

# Québec, ville de LITTÉRATURE UNESCO



## MONITORING REPORT 2017-2021

**Cover photos:**

Quebec City

*Poésie sur les toits* - Poetic fragment by Mireille Gagné  
Bibliothèque Monique-Corriveau





Culture reflects our history and creativity and has occupied a prominent place in Québec City for more than 400 years.

In its new *Sustainable Development Strategy*<sup>1</sup> inspired by the 17 United Nations sustainable development goals, Québec City recognizes culture as an important factor in social cohesion and the well-being of its citizens.

Over the years, the vitality of our arts scene—supported by more than 300 organizations—has earned us many honours, both local and international, and brought significant economic benefits.

On October 31, 2017, Québec City joined UNESCO's Creative Cities Network as a "City of Literature," becoming the first Francophone city to receive this prestigious title.

This was a great honour for Québec City and its many partners, which stepped up their efforts to use literature as means to bring our Francophone, Anglophone, and Indigenous authors together and into contact with the public.

The last four years have been very rewarding in this regard. Various programs for artists and measures to support diversity and inclusion have contributed to the creation of a collection of themed walks, poetry evenings, festivals, and events, including *Une ville, un livre* and the Old Québec literary rally.

Our actions have kept in step with our vision: To make Québec City an innovative, internationally recognized literary capital where literature and the literary arts contribute to the development of society and enrich the lives of citizens.

Our 2022–2025 action plan is a testament to the innovative ideas and imagination of our fabulous artists. As the cradle of French-speaking North America, Québec City has not yet finished writing its story.

### **Régis Labeaume**

Mayor of Québec City from 2007 to November 2021



As a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network since 2017, Québec City has had the pleasure of connecting and cooperating with other cities as well as showcasing our literary community to the world.

With its innovation and digital creativity, encounters between cultures, superb public libraries, and flourishing arts community, Québec City honours its title as the first Francophone "City of Literature".

The past few years have seen a flurry of original and popular ideas put in place by Québec City and our partners. Since 2019, some 20 projects directly related to our title's objectives have been carried out.

Thirteen authors have received the Prix de création littéraire from the city and the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair. Many literary organizations have been created, spurred on by artistic energy. And that is only the beginning!

Québec City has big ideas for the literary scene, as evidenced by the Québec City Library Development Vision, the Cultural Development Vision, and the newly expanded Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy.

Deepening our relationships with UNESCO's Creative Cities Network and taking specific actions in support thereof will help make the "City of Literature" title a real driver of artistic renewal.

Québec City is already unique thanks to its mix of Old World and New. Our literary community will ensure the city is recognized near and far for its love of words and its immense talent for sharing them.

### **Alicia Despins**

Member of the Québec City Executive Committee,  
Responsible for Culture, Technoculture,  
and Major Cultural Events from 2017 to November 2021



## **UNESCO City of Literature: Our national capital puts the whole of Québec in the spotlight**

Québec City stands out not only for its beautiful architecture and natural setting, but also for its literary vibrancy. Québec City—the first Francophone municipality in UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network to be named a literary city, in 2017—is a North American cultural hub.

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications is an important partner, in particular through the Cultural Development Agreement it signed with the city. This agreement provides \$200,000 annually to support Québec City’s participation in UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network.

Québec City is an important driver of cultural, economic, and tourism development for the province. Thanks to the vitality of its literary community and to the Québec en toutes lettres Festival, the First Nations Book Fair, Maison de la littérature, and the city’s digital book publishers, it is a confident and thriving cultural capital.

Being part of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network allows Québec City to share its expertise and establish collaborations around the world. It is also an excellent opportunity for the city to promote Québec’s distinctiveness and rich culture on the international stage.

Culture is a priority for our government, and so I congratulate the city and Institut canadien de Québec for the quality of this report, which reflects our national capital’s commitment to promoting our literature.

**Nathalie Roy**

Québec Minister of Culture and Communications







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# 1 / SUMMARY

Québec City, the cradle of French-speaking North America and the capital of Québec (population 543,095 in 2018), is internationally recognized for its natural beauty, thriving cultural scene, and rich heritage. Old Québec has been a designated World Heritage site since 1985.

On October 31, 2017, the city joined UNESCO's Creative Cities Network in the field of literature. In recognition of its exceptional literary vitality and that of Wendake, the local seat of the Huron-Wendat Nation, this designation gives concrete expression to the city's commitment to the literary arts and their ability to build more united and resilient communities.

With 295 members in seven creative fields, UNESCO's Creative Cities Network seeks to be an encouragement to cities that have identified culture as a lever of sustainable development and to strengthen cooperation among them<sup>1</sup>. For Québec City, being a UNESCO City of Literature is, above all, intended to mobilize people and fuel the creation and sharing of literary arts in Québec and beyond.



View of Québec City from Place des Canotiers

1 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Creative Cities *Network Mission Statement*.

During its first designation cycle (2017–2021), Québec City and its many partners set out to achieve a common vision: To gain international recognition for Québec City for its innovative use of literature and the literary arts to further the development of society and enrich the lives of all citizens. —

The initial years were busy—deciding how the city’s designation would play out in practical terms, developing an identity, and mobilizing the literary community and the public. Through close collaboration with the Government of Québec, special project funding was established through the Cultural Development Agreement to leverage Québec City’s new status.

Several literary promotion projects were conceived in a spirit of collaboration and creativity, such as *Une ville, un livre* and the *Vieux-Québec littéraire* project. New measures to promote inclusion were also put in place.

Internationally, Québec City launched a productive dialogue with the other member cities of the Network, especially those that share its passion for the literary arts. Québec City was brought quickly on board, participating in all meetings, setting up the UNESCO-LOJIC residency program for young writers, facilitating interaction between peers, and promoting the Network within the Francophonie, which is still underrepresented in the literary subnetwork.

Of course, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, everything changed overnight for the cultural community. Québec City, artists, and artist organizations had to rethink their practices to meet the challenges posed by the public health crisis. A number of actions were taken to spread messages of hope, kindness, and comfort and relieve people’s sense of isolation, but also to add life to the city and provide support to the arts community.

Despite the uncertainties of the situation, Québec City is looking ahead with confidence. The 2022–2025 Action Plan builds on the remarkable local determination to continue to implement the vision and proposes a number of ways to showcase Québec’s creativity and foster dialogue with the world’s most innovative cities. It positions Québec City’s UNESCO City of Literature designation as a springboard to reviving the literary community and crafting a more mutually supportive, inclusive, and innovative city.



## 2 / GENERAL INFORMATION

**City, country, creative domain and designation date:** Québec City, Canada,  
UNESCO City of Literature since 2017

**Date of submission of this activity report:**  
November 2021

**Entity responsible for preparing the report:**  
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### 3 / CONTRIBUTION TO NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Since joining the Creative Cities Network, Québec City has participated in all the annual conferences, which offer members an opportunity to strengthen their cooperation and work with UNESCO to plan the future of the Creative Cities Network.

Representatives from Québec City have also attended all the meetings of the literary subnetwork, where new partnerships are formed, international exchanges are fostered, and expertise is shared among cities in the same creative fields. Artistic initiatives at these meetings have served to promote the work of Québec writers.

#### Attendance at annual conferences

- 2018 – Krakow, Poland\*
- 2019 – Fabriano, Italy
- (2020 – *Conference cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic*)
- 2021 – Virtual conference held in collaboration with Santos, Brazil\*

\* Alicia Despins, Executive Committee Member Responsible for Culture and Technoculture and major cultural events.

#### Participation in subnetwork meetings

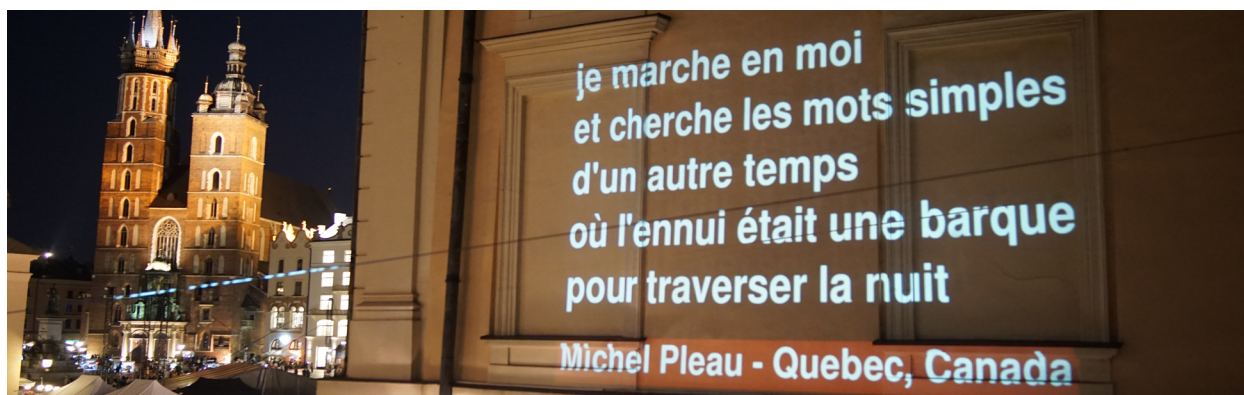
- 2018 – Iowa City, USA
- 2019 – Norwich and Nottingham, United Kingdom
- 2020 – Prague, Czech Republic
- 2021 – Reykjavik, Iceland

#### First Meeting of North American Creative Cities

At the invitation of Montréal, City of Design, and in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Québec City attended the first meeting of North America's creative cities at the 2019 South by Southwest Festival (Austin, USA) to promote Québec innovation and culture.

#### Engagement with the Subnetwork

Québec City's UNESCO City of Literature team has reviewed 28 applications from cities aspiring to join the Literature Network: 17 in 2019 and 11 in 2021.



Projection of a poem by Michel Pleau at Market Square (Rynek Główny) in Krakow. Photo credit: Krakow, UNESCO City of Literature.



## 4 / KEY LOCAL INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE THE NETWORK'S OBJECTIVES

### **Enactment and Promotion of the Designation**

Québec City quickly mobilized a vast network of partners to lay the foundations for an inspiring and collective City of Literature project. A grant program between Québec City and the Government of Québec to support UNESCO City of Literature projects was launched in 2019 through the Cultural Development Agreement. By supporting the literary initiatives of local cultural organizations, this program fosters creativity and provides visibility for writers and professional organizations in Québec City and Wendake. It is an essential support for the literary arts.

Joining the Network was also an opportunity for Québec City to enhance its literature initiatives and create new alliances. More was done to promote the literary creation prizes awarded jointly by Québec City and the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair, and a new partnership was developed with Bureau des affaires poétiques and Université Laval for the Jean-Noël Pontbriand Award, which honours a poet each year.

Attention was also drawn through activities within the literary community (mostly information sessions about the designation) and communications aimed at the general public (ads, Christmas cards in libraries, static window clings for businesses, etc.). A Facebook page, an Instagram account and a newsletter were also created. A dedicated website is in the works for the end of 2021.

Since 2020, the designation has been managed by ICQ (Institut canadien de Québec), a major cultural organization in Québec City whose mission is to provide access to knowledge and culture through libraries, literature, and literacy. A management committee made up of representatives from ICQ and Québec City meets monthly to discuss projects and opportunities related to the designation and its promotion. Another early partner, Table des lettres du Conseil de la culture, brings together the regional literary community and has a committee that seeks to enhance cooperation among the various parties concerned with the designation.

## TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- Some **20 projects** by the culture community since 2019 directly related to the objectives of the designation, with **\$360,000** in funding from Québec City and the Government of Québec.
- **13 writers** honoured with the Prix de création littéraire awarded jointly since 2017 by Québec City and the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair in the Adult, Youth, and Essay categories, for a total of **\$15,000** each year.
- **2,500 copies** of a publication featuring the prize-winning works distributed in public places around Québec City in 2019 thanks to an association with Les libraires, a cooperative of independent bookstores in Québec and French-speaking Canada.
- The **Culture and Development Award** from the Les arts et la ville Network in the “Cities with Populations of 100,000 or More” category, awarded to Québec City for the compelling nature of the UNESCO designation.
- **Enhanced literary vitality**, as evidenced by the creation of new organizations in the region (Éditions de l'Écume, CONTOURS poésie, Les autres jours – Espace possible) and the many bookstores in Québec City and Wendake that chose to update their premises (La Liberté, Morency, Hannenorak).



La Liberté bookstore. Photo credit: Jean-Christophe Blanchet.



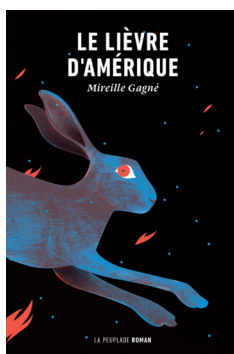
## Une ville, un livre

Une ville un livre is a citywide book club inspired by several other UNESCO literary cities. During Francophonie Month (March), the works of an author from Québec City or Wendake are celebrated, read, and discussed in person or at virtual meetings. The club not only introduces local writers to the public but strengthens the social fabric by promoting discussion among readers and a sense of belonging to the City of Literature. The club works with local libraries and bookstores to select the finalists by public vote and promote the winner for the entire month of March.

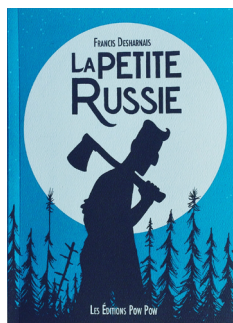
### Highlights

- Nearly **2,000 books purchased or borrowed** each year from bookstores and libraries
- **Increased sales** of the selected works
- **800 participants** in book activities (in-person and virtual) during the 2021 event

Since the first *Une ville, un livre* was held in 2019, the following titles have been featured:



2021  
*Le lièvre d'Amérique*  
by Mireille Gagné  
(La peuplade)



2020  
*La petite Russie*  
by Francis Desharnais  
(Pow Pow)



2019  
*Les chars meurent aussi*  
by Marie-Renée Lavoie  
(XYZ)



## Literature in Old Québec

First added to the World Heritage List in 1985, Old Québec bears the traces of a long literary tradition that continues today thanks to the cultural centres, bookstores, organizations, and magazines that call it home. To raise awareness of the old city's heritage and attractions, 12 partners are taking advantage of the UNESCO designation to hold neighbourhood events and activities. A first event in the summer of 2021—a discovery rally—featured 25 points of interest associated with literary history and presence, including houses where writers once lived, the premises of Canada's very first newspaper, and the first public library in Québec City.

A map illustrated by Julien Dallaire-Charest guided participants in a rally put together by researcher and writer Marie-Ève Sévigny, director of La promenade des écrivains. This challenge to residents and tourists alike also featured an exhibition in the heart of town.

### Highlights

- More than **11,250 people** connected with the literary heritage of the neighbourhood through the printed map or website
- Exhibition seen by **tens of thousands of passers-by**
- **250,000 ad impressions** through a multi-platform promotional campaign (bus shelters, radios, newspapers, television, social networks and more)



Old Québec literary rally Photo credit: Nadia Morin.

## A vibrant literary capital

Québec City's literary scene offers a lively reflection of the city's heritage at the crossroads of Francophone, Anglophone, and Indigenous cultures. For example:

- In addition to hosting four presentations at the only Indigenous book fair in French in Canada, Kwahiatonhk!, which promotes and disseminates Indigenous literature and books, toured its literary bingo night across the province and presented lectures, mediation activities, and cultural programming.
- Université Laval is preparing to launch a Canada Research Chair in the Indigenous Languages and Cultures of the Americas.
- The Morrin Centre (English-language cultural centre) continued its work disseminating English-language literature, including through the ImagiNation festival.

Québec City is home to a number of innovative initiatives that explore contemporary forms of literature. In this regard:

- Alea, the new Éditions Alto publishing lab, is pushing back the boundaries of book publishing through multidisciplinary and digital works.
- Les Ami.e.s imaginaires, a storytelling broadcaster, is developing an interactive adventure similar to a video game.
- Rhizome, an organization that focuses on interdisciplinarity, has established a community of practice on the place of Québec literature online, in addition to creating a number of shows based on the works of prominent authors.
- The De Marque digital book distributor has partnered with BiblioPresto, an organization that develops online library services, to design and produce Biblius, a digital loan service for Québec school libraries.



Activities of the Bibliothèque de Québec and the Institut canadien de Québec. Photo credit: Ville de Québec and Hélène Bouffard.

## Support for Diversity and Inclusion

From 2017 to 2021, a number of initiatives were rolled out in Québec City's literary community to increase diversity and inclusion, particularly among the artists and readership of the First Peoples. Québec City made a commitment to provide greater support for the First Nations Book Fair. Bibliothèque de Québec, working with Indigenous organizations, developed special cultural programming and a collection of Indigenous titles. To support up-and-coming writers, a brand-new writers' residency program that includes mentoring is now being offered to Indigenous writers by Kwahiatonhk! and Maison de la littérature, an organization dedicated to literary creation, activities, and dissemination.

To make reading accessible to as many people as possible, Bibliothèque de Québec has launched new literacy initiatives at its 26 library branches throughout the city. It created a reading service, a bilingual Spanish-Arab activity, and a Beginning Reader collection to support parents helping their children learn to read. In addition to its many regular activities, including an introduction to reading, services for immigrants, and book clubs, Bibliothèque de Québec performs community outreach through such initiatives as its "outside library" in Saint-Pie-X. This library in a completely overhauled marine shipping container will be open to the public three seasons a year, starting in summer 2022. Besides offering cultural mediation activities, it will have a collection of more than 1,000 young-reader documents available for borrowing and on-site consultation.

### Highlights

- **First awardee** of the Indigenous writers' residency program: Carole Labarre, from Pessamit
- **Public programming** by the First Nations Book Fair, presented in libraries during the 10<sup>th</sup> festival.
- **1,700 annual introduction-to-reading activities** and visits to school and preschool groups (early childhood centres, daycares, schools) organized by Bibliothèque de Québec.
- An event celebrating the book for young readers *Le livre où la poule meurt à la fin* by François Blais and Valérie Boivin (Les 400 coups) on International Literacy Day 2021: the video was watched by nearly **18,000 Internet users** within 24 hours and ultimately received more than **2,600 views**.



## 5 / KEY INITIATIVES CARRIED OUT THROUGH INTERCITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE NETWORK OBJECTIVES

### UNESCO-LOJIQ Young Writers Residency

Created as part of the Première Ovation support measure for young writers, this program sends a Québec City author 35 or younger to another UNESCO City of Literature for a writing residency. A \$6,000 grant is offered in collaboration with Les Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec (LOJIQ). In addition to encouraging an emerging artist, this residency strengthens ties with other UNESCO literary cities and adds to the conversation on potential activities.



The resident writer is asked to produce a text about the host city, which is translated into the host language for distribution in the subnetwork.

The program's first awardee, poet and editor Laetitia Beaumel, travelled to Edinburgh for two months in the summer of 2019. A second residency, taking Christiane Vadnais to Dublin, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rescheduled for January 2022.



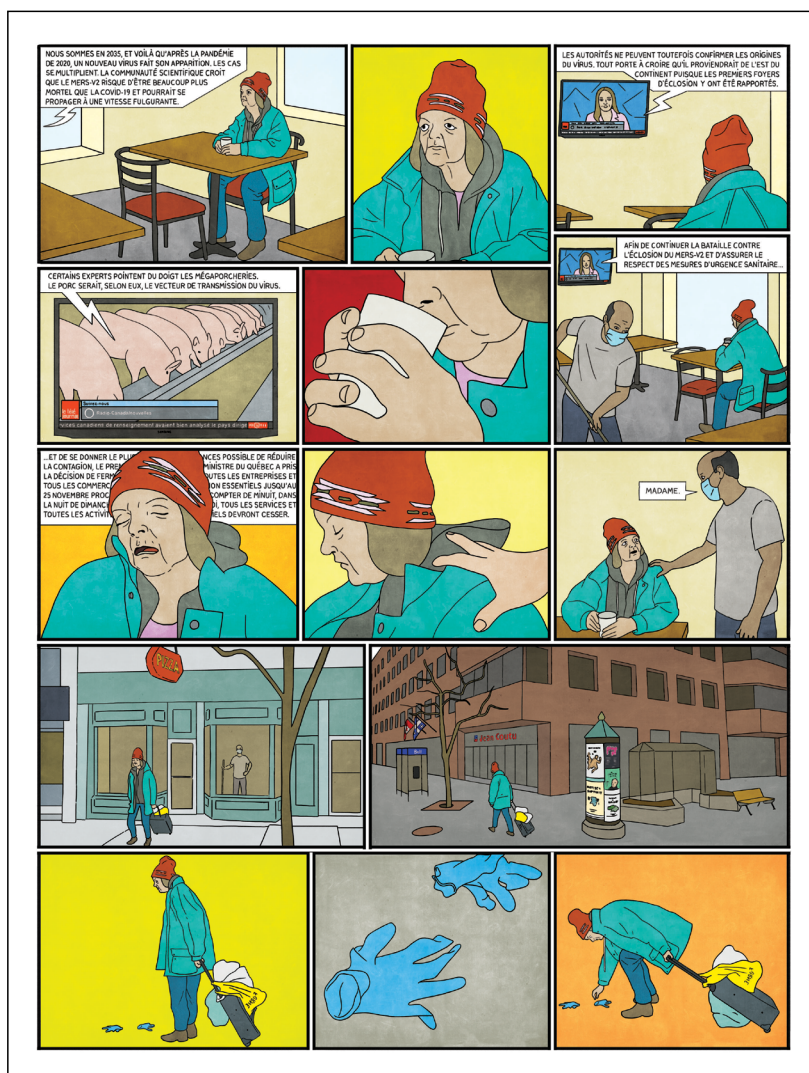
Laetitia Beaumel during her residency in Edinburgh, Scotland, and a view of the city. Photo credit: Laetitia Beaumel and iStock.



## Exchanges with UNESCO Cities

Since 2018, in addition to funding for local projects specifically related to the designation (through the UNESCO City of Literature project support program), proposals have been collected under the Cultural Development Agreement between Québec City and the Government of Québec for cooperation between organizations in Québec City and those based in all the other literary cities that are members of the Creative Cities Network. Under Section 4.1 of the Agreement, assistance of up to \$20,000 can be granted.

Also, since 2018, Québec City, in another effort to reinforce international literary exchanges, has participated in 25 calls for projects and competitions launched by other cities in the subnetwork, benefitting some 30 local artists, including Thomas Langlois's triumph as co-winner with Jardel Rodrigues of Manchester in Melbourne's international *Slam-O-Vision* competition, and comic book artist Brigitte Archambault's victory in the *La ville d'après* competition held by Angoulême.



Brigitte Archambault's art

Thanks to its ties with Heidelberg, Germany, Québec City also played host to writer Marion Tauschwitz in 2019, in collaboration with Rhizome and the German Christmas Market.

## The UNESCO Creative Cities Network, the French-speaking World, and Linguistic Diversity

As the cradle of French-speaking North America and the first Francophone city to join the literary subnetwork, Québec City promotes and publicizes Québec artists and literary arts to international partners.

- It has supported other Francophone Network applicants: Angoulême, France (2019 in literature), with which it shares a creative interest in comic books, and Namur, Belgium (2021 in media arts), Québec City's twin city since 1999.
- From October 5 to 8, 2018, Québec City hosted the Réseaux France-Québec conference, which highlighted the literary city theme through workshops, roundtables, and encounters between 228 delegates committed to cooperation between the two nations.
- In 2019, Maison de la littérature hosted the Commonwealth Short Story Prize, a prestigious international competition, and announced that submissions in French would henceforth be accepted.

Through these actions, Québec has positioned itself as a leader in the promotion of Francophone literature and a champion of the French language in international exchanges. Belonging to a multilingual network is also an opportunity for the city to promote its authors through simultaneous translation at literary events.



The finalists for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize at Maison de la littérature. Photo credit: Hélène Bouffard.



## WORLD LITERATURES MEET IN QUEBEC CITY

Literary Québec City is globally connected, reaching out and welcoming contemporary voices from all around the world. Renowned authors have taken part in many events in Québec City, such as the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair and the Québec en toutes lettres Festival, or been guests at Maison de la littérature. These include Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt, Yasmina Khadra, Paul Auster, Maylis de Kerangal, Emil Ferris, Alain Mabanckou, and Laurent Gaudé.

Québec City authors have also had their work promoted abroad, through the sale of publishing rights by Québec publishers, in the eight international exhibitions presented by Québec BD (two in Japan, two in Cuba, and one each in the United States, Algeria, Vietnam, and France) or through residencies, such as *Hôtel des autrices*, a project by Rhizome and Réseau des autrices francophones de Berlin.

Digital content provider De Marque acquired Libranda, the main international distributor of Spanish-language digital cultural content, as well as the French digital bookseller Feedbooks.

Québec City was also the birthplace of RAPAIL, the new network of Québec and French Canadian literary arts and spoken arts presenters. The Morrin Centre was the virtual host for the annual Canadian Literary Festival Directors conference, which will be held in person again in 2022.

## 2018-2021 BUDGET

The budget for the designation and to support the literary community from 2018 to 2021 was over **\$68.9 million**, broken down as follows:

- **Special projects in Québec City, UNESCO City of Literature:** \$1,055,200 investment in flagship projects, calls for projects with Québec City organizations, and for promotion and operations.
- **Municipal library management:** \$65.4 million for annual library management, cultural mediation, and document acquisition.
- **Support for major literary events:** \$1,350,000 to support the production of the Québec en toutes lettres Festival and the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair.
- **Première Ovation's support measure for emerging literary artists:** \$433,800.
- **Operating support for literary organizations:** 7 organizations supported, for a total of \$314,200.
- **Support for literary organization projects:** 37 projects supported, for a total of \$423,800.

Québec City and the Government of Québec provide significant support to literature each year. From 2018 to 2021, over \$2 million was awarded to major literary events, special projects, and organizational operations.



## 6 / 2022–2025 ACTION PLAN

### KEY LOCAL INITIATIVES

#### **2021–2025 Bibliothèque de Québec Development Vision**

With 26 libraries throughout the city, Bibliothèque de Québec is a place of knowledge and discovery that contributes to the quality of life of young and old alike. It is inclusive and accessible and puts people first. Its cultural programming and popular events contribute to the city's literary vitality.

In its 2021–2025 Development Vision, Bibliothèque de Québec undertakes to serve as a model of social ethics and to implement environmentally responsible practices. It aspires to improve the well-being of city residents and to build new bridges with the community through five areas of development:

1. Citizen and community outreach.
2. Access to knowledge, culture, and heritage.
3. Welcoming, attractive and innovative facilities.
4. Promotion of literary vitality.
5. New Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy<sup>1</sup> main library.



<sup>1</sup> The opening of the new Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy announced in Québec City's application to become a UNESCO City of Literature has been postponed until spring 2023.



## AMBITIOUS TARGETS

- Have 40 % of residents become members (37 % in 2020).
- Hold the highest loan rate among Québec cities with populations of 100,000 or more (4.4 million loans in 2019).
- Be first in terms of library use in cities with populations of 100,000 or more and position Bibliothèque de Québec above the Canadian average.
- Welcome 1 million visitors and lend 1 million documents a year at the new Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy.



Architectural drawing of the future Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy. Credit: Saucier + Perrotte | GLCRM.



## Support for Québec, UNESCO City of Literature Projects

Since 2018, Québec City and the Government of Québec have supported cultural initiatives through a funding program. Until 2023, \$120,000 per year will be provided to support the projects of cultural organizations in Québec City and Wendake, with up to \$30,000 per project.

The objectives of this program are to:

- Promote writing and reading in Québec City and Wendake.
- Enhance the visibility of literature, writers, literary artists, and cultural organizations in Québec City and Wendake and further their growth and success.

Priority is given to unique, innovative, or original projects and that have the support of high-quality partners. Management has been entrusted to ICQ, which has put together a selection committee of representatives from the field to assess applications.



*Poésie sur les toits*, poetic fragment by Catherine Côté on the Lomer-Gouin ferry.



## Putting Literature Front and Centre in Local Events

Québec City is widely known for its cultural vibrancy and hosts many major events, including literary events. It supports literary organizations that reach hundreds of thousands of people every year.

From 2022 to 2025 as a UNESCO City of Literature, Québec City plans to expand its presence at major events and connect with a diverse audience by collaborating with educational institutions and community organizations active with seniors and cultural communities.

### Upcoming Major Events:

- Opening of the new Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy and unveiling of its programming.
- Events and festivals such as Québec en toutes lettres, Salon international du livre de Québec, Québec BD, Mois de la poésie, Festival de contes et menteries, ImagiNation, and the First Nations Book Fair.
- Possible collaborations between literary organizations and major events in other disciplines such as the Québec Winter Carnival (the world's largest of its kind), the Québec Summer Festival (current music), Manif d'art (visual arts), Festival de cinéma de la Ville de Québec (film), or Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France (history) and Rendez-vous d'histoire de Québec (history).



*Ceci n'est pas une pub poetry banner.* Photo credit: Nadia Morin.



## MAIN INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCITY COOPERATION INITIATIVES

### Hosting the Annual Literary Cities Subnetwork Meeting

Each year, representatives of the literary cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network meet for three days to discuss their subnetwork's internal affairs and to oversee the development of joint projects and the admission of new members. Québec City hopes to host this gathering of some 60 people by 2025 and take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen ties between its literary community and that of other cities.

The event will include visits and literary activities and showcase local projects and the vibrancy of Québec City's literary community. It will set the stage for international collaborations for the local literary community and the subnetwork, as well as promote the designation nationally among the public.



Literary Cities Banners – Annual Creative Cities Meeting, Fabriano, 2019. Photo credit: Christiane Vadnais.

## New Creative Residencies

From 2022 to 2025, Québec City will step up its participation in writers-in-residence exchanges by developing new partnerships between organizations in Québec City and the Network's other member cities. Maison de la littérature, Québec BD, Rhizome, and several other organizations are already supporting dozens of exchanges between writers from Québec City and abroad every year. These new creative residencies directly impact the output and networks of at least ten artists and also help develop the international network of literary organizations in Québec City.

### Maison de la littérature

- A three-way residency with Québec City, Bilbao (City of Design, Spain), and Angoulême (City of Literature, France), in collaboration with La Cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image and Azkuna Zentroa and with the support of the Cultural Development Agreement.
- Second year of exchange with Krakow (City of Literature, Poland) and development of collaborations with other Network cities as opportunities arise.

### Première Ovation – Literary Arts

- Continuation of the UNESCO-LOJLQ residency for young writers.

### Québec BD

- *Quatre saisons de bande dessinée* program, an annual project through which four comic book authors from Network cities come to ply their craft in Québec City and participate in the events (literary and otherwise) marking the seasons.



Maison de la littérature.



## Three-Way Montréal–Québec City–Toronto Project

In 2021, the Canadian UNESCO Creative Cities—Montréal (design), Québec City (literature) and Toronto (media arts)—began discussions to expand their collaboration.

This could take many forms:

- Sharing best practices related to the designation and their participation in the Network.
- Connecting creators and participating in each other's programming activities.
- Establishing a joint artistic project combining the creative fields of each city (design, media arts, and literature) to be presented successively in each city and, subsequently, rolled out internationally in other Network cities.



Montréal



Québec City



Toronto

## PROVISIONAL BUDGET

Estimated spending related to the designation and support for the literary community from 2021 to 2025 is **\$76 million**, broken down as follows:

- **Specific projects for Québec City, UNESCO City of Literature:** \$825,000 invested in flagship projects specific to the designation, in calls for projects with Québec City organizations, and for promotion and operations.
- **Municipal library management:** \$72 million for annual library management, cultural programming, and document acquisition.
- **Support for major literary events:** \$1.9 million.
- **Première Ovation Young Writers Program:** \$469,000.
- **Operating support for literary organizations:** \$361,000.
- **Project support for literary organizations:** \$400,000.

Of this estimated spending, excluding municipal library management, the ratio of local initiatives to international initiatives is 98 % to 2 %.

In contrast, for non-library projects, such as literary art production and dissemination projects, the ratio of local initiatives to international initiatives is 62 % to 38 %.

The estimated revenue from the designation from 2021 to 2025 is \$76 million, broken down as follows:

- Cultural Development Agreement: \$1.1 million.
- New requests to Québec City – to be confirmed: \$575,000.
- Resources and operations (salaries, infrastructure, equipment, events): \$74.3 million.

## PROMOTION STRATEGY

The 2021–2025 Bibliothèque de Québec Development Vision sets the goal of doubling awareness of the designation to 35 % by 2025 in the Québec City area.

This target will be achieved by:

- Launching a website dedicated to the designation.
- Developing a promotional toolkit for partners.
- Gaining visibility at book venues (public libraries and bookstores) and literary events.
- Expanding press relations.
- Launching a competition connected to the *Vieux-Québec littéraire* rally to generate public interest.
- Developing reciprocal promotional partnerships with literary and cultural organizations in Québec City.

These actions are in addition to those already underway, such as a thrice-yearly newsletter, weekly postings on social networks (Facebook and Instagram), and advertising in literary magazines.

These measures have already proven their ability to attract a large community interested in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Québec City as a City of Literature, and related projects.



Greeting card by Pascale Bonenfant.





## 7 / COVID-19 INITIATIVES AND RECOVERY MEASURES

The public health situation since March 2020 has had a major impact on the cultural and literary life of Québec City, with the closure of venues, restrictions on gatherings, etc. Many of the measures needed to counter the pandemic directly impacted access to culture and artists' activities.

To make a strong, attractive contribution to the recovery and to support artists and cultural organizations, a number of cultural and literary initiatives have been put in place for the general public, healthcare workers, and out-of-town visitors. All of these activities put care and safety first while reinforcing the central place culture plays in Québec City's identity.

These activities held in appealing urban settings and at different times throughout the year, and ranging from artistic and cultural installations to performances and major events, were backed to the tune of several million dollars and gave people the opportunity to have fun, enjoy a change of pace, and break out of the isolation of the pandemic.

### **AN INVIGORATED LITERARY COMMUNITY**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, artists and literary organizations have been creative and resilient in continuing to provide audiences and readers with high-quality, accessible works that comply with public health measures. Several festivals or venues held fully or partially virtual events, such as:

- Maison de la littérature and Québec en toutes lettres Festival (204,000 people reached)
- First Nations Book Fair (10,000 people reached in virtual mode)
- Mois de la poésie (winner of the Institut canadien de Québec award for its quick adaptation to the pandemic)
- Québec BD (more than 80 activities, 30,000 views, including an international webinar on Québec comic books, with 225 participants from 10 countries)
- ImagiNation (7,200 participations or online views)
- Festival de contes et menteries (creator of several original mediation initiatives, such as videos of fairytales interpreted in Québec sign language)

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Several pandemic adaptation initiatives were documented by Littérature québécoise mobile, a research chair in Québec City headed by Professor René Audet of Université Laval.

These numerous and imaginative projects helped keep cultural life going and even germinated new ideas and approaches.



Morrin Centre, "Our Writings". Photo credit: Morrin Centre.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Québec City, UNESCO City of Literature, would like to thank its financial partners, all the cultural organizations, publishers, booksellers, authors, and everyone who works in literature and keeps its heart beating every day.

Thank you, also, to the people of Québec City for attending events large and small, in libraries or between the pages of a book.



# APPENDIX 1:

## OTHER NOTEWORTHY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

### **Comfort Calls from the Bibliothèque de Québec**

In order to break the isolation for seniors and brighten their day during the pandemic, Bibliothèque de Québec started making comfort calls to residents aged 65 and over. Reading facilitators called these members to offer them a reading of their choice over the phone and generally check in with them. 11,475 calls have been made since November 2020.

### **Confluence Crossroads of Local Literature**

The *Confluence* project was launched by Table des lettres du Conseil de la culture in 2019. A website, a public event, and 15,000 copies of an original booklet were used to invite the population of Québec City to explore the world of literature. The project was publicized in 413 public venues and involved more than 20 artists and organizations.

### **La Grande traversée poétique**

This multilingual poetry marathon, launched by Québec en toutes lettres, brought together 200 poets from some 20 countries and attracted 2,666 spectators. From October 23 to 25, 2020, videoed readings flooded the contributors' social media for 12 hours. Seven Network cities and 18 Canadian partners collaborated on this massive virtual gathering.

### **Philosophy Day (in collaboration with UNESCO)**

Québec City was one of the architects of *Philosophy Day*, held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2018 and presenting *La philosophie s'illustre, une rencontre Québec-France*, a dialogue involving authors, artists, and philosophers. Produced by Québec BD and funded under the Cultural Development Agreement between Québec City and the Government of Québec, this discussion between Jean-Marc Narbonne (Québec) and Éric Hamraoui (France) was accompanied in drawing by Philippe Girard (Québec) and Cy (France) and in music by Webster (Québec) and was hosted by Nicolas Jobin (Québec).

### **Poésie sur les toits**

*Poésie sur les toits* consists of a series of five luminous artworks that have been installed in the centre of town since June 2021. These neon artworks, displayed on high, illuminate Québec City nights and showcase the literary exuberance of our city. Short poetic fragments were created by local writers (Anthony Charbonneau Grenier, Catherine Côté, Sébastien Émond, Mireille Gagné, and Andrée Levesque Sioui, whose poetic phrase is in the Wendat language) and installed in easily visible places on the facades of City Hall, Palais Montcalm, and Espace 400e, on the Québec-Lévis ferry, and at Place des Canotiers. A video was also produced to document the project process, from concept to installation.

## Première Ovation Literary Arts

Introduced in 2008 by Québec City, Première Ovation supports emerging local artists by giving them the means to create and the opportunity to benefit from the mentorship of renowned artists and engage in their first professional experiences. From 2018 to 2021, Première Ovation supported between 48 and 95 young writers each year. A total of \$431,686 was distributed, mostly in grants, fees, mentorships, and subsidies to organizations. The remarkable vitality of Québec City's literary artists of tomorrow is felt not only in the resulting publications, works, and events, but also in the success of the writers who have benefitted from the measure.

## Quialu.ca

In 2019, the Les libraires cooperative launched Québec's first social platform for books. In addition to providing a way for Francophone readers in Québec and across Canada to meet up virtually, quialu.ca also connects visitors to the booksellers in its network. With nearly 5,000 user accounts created and more than 8,200 comments posted on the platform, quialu.ca has generated broad discussion around thousands of works of all origins.

## Sur les rayons, Library Art

In 2021, an artistic palisade produced by Québec BD in collaboration with Ping Pong Ping was erected around the Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy site. This colourful, modular artwork uses books as the focus for a massive luminous display evoking both attraction and transmission and announcing the future library as a place of convergence for the people of Québec City.

## Québec City–Barcelona, a Comic Connection

Québec BD, an organization that publishes and promotes Québec comic books, and Escola Joso, a teaching centre dedicated to the ninth art in Barcelona, co-presented two one-month residencies. Spanish artists Javi Rey (2018) and Sandra Cardona (2019) were welcomed in April at the Québec BD festival and Semaine numériQC. In addition to getting to know the Québec comic book scene, the writers were able to meet the general public at the library.



## APPENDIX 2: 2018-2021 DETAILED BUDGET

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total for 4 years
<b>Québec City, UNESCO City of Literature, Projects</b>					
Projects specific to the designation	Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy artistic worksite decoration project	\$35,000			
	Work promoting the literary community – Confluence	\$36,000			
	UNESCO Première Ovation grant	\$8,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	
	Vieux-Québec littéraire (phase 1)	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	
	“Une ville, un livre”	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	
	Mediation Literary Awards – UNESCO Creative City of Literature	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
	Poésie sur les toits and videos			\$174,576	
	Québec City literary creation award at the Salon international du livre de Québec book fair	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	
	Jean-Noël Pontbriand Award (poetry)		\$4,000	\$4,000	
	Subtotal	\$56,000	\$123,000	\$270,576	\$545,576
	Project support – Québec City, UNESCO City of Literature	\$36,200	\$102,200	\$120,000	
	Designation management fees		8 065,98 \$	\$25,000	
	Promotion of the designation	\$9,600	10 146,28 \$	\$13,000	
	Outreach/Conference	\$4,200	\$10,539	\$12,000	
	Subtotal	\$106,000	\$254,699	\$428,576	\$1,055,276
<b>Bibliothèque de Québec management</b>					
	Annual management of public libraries	13,670 588 \$	\$14,108,358	\$14,200,073	\$14,777,238
	Cultural property acquisition contract	\$1,990,700	\$1,971,900	\$2,366,209	\$2,261,700
	Subtotal	\$15,663,306	\$16,082,277	\$16,568,302	\$17,040,959
<b>Major literary events</b>					
	Production subsidy for the Québec en toutes lettres Festival	\$260,000	\$275,000	\$260,000	\$260,000
	Production subsidy for the Salon du livre international de Québec book fair	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$105,000
	Subtotal	\$320,000	\$340,000	\$325,000	\$365,000
<b>Première Ovation en arts littéraires</b>					
	Première Ovation en arts littéraires (subsidy and management fees)	\$97,156	\$100,156	\$117,187	\$117,187
	Subtotal	\$99,289	\$100,156	\$117,187	\$433,819
<b>Support for literary organizations</b>					
	Project support	\$90,750	\$116,000	\$72,000	\$145,050
	Operational support	\$70,300	\$76,230	\$83,853	\$83,853
	Subtotal	\$161,050	\$192,230	\$155,853	\$228,903
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$68,931,975</b>

# APPENDIX 3: INITIATIVES RELATED TO THE NETWORK OBJECTIVES

## Network Objectives

1. Making culture and creativity an essential component of urban policies and actions for sustainable development, through a participatory approach and partnerships.
2. Developing hubs of creativity and innovation.
3. Broadening opportunities for artists and professionals in the cultural sector.
4. Integrating culture and creativity into local development strategies, policies, and plans.
5. Strengthening the creative economy.
6. Improving access to and participation in cultural life.
7. Strengthening the creation, production, distribution, and enjoyment of cultural goods and services.
8. Reinforcing international cooperation among creative cities.
9. Raising awareness of the Network.

OBJECTIVES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Main local initiatives</b>									
Enactment and promotion of the designation	X	X	X	X					
Une ville, un livre					X	X			
Vieux-Québec littéraire project							X		
Diversity and inclusion measure			X			X			
<b>Main intercity and international initiatives</b>									
UNESCO-LOJIC young writers residency		X	X					X	
Development of exchanges with UNESCO cities							X	X	
Promotion of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network within the Francophonie and promotion of linguistic diversity									X
<b>Action Plan – Local Initiatives</b>									
Bibliothèque de Québec 2021-2025 development vision				X		X	X		
Support for Québec, UNESCO City of Literature projects		X	X			X	X		
Putting Literature Front and Centre						X	X		
<b>Action Plan – international initiatives</b>									
Hosting the annual Literary Cities subnetwork meeting								X	
New creative residencies		X	X				X	X	
Three-way Montréal–Québec City–Toronto project		X	X				X	X	

# APPENDIX 4: LITERARY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES IN QUÉBEC CITY AND WENDAKE

## **Designation lead:**

- ICQ, Institut canadien de Québec

## **Financial partners:**

- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
- Les Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec

## **Partner associations:**

- Association nationale des éditeurs de livres
- Culture Capitale-Nationale et Chaudière-Appalaches – Table des lettres
- SDC Vieux-Québec
- Union des écrivaines et des écrivains du Québec

## **Literary organizations and events:**

- Library of the National Assembly
- Bibliothèque de Québec
- Bureau des affaires poétiques / Mois de la poésie
- Collectif RAMEN
- Congrès Boréal
- Les libraires cooperative
- CONTOURS
- Jamais Lu Festival
- Québec en toutes lettres Festival
- Kukai de Québec
- Kwahiatonhk! / First Nations Book Fair
- Promenade des écrivains
- Les Ami.e.s imaginaires / Festival de conte et menteries
- Les autres jours
- Maison de la littérature
- Morrin Centre / ImagiNation

- Parenthèses 9
- Poètes de l'Amérique française
- Productions Rhizome
- Québec BD
- Salon international du livre de Québec book fair
- Société littéraire de Charlesbourg
- Spoken Word Québec
- Tremplin d'actualisation de la poésie

## **Publishers, cultural enterprises, and journals:**

- Alto
- ATMA internationale
- Dauphin Blanc
- De Marque
- De Courberon
- Éditions Avantage
- Éditions Huit
- Éditions de l'Écume
- Éditions Passe-temps
- Foulire
- GID
- J'ai vu
- Hannenorak
- L'Hybride
- Marcel Broquet éditeur
- Midi trente
- Presses de l'Université du Québec
- Presses de l'Université Laval
- Septembre éditeur
- Septentrion
- Société historique de Québec
- Sylvain Harvey
- Études littéraires
- Lapsus
- L'écrit primal

- Le Crachoir de Flaubert
- Les libraires
- Nuit blanche
- Revue Chameaux

## **Bookstores:**

- Archambault
- Coopsco Sainte-Foy
- Coopsco F.-X. Garneau
- La Maison anglaise
- Le Mot de tasse
- Librairie Charbourg
- Librairie du Quartier
- Hannenorak Bookstore
- Librairie Laliberté
- Librairie Morency
- Librairie Pantoute
- Librairie Première issue
- Librairie Saint-Jean-Baptiste
- Librairie Vaugois
- L'imaginaire
- Mediaspaul
- Renaud-Bray
- Zone – Université Laval cooperative

## **Specialized media:**

- Epilogue
- Les bouquins d'abord
- Saturday to read





