Assessing the English-speaking Community's Capacity to Access Arts, Culture, and Heritage in Nine Regions of Quebec

A Report on Phase One of the "Enhancing Access to Cultural Expression" Project
(EACE)

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In 2008, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) Board of Directors passed a formal resolution to prioritize the development of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector. This area was prioritized by a majority of members in the Network and was supported by the Board. An Arts, Culture and Heritage working group was created to develop a policy framework in this area to streamline and guide the activities of the Network. The main partners in this endeavour were the English Language Arts Network (ELAN) represented by Guy Rodgers, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) represented by Kevin O'Donnell and Dwane Wilkin and the QCGN represented by Sylvia Martin-Laforge. Jane Needles also participated in the working group representing both the QCGN and ELAN.

The policy framework, which was completed in November 2008, identified key areas of intervention over the next five years to support the dynamic growth and development of the cultural expression of English-speaking Quebec. The first was a project to access cultural expression through expanded partnerships. This current project "Enhancing Access to Cultural Expression" is a direct result of the prioritization of access to cultural expression. The other areas of priority included recognition and support through visibility - which is currently being addressed through the RAEV project being implemented by ELAN - and the creative economy - an issue yet to be addressed.

This effort by the Network to develop a unified vision on Arts, Culture and Heritage was prescient. When looking at current political contexts in the province which include discussions about jurisdiction over arts, culture and heritage it is increasingly important the community ensure it maintains access to cultural expressions that reflect its reality and identity. This access is what the English-speaking community of Quebec has defined as most important when it comes to it's vitality in this sector and the community looks forward to continued support in this area from government partners.

So what's new?

This was the first time that an official language minority community looked at the topics of Arts and Heritage as interwoven. That is why the term "cultural expression" was defined as "an inclusive term that denotes different ways of creatively expressing the life, experiences, contributions, ambitions and aspirations of English speaking Quebec. It includes a variety of creative expression, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment in the areas of culture, heritage, history, and the arts and communications technology."

This is also the first time that the importance and value of arts, culture and heritage to the English-speaking community have been enunciated in this way by a variety of partners. This document has helped government partners better understand the unique challenges and priorities the English-speaking community of Quebec faces.

Last but not least, cultural expression is an important aspect of community vitality because it is our direct link with identity. Arts, culture and heritage play key roles in how we see ourselves as a community in the past and in the future. English-speaking Quebec's evolving identity, sense of belonging and pride, space and place in Quebec and Canadian society is both reflected in and expressed by its arts, culture and heritage.

Enhancing the community's capacity to access artistic, cultural and heritage products is of great importance. We know that without an audience there is very little room for artists and historians to share their work. Bridging the geographic distances between our communities in Quebec is vital, but this must be done in parallel with bridging the capacity gap that exists for different communities across the province. In order to achieve this the English-speaking community decided to adopt the model that has been successfully implemented in the health sector by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN). This model prioritizes access and promotion to services and community development as its main tenets. It was agreed that development in the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector should follow this successful example.

From all of the work done in the creation of this project, it has become clear that to achieve a meaningful and sustainable capacity to ensure access to culturally relevant arts and culture in English across the province, we need a cohesive strategy. This strategy must ensure support and resources are provided to each region in a way that allows communities to pursue locally relevant strategies built upon their existing assets, culture, and current needs. Moreover, collective community strategies must be backed by coherent funding support to ensure implementation and vitality for minority language communities.

For a more in-depth look at the Arts, Culture and Heritage policy framework you can visit the QCGN website at: http://www.qcgn.ca/files/QCGN/aACH_Policy_Framework_English.ppt Interviews and workshops were based upon an Appreciative Inquiry approach, using a modified C-SOAR analysis (Challenges, Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results instead of "SWOT", or Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). Moreover, collective community strategies must be backed by coherent funding support to ensure implementation and vitality for minority language communities.

Executive Summary

English-speaking communities are present in pockets across the province, from the Magdalen Islands to the Outaouais and from Rouyn-Noranda to Megantic County, and have been there for hundreds of years. Recently, there has been growing recognition that access to culturally relevant arts in one's own language is important for a myriad of reasons – from connecting to one's culture, to fostering a sense of identity, to feeling a sense of belonging and place in the area one grows up in. Moreover, arts and culture are increasingly recognized as a vehicle for learning about one's heritage in a meaningful and engaging way.

In Quebec, a place in which the identity and belonging of English-speakers sit uneasily between linguistic tensions and a difficult political history, improving access to arts and culture is a powerful idea. The arts often bridge and transcend linguistic communities, serving as an important economic motor if harnessed appropriately. The Arts, Culture, and Heritage Policy Framework developed by the QCGN, ELAN and QAHN in 2008 backs up the assertion that this sector is of special importance to Quebec's English-speaking communities.

This report was generated by the Quebec Community Groups Network as the beginning of a long-standing endeavor to enhance access to cultural expression for the English-speaking communities of Quebec. It is intended as a stepping-stone towards actions that foster identity-building and a sense of belonging within Canada's official language minority communities, and promoting the contribution of arts, culture and heritage to the sustainable development of official language minority communities - both objectives of the Cultural Development Fund. Minority communities cannot achieve success independently and depend on coherent government support to build capacity internally as well as reach out to the majority community and build partnerships.

Methodology

The first step in improving the English-speaking Communities' capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage across the province was to speak with key stakeholders about their current needs and vision for the future. This was done through workshops via the video-conference network, in semi-structured telephone interviews and in face to face chats. QCGN Member Regional Associations directed this process in their respective regions (see the Appendix for a list). The desire to understand the different realities on the ground was at the heart of this process and Regional Associations were chosen to participate in this phase of the project due to their close connection and intimate knowledge of the local needs of their population. A draft report was generated from this exchange, at which point the Regional Associations were asked to validate the contents of the report, seeking input from local stakeholders as appropriate.

In keeping with this approach, a positive orientation was used in order to understand what is currently working well in communities so that local successes and assets can be built upon. Appreciative Inquiry contrasts with a "problem-solving" orientation where the focus is on deficits, challenges, and problems, which many would argue leads to band-aid solutions that are not sustainable in the long term. In this way, while briefly identifying gaps, interviews focused on the communities' successes and current access to venues, audience (and potential for audience development), and marketing channels.

Report Highlights

1. All regions show a strong desire to build capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English, and a willingness to work together and share resources and knowledge to do so.

2. Arts and culture is seen as a vehicle for transmitting heritage and a sense of identity and as a non-threatening approach to building bridges between communities - two vital undertakings for the long-term vitality of the English-speaking community in Quebec.

3. Regions vary widely in their current capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage. Some of the reasons for this variation are the isolated nature of some communities, the availability of infra-structure, the population density in some areas and the general interest in the arts by the local population. As noted elsewhere, English-speaking pockets spread throughout the province are not homogenous but actually represent quite a diversity of cultures, socio-economic status, local histories and relationships with the majority community, and other important differences that to-gether create a variety of unique experiences of access to arts, culture, and heritage.

4. The first steps in building capacity in each region will be different – from undertaking an initial needs assessment, to providing training and organizational development, to having a coordi-nating person to build networks and consolidate partnerships. As each region is in a different sit-uation, strategies must be tailored to each region's reality and current needs.

5. Regions vary in their perspective on bringing in provincial tours, which some communities see as a vital next step, while others feel that local talent must be developed as a first priority. The dif-ference in emphasis between access to local and provincial artists requires different capacity building for the community in question. This difference in emphasis reflects the local culture, lo-gistical issues related to isolation, and local infrastructure. Thus, these nuances are important to plan around.

6. Regional Associations pointed out that a history of non-collaboration within the English-speaking Communities of Quebec is exacerbated by funding structures that foster competition. Thus, among the Regional Associations that participated in this process, there was general agreement that access to cultural expression was prioritized by all and that each one should have the op-portunity to develop their capacity (rather than allocating larger amounts to select organiza-tions). Moreover the opportunity for sharing best practices is greater if all Regional Associations are collaborating in this effort. This opportunity to enhance best practices and foster collabora-tion and communication within the English-speaking Communities of Quebec would not exist if the development of this project is done through pilot projects or selected Regional Associations. Finally, economies of scale can be capitalized upon if all Regional Associations benefit equally in the development of their capacity.

Conclusion

This document provides a snapshot of nine regions' capacities to access arts, culture, and heritage. It is organized by region, and includes an identification of each region's current strengths, challenges, per-ceived opportunities, aspirations, and desired short-term results, all in relation to building capacity to ac-cess arts, culture, and heritage. While it is important to understand the individual needs of each of the regions, it is also important to develop and support province-wide strategies that can be implemented locally. Working on both levels is important for the sustainability and vitality of the English-speaking com-munity of Quebec.

Chapter One:

The Magdalen Islands

Being less accessible than other areas of the province, the Magdalen Islands would be advantaged by prioritizing their local resources. Those who were consulted emphasized the need to develop artistic talent and to foster local partnerships with the Francophone artistic community. These two local assets can be leveraged in developing networks, enhancing awareness, providing training to English-speaking organizations serving the arts and culture sector, and creating a communications infrastructure.

Chapter Highlights

- Communities in this region tend to respond well to local arts, culture, and heritage but do not engage as easily with touring artists from other regions; this points to a **strong need for capacity to develop local artistic talent** over development of capacity to access touring networks.

- To build capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English, **the most prominent needs are concerning network development, awareness, training, and communication infrastructure.**

- The high travel costs of getting to the island combined with the current state of relations between the English-speaking community and the Francophone community present an opportunity for training and education to come from the **development of new partnerships with Francophones.**

- Given the high value Islanders place on being "local", combined with the fact that network development, communication, and training can all be done locally, and that relationship building requires connections, there is a strong call for **any staff resources to be sourced locally** so that social connections can be maximized.

- Any staff person provided as human resources to the Magdalen Islands should not only be locally sourced, but also **bilingual, and with a skill-set focused in relationship building and network development.** Their primary role will be to bridge the gap between the English-speaking and Francophone communities. Expertise in accessing arts and culture is less important, since the mandate will be to build sustainable relationships with the local Francophone community to ensure long-term access to expertise.

- There is a history of sharing resources with the Gaspé in a way that Magdalen Islanders feel is inequitable and has little to no impact on the Magdalen Islands. This leads to increased animosity and decreased potential for inter-regional collaboration. This indicates that **efforts to distribute resources to the Magdalen Islands should be done carefully to ensure that time, money, staff people, and other resources are clearly earmarked** for their destination. Human resources must be physically located on the Island.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

Magdalen Islanders would like to see a higher level of engagement with and awareness of the arts, particularly with youth. They look forward to training being available for artists in terms of artistic techniques but also regarding promotion and business skills. Finally, the community would like to see a strong communication network on the Islands within the English-speaking community and also reaching out to the Francophone community as a strong audience to tap into. They wish to have a multi-functional venue for arts, culture and heritage.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The Magdalen Islands has talented artists, especially musicians, writers, and craftspeople, and some visual artists. There is a strong tourism industry (50,000 tourists annually, 15,000 of which are English-speaking). Current venues in use include a gymnasium and a church hall, both of which could easily be modernized. The island is geographically small, so all areas are accessible. The French-speaking majority community has a vibrant arts community and high quality facilities and venues, and there is a willingness to share and partner. The English-speaking community is well-connected to each other by Facebook and word of mouth.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

The English-speaking community has few institutional supports, little to no communication infrastructure, a lack of awareness of training methods, audience development techniques, or publicity strategies, and ill-equipped venues. Other than one hydraulic stage, the community has no lighting, curtains, audio equipment, and or anything else needed to host professional shows. The one English-language newspaper is gone, and there remains only one hour in English on one radio station. Many individuals are not bilingual and therefore cannot access information in French. The connections to English, Scottish, and Irish roots are no longer strong. Many are unaware of the potential for accessing arts, culture, and heritage. The biggest challenge is a lack of human resources to address these very challenges.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

Communication
There is no English-language newspaper; however there are some French-language communication channels that could be better used, such as CFIM radio, and possibly the local newspaper. There is currently an events schedule published in French that could be translated.

Venues
Outdoor shows are popular and easy; there are also many Francophone community venues to take advantage of, and some venues in the English-speaking community could be modernized and made suitable. The French-speaking community has sound equipment that could be borrowed.

Training and Knowledge
The French-speaking community is highly knowledgeable about accessing arts and culture, both in terms of developing artists and developing audiences; this can be tapped into. There are many talented English-speaking local artists who could become more professional with minimal training, thereby increasing the access to arts and culture in English for Islanders.

Audience
The English-speaking community is highly interested in local music shows. Audiences for other areas of arts, culture, and heritage could be developed. The Francophone community may provide a further audience to tap into.

Tourism
A strong tourism sector has not yet been accessed by the English-speaking community despite the fact that many tourists are English-speaking. This possibility provides further audience development avenues and revenue possibilities.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

• Develop local artistic talent to express culture and heritage

• Build relationships with the French-speaking community in order to:
- access training and development for artists and for community organizations wishing to promote arts, culture, and heritage
- capitalize upon existing communication and marketing channels
- collaborate in arts and culture for tourism
- access a wider audience

• Undertake a needs assessment and start to address those needs in a sustainable manner

Chapter Two:

The Gaspé

The Gaspé region wishes to capitalize upon its rich artistic history, talented youth, and the mobilization opportunities from previous and upcoming Regional Heritage Summits to form new partnerships and communication strategies in arts, culture, and heritage.

Chapter Highlights

- The Gaspé possesses a **rich artistic culture and heritage,** which is a great strength; however many musicians and other artists do not identify as such, since it is embedded in their culture; this makes them difficult to access.

- The development of opportunities **for young artists** in this region is a priority. Many young people are learning artistic skills from older generations, but have little opportunity to exchange with each other or with Francophone youth.

- **Communication networks are very limited;** promotional tools and channels are required in order to promote events and create visibility for artists.

- Local artists are generally not known. **A local database of performers and artists would be useful** in order to be able to develop local arts, culture, and heritage.

- Partnerships are beginning to be developed but this is a key growth area for the region.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

Essentially, those spoken to in the Gaspé region look forward to increasing communication between English-speaking artists and regional and provincial organizations that can assist with planning and development of individual projects, promotion and technical support for local artists. By fostering a partnership with service providers within the scope of arts, culture and heritage, the region's youth can also be exposed to several opportunities to connect and become exposed to artists in the community.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The local English-speaking community has a rich history of musical talent, not to mention storytelling, handicraft, sculpting and painting. Fortunately, many of these talents have been passed on to the younger generation. Seniors often take advantage of small events to perform musically, for the most part on a volunteer basis.

Some English-speaking artists have produced work without the support of local resources and have since discovered accessible services to continue developing their abilities and welcoming innovative approaches.

In the region, there are numerous events organized, from festivals to concerts, in various communities that are well attended each year. Exhibitions exist in smaller venues and commonly include the artwork or handicraft of other artists.

Most recently, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) had the opportunity to partner with the Conseil de la Culture de la Gaspésie, which recently provided a link on their French website to the Gaspesian Heritage Web Magazine.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

One of the most difficult challenges continues to be that the majority of musicians do not consider themselves "artists" and do not promote themselves as such, since for many it is simply a past-time or a part of their family's way of life to learn to play an instrument. Playing music is positioned in this region's heritage as a way of life rather than an artistic expertise. This can make it difficult to identify and promote local musicians.

Currently, there is no database of English-speaking musicians and locals rely on the same entertainers for annual events. Many English-speaking youth are seemingly performing more often and are encouraged through in-school support; they are provided with increasing opportunities to develop their presence as artists, and through this encouragement have gained confidence to perform for local events. However, Francophone festivals and exhibitions do not often incorporate an English component. Thus, exchange between young artists is minimal.

More broadly than only musicians, it is difficult to determine how many English-speaking artists exist in the region, of what discipline, and if they wish to develop their abilities.

Services for English-speaking artists, and to develop artists, are limited. For example, theatre camps for children exist in the region, but only in French.

Finally, communication networks to promote arts-based information are limited. Local media focuses on Francophone events, and little English content is included in local newspapers and radio stations.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

The Gaspé region sees partnership building as the main opportunity; for example, partnerships with the English Language Arts Program through the Quebec Drama Federation.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Foster partnerships and share knowledge of findings through different activities including findings that CASA hosts throughout the year pertaining to Arts, Culture and Heritage

- Implement a follow-up to the 2010 Gaspesian Regional Heritage Summit held in March 2010, which brought to light many Arts & Culture programming/accessibility challenges and recommendations

Chapter Three:

The Eastern Townships

This region has a vibrant arts and culture scene, providing a gateway to English-speaking heritage and providing a bridge between the linguistic communities. However, not everyone has access to this scene, particularly youth and those with low incomes. There is a need for paid positions in the arts to ensure access for all and to reduce the financial instability that artists experience.

Chapter Highlights

- The region has excellent local talent and a **vibrant arts and culture scene**

- **Venues are numerous;** when they are too large for the needs of the English-speaking community, churches and community halls are used

- **It is difficult for local artists to achieve the recognition they need** to become professional artists eligible for funding and grants. This contributes to the lack of stable income that artists in this region experience

- Arts and culture are currently being used **to foster connections** between English- and French-speaking communities

- **Paid positions in the arts are required** to help local artists gain the recognition that they require and ensure ongoing access to arts, culture, and heritage in English. Currently almost all the work is done by volunteers with no paid staff to support or coordinate them; this is not sustainable and contributes to poverty and undermines community vitality

- The audience is fairly well developed and events are most successful when they are marketed to a bilingual target audience; however **youth and low-income segments of the English-speaking population are not accessing arts and culture**

- There are hubs of English-speaking arts, culture, and heritage throughout the region but because of how large the area is, **events need to be developed in small villages**

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

The Eastern Townships wishes to develop its increasingly vibrant arts, culture, and heritage sectors in a way that fosters community development of the English-speaking community at the same time. Arts and culture needs to be not only accessible to all, but it also needs to avoid reinforcing cycles of poverty and lack of sustainability. Paid coordinator positions need to be developed to avoid volunteer burn-out and to contribute to a healthy, sustainable, and vibrant community.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

This beautiful region attracts artists of all kinds. Sutton was recently named one of the top ten cultural capitals in Canada. Theatre, music, dance, and visual arts are all strong in this region and the English-speaking community is well represented in these disciplines.

Although professional yet small venues - suitable to the needs of local English-speaking productions and tours catering to an English-speaking audience - are rare, the community has converted many churches and community halls into venues in villages. Networks have developed, such as the Carrefours Culturelles, to offer support and collaboration between villages, and some innovative models are springing up, such as the Coeur de Village in Sutton, which operates as a social economy style not-for-profit venue.

Marketing channels for artistic events are fairly well developed and include CBC radio, several English-language newspapers, e-bulletins and newsletters, e-mail lists, and word of mouth. Community radio stations are becoming a tool in many areas of this region.

There is a wide array of organizations and a huge pool of volunteers currently contributing to the vibrant arts and culture scene in the Eastern Townships. There are a wide range of training programs available in the region to develop local artists in English (particularly in Knowlton) offered by Bishops University and others. Training is available in the studio arts, drama, music, dance, and other disciplines.

There is also an array of festivals and major performances developed and shown locally.

Some regional county municipalities have cultural agents, which have proven very helpful to developing local arts and culture and represent some local expertise.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

Many artists face significant economic challenges. Part of the reason for this is how difficult it is for English-speaking artists in this region to gain "professional" status and therefore be eligible for provincial and federal artistic grants and other funding. There is a serious lack of galleries and venues in the region that can provide artists with accredited opportunities to showcase their work and therefore work towards a professional artist status. Full-time artists generally have to sell most of their work elsewhere in order to be financially self-sufficient.

This is also true for writers. Previously there were a few writing initiatives locally but this area of the arts has migrated to Montreal, leaving a gap in terms of venues, places to showcase work, or assistance in achieving first publication for local writers. A first book or magazine credit is an important step for young writers, and there is currently little infrastructure, support, venues, or information in the Eastern Townships in this area.

Although the audience for arts, culture and heritage is well-developed, there are demographic challenges presented by the "missing middle", both in terms of age brackets and income. Therefore, audiences tend to be older and wealthy, and it is difficult to reach youth and lower income earners. As arts and culture in English help individuals to affirm their identity, feel a sense of belonging, and understand their heritage, it is important to reach the entire population. This is one more reason why this sector must be developed in tandem with community development best practices, emphasizing sustainability and equal access. Historically, artistic events in this area have been funded by "patrons of the arts". This still occurs, but they are quite exclusive and only reach a certain segment of the population.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

Bilingual Events
Artistic events are increasingly bilingual and target both language communities, which not only increases their viability and accessibility, but also works to bridge the two communities and build partnerships. This should be continued.

Cultural Policies
In some municipalities, cultural policies have been researched and created, which helps community members get municipal support for the arts and to collaborate on common issues. In municipalities where this has occurred, the arts have seen major results; this should be more widespread.

Paid Positions
With greater human resources, more opportunities for artists to showcase their work could be provided, ensuring that everyone has access to arts, culture, and heritage in English, and also working towards a sustainable income for artists. Staff would also provide a more cohesive approach to community and network development and solidify structures that are currently carried rather precariously by tired volunteers. The English-speaking community could work towards being fairly represented in local and regional cultural organizations.

Support Local Artists
Finally, full-time artists usually rely on outside support in order to financially support themselves. If tourism of the arts could be promoted locally, increased artistic sales would impact artists, thereby enhancing the number of artists dedicated full-time to their craft locally. This would, in turn, increase access to arts and culture.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Strengthen volunteer networks through coordination and support

- Expand opportunities for local artists to showcase their work

- Enhance partnerships between English-speaking and Francophone artistic organizations and events to promote bilingual, bi-cultural arts

- Create cultural policies in more municipalities

- Support organizations in reaching youth and lower-income segments of the population

- Support organizations in accessing information and support about funding opportunities in order to create more paid positions in the arts; help organizations to advocate for the community to provincial and federal artistic organizations.

Additional Information

The Townshippers' Association, having identified the need to build capacity in the region for increased access to arts, culture, and heritage in English, recently proposed this as an initiative to Canadian Heritage. The following text, shared by the Townshippers' from their proposal, provides the context for such a proposal.

Townshippers' Association

Townshippers' Association is a non-profit non-partisan organization founded in 1979. Its mission is to promote the interests of the English-speaking community in the historical Eastern Townships, strengthen the cultural identity of this community, and encourage the full participation of the English-speaking population in the community at large. Townshippers' is able to make relatively strong contributions to promoting the interests of its community in the realm of health and social services, but lack of resources limits its ability to strengthen the cultural identity of the Townships English-speaking minority.

Eastern Townships English-speaking community

Townshippers' serves some 42,000 English-speaking people dispersed in a region larger than Belgium, stretching from Philipsburg in the west to Lac Mégantic in the east, and from Inverness in the north to the U.S. border in the south. The English-speaking minority population in this region diminished by 30 per cent over the 30 years between 1971 and 2001, and its members are largely scattered and isolated from one another. It has been identified as a relatively de-vitalized community (Floch).

English arts

Unlike English-speaking communities in many other rural areas in Quebec, the Townships official-language minority possesses a relatively high proportion of arts workers in theatre, crafts and visual arts, music, creative writing, dance and other performance arts – more than twice as many as in the Townships French-speaking majority (Statistics Canada).

However, this very important artistic community suffers particularly from low levels of employment and income, and its members are scattered throughout the largely rural Townships. Not only are they disconnected from each other, they are disconnected from the Townships English-speaking Community and community-at-large, and many are not cognizant of provincial or sectoral organizations which could contribute to their professional development and economic viability. This situation has prevented its members from mobilizing independently or in concert with initiatives coming from sectoral groups such as English Language Arts Network, the Quebec Drama Federation or the Quebec Writers Federation. It has also compromised the important contribution the Townships arts could and should be making to strengthen the cultural identity of the Townships English-speaking community as a whole.

Why is Townshippers' Association the organization of choice to carry out this initiative?

It is clear that English-speaking artists in the Townships are in need of a mobilizing force to bring them together, create visibility and links with the English-speaking community of the Eastern Townships, and enable them to benefit from existing resources both through Quebec-wide English-speaking sectoral organizations and through provincial professional organizations. However, aside from Townshippers', there does not exist an umbrella group in the Townships which could fill this role, either in terms of territory covered, bringing together various arts disciplines, and having established links with local, regional and provincial partners.

Townshippers' Association, from its inception, identified cultural identity as a primary concern for the Townships English-speaking community, and an important aspect of its three-part mission. Despite this importance, Townshippers' has severely lacked resources to address arts and culture. Over the past years, its Community & Culture Committee has initiated several projects that have been limited in time and scope. Most notably, these are:

- www.townshipsheritage.com, now owned by Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network;

- Townshippers' Day, an annual festival which includes a venue for musicians and dancers;

- A six-month ArtWorks project two years ago, which surveyed arts workers, hosted an information/networking session, and established an email list to circulate information;

- Selling Townships English books and CDs in English for participating Townships writers and musicians;

- Publishing Taproot: Poetry, Prose and Images from the Eastern Townships (series of 4 books in 10 years); and

- Publicizing information about events for 10 cultural partners.

These initiatives received very positive feedback from participants, but Townshippers' Association has experienced considerable pressure to expand and build on them, beyond its capacity to do so. While inadequate in themselves to fulfill their mission and objectives, the past initiatives, however, have laid a solid foundation for carrying out Townships Expressions, Building Rural Cultural Vitality. Townshippers' has access to a variety of local and provincial resource professionals who can lead workshops for arts workers.

Townshippers' has identified and inventoried these artists as well as their needs and the resources available to them. The association is in close touch with cultural agents in three Townships MRCs (Memphrémagog, Sherbrooke and Brome-Missisquoi) which have cultural policies. It partners with many local community organizations, and has a list of cultural organizations that would like to become formal partners – but cannot because of a lack of resources. In short, as a regional organization, Townshippers' Association is poised to carry out this initiative, and under considerable pressure from community members and the cultural sector to do so. This region's proximity to the Eastern Townships, Montreal, and Quebec City is an advantage to build upon in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English. Local music and excellent venues are assets of the region; however organizations require development of expertise in marketing of the arts, and in learning how to support the diversification of existing arts and culture.

Chapter Four:
Chaudière-Appalaches

Chapter Highlights

- **The region is well-positioned** between Montreal, Quebec City, and the Eastern Townships; this means there are untapped audiences and artists to draw from.

- **Venues are numerous and well-equipped.**

- There is currently **a lot of local music** but little theatre, dance, visual arts, and other access to arts and culture in English.

- **The audience is somewhat developed** but skewed towards older residents; arts and culture does not often reach youth.

- **Marketing channels and expertise are underdeveloped and need support.** Organizations do not currently know how to market cultural and artistic events and rely upon word of mouth and telephone calls.

- **Opportunities for youth to learn about their heritage** must be developed. Increasing access to arts and culture for young people provides a promising way to do this.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

The region trusts and relies upon community organizations such as the Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation ("MCDC") for arts, culture, and heritage in English much as they currently do for health and social services. MCDC has the expertise to develop audiences and market events appropriately to ensure that all sectors of the population have access to arts in English. Reaching youth, this provides an opportunity for them to learn about their heritage and feel a sense of identity, belonging, and pride. Local artists flourish and tours from Montreal and other regions are a regular occurrence.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The region is well located in terms of accessing talent and audiences. Local musicians are numerous and there is a wide pool of various artists and entertainers to tap into since those from Montreal are willing to travel.

Venues are numerous and well-equipped, from large professional and well-equipped auditoriums to small community halls to summer theatres.

Communication networks include the CBC and their public service announcements, e-mails, newsletters, and word of mouth.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

Currently, there is very little access to arts, culture, and heritage in English. Many youth know little about their English-speaking heritage. One group tried launching community theatre but was not successful.

Shows tend to be small as the community is small - a large audience is not feasible, which limits the shows that can be hosted. Audiences are also not willing to pay large ticket prices for artistic shows, although they will pay moderate prices.

The biggest challenge faced by the community sector is a lack of expertise in marketing arts and culture to the community, both in terms of publicity techniques, pitching the arts, and establishing effective communication channels. Currently, information about arts and culture shows and events is spread primarily by phone calls and word of mouth, since the majority of the population is older (38 per cent are over the age of 55) and do not use the Internet as much as younger age brackets.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

Training on marketing and audience development techniques would have a significant impact on this region. Also, due to the region's proximity to Montreal, Sherbrooke, and Quebec City, excursions could be organized by bus to see shows and events. If resources were allocated, MCDC could share and collaborate with Voice of English-speaking Quebec since their locations are so close and they have existing partnerships.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Improve the ability of the community sector to market and publicize arts, culture, and heritage

- Improve the ability of the community sector to develop an audience

- Enhance the image of MCDC as a competent key player in the arts, culture, and heritage scene locally and regionally

- Assist MCDC in understanding the desires and needs of local audiences

Chapter Five:

Abitibi-Témiscamingue

The English-speaking community of Abitibi-Témiscamingue currently has little access to arts, culture, and heritage in English. However, with the appropriate training for organizations, the English-speaking community could tap into supportive partnerships and local and provincial artistic talent. There is also an urgent need for research, as little is currently known about existing opportunities and assets.

Chapter Highlights

- The region **has excellent venues** and the **audience is fairly well-developed** for arts and culture.

- **Marketing channels** are not well developed for the English-speaking community. For example there is no English-language newspaper.

- **Very little is currently known** about opportunities to access arts, culture, and heritage in English - either by English-speakers or by organizations serving the English-speaking community. **There is a need to research and identify opportunities for growth.**

- **The biggest city, Rouyn-Noranda, is artistically vibrant, with a city very supportive of the arts.** The English-speaking community has low participation in local arts, culture, and heritage, but this could change.

- Capacity building of local and regional organizations should be the first step in enhancing this region's access to arts, culture, and heritage in English. **Training is required in all areas related to the arts.**

- The opportunity for supportive partnerships exists.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

The English-speaking community in this region would like to participate in a lively arts and culture sector in English, fostering a sense of belonging and providing a way to learn about heritage. This would include the creation of a local English Arts Network, and also a Provincial English Arts Network that reaches all the regions including tours and access to information. Regular arts and culture shows would include local artists performing in English, particularly in terms of small expositions and shows, giving local talent the opportunity to develop. Finally, the region has access to a bank of local and provincial artists of all kinds to call upon, from actors, to singers, to comedians.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

Abitibi-Témiscamingue possesses excellent venues of all kinds, from small halls to large auditoriums, particularly in Rouyn-Noranda. In fact, there are two high quality venues in the city run by not-for-profit organizations that are eager to partner with the English-speaking community.

The audience is well-developed in some ways, particularly for bilingual shows, stand-up comedy, and large productions. Neighbours Association has the funds to supplement admission charges to keep ticket costs low.

Rouyn-Noranda is a very artistic city, with many vibrant festivals which the English-speaking community does participate in. Occasionally bilingual shows are produced which both Francophones and English-speakers respond well to.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

Currently, the biggest challenge in getting access to English-language artists is that English-speaking artists are not well-known locally. Few participate in Francophone music and artistic festivals. Aside from Geordie Productions, there is also a knowledge gap about English-speaking artists in the rest of the province who could tour to this region.

This challenge aside, even if artists were known, there is not currently the capacity to reach out to them, put on shows, create performance contracts, market to the appropriate audience, develop those audiences, price tickets suitably, and so on. There are major organizational development needs for supporting this community's access to arts, culture, and heritage.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

Perceptions
There is a misconception in the French-speaking community that the English-speaking community is not interested in being part of the arts and culture scene. This could be corrected through relationship-building and promotion, which would open the door to participation in many forms. There seems to be, generally, a willingness and openness from the Francophone community that can be built upon.

A Supportive City
The City of Rouyn-Noranda is very keen to develop arts and culture and willing to partner with the English-speaking community. This is a key source of support that is currently not being accessed.

Schools
The English school provides some opportunity for youth to engage with arts, culture, and heritage, and may be another potential partner for deepening involvement. Youth generally express a desire for more access to arts and culture in English.

Audience
There are also a number of new "retirees" here who expect a high quality of life and expand the potential audience base.

Training
Funding and human resources is not a major capacity issue in the community sector in this region. Expertise in arts, culture, and heritage is. With some organizational development, Neighbours could provide effective community development to the region in access arts, culture, and heritage in English.

Access to Artists
Finally, it is hoped that if local artists could be supported in their development, and if links could be made with provincial touring groups, access to arts, culture, and heritage in English would be greatly enhanced in this region.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Capacity building for organizations on enhancing community access to arts, culture, and heritage, particularly in terms of marketing, audience development, partnership building in the arts, and the operational side of working with artists.

- Develop partnerships with local schools, the City of Rouyn-Noranda, local and regional Francophone artistic organizations, provincial networks, and others.

- Reach out to the French-speaking community to inform them of the needs and assets of the English-speaking artistic sector, and integrate our arts, culture, and heritage objectives.

- Research and identify opportunities to develop access to arts, culture, and heritage in English.

- Bring in provincial tours as the local talent is slowly supported and grown.

Chapter Six:

The North Shore

The English-speaking community of the North Shore currently has little access to arts, culture, and heritage in English, and although there is potential, there is a lack of awareness of what that potential is. Needs assessments or asset mapping processes would be helpful as a starting place for helping this region move forward and build capacity.

Chapter Highlights

- The North Shore area is **geographically remote,** with key communities located between 200 and 300 kilometres apart from each other. They are connected by roads and have good access to high speed Internet. English-speakers are generally fairly bilingual.

- There is a vibrant arts and culture scene, but only in French. The heritage of the English-speaking community is not widely known or celebrated. There are a few local English-speaking artists, but not many. There are probably some who are unknown. There is only one artistic tour (Geordie Productions) that reaches youth once a year. Organizations do not have the time or resources to develop this sector. Thus, **current capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English is very limited, and the community is not very aware of existing strengths and challenges in their community. Asset-mapping would be an exciting method to explore this further.**

- For any capacity building in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English, the major concern is that the capacity building is sustainable. Teaching new skills to those working in community development, providing access to new or existing arts networks, or better understanding how to bring tours to the region is not helpful without also ensuring that there are human resources available to undertake this work. Existing human resources cannot; volunteers are experiencing burn-out, and organizations do not have enough operational funding to enable staff to take on more responsibilities. Thus, **a major goal of capacity building must be putting funding solutions in place for long-term staff.**

- **Existing venues are adequate.** The English-speaking community has several informal venues, such as churches and schools, for informal artistic productions. The French-speaking community has well-equipped formal venues that probably could be used to host English-language events.

- **Marketing and communications channels could be improved.** The English-speaking community can listen to CBC radio, and although they do not have an English newspaper, they can place paid advertisements in the French newspaper, which is somewhat well read by English-speakers. With high-speed Internet available, Facebook, e-mail lists, and electronic newsletters are good methods for communicating, along with word of mouth. The NSCA also publishes a newsletter quarterly.

- **There are audiences to tap into.** Currently the English-speaking community pays to see artistic events in French, so it is reasonable to assume they would provide a willing audience for works in their native language and expressing their culture and heritage.

- **More artistic tours** to this region are important.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

To have sustainable funding for a resource person dedicated to promoting access to arts, culture, and heritage in the region in English; to have a network of volunteers in each major hub in the region; to have an asset map of venues, partners, artists, communication tools, and other assets the region has in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English; to have youth involved in watching and participating in the arts.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The North Shore recognizes its venues, high-speed Internet, high levels of bilingualism, vibrant artistic community and many resources in the Francophone communities. Several organizations that could be involved: NSCA, the Community Learning Center, and schools.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

The North Shore's biggest challenge is its remote location. There are currently a lack of partnerships with Francophones; lack of English-language media; and a lack of operational funding and thus human resources available to work on issues.

Significantly, there is a lack of awareness of current capacity of the community to access arts, culture, and heritage in English because there have been no studies, no networking, and no one has time to investigate this, despite its importance.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

A resource person could bring tours in to the region, which would be feasible since there is a paying audience, and partnerships with Francophones developed, suitable venues could be used. Networks could be developed. Funding could be applied for from diverse sources to ensure the sustainability of such a position over the long-term.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Securing sustainable funding

- Increasing tours to the region

- Identifying local assets that could be used to build capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English.

Chapter Seven:
The Quebec City Region

The Quebec City region sees its English-speaking communities participating, to some extent, in a vibrant arts and culture scene. Some challenges are faced in terms of finding suitable venues and accessing effective marketing channels. Partnerships with the majority community are seen as a promising way to develop capacity to develop arts, culture, and heritage in English.

Chapter Highlights

- **The region has excellent local talent** and a vibrant arts and culture scene

- **Venues are fairly numerous but are often too large and costly** for the needs of the English-speaking community

- **A multi-disciplinary community centre suitable for artistic events and exhibitions** for the English-speaking community has been a goal for this region for some time

- **The audience is somewhat developed** but could be developed further by reaching Francophones and Anglophones who are not involved in or do not identify with the English-speaking community. This is an excellent opportunity **as the Francophone majority is increasingly showing an interest in English arts, culture, and heritage,** and a wider audience creates greater viability for productions

- **Marketing channels are underdeveloped and need support.** Organizations do not currently know how to access French-language media, and communication channels in the English-speaking community do not reach everyone.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

The region would like to provide better opportunities for local artists to develop and showcase their work, and to host more artists from other regions. With a new multi-purpose community centre with an emphasis on the arts, smaller productions and exhibitions produced by the English-speaking community would have a viable venue. The region wishes to build upon increasing interest and acceptance by the Francophone community in order to establish greater access to arts, culture and heritage in English for English-speakers, French-speakers, and tourists.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The Quebec City area has access to excellent local talent, some venues and institutions such as the Morrin Centre, and a very supportive community.

Partnerships are growing. There is access to a wide audience that is highly interested in arts and culture and willing to pay for events and shows.

The communications infrastructure includes CBC radio, one English-language newspaper mainly reaching the older population, and various newsletters, e-mail lists, and bulletins. Word of mouth is fairly effective for part of the population.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

Finding appropriate venues for English-language theatrical and musical productions can be difficult, since productions tend to be smaller and draw a smaller audience, and therefore cannot afford the costs of renting large auditoriums or theatres. There is a lack of small yet well-equipped and affordable venues.

Publicity and marketing is another major challenge. Although those English- speakers who are involved and connected to the English-speaking community are reached, there is a large segment of the English-speaking population that is not reached since they would need to be accessed through French-language media, which the English-speaking community is having trouble tapping into. There is also no existing channel to reach younger people, since readership of the one English newspaper is skewed to an older demographic.

Funding and human resources are not often allocated to arts, culture, and heritage, and particularly its promotion, for those organizations that must also ensure health and educational needs for the English-speaking population are met.

Partnerships, particularly with the French-speaking community, need to be developed.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

The audience for arts and culture in English can be developed by targeting Francophones and tourists.

French media, if it could be accessed, would provide a new level of publicity and marketing available to the English-speaking community. Enhanced opportunities for networking and sharing both within this region and with other regional associations would allow for increased best practices, knowledge generation, and collaboration.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Fostering networking and partnership building

- Marketing and publicity training for small organizations, particularly tapping into the French-language media

- Promotion of local artistic talent and increasing the number of tours so that, overall, greater access to arts and culture in English is offered

- Facilitate and coordinate efforts to make the creation of a multi-purpose community centre for the English-speaking community a reality

Chapter Eight:
West Quebec Region

In the Outaouais, a thriving arts and culture scene can be solidified through organization and support. Building capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English is seen as a strategic priority for bridging the linguistic communities and easing tensions. Sustainable access to funding and organizational development are seen as two key factors in building this capacity.

Chapter Highlights

- Arts, culture, and a celebration of heritage are excellent ways to **shift the region's perception of the English-speaking community** - a vital undertaking at this particular time for the region.

- In order to better access arts, culture, and heritage in English, **organizations in the region must be stabilized and strengthened through increased sustainable operational funding.** They also have organizational development needs. Provincial funding for arts and culture could be accessed by local and regional organizations to foster their sustainability, but they need networking and translation support to do so.

- There is already a vibrant artistic community in the region that requires some support in order to be well-known, visible, and professional; this can be done through **enhanced networking and partnership building.**

- Any human resources would ideally be obtained locally, but **skills and qualifications are the most important criteria.** Either part-time or full-time support would both be beneficial.

Aspirations: How we envision our future capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English

The English-speaking community of West Quebec wishes to have a community sector that has the capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English with stable funding and adequate human resources needs. It hopes to have healthy, sustainable organizations able to reach all corners of the region, help youth become more involved in the arts, and provide frequent bilingual arts programming, festivals, and training. The region would also like to see high speed Internet available throughout the region to encourage artists to make their home here and to remain connected with communities. It is hoped that the education sector will reverse its trend away from arts funding. Finally, the region would like to have access to a formal network of venues available for artistic performances and shows.

Assets: Our strengths in accessing arts, culture, and heritage in English

The region has a beautiful natural landscape, attracting artists. There is a vibrant arts scene and an abundance of local talent, including visual arts, crafts, music, theatre, and film. There is a "creative energy" in the region, combined with an entrepreneurial spirit, which results in a few interesting local productions. The audience available for arts, culture, and heritage in English is fairly strong, particularly near Ottawa; further from Ottawa, it varies by community. English-speakers are fairly bilingual, and there are fairly well-developed communication and marketing channels available to publicize events, such as bilingual radio stations and several English-language newspapers, the Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) bulletin, and various e-mail listserves at the community level.

Challenges: Current obstacles and difficulties

The English-speaking community is somewhat invisible in the region; a shift needs to occur to make the community visible, and participants feel that this would best happen through celebration of arts, culture, and heritage. This is particularly timely, as currently there are difficult tensions between some English-speaking and French-speaking communities. Many artists could become professional with only minimal support; many productions and festivals could tour to other areas with some administrative assistance and network development; many French and English events could become bilingual with some human resources support to foster partnerships.

These human resources are not available. A lack of stable operational funding for organizations that wish to foster access to arts, culture, and heritage in English prevents the region from becoming as artistically vibrant as they wish.

Not-for-profit organizations must currently spend a disproportionate amount of their time and resources on securing last-minute operational funding since long-term funding is difficult to secure; this results in high turn-over, which reduces the efficacy and effectiveness of staff, which wastes resources. Institutional memory is lost. Volunteers burn out after being asked to do too much administrative support. Further, organizations are overextended; they require organizational development in order to strengthen and stabilize them, and to help them structure themselves intentionally. However, with most funding for not-for-profits coming from short-term project funding, it is difficult to hire long-term staff and virtually impossible to address organizational development needs.

A lack of venues and appropriate equipment for arts and culture has been identified. The size of the region is also an issue; it is hard to equip all areas and network with everyone effectively. Ottawa's proximity is a blessing and a curse, since although audiences can come from there, significant energy also moves towards Ottawa from the Outaouais in terms of audiences and artistic talent.

There are many resources available in the Francophone artistic sector that are not being tapped into due to a lack of human resources available to facilitate networking, partnership building, and communication.

Opportunities: Strategic options for building capacity

Funding
Status as a linguistic minority community provides opportunities for Federal funding. Provincial funding is also available for arts and culture through a variety of channels that the English-speaking community is currently not tapping into. With some better networking, support, and translation, significant new funding sources could be accessed, hopefully transitioning not-for-profit organizations towards sustainability and optimal health.

Venues
A number of high quality venues exist in the French-speaking community that are not currently being accessed by the English-speaking community. One example is the theatre in Hull.

Training and Knowledge
With a small English-speaking population spread throughout the region, the most feasible strategy for providing training to organizations and also directly to local artists is through building partnerships with Francophones to offer bilingual training.

Communication
Ensuring high-speed internet access is available throughout the region is a key strategy for supporting network development, business development of artists, creating a higher quality of life for resident artists, and ensuring their work is being accessed by the community.

Other
Building upon the entrepreneurial spirit of the region, social enterprise can be used as a model for sustainability.

Next Steps: Vital in moving forward towards greater capacity

- Both within the English-speaking community, and between the English-speaking community and the French-speaking community, **develop networks, collaboration, and sharing and exchange of skills and knowledge.**

- **Focus on local.** Identify and promote "home-grown" solutions, and facilitate the sharing of local knowledge and skills. Prioritize the development of local artists over provincial tours.

- **Network with arts and culture funders,** particularly at the provincial and municipal level, to begin to access new funds to enhance organizational sustainability. Facilitate a cohesive approach within the English-speaking community.

- **Foster organizational sustainability** by accessing stable operational funds to ensure adequate administrative and human resources needs, address structural and other internal issues, and strengthen the community's capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English.
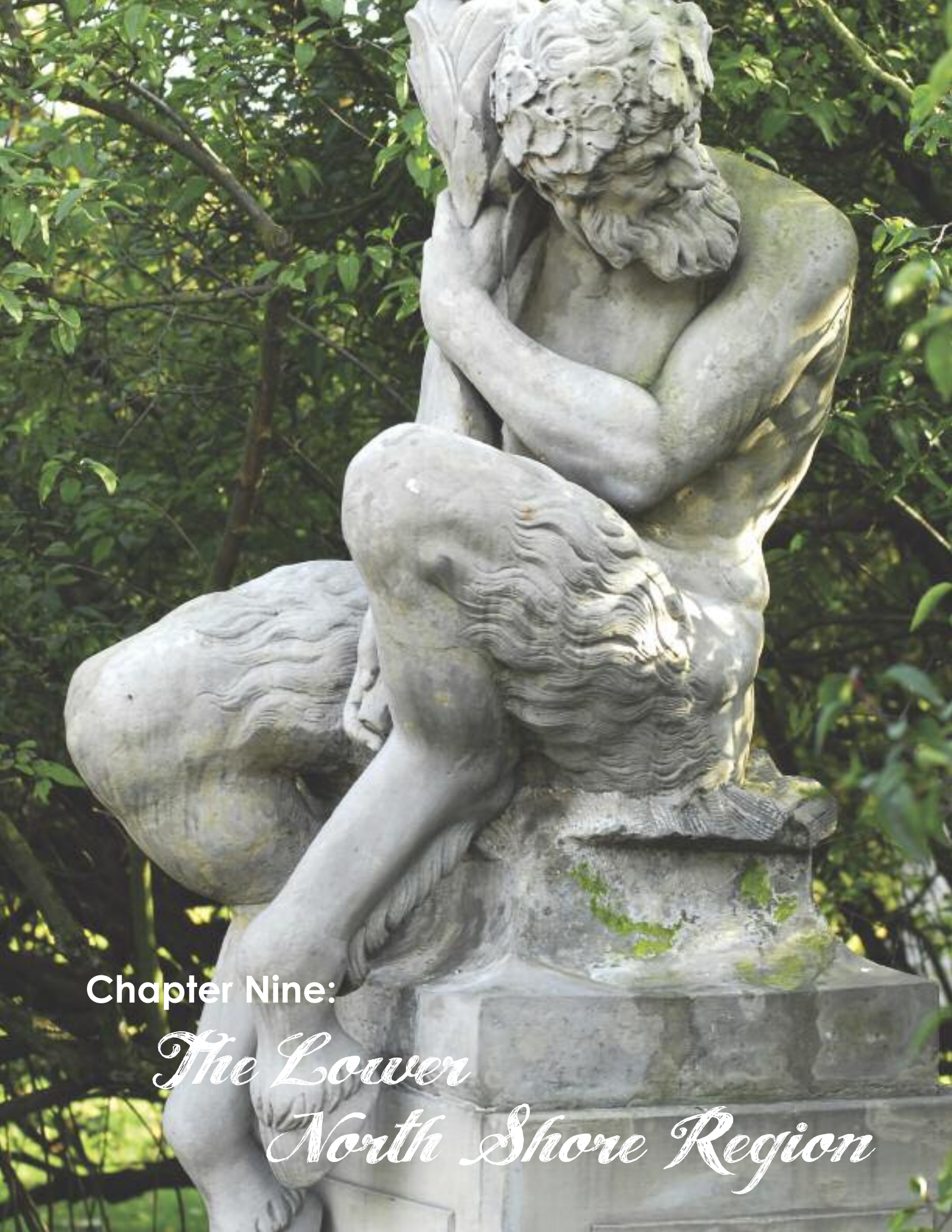
Chapter Nine:

The Lower
North Shore Region

The Coasters' Association has already done a significant amount of groundwork in the area of Arts, Culture and Heritage in collaboration with their partners on the Lower North Shore. This Chapter is a segment of a project proposal that they are developing to address needs in this sector. The Coasters' work in this area would be supported by the provincial work that would be carried out by the QCGN activities in this sector. Below please find a description of the work they wish to carry out.

Why is The Coasters' Association the organization of choice to carry out this initiative?

The Lower North Shore (LNS), with a total population of less than six thousand, consists of fifteen (15) isolated communities, thirteen predominantly English speaking, two Francophone communities, and two Montagnais reserves. These communities are spread over 550 km on the North East coast of Quebec.

The economic downfall (ie: fishery crisis) of the Lower North Shore is having a direct impact on the culture of the English-speaking community's capacity . Community's capacity to cope with everyday life, let alone the commitment and skill now required to ensure that future generations retain the traditional skill knowledge passed from generation to generation. The lack of employment opportunities on the LNS necessitates that the large majority of the population have to leave to seek work elsewhere which destabilizes the communities. If other avenues of economic development could be developed through the export of our local artisans products it could lower the percentage of the population that has to leave the LNS for work. Also through the development of an E-commerce web site local artisans could maintain the traditional skills (i.e. boat building, snow shoe making, quilting, etc…) of the LNS.

In order to make sure that all LNS communities maintain and improve their culture expressions an assessment will be carried out of what is in place and has be done to date. Many organizations have done cultural development work but the information is scattered and communities are unaware of what is even available. This leads to the duplication of work and lack of resources being placed where they are needed, which is back in the communities.

We also strive to support arts based learning through an Arts Institute on the LNS. This Arts Institute will provide the population with the opportunity to learn new art-based skills, improve current skills they have and transfer their own learning to people off the territory. The Art Institute will respond to the deficit in arts based learning on the territory and increase the capacity of cultural and arts development on the LNS, in addition to overcoming the great distances and isolation factors faced by LNS communities.

Some of the problems and issues that will be addressed by this project are:

- The difficulty for the population to receive arts and cultural based education opportunities from specialists due to the isolated location of the LNS;

- Seasonal migration of people who leave the territory for up to six months leaving children with relatives (ie: grandparents) which results in social and learning problems;

- Isolation and lack of roads linking communities makes it difficult to carry out cultural initiatives, and small local populations;

- Lack of programs and material that address special needs

- Lack of opportunities to showcase cultural expression

To address these challenges, this project intends to carry out a needs assessment and inventory of all cultural and tourism groups on the territory and their specific community based cultural needs, an E-Commerce Web Site model established, an operational, and sustainable, Arts Institute established and Community Expressions Events implemented in every municipality (5) throughout the LNS.

Concluding Recommendations

Following this research process, the following recommendations are offered in undertaking next steps for building capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in Quebec's minority communities located outside of the Greater Montreal area:

1. A resource person should be provided for each region, even if there is only sufficient funding for a part-time position. Providing full-time resource persons for only some regions creates a tendency towards non-collaboration and a lack of communication within the English-speaking community of Quebec. And according to the regional reports a part-time resource person could adequately address their current needs, for others, a full-time person is required.

2. Equally important is the need to create coherent and cohesive approaches and strategies in accessing arts, culture and heritage. For this province-wide support is required and a coordinator should be engaged to coordinate cross-regional and inter-sectoral aspects of access to arts, culture and heritage. This person would be in charge of developing strategic initiatives and support for all the local coordinators.

3. The balance must be struck between providing provincial support and structure and encouraging decision-making to take place at the local and regional levels. This balance will ensure a process that is cohesive and structured with the active engagement of the regions, and most importantly, will ensure that each step is in synch with local realities. Ideally the regions will be involved in each step of the decision-making process and priority areas for collaborative or local decision-making may include:

   a. Whether hiring is done locally or provincially. Some regions expressed a strong desire to hire locally, while others prioritize qualifications of candidates as most important.

   b. Where the emphasis is placed when building capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English. In some regions, accessing local arts, culture, and heritage is far more important than accessing tours from elsewhere.

   c. Determining the skill-set required for a resource person. In different regions, different skill-sets will be important according to local needs, assets, relationships, culture, and values.

   d. What training and support is provided to coordinators and to regional associations.

4. In attempting to strike a healthy balance between local decision-making and provincial structure, extra attention must be paid to clear communication of roles and responsibilities. The relationships between the QCGN, the coordinators, the Regional Associations, the sectoral associations, and the surrounding communities must be negotiated and made explicit. For example, decision-making responsibilities should be clarified. Who ultimately holds authority to approve the work of the coordinator – the community, the Regional Association, or the QCGN? Who is in a supportive role? The explication of these issues will encourage member engagement and accountability throughout. Also it will encourage collaboration between sectoral organizations that facilitate access to ACH expertise and talent and Regional Associations which have expertise in mobilizing their communities.

5. An important aspect of this process will be to provide opportunities for dialogue and exchange between the regions in order to address challenges, foster best practices, share information, and move in a cohesive manner. Three critical elements should be considered in providing these opportunities:

   a. Executive Directors of the Regional Associations should have this opportunity, not just coordinators. Executive Directors are a critical part of this process and provide institutional memory and sustainable knowledge creation.

   b. It is important that coordinators have sufficient time together at the start of the process to create real relationships with each other that can be sustained over distance (using technology) for the majority of the process. Insufficient attention to relationship building, and the time that it takes, will result in coordinators not making use of channels available to exchange and dialogue with each other from their respective regions, which in turn will result in regions working, in isolation. A training workshop spread over three to five days at the beginning of the process would provide such an opportunity for relationship building; a one day workshop would not.

c. Following this relationship building, it is recommended that communication channels are provided for coordinators (such as access to video-conference, regular conference calls, a blog) according to their preference.

The needs of English-speaking Quebec have been enunciated successfully by this project and will require attention in the future. It is important to understand the complex political environment in which the English-speaking minority community of Quebec resides. In regards to accessing arts, culture and heritage, this context is becoming ever more complex with discussions to increase provincial jurisdiction in this sector. It is recognized that access to services can be given on an individual basis, but the approach the Network wishes to embark upon is one of community access, where the whole community will see themselves reflected and feel that they are decision-makers, rather than individual consumers of products. Only in this way will bonds be built within the community to ensure prosperity and contribution to the province and to Canada.

Thanks to the mandate given to the QCGN by its Board of Directors - representing all of English-speaking Quebec - this report has been prepared with the confidence and hope that community development at a provincial level can be productively coupled with local community capacity building to generate strategies and activities that will truly enhance the vitality of our community and its sustainability.

Appendix

Methodology

The following section describes the methodology for the consultation that formed the basis for this report, by region.

For all regions, a standard interview grid was used in interview, workshop, or written survey format. This interview grid was developed using a modified SOAR analysis; SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) is Appreciative Inquiry's response to the more common SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis which was originally developed for a military context. In our case, SOAR was modified to become an AACORN analysis: aspirations, assets, challenges, opportunities, results (desired), and next steps. It was felt that this approach would allow participants to speak more concretely about their communities, including challenges, while remaining oriented towards the positive as is important within the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Interview Grid:

Thinking about your region's current capacity to access arts, culture, and heritage in English…
1. What are your region's aspirations?
2. What are your region's assets? (Specifically: venues, marketing channels, audience)
3. What are your region's challenges?
4. What opportunities to you see, especially given your assets and challenges?
5. What desired results would you like to see in the short-term, say over the next year or two?
6. Exchange on the region's next steps available to them, including but not limited to those relevant to the project in question.

Each region followed a unique consultation process according to their availability, logistical considerations, and cultural preferences.

Magdalen Islands

The Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI) hosted a workshop with six participants held over the Video-Conference Network for 1.5 hours. The workshop data was sent to CAMI for validation; CAMI in turn shared the draft report with workshop participants for their feedback.

The Gaspé

The Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) provided our link to this region through a written response to our questions, based partially upon the data collected in the 2010 Gaspesian Regional Heritage Summit.

The Eastern Townships

The Townshippers' Association provided the names of three key participants to be interviewed by telephone, each for 30 to 60 minutes. The resulting draft report was then circulated and validated by those participants, the Townshippers' Association Community and Culture Committee, and several other key stakeholders.

Chaudière-Appalaches

Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation ("MCDC") provided our link to the region, through an interview conducted by telephone, and validation of our draft report.

Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Neighbours Regional Association provided our link to the region, through e-mailed questions, an interview conducted by telephone, and validation of the draft report.

The North Shore

The North Shore Community Association (NSCA) provided our link to the region, through a telephone interview, and validation of the draft report.

The Quebec City Region

With the Voice of English-speaking Quebec (VEQ) forming our contact in this region, telephone interviews were conducted with VEQ, the Morrin Centre, and a local theatre group. The draft report was validated with interview participants.

The Outaouais

The Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ) established a workshop with four key stakeholders representing an array of community organizations which was facilitated in person. The draft report was then validated with all participants.

QCGN | Quebec Community Groups Network

Canadian Heritage   Patrimoine canadien