

Community Portrait: Sept-Îles



September 2012

Community Portrait of Sept-Îles

“Reaching beyond government to involve civil society and the voluntary and private sectors is a vital step towards action for health equity. The increased incorporation of community engagement and social participation in policy processes helps to ensure fair decision-making on health equity issues.” (WHO, 10).

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BACKGROUND

A project on community development

In 2009, the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) concluded an agreement with Quebec's Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) to develop knowledge on the English-speaking population of Quebec as part of a program concerning health projects for official language minority communities. Gaining a better understanding of English-speaking communities in Quebec is one of the objectives of that collaboration, and it is explored here through the lens of community development.

Community development

has been defined as “a voluntary cooperative process of mutual assistance and of building social ties between local residents and institutions, with the goal being to improve physical, social, and economic living conditions.”¹ The idea is for community members to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems by planning the development of all aspects of community well-being. The goal is to improve people's quality of life and to reduce social inequalities.

There are many different approaches to community development and many different groups that are engaged in it. Public health workers are one of those groups. In the Quebec context, community development has been identified as one of the main intervention strategies in public health. Many regional health boards and health centres are therefore engaged in community development.

The process of community development is grounded on several strategies:

- Community engagement
- Empowerment
- Intersectoral collaboration and partnership
- Political commitment leading to healthy public policy
- Capacity building

The underlying principle is that individuals and communities need to be empowered to take greater control over their health and future, with a view to reducing inequality among community members.²

Building healthy communities

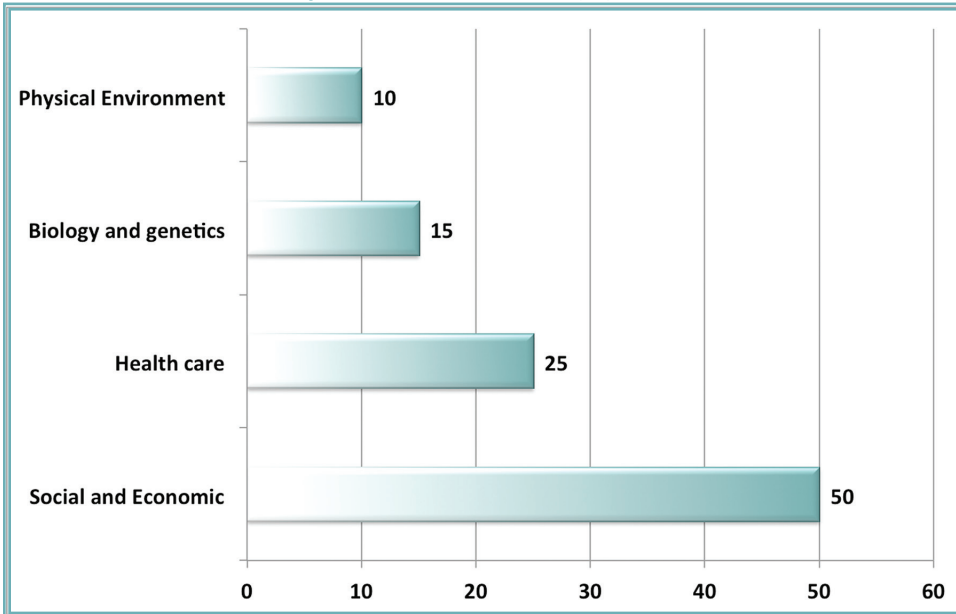
In keeping with the CHSSN's commitment to a population health approach that takes into account the range of health determinants, this project adopts a holistic view of health. This means examining ways to improve people's health, and the health of the community more broadly, through a socio-environmental approach, which considers health as a product of social and environmental determinants that interact to influence our health status.

The many different factors that contribute to health are referred to as health determinants. Health determinants are defined as the individual, social, economic and environmental factors that can be associated with specific health problems or with overall health status.³ Although there are many health determinants—income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, physical environments, biology and genetics, health services, and more—research shows that socio-economic and physical environments are among the

main determinants of health.

Even within the same region, there are major differences between communities in terms of health, well-being, and quality of life and some of these differences are related to varying social and economic conditions.

Health Determinants: Impact on Health Status (%)



This means that communities can have an impact on the health and well-being of their residents by working to reduce inequalities among people, and by creating a “healthy community.”

Lalonde, Marc (1974) *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada

A healthy community is considered to be one in which:

- Residents have access to **quality drinking water, food and housing**
- Residents **feel safe** in their community
- Residents have **access to work** that satisfies them
- Residents enjoy a clean, safe, high-quality **physical environment**
- The community has a wide range of well-coordinated **support groups**
- Residents maintain connectedness with their past, their cultural and biological heritage and with other individuals there by developing a real **sense of belonging to their community**
- A wide variety of **social, sports and cultural activities** encourage residents to adopt active and healthy life
- Residents have easy **access to public and private services**
- Economic activity in the municipality has a **strong and diversified base**
- Residents are **active participants** in the decisions that affect them
- Residents have access to **appropriate health care services** and generally enjoy good health⁴

A significant number of health determinants are beyond individual control and only the community can have an impact on them. Therefore, just as individual empowerment is important for health and well-being, so too is community empowerment. This means building the community capacity to structure itself in ways that help to improve the quality of life of its members. Beyond such traditional indicators as the economy and demographics, we must take into account factors such as democratic life, community dynamics and social capital, all of which testify to the health of a community as a living entity.⁵

Access to health care among minority language groups

After social and economic conditions, health care is the next most significant determinant (estimated to account for about 25% of people's health). Having access to health and social services is therefore vital. However, many factors can play a role in facilitating or hindering access to such services. Research shows that language is one of these factors and can therefore be considered a health determinant.

Among English-speaking Quebeckers, access to health and social services remains a challenge for many, in spite of the fact that rates of bilingualism in this group are on the rise, and English speakers are more likely than other language groups to be able to converse in both French and English.⁷ There is, as well, a wide variation in accessibility and quality of health and social services in English across the province.⁸



Photo: <http://phil.cdc.gov/PHIL/Images/>

Language barriers can create inequalities in health status because problems in communication and understanding reduce the use of preventative services, increase the amount of time spent in consultations and diagnostic tests, and influence the quality of services where language is an essential tool—such as mental health services, social services, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Language barriers also reduce the probability of compliance with treatment and diminish the level of satisfaction with the care and services received.⁶ Minority language communities often have greater difficulty obtaining services in a language they understand well, and even official language communities face barriers.

The Community Health and Social Services Network was founded in 2002 in response to these difficulties experienced by English-speaking communities. It was established to support communities in their efforts to develop community infrastructure and build strategic relationships and partnerships within the health and social services system to improve access to services.⁹ In doing so it aims to support English-speaking communities in Quebec in their efforts to redress health status inequalities and promote community vitality. Through a series of projects and partnerships that link community and public partners, the CHSSN is working to strengthen networks at the local, regional and provincial levels in order to address health determinants, influence public policy and develop services.

How is it that a group that is the linguistic majority in all other provinces (indeed in North America as a whole) needs such support? The situation of English-speaking Quebeckers has changed over recent decades and a better understanding of those transformations can help shed light on current realities.

Changing realities among English speakers in Quebec

Since the British Conquest in 1759, the English-speaking population of Quebec has experienced significant demographic, political and economic changes. Following the defeat of the French forces, increasing numbers of English speakers came to settle in what is now Quebec. While by no means were all these settlers well-off, historically the English-speaking population has been well-represented among Quebec's economic and political elite. The position of English speakers remained strong until at least the mid-20th century, however changing political circumstances

led to an increasing outflow of English speakers from the province and a decline in the vitality of some of the communities they composed. Thus, from 1971 to 2001, the population who spoke English as their mother tongue dropped by 25% and its share of Québec’s population fell from 13.1% to 8.3%. Meanwhile, the French-speaking population rose slightly (from 80.7% to 82.5%) while speakers of other languages almost doubled their share of the total population (from 6.2% in 1971 to 10.3% in 2001).¹⁰

However, over the 1996 to 2006 period, the English-speaking population in Quebec grew by 68,880, while its share of the provincial population was slightly higher in 2006 than it had been in 1996. The 2001-2006 period was one of growth for most English-speaking regional populations, with only the English-speaking groups in Côte-Nord and Gaspésie - Îles-de-la-Madeleine showing a decrease in size over that period. Relative to the total population, only Estrie and Laurentides experienced a drop in their share of the regional population. The regions in which the English-speaking population grew most were Montreal, Laval, Montérégie and the Outaouais.

Changes in Size and Proportion of the English-speaking Population, 1996-2006¹¹

Region	Size of English-Speaking Population			Proportion of Regional Population		
	1996	2001	2006	1996	2001	2006
Province of Quebec (total)	925,840	918,955	994,720	13.1%	12.9%	13.4%
Bas-Saint-Laurent	933	820	1,295	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%
Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean	1,795	1,765	1,830	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Québec - Capitale-Nationale	12,745	11,065	11,840	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%
Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec	6,033	4,885	4,995	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%
Estrie	24,770	23,390	23,580	9.1%	8.4%	8.0%
Montréal	560,813	563,940	595,920	32.1%	31.6%	32.7%
Outaouais	53,863	53,945	58,720	17.6%	17.2%	17.4%
Abitibi – Témiscamingue	6,363	5,315	5,355	4.2%	3.7%	3.8%
Côte-Nord	6,100	5,740	5,630	6.0%	5.9%	5.9%
Nord-du-Québec	12,080	14,385	16,945	31.5%	37.4%	42.8%
Gaspésie - îles-de-la-Madeleine	10,580	9,740	9,505	10.2%	10.2%	10.2%
Chaudière-Appalaches	3,340	2,685	3,705	0.9%	0.7%	1.0%
Laval	50,713	53,385	68,460	15.5%	15.7%	18.8%
Lanaudière	8,850	8,215	10,115	2.4%	2.1%	2.4%
Laurentides	31,213	30,565	33,175	7.3%	6.7%	6.6%
Montérégie	135,653	129,125	143,645	10.9%	10.2%	10.7%

But what is an “English-speaker”? The English-speaking population of Quebec includes citizens throughout the province who choose to use the English language and who identify with the English-speaking community. For some of those people English is their mother tongue, while for others English is the first official language they speak, and their mother tongue is a language other than English or French. In areas with high levels of immigration (notably in the Montreal area), the decline of the English-speaking population has been mitigated by some of these Allophones who speak English as a second language.

The English-speaking community has always been diverse in its make-up (originally comprising English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, Catholics, Jews and various Protestant denominations, among others), and that diversity has increased over time to encompass people from a broad range of origins around the world. Today the English-speaking community is made up of many sub-communities that are multicultural and multiracial.¹² In addition, the contexts in which they are located vary greatly. **While the majority of the population with English as their first official language lives in the Montreal area (about 80%),¹³ many English-speaking communities**

are located in rural or remote areas of the province. In some cases, English speakers are a very small proportion of the local population, while in other municipalities they may represent a significant percentage, or even a majority.

These changing demographic realities present a number of challenges to English-speaking communities, such as the issues related to an aging population and to outmigration among caregivers and youth. For example, among the population who speak English as their mother tongue, 8.3% left Québec for the rest of Canada between 1991 and 1996, and that percentage rose to 8.9% between 1996 and 2001. The rates for the total population were only 1.6% and 1.7% for those periods. Younger English speakers were the most likely to leave the province: 15.8% of those between 25 and 34 years old moved away, while fewer people age 65 and over left.¹⁴ This means that the **generations that represent the future of their communities and can take care of ageing relatives are often not around to do so. Those who stay can be overburdened with care-giving**, and the age structure of the community becomes skewed towards the older age groups. The impact on health and the need for services can be significant.

Another challenge is the socio-economic status of English speakers in Quebec. Although poverty does not affect all English-speaking Quebecers, it is a reality for many, and the gap can be significant between French and English speakers. For instance, **in some regions, English-speaking families are more likely to have a low income compared to their French-speaking neighbours. The same is true for educational attainment: in some regions English speakers are less likely than their French-speaking peers to have completed high school or to have pursued post-secondary education.**¹⁵

These issues are good indicators of demographic vitality, an important dimension of community health. Demographic vitality refers to community characteristics such as the rates of ageing and unemployment, the proportion of caregivers to seniors, population size, and in the Quebec context, level of bilingualism.¹⁶ Understanding demographic vitality allows health care workers, municipalities, policy makers and community residents to plan properly for services, activities and programs which will meet the needs of the community. For example, when a community has a large proportion of seniors the burden of care is greater on the care-giving generations, and steps may need to be taken to address the needs of both seniors and their care-givers. Or **when a community is losing its population, community services and institutional structures lose vital human capital and social networks are eroded, so planning needs to focus on strengthening the social fabric.**

This project is being carried out within the context of these transformations, and we therefore aim to document and illustrate the wide diversity of English-speaking communities in Quebec. This is being done through community portraits.

Six portraits of English-speaking communities in Quebec

In order to get a more detailed understanding of current realities in English-speaking communities, this action research project adopts a participatory method by which a “portrait” is drawn of the community. Six of the CHSSN’s Networking and Partnership Initiatives chose one community in their area to participate in a process aimed at developing a portrait of that community. In keeping with community development principles, this project is carried out in the spirit of community-based participatory action research. In practice this means that the work is centred on the community (village, neighbourhood, community of identity), involves community members in the process, aims to inform action (future directions for policy, programs, and projects), and involves the systematic collection of information. It is predicated on the conviction that the community is the expert on itself. Through participatory action research, participants develop knowledge, the ability to think critically, and a culture of learning. Commu-

ities are then better able to identify and develop local solutions to local problems. Researchers who work with this method find that individuals and communities can be empowered through the process.¹⁷ Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions that build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional contexts which govern the use of these assets.

In choosing the communities to involve in this phase of the project we aimed for diversity. Some communities are in urban, multicultural environments, others in rural, small town communities, and others in remote communities of Québec. In some places English speakers are a very small percentage of the population; in others they represent a larger proportion. Some communities are thriving while others are more vulnerable. Consideration was also taken for local interest and capacity for being involved in doing a community portrait. In some cases a community was chosen because the Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI) coordinator or host organization felt it was a good opportunity to reach out to that community and get to know it better. In other cases, there was a convergence of interests that made it a good time to bring together stakeholders and pool knowledge and resources, for instance, as a municipality developed a family and seniors policy, or as a health centre assessed the needs of the English-speaking community.

The six communities selected for this phase of the project are as follows.

Community	Region	Regional Association
Sutton	Montréal-Est	Townshippers' Association
St-Leonard	Montréal-Est	Réseau de l'est de l'île pour les services en anglais (REISA)
Laval	Laval	Youth and Parents AGAPE Association Inc.
New Carlisle	Gaspésie	Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
Sept-Îles	Côte-Nord	North Shore Community Association (NSCA)
Bonne-Espérance	Basse-Côte-Nord	Coasters Association

The method for completing the community portraits is inspired by various approaches used by groups active in community development, notably in the Healthy Communities movement (Réseau québécois de Villes et Villages en santé), among municipalities and by public health boards. There are several steps to completing these portraits. The first is to engage local stakeholders in the process. The second is to gather existing data, in the form of statistics, past reports and other information on the community. The third step is to obtain qualitative data via a town hall meeting (community consultation) where various themes are discussed and community members are asked to share their perspectives on their community. In some cases, in order to ensure that all perspectives are heard and a wide range of people are contacted, focus group interviews or individual discussions may be held with other community members.

The information gathered is then analyzed and summarized by theme, focusing in each case on the community's assets, and the challenges it faces as concerns social and community life, the economy and incomes, education, the environment, and health and well-being. The information is then summarized and a portrait drawn up, after which it is validated with community members and other stakeholders. This portrait presents the result of that process. The portraits can then be used to plan actions based on local realities, as defined by community members. Since each community is different, the way of addressing issues will necessarily vary, as will outcomes.

SEPT-ÎLES: A RESOURCE-ORIENTED TOWN ON QUEBEC'S NORTH SHORE

Sept-Îles is located on the north shore of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence to the north-east of Tadoussac, about 230 kilometres east of Baie-Comeau, in the administrative region called La Côte-Nord (region 09). The town lies between the Sainte-Marguerite and Moisie Rivers, on the shore of a deep-water bay protected by seven islands, hence the name “Seven Islands.” The bay constitutes a 45 km² natural harbour. Sept-Îles is located in close proximity to two Innu communities: Uashat and Malietenam.

Although the town itself is urban (population 25,686 in 2011), the region as a whole has very low population density and the town has mainly single-family dwellings, small apartment buildings and structures only a few stories high at most.



Historical trajectory of Sept-Îles' English-speaking community

The Sept-Îles territory was first inhabited by the Innu about 8,000 years ago.¹⁸ Nearly 3,000 Innu still live in Uashat (adjacent to Sept-Îles) and Mani Utenam (14 km to the east). Although Vikings had come to the Coast of Newfoundland, Labrador and possibly the North Shore as early as 1000, it was not until 1535 that the French first arrived. In the mid 1600s a number of fur trading posts were set up along the shore, and the Domaine du Roy was established to protect this lucrative trade. Settlement was not allowed and only a small number of fur traders were allowed to access the area. In 1651 Father Jean de Quen founded a mission in Sept-Îles and celebrated the first mass. Then, in 1661 a trading post was set up in Sept-Îles by François Bissot.

In 1760, after a half century of fighting between France and England for control over the trade, England gained the upper hand. Around 1800, fishing also became a part of the regional economy, and a community grew up around the trade. The first school was built in 1878, and the first church for



Drawing Contest Entry: Flemming Elementary School

Whites was established in 1908. In 1905, a Norwegian company, Steam Whaling, built a whale oil plant on Pointe Noire, killing about 75 whales a season for their blubber, meat and bones. They employed about 60 people locally in addition to about twenty Norwegian fishermen.

THE BEGINNINGS OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1900-1904, the first editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Clarke and Clarke) decided to set up a pulp and paper industry in the region. To do so they built Clarke city (which later became Sept-Îles), the first train and the first hydro-electric dam in the region (on the St-Marguerite River). Clarke city became the regional economic center, with a port, a boat-building factory, a wood processing plant, a hospital and more.

Although forestry was the mainstay of the economy, mining exploration began in 1937, and by the middle of the 20th century, the industry was being developed. The Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) moved into Sept-Îles in the early 1950s to develop a port for the iron ore that was to be shipped to Sept-Îles by railroad, and loaded aboard ships for transportation to the steel mills in Hamilton, Cleveland, Chicago, and eventually around the world. The modern Sept-Îles is therefore connected to the building of the 575 kilometres of the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway linking it to Schefferville. The railway was built between 1950 and 1954 by the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

Shipment of iron ore resulted in investments that turned Sept-Îles into a major port, second in Canada only to Vancouver in terms of yearly tonnage. The huge engineering project led to a major increase in population, and housing was quickly built to accommodate new workers. The town grew from 2,000 inhabitants in 1951 to 14,000 in 1961, and 31,000 in 1981.

From the 1950s on, Sept-Îles underwent a phase of intense economic development and became a strong economic driver in the region. However, in the early 1980s the decline in worldwide iron ore prices caused employment and population to decrease. The impact was buffered to some extent by the arrival of the Alouette aluminum plant in 1989: construction for Phase 1 began in September 1989, and operation started in 1992; then construction of Phase 2 began in 2003. Today, the economy of the region still relies on a few industries related to natural resources extraction and processing, and as the mining sector experiences a new resurgence, so does the economy.



Drawing Contest Entry: Neighbourhood along railroad

ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN SEPT-ÎLES

The establishment of an English-speaking population in Sept-Îles is directly related to the town's economic history.¹⁹ For example, in the case of the Iron Ore Company of Canada, the head office in Pittsburgh sent a manager and several department heads to Sept-Îles to “set up shop” and overlook the operation of the company. The English-speaking bosses in turn hired English-speaking assistants to facilitate communications, then English general foremen. The front line supervisor, the foreman, had to be bilingual to be able to communicate up and down the chain of employees. As the operation progressed, the department chiefs returned to the head office, since they were away from home. They were replaced with English-speaking people, because they still had to communicate with the head office. These new employees were often from other provinces in Canada. The bilingual foremen worked their way up the ladder and eventually replaced the department heads who in turn retired after 30 or 35 years of service and returned to their respective provinces to be closer to family.

The exception to this general trend of English settlement in Sept-Îles is the people from the Lower North Shore. Like others, they came to the town to find jobs but also to be closer to services such as health and educational services. Many purchased homes, had their families and settled in the town on a more permanent basis, in many cases because of the quality of life in Sept-Îles. Other English speakers have come to the town from other parts of Canada, or from other countries, such as Germany, Hungary, Ireland and England. These differing origins make the English-speaking community in Sept-Îles quite diverse.

ENGLISH SPEAKERS ON THE NORTH SHORE

In the Côte-Nord region, 5.9% of the population speak English as their first official language, a lower proportion than the provincial share for English speakers (which is 13.4%). On the territory of Sept-Îles that proportion is still lower, at 3.4%. In the First Nations of Uashat and Maliotenam, 3.2% and 5.7% respectively speak English as their first official language.

Percentage and number of English speakers

		Province of Quebec	RSS de la Côte-Nord	CSSS de Sept-Îles
FOLS – English	Number	994,720	5,635	905
	Percentage	13.4%	5.9%	3.4%
FOLS – French	Number	6,373,223	88,443 (392)	25,698
	Percentage	85.7%	93.3%	96.2%
Neither French nor English	Number	70,375	580	90
	Percentage	0.9%	0.6%	0.4%
Total Population	Number	7,435,900	94,805	26,715
	Percentage	100%	100%	100%

Source: CHSSN Baseline Data Report 2009-2010, based on Statistics Canada Census 2006

Aboriginal communities

		Maliotenam	Uashat
FOLS – English	Number	63	38
	Percentage	5.7%	3.2%
FOLS – French	Number	992	1,122
	Percentage	88.9%	94.3%
Native language only	Number	60	30
	Percentage	5.4%	2.5%
Total Population	Number	1,115	1,190
	Percentage	100%	100%

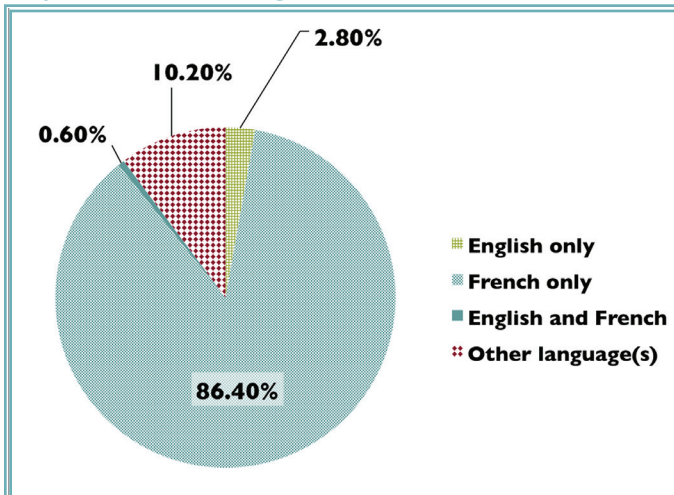
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles, Sept-Îles, Québec

LANGUAGE DYNAMICS: A SMALL PROPORTION OF ENGLISH SPEAKERS

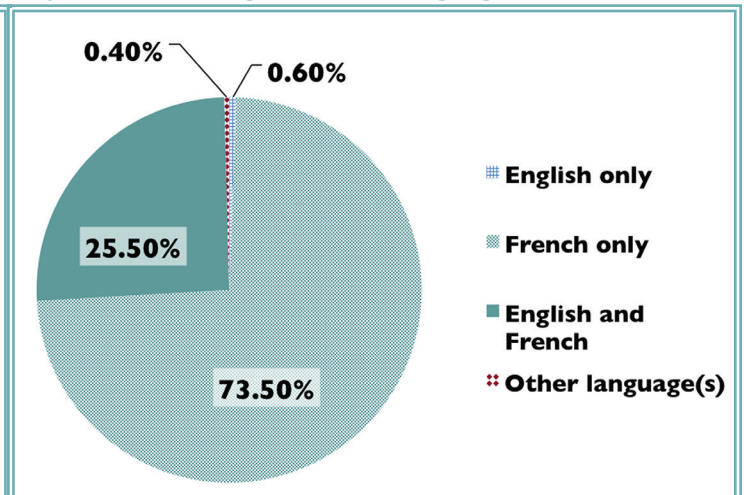
According to Statistics Canada, in 2006 almost 70% of English speakers in Quebec were bilingual and approximately 90% of English-speaking youth in Quebec were able to converse in both French and English at age 21.

In Sept-Îles about one quarter of the population knows both French and English, although only a very small proportion has English as their mother tongue (2.8%). A little over 10% of the population has a language other than French or English as their mother tongue.

Sept-Îles: Mother tongue, 2006



Sept-Îles: Knowledge of official languages, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles, Sept-Îles, Québec

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN SEPT-ÎLES: AN AGEING ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

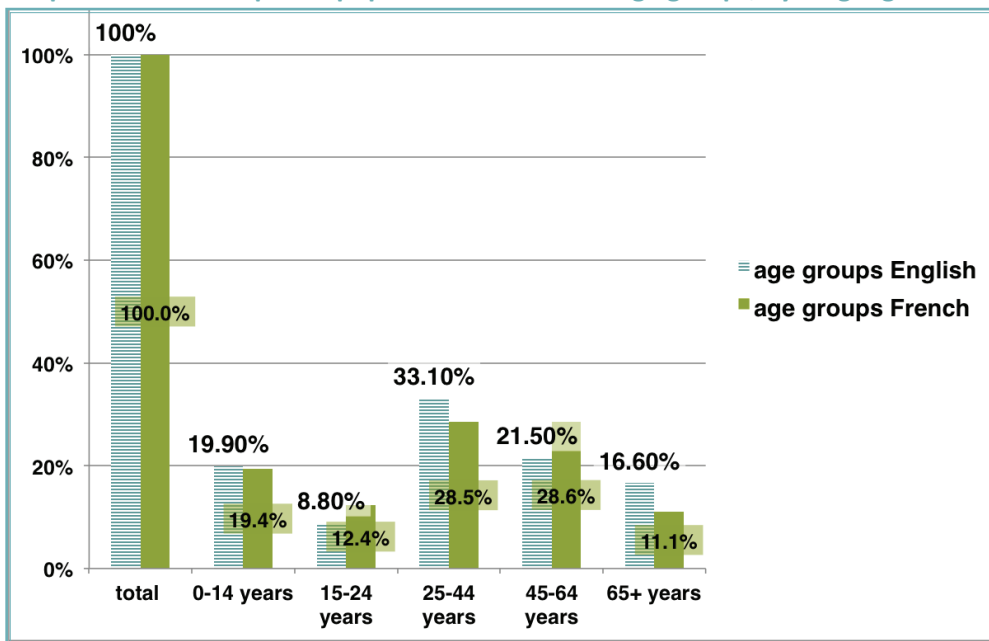
The English-speaking community in Sept-Îles is aging at a faster rate than the French-speaking majority. There are 150 English-speaking seniors over the age of 65 in the area, making up 16.6% of the English-speaking population. Among French speakers this proportion is only 11.1%. In the CSSS Sept-Îles, English speakers are 50% more likely to be 65 years or older than French speakers. The younger age groups tend to have lower proportions than among French speakers, with the exception of those 45-64 years of age.

Age structure of the population by first official language spoken

Age Structure of the Population	Province of Quebec		RSS de la Côte-Nord		CSSS Sept-Iles	
	English	French	English	French	English	French
Total - Age groups	994 720	6 373 223	5 635	88 443	905	25 698
0-14 years	159 660	1 068 283	1 110	15 565	180	4 978
15-24 years	134 400	808 725	745	11 120	80	3 188
25-44 years	313 505	1 749 930	1 670	24 333	300	7 335
45-64 years	254 675	1 899 995	1 380	27 508	195	7 353
65+ years	132 480	845 290	730	9 918	150	2 845
Total - Age groups	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
0-14 years	16,1%	16,8%	19,7%	17,6%	19,9%	19,4%
15-24 years	13,5%	12,7%	13,2%	12,6%	8,8%	12,4%
25-44 years	31,5%	27,5%	29,6%	27,5%	33,1%	28,5%
45-64 years	25,6%	29,8%	24,5%	31,1%	21,5%	28,6%
65+ years	13,3%	13,3%	13,0%	11,2%	16,6%	11,1%

Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

Proportion of the Sept-Îles population in different age groups, by language



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

Part of the explanation for the older population may be related to the fact that many people from the Lower North Shore move to Sept-Îles as they age, to be closer to services and sometimes to friends and family as well. Many English speakers from the Lower North Shore do not speak French, and therefore have specific needs with regards to services in English.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON SEPT-ÎLES

Drawing a portrait of Sept-Îles: method and sources

In order to draw a portrait of Sept-Îles, the project leader (Mary Richardson) made an initial visit to the community in April 2011. The North Shore Community Association (NSCA) was the main contact organization for this portrait, because it sponsors one of the CHSSN's Networking and Partnership Initiatives. The NSCA is a non-profit community organization established in 2000 to serve the English-speaking population of the North Shore, so it is connected to many groups in the region. Its mission is to serve, represent, and instill pride in the English-speaking community of Quebec's North Shore from Tadoussac to Havre-St.Pierre including Fermont and Schéfferville.



Drawing Contest Entry: 1 of 3 Winners of the Drawing contest

During this visit various “stakeholders” were consulted. These are people or groups that have a particular interest in different aspects of community development. They included a city councillor, a community organizer at the CSSS, the director of a local half-way house, the director of adult education for English speakers, members of the 50+ club, and the principal of the local English elementary school. These meetings served to pool information that could be useful for the portrait and gauge the interests of these different groups. They all were very interested in getting a better understanding of the English-speaking population of Sept-Îles and shared their perspectives.

Following these meetings, the teachers at the elementary school proposed a drawing contest on the theme “what I like best about my community, or where I like to go in my community.” The drawings submitted were judged by members of the 50+ Club and a prize was given to one student from each of the three cycles whose work was considered to stand out. All students also received a gift.

Then, on September 24, 2011 a community consultation was held. The invitation was extended to all community members and the structured conversations were followed by a lunch and the Annual General Assembly of the NSCA. Thirty-four people attended the gathering. The vast majority were members of the 50+ Club, with a few younger people who are very involved in the English-speaking community through their work. The mayor of Sept-Îles and the General Director of the CSSS also attended. The drawings made by the students of the elementary school were displayed at the consultation, and their (artistic) perspectives are included in this portrait. We did not collect data from the participants on their socio-economic and educational levels. Because there was not a great deal of diversity in terms of age, the views expressed may not represent all possible points of view in the community.



Members of the 50+ Club. Photo: Mary Richardson

In drafting this portrait, we have also integrated information from past surveys and reports, existing statistics, historical information, and studies carried out by government agencies and academic researchers.

In the sections below, we will discuss Septilians’ perspectives on five themes, as they were discussed at the community consultation: community life, education, the economy, health and well-being, and the environment. The order roughly follows the theme’s importance in determining health; since socio-economic conditions account for about 50% of people’s health status, we present community life first, followed by education (which is closely connected to socio-economic conditions), and then the economy. Then we present the environment (about 10% of what determines health) followed by health and well-being. In this section we highlight issues of health care, which accounts for about 25% of what makes people healthy, and also discuss broader issues related to health such as lifestyle, habits, health problems that affect the population, and more.

In each case, we will highlight the community’s strengths and challenges, and some perspectives for the future. A summary table is presented at the end of the document. This overview can be used to inform decision-making bodies and to stimulate community engagement. The “Social Determinant of Health” box at the beginning of each section provides an overview of the importance of this aspect for community and personal health, based on scientific evidence.



Drawing Contest Entry: 1 of 3 Winners of the Drawing contest

Community Life in Sept-Îles

A small and diverse community

In this section we present the perspectives expressed by community members at the consultation held in September 2011 concerning social and community life in Sept-Îles, followed by some relevant statistics and perspectives for the future. A summary table brings together that information.

Social Determinant of Health

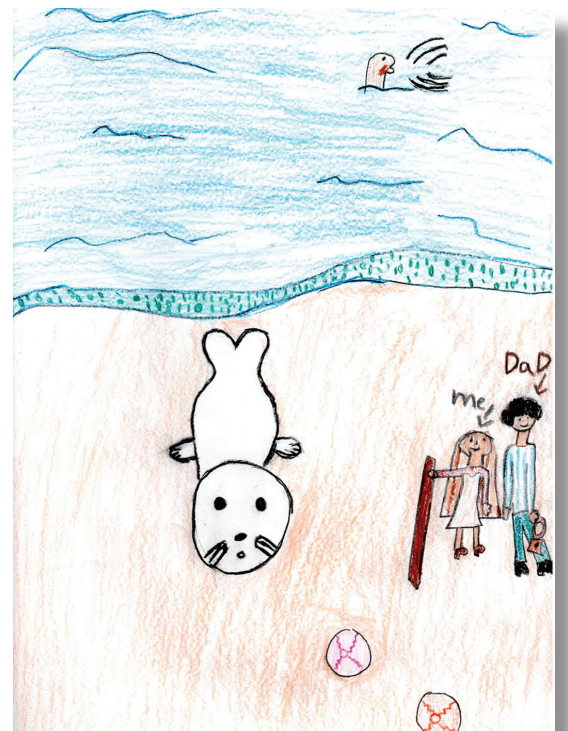
Support from families, friends and communities is associated with better health. Support networks are important in helping people solve problems and deal with adversity. They contribute to an individual's sense of control over life circumstances. Support networks support a feeling of well-being and act as a buffer against health problems. In the 1996-97 National Population Health Survey (NPHS), more than four out of five Canadians reported that they had someone to confide in, someone they could count on in a crisis, someone they could count on for advice and someone who makes them feel loved and cared for. Some experts in the field have concluded that the health effect of social relationships may be as important as established risk factors such as smoking, physical activity, obesity and high blood pressure.

The importance of the social environment can also be seen in the level of social cohesion in the broader community. Social cohesion refers to the willingness of members of a community to cooperate for the well-being of all, and it is known to exert a positive influence on personal health. The strength of social networks within a community are often referred to as civic vitality, and it is reflected in the institutions, organizations and informal giving practices that people create to share resources and build attachments with others. In addition, social stability, recognition of diversity, safety, good working relationships, and cohesive communities provide a supportive society that reduces or avoids many potential risks to good health. Social or community responses can add resources to an individual's repertoire of strategies to cope with changes and foster health.²⁰

SEPT-ÎLES' STRENGTHS

Sept-Îles has different groups that contribute to social and community life among English speakers. There is a **50+ Club** which is quite active, an Anglican Church Women's group, three English **congregations** (Catholic, Anglican and United), two English **schools**, an **adult education centre**, and a number of community organizations that are able to offer services in English. For school age residents and seniors, there are therefore activities in the community that take place in English. Since many English speakers are bilingual, a portion of the English-speaking population participates in activities in French.

When asked what people are proud of in their community, or what they value, many mentioned their church, the 50+ Club and the **friendliness** of community members. Several participants also mentioned people's **generosity** and the fact that **volunteer work is promoted** and valued. Sept-Îles is also valued as a **safe** place to live and people are proud of being **bilingual**.



Drawing Contest Entry: Dad and I at the beach

CHALLENGES FACING SEPT-ÎLES

The fact that many people are **bilingual** can also present a challenge to the social and community life of English speakers. For those who do not speak French well enough, the language barrier excludes them from participating in activities that take place in French, yet there are not a great number of activities that take place in English. The 50+ Club—a group organized through the NSCA—however has changed that for the older generation. For younger age groups there are school-based activities, however, for those in the **middle age groups** there seems to be **little that is organized** within the English-speaking community.

According to participants at the consultation, even in the schools a majority of the students are from French or bilingual families, and there is a lot of French being spoken in the school environment. Participants observe that the younger population is easily assimilated into the French-speaking community and does not seem to have as great a need for activities in English. They also observe that the number of **young people who return to the area after leaving for education is decreasing**.

Participants also felt that the **English community in Sept-Îles is not very well known** or visible, as compared for example to a region like the Gaspé. In addition, they believe that there is **little unity** amongst English speakers, particularly younger people. This may be due to higher levels of bilingualism, and to the fact that young people starting families and new careers have little time to devote to community involvement. This unity used to come from the church, but with the decrease in church attendance there has been a significant loss in unity amongst groups.

SOME STATISTICS ON SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

On the North Shore in general, people's sense of belonging is strong: 76.6% of the population rated their sense of belonging as strong or very strong, compared to 55.5% in Quebec in general. In the Sept-Îles area, this sense of belonging is slightly lower than in the region as a whole: 73.7% of the population rated their sense of belonging as strong or very strong. People with a very strong sense of belonging tend to be involved in their community, for example, by doing volunteer work.

Sense of belonging

	Province of Quebec	RSS de la Côte-Nord	CSSS Sept-Îles
Strong or very strong	55.5%	76.6%	73.7%

Source: Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord, 2007. Rapport de l'Enquête Santé Côte-Nord 2005.

In order to get a sense of the level of social support that people have, we can look at the number of people in lone-parent families or living alone, as these people are less likely to have help with day-to-day tasks or on-going emotional support. Living with relatives may, on the other hand, provide greater social support.

In Quebec as a whole, about 70% of people live in married or common-law couple families, nearly 12% live in lone-parent families, and about 13% live alone. Provincially English speakers are more likely to be living with relatives and less likely to be living alone.

On the North Shore, English speakers are more likely than French speakers to be in married or common-law couple families, but they are also more likely to be in lone-parent families. They are less likely to be living with relatives or alone.

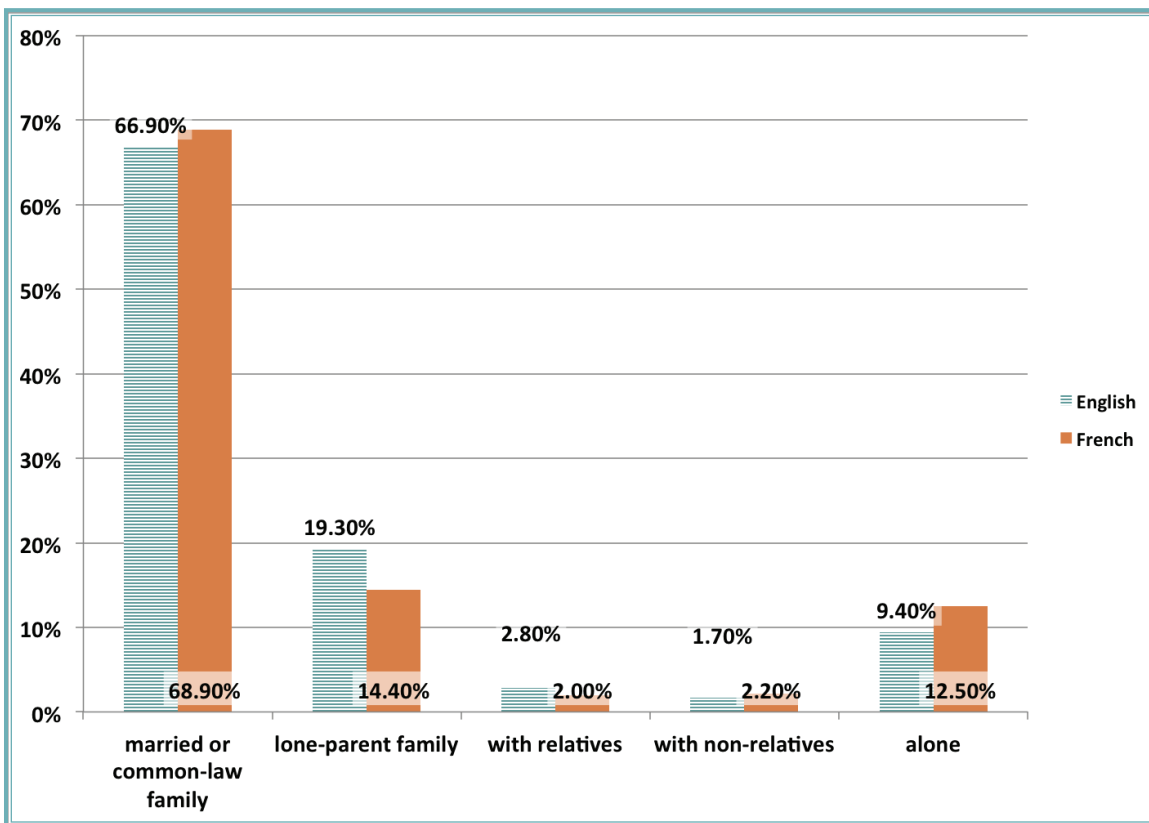
Proportion of the population by household living arrangement, and first official language spoken

	Province of Quebec		RSS de la Côte-Nord		CSSS Sept-Îles	
	English	French	English	French	English	French
Total - Persons in private households	99,7%	99,4%	99,9%	99,8%	100,0%	99,9%
Total - Persons in Census family households	82,5%	81,4%	90,1%	84,4%	86,2%	83,3%
Persons in married or common-law couples families	70,7%	69,7%	76,6%	71,6%	66,9%	68,9%
Persons in lone-parent families	11,8%	11,7%	13,6%	12,8%	19,3%	14,4%
Total - Persons in non-Census family households	17,2%	18,0%	9,8%	15,3%	13,8%	16,7%
Living with relatives	2,1%	1,7%	1,8%	1,9%	2,8%	2,0%
Living with non-relatives only	3,1%	3,0%	0,6%	2,0%	1,7%	2,2%
Living alone	12,0%	13,4%	7,5%	11,5%	9,4%	12,5%

Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

In Sept-Îles, English speakers are significantly more likely than French speakers to be in a lone-parent family (19.3% as compared to 14.4% among French speakers). This means that almost 1 in every 5 English-speaking households is a lone-parent family. However, they are less likely to be living alone (only 9.4% as compared to 12.5% for French speakers).

Proportion of the population by household living arrangement and language, Sept-Îles



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

Poverty is often greater among lone-parent families. The table below shows that persons living with non-relatives, persons living alone or persons in lone-parent families are most likely to be living below the low income cut-off.

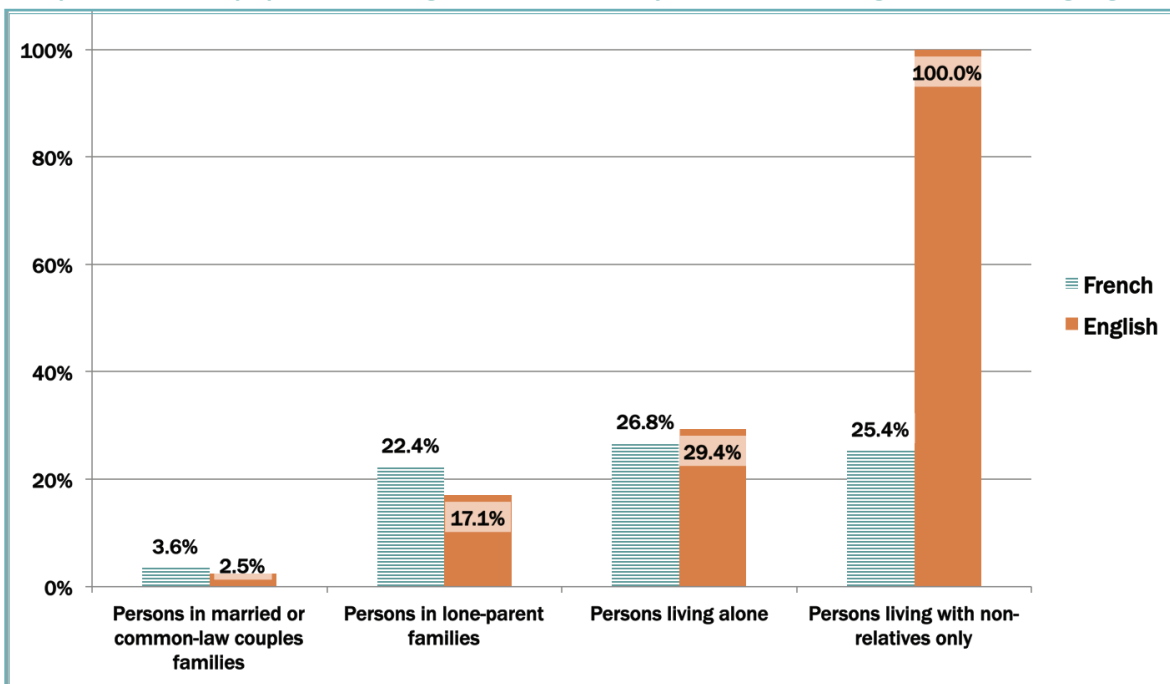
Proportion of the population living below the low income cut-off (LICO) by household arrangement

	Province of Quebec		RSS de la Côte-Nord		CSSS Sept-Îles	
	English	French	English	French	English	French
Total - Household Living Arrangements	22,0%	16,0%	6,4%	8,8%	11,0%	9,9%
Total - Persons in private households	22,1%	16,0%	6,4%	8,9%	10,5%	9,9%
Total - Persons in Census family households	17,6%	11,1%	4,4%	6,1%	5,1%	6,9%
Persons in married or common-law couples families	15,2%	8,3%	2,1%	3,6%	2,5%	3,6%
Persons in lone-parent families	31,7%	27,5%	17,6%	20,4%	17,1%	22,4%
Total - Persons in non-Census family households	43,5%	38,4%	23,4%	24,0%	44,0%	24,9%
Living with relatives	24,6%	18,2%	20,0%	9,0%	60,0%	11,8%
Living with non-relatives only	64,4%	51,7%	57,1%	25,6%	100,0%	25,4%
Living alone	41,4%	38,0%	21,4%	26,2%	29,4%	26,8%

Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

For Sept-Îles, English speakers living only with non-relatives are by far the most likely to be living below the low income cut-off. Those living alone are next most likely to be below the LICO, followed by persons in lone-parent families. English speakers are however less likely than French speakers in lone-parent families to be below the LICO.

Proportion of the population living below the LICO by household arrangement and language, Sept-Îles



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

There are a higher proportion of English-speaking families that are lone-parent, however they are less likely than French speakers to be living below the LICO. On the other hand, although there is not a large number of people living with non-relatives, this group is by far the most likely to be living below the LICO. Social support structures must take these realities into account.

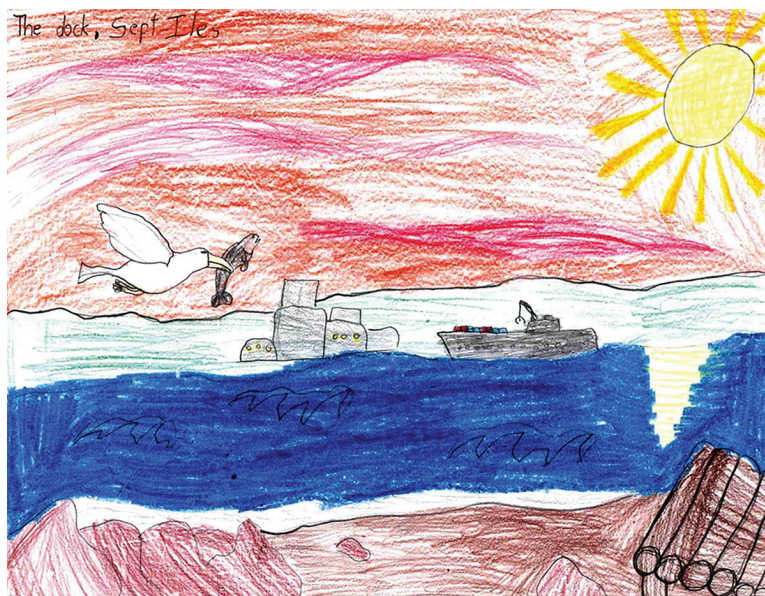
PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

At the community consultation, participants proposed various solutions for the future. First, they felt that creating **greater connections between the 50+ Club and the English schools** could be a good way to reach out to the middle-age group. They also suggested making **stronger connections with the existing services** offered in French so that these services are better able to reach out to the English-speaking population. In addition, people suggested having **more English books** available at the library. Finally, some participants would like to have **more entertainment** in English, such as a movie house with English language films.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The small size of the English-speaking community in Sept-Îles is both a source of strength and of challenges. In spite of small numbers there are several groups that provide a sense of a social life, be they churches, schools or seniors groups. While the small size makes the community feel safe and friendly, it also limits its visibility. Levels of bilingualism also have both positive and negative effects: people are proud to live in a bilingual community and that bilingualism helps them integrate into the broader Sept-Îles community, yet the unity among English speakers may be somewhat diminished by the fact that people can easily participate in activities in French. Some of the suggestions for the future address this, by increasing the availability of books and entertainment in English, and creating stronger connections among groups.

A table summarizing strengths, challenges and future perspectives is provided at the end of the document.



Drawing Contest Entry

Educational attainment

Serving the needs of a small community has its advantages and challenges

In this section we present the perspectives expressed by community members at the consultation held in September 2011 concerning education in Sept-Îles, followed by some relevant statistics and perspectives for the future. A summary table brings together that information.

Social Determinant of Health	<p>Health status improves with level of education. Education is closely tied to income and social status and provides knowledge and skills for problem solving. It helps provide a sense of control and mastery over life circumstances. It increases opportunities for job and income security, and job satisfaction. Education improves people’s ability to access and understand information to help keep them healthy.</p> <p>People with higher levels of education have better access to healthy physical environments and are better able to prepare their children for school than people with low levels of education. They also tend to smoke less, to be more physically active and to have access to healthier foods. In the 1996-97 National Population Health Survey (NPHS), only 19% of respondents with less than a high school education rated their health as “excellent” compared with 30% of university graduates. Canadians with low literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed and poor, to suffer poorer health and to die earlier than Canadians with high levels of literacy. In general, people with a higher level of education have more social relations, adopt a healthier lifestyle and have the feeling of being able to influence and control their lives.²¹</p>
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Sept-Îles has an English elementary school, an English high school, a small Cégep sector in English, and an adult education centre. In 2011 there were 151 students in the elementary school. A majority of the parents are French-speaking, often French-English couples, so many of the children speak both languages and are very well integrated.

SEPT-ÎLES’ STRENGTHS

When asked what people are proud of, or value, in their community, many participants mentioned the **English schools**. The **adult education centre** is also considered a significant asset. Several types of programs are offered: academic upgrading (high school for those who did not finish in the youth sector), vocational programs (mainly in health services, secretarial training and computer skills), and popular education (French or English second language). The centre is small and therefore limited in what can be offered.

CHALLENGES FACING SEPT-ÎLES

In the area of adult education, one of the challenges is that in spite of high levels of bilingualism generally, **not all students are bilingual** and therefore may have trouble finding a job once they have completed vocational training or a high school diploma. **Support for students with learning difficulties** is also a challenge. Indeed serving the needs of the adults who attend adult education can be challenging, since some have personal or family issues that make attending and succeeding at school difficult.

Educational attainment is not as high among English speakers as among French speakers. Many do not have a high school diploma. Participants at the community consultation explained that some people start working in a company when they are young, but as they get promoted they need a high school equivalency to ensure their position at work. A lot settle for a DEP (Diplôme d'études professionnelles) or DEC (Diplôme d'études collégiales) and enter the work force, rather than go to university.

The **programs offered in English at the local Cegep are more limited** than in French, so students do not have the same choice. If they want to study in English in other fields they have to leave the region (going, for example, to Montreal). If Sept-Îles keeps developing there will likely be an increase in the English-speaking population, and therefore greater demand for courses in English. The Cegep has new projects to provide training that is related to industries in the region, so they may be able to offer more in the future.

Youth have to leave the community to pursue higher education because there are few post-secondary options locally. Participants believe that this may be part of the reason that the youth who currently live in Sept-Îles are not well educated; those who have pursued post-secondary studies no longer reside in Sept-Îles. The Cegep offers some university-level courses in mining, but these kinds of programs take time to develop. **Training is therefore a problem**, although there are efforts being made to develop university services. The Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) has been giving courses in Sept-Îles for 30 years now. There are four undergraduate programs: nursing, project management, social work and teaching (primary), and more could be developed, in particular, mining and engineering programs. For example, Alouette will be investing \$ 7 million to promote a research centre in conjunction with UQAC and the local Cegep.

Participants in the focus groups felt that there is a perception that because the numbers of English students are small, they get a lot of individual attention and should therefore be doing very well. However, each student has his or her own challenges, and resources for helping them are limited. A single teacher often has to play many different roles, for example, as a teacher, a psychologist, and sometimes even a parent.

Finally, **servicing the needs of English-speaking First Nations** is a challenge because they are mostly Naskapi from Kawawachikamach (located 16 km northeast of Schefferville) and are therefore not part of the Montagnais (Innu) band council. To have access to funding they have to have been off their reserve for over one year. Also participants believe that the Sept-Îles English-speaking community is not in tune with the reality of the Native community. For example, the school year is not adapted to traditional lifestyles, culture and other activities specific to First Nations, such as seasonal breaks for hunting and fishing.

SOME STATISTICS ON EDUCATION

In the province as a whole, educational levels have risen in recent generations; younger generations are more likely than older Quebecers to have completed high school or to have pursued post-secondary education. Overall, English Quebecers are more likely to have a university degree than are French speakers (24.6% compared to 15.3%).

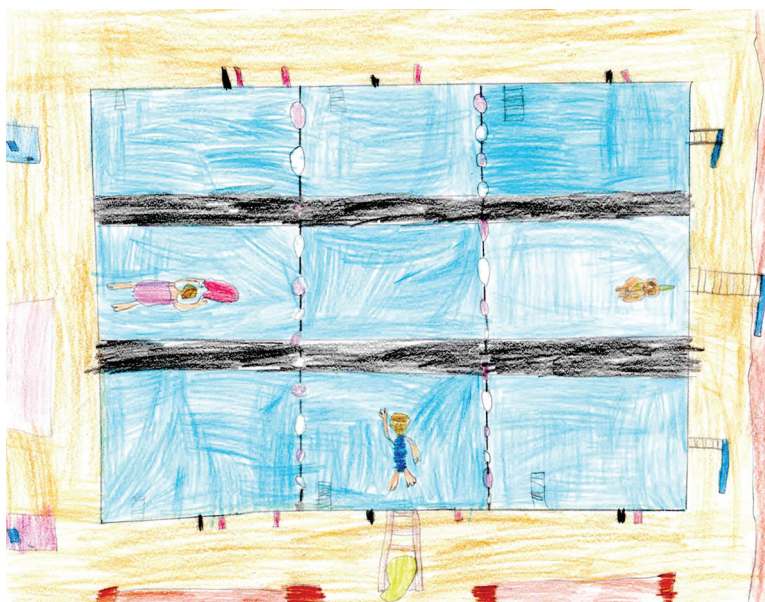
Highest educational attainment by age group

		Province of Quebec		RSS de la Côte-Nord		CSSS Sept-Îles	
		English	French	English	French	English	French
High school certificate or less	Total	44,7%	47,4%	72,3%	53,8%	59,0%	52,3%
	25-44 years	30,2%	29,9%	60,1%	37,5%	46,7%	36,5%
	45-64 years	43,3%	46,1%	76,1%	52,6%	56,4%	49,4%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	Total	9,3%	16,3%	11,6%	19,8%	12,5%	19,0%
	25-44 years	10,1%	21,2%	15,9%	25,4%	11,7%	22,6%
	45-64 years	10,8%	17,6%	8,7%	22,4%	12,8%	22,5%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	Total	16,2%	16,1%	9,3%	15,2%	15,3%	16,5%
	25-44 years	19,3%	20,7%	13,8%	21,5%	23,3%	23,4%
	45-64 years	14,3%	14,9%	7,6%	13,6%	17,9%	15,5%
University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level	Total	5,2%	4,8%	1,6%	3,2%	3,5%	3,2%
	25-44 years	5,8%	4,8%	1,2%	3,2%	3,3%	3,4%
	45-64 years	5,8%	6,0%	2,9%	3,8%	5,1%	4,4%
University certificate, diploma or degree	Total	24,6%	15,3%	5,3%	7,9%	9,7%	9,0%
	25-44 years	34,7%	23,5%	9,0%	12,3%	18,3%	14,1%
	45-64 years	25,8%	15,5%	4,7%	7,6%	7,7%	8,4%

Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

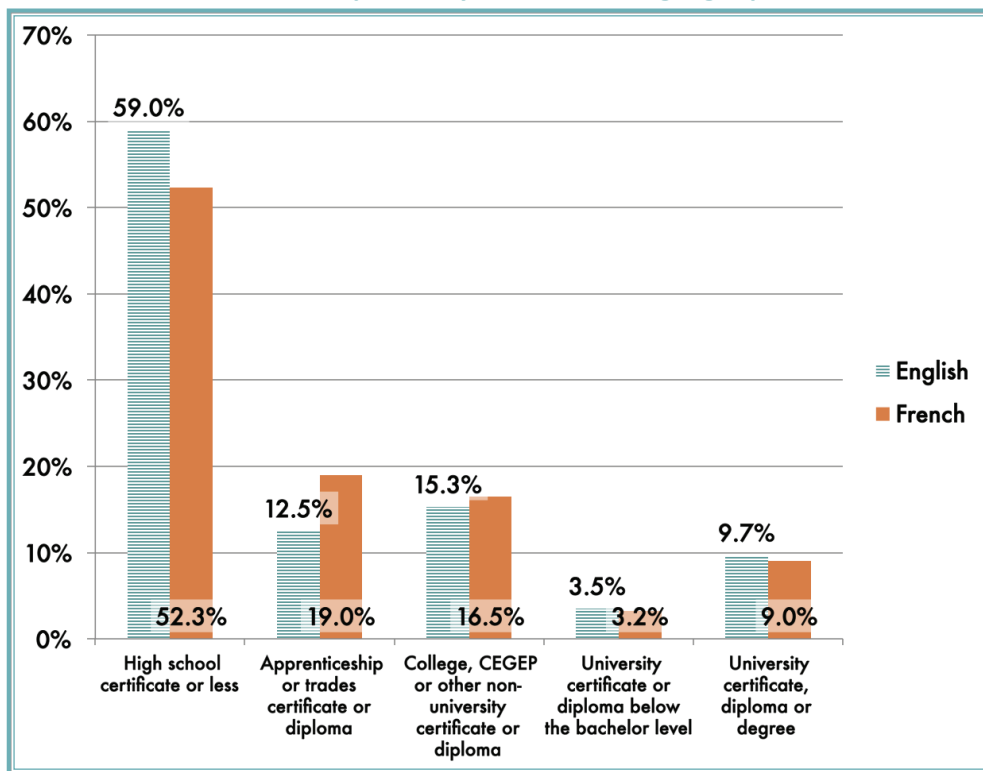
However, statistics show that English speakers in the Côte-Nord region are much more likely than French speakers to have a high school diploma or less. They are less likely than French speakers to have any other type of diploma or degree. It is also worth noting that the North Shore population in general is less likely than the provincial average to have a diploma or degree above secondary level.

In Sept-Îles as well, English speakers are more likely than French speakers to have a high school diploma or less, but they also are generally more likely to have a university education. Interestingly, they are less likely to have an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma.



Drawing Contest Entry: Swimming Pool

Educational attainment in Sept-Îles, by first official language spoken



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

These figures indicate a certain polarisation of the English-speaking population at both ends of the spectrum; they are more likely than French speakers to have lower educational levels as well as higher educational levels. This is no doubt a reflection of the types of jobs available in Sept-Îles, which may be polarized between professional or management jobs requiring university degrees, and labour jobs in the industrial sector, requiring lower educational levels. It may indicate a certain socio-economic disadvantage for English speakers since there is a high proportion with a high school certificate or less. This may also suggest that literacy levels are fairly low, which is related to difficulties finding and understanding written information, accessing services, and interacting with health or education professionals, for instance.²² In a region where the economy is dominated by large industry, it is surprising that English speakers do not have more apprenticeships or trades certificates. The proportion of younger people with university degrees is, however, a positive development.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Several proposals were made by participants at the community consultation for changes that they would like to see take place in the future. One suggestion was that high school students could teach computers to seniors, possibly at the adult education centre. This could be part of a personal orientation project (POP, done in secondary 5) in which they could explore teaching. Another suggestion was having the students do a history of Sept-Îles, perhaps in collaboration with seniors, since some of the latter have lived in the town since the 1950s when it was founded.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The English schools in Sept-Îles are a significant asset to the community, as is the adult education centre. Given the small numbers of English speakers, however, support services for students with difficulties are a challenge and teachers have to play many different roles in the lives of their students. Education beyond high school, including vocational training and apprenticeship programs, is more limited in English, and English speakers do not seem to pursue these avenues in as large proportions as do French speakers. Those interested in pursuing post-secondary education have few choices in Sept-Îles and therefore many leave the community to study elsewhere. Still, a larger proportion of English speakers than French speakers has a university degree, which is an asset to the community.

A table summarizing strengths, challenges and future perspectives is provided at the end of the document.



Drawing Contest Entry

Economic conditions

An economic boom creates challenges for infrastructures and services

In this section we present the perspectives expressed by community members at the consultation held in September 2011 concerning economic conditions in Sept-Îles, followed by some relevant statistics and perspectives for the future. A summary table brings together that information.

Social Determinant of Health

There is strong evidence that higher social and economic status is associated with better health. These two factors are considered to be the most important determinants of health. Health status improves at each step up the income and social ladder. Higher incomes promote optimal living conditions, which include safe housing and good food. The degree of control people have over life circumstances and the ability to adapt to stressful situations are key influences. Higher income and social status generally result in more control and more resources to adapt.

Studies are showing that limited options due to limited means and poor coping skills for dealing with stress increase a person's vulnerability to a range of diseases. For example, only 47% of Canadians in the lowest income bracket rate their health as very good or excellent, compared to 73% of Canadians in the highest income group. Low-income Canadians are more likely to die earlier and to suffer more illnesses than Canadians with higher incomes.

And perhaps most interesting of all, studies show that large differences in income distribution (the gap between rich and the poor) are a more important health determinant than the total income that a population generates. Income gaps within and between groups increase social problems and poor health. In other words, the more equitable a society, the better people's health is likely to be.

Of course, incomes are closely related to economic conditions and employment opportunities. Unemployment, underemployment, stressful or unsafe work are associated with poorer health. People who have more control over their work circumstances and fewer stress related demands of the job are healthier and often live longer than those in more stressful or riskier work and activities.

In addition, employment has a significant effect on a person's physical, mental and social health. Paid work provides not only money, but also a sense of identity and purpose, social contacts and opportunities for personal growth. When a person loses these benefits, the results can be devastating to both the health of the individual and his or her family. Unemployed people have a reduced life expectancy and suffer significantly more health problems than people who have a job. A major review done for the World Health Organization found that high levels of unemployment and economic instability in a society cause significant mental health problems and adverse effects on the physical health of unemployed individuals, their families and their communities. Lack of employment is associated with physical and mental health problems that include depression, anxiety and increased suicide rates.²³

SEPT-ÎLES' STRENGTHS

Economically, Sept-Îles has many assets. Currently, there is a big **demand for labour** and therefore many jobs. The **development of mining** is particularly active and there are lots of different minerals in the region. This is contributing to a diversification of the mineral sector beyond iron ore to other minerals such as hematite (used for fertilizers), taconite, rare earth minerals (used for telecommunications) and more. Gold has been found as well. The **availability of hydro power** close by is a huge asset in developing the sector, as is the **deep sea port**, which is open year-round and makes it possible to ship elsewhere for processing, manufacturing and other procedures.



Drawing Contest Entry: Big waves at the beach

These economic opportunities affect not only Sept-Îles but also **towns further north** such as Fermont, Labrador City, and Schefferville. Participants at the community consultation felt that workers from Newfoundland may choose to work in Sept-Îles or the region rather than go to work in Alberta or other provinces or territories. They believe the **standard of living is attractive**, and the cost of living is lower than near the tar sands.

CHALLENGES FACING SEPT-ÎLES

The town's assets are closely connected to its challenges: with economic development comes the challenge of **housing workers** and their families, as well as making sure that **infrastructures** are adequate for any new projects. A problem identified by some participants at the community consultation is the **regulations imposed by the mortgage and housing association**. Because of previous economic downturns when home owners defaulted on their mortgages, the association now requires a large down payment whether for housing or businesses, making it difficult for businesses and home owners to get set up.

Economic development also creates a need for labour, and some participants pointed out that currently there is a very serious **shortage of manpower** which will become even more evident if other projects come along. Attracting new residents can be difficult, because **Sept-Îles is not well known outside the region**. The economic development organization did a survey in the Montreal area and 8/10 people did not know anything, or almost anything, about Sept-Îles—or they knew only about First Nations and the opposition to uranium extraction. Many people view the town as a mining community, conjuring images of dust, noise, and explosives. This is untrue: the mines are not in Sept-Îles, but 350 km north. The iron ore activities in Sept-Îles involve stockpiling and shipping. That connotation does not encourage people to want to make a career in the mining industry or to settle in the community.

At the community consultation, participants said they are proud of the fact that the economy is going well and there is employment in Sept-Îles, but there is a downside to that: the **image among politicians is that Sept-Îles is rich and does not need help**; “they can do things themselves.” Some are concerned that government assistance for certain projects may

not be forthcoming (such as improving highway 138, providing day care centres, or helping to reduce airfares). There is a **perception that residents are all well-off**, whereas the reality is that not everyone makes the wages typical of industries such as the Iron Ore Company, and poverty does exist. For those who do have high incomes, some people note that they tend to get **deep into debt**, buying large homes, vehicles, boats and other consumer items. In order to pay them off, many rely on overtime work, which then undermines their home life and personal relationships.

Another issue related to the economy that affects the English-speaking community more specifically is that there are many people from the Lower North Shore and other English speakers who came to Sept-Îles for jobs and have stayed. Sometimes their parents also moved to Sept-Îles to have better access to health services and to enjoy their grandchildren. Their presence translates into a **greater need for senior’s services in English**.

SOME STATISTICS ON THE ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES

An interesting indicator of the economic and demographic vitality of a community is provided by the devitalization index calculated by the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l’Occupation du territoire (MAMROT). This index is based on data on population variation, employment and unemployment rates, rates of educational achievement, government transfers, low-income earners and average household incomes. A figure below zero means that the municipality is considered devitalized and the lower the number, the more so. The calculation ranks Sept-Îles at about 3.3, which is a positive rating, indicating that the community is doing fairly well in terms of employment rates, education levels, and income. This is not the case, however, for the two First Nations communities in the area, which are considered devitalized according to this index. Many of the communities on the Lower North Shore are also considered devitalized.

Devitalization Index for communities along the North Shore

Community	Population in 2006	Population variation 2001-2006 (%)	Employment rate 15 years and older	Unemployment rate 15 years and older	% of the population 15 years and older without diploma	Government transfers (%)	Low income before tax (%)	Average household income	Development index 2006
Sept-Îles	25,514	0.48	61.5	6.7	29.41	12.5	10.6	62,099	3.30
Sept-Îles urbain	23,335	-1.92	62.6	6.2	29.18	12.2	10.8	62,578	3.31
Sept-Îles rural	2,179	36.1	49.38	14.13	32.09	16.64	8.07	56,305	3.41
Port-Cartier	6,758	-3.92	56.75	8.21	34.57	12.3	13.0	62,956	1.54
Uashat	1,190	4.75	33.33	38.64	67.9	33.2	0	39,433	-9.14
Maliotenam	1,123	2.56	35.53	32.5	64.9	34.0	0	36,433	-8.49

Source: Ministère des Affaires municipales, Régions et Occupation du Territoire, <http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/developpement-regional-et-rural/indice-de-developpement/>

Let us see what the situation is for English speakers specifically. In the province of Quebec, about 65% of the population is in the labour force and of that number, about 93% is employed. The unemployment rate among French speakers is 6.6% and among English speakers it is 8.8%. On the North Shore, English speakers are more likely than French speakers to be unemployed and to be out of the labour force. However, in Sept-Îles this is not the case: a smaller proportion of English speakers is in the labour force, but those who are, are more likely to be employed and less likely to be unemployed.

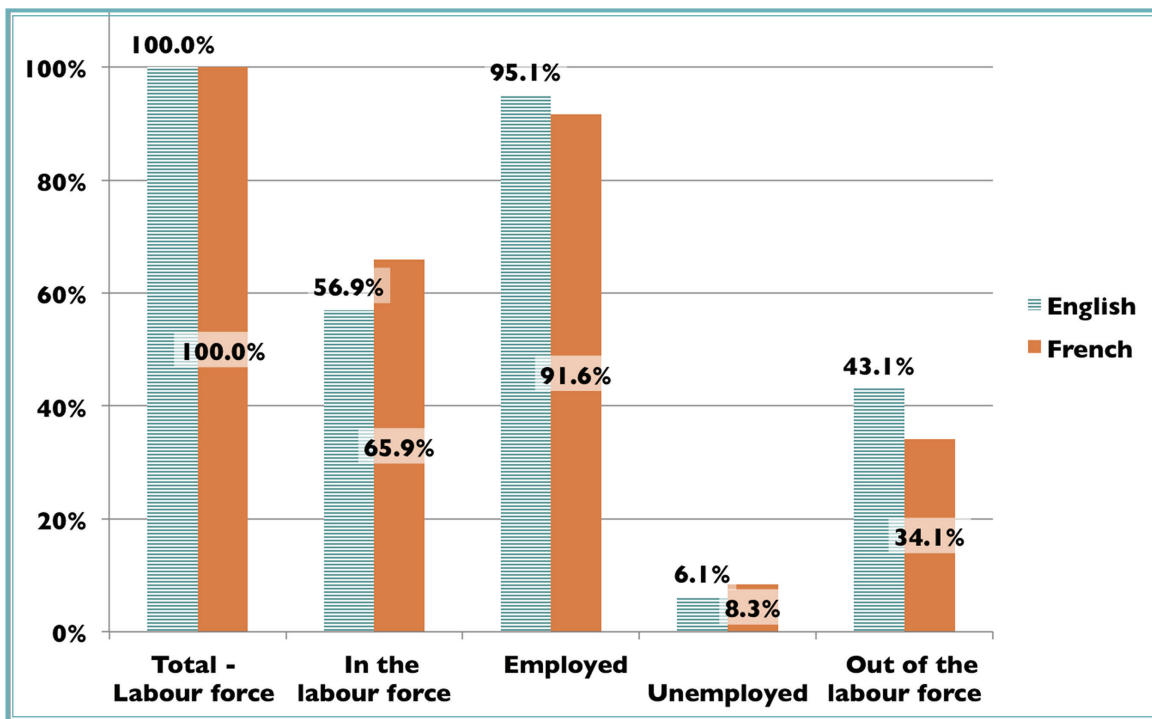
Labour force activity, by first official language spoken

	Province of Quebec		RSS de la Côte-Nord		CSSS Sept-Îles	
	English	French	English	French	English	French
In the labour force	64.6%	65.3%	61.0%	64.2%	56,9%	65,9%
Employed	91.2%	93.4%	71.3%	89.0%	95,1%	91,6%
Unemployed	8.8%	6.6%	28.7%	10.9%	6,1%	8,3%
Out of the labour force	35.4%	34.7%	39.0%	35.8%	43,1%	34,1%

Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

Below is a graph showing these figures for Sept-Îles specifically.

Labour force activity for Sept-Îles



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

The sectors of employment are somewhat different from the province as a whole in that resource-based industries are a greater source of employment (7.9% in Sept-Îles as compared to 3.7% in Quebec), as are jobs in the health and social service sector. There is less manufacturing, wholesale trade, finance and real estate, and business services.

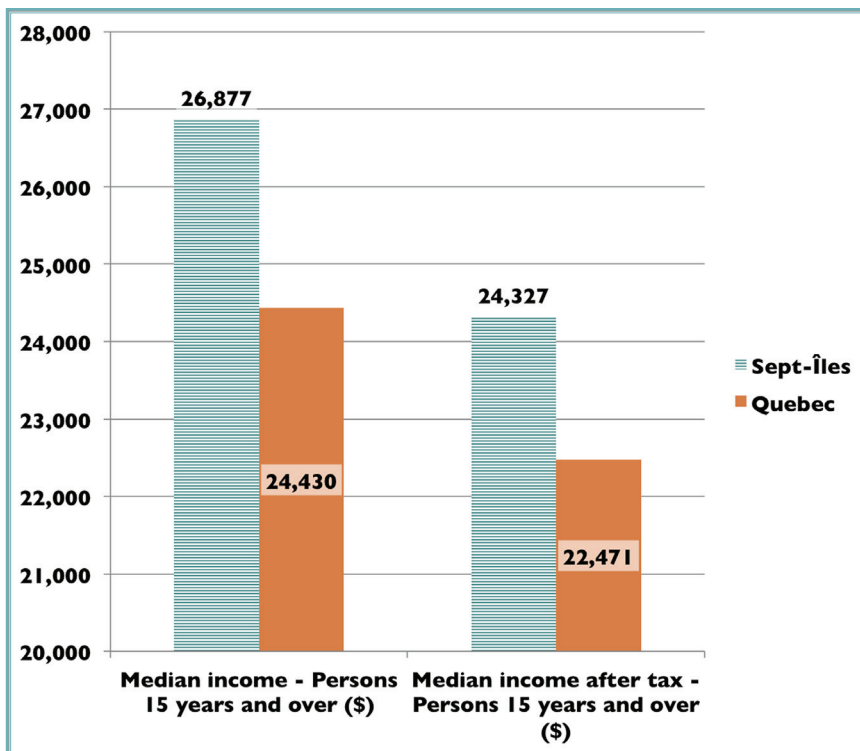
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over, Sept-Îles

Industry	Sept-Îles	Québec
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	7,9 %	3,7 %
Construction	5,2 %	5,2 %
Manufacturing	11,9 %	14,6 %
Wholesale trade	2,6 %	4,4 %
Retail trade	13,3 %	12,0 %
Finance and real estate	4,0 %	5,4 %
Health care and social services	12,5 %	11,2 %
Educational services	6,9 %	6,9 %
Business services	13,6 %	17,1 %
Other services	22,1 %	19,5 %

Source: http://www.deseptiles.com/fr/mainoeuvre_39/

In these employment sectors incomes are generally good, which is reflected in statistics on median incomes. Compared to the province as a whole, incomes in Sept-Îles are significantly higher.

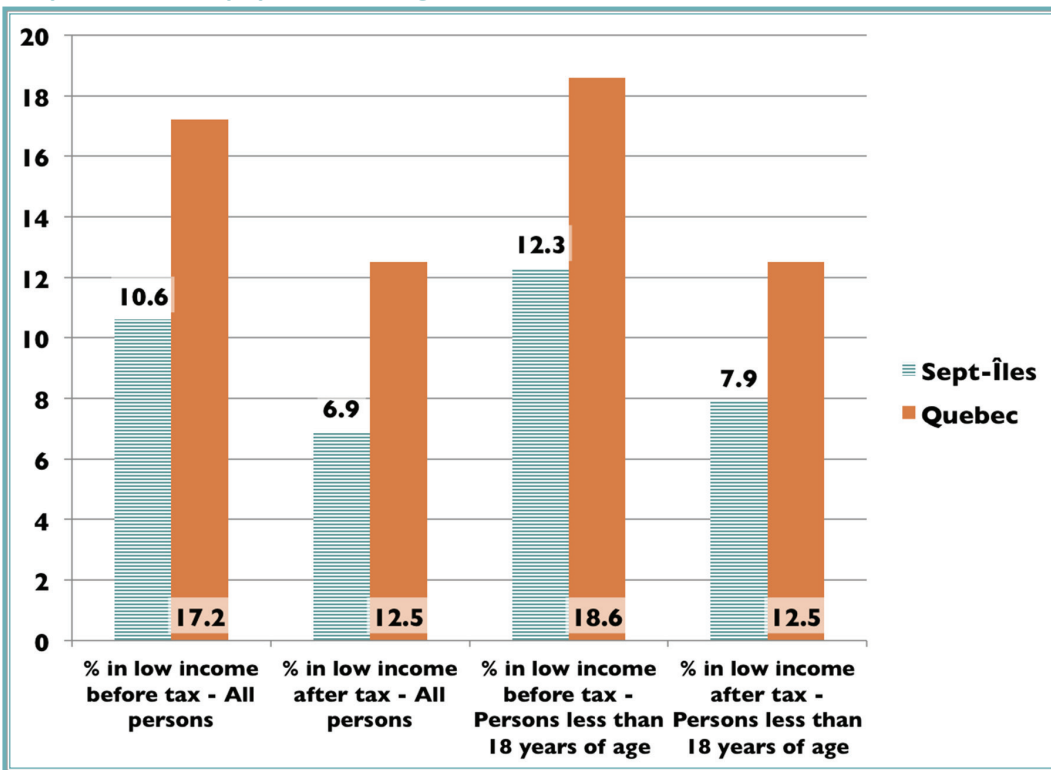
Median income and income after tax, persons 15+ years



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles, Sept-Îles, Québec

In addition, the proportion of the population living below the low income cut-off is lower. This of course does not mean that poverty does not exist; simply that a smaller proportion of the population is affected by it at the present time.

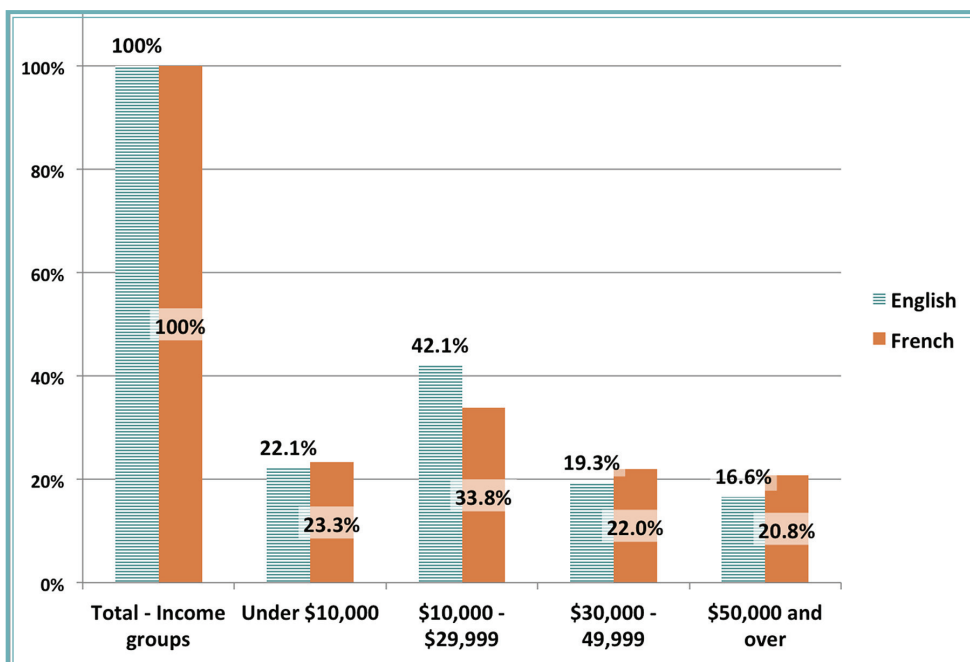
Proportion of the population living below the low-income cut-off



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles, Sept-Îles, Québec

If we compare the two official language groups, we can see that English speakers are more likely to have incomes below \$30,000 and less likely to have incomes above that level. They therefore appear to be somewhat less well off than their French-speaking counterparts.

Income, population 15+ years, by first official language spoken



Source: CHSSN 2010. Socio-Economic Profiles of Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Based on projects currently being developed, the **economic future of Sept-Îles looks good**. New mineral deposits have been discovered and new mines are being planned. Sept-Îles is in the region covered by the Quebec government's plan for the north (Plan Nord), but the impact of the plan is unknown. One participant pointed out *"It's supposed to be the second best thing to sliced bread"* but so far residents have not seen much that is concrete.

Outside investment is very much a part of the regional economy, as many of the new projects involve large-scale infrastructure development (railroads, housing for workers, processing plants and more), often using capital from investors in China or other countries.

There are also opportunities in the **agro-food sector**, such as berries (blueberries, strawberries). Research is being done and some financing is available from the government for these projects. The **tourist industry** is another area of economic opportunity.

In the participants' vision for the future of the community, several ideas concerned economic development. First they suggested building a **convention centre**. They also wanted to see Sept-Îles become a **university centre**, with a campus of the Université du Québec. In terms of transportation, they wanted to have **Highway 138 improved**, they suggested developing a **"blue highway"** (that is, water transportation) and a **ferry link** between Sept-Îles and the south shore. In addition, participants wanted to have access to **cheaper air fares**. Finally their vision included twenty **cruise ships a year** stopping in Sept-Îles.

SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The abundance of natural resources in the region and the worldwide demand for these resources is part of an economic context that is favourable to Sept-Îles. There are a good number of jobs, there is a high demand for labour, and the standard of living is good. This "boom" can also present challenges: housing and infrastructures may lag behind demand and manpower may also be insufficient. In addition, attracting people to Sept-Îles can be difficult since it is not well known outside the region, and is often seen to be a mining town. Socially, this type of economic environment can create its share of problems, such as high levels of debt, stress, and family difficulties. The economic future of the community may include development in a range of sectors, such as mining, tourism, food and agriculture, and higher education. Participants also envisioned more and better transportation options, an important factor considering the distance from many other areas of the province.

A table summarizing strengths, challenges and future perspectives is provided at the end of the document.



Drawing Contest Entry: 1 of 3 Winners of the Drawing contest

The natural and built environment

a beautiful natural environment that is not showcased

In this section we present the perspectives expressed by community members at the consultation held in September 2011 concerning the natural and built environment in Sept-Îles, followed by some relevant statistics and perspectives for the future. A summary table brings together that information.

Social Determinant of Health	<p>The natural and built environment is one of the determinants of health as it plays an important role in people’s quality of life as well as their physical and psychological well-being. At certain levels of exposure, contaminants in our air, water, food and soil can cause a variety of adverse health effects, including cancer, birth defects, respiratory illness and gastrointestinal ailments. In the built environment, factors related to housing, indoor air quality, and the design of communities and transportation systems can significantly influence our health, both as individuals and as communities.</p> <p>Where people live affects their health and chances of leading flourishing lives. Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods, that are socially cohesive, that are designed to promote good physical and psychological wellbeing, and that are protective of the natural environment are essential for health equity.</p> <p>For example, it has been shown that various elements of the built environment and services environment affect people’s behaviours, such as the amount of physical activity they do or their diet, which in turn can have an effect on physical characteristics such as body weight. Since obesity has become one of the most troubling public health problems in recent years—described as an epidemic by the World Health Organization—researchers and health organizations are seeking to better understand how to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent weight-related problems. There are many ways to change the environment to encourage people to use active transport, to eat healthier foods and to interact with their neighbours. For example, neighbourhoods can be designed with a blend of commercial and residential uses, with walking and biking paths, and with easy access to public transit and recreational infrastructures. This makes it easier for residents to do a number of activities in a walkable radius and have more frequent contact with neighbours.²⁴</p>
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SEPT-ÎLES’ STRENGTHS

The amount of **green space** in Sept-Îles was identified by participants as an asset to the community. In particular, the **waterfront** is considered to be the main attraction because of the beauty of the site, but also because of the many events held there. Participants also pointed out that there are lots of **flowers** and the **city is clean**. The location of Sept-Îles, in a region of vast spaces with forests and lakes, makes it easy to have access to **hunting and fishing areas**.

The **quality of the natural environment** is also considered good. This refers particularly to water quality and air quality. Participants appreciate being able to see across to Pointe Noire on a clear day, and say that there is very little smog or haze. Some even mentioned that they feel less stress due to the quality of environmental assets, and others pointed out that there are **great places for picking blueberries, raspberries and partridge berries**, with no worries about pesticides.

Some of the municipal programs contribute to these environmental assets, “going green” and investing in **recycling** and other environmentally-friendly programs.

The built environment is considered to help create a **sense of security and safety** during the day, although somewhat less at night. People appreciate the fact that Sept-Îles is a **small town** that is easy to get around, with lots of shopping malls and grocery stores.

“I know personally I wouldn’t live in the centre of a big city for love nor money.”

In terms of services and recreational facilities, participants at the consultation feel that there is a lot to do, and that there are **lots of recreational facilities**, but that people who do not speak French have a tendency not to take advantage of them.

It is interesting to note that the perspectives of elementary school children—as expressed through the drawings they made of what they like about their community—focus largely on the natural environment. In fact, more than half the drawings (23/42) feature the beach or another natural environment (forest). Twelve of the drawings (12/42) feature a house (probably the family home), four feature a business (Walmart, MacDonaldis) and three feature a recreational facility such as a hockey rink, swimming pool or ballet class. Many of the beach drawings include recreational activities such as fishing or swimming in the ocean.



Drawing Contest Entry: Ballet Studio

CHALLENGES FACING SEPT-ÎLES

One of the concerns expressed at the consultation is the **expansion of the mining sector**, and the pressure it puts on the environment, for example in the Schefferville area. The question of **uranium mining** and the potential health hazards it could present was also raised. Although participants felt that air quality is generally very good, they pointed out that sometimes there is **dust**.

The **rapid expansion of the town** was also mentioned as an environmental issue. Increased **housing development** could have environmental impacts as the population increases. Some participants noted that **traffic** has increased noticeably, both regular car traffic and transport trucks, which is something Sept-Îles residents are not used to having. The amount of **road construction** was also noted as a challenge, as well as the **state of the highway** which needs to be straightened out in places.

Another issue mentioned at the consultation is the problem of **coastal erosion** in outlying communities. Participants recognize that the shore has always been eroding, but that having people build close to the shore has exacerbated the problem.

With climate change they expect the ocean level to rise, again worsening the problem.

SOME STATISTICS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

In a health survey conducted on the North Shore, the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord surveyed the population on their concerns regarding environmental health.²⁵

For the Sept-Îles territory, the main environmental health concerns were:

- Air pollution: 57.7% were concerned (about average for the North Shore)
- Water pollution: 18.9% were concerned (about average for the North Shore)

The factors considered to have the most negative impact on quality of life were considered to be tobacco smoke (39.5%) followed by industrial pollution (24.5%) and wood burning (15.1%).

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

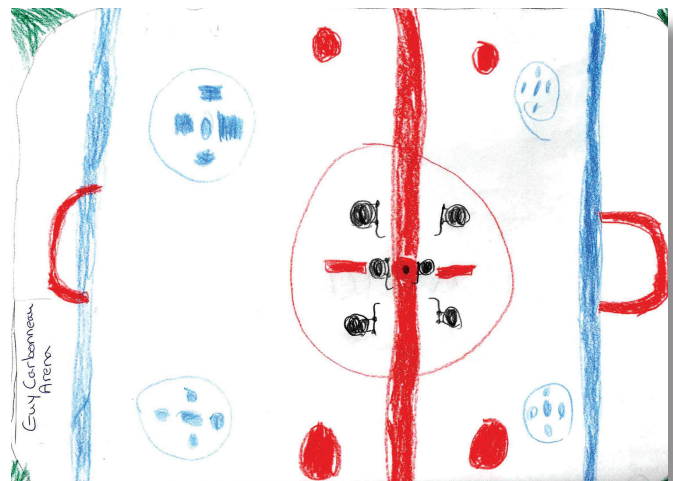
In the discussion on the environment, a suggestion was made to introduce composting in Sept-Îles (for leaves, grass and food) by giving each household a bin. Another suggestion was to ensure better snow removal for walkers.

SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The natural environmental assets of Sept-Îles include a good amount of green space—including the beach area—good air and water quality, and access to natural environments for hunting, fishing and berry picking. Coastal erosion is a concern expressed by participants, as it is having a negative impact on the natural environment in areas in and around Sept-Îles. The built environment also has assets in the form of the waterfront boardwalk and park, and recreational facilities.

Many of the environmental assets could, however, be threatened by the expansion of the mining sector and of the town, as industries, housing, roads and other infrastructures are built to accommodate the new companies and their workers.

A table summarizing strengths, challenges and future perspectives is provided at the end of the document.



Drawing Contest Entry: Guy Carboneau Arena

Towards community and personal health and well-being

In this section we present the perspectives expressed by community members at the consultation held in September 2011 concerning community and personal health and well-being in Sept-Îles, followed by some relevant statistics and perspectives for the future. A summary table brings together that information.

Social Determinant of Health

As we have seen, all of the above themes affect health and well-being in a myriad of sometimes complex ways. Social and physical environments—including social support networks, community organizations, educational opportunities, employment, incomes and social status, the natural environment, urban planning, transportation systems and the state of buildings, for example—are what most affect the health of both individuals and communities.

Health and social services also have a role to play in maintaining good health, preventing illness and treating people for health and social problems. In fact, the health care system itself is seen as a health determinant as well as a basic human right. Being able to access such services in an effective, efficient and reassuring way is therefore important. In Canada, we have a universal health care system that requires provinces to provide all “medically necessary” services on a universal basis. Yet access to care remains better for those in higher income brackets, and drug prescriptions are less likely to be filled by low-income earners. Many low- and moderate-income Canadians have limited or no access to non-insured health services such as eye care, dentistry, mental health counselling and prescription drugs.

People’s health and well-being are affected by the interconnections between all the health determinants. A good example of this is the issue of food insecurity. Food is one of the basic human needs and it is an important determinant of health and human dignity. Food insecurity more often affects households with lower incomes, lower educational levels, and other forms of deprivation. People who experience food insecurity are unable to have an adequate diet in terms of its quality or quantity. They consume fewer servings of fruits and vegetables, milk products, and vitamins than those in food-secure households. Dietary deficiencies – more common among food insecure households – are associated with increased likelihood of chronic disease and difficulties in managing these diseases. Food insufficient households were 80% more likely to report having diabetes, 60% more likely to report high blood pressure, and 70% more likely to report food allergies than households with sufficient food. Finally, increasing numbers of studies indicate that children in food insecure households are more likely to experience a whole range of behavioural, emotional, and academic problems than children living in food secure households. Additionally, food insecurity produces stress and feelings of uncertainty that can have a negative impact on health.²⁶

SEPT-ÎLES’ STRENGTHS

In the area of health and well-being, **the quality of the local environment**, the sense of safety and the **recreational facilities** described above are all important community assets, because they can encourage active, healthy lifestyles. The **social and community life** is also an important support for residents’ health and well-being, including the role played by groups in the community such as the 50+ Club, the churches, and the schools. These help create opportunities for social engagement and foster a sense of belonging among residents.

Access to health and social services is also an important element in supporting people's health and well-being. Through a regional adaptation project within an initiative of the CHSSN, funds from Health Canada were made available for the hospital to hire an English-speaking **customer service agent** who has the mandate of hosting and orienting English-speaking users upon their arrival at the institution, informing the clientele of the services offered and directing the English-speaking clientele to adequate resources. She also ensures the liaison between services; she supports caregivers in their relationship with the English-speaking clientele; and she may act as an interpreter during consultations to ensure the precise understanding of the diagnosis and treatment. This is an important asset for the English-speaking community.

Participants at the community consultation also mentioned the **quality of health services** they receive on site. The hospital and the clinic were mentioned specifically. One person particularly appreciated

“having good services for my husband that is so sick.”

Another asset that facilitates access to services is the **Maison Richelieu**, which provides low-cost lodging for people from the Lower North Shore when they go to Sept-Îles for medical appointments or treatments.

The halfway house, **Transit Sept-Îles**, is also able to offer services in English to people in need of temporary housing, counselling, support with addictions and other issues. Other community organizations are also able to offer services in English in Sept-Îles.

CHALLENGES FACING SEPT-ÎLES

Participants also identified some health-related issues for Sept-Îles, such as **environmental contaminants**. They were concerned about levels of pollution, mercury in the water and contaminants related to the iron ore industry.

Another concern was the **health and well-being of seniors**. Participants observed that the older population is on the rise, as retirees used to leave the community for bigger cities, whereas they tend to stay in Sept-Îles more nowadays. This presents some challenges to **housing**, which is already in demand from incoming workers. A particular concern was the **rate of falls among seniors**. Issues with medication among older residents may increase the likelihood of falling. Also falls are considered more likely when seniors do not get enough exercise to remain strong and agile. Having clean sidewalks in the winter so that seniors feel comfortable getting outdoors would be helpful, but can be a challenge.

SOME HEALTH STATISTICS FOR THE NORTH SHORE REGION

The Agence de la santé tracks many different health determinants for the territory it covers in order to get a picture of the health of the population. One of the lifestyle habits that can have a significant impact on health is smoking. Rates in the Sept-Îles area are the second highest on the North Shore. If we compare rates from 2000 to 2005, they are declining for all age groups.

Another lifestyle habit that can affect health is how often people eat fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. In this area, the population of Sept-Îles is slightly above average for the North Shore region. In general, women eat vegetables more often than men, and people with higher levels of education eat them more often than those with lower levels. In addition, smokers tend to eat fruits and vegetables less often than non-smokers.

On the North Shore 13% of the population eats fruits and vegetables less than 3 times a day. This is especially true of certain population groups:

- People without a high school diploma (18.8%)
- People on the Lower North Shore (18%)
- Men on the North Shore generally (17.7%)
- People who live alone (17.6%)
- People who smoke regularly or occasionally (15.9%).

These figures provide some indication of the situation on the North Shore generally, and in Sept-Îles, but they are not specific to English speakers. The data specific to English speakers do not exist.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Various elements of people's vision for the future of the community concerned ways to improve health and well-being. One was a wellness centre for English-speaking seniors. Another idea was that the Sept-Îles health centre become the major centre for the North Shore, so that residents would not have to go to Quebec city or Montreal anymore for health care.

SUMMARY OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Health and well-being is affected by a wide range of factors, as we have been able to see throughout this document. The quality of the local environment, including green space, opportunities for physical activity and clean air and water, is an important dimension of healthy lifestyles. So too is having a social and community life that provides opportunities for social interaction, community engagement and a sense of connectedness and belonging. Participants at the community consultation held in Sept-Îles felt that their community has important assets in these areas. Having accessible health and social services is also an important factor in health and well-being, and here too, the English-speaking community of Sept-Îles has various assets in spite of its small numbers. The challenges named at the consultation included environmental contamination related to industrial activities in the region, and concerns for the health and well-being of seniors, who make up a significant proportion of the English-speaking population. To this end, a wellness centre for seniors was envisioned as part of the future for the community. Participants at the consultation also imagined Sept-Îles as a major health centre for the whole North Shore.



Drawing Contest Entry: Landscape

A table summarizing strengths, challenges and future perspectives is provided at the end of the document.

Summary and Conclusion

Although different groups have inhabited the territory that is now Sept-Îles for many centuries—Innu, Norwegian, French, English and more—the establishment of an urban centre is relatively recent. In the early twentieth century, Clarke City, as it was known at the time, grew up around the pulp and paper industry. It became the regional economic center with a train, the first hydro-electric dam in the region, a port, a boat-building factory, a wood processing plant, a hospital and more. Towards the middle of the 20th century, however, mineral extraction and shipping—most notably of iron ore—became a major economic driver and led to a rapid increase in the population and in the economy. In spite of periods of economic decline due in part to a fall in iron ore prices in the early 1980s for example, mineral extraction, processing and shipping remains a significant part of the economy today.

The English-speaking community of Sept-Îles was established in this context. Many English speakers moved to the region for employment in the mining sector, and some have settled permanently in Seven Islands, as it is often called. Other English speakers have moved from the more remote area of the Lower North Shore to be near family, jobs and services. Still others immigrated from Europe, and use English more comfortably than French for day-to-day activities. In addition, some First Nations speak English as their first official language. Still, only 3.4% of the total population in Sept-Îles speaks English as its first official language.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON THE STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

In view of stimulating community development in the present-day context, a community consultation was held in September 2011. Various community assets and challenges were identified, as were perspectives for the future.

The strengths and challenges related to community life in Sept-Îles were both connected to the small size of the English-speaking community in Sept-Îles. In spite of small numbers there are several groups that provide a sense of a social life, be they churches, schools or seniors groups. While the small size makes the community feel safe and friendly, it also limits its visibility. Levels of bilingualism also have both positive and negative effects: people are proud to live in a bilingual community and that bilingualism helps them integrate into the broader Sept-Îles community, yet the unity among English speakers may be somewhat diminished by the fact that people can easily participate in activities in French. Some of the suggestions for the future address this, by increasing the availability of books and entertainment in English, and creating stronger connections among groups.

As concerns education, the English schools in Sept-Îles are a significant asset to the community, as is the adult education centre. Given the small numbers of English speakers, however, support services for students with difficulties are a challenge and teachers have to play many different roles in the lives of their students. Education beyond high school, including vocational training and apprenticeship programs, is more limited in English, and English speakers do not seem to pursue these avenues in as large proportions as do French speakers. Those interested in pursuing post-secondary education have few choices in Sept-Îles and therefore many leave the community to study elsewhere. Still, a larger proportion of English speakers than French speakers has a university degree, which is an asset to the community.

The abundance of natural resources in the region and the worldwide demand for these resources is part of an economic context that is favourable to Sept-Îles. There are a good number of jobs, there is a high demand for labour, and the standard of living is good. This “boom” can also present challenges: housing and infrastructures may lag behind demand and manpower may also be insufficient. In addition, attracting people to Sept-Îles can be difficult

since it is not well known outside the region, and is often seen to be a mining town. Socially, this type of economic environment can create its share of problems, such as high levels of debt, stress, and family difficulties. The economic future of the community may include development in a range of sectors, such as mining, tourism, food and agriculture, and higher education. Participants also envisioned more and better transportation options, an important factor considering the distance from many other areas of the province.

The natural environmental assets of Sept-Îles include a good amount of green space—including the beach area—good air and water quality, and access to natural environments for hunting, fishing and berry picking. Coastal erosion is a concern expressed by participants, as it is having a negative impact on the natural environment in areas in and around Sept-Îles. The built environment also has assets in the form of the waterfront boardwalk and park, and recreational facilities. Many of the environmental assets could, however, be threatened by the expansion of the mining sector and of the town, as industries, housing, roads and other infrastructures are built to accommodate the new companies and their workers. Participants made two very simple suggestions for improving the environment in Sept-Îles: a composting program, and better snow removal on the sidewalks in winter to encourage people to walk more.

Health and well-being is affected by a wide range of factors, and participants at the community consultation held in Sept-Îles felt that their community has some important assets, such as green space, opportunities for physical activity and clean air and water. They also identified some assets related to social and community life that provide opportunities for social interaction, community engagement and a sense of connectedness and belonging. These include the 50+ Club, churches and schools. Having accessible health and social services is also an important factor in health and well-being, and here too, the English-speaking community of Sept-Îles has various assets in spite of its small numbers, for example the recently hired customer service agent at the hospital, the Maison Richelieu and community organizations that can provide services in English. The challenges named at the consultation included environmental contamination related to industrial activities in the region, and concerns for the health and well-being of seniors, who make up a significant proportion of the English-speaking population. To this end, a wellness centre for seniors was envisioned as part of the future for the community. Participants at the consultation also imagined Sept-Îles as a major health centre for the whole North Shore.

SUMMARY OF SEPT-ÎLES' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The English-speaking community of Sept-Îles has experienced many accomplishments in recent years. Through the involvement of the North Shore Community Association, a 50+ Club has been set up for seniors in the community, as they were identified as a growing population in need of activities and a place for social interaction.

In addition, through a regional adaptation project within an initiative of the CHSSN, funds from Health Canada were made available for the hospital to hire an English-speaking customer service agent who has the mandate of orienting English-speaking users upon their arrival at the institution, supporting caregivers in their relationship with the English-speaking clientele, and providing interpretation services as needed.

Educational activities, including the elementary and high schools, as well as the adult education centre and the English sector at the local Cegep, all contribute to the vitality of the community. As stakeholders from all the different sectors (education, economy, health, community organizations and more) continue to work together and collaborate, no doubt initiatives will emerge and continue to respond to the needs of the population.

NEXT STEPS

The information contained in this portrait can be used to further community development actions in Sept-Îles at many different levels: institutional, community and individual. This community portrait is intended to encourage conversations about what people care about, what they can do to contribute to the quality of life in their community, and how that commitment can be translated into actions. In some cases, an institution may decide to address an issue, most likely in partnership with another organization or group of individuals. In another case, ordinary citizens may decide to organize an activity or project that they feel is within their reach. Community organizations may focus on some aspect of community life that they feel empowered to change, in collaboration with other community actors. Whatever the case, the ultimate goal is individual, community and organizational empowerment, and community development actions will be based on local assets. The strategies for getting there ideally include intersectoral partnerships, community engagement and political commitment. However large or small the actions are, when they emerge out of people's sense of commitment to and caring for their community they all have a role to play in building a healthier community.



Drawing Contest Entry: A Windy Day

Summary	COMMUNITY LIFE	EDUCATION	ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENT	HEALTH
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several community groups: 50+ Club, churches, schools, adult education centre • Friendly community • Generosity of people • Safe community • Volunteering is valued • Bilingualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of two English schools • The existence of the adult education centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High demand for labour • Mining development • Availability of large amounts of hydro power • Deep sea port • Development of towns further north connected to Sept-Îles' economy • Standard of living good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space, including waterfront, flowers, cleanliness • Access to hunting and fishing • Water and air quality • Berry picking • Environmental policies at municipal level • Sense of safety and security • Recreational facilities • Beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of local environment • Social and community life • Access person for English-language services • Quality of health services • Maison Richelieu • Transit Sept-Îles
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingualism leads many to participate more in activities held in French • Few activities for middle age group • Fewer young people returning to region after schooling • English-speaking community not known or visible • Lack of unity in English-speaking community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all students are bilingual • Support for students with learning difficulties • Serving the needs of English-speaking First Nations • Limited number of Cegep programs offered in English • Educational attainment not as high as among French speakers • Teachers have to play many different roles: small class sizes but also fewer resources • Youth have to leave the community for post-secondary studies • Training in relevant fields is a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of housing and infrastructures • Obtaining financing for housing and businesses • Shortage of manpower • Sept-Îles not well known and negative image makes it harder to attract newcomers • Perception that Sept-Îles is well-off • High levels of debt • Need for seniors' services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the mining sector, including possible uranium mining • Rapid expansion of the town, including housing development, traffic, road construction and highway maintenance • Coastal erosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental contaminants • Seniors: housing and falls
Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create stronger connections between the 50+ Club and the English schools • Create stronger connections with existing services offered in French • More English books • More entertainment in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school students could teach computers to seniors • Students could do a history of Sept-Îles, perhaps in collaboration with seniors • Possibility of more university-level programs being offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mines • Plan Nord? • Outside investment • Agro-food sector projects • Tourist industry • Convention centre • University centre • Improve highway 138 • Blue highway • Ferry link between Sept-Îles and south shore • Cheaper air fares • 20 cruise ships a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composting program • Better snow removal on sidewalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness centre for English-speaking seniors • Sept-Îles health centre as major centre for the North Shore

Endnotes

1. INSPQ & MSSS 2002, La santé des communautés.
2. Idem.
3. Lachance, Roger, 2011. Putting People First...
4. Simard, Paule, 2011. ... in Putting People First...
5. CHSSN 2003, A Community Guide to the Population Health Approach. www.chssn.org
6. These findings are for those who speak English as their mother tongue. In 2001, over 67% of English speakers reported that they were bilingual in French and English, as compared to 51% of speakers of other languages and 37% of French speakers (Parenteau et al., 2008).
7. CHSSN 5-year plan, 2008-2013
8. CHSSN Prospectus 2004
9. Parenteau et al., 2008
10. Community Health and Social Services Network, Baseline Data Report 2008-2009, page 10.
11. Maynard 2007
12. Corbeil et al. 2010
13. Parenteau et al., 2008
14. Pocock et al., 2010
15. CHSSN 2003, A Community Guide to the Population Health Approach. www.chssn.org
16. Minkler & Wallerstein 2002
17. Much of the information in the section was excerpted from the website of the town of Sept-îles: <http://ville.sept-iles.qc.ca>
18. Thanks to Harold Marshall for this part of the history.
19. See Public Health Agency of Canada, "What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy?" www.phac-aspc.qc.ca; Ministère de la Santé et Services sociaux du Québec 2007, "Health, in other words..." www.mssss.gouv.qc.ca; CHSSN 2003, A Community Guide to the Population Health Approach, www.chssn.org; Juha Mikkonen and Dennis Raphael, 2010. Social Determinants of Health, The Canadian Facts. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.
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25. Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord, 2007. Rapport de l'Enquête Santé Côte-Nord 2005
26. See Public Health Agency of Canada, "What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy?" www.phac-aspc.qc.ca; Ministère

de la Santé et Services sociaux du Québec 2007, “Health, in other words...” www.mssss.gouv.qc.ca; CHSSN 2003, A Community Guide to the Population Health Approach, www.chssn.org; Juha Mikkonen and Dennis Raphael, 2010. Social Determinants of Health, The Canadian Facts. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.