

CULTURE AS A DRIVER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY OF PINCOURT



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
6. CULTURE, EQUALITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

SOCIAL INCLUSION, CULTURAL STRATEGY, POLICY, DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH, ACCESS, COHESION, EDUCATION, COOPERATION, PARTICIPATION

1. Context

The town of Pincourt, situated on an island together with three other municipalities, was founded in 1960. It has a population of approximately 15,000. A satellite town of the metropolis of Montreal, it consists mainly of single-family bungalow housing and a commercial zone. Almost 72% of workers commute out of the area to work. Pincourt is one of the few towns in Quebec that has bilingual status with English speakers accounting for 43% of the population.

In recent years, the total population has grown by 13.2%. Pincourt has experienced a large increase in its immigrant population, which currently stands at 16.3%. No cultural community is particularly over-represented and the most widely spoken non-official languages are Spanish, Arabic, Romanian, Russian, Italian, Chinese and Polish.

2. Pincourt and culture

Over the last decade, the Regional County Municipality (MRC for its abbreviation in French) has adopted a cultural policy and the most populated town in the region, Vaudreuil-Dorion, has set a new benchmark in terms of culture. Culture and cultural mediation have become means to achieve social development goals.

The Social Development Policy (PDS for its abbreviation in French) seeks to respond to the needs identified by citizens themselves and to implement solutions that involve them.

It is supervised by a monitoring committee made up of members of civil society and also reports to a commission comprising elected officials. Social policies or action plans, such as the Action Plan for People with Disabilities, are part of the PDS.

THE AIM IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF CITIZENS THROUGH IMPROVED PLANNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITED AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY, WITH CULTURE AS A CROSS-CUTTING DRIVER FOR SOCIAL COHESION.

Pincourt's PDS is particularly in line with Commitment 6 of Culture 21: Actions, as it is a social policy that integrates cultural elements in a cross-sectional manner to transform them into a tool and a driver for social cohesion. The PDS is also in line with Commitment 1, which aims to promote access and participation in cultural life for all; Commitment 3, which undertakes cross-cutting actions alongside the education sector; and Commitment 9, which is based on an open and participatory model of cultural action.

The policy is also in line with the following Sustainable Development Goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 16 and 17.

3. Project objectives and implementation

3.1. Main objective and specific purposes

The overall objective of the PDS is to improve the quality of life of citizens through enhanced urban planning and the development of a united and supportive community. Culture is integrated across the board as a driver for social cohesion and a means to achieve each of the different intervention strategies.

3.2. Project development

Main actions carried out

Up to the present, two action plans have been drawn up following their approval, based on the following lines of work:

- Poverty alleviation
- Citizen participation and a sense of belonging
- The well-being of the whole population and social cohesion
- Access to quality housing
- Healthy lifestyle habits and physical activity
- Support for economic development
- Environment and spatial planning

In order to achieve the established goals, four means of intervention have been implemented:

- Citizen committees
- Municipal activities and programmes
- Partner activities
- Calls for projects

Citizen committees

Four citizen committees are involved in implementing the policy with the support of the city. The committees themselves organise cultural activities, thus guaranteeing the direct participation of citizens in the city's cultural management.

- The **Intercultural Committee** is tasked with strengthening intercultural relations between citizens.
- The **Design Committee** is responsible for revitalizing certain areas of the city.
- The **Youth Action Committee** mobilises young people by organising a large cultural event.
- The **Healthy Cities Committee** creates places that promote healthy lifestyles and socialisation, such as a meeting place for the elderly.

Municipal activities and programmes

The city develops its own projects and programmes in order to achieve its social development goals:

- The Biblio-pour-empoter programme, which aims to develop a passion for reading in children up to the age of five years old.
- The Transpo-Biblio programme, which allows the elderly to receive books at home or provides transportation so they can visit the library.
- The urban agriculture project created in response to school failure and social problems.

Partner activities

The PDS has also developed support schemes for community organisations that wish to work for the benefit of social development:

- Planif 005, which sets up a tent each summer in which people can read books and attend story time.
- A micro-library, constructed by a citizen, whose location, design and colours were chosen by young people.

Calls for projects

For the last four years, calls for projects have been addressed to citizens or artists and have made it possible to finance five cultural projects with a social objective:

- A mural spanning almost 457 metres
- Creation of the Mosai-Bleu programme by the local secondary school
- Terre des hommes, video capsule project, which gives a voice to young people from immigrant backgrounds
- Graphic novels based on the First Nations produced by schools in Pincourt
- Project for the creation of a mural by young graffiti artists condemned by the justice system

More specifically, the citizen committees have carried out more than 50 cultural activities that have benefited approximately 4,000 people. The municipal programmes have enabled the organisation of approximately 2,000 cultural events boasting the participation of close to 4,000 people. A dozen partners have organised approximately 60 events and calls for projects have led to around 40 activities with roughly 600 participants.

4. Impact

4.1. Impact

The creation of the Department of Social and Cultural Development has led to several changes in the town's governance. Citizen participation has increased significantly thanks to the creation of the Monitoring Committee and the establishment of citizen committees. The social development action plan has been designed on the basis of consultations and it is not unusual for citizen committees to consult it before drawing up their own action plan.

The PDS has also led to increased collaboration with artists in the region as well as greater awareness and promotion of Pincourt's artists. The work of the library has taken on a more social approach and new activities have been created (Biblio-pour-empporter and Transpo-Biblio).

Other impacts are difficult to exemplify but of equal importance: the actions of the PDS enable citizens to enjoy better health, develop reading habits in children up to the age of five years old, prevent isolation among the elderly, develop skills in young people, enhance educational and social success, bring different cultural communities closer together, and increase citizens' sense of belonging to their city, among others.

4.2. Evaluation

The main monitoring mechanism of the PDS is the Monitoring Committee. In total, approximately 6,000 citizens have been involved in cultural activities. Around 500 cultural activities take place every year, the main results of which are as follows:

- Creation of citizen committees involving the participation of approximately 50 citizens
- Dozens of volunteers in Early Childhood Centres (CPE for their abbreviation in French)
- Creation of an intercultural festival
- Creation of a meeting place for the elderly, which has been built through cultural mediation
- Installation of three murals created by means of cultural mediation with citizens
- Installation of a large mural made through cultural mediation with the primary school



4.3. Key factors

Several factors are important to the success of the PDS:

- Means of intervention enable the population to find answers themselves to meet their needs. Citizen committees are experts on their situation. Municipal programmes are developed on the basis of consultations, leading to the adoption of the PDS. If necessary, specific queries are incorporated.
- The support of elected officials and their openness towards the role of citizens facilitates the policy's implementation.
- Having a member of staff working full-time on social development issues is essential.

4.4. Continuity

The PDS is well established in the city thanks to the permanent member of staff, recurring committee budgets and programme budgets. This policy will be updated with the next action plan in 2021.

5. Further information

The town of Pincourt was nominated for the fourth edition of the International Award UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21 (November 2019–May 2020). The Jury of the Award produced its final report in July 2020 and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices for the implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture and as a special mention for the fourth edition of the Award.

This article was written by Célia Corriveau, Head of the Department of Social and Cultural Development, Pincourt, Quebec, Canada.

Contact: s.martel@villepincourt.qc.ca

Supported by



The European Union

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union



Sweden
Sverige

This document has been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its content rests entirely with the author.