Policy on Educational Success

Quebec Department of Education and Higher Education

BRIEF SUBMITTED BY

FÉDÉRATION DES CENTRES D’ACTION BÉNÉVOLE DU QUÉBEC

Prepared by

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Fédération des centres d’action bénévole du Québec

November 8, 2016
### General information on the FCABQ

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<th>Tankoano</th>
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<tr>
<td>First name:</td>
<td>Fimba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Mr. [x] Ms. [ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization (if applicable):</td>
<td>Fédération des centres d’action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description of the organization (if applicable):</td>
<td>Created in 1972, the Fédération des centres d’action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ) is a non-profit organization with 115 member volunteer centres (VCs) throughout Quebec. Its mission is to mobilize, support and represent VCs to help ensure that the various kinds of community volunteerism are promoted, recognized and developed. It does this by representing member VCs to public and private civil society organizations, by advocating for volunteerism, and so forth. The FCABQ’s member VCs promote and develop volunteerism in various sectors of human activity by fostering a space for volunteers to get involved in social, community and humanitarian issues important to the local community. For VCs, volunteerism is a means of personal and social development as well as a significant resource for community members who need material and human assistance. As an invaluable social reality, volunteerism is recognized, encouraged and valued. Having deep roots in their communities, VCs identify three areas of action for accomplishing their goals: 1) development of volunteerism and community action by promoting volunteerism and supporting volunteers; 2) support for the community through services to individuals and support for local organizations; and 3) governance and community life. In Quebec, nearly 40,000 volunteers give of their time to a variety of causes through the FCABQ’s various member VCs. Collectively, the VCs have 900 employees, while nearly 1,000 volunteer directors serve on the boards of the FCABQ’s 115 members.</td>
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<td>Telephone number:</td>
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Broad area of intervention I:
All students achieving their full potential

All students achieving their full potential is at the heart of the mission of schools and educational childcare services. Several different strategies and interventions will be needed in the coming years to enable students to achieve their full potential. To provide food for thought about this first broad area of intervention, four specific areas are proposed.

Volunteerism to support young people’s academic success

We think it is important to start by briefly mentioning what we mean by volunteerism and volunteering.

For the FCABQ, volunteering is a meaningful act that involves donating one’s time, knowledge and skills without expecting compensation. Key characteristics of volunteering include gratuity, freedom and social commitment. Commitment is what distinguishes volunteering from daily acts of kindness. Volunteers get involved in work that is compatible with their interests, skills and availability in order to meet community needs. Volunteering is above all a labour of love for oneself and for others, one where we do good for ourselves by doing good.

In recent years, social, political and economic organizations have expressed a particular interest in volunteerism. While volunteering is known for having a positive impact on the community, it is also likely to have a positive impact on those who volunteer and their ability to take an active role in their community.

In fact, volunteerism provides many externalities\(^1\) that can be summarized as follows:

1. **In terms of social aspects**, volunteering allows individuals to discover new interests and hobbies; to be part of a group of enthusiastic people and contribute to the success of shared projects; to build self-esteem and self-confidence; to improve social skills; to become a positive example to peers, family and community; and to integrate into a new community or country.

2. **Volunteering is a real career springboard** because it allows individuals to develop skills and abilities so they can prepare to take on new responsibilities; to network; to add new experiences to their CVs; to become familiar with the workplace; and to secure valuable references.

3. **In terms of health benefits**, volunteerism promotes a sense of well-being and reduces rates of depression; people who volunteer benefit from greater happiness, quality of life and self-esteem; it reduces incidences of heart disease and lowers blood pressure; it helps manage stress and anxiety; and death rates among volunteers are lower than in the general population.

\(^1\) Sources:
- FCABQ and web
- Laurent Bègue, Professor of Social Psychology and Director of the Inter-university Laboratory of Psychology in Grenoble, identified the latest studies on kindness: various studies (Patients with Alzheimer’s disease have reduced activities in midlife compared with healthy control-group members de R.P. Friedland et al., in *Proceeding of the National Academy of Science* - 2001). "Volunteer work and well-being" by P.A. Thoits and L.N. Hewitt in *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* (2001)
- Jacques Roy, Professor of Social Work at Cégep de Sainte-Foy and a researcher with Observatoire Jeunes et Société.
- Sylvie Tessier, Cégep Granby-Haute-Yamaska’s Implique Action program coordinator.
4. **Volunteerism helps make the world a better place** because it enables individuals to spread joy by lending an ear and showing empathy, and to take an active role in making the world around us happier, healthier and cleaner.

In addition, a number of studies confirm that volunteerism has a positive impact on several aspects of adolescent development:

- social, cognitive and psychological development (Kuperminc et al., 2001);
- identity development and political awareness (Youniss et al., 2001);
- reduction of risk factors (Allen et al., 1994); and
- development of independence and belonging (Allen et al., 1994; McKinney, 2002).

**Recommendations**

As we can see, volunteerism makes a valuable contribution to the development of an educational success strategy because it develops the full potential of those who engage in it and, by extension, of all students. It also provides an environment conducive to the development, learning and success of young people because it serves as an outstanding laboratory where students can put their knowledge into practice and get involved in real and challenging projects.

**Broad area of intervention II:**

**A favourable context for student learning, personal development and success**

All students achieving their full potential must also be understood as a function of a large number of competencies that represent countless possibilities and ways of succeeding, throughout their schooling and on the labour market. A more solid foundation in reading, writing and mathematics will enable them to develop competencies in a variety of fields, opening up more choices to them.

**Specific area 3: Adequate preparation for the transition to the labour market or higher education**

**Volunteerism as a means of preparing young people for the labour market and their social and career integration.**

It is no secret that volunteerism provides countless benefits in terms of labour market integration and facilitating social or career integration.

Job seekers know this because many of them use volunteering as a way to open up opportunities. The same can be said about immigrants who readily engage in volunteer activities to facilitate their integration into their host community.

Many schools (especially international studies programs) have volunteer programs that place students in local community organizations. Numerous studies have shown that volunteering can have a positive impact on young people’s psychosocial development and sense of community.
According to Statistics Canada, young Canadians aged 15 to 24 were more likely to volunteer than Canadians in most other age groups, at 58%. Within this age group, teens aged 15 to 19 (66%) volunteered at a significantly higher rate than young adults aged 20 to 24 (48%), about the same as in 2007. Young volunteers aged 15 to 19 worked an average of 115 hours in 2010. Youth aged 15 to 19 had higher rates of volunteering in all types of organizations than their counterparts aged 20 to 24. As expected, teens volunteered the most for educational and research organizations (25%), followed by 19% for social service organizations and 13% for sports and recreation organizations.

Several studies looked at volunteerism to determine whether community involvement in adolescence promotes certain developmental functions. Considering that youth is shaped by active achievements, Erickson argues that volunteering helps form young people’s identity, which continues into adulthood. He argues that young people must be given the opportunity to have concrete experiences in society in order to become aware of their future options and to shape their identity through their interactions with adults. Volunteerism and community involvement is one of these forms of formative experiences.

Also, the research report “Étude sur l’action bénévole chez les jeunes” [study on volunteerism by young people] conducted by the Centre de bénévolat de Laval (October 2006) states the following:

Based on a review of the main volunteer programs developed in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, Kuperminc et al. (2001) conclude that adolescents participating in community volunteering activities are likely to have experiences that promote their social, cognitive and psychological development. Governments can consider youth volunteer programs to be particularly useful for preventing emotional, behavioural and health problems related to adolescence. Hamilton and Fenzel (1988) also point out that the social development of adolescents is positively enhanced by community volunteering experiences, although the magnitude of these developmental gains remains, on the whole, limited. [TRANSLATION]

Allowing young students to take part in volunteer programs while in school can be very effective in integrating them into socio-professional life and even help them choose the higher education programs to complete if necessary.

Specific area 4: A school that is inclusive and proud of its diversity

Volunteering for an inclusive and diverse school

We are pleased to see that the government considers the school as a living environment. Schools should be a fertile ground for activities aimed at developing not only intellectual skills, but also life skills. That is why schools should encourage volunteerism as a recognized and valued activity throughout a young person’s academic career.

The world of volunteerism is conducive to contributing to the linguistic and social integration of young people and to promoting a welcoming culture by valuing the contribution of each individual. Quebec society has a wealth of cultural diversity, and this diversity is reflected in its community organizations. Encouraging young people to volunteer exposes them to this diversity of both the volunteer teams and the clients who benefit from their services.

Recommendations

2 Volunteering in Canada, by Mireille Vézina and Susan Crompton, April 16, 2012.
3 Research by Erikson (1968) into the development of the concept of adolescence
Consequently, the FCABQ proposes the following course of action in the future policy on educational success for young people in Quebec: the creation and implementation of a universal youth volunteerism program within Quebec’s elementary and secondary schools.

To ensure that such a provincial program is implemented successfully, the FCABQ suggests that a theoretical framework be designed to support the process within schools. Such a theoretical framework should identify the expected development outcomes in young people, what type of volunteer involvement should promote the achievement of these outcomes and under what conditions volunteerism should take place.

The preferred approach would be to build on existing school-based volunteer programs when implementing a universal program for all students in all schools in Quebec, not just one for the elite, which currently appears to be the case.

**Broad area of intervention III:**

**Mobilization of partners and stakeholders in support of educational success**

The third area of intervention involves the environment outside the school. Educational success is a challenge that goes beyond school walls and the school system’s responsibilities. It must be taken up collectively, with the involvement and cooperation of a number of stakeholders and partners.

**Specific area 2: Support from partners and the community**

As we mentioned in the 1st and 2nd areas of intervention, volunteerism is an activity that should not be overlooked when coming up with a strategy for educational success.

Implementing school-based youth volunteer engagement programs will undoubtedly require the cooperation of community organizations in the field. These organizations will be the ones to welcome and integrate young volunteers. This makes it important that these various organizations be prepared for achieving the objectives of a universal youth volunteerism program.

It is worth pointing out that the mission of FCABQ’s 115 member volunteer centres (VCs) is four-fold: 1) develop volunteerism in various sectors of human activity; 2) support volunteers; 3) support organizations; and 4) serve individuals.

There are VCs in all of Quebec’s administrative regions (except Grand-Nord) and are made up of local organizations and volunteers. Nearly 40,000 volunteers donate their time to various causes through VCs. These volunteers work mainly with individuals through various services such as Meals on Wheels, volunteer transportation, friendship visits and phone calls, tax clinics, support for caregivers, shopping assistance, community meals, homework assistance, drop-in childcare services, reading programs, etc.

In addition, several VCs have already had success working with educational institutions (kindergarten, elementary and secondary) to develop several initiatives to instill volunteering in young people in these institutions and in the community. VCs have in fact set up an impressive range of activities in schools. The following table gives an overview of the kinds of initiatives that VCs run in partnership with schools.
Table 2. Types of activities to promote volunteering in schools

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<th>Activities to promote volunteering in schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering awareness</td>
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<td>Kiosks – Volunteer fairs</td>
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<td>Intergenerational activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities to encourage reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering notebook/pamphlet handouts</td>
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<td>Matching not-for-profit organizations and student volunteers</td>
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<td>Homework help</td>
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Recommendations

Given the specific mission of the FCABQ and its member VCs and their expertise in developing volunteerism in the community, we strongly recommend that the Department of Education involve the FCABQ in the process of creating and implementing a possible youth volunteer engagement program in Quebec schools.

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4 Report on the survey of activities to promote volunteering in businesses and schools, FCABQ, October 2015.
Conclusion

The FCABQ and its 115 member VCs are pleased to see that the government is interested in developing a policy to ensure the educational success of young people. We believe that society’s validation of education is essential if the community is to work together to achieve short- and long-term results, and volunteerism is a meaningful, proven way to do just that. Whether it involves immigrants integrating into their new community, unemployed individuals looking to gradually re-enter the workforce, students practising acquired skills through hands-on volunteering projects, or young people acquiring life skills through volunteering that is either structured (through school) or on their own initiative (through community awareness).

Volunteering is an effective way for young people to acquire life skills because they will gain the ability to reinforce adaptive and positive behaviours that will help them effectively deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. By combining a set of people skills acquired in the classroom and direct experience (volunteering) to tackle the most common problems and issues that come up in daily life, we help train young people to become active and productive members of their communities, while respecting their abilities and deep personal identity.

Actively involved in their communities, VCs and their volunteers are essential for implementing successful strategies in the field. That is why we very much hope that the Department of Education will consider the recommendations that come out of this consultation process.

The FCABQ and its 115 VCs want the government to support the implementation of a universal youth volunteerism program in Quebec elementary and secondary schools. Providing them with a supervised program adapted to their development needs will prove to be a considerable asset in promoting their academic and educational success.

In closing, the FCABQ remains open and willing to work with the Department in drafting and implementing this new program and also in engaging VCs in the field when it comes time to implement it.
Appendices

List of the FCABQ’s member VCs

Region 01 – Bas-Saint-Laurent (8 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole Vallée de la Matapédia • Centre d’action bénévole Région Témis • Centre d’action bénévole de la région de Matane • Centre d’action bénévole La Mitis • Centre d’action bénévole de la Région de Rimouski – Neigette • Centre d’action bénévole des Seigneuries • Centre d’action bénévole Cormoran • Centre d’action bénévole des Basques

Region 02 – Saguenay / Lac-Saint-Jean (5 VCs)
Centre d’Action Bénévole du Lac • Centre d’action bénévole de Chicoutimi • Centre de bénévolat « Soif de Vivre » de la Baie • Centre d’action bénévole de Saint-Félicien • Centre d’action bénévole de Jonquière

Region 03 – Région de la Capitale Nationale (4 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole de Québec • Centre d’action bénévole Aide 23 • Centre d’aide et d’action bénévole de Charlesbourg • Association Bénévole de Charlevoix

Region 04 – Mauricie (9 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole du Rivage • Centre d’action bénévole de Grand-Mère • Carrefour d’action bénévole du Haut St-Maurice • Centre d’action bénévole de la MRC de Maskinongé • Centre d’action bénévole La Moraine • Centre d’action bénévole Mékinac • Centre d’action bénévole des Riverains • Centre d’action bénévole Laviolette • Centre d’action bénévole de la région de Shawinigan

Region 05 – Estrie (16 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole des Sources • Centre d’action bénévole de la MRC de Coaticook • Centre d’action bénévole du Granit • Centre d’action bénévole de Magog (Carrefour du Partage) • Centre d’action bénévole Missisquoi-Nord • Centre d’action bénévole de Richmond • Centre d’action bénévole R.H. Rediker • Centre d’action bénévole Valcourt et Région • Centre d’action bénévole du Haut-Saint-François • Centre d’action bénévole de Windsor • Centre d’action bénévole de Sherbrooke • Centre d’action bénévole de Bedford et environs • Centre d’action bénévole de Cowansville • Centre d’action bénévole de Farnham • Centre d’action bénévole de Granby • Centre d’action bénévole de Waterloo

Region 06 – Montréal (7 VCs)
Accès bénévolat /Centre d’action bénévole de l’Est de Montréal • Centre d’action bénévole Ouest de l’île / Volunteer West Island • Centre d’action bénévole Bordeaux-Cartierville • Centre d’action bénévole de Rivière-des-Prairies • Centre d’action bénévole de Montréal-Nord • Centre d’action bénévole de Montréal / Volunteer Bureau of Montréal •Centre d’action bénévole et communautaire Saint-Laurent

Region 07 – Outaouais (3 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole Accès • Centre d’action bénévole de Gatineau • Centre d’action bénévole de Hull
Region 08 – Abitibi / Témiscamingue (2 VCs)
Centre de d’action bénévole l’Amicale • Centre de bénévolat de Rouyn-Noranda

Region 09 – Côte-Nord (5 VCs)
Centre de bénévolat Manicouagan • Centre d’action bénévole Le Nord-est • Centre d’action bénévole de la Minganie • Centre de bénévolat de Port-Cartier • Centre d’action bénévole de Sept-Îles

Region 11 – Gaspésie / Îles-de-la-Madeleine (8 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole Gascons-Percé • Centre d’action bénévole Le Hauban • Centre d’action bénévole « La Grande Corvée » • Centre d’action bénévole Ascension Escuminac • Centre d’action bénévole des Îles de la Madeleine • Centre d’action bénévole des Chic-Chocs • Centre d’action bénévole Saint-Alphonse-Nouvelle • Centre d’action bénévole Saint-Siméon / Port-Daniel

Region 12 – Chaudière / Appalaches (4 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole Concert’Action • Centre d’action bénévole Bellechasse-Lévis-Lotbinière • Centre d’Entraide communautaire Bénévole de Montmagny • Centre d’action bénévole Beauce-Etchemin

Region 13 – Laval (1 VCs)
Centre de bénévolat et moisson Laval

Region 14 – Lanaudière (7 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole D’Autray • Centre Communautaire bénévole Matawinie • Service Bénévole Comté L’Assomption • Centre d’action bénévole Émilie-Gamelin • Centre d’action bénévole de Montcalm • Centre de bénévolat Brandon • Centre d’action bénévole des Moulins

Region 15 – Laurentides (7 VCs)
Centre d’action bénévole Association Solidarité Argenteuil • Centre d’Action Bénévole Léonie-Bélanger • Centre d’action bénévole Les Artisans de l’Aide • Centre d’action bénévole Saint-Jérôme • Centre d’action bénévole Laurentides • L’Entraide bénévole des Pays-d’en-Haut • Centre d’action bénévole Solange-Beauchamp

Region 16 – Montérégie (23 VCs)
Centre de Bénévolat Acton Vale • Centre d’action bénévole Beauharnois • Centre d’action bénévole du Grand Châteauguay • Centre d’action bénévole d’Iberville • Centre d’action bénévole de la Frontière • Centre d’entraide régional d’Henryville • La Mosaïque, Centre d’action bénévole et communautaire • Centre de bénévolat de la Rive Sud • Centre d’action bénévole la Seigneurie de Monnoir • Centre d’action bénévole de la Vallée-du-Richelieu • Centre d’action bénévole Soulages • Centre d’action bénévole « Les p’tits bonheurs » • Centre d’action bénévole de Saint-Césaire • Centre d’action bénévole de Saint-Hubert • Centre de Bénévolat de Saint-Hyacinthe • Centre d’action bénévole de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu • Service d’Action Bénévole « Au cœur du Jardin » • L’Envolée Centre d’action bénévole Sainte-Julie • Centre d’action bénévole du Bas-Richelieu • Centre d’action bénévole L’Actuel • Centre
d&action bénévole de Boucherville • Centre d&action bénévole de Verchères • Centre d&action bénévole de Contrecœur

Region 17 – Centre-du-Québec (6 VCs)

Centre d'action bénévole Drummond • Centre d'action bénévole du Lac Saint-Pierre • Centre d'action bénévole de Nicolet • Centre d'action bénévole de l'Érable • Carrefour d'entraide bénévole des Bois-Francs • Centre d'action bénévole de la MRC de Bécancour