

DECLARATION

THE GREAT



A Mobilizing Project

A group of young Quebecers is inviting youth from around the world to take part in writing a declaration of the principles and values they would like to promote on a global scale.

The Great Declaration will be officially proclaimed in Quebec City during the city's 400th anniversary celebrations, on the United Nations International Youth Day, August 12, 2008.

The project was initiated by the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) with the collaboration of Oxfam-Québec, les Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec and ReGénération 2008 - the 4th World Youth Congress. Based in Montreal, the INM is a non-partisan organization dedicated to citizen participation in democratic life.

Today, we are submitting a *Declaration Proposal* to you. It is the result of a group effort that took place between February and May 2007. This first draft is now ready for your comments, suggestions for amendments or other additions.

Who wrote it?

A steering committee was asked to write the *Declaration Proposal*. This committee is made up of 26 young people aged 15 to 30, of various origins and from all regions of Quebec, in the workforce or in school. They were guided by mentors and qualified educators.

For whom and why should a Great Declaration be written?

The steering committee's message is steered to young people, but also calls upon all generations. The purpose of the Great Declaration is to awaken the potential for change in all of us and encourage personal and social commitment.

What does the Great Declaration propose?

It addresses several themes: education, the environment, politics, justice, the economy, health, family, culture and rights. Each theme places emphasis on the values that young people would like to promote and apply. They are asking their fellow citizens to have an open mind, and act in solidarity, social justice and fairness, among other things.

What are the criteria for writing the Great Declaration?

The steering committee used writing criteria that maximize the text's accessibility: limited number of words per sentence, concrete words that evoke images, direct sentences (subject-verb-complement) and short paragraphs.

THE GREAT DECLARATION

1 **QUEBEC YOUTH DECLARATION [PROPOSAL]:**

2 **CALL TO COMMITMENT**

3

4 Let us rise to voice

5 What we want for the coming years.

6

7 We call each citizen, young and old alike, from all over the world, to take real action to build a more just, open,
8 and united world.

9

10 Our gestures, no matter how small, have an impact on the quality of the environment, and on health, education,
11 the economy, politics and culture.

12

13 People from the North and the South, East and West, we declare that...

14

15 Education can allow everyone to live in a world that is more just. By educating themselves, people have a better
16 understanding of the world around them and develop the skills to access better living conditions.

17

18 However, all over the world, millions of young people do not have access to elementary education or are denied it
19 due to discrimination, the obligation to work or learning difficulties.

20

21 Let us act to ensure that:

22 Everybody learns to read and write,

23 The family becomes a preferred place to transmit values and knowledge,

24 Knowledge is shared between different generations,

25 All people continue to educate themselves throughout life.

26

27 We believe that education must foster critical thinking.

28 Critical thinking allows us to participate in society's debates, contribute new ideas and choose the most reliable
29 sources of information.

30

31 Let us act to ensure that all citizens are able to formulate their own critical thinking:

32 Let us stimulate at once the will to take action and the desire for commitment,

33 Let us encourage all people to inform themselves and confront their ideas with those of others.

34

35 Everybody's freedom of expression must be respected, because it reflects human nature

36 Since they are free to express themselves, citizens must demand in their own way that the government be freely
37 elected and that it be responsible for them.

38

39 Let us act:

40 By participating in the collective choices of our governments and communities to make ourselves heard,

41 In every debate, let us respect the opposition to allow for different opinions.

42

43 We believe that each person has a culture and values.

44

45 Let us act to ensure that each culture is shared:

46 Let us disseminate and encourage cultural expression in all forms,

47 Let us be open to others, to their ideas.

48



49 It is time for each citizen to participate in finding solutions to the health and poverty problems that affect a large
50 part of the world's population.

51
52 Let us act:

53 Let us intervene to ensure that health prevention holds an important place in school
54 programs and mainstream education.

55 Let us share medical resources,

56 Let us denounce the injustices we witness,

57 Let us share our knowledge and use technology so that all citizens have access to
58 health care and a healthy environment.

59
60 Let us act to adapt our way of life to the ecosystems of the planet which we are a part of:

61 Let us show greater responsibility and awareness to the changes we create,

62 Let us implement green initiatives and take part in those that already exist in our communities.

63
64 For these solutions to materialize, wealth must be more fairly distributed: economic
65 prosperity must contribute to achieving greater social justice.

66
67 All citizens have the power to influence the economy, regardless of their role.

68
69 Let us act for a better balance between economic prosperity and social justice:

70 Let us encourage local producers,

71 Let us denounce economic injustices,

72 Let us buy fair trade goods,

73 Let us take part in social economy initiatives.

74
75 Our economic choices must be based on solidarity and respect the environment and human rights.

76
77 It is our duty to recognize, respect and promote human rights throughout the world.

78
79 Our daily actions must reflect these rights, for they express the value of all human beings.

80
81 We are convinced that each citizen must take action in order to reach our goals
82 of solidarity, justice, openness, and respect.

83
84 Let us play a crucial role in the future of humanity and our planet.
85 Each in our own way, let us take a stand and act now!

86
87 On _____ of the year _____, in (City/Country) _____

88 I, (name in block letters), _____
89 sign the *Quebec Youth Declaration*, and commit to taking the following concrete actions:

90 _____
91 _____
92 _____
93 _____

94 _____ To build a more just and open world, based on concepts of solidarity.
95 Signature _____ Email: _____



React to the Declaration Proposal!



You can improve the Great Declaration. Write proposals to amend the text, make additions or reword a section. Your collaboration will help give this proposal greater impact and depth before it is adopted. Make it easier for young people to implement this youth declaration. Your help is needed to optimize this founding text and make it a reflection of yourself. The amendments will be reviewed by the young participants of the INM's École d'été in August 2007.

What do I do?

Each line of the text is numbered. Simply identify the line and the suggested change (for example, *Line "x": change "y" and replace with "z"*). Send your suggestions to lynda.champagne@inm.qc.ca **before August 1, 2007**. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

You can also submit your suggestions on our website at www.inm.qc.ca, in the Great Declaration section.

Adoption of the Great Declaration at the École d'été 2007

Each year, the Institut du Nouveau Monde organizes a summer school, a major event that gathers about 600 young people from Quebec and outside the province to participate in a citizenship school held as a festive event.

The final version of the Great Declaration will be adopted during the École d'été 2007. It will then be ratified by the largest possible number of young people and organizations as well as by thousands of citizens in Quebec and around the world.

Each person who signs agrees to take one concrete action to build a more just and open world, based on concepts of solidarity. The Great Declaration will become an emblem of the aspirations of youth of the early 21st century.

The Great Declaration will be officially proclaimed in Quebec City during the city's 400th anniversary celebrations, on UN International Youth Day, August 12, 2008.

How to reach us

Lynda Champagne, Coordinator of the Great Declaration project
Institut du Nouveau Monde
lynda.champagne@inm.qc.ca

THE INSTITUT DU NOUVEAU MONDE Founded in 2003, Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) is an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the renewal of ideas and the facilitating of public debates in Quebec. The Institute focuses on social justice, respects democratic values and is open and innovative. Through its actions, the INM encourages the civic participation of citizens, the strengthening of social ties and the development of democratic institutions.



DES CITOYENS
DES IDÉES
DES PROJETS

630, Sherbrooke St. West, suite 1030, Montréal (Québec) H3A 1E4

☎ 514 934-5999 ■ ☎ 1 877 934-5999 ■ 📠 514 934-6330 ■ ✉ inm@inm.qc.ca ■ www.inm.qc.ca