



Action Plan for Adult
Education and Continuing
Education and Training

Learning
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TABLE of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTERS	V
SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES	1
BASIC EDUCATION	
BACKGROUND The components of basic education	3
OBJECTIVE To significantly increase the level of basic education in Québec	5
MEASURES	
1 First measure: Promote basic education	6
2 Second measure: Improve reception and referral services	7
3 Third measure: Adapt a wider variety of types of training and places where this training is provided	8
4 Fourth measure: Offer employees an apprenticeship program in the workplace	13
5 Fifth measure: Increase funding for basic education	13
JOB-RELATED CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING	
BACKGROUND	
OBJECTIVE To increase our efforts in favour of job-related education and training	16
MEASURES	
1 First measure: Step up awareness activities among employers and employees	16
2 Second measure: Develop tools for strategic watch in the workplace	17
3 Third measure: Strengthen the implementation of the Act to foster the development of manpower training	19
4 Fourth measure: Adopt collaborative mechanisms	19
5 Fifth measure: Make major adjustments to the supply and delivery of job-related continuing education and training	20
6 Sixth measure: Describe in detail the qualifying nature and transferability of training in the workplace	22

THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND COMPETENCIES

BACKGROUND

OBJECTIVE

To ensure access to recognition of prior learning services in every region of Québec 26

MEASURES

- 1 First measure:**
Create an interministerial table for the recognition of prior learning and competencies 26
- 2 Second measure:**
Clarify the right to the recognition of prior learning at the secondary and college levels of education 27
- 3 Third measure:**
Establish a record of learning in basic general education 28
- 4 Fourth measure:**
Consolidate an occupational certification system in the workplace including the recognition of competencies 29
- 5 Fifth measure:**
Make the recognition of prior learning and competencies the subject of a major action in the education community 29
- 6 Sixth measure:**
Develop an approach for the recognition of competencies acquired by groups of people in similar occupations 31
- 7 Seventh measure:**
Speed up and intensify the recognition of prior learning process for immigrants 31
- 8 Eighth measure:**
Emphasize referral to qualifying and transferable training 32

SHARED-RESPONSIBILITY FUNDING

BACKGROUND 33

PERSONAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS 34

A BROADER PERSPECTIVE IS CALLED FOR 34

CONCLUSION 37

MESSAGE

from the Ministers

The importance of adult education and job-related continuing education and training for social, economic and cultural development is widely accepted in all societies based on knowledge and active citizenship. The Government of Québec has made adult education and continuing education and training a priority and the focus of this action plan.

The five-year plan outlines the government's commitments and details its objectives and targets. It also names the major participants and partners in the different actions and sets the time frame for the major steps involved.

While some of these measures are consolidations, follow-ups and updates of earlier versions, many others herald a brand new way of doing things. Although the action plan is intended to encourage expression of the demand for training, it also stresses the adaptation of such training and related services to the particular needs and situation of adults.

By more clearly indicating for whom the different measures are intended, the government is emphasizing the fact that the adult learner is the focal point of both its policy and its action plan. By identifying the partners who play an essential role in the achievement of the targeted objectives, the government is also emphasizing that, here as elsewhere, all must assume their responsibilities in complementarity and synergy, in accordance with the concept of shared management, on which the policy and action plan for adult education and continuing education and training are based.

The government policy and action plan for adult education and continuing education and training represent a step forward for Québec society. It is crucial that we share the conviction that, in today's world, all must have sufficient basic education and must continue to learn throughout their lives.

Minister of State for Education and Employment



Sylvain Simard

Minister for Employment



Agnès Maltais



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SUMMARY of priorities

The action plan for adult education and continuing education and training is guided by three principles:

- Knowledge is an important factor in personal growth, economic development, social cohesion and democracy.
- Adults in Québec must have access to training and be given the opportunity to express their training needs.
- The state is responsible for adult education and continuing education and training; individuals, businesses and organizations must also be prepared to participate voluntarily and responsibly.

The action plan has four focuses:

- 1) basic education
- 2) job-related continuing education and training
- 3) recognition of prior learning and competencies
- 4) shared responsibility for funding and education

The focuses have specific aims, and actions are based on a similar theme:

- 1) stimulate a demand for training
- 2) inform, counsel and support the adult learner
- 3) offer services adapted to the adult's particular situation
- 4) work together with partners

Adult education and continuing education and training are the responsibility of a number of partners in the public, private and community sectors.

This is why the action plan will be closely monitored by the main partners participating in the **Comité de suivi de l'implantation de la politique d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue**, which will be set up in the spring of 2002. The Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will co-chair the committee. The Commission des partenaires du marché du travail will be represented by four members (from unions, employers' groups and community and education organizations); the Office des professions du Québec, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will also participate. The committee's mandate will be to:

- **ensure follow-up of the gradual implementation of the policy and action plan**
- promote the mobilization of ministries and regional and provincial partners around adult education and continuing education and training issues



- support cooperation among partners in the implementation of the measures set out in the action plan
- monitor the achievement of the action plan's objectives and the development of adult education and continuing education and training for all segments of the population and in every region of the province
- report its conclusions to the Ministers responsible
- propose any changes to the implementation process it deems necessary
- propose new ways of solving the problems encountered

BACKGROUND

According to Statistics Canada data from 1996, there are in Québec almost 1.5 million people aged between 15 and 64 who do not have a diploma, having attended school for less than 13 years; 41 per cent of them (611 000 people) attended school for less than 9 years. This can be explained in part by the fact that, before the major education reform of the early 1960s, access to education, especially after elementary school, was limited.

Since "adult" enrollments in general and vocational education in school boards in 2000-2001 totalled some 80 000 people between 20 and 30 years of age (and some 230 000 over 16 years of age), it must be concluded that far too few of the large number of people who lack sufficient basic education are pursuing educational activities to remedy their situation.

Despite their efforts, school boards and independent community action groups have been able to reach only a small percentage of the population with literacy needs. There were only slightly more than 18 000 enrollments in literacy training in 2000-2001: some 12 000 in school boards and the rest in community-based literacy groups.

This is a worrisome situation, because insufficient education has consequences for both individuals and society in the short as well as the long term. Thus, more than seven out of ten adults under the age of 30 receiving income security benefits left school without finishing their basic education and earning a diploma, and the proportion is even higher among people in their early twenties. A significant number of people with disabilities also have insufficient education.

Many single mothers do not have enough education to contribute as much as they would like to their children's educational success or to develop their own potential. As well, in addition to the general problems faced by immigrants, many newly arrived women immigrants experience problems because they have little education. Native women also experience this type of problem.

Insufficient education is also a problem among workers, and negatively affects Québec businesses as well. Basic education is a key factor in job maintenance and security and business performance.

Given this worrisome situation within the context of our knowledge-based society, it is urgently necessary that we meet the major challenge of adult education and continuing education and training, which is to provide the greatest possible number of citizens with the knowledge and competencies that are essential for their social and economic integration and that serve as the basis for lifelong learning.

Meeting this challenge demands a variety of actions geared to the difficulties faced by people with little education. Aggressive action to eradicate illiteracy is a priority. The amount of catching up that is needed and the serious consequences of this problem for Québec's development justify a clear commitment by the government to develop and put in place strategies and methods adapted to the situations of those concerned and the nature of their needs.



But more needs to be done; we must aim to provide for the greatest possible number a rich and diversified basic education leading to a diploma that facilitates social integration and job entry.

That is one of the major orientations of this policy: every citizen of Québec who has the ability should have a basic education that meets social standards.

Encouraging adults with little schooling to complete their basic education is a considerable challenge for Québec; not only must the number of adults already doing so be maintained, but more adults must be persuaded to complete their basic education, given the extent of the needs and the catching up required. This is where we see the importance of encouraging the demand for education; we must invest the time and energy to develop new ways to convince more adults to complete their basic education.

In the short term, this challenge will require intensive and diversified efforts to change the current situation in Québec with regard to basic education; in the long term, it is a step that will allow us to focus our energy on the establishment of a true culture of lifelong learning in Québec.

The components of basic education

In Québec, learning certified by a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) or a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) is the social benchmark for defining the basic education to be acquired by all Quebecers who have the ability.

Basic education consists, first of all, of the general, core competencies that normally require nine years of schooling and that include, but go beyond, literacy training. This is followed by diversified general education equivalent to two further years of schooling. Basic education includes a first occupational qualification for job entry, which may be obtained either following a secondary school diploma or as part of studies toward the diploma, either through a work-study program or on the job.

In today's societies, all these elements of such a basic education are indispensable for full participation in social life, satisfying employment and further learning.

For some people, however, despite all the support provided, acquiring all the elements that make up a basic education may represent an insurmountable challenge. The supply and content of basic education must be adapted for these people, whose needs are greater than those of most, and their experience and prior learning must be taken into account, regardless of how such learning was acquired. In this case as in the case of other adults and young people, an appropriate combination of basic general and occupational competencies favouring social integration and job entry is the best option.

In this context, the government is committed to:

- ❖ increasing access to basic education
- ❖ encouraging expression of the demand for education and training
- ❖ significantly reducing the illiteracy rate in Québec

OBJECTIVE

To significantly increase the level of basic education in Québec.

The following indicator will illustrate the achievement of this objective:

the gradual increase of annual enrollments in basic education activities from the current level of 230 000 to 263 000 in 2007, for an overall increase of 33 000 enrollments

In particular:

- enrollments in general education in the adult sector will increase gradually from 134 430 to 164 430 over a five-year period, including 5 000 more enrollments in literacy activities than at present (1 000 of them in independent community action groups and community-based literacy groups)
- the number of adults enrolled in vocational education will increase by 3 000 per year, in addition to the targeted increase among young people pursuing their education
- during the same period, the number of people participating in an apprenticeship program in the workplace will increase from 1 800 to 3 750, with a view to also substantially increasing the number of professional qualification certificate recipients

Based on the targeted rates over the next five years, within ten years, an estimated 1.5 million adults will have increased their level of basic education in one way or another.

More specific indicators will be developed to measure the decrease in the illiteracy rate and the increase in the basic level of education in Québec.

Measures

1 First measure:

In order to encourage expression of the demand for education and training among adults: promote basic education among the target clientele and set regional targets in basic education for adults.

- Starting in 2002, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and Emploi-Québec¹ will launch a **provincewide campaign as well as regional and local campaigns to promote basic education**. The campaigns will address, among other topics, the maintenance and enhancement of job-related competencies, and will target people with little education, as well as those responsible for in-house training and the general public.
- The Ministère de l'Éducation will set **specific regional targets for enrollment in basic education** to be included in the school boards' success plans. These targets will include an increase in the number of enrollments in literacy activities in school boards and community-based groups.
- School boards will be guaranteed funding for **community activities** so that they can intensify their recruitment efforts in basic education in cooperation with community organizations through door-to-door canvassing, workplace visits and public events, for example.
- In the spring of 2003 and 2005, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, in cooperation with the regional councils, will organize regional activities to promote basic education in the workplace or among those who know little about the problem. These activities will provide opportunities to present the results achieved by school boards, independent community action groups and businesses and stimulate the implementation of related actions.
- In cooperation with government bodies, civil society and the private sector, the Ministère de l'Éducation will continue the provincewide **literacy campaign** launched in the fall of 2001, whose goal is to raise awareness and recruit enrollments. It will:
 - organize awareness activities in places frequented regularly by adults with little education, based on themes such as education, work, health and leisure activities
 - promote the literacy hotline (1 800 Info-Alpha) on daily consumer items and in the media
 - maintain regular press relations

1. The campaign will also require the cooperation, at various levels, of the following ministries and government bodies: the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and their networks, the sector-based manpower committees and the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec.

- Starting in the fall of 2002, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will hold in-service training sessions for employees in school boards, local employment centres and other organizations with an interest in literacy; the training sessions will focus on ways of identifying illiterate adults, appropriate ways of approaching them, and the instructional services offered by school boards and community-based literacy groups.
- As part of these social, economic and linguistic integration services, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will step up the promotion of basic education among immigrants and, in cooperation with the school boards, establish referral mechanisms in order to encourage immigrants with basic education needs to take part in appropriate training.
- The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec will also promote basic education and enter into discussions with the education community to determine what services are to be offered to Quebecers with disabilities.
- Every year for the next five years, a *Semaine québécoise des adultes en formation* will be organized by the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, and their partners. This promotional activity is intended to raise public awareness of the value of education and lifelong learning, of which a basic education is an important element.

2 Second measure:

In order to encourage adults to undertake a training plan, in particular in basic education, and to promote retention and success:

improve reception and referral services for adults and offer counselling and support services.

- The Ministère de l'Éducation will provide each school board with a resource envelope for **reception, referral, counselling and support services in every adult education centre.**

These services will be responsible for:

- helping adults develop their training plan and, if necessary, referring them to other appropriate services to meet their needs, in particular to community-based groups
- counselling adults about the possible recognition of their prior learning and competencies, about appropriate upgrading activities and about any other educational service likely to meet their needs
- supporting and advising adults throughout the learning process
- Since Emploi-Québec and the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will also offer reception and referral services, an effort will be made to harmonize their services and those offered by the school system. In this respect, the regional offices of the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, Emploi-Québec and the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will develop a structure for cooperation among school boards, local employment centres, the regional offices of the Ministère des

Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and other organizations involved. Its mandate will be to:

- identify adults with basic education needs
- establish guidelines for cooperation and information-sharing in order to better meet the needs of people in different communities and to better inform the public of the different types of training available in different places, including short training activities, long training activities and literacy training
- establish complementary relationships to facilitate the learning and integration processes
- increase the success rate for training activities (on the basis of the conclusions of the current Solidarité jeunesse experiment)
- Emploi-Québec will modify some of its expectations as expressed to external resources with mandates related to the training of adults between the ages of 16 and 24, emphasizing **support for individuals engaged in a learning path** (situation analysis, guidance, referral, etc.).
- An additional amount will be assigned by Emploi-Québec to the funding of host businesses so that they can take in more young adults with serious social adjustment difficulties, in particular young immigrants and members of visible minorities.
- Reception and referral services will pay particular attention to the needs of people with specific difficulties, in particular people with disabilities, immigrants, Native people, adults under 30 without qualifications and adults 45 or over; they will also adopt a differentiated approach according to sex.
- The external resources of the Emploi-Québec network and independent community action groups with mandates related to the training of adults will be asked to help improve reception and referral services and to offer counselling and support services to adults engaged in a training plan.

3 Third measure:

In order to take into account the situation, needs and characteristics of adults:

for all adult education and continuing education and training partners involved in basic education, adapt a wider variety of types of training and places where this training is provided to the needs of the target clientele.

- **The success plans of adult education centres will be consolidated** along the following guidelines:
 - Services will be stepped up to meet the increased need for basic education and literacy services.
 - Emphasis will be placed on progression and retention for both young adults and their older counterparts; the success plans will also include ambitious objectives concerning the graduation rate of students aged 16 to 24.

– To this end, each adult education centre will have access to a database of sociodemographic information so that it can fine-tune its services to the needs of the population in its territory. In addition, an analysis of the success plan of each adult education centre and school board will be carried out and recommendations will be made on the methods used to reach the targets, in relation to the training needs of the population in the territory.

• **The basic education curriculum will be adapted to the needs of Québec adults.**

– To start with, it appears necessary to redefine the concept of *literacy*, which until recently has been narrowly defined as the ability to read, write and count; we must now take into account the context of today's knowledge-based society, globalization, technological change and the increased complexity of social and working life. Hence, basic education should also enable people to:

- understand and use written information in their everyday activities at home, at work and in the community to attain their objectives and expand their knowledge and abilities
- communicate effectively with peers and with society in general
- use information and communications technologies for learning, work-related, recreation and other purposes
- participate actively in the development of society by exercising all the roles of citizens

– In addition, while the current basic general education curriculum in the adult sector is patterned on that in the youth sector, the one that will be developed as a result of this action plan will take into account the roles played by adults in our society.

– Similarly, instead of regarding adult learners as people trying to “catch up” or being given a “second chance” at learning, the basic general education curriculum for adults will focus on personal development as such, taking into account the adults’ roles and experience. In short, the content of the curriculum will be adapted to the situation of today’s adults and instruction will be based on the specific characteristics of adult learners.

– The basic education curriculum for adults will include a general, core component and a more diversified component depending on each adult learner’s situation and choice.

– Overall, the core and diversified components will help adults develop competencies that will allow them to gather and process oral and written information for the purpose of effective communication, to adapt to changes in their immediate environment, to fulfill their potential throughout their lifetime and to take their place in society.

– More specifically, this basic education will stress the acquisition of competencies focused on the adults’ cognitive, emotional and psychomotor development, the use of communication tools and problem solving in everyday life. The diversified component will offer a choice of paths, depending on the adult’s aspirations, preferences and aptitudes. One path focuses on general education, while the other prepares the adult learner for vocational education.

– Although it essentially targets the same competencies as the youth sector curriculum, the basic education curriculum for adults will be distinguished by content related to the roles of adults in our society. In addition to the first language, the second language and mathematics,

which remain at the heart of basic education, other subjects such as science, technology and the social sciences will enrich the curriculum for adults.

- In addition, **learning will be based on the adults' areas of experience**: life management competencies; interpersonal relations; occupational and economic experience; social, community and political experience; personal development; spiritual and cultural experience and leisure activities.
- Basic education programs will be made **available on the Internet**, in cooperation with distance education organizations, and will be accompanied by the services required to ensure retention and success.

- **Additional efforts will be made to prevent illiteracy.**

- The *Assistance Program for Emergent Literacy in Disadvantaged Communities* launched with the policy on reading and books and intended for parents of children aged 0 to 5 will continue, as will support for the production of plain-language materials for adults with poor reading skills.
- The Ministère de l'Éducation, in cooperation with the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, the Conseil québécois de la famille et de l'enfance and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, will develop a program for parents of children aged 6 to 12, which will focus on the family, school and the community and promote academic success.
- Preventive support services will be offered to children of parents with little education or immigrants in the process of integrating into society in order to ensure that they remain in school until they obtain a diploma.

- **The Ministère de l'Éducation will legally recognize independent community action groups and establish a new funding plan.**

- The preamble and section 1 of the *Act respecting the ministère de l'Éducation* will be amended to recognize the role of independent community action groups in adult education. This formal recognition and the new funding plan will be implemented in the spring of 2002 and will complement and be consistent with the community action policy of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.
- According to the new three-part funding plan:
 - the Ministère de l'Éducation will fully fund the basic operation and educational activities of independent community action groups whose primary mission is to provide literacy services, prevent illiteracy, reduce the dropout rate or any other activity determined by the Ministère
 - independent community action groups whose mission falls under the jurisdiction of other ministries may submit special projects related to the activities mentioned above to the Ministère de l'Éducation

- the Ministère de l'Éducation may give independent community action groups special mandates intended to meet needs in the community
- **The Ministère de l'Éducation will specify the responsibilities of independent community action groups** and school boards in terms of literacy, in accordance with the following parameters:
 - **Both systems will offer literacy services.**
 - The school boards will, however, retain ultimate responsibility for the recognition of schooling and other learning, summative evaluation and certification.
 - The community-based literacy groups will focus primarily on adults who have decided not to return to school, who wish to pursue their education without necessarily obtaining official certification from the Ministère de l'Éducation (diploma, attestation, certificate, etc.), or who are not yet ready, for any number of personal or psychosocial reasons, to enter or reenter the school system.
- **Learning and support services adapted to the needs of people between the ages of 16 and 24 who have little education or who dropped out of school will be implemented, using a model based on the one used by Solidarité jeunesse.**

This action will be carried out in close partnership with school boards, local employment centres, external resources with specific mandates in the education of young adults, and other partners involved, such as youth centres and CLSCs.

The common goal of these services will be to offer young adults a chance to complete their basic education and to begin the process of social and employment integration. These services will be offered starting in the fall of 2002, in schools and elsewhere, depending on the resources available in the community.

The organization of these services will be based primarily on:

- a **partnership agreement** favouring close ties between the school board, the local employment centre, external resources with specific mandates and other local institutions or partners involved; these agreements will specify how complementary support roles are to be shared among the partners
- a rigorous evaluation of results to be carried out by the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, which will make the necessary adjustments to the measures
- the establishment of **individualized learning paths**, taking into account the different levels of schooling of young adults
- a method of organizing services allowing **students to begin and end their training at any time during the year** (continuous intake and exit)

- the priority given by the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail to the development of basic competencies within the framework of the Fonds national de formation de la main-d'œuvre

In addition, instructional services will include:

- **innovative instructional approaches and methods**, in particular practical training and virtual or on-line instruction
- access to regular **support activities and follow-up**
- activities designed to develop a **sense of belonging** to the place where training is provided
- **conditions favouring the participation** of young adults, in particular financial support for transportation, daycare services and learning materials
- practicums in the workplace for vocational education programs
- differentiated approaches according to sex

These services will be implemented gradually, with priority given to underprivileged communities.

- Emploi-Québec will modify some of its expectations as expressed to the Carrefours jeunesse emploi and other external resources in employability development in order to favour **support for individuals engaged in a learning path** (situation analysis, guidance, referral, etc.).

Other measures will also be aimed at adapting adult education services to the needs of certain segments of the population:

- The Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will make training adapted to **young mothers who wish to remain in or return to secondary school** available for 700 additional young women and in twice as many school boards as now offer the service (Ma Place au Soleil program); the various partners will also support other initiatives to help teenage mothers who wish to complete their basic education (e.g. École Rosalie-Jetté).
- The Ministère de l'Éducation, in cooperation with Emploi-Québec and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, will apply the principle of "**reasonable accommodation**" for **people with disabilities**, in particular in terms of access to places where training is provided, appropriate instructional approaches, adapted learning materials and interpretation services.
- The Ministère de la Sécurité publique, in cooperation with the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and institutions that offer basic education and college education, will ensure that every **penal institution** under Québec jurisdiction has a local coordinator of training and employability activities, facilitation infrastructures and resources to support individuals engaged in training activities; the federal government will be invited to adopt the same measure in establishments under its jurisdiction.
- The Ministère de l'Éducation and its partners will **plan and organize the supply of training services and adapt the content and approaches of basic education offered to Native adults**, in cooperation with First Nations of Quebec and the communities involved.

- Starting in the spring of 2002, in addition to supplying full-time francization services, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will implement revised part-time francization services in cooperation with community organizations and educational institutions, in order to meet the diverse needs of immigrants.

4 Fourth measure:

In order to diversify basic vocational education paths:

offer employees an apprenticeship program in the workplace, leading to occupational qualifications.

- The Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and the sector-based manpower committees, with the cooperation of Emploi-Québec, will develop apprenticeship programs in the workplace in accordance with job market needs.
- Training for instructors will receive special support from the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and Emploi-Québec in order to ensure the success of apprenticeship programs in the workplace.
- The government will certify the competencies developed in these programs.

5 Fifth measure:

In order to support individuals engaged in the pursuit of a basic education:

increase funding for basic education.

- The Ministère de l'Éducation will revise current school board budgetary rules so that all adult education centres can offer more part-time training. The *Basic Vocational Training Regulation* will be amended in consequence. In addition, in the spring of 2002, the Ministère de l'Éducation will amend the *Act respecting financial assistance for education expenses* in order to offer **broader access to part-time training** and to encourage adults to return to school. In particular, this amendment will allow students to obtain loans covering tuition fees and learning materials, as well as daycare expenses. **Emploi-Québec will also take the necessary measures to facilitate access to part-time training.**
- **In addition to supporting apprenticeship programs in the workplace, Emploi-Québec will increase funding for basic education:**
 - It will increase the number of unemployed people participating in basic education activities by 2 000 in 2002-2003; the targeted increase in the medium term is 4 000 people.

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BACKGROUND

Globalization, competition and technological developments call for job-related continuing education and training. In the current socioeconomic context, we must ensure that all adults, whatever their situation with respect to the job market, feel truly encouraged to pursue lifelong learning and supported in their efforts to upgrade and enhance their competencies on a regular basis so that they can keep up with technological change.

In this respect, the workplace is an essential place of learning for workers; in fact, further training, made necessary by constant technological change and evolving work practices, like the production of new knowledge, is best acquired quickly and in real-life situations.

Despite Québec's considerable progress in recent years with the adoption of the *Act to foster the development of manpower training*, it is still a challenge for all partners in the job market to firmly establish a culture of lifelong learning in Québec businesses and among Québec workers.

Here again, there is a need to encourage and support expression of the demand for training, both in small and medium-size companies and among the different job categories. We must ensure that the active participation of employers and workers in the identification of training needs generates the appropriate response from the systems in place. We must also ensure that the supply of training services responds quickly and appropriately to changes in the job market, in both businesses and educational institutions offering customized training. Finally, the training must take into account the specific characteristics and needs of people with jobs or those seeking work with the help of the measures offered by Emploi-Québec.

The main objective of the *Act to foster the development of manpower training*, i.e. the qualification of workers, is one we must continue to strive for because, in the vast majority of cases, training received under the Act does not lead to any qualification recognized in the job market. In addition, a number of people with jobs take the initiative to train themselves, without necessarily having their learning recognized. We must therefore improve both the development of competencies and the recognition of qualifications.

Although this aspect relies on nongovernment actions, the state would benefit from facilitating the development and implementation of the appropriate tools to help employers identify needs, plan training activities, evaluate participants and assess the usefulness of training offered.

In this context, the government is committed to:

- stimulating the demand for continuing education and training in the active population
- increasing the participation of all those involved in the identification of training needs
- adjusting job-related continuing education and training to the specific characteristics and needs of the Québec work force



The government is also encouraging its partners in the world of work to strengthen the *Act to foster the development of manpower training* in order to increase its impact on the improvement of workers' qualifications

The overall objective is:

OBJECTIVE

To increase our efforts in favour of job-related education and training by focusing on the following measures: equal access for the different categories of businesses and personnel, investment in employer-sponsored training and the organization and impact of activities on workers' qualifications.

In addition to an increase in the rate of participation in training activities, the following indicators will illustrate the achievement of this objective:

- The proportion of employers who invest at least one per cent of their payroll in personnel training will increase from 76 per cent in 1999 to more than 80 per cent in 2005 (one percentage point per year from now on).
- The proportion of employers with a payroll of \$250 000 to \$500 000 who invest at least one per cent in training will increase from 67 per cent in 1999 to 75 per cent in 2005.

To attain this objective, approaches focusing on training results will be favoured, in particular with regard to productivity gains for employers and employability development for workers. The indicators will also make it possible, in terms of equal access, to measure how much effort is being devoted to the different job categories and age groups. The increased number of apprentices in the Programme d'apprentissage en milieu de travail will also help attain the objective. The training may include occupational competencies as well as basic education.

Measures

1 First measure:

In order to stimulate the demand for continuing education and training in the workplace:
step up awareness activities among employers and employees.

- A vast **promotional campaign on job-related continuing education and training** will be launched starting in 2002 by Emploi-Québec, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and the sector-based manpower committees; **employers who invest the least in this area will be particularly targeted, as will unions and associations certified to represent employees or employee groups.** This promotional campaign will include:
 - a **communications plan for the entire Québec work force**, illustrating the advantages of continuing education and training and describing the tools available to support employers and employees

- an invitation extended by Emploi-Québec to regional participants in employment (Conseils régionaux des partenaires du marché du travail, Conseils régionaux de concertation et de développement, etc.) to hold forums on training in the workplace and on results that might inspire further action

This promotional campaign will be accompanied by:

- the inclusion of job-related continuing education and training activities and services in aspects of the **campaign to promote vocational and technical education** run by the Ministère de l'Éducation and its partners in 2002-2003 (in both French and English)
- targeted interventions by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, encouraging businesses in their sector to invest in continuing education and training and to make use of the tools and resources made available by the government
- interventions by the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec to favour continuing training and education among people with disabilities
- the development of a vocational information network in the cultural sector
- a communications strategy developed by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, Emploi-Québec and the Comité sectoriel d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre pour les personnes immigrantes to reach newly arrived immigrants with training needs. This communications strategy will be implemented by the Carrefours d'intégration of the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and the local employment centres of Emploi-Québec

2 Second measure:

In order to better understand the continuing education and training needs of workers: develop tools for strategic watch in the workplace.

- **Mechanisms for strategic watch in the workplace will be improved**, in particular in terms of emerging requirements, labour shortages, technological changes and regional situations; in particular, related actions will focus on:
 - the improvement by Emploi-Québec, starting in the spring of 2002, of the workplace information system of the Centre d'études sur l'emploi et la technologie (CETECH)
 - the improvement and enrichment of the government's strategic watch of the job market
 - in the general area of the knowledge-based economy and highly qualified jobs, by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre des technologies de l'information et de la communication/TechnoCompétences
 - with respect to needs and trends in the agrifood industry, by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation

- with respect to employment and competencies in the cultural sector, by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications in cooperation with Emploi-Québec, the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture and the Observatoire de la culture et des communications
- concerning the needs and trends observed, by the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce and its regional offices in cooperation with the industrial and business communities
- with respect to trends, development and projected labour needs in the health and social services sector, by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the regional boards in cooperation with the different sociovocational groups involved
- with respect to the relevance of programs of study regarding the needs of both male and female workers, by the Ministère de l'Éducation, which has developed a number of tools to this end over the years

A differentiated approach according to sex will be used for the strategic watch.

- **Diversified methods of supporting employers** will be developed and made available by Emploi-Québec in cooperation with the sector-based committees:
 - the presence and **role of counsellors from the local employment centres who work with employers will be emphasized**, in particular with respect to businesses that invest little in training
 - a **training coordinator will be appointed in each local employment centre** or group of local employment centres
- Projects with a structuring effect will be supported in priority by the Fonds national de formation de la main-d'œuvre in order to help small and medium-size businesses identify training needs.
- The sector-based manpower committees and Emploi-Québec will **continue** their efforts to identify training needs in businesses in each sector.
- The problem of continuing education and training specific to **employees in small businesses and the continuing education and training of self-employed workers and workers in non-standard employment** will be examined, starting in the fall of 2002, by Emploi-Québec and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail. The conclusions of this study will be integrated into the government human resources intervention strategy to be implemented by the Minister of State for Human Resources and Labour. In addition, the specific needs of workers aged 45 and over will be determined and the related measures will be implemented as part of the provincial strategy.
- Follow-up of the strategy concerning women workers will also be ensured.

3 Third measure:

In order to strengthen the implementation of the Act to foster the development of manpower training:

encourage partners in the job market to improve:

- **the effects of the Act in terms of the qualification of workers**
- **the implementation of the tools necessary to facilitate the management of related responsibilities in the workplace**

- Within the framework of the Cadre général de développement et de reconnaissance des compétences, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail will ensure the use of occupational standards developed by sector-based manpower committees in order to improve structured training in the workplace, in addition to the established use of these occupational standards for new apprenticeship programs in the workplace.
- In each case, there must be an occupational standard regarding the competencies associated with the practice of a trade, occupation or job function, specifying the performance criteria associated with the performance of tasks in a work context. Such criteria will refer, where necessary, to the different levels of complexity identified. The standard must be the result of a sector-based consensus.
- Certified competencies will be recorded in a register managed by Emploi-Québec and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, for the purposes of obtaining a professional qualification certificate issued by the Minister for Employment.

4 Fourth measure:

In order to ensure the harmonization, complementarity and efficiency of local government and sector-based interventions aimed at continuing education and training:

the principal government players in job-related continuing education and training will adopt collaborative mechanisms, while specifying their own responsibilities.

- The supply of training services to employers by government at the regional and local levels will be subject to **local and regional agreements**:
 - These agreements will be established starting in 2002-2003 among the different government players (local employment centres, services to businesses, reception and referral services, etc.) supplying continuing education and training services to businesses and workers, in terms of the specified fields of intervention and with a view to ensuring the complementarity of services; the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will coordinate the operation with the Ministère des Régions; all partners in job-related continuing education and training will be invited to participate, including the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce and the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation.
 - These agreements will provide functional and structured mechanisms for relations, communication and feedback.

- First, starting in the spring of 2002, the local employment centres, services to businesses, local development centres and the regional offices of the ministries involved will identify the interventions carried out among employers.
- **Associations of businesses in a given sector** for the purposes of training will be favoured:
 - To this end, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation will emphasize this aspect of the provincial strategy to improve the competitiveness of businesses developed by the Ministère de l'Industrie et de la Commerce in cooperation with Emploi-Québec; in addition, a joint network of participants will be implemented in order to organize and coordinate the supply of training services in the biofood sector in the metropolitan area.
 - Businesses and individuals in the cultural sector will also be encouraged to group together for training purposes.
 - Finally, small and medium-size businesses employing non-francophone immigrants will be encouraged by the Comité sectoriel d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre pour les personnes immigrantes to group together in order to be able to offer their employees francization services in the workplace adapted to their needs.

5 **Fifth measure:**
In order to ensure the relevance of job-related continuing education and training conditions to the specific characteristics and needs of workers:
make major adjustments to the supply and delivery of job-related continuing education and training.

- A new apprenticeship program in the workplace, combined with elements of the qualification scheme, will be implemented by the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, Emploi-Québec and the sector-based manpower committees.
- In the education system and in cooperation with partners in the world of work, measures will be implemented to increase the number of people availing themselves of distance education and on-line instruction, in particular among those with jobs.
- The **administrative structure of public educational institutions' services to businesses will be consolidated**; similarly, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation will ensure that the Instituts de technologie agricole have the necessary structures to meet continuing education and training needs in the biofood sector.
- **Public educational institutions will be given the necessary leeway** to meet regional labour training needs quickly and effectively. This action is primarily aimed at:
 - the field-testing, starting in 2002-2003, **of short qualifying vocational education programs at the secondary level**, for people requiring retraining or further training in a high-growth sector or a sector suffering a shortage of skilled labour; these programs will be developed by school boards under the supervision of the Ministère de l'Éducation and in cooperation with Emploi-Québec and the players in the world of work

- in this context, in cooperation with the regional offices of the Ministère de l'Éducation and the school boards, an in-service training program will be offered, starting in the summer of 2002, to people called upon to develop short training programs using the competency-based approach
- the Ministère de l'Éducation will make it easier for school boards to obtain provisional authorization to offer vocational education programs, so that they may respond quickly to special requests for continuing education and training
- The management and follow-up of the **measure concerning short college-level training programs will be consolidated**, primarily by favouring the creation of associations of colleges for the development of qualifying and transferable programs to meet the needs of similar businesses throughout the province (starting in July 2002).
- At both the secondary and college levels, **clear guidelines for short training programs will be set** by the Ministère de l'Éducation and these standards will be monitored closely.
- The organization of instruction in vocational and technical education will be reviewed in order to **improve the public supply of part-time courses**, beginning with courses to provide the components of education or training needed to complete the recognition of prior learning process; work will begin in the spring of 2002 with an emphasis on the 2002-2003 school year:
 - These arrangements will be aimed at the different alternatives to full-time learning, including part-time courses in general and for missing components of education or training in particular; the organization of learning so that students can begin and end their training at any time during the year; individualized training; training in the workplace; distance education and on-line instruction.
 - To this end, a resource envelope will be provided and the *Basic Vocational Training Regulation* will be amended so that anyone taking courses for less than 15 hours per week can benefit from free educational services when such training completes the recognition of prior learning process.
 - In addition, budgetary, administrative and organizational rules will be relaxed to facilitate part-time studies at the secondary and college levels.
- Between 2002 and 2004, Emploi-Québec will review the regulated occupations, in cooperation with the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, in order to update the regulations for the twelve fields of competency and **move away from an approach based on the duration of training toward more qualitative criteria of learning** and new training conditions.
- The francization services offered by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration to immigrants with schooling will be reimplemented and adapted in such a way as to **favour enrollment in complementary training** corresponding to their needs.
- Mechanisms for **quick access to job-related upgrading** will be implemented for immigrants, in particular at the college and university levels; in order to make the necessary adjustments, in particular as regards the standard and budgetary rules of the Ministère de l'Éducation and

Emploi-Québec, work will continue in cooperation with the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de l'Éducation and Emploi-Québec.

- **The necessary support for the training of personnel in small businesses, of self-employed workers and of workers in nonstandard employment will be emphasized in the services offered by public educational institutions and public employment services to businesses.** In particular, these actions will focus on:
 - the training measures made available by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
 - the development, by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the Ministère de l'Éducation, of means of action and the definition of an appropriate supply of training services, if necessary after field-testing and studying the relevance and feasibility of the proposed project
 - the fact that women make up the majority of people in this type of job, and have specific needs
- Employers will be encouraged to devote an equitable amount of their training investment to employees aged 45 and over. In addition, Emploi-Québec will promote the growth of human resources management planning.
- Support for ongoing training among workers with disabilities in achievement centres will also be given special attention by partners in job-related continuing education and training (through the grouping together of training services, if necessary).

6 **Sixth measure**

In order to increase the quality of training in the workplace and the impact of the Act on qualification:

describe in detail the qualifying nature and transferability of training in the workplace.

- The characteristics related to the qualifying nature will be based on:
 - the nature of the competencies on which the verification of qualifications is based
 - the conditions for the organization of training
- Those related to the transferability of learning will be based on:
 - the identification of training needs
 - the evaluation of learning
 - the recognition of training
- Internal and external instructors will be invited to focus their interventions on the tools developed by the sector-based manpower committees in such a way as to favour the transferability and the qualifying nature of training in the workplace.
- The regulation concerning the accreditation of training organizations, instructors and training services will be evaluated and revised.

In addition, in order to support employers in their efforts to provide continuing education and training in their companies, rules regarding the local administration of the Act to foster the development of manpower training will be relaxed. In this respect, starting in the fall of 2002, **the administrative formalities applicable to employers under the Act and the Fonds national de formation de la main-d'œuvre will be revised and the available tools will be improved**, in particular with respect to the following elements:

- the replacement of the form provided for in section 3 of the *Regulation respecting eligible training expenditures* with a sampling method and its adjustment to meet long-term evaluation needs
- the use of the Internet for information and support
- the revision of the guide to the Act and its adaptation for small and medium-size businesses

The different government partners in job-related continuing education and training will ensure the application of the principle of “reasonable accommodation” for people with disabilities (access to places where training is provided, appropriate instructional approaches, adapted learning materials, interpretation services, etc.). They will also ensure, given the needs and expectations expressed, the adjustment of the supply and conditions of training to the special characteristics and needs of certain segments of the population, in particular Native communities.

Finally, **the Government of Québec is committed to adopting a funding approach involving *personal training accounts***, in order to meet needs not currently covered by employer-sponsored training or government programs for the unemployed and welfare recipients. This measure is described in more detail later on, in the section dealing with *shared-responsibility funding*.

Learning
throughout life

THE RECOGNITION of Prior Learning and Competencies

BACKGROUND

Adults learn in different ways and in different places. Right now, there is a **marked inequality between educational institutions and levels of education with respect to the recognition of learning acquired outside the school system**, which makes access to this type of service, not always explicitly guaranteed by government regulation, a hit-or-miss affair.

In addition, people who are missing only a few competency or knowledge components to obtain full recognition of prior learning often find it **impossible to acquire the missing components** (equivalent to a part of a course or program).

There are even **more obstacles for immigrants** whose social and economic integration depends on the recognition of their prior learning and competencies. These difficulties are related in part to the recognition of studies undertaken outside the province and access to professional orders. Also, for businesses as for workers, there is as yet no way of officially recognizing learning acquired outside the school system. The possibility of officially certifying all the competencies mastered is an essential mechanism for improving the qualification of the work force.

In the workplace, it appears logical and beneficial to recognize competencies acquired on the job in order to, among other things, recognize occupational qualifications according to job market standards and facilitate job mobility by ensuring transferability of learning.

The following three principles will guide future action in the recognition of prior learning and competencies in the context of education and training:

- **People have a right to the formal recognition of learning and competencies corresponding to components of qualifying training insofar as they are able to provide evidence that they possess them.**
- **People should not be obliged to seek recognition again for competencies or prior learning that has been properly evaluated and certified by an official system.**
- **People do not have to redo in a formal educational setting any learning they have already acquired in other contexts or other ways.**

In this context, the government is committed to:

- **taking aggressive action toward the official recognition of adults' prior learning and competencies**
- **offering recognition of prior learning and competencies as a regular service in adult education and continuing education and training in Québec**



The overall objective is:

OBJECTIVE

To implement a diversified series of organizational methods to ensure access to recognition of prior learning services in every region of Québec.

- Indicators will be developed later for this objective. Others will make it possible to measure the targeted increase in the number of people benefiting annually from recognition of prior learning services, either by the education community, the world of work or a professional order.²

Measures

1 First measure:

In order to ensure the coherence and intensification of actions aimed at the recognition of competencies acquired by people in different ways and in different places:

create an interministerial table for the recognition of prior learning and competencies.

The Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale will co-chair the table, which, with the Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, will form the core of the structure; other agencies will participate as associates, depending on the nature of the issues (Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec, Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, CAMO-personnes immigrantes, etc.). The general mandate of the interministerial table will be to:

- **ensure the gradual implementation and follow-up of the government action plan** with regard to the recognition of prior learning and competencies and to report on the subject to the Comité de suivi et d'implantation de la politique et du plan d'action en matière d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue.

The interministerial table will be **assisted by a committee of experts**, whose role will be to:

- harmonize the systems for the recognition of prior learning in the education community and the world of work in order to ensure the reciprocity of the two systems by:
 - creating an **inventory of learning and competencies that will define equivalences and correspondences** and identify the relationships between programs and courses in the education system, studies undertaken outside Québec and competencies developed in the workplace or elsewhere (e.g. national schools); this inventory will be made available on the Internet for people working in the recognition of prior learning and competencies (feasibility: 2002, design: 2003-2004)

2. The number of people benefiting from this service would be increased by approximately 7 000 to 12 000 per year. These numbers do not take into account course equivalences, substitutions and exemptions granted and the situation in universities for which data is unavailable at the moment.

- establishing **common basic tools** to be used as references for the development of the list and the establishment of equivalences
- create a **Web site** to allow individuals to access a recognition of prior learning process on-line; similarly, initiatives making use of information and communications technologies in the field will be encouraged (2002-2003)
- **support the various partners** who offer recognition of prior learning services, in particular with respect to the further training of the persons concerned and the production of information documents and methodologies (seminar and three-year training plan for the persons concerned starting in 2002)
- favour the grouping together of services
- **make existing tools available**
- **raise awareness of recognition of prior learning services** among the public, particularly in campaigns aimed at promoting basic education and highlighting the value of education and lifelong learning
- develop **indicators** to measure the achievement of the objective regarding access and the targeted increase in the number of people benefiting annually from recognition of prior learning services

2 Second measure:

In order to ensure that the responsibility for the recognition of prior learning and competencies is explicit in the education system:

clarify the right to the recognition of prior learning in the basic school regulations for secondary school and college.

- These clarifications will be based on the three principles stated in this action plan.
- The right of access to recognition of learning services will be specified in the *Basic Adult General Education Regulation*, in terms of the support of training and evaluation; the same will apply in the *Basic Vocational Training Regulation*. At the college level, the definition of the right in the basic regulation will affect the Institutional Policies on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA). Useful links and distinctions will be made through regulations regarding course equivalences, exemptions and substitutions as well as the applicable rules regarding the awarding of diplomas and certification.
- In addition, conditions for **access to regular examinations** for people who have demonstrated sufficient learning to succeed will be relaxed and, in vocational and technical education, applications for the recognition of prior learning will no longer be subject to all the admission requirements related to prerequisites in general education.
- Applications for recognition of prior learning services will not be subject to enrollment in a training program.

- Universities will be encouraged to establish **public rules** for the recognition of prior learning through the adoption of an institutional policy or otherwise. They will also be invited to specify, in their admission regulations, how studies undertaken outside Québec will be recognized. They will be encouraged to input the data in such a way as to present an overview of the situation.
- The Office des professions will be encouraged to:
 - ensure that every professional order meets the requirements of the *Professional Code* with respect to the establishment of standards of equivalence and diplomas
 - raise awareness of the potential of the recognition of equivalent learning in the case of competencies acquired outside Québec, regardless of how they were acquired
 - ensure the necessary consistency among the different levels of education and educational institutions, not only for the recognition of prior learning, but also for the training required to update competencies
- Educational institutions will be supported by the Ministère de l'Éducation in their efforts to recognize prior learning among programs offered by a given institution, institutions at the same level of education and institutions at different levels of education.

3 Third measure:

In order to help adults determine the level of basic education they have attained:
establish a record of learning in basic general education for all adults who undertake to continue or complete their basic education.

- **Information on the possibility of obtaining this record will be provided by the reception and referral services of education, employment and immigrant integration services.**
- In the case of local employment centres, a second step will be to **refer the person** to a school board or adult education centre to obtain the record.
- For school board reception and referral services, the establishment of such records will now be a formal responsibility.
- If applicable, the record will include recommendations on the procedure for obtaining the official recognition of prior learning and the necessary updating activities.
- In all cases, the person's learning path will be **monitored**.

A **reference guide** will be produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation and Emploi-Québec to help those responsible for reception to provide this service. In addition, **in-service training activities** will be provided.

4 Fourth measure:

In order to ensure that the competencies acquired by people at work are better acknowledged and officially recognized:

consolidate an occupational certification system in the workplace including the recognition of competencies.

- Defined by the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and Emploi-Québec in the Cadre général de développement et de reconnaissance des compétences, this system is related to the Programme d'apprentissage en milieu de travail, in which training is offered in the workplace using the buddy system.
- The recognition of competencies will be based on a **list of core occupational competencies**³ required to practise trades and occupations as determined by the world of work (occupational standards determined by sector-based manpower committees). The main goal is to qualify workers and support versatility and job mobility. Workers who do not meet the established qualification standard will be invited to participate in training activities in the workplace. Special attention will be paid to the development and organization of activities to provide missing components of education or training in the workplace. If necessary, complementary training will be offered by educational institutions.
- Occupational certification obtained as a result of the training or recognition of competencies will be issued by Emploi-Québec and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail. Acquired competencies and occupational certificates will be recorded in a government register.
- The Commission des partenaires du marché du travail will allocate, from the Fonds national de formation de la main-d'oeuvre, the amount necessary for the development of these occupational standards by the sector-based manpower committees. Emploi-Québec will provide the necessary infrastructures. The Commission is already working on broadening the application of the Cadre général for learning acquired in the workplace to encompass means other than apprenticeship programs, despite the fact that these have undergone substantial changes.

5 Fifth measure:

In order to respond appropriately to the public's priority needs in terms of the recognition of prior learning and competencies:

make the recognition of prior learning and competencies the subject of a major action in the education community.

This action will consist in:

- broadening **access to missing components of education or training** through diversified and innovative means (distance education, self-teaching, part-time training, grouping together of services and clientele, etc.)

3. Official list to be used as a compulsory reference standard.

- adopting an approach to the **recognition of competencies that considers vocational and technical education as a whole** (secondary-college-apprenticeship program, etc.)
- creating a list of **equivalences among courses related to competencies in college programs**
- **respecting the level of schooling previously attained** by a person in the evaluation for the recognition of prior learning. This principle will be subject to standard rules set by the Ministère de l'Éducation. Changes will be made to current approaches, emphasizing upgrading activities and increased personalized support
- developing, testing and generalizing the following tools in the next three years:

In basic general education, these tools will include:

- the record of prior learning, making it possible, on the one hand, to place the adult at a given level of basic education in the new curriculum and, on the other hand, to counsel the person with regard to the recognition of prior learning and types of training meeting his or her needs
- new tools making it possible to speed up the process of obtaining a Secondary School Diploma, i.e.:
 - the *Quatre univers de compétences génériques* with regard to electives (experiential competencies, social roles, intellectual and socioaffective competencies; available in January 2003)
 - the *Prior Learning Examination (PLE)* for the recognition of competencies in French and English as a second language (available since January 2002 and in September 2003)
 - the electronic version of the secondary studies equivalency test (SSET; available starting in September 2002)
 - the tests equivalent to the *General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service*, for the formal recognition of the secondary level attained (available starting in the fall of 2002); eventually, these tests will replace the SSET

In vocational and technical education, these tools will include:

- the development of the Web site and on-line support for candidates for the recognition of prior learning and competencies (2002-2003)
- the development of the recognition of prior learning Web site (2003-2004)
- the implementation of five new tools per year in vocational and technical education (from 2002 to 2004); priority will be given to:
 - programs related to new provincial regulations (e.g. water sanitation, fishing and food services)
 - programs subject to occupational qualification under the Programme d'apprentissage en milieu de travail (e.g. pastry making)
 - programs leading to occupations where entry-level conditions are determined by the type of diploma held (e.g. construction); tools for the secretarial studies and early childhood education programs will be available starting in the spring of 2002)

- the frame of reference for the development of extension programs for immigrants and six experimental tools for recognition (from 2002 to 2004); priority will be given to programs corresponding to job functions for which there is a labour shortage, in which Québec technology is different and which reach a critical mass of immigrants
- In addition, the Ministère de l'Éducation will adapt instruments for the **recognition of basic schooling and other learning** to meet the specific needs of Native people, immigrants and people with disabilities.

6 Sixth measure:

In order to efficiently reach more people with similar recognition of prior learning needs:

develop an approach for the recognition of competencies acquired by groups of people in similar occupations by the education community and the world of work.

- The Ministère de l'Éducation, Emploi-Québec, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the sector-based manpower committees and businesses and organizations involved will develop, starting in 2002-2003, **a joint school-industry mechanism** making it possible to efficiently meet the needs of **groups** of people with similar jobs in terms of the recognition of prior learning and competencies, further training and missing components of education or training.

By bringing together a critical mass of people, this method will facilitate the initiation, at a reasonable cost, of a collective recognition of prior learning process.

7 Seventh measure:

In order to meet the needs of immigrants, given that the recognition of their learning and competencies is particularly important for their social and employment integration:

speed up and intensify the recognition of prior learning process for immigrants by the education community and the world of work.

- Starting in 2002, various **data sheets** will be produced by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration for immigrants and would-be immigrants, in cooperation with the Ministère de l'Éducation, Emploi-Québec, the professional orders and the Commission de la construction du Québec. These sheets will include information on the different facets of the recognition of prior learning in Québec.
- In addition, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, Emploi-Québec and the CAMO-personnes immigrantes will jointly design and develop **training activities** aimed at familiarizing immigrants with how their trade is practised in the Québec context; these activities will be offered before the adult undertakes the recognition of prior learning process.

- Following a survey of clientele and consultation of professional orders and other participants in the recognition of prior learning, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration will make the necessary changes to the mechanism leading to the issue of education credential evaluation reports or comparative evaluations of studies carried out outside Québec.
- Comparative evaluations of studies carried out outside Québec, produced from 2002 to 2004 by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and made available on the Internet, will also make it possible to compare studies carried out in the countries from which most of Québec's immigrants come with reference points in the Québec school system.
- Tools for evaluation and the recognition of competencies for immigrants will be produced by the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration in cooperation with the Ministère de l'Éducation, the professional orders and educational institutions.
- Language competencies in French as a second language will also be subject to a **common frame of reference** for purposes of evaluation and the recognition of prior learning and competencies, both for the continuation of studies and the practice of a trade or occupation. The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de l'Éducation, Emploi-Québec and the Office de la langue française will develop this tool by April 2003.



Eighth measure:

In order to favour the recognition of workers' competencies:

emphasize, within the framework of the implementation of the Act to foster the development of manpower training, referral to qualifying and transferable training.

- The Commission des partenaires du marché du travail and Emploi-Québec will encourage training institutions and instructors accredited under the Act to direct their efforts toward qualifying and transferable training recognized by the existing frames of reference.
- In the context of the implementation of the Programme d'apprentissage en milieu du travail, information and promotional activities related to the existing frames of reference and those in the planning stages will be carried out among businesses in the sectors in question, as well as training institutions and instructors.

BACKGROUND

Lifelong learning is an ambitious and demanding undertaking. We can only agree with the OECD when it points out that this objective redefines the content, location, schedule and duration of learning, thereby constituting a break with previous reforms. In addition, it requires an important shift toward greater emphasis on expression of demand for training among learners rather than on the institutions.

General observations are emerging here as elsewhere on funding for lifelong learning:

- We must determine whether lifelong learning should be considered a new reality requiring additional resources, or whether its development should be supported through a redistribution of the resources currently allocated to education and training.
- Lifelong learning is an objective whose achievement necessarily entails costs.
- The state cannot single-handedly create a lifelong learning system and there is not enough money in the public purse to fund such a project. It therefore appears necessary to involve employers and unions in lifelong learning strategies and to find substantial sources of private funding.
- There is a consensus on improvements to be made with respect to the return on learning for the individual, businesses and society, and on the identification of means of reducing financial constraints experienced by adults and employers.

Collectively, Quebecers invest more than \$2.4 billion annually in adult education and job-related continuing education and training activities. Half of this amount is provided by the state, and the other half by employers and individuals. In spite of this, all are in agreement that the rate of participation of Québec adults in training activities is too low.

While reaffirming the role and responsibility of the state in matters of adult education and continuing education and training, we must begin to see the development of adults' competencies in light of the responsibility of individuals and employers in the funding of continuing education and training.

In Québec, this raises a number of questions. Should education in the youth sector and adult education be funded by different sources? Should educational institutions always have to self-finance their supply of continuing education and training services? Should businesses and individuals have to pay the real cost of continuing education and training beyond the SSD or the DVS? Should financial assistance awarded to adults be established according to different criteria than that awarded to young people? Should Québec imitate European models and offer tax incentives to encourage adults to invest in their continuing education and training? Should employers contribute more to the training of their employees?



PERSONAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

Several countries have experimented with financial incentives to encourage more adults to invest in the development of their competencies. One such measure that has become popular in a number of countries is the **personal training account**.

This education savings measure encourages and supports adults who update and develop their occupational qualifications. The government contributes to the plan when the money is actually put to use. The government contribution normally depends on the participant's income, so that priority is given to low-income individuals. Sweden, Great Britain and a number of American states have adopted such a measure. Canada, Spain and the Netherlands are still in the testing stages.

The personal training account can supplement the different means currently available to finance adult workers who enroll in education or training activities. It is intended in particular for self-employed workers, employees in companies not covered by the *Act to foster the development of manpower training* and those not covered by employer-sponsored programs.

- The Government of Québec intends to study the different types of personal training accounts in existence and to determine how efficient the measure would be to encourage more Quebecers to invest in the development of their competencies.

In December 2001, the government harmonized the Québec income tax system with recent federal amendments allowing the use of RRSPs (registered retirement savings plans) for education or training purposes.

A BROADER PERSPECTIVE IS CALLED FOR

All are in agreement that the state has a responsibility to fund the mechanisms required to guarantee individuals free access to a first diploma. It is also agreed that, for young people who are continuing their education without a break, free preuniversity education and relatively low university tuition fees allow greater access to postsecondary education.

It is an established fact that efforts devoted to continuing education and training result in tangible and immediate benefits for both individuals and employers. Individuals become more competent and are more valuable in the workplace. Employers become more competitive and efficient. From an economic standpoint, investment in continuing education and training is justifiable and profitable.

What we need to do in the coming years is to find means by which a true dynamic of supply and demand can be implemented in Québec. This dynamic involves primarily employers, employees, educational institutions and the state.

To this end, we must:

- encourage workers to invest in their training and businesses to invest in their employees. Better tax incentives for businesses and the introduction of financial incentives for individuals (such as the personal training account or the education savings plan) could make it easier for them to do so
- ease regulations in order to help educational institutions better meet demand, in return for compensation
- establish a true mechanism of supply and demand for continuing education and training adapted to the requirements of the job market and allowing individuals to enhance their competencies

The supply of adult education and continuing education and training services, beyond the SSD or the DVS, would be funded in large part through the contributions of employers and individuals. The increase in costs for users would be offset by the systems' greater ability to respond to market needs quickly and adequately.

These questions are complex and involve a number of different dimensions. The government will set up a committee of experts, outside the public administration, whose mandate will be to study all the dimensions of the funding of continuing education and training and to make recommendations on actions to be taken to substantially increase the number of adults investing in the development of their competencies.

This committee of experts will be given the following general mandate:

- on the basis of an analysis of current practices in different OECD countries, to identify financing formulas that Québec could use as an inspiration for adult education and continuing education and training
- on the basis of an analysis of the different types of financial assistance currently offered to adults, to propose a reform to adapt financial assistance to their different situations, including specific measures for low-income individuals, in particular self-employed workers with precarious income
- following a study of federal and provincial income tax plans, to identify the mechanisms favouring continuing education and training, evaluate their impact and propose measures to encourage individuals and employers to invest more in the development of competencies

In carrying out its mandate, the committee of experts will take into account:

- equal opportunity for individuals undertaking initial postsecondary education or continuing education or training, whether full- or part-time
- the government's desire to play an active role in the postsecondary education sector
- the opportunity to introduce incentives for adult education

The committee of experts will begin work in the spring of 2002 and will have one year to complete its mandate. Its report will serve as a basis for discussion between the government and its partners with a view to redefining the financing mechanisms for adult education and continuing education and training. The report will be submitted to the Comité de suivi de la politique et du plan d'action en matière d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue.

This entire procedure is intended to allow Québec to pursue its social and economic development in the new global context created by the knowledge-based society.

CONCLUSION

This action plan is not an exhaustive inventory of all actions to be carried out by all the partners involved to implement the government's policy on adult education and continuing education and training.

In their own jurisdictions, a number of ministries will intensify their actions related to continuing education and training. In addition, data on adult education and continuing education and training will have to be integrated into a unified and viable system. Also, **a strategy for the development of distance education and on-line instruction is currently under development with a view to increasing the number of people using distance education and ensuring better synergy between the actions of the major players at all levels of education and in the different training sectors.**

Other actions will be taken, in particular with respect to the **competencies required of adult education instructors** and to the more specific responses to be developed to meet the **needs of certain segments** of the population with specific difficulties.

Efforts will be made to entrench a culture of lifelong learning in Québec. There is still much to be done, both in terms of changing attitudes and of bringing to term all the measures included in the action plan. Individuals can no longer consider that they have completed their education or training once they have earned a first diploma. The education and training systems, like individuals and businesses, must therefore be prepared to meet ever-increasing continuing education and training needs.

First of all, we must provide those who have the ability with the possibility and means of obtaining a first diploma, symbolizing the acquisition of the basic competencies necessary for survival in our society.

For those with low literacy skills, the action plan represents a goal shared by all players in adult education and continuing education and training: that efforts be renewed to help these people acquire the basic competencies necessary to participate fully in society.

It is also important to remember that continuing education and training is the key to entering the work force, remaining there and progressing and developing. This is true for individuals, businesses and the state.

We must approach these adult education and continuing education and training goals with determination, creativity and efficiency, together, with the focus on the adult learner. The fact that the learner is an adult is a reminder that he or she has primary responsibility for the development and maintenance of his or her competencies and knowledge, and that the partners in adult education and continuing education and training are there to provide services to help fulfill this individual responsibility. Adult education and continuing education and training are also means of combating poverty and social exclusion, participating in regional development, promoting the socioeconomic integration of segments of the population with specific difficulties and contributing to the cultural vitality of Québec.



With this in mind, social cohesion and equal opportunity are important and shared values in Québec society; adult education and continuing education and training contribute to the realization of these democratic values in a significant way, especially since knowledge is now an undeniable factor in economic success, which is itself one of the cornerstones of social and individual development.

The government policy and action plan for adult education and continuing education and training therefore mark a crucial step in the future of our society which, in the medium term, must come to share the conviction that lifelong learning is necessary and firmly establish a culture of continuing education and training.



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Learning
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