

Brief presented to
the Secrétariat à la (SAJ) du gouvernement
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Ensemble pour les
GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES
Quebec Youth Policy



CASA- Committee for Anglophone Social Action

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This brief is presented to the Secrétariat à la jeunesse (SAJ) du gouvernement du Québec by the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) under the Quebec Youth Policy
« ENSEMBLE POUR LES GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES ».



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1. Introducing the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)

CASA, established in 1975, is a non-profit community organization dedicated to serving the English-speaking population of the Gaspé Coast by representing the community's interests and designing and delivering programs that respond to its needs.

More precisely, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action is a regional organization with a mandate that focuses on the English-speaking communities between Matapedia and the town of Gaspé, Quebec in the Gaspésie region.

CASA is dedicated to the following areas of intervention:

Culture and Heritage

Youth

Seniors

Health and Social Services

Community Mobilization and Involvement

CASA's objectives are:

- To protect and promote the interests of the English-speaking population of the Gaspé.
- To encourage the development of a sense of responsibility to the community at both local and regional levels among all citizens, and to encourage the full use of human resources.
- To recognize the value of and to stimulate public and private interests and concern in all matters relevant to CASA with an aim to increase participation of the general population in the definition of their requirements and desires.
- To assure that the English population receives adequate services and communications of all kinds throughout the Gaspé.
- To be a resource centre for citizens and organizations interested in helping improve the social, cultural and economic life of the area as it affects the English-speaking population.
- To support organizations and activities dedicated to preserving and developing the variety of cultures present within the English-speaking communities of the Gaspé.

- To facilitate and promote participation in multi-cultural events, and to encourage greater participation in Quebec society.
- To manage operating and capital budgets in a fiscally responsible manner consistent with its responsibilities for the use of public funds.

CASA believes in fostering partnerships and supports the implementation of holistic approaches for the overall well-being of our English Language minority on the Gaspé Coast.

2. Explanation of CASA's interest in contributing to Quebec's Youth Policy

CASA has been involved in the promotion of youth in the region since its inception. More specifically, in 2006 CASA and its **partners**ⁱ agreed to explore the situation of our region's English-speaking youth between the ages of 18-35. This facilitated a sharper focus on the reality of young Anglophones in Gaspésie. The results sparked a region-wide interest amongst English-speakers and service providers; questioning the disproportionate ratio of accessible programs and services for youth, and how English minority youth are impacted by status quo French-based services with a mandate to serve **youth**ⁱⁱ.

Formal and informal consultations with Anglophone youth in the Gaspésie since 2006 have identified the primary elements that contribute to the enhancement of their social well-being and income security. The acknowledged fundamentals included: second-language skills-development, mentoring alignment practices, job training opportunities and the strengthening of intersectoral collaboration to ensure all youth-oriented services are completely accessible to all youth within the territory. Anything less would prove to be detrimental to the equality of rights and privileges alike. It became clear to everyone involved that a strategy was needed to motivate English-speaking youth to re-evaluate their framework for **civic engagement**.ⁱⁱⁱ

Clearly articulated sub-elements emerged that were labelled as having an impact on the active citizenship of an Anglophone youth were expressed as: illusive programming and services in English in line with labour force integration; weak to non-existent accompaniment for monolingual English job seekers; service providers and program developers were described as having no knowledge base of the Anglophone youth who reside in their mandated territory; non-existent orientation counselling for Anglophone youth; a decline in youth participants at the decision making level of community involvement; low **self-efficacy**^{iv} that impedes the motivation to act i.e.: behavioural change.

Acting upon these perceptible findings, CASA and partners launched the first five-year Action Plan for English-speaking youth in Gaspésie. This plan, and the areas of intervention within, became better known to the community as COMPASS: Guiding Young Gaspésians. CASA's purpose was to cultivate an expertise and develop the best approach to reach Anglophone youth. As programming became reliable for COMPASS clients and participants, their feedback and outlook revealed a trilateral sequence: the deciding factor for youth to consider remaining or returning to the Gaspé Coast is influenced by quality of life, family, and at the apex, employment.

A colossal cultural shift was about to happen between 2011 and 2015 under relevant objectives within the Youth Action Plan. CASA was ready to serve as many as 200 English-speaking youth through relevant programming; by March 31, 2015, COMPASS programming had in fact reached a total of 2,013 English-speaking youth in the region.

It was remarkable to witness the strength of the connection that youth were making as they re-framed their citizenship status. CASA's dedication to nearly a decade of program development and service delivery has moved the needle on the transformative place-making between our region's English-speaking youth and equitable opportunity.

It is with great attention that CASA construct development plans that restore hope and encourage our English-speaking youth as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Our designs and approaches were created with significant input from Anglophone youth, and our hope is that their authentic voice comes through unmistakably clear. CASA believes in the process of consultation, but holds tightly to the long term vision of citizen engagement and contribution to the closing of the gap between government and citizens; reconnecting with the citizen's needs, priorities and values. It is through this reflection that CASA is privileged and honoured to have the opportunity to contribute to Quebec's Youth Policy.

3. AREA OF INTERVENTION I – HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Every child deserves a bright future. For their healthy development, all children need nurturing environments, the opportunity to build secure attachments to their families and the feeling that they are part of a broader community that looks out for them. However, we know that many children do not receive a healthy start for a variety of reasons. As a result, throughout their lives they are more likely to draw more heavily upon the resources of systems such as healthcare, welfare, and criminal justice.

CASA is familiar with emphasizing the importance of supporting families as the core to nurturing healthy environments for children and youth. CASA believes that the importance of mental, physical, and economic health (and their interdependency) is very much grounded in the theory of social determinants of health. In the Gaspésie region, English speakers are 27% more likely to depend on government assistance than their French-speaking neighbours to meet their basic needs.

Compared to the provincial average for English speakers, this number jumps to **166%**.^v CASA's standpoint is parallel with the statement: adversity during the early years affects a child's development. The environment that witnesses certain effects of this struggle is the youth sector environment. It is inevitable that without earlier intervention tactics, in the youth's (and family's) language of comprehension, contributes to ongoing issues of poor **self-regulation**^{vi} and risk behaviour patterns.

English secondary schools in the Gaspésie region and Adult Education Centres are attended by the 15+ age group. In 2013, a total of 32 students were reported as being involved in occurrences of violence and bullying resulting in **suspension**.^{vii}

Parents with children in English schools commented that, “nursing and social work services provided by the CLSC/CSSS might not be in English because the professionals couldn't speak it.” In this case, leads to involving family members or school personnel as translators. There are drawbacks to this practice as the translators may not fully understand or be able to present the material (prevention or intervention) **effectively**.^{viii}

Poverty and other challenges affecting children, youth, and their families are a priority. They require prompt and coordinated responses from all levels of government. It is time to include adequate support and services in youth programming budgets permitting on-the-ground action; giving opportunity to our youngest generation to become healthy, contributing members of society, regardless of language.

The Quebec government and its partners can influence young people's habits with regard to nutrition, physical activity, risk behaviours and mental health problems

The Mental Health Commission of Canada determined that: most mental disorders begin prior to age twenty-five and tend to be chronic, with substantial negative short and long term outcomes. They are associated with poor academic and occupational success, substantial personal, interpersonal and family difficulties, increased risk for many physical illnesses, shorter life expectancy and **economic burden**”..^{ix}

Many factors can affect the mental well-being of children and youth, such as “poverty, having a parent with a mental health or substance use problem, or family **violence**..^x” Mental health problems and illnesses can affect anyone, but financial marginalization and exclusion from essential services, housing, safe neighbourhoods, and supportive social networks can place young people at increased risk of mental distress.

Community networks such as CASA must be entrusted to perform a comprehensive study of English speaking youth aged 15-29 in the Gaspésie region; strategically aligning CASA's positioning to make recommendations to the Quebec government and its partners that they may influence young people's habits with regard to nutrition, physical activity, risk behaviours and mental health problems.

Risk behaviours that the next Youth Policy should prioritize

Parents and other concerned adults need to be aware of these behaviors, the factors that increase their likelihood, and what can be done to abate or prevent those risks.

Over the last three years, CASA has included in more than one program application, a snapshot of what we have experienced with vulnerable youth. We learned that there are several risk factors that have been identified as a doorway to risky behaviors. At the individual level, youth who have low self-esteem, and low school engagement/attachment or educational goals are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. We also were made aware of family factors that include poor parent-child communication, low parental monitoring (e.g., parents are unaware/not concerned of the youth's whereabouts), and a lack of family support. Youth who experience negative school climate, poor neighborhood quality, low socioeconomic status, and poor (or no) relationships with non-parental adults are also at more risk for negative behaviors.

The provincial network of the Maison des jeunes du Quebec proclaims that their mandate encompasses youth and intervenes with impeccable timing and with relevance : Le jeune peut

briser son isolement, faire des rencontres intéressantes et il peut apprendre aussi à planifier, organiser et réaliser des projets. Il peut développer des forces comme l'autonomie, la créativité et le sens des responsabilités. La maison des jeunes est une ressource qui donne la possibilité aux jeunes de faire des choix conscients et éclairés, en s'informant et en se questionnant pour ainsi disposer de plusieurs façons de voir les choses et de mieux prendre sa place en société. Enfin, le jeune peut tout simplement venir se détendre, s'amuser et décrocher du stress de la vie quotidienne (**école, famille, etc.**)^{xi}

There are a total of 12 *Maison des jeunes* in the southern Gaspésie region however; they are not accessible for English youth to take advantage of their intervention programming. It is also worth exploring the impact of the *Maison des jeunes* programming, and consideration given to promoting inclusive alternative programming for Anglophone youth.

Ways to encourage young people to adopt a healthy lifestyle

In CASA's four decades, like any awareness efforts, we learned that it is important to reach individuals as early as possible, where they are accessible and in a learning environment; school. We are convinced that counting on youth to transfer knowledge that can impact their family in a positive way, works, but mainly by consistent rhythms. For example, CASA implemented a Diabetes Awareness campaign that generated an all-school healthy lunchbox point system. Youth were extremely competitive and it influenced the family grocery list to include healthier choices. Consequently, the family becomes accustomed to these choices, and this practice becomes habitual.

As a community network, we are often asked to promote activities and campaigns that are of the regional and provincial scope. Reaching a wider audience, and encouraging English youth to participate in province-wide health movements have proven to come with its challenges. CASA is of the viewpoint that: activities that are sponsored by provincial partnerships must ensure that interactive websites and health campaigns for youth are accessible to all youth in English so that parents and youth have access to participate fully in such initiatives.

For example, on two separate occasions the English community have missed out on regionally-promoted provincial healthy lifestyle campaigns that youth and their parents could not participate in due to the language barrier. Such as the **Wixx campaign**^{xii}, and the **Aiguise ta matière grise (Grand défi Pierre Lavoie)**^{xiii} that reached French sector youth and their families, setting negative undertones that result in disconnect from their counterparts.

4. AREA OF INTERVENTION II – AN ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES STUDENT RETENTION

Our perspective was formed following the recommendations dating back to the 2006 youth forum where youth between the ages of 18-35 first challenged CASA to take a closer look at the landscape of future preparedness pre-graduation. Additionally, we took note of the lack of formal protocol implemented to assist youth in the post-secondary planning process. The fact surfaced that our English high-schools were under-resourced, as an understandable result, youth had little opportunity to cultivate experiences and relationships that would demystify post-secondary transitioning, including learning options available in their language of instruction. The challenges faced by first-generation post-secondary planners make up a majority of the student population. CASA incorporated the Future Preparedness area of intervention in the Youth Action Plan (COMPASS programming) with the intention to engage partners from the pre and post-secondary spheres to discuss the existence of a ‘guidance gap’, and coordinate the joining of forces to effectively **close it**.^{xiv}

Positive learning environments have a major impact on a child’s life. Whether at home, school or with peers, healthy development depends on learning. Research reminds us that a school’s learning environment has a tremendous impact on youth development. From any practical perspective, it makes sense to construct and maintain an approach that integrates community with educational experiences. The result: a movement of invested community resources supporting the collective development of not only positive, but dynamic learning environments.

It has been identified that learning settings are highly influential in the pursuit of reaching goals and achieving personal best. CASA believes that any school retention objectives sought out in our region must reach beyond traditional dropout prevention tactics and consider a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between at-risk students and life at school.

Due to a combination of various social and economic hardships in our region, our children face many challenges in the classroom. The Québec Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport has a 10-point ranking scale with 1 being most advantaged and 10 being most disadvantaged in terms of social, economic and cultural conditions that increase the risk of academic failure and social or behavioral difficulties. The targeted students come from communities that carry a negative stigma of being defavorised; therefore the cooperative learning benefits and practical implications instill pride, personal success and school perseverance.

Student engagement, self-esteem, behavior and wider societal issues such as involvement in vandalism and illegal activity remain challenges within a certain percentage of our population. This is reflected in the percentage of students in breach of the Code of Conduct each school year. A very high percentage of our students require intensive emotional support and when these needs are not met, behavioral issues arise quickly.

Given the context in the English-speaking community, especially for students in vulnerable situations, CASA recommends that when encouraging the exploration of learning options and opportunities that the following priorities be acknowledged in the next Youth Policy:

- Ensure that measures for realistic education counselling services in English are accessible and relatable.
- Acknowledge the relevancy and expertise behind community organizations and the weight of their approaches beyond traditional pedagogic approaches; endorsing and defending these types of partnership agreements.

Students are more likely to stay in school if school becomes a more complete and stimulating living environment for young people

CASA had the opportunity to lead School Perseverance Programming for three consecutive years with a focus on stimulating learning environments. This special programming was delivered by CASA in collaboration with a realm of invested partners^{xv}, and aimed to:

- Increase support where needed for under-resourced programs, such as the Work Oriented Training Pathway prescribed to the high school curriculum by MELS;
- Increase youth engagement in their school day, their self-confidence, and their desire to stay in a successful environment (school);
- Help youth to recognize what they are good at and want to pursue;
- Facilitate a process of training-work integration before sec-3;
- Foster pride among students heading to the WOTP (Parcours de formation axée sur l'emploi) and encourage them to share their pride with their families and peers.

The number of students leaving an English high school in the Eastern Shores School Board territory without qualification or certificate is 23 students in 2013. Of the 23 students, 14 are indicated as leaving in **secondary 3**.^{xvi}

Before CASA implemented school retention programming, the percentage of students leaving school without a diploma or qualification reached 40.1% for Eastern Shores School Board. As of 2013-2014, the percentage has remarkably decreased to 21.9%. During our first year working with youth in difficulty, nearly 60% reported that they planned to finish their school year. During the last year of our program, 96% reported that they felt confident to persevere in their program of study in the Work Oriented **Pathway**.^{xvii}

Effective strategies can be considered through meaningful relationships between youth and community. CASA and our partners were able to provide vulnerable youth with mentorship support known to these students as, “My Success Network”, and felt (some for the first time) encouraged to stay in school.

Before CASA’s focus on stimulating learning environments, 33% of the targeted students reported that they engaged in conversation about their day at school with parents or other family members. Following the project, a total of 75% stated that they now are very expressive about their day and even talk about their future aspirations to their parents, family and even community members.

Principals noted a dramatic improvement in student behavior. At the end of the four months, the students filled out a survey. All students reported being very satisfied with the CASA’s partnership to facilitate these **opportunities**^{xviii}.

Extra-curricular activities help make school an appealing environment and stimulate young people’s commitment to their communities and Quebec society

It is becoming more and more evident that schools and communities should work closely with each other. All-inclusive school-community partnerships represent a promising network that facilitates interventions to address barriers to learning, enhance healthy development, and strengthen families.

In the Gaspésie region, English-speaking youth and their families are familiar with personalized support and services from various community organizations and are gradually becoming more accustomed to the activities and community-based learning, through the Community Learning Centres (CLC).

CASA promotes the implementation of the action **framework**^{xix}: «Partnerships for the Well-being of Minority English-Language Youth, Schools, and Communities» this framework represents several determinants with a particular emphasis for Anglo-Quebecers. The framework also permits strategic choices that support the well-being of youth, school and community.

CASA holds the standpoint that extra-curricular activities facilitate parents, educators (both traditional and non-traditional), local organizations, and community to play a role in student success and fosters a commitment to community within youth. CASA agrees with the fact that schools with a majority of students coming from vulnerable communities have an even bigger challenge within the school day to ensure that the curriculum is followed adequately. To act effectively without imposing even more challenge upon the teaching staff, the extra-curricular

component is profoundly important to youth in rural areas, and to a linguistic minority, extracurricular activities provided by the school are of relatively higher significance.

English-speaking students in rural areas are much more dependent on activities provided by the school than students living in urban areas, as they don't have the same access to other engaging outlets. The same can be said for linguistic minority communities having cultural and linguistic barriers.

Evidence in the English sector that extra-curricular activities must continue:

- Increased student participation and involvement, higher attendance rate (less absenteeism for students in difficulty)
- Less behavioural issues in-class, increased focus to complete their work and a decrease in negative and unhealthy behaviours (bullying, smoking, drug and alcohol use, vandalism)
- A significant decrease in vandalism in the town where extra-curricular activities are implemented, since students are now working to conserve and take care of their learning environment
- Stronger parent-school relations and sense of belonging
- Stimulates senior students to be involved in youth-driven actions, decision-making, mentoring and to take advantage of leadership roles

Encouraging more young people to consider vocational or technical training in their educational and career plans

CASA is of the opinion that by promoting and implementing experiential education programming, youth will be able to clearly recognize an area of discipline that they are good at and are willing to spend time on. English youth will feel an increased attachment to the school day; gain self-confidence and want to remain in this positive environment longer. The student will feel supported and motivated to explore vocational or technical training with interest and **vigour^{xx}**.

Within the Youth Action Plan, COMPASS programming included an orientation that facilitated a Small Motor Repair and Carpentry Exploration program. This was developed and delivered with the aim to encourage a heightened sense of ambition to stay in school and pursue personal interests and abilities for students. The program spectrum included awareness and valorisation of the student's interests, mentorship and building confidence through meaningful and relatable conversations. A total of 90% of students reported that CASA's program positively influenced their attendance at school.

CASA feels strongly that because of work-integration efforts and curriculum that offer broader options such as hands on experience within school hours, interactive and parent-inclusive workshops pertaining to vocational education, and sensitizing the needs of English-speaking

youth interested in this industry to the business sector. Follow up must also include attestation and certification exams in English.

Encouraging young people to stay in school

In order to promote and attract youth to the importance of school perseverance and continuity, young English-speakers must be convinced of two things; one, of their importance and two, that they as individuals are worthy of success. English youth radiate a low level of interest when it comes to future planning or acquiring skill-sets.

In fact, young English-speaking students between the ages of 12-14, carry out secondary I and II with limited exposure to local development, career choices and pathway transitioning. Parents are equally not aware of just how influential this exposure can be for their youth before secondary III. Moreover, if the youth within this particular age group are not successful in the core subjects, then they must be introduced to a support system that will identify and nurture their personal interests and abilities within, or around, school hours.

5. AREA OF INTERVENTION III – YOUNG PEOPLE READY TO WORK, AN ECONOMY READY TO WELCOME THEM

The relevancy of low socio-economic conditions (that attach themselves to a significant portion of English-speaking youth) equally warrants acknowledgement when promoting work-ethic and employability programming. Many of these youth are culturally isolated and not considered by local employers to be sufficiently bilingual or prepared mentally for the work force.

Furthermore, the terms used to describe inactive participants in the labour market such as: “non-mobilized youth”, “youth in difficulty” and “young people farthest from the labour market”, are often used by employment agencies that support transitional programming in the province, and region. CASA has defined and developed alternative programming exclusively tailored to successfully reach all three of this target clientele with approaches outlined in the Employability area of intervention of CASA’s Youth Action Plan (COMPASS). It is only since the implementation of the Youth Action Plan that the perseverance and autonomy of our Anglophones is supported, encouraged and strengthened. Personal accompaniment and planning during the early years of the Action plan led to 195 English-speaking youth obtaining permanent employment in the region. In our opinion, these youth would have otherwise left the region for work.

Challenges and opportunities do you envision for young people entering a labour market characterized by massive retirements

The path to independence can be straightforward (from formal education directly into full-time work) or more fragmented as it is more familiar to the English-speaking population in the Gaspésie; combining schooling with part-time work or alternating inactivity, work and/or unemployment).

This situation could be explained by a possible mismatch of skills acquired in initial education and labor market requirements, the economic situation, general labor market conditions and labor legislation which may not favour the integration of inexperienced people into employment. Young people who enter the labor market for the first time are definitely exposed to this uncertainty, since school-leavers without any work experience have to compete for the (scarce) available jobs with those who have already gained a position in the labor market.

Young people from any linguistic background play an important part in the dynamics of the labor market because they are a source of labor supply. As older people move out of economic activity through retirement, whether voluntary or involuntary, young people are needed to fill the gap. CASA has spent the last five years promoting labour market trends in collaboration with **provincial entities**^{xxi} and have also built relationships with the business sector to promote prerequisites to these available positions to both school sector youth, and young job seekers.

The first area of intervention to this notion was to convince young Anglophones in the Gaspésie that they could gain a foothold in the labour market in their home region; a place that they felt was working against these very aspirations. As aforementioned in this document, youth were not participating in regional and local work-transition programming due to linguistic and cultural barriers. Programs that were financially supported by the provincial level of government were not reaching the over 2000 English-speaking youth in the Gaspésie region.

CASA is convinced that support networks need to be created as a part of the work integration and renewal process. Targeted age groups, skill and mobilization levels could be supported through these transitions in collaboration with the employer. Pilot program models that work in one labour market sector can be replicated. For example, English-speaking youth who are first-time workers in entry-level positions can be supported by Employability programming for a trial period making the orientation process more manageable for the employer and tolerable to the new employee. CASA holds a reputable 86% success rate for transition to work programming leading Anglophone non-mobilized youth between the ages of 16-30 to employment in the **region**.^{xxii}

Ways to develop youth employability

In the Gaspésie region, the low rate of bilingualism has had a tremendous impact on employability and access to programs that assist youth to obtain and maintain employment. While the provincial unemployment rate for bilingual English-speaking youth (mother-tongue Anglophones aged 25-34) was 7.5%, the rate for unilingual English-speaking youth was **14.3%**.^{xxiii} At first glance, several solutions point to francization, however, the starting point in CASA's perspective for making English-speaking youth more employable begins with an introductory series of evaluations such as core skills, (including skills recognition), individual discussions about their motivation to seek employment, and identifying the self-professed challenges that could be a negative influence to obtaining work. With a paced approach, the individual not only becomes a job seeker, but trusts a community network to influence them to take a closer look at their **psychosocial health**.^{xxiv}

Since English-speaking youth have had very little exposure to employability pre-COMPASS, it is safe to assume that employability skills, or the development thereof, were unheard of. This lack of exposure to the labour market namely the expectations of employers, brings us to the fact that the region's Carrefour jeunesse emploi programing has not been present in English high schools in the Gaspésie region. Another factor points toward an English school board with no Guidance Counsellors, or Orientation Counsellors, yet a current **POP class**^{xxv} at the secondary 3 level targets the development of two closely linked competencies: 1) The process of career exploration, and 2) Contemplation of his/her learning and work possibilities.

The MELS structure goes on to entail that: students should choose from among the resources at their disposal those that will be used as springboards or as information sources and try out various tasks related to work functions in order to learn about themselves. They should consider possible career paths, compare them and assess their interest and requirements, which may lead to new explorations. Through this process, students learn to contemplate their learning and work possibilities and make the most of other explorations and situations related to career development.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of resources and specializations accessible to the English school board, much of this prescribed curriculum remains "suggestive" without program structure assistance from community organizations, such as CASA, employability development is introduced much later to Anglophone youth. This is not optimal and promotes feelings of indifference amongst English-speaking youth in the Gaspésie.

CASA remains in a state of persuasion; that our regional organization merits the necessary endorsement in workforce development to continue producing results that have a substantial impact on the livelihood of English-speaking youth in eastern rural Quebec. Furthermore, that CASA's perseverance is recognized by the Secretariat à la jeunesse as having the most effective design and delivery strategy to reach non-mobilized Anglophone youth in the Gaspésie region.

6. AREA OF INTERVENTION IV – AN ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATORY CITIZENSHIP

Ways to encourage active and participatory citizenship among young people

CASA's standpoint on active citizenship and youth is twofold; 1) it is about taking an active role in community life and making a positive contribution to society, and 2) enabling youth to become more reflective, and giving them the tools they need to make informed decisions about their lives. Creating a space for English-speaking youth to embrace citizenship education in general, is fairly easy, but the context is meaningless and the chances of full participation are low unless it is important to them, or they have been affected personally or inspired in some way. A total of 50 % of targeted Anglophone youth involved in CASA's youth-driven entrepreneurial projects expressed that they were not involved in any other **extracurricular activity**^{xxvi} due to lack of relatability to the themes.

Our summative results show that youth engagement becomes more contagious when a relationship is nurtured between (in our case) a coordinator and the potential youth we aim to reach. Several volunteer opportunities and entrepreneurial citizenship projects have been extremely fruitful, and the encouragement and enthusiasm was due to the trustworthy methods and approaches of a mentor. In the case of CASA's school initiative, a focus was placed on **Promotion and Attraction**^{xxvii} which enabled us to ensure that English-speaking youth were exposed to **selective leadership**^{xxviii} possibilities in their hometown as well as promoted different ways to become more meaningfully involved within their community.

CASA understands that an organization already exists in the province that promotes the discovery, or rediscovery, of the regions attractions, services, quality of life and financial incentives. French-speaking youth are accompanied through a series of exploratory visits to encourage them to expand their network of contacts and meet potential employers, socio-economic stakeholders, entrepreneurs and elected officials. The organization helps youth to plan and prepare for a future in the region by promoting migration, and the retention of young graduates between the ages of 18-35. The phenomenon is known as Place aux jeunes en region, and is acknowledged by the province to stimulate business creation, educate youth about the benefits and opportunities in the regions, including the Gaspésie, as well as to foster and promote the social commitment of youth.

Place aux jeunes en region continues to be recognized as a contributor to the socio-economic development throughout Québec. However, for the last 25 years, efforts have been questionable as to the level of energy, commitment invested to entice Anglophones in (or originally from) the Gaspésie region.

In the five short years that CASA has mobilized youth through the Sense of Belonging focus of the Youth Action Plan, Anglophone youth would see their region in a positive light thanks to the establishment of a Youth Ambassador's Table, recruiting 30 representatives region-wide between the ages of 14-17 from 2011-2015. For the first time, Anglophone youth in the Gaspésie were directly implicated in the planning, creation, promotion and co-facilitation of three youth-oriented activities per year for their peers. These activities ranged from regional leadership conferences to regional youth debates, the See My Gaspésie photo contests, and the Journée de la Gaspésie activities.

CASA's Sense of Belonging programming enhanced an identity-empowering movement that resulted in **reaching 1,979 English-speaking youth.**^{xxix} Our approaches, once again, were trusted by the English-speaking community to promote active citizenship and greater participation in democracy and society through a combination of community projects, research, education, discussions and debate. Unfortunately, to the disappointment of our younger constituents, financial investment was not renewed and March 31, 2015 marked the termination date of the first Action Plan for English-speaking youth in Gaspésie.

As the only community network renowned for our connection and relationship with the Gaspésie region's English-speaking youth, CASA recommends that we be considered to receive support to carry out a study that would respond to the need for a parallel entity to the current Place aux jeunes network for English youth in the region.

7. Conclusion

Considering that no regional concertation with Anglophone youth in the Gaspésie region occurred to exchange views during the launch of the preliminary consultation in 2013, may this contribution of abstracts from CASA's knowledge base described in this brief legitimately serve to enlighten the Quebec Government on the position of the English-speaking youth in the Gaspésie. Our standpoint earnestly persuades the Quebec Government to ensure that the renewed Quebec Youth Policy will mirror realistic opportunity worthy for all youth in this province.

8. References

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- ⁱ Partners for the 2006 Youth Turn Forum and consultation: Commission jeunesse gaspésie-îles-de-la-madeleine (CJGIM); Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC); Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité.
- ⁱⁱ Youth: In its definitive form does not discriminate or recognize a distinction by language; the period between childhood and adult age.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Civic engagement: Civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future. This term has been used to date primarily in the context of younger people.
- ^{iv} Self-efficacy makes a difference in how people feel, think and act. In terms of feeling, a low sense of self-efficacy is associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness. Such individuals also have low self-esteem and harbour pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development. In terms of thinking, a strong sense of competence facilitates cognitive processes and academic performance. *Self-Efficacy and Health Behaviors* Conner, M., & Norman, P. (1995). *Predicting Health Behaviour: Research and Practice with Social Cognition Models*.
- ^v Joanne Pocock, Baseline Data Report
www.chssn.org/populationhealth/BaselineDocs/Baseline%20Data%20RPT%2003-04.pdf
- ^{vi} Self-regulation: a critical competency that underlies the mindful, intentional, and thoughtful behaviors of younger and older children alike.
- ^{vii} 2012-2013 Annual Report Eastern Shores School Board www.essb.qc.ca
- ^{viii} THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE PRIORITIES OF QUEBEC'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING POPULATION: 2013-2018 Quebec Community Groups Network
- ^{ix} Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2010
- ^x Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2012
- ^{xi} Regroupement de maison des jeunes du Quebec. <http://rmjq.org/questions-frequentes-faq/>
- ^{xii} <http://wixx.ca>
- ^{xiii} <http://www.aiguisetamatieregrise.com>
- ^{xiv} Equitable programming and services for English-speaking youth in the Gaspésie region, August 2015
- ^{xv} Eastern Shores School Board, Complice Perseverance Scolaire Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine, New Carlisle Community Learning Centre, The Anchor Adult Education and Vocational Centre, Service d'accueil, de référence, de conseil, et d'accompagnement (SARCA), Coopérative de Développement Régional Gaspésie-Les Îles (CDRG GIM)
- ^{xvi} https://www.essb.qc.ca/annual_reports/2013-2014_en.pdf
- ^{xvii} COMPASS: Guiding Young Gaspésians Final Report on Results 2011-2015
- ^{xviii} www.essb.qc.ca/annual_reports/2013-2014_en.pdf
- ^{xix} www.learnquebec.ca, www.chssn.org
- ^{xx} CASA School Perseverance Initiative 2013(offer of service): Complice Perseverance Scolaire Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine
- ^{xxi} Emploi Quebec
- ^{xxii} Transition to work programming: COMPASS: Guiding Young Gaspésians Final Report on Results 2011-2015
- ^{xxiii} QCGN, Creating Spaces for Young Quebecers www.qcgn.ca
- ^{xxiv} Psychosocial Health: a state of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.
- ^{xxv} http://www1.mels.gouv.qc.ca/sections/programmeFormation/secondeaire2/medias/en/10b_QEP_PPO.pdf
- ^{xxvi} CASA Promotion and attraction reddition de comptes finale 2013-2014)
- ^{xxvii} Promotion and Attraction: career fairs, exploratory internships, mentoring and entrepreneurial projects CASA's School Perseverance Initiative 2012-2015.
- ^{xxviii} Selective leadership/learning: providing the tools needed to set the course for each individual to achieve excellence.
- ^{xxix} Orientation 1: Sense of Belonging – COMPASS: Guiding Young Gaspésians Final Report on Results 2011-2015, CASA