

A Practitioner's Guide to
Multisite CLC Development



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Purpose of this Guide

This Practitioner's Guide is designed to support school boards, school principals, centre directors, and ¹Community Development Agents (CDAs) as they **design, deepen, and sustain multisite Community Learning Centres (CLCs)** in Québec.

It responds to two realities:

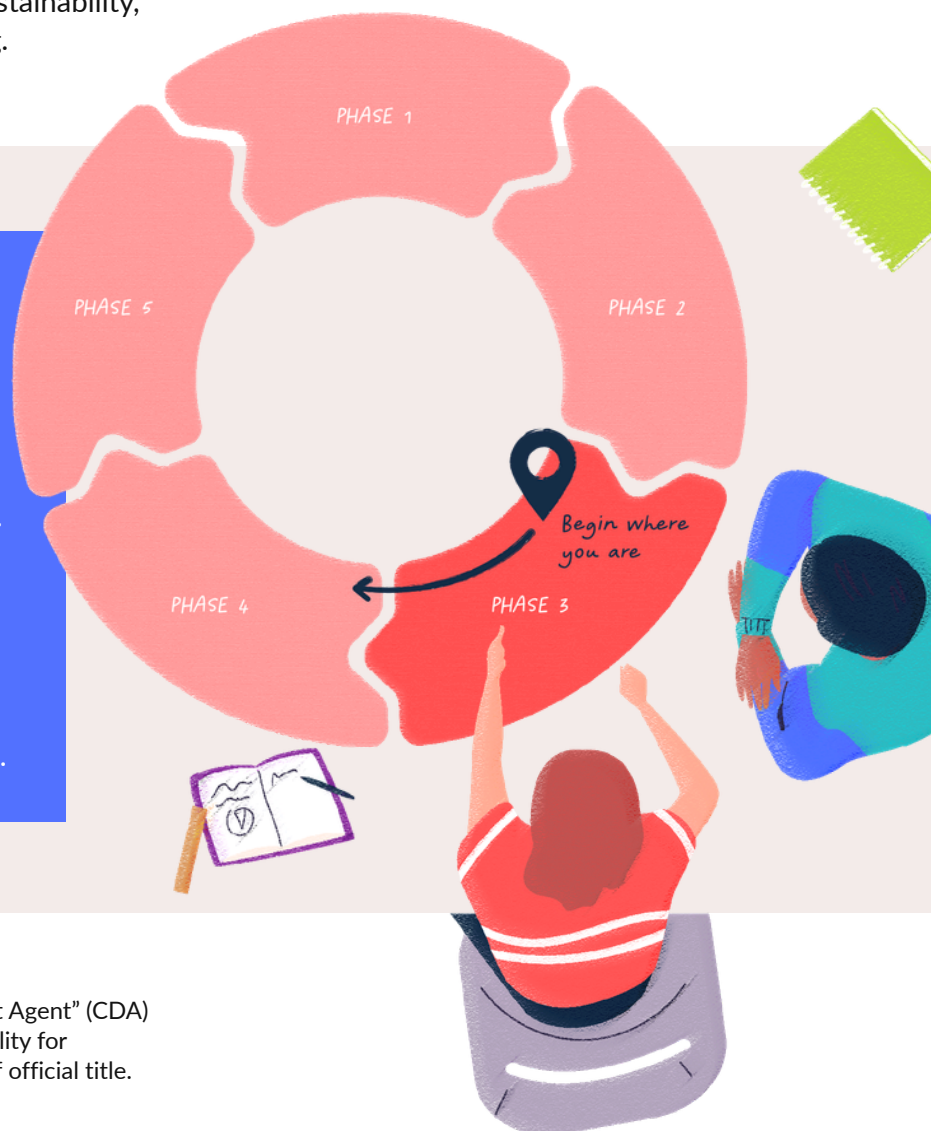
- Multisite CLCs are now the **dominant and viable structure** for growth in the network.
- Systemic pressures (e.g., staffing shortages, leadership turnover, annualized planning requirements) have made it harder to work with depth, coherence, and long-term intent.

This guide therefore emphasizes:

- clarity of mandate,
- long-view planning,
- community vitality and linguistic sustainability,
- and data-informed decision-making.

At the heart of this guide is its most practical element: a **step-by-step framework for multisite CLC development**.

This framework is designed as an iterative cycle rather than a linear sequence. For those working within established sites, take stock of what is already in place, begin where you are, and return to earlier steps as needed to improve and strengthen the work.



¹ In this document, "Community Development Agent" (CDA) refers to any person or team carrying responsibility for implementing the CLC Action Plan, regardless of official title.

What do we mean by “Multisite” Today?

A contemporary definition

A **multisite Community Learning Centre** is a single CLC mandate implemented across multiple schools/centres within a shared geographic area - typically a municipal regional county (MRC) - and community context.

A multisite CLC:

- is guided by a **shared vision** and a coherent strategy, articulated in the **CLC Action Plan**;
- is supported by **shared governance and leadership structures**;
- intentionally works **across schools and centres**, not merely in parallel;
- leverages community partnerships for **collective, regional impact**.

In practice, the term multisite now refers to what was previously described as an extended model (from 2015 to 2025).

What a multisite CLC is *not*

A multisite CLC is **not**:

- a collection of independent schools/centres sharing a CDA;
- a short-term efficiency measure;
- a simple duplication of single-site activities;
- a purely program-delivery mechanism.

When multisite work lacks shared vision or governance, it risks becoming fragmented and unsustainable.



Why Multisite CLCs Matter in Québec

Minority-language realities

English-language schools and centres in Québec are more than educational institutions. They are:

- cultural anchors;
- community hubs;
- key contributors to **institutional completeness** for English-speaking communities - which refers to a community's ability to meet members' needs and sustain its identity.

Multisite CLCs are uniquely positioned to:

- increase the visibility of English institutions within regional ecosystems;
- strengthen relationships across generations, sectors, and between majority- and minority-language institutions;
- support community vitality alongside educational success through coordinated action and shared influence, for example by working with organizational partners to: introduce early childhood services within schools to promote kindergarten readiness and strengthen families' connection to English-language institutions;
 - expand the use of school and centre buildings beyond the school day for community-wide learning, cultural, and recreational activities; use them as access points for health and social services; and provide a safe, familiar setting where English-speaking families can meet service providers - bridging access to services often delivered through French-language institutions;
 - coordinate transition supports across schools and centres so students and families are better prepared and more aware of community-based services that can respond to shared challenges.

Educational success and community vitality

In the Québec CLC framework, **educational success and community vitality are inseparable.**

Multisite CLCs support educational success by:

- expanding access to resources and services for students, families and educators;
- supporting smoother transitions across the educational continuum;
- reducing the isolation of small or rural schools and centres.

They support community vitality by:

- building and sustaining local partnerships over time;
- reinforcing a sense of belonging to English-language institutions;
- strengthening coordination and collaboration between majority- and minority-language institutions;
- connecting schools and centres to broader community priorities;
- informing the community about school and centre priorities.

Multisite CLCs exist within a distinct linguistic and socio-political context.

Core Outcomes of a Strong Multisite CLC

Every multisite CLC should be able to articulate how it contributes to the following outcomes:

1. Educational success (broadly defined)

- student engagement and well-being;
- family access to supports;
- smoother school transitions.

2. Community vitality

- sustainable school-community relationships;
- intergenerational participation;
- visibility and active presence of English institutions in the region;
- the capacity to mobilize and influence majority-language institutions in support of minority-language priorities.

3. Institutional completeness

- strengthened English-language networks;
- cross-sector collaboration;
- greater cooperation and, where bilingual capacity permits, coordination of services between majority- and minority language institutions
- continuity beyond individual programs or staff members.

The Role of the Community Development Agent in a Multisite Context

The CDA as system builder

In a multisite CLC, the CDA's primary role is **systems-level community development**.

Key responsibilities in implementing the CLC Action Plan include:

- maintaining a shared vision across schools and centres;
- building and sustaining partnerships that serve multiple sites;
- identifying common issues and opportunities across the region;
- connecting educational priorities with community realities.

This systems-level work strengthens alignment, shared ownership, and access to resources across sites, creating the conditions for meaningful and sustainable impact.

Programming remains important, but it is **an outcome of systems work**, not the core function.



Warning sign: when a CDA spends most of their time coordinating single-site events, the multisite model is at risk of losing depth.

Conditions for CDA success

Multisite CDAs require:

- clearly defined roles, responsibilities and tasks;
- structured supervision that reflects a multisite mandate.

Because CDAs operate across schools and centres and at the community level, principals/directors and designated school board personnel play a critical role in protecting the integrity of the mandate.

In practice, school and centre principals often have the greatest influence over how the role is interpreted day to day. When the position is treated as primarily site-based or limited to regular school hours, it restricts the CDA's ability to participate in partnership tables and to coordinate or supervise after-school and community activities - both of which are central to effective multisite work.

CDAs are encouraged to prepare periodic updates on the progression of the CLC Action Plan for school governing boards; these may be communicated by the school/centre principal or a designated staff member. Keeping governing boards informed supports transparency, informed decision-making, and alignment with the CLC Action Plan.

Governance and Collective Leadership

Shared ownership

Multisite CLCs depend on **collective leadership**.

Effective governance includes:

- active involvement of school board leadership;
- regular collaboration among principals;
- meaningful inclusion of the CDA in decision-making;
- mechanisms to include partner and community voice.

Regional Planning and Coordination Group

Multisite CLCs benefit from a regional planning and coordination group that:

- supports shared priority-setting and alignment across schools and centres, while respecting the authority of each principal/director within their school/centre;
- contributes to decisions related to resource use and strategic direction at a regional level;
- maintains a focus on long-term priorities and alignment, rather than day-to-day operations;
- provides continuity and coherence across sites, particularly in contexts of staff or leadership turnover.



Regional Planning and Coordination Group membership may include school and centre principals/directors, teachers and/or staff members, school board personnel, representatives from local organizations, and members of the community.

Planning with the Long View

The role of a CLC Multi-Year Vision

A multi-year perspective is a core component of effective CLC practice. Establishing a **CLC Multi-Year Vision** helps anchor the work over time and provides continuity across changing contexts.

The CLC Multi-Year Vision:

- establishes a 3-5 year direction for the work;
- identifies three broad outcome areas and the longer-term results the CLC is working toward;
- outlines the changes in relationships, access to services, and community conditions that will support progress toward these outcomes;
- draws on both school/centre and community data to inform priorities;
- articulates how progress will be monitored.

The Multi-Year Vision provides a stable reference point across changing contexts, including:

- leadership turnover;
- staffing changes or shortages;
- shifting school or centre-level priorities.
- The CLC Multi-Year Vision is developed and endorsed by all participating principals/directors, along with the school board representative. This supports continuity of established priorities, partnerships, and commitments over time, and provides a shared reference point for decision-making, particularly in contexts of leadership change.

Connecting the multi-year vision to annual action plans

The CLC Multi-Year Vision informs the development of the annual CLC Action Plan.

Each year, the Action Plan:

- identifies priority actions aligned with the longer-term direction;
- reflects current needs and opportunities within schools/centres and communities;
- serves as a cycle of implementation and learning within the broader vision.

This relationship helps ensure that:

- efforts remain focused and cumulative over time;
- new staff and partners can situate their work within an established direction;
- progress is not lost when priorities or personnel shift.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Data as a tool for feedback and learning

Data in multisite CLCs should support:

- reflection;
- sense-making;
- strategic adjustment.

Useful questions include:

What patterns are emerging across schools/centres?
What outcomes are stable over time?
Where are partnerships deepening or thinning?

What to measure

Beyond counting activities and participation rates, multisite CLCs should seek to monitor:

- effectiveness of programs and activities in relationship to long term goals;
- quality and longevity of partnerships;
- cross-school/centre collaboration;
- indicators of community engagement and belonging;
- indicators of school climate and student engagement.



Common Pitfalls to Watch For

Multisite CLCs are most vulnerable when:

Roles, responsibilities, and tasks are not clearly defined and shared across sites: the CDA role becomes unclear; responsibility for coordination, partnership development, and implementation is not distributed; and limited structures are in place to support cross-site collaboration and shared ownership.

Community vitality is assumed rather than cultivated: programming focuses solely on student services without deliberate effort to strengthen institutional relationships, intergenerational participation, or visibility of English-language institutions.

Scale outpaces governance: additional sites or programs are added without clarifying decision-making authority, supervision structures, or resource allocation across schools and centres.

Vision is implicit rather than explicit: partners and principals/directors cannot clearly articulate the shared purpose, intended outcomes, or how site-level work connects to a broader vision.

Planning becomes purely annual and reactive: priorities shift each year based on immediate pressures, with no multi-year vision guiding program selection or partnership development.



Naming these risks early allows teams to adjust structures, clarify expectations, and realign with their long-term mandate.

Final Reflection

In Québec's English-language education sector, multisite CLCs remain one of the most powerful tools for:

- sustaining communities;
- strengthening institutions;
- supporting learners and families in durable ways.

This guide invites practitioners to slow down, look long, and build systems that last.

About the Sources and Evidence Behind This Guide

This guide is grounded in over a decade of learning from Québec's Community Learning Centre (CLC) initiative, with particular emphasis on research and evaluation focused on **multisite practice in English-language communities**.

Its insights draw primarily from:

- **Québec-based research (2023–2024)** on multisite CLCs, community vitality, and institutional completeness in English-speaking minority contexts;
- the **2018 CLC Extended Model Evaluation**, which examined early multisite implementation across Québec school boards and identified key conditions for depth, coherence, and sustainability;
- accumulated practitioner knowledge from CDAs, principals/directors, school board leaders, and community partners working within real system constraints.

Where relevant, the guide also draws on international frameworks for 'community school' development and Canada Heritage's framework for promoting community vitality in minority language communities, while remaining firmly anchored in **Québec's governance, linguistic, and funding realities**. A complete list of references can be found at the end of this document.

What follows is a practitioner-oriented resource that reflects both evidence and lived experience, and that is intended to evolve alongside the CLC network itself.

Multisite Start Up: A Step-by-Step Pathway

This is a practical start-up companion for multisite leaders (principals, directors, CDAs, school board representatives) outlining the five phases to Multisite CLC Development:

CLC Development Cycle



Use it as your **minimum viable operating procedure**. If you already have elements in place, start where you are and loop back to refine your practice.

Explore

Goal: build shared understanding and a common picture of the multisite CLC; confirm readiness.

Time estimate: 8–12 weeks

Steps (in order):

- 1. Create the leadership triangle:** principals/directors + CDA + board lead. Set a standing monthly meeting (60–90 min). Discuss roles and responsibilities: How do we hope to work together, and what do we need from one another for this to succeed?
- 2. Learn from practice:** visit up to three existing CLCs that resemble your region and/or school/centre groupings; if you are expanding an existing CLC (single or multisite), explicitly learn from the originating site(s). Capture what you might like to “borrow / adapt / avoid.”
- 3. Build a shared understanding:** host a working session to answer: *What problem(s) might we try to address collectively through a multisite CLC? Why does it matter for educational success **and** community vitality?*
- 4. Create a ‘Relationships Inventory’:** quick mapping of each school/centre’s existing community connections + who “holds” them (so you don’t lose them with turnover).
 - a. Consider using [this tool](#) to capture organizations by outcome area.

Outputs: Inventory of existing community connections across sites; 2–4 candidate focus areas / promising strategies to explore further; shared understanding of roles, meeting cadence (i.e., established, recurring meeting schedule).



Initiate

Goal: move from interest to commitment; identify targeted outcome areas, identify core partnership possibilities.

Time estimate: 8–12 weeks

Steps (in order):

1. Present the multisite CLC to school/centre staff and provide opportunities for the CDA to build relationships and learn about staff contexts.

2. Capture needs and assets across participating schools/centres, their local communities, and the broader regional English-speaking community to identify shared gaps and leverage points.

- a. “Community Conversations” can help schools and centres better understand local and regional needs and assets, while building stronger relationships with staff and community members.
- b. **Collect and review existing data** from participating schools/centres, the school board, and relevant governmental and community-based sources (e.g., Statistics Canada; organizations involved in the Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI) led by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN); Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT); the Regional Development Network (RDN); Y4Y).

3. Develop a three-scale “community portrait” summarizing (1) key needs, (2) assets, and (3) points of commonality across sites.

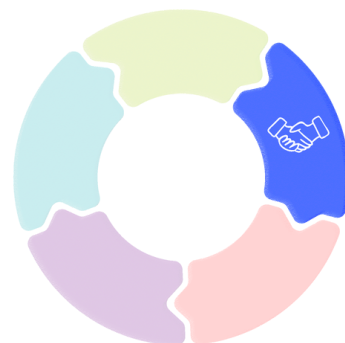
4. Articulate a multi-year CLC vision that:

- a. **Establishes a 3-5 year direction** by identifying a small number of shared priority outcome areas (e.g., youth mental health) and the longer-term results the CLC aims to achieve (e.g., improved access to services and resources for youth and families);
- b. **Defines the key shifts** needed in relationships, access to services, and community conditions to support progress toward these outcomes;
- c. **Draws on school/centre and community data** to inform priorities and decision-making;
- d. **Outlines how progress will be monitored**, including indicators and approaches to tracking change over time.

5. Initiate exploratory partnership conversations (typically led by the CDA) with organizations already connected to participating schools/centres and aligned with the emerging needs and result areas. Use these conversations to assess interest, alignment, and capacity. Formal agreements or Memorandums of Understanding can be developed later, once core partners and shared results are confirmed.

Outputs: community portrait; multi-year CLC Vision; exploratory partnership conversations.

Note: Do not skip Step 4. Without clearly defined shared outcome areas, multisite initiatives tend to fragment into parallel projects rather than function as a collective strategy. This step anchors collaboration and prevents mission drift.



Plan

Goal: build a focused **Action Plan** grounded in a **CLC Multi-Year Vision**

Time estimate: 8–12 weeks

Steps (in order):

1. Determine desired results: For each shared result area, define what success looks like in the long term, then work backward to identify the medium- and short-term results needed to get there. Capture this as a single, shared results pathway.

2. Select programs, services, and community roundtables: Identify the smallest set of high-leverage interventions and spheres of influence. Avoid “shopping lists.”

3. Confirm and establish capacity: Identify conditions for success (e.g., opportunities for the CDA to connect with school/centre staff, time, partner capacity, office space, access to building space after school hours etc.) and establish an initial sequence of priorities.

- a. **Develop a presence plan for the CDA:** Based on identified resources, conditions, and priorities, determine how time will be allocated across schools/centres and where the CDA can work within each site.
- b. **Establish site-level coordination:** Principals/directors are encouraged to identify a site-based team or point person responsible for day-to-day logistics and operational coordination related to anticipated services and programs.

4. Determine scope of implementation: Decide which programs and services will be deployed across all sites and which will be implemented at select sites.

5. Identify priority community roundtable(s) for CDA(s) to take part in: Determine which roundtable(s) are most likely to advance the shared mission and results. If none fit the bill, consider creating your own “Community Connections Committee”.

6. Identify indicators of success and data collection methods: Measure what matters, establish feasible data-monitoring mechanisms across sites, and avoid unnecessary data burden. Create a plan/schedule to monitor data.

- a.

7. Formalize the plan with partners: Where appropriate, CDAs work toward establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with organizational partners to reduce the risk of service interruption over time.

a. MoUs are typically signed by one or more school/centre principals/directors.

8. Formulate the Action Plan: Use the CLC Multi-Year Vision to inform annual action planning and sequencing of activities.

Outputs: CLC Multi-Year Vision; multisite Annual Action Plan;
Simple/feasible multisite data monitoring plan



Implement

Goal: deliver services and build capacity without losing coherence across sites.

Time estimate: 6-10 months for the first full cycle (then ongoing)

Steps (in order):

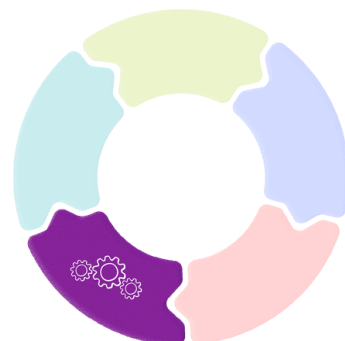
1. Allocate resources & begin delivery: Begin with a small set of action-plan-aligned services to test and refine the multisite model. As delivery ramps up, protect CDA systems-building time by clearly defining what the CDA will and will not take on.

- a. CDA(s) is best positioned to focus on cross-site coordination, shared learning, data integration and monitoring, resource acquisition (e.g., grants, developing new partnerships), relational maintenance with organizational partners and reporting. To support this focus, site-based teams are encouraged to retain ownership of site-specific logistics and day-to-day operational tasks, rather than defaulting these responsibilities to CDA.

2. Build capacity: develop site champions; put in place shared tools (calendar, feedback mechanisms, defined referral pathways that connect students and families to appropriate local service providers etc.).

3. Monitor: review data monthly to check for reach, quality, partner strain, equity across sites.

Outputs: operating cadence; a few “signature” cross-site strategies that build visibility + vitality; clarity of roles and responsibilities.



Evaluate

Goal: make sense of results, communicate value, and feed learning into the next cycle.

Time estimate: 4-6 weeks at year-end (plus regular data collection throughout the year)

Steps (in order):

1. **Collect additional data:** collect qualitative data (stories, observations, feedback from partners and school/centre staff) to combine with quantitative data collected throughout the school year.
2. **Analyze cross-site patterns:** what's consistent, what varies, what's trending.
3. **Prepare a report (multi-format):** short written summary + partner debrief + community-facing communication; include "lessons learned" and next-cycle adjustments. Share with all implicated stakeholders.
4. **The leadership team considers changes / adjustments** to make moving forward.

Outputs: operating cadence; a few "signature" cross-site strategies that build visibility + vitality; clarity of roles and responsibilities.

The depth and scope of evaluation can evolve over time. Early on, multisite CLCs may benefit from ongoing, high-level monitoring, complemented by more in-depth evaluations of key outcome areas conducted periodically (e.g., every few years).



Support Available Throughout the Process

LEARN's Provincial Resource Team (PRT) is available to support every phase of multisite CLC development - from early exploration through planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Support may include:

- facilitated planning and sense-making sessions;
- coaching and consultations with principals/directors, community development agents, and school board leaders;
- tools and templates for CLC Multi-Year Visioning and Annual Action Planning, and evaluation;
- accompaniment during periods of transition, growth, or leadership turnover.

Multisite CLC work is complex by design. Engaging third-party support helps leadership teams maintain **coherence, depth, and momentum over time**, especially in the face of system pressures.

Contact: prt@learnquebec.ca

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