



Cultural Policy

MRC OF BONAVENTURE 2021



Creating Bridges

My country

gives

easygoing

it smiles bearing its teeth

My country,

Is too big, shiny, smiling, large, easygoing; it takes, gives, barter, tinkers. With fists on its hips, it smiles bearing its teeth.

Françoise Bujold, *Lettres à toi qui n'es pas né au bord de l'eau*

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Cover pictures: Steeple of the Bonaventure Church. Credit: Gratien Bergeron / Painting by Sylvie Bujold / Patrick Dubois, storyteller.
Credit: Roger St-Laurent photographe, and Musée acadien du Québec

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A Word from the Prefect

I am very proud to witness the adoption of the MRC of Bonaventure's first Cultural Policy.

This is an opportunity for us elected officials to acknowledge how essential culture is to our community. This stands as proof of our commitment to make cultural development a priority.



Our territory and our history have a reputation of cultural diversity, and this diversity is also one of our greatest assets. It is the core and the foundation of the present policy, which makes a priority of preserving and enhancing our cultural heritage as well as bringing our cultural and linguistic communities closer together, whether they be First Nations, French-speaking, English-speaking, or other.

In that regard, the MRC of Bonaventure acknowledges the territory it stands on is the traditional territory of the Mi'gmaq nation which has been here for close to 10 000 years. The MRC acknowledges the inestimable worth of the Mi'gmaq culture and what it brings to the community, and wishes to renew its commitment to helping and supporting the enhancement and the vitality of the Mi'gmaq culture.

This first cultural policy is an opportunity to promote culture and diversity throughout our entire territory and to participate in sharing ideas, furthering reconciliation and creating a sense of belonging and pride for our whole community.

Éric Dubé

PREFECT, MRC OF BONAVENTURE

A Word from the Committee Chair

The strength of a region lies in its population! The wealth of a community is driven by its members! We have creative people, a great cultural diversity, a rich heritage... Culture is an integral part of our history and of our everyday lives. The process of developing a cultural policy has shown us how important culture is for our community.



Many of you took part in the discussions and reflected on how we could grow together even more. This collective work has allowed us to develop a cultural policy which will help create bridges between our communities, enhance the creativity of our artists and cultural workers, and preserve and foster our unique local heritage. That's what culture is all about!

We must be proud of the diversity of our roots, of who we are, and above all, we must express this pride. As a local representative and the committee chair, I've had the privilege to guide the work of the committee. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the committee members. Thank you for your time, your generosity, your creativity and your commitment. Your work will provide our municipalities and our artists with a vision of cultural development based on the local reality.

I also want to thank the mayors for trusting me to facilitate the development of this policy. It is now our shared responsibility to support its implementation and make it a reality.

Roch Audet
MAYOR OF BONAVENTURE





Introduction

Théâtre de la Petite marée. Credit: Roger St-Laurent Photographe

Culture builds¹ bridges, between past and future, generations, and language and cultural communities. It can bring people together, make communities more vibrant, inspire us, fill our souls, bring meaning or even add a festive spirit to our gatherings. It is the binding agent of our communities. It is thanks to culture that we know who we are and feel a sense of belonging; it is culture that makes us proud of ourselves, of our specificities, of what makes us be us. It is culture that makes it possible to communicate with each other and share this sense of pride; it is culture that makes our colours be part of the world's canvas.

Culture also plays a part in our health and well-being², in the quality of our life, and in social harmony³. Aside from that, it is a major characteristic of community attractiveness too. In the Gaspé region, culture is the fourth most important economic sector, and it creates jobs and wealth⁴; it is one of the main driving forces behind local and regional sustainable development.

The MRC of Bonaventure decided to adopt a cultural policy for all these reasons, and more. After realizing the necessity of investments in the cultural area, the MRC chose to develop a structural framework to support its future actions towards cultural development.

This policy is the end-product of a public consultation process which involved the local population, and local cultural, community, and business organisations as well as municipalities. This collaborative work serves as the foundation for the guidelines and intervention goals that were decided upon together in order to shape our cultural future.

Building bridges is also the purpose of the MRC. It works tirelessly to bring together different communities, environments and agents, to create networks, and to support collaboration and partnership for the enhancement of the vitality of its communities and the development of their full potential.

1. Following its most agreed upon international definition, culture stands for “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society. It covers art and literature, but also ways of life, human fundamental rights, systems of values, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies*, 1982).

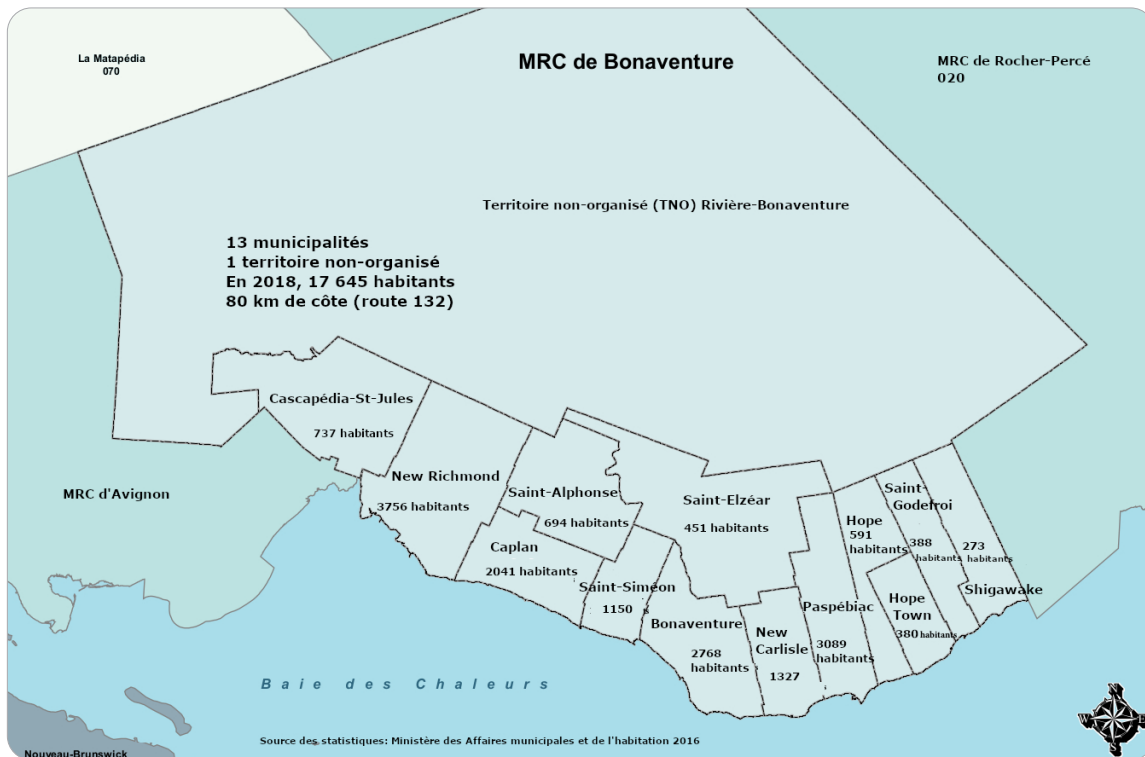
2. “Results from over 3000 studies identified a major role for the arts in the prevention of ill health, promotion of health, and management and treatment of illness across the lifespan.” Fancourt D., Finn S., *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*. Copenhagen, HEN 67, World Health Organisation, 2019, p.II.

3. *Agenda 21 de la culture du Québec*, p.6.

4. *Politique culturelle de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, 2013, p. 6.

Geographical and economic situation⁵

Photo: Gilles Robert, Fête de la peinture de Bonaventure



The Bonaventure MRC is located in the eastern part of the Baie-des-Chaleurs in the Gaspé Peninsula and is constituted of thirteen towns and municipalities with the addition of the non-organized territory of Rivière-Bonaventure.

5. The data used in this chapter stem from *Portrait socioéconomique de la MRC de Bonaventure*, March 2018 and *Schéma d'aménagement et de développement durable révisé*, January 2019. These two reports were edited by the MRC of Bonaventure.



The Gulf of Saint Lawrence forms its southern boundary. The MRC also has three main rivers on its territory: the Cascapedia, Petite-Cascapedia and Bonaventure rivers. These popular rivers are world-wide famous for the quality of their waters and the Atlantic salmon that inhabit them.

There were 17 645 inhabitants in the MRC in 2018. This population is mainly concentrated in the three main cities in the area (New Richmond, Bonaventure and Paspébiac) which host 53.5% of the MRC's inhabitants together. Only 6% of the territory is actually inhabited with most towns and communities bordering the coast. Demographic issues are pressing and have been made one of the MRC's top priorities; the ageing of the population is a major challenge here as in Gaspésie-Magdalen-Islands as a whole.

For a very long time, fishing was the primary source of income for most of the MRC's communities but this industry has slowly given place to the farming and forestry industries as primary economic sectors in the last decades.

Traditionally, the economy of the MRC relied primarily on resource industries; however, much like what happened in the rest of Quebec, the service industry has been booming in the region since the mid-1970s.

It must be noted that close to 15% of the MRC inhabitants speak English as their first language. Additionally, 4 of the 13 municipalities in the MRC are mostly English-speaking: Cascapedia-St-Jules, New Carlisle, Hope-Town and Shigawake.

Camp théâtre de l'Anse. Credit: Roger St-Laurent Photographe. / Cascapedia-Saint-Jules Fall Fest / Duthie's Point Heritage Site. Credit: Town of New Richmond

A woman in traditional Mi'gmaq dress is dancing at a fashion show. The background is a vibrant red with geometric patterns. The word 'frétt' is visible in the background. The title 'Cultural History⁶' is overlaid on the image.

Cultural History⁶

Frett Design fashion show. Credit: Fleurdelise Dumais

FIRST NATION

Archeological and linguistic studies show that the ancestors of the present-day Mi'gmaq were the first humans to inhabit the MRC's territory. These Paleo-Indian people arrived in Eastern Canada around 10 000 years ago. They were hunter-gatherers and they arrived in the area after following caribou herds and other species that moved to the east at the end of the last Ice Age . In other words, the Mi'gmaq have been living continuously in the Gaspé and the Bonaventure territory since time immemorial.

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS

European fishermen first reached the Gulf of Saint Lawrence by the end of the 15th century. The territory allegedly became French property with Jacques Cartier claiming possession in 1534. The subsequent arrival of French and European settlers brought a dramatic disturbance in the Mi'gmaq ways of life following, among other things the spread of new diseases, the introduction of European goods, industrial activity and the start of colonial wars.

ACADIANS, FRENCHMEN AND BASQUES

The true beginning of a permanent European settlement started with the War of Conquest. From 1755 on, Acadians were deported by the British. Some of them managed to escape the Deportation and flee from the area known today as Nova-Scotia, and they sought refuge at the mouth of the Bonaventure and Cascapedia rivers. A few French soldiers and fishermen (as well as Basque fishermen in Paspébiac) also settled in the area.

6. The first paragraph of this chapter was written by Pn'nal Jerome, Cultural Advisor at Gesgapegiag. Jeannot Bourdages, curator at Paspébiac's National Historic Site, wrote the others.

7. Gespe'gewa'gi Mawiomí Mi'gmawei, Nta'tugwaqanminen, *Our Story: Evolution of the Gespe'gewa'gi Mi'gmaq*, Fernwood Publishing, 2016.

BRITISH SOLDIERS AND SETTLERS AMERICAN LOYALISTS

The Treaty of Paris in 1763 acknowledged the British victory over the French. Some of the new colony's lands were then given to former Wolfe's soldiers, among which stood a few German mercenaries. This is how Hopetown was founded by Scottish soldiers.

Generally speaking, the Crown made the area available to settlers from the British Isles, particularly England, Scotland, Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey. Starting in 1833 for example, the Scottish merchant William Cuthbert started bringing many of his fellow countrymen to New Richmond.

THE IRISH IMMIGRATION

The largest immigration of the Irish to Canada occurred during the mid-19th century. The Great Irish Potato Famine of 1847 was the cause of death, mainly from the starvation of over a million Irish. It was also the motivation behind the mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Irish to North America.

During this time many of the Irish immigrants found the way to the shores of the Gaspé Coast and settled in small communities including Douglstown and Irishtown (Cascapedia St Jules). The Canadian government wanting to populate the Coast offered them provisions, tools and farmland.

THE JERSEYAN COMPANIES

In 1767, few if any would have guessed the foundation of a small Paspebiac fishing establishment by Charles Robin would soon be of far-reaching historical importance. Robin's small establishment rapidly became the biggest fishing company of its time in Eastern Canada. Many Jersey people settled in the area; most of them were craftsmen, sailors or bureaucrats.

The United States won the War of Independence against Great Britain in 1783. Among the American citizens wishing to remain loyal to the Crown, some decided to flee to Canada and a few ended up settling down in the area, mostly around New Richmond and New Carlisle. A few African American families also settled in the Fauvel sector.

QUEBECERS AND BELGIANS

The French-speaking population slowly naturally increased during the 19th century, along with the arrival of a few Québécois families. As a local peculiarity, the town of Saint-Alphonse was founded in 1891 by Belgian immigrants, under the leadership of the Catholic priest Henri-Joseph Mussely.

A SURPRISING DIVERSITY

The MRC's settler population was thus comprised of different European-born groups that brought a variety of sometimes very different cultures with them, which contributed to the creation of local identities later.

These settlements became larger during the 19th and 20th centuries, to the point of stretching along most of the coast. The Mi'gmaq communities were gradually pushed onto small tracts of land by the Canadian government. Today the names of a lot of local places remind us they have been here since time immemorial, like "Paspebiac", "Shigawake" or "Cascapedia".

State of local culture in 2021



Pierre-André Bujold. Credit: Roger St-Laurent Photographe, Musée acadien du Québec

The MRC of Bonaventure faces a number of challenges: remoteness from urban centers, low demographic density, ageing population, low levels of economic vitality and education, short tourist seasons... All these well-known structural challenges are common to most remote regions in the province, but they also affect local cultural life. Yet, these challenges also come with some assets: being a remote region can be attractive, and it contributes to the distinctive character and value of our unique heritage.

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Our cultural history makes our region one of the most culturally diverse places in Quebec. This patchwork of identity is one of our many strengths. Yet, there is still a lot to do to bring our communities together and to foster better relations between them in order for our great cultural diversity to become a source of pride and wealth.

Today, the Mi'gmaq represent only a small part of the MRC's population because they were forced to settle in Gesgapegiag, located West of the Bonaventure MRC. Thus, the Mi'gmaq culture is part of our history, as it is also part of our contemporary reality. Much effort has

been made by our country's institutions to make Indigenous cultures disappear and these efforts represent a dark chapter we can never erase from our local and national history⁸. The MRC acknowledges the sad reality of this senseless violence, the importance of working towards reconciliation between Settler and Indigenous people, and the inestimable worth of the Mi'gmaq nation's contribution to culture. Finally, the MRC wants to contribute to the growing vitality and reputation of this culture, as well as the others that flourish in our communities.

English-speakers (Settlers and Indigenous) represent about 15% of the local population⁹. Our shared history and language barriers make it difficult to have fruitful meetings and exchanges between English-speaking and French-speaking people. We need to work actively on building bridges between the two communities. In the same spirit, we need to work harder to support the cultural diversity resulting from current international immigration¹⁰.

Many cultural initiatives have been implemented recently in our communities, which is a step in the right direction towards reconciliation, coming and sharing together. We must keep up the good work and persevere in that direction.

HERITAGE

The MRC of Bonaventure benefits from a rich heritage which testifies to our complex cultural history. Our territory is full of vernacular architecture which enhances its landscapes' unique beauty and character. A range of conservation and enhancement initiatives for our architectural heritage have been implemented over the years (sites, museums, municipal policies). We need to keep up our efforts to protect and showcase even more of these local treasures.

Our local communities also benefit from three renowned museums (of which two have a cultural purpose), as well as other less known institutions, and they all contribute to the preservation and transmission of our local cultural heritage. In other words, the MRC is very well served in terms of museums.

Regarding the cultural heritage landscape however, the Gaspé Landscape Charter (Charte des paysages de la Gaspésie) currently lacks a regional sponsor. Even so, it is absolutely essential that this capital aspect of our heritage be supported and integrated into local decision-making processes. In this regard, the present cultural policy represents an attempt at linking together the management of buildings, landscapes, sites, intangible heritage and cultural assets under a common vision of local cultural development.

8. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p.1.

9. *Portrait socioéconomique de la MRC de Bonaventure*, March 2018, p.11.

10. According to the 2019, *Présence et portraits régionaux des personnes immigrantes admises au Québec de 2008 à 2017* report from the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, only 331 immigrants (out of 375 518 for the whole province) chose to settle down in Gaspé-Magdalen-Islands between 2008 and 2017. In this regard, our region is ranked second to last in the province (the only region with less immigrants being the Nord-du-Québec, with 219 immigrants).



PROFESSIONAL ART COMMUNITY IN BONAVENTURE

The main infrastructures of the local professional art community are the following:

- two professional venues;
- one cultural center;
- three official broadcasting organisations;
- one professional creative organisation specialized in youth theatre;
- various festivals and events showcasing professional shows;
- one Book Fest (not affiliated to the AQSL);
- a few artisan and creation studios/ boutiques;

It should be noted there are currently no actual exhibition centers for visual arts in the MRC of Bonaventure. Additionally, various regional initiatives also contribute to the

vitality of the local cultural environment. Finally, cultural artists and workers benefit from the support of the local regional cultural council Culture Gaspésie.

Local artists and cultural workers face many challenges; that is why it is crucial to acknowledge and support the quality of their contribution by any means necessary and to raise public awareness of their needs and the harsh realities they may experience. Our communities would greatly benefit from fostering a sense of pride in our local creators and to call upon them more often to give meaning to our collective realities, to enhance the beauty and vibrancy of our local gatherings, our institutions, schools, etc.

11. Association québécoise des salons du livre.

12. Les Rencontres internationales de la photographie en Gaspésie et le Circuit des arts de la Gaspésie (circuit touristique régional des artistes, artisans, boutiques et galeries). Notons que Vaste et vague est un centre d'artistes situé dans Avignon, la MRC voisine, dont la mission est régionale, mais qui généralement n'a pas d'activités dans Bonaventure. Peut-être y aurait-il là une opportunité de développement pour notre scène artistique locale.

13. Ce sont essentiellement les défis propres aux régions éloignées, soit : l'éloignement par rapport aux grands centres; la faible densité démographique; le vieillissement de la population, la faiblesse des indices de vitalité économique et des taux de diplomation; la courte durée de la saison touristique; le manque de lieux de diffusion et d'événements reconnus ouverts aux artistes locaux.

Mural by the Fée Couleur, le Bois-Vivant school, New Richmond. Credit: Town of New Richmond / La maison du capitaine Félix Arsenault, illustration by Bruno Mainville.



DIALOGUE, CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Generally speaking there is a need for more dialogue and collaboration between the different agents in the cultural sector; such dialogue and collaboration would help greatly enhance the drive and vibrancy of the local scene. This type of dialogue and collaboration should also be fostered between the cultural sector and other sectors of activity (business, community, health, education, etc.). Such partnerships would help support cultural initiatives in playing their role of binding and driving agents for our communities. The MRC could play a role of leadership in that regard.

DIGITAL ACCESS

In 2018, 91% of households in Gaspésie-Magdalen-Islands had high speed internet access which – when compared to provincial levels (93%) – shows our region managed to close the gap it previously experienced compared to other areas in the province¹⁴. However, other digital development indexes also show Gaspésie-Magdalen-Islands is ranking among the least advanced regions in the province¹⁵. The same observation can be made regarding the cultural sector. The MRC will incite the cultural sector to get more involved in this particular field, for instance by promoting

local cultural services and products online or by integrating digital technologies in the local cultural production.

SCHOOLING

The local school environment already has access to culture in a variety of ways¹⁶. Elaborating local learning materials would also contribute to fostering a greater sense of local belonging in our youth and would help them develop their curiosity regarding local history and current art practices. It would also be helpful to make children and teenagers more familiar with the local cultural events and initiatives.

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RECREATION

Regarding education and cultural recreation, the MRC has a lot to offer in terms of schools, clubs and various groups (dance, theatre or choir groups, cercles des fermières, etc.); several municipalities offer cultural leisure activities as part of their local programs; additionally the Regional Unit for Sports and Recreation (URLS GÎM) has been mandated to work on local cultural leisure development in 2019. Finally, Culture Gaspésie offers professional education programs for artists and cultural workers every year.

14. *Stratégie numérique de la Gaspésie*, Final Report, 2020, p.10.

15. *Stratégie numérique de la Gaspésie*, Summary Report, p.2, 2020. The poor Gaspésie ranking is apparently due to the local ageing population.

16. In particular through art and music classes, cultural visits and touring of artists' workshops as part of the *La culture à l'école* program (MCC and Ministère de l'Éducation). It is also worth mentioning Paspebiac's secondary school offers a program in art study and theater.



LIBRARIES

Local libraries often lack the human resources they need to function properly and thus rely extensively on volunteer work; their infrastructures and collections are often insufficient (particularly those in English); they also generally suffer from a lack of activities, events and digital technology equipment. The eastern English-speaking communities are the worst served in that regard.

The region's low level of education and literacy rates have been identified as one of the major challenges the regional cultural policy must cope with. We need to better fund our libraries and to turn them into vibrant cultural places, where community members can meet and access educational resources easily.

Recent investments have done a great job in upgrading some libraries, and a new English-speaking project is currently in development; our communities also benefit from the Biblio GÎM network, a regional lending and support organisation for libraries. We need to continue in that direction if we want to offer quality services to our communities.

CULTURAL ACCESS FOR ALL

Inequalities also exist in how different people can access culture. For instance, some communities are under-served compared to others, particularly in the eastern areas of the MRC. Poverty, mental and physical disabilities, poor health, old age and other elements can limit people's ability to participate in their communities' cultural life. More efforts are needed to make culture more easily accessible to all, in collaboration with different partners.

Fête de la peinture de Bonaventure. Credit: Gilles Robert / Cirque Nova Circus, circus day camp, Paspébiac Cultural Center.
 Credit: ici saskatchewan / Salon du livre de Bonaventure. Credit: Town of Bonaventure

THE LEADING ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN THE MRC

Due to the absence of a large urban center or of a notable regional cultural authority in the area, local municipalities play a leading role in the local cultural development. They have the ability to invest in cultural services and infrastructures such as libraries, venues, cultural centers and cultural leisure programs, and they support the creation of cultural events which enhance the vitality of our communities.

Municipalities can make a real difference by adopting cultural policies¹⁷, by hiring staff dedicated to the promotion of culture and recreation, by adopting housing policies to preserve our architectural heritage, by naming heritage buildings, by becoming members of the Biblio Network GÎM or by signing agreements with each other to better serve their citizens. By adopting the present cultural policy, the MRC will contribute to similar collective endeavors and will bring support to collaborative municipal projects.

CULTURE AND ECONOMY

As mentioned in the Gaspésie-Magdalen-Islands regional cultural policy, “thanks to more than 300 organisations, arts and culture [...] represent the fourth most important job sector [in the region]”¹⁸. This is one of the reasons why culture is vital to the development of the regional economy, population growth and attracting tourists.

Culture is also an asset to the tourism industry: according to the Regional Gaspé Tourist Association, nowadays visitors are as interested by the region’s cultural attractions as they are by its natural charm and environment¹⁹.

The enhancement of our communities’ unique cultural aspects will benefit the local initiatives in tourism development. There is room for better networks bringing together cultural and tourism initiatives. For instance, our local gastronomy is an integral part of a full cultural experience; access to it in connection with our cultural identity must be further developed. As with every other field of activity, the cultural sector needs substantial financial investments for its development.

17. Three local municipalities in the MRC have adopted cultural policies (New Richmond, Bonaventure and Paspébiac) as of 2020.

18. *Politique culturelle de la région Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, 2013, p.6.

19. *Plan stratégique de développement 2016-2020*, Association touristique régionale de la Gaspésie, 2016, p. 22..



Values and commitments

Duthie's Point Heritage Site. Credit: Town of New Richmond

VALUES

ACCESSIBILITY

Access to culture is a basic need, and it is also a right. The MRC wants to make culture more easily accessible to all.

DEMOCRACY

Culture does not belong to any particular group or elite. We must strive for more citizen participation, dialogue and inclusion in decision-making processes regarding cultural issues.

DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION

The MRC wishes to work more collaboratively with its partners in the fields of culture, education, health, business, as well as with artists, municipalities and community organisations.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Cultural and linguistic diversity are valuable assets that need to be protected and celebrated. Our differences must be a source of pride, and all people must feel they are an integral part of our great local collective patchwork.

INNOVATION

Audacity, creativity, innovation are essential ingredients for a vibrant and healthy culture.

PRIDE

Our culture, our history, our creators, our landscapes, our heritage are all expressions of who and what we are and they must be celebrated and promoted. We must nurture our collective pride!

COMMITMENTS

- To support our culturally healthy and vibrant communities
- To work towards reconciliation between the Mi'gmaq nation and Settler communities, and to support the promotion of Mi'gmaq culture
- To work towards bringing English-speaking, French-speaking and immigrant communities closer together through culture



Orientations and areas of intervention

Salon du livre de Bonaventure. Credit: Geneviève Smith

1

CONTRIBUTING TO INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING

The MRC pledges:

- To contribute to individual and collective well-being through culture by making it more accessible and by promoting active participation in the local cultural life;
- To use culture as a way of promoting social connection and encounters between generations, cultural and linguistic communities, social classes, etc.

1.1. Building bridges between cultural and linguistic communities

- Promote opportunities to meet and collaborate between French-speaking, English-speaking, Mi'gmaq and newly arrived cultural communities;
- To promote and support initiatives that enhance and celebrate local cultural diversity.

1.2. Making culture more accessible

- To work in collaboration with community organisations, municipalities, schools and health organisations to promote equal access to culture for marginalized or vulnerable individuals.

1.3. Promoting active participation of as many people as possible in cultural life

- To promote and support local cultural mediation²⁰ and recreation initiatives which foster the active participation of local people in cultural life.

20. The word “cultural mediation” has been used in Quebec since the early 2000s and stands for “[...] cultural action strategies focused on bringing together local people and the cultural and artistic community. It involves elaborating guidance, creative and intervention initiatives for local populations and artistic and cultural audiences; it also focuses on the promotion of diverse forms of cultural expression and participation to public life”; <http://montreal.mediationculturelle.org/quest-ce-que-la-mediation-culturelle/> (our translation).

Orientations and areas of intervention

2

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED AND VIBRANT CULTURAL COMMUNITY

The MRC pledges:

- To bring together its various communities and actors;
- To develop networks, dialogue and partnerships which will contribute to more vibrant communities, in particular by creating a local cultural roundtable.
- To support the cultural community as well as the municipalities' cultural initiatives.
- To raise awareness regarding the region's cultural value and potential.

2.1. Developing common and collaborative visions and actions for the whole MRC

- To work collaboratively with different partners and the cultural community to better assess and promote existing assets and initiatives.
- To create networks between the cultural and social development communities (particularly community organisations), as well as actors in the tourism, business, health and education sectors.
- To collaboratively create a common vision of our cultural identity.

2.2. Supporting cultural initiatives in the area

- To support cultural initiatives stemming from the cultural community and local municipalities, either by providing funding, coordination services, or by disseminating cultural information in the area.
- To contribute to the promotion of culture throughout the MRC's territory and beyond.

2.3. Supporting the development of digital culture

- To work collaboratively with other actors to support the cultural community's efforts towards updating its digital infrastructures, particularly the digital promotion of local cultural products and services.

Orientations and areas of intervention

3

REVITALIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND TERRITORY

The MRC pledges to:

- Promote cultural outreach in all of its territory
- Support initiatives celebrating local culture and cultural diversity which promote the development of a local cultural identity. Additionally, this orientation aims at protecting and promoting local heritage as well as integrating cultural issues into territorial management processes.

3.1. Protecting and enhancing local heritage

- To document, protect and enhance local cultural heritage in its diversity (heritage sites and landscapes, buildings, goods, objects and artifacts, as well as intangible heritage) for instance through the creation of a supervising committee for heritage preservation.

3.2. Promoting local culture

- To elaborate strategies to promote the knowledge and use of local culture.
- To better promote available local resources, artists, services and products.

3.3. Encouraging cultural outreach throughout the entire area of the MRC

- To work in partnership with local municipalities, organisations and cultural communities to encourage cultural outreach in all its forms throughout the entire territory of the MRC.



Conclusion

Paspébiac National Historic Site. Credit: Kevin Vandooren

Culture is an essential asset for social and economic development and plays an important part in collective and individual health and well-being. It is a staple of life and it must be made accessible to all for it to reach the far corners of our society.

Culture is worth investing in; it is worth the time, the energy, the creativity and the money we put into it. It deserves being better known, shared and transmitted. This is why local authorities and leaders should promote it and see it as the incredible tool it can be.

Let us build bridges through culture! Let us create connections between individuals, ethnic and linguistic communities, between generations and social classes, between past and future, between our territories and others.

Appendix 1 - Links and references

New Richmond's Cultural Policy:

villenewrichmond.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/POLITIQUE-DE-LA-CULTURE.pdf

Municipality of Bonaventure's Cultural Policy:

villebonaventure.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/pol-cult-pdf-off.pdf

Paspebiac's Cultural Policy:

villepaspebiac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Politique-culturelle-de-Pasp%C3%A9biac.pdf

Socio-economic Profile, MRC of Bonaventure:

mrcbonaventure.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Portrait-socio-%C3%A9conomique-2018-MRC-de-Bonaventure.pdf

Site of the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi:

migmawei.ca

About the Wabanaki people and the Mi'gmaqs:

www.wabanakicollection.com/welcome

Appendix 2 — Cultural Census

For an assessment of the state of local heritage in Gaspésie-Magdalen-Islands, please consult: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *État des lieux du patrimoine, des institutions muséales et des archives*, Cahier 5, Territoires, 2010. statistique.quebec.ca/fr/fichier/cahier-5-territoires.pdf

The following list represents the current (2020) state of knowledge on cultural matters. It relies on data and findings from Culture Gaspésie, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, municipalities, as well as research undertaken by the Development Committee for the present policy. We decided not to create a comprehensive list of all cultural recreation initiatives considering it would be nearly impossible not to omit some due to the vast number of them and how fast data change. However, we would like to point out the great value of these initiatives for the creativity and vitality they bring to the cultural community and local social life.

BROADCASTERS AND RECOGNIZED VENUES

Name	Types of activities	Municipality
Les Moussaillons Cultural Committee	Official broadcaster, Performing arts	Paspebiac
Desjardins Regional Performance Hall of New-Richmond	Official broadcaster and venue	New-Richmond
Paspebiac's Cultural Center	Official broadcaster and venue	Paspebiac

STUDIOS, SHOPS AND GALLERIES

- Topsy Canoe Designs, Cascapedia-St-Jules
- Liber Bookshop, New Richmond
- La ruelle Fourrure Studio/Boutique, St-Simeon
- Jako Boulanger Studio, St-Simeon
- Verre et Bulles Studio/Boutique, Bonaventure
- Frett Design Fashion Studio/Boutique, Caplan
- Z'unik Shop, Bonaventure
- l'Omirlou Studio, Bonaventure
- Cercle des fermières Shop, Acadian Museum, Bonaventure
- Gospel Chapel Gallery and Store, Acadian Museum, Bonaventure
- Gabriel's Gallery, Bonaventure
- La Girafe bleue, Fashion Store, Bonaventure
- Paspebiac's Banc-de-pêche Historic Site Shop (arts and crafts, visual arts), Paspebiac
- Café culture (arts and crafts, visual arts), Paspebiac
- Cascapedia River Museum's Shop

MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE SITES

- Cascapedia River Museum
- Acadian Museum of Québec
- Paspébiac National Historic Site
- Kempffer Cultural Interpretation Center
- Espace René-Lévesque
- Gaspesian British Heritage Village
- Bioparc Wildlife Park
- Bay Chaleur Military Museum

FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

- Paspébiac Trac Festival. Theatre
- New-Richmond Agricultural Fair
- Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Fest. Agricultural heritage and music show
- Cascapedia Fall Festival (music, flea market)
- New-Richmond Bluegrass Festival. Music
- Rencontres internationales de la photographie en Gaspésie. Photography, installations, exhibitions and conferences
- Paspébiac Crab Fest
- Bonaventure Book Fair
- Saint-Alphonse Wood Fest
- Bonaventure Acadian Festival

RECOGNIZED PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS BASED OR HOLDING EVENTS IN THE MRC

- Petite Marée Theater (Professional organisation specialized in youth theater creation)
- Camp-Théâtre de l'Anse (Professional organisation holding events in Bonaventure)

THEMATIC TOURS

- Gaspe Craft and Visual Arts Tour
- 5M, The 5 Musées Gaspésiens

LOCAL MEDIA (RADIO, COMMUNITY TV-CHANNELS, NEWSPAPERS, DIGITAL MEDIA...)

- Written media: Graffici, The Gaspe Spec, Chaleurs Nouvelles
- TV: Télévag
- Radios: CHNC, Cieu FM

NATIONAL MEDIA WITH REGIONAL OFFICES IN GASPE

- Télé-Québec and CBC-Radio-Canada

Appendix 3 — Partnerships²¹

GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ)
- Centre de conservation du Québec (CCQ)
- Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec (CALQ)
- Canada Council for the Arts (CCA)
- Canada Economic Development (CED)
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC)
- Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'habitation (MAMH)
- Ministère du Tourisme (MTO)
- Canadian Heritage (CH)
- Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC)

LOCAL AND SUPRA-LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- School boards
- Municipalities
- Cultural organisations (see Appendix 2)

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Culture Gaspésie
- 5M Association, The 5 Musées Gaspésiens
- Unité régionale loisirs et sports Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine
- Tourisme Gaspésie
- CASA, Committee for Anglophone Social Action
- Biblio GÎM Network
- Technocentre TIC
- Reception Committee for New Arrivals - SANA
- Gaspésie Gourmande

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture (CQRHC)
- Culture pour tous
- Regroupement des organisateurs de spectacles de l'Est-du-Québec (ROSEQ)
- Société des musées québécois (SMQ)
- Association québécoise des salons du livre (AQSL)

21. This section is primarily based on *Politique culturelle de la région Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, 2013, p. 23-28, which presents each organisation in more details.

Appendix 4 — First Nations

Archeological and linguistic studies show the first human inhabitants of the MRC of Bonaventure's territory were today's Mi'gmaq ancestors. These Paleo-Indian people arrived in Eastern Canada around 10 000 years ago and were soon followed by the Proto-Algonquian people who arrived in Eastern Quebec 7 000 years ago, with whom they eventually intermingled. These two peoples lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, following caribou herds and other animals which gradually moved to the east at the end of the last Ice Age²².

The presence of more than 800 Mi'gmaq toponyms all across the Gaspé Peninsula shows evidence of Mi'gmaq occupation since time immemorial, far before the first Europeans set foot in the area in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Proto-Algonquian people used to name rivers they found on their path towards the east. Gaspé linguist Danielle Cyr showed this phenomenon can be observed throughout most of the continent, from the Prairies to the East Coast. Our MRC is a good example of this with the Cascapedia and Petite-Cascapedia rivers. As another example, the word "bogan", which is used to describe salmon pools and places where water flows slowly, can only be found on the southern shores of the peninsula and in Northern New-Brunswick, which makes this particular word specific to the area²³.

The Mi'gmaq interpretation of culture is quite large. Under their perspective, it is impossible to separate culture from ways of life, the ways resources are used, spiritual beliefs, or stories and legends people tell about themselves. Additionally, the Mi'gmaq believe we are all connected, and that what we share is much greater than what divides us. Likewise, sharing is at the core of Mi'gmaq culture; the friendly way in which the Mi'gmaq nation welcomed European people with whom they shared their knowledge of the territory is a testimony of this collaborative spirit, which greatly benefitted the first Europeans who settled along the peninsula's shores.

Nowadays, the Mi'gmaq nation is still a prosperous Gaspé community and its culture is one of the many branches on the living tree of the MRC's cultural expression. The Mi'gmaq regularly host musical, dance, movie, art, craft and spiritual activities to which all are welcomed. Sharing these rich traditions, which is what the Mi'gmaq have always done, will help further a mutual and reciprocal understanding between communities, and will support future collaborative endeavors.

22. Gespe'gewa'gi Mawiomi Mi'gmawei, *Nta'tugwaqanminen, Our Story: Evolution of the Gespe'gewa'gi Mi'gmaq*, Fernwood Publishing, 2016 p. 11.

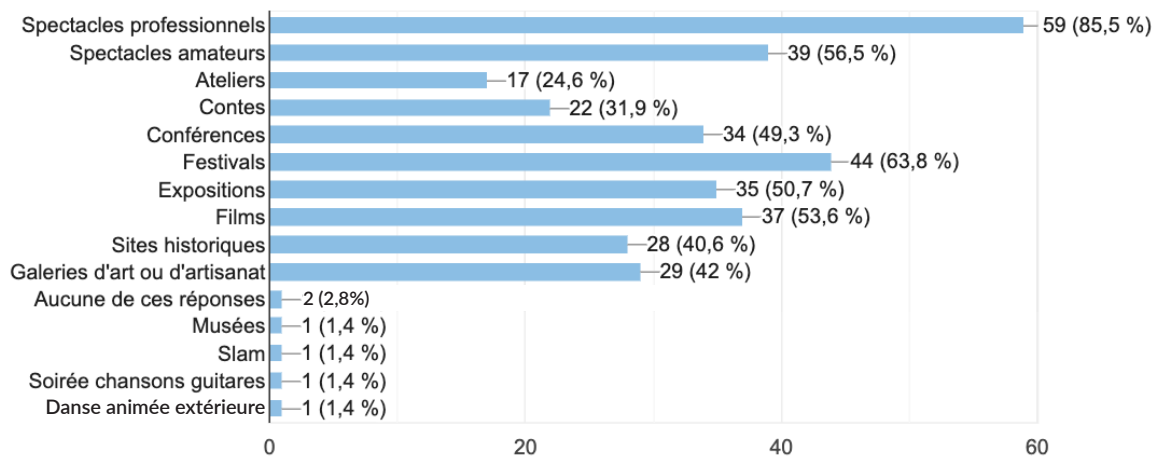
23. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Appendix 5 — Public Survey on Cultural Needs and Habits

This online survey was conducted in 2020 by the MRC as part of the development of this cultural policy.

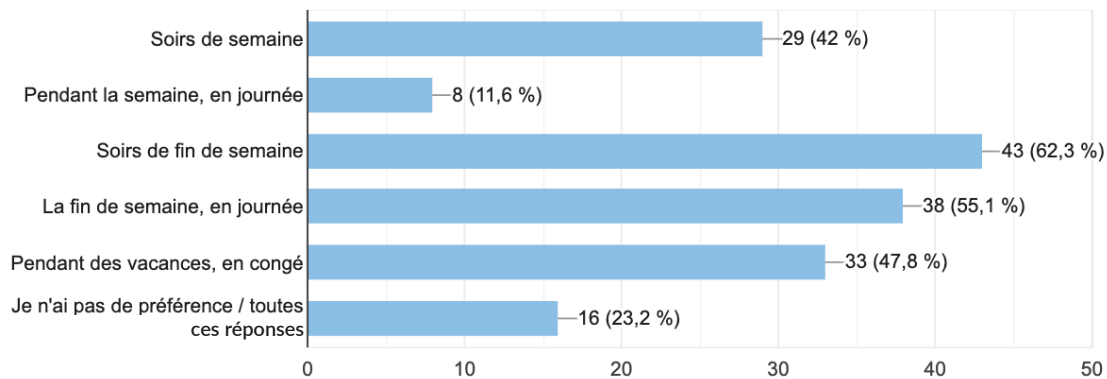
Quelles sorties culturelles avez-vous faites au cours de la dernière année? Cochez toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

69 réponses



Quel est pour vous le meilleur moment pour faire des activités culturelles? Cochez toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

69 réponses



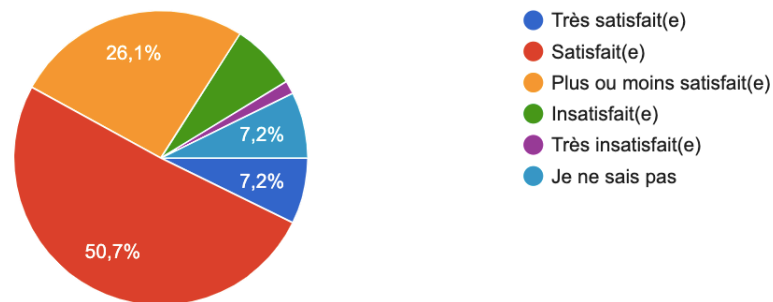
Dans quel type d'endroit ont lieu la majorité de vos activités culturelles?

69 réponses



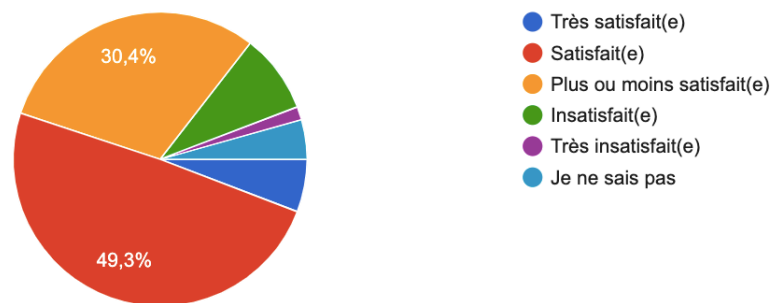
Quel est votre niveau de satisfaction quant à la quantité d'offres culturelles dans la MRC de Bonaventure?

69 réponses



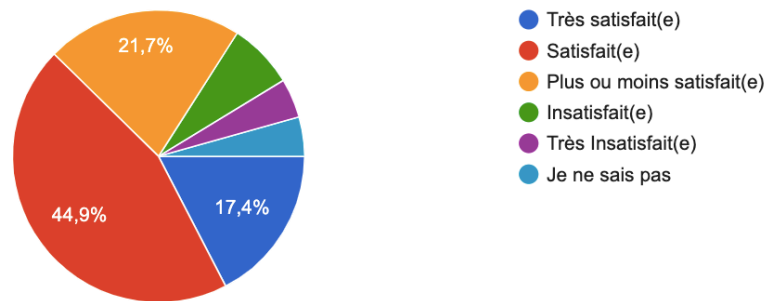
Êtes-vous satisfait(e) de la diversité de l'offre culturelle sur le territoire de la MRC de Bonaventure?

69 réponses



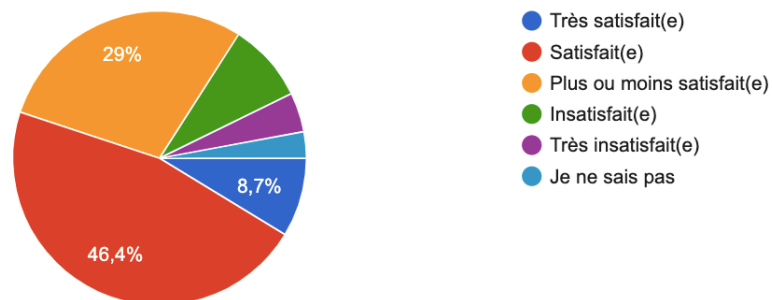
Êtes-vous satisfait(e) de la qualité des infrastructures intérieures dans la MRC de Bonaventure (ex.: bibliothèques, salles de spectacle, musées, salles d'exposition...)?

69 réponses



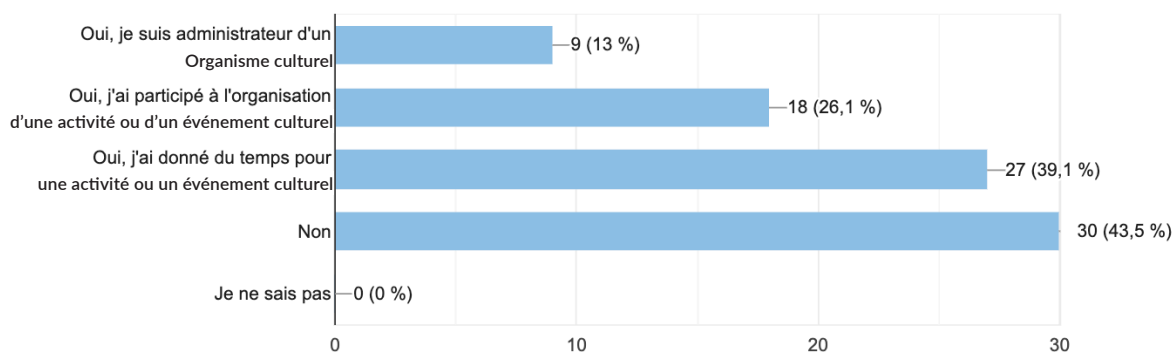
Êtes-vous satisfait(e) de la qualité des infrastructures culturelles extérieures dans la MRC de Bonaventure (ex.: sites historiques, places publiques, scènes extérieures, etc.)?

69 réponses



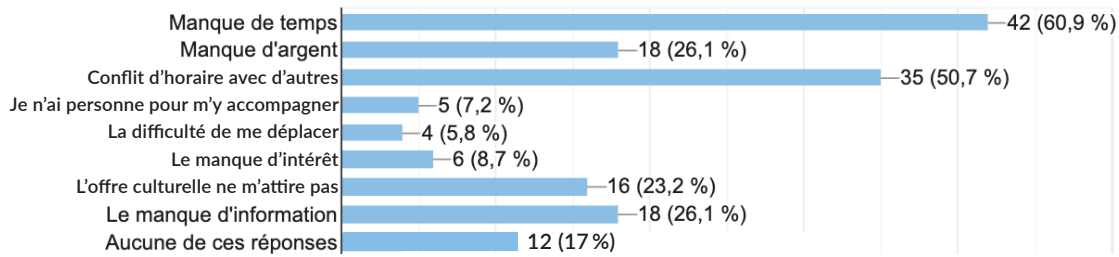
Au cours de la dernière année, avez-vous fait du bénévolat pour une activité, un événement ou un organisme culturels? Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

69 réponses



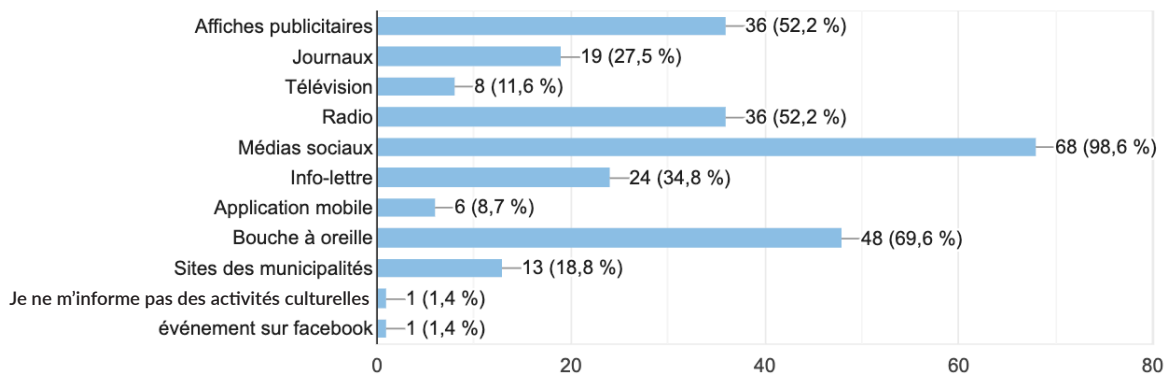
Qu'est-ce qui limite votre participation à des activités culturelles ? Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

69 réponses



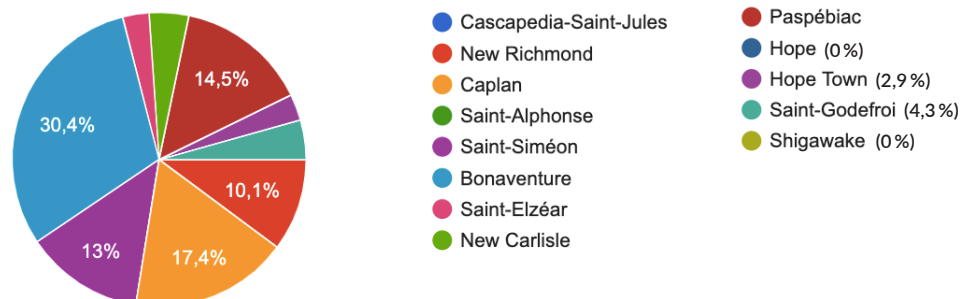
Comment vous informez-vous des activités et événements culturels? Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

69 réponses



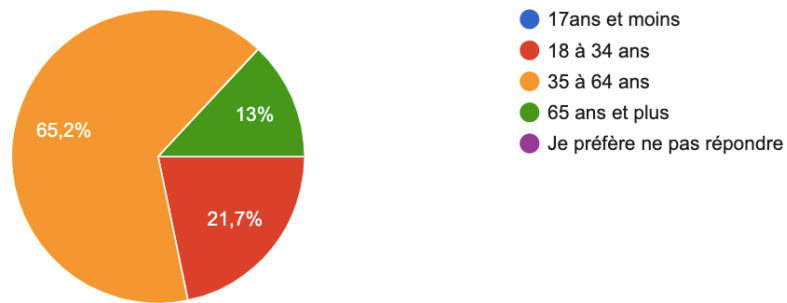
Dans quelle municipalité habitez-vous?

69 réponses



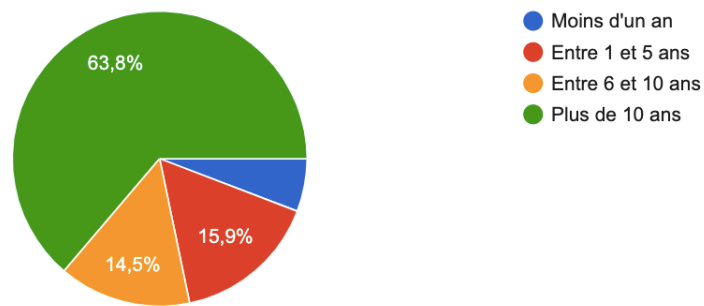
À quel groupe d'âge appartenez-vous?

69 réponses



Depuis combien d'années habitez-vous dans la MRC de Bonaventure?

69 réponses



Afin de bonifier l'offre culturelle, quel type d'activité aimeriez-vous retrouver davantage sur le territoire de la MRC de Bonaventure ?

69 réponses

