



Strategic Plan

2017 – 2022

North Shore Community Association

Building Bridges, Building Steam



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THE NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

When the North Shore Community Association was founded in 2000, the community members involved identified many of the same sectors that continue to be priorities. In the past sixteen years, the NSCA has taken on a broad leadership and facilitation role in the English-speaking community of Quebec's North Shore. The organization has a growing membership, is supported by a strong and representative Board of Directors, employs three full-time staff in Baie-Comeau and three part-time staff in Sept-Îles, and regularly contracts project coordinators.

Recent and ongoing research initiatives have provided an accurate and nuanced portrait of the community, and therefore increased the NSCA's ability to serve its constituency. The NSCA manages an increasingly diverse range of regional, provincial, and federal funding sources, and the organization increasingly leverages its resources through regional and provincial partnerships.

The NSCA recently celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, marking years of community development work that has established the NSCA's credibility and leadership within the community, and with funders and partners.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The North Shore Community Association is a non-profit regional organization dedicated to serving, representing, and instilling pride in the English-speaking community of Quebec's North Shore. The organization's aim is to empower residents and to strengthen the community across the region by working to make information and resources available, by facilitating community initiatives, by encouraging and improving communication, by promoting access to services, by developing partnerships and by increasing the visibility of the English-speaking community. Its objectives are as follows:

- Develop and maintain a knowledge base about the English-speaking community of the North Shore.
- Increase access and knowledge of services and resources for the English-speaking community within the region.
- Increase cohesion and participation in the English-speaking community.
- Support and showcase the English-speaking community and its heritage and culture.
- Strengthen communication and visibility within the community.

SUCSESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HIGHLIGHTS

The NSCA's 2011 – 2016 strategic priorities have yielded to see results under each operational and sectoral priorities; the community is being empowered with information and services from newly formed partnerships and developments.

➤ Arts, culture and heritage

- Work with partners to promote and sponsor English-language film screening;
- Developed heritage programming in partnership with local historical and educational facilities (e.g. "In Search of Yesterday" exhibit);

➤ Community information

- Regular electronic and print communications disseminated (e.g., newsletter, social media, etc.);
- Publications made available informing the community of various resources and organizations;

➤ Community priorities

- Community cohesion: regular weekly, monthly and/or annual events held across the region (e.g., Holiday Social, Saint Patrick's, etc.);
- Awarded the Marc Deslauriers Award in recognition of community involvement;

➤ Health and social services

- Established regional community health and social services network, and participated on decision-making tables (Regional ACCESS committee, Jeunesse en santé, AlimentAction, etc.);
- In collaboration with regional health partners, secured the services of a trilingual in-hospital interpreter in Sept-Îles;
- Completed study of Kawawachikamach First Nation health and social service needs;

➤ Operational priorities

- Capacity support: operating funding maintained and increased (by approximately 10%) and diversity of project funding secured;
- Regional representation: increased full- and part-time staff in Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles;
- Partnership development: community and governmental partnerships maintained and increased, particularly with regional health-services bodies and networks (e.g. Health Exchange);
- Visibility: NSCA increasingly solicited as the voice of English-speaking minority of the North Shore;

➤ Seniors

- Seniors Action Quebec consultations held;
- Regular events held for 50+ demographic (e.g., National Seniors Day, wellness activities, social events, etc.);

➤ Youth

- Needs assessment completed and new programming implemented (i.e. Toddler Time);
- Undertook McGill University "Investing in Tomorrow" career and education project;
- Intergenerational links strengthened (e.g. through *North Shore Memoirs* publications).

ENGLISH-SPEAKING MINORITY COMMUNITY PROFILE

The North Shore Community Association represents English speakers from Tadoussac to Natashquan and north to Fermont and Schefferville; the coastal range alone is nearly 700 km, and weather conditions and economic patterns further contribute to the population's isolation. As of the 2011 census, the population of the region was 89,640 inhabitants, of whom 2,160 are anglophones. Additionally, approximately 1,100 Naskapi, whose second (first official) language is English, live between Sept-Îles and Schefferville.

Each community has a slightly different profile, and different needs: in Sept-Îles, for instance, a large seniors' population requires a focus on health and social services issues; Baie-Comeau tends to benefit from community cohesion initiatives and educational partnerships; while the smaller and northern communities manifest basic needs such as a dearth of services in English.

The linguistic-minority communities across the North Shore share many demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, such as youth outmigration, limited access to English-language activities and services, and economic struggles. More anglophones live on restricted incomes (almost 30% of anglophones live on less than \$10,000 a year, compared to 24.2% among the francophone majority), and one in five English-speaking households is a single-parent family. Educational and employment opportunities are limited, and the North Shore population in general is less likely than the provincial average to have obtained a diploma beyond the secondary level.

The relatively high rate of bilingualism can present a challenge to the social life and community identity of English speakers on the North Shore. Conversely, for those who do not speak French well enough, the language barrier excludes them from participating in activities that take place in French, yet there are not many activities that take place in English. Seniors, who make up 24% of the English-speaking minority community, are especially vulnerable to social isolation as a result of linguistic disadvantage; many seniors in the eastern part of the region, who have moved there from the Lower North Shore for proximity to health services, are likely to be unilingual anglophones. Younger age groups are served through school-based activities; however, little is available for those in middle age groups. In regards to community communication and cohesion, there is no English print media in the region, or local English-language radio or television.

In recent years, the NSCA has conducted surveys and consultations in regards to health and social services, seniors, and youth, which have fleshed out the portrait of the region's anglophones and clearly defined specific needs in many areas, mostly notably in continuing to improve access to services and information for the English-speaking communities across the North Shore. The results of this research, along with the challenges and opportunities faced by these communities, form the strategic orientations on which the NSCA will focus its efforts for the next five years.

STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Consultations were carried out with the NSCA Board of Directors and staff, buttressed by recent demographic documentation. Strategic consultations reflected on the priorities that shaped the previous five years of NSCA programming and positioned the organization today vis-à-vis those priorities sectors, taking into consideration the different realities of the communities it serves across the region.

Throughout the next five years, the priorities identified in the present strategic plan will inform NSCA programming, project development, and partnerships. Regular consultation of the NSCA Board of Directors, membership, and constituencies will additionally ensure that needs and priorities are being met, and will evaluate the organization's efforts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

➤ Community Cohesion

The NSCA has been seminal since its foundation in fostering a sense of belonging among the North Shore's English-speaking community. The organization seeks to improve intraregional community development particularly in underserved, smaller or more isolated areas, as well as increasing the visibility of the NSCA and the English-speaking community in the French media and in the majority-language community in general.

➤ Health and Social Services

The NSCA has been instrumental in improving access to minority-language health services. The organization seeks to maintain and increase access to health and social services in English across the North Shore, both through direct initiatives and by working with local and regional partners and province-wide networks. Accurately documenting and representing health and social service needs will help secure longer-term gains in this sector.

➤ Seniors

The NSCA is a leader in developing health, social, and cultural activities for seniors, fostering community engagement among this community demographic, including breaking patterns of isolation. The organization notably seeks to ensure the varying needs of the senior populations across the region are identified and met. Partnership development and maintenance is pivotal in this sector in order to maximize and make efficient use of existing resources.

➤ Sustainability

The NSCA has a sound organizational base in its Board of Directors and staff, and its increasing funding diversity is an asset. The organization seeks to develop mechanisms to anticipate succession needs; to increase staff resources in order to improve vitality and versatility; to represent the needs of the organization and the community in order to augment operating funds; and to secure longer-term resources for new initiatives.

➤ Youth

The NSCA benefits from well-established collaboration with regional educational institutions, and with youth and related economic resources outside the region. The organization seeks to expand efforts to engage youth and mitigate outmigration across the region, and especially to diversify initiatives in order to reach youth outside the English-language education system who would potentially engage in or identify with the English-speaking community. Policy-related partnership development is pivotal in this sector.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2022

Strategic Orientation # 1 Community Cohesion: Stronger Together		
Objective	Strategy	Indicator
1) The English-speaking communities across the North Shore are more connected and benefit from a stronger sense of identity and community cohesion.	Maintain effective and regular communications in the ESC and among partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is increased collaboration and communications throughout the North Shore ESC.
	Promote and facilitate exchanges and resource sharing between North Shore ESC communities.	
	Maintain and promote pan-regional representation within the organization and partners.	
2) Increased visibility for the English-speaking community, the North Shore Community Association and the needs and the opportunities of the linguistic minority.	Include outreach components beyond the ESC in each activity component.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ESC is actively involved in local, regional and provincial decision-making structures. Public partners have a greater understanding of the needs and priorities of the ESC.
	Participate in events and opportunities to represent the ESC and sensitize partners.	

Strategic Orientation # 2 Health and Social Services: Healthier Communities		
Objective	Strategy	Indicator
1) Increased health and social services in English across the region.	Identify specific areas for improvement in English-language health and social service delivery particular to each community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ESC has increased health and social service in English.
	Target administrative improvements for minority-language access, notably through new and existing partnerships and networks.	
2) Increased visibility and access for the Naskapi community.	Extend work on service and information access to first-official-language-English First Nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Naskapi community has increased access to health and social services. The needs of the Naskapi community are increasingly visible and more broadly represented.
	Address specific, focused health and social service and youth issues and provide support and representation to existing administrative and service organizations.	

Strategic Orientation # 3 Seniors: Engagement and Access Improvement		
Objective	Strategy	Indicators
1) Increased community engagement and vitality across the senior demographic.	Increase access to social, cultural and recreational activities within the ESC and ensure their sustainability in partnership with local community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved community engagement among all age groups.
	Develop a communications and intervention strategy aimed at ensuring all ESC seniors, including those most vulnerable to isolation, are aware of events and activities.	
2) Expanded senior programming in English-speaking communities within the North Shore.	Identify the varying needs of seniors in communities across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective service and activity delivery to each community.
	Develop or adapt services and activities, first on a pilot basis and subsequently to offer them sustainably if warranted.	
3) Empowered community and government partners able to address the specific needs of English-speaking seniors.	Procure and disseminate up-to-date and pertinent data on ESC seniors to partners and networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved knowledge of available services among ESC seniors.
	Develop collaborative initiatives including to increase the availability of and access to French-language resources.	

Strategic Orientation # 4 Sustainability: A Vital NSCA for Years to Come		
Objective	Strategy	Indicator
1) The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers are mutually supportive and proactive in bolstering their capacity to service the English-speaking community.	Identify and develop development and training opportunities for the Board, for all staff, and with partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational capacity is flexible and able to adapt in the long term.
	Hire an assistant to the Executive Director, and identify, delegate, and deputize tasks.	
	Develop a succession plan for staff, Board members, and volunteers.	
2) The English-speaking community in each region and community within the North Shore is served by the North Shore Community Association.	Identify and develop overlooked skills among staff, Board members, and volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NSCA serves the ESC increasingly efficiently across the entire region.
	Identify specific challenges arising from geographical impediments and develop tools, including with outside input, to mitigate the effects of long-distance management and supervision.	

Strategic Orientation # 5 Youth: The Next Generation		
Objective	Strategy	Indicator
1) Increased community engagement and vitality across the youth demographic.	Increase access to social, cultural and recreational activities for ESC youth and ensure their sustainability in partnership with local community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved community engagement among all age groups.
	Develop a communications and intervention strategy aimed at ensuring all ESC youth, including those who are not in the English-language education system.	
	Identify underserved age groups and develop, implement and pilot events and activities aimed at those groups.	
2) Empowered community and government partners able to address the specific needs of English-speaking youth in the regions.	Procure and disseminate up-to-date and pertinent data on ESC youth to partners and networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved knowledge of available services among ESC youth.
	Develop collaborative initiatives to increase the availability of and access to resources.	
	Actively represent the needs and opportunities of North Shore ESC youth within policy development and decision-making structures.	

CONCLUSION

The 2017 – 2022 North Shore Community Association Strategic Plan, “Building Bridges, Building Steam,” provides a snapshot of the organization and the community it serves, and a roadmap to anchor the coming years’ operations and activities. The strategic planning process allows the NSCA to prioritize its sectors of intervention: seniors, health and social services, community cohesion, sustainability, and youth emerged as particular focal points for the next five years. In order to maintain and motivate the region’s vibrant English-speaking community, the NSCA needs an engaged board, membership and volunteers, strong and reciprocal partnerships, and innovative and resourceful initiatives.