

MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

Our outlooks

The year 2023-2024 marks Centraide's 50th fundraising campaign, which will highlight 50 years of solidarity and collaboration with community agencies, citizens, institutional and social partners, businesses and workplaces to address the challenges of marginalized groups and people in Greater Montreal who are living in poverty. Over its history, Centraide has become a major social development ally for the communities it serves through the actions of the network it supports and its many partnerships and collective projects.



Camp
Amy Molson

Tackling the root causes of poverty and social exclusion



With this year's Speaking Truths on poverty issues, Centraide is embarking on a social development approach to address the root causes of poverty and social exclusion.

Housing has quickly emerged as the first issue for discussion and action. **Together for Housing**, the flagship event of the Speaking Truths on Housing, has already taken place at the time of writing. This event brought together local, regional and national stakeholders to identify sustainable solutions to the current housing crisis.

More Speaking Truths will follow in the coming years to help us think about innovative solutions that bring people together around the complex issues that lead to poverty. Of course, one topic on tap for these conversations will be food security, a major concern given the rampant inflation we have experienced in the past year. It is hard to believe that, in a wealthy society like ours, nearly one quarter (22%) of the Quebec population is food insecure. However, this is indeed the result revealed by Centraide's second financial anxiety index report conducted with Leger and released in April 2023. Centraide will track how Quebecers' financial situations evolve over the next two years, with a particular focus on populations that live on a low income. More reports will be released in the fall and spring to help us clearly understand the situation and better support agencies and their needs related to this issue.

Meeting basic needs

In the areas of housing and food, crisis is the new normal for more and more people. Given the skyrocketing costs of housing and groceries, finding a place to live and getting enough food to eat are becoming a real challenge for people in a situation of poverty. Centraide will continue to support agencies that help anyone facing an emergency housing situation and that work to sustain their food security, first through food assistance but also through local, sustainable and inclusive food-system projects in neighbourhoods and municipalities. Greater Montreal has a growing number of people experiencing homelessness, a crisis exacerbated by a limited housing supply and unaffordable rents. We will continue to support measures to address homelessness while paying particular attention to target populations with specific needs who find themselves on the street (women, seniors, Indigenous populations, etc.).

Giving special attention to groups at a higher risk of poverty



Faced with unique challenges and barriers keeping them from fully participating in society, some groups need special attention, such as refugees or migrants with precarious status, people from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, and members of Indigenous communities. Without support, they risk falling into cycles of poverty and social exclusion that can have negative consequences on their mental and physical health and overall well-being. Equal opportunity remains a priority for Centraide, which will continue to strengthen its relationships with communities that are at a greater risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination, and stigma and invest in agencies and projects that foster inclusion and diversity and advocate for people's rights.

Focusing on **young people's** **struggles**



La Maison des grands-parents de Villeray

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, we had assumed that the health crisis would significantly impact young people and affect their academic motivation and success.

Many students have faced major challenges such as social isolation, stress and anxiety, struggles with online learning, family difficulties, and more. Three years later, it is still difficult to get accurate school dropout data for Quebec. However, we do know that the pandemic has affected some determinants of academic perseverance, such as self-esteem, motivation and engagement, the valuing of education and parental support, and the school climate, which in turn could have impacts on the dropout rate.

We are closely tracking the following assumptions:

- Small children have been particularly affected by the pandemic, and this could impact the rest of their school careers.
- Teen mental health has been shaken by the crisis, which could have an impact on students' readiness to learn.
- Long-term effects could be experienced by students who were having trouble before the crisis and by those who fell even further behind and are struggling because of these delays.
- More young people may decide to put off further or higher education.

Supporting agencies at the end of their ropes



Community agencies that worked non-stop to support people at the peak of the health crisis and have continued at the same pace due to the current inflation problem are being stretched past their limits. They are coping with severe labour shortages and staff fatigue, increased operating costs, and accessibility issues. Many have to move to larger spaces to meet the ever-increasing demand for support and services. Centraide is working to consolidate and strengthen their capacity, especially by helping agencies share and combine their tools and strengths to make the most of these resources. Centraide will also continue to support the following digital transformation initiatives to help agencies make this important shift.