

RDN INSIGHTS

Updates, Stories, and Outcomes From Across the Network



Provincial and Regional Organizations Connect at RDN Community Builder Retreat

14 provincial organizations and over 40 participants were present on day two of RDN's Community Builder Retreat.

Day two of RDN's Community Builder Retreat brought together provincial and regional organizations serving Québec's English-speaking communities for a day focused on dialogue, collaboration, and relationship-building. Regional organizations shared community-driven initiatives creating meaningful impact across the province, while provincial organizations facilitated discussions on key issues affecting English-speaking communities and the overall vitality of English-speaking Québec, including section VII of the Official Languages Act.

"The day provided an important opportunity to bring organizations together to exchange ideas, strengthen relationships, and identify shared priorities," said RDN's executive director. "The discussions highlighted the value of collaboration across Québec's English-speaking communities, and we look forward to building on this momentum through more connected and coordinated efforts moving forward."



RDN LAUNCHES THE EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES (EIEC)



Empowerment initiative for English-speaking Communities

The Empowerment Initiative for English-speaking Communities (EIEC) is a new RDN program funded by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program. This funding supports projects that promote social inclusion and equitable access to resources for diverse English-speaking sub-populations in Québec, including 2SLGBTQI+ communities, youth, and seniors.

RDN looks forward to supporting the EIEC's five recipient organizations as they carry out program activities across the province through a community of practice and ongoing guidance over the course of the program, which will run until the end of the 2028–2029 fiscal year.

Heartfelt Goodbye to Mike Vigneault

Mike Vigneault's journey with the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI) began in November 2022 with his appointment as interim executive director, marking the start of what became an almost four-year tenure as the organization's leader. During his time at the helm, Mike provided calm and steady leadership as CAMI navigated challenging infrastructure projects essential to sustaining heritage activities important to the socio-economic development of both the English-speaking and broader communities. He also helped strengthen regional collaboration and maintain CAMI's position as a key player within the region's community development ecosystem.

RDN's team would like to recognize Mike's dedication not only to CAMI but also to enhancing the vitality of the English-speaking community of the Magdalen Islands and to maintaining strong ties with the wider



community. It has been a pleasure working with you as part of the network, and we wish you all the best in your (second!) retirement.



Taking Action to Reduce Poverty and Social Exclusion

Over the next three years, RDN and its member organizations will benefit from a new financial partnership with the Lucie Andrée Chagnon Foundation (FLAC) to address poverty and social exclusion in English-speaking communities across Québec.

This partnership will strengthen RDN's capacity to collaborate with provincial stakeholders, generate and share new knowledge, and further support regional and local mobilization efforts focused on achieving meaningful and lasting improvements in community conditions and quality of life.

“Our goals and values are closely aligned with those of the FLAC, as we both share a commitment to social transformation, and I believe we can achieve it together,” said Cathy Brown, executive director of RDN.

She added that “according to Statistics Canada research, poverty rates among English speakers are significantly higher than those of the majority French-speaking population in almost all regions of the province.”

This past winter, RDN hosted a webinar bringing together provincial partners to collectively explore the realities of poverty and discrimination affecting English-speaking communities in Québec.

For a copy of the presentation, please contact **Russ Kueber** at russ@regdevnet.org



Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon

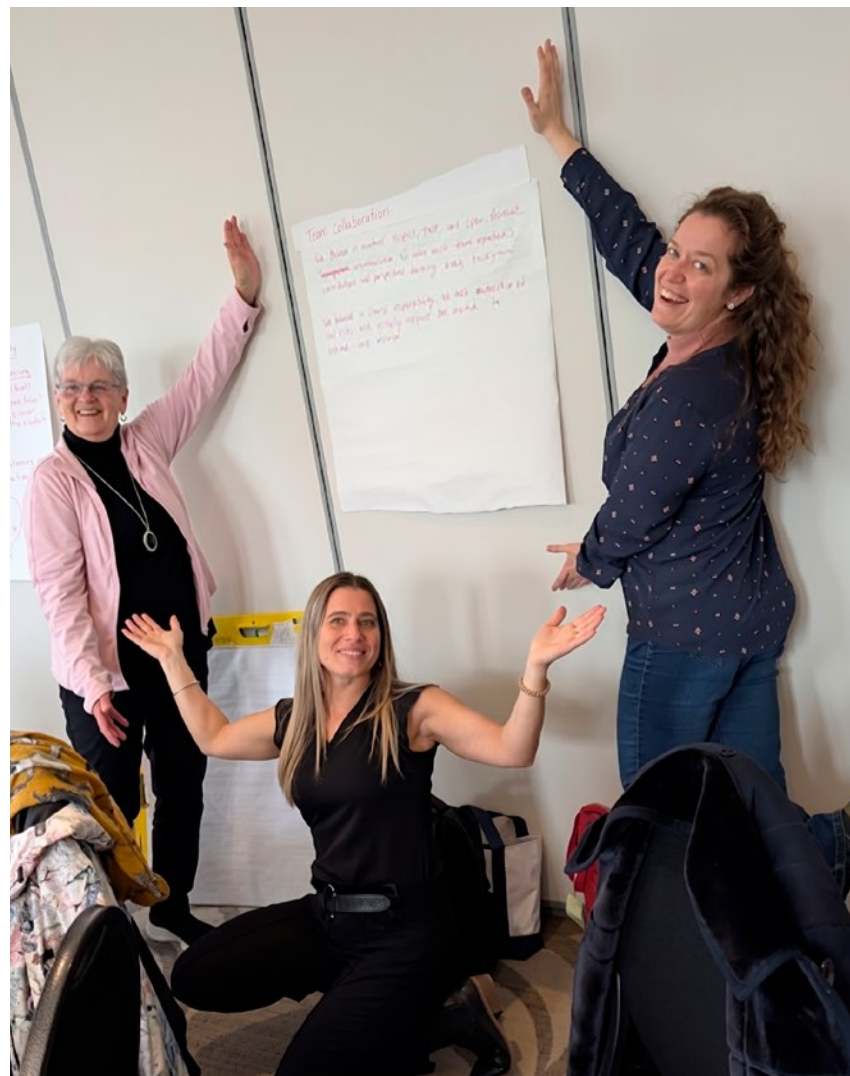
The Importance of Building Effective Teams

Nonprofit organizations rely on strong internal collaboration to achieve results, respond to challenges, and sustain their impact within communities. The strength of a team often influences an organization's ability to communicate effectively, work strategically, and adapt to changing needs and circumstances.

This understanding is reflected in RDN's approach to supporting member organizations.

“BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE OUR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS DEPEND ON PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR MISSIONS. STRONG TEAMS FOSTER BETTER COMMUNICATION, CLEARER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND A GREATER ABILITY TO LEARN, ADAPT, AND RESPOND TO EVOLVING COMMUNITY NEEDS.”

— Russ Kueber
senior manager of
regional development at RDN



Audrey Ottier, executive director of CASE (center), and two of her team members participate in an effective teams workshop led by RDN.

Over the past few months, this commitment has taken shape through a series of workshops involving six member organizations. The sessions focused on strengthening team capacity, improving communication, and enhancing collaboration to help organizations work more effectively and better serve their communities.

Schools Are Getting On Board With SEEnet

SEEnet has been actively engaging with English-speaking schools across the province, having visited eleven institutions in seven different regions of Québec. The primary objectives of these visits are to deliver SPARK workshops and to strengthen connections between schools and the broader social economy ecosystem, opening up new learning and partnership opportunities for students.

To date, workshops have been facilitated in a range of educational settings, including three high schools in the Laurentians, two in the Outaouais region, and one on the Lower North Shore. SEEnet has also engaged with post-secondary institutions, including Vanier College, the three Champlain campuses, and Bishop's University.

These activities have been carried out in close collaboration with member organizations, the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM), and regional Pôles d'économie sociale, helping to ensure strong local partnerships and meaningful connections within each region.

Mario Oropeza, social economy officer for RDN, explained that "SPARK workshops are being adapted and delivered to schools that experience very different realities throughout Québec". He continued to say that "besides the educational component, I love it when schools and students seize interesting opportunities that we're able to bring closer to them thanks to our social economy partnerships."



If you are interested in hosting a SPARK workshop in your region, feel free to contact **MARIO OROPEZA** or **HOFFMAN WOLFF** for more information.



Bringing Regional Voices Into Policy Development in Québec and Canada

RDN is proud to have contributed to the work of both Québec's Commission des institutions and Canada's Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages on key policy issues affecting English-speaking communities across our regions.

RDN had the opportunity to take part in consultations on Bill 1, the Québec Constitution Act, 2025, before Québec's Commission des institutions. In April 2026, RDN was also invited to present a brief to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages as part of its review of the regulatory framework for Part VII of the Official Languages Act.

These engagements provided important opportunities to share a regional perspective and contribute to discussions that help shape public policy affecting English-speaking communities.

If you would like to view the recordings, they are available here:

COMMISSION DES INSTITUTIONS
<https://lnkd.in/eH-ReZ78>

STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
<https://lnkd.in/evdMS3kB>

Brigitte Wellens, president of RDN, in front of the Commission des institutions on February 10, 2026.



Rachel Hunting, senior manager of regional development of RDN, in front of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages on April 13, 2026.

Building Bridges With CDCs

At a recent community of practice session, RDN member organizations were introduced to Marie-Line Audet, executive director of the Table nationale des Corporations de développement communautaire (TNCDC). Ms. Audet presented the TNCDC and highlighted the role of its 71 Community Development Corporations (CDCs) across Québec. These CDCs work across a wide range of sectors, including poverty reduction and the fight against social exclusion as well as education, the environment, health, and employment.

“WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH OUR CDC FOR SOME TIME NOW, AS WE SHARE MANY COMMON GOALS. I WAS PLEASED TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE IN THE HOPE OF ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH THEIR LOCAL CDCS.”

— Brian Gignac, MCDC

“LA RENCONTRE AVEC LE RÉSEAU DE DÉVELOPPEMENT RÉGIONAL A ÉTÉ L'OCCASION POUR MON ÉQUIPE ET NOS MEMBRES D'ÊTRE DAVANTAGE SENSIBILISÉS À LA RÉALITÉ SOCIOÉCONOMIQUE DES QUÉBÉCOISES ET QUÉBÉCOIS D'EXPRESSION ANGLAISE. LES ÉCHANGES ONT PERMIS AUSSI DE RÉFLÉCHIR SUR LES FAÇONS DE MIEUX COLLABORER AVEC LES ORGANISMES LOCAUX QUI LES REPRÉSENTENT POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RÉGIONS DU QUÉBEC.”

— Marie-Line Audet
directrice générale, TNCDC



Following this presentation, the TNCDC extended an invitation to RDN to participate in an exchange with its CDC network with the aim of strengthening awareness and fostering deeper connections between CDCs and regional English-speaking organizations.

These exchanges reflect a growing interest in strengthening collaboration between CDCs and regional organizations serving English-speaking communities, and in building stronger, more connected community development networks across Québec.

EnRoute Québec Makes Its First Appearance

at the RDN Community Builder Retreat

The new EnRoute Québec mobile app made its official debut at the RDN Community Builder Retreat, offering attendees an exclusive first look at this innovative storytelling and tourism platform. Designed to showcase the culture, heritage, and lived experiences of Québec's English-speaking communities outside Montréal and Laval, the app combines immersive storytelling with interactive features that invite users to discover the regions through a new lens.

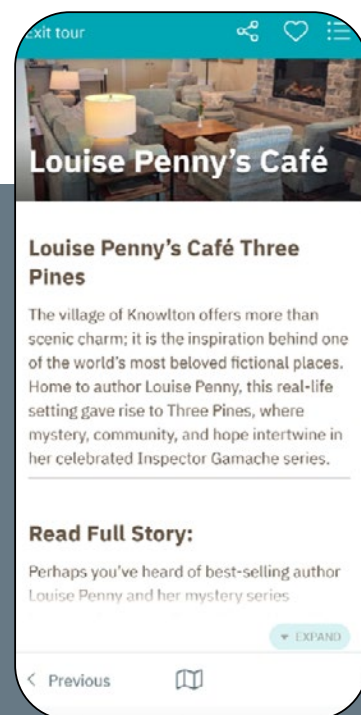
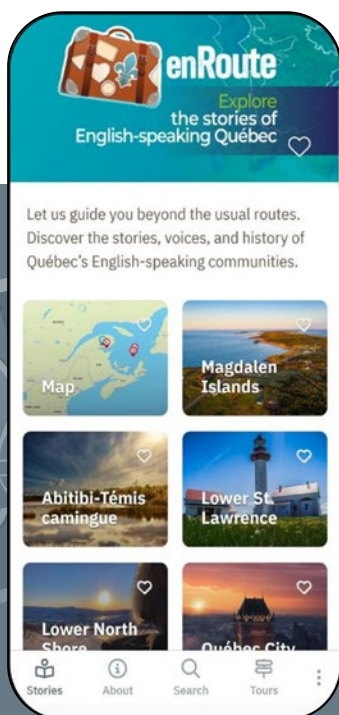
As part of the soft launch, participants explored a diverse collection of stories from across Québec's regions — from the tale of a fugitive horse in the Magdalen Islands that swam its way home, to the extraordinary account of a chance encounter with a Nazi spy in the Gaspé, and the remarkable story of how an entire town in the Saguenay was built in just 135 days.

“ I THINK THIS APP IS A
MUCH-NEEDED WAY OF
SHOWCASING THE STORIES
THAT MAKE US WHO WE ARE
AND WHAT WE CONTRIBUTE
TO THE FABRIC OF QUEBEC
CULTURE. AS A PROUD
ANGLOPHONE QUEBECER
MYSELF, I CAN'T WAIT TO
USE IT! ”

— Miranda Castravelli
executive director, ELAN

Organizations were also invited to test the app's user experience and share feedback ahead of its public rollout later this year.

Early reactions were overwhelmingly positive, with attendees highlighting the importance of creating vibrant digital spaces where English-speaking Quebecers can see themselves reflected in and contributing to Québec's broader story.



Winter LEAD Workshops

A Huge Success

As part of the Leadership, Empowerment and Development (LEAD) Program, four online training sessions were held this past winter to support both RDN members and non-members in building their community development capacity.

The workshops covered a range of key topics, including introduction to community development, collaborative leadership, community engagement and empowerment, and community assessment and mobilization.



“With this interest and success, we are planning to launch a fall 2026 LEAD online workshop series,” explained Rachel Hunting, one of the RDN LEAD trainers.

IN TOTAL,

35

different organizations participated, representing a diverse range of sectors.

A flyer for the "Community Development Workshop Series 2026". At the top left is the LEAD logo with the tagline "Workshop Wednesdays". The main title is "Community Development Workshop Series 2026" in white text on a dark blue background, with a subtitle "1.5-hour online workshops starting at 10 a.m., open to non-members". The flyer lists four workshops: 1. Jan 21: Introduction to Community Development; 2. Feb 18: Collaborative Leadership; 3. Mar 18: Community Engagement and Empowerment; 4. Apr 22: Community Assessment and Mobilization. On the right side, there are two circular portraits of Rachel Hunting and Russ Kueber, with the text "Facilitated by Rachel Hunting and Russ Kueber from RDN". Below the portraits is a red button that says "REGISTER NOW" with a hand icon. At the bottom, it lists financial support from the Government of Québec and RDN (Regional Development Network).

“VERY INFORMATIVE AND GREAT ACTION STEPS TO WALK AWAY AND USE.”

“IT’S GREAT TO BUILD ON ONE ANOTHER’S EXPERIENCES, STORIES, AND LEARNINGS.”

A few of the participants' comments

“THE WORKSHOP PROMOTED INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND THE SHARING OF CHALLENGES.”

SEEnet Expands Its Reach in the Laurentians



SEEnet is strengthening partnerships across Québec's social economy while improving access to English-language support.

In Arundel, a majority English-speaking village south of Mont-Tremblant, local stakeholders sought to bring several initiatives such as a farmers' market, ski trails, an arts fair, and a community centre under one revenue generating nonprofit. Lacking capacity to support in English, Économie sociale

Laurentides partnered with SEEnet. Earlier this spring, Hoffman Wolff representing SEEnet, Hugo Bissonette from 4Korners, and Économie sociale Laurentides held a community session to gather input and present available support.

SEEnet is also increasing access to information on collective takeovers. More recently, it hosted a webinar for the Québec Farmers' Association, featuring a presentation in English by Jérôme Gagné of the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité on support for farm transfers.

These efforts reflect SEEnet's role in bridging language gaps and supporting inclusive social economy development.



Famous Arundel train station turned into a post office

Strengthening Links With Place aux jeunes

In May, RDN was invited to the semi-annual meeting of Place aux jeunes agents in Baie-Comeau to deliver a presentation on English-speaking communities in Québec. The presentation aimed to help agents better understand the presence of these communities in the regions, the regional organizations that support them, their realities, and the diversity of profiles among the young people who are part of them. It also explored the connections between these elements and the role of Place aux jeunes regional agents (PAJR).



Rachel Hunting, senior manager of regional development presents to the Place aux jeunes en région agents.

Circonflexe Mentorship Program

In partnership with VEQ and PERT, RDN co-hosted a Circonflexe Mentorship Program event last February in Quebec City. This networking initiative aimed to bring together French-speaking professionals and prospective employers, as well as English-speaking Quebecers seeking to strengthen their professional French skills and expand their French-language professional networks. The event brought together more than 60 English- and French-speaking participants.




“RDN WAS PLEASED TO WELCOME LINDSEY KETTEL, PRESIDENT OF CHANTIER DAVIE, AND GABRIEL DUSABLON, PRESIDENT OF THE QUÉBEC CITY’S COUNCIL, WHO DELIVERED OPENING REMARKS. PARTICIPANTS ENJOYED A SELECTION OF APPETIZERS AND TOOK PART IN A NETWORKING BINGO ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION. THE 5 À 7 WAS A GREAT SUCCESS, FOSTERING MEANINGFUL EXCHANGES AND NEW PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.”

— Mario Oropeza
social economy officer, RDN




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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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This publication was made possible with the financial support of:

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

Québec 