Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest-de-L'Île

TOGETHER FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE SOUTHERN WEST ISLAND

PORTRAIT OF PARTICIPATION OF THE POPULATION OF IMMIGRANT ORIGINS AND OF ETHNOCULTURAL MINORITIES IN COMMUNITY LIFE AND IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

2023

ROXANA STOLERU, PROJECT MANAGER

Diversity has always been a hallmark of the population and society of Canada.

Raison d'être

This document was drafted in the framework of the project *Together for a more inclusive southern West Island* that aims to address the challenges of not having the full participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in the southern West Island by developing tools, raising awareness among local organizations and setting up favorable conditions - free from racism and discrimination as well as promoting the establishment of intercultural relations.

The present portrait is based on a large literature review, on a statistical analysis as well as on surveys that were conducted in the territory.

While the Montreal urban region is well known for its population of immigrant origin and its omnipresent ethnocultural minorities, the southern West Island is often overlooked in discussions about immigration. Although it may be true that other areas of the island have a higher percentage of this group of people, the southern West Island is still a diverse community, with 26.99% of its population, i.e. 26,480 people, composed of individuals from immigrant or ethnocultural minority groups in 2021 (Canadian census data).

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The Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Île is a non-profit community organisation that aims to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the southern West Island.

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An Overview of Canadian Multiculturalism

The 2021 census data on immigration, place of birth, and citizenship in Canada released on October 26, 2022 provides us with the following information:

- Almost 1 in 4 people (23.0%) counted during the 2021 census are or have been a landed immigrant or permanent resident in Canada. This was the highest proportion since Confederation, topping the previous record of 22.3% in 1921, and the largest proportion among G7 countries. According to the 2021 census, *8.3 million people were foreign-born.*
- Just over *1.3 million new immigrants* settled permanently in Canada from 2016 to 2021, the highest number of recent immigrants recorded in a Canadian census.
- Over half of recent immigrants living in Canada were admitted under the *economic category*. Of these 748,120 economic immigrants, just over one-third (34.5%) were selected through skilled worker programs and another one-third (33.6%) through the Provincial Nominee Program.
- The proportion of immigrants who first came to Canada *temporarily on work or study permits or as asylum claimants* before being admitted as permanent residents was especially high amongst recent immigrants who settled since 2016 (36.6%).
- *Asia*, including the Middle East, remained the continent of birth for most recent immigrants (62.0%).
- Almost one in five recent immigrants (18.6%) were born in *India*, making it the leading country of birth for recent immigration to Canada.
- In contrast, the share of recent immigrants from *Europe* continued to decline, falling from 61.6% in 1971 to 10.1% in 2021.
- The vast majority (92.7%) of recent immigrants are able to conduct a conversation in either *English or French*.
- The share of *second-generation Canadians* (children of immigrants) younger than 15 years with at least one foreign-born parent rose from 26.7% in 2011 to 31.5% in 2021.

The policy of multiculturalism means more than just cultural diversity. When speaking about it, one should also take into account intercultural interaction as well as equitable participation to the larger society. Canadian policy has always been more than just the recognition, promotion and celebration of cultural diversity. Intercultural sharing, equity and inclusion have been seen as essential elements in the policy.

These two features of multiculturalism, **diversity and equity**, have remained central to Canadian policy since its inception. However, there have been shifts in emphasis over the past 40 years. At the beginning, there was a focus on support for the maintenance of cultural diversity. This appeared to be an effort to halt or reduce the assimilationist features of earlier policies. Later, the other core concern in the policy (for sharing, equity and social inclusion) came to be emphasized more. And most recently the incorporation of everyone into a Canadian civic society has come to the fore with an emphasis on a common citizenship for all. Fleras (2009) has referred to this shift as moving from *ethnicity* multiculturalism (with a focus on cultural diversity), to *equity* multiculturalism (focus on equitable participation), to *civic* multiculturalism (focus on society building and inclusiveness) and finally to *integrative* multiculturalism (focus on identification with Canada, and full incorporation into the larger Canadian society).

This shift is still in progress, with earlier forms of multiculturalism very much in evidence. For example, expressions of heritage/ethnic cultures are part of annual festivals in many communities; anti-discrimination efforts are seriously advocated to reduce barriers to full participation, and the civic integration of all peoples is promoted through public education and political advocacy (Biles & Tolley, 2005).

Generally, recent immigrants raise several concerns related to social exclusion, such as:
- difficulty in integration of children;
- difficulty in finding and in forming a supportive social network;
- feeling of exclusion and neglect;
- difficulty finding local information and resources;
- difficulties in understanding the local context, culture, local systems (health, financial, tax).

An Overview of the Southern West Island as a Diverse Region
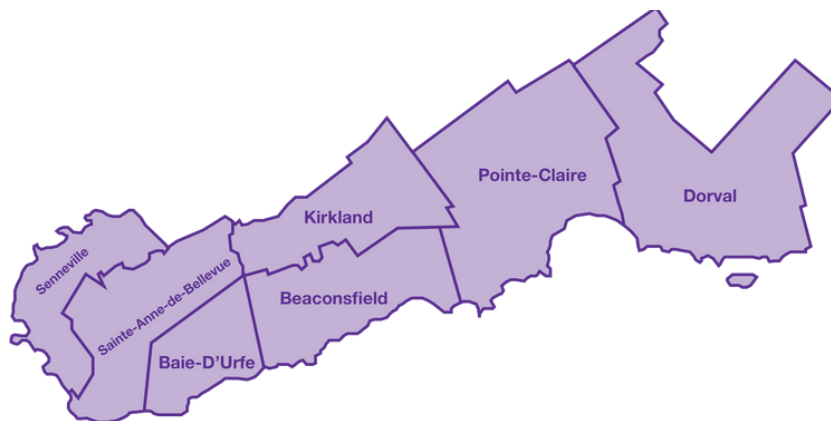
The territory served by the TQSOI includes 101,222 residents and covers **7 municipalities** (Baie d'Urfé, Beaconsfield, Dorval, Kirkland, Pointe-Claire, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, and Senneville) with an area of 85km².

According to Statistics Canada, in 2021 there were **26,480 people of immigrant origin** living in the seven municipalities of the Southern West Island. The people that make up this population are themselves from a diverse background, with no ethnocultural community having a majority share of the group. The largest of these groups, people of **Chinese descent**, account approximately for 30% of the immigrant and ethnocultural minority population. The second largest group, **South Asians**, represent roughly 16% of the immigrant and ethnocultural minority population. **Black** and **Arab groups** represent approximately 12% and 11%, respectively, of the immigrant and ethnocultural minority groups.

It is also important to take into consideration the different arrival periods of the immigrant community here in the southern West Island. The largest group, 26.59% of immigrants, have arrived prior to the 1980s. Having lived in the territory for more than 40 years, they can be considered to be more integrated in the community.

Our work is more relevant and focused on newer arrivals, those who have arrived since 2016 represent 12.2% of the immigrant population.
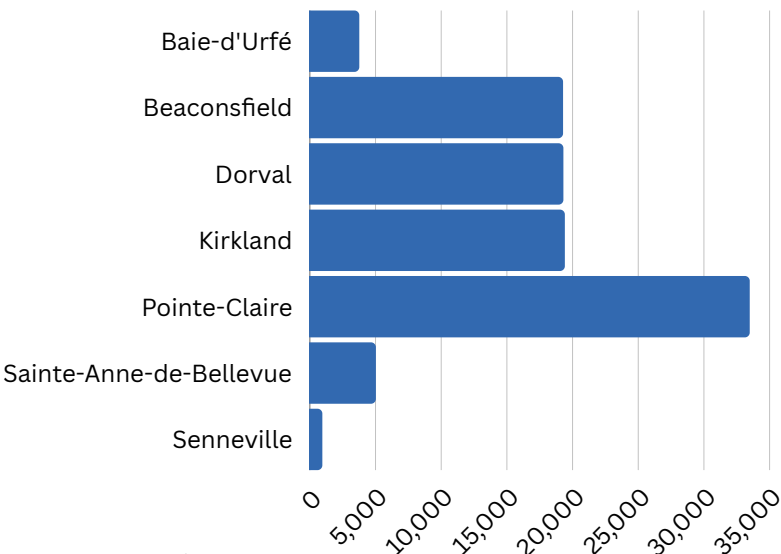
In terms of religion, according to Statistics Canada, in 2021 the Southern West Island's population was predominantly Christian (59.66%). However, some Christian groups, such as Filipino Catholics or Coptic Egyptians, also constitute ethnocultural minorities. Almost a third (30.4%) of the Southern West Island population is non-believer or atheist. Non-Christian groups (Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, etc.) account for 9.22% of the population.

Out of all the municipalities that make up the southern West Island, Pointe-Claire has the largest total population of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities (8,510 ppl) but Kirkland has the largest community of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities as a share of its population, at 32.25%.

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Southern West Island

Population distribution

Baie-d'Urfé
Beaconsfield
Dorval
Kirkland
Pointe-Claire
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
Senneville

0 · 5,000 · 10,000 · 15,000 · 20,000 · 25,000 · 30,000 · 35,000

Pointe-Claire has the largest population in Southern West Island followed by Kirkland, Dorval and Beaconsfield.

Mother Tongue

Others
19.5%

Arabic
2.1%

Spanish
2.4%

Italian
3.1%

Chinese languages
6.1%

French
21.7%
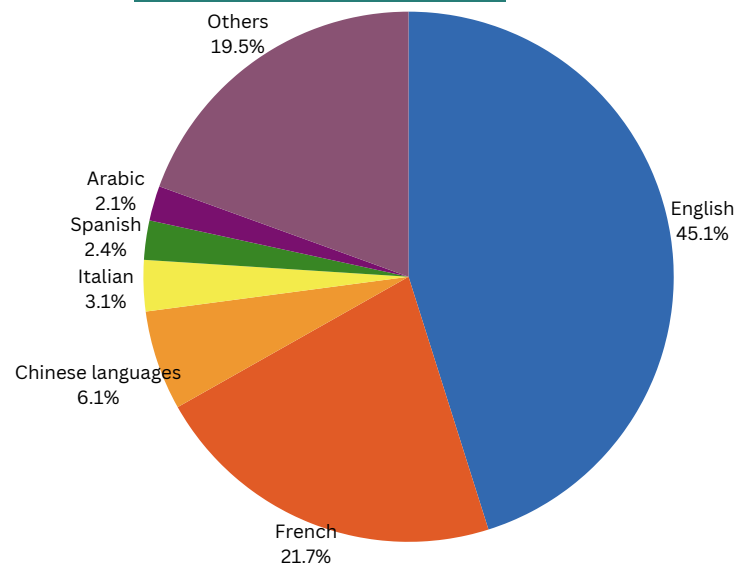
English
45.1%

The predominant mother tongue is English, followed by French, Chinese languages, Italian, and Spanish. The category "Others" includes languages like Farsi, German, Russian, and more.

Visible minorities

Chinese
7.5%

South Asian
4%

Black
3%

Others
8%

Non-minority
74.7%
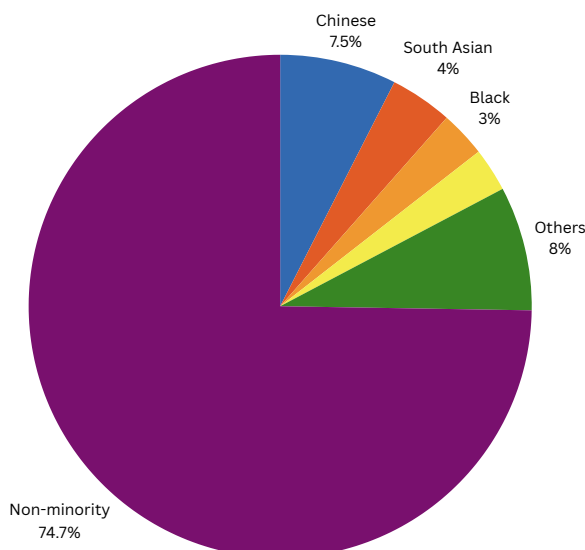
In terms of visible minorities, the Chinese population represents 7.5% followed by South Asian with 4% and Arabs with 2.8%."Others" include Koreans, Japanese, South-East Asians, Filipinos and more.

Period of immigration

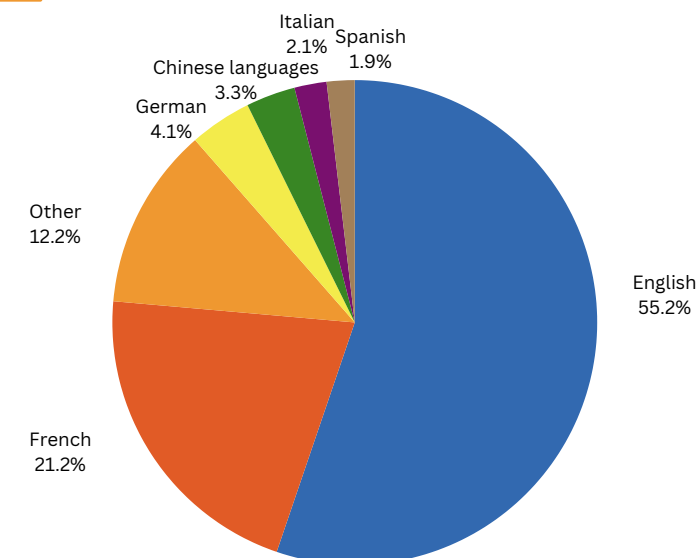Before 1980
1980-1990
1991-2000
2001-2010
2011-15
2016-2021

0 · 2,000 · 4,000 · 6,000 · 8,000
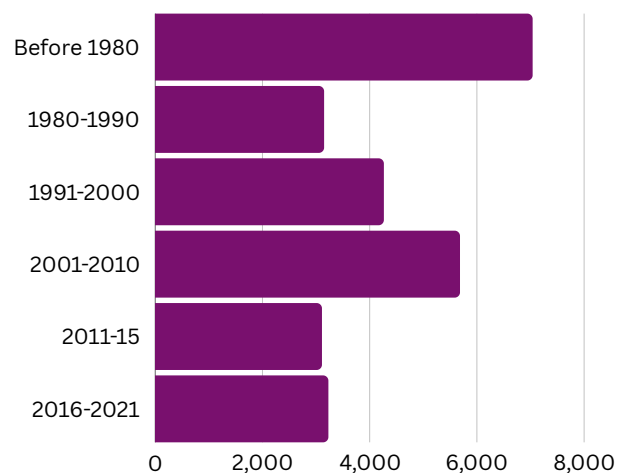
The highest percentage of immigrant population in the Southern West Island arrived in Canada before 1980 (26.6%)

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Baie d'Urfé

Mother tongue pie chart

Italian 2.1%
Spanish 1.9%
Chinese languages 3.3%
German 4.1%
Other 12.2%
English 55.2%
French 21.2%

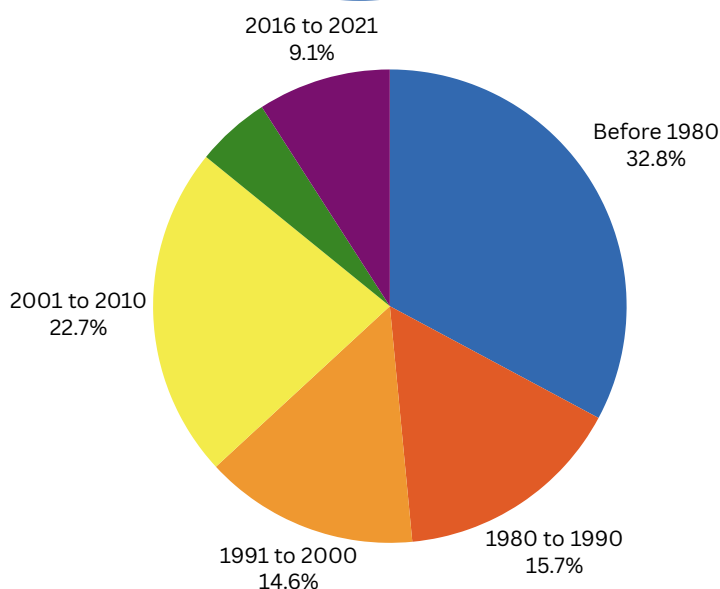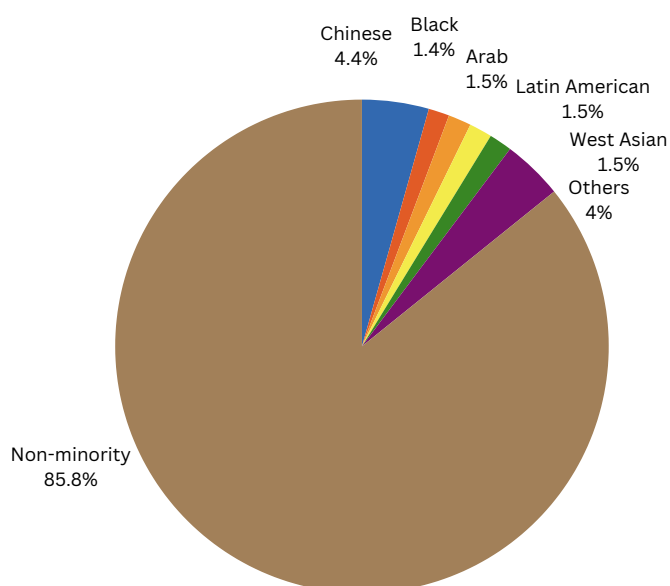## Mother tongue

With 76.4% of the population speaking one of the official languages as their mother tongue, the most common other ones are German and Italian. "Others" include Farsi, Russian, Greek and more.

Period of immigration pie chart

2016 to 2021 9.1%
Before 1980 32.8%
2001 to 2010 22.7%
1991 to 2000 14.6%
1980 to 1990 15.7%

Period of immigration

Almost half, 48.5%, of immigrants in Baie-d'Urfé have been in the country for more than thirty or even forty years.

Visible Minorities pie chart

Chinese 4.4%
Black 1.4%
Arab 1.5%
Latin American 1.5%
West Asian 1.5%
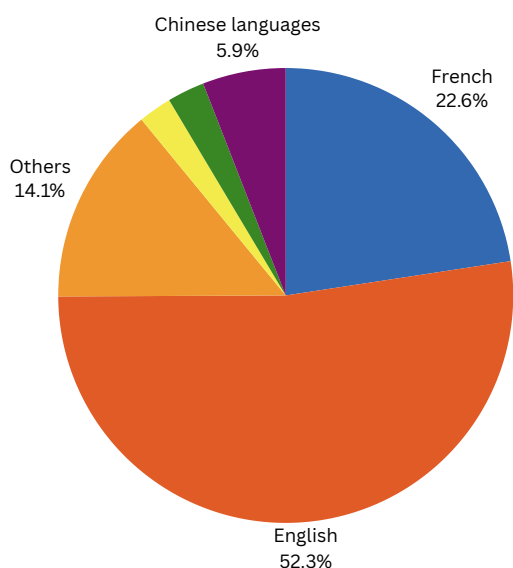Others 4%
Non-minority 85.8%

Visible Minorities

While an overwhelming majority of the population is not from a minority group, the largest minority group is Chinese at 4.4%. "Others" include South-Asians, Koreans and more.
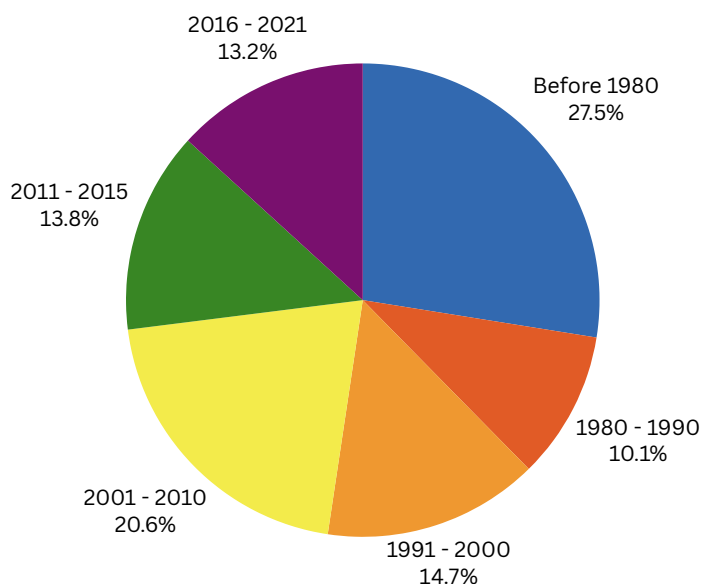
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Beaconsfield

Mother tongue chart

Chinese languages
5.9%

French
22.6%

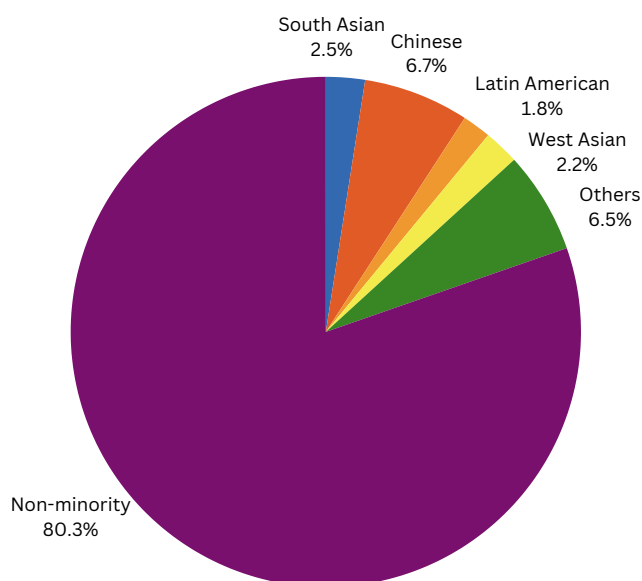Others
14.1%

English
52.3%

Mother tongue

The largest non-offical language as a mother tongue are Chinese languages. "Others" include Farsi, German, Arabic and more.

Period of immigration chart

2016 - 2021
13.2%

Before 1980
27.5%

2011 - 2015
13.8%

1980 - 1990
10.1%

2001 - 2010
20.6%

1991 - 2000
14.7%

Period of immigration

While 37.6% of immigrants have been established here prior to the 1990s, the biggest group, at 47.6%, are those who have arrived after 2000.

Visible minorities chart

South Asian
2.5%

Chinese
6.7%

Latin American
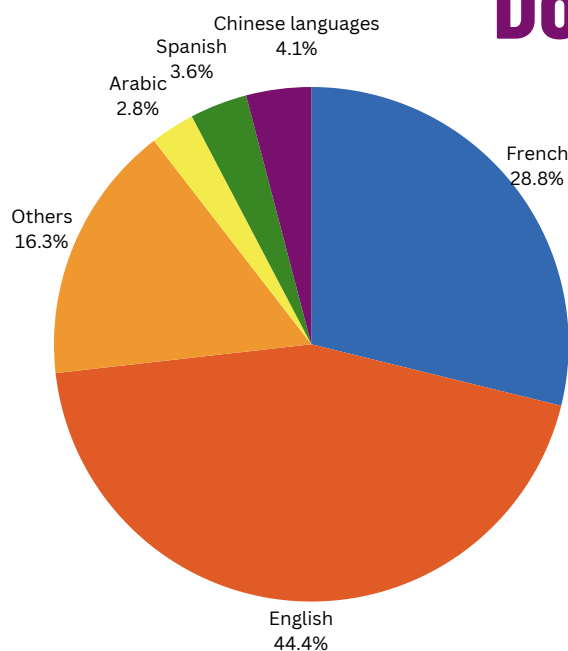1.8%

West Asian
2.2%

Others
6.5%

Non-minority
80.3%

VisibleMinorities

While the overwhelming majority of the population is not from a minority group, people of Chinese origins represent the largest minority group. "Others" include Arabs, Black, South-East Asians and more.
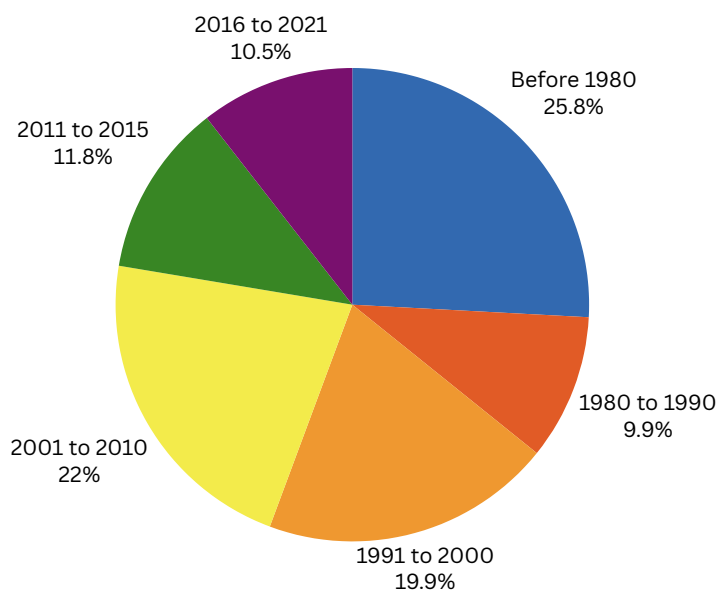
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Dorval

Mother tongue

Chinese languages
4.1%

Spanish
3.6%

Arabic
2.8%

Others
16.3%

French
28.8%

English
44.4%

Chinese languages, Spanish and Arabic represent the largest non-official languages as mother tongues. "Others" include Italian, Romanian, Tagalog and more.

Period of immigration

2016 to 2021
10.5%

2011 to 2015
11.8%

Before 1980
25.8%

2001 to 2010
22%

1980 to 1990
9.9%

1991 to 2000
19.9%

Home to a much newer immigrant population, 44.5% of Dorval's immigrant population has arrived in the country after 2001.

Visible Minorities

Others
10.8%

South Asian
4.3%

Chinese
4.7%

Black
4.6%

Latin American
3.6%
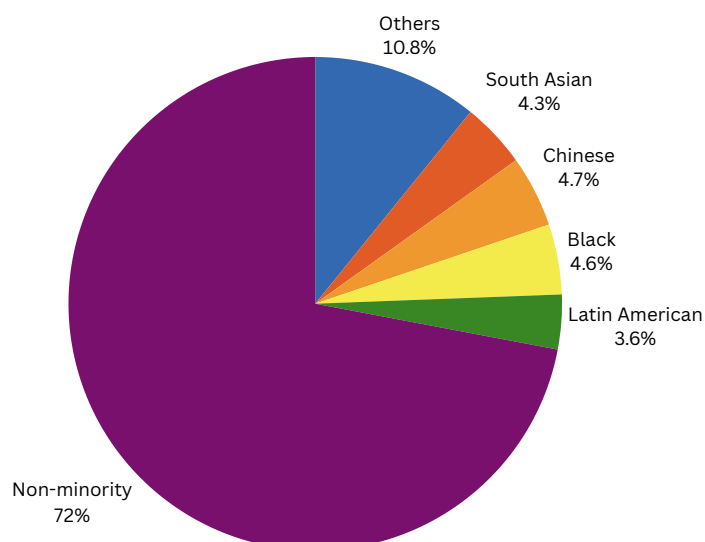
Non-minority
72%

At almost equal percentages, Chinese and Black people are the largest minority groups, but Dorval is still mostly made up of non-minority people (72%). "Others" include Arabs, Filipinos, South-East Asians and more.

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Kirkland

Chinese languages
11.1%

French
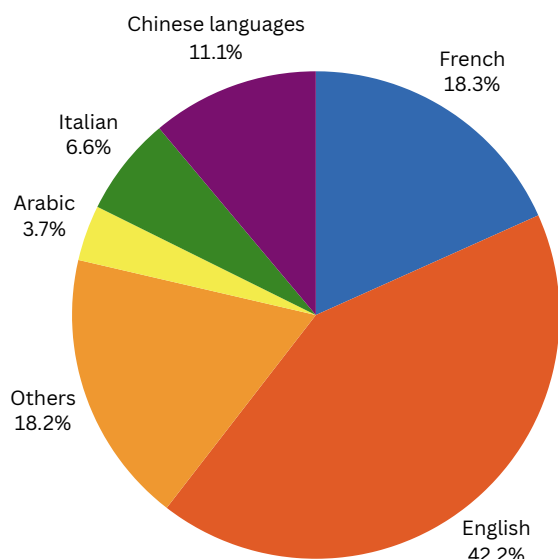18.3%

Italian
6.6%

Arabic
3.7%

Others
18.2%

English
42.2%

Mother tongue

Chinese languages, meaning Mandarin, Cantonese and others, are the biggest mother tongue groups outside of the official languages. "Others" include Farsi, Greek, Spanish and more.

2016 to 2021
13.5%

Before 1980
27.6%

2011 to 2015
10.9%

2001 to 2010
19.3%

1991 to 2000
15.6%

1980 to 1990
13.2%
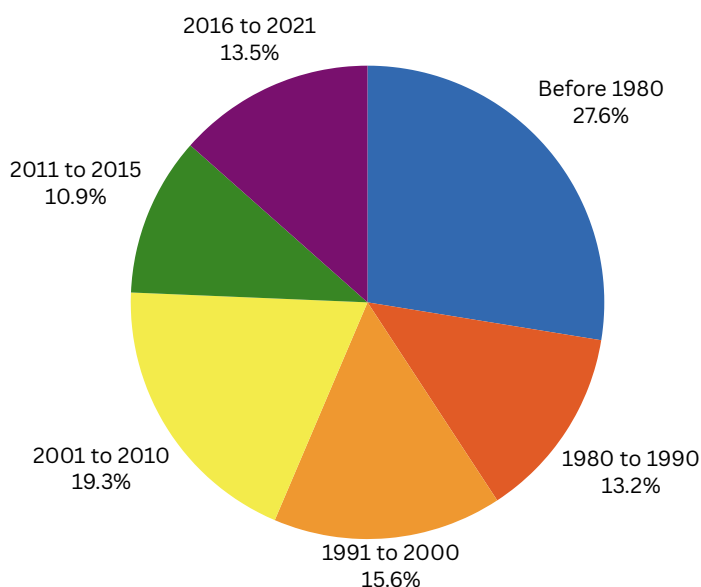
Period of immigration

Much like in Beaconsfield, the largest group of immigrants have arrived after 2001.

Others
6.6%

South Asian
5%

Chinese
12.5%

Black
2.9%

Arab
4.7%
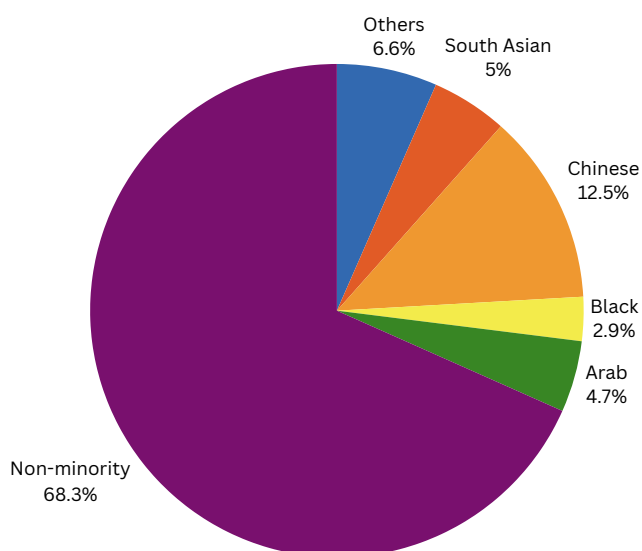
Non-minority
68.3%

Visible Minorities

By far the largest minority group in Kirkland, people of Chinese origin represent 12.5% of the population, followed by South Asians at 5%. "Others" include West-Asians, Filipinos, Latin-Americans and more.

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Pointe-Claire

Mother tongue

Chinese languages
6.4%

French
21.8%

Others
16.5%

English
50.4%

The largest non-official languages as a mother tongue are, in order, Chinese languages, Spanish and Italian. "Others" include Farsi, Romanian, Polish and more.
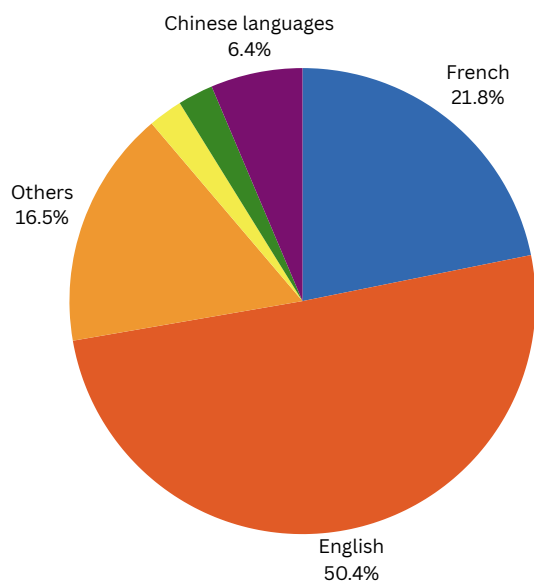
Period of immigration

2016 to 2021
12.4%

Before 1980
24.7%

2011 to 2015
11.8%

1980 to 1990
12.9%

2001 to 2010
23.2%

1991 to 2000
15%
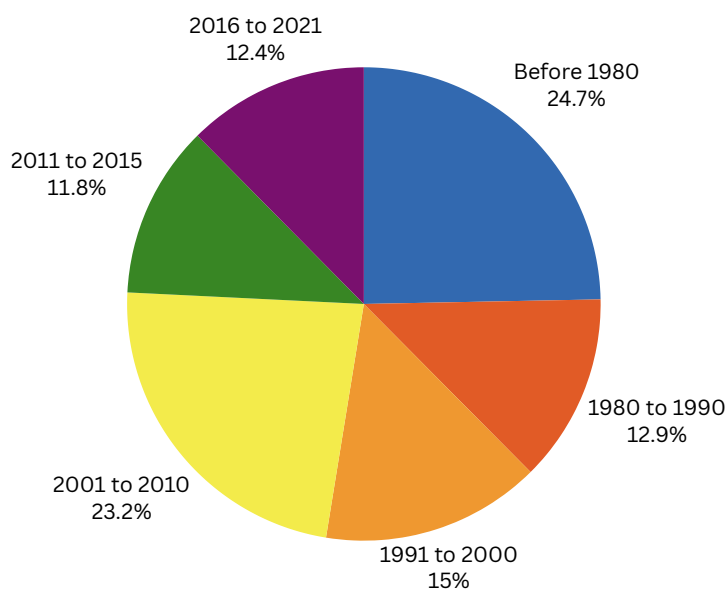
Nearly half, 47.4%, of people of immigrant origins have arrived in Pointe-Claire after 2001.

Visible Minorities

Arab
2.3%

Others
8.3%

South Asian
4.5%

Chinese
7.7%

Black
2.8%
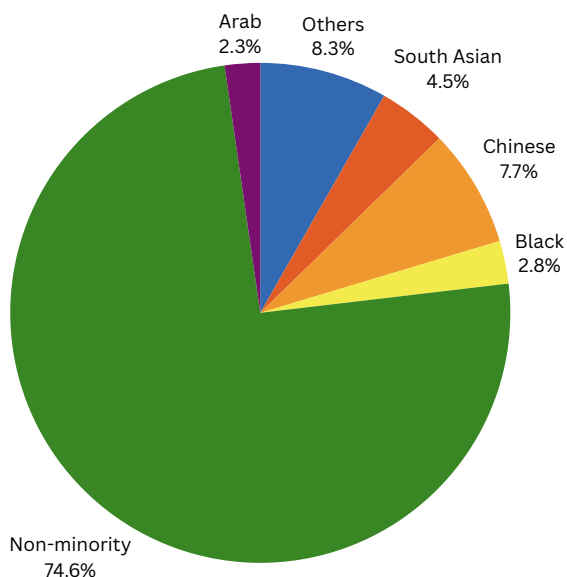
Non-minority
74.6%

Once again, people of Chinese origins represent the largest minority group. "Others" include Latin-Americans, West-Asians, Filipinos and more.

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Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue

Chinese languages 3.8%
Spanish 2.9%
Arabic 2.3%
Others 14.5%
French 30.1%
English 46.4%

Mother tongue

Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue has one of the highest rate of native French speakers, at 30.1%, but English speakers remain the largest group. "Others" include Italian, Romanian, Polish and more.

2016 to 2021 11.5%
2011 to 2015 15.8%
Before 1980 26.2%
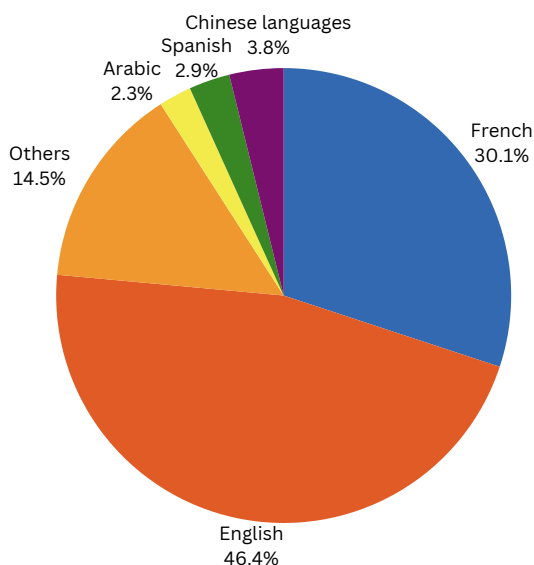**1980 to 1990** 10.4%
2001 to 2010 19.1%
1991 to 2000 16.9%
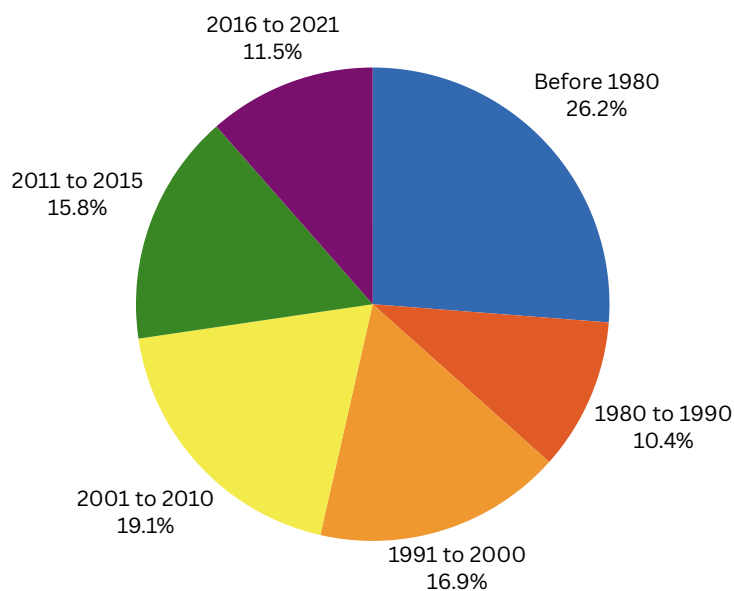
Period of immigration

46.4% of people of immigrant origin in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue have arrived in the country following 2001.

Others 4.9%
Chinese 4.4%
Black 4%
Arab 2.3%
Non-minority 78.1%
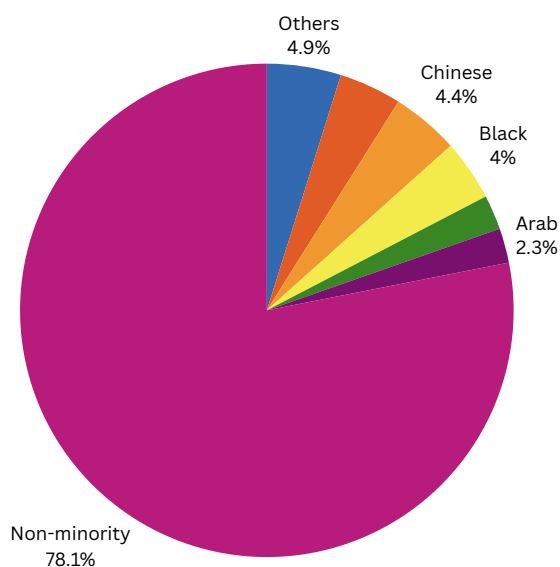
Visible Minorities

While the vast majority of the population is not from a minority group, Chinese and Black groups represent the two largest minority groups. "Others" include Latin-Americans, West-Asians, South-east Asians and more.
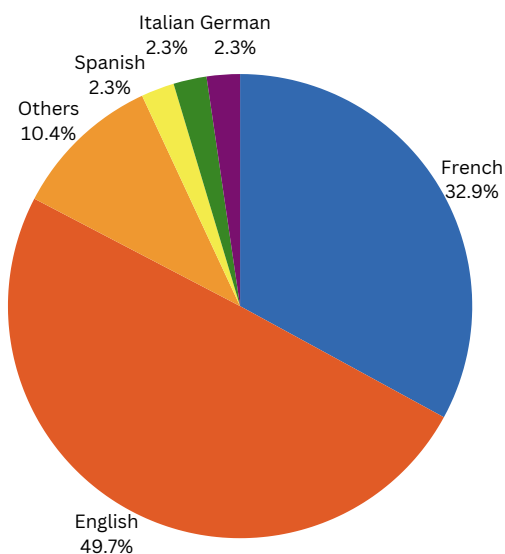
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Senneville

Mother tongue

Pie chart — Mother tongue:
- French 32.9%
- English 49.7%
- Others 10.4%
- Spanish 2.3%
- Italian 2.3%
- German 2.3%

With 82.6% of the population having one of the official languages as their mother tongue, the next most spoken languages, Spanish, Italian and German, each represent 2.3%. "Others" include Chinese languages, Arabic, Polish and more.

Period of immigration

Pie chart — Period of immigration:
- Before 1980 45.9%
- 1980 to 1990 8.1%
- 1991 to 2000 18.9%
- 2001 to 2010 27%
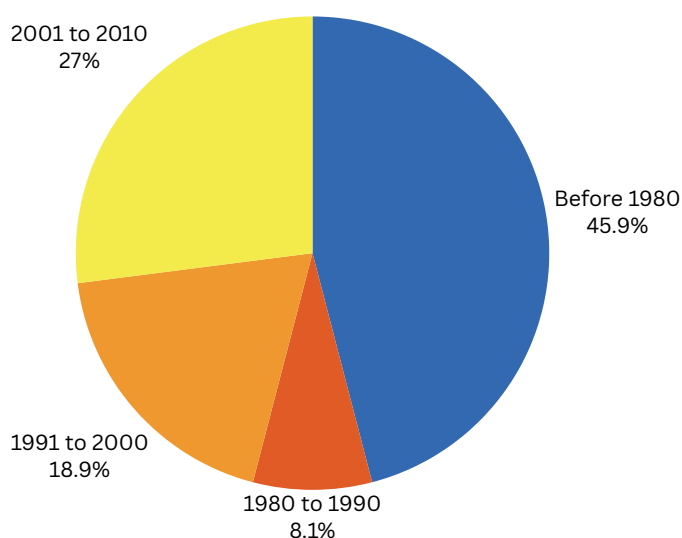
With no immigrants after 2010, we can see that the immigrant community in Senneville is more established, with almost half of them arriving before the 1980s.

Visible Minorities

Pie chart — Visible Minorities:
- Others 5.2%
- South Asian 4.7%
- Black 3.1%
- Non minority 86.9%
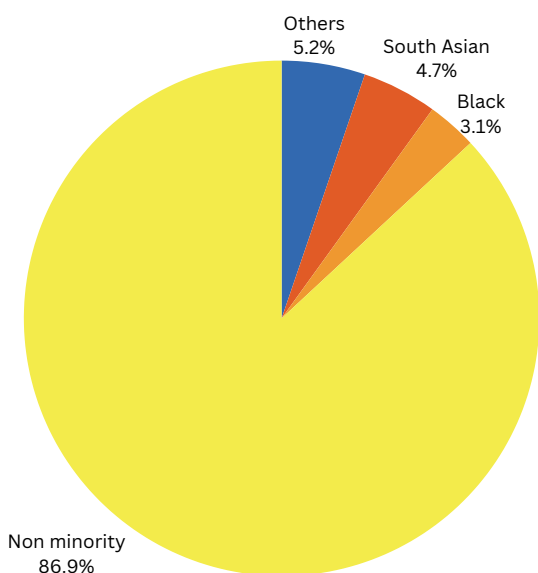
The least diverse community, 86.9% of Senneville's population is not from a minority group. The largest minority group, South Asians, represent 4.7% of the population.

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Participation in Community Life and in Decision–Making Processes

To gain deeper insights into the **level of participation** of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in the community life and in the decision-making processes within local West Island organizations, the TQSOI has developed a **comprehensive survey** (see Annex).

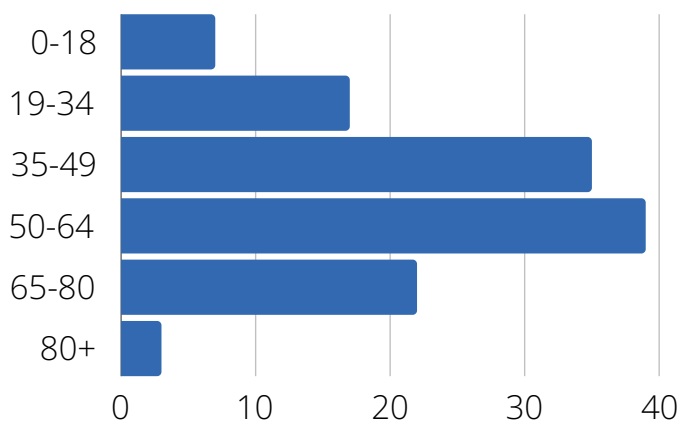The primary objective of the survey was to learn how the TQSOI can enhance the participation experiences of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities and identify any potential obstacles that may hinder their active participation. By understanding their **unique needs and challenges**, the TQSOI aims to facilitate their involvement and create a more inclusive environment.

The survey was initially distributed within the Southern West Island community and amongst the members of local community organizations. Given the modest response rate in 2022, the TQSOI initiated a second round of outreach, coinciding with numerous local summer events in July and August 2023. These included events such as the Pointe-Claire Neighbourhood Solidarity Market, Beaconsfield's summer community event series, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue market and boardwalk, a Kirkland event in Meades Park, the West Island Chinese Association summer camp, Hindu Mandir Temple, Dorval market, amongst others. As of the completion of this portrait, we have received a total of **124 responses**.

Audience age

Age	
0-18	
19-34	
35-49	
50-64	
65-80	
80+	

The 35-46 and 50-64 age groups have been the most responsive to our surveys.

Mother Tongue

Hindi 3%
Creole 3.7%
English 28.4%
Other 21.6%
French 14.9%
Romanian 5.2%
Russian 4.5%
Mandarin 15.7%
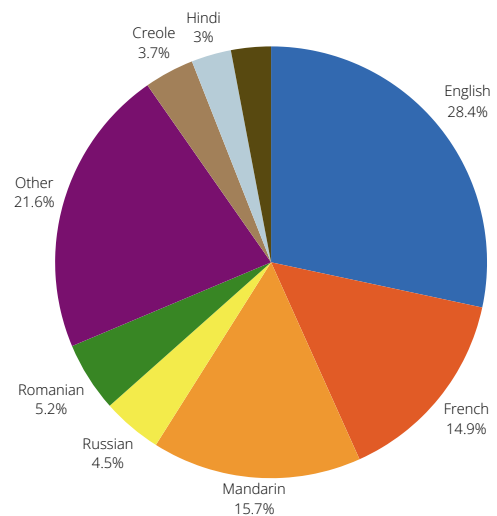
While English is the mother tongue for the majority of respondents, Mandarin and French are the two other most common ones.

Are you involved in any community organizations?

Yes 40.7%
No 59.3%
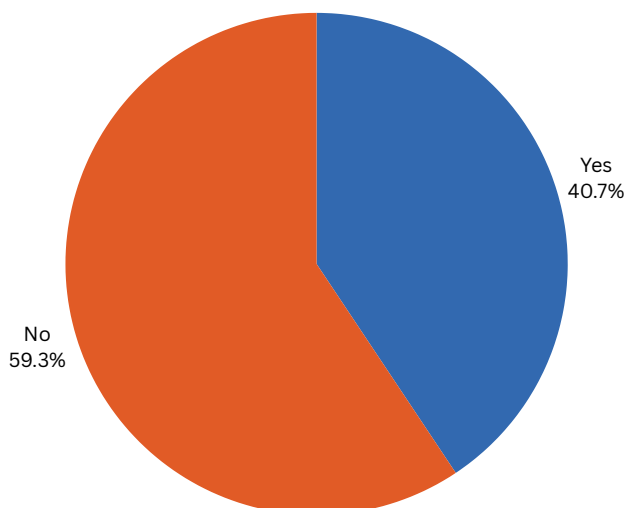
The majority of those surveyed do not participate in any community or local organisations.

If yes, what type of organization?

Cultural 18.5%
Community 25.9%
Municipal 9.9%
Sports 7.4%
Faith 27.2%
Schools 11.1%
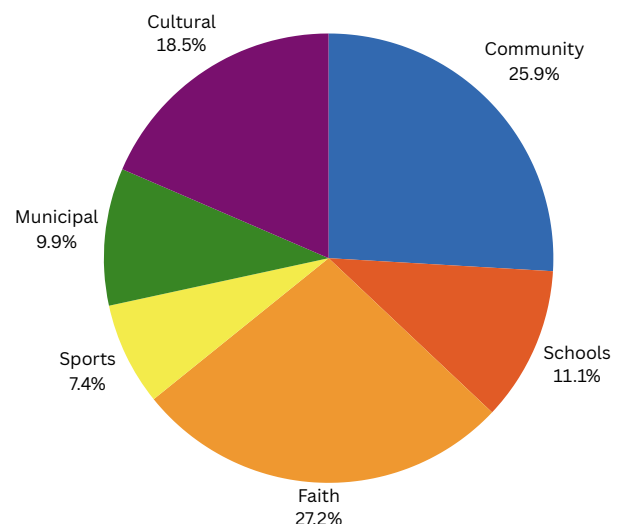
Amongst those who do participate, religious and community organizations are the most common ways of participation.

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Do you participate in the decision-making processes?

Yes
25.6%

No
74.4%
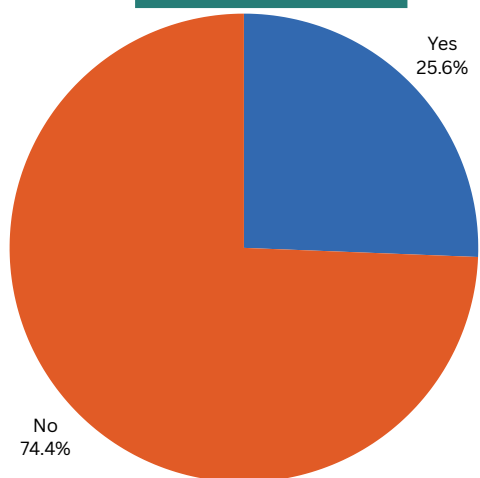
Most people do not participate in the decision-making processes.

Where do you participate in the decision-making processes?

sports
4.2%

Cultural
22.9%

Community
25%

School
8.3%

Municipal
20.8%

Faith organization
18.8%
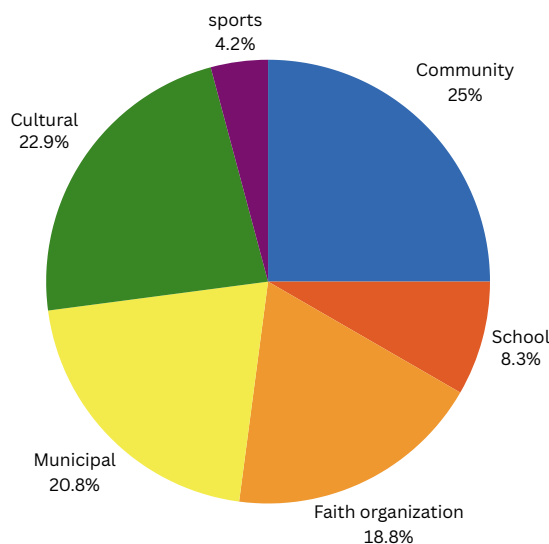
For those who do, it is mainly within community organizations and cultural associations.

How do you participate in the decision-making processes?

School
7%

Partcipation municipal meetings
9.3%

Consultation activities
32.6%

Organizing Faith activities
11.6%

Employment
2.3%

Cultural activities
9.3%
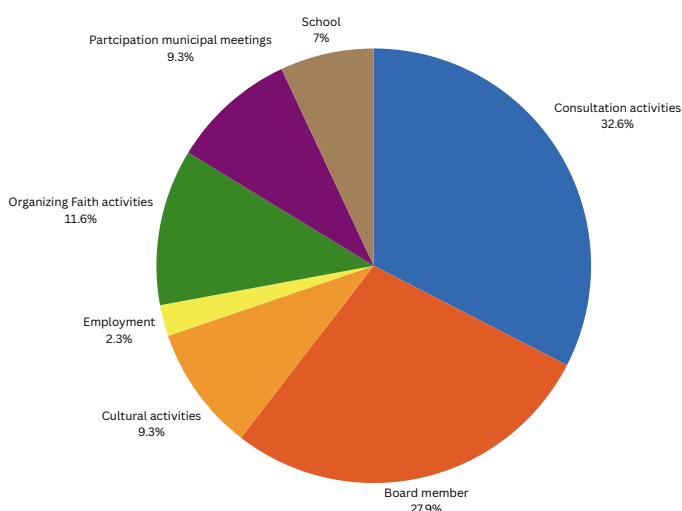
Board member
27.9%

Being a board member and participation in consultation activities are the two most common ways of participation.

Do you face any obstacles in participation?

Yes
35.9%

No
64.1%
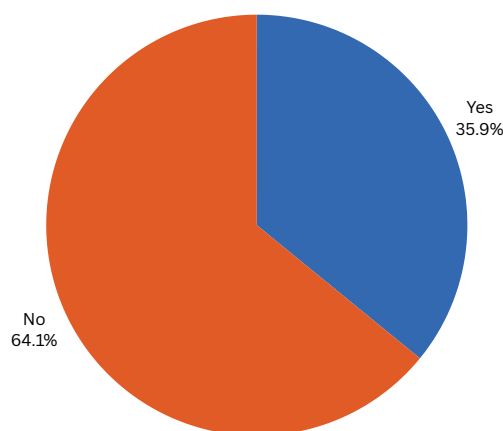
Most people surveyed face no barriers to participation.

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What are the obstacles?

Obstacle	Value
Language barrier	18
Fear	2
Lack of knowledge	18
Lack of encouragement	13
Childcare	6
Family concerns	5
Mobility	2
Age differences	2
Lack of community	1
Lack of free time	3
Travel expenses	2
Lack of access	1
Cultural differences	1
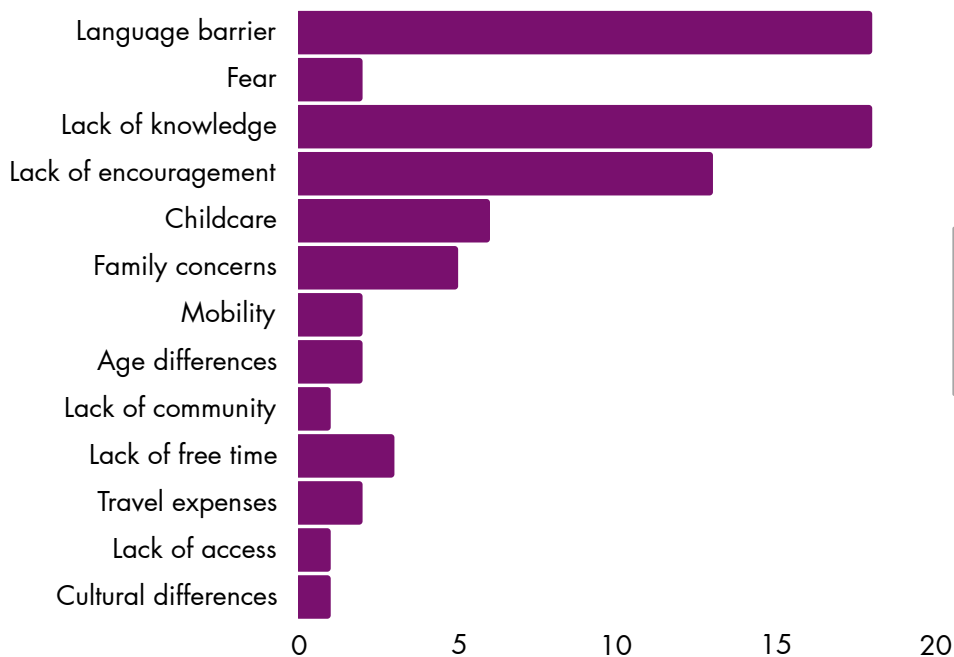
The most common barriers to participation are language barriers and a lack of knowledge of participation opportunities.

What could be done to make participation easier?

Action	Value
Increase communications social media visibility	31
Use easily understandable language	21
Support and accompagny people in participation	15
Involve people in desicion making processes	15
Be more open	16
Organize events closer to people	16
Offer a welcoming environment	15
Make it child friendly	17
Make meetings accessible	22
Ensure power is shared	15
Ensure all voices are heard	18
Ensure appropriate training	8
Inclusive language	18
Offer language classes	1

Increasing communications, both in quality and quantity, and social media visibility are the most given answers as to what would make participation easier for the public, followed by making meetings accessible to all and using a language that is easy for most to understand.

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In essence, participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities is not just about their involvement in decision-making processes, it's about embodying **the essence of democracy** itself. Their engagement is a testament to the values of **equity, inclusion, and shared responsibility** that underpin democratic societies. By participating, they not only contribute to the betterment of their own lives but also play an integral role in shaping the collective destiny of the community.

The survey we prepared regarding the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes of local community organizations provided **valuable insights** into various aspects of their **engagement, experiences, and barriers**.

In short, according to the results of our survey, the main reasons people do not participate in community events or processes are the **lack of knowledge, the language barriers**, and **lack of encouragement.**

The main strategies to overcome the barriers to participation indicated by the survey respondents would be to improve communication and social media visibility, making meetings accessible and child friendly, as well as ensuring that power is shared and all voices are heard.

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Knowledge and Awareness

Through the surveys, we have found that the most common barrier to participation is a lack of knowledge of what is happening in the community and how to participate. This obstacle is important to note as it demonstrates that community organizations need to improve their **communication strategies**.

This idea is further reinforced by the feedback provided by respondents. When asked what organizations could do to facilitate participation, the most common answer is to increase communication and presence on social media. This would allow the population to know what organizations are doing and how they can participate.

Immigrant populations and ethnocultural minorities may face **challenges in accessing information** about community organizations and their activities. Limited awareness of available resources and opportunities can deter individuals from getting involved. It is essential to employ targeted outreach strategies to ensure that these communities receive timely and relevant information, promoting awareness and encouraging participation.

Knowledge and information play a pivotal role in fostering the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes of local organizations.

In a rapidly evolving and interconnected world, access to accurate information **empowers individuals** to engage meaningfully, to contribute their perspectives, and to make informed decisions.

However, the lack of knowledge about local events, processes, and resources can present a significant barrier to participation. Addressing this challenge requires a **multi-pronged** approach that prioritizes effective communication, outreach, and educational initiatives.

Knowledge and information are the **building blocks** of meaningful participation. Addressing the lack of knowledge about local events and processes requires a comprehensive approach that leverages effective communication, cultural sensitivity, educational initiatives, and collaborative partnerships.

By ensuring that accurate and accessible information reaches everyone, we can empower people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities **to contribute** their unique perspectives and shape the future of their communities.

People may be unaware of available community events, meetings, or opportunities due to a lack of information. This can result from a lack of targeted outreach or inadequate communication channels to reach these populations.
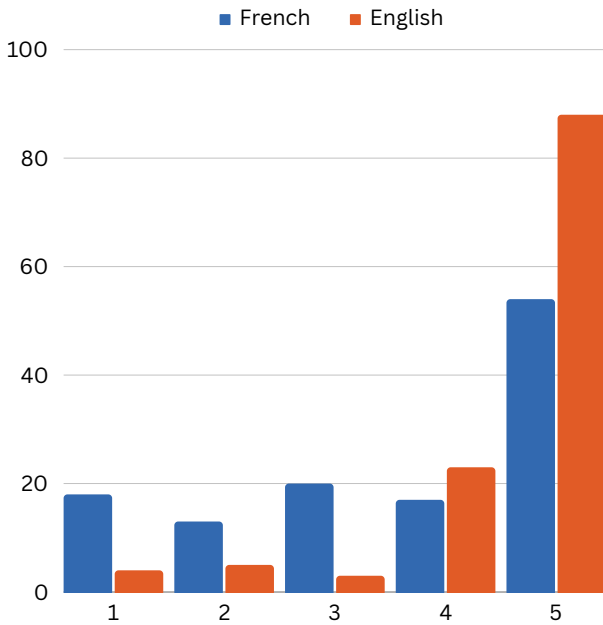
Language and Communication

The southern West Island of Montreal is a **linguistically diverse region**, reflecting the multicultural nature of its population. While English and French together are the dominant languages in the area with 66.8% of the population having them as their mother tongue, there is a significant presence of other languages due to the diverse immigrant and ethnocultural communities that reside there. Some of the languages spoken in the Southern West Island include: Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Italian, Spanish, Arabic, German and more.

Language barriers can pose challenges to effective communication and may affect the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community activities and decision-making processes. Limited proficiency in the official languages (French and English) can hinder individuals from fully engaging in discussions, accessing important information, and expressing their opinions and needs effectively. This can result in **feelings of exclusion and frustration** amongst these communities.

Through our surveys, we asked people about their level of understanding of the French and English language on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) as well as the level of speaking French and English on a scale of 1 to 5 and here are the results:

Data source: TQSOI Surveys

Charts about French and English speaking levels on a scale from 1 to 5.

Charts about level of understanding of French and English on a scale from 1 to 5
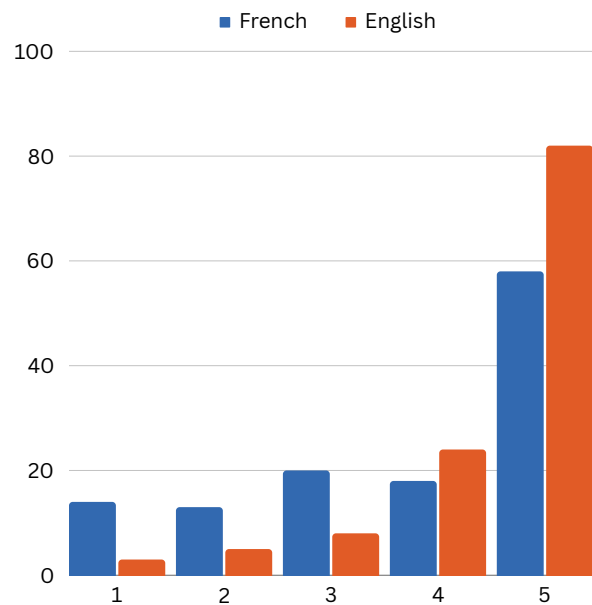
Limited proficiency in the local languages can impede effective communication and active participation. People may feel hesitant to engage if they are unable to express themselves or understand discussions, documents, or announcements. Our survey reveals that language barriers are **the second most given reasons for obstacles** to participating in the community life or decision-making of local community organizations, the first being a lack of knowledge (see next section).

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Empowerment and Encouragement

The lack of encouragement stands out also as **a significant hurdle** to the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes. This obstacle is rooted in the absence of proactive support and motivation provided to these individuals, often stemming from cultural norms, societal expectations, or simply a lack of awareness. It is **the third most common obstacle** identified by the respondents to our survey.

In many cases, individuals from immigrant and ethnocultural backgrounds may not receive the same level of encouragement to participate in community activities as their peers from the dominant culture. This lack of encouragement can have a discouraging effect, making them **feel less valued or welcomed** within these spaces. It also contributes to a sense of **unfamiliarity** with the local community and its various opportunities for engagement.

Moreover, language and cultural differences play a role in exacerbating this obstacle. When individuals are not fully integrated linguistically or culturally, they may face challenges in understanding the importance of community involvement or may be unsure about how to navigate these spaces effectively. This **lack of clear guidance** can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection, further deterring them from actively participating.

To address this obstacle, it is crucial to implement **targeted awareness campaigns** that emphasize the benefits of participation and highlight success stories of individuals from similar backgrounds who have become actively engaged. Creating **mentorship programs** or **pairing newcomers** with community members who can provide guidance and encouragement can also help build a supportive network. Additionally, **involving leaders and influencers** from diverse backgrounds in community initiatives can inspire others and send a strong message of inclusion.

By proactively fostering a culture of encouragement and providing tailored support, we can break down this barrier and empower people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities **to become valued contributors** in the community's decision-making processes and overall vibrancy.

The lack of encouragement emerges as a significant barrier hindering the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes. Often stemming from cultural norms and language differences, the absence of proactive support can leave individuals feeling undervalued and disconnected from community spaces. Addressing this challenge requires targeted awareness campaigns, mentorship programs, and the involvement of diverse leaders to inspire and empower these individuals to actively engage and contribute. Through fostering a culture of encouragement, we can break down this obstacle and create a more inclusive and vibrant community.

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Other Obstacles to Participation

Several obstacles can hinder the participation. These challenges often arise due to a **combination of social, cultural, and structural factors**. Understanding these obstacles is crucial for designing effective strategies to promote inclusivity and engagement, and increase participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in the community life and in the decision-making processes of local community organizations. A community where their voices are fully integrated into the fabric of decision-making processes and community activities is a stronger one.

The three most common obstacles have been thoroughly discussed in the preceding sections. We will now address **additional** challenges highlighted by survey respondents.

The survey participants have highlighted **several other obstacles** that contribute to the challenges they face:
- Cultural and historical factors
- Lack of representation
- Lack of child care services
- Discrimination and prejudice
- Time constraints
- Accessibility
- Unfamiliarity with processes
- Financial constraints and prioritization of basic needs
- Fear of speaking up

Cultural and historical factors: When people move to a new country, they may bring with them different ideas about participating in community activities. In some cultures, participating in public events may not be seen as important. This can make it harder for people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities to feel comfortable getting involved and can lead to a hesitancy or lack of familiarity with actively engaging in community life and decision-making processes.

Cultural norms and practices from their countries of origin can influence perceptions of public participation. Some cultures may not traditionally emphasize community involvement, leading to unfamiliarity or discomfort with engaging in decision-making processes.

It is important to recognize and address these cultural factors by creating inclusive spaces that value diverse participation and provide opportunities for individuals to learn about and engage in community activities.

Lack of representation: The absence of diverse representation within decision-making bodies and leadership positions of community organizations can discourage people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities from participating.

When individuals do not see people who share their cultural or ethnic backgrounds in influential positions, they may feel that their perspectives and interests are not adequately represented or considered. Actively seeking diverse representation within community organizations is crucial to address this obstacle and create an inclusive environment that reflects the community's diversity.

Lack of childcare. The lack of childcare services can significantly impact the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes. Childcare is a crucial consideration, particularly for younger families who often face the challenge of juggling parental responsibilities with their desire to engage in community.

For many families, especially those with young children, finding reliable and affordable childcare options can be a barrier that limits their ability to attend community events or actively participate in local organizations. Without adequate childcare, parents may find it difficult to allocate time for meetings, workshops, or community gatherings. This can lead to a sense of exclusion, where individuals feel they have to choose between fulfilling their parental duties and engaging in community activities.

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By offering on-site childcare during meetings, events, or workshops, community organizations create a more inclusive environment. Parents can participate without worrying about finding care for their children, thus allowing them to fully engage and contribute.

This not only enhances their involvement but also sends a message that the organization values and respects the diverse responsibilities that individuals may have.

Moreover, accessible childcare services can attract younger families to community events and decision-making processes. It recognizes the unique needs of these families and acknowledges their potential contributions.

By alleviating the burden of childcare, organizations encourage a wider range of perspectives to be part of discussions, fostering a more representative and dynamic decision-making process.

The lack of childcare can perpetuate a cycle where certain groups, especially women who often bear the primary responsibility for childcare, are disproportionately excluded from community participation. Providing childcare services breaks down this barrier, enabling more individuals, regardless of their familial responsibilities, to actively engage. In turn, this promotes a more inclusive, diverse, and vibrant community,

Discrimination and prejudice: Discrimination and prejudice can create barriers to participation, making individuals feel unwelcomed or marginalized within the community. It is essential to foster an environment that values diversity and actively works against discrimination. Promoting inclusivity, providing anti-discrimination training, and implementing policies that address prejudice can help overcome these barriers and encourage greater participation.

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Time constraints: Family and work responsibilities can limit the time individuals have available for community engagement. This is particularly relevant for parents with young children or multiple jobs.

Accessibility: Physical and transportation barriers can prevent participation, especially if venues or events are not accessible to people with disabilities or are located far from their residences.

Unfamiliarity with processes: Complex bureaucratic procedures or unfamiliar decision-making processes can discourage participation, especially for newcomers who may be unfamiliar with local governance structures.

Financial constraints and prioritization of basic needs: Limited financial resources can prevent individuals from attending events or workshops that may require fees or travel expenses. Individuals dealing with socioeconomic challenges may prioritize meeting basic needs over community involvement.

Fear of speaking up: Some individuals may fear speaking up due to concerns about negative consequences or judgment.

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Strategies for Overcoming the Lack of Participation

Many of the challenges mentioned in the previous sections can be addressed through **early informal contact** with interested parties, **transparent communication**, providing of **adequate information** about the events and the processes, sharing the information in the **languages of interest**, as well as **effectively listening** to the concerns of the potentially interested parties. Thus, it is important to consider all of these factors when planning and implementing activities and decision-making processes.

By addressing the obstacles through **targeted initiatives**, community organizations and municipalities can create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages the active participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in community life and decision-making processes.

The TQSOI published a **Toolkit of Best Practices** to promote the participation of people of immigrant origin and of ethnocultural minorities in the decision making processes of local organizations as well as in community life. The toolkit provides general information about public participation as well as a checklist that community organizations can use when planning and implementing an event or a process. The toolkit of best practices is available on the TQSOI website at www.tqsoi.org.

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The growing demand for public participation can overload the public and hinder its ability to respond effectively, resulting in **public overload** or **consultation fatigue**. Some interested parties may choose their involvement carefully because of competing demands on their time and resources; others may simply withdraw.

This is especially true when various public participation processes or events **compete for the attention** of the same population group.

There are several ways in which we can **overcome** the lack of participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in the community life and decision-making processes of local community organizations in the West Island. Here are some **strategies below.**

Outreach and Engagement: Actively reach out to communities and people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities to raise awareness about community organizations and their activities. Develop targeted outreach strategies, such as hosting information sessions, organizing community events, and leveraging community networks to engage and connect with these populations. This may take at the beginning of establishing a relationship with the community.

Cultural Competence and Sensitivity: Foster a culture of cultural competence and sensitivity within community organizations. Provide training and resources to staff and volunteers to ensure they have a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds. This will create a welcoming environment that respects and values diverse perspectives.

Representation and Inclusion: Actively seek diverse representation within decision-making bodies and leadership positions of community organizations. Encourage individuals of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities to participate and contribute their unique perspectives and experiences. Create inclusive spaces where everyone feels their voices are heard and valued.

Language Accessibility: Recognize the importance of language accessibility in facilitating participation. Provide multilingual resources, translation services, and interpretation support to ensure that language barriers do not hinder engagement. Consider offering materials and communication in multiple languages spoken within the community.

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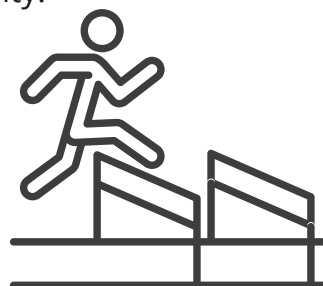
To address **language barriers** and promote inclusivity, community organizations in the southern West Island may implement various language support services and initiatives. These may include:

- **Multilingual resources**: Providing written materials, such as brochures, flyers, and information sheets, in multiple languages commonly spoken within the community. This approach ensures that important information is accessible to all residents, regardless of their language background.

- **Translation services**: Offering professional translation services to convert documents, forms, and notices into different languages. This helps bridge the language gap and ensures that essential information reaches a wider audience.

- **Interpretation support**: Providing interpretation services during community events, meetings, and workshops to assist individuals who may not be fluent in the official languages. This allows everyone to actively participate and engage in discussions.

- **Multilingual staff and volunteers**: Hiring bilingual or multilingual staff and volunteers who can effectively communicate with diverse community members. Having team members who understand different languages and cultural nuances helps create a more inclusive environment.

- **Language classes and workshops**: Organizing language classes and workshops for newcomers and other community members to improve their language skills. These initiatives empower individuals to overcome language barriers and become more engaged in community life.

- **Digital language support**: Developing multilingual websites and online platforms that offer information and services in various languages. This enhances accessibility for those who prefer to interact digitally and addresses language barriers in the digital sphere.

By implementing these language support services and initiatives, community organizations in the southern West Island can enhance communication, increase participation, and foster a more inclusive and cohesive community. These efforts demonstrate a commitment to embracing linguistic diversity and ensuring that all residents can fully participate and contribute to community life and decision-making processes.

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Collaborative partnerships: Forge partnerships with local cultural and community organizations that specifically cater to the needs and interests of immigrant and ethnocultural minority populations. By working together, community organizations can pool resources, share knowledge, and create collaborative initiatives that better address the needs of these communities.

Capacity building and empowerment: Provide capacity-building opportunities for individuals of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities, such as leadership training, mentorship programs, and skill development workshops. Empower these individuals to actively participate in decision-making processes and community initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement.

Breaking down barriers: Identify and address systemic barriers that hinder participation, such as limited access to information, discrimination, lack of representation, and cultural biases. Work towards creating an inclusive and equitable environment that embraces diversity and removes obstacles to participation.

Celebrate diversity and cultural exchange: Organize events and activities that celebrate the diverse cultures and traditions within the community. Encourage cultural exchange and dialogue to promote understanding, respect, and appreciation among different groups. This fosters a sense of belonging and encourages active participation.

By implementing these strategies, we can foster an inclusive and participatory community where people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities feel welcomed, valued, and empowered to actively contribute to the community life and decision–making processes of local community organizations in the West Island.

Conclusions

The **inclusion** of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in decision-making processes of local community organizations is essential for fostering a more representative and equitable society. When these **diverse voices** are actively involved in shaping policies and initiatives, it leads to more informed and comprehensive decisions that address the needs of all community members. Their unique perspectives bring **fresh insights and innovative solutions** to the table, contributing to the overall effectiveness and relevance of community programs.

By involving people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in decision-making processes, community organizations can ensure that their services are culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse populations they serve. This inclusivity promotes **trust** and **confidence** among these communities, making them more likely to engage with community organizations and access the resources and services they offer. It also creates a sense of ownership and investment in community initiatives, fostering a deeper connection and commitment to the betterment of the community.

Furthermore, the active participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in decision-making processes leads to a **greater social cohesion and harmony**. When individuals from different backgrounds collaborate and work together towards shared goals, it breaks down barriers and dispels stereotypes, promoting understanding and appreciation among community members. This integration of diverse perspectives fosters an environment of mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Community organizations that prioritize inclusivity in the decision-making process demonstrate their commitment to social justice and human rights. By ensuring that all voices are heard and valued, these organizations set an example for the broader community and encourage other institutions and individuals to follow suit. This not only leads to more effective and culturally responsive programs but also allows for a more cohesive community where a sense of belonging is fostered. Therefore, the inclusion of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in this process is a vital step towards a more just, inclusive, and vibrant community.

Firstly, **inclusivity** ensures that every member of the community feels welcome and valued, regardless of their cultural heritage or origin. When people feel included and recognized for their unique identities, they are more likely to engage in community activities, share their insights, and contribute to decision-making processes. This active involvement leads to a greater diversity of ideas, solutions, and approaches, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

Secondly, **diversity** enriches the fabric of a community by bringing forth a tapestry of traditions, languages, and customs. Embracing this diversity fosters a spirit of learning, tolerance, and understanding among community members. It promotes intercultural exchange and empowers individuals to learn from one another, leading to increased social cohesion and reduced instances of prejudice and discrimination.

Active participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities plays **a crucial role** in shaping community policies and initiatives. By involving diverse voices in decision-making processes, community organizations can create solutions that cater to the specific needs and interests of all residents. This collaborative approach ensures that the community's resources are effectively utilized and directed towards projects that truly address the community's challenges and aspirations.

Moreover, inclusivity, diversity, and active participation contribute to a sense of **social harmony and unity**. A community that embraces its differences and works together for common goals becomes more resilient and cohesive. It fosters a supportive environment where individuals from various backgrounds can develop a sense of belonging and take pride in their contributions to the community's growth and development.

Participation in community life and decision-making processes of local community organizations is of **paramount importance**, it lies at the heart of democratic principles. Decisions affecting the community are ideally made collectively. By participating, individuals become active agents in shaping the rules, regulations, and policies that govern their lives.

For people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities, participation is **a pathway to integration** within their new community. When they actively engage in community life and decision-making, it signals their commitment to being part of the societal fabric. It bridges gaps between different cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

The **engagement** of immigrant-origin and ethnocultural minority individuals brings unique perspectives, experiences, and knowledge to the table. This diversity enriches discussions, leading to more innovative and comprehensive solutions to community challenges. Their participation contributes to a tapestry of ideas and cultural insights that elevates the community's collective intelligence and enhances problem-solving capabilities.

The active **involvement** of these groups in decision-making processes ensures that policies and initiatives are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Their firsthand experiences shed light on the specific needs, preferences, and challenges faced by their communities. As a result, policies become more nuanced, relevant, and effective in addressing the **multifaceted dynamics of the community.**

Their engagement helps identify areas of improvement and opportunities for development that might have otherwise been overlooked. This comprehensive approach ensures that development is not one-sided but considers the well-being of all members, **fostering social harmony and preventing disparities**.

Participation fosters **connections** and **social capital** within the community. As individuals from diverse backgrounds collaborate on projects, share ideas, and work towards common goals, bonds are formed, and a sense of camaraderie is cultivated. This **interconnectedness** strengthens community resilience, cohesion, and the overall quality of community life.

> Inclusivity, diversity, and active participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities are essential for a thriving community. Embracing these values strengthens social bonds, promotes cultural appreciation, and ensures that community decisions reflect the perspectives of all members. By championing these principles, we build a strong, cohesive, and harmonious community that celebrates its diversity and unity.

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Local Population Survey

English

Together, for a more inclusive Southern West Island
514-505-0840 ext.06 | rstoleru@tqsoi.org

We want to hear from you!

As a resident of the Southern West Island of Montreal, you are invited to complete this 10 minutes survey created in the framework of the *Together, for a more inclusive South of West Island* project of the Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest-de-Île (TQSOI). The project aims to improve the participation of people of immigrant origin and ethnocultural minorities in the civic and democratic life of our community.

The purpose of this survey is to better understand the level of your participation in community life and in the decision-making of the West Island organizations in order to understand how we can help your experience and make it easier for you to participate.

1. Tell us about you

How old are you? □ *Under 18* □ *19 – 34* □ *35 – 49* □ *50 – 64* □ *65 – 80* □ *More than 80*

Gender: □ Male □ Female □ Other □ Prefer not to say

In which municipality of the West Island do you live?

Southern West Island
- ☐ Baie d'Urfe
- ☐ Beaconsfield
- ☐ Dorval
- ☐ Kirkland
- ☐ Pointe-Claire
- ☐ Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
- ☐ Senneville

Northern West Island
- ☐ Dollard-des-Ormeaux
- ☐ L'Île Bizard - Sainte-Geneviève
- ☐ Pierrefonds - Roxboro

How would you rate your level of understanding French?

I don't understand French | 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○ | 4 ○ | 5 ○ | I do understand French

How would you rate your level of understanding English?

I don't understand English | 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○ | 4 ○ | 5 ○ | I do understand English

How would you rate your level of comfort:

In speaking French? | I don't speak French | 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○ | 4 ○ | 5 ○ | I do speak French

In speaking English? | I don't speak English | 1 ○ | 2 ○ | 3 ○ | 4 ○ | 5 ○ | I do speak English

What is your mother tongue? _____

Do you speak any other language as a mother tongue? ○ Yes ○ No
If yes, which one? _____

Do you belong to any ethnocultural minority? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which one?
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Arab and West Asian
- ☐ Latin American
- ☐ South Asian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Were you born in a different country? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which one? _____

If yes, when did you first arrive in Canada? _____

Do you live with children? ○ Yes ○ No

2. West Island community life

Are you involved with any organizations in the West Island? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, which category(s)? (Please specify the name also)
- ☐ Community organizations
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Faith community organizations
- ☐ Cultural associations
- ☐ Municipal organizations
- ☐ Others, please specify. _____

If yes, how?
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Attending local events
- ☐ Attending church or other faith related activities
- ☐ Making donations
- ☐ Attending municipal meetings
- ☐ Others, please specify._____

Do you participate in any decision making in your community? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, in which one(s)?
- ☐ Community
- ☐ School
- ☐ Faith community
- ☐ Cultural associations
- ☐ Municipal organizations
- ☐ Others, please specify.

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If yes, how?
- ☐ Participating in consultation activities
- ☐ Joining a Board
- ☐ Joining a school association
- ☐ Organizing church or other faith related activities
- ☐ Organizing cultural activities
- ☐ Actively participating in municipal meetings
- ☐ Others, please specify._____

Are you facing any obstacles in participating in the decision making process of your community / municipality? ◯ Yes ◯ No

If yes, what are they?
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Lack of encouragement
- ☐ Lack of knowledge
- ☐ Lack of childcare
- ☐ Family concerns
- ☐ Travel expenses
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

If yes, what can be done by organizations to make your participation easier?

- ☐ Use language and communication that are easily understood
- ☐ Use language that is inclusive of all
- ☐ Support and accompany people in their participation
- ☐ Involve people in decision-making processes, including in organizing events, consultations, etc.
- ☐ Be completely open about consultation processes
- ☐ Organize events close to people's surroundings (work place, living place, schools, libraries, parks)
- ☐ Offer a warm and welcoming environment
- ☐ Encourage and welcome the presence of children
- ☐ Make meetings accessible
- ☐ Ensure shared power as much as possible
- ☐ Ensure that all voices are heard
- ☐ Ensure appropriate training of key people involved in mobilizing, organizing and facilitation of consultations
- ☐ Other(s), please specify. _____

Thank you so much for your time and interest!

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List of Local Events 2023

Location	Date
POINTE CLAIRE - NEIGHBOURHOOD SOLIDARITY MARKET	JULY 12TH, 2023 JULY 26TH, 2023
BEACONSFIELD - CENTENNIAL PARK - SOIRÉE 80 & SONS DE L'ÉTÉ	JULY 20TH, 2023 AUGUST 17TH, 2023
BAIE D'URFE - WILD WILLY'S AT THE LIBRARY'S PARKING LOT & VINTAGE CAR SHOW	JULY 27TH, 2023 AUGUST 5TH, 2023
SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE - SATURDAY MARKET AND CANAL PROMENADE	AUGUST 5TH, 2023 AUGUST 9TH, 2023
KIRKLAND - PARK MEADES ART AND MUSIC FESTIVAL	AUGUST 6TH, 2023
DORVAL VILLAGE - MAIN STREET	AUGUST 11TH, 2023
HINDU MANDIR TEMPLE	AUGUST 13TH, 2023
WI CHINESE ASSOCIATION SUMMER CAMP	AUGUST 8TH-17TH, 2023

Together for a more inclusive southern West Island

Table de quartier sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Ile (TQSOI)

514-505-0840
info@tqsoi.org
wwww.tqsoi.org

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