

André Thibault

Public and Civic Leisure in Québec

**Dynamic, Democratic,
Passion-driven, and Fragile**



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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of presenting an overview of Québec's public and civic leisure model—an organizational model involving both government and citizens' groups—followed on the decision to hold the 2008 World Leisure Congress in Québec City under the auspices of Conseil québécois du loisir and with the support of the Québec government's Secrétariat du loisir et du sport. The scope of the task quickly became apparent: 500,000 volunteers, 15,000 associations, no less than 40% of government departments, and the majority of Québec's municipalities are involved in a leisure system in constant interaction with a changing population. This distinctive system faces challenges from a powerful and growing commercial sector and the rise of "cocooning" and "nesting." A product of joint efforts by the public sector and civil society, public and civic leisure does not fit any classic organization chart hierarchy. It is more akin to the Internet, with a multitude of actors who collaborate to diverse degrees through a variety of networks, and who share certain values and principles that act like network connection protocols. The challenge was to determine the most appropriate angle from which to tell the story of this system and its culture, dynamics, and challenges without making the final result read like a directory of organizations.

Portraying this system requires humility on the part of the authors, and considerable indulgence on the part of the reader. Public and civic leisure is like an extended family whose members belong to a multifaceted society scattered across a vast territory—the province of Québec. The family shares the same gene pool, but its members are different. Introducing the family not only means presenting its genetic similarities, but also the way in which the various family members have evolved in their own distinct ways. The goal is not to recount the entire family history, but to offer an impressionistic overview. For this reason, the team from *Laboratoire en Loisir et Vie Communautaire* decided to describe the Québec system on the basis of the aspects that its many actors have in common: Québec, Quebecers and their leisure practices, a mission, values, certain principles, resources, and spaces for dialog and collaboration. What is the Québec experience? Obviously, this book cannot cover its multiple expressions; however, more than 43 cases and an equal number of short practical examples from the field illustrate how the model lives and grows.

The purpose of this book is to help foreign attendees at the World Leisure Congress grasp the fundamental dynamics and distinctive characteristics of the Québec model. It also aims to provide the Quebecers who help build and transform this model piece by piece, day by day—and often don't step back to see the big picture—with an idea of the scope of their achievements. The World Leisure Congress provides an opportunity to take such a step back, an opportunity this book seeks to promote and prolong. The book is also intended for recreation and leisure students who will spend their careers in a system faced with major strategic challenges that will shape their future working environment. We hope a better understanding of the system will help them identify personal and professional challenges that can motivate and guide their future actions.

The project was the initiative of a committee of Laboratory partners: *Association québécoise du loisir municipal*, *Sports-Québec*, *Conseil québécois du loisir*, *Secrétariat au loisir et au sport*, regional sport and recreation units and the Department of Leisure, Culture, and Tourism Studies at *Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*.

I would first like to thank the hundreds of people who provided documents and shared insights in interviews and discussions. Like the world of public and civic leisure, this book is a collective effort. And as in the entertainment business, we had a guest artist, Jocelyn Morier, a Ph.D. candidate and teacher at *Cégep du Vieux-Montréal*, who provided us with

several “turnkey” cases. The research was done by Julie Beaumont, Joannie Otis, Philippe Trudel, and Josée Desruisseaux, students in the master’s program in leisure, culture, and tourism. My thanks to all of them.

I would also like to say a very special thank you to my two UQTR colleagues, professors Julie Fortier and Pascale Marcotte, who supervised the case research teams, summarized the cases, and commented on the draft text. They played a crucial role in bringing this book into being.

Now, all aboard for an exploration of the Québec model of public and civic leisure!

André Thibault, Ph.D.



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INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC AND CIVIL LEISURE: BETWEEN HOME AND INDUSTRY

Between the world of commercial leisure and cocooning, a variety of public institutions and civil society organizations in Québec work together in the community and the public sphere to provide Quebecers with access to leisure opportunities. Everyone has at some point in their lives attended a community celebration, signed their children up for team sports, used parks or bike paths, volunteered for an amateur theater company or soccer tournament, or expressed their needs or defended their rights respecting leisure. In short, people use or contribute to leisure activities and services in their communities. These communities may be territorially based—a neighborhood or village, for instance—or interest based, such as a fishing club or philatelic society. The noncommercial leisure activities that society develops and participates in are made possible by a series of actors with a particular vision and set of values and strategies. Their roots in the community make for a vibrant sector that is constantly changing and difficult to capture in a single snapshot. It is this world that we seek to describe and understand in this book—the world of public and civic leisure in Québec.

This world is nourished and developed by public officials and thousands of associations and volunteers. It is peopled by over 15,000 citizen associations, no less than 40% of Québec government ministries, 500,000 volunteers, and several thousand permanent staff (professionals and technicians), most of whom work at recreation departments in municipalities of 5,000 people or more, or in the many organizations and regional and provincial associations partially funded by government and the municipalities. These groups operate as a loose-knit network to provide Québec's eight million people with leisure facilities, instruction and supervision, information, programs, and experiences. The Québec system is built on a partnership between civil society, the government, and the commercial sector.

Annual spending on public and civic leisure is estimated at least at \$6 billion: \$1 billion from the municipalities, \$1 billion in volunteer time, \$1 billion from the Québec government, and at least \$3 billion from the many associations and their members, not to mention the resulting spinoffs for the Québec economy in general.

Dollars aside, the leisure sector testifies to a society determined to affirm its leadership and work democratically to build a better quality of life. Its actors are the people who cultivate Québec's human and social capital. Together, they share the same mission:

To make the conditions for a satisfactory leisure experience available to the public and provide the sought-after benefits of leisure to the community.

In concrete terms, they work in partnership to

Provide a range of quality cultural, social, sporting, physical, natural, urban, and play and rest-oriented experiences that are varied, accessible, and safe, as well as equitably distributed across the province and adapted to citizens' needs and characteristics.¹

This leisure sector is a response to social and individual aspirations. Socially, it influences health, quality of life, community social capital, and the social integration of individuals and groups. It contributes to individual, community, and economic development.

Present-day society expects leisure to contribute to the development of health, quality of life, a sense of belonging, and public socialization and participation, as well as to facilitate the social integration of the disadvantaged.²

1. Thibault, A. (2006). "Les grands enjeux en loisir et les défis du système québécois," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 1. Quote is our translation, as are all other quotes from French-language sources cited in the text.

2. *Ibid.*

Public leisure facilitates the education and integration of the largest possible number of citizens, including the disadvantaged, through social participation. It has values that are distinct from commercial and private leisure and is organized along the principles of a democratic society. It can be supplemented and enriched through partnerships with commercial interests that incorporate the values of public leisure.

In the area of free time and leisure, public and civic leisure is not alone. It is one of three players in the field, along with commercial and domestic leisure. Each of them pursues its own objectives and provides goods and services to the population, sometimes in competition, and always in a manner that complements the other two.

Without the cultural, entertainment, and tourism industries, large segments of Québec's domestic and export economy would be weakened. These industries occupy a growing economic space estimated to account for over 12% of Québec GDP. Household leisure spending in Québec is nearly \$10 billion³—over 12% of Quebecers' current expenses—an increase of 13% between 2001 and 2005.⁴

Intrawest invested more than \$800 million at Mont-Tremblant; the former Montréal Forum has been transformed into an entertainment center; in Québec City, the Galeries de la Capitale shopping center features an indoor amusement park, video games, Cirque du Soleil shows, and an IMAX theater. Sales by the video game industry have overtaken movies, and the cultural and tourist industries are thriving thanks to megashows and the products of globalization. The business world spends hundreds of times more on leisure than the Québec government. The industry capitalizes on consumers' quest for pleasure to sell goods whose purchase is pleasure driven. It has developed marketing strategies covering everything from product definition to rollout that are based on customer expectations, desires, and behavior.

Based on the model developed by Professor Florida, Institut de la statistique du Québec has established Montréal's bohemian index at 1.79, making it one of the most bohemian cities in North America [...] thereby confirming what many people may have had already guessed.⁵

3. Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Table (pay use) 203-0001. Updated on August 1, 2007.

4. Statistics Canada, Table 203-0001: *Survey of Household Spending* (SHS), household spending, summary-level categories, by province, territory and selected metropolitan areas, annual (Table), CANSIM (database). See <cansim2.statcan.ca/cgiwin/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=F&CANSIMFile=CII\CII_1_F.htm&RootDir=CII>, retrieved January 9, 2008.

5. The bohemian index is used measure the quality of life, tolerance, and cultural creativity of a city or region.

[...]

According to a survey of thousands of subscribers to U.S. magazine *Travel and Leisure*, Montréal is the fifth most popular city in North America. The criteria selected and weighted (out of 100) for the rankings were arts/culture, restaurants, people, shopping, activities and attractions, and value.⁶

As for the trend toward cocooning and nesting in recent years, it has increased the emphasis on household leisure. People perceive leisure as a moment of freedom and an opportunity to take time for themselves and those within their immediate circle of family and friends. The most visible consequence of this is the rise of the home as a focal point for recreation, and the corresponding boom in home theater systems, gardening, the Internet, entertaining friends, do-it-yourselfing, etc. This nesting phenomenon is due to lifestyle. In Québec, getting around without a car is a challenge. The suburbs ringing our larger cities continue their outward expansion. As a result, family members live apart from morning till night, with parents at work and children in school or daycare. Furthermore, market enticements encourage everyone to have their own in-home fitness rooms, dens, pools, and home theater systems, and promote products designed to make household kitchens look like their restaurant counterparts, and gardens and lawns like public parks. In short, society values leisure in its own right, which has made it into a high-growth sector.

Against this backdrop, public and civic leisure must reaffirm its distinctiveness and remain relevant while at the same time achieving a form of osmosis with Québec society and its people.

IS THERE A QUÉBEC MODEL?

In the strict sense of the term, there is no formal, comprehensive Québec leisure system with its own hierarchy or codes and regulations. The deployment and development of public and civic leisure structures in Québec is not dictated by central planning, or by government policy or legislation. As in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, it is the result of initiatives by individuals, communities, institutions, ministries, and leaders, and has been shaped by the needs and behavior of Quebecers through time, space, and changing social, economic, and political circumstances.

6. Tourisme Montréal (2001). "Indicateur plus," *Bulletin statistique de l'industrie du tourisme montréalaise*.

In this light, the word “model” refers not so much to a structure, but rather to a representation of a group of government actors and civil society representatives who, historically, have woven a diverse tapestry of links to meet the needs of the population. One thing they share is the absence of a profit motive. Together, they have gradually developed local, regional, and provincial contact points where they can meet, consult, and help each other while maintaining their independence, initiative, and competitiveness. These contact points may be public organizations such as municipalities, or civil bodies such as regional sport and recreation units, community centers, local recreation committees, and sports clubs. Funding for the work they do comes from both public and civic sources. In this sense, then, there is a Québec model that can be defined as a way of governing, organizing, and doing things in order to assemble the elements required for leisure activities. The model is dynamic, democratic, “passion-driven,” and fragile. Is it exclusive to Québec? Undoubtedly no, but it presents features that make it a unique, functioning whole, if for no other reason than it reflects the land and people of Québec.

The Québec model obeys dynamic system theory, since it evolves in response to past and present determinants. From what it was at the outset, the Québec leisure system has changed as it reacts and adjusts to present-day circumstances though the independent actions of its component parts. Québec is a plural entity in terms of territory, the cultures that comprise it, and its population, which is both rich and poor, and both well educated and undereducated (with a 30% dropout rate). The leisure activities and needs of Quebecers are also plural, as are the actors of the leisure system and the multiple relationships between them. In this light, the Québec model would appear more diffuse, in keeping with chaos theory.

Speaking of leisure practices, Michel Bellefleur⁷, in his book *L'évolution du loisir au Québec*, shows that

their development was neither linear nor planned. On the contrary, it was more often disorganized, uncertain, haphazard, chaotic, agenda-driven, and subject to social inequality. In this sense, leisure was a microcosm for the challenges facing society in general.

The Québec model is democratic, mobilizing groups from all sectors of society and encouraging numerous actors to exercise their power of action and initiative. Not only is it democratic, it also operates *as part of a*

7. Bellefleur, M. (1997). *L'évolution du loisir au Québec: essai sociohistorique*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 12. This outstanding work analyzes the evolution of leisure in Québec and is a vital reference for understanding the contemporary model described in this book.

democracy where it must carve out its own space among multiple interests and vectors of power. Local associations and municipalities are, for example, constantly renegotiating the way they share power.

Driven by passion, the Québec model relies on the commitment of individuals to their leisure interests, their community, and their children. It depends extensively on the zeal of leaders and citizens who volunteer their time and energy to organize leisure activities.

The Québec model is also fragile as it faces changes affecting its foundations and various aspects of its normal approach. Clientification and the dominance of individual leisure undermine the volunteer sector. Notions of community life and a shared responsibility for the common good are confronted by mercantilism and individualism. Volunteering has always been taken for granted in the past, but today's volunteer sector is in need of attention. In addition, over the years we have developed services and products based on a multitude of activities. Today we need to preserve and develop a more holistic, population-based system in order to respond to public expectations, particularly with respect to seniors and families. We need to evolve from an activity-oriented approach to leisure to an experience-oriented approach. Yet even as these changes become necessary, the human, material, and financial resources available to implement them are stagnant at best, and at worst, decreasing or at risk.

The accelerated development of the commercial sector has in some respects forced the public and civic leisure sector to define and affirm its specificity. In the early years, public and civic leisure largely compensated for the absence of private and commercial leisure opportunities (many older Quebecers can still remember seeing their first movie at the local parish hall!). Today, however, the sector must explain and justify its need for public funds, especially in an era when the welfare state is shrinking. In this light, modern-day public leisure tends to play up its social, cultural, and economic usefulness and, from a public officials' perspective, to be considered as a means of achieving social, cultural, and economic goals in areas ranging from health to social cohesion. This explains why notions like quality of life, health, and living environment are often cited to justify public spending on leisure.

The present-day Québec model was born in a civil society historically dominated by the church—both Catholic and Protestant—at the parish and diocese level. During the 1960s, playground programs, recreation centers, diocesan leisure federations, and sports organizations (mainly in ice hockey and baseball) that had come under lay control asked municipalities and the provincial government to step in and invest in leisure in place of the Church. The Montmorency Declaration (1968) summarizes

the key issues of the day and describes the circumstances that paved the way for the current model based on complementary roles for the public sector and civil society.

- Private organizations are struggling under the load: public opinion is forcing local, municipal, and school officials to take responsibility for the future of recreation.
- Numerous regional recreation federations are being established and becoming more representative by the day.
- A number of new associations are being created (sports federations, recreation centers, municipal recreation departments, etc.).
- Numerous new facilities are springing up, including pools, tennis courts, stadiums, cultural centers, etc.⁸

The momentum created in 1968 continued. A diverse array of associations came into being in response to public needs and desires and the growing popularity of certain activities. Today, civil society continues to play a predominant role in developing and sustaining the Québec model. It often steps into the breach left by public institutions as they withdraw under the impetus of administrative reforms or questions about the role of the state, at least as the sole authority in charge. Today, the government acts “with” instead of “for.” In some spheres, the trend is even toward getting someone else to do the job entirely.

Alongside the social change and government reforms sweeping Québec, the leisure field was the subject of several consultations, held at approximately ten-year intervals. These consultations were very successful and allowed the field to evolve at the same pace as society. Most notable were the Lévis consultation in 1967, the White Paper on Leisure Activities in 1978, the Québec Leisure Conference in 1986–1987, and the consultation on partnership renewal in 1995–1996.⁹

In short, the Québec leisure model has developed against the backdrop of a changing Québec. To understand it, we must not only describe it, but also understand the environment and the changes that stand as challenges today. To explain it, we must constantly look to Quebecers’ leisure-time practices and the people and institutions that help make these practices possible.

8. Association des directeurs de loisir municipaux du Québec (ADLM) (1968). *Le loisir, défi d'aujourd'hui*, Montmorency Declaration, brochure.

9. Bellefleur, M. (1997). *Op. cit.*, p. 260.

RECOUNTING AND ILLUSTRATING

The purpose of this book is to recount and illustrate the Québec model of public and civic leisure activity and services. To do so, we will describe and analyze the model to understand the environment that has shaped it, the organizational logic that has structured it, and the dynamics of the relationship among its actors and between them and the population that is their *raison d'être*.

The logical framework of this book is inspired by organization theory, and recounts and illustrates the Québec model in terms of its environment (territory, population, society, and governance), strategic challenges, directions (vision, values, principles, and strategies), actors (local, regional, and provincial governments and civil society), resources (volunteer, professional, financial, and infrastructure), achievements, and track record.

Our work has significant limits due to the changing and sometimes chaotic nature of the model. The diversity of the leisure community and the model's relativity in time restrict the generalizations that can be made. The model's component parts do not always move at the same time or in the same direction, which makes it harder to take a snapshot. There is a risk of painting an inaccurate or incomplete picture. *Describing the Québec model as it exists, and not as we wish it were, thus calls for an impressionistic approach that sketches out the contours without filling in all the details.* It means giving the reader the tools and benchmarks to navigate through a dynamic model.

It is for this reason that this book uses two epistemological strategies to explore the Québec model. It attempts to describe and analyze the model's foundations while at the same time punctuating the description with illustrations from cases chosen from across Québec to reflect its various dimensions. These cases are not so much "best practices" as significant practices, i.e., examples that illustrate certain successes or corresponding intentions in implementing various aspects of the model. Such practices are significant in that they are consistent with the challenges of public and civic leisure, or are feasible in a given situation.

Each of the cases presented was chosen for its ability to illustrate a given aspect of the model. As with a survey sample, the cases were also chosen because they were representative of local, regional, and provincial environments; cultural, sports, social, and outdoor activity sectors; and the principal actors—ministries, municipalities, associations, community centers, and institutions. In short, each case is a piece of a perpetually incomplete puzzle that depicts the world of public and civic leisure in Québec. This book tells the story of the puzzle, illustrated with photos.

Throughout the book, the notion of leisure is used in its broadest sense—that of activities or experiences people freely choose to partake in during their free time.

The field of public and civic leisure is rooted in the notion of the public good and pursues both collective and individual goals. Its governance generally takes inspiration from a democratic society model and relies on participation by a large number of social actors. These actors share a broad vision and common values of public service. To present the Québec model, we must identify the vision and shared values, the actors and their contributions, and the relationships (networks, partnerships, competition, collaboration, outsourcing, solidarity, and coalitions) they maintain among themselves and with society and the community. And we must understand the dynamic that creates, modifies, and develops this sphere of activity.

The Québec model exists and develops in an authentic societal setting and in a specific social, cultural, economic, and political environment.

Chapter 1

QUÉBEC AND QUEBECERS

Quebecers inhabit a territory three times the size of France, but occupy an ever-smaller portion of it. However, they increasingly use their leisure time to explore this land. They are city dwellers living in what resembles urban villages—Montréal was once described as a city of 43 villages—where they like to gather, play, and celebrate together, organizing their leisure activities through a multitude of organizations. Over time, these urban villagers have come in contact with Quebecers from neighboring villages, developing affinities and creating new groups less closely tied to a specific territory. They have also manifested their growing independence by expressing a sense of ownership of their municipalities and provincial government, calling upon them to support their initiatives and, in doing so, creating a form of partnership-based leisure governance. Contemporary Québec is changing. It is aging. Its young people, who are in a minority, are trying as best they can to make a place for themselves. The population is diversifying. The pace of life is accelerating, and everyone talks about how little time they have. Families are constantly on the run as children are shuttled between the homes of divorced parents and school or daycare. To save time, residents, that is to say the parishioners of yore, are increasingly urged to view themselves as consumers and clients. The Québec of today has an impact on the very foundations of the Québec model, which

by turns grows stronger and more fragile. One thing is certain: the model is in flux. To understand the model today and get a glimpse of what it may look like tomorrow, it is Québec we must look at first.

CITIES, TOWNS, AND VILLAGES—AND A VAST PUBLIC DOMAIN

Québec's current population (2008) is 7.7 million, nearly one-quarter of the Canadian total. The population density is 4.5 per square kilometer, but nearly 80% of Quebecers live in a corridor running along the St. Lawrence River.

Québec is a vast territory, and Quebecers use it for a wide variety of leisure activities that occasionally require harmonization. Administratively, Québec is divided into 17 regions and hundreds of municipalities grouped together in regional county municipalities (RCMs). As in many countries, Québec is experiencing significant outmigration from its rural communities, which have to respond differently to individual and collective leisure needs than cities do.

Public lands make up 92% of Québec's surface area; they are mainly located in the central and northern regions of the province and are sparsely populated. They constitute a major heritage, an outstanding natural environment, and a source of natural resources vital to Québec's socioeconomic development.

In Québec, nearly 45,000 citizens and private or public organizations have a right to use public land: nearly 42,000 are lessees (28,000 for recreational purposes, 11,000 for shelter, and 3,000 for commercial, tourism, or other purposes); about 3,000 have another type of right to use public land, such as rights-of-way or authorizations to develop trails.¹

Public land is used for multiple purposes, including natural resource development (forestry, mining, energy, wildlife), parks and protected areas (recreation and conservation parks, ecological reserves, wildlife reserves and habitat), construction of industrial and public service infrastructures, and recreational and vacation property purposes.

The diversity of uses creates harmonization challenges given the increasing economic, recreational, and environmental demands on the land.

1. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, *Portrait du territoire*, <www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca/territoire/portrait>, retrieved February 26, 2008.

North of the 55th parallel, the *Act respecting Northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government* (R.S.Q. c. V-6.1) established a municipal system in 1978 encompassing an area almost as large as France, and covering two-thirds (over 500,000 km²) of Québec's territory. This area is home to 14 villages with populations that vary between 191 and 1,910 people, most of them Inuit. These villages are grouped under the Kativik Regional Government.

In the south, the population is divided among 1,139 municipalities: 3.5 million Quebecers (46.9%) live in the nine cities with populations over 100,000, and 66.6% live in metropolitan areas. One-quarter of the population lives in rural areas in municipalities of 10,000 people or less. This proportion has reversed itself in the space of a few generations. In the early 20th century, 80% of Quebecers were rural dwellers.

In the early 2000s, Québec underwent a major municipal restructuring when 213 municipalities and parts thereof amalgamated to form 42 new municipalities. In several large cities, boroughs were created and entrusted with front-line responsibility for leisure, culture, and social development. Legislators considered that leisure was a matter for the most local level of government.

Many of Québec's rural municipalities face significant challenges. Their per capita spending is only half that of their larger urban counterparts, as shown in Table 1.1.² Gone are the days when the difference between rural and urban budgets was made up through Québec government funding. Rural communities now have to rely on other means and other partners. Current government efforts, notably in the wake of the Rural Pact, tend more toward providing (partial) financial assistance for local initiatives than to covering deficits. New "models" are emerging, most of them born of cooperation between public institutions and citizen associations that leave municipalities with a more limited role.

Population breakdown by municipality provides important data for understanding the Québec leisure model because municipal corporations are the main public bodies with jurisdiction over leisure. With a total annual budget of over \$1.2 billion for nearly ten years now, municipalities have a central responsibility for leisure and play a key role at the local level, as set forth in the 1979 leisure policy.³

2. Thibault, A. (2005). "Regard sur les finances municipales en loisir et culture," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 8.

3. Gouvernement du Québec (1979). *On a un monde à récréer: Livre blanc sur le loisir au Québec*, Claude Charron, minister.

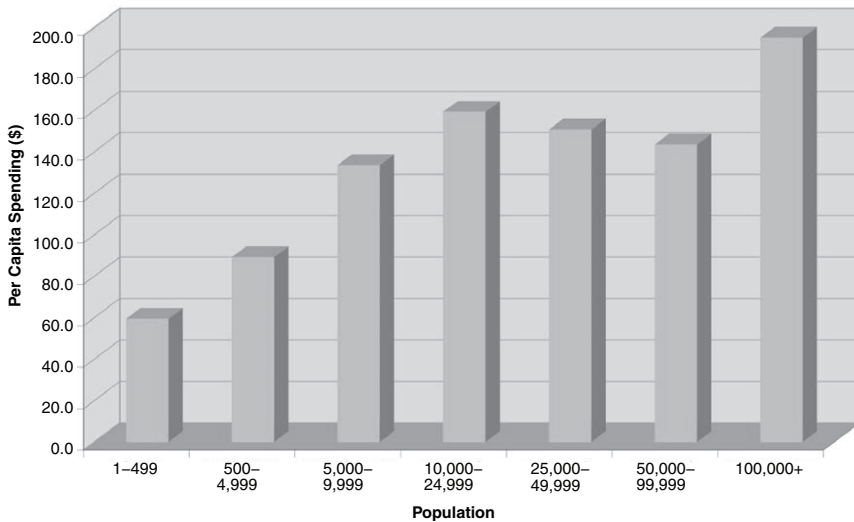
TABLE 1.1
Local Municipalities in October 2006*

Breakdown of Local Municipalities by Population

Population Range	Number of Municipalities	Population	
Under 2,000	753	648,163	8.6%
2,000 to 9,999	294	1,147,270	15.3%
10,000 to 49,999	74	1,578,878	21.1%
50,000 to 99,999	9	603,739	8.1%
100,000 and over	9	3,515,699	46.9%
Total	1,139	7,493,699	100.0%

* Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions (2006). *Décret de la population 2005*, <www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/organisation/orga_donn_popu.asp>, retrieved February 5, 2008. This table excludes Indian reserves, federal lands, unorganized territory, and Inuit lands.

FIGURE 1.1
Leisure and Culture Spending per Capita (2005 Forecast)
by Municipal Population



MÉKINAC

From Municipal to Community Coordination^a

Located in the Mauricie region, Mékinac regional county municipality (pop. 12,000) encompasses 10 municipalities. The community faces major problems of poverty, unemployment, high dropout rates, and youth outmigration and is the poorest RCM in the Mauricie region. Local communities clearly understood that they had to take action. The RCM normally devotes itself to five traditional spheres of activity: property assessment, land use planning, public safety (emergency measures, fire service), waste management, and economic development (Bill 34) as well as cultural and tourism development, which is considered part of economic development. As is frequently the case, municipal cooperation is a strain. The mayors of the RCM often have their own axe to grind and end up dividing budgetary resources equally between themselves without taking common challenges they face into account. There is no overall analysis of leisure needs and the mayors make sure they get their share of the pie. There is only one recreation director—in Saint-Tite (pop. 3,872)—and he has no role in the other municipalities. Saint-Tite has the most recreation facilities, with an arena, soccer fields, and schools with gymnasiums. The municipality is often the focal point where people gather.

In examining things, the Saint-Tite recreation department, Social Services, the early childhood center (CPE), and the Mauricie regional sport and recreation unit noted that playground leaders in the RCM were often left to their own devices.

Take care of 40 kids with 2 balls and 2 hoops, and keep them entertained. Good luck and see you at the end of the summer.

On the strength of this observation, these three local organizations took a first step and put together a training program for playground leaders. Today there are eleven projects, including regular and CPR training for playground leaders and day camp counselors, a workshop for municipal representatives, day camp manager training, access to assistance from the Psychosocial Department at CSSS Vallée-de-la-Batiscan, a Summer Olympics event (“Mes Premiers Jeux”), Mékin’art, intermunicipal activities, the Journées de la culture event, and a leadership and activity training program. In short, a network has formed. As local workers put it,

The strength of the network can be explained by the fact that we’re not all from a municipal background, but also from the community, sports, and health fields. Volunteers don’t have to handle clerical responsibilities. Permanent staff at the four organizations do that. Nathalie, who is a volunteer, doesn’t have time to take care of these duties in addition to her recreation committee in her municipality. Getting organizations that share an interest in developing sports and recreation to work

together to that end is a winning formula. Why are we successful? Because we've switched from seeing the municipality as responsible for coordinating leisure to seeing the community as coordinator. We bring together community organizations in all our fields of action. Schools, municipalities, and health services mobilize around shared concerns and contribute resources to improve our collective well-being. For example, at a meeting, the CPE representative said that if nobody could handle a certain project, the CPE would take it on even it wasn't part of its mission. That is quite an impressive level of involvement.

This is an example of how a community and local institutions, most of which have little normal involvement in leisure activities, took action on a problem and gradually built a network that stepped in in place of municipal leaders, getting the villages on board in the process. Perhaps this is a potential avenue for rural revitalization.

^a Based on an interview and documents collected during research on emerging models in rural Québec. Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, report forthcoming in 2008.

A HIGHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION

People are staying in school longer. And those with higher levels of education get more involved in their communities, ask for better quality services, and attend libraries and cultural events more frequently, even if they are short on time.

In Québec,⁴ education levels lagged behind those in the rest of Canada for many years. In 1951, 61.2% of the population 15 years old and under had less than 9 years of education, compared to 51.9% in Canada as a whole, and 46.9% in the neighboring province of Ontario. Education was one of the main objectives of the reforms introduced during the Quiet Revolution.

Today 2006 census data shows that 43.7% of the population aged 25 to 64 has a postsecondary education. This is about 3% more than in 2001, and one of the highest rates among the member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).⁵ In the medium term, income gaps between different groups impact access to leisure. Québec also has to deal with a high school dropout rate that consistently remains above 25% (see paragraphs on youth).

4. Laroche, D. (1997). *La mobilité scolaire*, Québec, Bureau de la statistique du Québec, "Introduction," p. 1.

5. Ministère des Affaires internationales (2006). *Le Québec en un clin d'œil*, Québec City, Government of Québec, p. 6.

A HOMOGENOUS POPULATION IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

Historically derived from European immigration, Québec's population continues to diversify under the influence of other cultures that are transforming and broadening leisure practices and needs, and creating a need for new efforts to ensure people live together harmoniously despite differences that can upset established ways.

Québec's population may seem relatively homogenous overall, but the Montréal metropolitan area stands apart. The majority of Quebecers—83%—speak French at home, while 10% speak English and 6% another language. Over 40% of the population is bilingual in French and English, a rate that attains 57% in Montréal. A significant portion of Quebecers (22%) also speak a third language. Although immigrants make up only 11.5% of the population, 90% of new arrivals (about 40,000 per year) settle in the Montréal area. On the island of Montréal, 28% of the population was born abroad, and there are 120 different ethnic groups. Fully 53% of students in Montreal public schools have at least one parent who is an immigrant. According to 2006 census data, one-third (136/411) of these schools have student populations where over 50% of the children are from non-francophone/non-anglophone cultural backgrounds. The vast majority of these schools (125 out of 136) are in the French-language sector. According to a 2005 survey, students at the Montréal school board came from 180 countries and spoke over 150 different mother tongues.⁶

In recent years, many of the media reports of cohabitation problems between various groups were related to leisure, no doubt because it is an area of cultural expression little subject to the constraints and codes of the workplace. Leisure is what people do in their free time. From the frosted windows installed at the YMCA to hide the view from the Hassidic community and soccer fields with different rules about wearing the Islamic headscarf to public parks where the odors of ethnic food cooked by picnicking families bother the neighbors, leisure activities are a space of constant negotiation between the diverging interests and values of a diversified society. For the moment, everyone acts to the best of their knowledge and in good faith to deal with their own particular situations. However, as is undoubtedly the case elsewhere in the world, there is growing public debate around the concept of "living together."

6. Commission scolaire de Montréal, Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (2007). *Portrait socioculturel des élèves inscrits dans les écoles publiques de l'île de Montréal – Inscriptions au 30 septembre 2006*, May, Montréal, CSM.

Political and popular discourse would suggest that Québec needs to develop a frame of reference for diversity and unity. In 2007 the Bouchard-Taylor Commission invited the population to debate “interculturalism, immigration, secularism, and the theme of Québec identity”:

Most Western nations are facing the same challenge, that of reviewing the major codes governing life together to accommodate ethnocultural differences while respecting rights. None of these societies can claim to have found a quick fix. It is incumbent upon each one of them to elaborate a solution or model that suits it, in keeping with its history, institutions and values and the constraints that it is facing. [...] It is in this spirit that the Commission is conducting its deliberations by focusing on three concrete objectives. Specifically, it is seeking to (a) clarify the existing situation; (b) provide a reference framework to facilitate decision-making among the managers of public and private institutions; and (c) share its reflections and formulate recommendations concerning the future.⁷

In certain parts of Québec, people learned to live with this diversity long ago. The following example is a case in point.

CASE 1.2

THE MONTRÉAL BOROUGH OF VILLERAY–SAINT-MICHEL–PARC-EXTENSION A Society of Many Nations

Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension is the second most populous borough in the city of Montréal. Fifty percent of its residents are first-generation immigrants (born outside of Canada), while 12% are second generation, i.e., born in Canada, but with at least one immigrant parent. The two main source countries are Italy (12.5%) and Haiti (14.2%); other countries of origin include Greece, Vietnam, Portugal, India, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Pakistan, and Algeria. Half of the borough’s residents speak a language other than French or English. Moreover, 40.7% of households fall in the low-income category. In fact, the lowest income households in the City of Montréal are in the borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension.

What did the borough do about leisure activities? First, it changed its approach, notably the way the municipal government and its partner organizations communicated with the population. Translation and informal

7. Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (2007). *Accommodation and Differences – Seeking Common Ground: Quebecers Speak Out*, consultation document, pp. 6–8.

assistance services were provided by residents, participants, and employees of different ethnic origins. Staff were trained to understand certain cultural codes and defuse conflicts caused by ignorance. Steps were taken to accommodate other groups with respect to certain sports (schedules, attire), but consistent with safety rules and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Moreover, the borough affirmed its determination to ensure the integration of immigrants into the community while respecting their differences, and to build bridges between groups and individuals. For example, in the face of plans for a community center for one particular cultural group, public institutions and local associations chose instead to offer the services at facilities used by the borough population as a whole, but adapted to their needs. Montréal does not want to be a city where communities live parallel lives. There is awareness that leisure activities provide an opportunity for cultural affirmation and cohabitation. Striking a balance requires constant vigilance.

CASE 1.3

THE CITY OF SHERBROOKE INTERCULTURAL POLICY

In 2002 the City of Sherbrooke (pop. 150,751) signed an agreement with Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration to develop its own immigrant settlement and integration policy. Sherbrooke had 6,290 immigrants in 2001.^a This move testified to the city's desire to take initiative and intervene more effectively with immigrants. Today, Sherbrooke is the first of Québec's amalgamated cities to draw up its own immigrant settlement and integration policy. The policy calls for the signature of a triennial agreement with Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration in order to implement the action plan.

The task of drafting the policy was entrusted to the City of Sherbrooke's Department of Sports, Culture, and Community Life. The team assigned to the job opted for a participatory democracy approach involving consultations with residents, civic organizations, institutions, and municipal employees.

The goals of the policy development committee, made up of representatives of the main parties affected by the policy, were to provide policy content, support the policy development process, and ensure the distribution and promotion of the policy. Some 30 civic organizations and institutions directly involved with immigrants participated in workshops on various aspects of the policy that were submitted by the development committee. In February 2004 the policy was presented to the public for consultation, generating numerous comments and suggestions from stakeholders and members of the general public. The policy was adopted by city council in spring 2004.

With this policy, the City of Sherbrooke has developed its own vision of immigrant settlement and integration, clarified its mission, identified the values and principles for action, and chosen its policy directions and priorities. Its mission is as follows:

The City will seek to ensure that residents of all origins have access to its services, jobs, and the various spheres of municipal life, and will help foster a sense of belonging to the Sherbrooke community, in collaboration with the various stakeholders concerned^b.

In this sense, the City seeks to play three special roles. First, it wishes to promote immigrant settlement and retention. Second, it wants to assist immigrants with their projects and initiatives. And third, it wants to provide them with referrals to available resources as needed. It set the following policy objectives:^c

- Foster access to municipal services among all residents of immigrant origin
- Encourage representation by immigrants in all sectors of municipal activity
- Foster intercultural rapprochement
- Develop partnerships

To foster access to municipal services, for example, the City plans to

- Inform its employees and elected officials about the experiences, needs, and expectations of residents of immigrant origin
- Develop an intercultural awareness and training program for its employees and elected officials, in collaboration with specialized organizations
- Implement communication strategies to connect with residents of immigrant origin and inform them about available services and municipal by-laws
- Facilitate immigrant access to essential municipal services such as housing, electricity, and public transit, within the limits of its jurisdiction
- Facilitate access by non-French/non-English-speaking residents to municipal services
- Facilitate access by immigrant families to recreation, culture, sports, and community programs in collaboration with municipally recognized organizations. This could even entail adapting these programs.^d

The similarities between this policy and practices put in place in the Montréal borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension are clear. Other municipalities are following suit.

^a Turgeon, S. (2004). *Portrait démographique et économique 2001, Ville de Sherbrooke*, <www.ville.sherbrooke.qc.ca>, retrieved April 20, 2008.

^b Ville de Sherbrooke (2004). *Politique d'accueil et d'intégration des immigrants*, p. 11.

^c *Ibid.*, p. 15.

^d *Ibid.*, p. 17.

POPULATION AGING

In the words of Institut de la statistique du Québec (2003, p. 24),

“Seniors boom,” gray power, gerontocracy—there is no shortage of expressions to describe population aging. By 2031, the number of people aged 65 and over in Québec will increase from its current level of 965,000 to 2.2 million. This group will continue to grow afterward, but at a much slower pace.⁸

This phenomenon is characterized by two things: it is taking place faster in Québec than in most countries, and its effects vary from region to region. One scenario by Institut de la statistique du Québec projects that by 2021, there will be more seniors (65 and over) than young people (0 to 19) in Québec. In other words, the horizon for change is very short. Whereas Canada is expected to take 45 years before the proportion of the population aged 65 and over decreases from 24% to 12%, Québec will only take 29 years to do the same. The number of people over 65 will more than double during the next 25 years.⁹ The phenomenon is at our doorstep and involves a massive transformation that we cannot disregard. Not only will there be a significant increase in the number of seniors, but the overall population is expected to begin declining by 2031 if current demographic trends continue.

In the regions, the challenges can be different. Southern Québec will see its overall population grow, but with a smaller proportion of seniors. In the Greater Montréal area, for example, seniors will make up between 20% and 26% of the population, whereas in most regions the proportion will be closer to 30%.¹⁰ Regional populations will decline, and the less urbanized regions will see stronger aging trends and an imbalance in the age group breakdown.

In the years to come, the leisure sector will have to deal with a massive influx of active young retirees, a growing number of frail elderly, and more and more people living at home rather than in institutions. All of these people will want to make the most of their free time, and will look to public and civic institutions and associations to help them do so.¹¹

8. Institut de la statistique du Québec (2003). *Si la tendance se maintient... Perspectives démographiques, Québec et régions 2001–2051*, Québec, Government of Québec, p. 24.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. Thibault, A. (2006). “Vieillessement de la population: menace ou opportunité? Établir les faits: la démographie et les stéréotypes”, *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 13.

We must not exclude the possibility that seniors themselves help supply these resources. Given that many seniors will have extensive qualifications and will live and remain healthy longer, their contributions could be greater than in recent decades.

The Québec government has defined its main strategy in terms of keeping seniors in their homes, maintaining their quality of life, and supporting natural caregivers. In so doing, it seeks to give seniors the means to remain independent and preserve their quality of life.

It also wishes to offer seniors every opportunity to participate in a constantly changing society. Seniors are a valuable asset in our society. They must take their place in our society and be able to give future generations the benefit of their experience and know-how, if they want to do so. We must offer them the tools that they require (<www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/aines/strategie-action/index_en.asp>, consulted March 25, 2008).

In this light, communities have a role to play in providing a quality environment to their seniors, in adapting services for an aging population, and especially in taking advantage of the positive contribution that “old-timers” from the privileged boomer generation can make. Free time and leisure activities are central to this collective challenge. Maintaining an active social life is one of the keys to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The vast consultation on seniors’ living conditions carried out in Québec in 2007 underscores the scope of this challenge to communities, as an excerpt from the report indicates.

In order to achieve a better level of collaboration, or “linkages,” between public and community organizations and between municipalities and seniors’ groups, participants stated that it was important for everyone to share their expertise and their know-how to facilitate the social involvement of seniors [...]

If you intend to improve the living environment of senior citizens, you have to take into account their many faceted needs in the areas of housing, public space design, access to public paratransit, security, leisure and cultural activities as well as the need for a stimulating community life.

A number of municipalities have made strides in this direction, and many already have a councillor who is responsible for seniors. Others choose to let this role be played by committees of seniors. It is clear though that much remains to be done to better respond to the overall needs of senior citizens in both rural and urban areas.¹²

12. Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (2008). *Preparing the Future with Our Seniors*, Public consultation report on living conditions of Québec seniors, <www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/rapport_consultation_aines_en.pdf>, retrieved March 25, 2008, pp. 71–72.

CASE 1.4

FORUM ON AGING AND LEISURE

During the forum held at Observatoire québécois du loisir (OQL, 2007, vol. 5, no. 1), participants concluded that retirement is a withdrawal not from society, but only from the workplace. Work is what allows individuals to develop a social identity, but leisure activities and volunteering often replace work as the main sources of identity and satisfaction after retirement. Obviously, leisure activities combat isolation and help maintain physical, social, and intellectual activity. Certain guiding principles have been recognized:

- Consider aspirations more than age
- Develop partnerships rather than dependency
- Rely on participation and active leadership from seniors
- Provide significant support for unorganized leisure activities
- Consider leisure more as an art of living than an activity, and center it around social, intellectual, sensory, and physical experiences
- Implement access measures adapted to all age groups of seniors
- Facilitate social openness rather than ghettoization
- Recognize that seniors live in a community more than in their own world
- Ensure accessibility, affordability, and safety in terms of time, distance, and cost aspects^a

Civic organizations and municipalities have already taken initiatives, and some have developed seniors policies.

^a Thibault, A. (2006). "Traiter avec des personnes âgées," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 15, p. 3.

CASE 1.5

REPENTIGNY'S MUNICIPAL FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY An Intergenerational Experiment

The City of Repentigny (pop. 77,744) has produced a policy on the family and on seniors^a in which it lays out "four aspects that will provide a frame of reference for city officials and for stakeholders in the community to act on behalf of families and seniors:

1. The organization of the lives of families and seniors

2. Living conditions that help seniors and families live healthy lives
3. Municipal development harmonized with the needs of families and seniors
4. The realities and identity of Repentigny^b

Here are some of the measures the City plans to put in place to implement its policy:

- Design fee structures adapted to the needs of families and seniors
- Help improve public transit, paratransit, and roads, as well as enhance the bike and pedestrian network
- Facilitate access to municipal services as part of a personalized approach.
- Work constantly to ensure safety and increase the sense of security by monitoring and acting on issues affecting public order (Safety involves various areas of action complementary to public safety services. Urban infrastructure planning, preventive behavior, civic-mindedness, and neighborhood watch programs are among the avenues to examine for maintaining and improving public order for families and seniors.)
- Make the town center and public facilities people-friendly places
- Promote access to nature
- Encourage intergenerational contact by offering activities that allow youth, adults, and seniors to make a connection, get to know each other, and develop a spirit of mutual assistance
- Promote an integrated approach in the delivery of municipal services to families and seniors by introducing innovative practices in family and seniors' services at the municipal level
- Develop strategies for integrating families and seniors that take neighborhood identities into account and provide opportunities for celebrations, information meetings, the exchange of services, and the development of all sorts of projects
- Acknowledge and support initiatives to improve the well-being of families and seniors.^c

^a Ville de Repentigny (2007). *Politique de la famille et des aînés*, <www.ville.repentigny.qc.ca/familleetaines/images/famille_ainee.pdf>, retrieved April 20, 2008.

^b *Ibid.*, p. 16.

^c *Ibid.*, p. 24.

LA MAISON DES GRANDS-PARENTS DE VILLERAY^a Another Intergenerational Experiment

In January 1991 the instigators of this project, backed by Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec (FADOQ), held a series of meetings to identify the main reasons for decreased contact between grandparents and their families:

- Responsibilities of parents who both work outside the home
- Blended families that upset the traditional family unit
- Teenagers who have few contacts with seniors
- The generation gap
- Immigrant families who left grandparents behind in their country of origin

Around the same period, in June 1990, young people from a youth center sent a message to the coordinators of the International Federation of Senior Citizens Associations (FIAPA) symposium in Montréal. The message, which was read at the opening of the symposium, expressed how much these young people, in their isolation, needed seniors and looked to them for their wisdom, availability, and attentive ear.

The idea of a house from which seniors could reach out to young people and families was born. To bring the dream to life, three women sought help from key social actors. That is how Regroupement interorganismes pour une politique familiale au Québec and CLSC Villeray joined with “Le Pélican” seniors club and FADOQ to develop plans for a grandparents’ house, bringing the project to fruition with the support of the community sector and the school, institutional, and business communities. So began La Maison des Grands-Parents de Villeray, whose mission is described as follows:

Through their involvement with other generations, seniors break their isolation, play an active role in society, and pass on important values in their community.

The work seniors do with families and youth is part of a comprehensive approach that complements the efforts of professionals and the social, school, community, and institutional sectors. Families and young people are warmly welcomed with all their life experiences and potential. The goals are to

- Build ties between generations and prevent conflict
- Promote mutual assistance between families and generations
- Promote the role seniors play in families and society
- Encourage seniors to share their experience
- Pass on heritage values

In concrete terms, La Maison des Grands-Parents de Villeray provides various services to the community and community workers from neighborhood organizations in a spirit of family and intergenerational assistance:

- Welcome: warm and informative
- Library: books for adults and children
- *Mémoire collective* newsletter: information and upcoming activities
- Community Internet center (CACI): computers available for the community
- Intergenerational singing: varied repertory for singers aged 8 to 90
- Community kitchen: kitchen space available to organizations for community purposes
- Community kitchen: cooking workshops with an emphasis on affordable and healthy eating
- Second-hand store: clothing, toys, household articles
- Community garden: Learning and sharing gardening basics
- Sharing get-togethers: theme brunches and conferences
- Crafts, knitting, sewing, weaving

This ambitious project has not been without its pitfalls, but the concept is worth presenting and developing on the basis of the lessons learned by La Maison des Grands-Parents in Villeray.

In another initiative, Montréal's MAGI youth center, in cooperation with neighborhood partners, provides youth with an opportunity to take part in an experience fostering ties between generations. During this 35-week project, the young participants receive a variety of training sessions and develop their own activities for seniors. This initiative has produced various benefits, increasing social participation by troubled youth, helping them develop their self-esteem, and breaking down the isolation of seniors. The initiative has attracted growing interest from seniors centers, proof that it meets a genuine need. It has proved positive, both for its young participants and for neighborhood seniors.

^a La maison des grands-parents de Villeray: un carrefour des générations, <www.mgpv.org>, retrieved March 12, 2008.

ONE GENERATION, TWO REALITIES, A MULTITUDE OF INITIATIVES

Although aging baby boomers, who have always identified with society, are increasingly stepping up to bat to defend seniors and their interests, young people do not have the same social and political clout, or the same aspirations for changing the world. This loss of hope at the start of their active life causes problems for many youth.

In Québec, the demographic weight of the 15–29 age group has progressively decreased, falling from 29.2% in 1976 to 19.7% in 2001. In the future it will continue to fall, albeit at a slower rate.

As a minority, young people are struggling to find their place in society, despite a looming labor shortage. Although some fail, others make a special effort, building on their global outlook and a level of knowledge capital higher than ever before.

Society fears for the physical and mental well-being of today's youth. Between junk food, sedentary lifestyles, and high dropout and suicide rates, some young people are adrift.

A significant percentage of Quebecers do not reach the levels of leisure-time physical activity recommended by specialists. In 2003, this was the case for 63% of those 18 and over, and 56% of 12–17 year-olds. Moreover, 26% of adults and 7% of 12–17 years-olds were completely sedentary during their free time.

Although adult men are slightly more active than women during their leisure time, there is a significant difference between the sexes within the 12–17 age group. In 2003, 52% of boys and 35% of girls achieved the recommended level. For boys, this percentage was the same as it was in 1994; for girls, it increased from 21% to 35%.

[...]

Suicide is one of the main causes of death among young Quebecers aged 15 to 29. In 2002, suicide accounted for 34.5% of all deaths in the 15–19 age group, 34.7% in the 20–24 age group, and 42.9% in the 25–29 age group. Motor vehicle accidents were the other main cause of death in the 15–29 cohort. In 2002, they caused 45.3% of deaths among the 15–19 group, 27.2% among the 20–24 group, and 17.1% among the 25–29 group.¹³

Québec also has a high dropout rate. Since the early 2000s, it has hovered at around 30% among boys and 25% among girls. Despite significant efforts, the dropout rate has only fallen 0.8% over the past five years. Dropouts are defined as students who leave high school without a diploma or vocational qualifications and do not enroll the following year in youth or adult general education, vocational training, or college in Québec.¹⁴

The issues of school leaving and suicide raise questions about the quality of life of young people, no matter how well off they are. Today's children are highly scheduled and increasingly programmed from a young

13. Secrétariat à la jeunesse (2006). *Stratégie d'action jeunesse 2006-2009*, <www.jeunes.gouv.qc.ca/strategie/portrait.htm>, retrieved February 29, 2008.

14. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Direction de la recherche, des statistiques et des indicateurs (2007), <www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/regions/profils/profil01/societe/education/decrochage01.htm>, retrieved February 15, 2008.

age. Between daycare, visits to their step families, swimming lessons, TV and Internet, and parents increasingly stressed by the pace of life, they have little time to play or be inventive. More and more kids are showing up at day camps and summer camps with psychosocial problems or on medication, undermining the leisure aspect of these summer programs in a way by forcing counselors to act as psychosocial support workers and transforming the camps into daycare centers. In short, kids are playing less and less. Organizations now run the risk of building leisure programs around problems rather than aspirations, dreams, and enjoyment. What space is left for leisure that leaves room for imagination, creativity, and independent activity?

Today's youth face two different realities. Can public and civic leisure meet the challenge of helping those most in need while also providing the most fortunate with life experiences that provide a foundation on which to build their future?

Studies of youth leisure activities show that they revolve primarily around media consumption, especially movies; listening to music, which inhabits every part of their lives; physical activity; and relatively serious amateur involvement in activities such as music, theater, dance, and the visual arts, the first youth generation to present this characteristic.¹⁵ In all of these activities, the research notes that friends are always present. In all cases, specialists stress, it is important to provide a place where youth can meet. Pronovost¹⁶ affirms that the challenge facing community centers, for example, is to integrate the diverse meanings leisure holds for young people and their multiple worlds. Centers that seem too much like an extension of school will not appeal to certain youth at risk or with learning difficulties, but will easily attract a clientele from a wealthier background. For centers aiming to promote autonomy and creativity, the trick is avoiding the trap of trivial entertainment and complacency. The challenge is to provide a variety of structured and unstructured activities. If centers want to reach out to "street kids," they have to resolve the dilemma of providing a space that is both open and closed, without further marginalizing certain groups of youth. In a similar vein, Vigeant¹⁷ also affirms that gathering places for young people should not be exclusively designed for them, and should ideally be located somewhere else than school.

15. Pronovost, G., F. Tessier et P. Vigeant (2005). "Adapter l'offre en loisir pour qu'il contribue au développement personnel et social des jeunes," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 2, No. 12, p. 1.

16. Pronovost, G. (2005). "Les jeunes et leurs loisirs," *Milieu de vie*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fédération québécoise des centres communautaires de loisir.

17. Vigeant, P. (2005). "Les jeunes et les centres communautaires de loisir," *Milieu de vie*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fédération québécoise des centres communautaires de loisir.

The government's Youth Action Strategy 2006–2009 sets five policy priorities for a three-year period, each aimed at helping youth achieve success:

- Improve the health and well-being of youth
- Foster young people's educational success
- Assist young people's entry into the workforce
- Increase young people's presence in society
- Improve the support offered to youth

Several experiments guided by these priorities are currently underway in Québec. The collaboration between youth centers and Québec en forme, the venture by Loisir et sport Montérégie, and Montreal's Youth Program 2000 are examples of meaningful efforts to tackle the twin challenges of preventing and correcting school and social dropping out and of supporting youth initiatives.

CASE 1.7

A REGION TAKES ACTION WITH ITS YOUTH

In March 2000, Loisir et Sport Montérégie^a launched a pilot experiment in the regional county municipality (RCM) of Acton (16,000 inhabitants and 8 municipalities) to improve recreational opportunities for youth. The experiment consisted of analyzing the situation of local youth along with recreational structures and governance, identifying who was interested in the well-being of local youth, and determining conditions and actions conducive to success. Observers had noted a lack of participation and a general disinterest in activities among young people, as well as antisocial behavior, a weak sense of belonging, migration to larger centers, and an increasing dropout rate. In addition, organizations were dealing with volunteer fatigue and loss, as well as with difficulties in maintaining recreational activities. Elected officials in the villages also had to be convinced as to the importance of leisure as a vector for young people's quality of life and social integration.

Loisir et Sport Montérégie undertook an objective diagnosis of the leisure situation for rural youth by collecting opinions and proposals from teens and stakeholders active in the leisure sector in the Acton RCM. In March 2002, the organization presented its findings at an orientation conference that brought together young people, civic and institutional organizations, and municipalities. Participants determined which changes were required and suggested courses of action.

Several interesting findings emerged from the analysis. First, the lack of youth participation was not so much due to a lack of recreational opportunities or youth disengagement as to a lack of information and of means for integrating youth into the community, and to an absence of support for measures encouraging youth to take their own recreational initiatives. Second, problems with local availability and regional diversity of youth recreational opportunities were caused more by inadequate recognition and support for “recreation organizations” and the lack of regional vision, collaboration, and partnering than to the lack of infrastructure and resources.

Young people may not be as disinterested as we think. They are unfamiliar with existing resources and structures and do not know how to organize themselves. Most of them want to be involved in organizing activities and would like to have a voice that adults listen to. Schools are the main contact point, but nearly one-third of young people are dissatisfied with life in their schools and municipalities. The majority want to participate with their friends and have an opportunity to develop projects.

There are many ways to increase active youth participation and involvement. Activities must be held in an inviting “context,” and young leaders need a helping hand—including coaching from significant adults—in order to seize opportunities, avoid pitfalls, and manage their time and priorities. Organizations, for their part, must respect and believe in teens and their qualities, their potential, and their right to make mistakes. They must inform them, listen to them, and invite them to get involved by creating opportunities for them to express and defend their ideas. They must also ensure that youth have a voice on consultative and decision-making bodies.

In short, the conditions most conducive to youth participation must be put in place: information, support, encouragement for youth volunteering, safe gathering places (an alternative to the street), and a setting and atmosphere suited to young people.

Overcoming these challenges in a rural environment requires shared acknowledgment of the challenges involved with organizing leisure activities. Stakeholders must agree on the same conclusions and problems and identify the solutions. Partnering and cooperation are thus essential for dealing with the challenges of youth recreation.

Lastly, the public must recognize the importance of investing in teens and the benefits of recreational activities for the development and community integration of their young people.

^a Loisir et Sport Montérégie is a regional sport and recreation unit whose mission is to promote, defend, and develop sports and leisure within its territory and foster dialog and partnership between municipal, education, and community stakeholders in the six leisure sectors: sports, culture, science, social and educational leisure, outdoor activities, and tourism.

YOUTH CENTERS

Québec has a network of some 140 youth centers in more than 14 regions. These facilities are gathering places and resource centers for over 40,000 youth, 400 youth workers, 2,000 parents, and 1,000 volunteers. They are supported by the government under the Support for Community Organizations Program administered by Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, and by local communities, including municipalities. The centers clearly provide young people with an opportunity to participate in recreational activities while integrating into society.

In the mid-1970s, there were numerous calls for new social services and prevention resources for young people. In the wake of the Batshaw Report (1976), the government agreed to provide \$200,000 in funding to six community youth organizations, including two youth centers in the provincial capital of Québec City (Maison des jeunes Saint-Jean-Baptiste and Maison des jeunes L'Ouvre-boîte du quartier). This new movement, which bucked institutional and conventional resources, developed very rapidly, sparking the appearance of other youth centers in a number of regions across Québec.

At Maison des jeunes L'Initiative in Valcourt (pop. 2,400), recreational opportunities are abundant, as the youth center notes in the following description: "At L'Initiative, get access to all kinds of material: a pool table, ping-pong, foosball, a shuffleboard table, three computers with Internet, two Playstation-2 consoles with lots of games, including an Eye Toy and two dance pads (DDRMAX), and two TVs set up with video, DVD, and karaoke. We've got a ton of board games plus rooms available for your group activities (rehearsals for your band, Dungeons and Dragons, etc.). And there's also plenty of sports equipment and a place to play basketball out back." In the Sherbrooke (pop. 150,751) borough of Fleurimont (pop. 40,000), Maison des jeunes La Maize defines itself as a place where young people can enjoy conversation and discussion, get information, and question and develop their views and opinions. It describes its main activity as learning to live with different people and reach out to the world! Activities vary depending on interest, and there is lots of space for imagination.

The network of Eastern Townships youth centers notes that these facilities bring together young people and adults who volunteer to provide kids aged 12 to 18 with a gathering place where they can develop their critical thinking and become active and responsible citizens through contact with significant adults.^a

^a <www.maisonsdesjeunes.org>, retrieved March 14, 2008.

QUÉBEC EN FORME

Mobilizing the Community Through a Public–Private Partnership

In the area of leisure and physical activity, the Québec en Forme program seeks to mobilize local communities by supporting projects designed to encourage the adoption and maintenance of an active lifestyle and healthy eating habits by Québec youth, from birth to age 17. Québec en Forme is the result of an agreement between the Québec government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation on the establishment of a fund to promote healthy lifestyles.

The Québec en Forme strategic plan flows from the mandate assigned to it by the Fund management corporation. It is thus our responsibility to administer local community mobilization projects, with the goal of encouraging youth age 0 to 17 to adopt and maintain active lifestyles and healthy eating habits.^a

Québec en Forme is built around the idea of getting local communities to “create environments conducive to the adoption and maintenance of active lifestyles and healthy eating habits” through the work of local action committees.

Through the development of its strategic plan, Québec en Forme seeks to consolidate the contributions of social actors in local communities to help youth develop healthily in supportive environments. This vision means that organization governance will be mainly oriented toward support for communities, although attention will also be paid to how effectively funds are used.^b

The partners to the agreement decided to make local communities the focal point for action and allocate the bulk of funding to projects oriented toward community mobilization.

This choice was not accidental. It flows from the recommendations of the World Health Organization, affirming that initiatives originating from communities and local groups have the greatest potential to encourage physical activity. The key to success is to mobilize and support communities and local governments. Support must originate with regional and provincial actors.^c

In 2006–2007, Québec en Forme provided funding to 35 local action committees active in 209 municipalities and 225 schools, and reached 56,811 youth from underprivileged backgrounds. This is a good example of a government/private sector/community partnership that uses recreation as a vector to encourage prevention.

^a Québec en Forme (2007). *Strategic Plan 2007–2012*, <www.quebecenforme.org/projet/en/reference-documents>, p. 2.

^b *Ibid.*

^c Québec en Forme (2007), p. 8.

JEUNESSE 2000

A Montréal Partner Program by and for Young People^a

In response to the problems facing young Montrealers in the late 1980s and a sharp drop in participation in recreational activities among 13- to 17-year-olds, the City of Montréal, through its Recreation Department, developed the Jeunesse 2000 program in 1990. By redefining the approach to youth recreation and the parameters for community group partnerships in a more open manner, the program has remained relevant for 18 years and has reached 50,000 young people throughout the city.

The program is still based primarily on an active partnering approach whereby the organizations chosen to manage Jeunesse 2000 projects in their areas ensure a direct link with neighborhood realities and help achieve, to the extent they are capable, the basic program objectives:

- Reach 13- to 17-year-olds and ensure permanence and continuity in their recreational initiatives
- Give young people control over and responsibility for their recreational activities
- Provide good supervision and guidance to facilitate youth involvement in decision making and achievements as part of a program that respects their needs
- Take complementary action by facilitating access to other municipal recreation sectors
- Facilitate social interventions by organizations specialized in youth

To reach these objectives, managers and program workers stressed two key aspects: an approach “by and for young people” based on a coaching process that guides youth in their recreational initiatives and in the activities they propose to develop with others in their community; and accompaniment by a “significant adult,” both in terms of the approach and the initiatives, and in terms of permanent support for the clientele.

The following core program parameters guaranteed access and the quality of intervention work: provision of exclusive spaces for young people; unrestricted program access for all 13- to 17-year-olds with an emphasis on the 15–17 group; a minimum of 30 hr./week of operating time, 48 weeks a year; a ratio of one youth worker per 15 young people; and support from the youth coordinator in each of the boroughs involved in the program.

The “by and for young people” formula has kept the Jeunesse 2000 program fresh and relevant through nearly 20 years of existence, despite changes in Montréal’s municipal government over this period. The fact that the

coordinators, youth workers, and participants from the 24 projects underway today feel at home under the “Jeunesse 2000” banner and, most importantly, are comfortable with its approach to leisure is testimony to its success.

^a Case suggested by Pierre Morin, former youth coordinator, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Community Development, City of Montréal.

A DIVERSIFIED SPECTRUM OF BUSY FAMILIES

In 66% of Québec families, two adults work outside the home. In 2001, nearly 130,000 families used daycare services.¹⁸ In 2003, 230,000 children attended school daycare programs that incorporated a recreation component. The issue of balancing work, family, and leisure is therefore a major public concern.¹⁹

The search for solutions to this problem is a widespread concern, and how it is addressed can affect how easily families are able to balance their various responsibilities.²⁰

Public and civil stakeholders in the leisure sector are obviously among those with a role to play in facilitating the leisure/work/family balance. They do so in various ways, four of which we will examine here.

First, families use recreation services to provide ongoing child care, particularly during summer vacation and spring break. In total, 202,000 children attend municipal or local day camps, and 90% of these summer programs provide daycare services (see Case 1.12).

Second, families are increasingly seeking leisure opportunities they can enjoy together rather than separate activities for parents and children. Families are swarming to bike paths, children’s shows, public skating rinks and swimming pools, and winter sliding activities. This does not mean that they are rejecting separate activities—indeed they continue to sign their children up for sports and art—but that they are adjusting their leisure practices to suit their lifestyles and fulfill their need to spend more time

18. See: <www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/services-de-garde/portrait-des-services-de-garde/profil-des-utilisateurs>, retrieved May 8, 2008.

19. Observatoire québécois du loisir (2004). “La concertation municipale-scolaire – Garde des enfants et temps des familles, un univers de loisir à redéfinir,” *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 1, No. 10.

20. Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés, <www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/famille/conciliation-travail-famille/milieu-de-vie>, retrieved March 26, 2008.

together as families. Evidence shows that families are giving up activities that require significant and regular time commitments (e.g., team sports with frequent practices) that do not fit their schedules or that divorced parents with shared custody have trouble organizing around.

The third challenge facing leisure-sector stakeholders concerns scheduling and programming time periods. For example, parents are asking that summer day-camp schedules fully overlap with school vacations, whereas they are currently two or three weeks shorter.

Lastly, family lifestyles make it hard for the leisure sector to affirm its difference. The challenges of balancing work and family oblige many parents to put their children into day care early, raising questions about the quality of the free time experienced by children who are scheduled from such a young age. Ethical issues confront leisure-sector employees who are forced to act as social workers in order to manage groups where allergies, behavioral disorders, and the demands of stressed-out parents create problems that overshadow the children's right to play, imagine and invent things, and get dirty.

A number of towns and villages in Québec have recognized the challenges that contemporary families pose for the leisure sector and have established guidelines by drafting family policies. Despite their efforts and well-intentioned declarations, the problems and challenges remain. Action is now required on family policies. The City of Gatineau's policy is a good example.

CASE 1.11

THE GATINEAU FAMILY POLICY

Adopted in 2005, the City of Gatineau's family policy aims to meet the challenges posed by today's multiform families, whose leisure time situations are as diverse as their makeup.^a

The goal of the policy is to establish a common framework for action and decision making biased to families, and to support families by providing fair and accessible services to improve their quality of life.

The policy, which was drawn up with input from the community, defines roles, values, and guiding principles for the city. Like other municipalities, Gatineau looks to the civic and public network, affirming its determination to share a common vision with its partners that each will pursue in keeping with its mission and sector of activity.

In the area of recreation, sports, and cultural activities, the policy seeks to foster increased involvement by families regardless of economic, social, physical, or cultural status or location within the city, so that they develop and maintain good physical and mental health.

How does it do so? The city proposes the following avenues:

- Adapt recreation, sports, and cultural services to take into account the situation, needs, and time constraints of all family members
- Better publicize the resources and services available to families and stakeholders in all sectors using appropriate and varied communications tools
- Review recreation, sports, and culture services and fees in light of family realities
- Cultivate, from early childhood, a general interest in culture by promoting access to cultural activities and venues, paying special attention to more vulnerable families
- Provide family members with the opportunity to participate independently in sports, cultural, and recreational activities by providing local services and developing a partnership with Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO) to promote better access to city facilities and greenspace
- Reduce physical barriers to sports and cultural facilities for the mobility-impaired and the frail elderly
- Start evaluating the possibility of building community recreation centers in urban villages.
- Support community organizations so that they can provide families with affordable sports, recreational, and cultural services.^b

^a Ville de Gatineau (2005). *Vers un idéal pour la famille, politique familiale*, <www.ville.gatineau.qc.ca/politiquefamiliale>, retrieved March 28, 2008.

^b Ville de Gatineau (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

CASE 1.12

DAY CAMPS A Programming Challenge^a

The issue of day camps in Québec needs to be dealt with. Long known as Œuvre des terrains de jeux (OTJ), the day camp program is the longest-running summer recreation program in the neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities of the province. The program has changed little, but children, families, and society in general have changed a lot. Day camps have become

childcare centers. They must meet the needs of a more safety-conscious society and of children with food allergies or psychosocial problems. They must also respond to society's wish to integrate handicapped children. These changes require modifications to day camp quality standards.

Day Camp Services

- Outings (96.9%)
- Extended morning day care (91.8%)
- Extended afternoon day care (89.9%)
- Noon day care (44.7%)
- Basic activities (87.4%)
- Disabled services (66.0%)
- Emergency services (59.7%)
- Specialized activities (35.2%)

Municipalities now realize that they can no longer respond on their own to needs that require expertise and funding from other partners.

Day camps are attended by some 202,000 children, a number that has increased slightly over the past three years. Already in 2005, 31.3% of day camps had to turn children away for lack of space. The overall budget of Québec day camps is estimated at \$48 million, a cost borne equally by parents, municipalities, and their partners, including community recreation centers and neighborhood recreation committees. In rural areas, the Canada Summer Jobs program provides one-third of day camp revenues.

When we ask camp managers how they see the present and future of their programs, their answers reflect a clear consensus. There will be more and more children with psychosocial problems and discipline issues. Parents want to see the camp season and hours extended, and will be increasingly demanding with respect to safety and counselor qualifications. In short, counselors will have to master new skills, and the camps will have to provide more services and more guarantees as to the quality of those services. Should they provide parents with a role in management? The spirit of the Québec model suggests that this may be in the cards.

Yet only 20.5% of day camps are currently accredited or certified by a recognized organization, only 58.7% have adopted an orientation document of some kind laying out their philosophy, values, and principles, and only 21.4% have had their orientations approved by a board of directors or municipal council.

The survey conducted in 2006 by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire in partnership with Association québécoise du loisir municipal found that Québec day camps had an average counselor/child ratio of 1/15 during

regular activities, and 1/12 during outings. This ratio is often higher, and it is not unusual to see 19 or 20 children per counselor. For regular activities, the Québec Camp Association, like other accreditation organizations, suggests a ratio of 1/8 for 5- to 6-year-olds, 1/10 for 7- to 8-year-olds, and 1/12 for 9- to 11-year-olds. The ratio of 1/15 should only apply to children age 12 and over.

Despite this troubling situation, day camps have existed for decades, and their services are known and generally appreciated. Their role is crucial, but adjustments are necessary. Indeed, some are already underway.

^a This case is drawn from Thibault, A. (2007). "Les camps de jour publics: un programme de loisir en révision," in *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 13.

WEALTH AND POVERTY

Québec is no different from other countries in that the gap between rich and poor is growing wider. There is a growing class of consumers who are spending more and more—often on credit—on commercial recreation, entertainment, culture, and tourism. This group contributes 12% of Québec's GDP. There is also a growing number of people whose access to leisure activities is limited, or even nonexistent. This group is a challenge to the public system, which, in principle, incarnates the value of accessibility. Are we headed toward a two-tiered leisure system in the long term? Will we see a form of ghettoization, with separate communities and worlds? Can the user-pay principle that emerged in the 1980s to fund a significant portion of our public services survive in this context? Has it reached its limit? Yet the cost of living in Québec is still low. Let us imagine what would happen if it were adjusted to match levels in similar jurisdictions:

In Québec, the cost of living is very low in relation to other comparable locations around the world. Various studies and statistical data clearly show this. According to a study conducted in September 2003 by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, Montréal is one of the most affordable large cities in the world. By way of comparison, the cost of living in Paris is 118, 129 in London, and only 100 in Montréal.²¹

21. Union des banques suisses, <www.site-aquebec.com/pouvoir_d_achat.php>, retrieved February 17, 2008.

TABLE 1.2
Household Spending (2006)

Household Spending by Summary Category	Statistics	Amounts Spent in 2006 (\$)
Total current spending	Average spending	41 122
	Median spending by reporting household	35 537
Leisure	Average spending	3 275
	Median spending by reporting household	1 912
Reading and other printed materials	Average spending	238
	Median spending by reporting household	200
Gambling (Internet)	Average spending	235
	Median spending by reporting household	104

In 2006, Quebecers had an average annual disposable income of \$23,273 after payroll deductions and income taxes. This placed Québec seventh among the Canadian provinces, where the average annual disposable income is \$25,624 according to Institut de la statistique du Québec.²²

The growth and diversification of leisure activities over the past 40 years could be largely related to the increase in personal income (Kraus, 2001). According to Scott and Munson (1994), there is a positive correlation between personal income, participation in certain outdoor activities, and use of parks and outdoor resources. Since many of these activities are expensive, they are often limited to those with higher incomes.²³

According to 2006 census data,²⁴ households spent an average of \$3,275 on leisure, or 8% of total spending. With median leisure spending at only \$1,912, there is obviously a significant gap.

The structure of household spending has changed considerably over the past 20 years. In real terms, disposable income, adjusted for family size, has remained relatively stable since the mid-1970s. However, certain

22. Institut de la statistique du Québec (2007). *Revenu personnel*, Flash newsletter.

23. Auger (2007). "Les tendances qui influencent la participation aux activités de plein air," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 16, p. 3.

24. Statistics Canada. Table 203-0001: *Survey of Household Spending* (SHS), household spending, summary-level categories, by province, territory and selected metropolitan areas, annual, CANSIM (database), <cansim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/CNSMCGI.PGM?Lang=E&CANSIMFile=CII\CII_1_E.htm&RootDir=CII>, retrieved February 26, 2008.

social and demographic transformations have influenced household needs and desires and modified household spending habits. The past two decades have seen a decrease in the relative portion of the budget set aside for food, clothing, and furniture and a corresponding increase in proportionate spending on housing, transportation, *leisure*, and health care.

Childless couples have the highest incomes. And even though average incomes have grown, poverty persists. Single-parent families, which have the lowest disposable incomes, also account for the largest percentage of low-income households (25.3%). They are followed by single-person households at 21.8%.²⁵ With more and more people living alone, single-person households accounted for 29.6% of all households in 2001, compared to 27.3% in 1996.

On average, low-income households have incomes that are 30% below the low-income cutoff.

Low-income rates vary considerably depending on the family unit and its members. Findings show that living alone or with unrelated people is associated with a higher risk of low income. The low-income rate also varies from one administrative region to the next, with Montréal being the most exposed.

In 2005, nearly half of low-income individuals were living alone, and just over half of the low-income family units had no employment income. Nonetheless, salaries and wages were the main source of income for one-fifth of low income family units.²⁶

Kids Say Poverty Is:

- Not being able to play soccer or hockey, take swimming lessons, or go on school trips or to camp
- Being teased about clothes, being afraid to tell your mom or dad you need gym shoes, or not buying books at the book fair
- Not getting to go to birthday parties or have your friend sleep over
- Not having breakfast or pretending you forgot your lunch
- Being ashamed when your dad or mom can't get a job or when you get a basket from the Santa Fund

Excerpt from the Canadian Parks and Leisure Association. *Everybody Gets to Play™: Recreation without Barriers. A Position Paper.*

25. Statistics Canada, *Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) and Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)*. Compilation and reference: Institut de la statistique du Québec, <www.stat.gouv.qc.ca>.

26. Centre d'études sur l'exclusion sociale (2008). *Le faible revenu au Québec, un état de situation*, Québec, Direction générale adjointe de la recherche, de l'évaluation et de la statistique, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

In 2000, the average before-tax family income for two-parent families with children age 25 or less was \$46,785 in single-income families, \$74,539 in dual-income families, and \$95,000 in families with three or more incomes.

Among single mothers, the average before-tax income was \$30,989 in single-income families and \$39,792 in dual-income families. Family income includes the combined earnings of parents and children living under the same roof.

One-quarter of Quebecers are thus considered to be poor,²⁷ a proportion that is even higher among single-parent families and those living alone. Québec is home to 335,000 single-parent families, most of which are led by women; over 100,000 of them live below the poverty line. There is also poverty among senior citizens.²⁸

In recent years, the terms “poverty” and “social exclusion” have become increasingly closely associated. They are sometimes used interchangeably to describe a situation of deep poverty, whereas at other times, the word “exclusion” serves to partially explain the inability of individuals or groups to achieve a decent standard of living.

One of the fundamental values of public and civic leisure is accessibility, a value widely expressed by stakeholders in the Québec leisure sector, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on December 10, 1948.

A VISIBLY CHANGING CLIMATE

Québec has not escaped the climate change phenomena that have already begun to affect its population and the environments in which Quebecers enjoy many of their recreational activities.

A number of regions have undergone significant warming between 1960 and 2003. The greatest warming has been in the **west** (Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Outaouais, Laurentides, Lanaudière, Montréal, Laval, Montérégie) and **south central Québec** (Mauricie, Estrie, Centre-du-Québec, Capitale-Nationale, Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean, Chaudière-

27. The low income cutoff is based on the share of revenue spent by the average Canadian family on so-called essential goods (housing, clothing, and food), to which 20 points are added (arbitrary percentage established by Statistics Canada). Institut de la statistique du Québec and Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (2006). *Recueil statistique sur la pauvreté et les inégalités socioéconomiques au Québec*, p. 22.

28. Excerpt from Thibault, A. (2007). “Les 12 travaux du monde du loisir : les enjeux sociaux,” *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 4.

Appalaches). In these regions, average annual temperatures have risen between 0.5°C and 1.2°C. In the **eastern part of the province** (Bas-Saint-Laurent, Côte-Nord, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine) the warming trend is less pronounced, less than 0.5°C.²⁹

Global warming,³⁰ which is essentially due to greenhouse gases, affects people and nature. It will affect the world of recreation in as yet unsuspected ways through extreme heat waves, dangerous levels of UV radiation, degradation of lakes, rising water levels in the St. Lawrence River and shoreline degradation along the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It will lead to the loss or degradation of recreation areas and the need to protect populations and adapt practices.

Confronted by these phenomena, the leisure sector will need to audit the effects of warming on participation and services, on its ability to reduce CO₂ emissions, and on the changes it needs to make. In short, in the face of climate change, it will need to adapt and to take preventive and mitigative action.

Among other things, energy efficiency, recycling, and eco-friendly consumer behavior and product use will be necessary to slow the greenhouse gas effect. Green engines, compressors, and vehicles, green buildings, reduced use of plastics at snackbars, and the planting of trees and shrubs are just some of the avenues for reducing climate change.

The effect of these changes is already being felt. Seniors and children are more sensitive to the more frequent heat waves. They need to be protected. The City of Sherbrooke has already taken action by building shelters in municipal parks for seniors' activities. Will we be able to continue building soccer fields without any shade for the players and spectators on the sidelines? And what about play spaces for the 202,000 children who attend summer day camps? Lakes and waterways are under increased scrutiny (blue green algae), and their degradation impacts a whole range of nautical activities. These are just a few examples. Environmental audits must clearly indicate the full scope of the mitigation measures that will be required.

29. Yagouti, A., G. Boulet, and L. Vescovi (2006). *Évolution des températures au Québec méridional entre 1960 et 2003*, Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, <www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/chang-clim/meridional/resume.htm>, retrieved February 26, 2008.

30. The subsequent paragraphs are excerpted from Thibault, A. (2007). "Les 12 travaux du monde du loisir: les enjeux politiques, technologiques administratifs et environnementaux," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 5, No. 2.

We will also have to accept that we may have to give up certain activities. For example, will climate warming allow us to maintain outdoor skating rinks during milder winters? If fall lasts longer, will it still be considered as a low or transition season? Will we need to use our imagination? To counter the effects of UV rays, will we have to impose protective and safety measures like in other sports? Will sunscreen become a requirement like helmets are today in certain sports? These are just a few examples of the environmental challenges that will demand responsible action in the leisure sector.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Québec, like the rest of Canada, boasts an active civil society and governments that generally encourage public participation. In leisure, a field that impacts all Quebecers in their daily lives and local communities, public participation and civil society are paramount.

What do public participation and civil society entail? How do these characteristics of Québec society help define the meaning and use of leisure?

At the neighborhood level and in government forums, public and social participation is the most radical expression of democratic culture, incarnating “We, the people” and the power communities have over their own fates. It manifests itself through free expression and deliberation, hallmarks of our public decision-making process. However, its place, processes, and power are subject to constant negotiation and change.

As a complement and sometimes an alternative to representative democracy, public participation is the action of citizens and groups involved in the collective decisions made by government, public institutions, and civil society organizations. It is the process of voluntary interaction between an organization, which grants a certain level of power to the persons it deals with, and these same persons, who in return accept a certain degree of involvement on behalf of the organization.³¹ It is important to distinguish public participation from electoral participation and independent citizen action. In the field of leisure, all three forms exist, especially at the local level: municipal *elections* often focus on leisure issues; *public consultations* often deal with policy issues and major infrastructure projects; and lastly, *partner dialogs* ensure that civil society has a voice.

31. Godbout, J. (1983) *La participation contre la démocratie*, Montréal, Éditions Saint-Martin, p. 35.

The rate of public participation is an indicator of community health. Societies stay healthy and continue to develop by keeping their values alive, values that serve as a kind of distinctive filter through which they receive and integrate outside information and influences, characterize their contributions to the outside world, and develop a quality living environment. Promoting societal dynamism and raising the level of interaction between the members of a society are the most effective ways to identify and put into practice the values that give it meaning. Etzioni³² and Putnam³³ use the term *social capital* to describe the aspects of our collective existence that make us more productive: a high level of *participation, confidence, and reciprocity*. Societies that function better stand out because they have more social capital. For example, accounts by local leaders and public-utilities officials clearly showed that communities with higher levels of social capital met the challenges of the 1998 Québec ice storm more successfully than other communities that had a victim mentality. According to the then mayor of Marieville, the town suffered less from the intense cold during the extended power outage because it was able to mobilize various groups, especially those active in recreation, to implement mitigating measures. A neighboring town that behaved more as a victim suffered more. A high level of social capital is a source of resilience and development. It is how public and civic leisure achieves its full potential as a contributor to community development.

The construction of social capital informs our understanding of civil society, the public sphere that Habermas³⁴ has described as the domain of human social interaction where, among other things, public opinion is forged. Citizens behave as a public when they deal with questions of general interest without being subject to any form of coercion. Within the broader public space, civil society emerges as a space between individual private space and the domain of the state. It is through the associative sphere that citizens enter the public sphere by joining forces with others, whether to form a softball league or to protect their environment. The associative universe is peopled by numerous nonprofit and volunteer organizations that vary widely in their activities and organizational features. Their common purpose is to serve as instruments for collective action and participation in community life.

32. Etzioni, A. (1968). *The Active Society*, New York, Free Press, p. 6.

33. Putnam, R. (1995). *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

34. Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contribution to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trad. W. Rehg, Cambridge, MIT Press, p. 231.

In its most simple conception, civil society is a network of independent associations created by citizens who are conscious of their rights and responsibilities and who come together to deal with collective problems, share common interests, and/or promote shared aspirations. It is understandable that civil society forms a natural locus for recreational development. Indeed, recreational stakeholders have a strong presence in civil society in Québec and the rest of Canada, as the following data shows.

According to the 2004 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations,³⁵ Québec is home to 46,326 organizations—617 per 100,000 people—whereas Ontario has 45,360, or 369 organizations per 100,000. The ratio for Canada as a whole is 508 per 100,000. Québec ranks first in Canada for the total number of organizations, and sixth in terms of the per capita ratio. Among the Québec organizations, 33.4% are active in sports, recreation, and culture. This percentage is only 25% in the neighboring province of Ontario, and 29.4% for Canada as whole.

In 2004 Québec organizations generated some \$25 billion in funds, 60% of which came from the government. Sports, recreation, and culture organizations are estimated to independently generate at least \$3 million in non-government funds.

Yet the future of these organizations is by no means guaranteed. The most commonly mentioned problems are volunteer recruitment and retention. According to the results of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP),³⁶ volunteering is on the decline in Canada. The number of volunteers decreased between 1997 and 2000, and there are indications that volunteers are starting to feel overwhelmed. Furthermore, trends in volunteering suggest that the challenges facing nonprofit and volunteer organizations will continue to grow.

The other problem comes from the relationship between civil society and the government. In Québec, civil society is still establishing its independence in several respects, even as its role increases. Only recently freed from church control, it has barely begun to affirm its autonomy, even as government offloading has left it to shoulder numerous responsibilities. In response, civil society has turned to the government for help. Since the Quiet Revolution, numerous associations have applied for and obtained government funding, and have developed in large measure within the frameworks defined by the government.

35. Statistics Canada, 2004, Catalogue No. 61-533-XIE.

36. Statistics Canada (2006). *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Catalogue No. 71-542-XIE, p. 10.

Today “clientification” is the main threat to public participation and the survival of the Québec leisure model. Public debate often turns into a free-for-all of individual opinion, leaving government to act as arbitrator. It is no surprise that decision makers refuse to consult the population out of fear that they will be unable respond to public expectations, for they view the population as a series of clients. The “not in my backyard,” “me, my child”, and “I pay taxes” syndromes are a growing part of public discourse in Québec. **In the leisure sector**, the rise of individual recreational activities gradually transforms individuals into clients. The mediating role of the group is reduced because communications target people directly.

Even the public service has adopted the client-centered approach. For volunteers who get involved more out of interest in human contact than in providing a service, what becomes of their role in light of this transformation? Certain studies show that this misunderstanding with respect to the volunteer’s role is the main cause of volunteer fatigue and withdrawal. When you serve a client who expects nothing but a service in return, there is no human interaction. Is this not a reworking of the social contract between the volunteer sector and the community, between volunteers and “beneficiaries” (Thibault, Fortier and Albertus, 2007, p. 46)?³⁷

Even though this phenomenon has much to do with contemporary lifestyle and the way free time is organized for today’s families, it still contributes to volunteer fatigue and, consequently, the weakening of civil society organizations. Indeed, one of the limits to development in the volunteer sector, which is the source of crucial resources for citizen-based associations, is the “user-as-a-client” way people receive goods and services as part of a market relationship.

In short, Québec has a strong civil society. In the leisure domain, it plays a vital role that is impossible to replace financially as well as a role that speaks to the very essence of civic leisure—that of building social capital. Yet civil society’s contribution to leisure, largely through the work of volunteers, has been undermined by volunteer fatigue and aging, the rise of “clientification,” and the increasing offloading of government responsibilities to the volunteer sector. As in all developed countries, Québec civil society must meet the challenge of maintaining a citizenry actively involved in leisure.

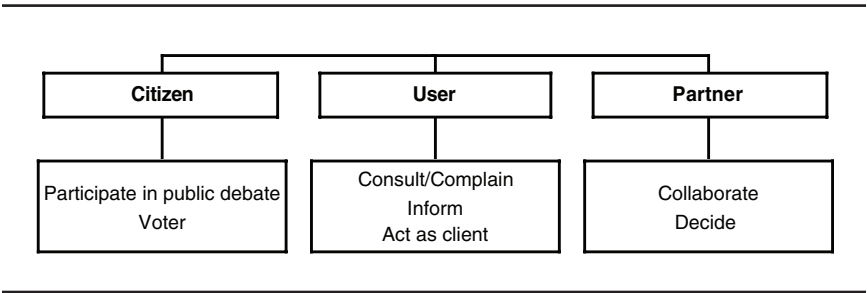
37. Thibault, A., J. Fortier, and P. Albertus (2007). *Rendre compte du mouvement bénévole au Québec, créateur de liens autant que de biens*, Rapport de recherche déposé par le Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire au Réseau de l’action bénévole du Québec (RABQ), p. 20.

GOVERNANCE IN TRANSITION, PARTNERSHIPS REDEFINED

Globalization has put states in competition for the advantages of a globalized economy. The latest agreements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) have more than ever recognized the globalization of the economy and liberalized trade, forcing the abolition of protectionist policies and reductions in corporate subsidies. Globalization has made the welfare state obsolete and established a strict framework for national economies, strengthening the role of the administrative tribunals created under free-trade agreements at the expense of the liberal state and its role as arbitrator. Moreover, the contemporary state governs in a complex and postmodern society characterized by individualism, the fragmentation of interests and cultures, and the decline of consensus. It is clear that the state no longer has the wherewithal to provide the full range of services to all as satisfactorily as in the past. The welfare state borrowed against the future on the assumption that economic growth would go on forever. This is no longer the case. Driven by the public finance crisis of the 1990s, the impetus of technological progress (in information and communications, for example), and examples from the private sector, states are undertaking reforms that affect the leisure sector in the same way as any other public service.

In Québec, like in most industrialized countries, major public service reforms have been implemented, aimed at the efficient and effective delivery of quality public services. Recent reforms have generally been characterized by decentralization, a client-centered approach, and government withdrawal from direct delivery of services in favor of partnerships with the community and private sector, thereby strengthening the traditional Québec leisure model.

FIGURE 1.2
Citizen Roles



This is the situation that marks and will continue to mark governance in a leisure sector where civil society has taken on increasing responsibilities even as it struggles to deal with the decreased availability of government resources and the rise of “clientification.” Moreover, this model of governance fits well with the more freewheeling nature of the leisure sector and the acknowledged contribution of public and civic leisure to community social capital.

In this light, the citizen has become a user or client, a partner, and sometimes, as a member of the collectivity, a citizen shareholder.

By abandoning the oars for the tiller,³⁸ the government is sharing the power over which it held a monopoly. It no longer has sole responsibility for public services. Forced to make choices and build a relationship with civil society, the government seeks convergence between its vision of public service and civic values: by consulting citizen shareholders, it calls them to dialog.

As partners, citizens and the associations they create are entrusted with responsibility for various public services, with varying levels of independence.

Furthermore, New Public Management (NPM) has introduced a major change in the delivery of public services: individuals are no longer the “governed,” but clients. Government no longer attempts to adapt individuals to programs, but rather to tailor resources and services to citizens’ needs and initiatives. This is, in appearance, a significant change from the normative management approach³⁹ that was centralized and professionalized under the welfare state. Now governments actually undertake to inform citizens about the choices and types of service available, put in place complaint processes, and systematically invite citizens to help set quality standards.

In Québec, the government gave expression to many of these changes in the *Public Administration Act* of June 2000, which entrenched the notion of results-based management. In the introduction to the act, the minister responsible wrote,

Ministries and agencies providing services to the public must draft a statement of objectives regarding the level and quality of these services. In addition, each ministry or agency must develop a strategic plan to

38. Olson, D. and T. Gaebler (1993). *Reinventing Government. How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector*, New York, Plume Books.

39. Lane, J.E. (1995). *The Public Sector: Concepts, Models, and Approaches*, London, Sage, p. 2.

guide its actions over a period of several years. Each must also be accountable for the results achieved, notably by producing an annual management report.

The Act allows for performance and accountability agreements to be concluded for individual ministry or agency administrative units. These agreements will provide for a more flexible management framework adapted to each unit's circumstances, as well as a reporting process focused on specific results committed to by the unit.⁴⁰

Partnership agreements under which the government transfers funds—and by the same token accountability obligations—throw into question the independent action of civil society. The line between partnership and outsourcing can be hard to trace. Are associations partners or agents?

To clarify this issue, the Government of Québec and community organizations and associations worked to draft the *Policy on the Recognition and Support of Community Action*.⁴¹ This policy recognizes certain characteristics of the democratically structured organizations that work to improve quality of life in their respective communities. It acknowledges the need to maintain a certain critical distance between these organizations, the government, and the independent action of civil society. Conversely, the government will adjust its funding approach for these organizations by distinguishing between basic-mission funding and special-project funding. Reporting requirements will also be adjusted accordingly. While endorsing the criteria for transparency and rigor in financial management, the policy affirms that there is a difference between public support for an independent mission recognized as being in the public interest, and imposing reporting requirements for specific ministerial mandates with precise and measurable targets. With the independent mission acknowledged and supported, reporting can focus on the criteria of sound management consistent with public service ethics and the results defined by the organization itself.

These nuances have not necessarily been understood throughout Québec in government/leisure association dealings. The new “partnership” approach in the 1990s was more a quasi-outsourcing approach, whereby associations signed, and often continue to sign, the same contract after only limited contact with the contracting party. However, there is a movement afoot to address the unease this situation creates and to clarify the relationships in a manner respectful of both parties. On the one hand,

40. Éditeur officiel du Québec (1999). Bill 82, *Public Administration Act*.

41. Government of Québec (2001). *Community Action: A Crucial Contribution to the Exercise of Citizenship and the Social Development of Québec*, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

local elected officials feel as if they have lost power—some would like to take back these responsibilities at the municipal level, a financial impossibility. On the other, associations deplore the absence of genuine negotiations between partners to reach agreements in which both parties clearly set out their obligations, rather than just the obligations of the NPO. These associations are aware of both their own abilities and the need to specify what government will contribute. There are signs on the horizon of more precise public mandates and of cooperation agreements that will replace service contracts, although the latter option will remain useful in specific cases. Generally, there is a trend toward “working with” rather than having someone else do all the work, and an effort to talk about multipartite cooperation among the partner networks.

This examination of the trends and pitfalls in Québec governance illustrates the foundations of the Québec model and the challenges that still threaten to force it to adopt a client approach that significantly reduces its societal and community contribution. The experience of the City of Granby described further on is a good example.

Chapter 2

QUEBECERS AND LEISURE A Four-Part Analysis

NOTION

The scientific community (Jackson, 2006; Cordes and Ibrahim, 1998; Henderson *et al.*, 2001)¹ and the general public more or less agree that leisure can be explained from four complementary angles—free time, activity, state of mind, and experience, each of which ties in to social, economic and political culture, creating benchmarks and challenges for leisure organizations.

Activities that are carried out during *free time* have no meaning unless they correspond to the significance we give to our free time (*state of mind*). These activities deliver satisfaction provided they awaken the senses, stimulate new feelings or discoveries, and create pleasant memories. In short, provided they constitute an *experience*. Let's examine the nature and interaction of these aspects of leisure.

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1. Jackson, Edgar L. (ed.) (2006). *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development*. Hangzhou Consensus, Hangzhou, China, Zhejiang University Press; Cordes, K. and H. Ibrahim (1999). *The Nature of Leisure, Recreation, and Play in Applications in Recreation and Leisure: For Today and the Future*, 2nd ed., New York, McGraw-Hill College, chapter 1; Henderson, K., D. Bialeschki, J.L. Hemingway, J. Hodges, B. Kivel, and D. Sessoms (2001). *Descriptions and Definitions of Recreation and Leisure*, in *Introduction to Leisure Services*, State College, Venture Publishing.

Free time is the time left over once we have fulfilled our personal, family, social, and civic responsibilities. This time is partially regulated by laws on how many hours we work, the vacations we take, and the lifestyles of individuals and peoples. Today's notion of free time came about in the wake of industrialization and the advent of the mechanical age, in contrast to a time once regulated by nature. With industrialization, we began to count working hours and demand non-working hours to care for ourselves and our families. In 1880, Paul Lafargue wrote *The Right to Be Lazy*. Contemporary leisure first developed in reaction to industrialized and mechanized work and to the abuses workers suffered. Conditions in factories in the early days of industrialization were a far cry from a healthy living environment. The urbanization of living spaces, which developed alongside industrialization, led to a new rationality of human relations and living environments, notably by dedicating separate spaces to work, living, and leisure.

In keeping with the new rationality of fragmented work tasks, leisure activities appeared as a fragmentation of leisure into behaviors that were codified to varying degrees by rules that defined the playing area and gestures required of each. And so there developed a distinction between "leisure" and "leisure activities." The advent of activities in the commercial sector added equipment to the mix as a factor of specialization. It is not unusual to see a new activity emerge with the market introduction of a new piece of equipment. Snowsport activities, for instance, grew in variety as the technology and equipment developed. While our great-grandfathers did indeed "play in the woods," one has only to peruse the long list of activities offered in Québec's parks to appreciate just how many ways there are to "play in the woods" today.

These activities—or leisure capsules, if you prefer—attract people who spend varying amounts of free time and personal energy on these pursuits, specialize to varying degrees, and derive often considerable satisfaction from them. In sport, but also in art and outdoor pursuits, competition with others or oneself helps set the elite apart from the masses, the diehards from the recreational participants. The virtues of excellence have been proven. For one, they justify the presence of and inspire the actions of numerous organizations in Québec's world of public and civic leisure.

While this pursuit, which Stebbins² calls "serious leisure," may satisfy a large but minority group of Quebecers, for most, leisure is all about surroundings and experience. To achieve and experience the state of mind

2. Stebbins, R. (2001). "Antinomies in Volunteering: Choice/Obligation," *Loisir et société/Society and Leisure*, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 314.

they seek in the pursuit of leisure, people first choose their goals, other people, the time and environment, and then the activity. We seek the leisure experience before the specific activity. This attitude has led commercial, public, and civic outfitters to define their task as the delivery of an ensemble of components and activities in the practice of leisure. Thus, the notion of “experience” is front and center.

In Québec, we are gradually migrating from an activity-based approach to an experience-based approach, notably in community recreational centers and individual leisure venues such as bike paths and parks. This shift is often the result of people being more proactive in their pursuit of leisure. As a result, the notion of programming has changed, becoming less a list of activities and more a range of venues, events, and organized activities.

DISTRIBUTION OF FREE TIME

In this day and age, free time is distributed in myriad ways, spurring organizations to tailor their services and programs to specific clienteles. For example, in neighborhoods where young people are criticized for loitering, gyms are more likely to be opened in the evenings. In areas with large populations of seniors, leisure activities should be offered in the mornings. In industrial towns with a high percentage of evening and night shift workers, leisure services and schedules should reflect this fact. There is also growing demand from parents for family-oriented activities—so they can spend more time with their children—as opposed to activities where they are simply spectators.

Recent studies have pointed to stagnation in the growth of free time. Factors such as the increased workload among the more educated and the growing concern with body and health are all interfering with free time. The traditional pace of family life has changed, and when both spouses work, parents have a limited amount of free time. Juggling work and family is a problem faced by two-thirds of Québec families with children.

In a newsletter by Observatoire québécois du loisir, Gilles Pronovost³ analyzed the evolution of free time. According to time-use studies conducted by Statistics Canada in 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2005,⁴ an unexpected—and worrisome—phenomenon appeared at the turn of the last century: an increase in working hours and a decrease in free time.

3. Pronovost, G. (2007). “Fin de siècle, déclin du loisir?,” *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 7, p. 1.

4. These studies were conducted using a sample of 2,000 respondents in Québec and 10,000 in the rest of Canada.

Two findings in particular caught the eye of this researcher seeking to understand the behavior of Quebecers so as to better understand the challenges of leisure organization:

In 2005, the total volume of time devoted to leisure in Québec was 12 hours a week more than the time devoted to work. The average work week, including travel time, was 25.6 hours, while average time spent on leisure was 37.7 hours. However, if we apply the total volume of working hours to the active population only, the situation and ratios are reversed, since many people are not part of the workforce (retired, unemployed, etc.). In this case, members of the active population spend the equivalent of two-thirds of their working hours on leisure.⁵

Based on the above-mentioned studies, Pronovost proposes the following tables⁶:

Table 1 presents data for the entire population, providing an overview of the total volume of time Quebecers devote to eight main activity categories. For example, the figures show that over a twenty-year period, the proportion of time devoted to sleep has remained relatively stable, which means that while the structure of our social time has changed, our sleeping patterns have not.

Table 1 Weekly Time Budget. Québec, 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2005 Population aged 15 or over				
	1986	1992	1998	2005
WORK (including commute)	23.7	23.5	23.5	25.6
including travel at work	2.3	1.9	2.0	2.3
EDUCATION	5.9	4.0	3.7	3.5
HOUSEWORK	12.8	13.3	14.7	14.3
PURCHASES AND SERVICES	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.9
PERSONAL CARE	77.2	78.2	75.6	76.2
including sleep	58.7	59.3	59.1	59.6
CHILDREN'S NEEDS	5.5	3.0	3.2	2.6
ASSOCIATIONS	1.8	3.4	2.6	2.2
LEISURE	36.3	37.5	39.3	37.7
TV	16.7	14.7	14.5	14.4
Cultural activities	5.1	4.5	4.4	3.9
Reading	2.9	3.5	3.1	2.5
Sports	2.0	3.8	4.0	3.9
Parties, visiting	5.2	6.2	10.8	9.8

5. Pronovost, G., *op. cit.*, p. 1.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Table 2 applies the same information specifically to the working population. For example, while the average work week is 25.6 hours (when the total volume of time devoted to work is applied to the entire population), the actual work week for the active population alone is 43.2 hours (39 hours of paid work plus commute and other related activities).

Table 2 Weekly Time Budget. Québec, 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2005 Active Population				
	1986	1992	1998	2005
WORK (including commute)	46.4	42.5	41.3	43.2
including travel at work	4.2	3.4	3.4	3.8
EDUCATION	1.4	1.0	0.7	0.6
HOUSEWORK	9.1	10.3	12.3	12.3
PURCHASES AND SERVICES	3.9	4.4	4.9	4.7
PERSONAL CARE	73.9	74.3	71.4	72.7
including sleep	56.3	56.6	56.4	57.2
CHILDREN'S NEEDS	3.8	2.6	3.1	2.4
ASSOCIATIONS	1.3	2.1	1.8	1.8
LEISURE	28.3	30.9	32.5	30.2
TV	12.9	12.5	11.3	10.9
Cultural activities	4.2	3.8	3.3	2.9
Reading	2.1	2.7	2.1	1.5
Sports	2.1	3.1	3.9	3.5
Parties, visiting	5.5	7.6	9.5	8.8

After analyzing these findings, Pronovost concluded that

With regard to working hours, after declining steadily for a century up until the middle of the last decade, the work week has now increased to the point where the gains of the past twenty years have been virtually wiped out in one fell swoop. . . As for *leisure time*, the decline is almost as pronounced—we have turned the clock back nearly twenty years! Among the active population (the employed), between 1986 and 1998 the time devoted to leisure continued to increase, jumping from 28 to 32½ hours a week. By 2005, it had dropped back down to 30.2 hours.⁷

According to Statistics Canada's 1999 General Social Survey,⁸ one-third of Canadians aged 25 to 44 considered themselves workaholics and approximately half admitted to worrying they didn't have enough to

7. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

8. Statistics Canada (1999). *The Daily*, November 9, <www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991109/d991109.pdf>, retrieved March 5, 2008.

spend with their family and friends. Almost half reported they felt trapped in their daily routine. Only one-quarter of these individuals said they planned to slow down in the coming year.

Canadians aged 15 and over who reported they were time-stressed spent more of their time working than low-stress individuals. These time-stressed Canadians also had 2 hours less free time each day. From 1992 to 1998, the proportion of men aged 25 to 44 who reported being time-stressed increased at a faster rate than the proportion of women.

Among people aged 25 or younger, including those of high school age, some reported fairly high levels of time stress. Young women were twice as likely as young men to be time-stressed.

The survey found that relief comes with age. Time-related stress levels virtually disappear among older Canadians, notably after retirement and once their children leave home. However,

Despite dreams of “Freedom 55,” retirement is not one long vacation. Life goes on, only under different circumstances. Work is no longer a consideration, and free time and leisure are different than at other times of life.⁹

Much remains to be done in terms of developing our understanding and competencies to truly capture the essence of free time, in order to better plan leisure services to reflect the lifestyles of Quebecers.

LEISURE AS ACTIVITY: CHANGING PRACTICES AND NEW CATEGORIES

Leisure is also experienced as an **activity**, generally for enjoyment, satisfaction, or to improve quality of life. The activity itself is often a pretext for a host of other related activities that are part of the leisure experience. For example, a hike can be followed by a good meal, an evening with friends, or a visit to an historic site.

Obviously there exists no single activity categorization in the pure sense of the word. No activity list can claim to be complete once the other dimensions of time and state of mind are added in. In fact, it is possible for an activity to be leisure to some, but not to others, depending on the

9. Thibault, A. (2006). “Traiter avec des personnes âgées,” *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 15, p. 1.

length of time it is performed and the intended result. For instance, gardening, poker, and competitive sports may be work or leisure. Competitive athletes take a day off from training or competition, compulsive card players may seek escape from poker, and at harvest time gardening enthusiasts likely prefer not to be forced by weather conditions to race to harvest the fruit of their labors. The introduction of a new product onto the market can also spur the development of a new activity.

Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that public and civic leisure activities can be divided into the following categories:

- Cultural, scientific, and heritage activities, whether for consumption or creation
- Activities that take place in nature and that rely on an element of the natural environment. In Québec, these activities generally fall into the “outdoor recreation” category
- Sports
- Social activities: games, volunteerism, celebrations
- Social, cultural, and economic tourism
- Physical activity during free time that revolves around health and well-being

These categories are based on the historic nomenclature of organizations and government ministries, not on categories of individuals. For example, a number of activities such as crafts, gardening, and handicrafts can be classified as physical, social, or cultural pursuits, depending on the circumstances in which they are performed and the intended result.

We cannot claim this to be an exhaustive list of the leisure activities of Quebecers for the reasons outlined above and also because an exhaustive list would be simply too tedious to read. In considering the leisure practices of Quebecers, we must also consult various studies. Since the Québec model is multifaceted, every network head and government ministry or organization measures leisure practices in its own area of responsibility. The same goes for municipalities and regional organizations who, when surveying their users, draw up a list of activities to match their particular services. However, there are a number of population-oriented studies that use open-ended questions to find out what people do in their leisure time. In this report, we will give an impressionistic overview of the Québec leisure scene by focusing our description on activity groups and categories.

Cultural Leisure

The most comprehensive data on cultural leisure appears in *Recueil statistique de la pratique culturelle*, a compendium by Direction de la recherche, des politiques et du lectorat of Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (2005). The data presented in these chapters is all taken from this source.

The leading cultural practice among Quebecers is television viewing, with an average of over 10 hours a week. It is also fascinating to note that Quebecers overwhelmingly watch made-in-Québec TV.

TABLE 2.1
Television Viewing

Number of Hours a Day			
< 1	1–2	3–5	> 5
18.1%	50.0%	20.6%	11.3%
Type of Show			
News	Serial Drama	Sports	Films
60.2%	17.3%	15.6%	28.8%
Miniseries	Humor	Variety	Games
12.8%	19.4%	9.8%	8.6%

Television is now joined by computers and audiovisual reproduction devices, for which Rosaire Gagnon, author of a number of studies on cultural practices, analyzed the impacts on leisure in a newsletter for *Observatoire québécois du loisir*:

Québec households now boast an array of audiovisual devices, computers, and the usual peripherals. The number of tools available to copy and play audiovisual programs has skyrocketed, and being overequipped has become the norm. The phenomenon, far from stabilizing, is clearly on the rise. The result is an individualization of audiovisual practices. The home is increasingly becoming an audiovisual entertainment center. The more people in the household, the more prevalent the phenomenon. Conversely, households with only one member, often an elderly person, have less equipment.

[...]

Video games are a leisure activity that occupy an undeniable place in the cultural landscape of young Quebecers. Sixty percent of households with children and teens own a video game console such as Playstation,

Nintendo, or Xbox. The Internet is another game source the young and not-so-young turn to to play, alone or in networks. According to NETAdos 2004,¹⁰ 60.7% of teens, and 71.9% of boys, use the Internet for this purpose.

As more and more households become connected to the Internet, websurfing has become a leisure activity that occupies many hours a week, especially among young people. According to *NETendances* 2004,¹¹ approximately half of the Netsurfers in Québec spend over four hours a week on the Net for purposes other than work or school. Home Internet access serves primarily for news, communication, and entertainment purposes. Email is still the most popular use, with 54.8% of Quebecers using it, according to a September 2004 study. However, many Quebecers use the Net to chat online (24.1%), listen to and download music (15.5%), play games in networks, or simply play online (12.0%).¹²

Many observers have wondered about the negative impacts of these emerging practices on the rate of physical and social activity among young people. We are starting to see efforts by video game enthusiasts to emerge from their shell and create competitions and clubs, or to move more, with the Nintendo Wii console, for example. People are also becoming aware that the lifestyles of children whose parents both work can confine them to their homes. The idea has been raised about designing a partially virtual leisure center that would tap into the powerful potential of the Net to connect people via networks and give them an opportunity to discuss, play, and plan activities where they can get together. Online dating sites are already doing this by organizing face-to-face dates among members. Instead of resisting the Net, these people are taking advantage of its power and potential.

When it comes to reading, most Quebecers read dailies and weeklies, and nearly 60% pick up a book at least once a week. For most, reading is a leisure activity, with 70% reporting they read to relax. Among those surveyed, 54.6% said they don't have time to read. This bears out the situation described above. It is also worth noting that 36.9% of respondents borrow books from the library.

10. Lamy, C. (2004). "Portrait des 12-17 ans sur Internet," *NETAdos 2004*, CEFRIO, p. 30.

11. CEFRIO (2004). *NETendances*, September, <www.infometre.cefrio.qc.ca/loupe/omnibus/divertissement_0904.asp>.

12. Gagnon, R. (2005). "Mécanisation et industrialisation des loisirs culturels domestiques des Québécois," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 2, No. 11, pp. 1-2.

TABLE 2.2
Reading

Newspapers and Magazines				
	Every Day	Once a Week	Less than Once a Week	Never
Dailies	44.3%	21.2%	7.7%	26.8%
Weeklies	52.4%	7.6%	8.6%	31.6%
Magazines	24.9%	28.0%	18.2%	28.9%
Books				
	Often	Fairly Often	Rarely	Never
	29.1%	30.1%	25.0%	15.9%
Number of Hours a Week				
	More than 10	5 to 10	1 to 5	Less than 1
	9.9%	28%	47.7%	14.4%

Cultural outings are fairly infrequent, with the exception of movies (42.8% of Quebecers go to the movies at least once a month), celebrations, and festivals. The majority of people go out in groups or as a couple (only 5% of cultural outings are by people on their own). In all, 35% of respondents attend amateur performances, including 21.5% for music and 15% theater.

It is significant in this regard that 34.5% of Quebecers, or nearly 3 million people, take part in an artistic activity for leisure.

TABLE 2.3
Cultural Outings

Type of Outing	Rate (%)	Type of Outing	Rate (%)
Movies	75.8	Musicals	8.2
Theater	24.2	Comedy	20.6
Classical music	13.7	Circus	6.0
Dance	13.9	Celebrations and festivals	50.7
Choral concerts	10.6	Historic sites	25.9
Rock concerts	13.7	Bookshops	41.7
Jazz concerts	13.0	Museums	15.9
Singer-songwriter performances	17.0		

These figures illustrate the broad scope of active cultural and scientific leisure as opposed to leisure in which one is merely a spectator or visitor. Ten percent of people take or have taken courses in this area (music, photography, dance, and others), primarily those offered by individuals and private organizations. However, the size of this sector of active cultural and scientific leisure is not proportional to public and civic offerings, especially when compared to the sports and outdoor recreation sector. It appears that Québec, perhaps to affirm its national and economic identity, favors an infrastructure that focuses on artists and art promotion.

TABLE 2.4
Cultural Practices of Quebecers

Amateur artistic activity	34.5%
Genealogy	15.5%
Computer programming	8.7%
Natural sciences	29.1%
Physical sciences	7.8%
Member of an artistic or scientific association	9.4%

Outdoor Recreation

Quebecers live in a vast and relatively sparsely populated land. Data on recreational use of nature indicates that they take keen advantage of the great outdoors and that recreational activities are on the rise. This activity sector is by far the most popular and the fastest growing, likely because it is compatible with the new constraints on and configurations of free time. Table 2.5 presents the most popular outdoor activities.

These activities are carried out in both the commercial sector and the public and civic sector. In general, cycling, hunting, fishing, and water-sports are carried out at public venues such as bike paths and on public lands. The growing popularity of these activities has given rise to problems of accessibility and cohabitation among enthusiasts of various activities. These facilities were generally developed as a result of representations and partnerships with community associations. One example of a successful initiative is Route verte, the bike route promoted by Vélo-Québec.

According to a study commissioned by Aventure Écotourisme Québec,

Unorganized activity accounts for 87% of mentions. The per-activity analysis brought to light the following observations:

TABLE 2.5
Nature Activities among Adults

Type Activity	Number	Source
Cycling	2,600,000	Vélo Québec (2006), <i>L'état du vélo au Québec en 2005</i> .
Camping	460,000	< www.campingquebec.com/atcq/atcqstat.shtml >
Snowmobiling	410,000	< www.admdq.org/statistiques.html >
Fishing	688,321	< www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca/faune/statistiques > (2007)
Hunting	527,621	< www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca/faune/statistiques > (2007)
Skiing (sliding)	1,649,407	< www.skicanada.org >
Hiking	4,640,000	More than 10 times a year, according to the Québec survey on physical activity, sports, and leisure (ISQ, 2006)
Nature observation	5,440,000	< www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/publications/sante/EQSAPSL.htm >
Gardening	6,400,000	
Rock climbing	136,000	
Snowshoeing	4,800,000	
Paddling sports	2,320,000	

Unorganized activity accounts for over 90% of mentions for certain activities such as walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

Of the six most popular activities, only canoeing/kayaking and nature interpretation/observation had slightly lower unorganized activity rates.¹³

In addition to popular activities were a host of emerging and more specialized activities.

13. Aventure Écotourisme Québec (2004). *Étude sur la valeur économique de l'écotourisme et du tourisme d'aventure*, <www.aventure-ecotourisme.qc.ca/content/articlefiles/98-Sommaire_AEQ_etude.pdf>, retrieved March 6, 2008.

According to the Print Measurement Bureau (PMB), summer cottages are growing in popularity. In 2005, more than 251,000 Quebecers owned a cottage compared to 232,000 in 2001. Each and every one is a potential outdoor recreation base for families and friends.

Despite—and because of—its popularity, outdoor recreation poses considerable challenges, including three key problems: the cohabitation of somewhat incompatible activities, the harmonious cohabitation of recreational and industrial uses, and conflicts between public use and private property. Cohabitation and long-term safe access are two issues that are already the subject of public debate.

Another serious issue is who should be responsible for outdoor recreation at the local level. While local community groups and municipalities work to meet the needs of their own residents for other activities, they have considerable difficulty fulfilling the same role for nonresident outdoor enthusiasts. Yet over 50% of enthusiasts live in metropolitan areas (<www.faunenatureenchiffres.gouv.qc.ca>, consulted March 11, 2008). Yet the political trend seems to be to give local authorities the power to decide how land is used and land uses harmonized.

Sports on the Decline among Adults

The most comprehensive information on sport participation among adults comes from a 2005 study on sport participation in Canada¹⁴ that was published in 2008 and includes up-to-date data from similar studies conducted in 1992 and 1998.

Respondents aged 15 and over in the ten provinces were asked whether they or any other household members had **regularly** participated in any sport, at least once a week during the season or during a certain period of the year. They were also asked whether they or any other household member had participated in amateur sport as a coach, official, referee, umpire, administrator, or assistant. Guidelines for determining whether a physical activity fell within the scope of “sport” were set by Sport Canada.

Specifically, a sport is an activity that involves two or more participants engaging for the purpose of competition. Sport involves formal rules and procedures, and requires tactics and strategies, specialized neuromuscular skills, and a high degree of difficulty and effort. The

14. Ifedi, F. (2008). *Sports participation in Canada, 2005*, Statistics Canada, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics, <www.statcan.ca/english/research/81-595-MIE/81-595-MIE2008060.pdf>, retrieved March 5, 2008.

competitive nature of sport implies the development of trained coaching personnel. It does not include activities in which the performance of a motorized vehicle is the primary determinant of the competitive outcome.¹⁵

The authors of the study observed that sport participation among this segment of the population was on the decline.

Fewer Canadians aged 15 and older participated in sport in 2005 than in 1998 or in 1992. In 1992, the results of the General Social Survey showed that 45% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 9.6 million people, participated in sport. In 1998, the figure dropped to 34% of the population. By 2005, the number of participants had decreased further to 7.3 million Canadians, representing 28% of the population.¹⁶

The authors suggest that a combination of factors may be responsible for this decline.

These include time pressures, family responsibilities, child rearing, careers, lack of interest, and participation in other leisure time activities such as watching television and surfing and chatting on the Internet. Although the aging population is perhaps the dominant factor, gender, household composition, educational attainment, and income all influence sport participation.¹⁷

Boys, individuals with a high level of education and high income, and households with children tend to participate in sport more than others.

Figure 2.1 shows participation rates in the top sports.¹⁸

What did this pan-Canadian study reveal about Québec?

In 1992, 48% of adult Quebecers participated in a sport. In 1998, Québec ranked number one in Canada with a sport participation rate of 38%. In 2005, that rate had dropped to 27%, the biggest drop (11 percentage points or 29%) among all Canadian provinces. There is therefore clearly a major continuing decline in sport participation among adults.¹⁹

15. Ifedi, F., *op. cit.*, p. 15.

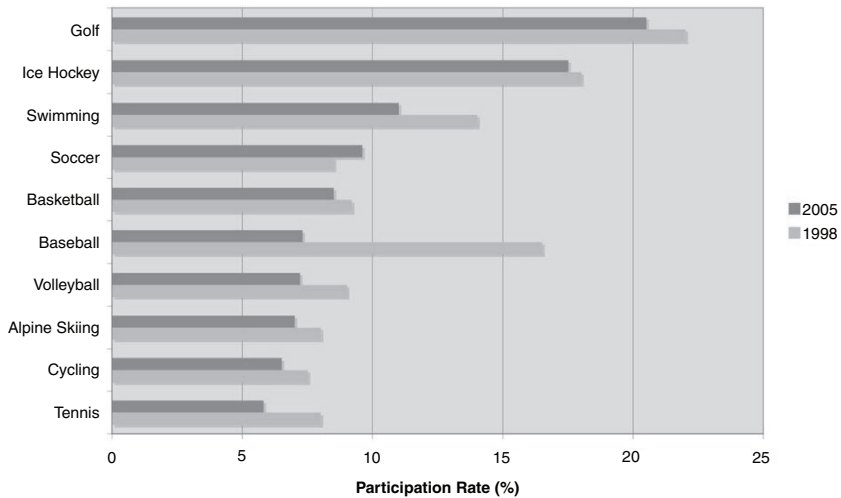
16. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

FIGURE 2.1
Participation Rates in the Top 10 Sports, 1998 and 2005



In 2005, 18% of Canadians aged 15 or over belonged to a club, community league, or other local or regional amateur sport organization. This represents a 1% drop compared to 1998. Golf, ice hockey, and soccer clubs attract the greatest number of Canadians. The statistics show that club membership increases with level of education and income.²⁰

While the number of Canadian adults participating in amateur sport has declined considerably, the number of spectators has jumped by 20.3% since 1998, topping 9.2 million in 2005. Young adults under the age of 25 had the highest rate of attendance at amateur sports events (43%).²¹

The picture is quite different among children between the ages of 5 and 14, who participate in sport in large numbers, both at school and outside of school. In 2005 in this age group, more than half (55%) of Canadian boys were active in sport compared to 44% of girls. Boys and girls tend to opt for the same sports, though not necessarily in the same order. Three times as many girls played ice hockey in 2005 as in 1998.²²

20. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

While we had no systematic data to measure these trends in Québec, local and provincial sports authorities are clear—there has been a drop in participation in certain sports and a rise in others. The Canadian survey corroborates this trend across the country.

Soccer has become the sport of choice for boys and girls aged 5 to 14, while baseball has lost ground. Soccer has been ranked the most popular sport activity among active children for many years. In 1998, it was the number one participation sport among children (32.1%), and still topped the list in 2005, with participation rates rising to 44%. The rate of participation in soccer was the same for boys and girls, despite the fact that boys tend to be more actively involved in sport than girls.²³

The annual report (2006–2007) by the executive director of the Québec Soccer Federation noted a 7% increase in the number of players (174,901), a 6% rise in the number of officials (6,525), and 16% more coaches (17,059).²⁴

Ice hockey also remained popular among Canadian children, and even rose slightly in 2005, with a participation rate of 26.1%. Swimming and basketball are on the rise, while baseball continues to fall out of favor, dropping from 22% to 13.6% between 1998 and 2005.

Why are we seeing a continuing decline in recreational sport among adults, a relative stagnation among children, and a resurgent interest in spectator sports?

Is sport falling victim to the new distribution of free time and the challenges of juggling family and work? Or is it the sport organizations' lack of support and flexibility toward this category of sports participants that is to blame? Another explication could be that certain sports children participate in at school are not available outside the school environment. When children finish or drop out of school, they no longer have the opportunity to participate in their sport. We need to study the continuity between sports organizations and the socioeconomic and family context.

One answer may lie in the new priorities various sports organizations have adopted to reflect the strategic priorities of Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. Two of the ministry's four priorities touch on physical

23. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

24. See <www.federation-soccer.qc.ca/fre/administration/1015.cfm>, retrieved March 5, 2008.

activity and healthy eating habits, and on the performance of Québec athletes at national and international competitions.²⁵ Adult participation in recreational sport is not a priority.

Among the general population, it appears that sport has been replaced by physical activity and outdoor activities that are more flexible, less restrictive, and better adapted to the lifestyles of Quebecers today.

CASE 2.1

JEUX DU QUÉBEC A Driving Force

The Jeux du Québec sports program is conducted at two levels—one around the organization of local activities to introduce children to competition through “Mes Premiers Jeux” (My First Games), and the second around the regional Jeux du Québec held twice a year in 19 regions of the province. The Jeux du Québec finals are an annual event bringing together athletes from every region, alternating each year between winter and summer.

The idea for Jeux du Québec came about in the late 1960s with the desire to create a Québec version of the Canada Games. The success of the first edition in August 1970 surpassed everyone’s wildest expectations—over 100,000 young athletes from all across Québec took part in the competitions, no doubt acquiring a taste for sport in the process. The province-wide event brought together the regions in a host town or city. In August 1971, the City of Rivière-du-Loup hosted the first Jeux du Québec finals. Since then, over thirty different towns have played host to the finals. Over 2,700,000 athletes have taken part in sports competitions, 650,000 volunteers have made it all possible, 30 sports are now offered on a structured basis in virtually every region of Québec, and socioeconomic spinoffs of \$370,000,000 have been generated by the local, regional, and provincial Jeux du Québec programs, including \$260,000,000 by the finals. Lastly, sports infrastructures have been built in every host town and city, and local organizers have acquired valuable expertise in sports organization.

Many of Québec’s Olympic athletes got their first taste of real competition at Jeux du Québec. Even more important, the games have been a seminal experience for hundreds of thousands of young people.

25. MELS (2005). *2005-2008 Strategic Plan*, <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ADMINIST/plan_strategique/2005-2008/shema-web_a.pdf>, retrieved March 11, 2008.

Physical Activity

Direction de la santé publique du Québec has issued an alarming diagnosis of the physical condition of Quebecers:

On average during a given season in a year, 46% of the population aged 15 and older does not attain the recommended level of physical activity.

Summer is the season when the population is most active, and winter, the least active.

TABLE 2.6
Participation in Physical Activity, Sports, and Leisure*
Proportion of Quebecers aged 15 and over, by gender, who participated in *active* physical activity at least 10 times a year

Active Physical Activity	At Least Once			At Least Ten Times
	Men (%)	Women (%)	Both (%)	Both (%)
Walking	90	94	92	95
Cycling	61	48	55	76
Gardening/horticulture	48	60	54	81
Strength training	48	48	48	93
Swimming	44	44	44	73
Nature observation	41	42	41	68
Cardiovascular exercise	35	44	39	88
Ice skating	32	27	29	46
Dancing	21	35	28	62
Paddling	32	23	27	29
Jogging	30	19	25	75
Racket sports	25	16	20	61
Volleyball	19	12	15	45
Downhill skiing	20	17	14	45
Cross country skiing	–	14	12	43
Soccer	17	7	12	60
Snowboarding	–	–	6	49
Rockclimbing	–	–	5	55
Inline skating	6	–	5	20
Scuba diving	6	–	5	20
Combat sports	6	–	4	83

* Institut de la statistique du Québec and Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2006). *Enquête québécoise sur l'activité physique, sportive et le loisir*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, p. 80.

The most radical drop in activity occurs between the 15–24 and 25–44 age groups, for both men and women.

The number of active individuals has decreased considerably in men aged 65 and older, and the trend seems to be the same for women in that age group.

The percentage of sedentary individuals has increased significantly among men between the ages of 25 and 44, and among women aged 65 and older. Moreover, this percentage appears to be on the rise in all age groups.

A large majority of people claim they intend to participate in physical activity on a regular basis.²⁶

A Québec survey on physical activity, sports, and leisure (*Enquête québécoise sur l'activité physique, sportive et le loisir*²⁷) commissioned by Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and conducted by Institut de la statistique du Québec looks at Quebecers and their levels of activity. It found that over 40% of Quebecers partook in walking (92%), cycling (55%), gardening (54%), strength training (48%), swimming (44%), and nature observation (41%) at least 10 times a year. It is noteworthy that the most popular activities are those most likely to be partaken in on an individual basis. Given this, two methods can be envisaged to develop these activities—public education and enhanced availability of facilities.

CASE 2.2

KINO-QUÉBEC

Kino-Québec^a is a government program that was introduced in 1978. It is managed by three partners: Secrétariat au loisir et au sport, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, and local health and social services agencies. Its mission is to promote a physically active lifestyle. To fulfill this role, Kino-Québec calls on local organizations to play a leadership role, while providing them with support. By 2010, Kino-Québec aims to reduce from 46% to 41% the percentage of Quebecers aged 15 and older who are not engaging in enough recreational or other physical activity for it to have a positive

26. See <www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/sujets/santepub/physical_activity.php>, retrieved April 20, 2008.

27. Institut de la statistique du Québec and Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2006). *Enquête québécoise sur l'activité physique, sportive et le loisir*, Québec, Government of Québec.

impact on their health. Kino-Québec targets its actions in two specific settings, namely schools and municipalities (families, neighborhoods, communities), urging representatives in these areas to design and promote organizational, physical, and social settings conducive to active transportation and the participation of young people and adults (especially those with children) in physical and sports activities. Kino-Québec has made two specific groups its priority: youths and adults aged 25 to 44. By targeting these two groups, Kino-Québec hopes to help prevent or at least delay as much as possible the gradual decline in physical activity that generally appears in part of the population with the onset of adolescence.

Schools, municipalities, community organizations, and sports associations are ideal settings for reaching young people 10 to 19. For adults 25 to 44, the best spots are workplaces, municipalities, and the healthcare network. In all these settings, Kino organizes educational and awareness activities, produces information documents, and sets up incentive programs. In school settings, Kino-Québec fosters the creation of physical and social activities that promote participation in safe physical activity—stimulating schoolyards; a variety of services, including outdoor activities, skateboard or inline skate parks; measures that promote active transportation; and other initiatives. Various promotional efforts (campaigns, contests) back partner activities.

In the workplace, Kino-Québec encourages its partners to create environments conducive to physical activity and active transportation. Kino-Québec also spurs municipalities to make the sites and facilities they manage more accessible and promote their use. These include bike paths, swimming pools, tennis courts, skating rinks, and others.

Among **adults aged 55 and over** (a heterogeneous group, given the varying levels of functional ability), Kino-Québec recognizes two subgroups: preretired or newly retired individuals (aged 55 to 64) and older seniors (aged 65 and older). Kino-Québec documents the physical activity and consumer habits of 55- to 64-year-olds in order to identify possible solutions to help improve the services available to them. For the 65-and-older group, Kino-Québec is building on its efforts in recent years by working with various community partners (seniors' groups, CLSCs, community organizations, etc.).

^a See <www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/sujets/santepub/physical_activity.php>, retrieved April 10, 2008.

Social Leisure and Associations

Social leisure is less about specific activities than individual intent or goals. This category of activity is often tied to other activities, such as going for a drink with friends after a hockey game or a concert or playing games at a festival or family gathering. As such, social leisure is an integral part and important dimension of the leisure experience.

Certain activities are more associated with social leisure than others. According to Fédération des jeux récréatifs,²⁸ there are 15 provincial organizations and over 500 clubs devoted to board games and recreational games, with 10,000 members in all. Backgammon, beanbags, bridge, checkers, croquet, darts, Go, horseshoes, kite flying, pichenotte, President, Reach for the Top, Scrabble, and tarot cards are just some of the games represented by clubs and federations. Since one does not have to be a member of a club to participate in these activities, there are no doubt many more enthusiasts than the official statistics suggest. How many other activities can be included on this far-from-exhaustive list? What about role-playing games, family festivities, gatherings of founding families, local celebrations, and Fête nationale (June 24) festivities? Some municipalities also make material available to residents to organize neighborhood parties.

And we must not forget the 400,000 users of the 80-odd community recreation centers, the members of employee social clubs, and those of the 835 seniors' clubs, plus the hundreds of thousands of people who gather to celebrate, play, and learn together.

A significant part of social leisure comes in the form of volunteerism and involvement in associations. When volunteers are asked what motivates them to become involved, their responses reveal that it is not only to help others or support a cause, but that they are also seeking the same satisfaction gained from leisure.

Volunteers' motivations for staying involved with recreation organizations may differ from the motivations that lead to initial involvement. . . . Recreation volunteers identified the desire to have fun as their most important motivation for continuing to volunteer (an average rating of 3.40/4), followed by the desire to be a player, and the desire to be useful (average ratings of 2.94 and 2.57, respectively).²⁹

28. See <www.fqjr.qc.ca>, consulted March 6, 2008.

29. Thibault, A. (2002). *Recreation Volunteers: An Asset to Be Cultivated*, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Research Program, <nonprofitscan.imaginecanada.ca/files/en/iyv/thibault_fs_english.pdf>, p. 1.

Volunteering, or the voluntary giving of one's free time, is clearly considered a form of leisure. The study of volunteer motivation clearly shows that volunteer work is not totally free, as the volunteer seeks something in return—a counter-donation, as it were. Godbout,³⁰ in what has become an anthropology classic, demonstrated that there is no such thing as absolute giving. Volunteering is an exchange—he who gives gets back and is thereby motivated to keep giving. The biggest benefit in volunteering is the forging of social ties, both for volunteers and for those they serve. A number of studies have shown that volunteering aid to persons in need—for example, serving meals to the homeless—has a marked effect in reducing loneliness, as it helps create a relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiary. The resulting social capital is as much about the volunteer as it is about the person who benefits.

MONTREAL, August 16, 2004—A recent Expedia.caTM/Ipsos-Reid poll on vacation deprivation found that three in ten employed Quebecers (28%) don't take all their yearly allotted vacation days—the lowest percentage in the country. The poll also found that 92% of Quebecers who have ever traveled agree that time away together enables friends, family, and loved ones to reconnect. And yet, large numbers of them are skipping their vacations to spend more time at work.

[...] Working hard is fine, but playing hard, too, can bring people closer together. While 92% of Quebec vacationers believe that taking vacations with their loved ones creates closer relationships, nearly one-third of them (33%) did not take time for holidays with close family and friends in the past year.

Residents of Quebec (73%) are the most likely in the country to have made time for vacation with friends and family within the last year, while residents of Atlantic Canada are least likely (58%).

<www.expedia.ca/daily/enc4105/service/press/releases/Aug16-VacationDeprivation.asp>, retrieved March 5, 2008.

In Québec, over 500,000 leisure volunteers³¹ work with the province's 15,000 associations, clubs, and leisure committees. This figure does not include the many volunteers involved in various other kinds of

30. Godbout, J.T. and A. Caillé (1992). *L'Esprit du don*, Montréal, Boréal, p. 45.

31. Thibault, A. (2002), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

organizations that can also be considered as a leisure activity for them. The National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations³² counted 46,000 not-for-profit organizations in Québec. These organizations have approximately 3,000,000 volunteers, who give an average of 140 hours of their time a year.

In short, there are leisure activities whose goal is clearly to meet people, and there are venues, such as community recreation centers, that are conducive to these activities.

Tourism and Vacations³³

Forty-six percent of Quebecers took at least one vacation break during the winter. Among these, 62% took more than one vacation break during the period. During the summer, 49% of Quebecers took at least one vacation break. Among these, 55% took more than one vacation break during the period. Among Quebecers who travel, 79% took more than one vacation break. Most Quebecers choose to stay in their own province when they vacation for three or more days. Only 43% of Quebecers vacation outside Québec. Europe (7.4%) and Florida (6.7%) are the most popular destinations for Quebecers who vacation abroad.

The reasons cited for not taking vacations are related to finances (23%), health or age (11%), work (13%), lack of vacation time (5%), lack of time (13%), or lack of interest (12%). Lack of money is often cited (30%) by families with children.

Only half of Quebecers take vacations outside their home and immediate environment, while for many families, vacations are simply not an option. However, the right to a vacation is explicitly set out in Québec's labor laws. In a recent article, Louis Jolin aptly described the profile of these non-vacationers and the efforts made by Québec to improve access to vacations:

32. Statistics Canada, Small Business and Special Surveys Division, Business and Trade Statistics Field, *Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations*, p. 21.

33. Léger Marketing (2003). *Étude auprès de la population – Comportements touristiques des Québécois à l'intérieur de leur province*; Réseau de veille en tourisme / Écho Sondage (2004). *Départs en voyage des Québécois, hébergement et Internet*.

Non-vacationers fit a clearly defined profile—they are the poorest and least educated. Like income, education is a key vector of vacation exclusion. Non-vacationers are more likely to be younger (24 and under) or older (65 and over), including cash-strapped students, non-specialized laborers, farm workers, and retirees.³⁴

To make vacations more accessible to all, a wide array of organizations have stepped up to provide affordable destinations and programs. Social tourism and outdoor organizations were the first to come up with facilities to help foster and democratize participation in activities, including hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, bike paths, revitalized riverbanks, and more. There are still a number of Québec organizations working to make vacations and tourism more affordable to Quebecers. These include the key tourism and outdoor associations and federations who belong to Conseil québécois du loisir, namely, Mouvement québécois des camps familiaux, Association des camps du Québec, Tourisme Jeunesse, Vélo Québec, Kéroul, Fédération québécoise de la marche, Fédération québécoise de canot et de kayak, and Festivals et Événements Québec. These associations also oversee a number of regional and local associations that are in fact social economy enterprises based on a group entrepreneurship model and reflecting community social and economic realities. Various regions of Québec are also home to not-for-profit organizations such as economuseums, interpretation centers, and theme parks that offer original tourist services with an eye to affordability for visitors, promotion of local resources, and spinoffs for the community in terms of employment and the purchase of goods and services.³⁵

In this two-tiered Québec, a European phenomenon appears to be emerging, with winter school holidays attracting large numbers of families to winter-sport activity centers and, of course, to sunny southern beaches for those seeking an escape from the snow. This winter break places considerable pressure on leisure organizations that offer a range of programs for people who stay home and for children whose parents are not on vacation and whose after-school programs are also closed for the break.

34. Samson, M. and J. Stafford (1996). *Vacances et tourisme 1995. Enquête auprès d'un échantillon de Québécois et de Montréalais sur les comportements de vacances*, Québec, Ministère des Affaires municipales, Direction générale du loisir et des sports, Government of Québec.

35. Jolin, L. and L. Proulx (2005). "L'ambition du tourisme social: un tourisme pour tous, durable et solidaire!," *Interventions économiques*, Vol. 32, <www.telug.quebec.ca/pls/inteco/rie.entree?vno_revue=1&vno_numero=39>, retrieved April 20, 2008.

THE FAMILY CAMP MOVEMENT

Claiming the Right to a Vacation

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the World Tourism Organization (1999)^a and recognized by the UN General Assembly on December 21, 2001 (A/RES/56/212) acknowledges the importance of social tourism. Article 7 of the Code deals with the right to tourism:

- 1) The prospect of direct and personal access to the discovery and enjoyment of the planet's resources constitutes a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants; the increasingly extensive participation in national and international tourism should be regarded as one of the best possible expressions of the sustained growth of free time, and obstacles should not be placed in its way.
- 2) The universal right to tourism must be regarded as the corollary of the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, guaranteed by Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7.d of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.
- 3) Social tourism, and in particular associative tourism, which facilitates widespread access to leisure, travel, and holidays, should be developed with the support of the public authorities.
- 4) Family, youth, student and senior tourism, and tourism for people with disabilities, should be encouraged and facilitated.

In keeping with this Code, Mouvement québécois vacances familles (MQVF) strives to "defend and promote vacation accessibility and, through a community-based approach, encourage families, specifically low-and middle-income families, to actively plan their vacation time."^b

In summer 2001, a series of public demonstrations were held in Montréal by families demanding the means to vacation at family camps. That same year, the Interaction Family Camp nearly closed its doors for good for lack of funding. Only through the determination of the organization's director did it manage to stay afloat. The program costs \$30,000 a year and enables some 50 families to spend a week at a camp. The parents pay only the equivalent of their usual weekly grocery bill. "I called donors, but many responded in an insulting way," said the director. "I was told, 'Why should I give money to people on welfare? They're on permanent vacation!' I was absolutely shocked." It was only thanks to a last-minute \$12,000 grant from the City of Montréal that the organization managed to fund the vacations that year.^c

MQVF currently runs 30 member vacation centers throughout Québec's 10 tourism regions. Most of them are managed by not-for-profit organizations and make a point of offering affordable rates for all families, with further reduced rates for low-income families.

MQVF focuses primarily on family summer camp vacations. It believes that these types of vacations help improve family relations, including between couples. These vacations help foster the social development of children, promote better relations between parents and children, break the isolation of families, and spur mutual aid. In short, they provide the physical and mental respite essential to good quality of life.

MQVF supports the creation of family organizations, the installation of facilities, and the development of policies. It runs programs and offers its members assistance in the way of information, training, research, technical support, and administrative services.

The activities of family organizations and family vacation centers are funded in large part by the government.

^a World Tourism Organization (1999). *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, <www.unwto.org/code_ethics/pdf/languages/Codigo%20Etico%20Ing.pdf>, retrieved April 22, 2005.

^b See <www.vacancesfamiliales.qc.ca/mouvement>.

^c *Le Devoir*, July 21, 2001.

CASE 2.4

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS A Category unto Itself

Is this a category of leisure activity or an activity that encompasses every category? Whatever the answer, festival and event attendance is a major leisure occupation in Québec. A study by Fêtes et Événements Québec (FEQ) found that, on average, 101,956 visitors attend Québec's festivals and events every year. When that figure is extrapolated to the total attendance for FEQ members, it tops 21 million visitors! Festivals that attract more than 100,000 visitors each represent 22.6% of FEQ members, attracting 81.6% of all festival-goers.^a

^a See <www.evenementsquebec.qc.ca>, consulted April 21, 2008.

A STATE OF MIND: GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL

For most leisure psychologists, the prerequisite of leisure is the perceived freedom it creates. Individuals are free because they see themselves that way and they overcome constraints. Other psychologists, educators, and sociologists believe that there can be no freedom without a higher consciousness of the determinants that influence and affect human behavior. In their view, individuals feel free because, since they know their limits, they accept them, exercise their free choice, get away from it all, and set aside their obligations to achieve a sense of freedom.

This theory is based on Neulinger's paradigm of perceived freedom:

The primary dimension of leisure, then, is the freedom or, to be more specific, the perceived freedom. By this we simply mean a state in which a person feels that what he is doing, he is doing by choice and because he wants to Whether this perception corresponds to an objective freedom or is an illusion is beside the point. As shown by Lefcourt (1973), even illusion has real consequences, and the main consequence of the illusion of freedom is leisure.³⁶

This state of mind transcends the activities themselves. Furthermore, it defines culture and organization. Studies have shown that leisure pursuits are based more on specific personal motivation than on the activities themselves. Individuals seek a context more than an activity, with the exception of the keenest enthusiasts, who represent a small percentage of the population.

The considerable challenge facing leisure professionals and organizations is to allow individuals to do what they want, when they want, with whom they want, and at the pace they want. This is in keeping with the rise in unstructured leisure. It requires that leisure services be varied and that THE guiding principle of public leisure services and their heavy reliance on volunteers be that persons and groups have control of their leisure time.

This is also the reason for having professionals who educate people about leisure to develop their capacity to recognize and choose the type of leisure that best suits them.

36. Neulinger, J. (1974). *The Psychology of Leisure: Research Approaches to the Study of Leisure*, Springfield, Thomas, p. 15.

It is a philosophy often imperiled by structures that leave little initiative to children or seniors on the pretext of safety concerns or lack of ability. It is also imperiled in tourism and cultural activities that confine people to the roles of spectator or consumer.

EXPERIENCING THE EXPERIENCE³⁷

According to Henderson *et al.*³⁸, “leisure time” and “leisure activity” approaches tend to underestimate the qualitative aspects of the leisure experience. These approaches are considered too simplistic to account for the complexity of human behavior. The “leisure as **experience**” approach can remedy this. It is a theory that emerged in the postindustrial age that leisure and work are equally important. Leisure is perceived as a personal experience conditioned by society’s values.³⁹

The important role leisure plays in today’s society makes it a good example of the experience economy, an economy that has surpassed the stage of producing and consuming tangible goods and attained the next stage of personalized and theatricalized services.⁴⁰ The postindustrial society is also a postmaterialistic society. As we realize that we cannot buy our way to happiness, experiences—including leisure experiences—are more and more the source of personal satisfaction and a way to give life meaning. To achieve this, the experiences must be memorable on a personal, learning, and entertainment level. Even though households are by and large well equipped with audiovisual devices and sports equipment, it is the intangible and hedonistic experiences these devices allow, such as family parties or outings with friends, that motivate people to purchase them. Leisure products are not consumed merely in and of themselves, but rather for the experience they create. Leisure as free time/space therefore corresponds to the notion of experience as a moment of freedom, novelty, and escape.

37. These paragraphs were contributed by Professor Pascale Marcotte, Department of Leisure, Culture, and Tourism Studies at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

38. Henderson, K., D. Bialeschki, J.L. Hemingway, J. Hodges, B. Kivel, and D. Sessoms (2001). *Descriptions and Definitions of Recreation and Leisure*, in *Introduction to Leisure Services*, State College, Venture Publishing.

39. Fortier, J. and D. Auger (2006). *Définitions du loisir*, text presented to Musée de la civilisation du Québec as part of the preparation for its *Free Time* exhibit.

40. Pine II, J. and J.H. Gilmore (1999). *The Experience Economy*, Boston, Harvard University Press.

Experience also implies that the activity's timing is not the only thing that matters. The time leading up to and following the consumption of the activity is also important and adds to its value and perceived worth. Leisure programs and settings must be designed to spur interest, promise a one-of-a-kind experience, and offer a singular opportunity for personal growth. Leisure is also a happy memory that forges ties, creates shared remembrances, and triggers the desire to relive the experience.

Marketing theorists have understood that consumers are not simply rational beings who calculate the best return on their investment (Holbrook and Hirshman, 1982)⁴¹. Leisure is a hedonistic mode of consumption whose choice cannot be explained by mere rational and measurable criteria. It is precisely in this irrationality, this gratuity, that freedom will appear possible and will be sought out.

The leisure experience, as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990),⁴² is an aspiration to happiness or the optimal experience. This optimal experience, achieved when an individual's attention to and concentration on an activity solicits all their skills, making them lose track of time and posing a challenge that, while sufficient to maintain their interest, is also attainable, thereby avoiding the anxiety of possible failure. Since the leisure activity is the individual's choice, it creates enthusiasm and an emotional investment.

Today, promoters of everything from museums to festivals, tourist attractions, and even breweries (beer is, after all, the drink of leisure, celebration, and sport) focus their advertising on the experience their product creates. Museums are interactive, festivals invite attendees to sing, make crafts, dress up, or have their faces painted. Tourist attractions offer gourmet dining experiences, an adrenaline rush, friendly encounters, and rewarding discoveries. Their ads are designed to inspire, and the souvenirs they sell, to prolong the experience. What do these behaviors have in common? They promise to involve you, to challenge and stimulate you, to solicit your senses. They promise you'll always cherish the moment. *It will be an amazing experience!*

Leisure and work each offer certain qualities and satisfactions. Leisure is more than non-work; it is one of life's dimensions. In leisure, individuals seek to achieve something (need of fulfillment), to enter into a relationship

41. Holbrook, M.B. and E.C. Hirschman (1982). "The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 9, pp. 132-140.

42. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975). *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass; Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, New York, Harper and Row.

with others (need to belong), and to exert control (need for power) over what they do. More than in the other spheres of their lives, which have greater constraints, people want to actively experience their leisure.

I meet the people I want to meet, I do what I like doing and what gives me pleasure. This is the leisure experience—a moment I can truly experience and enjoy.

In general, the characteristics of this experience include the following:

- Commitment to and participation in the leisure experience
- Physical, mental, emotional, social, or spiritual commitment
- A change in or acquisition of knowledge, skills, memory, or emotions following the experience
- Awareness of having “experienced something”
- Satisfying of one’s needs and aspirations

In as much as the system provides the resources and conditions for people to enjoy leisure experiences, it must show an understanding of what constitutes a satisfying leisure experience. Leisure planning must take into account a range of factors, including individual inclusion and the desire to take initiative and socialize. This latter factor is even more complex given that today’s postindustrialized society is so fragmented, multifaceted, and multicultural, and that communities have such varied values and behaviors. Quebecers are not all white, Catholic heterosexuals named Tremblay or Leblanc. And not all Quebecers who frequent parks eat hamburgers or play petanque. They also eat curried lamb and play *bocce*.

Long gone is the day when leisure planning meant simply drawing up a predefined list of activities and setting a schedule.

The Rise in Individual Leisure and the Use of New Technology

The popularity of outdoor activities, the decline in organized sport, the rise in cultural and sports show attendance, the compartmentalization of Quebecers’ free time and family time, the drop in the number of volunteers (see below), and the unanimous comments of scores of leisure actors confirm and explain why more and more Quebecers are opting for individual leisure, as it offers greater scheduling, social, and professional flexibility.

The other significant trend in leisure participation is the use of information technology. Quebecers are not only using the Internet more than ever, they are also participating in more online activities. Quebecers are communicating more than ever via the Net and using it in ever greater numbers, notably for entertainment and transactions.⁴³

Main finding for 2007: Internet use rates hit 71%. This is a significant increase from the average observed in 2006 (66%). Québec now has 4.4 million regular Netsurfers compared to approximately 2.4 million only seven years ago.

Quebecers spend more than six hours a week on the Net for personal use. They are big communicators: in 2007 nearly two-thirds of Quebec residents (65%) communicated with their friends and family by email, and 34% communicated live by chat, text messaging, or other electronic means. One in ten (11%) even chatted in video mode (with sound and video). Online entertainment is more popular than ever. On average, 27% of Quebec adults listen to or download music online and 20% watch and download videos (double the average from December 2005 [10%]).

Quebecers have also adopted the participative Web (or Web 2.0). Seventeen percent of Quebec residents aged 18 and over are members of networking sites such as Facebook, 16% make use of podcasting, 15% share photos by posting them on sites such as Picasa or Flickr, and 11% post videos on YouTube or its Québec counterpart TonTuyau. While relatively few Quebecers post their own blogs (8.3%), interest in online blogs is on the rise. More than a quarter of Quebecers (26%) regularly consult blogs. That's 800,000 new users since 2005. Moreover, one in five Quebecers (19%) use Wiki sites.

Quebecers are spending more and more time communicating, playing, and gleaning information via new information technology. Has the Internet become a virtual leisure center? The proof is in the pudding: the Internet is becoming a new way to socialize, be entertained, and, occasionally, to become socially and politically involved. The campaign for the U.S. presidential election is a perfect example. However, it appears that the Québec leisure scene is still in its infancy when it comes to taking full advantage of these tools. We are still at a stage where people are expressing doubts and fears about the craze for new technology as a leisure activity.

43. CEFRIO (2008). *NETendances 2007: les usages d'Internet au Québec se diversifient*, Bulletin Sistech, <www.infometre.cefrio.qc.ca/loupe/sistech/0308.asp#1>, retrieved March 24, 2008.

Integrating IT will certainly be one of the biggest challenges for public and civic leisure in the coming years. It must help young people bridge the gap between their computers and the community, and allow elderly people confined to their homes to stay in touch with their communities and continue to provide service, like the 85-year-old woman who continues to volunteer for her genealogy club from her home.

Individuals participate in activities when they want, where they want, with whom they want, and in some cases, how they want, within the limits of personal safety and the welfare of others. This key trend is influencing the way we provide and organize leisure. Of course, children will always require supervision, and there will always be a need to provide training for activities that require technical mastery or special safety measures. This much is obvious from the supervised activity programs offered by public institutions and civil society organizations. However, the main thrust of the organizational system's actions will consist of making resources available in settings where people and groups have access to them so they can use them to organize their leisure on their own time.

Adapting individual leisure to reflect this trend will in many cases require a move away from its current organized structure and reliance on supply rather than demand. For example, the difficulties organizations are experiencing in attracting sufficient numbers for activities that have traditionally been the core of leisure programs suggest that major changes will have to be made.

It is no longer enough to take a "teacher knows best" approach to activities. Leisure organizations must base their content and structure on actual demand. They must strive for a better understanding and inclusion of leisure experience indicators. With whom? At what pace? When? How many times do participants want to paint and how much freedom do they want? An exercise with students in a recreology course identified over 30 possible ways to run a painting course.

CONNECTING LEISURE TO SOCIETY: KEY PREREQUISITES

This examination of Québec society and the leisure practices of Quebecers has brought to light a number of obligations public and civil leisure organizations must accept if they are to maintain their connection with society, a connection that is the very reason for their existence and a guide to defining their mission.

It is clear that society is changing, and leisure along with it. If leisure is to stay in tune with society, it must be organized to meet the following key prerequisites:

1. Improve access to the land and harmonize land use, specifically for recreational purposes
2. Incite the institutional network and civil society to maintain and develop rural leisure to complement or even replace municipal offerings
3. Leave ample room for multicultural diversity
4. Understand and take into account the new distribution of free time, for greater fairness
5. Tailor services to the aging population and get seniors involved in organizing leisure activities themselves, but avoid paternalistic attitudes
6. Get young people involved in leisure by making room for their initiatives
7. Ensure the most financially and socially disadvantaged members of society have access to leisure
8. Understand and promote the role of civil society in the “Me, Myself, and I” society
9. Step up the use of information and communication technology in leisure circles
10. Focus resources on burgeoning leisure sectors such as outdoor recreation, popular artistic pursuits, and physical and social activity
11. Define services based on demand and desired experience rather than on some catalog of offerings; make the strategy one of responding to demand rather than creating it
12. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate their harmful effects on leisure participants, and protect the public from UV rays and intense heat

In closing, it is time to put these prerequisites into practice, given the characteristics and strengths and weaknesses of the Québec model of public and civil leisure.

Chapter 3

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC AND CIVIL LEISURE

A NETWORK

Individuals may come together at the local or provincial level to form associations to provide leisure services or promote an activity for which they have a passion. Groups may benefit from public support and can forge ties with other civil society groups of their choice—in other words, take part in a public and civil network. As we have noted, Québec numbers 15,000 leisure-related civil organizations run by 500,000 volunteers. These organizations and their volunteers illustrate the community character of the Québec model and draw attention to the many actors who strive to work together in complementarity or as part of a network.

The most recent government policy paper on leisure, entitled *Pour un partenariat renouvelé* (For A Renewed Partnership), echoes all previous public documents in repeating that partnership is the essence of the Québec model. Québec's organization of public and civil leisure is part of a relatively structured network whose participants share a common vision, mission, and values, as well as various action principles, but use different strategies.

In a network, actors work together, forge partnerships, and acknowledge each other on a basis of affinities and complementarity, in keeping with their specific features, skills, and fields of expertise or excellence.

A network is an association of independent actors founded not only on authority, but also on mastered skills and their strategic interdependence. A network is above all an organization of action and communication before it is an institution.

A network's strength is measured by the relationships maintained and the degree of commitment of its members. This commitment turns on common objectives and undertakings, shared acknowledgment of the added value that each member can bring, acceptance of a number of rules that govern strategic and operational decision-making processes affecting the entire network, and the quality of communications between members in terms of both form and content. A network's strength also depends on the leadership of those who "champion" it.¹

Since the 1960s and the implementation of public leisure organizations—established mainly as a result of pressure from civil associations such as playground organization boards—collaboration has been a constant theme. Joint action, partnership, strategic alliances, and networking have each had their turn as coordination and harmonization strategies for the public leisure system.

This ongoing concern demonstrates that the world of leisure regards itself as a vast organization that must strive for consistency, irrespective of institutional divisions and differentiations and of "structures" set up in the past 40 years.

Various organization theories explain that coordination of individual stakeholders pursuing common goals is the essence of every organization, and organizational governance stems directly from the way convergence is ensured. The main theorists agree that an organization is made up human, physical, financial, and informational resources that must be organized into structures and tasks in order to help meet common goals. Organizations are therefore built around their missions, values, job descriptions, and an integration and coordination strategy that ensures all actors contribute to the mission or common goals. In this sense, there is a public and civil organization of leisure in Québec.

1. Thibault, A. (2000). "Réseau et réseautage," in Association québécoise du loisir municipal et al., *Le loisir public au Québec: une vision moderne*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 86.

On a local, regional, and provincial level, there is an organization of public leisure made up of independent actors and corporations that share common objectives and purposes in whole or in part despite the impediments, which have been many in the past 40 years. The main difficulty has been to have people work in consultation. Individual autonomy has been both a constant goal and, along with fear of its loss, a constant stumbling block.

A network draws on strategic alliances and the belief that all will better fulfill their missions if they associate with partners able to provide resources of all types: capital, expertise, outside networks, physical resources, etc. We will examine the dynamics of strategic alliances later along with the functioning of Québec's leisure network and subnetworks.

Because a network exists to the extent that its members share a vision, values, and common goals, we must first examine what unites members of the Québec network: their vision, mission, values, principles, and interdependence.

CASE 3.1

NETWORKING IN THE TROIS-RIVIÈRES OUEST SECTOR OF THE CITY OF TROIS-RIVIÈRES

This case illustrates a networking process within volunteer organizations in the Trois-Rivières-Ouest sector of the city of Trois-Rivières. Networking was implemented to counter the growing shortage of volunteers through the sharing of material, financial, and human resources and through partnerships on projects with collective benefits.

The network currently includes municipal representatives and services, seniors, social groups, youth, self-help groups, and special events. Sports and cultural groups are increasingly joining them.

The organizational structure of the network is in constant flux. Various individuals from the volunteer world are called upon, depending on the nature of projects. Partners join in with them to sponsor actions under way or lend their general expertise. City staff, through their leadership role, play a key part in network implementation. Recreation specialists, who keep abreast of public and organization needs, can take a big picture approach and target certain actions. As leaders, they are well placed to develop resource-sharing initiatives between leisure organizations in the community sector. To back its efforts, the city produced the document *Vigie de l'Ouest*.

Just a few years ago there was no youth center for teens in Trois-Rivières-Ouest, though the need was obvious to many in youth circles. The sector recreation coordinator therefore had all those concerned by the issue sit down together at the same table to discuss how each organization could contribute its resources and skills. This led to the birth of *Youth Net/Réseau ado*.^a

What can be learned from this experience? It is vital that all organizations complement each other, that they be recognized for their contributions, and that they benefit from the results. From the first meeting on, all network members must know and agree to the purpose of the project, its goals, and the means to attain them.

Recreation professionals initiate the networking process. They know the benefits when organizations work together and can look at the big picture. Their interpersonal skills and role as leisure specialists also help them rally the support of multiple organizations for individual causes.

This case illustrates the importance of gathering all information together in a single guidebook. This book shows contact information for all organizations in western Trois-Rivières as well as handy information for volunteers, including government grants, networking procedures with the municipality, and businesses, educational institutions, and media in Trois-Rivières. Also included are common challenges, issues facing Trois-Rivières organizations, and sample press releases.

^a Interview with Dan Magny, professional in charge of the Trois-Rivières-Ouest sector.

A VISION AND A MISSION

There are two prevailing trends in the vision and mission of the Québec network. One is a populational approach based on the notion the public can come together as a community to take charge of its leisure needs and have as its mission to respond to public demand on the local, regional, and provincial level. Recreation committees and municipal departments are a good illustration of this. The other approach is founded on a vision of leisure benefits and has as its mission to promote and develop fields of activity or behavior that improve the health of individuals and communities. Associations and federations dedicated to one sport or outdoor activity in particular and institutions devoted to promoting physical activity are good examples of this. One approach meets needs and desires while the other seeks to promote.

These seemingly contradictory trends are actually complementary and reflect the many dimensions of leisure experienced as an activity, encounter, or state of being. The quality of the Québec model depends specifically on achieving a balance between these two approaches, which subscribe to the same basic mission of providing quality leisure experiences that are safe and accessible.

Because of the public and community character of leisure presented in this document, the common good and access to leisure for the greatest number of people are inevitable objectives. Essentially the goal is to make leisure accessible and ensure that individuals and the community enjoy all its possible benefits. It is our belief that leisure contributes to community social, cultural, and economic development.

This mission stems from the democratic nature of Québec society and is based on the fundamental right to leisure:

Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been the major reference point of every modern leisure policy statement since 1948. This article morally establishes beyond any doubt the right to live well and lead a life of the best possible quality given the constraints and inherent limits of the lives of individuals and communities. It refers to what could be called a guaranteed minimum leisure policy closely tied to other fundamental rights the same declaration advocates, including the right to a fair and decent income, good health, safety, education, culture, association for specific purposes, and so on.²

The right to leisure has been pursued from several angles by the United Nations (UN), which adopted a series of declarations and conventions asserting the right to leisure on the occasion of international years dedicated to various groups, such as children, women, and the elderly. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 192 countries since the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted it in November 1989. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979. In 1999 the General Assembly adopted a protocol inviting countries that had not already done so to ratify the Convention or accede to it as soon as possible so that it could be universally ratified by 2000. Furthermore, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons were adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 16, 1991. Governments were encouraged to integrate these principles into their national programs:

2. Association québécoise du loisir municipal *et al.* (2000). *Le loisir public au Québec: une vision moderne*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 10.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Principle 7: [...] The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 13: State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

[...] c: The right to participate in recreational activities, sports, and all aspects of cultural life.

United Nations Principles for Older Persons

Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being, share their knowledge and skills with younger generations, be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community, serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities, and be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

In Québec, these rights have been integrated. The latest official policy paper³ asserts the following:

Government intervention in these areas is the result of a social vision that has been the subject of numerous official statements. It is considered to be up to governments to ensure that everyone has the possibility of taking part in leisure and sports activities in pleasant, healthy, safe, and enjoyable conditions. This intervention is considered essential to meeting goals deemed of great importance for the entire population.

Given this, the purpose of government intervention in sports and leisure is to guarantee that participation in recreational activities and sports provides benefits to physical and mental health, personal and collective well-being, quality of life, and civic and social development.

More recently Association québécoise du loisir municipal (AQLM) stated the following in policy directions unanimously adopted by its members:

Public intervention in leisure must be based on the identification and precise knowledge of what citizens need. It must take into account not only personal needs, but also the realities of private or family life, friendship, acquaintanceship, common interests, life cycles, intergenerational

3. Government of Québec (1997). *Pour un partenariat renouvelé*. Government Framework for Recreation and Sport, item 2.

relationships, and interethnic and intercultural contact. Leisure needs vary greatly, just like the clientele to be served. This suggests the need for consultation, participation, and action-research mechanisms and processes that help adjust action to real public needs with a view to the collective good and general interest.⁴

Consequently,

1. Like its mission and rationale, the purpose of public recreation services is to provide citizens with a structure of services with a view to fairness and solidarity.
2. Public service delivery ensures accessibility to quality of life by means of recreation in all its forms to all members of the community and upholds the principle of self-empowerment.
3. Public service delivery acknowledges the plurality and diversity of the needs to be met and the variety and differentiation of the clientele to be served.
4. Public recreation departments must have individual and collective consultation mechanisms so as to stay abreast of individual and community needs.
5. Public recreation departments must pay special attention to the disadvantaged, i.e., those unable to self-organize and defend their legitimate interests.⁵

The 2005–2008 Strategic Plan of Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport states its mission as follows:

In matters of recreation and sports, the Ministère's actions are aimed at the entire population. By creating synergy regarding the promotion of and access to recreation and sports in a safe setting, and by developing excellence in sports, the Ministère plans to improve the participation rate of the Québec population.⁶

Many leisure organizations adhere to the charter of the World Leisure Organization:

Article 1: All people have a basic human right to leisure activities that are in harmony with the norms and social values of their compatriots. All governments are obliged to recognize and protect this right of its citizens.

4. Association québécoise de loisir municipal and Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire (2000). "Loisir, communauté locale et qualité de vie: une politique du loisir au Québec" in Association québécoise de loisir municipal et al., *Le loisir public au Québec: une vision moderne, op. cit.*, p. 11.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

6. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2005). *2005–2008 Strategic Plan. Summary*, <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ADMINIST/plan_strategique/2005-2008/shema-web_a.pdf>, p. 1.

Article 2: Provisions for leisure for quality of life are as important as those for health and education. Governments should ensure their citizens a variety of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities of the highest quality.

Article 3: The individual is his/her best leisure and recreational resource. Thus, governments should ensure the means for acquiring those skills and understandings necessary to optimize leisure experiences.

Article 4: Individuals can use leisure opportunities for self-fulfillment, developing personal relationships, improving social integration, developing communities and cultural identity as well as promoting international understanding and cooperation and enhancing quality of life.

Article 5: Governments should ensure the future availability of fulfilling leisure experiences by maintaining the quality of their country's physical, social, and cultural environment.

Article 6: Governments should ensure the training of professionals to help individuals acquire personal skills, discover and develop their talents, and broaden their range of leisure and recreational opportunities.

Article 7: Citizens must have access to all forms of leisure information about the nature of leisure and its opportunities, using it to enhance their knowledge and inform decisions on local and national policy.

Article 8: Educational institutions must make every effort to teach the nature and importance of leisure and how to integrate this knowledge into personal lifestyle.⁷

Today there is proof that leisure in all its forms promotes health, quality of life, a sense of belonging, socialization, and social and public participation among citizens and facilitates the education and social integration of the most disadvantaged. In fact, scientific and professional communities have stressed the possible effects of leisure in general. United around the "benefits of leisure" movement sponsored in Canada by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), professionals and scientists have proposed and scientifically justified the five main categories of benefits contained in the following statements:

- Recreation and active living are essential to personal health.
- Recreation is key to balanced human development.

7. World Leisure Organization (2000). *Charter for Leisure*, <www.worldleisure.org/pdfs/charter.pdf>.

- Recreation is essential to quality of life.
- Recreation reduces self-destructive and antisocial behavior.
- Recreation and parks build strong families and healthy communities.⁸

These benefits define the common good that leisure provides and justify public investment. The public system defines its mission based on these beliefs.

Public and civil leisure is an added value to commercial and private leisure because it operates according to the values of democratic society and works for the common good.

This vision explains the implicit yet shared mission of Québec actors in public and civil leisure:

Make the conditions of enjoyable leisure experiences accessible to individuals and . . . provide the benefits of leisure sought by and for the community. Essentially leisure contributes to quality of life, health, and the social, cultural, and economic development of communities.

In concrete terms, the Québec system carries out its mission for the following reason:

In a network of partners, it offers a range of cultural, social, sports, physical, natural, urban, leisure, and relaxation experiences that are varied, accessible, safe, of good quality, fairly distributed throughout the province, and adapted to citizen expectations and characteristics.⁹

To fulfill its mission, the Québec organization of leisure has a set of resources that individuals and groups use to create leisure experiences.

These resources include facilitators, counselors, volunteers, salaried employees, facilities, venues, buildings, equipment, information, knowledge and skills training, money to support groups and ensure accessibility for the less advantaged, and opportunities for leisure activities offered through activity and event programs.

8. Canadian Park and Leisure Association (1997). *The Benefits Catalogue*, <www.cpra.ca/EN/main.php?action=cms.initBeneParksRec>.

9. Thibault, A. (2006). "Les grands enjeux en loisir et les défis du système québécois," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 1.

VALUES

Implementation of the public and civil leisure mission is colored by specific values, dictated in large part by the public and civil leisure vision. These values are largely common to cities in industrialized countries, as illustrated in the missions, objectives, and values of a number of cities¹⁰ expressed in the leisure policy of Association québécoise du loisir municipal¹¹ and the analysis framework of the International City/County Management Association and the Urban Institute.¹² Implementing values, however, factors in the development of communities, priorities imposed by political choices, and the ability to pay of these communities (boroughs and special interest groups), civil society partners, and the governments of Québec and Canada.

These values are taken into account in all leisure environments and are expressed as observable, measurable indicators.

Accessibility

Accessibility is no doubt the most influential value and the most characteristic feature of public leisure in a democratic society. It is conveyed through a number of indicators, such as price, distance, schedule, and the absence of physical or social barriers. Implementation of all dimensions of accessibility, more than any other value, is defined in relationship to the characteristics of individuals and groups and is built on public participation. Application of this value is rooted in the beliefs and opinions of the population.

By way of example, concrete measures include the rule some cities have that every citizen must be within walking distance of a green space. Others have decreed services deemed essential must be free. As a result, access to all libraries in Montréal is free.

10. Lavigne, M.-A. (2003). *Analyse descriptive des missions, objectifs et orientations de 17 municipalités de l'extérieur de la province de Québec*, Trois-Rivières, Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, UQTR.

11. Association québécoise du loisir municipal et al. (2001). *Le loisir public au Québec: une vision moderne*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec, pp. 7–23.

12. The Urban Institute and International City/County Management Association (1992). *How Effective Are Your Community Services? Procedures for Measuring Their Quality*, pp. 35–55.

CONSEIL QUÉBÉCOIS DU LOISIR ACCESSIBILITY TABLE

In Québec, access to public leisure is required by the *Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, adopted by the National Assembly on December 13, 2002. This act clearly stipulates in section 8, paragraphs 4 and 6, that actions aimed at preventing poverty and social exclusion should contribute to “promoting for persons living in poverty, access to culture, recreation and sports,” in addition to “supporting volunteer and community actions that contribute to the social inclusion of persons living in poverty.”^a

The challenge for the leisure community is to put the principle of accessibility into action. To meet this challenge, Conseil québécois du loisir developed an accessibility analysis table (<www.loisirquebec.com/accessible>) under the direction of Professor Louis Jolin. The Council initiated the work in early 2005 in cooperation with the partnership action task force on social leisure and tourism of Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale (ARUC-ES), with a whole team of researchers and partners in the sector.

The team has created tools for precisely analyzing the accessibility of services in public and civic leisure, or in any other service sector. To date, the following tools have been completed:

- A reference framework for analyzing leisure accessibility
- A tool for analyzing leisure accessibility in municipalities
- A tool for measuring leisure accessibility from the perspective of recreational community centers

Accessibility is defined as equal opportunity, and a right is defined as the possibility of choosing whether or not to do something or invoking recognized rules to require it of others. It is measured on a “weakest link” basis and is considered universal when everyone has access to leisure, can partake in it, and can interact on equal terms. However, it often requires special measures to meet the needs and expectations of some sections of the population.

For leisure to be accessible, the following conditions must be present, among others:

- The ability to access an activity or a venue or facility where it takes place
- The ability to understand and take part in the activity
- Good contact and interaction

The accessibility analysis table covers four dimensions or vectors of accessibility: time (available free time vs. opening hours), space (access to the geographical area and physical access), cost (ability to pay vs. fee schedule),

and cultural suitability (respect for values, traditions, and social and educational context). To achieve these goals, the table suggests political and administrative actions to take regarding fees, activities, and communications. The location, services, information, activity, and facilities must all be accessible.

The reference framework for analyzing leisure accessibility was created in 2005 for the 4th Québec Leisure Roundtable, whose theme was leisure accessibility. The organizing committee called for discussions to continue after the roundtable so that the framework could be adapted to various types of communities. Discussions were held in the Montérégie municipal leisure community with the support of *Loisir et sport Montérégie*.

^a Québec National Assembly (2002). *An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, section 8, Québec City, Government of Québec, p. 8.

CASE 3.3

THE SHERBROOKE SPORT AND RECREATION FUND

The Sherbrooke Sport and Recreation Fund was created in 1998 based on the assumptions that sport and recreation have an intrinsic educational value and that difficult economic circumstances can reduce young people's access to and participation in sports and recreational activities.

The Sport and Recreation Fund facilitates access for disadvantaged youth to sports and recreational activities in the City of Sherbrooke by covering part or all the registration costs.

To receive assistance from the Fund, young people must

- Reside in Sherbrooke
- Be a member of a sports or recreation organization recognized by the City of Sherbrooke's Recreation, Sports, Culture and Community Life Department
- Apply in writing to their home organizations using the form provided and according to set rules
- Not receive funding from other sources for participating in the same sports or recreational activity^a

Since its establishment in 1999, the Fund has helped 1,849 young people and distributed \$166,607.22 to 48 clubs or associations. It has grown steadily from 91 beneficiaries and \$5,680 in 1999 to 289 young people and \$33,332 in 2007.

^a City of Sherbrooke, *On t'a gardé une place*, Fonds du sport et du loisir sherbrookoise, <www.ville.sherbrooke.qc.ca>, p. 3.

Safety

Physical and psychological safety is an issue of growing importance in society, particularly in urban communities. It must therefore be taken into account when leisure activities are developed and implemented. The risk of accidents and physical injury and the feeling of safety on the part of those who engage in the activities determine the level of safety, which is measured against certain standards¹³ and in terms of public expectations and perceptions.

One of the few pieces of legislations that directly concerns leisure is the *Act Respecting Safety in Sports* (R.S.Q., c. S-3.1), which was adopted by the National Assembly on December 21, 1979. It stipulates that "The Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports is responsible for supervising personal safety and integrity in the practice of sports."

Every sports federation and every unaffiliated sports body shall adopt safety regulations concerning the matters prescribed by regulation of the Government, and see that they are observed by its members.

The safety regulations may, in particular, include provisions respecting

1. The conditions of the premises
2. The equipment used by participants
3. The verification of participant's state of health
4. The instruction and training of participants
5. The standards for practicing a given sport
6. Sanctions for cases where regulations are not observed¹⁴

The Act led to the creation of Régie de la sécurité dans les sports (Québec Sports Safety Board), which has since become Direction de la promotion de la sécurité, a department within Secrétariat au loisir et au sport. Regulations were issued concerning underwater activities, ice hockey, skiing, and combat sports following adoption of this act. A number of guides have been produced by the Board, sports and outdoor activity federations, the Government of Canada, and certain cities such as Montréal to assist in constructing and managing facilities and in organizing events. However, this fragmentation and lack of cooperation among stakeholders seems to have created a certain level of confusion.

13. Such as those of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or of sports federations

14. Sect. 36.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY SAFETY KIT

Given the rise in popularity of outdoor activities and the cooperative nature of the experience, *Guide de pratique et d'encadrement sécuritaire d'activités de plein air – normes, exigences et procédures*^a deserves particular attention. This practical guide to outdoor recreation safety is the collective work of Québec outdoor recreation federations in cooperation with Conseil québécois du loisir and MELS's leisure and safety promotion branches. The kit includes a general reference document on the practice and supervision of outdoor activities and a series of similarly formatted booklets, each on a different discipline. The disciplines currently covered are canoeing, climbing, sea kayaking, snorkeling, horseback riding, hiking, and speleology. Booklets are planned for other activities such as snowshoeing and cycling.

This kit provides information and rules of conduct that have been developed by Québec outdoor federations since their foundation in recent decades. It is aimed at those who partake in the activities, both beginners and experts, as well as anyone who supervises them on a volunteer or professional basis. They will find a wealth of information to help them prepare and enjoy outdoor activities safely:

1. The activity: definitions, requirements, levels of difficulty, associated risks, criteria for canceling an activity
2. Equipment: basic equipment, clothing, personal equipment for advanced levels, group equipment, verification and maintenance
3. Individual practice: skills required, preparing the outing, equipment, safety rules, respect for the environment
4. Supervised activities: officially recognized supervisor levels, organizing the outing, the participant, supervision, supervision of instruction activities, supervision procedures in summer and municipal camps
5. Emergency procedures: first aid, life saving and evacuation, accident reports
6. Site design: in preparation

The kit also provides waivers, medical assessment forms, and equipment lists.

^a See <www.loisirquebec.com/associatif/associatif.asp?id=119>, retrieved March 20, 2008.

Quality of Services

Demanding that services to residents and leisure organizations be of quality is a modern notion that has led to the adoption and publication of standards for service providers. The Québec *Public Administration Act* (R.S.Q., c. S-6.01, p. 6) stipulates the following:

A department or body that provides services directly to the public shall publish a service statement setting out its objectives with regard to the level and quality of the services provided.

The statement shall specify the time frame within which services are to be provided and give clear information on their nature and accessibility.

Service quality indicators and standards are generally developed with an eye to end users. They measure such things as timeliness, human relations, respect, and efficiency. Asked to rank service quality criteria in order of importance, Canadians rated response time first followed by competence and courtesy of staff, fair treatment, and outcome (Canadian Management Centre, 1998).¹⁵

CASE 3.5

THE BOISBRIAND CITIZENS CHARTER

Boisbriand is a municipality in the suburbs north of Montréal. Its population has remained stable at about 27,000 for the past ten years. It is a relatively young municipality both in the historical and demographic sense—its population in 1981 was 13,000, and its residents have an average age of 30.

After many months of reflection and consultation, the City of Boisbriand launched its Citizens Charter, developed by its Partnership Committee in collaboration with residents, city council members, City of Boisbriand department heads, and various municipal employees. Many people took advantage of this opportunity to contribute their opinions and suggestions to the drafting of a charter reflecting the Boisbriand community. It sets out rights and duties that, in some sense, comprise a social contract establishing quality assessment criteria for services and even for relations between the municipality and its residents.

15. Canadian Management Centre (1998). *Citizens First*, Highlights, p. iii.

RIGHTS: As taxpayers and members of the community, residents of Boisbriand are entitled to receive their share of services and be treated with dignity. This includes the right to

- Information
- Expression of their opinions
- An attentive ear
- Consultation
- Fair treatment
- Courteous, competent service
- Respect
- Timely, appropriate service
- Accessible, efficient, quality municipal services
- A healthy, safe, peaceful environment

DUTIES: Residents of Boisbriand must act as good neighbors who are respectful of their environment and proud of their community. They should

- Develop a community consciousness
- Show courtesy
- Respect others
- Contribute to a peaceful environment
- Foster mutual aid
- Live in harmony with their environment
- Be ecologically responsible
- Keep the community safe
- Maintain their property
- Report troubles or acts of vandalism^a

^a Ville de Boisbriand, <www.ville.boisbriand.qc.ca/pages/organisation/conseilmuni.aspx#relations_citoyens>, retrieved March 20, 2008.

The Quality, Diversity, and Flexibility of Leisure Environments and Programs

The quality of leisure environments (venues and facilities) can be defined in terms of their appearance, upkeep, ability to attract users, and ability to meet community needs. Given the availability of commercial services and the desire of Quebecers for a wide-ranging leisure experience, it is clear that leisure venues and facilities must meet increasingly high standards in terms of their appeal and appearance.

Attractiveness, condition, speed and regularity of maintenance and repairs, and flexibility of use are criteria that are sometimes measured against external standards and at other times configured to meet community expectations and perceptions or the objective requirements of particular activities.

Most public facilities in Québec were built in the 1970s based on the public needs, technology, and safety and environmental standards of the day, many of which have changed. Numerous facilities have reached, entirely or in part, the end of their normal lifespans and must compete for modernization with other public infrastructures in the same state.

Although venue design and construction are governed by public legislation and standards, venues and facilities must also meet the requirements of various activities and practices. Many games and sports have compulsory rules (such as field size), while certain features can add to flexibility. For example, some fields need lighting because of the time of day the public uses them.

There is thus a trend toward multifunctional facilities that are easy to adapt to the differing needs of the public.

The strong, continuous growth in leisure activities, the evolution of practices, and the wide range of needs are ample reason for making services flexible and diverse.

The very nature of the leisure experience, based on free choice and the many expectations this creates, the variety of possible and actual activities, and the demographic, sociological, and cultural diversity of the population are further reasons for seeking variety.

This calls into question the practice of basing the number and location of venues and facilities solely on the number of inhabitants. For example, although we could once claim we needed one arena per 100,000 inhabitants, this is no longer the case in communities that prefer indoor soccer to ice hockey as a winter sport.

Ethics

While physical, social, and financial disparities are what make accessibility so important to the public good, the diversity of behaviors, cultures, and religions in Québec, or quite simply of personal values that Quebecers hold, demands that public and civic leisure be organized on the basis of ethics.

Ethics can be defined as a profound, ongoing reflection on the values of the organization and the means of implementing them. These values underpin the professional code of ethics, which is but one means among many of ensuring that practices are in perfect harmony with a set of values. In leisure, there is a difference between ethics at the organizational and personal levels.

Leisure organizations must remain vigilant with regard to how their values are expressed and interpreted. They need tools, policies, and feedback to evaluate their actions and strategies for developing their activities, programs, and organizational cultures.

On a personal level, ethics takes the form of rules to remind us that it is all just a game and that respect for personal safety, including one's own, and for property is important. How extreme can sports be allowed to be? At what point do games of chance, overtraining, and performance-enhancing substances become addictive? To what degree should the convictions or moral or religious dictates of some impede the actions of others on the grounds of accommodation, or restrict the application of leisure organizations' values in Québec? These are examples of issues in need of regular debate in the pursuit of ethical values.

CASE 3.6

PATRO LAVAL AFFIRMS ITS VALUES

The mission and values of Patro Laval in Québec City are to

create a place for prevention work and human, Christian education where young people acquire a sense of responsibility and team spirit over the years, live in a fraternal environment, discover the joy of giving and receiving, get involved, and join together to experience a balanced program of sporting, social, cultural, community, pastoral, and artistic activities.^a

To ensure that everyone behaves ethically at Patro Laval, each parent and child receives a member's Charter of Rights, which stipulates that Patro Laval commits to providing members with an exciting lineup of recreational activities adapted to children and conducted in appropriate premises. It pledges to provide an environment where Christian values such as modesty, accomplishment, mutual aid, generosity, respect, justice, trust, and sharing predominate. It serves families by offering appropriate activities and a sliding fee scale, and by referring families to appropriate professional resources when their problems exceed its ability to help. It provides a group experience where children can take part in organizing and leading activities.

Children make the following promise:

I promise to

- Participate in my group's activities
- Be an active member of my group
- Make the members of my group feel welcome
- Be careful to say only things that are positive and true about other Patro members
- Take care of the equipment and premises made available to me

- Accept the differences of other members of my group
- Respect other Patro groups
- Resolve my differences simply, by talking to the persons concerned
- Follow the group leader's instructions

In the same spirit, at the organizational level Patro Laval has set up a “community life squad” to help meet the needs of disruptive children without penalizing the rest of the children. The squad’s members are teens from the day camp who want to get involved in youth groups. When a child refuses to obey Patro Laval’s rules, the teen can take over the activity while the facilitator helps the troubled child. The squad cannot replace the facilitator, but it can assist in the activity.^b

^a See <www.patrolaval.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=28>.

^b Interview with Donald Gingras, Executive Director.

CASE 3.7

AN ETHICS PLEDGE FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The MELS Secrétariat au loisir et au sport (SLS) is responsible for fostering the development of sports and leisure in healthy and safe environments as well as promoting physically active lifestyles for all Quebecers. Yet healthy and secure environments depend to a large extent on the people who run, supervise, and facilitate leisure and sports. This was why SLS and its partners invited all those active in leisure and sports to join together in reaffirming the fundamental values to be promoted through leisure and sport and to make ethical behavior THE social norm. More than 60 partners have signed this document.

For ethical behavior to become the norm, it is important that the greatest possible number of people lend their voices to the cause. This is why all parties must work together to reach a consensus on the values that underpin ethics in leisure and sports. It is in this spirit, and based on a number of conclusions on the status of ethics, that *Le loisir et le sport en valeurs! Avis sur l'éthique et le sport* was drafted.

Developed in collaboration with representatives of the leisure and sports community, this document emphasizes the values of fairness, perseverance, pleasure, respect, health (including safety and freedom from injury), and solidarity. It also sets out guiding principles to orient actions toward respect for and promotion of these values. It was drafted in the wake of the Canadian strategy for ethics in sport (True Sport Strategy) and shares its goals.

In concrete terms, what does signing such a document entail?

It implies that each decision or act on the part of the signatory is consistent with the values it sets out. In addition to including ethical considerations in one's daily life, it can mean doing such things as adopting a code of ethics or new practices that promote good behavior, supporting and training officials and other actors, or making an activity accessible to a disadvantaged group. Subscribing to this document is thus a commitment to

- Emphasize values inherent to a positive contribution to the practice of leisure or sports activities
- Promote ethics to stakeholders in the community and the public

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Three principles guide the Québec model and its strategies:

- Individuals must be in charge of their own leisure
- The community is the most important leisure environment
- Participative governance characterizes organizations active in public and civic leisure

Individuals in Charge of Their Own Leisure

The freedom to choose and to act is the essence of leisure. Yet individuals seeking the freedom of leisure are subject to obligations, restrictions, and social, cultural, economic, and institutional influences that, although not work-related, continue to apply in their leisure time. There are restrictions inherent to any social context, not just the workplace. Research has shown that the political and economic spheres also have an interest in leisure time. All of which means that individuals must be able to enjoy leisure despite these constraints, and that the organization of public leisure should at the very least encourage initiative and creativity so that individuals can take advantage of the space-time that makes up leisure. This is the basic principle that historically has been an integral part of public leisure in Québec. For example, the policy adopted by AQLM members is based on three principles underpinning the development of public leisure.

The first states the following:

1. Citizens are and must be the main architects of their own leisure.

The second principle flows from the first:

2. Leisure should be entrusted to the level in closest touch with citizens, namely their local community.

The third characterizes community action:

3. Citizens' quality of life depends on the pooling of all the resources available to the community.¹⁶

These principles explain why the system must seek first to meet the expectations and needs of individuals and that it base its organization on citizen involvement. They concern how leisure is both organized and run. The principles further imply that the pace, feelings, and progress of individuals must be respected. They also offer at least three lessons on how to organize leisure.

First, they call into question the increasing tendency to use leisure for purposes that are not necessarily the individual's choice. For example, must the purpose of all our leisure activities be to prevent disease through physical activity or to contribute to the community through volunteering? Must all leisure be serious, as Robert Stebbins understood the term,¹⁷ namely leisure that requires perseverance and aims to foster personal fulfillment and identity? And must these demands be imposed from outside?

Second, the principles call into question the directive approach to leisure activities. They raise particular questions regarding children's programs, which call for balance between supervision and initiative, between monitor and leader, between video game console and crayon, between discipline and entertainment. People worry that children don't know how to play anymore. For example, in day camps where there are more and more "problem" cases, must councilors fill the role of psycho-social caregivers or leisure coaches?

Third, in organizations structured around specific disciplines where the emphasis is on specific activities, these principles show that it is important not to structure or label activities too much, i.e., not to turn leisure into nothing but a series of listings in a catalog, to the detriment of a much broader and at times chaotic "experience."

The principle that individuals are the architects of their own leisure does not mean that we seek to eliminate ordered activities, deny the personal and collective benefits of leisure, or reject structure outright. However, it is important to stress initiative, creativity, and personal responsibility for organizing and experiencing leisure.

16. Association québécoise du loisir municipal *et al.* (2001). *Le loisir public au Québec, une vision moderne*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 8.

17. Stebbins, R. (2001). "Antinomies in volunteering-choice/obligation," *Loisir et société*, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 315.

In terms of how leisure activities are organized, this principle of citizen as main architect is the foundation for volunteer action and the important role of civil society. We will discuss these issues further on. However, it is important to note that in a consumer society, the citizen-client is king. Will citizens be seen as a market to capture, even if it is for their own pleasure? Are they followers to be convinced or converted? How long will they be listened to?

CASE 3.8

FROM CAREGIVERS TO COACHES IN RIVIÈRE-DES-PRAIRIES

In an article published in *Guide Montréal-Nord* on December 11, 2006^a, Audrey Gagnon wrote as follows:

The director, Pierreson Vaval, related how the organization was founded, describing the main problems the team faced in the early nineties—violence, racism, and vandalism. “Youth expressed themselves anywhere and anyhow,” remembered Mr. Vaval. Drug and alcohol use, unemployment, and street gangs were also part of the landscape at the time. “Young people had low self-esteem, and some of them wanted to change the color of their skin,” related Pierreson Vaval.

“We observed that the young people liked sports,” he continued. “So we created a basketball team. We took about 60 youth, half of whom were criminally active, and we gave them responsibilities. With time, we realized that we had to find a more long-term platform for working with youth. Life in the street provided young people with a network. So we had to provide them with an alternative network that would ensure positive social development. So the attitude of youth workers would be what determined young people’s choices.”

The story of this basketball team in Rivière-des-Prairies is interesting because it shows the impact leisure can have when we respect the principle of individuals taking charge of their own leisure. The members of this team of youth workers started by paying attention to the wishes of the young people, and then presented themselves not as caregivers who were there to solve problems, giving the young people the impression that they were not problem youth, but rather basketball coaches. They sent out a much different message—that the young people could act positively, that the youth workers were there to support them rather than take care of them or be psychosocial caregivers, and that they counted on their talent and commitment. The results were not long in coming:

The presence and availability of youth workers changed things for youth in the neighborhood.

^a See <www.guidemtlnorth.com>, retrieved March 17, 2008.

The Community as Principal Leisure Environment

In 1979, the Québec government's white paper on leisure put local governments in charge of leisure and made services to citizens the core focus of any future policy on the matter. This position was upheld in the *Government Leisure and Sport Intervention Framework* adopted in 1997, which sought to further decentralize services.¹⁸

Public and civic leisure is a local, community-based responsibility. The principle of community-based leisure and sport is even included in the charters of large cities, which state that leisure is a responsibility of the boroughs. This characteristic distinguishes public and civic leisure from commercial, for-profit recreation. Public and civic leisure is oriented towards communities, which means that the structure and evolution of the organization of leisure, and the distribution of resources and recreational facilities, are up to the community.

The community is a place that residents identify with and where they are connected and interact with others. It is characterized as much by the strength of its members' sense of belonging and identity as by the existence of venues, means, and signs of community life. Strong communities know the issues they must face, believe they have the keys to their future in their own hands, and are organized (through civil society) to take advantage of relationships between community members, meet current and future challenges, and enhance their vitality.

Each community has its own characteristics, determined by the way people live together. There are neighborhood-, district-, borough-, or regionally-based communities. There are also communities that, rather than occupying a geographical area, are centered around *interests or common characteristics* with which their members identify. The student community, the business community, the gay community, and cultural communities are all examples of nongeographic communities.

Public and civic leisure is the province of geographic or interest-based communities. It is usually based in neighborhoods and boroughs, but some types of recreation, by their nature, extend to the municipal, regional, or provincial levels.

AQLM members recognize the community as the place where public and civic leisure best flourishes:

1. The local community is responsible for making residents the main architects of their own leisure and encouraging their participation, while adopting a service approach.

18. Association québécoise du loisir municipal (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

2. The local community is the integration level for recreational and related services emanating from associations and higher levels of government.
3. The local community coordinates the work of the various organizations and institutions that provide services to the same groups of people in the same communities by creating and managing appropriate and effective means of collaboration.
4. The local community supports and assists agents for social change deemed positive and beneficial for its members because of their contribution to quality of life.
5. The local community supports initiative and volunteer work by providing the resources, services, and supervision necessary to their integration into public networks.
6. The local community provides the means and tools for the training and professional development of volunteer and paid human resources.
7. The local community recognizes and promotes leisure workers as service professionals and development agents.
8. The local community adopts and puts into practice an approach of continuous assessment, constructive self-criticism, action research, and openness to innovation.
9. The local community keeps up-to-date on research results in human and social sciences applied to leisure, culture, tourism, and communications and supports such research when necessary.
10. The local community promotes intercultural and interethnic communication while respecting differences, in order to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging.
11. The local community values its heritage as an expression of its collective identity.¹⁹

CASE 3.9

URBAN VILLAGES IN GATINEAU

Creating communities where leisure flourishes requires a good understanding of the urban social, economic, and spatial environment. A human-scale living environment and public spaces that foster friendly interaction (public squares, small shops, community centers, recreational and sports facilities) and are safe and easy to get around are the ingredients for healthy community life. This is far from the case in certain suburbs designed around automobiles

19. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

and row upon row of private homes. Gatineau understood early on that urban planning could help shape a community, and that a community was built in collaboration with its residents and must take recreation and quality of life into account.

Thus was born the urban village concept developed in Gatineau under its *2003–2007 Strategic Plan*. The concept of urban village provides a new approach to planning, managing, and intervening at the community level. It responds to the clear wish of residents to recognize the diversity of communities and to promote each individually. Following the *Strategic Plan*, a number of the City of Gatineau's major policies integrated this concept.

To think and create at the urban village level means to bring development down to the local level and provide everyone with the opportunity to get involved in the issues that affect them personally.^a

The urban village is above all **a community**. It is an area that comprises one or more neighborhoods and in which a strong community resides. Delimited by waterways, roads, or social groups, it constitutes a collective place of belonging.

The scale of the urban village creates a vital neighborhood environment and close social ties. The community's social network and the solidarity and commitment of its residents comprise a "social capital" for the urban village that can generate local solutions to problems such as violence or the protection of the local natural environment. Thus, residents can truly take charge of their quality of life and create a sense of belonging for their urban village. The design of the "ideal" urban village helps foster social ties between residents. It is often a place where people live, shop, engage in recreational activities, and sometimes even work. The diversity of housing types, the dynamism of urban activities, the presence of local services, and the emphasis on public transit or nonmotorized traffic are also characteristic of the urban village. They give residents opportunities to be in more frequent contact with each other, to communicate with each other more often, and get to know each other better.

With these closer ties, residents are also more apt to involve themselves in the running of their community and to work closely with the municipality in enhancing their urban village. Residents and organizations can truly help shape their community.^b

In concrete terms, the new urban planning approach in Gatineau is an adaptation to historical and modern realities. Urban villages reflect their residents and meet daily needs and local aspirations. They are also a means of encouraging residents to take responsibility for their own wants and needs.

Seven elements nourish and shape the urban village living environment—cultural activities, leisure and community life, sustainable transportation, commercial and public services, urban form, a sustainable environment, and public participation. In the "leisure and community life" dimension of urban villages, "residents develop strong, dynamic community networks. Community associations are active, and residents contribute to the quality of life

of their fellow citizens. Recreational activity is abundant and helps reinforce the bonds between residents. The village center is the focal point of community life in the urban village.”^c

From February 8 to March 16, 2005 (Gatineau, 2005, p. 1), the City of Gatineau conducted an extensive consultation of residents and representatives of organizations and interested groups about its urban villages. The purpose of the meetings was to fine-tune the urban village concept by describing it in concrete terms. For example, participants from Village Rivière-Blanche expressed the desire that their urban village exploit its natural assets by

- Completing the recreational trail network
- Developing the natural environment for recreational use by creating, for example, a model sugar bush or educational community gardens, or by organizing boat rides on Rivière Blanche
- Protecting natural sites and vegetation in general^d

The Du Moulin urban village residents wanted

- Tourism and heritage projects for youth
- The restoration of unused churches
- A “park and path” concept to provide easier access for persons with reduced mobility
- Bike paths between parks and trails that can be used for cross-country skiing or snowshoeing in the winter, and paths between housing blocks
- A streetscape of cafés and restaurants that is also welcoming and affordable for disadvantaged persons^e

Urban villages fit perfectly with the very concept of the Québec leisure model—they are built on active, healthy communities, a strong civil society, and participative governance and they empower residents and provide places where they can meet.

^a City of Gatineau (2003). *2003–2007 Strategic Plan*, <www.ville.gatineau.qc.ca/pdf/planification_strategique/plan_strategique_2003_2007.pdf>, p. 4.

^b City of Gatineau (2005). *Vision communautaire sur les villages urbains, rapport de consultation*, 2^e édition, Tecscult <www.ville.gatineau.qc.ca/pdf/Rapportdeconsultationdelavisioncommunautairesurlesvillagesurbains.pdf>, p. 70.

^c *Ibid.*, p. 68.

^d *Ibid.*, p. 18.

^e *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Participative and Partnership-Based Governance

The Québec model, characterized by the presence and contribution of numerous public and civic stakeholders, calls quite naturally for participative governance. The principle that people are the prime architects of their own leisure puts the individual at the core of decisions that affect them and invites them to take charge of their own affairs by participating in

decision making. Civic leisure, and even association-based leisure, cannot carry out its mission to spur the creation of social capital and a sense of belonging in communities without participative governance within its own organizations and in government. Governance is "a system of government that links political institutions, social actors, and private organizations in the process of developing and implementing collective decisions capable of garnering the active support of citizens."²⁰ Governance as an interactive process involves various forms of partnerships characterized by relationships between constituents and representatives, interorganizational negotiations, systemic coordination, consultation, and so on.

Public participation is an essential prerequisite to the development of social capital and the enhancement of quality of life. It is inescapable, the prime teaching of social development and the success of the Québec vision of public and civic leisure.

We all know of successful communities. They are communities where people trust each other (even newcomers), where interaction occurs (or the potential for it is there), where active participation in problem solving is much valued and the mutual benefits of collective action are recognized, and above all where members have the ability to resolve their conflicts and differences. These communities have a large amount of social capital, which is important to develop.²¹

This type of governance calls for public participation.

Public participation is the act of taking part in collective decisions within government, public institutions, or civil society (community groups, taxpayer associations, development bodies, etc.). To be democratic, useful, and credible, it must be based on shared values and common references, language, and codes.

Other types of relationships with government or social institutions such as elections, political involvement, independent action, or public demonstrations are excluded. In public participation, members of the community take part directly in the decision-making process of the organization or government institution to which they belong.

Public participation is thus the involvement of citizens in public decisions of public organizations.²²

20. Blais, P. (2000). "Particularités et risques de la gouvernance," *Municipalité*, February-March, pp. 12-14, <www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/publications/revu_muni/2000_02/12a.pdf>, retrieved May 22, 2007.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Thibault, A., M. Tremblay and M. Lequin (2000). *Cadre de référence en participation publique*, Conseil Santé bien-être, <www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/csbe/>, p. 3.

In the real world, this principle is expressed in a multitude of ways in the relationships public institutions and organizations in civil society maintain with their members or citizens or their groups.

The unique contribution of citizens to the debate concerns the choice of values that guide the technical and administrative aspects of running a community. Participation, said Fernand Dumont, “is the meeting of values and technology.”²³

All public decisions are based on values that are determined democratically and collectively. These values influence how laws, policies, programs, and plans are implemented. This is the principal social and democratic sphere of citizens.

The main way this principle manifests itself is characteristic of the Québec model—the capacity to adapt to circumstances, the recognition of the right, and even the duty, of groups in civil society to take the initiative, and the acknowledgement of their status as partners. Recognition policies instituted by cities have sanctioned this principle—that of the borough of Vieux-Longueuil, described further on, is an example.

Another facet of public participation comes into play when public or civic decision makers call on citizens to take part in the decision-making process.

Public participation is the act of taking part in collective decisions within government, public institutions, or civil society (community groups, taxpayer associations, development bodies, etc.). To be democratic, useful, and credible, it must be based on shared values, and common references, language, and codes.²⁴

Public participation is a process in which an organization that has a decision to make on a subject that affects citizens decides to accept their input (power sharing, partnership) and invites citizens to voice their opinions during the decision-making process concerning a project or policy.

There are many ways of doing this, and it can occur at various stages in the decision-making process, can give various degrees of power to participants, and can spur various levels of public debate. In short, the who, when, what, and how can be variable and depend on the democratic culture of the community, its participative history, the nature of the decisions, and ultimately the decision makers. It is important to remember

23. Dumont, F. (1979). “L’idée de développement culturel: esquisse d’une psychanalyse,” *Sociologie et sociétés*, Vol. 11, April, pp. 7–31.

24. Thibault, A., M. Lequin and M. Tremblay, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

that interaction with the public or with members—in the case of an association—is a process initiated by decision makers to share their power to one degree or another.

They can take the form of informal and formal consultations, public assemblies, advisory committees, municipal commissions, symposiums, and discussions and negotiations between partners. Where policies are concerned, generally decision makers interact with actors in civic and institutional organizations, while when development projects or programs are on the table, those who will be directly affected are the ones who are consulted. Often, the type of participation varies with the stage of the project—this was the case when the City of Québec developed its family policy.

In all cases, experience teaches us that these processes are useful, credible, and efficient. Useful because they generate better decisions and enhance the benefits, as well as the quality and acceptability of the decision. Credible because each process is carried out within a framework of accepted rules and values, which ensure that it is run fairly and is accessible, transparent, and rigorous. Effective because the processes meet deadlines and, more importantly, honor their commitments.

By evaluating a number of experiences in the leisure sector, we can draw up a list of the essential prerequisites to successful public participation:²⁵

- There is a specific decision to be made.
- The person who interacts with the participants has decision-making authority or a mandate from the decision maker.
- The decision maker is willing to accept input and makes this known to the public.
- The decision maker promises to take into account the results of the participative process.
- Clear and full information on the participative process and on the issue or project in question is provided.
- The rules governing the process are accepted by the participants and are in the common good.
- Citizens have an interest in the issue or project.
- Participants can interact with each other.

In short, participative governance implies duties and requires skills, rigor, and adherence to certain best practices.

25. Thibault, A. (2007). "La participation publique et la gouvernance du système de santé et de services sociaux," in M.J. Fleury *et al.*, *Le système sociosanitaire au Québec*, Montréal, Gaëtan Morin, pp. 417–428.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS IN QUÉBEC CITY

In developing its family policy, the City of Québec wanted to hear what families had to say, so it invited them to consultations. It formed an advisory committee made up of people who worked with families in either a professional or personal capacity. Before drafting its policy, the advisory committee, in turn, teamed up with a wide range of individuals, departments, and organizations to draft a public information and consultation program.

A variety of means were used to promote the consultations, including news releases, a full-page ad in *Guide de la famille* (Family Guide), the distribution of bookmarks in the Guide and in primary schools, and the distribution of a summary of the policy in the City's libraries and offices. A few months before the official consultations began, background documents were sent to citizens and organizations participating in the forum and posted on the City's website, and the reference framework was forwarded, on request, to interested parties.

Below is a brief description of the consultation process:

- *Information Meeting*: The information meeting included a presentation of the public consultations and the draft family policy, followed by a question period. A local radio station conducted an interview and aired it the next day.
- *Discussion Workshops*: Discussion workshops provided citizens a less formal forum than the public hearings. Despite low turnout, the three-hour sessions offered citizens an initial public forum and an opportunity to express their concerns about the project.
- *Public Hearings*: The public hearings were scheduled in the morning, afternoon, and evening of the same day. Most of the attendees were representatives of city organizations.
- *Stakeholders Forum*: This event was an opportunity to present the context, challenges, and target principles identified by the advisory committee. It also included a discussion period and workshop to discuss a specific principle and target put forward in the policy.

A POLICY RECOGNIZING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE BOROUGH OF VIEUX-LONGUEUIL^a

Most cities across Québec have policies recognizing civil society organizations and defining the role they play in fulfilling the city's mission. Although the term "recognizing" may come across as paternalistic, these policies serve primarily to set out the rules of the game and the participatory role of civil society and the municipal government, not only to decide on policy directions, but also to take action. In the case of Vieux-Longueuil, the approach is very typical of what is done elsewhere in Québec.

In this urban borough with 300 leisure, sport, cultural, and individual and family support organizations, these civil society entities are recognized for their role in the delivery of services and support for community leisure initiatives. To fulfill its mission, the borough states that "proper recognition of the community is as essential as the involvement and participation of its residents."

Organizations are then classified and support is determined based on whether they serve primarily the entire population or their members only, who are also residents.

The borough encourages its citizens to address the needs of the community, and therefore favors autonomous groups. It assists and supports citizen groups that address a need expressed by the community so that all its members can benefit from high-quality activities or services and a living environment that reflects their true aspirations.

In fulfilling its mission, the borough sets out four means of participation: delegated management, partnership, collaboration, and joint action. The level of authority given to groups decreases from one category to the next. In cases of *delegated management*, the Recreation Department teams up with a recognized organization to manage specific services in an area over which it has jurisdiction. This kind of intervention involves considerable support from the Department for the organization addressing a community need. The relationship is formalized in a memorandum of understanding. For *partnerships*, the Recreation Department can forge partnerships with organizations of any kind, including government and for-profit organizations. This type of process is chosen freely by the partner organizations, which have a vested interest in working together to produce activities, services, or projects for the community. It requires that an agreement between the parties be formally ratified. In cases of *collaboration*, the city aims to facilitate ad hoc activities or services likely to have a positive impact on citizens. Collaborative initiatives are generally entered into without any type of formal agreement. Lastly, certain projects, events, or issues require the *joint action*

of various players. In such cases, the Recreation Department will convene a meeting of all the parties and take part itself as a community leader. Its level of involvement will depend on its mission and municipal priorities.

The rules of recognition for partners, collaborators, and delegates ensure that these organizations comply with their status as civil-society actors and adhere to the vision and mission of the network in question, notably with regard to community recreation:

1. Be a legally constituted not-for-profit organization active in leisure, sport, culture, or social and community development
2. Pursue objectives in keeping with the municipal legislation and mission of the City of Longueuil, and specifically the borough of Vieux-Longueuil, in the areas of leisure, sport, culture, or social and community development
3. Be active in the borough of Vieux-Longueuil and predominantly serve the citizens of the borough of Vieux-Longueuil
4. Provide activities or services in leisure, sport, culture, or social and community development
5. Stipulate in their general bylaws that the board of directors must be made up of at least five (5) directors, and comply with this bylaw
6. Be headquartered or have a service outlet in the borough of Vieux-Longueuil

The Recreation Department's actions with recognized organizations varies according to the competencies, obligations, and authority vested in the borough of Vieux-Longueuil and the City of Longueuil in the areas of leisure, sport, culture, and social and community development. To reflect these different levels of intervention, three categories of recognized organizations have been identified:

- *Associated Organizations:* These organizations are devoted to leisure and act at the local level in a field legally vested in the municipality. They are open to all borough residents.
- *Affiliated Organizations:* These organizations work in one of the following fields: social and community development, sports, the arts, or a field in which the City wishes to intervene in accordance with its policies and action plans. In sports, preference is given to organizations that select athletes primarily to ensure athletic development and excellence. In culture and the arts, the focus is on the development and excellence of artists.
- *Complementary Organizations:* These organizations are defined as those the City wishes to cooperate with under the terms of its policies and action plans to improve the quality of life of residents.

Like most policies of its kind across Québec, this policy does not contain any provisions to evaluate organizations, enhance quality, or make recommendations to the organizations, and it does not measure the relevance or

effectiveness of the borough's support as is increasingly the case for networks that develop around parent organizations. At the very most—and it's more than in other places—recognized organizations can lose their status by resolution of the borough council in the event of noncompliance with any of the obligations set out in the signed service agreement.

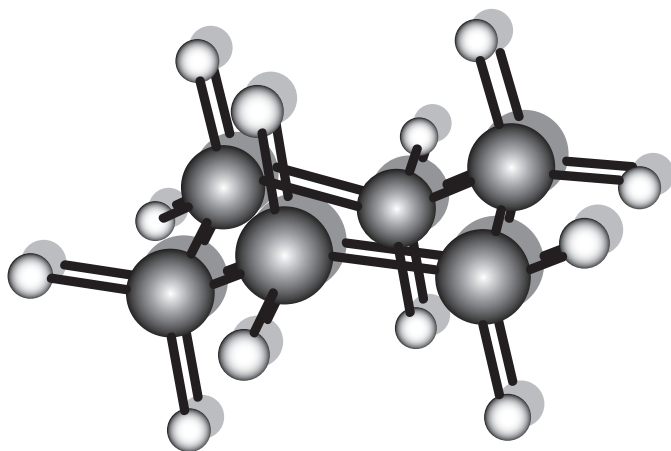
^a This case and the quotes it contains are taken from Borough of Vieux-Longueuil (2006). *Politique de reconnaissance et de soutien aux organismes*, p. 18.

THE QUÉBEC MODEL

The Québec Model in the Age of the Internet

How does one go about illustrating the Québec model? There are no laws, decrees, or municipal bylaws defining or governing the operating structure of the system delivering leisure goods and services. In Québec everyone from the government to the average citizen has to chip in to some degree. In the strictest sense, the Québec model is a societal undertaking. In a traditional or historic sense, it is like a big collective building bee.

FIGURE 3.1
Illustration of a Network



Citizens receive local, regional, and provincial level services and network support that are organized to varying degrees. These networks are made up primarily of democratic civil society organizations and provincial and municipal government ministries and institutions.

The networks communicate and maintain relations among themselves and with their members: client/servers, primary contractors, subcontractors, partners, and competing organizations. Occasionally, these relations involve information sharing, which can lead to citizens, organizations, or the government changing their behavior. This makes the organization of these networks extremely varied and limits the ability to hold them accountable through a hierarchy. Instead, we can talk about organizations in movement, and avoid at all costs attempting to describe them using a flow chart. Describing the Québec model entails presenting different worlds, identifying their actors, describing where they converge, and qualifying the ties between actors.

The most appropriate way to illustrate this model is to use the Internet as a metaphor, since its acronym is *INTERconnected NETworks*.

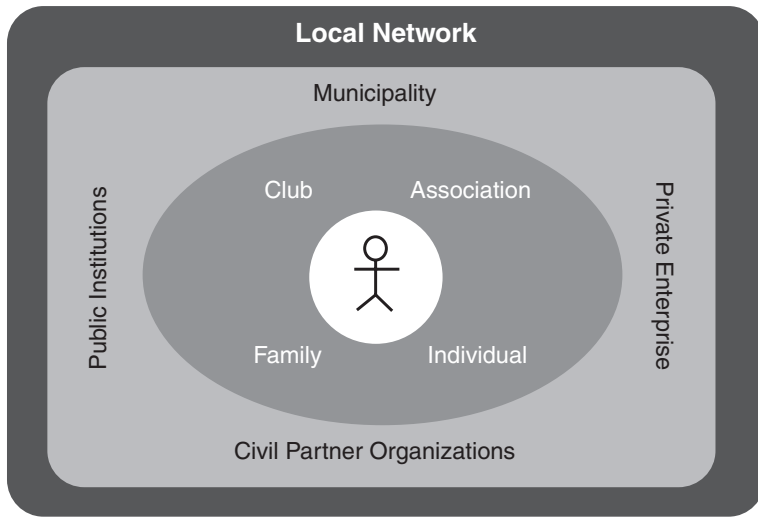
While the Internet as metaphor works to grasp the overall sense, dynamics, and components of the situation, it provides only a partial picture, as the reality is too complex to be represented in its entirety. It is therefore crucial to define the point of view or entry point into the reality we want to illustrate. Three entry points or angles apply to leisure: that of the people participating in leisure, that of civil society organizations, and that of the government and its institutions. But what goes in the center? If we are to be consistent with the vision and values of the Québec model, the citizen and his or her community go in the middle of the diagram illustrating the dynamics of the Québec "Internet" leisure model.

The other option is to depict the Québec model from the point of view of the citizens by stressing the local organizations—the municipalities, its programs and infrastructure, local civic organizations and, especially in rural areas, regional sports and recreation units (URLSs). Around this core of leisure specialists revolve schools and health and social services network institutions.

At the Local Level

At the local level, leisure is the responsibility of networks made up of citizens and their informal groups (friends, families, colleagues, etc.) or their associations, municipalities and their institutions, and other public institutions such as schools and health and social services network actors.

FIGURE 3.2
Local Network



In Québec, leisure is generally practiced close to home. With the recent municipal amalgamations, responsibility for leisure was transferred to the boroughs. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and no boroughs kept a decentralized approach to leisure services and delivery. The local level is an illustration of the Québec model that no doubt better reflects the reality of Quebecers. It also reflects the traditional position of the Government of Québec set out in its 1978 Leisure Policy and, more recently, in the 1998 Administrative Framework.

The local level—be it the neighborhood, borough, or municipality—has three main actors: individuals, their immediate circles (family, club, or association), and the municipality. Schools and health and social services facilities are involved primarily as community partners, acting directly with their clienteles of students or residents of long-term-care centers, for example.

In this local network, organizations can maintain functional relationships with the other levels, although it is generally on a voluntary basis and depends on the interest in doing so. Provincial structures have little authority or impact at the local level, where the municipalities have all the power and do not answer to any ministry, except on an accounting and administrative level to Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions.

Municipalities generally provide venues, facilities, and professional and financial support. Towns and cities with over 5,000 inhabitants generally have their own recreation departments known either as the Recreation and Sports, Recreation and Community Life, Recreation and Tourism (in smaller municipalities), or Recreation, Sports, and Culture Department. The most common name at this time appears to be Recreation and Community Life, which reflects the fact that these departments are also generally responsible for social development, a job they perform in conjunction with community groups that provide social services, and that are responsible for providing emergency shelter in the event of disasters. The legal basis for municipal interventions is set out in the *Municipal Powers Act* (R.S.Q., c. C-47.1, 2005), specifically in sections 7 and 8. Topping the list of the eight municipal jurisdictions (a. 4) is “culture, recreation, community activities, and parks.”

Section 7 stipulates that “A local municipality may make by-laws governing the cultural, recreational, and community services it offers and the use of its parks.” In Section 7.1, the legislator stipulates that “A local municipality may entrust a person with the operation of its parks or its facilities or public places intended for cultural, recreational or community activities.”

Section 8 states that “In cooperation with a non-profit body, a school board, or an educational institution, a local municipality may establish or operate a cultural, recreational, or community facility in its territory or, after notifying the municipality concerned, outside its territory. It may also grant assistance to a person outside its territory for the establishment and operation of facilities and public places intended for cultural, recreational, or community activities.”

This act is in addition to the orders-in-council specific to each of the nine largest cities. For example, the *Charter of Ville de Québec* (R.S.Q., c. C-11.5) calls for an arts council, whose responsibilities are described in Section 56 as follows:

- 1) To draw up and keep a permanent list of the associations, societies, organizations, groups, or persons engaged in artistic and cultural activities in the territory of the city
- 2) To combine, coordinate, and promote artistic or cultural initiatives in the territory of the city
- 3) Within the limits of the funds available for that purpose, to designate the associations, societies, organizations, groups, or persons and the artistic or cultural events worthy of receiving grants, fix the amount of any grant, and recommend the payment of it by the city

Overall, these laws confer authority in the field of leisure, but no obligation to act. However, they allow municipalities to interact with associations, clubs, and recreational and cultural centers, and to support them, which the majority of municipalities do. They also facilitate the creation of municipal corporations with responsibility for various activity sectors.

For example, Corporation de développement culturel de Trois-Rivières,²⁶ created in 1997, is a flexible, arm's-length structure that answers to municipal authorities. The municipal council retains full authority over cultural policy, but delegates means to its corporation to plan and take effective, timely action tailored to the ever-shifting cultural scene. The Corporation is in charge of managing cultural facilities, presenting the arts, setting up Maison de la culture, supporting cultural organizations, implementing the Cultural Policy, and coordinating, organizing, and presenting the city's cultural heritage activities.

The flow chart for municipal leisure services is essentially the same and, in addition to a manager, includes individuals in charge of various sectors of sport, culture, and community life. It may also include a person in charge of facilities as well as managers of parks and major facilities such as arenas and multisport centers.

Civil society distinguishes between various types of groups active in the leisure sector. The first consists of public organizations that serve the community and its members, and are generally made up of residents who want to get involved. They offer a host of services such as recreation committees—the organizations on which development of the Québec system is founded—or focus their efforts on a specific segment of the population while offering a versatile range of activities, e.g., Maison des jeunes and the Scouts. Lastly, a number of groups such as soccer or minor hockey leagues are devoted to a specific activity. They are often partners of the municipality or vice versa.

The second type of group, while community-oriented, serves primarily its own members. These may include seniors clubs, bridge clubs, or associations of people like parents of autistic children who, while they may meet for another specific purpose, also enjoy leisure activities together. These groups may ask their municipalities for specific services, which may or may not be granted.

26. See <laville.v3r.net/portail/index.aspx?sect=0&module=5&module2=1&MenuID=140&CPage=1>, retrieved April 1, 2008.

The third and final category consists of families and spontaneously formed groups of residents who gather on an informal basis to participate in a sport together. These may be friends who meet at the local gym on Friday evenings to play volleyball. This is what is referred to as unstructured group leisure activity. These groups make use of municipal resources or the resources of the groups in the above-mentioned categories.

Community recreation centers form a group unto themselves, but are still considered civil society actors. They are veritable institutions around which also revolve other civil society groups and individual members of the community. These 85 or so centers are in many cases agents of the municipalities, but they fulfill their role in a manner fully consistent with their own philosophy.

At a more basic level, individuals mostly use local grounds and facilities such as bike paths, hiking trails, playgrounds, and parks for individual leisure.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning health institutions, specifically those that house patients for long periods. More and more these institutions are becoming “home” to their residents who, by association, become residents of their neighborhood. Persons who live in a care facility for extended periods are, in reality, residents. They are no longer patients like those in short-term-care facilities; rather they are full-fledged residents who can sometimes share their leisure activities with other local residents. This is the case for residents of Centre de gériatrie de Sherbrooke, for example, who invite the population to come celebrate Fête nationale with them on June 24. Situations such as these highlight the important role of leisure in institutional settings, which helps keep residents active in their communities. From this standpoint, recreational workers in the institutional sector, like in communities, can no longer limit themselves to implementing and facilitating activity programs. Rather, they must create living environments where, like in society, individuals are the primary agents of their own leisure-time activities, regardless of their capacity. Quality of life is, after all, a determinant of health.

All these local leisure actors can maintain associational, hierarchical, and information-sharing relations with groups and institutions at the regional and provincial levels. For example, you can join an outdoor recreation federation to go rock climbing, or sign up for a regional kinball league, but if you want to take part in a tournament, you must hold a valid license with a regional association or Québec sports federation. Or as is often the case, people become members of federations simply because it entitles them to a cheaper price for trail maps or helps support the federation’s efforts to lobby the government.

These examples illustrate the highly variable nature of the relations with other levels, depending on the area of activity and individual interest. The Québec model is truly built from the ground up.

CASE 3.12

CITY OF RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP^a

Home to a long tradition of recreation and a cégep (college) that has for many years offered a training program in leisure, the City of Rivière-du-Loup (18,999 inhabitants) has a Recreation, Culture, and Community Department whose mission is to “provide residents of the city of Rivière-du-Loup with access to leisure activities and venues to meet their needs and aspirations through programs and facilities or through the support of local organizations.”

Its mandate is as follows:

- Provide and support activities to complement the city’s recreational, cultural, and community venues and facilities such as Stade de la Cité des Jeunes stadium, the cégep swimming pool, municipal parks, the Françoise-Bédard Municipal Library, and Maison de la culture
- Aid local and regional sports, culture, and community organizations
- Support and encourage volunteers who contribute to community wellness
- Provide beginner-level leisure activity services and manage various recreational programs specifically for families and the disadvantaged
- Ensure follow-up of cultural, sport, and family policies with local stakeholders and within the administrative structure

The city is home to over 75 organizations active in sports, culture, and community work.

Rivière-du-Loup boasts a range of municipal, institutional, and civic facilities, including a culture house, library, theater (La Goélette), cultural center, Musée du Bas Saint-Laurent, Centre Premier-Tech, a municipal campground with water spray areas, baseball and softball fields, bike paths, community huts, hiking trails, and skating rinks. There are also playing fields and facilities for skateboarding, track and field, and tubing, as well as neighborhood parks. The city also puts on a host of family-oriented events: Pleins feux sur la Pointe fireworks display, a country rodeo, the Homage Festival, an intercollegiate snow-sculpting contest, Noël Chez Nous Christmas celebrations, indoor motocross, comedy nights, a folk festival, Budweiser Rock Shows, and Juke-Box Rendez-vous.

Rivière-du-Loup is a prime example of how numerous Québec towns and cities operate at the local level.

^a The description and quotes with regard to this case are taken from <www.ville.riviere-du-loup.qc.ca/loisir/loisir.php>, retrieved March 15, 2008.

KITCISAKIK ININIK FIRST NATIONS (ALGONQUIN) COMMUNITY

Québec is home to a population of 80,000 aboriginal people in 59 communities and “reserves,” where leisure is generally seen as a way to preserve culture, develop solidarity among First Nations peoples through intervillage gatherings, and fight problems that often arise from idleness. Leisure activities fit readily with the very community-oriented culture of First Nations peoples and are organized in partnership with public institutions. Kitcisakik Ininik is a perfect example.

The community of approximately 400 is located in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region. On three separate occasions in the 20th century, the community of Kitcisakik turned down the federal government’s offer to become an aboriginal reserve. The members of the community want to preserve their rights to their land and possessions,^a but even more importantly, they want to remain their own decision makers. Consequently, the community of Kitcisakik receives very little assistance from the federal government and even less from the provincial government. Living conditions in the community are primitive: there is no water supply, no sewers, no electricity, and no fire protection.^b The community has an early childhood education center (CPE), a kindergarten class, and a grade one and grade two class. However, due to the lack of resources, children are forced to leave home to attend school in Val d’Or, where they board during the week.

In recent years, community members have run up against a number of social problems, including drug and alcohol addiction, child negligence, and physical and psychological violence. In the 1990s, abuse of all kinds was widely condemned, and to ensure its own survival, the community adopted a social commitment contract covering the social, physical, psychological, recreational, and spiritual aspects of life. Despite numerous hurdles, the leisure, culture, and sports aspects of the commitment contract have been readily complied with, more so than the others.

Given the problems facing the community, an issue table made up of members of the community; professionals from the education, health, and social services sector; and, recently, the organization Québec en Forme, was set up to identify possible solutions. This led to the idea of a social commitment contract among community residents. In November 2000, the final version of the contract was adopted by Kitcisakik’s families and key stakeholders. It took another five years before it was passed by resolution of the community band council on April 12, 2006.

The community commitment contract lists the desired behaviors sought by community members, parents, and children. Concretely, it addresses the responsibilities of parents to meet the basic needs of their children; the importance of healthy communication between parents and their children; the value of cultural, sports, and educational activities; and the issues of drug and alcohol use, child safety around water and on all-terrain vehicles, child curfews, vandalism and violence, and the repercussions of suspension from school.

The contract as implemented by the members of the community has shown that residents' involvement is key. It is not only recommended, it is crucial to improving the situation. The community residents are responsible for organizing festive and leisure activities in the community, with support from professionals at the various institutions devoted to serving and strengthening the community.

There are no obstacles with regard to leisure. Members of the community get together to organize celebrations to mark various events during the year. They also take part in educational, cultural, and sports activities organized by local stakeholders, and get involved in community initiatives to preserve Algonquin traditions.

Teens in Kitcisakik enjoy the same fashions, musical tastes, and leisure activities as other young Quebecers. One of the community's main challenges is to conserve its cultural identity without turning back the clock. It is interesting to note that Kitcisakik was the only First Nations community to submit a brief to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation.

Half the population of Kitcisakik is under the age of 20. There are very few elders left, and many Algonquin traditions are at risk of dying out altogether. The Forest Committee organizes traditional activities with the community elders, including the Trail of the Bear, with the tree names labeled in Algonquin, as well as handicraft and meat-smoking activities. This activity was originally designed for children aged 10 to 12. However, it proved to be so popular that it was expanded to include adults, families, and children of all ages, and now also features a canoe-camping component. For five days and four nights, children and adults alike reconnect with their traditional Algonquin foods and language in the company of a community elder. The event attracts about 55 people.

Members of the community also organize a health festival, a Septemberfest, a canoe race, a Christmas celebration, and other events. Health and social services professionals take part in the health festival, providing information about drug addiction, blood-borne infections, and health in general.

With the arrival of summer, the children of Kitcisakik head back to their community. The organization Québec en Forme provides training to the Kitcisakik playground monitors so the children can enjoy a physical activity program in their home community.

What can be learned from this experience? The very essence of community improvement is to have members take charge of the situation. When the community commitment contract was imposed on teens, they resisted and refused to apply certain rules. But given the opportunity to express themselves, they vented their frustrations, which ultimately led to a revised version of the contract.

Today, the number of children from Kitcisakik who are turned over to social services is on the decline. Of course, there are still many challenges to be resolved, but the community commitment contract and the success of positive activities are key tools that have helped strengthen this community.

Kitcisakik is the only aboriginal community that belongs to the organization Villes et Villages en santé—a clear indication of its desire to improve the quality of life of its residents.

^a Under the terms of the *Indian Act*, their possessions, lands, and homes belong to Canada.

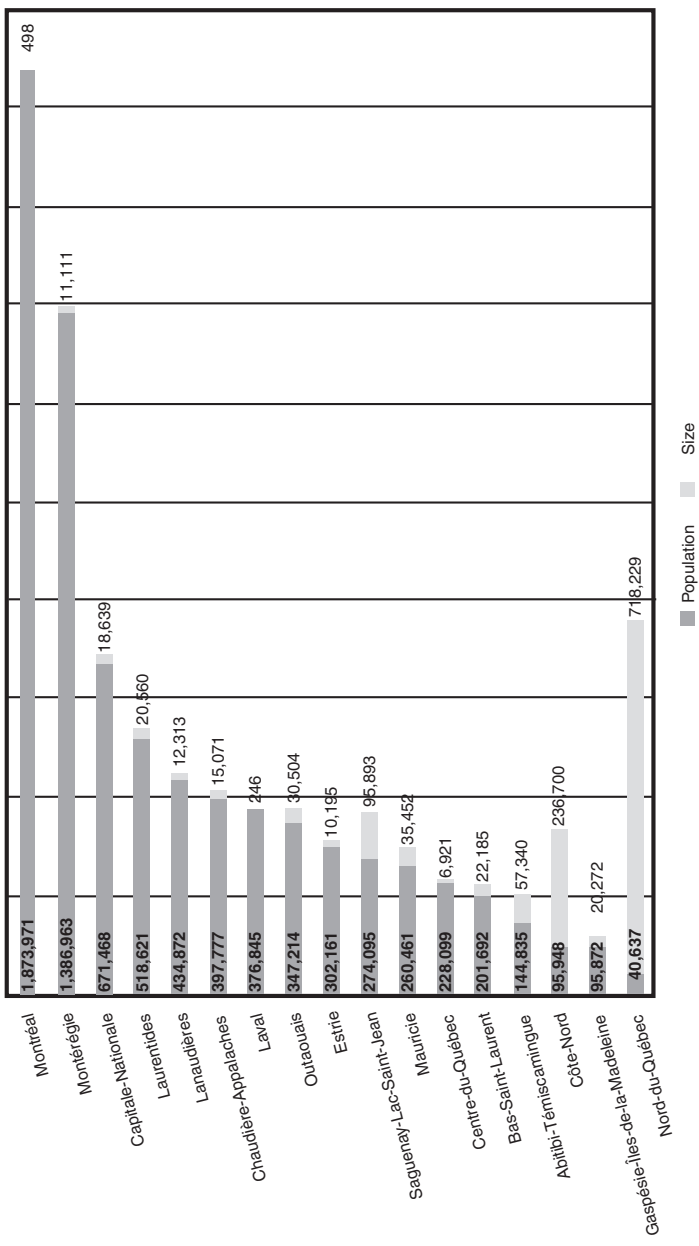
^b See <www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/qc/qc/gui/kitcisakik_e.html>.

At the Regional Level

Overall, the regional level is one of dialog and cooperation between local governments and civil society actors. It is also at this level that there is significant interaction between the authorities and the people. In most regions of Québec, the primary stakeholder is the URLS, which stands for regional sports and recreation unit. Of all leisure activity sectors, outdoor recreation and nature activities are those most closely associated with tourism, and most dependent on the regional plan for their development. The Jeux du Québec games are one of the most deeply rooted examples of regional cooperation.

Québec is divided into 17 administrative regions and two aboriginal regions that loosely correspond to logical socioeconomic divisions as well as school, health and social services, and political territories, with a few exceptions in vast areas such as Côte-Nord and in remote regions like Îles-de-la-Madeleine, isolated in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As well, a number of zones are in flux, including Montérégie, whose lack of cohesion was acknowledged when the Regional Conferences of Elected Officials (CREs) were implemented and three such conferences were set

FIGURE 3.3
Comparison of Administrative Regions by Population and Size



up there. From region to region, the number of inhabitants and total land area vary considerably. If we exclude Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the relation between these two parameters is almost inversely proportional, illustrating the range of social, political, and economic diversity across Québec's regions.

At the political and public levels, the primary actors are the Regional Conferences of Elected Officials (CREs) and the Regional County Municipalities (RCMs).

CREs are mandated to evaluate the development and planning organizations active at the local and regional levels that are funded in part or in whole by the government, notably the URLSSs. However, they do not appear to do so on a regular basis. The CREs are also tasked with seeking consensus among regional partners and advising the minister on regional development, where warranted. The CREs draw up a five-year development plan that sets out the region's general and specific development goals from a sustainable standpoint. Most give the URLSSs responsibility for development of their leisure plans. The CREs administer the funds allocated to them by the government under an agreement governing all regional development projects that fall under the authority of the signatory minister.²⁷

Regional forestry commissions are set up around the Regional Conference of Elected Officials at the regional level to make decisions about and harmonize land use, notably for recreation and tourism.

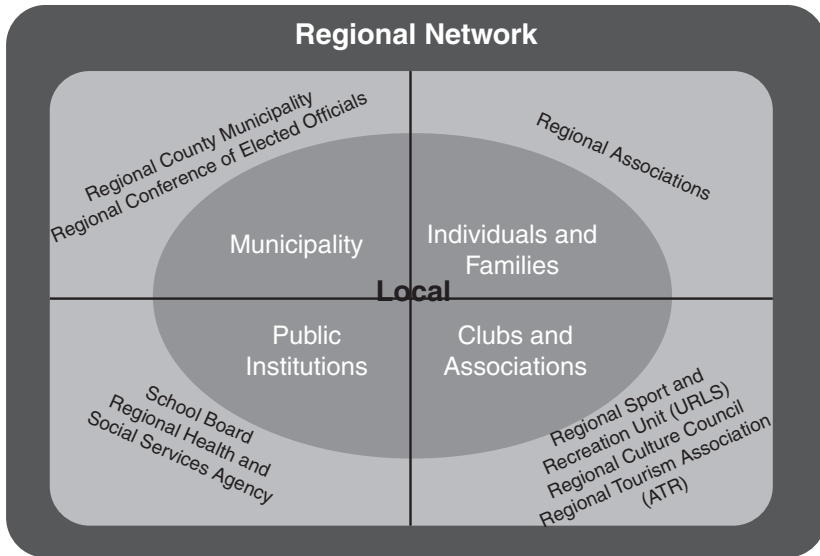
The RCMs were set up in 1979, primarily to look after land use. Once this task was completed, their scope of action was broadened.

RCMs²⁸ group together municipalities of all sizes and have various responsibilities and jurisdictions. However, cities with populations over 100,000 assume these same responsibilities either directly or through metropolitan communities. The RCM's jurisdictions extend to land use and urban planning, management of regional waterways, and preparation of property tax rolls. For example, the RCM is responsible for drawing up a waste management plan, a fire safety plan, and a public security plan. It is also tasked with local development, employment assistance, and financial support for the Local Development Center (LDC). In addition, the law allows it to acquire delegated competencies from local municipalities, with

27. See: <www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement/outils/amen_outi_acte_conf.asp#resp>, retrieved April 3, 2008.

28. Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions (2007). *La municipalité régionale de comté: compétences et responsabilités*, <www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/organisation/orga_stru_inst_pali.asp#lienress>, retrieved April 2, 2008.

FIGURE 3.4
Regional Network



the right to withdraw from these competencies for the delivery of the following services: water, sewers, police, fire, *leisure*, *cultural activities*, roadworks, waste removal and disposal, lighting, snow removal, septic system emptying, and tax collection.

A number of RCMs have experimented with pooling their leisure resources and programs, especially in rural areas. Fourteen years ago, the Coaticook RCM (18,465 inhabitants) set up a youth program called Carrefour loisir (Leisure Hub), with each of the 12 member municipalities contributing financially.

In 2001, the government took an important step to providing financial support for rural leisure with the launch of its Rurality Policy and the signing of a pact to support communities in their efforts to build prosperous living environments, with RCMs as the coordinating entity. The policy has the following strategic priorities:

1. Sustain healthy population levels and promote integration of newcomers

2. Seek to develop human, cultural, and physical resources in the territory
3. Ensure the future of rural communities
4. Maintain a balance between quality of life, living environment, natural environment, and economic activity

The Rural Pact is a decentralized policy support measure. It is essentially an agreement between the government and each RCM designed to strengthen and support the development of rural communities within their territory. A budget of \$230 million is earmarked for projects that fall under the Rural Pact. Most of the projects proposed by the RCMs across Québec under the Rural Pact have to do with leisure.

Regional **civil society**, for its part, revolves around three organizations funded largely by the state: URLs, regional culture councils known as CRCs, and regional tourism associations called ATRs, and to a lesser degree, the regional health and social services agency. The URLs are clearly the body people turn to for discussion, cooperation, and development on leisure matters.

At the regional level, regional associations coordinate or oversee leisure activities, coordinate training, distribute information, lobby on behalf of their activity, and organize regional activities and events with a sports, artistic, or heritage focus. Some of these events are aimed at tourists. The Jeux du Québec games are without a doubt the oldest, most widely recognized, province-wide sports event. Others include *Secondaire en spectacle*, a performing arts competition for high school students. Regional sports associations are widespread. A number of regional organizations devote themselves to less urban activities such as nature pursuits, including those that promote snowmobiling trails, hiking trails, and bike paths.

The hub of this regional life is understandably an association-based organization—the URL— which has a board of directors made up of members of leisure organizations, municipal representatives (designated by RCMs or metropolitan communities), and spokespersons from the education sector. Despite its name that appears to limit it to the sport and recreation sector, the URL is also active in cultural leisure and receives funding from Ministère de la Culture et des Communications under Québec's Cultural Policy, which aims to ensure the vitality of artistic organizations by providing them with financial support and promoting the integration of young artists and performers.

Québec's 17 URLSS receive approximately 60% of their budget—a total of \$10.4 million in 2008–2009—from Secrétariat au loisir et au sport. This budget is governed by what is called a CORA agreement on anticipated objectives and results. For the period of April 1, 2007, to March 31, 2010, these agreements primarily specify the production of a multiyear leisure and sport development plan and the delivery of services under this plan by increasing levels of participation in sport at the beginner, recreational, and competitive levels, through the “Mes Premiers Jeux” program and the support and training of sports officials in the region. Initiatives to support volunteer work include training and the organization of public events that spur volunteer recognition and participation in the province-wide Dollard-Morin Award. Furthermore, the CORA agreements stipulate that the URLSS must work specifically to support disabled persons and run recreation and sport promotional campaigns. These mandates are in keeping with the policy directions and programs of Secrétariat au loisir et au sport, and are consistent with the results expected of provincial organizations.

According to the Government Recreation and Sport Intervention Framework, the URLSS must develop plans and provide opportunities to promote cooperation and offer advisory services to municipalities, schools, and regional associations and organizations. They also manage a budget to financially support regional associations.

These roles appear to be the same from one URLS to the next. Others include organizing activities in cooperation with their communities. In this aspect, there are differences from one URLS to another. In recent years, URLSS have worked together with the CREs (regional development and cooperation authorities) and been represented on the boards of various regional authorities dealing with leisure issues. However, when only one representative can be named for an entire sector, the URLSS are often in direct competition with regional tourism associations (ATRs) or regional culture councils for these positions.

The regional culture councils appear to be more focused on developing, promoting, and defending the production and dissemination of the arts, and the work of artists and artisans. Regional tourism associations (ATR), which are largely governed by their members, are active in four main sectors: development, promotion, visitor reception, and information. They rely on the financial contribution of regional stakeholders (CREs), ATR members, and various Tourisme Québec promotion and development programs. These regional groups are active in fields connected with leisure and may, depending on the project or issue, contribute by promoting or rallying artists or the tourism sector.

The following case illustrates the broad scope and diversity of the work and actions of a URLS. This examination raises the question of whether the means the URLSs are given are consistent with the results expected of them.

CASE 3.14

THE MONTRÉGIE REGIONAL SPORTS AND RECREATION UNIT

Montréal's 1.4 million residents make it Québec's second most populous administrative region. It does not, however, form a social and economic whole strictly speaking. One area is clearly identified with suburban Montréal, another is semi-urban and tourist-oriented, and a sizeable portion is rural, like the Acton RCM, which has eight municipalities and just under 16,000 people. It is like a microcosm of all of Québec's regions, except for more isolated outlying areas.

The mission of the Montréal regional sport and recreation unit or URLS, also known as *Loisir et sport Montréal*, is to promote sport and recreation throughout the area, ensure their protection and development, and foster cooperation and partnerships among various municipal, educational, and community stakeholders in six leisure-related sectors: sports, cultural recreation, scientific recreation, socioeducational recreation, outdoor recreation, and tourist-related leisure activities.

Loisir et sport Montréal and its counterparts throughout Québec are dedicated to

- Ensuring regional leadership and facilitating partnerships
- Collaborating with partners to devise a strategy and communication plan that will bring sport and recreation to the attention of authorities
- Establishing ways to ensure projects are evaluated and deliver results
- Identifying the needs of each clientele
- Recognizing, fostering, and saluting excellence
- Developing effective ways to communicate with the public
- Making existing training programs available to organizations
- Developing and implementing funding methods adapted to regional needs and realities
- Offering consulting services

Its recent work can be classified using the headings of *representation, dialog, support, information and promotion, and coordination*. On the *representation* front, the URLS worked to secure two Québec en Forme projects and sought to position itself as a regional sport and recreation leader by

participating in innovative projects and publishing community organization guides. It also worked particularly closely with its regional council of elected officials (CRE) to introduce recreation planning projects. With regard to *support*, the URLS says it fielded inquiries, mostly regarding specialized equipment suppliers, organization guides, private and contractual services, and codes of ethics. It was also contacted about the reform of soccer, legal opinions on sport safety, utilization standards for sport and recreation facilities, fee schedules, the benefits of recreation and reasons for recognizing it, structural phases for a model municipal recreation department, and performance evaluation of sport and recreation facility managers. The URLS also contributed to the training of day camp monitors, volunteer administrators, and sports officials. Under *dialog*, the URLS primarily invited individuals and associations involved in culture, sport, and outdoor activities to convene, pool services, and implement shared projects; no fewer than 29 meetings took place in 2006 and 2007. It also implemented specific action plans and financial aid programs (approximately \$80,000) for each subregion where parties joined together. With regard to *information and promotion*, the URLS published three issues of its newsletter, maintained a website, issued numerous press releases, and held media briefings. Lastly, under *coordination*, the URLS led or supervised such programs and projects as the regional Jeux du Québec games and activities connected with the provincial finals, Académie olympique jeunesse, Mes Premiers Jeux, and Équipe Québec. On the cultural stage, the URLS coordinated programs like Relève culturelle amateur, Secondaire en spectacle, and Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.

The URLS was also a notable innovator, drawing up original development models for rural recreation and youth volunteerism.

These efforts show clearly that Loisir et sport Montérégie is one of Québec's most active regional sport and recreation units.

On the Provincial Scene

Within the Québec government, public leisure development is the responsibility of five ministries and a public corporation, each of which supports a certain number of civil society organizations and set outs their broad mandates. They are Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS); Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC); Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions (MAMR); Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune (MRNF); Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS); and Société des établissements de plein air (SEPAQ). Three "partner ministries"—Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés (MFA), Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC), and Ministère

du Tourisme (MT)—represent populations whose quality of life is affected by leisure activities and therefore influence the model as well. Of Québec's 22 government ministries, nine—or 40%—are involved in leisure.²⁹

In **civil society**, various organizations serve as focal points for leisure development. Primary among them are Sports-Québec, Conseil québécois du loisir (CQL), the emerging conference of URLSS, and AQLM, which represents Québec's municipal recreation professionals. Associations and federations are also active in the field. Some have broad and varied missions (Scouts, 4-H, seniors groups) while others are interest-based, like sports or outdoor leisure federations. Fédération québécoise du loisir en institution (FQLI), which focuses specifically on institutional leisure, is only somewhat related, but does have increasing ties with civil society.

The government, which possesses legislative, regulatory, and financial powers, is responsible for safeguarding the public good and balancing multiple interests. It therefore has the power to influence and orient other leisure activity networks. It generally seeks to facilitate and guide, since it does not operate leisure facilities itself, other than provincial parks, certain health facilities, and schools that provide leisure opportunities for their users. The Québec government's principle of governance founded on decentralization, partnership, and government oversight is a key to understanding what it does. With its Internet-like nonhierarchical structure based on client-server relationships, the government is much like a server, which is a transmission and meeting place in network processing. A server's quality is based on its capacity to quickly process a number of operations, and its power determines the network's ability to function and grow.

Within the Québec government, the broadest vertical and horizontal mandates are those of MELS through its Secrétariat au loisir et au sport, which is also responsible for safety. Vertically, MELS backs local projects and supports and interacts with a network of provincial and regional organizations. Horizontally, it contends (and so do others) that it has the role of coordinating all government actions on leisure. It is, however, the ministry with the fewest resources earmarked for leisure, a meager

29. MELS is the government department in charge of education, leisure, and sport. MCC is the government department in charge of culture and communications. MAMR is the government department in charge of municipal and regional affairs. MRNF is the government department in charge of natural resources and wildlife. MSSS is the government department in charge of health and social services. SEPAQ is a government corporation that runs outdoor recreational establishments. MFA is the government department in charge of family issues and the elderly. MICC is the government department in charge of immigration and cultural communities. MT is the government department in charge of tourism.

\$63 million³⁰ for Secrétariat au loisir et au sport. For the last 20 years or so, it should be noted, Secrétariat au loisir has been more of a ministry administrative unit (it has been affiliated with five different ministries in the last decade) than a ministry in its own right.

Civil society also has high expectations of this ministry and, in particular, its Secretariat. They are generally seen as sources of financial support for much of the civil apparatus, such as URLs, provincial federations, and codevelopment organizations; they also are seen as driving forces behind initiatives for healthy lifestyles, volunteerism and, increasingly, the cooperative role that government recreation initiatives play with the public. For example, some say the ministry should affirm that leisure is a major government concern and explain how it fits with such issues as balancing work and family, helping seniors live independently and maintain quality of life, renewing infrastructure, supporting volunteer work and rural communities, spurring outdoor recreation, and providing physical and mental preventive healthcare. Leisure, in all its forms, must contribute in these regards or remain confined to the playground.

The goodwill that Secrétariat au loisir et au sport enjoys in the community is most likely why so much more is expected of it than it can give. It has been a traditional part of the collective solidarity that typifies Québec's leisure model.

Like all ministries, Secrétariat au loisir et au sport acts as a "driver" when it recognizes or reaffirms the missions of civil society organizations that receive government funding. That is what its board of directors did in the late 1990s when the Secretariat was part of Ministère des Affaires municipales, setting forth mandates and missions for a number of subsidized organizations.

Today, Secrétariat au loisir et au sport engages in CORA negotiations on objectives and outcomes with regional and provincial organizations and manages programs designed to get partners to direct their efforts in specific ways. However, since publication of the Government Sport and Leisure Intervention Framework, government policies directions have been announced ad hoc in response to broader priorities, such as developing healthy lifestyles, or those stemming from strategic ministry directions, including the 2005–2008 MELS strategic vision, which states that

30. According to *Budget des dépenses du gouvernement (2007-2008)*, volume II, Crédits des ministères, p. 98.

In matters of recreation and sports, the Ministère's actions are aimed at the entire population. By creating synergy regarding the promotion of and access to recreation and sports in a safe setting, and by developing excellence in sports, the Ministère plans to improve the participation rate of the Québec population.

Consequently, the goals and objectives of Secrétariat au loisir et au sport are to

Promote, among the population, participation in physical activities, recreation and sports in a healthy and safe setting

By 2007, increase the participation of the population in physical, recreational, and sports activities

Promote safe and ethical participation in recreation and sports

Improve the results that Quebecers achieve in the Canadian and international sports arena

By 2007, support increased volunteer participation in recreation and sports

These goals are reflected in signed agreements, particularly those with sports, cultural, or outdoor federations, and with the two codevelopment organizations—Conseil québécois du loisir and Sports-Québec—noted in our discussion of regional sport and recreation units.

These organizations, it should be noted, are legally autonomous. A substantial part of their income comes from non-government sources, and they formulate their own strategies.

In addition to MELS, the leisure field in Québec (including cultural, sports, and social activities) is overseen by four main ministries around which gravitate a number of civil society organizations that receive varying degrees of ministry support.

MCC supports and directs the network of regional cultural councils and finances regional sport and recreation units, particularly as regards emerging talent. It provides financial support and grants to some centralized organizations such as Conseil des arts du Québec and a multitude of private arts organizations that develop projects and facilities. It helps libraries, exhibit spaces, and cultural centers—in fact, much of the cultural infrastructure needed by amateur or “recreational” artists who, it should be noted, comprise 34.5% of the Québec population.

MAMR oversees municipalities, which are the primary public sources of leisure. MAMR has the power to sanction various municipal actions. It approves budgets and borrowing bylaws and monitors administrative propriety. It is responsible for the policy on rurality and the Rural Pact, two essential leisure tools for rural communities, and administers a support program for municipal infrastructure rehabilitation.

As the body responsible for municipal organization and regional development, MAMR advises the government and ensures interministerial coordination in these regards.

Its mission is to work in partnership with municipalities and regional development stakeholders to create and maintain quality communities and municipal services for all citizens, foster regional and rural development, and help Montréal to progress and thrive.³¹

On the infrastructure level, some MAMR programs have an impact on leisure, notably those to upgrade facilities and foster rural development. Section 3 of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (FIMR) concerns construction, renovation, or upgrade work for commercial, industrial, tourism, cultural, or heritage endeavors, sports or physical activities, or ventures aimed at improving the quality of people's lives. In Québec, FIMR also includes a program aimed at improving recreational and cultural facilities—the Urban and Village Renewal Program—one of whose goals is the creation of parks and public spaces.

As the manager of public lands (92% of Québec's total land area), along with forest, mineral, energy, and wildlife resources and land information, MRNF is the ministry in charge of promoting development, conservation, and awareness of natural and land resources for the public good, from a sustainable development and integrated management perspective.

MRNF has a twofold impact on leisure: it regulates hunting and fishing—pursuits popular with over 700,000 Quebecers—and is responsible for managing public lands, which make up 92% of Québec's land mass. Its management mission in these areas has an impact on leisure activities and on tourism and nature activities, which are experiencing growth. In recent years, MRNF has had to completely overhaul the Québec forest management system.

31. Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions (2004). *Plan stratégique 2005-2008*, <www.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/publications/ministre/plan-strategique-2005-2008-mamr.pdf>, retrieved April 6, 2008.

Many different money-making ventures, recreational activities, and conservation uses compete for public land and resources. A wide range of private and public parties also have a stake in regional or local land and resource development. As outdoor activities grow more popular and their tourist value increases, it has become strategically crucial to harmonize the use of the natural environment. The challenges are immense, since leisure must take its place alongside powerful commercial interests such as forestry, papermaking, or mining. Leisure must craft strategic alliances in order to gain political clout. Environmentalists, the tourism industry, and native populations can no doubt be a big help. In addition, all who “use” nature must unite strategically and cast aside their differences. But this is a challenge that obviously has not yet been met, given all the groups pitted against each other—snowmobilers versus snowshoers, motorists versus hikers, campers versus RVers, or those who are green versus those who pollute. As was discussed in chapter one, MRNF delegates day-to-day land management to regional entities. This raises the question of access for the 55% of nature consumers who reside in urban areas.

MSSS plays a growing role in leisure in three regards. Public health professionals, especially those concerned with prevention, recognize that recreation plays a decisive part in developing healthy lifestyles. MSSS therefore supports two core initiatives, Réseau québécois de Villes et Villages en santé and Kino-Québec (see Case 2.2). MSSS is also responsible for numerous nursing and long-term-care residential facilities, which thousands of people call home. These community environments provide many recreational opportunities. Recreation is also as a powerful restorative tonic for those whom illness has robbed of energy and often of their identity within the healthcare system and with their families. Furthermore, by helping the elderly remain in their homes, MSSS automatically creates a need for leisure services for them and their caregivers.

SEPAQ manages a broad range of facilities—48 in all—divided into three networks: provincial parks, wildlife preserves, and tourism centers. SEPAQ is a commercially run public corporation that began operation on March 20, 1985, when its incorporating act (R.S.Q., c. S-13.01), adopted in December 1984, came into force. It reports to the Minister of Sustainable Development, the Environment, and Parks. The Minister of Finance is its sole shareholder. In 2006–2007, SEPAQ business revenues topped \$100 million. This was a historic high, with revenue growing 7.9% from \$98,541,000 to \$106,314,000. SEPAQ is in charge of administering and developing those public lands and tourism facilities entrusted to it under its incorporating act. Its mission consists of ensuring access to these public facilities, developing their full potential, and protecting them for the benefit of users, Québec’s regions, and future generations. SEPAQ endeavors to

be a part of regional and provincial networks. In its strategic plan, it states that it wishes to maintain the cooperative structure represented by harmonization tables and local boards of directors and increase the number of partnerships it has with regional and tourism industry stakeholders.

In civil society, CQL³² seeks to contribute through leisure to Québec's social, cultural, and economic development. It represents provincial leisure organizations while also encouraging cooperation and contact among those who work in the field. It defends citizens' right to free time and leisure, and promotes the availability of both. Under the Government Leisure and Sports Intervention Framework, it enjoys recognition and financial support from the Government of Québec. Established in 1998, CQL is descended from two umbrella organizations: the Québec Leisure Confederation (1969) and Québec Outdoor Activities Federation (1972). For the purpose of promoting and developing various aspects of leisure, CQL encourages its members and stakeholders to cooperate, both inter-sectorally on joint recreational ventures in civil society and on leisure as it pertains to the social economy, independent community action, volunteerism, and community life. The Council has three complementary functions: to serve as a "confederation of provincial federations," to promote action within civil society, and to create a gathering place for the Québec leisure sector. It represents, brings together, and provides services to some 46 provincial federations and associations governing over 60 disciplines in the arts and the cultural, outdoor, scientific, educational, and tourism realms (including walking, biking, singing, history, etc.). Some of these serve specific clienteles (youth, persons with disabilities, seniors, etc.), while others provide physical facilities (community centers, vacation or family camps, etc.). CQL is the leisure counterpart to Sports-Québec. Other members include regional sport and recreation units, non-profit organizations involved in recreation, institutions, individuals (volunteers and professionals), and others. In addition, CQL supports, develops, and promotes important and specific aspects of the Québec leisure model.

In this regard, CQL is active in the volunteer sector, having implemented a volunteer and stakeholder training network involving a number of partners; it collaborates with various community life organizations; it is very active in the social economy sector; and it also defends civil society's leisure interests to public authorities and in community group circles. In addition, the Council is, in various ways, a "public forum" for debating leisure issues in Québec. Its board of directors convenes not only representatives from provincial leisure federations, but also important players in the Québec leisure sector such as AQLM, the regional sport and recreation

32. See also <www.loisirquebec.com>, consulted April 16, 2008.

units, and recreation resource persons from secondary schools and universities. Moreover, CQL organizes various activities such as seminars, the Journalism Award in the leisure sector, and the Québec forum on leisure, which addresses topics in the field every other year. In addition, it provides access to various tools and publications, including activity inventories, accessibility presentation tools, outdoor activity safety guides, and others. Lastly, it worked with World Leisure and the International Bureau of Social Tourism to help Québec City become host of the 2008 World Leisure Congress, which major Québec and Canadian leisure networks and a good number of Québec ministries have pledged to support.

Sports-Québec,³³ the federated sports organization counterpart to Conseil québécois du loisir, ensures synergy among members and partners in the Québec and Canadian sports systems so as to foster sports development and boost participation. Sports-Québec represents 64 provincial sports federations and 17 URLs whose volunteer and permanent structures serve to develop sport and support elite talent. Sports-Québec's representation role derives from the Government Leisure and Sport Intervention Framework and its members' determination to express the sports community's needs wherever doing so can make a difference and on all subjects that directly impact the sports system. Each federation heads a network comprised of regional associations and local clubs, and these entities engage in joint efforts on behalf of their athletes as they progress from their earliest competitive encounters through the highest levels of proficiency. Sports-Québec, through its programs and network of members, federations, and regional groups, oversees sport in Québec, where 800,000 persons belong to federations and take part in organized sports, and 400,000 youngsters play school sports. Over 60,000 people coach or teach sports, in addition to those who volunteer for sports groups. Québec has more than 3,000 top-level athletes.

Sports-Québec's primary mission is representing its members' collective interests. To develop sports, it provides program coordination for Jeux du Québec and ensures that all parties work together so that the games come off without a hitch. In addition to coordinating athlete funding programs, it organizes the annual Gala Sports Québec to recognize athletic excellence and honor top performers. In the field of training, Sports-Québec supports coaches—the prime architects of athlete success—by coordinating the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). The organization is active in fundraising, both for its own development and to support members. It must develop and carry out funding and support programs (communications, technical services, and assessment) on behalf of the

33. See <www.sportsquebec.com>, consulted April 15, 2008.

organization and its partners. Sports-Québec must take a high-level view of sports and give equal weight to all skill levels (beginner or seasoned practitioner) and all motivations (recreational, competitive, elite). It has therefore adopted a nondiscriminatory approach to sport and practitioners in terms of gender, race, social class, and talent.³⁴

Working jointly with CQL and Sports-Québec, which act as confederations of provincial federations, are two associations made up of non-sectoral local and regional organizations, AQLM and the emerging conference of URLSS. They owe their existence not to the Government Leisure and Sport Intervention Framework but rather to the interests of their members.

AQLM was established on October 1, 1999, when Association québécoise des directeurs et des directrices du loisir municipal (AQDLM) merged with Regroupement québécois du loisir municipal (RQLM). With its 650 active, associate, or student members in more than 220 Québec municipalities, AQLM is the unified voice of Québec municipal recreation, striving to attain major objectives while remaining committed to protecting member interests. As a professional municipal recreation association, AQLM is committed to being a member service organization, a promotional vehicle for municipal recreation, a development organization for professional members, and an entity that owes its existence primarily to member commitment. AQLM has action programs in four areas: politics, service, professional development, and association development. Its political program is aimed at providing strong representation for municipal recreation along with professional analysis of governmental and quasi-governmental structures. This way the Association hopes to develop a network of regional, provincial, and federal partners, gain outside recognition as a key and influential player, and successfully anticipate changes likely to impact municipal recreation—in short, be the voice of municipal recreation. As such, it is currently heading up two strategic initiatives: bringing municipalities and schools closer together and providing new impetus to day camps, culminating with a day camp strategy meeting for all concerned parties. On the municipality / school front, AQLM is leading a group formed of main stakeholders—MELS, MAMR, Fédération des commissions scolaires, the Union of Quebec Municipalities, and Fédération québécoise des municipalités. Also in this group are CQL, Sports-Québec, Fédération des centres communautaires de loisir, and associations of school principals and superintendents. A similar network was created for day camps. With its member services program, AQLM offers a range of services in such

34. This information is taken from a document provided by the Sports-Québec Communications Department

areas as training (university courses, workshops, training conferences, etc.), information, and networking and individual support (advice, literature, placement, etc.). In this regard it publishes a magazine, *Agora Forum*, and maintains an informative website that hosts discussion groups. The objective of the professional development program is to make worktools available for recreation professionals at the municipal level. Advancing research on municipal recreation issues and developing a toolbox, assessment criteria, and quality standards are only some examples of AQLM's efforts in this area. AQLM is a founding member of Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, together with CQL, MELS, and Sports-Québec. The laboratory's purpose is to contribute to development of professional practices in municipal recreation and community life. The fourth and final part of the AQLM action plan is the association itself—its setup and ongoing development.

Fédération québécoise du loisir en institution (FQLI)³⁵ possesses certain unique features and offers a novel professional networking model aimed at leisure service development and accessibility for clientele in the health and social services system. FQLI is intimately involved in recreation within healthcare facilities. It provides expert assessment, develops new means of leisure-oriented intervention, trains and educates stakeholders, and increases awareness in the population at large. FQLI promotes recreation as a tool that improves the institutional environment and patients' quality of life, but also as a means to attain therapeutic objectives. It intervenes in four main areas: training, instrumentation, representation, and consulting. FQLI provides training in the form of an annual symposium where institutional recreation professionals discuss topics of concern. It also conducts a theme-based training program in any region that requests it. FQLI aids instrumentation by supporting development that addresses matters unique to institutional recreation. It helps Québec special-interest authors in need of support during the publishing process, and it has established an institutional recreation resource center and produces leisure activity promotional material (posters, slides, videos). FQLI's promotion efforts include sponsorship of an annual "Québec Week of Institutional Recreation," for which it produces various promotional tools to offer its members. It also works with a number of other organizations and maintains close relations with various ministries in order to gain recognition for the role of recreation in maintaining and improving health. FQLI fulfills a consulting role by responding to member requests for advice, expert opinions, or information on institutional recreation in such areas as staffing or volunteer training programs.

35. This information was prepared by Ph.D. candidate Jocelyn Morier.

Local, Regional, and Provincial Interaction

Local, regional, and provincial interrelationships are created in many ways and by numerous parties. Individually, people can participate and receive services or instruction at any level. For instance, young soccer players belong to their own clubs plus local leagues and—courtesy of their regional associations—take part in the Jeux du Québec games and in tournaments staged by the Québec soccer federation. Recreational rock climbers may have no contact with the Québec federation other than to receive its guide to climbing locations. The same holds true for activity-specific local associations. However, multidimensional committees, like those for neighborhood or community recreation, no longer have meeting places as they did in the days of the regional leisure councils disbanded 10 years ago. Many of these recreation or leisure committees faded for lack of new blood, while others became city “subcontractors,” but they all lost political clout in general.

Intra-organizational relations on various levels are generally multifaceted and multidimensional. The nomenclature and descriptions of civil society organizations confirm the fact that their network is flexible and that in addition to the mandates set out in the government intervention framework, convergence exists on a number of points, depending on portfolios and issues. Regional sport and recreation units (URLSs) take part in CQL, Sports-Québec, and their own associations, as well as in AQLM initiatives. Ministries are likewise part of civil society when invited, acting not only as authorities but also as partners. Municipalities address policy questions in one of the municipal associations, and professionals meet within AQLM, which itself is an active participant in CQL.

Regional sport and recreation units have a variety of contacts locally and take part in a number of provincial associations.

In short, like in today’s Web 2.0 world, relationship choices are made by users, whose interactions and coalitions are colored by pragmatism. Although this is totally democratic and facilitates ad hoc solutions, it also has weaknesses that over the medium term diminish the system’s strategic capacity to achieve consensus and stay on track in the face of environment changes. There is veiled competition between multiple organizations that claim to be building consensus and coalitions within local, regional, and provincial ranks.

The Québec model, as we observed, follows chaos theory.

STRATEGIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Québec public and civic leisure network owes its existence to the fulfillment of specific functions it is now beginning to discover and understand. The nature of leisure—particularly public recreation—and the organizational, political, and social context in which services and programs are provided lead naturally to identification of functions that enable the system to direct and oversee groups, resources, and people who facilitate the leisure experience by putting favorable conditions in place.

Functions that promote active networking (leadership, social mediation, cooperation), allow for public services to be put in place (communication, activity presentation), support the production system itself (material and financial support, planning and resource management), and ensure strategic oversight to keep the system relevant and focused are the foundation of the strategies used.

Leadership and Social Mediation

This function consists of ensuring network mobilization and cooperation so that all benefit and the system performs efficiently. It cannot be assumed that when cooperation is optional and participants have complementary roles, they will willingly forego autonomy and work together to find ways to benefit the collective good. This requires attention, skill, leadership, and the use of social mediation—that is, efforts aimed at creating interaction rather than conflict between the parties. Staying a common course in a lasting spirit of cooperation and respect is both the objective and challenge of this function. Fulfilling this mission and meeting this challenge demands a high level of proficiency and true leadership capable of spurring individuals and organizations to action, but without taking their place. And before joining together in this way, real efforts must be made to ensure that citizens—the central figures in personal and group leisure—are active, on-board participants. Two core concepts are involved: leadership and social mediation.

Leadership can be defined as “an influence process shared by a leader and a community at a specific time and in a specific context” (Prévost, 1997, p. 7). Thus leadership and the leader are defined in terms of interaction or movement by one toward the other. According to Prévost, leadership is voluntarily conferred by members of a community.

Leadership influences the extent of buy-in and is essential to any local development project. Leadership can be provided by the project originator, an agency, or citizens. There are two types of local leaders: charismatic and intellectual. *Charismatic* leaders have high visibility, rallying people around a common cause, and are especially effective in crisis situations. *Intellectual* leaders are less visible, remaining more in the background—they develop the vision that charismatic leaders draw upon, and they ensure the vision's appropriateness. Prévost identifies six basic leadership functions within the local community, writing that leaders must be inspirers, visionaries, organizers, and listeners who are capable of putting their own ideas and opinions—and those of others—into action. They must

1. Mobilize the population and create partnerships
2. Inspire a shared vision and imbue events and phenomena with meaning
3. Seek out opportunities and act on them
4. Use and develop community resources
5. Nurture and develop community resources
6. Aptly reward and support the efforts of others³⁶

In leisure as in other fields, there is no spot marked “leader” on the organization chart. Sometimes leaders are professionals in management positions, other times elected or academic officials, or citizens or groups within civil society. While leaders may be both charismatic and intellectual, most of the time they will possess one or the other set of distinguishing traits.

While leadership may hail from a variety of places, it cannot be improvised. Leaders listen, understand, shape, and then tell their constituencies what they have learned; they are mirrors that seek not only to reflect the image they face, but also project a vision of the future. This intimate symbiosis with the heart and soul of their environment has led analysts to describe a leader as “the right person at the right time.”

During winter of 2008, Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire was tasked by Secrétariat au loisir et au sport with exploring the dynamics of a rural community that succeeded in providing an admirable quality and quantity of leisure activities despite often very limited resources. Interviews revealed that the success or failure of initiatives was dependent on the passion, leadership, and energy of “champions” who were able to drum up support within their constituencies and were “allowed” to take responsibility for the projects.

36. Prévost, P. (1997). “Le leadership et le développement: quelques réflexions,” *Revue Organisation*, pp. 5–17.

This study also showed that towns, unlike cities, did not play a central role in leadership, which stemmed entirely from the local community, with the origins of leaders varying from one rural environment to the next.³⁷

This brings up a question for the leisure system: given the particularly intangible nature of leadership, how can organizations provide the leadership that communities need?

Since leadership comes from people who possess unique strengths, we cannot assume that all salaried staff, all professionals, all administrators, or all elected officials are able to exercise it. However, organizations, administrators, and personnel can—and must—create conditions that permit the emergence of leaders. What are these conditions? They take a cue from the traits of healthy communities that encourage both community recognition and the emergence of leaders. Essentially, healthy communities are those that are active, organized, self-aware, and conscious of their power. For organizations to stimulate leadership and show the way to those in charge, they must reflect back to their communities and members an objective and uncompromising self-portrait, while also fostering cooperation, offering support to groups and action-oriented individuals, and recognizing the contribution of all. The main job of the network leader or facilitator is to tell members how shared goals and objectives have changed, to keep the spirit of action alive, and to support structures within the network. Given this, public recreation departments should always be well informed about the needs and state of communities and networks. They support certain members, such as volunteer associations, to ensure their independence, and can in some cases serve in the interim given their status as local government, according to the needs of the population.

CASE 3.15

LEADERSHIP IN SAINT-PACÔME **Capital of the Detective Story**

Saint-Pacôme, population 1,719, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2001 and was declared “Capital of the Detective Story” in June 2002. The first thing its mayor told us was that although farming and logging the Ouelle River’s wooded banks used to provide villagers’ livelihoods, today the local economy revolves around outdoor activities and the appeal of Saint-Pacôme’s splendid location. That, and the community’s desire—shaped by its mayor’s vision—to become known for something.

37. A report on this study will be available in September 2008 from the online archives of Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire (<oql.uqtr.ca>).

"So why 'capital of the detective story'?" is the first thing visitors to Saint-Pacôme ask. A group of residents were eager to find a clever way to tell the world about their town, something that would complement its beauty and charm. They came up with a long list of interesting ideas that led—almost naturally—to the concept of holding an annual literary competition for the best detective story in Québec.^a

Behind this success was an instigator with true leadership qualities, as this passage shows:

"I was wondering how to make Saint-Pacôme known around the world, and decided that crime was the best way." Jacques Mayer

"Dare to be different"—that's the slogan behind the wonderful tale of the Detective Story Society of Saint-Pacôme. The project creator . . . recounted the adventure's start for us.

Jacques Mayer, a prosperous business owner, was concerned about the exodus of young people from the Kamouraska region and, more specifically, the town of Saint-Pacôme. In 1996 he set about to find a project that would help retain young residents and attract new ones.

That's how he convened a group he called "Toujours les mêmes" or "TLM" for short to discuss the idea of making Saint-Pacôme the "detective story capital of the world." Considered odd at first, the idea was supported by the town council in partnership with village leaders. Once the decision was made, the people of Saint-Pacôme quickly took the concept and ran with it. Now as many as 40 amateur authors submit detective stories each year in a hotly contested competition that produces one winner for this coveted literary prize. . . .

"This project is a typical example of a community that took charge and learned to stand on its own, using more than traditional tools like CLDs [local development centers], SADCs [community development assistance corporations], and the like," Mr. Mayer says. For him, the project shows how people anywhere can innovate. "You have to create the right conditions, know your strengths, take chances, be bold, and forge ahead."^b

^a See <www.st-pacome.ca>, consulted March 20, 2008.

^b Réseau québécois villes et villages en santé (2005). "Saint-Pacôme, capitale du roman policier," *Le Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 4, special 2005 seminar issue. See <www.rqvvs.qc.ca/pub/bulletin/BulletinV13No4.pdf>, retrieved March 25, 2008.

CONNECTING SCHOOLS AND ARTISTS IN THE CITY OF SAGUENAY^a A Case of Mediation

The Culture-Éducation project grew out of the acknowledgement that Saguenay's schools were not very involved in local cultural activities, favoring instead artists and organizations from outside the region. To change this, the cultural environment needed to alter the way it delivered services, making them accessible to young people. Networking efforts, first undertaken in 1998, proved successful and led to the establishment in 2000–2001 of the Culture-Éducation program, as it is known today.

The program's mission is to inspire a love of art and culture in the young.

Mediation provided by Saguenay's Arts, Culture, Community Life, and Library Department helped the art world and the academic community—the Jonquière and Rives-du-Saguenay school boards—craft an intersectoral policy for cooperation. The program requires effort and contributions from numerous artists and professional arts and culture organizations. In the eyes of those who are involved, it is a “win-win” situation.

Culture-Éducation has four thrusts:

- Develop and disseminate tools to facilitate integration of art and culture (instruction guide)
- Create communication opportunities for professionals to share their experiences in the cultural and academic fields
- Support initiatives begun by professionals in these fields
- Develop strategies that will let schools weave cultural components into their curricula

With different objectives, working conditions, and income levels, culture and academia are two very separate worlds that do not coexist easily. But coexistence is possible, as proven by this program that has benefited all Culture-Éducation program partners.

The program has brought artists in the region increased attendance at cultural and artistic events, reduced promotion costs, greater self-sourced income, and recognition of their professional accomplishments. In addition, by working closely with the academic world, artists could understand its needs, expectations, and limitations, and it was easier for them to adapt their art and services to suit school needs.

To ensure program success, Culture-Éducation had to make sure those involved were sensitive to the need to support, motivate, and assist teaching staff in schools. Keeping things simple is always the best way to get partnership projects up and running. It is important to remain sympathetic to the needs of partners and make sure they are satisfied.

According to the project promoter^b it was simply a matter of following some basic rules:

- Identify needs and line up potential partners, with the City serving as mediator
- Guide, counsel, and lead those involved to synergy, positive interactions, and awareness of individual and shared benefits, such as economies of scale and means
- Recruit passionate people who can convey their enthusiasm to decision makers
- Highlight even the smallest accomplishments and award prizes, so that everyone feels truly involved
- Stay flexible, prepared to set aside difficulties and enter into “partnerships of convenience”—keeping things simple is much easier
- Delegate initiative to partners or tactfully suggest levels of commitment to them
- Increase opportunities for interaction between different fields

^a Lise Laroche of Saguenay's Arts, Culture, Community Life, and Library Department helped with this case description.

^b City of Saguenay Arts, Culture, Community Life, and Library Department.

Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation and collaboration is generally defined as

A process in which a limited number of parties, generally selected, convene to discuss and debate among themselves in order to agree (through compromise or consensus) on a solution to a common problem, or to at least arrive at a final decision.³⁸

When referring to interaction between parties in positions of power, consultation and collaboration becomes

A step that includes all formal efforts made by a group of independent decision makers who have come together to agree not only on direction, but also on intervention strategies and specific actions in a given area.³⁹

38. Fortier, J. (2008). *Contribution de la concertation à la démocratisation de la gestion municipale: le cas de Trois-Rivières*, doctoral thesis, Department of Urban Studies and Tourism, Université du Québec à Montréal.

39. Schneider, R. (1987). *Gestion par concertation*, Montreal, Agence d'ARC.

Consultation and collaboration within the leisure network enhances consistency, avoids duplication of effort and, most of all, optimizes the capabilities and competencies of those serving the public; it is the primary strategy of the Québec public and civic leisure model. However, it is often difficult to achieve. A number of obstacles threaten consultation and collaboration, and many factors limit its success. And there is a primary impediment: ignorance of how it works. Especially in the field, the concept can seem vague, with multiple meanings depending on when it is used, by whom, in what context, and what the problems or interests at hand are. Moreover, consultation and collaboration requires that “doers” get involved and take collective action. It assumes that they will make a certain effort, especially in terms of commitment—and often underestimates how much this effort takes. Many committees and organizations are completely ineffective because their members are not in a position to commit their groups to action; they are simply there to exchange information, and one might say somewhat cynically, to check out the competition. Consultation and collaboration involves more than sitting around the same table. As Vachon remarks, “consultation and collaboration . . . is often misconstrued as meeting, talking about an issue or two, exchanging information . . . This is not the case.”⁴⁰ In fact, for consultation and collaboration to succeed—or even get off the ground—certain conditions must be met. Fortier’s in-depth look at the process⁴¹ revealed factors that contribute to success.

Consultation and collaboration requires the existence of certain conditions. Despite persistent difficulties, these conditions must be met and, in practice, exemplary successes should serve as building blocks. The practical and scientific literature tells us that success depends greatly on the following:

1. A common cause and sense of urgency
2. Strongly motivated participants who are empowered to act
3. Organizational flexibility, but with guidelines (signed agreements, for example)
4. A history of success
5. Committed players and champions dedicated to working together⁴²

40. Vachon, B. (1993). *Le développement local: théorie et pratique*, Montreal, Gaëtan Morin.

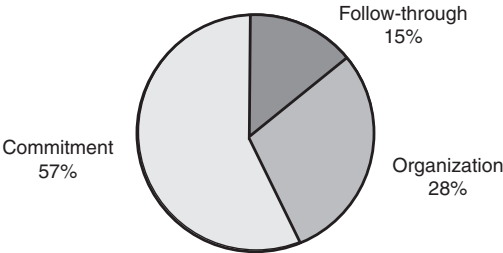
41. Fortier, J. (2002). *Proposition d'un cadre de référence en concertation*, master's degree thesis, Department of Leisure, Culture, and Tourism Studies.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

These champions can be elected officials, professionals working for a city, or citizens' groups or associations seeking to convey their needs and missions to public authorities; they understand the need to act together toward a common cause where each will benefit from a system of continuous assessment and periodic adjustment of joint actions.⁴³

A study by Julie Fortier of participants working together on leisure activities resulted in development of a reference framework describing the types of consultation and collaboration that best ensure success.

Referring to this chart, it would seem obvious that "participant commitment" is the aspect to highlight when seeking collaboration.



Distribution and percentage of action to stress for collaboration

This dimension refers to the motivations that individuals and organizations show as well as relationships with partners; we are talking here mostly about whether a group exhibits trust and respect.

"Organizing" consultation and collaboration seems a lesser priority for leisure professionals given how little effort it entails. This aspect should not be disregarded, however, as it is the stage that gives the approach its structure, i.e., development of objectives, tasks, and relationships between partners by setting out expectations, the group's ability to act, the action plan, and leadership roles. In addition, as Olson (1966) has noted, "when it comes to shared objectives or collective assets, group action or organization is indispensable."

43. Fortier, J. (2004). "Les Actes de la journée de réflexion: les défis de la concertation scolaire-municipale," *Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire and Association québécoise du loisir municipal, Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 2, No. 5.

Follow-through, which refers to ongoing assessment and adjustment, ranked third in terms of implementation effort. Evaluating whether a group's collective effort has achieved desired results nevertheless remains an important part of successful consultation and collaboration.⁴⁴

What about the Québec model? In principle, consultation and collaboration exists within each of the local, regional, and provincial subnetworks. Its overall quality varies, but willingness and ability to consult and collaborate seem to be expressed regularly, almost universally, especially in conjunction with collective endeavors, such as the Jeux du Québec games, holidays and festivals, or challenges like the World Leisure Congress, which mobilized all of Québec's leisure sector. In short, people consult and collaborate when they perceive a need to act and a leader or unifying cause.

Local consultation and collaboration varies widely, from neighborhood recreation committees to town municipal committees where various players come into contact with one another. However, it is no exaggeration to say that it is probably the weakest link in the local network, insofar as joint action among partners is frequently supplanted by recreation departments. In defense of this, we note that informal exchanges are plentiful and easy at local levels. However, many observers believe that the absence of formal channels diminishes the political role of local civil society in leisure activities, leaves little room for the emergence of leaders, and sees many topics superseded on the political agenda by other issues of local public interest. The preference for coordination over consultation and collaboration reflects our slide into clientification and the weakening of the Québec model.

On the regional level, the sport and recreation units have the theoretical role of facilitating collaboration.

44. Fortier, J, (2003). "Le succès de la concertation passe par la passion des personnes et la planification des actions," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 1, No. 4.

CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOLS, AND CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS A Generic Case

In Québec, school board members, who are elected by general vote, are responsible for the physical and pedagogical aspects of schools. The school board owns the school buildings and manages the financial resources earmarked for their operation.

In addition to overseeing educational matters, the board organizes and offers community services of a cultural, social, athletic, scientific, or community nature. It also takes part in activities that aid local and regional development, notably through participation in various local and regional development bodies and the creation of infrastructure (libraries, gyms, fiber-optic networks, etc.). The school board enters into agreements with area organizations; for example, in Québec there are currently over 1,000 municipal school agreements, testimony to resource sharing at both the local and regional levels. The board of education can also provide services for cultural, social, athletic, scientific, or community purposes. New players have also emerged as a result of Bills 170 and 180: boroughs and institutional councils.

Collaboration between municipalities and schools has been part of the public agenda for more than 35 years. Today it involves far more than the sharing of equipment and property, although this is still a topical issue as recreational facilities begin to show their age. There are a number of cases of shared use of equipment and joint financing for renovation of equipment or construction of gyms, school recreation facilities, or sports arenas.

Today, collaborative efforts are urgently needed to confront issues old and new, such as school dropout rates or continuity of service delivery, especially for daycare and extracurricular activities. Other examples include spring break programs, "Québec en forme" initiatives for disadvantaged neighborhoods, and the Jeux du Québec games, all of which require joint action from educational, municipal, and community stakeholders. And there is always the issue of coordination between school daycare and day camp.

While civil society has taken over more and more aspects of community life and services, public resources are increasingly being called on for the purposes of government/citizen partnerships. Numerous such arrangements have arisen between municipalities, citizen groups, boards of education, and local schools to keep schools open in rural locales.

Consultation and collaboration between municipalities and schools has been commonplace since the 1960s. It has met with some success and has also met with certain challenges it has not yet overcome.

MUNICIPALITY, SCHOOL, AND LIBRARY COLLABORATION IN REPENTIGNY^a A Special Case

This case concerns collaboration between the Repentigny public library, the Des Affluents school board, and two of its primary schools. The goal was to develop and implement a program to help primary school students do better in school. The *Le Fouineur* pilot project was initiated in 2006 by the Repentigny public library. As a result of the program, a 2007 Municipal Ovation Award was bestowed on the City of Repentigny at the annual conference of Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ), in the community development category.^b

The project gave teachers and their classes access to public library space, resource and documentary materials, and staff. Program financing was provided by schools and financial partners, including the city through its library budget. Under the aegis of library administration, library staff and teachers worked together to develop the *Le Fouineur* program.

In fall of 2005, the assistant head of the Repentigny public library felt that primary school students had not been making full use of available library resources. “Recreational” library usage was going strong, but academic resources for primary level children were underutilized. Word in the media at the time was that school libraries were ill equipped and incapable of meeting student needs. In addition, staffers (including volunteers and school homework help program professionals) were overtaxed and not always able to respond to requests.

This project worked because it had the three essential ingredients of successful collaboration: a real problem brought to the attention of the public, a champion aided by in-the-field collaborators, and organizations that recognized the problem and its solution, and lent their support.

^a This case was conducted with the cooperation of Chantal Brodeur of the Repentigny library.

^b See <www.ville.repentigny.qc.ca/communiquer/fouineur-gagant.html>.

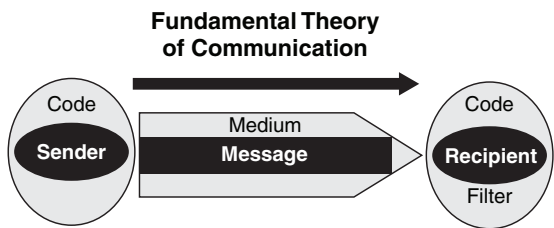
Communication

To ensure service quality and accessibility and uphold the principles of personal empowerment and participative governance, leisure organizations must engage in communication. This involves on the one hand seeking out information to enlighten the organization, guide its decisions, and ensure they are the right ones, and on the other hand providing

information that helps the public and project partners make decisions and wise choices as regards leisure experiences, services, events, and activities. In other words, communication is the function that eases organizational and personal decision making. As such, organizations and individuals are by turns message senders, recipients, consultants, and the consulted: they are communicators.

Communication basically involves using media and language to send messages to targeted persons (recipients) to elicit a behavior (effect) desired by the message sender. For communication to work, the medium and language must be those of recipients (based on codes they understand) and must attract recipients' attention (filters), then stimulate reactions. Recipients can receive more than a thousand communication messages each day.

FIGURE 3.5
Diagram of Fundamental Theory of Communication



Organizations communicate to help individuals and groups make decisions about their leisure activities. People base their leisure decisions largely on whether they have information and can understand it; that is, they receive accessible, comprehensible information that cuts through the media clutter and offers real choices—options based on their values, expectations, and abilities, rather than illusions. This makes it increasingly important for recreation departments to comply with present-day communication requirements and standards in providing information and promoting their services.

The process by which organizations define their service offerings, programs, and resources also rests largely on their knowledge and appreciation of individual and collective expectations. This aspect can unfortunately be forgotten in the flood of inquiries and under the strain of internal,

organizational, bureaucratic, and external (political and media) pressures. It requires discipline enlightened by the democratic values of public leisure and the management values of efficiency. This is why public participation and consultation are essential components of leisure communication. In discussing the principle of participative governance we cited the use of consultation by recreational organizations, touching upon use of reference points and milestones to ensure the discipline necessary for this dimension of communication.

One question remains: What are Québec organizations doing about informing the public? While there is no system as such for analyzing communication with the public, we can, from observation, make some inferences. If we classify practices according to the intent of the communicator, we distinguish the following:

1. *Promotion*, which assesses results by measuring how many people take part in activities or events, or visit an attraction such as a cultural center
2. *Education*, the goal of which is better leisure utilization by the young, people who are relearning leisure activities or using them for rehabilitation after accident or illness, or those seeking information on how to spend their spare time
3. *Training*, to help people improve their recreational skills and safety practices in a range of activities, from skiing or rock climbing to taking photos
4. *Awareness*, whether regarding the rights of cyclists, the right to vacation time, immigrant access to sports, or information to help Quebecers decide on which leisure-related equipment and services to buy

Communication takes many forms, but is still somewhat traditional. For example, there is minimal use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and little or no use of interactive tools. People are content with so-called virtual storefronts that provide basic descriptions and related information. Some, like the City of Montréal website, are linked to local networks; others offer online transactions such as making reservations or signing up for activities—but they are still the exception. Neither the public nor civic leisure systems yet has a “virtual recreation center” in support of their existing programs.

Two cases and one project aptly illustrate this. Vélo Québec, which serves a broad audience, has structured its organization around three of the four communication methods. And Sherbrooke Geriatric University Institute has specifically developed leisure education to improve the lives of persons with certain physical or mental limitations.

CASE 3.19

VÉLO QUÉBEC

Vélo Québec, a civil society organization, has been at the forefront of Québec cycling for 40 years. Whether for personal recreation or tourism, or as a means of transportation, this organization offers advice, training, and information on cycling and tirelessly promotes bicycles as a means to improve the environment and the health and well-being of citizens. Vélo Québec has four divisions that make use of a broad range of communication tools:

- **Vélo Québec Association** is a member group that has defended the interests of cyclists since 1967. Its crowning achievement is Route Verte, the 4,300-kilometer cycling trail created on its instigation that will connect one end of Québec to the other. The organization also compiles statistics, produces bike-use studies, and offers technical training on bike routes. It is the voice of cyclists and encourages collaboration, research, education, and communication in the field. On request, it also acts as a consultant. In 2005 Vélo Québec Association launched *On the move to school!*, a project designed to encourage students in lower grades to make active transportation part of their everyday lives.
- **Vélo Québec Éditions** publishes four magazines (*Vélo Mag*, which marked its 25th anniversary in 2005, *Géo Plein Air*, *Québec Science*, and *Nature sauvage*), as well as guidebooks, maps, and publications on outdoor sports, recreation, and tourism.
- **Vélo Québec Événements** creates and runs internationally renowned cycling events such as the Tour de l'île de Montréal—the highlight of the Montréal Bike Fest, which also features the Tour la Nuit and Défi métropolitain. The division also organizes 75-to-150-km bike rides known as Summer Challenges and acts as producer for other organizations, including the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. It is also behind Operation Bike-to-Work, a sweeping awareness and advertising campaign that promotes cycling as a means of transportation.
- **Vélo Québec Voyages** is an agency serving active travelers. It offers a variety of Québec biking packages, including events like The Grand Tour and La Petite Aventure, in addition to developing cycling routes and putting together bike travel packages in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, and Morocco. The agency helps 5,000 cyclists take to the road every year.^a

^a See <www.velo.qc.ca/fr/accueil.php>, consulted February 15, 2008.

AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO GERIATRIC LEISURE

Various educational approaches have been taken, with different consequences from one model to the next (Tinsley and Tinsley, 1981;^a Tinsley, 1984;^b Ouellette and Berryman, 1984).^c Some served to distribute information or recommendations for activities. Other programs were more concerned with the personal development of individuals (Munson and Munson, 1986;^d Bullock and Howe, 1991;^e Mundy, 1998;^f Peterson and Stumbo, 2004).^g

One such leisure education program, from Sherbrooke Geriatric University Institute, uses various kinds of interactive communication to reach its audience. It seeks to help participants become aware of available leisure opportunities and acquire the skills and familiarity needed to attain maximal levels of self-initiation.

The program is structured around the four components proposed by Mundy (1998): awareness of leisure, self-awareness, skill development, and utilization of resources. *Awareness of leisure* refers to individuals' attitudes toward leisure and its role in their lives. Awareness may be colored by preconceived ideas that keep people from engaging in leisure activities. *Self-awareness* refers to how individuals perceive and value leisure and recreation. *Skill development* relates to all skills needed to achieve self-initiation, including social or technical competencies and decision-making and organizational abilities. *Utilization of resources* also covers awareness of resources available to organizations, from materials to facilities.

The leisure education program is run using a systematic procedure inspired by the Bullock and Howe model (1991). It takes a sequential approach, beginning with attitude awareness and obstacles that interfere with attainment of leisure self-initiation.

^a Tinsley, H. and P. Tinsley (1981). "An analysis of leisure counseling models," *The Counseling Psychologist*, vol. 3, pp. 189–200.

^b Tinsley, H. (1984). "The psychological benefits of leisure counseling," *Loisir et société*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 125–140.

^c Ouellette, P. and D.L. Berryman (1984). "Le counseling en loisir: dimensions et perspectives," *Loisir et société*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 243–357.

^d Munson, W.W. and D.G. Munson (1986). "Multimodal leisure counseling with older people," *Activities, Adaptation and Aging*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 1–15.

^e Bullock, C.C. and C.Z. Howe (1991). "A model therapeutic recreation program for the reintegration of persons with disabilities into the community," *The Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 67–77.

^f Mundy, J. (1998). *Leisure Education: Theory and Practice*, Champaign, Sagamore.

^g Peterson, C.A. and N.J. Stumbo (2004). *Therapeutic Recreation Program Design: Principles and Procedures*, San Francisco, Pearson Benjamin Cummings.

Support and Leadership

This very tangible and operational function consists of providing coaching and any material, financial, and logistical coordination needed by groups or persons in order to take part in free or structured leisure activities. It covers a broad range of actions, is concerned primarily with the everyday doings of personnel in public or civic organizations, and is the primary output of the Québec system.

Public organizations devote most of their time to support and leadership, usually formalized in policies setting out which organizations qualify to benefit. Civil society organizations provide support and leadership to persons and groups. A distinction must be drawn, however, between support provided for organized activities versus that for unorganized activities. In the former case, personnel play a direct role in relation to participants; in the latter case, personnel mostly make suitable environments available, such as equipment, space, or information, so that individuals may participate at their leisure. Bike paths are one example of support for unorganized activities, while day camps or theater workshops are examples of the added value in organized activities.

Operationally, support and leadership are divided into five main subfunctions:

1. Facilitation and experience- or activity-specific programming
2. Coaching for organizations and volunteers
3. Funding of organizations and initiatives
4. Material support—equipment and space
5. Logistical support, especially for promotional, management, and technical plans

Facilitation and Programming

Facilitation in the context of leisure organizations takes place on site and involves experiences or pursuits that people enjoy in their spare time. The activity leaders usually give the activities names (outings, games, etc.), explain how they will work, manage the environment (decorations, materials, etc.), guide or encourage participants, and manage conflicts, successes, and setbacks. They need to interest, involve, and supervise. Participants' autonomy varies depending on their skill levels or abilities to act independently. Facilitation, to the extent that it respects the fundamentals

of the leisure experience, makes it easy for participants to show initiative. Organizations facilitating activities act as sources of programming or events, handle promotion, and manage the finances and logistics.

In Québec all local players put on activities. The trend is for municipalities to delegate organization to civil society organizations or groups that initiate activities with their members or communities. But most of them still offer activity programs themselves, the oldest and largest of which being summer day camps, which attract over 202,000 children. In this regard, community recreation centers and neighborhood recreation committees play a big role. Facilitation and programming is also the most prevalent subfunction in residential and long-term-care centers (CHSLD), seniors residences, and residential facilities for troubled youth or those who are ill or in recovery.

CASE 3.21

INTERMUNICIPAL ACTIVITIES

Seven towns in the Thérèse-de-Blainville RCM (146,410 inhabitants) signed an agreement to allow all their residents to register for activities in any of the seven municipalities, regardless of where they lived. This agreement provides access to a broader selection of activities at competitive rates—those living in the RCM pay resident rates for all the activities covered by the agreement. So someone living in Rosemère (14,434 inhabitants) can register for one or more cultural classes in any other municipality in the RCM without paying a higher rate. The agreement only covers cultural classes for adults.

For the winter 2008 season alone, activities included almost 90 language, dance, drawing, painting, wine appreciation, handicraft, jewelry, and yoga classes at rates from \$40 to \$250. The fees pay the direct costs of materials and instruction.

Class instructors are for the most part specialists in their fields, and their approach is more adapted to adults than children.

ACTIVITIES IN A COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER^a

The Multi-plus community center in Trois-Rivières provides adults with activities similar to those in the Thérèse-de-Blainville RCM. For summer 2008, it offers women's and men's cosom hockey, recreational volleyball, and fitness classes for those age 50 and over. There are also dance classes in hip-hop/jazz, flamenco, gumboot, solo and couple Latin dances, Argentine tango for couples, line or group dancing, afternoon dance parties, and belly dancing. The community center also offers arts and cultural activities in knitting; bobbin, Russian, and Bruges lace making; scrapbooking; decorative painting on wood; traditional decorative painting; amateur choir singing; napkin technique; acoustic guitar; French wine tasting and appreciation; beginner courses in digital photography; photoediting with Photoshop; photography; watercolor painting; painting; as well as portraiture and drawing techniques. There are also Indian, Chinese, and vegetarian cooking classes, sushi- and chocolate-making workshops, and courses on healthy cuisine. For health and well-being, there are yoga and *tai chi yang* classes, facial firming workshops, first aid, daycare, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) classes, and workshops on making personal care products, and on mandalas and intuitive drawing.

^a See <www.multi-plus.ca>, consulted April 20, 2008.

No doubt these activities help many Quebecers draw pleasure and satisfaction from their artistic or cultural interests by providing information, training, and interaction with others. The instructors are specialists who act as combination councilors, teachers, and coaches and are usually paid from the registration fees.

Coaching

Coaching is widely used by municipal, regional, and even provincial employees to assist organizations in civil society and by employees of these same organizations to support their volunteer board members as well as individuals and groups. Coaching is not a power trip, but rather a form of support to help individuals acquire competencies. It is in keeping with the nature of leisure and volunteering and with the principle of civil society's empowerment and independence. At the same time, it lends valuable assistance to organizations and ensures that public funds are used well and efficiently.

Why coaching? Because it corresponds to the needs and special characteristics of volunteers, who wish to be independent and appreciated, who want to choose where they put their energies, and who need the freedom to act and make their own decisions. Coaching works better than controlling, and corresponds to the leadership style and role of public organizations, particularly municipalities.

Coaching can be broken down into several actions:

1. Counseling: Helping individuals and groups resolve problems
2. Guiding: Giving individuals and groups a better understanding of their environment
3. Training: Helping individuals and groups engage in lifelong learning
4. Confronting: Helping individuals and groups recognize their shortcomings and work towards improvement

The coach's role is similar to that of the local network leader, as discussed previously in the paragraph on leadership. The network leader or coach's main job is to keep members abreast of how shared goals and objectives are evolving and thus keep the spirit of their action or vision alive and support network structures. To do this, the coach must be well informed about the needs and status of the community and network. The coach helps both members and the actual volunteer organizations be self-sufficient. No doubt that volunteers are the most important group in this leisure system that need coaching.

Over the last few years, Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire⁴⁵ conducted a research program on volunteering and volunteers. The study addressed and shed light on a number of issues, such as the role of paid staff with respect to volunteers, especially the board members of the many organizations in civil society. Paid staff in the survey were either employed by an institution outside the organization.

45. Excerpts from Thibault, A. (2003). *Les professionnels en loisir, sport et culture: intervenants ou accompagnateurs auprès des bénévoles*, text presented at a symposium on social action in Bordeaux, France.

COACHING AT THE CITY OF MONTREAL

The City of Montreal provides a good example of the role coaching can play. In 1996 the City introduced a new partnership approach that put an end to its hands-on role and turned responsibility for program implementation over to outside organizations. The City signed partnership agreements recognizing organizations' expertise and competencies in one or more shared spheres of activity and specifying the means of dividing responsibility between the two parties. Shared responsibility means, among other things, that the City and the organization jointly design, plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the services provided. This process is spelled out in the Borough of Rivière-des-Prairies' recent *NPO* [nonprofit organization] *Accreditation and Support Policy*, adopted in November 2007.

The City (and for the past few years, the boroughs) lends technical, professional, physical, and/or financial assistance to organizations working in its spheres of responsibility. The professional support provided is much in the form of coaching, a change that has altered the roles of many permanent employees and professionals, who now coach rather than facilitate.

Financial and Material Support

Public bodies can provide financial support to civil organizations and individuals in a variety of ways. User fees, grants, loans of venues and equipment, and results-based contracts (RBC) are the most common means, as well as free professional assistance, which often has to do with locating other funding sources.

Material support generally consists of lending basic equipment on site (e.g., gym mats), furniture (e.g., chairs, tables, etc.), or equipment specific to various events. Public bodies can also lend, over the short, medium, or long term, office space, activity venues, or sports facilities, either interior (e.g. rinks, pools, gymnasiums, etc.) or exterior (soccer or baseball fields, rinks, pitches for playing *pétanque* or *bocce*, etc.).

In concrete terms, grants can take many forms, ranging from funds managed entirely by the beneficiary to a credit line established by the municipality, which organizations draw on using payment requisitions. There is ongoing debate about which is best in light of public financial and political accountability obligations. The issue is far from being resolved because public bodies want to and must be accountable for how funds are used, and civil society organizations say they need flexibility and do not want to be treated like subcontractors. This situation has gradually

led to partnership agreements where each party's responsibilities are clearly defined and results indicators are agreed on in advance. However, although this has the advantage of clarifying roles and expectations, it demands a "contractual" discipline that is neither easy to adopt nor well accepted in municipalities and communities, where it is viewed as red tape that gums up program workings. It also runs counter to the usual practice of transferring funds via contract, which is more like delegating or subcontracting than partnering. These contracts rarely result in a real communication between parties and are more an expression of the results expected of the subsidized organization or the mission it is to fulfill.

As regards other income, it is common to see municipal recreational departments or civic organizations pool logistics, tools, and know-how to collect activity fees or hold fundraising activities such as bingo games.

To help with equipment needs, many towns and organization groups have set up equipment banks, which are available to accredited organizations and, in certain cases, to the public. For example, the Borough of Beauport in Québec City has a central equipment office providing everything from coffee machines to sound systems, and the City of Sherbrooke lends tables and games to its citizens for street, neighborhood, and family parties.

Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

In Québec three types of planning are used—strategic planning, project planning, and programming.

As a corollary to results-based management, a measurement process has emerged that gives the evaluation function a new meaning, integrating it more fully into the decision-making process. An example can be found in *Montréal, Cultural Metropolis: A Cultural Development Policy for Ville de Montréal 2005–2015*,⁴⁶ which provides a point-by-point analysis of the policy's actionable items and observable results.

However, it should be noted that apart from the large bureaucracies, organizations rarely survey their clients in a systematic and formal way, but rather assess their level of satisfaction after the fact—there is no evaluation process based on planned results and desired impacts. "No news is good news" is usually the approach.

Strategic planning, which consists of assessing and adjusting an organization's position in its environment, has been popular since the 1990s, although it is sometimes done more out of a sense of obligation or

46. See <ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/culture_fr/media/documents/Report_2006_Montreal_english.pdf>, retrieved April 18, 2008.

because “it’s the thing to do.” In light of external changes such as the new behaviors and demographic profile of Quebecers, school and municipal reforms, low levels of public support and income, and the emergence of results-based management, many public and civil organizations have felt the need to revise their orientations, services, and specific contributions to leisure. To this effect, they have studied their strengths and internal weaknesses, as well as external threats and opportunities. With municipal reorganization, administrative units responsible for planning have been identified for the first time. Central recreation departments in cities with boroughs have thus offloaded the provision of services and assumed responsibility for planning and supplying expertise.

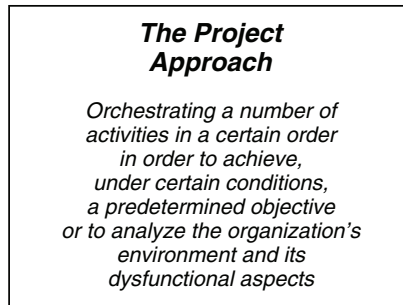
Today the leisure system faces many issues and a rapidly changing environment, as we saw in the first chapters of this book. Despite the social, political, and administrative challenges ahead, there has been no systematic development of an overall strategic perspective on public and civic leisure. Stakeholders in the leisure sector, conditioned as they are to making do, continue to get by. But in the face of cocooning and the commercial leisure industry, it will take more than resourcefulness—it will take vision and, undoubtedly, strategic choices that reflect the resources available and the special characteristics of the public and civic sector.

However, we have already had glimpses of a more systematic strategic approach. Take, for example, the biennial strategic planning exercises of Observatoire québécois du loisir, Observatoire de la culture, and Forum québécois du loisir, as well as the several recent municipal recreational policies in large cities.

Results-based management, the principal management style in Québec’s public sector since the adoption of the *Public Administration Act* in June 2000, obliges organizations to identify observable and measurable products, outcomes, and sometimes impacts, and to make sure they are achieved. This calls for an information and data collection system that allows for real-time evaluation in the shortest possible time. These are first, hesitant steps in this regard for leisure, ones that will force professionals to identify more precisely the services and products they wish to produce and the impacts they hope to generate.

In Québec, results-based planning frequently takes a project-centered approach. This has the advantage of concentrating the necessary efforts and resources over a specific period to achieve precise results, defined in terms of products, outcomes, and impacts, thus facilitating the mobilization of resources around specific objectives. The products are the project outputs, such as activities, services, or facilities. The outcomes are the short- and medium-term results of the products, such as client satisfaction

FIGURE 3.6
The Project Approach Definition



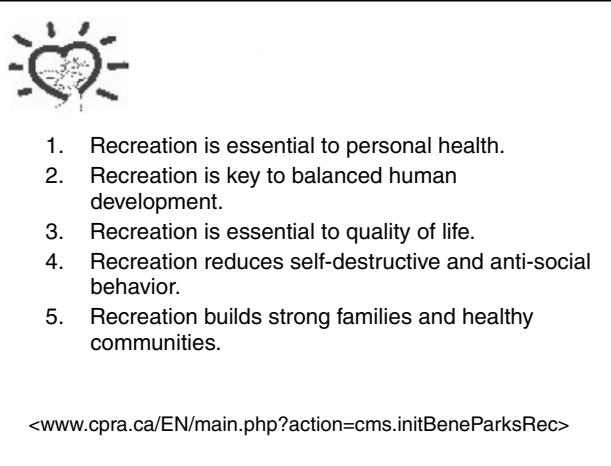
or more participants, while impacts, which are broader and less present in the short term, are the expected economic, social, or cultural spinoffs. Another dimension increasingly present is efficiency and productivity. Results-based project planning consists of identifying, directing, and carrying out actions that provide, effectively and efficiently, the necessary services, information, and resources to support the leisure experience for individuals and the community.

On the outcome and impact side, the scientific and professional communities have demonstrated the potential beneficial effects of leisure. The “benefits of leisure” movement sponsored in Canada by the Canada Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has suggested and scientifically demonstrated five broad categories of beneficial effects, illustrated in Figure 3.7.

Lastly, the leisure sector has become adept at programming, especially at identifying and scheduling activities, which is a more hands-on type of action.

Planning is most advanced at the operational level and is only taking its first baby steps at the strategic planning and results identification levels. Organizations are generally ill equipped to carry out this type of planning and evaluation. Apart from libraries, Québec leisure institutions have no databanks or management information systems capable of measuring the shifts and characteristics of consumers to inform and evaluate their work. Managers have difficulty measuring and using performance indicators to evaluate their decisions objectively, support their reporting activities, or defend the value of public leisure. Similarly, there is no way of systematically measuring the quality, use, and value of facilities and infrastructures. Except for operational planning, the absence of effective tools weighs on

FIGURE 3.7
Benefits of Recreation



the process and causes managers to take shortcuts that reduce the quality of strategic plans and limit them to generalities and operational details. This is clearly a weak link in the Québec system.

Management of Human, Material, and Financial Resources

The field of leisure, whether it be social, cultural, sports, or tourism-related, draws on human resources whose nature, recruitment, retention, and development are specific to the field. Volunteers are not paid employees, and a large portion of budgets are subsidized. Facility and venue schedules are complex, and aging infrastructures must be dealt with and, often, adapted to new vocations. Funding strategies have reached their limit, and at the same time financial needs are increasing.

As we have seen previously, management information systems are often inadequate, yet the management of leisure resources is results based and subject to public accountability and reporting obligations, in addition to partnership considerations. Few organizations identify observable results in order to develop and fine-tune leisure services. Government departments have difficulty adapting management procedures to the distinctive characteristics of the leisure system, no doubt because leisure management specialists have not yet developed enough appropriate administrative

practices. Management techniques must evolve if we want to prevent the sacrifice of a number of specific features of the leisure system on the altar of standardization. In addition to developing methods conducive to leisure management, managers have many challenges to face.

We must adapt the recruitment, supervision, motivation, and training of volunteers to today's lifestyles. We must develop, promote, and ensure the rightful place of volunteer work in the community, as well as the professional development and motivation of paid staff.

We must renovate and convert venues and facilities, optimize their use for increasing versatility, meet new safety and environmental standards, and reduce costs. Managing facilities and infrastructures mainly consists of measuring the worth of venues and facilities, assessing the need for them, adapting them according to these needs, and making sure they're safe⁴⁷ and in compliance with standards, as well as ensuring cooperation between owners.

We must set up budgetary processes that forge ties between partners and adapt budget appropriation methods to the leisure system's mission and values. We must find a means of transferring funds to civil partners that allows elected officials and public bodies to monitor how the money is used without interfering with civil society's independence. Two cases illustrate possible ways of doing this—a partnership project currently on the table in Granby, and in Québec City, an equalization model for sharing funding between its very distinct boroughs.

We must find new funding solutions, as current methods have reached their limit. The main roles of financial management are to justify and put in place public funding, create public-private partnerships, establish affordable and fair fee scales, plan public and private fundraising activities, and do financial reporting.

How is the Québec system doing in this regard? As with planning, the level of development and modernization varies with the size of the organization and the management information systems in place, systems that are sadly lacking at the provincial level. How many times have we heard managers in the leisure sector complain that accountants impose budget parameters that are inappropriate for the leisure sector? What alternatives can we suggest?

47. There has been much debate in recent years concerning the safety of children's playgrounds. Because of the large number of accidents, certain public organizations with substandard play structures were more or less required to bring them up to standard. Canadian standards for this equipment and playgrounds have become compulsory in childcare centers. Tremblay, B. (2005). "État de la sécurité dans les aires de jeu pour enfants," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 5.

A PARTNERSHIP NETWORK GETS INVOLVED IN GRANBY'S BUDGETARY PROCESS

Following the example of other municipalities, the City of Granby (60,600 inhabitants) has been in the process of updating its recreational policy since early 2008.

Until 2008, the City of Granby was the only municipality of its size without a municipal recreation department. The City contracted out responsibility for planning and implementing a program of activities and providing support to groups and individuals, offering little in the way of direction over the years and making few changes to its funding arrangements. A change in policy at the City and a new municipal vision statement led senior officials to redefine the City's role and show more leadership in how the City's recreation budget was being used. The City also sought to be more accountable to taxpayers and create synergy by working hand-in-hand with others rather than imposing from the top. To strengthen and modernize all aspects of recreation, the City of Granby hired leisure professionals and sought out civil partners to act as network leaders in the main recreational spheres—nature activities, sports, cultural activities, and community life. These network leaders provide support for both group and individual practice in each sphere, while the City is responsible for informing the public, developing infrastructures, and monitoring and evaluating the field as well as overall municipal leadership. The City's main partners coordinate their efforts through a pilot or liaison committee.

The subcontractors have thus become partners. To get more involved in choosing the directions the leisure network should take, the City adopted a three-phase budgetary process. First, municipal employees responsible for monitoring and evaluation present to the Partner Council and city council a summary of accomplishments and results from the previous year as well as a statement of the public's expectations. With this summary and the City's budgetary guidelines in hand, the Partner Council develops a budgetary framework appropriate to the leisure sector and presents it to city council for adoption. In the second phase, each partner develops an action plan and budget in accordance with the budgetary framework, which they present to and discuss with city officials. The City then finalizes and adopts its budget. In a final step, the partners and the City sign a protocol in which each party specifies its commitments and anticipated results. Obviously, the partners remain free to act and seek financing as they wish.

This process is still in the trial stage, but it has the advantage of transforming subcontractors into partners and opening up possible ways to resolve problems that threaten to change the spirit of local networks.

Québec City IN SEARCH OF AN EQUALIZATION FRAMEWORK

This case, like that of Granby, is an example of a budgetary process in keeping with the values and mission of public and civic leisure. It is only a start, however, and needs fine-tuning.

The *Charter of Ville de Québec* (R.S.Q., c. C-11.5, a. 123), like that of Montréal, stipulates that “The city shall determine the annual allotment to be made to each borough council according to a formula it determines that establishes, among other things, elements of equalization among the boroughs.”

In as much as the boroughs are responsible for recreation, culture, and social development, it is important to develop a framework for sharing resources among them.

It is generally recognized that equalization is a mechanism that “guarantees residents, no matter where they live, equal public services for equal levels of taxation.”^a

The City started by considering ways of developing a tool to equitably distribute resources for municipal recreation services. The model under study takes into account demand (D), City policy re minimum guaranteed level of service to all members of the public (B), and commitments that shaped what services were provided in the past (OH) and the obligations these created.

Demand represents the entire set of present and future characteristics of the borough—population (P), age structure (A), population distribution (T), residents’ ability to pay (R), and current use of recreational services (U). It is calculated in accordance with the principles of accessibility and empowerment, particularly in that it takes into account the poverty index and population distribution. It is expressed by the formula $D = A / (T + R) + (U)$. For example, a poorer borough where recreational services are used a great deal and where the population is dispersed over a large area needs a bigger budget than a rich, densely populated borough whose residents partake in commercial leisure activities.

The formula also factors in the presence of leisure resources in the borough (+O) such as parks, facilities and buildings, programs, and support to the public, all of which entail costs. In short, the budgets are flexible. This formula applies to services beyond the basic ones provided to the entire population, like playgrounds for preschool children and parks that are accessible to seniors on foot.

This framework is in its preliminary development phase and still needs a management information system as well as political input, particularly with regard to basic services. It will above all require political courage—it is much

easier to budget on the basis of previous years according to number of inhabitants or demand per service—but this framework respects the nature and values of the public leisure system.

Boroughs or no boroughs, there will always be differences within municipalities and regions that call for equalization.

^a Lord, B. (2002). *Les cahiers du CRIC*, No. 7, September, p. 18.

Strategic Watch

Because of the major changes affecting Québec society, strategic watch has become an essential tool for ensuring that programs, resources, and services remain relevant. It requires information about and regular analysis of populations, communities, and leisure practices.

For the past decade or so, most organizations have needed to keep strategic watch to take advantage of rather than be a victim of the rapid social, technical, legislative, regulatory, economic, and individual changes in society.

Private companies watch markets, the competition, and technology to inform their strategic decisions essential to their survival and success in a highly competitive world.

Rapid changes in the leisure, sports, and arts sector in recent years have forced organizations to adapt to realities that they have too often underestimated.

The leisure system must keep watch to demonstrate the value and worth of its own actions and those of other organizations. It must keep up-to-date on the leisure environment, professional practices, government action, and above all, the changing behavior of Quebecers, who are aging, multicultural, and demanding.

The Québec leisure system can count on a number of observatories in the province and internationally to help it with its watch activities. It is important to know how to read and interpret the numerous reports from statistics institutes and forecasting organizations. For the Québec leisure sector, Observatoire québécois du loisir and its federal counterpart, the Lifestyle Information Network, are excellent resources. As in many other spheres such as the health and education sectors, a great deal of work goes into building these information systems.

OBSERVATOIRE QUÉBÉCOIS DU LOISIR

Observatoire québécois du loisir (OQL) is a product of collaboration between Secrétariat au loisir et au sport, Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, Association québécoise du loisir municipal, Sports-Québec, Conseil québécois du loisir and the URLSS, which make up its advisory council.^a Its mission is to inform the decisions of stakeholders in public leisure by reporting on changes in critical factors in their environment. OQL's services are aimed at staff and managers, and it is headquartered at Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire.

To carry out its watch function, OQL uses an electronic monitoring and analysis network (800 websites are visited each week) as well as observers in the Québec leisure community. OQL disseminates the results to its 2,000 subscribers in the form of newsletters, dispatches, reports, and portfolios. It also presents its results at symposiums, seminars, and workshops.

OQL monitors and reports on the following four topics:

The public and communities: their demographic and sociological makeup, segments, leisure practices, and expectations—in short, public leisure's clients

Governments and federations: their laws and regulations, policies, programs, and decision-making processes, in order to observe the factors that promote and impede action

Resources (funding, facilities, and people): their nature, state of health, management and evolution

Significant professional and organizational practices in current use

OQL produces 20 issues of its newsletter a year, as well as factual, refereed, and popularized reports on its work, and publishes weekly dispatches (more than 150 a year). Every year it holds a seminar on a strategic issue, and at the request of an organization, OQL may undertake a more in-depth study of a particular subject.

In collaboration with its Canadian counterpart, the Life Style Information Network,^b OQL makes an electronic library available comprising several thousand downloadable documents on leisure.

^a See <oql.uqtr.ca>, consulted February 1, 2008.

^b See <www.lin.ca>, consulted March 15, 2008.

Chapter 4

RESOURCES

PAID STAFF: THE RENEWAL CHALLENGE

Looming labor shortages in Québec are bound to affect the leisure sector. According to a study conducted in 2002 by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, leisure workers had an average of 17.3 years of experience in the field.

A number of different employee groups are responsible for Québec's leisure system. Regular, permanent employees in the public sector enjoy the working conditions afforded all provincial and municipal civil servants. The civil service also hires casual workers (some of whom are unionized) as lifeguards or for programs or activities such as day camps. It may also hire independent workers, usually as monitors or to teach a variety of courses, from photography to dance. Permanent salaried staff work in civil society, too, where their conditions are sometimes on par with those of civil servants, but often inferior. Many workers in this sector are employed on special projects or series of projects for which they often have to find the funding themselves. Most salaried leisure staff therefore find themselves in short-term employment.

The situation varies from one sector to another. In local, regional, and provincial associations, 43.6% of employees have less than 15 years' experience in the leisure field, for an average of 16.0 years. For institutional workers, the average is 15.8 years, with many employees (28.4%) having between 15 and 19.5 years.

Municipal workers in the sector have the most years of experience—18.4 on average. Close to a third (32.2%) have more than 25 and will be eligible to retire in a few years. Staff turnover in this sector is already high.

To meet these needs, an average of 230 Quebecers graduate with undergraduate or technical degrees in leisure every year. According to recent Relance Survey data from Ministère de l'Éducation (2007),¹ 73.2% of 2005–2006 graduates from technical programs in leisure are working in their field and earn an average weekly income of \$474 (or \$24,648 a year), while 23% have chosen to continue their studies. The real rate of unemployment or employment outside the field is only 3%. Of students who completed an undergraduate degree in leisure, culture, and tourism in 2005,² 81% are working full time, 73.3% in a field related to their studies, and are earning an average income of \$682 a week or \$35,464 a year. It took them an average of eight weeks to find a job. Although this high employment rate is wonderful for the graduates, it means that there will be a shortage of workers due to the high rate of retirement and the boom in leisure services. This poses the question of whether the number of places in educational institutions should be increased. Moreover, promotion of these programs should be intensified because the programs are far from full. We also need to look at working conditions in the leisure sector to keep it competitive at a time when demographic trends are leading to a shrinking pool of young workers.

Data on pay scales is scarce, but the 2001 survey³ on municipal pay scales indicates that municipal recreational directors in cities of 10,000 inhabitants or more earn from \$55,000 to \$70,000, managers of arenas from \$44,000 to \$57,000, and professionals from \$36,000 to \$63,000. As this data was generated by surveying a sample of respondents, the reality on the ground may be different. For example, in the municipalities of Gatineau,

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1. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007). *La relance au collégial en formation technique : la situation d'emploi au 31 mars 2007 de personnes diplômées de 2005–2006*.
 2. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2007). *La relance à l'université : la situation d'emploi de personnes diplômées de 2005 pendant la semaine du 21 au 27 janvier 2007*.
 3. Institut de la statistique du Québec (2001). *Enquête sur la rémunération globale: municipalités locales de 10 000 et plus de population*, <www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/publications/remuneration/rem_globale2001_pdf.htm>, retrieved February 8, 2008.

Sherbrooke, Repentigny, and Lévis, directors' salaries range from \$70,000 to \$88,000 and those of professionals from \$30,000 to \$62,000, according to revised data from January 2004.

Although municipal civil servants enjoy decent working conditions, the same cannot be said for employee groups in civil-society organizations, especially local ones. Many are dependent on projects and available funding and have no social safety net. This lack of job security, in a situation of labor shortages and strong demand for workers, threatens to weaken the leisure system itself, which will no longer be able to attract competent workers to guarantee a certain level of stability in supervising volunteers and providing services. Already many employers complain of high employee turnover. This is how a speaker at a 2003 leisure symposium put it:

Community organizations often lack insight and competence with regard to the demands of organizing work. You rightly stress that we know little about the actual working conditions of employees. Studies should be conducted on working conditions in the community sector to identify weaknesses and possible ways of improving how work is organized. Community leisure workers also have the responsibility to organize themselves professionally to promote their interests and concerns.⁴

This will be a significant challenge for the Québec model in coming years. In fact, the challenge is already here. Recruiting and keeping day camp monitors already poses a big problem.

Fifty percent of day camps only retain half their monitors from one year to the next and [...] 37% have to accept almost all applicants (more than 75%). This recruitment and retention problem is more prevalent where the job supply is most competitive, for example where better-paying positions in the restaurant industry are available.

Day camp monitors' salaries are less and less competitive, it would appear. Yet monitors have increasing responsibilities to shoulder and big challenges in store.⁵

We not only have to look at employee working conditions—the work context itself poses challenges, which are shared by volunteers. We can no longer take staff for granted; we must see to their needs.

4. Lachapelle, R. (2003). *Les défis de la reconnaissance du travail communautaire en loisir*, a presentation at Forum québécois du loisir, <www.loisirquebec.com/doc/file/Conference_rlachapelle_03.pdf>, retrieved April 23, 2008.

5. Thibault, A. (2007). "Les camps de jour publics: un programme de loisir en révision," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 4, No. 13, p. 4.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF VOLUNTEERS

Current knowledge of volunteer work has led to a strong theoretical consensus on the definition of volunteering as a commitment and a freely given gift. *The volunteer freely chooses to commit his or her time, energy, skills, and passion with no financial benefit.* The notions of freedom, sharing, and commitment are integral to the definition of volunteering.

Studies in Québec, across Canada, and in the French-speaking world, as well as internationally, often refer to three key variables—volunteer work is a voluntary act, an unpaid activity, and a field of commitment and giving. Sociology stresses that volunteer work can be interpreted according to the specific sociocultural characteristics of each community.⁶

In the leisure sector, volunteers are an irreplaceable resource and underpin the entire Québec model of civic leisure.

About 500,000 people devote a total of 80 million hours to recreation, sports, arts, and community volunteer work in Quebec each year. These 80 million hours are the equivalent of 44,000 full-time positions. The value of this volunteer labour ranges from \$560 million, if valued at minimum wage, to \$1.061 billion, if valued at the average wage.⁷

The Québec leisure system cannot survive without this contribution. Clearly, no increase in user fees or contribution of public funds can replace the monetary value of volunteers. Even if it could, the very purpose of public and civic leisure would be called into question. Indeed, the mutual aid, solidarity, and human interaction contributed by volunteers, who forge social ties, build social capital, and enhance social environments, cannot be replaced by paid staff.

The meaning of volunteering varies in time and space. It is influenced by its era, its community, its generation. However, all volunteers share the fact that they give freely of themselves, with no financial gain, to serve other people and their community. They operate in an environment of mutual benefit—they both give and receive. Although they carry out tasks, their main quality consists of forging relationships. Their work is thus free, social, and public.⁸

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6. Thibault, A., J. Fortier, and P. Albertus (2007). *Rendre compte du mouvement bénévole au Québec, créateur de liens autant que de biens*, research report by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire of Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec (RABQ), p. 20.
 7. Thibault, A. (2004). *Recreation Volunteers: An Asset to Be Cultivated*, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, IYV Research Program, p. 1.
 8. Thibault, A. *et al.* (2007), *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Moreover, in studies conducted by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, leisure organizations reported volunteer burnout, recruitment and retention problems, and difficulties training new volunteers.

The Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating showed that the proportion of the Canadian population who did volunteer work fell from 31% to 27% between 1997 and 2000. Although the number of volunteers decreased, a small number of volunteers donated many more hours:

More than a third (34%) of volunteer hours were donated by the 5% of volunteers who gave 596 hours or more of their time a year. Moreover, 39% of volunteer hours were contributed by the 20% of volunteers who donated from 188 to 595 hours a year. Although these two groups only represent 25% of volunteers, and less than 7% of the Canadian population, they contributed 73% of all volunteer hours.⁹

Volunteer work is a public good that can no longer be taken for granted—it is in decline and needs attention. Renewing recruitment efforts and exploring new sources of volunteers will go some way to expanding the practice of volunteering as a civic duty. However, this will not be enough. Other strategic challenges must be met, namely adapting the very practice of volunteer work and management to new realities and taking the necessary measures to counter various threats.

Three factors explain this dropoff—higher expectations, “clientification,” and changing living conditions and societal values. Society and the government often demand of volunteers a level of performance on par with that of permanent employees. What’s more, the availability and motivations of the volunteers themselves have changed; their free time is now organized differently, and volunteering motivated by moral values is in decline.

Much of the new demand for volunteers comes from recent changes to the role of government and the increasing prominence of civil society, which require more citizens to be involved and more respect for their contributions when they do, while paradoxically accelerating the transformation of citizen into client. Government, by offloading its responsibilities, has increased the burden on civil society and qualitatively and quantitatively increased the effort demanded of volunteers. The government and its streamlined civil service let volunteer recreational organizations do the

9. Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada (2001). *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, <www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/71-542-XIE/71-542-XIE2000001.pdf>, retrieved May 29, 2008.

work while retaining control through partnerships and subcontracting arrangements (Thibault, 1998; Olson, 1993),¹⁰ all the while requiring greater accountability. Volunteers now manage more funds, equipment, services, and staff; must satisfy higher standards of accountability; and must do more negotiating, supervising, and monitoring. For their part, public authorities that support volunteer organizations, particularly by funding much of what they do, are themselves subject to the same obligations as those they impose on civic organizations.

Results-based management as practiced by the modern civil service imposes performance requirements on volunteers, who, because the organization's funding depends on results, are evaluated and supervised according to the task at hand rather than the social ties they forge. Too often social ties are not counted as results. Often the only management models available are those for paid staff. Volunteers are run through the same mill, the only difference being that they are not paid. It's virtually a case of cheap labor, so to speak. In many civic organizations, the volunteer has become a human resource that must be recruited, supervised, screened, trained, evaluated, and rewarded. Will the failure to consider and respect the very nature of the volunteer experience and the special contribution of volunteers to the work world destroy volunteer work?

Another factor limiting the development of volunteer work is the "clientification" that has turned everyone into a "consumer" of goods and services. Even the public sector talks about serving clients. How does the volunteer fit into this new reality when his or her role is to forge social ties rather than just satisfy consumers? Some studies show that this misunderstanding of the role of volunteers is the main cause of volunteer burnout and disengagement. When all they do is serve consumers, and the consumers' only interest is in receiving a service, there is no social interaction. Is this not a change in the social contract between volunteers and the community, between volunteers and those they seek to serve? To encourage volunteering and volunteers, not only must we adjust our approach, but we must also promote the special contribution of volunteers, which is as much to forge social ties as it is to provide services.

10. Olson, D. and T. Gaebler (1993). *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector*, New York, Plume Books; Thibault, A. (1997). *Participation publique et réforme des services (écoles et hôpitaux): une étude comparative dans quatre pays*, Québec City, Institut international des sciences administratives; Godbout, J.T. (1995). *L'esprit du don*, Montréal, Boréal; Dorsch, K.D., H.A. Riemer, V. Sluth, D.M. Paskevich, and P. Chelladurai (2002). *What Affects a Volunteer's Commitment?*, <www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/Dorsch-SR1-English-Web.pdf>.

Volunteers today have limited free time. Work and family responsibilities have cut into their availability. They need tasks that are clear and that can be done in the time they have available.

The literature on the subject and policies in several countries suggest three concrete things that can be done:

1. Adapt how public and civic leisure organizations are run to the special characteristics of volunteers
2. Review and adapt the organization of volunteer work and the tasks of volunteers
3. Recognize and promote how special volunteers are and that they are part of a group

These suggestions are not very different from the guidelines adopted by the French government in 2006.

Adapting How Public and Civic Leisure Organizations Are Run to the Special Characteristics of Volunteers

Volunteers and their organizations cannot be managed the same way salaried employees are—they require a new vision of an engaged citizenry.

How to involve citizens in policy making is at the core of discussions over modernizing governance and building a stronger civil society.¹¹

Volunteers are active participants—they have asserted this themselves in various studies, and society has confirmed it through recent reforms of government and the civil service and expressed it during International Year of Volunteers.

Results of studies by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire and of an Ontario survey¹² show that volunteers increasingly want to be partners rather than simply order takers, and that their motivations are different from those of salaried workers. Participative governance heightens the feeling of belonging and the sense of responsibility to the organization. In fact, this is the second greatest predictor of volunteer commitment according to Dorsch *et al.*¹³

11. Phillips, S.D. and M. Orsini. *Mapping the Links: Citizen Involvement in Policy Processes*, a Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) discussion paper.

12. Arai, S.M. (2000). "Typology of volunteering for a changing sociopolitical context: The impact on social capital, citizenship and civil society", *Loisir et société*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 327–352.

13. Dorsch, K.D. *et al.* (2002), *op. cit.*

These studies bring up the question of volunteer power. Paid employees said they understood that volunteers had a role to play and were aware there were limits to what volunteers could do and to their own support for volunteers. Volunteer board members who oversaw permanent staff tended to give more power to permanent employees in organizations of 500 or more members.

To guide their work, volunteers wish to learn about and discuss management techniques and public needs. They believe the civil service, given its leadership role, has a responsibility to keep them informed. They want to know other organizations they can work with. They expect to express their opinions on government decisions that affect them and express their needs on services they require. In short, they want to be participants, not order takers.

Authorities and salaried workers have a guiding role to play in providing expertise and in rallying people to a common cause, while at the same time paying attention to individual desires and needs in order to maintain volunteer commitment and satisfaction and to respect their point of view.

The concept of the volunteer as order taker must gradually be replaced by that of the volunteer as citizen. The social and political status of volunteers must be affirmed, and organizations must adapt their functioning, especially to the needs of the young.

The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* can serve as a reference—it aims to spur discussions within organizations on the involvement and supervision of volunteers. The Code has three main sections:

- **Values for volunteer involvement**
Core statement on the importance and value of volunteer involvement in voluntary organizations and Canadian society
- **Guiding principles for volunteer involvement**
Principles that detail the exchange between voluntary organizations and volunteers
- **Organizational standards for volunteer involvement**
Standards that organizations should consider in developing or reviewing how volunteers are involved in their organizations¹⁴

14. Volunteer Canada (2006). *Canadian Code on Volunteer Involvement*, <volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/CodeEng.pdf>, p. 4.

Reviewing and Adapting the Organization of Volunteer Work and the Tasks of Volunteers

In various studies by Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire, volunteers and employees in the leisure field explained the reasons for volunteer burnout and recruitment difficulties. Many of their comments match the results of the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating,¹⁵ which observed that large sections of Canadian society have less and less time to devote to volunteer work, while volunteers who remain committed tend to contribute even more hours, except those aged 25 to 34.

To explain this phenomenon, a number of Canadian studies point to the time constraints and stress experienced by the active portion of the population, particularly those aged 25 to 34 who are in the process of starting a family and where in nearly 70% of cases both members of the couple work.¹⁶ They also mention the decrease in active Canadians' leisure time, as indicated by the General Social Survey (GSS) of 1998:

Overall, Canadians reported somewhat elevated levels of severe time-stress in 1998 compared with 1992, the date of the last survey. About 21% of women aged 15 and over perceived themselves as time-stressed, up from 16% six years earlier. The proportion of men reporting time-stress increased from 12% in 1992 to 16% in 1998.

Severely time-stressed individuals aged 15 and over spent more of their days doing some form of work, either paid or unpaid, than low-stress individuals. Time-stressed men spent 9.7 hours and time-stressed women spent 9.4 hours per day on total work activities. This is 2.8 hours more for both these men and women than those who reported low levels of time-stress. Those who were severely time-stressed also had less free time—2.2 hours less for men and 2.0 hours less for women. Free time is defined as the time spent on leisure activities, like playing sports, watching television and socializing.¹⁷

Studies have shown that people will volunteer provided the task at hand is clearly defined and they know their contribution will make a difference. Making sure of this is one way paid staff who work with volunteers can help.

15. Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada (2001), *op. cit.*

16. Statistics Canada, Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division (1998). "Days of our lives: Time use and transitions over the life course," *Transitions to Union Formation*, No. 2.

17. Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, November 9, 1999, <www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991109/d991109a.htm>, p. 2.

Volunteers complained about all the extra paperwork they have to do—filling in forms, writing reports, producing supporting documents—as their relationship with funding bodies grew more complex and reporting requirements rose in the name of accountability. In this regard, administrative tools available online or in other forms are appreciated. Volunteers also expressed the desire that certain routine tasks such as office and grounds maintenance be turned over to paid staff.

Recognizing and Promoting How Special Volunteers Are and That They Are Part of a Group

The previous section demonstrated that urgent changes were needed to stop declining volunteer rates. Even if the task is something that people can physically do, they still will not volunteer if it is not mentally appealing, i.e., it does not fit with their motivations and their perceptions of volunteer work.

Not only are volunteers *individually* unique as social actors deserving of respect, they are also *collectively* unique as a social entity whose legitimacy is generally derived from the civil society of which they make up the institutional core. It has become both necessary and strategic to counter pressures coming both from technology and “clientification” to reverse the decline of volunteer work itself. Volunteers need the cooperation and understanding of the civil service to create a bulwark against the mounting and overwhelming pressure from consumers of leisure, sports, arts, and community services, who sometimes demand too much of volunteers. The latter would like the public to understand that they are only volunteers and that community services cannot be compared to those provided on a commercial basis because they draw on a collective sense of responsibility rather than an individualistic, market-driven approach.

Volunteers comprise a social group in the sociological and political sense of the term. Volunteering should have a special status in society, and this status must be recognized and promoted. There needs to be an association of volunteers capable of forging an active “fellowship.”

Many sports, leisure, and cultural organizations would, in fact, like to see more systematic training for young volunteers. They observe that there are no school programs in the field and that young people rarely fill decision-making positions, although many are involved in organizations associated with leisure activities they themselves partake in.

It is suggested that formal ties be created with schools to enable volunteer organizations to accommodate internships and student projects associated with their various social or vocational training programs and

to bridge the gap between schools and civil society. It is also suggested that certain leisure activities for young people be revised so that their approach encourages young people to take charge of their own leisure activities and get involved as volunteers.

This is how a “fellowship” can be constituted with the mission to create a place of belonging and a space for networking and defending volunteers as a social group. Certain Canadian provinces and countries have developed volunteer charters, and city officials distribute pins and other objects symbolizing membership in this fellowship. Some offer “privilege” cards giving access to public services. Volunteers have also suggested Internet discussion groups for sharing and mutual aid. These are excellent ways to promote the social capital that volunteers represent.

Volunteers agree that teamwork rather than individuals should be the focus when volunteer awards are handed out, an attitude that seems in keeping with their reasons for remaining volunteers.

CASE 4.1

THE DOLLARD-MORIN AWARD^a

The Québec government, having noted the importance of volunteer work in leisure and sport, wished to draw attention to the social role of volunteers. It thus created the Dollard-Morin Leisure and Sports Volunteer Award in 1992. The first year was a special posthumous tribute to Mr. Morin, in whose honor the annual award event was named. The Québec government has since honored many other award winners.

The award has three main objectives:

- To recognize and honor at two different levels—regional and provincial—those who are active volunteers in leisure and sport in Québec
- To pay separate tribute to support for volunteers, either by a municipality, a business, or an organization
- To encourage volunteer commitment and support by promoting this kind of initiative

Today the Dollard-Morin Leisure and Sports Volunteer Award is given each year to a volunteer from each of Québec’s administrative regions who has made an individual contribution of note. It honors a municipality, an organization, and a business for supporting volunteer work in leisure and sport. It also pays tribute to one volunteer in leisure and one in sports whose volunteer work has provincial, national, or international scope.

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport is responsible for the Dollard-Morin Leisure and Sports Volunteer Award. For nominations, three partners provide substantial help. Award candidates are nominated at the regional level by the regional sport and recreation units and at the provincial level by Conseil québécois du loisir for leisure awards and Sports-Québec for sports awards.

a See <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/loisirSport/index.asp?page=benev_prixbenevDollardMorin>, retrieved March 14, 2008.

CASE 4.2

SPORTS OFFICIALS The Neglected Volunteers^a

For the past few years, sports federations have had difficulty recruiting and retaining their officials. Up to 30% of new officials leave after only one season. Officials are considered to be volunteers—although some receive a little money, the sums involved are so low they barely cover expenses, if at all.

In the light of this, Sports-Québec asked Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire to conduct a study aimed at furthering our understanding of officiating and to identify changes to make and actions to be taken, not only to recruit officials but to keep them. More than 500 officials in 16 sports responded to the questionnaire. Note that the term “official” includes referees and judges.

The study showed that officials first get involved out of a passion for and love of the sport. They wish to serve and promote the sport, to stay active in it, or to give back to the sport what they got out of it. Through their involvement, officials are looking for an opportunity to experience their leisure activity to the fullest, in other words do something different, have fun, experience new things, meet other people, etc. They seek to develop personally and strengthen their self-esteem by facing new challenges through their volunteer work. They want to be known and have influence in the milieu.

Officials need respect, support, and recognition. It is partly the lack of respect and support that causes them to leave. The sports community (spectators, trainers, and athletes) does not value their work enough. Awareness needs to be raised among those active in sport, to enhance the image and status of officials. They should no longer be viewed as a necessary evil but rather as an integral part of sport on the same level as trainers and athletes.

According to officials, the best way to recognize their work is to give them the chance to officiate at higher levels and, simply enough, to express thanks to them, either in person or in writing.

Officials who no longer volunteer cite personal reasons (25%) and lack of respect (23.5%) as the main reasons for their departure. The disrespect is mainly displayed by the spectators (12.2%), followed by coaches (9.4%) and athletes (1.9%). Officials who are still active all mention the same problems. Measures must be taken to counter disrespect of officials and adapt the sports structure to today's fast-paced lifestyles.

What needs to be done? Officials who participated in the study had a whole list of suggestions for maintaining and expanding this form of volunteer work:

- *To improve the image of officiating*, we need to leverage the value of experience by pairing up new officials with senior officials. It would also take a load off officials' shoulders, if we encouraged athletes and coaches to take a more responsible attitude.
- *To give more power to referees in the overall organization of sports*, we must involve them in coach training; include representatives of officials on sports associations boards; give officials more political clout with the various levels of government, sports federations, and local associations; and solicit the help of athletes, scorekeepers, and coaches in recruiting officials.
- *To enhance training and improve contact between officials in different disciplines*, training should be more accessible, interaction between officials in different disciplines should be encouraged, the content of the training sessions should be revised, and officials should be thanked by means of galas, volunteer nights, etc.

^a From Fortier, J. and D. Magny (2005). "Étude sur le recrutement et la rétention des officiels," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 2, No. 14.

TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Training in the field of leisure is available in many forms in Québec, including degree programs, continuous education for employees, volunteer training, and courses for the general public. In the latter case, most programs given by recreation centers, municipalities, regional organizations, and provincial federations are, as we saw earlier, beginner sessions or courses. Our focus here will be on the training of salaried staff and volunteers.

Research is conducted in universities and elsewhere, and its findings are much more widely available and applied than before. However, information remains fragmented despite the large number of media—websites, magazines, and several scientific journals.

Degree programs and continued education are offered by general and vocational colleges, known in Québec as *cegeps*, and by universities. Four public *cegeps* and several private colleges train technicians to provide leisure services, specifically to plan, coordinate, lead, and evaluate socio-recreational activities. Technicians are generalists who address all aspects of leisure in all its diversity. There are also more specialized leisure programs—in tourism, adventure tourism, natural heritage development and interpretation, and hunting and fishing development, which emphasizes sports fishing and hunting but also extends to other recreational activities in wildlife reserves.

Two universities offer general undergraduate training in leisure—Concordia University in English and Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières in French.

At Concordia University, the 60-credit leisure sciences major offers general training in applied human sciences combined with 12 credits in leisure administration and planning. The 90-credit degree at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières includes 87 credits in leisure, culture, and tourism and an eight-month on-the-job internship providing hands-on experience in the field. This very broad discipline covers municipal and regional leisure as well as cultural and sociocultural events, tourism, ecotourism, education, health, social services, and support to volunteer associations. In all these areas, leisure professionals seek to introduce recreational, play-oriented, educational, social, and cultural components characteristic of modern leisure. By the end of their training, they can perform basic aspects of the job—management, planning, programming, activity leadership, communications, and research and development. They may also seek further specialization by way of graduate studies. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières' master's degree program in leisure trains researchers and analysts for Québec's leisure system.

As at the college level, programs in related fields are also available at university. The therapeutic recreation program at Concordia trains technicians to work with the handicapped, while Université du Québec à Chicoutimi's undergraduate degree in outdoor activities and adventure tourism prepares students for leadership or professional positions in the adventure industry (expeditionary guides in isolated areas, technical instructors, consultants, development officers, etc.). At Université du

Québec à Montréal, an undergraduate program in tourism and hotel management trains professionals to manage tourism and various related businesses. Université Laval offers an undergraduate degree in sports intervention, which educates coaches and sports managers to assume responsibilities such as the training and development of athletes, the development and supervision of coaches, the design and coordination of sports programs, the management of sports leagues, the establishment and coordination of sporting events, and the management of sports clubs and unisport and multisport organizations. Kinesiologist, cultural activities leader, and arts manager are other degrees offered by Québec universities.

Colleges and universities develop their programs independently of each other according to their resources and public demand, and work very little together. Unlike in the United States and the rest of Canada, there are no associations of professors and researchers in leisure.

Professional associations such as Association québécoise du loisir municipal offer professional development programs for paid staff, including workshops at their annual conventions. Québec law also obliges employers to devote 1% of their payrolls to employee development. Some, like the City of Montréal, have set up learning circles, and most reimburse tuition fees to employees enrolled in educational programs. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières also offers customized training and a short program in change management in the leisure sector.

Most paid workers are casual employees such as day camp monitors and lifeguards. They generally receive ad hoc training from their employer, a federation, a URLS, or one of many private companies in the sector. There is some training overlap between paid staff and volunteers.

The federations and URLSs carry out the bulk of volunteer training, be it for managers, board members, specialists such as sports trainers or officials, festival organizers, or bicycle tourism guides. Réseau québécois de ressources en formation, an initiative of Conseil québécois du loisir, is a clearinghouse of resources whose aim is to facilitate volunteer training. It designs training strategies to meet specific needs (support, self-training tools, and thematic instruction) and makes them available in every region of Québec. It also offers three-hour sessions that introduce the various subject areas and go over the main functions of organizations as well as volunteer development and support. In 2008 the Réseau inaugurated an activity leader training program. Still to come is a knowledge bank constituted from a plethora of educational initiatives by public and civil actors in the leisure sector.

On the research side, an increasing number of studies have analyzed the recreational behavior and needs of Quebecers, seeking to identify constants and organizational and mobilization models, or less ambitiously, to take stock of certain programs or organizational dimensions. The many references and case in this book are eloquent proof of this. The research taking place is reflective of the Québec model itself, i.e., there is no central guiding hand and almost no collaboration between researchers. At the federal level, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association recently conducted a broad study to develop a strategy for developing and applying knowledge. The objectives were to assemble and summarize existing research results, to identify research priorities, strategies, and challenges, and to develop a research program.¹⁸ In its conclusions, it recommends avenues for fostering dialog between researchers and professionals and for increasing research funding. It also suggests a nomenclature for the main spheres of activity and research themes. The initiative is worthwhile in that it sets out a research strategy and action plan based on a broad-ranging vision and analysis. In Québec it is essential that a similar undertaking be carried out collaboratively by those in the sector.

VENUES AND FACILITIES

During the 2005 municipal elections, 20% of election promises concerned sports and recreational facilities and infrastructure.¹⁹ In its 2006–2007 budget, the Québec government created a \$30-million fund for this sector, which supplements existing Canadian and Québec public infrastructure renewal and development funds.

Québec's recreational infrastructures have been built following various lines of reasoning. At times the goal has been to support an individual activity such as ice hockey. Thus in the 1970s, the Québec government decided that each local community should have its own arena and offered to pay 50% of construction costs. At other times, efforts have gone to stimulating demand, such as when we started building gymnasiums in recognition that young Quebecers needed to be involved in physical activity and sport. Many other facilities we owe to the efforts of lobby groups. Such was the case of Québec's Route verte, a province-wide network of bike paths. Occasionally our goal has been to ensure the safety

18. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (2006). *The Canadian Research Agenda for the Parks and Recreation Field*, <www.cpra.ca/EN/main.php?action=cms.init Research>, retrieved February 19, 2008.

19. Thibault, A., F. Pauquay and M.A. Lavigne (2006). "Le loisir dans l'élection municipale québécoise 2005?" *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 3, No. 9.

of sports practitioners—this was particularly the case of skate parks. Other facilities have been “gifts,” built for events like the Olympic Games or the arrival of a sports star in the community. For example, the Québec City suburb of Sainte-Foy/Sillery has a skating oval and an Olympic speed-skating champion, while Sherbrooke, home to a Canadian water-skiing champion, has a facility for the sport. Thus, development has sometimes been based on demand, sometimes on supply, and often on opportunity and circumstances.

Today most facilities are aging, and practices have changed and are diversifying rapidly. Infrastructures must either be abandoned, used for other purposes, or renovated, and new ones must be built. These aging facilities are also big energy consumers—which means environmental issues must be addressed as well. The cost of all this, which amounts to many billions of dollars, requires new methods of funding, which will inevitably involve partnerships between stakeholders in Québec’s leisure system and private investors.

Government ministries and cities such as Montréal are looking to get more out of their leisure facilities. They want them to be more multi-functional and better suited to leisure demand, and more in line with performance and efficiency criteria. How this is to be accomplished is not yet clear.

Sports facilities have contributed significantly to the practice of sport at school and in clubs. But today they must address new planning needs and local development concerns. They comprise, according to J.-P. Augustin (2001), a “social and economic capital and an instrument for regional development.” This is why it is incorrect to think of a sports facility as simply a place to play a sport. We must integrate it into a more complex strategy because it has an economic and cultural function as well as being an expression and a representation of the community in which it is located.²⁰

In general, there is agreement that the diversity, accessibility, safety, suitability, and equitable regional distribution of facilities are criteria by which they may be evaluated. Accessibility is clearly the value that most characterizes public recreation in a democratic society. It is the most important aspect of the quality of services. Accessibility comprises a number of factors—cost, distance, opening hours, and absence of physical or social barriers. Safety generally refers to two main indicators—the number of

20. Penel, G. (2006). “Les espaces sportifs innovants: acteurs de l’animation locale,” *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 5, No. 14, p. 1.

injuries and the level of perceived lack of safety due to the risk of “violence” and fear caused by poor lighting or by the presence of people who are seen (rightly or not) to pose a threat. Safety entails issues of the legal liability on the part of facility owners as well as insurance costs, which are another management issue. In Québec, some towns have chosen to be their own insurance providers, while certain private insurance companies tolerate higher levels of risk than others. It is also important to have a clear understanding of the notion of legal liability—civil suits barely existed twenty years ago, but they are on the rise today. The quality of facilities and services refers to appearance, level of maintenance, ability to attract users and convey a sense of belonging, and practicality in relation to intended uses. Diversity can be understood as the variety of possible and actual activities and is closely tied to diversity in the social, community, and cultural fabric. In the case of skateboarding, diversity means the ability of the facility to provide for various types and levels of difficulty and the capacity to accommodate skateboarders of various skill levels. In concrete terms, diversity comes in two forms: different levels of activity (competitive and recreational) and diversity of possible activities. Regional distribution can be defined as the entire set of resources in a given territory. Although equitable regional distribution may seem a self-evident goal, one need only examine where many sports facilities are located in towns and cities to see this is not always so.²¹ Although efforts have been made in the past to follow certain rules, such as amount of green space or number of arenas per inhabitant, today such rules are inadequate or incomplete. For example, park accessibility and the level of interest in ice hockey also have to be taken into account.

The challenge is tall and calls for measurement and information tools. The following case is a good example.

21. Thibault, A. and B. Robinson (2006). *Guide d'aménagement et de gestion: parc de planche à roulettes*, Québec City, Presses de l'Université du Québec and Association québécoise du loisir municipal.

A PARTNERSHIP TO INVENTORY LEISURE VENUES AND FACILITIES

Although some large municipalities and school boards have a good idea of the venues and facilities they possess, this is not true of most. And with major decisions to be made, the situation is in urgent need of correction. Convert, renovate, abandon, or develop—only reliable, relevant information can help us decide.

Drawing up a descriptive inventory of leisure infrastructures gives municipalities and schools an exhaustive list of their facilities that can guide government infrastructure support programs. Creating a central databank, as a number of other Canadian provinces have done, also provides each municipality with comparisons to comparable communities (benchmarking).

The only way to create such an inventory for Québec is if everyone pitches in. Having the government take sole responsibility would be prohibitively expensive and reduce the likelihood its potential beneficiaries would actually use the tool. Developing the database must be a collaborative effort.

This was the basis on which an infrastructure inventory and database program was conceived and implemented to guide decision making. It is based on the idea that each community should conduct an inventory according to its own needs, but that certain basic data should be entered into a common databank to have province-wide information.^a

The inventory program comprises three parts:

1. A database including all information on recreational and sports facilities
2. A set of means and tools (technical support, software, etc.) provided to the various partners (municipalities, school boards, URLs, etc.) who wish to conduct an inventory and, as the case may be, an analysis of their recreational and sports facilities
3. A system for putting the database on line for the use of decision makers (elected officials and professionals at the local, regional, and provincial levels)

In order to integrate all the inventories into a province-wide database that can guide government decision making and provide facility owners with a useful source of information, the PROSAQ database uses data entered into a common program called MESURE. This provides contributors with an accurate picture of their leisure and sports infrastructures. This user-friendly program is highly flexible, so not only can partners contribute to the common database, they can also include data that concerns only them, to gain a better understanding of the leisure facilities on their territory and improve their management of recreational and sports sites.

MESURE is an essential tool in this huge collaborative initiative to build a leisure infrastructure database for Québec. MESURE's home page allows the user to locate sites by city, RCM, or region. It has space for entering a complete list of all sites in a given area along with their addresses. It is also possible to upload photographs and write comments. In the "General Description" section, the user can enter a brief description of the site or list facilities available, access points, and opening hours. The "Facilities" section presents the various categories of equipment and facilities—playgrounds, arenas and winter equipment, buildings, aquatic facilities, paths and green spaces, sports fields—as well as descriptive criteria appropriate to each. Users can thus evaluate infrastructures according to precise criteria.

A network of contributors is carrying out this program, which will achieve its goal once all partners have participated.

^a Auger, D. (2008). "Un nouveau logiciel pour l'inventaire et la gestion des infrastructures de loisir au Québec: MESURE," *Observatoire québécois du loisir*, Vol. 5, No. 8.

FUNDING: MODERNIZING AND EXPLORING NEW AVENUES

Like the system itself, funding for leisure comes from an array of public and private sources. These sources, however, are stretched to the limit, and big challenges lie ahead. To increase budgets, ensure access to leisure for all members of the public, and uphold the democratic principles that are the system's great achievement, difficult decisions will have to be made about cutting costs and dropping or revamping certain programs. Given the undeniable contribution of leisure to certain collective goals, we will have to be much more active within funding programs that serve the common good and to which leisure makes a significant contribution—public health, rural development, assisted at-home living for the elderly, continuing education, and public infrastructure renewal. In short, we must act in a much more integrated fashion.

Currently public and civic funding of leisure comes essentially from four roughly equal sources: public funding, user fees, hours donated by volunteers, and income from donations and sponsorships. Funding for the expansion and upgrading of buildings and facilities is mainly provided by public funds, donations, or private investment within the framework of public-private partnerships under which public institutions guarantee the purchase or rental of services provided by the investor, who assumes responsibility for facility development and construction.

A look at public budgets reveals that for the past ten years, spending by municipalities and higher levels of government has remained stable. As for investment, several building renewal programs have been added, but they are clearly inadequate. Volunteers still contribute as much as before, but as we saw earlier, this is not at all a sure thing. Can user fees and independent funding sources fill the gap?

Independent income comes from sales, donations, and bingo games. Sports leagues run snackbars, operate lottery ticket booths, or offer sports equipment repair services. Amateur choirs get paid to accompany professional artists and may hold their own annual concerts. Outdoor clubs get local merchants to sponsor their expeditions. And everyone receives cases of beer from distributors. Scouts sell calendars, apples, and maple syrup in their neighborhoods. Québec en Forme enjoys the support of a foundation. Festivals and carnivals increasingly seek out presenting sponsors. In short, the community—neighbors and merchants—support and fund leisure in civil society. Although this source is limited by competition from other activities, by the state of the economy, and by the size and wealth of the local community, there is clearly room for improvement by generating greater awareness of the value of leisure and by drawing on competitive fundraising techniques.

User fees, a product of the “user pays” principle whereby users pay the direct costs of their activities and services, have reached a limit beyond which public services start to resemble private commercial services. The question is rather, What is the minimum level of service that should be guaranteed to all citizens, no matter how rich or poor? For instance, the City of Montréal grants free access to its public libraries, making up the difference by charging fees for more specialized library services. The City of Québec has decided that all children have the right to a certain level of free day camp services, the monetary value of which constitutes the public contribution per registered child. Although fees continue to be a source of revenue (cities report that they receive more than \$143 million in fees) and help shoulder the cost of extra services, they clearly cannot take the place of public funding, the guarantee of accessibility and the common good.

The underlying justification for investing public funds in leisure is the social, economic, and cultural benefits that public and civic leisure provides. Leisure contributes to social capital, which promotes endogenous economic development and attracts outside investment. This explains why and how public money is invested. It is clear that we have not explored all avenues in this regard and that it may be possible to boost public funding without increasing taxes.

If recreational services become nothing more than a consumer service like any other, will public funding still be justified? In the Québec model, public funds exert a significant leverage effect on private and civic funding. Given that a dollar of public funding leverages at least four dollars in services to the public, the value of public funding is obvious.

Individual and community development programs in which leisure can and does play a major role are one of the sources of public funding that should be explored more thoroughly. This is not a new idea, and certain groups already draw on these programs. For example, in rural development, municipalities use the Rural Pact to support various leisure initiatives. In community development and preventive health, groups like the Healthy Towns and Villages Network, Kino-Québec, and Québec en Forme finance activities through public health funds. However, these programs do not appear to sufficiently acknowledge the much more significant and efficient (or economical) contribution leisure makes in these spheres. Leisure can often provide an alternative to much more costly and sometimes less effective interventions. For instance, helping the elderly live independently in their homes, which requires nursing care and domestic help, but also attention to the quality of people's social and cultural lives so that they may age with dignity, is one area where leisure services can and should soon make a difference. And should not volunteer training, the very underpinning of public and civic leisure and the key to its contribution to community development, be funded by professional development funds? These are only a few examples.

In short, current sources of funding for civic and public leisure will continue to exist and could well rise under certain conditions. However, new avenues can and must be explored.

BINGO GAMES

On December 3, 1969, an amendment to the *Criminal Code* decriminalized certain games of chance on the condition they be managed by a province or a “charitable” or religious organization. Ever since, leisure organizations have been able to obtain lottery licenses from Société des loteries du Québec, a not insignificant source of funding.

According to Loto-Québec’s 2007 annual report, 1,009 organizations shared almost \$11 million. In 2006–2007, 113 bingo halls throughout Québec participated in Société des bingos du Québec programs. The 784 organizations that took part in network bingo games shared some \$10.2 million over this period, and the 315 that did not took in \$713,000. A glance at the list of organizations reveals that a third of them were sports or cultural groups, or leisure committees.

Despite concerted efforts since the creation of Société des bingos du Québec in 1997, this source of income is in decline, dropping by 11% in 2007. Loto-Québec’s annual report blames the aging population of bingo players, the fact that bingo games have gradually become outmoded, and the recent smoking ban in bingo halls.

The Québec City borough of Beauport is an example of a community for which bingo games have been a significant source of funding. During the 1970s, each neighborhood in the borough had a fundraising committee, which ran a bingo game on a specific night of the week in collaboration with the two other neighborhoods. Funds raised during the evening were divvied up among local leisure organizations. A fourth evening was devoted to leisure organizations that served the entire Beauport population. Over time, an imbalance arose in the amounts earmarked for each neighborhood. Simultaneously, commercial halls began competing with leisure and community organizations. Given how important this funding source was for groups in the area, the City of Beauport leisure and community life department suggested creating a new organization. The assets of all the fundraising committees were combined under the aegis of a single bingo committee,^a and in 2006 more than a \$1 million was redistributed to local leisure organizations.

^a Comité de concertation des comités de financement de Beauport (1996). Interview with Pierre Watters and Roch Huot, Bingo des Chutes website.



CONCLUSION

Past Successes and Future Challenges

THE QUÉBEC MODEL: DEMOCRATIC, DYNAMIC, PASSION-DRIVEN, AND FRAGILE

Public and civic leisure in Québec draws on the talents of hundreds of thousands of people who voluntarily commit to providing leisure activities to their fellow citizens while seeking an enjoyable experience for themselves. Thus, communities build social capital that contributes to their own economic, social, and cultural development. Gone are the days of the nanny state, replaced by the government as partner, offering its support rather than doing or directing, spurring to action rather than demanding everyone be the same. The government is not the one that provides or directs leisure, the community is. And community involvement and empowerment is the very essence of democracy. This fundamental characteristic of the Québec model gives it its power and its capacity to continuously reflect Québec society. Its underpinnings demonstrate the value of public leisure and the public funds that support it. Without it and its benefits to the community, without public and civic leisure, all the space would be occupied by commercial leisure and cocooning, which benefit individuals and the economy. However, society would deprive itself of an essential contribution to community development and to collective goals such as physical fitness, social health, the social integration of youth,

quality of life for the elderly and families, and the maintenance of the essential pillars of a strong society—an active citizenry and a sense of social responsibility. We would be left with a consumer society driven by purchasing power and unavoidably racked by inequality. Such a consumer society is a constant threat to public and civic leisure.

The collective approach to leisure is no doubt at the root of the dynamic, and sometimes chaotic, nature of the Québec model. We cannot capture it in an organizational chart or apply across-the-board practices such as those we describe in our case. Public and civic leisure is fragmented into as many physical places as there are spheres of activity. It comprises a diversity of small worlds unto themselves—the sports clubs and many other associations that rise up in neighborhoods or around common activities. It is a system in which central authorities have little power. Sports federations could tell us a thing or two about how hard it is to control local organizations. Yet all those involved in the system are aware how interdependent and complementary they are. They work in networks because networks leave room for both autonomy and interdependence. They cooperate, they share services, and together they demand government attention. They stand together when governments try to control them too closely or peer over their shoulder. It is a model where relationships among actors are perpetually renegotiated, a model that thrives on paradoxes. Even relationships with the public are sometimes paradoxical. Sometimes the public and its needs are claimed to come first. Other times the public is claimed not to know what is best for it and that it should adjust its behavior to the services being offered. The Québec model applies two strategies simultaneously—one centered on promoting and selling specific activities, another, population-based, that puts more emphasis on listening and responding.

A feedback system that redresses imbalances maintains the equilibrium. The Québec model, rooted in thousands of local organizations, allows for much more ready feedback than a centralized one would in today's multifaceted society. The apparent chaos and inconsistencies of leisure organizations are simply manifestations of a restriking of balance with the community, a natural tendency in humans. The phenomenon of those leaving and entering the system is also what keeps the entire model in equilibrium with Québec society. Such is the power of the dynamism and chaos of public and civic leisure in Québec. However, we must also "pay attention to human nature."

Leisure in Québec is an affair of the heart. Parents volunteer out of love for their children, and organizers get involved out of love for their sport, their art, or their neighborhood. In return, they expect to receive

respect, recognition, and enjoyment. If there is a community in which symbols of membership are powerful and numerous, it is clearly the leisure community—pins, T-shirts, jackets, and banners adorn individuals and organizations. Public and civic leisure is driven by passion, identity, and belonging. Indeed, it would be surprising if leisure were to be ruled by rationality. This is the culture, and to some the degree the nature, of the leisure community. It is important to always keep in mind that the 500,000 volunteers who keep the leisure system working are themselves engaging in leisure. When they are no longer enjoying themselves, they leave. It is this passion that distinguishes leisure from work—a passion that comes from the inside, an experience where the level of tolerance of disappointment is much lower than at work. Leisure is an experience that takes its meaning from this passion and search for enjoyment.

Yet the public and civic leisure system must also operate rationally, if only because it uses public funds and must demonstrate its effectiveness and efficiency with regard to community expectations. The Québec system must also be self-aware—it must know what it is and where it is going. It needs to have a shared vision with Quebecers. The whole, sociologists tell us, is more than the sum of its parts. Public and civic leisure is more than the thousands of people of which it is comprised, because it fulfills a social goal. As in any society, choices must be made, and priorities set. Beyond passion lies reason.

However, in reflecting on the Québec system and on Québec as a whole, we become aware of the system's fragility and of certain imbalances that it must actively redress without waiting for solutions to occur on their own. The system must pay heed to human nature. Should it fail to act, it runs the risk of no longer being able to, because others will have taken its place. The public and civic system is not the only player in the leisure sector, and not necessarily the most powerful.

The system faces two types of challenges—concerning the model's very foundation and culture as well as its social relevance. The public and civic leisure system is founded on citizens' voluntary commitment; yet volunteer work is under attack from our fast-paced lifestyles and "clientification." We cannot sit back and do nothing—we must act. The public and civic leisure system's only claim to legitimacy is that which local communities and the Québec population confer upon it. It must grow and evolve with them and their challenges. Today, rural communities are fighting for survival, while the elderly, families, and young people are demanding better quality of life. Many Quebecers have cultivated new interests and new ways of engaging in leisure. Lack of leisure is no longer what they decry, but lack of leisure quality. They have progressed from activity

to experience. At the same time, administrative systems are increasingly squeezed for resources and must prove that they are relevant, efficient, and deserving of public funds. Public and civic leisure finds itself in a world where it must compete for attention and public resources—it must do its homework and take nothing for granted.

The Québec leisure system faces three big challenges: strengthening its foundations and offerings, contributing to Québec's social goals, and positioning itself competitively in the public sphere.

LEISURE MUST CONTRIBUTE TO QUÉBEC'S SOCIAL GOALS

Preserving Rural Communities

When infrastructures reach the end of their useful life, public tastes diversify, rural exodus continues apace, traditional leisure committees lose steam, and public funds taper off, it is a time of crisis and anxiety about the future of leisure for the 1,367,434 Quebecers¹ who live in towns and villages of less than 5,000 inhabitants.

Québec has been supporting rural communities for a number of years, through the Rural Pact, for example, most of whose projects are in the sphere of leisure, through RCMs, which facilitate the sharing of services, particularly in leisure, through rural development officers, and through the Solidarité rurale movement. Many URLs also provide expertise to rural communities.

In the leisure field, several experiments in sharing services through RCMs as well as various other types of undertakings have succeeded and endured, while others have failed. A study of 18 of these projects throughout Québec has shed light on how and how not to conduct such initiatives.

A look at both successful and failed projects, as well as those that have had little lasting impact, reveals that leisure in rural communities must follow a different model than in urban environments. The rural approach is more convivial and involves civil society and public institutions more. The municipality's role is to catalyze rather than do, but it still assumes responsibility for facilities and buildings. Given that it is often the only remaining local institution, the municipality can be instrumental in bringing people on board. In decentralized decision making and resource

1. Institut de la statistique du Québec (2006). *Estimation de la population des municipalités du Québec au 1^{er} juillet des années 1996 à 2006 selon le découpage géographique au 1^{er} juillet 2006*, Québec City, Government of Québec.

allocation, it speaks for or supports the community. In short, when projects have the benefit of competent leadership, the municipality can play a decisive role in their success. Ministries, regional bodies, and other outside agents use methods akin to those of industrial commissioners, guiding, informing, training, and networking, but never taking the place of entrepreneurs. In rural communities what we need is social entrepreneurs.

In rural areas, leisure, more than any other sphere, requires community involvement. The project study revealed that the goal or vision that gets things in motion is often a product of local circumstances and sensibilities. As in the strategic approach, threats and opportunities are what mobilize and liberate energies when the “big bang” occurs. All successful projects were found to depend on the leadership of individuals from one group or another, and rarely the municipality. What then is the municipality’s role? Mostly to be an assistance giver, not an initiative taker.

Funding programs whose goals are not community inspired are quick to run their course and can hinder other initiatives in the process. Funding locally conceived initiatives with lasting impacts and other ad hoc projects is more effective.

With results-based management, support programs tend to define results not only in terms of effects but of means—the community becomes a passive player dependent on outside funding. Yet the most successful projects are those conducted by communities that, while entrepreneurial, need support. In this regard, programs under the Rural Pact are models in terms of process.

However, this common feature of the projects examined brings up the broader issue of support, coaching, training, information, and expertise. For a number of projects, URLSS played a crucial role (see case 1.1). Should these be made into “expert” units?

Often projects involve a number of villages, sometimes through the auspices of an RCM, and at times even bringing together several neighboring villages from more than one RCM. Respect for natural communities, community independence, and the conviviality needed for rural leisure activities to succeed explains the varying geometry of collaborative relationships between municipalities.

Acknowledging these lessons and strengthening the role of leisure in rural revitalization and development programs are strategic avenues for meeting the challenges facing rural communities.

A Population Approach to Seniors, Families, and Youth

Based on Québec's social and demographic profile and key political and public issues in the province, we can identify four groups of citizens of particular concern to the public and civic leisure sector: seniors, whose number and longevity are increasing significantly; families, who must balance a plethora of competing needs; young people struggling to make a place for themselves in the world; and rural residents, who see their communities declining. These groups, which are all plagued by poverty and hampered by lifestyles harmful to health and well-being, are bringing pressure to bear on a system whose mission includes promoting accessibility, quality of life, and quality of community. In each case, public and civic leisure is part of the solution.

For Seniors: Challenges in the Community, the Home, and Institutions

The massive wave of baby boomers reaching retirement age creates a large community of socially, physically, and culturally active young retirees. These baby boomers now have more free time and want to take charge of their leisure, either by joining existing groups or by creating their own associations. They have made their needs clear. Retired baby boomers do not want to be seen as "old." They want services tailored to their needs rather than their age, and they want to be supported as partners rather than in a paternalist fashion. Above all, they want individual leisure to be supported.

Young retirees see leisure as part of the art of living, more an experience than an activity; they favor social, intellectual, sensual, and physical experiences. They already hold responsibilities within associations, or will soon, so much so that young people may feel left out and need programs to support an intergenerational changing of the guard.

Retirees force us to see leisure for seniors from a completely different perspective—they demand more services and insist that recreational facilities and programs must operate all day, not just nights and weekends.

Despite the wishful thinking of baby boomers, aging inevitably takes its toll of disease and lost autonomy. And these Québec seniors fully intend to remain in their homes, something that will take more than nursing care and domestic help. Quality of life, degree of autonomy, and level of physical and social activity weigh just as heavily in the balance as illness prevention in keeping the elderly in their homes. Prevention is always more pleasant and less costly than cure. The public and civic leisure system, it would appear, has not yet begun to reflect on how it will fulfill its essential

role in efforts to keep the elderly in their homes. Although the experience of local communities can no doubt be instructive, much work needs to be done in the very near future.

The elderly must eventually enter long-term-care facilities or specialized institutions such as those for Alzheimer patients. These establishments then become their home.

Leisure in Québec healthcare institutions has developed since the early thirties and expanded significantly since the mid-1970s. However, leisure workers have some difficulty getting recognition for the breadth and diversity of their contribution to health and prevention. At most, we acknowledge the role and usefulness of leisure as entertainment. Yet in 1991, an amendment to the *Quebec Health and Social Services Act* set out the mission of long-term-care facilities as providing, temporarily or permanently, a substitute living environment. The government's new vision made leisure the preferred means of creating and enriching a living environment and fostering stronger links with the community. Leisure became an indispensable tool for bridging the gap between the individual's natural living environment and the nursing home.

Fédération québécoise du loisir en milieu institutionnel has been championing leisure in this regard, but it has run up against a health and social services system more concerned with disease than health. Clearly, greater awareness of the need for leisure as a way of maintaining quality of life, and no doubt reducing pharmaceutical costs, must come from outside health institutions.

Young People: Supporting Initiatives, Readyng Them for Leadership, and Providing Experiences That Facilitate Integration While Remaining Enjoyable

Although the seniors age group is led and defended by the baby boomers, who all their lives have identified closely with their society, young people today do not have the same social and political clout, and perhaps, the same hope of changing the world. Leisure must provide that hope and offer fulfilling personal and social experiences designed by the young people themselves.

The system must show its confidence in young adults by supporting their initiatives, giving them the chance to explore new avenues, and allowing them to make their own mistakes. There has always been a gulf of misunderstanding between young people and adults, which is why adults should sometimes loosen their grip and assist rather than direct.

We have a rich pool of experience and lessons in the field—the challenge lies more in sharing them. Perhaps we need an ISO-youth standard for public and civic leisure organizations.

Youth is also a time for learning. How are we doing in teaching leisure, empowerment, and quality of life? The education system plays a major role in this regard, inside and outside the classroom. Probably the greatest challenge for public and civic leisure is to bridge the gap between schools and the community. Although in many areas programs and events remain isolated from each other, some—such as Québec en forme, Jeux du Québec, Secondaire en spectacle, and Cégeps en spectacle—bring them together. Students in the international school programs are also “required” to do volunteer work. Yet school gyms and schoolyards remain closed in the summer, and ties between student services and the community are rare—many school sports have no counterparts in the community. Often leisure education consists only in promoting leisure and providing instruction in the techniques required by various activities rather than teaching what leisure is all about.

The second area concerning young people that needs work involves the intergenerational transfer of responsibilities in the many organizations that comprise the Québec model. If baby boomers are running the show, where are the young people? Small and medium-sized family businesses have strategies to smooth the transfer between the parents who founded the companies and the sons or daughters who wish to take them over. Having a token young person is no solution, it would appear. Mentorship, the gradual transfer of knowledge and responsibilities, and on-the-job training are possible avenues to explore. Those who train volunteers should look on this as a strategic and urgent issue.

In a world that pressures young people to perform and where activity leaders are being turned into psychosocial caregivers, we should let young people play, have fun, hang out, and enjoy a taste of freedom.

For Families, Childcare Leisure, Family Leisure, and Affordable Service for the Poorest

Today, family life often resembles that of roommates whose schedules barely coincide, who live in the same house but each in his or her own little world in front of the computer or television, busy with housework or homework. Conversation is utilitarian and short. The dining room looks like a cafeteria where everyone comes and serves themselves or puts together their own meal. Yet in Québec, people rank families high on the

scale of values. But families are in a rush, and even have difficulty coordinating their schedules to take vacations together. This is true for couples, and it is also true in parent-child relationships.

Children are put in daycare at a very early age and stay there right up until primary school. Leisure plays an important role in the missions and practices of daycare centers and childcare centers in schools. During the summer and school breaks, communities and municipalities take over, but without the funding the government provides to other childcare services and without any real continuity of service or communication with childcare service staff, who are professionals, unlike the young monitors who keep children busy in day and summer camps. Should there not be government support for these community-based services? Should we not apply the same standards as in school-based childcare? And with child behavior disorders on the rise, what should we do? Exclude children? Train more specialized staff? Develop special programs for them? Or just let them “play”? Public and civic leisure is at a crossroads in this regard.

Family time is rare, so many parents value family leisure. We see families on bike paths, at skating rinks, on sliding hills, in public pools, and at the many festivals. Often access to the rink or pool is restricted because swim classes or hockey leagues get precedence. In a system that originally developed around structured sport, free practice is not always a priority. It is the same for structured leisure, which leaves little room for family activities. What about volunteering as a family? Experience shows that this type of activity is very possible and beneficial for families.

Statistics attest to the severe poverty of a large portion of single-parent families and many children under joint custody. Because few of these children or families participate in public and civic activities, they do not show up enough on the system’s radar screens. Yet it is this same system that writes and implements the government’s family policies, each more picture-perfect than the last. The actions that flow from these policies are still too timid. In short, the system still needs to adapt to today’s family.

PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES: STRENGTHENING THE SYSTEM’S FOUNDATIONS AND REDEFINING ITS OFFERINGS

Turning Leisure Activities into Leisure Experiences

Québec’s leisure system, as any high-quality system does regularly, needs to rethink some of its approaches to adapt to present-day Québec. Quebecers want leisure experiences that fit with their busy schedules. For them,

leisure is a hedonistic lifestyle that is not always chosen for rational or measurable reasons. In fact, it is the very irrationality and gratuitousness that gives the feeling of freedom. As we have seen previously, the best experiences are those where participants' attention and concentration on the task at hand take all their skill, banish all sense of time, and provide a sufficient level of challenge to sustain interest, while remaining easy enough to do to avoid fear of failure. Because leisure is a personal choice, it generates enthusiasm and emotional investment.

We must create programs, orient activities, and support organizations with this in mind. It is no small matter to meet this challenge in a system that developed around individual activities. We must develop tools, references, and training in order to effect change. The accessibility and safety tables in this book are no doubt useful models. It should be acknowledged that commercial services, whether in tourism, culture, or recreation, have knowledge and know-how that can be explored and adapted.

In the same vein, the spectacular rise in individual leisure requires us to find new ways of intervening while conserving a public and civic approach.

Promoting and Expanding the Commitment of the Citizen Volunteer

Volunteer work is an asset that we can no longer take for granted—it is in decline and requires attention. Renewing recruitment efforts and exploring new sources of volunteers, especially among young people, will go some way to expanding the practice of volunteering. However, this will not be enough. Other strategic challenges must be met, namely adapting the very practice of volunteer work and its management to new social realities, taking the necessary measures to counter various threats, and making sure that volunteers take part in decision making within their own organizations and in Québec's leisure system at large.

Volunteers need the cooperation of the civil service to create a bulwark against the mounting and overwhelming pressure from consumers of leisure, sports, arts, and community services, who sometimes demand too much of volunteers. The latter would like the public to understand that community services cannot be compared with those provided on a commercial basis because they draw on a collective sense of responsibility and conviviality rather than an individualistic, market-driven approach.

We must adapt the full complement of human resource management approaches to the challenge of volunteer management in the field. Each actor in the system must contribute to this goal. The situation calls for even more—it demands a program as ambitious as the one to promote

healthy lifestyles; a public communications plan that promotes the value and worth of volunteering; a volunteer recognition program that does more than just hand out awards, but actually acknowledges the volunteer experience as equal to paid work experience; inclusion of volunteers in consultations in much the way professional organizations are consulted; support for groups that voice the opinions and demands of volunteers; and an action plan that puts responsibility for development and funding into the hands of government-funded organizations as close as possible to local, or at least regional, communities. Advice, training, development, assistance, and industry watch activities are some of the functions these agencies could assume.

A New Take on Infrastructure Renewal

Most infrastructures have aged, and practices have changed, have diversified, and continue to diversify rapidly. Infrastructures must be abandoned, used for other purposes, or renovated, and new ones must be built. The cost of all this will run to many billions of dollars and require new methods of funding, which will inevitably entail partnerships between Québec's leisure system and private sources of funding. We can no longer do things piecemeal, as was the case when the system was being developed. We must base decisions on a more structured strategy, one that integrates multiple aspects of leisure and its infrastructures and better reflects demand as well as criteria of relevance and efficiency. The vision must be population-based as much as it is interest-based. This type of rational approach is almost totally absent.

We must clearly establish dialog in all public institutions and civic groups. Schools, cities, health and social services, clubs and associations, and in certain cases private owners must be consulted before any decisions are made to invest public funds in infrastructure.

Modernizing sports, community, and cultural leisure facilities should be given the same priority as that of other public infrastructures. Otherwise there is a great risk in this era of crisis-driven management that the task will be conveniently forgotten. Overpasses are not the only infrastructures that need fixing.

Update Funding Methods

Funding sources are stretched to the limit, and big challenges lie ahead. To increase budgets, ensure access to leisure for all members of the public, and uphold the democratic principles that are the system's great achieve-

ment, difficult decisions will have to be made about cutting costs and dropping or revamping certain programs. Current sources of funding for civic and public leisure will continue to exist and could well rise under certain conditions. However, new avenues can and must be explored.

The underlying justification for investing public funds in leisure is the social, economic, and cultural benefits that public and civic leisure provides. This explains why and how public money is invested. It is clear that we have not explored all avenues in this regard and that it may be possible to boost public funding without increasing taxes.

We should therefore explore more thoroughly those individual and community development programs in which leisure can and does play a major role, such as in public health, regional and rural development, and continuing education.

GIVING PUBLIC AND CIVIC LEISURE POLITICAL CLOUT

To meet all the challenges it faces, public and civic leisure in Québec must garner the support of Québec society and attract the attention of public decision makers. It is not the only player in the public sphere and must fight to keep its place. Although it is rooted in communities and thus has public legitimacy, its image generally does not do justice to its economic, social, and cultural contribution to society. Leisure is still perceived as entertainment, like recess between classes. Even in the public and civic leisure sector, some sports and arts promoters place sport and amateur theater at the very bottom of the totem pole.

Public and civic leisure stakeholders do not work together to attract public and political attention. At the provincial level, there is neither a true coalition of civil society regarding leisure nor a public forum to keep it in the spotlight. Although the Québec leisure network has shared values, its subnetworks see themselves as different from each other and lobby and make their presence felt separately. Despite repeated, cyclical attempts since the breakup of *Confédération des loisirs du Québec* in the late 1960s, no coalition has truly spoken for the sector or worked to give leisure political clout. It is often the same at the local level. We are a long way from *Service des loisirs de Montréal*, a non-governmental Montréal advocacy organization—the predecessor to the URLS—chaired by Dollard Morin (after whom the award was named) which persistently lobbied the City of Montréal until it built such and such park or offered such and such program.

Of course the media cover journalism awards or events like the Jeux du Québec games, and the collapse of a gymnasium roof, injuries on a playground, or water quality in public pools make headlines. Of course local election campaigns talk about leisure (although they never mention the word). But never has Québec reflected on the mission of leisure as it has done for education, health, the environment, or reasonable accommodation. Without strong support for the leisure network from Québec citizens, no political figure will give leisure the priority it deserves.

If a coalition were to materialize tomorrow, it is not certain it would have the message, the tools, and the strategies to achieve this political clout. Should we keep using the word leisure or should we refer instead to a quality of life and neighborhoods network?

The leisure sector should take these results and their impacts into account, but it is still at the stage of approximations and ideological discourse. It must make its presence felt and speak out on important social issues. To date, except in a few rare instances, it has been either absent or very discreet. It must put forward practical solutions, yet generally all it puts forward is criticisms. It must use the media to its advantage to stimulate debate and demonstrate its usefulness in a public sphere where it sometimes has trouble vying for attention with rare diseases.

In a the very competitive world of Québec public affairs, the leisure system must acquire the tools, expertise, and membership that are essential to its future and crucial for meeting the inevitable challenges that public and civic leisure faces in a world where individuals have become clients and communities, market segments.

The strong community roots of the leisure sector are without doubt the main political strength of the Québec leisure system, and the best proof of its worth. Although its form, means of communication, and messages may still be amateurish, at the core it is very powerful.

Leisure is a serious issue for communities and for Québec, but also a source of serious enjoyment!

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Between the world of commercialized leisure and the world of home cocooning lies a middle ground in Québec replete with public and community organizations that work together by the thousands to offer recreational and leisure opportunities to Quebecers and growth opportunities to communities. At some point everybody takes part in a festival, enrolls their children in team sports, visits a park, uses a bicycle path, volunteers for an amateur theater troupe, organizes a soccer tournament, expresses a need for recreation, or claims the right to leisure.

Through more than 50 case studies that provide a compelling portrait of leisure in Québec, this work illustrates that public and civic leisure model that Quebecers use in their recreational pursuits. It presents the model's mission, its values, certain principles, the resources used, the main challenges ahead, and the ways of meeting and working together that enable the model to thrive and develop.



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