

CSQ

MAGAZINE

LACK OF SUPPORT

A DAMAGING VICIOUS CIRCLE

Public sector negotiations:
how will the population benefit?

.....

Broadening pharmacists' role:
who will foot the bill?



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Winter 2020



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BECAUSE THINGS NEED TO CHANGE IN 2020



The upcoming year will bring its share of challenges and, we hope, the wind of change that is needed for the improvement of working conditions in the public sector.

Negotiations have now started in the education, health and social services and early childhood sectors. Given the difficulties experienced in these environments, we expect many challenges.

The actual working conditions in the public sector are the result of numerous years of budget cuts, of imposed laws and of employers' policies decided on according to which way the wind was blowing. Let's not forget that the billions in surplus of the Legault government didn't fall from the sky. They're the result of the liberal austerity that savagely cut the services on the back of families, of the most vulnerable groups and of employees of the public sector.

The government now has the chance to make it so those sacrifices will be demoted to the past by bestowing the necessary financial leeway to give oxygen to the state's employees.

We mentioned it on all the platforms and we will repeat it relentlessly: it's imperative that the government show openness and a willingness to listen for better working conditions for the workers. The future of services to the population is at stake.

For many years already, we have made the demonstration of the countless difficulties experienced in the work environments: overload, lack of support, feeling of injustice, lack of appreciation, or insecurity, psychological harassment, etc. Consequences on the ground have names and translate into labour shortage, distress, precariousness or even professional desertion.

The Legault government is now at a crossroads: continue the liberal austerity that is choking the public sector or finally give the necessary push to set the situation straight.

The workers have the right to be provided with adequate resources to carry out their duties. The year 2020 will provide the opportunity to rally, together, so finally, things change!

Solidarity!

Sonia Ethier
Sonia Ethier | PRESIDENT

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SOCIAL SUPPORT

A MUST IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

As workloads increase, support and collaboration
between colleagues decreases. Why?

Félix Cauchy-Charest | CSQ ADVISOR

According to Angelo Soares¹, the public sector is currently facing two glaring problems: unsustainable workloads and a rise in competition and individualism at the expense of cooperation between colleagues.

“Overwork occurs when more is demanded with less. The poor organization of work means less time for cooperation, creating more individualization, which ultimately leads to overwork. It’s a real vicious circle!” summarizes the researcher who led a study among CSQ members in the education and health sectors.

WHEN COLLEAGUES NO LONGER COLLABORATE

Management’s lack of attention and availability to provide adequate resources, advice and support to workers, or to resolve conflicts and make decisions, can significantly impact the work environment.

“In this context, a spirit of competition can take over. Bad faith and mistrust set in and it’s everyone for themselves,” says Luc Bouchard².

Yet when colleagues collaborate and support each other, the climate and quality of life at work are improved. “Social support creates a sense of belonging and solidarity. It promotes a healthy work-life balance,” adds the advisor.

Workloads also affect peer support mechanisms. For example, “a teacher who already lacks planning time will not be inclined to participate in a mentorship program,” says Angelo Soares.

WHO’S TO BLAME?

According to the researcher, neoliberalism – an ideology that proposes reducing the role of the state - has infected the labour market in general: “Our public institutions did no escape it, which has led to significant problems in our schools, vocational centres, CÉGEPs, universities, hospitals, CLSCs, CHSLDs, CPEs, etc.”



Photo Pascal Ratthé

Angelo Soares adds, “the state has withdrawn from economic life through deregulation, privatization, and promoting competition among workers. Therefore, there is no incentive to change things. All that matters is individual performance.”

CLEAR WARNING SIGNS

In the public sector, leaders are unable to formulate long-term plans that would change this way of thinking, condemns Angelo Soares.

Despite the clear warning signs that our organizations are heading towards disaster, dragging the health of workers down with them, managers are content to act on immediate issues, refusing to take the time necessary for more significant long-term change.

As a result, there are greater numbers of students struggling in class and fewer support staff and professional resources to help teachers integrate these youths well.

¹ Angelo Soares is a sociologist and professor in the Département d’organisation et ressources humaines de l’École des Sciences de la gestion at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

² Luc Bouchard is an occupational health and safety advisor at the CSQ.

64.4%

OF CSQ MEMBERS SLEEP 6 TO 7 HOURS A NIGHT, THAT IS, 1 TO 2 HOURS LESS THAN THE AVERAGE CANADIAN (8.12 HOURS PER NIGHT).

ONLY
1/3

**OF EDUCATION WORKERS
DO NOT WORK ON
WEEKENDS.**

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

This situation is damaging. One in four young teachers abandons their profession before reaching their fifth year. Professional staff are exhausted and can no longer put out fires all day long. Special education technicians and childcare workers, tired of precariousness in these difficult conditions, find employment elsewhere, often reluctantly.

In the health and social services sector, there are more patients and fewer nurses. And when these nurses don't get sick, they are required to perform mandatory overtime.

"The foundation of these problems is clearly organizational," says Angelo Soares.

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH RISKS

The researcher points out that overwork and a lack of workplace support are two of the factors that can lead to psychological distress, mental health problems, and even significant musculoskeletal disorders that are costly for the community.

As work intensifies, so do the physical, intellectual, and psychological demands made on workers. "Several studies show that a heavy workload can also lead to cardiovascular problems and increased absenteeism," explains Luc Bouchard.

He adds that poor social support from co-workers or supervisors can create an unhealthy workplace environment and negatively impact workers' health. "It can generate tension and conflict, leading to a variety of problems, including absenteeism, depressive symptoms, and psychological distress," he says.

According to the INSPQ³, in a context where work is intensifying and changes occur more frequently, social support is an important

protective mechanism for preventing occupational health problems. Support can manifest in many ways. For example, colleagues may offer help to overcome difficulties, share tasks, divide work during peak times, and take time together to discuss ways of doing the job.

The situation is a far cry from the ideal that public sector workers aspired to when they chose to devote their lives to the service of others. And this is the root of the problem, says Angelo Soares. He goes on to say, "this dissonance between the personal values and realities of workers creates tremendous pressure and is a major stake in the retention of personnel. Passion is not enough, neither is vocation!"

IT'S NOT IN OUR HEADS

According to Angelo Soares, "the problem is a collective one and we must fight it collectively." We must name problems and act on the organization of work at the local level.

"These problems are not imagined and the solutions exist in the minds of the workers. Every member of the CSQ holds a key to change things," he concludes.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

To cope with intensification work, workers rely on the following three popular strategies:

1. Working during personal time, for example, at home on weekends instead of spending time with family.
2. Doing more things at the same time, such as making phone calls during their commute home, or making corrections while on public transit.
3. Arriving before the start of a shift or staying after to become acquainted with or complete files in progress.

However, these strategies are not very effective and should be not be favoured.

³ Institut national de santé publique du Québec.

“A CRUCIAL NEGOTIATION, BOTH FOR OUR PERSONNEL AND THE POPULATION”

Negotiations on the working conditions of public sector workers are now underway. How will the population benefit?
Interview with the CSQ President, Sonia Ethier.

Claude Girard | CSQ ADVISOR

CSQ MAGAZINE: WHAT DOES SOCIETY HAVE TO GAIN FROM THIS NEGOTIATION?

Sonia Ethier. The entire population has suffered a great deal from the Couillard government’s austerity measures. Services were cut, across all sectors, particularly in education as well as health and social services. The entire population was short-changed.

WHY SHOULD THE POPULATION SUPPORT PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES?

Employees of the public sector are fighting to improve their working conditions, but also to improve the quality and accessibility of public services. As such, the better their working conditions, the more the services rendered will meet the population’s needs.

HOW CAN BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES?

Quite often, improving working conditions involves giving workers the means to fulfill their work for the population. Nothing is as challenging for the education personnel, as well as those in the health and social services sector, than having to compensate for

the lack of staff and resources to do their job properly. There lies the increasingly difficult task of retaining current personnel or attracting a new generation to the public sector.



Photo Pascal Ratthé

DOESN'T THE POPULATION HAVE MORE TO GAIN THROUGH INCOME TAX CUTS THAN IMPROVED PUBLIC SERVICES?

What good do small income tax cuts do if citizens are forced to turn to the private sector to get the services they are entitled to?



Turning to the private sector entails outrageous costs, when public networks have the necessary expertise to teach and care for the general public. Tax cuts can be very enticing and pleasing in the short term, but they don't serve the interests of the population in the medium and long term.

A government that decides to under-finance public services in order to give income tax cuts weakens and jeopardizes the services offered to the population. The people of Québec believe in their public networks because they recognize that through them, they can access quality healthcare and education services, regardless of their income. This level playing field is one of the fundamental values we hold dear.

CAN THE POPULATION'S SUPPORT INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS?

The support of the population is very important. Governments are highly aware of public opinion. Hence the importance of effective communication with the public, to clearly state our demands so they can have a better understanding of the real issues at stake which, ultimately, impact their lives as well. We, the workers, have

but one desire: to secure working conditions that will allow us to provide the best possible services to everyone.

WHAT DOES THE CSQ AND ITS MEMBERS PLAN ON DOING TO SECURE THE POPULATION'S SUPPORT?

We will be present, in the public arena and in the media, to explain the state of working conditions in our public networks, and their impact on personnel as well as the services provided to the population. We will endeavour to show how our valid demands are closely linked to the best interests of our fellow citizens.

Our message will be clear and direct: the government has the necessary fiscal leeway to take action. Many surpluses are available. Workers have made significant contributions to these results. Citizens have also done their part, and I think that's more than enough.

Now is the time for a drastic change of direction so as to restore the quality public services the population is entitled to. The personnel should also be granted salary increases which are much higher than those given during the last negotiations. There is enough leeway and no justification for the government not to listen.

WHAT WILL YOU SAY TO THE GOVERNMENT TO CONVINCe THEM TO SHOW MORE OPENNESS DURING NEGOTIATIONS?

All bargaining tables must be prepared to negotiate in good faith, as provided for in the Labour Code. The employer will have to listen to the needs of everyone, given that those working in the field know what needs to be done. No one knows what happens on a daily basis in our institutions, whether in the education or health and social services sectors, better than those who work there. It would be in the best interests of employer representatives to listen to what we have to say.

HOW DO THESE NEGOTIATIONS DIFFER FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES?

Essentially, negotiations are very similar from one to the next, as far as proceedings are concerned. However, issues and demands vary.

With respect to the negotiations that are beginning, the improvement of working conditions and the increase in wages are particularly urgent, given that we have endured several years of cuts and cutbacks.

Workers are no longer able to carry our public services while dealing with difficult and unacceptable working conditions. Absenteeism rates for long-term sick leave are the rise for a good reason: current working conditions are making workers sick.

HOW MUCH DOES MEMBER MOBILIZATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE DURING NEGOTIATIONS?

It makes a WORLD of difference. No government can stay indifferent to the solidarity and mobilization of public sector workers. It is the best way to send the government a clear message that we are committed to seeing our demands met and that we are determined to improve our working conditions. The strength of our mobilization also has a significant influence on public opinion in our favour.

WHERE DO THE STRENGTHS OF THE CSQ LIE AS IT UNDERTAKES THESE NEGOTIATIONS?

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¹ Benchmarking Study on Auto/Home insurers in Ontario & Quebec—2018 (by SOM)—Ranking based on the main P&C insurance brands.

A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

How to change the world one student at a time¹? By helping young people find sense in their life.

Karine Lapierre | FPPE-CSQ ADVISOR

Pierre-Luc Lajoie² explains: “I stimulate their sense of belonging to their school and to their community. I do awareness-raising and prevention work that, I feel, eases the already daunting tasks of my professional colleagues who need to intervene.”

Pierre-Luc Lajoie and other SCGCIA³s conceive, plan, organize and host activities that enable students to develop their spiritual life and their social conscience, and to participate in the improvement of their environment and of society. Many SCGCIA³s make a mark on young people during their high school journey.

WHEN “SPIRITUAL” DOESN’T MEAN “RELIGIOUS”

We must be careful not to confuse “spiritual life” with “religious education”, because the service is non-denominational. Its mission aims instead to help the development of identity, inner life, personal values and self-awareness.

In a time when the secularization of the state creates important social debates, this confusion puts the SCGCIA³s’ survival at risk. Over the last 5 years, their number has gone from 328 in 2013–2014 to 253 in 2017–2018. That job category is obviously less and less popular in the school boards.



Photo Gratien Tremblay

Pierre-Luc Lajoie

THE FORGOTTEN SCGCIA³s

“Furthermore, Minister Roberge’s school board transformation project deals another severe blow to the SCGCIA³s. On the one hand, it amends the article stipulating that ‘the student is entitled to services in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement’. On the other hand, it suppresses a passage of the Education Act mentioning that the school must ‘facilitate the spiritual development of students so as to promote self-fulfillment’. We are worried that this action will contribute to the continuing decline of this job category,” claims FPPE-CSQ⁴ president, Jacques Landry.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

To save the SCGCIA³s, the FPPE-CSQ is working with the APAVEQ⁵ to determine what is causing the numerous job cuts of the recent years, and to update these professionals’ functions to better meet the needs of youth. “We want to change the perception of the Minister and school boards about this service that makes a difference,” concludes Jacques Landry.

1 “Change the world one student at a time” was the theme of the 2019 Education Professionals’ Week.

2 Pierre-Luc Lajoie is a spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animator at Commission scolaire du Lac-Saint-Jean and a member of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de l’éducation du Saguenay (CSQ).

3 Spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animator (SCGCIA).

4 Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l’éducation du Québec (CSQ).

5 Association professionnelle des animatrices et animateurs de vie spirituelle et d’engagement communautaire du Québec.

A PASSION THAT FEEDS EVERYDAY LIFE

Daniel Larivée's days follow one another,
but don't look the same.

Meet a passionate audiovisual technician.

Rébecca Salessse | FPSS-CSQ ADVISOR

At École secondaire des Chutes where he's been working for 14 years, Daniel Larivée¹ doesn't see time go by. His work leads him to perform a wide range of tasks. For example, he offers support to teachers, is responsible for equipment loans, broadcasts messages through the school radio, repairs the interactive whiteboards, is involved in the presentation of shows and lectures, etc.

That much variety requires essential qualities. "I need to be calm, structured, versatile and I also need to be able to respect specific deadlines," he explains.

There are moments when the pressure is quite strong. "During the shows, for example, I can't make a mistake. I also need to show patience, because the days can be longer than expected!"



SHARING HIS PASSION

"In the course of my work, I need to be completely invested," adds Daniel Larivée. His involvement incidentally pushed him to put in place a small technical team of a dozen students, some of them with special needs. A few young people who already obtained their high school diploma even continue to take part in the group for the fun of it.

Daniel Larivée teaches his team all the aspects of the trades in the audiovisual field. The young have the chance to put what they learn into action in

various events, like the Christmas and end-of-the-year shows. They also come and give a hand when outside organizations rent rooms in the school.

"Over time, I have developed an excellent bond with youth. I've also seen, throughout my career, the influence I have had on some students who only had the technical team as a motivation to finish their education," he concludes.

¹ Daniel Larivée is a member of the Syndicat des employés de soutien de la Mauricie (CSQ).

TWO CAREERS, ONE PASSION

Looking into the eyes of happy children as they start school has always been a great source of motivation for Eva Annahatak.

Nicole de Sève | COLLABORATION

Eva Annahatak¹ has pursued two careers at the Sautjuit School, Kangirsuk's² primary and secondary school, in Northern Québec: teacher and school secretary.

"Early on, I taught kindergarten in Inuktitut," explains Eva. A mother of three, she changed careers to avoid having to leave her family to take part in a three-week professional development training during the summer.

And so, 21 years ago, she became the Sautjuit School secretary, where 150 students come to learn each day. "But, she adds, even today, what I love about my work is to see those happy children, especially the little ones who are just starting school."



Eva Annahatak

Photo François Beaugard

A WIDE RANGE OF TASKS

"My duties are varied: I oversee things when the principal is away, and take care of the children's registration or their transfer to schools in other villages. I handle administrative tasks and take care of the necessary purchases to make sure everything runs smoothly," she explains.

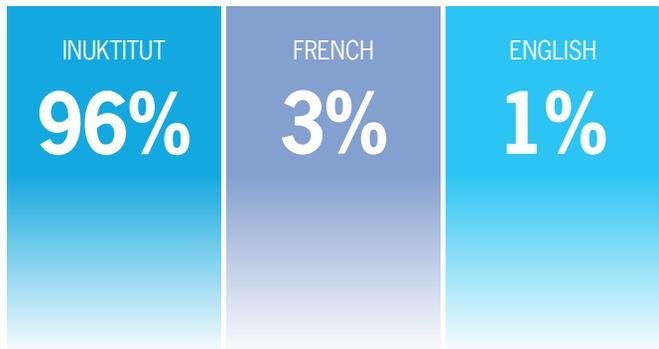
TWENTY YEARS OF UNION ACTIVISM

In addition to her work as secretary, Eva Annahatak has also been union delegate since 1999: "I love helping others. Many of our elders speak very little English: my job is to understand their needs and discuss different issues with the management team. I also have to stay up to date with the latest changes to the collective agreement."

She represents 10 employees. "I don't have huge responsibilities, except during negotiations, special consultations or when organizing events." And when grievances are involved, she can always count on the AENQ-CSQ's³ support.

After all these years of union activism, Eva Annahatak would like to see younger people get involved. "I hope I'll be able to count on our next generation of union activists, because it's extremely important," she concludes.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE POPULATION OF KANGIRSIK



1 Eva Annahatak is a member of the Association of Employees of Northern Québec (AENQ-CSQ).

2 Kangirsuk, which means "the bay", is an Inuit village located 13 kilometres from the western coast of the Ungava Bay, in Northern Québec.

3 Association of Employees of Northern Québec (AENQ-CSQ).

REAPING THE FRUITS OF OUR HARD WORK

For more than a decade, there have been persistent and widespread complaints about the Grade 6 ministerial examination in Mathematics. After years of waiting, the first changes are finally being made.

Mélanie Fortier | FSE-CSQ ADVISOR

In June 2019, to pass their ministerial math examination, Grade 6 students had to take on eight sections over some ten hours during a five-day process. This generated significant anxiety for the students and entailed dozens of hours of preparation and grading for teachers.

The FSE-CSQ¹ has been criticizing the length, complexity and lack of clarity of this ministerial examination, and asking for the proper adjustments, for what seems like ages. Each year, Grade 6 teachers have also asked that it be reviewed, to no avail... until now.

CHANGES, AT LAST!

The FSE-CSQ reached out several times to Minister Jean-François Roberge. In November 2019, the first changes to the mathematics examination were made:

- There will now be four application cases instead of six.
- The examination session will take place over four days instead of five.
- Students will have more time to complete each task.
- The grading tools will be clarified.

THERE'S MORE WORK TO BE DONE

These adjustments will be effective as of 2020, but the MEES intends to continue its work in order to make additional changes for the 2020-2021 school year.

¹ Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (CSQ).

² Josée Scalabrini is President of the FSE-CSQ.

"This first step allays the coming year's difficulties, but there is still much work to be done to significantly improve the conditions both students and teachers have to deal with during the Grade 6 math exams," stated Josée Scalabrini².



Photo Pascal Ratthé

A RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE

Beyond the Grade 6 ministerial examination in mathematics, student evaluation as a whole presents a number of problems. The FSE-CSQ teacher consultation, held in 2018-2019, showed that 83% of elementary teachers are concerned by the number

of mandatory exams imposed by the Ministry. Of the teachers surveyed, 72% also call for fewer school board examinations.

There is also some concern about other issues, particularly the parallels drawn between examinations and results-based management, the race for statistics, the lack of respect for professional judgment, and the standardized report card which is incompatible with early childhood or transition classes.

"It is high time to review the evaluation and bring it back to its real purpose, that is, supporting students' learning, and teachers need to be closely involved in this process," sums up Josée Scalabrini.

FAR FROM THE CLICHÉS

At Cégep Limoilou, Alexandra Lavallée dusts off the clichés of her librarian job and paints a dynamic and exciting career rich in collaboration. New perspective on an unrecognized activity.

Marie-Claude Ethier
COLLABORATION

“My job isn’t just about books and the library is much more than a books’ storage with tables and chairs,” enthusiastically states Alexandra Lavallée¹. Besides, she would love to put away those tenacious myths about her career and workplace.

One look at her daily planner is enough to see the diversity of her tasks and responsibilities: library and personnel management, collections’ selection and purchase (books, databases, theme kits, games and audiovisual equipment), design of the environment (teamwork, reading and consultation zones), showcasing the service through various activities (Facebook page, exhibits, book club), website administration and the creation of informational skills workshops, etc.

The workshops are particularly crucial in the Google era: “In a society where information and data are the new gold rush, students need to learn not only to find information, but also to distinguish the reliable sources from the populist or biased sites, or those financed by an industry,” she explains.

¹ Alexandra Lavallée is a learning methods and techniques specialist, but prefers to introduce herself as a librarian, a more evocative term and better known to the public. She is a member of the Association des professionnelles et professionnels du Cégep Limoilou (CSQ).



Alexandra Lavallée

Photo Pascal Ratthé

A ROLE THAT SHATTERS STEREOTYPES

Alexandra Lavallée conceives her role as one of a facilitator working to foster the creation of knowledge, collaboration and the development of communities. That perspective motivates her, among other things, to take part in projects promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, like setting up a comic book club with the participation of the institution’s literature and creativity and media departments.

Highlighting the dynamism of her team, she is particularly proud of the creation, in spring 2019, of a committee to think about the birth of an innovation space, Fab Lab style. The project, set up with the Cégep’s entrepreneurship service, sparked the enthusiasm of multiple services and departments. “The simple fact of dreaming a common project together is a great success that’s priceless in my eyes. I am thrilled!” she says.

ESSENTIAL WORK YOU'RE PROUD OF

Knowing your work makes that of others easier, what could be more gratifying?

Félix Cauchy-Charest
CSQ ADVISOR

"I'm the go-to person when there's a problem," says Étienne Collette¹. His administrative technician job is split in two components: the daily management of the Social Work department of the Université du Québec en Outaouais and the support of the Social Work graduate students throughout their studies.

His responsibilities include the management of the professors' teaching tasks as well as the assignment of course loads. "I prepare the contracts, I follow up on the lecturers' requests for the recognition of requirements of teaching qualification, on the budget management and on the collective agreement compliance," he says.

A LITTLE HELP FOR THE STUDENTS

Étienne Collette also assists the students in Social Work. "I make sure that their progress goes smoothly, oversee the different administrative follow-ups, including those related to the supervision of their research studies, and I help them conform to the institutional regulations," he explains.



Photo Mathieu Girard

AN APPRECIATED RECOGNITION

Proud of what he accomplishes, Étienne Collette believes that his work is recognized by his colleagues. "I feel that I facilitate the work of the University professors, of the lecturers, but also of the students," he confides.

"I know I enable the department to work well. I contribute in my own way to the

primary missions that are teaching and research in Social Work. It's particularly gratifying, especially when we know that those missions aim to shape citizens and to acquire knowledge that will serve society," adds the technician.

"My work is done behind the scenes, but I think it's essential work, which the University couldn't do without," he concludes.

¹ Étienne Collette is a member of the Syndicat du personnel de soutien de l'Université du Québec en Outaouais (CSQ).



Photo Shutterstock

MOBILIZATION 2.0

Social media fosters active citizen engagement. Its use has benefits, but also several limitations.

Pierre Avignon | FEC-CSQ ADVISOR

From the “Maple Spring” and the “Arab Spring”, to the *Indignados* in Spain and the “Yellow Vests” in France, a great number of protests were made possible thanks to the judicious use of social media.

These same tools gave voice to minority groups such as First Nations and the Idle No More movement. They also help generate public debate on taboo subjects, as was the case for the #MeToo movement. In fact, in Québec, this mobilization led to the adoption of the Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions in 2017.



Photo Shutterstock

A MOBILIZATION WHICH ALSO HAS ITS LIMITS

“The use of social media has helped several protest movements become increasingly inclusive and decentralized. However, these mobilizations often lack cohesion and can be quite fragmented,” claims Mireille Lalancette¹.

She also states that, even though many of these movements have succeeded in wielding some influence on policy makers, others have failed to translate into political action. For instance, there was the Occupy movement, which denounced the hoarding of wealth by the 1%, those most wealthy. Though it no doubt raised people’s awareness of their cause, it hasn’t led to any changes which could improve wealth distribution in the United States... far from it!

The case of the French Yellow Vests also provides another telling illustration of the tension which can be experienced within this type of movement. Extremely active and firmly established in large parts of the population, the “Yellow Vests” have no structured organization, and are struggling to find spokespersons and to bring forward democratically debated demands. “And that is where we need the help of organizations like unions,” says Thierry Vedel².

Thierry Vedel believes that union organizations are “collective-demands-producing machines”. They get things in order, prioritizing and organizing, unlike social media which promotes individuality and doesn’t instill a sense of oneness³.



Photo Shutterstock

A POTENTIAL DRIVER OF UNION ACTION

The judicious use, in-house, of social media appears to encourage members’ participation. When used externally, it seems to give union demands greater visibility.

For social media to act as a driver to democratize and strengthen our actions, communication codes must be followed. For instance, messages posted on social media must be visually driven, spontaneous and connect with the audience on an emotional level. In short, the use of digital technology should be seen as another arrow in our quiver of possible collective actions, but not as a miracle solution.

Within the general population, unions are still considered as organizations that provide opportunities for consultation as well as the continued defence of numerous rights. As information overload makes communications with members and fellow citizens somewhat more difficult, a judicious mix of newer mobilization 2.0 strategies and more traditional union mobilization practises will undoubtedly help promote better working and living conditions for a majority of the population.

¹ Mireille Lalancette is full professor of Social communication at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

² Thierry Vedel is a researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

³ NICOLAS, Clément, and Marion CANDAU (2018). “ Les gilets jaunes pris au piège des réseaux sociaux”, *EURACTIV.FR*, [Online] (December 7, updated December 10).

WHO WILL FOOT THE BILL?

Broadening pharmacists' role to improve access to front-line health care services sounds like a great idea. However, billing these essential services seriously undermines the principles of accessibility and fairness with respect to health.

Lise Goulet
CSQ ADVISOR

This was one of the more important issues raised by the CSQ as the government prepares to amend the Pharmacy Act. Its Bill n° 31 aims to authorize pharmacists to engage in eight new professional activities in the practice of pharmacy, such as prescribing and administering vaccines or prescribing all non-prescription medications.

However, changing the role of these professionals without reviewing their compensation doesn't make any sense. "The government can't say it wants to improve access to health care while allowing new pharmaceutical services to be billed to public and private insurance plans," says Sonia Ethier¹.

When transferring services provided for in the public hospital network to private community pharmacies, initial and monthly professional fees may be charged. Even though these fees are covered by the RAMQ², people who are not covered by the prescription drug insurance plan's public component are not insured.

A WORRISOME PRIVATIZATION

As such, a broader role for pharmacists, combined with fewer services offered in the public sector as well as the deinsurance of pharmaceutical services for individuals covered by a private insurance, constitutes an insidious privatization of health care services. Such an approach is unfair and runs contrary to the spirit of the Canada Health Act.

"The government cannot ignore or contribute to these growing inequities in the health sector. The fair access to health care, and therefore the right to health as recognized by the World Health Organization, is at stake," states Sonia Ethier.



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¹ Sonia Ethier is President of the CSQ.

² Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec.

“WE NEED TO CREATE WINNING CONDITIONS”

Regulating private home childcare educational services is a good idea. But why do they also need to be subsidized?

Véronique Brouillette | CSQ ADVISOR

The Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, has recently made a number of public statements in favour of better oversight with respect to private home childcare centres. As they are not regulated by the Ministry, there is no structure to assess the quality of the services they provide.

According to the FIPEQ-CSQ¹, regulating private home childcare educational services would be a step in the right direction.

“However, we ask that the Minister guarantee that these childcare centres would also be subsidized. Parents have made their position very clear: they want subsidized spaces,” states Valérie Grenon².

The FIPEQ-CSQ President believes that we must take advantage of a legislative change to review the law and its regulations as a whole. Since 2014, many HCEs³ have left the regulated and subsidized network for the private sector as a result of stifling regulations and the additional contribution for childcare expenses.

“We need to create winning conditions to have private home-based service providers return to the regulated and subsidized network,” sums up Valérie Grenon.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRIVATE, AND REGULATED AND SUBSIDIZED?

The first thing that sets the two types of service apart is their rates. Only regulated and subsidized home childcare centres are allowed to offer spaces for a single reduced daily rate of \$8.25. Private home childcare centres determine their own rates. They charge the parents who may then get a tax credit.

Among other differences, only regulated and subsidized childcare services:

- fall under coordinating offices⁴
- are subject to at least three compliance visits per year
- may benefit from educational and technical support from the coordinating office
- may receive certain allowances for infants and children with special needs



Photo Pascal Ratthé

Valérie Grenon

1 Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (CSQ).

2 Valérie Grenon is President of the FIPEQ-CSQ.

3 Home childcare educators.

4 There exist a few regulated, but non-subsidized, home childcare centres. They fall under coordinating offices which however do not receive any additional subsidies.



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