



GASPÉSIE LITERACY COUNCIL

Needs Assessment

2023-2024

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The Gaspésie Literacy Council



Who We Are

The Gaspésie Literacy Council is a non-profit organization that operates in eastern Quebec (see map below).

Our mission is to lead English-speaking individuals and families to achieve their literacy goals. By increasing public awareness of common and invisible literacy challenges, the GLC identifies and responds to the evolving needs of our communities.

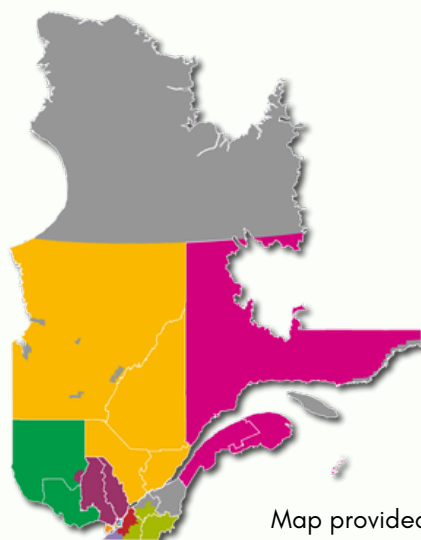
Under the umbrella of Literacy Quebec, our goal is to provide leadership in promoting awareness of the increasing importance of literacy in our modern world.

We have been in operation since 1984 and we were incorporated in 1990. In 2018, we changed our operating model in an effort to become more visible.










Who We Serve

Our territory mirrors the Eastern Shores School Board, pictured in pink below. We serve the English-speaking and Indigenous communities within the following areas:

- The Gaspé Peninsula (Rimouski to Matapédia)
- The North Shore (Sept-Îles, to Schefferville, to Baie Comeau)
- The Magdalen Islands



GLC territory in pink

LEGEND			
	CENTRAL QUÉBEC SB		NEW FRONTIERS SB
	Electors: 71,387 28 prov. electoral div.		Electors: 10,154 3 prov. electoral div.
	25 RCM 220 municipalities		4 RCM 21 municipalities
	EASTERN SHORES SB		RIVERSIDE SB
	Electors: 4,434 8 prov. electoral div.		Electors: 24,397 17 prov. electoral div.
	12 RCM 101 municipalities		7 RCM 175 municipalities
	EASTERN TOWNSHIPS SB		SIR WILFRID LAURIER SB
	Electors: 11,019 12 prov. electoral div.		Electors: 17,485 10 prov. electoral div.
	14 RCM 175 municipalities		17 RCM 105 municipalities
	ENGLISH MONTREAL SB		WESTERN QUÉBEC SB
	Electors: 81,053 42 prov. electoral div.		Electors: 16,684 8 prov. electoral div.
	1 RCM 7 municipalities		8 RCM 40 municipalities
	LESTER B. PEARSON SB		
	Electors: 80,000 8 prov. electoral div.		
	3 RCM 22 municipalities		

Map provided by the Quebec English
School Boards Association (QESBA)
<https://qesba.qc.ca/en/home/>
Used with permission (2024)

Introduction to the Project



This needs assessment is the first step of the GLC's Literacy Summit Project, funded by Canadian Heritage and led by Project Coordinator Angelina Leggo.

By using a variety of methods – research, statistical analyses, interviews, and surveys – the GLC has been gathering data on our communities since August 2023. This document has been the primary objective of the 2023–2024 year.

Due to population size and access to community members, some areas are better represented than others. We welcome and encourage readers to contact us with any updates, corrections, or supplemental information you think is relevant to this document (see Section 13).

This needs assessment serves two purposes for the GLC:

1. It will inform the Literacy Summit, a month-long event tentatively scheduled for November 2024. The Literacy Summit will provide networking opportunities, workshops, presentations, resources, and online information to educate and inform on topics identified in this document
2. It will help the GLC shape the services, events, activities, and partnerships we are planning for the future

Hence the primary goal of the Needs Assessment:

***Getting to know you better,
to serve you better***



Find us:
Facebook: @gaspelit
Instagram: @gaspesieliteracycouncil
Website: <https://gaspelit.ca>

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Introduction to the Project



Acronyms and Definitions

ACEF - ACEF de La Péninsule

AVEC - Adult Education and Vocational Centre

CAMI - Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders

CASA - Committee for Anglophone Social Action

CDA - Community Development Agent
(liaison between schools and community)

CHEP - Community Health Education Program

CJE - Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi

CLC - Community Learning Centre

Coasters - Coasters Association Inc.

EN - English

ESC - English-Speaking Community

ESSB - Eastern Shores School Board

Gaspésie Literacy Council - **GLC**

Healthy Early Years - **HEY**

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence - **HLSL**

Listuguj Mi'gmaq Development Centre - **LMDC**

Lower North Shore - **LNS**

Lower Saint Lawrence - **LSL**

North Shore Community Association - **NSCA**

Regional Individual Employment

Services and Support - **RIESS**

Services for Healthy Aging in the Right Place - **SHARP**

Service to Business, an ESSB initiative - **STB**

Vision Gaspé-Percé Now - **Vision**

Youth Employment Services - **YES**

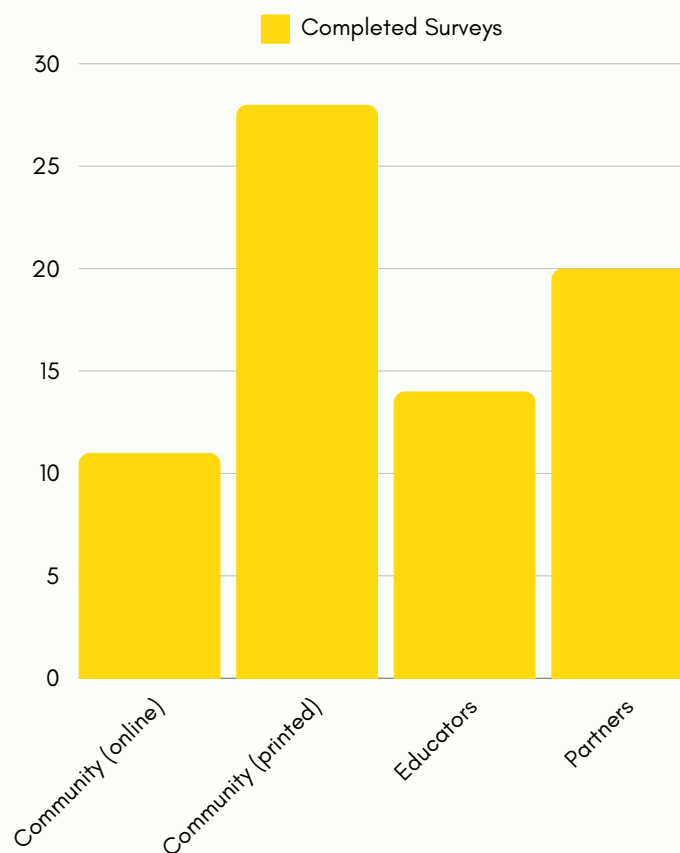
Types of Literacy:

- Traditional - Reading, writing, and basic math
- Digital literacy - using technology and being online
- Media literacy - understanding the messages in movies, tv, news, etc.
- Health literacy - understanding and navigating the health system
- Financial literacy - understanding and managing finances
- Cultural literacy - understanding your culture and how it may differ from others
- Physical literacy - being confident, able to move, and knowing why it's important
- Soft skills - time management, creativity, ingenuity, communication, teamwork, etc.



Data Collection

The following graph outlines the primary sources of raw data collected through this project, primarily through the interview process.

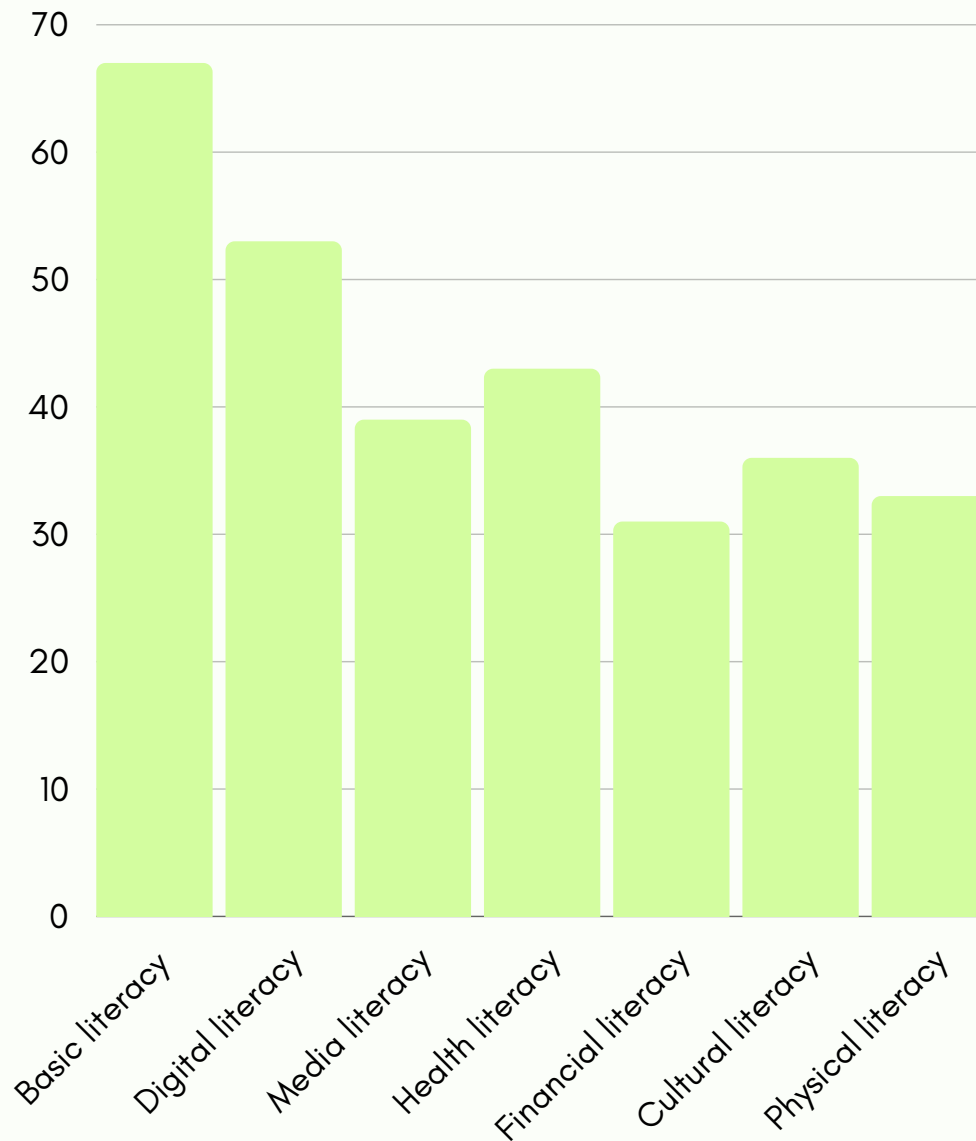


26 Interviews with **18** different organizations/institutions.
A total of **25** hours in interviews.

Research methods supplemented data collected from surveys and interviews, and provided statistical analyses.

Survey Results

What Does Literacy Mean?

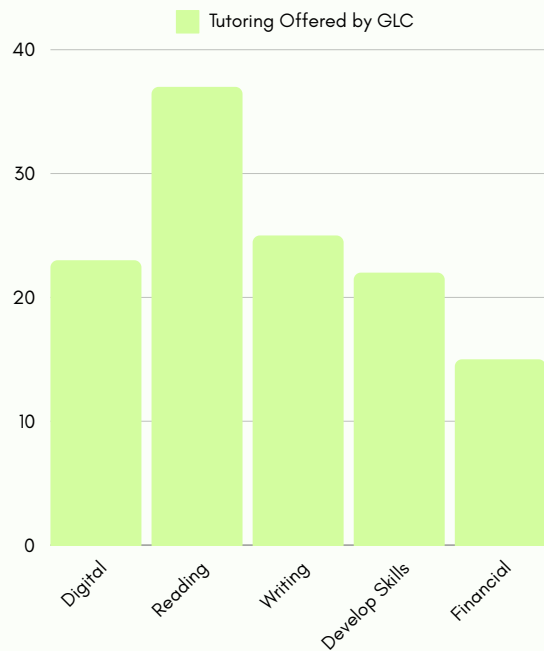
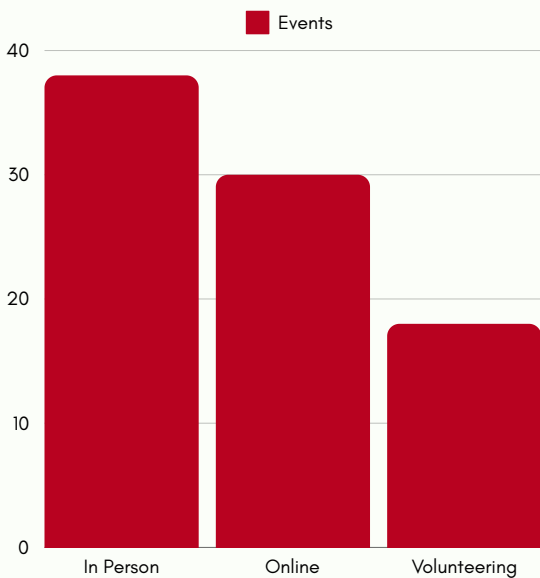
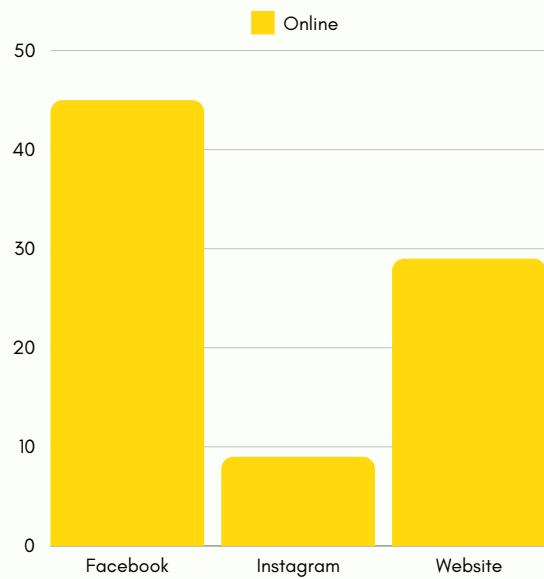
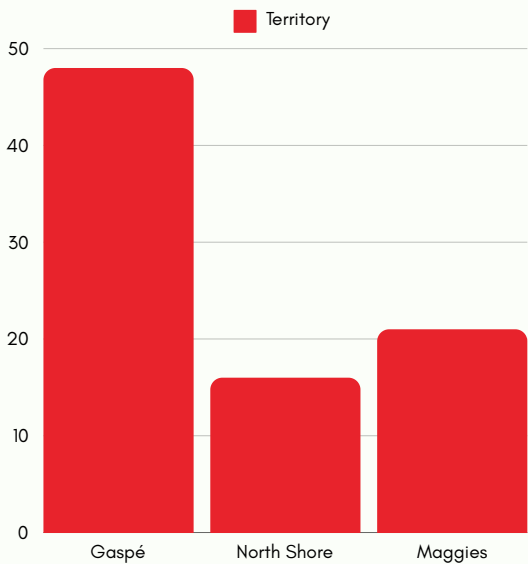


See Section 2 for Definitions

70 respondents in total for this question

Note: not **one** category achieved 100% results

Knowledge of the GLC



63 respondents in total for these questions

Survey Results



Analysis

The survey process was the most difficult portion of data collection, as we were unable to offer incentive prizes or to pay for advertising. As a result, the majority of responses have come from in-person events that were offered in Gaspé, such as GLC's AGM in 11-2023. Other survey contributions are almost entirely due to the collaboration and dedication of our partners, notably:

- NSCA
- Vision
- CASA
- CAMI
- Wakeham AVEC
- The Anchor

The location of survey respondents, from most to least, is as follows:

- Gaspé-Percé
- Baie des Chaleurs
- Magdalen Islands
- North Shore

Given the location of the GLC office, it's expected that more people are aware of the services we provide in Gaspé-Percé. Therefore, we can assume that the survey results describing knowledge of the GLC are not representative of our entire territory.

The GLC has work to do in terms of self-promotion and raising awareness of literacy.



The North Shore



Community

The English-speaking community is 23.6% of the total population in the MRC Caniapiscau, 3.3% in Sept-Rivières, and 1.1% in Manicouagan, with the largest communities (by number) in Sept-Îles and the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach.

There are 3 elementary (pre-K-Grade 6), 1 high school (Secondary 1-5), 1 combined school (pre-K-Secondary 5), the Northern Lights AVEC in Sept-Îles, and English programs at Cégep de Sept-Îles. In the Naskapi community of Kawawachikamach, there is 1 combined school (K-Secondary 5) and a learning centre for adults (see Section 11). Given the large ESC and three ESSB schools, Sept-Îles functions as a hub, with adults and families migrating to the area for employment and education opportunities. Businesses and schools also recruit from out-of-country and many newcomers are more comfortable in English when they arrive.

The elementary schools tend to have high percentages of students from French-speaking homes (approximately 75%) and bilingualism levels are high in the community. There is a tendency for students to migrate into the French school system after elementary school.

Many people come from outside of the city to attend Northern Lights, including nearby Indigenous communities. Migrants to Sept-Îles from outside the area represent the majority of unilingual Anglophone students in local elementary and high schools.

Needs

These are the reported needs of the community (see Section 12 for current programs)

Children and Youth

- Children are not school ready, particularly since Covid-19 pandemic restrictions
- Growing diagnoses of learning challenges
- Literacy levels are dropping
- These problems are not exclusive to the ESC
- Difficult to engage parents

Adults

- Soft skills are lacking (see Section 2)
- Late or suspected diagnoses of learning challenges is increasingly common
- Support for newcomers integrating into the region



Lower Saint Lawrence



Community

The English-speaking community is 0.8% of the total population in the MRC Rimouski-Neigette, 1% in La Mitis, and 0.6% in Rivière-du-Loup. The largest numbers of ESC members (by number) are in Rimouski. The LSL represents the smallest ESC in Quebec.

Many industries recruit heavily from abroad, contributing to a highly ethnically and culturally diverse ESC, and a high turnover rate. While the majority of the permanent ESC is bilingual, newcomers are typically more functional in English than in French.

In general, the ESC has higher levels of education and lower levels of income than their Francophone peers. In part, this is due to the recruitment of personnel from outside the province and country.

There is 1 combined school (pre-K-Secondary 5), located in Metis Beach, that serves 4 MRCs. 90% of students at Metis Beach School come from French-speaking homes; those from English-speaking homes tend to be the children of temporary migrant families. The percentage of students from the permanent ESC is very, very small.

Some children from the new/temporary ESC get lost in the French school system, either because Metis Beach School is too far, English curriculum in private schools is unaffordable, and/or students must attend school in French due to the status of their parents.

Relationships between the language communities are complicated, with language differences often intersecting with ethnic and cultural diversity.

Needs

These are the reported needs of the community (see Section 12 for current programs)

Children and Families

- No motivation to read, write, and speak English
- Multi-lingual families are concerned about language and speech delays
- Support for English-speaking students in French schools

Adults and seniors

- Financial literacy: from student loans to retirement packages, and for newcomers
- Awareness and understanding definitions of literacy
- Health literacy

Community

- Difficult to reach the ESC



Gaspé-Percé



Community

The English-speaking community is 9.8% of the total population in the MRC Côte-de-Gaspé, 0.5% in Haute-Gaspésie, and 7.6% in Rocher-Percé. The largest numbers of ESC members (by number) are in Gaspé.

There are 2 elementary (pre-K-Grade 6), 1 high school (Secondary 1-5), Wakeham AVEC, and English programs at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles.

The ESC does not experience much diversity, although this is changing with the recruitment of employees from abroad. Currently, the lack of variety is restrictive for graduates exploring post-secondary options and for children developing their creativity and ingenuity.

Families with lower education levels do not prioritize reading and homework, leading to cyclical low literacy levels. Parents struggle to advocate for their children in schools, particularly if they have had poor experiences as children/youth. Under-diagnoses of learning challenges in adults also contribute to struggles with the education system.

Those who slip through the cracks of the education system for various reasons tend to end up on social assistance.

Needs

These are the reported needs of the community (see Section 12 for current programs)

Children and Youth

- Lack of socialization, exacerbated but not caused by pandemic restrictions
- Children are not school ready and do not progress as expected
- Graduates are not prepared for CEGEP
- Development of critical thinking skills

Adults Students

- Lack confidence and autonomy
- Struggle with appropriate digital communication skills
- Struggle with reading comprehension and soft skills (see Section 2)
- Do not use the resources available to them to improve



Southern Gaspésie

Baie des Chaleurs (Bonaventure, Avignon) and Matapédia



Community

The English-speaking community in the MRC of Bonaventure is 14.8% of the total population and 9.5% in the MRC of Avignon. The largest numbers of ESC members (by number) are in New Carlisle and Gesgapegiag.

There are 2 elementary (pre-K-Grade 6), 2 high schools (Secondary 1-5), 2 combined schools (pre-K-Secondary 5), Listuguj AVEC, and The Anchor (AVEC) in New Carlisle.

In general, the ESC does not have very high levels of bilingualism, although there is a growing trend of putting Anglophone children in Francophone schools for this reason. The two language communities experience a greater divide here than elsewhere in GLC territory.

The ESC is spread out and consequently has difficulty attending community events. Project coordinators at CASA spend a lot of time in transit to maximize service delivery from Chandler to Matapédia.

In general, the region is low income, particularly for the ESC. This affects pursuit of post-secondary education, which can only be accessed by moving away. Access to books in English is also a problem, despite the work of several community organizations.

Needs

These are the reported needs of the community (see Section 12 for current programs)

Children and Youth

- Weak reading skills in the schools
- A lack of appropriate behaviour in older students
- Youth are not prepared for post-secondary education and their parents do not have the resources to support them

Adult Students

- Social anxiety when attending school in person (improving)
- Struggle with reading and writing, compounded by digital literacy needs

Adults

- Very low literacy levels exist within the population, but are largely invisible
- There is a need for awareness of literacy
- High levels of low income and social assistance leads to unhealthy coping mechanisms and substance abuse
- Undiagnosed learning disabilities and challenges in adults
- Lack of proper documentation, i.e., birth certificates, Medicare cards, SIN, etc. for some

The Magdalen Islands



Community

The English-speaking community in the Magdalen Islands is 5.3% of the total population. The largest numbers of ESC members (by number) are in Grosse-Île.

There is 1 combined school (pre-K to Secondary 5) and the Grosse-Île AVEC, which is under-used, with no enrollments in 2023-2024. In part, this is due to scheduling conflicts with the fishing season, the main industry for the ESC.

In Grosse-Île, the ESC is approximately 50 km away from most services in Cap-aux-Meules. While the Magdalen Islands has adequate support in education and medical care, these services are not easily accessible to the Anglophone community.

Driven by the fisheries, participation in the economy begins at a young age and negatively affects educational attainment, particularly for men. Boys drop out of school at 14-15 years old to start working. As a result, their literacy levels remain low and female family members compensate as needed.

A major concern is cultivating interest in post-secondary education and encouraging re-migration afterwards, particularly young women. There remains a need for personnel and housing in the community.

A significant portion of the ESC struggles in French, although women under 40 tend to be functional in both languages.

Needs

These are the reported needs of the community (see Section 12 for current programs)

Children and Youth

- Children are not school ready
- Youth are not media literate
- Need to develop and practice social skills
- Lack of interest in post-secondary education

Adults

- Very low literacy levels exist within the population
- Parents do not prioritize reading and homework at home
- Parents do not know how to support their children who pursue post-secondary education

Seniors

- Are difficult to engage
- Struggle with specialized language, particularly for health, legal, and financial literacy

Community

- There is a need for financial literacy training for people of all ages
- Difficult to finding employees
- Lack of housing



First Nations Communities

Educational and Literacy Support in each Community



The following only includes services in English.
Any and all information that can be used to revise and
expand on this section would be VERY welcome.
Please see Section 13 for contact information.

Gespeg

- Micmac Interpretation Site of Gespeg
- Events and activities in French and English
- Presentations to local businesses, organizations, and schools
- Gespeg members in Gaspé attend ESSB schools

Listuguj

- Alaqsite'w Gitpu School from Nursery to Grade 8 in Listuguj
- Listuguj Education, Training, and Employment
- First Nations Adult Education School Council
- Listuguj AVEC (ESSB)
 - Educational assessments for those that require support (with LMDC)
 - Individual student support and learning plans (with LMDC)
 - Tutoring support
- Listuguj Mi'gmaq Development Centre

Gesgapegiag

- Post-Secondary Student Support Program at Gesgapegiag
- Wejgwapniag School in Gesgapegiag
- Walgwan Education Program for at risk youth ages 12-17: a national rehabilitation center, open to all Nations
- First Nations Adult Education School Council

Kawawachikamach

- Jimmy Sandy Memorial School (K-Secondary 5)
- James Chescappio Memorial Learning Centre, adult education, vocational training, and post-secondary studies
- Academic counselor available
- Individualized education/career plans
- Community and informational events and activities



The Entire Territory



What is in Common?

- Digital literacy needs across the territory
 - Not just how-to, but community members need an opportunity to practice and troubleshoot
 - Seniors are the easiest group to reach and the most likely to ask for help
 - **BUT** they are not the only group in need of digital literacy training, especially outside of social media usage
 - Media literacy for all ages is needed in conjunction with digital literacy
 - One specific digital literacy need is: How to properly search for information online
- A lack of motivation or desire for self-improvement
 - Community members display apathy toward lifelong learning
 - Those who seek to improve themselves are faced with multiple barriers, including:
 - Distance, no methods of transportation, or limited financial resources for gas or other costs/fees
 - Familial responsibilities
 - *Most importantly* - a fear of being identified within a small community as someone who needs help. This is especially true for people who struggle with reading, writing, and basic math
 - Reaching men is a common struggle for this reason
 - However, they are an important segment of the population to reach particularly in places where they are more likely to have less education and higher income
- Access to books in English
 - Libraries and book lending programs have limited selection, school libraries are out-of-date or limited to the classroom
 - Book stores with English books are non-existent
 - Financial limitations
 - Most community organizations have book lending and distribution programs, yet identified this as a need nonetheless
- Understanding literacy
 - The term "literacy" is not well understood, and neither are any of the types that have become relevant in recent years, such as digital, health, and financial literacy

The Entire Territory



Provided Services for the ESC

Please note that some of these areas contain additional programming that was difficult to categorize and have therefore been omitted from this chart.

	Lower Saint Lawrence	Gaspé-Perce	North Shore	Southern Gaspésie	Maggies
Children					
Bright Beginnings	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
HEY	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Literacy Bags	HLSL		NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Parent-volet		CDA	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
School Readiness Prep		CDA	NSCA	CASA	ESSB
Other				Family Ties	
Seniors					
Wellness	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Digital Literacy		GLC	NSCA	The Anchor	
Outreach		Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Meals on Wheels/equivalent		Vision			CAMI
Youth					
Employability Services		CJE	NSCA	CJE/CASA	ESSB
Youth Hub/YMHI	HLSL	Vision	NSCA (YMHI)		CAMI
YES Programs		Vision	NSCA	RIESS	
Career Planning		ESSB	NSCA/ESSB	RIESS	ESSB
Financial Literacy	ACEF	ACEF/Partners	CDA	ACEF	ACEF
Education					
SHARP (CHEP)		Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Educaloi	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CASA	
CLC/equivalent		CDA	CDA	CDA	CAMI (temporary)
Students					
McGill Retention	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CASA	CAMI
Other					
Libraries	HLSL/Reseau Biblio	Reseau Biblio	NSCA/ESSB	Family Ties/CASA	CAMI
Naitre et Grandir in EN	HLSL	Libraries/CLSC			
Book Club		Library	NSCA		
Book Fairs/Scholastic		ESSB/CDA	CDA	Family Ties	ESSB
Bilingual Training	ESSB (STB)	Vision/ESSB (STB)	ESSB (STB)	ESSB (STB)	ESSB (STB)/CAMI
Cultural Promotion Projects	HLSL	Vision	NSCA		CAMI
Healthy Living Programs	HLSL	Vision	NSCA	CDA/CASA/Family Ties	ESSB/CAMI

Sources and Conditions



Research for the document was derived from the following online sources

- <https://coastersassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/LNS-Portrait-V.A-Digital.2.pdf>
- <http://lowernorthshore.ca/default.aspx>
- <https://coastersassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Final-Report-with-revisions-page.pdf>
- <https://coastersassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Social-Development-Framework-2.pdf>
- <https://coastersassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Youth-Engagement-Guide.pdf>
- <https://heritagelsl.ca/document-centre/>
- <https://quebecnorthshore.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/North-Shore-Profile-October-2023-Email-version.pdf>
- Stats Can – see bookmarks – used only FOLS
- <https://listuguj.ca/>
- <https://www.listugujhavenhouse.ca/>
- <https://www.lete.listuguj.ca/>
- <https://gesgapegiag.ca/>
- <https://www.walgwan.com/en/>
- <https://www.essb.qc.ca/>
- <https://naskapi-education.org/index.php/education-kawawachikamach/jimmy-sandy-memorial-school>

Conditions to the Needs Assessment Document

This is a living document and we are aware that information is missing. Please help us create the best possible document by filling in the blanks and sending any comments, suggestions, and corrections to Angelina Leggo:

angelina.leggo@gaspelit.ca

Any major updates to the information provided will be advertised online. Please note: it was not possible to share all information gathered within this document, but please reach out with your specific questions.



Next...



What Can the GLC Do?

- Raise awareness of what literacy is and all the ways it affects individual lives
- Raise awareness of the GLC and what we can offer and where
- Increase access to books in English across our territory
- Increase digital literacy training and resources
- Implement financial literacy programming across our territory
- Produce more educational resources to share within the community, especially for parents

The Literacy Summit will be held in the Fall of 2024. Using the information presented here, as well as the results of surveyed topics of interest, we will attempt to provide information to community members, partners, and other interested parties that will provide some tools for moving forward.

Literacy Summit information will be delivered in the following ways:

- Presentations by outside experts
- Presentations and workshops by GLC staff
- Presentations to community members (open to everyone), specific audiences (during already organized events), and to partner organizations
- Networking events
- Pamphlets, brochures, and postcards in print
- Digital ebooks, downloadable graphics, useful infographics
- Social media posts
- Website page dedicated to sharing these resources

Key topics to include:

- Family literacy
- Digital literacy
- Financial literacy
- Learning challenges and delays
- How to recognize low literacy in adults and what to do about it

Partners and Contributors



Club FADOQ York River Senior
Citizens de Wakeham
Gaspésie Îles-de-la-Madeleine



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
Eastern Shores
SCHOOL BOARD

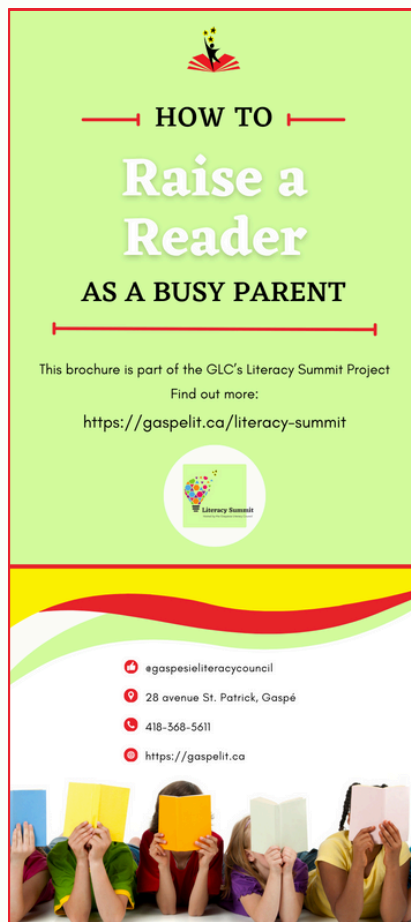


Sneak Peek

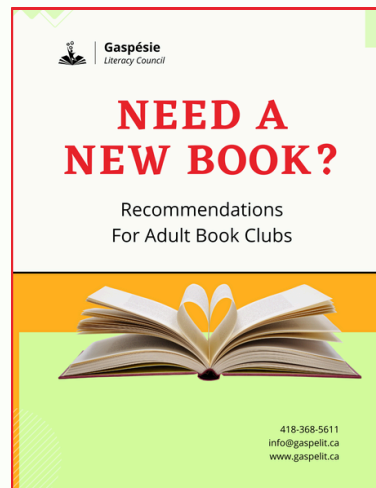
Here is a small taste of some resources that have already been developed for the project and are available digitally until Fall 2024, when they will be distributed as part of the Literacy Summit



Postcard Magnets



Rack Card



Ebook



Rack Card



Coming in Fall 2024

For more information:

<https://gaspelit.ca/literacy-summit/>
angelina.leggo@gaspelit.ca