



Réseau des villes francophones
et francophiles d'Amérique

What if francophone communities dared break free of familiar dialogues? What if young people invested themselves, encouraging us to stray from well-worn paths? What if tourism development was thought of in different ways? What if a project were proposed to create bridges and solidarity between cities, cultures, generations, minority and majority, for the purpose of breaking down the solitudes? What if the majority were inspired to take a fresh look at francophone communities? What if support from that majority allowed us to capitalize on these tourist routes and circuits, in order to increase development in francophone communities?

By focussing on francophone cultural tourism as driver for historic, cultural and economic development of francophone communities, the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network offers innovative answers to these questions!

A NEW APPROACH: THE FRANCOPHONE AND FRANCOPHILE CITIES NETWORK

For more than 400 years, the French language moved through the vastness of North American lands, taking root from east to west, and from north to south. As a result of travels and partnerships, francophone communities shaped the foundations of America, leaving behind various remnants which have faded over the centuries.

This is a hidden treasure, a common history that we need to dust off and revive by way of authentic experiences. Precarious francophone communities cannot continue to develop fully without the support of and contributions from the majority. So it is imperative and necessary to be bold and encourage a new approach. This is the challenge that the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques, member cities and local communities have set themselves, by developing the Francophone and Francophile Cities Network of America.

Consequently, the Network brings together francophone and francophile cities that design and develop collaborative projects, build partnerships and create links, with a focus on francophone cultural tourism. The creation of tourist routes, within and between member cities, is intended to highlight their historic, cultural, and economic connection to the French language, thus strengthening the vitality of francophone communities and preserving their respective and shared heritages.

THE PROCESS THAT SUSTAINS THE NETWORK

1. Give the movement momentum!

This kind of Network isn't created instantly! The first years of its existence served to give the movement some momentum, mobilize, educate, reflect, plan, inspire...

In 2018, the Network:

- ✓ Exists through the initiative of three founding cities: **Lafayette**, **Moncton** and **Quebec**, thanks to a partnership with the **Centre de la francophonie des Amériques**
- ✓ Is managed by the **Centre de la francophonie des Amériques**
- ✓ Comprises **149 cities**, including **104 in Canada**, a steadily-growing number
- ✓ Benefits from the support of more than **200 agencies** in Canada
- ✓ Was set in motion thanks to **4 major bilingual gatherings**

2015 – Founding meeting in Quebec City (Canada)

2016 – Interim working meeting in Lafayette (United States)

2017 – Meeting in Quebec City (Canada)

2018 – Interim working meeting in Grande Prairie (Canada)

2019 – Meeting in Moncton (Canada)

Next gathering:

2020 – Interim working meeting in Winnipeg (Canada), September 17 and 18, 2020

2. Develop tourist routes and circuits which showcase francophone communities and extend their reach

The development of tourist routes and circuits will be the result of practical experience and entail contributions from local communities. Member cities and their communities will be invited to think about how they can attract visitors to generate interest in francophone communities, while supporting the growth of local francophone communities. The Centre will provide tools to support them through the suggestion of avenues for development and improvement, to be implemented within francophone as well as majority communities. These components may be historical (sites, monuments, museums, costumed interpreters, etc.), cultural (artisans, artists, festivals, performances, galleries, etc.), economic (food services, local products, accommodation, ancillary services, etc.) or varied (specialized industry, educational, health, etc.) in nature.

3. Become a tool for change with the creation of a cultural and social footprint

Using a participative and inclusive approach, the Network is intended as a transformative project that uses cultural tourism to boost community development for the benefit of local francophone communities, which contribute to their region. In this way, more than simply being lucrative, the economy driven by the promotion and use of tourist routes will create a cultural and social footprint. The economy doesn't then become an end in itself, but rather a vector of the sustainability of this approach. Finally, due to its innovative character, the Network will call upon young people and foster a new and unifying dialogue around "living together."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The CENTRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE DES AMÉRIQUES contributes to the promotion and showcasing of francophone communities that offer promise for the future of the French language within a culturally diverse framework. The Centre helps build partnerships with 33 million francophones on the American continent and provides greater mutual awareness of francophone communities in Québec, Canada, and North America.