

ACTION RESEARCH FINDINGS

Report by the Québec pluriel Steering Committee

QUÉBEC PLURIEL



Diversity in action

A project for youths aged 16 to 24
from cultural communities or visible minorities

Québec 

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Note
In order to make this text
readable, the use of the
masculine pronoun is
generic and applies to
both men and women.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

I am very pleased to present you with *Action research Findings: Report by the Québec pluriel Steering Committee*. This report describes the issues and concerns that were the springboard for the Québec pluriel project, summarizes the action research carried out under the project, and presents the project's main results. It also highlights concrete actions taken by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and its partners following the completion of the project's action research phase.

After the action research phase ended, the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes transferred the management of the project at Emploi-Québec to ensure the harmonious integration of existing projects into the services provided by Emploi-Québec. In addition, five of these projects were extended to continue through 2005-2006.

The purpose of these actions is to ensure the continuation of the Québec pluriel project and to extend its use, under optimal conditions, as a model for socio-occupational integration by other regions. They also bear witness to the government's desire to apply innovative solutions for remedying the socio-economic inequalities facing Quebecers who are members of cultural communities or visible minorities.

It is through effective and concrete initiatives such as Québec pluriel that we will succeed at erasing inequalities. The challenge ahead is to use the results of this action research to integrate and adapt government services.

Québec pluriel has not only brought convincing results but has also made it possible to open up a new dialogue with immigrants and members of visible minorities. This dialogue has helped to mobilize a great many citizens in these communities and such mobilization has been one of the key factors contributing to the success of this project.

Québec pluriel has also helped us gain a great deal of knowledge about accompaniment measures and in that respect provides an unparalleled model for an adapted individual approach.

Lastly, Québec pluriel comes within the spirit of the Québec government's youth strategy and the agreement made between the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles to promote labour market access by immigrants and persons who are members of visible minorities.

The action research described in this report marks a first step towards a society that puts success within reach of all its members, whatever their cultural origins.

Michelle Courchesne
Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity

INTRODUCTION



Action Research Findings: Report by the Québec pluriel Steering Committee provides a synthesis of the results of Québec pluriel, an action research project conducted by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2005¹. It first presents the context in which Québec pluriel was developed and then describes the action research components, which focused on a number of themes including adapted interventions, mentoring services, community mobilization and community partnerships. The main results of the pilot projects that were tested as part of this research are also given. The report concludes with a look at some of the lessons Québec pluriel has taught us and a look towards the future regarding the educational qualifications and occupational integration of Quebecers who are recent immigrants or members of visible minorities.

This report is the end product of the work and reflections of the Québec pluriel Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives from the MESS, the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC), the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) and the city of Montréal. The Secrétariat à la jeunesse was a member of the committee as an observer. The mandate of this inter-departmental committee was to ensure the smooth functioning of Québec pluriel's action research and to promote avenues for actions in facilitating the social or occupational integration of youths from cultural communities and visible minorities, on the basis of the pilot projects that were tested under Québec pluriel. The report also bases its findings on evaluations carried out to date by the Direction générale adjointe de la recherche, de l'évaluation et de la statistique (DGARES), on analyses carried out by the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (BDSJ) with partner organizations in the form of semi-directed interviews², and on documents dealing with mentoring, including one produced by the Direction générale des politiques (DGP) at the MESS and one written by mentoring consultant Catherine Légaré.

1. Some Québec pluriel pilot projects were extended to run until September 30, 2005.

2. The BDSJ (MESS) met with participants, mentors, intervention and coordination teams, and partners to discuss such themes as the extent to which the pilot projects under Québec pluriel achieved their objectives, the actions proposed by partner organizations, the partnerships involved, community mobilization, and improvements that could be made to Québec pluriel.



1.1 ISSUES BEHIND THE CREATION OF QUÉBEC PLURIEL

Québec pluriel is an action research project that was officially announced in May 2004 by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS)³. Its creation stemmed from the observation that several groups of Quebecers who were members of cultural communities or visible minorities had much higher dropout, under-education and unemployment rates than were seen in the Québec population overall. We know that these kinds of socio-economic inequalities can lead to prejudice and discrimination and that they put a brake on the dynamism of Québec's economy. The key issue for Québec pluriel was therefore to identify new practices that could help reduce these disparities seen among new arrivals who were in a period of transition and were seeking to join the labour market, and among certain populations in the cultural communities and visible minorities, many of whose members were born in Canada and educated in the Québec education system.

Demographic trends justify the strategic nature of the testing carried out through Québec pluriel. According to Emploi-Québec, 655,000 jobs will become available between 2003 and 2007, due mainly to the retirement of significant numbers of workers. Beginning now and continuing over the next several years, public organizations and businesses in the private sector will have to intensify their efforts to inform youth about job prospects and to develop means for accompanying youth in their efforts to find their first jobs. This also means that a larger proportion of Québec youths must obtain qualifications for finding and keeping a first job. For the first time in Québec's history, we are witnessing an inversion of the population pyramid. With

3. Québec pluriel was coordinated by the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (MESS) and received funding until November 30, 2004 in the amount of \$1,357,680, provided by the Fonds Jeunesse Québec. Emploi-Québec provided projects with funding that allowed for three extension periods, as follows: \$388,485 (December 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 - nine projects), \$201,465 (April 1 to June 30, 2005 - six projects), \$170,162 (July 1 to September 30, 2005). The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport funded one project for \$24,500 (April 1 to June 30, 2005).

the rapid aging of the work force, the active working population will diminish considerably in size. This decrease in the number of workers should level out in 2051, for a drop of 22.3% in the active working population. Also, beginning in 2006, more people will leave the labour market than will join it⁴.

We are thus facing a major social challenge concerning our ability to implement measures that will increase the employment rate. Youths and new arrivals form part of this group of 'new workers' that we must target as priorities if we hope to see a maximum number of persons contribute to the development of Québec society. At present, visible minority youths show the highest unemployment rate among all youths. The unemployment rate for 15-24 year-olds who are members of visible minorities is 19.7%, compared to 13.2% for 15-24 year-olds in the population overall. Turning to education, we see that some groups of 16-24 year-olds are also disadvantaged, compared to all youths in that age group combined. For example, 52.7% of Black youths and 60.7% of youths of Latino-American origin have not gone beyond secondary five (versus 49% of the youth population overall)⁵.

We can strengthen pluralism in our society by working to reduce these kinds of socio-economic disparities. In the 1960s and 1970s, we saw the social mobilization of a large number of Quebec citizens of French-Canadian origin, and now is the time to see the same thing among Quebec citizens of all origins. To make that happen, it is necessary to develop employment and education measures that will combat discrimination, promote equal opportunities and foster diversity. Such measures should also allow workers from all origins to contribute to the development and competitiveness of the Québec economy in a global economy.



1.2 TARGET POPULATIONS AND ACTION RESEARCH COMPONENTS

Québec pluriel targeted youth aged 16 to 24⁶ from the cultural communities or visible minorities who presented higher dropout, lower scholarship and employment rates than the overall population. Youths not receiving government income support were a specific target, but those who were receiving employment assistance or employment insurance were also eligible, provided that they were not participating in any MESS program or employability measure.

Partner organizations were responsible for identifying and selecting youths for the project. Youths participated on a voluntary basis in individual and group activities and met with mentors for at least 15 minutes a week. They received participation allowance of \$30 per week.

Québec pluriel was made up of two components: labour market entry and education/academic persistence. The initial analyses that the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (BDSJ) conducted on the projects have shown that the youths participating in the labour market entry component formed two distinct categories, each reflecting their own specific needs and expectations: youths who had recently immigrated and young Quebecers from visible minorities.

4. Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Faits et chiffres*, 1999, gouvernement du Québec, 1999.

5. MESS, *Document de présentation Québec pluriel*, 2004, 16 p.

6. Three pilot projects specifically targeted youths aged 16 to 30.

It was seen that youths from certain target groups had more education than the overall youth population, but that they still presented one of the highest unemployment rates. The dominant characteristic of other youths was their considerable distance from the labour market (lack of qualifications, insufficient preparation, lack of understanding about employment opportunities and employability resources, etc.).



The pilot projects carried out under the education/academic persistence component were intended for youth from the cultural communities, including visible minorities. Their objective was to support youth in populations characterized by high dropout and under-education rates in order to foster their academic persistence or to support them in their effort to return to school.

1.3 GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED FOR QUÉBEC PLURIEL

MESS coordinated Québec pluriel, with funding from the Fonds Jeunesse Québec and with the collaboration of the Québec pluriel Steering Committee. This committee identified three major guidelines for the project, as follows:

- Use an action research approach.
- Carry out the action research on the basis of ten pilot projects distributed under two components (labour market entry, education/academic persistence).
- Explore, within a common framework, the greatest possible variety of pilot projects.

USE AN ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH

The action research model⁷ provides many advantages. For example, it allows for the gradual development, in collaboration with professionals, of new practice-based intervention methods to enhance understanding of the needs of the target groups and to guide the implementation of new public programs and policies.

7. Action research promotes the creation of a "dialectical logic moving back and forth between theory and practice, between the work of users and of experts, between transference figures and learning operations, between learned knowledge and constructed knowledge, between the individual subject and the social subject" (Resweber, 2003, pp. 5-6, free translation).

USE PILOT PROJECTS FOR THE ACTION RESEARCH

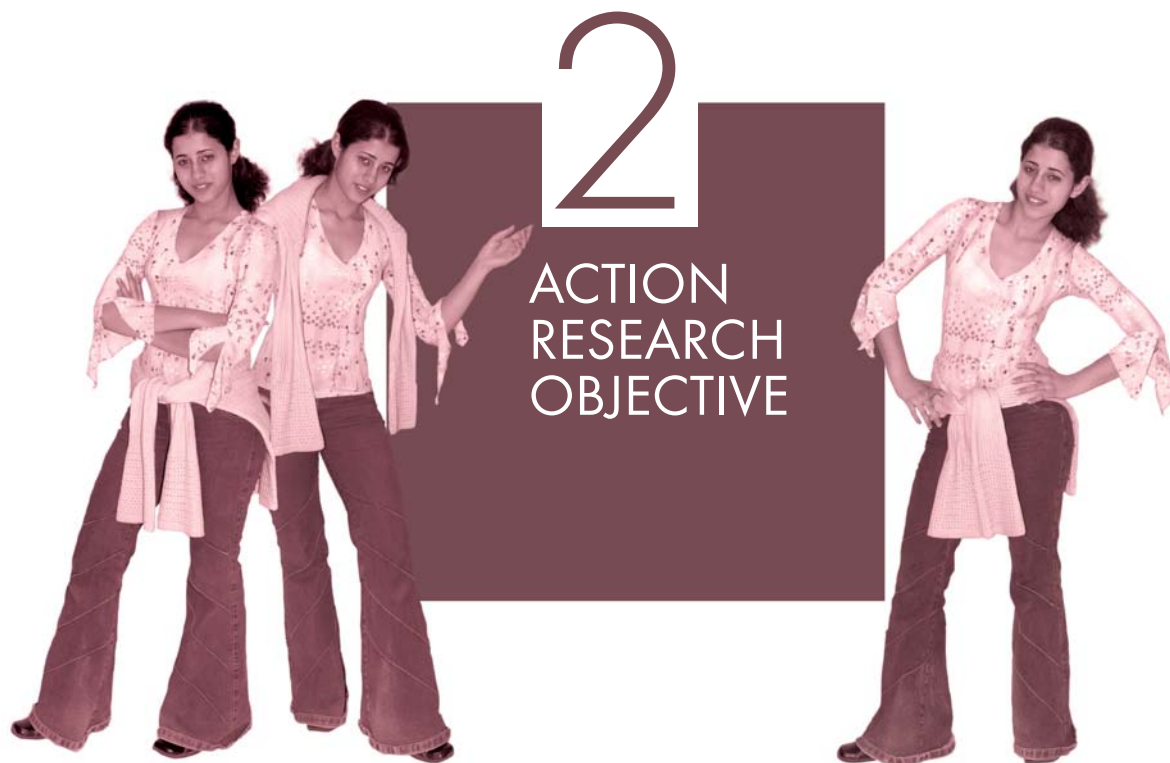
Québec pluriel consisted of three distinct phases: research, consultation and production of the report. Research involved experimenting, in collaboration with partner community organizations in the Montréal region, with ten pilot projects focusing on the development of adapted interventions and accompaniment services (seven labour market entry projects and three education/academic persistence projects)⁸. This research made it possible to document mentoring-based accompaniment practices that could inspire the government in its future actions for young people. For the consultation phase, meetings were held with participants, mentors, interveners and partners to get their opinions about Québec pluriel and any suggestions they might have for improving it. This report completes Québec pluriel. It does not supersede evaluation reports that have been completed or are yet to be completed, but is intended to provide reflections that can help improve our understanding of Québec pluriel.



ENSURE A DIVERSITY OF PILOT PROJECTS

The Québec pluriel Steering Committee developed a common framework for all the projects. At the same time, this framework was flexible in order to allow for a diversity of variables (target populations and territories, participants' status, i.e., recent immigrants or otherwise, types of partner organizations, specific guidelines for each project, etc.), to generate a wider variety of information.

8. The ten partner organizations of Québec pluriel (nine as of November 2004, because one project was not renewed), all in Montréal, were as follows: Labour market entry component: Carrefour jeunesse-emploi Bourassa-Sauvé, Black Community Resource Centre, Centre génération emploi, Centre jeunesse arabe, Intégration jeunesse du Québec inc., Jeunesse noire en action, and L'Hirondelle – Services d'accueil et d'intégration des immigrants. Education/academic persistence component: Café jeunesse multiculturel, Carrefour jeunesse-emploi Viger/Jeanne-Mance and La Maisonnée.



The objectives of each pilot project carried out under Québec pluriel were to:

- develop adapted interventions and implement accompaniment services based on mentoring in the partner organizations;
- mobilize partner organizations, local institutions and stakeholders participating in the action research to focus on the importance of education, the existing job opportunities in Québec and employment sectors currently in demand, and on the importance of innovating and exploring the new actions for attenuating the problems observed;
- raise awareness among employers about the real issues faced by Quebecers who constitute our cultural communities and visible minorities, about the importance of having diversified human resources, and about the role employers have to play in socio-economic integration.

2.1 ACTIONS BY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND THE USE OF MENTORING

A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIONS

Québec pluriel gave its partner organizations the opportunity to develop new kinds of interventions as means of enhancing their services. Their interventions took on a wide variety of forms, made possible by the leeway they had for taking account of local initiatives and needs. Numerous individual and group workshops were made available to the participants, with three types of workshops forming part of the Québec pluriel projects. Dynamic job search methods and socio-occupational integration were the themes of two workshops. In addition, group workshops were offered, with the focus on self-knowledge or aspects of life in Québec,

such as time management, Québec's organizational culture, labour standards, the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, learning techniques and the education system (education/academic perseverance component). Several networking activities were held, including meetings with employers to discuss hiring strategies, meetings with workers who spoke about their occupations and career paths, and conferences on such themes as labour standards. Sports and socio-cultural activities (viewing of documentaries, visits to career fairs and museums) were also held to help break through the isolation experienced by several participants. In addition, some participants were able to do volunteer work.

USE OF MENTORING TO COMBAT THE SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL ISOLATION OF CERTAIN YOUTHS



The use of mentoring is one of the main original ideas that went into the action research carried out under Québec pluriel. In promoting greater inter-generational and intercultural solidarity, we wanted to give participants individualized support and to help them develop their contact networks in support of their efforts to join the labour market or continue with their studies. The Québec pluriel Steering Committee thus fully assessed and researched mentoring for its use in the project. This work helped ensure understanding of the key concepts behind mentoring and to define its nature as a specific form of support. Its relevance in supporting socio-occupational integration and academic perseverance was also studied in relation to previous research and the results of Québec pluriel. Appendix 2 presents the highlights of this work.

The Concept of Mentoring

Although we find a wide range of definitions in the literature, the term 'mentoring' may be defined as "personal, voluntary assistance provided free of charge and in confidence over a long period by a mentor to meet the specific needs of a person (the mentee), on the basis of objectives related to the mentee's personal and professional development, including education and development of competencies, in a given context." (Office québécois de la langue française, 2003). This assistance, which can take on different forms depending on the circumstances (individual accompaniment, occupational support counselling), focuses primarily on life skills, i.e., the mentee's generic skills (initiative, perseverance, creativity, sense of organization, critical thinking, etc.), on transferable skills (communication skills, research skills, personal development skills, career planning, etc.) and on key transversal skills (organizational efficiency, negotiating skills, ability to work as part of a team, creative thinking, problem-solving skills, etc.).

Mentoring helps mentees to become proactive and to take responsibility for their future (Cohen and Galbraith, 1995; Schulz, 1995). It offers models for youths and broadens their horizons by exposing them to new situations that take them beyond what is available to them in their immediate environment (Freedman, 1993). Mentors are usually successful persons who have accomplished a variety of things throughout their lives and careers. Contact with adults other than their parents has been seen to be very rewarding, enriching and stimulating for youths. The mentor-mentee relationship gives the mentee more than just ready-made knowledge and strategies; it gives them a genuine occasion to enrich their intellectual, social and affective capacities. Often seen as a means for inter-generational transmission, mentoring is also a source of intercultural transmission.

2.2 PARTNERSHIP AND MOBILIZATION FOR COMBATting THE ISOLATION OF CERTAIN CULTURAL COMMUNITIES OR VISIBLE MINORITIES

The nature of the difficulties hindering the socio-occupational integration of youths who are new immigrants or members of visible minorities demands actions beyond traditional employment or educational support services, to ensure the inclusion of these youths. The challenge lies in creating favourable conditions, on the one hand by reinforcing individuals' empowerment⁹ (ability to act), notably by strengthening their motivation, and on the other hand by attenuating external or social factors that have an effect on the paths taken towards inclusion by individuals or certain populations.

For partner organizations and participants, this means bringing about, with support from the government, genuine collective stakeholder participation, not just to modify individual behaviours or situations but also to influence social relations (for example, the functioning of the labour market or discriminatory behaviours and attitudes) that are present in society. This challenge is met notably by building solidarity networks, based on a dialogue between stakeholders who wish to undertake collective initiatives on the basis of common themes, objectives and actions. Mobilization must include as its objective, further to the construction of discursive spaces based on identity or specific claims, "discourse construction carried out by the stakeholders who recognize each another and agree to be recognized by each other as capable of intervening and of transforming the contexts of the social life in which they act" (Farro, 2000, p. 217). Mobilization and awareness building do not arise spontaneously; they depend very much on the time and efforts invested by partner organizations in an active effort to engage other stakeholders in the process.



Through its objective to support youth not only by way of mentoring but also by getting partner organizations to mobilize local stakeholders and sensitize employers, Québec pluriel sets itself apart from the education and employment measures and services normally provided to individuals.

MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

The purpose of mobilization was to create new partnerships that would work for the benefit of participants, as was the case with the city of Montréal and some of its districts, and also to get local institutional and community stakeholders to work together in addressing factors that had effects on the issues being dealt with (unemployment, dropout and under-education rates). This mobilization of local stakeholders was seen in periodic meetings with community organizations, advisory tables or business associations, as well as in the distribution of information to the media, awareness building for organizations in the target cultural community, a conference for broadening the discussion of the issues, and the creation of an advisory committee on the issues involved in the action research. Schools were asked to participate in the education/academic persistence component.

9. The concept of 'empowerment,' which may be considered synonymous with 'power to act' or with the terms 'self-determination' and 'capacitation,' refers to actions intended to provide tools allowing persons who are experiencing transition difficulties or who have lost hope to recover the feeling that they can regain control of their destiny. One interesting definition of 'empowerment' is found in a document by Groupe Recherche Focus (available at: www.grfocus.com): "Authors and researchers all agree that empowerment is first and foremost a process involving concrete actions that allow persons caught up by incapacitating situations in their lives to gain the feeling that it is possible for them to exercise greater control over the various aspects of their psychological and social reality. This feeling can lead to the exercise of genuine control" (free translation).

RAISING AWARENESS AMONG EMPLOYERS

Various means were used to increase awareness among employers. Telephone calls were made to employers indicated on a list of companies provided by participants in order to deal with the issue of diversity in hiring and to promote themselves for jobs, and meetings were held with local chambers of commerce. One organization announced that it had created a working group to write down existing practices and programs of diversity in hiring and programs at certain companies, which were then promoted among other employers.

Measures that promote the hiring of recent immigrants or members of visible minorities can meet the needs of employers who are facing a labour shortage and are seeking international expertise. Such measures can also help them gain an image of prestige and social responsibility. Providing employers with access to organizations that have job candidate banks and developing networks of companies in specific sectors are also highly promising avenues for the future.



Employers' interest in hiring immigrants

A CROP survey conducted in the spring of 2004 for the Conseil du patronat du Québec (CPQ) showed that a strong majority of employers are open to seeing measures that will facilitate the labour market integration of 'immigrant workers'¹⁰. Most employers also recognize that hiring immigrants gives them advantages in terms of networking and innovation. However, less than one of every five employers possesses written policies, programs or practices for integrating these workers, and a vast majority do not appear to have sufficient information on immigrant labour. In short, the interest of employers in seeing greater integration of immigrant workers does not necessarily lead to initiatives by them in that regard. Public initiatives could meet the real needs, and the follow-up on Québec pluriel should accordingly include developing systematic strategies for raising awareness among employers and getting them involved in the integration of immigrants into the labour market.

10. CROP, *Étude quantitative portant sur l'intégration des immigrants en entreprise au Québec*, 2004.



According to the Québec pluriel Steering Committee, Québec pluriel has done what it set out to do, as seen in the results presented here. It was run in accordance with the established objectives and timeframes, despite a tight work calendar, and in some cases allowed for the start-up of projects in the summer. The perceptions of participants and interveners concerning the projects indicate a high level of satisfaction with Québec pluriel. The preliminary information from the evaluation of projects also points to positive and encouraging results for the future.

A total of 303 youths took part in Québec pluriel between May 2004 and February 2005. This number exceeded the initial objective of 285 participants.

The steering committee monitored the pilot projects throughout their duration. In addition, the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (BDSJ) produced analyses by way of roundtables held in the fall of 2004 with all partner organizations, project teams, participants, mentors and local stakeholders that had been mobilized for the projects. The Direction de l'évaluation (DE) of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité (MESS) mandated a firm to organize group discussions involving the participants, interviewed teams on the running of their projects and asked them to provide updated information on the situation of participants by means of a questionnaire. The DE also drew up a portrait of participants using the recruitment files provided by the partner organizations. Finally, at the time this report was being written, the DE was completing an e-mail survey of mentors to obtain information from them and was beginning a telephone survey of participants. The results of these two surveys will be available in the fall of 2005.

It was decided to present results in an overall manner in order to:

- prevent comparisons of the results achieved by the various partner organizations, seeing that each project had its own specific characteristics;
- describe the general trends that emerged from the pilot projects;
- protect the privacy of the youths who took part in Québec pluriel.

The objectives and methodology of the evaluation are given in Appendix 1.

3.1 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS IN QUÉBEC PLURIEL PILOT PROJECTS



The profile of participants was drawn up in March 2005 on the basis of information concerning 303 registered participants.

- **Participation component:** 67% of youths took part in the labour market entry component, while 33% took part in the education/academic persistence component.
- **Age:** The average age of participants was 23 (average age of 25 for the labour market entry component and average age of 18 for the education/academic persistence component). More than half of the participants (52%) were between the ages of 16 and 21.
- **Sex:** 55% of the participants were male and 45% were female. Women made up the majority of participants in the labour market entry component, at 58%, and men made up the majority of participants in the education/academic persistence component, at 52%.
- **Educational attainment level:** The educational levels attained by participants in the labour market entry component were as follows: 17% (high school diploma), 7% (college diploma), 53% (university degree), and 23% (no diploma or degree). For the education/academic persistence component, 98% of the participants did not have a diploma or degree and 2% had a high school diploma. In addition, 69% of participants born outside Canada had a foreign diploma or degree.
- **Member of a cultural community or visible minority:** According to information provided by the partner organizations, the origins of the participants were as follows (with proportions in descending order): Haitian (34%), Arab or Maghreb (24%), Latin-American (18%), African (14%), Black with no other specification (10%), Asiatic (2%) and European (1%).
- **Place of birth or legal status in Canada:** 77% of the participants were born outside Canada, 45% were Canadian citizens, and 55% had permanent resident status.
- **Government income security recipients:** Thirty-one participants (10%) had received employment assistance and 44 (15%) had taken part in at least one active program of Emploi-Québec before May 2004. A majority of the latter had benefited from one or several short-term active programs, i.e., employability evaluation with intervention plan and employability evaluation intervention plan (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Number of Québec pluriel participants who took part in Emploi-Québec active measures
before May 2004, according to type of measure

NAME OF MEASURE	Number of participants in their 1 st measure	Number of participants in their 2 nd measure	Number of participants in their 3 rd measure
Employability evaluation with intervention plan	21	11	4
Employability evaluation without intervention plan	8	2	
Employment assistance service	6	6	4
Follow-up on a personal integration plan	3	1	1
French language learning	2	2	2
Initial evaluation interview and employment assistance (group)	2	3	1
Labour market information	1		
Private enterprise	1		
Job readiness project		2	
Enterprise integration		1	1
Presentation of Emploi-Québec services and measures		1	
Integration		1	
Job search techniques and tools		1	
Solidarité jeunesse			1
Occupational training prerequisite			1

3.2 RESULTS OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS

As requested by the Direction de l'évaluation, the firm Johnson & Roy inc. held group discussions in the fall of 2004 with 65 youth who had taken part in the ten projects¹¹. The report on these group discussions indicates the overall satisfaction of the youths. It also presents the profiles of the youths involved, the information they received on the projects before their participation, their expectations, how the projects were run, the effects of the youths' participation, and their perception of those effects¹².

OVERALL SATISFACTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The report indicates that "all of the youths involved in the group discussions on the Québec pluriel projects were satisfied or highly satisfied by their participation in their specific projects. The projects met their needs and expectations and brought them undeniable benefits¹³." It goes on further to note that "all respondents in both components combined said they would like to see the project continue. They received many significant benefits and felt that the support offered by the projects was of particular use to their situations." The main element to be improved, according to participants in the labour market entry component, involved reinforcing the practical side of Québec pluriel by including work experience placements. Some youths recommended increasing the number of links with professional associations and ensuring greater awareness among employers.

11. Johnson & Roy inc. interviewed 61 youths in group interviews and interviewed four others by way of individual telephone interviews.

12. Johnson & Roy inc. (2005), *Évaluation des projets pilotes Québec pluriel destinés aux jeunes de communautés culturelles et de minorités visibles. Rapport sur les groupes de discussion tenus avec des participants aux projets pilotes, étude réalisée à la demande du ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*, 14 p.

13. *Ibid.*

PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

The participants, all of whom took part in individual meetings, "felt that the meetings were useful and necessary and that they should be included in group activities to provide personalized support in that context."

PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION REGARDING THE GROUP WORKSHOPS

Here, "the vast majority of the youths felt that all of the group activities gave them relevant, important and enriching information. All of the youths considered that the activities were conducted satisfactorily and in a friendly atmosphere. The activities were appropriate for the youths in terms of frequency and the choice of themes discussed, and they met the youths' expectations and needs."

EFFECTS OF QUÉBEC PLURIEL AND PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE EFFECTS

With regard to the effects of Québec pluriel on the participants in the labour market entry component, the report by Johnson & Roy inc. indicates that, on the basis of information obtained in October 2004, "the projects enabled some youths to find jobs or work experience placements in the areas of their choice but most of the participants were still looking for jobs. It would thus be premature to draw any conclusions concerning the effects related to employment integration."

On the other hand, the youths noted improvements in their job searches:

- Some participants said they were being called more often for job interviews.
- Others felt that without the project they would have made less progress or would have made less effort in their job searches.
- A majority of participants felt they were better prepared for their job searches "because they have acquired important knowledge about the labour market and have learned job search techniques (résumé writing, interview techniques, etc.)." They are now more confident that they will find the job they want.
- They also felt that "they are better prepared to identify their career goals and the means to achieve those goals (path, training)."
- Lastly, "the knowledge they have acquired through their projects has allowed them to expand their contact networks and to take advantage of those networks."

Turning to the pilot projects conducted under the education/academic persistence component, we see that "some youth improved their academic performance ('I am getting better grades'), have found greater motivation to continue their studies and are attending their classes regularly. For the youths in one group, their career choices were becoming clearer. Before registering in the project, they had already returned to school or were planning to do so, and the assistance offered them by the project has given them substantial help in persevering."



3.3 PRELIMINARY EFFECTS OF THE PROJECTS

In January 2005, the interveners with the partner organizations completed a questionnaire dealing with the preliminary effects that they found their respective projects to have had on the participants. These interveners provided us with information on 192 participants in the labour market entry component and on 100 participants in the education/academic persistence component¹⁴.

Table 2 illustrates the situation of 192 participants in the labour market entry component. One hundred and thirteen (59%) participants were still involved in their projects as of January 17, 2005. Among the 79 other participants, 29 (37%) had left because they had achieved their objectives, 19 (24%) had left without achieving their objectives and 32 (39%) had already completed their projects. In addition, nine youths who were no longer receiving their participation allowances were continuing to meet with their mentors.

TABLE 2
Situation of 192 participants* in the labour market entry component as of January 17, 2005,
according to information provided by the interveners

SITUATION	Number of responses	Proportion (%)
Working full-time in the desired area	25	14,5
Working part-time in the desired area	14	8,1
Working in a related area (job obtained before the project)	3	1,7
Working in a related area (job obtained during the project)	4	2,3
Working in an area without relevant training (job obtained before the project)	16	9,2
Working in an area without relevant training (job obtained during the project)	15	8,7
Looking for a job	62	35,8
Studying (holders of foreign diploma or degree obtaining additional training)	12	6,9
Studying at the high school or college level	39	22,5
Work experience placement in the desired area	18	10,4
Studying French	7	4,0
TOTAL	215 *	*

*More than one situation applied to 42 individuals, hence the total of 215 responses (and a total percentage greater than 100%). This total excludes the 19 participants who left the project without achieving their objectives.

The information available on January 17, 2005 regarding the 100 youth who registered in the education/academic persistence component shows that 73 participants (73%) were still active in the project, according to the interveners. Table 3 presents the situation of these participants. The interveners reported that 20 of them (27%) had improved their school behaviours, 12 (16%) had improved their academic performance, and 6 (8%) had transferred to part-time studies so that they could devote more time to their schoolwork. The reasons the other participants had for withdrawing from the project, as determined by the partner organizations, were lack of motivation, inability to find a job, personal problems or an extended stay in a welcoming class.

14. Information taken from *Compilation du questionnaire sur les effets préliminaires administrés aux intervenants*, Direction de l'évaluation, ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, 2005.

TABLE 3
**Situation of 73 participants* active in the education/academic persistence component
as of January 17, 2005, according to information provided by the interveners**

SITUATION	Number of participants	%
In high school	23	31,5
High school studies (adult education)	46	63,0
College studies	4	5,5
Working (same situation as before the project)	12	16,4
Working (job obtained during the project)	4	5,5
Looking for a job or working while going to school	9	12,3
Total	98*	*

*The information provided by the organizations covered 73 of 100 participants. Several situations apply to 25 of these 73 participants, hence the total of 98 (and a total percentage exceeding 100%).

The Québec pluriel Steering Committee feels that the information available on the employment integration of participants is encouraging. Some participants have returned to school. The analysis of the results must, however, take account of the fact that some youths had just begun their participation and that others had just completed it. Nor do we have information concerning the jobs held (fixed-term positions or otherwise) or concerning job maintenance. It should also be noted that the effects in terms of employability will take longer to be felt among youths who were at a greater distance from joining the labour market because of lack of scholarship or because of personal problems (which also affected participants who had attained a certain educational level). Furthermore, information over the longer term will be necessary to assess the project's effects on youth who resumed or continued with their studies (year in which they complete their studies, diploma obtained).

However, in considering the information obtained on youths whose situations have changed as well as on those who found a job during their participation in Québec pluriel, who continued with their studies or who found a work experience placement, and in considering the interim effects reported by the interveners, the steering committee believes that the projects have brought positive results for a good number of participants.

3.4 INTERVENERS' ASSESSMENTS OF THE PROJECTS¹⁵

As indicated in the preliminary report *Projets pilotes Québec pluriel – Entrevues auprès des équipes de projet*, which was produced by the Direction de l'évaluation (June 2005), the interveners who were consulted at the time of the evaluations were conducted said they felt the projects had gone ahead as planned. The only major changes reported by the organizations had to do with personnel movements. On the other hand, changes were made along the way, to the extent permitted by the testing involved in the projects. Also, the projects carried out under the education/academic perseverance component appeared to be more difficult for the organizations to implement and manage than those under the labour market entry component. The main difficulty appears to have been the lack of time; the seven-month testing period was considered too

15. Information taken from the preliminary report *Projets pilotes Québec pluriel – Entrevues auprès des équipes de projet* (Direction de l'évaluation, June 2005).

short by the interveners. After they were interviewed, it was decided to extend a majority of the projects. In light of the observations obtained, it seems that the labour market entry projects should run for six or seven months and that the education projects should run the length of the school year. However, the interveners felt that the length should vary depending on the needs of the youths and the type of assistance being offered.

The interveners felt that the mobilization of local stakeholders was relevant in a majority of projects. They indicated that establishing partnerships in the community is useful for recruiting participants and for facilitating their search for work experience placements or jobs. Despite the consensus achieved concerning the relevance of motivation, there were questions about the exact objectives involved and about the energy that the organizations should devote to motivation, seeing that it is by definition an ongoing process.

Some interveners who were interviewed at the start of the project questioned the relevance of raising awareness among employers. This perception may have been influenced by the sometimes limited means they had for such actions (time, human resources, or information). Intervenors felt that awareness building among employers was less relevant for the education/academic perseverance component, seeing that most participants in that component were far from ready to join the labour market.

It is true that informing and canvassing employers was demanding work for the interveners. The efforts to help employers learn about the realities of the youths targeted by Québec pluriel may have been disproportionately high compared to the immediate results. But there could be long-term benefits, as the



BDSJ noted. For example, some employers contacted one partner organization several months after first being approached by it. Several businesses demonstrated openness to requests for work experience placements by one organization, but they did not feel the time was suitable for offering placements. In general, the BDSJ, which supported the Québec pluriel organization that focused on obtaining placements, also saw that employers often had little time to undertake actions for promoting greater diversity in their human resources. For example, holding job competitions to hire immigrants takes time, energy and the ability to seek out appropriate candidates.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF MENTORING SERVICES PROVIDED¹⁶

Overall, mentoring services were more effective in the labour market entry component. The youths in the education/academic perseverance component were either less interested in the mentoring service or found the type of mentoring offered them (occupational) less relevant to their needs.

According to figures received by the BDSJ from interveners in March 2005, 151 mentor-mentee pairs had been established under Québec pluriel. In three projects, the mentors and the mentees came from the same community. In the other cases, the mentors were from other communities and several of them were Quebecers in origin. Three projects had the same number of men and women, while the ratio varied in other projects. There seems to have been no specific trend concerning the ages of mentors, which ranged from 20 to 60.

16. The information provided in this section comes from various sources, including the preliminary report *Projets pilotes Québec pluriel – Entrevues auprès des équipes de projet* (Direction de l'évaluation, June 2005), the report by Johnson & Roy inc. on the participants' discussion groups, the analyses of round-table consultations carried out by the BDSJ, and a literature review carried out by the Direction générale des politiques.

According to information provided by partner organizations, several mentors were recruited by way of interveners' personal and professional relationships. These results brought out the limits in using interveners' networks to recruit mentors. We also saw that recruitment can be difficult for community organizations that have few partners.

LABOUR MARKET ENTRY COMPONENT

According to the report by Johnson & Roy inc., the youths who participated in this component had three types of expectations with regard to mentoring. The report states that these three types of expectations were interrelated and describes them as follows: "First, youths' expectations with regard to mentoring focused on the occupational aspect [. . .] Secondly, some participants who had recently immigrated felt that [. . .] mentoring was an activity that would help them learn about the culture, customs, lifestyle and social expectations in Québec [and thirdly,] they felt that the role of mentors was to help them expand their occupational contact networks."

a) Youths who have recently immigrated

Four pilot projects targeted this participant category in the labour market entry component. Their activities included occupational mentoring, combined in one case with psychosocial mentoring. Mentoring is seen as an invaluable and relevant form of accompaniment for this clientele, which is going through an important transition period, not only in occupational terms but also in cultural and social terms. As Cuerrier (2004) explains, "Mentoring is an intervention method that can reduce the number of decisions made through trial and error and minimize the pain of transition. It supports persons in their occupational decision-making and helps them to define their career goals over the long term." In addition, many youths who are recent immigrants feel social and occupational isolation. According to testimonies obtained at the round-table discussions organized by the BDSJ, contact with mentors helps reduce the feeling of social isolation. Lastly, the participants said that they appreciated the flexibility of mentoring as a form of accompaniment. At the round-table consultations held in September 2004, some participants said that it is common in their countries of origin for youths to receive guidance from mentors who are members of their extended families.

Regarding the benefits of mentoring for newly immigrated youths, the consultant involved in this action research noted that "even though mentors cannot provide jobs for their mentees, they still facilitate their socio-occupational integration. On the basis of their experience with the working world in Québec, mentors can help mentees decipher the various socio-occupational codes and develop attitudes that will assist them in finding and maintaining jobs" (Légaré, 2004, p. 9). Thanks to the support and advice provided by mentors, youths can recognize pitfalls to be avoided in their journey towards socio-occupational integration. Furthermore, the information given by mentors on the functioning of the work world in Québec complements the information given in the workshops. The strongest advantage offered by mentoring is that it serves as a personal and privileged form of communication allowing mentees to develop their occupational contact networks. In this regard, one important aspect in the selection of mentors is that they should have completed their own socio-occupational integration.

b) Visible-minority youths

Three pilot projects under the labour market entry component were intended in particular for Québec youths who were members of visible minorities. After speaking with project promoters and their partners, the BDSJ saw overall that these youths have little access to positive role models in their entourages and that mentoring would be a highly relevant means for addressing this situation. These pilot projects were intended for Black communities. Most participants came from underprivileged environments and those who no longer went to school were generally seen to be under-educated, which meant they faced significant employment and social barriers. They preferred mentors of the same origin as them, i.e., persons with whom they could identify more easily. Matching participants with occupational mentors who came from the same community as them and who had gone through the same experiences was thus the model chosen for Black communities.

In addition, the organizations noted that the youths aged 20 and older were the most receptive to occupational mentoring. The younger ones, many of whom were still attending school, showed less interest in this form of mentoring. Some interveners mentioned at the round-tables that the two components of Québec pluriel (labour market entry and education/academic persistence) were necessary to help this clientele meet its various needs. We saw that youths who had completed school but had not yet found jobs needed to gain better understanding of the work world and to build up their contact networks. These youths often lack motivation and can become cynical regarding their job search due to the racism (real or perceived) directed towards them.

EDUCATION/ACADEMIC PERSEVERANCE COMPONENT

Two models were tested by the three organizations involved in this component. Two projects focused on occupational mentoring, while the third was based on mentoring that provided academic accompaniment and access to positive role models. The youths targeted here were taking regular courses as adult education students. The BDSJ learned from the interveners in all projects that the participants needed, above all else, academic supervision, especially those in adult education, which employs individualized learning that requires a high level of autonomy. These youths generally receive little supervision at home and at times go through periods of tension with their parents. They often have difficulties concentrating and finding the motivation to continue with their studies.

As indicated in the report by Johnson & Roy inc., participants in this component had varying opinions about the mentor profile. The report goes on to note that the main expectation of youths in one project with regard to mentoring was that they felt it should provide them with help in their studies. The youths saw the mentor as a 'private teacher,' one who could teach them study techniques. Still according to the report by Johnson and Roy, the youths in another group wanted the mentor to help them make career choices, while the youths in another project showed little interest in this kind of support.

The only project that used an educational form of mentoring was highly successful. The interveners in that project found indications of positive effects on youths regarding school and their academic performance. These observations correspond with what we see in the literature¹⁷. The youths expressed the need for homework assistance and more supervision to help them improve their grades. Moreover, some youths who had recently immigrated were in welcoming classes, where they felt their situations were not always properly considered and which made them feel they were losing important years of their lives.

17. Evaluations of mentoring programs for at-risk adolescents show that these programs have positive effects on youths' perceptions of school (LoSciuto et al., 1996; Linnehan, 2003), on school absenteeism (McPartland and Nettles, 1991), on academic persistence (Hamilton and Darling, 1996; Slicker and Palmer, 1993), and on academic success (McPartland and Nettles, 1991; Slicker and Palmer, 1993).

MENTORS' ASSESSMENT OF MENTORING SERVICES¹⁸

The initial observations stemming from the consultation of mentors in June 2005 show that the mentors considered the mentoring relationships established under Québec pluriel were highly relevant. Most felt that the relationship had gone ahead without any particular difficulty and that it had been useful. However, a significant enough number of them said that the experience did not meet their expectations and mentioned that various aspects could be improved, in particular the means for selecting and pairing mentors and mentees, and the coordination of the relationship by the partner organizations. In addition, the lack of motivation and unwillingness to get involved shown by some participants hampered the development of relationships. It would thus be appropriate to continue improving mentoring services on the basis of success factors indicated in the literature (see Appendix 2).

18. The information in this section is taken from the document *Projets pilotes Québec pluriel – Sondage auprès des mentors*, ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (which was being prepared at the time this report was written).



According to Québec pluriel Steering Committee, the analyses and evaluations conducted to date indicate that the pilot projects have had positive impacts on the participants, that they met the needs expressed by the youths and by local stakeholders who were consulted, and that the model tested under the projects was sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the specific characteristics of the target communities. The participants' level of satisfaction was also high.

The lessons learned from Québec pluriel will allow the Québec government to continue with actions based on the premises, objectives and intervention models that made up this action research. We have learned specific things from each of the two components (labour market entry and education/academic perseverance) and more generally from mentoring as a form of accompaniment.

4.1 LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES: LABOUR MARKET ENTRY COMPONENT

- **Challenge in reaching youths who have no government income:** Québec pluriel showed that the challenge of reaching youths who are not receiving any form of government income assistance can be met by way of projects in the labour market entry component if the appropriate energies are applied and if alternative recruitment strategies based on mobilization are developed. We note here that only 10% of the 303 youths who participated in Québec pluriel between May 2004 and February 2005 were receiving employment assistance and that only 15% had taken part in at least one Emploi-Québec active program (most of which were short-term) before May 2004. Further to mobilizing youth or employment integration organizations and the local employment centres (CLE), it will be necessary in the future to target new partners and communication networks in some specific communities, notably those that presented the most difficulties in labour market entry and academic perseverance.
- **Distinct needs of recent immigrants and members of visible minorities:** It was seen during this action research, especially through the analyses and observations of the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (BDSJ), that the characteristics and needs of youths varied depending on which of the two following categories they fell into: recent immigrants and members of visible minorities. The partner organizations had to take account of the needs presented by the youths in each category. Accordingly, specific lessons have been learned regarding these two populations.

PILOT PROJECTS INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR RECENT IMMIGRANTS



The main lessons learned from labour market entry projects for recent immigrants stem from the participants' needs, in particular the value of work experience placements and the need to increase the client age limit to 35.

- **A response to specific needs:** It appears that new arrivals need first of all to gain knowledge of the labour market to guide their steps towards finding jobs. The organizations' workshops met this need. The main function of the intervention focusing on recent immigrants is to help them understand the existing structures, to identify tools that can help them at some point in their labour market integration, and to help them learn job search techniques.
- **The importance of accompaniment:** Occupational mentoring proved to be especially relevant in Québec pluriel for this sub-group of youths who had recently immigrated. Most of these youths want to join the labour market as quickly as possible and their relationship with a mentor can help reduce the length of their socio-occupational integration. Accompaniment is useful also for Francophone immigrants, who often undergo significant culture shock. It also appears overall that the origin of the mentor is not a determining factor for the pairing of mentors and mentees. The mentor's occupational experience and area of employment appear to be more important because these youths want assistance to find jobs in fields that interest them.
- **The strategic value of obtaining a first work experience placement:** Even though just one project was based on providing youths with work experience placements, the participants in projects for recent immigrants often indicated the usefulness of obtaining work experience placements or on-the-job training. Gaining their first work experience is important because they have been educated outside of Canada and often lack the experience of other youths their age. Québec businesses also tend to prefer job candidates who have acquired their work experience in Québec. The workshops and placements thus met two of the main needs expressed by the participants: gain information and work experience, and develop occupational contact networks.

Short-term work experience placements

One of the pilot projects offered short-term work experience placements. The participants were able to obtain unpaid placements lasting a few weeks in an area corresponding to their educational background (e.g., childcare services, travel agency, accounting, computers). Several youths in this project were subsequently hired by the participating companies. They also received follow-up support from the organization and the companies involved, and were given letters of recommendation. These placements were quite short and unpaid, and the difficulty of recruiting employers was stressed¹⁹. The experience nevertheless confirmed the importance in building close relationships with local stakeholders to ensure the success of the intervention forms that were tested. Some proven models for managing placements, such as Career Edge, can provide guidance in this area (see Appendix 4).

- **Extend the age limit for eligible clients:** The age limit for eligibility of participants in Québec pluriel was questioned by all organizations that worked with recent immigrants. Several organizations mentioned that the projects could gain effectiveness by extending the age limit to 35 (rather than 30, which was the limit) because young adults up to the age of 35 have much the same needs as the younger clientele. Indeed, close to 50% of the persons who immigrate to Quebec are between 16 and 35 years old. We note in this regard that Québec's immigration strategy for 2005 calls for increasing the number and proportion of working youth and young families²⁰.

PILOT PROJECTS FOR MEMBERS OF VISIBLE MINORITIES

The main lessons learned from projects for visible minority members primarily concern the relevance of the support provided and more generally the means for improving this intervention.

- **An adapted response:** The steering committee considers that the model offered by Québec pluriel was adapted to the needs of youth from visible minorities, many of whom are born in Québec. These projects must address the issue of poverty. We note that these youths were further away from joining the labour market, and had less education, than participants in the projects for recent immigrants. In many cases, they had quit school.
- **An intervention form to be perfected:** Adding a psychosocial element to the mandate of mentors would foster the development of positive social behaviours and attitudes among youths. The intervention could also run longer for new arrivals, and attention must be given to making families aware of the realities of the labour market and the education system. Accordingly, the focus should be on establishing regular contacts with the various networks in the target cultural communities.
- **Origin of the mentor:** In projects run by partner organizations for the Black communities, the youths often expressed the desire for a mentor who was of the same origin as them.

19. For the pilot project involving occupational placements, 315 employers were contacted, which led to placements for 11 participants, each lasting from four to eight weeks.

20. Ministère de l'Immigration et des Relations avec les citoyens, *Plan d'immigration du Québec pour l'année 2005*, gouvernement du Québec, 2004, 12 p. Website: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca. This approach also corresponds to the five main pillars for action set out in the Entente interministérielle pour favoriser l'intégration au marché du travail des immigrants et des personnes appartenant aux minorités visibles between the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles. These five pillars are: create mechanisms for effective collaboration between the two departments; recruit and select candidates for immigration to match them with employers' needs; provide individualized accompaniment for new arrivals as means of facilitating their labour market integration; support and sensitize employers to promote the labour market integration of immigrants and members of visible minorities and exchange information for purposes of coordination, evaluation and accountability.

Aspects that could improve Québec pluriel, according to interveners consulted for the evaluation of the project:

- Give the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) direct responsibility for recruiting mentors.
- Get several community organizations to carry out common actions for mobilizing local stakeholders.
- Provide a larger participation allowance.
- Produce information in English to publicize Québec pluriel.
- Have the MESS and the partner organizations produce a new guide for mentors (several teams elaborated their own guides, further to the one provided by the MESS) and a guide for mentees.
- Ensure that other youths can benefit in the future from the experience and know-how gained by the partner organizations.



4.2 LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES: EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC PERSEVERANCE COMPONENT

The main lessons learned from this component deal with the appropriateness of targeting youths according to socio-economic criteria rather than ethno-cultural ones and with the situations of youths in welcoming classes.

- **Positive results:** The information obtained through the education academic/perseverance component indicates that the accompaniment model that was tested gave positive results when mentoring was directed towards homework assistance.
- **Impact of socio-economic criteria:** Mentoring that dealt with academic perseverance was highly appropriate for all youths who were experiencing difficulties at school, whatever their origin, and particularly those from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds. It is important to note that the relevance of focusing the intervention specifically on youth from visible communities was questioned by the interveners, some of whom indicated that the youths did not appreciate being targeted according to their origins. There appears to be little viability in carrying out actions in education solely on the basis of youths' ethnic origin or on the fact that they belong to a community characterized by high dropout rates. One alternative approach would consist in offering an intervention on a geographic basis, not an ethno-cultural one, with the focus on territories presenting a large concentration of youth from cultural communities or visible minorities. Mobilization activities could, for their part, target certain specific populations or communities.
- **The specific situation of students in welcoming classes:** The BDSJ observed that one issue dealt with by Québec pluriel concerned the specific needs of students who had arrived in Québec and were in welcoming classes. Several participants in Québec pluriel were in this situation and they were dismayed at being placed in a class below their actual academic level and at being required to spend the next 30 months in this transition period before joining a regular class. Parents are often preoccupied by the need to look for their first jobs or do not know French well enough and thus cannot provide their children with adequate educational supervision. Many of these youths have not completed high school by the age of 18 because of their transition period in welcoming classes, which can last up to 30 months. Mentoring could be a strategic tool for use during this transition period.

Aspects that could improve Québec pluriel, according to interveners consulted for the evaluation of the project:

- Arrange and reserve rooms for homework assistance.
- Offer more support to certain youths and mentors.
- Give an introduction to the career orientation process.
- Establish more links among school interveners (teachers, guidance counsellors, etc.), interveners with community organizations, and the parents and teachers of the participants.
- Take in participants younger than 16, given the dropout risk for students under that age.
- Provide youths with a secure workplace environment where they can carry out tasks for acquiring work skills.

Note: These suggestions were not based on consensus. Each one was formulated by a different team of interveners.

Furthermore, the participation allowance of \$30 per week did not appear to be very appropriate in an education context, in the opinion of the interveners and partners. On the other hand, one organization indicated that some youths had been able to adapt or to reduce their part-time work schedule because of this allocation, even though we did not see a trend in this regard. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) will continue its reflections on the school population experiencing academic difficulties or in danger of dropping out, in particular with regard to funding and linking of future projects with other services and resources already available in education. Such projects could focus on awareness building and mobilization to make the involved communities actors for change, thus complementing an accompaniment process normally restricted to individuals. For example, mentors could be older students or they could be graduates who have completed their integration into the regular education system. Some models for success could serve to inspire future actions in the education/academic perseverance component. Two such models are Prométhée, a Québec pluriel project run by one organization (La Maisonnée), and the After-School Program at Vanguard School in Westmont and Laval (see Privé, 2002).

4.3 LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES: MENTORING

As we have seen, the occupational mentoring that was tested under Québec pluriel appears overall to have been:

- adequate for young post-secondary graduates, particularly those who had recently immigrated;
- adequate for youths without diplomas or with little education but who had reached a certain level of maturity or were 20 years of age or older;
- less appropriate for youths without diplomas and younger than 18. On the other hand, with homework assistance included, mentoring appeared to be appropriate for this clientele.

Other lessons learned and challenges identified by the steering committee of Québec pluriel are:

- **The challenge of coordination:** The implementation and management of mentoring services often proved to be complex challenges for the organizations, with the quality of services varying considerably among the organizations. Identifying, recruiting and training mentors, and monitoring the activities of mentor-mentee pairs a great of time and energy from the organizations. The difficulty in recruiting mentors was raised by partner organizations as being an obstacle that let at times to a certain level of competition among them in the recruitment of mentors.
- **Recruitment of participants:** Recruiting youths who are not receiving government forms of income support required a great deal of energy on the part of several organizations. Through the labour market integration component, Québec pluriel attempted to reach youths who normally seek few or no MESS services. This difficulty is therefore not surprising. But it has helped us to learn more about the most effective recruitment models, i.e., announcing projects in the local newspapers and in-person promoting of projects at activities and events held in the community targeted by the project.
- **The challenge of wide-scale mentoring:** Québec pluriel has reached several hundred youths. One of the issues subsequent to the success and continuation of this action research is to increase the number of participants (and eventually the geographical territory covered). In the near future, the number of youths paired with mentors could easily be increased ten-fold, or even one hundred-fold. But there are few government initiatives in this regard. However, the French government has tested and implemented a wide-scale occupational sponsoring program²¹, *Parrainage pour l'emploi des jeunes*, that focused first on immigrant youths and then youths at risk of being socially marginalized. The goals of this program are similar to the goals of Québec pluriel (see Appendix 5 for an overview).
- **A form of accompagnement to be developed:** The use of mentoring as a form of social accompagnement could be explored for the youth clientele served by the MESS, including a substantial enough proportion who are returning to school (adult education), in particular through Emploi-Québec's labour force training measure (MFOR-Mesure de formation de la main-d'œuvre). Mentoring could eventually be tested specifically on the CLEs' clients to help them make career choices and to register in and complete employment measures. The strength of this model is that it provides, when possible, a one-to-one ratio of mentors (volunteer accompagniers) to participants.

In addition, various factors influence the success of mentoring projects, as we see reported in the literature. The work to continue with Québec pluriel should take these factors into account (see Appendix 2).



21. We note the following definition of sponsoring given in the French government's memorandum DGEFP/DPM N° 2003-20 of August 4, 2003 regarding the development of a sponsoring program to promote labour market access for persons experiencing occupational integration difficulties:

"Sponsoring consists in accompanying persons who are experiencing difficulties and who have no occupational contact networks to help them in their search for jobs, contract work included. Sponsors can use their own networks and knowledge about potential employers to help these persons find and maintain jobs. Sponsoring is not intended as a substitute for workplace supervision but is meant to support persons in difficulty, i.e. to contribute, along with the welcoming network and other kinds of follow-up, to the effort to find solutions to their non-occupational problems by mediating between persons and services, organizations or associations having expertise in such areas as accommodations, transport, childcare and health. It is a volunteer function external to an employer's organizational structure and is not the same as coaching provided by an employee within the company who helps the person acquire occupational knowledge. It is also different from the role of counsellor, which involves working with persons to build up their integration support structures."



LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

5.1 FUTURE ACTIONS: LABOUR MARKET ENTRY

The many lessons we have learned through the labour market entry component of this action research have convinced the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) to continue the work begun by Québec pluriel. Following the official end of testing in March 2005, the MESS decided to extend five labour market entry projects until September 2005 so that it could work on adapting its own services and the mentoring that will be offered to specific youth clienteles in the future. New Québec pluriel projects will thus be established for the period of October 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

QUÉBEC PLURIEL 2005-2006 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Québec pluriel for 2005-2006 are:

- promote labour market entry;
- offer participants their first work experience (job exploration, work experience placements, salary subsidies, etc.);
- develop individualized accompaniment to help participants obtain their first work experience and build social and occupational contact networks, and to strengthen the academic persistence of youths who return to school in carrying out their employment integration strategies.

TARGET CLIENTELE

The persons targeted by Québec pluriel in 2005-2006 will be:

- recent immigrants aged 16 to 35, with particular attention given to those who have lived less than five years in Québec;
- young Quebecers from visible minorities aged 16 to 24.

Fifty percent of the participants who are recruited should come from among youths are not receiving income support from the government, but all youths looking for jobs, including those receiving employment assistance or employment assistance and those who not receiving income security, will be eligible.

Youth will participate on a voluntary basis and they will be recruited by one of two means: direct recruitment by partner organizations and referrals provided by the local employment centres (CLEs). Each project will be run in partnership with an organization involved in employability or with a local organization that works with client groups targeted by the project and has signed a memorandum of understanding to that effect with the MESS. The Québec pluriel partner organization will work closely with an organization responsible for management of the mentoring program, which will ensure better coordination of this service along with greater effectiveness and efficiency in the procedure used to pair mentors with participants.



DIRECT INTERVENTION

Direct intervention will entail an individual and group approach based on the situations of the clientele served by the organization involved in the Québec pluriel program. The total duration of direct intervention with each participant will be from 80 to 120 hours.

INDIRECT INTERVENTION

Indirect intervention refers to complementary activities dealing with external factors that could influence the success of recently-arrived youths or those who are visible minority members at obtaining their first jobs or occupational qualifications. These activities will include:

- mobilization of local organizations, institutions, stakeholders and populations (specific group or territory) targeted by the project in order to: 1) develop new partnerships that will work to the benefit of participants; 2) build awareness about the importance of seeing youths gain their first occupational qualifications, about existing job opportunities, available resources, and employment sectors with strong demand for workers, and about the importance of innovating and developing actions that can mitigate the problems that are identified;
- raise employers' awareness to motivate them to create employment opportunities for participants.

The city of Montréal plans the following activities as part of the labour market entry component:

- continue its awareness and information activities concerning Québec pluriel for its districts and for various city services, in particular by way of local consultation committees;
- provide its expertise and information on the target clientele to the MESS;
- recruit mentors for its organization and direct them towards the regional mentoring organization (see Appendix 5).

ACTIVITY BLOCKS

The organization's intervention with the target clientele will be carried out by means of three activity blocks as follows: job search and socio-occupational integration strategy (block 1), Québec pluriel strategy (block 2) and mentoring (block 3). Appendix 5 presents these activity blocks in detail.

Finally, the MESS will work to ensure that participants in Québec pluriel receive complementary support from the Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities (PRIIME), an incentive measure that was developed jointly by the MESS and the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in hiring immigrants and members of minority communities for available permanent positions.

5.2 FUTURE ACTIONS: EDUCATION/ACADEMIC PERSEVERANCE

Two of the three projects under the education/academic persistence component ended on March 31, 2005 and the third ended on June 30, 2005. At the end of the testing phase, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) indicated that it wanted to continue running, in 2005-2006, the two pilot projects under its responsibility. School boards in the Montréal region will be asked to collaborate in this work. The city of Montréal is prepared to continue its collaboration with the MESS through, for example, existing municipal programs dealing with the school dropout rate and academic perseverance.

2005-2006 activities in the education/academic perseverance component should focus on the following challenges:

- Support youths aged 16 to 20 who have recently immigrated to Québec and must register in a welcoming class in order to make the transition to the regular sector (youth or adult) or who wish to continue their studies in adult education programs.
- Provide the above support by making use of the lessons learned through the Québec pluriel pilot projects, in particular those that included mentoring based on partnerships between the high schools or adult education centres and community organizations.



5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE QUÉBEC PLURIEL STEERING COMMITTEE

On the basis of the results obtained by Québec pluriel, the steering committee recommends that the three following avenues for action be explored:

- Ensure the sustainability of the Québec pluriel model beyond the period corresponding to this action research, according to conditions to be established.
- Ensure inter-departmental management of Québec pluriel to maintain cohesion between MESS interventions and future interventions of other departments and organizations.
- Make the Québec pluriel model a component of the Québec government's youth action plan, which is now being developed. This avenue, to be explored in collaboration with the Secrétariat à la jeunesse, could, for example, consider the possibility of running projects in regions outside the Montréal area.





CONCLUSION

The results of Québec pluriel have been seen to be positive in many aspects, ranging from its effects on participants and their situations and expectations to the success observed in new intervention forms tested through this action research.

The Québec government must focus on the training and sustainable labour market integration of youths who have recently immigrated and of visible minority youths to combat poverty and social exclusion of these populations, thereby allowing them to contribute fully to the development of Québec society. Québec pluriel has shown that this objective can be achieved, in particular through more effective accompaniment of individuals. Mentoring is a flexible means for helping youths gain socio-occupational autonomy and it provides an effective means for complementing the measures and services already offered by other organizations. However, despite its value and relevance, mentoring has been shown by Québec pluriel to be a tool that needs to be perfected.

To ensure the long-term chances of success for mentoring and for the intervention adapted under a new format making it possible to improve this service and at the same time to experiment with cybermentoring, it is necessary to explore means for mobilizing the target milieus and populations and for sensitizing employers about the situations of recently immigrated and visible minority youth, seeing that the labour market is governed by dynamics going beyond individual contingencies alone.

A majority of youths are relatively well served by existing public services, but some still experience serious difficulties. Furthermore, it appears important that any government today wishing to promote equal opportunities should focus more on an individualized approach than a global one, by narrowing down its interventions and by providing accompaniment to those who need it the most. The government should therefore develop tools to gain more knowledge about citizens' needs and should provide mechanisms for supporting the stakeholders who are best placed to offer the best possible local services to youth. It should also support target communities and organizations through its human, material and financial resources. Institutional stakeholders for their part must adapt their measures and services by putting individuals at the centre of their interventions, thereby contributing to greater social justice and to the economic development of Québec.



APPENDICES



1 EVALUATION OF QUÉBEC PLURIEL PILOT PROJECTS: OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives set for evaluating the action research conducted under Québec pluriel were as follows: analyze the pilot projects to learn about how they were run and about the activities carried out, identify the conditions that had an impact on the success of these pilot projects, assess the results to determine whether they enabled the pilot projects to achieve their objectives, and analyze the effects of the pilot projects on the participants.

To enrich the expertise of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) and its partners regarding these types of pilot projects, the evaluation of Québec pluriel took a formative approach. In concrete terms, the evaluation was carried out by means of interviews with the main stakeholders in the projects, i.e., the workers at partner organizations, the youth participants and the mentors. The information obtained through these interviews was supplemented by information on participants' profiles, taken from the recruitment files provided by the partner organizations, and by administrative information provided by the MESS.

The short-term effects on participants were studied in the fall of 2004 by way of a questionnaire for project teams regarding the youths' situations. The longer-term effects will be evaluated by means of a telephone survey of all youth participants, a few months following the completion of the projects.

Finally, the Bureau de développement des services aux jeunes (BDSJ) at the MESS learned about the effects of Québec pluriel on the partner organizations and on the partnership in general by way of round-tables held with these organizations.

2 MENTORING AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT TOOL

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT TOOL

We find in the literature various concepts related to accompaniment: advice, counselling, follow-up, coaching, mentoring, companionship, sponsoring, etc. (Paul, 2003, 2004). Mentoring is one such tool that presents several advantages. It constitutes an intervention mode that can build bridges between the generations and between communities. Paul (2004) considers that individuals cannot develop solely through peer contact, they must also be in touch with the community's 'elders.' Paul also indicates that the popularity of mentoring is related to the transformation of the social fabric that makes it difficult to enter adult life, can make individuals close in on themselves, and creates more and more gaps between generations. Mentoring can also open doors and help individuals regain their confidence.

The mentoring relationship is founded on reciprocity and on inter-generational solidarity, which is often interpersonal; it is a meeting of the minds. It develops in a vast context, where personality is constructed, in both interdependence and autonomy. The asymmetrical aspect (expert/novice) of this relationship moves towards a more egalitarian relationship. Lastly, interactive and by nature temporary, occasional and sequential, the duration of this relationship, although created due to a program (e.g., training or work placement), is not governed solely by that fact.

MENTOR AND MENTEE: DEFINITIONS AND ROLES

The Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) defines a mentor as an experienced person who volunteers to provide personal and confidential assistance to a younger person, as a guide, counsellor and role model, and who shares with that younger person his or her life experience, expertise and vision. Guay (2003, quoting Cuerrier, 2001 and Houde, 1995) notes that being a mentor, even though the role of mentor can vary depending on the objectives of the project, essentially means accompanying, counselling, guiding and promoting the psychological and occupational development of the mentee²². The mentor helps break down personal and occupational barriers. Mentoring is an interactive relationship marked by generosity. Mentors give of their time and efforts to enhance their own learning as well as the learning of their mentees. They know how to listen, can give useful feedback, can question themselves and can transmit information useful to the mentee's occupational development. They share their experiences and contact networks, show empathy, focus on the mentee's strength and provide meaningful challenges concerning the occupational development of the mentee.

'Mentee' can be defined as a person twinned with a mentor to receive support in acquiring skills, developing confidence, skills and one's chances for succeeding in one's personal and occupational objectives (OQLF, 2004). Guay (2003) writes that mentees contribute, in their way, to the establishment of a rewarding relationship and show that they are fully open to learning. They must be highly interested in learning and in their occupational development, must be able to express their needs, expectations and questions regarding their career goals, and must question themselves when appropriate. They must take responsibility for their occupational development and learn how to take advantage of the knowledge transmitted by the mentor.

22. Paul (2002) and Cuerrier (2003, citing Houde 1995) list the functions that describe the mentor's work: welcome, guide, teach, supervise, encourage, serve as a role model, present challenges, counsel, give feedback, support and make feel safe. These functions also apply to the roles of coach, tutor, sponsor and trainer.

MENTORING AND LABOUR MARKET ENTRY

Most official mentoring programs described in the literature are generally based on occupational accompaniment, depending on the needs identified by the participating organizations and the needs of individuals. These needs include, among others, career planning and development, occupational integration, employability development support for entrepreneurship, occupational transitions, managing staff turnover, skill development, support for young workers, and job maintenance (Cuerrier, 2003a, 2004). Other programs, particularly but not exclusively in the United States, are based more on psycho-social considerations. These interventions target at-risk youths or those experiencing difficulties; their objectives are to combat the school dropout rate, teen pregnancy, crime, and social exclusion (Foster, 2001; Grossman et al., 1999).

Mentoring involves one of two types of mentoring. The first, a traditional or informal one, is characterized by a spontaneous, dynamic, reciprocal and deep relationship over the long term. The second type is structured and planned by an organization, usually as part of a program for twinning an experienced adult with a young novice to meet the specific needs of the latter. Further to making mentoring possible to all populations, mentoring, as described by Cuerrier (2001) also has the advantage of clearly establishing the rules involved: there is a clear framework defining each person's role, the objectives are tailor-made, and the organization offers supervision, reflection tools or training. In this way, the risk of ambiguity or unrealistic expectations is avoided.

MENTORING AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS



Experts agree that the dropout rate at high schools has many causes, i.e., an interaction of personal, family and school factors. In general, when we compare dropouts to students who continue in school, we find that the former often have a negative attitude towards school, teachers and learning. They are thus little motivated to continue their education.

In addition, some researchers have brought up several protection factors forming the basis for intervening to reduce predictive school drop-out factors. These protection factors cut across four dimensions: the personal, family, social network and school dimensions. The relationship with a mentor can reinforce some of these protection factors (Potvin et al., 2004).

Several authors agree that youths need to have privileged and significant relationships with adults in their families, schools or entourage for stronger success (Benny and de Carufel, 1997; Carr, 1991; Lafranchise 2000; Langevin, 1994; Violette, 1991). Youths need to be in relationships with adults they trust and whom they can use as role models to reinforce their identity and worth in their eyes. Extended contact with an adult as a social role model promotes the shaping of a positive identity by adolescents and fosters their school perseverance. Unfortunately, the possibility of establishing significant relationships with adults in their families or entourage is not available to all youths. That is why, for some years now, mentoring programs have arisen for youths who show a risk of dropping out of school.

Mentoring programs stem from tutoring programs, which were already in the schools, and date back to the early 1990s in the United States. We note differences with tutoring programs not just at the educational level but at other levels as well, depending on the students' needs (social, personal, affective, occupational). A formal mentoring program can help students at risk of dropping out to develop and maintain significant relationships with adults that will enhance their self-worth and help them to further develop their skills for educational, personal and occupational success.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF PROJECTS BASED ON MENTORING

In their look at the results of mentoring programs for youth, Johnson and Sullivan (1995) examined the quantitative results from ten evaluations of the specific objectives for then programs. For each program, they found that four of the ten programs did not achieve positive results (i.e., significant vs. non-significant). Three of these four programs shared the following characteristics:

- They offered school support in addition to mentoring.
- Mentors were persons from outside the school.
- The mentor/youth ratio was one-to-one.
- In addition, two of these programs required at least one meeting a week.

The above information suggests that academic support is an important factor in order for this clientele to achieve success and that their strong participation is essential for ensuring its effects. It appears that a good number of youths in the education/academic perseverance component need more homework assistance and academic supervision than occupational mentoring. They have more immediate concerns, i.e., succeeding at school and completing their studies as soon as possible.

Similar conditions are necessary for the success of mentoring programs. For Benabou (in Cuerrier et al., 2003), a structured mentoring program stands out by way of the following characteristics: clear objectives, full support from the organization that is sponsoring the program, effective coordination, recruitment of mentors and mentees, training of participants, and evaluation of the program. This type of program must also clearly establish the rules, give a solid framework for everyone's role, and define the objectives as they arise. The organization responsible for these programs must offer supervision, tools for reflection and training to reduce ambiguities or unrealistic expectations. Benabou notes, however, that structured programs can lack flexibility. In addition, the possibility of poorly matched mentors and mentees or negative reactions in the environment are always present.

On a related matter, Guay (2003) lists, in the *Guide sur le mentorat pour la fonction publique québécoise*, conditions for success, including some that could apply in a context other than occupational integration at an organization. Among these conditions, support by the program's coordinators, who ensure the proper functioning of activities and make adjustments necessary to achieve the program's objectives, taking account of imperatives in the environment (context, atmosphere, resources, socio-demographic profile), transparency in the twinning process, training on the requirements related to everyone's role, and developing a culture of continuing learning (Doyon, 1998), support for participants at every stage of the mentoring relationship, in full respect of participants' privacy, are some of the conditions allowing for win-win accompaniment activities that will be beneficial and satisfying to mentors, mentees and the organization. We can add, as another condition, the stability of financial means for ensuring the sustainability and development of these programs.

The main factors leading to failure, as presented by Hall (2003) include: poor twinning, lack of shared values and beliefs (social distance) by the mentor and mentee, poor matching of objectives in the mentoring relationship and the needs of the mentee, distant or manipulative behaviour, the mentor's lack of expertise and training, time constraints, conflict in roles to the extent that it is difficult to tell whether the mentor is working on behalf of the organization or the mentee, etc.

Lastly, some researchers were interested in the relevance of ethnic origin as a factor in the pairing of mentors and mentees. The results obtained by Rhodes in research on 476 youths participating in the American Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program show that, to the extent that this factor is not a major concern for the mentee, the origin of the mentor is not a determining factor enabling one to predict the success or failure of the mentor/mentee relationship. Its impact is instead minimal and it may be added to other factors such as gender and intervention style as factors influencing the mentoring experience. To the extent that mentors encourage the youths to feel good about their cultural identity, or embark on activities that enhance the mentees' knowledge of their cultural heritage and become conscious of the effects of their cultural background on the relationship, similar racial or racial identity has only relative importance on the entire experience. On the other hand, according to the Québec pluriel partner organizations working with the Black community, several youths in this community wanted to have a mentor of the same origin as them, i.e., mentors who could transmit aspirations, positive values and positive success models that are often missing in the entourages of these youths.



Among the various transitions that occur in an individual's career that can benefit from mentoring, such as those identified by Gray and Gray (1990), Québec pluriel corresponds to the category of programs dealing with both career awareness and occupational integration. These researchers also examine the determination of skills to be acquired and of possible means to achieve occupational objectives. Contact with a mentor can make youths more aware of their career possibilities and can help them discover the knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitudes necessary for various occupations or trades. It enables them to make the link between theory and practice and helps them learn about the reality of the working world to prepare for their occupational integration.

3 EXPERIENCE IN FRANCE WITH REGARD TO MENTORING FOR PERSONS EXPERIENCING OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION DIFFICULTIES

France's employment sponsoring program, based on premises similar to those of Québec pluriel, shows that accompaniment tools intended specifically for youth from cultural communities or visible minorities work effectively overall to support youth experiencing difficulties in their socio-occupational integration.

This program was started in 1993 to help eliminate the obstacles that many youths face in their job searches, particularly, their low levels of training, the disadvantaged social milieu to which they belong, the negative image due to the neighbourhoods they live in, discrimination based on their origins, and their lack of networks for contacting companies. Furthermore, employment integration is particularly difficult for youth who leave the school system without graduating. The widening of the social chasm and the rise of racism and discrimination have aggravated the situation of exclusion experienced by many young adults, who find themselves further and further removed from networks that could help them find jobs. It is thus necessary to strengthen the cohesion between the various components of society and to mobilize all persons who want to join in the combat against social exclusion.

The objective of the sponsorship program is to help youths gain stable and paid jobs or training giving them qualifications, and to help them hold jobs, through accompaniment by sponsors (volunteers, paid or retirees). The role of sponsors is to provide social support to youths and to mediate between youths, the organization's respondent and the company. Sponsors help youths resolve problems they can deal with directly and diagnostically, problems not within their scope of action, to refer them to the organization in question (e.g., the local mission, welcome places and listening to youth aged 16 to 25 when they leave the school system). Sponsors give support to youth allow them to "develop relationships for those who do not have them", facilitate their access to jobs and help them keep jobs, all through mediation between youths, the companies and the daily environment (transportation, health, housing, recreation, etc.). Sponsorship actions generally last nine months, broken down into two periods: before finding a job or being involved in sponsorship (six months maximum) and after the youth has a job or is in the activity (three months).

The guide on sponsors for jobs, produced by the Ministère des Affaires sociales, du Travail et de la Solidarité, covers certain elements to which the organizations wanting to implement sponsor services should give particular attention: evaluation of clients' needs, recruitment and selection of sponsors, training of sponsors and twinning²³.

In close to ten years, sponsorship has moved from experimentation to generalized use: 5 regions, 15 networks and 1,000 sponsored youths in 1993-94, to 22 regions, 330 networks and 13,500 sponsored youths in 1997. In 2002, this activity was available in all regions in France, with approximately 500 networks for more than 16,000 sponsored youths. This program has also evolved over the years, in terms of diversification of target groups (extending them beyond immigrants), types of jobs and partnerships involved, and funding sources (local communities and private sector²⁴). Experience has demonstrated the viability and effectiveness of wide-scale mentoring services.

23. *Parrainage sur l'emploi. Guide pratique*, 3^e édition, ministère des Affaires sociales, du Travail et de la Solidarité (France) 2003, 74 p. [Online] www.social.gouv.fr (predecessor of the current Ministère de l'Emploi, du Travail et de la Cohésion sociale). For the authors of this guide, twinning is the foundation of the actions (based on the dynamic of interaction) for which it is necessary to concentrate a maximum of pluses. To do this, twinning must take account of certain factors, including geographical proximity, coherence of activity sectors, compatibility between the skills of sponsors and the expectations of their proteges, personalities, etc.

24. Ministère des Affaires sociales, du Travail et de la Solidarité (France) [2003], *Circulaire DGEFP/DPM no 2003-20 du 4 août 2003 relative au développement du parrainage pour favoriser l'accès à l'emploi des personnes en difficulté d'insertion professionnelle*. [Online] www.travail.gouv.fr. see above.

4 CAREER EDGE: AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR YOUTHS

With numerous positive experiences in managing occupational placements on a wide scale, Career Edge (www.careeredge.ca) is a not-for-profit organization that was created in 1996 by a group of major Canadian companies. Its mission is to offer youths work experience placements allowing them to obtain rewarding work experiences in companies requiring a full range of work skills. At the same time, Career Edge gives companies access to highly skilled and educated graduates, and gives these graduates an opportunity to begin careers in leading Canadian companies. Since its inception, Career Edge has collaborated with more than 900 employers to offer placements to 6,000 youths in Canada.

Career Edge manages the three following placement programs:

- Career Edge, a program for graduates in all disciplines;
- Ability Edge, a program for persons with disabilities;
- Career Bridge, a program for young professionals who have recently immigrated and do not have sufficient experience in the Canadian labour market.

Career Edge, the oldest of these programs, offers paid placements lasting six, nine or twelve months to university, college and high school graduates in various sectors, including business, human resources, information technologies and finance. This program enables companies to access, at little cost and with no risk, new well educated and skilled graduates to give them work experience that can help them get started in the field of their choice. In the months following their placements, nearly 80% of participants have obtained full-time jobs offering competitive salaries; 60% have been hired by the company that offered them a placement.



Created by the Ontario government and offered in the greater Toronto area, the program Career Bridge seeks to break the vicious circle of “no canadian experience, no job; no job, no canadian experience”, which means many qualified immigrants cannot contribute to the Canadian economy. It is offered to immigrants who have been in Canada less than three years and have the right to work in the country.

5 ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATION IN THE NEW QUÉBEC PLURIEL PROJECTS (2005-2006)

In the new Québec pluriel projects (October 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006), the intervention of partner organizations concerning target groups will be broken down into three activity blocks: job search and socio-occupational integration strategy (block 1); a Québec pluriel strategy (block 2); and mentoring (block 3).

BLOCK 1: EMPLOYMENT SEARCH STRATEGY AND SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

Occupational guidance and counselling: occupational career choice and evaluation of skills and abilities necessary for different kinds of work.

Types of workshops:

Dynamic job search techniques:

- Writing of resumé, presentation letters and letters of thanks
- Employment interviews: strategies and tactics
- Job search tools
- Labour market information
- Contacting employers
- Networking and lists of employers
- Interview simulation
- Negotiating a salary
- Prospection of potential employers

Socio-occupational integration:

- Workplace communication
- Team work
- Managing conflict and work stress
- Occupational harassment

BLOCK 2: QUÉBEC PLURIEL STRATEGY

Types of workshops:

- Educational and occupational information
- Québec labour market
- Occupational health and safety
- Labour standards
- Québec history and culture
- Québec organizational culture
- Realities of Montréal
- Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms
- Time management
- Aptitude and general intelligence tests
- Impact of immigration on identity
- Self-knowledge (values, beliefs, knowledge, ways of being, know-how)

BLOCK 3: MENTORING SERVICES

Recruitment of mentors and management of the mentoring program are the responsibility of the Corporation Éducentre de Bois-de-Boulogne (CÉB). The mentoring service offered by the CÉB will include two components:

A mentoring services centre for the Québec pluriel projects – This centre will handle recruitment, selection and training of mentors. The organizations running Québec pluriel projects will be able to use the databank of mentors at this service centre to pair participants with mentors when the participants have finished the activities in blocks 1 and 2. The services centre will work closely with the organizations to ensure that the mentors meet youths' needs as effectively as possible. Not only is sufficient recruitment of mentors for all participants a significant challenge in itself, but the profile of mentors must adequately match the needs of participants. It would be easier to concentrate mentor recruitment, selection, training and preparation efforts by having this done by a specialized organization. In this way, each organization providing mentoring to youths could refer to this databank of qualified mentors. Mentoring costs will be reduced and services will be easier to administer.

Cybermentoring for youths receiving occupational guidance or confirmation of their career choices: here, youths will have a cybermentor while completing the activities in blocks 1 and 2. Next, a twinning of mentors and mentorees will be carried out by the organization when the participants have completed the activities in blocks 1 and 2. Note here that cybermentoring is a form of mentoring in which "communication is based on the use of information technologies, in particular, e-mail, discussion groups and video conferencing" (OQLF, 2003). Like traditional mentoring, this form of relation seeks to promote the development of the mentoree at the personal, educational, social or professional level and it is appropriate when presential relations are difficult to organize or maintain, primarily due to geographical or time constraints, or because of the costs in managing the programs. Cybermentoring also makes it possible to take in a far greater number of participants than do mentoring programs that involve in-person meetings²⁵. Cybermentoring can also be used for accompanying newly-arrived immigrants who want to live and work in regions outside the major cities and who do not have a network of relations. In all cases, a diversity of communication means (in-person, telephone, Internet) can be used for all types of programs.

25. For example, the program Academos, founded in Québec in 1999, now has 8,000 youths and 70 mentors registered.

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Career Edge
www.careeredge.ca.

Grand dictionnaire terminologique, Terminologie élémentaire du mentorat et de l'accompagnement, Office québécois de la langue française
www.olf.gouv.qc.ca/ressources.

Mentorat Québec
www.mentoratquebec.org.

Peer Resources (peer and mentoring resources)
www.mentors.ca.

Elsewhere in the world

National Mentoring Partnerships (United States)
www.mentoring.org.

The Mentoring Group, Worldwide Mentoring Services (United States)
www.mentoringgroup.com.

Parrainage pour l'emploi des jeunes (France)
www.social.gouv.fr.

SPHÈRE, Le mentorat électronique (France)
www.spheremag.net/mentorat

