



Community action

A crucial contribution
to the exercise of citizenship
and the social development of Québec

The representatives of the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome and the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire were instrumental in drafting the community action recognition and support policy.

COORDINATOR:

Daniel Jean

Director general of the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec

WRITER:

Ginette Drouin Busque

CONTRIBUTORS:

Hélène Boivin

Martine Pichette

Patrick Brunelle

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MESSAGE

FROM THE MINISTER

I am very pleased to present the government's community action recognition and support policy entitled *Community action: A crucial contribution to the exercise of citizenship and the social development of Québec*. This national policy is a unique initiative that reflects the progressive values of Québec society. It is the culmination of a round of discussions that enabled us to better understand the role of the community sector in our modern society and better define the kind of collaboration that can occur between this sector and government bodies.

In providing Québec with a community action recognition and support policy, we are affirming the place of community organizations at the centre of the renewal of Québec's social policies. Indeed, it is a way of fully recognizing their role in the social and economic development of Québec.

The importance of the community sector has kept pace with the secularization of Québec society, political choices in the field of education, social rights, and economic support for people with low incomes, and the elimination of social exclusion. Its presence in the public arena and the daily lives of thousands of citizens has boosted its visibility and clout. Today, nearly 5,000 community organizations have various links with the Québec government.

Numerous decision-making bodies can now draw upon the expertise and vision of the community sector in matters of social justice, solidarity, full participation in society, and, most importantly, the quality of life and well-being of our society as a whole. The community sector has chosen to use this leverage to promote highly original initiatives through unique community-based approaches and goals.

Through the adoption of this policy, the government recognizes two essential criteria: respect for the independence of community organizations in the many social roles they are asked to accept and the need for adequate support of community action in citizenship.

This policy is based on experience, serious thinking and constructive exchanges with community organizations and offers guidelines for government initiatives to assist the community sector in consolidating its action and sphere of influence. It involves a revision of government funding practices, particularly to build structured bases, accountability, openness and confidence and thus maintain free and voluntary lines of communication that are sound and productive between government and the community sector and, at the same time, support the overall mission of community organizations.



*To introduce such a policy
is to unequivocally position
community organizations
at the core of the renewal
of social practices in Québec
and to fully acknowledge
their role in Québec's social
and economic development.*

The government commitments enshrined in this policy will only be meaningful if they are in keeping with the values espoused by the volunteers and activists within community organizations. Here I am thinking in particular of the thousands of volunteers, most of them women, whose commitment and dedication far exceed the simple call of duty.

I am convinced that with this policy, the Québec Government is laying the important groundwork for the recognition and support of community action. The policy sets the stage for continued dialogue and the development of promising new practices.



Nicole Léger
Minister for the Elimination of Poverty and Exclusion

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INTRODUCTION

From the first grassroots groups to emerge from the citizens movement of the 1960s, right up to today, the community sector has always sprung to the defence of fundamental values such as the need to be rooted in the community, the duty to take local action to eliminate exclusion, and the importance of dynamic democratic and associative approaches. The preservation of these characteristics hinges on the ability of organizations to retain their independence and freedom of action with regard to funding agencies and the State. This is why the community sector has repeatedly asserted its desire to remain autonomous and independent with regard to the government.

The first demands for government recognition of community action go back to the 1970s and have resurfaced regularly, especially through the independent community action movement.

Québec's development over the past four decades has made the State a vital partner of the community movement and its primary source of funding. Nearly \$471 million¹ is currently earmarked for support of community organizations and for the purchase of services offered within the community sector.

In 1995, to underscore its will to formally recognize the community sector's contribution to the development of our society, the Québec government created the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA), or secretariat for independent community action, as well as the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome², or independent community action assistance fund. That same year, the government took another step forward by creating SACA's Comité adviseur de l'action communautaire

autonome, an advisory committee composed of representatives from the various independent community action sectors³. In 1998, an interdepartmental committee was formed to help SACA draft a community action recognition and funding policy⁴.

As part of the recent reforms in health and social services, manpower, education, family assistance, and local and regional development, the government has decided to create an environment that is even more conducive to the development of community resources.

The present policy is a continuation of these initiatives. In response to the demands of the community movement, it is aimed at genuine recognition of community action with a view to social development and the elimination of exclusion. This is the government's way of acknowledging the important social and economic contribution of the thousands of community organizations throughout Québec, as well as the contribution and commitment of the many salaried workers and volunteers to the betterment of society. The government has also pledged to do whatever needs to be done to preserve and develop the dynamism of this sector.

While the purpose of the policy is to increase awareness of and promote and support community action in the broad sense, it also expressly targets independent community action stakeholders. Through the structural development it hopes to achieve, it also includes those people who benefit from the specialized services and initiatives provided by the sector, a sector that contributes on a daily basis to building a Québec society that is more just and more heedful of the needs of individuals and communities.

1. In addition to this \$471 million, community organizations have access to various other monies through funds such as the Fonds de développement de la Métropole, the Fonds de lutte contre la pauvreté par la réinsertion au travail, the Fonds Jeunesse, and shelter funding, etc., through regional budgets (regional development councils, economic and community development corporations), and through ministers' and MNAs' budgets earmarked for community projects in their ridings.

2. The law under which the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome was created provides for the Société des loteries du Québec to contribute 5% of its annual net profits from the operation of State casinos and the management of associated businesses.

3. See Appendix 2 for a list of the members of this advisory committee.

4. See Appendix 3 for a list of the members of this interdepartmental committee.



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The policy also calls on government departments and agencies, as well as on the various public and private sector partners that support these organizations and are associated with them, to play a decisive role.

The orientations the Québec government has chosen take into account the demands expressed by the community sector, in particular those of the independent community action movement in 1996 and 1998, as well as deliberations by researchers in the field. They are also based on a number of recommendations made by Gérald Larose, further to the public consultations he chaired on the initial policy proposal.

The policy proposal entitled *Le milieu communautaire : un acteur essentiel au développement du Québec* (The community sector: a key player in Québec's development) was tabled on April 5, 2000, and interested parties were invited to comment on the draft document. SACA processed 571 briefs, and nearly 2,000 people attended the 29 sessions held in Québec's 17 regions from August 24 to September 22, 2000, during which over 700 individuals and community organization representatives took their turn at the podium.

The new proposal takes this invaluable input into consideration in order to better define the types of collaboration that can occur between the community sector and government agencies and to more accurately pinpoint the kind of support the government can provide.

MAIN AREAS OF PROGRESS IN RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ACTION

This new policy statement is a major milestone in the development of Québec. It lays out the principles that should guide government efforts to help the community sector consolidate its endeavours and expand its influence and maps out specific areas where progress has been made in recognizing and supporting community action.

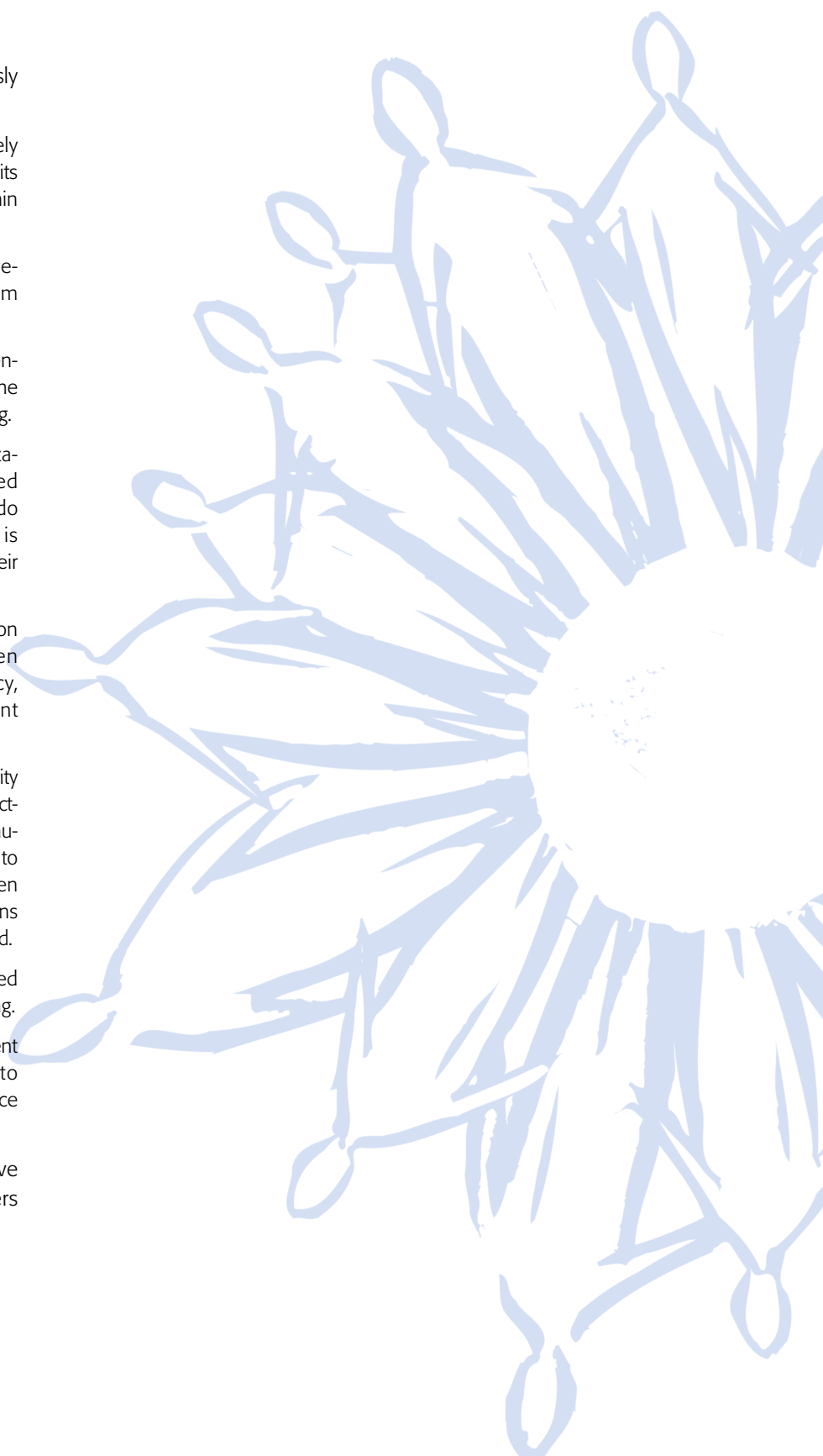
MAIN AREAS OF PROGRESS

- The representational role of community organizations, their influence and their expertise are formally recognized. Community sector representatives will therefore be invited to take part in major forums where the mechanisms and means for consulting on departmental priorities will be established.
- The areas of cooperation with the public sector are clarified to protect the missions, approaches, initiatives, and services specific to the community sector.
- Volunteering is acknowledged, encouraged, and supported and will be taken into account when evaluating the needs of organizations and the services they offer.

• Independent community action is expressly targeted and cuts across the entire policy:

- > Certain policy objectives focus exclusively on independent community action and its defining characteristics are included within the scope of the policy.
- > The criteria that broadly distinguish independent community organizations from community organizations are enshrined.
- > Respect for the characteristics of independent community action is included in the guidelines for awarding government funding.
- > Independent community action organizations are entitled to funding allocated according to the kind of work they do in the community and the funding is based on an approach that supports their overall missions.
- > The mission of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome has been refocused to highlight rights advocacy, a fundamental aspect of independent community action.
- > The crucial role of independent community action organizations is recognized and protected and the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome will make it possible to maintain the necessary distance between independent rights advocacy organizations and the government departments concerned.
- > Accountability requirements will be adapted for independent community action funding.
- > The characteristics specific to independent community action will be taken into account in determining how performance evaluations are carried out.

Detailed explanations of all of the above points will be given in the three chapters that follow.



1. RECOGNIZING C O M M U N I T Y A C T I O N

1.1 PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY ACTION

The community action movement is made up of organizations that meet specific criteria. Not only do they have to satisfy requirements concerning their non-profit status, but they also have to be associative and democratic and pursue a social mission particular to them.

Québec attaches great importance to community action as a vehicle for social participation. In Europe and other parts of North America, community action is not given any special attention because the tendency is to concentrate on the third sector as a whole.

1.1.1 THE THIRD SECTOR ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

The Québec government considers community action organizations and their contribution as a separate and distinct reality. However, in Europe and the remainder of North America this recognition does not exist per se. Community organizations, foundations, cooperatives, economic and community development corporations, social economy enterprises, and volunteer associations are lumped together under the headings "third sector," "social economy," and "voluntary sector."

Countries interested in the third sector emphasize its openness and pluralism, but nonetheless see it mainly as a service provider. This means that international research tends to examine the third sector as a whole and therefore tells us little about community organizations and their particular experiences.

Despite this gap, researchers at Johns Hopkins University⁵ have touched on community organization-related issues as part of their examination of the third sector around the world, including topics such as relations between the State and community organizations and the conditions that foster the growth of these organizations. Some of these conditions have captured the interest of the Québec government:

- Maintaining a certain distance between the State and the organizations.
- Respecting the independence of the organizations so that they can influence how the programs of interest to them are crafted; making program guidelines sufficiently inclusive; and allowing organizations to maintain their right to develop the structure and content of the services they offer.
- Promoting diversified funding, that is, funding that does not rely completely on the State. This is one of the best ways for an organization to have a positive working relationship with the government.



Québec attaches great importance to community action as a vehicle for social participation.

5. Salomon Lester M. and Anheier Helmut K. (1994), *The emerging sector: An overview*, The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies, Baltimore.

Researchers have concluded that the defining characteristics of the third sector are its ability to respond to citizens' needs by providing services with a human face and its role as a forum for the expression of citizenship.

The Johns Hopkins research also examined the policies some countries have adopted regarding the influence organizations exert in their relations with the State.

For example, the German government has recognized the organization that represents the Free Welfare Association as the voice of the third sector. This organization is systematically consulted on all social legislation. The main networks are also ensured of being consulted in crafting policies they will eventually implement.

In the United States, access to the corridors of power basically depends on how strong a particular lobby group happens to be. The political role of community organizations is therefore very fragmented and not officially recognized.

The government of the United Kingdom is mainly seeking greater coherence and transparency. Its strategy is to encourage organizations to support government objectives and program goals.

The specificity of third-sector services in relation to public services has also caught the attention of researchers. Currently, in Europe as well as in North America, there is a marked trend to involve third-sector organizations, but primarily with a view to ensuring that public and third-sector services complement each other. Some governments have adopted (or are in the process of drafting) agreements between the State and the sectors concerned that sets out mutual commitments aimed at achieving common goals.

Closer to home, the current president of the United States intends to support religious communities in order to assist the disadvantaged members of society.

For its part, the Canadian government, through specific programs (PACE, SCPI, etc.), grants non-recurring funding for achieving specific objectives tailored to a specific clientele. The federal government has also taken steps to reach an agreement with the voluntary sector and set in place evaluation procedures.

The Québec government has chosen break with the paradigm of the third sector as a single homogenous unit and with certain approaches used elsewhere in the world. Thus, at the request of various organizations in civil society, the government has acknowledged that independent community organizations, social economy enterprises, and cooperatives are separate entities.

The government of Québec also differs in the effort it makes to respect the independence of the organizations it works with and by funding practices whose goal is not to systematically ensure service complementarity or the creation of partnerships. The Québec government is the main source of funding for community organizations. In fact, it contributes over 80% of their revenues. Québec's stance on diversified funding is therefore markedly different than that of Europe, the United States, and, for that matter, in some cases, Canada. This last point highlights the importance of Québec's policy on the recognition and support of community action.

1.1.2 COMMUNITY ACTION IN QUÉBEC

Québec's history and evolution have been strongly marked by the broad range of community-based activities. Over the years, community organizations have become a significant part of our social structure. Removed from political currents and labour affiliations, the community sector contributes substantially to the strength and originality of Québec society. It also fosters and promotes democracy and social and economic development.

Community organizations represent that portion of our social infrastructure that is distinct from the State's public services and that is citizen-based and whose purpose is to improve the daily lives of Quebecers. These versatile community organizations not only provide insights into new issues, but also foster the development of new approaches and experiments with varied and innovative forms of intervention. To preserve this asset, we must respect their independence and ensure they are sufficiently distanced from the State.

There are an estimated 8,000 community organizations in Québec. Nearly 4,000 are part of the independent community group movement, that is, their community activities are geared towards social change and development. They are involved in efforts to improve the social fabric and quality of life, which often means the fight against poverty, discrimination and exclusion. It is a citizens movement that takes a special interest in the living conditions of all members of society and the quality of public services, a movement that demands to be consulted and have more of a say in the decisions made by those in power.

Then there are rights advocacy groups and coalitions that take a stand on public issues and militate in various causes. Their contribution provides impetus for social change, mobilizes citizens, and elicits responses from the State, while favouring consultation and discussions based on transparency as the means of resolving situations that could lead to exclusion.

Québec is in lock-step with the international movement to support the emergence of the third sector. Certain measures to consolidate the social economy and cooperative sectors, among others, already exist. However, through its recognition and support policy, the Government of Québec seeks to innovate and make its mark by introducing special mechanisms for acknowledging and better supporting community action, including independent community action.

While the project- or objective-based funding approach used in Europe and other parts of North America has produced substantial results and at the same time contributed to the well-being of the general public, it does not promote the full emergence of innovative citizenship practices in the environment where problems are directly experienced. The Government of Québec therefore intends to provide specific support for this movement for social change through community development and to play a leading role through a funding mechanism distinct from service agreements.

To sum up, this move to consolidate, which is rooted in a vision of Québec's social development, involves both the funding of community organizations as well as their participation in debates on the public issues that the government wishes to address.

The community movement contributes substantially to the strength and originality of Québec society. It also fosters and promotes democracy and social and economic development.

Québec seeks to...make its mark by introducing special mechanisms for acknowledging and better supporting community action, including independent community action.

1.2 GOALS OF THE POLICY

Québec is increasingly aware of the importance of social development as a catalyst for change in its society. The contribution of the private and labour sectors, as well as that of the political, institutional, municipal, and community stakeholders, fosters the growth of active and constructive social participation of communities.

Generally, the purpose of the policy is to recognize the contribution of the community sector to the social development of Québec. It clarifies the relationships the government has or wishes to develop with the community action sector in the broad sense and, more specifically, with the independent community action sector. It presents all facets of the support the government intends to provide to the organizations in order to promote the consolidation of their initiatives and services as well as innovation in the approaches that characterize their endeavours.

The general objectives of the policy are to

- Acknowledge, promote, and support community action in the broad sense, that is, in its entirety, by taking into account its contribution to the elimination of poverty and exclusion, social development, and the development of active citizenship
- Acknowledge, support, and consolidate independent community action and its natural field of application, namely, community education and social change, support for participation in the democratic process, development of a global vision of issues, the exercise of active citizenship, and entrenchment in the community
- Ensure the consolidation of community action through general goals and national guidelines that will apply to the public authorities concerned, nationally, regionally, and locally
- Recognize and support volunteering within community organizations

The goals regarding relations between the government and the community sector are to

- Forge ties based on trust, mutual respect, and transparency
- Promote consideration of the expertise and diagnostic abilities of community organizations in determining the needs of citizens and the action to be taken in response to these needs
- Ensure that community action organizations can fully play their rightful role, while respecting their independence, mission, goals, *modus operandi*, approaches, and management methods

The goals regarding government support of community action are to

- Fine-tune the response to emerging issues and citizens' needs by supporting initiatives aimed at individual assistance, social innovation, and social participation in the community sector
- Reinforce and give a boost to the initiatives of independent community action organizations by fostering their stability and sustainability through funding tailored to their characteristics and overall approach
- Consolidate community organization action by introducing mechanisms that allow an array of financial links to be established with the government
- Acquire more in-depth knowledge of community action, notably its contribution to social development and the exercise of citizenship in Québec

1.3 BASES OF THE POLICY

All commitments and measures proposed in this policy are based on the following imperatives:

- Respect for the independence of community organizations
- Recognition of community action as a citizenship and community development tool
- Recognition of community action as an important tool in Québec's social development
- Recognition of the role, contribution, and rightful place of women in the development of community action
- Recognition of the community sector as a valued and innovative source of initiatives, activities, and services for the general public

1.3.1 RESPECT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATIONS: A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR ALL PARTIES

No matter what form the community movement has assumed over time, one common strand runs through its history—its determination to preserve its independence and initiative with respect to funding agencies and the State. Independence requires that a crucial distance be maintained between the community movement and the State in order to create a genuinely dynamic relationship in which the community sector safeguards its identity and retains a certain leeway in its ties with the government.

A number of public policy analysts in Québec and around the world have already drawn attention to the size of the challenge involved in abiding by this principle. In Québec, despite some remaining stumbling blocks, it cannot be denied that major strides have been made in setting out guidelines for this principle and exploring practices for promoting its application, some of which are more structural in nature and are making headway in the machinery of government. A case in point is the recognition of the fundamental characteristics of the independence of community organizations in section 335 of the Act respecting health services and social services:

"Every community organization which receives a subsidy under this Title shall be free to define its orientations, policies and approaches. (R.S.Q., c. 4.2)"

Respect for the independence of community organizations is based in part on the fact that community action is an internal response to the needs of the community itself, a process that includes determining these needs and, in turn, implementing the appropriate means for addressing them.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC RECOGNIZES THIS FACT AND IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

> Ensuring respect
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1.3.2 COMMUNITY ACTION: A CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Civic education and active citizenship are emerging values that call on individuals to do their part in crafting common goals aimed at building a better future while making the present richer and more stimulating.

Because community action takes place in a setting that is real and dynamic, it personifies these values. It unites people interested in working together for a common cause. Through community action, citizens are empowered to change the course of events and transform their shared aspirations into a vision of the common good as a genuine expression of their commitment to be involved in their communities. It is an embodiment of individual and collective responsibility for improving the quality of life of every member of society.

People who invest time and energy in community action help strengthen the social ties within their communities. They are eager to speak out and to intervene actively in resolving problem situations. They are society's critics, and the community sector is a place where they can reflect on society and effect change through genuine, hands-on participation.

In a word, community action generates social participation, either as collective exercises in a structured environment (organizations, associations, coalitions, etc.) or more informally through individual initiatives.

The government recognizes the importance of community action and, notably, of volunteering, as a way for individuals to make a commitment to their community and to develop citizenship. In addition, the government, through various policies and action, encourages the implementation of strategies for mobilizing local players around the cause of community development.

1.3.3 COMMUNITY ACTION: AN IMPORTANT AGENT IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF QUÉBEC

Although the Québec government has a crucial role to play in social development planning, there are other stakeholders, including its partners from various spheres of activity, and factors, such as the interaction of community organizations, that also contribute. As the Forum du développement social report points out—

“Everywhere in Québec, the current contribution of community organizations to social development is acknowledged. But in the same breath, we say that, under the right conditions, the organizations could do a lot more if their importance as agents of social development was fully recognized. The present exercise has given these organizations the opportunity to be seen throughout Québec as crucial participants in the debate on the course to be charted for all Quebecers, and not just as experts on groups with specific problems.”⁶

Community action also has economic spin-offs. Community organizations provide jobs, services and, in some cases, goods, and are consumers in their own right. They support and engage in structuring projects that have an impact on individuals and communities alike.

6. Conseil de la santé et du bien-être, *Agir solidairement pour le mieux-être des personnes et des collectivités*, Report of the Forum du développement social, 1998.

By adopting this community action support policy, the government explicitly recognizes that through the community movement's continued presence in various sectors, its concern for social issues and its ability to innovate and provide specialized, complementary, or alternative services to citizens, it has been the focal point for much of Québec's social development.

The consultations held with institutional networks and government agencies and departments have highlighted the challenges involved in producing a community action policy. The government has thus elected to focus on three main requirements:

- Building on what has already been achieved within the machinery of government with respect to support for community action
- Maintaining the distinctness of community approaches and public services
- Providing improved support for community action while continuing to encourage volunteering, philanthropy, and the ability of communities to initiate action

1.3.4 RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE, CONTRIBUTION, AND PLACE OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY ACTION DEVELOPMENT

Women have played a leading role in community action development and have become part of the community movement in order to intervene, raise awareness, educate, and militate in ways consistent with their needs. With a view to fully assuming their rightful role within Québec society, they have established a number of mechanisms to tackle issues that public services have failed to address and to influence government policy. They have been at the forefront in promoting gender equality.

Everywhere in Québec, and to this very day, women form the largest group of community service providers and users. Their involvement in community action is a concrete illustration of the community development and active citizenship values the government intends to support and promote. The Québec government sees this policy as an instrument for recognizing the special contribution of women to the betterment of Québec society.

By adopting this community action support policy, the government explicitly recognizes that... the community movement has been the focal point for much of Québec's social development.

The involvement [of women] in community action is a concrete illustration of the community development and active citizenship values the government intends to support and promote.



The ability of community organizations to respond quickly [and] to tailor interventions to needs... has made them important community resources.

The government believes that recognizing community action in the broad sense is crucial...while emphasizing independent community action.

1.3.5 COMMUNITY ACTION: HIGHLY VALUED AND INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND SERVICES

The government also recognizes the importance of the social action networks established by the community sector. Activities or adapted services are often the passport to the community. The ability of community organizations to respond quickly, tailor initiatives to specific needs, handle complex personal or social problems, and put a human face on services has made them important community resources.

The approaches used within the community sector have served as templates for public services. CLSCs (local community service centres), for example, were set up once community clinics had proved that a comprehensive approach to services based on personal accountability and prevention had distinct advantages. Daycare centres are another example. The government is aware that when a service provided by the community sector becomes widespread it must be prepared to take up the "challenge of preserving, as well as possible, the intrinsic qualities of the services, organizations, or activities created by independent community action."⁷

1.4 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

1.4.1 ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THE POLICY APPLIES

The scope of this policy takes into consideration the demands expressed by the community sector in general, as well as those of the independent community action movement.

The government believes that recognizing community action in the broad sense is crucial, that is, community action in all its permutations and forms, while emphasizing independent community action and the social change and participation movement it represents. Therefore, the scope of the policy will be defined on the basis of the following three considerations:

- The government recognizes community action within the broad meaning of the term. Consequently, the policy is intended for the community sector as a whole.
- The policy recognizes independent community action and its unique characteristics.
- The policy expressly supports independent community action and the resulting alternative services by instituting a financial support mechanism tailored to its unique characteristics.

7. Gérald Larose, *Rapport de consultation sur le projet de politique de reconnaissance et de soutien de l'action communautaire*, November 2000, p. 11.

The following basic criteria apply to community organizations as a whole. They must be

- 1 Non-profit⁸
- 2 Community-based
- 3 Associative and democratic
- 4 Free to determine their missions, orientations, approaches, and practices

Since the government wishes to support independent community action organizations in particular, it recognizes the characteristics unique to them. These characteristics were defined in 1996 and 1998 at formal meetings with a wide range of stakeholders under the aegis of the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome. The idea was to pinpoint what made independent community action practices different from those of public services. The characteristics thus identified were basically repeated in the public consultation report on the policy proposal. The government has used the characteristics selected by Gérald Larose as the main basis for its definition of independent community action.

Independent community action is a broad-based social change and social participation movement that entails active citizenship and fosters social ties and cohesion. It is a movement rooted in civil society, in other words, it

- is an initiative of citizens or communities
- with their participation (democratic format)
- and with their commitment (militancy, volunteering)
- within a perspective of individual and collective accountability aimed at social solidarity, social change, gender equality, and the elimination of poverty and discrimination
- for the collective promotion and defence of rights, the development of alternative services, and the development of new responses to emerging needs (innovation).

The organizations associated with this movement are independent in terms of their initiatives and missions. In addition to the four criteria listed above, which apply to all community organizations, they meet the following criteria, which reflect the nature of independent community action:

- 1 They must have been created through a community initiative.
- 2 They must pursue a social mission that promotes social change and that is specific to the organization.
- 3 They must use active citizenship practices and broad-based approaches rooted in a comprehensive view of the issues at stake.
- 4 They must have a board of directors independent from the public network.

1.4.2 ORGANIZATIONS EXCLUDED FROM THE POLICY

The community action recognition and support policy is not intended for non-profit organizations that are not involved in community action, such as foundations whose sole purpose is to raise and distribute funds,⁹ professional associations, unions, and political and religious organizations.

8. Organizations registered pursuant to Part III of the Québec Companies Act or Part II of the federal Companies Act.

9. Some community organizations are called foundations, but have no specific fundraising mandate. This is why foundations whose mission, activities, and management methods allow them to be grouped with community organizations are included under the policy. Some foundations have a dual role of service provider and fundraiser for their activities. These foundations will be examined on a case-by-case basis by the government departments and agencies concerned.

2. PROVISIONS REGARDING RECOGNITION

2.1 RELATIONSHIPS IN THE THROES OF CHANGE: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The government is responsible for analyzing the needs of citizens, determining which needs it should act upon, and adopting the necessary courses of action and strategies. Its actions must be in keeping with the principles of fairness, social justice, and proper management of public funds. The community action sector has repeatedly asserted that it is an important player in the search for solutions and the introduction of adapted or alternative services to meet the specific needs of the communities it serves. The community sector therefore insists on being part of the decision-making process and on being supported in its practices.

Relations between the State and community organizations have changed considerably since 1990. In recent years, the government has chosen to involve the community sector in its major reforms in health and social services, education, income security, labour, and municipal affairs through its family policy, local and regional development policy and other newer policies such as its science and innovation policy. This choice has led to the creation of bodies and mechanisms for consultation and joint action through which community organizations can play an active role and exert their influence. In employing this vector of social change, the government fully acknowledges the expertise of community organizations and is taking steps to recognize their approaches and practices as viable options for responding adequately to the needs of communities.

The creation of the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA) in 1995 is a compelling example of the government's intention to strengthen its ties with the community sector. SACA has the mandate of facilitating the access of community organizations to government resources, advising the government on the support that

should be awarded to community organizations, and administering the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome. In matters of community action, it has become a powerful voice within the community sector and government departments and agencies alike.

The formation of the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome, which is composed entirely of representatives from the community sector, was an important step in renewing the links between the government and independent community action organizations. This committee conducts analyses, issues position statements and recommendations, and advises SACA and the minister responsible for SACA, which is empowered to provide input in drawing up Fonds programs.

Lastly, the setting up of an interdepartmental committee made up of the government agencies and departments directly involved in the recognition of community action has contributed to consolidating relations with community organizations.

In its April 5, 2000 policy proposal, the Québec government took one more step by offering the community sector overall partnership at several levels, including major forums or debates on Québec society and in venues for consultation and joint action. It also conceded that partnerships with the community sector posed a number of strategic challenges because its relations with community organizations can be confrontational and the parties are not necessarily on an equal footing. This is why the government reiterated its will to make respect for the various aspects of the independence of community organizations the foundation for its relations with them.

The government has restated its will to maintain relations rooted in trust, transparency and mutual respect.

The government commitments outlined in this policy should lead to the adoption of national guidelines to be applied by the government departments and agencies that support community organizations.

During the consultations chaired by Gérald Larose, the community sector made it clear that it felt uncomfortable with the idea of an overall partnership with the government. It felt that healthy relations with the State hinged first and foremost on the respect for the ability of the sector to chart its own mission, goals, strategies, approaches, and management methods.

The policy presented here therefore redefines the principles underpinning the relations the government wants to maintain with the community sector based on the aforementioned consultations. Basically, the government has restated its will to maintain relations rooted in trust, transparency, and mutual respect despite its awareness that its relations with rights advocacy groups are potentially confrontational given their role as social critics.

The following principles have thus been entrenched in the government policy:

- The government wants its relations with the community sector to be based on transparency and mutual respect.
- The government wants to maintain various types of relationships with community organizations and the bodies that represent them, including as a partner and a provider of funding and out-sourcing, while respecting the wishes of the organizations, their particular circumstances, and the requirements specific to each relationship.
- The government wants to involve the community sector in the major forums and public debates that shape the future of Québec.
- The government wants to open up the bodies and consultation venues set up by government departments and agencies to the community organizations interested in sharing their expertise and to facilitate their participation in the consultation process.

- The government considers that certain conditions must exist in order for genuine partnerships and collaboration to develop. They must be voluntary, undertaken as the need arises, and for specific projects and ensure that the expertise of each of the parties is recognized.

- The government wants to call on all of civil society, including public and private funders, to promote community action and its development, consolidation and funding.

2.2 NATIONAL GUIDELINES

The government commitments outlined in this policy should lead to the adoption of national guidelines that will be applied by the government departments and agencies that support community organizations. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that mechanisms for implementing funding formats are instituted, while abiding by the imperatives of equity and transparency and taking into account regional and local realities.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FUNDING GUIDELINES REQUIRES

Maintaining the national, regional, and local responsibilities of government departments and agencies in their spheres of activity and gradually adapting their funding practices according to three main funding formats

- > Funding for the overall mission of organizations and for service provision on a three-year basis
- > Funding for services that complement public services
- > Funding for special initiatives and one-time and short-term projects

- > Providing funding to support the overall missions of independent community organizations, which would represent the preponderant portion of total government funding provided to the community sector
- > Setting up a mechanism within the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome for funding the overall missions of coalitions and independent community organizations whose main vocation is rights advocacy

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO EACH SECTOR OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

The definition of guidelines specific to each sector of government activity, based on national guidelines, remains the prerogative of government departments and agencies and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec. Procedures for making the necessary changes to current funding mechanisms as well as the transitional mechanisms needed so that the community organizations in question are not penalized will be provided for under the policy's implementation procedures. The same applies to any other changes deemed relevant.

2.3 FINANCIAL SUPPORT MEASURES

Despite a 33% increase in their budgets between 1996 and 1998, and some \$471 million earmarked for community action in 1999–2000, the fact remains that the financial situation of many organizations, especially rights advocacy groups, remains precarious. The Québec government would like any future support to result in more permanent structures and to have a better fit with the mechanisms governing the interactions between the organizations and public authorities. Funding thus represents one of the primary means by which the government is committed to promoting the activities of community organizations.

Existing forms of government support include sectoral, multi-sectoral and client-based funding, mission-based funding, service agreements, and funding for projects, special activities, and one-time initiatives. Funding is annual, triennial, ongoing, or episodic, depending on the case.

The thrust of this policy is not to make a clean sweep of existing funding mechanisms but, rather, to specify the type of relationships with the government and the circumstances under which the main forms of funding should be used.

The government believes that it has become necessary to establish a mechanism tailored to independent community action, its fundamental characteristics, and its autonomous nature. This mechanism will end the disputes regarding the distinctions between alternative initiatives and services arising from independent community action and initiatives and services that complement those offered by the public sector.

However, this mechanism does not prevent the government from maintaining other types of ties with the community network, notably contractual relationships through agreements for services that complement those offered by the government as well as special arrangements to support one-time projects.

Furthermore, the government recognizes the contribution of coalitions and feels it is important that they be provided with appropriate funding mechanisms. It is also keenly aware of the role of organizations whose main vocation is rights advocacy and support for citizenship participation.

This policy cannot guarantee funding for all existing or future community organizations, but it does acknowledge that recurring funding is vital for the sustainability of these organizations.

The courses of action set forth in this policy...are aimed at specifying the types of relationships and the circumstances that should prevail in order for such-and-such a funding format to be used.

This policy cannot guarantee funding for all existing or future community organizations, but it does acknowledge that recurring funding is vital for the sustainability of these organizations.

A corollary of the funding issue is the question of consistency within the government itself. Some government departments and agencies provide overall funding for coalitions and groups while others only fund one-time projects sponsored by these groups. One of the main issues addressed in this policy is the financial difficulties faced by rights advocacy organizations. Funding orientations will therefore take into account the dynamics between these organizations and the government.

In addition to the idea that the policy should mesh more closely with the reality of community organizations, it should also target, insofar as possible, simplification and harmonization of the administrative procedures related to accountability and access to funding.

2.3.1 FUNDING PARAMETERS

Funding guidelines must take the following eleven parameters into consideration:

General

- 1 Government responsibility for public services
- 2 Respect for the financial capacity of the State
- 3 Respect for Québec's social development priorities
- 4 Regional equity, while taking into account regional and sub-regional idiosyncrasies
- 5 The balance between the goal of consolidating existing community organizations and the leeway needed to create new community organizations in response to emerging needs

Operational

- 6 Equity among community organizations with similar sizes, user throughputs, activities, and clientele
- 7 Respect for the independence of community organizations and the characteristics of independent community action
- 8 Strategies implemented by community organizations to achieve their goals and the efforts at innovation
- 9 Respect for sound management
- 10 Entrenchment of the organizations in their communities
- 11 Consideration of other sources of funding available to community organizations

2.3.2 FUNDING FOR INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ACTION: A SPECIAL MECHANISM

Government participation in funding the overall missions of independent community organizations is a key element of the present policy. It is a major factor in ensuring the independence and sustainability of this category of community organization.

The principle of funding for the overall missions of community organizations has been applied for some years now by a number of government departments, including the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. Certain regional boards have also found it to be an effective way of recognizing the independence of community action, while ensuring the sustainability and the quality of the programs and services offered.

This format hinges on a global approach consistent with the intrinsic nature of independent community action as defined above. It is also contingent on the consideration of every aspect of the initiatives of independent community action organizations. This means recognizing contributions that are not limited to simple service provision but also acknowledging contributions that are aimed at citizen participation and promoting awareness, participation, accountability, and mobilization, as well as reinforcement of human potential, support for families, and improvement of living conditions. Here we are referring to alternative services or practices that differ from those in the public sector. The government's participation would therefore be aimed at helping organizations succeed in their overall missions.

However, in cases where an organization that meets program requirements for a given department is transferred to another government department or agency, previous funding to support of its overall mission must not be reduced. The principle of maintaining acquired rights applies not only in cases of transfers but to all funded organizations that meet current program or funding requirements.

While committed to fine-tuning its funding to independent community organizations, the Québec government nonetheless expects them to pursue their efforts to find other sources of funding. However, this is not a prerequisite for access to government support and goals related to the procurement of alternative funding must take into account the nature of the missions and activities of the organizations as well as prevailing economic conditions in the communities concerned. Various alternative sources of income can be envisaged, including membership fees and drives, public or private sector support in the form of access to goods, services or premises, and volunteering,

to name but a few. These contributions are visible signs of the ability of society at large to assume responsibility for and to participate in the life of community organizations.

This move towards other sources of funding is also a call for external funders to demonstrate their willingness to join forces with the organizations that help improve the fabric of our society. Responsibility for the organizations that provide services to communities is collective.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Funding for the overall missions of community action hinges on the recognition of the practices specific to independent community action. General operating expenditures (rent, telephone, office equipment, technological infrastructure, etc.) and wage-related costs for basic operations and the alternative services offered are considered eligible costs.

Costs related to the social mission of independent community action organizations such as human rights education and advocacy, associative relationships with other organizations, joint action and lobbying, and support for and leadership in volunteering are also eligible.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

- > Taking steps to ensure that the funding mechanism for independent community action be implemented in every government department and agency in order to support the overall missions of independent community action organizations
- > Protecting existing funding for the overall missions of independent community action organizations that will be transferred from government departments or agencies that currently provide funding to other government departments or agencies, as well as those not slated for transfer under this policy

[This type of funding]...means recognizing contributions...aimed at civic participation and geared to information, participation, accountability and mobilization.

The Québec government... expects [the organizations] to pursue their efforts to find other sources of funding.

The Québec government recognizes the special and indispensable contribution these organizations make to the vitality of the democratic debate on the exercise of basic rights, especially, social rights.

It is up to the community organizations to show which mechanisms, activities, or initiatives will be used for these components. Funding programs will take into account this dimension of the activities undertaken by independent community action organizations. The parameters used to assess activities involving human rights education and the exercise of rights will be determined in partnership with representatives of the community sector.

The lump sum grants awarded to support community action will cover basic minimum expenditures and will represent a sizeable portion of eligible costs in relation to general and social mission expenditures. Furthermore, lump sum grants will also be awarded to independent community action organizations to help cover the wages of administrative staff and the cost of their initiatives and alternate services.

THREE-YEAR FUNDING

Recurring funding is crucial to the sustainability of independent community action organizations. Most regional boards, the primary sources of funding for a good many community organizations, have been using a three-year funding format for a number of years, and some even provide ongoing funding.

Currently, many community organizations are hard pressed to provide convincing evidence of their ability to meet future financial commitments. Three-year funding would make it easier for some of them to obtain outside funding.

The government recognizes that three-year funding gives community action organizations greater stability and enables them to better plan their activities.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

- > Applying the special three-year funding support mechanism to independent community action
- > Approving three-year funding support for independent community action after a probationary period that enables the awarding department to monitor the quality of the initiatives or services using a results-based accountability approach

SPECIAL CASES

Rights advocacy organizations

Much social change in Québec has arisen from struggles led by the community movement. By definition, the independent community action movement seeks to act at the root of social problems in order to instigate sweeping change. This is how the organizations that form this movement have furthered rights advocacy in Québec. The Québec government recognizes the special and indispensable contribution these organizations make to the vitality of the democratic debate on the exercise of basic rights, especially social rights, through their actions and their thoughtful input on national and international issues alike.

The government acknowledges the activities related to non-partisan political action under the term "rights advocacy," which consists of the analysis of government policy or draft legislation by organizations and coalitions. It also acknowledges their mobilization and lobbying activities aimed at making the government aware of these analyses and of the circumstances of certain segments of the population.

The government acknowledges, among other things, the role these organizations play in showing citizens how to defend their rights, preparing them to assume responsibility for their lives, empowering them to face personal or collective issues, and teaching them the principles of democracy.

Even though rights advocacy is considered a fundamental component of their missions, it is more important for some organizations than for others. Community action organizations that include rights advocacy among their activities will be supported for that particular component through the funding allocated to support their overall mission.

The government is aware that the financial situation of organizations whose sole or primary mission is *rights advocacy* is often precarious for a number of reasons, including problems finding community funding, no fit with a government department or agency, or, in some cases, impediments that prevent the department or agency from providing the necessary support. The creation of SACA in 1995 provided a boost for some of these organizations and the government feels it is important to maintain a funding mechanism intended expressly for organizations whose primary mission is rights advocacy. The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome will therefore become the source of funding for these organizations. This course of action is not only proof of the government's desire to recognize rights advocacy, which is, in itself, a sizeable gain for the sector, but is also allows the organizations to receive financial support from a body totally separate from government departments and agencies with which they may clash at times. Since these advocacy organizations are rights watchdogs, this measure ensures that their role as social critics is protected.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

- > Maintaining a funding mechanism reserved for independent community action organizations whose sole or primary mission is rights advocacy and ensuring that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome is the source of funding for this entire category of organizations
- > Maintaining the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome as a national source of funding

By maintaining the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome at the national level, the government will also ensure that these organizations enjoy the leeway they need to maintain a clear, overall vision of their priorities.

Coalitions

In addition to their involvement in joint initiatives at the local level, community organizations are often part of networks and have created coalitions to lobby for them at the various forums and with government authorities at the national level. These sectoral and multi-sectoral coalitions act at the local, regional, national and, occasionally, international level.

The government acknowledges that coalitions play a strategic role in the political representation of their members and as their spokesperson in the corridors of power. These coalitions meet the need for joint action by member organizations and serve as contacts with government departments and agencies in partnerships and joint action forums. The government also acknowledges their ability to provide a comprehensive picture of issues, compared to the often partial view held by their members, as well as their role in research and training, critical analysis, rights advocacy, and the protection of the quality of the services and initiatives of member organizations.

There is no unified government approach to the funding of coalitions. Some government departments and agencies directly fund coalitions in their spheres of activity, both regionally and nationally, while others choose to fund special projects only or provide indirect support through their contributions to the membership fees of participating organizations.

Coalitions meet the need for joint action by member organizations and serve as contacts with government departments and agencies in existing partnerships and joint action forums.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

> Ensuring that government departments and agencies contribute to funding the overall missions of the national, regional and local coalitions in their activity sector

> Ensuring that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome contributes to funding the overall mission of coalitions whose sole or primary mission is rights advocacy and supporting national, regional and local coalitions with no ties to a particular department or agency on a temporary basis whenever possible

> Maintaining the option of funding coalitions whose members are active in a single sector through membership fees insofar as this funding approach has been negotiated and provides equivalent funding for the overall missions of the coalitions concerned

Government departments and agencies will be responsible for contributing to the support of the overall missions of regional, national and international coalitions in their fields of activity. The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome will be used in a similar fashion for national and regional coalitions with no ties to a particular government department or agency.

Clearly, membership fees alone do not provide a sound financial footing for coalitions. However, the government feels that fees, albeit symbolic in some cases, are significant in terms of the associative and democratic vitality of the organizations. The government sees membership fees as an indication that a given coalition is meeting the real representation, training, and job action needs of a certain number of organizations.

This does not completely preclude the idea that membership fees, which are a form of community funding, may be the primary source of funding source for a coalition. This practice is already in place at Emploi-Québec and the coalitions in question are satisfied

with this arrangement. However, this funding format would be limited to coalitions whose members are in the same sphere of activity. The government believes that, for this approach to be possible, it must be voluntary and have been negotiated by the parties concerned so that equivalent funding is provided for the overall mission of the coalition. In such cases, membership fees would be included under the associative component of member missions.



LINKS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

By opting to create a funding mechanism that supports the overall missions of organizations, the government has chosen a bold approach, but one that is not unfamiliar. In recent years, government departments and agencies have acquired invaluable expertise in creating relationships with community organizations that offer an array of complementary and alternative services that have an impact on the daily lives of citizens.

Because of the nature of their areas of activity, community organizations have implemented various aspects of their missions in the jurisdictions of a number of government departments. Given the wide range of realities, approaches, and funding, it became imperative to emphasize solutions that consolidate activities within the community movement by streamlining administrative procedures and preventing overlap.

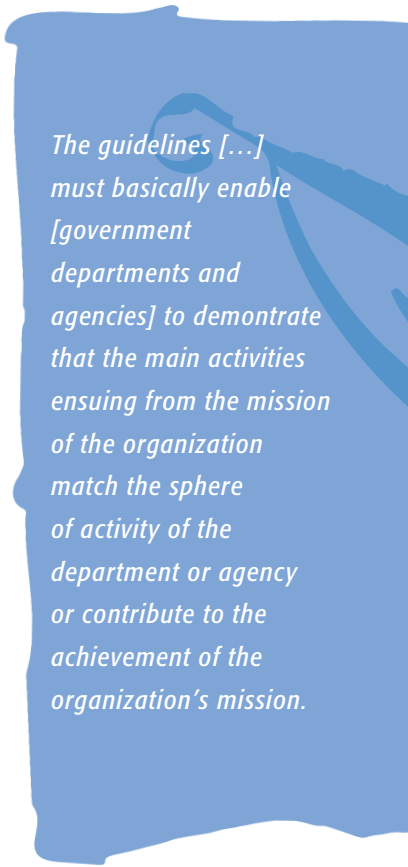
Without resorting to a one-stop outlet approach, which would have the disadvantage of centralizing available funding and expertise, the government has opted for the following choices:

- The government department likely to contribute to funding the overall mission of a given independent community action organization must be chosen based on the fit between the organization's activities and the department's area of jurisdiction. The guidelines used by government departments and agencies to determine whether or not they will fund the overall mission of an independent community action organization must basically enable them to demonstrate that the main activities ensuing from the mission of the organization match the sphere of activity of the department or agency or contribute to the achievement of the organization's mission.

- Current government practices already have recognition procedures in place. For example, regional boards have a certification process that could be applied to some or all aspects of the main mission of an organization.

The goal of the policy is not to ensure that the same mechanism be used by all government departments and agencies, but to draw on tried and true practices. The primary responsibility of government departments and agencies is therefore to ensure implementation of the funding formats that are accepted under the policy. The government considers that, for funding purposes, certification is appropriate to clearly establish the link between the activities of an organization and the jurisdiction of a government department and to ascertain that the organization has an independent community action mission.

An organization or coalition may fall under more than one government department or agency if its mission is multi-sectoral. In such cases, the departments and agencies concerned will work together to analyze the needs of these community organizations and coalitions and SACA will act as the intermediary between the potential partners as needed.



The guidelines [...] must basically enable [government departments and agencies] to demonstrate that the main activities ensuing from the mission of the organization match the sphere of activity of the department or agency or contribute to the achievement of the organization's mission.



*It stands to reason
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LIMITATIONS

The funding orientations under this policy will not terminate other provisions designed to respond to special problem areas and that community organizations can turn to based on the nature of their activities.

The individual circumstances of independent community action organizations must be taken into account. Some organizations act on a variety of fronts using an array of approaches. For example, without betraying its overall mission, an organization might undertake social economy projects or choose to address an issue that the government supports through service agreements. This is why independent community action organizations must have access not only to funding for their overall mission, but also to other types of funding on a free and voluntary basis. It stands to reason that, in such cases, the government will ensure that there is no overlap and that the funding is complementary.

Given the above, and with a view to ensuring that funding is complementary, it should be specified that the mechanism for funding for overall missions described throughout this policy does not apply to the following areas:

- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization defined as intermediate lodging resources in the *Act respecting health services and social services*
- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization whose funding has already been determined by regulation based on their particular circumstances, for example, daycare services
- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization funded as a social economy project or activity

- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization governed by a service agreement with departments and agencies such as Emploi-Québec, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, and the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec

- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization governed by a contractual agreement with the Ministère de la Sécurité publique for initiatives undertaken in the context of penal measures

- That portion of the activities of an independent community action organization funded by the federal government without the involvement of the Québec government

2.3.3 SERVICE AGREEMENTS: FUNDING AVAILABLE TO ALL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR SERVICES THAT COMPLEMENT PUBLIC SERVICES

The government considers that complementary services must be funded on a contract basis through service agreements. This funding must come from a budget envelope reserved exclusively for that purpose.

While these agreements may be used to fund the operations of community organizations, they are mainly aimed at supporting mandates assigned by the government in response to needs it has determined.

The rationale for service agreements differs markedly from that underlying funding for the missions of community organizations. Service agreements are contracts that specify the commitments of the parties concerned. Generally speaking, they include a detailed description of the services the community organization provides, supporting documents for related costs and expected results, and items such as the number of people served, conditions for access to these services (age, status as employment-assistance or employment insurance recipients, etc.), referral and follow-up procedures, and the computer systems to be used to transmit user data. There are several criteria that may be used to determine the amount of service contract funding, including hourly cost, cost per act, cost per user, or overall cost. For example, Emploi-Québec includes all supply-related operating expenditures for a set period in its service agreements based on overall cost.

Services may be provided by organizations whose activities are basically complementary to public services, as well as by community action organizations that already receive funding for their overall mission.

SERVICE AGREEMENTS: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Service agreements are fitting in cases where government departments and agencies wish to give community organizations the mandate to provide services that complement public services. This type of cooperative relationship with the government is open to all community organizations. The only condition is proof of their ability to achieve the results targeted in the service agreement.

2.3.4 FUNDING FOR SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND ONE-TIME AND SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

In addition to funding the overall missions of independent community action organizations and service contracts, government support also includes funding for special activities and one-time and short-term projects. Each government department or agency will maintain responsibility for setting the terms and conditions governing access to this kind of financial assistance and for assessing the relevance of the projects.

**IN ORDER TO MAKE
GOOD ITS INTENTION
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MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR
THE ORGANIZATIONS TO
UNDERTAKE AN
AGREEMENT WITH
GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES BY MUTUAL
CONSENT, THE
GOVERNMENT OF
QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

> Ensuring that contractual agreements for services that complement public services are entered into in a context of mutual, free, and voluntary cooperation.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

> Ensuring that the funding of special activities and one-time and short-term projects continues to be available to all community organizations

> Ensuring that the funding of special activities and one-time and short-term projects takes into account all general expenditures incurred by the organizations for carrying out the project or activity in question

Service agreements are fitting in cases where government departments and agencies wish to give community organizations the mandate to provide services that complement public services.

*...the government...
has reiterated
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and its intention
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2.4 OTHER SUPPORT

2.4.1 SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING

In Québec, volunteer work represents hundreds of thousands of hours of social commitment. It contributes to creating solidarity and improving the living conditions for all members of society. The Québec government recognizes this contribution through the annual awarding of the Hommage bénévolat-Québec prize under the aegis of SACA.

Many community organizations rely on volunteers at every level, whether for performing administrative or management tasks, or for providing services or professional activities.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

- > Continuing to recognize and promote volunteering through the annual awarding of the Hommage bénévolat-Québec prize
- > Respecting the building blocks of volunteering and remaining heedful of the conditions that favour it when crafting government programs and services
- > Supporting initiatives to recognize skills acquired through volunteering
- > Taking into account initiatives or projects aimed at recruiting, supervising, or coaching volunteers in the three funding mechanisms available to community organizations

The boards of directors of the community sector reflect the democratic nature of community organizations. Unlike similar boards in the private sector, they are entirely composed of unpaid volunteers. Above and beyond their ability to represent various spheres of activity, these volunteers are given substantial responsibility in determining the orientations and priorities of organizations and managing their financial affairs. While the Civil Code of Québec is seen as providing a tight legal framework for these responsibilities and obligations, it would appear that at times it is a deterrent to people who are asked to sit on the boards of community organizations. The government therefore recognizes the need to train administrators. This will be discussed in the section on support for training.

Community organizations do not always have the resources needed to provide volunteers with the supervision and guidance they need to fully exploit their expertise for the good of the organization or to benefit fully from their involvement through recognition of the skills they acquire as volunteers. The costs thus incurred are included as eligible costs in the funding provided to support the missions of community organizations.

2.4.2 SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The training and human resource development needs of salaried workers and volunteers within community organizations, whether they are assigned to specific initiatives, ongoing operations, services, management, administrative support, or the board of directors must never be underestimated and organizations must be supported in order to meet these needs.

By adopting the Act to foster the development of manpower training, under which enterprises are required to invest 1% of their payroll in training, the Québec government underscored the importance of training in this era of technological revolution and upheaval in the labour market.

However, most community organizations are too small to be subject to this law, so their staff have no access to its benefits. This is why the government, through this policy, has reiterated the importance it attaches to training and its intention to implement ways to promote training. It bears mentioning that some organizations specialize in providing training to community organizations. In addition, community service programs at universities give community organizations access to customized training. Furthermore, section 376 of the Act respecting health services and social services entrusts regional boards with the responsibility for supporting the human development needs of community organizations.

Given their strategic position, coalitions are aware of the activities of their members and are sensitive to their needs and organizational culture and therefore have an important role to play in training. The same is true of the Comité sectoriel sur l'action communautaire et l'économie sociale, or sector-based community action and social economy committee, which is mandated to craft and implement development and training strategies for community enterprises and organizations by promoting joint action and partnerships on a sectoral basis. This committee could be asked to develop a more comprehensive proposal regarding the training needs of human resources and volunteers within the community sector.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

- > Ensuring that human resource training in the community sector is monitored by SACA as part of the process of implementing this policy and that the expertise of coalitions is sought and tapped into
- > Ensuring that coalitions receive the support they need to meet the training needs of their member organizations
- > Ensuring that SACA seeks the collaboration of the Comité sectoriel sur l'action communautaire et l'économie sociale in working with coalition representatives to explore formulas to better match training supply and demand

2.4.3 IMPROVED ACCESS TO BENEFITS

The government favours extending the principle of participation in the funding of independent community action to all government departments and agencies to improve working conditions within all community organizations. The Québec government is fully aware that women are a major force within the community sector. The precarious financial status of this group has been amply documented. By improving working conditions in the community sector, the government hopes to contribute to creating sustainable jobs. It has also reiterated its desire, notably through the role vested in SACA, to assist the community sector in steps aimed at determining the interest of organizations in establishing group insurance plans or basic retirement plans, should the sector deem it appropriate.

2.5 OTHER GOVERNMENT PRACTICES REGARDING COMMUNITY ACTION

Popular and government support for community organizations hinges on the conviction that the mission of the organizations is appropriate, that funding is being managed wisely and that community action is producing tangible results. Government responsibility for managing public monies is of primary importance. As taxpayers, citizens have the right to be fully informed of the way the government spends their money, as well as the right to know whether the expected results have been achieved.

This government responsibility has a direct impact on community organizations. It imposes transparency requirements for, among other things, accountability and the evaluation of the quality of the services delivered on a voluntary basis. Community organizations have the responsibility of providing their funders, members, service users, and the communities they serve with information that enables them to assess how public funds are being used.

...government responsibility... imposes transparency requirements for, among other things, accountability and the evaluation of the quality of the services delivered on a voluntary basis.

Accountability is the process whereby a community organization gives itself the tools it needs to openly answer questions by interested parties while respecting the confidentiality of the personal files.

Recognition of the independence of community organizations also means that they must be held accountable for how they manage the funding they receive. This supposes the implementation of follow-up mechanisms that enable the government to fulfil its obligations without meddling in areas where it has no business interfering. The terms and conditions governing accountability must also respect the representational role of these organizations.

2.5.1 ACCOUNTABILITY: RIGOUR, FLEXIBILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

Accountability is the process whereby a community organization gives itself the tools it needs to openly answer questions from interested parties while respecting the confidentiality of personal files. This means that information on the missions, orientations, goals, and activities made possible through public funds must be available and accessible. This information must also show that community organization administrators have acted responsibly in performing their duties.

The government affirms its desire to favour accountability mechanisms that respect the independence of community organizations and that are sensitive to their particular characteristics and circumstances. Government guidelines are in keeping with the imperatives of rigour, flexibility, and transparency. The government departments and agencies that fund community organizations and that already have accountability requirements and guidelines must not further increase the burden placed on the community organizations under their purview.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND FUNDING OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ACTION

Activities related to the social mission of independent community action organizations cover components that require a different form of accountability than that used for special activities under service agreements, for example, components likely to be part of associative, citizen education, rights advocacy, and joint action activities.

Accountability by independent community action organizations must be in keeping with this reality while taking into account requirements regarding rigour, transparency, and respect for the independence of the organizations. Accountability may cover more than financial management. Activity reports and other documents attesting to the nature of the initiatives undertaken could also be considered.

In implementing the policy, the government departments and agencies concerned, along with SACA, will set the parameters they would like the organizations to use for reporting on these components. The Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome will also be consulted on accountability requirements.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Given that service agreements are contracts containing clauses stipulating the services that community organizations must provide, accountability requirements will, in principle, cover these components and could form part of the agreement per se. Departments must respect the right of the organizations to self-management, while complying with the government's contractual requirements regarding management procedures.

Funding for most community organizations comes from several government sources. One of the aims of this policy is to maintain a variety of links with community organizations, which means that a given organization may have to approach more than one government body for funding. This is why the government must as much as possible seek to harmonize its accountability requirements and ensure that the size of the budgets of the organizations is taken into account.

Accountability may cover more than financial management. Activity reports and other documents attesting to the nature of the initiatives could also be considered.

ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND ONE-TIME AND SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

It goes without saying that one-time projects call for a different approach than that used for service agreements or independent community action funding. The required accountability documents for special activities and one-time projects will necessarily deal specifically with the execution of the activities or projects. However, the government must be capable of judging whether the public funds were used for the intended purpose and be informed of the goals achieved by the project.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

> Harmonizing the accountability mechanisms for government funding programs for community action in keeping with the imperatives of rigour, flexibility, and transparency, while respecting the independence of the organizations and remaining sensitive to their particular characteristics and circumstances

2.5.2 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The social and economic changes underway call for permanent re-engineering of the management and operational structures of organizations. Beyond adaptation to technological changes that increase service efficiency, innovations in the field of social development have also made it necessary to find new practical approaches or skills for preventing social problems or dealing more effectively with social challenges.

Since public funds must be allocated to support initiatives that generate the greatest possible number of positive spin-offs, the government must find ways to validate the soundness of its choices. A variety of approaches for evaluating the performance of community organizations have been tested by government departments and agencies, and the participatory format developed by the Comité ministériel de l'évaluation pour les organismes communautaires du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux (departmental committee for evaluating community organizations in the health and social services sector) appears to be the most appropriate model.

Through its policy on science and innovation, the government has stated its desire to invest in social research and innovation, notably innovation arising from successful practices put in place by community organizations.

The ultimate goal of the government is...the continuous improvement of the services provided to the community and the promotion of practices fine-tuned to Québec's social needs.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

> Forming a task force under the aegis of SACA composed of community sector and department representatives in order to define performance evaluation and accountability guidelines, with the possible input of outside experts

> Working with community organizations and coalitions to define evaluation parameters, conditions, procedures, and indicators, while respecting the nature of their initiatives and the characteristics of independent community action

> Providing support for community action organizations that wish to undertake performance evaluations

> Ensuring that the Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, in collaboration with SACA and the Comité interministériel, develops a performance evaluation, research, and innovation program

The government is aware of the need to make a distinction between the legitimate evaluation of programs for its own purposes and the evaluation of the performance of community organizations as such. It is equally aware of the status of evaluation as a tool to be used first and foremost by the organizations in question and of the fact that evaluation is primarily their responsibility. The government has noted the interest of community organizations for evaluation practices likely to help improve their efforts at social innovation and their search to come to grips with new requirements and increasingly complex social problems.

Consequently, the evaluation procedure chosen by the government and the community sector must explicitly set forth their respective objectives and be geared towards social innovation. Practices, the relevance of intervention methods, and the performance of management models are among the quantitative and qualitative components that may be evaluated. Research and evaluation are recognized for their contribution to an understanding of social phenomena and their raising of public awareness. The ultimate goal of the government is nonetheless the continuous improvement of the services provided to the community and the promotion of practices fine-tuned to Québec's social needs.

In this regard, the government intends to favour rigour and to respect the right of community organizations to choose their own practices. The government feels it is important that evaluation procedures take into account the nature of community action and the characteristics of independent community action. This is why government authorities will ensure that the community organizations concerned will be involved in planning, designing, and conducting research. In some cases it may be necessary to provide funding for the community organizations that take part in producing evaluation tools.

The government recognizes the expertise of the community sector in performance evaluation and the relevance of tapping into this know-how. It also acknowledges the contribution of university research to performance evaluation and would like to see a pooling of the knowledge from the all spheres of activity with broad experience with evaluation tools. Cases in point are the Conseil québécois de la recherche sociale, the academic community, and educational institutions that have developed teaching and research programs in the field of social practices and community approaches.

In recognizing the contribution of all players to the development, evaluation, and dissemination of new social practices, the government wishes to put the research results to use and enhance the ability of the organizations to use their knowledge to improve their practices and to benefit all citizens.

However, the government is aware that research results do not automatically lead to novel approaches or new services that are better adapted to circumstances that require action. This is why it is counting on the community sector to forge close ties with communities at the grassroots level and to assume its role as a catalyst for social innovation. The need to innovate in order to face the challenge of improving the quality of life of Quebecers involves both theoretical and hands-on approaches.

Through its departments and agencies, the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome, and the research and innovation funds it manages, the government intends to promote community action research and innovation.

2.5.3 REGIONALIZATION OF FUNDING

The consultations held following the tabling of the policy proposal drew attention to the need for the regionalization of decision-making in matters of community organization funding. Within the government, the regional level is defined as the level where joint action, harmonization, and crafting of development strategies take place. It would therefore be necessary to bring the local and regional players entrusted with identifying needs, defining initiatives, and managing budgets more closely together. Furthermore, Québec's local and regional development policy is a basic orientation of the Québec government and must therefore be taken into consideration as much as possible.

While it is clear that national decision-making guidelines must be used to prevent regional disparities, it is equally clear that, where applicable, community organization funding guidelines must be applied at the regional level. The government intends to rely on the structures put in place by those departments and agencies that have decentralized their operations to reinforce and confirm the role of the regional level, while respecting the goals of this policy.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

- > Ensuring that the policy orientations regarding community organizations are applied at regional and local levels as warranted
- > Ensuring that the Comité interministériel, during the implementation of the policy, sees that government goals and the resulting national and sector-based guidelines are complied with when funding is awarded at the regional level due to the devolution of the activities of government departments and agencies

The Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire will be tasked to oversee implementation of this goal. Notably, government departments and agencies will be responsible for informing the regional and local bodies affected by this policy of government objectives and guidelines for their application. They will also be responsible for helping the bodies under their purview to apply the policy.

The government intends to rely on the structures put in place by those departments and agencies that have decentralized their operations to reinforce and confirm the role of the regional level, while respecting the goals of this policy.



Implementation of the community action support and recognition policy calls for an unprecedented effort to harmonize government practices.

2.5.4 COHERENCE, SIMPLIFICATION, AND HARMONIZATION OF GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

Implementation of the community action support and recognition policy calls for an unprecedented effort to harmonize government practices. In undertaking this process, SACA and the government departments and agencies concerned will strive for greater rigour, administrative streamlining, and transparency.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

> Harmonizing and simplifying government practices and administrative documents in its relationships with community organizations

> Providing mechanisms for consulting and sharing information with the community sector when defining, implementing, and periodically evaluating new practices

> Ensuring the transparency of the funding provided to community organizations, while respecting the imperatives of confidentiality, sound management, and accountability

3. POLICY I M P L E M E N T A T I O N

3.1 SACA MANDATES

SACA acts as an advisor to the minister responsible for community action and to government departments and agencies. It also ensures joint action and consultation in the quest for better dovetailing of funding measures.

SACA is entrusted with coordinating the implementation of the goals of the policy and any initiatives requiring the participation of government departments and agencies.

In order for it to perform its horizontal mission within the government apparatus, SACA must have a more structured relationship with government departments and agencies.

Henceforth, SACA will thus be responsible for coordinating the work of the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire to ensure compliance with the government goals outlined in this policy, to do what is necessary to ensure greater administrative coherence, to streamline funding procedures, and to deal with the issues of accountability, performance evaluation, and human resource training and development and, as required, access to benefits.

Furthermore, as part of the policy implementation process, SACA will form a consultation and coordination committee with representatives from every segment of the community sector.

It will also be responsible, in cooperation with government partners, for developing a government program information management and dissemination strategy for government Websites.

It will oversee the forging of links with the academic community in order to enhance government expertise in community action, design measures for better access to basic information for all government funders dealing with the same community organization group, and orchestrate the Hommage bénévolat-Québec event in collaboration with the Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec.

3.2 INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

Since 1998, SACA has been instrumental in working towards a community action recognition and support policy for Québec through the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire, which is composed of representatives from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, the Ministère des Régions, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, Emploi-Québec, and the Régies régionales de la santé et des services sociaux.

For policy implementation purposes, the mandate of the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire will be extended to make it a permanent network of representatives from government departments and agencies that fund community organizations.

Henceforth, SACA will thus be responsible for coordinating the work of the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire to ensure compliance with the government goals outlined in this policy.

For policy implementation purposes, the mandate of the Comité interministériel de l'action communautaire will be extended to make a permanent network of representatives from government departments and agencies that fund community organizations.

In implementing the policy and ensuring ongoing monitoring, the government works with the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome at various levels.

The Comité interministériel sur l'action communautaire will thus have the following mandate:

- In partnership with SACA, participate in developing funding mechanisms, harmonizing and simplifying administrative practices and accountability procedures, setting up new Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome programs, implementing tools and mechanisms designed to keep all levels of government abreast of national guidelines, providing other types of support to government departments and agencies with a devolved administration, and dealing with all other matters related to the implementation of the policy
- Support SACA in carrying out its horizontal mission
- Produce a consolidated action plan that incorporates the action plans of all the government departments and agencies involved in implementation of the policy

autonome and the principles underlying performance evaluation, accountability, and streamlining of government practices.

In addition, through this advisory committee, the government will invite independent community action organizations to take part in an annual meeting to discuss the overarching issues arising from the government's orientations with respect to independent community action goals as well as issues specific to each sector. This event will give the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome the opportunity to speak on behalf of the independent community action movement and to let the government departments and agencies concerned know how it feels about the progress being made in implementing government goals.

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE COMMITTED TO

- > Making the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome its primary liaison with independent community action organizations and seeking its participation in the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the policy
- > Ensuring that the main components or sectors of the independent community action movement are involved in implementing the policy through SACA

3.3 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome advises SACA and the minister responsible for SACA. The advisory role is both operational and political. In implementing the policy and ensuring ongoing monitoring, the government works with the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome at various levels. It has invited it to help define funding mechanisms for independent community action, the new mission of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire

The government also wishes to further promote participation of the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome in the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome. Currently, the committee issues opinions to the minister responsible for the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome on programs and annual priorities and, more broadly, on the effectiveness of funding application processing.

As part of the process of refocusing the mission of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome and enhancing the involvement of the independent community sector in decisions regarding funding management, the government has proposed that the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome explore the possibility of expanding its mandate. The government is prepared to have Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome representatives become closely involved in the process leading to approval of the funding applications submitted to the Fonds.

The government remains intent on giving a say to all sectors of the independent community action movement likely to avail themselves of Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome programs. It therefore invites the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome to take note of the government's willingness to take into consideration all components of the independent community movement.

3.4 INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ACTION ASSISTANCE FUND

The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome followed on the heels of the creation of SACA in 1995. This extrabudgetary fund is financed using 5% of the net profits from the operation of government casinos and connected businesses based on figures from the preceding year. Since its creation, over \$50 million has been invested in the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome

With a view to maintaining the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome as an important lever for the recognition and support of independent community action, the government has confirmed its desire to refocus the mission of the Fonds and give it a leading role in supporting rights advocacy.

In order to increase the ability of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome to fully accomplish its mission, SACA must establish programs aimed at

- Supporting and consolidating funding on a national basis for all independent community action organizations and coalitions dedicated to rights advocacy
- Providing additional funding for independent community action organizations and coalitions with no ties to a particular department or agency, on a temporary basis whenever possible
- Maintaining a program to support independent community action development projects

The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome will maintain a regional equity-based approach in allocating its budget. SACA will also establish links with regional stakeholders.

With a view to maintaining the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome as an important lever for the recognition and support of independent community action, the government has confirmed its desire to refocus the mission of the Fonds and give it a leading role in supporting rights advocacy.



*Policy implementation
should be evaluated
every three years
based on the results
of each phase.*

3.5 TIMETABLE

The timetable is included in the implementation plan that accompanies the policy.

3.6 FINANCIAL RAMIFICATIONS

The Québec government currently devotes over \$471 million to community action.

Implementation of the programs aimed at refocusing the mission of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome, application of the three funding mechanisms provided for under the policy, efforts to achieve government coherence in matters of community action funding, other measures enshrined in the policy, and existing community action support priorities within government departments and agencies require supplementary recurring appropriations. These extra appropriations will be earmarked for the most part for funding to support the overall missions of independent community organizations.

Following phase one of the implementation of the policy, government departments and agencies will be able to determine the financial resources required to continue the implementation process. This phase will also make it possible to take into consideration the changing needs of the population and the circumstances of community organizations.

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF QUÉBEC
IS THEREFORE
COMMITTED TO**

**> Earmarking most
of the supplementary
appropriations for
this policy for support
for independent
community action**

3.7 MECHANISMS FOR EVALUATING THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Policy implementation should be evaluated every three years based on the results of each phase. The government departments and agencies concerned will have to meet specific objectives based on a target schedule. The Comité interministériel will set common objectives and indicators for all government departments and agencies. The minister responsible for community action will be required to report to the Cabinet on the implementation and application of the policy.

The Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome will be asked to take part in this evaluation process, as will community action organizations for those components of the policy that affect them.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT POLICY, THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE POLICY

- Ensuring respect for the freedom of community organizations to determine their missions, goals, approaches, practices, and management methods

FUNDING

- Ensuring that a universal funding mechanism for independent community action is applied by all government departments and agencies in order to support the overall missions of independent community action organizations
- Protecting existing funding for the overall missions of independent community action organizations, whether or not they are slated for transfer from the government department or agency that currently supports them to another government department or agency
- Providing funding for independent community action on a three-year basis
- Awarding financial support for independent community action on a three-year basis after a probationary period that enables the awarding department to ensure the quality of the activities or services offered once the organizations have satisfactorily accounted for their activities
- Maintaining a funding mechanism exclusively for independent community action organizations whose sole or primary mission is rights advocacy and ensuring that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome is the funder for this category of organizations as a whole
- Maintaining the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome as a national source of funding

- Ensuring that government departments and agencies contribute to funding the overall missions of national, regional, and local coalitions in their spheres of activity

- Ensuring that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome contributes to funding the overall missions of coalitions whose sole or primary mission is rights advocacy, as well as funding national, regional, and local coalitions with no links to a specific department or agency, preferably on a temporary basis

- Maintaining the option of funding coalitions whose members are from a single activity sector through membership fees on the condition that this funding approach is the result of negotiation and provides equivalent funding for the overall missions of the coalitions concerned

SERVICE AGREEMENTS

- Ensuring that contractual agreements for services that complement public services are undertaken in a context of mutual, free, and voluntary cooperation

FUNDING FOR SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND ONE-TIME OR SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

- Ensuring that the funding mechanism for special activities and one-time and short-term projects continues to be available to all community organizations
- Ensuring that the funding mechanism for special activities and one-time and short-term projects takes into account all general expenditures incurred by the organization for undertaking the project or activity in question

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING

- Continuing to recognize and promote volunteering through the annual awarding of the Hommage bénévolat-Québec prize
- Respecting the bases of volunteering and remaining heedful of the conditions that favour it when crafting government programs and services
- Supporting initiatives to recognize skills acquired through volunteering
- Taking initiatives and projects aimed at recruiting, supervising, or coaching volunteers into account in the three funding mechanisms available to community organizations

SUPPORT FOR TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Ensuring that the need for training within the community sector is monitored by SACA as part of the policy implementation process and that the expertise of coalitions is sought and tapped into
- Ensuring that coalitions receive support to meet the training needs of their member organizations
- Ensuring that SACA seeks the collaboration of the Comité sectoriel sur l'action communautaire et l'économie sociale in working with coalition representatives to explore formulas to better match training supply and demand

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Harmonizing the accountability mechanisms for government community action funding programs in keeping with the imperatives of rigour, flexibility, and transparency, while respecting the independence of the organizations and remaining sensitive to their particular characteristics and circumstances

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- Forming a task force under the aegis of SACA composed of community sector and department representatives in order to define performance evaluation and accountability guidelines, with the possible input of outside experts
- Working with community organizations and coalitions to define evaluation parameters, conditions, procedures, and indicators, while respecting the nature of their initiatives and the characteristics of independent community action
- Providing support for community action organizations that wish to undertake performance evaluations
- Ensuring that the Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, in collaboration with SACA and the Comité interministériel, develops a performance evaluation, research, and innovation program

REGIONALIZATION OF FUNDING

- Ensuring that the policy orientations regarding community organizations are applied at regional and local levels as warranted
- Ensuring that the Comité interministériel, during the implementation of the policy, sees that government goals and the resulting national and sector-based guidelines are complied with when funding is awarded at the regional level due to the devolution of the activities of government departments and agencies

COHERENCE, SIMPLIFICATION AND HARMONIZATION OF GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

- Harmonizing and simplifying government practices and administrative documents in its relationships with community organizations
- Providing mechanisms for consulting and sharing information with the community sector when defining, implementing, and periodically evaluating new practices
- Ensuring the transparency of the funding provided to community organizations, while respecting the imperatives of confidentiality, sound management, and accountability

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Making the Comité aviseur de l'action communautaire autonome its primary liaison with independent community action organizations and seeking its participation in the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the policy
- Ensuring that the main components or sectors of the independent community action movement are involved in implementing the policy through SACA

FINANCIAL RAMIFICATIONS

- Earmarking most of the supplementary appropriations for this policy for support for independent community action



APPENDIX 2

MEMBERS OF THE COMITÉ AVISEUR DE L'ACTION COMMUNAUTAIRE AUTONOME DU QUÉBEC

MULTI-SECTORAL COALITIONS

- Coalition des tables régionales des organismes communautaires du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux
- Mouvement d'éducation populaire et d'action communautaire du Québec (MEPACQ)
- Table des fédérations et organismes nationaux en éducation populaire autonome
- Table des regroupements d'organismes communautaires et bénévoles, du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux
- Table nationale des corporations de développement communautaire (TNCDC)

SECTORAL COALITIONS

Volunteerism

Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ)

Literacy

Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec (RGPAQ)

Native rights

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

Communications

Fédération des télévisions communautaires (TVC) autonomes du Québec

Consumer advocacy

Fédération des associations coopératives d'économie familiale (ACEF)

Rights advocacy

Assemblée des travailleurs et travailleuses accidentés du Québec (ATTAQ)

International solidarity

Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)

Environmental issues

Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes (RQGE)

Family issues

Fédération des associations de familles monoparentales et recomposées du Québec (FAFMRQ)

Women's issues

Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale de la région de Québec

Youth

Regroupement des organismes communautaires autonomes jeunesse du Québec (ROCAJQ)

Housing

Regroupement des comités de logements et associations des locataires du Québec

Recreation

Conseil québécois du loisir (CQL)

Persons with disabilities

Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN)

Refugees, immigrants, and ethnic communities

Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCMR)

APPENDIX 3

MEMBERS OF THE COMITÉ INTERMINISTÉRIEL

- Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec
- Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
- Ministère de l'Éducation
- Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole
- Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance
- Ministère des Régions
- Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
- Emploi-Québec
- Secrétariat à la condition féminine

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES ADDED TO THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTEERING. THESE BODIES WILL BECOME FULL MEMBERS FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THE POLICY.

- Secrétariat du Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse
- Secrétariat aux aînés
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES THAT WILL BECOME FULL MEMBERS FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THE POLICY.

- Société d'habitation du Québec
- Office de la protection du consommateur
- Office des personnes handicapées du Québec
- Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
- Ministère de la Sécurité publique
- Ministère de la Justice
- Secrétariat au loisir et au sport
- Ministère de l'Environnement
- Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec

APPENDIX 4

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION ON THE APRIL 5, 2000 POLICY PROPOSAL

- The scope of the policy: The community sector demands that community action be more fully recognized and supported. The report recommends that a funding mechanism be put in place that corresponds to the specific characteristics of independent community action and that, at the same time, encompasses a broad-based vision of community action.

- Partnerships between the government and community action organizations: Since not all organizations are in favour of partnership arrangements, the community sector wants guarantees that other relationships will be possible. The report recommends that the government reaffirm its commitment to free and voluntary partnership, that it commits to consulting the organizations in matters that concern them, and that it put the community sector on an equal footing with the labour, private, and service sectors in forums where the pressing issues that affect Québec society are debated.

- The "utilitarian" approach: The results of the consultation process indicate that community sector organizations would like to receive support not only in carrying out mandates defined by the State, but also in carrying out mandates linked to their missions and their community bases. On this issue, the report recommends that the government must recognize that independent community action has its own approaches, practices, and areas of expertise that contribute to the overall, sustainable development of Québec.

- Independence: The community sector sees its independence as a key issue, one that should be reflected in every aspect of the policy proposal. The resulting recommendation is in keeping with this vision.

- Rights advocacy: The report recommends that rights advocacy groups be given a greater role and that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome be used for that purpose.

- Basic government funding: The report recommends that recurring funding for the missions of independent community action organizations become standard practice in order to strengthen existing organizations.

The report contains three funding scenarios. In two of them, the budget earmarked for basic funding is managed by an organization that acts as a one-stop outlet while the service agreements remain under the purview of government departments and agencies.

The first scenario involves the adoption of an umbrella act and the creation of a State-owned corporation co-managed by the government and independent community action organizations. The corporation would promote and support independent community action and would be tasked to manage the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome, that is to say, the programs earmarked for basic funding, rights advocacy groups, and coalitions.

The second scenario involves the expansion of the role of SACA and a redefinition of its mandate to enable it to play the same role as the corporation described above, but without co-management.

Under the third scenario, government departments and agencies would share funding that is divided into two financial envelopes, one for basic funding and the other for service agreements.

- Regionalization: Opinions are split on this issue, but there is a call for clear national guidelines in order to prevent regional disparities. The report recommends that the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome continue to be managed at the national level.

- Financial commitments: The policy proposal does not set out the amounts earmarked to support the implementation of government goals. The community sector wants this point to be clarified and the report recommends the allocation of new funding.
- Women's issues: Criticism was levelled at the policy for its failure to take into account the role of women within community organizations. The report recommends that the contribution of women be given more emphasis and that independent community action be aimed at promoting gender equality.



APPENDIX 5

REPORT ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Québec government's recognition of community action has translated into substantial increases in funding for the community sector. In 1996-1997, nearly \$280 million was allocated for community organizations. In 2000-2001, the Government of Québec granted over \$471 million through some twenty government departments and agencies.

Despite the difficult fiscal environment, most government departments and agencies either maintained or increased funding to community organizations between 1996 and 2001.¹⁰ The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux alone has provided over 51% of Québec government funding to community organizations in the past three years. Québec's community organization support program (PSOC) remains the single most important financial support vehicle and its growth is a meaningful indicator of funding trends. The budget for this program has risen from \$1 million 25 years ago when it was first introduced to slightly more than \$150 million in 1996-1997 and over \$240 million in 2000-2001. The growth of this program is eloquent proof of the contribution of the community sector to the achievement of health and social service objectives in Québec.

In 2000-2001, Emploi-Québec granted over \$96 million to community organizations involved in the field of social and vocational integration and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale gave \$28 million to youth employment centres (carrefours jeunesse-emploi). That same year, the community sector received \$17 million from the Ministère de l'Éducation. The contribution from the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration rose from \$8.6 million in 1996-1997 to \$9.4 million in 2000-2001.

Since the introduction of the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome five years ago, over \$50 million in new funding has been invested in community action. In 2000-2001, hundreds of community organizations were subsidized to the tune of \$12.9 million.

At the summit on the economy and employment held in 1996, the Québec government, in tandem with its partners from the socio-economic sector, created the Fonds de lutte contre la pauvreté par la réinsertion au travail to combat poverty through reintegration into the labour market, a \$250 million, three-year financial arrangement involving three parties: tax-payers, businesses, and financial institutions. The community sector through some 2,000 innovative projects has made a significant contribution to the success of this fund through its unprecedented efforts to help people at risk of chronic unemployment. The Chantier d'économie sociale, a group that promotes the growth of the social economy, was set up during the 1996 Summit and on March 31, 1999, the Québec government awarded it \$2.6 million. At the Québec youth summit, the Québec government announced it would award \$160 million to ensure the sustainability of the anti-poverty fund. Clearly, the government has given community action a central role in the development of the Québec, and its record of support is proof of the importance that it accords to this form of civil society-based collective action.

10. The Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune, the Ministère des Relations internationales, the Ministère de la Justice, the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, the Société d'habitation du Québec, the Office de la protection du consommateur, the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, and the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec.

APPENDIX 6

MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION¹¹

THE FIRST GENERATION: CITIZEN COMMITTEES

In the 1960s and 1970s, citizen committees spearheaded the grassroots movement in Québec. Active in cities and rural Québec alike, these committees focused mainly on working-class neighbourhoods and poorer regions. They initiated the move to distance community organizations from church-controlled charities and recreational groups, social clubs, and traditional political parties. Citizen committees were also instrumental in tackling issues such as living conditions and community services and in demanding to be consulted and have a stronger voice in decision-making.

The women's movement picked up speed in the late 1960s and women militated to fully assume their rightful role within Québec society and set up groups throughout Québec. The organizations and groups that emerged would give women a decisive influence in the development of government policy.

THE SECOND GENERATION: GRASSROOTS GROUPS OR INDEPENDENT SERVICE GROUPS

In the decade that followed, the grassroots movement explored fresh territory: "The first new front being political action and the second, service groups."¹²

Political action began with the creation of the Regroupement des associations populaires du bas de la ville et de l'est de Montréal (RAP), followed by the emergence of political action committees (PACs) from the ashes of a number of citizen committees. The members of these PACs later allied with the student and union movements. "This helped lead to the creation of political parties in Montréal (RCM, 1974) and Québec City (Rassemblement populaire, 1974)."¹³

Citizen committees also gave rise to local service groups. Instead of relying on the State for services, citizen committees tried to solve local problems themselves. This is how the first food banks, home economics associations, community clinics, services for the unemployed, daycare centres, tenants' associations, community media groups, and a myriad other service groups sprang to life across Québec in response to the needs of communities.

"Grassroots service groups were primarily self-funded (and composed of volunteers, paid staff and service users) bodies that experimented with new formats for labour relations. Some defined themselves as providers of services that were alternatives to those already delivered by the State and the private sector."¹⁴ This era also marked the rise of a new generation of organizations dedicated to the social and vocational integration of people living in poverty and insecurity.

11. Excerpts from "Le mouvement populaire et communautaire : de la revendication au partenariat (1963-1992)," by Paul R. Bélanger and Benoît Lévesque, in "Québec en jeu," by Gérard Daigle and Guy Rocher, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1992.

12. Idem p. 719.

13. Idem p. 719.

14. Idem p. 720.

THE THIRD GENERATION: GROWTH, VITALITY AND STRUCTURE

In the wake of the economic crisis of the early 1980s, the community movement experienced a genuine revival, with unparalleled growth in the number and diversity of grassroots and community groups.¹⁵ Under the impetus of increased funding from the Québec government, support through CLSCs and numerous federal employability programs, the community sector gained momentum, which enabled not only the consolidation of existing organizations but the creation of numerous new ones.

But the reforms proposed by the Québec government in areas such as health and social services, income security, and labour came into question and strained relations with community organizations. At the heart of the debate was the issue of the independence of the organizations that wanted to define their roles based on their own goals and to maintain their independence, while the government's objective, as the primary funder of the community sector, was to create complementary services.

The community movement was extremely active during this era, spurring the creation of numerous coalitions to promote joint action and present a unified front to the government.

Action on the youth, family, retiree, and immigrant fronts was stepped up. The voluntary sector consolidated and spread to other sectors. New needs emerged and resources were deployed to deal with issues such as AIDS and drug dependency. The issue of exclusion from the labour market prompted the creation of economic and community development corporations, and organizations specializing in employability development began to spring up. Other organizations took up the cause of the unemployed.

HERE AND NOW: RENEWING RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE STATE

Today's community movement is in the grand tradition of preceding generations of community organizations. It is involved in every sphere of activity, not the least of which is the elimination of exclusion. Self-help organizations still exist and respond to the challenges still facing society.

For their part, community organizations continue to find new avenues for action. The social economy, among other sectors, is increasingly important. But this generation of community organizations is different from its forbears in its unprecedented attempts to renew and revitalize relations with the government. The system of political representation that has been created by the community sector (local, regional, national, and multisectoral groups and coalitions, etc.) has fostered joint action, consultation, and collaboration and has enabled the community sector be part of the government's reform process and to play an active role in the consultation mechanisms that the government has set up.

15. Idem p. 725.

Certain events have proven pivotal in forging new power relationships with the State. For example, the Bread and Roses March for Women in 1995 rallied the movers and shakers from most community action sectors around a common cause. This has helped make the community movement a pivotal partner in debates on issues of public concern. Québec's summit on the economy and employment, in which the community sector sat alongside traditional partners, in this case, unions and management, is yet another telling example. In fact, the summit was the setting for a reiteration of the need for a community action recognition and support policy. More recently, youth organizations took part in Québec's youth summit as full partners.

This overview of the community movement serves to show how capable the community sector is of innovating in order to face social problems head-on and of testing new approaches and practices. This sector plays a dynamic role in responding to emerging needs, which makes it a very progressive actor in Québec society, but also a very vocal critic.



