

## **Identifying the Current Trends That Affect Our Work**

### COMMUNITY SECTOR

- The community sector is becoming more and more professionalized.
- Conservative trends of off-loading services onto the community sector.
- Generally, the conservative agenda is impacting community groups. Need to be aware of how this is done and remain 'vigilant'.
- There is an increasing lack of real spaces for engagement and true consultation.
- It is increasingly unclear who "owns" communities - Residents? Organizations? Institutions? Tables de concertation? Elected Officials?
- It is unclear as to who chooses the language that community organizations are using (ie: Human resources, volunteer management, planning, etc...).
- Branding and marketing in society is growing in intensity, both on the part of large corporations and large nonprofit organizations, with no end in sight, drowning out the voices of community organizations. The community, the government, and the sector don't know we exist. We're our own best-kept secret!
- The sector as a whole is not visible enough and its contributions not recognized sufficiently. When it is visible, it is damaging to our sector. For example, there is rhetoric that suggests that community groups are no longer meeting needs of our communities but rather just trying to keep job for ourselves.
- Increased burnouts of the staff working in organizations.

### DEMOCRACY

- There are gaps between rights and application of rights
- There is increasing interest in and experiments with participatory democracy. People are becoming more and more discontented with a democratic model based on representation and consultation
- There is a need to participate in community building by attending general assemblies and joining in a more public space.

### DIVERSITY

- Despite having a provincial law that ensures access to health, employment, and other basic services in English, there is a growing gap between the law and what is actually practiced.
- Inclusion is more of a focus. Some people are proposing that we explore ways of living together equally, while celebrating our differences.
- Exclusion is more of a focus: Some people are emphasizing reasonable accommodation (post 9/11 environment).
- There are more and more immigrants in Quebec.
- An increase in the diversity of languages being spoken.
- The language laws are being emphasized in response to these changes.
- There is an increasing need to sensitize local communities on issues of diversity.
- The government is increasingly impeding on immigrants' right to confidentiality (e.g., assigning a number to each immigrant and tracing their use of services to ensure that they

don't go over the government-mandated limit. Some organizations are getting around this by assigning different numbers to the same person or providing services without asking people for their numbers.

- There is a growing movement to bring the history of the slave trade to the forefront of public discourse and to obtain reparations for the descendents of those who were enslaved.
- There is a growing need to make room for the diversity of Anglophone identities that exist in Quebec. How might we do this? How might we re-imagine the future of our sector?
- There is still much exclusion of people with various disabilities.

#### AGE

- The overall population is aging to the point that soon the elderly will be the dominant population. Yet few people are talking about elders in a meaningful way.
- Are there ethnic groups that are doing a better job giving elderly a voice? (note: this was an interest to know if a trend exists)

#### HOUSING

- There is a decline in affordable housing.

#### TECHNOLOGY

- Society is becoming more and more technology dependent. Technology is replacing people. How can organizations begin to use technology to their advantage? We need the resources to get “connected.”

#### SAFETY

- The way that society is dealing with violence is more reactive (i.e. more policing and repression) vs. pro-active (more focused on prevention, education, empowerment, demystification, and anti-oppression work).

#### EDUCATION

- More kids are dropping out of school.
- More education is required to get by in a world that is increasingly knowledge-based and technologically driven.

#### ECONOMY

- The social economy is increasing in size (currently 20% of the total economy).
- There is a movement towards an ever-increasing knowledge-based economy.

#### FUNDING

- Community groups need to learn to embrace controversy. Controversy is something healthy that helps us all advance. **Bite** the hand that feeds you!
- There is increasing confusion about where to go for what funding and how funds are allocated to various groups.
- There is less funding available, particularly due to a perceived duplication of services, even though each organization might be offering the same service to a different ethnic community. Funders are increasingly asking these organizations to merge under one “multi-ethnic” organization, resulting in more homogeneity of services.

- Community organizations are not recognized by the three levels of government.
- The provincial government has adopted an “independent community groups” policy and action plan and has plans to incorporate it into law. In addition, a government body has been created to administer the government’s policy for community groups (SACAIS). Being officially recognized by the government is a huge victory that is the result of many years of hard work. COCo is helping to keep this trend going by creating a caucus of English-speaking, bilingual, and ethno-cultural groups to help SACAIS and the four main ministries better serve them.
- Funding is often dependent on ‘services rendered’. Funders are becoming more and more focused on quantity/measurable results and less focused on quality/process, causing organizations to do the same. Funders increasingly ask organizations to document numbers of people served.
- More funders are focused on efficiency and financial accountability.
- There is an increased imposed bureaucracy by funders and government.
- It’s increasingly hard for organizations to match their mission with funders’ missions.
- More funders are focused on only funding a specific linguistic group, which makes it difficult for organizations to serve the real need in the community, which is bilingual or multi-lingual.
- Organizations are having more difficulty sustaining funding.
- More funders emphasize service delivery over advocacy.
- There is increased competition for funding.
- There is more collaboration required in order to receive funding.
- Increased dependency on philanthropy for funding which may clash with missions thus creating dissonance for some organizations.
- Increasing difficulty in getting charitable status, thus making community organizations internal fundraising activities more difficult.

#### LEADERSHIP

- There is an increasing need to successfully transition leadership from one generation to the next to ensure continuity. Questions arose around how to do this: How to engage young people as future leaders and how to transfer leadership.

#### ENVIRONMENT

- A small, but growing number, of nonprofit organizations are beginning to take steps to reduce their environmental footprints.

#### PARTNERSHIP

- More and more organizations are partnering and collaborating with each other, both for funding and for work.
- There are more organizations sharing resources.
- There is more splintering happening amongst community groups.
- There is more networking/linking happening amongst community groups and a valuing of cooperation, being together and working with each other’s strengths.

#### VOLUNTEERING & CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

- There is less stability/permanence when it comes to volunteer and member engagement in organizations due to a more migrant and aging population. There are questions around how to sustain volunteer energy and continually renew organizations' membership base.
- What attracts, motivates and engages volunteers/members is changing.
- The increasing focus on social service rather than advocacy makes it difficult for organizations to represent the needs of their members.

#### SPACE

- Organizations are struggling more and more with day-to-day maintenance.
- Organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable space.

#### OTHER

- If it's not broke, don't fix it! Many groups are doing really well.
- There is a need to have a common focus.
- There is a need to be able to act fast on new ideas and on external events

#### WHAT PROPS UP THE TRENDS

- Patriarchy and sexism
- Capitalism
- Globalization
- Ageism
- Racism
- Complacency
- Lack of public spaces to talk together
- Urbanization
- Disconnect from nature
- Disintegration of community
- Bureaucratic inertia