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Support services for **English-speaking** caregivers in the West Island

Realities, challenges, and recommendations

A webinar presented by the South-West Caregivers Group (GASO) in partnership with the Community of Practice (CdP) with dedicated support.

Presented by

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with the assistance of

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Outline for the webinar

1. Introduction
2. Portrait of informal caregiving in Quebec
3. Analysis of the West Island Region
4. Methodology and Sampling
5. Primary findings
6. Discussion and Recommendations
7. Conclusion
8. Question session



The project and its inception

Since 2017, GASO has been providing services in English in the city of Dorval with the aim of supporting English-speaking caregivers. After several years, the organization is confronted with a specific challenge: it is struggling to connect with English-speaking caregivers, despite their acknowledgment that their needs are both genuine and substantial.

Between 2020 and 2022, the pandemic context significantly hindered the development of English-language services in the sector, as our organization faced a substantial rise in support requests from French-speaking caregivers.

This needs assessment project was established to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges encountered by English-speaking caregivers in the West Island sector, facilitated by a \$40,000 grant from the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF). Bianca Tessier was appointed as the project manager for a duration of one year to oversee the assessment and implementation of the project in its entirety.

The project's objectives

- **Comprehend the realities of English-speaking caregivers**, encompassing their distinct needs and the challenges they face.
- **Identify the available services in the area** and evaluate their appropriateness for the needs of this population.
- **Formulate recommendations to enhance access to services** and more effectively address the unique challenges faced by English-speaking caregivers.
- **Establish prospective partnerships** to enhance support networks and foster local collaborations.



Who are we?

Founded in 1995, GASO is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting caregivers in enhancing their quality of life, preventing burnout, and fostering their recognition within the community.

Our services are

- Bilingual;
- Complimentary;
- Confidential and professional.

At every stage, we provide:

- emotional support and active listening;
- knowledge-building workshops and conferences;
- monthly revitalizing workshops;
- and support groups.



Each year, we assist nearly 350 different caregivers in the broader South-West region of Montreal.

Caregiving in Quebec

Caregiving represents a significant concern in Quebec, where **21.9% of the workforce** serves as caregivers (OPAQ, 2022). Nevertheless, despite their vital contributions, numerous caregivers, especially those in the West Island, encounter difficulties in accessing services tailored to their requirements. This project aims to address this disparity and enhance support for this community.



In the context of this project, the importance of evaluating the needs of English-speaking caregivers is underscored by demographic data indicating that in specific regions, such as **Pointe-Claire, English is the mother tongue for 54.9% of the population**, whereas in Lachine, this figure stands at 23.7%.

Portrait of informal caregiving in Quebec

- ▶ **25.7%** of caregivers endorse two **individuals** (ISQ, 2015).
- ▶ **35% of caregivers do not identify with this role**, primarily due to the perception that it constitutes a familial obligation (Appui, 2022).
- ▶ Individuals **aged 45 to 64** primarily provide care for their **parents**.
- ▶ Caregivers **aged 65 and older** primarily provide support to their **spouses** (Girard-Marcil et al., 2023).
- ▶ **Transport: 71.6%**
- ▶ **Domestic labor: 50.9%**
- ▶ **Home maintenance: 40.1%**
- ▶ **Gender differences:** Women offer greater emotional support, whereas men tend to handle physical tasks (ISQ, 2022).
- ▶ caregivers dedicate **808 million hours annually to caregiving**, resulting in a savings of **\$13.7 billion for the State** (RAPP, 2022).
This position carries substantial implications for the mental, physical, and economic well-being of caregivers.

Analysis of the West Island Region

Analysis of the West Island Region

Native language:

▶ **Pointe-Claire:** 54.9% of the population speaks English as their first language.

Lachine: merely 23.7%.

34.6% of residents speak a mother tongue that is **neither French nor English.**

Immigrant population:

▶ Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Pierrefonds-Roxboro represent **59%** of the territory's immigrant population.

Transport:

▶ **86.9%** of residents primarily rely on automobiles, highlighting **difficulties in accessing public transportation.**

Extended journeys via public transportation pose significant challenges for numerous caregivers in accessing services.

Analysis of the West Island Region

- According to the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud, the senior demographic is projected to constitute 25% of the West Island population by **2036**, reflecting an increase of **42.4%**.
- The expansion of the senior demographic and linguistic diversity signifies an escalating demand for services tailored to English-speaking caregivers, who will assume an increasingly pivotal role within the Montreal context.



Methodology and Sampling

Methodology and Sampling

Participant Classifications

The project concentrated on four participant groups to obtain a thorough understanding of the needs of English-speaking caregivers:

1. **Caregivers**
2. **Psychosocial professionals**
3. **Community service professionals and volunteers**
4. **Union delegates**

Recruitment

39 organizations and institutions were contacted.
16 organizations responded favorably, enabling the recruitment of a total of nineteen participants:

- 5** **Caregivers**
- 5** **Psychosocial workers**
- 7** **Community workers**
- 2** **Union representatives**

Methodology and Sample

▶ Data acquisition

Interview grids organized into two sections:

- Characteristics of caregivers and their role
- Existing needs and available services

▶ Qualitative methodology

This method facilitated the gathering of comprehensive insights regarding the challenges, specific needs, and available services for English-speaking caregivers.

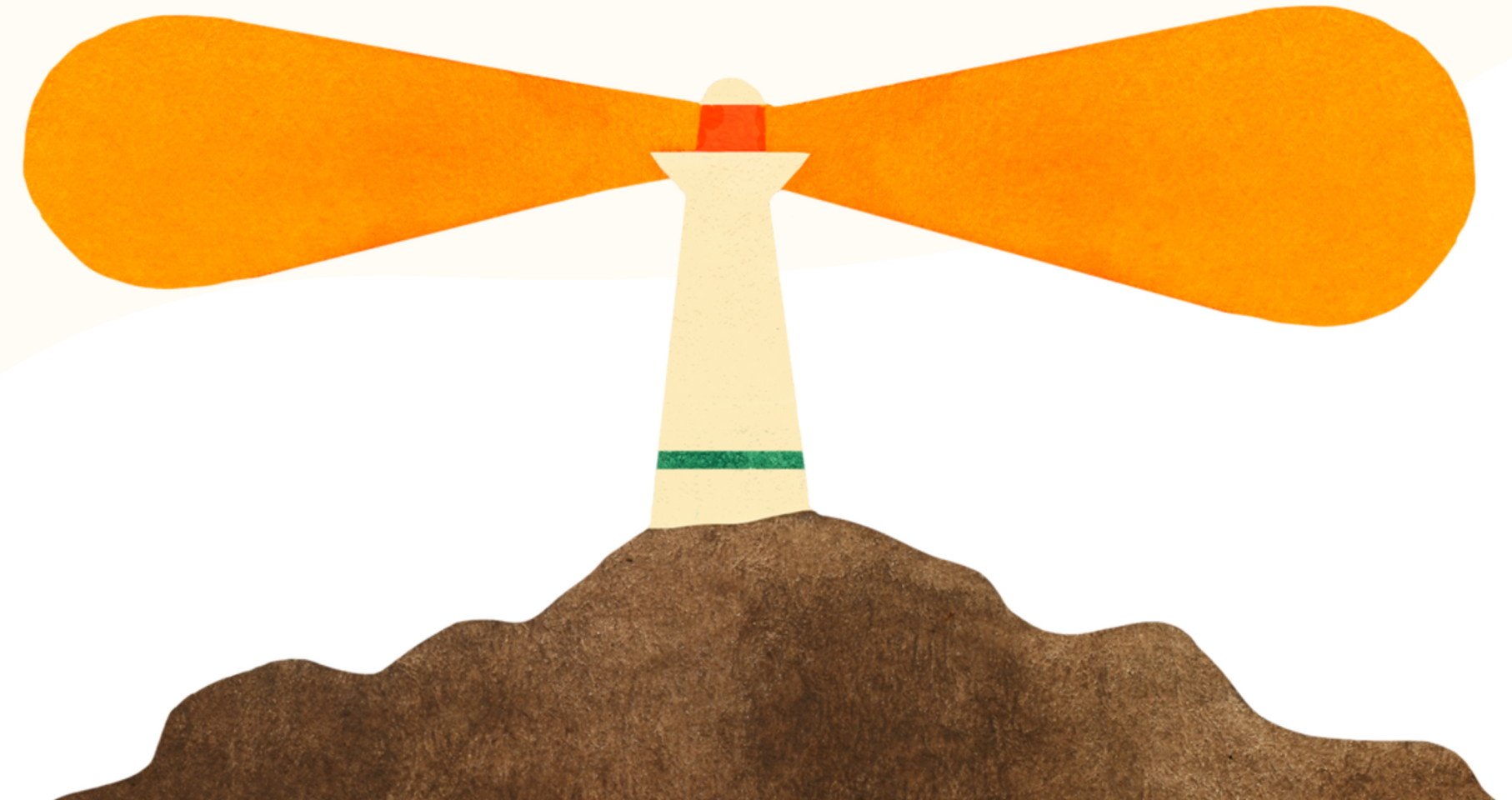


Primary Findings

1

Delayed recognition as a caregiver

- Many English-speaking caregivers find it challenging to identify with this role. Linguistic stigma serves as an exacerbating factor: The term "*caregiver*" is regarded as a designation that pertains to a professional. The term "*loved one*" pertains more to emotional and financial support.



2

Specific challenges for English-speaking caregivers

Navigating the healthcare system :

- Recognized as the primary challenge by caregivers and community professionals.

Increased mental load associated with translation :

- **Translating information or articulating thoughts and feelings** in French requires extra effort for caregivers.
- This challenge is exacerbated for caregivers for whom English is a **second or third language**, especially individuals from immigrant backgrounds.

3

Access to Services

- Caregivers with **financial resources** have greater access to **private services**.
- Caregivers in **precarious circumstances** are frequently compelled to **reside with the individual** for whom they provide care.
- Prolonged and intricate journeys to access public services via public transport exacerbate the situation.





The desired services

- The requirements of English-speaking caregivers **closely resemble those of their French-speaking counterparts**, encompassing respite, home care, and moral support, for instance.
- However, there is a **discernible distrust of public services**, accompanied by a noted **preference for local community or religious services**.



Discussion and Recommendations

Challenges Faced by English-speaking caregivers

- ▶ The challenge of **navigating the health care system** continues to be a **significant barrier**.
- ▶ The **cognitive strain associated with translating** and utilizing a second language restricts efficient access to services.
- ▶ **Distrust in public services** underscores the necessity for alternative strategies, including community organizations and private sector services.



Recognized priorities



Enhancing language accessibility:

- Systematic translation of documents and correspondence.
- Clear presentation of services customized for English-speaking caregivers.



Geographically accessible assistance:

- Enhance local services to minimize lengthy commutes.
- Enhance the involvement of community and religious organizations in regions such as Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Pierrefonds-Roxboro, and Pointe-Claire.



Tailored assistance:

- Provide targeted services to assist caregivers in navigating the healthcare system.
- Provide English support groups to exchange resources and alleviate isolation.

Comprehensive recommendations



1. Enhancing linguistic accessibility

- **Systematically translate** official communications and documents into English, ensuring the use of terminology appropriate to the role of the PPA.
- **Adjust terminology** to prevent cultural misunderstandings associated with terms such as "caregiver" or "family member."
- **Train public service personnel** to extend a warm welcome and offer clear explanations for English-speaking caregivers.



Comprehensive recommendations

▶ 2. Develop tailored and region-specific services:

- **Establish service points** in regions such as Pointe-Claire, Pierrefonds-Roxboro, and Dollard-des-Ormeaux, where English-speaking caregivers are predominantly located.
- **Foster partnerships with places of worship and cultural organizations** to engage communities that are occasionally marginalized from public services.



Comprehensive recommendations

3. Enhancing access to the healthcare system

- **Develop practical resources** to assist caregivers in their initiatives, including bilingual guides or public presentations on access mechanisms.
- **Provide support services from trained professionals** to assist caregivers in navigating the various stages of delivering care.



Comprehensive recommendations

4. Additional assistance for community organizations

- **Invest in local non-profit organizations** to enable them to provide support services, including support groups, workshops, or individual assistance in English.
- **Strengthen collaborations between non-profit organizations and public services** to enhance their collective effectiveness in addressing the needs of caregivers with greater coherence.



Comprehensive recommendations

▶ 5. Enhance awareness and advocate for caregivers.

- **Organize local awareness campaigns** to assist English-speaking caregivers in recognizing their roles and accessing available resources.
- **Advocate for their critical role** among decision-makers (municipalities, elected officials, deputies, etc.) to ensure sustainable and adequate support.



Conclusion

Summary of our Primary Findings

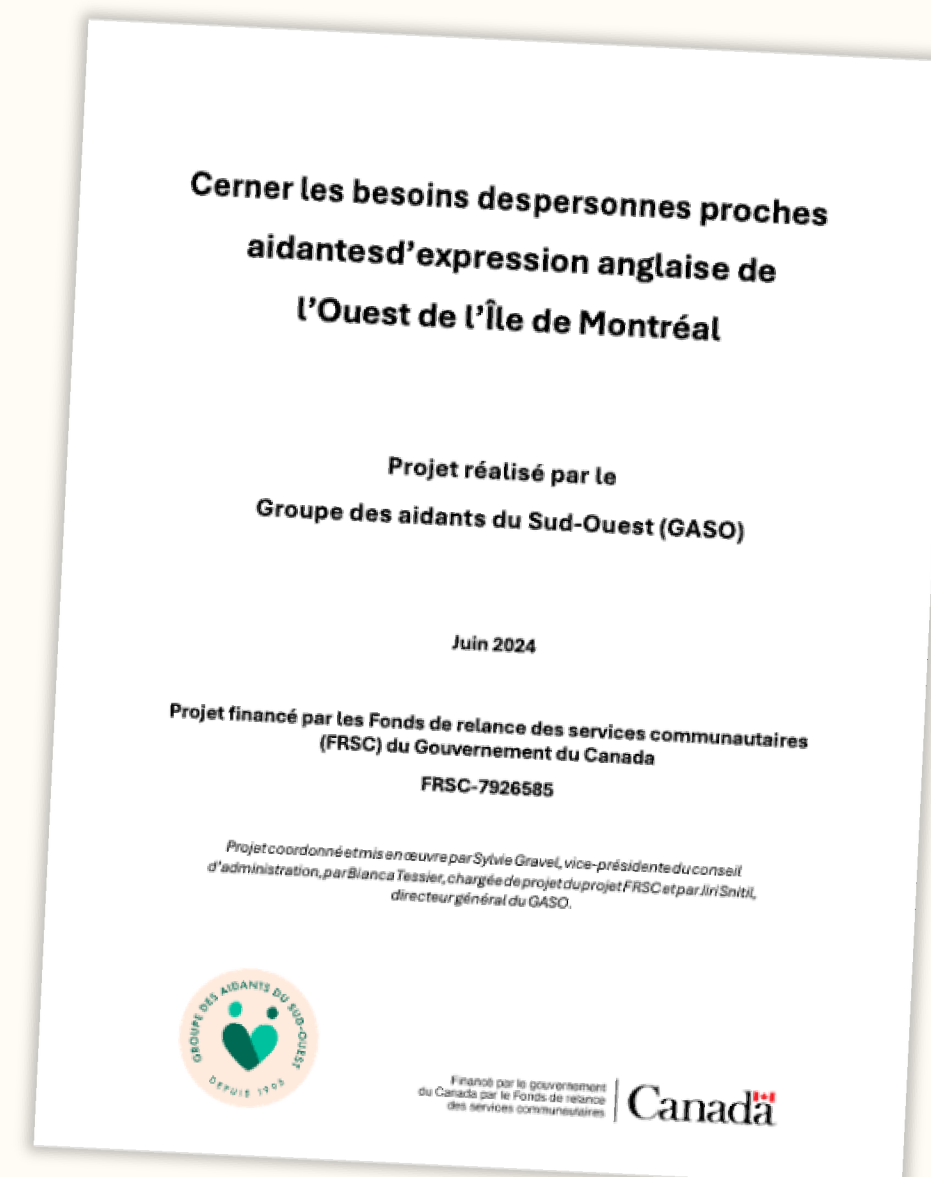
- ▶ **Key Issues:** English-speaking caregivers in the West Island encounter distinct obstacles, including an increased language-related mental load, difficulties navigating the healthcare system, and challenges related to geographic accessibility.
- ▶ **Main finding:** These challenges necessitate modifications to existing services, yet do not demand the establishment of new structures.

The project emphasizes practical and flexible solutions to enhance support for English-speaking caregivers in the West Island. **These recommendations provide a foundation for tangible and cooperative initiatives designed to improve their quality of life.**

To acquire the final report

▶ If you wish to access the complete report, it can be provided upon request.
Please send an email to:

direction@gaso.ca





Thank you for listening!

Q&A session

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