



# What is the future for collective sponsorship of refugees in Quebec?

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# COLLECTIVE SPONSORSHIP IN QUEBEC: SUSPENSION OF A PROGRAM RECOGNIZED WORLDWIDE FOR ITS CONCLUSIVE RESULTS

Created over 50 years ago in Quebec, collective sponsorship represents a unique model for the inclusion of refugees selected abroad. It is an organizational modality for resettlement, namely "the organized transfer of refugees from the country where they have sought asylum to another country that has agreed to accept them."

Resettlement programs vary around the world. Pair-based programs, in which a two-party relationship is established, are the most common. Under this model, a refugee is then paired with an organization. This organization may be the government, a community or religious group, or a group of individuals. Under this model, each organization acts as both guarantor and sponsor.

In addition to pair-based programs, Quebec has developed a third model, collective sponsorship, through which a tripartite relationship is established. Refugees benefit from the full support of a community or religious group (the guarantor) as well as from individuals in their community of residence after they settled in Quebec (the sponsors)

1. Refugee sponsors are the front-line workers that ensure the refugee's inclusion in the community. They do this through meeting the essential needs related to the well-being and development of every human being: physiological, security, belonging, esteem, and self-fulfillment.
2. To collect the necessary funds to meet the refugee's financial needs for one year and to exercise control over the management of these funds. The sponsor, whether a community or religious organization, is responsible for collecting the necessary funds to meet the refugee's financial needs for one year and exercises control over the management of these funds."

## **“ Collective sponsorship aims to include refugees”**

Collective sponsorship aims to include refugees. Despite the program's internationally recognized reputation and history, the Quebec government issued a first suspension by ministerial order in 2017, following investigations that revealed irregularities in certain applications submitted by organizations. Although the specific information on these irregularities has not been made public, subsequent events suggest that these problems have been resolved. Indeed, between 2018 and 2025, the government has repeatedly reopened and suspended the program, with the main reason for doing so being the significant increase in foreign nationals in the territory, including refugees. In June 2025, a new suspension was issued until December 31, 2027, for the same reason.

These repeated government hesitations regarding this program have caused confusion and disbelief among sponsoring organizations that have been involved in collective sponsorship for a very long time. Not to mention, the dismay of refugees whose applications had already been submitted to the government for decision.

To better understand these issues and to question the future of collective sponsorship, this third ÉRIQA issue brings together three contributions:

1. *What will happen to the private sponsorship program for refugees abroad? Legal considerations and prospects for sustainability*, by Yan Lasnier-Le Quang and Myriam Dumont-Robillard
2. *The impasse of collective sponsorship in Quebec*, by Elisabeth Hayes, Claudia Jarry, Ana Levano Garcia, Jessica Ranger, and Alexandra Soucy
3. *Communication dynamics and governance in crisis: the case of the suspension of the collective sponsorship program in Quebec*, by Bettina Champion, Mengying Lin, and Marlène Mutwa

**An interdisciplinary and interfaculty teaching experience at UdeM: legal, political, and communications analysis**

In June 2024, the Roundtable of Organizations Serving Refugees and Immigrants (TCRI) contacted Professor France Houle of the Université de Montréal Faculty of Law for advice and guidance. Shortly after the working group was formed, her colleague, Professor Myriam Dumont-Robillard, agreed to join.

By fall of 2024, it became clear that addressing the many questions raised by this case would require not only legal expertise but also insights from other disciplines. It was at this point that the idea of creating an interdisciplinary research seminar at the Université de Montréal emerged. Catherine Xhardez, professor in the Department of Political Science and director of ÉRIQA, and Pascale Caïdor, professor in the Department of Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, enthusiastically joined the project.

The seminar took place from January to April 2025. Twenty-one students registered during the semester and worked on the legal, political and communication aspects of the issues raised by the TCRI. On April 9, 2025, we all gathered at a workshop "What is the future for collective sponsorship of refugees in Quebec?" to share the results of our analyses through student presentations and an exchange with sponsorship experts and community stakeholders.

The students acquired knowledge, developed new skills, and practiced ethics and professionalism in a real-life situation. They unanimously agreed that the experiential learning they gained during the seminar was among the most formative and engaging during their studies.

This third ÉRIQA report highlights their analyses, in order to share the expertise acquired on the collective sponsorship program but also to discuss the issues caused by its suspension as well as future prospects.

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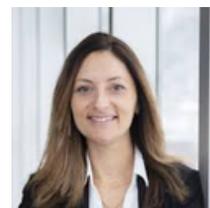
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In this ÉRIQA Issue Brief :

**What will happen to the private sponsorship program for refugees abroad? Legal considerations and prospects for sustainability ..... 5**

*Yan Lasnier-Le Quang, Myriam Dumont-Robillard*

**The impasse of collective sponsorship in Quebec ..... 8**

*Elisabeth Hayes, Claudia Jarry, Ana Levano Garcia, Jessica Ranger, Alexandra Soucy*

**Communication dynamics and governance in crisis: the case of the suspension of the collective sponsorship program in Quebec ..... 11**

*Mengying Lin, Marlène Mutwa, Bettina Champion*



Photo: Presentation by political science students at the workshop “What future for collective sponsorship of refugees in Quebec?”, April 9, 2025

*Part one*

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES ABROAD? LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Yan Lasnier-Le Quang et Myriam Dumont-Robillard

In Canada, under the Constitution, immigration is a concurrent jurisdiction [1]. Although it is generally under federal jurisdiction, the provinces still hold some legislative power in this area. In Quebec, the 1991 Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration and the Temporary Admission of immigrants governs Quebec's jurisdiction over the selection and integration of immigrants to the province, including refugees selected abroad.

Within this framework, Quebec administers a resettlement program for refugees located in a third country who request to be received as refugees in Quebec. Among these resettlement programs, is the *Programme des personnes réfugiées à l'étranger* (PPRE). The privately sponsored refugee program (PPRE) allows charitable organizations to submit applications for collective sponsorship. Framed by la loi sur l'immigration au Québec [2] (LIQ) and the Regulation respecting immigration to Quebec [3] (RIQ), collective sponsorship specifically requires that the organization guarantees the essential needs of the refugee as well as provides the necessary support for the latter's integration into Quebec society, for a period of one year (RIQ, sections 68 and 96).

In Quebec, the guarantor organizations are often religious organizations that have several decades of experience in collective sponsorship of refugees from all over the world.

This includes the Jesuit Refugee Service and Action Réfugiés Montréal, who have been working there for over 30 years.

For non-profit organizations to fulfill their obligations, they will generally obtain security deposits from members of their community. These funds are used solely to meet the needs of sponsored refugees and are returned to them in full during their first year of settlement in Quebec [4]. Community members will also act as front-line workers to support the organization in its reception and integration activities for the refugee, thereby guaranteeing the humane and effective integration into their new community.

Over the years, this operational mode has been endorsed by the Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration (MIFI) through the signing of framework agreements with the most experienced organizations. In addition to reducing the administrative burden on government-recognized organizations and recognizing the contribution of community members as a "support group," these agreements established a direct channel of communication between the MIFI and the sponsoring organizations within the framework of collective sponsorship. Although they are no longer renewed by the MIFI today, it should be noted that this type of agreement is still present in other Canadian provinces.

[1] Constitution Act, 1867, 30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3, s. 91(25).

[2] Quebec Immigration Act, CQLR, c. I-0.2.1.

[3] Regulation respecting immigration to Quebec, c. I-0.2.1, r.3.

[4] Delphine Mas, "Press release: ROGPRQA calls on MIFI on its recent reinterpretation of the Collective Sponsorship Program regulations," TCRI (May 7, 2024), online:

: <<https://tcri.qc.ca/2024/05/communiqué-le-rogpraq-interpelle-le-mifi-sur-sa-recente-reinterprétation-du-règlement-du-programme-de-parrainage-collectif/>> (consulted June 11th) 2025).

## Recent Regulatory Changes

However, since 2017, a series of regulatory amendments and ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (MIFI) have significantly altered the application of the PPRE to sponsoring organizations. In addition to suspending the program's implementation three times over the past eight years,[5] the government made a regulatory amendment in 2018, moving from the Regulation Respecting the Selection of Foreign Nationals to the current RIQ. Initially due to concerns about the practices of inexperienced immigration consultants and other legal entities that undermined the program's integrity, and later for reasons of effectiveness related to the number of applications,[6] These amendments resulted in a government turn around in the MIFI's application of the PPRE.

In November 2024, given the increase in the number of asylum seekers in Quebec, the MIFI decided to focus on processing these asylum applications and suspended the PPRE until June 30, 2025, a deadline which has just been extended until December 2027[7]

In this regard, since 2024, several otherwise experienced organizations have been faced with the rejection of all their sponsorship requests by the MIFI, which accuses them of shirking their obligations as guarantors.

While their mode of operation has always been accepted by the MIFI, they now find themselves accused of delegating their responsibilities to members of the community who would in fact act as "co-guarantors". In other words, the organizations would thus be considered as "screen" guarantors who would allow individuals to avoid having to comply with the RIQ[8].

Our research for this project leads us to conclude that this is a misguided view of reality. This regulatory shift has left organizations in complete confusion about the future of ongoing sponsorship applications and raises significant questions about the program's sustainability.

## Solutions to Ensure the Sustainability of the PPPR

As part of this project, several **legal solutions** were explored by law students [Linda Sabouni, Zoé Primeau-Barey, Yan Lasnier-Le Quang, and Olivier Mathieu] to ensure the program's sustainability. One solution put forward would be to reintroduce the PPRE as a pilot project, similar to certain economic pilot projects established by the Quebec government.[9] This approach would allow for the implementation of a plan to address government concerns while verifying the feasibility of such an approach. This could subsequently be officially incorporated into the legislative framework.

At the same time, the reinstatement of framework agreements was also presented as a possible solution to ensure the integrity of the PPRE.

Designated for organizations recognized as experienced, these agreements would not only distinguish them from other organizations involved in fraudulent or deceptive activities, but would also reintroduce a meaningful and humane collaboration between experienced organizations and the MIFI, for this would benefit people in situations of extreme distress.

[5] Ministerial Order 2017-001 concerning the temporary suspension of the receipt of certain applications for a selection certificate submitted by foreign nationals in the category of foreign nationals who are in a situation of particular distress, (2017) 3 G.O. II, 98; Ministerial Order 2020-004 concerning the management of applications for commitment submitted under the Program for Refugees Abroad (Collective Sponsorship) for the period 2020-2021, (2020) 44 G.O. II, 4625 and Ministerial Order 2024-009 concerning the management of applications under the Program for Refugees Abroad (Collective Sponsorship) for the year 2025, 51 G.O. II, 7311.

[6] Order No. 2021-014 of the Minister of Immigration, Francisation and Integration dated October 18, 2021, (2021) 43 G.O. II, p. 6678 and Order No. 2023-007 of the Minister of Immigration, Francisation and Integration dated December 8, 2023, (2023) 52 G.O. II, p. 6401.

[7] Order No. 2025-002 of the Minister of Immigration, Francisation and Integration dated June 5, 2025 (2025) 23A G.O. II, p. 3062A.

<https://www.quebec.ca/immigration/refugies-demandeurs-asile/parrainage-collectif/apercu-du-programme/parrainer-personne-refugiee>

[8] Government of Quebec, Brief to the Council of Ministers: Draft Regulation amending the Regulation respecting immigration to Quebec – Amendments to the Program for Refugees Abroad – Collective Sponsorship, 2022, online: <[https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/immigration/publications-adm/memoires/MEM\\_Modif-RIQ-Parrainage\\_collectif-2022-03-30.pdf](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/immigration/publications-adm/memoires/MEM_Modif-RIQ-Parrainage_collectif-2022-03-30.pdf)>, p. 3.

[9] It should be noted that this possibility is put forward for exploratory purposes only since, although the LIQ allows for the development of pilot projects for temporary or permanent economic immigration, there are no specific provisions for humanitarian immigration. LIQ ss. 16 and 32.

### Legal appeal to contest MIFI rejections of sponsorship applications

As previously mentioned, in 2024, a number of organizations had their applications rejected by the MIFI.\* While the precise reasons for the Ministry's rejection varied according to the organization concerned, they generally referred to the delegation of their financial and hospitality obligations as guarantors. Whether a decision is a rejection or a refusal, the MIFI's decision may be the subject of a request for administrative reconsideration[10]. The Ministry then re-examines its decision and may, on rare occasions, modify its initial decision.

The LIQ distinguishes between the decision to reject an application and the decision to refuse to examine an application. Under section 57, the rejection relates to the substance of the application, if it is determined that it contains false or misleading information or if the department is not convinced of the veracity of the organization's statements. If such false or misleading information is provided, the department may then, in subsequent years, simply refuse to examine the sponsorship application under section 56.

For all practical purposes, a decision by the Ministry to reject an application is final. While in most cases, an administrative decision such as that issued by the MIFI will give rise to an appeal before the Administrative Tribunal of Quebec[11], organizations participating in collective sponsorship are expressly excluded from this possibility (LIQ, art. 72(1)).



Photo : Royalty-free image, Pixabay License, 2025.

Therefore, the only remedy available in the event of a rejected application is an application for judicial review before the Superior Court.

This appeal requires the development of legal arguments demonstrating how the MIFI's decision is unreasonable. Due to the deference that courts must show towards specialized administrative decisions, the unreasonableness of a decision will be restricted to inconsistent, irrational or unjustified decisions. It is therefore a question of proving that the MIFI's reasoning is inconsistent or impossible to follow or that the decision is simply indefensible based on the applicable rules of law or the facts invoked[12].

**“One solution put forward would be a reintroduction of the PPRE in the form of a pilot project.”**

In this case, it should be noted that none of the information provided by the organizations was false or misleading. At the most, this information would amount to incomplete financial information required to meet the MIFI's requirements, in a context where such information is provided and recorded by non-profit organizations with limited resources. The new requirements imposed by the MIFI on organizations are to demonstrate the veracity of their declarations could therefore be considered unreasonable. It is therefore possible to hope that a judicial review application could rule in favor of the sponsoring organizations and overturn the MIFI's decisions, paving the way for the acceptance of sponsorship applications.

In a context where, according to the organizations' own contacts, it is too often a matter of life or death for the refugees concerned, safeguarding applications and ensuring the sustainability of the program as a whole can only be desirable.

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[10] LIQ ss. 57.

Regulation respecting immigration to Quebec, c. I-0.2.1, r.3, s. 94. Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration, “Submitting a request for administrative review,” Government of Quebec (December 19, 2024), online: <<https://www.quebec.ca/immigration/demande-reexamen-administratif>> (accessed June 11, 2025).

[11] Act respecting administrative justice, c. j-3, Schedule 1, s. 6.

[12] Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v. Vavilov, 2019 SCC 65.

*Part two***THE IMPASSE OF COLLECTIVE SPONSORSHIP IN QUEBEC**

**Elisabeth Hayes, Claudia Jarry, Ana Levano Garcia, Jessica Ranger, Alexandra Soucy**

On December 18, 2024, the Government of Quebec announced the temporary suspension of its Refugees Abroad Program (Collective Sponsorship) until at least June 30, 2025, a suspension now extended until 2027. This program relies on collaboration between the Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration (MIFI) sponsoring organizations and co-sponsors, who ensure the integration of sponsored refugees. The joint financial participation of the organizations and co-sponsors is essential to the operation of the program: the organizations take charge of the administrative aspect of sponsorship and the co-sponsors provide financial support to the organizations and facilitate the integration of refugees.



Photo : Royalty-free image, Pixabay License, 2025.

However, since 2018, particularly due to cases of fraud, the government has amended the Regulation respecting Immigration to Quebec (RIQ) and repealed section 28.1, which authorized the practice of co-sponsorship. The MIFI has also tightened its interpretation of section 95 of the RIQ and prohibits organizations from providing for the needs of sponsored refugees through an amount received from a third party (see the legal analysis in this file). They would then have to raise several hundred thousand dollars on their own, which is impossible. This new standard could lead to only one or two application submissions annually. This leaving community organizations uncertain about how to proceed.

In addition to this suspension and change in interpretation, the colossal backlog of sponsorship applications is leading to extremely long processing times, further hampering the program. In 2023, the wait time for program applications was around 30 months.

Several community organizations active in sponsorship have also denounced the difficulty (or lack thereof) of communicating with the MIFI since 2018.

Furthermore, Quebec has significantly reduced the number of eligible sponsored refugees in the province. The Quebec government plans to welcome between 850 and 1,100 refugees through collective sponsorship in 2025, while the target for 2024 was between 1,850 and 2,100.

In 2021, the target for the number of refugees selected abroad was 4,400 to 4,700. Since 2020, Quebec has not met its established targets.

In 2023, Quebec welcomed 1,190 refugees through this program, while the target was 2,750 to 3,000. Behind the suspensions, reduced targets and refusals, the lives of hundreds of refugees are being significantly affected. These conditions can have serious consequences for their well-being, increase their vulnerability, and expose them to further human rights violations.

#### **Ressources :**

(1) Blain, Marie-Jeanne, Lourdes Rodriguez del Barrio, Roxane Caron, Marie-Claire Rufagari, Myriam Richard, Yannick Boucher, et Caroline Lester. 2019. « Private Sponsorship of Refugees in Québec: Perspectives of Sponsors and Refugees from Syria ». *Lien social et Politiques*, no 83 : 204-29. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1066091ar>.

(2) Gervais, Lisa-Marie. 2023. « Long waiting times for refugee sponsorship deemed 'unsustainable' [Les longs temps d'attente pour le parrainage de réfugiés jugés « insoutenables » ]. *Le Devoir*, 3 août 2023. <https://www.ledevoir.com/societe/795612/immigration-les-longs-temps-d-attente-pour-le-parrainage-de-refugies-juges-insoutenables>

Under current conditions, several group sponsorship organizations—some of which have been providing services to refugees for over forty years—find themselves uncertain, exhausted, and questioning their commitment. **How can Quebec's group sponsorship program be reformed to ensure its sustainability and proper functioning?**

## “How to reform the Quebec collective sponsorship program to ensure its sustainability and proper functioning?”

The government's current policy of suspending the sponsorship program in order to reduce processing times and meet the reduced targets of its 2025 immigration plan is flawed. It hinders the involvement of organizations and the support they are able to offer to refugees, thereby jeopardizing Quebec's collective sponsorship program.

### Foreign Experiences and the Search for Solutions

The search for solutions leads us to examine other sponsorship programs, relatively similar to the Quebec program, in order to assess their benefits.

**Canada:** Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program is administered by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Unlike the Quebec program, there is a third category of sponsors: Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs). Thanks to these contracts, SAHs are not affected by the current suspension of the program at the federal level.

**United Kingdom:** In the United Kingdom, under the Community Sponsorship Scheme, refugees are selected by the British government in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Selected refugees are connected with community organizations that have obtained approval from the Home Office and local authorities. Since 2016, this program has welcomed more than 600 refugees into 350 communities across the UK.

**Australia:** In Australia, refugee sponsorship is entrusted to a third-party organization independent of the government, Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia. It manages the matching of sponsors and refugees. Unlike the Quebec program, and as in the United Kingdom, refugees are not selected by sponsors. The program relies solely on the goodwill of Australian citizens who want to make a difference in the lives of refugees and their families.

While the British and Australian programs are inspiring, the resettlement numbers they produce are not comparable to Quebec's immigration commitments and targets.

### Strategies and Reforms to Optimize the Group Sponsorship Program

Several options are emerging for reforming the group sponsorship program, such as the implementation of a pilot program modeled on the Canadian, Australian, or British models, or the creation of an advisory committee composed of representatives from the MIFI and organizations, for example.

#### Ressources :

(3) Paquet, Mireille, et Anna K. Boucher. 2025. « Beyond the Queue: The Sources and Politics of Migration Backlogs in Canada and Australia ». *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 0 (0) : 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2025.2458851>.

(4) Paquet, Mireille, Adèle Garnier, Sule Tomkinson, et Antoine Robitaille. 2022. « The CAQ and immigration: “Take less to take care of it?” ». [La CAQ et l’immigration: En prendre moins pour en prendre soin ? ] Dans *Bilan du gouvernement de la CAQ. Entre nationalisme et pandémie*. Sous la direction de Lisa Birch, Yannick Dufresne, Dominic Duval, et Camille Tremblay-Antoine, 191-204. Entre nationalisme et pandémie. Les Presses de l’Université Laval. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv30dxx70.20>.

(5) Purkey, Anna Lise, Biftu Yousuf, Dawit Demoz, et Johanna Reynolds. 2025. « Suspending private refugee sponsorship will trap refugees in war zones and keep families apart ». *The Conversation*, 29 janvier 2025. <http://theconversation.com/suspending-private-refugee-sponsorship-will-trap-refugees-in-war-zones-and-keep-families-apart-246754>.

## “A solution emerges: the establishment of framework agreements or sponsorship agreements between the MIFI and experienced organizations”

However, one solution is arising: the establishment of sponsorship agreements between the MIFI and experienced organizations to ensure the program's sustainability. Sponsorship agreements establish the responsibilities of the signatory organizations and the government toward sponsored refugees, as well as the signatory organizations' privileges. For example, they could authorize signatory organizations to use co-sponsors and to keep their deposits in clearly identified trust accounts. Under these agreements, the government can impose greater financial restrictions on organizations, which addresses the MIFI's concerns about fraud. It can also commit to better communication, for example, to inform signatory organizations and co-sponsors of the interview date, visa issuance, and target arrival date in Quebec.

Establishing framework agreements requires few government resources. For instance, it does not require any new legislation or specific regulations, which facilitates its adoption and allows for greater flexibility. Furthermore, establishing framework agreements between the Quebec government and organizations streamlines the administrative procedures surrounding application analysis and verification.

Agreement signatories may be subject to periodic rather than systematic verifications, for example. Framework agreements would therefore reduce processing times for signatory organizations.

Currently, the Group Sponsorship Program already distinguishes between regular and experienced community organizations. However, application processing remains identical between the two categories. Establishing framework agreements would allow the experience and expertise of experienced organizations to confer certain advantages, notably by establishing a special bond of trust between them and the government.

The provisions of the agreements ensure better communication and greater transparency between the MIFI and the signatory organizations. Additionally, it recognizes the importance of the ongoing support provided by experienced organizations to refugees, which extends well beyond the one-year commitment period.

A comprehensive in-depth policy analysis (conducted as part of the [POL6509](#) course, under the supervision of Professor Catherine Xhardez) helped determine the best way to reform Quebec's collective sponsorship program: the establishment of sponsorship agreements containing clear commitments between the sponsoring organizations and the Government of Quebec. This solution would ensure the sustainability, proper functioning, and influence of a program that constitutes a rich asset to Quebec society and deserves to be preserved.

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### Ressources :

(6) ROGPROQ. 2023. « ROGPROQ Memorandum: Consultations for multi-year immigration planning for the period 2024-2027 » [Mémoire du ROGPROQ: Consultations en vue de la planification pluriannuelle de l'immigration pour la période 2024-2027]. <https://tcri.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Consultation-gouvernementale-sur-la-planification-de-limmigration-au-Quebec-2024-2027-Memoire-du-ROGPROQ-VF.pdf>

(7) Schué, Romain. 2024. « We are all lumped together with fraudsters » [On nous met tous dans le même sac que les fraudeurs]. **Radio-Canada**, 8 mai 2024. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2070951/quebec-parrainage-refugies-fraudes-immigration>.

(8) Van Haren, Ian, et Sandra Colon. 2024. « Quebec's attack on refugee sponsorship ». [L'attaque du Québec contre le parrainage des réfugiés] **Policy Options**, 9 juillet 2024. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/juillet-2024/attaque-quebec-parrainage-refugies/>.

(9) Yousuf, Biftu. 2025. « The Invisibilised Labour of Diasporas as Co-sponsors in Refugee Sponsorship: Lessons From Canada ». **Refugee Survey Quarterly**, janvier, hdae024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdae024>.

*Part three***COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS AND GOVERNANCE  
IN CRISIS: THE CASE OF SUSPENDING THE  
COLLECTIVE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM IN QUEBEC****Mengying Lin, Marlène Mutwa, Bettina Champion**

This contribution aims to analyze the **communication issues** related to the change surrounding the suspension of the group sponsorship program in Quebec, with three main objectives:

1. Identify the main communication challenges associated with this suspension;
2. Understand how change is perceived within a community organization;
3. Explore the perspectives considered by this actor in a context of reorganization.

The suspension of the group sponsorship program has created tensions among a wide range of stakeholders, with varying roles and levels of involvement. From a change communication perspective, identifying and monitoring stakeholders, as well as their influence and level of interest, provides a better understanding of the political and institutional dynamics at play.

At the heart of this reconfiguration, the Ministry of Immigration, Francisation, and Integration (MIFI) occupies a strategic position. As the initiator of the change, it holds direct decision-making authority over the program's rules, its suspension or reactivation, as well as the nature of the dialogue with the organizations.

Alongside the TCRI, its employees and board of directors play a pivotal role in the relationship between the roundtable's member organizations and government bodies. Within the TCRI, the ROGPRAQ is a network that brings together organizations and refugee sponsorship groups in Quebec. This group acts as a key intermediary to structure demands and influence decisions.

Through our study, we also observed that organizations are going through different phases of concern, particularly phases 4 to 6 of model—ranging from questioning change to experimenting with new practices, to seeking collaboration with other stakeholders. These findings suggest several avenues for action:

- Officially clarify the role of co-guarantors to avoid any legal or operational ambiguity;
- Reestablish direct and continuous channels of communication between the MIFI and organizations;
- Implement evaluation mechanisms that are more egalitarian to organizations' experience, to avoid an undifferentiated punitive approach.

In a larger perspective, encouraging the pooling of mobilization efforts between organizations and strengthening their collective representation capacity could help restore a climate of trust conducive to the relaunch of the program.

***“Encouraging the pooling of mobilization efforts between organizations and strengthening their collective representation capacity could help restore a climate of trust conducive to the relaunch of the program.”***

Faced with the difficulties caused by the suspension of the collective sponsorship program, we have identified three priority questions for reflection:

1. How can we reestablish smooth and transparent communication between the MIFI and the organizations?
2. How can we ensure the equitable participation of organizations in developing solutions?
3. How can we broaden mobilization by drawing on new allies from civil society?

Four main tracks of action are emerging to provide possible solutions and best practices to facilitate communication between stakeholders in a context of change.

### 1) Mobilize potential allies

It appears necessary to identify and mobilize potential allies beyond community organizations. Actors such as Radio-Canada (with a view to an investigative documentary), Amnesty International, the Fédération des femmes du Québec, as well as student and union movements, can help raise awareness of the situation and increase public pressure. Coalitions or advocacy actors, such as the Canadian Refugee Coalition (CCR), which already supports such an approach.

### 2) Foster the emergence of new communication channels

Exploring political and legal levers aimed at reestablishing institutional dialogue is essential. If dialogue with the current government is blocked, avenues such as engaging opposition parties can open new communication channels —as discussed by Véronique Hivon, a Quebec politician and visiting professor at UdeM, at the conclusion of the workshop on April 9, 2025.

### 3) Establish common ground

A third solution would be to design a discussion grid common to all organizations, making it possible to standardize the information transmitted to the media and popularize their work among the general public. This would promote responsive and coherent communication in times of tension.

### 4) Strengthening inter-organizational ties

Finally, strengthening inter-organizational ties is essential to distribute the workload more equitably and prevent burnout among certain stakeholders who are more in demand. These avenues aim to rebuild a collective capacity for action, in a spirit of collaboration, solidarity, and shared strategy.

These proposals are therefore part of a desire to give voice to stakeholders on the ground by restoring a balance between public governance and community engagement. The success of the collective sponsorship program will depend on the ability to rebuild a climate of trust, in a spirit of shared responsibility and mutual recognition.

***“The success of the collective sponsorship program will depend on the ability to rebuild a climate of trust, in a spirit of co-responsibility and mutual recognition.”***

In a context of change, communication plays a central role in ensuring stakeholder understanding, buy-in, and commitment. In the case of the sponsorship program, a communication analysis not only allows information to be disseminated clearly and consistently, but also creates a space for dialogue where concerns can be expressed and addressed. It is therefore essential because it acts as a lever to facilitate change, maintain trust, and foster a dynamic of lasting collaboration between the stakeholders involved.

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of Montréal

#### Ressources :

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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The [Équipe de recherche sur l'immigration au Québec et ailleurs \(ÉRIQA\)](#) (ÉRIQA) is an inter-university research team of 11 researchers funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ). ÉRIQA proposes a structured dialogue between global realities and those of Québec, through comparative analyses and case studies that focus on the policies and experiences of migrants.



Photos: Workshop “What future for collective sponsorship of refugees in Quebec?”, April 9, 2025