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Chair in Small Community Development

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE

Investment:
\$1 million

FUQAT contribution:
\$500,000

THE PROJECT

Founded in 1993 through the financial support of the Mouvement Desjardins, the Desjardins Chair in Small Community Development was the first to see the light of day at UQAT on the heels of the États généraux du monde rural summit in 1991, which had painted an alarming picture of the devitalization of a number of small communities in Quebec. The picture has since changed, but major challenges to development still exist for small communities, as revealed by the 2018–2022 government strategy for ensuring the vitality and occupancy of territories.

The Chair's mission is to support small communities in taking control of their development. Its main concerns are social vitality, economic viability, and political validity of small communities.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Today, the Desjardins Chair in Small Community Development is rolling out its 2021–2026 research strategy. The goal of its work, carried out in synergy with communities, is development of knowledge around issues specific to small communities, and the enhancement of expertise around development strategies. The Chair's program will continue to be built around three fields of closely related activity – research, support, and training – along six lines:

1. Population and living conditions;
2. Community services;
3. Responsible development of natural resources;
4. Indigenous communities;
5. Social economy;
6. Patterns of development.

TIMETABLE

September **2021**
to August **2026**



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Chair in Small Community Development

Fields:
**Human and Social
Development
Management Sciences
Indigenous Studies**



- The dissemination and transfer of knowledge are of particular importance to the Chair, whose mandate is to support small communities as they change and grow. A number of methods will be provided for disseminating research results, including a website, a quarterly newsletter, public lectures, workshops, an annual symposium, and the publication of scientific articles.
- In the years to come, the Chair will continue to rely on the support and participation of community

partners, associations, organizations, Indigenous communities, business and government sectors, as well as on professors and students from across Quebec and elsewhere.

- Lastly, the Chair will continue its partnership with the Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, whose mission is to gather, valorize, and disseminate knowledge about community development in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

IMPACT

The work done and the topics addressed by the Chair demonstrate their relevance far beyond regional borders. They resonate in a number of other small communities in Quebec and Canada that share similar realities (e.g.: rurality, northerness, Indigenous communities, economic dependence on natural resource development, etc.). The Chair contributes to the growth, prosperity, and future of small communities through the realization of projects in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region and other regions of Quebec (James Bay, Mauricie, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, etc.), Ontario, and the Northwest Territories, as well as abroad. The results of work carried out elsewhere are relevant for communities here, and vice versa.

Because the Desjardins Chair in Small Community Development mainly takes a qualitative approach (interviews), its work is complementary to the quantitative research carried out by the Université Laval's Chaire de leadership en enseignement en développement régional et économique [Chair in

Educational Leadership in Regional and Economic Development]. The holders of these two Chairs are part of the Research Centre on Territorial Development (CRDT), which brings together the leading researchers in local and territorial development in Quebec. The CRDT also provides member professors and students of the two Chairs, opportunities to share knowledge with colleagues and partners from all across Quebec.

Research carried out by the Chair is presented at a number of national and international scientific conferences (e.g.: the ACFAS and Association des sciences régionales de langue française conferences), as well as in various international scientific journals of high calibre. Its work regularly attracts attention from national media.

The Desjardins Chair in Small Community Development's activities are visible and create benefits throughout Quebec, Canada, and internationally.