

## Training for Employment in Saint-Michel

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### • *Challenge* •

A high level of poverty with all its attendant challenges is evident in Saint-Michel and for this reason Vivre Saint-Michel en santé (VSMS) has made raising family incomes one of its key priorities. The average income of Saint-Michel residents aged 15 and older is \$10,000 less than the average for Montreal. Moreover, some 40 percent of residents' salaries are below the low-income cut-off (LICO) compared with 29 percent in Montreal as a whole. And the level of unemployment in the region is 3.3 percent higher than the rest of Montreal. The aim of this project is to improve the employability of local residents and to raise the incomes of households at or below the poverty line.



### • *Strategy* •

Le Chantier — an offshoot of VSMS and the convening organization for Vibrant Communities in Saint-Michel — has launched a project to recruit and train residents to meet the needs of local business and industry. Working in partnership with the Commission Scolaire de Montreal (CSDM) and the Centre de formation en alimentation de Québec, an initiative of the major food chains, employee training programs have been developed and will be initiated this spring. The programs will focus on recruiting candidates primarily from Saint-Michel and to a lesser extent from two nearby neighbourhoods.

To support this work, a proposal was submitted to the then Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to finance the position of one development worker for one year. That individual will visit the human resource departments of major employers in the neighbourhood with the objective of establishing training experiences beyond those offered by existing programs. The model will build on the experience of the recently launched agreement with the Centre de formation en alimentation de Québec.

The project is the first of a planned series of similar projects intended to build skills and increase the incomes of families. Le Chantier's overall plan of action calls for the identification and engagement of partners from business and industry to explore potential employment and training opportunities. Working with other community organizations and agencies (for example, the Corporation de Développement économique communautaire Centre Nord, the Centre local d'emploi Saint-Michel, the CSDM, Objectif Jeunesse), Le Chantier has set out to obtain access to local employment opportunities for residents. Its strategy also includes approaching companies that are considering locating in Saint-Michel with a view to planning for their future training requirements.

• *Impact* •

Le Chantier and its organizational and business partners are developing a set of indicators to measure progress. In its 2005-2008 plan of action, Le Chantier identified two outcomes for its training for employment priority areas. It plans to strike three service agreements with three businesses and to ensure that 25 people are placed in stable employment with these firms each year for 100 positions in all.

Building on the initial partnership with the food sector, Le Chantier aims to meet training needs for new and replacement positions in other sectors in Saint-Michel, including clothing manufacturing, retail sales, the arts, and sports and recreation.