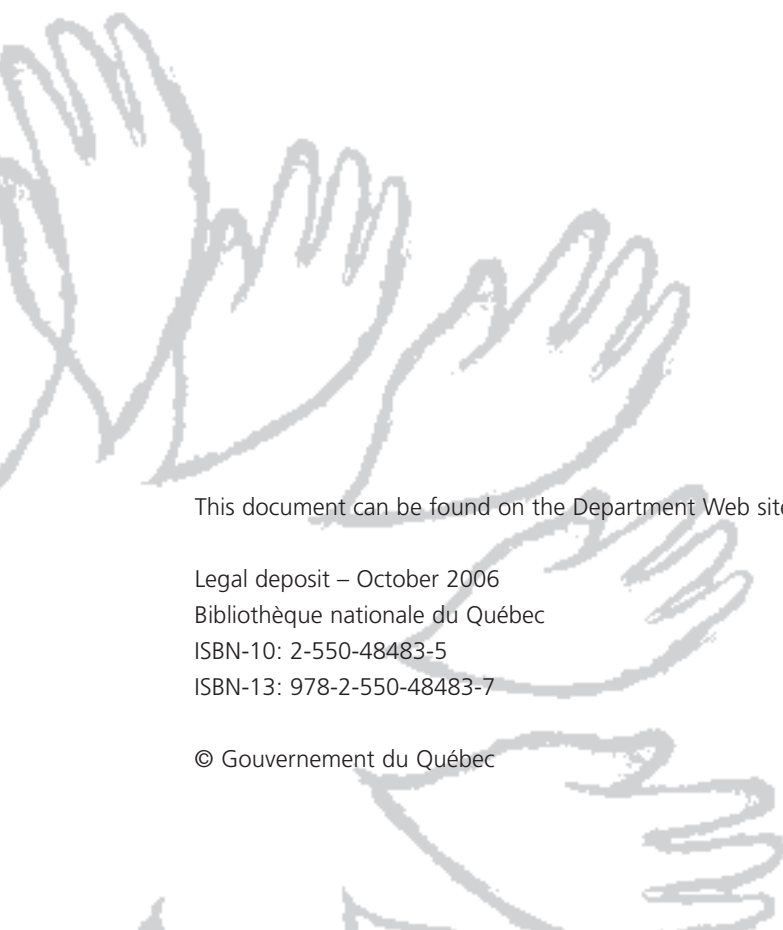


2004-2009
*Government Action Plan
to Combat Poverty
and Social Exclusion*



YEAR TWO REPORT

October 2006



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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Today we are releasing the report on the second year of implementation of the Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, entitled *Reconciling Freedom and Social Justice: A Challenge for the Future*. This anti-poverty action plan, introduced in April 2004, is based on the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion and arises from the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, legislation that provides direction for government action and engages all of Québec society in the great ten-year challenge of placing Québec among the world's industrialized states with the least poverty and social exclusion.

This objective is feasible but very demanding. It requires the mobilization of every member of our society every day. It is based on the right to live with dignity, decency, and respect, the right to equal opportunity, and on the individual and society-wide responsibility and obligation to do all we can to develop our human potential and our talents so as to overcome life's difficulties.

This Year Two Report describes the main existing measures as well as those instituted between April 2005 and March 2006 by the Government of Québec departments involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Our government is continuing its action aimed at eradicating and preventing poverty, assisting children, countering student disengagement, or dropping-out, acknowledging the value of work, and strengthening partnerships at the service of those unable to enter the labour force in the short-term. We want to help immigrants, women, members of visible minorities and persons with functional limitations to grow and thrive. They too want to live with dignity and aspire to have a hand in developing their community in a manner commensurate with their ambitions.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this document, the result of a determined and systematic approach aimed at finding lasting solutions to these complex phenomena that are unacceptable in a modern and democratic society.

Michelle Courchesne

A stylized, artistic signature of Michelle Courchesne, consisting of a series of connected dots and lines that form her name in a cursive-like font.

Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity

SUMMARY

Presented in April 2004 by the Government of Québec, the Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion is composed of a set of measures to be implemented within a five-year timeframe in order to meet the objectives enshrined in the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*. The action plan hinges on government and intersectoral involvement that brings together all the players concerned.

Under this Act, the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity must table an annual report on the activities carried out within the framework of the action plan.

This Year Two Report describes the second year of implementation of the action plan.

FORMATION OF THE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE AND OF THE CENTRE D'ÉTUDE SUR LA PAUVRETÉ ET L'EXCLUSION

Formation of the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale and of the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion figures among the milestone achievements of Year Two. These new deliberative forums will enable social dialogue that should foster the emergence of innovative solutions for waging an effective battle against poverty and social exclusion and contribute to more closely allying the various socioeconomic players in this sizeable challenge.

The Comité consultatif, a group that represents stakeholders from all sectors of civil society, is a place of exchange, deliberation, and joint and coherent action targeting complex issues in the fight against poverty. Its main mission is to advise the Minister on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the action introduced under the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. This advisory committee is made up of 17 members appointed by the government, five of whom represent anti-poverty groups or organizations. At least three of these five members must also be people with whom these groups or organizations work. Ten members are from various sectors of Québec society, and the remaining two members are civil servants.

In addition to the advisory component of the Comité consultatif's mission is its mandate to monitor government policies that have an impact on poverty and social exclusion. It is also empowered to follow developments in the communities affected by those problems. The Comité consultatif therefore maintains ongoing contact with the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion in order to have access to the indicators required in tracking the progress made under the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion is an observation, research and discussion centre entrusted with providing reliable and objective information on poverty and social exclusion. Its main purpose is to provide the Minister with a series of indicators to be used for measuring poverty and social exclusion, and social and economic disparities, such as income, as well as other determinants of poverty. The Centre will follow up on the indicators chosen by the Minister to measure the strides made, particularly with regard to improving the economic and social situation of people and families experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Under the aegis of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion is managed by a steering committee composed of members of the government, academic and research communities whose knowledge of poverty and social exclusion is recognized, as well as two workers in the field of poverty and social exclusion.

Changes to employment assistance

Assented to in June 2005, the *Individual and Family Assistance Act* favours incentives rather than coercion by more strongly supporting social integration and labour market participation efforts. This piece of legislation has made it possible to institute many action plan measures:

- a basic benefit that abolishes decreases enforced for failure to take steps leading to employment, including refusing or giving up a job
- more flexible eligibility conditions governing temporarily limited capacity for employment in order to broaden access to families with dependent children with a disability, even if the children are full-time students
- the Devenir program, aimed at providing recipients with individualized support in helping them to undertake initiatives leading to their active participation within society and to adequately prepare for an employability assistance measure.

In light of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*, certain rules governing employment assistance were changed or relaxed:

- allowable savings of up to \$5000 in an individual development account earmarked for a specific project
- increases in the allowable exemptions for certain assets, notably, the net value of a residence, which rose from \$80,000 to \$90,000
- exemption of child-support income of \$100 a month for all eligible families with dependent children
- benefits indexed by 2.43% in January 2006 for recipients with a severely limited capacity for employment and by 1.21% for persons fit to work.

NEW EFFORTS AND RENEWED EFFORTS

Financial assistance and housing assistance

- In May 2006, the minimum wage went from \$7.60 to \$7.75 an hour, and from \$6.85 to \$7 an hour for workers with income from tips.
- Advance payments under the Work Premium program meant that five times more families benefited than under the Parental Wage Assistance (PWA) program in 2004. In 2005, 54,099 families received advance payments under the Work Premium program.
- From June 2005 to March 31, 2006, some 600 immigrants or members of visible minorities were assisted under the Programme d'aide à l'intégration des immigrants et des minorités visibles en emploi.
- In 2005-2006, 4,519 resource region workers who underwent collective dismissal were assisted. Furthermore, outside the resource regions, 1,931 textile and clothing sector workers who underwent collective dismissal were also assisted.
- \$3.4 million was spent on food security for certain segments of the population.
- During the 2006-2007 Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance announced the addition of new monies earmarked for constructing 1,400 housing units in addition to the 18,600 others planned under the AccèsLogis Québec and Affordable Housing Québec programs. The target for social and community housing is now 20,000 by 2008.

- In 2005-2006, approximately 4,100 emergency housing supplements were granted.
- Since July 2005, seniors who receive the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement benefit receive free medication.
- More people now have access to legal aid.

Prevention of poverty and social exclusion

- Poor families now receive Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services through two poverty-prevention components: Soutien aux jeunes parents (support for young families) and Soutien aux familles vivant dans l'extrême pauvreté (support for families in extreme poverty).
- Under the Assistance Program for Emergent Literacy in Disadvantaged Communities, more than 1,400 literacy activities were carried out with parents, children 5 years old and younger, and social groups.
- 6,299 students in 25 schools in disadvantaged communities and 12 adult education centres were reached under the Programme famille, école et communauté : réussir ensemble.
- The Homework Assistance program budget has been doubled (\$9.4 million in 2004-2005 to \$19.6 million in 2005-2006).
- The \$90 million cash injection used to provide students with disabilities or learning or adaptation disorders with better guidance and supervision and faster intervention brings the additional amounts dedicated to this clientele to \$120 million for 2004-2005 to 2008-2009.
- In the 2005 calendar year, nearly \$2 billion was paid out through a Child Assistance refundable tax credit, a \$550 million increase from 2004 figures. The average annual benefit for all eligible households was \$2274 and \$3176 for families with income of less than \$25,000.
- In 2005-2006, funds were allocated for training and maintaining youth intervention teams in every region of Québec.
- In order to offer training and support services tailored to the situation and needs of drop-outs and young people with a low level of schooling aged 16 to 24, 24 local teams bringing together nearly 300 organizations were formed.
- The Agir autrement intervention strategy for secondary schools in the most disadvantaged communities made it possible to reach nearly 114,000 students.
- In order to provide alternatives to last-resort assistance for young people under age 25, since May 2006 the Alternative jeunesse pilot project has been underway in nine local employment centres. The program is one of the centrepieces of the 2006-2009 Youth Action Strategy made public in March 2006.

Involving society as a whole

- The Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions has committed to extending the Programme de renouveau urbain et villageois à Montréal until December 31, 2006.
- Pilot projects on local strategies to combat poverty and social exclusion continue in the regional county municipalities (RCMs) of La Haute-Gaspésie and Témiscouata and the City of Montréal (22 boroughs).

Consistent and coherent action

- When making proposals to Government, government departments and agencies must report on the direct and significant impacts of draft legislation on the incomes of individuals or families in situations of poverty. Where applicable, the report must be appended to the briefs presented to the Conseil des ministres.
- Further to talks between the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, an agreement was signed in December 2005. Its purpose was to work with Native communities, in keeping with their culture, to craft and introduce means of combating poverty and social exclusion. The social development office of the health and social services commission of the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador was tasked to produce an action plan adapted to Native peoples.

YEAR THREE

Year three will focus primarily on the work of the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale and of the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion. In early 2007, the Comité consultatif will produce a brief on updating of the Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. For its part, the Centre, in collaboration with the Comité consultatif, will suggest a series of poverty and social exclusion indicators.

In addition, the work related to an integrated territorial approach will continue in order to help local and regional communities design anti-poverty strategies. Certain changes will also be made to employment assistance in the aftermath of the upcoming adoption of the *Regulation respecting individual and family assistance*. Lastly, the First Nations will continue working on the production of an action plan to combat poverty and social exclusion consistent with their culture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	13
1. SHORT SUMMARY OF THE YEAR-ONE REPORT	15
2. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN YEAR TWO	17
2.1 Improve the lives of people living in poverty	18
2.2 Prevent poverty and social exclusion by fostering development of personal potential	25
2.3 Foster the involvement of society as a whole	32
2.4 Ensure consistent and coherent action	34
3. OUTLOOKS	37
CONCLUSION	43



INTRODUCTION

The Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion was made public in April 2004. It arises from the adoption in December 2002 of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*. The measures provided for in this action plan are aimed at attacking the causes and consequences of poverty alike in order to achieve the primary goal of the Act, namely, to make Québec one of the industrialized states with the least number of poor.

In accordance with this statute, an annual report presenting the activities carried out under the government action plan must be tabled with the Government by the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity. Here, therefore, is the report describing Year Two of implementation of the action plan.

The Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion assembles a set of measures for enabling movement towards achievement of the goals enshrined in the Act within a five-year timeframe. There are four major thrusts of these measures:

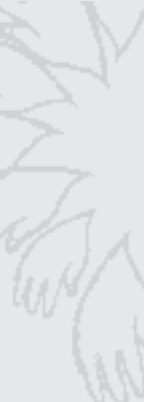
- Improves the lives of people living in poverty
- Prevent poverty and social exclusion by fostering development of personal potential
- Foster the involvement of society as a whole
- Ensure consistent and coherent action.

The action plan hinges on government and intersectoral involvement that brings together all the players working on the anti-poverty and social exclusion front. This is why, under the aegis of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, an interdepartmental committee was formed in June 2004 to effect true mobilization of the stakeholders and consistent and coherent implementation of action plan measures. In addition to Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale representatives are representatives from the following government departments and agencies: the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, the Ministère de la Famille, des Aînés et de la Condition féminine, the Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions, the Ministère du Travail, the Société d'habitation du Québec and the Secrétariat à la jeunesse.

During Year Two, the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale and the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion were established and commenced their mandate. Everything is now in place for action resolutely geared towards attaining the goals of the Act.

The action plan comes at a time when the conditions for entering the workforce and keeping a job are good. This, of course, means that implementation will be easier since one of the plan's two driving principles is that employment is the number one solution for ensuring the economic security and inclusion of individuals. Recent years have seen a drop in the jobless rate and a rise in the number of jobs. From August 2003 to August 2006, the unemployment rate decreased from 10% to 7.9%, to reach its lowest level since 1976, and the number of jobs increased by 155,000. The job creation and workforce renewal predicted for the next few years should, among its many effects, cause the jobless rate to retreat even further.

According to Emploi-Québec forecasts, some 250,000 jobs will be created in Québec from 2005 to 2009 as a result of economic growth, in combination with a particularly high labour force replacement demand.



Section 1 is a short summary of the Year One Report. Section 2 presents action taken or built upon in Year Two (fiscal 2005-2006). Lastly, Section 3 provides an overview of what to expect in Year Three.

Note that this report deals primarily with initiatives under the Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. It does not touch on all the action undertaken either by the government or its partners to make Québec a society where every citizen counts and actively contributes to the common good.



COHERENT ACTION AND INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

Efforts were made to step up exchange with the federal government. This resulted in the Québec Parental Insurance Plan. Talks were also held with the First Nations to support the emergence of local anti-poverty strategies in villages and on reservations.

A number of social and community development projects in communities with a heavy concentration of poverty were funded under the Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales, notably through integrated urban renewal, food security, and public transit. A method for quicker identification of legislative or regulatory proposals with direct and significant impacts on the income of persons in situations of poverty was developed. Lastly, work was begun to establish the Comité consultatif de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale and the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion.

During the 2006-2007 Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance announced the addition of new monies earmarked for constructing 1,400 housing units in addition to the 18,600 others planned under the AccèsLogis Québec and Affordable Housing Québec programs. The target for social and community housing is now 20,000 units by 2008. This target has been pushed up three times since 2003, from 13,000 to 20,000 housing units, and the rate speeded up from some 150 to 300 dwellings a month.

Very short-term assistance must also be provided to households unable to find shelter due to the shortage of affordable rental units. In 2005-2006, approximately 4,100 emergency housing supplements worth \$19 million were granted. This included assistance to municipalities to cover a portion of the cost of emergency services. In February 2006, the Government of Québec ratified one-year renewal (until the summer of 2007) of the emergency rental subsidies issued to some 4,100 households. The Government of Québec's contribution is \$15.5 million. When the contribution by the federal government and the participating municipalities is factored in, the total estimated cost is \$19.9 million.

For some citizens, getting to and moving about their apartment is difficult because of their mobility problems or physical disabilities. The cost of adapting their dwelling often far outweighs what they can afford. The Residential Adaptation Assistance Program offers financial assistance for making their dwelling accessible to them and customizing it to their needs.

The program has a recurrent budget of \$4.2 million a year. In 2004-2005, additional appropriations of \$38.8 million over three years were approved for 2,500 extra residential adaptations and for compliance checks and upgrades of platform lifts in dwellings for disabled persons.

As at March 1, 2006, over 900 residential adaptations had been carried out further to announcement of these additional appropriations, plus the 3,140 current files at various stages of processing. For the same period, \$2.9 million was allocated for equipment repair and replacement. Specifications and bids with a cost estimate in the order of \$4.1 million are currently on the table.

Support for community initiatives is delivered via various programs. The Assistance Program for Community Housing Organizations provides financial assistance to organizations involved in improving housing conditions and promoting citizen self-empowerment in that regard. In 2005-2006, the program had a budget of \$1.52 million which enabled the operation of 47 community organizations and implementation of projects aimed at developing new community practices, conducting studies and analyses, and carrying out joint housing activities.

The Community and Social Initiatives in Low Rental Housing Program provides funding for community projects aimed at improving life in low-rental housing by empowering residents to take charge of their environment. The purpose of the program is to provide funding for creating a family, community and social life adapted to the needs of the people who live in these subsidized environments and lifestyles that foster the meeting and intermingling of different generations and cultures. From 1998 to 2005, 287 projects for residents of low-rental housing were carried out under this program.

Lastly, within the framework of the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Société d'habitation du Québec select projects for assisting the homeless or individuals at risk of becoming so. The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and Human Resources and Social Development Canada work together to assess the program and have already decided upon the terms and conditions for its extension until March 2007.

Better access to prescribed medication for people with low incomes

Since July 1, 2005, seniors who receive the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement have been entitled to free prescribed medication. The plan is to extend coverage to other groups in cases where there are savings through agreements with the pharmaceutical industry and to implement ways of promoting better use of medication. A policy will be tabled late in the autumn of 2006.

Measures for cushioning the impact of the increased cost of electricity on low-income households

Given the climbing cost of electricity in Québec in recent years, a committee composed of representatives of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune was tasked to ensure that the problem of poverty and social exclusion was taken into account in Québec's energy strategy, Hydro-Québec's strategic plan for 2006-2100, and the government master plan for energy efficiency.

This demand was heeded because Québec's energy strategy for 2006-2015, made public in May 2006, includes several sections dealing with the effects of higher energy costs on low-income households.

More specifically, it allows the Régie de l'énergie to require distributors to provide impact studies on the situation of these households with their applications for rate increases. To give teeth to this course of action, a government order in council makes it mandatory for the Régie de l'énergie, when setting power-distribution rates and conditions, to take into account the government's economic and social concerns as stated in its energy strategy, namely, to consider the situation of low-income households that have trouble paying their energy bills.

In light of this, the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique du Québec must, by January 2007 at the latest, produce a ten-year master plan for energy efficiency. The plan must include an energy savings program for existing homes that provides for improving the thermal envelope of buildings.

The agency currently offers personalized assessments that make it possible for low-income households to trim their electricity bill. Last year, 6,200 households benefited from the agency's Budget modeste program. The target for 2006 is 7,400 households.

Greater access to legal aid

Access to justice is fundamental in a law-based society. People in situations of poverty or with modest incomes must be ensured State assistance if they do not have the financial means for legal services.

The income cut-offs levels entitling applicants to free or low-cost legal aid have not been increased or indexed since 1996. For independent adults, this threshold has not moved since 1981. Last January 26, the cut-off levels were raised for all household categories, and this upward trend will continue yearly until 2010. For example, the threshold for an independent adult has gone from \$8870 in 2005 to \$9695 in 2006. In 2010, it will reach \$12,093.

As of January 1, 2007, cut-off levels will be indexed annually. The new income cut-off levels will make more people eligible for legal aid, either completely free of charge or at low cost. In 2010, the government will spend nearly \$30 million more per year on legal aid.

Note that access to legal aid was not among the measures under the Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion. Since this measure addresses a

The Homework Assistance and Healthy Schools programs managed by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport are geared towards student motivation and success.

The Homework Assistance program is aimed at bolstering the homework assistance needed in order for elementary-level students to remain interested in school, to rally the school community to the cause, and to stimulate local initiatives in finding formats tailored to each school community. The purpose of the Healthy Schools program is to educate Cycle Three elementary school and Cycle One secondary school students in healthy lifestyle habits, including regular physical activity and proper nutrition.

All schools are eligible for the programs and in 2005-2006, every Québec school board participated. Total disbursements for the Homework Assistance and Healthy Schools programs were \$19.6 million and \$4.9 million respectively. The budget for the former doubled in 2005-2006, from \$9.4 million to \$19.6 million.

Examples of activities offered under the Homework Assistance program:

- Twice a week, students considered at serious risk of academic failure and who do not receive adequate assistance and supervision for homework stay after school and are given help with it.
- Parents and their children attend sessions aimed at helping the parents develop support skills, strengthening school-family ties, enhancing student motivation for learning, teaching students proper work methods, and instilling the value of perseverance in students. Special attention is given to students in difficulty. Schools decide whether to offer the service at lunch time or after school.

Examples of activities offered under the Healthy Schools program:

- Two Circus workshop practices a week held in the school gymnasium.
- Formation of hockey, handball or basketball teams. The activities are given at lunch time or after school.

- **Support for students in difficulty through additional staff**

In the education sector, certain measures are intended to enhance the support offered to children at school in order to foster their development, feeling of belonging, and academic success. These measures make it possible to provide children in academic difficulty with special support. This extra guidance and supervision during and after school also gives parents more quality time with their children.

This is why \$20 million was made available to school boards for 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 to hire professional staff and support staff whose role it is to support the children, parents and teaching staff. Another purpose of the measure is to enable early screening of children with difficulties and to provide appropriate monitoring and follow-up.

The agreement in principle entered into on December 15, 2005, between teaching staff and the government provides for allocations worth \$90 million for additional staff for students in difficulty starting in 2006-2007 and ending in 2008-2009. This three-year funding will be distributed as follows:

\$30 million for hiring remedial teachers for elementary-level students with learning disabilities

\$30 million for hiring resource teachers for the secondary level, primarily for students with behavioural problems

\$30 million to hire or keep professional staff and support staff.

ADAPT ACTIONS TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST NATIONS

Further to the discussions between the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, an agreement was signed in December 2005. Its purpose is to work with Native communities, in keeping with their culture, to craft and introduce means of combating poverty and social exclusion. The social development office of the health and social services commission of the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador was tasked to produce an action plan adapted to Native peoples.

The first phase, a study by an organization commissioned by the Assembly of First Nations of Québec and Labrador, determined that the poverty in Native communities was largely associated with social exclusion, that is, exclusion of Natives by non-Natives, and the tendency of Natives to marginalize themselves. The study recommends a structure for facilitating the joint action of everyone engaged in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The results of the study have served as guideposts for the next phases, namely, creation of an action steering committee for each Nation; a Native anti-poverty foundation; and developmental projects. The study and the subsequent phases are steps in the production of an action plan covered in full (\$74,000) by the Fonds d'aide à l'innovation et à l'expérimentation of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

- 2 : Critical and comparative analysis of anti-poverty programs and policy in Québec and elsewhere in Canada and abroad.
- 3: Taking stock of, analyzing and assessing the various results-centered development initiatives in local and regional communities, taking into account the social and economic development likely to fit in with a broader framework for sustainable development.

The selected research projects will get under way in January 2007. The new knowledge thus acquired should make it possible to provide a better understanding of the full breadth of poverty, accurately assess the repercussions for individuals, society and the economy, and craft innovative and more effective anti-poverty approaches.

Lastly, the Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion is working in tandem with the Conseil de la science et de la technologie to produce a research and knowledge-transfer strategy aimed at novel action for combating poverty and its causes, chronic enablement, and consequences.

MOVING TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACH

To maximize the spin-offs aimed at improving the living conditions of the most impoverished individuals and communities, local strategies against poverty and social exclusion designed by the very people concerned and the government departments (interdepartmental synergy) and agencies involved will be launched or continued as part of the systematic deployment of an integrated territorial approach. This move will factor in the financial means of every regional and local player concerned. The Comité interministériel de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale will therefore continue its work to implement and deploy the integrated territorial approach.

Working with the various government departments and the Comité interministériel de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will step up its prospecting of financial partnerships with the federal government and municipal administrations, private businesses and institutions, and foundations. These monies will provide the targeted communities with a more sustained and secure base for their social and economic development, while helping the Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales play a more effective role as a catalyst and lever for pooling the resources of the different players.

The work to deploy the integrated territorial approach is slated to be carried out with the Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions under a future territorial development policy. The policy is in response to the feedback from local and regional stakeholders at the The Public Talks Town Hall Meetings held in the summer of 2004 in every region of Québec and the Forum des générations in October 2004. These concerns focus mainly on the need for greater decision-making power for the regions and government action that is more flexible and better adapted to regional characteristics. The territorial development policy will be presented in the autumn of 2006.

TOWARDS AN ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In order to produce and establish a government anti-racism and anti-discrimination policy, the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles will conduct consultations in the autumn of 2006. This process is consistent with government action in recent years to facilitate the integration and full participation within Québec society of citizens of every origin by ensuring one and all equal opportunity and respect for differences.

