

# Regroupement québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA)

## Structuring a Movement, Amplifying a Collective Voice

RQ-ACA

RÉSEAU QUÉBÉCOIS DE L'ACTION COMMUNAUTAIRE AUTONOME

### A Network Rooted in the Struggle for Recognition

The RQ-ACA emerged to advocate for autonomous community action (ACA) as a full-fledged actor in social development. In 1995, an advisory committee was established by the ACA movement to work in collaboration with the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome. This initiative aimed to structure the relationship between the state and a citizen-led movement rooted in local communities and committed to addressing social inequalities.

### Key Moments in a Political Structuring Process

- 1995 Establishment of the advisory committee leading to the RQ-ACA's founding.
- 2001 Adoption of the policy *Community Action : A Vital Contribution of Citizenship to Social Development* by the Government of Quebec.
- 2004 Implementation of an action plan and a policy framework for various ministries and public agencies.
- 2022 The RQ-ACA coordinated a large-scale mobilization resulting in the 2022-2027 Government Action Plan on Community Action, marking a renewed engagement after 15 years of stagnation.

### A Collective Force Across Quebec

The RQ-ACA unites together 77 national organizations and umbrella groups representing approximately 4,500 autonomous community action groups in Quebec. These organizations encompass over 54,000 employees — 1.4% of all jobs in Quebec — and nearly 425,000 volunteers. The RQ-ACA serves as the network's voice supporting the autonomy, diverse practices, and collective strength of the community movement.

### Weaving Social Justice: 5 Levers Advanced by the RQ-ACA

- 1 An Unprecedented Political Recognition**

The RQ-ACA played a central role in recognizing for autonomous community action as a social development pillar embedding this in public policies while safeguarding the movement's autonomy.
- 2 A New Relationship Model with the State**

Rather than being seen as a mere service provider, the community sector is recognized as a social and political actor. This relational model emphasizes participation, mutual respect, and co-construction.
- 3 A Strong Voice to Preserve Autonomy**

In response to outsourcing and performance-driven logic imposed by certain funders, the RQ-ACA acts as a watchdog, asserting that autonomy depends on stable, unconditional funding.
- 4 A Space for Collective Mobilization**

The RQ-ACA supports thousands of groups in Quebec by providing a framework for mobilization, debate, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. It values these groups — places of solidarity, popular education, and social transformation.
- 5 A Major Contribution to Public Debates**

By addressing governance, funding, equity, and social justice issues, the RQ-ACA engages in meaningful debates on the community sector's role in Quebec society challenging institutions to acknowledge their responsibilities.

### What Now? Staying the Course in an Uncertain Context

The RQ-ACA maintains a strong vision of autonomous community action: independent, rooted, united, and committed. In a context of service recentralization, chronic underfunding, and growing administrative pressure, it remains a key player in sustaining a social democracy and community development.

### References

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