



Stratégie nationale de lutte contre
la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale

Report on government action to fight poverty and social exclusion

During the Quiet Revolution, Québec equipped itself with key tools of development: universal education, free health and social services, and other services integrated into a social and economic safety net that are the envy of many of its neighbours. A number of measures taken in the last 20 years have enabled local and regional authorities to take charge of their development, the most significant of which has been the Policy on the Support of Local and Regional Development. During this same time, the Québec government also implemented the Parental Wage Assistance program further to recommendations in its White Paper on Personal Taxation, which put a greater value on work by linking taxes and transfers in a more integrated fashion.

A strategy backed by major funding announced in the last 12 months

Since 2001, the Government of Québec has demonstrated its commitment to taking sweeping action against poverty with announcements in two budget speeches and an additional budget statement of an array of measures and the investment of more than \$1.34 billion over the next three years:

- **Strengthening of the social and economic safety net**

- Automatic annual indexation of social assistance
- Abolition of the penalty for sharing a dwelling
- Abolition of the accommodation calculation
- Increased investment under the Action Emploi measure

- **Improvements to the personal tax system**

- Transfer to spouses of the unused portions of non-refundable tax credits
- Tax deductions for support payments
- Tax deductions for residents of outlying regions

- **Housing and neighbourhood revitalization projects**

The 2002–2003 Budget devotes \$500 million to a series of measures for the construction and renovation of 40,000 housing units.

- Enhancement and 5 year renewal of the AccèsLogis program
- Affordable housing program
- Enhancement of Revitalizing Older Neighbourhoods Program
- Renewal of RénoVillage program
- Rejuvenation program for cities and towns

- **Development of the social economy and outlying regions**

In its March 2001 budget speech, the Québec government announced a series of social solidarity measures.

Among these measures, \$100 million was set aside to revitalize the social economy.

An investment of \$33 million was also announced to support local initiatives in vulnerable rural areas.

- **A rural policy for Québec**

In December 2001, the government unveiled its rural policy:

- Establishment of a rural pact with regional county municipalities (RCMs)
- Government services adapted to meet the specific needs of each area
- Development of community transportation
- Agricultural diversification in 20 RCMs

- **Policy on the Recognition and Support of Community Action**

In September 2001, the Government of Québec unveiled its Policy on the Recognition and Support of Community Action, which underscores the government's intent to respect the independent action of community groups in the various social roles they serve and to acknowledge the importance of community action in citizenship and social development.

- Injection of \$50 million over 3 years to implement this policy

- **Prevention**

The Québec government also put in place a series of measures to fight the causes of poverty by reducing the number of high school dropouts and providing support to youths and families.

- More than \$60 million allocated to the school adjustment action plan, *Agir tôt pour réussir*
- \$22 million to improve services for young people and their families
- \$141 million to reduce the number of high school dropouts in disadvantaged areas
- \$45 million to consolidate prevention services for children and youth and to support families

- **Feeding Quebecers**

In June 2001, the Government of Québec put aside a budget of \$35 million to ensure that all Quebecers have enough to eat.

Since 1994, the concrete action taken by the Government of Québec has demonstrated its commitment to resolutely attacking the ills of poverty and social exclusion.

In the wake of two recent Québec socioeconomic summits—the Summit on the Economy and Employment in 1996 and the Québec Youth Summit in 2000—action was taken on a number of fronts:

- Implementation of the Fonds de lutte contre la pauvreté par la réinsertion au travail (Anti-Poverty Fund)
- Introduction of the “zero poverty clause” for some 120,000 Quebecers who, for physical or psychological reasons, cannot enter the job market
- Increased development support to social economy enterprises
- Creation of a youth fund aimed at supporting social, community, cultural, and professional integration initiatives for youths aged 15 to 29
- Announcement of support programs for disadvantaged young parents

A number of steps were taken toward improving the lot of low-income workers:

- Drug insurance plan
- Family allowance plan
- Reduced contribution daycare services
- Housing allowance

Other measures were put in place to prevent poverty and improve employment assistance:

- Support for Montréal schools
- Adoption of the Act respecting income support, employment assistance and social solidarity
- School adjustment action plan: *Agir tôt pour réussir*
- Women's labour strategy
- Pay Equity Act