



RÉSEAU jeunes



Vol 6 | No 1 | November 2014
fiqsante.qc.ca

BULLETIN DU RÉSEAU DES JEUNES DE LA FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC



OS-TERRE-RIZ-THÉ [AUSTERITY] = LEAN REGIME?

The 10th edition of the FIQ Youth Network was held in November, the meeting much anticipated by the healthcare professionals age 30 and younger. Like the other editions, this meeting was an opportunity to reflect on and talk about a current event. This time, austerity was at the heart of the discussions.

What's austerity all about? Can it have impacts on women, healthcare professionals? What real interest is there in *austerizing* the population? Is it for the future of the children or for that of the bankers? For two days, the participants at the Youth Network tried to answer those questions.

First Network since the elections last spring, the renewed Youth Committee is a perfect blend of experience, youth and vibrancy. I am very impressed by the vitality and the commitment of these young union representatives who represent the future of the Federation. They can be proud of their first Network!

Marie-Claude Ouellet, Political Officer for the Youth Committee



Bulletin du Réseau des jeunes de la FIQ, Vol. 6, No. 1, November 2014 | **Political Officer:** Marie-Claude Ouellet | **Written by:** Suzanne Prévost and Marc Thibault-Bellerose, Union Consultants, Sociopolitical Sector | **Writing, revision and coordination of the production:** Marie Eve Lepage, Union Consultant, Communication-Information Service | **Translation:** Susan Millroy, Union Consultant, Translation Service | **Secretariat:** Luce Dessureault | **Design and graphic layout:** Josée Roy | ISSN 1920-6089 (Online) | www.fiqsante.qc.ca | info@fiqsante.qc.ca



Philippe Hurteau, researcher at the *Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS)*

FISCALITY AND AUSTERITY: MYTHS AND ALTERNATIVES

The young participants at the Network had the opportunity to attend a conference by Philippe Hurteau entitled “*Fiscalité et austérité: mythes et alternatives*” (Fiscality and austerity: myths and alternatives). Researcher at the *Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS)* and doctor of political science, Mr. Hurteau succeeded in demystifying, in an eloquent and graphic manner, what is behind the discourse on austerity which is often presented to us as fate.

Throughout his presentation, the young audience came to better understand that the current precarious state of public finances is not due to a “grocery list” of expenses that are beyond Québec’s means or made on credit. This precarious state is instead due to the multi-billion dollar rescue efforts of the financial sector, in a crisis at the end of the last decade.

Moreover, the deficit in the name of which the Government assumes they are entitled to apply the chainsaw everywhere, is, at least in part, a result of its own creation, because it is based on hypotheses which do not represent the real expenses for the Québec State. So, now, it is convenient to ask ourselves why the untruths? What interest does it have in presenting us figures which do not add up and offering us a misleading image of reality?

On this, Philippe Hurteau was very clear: it is because the Couillard

Government is looking to justify the dismantling of the social solidarity tools and the sharing of the wealth in favour of the privileged class who find themselves very well represented on the Council of Ministers. Indeed, with socio-demographic studies to back him, the IRIS researcher stated that 1% of the wealthiest in Québec is essentially composed of men, residing west of St. Laurent Blvd. in Montréal, and with a job profile of business owner, banker or ... physician specialist!

Lastly, Mr. Hurteau concluded his much appreciated presentation by demonstrating that even if we accept the legitimacy of the idea that public finances are in a precarious state, there is a whole range of alternative measures to bail out the State’s coffers and to spend better, without however affecting the social fabric and the model of society based on solidarity and sharing. This sets the scene for the follow-up of the Network.

AND IF WE BREAK THE ICE

What is my name? In which institution do I work? Is this the first Youth Network that I have attended? What are my expectations of this Network?

Those are the questions which the participants at the Youth Network must first answer, standing up in front of the group, microphone in hand. A great way to break the ice, right?



1. Cassandra Massé, McGill University Health Centre 2. Lysandre Hélène Désilets, *CSSS Bécancour-Nicolet-Yamaska* 3. Marianne Rose De Leon, Maimonides Geriatric Centre 4. Michael Potvin, *CSSS de Papineau* 5. Marie-Michelle Gouveia, *CSSS du Suroît* 6. Mélanie Roy-Beaulieu, *Centre d'accueil Saint-Joseph de Lévis inc.*



A RALLY, ROLES PLAYED EXCEEDINGLY WELL

As has been done in the past, the young people attending this 10th edition of the Network participated in an outside rally. In teams of 4 or 5 people, they had to then respond to a series of questions. One distinction: this time, they had to address the issues as a single mother, student, small business, daycare centre, a senior citizen, large business, bank, provincial government, private healthcare employment agency or a middle class family with two children. Role-playing which aroused this group of young people on this 2nd morning of the Network.



Kim de Baene, communication and liaison officer with the members on the *Table des regroupements provinciaux d'organismes communautaires et bénévoles* (Table of provincial community and volunteer groups)

10 BILLION SOLUTIONS

To encourage reflection by the Network participants on the solutions that can counter the austerity measures advocated by the Government, the Youth Committee invited Kim de Baene from the *Coalition opposée à la tarification et à la privatisation des services publics* (*Coalition main rouge*). Ms de Baene presented some of the solutions developed and put forward by the Coalition.

First of all, she gave a brief history of the Coalition and its various actions since its creation in 2009. Note that the FIQ has been a member since then. Then, Ms de Baene presented the objectives of the campaign “*10 milliards de solutions. Nous avons les moyens de faire autrement!*”. The objective of this campaign is to put into perspective the different options available to the Government for increasing the State’s revenue. It could avoid the cuts in public services and social programmes, in particular.

Four of the 18 solutions written as part of the campaign were presented to the participants:

1. The addition of six taxation levels to the four that already exist would make it possible to take in a billion dollars in additional revenue, while allowing the income taxes of 87% of tax-paying Quebecers to be reduced.
2. The creation of a completely public drug insurance plan and measures aimed at controlling the costs of medication could generate savings of around a billion dollars for the State.

3. The reinstatement of the capital tax on banks and other financial institutions in order to get about 600 million dollars and would force these institutions and banks to pay income taxes.
4. A reduction in subsidies and an increase in the tax rate of companies (the latter pay about 3.9% in taxes as opposed to 20.9% for individuals) would replenish the State’s coffers with about 1.72 billion dollars.

The campaign’s brochure, containing the 18 solutions recommended by the Coalition, was given to each one of the participants. Ms de Baene concluded her speech, very appreciated by the participants, by stressing the importance of mobilizing to promote the solutions over those of the Government. She also reminded the group that austerity is not inevitable and that the State has “10 billion solutions” at its disposal.

The
next
generation...

You said RREGOP?

Media: the necessity to always have a critical eye with you



Diane Bouchard, Union Consultant in the FIQ Social Security Sector

YOU SAID RREGOP?

On the last day of the Youth Network, the participants welcomed Diane Bouchard, Union Consultant in the FIQ Social Security Sector. Ms Bouchard was invited to speak to them about RREGOP, the pension plan for the healthcare professionals, in light of the recent Government attacks on this type of pension plan. The goal of her presentation was to explain their importance for the future.

First, Ms Bouchard spoke about the history of RREGOP and explained its main terms and conditions. For example, for every year of participation at full time, the healthcare professional accumulates 2%, for a maximum of 76%, of her average salary for the five best-paid years, if she contributes for 38 years.

Then, Ms Bouchard addressed the issue of the funding of the plan. Since it was created, the employees and the employers have contributed equal parts. The parties also share the temporary deficits that can arise over the course of a period. All the terms and conditions are negotiated, in good faith, by these two players. The RREGOP is sufficiently funded to meet its annual obligations of paying pensions to the retirees. Every year, numerous actuaries establish provisions in order to ensure that there is enough capital.

Ms Bouchard reminded the participants of the importance of maintaining a defined benefit plan, as this type of plan is among the only ones that guarantee a decent minimum of income for the current retirees and especially those to come. One advantage is that it forces the employers to contribute a certain percentage to the future pension benefits of their employees and they guarantee an income, regardless of the fluctuations in the financial markets. Therefore, the RREGOP must be maintained and defended by all the healthcare professionals, whatever their age, in order that they can benefit from it now or in 25 years.



Marc Thibault-Bellerose, Union Consultant in the Sociopolitical Sector at the FIQ.

MEDIA: THE NECESSITY TO ALWAYS HAVE A CRITICAL EYE

As part of the Network, the young participants were entitled to an extract from the sociopolitical training, given to the elected officers of the Federation for the past year. In this regard, Marc Thibault-Bellerose, Union Consultant in the FIQ Sociopolitical Sector, insisted on the need to always have a critical eye when exposed to the mass media. Indeed, the phenomenon of the concentration and the convergence of the media, combined with the growing insecurity of the publicly funded media, has resulted in information, an essential staple for citizen participation, now being at the behest of private interests.

So, the necessity to make profits, to shape public opinion according to the interests of the media owners and, lastly, to please advertisers who are looking for “available brain time” generate a paradoxical situation. In fact, although the population is exposed more than ever to information sources, it is less and less informed.

After Mr. Thibault-Bellerose had illustrated some of the strategies of mass manipulation commonly used in the media, the young participants took part in a practical exercise in which, as a team, they had to analyze newspaper articles with biases intended more for manipulation than in the interest of information.

THE FIQ, A STRONG VOICE, ACTIONS THAT COUNT



Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois

MOBILIZATION, OR THE ART OF GETTING THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS

One of the highlights of the Network was without a doubt the presentation by one of the most visible and articulate figures of the student movement during the *printemps érable*, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois. A model of commitment, activism and involvement against an austerity which has attacked the students just like the healthcare professionals, the young columnist, essayist and student in sociology succeeded in inspiring his audience.

The message passed by Mr. Nadeau-Dubois focused on conveying three lessons from the social and student movement in 2012, lessons that the union movement can and must adopt to have success in its upcoming battles. First, the young speaker showed that the massive mobilizations of 2012 were not spontaneous. They were not the result of a sudden awareness, but instead the fruit of very long work in awareness-raising carried out in the two years following the Bachand budget in 2010. Class by class, student by student, the associations representing their interests made the members aware of the dangers of the Liberal measures, but above all, to the necessity of mobilizing to confront them.

Secondly, Mr. Nadeau-Dubois insisted on the fact that the success of the student movement did not rest on the quality or the leadership of the student spokespersons, but instead on the collective strength which gave weight and legitimacy to the young leaders. In this respect, the strength of a movement always comes from

the mobilization and the adhesion of the basic membership which gives power to the head of the movement, and not the contrary, according to the ex-spokesperson for the *Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ)*.

Lastly, Mr. Nadeau-Dubois warned the participants against the magical thinking about the social networks. For him, if the social networks are a formidable mobilization and information sharing tool, they must never be considered as the starting point of awareness-raising and subsequent mobilization. Therefore, the social networks can never replace the spoken word and human contact as a means to make people believe in the necessity of mobilizing in order to change things. Facebook and Twitter in this world are tools which can serve to enhance the mobilization of someone who has been sensitized and convinced *a priori*.

In short, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois delivered an inspirational message filled with hope.

Generation



A very democratic 5 à 7

After its 2014 Convention, the Federation set up ENPAIR: the *Équipe des nouvelles pratiques et des approches d'innovation et de représentation*. (New practices and innovative approaches and representation team). A few of its members attended a 5 à 7 of the Youth Network to get the responses of the participants to the following question: considering the low rate of participation in the general assemblies, what are the only means to practice union democracy?

The ENPAIR greatly appreciated the input from the young participants of the Network and the latter really enjoyed themselves at this activity. The variety of the responses will enrich the reflection of the Team and they will surely be found in the future actions of the Federation. The results of the consultations held on the matter will moreover be presented at a later decision-making meeting of the FIQ.

At the microphone: Julie Rioux and Antoine Bégin-Couture, Union Consultants on the *Équipe des nouvelles pratiques et des approches d'innovation et de représentation* at the FIQ