



**Presentation by**

**Youth Employment Services (YES)**

**To**

**The Standing Senate Committee**

**On**

**Official Languages**

**And the**

**English-speaking Community in Quebec**

May 8, 2017



## **About Youth Employment Services**

### **Who we are**

We help people start successful careers – for themselves, and for our community.

YES (Youth Employment Services) is a non-for-profit charity whose mission is to enrich the community by providing English-language services to help people find jobs and start small and medium size businesses.

We were founded in 1993 by a group of concerned leaders from the business, education, and corporate communities in response to the youth exodus and in recognition that employment was a major strategy in addressing retention.

Retention and renewal is still our primary mission and every program or activity we engage in, is with the purpose of supporting, retaining and attracting individuals to Quebec. We see over 4,000 people a year at our downtown location and remotely. We work with our partners in the regions to provide coaches who can offer English language business support.

In the broader sense, we do this using a community development approach, building partnerships, attracting and cultivating volunteers and creating networks. In concrete terms, we do this by providing support services.

Our services respond to the ongoing needs of our clients and our community. We help people start and grow businesses, find employment and help artists who need the business skills to succeed economically through their art, contributing to the creative economy.

We modify and adjust our programs to ensure that our services remain relevant. We provide over 1,200 workshops at our downtown location and online, we hold events and conferences, provide coaching and counselling (over 7,000 sessions), mentors and internships and we work with over 400 volunteers, and a variety of partners and funders while conducting research and creating publications.

### **Who We Serve**

- 69% of our clients are English-speaking
- 11% are French-speaking
- 20% speak a language other than English or French as a mother tongue



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- 36% come from other countries
  - 49% have university degrees
  - 25% have a Masters or PHD
  - 26% have a CEGEP, trade school or high school degree
  - 4054 clients served in 2016-2017
    - 1,872 job search clients
    - 2,182 entrepreneurship clients

### Community Talks

In 2015, we broadened the conversation about what it's really like to navigate today's job market and gave hundreds of OLMC young job seekers from across the province the opportunity to share their own personal stories about finding employment in Quebec. We set up video booths, did surveys and created a social media campaign.

We developed 25 short videos capturing the youth voices and produced a 17 minute documentary with the goal to create more dialogue between government, employers, unemployed youth, not-for-profits and educational institutions. Our hope was to work together to uncover potential solutions to youth unemployment and underemployment within Quebec.

This year we will be holding a day long forum bringing together these various shareholders to develop recommendations to move forward.

For more on the video, you can watch it at: *Youth Voices: Community Talks Employment*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SghSaAtFdc>

### Highlights from the Survey

- 49% of the OLMC youth identified themselves as both English and French
- 79% of youth have considered leaving Quebec for employment
- 68% of youth surveyed considered themselves to be underemployed.
- 58% considered language as the main challenge you face when applying for a job



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### Areas of Concern for OMLC Youth

Economic integration is essential for the retention and health of the Official Language Minority Community youth.

- **Youth Unemployment**

Unemployment is a major issue in Québec and an even greater issue for the Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) in Québec. The youth unemployment rate is higher for the English-speaking community of Québec (16.7%) compared to Québec's French-speaking community (12.1%). These figures do not however reflect the full reality of the employment situation in Québec as unemployment rates do not fully capture those youth that have dropped out of the job market, or those who are underemployed. The consequences of unemployment and underemployment to a society are critical as it relates to the general health of the community.

- **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is an integral part of economic integration and is a critical option for members of the OLMC. More than one-fifth of Canada's small employer businesses (235,075) are concentrated in Quebec. Over 92 percent of employment is created from SMEs but, about 85% of businesses that enter the market place survive one full year, 70% survive for two years and 51% survive for five years.

- **New Arrivals**

Newcomers are now forming a greater proportion of the OLMC in Quebec. Quebec was home to 19.2% of all newcomers in 2011, up slightly from 17.5% in 2006. Of the immigrant population who reported single mother tongue, about 1.6 million, or 23.8%, reported that their mother tongue was English. Yet, English-Speaking newcomers are underserved in their first official language due to restrictions related to jurisdictions.

- **The Arts**

The arts and artists contribute to the vitality and sense of belonging. They also contribute to the economic wellbeing of the community. "The direct contribution of culture industries to GDP was \$12.8 billion in Quebec in 2010, or 4.1% of provincial GDP. In 2010, there were 174,800 jobs directly related to culture industries in Quebec, or 4.5% of total employment. The Quebec jobs total represents 24.7% of Canadian employment in culture industries. In Quebec, the GDP of culture industries is larger than the value added of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (\$4.2 billion), mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (\$4.6 billion),



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accommodation and food services (\$6.8 billion), utilities (\$11.6 billion), and transportation and warehousing (\$11.7 billion).” - <http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/ontario-and-quebec-estimates-provincial-and-territorial-culture-satellite-account-2010>

### **Recommendations**

More and more OLMC youth see themselves as bilingual. Many have parents who are English and French. There are many more new arrivals making up the OLMC, where identity becomes a much more complex issue. The one thing that is consistent is that those whose first mother tongue is English want services in English regardless of how they identify themselves. In order to build, attract and retain youth, YES makes the following recommendations:

- ***Stimulate an Inclusive Approach for Retaining Youth:*** Increase support programs that focus on the unique needs of OLMC youth throughout the province by offering more employment and entrepreneurship support and services and create economic opportunities through paid internships and other strategies. This includes new graduates and those attending university from other countries.
- ***Ensure adequate employment services and supports*** for the more vulnerable members of the OLMC – those with mental health issues, disabled, visible minorities, those on social assistance.
- ***Invest in the OLMC’s Creative Economy:*** The arts and artists need to be viewed as contributors to the vitality and economic health of the OLMC. Funds should be created to assist artists in gaining stronger business skills as well as support programs to help them commercialize and access new markets.
- ***Increase access to trades, internships, and apprenticeship programs.*** There are not enough programs in English for those that want to get into the trades and apprenticeship programs are often difficult for those from the OLMC to access. Paid internship programs to help youth integrate into the job market (Career Focus) have shown great success and should be continued with the current structure utilizing government, businesses and community groups working together.
- ***Access to education and Official Language training:*** Public access to lesser-used languages should not be restricted. For example in Quebec, Newcomers to English training and French Natives to English Elementary and High Schools. There should be a multi-



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delivery approach to learning both official languages which include online, educational institutions and training centers at minimal cost.

- ***Address the integration of Newcomers into the OLMC and the labour market:*** (Less than five years) Investment is needed to support and retain new arrivals. Finding employment services in English for new arrivals is a challenge and limited, but these services are desperately needed to ensure successful integration into the workforce and the economy, and to ensure the renewal of the OLMC.
- ***Encourage and support:*** Programs such as Katimavik, which bring youth from different provinces, and linguistic backgrounds together.

We invite you to visit us at our center to meet with youth from our community.

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