

ACTIVITIES REPORT



2020 - 2021



**THE
IMMIGRANT
VOICE**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Members of the Immigrant Voice (TIV),
Partners and Supporters,

Our 2020-2021 action plan was innovative as it aligned the organization's activities around autonomous popular education, social mobilization, non-partisan political action and advocacy.

The above-mentioned action plan also emphasized the need to intensify the search for sources of funding and the renovation of the organization's technological infrastructure in order to adapt its services to the new societal realities, including the limitations dictated by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

It should be noted that the second wave of COVID-19 and its accompanying safety regulations (including social distancing measures) have led the organisation to adapt its action plan for the 2020-2021 financial year.

Thus, your Board of Directors has resolved to align the agency's activities around priorities dictated by the coronavirus pandemic, including:

Hamid Benrabha



- Raising awareness among foreign-trained health professionals to participate in :
 - a) in the formulation of responses against COVID-19 in CHSLDs across Québec;
 - b) to join the process of vaccinating Quebec populations against COVID-19;
- Support the collective defense of rights before the courts and tribunals;
- Mobilization of resources;
- Membership perception surveys.

During the 2020-2021 financial year, the organisation's services reached one hundred and seventeen (117) members, of which twenty percent (20%) were members who had practiced as doctors abroad.

Thank you.

Gatineau, July 25, 2021

Hamid Berrabsha

Financial Director
First Nations - Maniwaki



ADVOCACY WORK IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

CONTEXT

In April 2020, the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services was looking for candidates for vaccination activities, more specifically for vaccine administration and subsistence blending, as well as for screening and surveys in the fight against COVID-19. The Ministry's call was made through the campaign "COVID-19, JE CONTRIBUE" [1].



On April 8, 2020, The Immigrant Voice (LVI) welcomed the Ministry's initiative and sent a letter to the now former Minister Danielle MCCANN proposing that foreign-trained workers residing in Quebec be involved in the process.

A copy of the correspondence was shared with Minister Mathieu LACOMBE, Minister of Family and responsible for the Outaouais region; Minister Jean BOULET, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity; the Member of Parliament for Hull, Maryse GAUDREAULT; the President of the Collège des médecins du Québec, Dr. Mauril GAUDREAULT; as well as to the group of organizations for the collective defense of rights at the national (RODCD) and regional (TROVEPO) levels, with the intention of raising awareness about the need to take into account a qualified and available workforce in the fight against COVID-19.

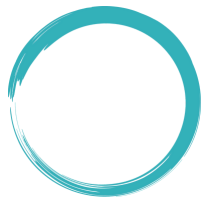
It should be noted that at the time of the proposal (April 2020), the organization had already mobilized seventeen (17) foreign-trained professionals to serve in Quebec's CHSLDs at the height of the nursing shortage.

[1] To review the call from the Ministry of Health and Social Services, see the link: <https://jecontribuecovid19.gouv.qc.ca/Inscription.asp>

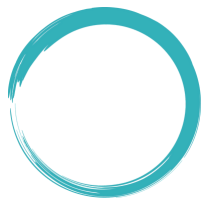
Of all the recipients of the organization's offer to use foreign-educated workers to combat COVID-19 in CHSLDs, only the Ministry of Health and the MP for Hull responded.

First, the MP for Hull, Maryse GAUDREULT, dated 9 April 2020, whose correspondence read:

The following quote has been translated from French



"I would like to thank you sincerely for your commitment to contribute to the common effort to care for people with COVID-19 by offering the services of foreign health professionals.



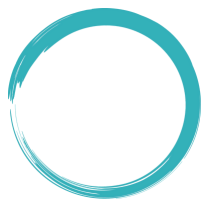
Please promote the "Je contribute" site to these health professionals and invite them to register so that those responsible for recruiting and hiring staff during the crisis period can access their professional data (...)



I am informed that to date, 139 people are being hired or have been hired to meet their staffing needs, mainly in the following job titles: nurses, auxiliary nurses, beneficiary attendants, service assistants, caretakers. In addition, nearly 400 people have indicated their interest in lending a hand without having expertise in the health and social services network. People will be chosen from this bank to help in the areas of medical equipment delivery, inventory taking and others. This is already a good start.



Believe me, we welcome anyone who wants to get involved and work to support the medical staff to lighten their workload and get them through this difficult period. (...)"



Subsequently, on 23 April 2020, the organisation received the Ministry's response [2] signed by Mr Daniel Cormier. The Ministry's response read:

The following quote has been translated from French

"(...) we wish to point out that the Professional Code defines the Quebec professional system. In order to ensure the protection of the public, this law regulates the practice of several professions and specifies the conditions of professional practice.

In accordance with these laws, representatives of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec are currently working closely with the professional orders to mobilize the resources that may be available in the context of this pandemic.

We would also like to inform you that the current needs are mainly in the area of long-term care facilities. We invite your members who wish to contribute, through alternative employment, to submit their applications on the website <https://jecontribuecovid19.gouv.qc.ca/Inscription>."



[2] Directorate General for Network and Corporate Personnel.

ANALYSIS

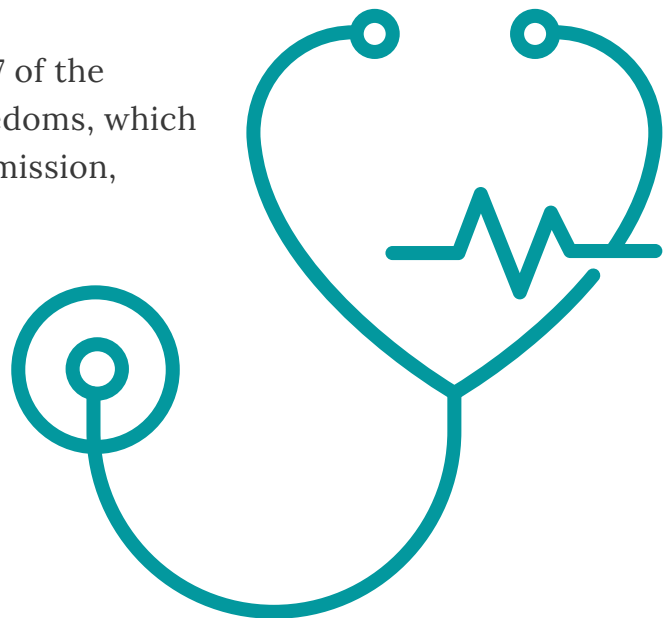
What the two above-mentioned responses have in common is that they ask the organisation to promote the "Je contribue" campaign to foreign-educated health professionals and to invite them to register for it.

The uniqueness of the MP's response was that it highlighted the need for additional manpower. These mainly concerned a certain category of job titles for auxiliaries, assistants and support for existing medical staff in order to lighten their workload. These clarifications were made to the attention of foreign-educated professionals so that they would lower their expectations of professional integration.

On the other hand, the Ministry's response emphasized that the Professional Code defined the Quebec professional system, that it ensured the protection of the public, and that this law regulated the practice of several professions while specifying the conditions of professional practice.

The Ministry's response was clear. Foreign-educated health professionals would not be included in the fight against COVID-19 in their full capacity as medical professionals.

The Ministry's response violated section 17 of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which reads: "No one may discriminate in the admission, enjoyment of benefits, suspension or the expulsion of a person from an association of employers or employees or from any professional corporation or association of persons engaged in the same profession."



TIV'S RESPONSE

Without dwelling on the discriminatory nature of the Ministry's response, the organisation launched an awareness campaign aimed at foreign-educated health professionals residing in Quebec to participate in the fight against COVID-19 in the CHCSL.

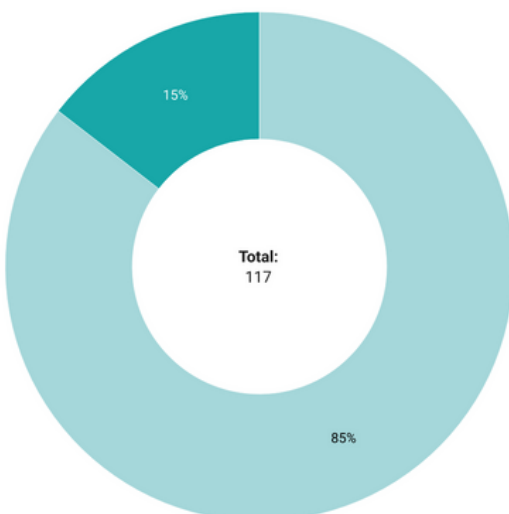


On April 30, 2020, the campaign was broadcast on the organization's website (www.lviqc.ca), on all social media and by mass emailing to partners. More than a hundred foreign-educated health professionals were directly reached across Quebec, in addition to the general public.



This advocacy effort also reached the Quebec political sphere, including the caucus of CAQ MPs from the Outaouais region, under the leadership of Minister Mathieu Lacombe, as well as the Ministry of Health.

■ Members who had not shared their applications ■ Members who shared their applications



Out of a total of one hundred and seventeen (117) active members, seventeen (17) members had shared their applications with the organization and then submitted them on the "Je contribue" site to help in the CHSLDs.

Chart: Olivia Hnatyshyn • Source: LVI • Created with Datawrapper

A follow-up survey of members asking if an offer had been made by the Ministry (through the regional CSSSs) to help in the CHSLDs showed that, of the 17 applications submitted by foreign-educated professionals, only two (2) were offered to serve as vaccination officers at the Gatineau Convention Centre.

All other applicants (across Quebec) did not even receive a phone call to discuss the extent of their skills to serve in the CHSLDs, which were in short supply due to the deployment of the army.

On Monday, July 6, 2020 at 2:30 p.m., the organization met with the caucus of CAQ MPs for the Outaouais region to make them aware of the need to take into account the expertise of health professionals with international degrees in the fight against COVID-19.

Despite all the above-mentioned efforts, the professional integration of foreign-educated workers remains an issue in Quebec.



SUPPORTING THE COLLECTIVE DEFENCE OF RIGHTS

CONTEXT

The organization's mission is also to offer legal assistance to its members in the process of bringing individual or collective cases to court in order to put an end to situations of systemic discrimination in professional integration.

Since March 2020, the organization has been supporting the referral of a case to the Superior Court of Quebec (District of Saint-François) by a doctor with a degree from abroad. The latter is suing the University of Sherbrooke for discrimination based on ethnic origin in the context of an integration course for new residents who graduated outside Canada and the United States (IMG), which is in violation of section 10 of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

More specifically, the University of Sherbrooke's behaviour led to the revoking of our member's registration certificate by the Collège des médecins du Québec. It was only after the revocation that our member realized the impact of the discrimination he had been subjected to, and it was the extent of this discrimination that dictated the representative support of The Immigrant Voice (TIV).



Visit - <https://www.lviqc.ca/representation>

ANALYSIS

The referral to the court was made in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Administrative delays coupled with the confinement measures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic mean that the case is still ongoing in the 2021-2022 financial year.

Defence pre-trial examination was conducted in March 2021. However, the defence and plaintiff's briefs will be filed during the summer and fall of 2021.



TIV'S RESPONSE

The organisation had mobilized its membership since the initial court referral, through posts on social media and the website (www.lviqc.ca). The one hundred and seventeen (117) members of the organization were affected by the actions undertaken by the TIV in addition to the large network of Quebec organizations in collective defense of rights.

MOBILIZING RESSOURCES

CONTEXT

Resource mobilization (of any kind) is crucial to the organizational functioning of organizations.

The Quebec government has been providing mission funding to Quebec community organizations for several years, including autonomous community action organizations (ACA) and collective advocacy organizations (DCD) under the management of the *Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome et aux initiatives sociales* (SACAIS).



Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and its accompanying decline of financial resources, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity (through the SACAIS) has granted an emergency fund to support organisations in dealing with the above situation.

The emergency fund has helped a significant number of collective advocacy organisations. Phase 1 of the emergency fund supported a few dozen organisations for a total amount of just over two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), while phase 2 supported seventy-eight (78) organisations for a total amount of five hundred and thirty-five thousand and four hundred and seventy dollars (\$535,470).

ANALYSIS

In spite of the funds made available to the organisations, it is clear that there are still many organisations not funded by the SACAIS.

The Immigrant Voice is, unfortunately, one of the organisations not yet funded by SACAIS.

Created in 2013, the organization continues into 2021, to request recurrent financial support, in order to better carry out its mandate, pursue its mission of collective advocacy and offer services to a clientele composed of foreign-educated workers who are victims of systemic discrimination by certain professional orders in Quebec.

TIV'S RESPONSE

To alleviate its financial difficulties, the organisation has renewed its request for financial support for the mission from the SACAIS.

The organization also proceeded to mobilize financial resources from its membership, elected officials and the general public during the fiscal year 2020-2021.

The organization has also created an advocacy [video](#) to help raise funds.



To defend its right to mission funding, the organization met with provincial and federal elected officials.

At the provincial level, the organization met with the CAQ caucus for the Outaouais region, invited by its president and MP for Gatineau, Robert Bussière. The meeting was held virtually (zoom) on July 6, 2020.

The Immigrant Voice was represented by the vice-president of the board of directors, Mrs. Laurence Dadié, and the organization's management. While the MP for Papineau, Minister of Family and Minister responsible for the Outaouais region Mathieu Lacombe led the debates for the CAQ caucus.

The organization spoke briefly about its mission, and then presented to the CAQ caucus the difficulties perceived in its quest for financial support from SACAIS. The caucus assured them that they had heard the awareness and the need to mobilise resources to support the organization's mission. The caucus reassured them that they would get back to the organization with answers.



The organization was still waiting for answers from the CAQ caucus in the Outaouais region in July 2021.

Continuing its quest for fundraising, the organization also met with federal Liberal MP Greg FERGUS, elected MP for Hull-Aylmer, on September 2, 2020 by zoom. The organization was represented by the same people as above. The MP was made aware of the organization's mission and its crying need for funding to pursue its mission.

MEMBERSHIP PERCEPTION SURVEY

CONTEXT

Many foreign-educated professionals are victims of systemic discrimination by certain professional orders in Quebec, who rely on the services of The Immigrant Voice for collective advocacy.

ANALYSIS

The issue of systemic discrimination prevents foreign graduates from integrating into the professional labour market in general, or into their profession of experience specifically. The systemic barrier limiting access to permits and licences under the control of the professional orders, prevents the integration of foreign-educated workers in Quebec. This situation has resulted in unintended consequences, including a lack of skilled labour that can be directly utilized by both Quebec and Canadian businesses.



TIV'S RESPONSE

In order to better understand the needs of foreign-trained workers and to determine the best collective advocacy responses, The Immigrant Voice participated in a survey organized by Women and Gender Equality Canada, and also organized a its own Quebec-wide survey.

a) Women and Gender Equality Canada Survey

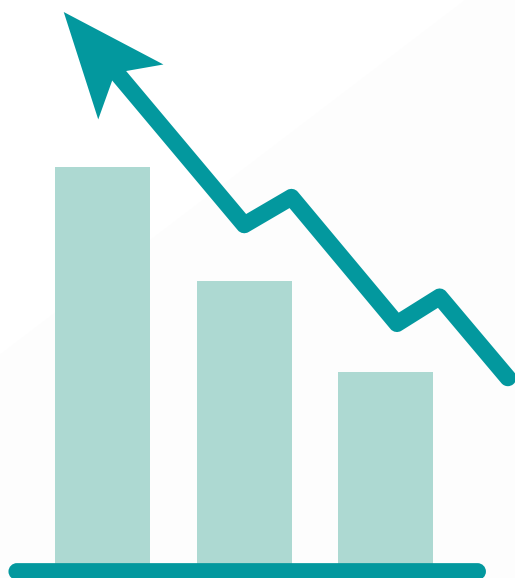
This survey consisted of an environmental scan for equality in Quebec. The survey was based on a literature review and content analysis of telephone interviews.

The organization collaborated with the researcher who conducted a review of the documentation that had been produced by "les Tables régionales du mouvement des femmes" in order to identify the main socio-economic, political, local, regional and geographic realities and issues facing organizations in the seventeen (17) administrative regions of Québec.

Using an online search, the researcher identified 1,037 equality-seeking organizations, including those involved in the development of the regional reports used in the situational analysis.

Of the 1,037 organizations, forty-two (42) responded to a request for an interview, including The Immigrant Voice.

The context for the participation of The Immigrant Voice in this survey is twofold:



- Immigrant women have difficulty accessing services due to language barriers, especially in rural and remote areas:
- The drastic decrease in available funding, as well as the reorganization of provincial networks has greatly hindered the availability of services.

Results

The report found that the responses from the interviews focused on seven emerging equality issues. Organizations identified difficulty accessing funding as the main barrier to their ongoing work. The Immigrant Voice ranked first among these organizations.

b) Survey conducted in Quebec

The organization conducted a survey in Quebec with the main objective of identifying the perception of foreign-trained professionals regarding their integration into the labour market, and particularly their perception of the systemic barriers they face from certain professional orders, preventing them from practicing their professions in Quebec.



The organization published the survey on its website and social media (Facebook and Twitter) for a period of three (3) weeks. The survey was also emailed to the organization's members via virtual messaging, including WhatsApp.

The survey was distributed through the networks of partners, including the *Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes refugies et immigrantes* (TCRI), *le Service intégration travail Outaouais* (SITO) and *le Carrefour jeunesse emploi de l'Outaouais* (CJEO).

Results

A total of eighty-five (85) Quebec residents responded to the survey.

The survey involved women and men of twenty-two (22) different nationalities, residents of twelve (12) of the fourteen (14) administrative regions of Quebec, and with degrees from more than 30 different professions.

The results of the survey were presented according to a four-part structure, namely: the participant's profile, his or her path in Canada, his or her dealings with the professional orders and his or her integration into the labour market.

The results of the survey make it possible to :

- Raise awareness among the members of the organization about the complex and multifaceted nature of the problem;
- Present the survey report to the political and administrative authorities;
- Mobilise the people concerned by the issue and channel their demands;
- Disseminate the results to national opinion (Quebec / Canada)

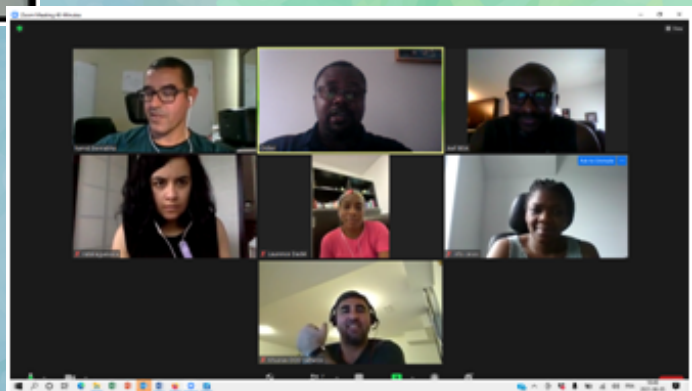
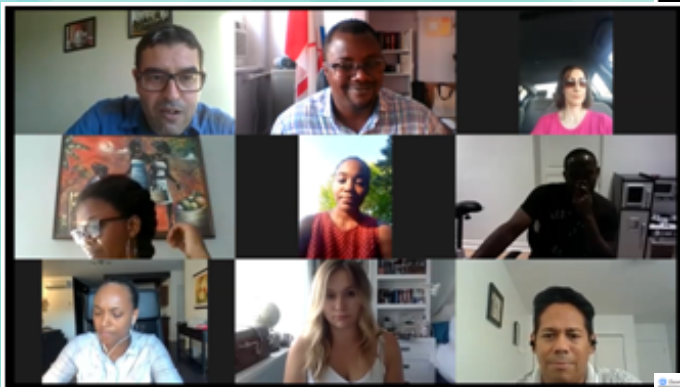
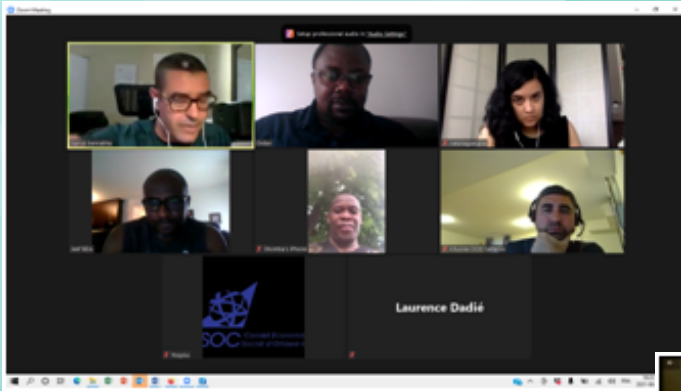
The survey report will serve primarily as a :

- A policy instigation document to correct existing policies on work integration.



PHOTOS

Virtual meetings with the Board Members in 2020-2021



PARTNERS

