (PRAQ and Museum) who work seven hours weekly on average.



DIFFICULTIES

The first difficulty we encountered was convincing the Board of Directors of both the PRAQ and the Musée de société des Deux-Rives to accept the project. For the PRAQ, it was the inability to understand the social role a museum could play, whilst for the Museum, it was a project that fell beyond the scope of generally accepted standards for an institution of this nature.

To begin with, melding together social work and culture was not at all easy for the two principal participants, even less so for the organizations that provide grants or financing, and for whom such projects do not meet their usual standards. This required a great deal of gentle persuasion. Negotiations can be long and difficult before coming to a satisfying conclusion. Everyone must be convinced that it is in their best interest to go beyond the beaten path and face the obstacles that will inevitably rise to impede our progress. The Museum was looking for a way to be active in the neighbourhood and to better develop a feeling of belonging. The project has also made residents aware that a museum can be an active player in the milieu and not only a mirror reflection of the surrounding culture.

You must first believe in a project that merges art, culture and social intervention, and be ready to persist in the face of adversity. The presentation of such a project by two so diverse promoting organizations, along with the fact that the project stands well beyond the usual norms of either of their domains, can initially awaken suspicion, absence of trust, and insecurity that can eventually be assuaged, but only with a very deft touch. Looking back, we can now see that even the initially reticent organizations have, with time, become our staunchest allies. They cite us and our project as examples and regularly invite us to present the project to third parties. They have now even offered us funding for the coming year.

The other major difficulty we encountered was that of recruiting young people who remained reticent even when paid for participating in a project that brings together art, culture and an empowerment

initiative. Many fear they may not be equal to the task, especially as regards to writing and artistic expression.

Another problem arose from the Loi de l'Instruction publique [public education law] which requires that young people attend school up to the age of sixteen. In light of the success of our program, the School Board has begun referring us 15-year old students. We must proceed with caution, as the schools tend to send us these students rather than question the ways of better answering their needs. In cases like these, we can expect to be having long conversations with the parents, the School Board, the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse [Youth Protection Directorate] and various sources of funding such as Service Canada. In certain cases, these kids had not physically attended class since they turned 13, even if they were registered.

In closing, a last difficulty stemmed from the need to schedule the workshops with consideration given to the start of the September school semester, so as to ensure that those wanting to return to school need not wait till January.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

This project has had a positive impact with the young, primarily through reawakening their pride and sense of belonging to their milieu. The project has been an effective incitement to perseverance and success. Of the young people from the two first years, 19 of 20 participants have gone back to school or onto the job market where they remain to this day.

One of the most beautiful moments is seeing the transformation that occurs in these young people over the course of six months, whether it be in their overall demeanor, the perception of their environment, the way they enter into relationships, or how they express their sense of belonging to the milieu. Another is to see the gains made by participants to the program in regard to their self-confidence and potential. This

can be seen at the exhibitions when visitors offer them congratulations. Seeing the pride they feel, that is our greatest reward.

As the Musée de société des Deux-Rives is a rather smallish museum that has no facilities or adequate space, it must make use of public locals to mount its exhibitions. This creates an impact, an interaction with members of the public who pass by while the youngsters are there to greet and guide them, and explain the exhibition and the project. So was it that in 2006, the exhibition was held in a shopping plaza where people, both young and old, usually congregate in numbers but without there necessarily being a lot of conversations. The exhibition provided an opportunity to see how people's perceptions of the young change, how certain preconceived notions or prejudices fall.

The project made people realize that a museum can also be an agent for development in a given area. This also resulted in greater visibility and recognition for the museum, as well as increasing its patronage and number of partners. Lastly, 20 new volunteers have been recruited by the Museum and the PRAQ. They will lend a welcomed and helpful hand during activities. In the wake of this successful endeavor, one source of funding, that was not however involved in financing this project, has nonetheless modified the eligibility criteria for its aid to museum program in order to allow more towns, cities and museums to adopt the concept of museology as social intervention.

The fact the milieu decided to mobilize in favor of these young people has had a positive impact on the community. In this regard, a few examples are worth mentioning:

- Many professionals involved (photographers, graphic designers, teachers and archeologists) have returned their professional fees (over \$7,000) in order to show their support for the exhibition;
- 75 community workers, organizations and businesses have offered participants workshops, and unique volunteer or work experiences;

- A city councilman, himself a career photographer, has volunteered to do some "coaching" and the mayor himself has met personally with participants on a few occasions;
- After having been photographed by a project participant and included in the exhibition and book, members of a group of elderly people now take time to talk with young people who congregate in a city park. The fear they harbored of the kids has disappeared;
- The project had positive media coverage – the newspaper *Le Soleil* published a 12-page special issue on the subject – and has made these kids excellent ambassadors for the city.

This project gave rise to new collaborations and partnerships. It also made residents realize that a city, a museum, and a community group can join together with an impressive number of partners to become even more effective agents for development in their milieu.

The results obtained prove that such an action is profitable on many planes: increased feelings of pride and belonging, recognition of partners, among which the City, the museum and PRAQ, as important actors in the field of social and cultural development, increased patronage of the museum, contribution to a reflection leading to the modification of the criteria of the Museums Assistance Program, and incitement to go beyond existing museum practices and norms.

To this day, the project has been cited as an example and has garnered various prizes awarded by the social clubs of the district (Rotary, Optimist, Lions), the Chamber of Commerce of the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield region, the Réseau québécois des Villes et Villages en santé (Prize for Excellence), the Société des Musées québécois, the Association des musées canadiens and the Conseil international des musées, and was cited during the seminar Les Arts et la Ville and at the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) congress.

TRANSFERABILITY

For this project to be effective in other towns and cities, the concept must not be imported wholesale. It must be adapted to each milieu. The approach, however, is transferable anywhere in the world, no matter the culture. As a result, the PRAQ and the Museum have already met with representatives of various communities interested in implementing such projects. We even offer our expertise to assist municipalities and communities to launch projects where museology becomes a tool for social development. This was the case with Trois-Rivières, Mont-Saint-Hilaire and Mashteuiash.

The project is transferable but the transfer can only succeed if those who manage the museum are open to innovation. The project also demands an equally firm belief in the capabilities of young people and the requirement that we accept them as they are. Obviously, money is also needed: publishing a book and mounting an exhibition alone cost on average \$15,000 to \$20,000. Therefore, it is paramount that financial backers step up.

When done in the proper conditions, the transfer and implementation of the museology concept have proven successful as a tool for social development, as they soon will be with the Musée du Fjord, in the city of Saguenay and in five other museums elsewhere in the world (Cameroon, India, Morocco, China and Finland). A project bringing together street kids from 10 different countries is presently underway and should see the light in 2009.

PRACTICE

VISITES GUIDÉES
D'UN QUARTIER

[NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDED TOURS]

Organization: Le Comité du Patrimoine des Anciens Quartiers (CPAQ), en collaboration avec les Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

Contact: Julie Bergevin

PROJECT

This project offers the possibility of discovering or rediscovering the North Ward of the city of Valleyfield by way of guided tours of no less than 90 minutes. More often than not, the tours willingly go on for two or three hours. The publication and distribution of an accompanying booklet is also part of the project. It is an accessory tool much appreciated by those who have taken the tour and contributes to the wealth of information on the history and heritage of this quarter.

This project is only one of the many activities managed by the Comité du Patrimoine des Anciens Quartiers (CPAQ). The CPAQ is a group of citizens that forms part of the organizational structure of the Partenaires pour la Revitalisation des Anciens Quartiers (PRAQ) de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield in its role as stakeholder in matters of built (material) or experienced (immaterial) heritage.

CPAQ MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective targeted by the CPAQ mission is to reinforce the sense of pride of residents, both old and new, of the old quarters in particular and of the overall population of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and of the MRC's in general. Specifically, the CPAQ seeks to halt urban decay in the old quarters of Valleyfield, but also to preserve the built heritage and architectural character of the old quarters, and thereby, the history that inhabits them.

Its role is to mobilize present and former residents of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, as well as the organizations of the community around specific projects. Through its activities, the CPAQ seeks to protect and safeguard the integrity of the old neighbourhoods within the territory of the Beauharnois-Salaberry MRC, including Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. It thus contributes to the well-being of the territory's residents, starting with those of the North Ward, which may be the oldest working-class neighbourhood in Canada, site of the famous Montreal Cotton textile company. Today, the North Ward is home to about 2,000 residents.

The CPAQ has also taken on the mission of making the general population more aware of the role the old neighbourhoods play, of their contribution to the development of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, and of the ripple effect of that development on the surrounding area. This is why the territory serviced by the CPAQ encompasses Beauharnois-Salaberry, the Suroît, as well as the Montérégie.

Ultimately, the CPAQ would like to see a greater sense of pride in the present and former residents of the old neighbourhoods, of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and of the whole MRC. The guided tours and accompanying booklet that allow people to discover or rediscover the North Ward of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield perfectly meet this objective.

IMPLEMENTATION

It was first a couple of citizens – long-time residents, history and heritage buffs – who came knocking at PRAQ's and the Museum's doors over three years ago, because they were concerned about announced changes to municipal laws that would authorize the issue of construction permits in the old quarter. They feared that the rich heritage and history of the quarter could be lost or hidden away, not to mention that they had the very distinct impression of witnessing its deterioration with no one seemingly caring.

A recruitment drive was launched with an announcement placed in a local paper calling all interested parties to come together and act. Six people answered the call, including the daughter of the baker who had long been living in the sector and serving area residents. From this initial undertaking was born the CPAQ.

The CPAQ launched an extensive survey effort in 2006. Interviews of concerned residents were conducted door to door by this couple to collect views and support. CPAQ volunteers would go to meet with residents on the first of the month, when Social Security payments are deposited in bank accounts, setting up a table on a street corner. Many testimonials from people who lived at the time that this neighbourhood was a hub of economic and industrial activity were collected through this effort.

The history of the neighbourhood was pieced together little by little. Over a three-year period, we filled in the details with the help of documents, maps and photographs. The research was conducted free of charge thanks to the commitment, passion and abilities of CPAQ members, along with the precious collaboration of the Musée de société des Deux-Rives that provided volunteers with its expertise in matters of museology and technical research in ethnology, not to mention providing access to its photographic archives.



The current project of the CPAQ seeks to enhance and consolidate the guided tours already proven successful since 2006, the year the first tours were offered. This heritage walking tour circuit is innovative in many ways: it is conducted by the people themselves; it is part of the regular activities of the Museum; and it is officially registered as part of the Journées de la culture program, itself under the direction of the ministère de la Culture et des communications du Québec (MCCQ).

The project also aims to bring higher visibility to the North Ward, the CPAQ and to citizen participation, the latter having enabled us to discover and complete in more detail the history as documented to this day. The guided tour is, in and of itself, a cultural activity of awareness and exchange. Another objective consists in making permanent the booklet and tour by producing a tangible object that speaks of the wealth of material (built) and immaterial (experienced) heritage.

The accompanying booklet is a concrete tool that allows us to pass on to the present population of the MRC and visitors from other areas, as well as to future generations, an overview of the history of the North Ward. This document offers the population of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and of the MRC of Beauharnois-Salaberry a way of highlighting their heritage and history.

The booklet also serves to reawaken the sense of pride of those living in the North Ward, as it also does that of former residents. By the same token, it ups the value, in the eyes of the general population, of a part of the city that is often the victim of prejudicial views.

In a way, this document has become a tool of reference for the North Ward and for those interested in the history and heritage of their region, as it provides easy-to-use cultural and architectural reference points (history and recognition). The booklet can also be used as a tool to teach grade and high-school students about

the history of the MRC in terms of the heritage value of their milieu, and this, through that of the North Ward.

Lastly, the booklets have been distributed in libraries and in strategic locations such as in MRC offices, city halls or municipal offices (or the department of recreational services) of the seven municipalities of the MRC, the Plaza Valleyfield Hotel, the Campi Marina, the Museum kiosk, as well as to any group interested in history and heritage. Moreover, the local cable company, owned by COGECO, produces and broadcasts reports on the CPAQ and its guided tours. One such report, aired February 6, 2008, during the television program *Autrement Vu*, on COGECO TV, Channel 13, is also available on DVD. Another report was broadcast following the visit that took place on July 20.

Thus is CPAQ constantly trying to attract more participants to its guided tours. It also tries to draw visitors from the MRC territory and from the Montérégie region, especially by scheduling heritage visits with the Musée de société des Deux-Rives. Info about these visits is found on Tourisme Suroît and Journées de la culture Websites.

PARTNERS AND ACTORS

In order to better manage joint activities, the CPAQ looks to develop collaboration and maintain cooperative links with partners in accordance to the needs of specific projects and files, which it seemingly does very well, as seen by the ongoing exchange of services and efficient procedures, whether it be the loan of premises, the printing of the accompanying booklet, publicity or the inscription of the tour on the Journées de la culture calendar.

The guided tour and accompanying booklet project is administered mainly by the Partenaires pour la revitalisation des anciens quartiers (PRAQ) of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. Important actors in the project are the Musée de société

des Deux-Rives and the MRC of Beauharnois-Salaberry. The Collège de Valleyfield loaned office equipment, and the Café Agora also collaborated on the project. The municipality of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield contributed financial assistance to participate in seminars and training sessions provided by the Conseil des monuments et sites du Québec.

The exchanges and transfer of expertise with CPAQ members were mainly conducted through Julie Bergevin (PRAQ Coordinator), Geneviève St-Jacques Thériault (Coordinator of Museum activities) and Michel Vallée (Museum Director). The PRAQ provides technical aid, the transfer of expertise, and clerical support. The Museum also offers support in the form of technical assistance, museology guidance, clerical support and access to its archives.

The publication of the accompanying booklet was realized thanks to a unique public/private/volunteer partnership formula. The publication project was thus made possible thanks to the support of public organizations that have worked with the CPAQ since its creation in 2005. The booklet also promotes various private local businesses. These business partners are the Presses collégiales du Québec (PCQ), co-editor of the booklet with the Museum and Aude Conception, creator of the graphic design whose participation was also an opportunity for the graphic designer to further her budding career. Finally, the booklet is a realization of the CPAQ, whose activities rely in great part on volunteers.

The members of CPAQ are citizens, residents or former residents of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield neighbourhoods with an interest in seeing the development of an urban landscape respectful of our built and experienced heritage.

At the heart of the CPAQ is a six-member committee with roots in three different Salaberry-de-Valleyfield neighbourhoods: Champlain/North Ward, Jules-Léger and Georges-Leduc/Bellerive. The committee has no hierarchical structure and no administrators. It relies on its own vibrant structure, inspired by the committees it forms

as the need arises. Its workings are based on the principle of citizen participation. The committee seeks to maintain quality interpersonal relationships, to nourish the enthusiasm of its members, and to ensure the successful realization of its activities and projects. At the last five meetings (one via Internet) an exhibition project, the guided tour and participation in the Journées de la culture were discussed.

DIFFICULTIES

The search for funding that allows the realization of activities in the field is the most important difficulty we encountered. This activity demands a great deal of time and energy (530 hours were logged between March 2007 and March 2008) and is performed by volunteers.

It raises a question: How do we ensure the long-term survival of the Committee and the project, beyond the good intentions and energy expended so generously by interested parties and founding-members?

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

The Comité du Patrimoine project, as such, was presented during a seminar held in Trois-Rivières in the autumn of 2007 dealing with various citizen mobilization efforts in support of urban renewal in Quebec. The presentation resulted in doors being opened for the organization. Indeed, the organization was later invited to give conferences and present the project at other seminars in various locations.

Another beautiful moment associated with the project is seeing the pride of citizens during the guided tours. Standing on their doorsteps or church steps, they wait and greet those having signed on to the tour to discuss, exchange, share and add to the history of their neighbourhood. Their comments often serve to correct or complete the information contained in the booklet. Even the guides, hosts and hostesses found themselves discovering historical pearls often hidden or unknown to the public. It is a fantastic way of nourishing the history of a site and preventing the loss of important testimonials and objects.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The project resulted in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield giving special consideration to its built heritage when it drafted its policy on housing.



IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

Many questions have been raised, the main one having already been asked: How can we ensure the long-term survival of the Committee and the project, beyond the good intentions and efforts so generously expended by founding members and those first concerned? How can we ensure the financial viability of the Committee and of current and future projects (there is no lack of ideas), while each neighbourhood now wants its own historical and heritage guide?

The archiving of objects, documents and photographs (including the time and resources allocated to the task) remains an ongoing challenge, as does the ever increasing promotion of activities and events. The Committee would like to increase its visibility by having its own Website. It has already gained more exposure appearing in the column *Quoi faire la fin de semaine* [what to do on weekends] in the daily, *La Presse*.

TRANSFERABILITY

Anything is possible! There is a lot to be learned, on a variety of levels, from what has been done: the time, the human and financial resources to be foreseen; better recognizing how not to waste time and energy; and developing new and different promotional strategies. How can we better systemize this beautiful adventure in time, knowing that it took three years to arrive at such a deployment of activities?

Is the consolidation or extension of the Committee necessary, and this, as we consider the risk of losing the initial and friendly spirit members now enjoy? Should we look for young promoters among the students we have reached with our school visits? We might also ask what follow-up we should do to our school visits and what positive impact the visits had on students on various levels. For example, we might think of the encouragement to persevere in their studies, or the amount and nature of the work accomplished, the interest this may have engendered among them, as well as the increased sense of belonging to a milieu (that young people sometimes denigrate, when they themselves aren't denigrated by adults). Although we are not yet in a position to clearly delineate the results obtained at this level, there is no doubt that the transfer of this practice to a grade school in Rosemont should yield a better view.

In closing, we perhaps have reason to feel inspired by other citizen mobilization and activities, notably the ones organized by other partners of Agir dans son milieu, be it only to better identify the resources, the expertise to be shared and further developed so that citizens may become increasingly empowered to get involved and speak out on the future of their neighbourhoods. The exemplary character of CPAQ members certainly represents a glowing source of inspiration to us all, and a beautiful way of bringing together the individual and collective aspects of citizens involved in their milieu.

Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi (Shawinigan)

*Revitalization of the Saint-Marc/Christ-Roi neighbourhoods
(Shawinigan)*

Its projects and its practices



Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi (Shawinigan)

Revitalization of the Saint-Marc/Christ-Roi neighbourhoods



Created in 2001 under the name *Mon quartier, mon avenir, mes actions* [my neighbourhood, my future, my actions] and subsequently incorporated in 2005, the organization, Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi is a coalition of citizens and organizations that have joined hands to work at revitalizing these two Shawinigan neighbourhoods.

Thanks to its *Projets de revitalisation intégrée* (PRI) [integrated revitalization projects], it seeks to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of the residents of these sectors, comprising 3,900 homes. Its main poles of action are as follows:

- to work with the residents of the neighbourhood (single-parent families, low-income earners, people with mental health problems or special needs) to implement, protect and improve the living conditions and environment of residents and workers by way of projects they have identified and developed;
- to mobilize the population of the St-Marc/Christ-Roi sector, that is to say, the people who live there, have a business there, own buildings there, as well as the community groups that work there, in consultation with the milieu;
- to promote the inclusion of local residents;
- to identify in consultation with the population the major issues that require action;

- to provide popular and social education by way of strategies and services identified by members and addressing individual and collective needs;
- to support individuals living in poverty in order to allow them to make a place for themselves in society and in the economy through the creation of revitalization projects;
- to educate and bring greater awareness regarding protection of the environment.

The PRI Implementation Committee has a seven-member Board of Directors. The corporation also comprises various categories of members: active members (6), and a co-opted member. Other members may be asked to sit on various committees. Active members of the corporation are residents, business people, landowners or community groups inscribed on the updated *Revitalisation des Quartiers* list. Active members have the right to vote at the General Assembly. Co-opted members are individuals invited to join a committee or the Board of Directors in order to bring a specific form of expertise or representation not otherwise available. Consequently, co-opted-members are never elected. They have the right to vote.

Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/ Christ-Roi has many achievements under its belt, the principal ones being:

- A door-to-door consultation of residents, business people, property owners and community groups. The objective of this initiative was to consult residents, awaken their interest, and then mobilize them;
- the drafting of a profile of the neighbourhood;
- a diagnostic of the needs of the neighbourhood;
- the painting of murals on the walls of a rundown apartment building located at one of the busiest intersections in the neighbourhood;
- various mobilization actions: production of a community newsletter, commercial mobilization to prevent the closing of the local public market, organization of many neighbourhood celebrations;
- the organization of pre-employment workshops for some 20 residents;
- the creation of the Maison de répit where families from the greater Shawinigan area can go for daycare services at little cost, and this, outside the times normally offered by the centres de la petite enfance [daycare centres];

The 2007-2008 action plan focuses on putting together and publishing the community newsletter, promoting services, development of new projects (drop-in daycare, employment development assistance, etc.), hiring personnel.

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PRACTICE

MAISON DE RÉPIT

[RESPITE HOUSE]

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Organization: Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi (SHAWINIGAN)

Contact: Hélène Plante

PROJECT

The Maison de répit is the result of a group reflection among actors committed to social development of the region that took place in January 2001 and which gave rise to numerous actions (wide ranging consultation by way of a questionnaire, publication of citizens' concerns, consensus on and choice of four sectors of action, etc.). In response to the concerns expressed by residents of the neighbourhoods, the Maison de répit has become a meeting place for all those concerned by the development of the St-Marc and Christ-Roi neighbourhoods. In addition, it provides daycare services for children from 0-12 years of age and complementary activities for the parents. The Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc / Christ-Roi has its offices on the premises and launches projects that call for citizen participation to improve the overall quality of life of the sector's residents.

CONTEXT

The neighbourhoods of St-Marc/Christ-Roi were once an important industrial sector of the region. The housing was spacious. People made good money. Following the decline of the manufacturing industry that saw many plants shut down, the sector lost vitality on a major scale. The sector is now home to many low income and single-parent families, many of whom have

little educational background. Many are on unemployment or welfare.

The Maison de répit launched a public consultation under the guidance of the Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi organization. It was the chosen way to address the priorities the citizens had earlier identified. The latter wished to see a meeting place where they would be offered services complementary to the daycare services already provided, services more along the lines of respite and drop-in daycare, as well as support services for families.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project was implemented in stages.

First, the Board of Directors decided to purchase a house rather than rent premises. During the consultation, the citizens had mentioned the need for a meeting place that would be lasting and long-term. Many projects launched in the sector had not lasted very long. People had somewhat lost confidence. The Board decided it would be best to buy a house in order to offer a more permanent location in the neighbourhood.

Secondly, the Board formed the Comité Maison de Répit [respite house committee]. Members then combed the city to find the right house, one that would be close to the people. The process took six months.

Thirdly, members of the Board of Directors looked for financing, conducted consultations, and prepared the necessary documents to ensure the installations would meet health and safety requirements (six months). There followed the purchase (which went quickly). As for the restoration of the house and the organization of its workings, many unforeseen incidents intervened and this last phase stretched over eighteen months. We then had to promote the services offered by La Maison de répit.

At the Maison de répit, from Friday 6:00 p.m. to Saturday 12 a.m., an educator trained in early childhood care welcomes six children between the ages of 0 and 12, although never more than two infants. This allows parents who so desire to simply step out and not leave their children alone at home. They may want to eat out, do some sort of activity or simply take a break. For \$18, the Maison provides the child with a sleep-over, two snacks and breakfast.

The Maison is now in a consolidation phase and is open to new projects. As the Maison does not benefit from any recurrent funding, it now offers complementary services in order to meet the self-financing objective that will allow it to further its development.

Drop-in daycare service is offered Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at a cost of \$2.00. In addition, Wednesday morning from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., it offers the parents of children between the ages of 0 and 4 its collations sourires [smiling snacks] free of cost. These get-togethers are pleasant for the children, as well as for the parents, providing the latter with an opportunity to widen their social circle and to “vent” the week’s events by establishing new contacts and developing new relationships. Activities are organized for the parents (discussions, recipes, special activities, conferences, workshops, etc.). On these occasions, the children are cared for and their social and emotional development stimulated through activities held in the games-room. The activities always close with a snack.

The Maison also enhanced its agreement with the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de l’Énergie (CSSSE) [health and social services clinic], that will now fund the parents it refers to the Maison when so required.

PARTNERS AND ACTORS

The members of the Board of Directors of the organization, Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi put a lot of themselves into starting up this project. They nominated a coordinator who has taken on the responsibility for both the Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi and the Maison de répit. The initial partners, brought together in the Advisory Committee, were: the city of Shawinigan, the MNA Claude Pinard, Alcan Company, the community group Le Regroupement de Défense des Droits Sociaux (RDDS), the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de l’Énergie (CSSSE), the Centre d’action bénévole (CAB) that provided precious support, the Centre local d’emploi (CLE) and the construction contractor, Gilles Guertin, sadly now deceased. Mr Guertin took to heart the creation of a facility for families of the greater Shawinigan area in need. His widow asked that donations be sent to the Maison de répit in memory of her husband, as she recognized the importance this initiative held for her husband.

The members of the Board of Directors also invited organizations to participate, at the management/administrative level, as well as for upkeep and other small chores. Thus did we rely on the strengths, talents and competencies of individuals (accounting, painting, gardening, housecleaning, etc). Many volunteers worked at every implementation stage of the Maison. It is thanks to them that the project saw the light of day.

As the monies allocated for salaries and operations are not recurrent, the project has assembled a number of partners over the years, equally from the institutional, community, foundational and business milieus: the Fondation Béati, Centraide, the Centre local de développement (CLD), the Caisse populaire Desjardins, the Club Richelieu, the Regroupement des bingos. The educator/daycare worker is paid with sums received from a non-recurring project of the Centre local d’emploi (CLE), which is a source of some uncertainty.

DIFFICULTIES

The moving in and restoration phase was very long and required a lot of energy. Only the coordinator and members of the Board were available to ensure the proper and on-going supervision. Despite the assistance provided by partners and citizens, they had to dedicate all their energies to the start-up of La Maison. This was accomplished to the detriment of the primary objective of the group, namely, that of mobilization of the neighbourhood, and this, to such an extent that the mission now requires re-building.

Another major difficulty the project encountered was, and remains, funding. The search for funding demands time, in fact, a lot of time. Indeed, the coordinator must devote a lot of time to the detriment of her other tasks. The role of educator being essential, as she is the one providing basic first-line services, a lot of time and energy is expended to guaranty payment of her salary.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

Everyone who participated in creating the Maison de répit gained knowledge and/or abilities. All actors, volunteers and remunerated workers brought to the project their own particular strengths and competencies that they transmitted and shared with others. The inauguration of the Maison de répit, an event open to the general public, was a great source of pride to them.

For the team, the major change wrought by this experience was surely that of learning to set concrete objectives, of planning actions that allowed meeting the set objectives, and of setting a timetable for these actions. The initiative not only made the work easier, it also facilitated clear communications with our partners and sponsors. We believe and hope that working together with business people, the institutional network and community groups will lead to the creation of new and stronger alliances.

We are beginning to see the impact of this project on the community. There is a lot of word of mouth. The service is gaining popularity and recognition. La Maison touches the community, primarily allowing certain women to escape isolation through the development of contacts that at times extend beyond the proffered services of the Maison. By way of the collations sourire activity, La Maison supports the development of parental skills. It also contributes to the social and emotional development of children. Furthermore, when teachers organize visits of the Maison for single mothers within the framework of the Ma place au soleil [my place in the sun] continuing education initiative, La Maison becomes an attractive and accessible place they can elect to adopt as their own.

FUNDING

La Maison de répit was bought for \$66,000 with renovations adding \$20,000 to the bill. To cover these costs, we put together a financing group that organized a few activities. A wine and cheese, a raffle for a new car, and a benefit concert by Patrick Normand allowed us to cover almost all our expenses. Today, the mortgage on the house stands at about \$30,000. Operating costs for the house are those of a normal house plus the costs of snacks for the children and the activities organized for the residents of the neighbourhood. The educator is paid with funds provided by non-recurring grants. The monies collected during funding drives are used to reduce the mortgage.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

If we had to do it again, we would have to allocate our resources more equally between the various projects undertaken by Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi to ensure one project does not squeeze out the others. The Advisory Committee of partners established at the outset of the project should not have been disbanded. It did not

require a great deal from its members but contributed mightily in the form of ideas and contacts. It would still be very useful today. We would have to better plan and work faster at acquiring recurrent funding.

It is an undertaking that could be launched elsewhere, especially with groups or organizations that already have a house or their own premises. In closing, we cannot insist enough on the importance of having the benefit of expertise in construction or home renovation on a project such as this.

TRANSFERABILITY

The Advisory Committee of neighbourhood partners created at the outset of the project is a type of committee that can easily be transferred from one project to another. As it comprises people from the milieu who know and understand the issues, the committee is a buzz-group rich with ideas. The exercise of planning and setting priorities we experienced constitutes an apprenticeship in organizational development transferable to other projects.



PRACTICE

MURALES DE QUARTIER

[NEIGHBOURHOOD MURALS]

Ma vie de quartier et Imagine

*“My Life in the Neighbourhood”
and “Imagine”]*

Organization: Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc /
Christ-Roi (Shawinigan)

Contact: Hélène Plante

PROJECT

The murals project evolved within the framework of the overall revitalization of the older neighbourhoods initiative of Shawinigan (St-Marc and Christ-Roi). The Murals project has provided colour and vitality to two building facades on a busy street corner in the neighbourhood. Before completion of the project, these walls had been eyesores whose ugliness aggressively permeated the area. Now they are a source of pride to residents and add a dab of gaiety to the neighbourhood. The project also played a more overall role in regard to revitalization as it brought the initiative higher visibility.

PARTNERS

Many partners contributed to the project: the owner of the building, the city of Shawinigan, Peinture Laurentide, Échafaudage Du-For, Peinture Robert Dupont, the Centre d'action bénévole (CAB) de Shawinigan, the Carrefour jeunesse emploi (CJE) de Shawinigan, the Forum jeunesse de la Mauricie and Développement des ressources humaines Canada (Service Canada).

Many citizens were also actively involved in the project. Such is the case with residents and volunteers of the Pavillon l'Assuétude (a treatment centre for people suffering from alcoholism or drug problems) and the members of the Board of Directors of Revitalisation des quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi.

The contribution of partners came in various forms, such as the loan of material and human resources, or by way of financial support.

As for material contributions, the project enjoyed the loan of a building, a firetruck, as well as fencing to protect the area where the murals were being painted. As for human resources, the project benefited from the presence of firemen, of municipal police surveillance, as well as of assistance with the project. As for financial support, agreements were negotiated for the cost of the paints, for preparing the wall for painting, and for the free installation of scaffolding. A grant provided the funds required for the hire of two employees to realize the project.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project aimed to give new sparkle to two immense walls located on a very busy street corner in the neighbourhood.

The first step was to look for financing, and also to examine the various existing projects. An action plan was devised, along with an estimate of the project's related costs.

Another important step was looking for partners. The project was presented at the Forum jeunesse de la Mauricie [young people of the Mauricie forum] and two applications for grants to fund salaries were submitted to Emploi d'été Canada [Canada summer jobs].

A sketch of the future painting was drawn and a person hired to coordinate the project, a second to provide technical assistance.

The walls chosen for the murals were washed by city workers. The scaffolding was then raised and the primer and tiling applied. The last steps were the tracing of the outline of the painting, the painting of the mural proper, and the inauguration.

The first mural, *Ma vie de quartier* [my life in the neighbourhood], better represents the initial idea of its creator, Caroline Matteau, an art student at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR). Indeed, her idea evolved to become the representation of many requests made by residents of the sector who wished to offer pedestrians a work of art of a lively nature. Consequently, the painting evolved in accordance to the comments of passersby, and concealed the once shockingly horrid wall that stands there.

At the inauguration, most comments expressed the wish of seeing the mural extended to the adjacent wall so as to provide greater continuity. The second mural, *Imagine*, takes its name from, and depicts songs by the Beatles, with images representing seven to ten song titles, as well as recognized Shawinigan landmarks. The mural

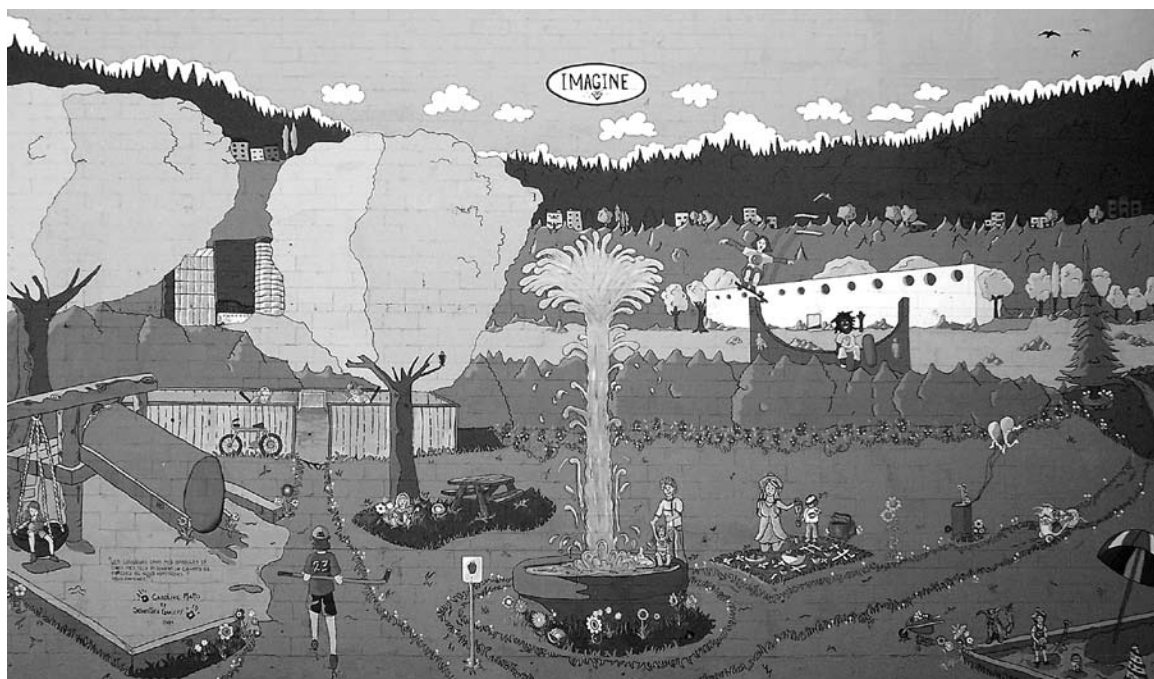
offers the possibility for an educator to organize trivia games, perhaps consisting of finding the titles of the songs depicted on the wall.

ACTORS

The main actors in the project are the Board of Directors of the Revitalisation des quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi initiative, the organization responsible for the project, along with its team. Our various partners are also important players who have allowed us to solidify the project at each of its many stages. The neighbourhood residents, including those of the Pavillon de l'Assuétude, also played important roles.

DIFFICULTIES

The project created a certain pressure in regard to our human resources. As many of the citizens involved in the project came to us from the Pavillon de l'Assuétude, a centre that helps



those with alcohol and drug problems, it was very demanding at the human level. Efforts had to be expended to ensure that the relationship between those who coordinated the project and the citizens involved did not slide into one of a less professional nature.

The project also required that team members develop certain knowledge, among which was painting. More generally, expertise had to be acquired in human resource management, filling out request forms for grants, methodology of press conference organization, and the development of relationships with the press in order to better “sell” the project.

We also had to contend with the weather, as it had a direct impact on our ability to meet our deadlines.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

The enthusiasm demonstrated by the residents of the neighbourhood was certainly one of the beautiful moments associated with the project. Seeing the day-to-day progression of the work was also a stimulating factor that allowed us to witness the project slowly coming together. The final application of colors that gave life to the murals and, lastly, the inauguration that marked the completion of the project were also beautiful moments.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The changes affected are not so much in the practices, but rather more in regard to the visibility of Revitalisation Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi, that saw the project through. Completing the project was thus made easier because, with the completion of the murals, the defeatism of neighbourhood residents faded away, giving place to pride.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

The project would be done in exactly the same way.

TRANSFERABILITY

The collaboration with partners, the knowledge in project development, the network of contacts, and the sense of pride among the local residents.

Solidarité Ahuntsic à Montréal

Ahuntsic Solidarity (Montreal)

Its projects and its practices



Solidarité Ahuntsic à Montréal

Ahuntsic Solidarity (Montreal)



Solidarité Ahuntsic is a joint action table in the Ahuntsic district of Montreal (north central). The neighbourhood is home to 76,000 residents of a territory bordered to the north by the Rivières-des-Prairies, to the south by Crémazie Boulevard, to the east by Papineau Street on its southern flank and J.-J. Gagnier Street on its northern flank from Port-Royal Street, at the limits of Saint-Michel District. To the west, it is crossed by the Montreal-Laval railway line, right at the limits of the Bordeaux-Cartierville District.

OBJECTIVES

This intersectorial and multi-network table comprises citizens, community groups, institutional partners and elected officials who all seek to improve the social and economic conditions of the residents of the district. Joint action and citizen involvement are the basic strategies of all these organizations and individuals who, in this way, take part in an initiative for social and community development.

HISTORY

Solidarité Ahuntsic was formed in March 1999 from the merging of two consultation groups: the Conseil communautaire d'Ahuntsic [Ahuntsic community council] (incorporated in 1987), and Ahuntsic Quartier en santé [Ahuntsic healthy neighbourhood] (whose activities began in 1995).

MEMBERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Presently, this joint action table has 112 to 115 individual or group members. One person only occupies a permanent position (management), working with a group of some 10 individuals hired in accordance with the needs of the various projects (7), and three other workers for the neighbourhood, hired for terms of varying durations.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Here are a few of the projects this neighbourhood joint action table completed, with the quality of life of the neighbourhood residents as the priority and main objective:

- the establishment of a community centre (the Centre communautaire Ahuntsic) that brings together under the same roof 20 community organizations;
- participation in the production of neighbourhood profiles;
- the organization of days of reflection and exchange forums;
- the implementation of integrated approaches for social development in poor neighbourhoods of the district (many sub-sectors);

- support for the consolidation and development of community organizations;
- organization of inter-sectorial consultations dealing with targeted issues;
- various representations to highlight the needs and realizations of the district;
- a diagnostic and strategic planning process for district development.

Coordinates

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Contacts

Azzedine Achour (Coordinator) et Francine Goyette (President)



PRACTICE

APPROCHE INTÉGRÉE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT SOCIAL DU QUARTIER

[INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE DISTRICT]

Organization: Solidarité Ahuntsic

Contacts: Azzedine Achour et Francine Goyette

PROJECT

The project consisted in a strategy to fight poverty in a wealthy neighbourhood of the district that contains pockets of poverty. The project was born in the wake of a neighbourhood social forum held in November 1997 that established the fight against poverty as the overriding priority.

The emergence of this strategy resulted from two main factors: first and foremost was the recognition of the deterioration of socio-economic conditions, as illustrated by various neighbourhood profiles defined by data from Statistics Canada and the experiences of district community organizations. Then there was the willingness of the local communities, by bringing together the member-organizations of Solidarité Ahuntsic joint action table and the citizens, men and women, to act on living conditions.

In 2001 a meeting place was created, the Maison Fleury, that brings together stakeholders to address the preoccupations of the local population and accompany the most excluded and marginalized of a given sector (Saint-Benoît) in an initiative of integration and autonomy. This project was the first to come to light within the framework of the Approche intégrée de développement social du quartier [integrated approach for district social development]. Thanks to the vitality

this project generated, and in view of its success, the approach progressively spread to four other pockets of poverty of the district over the years between 2002 and 2006.

PARTNERS

The partners at the outset were the Carrefour d'aide aux nouveaux arrivants (CANA) a group providing assistance to recent immigrants, the Service de Nutrition et d'Action Communautaire (SNAC), the CLSC (now integrated into the Centre de santé et de services sociaux Ahuntsic/Montréal-Nord (CSSSAMN) and the Centre local d'emploi (CLE).

Here is a detailed list of the organizations that have since joined the initial partners:

- Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi Ahuntsic / Bordeaux-Cartierville (CJE ABC)
- École primaire Saint-Benoît
- Comité Logement Ahuntsic-Cartierville
- Ville de Montréal et l'Arrondissement Ahuntsic / Cartierville
- Office Municipal d'Habitation de Montréal (OMHM)
- Centre des Bénévoles Ahuntsic-Sud (CBAS)
- Rue Action Prévention (RAP) Jeunesse
- Centre des Jeunes de Saint-Sulpice (CJSS)
- Centre des Ressources Éducatives et Pédagogiques (CREP)
- Association multifamiliale du HLM Meunier-Tolhurst
- RePère
- Pause Famille
- Ateliers 5 épices
- Centre de ressource de la 3^{ième} avenue

IMPLEMENTATION

This first project to rise from the Approche de développement social intégré was seen as a pilot project. In May 2000, a few members of Solidarité Ahuntsic decided to launch a process to address the preoccupations of the local population and accompany the most excluded and marginalized of a given sector (Saint-Benoît) in an initiative of integration and autonomy.

The CANA and the CLSC Ahuntsic took on the mantle of leadership of this initiative that joins together some ten (10) social and community organizations and residents regularly consulted on matters regarding the diagnosis of the needs of the milieu and invited to mobilize and act collectively on identified social and urban issues.

The Démarche concertée pour le développement social de Saint-Benoît [integrated initiative for social development of St-Benoît] sets itself as main objective to bring together the consultations of the various organizations working for the social and community development of Saint-Benoît and to support the efforts of residents working in their community.

The actions undertaken target the residents of the Saint-Benoît sector of Ahuntsic and more specifically:

- the tenants and neighbours of the apartment buildings on Terrasse Fleury, Mont-Cassin and Place Meilleur;
- the families of children attending Saint-Benoît grade school;
- the tenants and neighbours of the HLM Meunier-Tolhurst [low-cost housing].

All in all, representing some 1,000 families.

Each organization involved at the start was aware that the integration of immigrants could not be the responsibility of any single organization, and that the entire neighbourhood had to take charge of the situation. This did not, however, exclude

individual organizations from having their own specific objectives. For example, the CLSC wished to see young people take charge of themselves, while the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi with agents on the ground wanted to work with young people to help them onto the job market. Another organization had grown tired of feeding people (soup kitchens) and an elected school board member was concerned about school attendance and success, etc. It was then a question of uniting all these objectives under a common strategy and launching projects that would structurally modify the lives of those concerned, as well as their milieu.

Little by little, with the meager resources made available by each partner, we searched and found premises that could serve as a meeting place for those working in the sector and its residents. In the end, the costs of the premises were assumed by Centraide. We then hired a coordinator and each organization committed to recruiting residents to help organize activities.

Thus launched, the process resulted in the design and implementation of a meeting place christened La Maison Fleury [Fleury house], inaugurated in February 2001. It now serves as a rallying point and embodies the concerted efforts that aim to improve the capacity of the Saint-Benoît milieu to mobilize and act to enhance the quality of life of the sector. In this local, where we meet with local residents, many activities are under way.



AVAILABLE ACTIVITIES

Here are a few of the activities from a program schedule that varies according to the needs of residents:

Information Workshops

From the Employment file, since April 2007, two monthly information sessions are presented by a CJE representative. They facilitate the assistance of those actively seeking employment;

From the Finances file, two workshops are offered by the ACEF du Nord de Montréal under the theme “Budget Management” and “Credit and Debt”:

From the Nutrition file, Les collations santé [healthy snacks] led by a representative of the SNAC.

Employability

Organization by the CJE of informal, bi-weekly meetings on jobs and employability;

Services of an Employment Counselor charged with getting those living in the territory who are most removed from the job market to local employment resources;

Une place pour moi [a place for me] workshops offering information, individual coaching, as well as the possibility of professional internship-apprenticeships to women removed from the job market.

Social and community activities for children attending Saint-Benoît grade school and their families

Creation of the Samedi d'apprendre project [I feel like learning project, PUN with saturday (samedi) and I feel like (Ça me dit)]. Stemming from the partnership of the Saint-Benoît grade school and participating community organizations, the project made available to 37 adults (parents of students in welcoming classes) and to 49 children weekly activities, such as francization courses, homework assistance, early intervention for pre-schoolers, and child/parent cooking.

Food Safety

Conducted by residents, these communal kitchens provide an occasion for a group of 5 to 12 women to break free from their isolation and develop social and self-help networks. The women are all from other cultural communities, newly arrived in Quebec, and mothers of small children.

Socialization Meetings

Residents are offered opportunities to meet informally in the form of chats over coffee and citizens' meetings in the mornings and afternoons, community suppers at lunch or picnics during the summer. The aim is to facilitate the creation of self-help networks. This also provides field workers with an opportunity to inform and encourage people to take part in neighbourhood life.

Tour of social and community organizations in the neighbourhood

Residents are accompanied by two field workers on a tour of the neighbourhood to show them the available social and community resources.

Interventions at the HLM Meunier-Tolhurst [low-cost housing]

- Day of reflection to decide on a strategic plan for concerted intervention;
- Implementation of an action plan and program of activities;
- Consolidation and coaching of tenant mobilization committees;
- Activities for the young;
- Informal social activities to encourage dialogue between tenants, and between tenants and their neighbours;
- Family services.

REQUIRED COMMITTEES AND ACTION PLANS

The Démarche concertée pour le développement social de Saint-Benoît [joint action for St-Benoît social development] has two main active committees: the Comité des partenaires Saint-Benoît [committee of St-Benoît partners] and the Comité des partenaires du HLM Meunier-Tolhurst [committee of HLM Meunier-Tolhurst partners]. These committees are formed by organizations pre-occupied with the various social issues of the St-Benoît sector and work with the predominantly immigrant population, often more vulnerable and underprivileged.

The Maison Fleury now has nine committees of residents and stakeholders addressing various issues. All but a few of the above-mentioned committees constitute together the Comité des partenaires. The latter is chaired by a coordinator paid by Solidarité Ahuntsic.

The year 2007 served for the reflection over the development of strategic action plans and their launch. The return from the summer holidays was met by a completely different reality: many departures and new arrivals had taken place within the Démarche concertée Saint-Benoît. Thus was its portrait remodelled to include

various implications and unforeseen challenges in regard to mobilization.

IMPACT

This dynamic resulted in other projects being progressively implemented in four other pockets of poverty in the sector (five projects in all).

The year 2003 saw the creation of another house, La Maison de la visite, resulting from a trans-sectoral mobilization in an area surrounding a school and working for the social development in Sault-au-Récollet.

Since 2004, community and institutional organizations, as well as citizens, work together to mobilize and fight social exclusion and poverty at the HLM Meunier-Tolhurst, home mainly to Haitian families.

In February 2005, residents of the Saint-Simon Apôtre sector formed a committee to address the difficulties stemming from decline of the needle trade. Solidarité Saint-Simon came about thanks to all these lovely people supported by community and institutional organizations committed to the promotion of social and community development in the milieu.

Lastly, in 2006, a trans-sectoral association of the Domaine Saint-Sulpice set up working committees to address the issues of housing, relief, volunteer work, and breakfast for underprivileged children.

Each project is directed by a Comité conseil de partenaires [partners' advisory committee] under the guidance of a salaried coordinator from Solidarité Ahuntsic. The role of this advisory committee is mainly to see that orientations are followed, but all is decided and organized by the committees and the sub-committees they have formed.

ACTORS

In each zone, the actors are people from different and varied backgrounds:

- Institutions that transect, such as: schools, Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques (CRÉP), CLSC, Centre local d'emploi (CLE), Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMH)....;
- Community organizations: Initiative 1-2-3 GO, Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) Ahuntsic/Cartierville, Comités de loisirs, Comités de logement [recreational and housing committees], Centres de la petite enfance [daycare centres]...;
- Business: merchants associations, grocery chains, credit unions....;
- Elected municipal or school-board officials....;
- And citizens involved in parents' or residents' committees, tenant associations, etc.

There are also financial partners that vary according to the projects, such as Centraide du Grand Montréal, the City of Montreal, the Arrondissement of Ahuntsic/Cartierville, the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM), the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec (MICCQ), the Caisse populaire, the Direction de la santé publique (DSP), Emploi-Québec, etc.

FUNDING

Two sources provide the funding for La maison Fleury:

- Centraide pays the salary of the coordinator, the rent and minor administrative costs
- The Arrondissement of Ahuntsic/Cartierville, by way of the Contrat de Ville, pays the costs of the activities undertaken by the partners.

DIFFICULTIES

Organizing activities with citizens is a commitment that is, at times, difficult to sustain, especially at the start of a project. We must take time to get to know people, learn how to best approach them, find the right words to energize them, find agreement within the committees as to the level of commitment expected of them, and lead them to take over the overall initiative at the appropriate moment. We must establish dialog between those backing the project, with those within the citizens' group, as well as between the two aforementioned parties.

Another difficulty is that of long-term commitment of partner organizations. When project backers or representatives of organizations leave for any number of reasons (retirement, better opportunities) we often recognize how very tenuous the ties between the organization itself and the project can be. And as all the implemented projects derive from the dynamics of preceding projects, the new actors having not participated in the prior experiences (although often coming from the same organizations), they must be reminded of the first and overriding objectives, which are not objectives of service, but rather those of empowerment.

In reality, the organizations backing these projects do so mostly thanks to the privileged relationships of trust they enjoy with individuals that believe and are wholeheartedly committed. In order to ensure that these projects are shared

and supported yet further by these organizations, the challenge consists in ensuring their long-term survival beyond that of the people who support them. This is true not only for institutions but also for community organizations.

To close, the organizations and individuals who represent them who believe in these projects must also show a greater flexibility. They must at times change a few aspects of their practices, were it only to modify or reconcile the work schedule in consideration of the fact that we cannot recruit citizens only from 9 to 5. They must sometimes go the extra mile and meet them halfway. This sometimes requires additional and adequate resources.

Another challenge: citizen mobilization remains very difficult so long as community organizations are not more anchored within the community.

BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

All moments were inspiring, but the winner goes to the inauguration of La maison Fleury which certainly marked the launch of the Approches intégrées en développement social. It was specially touching as this was our baby, made of our own hands. The fact the project spawned a swarm of ideas in others is a very inspiring observation.

Readers can see the projects developed in the other four pockets of poverty in the IMPACT section of this report.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

We came to realize that there are two types of intervention: interventions tinged with a vision leaning toward change and development of the neighbourhood based on the needs of the people; and interventions that strive towards the mission that each organization has given itself.



IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

We would invest more energy in training and in popular education to ensure that the organizations involved share a better overall understanding of the initiative.

TRANSFERABILITY

As the projects were implemented and transferred from one neighbourhood to another here, in neighbourhoods that sometimes have very different realities, they can most certainly be transferred elsewhere.



PRACTICE

CENTRE COMMUNAUTAIRE AHUNTSIC

[AHUNTSIC COMMUNITY CENTRE]

Organization: Solidarité Ahuntsic

Contacts: Azzedine Achour et Francine Goyette

PROJECT

The Ahuntsic Community centre is a socio-economic project backed by Solidarité Ahuntsic. The project brings together, in a building rented from the Commission scolaire de Montréal [Montreal school board], some 20 community organizations, as well as a few self-employed workers offering services. It gathers together organizations, under the same roof and in a spirit of solidarity, while allowing them to share reception, administrative and financial services.

The Centre is also a meeting place for neighbourhood residents who can go there to participate in activities organized by the various groups or simply to meet people and break free of their isolation. As a meeting place offering open activities and as a place for the exchange of services between organizations, the Centre constitutes a project that is cross-sectional and beneficial to the neighbourhood.

PARTNERS

The neighbourhood community organizations, the School Board commissioner for Ahuntsic, the provincial MNA for Crémazie, the CLSC of Ahuntsic, the Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDÉC) Ahuntsic/Cartierville, the

municipal councilman of Ahuntsic, and two residents of the neighbourhood.

Financial backers also supported the project, among them the ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole [department of municipal affairs], the City of Montreal, as well as two private foundations (the Fondation Crémazie and the Fondation Berthiaume-du-Tremblay).

IMPLEMENTATION

In 1997, Solidarité Ahuntsic conducted a survey of community organizations in the neighbourhood in order to ascertain their needs in terms of office space. Simultaneously, the project promoter began to look for suitable and available buildings in the neighbourhood that could house a number of community organizations. The choice initially fell on the Madame-de-la Peltrie School.

In 1998, the first steps were taken by a CLSC community organizer who was also a member of the Board of Directors of the joint action table. The School Board commissioner for Ahuntsic agreed to actively pursue the matter with the School Board (Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM)). A dossier presenting our project and intentions was submitted to the Board in February 1999. At this stage, Solidarité Ahuntsic also got the backing of organizations and influential neighbourhood figures to help push the case along. Simultaneously, the project was developed further and submitted to the financial backers for consideration, specifically to obtain funding for interior modifications, equipment, and the operating costs of the Community Centre. The answers from the financial backers began to trickle in: the ministère de la Métropole [minister for Montreal] agreed to finance the renovation/modification of the premises and the purchase of equipment; two local foundations agreed to fund the work to make the building accessible; the Fonds d'économie sociale de la CDÉC agreed to cover the operating costs of first three years of the project, while the City of Montreal agreed

to pay a portion of the operating expenses for a one-year period.

In 2000, a 25-year emphyteutic lease was negotiated and signed with the School Board (CSDM). The lease included a clause that requires that the School Board make the necessary modifications to ensure the building is up to standard. During this same period, a variety of policies regarding the management of the Centre, the allocation of office space and the cost of rents were submitted for approval. Renovation/modification work was completed and the first tenants entered the Centre in October 2000. A month later, all proffered services became available to the public.

Even though the agreement signed with the School Board was done to the complete satisfaction of all parties concerned, the challenge was now to ensure the upkeep of the building. That remained a costly affair. In 2000-2001, promoters worked at consolidating the management of the Centre, obtaining the financial support of a private local foundation to do so. The purpose of this additional funding was to maintain the rental costs for community organizations at an affordable level as compared to the regular market cost.

ACTORS

The neighbourhood community organizations, the School Board commissioner for Ahuntsic, the provincial MNA for Crémazie, the CLSC of Ahuntsic, the Corporation de développement économique communautaire (CDEC) Ahuntsic/Cartierville, the municipal councillor for Ahuntsic, as well as two neighbourhood residents.

DIFFICULTIES

The search for funding, the renovation/modification work, and the purchase of equipment were tasks both long and fastidious. This difficulty was off-set by the mobilization of members and, especially, by that of the neighbourhood community organizations by way of pressuring local elected officials. This played a determining role in obtaining the necessary funding for the project. The realization of the project also required that the work team develop new skills, most notably those of ensuring the proper follow-up of the renovation work, of instituting management procedures for the Centre inspired by how things were done elsewhere, and of controlling the treasury.

Part of the difficulties came from the community organizations themselves. Among these difficulties, let us mention the fact that the community organizations had to respect the timetable for moving in. The project managers also had to deal with various specific requests from these organizations, and this, always with an eye on the available budget. The various groups also had to be made aware of certain hygiene and safety standards. Lastly, there remained the challenge of rallying these groups around collective community activities undertaken by a committee of tenants.



BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

The most beautiful moments were those surrounding the signing of the lease and welcoming the first tenant organizations to the Centre. These moments represent the crowning of many years of petitioning and prospecting, and of searching for financing.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

The work of the organization moved from one of neighbourhood joint action table to one of community socio-economic project management.

As the tenant organizations of the Centre were also members of the Table, they would tend to confuse the routine of the Centre with the debates over neighbourhood social development. This confusion led the Centre to adopt a new approach to remedy the situation. Special assemblies and days of reflection reserved exclusively for matters relating to the Centre were organized.

The Centre allowed the concentration of most community resources under one roof. Public access to these resources was made easier. Communications and exchanges between like organizations and with the general population were improved and increased.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

According to Solidarité Ahuntsic, the Centre would benefit from becoming a work cooperative. The formula should have been adopted at the time the Centre was still only a project, as it would have made participating organizations more responsible and lessened the pressure on the operations of the joint action table and so allowed it to better dedicate itself to the mobilization process in the more underprivileged pockets of the neighbourhood.

Today, community organizations have learned to enjoy the services provided, and have adjusted their operational procedures to ensure they pay for them. An idea is presently circulating as to whether differential rental costs billed in accordance to whether an organization sits at the joint action table or simply is a tenant and user of the existing infrastructure. Should we adopt this measure? We have not yet reached a decision on this question. However, we find that the rents we presently charge, which include building and equipment maintenance, are really quite competitive in comparison to what is charged elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

So now it is up to the joint action table to find appropriate funding for the difference between the prices charged and the real costs. These questions now surface as the funding guaranteed by the Fonds d'économie sociale during the first three years of the start-up phase is now a thing of the past.

TRANSFERABILITY

The organization and management methods used at the Centre can be easily transferred, especially the systems for funding, office space management, and communal services.

The advantages of centralized information and readily accessible resource personnel, the rationalization of weekend maintenance costs, the experience of managing the problems of multi-organizational co-habitation (that we overcame and resolved in a friendly manner), the criteria for allocating office space, the experience of preventing the deterioration of discipline in matters of maintenance, the adjustments and agreements that were struck to ensure peaceful co-habitation with our immediate neighbours, all these are elements of the know-how that we can offer other organizations that wish to launch themselves into such an adventure.

Solidarité Mercier–Est à Montréal

Solidarity Mercier-Est (Montreal)

Its projects and its practices



Solidarité Mercier-Est (SME) à Montréal

Solidarity Mercier-Est



Solidarité Mercier-Est (SME) is the joint action table of the Mercier-Est neighbourhood of Montreal (formerly known as Tétéreaultville). This sector is delineated on the west by Autoroute 25, to the south by the St-Laurence Seaway, to the east by Montreal-East, and to the north by the borough of Anjou. It is home to 41,891 souls.

This trans-sectoral and multi-network table brings together a number of representatives from various sectors of activity, such as the elderly, the young, employment, the environment, families and women. Moreover, it tries to reach out to people of all walks of life: residents, community organizations, parishes, public institutions, and elected officials at all levels (school boards, municipal, provincial and federal). In short, anyone and everyone can join Solidarité Mercier-Est.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CONSULTATION IN MERCIER-EST

Solidarité Mercier-Est was born in 2001 of the merger of Mercier-Est Quartier en Santé (MEQES) [Mercier-Est healthy neighbourhood] and of the Table de concertation des organismes communautaires de Mercier-Est (TCOCME) [Mercier-Est community organisations joint action table]. From 1989 to 2000, these two organizations oversaw community action and development

initiatives in the neighbourhood. In an effort to bring together people of the milieu, the two organizations created a single joint action table for the neighbourhood whose chosen approach is trans-sectoral and multi-networking.

Faced with over solicitation and exhaustion of the actors involved, and highly motivated by the wish of reaching the greatest possible number of residents, Solidarité Mercier-Est modified its consultative approach in 2003-2004. It moved from what had until then been a sectoral division (children, families, environment, etc.) to a territorial one. Four territories were then delineated on a parochial basis, a basis that, still today, spawns a sense of belonging in residents.

With the support of the Centre St-Pierre, SME developed a program of activities for citizens in the form of two main initiatives: a training program and the creation of urban cafés. These changes, this support, along with neighbourhood consultations allowed us to make a true citizen participation success of the Forum 2005: Agir pour mon quartier [taking action for my neighbourhood]. The forum further allowed us to identify six main objectives for 2005-2010, as well as increasing mobilization around them. It is the result of a long process first influenced by the mechanisms of adapted consultation, pertinent citizen activities, and of a forum that succeeded in rallying people to it.

THE MISSION

The mission of Solidarité Mercier-Est is to bring together residents, groups, organizations and institutions working in Mercier-Est in order to have them collectively participate in the social, economic, environmental and community development of the neighbourhood. It also contributes to the promotion of the neighbourhood,

the improvement of the quality of life of its residents, as well as the development of independent community organizations.

SOME OTHER SME OBJECTIVES ARE:

- to defend and promote the interests of the Mercier-Est community by helping residents develop the ability to choose and change their environmental, social and economic living conditions, in collaboration with all those involved.
- to create and develop ways to encourage trans-sectoral and multi-networking cooperation in accordance to their interests and competencies.
- to gain a firm grasp of the issues and rally as many people as possible, inviting them to join in the decisions that deal with the improvement and development of the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

HOW?

By facilitating the mechanisms of consultation and by offering various forms of assistance, support, information and training, such as:

- Production and distribution of a weekly electronic liaison bulletin;
- Organization of urban cafés, public debates and forums;
- Chairing members' assemblies and four formal consultative committees (Environment and Urbanism, Local Revitalization–RUI, Community Organizations, and Project 1, 2, 3 GO!), as well as action committees (as needed) deriving from the major committees (Revamping of Notre-Dame Street, Active Transportation, Urban Safety, Contrecoeur Site Development, AGIIRR, etc.)

- Offering training on occasion (public speaking, participating in public consultation).

Each resident of the neighbourhood, and any group or organization working in the territory, can become a member and exercise their right to vote at general assemblies and consultative committee meetings.

MAJOR REALIZATIONS:

- Organization of forums on social development and the future of the neighbourhood (1994, 2000 and 2005).
- Support for various projects and realizations: creation of a food safety resource (SÉSAME); housing cooperatives (Les habitations Hermandad, Le Fleuve de l'Espoir and Les Rives du St-Laurent); Maison des familles; program working with young people living on the streets; Project 1, 2, 3, GO!, etc.
- Production of neighbourhood and territory profiles and implementation of joint initiatives.
- Organization of urban cafés focusing on themes regarding the quality of neighbourhood life (safety, housing, transportation, urban planning, inter-cultural relations, the situation and contribution of the elderly, etc.) and electoral debates (municipal and provincial elections).
- Implementation and coordination of mobilizing action committees, comprising hundreds of citizens, along with stakeholders, participation in public debates regarding projects greatly impacting neighbourhood quality of life (Contrecoeur site, opposition to the construction of new Canterm reservoirs, transportation plan, etc.).
- Drafting a master plan for local development.
- Mobilization and major involvement of neighbourhood residents.

In 2008, the SME work team comprised six individuals. The titles of the positions are: general coordinator, territorial agent, administrative assistant, Integrated Urban Revitalization initiative (IUR) coordinator, 1,2,3 GO! development agent, and agent for organizational development. The position of coordinator is the sole permanent position, whose salary is guaranteed by a recurring grant.

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PRATIQUE

CAFÉ URBAIN SUR LA
CRÉATION DE MURALES

[URBAN CAFÉ ON MURAL CREATION]

Organization: Solidarité Mercier-Est**Contacts:**

Fabienne Audette et Laurie Fournieux

CONTEXT

The Urban Café experience is part of the joint action process adopted by the Solidarité Mercier-Est (SME) joint action table to communicate directly with the citizens throughout its territory.

The Urban Café is an awareness-building forum on issues that affect citizens. The themes discussed reflect the priorities for action established in each neighbourhood, such as the integration of immigrants, urban design, etc. According to the selected theme, citizens, social groups and community organizations are invited to a restaurant or a café where a few guest-speakers, from the neighbourhood or elsewhere, usually three, make a short presentation on the main aspects of the theme in question. Afterwards, citizens are invited to ask questions, express their opinion and discuss the issue.

Urban Cafés often lead to action committees. With agents from the community, these committees act collectively on the issue at stake. A report on the Urban Café proceedings is drafted to assure a broader diffusion and eventual media coverage, to keep record of the discussions or provide a base for reflection at a later date.

The Urban Café approach is largely inspired by the cafés philosophiques that emerged in France in the 1990's, but even more by similar meetings dealing with urban issues in Hochelaga-

Maisonneuve, a neighbouring borough. In addition, the idea dawned upon us when we recalled that traditional elites, members of social clubs (ex.: Optimists), would gather in local restaurants. Thus, in the absence of a public meeting place, a common site for deliberations or a community centre to replace the church steps, organizers did not hesitate. Lastly, instead of begging for publicity or sponsorship from local storekeepers to support events, Solidarité Mercier-Est positions itself as an indispensable key actor in the development of the borough, bringing a new clientele for a coffee and a bite in local restaurants.

PROJECT

The Urban Café presented here has the particularity of being linked to a project called “L'EnVert du mur” [the other side of the wall (PUN with envers and vert, the colour green)]. This project consists of creating five murals on walls within the territory. The Urban Café's objective was to consult citizens on mural themes and on the areas and walls where they should be created.

People in charge of the Café preselected eight walls, took pictures of them, obtained the authorization of the site owners and contacted five mural artists to submit sketches to participants. In the course of the Café, the eight walls were presented, their advantages and drawbacks outlined. Then the participants voted, and five locations were chosen.

PARTNERS AND ACTORS

The leading organization in this mural project is “Y'a quelqu'un l'aut'bord du mur” (YQQ) [there's somebody on the other side of the wall]. This is an enterprise of social economy involved in urban revitalization. Its mission is to increase the sentiment of safety among citizens by reducing the occurrence of tags and graffiti on buildings, which in turn reduces criminality in the eastern

boroughs of Montreal. The organization takes action on all components of the graffiti issue and works to develop youth employability by mobilizing the whole community. It also manages the Éco-Quartier Tétéreaultville. YQQ was in charge of the Café content and is the mural contractor.

Four members of Solidarité Mercier-Est acted as promoters and organizers of the Urban Café. The expertise within our staff is quite advanced, in terms of logistics as well as in terms of mobilization of citizens and stakeholders in the community.

The team put close to 50 hours into the Urban Café preparation, mobilization and organization. Since YQQ was in charge of the content of this particular Café, the workload was reduced by some 20 hours. In total, around thirty people expressed their point of view and contributed to making a sound decision. They were residents, property owners, young clandestine graffiti artists, and mural artists involved in the mural project.

IMPLEMENTATION

The various steps required to organize an Urban Café are quite technical. First, a location must be found to stage the event, preferably a neighbourhood restaurant or café in order to facilitate and maximize citizen participation. Next, organizations must be contacted from the community or elsewhere. These organizations must be well-informed about the issue and willing to make a presentation. Generally, three guest-speakers is ideal. Of course, it is interesting to hear each guest present a different perspective on the issue.

Mobilization is a very important step. Notices must be posted in shops, public places, and strategic locations in the neighbourhood, such as the Maison de la Culture, the library, community organizations and schools. For this particular Urban Café, we went door-to-door to deliver printed leaflets. This was the first time we used this strategy, and the response was very positive.

We were able to do it because four people in our team could invest time in this effort. Finally, a childcare service is sometimes offered to allow parents to participate.

DIFFICULTIES

One of the challenges we encounter at these Cafés is keeping the discussion at the level of local issues. People tend to expand on the topic. For example, in the course of an Urban Café on immigrant integration, participants rapidly brought up the discussion to the level of national policies on employability. It is sometimes difficult to bring the debate back to local issues. It should be taken into account and clearly stated when we define the topic and select the guests. On the other hand, inviting a guest-speaker from outside the community can have a positive effect, as it shows that, while being presented with a local perspective, the issues exist elsewhere and another approach may be inspiring. For this Café on murals, it was easy to stay the course since it is a “very local” project.

This Urban Café presented a particular challenge in terms of coordination between facilitators from YQQ, the leading organization, and SME team members who usually act as facilitators at such meetings. Sometimes the team is not completely satisfied with the guest-speakers’ performance. It may be due to differences between each party’s goals, or understanding of the goals, or the angle that the team wishes to favour in the discussion. Mobilization remains the biggest challenge. When you select the Urban Café venue, you must consider the ambient noise, since it may interfere with the exchanges.

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

This Urban Café took place too recently to assess its impact, however we can reflect on another on the topic of immigrant integration, which brought the team to ask the following questions: How will we handle this issue in Mercier-Est? Do we need to create a community organization devoted to immigrant orientation and integration, or should we develop services for immigrants within existing organizations? This Urban Café initiated discussions and a common reflection on the public place. The most satisfying outcome of an Urban Café is certainly when it leads to action, to increased citizens' awareness, leading them to say "Yes... Let's act together!"

FOUNDING

The mural creation project is financed by the program Contrat de Ville/Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée (RUI) [city contract/integrated urban revitalization]. The partnership with Solidarité Mercier-Est consisted of organizing the Urban Café to consult the population on selected themes and sites.

Urban Cafés are a part of Solidarité Mercier-Est activities and are financed out of SME general operating budget. The cost for holding an Urban Café is variable: it may cost between \$500 and \$2000 for an audience of 30 to 40 people. The gathering place is usually free since it is a café or a restaurant. Expenses include food and beverage, photocopies of leaflets for mobilization, professional fees for guest-speakers, childcare service, and production of the report for the media or our records. Sometimes, it is necessary to rent a meeting hall when the event is major. Of course, you must also count 50 to 70 hours for planning and mobilization.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

For the first time, we introduced a decision-making process in the Urban Café. Everything worked well, and we would not hesitate to repeat the experience if the circumstances required it. Discussions were lively and arguments pertinent.

TRANSFERABILITY

This is an exercise of citizen participation that is easily transferable since it does not require much infrastructure. The Urban Café formula is appropriate when a group needs to build awareness in the community or wants to consult the population, as it was the case for this Urban Café on mural selection.

PRATIQUE

ÉVALUATION DES ACTIVITÉS DE CONCERTATION ET DE MOBILISATION

[ASSESSMENT OF JOINT ACTION
AND MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES]

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Organization: Solidarité Mercier-Est

Contacts:

Fabienne Audette et Laurie Fourneaux

PROJECT

This practice, which arose out of the 2005 Forum social de Mercier-Est, was twofold. First, it aimed at assessing joint action and mobilization practices, and second, at restructuring those practices. The need for assessing and restructuring came at a time when the joint action table members were increasingly concerned with various aspects regarding its own expansion. The assessment process had 4 main objectives:

1. To understand and describe the concept of joint action
2. To depict Solidarité Mercier-Est joint actions
3. To encourage a reflection on its practices
4. To guide the improvement of joint action practices in general

Citizen mobilization, local governance and sharing of power were the main assessment and reflection themes of the Restructuring Committee. These issues emerged from the recent expansion of the organization, notably due to an increase in citizen participation.

PARTNERS

Citizens, as well as Mercier-Est community workers, were the main partners for the assessment; first as part of the assessment committee, and then by answering questions in the course of semistructured interviews.

A partnership was also established with various university research groups, especially the Chaire en approches communautaires et inégalité de santé (CACIS) de l'Université de Montréal and the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS).

Within the Restructuring Committee, four different partners were at the centre of the reflection: the Corporation de développement économique communautaire de l'Est de Montréal (CDEST), the City of Montréal, the Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) de la Pointe-de-l'Île and the Maison des familles de Mercier-Est.

IMPLEMENTATION

The project was divided in two phases: assessment and restructuring.

The assessment process aimed at better understanding joint action practices in general, but mainly at improving the joint action efforts of Solidarité Mercier-Est (SME). Three main themes were tackled: first, defining joint action in order to better define the mission and objectives of the Table; second, studying the various types of joint action, such as consultation, awareness building, engagement, mobilization, etc., and third, examining the factors that influence joint action, such as leadership, knowledge, sense of belonging and technical factors. The assessment process resulted in an overall picture of joint action within Solidarité Mercier-Est and provided a series of recommendations to improve joint action practices.



The committee – composed of members of the joint action table, coordination agents and the project manager – developed an assessment grid consisting of assessment criteria, indicators, and mechanisms. Thirty two semistructured interviews, containing about thirty questions, were conducted with as many representatives of various networks and sectors within the community: elected officials, citizens, community organization workers, and institutional leaders. Interviewees represented a cross section of the level of involvement within joint action activities. The committee also proceeded to a vast review of the joint action table's documentation. Numerous questionnaires were also distributed to evaluate its activities. Two assessment reports were written, a comprehensive report and an abbreviated version, including recommendations. Since the fall of 2008, the conclusions

and recommendations are being gradually integrated into the structure of the organization.

The project's second phase – the restructuring phase – aims at providing answers regarding issues brought to the Table by the shift in citizen participation and its ensuing growth. A committee was created to reflect upon governance issues at the Table. The main themes were the following: distribution of power within the Table's instances, representativeness, limits of the Table's representativeness, stakeholders' expectations, funding mechanisms, priority of process versus results, etc.

For the restructuring phase, the committee reflected on local governance issues and other challenges for the Table in the context of a larger citizen participation. This phase resulted in the

modification of the Table's by-laws and the implementation of policies to better oversee the action of the Table, as recommended by the committee. These recommendations must however be ratified by the Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

ACTORS

Centraide financed the project, which allowed the hiring of a person responsible for the assessment process as well as facilitator within the community. Another grant was made available to the Table to implement the recommendations stemming from the assessment. This last grant also supports the restructuring process since it is closely linked to the implementation of those recommendations.

The assessment process also required the expertise of researchers to support the project manager

in data analysis. Throughout the process, they contributed to our reflection.

DIFFICULTIES

The Table allocated a lot of time to the assessment, and the process was indeed difficult, especially establishing our objectives and targeting the appropriate elements to analyse. Mastering the methodological aspects of the process was equally difficult.

Changes within the leadership resulted in a division of the work, making it difficult to maintain a common direction.

Distributing the report will require an investment in time and human resources. In addition, the cost associated to the production of the document will likely be quite high.



BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

Interviews with the stakeholders in the community allowed us to get to know their point of view on the daily work accomplished by the Table, thus appraising its action within the community.

The answers provided in the course of the interviews helped the Table members better understand the flaws within our joint action practices, and the aspects requiring improvement. For example, the Table became aware of the importance of commitment among members, and of the necessity to promote and make use of various types of leadership. This is seen as a positive element as the Table members believe it is stimulating to understand the causes of certain difficulties, and the actors' reactions to those hitches.

Generally, the actors' reaction was quite positive, which provides some satisfaction for joint action participants in Mercier-Est.

We also found encouragement in noticing that the assessment conclusions are often akin to the Table members' own concerns and reflections about joint action. For example, the necessity to bring in new contributors and leaders to joint action activities was mentioned by respondents, and this is a daily concern for us at the Table (considering the small number of active organizations in the community).

CHANGES BROUGHT TO THE MILIEU

In a certain way, the assessment brought about the creation of the Restructuring Committee on joint action practices.

Following this project, many transformations in our way of doing things at the Table were implemented, or will be soon, to improve our joint action practices. These changes stem from the assessment recommendations. Indeed, many of them aim at improving joint action in Mercier-Est, and revolve around three major poles: communication, democratic restructuring, and internal working. The community as a whole should be affected by the project, and benefit from it.

Finally, improving our practices has the effect of making our action more viable and more dynamic within the community.

IF WE HAD TO DO IT AGAIN

The Table coordinating group would be more involved in the process. The assessment process would be more focused; it is indeed more advantageous to limit the object of analysis. Finally, if we had to do it again, early on, the Table would better examine the quality of the questionnaire, and make sure that the questions suit the chosen data processing methodology.

TRANSFERABILITY

The assessment process may be used by any organization that wishes to improve its joint action practices and tune its action to its members' expectations. It is also useful to nourish the reflection on joint action.

The type and nature of the assessment are flexible and may be adapted to available resources. Ours was quite ample, but it can be more targeted and concise.

Our assessment was different than the ones usually conducted by financial backers or government departments. It has not been forced on us, nor were we ordered to perform it. Of our own free will, we asked Centraide to provide us with the means to assess our joint action practices. For that reason, this assessment is of particular interest to us.



THE CENTRE ST-PIERRE

OUR MISSION

The Centre St-Pierre was founded in 1973 by the Oblates Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, in response to the transformations taking place in the neighbourhood of Centre-Sud in Montreal: the new needs expressed by families and couples, and the spiritual quest of more and more people. Over the years, the Centre St-Pierre has become an institution in Montreal, with an outreach throughout Quebec.

It is a training centre and a resource centre for social intervention. The Centre St-Pierre's training team is specialized in organizational development, communication, community-based organization, personal development, spirituality in a broad sense, and Christian spirituality in particular. At the Centre St-Pierre, the priority is the person, as an individual and collectively, his or her material and psychological needs, quest for meaning, and aspiration for dignity, justice and social transformation. A hub for various resources, it is also a gathering place of the social movement in Quebec. With 15 meeting rooms, a computer lab, an Internet Café open to all in the neighbourhood, it is a true popular congress centre, where various groups gather: labour organizations, professional corporations, government and non-government organizations, associations, and community-based groups. At the cutting edge of technology, the Centre St-Pierre also offers audiovisual and multimedia production services.

The Centre St-Pierre is committed to the promotion of evangelical values, social justice and human dignity, democracy and solidarity, faith in God and spirituality. Offered mainly to underprivileged individuals and groups, and to organizations who work with them, its services encompass training, coaching, and community intervention. By its action and its approach, the Centre St-Pierre promotes empowerment, and supports individual and collective development.

POPULAR EDUCATION AND ONGOING TRAINING

As a training centre, the Centre St-Pierre supports groups and organizations that, through their action, aim to further individual and collective awareness of life and work circumstances to allow people to change their environment. Its training and intervention approach takes into account the realities of the community: individual, collective, psychological, spiritual, cultural, social, economical and political. Its pedagogical approach banks on the knowledge and experience of the individuals and groups involved. The Centre St-Pierre promotes the empowerment and autonomy of people and groups by providing them with the tools required for their own development and the improvement of their community.

FIELDS OF PRACTICE

Training and coaching of community-based organizations or social economy enterprises

The Centre St-Pierre supports the ongoing training and professional development of community-based organization leaders, financial managers, coordinators and workers to improve the effectiveness of their interventions and optimize the impact of their action in the community. The Centre also helps people and organizations to develop skills in public speaking and media relations. It is also involved in various projects to develop resources and content for community-based and social economy organization analysis. To do so, the Centre brings in multidisciplinary expertise in community action, in communication, in human resource management, in conflict prevention and management, etc. The Centre offers a wide range of training workshops, from strategic planning and staff management to board of director roles and responsibilities.

Personal and spiritual growth

Building a more humane society requires that each person builds up his or her personal identity, comes to terms with his or her emotions and develops satisfying and open-minded relationships. Thus, the Centre offers a wide range of conferences and workshops to support people in their personal growth. The Centre St-Pierre also offers spiritual counselling to anybody in search of meaning and introspection. The Centre also offers workshops and conferences related to spirituality in today's world or the dynamics between Christian faith and social action.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy services have been offered for thirty years to help individuals in psychological distress. In order for quality services to be available to all, fees are set according to the person's financial situation. The service is offered to individuals, couples or families. There is also a service of family mediation for couples with children who have decided to go their separate ways.

Orientation, meeting rooms' rental and facilitating staff

The Centre St-Pierre has rented meeting rooms since the beginning of its operations. The orientation and meeting room service is well appreciated by people and groups looking for a convenient venue for their activities. The fifteen rooms – air-conditioned, sun drenched, connected to Internet and affordable – can accommodate from 12 to 250 people. Catering services are available. The Centre St-Pierre is accessible to disabled persons. Furthermore, upon request, the Centre can provide facilitating staff to spearhead or moderate public debates, general assemblies, conferences and various other activities.



Démarche des
premiers quartiers



Revitalisation
Quartiers St-Marc/Christ-Roi
Shawinigan



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