

NEWSLETTER

EDITION #2 • DECEMBER 2025

RDN INSIGHTS

Updates, Stories, and Outcomes from Across the Network



Photo (left to right): Hoffman Wolff, Social Economy Manager RDN; John McMahon, Sous-ministre adjoint du Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SQREA); Cathy Brown, Executive Director RDN; Christopher Skeete, Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Québécois, Russell Kueber, Senior Manager of Regional Development RDN.

RDN MEETS WITH MINISTER **CHRISTOPHER SKEETE**

A Great Start

RDN was thrilled to be the first English language organization consulted since Mr. Christopher Skeete - Député de Sainte-Rose has become Minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Québécois. The November 2025 meeting covered important topics related to English-speaking communities in the regions of Québec such as employability, higher rates of poverty, involvement in the social economy sector and inclusion into regional and provincial action plans.

LA PAUVRETÉ ne parle aucune langue

Poverty Speaks No Language

Those words resonated deeply when Ismaila Ndiaye, Secretary General of the Advisory Committee on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion for the province of Québec, met with RDN for the first time. Mr. Ndiaye also went on to say that “poverty knows no boundaries and thanks to your work, I’ve seen how Englishspeaking Quebecers can also experience its negative effects.”

Mr. Ndiaye also participated in the Community Builders Retreat, where he shared with RDN members the Advisory Committee’s mandate and offered valuable perspectives on the province’s efforts to reduce poverty and social exclusion. His insights helped connect the broader provincial picture with the lived realities of English-speaking communities.

RDN has also been active in building connections across Québec’s anti-poverty network. The team recently met with the Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté and participated in their annual general assembly. This coalition brings together national organizations and regional collectives that work alongside people experiencing poverty to create systemic change. Another important exchange took place with the Centre for the Study of Poverty and Exclusion, an organization that provides research and guidance to the Québec government on social and economic inclusion.

Reflecting on these collaborations, Cathy Brown, Executive Director of RDN, shared:

“Given the higher rates of poverty in some of our regions, it was essential for RDN to be part of Québec’s poverty and social exclusion ecosystem. We want to make sure English-speaking Quebecers are included in planning, decision-making, and service delivery.”

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— Cathy Brown
Executive Director RDN



Photo (left to right): Russell Kueber, Senior Manager of Regional Development RDN; Ismaila Ndiaye, Secrétaire Général of the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale; and Cathy Brown, Executive Director RDN.

CASA Honored at the National Assembly

*50 Years
of Service*

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In early November, one of RDN's member organization, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) was honored at the National Assembly in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Allen Richards, Executive Director of CASA, along with four other staff members, made the trip from the Baie-des-Chaleurs to attend the question period where they were recognized by MNA Élisabeth Prass.

Mr. Richards explained that "this recognition is for all the dedicated staff, board members, volunteers, and partners of CASA over the past 50 years." He went on to say that "CASA has played an important role over the years in supporting an important and often isolated English-speaking population."

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— Allen Richards
Executive Director CASA

Photo (left to right): Allen Richards, Executive Director CASA; Shannon Day, Program and Activity Coordinator - Youth Mental Health CASA; Ashley Renouf, Office Manager CASA; Kathy Gallon, Program and Activity Coordinator CASA; Kayla Gallon, Bright Beginning Programs and Activity Agent CASA.

Celebrating Milestones with Our Members

Exemplary Community Service Over Many Years

Last month at our annual general meeting, we recognized five of our member organizations that reached milestone anniversaries this past year. The Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) was honoured for its 50 years of community service to the English-speaking community of the Gaspé Coast. Two organizations reached their 25th anniversary: Making Connections Developing Community (MCDC), which serves Chaudière-Appalaches and MRC l'Érable, and North Shore Community Association (NSCA), which serves Québec's North Shore. Two other member organizations celebrated 20 years of community service: 4Korners in the Laurentians and Vision Gaspé-Percé Now in the Gaspé area. Congrats to these organizations for their exemplary service to their communities over so many years!

CASA Executive Director Allen Richards and RDN Executive Director Cathy Brown



Vision Resource Manager Amie Chicoine and RDN Executive Director Cathy Brown



MCDC Executive Director Brian Gignac and RDN Executive Director Cathy Brown



4Korners Executive Director Hugo Bissonnet and RDN Executive Director Cathy Brown



NSCA Executive Director Jody Lessard and RDN Executive Director Cathy Brown

Community Builders Retreat and AGM

A Huge Success!

November 18–19, 2025 marked another wonderful RDN Community Builder Retreat and Annual General Meeting (AGM) — bringing together community leaders, partners, and RDN members from across the network.

Day One featured inspiring presentations from:

Eric Caron Malenfant Assistant Director,
Canadian Heritage, Languages Statistics Program

Lesley Bramhill Senior Program Advisor,
Canadian Heritage, Official Languages Support Program

Cedric Lachance Development Advisor,
Coopérative de développement régional du Québec

Allen Richards Executive Director, CASA

Hugo Bissonnet Executive Director,
4Korners Family Resource Centre

The day wrapped up with our 6th Annual General Meeting and a fun networking event where members shared updates, ideas, and plenty of good conversation.

Day Two began with a powerful session from **Ismaila Ndiaye**, Secretary General of the Advisory Committee on the Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion. The retreat closed with leadership training led by RDN staff, designed especially for executive directors of member organizations.

A big thank-you to everyone who participated and helped make this year's events such a success!

“COMMUNITY
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— Jody Lessard
Executive Director NSCA

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Snapshots
from our time
together



RDN Launches **LEAD**

New Community Leadership Program



Leadership, Empowerment and Development Program

This fall, RDN proudly introduced the Leadership, Empowerment and Development (LEAD) Program, an exciting new initiative designed to strengthen community leadership and support the growth of RDN members.

"The program consolidates much of what we have already been doing to support the training needs of our members," explains Rachel Hunting, Senior Manager of Development for RDN. She adds that "in addition to supporting them in organizational effectiveness, we want to do more individual skills training—especially in the area of community development."

Snapshots from
our first LEAD
workshops:

**THROUGH THE LEAD
PROGRAM, RDN AIMS
TO EQUIP MEMBERS
WITH THE TOOLS,
KNOWLEDGE, AND
CONFIDENCE NEEDED
TO LEAD EFFECTIVELY
WITHIN THEIR
COMMUNITIES.**



Behind the Scenes of Member Success

Helping Members and Partners Plan for the Future



Photo (left to right): Alina Holmes, Executive Director RAWQ; Rachel Hunting, Senior Manager of Regional Development RDN; Loretta the Llama; Jacqueline Busby, Board member RAWQ; Cathy Brown, Executive Director RDN; Alex Hayes, Vice-president RAWQ; Chad Bean, President RAWQ.

This year, RDN supported member organizations CASA, ARC, RAWQ, and CAMI, as well as partner Y4Y, in developing their next strategic plans. We are excited to continue this momentum with other members and partners throughout the remainder of the fiscal year.

“Strategic planning is one of my favorite parts of the work we do,” says Rachel Hunting, RDN’s Senior Manager of Regional Development. “I’m always happy to roll up my sleeves and help our members map out their path forward.”

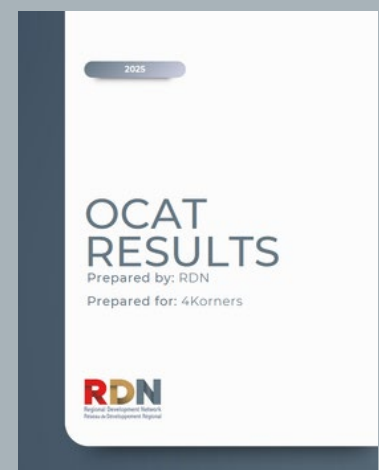
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— Rachel Hunting
Senior Manager of Regional Development RDN

Supporting members’ growth with the OCAT

This fall, RDN supported its members in completing the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), a key exercise RDN recommends every 3–5 years. The OCAT helps organizations evaluate capacity across six operational areas.

In 2025, 16 of 19 members completed the questionnaire, receiving tailored results reports and needs assessments; these insights provide a clear roadmap for strategic planning and operational improvement, helping our members continue to grow and serve their communities effectively.



Occupation et vitalité des territoires (OVT) Initiative

Engaging with Quebec's OVT initiative

RDN is actively supporting its member organizations in engaging with Quebec's Occupation et vitalité des territoires (OVT) initiative, the provincial framework for regional development. The OVT, funded through the Fonds régions et ruralité (FRR), aims to promote the social, economic, and cultural vitality of all regions across Quebec — urban, rural, and remote. The FRR provides both regional and MRC-level funding envelopes, allowing each region and MRC to determine its own investment priorities.

Of the five funding components (volets), three are directly relevant to RDN member organizations:

Volet 1

Regional funding allocated through calls for proposals.

Volet 2

Direct funding to MRCs.

Volet 3

Additional funding for devitalized MRCs and municipalities.

“RDN, in collaboration with consultants Jennifer Hayes and Dave Felker, has already partnered with three organizations to identify opportunities to strengthen connections with their regional MRC offices” explains Hoffman Wolff, the RDN point person for the initiative. He goes on to say that “getting connected to OVT in the regions is a great way for English-speaking communities to be included into regional development”.

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— Hoffman Wolff
SEEnet Social Economy Manager

FRR Volet 3: Funding for distressed MRCs

- 6 MRCs in the bottom quintile have **more than 1,000 English speakers**:
 - **Côte-Nord**: Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent
 - **Gaspésie-ÎdLM**: Avignon, Bonaventure, Rocher-Percé
 - **Outaouais**: Pontiac, Vallée-de-la-Gatineau



The Social Economy Initiative (SEEnet) Event

Helping Members and Partners Plan for the Future

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RDN recently co-hosted a dynamic event in Montreal alongside Startup – incubateur de communautés féminines, celebrating those already shaping the Québec of tomorrow. The gathering placed a spotlight on collective takeovers and the next generation of social economy professionals, bringing together Francophone and English-speaking participants in a bilingual space that encouraged dialogue, experience sharing, and the co-creation of innovative solutions.

The first panel focused on collective takeovers, featuring insights from Hugh Maynard of The Gleaner newspaper and Viviana Fernandez of the CDRQ, who has previously collaborated with SEEnet. The second panel, moderated by RDN's Mario Oropeza, explored the future of the social economy through the perspectives of Adrienne Winrow, Executive Director of Y4Y Québec, as well as representatives from the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité and Sayaspora.



Snapshots from the SEEnet Startup event





Cooperative Education School Strategy

The SPARK workshop

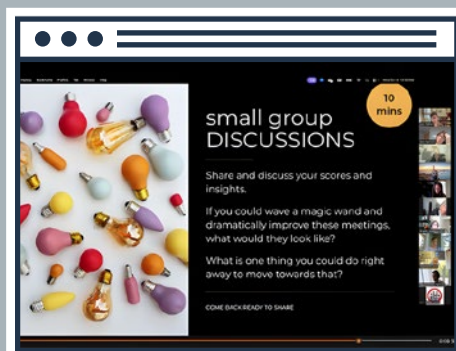
During the fall, the SEEnet team reached out to English-speaking schools and institutions such as LEARN, the Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, Cégep SaintLawrence in Québec City, and Bishop's University, to name a few. The SEEnet team's efforts were part of its strategy to offer cooperative education through the Spark workshop and to showcase the opportunities available within Quebec's social economy ecosystem. Next year, the team will visit the regions that embraced the Spark workshop and the connections that come with it.

Special thanks to 4Korners, whose staff opened doors in several Laurentian high schools for the Winter 2026 semester. Contact us if you would like to bring this opportunity to your schools!

Workshop Wednesdays *Driven by members' priorities*

RDN's Workshop Wednesdays are practical 60–90-minute online workshops focused on the issues that matter most to members. Since January 2025, RDN has delivered 12 sessions on topics related to human resources, funding, governance, and communications, with 174 participants from across the network. Each session helps members build skills, solve real organizational challenges, and work with more confidence.

A winter session is in the planning stages, more details will be available soon!



**“PARTICIPANTS
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— Kim Harrison,
RDN Programs Manager

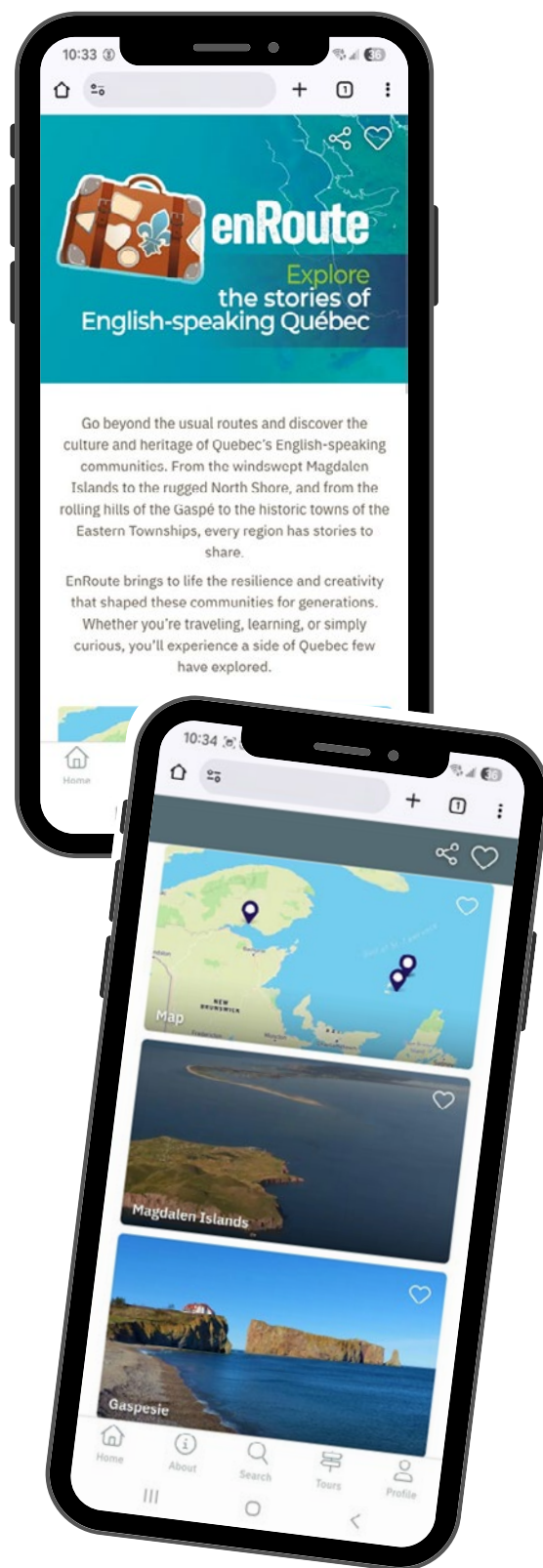
En Route: RDN's New Mobile Storytelling App

*Ready to roll into its
next phase*

The stories of English-speaking Quebec are rich, diverse, and deeply rooted in our communities. They live in our museums, community centres, archives, family collections, books—and in our collective memory. To help preserve and share these stories, the Regional Development Network is launching EnRoute, a new mobile storytelling app that brings the heritage of English-speaking Quebec to life through multimedia. Built on the award-winning StQry platform, EnRoute is now “Ready to Roll” into its next phase.

We need your help to spread the word and encourage story submissions. Stories may be up to 750 words and must include at least one image. Additional photos, videos, and audio files are welcome. Full details can be found in the [EnRoute Submissions Guide](#). Launching publicly in 2026, EnRoute will be a free, bilingual app available on the Apple App Store and Google Play, opening the rich stories of Quebec's English-speaking communities to local residents, visitors, and the world. The EnRoute app has been made possible with the financial support of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise.

**HELP RDN GET THE
MESSAGE OUT AND
INSPIRE OTHERS TO
SUBMIT THEIR STORIES!**



Happy Holidays



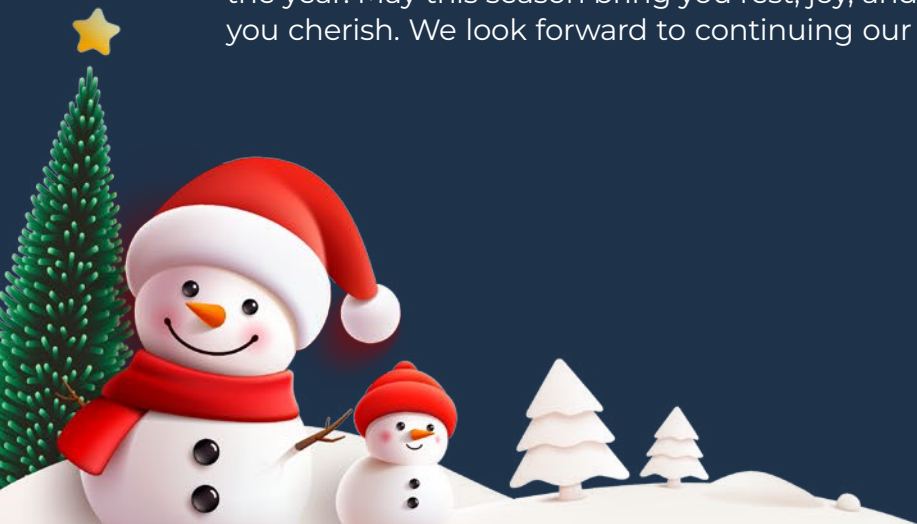
Best wishes for the holiday season from RDN's Board of Directors!

Now is the perfect time to reflect on the year that's been and to think about what we want to achieve in the new year together as a network.

We extend our heartfelt thanks for your dedication and collaboration throughout the year. May this season bring you rest, joy, and meaningful moments with those you cherish. We look forward to continuing our work together in the new year.

Brigitte Wellens

President,
RDN Board of Directors



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Find out more about our network, members, and programs by sending us an email or looking us up online.



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418-684-8810

This publication was made possible with the financial support of:

**Secrétariat aux relations
avec les Québécois
d'expression anglaise**

Québec 