

# *Lifelong Learning and Québec's English-Speaking Community*

**May 2003  
Study Mission to Europe  
Report and Recommendations**

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Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport – 05-00047

ISBN 2-550-44251-2

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2005

# Lifelong Learning and Québec's English-Speaking Community

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December 1, 2004

*The opinions expressed in this report are those of its authors and do not represent  
the official position of the ministère de l'Éducation.*

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## *Foreword*

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In May 2002, the Government of Québec adopted *Learning Throughout Life - Government Policy on Adult Education, Continuing Education and Training*. This policy and its accompanying *Action Plan* call upon government ministries, agencies and institutions to work in partnership with business, industry, community groups and other sectors of society to establish and sustain a culture of lifelong learning.

Implementing a culture of lifelong learning is seen as an important precondition for Québec's continued evolution as a knowledge-based society and would therefore play a role in ensuring that all residents are equipped to face the challenges and reap the benefits that such a society entails. From this perspective, learning is characterized as both "lifelong" and "life-wide," as it not only takes place at every stage of life, but also in a multitude of contexts, both structured and unstructured, formal and non-formal.

### *Four Government policy orientations*

The policy's Action Plan, to be implemented over a five-year period, identifies over 100 recommendations, which are guided by four main orientations:

- To provide basic education for adults
- To maintain and continually upgrade adults' competencies
- To acknowledge prior learning and competencies through official recognition
- To removal obstacles to access and retention

The policy acknowledges that heritage, culture, values and personal experience must be taken into account when developing services. To create an environment conducive to lifelong learning, the policy also puts emphasis on finding ways to encourage both individuals and communities to recognize and voice their learning needs. Moreover, it sets the stage for promoting and enabling the active involvement of citizens in the development of approaches to adult learning.

Given the scope of Québec's policy on lifelong learning, there are many implications for the future organization of service delivery to adult learners throughout the province. Within the English-speaking population, educators and community leaders recognize the positive impact this policy can have on the present and future vitality of their community. They also recognize the particular challenges the policy's implementation presents for English speakers. Ensuring equitable, accessible and quality service for the diverse, complex and geographically dispersed English-speaking minority will clearly require improved coordination of existing resources and the mobilization of new ones. It will also require new ideas and innovative practices.

## *Study Mission on Adult Learning*

A number of European countries have already adopted policies and legislation to support the implementation of lifelong learning. The various initiatives and approaches and the resulting experiences are yielding valuable lessons that could serve as a model for improved services and conditions for the English-speaking community here in Québec.

With this in mind, a 15-member delegation of English-speaking educators undertook a Study Mission to Europe in May 2003 to learn first hand what these countries have been doing to integrate lifelong learning into their own culture, within the context of the European Union.

The Québec delegation met with legislators, academics, researchers, policy developers, directors of learning institutions, municipal officials, community group leaders, national associations, civil servants, teachers and adult learners.

In embarking on this Study Mission, five global objectives were set:

- To collect information on policy initiatives in Europe related to adult learning and continuing education and training in the workplace, as developed by the member states of the OECD, and in particular, by Ireland, England, Germany and Sweden
- To create a contact network of adult educators and policy developers in various European countries
- To analyse European policy initiatives from the perspective of the needs of the English-speaking population of Québec
- To contribute to the long-term promotion of lifelong learning in Québec
- To contribute to the development and implementation of action plans and policy initiatives for English-speaking adult learners in Québec

While on their Study Mission, delegates examined the conditions and contexts for successful policy implementation in different countries, as well as the most effective modes of service delivery. They studied approaches to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). In addition, they looked at General Education, including Literacy, Languages and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); Vocational and Technical Training, including manpower training and retraining; and Information, Guidance, Counselling and Support Services. They also gathered information on how business, industry, government and community groups are working together and the winning conditions for successful partnerships.

The knowledge garnered from this Study Mission to Europe will serve as a lasting resource and provide fresh perspectives on adult learning for the English-speaking community of Québec.

### *Three paradigm shifts*

This report, *Lifelong Learning and Québec's English-Speaking Community*, synthesizes the impressions and observations collected by the Study Mission delegates during their 11 days of meetings, interviews and visits with numerous representatives of over two dozen European organizations and institutions. The report also draws upon the delegates' collective experience of Québec's educational environment.

Their findings—seen in tandem with the four orientations outlined in the Government policy—point to a need for three fundamental paradigm shifts in the approach to adult learning if a culture of lifelong learning is to be created and sustained.

- The first paradigm shift involves building a broader understanding and acceptance within Québec society of the idea that learning continues through every stage of life. Formal schooling is but a part of a continuum that also recognizes and values learning in all its diverse forms.
- The second paradigm shift requires moving from a supply-driven to a learner-centred model of service delivery.
- The third paradigm shift entails acknowledging that lifelong learning is a shared responsibility that demands the active involvement of many partners in different areas of society.

In addition, the report strives to present, in an accessible format, the essence of what is taking place in a number of European countries to promote lifelong learning, as seen through the eyes of the Study Mission delegates. At the same time, the report situates these European developments within the current context of adult learning in Québec's English-speaking community.

To validate their findings, the Study Mission invited some 70 representatives of the English-speaking community to participate in a symposium on lifelong learning, held from February 13-14, 2004 at Concordia University. The recommendations in this report take into account the many issues identified over that two-day period.

The Study Mission delegates invite government and other key stakeholders to incorporate these recommendations into the future planning and development of lifelong learning initiatives in Québec. In addition, these recommendations will contribute to further discussion on lifelong learning within the English-speaking community and serve as a catalyst for mobilization and action.

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## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 A new policy on lifelong learning

*“People’s access to knowledge and learning throughout their lives is one of the conditions for cultural, social and economic development.”<sup>1</sup>*

These are the opening words of the new Québec Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training. Right from the outset, they point to the importance—and value—that learning holds in shaping, and giving meaning to, every stage of our lives.

That a new Policy on Lifelong Learning has emerged at this time is no coincidence. In a knowledge-based society, the ability of individuals to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship—and to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social and cultural development—is rooted in the quality of their basic education and knowledge and their capacity to continuously learn and adapt.

This preoccupation with lifelong learning is part of a worldwide trend. In 1997, Québec joined over 130 nations and states in supporting the Hamburg Declaration issued at the close of the Fifth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education. This Fifth Conference followed four previous ones that were held in Elsinore, in 1949; Montréal, in 1960; Tokyo, in 1972; and Paris in 1985.

#### **The first four UNESCO International Conferences on Adult Learning**

##### **Elsinore, Denmark, 1949**

Meeting soon after the traumas of the Second World War, participants at the Elsinore conference were concerned that adult education should promote democracy and international understanding. The conference highlighted the importance of adult literacy. It also affirmed the concept of an all-round adult education which responded to adults' intellectual, social and artistic impulses, and which was distinct from purely vocational training. Participants recognized the significant role played by radio, cinema, the press and public libraries in education.

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1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002) p.1.

### **Montréal, Canada, 1960**

While the Montréal conference continued in the spirit of Elsinore, it also introduced a number of new themes, such as the importance of adult education in contributing to the stability of newly independent countries. The conference also recognized the role of adult education in combating inequality, as well as promoting gender equality. Participants called for more research into the learning needs of adults and into effective methods of teaching them. That education should be seen as a permanent, lifelong process was an important new motif introduced at that time. The conference also promoted cooperation between adult educators and people working in the media.

### **Tokyo, Japan, 1972**

Delegates at the Tokyo conference further stressed the importance of adult education for the developing world and in helping the poor and disadvantaged. At the same time, they introduced a new emphasis on the quality and accessibility of adult education, along with issues such as population policy, protection of the environment and education for senior citizens. There were again many references to the essential role of the media.

### **Paris, France, 1985**

The Paris conference established a new landmark by including in its final declaration a universal right to learn throughout one's lifetime. Conference delegates recognized the growing importance of information technology and modern media, and argued for their integration into adult education programs. The conference also called for the full professionalization of adult educators, and emphasized the need for creativity and innovation in adult learning.<sup>2</sup>

The Hamburg conference provided its 1507 participants with an opportunity:

*“to construct a new vision, looking at adult learning as an integral part of a lifelong and life-wide learning process, promoting family and community learning as well as dialogue between cultures, respecting differences and diversity and thereby contributing to a culture of peace.”<sup>3</sup>*

It also acknowledged learners as subjects—not objects—of the learning process.

As an affirmation of the importance of lifelong learning in the pursuit of personal, societal and economic growth, this declaration has served as a catalyst for the development of lifelong learning policies in many areas of the world, including Québec. In language closely paralleling that contained in the Hamburg Declaration, the Québec policy states:

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2. European Service Network for Adult Learning : <http://www.esnal.net/eureda>

3. UNESCO, *Final Report – Fifth International Conference on Adult Education*, Hamburg, Germany, July 14-18, 1997

*“The objectives of learning as a process that goes throughout life are to develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of individuals and communities, to enable them to deal with changes in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and to promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in society, in short to enable individuals and communities to take control of their destiny and that of society in order to face the challenges ahead.*

*It is essential that approaches to adult education and lifelong learning be based on people’s heritage, culture, values and personal experience and that they be carried out in such a way that they enable and encourage citizens’ active involvement and expression.”<sup>4</sup>*

The Québec policy statement adds certain principles relevant to adult learning:

- Access to knowledge for all and sharing of knowledge are factors in personal growth, economic development and social cohesion.
- Initial education and lifelong learning are the two cornerstones of a single learning process that extends throughout people’s lives.
- The right to education must translate into actions that give rise to a demand for lifelong learning and encourage success in educational endeavours.
- The state must take central responsibility in adult education and continuing education and training while stressing concerted action and partnership.
- The state, organizations and networks of institutions are not the only parties responsible for implementing adult education and continuing education and training. People who benefit from them, their teachers, professional associations, trade unions and socio-economic organizations, employers and citizens in general are also responsible.<sup>5</sup>

## *1.2 Three paradigm shifts*

The Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning is moving us in new directions that represent three paradigm shifts in how we perceive and value learning, and in particular, adult learning.

- Firstly, it establishes that learning does not end with compulsory education, but continues and evolves as both a lifelong and life-wide process, in that it takes place at different stages of life and in many different settings and circumstances;

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4. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002) p.2

5. Ibid, p. 3

- Secondly, it moves us from a supply-driven model of education and learning to one that is learner-centred and demand-driven;
- Thirdly, it recognizes that the provision of lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities cannot be accomplished by educational institutions alone, but requires new partnerships within government and with industry, communities and learners themselves.

The Québec policy was adopted after extensive consultation with representatives and spokespersons from a cross-section of Québec society: business, industry, unions, universities, community groups, associations and individuals. It represents the combined thinking of several government ministries and recognizes the vital role to be played by the private sector, the community and individuals in instilling a Québec-wide culture of lifelong learning.

### *1.3 A call for dialogue within the English-speaking community*

*“The one indicator of the capacity of an individual or of a society to flourish in the face of challenge and change is the ability to learn.”*

*- W. Duszara, Study Mission participant*

As a minority group within a majority francophone society, it is particularly urgent for the well-being and development of the English-speaking community that it take full advantage of the opportunities that the new Policy on Lifelong Learning presents.

It is in the English-speaking community’s interest to determine how this new Policy on Lifelong Learning can best be implemented to serve its specific—and sometimes distinct—needs. It is also possible that this unique experience will inspire innovative approaches that could benefit the whole of Québec society, in that accommodating the concerns of a minority group can sometimes result in better service for all.

To encourage the innovative thinking that a challenge of this magnitude requires, the Study Mission on Lifelong Learning created in the spring of 2003 was a joint initiative of the MEQ’s Services à la communauté anglophone and the Direction de la formation générale des adultes. Its participants represent many of the key providers of adult learning services as they currently exist, including school boards, adult education centres, vocational training centres, universities, community-based literacy and adult learning groups and the MEQ itself (*Appendix 1*).

## *1.4 Diversity of solutions*

In reviewing the implications of the new policy, the Study Mission met with representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in France. It also examined developments and best practices in four European Union countries: Ireland, England, Sweden and Germany. Attention was focused on these particular countries because they are already actively involved in developing services that respond to and promote the lifelong learning policies that their governments have adopted in recent years. In other parts of Canada and in the U.S., lifelong learning and adult education, by contrast, are the subject of either current or emerging policy debates.

There is no magic formula for creating a culture of lifelong learning. Solutions are as varied as the political, social, economic, historic and geographic conditions that give rise to them. Moreover, it is this variety of experience that provides a fresh perspective and a renewed sense of possibility from which to initiate discussion.

This report is an attempt to identify the characteristics, needs and concerns that unite the English-speaking community where lifelong learning is concerned. It is also an attempt to envisage an ideal lifelong learning environment. It is not meant to be exhaustive, nor does it always represent a firm consensus, even among the members of the Study Mission.

Above all, it is a first step in a larger process of dialogue and partnership-building that will help to implement the Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning in ways that support, and are meaningful to, the English-speaking community.

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## 2. *The evolution of Québec's lifelong learning policy*

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The development of the new Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning has been influenced both by developments at home and on the world stage – some very recent, and some which have been building quietly over the span of many decades. Certainly, adult learning—both in its formal and non-formal incarnations—is no recent phenomenon. What is new is the scope of attention being accorded it, and the inclusive and far-reaching nature of the debate.

### 2.1 *The Québec context*

Québec has a history of adult education services that dates back to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These early initiatives were often community - or church-based, and were frequently linked with the emergence of co-operatives, credit unions, rural networks and unions. Up until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, adult education — and, for that matter, the education of children — took place outside the authority of government.

To fully appreciate the value of these early initiatives, it is important to realize that, right up to the 1950s and even into the 1960s, few Quebeckers proceeded beyond the elementary school level. In 1943, Québec became the last jurisdiction in North America to enact compulsory school attendance legislation for those between the ages of 6 and 14. Even at that, there was little effort at enforcement.<sup>6</sup> While fees for elementary schooling were abolished in Montréal in 1904, they persisted in the rest of the province for grades 1 through 9 until 1944. Fees for grades 10, 11, and 12 were only removed in 1961, as Québec's Quiet Revolution, and its accompanying social, economic and educational reforms, gradually took hold.

#### 2.1.1 *The beginning of active state involvement*

The establishment of the *Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ)* in 1964 marked the beginning of public education in Québec as we know it today. Within a few years, the newly created MEQ and its adult education directorate gradually broadened access to educational services for adults.

By the end of the 1970s, formal adult education programs were established in both the secondary and CEGEP systems. They offered general academic courses, vocational training, language and literacy training, cultural activities and a range of popular education courses. In addition, opportunities for continuing education services at the

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6. Roger Magnuson, *A Brief History of Québec Education* (Montréal: Harvest House Ltd., 1980).

university level increased with the establishment of new universities throughout the province.

### *2.1.2 The need for policy direction*

Service provision has remained something of a hit-or-miss affair right up to the present time, notwithstanding such major policy initiatives as the Education Act of 1988, the Orientations and Action Plan for Adult Education (1984) and the Jean Commission (1980). Service providers tend to operate under less-than-ideal conditions in facilities that were never conceived to optimize adult learning. Moreover, while programming in areas such as vocational training has been strengthened, the popular education courses that school boards used to offer in English have all but disappeared, given that the Education department withdrew its funding under the pretext of a duplication of services provided by the municipalities. Generally speaking, the further one moves from large metropolitan centres like Montréal, the more difficult it becomes to obtain access to a wide range of formal and non-formal adult education services in English.

In the two decades leading up to the creation of the Québec policy on lifelong learning, the government had increasingly turned its attention to the needs of adult learners. Rapid technological development and the emergence of a knowledge-based society, together with global competition and an aging workforce, have all contributed to the new urgency surrounding adult learning.

In one of its many recommendations, the 1995 Estates General on Education emphasized the need for policy direction as regards lifelong education:

*“Although we hesitated to call for such a policy during the first stage of the Estates General, we now believe that one must be formulated. A consensus has been reached on the main objectives that might be included in this policy: it could foster more coherent actions and organization of services and reflect the recognition of people’s right to lifelong education.”*<sup>7</sup>

### *2.1.3 Other measures*

The 1995 *Act to Foster the Development of Manpower Training*<sup>8</sup>—cited internationally for its progressive stance—requires employers to spend the equivalent of 1% of gross wages on manpower training. This training can be carried out within the company or by an association, a community organization or a recognized educational institution.

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7. Commission for the Estates General on Education. *Renewing Our Education System : Ten Priority Actions*. (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1996) p. 36

8. Revised Statutes of Québec, ch. D-7.1

Alternatively, companies can make an equivalent contribution to a central manpower training fund. The law originally applied to employers with payrolls over \$250 000; however, an amendment which came into force on January 1, 2004 raised the figure to \$1 million. An ongoing criticism of the law is that it falls short in responding to the training and development needs of small and medium-sized businesses, farm labour, self-employed workers, as well as those in non-standard or unstable employment—a fact recognized and highlighted by the new policy on lifelong learning. This criticism will undoubtedly gain momentum now that only large employers are subject to the law.

*Emploi-Québec* is working to assist individuals and companies with sustained employment-related measures and services, including training, apprenticeship and professional qualification programs.

Non-formal models of adult learning also continue to blossom. For example, close to 1 000 community-based organizations promoting literacy, environmental awareness, women's issues, anti-poverty education and other areas of interest receive funding from various government departments. Once again, however, the number of these organizations providing services in English is limited.

### **Significant dates in the evolution of English-language adult education**

1821: The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning receives a charter for a university to be called McGill College. (This later becomes McGill University.)

1828: The Mechanics' Institute of Montréal opens its doors as a branch of a Scottish organization that promotes the educational welfare of workers.

1840: The Mechanics' Institute of Montréal offers both practical and technical evening courses, and operates a library.

1844: The *Institut Canadien* is founded as a grass-roots organization and provides courses of an academic and cultural nature for the next 25 years in both English and French. (When the *Institut Canadien* eventually ceases operations, its library is taken over by the privately endowed Fraser Institute. Until the First World War, this is Montrealers' only free lending library.<sup>9</sup>)

1848: Loyola College is established in Montréal.

1851: The Montreal YMCA is founded and begins offering commercial courses for businessmen.

1859: The provincial government establishes the *Conseil des Arts et Métiers* which offers day and evening courses in both English and French.<sup>9</sup>

1889: The Québec government, under then premier Honoré Mercier, creates night schools in Montréal and Québec City to assist workers in completing their basic education.<sup>10</sup>

1908: Notre Dame Ladies College is founded in Montréal. (In 1926, the name is changed to Marguerite Bourgeoys College, and in 1944, it becomes Marianopolis College.)

1926: The YMCA opens Sir George Williams High School and College, a pioneer in evening courses for adults at both the secondary and college levels.<sup>11</sup>

1937: Sir George Williams College grants its first bachelor's degrees.

1945: Thomas More Institute for Adult Education is founded.

1946: The *Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICEA)* is established to promote adult education and influence related policy on behalf of its member organizations. (It has recently been renamed the *Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes.*)

1948: Sir George Williams College is awarded a university charter.

1954: The Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems (The Tremblay Report) identifies public education in Québec as a major problem.

1961: As part of newly-elected Premier Jean Lesage's Quiet Revolution, a series of laws is passed to reform education in Québec. Known as the "Magna Carta" of Québec Education, these laws increase government spending on education, abolish school fees, raise the compulsory school attendance age from 14 to 15, and encourage school boards to establish public secondary schools.

1961: The establishment of a Royal Commission on Education, under the leadership of Alphonse-Marie Parent, leads to the creation of Québec's first *Ministère de l'Éducation* (MEQ) three years later (Bill 60, 1964).

1964: The new MEQ creates its adult education directorate, the *Direction générale de l'éducation des adultes* (DGÉA).

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9. Magnuson, op.cit.

10. Selman et al., *The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc., 1998)

11. Norman Henchey and Donald Burgess, *Between Past and Future—Québec's Education in Transition* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1987)

1967: The *General and Vocational Colleges Act* (Bill 21) establishes the CEGEP system in Québec to provide post-secondary pre-university education and technical training. The acronym CEGEP stands for *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*.

1968-71: Québec's teacher training or "normal schools" are closed. Saint Joseph's Teachers College is amalgamated with McGill's Faculty of Education and the new faculty is relocated from Macdonald College to McGill's main campus in Montréal in 1970.

1969: The Université du Québec opens with campuses in Montréal, Chicoutimi, Rimouski and Trois-Rivières, providing the general population with greater access to university education.

1974: Loyola College and Sir George Williams University are amalgamated to create Concordia University.

1980: The *Commission d'étude sur la formation professionnelle et socio-culturelle des adultes* (better known as the Jean Commission after its chairperson, Dr. Michèle Jean) raises the profile of adult education. More than 430 recommendations are proposed, but the recession of the 1980s and other factors turn the government's attention to other priorities.

1981: The Québec government issues formal regulations (*régimes pédagogiques*) dealing with curriculum organization and educational services for pre-school, elementary and secondary education.

1981: The Québec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL) is founded to promote educational opportunities for adults who pursue learning projects primarily in the English language.

1986: The Estates General on the Quality of Education is held in Montréal.

1986: The government publishes its Plan of Action on Vocational Education (*La formation professionnelle au secondaire: Plan d'action*).

1994: The government issues its regulations (*regime pédagogique*) on adult education.

1995: The Estates General on Education, which becomes an 18-month public consultation process, is convened to carry out a comprehensive review of Québec's education system. Adult education and lifelong learning are on the agenda and important questions are raised related to the value and recognition of secondary diplomas obtained in adult education, the need for greater harmonization among various levels of education, the assessment and recognition of prior learning, and the growing presence of teenagers in the adult sector of the public school system.

1997: Bill 180 amends the Education Act and redistributes school board territories along linguistic rather than confessional lines. Both English and French school boards offer adult general education and vocational training.

1998: Linguistic school boards become operational.

2002: Québec adopts its Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training. The policy addresses many of the lifelong learning issues raised by the Jean Commission and the Estates General.

## 2.2 *International policy*

As much as Québec's Policy on Lifelong Learning has been influenced by internal developments and concerns, it is also part of a much larger movement. Elsewhere in Canada, and in countries around the world, lifelong learning policies have taken on a renewed priority, as governments address the monumental impact of demographic and socio-economic change and the realities of massive workplace restructuring.

### 2.2.1 *Adult Education: The Hamburg Declaration*

Interest in lifelong learning at the international level intensified with the issuing of the 1997 *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* at the close of UNESCO's Fifth International Conference on Adult Education. The *Hamburg Declaration* makes the link between adult learning and a broad spectrum of issues, including the promotion of democracy, justice, gender equality, ecologically sustainable development, health, culture, access to information, as well as international cooperation and solidarity. It states:

*"The potential contribution of adult and continuing education to the creation of an informed and tolerant citizenry, economic and social development, the promotion of literacy, the alleviation of poverty and the preservation of the environment is enormous and should, therefore be built upon."<sup>12</sup>*

The government of Québec has endorsed the contents of the declaration and used its fundamental definitions and principles when creating its own policy.

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12. *The Hamburg Declaration*, Article 4.

### 2.2.2 *The European Union*

Québec has also been closely following European Union developments with regard to lifelong learning. In response to *Hamburg's* call to support and develop adult education and lifelong learning, the countries currently forming the European Union are in the process of establishing integrated policies, values and approaches from their divergent histories and current priorities. A restructured, unified Europe is seen as a cornerstone of the region's global competitiveness and future prosperity. Indeed, in March 2001, the European heads of state, meeting in Stockholm, developed an action plan designed to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.

*The concept of learning throughout life thus emerges as one of the keys to the twenty-first century. It goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education. It meets the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.*<sup>13</sup>

*The concept of learning throughout life leads straight to that of a learning society, a society that offers many and varied opportunities of learning, both at school and in economic, social and cultural life ...*<sup>14</sup>

One reality facing all governments is that they must concurrently balance the urgent need for workforce upgrading and retraining with the longer-term moral and economic concerns of societal and citizenship development.

*A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Commission Staff Working Paper*, produced by the Commission of the European Communities in October 2000, argues that promoting personal development and active citizenship and promoting employability skills are equally important and interrelated aims for lifelong learning.

Finding the right balance between these long-term and short-term considerations is an enormous challenge. It has major implications on how we define lifelong learning, where we set our priorities, and how we distribute—or redistribute—finite resources.

### 2.2.3 *OECD influence on Québec's Lifelong Learning Policy*

Recent research carried out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also had a major influence on the direction taken by Québec's

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<sup>13</sup> Delors, Jacques, *Learning: The Treasure Within – Highlights*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. UNESCO Publishing, electronic reference, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

lifelong learning policy. In fact, the OECD has been a key player in the development of lifelong learning policies worldwide.

Headquartered in Paris, the OECD is made up of 30 member countries from both the developed and developing world that share a commitment to democratic government and the market economy. It produces comparative research, establishes public policy benchmarks and coordinates collaborative projects in areas of social and economic concern. In 1996, the Education Ministers of the member states called upon the OECD to study adult education and lifelong learning. Since 1998, its Education and Training Policy division has monitored developments in numerous countries, including Canada.

Québec is one of many governments who have used, or are using, OECD's findings and guidelines in their own policy reviews. Certainly, the action plan developed to implement the new Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning incorporates the six areas of focus that the OECD proposes as being key to an improved service offering.

## OECD's six areas of focus for improving adult learning

1. **Attractiveness:** Every effort should be made to make learning more attractive to all. This would imply that the service offering is useful to the learner and that it recognizes and validates what the learner already knows.
2. **Accessibility:** Learning is accessible when it is affordable and scheduling is convenient. Travel time and the availability of transportation services are other important considerations. Information, counselling and guidance services are key to making learning accessible.
3. **Financing:** Existing financial incentives should be enhanced to ensure that costs (and decision-making) are being shared equitably by individual learners and their employers or sponsors. Innovative incentive schemes could include tax breaks, subsidies, Individual Learning Accounts, grants, loans, etc.
4. **Quality:** Quality assurance is essential in every area of learning, from programming and facilities, to evaluation and the provision of statistical information.
5. **Efficiency:** Efficient service delivery takes into account local and national priorities. It also recognizes, monitors and proactively responds to demand, and is carried out through active partnerships.
6. **Policy coherence and coordination of effort:** A holistic approach makes the needs of learners the focal point from which all services and activities radiate. Coherence of policy, coordination of effort, active partnerships, and both top-down and bottom-up approaches are all needed.

### *2.3 New solutions for a knowledge-based society*

Québec, like its neighbours around the world, is acutely aware of major shifts in the world's socio-economic realities. Inter-governmental agencies and governments alike increasingly cite the "knowledge-based society" as a reality reshaping current and future priorities in social policy. It is seen as the foundation upon which societies can create effective responses to global challenges such as economic competition, current and anticipated labour shortages and changes, evolving demographics and family structures, worldwide migrations of people, and so on.

New solutions are required to meet the challenges of becoming a knowledge-based society. The OECD has suggested that the equivalent of a high school diploma be considered the international basic education benchmark for adults.

The life skills young people develop during their compulsory schooling, the skills-upgrading adults in our workforce can access, and the social attitudes and values reflected in government policies and priorities will determine how successfully Québec finds its future place.

In this context, adult learning—within a culture of lifelong learning—is acquiring a new level of acceptance and respect. Nevertheless, a lingering perception persists among many Quebeckers that adult learning essentially falls into two categories:

1. the skill upgrading/training/re-training essential for improved employment opportunities;
2. the second-chance schooling available for those who, for whatever reason, never completed their compulsory education.

This limited perception is being dramatically challenged by the new policy which views access to learning at every stage of life as being a fundamental condition for the development of an involved citizenry and the promotion of Québec's economic, social and cultural well-being. In this context, it is noteworthy that the policy seeks to combat poverty and social exclusion by paying particular attention to the needs of five priority groups:

- young people under 30 without qualifications;
- people with disabilities;
- immigrants;
- Native people;
- people aged 45 or over in the job market.

By recognizing the needs and potential of these key segments of Québec society, Québec is positioning itself strategically to assure it becomes a truly knowledge-based society.

## **Sweden: a long tradition of liberal adult education**

*Adapted from Facts on Liberal Adult Education in Sweden,  
The Swedish National Council on Education*

That learning is lifelong and of value both to the individual and to society is a strongly held belief in Swedish society. “The history of modern liberal adult education in Sweden commenced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first folk high schools (1868), libraries and lecture associations were founded, study circles started, and magazines and books on current issues were published. The different educational movements developed along side and in cooperation with the new popular movements.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1991, the Swedish government’s adoption of its Decree on Government Subsidy for Liberal Adult Education signalled a shift in emphasis from “rules” to “objectives”, and from “inputs” to “outcomes”. It mandated the Swedish National Council of Adult Education to distribute government funds to the 11 study associations and 147 folk high schools in the country.

The study associations have over 270 member organizations, with their most common form of activity being the study circle. Study circles offer different programs according to the interests of participants and within the scope of interest of the study association. Programs include languages, mathematics and science, as well as civics and, in particular, subjects related to the arts and to cultural heritage. Every year these associations organize about 336 000 study circles with over 1.5 million participants. In addition, the associations organize more than 200 000 cultural programs with nearly 18 million visitors/participants.

Folk high schools serve adults over 18 years of age who have little schooling. They give courses at different levels and with varied aims and durations, according to the needs and experiences of the students. All folk high schools offer the “general course” which qualifies learners for university. They also offer specialized courses in subjects such as music, media and arts, as well as training in journalism, drama teaching and recreation leadership, to name a few. Courses are free of charge and students are eligible for government grants. Almost 30 000 students participate annually in courses that last a full term, while 150 000 take part in short courses of a day or two in duration.

Adults can enrol in a study circle or folk high school at any time in their lives. Consideration is currently being given to extending a legal “right to education” in the formal sector beyond compulsory school.

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14. *Facts on Liberal Adult Education in Sweden*, The Swedish National Council of Adult Education, Stockholm.

Local citizen involvement is encouraged by government recognition and funding of both formal and community-based educational systems that offer services that are accessible to users and responsive to their needs.

Traditionally, the cost of financing non-formal learning activities has been accepted as a long-term investment in social stability, economic growth, and the education of a democratic citizenry. Priority is given to raising the educational level of immigrants, people with special needs and the unemployed. In recent years, however, reductions to the funding of state welfare programs and adult education programs are putting a strain on Sweden's tradition of non-formal learning.

## **Germany: Trends and Prospects**

*Excerpted from Portrait Adult Education Germany*

“The Federal Republic of Germany is in the centre of Europe. This geographical situation has affected not only the history of the country, but also its language, its culture and its political awareness. Influences from the north, south, east and west of Europe are particularly discernible in the field of education and culture. After the reunification of the country (in 1990), Eastern Europe is once more playing a larger part in the cultural and political life of Germany.

Alongside European history and integration, two other cultural and economic factors have had a particular impact in Germany in the last few decades: one is the strong influence of American language and culture since the Second World War, and the other has been the rising number of foreigners (especially Turks) among the population. As in the other developed countries, Germany is changing in the 1990s from an industrialised into an information and service society, with its attendant high unemployment rates, structural crises and redevelopment of regions. These developments are having considerable effects on both vocational training and on the whole of (continuing) education.

The Federal Republic of Germany is a federal state. This is of particular importance in the area of education and culture, where . . . powers are principally vested in the . . . states (the Länder, often written as Laender) and not in the federal government. Common educational aims and activities are agreed in coordinating committees: the Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK), the Federal- Laender Commission for Educational Planning and the Promotion of Research (BLK), the Research Council and other national bodies.

The Europe-wide discussion of “lifelong learning” has also been taking place in Germany. Through numerous projects, models and programs, governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations have attempted to establish links between the different sectors of education, to create opportunities for transfer and access, and to increase and facilitate participation by setting up information and counselling schemes. This work has been associated with efforts to expand the system of certificates and recognition of learning, to align these nationally and to make them compatible with other European systems.

In the context of the debate about lifelong learning, educational and academic discussion has increasingly focused on the learners and learning. Learning at the workplace, learning in the social environment, learning in and through the media, and self-organized and self- directed learning, are the key words of this development . . . There is broad agreement among educational policy-makers that the huge growth in popular demand for education cannot be met by institutions (and certainly not by those funded by the state).

Furthermore, the state (Federation, Laender and communes) has gradually been

withdrawing from the basic funding of continuing education, as it has from other areas of public service. Grants to continuing education institutions have often been “frozen” (i.e., they stagnate) or reduced. With respect to the funding of continuing education activities, the Employment Promotion Act is increasingly restrictive. Company-based continuing education concentrates on staff development and productivity. Major organizations which have supported continuing education institutions up to now (especially churches and trade unions), are struggling with financial problems caused by large drops in membership. Lastly, commercial institutions are obliged to levy higher fees in order to meet state regulations and to fulfil students’ demands for quality. Vocational schools, higher education institutions and other state establishments are tending to become more heavily involved in income-generating areas of continuing education.

Public demand for adult education has constantly grown over the last 20 years, and will grow further. The need for ...languages, information technology and vocational education remains very high. There are also growing needs in fields such as health education, cultural education and prevocational basic education. However, there is an increasing danger that those wanting to enrol will lack the funds to do so, and that the number of those who are unable to pay even modest fees will rise, while the number of those willing to pay substantially higher fees will also rise – so that the social gap between rich and poor will become even more evident. Greater efforts are now being made to counter such “social exclusion” – here too, Germany is in line with European policy.

In the next few years, there is likely to be a restructuring of continuing education institutions and provision. The quality of provision, the in-service training of teaching staff, the question of access to provision, and the relationship between price and performance, will gain yet further significance. The European dimension of continuing education will become more important with regard both to content and to funding.

The question of the degree to which adult and continuing education should be tied to the requirements of the labour market, and to commercial and occupational interests, will – necessarily – be discussed more fully in the coming years. The smaller the proportion of state funding ... the greater is the part played by the interest of the consumers of “education”, i.e., the participants and the companies which may fund them, and the more important is the criterion of “quality”, quality assurance and competitiveness. On the other hand, there is a growing social and individual need for education which makes contemporary world and individual problems comprehensible and manageable. We can expect that continuing education will in the immediate future be given a new political emphasis, and will have to undergo change, integration and development in its educational practice. The European dimension, which gives a perspective of comparative relativity to national developments and shows them up more clearly, will be of major significance in this context. This goes for the continuity of continuing education, but also for the ever more all-embracing principle of “subsidiarity”, (i.e., that where there are “deficits” (determined by reference to target groups or regions), the state intervenes to offer support).”<sup>16</sup>

15. Ekkehard Nuißl and Klaus Pehl, Eds., *Portrait Adult Education Germany*, (DIE, Deutsches Institut

## **Ireland - National Qualifications System<sup>17</sup>**

*(Adapted from OECD - The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland  
- The Role of National Qualification Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning.*

Ireland is an independent republic at the extreme western edge of Europe. It has a small population of 3.75 million people. It has been a full member of the European Union since 1973, and is part of the EURO monetary zone.

Ireland's economy is small and open, heavily dependent on international trade, and consequently reliant on competitiveness in knowledge and high skill areas to sustain economic growth and development. The 1994-2000 period was one of unprecedented economic growth, with employment expanding by 40% (the Celtic Tiger). This modern economy has been transformed over the past forty years from a largely agricultural and low-technology base. This transformation has been achieved in tandem with very significant expansion of the education and training infrastructure and increases in the rates of participation in education and training up to the highest levels.

The education and training strands of learning have separate organizational identities, and are coordinated through two Ministries (Education and Science, and Enterprise, Trade and Employment). FÁS, the national authority for training and employment, delivers and coordinates a wide range of training provision, including apprenticeships. The mission of FÁS is to meet the employability, skills and mobility needs of job seekers and employees in addition to meeting labour market needs, thereby promoting competitiveness and social inclusion.

Education in Ireland has traditionally comprised three main strands: Primary, Post primary or Second Level, and Higher Education or Third Level. Higher Education is further divided into a binary system, comprising universities and institutes of technology. In very recent times, a new Further Education strand has been formalized, comprising a variety of learning opportunities for adults, a range of mainly vocational provisions, and many community-based learning programs.

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für Erwachsenenbildung – Bielefeld: Bertelsmann, 2000)

16. OECD, *The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The Role of National Qualification Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning.* (Country Background Report. Ireland. 2003.)

**England: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Strategy**  
(Excerpted from sources indicated below)

Although a market-oriented approach to adult education and lifelong learning prevails, England's *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Strategy* is not simply about productivity and competitiveness, it is also about people<sup>18</sup>. Educational institutions are encouraged to work closely with the private sector, and there is an emphasis on partnerships — primarily with business and industry, but also with community organizations and other stakeholders from the voluntary sector.

The Skills Strategy is coupled with an ongoing reform to the educational services provided to the population. The objectives of this reform include providing children with an excellent start and a good foundation for learning; enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work; and to encourage and enable adults to learn, improve their skills and enrich their lives.<sup>19</sup> The Skills Strategy has received broad support, in general, from the public and from critics both in what is being attempted and the manner in which the reform is being carried out.

Nevertheless, there remain areas that demand further action. These include a call for the recognition by the government of the “demographic dimension to skills” - the needs of older adults, whether working or not; the self-employed; and those re-entering the job market.

Government is being called to demonstrate greater sensitivity to those most vulnerable — the disabled and the unemployed.

In addition, there is a need to strike a better balance between encouraging demand and available supply of services and opportunities and to clarify and sort out practical issues related to partnerships — employee-employer relationships; cooperation between levels of education; conflicting policy goals in Employment and Education departments. For example, criticism has been levied on government manpower retraining agencies that pull beneficiaries out of basic education programs and send them into jobs before they have completed their qualifications.

Furthermore, indicators of success, both in the short- and long-term, need to be improved.

In order to support the implementation of the Skills Strategy, it is argued that greater access to the full continuum of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services must be provided “. . . *from specialist counselling through to barefoot guidance and*

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17. *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*, (NIACE Response to the White Paper, October 2003.)

18. *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, (United Kingdom, July 2003)

*information-giving, and encompassing the role of teachers in guidance. NIACE believes that helping people negotiate the transition . . . is a crucial task and that the most cost-effective way to achieve this is to ensure that all publicly-funded providers of post-16 education and training are able to supply a basic common core of information, advice and guidance services to learners. Whether this is done through appropriately trained teachers, tutors, supervisors, learner support staff or specialists should be left to local discretion.”<sup>20</sup>*

There is a call for greater clarity regarding what kinds of services adults are entitled to receive – basic education and/or culture, citizenship and health education.

The systems of accreditation and recognition of prior learning are still considered to be cumbersome and unresponsive to the needs of adults.

The financial support measures in place and the opportunities for access to learning available to adult learners are still deemed inadequate when compared with what is available for youth.

Finally, there is a call for government to stay the distance and ensure the necessary resources to sustain the implementation of its Skills Strategy. “*...that these resources must be found as a major priority if the learning divide blighting our economic productivity and social cohesion is to be significantly narrowed.”<sup>21</sup>*

In spite of the criticisms cited above, authorities have been praised for initiatives that have been undertaken to date. Notable among these are: the intent to provide free learning for those adults without a full first qualification and the removal of age caps for Modern Apprenticeships.

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19. 21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential, NIACE Response to the White Paper, October 2003.

20. Ibid

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### *3. Québec's English-speaking community*

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The Policy on Lifelong Learning provides an extraordinary opportunity for Québec's English-speaking population to reflect upon its current and future needs in relation to learning, education and training. But what defines our community, or more accurately, communities, what cement holds us together, and how is our experience distinct?

#### *3.1 A diverse community with a common language*

Québec's English-speaking population at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a heterogeneous, multicultural blend of First Nations, descendants of early settlers, multi-generation immigrants and new arrivals from every part of the planet.

English-speaking communities of varying size are found throughout Québec. Social and cultural traditions and values are many and varied. Religious traditions are equally diverse. Access to English-language services can be readily available, limited or non-existent.

Many in the English-speaking population also speak French and one or more other languages. Those with cultural and family roots in other countries strive actively to maintain, foster and celebrate the best of their culture and traditions. Even within this diversity, there exists among English-speaking Quebecers an abiding sense of community based on their common use of the English language. For many, there is also a shared sense of belonging, respect and commitment to Québec's historical, linguistic and cultural aspirations.

##### *3.1.1 The urban face of English Québec*

Montréal and its surrounding region is home to the majority of Québec's population, and not surprisingly, to the majority of the English-speaking population. It is also home to the largest number of new immigrants and to the descendants of immigrants who continue to use the English language. It contains the greater part of Québec's businesses and industries, it is home to the majority of English-language institutions and provides the majority of English-language services. This region continues to attract increasing numbers of people from other countries as well as from other parts of Québec. Moreover, with the municipal restructuring taking place, Montréal is also undergoing major transformations to its governance, power-sharing and taxation structures, its demographic profile, and its sense of community.

### *3.1.2 Rural communities*

In the rest of the province—a territory roughly three times the size of France—the English-speaking population is widely dispersed. Its numbers have fallen over the past 20 years, and continue to do so in many regions.

Churches were historically at the centre of these communities. However, with changing attitudes and aging populations, many churches have been forced to close their doors. The English school is often the last remaining English-language institution in many regions of the province.

The bedrock of many regional economies has shifted dramatically in recent decades. Mining, fishing, farming and forestry have all suffered. New industries are difficult to attract and to retain. Many young people are leaving in search of better opportunities. As a result, the average age of English-speaking residents is generally higher than that of the rest of the population in the regions.

### *3.1.3 First Nations*

Approximately half of First Nations people are English-speaking. In contrast to the general demographic trend in Québec's English-speaking population, First Nations communities have seen the number of their young people grow dramatically. The proportion of people under 20 years of age exceeds 50 percent of the population in many First Nations communities.

## *3.2 A deeply rooted attachment to learning*

The importance of learning and the value placed on supporting the individual learner, regardless of age, have deep roots within Québec's English-speaking communities. The Protestant ethic encouraged on-going learning regardless of social status. Protestant communities built and supported schools and universities throughout Québec for close to two centuries. English Catholic schools and teaching orders of men and women provided initial education for children for over a century. Catholic colleges served men and women for decades.

Institutions such as the Thomas More Institute, the YM/YWCA, YM/YWHA, numerous libraries, museums, private and public organizations (e.g. banks, utilities, railways) independent consulting and training groups, print and electronic media outlets, various community groups and farmers' associations have been places of formal and non-formal learning for generations of English speakers.

Immigrants from various countries have often established schools for their children to support mother-tongue language learning and to pass on culture and history. Weekend and evening educational and cultural activities for children and adults continue to be provided in many cultural community centres to this day.

Business, community leaders and ordinary citizens alike have been, and continue to be, part of a long tradition of sponsorship and support for initial schooling and higher education that manifests itself in thriving Home and School Associations, active alumni organizations, and generous university endowments, to name just a few examples.

The continuous support the English-speaking population has given its educational institutions is an indication of the value it places on learning, and a solid foundation on which to build a culture of lifelong learning for all its members.

### *3.3 Learning-related issues for the English-speaking community*

The English-speaking community has many strengths but it also faces a number of distinct challenges that call for creative solutions. For instance:

- The regionalization of many government services, designed to better serve local populations, has, in actual fact, proved detrimental to many English-speaking communities, particularly in outlying regions. Guidance, counselling and psychological support services normally provided through CLSCs, Centres locaux d'emploi (CLEs), Carrefours Jeunesse Emploi (CJEs), etc. are rarely available in English outside the Montréal area due to a lack of bilingual personnel.
- Existing funding formulas and budgetary rules make it difficult for the Adult Education and Vocational Training Centres operated by the English School Boards to offer guidance and support services to their students.
- With the exception of literacy groups, few women's, environmental and other popular education groups operate bilingually. Moreover, current government policy is designed to support existing groups, rather than to fund the creation of new ones.
- In the absence of a critical mass of English speakers in many Québec regions, the capacity of a group of individuals to express their learning needs in a sustained way is extremely limited. It is difficult for unilingual English speakers to have their needs recognized and responded to in areas such as health services, manpower and employment services, the legal system, highways, roads and transportation, and continuing education and training.
- English school boards cover territories that are much larger than their French counterparts. Limited board resources make it extremely difficult for English

school boards to participate regularly in the activities of Emploi-Québec offices, CLSCs, cultural agencies and municipalities in their territory. As a result, local programs may not take into account the specific needs of the English-speaking population.

- English speakers in the regions often feel excluded from local work-training and apprenticeship programs. By the same token, it is essential that they receive the French-language training they need to be able to work effectively in French.
- Few social integration and other programs for people with special physical or intellectual needs exist in English, especially outside the Montréal area..
- There are few resources available to meet the education and training needs of adult immigrants who have a greater facility in English than in French. This can discourage them from pursuing further learning and, as a result, limit the contribution they can make to their new society.
- First Nations peoples have particular challenges (low retention rates, low success rates, isolation, etc.) and needs in terms of lifelong learning. These require innovative solutions that respond to their culture, traditions and environment.

### *3.4 Common need for learning*

English-speaking people throughout Québec face diverse challenges, yet all share a common need for learning services and opportunities. While specific needs and individual interests may vary from place to place and from time to time, basic literacy, numeracy, personal, social and learning skills, employability skills and job-related upgrading are required by everyone.

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#### *4. First paradigm shift: Building a broader understanding and acceptance of learning as a continuum through every stage of life*

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The introduction to this report suggests that the establishment of a culture of lifelong learning will require three fundamental shifts in our thinking.

The first paradigm shift is towards an understanding that learning is a continuum through every stage of life. Even as we continue to focus on providing children with a rich and varied educational experience that will give them the knowledge and skills they need to keep on learning over their lifetime, we cannot stop there. Adult learning must also be encouraged, supported and recognized at every stage of development — from young adults looking to enter the workforce, to parents balancing work and family responsibilities, to seniors wishing to continue playing a meaningful role in society.

Article 255 of the *Education Act*<sup>22</sup> allows school boards to address community and regional development issues that extend beyond the traditional focus on formal instruction from kindergarten to grade 11. The provisions of Article 255, read together with the government’s policy on lifelong learning, suggest that school boards now have a mandate to serve the educational needs of the community in a much broader manner than in the past. Education is now seen as an ongoing activity from cradle to grave, and school boards will be called upon as never before to respond to the lifelong learning needs of the population in their territory.

*“In the context of lifelong learning, it is no longer sufficient simply to meet the explicit demand. Appropriate mechanisms must be found to stimulate the demand.”<sup>23</sup>*

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21. Article 255. *A school board may (1) through manpower training, technical assistance to enterprises and informational activities, contribute to the development and realization of technological innovation projects, to the implementation and dissemination of new technology and to regional development; (2) provide cultural, social, sports, scientific or community services; (3) take part, in keeping with Québec policy on Canadian intergovernmental affairs and international affairs, in the development and implementation of external cooperation programs in the fields under its jurisdiction.*

22. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002) p. 5

#### *4.1 Information, guidance and referral services*

Encouraging adults to become aware of their learning needs and to insist that they be fulfilled is key to the perception of learning as a continuum. As such, it is an important element of the new Québec policy.

All of the countries visited by the Study Mission identify the lack of high quality information, guidance and counselling services for adults as a systemic barrier to their resuming or advancing their learning. This is especially true of those adults who have not completed their basic education and who may have little information about learning opportunities available to them.

An inability to offer their adult students an adequate level of guidance and counselling is certainly an issue for the Adult Education and Vocational Training centres operated by Québec's English-speaking school boards. Even though these services are identified in the most recent legislation and regulations regarding adult education, specific budget rules have not been established. As a result, these services—more often than not—are considered a luxury, available when financial resources permit.

Furthermore, there has been a tendency to assume that adults do not require the same level of guidance and counselling services that are available to youth-sector students. Even if this were true—and experience suggests otherwise—it is essential to remember the high proportion of students under 20 currently in the adult sector.

In the European Union countries visited by the Study Mission, these complementary services were considered a wise investment for many reasons. They reduce training time, assure appropriate program selection, enhance social development and foster learning as a lifelong process.

The guidance-oriented school mode — which is gradually taking root in Québec schools and, which the OECD has singled out as one of our strengths — is an important development that holds promise for both adult and young learners.

#### 4.1.1 Grass-roots outreach

*“It is more important to ask who is not there than who is there.”*

*Margaret Davey,  
Principal, City Lit*

The success of European Union countries in terms of information, guidance, counselling and referral services is often related to policies that actively seek out potential learners, rather than waiting for potential learners to make the first move. In England, for example, a network of Outreach Field Workers operates at a grass-roots level, meeting prospective learners on the shop floor, in pubs, sports clubs, and community associations. Without affiliation to any particular educational institution, they can focus on the needs of the individual rather than the promotion of particular programs or courses.

Similarly, in Ireland, a variety of adult education organizers, community education facilitators and local resource workers provide a non-threatening contact to facilitate entry into the adult education network. Approximately 1000 organizations receive funding from the Department of Social Welfare to engage in this outreach activity.

Sweden’s storefront guidance services, operating out of centrally located shopping centres, make such services readily accessible to prospective learners. Were such storefront information, advice and guidance services to be widely established in Québec, they could complement similar services in employment centres and institutions for formal adult learning. What would set the independent services apart is that they would be truly accessible to the community, and not just to those already involved in some area of formal learning.

#### 4.1.2 Adult Learners’ Week and other initiatives

Information, marketing and recruitment campaigns can take many forms. England’s Adult Learners’ Week encourages the public celebration of adult learners and of new forms of adult learning. This idea has also caught on in Québec. The third edition of Québec Adult Learners’ Week, to be held in April 2005, is being organized on the MEQ’s behalf by the *Institut de coopération pour l’éducation des adultes* (formerly known as the *Institut canadien d’éducation des adultes*). Other initiatives within Québec’s English-speaking community include the publication of a collection of student testimonials, in storybook form, by one adult general education facility operated by the Lester-B.-Pearson School Board.

In 2002, England set itself the goal of creating an environment that would support widespread use of the Internet for many purposes. England initially established 6 000 computer access points, from which information on 500 000 courses was available. There are now close to 7 000 access points. By 2005, the goal is to provide Internet access to everyone who wants it. At the moment (Spring 2003), 67% of potential users can get access, but not in all geographic areas. Rural areas are banding together to demand more access. By 2005, all government services will be provided on-line: *UK Online For Business*, the Department of Trade and Industry; *UK Online Centres*, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES); *UK Online Government*, the Office of e-Envoy, Cabinet Office.

Ireland is considered a world leader in using the media to deliver literacy instruction. Since 2000, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has developed several series of television and radio programs that have reached hundreds of thousands of viewers and listeners.<sup>24</sup> To date, four television and three radio series have been developed for people who want to improve their English and math skills in the privacy of their own homes. All the programming is supported with print learning packs that viewers or listeners can order, and they can also take advantage of a free telephone help line. Peak audiences for the television programs have reached as high as 270 000. Requests for learning packs have varied between 7 100 and 30 000 per series. NALA also works closely with community radio and local Vocational Education Councils (VECs) to promote and support the broadcasts. Evaluations of each series have led creators to believe that many learners who are unwilling, unable, or not ready to go to a program site will, nevertheless, take up the opportunity to learn basic skills through a familiar medium.

## 4.2 *Recognition of prior learning*

The acknowledgement and recognition of prior learning is widely seen as another critical element in eliminating barriers to lifelong learning. The principle is simple: anyone who can demonstrate that they have already acquired a certain level of knowledge, or mastered a specific competency, should not have to redo their training or repeat material they already know in order to have their learning formally recognized.

Furthermore, if prior knowledge and competencies can be validated, it should be of little importance whether they were acquired through formal education or training, or non-formal learning on-the-job or informally at home or in the community.

The Québec policy recognizes the importance of acknowledging prior learning by identifying it as one of its four main orientations. Some of the main issues associated with recognition of prior learning include:

- Determining the criteria for what is/is not recognized and how much credit is given;

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23. [www.nala.ie/projects/project](http://www.nala.ie/projects/project)

- Identifying specific means for measuring prior learning (e.g. demonstration, portfolio, etc);
- Training assessors;
- Maintaining quality control.

There are also political issues as unions and professional associations grapple with their role in the process. And finally, there are logistical issues of time and cost in terms of setting up the structures, designing cost-effective processes, etc.

#### *4.2.1 Similar preoccupations, different approaches*

The validation of extra-school learning in Sweden is very recent, despite a long tradition of valuing non-formal and informal learning. There, experiential competencies can now lead to a separate formal certificate, which is awarded after interviews and workplace tests.

In England, prior learning assessment is currently being applied in vocational programs to shorten the period of study required for a diploma. A *National Qualifications Framework* categorizes all achievement outside of university education, based on a policy in effect since 1997 aimed at the "inclusiveness for all achievements". At the time of the Study Mission's visit, 17 000 qualifications were included in the framework, although an attempt was underway to simplify and streamline these into a smaller number. By the end of 2003, all courses in the country were expected to be included. Since all educational establishments will be working with a common framework, qualifications attained by any individual could lead to recognition by multiple institutions.

Germany has developed a Kom-PASS (or competency passport), which documents one's learning competencies and provides individuals with both an educational and occupational biography. This tool facilitates the recognition of existing competencies and can be used as a support for educational and vocational planning and decision-making.

Several related issues that are preoccupying European jurisdictions are also relevant to Québec. These are:

- the recognition of learning and competencies across geographic boundaries – an important issue in times of increased mobility;
- the need for an agreement by universities to recognize prior learning assessment carried out by institutions at lower levels;
- and the use of recognition of prior learning as a means of promoting and accelerating the integration of immigrants.

### *4.3 Relationship between funding and access*

Funding is another critical element in the development of a lifelong learning culture. It has a direct bearing on the availability of programs, number of places open, appropriate design of facilities, ability to attract qualified teaching staff and a support infrastructure that includes information, guidance, counselling and referral, as well as recognition of prior learning services.

#### *4.3.1 Limitations of current funding formulas*

Under Québec's current system, the funding that school boards receive for adult general education is a fixed amount— i.e. a closed envelope. Constrained by this funding formula, centres are often forced to make difficult choices in terms of the number and range of programs they can offer and the number of students they can accept. In contrast, funding for the youth sector is tied to the number of students enrolled on September 30 of each year – i.e. an open envelope.

The English-speaking community's relatively small and geographically dispersed population only compounds the problem. Rather than facilitating access to basic education to a wide cross-section of adults, this funding formula acts as a deterrent to access for many of the groups identified as priority populations by the new Québec policy.

- With a growing number of 16-to-18-year-olds registering in adult education programs, there are fewer spots available for mature learners. It is estimated that 40% of current registrants are in the 16-to-18 age group.
- These 16-to-18-year-olds who leave the youth sector without completing their basic education and register in the adult sector may lose access to programs. This would be the case if classes are either already full, or conversely, if course offerings are not financially viable due to too low registration. They may also lose access to complementary support services and school transportation services once they are registered in the adult system.
- Literacy programs, which require small class sizes to be effective and attract relatively small numbers of students, are often not offered by school boards. Budgetary considerations may cause adult centres to opt for other general education programs that serve a greater number of participants.
- English-language programs to meet the needs of immigrants, people with special needs, Native people and other target groups are always subject to funding availability. Consequently, supply at times does not meet demand;
- Urban centres face the problem of over-subscription in relation to the number of places they can fund, whereas rural centres experience the opposite problem of having populations too low to support viable programs.

Vocational training is funded according to formulas particular to the specific programs offered. Often these funding formulas are based on province-wide average class-sizes that are larger than the demand that exists in the minority-language population. The result is that centres face difficulties sustaining financially viable programming, and the English-speaking population suffers from limited access to program options in English.

#### *4.4 Giving new value to adult learning*

While some adult education and training services are offered by private institutions, the majority of services and programs funded by the MEQ operate within school boards and/or colleges. Traditionally, these institutions have viewed the education of youth as their primary mandate and focus, and adult “second chance” education has rarely received the full attention it deserved.

Governing bodies play an important role in creating and sustaining the conditions necessary for a culture of lifelong learning. Institutions with well informed governing bodies, and with partners in the community, business, industry and governmental organizations, are better placed to promote a broader vision of learning, dismantle artificial barriers to access, and ensure that suitable facilities, programs and resources are in place to attract adult learners.

Teachers’ collective agreements also have a direct effect on the delivery of adult education services. Existing collective agreements, written primarily with the priorities and needs of youth in mind, make few references to adult learners, even though the working conditions, facilities and knowledge required to work with adults are different from those needed in the youth sector. For example, the length of the school year, the frequent arrivals and departures of adult learners due to varying program lengths, the part-time nature of adult learning, and the hours of operation, are some striking differences. Rethinking collective agreements in terms of adult learners’ needs—or creating separate collective agreements for the adult sector—would contribute to a better appreciation of the conditions conducive to adult learning, and ultimately to the development of a lifelong learning culture.

#### *4.5 In summary*

Reaching out to adult learners with comprehensive information, guidance and referral services, recognizing prior learning, and assigning a new value to adult learning with appropriate funding, infrastructure and governance are ways we can overcome some of the barriers to successful adult learning. Overcoming those barriers will then lead to a new society-wide perception of the importance of learning at every stage of life.

With a renewed respect for adult learning, we can turn to new delivery models that are learner-centred and demand-driven – whether they be formal or non-formal in nature.

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## *5. Second paradigm shift: Moving from a supply-driven to a learner-centred model of service delivery*

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*“One of the most enduring features of the various adult education programs we encountered in Europe is the fact that service delivery is based on the pre-assessment of the population’s needs, rather than an institutional prescription of those needs.”*

*- Noel Burke, Study Mission*

### *5.1 Understanding learning needs of the English-speaking community*

The network of adult education and vocational training centres operated tuition-free by school boards across the province strives to serve adult learners in an evolving social and economic environment.

However, the scarcity of existing research or demographic information specific to Québec’s English-speaking population poses particular challenges to English-language providers of formal adult learning services.

Information about the extent of community-based, non-formal, not-for-credit learning that is actually taking place often is available only within the immediate locality.

A full mapping of the learning activities currently underway in the English-speaking community would be a major step forward. This would require an investment of time and energy to meet with and sound out community members throughout Québec. It would also require concerted effort, coordination and a pooling of resources.

At present, there is no focused effort or dedicated resource within the English-speaking community to perform ongoing research and provide a forum for dialogue and policy development related to lifelong learning. Yet examples of such facilities operate successfully in Europe and could provide a model for Québec’s English-speaking community.

### **Nordens folkliga akademi (NFA) - Nordic Folk Academy, Göteborg, Sweden<sup>25</sup>**

The Nordic Folk Academy in Sweden was established in 1968 by the Ministries of Education of 10 Nordic countries as a meeting and networking place for adult educators and policy-makers. The aim of the NFA is to foster and develop co-operation among adult educators in the Nordic countries as well as between the Nordic countries and the adjacent areas (the Faeroes, Greenland and Åland Islands), and also between the Nordic and other European countries. The NFA has brought together researchers and practitioners in a number of areas related to lifelong learning, including adult education, workplace training, community development and civic training. It has served as an important centre for innovation, research into the needs of adults, professional development and identification of best practices. In addition, it has provided a focal point for promoting and recognizing the benefits of all lifelong learning – formal, non-formal and informal.

Lecturers and project leaders come from the Nordic and Baltic countries. NFA seminars are open to all who are interested. The NFA also organizes tailor-made seminars and courses for special target groups. The activities of the NFA take their point of departure in:

- adult pedagogy based on the philosophy of socio-cultural education
- dialogue between non-formal and formal adult education
- dialogue between adult education and the labour market
- lifelong learning in relation to competence development, information technology, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship
- Nordic cooperation based on common history, culture and democratic understanding in dialogue with voluntary, non-governmental organizations
- international involvement for exchange of information and good practice in adult learning.

Of particular interest is the “Scholarship Month” program, allowing visiting scholars to stay in residence for extended periods of time in order to do research and to contribute to the work of others at the NFA.

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24. There was considerable dismay in many quarters following the recent announcement that the NFA would cease operations as of August 2004.

### **AONTAS – Irish National Association of Adult Education<sup>26</sup>**

AONTAS is the Irish National Association of Adult Education, a voluntary membership organization. It exists to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education that is accessible to and inclusive to all.

AONTAS has 509 members representing statutory and voluntary organizations as well as individuals. It participates in policymaking, organizes networking among members, supports the work of members, provides an information referral service to adult learners and the general public collects data and undertakes research.

Membership is open to all organizations, groups and individuals involved in the promotion or advancement of adult education.

### **Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (DIE) (German Institute for Adult Education)**

The German Institute for Education (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung - DIE) belongs to the Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz (WGL) academic community. It acts as a link between academic theory and practical work in adult education, provides the basis for research based on practice, and develops innovative approaches.

The DIE:

- motivates people to continue learning all through their lives;
- supports and encourages further education based on real needs;
- makes education into a central area of activity in society;
- provides the foundations for teaching and research;
- links various disciplines such as educational science, sociology, psychology and economics;
- disseminates the results of research and issues raised in practice;
- supports the development of the profession of “adult educator” and advises on processes of organizational development;
- evaluates and analyzes the systems and support structures of adult education;
- acts in an advisory function for research, policy and practice;
- represents German adult education internationally and reinforces the transfer of knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

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25. AONTAS

26. *Good to Know*. DIE, 2002. Ed.Prof. Dr. Ekkehard Nuissl von Rein: <http://www.die-bonn.de>

## **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)<sup>28</sup>**

NIACE's formal aim is "to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education" or less formally, to advance the interests of adult learners and potential learners. It is a registered charity with individual members and more than 260 corporate members across the full range of providers, policy-makers and users of adult learning opportunities. NIACE headquarters are in Leicester, England and Cardiff, Wales. It employs more than 150 staff.

Its strategic plan commits it to "support an increase in the total numbers of adults engaged in formal and informal learning in England and Wales; and at the same time, to take positive action to improve opportunities and widen access to learning opportunities for those communities under-represented in current provision."

It accomplishes these goals through:

- advocacy to national and local government, funding bodies, industry and providers of education and training;
- collaboration with providers across all sectors of post-compulsory education and training; and through fostering progression routes for adults seeking to develop pathways as learners;
- a commitment to supporting evaluation and monitoring and to high quality service;
- securing informed debate - through research, enquiry, publication and through arranging seminars and conferences;
- effective networking - to ensure that lessons learned in one part of the system can be drawn on elsewhere;
- ensuring that the best of international practice is available to its members and users;
- a commitment to being itself a well-managed learning organisation.

NIACE's work is unique in that it works in all fields of UK education and training, including local authority-organized provision; the further education college sector; higher education in universities and colleges; employment-led learning involving both employers and trade unions; learning in the voluntary sector; and through the media, especially broadcasters.

It is particularly concerned with widening access to learning opportunities and increasing participation among those groups currently under-represented in education and training. Its specialist expertise includes:

- Basic skills
- Older learners
- Learning through Information and Communication Technologies

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27. NIACE: [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

- Black and ethnic minority learners
- Learning and health
- Learners with disabilities or learning difficulties
- Learning and the voluntary sector
- Young adult learners
- Women
- Other research projects/programs

## *5.2 Building a service delivery network tailored to adult needs*

Even in the absence of extensive research, there are many areas that could benefit from rethinking if the service delivery framework is to shift from a supply-driven model to a learner-centred one.

### *5.2.1 Attractive, adult-friendly facilities*

Representatives of the European countries visited by the Study Mission often expressed the belief that conventional scholastic institutions were not necessarily appropriate settings for adult learning to take place. This is especially true when facilities are housed in school buildings that were never conceived with the needs of adult learners in mind. The OECD defined attractiveness as a major factor in attracting and retaining students. Investments made in appropriate buildings and facilities are seen as an enhancement to access.

The ideal adult facility is bright, physically welcoming, and attractive. It is conveniently located, close to public transportation, equipped with childcare services as well as food services, appropriate furniture, climate control and adequate parking. On-site information, counselling and guidance services have high visibility and a strong culture of quality and respect extends to all personnel, from the caretaker to the director

#### ***The City Lit: 80 years of experience serving adult learners***

England's The City Literary Institute (City Lit) provides learning opportunities for over 24 000 adults every year, and offers the biggest part-time course selection in London. Devoted purely to adult learning, The City Lit's focused environment encourages and supports individuals, whatever their goals.

More than 3 000 courses cover a wide array of subjects including Visual and Performing Arts, Languages, Computing, Health and Fitness, and Humanities. The City Lit's Centre for Deaf People is one of several specialist areas. The City Lit also works with community groups to bring learning to as wide an audience as possible. It offers parent education as well as special programs for homeless people.

The City Lit is a registered charity with an annual budget of £10million. It is regulated by the Learning and Skills Council, which provides 60% of its income. Tuition fees from students and employers represent a significant portion of the balance.

The City Lit aims to meet the Learning and Skills Council agenda:

- Attracting adults into learning
- Supporting basic skills development for adults
- Raising standards for learning
- Developing individuals' skills, qualifications and experiences to help meet the wider economic agenda, as well as upholding the joy of learning for its own sake.

As an institution concerned with the needs of adult learners, The City Lit provides support services to help students with study skills, guidance, counselling, and finding adequate daycare services.<sup>29</sup>

### *5.2.2 Scheduling to meet adult needs*

Attractive, adult-friendly facilities are one element in a total service delivery network. . Another is program scheduling that accommodates different lifestyles and work schedules. Adult learners often have the responsibilities of work and family. Choosing to continue their studies is an added challenge. Adult learners require scheduling that is as flexible as possible, with daytime, evening and weekend programming, and multiple shifts to correspond with adult schedules. The provision of both full-time and part-time programs, through a variety of means and media, would further contribute to overcoming barriers to access. Use of the latest information technology could also help accommodate the scheduling concerns of adult learners, especially those living in rural areas.

### *5.2.3 Teacher training*

Adult educators work in many different environments in both the public and private sectors – community centres, health centres, military bases, prisons, in businesses and industries, as well as in education centres. Teaching adults requires certain skills and attitudes that respond to an adult learning style. Adult learners learn with a purpose in mind—improved skills, status, better job, improved relationships, quality of life, etc. They are not “captive clients.” They work independently towards their own goals and at

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28. <http://www.citylit.ac.uk/newtocitylit/howeare.asp>

their own pace. They will socialize with other adults when it is convenient for them. As wage earners and heads of families, they bring a large range of skills and life experiences to the learning context, and they expect to be treated and respected as adults. The training of those who teach adults should therefore be tailored to reflect these realities.

Additionally, teachers in both the adult general and vocational education sectors in Québec have had to adapt to the class management, learning disability, and discipline-related issues that have come with the dramatic increase in the number of students, aged 16-18, enrolled in the adult centres.

In Europe, adult education teacher training varies considerably from one country to the next. In Germany, 40 universities (and 60 full professors) train adult education teachers, though there are still many without formal training who learn on the job. The National University of Ireland, Maynooth,<sup>30</sup> trains both adult education teachers and community facilitators. Ireland also offers short training programs for literacy volunteers. In England, initial teacher training includes lifelong learning in the curriculum. Moreover, the Further Education National Training Organisation is working to see that all adult education teachers have training. In Germany, one can also obtain a certificate in counselling adult learners. With the increased mobility of adult educators brought on by the European Union, some observers feel that an EU-wide certification for adult teaching is needed. Much of the training of adult educators is offered at the post baccalaureate level.

Here in Québec, teacher training, certification and ongoing professional development are also essential factors in the movement towards establishing a culture of lifelong learning. Ideally, all teachers in educational institutions would have specialized training and hold a valid teacher's license. Teacher training programs that focus on the lifelong learning needs and strategies of adult learners could be of interest to a wide range of educators – in business and industry, at the secondary, collegial and university levels, in health services, etc. Professional development incentives would encourage teachers in-service to stay abreast of the changing needs of their adult clientele and the ongoing demands of curriculum reform.

Adults who lack basic literacy, mathematical and personal development skills require specialized attention in that they are often reluctant to approach a formal institution of learning to get the training they need. In these situations, the initiatives taken by volunteers and community workers to reach out to these adult learners are extremely valuable. Their efforts as mentors, coaches and advocates often result in breaking down attitudinal barriers, evaporating fears and setting down the foundation for further learning. Greater collaboration and mutual support between the formal and non-formal service providers in our community would strengthen our ability to respond to the needs of all adult learners.

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29. <http://www.may.ie>

#### *5.2.4 Program availability in English*

In terms of curriculum development, Québec can be proud of its well-elaborated programs and standardized content in both the vocational and general education sectors. This is in contrast to the situation in Ireland, for example, where a mammoth demand for rapid training has resulted in programs such as bricklaying being vastly different in the northern part of the country from those given in the south. The importance of such standardization was identified by the Irish National Framework of Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Institute as a means of ensuring the portability and transferability of skills and qualifications.

While the quality and standardization of Québec's vocational and technical programs provide excellent training for students, the delivery of that training in English continues to be a challenge. For example, the English school boards currently offer some 75 programs in English, less than half the number available in French school boards. The English boards also face administrative constraints with regard to the timely and equitable provision of English-language materials and services. Funding levels, MEQ regulations concerning program authorizations, and a complex cluster of factors related to geography, needs of the workplace, and traditional attitudes and perceptions within the English-speaking community that favour university education over vocational or technical programs, have all limited the development of these education opportunities in English. Whatever approaches are adopted to provide fair and equitable access to programming in English, they must respond to the needs of learners as well as those of employers.

#### *5.2.5 French-language competency*

A corollary to the aforementioned issues is the fact that the employability of English-speaking graduates is linked to their job-related competency in French. In particular, graduates need a good grasp of the technical vocabulary required to use their skills and communicate effectively in the workplace. While many centres are finding ways to include "ad-hoc" or "add-on" French-language upgrading in their programs, doing so creates additional time demands and difficulties for both school boards and their students. The revised MEQ curriculum will address the need to develop "soft skills." Moreover, it is expected that there will be provision for more flexibility in local programming. This is an opportunity for the English community to propose changes to program design and funding policies to allow for the improved development of essential French-language competencies.

#### *5.2.6 Complementary services*

In the previous chapter, we highlighted the importance of counselling, guidance, and information services, along with evaluation of prior learning, as important factors in

removing barriers to adult learning. In Europe, we have also seen that once adults become a part of a learning society, they view this ongoing support as being integral to the process of lifelong learning.

### *5.2.7 Harmonized programming*

Québec is already working to create greater harmonization among different programs at the vocational, technical, and university levels to make it easier for individuals to move from one level of formal education to the next. These efforts are welcome, but more remains to be done. There is no conceivable valid argument for having learners repeat courses that cover the same information and develop the same skills, simply because the courses exist at different levels within the formal institutional hierarchy. Forced repetition of such courses can create artificial dead-ends that discourage learning, rather than continually adding to students' knowledge and skill in a specific field.

### *5.2.8 Distance education and e-learning: overcoming geographical barriers to access*

Access, a principle outlined by the OECD, remains fundamental to a learner-centred service delivery model. The vastness of Québec's geography in relation to its population base presents a constant challenge in reaching out to adult learners in outlying regions. For minority English-speaking communities, the challenge is still greater. With the main core of services centred in the Montréal metropolitan region, it is particularly difficult to reach the small pockets of English-speaking communities scattered across large distances, in areas such as the Far North, Gaspé and the Lower North Shore.

In Europe, we saw a concerted effort to take learning to the learner with various delivery models, including distance education, workplace learning, rural community centres, and even pub-based learning. Sweden provides yet another option by providing assistance to individuals who wish to relocate closer to a learning centre, when no such centre exists within a set distance.

By contrast, in Québec, we have traditionally expected learners to come to the service provider, rather than the reverse. Nevertheless, some initial progress is being made in developing distance education and Internet-based alternatives. For instance:

- Québec students can register for correspondence courses in Mathematics, English, French and other general education subjects through their school board. Material is prepared in English and French by the non-profit *Société de formation à distance*, (SOFAD), an enterprise which is controlled by the school boards. Only exams need to be written at a local adult education centre.

- Innovative online vocational training in Accounting is presently offered by the Western Québec School Board, and plans are being made to expand e-learning initiatives to other programs.

Québec is still in its infancy with respect to employing emerging technologies and would benefit from further analysis of the e-learning movements in England and Sweden, which could allow for more flexible learning opportunities that are independent of time and place.

### *5.2.9 Financial support for adult learners*

For adults, pursuing learning opportunities is conditional upon their being able to support themselves in the process. This financial support is a fundamental condition of access. While it is notable that full-time Québec students in vocational, technical and university programs are eligible for loans and bursaries, those enrolled in general adult education programs at the secondary level are not. As a result, adults who wish to complete their basic secondary education in preparation for vocational or technical training may not be able to, due to their ineligibility for loans and bursaries. A vicious circle ensues, since, without the necessary prerequisites, they are barred from the vocational or technical training that would enhance their employability and their ability to continue learning.

Additionally, this clientele must also contend with conflicting policies emanating from different government agencies, such as a loss of employment insurance should they decide to return to school. Greater policy coherence is needed to reinforce the message that lifelong learning is essential to individual, social and economic development.

The EU countries have strived for greater coherence between their policies and practices. Moreover, they have declared that basic education, in the framework of lifelong learning, is a fundamental investment. It is essential for ensuring sustainable economic development and for addressing the continuing education needs of an aging workforce. In Sweden, transportation, daycare and even spousal and eldercare are provided at no cost to all adult students.

### *5.3 In summary*

In the preceding pages, we have described how some of the key elements of our service delivery model might evolve into a more learner-centred adult learning experience. Further research and a comprehensive needs assessment of our community will point to other initiatives that could be taken, both in the short- and long-term.

Learning is not, and cannot be, restricted to our formal system of education. As our lives progress, much of the learning we do takes place in non-formal settings in the community and in the workplace. The next chapter takes a closer look at the importance of non-

formal learning. It also reflects on how partnerships with community-based groups, business, industry, and others who play a role in adult education are essential to the establishment of a lifelong learning culture.

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## *6. Third paradigm shift: Acknowledging lifelong learning as a shared responsibility that demands the active involvement of many partners in different areas of society*

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A traditional supply-driven view confines learning to the formal education received in educational institutions. In other words, “learning equals schooling” and responsibility for it rests with educators and their students. By contrast, a learner-centred culture of lifelong learning recognizes many different types of learning—formal, non-formal and informal—because throughout their lives, people learn in many different ways and in many different situations. Learning is both “lifelong” and “life-wide”.

From this perspective, responsibility for learning also broadens to include a much greater spectrum of facilitators and partners – all of whom are essential to the implementation of a lifelong learning policy.

The creation of new partnerships and sharing of responsibilities presents both challenges and opportunities. Educational institutions are being asked to step beyond their traditional comfort zone of compulsory and higher education to find new partners—and new value—in the workplace and the community, where non-formal learning is already taking place. By the same token, employers, communities, organized labour, professional associations, government agencies and other potential partners are being challenged to consider how their resources and networks can best be applied to the cause of lifelong learning and its resulting opportunities.

### *6.1 What is non-formal learning?*

Non-formal learning can occur in the workplace; it can also take place in such diverse venues as libraries, community centres, church basements, local fitness centres, cultural associations, housing projects, museums, and so on. By definition, non-formal learning is non-credit, and largely voluntary. In their book, *Between Past and Future – Québec’s Education in Transition*, authors Norman Henchey and Donald A. Burgess refer to five broad categories of non-formal learning<sup>31</sup>:

- 2.4 “Economic programs offered by business and industry, unions and professional organizations;*
- 2.5 Cultural programs sponsored by libraries, museums, literary organizations and community centres;*
- 2.6 Communications, through print and electronic media and the new information networks and data bases;*

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30. Norman Henchey and Donald A. Burgess, op. cit., p. 128.

- 2.7 *Government and professional resources offered by various agencies and departments, professional corporations, social services, and political parties;*
- 2.8 *Voluntary organizations bringing together persons who share a common interest—women, religion, the environment, a local community, civil rights, and so on.”*

Indeed there are so many possible forms of non-formal learning that a first challenge for Québec’s English-speaking community would be to identify the extent to which it is already involved in non-formal learning, and where and how this is taking place.

### **Formal, non-formal, informal learning and education<sup>32</sup>**

There is no single definition of the terms “formal”, “non-formal” and “informal” as applied to learning and education. Furthermore, many people do not make the distinction between the terms “non-formal” and “informal” or may use them interchangeably.

Often these terms refer to administrative concerns: how is the learning organized? Is there a predefined curriculum? Is the teaching/learning scheduled and structured? Are there quality controls in both the nature of the transmission and the acquisition of knowledge and skills? Are the process and its results capable of being measured so that qualifications can be granted? Are there objective standards of success or failure?

Simply stated, learning that takes place in dedicated educational institutions, such as schools, is seen as formal, while that which occurs beyond the school walls is not.

Informal learning is seen as the lifelong process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play: from the example and attitude of families and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning – including that of a highly “schooled” person. It takes place outside a dedicated learning environment; it arises from the activities and interests of individuals and groups. It can be comprised of non course-based learning activities (which might include discussion, talks or presentations, information, advice and guidance) provided or facilitated in response to expressed interests and needs by people from a range of sectors and organizations (health, housing, social services, employment services, education and training services, guidance services, etc.)

Thus, formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left, e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues.

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31. Adapted from a text by Mark K. Smith, <http://www.infed.org/biblio/inf-lrn.htm>

## 6.2 *Benefits of non-formal learning*

Many people have traditionally equated learning with enhanced qualifications or certification. So how does one measure the value of non-formal learning which, by definition, does not result in formal certification?

Learning in the workplace—or the on-the-job upgrading of employee skills—is a form of non-formal learning. It is also one of the quickest ways of raising the level of education and/or the job-related competencies of an individual.

There are other benefits to non-formal learning that go beyond standard qualifications. In England, the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning was created in 1999 “to investigate the full range of benefits that learning brings both to the individual learner and society as a whole.”<sup>33</sup> Links between learning and personal health, family life and active citizenship are some of the areas being studied.

Outreach activities are very important in England, where some educational institutions have off-site delivery in dozens of communities and fund small organizations to work with special-target groups. In this way, they reach many adult learners who would never come to the institution’s main campus.

Non-formal community-based learning can also be the confidence-building catalyst that helps individuals make the leap to more formalized learning. In Ireland, the Study Mission was told that older adult males often perceive a return to studying and formal learning as a sign of weakness. A movement is afoot to use non-formal learning to overcome this stigma. The idea is to help men who have been displaced from the workforce become sufficiently empowered that, with time, they are comfortable enrolling in the formal learning programs that will allow them to upgrade their skills and become re-employable.

Sweden’s Study Circles provide an occasion for people to get together to pursue a common interest, be it a skill such as carpentry or an aspect of Swedish culture. The circles are informal, but highly purposeful in nature, and usually focus on themes relevant to a group of individuals or to a specific community and its people. The experience can empower people to grow personally and professionally. An amazing 75% of the adult population has participated in a Study Circle at some point, and at any given time, some 25% of the adult population is enrolled in this non-formal type of learning. Sweden is currently trying to establish a national system for validation of non-formal learning, such as that done in Study Circles.

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32. The Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning: [www.learningbenefits.net](http://www.learningbenefits.net)

### 6.3 Assigning value to non-formal learning

With the advent of a Québec policy on lifelong learning, the time is ripe to build the bridges between formal and non-formal learning providers and structures that would lead to greater recognition, validation and support of non-formal learning. This would truly put the needs of individual learners at the forefront and recognize all their competencies – regardless of where they are obtained. It would also enable learners to move more easily between non-formal and formal programs of learning.

In *Canadian Nurse*, Lynn Esson et al. discuss the issue of assessing prior learning for people returning to complete their nursing degrees:

*The benefits of PLA [Prior Learning and Assessment] are many. For the individual, it can decrease time, cost and repetition of content, and enable the person to focus more on the specifically needed or desired learning. It recognizes that learning can take place outside a classroom and that such learning is as valid as formal education. For employers, it can increase the pool of formally accredited professionals in areas where there are shortages— of which nursing is certainly one. For nursing, enhanced educational opportunities for RNs would advance the educational base of a profession that has borne the brunt of many recent health care reforms.<sup>34</sup>*

This is just one example of how recognition of non-formal learning can benefit both individuals, organizations and society as a whole. There are as many potential examples as there are types of non-formal learning.

### 6.4 Building on existing partnerships

In addition to paving the way for recognition of non-formal learning, partnerships between formal and non-formal learning providers would also help to identify education or training needs within the population, reinforce existing programming and fill learning niches that are presently not being met.

For instance, in Québec, steps are already being taken to strengthen ties between the English-language vocational training centres and employers, or employer groups. Industry representatives sit on the Governing Boards of many vocational training centres and are also closely involved in developing and revamping programs. This could be taken a step further by routinely establishing Business Advisory Boards or other more formal links to industry such as exist in Germany and in Québec's national vocational

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33. Lynn Esson et al, *Canadian Nurse*, 98(5) May 2002 pp. 28-29+.

training centres which have a province-wide mandate (e.g. *École des métiers de l'aérospatiale de Montréal* and *École des métiers de la construction de Montréal*.)

Success rates for vocational training and the satisfaction rates among businesses and industries which hire new graduates also speak of a solid base on which to build. Other areas that could be further developed within the English sector include:

- **English-language “Service to Businesses” outreach programs:** These school-board run programs are more developed in the Francophone than in the Anglophone sector. A more systematic promotion of these services could provide an economically viable solution to meeting the training needs of small- and medium-size businesses within our community.
- **More widespread implementation of work-study programs:** The traditional model of program delivery that is based in vocational training centres is gradually giving way to a work-study model that includes more direct exposure to the workplace. The work-study model gives learners exposure to up-to-date equipment and the latest technology. Moreover, it provides a realistic workplace setting for the acquisition of skills by encouraging the immediate linking of theory and practice.
- **Up-to-date program content, technology and teacher training:** Close links between industry and centres help to ensure that program content corresponds to the evolving needs and realities of the workplace. Equipment donations and access to actual business settings are other important side-benefits. Partnerships can also support an expansion of teacher internship programs designed to keep instructors up-to-date in their field.
- **Recruitment and career placement opportunities:** With greater interaction between centres and employers, companies are gaining access to a ready pool of candidates already familiar with their operations. This has the potential to reduce their recruiting costs accordingly, while meeting the employment needs of graduating students. This notion of “frontloading” or investing in the training/learning opportunities of younger workers (ages 18-30) is common in England and Germany.

## 6.5 New solutions for communities

The examples cited above all centre on prospective partnerships with employers. There is also considerable potential for expanded partnerships between the formal education sector and non-formal community-based learning groups.

### 6.5.1 Community literacy groups

Literacy training is one such area where partnership arrangements could better serve the needs of learners. A network of volunteer trainers has helped to establish a solid footing for literacy training at the community level. At the same time, school boards struggle to provide programming that, under current funding rules, absorbs a disproportionate amount of resources relative to the number of people who can be served. Partnerships could therefore help establish clear roles and responsibilities and assign the necessary funding where it can make the greatest impact.

### 6.5.2 Remote communities

In the outlying areas of Québec, formal learning centres serving the English-speaking community are few and far between. Partnerships with community groups could help identify the learning needs of these communities and develop innovative ways for meeting those needs. Widespread Internet access is just one means that could be used to bolster and encourage a culture of lifelong learning through non-formal means. In turn, this electronic access could open the door to more formalized programs through distance education and e-learning.

#### ***Non-formal learning in action***

*In the small community of St. Paul's River, on Québec's Lower North Shore, a group of women had come together as part of a formally organized fisheries assistance program. With funding from the program, they worked out of a local museum, making crafts for the museum boutique to sell to tourists. In the process, they had evolved into an effective team. However, with the winding down of the program and the closing of the museum for winter, one participant voiced her concern that the momentum they had worked hard to build would be lost. A suggestion that they continue to meet informally in each other's homes struck a chord. This form of non-formal learning would enable them to pursue their work, perfect their skills and potentially create employment for themselves as they learned to market their crafts further a field.*

### *6.5.3 Reaching people on the margins*

Community learning can also be an effective means of reaching out to the poor, the unemployed and other groups on the margins of society who might otherwise be left out of the lifelong learning process. In England, the City Literary Institute, better known as City Lit, has an outreach program to help homeless people in the heart of London reintegrate into their community and break the cycle of homelessness. In addition, Lambeth College in London has developed partnerships with a variety of community groups to provide services to recent immigrants and others who feel out of place in a regular campus setting. In Sweden, the folk high school, Tollare, brings mentally challenged individuals together during the summer for life skills training.

### *6.6 In summary*

In a culture of lifelong learning, the responsibility for transmitting knowledge and developing skills cannot be restricted to formal educational institutions. Non-formal learning plays an equally important role, and requires recognition and validation.

The catalyst of a new lifelong learning policy is giving our English-speaking community an opportunity to encourage new partnerships that would enable formal and non-formal learning to complete and complement each other. Employers, professional associations, labour unions, media, cultural organizations, government agencies, community groups and many other facilitators of non-formal learning are as crucial to the big picture of lifelong learning as are our institutions of formal learning.

As full partners in a lifelong learning process, they can contribute to the enhancement of our formal educational structures. They can also offer new solutions—and new hope—where more formal systems cannot meet the population's needs.

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## 7. Conclusions

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This report has taken a preliminary look at some of the major issues related to lifelong learning that directly affect Québec's English-speaking community. It has also provided a forum for the Study Mission to share its experience of various European initiatives and developments that could shed new light on how lifelong learning is perceived in Québec. Lastly, it has outlined three fundamental paradigm shifts that are required to establish a culture of lifelong learning and suggested steps that could be taken to move closer to that goal.

### 7.1 Community-wide needs assessment and research capability

One of the most compelling findings of the Study Mission to date is the lack of knowledge currently available about the learning needs of Québec's English-speaking community, both in terms of their nature and extent. Existing education and training-related data (much of it from the MEQ and Statistics Canada) rarely separates out specific information on the English-speaking community. Moreover, existing information systems and databases are inadequate to address today's needs effectively, much less the needs of the future. An in-depth, research-based assessment of the English-speaking community's learning requirements, both present and future, would be a critical first step towards developing solutions based on learners' actual needs.

Québec's English-speaking community is fortunate in that it has a network of school boards, CEGEPs and universities that could serve as a model for minority groups around the world. Yet, how well are these institutions of formal learning meeting the diverse needs of the community today and how will they work for it in future?

To what extent is non-formal learning in the English language taking place in the workplace and in the community? How can this non-formal learning be recognized, measured and built upon?

What solutions to learning needs will best respond to a highly diverse community whose common bond is its use of the English language?

- Not all students are successful in their elementary and secondary education experiences by the time they reach age 16. How can the needs of young people, 16-24 years of age, who have not completed their basic education, best be met? How can they best be helped to develop their abilities and take their place as contributing members of society?

- Young adults who have not completed their basic education and have been out of school for 10 years or more may be particularly reluctant to return to school. How can their desire to learn be rekindled?
- Adults over 35 years of age who have not completed their basic education have increasing difficulty in a fast-changing, technology-driven workplace. What can be done to better identify and address their needs?
- The elderly are being called upon to participate more actively in the workplace, in their community and in the families of their children and grandchildren. What learning services do they require?
- Immigrants who arrived in Québec 25 or more years ago may not have had the opportunity to learn French or English well. Where is their place on the road to lifelong learning?
- Adult refugees from war-torn countries, for whom English is a second language, often have not had the opportunity to attend school as children. What English-language learning services do they require and what provisions can be made for them now and in the future?
- Schools and parents in the regions currently face enormous obstacles when trying to provide learning and support services to children with disabilities. What services will be available to them as disabled adults?
- First Nations' communities, many of whom consider themselves English-speaking, are seeking to find their place in 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada and Québec, even as they strive to preserve long-standing traditions and culture. How will their lifelong learning goals be met?
- English-speaking employees, entrepreneurs, owners of small businesses and the self-employed have a wide range of professional development and work-related training needs. How can resources be coordinated to serve them effectively?
- Advanced communication technologies, distance education and e-learning all hold promise for overcoming the lifelong learning challenges of a geographically dispersed population. How will this translate into reality for all members of the English-speaking community, particularly those in outlying regions?

These are just some of the questions that call for answers if a culture of lifelong learning is to take root within the English-speaking population. Finding solutions will require the development of up-to-date demographic profiles, appropriate information systems and accurate databases. There is an identified need to build the capacity for research and exchange of information on lifelong learning, with a specific focus on the English-speaking population.

The establishment in Québec of an Institute of Lifelong Learning, drawing on features of the Nordic Folk Academy in Sweden, the DIE (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung) in Germany or the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in England and Wales, has widespread support among all members of the Study Mission—whether they represent formal institutions of learning, policy-makers or community-based non-formal learning groups.

Such an institute could be a hybrid between a research centre and a practice-oriented centre for innovative ideas. It could also include a library, a meeting place for teachers, other professionals and even adult students to exchange ideas, do research, debate policy, share knowledge and information, etc. It could engage analysts to distil data of use to government, school boards, adult and vocational centres and other providers of adult learning. It could bring together researchers and practitioners in an environment designed to promote collaboration and innovation. It could reduce historical competition among primary partners and promote cooperation and partnerships among various stakeholders that would make knowledge on learning more accessible across the community. It would also raise public awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.

The potential benefits to practitioners, researchers and policy developers in improved practices and services have been clearly demonstrated in jurisdictions where such a facility exists.

## *7.2 A learner-centred service delivery network*

A second major finding of the Study Mission is that learning in general, and adult learning in particular, cannot be confined or restricted to the traditional institutions which were mandated to provide it. The ability of local communities and non-formal learning groups to generate quality learning opportunities, such as in Sweden and Ireland, is causing governments and local authorities to look for ways to validate these “external learnings” through certification. It is essential that any attempt to develop a learner-centred network of service delivery be based on a clear understanding of the role and value of all service providers and the formal recognition of prior and non-formal learning.

### *7.2.1 Stimulating the expression of demand*

Much of the international research relating to adult education has highlighted the difficulties many adults have in accessing training. In Québec in 2003, nearly 40% of available seats in adult general education were occupied by young students between the ages of 16 and 18. Reaching a larger proportion of the older adult population will require the provision of additional places and programs, as well as a reoriented understanding of what qualifies as adult learning and what should remain the responsibility of youth-sector schools.

Encouraging individuals to express their learning needs will also require a significant restructuring of the way in which information, guidance and counselling services are provided to both current and potential learners. For adults already registered in formal education or training programs, this means access to a full range of services whose delivery may well require innovative thinking and approaches to overcome current budgetary and other constraints. For a potential clientele, these services should be readily accessible within the community in high-visibility locales such as shopping centres or through the social service and health care networks.

### *7.2.2 Broadening the dialogue among all stakeholders*

By fostering a culture of lifelong learning, Québec is striving to create an environment conducive to individual, social and economic growth. This requires the cooperation and commitment of a wide variety of partners in education, government, industry, business and the community at large.

The work achieved so far by the Study Mission is but a prelude to a larger process of dialogue and partnership-building that needs to take place among all Québec's English-speaking stakeholders in lifelong learning.

An initial symposium in February 2004 brought together key English-speaking Quebeckers (see Appendix 3) in education, government and the community to examine the Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning, to become acquainted with the Study Mission and its observations and to formulate goals and priorities for further action from the perspectives of the participants. A further broadening of the discussion can serve to engage further all stakeholders in the creation of a lifelong learning culture within the English-speaking community—from educators and learners to representatives of business, industry, labour, as well as a wide cross-section of community groups and government departments and agencies.

By sharing their individual perspectives, all stakeholders can work together to create a vision, establish short- and long-term priorities and determine how those priorities can best be realized to ensure the English-speaking community's collective future.

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## 8. *Recommendations*

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The following recommendations are inspired by various ideas, models and initiatives the Study Mission delegates encountered in the European countries they visited. They also reflect the delegates' review of the pertinent literature and their collective experience working within the English-speaking sector of Québec's educational system.

In making these recommendations, the Study Mission delegates are fully aware of the action plans already in place to implement the Government policy on lifelong learning. Their intent is to suggest ways that these action plans can resonate with the English-speaking population by better taking into account certain distinctive aspects of English-speaking learners, their communities and institutions.

The recommendations have been grouped according to the three fundamental paradigm shifts the Study Mission has identified as essential to establishing and promoting a culture of lifelong learning.

### *8.1 First paradigm shift*

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#### ***Building a broader understanding and acceptance of learning as a continuum through every stage of life***

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- 8.1.1 Enshrine in law a right to basic education for all Quebeckers.
- 8.1.2 Undertake a broad-based consultation on lifelong learning—for example, an Estates General—with the English-speaking community to determine how well existing services are meeting its learning needs. Such a formal and comprehensive consultation would also encourage and enable citizens to participate in the definition and development of new services and novel approaches to promote and sustain a culture of lifelong learning.
- 8.1.3 Establish and maintain an up-to-date, region-by-region inventory of the various organizations and resources within the English-speaking community that are involved in advancing learning and providing learning services.
- 8.1.4 As a matter of policy, ensure that all government ministries and agencies collect, process and report demographic and other pertinent data related to lifelong learning along linguistic lines. This would provide the English-speaking community with essential information required for both short- and long-term planning.

- 8.1.5 Create an Institute of Lifelong Learning for the English-speaking community. Inspired by European models, this institute would serve as a centre for research, policy development, experimentation, training and the promotion of lifelong learning within the English-speaking community.
- 8.1.6 Develop integrated information, guidance, counselling and support services that would serve English-speaking learners of all ages throughout Québec. These services would not only provide information about available learning opportunities and career development, they would also advise individuals on the best route to meet their needs. These services could be provided within existing English-language institutions or within independent “walk-in”, “dial-in” or “storefront” services and would serve both registered students and the general English-speaking population.
- 8.1.7 Ensure the provision of appropriate support services for English-speaking adults with learning difficulties. In addition to making such professional services available within English-language institutions and community organizations, itinerant services for the regions should be considered.
- 8.1.8 Ensure that any province-wide initiatives to assess and recognize prior learning through an official certification process are made accessible to all Québec residents at the same time, regardless of language. Such certification should allow for portability of qualifications and permit greater mobility of individuals.
- 8.1.9 Develop a comprehensive record of an individual’s academic and work-related certifications and competencies, acquired in both formal and non-formal settings. This should be recognized by educational institutions at all levels as well as by industry and would be linked to the process of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.
- 8.1.10 Encourage all government agencies and publicly funded institutions to use positive and affirming language that favours the pursuit of lifelong learning. “Level of literacy” (not “illiteracy”) and “taking time out” (not “dropping out”) are examples of language that encourage, rather than discourage, learning.
- 8.1.11 Examine how European grassroots outreach programs and networks of community education facilitators could be adapted to recruit hard-to-reach learners in both urban and rural settings. Disseminate this information in both languages. Provide the necessary resources to support experimentation by different institutions, community groups or non-profit organizations throughout the province.
- 8.1.12 Finance the development and implementation of ongoing information, promotion and advertising campaigns designed for the English-speaking population that focus on the value of lifelong learning. This could best be done through

partnerships between government and the media, community groups and educational institutions.

## *8.2 Second paradigm shift*

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### ***Moving from a supply-driven to a learner-centred model of service delivery***

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- 8.2.1 Define a baseline for all services provided to adult learners within Québec. To ensure equity and quality, re-examine and adjust current funding formulas used to finance both formal and non-formal adult education programs and services. Ensure equal access to these services for both French- and English-speaking adult learners in every region of Québec.
- 8.2.2 English-speaking adults require a minimal level of competency in the French language to study, work and participate as active citizens in Québec. Adjust existing regulations to allow all English-speaking adults to access free French-language instruction to a level equivalent to basic education. Moreover, adults enrolled in vocational training programs should receive French-language instruction appropriate to their trade to a level that would allow them to succeed in the workplace.
- 8.2.3 To improve publicly funded lifelong learning services to adult learners, conduct a comprehensive review and revision of current collective agreements, regulations and policies in the education and training sectors. At present, these tend to reflect the needs of the youth sector, whereas the needs and realities of adult learners are quite different from those of children.
- 8.2.4 Introduce greater flexibility and variety as to how learning is accessed. Make existing programs and services more attractive and accessible through such initiatives as expanded use of e-learning, distance education, workplace learning, adult-friendly scheduling, program delivery through the media and the creation or promotion of community learning centres throughout the province.
- 8.2.5 Support the development of regional pilot projects to test the effectiveness of different delivery models in response to various learner needs. Support those models that prove to be most effective.
- 8.2.6 Provide enhanced financial support to adult learners through a variety of programs that could include loans, bursaries, scholarships, tax credits,

- transportation, daycare and elder-care allowances, training incentives for employers, etc.
- 8.2.7 Establish standards for initial training and certification of teachers, trainers and facilitators engaged in the fields of adult education and training. Such accreditation would require the holder to acquire and demonstrate an accepted standard of proficiency in terms of subject content, learning theory and methodology appropriate for adult learners.
  - 8.2.8 Develop conditions to require and facilitate ongoing professional development and continuing education activities for teachers, trainers and facilitators who work with adult learners.
  - 8.2.9 Ensure that adult learning facilities are attractive, accessible, close to public transportation and integrated with other community services. They should contain adult-appropriate furnishings and provide on-site services such as cafeterias, day care and ample parking. Existing facilities should be adapted to respect these criteria.
  - 8.2.10 Develop protocols that encourage partnerships among various organizations within government, industry, education and communities, with a view to pooling and sharing resources, both human and material, in support of adult learning.

### *8.3 Third paradigm shift*

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#### ***Acknowledging lifelong learning as a shared responsibility that demands the active involvement of partners in different areas of society***

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- 8.3.1 Create opportunities and conditions for dialogue and cooperation among educational institutions, community organizations, professional associations, service clubs, industry, labour, government, the media and other potential partners who could share in the development, promotion and delivery of lifelong learning within the English-speaking community.
- 8.3.2 Improve communication among various government departments and agencies to ensure greater policy coherence in support of lifelong learning and to eliminate barriers to access caused by contradictory elements of existing policies. Establish provincial consultation mechanisms that bring together educational institutions, community groups and government ministries and agencies to better support English-speaking learners.

- 8.3.3 Expand and improve links among educational institutions and providers at all levels to encourage greater recognition of the outcomes of learning, thereby facilitating the movement of learners between institutions and between the formal and non-formal sectors.

#### *8.4 Comprehensive recommendation*

- 8.4.1 Create a committee of partners to monitor the progress being made in implementing the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training, and specifically its effectiveness in achieving the stated policy objectives within the English-speaking population.

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**NOTE:**

*The complete collection of documentation and research material gathered by the Study Mission delegates is available for consultation through:*

**Centre for Literacy of Quebec, Inc/  
Le centre d'alphabétisation  
du Québec, inc.**  
3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 4B.1-6  
Montréal, Québec, Canada H3Z 1A4  
Tel: 514-931-8731, local 1415;  
Fax: 514-931-5181  
e-mail: [literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca](mailto:literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca)

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## 10. Glossary

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**AONTAS:** Acronym for the Irish National Association of Adult Education, based in Dublin, Ireland. This voluntary membership organization promotes the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education that is accessible and inclusive to all.

**CEGEP:** Acronym for “Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel”—a post-secondary institution for general and technical education in Québec. There are a total of 46 CEGEPs located throughout the province, and the vast majority of them are public institutions.

**CLSC:** Acronym for “**Centre local des services communautaires**”. A Québec-wide network of provincially funded community health care clinics that offer health and social services at the local level.

**Complementary services:** Services which form part of the educational mission of the school, other than instructional services. They include support services and student life services, such as academic and career counselling, remedial and special education services, student participation in school life, and speech therapy.

**DIE:** Acronym for “Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung,” the German Institute for Adult Education based in Bonn, Germany. The DIE acts as a link between academic theory and practical work in adult education.

**Demand-driven:** The user of the product expresses a demand which will determine what the supplier will provide; thus, in education, school boards will serve the varied needs of a diverse population based on what that population says it needs.

**Emploi-Québec: This Québec government department** is an integral part of the Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille. Emploi-Québec offers services for job placement and labour market information. In addition, it assists employment seekers in finding work and helps workers preserve jobs or acquire additional skills. These services include job-search assistance, development of employability profile, training, apprenticeship and professional qualifications and the retraining of laid-off workers. Emploi-Québec also refers some of its clients to adult education centres and vocational training centres, paying the school boards for these services on behalf of its clients.

(see: <http://emploi.quebec.net/anglais/index.htm>)

**European Union (EU):** An organisation of 25 European member states that have set up common institutions to which they delegate some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at the European level. Originally focussed on issues such as trade and the economy, the EU also deals

with many other subjects such as citizens' rights; ensuring freedom, security and justice; job creation; regional development; and environmental protection. (See: [http://europa.eu.int/abc/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/abc/index_en.htm))

**FÁS:** The Irish national Training and Employment Authority, which, through a network of training centres and employment offices, provides a wide range of services to the labour market in Ireland.

**Formal, non-formal, informal education/learning:** Formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left, e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues.

**Guidance-oriented approach to learning (GOAL):** The integration of theory and experiential activities related to career development and choice throughout the curriculum and in extra-curricular programs to allow students to discover various educational paths and become more familiar with the world of work. GOAL is implemented by a multi-disciplinary school-based team. (See <http://www.qesnrecit.qc.ca/goal/index.php>)

**ICT:** Abbreviation for Information and Communication Technologies

**Learner-centred:** The notion that the focus of education should be on the needs, skills, and interests of the learner rather than on the transmission of curriculum content; the goal is active exploration, construction, and learning rather than the passivity of lecture attendance and textbook reading. A learner-centred approach is often accompanied by a problem-based approach, where the problems are picked so as to fit the interests and needs of the learners.

**Lifelong learning:** The notion that learning is not restricted in time to formal schooling for the young but continues throughout life in various forms.

**Life-wide learning:** The notion that learning is not restricted to what is learned in formal institutions but can also take place in day-to-day activities in structured and unstructured settings.

**MEQ:** Acronym for “Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec,” the Government of Québec’s ministry of education.

**NALA:** Acronym for the National Adult Literacy Agency, based in Dublin, Ireland.

**NIACE:** Acronym for the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, based in Leicester, England and Cardiff, Wales.

**Nordic Folk Academy (NFA):** A centre dedicated to lifelong learning, located in Göteborg, Sweden. The NFA was established by the Ministries of Education of 10 Nordic countries to promote research, training, and the exchange of ideas among

teachers, researchers, policy-makers, and others involved in the promotion of lifelong learning. Scheduled to cease operations as of August 2004.

**“Open” and “closed” envelopes:** In the financing of school boards in Québec, budgets in the youth sector (elementary and high schools) are allocated based on the number of students registered in school each year: the total amount is “open”. Budgets for adult general education are predetermined or “closed”.

**OECD:** Acronym for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The OECD brings together 30 member countries to discuss, develop and refine economic and social policies. Its members produce two thirds of the world's goods and services. It works to co-ordinate domestic and international policies to help members and non-members deal with an increasingly globalized world. In recent years the OECD has moved beyond a focus on its member countries to offer its analytical expertise and accumulated experience to developing and emerging market economies.

(See: <http://www.oecd.org/>)

**PLAR:** Acronym for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

**SOFAD:** Acronym for “Société de la formation à distance”. A Québec-based agency for development and distribution of distance-education materials.

**Soft skills:** Skills or competencies relating to personal and interpersonal capabilities or characteristics rather than technical mastery of subject material. Examples can include ability to co-operate and work in groups, ability to multi-task, and skills in areas such as communication, time management, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and stress management.

**Supply-driven:** the supplier of the product determines what will be available on the market; thus, in education, a school board will decide on its own which courses it wants to offer and how to allocate its resources.

**UNESCO:** Acronym for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A specialized UN agency established in 1945 that promotes international cooperation among its 190 member states and six associate members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

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## *11. Credits*

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### **COORDINATION**

Walter Duszara  
Direction de la formation générale des adultes  
Ministère de l'Éducation

### **WRITING AND PRODUCTION TEAM**

Walter Duszara  
Direction de la formation générale des adultes  
Ministère de l'Éducation

Laurene Bennett  
Communications Arpeggia

### **CONTRIBUTORS**

Ruth Ahern  
Sam Boskey  
Noel Burke  
Viviane Croubalian  
Cosmo Della Rocca  
Wayne Goldthorp  
Barbara Goode  
Riva Heft  
Kelly Howarth  
Steven Jordan  
Gloria Keenan  
Marzia Michielli  
Marion Roberts  
Linda Shoheit

### **LINGUISTIC REVISION**

Direction de la production en langue anglaise  
Services à la communauté anglophone  
Ministère de l'Éducation

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## *Appendix 1: Study Mission Delegates*

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The 15 delegates who make up the MEQ Study Mission are directly involved in the field of adult learning in Québec and have a particular focus on the needs of the English-speaking population. They represent a cross-section of organizations, institutions and associations that promote and provide services to adult learners.

<i>Ministère de l'Éducation</i>		
Noel Burke	Assistant Deputy Minister	Responsible for educational services to the English-speaking community.
Sam Boskey	Education Specialist, Services à la communauté anglophone, Direction des politiques et des projets	Responsible for adult general education services within the MEQ's Services à la communauté anglophone
Barbara Goode	Education Specialist, Services à la communauté anglophone, Direction des politiques et des projets	Responsible for vocational training services within the MEQ's Services à la communauté anglophone
Walter Duszara	Special Advisor to the Director of Adult General Education Services Direction de la formation générale des adultes	Responsible for developing strategies for the implementation of the Québec Policy on Lifelong Learning for the English-speaking population; Study Mission Coordinator.
<i>School Boards</i>		
Ruth Ahern	Director of Adult General and Vocational Education Services, Western Quebec School Board	The Western Québec School Board serves a rural and urban population over a large and widely dispersed territory.
Viviane Croubalian	Director of Adult General and Vocational Education Services, Lester-B-Pearson School Board	The Lester-B.-Pearson School Board serves a largely suburban population.
Cosmo Della Rocca	Assistant Director, Adult General Education Services, English Montreal School Board	The English-Montréal School Board serves a multi-cultural urban population.
Wayne Goldthorp	Assistant Director General and Director of Adult	The New Frontiers School Board serves a suburban, rural and Native population and

	General and Vocational Education Services, New Frontiers School Board	provides a wide range of vocational and general education programs
Gloria Keenan	Centre Director, Place Cartier Adult Education Centre, Lester-B-Pearson School Board	This adult general education centre responds to a wide range of learners: those completing their high school diplomas; those completing college prerequisites; second-language learners; and literacy students.
Marzia Michielli	Centre Director, Rosemount Technology Centre, English Montreal School Board	This vocational training centre offers a broad range of vocational training programs.
Marion Roberts	Elected school board commissioner – Lester-B.-Pearson School Board	Representative of the Québec English School Boards Association, with aspecial interest in adult learning and vocational training.
<b><i>Universities</i></b>		
Riva Heft	Professor, Concordia University	Long-time faculty member – certificate program for adult education teachers; member of the Québec Advisory Board on English Education.
Steven Jordan	Professor, McGill University, Faculty of Education	McGill University offers initial training (B.Ed.) and continuing education for teachers and adult educators.
<b><i>Literacy Organizations</i></b>		
Linda Shohet	Executive Director, The Centre for Literacy of Québec	The Centre for Literacy provides information and support to literacy practitioners, researchers and policy-makers in schools, community groups and the workplace throughout Québec and Canada.
<b><i>Associations</i></b>		
Kelly Howarth	President, Québec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL)	QAAL provides information, training and support to adult educators in schools, community groups and the workplace throughout Québec. It advocates for adult learning from the perspective of Québec’s English-speaking population.

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## Appendix 2: Study Mission Itinerary – May 10-24, 2003

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<i>DATE</i>	<i>LOCATIO</i>	<i>AGENDA</i>
May 10-11, 2003		Depart Montréal; arrive Dublin
May 12, 2003	Dublin, Ireland	Briefing by <i>Berni Brady</i> , Director, <i>Irish Association for Adult Learning (AONTAS)</i> . Evaluation of the <i>White Paper on Adult Education</i> “Learning for Life.”
		Briefing by <i>Pat O’Toole and John McNamee</i> on “Education and Vocational Training in Ireland” at <i>FÁS, the national Training and Employment Authority Training Centre in Loughlinstown, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin</i> .
May 13, 2003	Dublin, Ireland	Meeting with <i>Dr. Anna Murphy</i> at the <i>National Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (NQAI)</i> ; Briefing with <i>NQAI’s Department of Education and Science</i>
		Meeting with <i>Pauline Gildea, Principal Officer, Department of Education and Science</i> . Briefing on the evolution of the Irish adult education system and Ireland’s efforts related to Lifelong Learning
		Briefing on “Literacy in the Workplace” by <i>Helen Ryan</i> , Information Officer at the <i>National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)</i>
May 14, 2003	Göteborg, Sweden	Briefing on “Adult Education in the Nordic Countries” by <i>Carina Abreu</i> , Director of the Nordic Folk Academy, <i>Arild Mikkelsen (Norway)</i> - director of a Folk High School, <i>Sari Virtanen (Finland)</i> – researcher on non-formal adult education.
	Möln dal, Sweden	Visit to an adult education centre. Briefings from <i>Bengt Odlöw</i> , Mayor, <i>Bo-Gören Dahlberg</i> , Adult Centre Director, <i>Björn Sandmark</i> , Adult Centre Administrator, <i>Danuta Ciasnocha</i> , Director of Studies and Centre Staff on governance and operations.
May 15, 2003	Stockholm, Sweden	Delegates meeting – debriefing, synthesis, and group work
May 16, 2003	Stockholm, Sweden	Tour of <i>Tollare Folk High School</i> and meeting with <i>Eva Önn esjö</i> , Director.
		Briefing on “Government Initiatives for Adult Education in Sweden” by <i>Anders Franzén</i> , General Director, <i>Ministry of Education, Division for Student Financial Support and Adult Learning</i>
May 17, 2003	Stockholm, Sweden	Briefing on “Non-formal learning systems in Sweden” and “Learning with a difference” by <i>Britten Månsson-Wallin</i> , Director, <i>Swedish National Council of Adult Education</i>
May 18, 2003	Paris, France	Delegates meeting – debriefing, synthesis, and group work
May 19, 2003	Paris, France	Meeting at <i>OECD Headquarters</i> with <i>Patrick Werquin</i> and <i>Richard Sweet</i> . Themes: “Overview of recent developments in Lifelong Learning in OECD member states” and “Information, Counselling, Guidance and Support Services in OECD member states”

May 20, 2003	Bonn, Germany	Meeting with <i>Ekkehard Nuissl von Rein</i> , Director General, <i>German Institute for Adult Education (DIE)</i> ) and <i>Brigitte Bosche, International Relations, Daniela Harlinghausen, Researcher Dr. Rüdiger Preisser, Researcher, Planning &amp; Development</i>
		Briefings by Associate Deputy Minister and 5 colleagues at <i>Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMPF)</i> and at <i>Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)</i> . Themes: Challenges faced in education; Financing - state/federal jurisdictions; Financing – paid vacation leave, workplace education
May 21, 2003	London, England	Briefing by <i>Tom Schuller, University of London, Birkbeck College</i> , Dean, Faculty of Continuing Education, <i>Research Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning</i> . Theme: “Wider benefits of learning research in the context of Lifelong Learning”
		Tour of <i>The City Lit</i> and meeting with <i>Margaret Davey</i> , Principal. Theme: “Adult Learning at The City Lit—A provider’s perspective on policy”
		<i>Christine King, NIACE President</i> , “From Coronation Street to Oxford: Whatever next?” Fifth Philip Jones Memorial Lecture at the <i>London Voluntary Resource Centre</i>
May 22, 2003	London, England	Meeting at <i>Délégation générale du Québec à Londres</i> with <i>Céline Gagnon</i> , Public Affairs attaché, <i>Denis Turcotte</i> , Chargé d’affaires
		Tour of <i>two vocational centres: Vauxhall, Peter Harris, Assistant Principal</i> , (construction crafts, engineering and media) and <i>Brixton</i> (computing, business administration and basic skills)
		Briefing by <i>Ian Ashman</i> , Principal, <i>Lambeth College</i> . Theme: “Working with adults and how to widen participation in education”
		Visit to Heathrow Airport and presentation by <i>Christine Mills, BAA, Heathrow Learning and Development Advisor</i> of the <i>Heathrow Basic Skills Project</i> for Heathrow employees.
		Delegates meeting – debriefing, synthesis, and group work
May 23, 2003	Leicester, England	Briefing at <i>National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)</i> by <i>Alan Tuckett</i> , Director, and <i>Alastair Thomson</i> . Theme: “Overview of Adult Education”
		Briefing by <i>Sturla Bjerkaker, Norwegian Associate for Adult Education</i> regarding Adult Learners’ Week
		Briefing by <i>Sue Waddington</i> – Theme: European networks.
		Meeting with <i>Sica Martinez</i> of <i>NIACE</i> . Theme: “Adult Learners’ Week”
		Meeting with <i>Jan Eldred</i> and <i>Kate McGimpsey</i> of <i>NIACE</i> . Theme: “Informal Learning/Widening Participation”
		Health and Literacy – <i>seminar with Hilary Webster, Fiona Aldridge, Christine Nightingale, Peter Lavender, Kathryn James.</i>
		<i>Alistair Clark</i> presentation on ICT implementation in the United Kingdom
		<i>Philip Edmeades, Youth and Lifelong Learning Strategy, Department for Education and Skills</i> presentation on the Theme: <b>LIFELONG LEARNING AND ADULT SKILLS IN ENGLAND</b>
May 24, 2003		Depart London, arrive Montréal.

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## *Appendix 3: Registered Symposium Participants*

*“Lifelong learning: a passion for life”*

*February 13-14, 2004*

*Concordia University*

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### *CEGEP*

*Nadia Bissada*  
Dawson College

*Alan Gaudet*  
John Abbott College –  
Continuing Education.

*Mark Wallace*  
Champlain College – Saint-Lambert

### *COMMUNITY GROUPS*

Neil Burdon  
Châteauguay Valley English  
Speaking Peoples Association  
(CVESPA)

*Peggy Brimsacle*  
Committee for Anglophone Social  
Action (CASA)/Gaspé CEGEP

*Eunice de Gruchy*  
Québec Association for Adult  
Learning

*Sam Ephraim*  
Alliance Québec

*Marielle Green*  
Québec Association for Adult  
Learning

*Kim Harrison*  
Committee for Anglophone Social  
Action (CASA)

*Gillian Keefe*  
Centre for Community  
Organizations (COCO)

*Sharon Leslie*  
NDG Community Council/  
Concordia University

*Peter MacGibbon*  
Québec Learners' Network

*Irene Menear*  
Thomas More Institute/  
Atwater Library

*Jane Needles*  
Québec Drama Federation

*Anne Usher*  
NDG Community Council

*Pat Waters*  
Québec Federation of Home and  
School Associations. Inc.

*David Wright*  
Québec Community Newspapers  
Association

GOVERNMENT

*Alain Mercier*  
Ministère de l'Éducation

*Lorraine Séguin*  
Ministère de l'Emploi, de la  
Solidarité sociale et de la Famille

HEALTH

*Jo-Ann Jones*  
St. Mary's Hospital Centre

LITERACY

*Gary Briand*  
Gaspésie Literacy Council

*Lianne Calvert-Shefler*  
RECLAIM

*Marilee De Lombard*  
Laubach Literacy of  
Canada/Québec

*Danielle Hay*  
Laurentian Literacy Council

*Valerie McConnell*  
Châteauguay Valley Literacy  
Council

*Patti L. Moore*  
Québec Literacy Working Group  
Eastern Québec Learning Centre

*Nina Nichols*  
South Shore Reading Council

*Martha Shufelt*  
Yamaska Literacy Council

MISSION DELEGATES

*Ruth Ahern*  
Western Québec School Board

*Sam Boskey*  
Ministère de l'Éducation

*Noel Burke*  
Ministère de l'Éducation

*Viviane Croubalian*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board

*Cosmo Della Rocca*  
English-Montréal School Board

*Walter Duszara*  
Ministère de l'Éducation

*Wayne Goldthorp*  
New Frontiers School Board

*Barbara Goode*  
Ministère de l'Éducation

*Riva Heft*  
Concordia University

*Kelly Howarth*  
Québec Association for Adult  
Learning

*Steven Jordan*  
McGill University

*Gloria Keenan*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board  
Place Cartier Adult Centre

*Marzia Michielli*  
English-Montréal School Board  
Rosemount Technology Centre

*Marion Roberts*  
Québec English School Boards  
Association (QESBA)

*Linda Shohet*  
The Centre for Literacy of Quebec

OTHERS

*Laurene Bennett*  
Communications Arpeggia

*Hugh Maynard*  
QUANGLO Communications &  
Consulting

*Susan Oliver*  
La Société GRICS-BIM

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

*Sima Brockstein*  
Québec Business Teachers'  
Association

*Lorne Flavelle*  
Canadian Counselling  
Association

*Donal Irving*  
Québec Provincial Association  
of Teachers

SCHOOL BOARDS

*Barbara Arzooni*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board  
Gordon Robertson Career Centre

*Gail Atkinson*  
New Frontiers School Board  
Harmony Elementary

*Kathleen Barnett*  
Western Québec School Board

*Louise Caron*  
Eastern Townships School Board

*Barbara Freeston*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board

*Jennifer Hale*  
Western Québec School Board  
Western Québec Career Centre

*Annie Neeposh Iserhoff*  
Cree School Board

*Veronica Johnson*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board  
Place Cartier Adult Centre

*Antonio Lacroce*  
English-Montréal School Board

*Hélène Leboeuf*  
Western Québec School Board  
Hull Adult Education Centre

*Stephen Lessard*  
Riverside School Board

*Robert. T. Mills*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board

*Ron Patterson*  
English-Montréal School Board

*William Pollock*  
Sir-Wilfrid-Laurier School Board

*Roberto Raes*  
English-Montréal School Board

*Marjorie Reddick*  
New Frontiers School Board

*J. Kenneth Robertson*  
New Frontiers School Board

*Giordano Rosa-del-Vecchio*  
Sir-Wilfrid-Laurier School Board

*John Ryan*  
New Frontiers School Board

*Anais Trudel*  
Lester-B.-Pearson School Board

*Bruce Willett*  
Central Québec School Board

UNIVERSITY

*Paul Bouchard*  
Concordia University

*Arpi Hamalian*  
Concordia University

*Anthony Paré*  
McGill University

*Murray Sang*  
Concordia University  
Continuing Education

