

Mesdames, Messieurs, Membres du jury, bonjour,

Premièrement permettez moi de clarifier que si j'étais capable de m'exprimer en français sans fautes d'orthographe j'écrierais ma mémoire dans la langue de Molière. Mais ceci n'est pas le cas alors permettez moi encore, mesdames et messieurs d'écrire ma mémoire en Anglais pour donner mes mots leur vigueur nécessaire.

Merci et bonne lecture,

Teprine Baldo

La mémoire consiste d'un partenariat entre Teprine Baldo – Consultante Pédagogique – Éducation Relative à l'Environnement et April Stewart, CPRS -Coordinator | AITC-Q. Teprine Baldo répond à la question dans ce document et April Stewart a rédigé une lettre descriptive sur le projet Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec ©

Agriculture in the Classroom ©

In the 21st century, agriculture is not necessarily restricted to rural areas nor to traditional products or methods of farming. Agriculture has indeed changed with the times and as such incorporates many kinds of products produced in many kinds of ways by many different people with many differing opinions and value sets.

Since at least the First World War, the importance of agriculture as a whole to a nation has been an unarguable point. However, it has only recently been recognized that accessibility to healthy, fresh food should not be the exclusive right of those who can afford an expanse of country real estate. Furthermore, the notion of sustainability has led to innovative explorations of how more fresh food can be produced locally in an efficient manner.

Enter urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture not only allows people who would not ordinarily have access to fresh food a way in which they can make this a reality, but learning how to grow food provides them (particularly children) with important life, business and personal skills. They not only learn to connect with others on a community level in respectful ways, but they also acquire knowledge of the intricate and precarious natural web of which humans are a supporting strand and business acumen through management, timing, responsibility, and entrepreneurialism.

The goal of Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec (part of the Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (www.aitc.ca)) is to simultaneously teach children about the importance of food production, respect for those who produce it, and to view agriculture as a viable career option. Through a variety of interactive learning tools, projects, speakers, and field trips Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec (AITC-Q) teaches students to make healthy food choices, innovate to create equitable food access and sustainable technologies, and recognize the importance of food sovereignty for Canada.

AITC-Q supports all facets of the agriculture industry from conventional to organic, rural to urban. An integral part to urban agriculture is knowledge transfer from their rural counterparts who may have

more experience. As 98% of the population is non-farming and at least two generations removed from any connection to the farm or a rural lifestyle, there is also an urgent need for the next generation of consumers (children) to learn the intricacies of a food system that supports ALL Quebecers inclusively as well as to teach adults how to make more informed food choices and recognize and appreciate those that work hard to bring healthy, safe and nutritious food from the country to the cities.

In order for us to accomplish these energetic yet very achievable goals, local and provincial governments should be encouraging youth related learning opportunities and agripreneurial ventures. Furthermore, as communications are an inherent part of knowledge transfer and education, it is imperative that the reams of relevant documents available throughout Canada be made accessible to the right resource person in either official language. Affordable learning opportunities for those wishing to embark on an agripreneurial or urban agriculture endeavour would also be very valuable as would municipal and regional food policies reflecting current needs and demands as opposed to out-of-date, irrelevant policies of the post-industrial, post-war era.

April Stewart - © Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec, 2012

1- État des lieux: Rédigé par Teprine Baldo

- À quel projet d'agriculture urbaine participez-vous ou connaissez-vous?
 - Participation in the Dent Verte Collective garden in Pointe Saint-Charles (PSC). I am an urban gardener and urban agricultural/environmental educator. I am presently participating in the collective and community garden movements in both PSC and Verdun.
 - Je support la mémoire du Club Populaire des Consommateur de Pointe Saint-Charles
 - I am a Pedagogical consultant working with children in the Anglophone public school system to facilitate their learning with regards to the environment, sustainable development, urban agriculture and ecology. This work is supported by the Lester B. Pearson School board and LEARN's (<http://www.learnquebec.ca/fr/>) Community Learning Center (CLC) at Riverview elementary school who both work towards educating Montreal anglophone citizens about sustainability, food security, agricultural practices and the links that can be created in the classroom setting between the urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture communities.
 - Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) is a Canada-wide initiative that bridges the gap between agricultural practices, the people working in the agricultural industries and schools all over the country. Presently, April Stewart is working on developing and promoting the Quebec division of AITC-Q and is only working with Anglophone communities. . AITC-Q does not have any provincial content and is only able to use documents from Ontario. We feel that these pedagogical tools do not fully represent the Quebecois realities with regards to our agricultural practices in both the urban, peri-urban and rural areas of our province. This is why we feel that it is necessary to develop

content that reflects these realities and promote our agricultural sector in the elementary and high school classrooms of Quebec. Ideally we would want for the city of Montreal to fund curriculum and content development for the AITC-Q and subsidize the development of the AITC-Q as a business in Quebec. This investment would not only be in agricultural and environmental entrepreneurs, but would also be an investment in potential employment for Quebec citizens as it teaches them about the agribusiness sector and the opportunities within that sector. Moreover, it is also important that we draw attention to the need for municipal, provincial and federal governments financial support of the AITC-Q initiative by funding the translation of existing documents from English to French to allow this innovative and original project to initially access all children in Quebec while localized pedagogical tools are developed with the support of the MELS. This teaching practice of linking up producers with consumers not only allows for an open dialogue, it promotes the respect of local producers and encourages urban citizens to consider the potential employment opportunities in the agribusiness sector, a tool that is especially useful in high schools.

- I am one of the 7 founding members of the eventual CSDM alternative school in PSC (www.ecolealternativespsc.com). This school will have as a particular mandate nature, the environment, urban agricultural practices and children's need for movement. Our school idea came out of a need for more direct contact with nature and is based on theories that were in Richard Louv's book 'Last Child in the Woods' a study on nature deficit disorder. We as parents wanted our children to have more direct contact with earth, food that is grown from this earth and the respect that is created through this contact. Our school is in line with many of the philosophies that guide the urban agricultural movement and it is our goal that children are able to learn this valuable practice during the formative years of their lives.
- Participation in the Community Engagement Initiative at Riverview Elementary School. The creation of an action plan for the Green Play Area on the school grounds at Riverview is a project that has the goal of integrating sustainable development and urban agricultural theories into a play structure for children that would also serve as a pedagogical tool for the teachers. This project is a concrete way to promote urban agriculture and sustainable development, as well as focus on the children's need to be physically active in a safe outdoor play space.

2- Opinion sur la pertinence de l'agriculture urbaine à Montréal :

- Pourquoi l'agriculture urbaine à Montréal est importante à vos yeux?
 - Food security, food production and access to this information are the biggest issues revolving around urban agriculture in Montreal today. If citizens do not have access to both information and consumption of healthy, inexpensive and local food, they are more likely to eat pre-packaged, cheap, low calories, high fat/sodium foods that are processed, which in turn are a burden on their health, the environment and the local economies. If a population is not eating sufficient amounts of fruits, vegetables and protein, the risks of increased use of the health

care system becomes a financial necessity that all citizens have to carry. This need to use the health care system is an extra cost to the municipal, provincial and federal governments and can be reduced through education on and access to healthy food, food security, information on the people who grow the food and creating links between these 3 worlds. The role that urban agriculture plays in all of this is tremendous as it allows for all the issues to conjoin in the public sphere either through community gardens, community centers, schools, non-profit organizations and for profit businesses. This intricate web of players all have a role to play in developing access to information on agricultural practices as well as open up public spaces to gather to either purchase, grow food and/or discuss about the politics that revolve around it.

- Quelle est la pertinence de l'agriculture urbaine à Montréal?
 - The pertinence of urban agriculture in Montreal is that it allows people to have access to land to grow food and learn about the natural cycles of the food system either through collective, community, personal or educational gardens. This hands-on approach to education empowers citizens to take control of their eating habits and in turn their health as well. Once a population has access to this knowledge, they can then make more informed choices about the foods they buy in the super markets as well as reduce their need to use public health services. If citizens are empowered through the means of production of their food, they do not need to access food banks as often. In my experience with food banks, the foods included in the baskets are often pre-packaged, of low nutritional value foods with very little fresh produce or meats for the consumer. This often has very little to do with the policies of the food banks but more to do with what foods have been donated by companies and corporations. Urban agricultural practices in a community can supplement these baskets and allow for healthier meals for families in need. A good example of this is an urban garden at the Hélène de Champlain high school in Longueuil that produces an excess of vegetables that they are able to donate to a food bank across the street. This not only increases intergenerational contact but it also gives citizens who use the food banks access to fresh foods items that are often missing from these baskets. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOpCZ2-QU6s>)
 - Practicing urban agriculture also facilitates links between the farmers and the local production of food by creating spaces for dialogue between the urban, peri-urban and rural people. This leads citizens to better understand food production, local economies as well as ways to obtain better food security. Without this strong link, much of our food would have to be imported from further away with the environmental consequences of increased CO2 emissions. With less traffic for food in the city, the amount of traffic on our already overburdened highways and roads can be reduced, as people are not leaving their communities to get healthy fresh food. In turn, less large trucks would be coming into our city streets to deliver foods and goods. This alleviates the physical stress on our already mangled streets and has the potential to slightly reduce the amount of traffic and traffic jams that are experienced everyday in Montreal. The transition movement in Quebec fully supports this approach to food production and is a good partner to

get involved with when the city starts to implement new and improved urban agricultural approaches.

- <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/quebec-centre-ville>

- En quoi l'agriculture urbaine améliore la Ville de Montréal?

- Urban Agriculture leads to better food security and once this is achieved, citizens are more able to draw their attention to other aspects of their personal development. This can manifest itself in many ways, such as higher education, improved employment, increased participation in community activities and family, all of which improve the life of any city. Citizens that are learning how to garden and have access to healthy food for their families are also able to alleviate some of the stress and pressures that can be caused by lack of access to healthy food. In turn this reduces stress and pressure on the CLSC systems because citizens are now in control of their health and can reduce their need to use the service provided.
- Access to locally grown food can also support the MELS in their ultimate goal of junk food free lunches in schools. I do not believe that simply because a family is from a lower income situation that they are not interested in eating healthy and fresh vegetables. However I do believe that the inexpensive cost of unhealthy food encourages people to buy products that are a nuisance on their body and health. It is also important to emphasize that through education pertaining to food, urban agriculture and its role in our health, we can facilitate citizens access to recipes that require little time to prepare, are cost effective and are high in nutritional value. As many parents are already running around with work, family and general life tasks, it is important to give them access to these recipes through school, municipal and health bulletins.

- En quoi l'agriculture urbaine à Montréal améliore-t-elle la qualité de vie dans votre quartier?

- In PSC there are 2 factors that I see as important when discussing urban agriculture. First, there is a lack of access to food in our neighborhood, where the only big grocery store can control, inflate and manipulate the cost of food as they see fit. The quality of the produce at the local grocery store is often poor and usually I leave my community to buy inexpensive and fresh produce. The second point that I think is important to address is that the practices of urban agriculture in PSC allow for people to learn about food production, food security and give them access to fresh produce, all the while **bringing many of our citizens out of isolation and into public spaces and discussions**. Therefore in many instances the collective gardens and community gardens in PSC act as one of the glues that holds our citizens together and empowers them to have access to healthy food and a network of people to support them through the learning process.

- Pourquoi l'agriculture urbaine peut-elle s'allier avec le développement de la Ville de Montréal?

- A city that invests in its citizens proactively will be better suited to avoid the causes and outcomes of poor health and lack of access to the means of production of their food. If the city of Montreal wishes to be a leader in the world with regards to urban agriculture, the **deputies and elected officials need to put into place policies** that will increase green spaces in the city, mandate that developers

include and dedicate a percentage of their building plans to urban agriculture (green roofs, green walls, water catchment systems, fruit trees and gardens), and allow citizens to take back the right to produce a percentage of their meats and fish through allowing animal husbandry in the city.

- I also think that it is important for the city to **support integrated curriculum development with the school boards in both the English and French sectors as well as the MELS** to implement agricultural curriculums that both serve an educational purpose as well as an economic incentive towards the agribusiness in Quebec and Canada as this industry is an employer for thousands of citizens. The support of this curriculum development will also alleviate pressures on overburdened teachers to create new curriculums on urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture and its link to food security, ecology, business, the environment, community development etc. These 'clef en main' documents will then allow teachers to implement the aforementioned theories without too much strain on their already over charged daily tasks. For this to happen though, there needs to be a translation initiative from the city to bring curriculums from the rest of Canada and the US to our French classrooms as well as invest in localized content development that also addresses the historical practices of urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture in Quebec. This would also include the growing techniques and histories of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples of our province.
- Support the development and implementation of the alternative urban agriculture elementary school in PSC (www.ecolealternativepsc.com)

3- Préoccupations, problématiques et blocages :

- Quels sont les blocages/problématiques que vous avez observés dans vos projets d'agriculture urbaine?
 - There are very few municipal or public lands in PSC that would allow for us to develop urban agricultural spaces for the community. The 'Bâtiment 7 à nous' project is one initiative that has gained support, but even this initiative with a tremendous amount of community support has not been without its obstacles. It is important that the present projects in our neighborhood receive the required support from the private and public sector to ensure that the access to the earth and spaces to grow food is available.
 - It is also very important to note that most of the ground earth in PSC is contaminated with petro-chemicals and therefore a lot of the spaces that would immediately be available to the citizens are not cultivatable because they are hazardous. The cost of decontamination can be extravagant but the city must recognize that there exist and encourage less expensive and innovative ways to clean up the soil. We can use urban-agricultural practices from around the world (mushrooms, squash, pumpkin...) to decontaminate the soil and make it healthy for growing food again. Working closely with biologists, horticulturalists and other gardening activists who have years of education and experience regarding this issue will help to ratify the municipal by-laws towards more cost effective and organic decontamination processes.
 - School boards and the ministry of education will be key in the development of educational curriculums that revolve around agriculture. If they do not allocate funds from their budget to address this need, hire more pedagogical consultants and curriculum developers, it will be very hard to justify financial requests to the various ministerial bodies to pay for the development of pedagogical documents

and their subsequent translation. Presently the EMSB has a Green Plan initiative but there are no curriculums provided. <http://www.emsb.qc.ca/pedservices/green/index.htm>. I would like to see active partnerships between the French and English school boards to better share existing curriculums. I propose that research be done into what funds available to translate curriculums from the French school boards into English. The alternative CSDM urban agriculture school in PSC hopes to be able to be a model for such partnerships by working closely with the EMSB and the Saint-Gabriel school to bridge the cultural and linguistic divide by using urban agriculture as the conduit and getting children to play and learn together in both official languages.

- Quelles sont les impasses actuelles au développement de l'agriculture urbaine à Montréal?
 - I think that socially there is a lack of understanding on the importance of agriculture in our society. Up until just recently (last 50-60 years) there was a direct contact with farmers and food production. Many children have never been on a real working farm, do not know where their food comes from or how it made it to their table. Most families will only ever purchase their food from inside of a grocery store therefore creating a barrier between food production and the consumer. If the city is truly interested in increasing knowledge concerning urban-agriculture, it is in my opinion, imperative that they effectively support the organizations and people who are working towards strengthening those ties and bring the farm back into urban kitchens. The investment in these organizations and the people who are running them will be a first step towards making them more self-sustainable.

- Quels sont les blocages à vos projets en agriculture urbaine?
 - Lack of access for the Anglophone Quebecois youth in the English primary school system to translated French Quebecois pedagogical documents due to either lack of funding or lack of communication between the two school boards. One example of such work that could be used in this way would be the work of Carole Marcoux at the CSDM: www.csdm.qc.ca/CSDM/environnement
 - Lack of funds for projects such as the Green and Healthy living initiative at Riverview Elementary School and the Agriculture in the Classroom Quebec project. Funds would be used to maintain and improve the communications for these initiatives as well as go into research, online curriculum development, translating the website and pedagogical documents.
 - It is also very important to translate English documents into French bridging linguistic and cultural divides by making the curriculum available in the French language for both the anglophone and francophone communities. This in turns allows all citizens of Quebec to understand pedagogical tools by making them culturally relevant. The cultural similarities, even if they are from different linguistic groups, would be a benefit to all classrooms as it reflects our collective realities.
 - Lack of a link between the urban, peri-urban and rural communities. This could be remedied if it was made an important aspect of the educational curriculums of MELS. Students could visit, write to, skype with and develop projects with other students in Quebec who live on farms or garden in the city. The LEARN initiative

(<http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/EducVideoconf.html>) could facilitate this process as they already have video conferencing technologies in schools all over Quebec.

- Lack of interest on the part of CN to work with the PSC community. I would like the city to support dialogue between the two bodies to ensure that a neutral mediator is present.

4- Recommendations, suggestions et commentaires :

- Quels changements pourraient être apportés pour permettre un meilleur développement de l'agriculture urbaine?
 - I would like to propose that each borough is loaned municipal/provincial land to create greenhouses that could provide healthy food all year round and share it with the community. I propose that these collective spaces (such as the future Bâtiment 7 project in PSC) would then be able to better facilitate dialogue around food production, food prices, education, green spaces and security with the local citizens. The peri-urban and rural communities around Montreal should also be involved in these processes allowing for a variety of perspectives on a shared issue. This dialogue is beneficial to the city as it will create a sustainable network of producers, consumers and local production that keeps money in Quebec and promotes active citizenry with regards to health and security.
 - I think that the elected officials of Montreal and Quebec must increase dialogue with developers in our cities to engage and inform them about the citizens desire to evolve towards new models of architecture and sustainable design that can support urban agriculture in all its facets. This will not only increase the health of our citizens, reduce the îlots de chaleur but will make us leaders and a model to follow around the world. This will not only increase Quebec's reputation as an environmental crusader but will draw in tourists and new innovative businesses that are moving towards new environmental technologies and designs. The city has to stop seeing it as a deficit/too expensive and more of an amortization of our future and an investment towards new ways of living in an urban setting. We need to be better than what we are now, all of us and be open to new ways of living in the city.
 - Support dialogue between communities and private business in the community. It necessary that dialogue with pre-existing businesses in communities are facilitated to discuss the how to share fallow or un-used greens spaces with the community. Is PSC a good example of that would be to create dialogue and partnerships with the CN and VIA rail as many of the green spaces that are in our community that are not being used right now belong to these companies. As our community is surrounded by the CN, it would be a great initiative to support the urban agricultural activities that will be taking place in our community by developing partnerships and creating more green spaces to grow food.
 - Amend animal husbandry laws to allow for chickens, rabbits, fish and goats in the city.
 - Have the city approach sustainable architectural development and design with an open mind about the various possibilities. We want these buildings to still have relevance in 50 years.
 - Translating pre-existing documents to implement into elementary and high schools as well as Cégeps.
 - Translating supporting content development for websites, especially English websites that wish to have their content in French, bridging cultural divides here in Quebec.
 - Integrating agriculture into the curriculum at the MELS so as to ensure that agricultural jobs are seen as a viable opportunity for citizens living in Quebec.
 - Promoting the use of public lands for urban agriculture

- Consult with First Nation and Métis people (Mohawk, Algonquin Huron...) about the urban agricultural consultation process and outcomes as much of the land we are discussing is originally their land.
- Flexibility with regards to the amendments and changing of municipal by-laws that are directly correlated with the recommendations from the consultation.
- Support a province wide regulation of fresh produce in big grocery stores and mandate that a % of the produce and foods are produced and sourced from here.
- Plant more fruit trees in the city
- That the urban agriculture school in PSC be supported as an innovative and sustainable project. This model may then be used to implement urban agricultural practices at a fundamental school level in the public traditional system by individual schools or the school board.
- Help people access the various funds available for eco-entrepreneurs, urban agricultural businesses, and food security initiatives through organizations such as MAMROT.