



North Shore Community Association

Shoring Up the North: Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016

September 25, 2010



The North Shore Community Association gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Development of Official Language Communities Program.

Mission and Objectives

Who we are, what we do

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. Our 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. Together, we are building a vital, informed and strong community.

- 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.

Background

Ten years of community development

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: health, education, heritage and culture. In its infancy, however, the organization was seen as a way to remedy specific needs. In the past ten years, the NSCA has taken on a broad leadership and facilitation role in the English-speaking community of the North Shore, and has grown to 335 members, has eight Board members, employs two staff in Baie-Comeau, regularly contracts project animators, manages multiple funding sources and human resources, and benefits from reciprocity and representation in several partnerships. The NSCA has an accurate and nuanced portrait of the population they represent, and increasingly sophisticated means of serving that population.

Shoring Up the North

Where we're going: Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016

In 2008 – 2009, the North Shore Community Association (NSCA) undertook preliminary reflections towards a strategic planning exercise, prompted by the organization's growth, by the evolving but particular challenges posed by the geography and demographics of Quebec's North Shore region, by changes within the group's constituencies and recent assessments of those constituencies, and by the NSCA's increased solicitation as a resource in and for the English-speaking minority community.

In the summer and fall of 2010, during the organization's tenth year of operations, the present strategic plan was concretized, with financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Development of Official-Language Communities Program, through a series of individual consultations with staff, Board members and community stakeholders, and at town-hall sessions in both the western (Baie-Comeau) and eastern (Port-Cartier and Sept-Îles) sectors, then developed closely with long-time Coordinator Jody Lessard, amended with feedback from staff and Board members, and adopted at the organization's Annual General Meeting on September 25, 2010.

2008 – 2009

preliminary strategic considerations

July – August 2010

individual consultations with Board members, former Board members and community stakeholders

August 23, 2010

Baie-Comeau town hall session

August 25, 2010

Eastern sector town hall session

September 2010

Board discussion and approval

September 25, 2010

presentation and adoption of NSCA 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan at AGM

The consultations and planning process led to the more specific articulation of the organization's mandate, focussing on its role as a facilitator, recognizing the importance of partnership development, and foregrounding the community's visibility. The strategic planning process also led the NSCA to prioritize its sectors of intervention: visibility, the senior population, and heritage emerged as particular focal points for the next five years. Finally, the 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan will allow the NSCA to more efficiently plot its programming in multi-year increments, regularly reassessing and adjusting its strategic objectives.

Organizational Strengths and Challenges

Where we are

In the preliminary exercise and during the present strategic planning process, NSCA Board and community stakeholders identified a range of organizational strengths and challenges. Some, such as the varied and multiple tasks of the organization's Board and staff, are tied to the size of the community and to the NSCA's pan-sectoral status. Others, such as the widely noted success in health, arise from the recent Health and Social Services Networking Partnership Initiative.

Organizational Strengths

- Longevity of the staff and Board members, which leads to a stable representation and comprehension of the community-ies, sectors and demographics;
- Board diversity (age groups, regions, professional resources);
- Multiple and various tasks, responsibilities and initiatives of the staff and members of the Board (i.e., the many "hats");
- Recognition of the importance of incremental, organic development (i.e., "baby steps");
- Ongoing increases in membership (currently at 335);
- Recent leadership in health and social services, which activities are increasing the services and information available to those members with the most identifiable needs;
- The engagement of the senior population, particularly in the Eastern sector.



NSCA President Marc Deslauriers and 2009 Outstanding Community Involvement Recipient Debbie Laurie.



Members of the English-speaking minority community of the North Shore gather for a community luncheon

Organizational Challenges

- Maintenance of a broad and consistent presence throughout the region (the organization is based in Baie-Comeau but represents the English-speaking community over 650 km of coast and north to the Labrador border);
- Low visibility of the organization vis-à-vis its Francophone counterparts, in governmental structures and within the larger community;
- Multiple demands on polyvalent staff;
- Particular resource-related needs given the distances and especially the differences between the communities / demographics served.

Community Strengths and Challenges

Where we are

The challenges and strengths of a small, somewhat isolated and geographically dispersed minority-language community were identified in the preliminary strategic planning exercise and in the 2010 sessions, and substantiated by the results of recent youth and senior consultations. Some particularities vary by locality; some, especially as pertaining to youth, education and employment, are not limited to the linguistic minority.



The North Shore Community Association celebrates the community's heritage on Saint Patrick's Day.

Community Strengths

- Baie-Comeau: fairly integrated in Francophone majority;
- Eastern sector: culturally and linguistically identified;
- Opportunities and willingness to collaborate in almost every sector: heritage and culture, human resources, health and social services, youth, seniors, tourism, etc.;
- Strong and identifiable community hubs (churches, schools, seniors' clubs, etc.);
- Strong links to neighbouring English-speaking communities.

Community Challenges

- Distances, and demographic variation throughout the region;
- Diffuse sense of community cohesion;
- Low visibility of the region's English-speaking minority, both within and beyond the North Shore;
- Ongoing need for English-language health and social services;
- Limited awareness of what services are available, and of English-language services and information;
- Limited availability of English-language arts and culture;
- Limited post-secondary English-language education (only one educational sector at Sept-Îles cegep);
- Several economic and demographic challenges that transcend linguistic barriers:
 - reliance on few industries;
 - youth outmigration;
 - limited employment possibilities.



Older members of the English-speaking minority community are a vital, engaged population with clearly identified needs.

Community Priorities

Situation and Objectives: Overview

Strategic planning sessions ranked priority sectors for the next five years, mapping out the areas in which the NSCA can effect change and should focus its programming activities and its projects. Many of the NSCA's activities overlap more than one priority sector, or have various ripple effects in the overall long-term vibrancy of the community.

As a gathering force, **community-cohesion** related activities were identified as an area needing continued, judicious attention. The various obligations of community members make skilful planning and communication paramount.

The population of Anglophone **seniors** are a priority demographic, in part because their needs, relating primarily to health and well-being, are pressing, and because a portrait of that demographic is emerging more clearly.

Arts, heritage and culture have a tremendous effect on community identity and the visibility of any given community, and provide opportunities to gather and stretch across multiple generations; the NSCA accorded particular importance, in defining their next five years, to **heritage**.

Community Priority Sectors:

Community Cohesion

Seniors

Arts, Heritage and Culture

Health and Social Services

Community Information

Education

Youth

Recent developments, success and visibility in the **health and social services** sector will dovetail into the work with seniors. Health and social services remains a priority, but has been stabilized with the hiring of a staff person and the long-term perspective of the Networking Partnership Initiative.

Community information encompasses both communication within the English-speaking community, and extra-regional representation of the linguistic minority of the North Shore. Content, means of delivery, input and dissemination remain evolving concerns.

Raising issues that extend beyond the region's English-speaking community to other regional Anglophone groups, **education** was explicitly defined to include institutional partnerships (schools, school boards, teachers' unions, etc) and broader areas, notably adult education.

The development of **youth**-related programming, touching also on culture, employment, and education, raises certain issues that are common to the North Shore and to distant, less populated regions in general.

Community Priorities Situation and Objectives

The following table elucidates the situations and objectives for each priority from 2011 to 2016, and includes activities suggested during the strategic planning process. The activities delineated by Board members, staff and community stakeholders during consultations are intended to be adjustments or additions to the NSCA’s regular operations.

Priority		Situation	Objectives	Activities
OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES	Capacity support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple demands on part-time coordinator Demographically limited pool of volunteers Limited presence in Sept-Îles / Port-Cartier 	The NSCA will more effectively and thoroughly serve the English-speaking community of the North Shore by marshalling, streamlining and increasing its resources.	Diversify and increase sources of funding Multi-year funding applications (three funding cycles: 2011 – 2013, 2013 – 2015, 2015 – 2017) Diversify volunteer responsibilities Explore possible internships Increase staffing in Eastern Sector to minimize travel Develop and continually, regularly update project pool
	Partnership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some partnership development / representation under way (Agence de la santé et des services sociaux, CRE, CLCs) 	Through solicitations arising from increased organizational visibility and by the organization’s own initiative, the NSCA will develop and / or strengthen pertinent partnerships to better represent the English-speaking community of the North Shore and to increase available resources through reciprocity	Broaden partnerships incrementally and gradually, and as pertinent to programming, projects or activities with organizations including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector organizations (SADC, CDR, municipal libraries, HSS, universities, LEARN, etc) Professional organizations (syndicates, QDF, etc) Private sector Initiate communication with first-language-Anglophone First Nations groups (Naskapi) Participate in ESC Regional Table

Appendix A

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES	Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low organizational visibility in regional majority community • Low organizational visibility in key institutions and organization outside the region 	<p>The increased visibility of the NSCA with the majority regional community, institutions and partners and with extra-regional bodies will contribute to the long-term vibrancy of the English-speaking community of the North Shore.</p>	<p>Compile and regularly contact list of regional and provincial media</p> <p>Broaden distribution of newsletter to key community stakeholders (e.g. municipal leaders, etc)</p> <p>Develop resources / support for regular translation (press releases, major documents, etc)</p> <p>Develop and implement communications plan</p> <p>Increase visual presence (signage, partnerships, etc)</p> <p>Ensure NSCA mention /acknowledgment all existing and new collaborations</p> <p>Update and distribute community directory</p> <p>Ensure broader representation through regional ESC collaborations (Regional Table)</p>
COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering remains key to community's long-term vitality • Regional variation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baie-Comeau ESC fairly integrated in majority community • Eastern region more distinct from majority community 	<p>The English-speaking community of the North Shore will benefit from increasingly strong self-identification, from members' engagement vis-à-vis the entirety of the community's needs and opportunities.</p>	<p>Develop / increase family-oriented (pan-generational) events</p> <p>Regularize and strategically time events (e.g. annual barbecue, St Patrick's Day event, etc)</p> <p>Organize events in each locality to reflect the realities of each ESC (e.g. Baie-Comeau more integrated; therefore encourage linguistically inclusive events)</p> <p>Develop connection to private sector to increase awareness and use of ESC support tools (e.g. welcome kits for newcomers)</p>

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many seniors insufficiently informed about HSS (77% of those surveyed) • Sept-Îles seniors request drop-in / wellness centre • High percentage of unilingual Anglophones • Regional disconnections among the community 	<p>The needs of English-speaking senior citizens will be clearly and regularly identified and diverse resources will be mobilized to ensure their physical, emotional and social needs are being met, and to allow them to participate fully in their communities.</p>	<p>Increase Sept-Îles seniors drop-in to one full day per month; base possible subsequent increases on response / resources</p> <p>Diversify activities both based on manifested need and on trial basis (e.g. English-language movie nights, physical activities, foster social well-being)</p> <p>Broaden information resources and availability (e.g. record and rebroadcast or archive health sessions, permanent information station)</p> <p>Take into account transportation issues, shut-ins, etc</p> <p>Enable networking and community activities with other seniors or communities (e.g. transplanted Coasters)</p>
	Arts, Culture and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage and culture key aspects of community visibility, cohesion and self-identification • Limited access to English-language arts and culture • Existing regional cultural analysis insufficient 	<p>The increasingly developed and visible culture and heritage of the English-speaking community of the North Shore will contribute to the vitality of the Anglophone minority and of the region as a whole.</p>	<p>Consult and collaborate with community hubs (churches, schools) to develop opportunities for culture and heritage exploration and initiatives</p> <p>As possible, develop initiatives from project pool</p> <p>Explore alternative sources of support / partnership</p> <p>Explore possibilities for smaller scale initiatives (e.g. movie nights)</p> <p>Communicate regularly with sectoral arts, culture and heritage organization to increase NSCA visibility and encourage regional investment and interest</p>

Appendix A

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	Health and Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited access to health and social services information in English Limited awareness of English-language services and rights Limited availability of services in English 	<p>Access to health and social services information and service for the English-speaking community across the North Shore will continue to improve.</p>	<p>Ensure sustained availability of HSS information (e.g. record & rebroadcast or post health information sessions)</p> <p>Translate and disseminate assessment information broadly and to pivotal stakeholders</p> <p>Conduct health and social service assessment in the Eastern sector</p> <p>Ensure sustainability of HSSNPI</p> <p>Develop collaborative and creative initiatives through regional ESC collaborations (Regional Table)</p>
	Community Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolving content, rubrics and format of organizational communication tools Varied regional communication needs Lack of translation capacity inhibits communication and therefore long-term ESC vitality 	<p>The English-speaking community of the North Shore will be empowered to communicate more effectively within the community, and benefit from clear forums for self-expression.</p>	<p>Seek additional resources for newsletter development</p> <p>Include heritage components in newsletter</p> <p>Broaden dissemination of newsletter (to include for instance city councils, media, regional partners; more, and more pivotal awareness)</p> <p>Seek additional resources for translation</p> <p>Make communication tools available electronically where requested to express itself</p> <p>Shape communication tools in the image of the community</p>

Appendix A

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of English-language post-secondary education in the region • Evolving relationship with regional English schools • Demographic and geographic challenges of Eastern Shores School Board 	<p>The English-speaking community of the North Shore will benefit from increased educational communication, information, services and partnerships.</p>	<p>Support existing educational institutions (liaison, participation, etc):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school board • schools • adult-education organizations • second-language programs • post-secondary extended-learning programs <p>Encourage extra- or co-curricular components in initiatives where applicable</p> <p>Broaden range and specificity of educational initiatives (e.g. computer skills for seniors)</p>
	Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rate of youth outmigration • Limited employment opportunities • Lack of English-language post-secondary education in the region 	<p>The NSCA develops creative, collaborative tools to foster youth presence and engagement in the region and in the English-speaking community of the North Shore.</p>	<p>Develop initiatives for all age groups</p> <p>Partner with other regional and youth-sector ESC institutions, and with North Shore organizations facing similar issues</p> <p>Assess actual vs. perceived employment situation</p> <p>Remodel armature of other successful network partnership initiatives to creatively undertake youth initiatives</p>

Operational Working Document

Where we'll be...

The following table is intended as a tool for Board and staff to conduct trimestrial assessments of the progress of the implementation and evolution of the North Shore Community Association's 2011 – 2016 strategic priorities.

ASSESSMENT PERIOD	Objectives	Main Activities: Current Assessment Period	Deliverables / Objectives Reached	Adjustments / Next Assessment Period	Comments
	Capacity support				
	Partnership development				
	Visibility				
	Community Cohesion				
	Seniors				
	Arts, Culture and Heritage				
	Health and Social Services				
	Community Information				
	Education				
Youth					

The following project pool is intended as a tool for Board and staff to trimestrially adjust, draw from and add to based on member feedback and consultations, partnership opportunities and community needs.

5-year Project Pool

- *North Shore Memoirs* part 2 and / or expansion & development, inclusion in newsletter
- Baie-Comeau / St Andrews & St George heritage museum
- Sept-Îles seniors drop-centre / wellness centre developments
- calendar (seniors)
- cookbook (seniors)
- welcome kits for newcomers (collaboration with private sector, with extra-regional organizations, etc)
- Sept-Îles health and social services assessment
- computer skills workshops for seniors
- English movie nights
- visibility / branding project (+ objects e.g. fridge magnets)
- cemetery and / or industry and / or military history heritage projects
- communications plan (incl. newsletter support)
- ESC heritage development with Société historique de la côte-nord
- Youth employment opportunity assessment
- inter-regional education career fair partnership / tour