

Midterm Evaluation Report
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES
An English Minority-Language Initiative



Presented to:

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Graphics and electronic publishing

Deschamps design

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Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2009-09-00021

ISBN 978-2-550-55766-1 (Print Version)

ISBN 978-2-550-55767-8 (PDF)

Legal Deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2009

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to acknowledge all project participants, including the staff of the Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone (SSCA) (the Sector for Services to the English-Speaking Community) at the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS), the members of the Project Resource Team, especially Paule Langevin, Anne-Marie Livingstone, Linton Garner, and Benjamin Loomer, as well as the principals, coordinators, teachers, staff, students, school board representatives and community partners in each of the Community Learning Centres (CLC) for their contribution of time and information to the CLC evaluation. Without their generosity of time and openness to sharing information about program implementation, successes and challenges, this report would not be possible. We wish to also acknowledge the contributions of Elias Abou-Rjeili and Bill Floch at Canadian Heritage for their work constructing data portraits from census variables of the characteristics of the English-speaking communities served by the CLCs. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Evaluation Committee¹, whose members provide thoughtful advice, guidance, and feedback on evaluation planning and this report.

¹ A list of members on the Evaluation Committee is provided in Appendix E.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This midterm evaluation report presents the findings from the first year of data collection for the *Community Learning Centres: An English Minority-Language Initiative*. The purpose of the initiative is to help schools in Québec’s English sector become “Community Learning Centres” (CLCs) that serve as hubs for education and community development and as models for future policy and practice. There are three key results anticipated from the project: (1) ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities in all regions; (2) increased student engagement and success; and (3) enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning opportunities for English-speaking communities. In the long term, it is hoped that the CLCs may contribute to the revitalization of English-speaking minority communities in Québec. The initiative began in 2006 with the selection of 15 schools, referred to as Phase 1 schools in this report. In the spring of 2007, seven additional schools were selected to become CLCs; these schools are referred to as Phase 2 schools. The key findings in this report represent the first year of data collection on Phase 1 schools.

The Context

The community school is an international reform that has been receiving growing attention in recent years. A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community (Melaville, 2000). The community school model is built upon an ecological view of school and community as one integral entity (Smith, 2006). Community schools supplement the usual academic function of schools by bringing together various stakeholders in partnerships for youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, family support, and community health and safety. Community schools have been shown to improve student learning and to contribute to better-functioning schools, increased family engagement with students and schools, and more vital communities (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994).

In the Québec context, schools serving the English-speaking community take on special significance.

Students attending English schools account for less than ten per cent of all students in the Québec education system, and many of the 340 English schools are small and isolated. These schools—often the last remaining English institutions in their communities—are increasingly being turned to as community centres, “responsible not only for the students’ academic performance, but also for the development of their language and culture” (Advisory Board on English Education, 2000). If these schools were to disappear, it would “have a devastating effect on communities already dealing with a delicate sociolinguistic balance” (Berger, 1999, in Advisory Board of English Education, 2000). The Community Learning Centres initiative of the Secteur des Services à la communauté anglophone (SSCA) of the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) presents an important opportunity to revitalize and provide solutions to the challenges facing the English school system.

In 1997, the Minister of Education announced *A New Direction for Success*, an education reform that included increasing local autonomy for schools to better serve the needs of their diverse constituents (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2000). School boards were also reorganized in 1997 along linguistic rather than denominational lines (Freeland, 1999). In its 2000-2003 Strategic Plan, the MELS stressed conferring greater local autonomy on those responsible for student outcomes and building partnerships with all community stakeholders. The recent mandates given to schools and school boards in Québec, by increasing schools' responsibilities and ability to act, present the opportunity and challenge of adapting services to the unique populations served and allowing stronger connections between schools and communities.

The Project

The CLC project is funded through the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* (the "Entente") through the SSCA at the MELS. The initiative is led by the independent Project Resource Team (PRT) based at the offices of the Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN). The project, subsidized for three years, consists of funding for the development of 15 (now 22) CLCs. The funds are to be used for the hiring of a site coordinator as well as for substitute teachers and videoconferencing equipment. The PRT is funded to provide training and technical assistance, and to develop materials to support the development of the CLCs.

The PRT consists of a project manager, community development coordinator, evaluation coordinator and community-based learning coordinator. Together they lead the project in collaboration with the SSCA. In addition, a consultant helps teachers in the CLCs use the Videoconference Network (VCN). The PRT's main role is to provide technical assistance, training and support to the CLCs. Guidance for implementing CLCs can be found in the CLC Framework for Action and the project's Theory of Change. The Framework for Action, and the accompanying resource kit, is a tool that was designed to help schools transition from a regular school to a CLC by following five steps: 1) explore, 2) initiate, 3) plan, 4) implement, and 5) evaluate. The PRT coordinates this work in partnership with the SSCA of the MELS and the Project Implementation Committee (PIC). The PIC is presided over by the Assistant Deputy Minister at the SSCA and includes staff of the PRT and SSCA.

The 22 CLCs are found in every English school board in Québec, as well as in the Littoral school board and the Association of Jewish Day Schools. The project's Theory of Change suggests that CLCs will be led by their principals with support from a coordinator, who works with stakeholders to establish a vision, mission and direction for the CLC. They work in partnership with other organizations and businesses to meet their goals and serve the English-speaking communities in which they are located.

The Evaluation

Learning Innovations at WestEd was contracted to conduct the evaluation of the CLC initiative. The evaluation has three purposes:

- 1) support the implementation of the project and the individual CLCs
- 2) assess the attainment of the short- and medium-term expected outcomes and the longer-term impacts of the project and the CLCs, and
- 3) examine and identify the processes that impact the attainment of expected results of the project and the CLCs

The evaluation activities in the first year of data collection focused on three implementation questions:

- 1) To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and PIC implement activities and processes designed to contribute to the capacity of the CLCs to achieve the short and intermediate outcomes, such as developing organizational capacity, forming partnerships, and developing a collaborative school culture?
- 2) To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs, led by principals and CLC coordinators, implement their Action Plans, including development of community partnerships and engagement, development of a culture of collaboration, and use of community-based learning?
- 3) What is the role of school boards and school-level committees in the process of implementation of CLCs?

An Evaluation Guide developed in 2007 by Learning Innovations at WestEd and the PRT, with direction from the project's evaluation committee, guides the evaluation. The Evaluation Guide and the project's Theory of Change were used to frame the data collection for this midterm report. This report focuses on Phase 1 schools and covers the period from June 2007 through June 2008. Data-collection activities included: site visits to Phase 1 schools, including interviews and focus groups with principals, coordinators, teachers, parents, and community partners; focus groups with principals and coordinators during PRT training sessions; observation of four PRT training sessions; analysis of demographic data from Phase 1 CLC communities; and the review of key documents from the CLCs and PRT, including year-end reports, theories of change, mission statements, listserv communication, training materials, Guidebook, and other documents.

Key Findings

The key findings after one year of implementation of the CLC initiative can be organized into three categories: the work of the PRT and PIC to support CLC implementation; CLC implementation at the school and community level; and the role of the school boards in CLC implementation.

The Work of the PRT and PIC

The role of the PRT and PIC is to support CLC implementation and help them achieve desired outcomes. The PRT and PIC have a significant challenge, that of simultaneously supporting the development of 22 CLCs across Québec through policy and political support, providing training and technical assistance, and development of materials. The evidence, after one year of data collection, suggests that the project has been well organized and carefully thought out in terms of the development of training and support materials (Guidebook and Framework for Action) and that the PRT and PIC have facilitated the development of CLCs that are working to implement their own vision and goals.

Training helps to build capacity among principals and coordinators

The PRT has implemented a number of key activities and strategies that have contributed to the ability of the CLCs to begin to achieve short and intermediate outcomes such as developing organizational capacity and forming critical community partnerships.

A key area of support has been the training led by the PRT, which brought together principals, coordinators and school board representatives. These training sessions, as well as one-on-one technical and organizational assistance provided by PRT members, have resulted in more effective use of the Guidebook and planning tools by coordinators, as well as stronger relationships between CLCs and school boards.

Coordinators, principals and school board liaisons value training as working sessions

Providing role-specific training for teachers, principals, coordinators and school board representatives allowed stakeholders to network with each other across CLC sites, and contributed to building networks and learning communities across the schools. Furthermore, these training opportunities allowed school teams to spend time together to reflect and share their experiences, as well as plan for their own CLC. Focus groups in May 2008 revealed that coordinators and principals felt that the time to work in teams was especially valuable for planning and moving forward with implementation.

Training and support in community-based learning and the VCN have led to increased use of these for educational and community purposes

The PRT offers additional support and training in the areas of community-based learning and educational videoconferencing. Evidence suggests that support offered to the teachers in community-based learning and the training on the VCN are beginning to have an impact on how teachers use community resources and the VCN to enhance the curriculum.

The PRT is essential to CLC implementation

The feedback from CLC coordinators and board representatives indicated that the role of the PRT is essential to project implementation and success. Some key areas that have been specifically singled out as critical are the training sessions, organizing time and providing key documents for CLC teams to plan strategies, and facilitating communication with the school boards. The PRT has been flexible and responsive to formative feedback, especially with regard to changes in the CLC Guidebook and the reduction of reporting and paperwork, which early focus groups with coordinators and principals flagged as issues. The PRT also responded to early focus group findings indicating the desire of CLC coordinators to work with other coordinators and with their school teams by building in meeting time in subsequent training sessions. Several ongoing concerns regarding the work of the PRT and PIC include unclear reporting requirements from the CLCs to the PRT, and formulating a plan for sustainability of the CLCs after the funding ends.

The Implementation of CLCs

While the 15 Phase 1 CLCs are at varying stages of implementation, by the summer of 2008 they all had a coordinator and had planned and implemented activities; most had also engaged with outside partners in providing activities and/or services to students, families and the general community. As is to be expected with a large, complex initiative that is being played out in many different community contexts, there is variation in the progress and success of CLC implementation. Some general findings are highlighted below.

CLCs following stages in the CLC Framework for Action, in combination with other factors such as principal leadership and the work of the coordinator, are in more advanced stages of implementation

All schools have to a greater or lesser extent followed steps in the CLC Framework for Action (FFA). However, the most advanced CLCs have implemented the key stages: they have mapped their community assets, recruited partners, developed a mission statement, and identified and begun offering programs and services. In these CLCs, there is also leadership by the principal, an active coordinator, supportive teachers, an operating steering committee, and partners who are working together toward CLC goals.

Though not all CLCs have followed key stages in the FFA, most have developed or are developing a “theory of change” to guide implementation.

CLC implementation falls into one of three stages: installation, initial implementation, and full operation

- The majority of Phase 1 CLCs are in the “initial implementation” stage, where they are initiating change and implementing elements of the concept of a community school, but practices have not yet permeated the whole organization. The coordinator and principal are working together to engage partners and develop activities and services that address student success and community engagement. However, the CLC may still be struggling with questions of implementation and buy-in such as, “what are the activities that best fit our goals?” “how do we get to the outcomes?” “how do we articulate our outcomes?” “how can we get teachers’ support?”
- Several CLCs are in the “full operation stage.” At these CLCs, stakeholders are no longer questioning if this is the right initiative, but rather the initiative is fully integrated into the operation and practice of the school. There is leadership by the principal, an active coordinator, supportive teachers, an operating steering committee, and selected partners who are working together toward CLC goals.
- At least two Phase 1 CLCs appear to still be in the “early installation” phase of implementation, where they have hired a coordinator and are working on organizational changes but are only beginning to initiate community partnerships. In these CLCs, the implementation may have been slowed by factors such as a turnover of the principal, a delay in hiring a coordinator, a poor fit between the coordinator and principal, or a lack of support from key stakeholders.

CLCs have formed steering committees that are made up primarily of community partners. Many also include parents, teachers and students

- CLCs have established steering committees that range in size from small (about 5 people) to large (20 or more people). Not all CLCs have steering committees that meet regularly and that are decision-making bodies; some are brought together more for informational purposes.
- In addition to the coordinator, Steering committees frequently include the principal, and may include teachers, a parent and even students.

The transformation from a school to a CLC is under way and garnering support from those involved

- Different stakeholders (coordinators, principals, teachers and community partners) have a similar understanding and are supportive of the CLC concept.
- All Phase 1 CLCs have formal or informal partnerships. CLCs have developed partnerships with both government and nongovernment organizations, such as the Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS), the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC), and other local, regional and provincial organizations (e.g. Coasters' Association, Townshippers' Association, Centre for Literacy, Home and School Association).
- Community partners interviewed for the evaluation note the potential for additional or enhanced services through a CLC partnership.
- In general, CLCs are showing their potential to bring in, as well as bring support to, regional and local associations and service providers. A promising finding is that partners in some CLCs report that the partnership allows them to better fulfill their mandate within a mutually beneficial relationship.

CLCs are showing that they can provide a physical space for community life

- By keeping schools open longer hours and more days in a year, many new activities become possible at relatively little cost. Examples include providing space for organizations to deliver services in the school, for community associations and groups to meet, and for residents to have access to libraries and recreational facilities.
- Recreational activities have been a focus of many CLCs, and school gymnasiums have been opened to the community at large for activities such as line dancing, aerobic classes, badminton, basketball and movie nights.

CLCs vary in their engagement of students, teachers, parents and the general community

At the time of data collection, students often did not identify with the CLC or they recognized the CLC only as a new room or area in the school with the VCN equipment. Early on, the majority of teachers also associated the CLC with the VCN, and some have started using this technology to enhance their curriculum. Teachers overall were very supportive of the CLC idea, although many were still unsure of their role in the new initiative or how the CLC will affect them. Among those parents who were involved, they tend to either be involved in the CLC through participation on the steering committee or in CLC activities.

Students are the primary target of activities, but most CLCs also serve parents and the wider community

- Some CLCs appear to have strong community connections and are focused on providing services to the community at large, while others are more student-focused in their activities. In some CLCs, principals appear to struggle with the balance between being primarily focused on students and their success, and serving the broader community.

- Programs and services for students include homework clubs, tutoring, literacy programs, recreational and arts programs, and Saturday schools. CLCs have facilitated other events that promote education and health, such as activities for Literacy Family Week and a health week. Some have also facilitated volunteering opportunities for students in the community.
- Services for parents have included parenting workshops and language classes. Some CLCs have developed “parent” or “family” rooms.
- Community members have participated in “lifelong learning” opportunities, such as language courses, computer courses, photography courses, and more.
- Many activities for parents and the community have included workshops to provide health information through the VCN; this has been especially true in the rural CLCs.

Two models of CLCs have emerged: parallel and integrated

Early data indicate the emergence of two models of how CLCs are incorporated into the school context. In a “parallel model,” the school and the CLC coexist and the CLC is an “add-on” to the school. In an “integrated model,” the CLC and the school are woven together as one and the school is now seen as a community learning centre. It is still unclear how these different models will influence sustainability of the CLC—an area to examine closely as the project continues to evolve.

CLCs are showing their ability to maintain their educational goals, while addressing broader community goals. But how “community” is defined varies across CLCs

One of the goals of the project is that CLCs will respond to the needs of the English-speaking communities they serve. The nature of the relationship between the CLC and the community varies based on the location of the CLC. In several rural communities, CLCs have become an important centre of activity for the English-speaking residents. In urban locations, CLCs may be active and engaged with the community, but are often not the only community centre in the area. There is a challenge for some CLCs that serve linguistically and ethnically diverse students in defining just “who” the community is.

Leadership of principals is key

The creation of a CLC involves a major shift in how schools are understood and function and requires a change in school culture, hence, a transformation that relies heavily on the support and leadership of school principals. The evaluation indicates that in many sites, this change is under way, but still vulnerable at this stage, particularly in respect to two key players: the school principal and the coordinator. As the evaluation report makes evident, the implementation of a CLC is seriously hampered if principals and coordinators do not take on leadership roles and if a viable working relationship between these two players is not struck.

Principals assume three leadership styles: leader, supporter and a “hands-off” approach

In CLCs with principals that are *leaders* of the CLC, there appears to be a more successful implementation at the time of this report. Principals who see themselves as *leaders* of the CLC often describe the CLC and school as one entity. Leader principals tend not to involve themselves in day-to-day decisions and operations, but rely on their coordinators. These principals

communicate to the school and the community that the CLC initiative is moving forward with themselves at the head. This style of leadership, along with an effective coordinator, appears to be a promising combination to move the CLC initiative forward. Other principals are active and vocal *supporters* of their CLCs, but take less direct responsibility for leading CLC initiatives. A “hands-off” principal takes a less active role in leading the CLC and allows the coordinator to be the face of the CLC to the school and community. It is also important to note that the roles assumed by the principals are not necessarily static. The evaluation data indicated that the principal’s role shifted depending on changing circumstances.

CLC coordinators play different but important roles

The role of the coordinator is not the same in all CLCs, as it is shaped by the expertise and experience each individual brings to the role, as well as the expectations of the coordinator held by the principal. The coordinator’s role varied but generally included, to some extent, strategic planning, working with the PRT, developing partnerships, and managing activities and events. Across the sites, there is variation in how active the coordinator was in driving the vision of the CLC. In some sites, the coordinator drove the vision and sought partners to join that vision, while in others, the vision of the CLC was driven more by other stakeholders, such as the principal or other school and community leaders. Regardless of the exact nature of the role the coordinator assumes, the coordinator is described as “the glue” that holds the CLC together and maintains the momentum; indeed, several principals said they would not participate in the initiative if the coordinator role were eliminated.

The nature and structure of the CLC coordinator’s job influences implementation

While the findings suggest the coordinator’s role is important in the CLC, several factors relating to the structure and nature of the work posed a challenge for the coordinators and the implementation of some CLCs. These challenges included time, job security and turnover of some coordinators. Most coordinators reported feeling fulfilled by their work but find it difficult to have enough time to fully engage in planning and managing the CLC. This challenge is exacerbated in the many CLCs where coordinators are not full-time employees. The fact that most coordinators are contractual and not permanent employees of their school boards, along with the three-year grant funding for the position, may result in a sense of insecurity for some coordinators.

In conclusion, it is apparent that at this early stage of implementation, CLCs are already showing their ability to generate a great many benefits to the student population and to the broader population. However, some ongoing challenges for the CLCs as they work to solidify their implementation and plan for sustainability include engaging or continuing to engage stakeholders more broadly, such as partners on the steering committee, parents and teachers, in order to build buy-in and strengthen support for implementation. Other challenges include ensuring that all principals provide visible leadership of the CLCs and reducing turnover of CLC coordinators. Fundraising to support the coordinator and other CLC activities, as the grant funding ends, is also an ongoing concern.

The Role of the School Boards

Each of the school boards with a CLC has a representative that serves as the liaison between the CLC and the school board, including the director general. The school board representatives were each interviewed by telephone and most also participated in a later focus group.

CLC implementation is challenging without school board support

The support of the regional linguistic school boards is crucial to the implementation and sustainability of the CLCs. Without board support, CLCs found it challenging to implement key CLC features, such as making renovations to support the VCN or covering the extra custodian costs of keeping a school open more hours.

Boards find the CLCs a greater financial and energy commitment than anticipated

Some liaisons reported that the school board directors general have found the CLC initiative to be a greater commitment, in terms of funds and energy, than originally expected. Although the support varies, some school boards have been very supportive of the CLCs and one board is even considering having all of the schools in the region become CLCs. Liaisons reported that sustainability is their biggest concern, shared by coordinators and principals as well.

School board liaisons play different roles in supporting CLC implementation

The nature and extent of the support provided by school board representatives varied; for most of the liaisons, the CLC is only one of many dossiers, thus limiting the amount of time and resources that the representatives could dedicate. Some of the liaisons worked with the CLCs on hiring coordinators, attending meetings and helping arrange renovations, while others were more hands-off, serving more as a conduit of information. At the beginning of the project, the role of the school board representative was not clear to many of the CLC coordinators and principals, but this seemed to be changing as these representatives attended CLC training sessions and other meetings.

Recommendations

After one year of data collection and implementation, our findings indicate that significant progress has been made overall in the implementation of CLCs and that CLCs are being supported in their development by the PRT. This is a large-scale project that continues to evolve on many different levels. As is expected in an initiative of this size and complexity, a number of challenges for the PRT, CLCs and school boards remain. As the initiative moves forward, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations for consideration.

Recommendations for the Project

The PRT has established a pattern of in-person training and meetings for members of CLC school teams to attend together. The feedback from these training sessions has been generally positive. Participants have suggested allowing more time at these meetings for the coordinators and principals to interact and share ideas and knowledge across CLC teams. In addition, scheduling more time for CLC school teams to meet together and continue their planning activities would be valuable.

- 1) Communication from the PRT and the school teams should be improved regarding the use of the Guidebook and templates that are required for the project.
- 2) School teams should be involved in the future planning of CLC training sessions and events in order to enhance the collaborative nature of this initiative as well as move the project forward.

- 3) The teachers and other school staff at CLCs would benefit from specific training on how to implement community-based learning. This would increase capacity at the school level and also contribute to the ongoing efforts of sustainability for the CLCs.
- 4) The project should continue to address the ongoing issue of sustainability, both in terms of financial support and policy support.

Recommendations for Community Learning Centres

It is important for school teams to make time for long-term planning and developing a cohesive and strategic program as part of their continued work in their community.

- 1) CLCs need the visible and active leadership of the principal.
- 2) CLCs should consider ways to enhance the use of their steering committees. Close collaboration with the members of their steering committee and their community partners to create buy-in will help position the CLCs to reach their goals and to sustain themselves in the future. Steering committee members may be able to assist with issues such as raising funds and community support to sustain the CLC.
- 3) Working to engage the teachers and other key school staff will be critical for successful implementation at the school level.
- 4) CLCs that have multisite schools should consider the most efficient and effective ways to work together and serve the community as a whole.
- 5) As the CLCs work on implementation, it is also important to recognize their success and share those successes with key partners, including the school board, the directors general and commissioners, to build support and help work toward sustainability.

Recommendations for School Boards

- 1) Communication between the CLCs and school boards will be critical to the initiative over time and especially as the funding cycle comes to an end. Open communication channels between the CLCs and school boards about CLC successes and challenges can only help in the efforts to sustain the CLCs.
- 2) The principals and the coordinators can do a lot of work at the local level fostering partnerships and increasing services to the community, but there is also policy-level work at the school board and interministerial level that will be required to fulfill the full range of goals for the CLC initiative. Each CLC is unique in the school and community context in which it operates and the school boards can be important partners helping to navigate and support CLC efforts. This is a critical relationship that needs further bolstering as the initiative continues.

Limitations and Future Work

There are several limitations to this midterm report. The report represents baseline data from Phase 1 schools and data from the site visits were early in the implementation period. Future data collection will gain insight into later stages of implementation as well as the implementation of the Phase 2 CLCs. Also, the data for this report were collected from June 2007 through June 2008. Since our data collection efforts, many sites have made progress and a few have had setbacks that are not reflected in this report. Future site visits and other data collection efforts will capture this information, and the final evaluation report will present a complete picture of the successes and challenges of the CLC implementation process. There are many aspects of the CLC project that are evolving and emerging as the project continues; these include community participation in the CLCs, the nature of the partnerships, and the role of PIC and the Project Resource Committee. Data on these aspects of the project were not available at the time of this report, but will be collected in future data-gathering activities.

Conclusion

It is evident that most schools with CLC grants have embraced the concept and are making significant strides in implementing CLCs that address their school and community needs. The coordinators and principals are key contributors to the energy and direction of the implementation. In addition, the PRT's support for coordinators, principals and other stakeholders is critical to their success. More remote and isolated CLCs appear to be firmly on the path to becoming hubs in their communities. In the more urban communities, CLCs may not be hubs for the larger English-speaking community, as other options for community engagement are available, but they are working to fill important gaps in meeting the needs of their communities or key segments of their communities. The early evidence suggests that CLCs have the potential for positive impacts on their schools and communities and that there is a commitment among stakeholders to meet the challenges and sustain the initiative.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

This midterm evaluation report presents the findings from the first year of data collection for the evaluation of the implementation of *Community Learning Centres: An English Minority-Language Initiative*. The project is funded through the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* (the “Entente”) through the Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone (SSCA) at the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). The initiative is led by the Project Resource Team (PRT) based at LEARN and the SSCA. The report is organized as follows:

- *Introduction*, including overview and description of the initiative, purposes of the evaluation, and evaluation questions addressed
- *Methodology*
- *Findings* at the project and centre level, as well as emerging findings
- *Conclusions and recommendations*

Community Learning Centres Initiative

The Community Learning Centres (CLC) initiative is designed to help English schools in Québec become “community schools.” The community school is an education reform model that has been receiving growing attention in recent years. A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community (Melville, 2000). The community school model is built upon an ecological view of school and community as one integral entity (Smith, 2006). Community schools combine academics with other resources, such as health and social services, to promote community development. These community centres bring together various stakeholders in partnerships for youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, family support, and community health and safety. Community schools have been shown to improve student learning and to contribute to better-functioning schools, increased family engagement with students and schools, and more vibrant communities (Blank, Melville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994).

The CLC initiative is the first large-scale initiative of its kind for English schools in Québec, although other initiatives in the province’s French and English schools have incorporated some of the ideas of community schools: *Famille, école, communauté: Réussir ensemble*, an initiative for low-income elementary schools; *New Approaches, New Solutions*, for secondary schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas; and the *Supporting Montréal Schools Program*, for elementary schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Montréal.

In the Québec context, schools serving the English-speaking community take on special significance.

Students attending English schools account for less than ten per cent of all students in the Québec education system, and many of the 340 English schools are small and isolated. These schools—often the last remaining English institutions in their communities—are increasingly being turned to as community centres, “responsible not only for the students’ academic performance, but also for the development of their language and culture” (Advisory Board on English Education, 2000). If these schools were to disappear, it would “have a devastating effect on communities already

dealing with a delicate sociolinguistic balance” (Berger, 1999, in Advisory Board of English Education, 2000). The Community Learning Centres initiative presents an important opportunity to revitalize and provide solutions to the challenges facing the English school system.

In 1997, the Minister of Education announced *A New Direction for Success*, an education reform that included increasing local autonomy for schools to better serve the needs of their diverse constituents (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2000). School boards were also reorganized in 1997 along linguistic rather than denominational lines (Freeland, 1999). In its 2000-2003 Strategic Plan, the MELS stressed conferring greater local autonomy on those responsible for student outcomes and building partnerships with all community stakeholders. The recent mandates given to Québec schools and school boards, by increasing schools' responsibilities and ability to act, present the opportunity and challenge of adapting services to the unique populations served and allowing stronger connections between schools and communities.

The CLC initiative fits into the overall MELS strategy of school improvement and addresses unique issues of English schools in the province, which are under threat from the declining Anglophone population, declining school-age population and exodus of Anglophones to other provinces and the United States (QCGN, 2007a).

Description of the Community Learning Centres Project

The CLC project involves 22 English schools located throughout Québec becoming Community Learning Centres (LEARN, n.d.1). The objectives of the project are to:

- 1) help English schools secure their future in the regions in which they presently reside
- 2) help support and monitor the development of a diversified group of CLCs that become hubs for education *and* community development in the English-speaking community and serve as models for future practice

In a speech delivered at the launch of the project in Montréal in June 2006, then Assistant Deputy Minister, Noel Burke, proposed the following as a definition of a CLC:

“Community Learning Centres are partnerships that provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of learners, their families, and the wider community. Their aim is to support the holistic development of citizens and communities.”

The Entente states that the key anticipated results for the project are:

- ongoing collaborative networks in each region
- enhanced access to educational services and life long learning for English-speaking communities, and
- increased student retention and success

The project, funded for three years by the Entente via the MELS, provides funds and technical assistance to the CLCs including: \$170,000 for the hiring of a site coordinator for three years and funds for substitute teachers and videoconferencing equipment; technical assistance is provided by the Project Resource Team (PRT) situated at LEARN Quebec.

The findings presented in this report relate primarily to the original 15, or Phase 1, CLCs, which began implementation in the winter of 2007. Specifically, the data and findings presented come from data collected on the first 18 months of implementation of Phase 1 CLCs and the work of

the PRT during this time. Limited findings for the new seven Phase 2 CLCs, which began implementation in the spring of 2008, are available at this point and a description of implementation of the Phase 2 centres will be further described in subsequent evaluation reports. In this report, findings that relate to or also include Phase 2 CLCs are specified.

Before presenting findings from the first year of data collection, we describe the following aspects of the CLC Project: the selection and description of Phase 1 centres, and expansion to Phase 2 sites, the Project Resource Team, the Project Implementation Committee, the Framework for Action and Theory of Change.

Selection of Centres

The original 15 CLCs were selected by means of a competitive application process. A call for proposals was sent to English schools and school boards throughout the province in June 2006 (LEARN, 2006). Proposals from schools were submitted first to local school boards, and after being reviewed by the boards, they were forwarded to the project coordinating office at LEARN. The nine English school boards and the Association of Jewish Day Schools were responsible for identifying the three best proposals in their boards, though some school boards had fewer than three proposals. A seven-member committee consisting of representatives from the school boards, schools, community organizations, and others evaluated the proposals. Fifteen CLCs were selected from the 33 proposals received, based on an evaluation rubric using common criteria.

The original 15 CLCs (referred to as Phase 1 CLCs) are diverse in terms of location, type of schools, characteristics of the communities and student populations (see section 2m for a description of schools and communities). CLCs were established in each of the nine English school boards. Two are in the Littoral school board, a remote nonlinguistic board serving Anglophone, Francophone and First Nations students, and one is a member of the Association of Jewish Day Schools. Four of the CLCs are on the Island of Montréal, another five are in other urban areas, and six are in rural or semirural areas. Several of the selected sites are the last English institution in their communities, and some of the communities are very remote, including some not served by the provincial road system. The sites in urban areas are confronting the issues facing many urban school communities, such as poverty. In addition, at least one is in an area with a growing Anglophone population and at least three serve families with higher-than-average income.

The project was designed for a three-year implementation. The first year, which was truncated for Phase 1 CLCs because of a late start, included the project launch, the conduct of needs assessments, work with the Guidebook (see description below), and other initial CLC activities, such as identifying partners, as well as receiving training and support from the PRT for these activities. The second year is focused on ongoing implementation of CLC services, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities. The final year will include solidification of activities and partnerships, and planning for sustainability.

In the spring of 2007, an additional seven CLCs (referred to as Phase 2 CLCs) were selected and funded. These sites began their planning and implementation in the fall of 2007. These seven new CLCs are as diverse as the original 15. Six of them are in English school boards and one is located in the Littoral board. In the selection of these new CLCs for Phase 2, all of the English school boards as well as Littoral were asked if they were interested in supporting another CLC, and seven responded affirmatively. Staff at Canadian Heritage profiled English-speaking communities across the province and identified the most vulnerable in terms of demographic and socioeconomic status. Schools in communities meeting the criteria were identified in the seven board areas as

candidates for new CLCs. In addition to the community profiles, attention was paid to the geographic distribution of CLCs, and several unfunded proposals from 2006 were awarded grants in Phase 2.

The Project Resource Team

A four-member Project Resource Team leads the project in collaboration with the SSCA. The team is composed of four professionals who carry out both distinct and overlapping roles in the project. They include a project manager, community development coordinator, evaluation coordinator, and community-based learning coordinator. In addition, the team includes a consultant who works on a part-time basis to help teachers in the CLCs use the Videoconference Network (VCN) as an instructional tool. The team provides technical training and support to CLCs that is based on the CLC Framework for Action (see below) and the needs and requests of CLC stakeholders such as coordinators, principals and school board representatives.

The Project Implementation Committee

The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) is led by the Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of the SSCA. The other members of the committee include a professional associate at the SSCA and the PRT members. The committee represents the link between the project (including the PRT and CLCs) and the SSCA at the MELS. The committee's mandate includes: a) reporting to the directors general of English school boards and to Canadian Heritage; b) organizing the funding for CLCs; and c) facilitating networks of partners at the provincial level (e.g. creation of a Project Advisory Committee and interministerial dialogue).

The CLC Framework for Action

The CLC Framework for Action and the accompanying CLC Resource Kit (including the Guidebook, Templates and Workbook) (Smith, 2006 & 2007) were developed as tools to assist schools in making the transition from a conventional school to a CLC. The Framework and Resource Kit (frequently referred to as the "Guidebook" by project participants) describe the steps that schools should follow to develop an action plan that is based on collaboration between the school and multiple stakeholders in the community. The guiding principles reflected in the Framework for Action are that schools will develop into CLCs that are both "hubs" for education and services and "learning communities." Five major steps are recommended for all CLCs: 1) explore, 2) initiate, 3) plan, 4) implement, and 5) evaluate.

CLC Theories of Change

All of the CLCs are expected to develop a theory of change, which is described in detail in the Guidebook. Each CLC's theory of change should reflect individual contexts, and describe the CLC's key strategies, expected results, and impacts (see Guidebook, pp. 14 and 15). The Guidebook suggests that a theory of change is key to planning, and that it should occur prior to implementation. The Guidebook also stresses that a theory of change is not static but needs to be readjusted from time to time. To the extent that CLCs have begun to develop their theories of change and action plans, they are included in this report's analysis of the characteristics of action plans in section 2c.

Project Theory of Change

PRT members also developed a theory of change for the overall CLC project. The PRT began the process of developing its theory of change in August 2006. An initial draft was developed, and this draft guided the PRT's work throughout the first year of implementation, from September 2006 to June 2007 (See Appendix B)². In the fall of 2007, the PRT consulted with various stakeholders such as community members, representatives from Canadian Heritage and others in order to obtain feedback on the theory of change. There was some discussion among the group regarding the impacts that could be observed in three years' time. A final version of the theory of change was prepared in January 2008 based on this feedback. The project's theory of change will continue to be reviewed and possibly modified throughout the life span of the project based on new information and developments from the project's implementation.

The theory of change is a set of assumptions about actions, strategies and outcomes related to the work of the PRT, the PIC and the individual CLCs and their communities. In essence, the theory proposes that the PRT support the CLCs, individually and as a group, through training, technical support and networking, with different types of supports for CLC coordinators, principals, teachers and other stakeholders. This support is intended to develop the organizational capacity of CLCs to build and eventually sustain the work and services of the CLCs (Community Learning Centres, 2007). Another aim of the project, described in the theory of change, is to influence the broader policy environment in which CLCs operate, by working with school boards, government departments and provincial organizations.

PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION

The three broad purposes of the evaluation of the CLC initiative, agreed upon by the PRT and the contractor, Learning Innovations at WestEd, are to:

1. support the implementation of the project and the individual CLCs
2. assess the attainment of the short- and medium-term expected outcomes and the longer-term impacts of the project and the CLCs, and
3. examine and identify the processes that impact on the attainment of the expected outcomes of the project and the CLCs

EVALUATION QUESTIONS ADDRESSED IN THIS REPORT

The evaluation activities in the first year of data collection focused on three implementation questions:

1. To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and PIC implement activities and processes designed to contribute to the capacity of the CLCs to achieve the short- and medium-term outcomes, such as developing organizational capacity, forming partnerships and developing a collaborative school culture?
2. To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs, led by principals and CLC coordinators, implement their action plans, including development of community partnerships and engagement, development of a culture of collaboration, and use of community-based learning?
3. What is the role of school boards and school-level committees in supporting (or hindering) the process of CLC implementation?

² The full document is available online at http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/clc_res_eval.html.

2 | METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is guided by a set of questions and data-collection activities identified through development of an Evaluation Guide during the summer of 2007. The guide was developed collaboratively by WestEd staff and the PRT, with guidance from the project evaluation committee.³

The Theory of Change document has helped to shape the program evaluation in terms of the questions being addressed and the impact on the CLCs being examined. The evaluation also serves to validate and enhance the theory by determining the extent to which the theory adequately presents the most important processes and outcomes of the project. The midterm evaluation report focuses primarily on the short-term outcomes reflected in the project's Theory of Change. The *intended* short-term outcomes as listed in the CLC Project Theory of Change (TOC) are the following:

- Principals exercise shared leadership.
- Coordinators are able to work effectively.
- Constructive relations exist between the school board and CLC.
- A representative group (steering committee) of stakeholders is involved in developing and implementing the action plan.
- Teachers use community resources and videoconferencing to enrich curriculum.
- Community members use CLC resources and services.
- Services and resources are mobilized to meet the CLC's needs.
- The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) identifies areas for policy alignment with the directors general, school boards, the Project Advisory Committee and the Resource Committee.
- Resource Committee members identify areas for collaboration and develop projects with CLCs.
- Evaluation findings are disseminated and utilized.

Data Collection. Data collection for the program evaluation began in June 2007, at the end of the first truncated year of implementation for the Phase 1 CLCs. This report covers the period from June 2007 through June 2008 and focuses on the Phase 1 CLCs and the PRT activities during this time. The initial evaluation methods and data-collection activities were of a primarily qualitative and formative nature. The formative nature of the early evaluation activities provided opportunity for feedback to the PRT and CLCs throughout the year, as opposed to waiting for a final summative report. The early evaluation activities included extensive visits to Phase 1 CLC sites, observations of training sessions and meetings organized by the PRT, focus groups of role-alike participants, interviews and document review. More specifically, site visits were conducted between November 2007 and February 2008 at 13 Phase 1 CLCs; 2 CLCs were not visited either because of delayed implementation or lack of a coordinator at the time of the site visits, but telephone or in-person interviews were conducted with the principals and coordinators to gather data from these sites. Site visits and interviews have not yet been conducted with Phase 2 CLC sites and coordinators.

³ The evaluation guide is available online at http://www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/clc/documents/Evaluation_Guide_CLC_Project-WestEd.doc.

Site Visits. Each coordinator for Phase 1 sites was interviewed over the telephone in the fall of 2007 prior to the site visits. For the site visits, an evaluator from WestEd or consultant, Dr. Patricia Lamarre, visited the CLC in person, usually spending a day and a half to two days at each site. Prior to each site visit, the evaluator communicated with the site to arrange a convenient date for the visit and asked the coordinator to set up meetings and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, other stakeholders and the principals. Evaluators tried to time their visits to view CLC events, though this was not always possible. The ability of each coordinator to arrange the desired interviews and focus groups varied from site to site. At each site visit, the coordinator and principal were interviewed at length; teachers were interviewed either individually or in a focus group, as were students and other stakeholders. Parents were not always available and some site visits did not allow data to be gathered from parents. On average, one focus group was held with parents, one with teachers, one with students, and one with community stakeholders at each site. Common interview and focus group protocols were developed by the evaluation team and were used for all site visits (see Appendix C). Evaluators reported initial findings from the site visits to the coordinators and principals in a confidential memo following the visits.

Observations. In addition to making site visits, the evaluators observed training sessions conducted by the PRT and conducted focus groups of participants as described below:

- June 2007—observation of training sessions on using the Guidebook, focus groups of Phase 1 principals and coordinators in both mixed and role-alike groups.
- September 2007—observation of training on Theory of Change for Phase 1 coordinators, including feedback on Guidebook.
- November 2007—observation of training sessions for Phase 2 coordinators and focus group of Phase 2 coordinators.
- May 2008—observation of the launch of the Phase 2 schools and workshops with school teams of Phase 1 and 2 CLCs, as well as role-alike focus groups of principals, school board representatives and coordinators.

Document Review. In addition to conducting site visits, interviews, focus groups and observations, the evaluation staff also reviewed several key documents as part of the data-collection plan. These included:

- year-end reports of CLCs (where available)
- theories of change/action plans (where available)
- mission statements (where available)
- listserv communication
- training materials
- guidebook
- journals (where available), and
- newsletters (where available)

3 | FINDINGS

3.1 Project implementation

The findings presented in this section are based on data gathered through focus groups and observations of PRT training sessions for Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs, interviews with PRT members and document review, as described in the *Methodology* section. Each implementation evaluation question has several subquestions. These will be examined in turn, starting with the first implementation question:

Implementation Question 1: *To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and PIC implement activities and processes designed to contribute to the capacity of the CLCs to achieve the short- and medium-term outcomes, such as developing organizational capacity, forming partnerships and developing a collaborative school culture?*

1a. What is the range of support services that the Project Resource Team (PRT) and the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) are providing to the 22 CLCs?

The PRT provides an extensive range of support services to the 22 CLCs. There are three broad categories of support: individualized; technical guides and materials; and group training. Much of the support provided is designed to meet a need or request from a particular CLC, more specifically, a CLC coordinator. It will often entail a PRT member talking on the telephone or visiting a CLC to have a meeting and provide information. The level of individualized support each school receives is dependent to a large extent on the CLC's request for assistance or information. The original three PRT members also have CLC's "assigned" to them for which they serve as the primary contact at the PRT level. PRT members take different approaches to providing support. Some take a more active role in initiating contact and providing assistance to the CLC assigned to them. Others are more likely to respond to requests for assistance from the CLC than to initiate contact. The broad areas of support provided by the PRT include the following: assistance with the development, implementation and organization of the CLC; partnership development; self-evaluation and theories of change; implementation of community-based learning; and use of the VCN. To illustrate how PRT members interact with CLCs, we offer a few examples:

- The PRT evaluation coordinator worked closely with several sites one-on-one to develop their action plans and theories of change.
- The PRT community-based learning coordinator initiated and coordinated videoconference seminars and the distribution of pedometers for a CLC Health Week.
- The community development coordinator organized an informal wine and cheese event with potential partners, including some on the Resource Committee, to give a brief overview of the organizations and network to CLC coordinators.
- The project director met with a school board to intervene and help solve a difficult situation involving the employment of a coordinator.

The PRT also provided support for the CLCs through the development of resource materials designed to assist CLC principals and coordinators with the planning, development, implementation and sustainability of the centres. These include documents such as the Guidebook and the Framework for Action, action plan templates, financial reporting templates and others. Some of these materials, such as the Guidebook and action plan templates, are meant to be guides and to provide information and illustration for coordinators and principals.

The third main area of support includes training and workshops provided or facilitated by the PRT for CLC coordinators, principals and/or school board representatives. From June 2007 through June 2008, the PRT convened nine in-person training sessions and meetings in Montréal and Laval for CLC leaders, with most of these efforts focused on training coordinators. The training usually extensively covered a major section of the Guidebook, for example, action plans or theories of change. In most cases, a PRT member or a consultant led these training sessions, and several included time for work in small groups. Some of the major training sessions, meetings and workshops held included the following:

- February 2007—CLC coordinators training session with focus on Guidebook (Phase 1)
- March 2007—meeting of CLC principals (Phase 1)
- June 2007—training on using the Guidebook, including two days with principals and coordinators together, and one day with coordinators alone (Phase 1)
- September 2007—training on Guidebook/Theory of Change with coordinators (Phase 1)
- November 2007—training for Phase 2 coordinators
- December 2007—meeting of school board representatives
- February 2008—principals' meeting in Laval (Phase 1 and 2)
- April 2008—training sessions for Phase 1 and 2 coordinators
- April/May 2008—National Coalition of Community Schools Conference (US) in Portland, Oregon (attended by many Phase 1 and 2 principals, coordinators, and a few school board representatives).
- May 2008—workshops with school teams (coordinators, principals and school board representatives) (Phase 1 and 2).

Other services provided by the PRT include development and support for community-based learning opportunities and teacher training on educational videoconferencing. For example, the PRT coordinated a series of activities around "Health Week" in February 2008 that were community based and used the videoconference network (VCN). Many CLCs built their own activities around the PRT coordinated ones; for example, one school organized a walk-a-thon. With regard to educational uses of the videoconference technologies, the PRT hired a consultant to train and support teachers in using the VCN for educational purposes. Another member of the PRT organized a Resource Committee, consisting of nonprofits and other organizations that work throughout the province or in more than one region of the province in an effort to make connections between these entities and the CLCs. The PRT has also organized visits for CLC coordinators, principals and school board representatives to community schools in other areas, such as Saskatchewan, England, and the US (Vermont, and in May 2008, a large group attended the Coalition of Community Schools Conference in Portland, Oregon).

The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) has supported the project through the development of the Project Advisory Committee, made up of key stakeholders in the English-speaking community and education sectors. This group advises the PRT on project implementation.

The range of support services that the PRT and PIC are providing to the 22 CLCs has been broad and comprehensive, including responsive technical help on the start-up and implementation of key components of the program. Key technical assistance documents are developed and in use, and the PRT/PIC are assisting the CLCs in making connections to regional and provincial nonprofit organizations.

1b. What is most useful and valuable about the technical training provided by the PRT? What are the challenges and how are they resolved?

The evaluation team observed most of the formal training provided by the PRT for principals and coordinators and also conducted focus groups during this training in order to gather data on such things as the usefulness of the training and progress on implementation. The evaluators also analyzed the results of evaluative feedback on all meetings and training sessions. Participants reported that they found the training/meeting events valuable. The sessions were usually rated 4 for “valuable” or “useful” on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest. The feedback forms also asked participants for most useful and least useful aspects, as well as for suggestions. Examples of things found most useful included trying out templates, meeting/work session with school teams, having access to PRT and WestEd, focus groups, sharing ideas and expertise, dos and don’ts on fundraising, and sharing knowledge and information. Some of the least useful aspects included too much theory and too many PowerPoint presentations. Data from the 2007 sessions showed that participants would like more time for interacting and sharing knowledge and ideas. In response to this feedback, in 2008, the sessions were organized to include work in smaller groups and more sharing of knowledge and expertise among participants. For example, the May 2008 training session included blocks of time for coordinators, principals and school board representatives to work together on their action plans. This time was viewed as highly valuable. This was especially true for the coordinators who wanted to learn from those who had implemented and learned from CLC activities already.

The early training sessions were very didactic with fewer opportunities for interaction among the participants. Training focused on how to complete templates or reporting requirements while participants seemed to be eager for more interactive sessions and opportunities to engage with the materials and do the planning work that they claimed not to have enough time to do on a daily basis. Some participants expressed a desire for training that is based more on their experiences, for example, one coordinator noted: “I want more training on how to implement this [the CLC] than on filling out the forms.” Participants reported that they wanted to use their time together in practical ways, to learn from each other, and to use the time to move their work forward. Over the year, we observed the PRT sought more input from the coordinators and others about the focus and content of the training sessions. The project staff responded to the feedback and over the year, the training sessions became more interactive, with more work in small groups be added as well as time for applying the concepts learned to the work of the CLCs.

Most coordinators and principals reported finding the Guidebook to be full of great information, but overwhelming and unwieldy. The Guidebook contains a lot of information and is thorough and research-based. It presents the process for developing a CLC in a straightforward, linear fashion, which does not match what the coordinators experience. Coordinators reported that they find starting a CLC complex and not necessarily a linear process. Many coordinators reported

that they had to “hit the ground running” and began implementing proposal plans that were developed prior to reading the Guidebook. Coordinators reported feeling pressure to have something to “show” stakeholders and build buy-in early on, as well as feeling like the work of implementing did not leave time for the work of planning. This lack of planning time seems especially true for the majority of coordinators who work part-time. In addition to a great deal of information, the Guidebook presents many templates, some of which are required, some of which are highly recommended, and some of which are provided as examples. Some coordinators and principals reported receiving mixed messages as to which templates are required versus which are optional/informative. Reports of in-kind contributions, for example, are required to meet the Entente, and others, such as partnership agreements are highly recommended. Coordinators and principals also stated having too much paperwork or reporting associated with the project and some wondered whether the paperwork is disproportional to the project benefits.

The PRT has been flexible and responsive to formative feedback, especially with regard to changes in the Guidebook and the reduction of reporting and paperwork. Early focus groups found widespread dissatisfaction with the complex organization of the Guidebook, which made it difficult to access its rich resources. These focus groups also revealed that coordinators and principals were highly dissatisfied with the extent of paperwork required by the PRT. There remains some dissatisfaction with the level of paperwork and the complexity of some paperwork (e.g. budgets and action plans). The PRT also responded to early focus group findings showing the desire of CLC coordinators to work with other coordinators and with their school teams in less structured settings than the formal training by frequently building in meeting time in subsequent training sessions and meetings. Focus groups in May 2008 revealed that coordinators and principals felt that the time away from school to work in teams was especially valuable for planning and moving forward with implementation.

We know from research on change management that people go through stages as they implement new initiatives (Hall & Hord, 2001). At the beginning, they may have major personal concerns about how the new program will affect them and in the early stages, they experience management concerns as they try to get it right and make it work. The frustrations voiced in this feedback all fall into the predictable stages of change. The project has been responsive to such concerns, for example, by adjusting the technical assistance to offer more planning time and by modifying the Guidebook.

1c. In what ways does training and support through the PRT provide capacity building for constituents of each CLC?

The training and support provided by the PRT is primarily focused on coordinators, then on principals and to a lesser but growing extent, the school board representatives. Teachers have also been the target of training and support, mostly in the use of the videoconference network as a tool for teaching and in community-based learning. PRT members have attended steering committee meetings and this can be viewed as supporting capacity building. Coordinators’ training covered topics such as using the Guidebook, developing a theory of change, and action planning. These activities can be considered as building the capacity of principals and coordinators to implement and lead CLCs. While coordinators and principals may be learning about action planning and fundraising, there is concern that with coordinator and principal turnover the investment may not have a long-term impact on capacity. However, the development of clear forms and templates may contribute to building organizational capacity in that these documents create a paper trail for what has been implemented even if a coordinator or principal leaves.

To strengthen the project's impact on capacity building, coordinators and teachers have expressed a need for training teachers and other school staff in areas such as community schools in general and community-based learning. This kind of training could be seen as developing the capacity of other key constituents who can be important to implementation and sustainability. The PRT community-based learning coordinator has been active over the past academic year in connecting with teachers who express interest in community-based learning and has conducted outreach to teachers in general at the CLCs. For example, the community-based learning coordinator organized activities for CLCs and speakers through the VCN for a Health Week. He also visited schools, mostly in the Montréal area, to meet with teachers, encourage them to use community-based learning, and assist them in developing projects and curriculum. Research suggests that teachers take direction from the principal for leadership in curriculum issues, thus the challenge of getting teachers interested and supporting them in their use of community-based learning and the VCN might benefit from a strategy that also involved the principal.

1d. To what extent and in what ways is the PRT responsive to the needs and concerns of the CLCs, especially during the start-up stage?
To what extent are positive, collaborative relationships established between the PRT and the CLCs?

Evaluation data show that CLC sites, especially the coordinators and school board representatives, believe that the PRT's role is critical to project implementation and success. This is with regard to several key activities: (1) providing organized training and resources on planning, developing, implementing and sustaining a CLC; (2) supporting and prodding CLC school teams to engage actively in planning and support through the use of project documents (e.g. action plans); and (3) as a facilitator with their school boards. CLCs also value the individual support the PRT provides to the centres and coordinators. PRT members are known, for example, to travel to CLCs to help resolve an issue, to help a coordinator organize a steering committee, or to smooth relationships between a principal and a school board. This centralized support is highly valued by the sites. This enthusiasm for PRT support is noticeably different from the first June 2007 focus groups, where the support was viewed as not serving coordinators' needs. The first focus groups, in June 2007, were conducted in the early stages of implementation (five to six months after CLC coordinators began their positions). With time, it appears the coordinators and PRT are more comfortable together, that the relationships have improved, and that there is increased understanding of the roles and experiences of different partners. The following quotations illustrate this finding:

"I know help is just a phone call away." *A coordinator (November 2007)*

"If I have a problem, I have the provincial team [PRT]." *A coordinator (November 2007)*

"The PRT has been working very closely with our staff, especially in the absence of support from the school board level; it's a godsend." *A principal (May 2008)*

"I wanted to note how great the PRT is in being responsive. How responsive and good the communication is between each other." *A coordinator (May 2008)*

We have found that the work of the PRT and CLCs together is more of a helping relationship than a collaborative one of equals. Frequently, the PRT initiates the training subjects (with, more recently, some input from coordinators and principals) or initiates contacts with the CLC. The coordinators and principals report feeling that the PRT is always willing and able to help with information or to work through a problem or provide one-on-one technical assistance with an action plan, for example.

1e. To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and the PIC support the CLCs in establishing critical connections with regional and provincial resources?

During the 2007-2008 school year, PRT members have taken steps to establish connections between the CLCs and potential regional and provincial resources, such as nonprofits, service agencies and arts organizations. As yet, the PIC has not been active in this area, nor has the PIC facilitated connections with provincial government agencies or interministerial connections outlined in the project Theory of Change. Through the establishment of the Project Resource Committee (established to involve nonprofit organizations in the CLCs) and the Project Advisory Committee (made up of government representatives such as DQSBA, principals' association, teachers' association, etc.), many provincewide stakeholders in education have come to know of the CLC project and some may have established connections with CLCs. CLCs themselves have made extensive connections with nonprofits and other organizations and agencies in their local areas. The PRT has been influential in a number of regional and provincial connections. The coordinators' listserv is a venue through which the PRT and coordinators share resources and information about partners and events. Several of the connections facilitated by the PRT have led to one-time and ongoing partnerships and events with a regional/provincial organization and one or more CLCs. Some examples of connections facilitated by the PRT include:

- CHSSN Telehealth sessions (in partnership with McGill University) using videoconference technology: numerous CLCs have participated in sessions on topics such as menopause, obesity, and other health issues.
- Red Cross
- Centre for Literacy: several CLCs have partnered with the Centre for help in establishing libraries and rotating libraries including "traveling trunks" of books.
- Community Table (CEDEC, the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee)
- Quebec Drama Federation
- ANEB Quebec (assistance for persons suffering from anorexia nervosa and bulimia)
- Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) Youth Forum
- Videoconference sessions to acquaint students in CLCs with CEGEPs outside their community

1f. To what extent and in what ways does the work of the PRT/PIC focus on building a productive learning network among the 22 CLCs? What is the role of videoconferencing and use of the project Web site in supporting this work?

The PRT uses several strategies that contribute to building a learning network among the CLCs, including the listserv. The PRT uses the coordinators' listserv as a mechanism for getting information to all coordinators at once, and coordinators also use the listserv to communicate and share information and resources among themselves. Since the time the evaluators started monitoring the listserv (December 2007 through July 2008), over 230 messages were sent over the listserv. These messages were often directed at sharing information or resources, announcing events, and other communications.

Another way in which the PRT facilitates a learning network is through the project training sessions discussed above. These training sessions are opportunities for coordinators (and sometimes principals and school board representatives) to meet and learn more about implementing the CLC. At these sessions there is often small-group time and social time at lunch, dinner and in the evenings. There is sharing of information, resources, ideas and general moral support. These in-person opportunities have led to a level of comfort among the coordinators that promotes the sharing of information and resources even after the training sessions.

Videoconference and teleconference technologies are also used to build a learning network. For example, one PRT member used the VCN to network and facilitate learning and sharing with the CLCs for which she has primary responsibility. The PRT found these VCN meetings useful and the approach will be continued and adopted by other PRT members in the coming school year. The VCN has also been used during training sessions and other meetings to connect to people and sites that could not be present in Montréal.

The PRT also keeps key documents, forms and templates available on the Web site, as well as a complete copy of the Guidebook. Several coordinators have shared documents and tools with the PRT to distribute to others, such as parental permission forms and evaluation forms. The PRT makes them available on a closed section of the Web site for other coordinators and principals to use as resources.

1g. To what extent and in what ways do PRT/PIC activities and processes of implementation and ongoing support contribute to the individual CLCs implementing strategies focused on the following?:

- ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities
- increased student success and engagement, and
- enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning for the communities

As indicated earlier, the PRT contributes to the work of the individual CLCs in several ways:

- group training/support
- individual support to CLCs, and
- as information brokers/network facilitators

In group training and meetings, the PRT is instrumental in getting CLCs to be thoughtful about planning activities and partnerships. For example, the PRT used at least one of the in-person training meetings as an opportunity to connect all CLCs with potential provincial or regional partners, such as the Centre for Literacy, Homeschool Association, and others. In addition, through the Guidebook, training sessions, and one-on-one support, the PRT has encouraged CLCs to engage in thoughtful, appropriate and strategic partnerships that will contribute to ongoing collaborative relationships. Some CLC principals and coordinators worry that the formalized partnership process (partnership agreements) presented in the Guidebook is a deterrent to some partners, but others had no qualms about signed partnership agreements.

The PRT's community-based learning coordinator and the videoconference consultant are directly involved in helping CLCs and teachers use these methods to address student success and engagement. The videoconference consultant goes to and/or connects with centres to provide training to teachers on the use of VCN. The community-based learning coordinator has used a three-pronged strategy of reaching out to teachers, responding to teacher requests, and coordinating project-wide events, such as Health Week.

The PRT processes, forms and templates, through the development of an action plan and theory of change, endeavour to get CLC leaders to think about these key areas. It is hoped that by using the forms and templates and developing action plans, CLC leaders will be mindful about planning activities and partnerships that will lead to each of these outcomes. At the same time, CLCs are encouraged to think about their own long-term outcomes. It is evident from the analysis of the CLC theories of change in Table 2 that not all CLCs have explicitly adopted the goals of ongoing collaborative partnerships, increased student success and engagement, and enhanced access to services.

The centres could use support in developing their self-evaluation plans. To date, much of the training, templates and forms have focused on action plans and theory of change. The project is entering the third, and final, year of funding, and few, if any, sites have begun self-evaluation activities. Self-evaluation and other data collected about activities could help CLCs plan for their future and for sustainability.

1h. In what ways and to what extent does the work of the PRT/PIC support the CLCs in developing processes and infrastructures that will increase the likelihood of CLC sustainability? For example, strategies designed to build support for the CLCs in policy and practice, such as interministerial dialogue and cooperation, networking between provincial associations and their partnerships with CLCs, and contact with school boards.

The PRT has been active in trying to get individual CLCs to plan for their short-, medium- and long-term viability. This has included training, support, and encouragement for the development of action plans, theories of change, and formal partnership agreements, for example. Some centres have embraced this planning work more so than others. For example, the coordinator from one CLC has an extensively detailed theory of change/action plan that outlines which activities/services/events are related to what outcomes and goals, both in the short and long term. Other CLCs have brief one-page theories of change that appear generic using similar language as the examples provided by the PRT.

In 2007-2008, the PRT paid increased attention to the school boards and to the school board representatives as liaisons and advocates for the CLCs. Initial meetings were held with all school board representatives to provide information about the project and to detail expectations for the representatives. During the 2007-2008 school year, the PRT facilitated meetings with board representatives, principals and coordinators at each CLC.

The PRT provided training on fundraising and grant writing, which was designed to support efforts toward sustainability. This training was provided in response to requests from coordinators.

The SSCA and the Assistant Deputy Minister have also committed to supporting the CLCs. The PIC, for example, met several times throughout the year to address implementation issues and challenges. The SSCA has also hosted meetings for the coordinators and principals at its offices. In addition, the Assistant Deputy Minister discusses CLC issues with the directors general of the English school boards at monthly meetings. The SSCA also organized a meeting of the Project Advisory Committee in October 2007 at the MELS offices.

Reflections and Summary of Implementation Question 1

To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and PIC implement activities and processes designed to contribute to the capacity of the CLCs to achieve the short- and medium-term outcomes, such as developing organizational capacity, forming partnerships and developing a collaborative school culture?

The PRT has implemented a number of key activities and strategies that have contributed to the CLCs' ability to begin to achieve short- and medium-term outcomes such as developing organizational capacity and forming critical community partnerships. Our data do not allow us to speak to the issue of collaborative school culture. We do know that the training and support offered by the PRT to coordinators, school board representatives, principals and teachers has been a useful strategy to help build capacity at the CLC level. Specifically, these training sessions have resulted in the following outcomes:

- Training and support are enabling coordinators to work more effectively through growing familiarity with the Guidebook and templates.
- Training, meetings and support are helping to build constructive relations with most school boards and CLCs. This past school year has seen increased engagement and inclusion of school board representatives.
- Training and support for teachers is beginning to enable and enhance their use of community resources and videoconferencing to enrich curriculum.

The PRT has created a network and learning community among CLC school teams. For example, the PRT facilitated networks of role-alike groups, such as the coordinators' listserv, principals-only meetings/training, coordinators-only meetings/training, the school board representative meetings/training, as well as coordinated opportunities for project participants to learn together, such as the trip to the Coalition for Community Schools Conference and the CLC conference in May 2008. In addition, the PRT provides ongoing videoconference and teleconference meetings with coordinators, principals and/or school board representatives.

The PRT has been instrumental in helping to mobilize services and resources to meet the individual needs of the CLCs. The PRT has also encouraged the CLC coordinators and principals to share their lessons learned, activities, and other information with each other by implementing a project listserv. This year has seen much activity, with over 200 messages in seven months, on the coordinators' listserv with PRT members and coordinators sharing resources or announcing activities.

The PRT shared evaluation findings with stakeholders and used findings to shape its own practice, such as changing the design of training sessions for principals and coordinators. For example, the PRT has changed the format of some training as discussed above in response to formative feedback from focus groups, which led to increased satisfaction among participants.

Some areas that remain a challenge for the PRT are facilitating interministerial connections, streamlining required forms and templates, and providing training sessions geared toward “doing” the work of running and sustaining a CLC. Suggestions to address these challenges are outlined below in the recommendation sections.

Below are the specific findings for each of the key areas the PRT is providing support to the CLCs on project implementation.

Range of Support Services

- The PRT and PIC offer support to the CLCs in the form of individualized support, technical guides and materials, and group training.
- The types of support include developing/implementing the CLC, facilitating partnerships, developing theories of change, adopting community-based learning, and using the VCN.

Technical Training Successes and Challenges

- Participants rate most training sessions as “valuable” or “useful.”
- Participants found the most useful aspects of the training to be trying out templates, meeting/work sessions with school teams, having access to PRT and WestEd, focus groups with WestEd, sharing ideas and expertise, and learning about fundraising.
- Participants found the Guidebook both overwhelming and full of great information.

Capacity Building for CLCs

- PRT members have contributed to capacity building in different ways, such as attending CLC steering committee meetings that build capacity at the local level.
- Training sessions that have focused on using the Guidebook, developing a theory of change, and action planning have helped to increase the capacity of CLC coordinators.
- The PRT community-based learning coordinator has conducted outreach to teachers at the CLCs. More of this activity is needed in the future.

Role of the PRT/Relationship Between the CLCs and PRT

- CLC coordinators and school board representatives believe the PRT is critical to project implementation and success. Providing training and resource planning, supporting CLC teams to engage in planning and providing supportive documents, and acting as a facilitator with the CLC’s school boards have been key supportive activities from the PRT.
- CLCs value the individual support the PRT provides to coordinators, including their site visits, help in organizing steering committees, and assistance with school board relationships.

Critical Connections With Resources

- The PRT has facilitated a number of regional and provincial connections and resources for the CLCs such as nonprofits, service agencies and arts organizations.
- Through the establishment of the Project Advisory Committee, many provincewide stakeholders have become familiar with the CLC project and some have established individual connections with CLCs.

Building a Learning Network

- The PRT has established a project listserv that is used as a mechanism to disseminate information to all coordinators simultaneously.
- The PRT has established a learning network through training sessions in Montréal. These give CLC coordinators and other members of the school teams opportunities to come together and share ideas and challenges.
- The PRT has used technology such as videoconferencing and teleconferencing to build a learning network by connecting project teams and facilitating learning and sharing with the CLCs. The videoconferencing has also been used in training to connect people and sites that could not be present in Montréal.
- The PRT maintains an updated Web site that allows CLC coordinators and principals to access key documents, forms and templates.

Supporting CLC Implementation Strategies

- The PRT is instrumental in promoting thoughtful planning by the CLCs and supporting partnership in group training and meetings and in project materials.
- The PRT's community-based learning coordinator and the videoconference consultant are directly involved in helping CLCs and teachers use different methods to address student success and engagement.

Supporting Sustainability

- The PRT has actively helped CLCs plan for short-, medium- and long-term outcomes through training, support for the development of CLC action plans, theories of change, and formal partnership agreements.
- The PRT has recently paid increased attention to the role of school board representatives by acting as a liaison and advocate for the CLCs.
- The PRT has provided training on fundraising and grant writing for all CLCs.

Recommendations. Based on the findings for Implementation Question 1, the project is encouraged to address several recommendations in the coming year, as follows:

- Consider allowing more time during training sessions for CLC coordinators and principals to interact with each other in order to share ideas and knowledge. Also allow more time during training for CLC school teams to work together in order to move forward CLC implementation.
- Clarify and communicate the purposes and expected outcomes of all training to the participants at the outset.

- Specify which templates in the Guidebook are required and which are highly recommended.
- Provide training for teachers and other school staff on community schools and how to implement community-based learning. This kind of training could increase capacity at the school level as well as influence sustainability.
- Continue to include the CLC school teams in providing input to the planning for future training sessions and events.
- Provide CLCs with increased support such as training and templates for their self-evaluation plans. Clarifying the purposes of the self-evaluation might also encourage CLCs to begin this work.

3.2 Implementation of Community Learning Centres

***Implementation Question 2:** To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs, led by principals and CLC coordinators, implement their action plans, including development of community partnerships and engagement, development of a culture of collaboration, and use of community-based learning?*

2a. In what ways do CLC participants and stakeholders understand the concept of a community learning centre and the roles they play in the CLC implementation process? To what extent do they develop a clear, shared vision of their centres?

In this section, we report how each stakeholder group understands the CLC concept, and the role they play in implementation. Data from coordinators, teachers, principals, school board representatives, parents and community stakeholders are represented here. In addition, Exhibit 1 presents a sample of CLC mission statements to illustrate some of the shared visions that are emerging.

Coordinators: Coordinators demonstrated an understanding of the concept of a CLC as presented through the Guidebook and PRT training: as a way to bring communities into schools and to form partnerships that will strengthen schools and the communities. How this concept is implemented in the schools varies tremendously from centre to centre. The role the coordinator takes on in the school depends on both the style and professional background of the coordinator, and on the way the role is defined by the principal. In some CLCs, the coordinator is driving the vision and seeking out partners in the community; in other CLCs, the vision is driven or developed by other means or stakeholders (e.g. based on a formal needs assessment or developed by the principal or other school/community leaders).

In most CLCs, the coordinator is a day-to-day manager and implementer, and the one who completes paperwork and generates ideas for activities and partnerships. In some CLCs, the coordinator is also the on-site person who directs the activities. Some participants speak of the coordinators as “the glue,” the person who has the momentum and connections to move things forward in a cohesive manner. All principals rely heavily upon their coordinators to move the CLC initiative ahead, and in sites without coordinators or where a coordinator has left the position, implementation stalled at some point.

Principals: Principals generally articulate a vision of a CLC that is focused on increasing student success and/or on bringing the community into the school and serving the community. While the principal is most likely to articulate the vision, it is the coordinator who carries it out. Principals infrequently mentioned general community vitality or supporting the English-speaking community as a CLC goal. The following is a typical response from a principal when asked what the vision of the CLC was:

“The vision and reason for applying [for the CLC grant] was to improve student success in my school, culture in the school in lifelong learners; for students to see adults learning, that what was the big reason, and the service to the community.” *A principal*

In early (2007) focus groups, some principals mentioned feeling torn between what they understood as the CLC policy goals established by the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*, which centre on the vitality of the English-speaking community, and what they understood as their primary educational mandate of ensuring student academic success. A later focus group with principals in May 2008 revealed a major shift away from principals seeing this as a dichotomy. Instead, principals, for the most part, came to believe a community school is the right approach to education. They suggested that for a CLC to become a full-service school, there were two possible visions: 1) invest real support and funding into CLCs at the interministerial level by means of a clear provincial agreement, and 2) innovate and implement at the local level regardless of ministry support. One principal suggested a third possibility of a combination of these visions.

The principal’s role in each CLC varies, with three predominant styles emerging from the early data collection: (1) leader, (2) supporter, and (3) hands-off approach. Principals who see themselves as *leaders* of the CLC often describe the CLC and school as one entity. Leader principals tend not to involve themselves in day-to-day decisions and operations, but rely on their coordinators. These principals communicate to the school and the community that the CLC initiative is moving forward with themselves at the head. They not only provide support, in terms of identifying the direction of the CLC, but are also active on the steering committee and ensure that the CLC is on the governing board meeting agenda. Centres with this style of leader *and* a successful coordinator appeared the most advanced in terms of implementation. These CLCs have established many activities for students and teachers, and have established partnerships with community organizations. An example of such a principal is described in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Principal as CLC Leader

In this urban secondary school, serving an ethnically and economically diverse student population, the principal has worked to integrate the CLC and school into one entity. There is no distinction here between school activities and CLC activities; for the principal, they are one and the same. The school *is a CLC*, as evidenced by the fact that no distinction is made between them. While delegating day-to-day management of activities and partnerships to the CLC coordinator, the principal is *leading* the CLC. Through communication and action, the principal sends a message to school staff, parents and the broader community that the school is a CLC. The principal participates in steering committee meetings; the principal contributes to the mission and vision statement, as well as to action planning; the principal encourages faculty and students to use CLC resources, and the principal communicates daily with the coordinator. The coordinator talks about having latitude and support from the principal.

Other principals are active and vocal *supporters* of their CLCs, but take less direct responsibility for leading CLC initiatives or ownership of the CLC. In these cases, there was also less integration of the school and CLC as one entity. In these CLCs, the CLC is seen as a special offering or program, representing more of a coexistence or parallel model. Here the coordinator is the face of the CLC and the CLC principal delegates leadership to the coordinator. In these cases, the impetus for action is often the responsibility of the coordinator. An example of this type of leadership is described in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Principal as Supporter

In this relatively large urban secondary school, with several special offerings and concentrations, the CLC is regarded by the principal as another special program at the school. The principal wrote the grant for the CLC and provides verbal support and praise for the CLC, but has little time to dedicate to CLC activities. The principal delegates not only day-to-day management, but also key vision and mission building activities to the coordinator. The principal talks of CLC activities as separate from school activities. The teachers are aware of the CLC, but note that the principal does not actively encourage them to use the CLC resources. The coordinator suggests that it is a struggle to get the principal to pay attention to the CLC and suggests that this lack of visible leadership prevents the CLC from really taking hold in the school.

In one or two CLCs, the principal is neither an active leader nor active supporter of the CLC; these principals tend to take a “hands-off approach” or rely on a coordinator to get the CLC off the ground. These principals do not consistently attend and/or participate in PRT training sessions and events, and may not have been the one to apply for the grant. Coordinators under these principals report receiving the nonverbal message that the CLC is not a priority. At these schools, there was sometimes a turnover of the principal or coordinator or a poor fit between them. In these CLCs, implementation appears stalled.

The roles assumed by the principals are not necessarily static throughout the CLC development. The evaluation data indicated that the principal’s role shifted depending on changing circumstances. A visible success, for example, prompted a principal who had been less involved to actively engage with and support the CLC. A change in coordinator in several cases prompted new activity, and, in others, led to stalled implementation. An example of this is an urban secondary school where the principal was originally somewhat uninvolved with the CLC, leaving it primarily in the hands of the coordinator. With some visible successes and on recommendation from the evaluators, the principal has taken an active leadership role in the CLC. The coordinator and principal recently reported good progress in implementation and long-range planning. At the same time, another CLC that started off with great momentum and an eager leadership has seen implementation and activities stall with a new principal at the helm of the school. This example is illustrated in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3: Leadership Change

In this large urban secondary school, a new principal came to the school after a year of active implementation. The coordinator had worked closely with the previous principal and community partners, and the CLC seemed to be developing in a particular direction with all participants in agreement. Partners were engaged and activities had begun. The new principal inherited the CLC when assigned to this school. The principal spent much of the first year at the helm figuring out how to run the school; the CLC did not seem to be a priority. The steering committee did not meet frequently, activities were put on hold, and the coordinator was not able to meet frequently with the new principal. The coordinator felt unable to advance the action plan, and implementation stalled.

Teachers: Most teachers who participated in focus group discussions or interviews during site visits understood the purposes of the CLC as opening up the school to the community and bringing the community into the school, though few articulated what this would look like. At some sites, teachers reported understanding the CLC primarily as the addition of VCN equipment that is frequently housed in a particular room in the school.

In terms of the roles teachers see for themselves in the CLCs and in implementation, teachers across the sites were somewhat unclear of their roles. Many CLCs have a teacher on the steering committee (also sometimes called “partnership table”) and these more involved teachers have a clearer understanding of the vision and purpose of a particular CLC. Teachers, for the most part, are supportive of the idea of the CLC, even though many are unclear about the purpose. Numerous teachers associate the CLC with the VCN and thus see their roles as using technology as part of their teaching. The majority of sites have a core of one to five active teachers at each CLC who sit on the steering committee, or are involved in using community-based learning or the VCN with their classes.

School board representatives: Interviews with school board representatives indicated that they understood the CLCs as an initiative to bring communities into schools. School board representatives also talked about CLCs as efforts to strengthen communities and schools, and to bring resources to support student and community success. An illustrative quotation from a school board representative on the purposes of the CLC initiative follows:

“I see the goal as being one of entrenching the school within the community and the community within the school. In a period of declining enrollment, reduced funds, where we are able to share resources and bring community resources into the school and also have school resources available to the community.” *A school board representative*

For school board representatives, the CLC dossier is one of several areas for which they are responsible. While some representatives may have difficulty finding adequate time to address CLC issues, they view their roles as supporting the school principals and CLC coordinators, assisting with communication between involved parties, and advocating for the CLC at the school board level.

Parents: In interviews with parents during site visits,⁴ we found that parents who were more involved in the schools, such as already serving on the Governing Board or Parent Participation Organizations (PPO), were more aware of the CLC and had a clearer understanding of its purposes. Many, though not all, CLCs include one or more parents on the CLC steering committee. Parents reported seeing the CLC as a way to bring more resources to the school and the students, and also to bring more parents into the school. In some CLCs, especially those in small or remote areas, parents reported being very aware of the CLC and the activities for their children. Some less involved parents interviewed had not heard of the CLC before the interview, and others thought the CLC was synonymous with the VCN. Some illustrative quotations from parents regarding their understanding of the purpose of the CLC include the following:

“It’s to bring more things into the building. More accessible services.”

“It’s to help keep school open.”

“The CLC is what we needed, because we are so remote. Students don’t have opportunities—chances to visit things like museums. This [VCN] will give them more of a world-view.”

“The CLC is like glue. Connecting people. Bringing people more together.”

“What I hold onto is the idea of improving the school and spreading to the community.”

Community Stakeholders: Our assessment of how community stakeholders understand the concept of the CLC is based on interviews and focus groups conducted during site visits with community members (most were steering committee members at their various CLCs). It is evident from the data that most community stakeholders understand that CLCs are a project designed to enhance the vitality of their English-speaking communities. Most also see general community development and youth development purposes as well. Community stakeholders view the CLCs as a source for exchanging information, resources and services, as well as for reaching communities and community members. Many also feel that CLCs are intended to serve and enhance life and learning for students and their parents. Others see CLCs as a way to bring the community into schools. Some community stakeholders stated that they were unsure of their role or purpose on the steering committee. Some community stakeholder quotations are excerpted below:

“The purpose is to serve students, parents, community. Empower them. Have the space open all year for a hub. A chance for people to get together and exchange.”

“The CLC is a natural bridge to the community and school. The VCN is a window to the world. The CLC can assist parents and students to help in learning and with physical activity.”

“It gives kids added value. They know there are other resources out there. Gives kids more of a connection to community. They may go away for education but we start ties that they may come back to as well—which we desperately need.”

Mission Statements: We reviewed the mission statements of a selection of CLCs. There was some diversity in the purposes and goals across the CLCs. The statements analyzed for this report all focus on communities and schools working together but in some, students are more central to the focus and in others, the larger community is the main focus. Several mission statements are excerpted in Exhibit 4 to illustrate their variety.

⁴ Note that parent interviews and focus groups were not conducted at all sites.

Exhibit 4: A Selection of CLC Mission Statements

Mission Statement 1

A collaborative organization comprised of united partners working toward the development of sustainable opportunities which promote lifelong learning. By working together the partners strive to maintain and develop quality *educational, cultural/linguistic, social-economic, sports and leisure, entrepreneurial/career, and health services/activities* which respond to the diverse needs of the community at large. The CLC recognizes the future potential of the community it serves, and promotes the effective use of local skills and resources, thereby evoking a sense of enthusiasm and pride for the community in which we live.

Mission Statement 2

The CLC is a hub for developing lifelong learning through empowerment. Its aim is to level the playing field to develop the community of southwest Montréal, generating experience locally and far afield. It is participatory in nature and its destiny is to collaboratively organize, mobilize, and develop opportunities for success among its students, their families and the wider community

Mission Statement 3

The CLC will promote, encourage learning and cultivate good citizenship values to one and all. The CLC must directly impact the success of the children from the community serviced by the School.

Mission Statement 4

Using the school as a hub, in collaboration with diverse partners sharing a common vision, our mission is to promote student success and foster lifelong learning by actively participating in the development of educational services as well as enhancing community vitality through cultural, sports and recreational activities for students, their families and the communities they belong to.

2b. Who are the stakeholders in each CLC? To what extent are they involved in the process? How are decisions made? What is the role of the steering committee? What is the level of collaboration among the school and its partners and other stakeholders?

At this point in the evaluation, we can answer only parts of this question. For example, we discuss the role and use of the steering committee, but have only anecdotal evidence of how decisions are being made within the CLCs. Also, we are able to present data on the stakeholders, partners and those with whom activities are held, but do not have extensive data on the level of collaboration for all partners. More data on these topics will be available as the CLCs move from the launch phase into full-blown implementation.

Steering committees: There is great variation in the role of and use of steering committees at each CLC. At the time of our site visits in late 2007 through the spring of 2008, several coordinators reported that the steering committees were not meeting regularly, and some had not yet met

for that school year. Some coordinators seemed unsure of how to organize and effectively use a steering committee. For many, the steering committee was used to bring partners together and to share information, not for decision making. Other CLCs had highly organized steering committees that met regularly and worked to craft the direction, mission and vision for the CLC, as well as to plan activities. Steering committee members and coordinators report that the committees work well when the partners bring different strengths and expertise to the table and that the CLC leaders draw upon those strengths. For example, some coordinators with little nonprofit experience drew upon partners' expertise in helping to craft mission statements.

In addition to coordinators and principals, steering committees comprised key CLC community partners. At least six CLCs have a teacher representative on the committees, and many also have a parent representative; fewer have student representatives. The size of the committees ranges from small (about 5 members) to large (20 or more members).

Partners: Partners and steering committee members for each site are presented in Table 1. (These were identified from data gathered during site visits and reflected in action plans and other documents.) The partnerships are not necessarily all formalized with signed partnership agreements, but rather are organizations that CLCs have identified as partners/potential partners and those with whom activities have been or will be conducted. In some cases, partners are working very closely with a CLC, planning activities and services and engaging in long-term efforts. In others, the activities may be one-time events or a partnership may involve donation of time, money or other resources. (Please note that the list may not be exhaustive, as documents reviewed may have been incomplete or new partnerships may have been added since the site visits and document review.)

A few notable points about the CLCs' partnerships are that many of the CLCs are addressing community development broadly, with a majority of them working with their local *Community Economic Development and Employability Committee*. CLCs are also partnering with their local towns and municipalities as well as other government agencies. In addition to the 14 government partners listed, 7 CLCs are partnering with their local Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS), which we coded as a health/government type of partner. Seven partners dealing with cultural or multicultural issues were listed, such as Italian Community Services and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Exhibit 5 illustrates the number and extent of partnerships in a particular CLC.

Exhibit 5 CLC Partnerships

The English secondary school that houses this CLC is located in a predominately Francophone city. The secondary school has almost 1000 students and about 60 full-time teachers. Most of the students at the secondary school were born in Québec and speak English at home. The focus of the CLC in this community has been to build partnerships with community organizations that will improve the lives of students and their families. Many of the activities and partnerships have centred on engaging students and improving their academic performance.

The CLC is located in one wing of the secondary school, and teachers have reported that this has given meaning to the CLC and offered students a place to go. Many of the CLC partners have a focus on engaging students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. One of the original CLC partners has dedicated a room at the secondary school that is used

for school-based programs such as intervention programs, tutoring programs and after-school programs. This partner also runs a school program on Saturdays that is open to students beyond those enrolled in the secondary school and reaches a broader population in the community. A CLC room is used by another partner organization to teach English to community members on weekends.

Improving the literacy of secondary school students is also a priority for this CLC. Partnering with a community organization focused on literacy and a local basketball organization, in which many of the secondary school students participate, has created a unique avenue to address students struggling with literacy. These partners have worked together to develop a mentor, homework and tutoring program for students involved in basketball in the community.

Addressing health issues among students and families is another emerging issue for the CLC. The CLC hopes to make it possible for one of the school nurses to be available during the evenings to see people from the community. It is also planning to partner with a local university to develop health education programs for teenagers.

The collaboration between the CLC and the community partner organizations have helped the CLC implement a number of programs and activities that are focused on engaging students, improving student academic performance and improving student health.

2c. To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs find the Framework for Action helpful and use it in the implementation process? To what extent do CLCs develop and implement the various steps in the Framework for Action?

Use of the Framework for Action: In addition to the information and templates presented in the Guidebook, the Guidebook presents a step-by-step Framework for Action for the development of a CLC, which culminates in the development of a school-community collaborative action plan. Unfortunately, we do not have complete data on each centre's completion of the steps in the Framework for Action. We do, however, have data on the action plans and theories of change.

In addition to the action plans, CLCs are expected and encouraged to develop theories of change, which elaborate the overall conceptual framework for their project. During our site visits, we asked coordinators about their use of the Guidebook and the Framework for Action, and the development of their action plans and theories of change. We found wide variation in the use of and development of the different steps and tools. Some coordinators and their principals said they "never" use the Guidebook and do not have time to do so. Many centres pick and choose which aspects of the Guidebook to use. Thus, some sites have not engaged in asset mapping, for example. Most coordinators, however, do find that the Guidebook contains useful information that they consult as needed. A few coordinators referred to the Guidebook as their "Bible." Many coordinators and principals noted that there were too many forms and too much paperwork, although some saw value in forms that help systematize the development and implementation of the CLC. While some coordinators felt the documents were not helpful in concluding agreements with partners, others made use of these templates, such as the partnership agreement. Few CLCs have yet engaged in the final step of the action plan, which is evaluation, and even for those centres that submitted action plans, this final step is often not fully described in their plans.

Theories of Change/Action Plans: It is notable that in the documents submitted by coordinators, many use the terms “action plan” and “theory of change” interchangeably; thus when CLCs were asked to submit their theories of change in June 2008, several instead submitted action plans or a document outlining the steps in the development of a CLC. The documents submitted range from one-page tables with broad categories to detailed documents many pages in length describing impacts, outcomes, activities and partners. From the documents provided to us, it was not clear in some cases which steps in the Framework for Action were completed.

The CLC action plan or theory of change outlines strategies and methods for how the CLC activities will result in larger impacts for students, families and the community the CLC serves. One CLC, for example, identified increasing the strength and civility of the community as one of the anticipated project impacts. The CLC has planned to achieve this by implementing activities such as community and family intervention programs, drug awareness programs, a social skills group, as well as by addressing bullying. The theory of change for this CLC holds that these activities will help youth and families develop problem-solving skills, which will lead to greater resilience among community members when faced with challenges, and will ultimately result in increasing the strength and civility of the community. Another anticipated impact of this CLC is to increase postsecondary student achievement. The CLC is implementing activities such as literacy programs, a poetry program, early childhood programs, and even a theatre program to help achieve this goal. The intention of these programs is to improve literacy among students and therefore help students master the demands of the secondary school curriculum, all with the goal of increasing student success.

Table 2 documents the key characteristics of the available theories of change/action plans for Phase 1 CLCs. All of them listed long-term impacts; many use similar language related to three impacts of the PRT theory of change (ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools; families and communities, increased student engagement and success; enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning opportunities for the community). Also notable is that all have listed at least one nongovernment partner; many list several partnerships. Eight of the 12 list impacts, activities or partnerships designed to contribute to community vitality in general, but only 4 of them reference the vitality of English-speaking community in particular. Also evident from the table is that many CLCs are providing educational, extracurricular and other activities for students and others.

An example of a CLC action plan can be seen in Exhibit 6. This CLC is focused on increasing employment in the community, encouraging youth to remain in the community, sustaining economic development as well as many other anticipated impacts. The activities for each impact and the immediate outputs from these activities are shown. For example, to increase employment, encourage youth to remain in the community and sustain economic development, this CLC has implemented a cooperative entrepreneurship course, initiated a cooperative mini-store, held training sessions on how to prepare a CV, and participated in the Québec Entrepreneurship Contest. The CLC anticipates that these activities will lead to a set of outputs such as increased self-esteem, responsibility and motivation among community members; more apprenticeships for students with learning difficulties; and increased participation in the local economy. Together, these outputs will lead to the larger desired impact in terms of increasing employment, encouraging youth to stay in the community and sustaining economic development.

Exhibit 6: A theory of Change (School B111)

Note: * is for indicators

IMPACT	OUTCOME	OUTPUT	ACTIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An economically vibrant community * Lower unemployment rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable economic development Youth remain in community Community in full employment * Partnerships with local entrepreneurs * Attendance * TTFM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work apprenticeship for students having learning difficulties Knowledge of the community and job offers Apprenticeship of the economic community rules of life Enhancement of the motivation factor Enhancement of self-esteem Active participation in the local economic community Enhancement of the sense of responsibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative entrepreneurship class Cooperative laminating mini-store Training in CV writing Participation in the Québec Entrepreneurship Contest
IMPACT	OUTCOME	OUTPUT	ACTIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engaged citizens in the community Revitalized English-speaking community A more harmonious and safe environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth remain in community Sense of belonging within the community Parents, grandparents and community engaged in school life Enhanced capacity of parents to contribute to school life Better communication between children, parents and school Seniors reconnected to community * Partnerships within the community * Attendance at events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge of community Intergenerational and multicultural comprehension and engagement Parents able to help children with their homework Reduced bullying and ability to deal with problems * Number of students and seniors attending * Survey of seniors and students * Number of teachers or partners using the VCN 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary translators committee Greek and Spanish online courses Intergenerational activity in the family room Adopt a Grandparent Activity organization in seniors' buildings Writing of biographies Multicultural conferences Citizen's program: Goal of 100 hours of volunteer work per year for each participating student Conferences and workshops in the family room on different subjects Use of VCN

IMPACT	OUTCOME	OUTPUT	ACTIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engaged citizens making healthy and balanced choices for a sustainable healthy community * Social services usage * Rates of school absences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better trained athletes in the community Relief of stressful situation in families Healthy mind in a healthy body Well-adjusted citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More focus on studies Preparation of healthy, balanced meals Awareness of drug and alcohol effects on the body, mind and social health Physical activity Reduced loss of morale and depression in students Reduced bullying and ability to deal with problems * Attendance * Before and after survey for family, social services and students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Breakfast for needy students and preparation of a balanced meal Health and fitness week Drug prevention program Vaccination clinic Family room activities for parents and community AVEC program: Skateboard park, creation of a breezeway with plants, etc. Healthy food week

2d. To what extent do the CLCs use and value the training, technical assistance and general support from the PRT and the collaborative relationships with other CLCs in the project? Do CLCs need assistance in areas not addressed by the PRT?

(See also Section 3.1 [1b and 1c] above for additional discussion of value and use of PRT training.)

The CLC coordinators value the training, technical assistance and support from the PRT, although coordinators reported that not all training sessions are equally valued by all participants. CLCs indicated some discrepancy between being asked to be creative and think “outside the box” in developing their CLC versus all CLCs being required to conform to the same procedures for completing action plans, theories of change and steps in the Framework for Action. The most useful training aspects identified by participants include the chance to get together and learn from one another, share information and resources, and carve time away from the hectic school days for planning with their principals and school board representatives. Some coordinators felt that early training sessions, which focused on using the Guidebook and paperwork/reporting, were not the most productive use of their time. Some coordinators also reported that the PRT training was overly theoretical and did not address concrete issues such as gaining new partners or building steering committees. Some coordinators, principals and school board representatives reported that the training sessions often dealt with procedures for filling out forms and paperwork rather than with the actual *implementation and operation* of a CLC. Some quotations from training participants reflect these issues:

“Whenever I go into a training session, especially for three days, I ask what I’m getting out of it, what do I need. Quite frankly, I’ve checked off all the things on my list. If I have more concerns, I’ll talk to a coordinator who’s done it.” *A coordinator (November 2007)*

"The best part of the training session is talking to the other coordinators and sharing our experiences. And the best thing about this conference was meeting my school board rep. for the first time." *A coordinator (May 2008)*

"The PRT training isn't about living the reality and bringing it back to the school. The training is about forms and deadlines. My school teams want more." *A school board rep (May 2008)*

In terms of technical assistance and support, coordinators reported that the PRT is very responsive and very helpful. Evaluators heard time and again that "help is just a phone call away." In technical assistance and support roles, the PRT gives individualized support and can tailor its assistance to particular needs, making this support highly relevant and useful.

Coordinators are establishing collaborative relationships with other CLCs and appear to be building a support network among themselves, with relatively frequent e-mail and telephone conversations and use of the coordinators' listserv. Some coordinators collaborate on projects and serve as resources for each other. Coordinators seem to draw both strength and inspiration from one another. Phase 2 coordinators also appreciate being able to learn from the experiences of the Phase 1 coordinators.

"I don't feel alone anymore. I feel more confident." *A coordinator (November 2007)*

"The part I enjoyed most is the conversation with the other CLCs." *A coordinator (November 2007)*

"Chances to get together are invaluable. The coordinators are my colleagues, not those at my school." *A coordinator (May 2008)*

Coordinators, principals and others do report some other areas where training or assistance is needed. This includes:

- more training for teachers on the CLC concept to help with buy-in
- more training for teachers on how to integrate VCN and community-based learning into the curriculum rather than as extras that are outside of teaching time
- more training and information for the directors general to ensure they have full knowledge of the expectations and additional needs of CLCs, as well as the benefits, and
- more training for coordinators in operations, such as budgets, time management and self-evaluation related to CLC implementation and activities

2e. To what extent and in what ways are students involved in the development and implementation of each CLC? Why or why not?

Student involvement in CLCs varies from centre to centre. During our site visits from November 2007 through February 2008, we asked coordinators to arrange for evaluators to conduct focus groups or have opportunities to have conversations with students. In most CLCs, we were able to talk with students. Students in most CLCs were not involved in developing and implementing the CLC; students are more the target of CLC activities; for example, a CLC will establish tutoring or after-school activities for students. In a few CLCs, students were involved in early focus groups related to needs assessment and a few were involved as members of a steering committee.

In one or two CLCs that we visited, students did not know about the CLC, or the coordinator was not able to arrange a focus group with students citing “the students don’t know about the CLC yet.” In some, students are active participants in CLC activities and in some there is a physical space that is “the CLC” for students and others to use. In some CLCs, the activities are more outwardly or community focused, rather than school focused, and in these instances, there is little student involvement. Some CLCs have been able to strike a balance in activities for students and community members. Reviews of action plans/theories of change and other documents suggest that CLCs are organizing or hosting many activities targeting students, such as breakfast programs, popular or general interest classes, extracurricular activities, homework help, VCN seminars and more. In some CLCs, it is not always clear when activities are driven, organized or hosted by the CLC as opposed to usual school activities.

In our focus groups and conversations with students during site visits, students reported great potential for the CLC both in terms of serving students’ needs as well as integrating the school into the community and bringing the community to the school. In some CLCs, the activities students tend to associate with the CLC are related to the VCN. In some cases, the CLC is helping students make a connection to school beyond their classes. For example, through the CLC, students have been working with a nonprofit community organization that collects clothing donations. Through this experience, the students continued to work with this organization to set up a second-hand clothing store. Thus because of the CLC, students have been able to volunteer and also work on their entrepreneurship skills.

Students are not always aware when they are involved in a CLC activity, especially if a teacher is doing a community-based learning project or if a partner is running an activity that may be facilitated by the CLC coordinator. Other CLC coordinators are being very explicit in their publicity for events and activities, using the CLC project logo on brochures, flyers and posters. Some teachers also attempt to make the connection between activities and the CLC. Some quotations about students’ knowledge and involvement in the CLC follow:

“We did do a project and they knew it was part of the CLC, but I don’t think they see the connection besides the VCN. They don’t understand, have awareness of CLC.” *A teacher*

“Not many schools have the community learning centre. Smart boards, activities—trips and stuff. Sports club on Wed. VCN—watch movies, talk to kids in other schools or other countries.” *A student*

“The VCN is special because we watched a hockey game.” *A student*

“I don’t really know about the activities.” *A student*

“I don’t think a lot of us know about it. It’s about trying to interact the community and school.”
A student

During future site visits, and through other data collections, we plan to measure the level of student involvement and reasons for involvement.

2f. To what extent and in what ways are members of the community involved? What school/community partnerships are planned and developed?

As part of each site visit, the evaluators asked coordinators to arrange a focus group or interviews with partners and members of the community. At 10 of the 12 sites visited, we were able to conduct focus groups and/or interviews with individuals representing partners, community groups or the general community. For the most part, focus group and interview participants represented partners and members of the steering committee of each CLC. We realize that the viewpoints of active participants are likely different from an ordinary member of the community. Nonetheless, given that the site visits were conducted early in the implementation phase, many coordinators did not feel comfortable inviting uninvolved community members to talk with evaluators. With community members, partners and steering committee members, our interviews focused on their understanding of the CLC, challenges and successes, and their involvement in CLC development and implementation.

Community members and stakeholders understand the CLC as means for the community and school to collaborate, for the community to have access to school resources such as premises, and for serving populations through the school. Some community partners mentioned challenges related to establishing effective partnerships with the CLCs, including transportation across large regions often served by CLCs and issues related to working in schools (e.g. afterhour facilities and custodial services). Partners and stakeholders, however, also noted that implementation was still in the early stages and that they saw potential for activities and services.

Section 2b above discusses partnerships with community and other organizations in depth. In addition, Table 1 lists the community and other organizations that are involved in formal and informal partnerships with each CLC. The list is extensive and is notable in that community development and other nongovernment organizations dominate the list.

Exhibit 7 below provides an example of strong school and community relationships. Exhibit 8 describes the characteristics we found associated with CLCs that had relatively weak school and community relationships.

Exhibit 7: Strong School-Community Connections

This CLC serves a number of rural communities where English-speaking residents are the minority. The communities have a rich agricultural tradition. The town where the CLC is housed does not have a town centre, however, the CLC is becoming a centre of activity for the community.

This CLC has focused on using the school and CLC as a way to bring to community residents activities that have not been available in this region. Many of the CLC activities based at the elementary school bring the community into the school during afterschool or evening hours. The goal of many of these activities is to provide the community with opportunities to learn new skills or use the school for recreation. For example, there is an Internet Café that is held one evening a week where computers are available for use in the school and high-speed Internet can be accessed. Students and community members are welcome at the Internet Café and some students volunteer their time to help others with computer questions. In addition to the Internet Café, the school is used during the evenings to provide classes to adults, including a computer class that was very popular, a painting

class taught by a local artist, and a sewing workshop. The school also houses a literacy library in the CLC room that has books and reading materials for adults. Community members can borrow any of these books for their own use.

Both community members and teachers are utilizing the videoconference system, although it is still new to the school and community. The ability of the VCN to connect with remote areas also appears to be facilitating dialogue and support among community members. One of the popular uses for the VCN is the Telehealth video sessions that are held approximately once a month on relevant health topics. These sessions are open to the community at large. The challenge appears to be scheduling sessions that are convenient for a larger population and communicating the events to the public. As this technology becomes more familiar to teachers and the community, it appears it will be of great service in connecting people to information and resources in other parts of Canada and the world.

Other community-focused activities at this CLC include a new grant-funded project that will connect senior citizens with children and adult learners to create learning clusters around traditional agriculture and rural life skills. This unique project will be a way for the students and older community members to work together and learn about their community's history.

The community focus of this CLC is providing adults and students with new opportunities to engage in learning opportunities that have not previously been available. Access to adult education classes, recreation opportunities and other information has helped to reduce isolation in these rural communities.

Exhibit 8: Weak School-Community Connections

In evaluating the school-community partnerships of the CLCs, we observed some cases of relatively weak school-community linkages. These weaker relationships manifested in the following ways:

- * partnerships and interaction with the community limited to the exchange of services, usually extensions of earlier partnerships, and did not focus on collaboration; for example, a school providing space for community activities
- * failure to include a parent or other key community stakeholders on the steering committee
- * lack of strong communication with, or support from, the local town or city collaborating with the CLC to provide services to the community
- * lack of a strong shared sense of community in schools serving large and/or fragmented geographical areas with diverse student populations

Future data collection will emphasize interviews with participants in CLC activities and not just stakeholders/partners. It will also examine the nature and types of partnerships.

2g. What other collaborations serve the implementation of each CLC?

Partnerships, including collaborations, are discussed above in subquestion 2b.

2h. What is the range of services provided by the CLCs and how does it broaden and expand over time? To what extent do these services meet the needs and gaps identified? What are the constraints, challenges and opportunities?

CLCs and their partners, at this stage in data collection, are conducting many activities. The term “service” can be generic for any activity, program or service, whether short- or long-term. It is worth noting that CLCs are more likely to engage in discrete activities such as a cooking class, a dance, festival, homework club, sports, or other special event than in providing or coordinating the provision of health and social services. Many activities are discrete or time-bounded events that participants might register for, such as homework club, afterschool basketball, or weekend language or craft courses, which may or may not be part of a larger program of activities and services. Service tends to fall into the realm of health and social services and are often, but not always, provided by a professional; some examples of CLC services include psychological counselling, eating disorders support group, vaccination clinic, or a new immigrant integration support group. However, in interviews and focus groups, many partners noted the potential for services and linkages, but, at the time of the site visits, these were still ideas and not yet materialized. Action plans and theories of change also refer to planned or actual community, health and other social services. During the period of site visits, CLCs and their partners were frequently still discussing community needs and potential services. In some CLCs, partnerships were made and activities planned before community needs were assessed or before the steering committee was set up. In these centres, the CLC’s direction is driven more by the principal’s and/or coordinator’s ideas or vision. In some CLCs, coordinators noted the desire for quick and visible activities that could be highlighted as CLC successes and enhance support for the CLC. In others, activities and services are being planned based on community needs and assets. A few more examples of services offered through or by the CLC include:

- family support services via the Family Resource Centre to support students as parents
- offering students advanced courses not available through the school
- communication (e.g. local newsletters)
- CSSS nurses, dentists, psychologist at the school for the first time
- afterschool homework assistance

Table 3 lists activities by centre and they will be discussed more in the next section.

2i. What are the activities and exemplary practices these CLCs implement in the following areas?

- education and lifelong learning
- youth development
- support for family and community
- recreation, e.g. sports and arts/culture
- access to information and communications technologies (ICT)
- service integration and access, and
- access to health services

Based on site visits, interviews, focus groups and document review, the activities the CLCs are implementing are presented in Table 3. The list of activities may not be comprehensive, as some CLCs did not submit documents listing activities. The activities are categorized according to the following broad categories: education and lifelong learning, youth development, support for family and community, recreation, access to information and communications technologies, service integration and access, and access to health services.

Table 3 indicates that activities in the areas of education and lifelong learning as well as recreation are the most frequent across the centres. Few activities are listed in the areas of service integration and access. While not necessarily listed under access to information and communications technologies, we know that many sites are using their VCNs for community and student activities. For example, some of the parent workshops listed were conducted using the VCN technology. Most CLCs list several activities; however, one or two indicated only a few activities and/or services, raising questions about the progress of implementation at these sites.

2j. What is the level of parent and other community member participation in the CLC's activities and services?

In most CLCs, the activities are primarily geared toward students, and less toward parents and other community members. That said, CLC coordinators and principals report that for those activities geared toward parents and other community levels, there are good levels of participation. For example, one CLC has activities for women, preliteracy for small children, and a festival of the arts for the whole community. Parents are also involved in a number of CLC steering committees. CLCs and the PRT provided evaluators with lists of activities but not with records or counts of the number of participants in CLC activities and services. Evaluators expect to collect more data on participation in the coming year.

Based on findings from the site visits and document review, it appears that community members in most communities are beginning to engage in activities or use the CLC's resources and services and/or are mobilizing resources and services to meet the needs of the CLC. Site data reveal many schools are using the CLC to enhance prior partnerships. Indeed, several sites mentioned having longstanding partnerships with community organizations and that the CLCs served as a way to formalize the partnerships. For example, in one CLC that held a yearly fundraiser for

an immigrant-settlement organization, the CLC has led to a formal relationship including the rental of space in the school by the organization. Through CLCs, many new activities are being offered and many new partnerships established. A few schools have not advanced far in implementation of the CLC and in these there is little engagement with partners and few activities. In these CLCs, we do not see a mobilization of services and resources.

2k. What are the attitudes toward the school/centre on the part of parents, students and other stakeholders at the beginning of the project (e.g. value of the school/centre and its services, comfort level), and to what extent and in what ways do these attitudes change over time?

Our interviews and focus groups with parents and community members do provide some insight into attitudes toward the CLC on the part of parents and other stakeholders.

Parents: In many CLCs, parent involvement and knowledge of the CLC is low, although in many CLCs there is a core of parents available to help or be involved. Some parents expressed the idea that the CLC is a good thing, but there is often some uncertainty about whether the initiative will continue. Some parents expressed the desire that it not be forgotten that CLCs are schools at heart and that student learning is the main responsibility of a school. It is notable that in some CLCs, especially remote ones, parents are both involved and aware of the CLC and its activities, as well as of the potential for students and community building. Some parents stated that if the CLC serves the children, the parents would be supportive.

Students: Student involvement in activities varies from centre to centre, with some high and some low. In CLCs that are highly student-activity focused, there is more involvement and knowledge of the CLC. There does not seem to be a discernible pattern of student involvement based on location or grade levels served. Students in many centres report pride that their school is a CLC. (See also section 2e.)

Community Stakeholders: Through CLCs, many new activities are being offered and many partnerships established. Some CLCs approach partners strategically while others cast a wider net, engaging any partner without close attention to whether and how the partnership fits with the vision, mission and purpose of the CLC. (See also section 2f.)

Teachers: Teachers in all schools *know* their school has a CLC and understand the CLC idea. There is a sense of pride that “our school is a CLC,” but there are varying levels of teacher involvement. In some, teachers use the VCN and have been involved in “community-based learning.” Teachers in different sites collaborate with the CLC community-based learning coordinator at the PRT to integrate CLC activities in the community with their classroom instruction. In others, teachers know of the CLC, but have not had any contact with it. In some CLCs, teachers associate the CLC with the VCN exclusively.

Most teachers see the CLC as having potential for enhancing the school and the learning environment, but some are uncertain or hesitant of how the changes will affect them. They also express some concern about lack of time to learn how to integrate CLC services into their teaching, whether through community-based learning or the VCN.

At most CLCs, there are at least some teachers who embrace the new technology and CBL. Other teachers would like to participate in CLC initiatives, but do not feel that they have the time or resources to lead the initiatives. School staff at several CLCs mentioned that many teachers are overwhelmed adjusting to the current education reform and are taking a “wait and see” attitude about whether instructional reforms associated with the CLC will be beneficial to their instructional goals. Other teachers are concerned about whether they have the time to devote to the CLC.

2I. What is the nature of the relationship of the school/centre and of the English-speaking community it serves, and to what extent and in what ways does this change over the life of the project?

[SECTION EXPANDED BY DR. LAMARRE IN ADDENDUM TO THIS REPORT]

The nature of the relationship between a CLC and the English-speaking community it serves varies to some degree on the remoteness or isolation of the community. In all but the few CLCs where implementation has stalled, CLCs have active partnerships with organizations, and many of these serve Anglophones. In the remote communities especially, we hear reports of the CLC bringing vibrancy to communities, or giving the English-speaking community a place to gather in their own area. Even in more urban areas, while CLCs may not expect to be the hub of the community because the community may be dispersed and diverse or other community centres exist, coordinators, principals and stakeholders report a sense of positive action in communities that are more likely to see an English institution close down rather than grow.

As indicated earlier, the priority placed on serving the English-speaking community appears to vary across the CLCs. Examples of activities and partnerships that relate to the English-speaking community and community vitality include:

- an Internet café in a rural area where there is little home access to computers and the Internet
- an English-language March break “camp” at a school to fulfill a community need
- development of CLC or general community newsletters to facilitate access to information about a community in English
- the establishment of branch offices of health and social service organizations directly in a school, such as an immigrant assistance group, an afterschool homework help group, a physiotherapy clinic, and others, where access to these types of services in English is inaccessible or difficult
- partnerships with cultural organizations to offer classes and to provide space for activities
- use of school facilities for groups and organizations, such as providing practice space to the Highland Frasers or a choir
- use of videoconference facilities by groups, such as a group of mayors in a rural area, an intercultural group, students who “visit” a CEGEP via videoconference

The example of a CLC in a remote part of Québec provides an interesting and powerful description of the potential impact that a CLC can have on English-speaking communities.

Exhibit 9: CLCs responding to the needs of the local English community

This CLC is located in a small school of less than a hundred students serving both elementary and secondary school students in a remote and isolated part of Québec. Most students come from the local community, but some of the secondary school students come from outlying villages. In the winter months, many students travel to school on snowmobiles. There are nine full-time teachers.

The village is only accessible by boat or plane in the warm months and by snowmobile and plane in the colder part of the year. The local community is tightly knit and almost entirely Anglophone. There are a few Francophones in the community, either from other villages or from urban centres, but they have moved to the area as service providers (nurse and her family, for example). Family income comes from primary resources, the provision of services (such as health and education) or from seasonal work in other parts of Canada. The population of the community actually grows in the winter months when people come back from other provinces like Alberta. Despite its isolation, the community is active and there is a strong sense of attachment to the community and region—expressed by those that stay on as well as by those that have left. This said, there is a steady drain among the younger population who are leaving to continue their education and find employment. Students from this school traditionally do well on secondary school exams—and for this reason are that much more likely to leave than to stay. The economic sustainability of the community, and hence its survival and continuation, is one of the main concerns for the people living here and a target within this particular CLC’s action plan.

The CLC has its own space in the school. The room is close to the entrance and is very visible. It has its own bulletin board on which activities are announced. The CLC room has a telephone and a computer but no Internet hookup of its own. The VCN equipment is located in its own room on the second floor. At the present time, this CLC is working toward an integrated model and is using its theory of change as a stepping-stone toward this goal, as the teachers start knitting the CLC goals into curriculum delivery.

Prior to having the CLC, the school was already very involved in providing sports activities to students. The notion of opening the school to the community did not require a huge leap for the principal and staff. A system has been put in place so that the gym can be used by all on evenings and weekends. This is much appreciated and the school has in effect become the centre of a great many of the activities taking place in this village. In the same vein, the school library is expanding to become a community facility with books for adults as well as children, and a woman’s group is regularly using the school in the evenings for scrap-booking. The school is now being used for a summer camp for tiny tots and elementary school students. A secondary school science teacher participated in building the curriculum for the summer camp and teenagers in the community and returning CEGEP students were offered employment with the summer camp. The school is now perceived as more open to all in both the physical and more general sense, and this is considered a major achievement by all, including the principal and teaching staff.

Associations and service providers who are members of the Partnership Table are happy with their relationship with the CLC, which they describe as reciprocal, facilitating and pertinent to their mandate. Associations and service providers expressed their willingness to sit on the Partnership Table for the CLC (and for that matter on those of all CLCs in

the region). Partners' comments on their relationship with the CLC include the following: "it's like having an arm into the community," *"it's like having a ground person," "it's provided a link to the community," "the CLC was the missing link between regional associations and services and people in local community."*

One of the main successes of this particular CLC, according to many interviewed, is the huge improvement of communication and networking in the community and the region through the development of a regional newsletter. Previous initiatives had been tried, but now *"everyone knows what is going on because of the newsletter."* Since the newsletter is regional, it has improved communication not only in the local community, but also between communities in the region. The newsletter, which requires very little actual funding, is supported by a number of different partners in the community who share information and reports.

The CLC was described as something that could bring the local community together, as well as help pull together the region, but it was also expressed that the CLC could bring the larger outside world into contact with people living in this remote part of Québec. More specifically, the VCN, although still not used to full potential, is considered a window out onto the world, but also as a window into the community: able to bring, for example, museums, CEGEPs and specialists into the community. In a relatively short time, thousands of dollars in travel costs and human hours have been saved through the use of the VCN by education specialists who were able to participate in meetings without leaving the community. Furthermore, activities that could not be offered to students have been made possible, such as a virtual visit of a space station and talking to students in a neighbouring school roughly four hours away by snowmobile.

The biggest concern expressed in respect to the CLC is finding ways to ensure the sustainability of the coordinator position. The whole future of the CLC is seen as tied to this issue. There is also a real concern that the community and the CLC have to prove that this initiative is viable and worthwhile in a very short time. People in this small community have seen programs come and go and are somewhat hesitant to invest time and energy in a project that may be fleeting.

As can be seen in this brief description, this CLC in an isolated part of Québec is showing its potential to bring a community together and provide people with more services, activities and information at relatively little cost. It seems to make good sense that in an isolated village in which the school is the only really important building, complete with gym and other facilities, the CLC becomes the hub for that community. It is also worth underlying that seeing this initiative take off has been met with a surge of hope and enthusiasm.

2m. What is the baseline portrait of these schools/communities prior to or in early stages of CLC implementation? To what extent and in what ways do these schools/communities change over the life of the project? Do the changes reflect the outcomes defined in the individual CLC theories of change? Have any unanticipated outcomes/changes occurred?

In this section, we focus on the first part of this question, that is, the baseline portrait of the schools and communities; the final report will focus on the changes from baseline data.

Table 4 summarizes baseline data from the CLC schools and communities in which they are located/serve. The data on the characteristics of the schools are for the 2007-2008 school year and come from the "Fiche-école" or school summary sheet for each of the schools involved in the CLC project and subject to oversight by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). Data on the communities come from various sources such as Canadian Heritage, the community health and social service network, and others, as noted on the table.

Looking first at the school characteristics, we see great diversity. Some schools are small, serving only 45 students, and others are large with almost 1000 students. Teaching staff range from 4.7 full-time equivalent teachers to 67.2 full-time equivalent teachers. In some schools, the majority of students are Anglophone, speaking English at home, and in others, they are mostly Francophone with a minority of students who speak English at home. The percentage of students speaking English at home ranges from 41% to 100%. The socioeconomic conditions of the schools also range widely. The socioeconomic index (an index of mothers without a diploma and unemployed parents) ranges from 9.416 to 29.38. And with the decile rank, which is a poverty index where decile ranks of 9 and 10 correspond to the most disadvantaged schools, 6 of the 11 schools have ranks of 7 or higher, indicating that many CLCs are in disadvantaged schools.

Turning to the characteristics of the communities in which CLCs are located or which they are targeting for service, we see a wide variation in the characteristics of the communities served.⁵ The census data are for 2001, the last year for which census data on Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC) have been released. We see that CLCs are in communities with as few as 520 Anglophone residents to as many as over 500 000 for those on the Island of Montréal. In these communities, the Official Language Minority Population, or the Anglophones, make up as little as 8.2% of the total population to as much as 91.2%. Unemployment rates in the CLC communities range from a low of 6.9% to as high as 35.7%, with 6 of the 15 communities having unemployment rates of 10% or higher, and 4 of these 6 having rates of 20% or higher. As likely reflective of the unemployment rates, in 6 of the CLC communities, more than 50% of the Anglophones 15 years and older have incomes of less than \$20 000 a year.

In terms of the health and social characteristics of the CLC communities, we again find much variation. In four of the communities, there appears to be high levels of volunteerism, with estimates that more than 50% of the adult Anglophone population were engaged in unpaid volunteer work in the prior year. And in three of the communities, more than 25% reported volunteering at a school. We see wide variation as well regarding the communities' access to continuing education, with high levels reported for communities in or near Montréal or for communities with an English university or CEGEP, and low levels elsewhere. Similarly, we see widely varying, but fairly low levels of satisfaction regarding access to leisure programs and services such as English preschool and daycare.

⁵ All Phase 1 CLCs were asked to identify the local areas they are targeting for service. For those that did, Research Unit, Official Languages Support Programs Branch of Canadian Heritage provided modified "Official Language Minority Community Profile Table Series" reports with data from the identified communities, towns and municipalities.

With regard to health ratings, Anglophone communities on or around Montréal report the highest levels of self-report health, with 83.4% to 90.1% indicating their general state of health as good, very good, or excellent. Anglophones were also asked about their satisfaction in terms of access to health services, and we again find that those communities on or around Montréal have the highest levels of satisfaction at 39% to 55%. In these same communities, we also see Anglophones reporting high levels of use of English with doctors, doctors at CLSCs (now CSSS), and the Info-Santé line.

We expect to update the data presented in the tables over the course of the project, provided that the data from the sources used are also updated.

Reflections and Summary of Implementation Question 2

To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs, led by principals and CLC coordinators, implement their action plans, including development of community partnerships and engagement, development of a culture of collaboration, and use of community-based learning?

It is evident that all schools have to greater or lesser extents followed steps in their action plans and in the Framework for Action. The implementation of the CLCs in 15 Phase 1 schools simultaneously has shown that implementation happens at different speeds and with differing levels of success. This is to be expected in an initiative of this size and scope. To help understand program implementation, we refer to Fixsen and colleagues (2005) who have developed a typology of the stages of implementation of an initiative. The typology was originally developed in the mental-health setting and has been used in educational settings as well. We find it useful for thinking about the range of implementation we see in the CLC initiative. The stages include, in increasing level of implementation: exploration and adoption, installation, initial implementation, full operation, and innovation and sustainability. Our data suggest that at least two Phase 1 CLCs appear to still be in the early installation phase of implementation, where they have obtained the grant, have hired a coordinator, and are working on organizational changes, but are only beginning to initiate activities, programs and community partnerships toward student success and lifelong learning. In these CLCs, there may have been turnover of the principal or delay in hiring a coordinator, a poor fit between the coordinator and principal, or there may have been a lack of support for the initiative from key stakeholders such as the principal, school board or teachers that has slowed the implementation momentum. At this stage, CLCs may not have completed important steps in the Framework for Action, such as developing an action plan or theory of change, or have signed partnership agreements. These CLCs tend not to have regular steering committee meetings.

Several Phase 1 CLCs, based on the evidence presented here, are at the stage of initial implementation, where change seems to be taking place in the school's overall practices and operation. These CLCs show evidence of changes in organizational capacity and organizational culture. The coordinator and principal are working together to engage with partners and to implement activities and services designed to enhance student success and engagement and to support lifelong learning in the community; some are working toward the goal of having the CLC become the hub of activities and services for students, families and the community. These are the CLCs that frequently have several partnerships established and that regularly hold activities. The activities may have been developed prior to the completion of key Framework for Action Planning steps, such as the

mission statement or formation of the steering committee, but the coordinator is working toward completing the steps in the Framework for Action, such as action planning or developing an initial theory of change. The challenges at this stage can involve motivating people to invest time and effort in the difficult and complex task of implementing a large and organizational-changing initiative. The CLC may still be struggling with questions of implementation and buy-in, for example, questions such as the following: what are the activities and services that best fit our goals, how do we get to the outcomes, how do we articulate our outcomes, how can we get teachers' support?

What Fixsen and colleagues (2005) call "full operation" tends to happen in years two to four of implementation and at this point, stakeholders are no longer questioning whether the initiative is right for them, but rather the initiative is fully integrated into the school's operation and practice. There is leadership by the principal, an active coordinator, supportive teachers, an operating steering committee and selected partners who are working together toward CLC goals. For these CLCs, key phases of the Framework for Action have been implemented. These CLCs have mapped their community assets, determined community needs, selected partners, developed a mission statement, and selected and begun offering programs and services. The community is aware of the CLC and the CLC may be working toward becoming a hub for education and community activities. The CLC is accepted by key stakeholders. Benefits of the initiative are being seen and felt by stakeholders in the school and the broader community. There is evidence that several Phase 1 CLCs are at this stage.

Summary. The rest of this section summarizes the main findings from the evaluation subquestions discussed in detail above.

Roles and Understanding of the CLC:

- Different stakeholders have similar understanding of the CLC concept and there is some shared vision developing.
- Coordinators are day-to-day managers and implementers who take more or less initiative, depending on particular circumstances in the school such as principal support.
- Principals may be acting as leaders, supporters or taking a passive approach in their CLC.
- The principal role is not static but may change over time becoming more or less supportive.
- Teachers are aware of and mostly supportive of the CLC. Teachers are not always clear about their role in the CLC.
- CLC mission statements focus on schools and communities working together, but some are more student oriented and some more community oriented.

Stakeholders and Partners

- In addition to the coordinator, steering committees frequently include the principal and may include teachers, a parent and even students. All steering committees comprise key partners, as well.
- Not all CLCs have steering committees that meet regularly and that are decision-making bodies; some are brought together more for informational purposes.
- All Phase 1 CLCs have formal or informal partnerships. Some CLCs have only a few partners, while others have many. The nature and extent of the partnerships is not known at this time.

- Partners are most frequently addressing community and economic development issues (CEDEC) and many CLCs are partnering with their towns or municipalities. Many are also partnering with their local health and social service agency (CSSS). CLCs also frequently partner with cultural and other community-based organizations.

Use of the Framework for Action

- Early reports from coordinators and principals were that the Guidebook and Framework for Action were useful, but also overwhelming.
- Most coordinators are using parts of the Framework for Action, and many, but not all, are following key steps. As noted earlier in this section, upon reflection, it appears that those CLCs following the stages of the Framework, in combination with other circumstances, such as leadership by the principal and an effective coordinator, are in more advanced stages of implementation.
- Many CLCs have developed action plans/theories of change, but these vary a great deal in terms of the level of detail regarding impacts, outcomes and strategies.

Use and Value of Technical Assistance and Collaborative Relationships With Other CLCs

- Key stakeholders value the PRT as a resource for information and implementation support.
- Coordinators and others wish that training provided by the PRT were more focused on the work and challenges of implementation and less on the completion of reports.
- Coordinators, principals and school board representatives value training for the opportunity to come together and jointly work on planning to move implementation forward.
- Coordinators value learning from each other and from sharing experiences.
- Coordinators are developing a collaborative network through in-person meetings and the use of the coordinators' listserv.

Activities and Services

- Services provided by CLCs, or through a partnership, frequently involve health and health information through the local CSSS and Telehealth VCN sessions with McGill University. Other services include vaccination clinics, support for families, psychological services in English, language courses, and so on.
- Partners note the potential for additional or enhanced services through the partnership with the CLC.
- Overall, CLCs offer many activities for students and the broader community. Most activities fall into the category of "Education and Lifelong Learning" and include cultural awareness talks, popular education courses (e.g. photography), study skills workshops, postsecondary planning, language workshops, literacy programs, tutoring programs, Saturday schools, and more.
- Many activities were also listed in the category of "Recreation" (e.g. aerobics classes for families, line dancing, movie nights, sports programs). We also saw activities in the categories of "Youth Development" (e.g. a drug prevention program), "Support for Family and Community" (e.g. a recycling program), "Access to Information and Communications Technologies" (e.g. the *Sounds Like Quebec* project), as well as "Service Integration and Access" and "Access to Health Services" (e.g. vaccination clinics).

Involvement of Teachers

- Teachers are verbally supportive of the CLC.
- Many teachers are still unaware of their role in the CLC or how the CLC will affect them.
- Many teachers associate the CLC with the VCN.

Involvement of Students, Parents and the General Community

- Student involvement in CLC development and implementation varies from centre to centre. Students are participating in activities at many CLCs.
- Some CLCs have a student on the steering committee.
- Community members and parents may be involved in the CLC as steering committee members or as activity participants. Some community members are involved as partners and deliver or offer services in the school.
- Some CLCs are very focused on activities for students, and on student success and engagement.
- Some CLCs have strong community connections and are focused on activities and services for the general community. For others, the general community may be peripheral.

Nature of the Relationship of the CLC and the English-Speaking Community It Serves

- The nature of the relationship varies to some degree based on the remote or urban location. In remote communities, the CLCs are very visible and become a centre of activity. In the more urban communities, the CLCs may be active and engaged with the community, but they have challenges related to a larger population and other existing community centres.
- Many CLCs are engaging in activities that may serve to benefit or strengthen the English community in the longer term, such as hosting English-language summer camp, developing community newsletters, and supporting literacy in English.

Baseline Portrait of Schools and Communities

- The schools range in size from 45 students to almost 1000 students.
- CLCs are in schools where a majority of students speak English at home.
- CLCs are in schools of relatively high economic disadvantage.
- The communities in which the CLCs are located vary greatly from very remote communities with as few as 520 Anglophones to those on the Island of Montréal with over 500 000 Anglophone members of the community.
- Unemployment rates in the communities ranged from a low of 6.9% to a high of 35.7%.
- Communities in and around Montréal rated their health and their access to health services in English generally higher than those outside of Montréal.

Recommendations. Based on the findings presented in this section of the report, we make several recommendations aimed at the Community Learning Centres.

- Centres should make time for long-term planning in order to develop a coherent and sustainable program or set of programs that work toward the overall goals of enhanced student success and engagement, support of lifelong learning, and enhanced access to services. The Framework for Action can provide guidelines and support for this process.

- CLCs should consider ways to enhance the use of their steering committees in order to support implementation and work toward sustainability. Coordinators might consider organizing into subcommittees in order to distribute the work, or they may seek board members with particular expertise to contribute.
- Centres should consider ways to engage teachers and to help them make the connection between the VCN, community-based learning and the CLC.
- Multisite schools should work to ensure that all school sites are engaged in CLC activities, contribute to its development, and benefit from its resources.
- Centres should consider ways to ensure that the principal and coordinator engage in information sharing and joint planning with a view to moving forward implementation.
- Centres should consider ways of sharing successes, activities and partners with the school board and directors general in order to build support for the project.

3.3. CLC Support

Implementation Question 3: What is the role of the school board and school-level committees in supporting (or hindering) the process of CLC implementation?

This section focuses on the regional school boards because the role of school-level committees, such as school governing boards, has not been thoroughly examined at this point of the evaluation.

Each of the 11 school boards with a CLC has a representative that is a liaison to the CLC(s) within that board's region. The school board representative is the liaison between the CLC and the board, including the director general, elected board members and professional staff. The school board representatives to the CLCs were interviewed by telephone in April 2008 and in a focus group in May 2008. They were asked about their role and the role of the school board in supporting the CLC initiative. They were also asked their opinion about the CLCs' challenges and successes.

The school board representatives vary in their roles with the CLCs, from being closely involved in the CLC's operation, to being only peripheral to its operation. For example, some representatives reported their roles as supporting the school principals, helping with hiring, clarifying the role of coordinator, and communicating to and advocating for the CLC with the board, while others had limited conversations about forms and regulations. All expressed the idea that their role is to help this project be successful, but noted some challenges. The school board representatives discussed some of the challenges of their role, including the tension that arises if the board representative is a CLC liaison to schools that may fall out of his or her usual oversight role. Because the liaison is not in regular communication with the school principals, the liaison might not hear about activities or events that are taking place at the CLC. The board representatives expressed the need to clarify the communication channels between the PRT, schools and school board. Many board representatives said the board is not always in the loop of the communication between the schools and the PRT. Clarifying this issue will help the board representative be more supportive of the CLCs in the future.

“We are liaisons, when something is needed we try to help.”

“The administrator and I touch base and see how things are going. When she has requests and renovations she forwards them to me and I try to gather people together to address them and take a look at them along with the DG. Meeting with the administrator to hear her thoughts on where she sees this going and how she sees the requests turning into a self-sufficient process. And also if there are other issues she has that involve the board.”

“It was easier when I had one CLC. It’s more complicated this year. My original role was to be the board liaison to the CLC. Support the principal and the coordinator. Share with the school board teams and other administrators and other board administrators what is going on with the CLC. Also to bring it to the political level—the commissioners. Regular updates, the CLC is a standing item to give updates on at the commissioner level meetings—who the partners are, some of the new initiatives at the CLC ...”

“My role was to make this a successful project and try to get from the school board the support needed. Soon after, we got a second CLC, another challenge because we were in midyear. There was not even a budget for the first one and now there was not one for the second. We had to find resources and support the coordinator. And the CLCs work differently from each other and we have to do what it takes for that school to make it work.”

The school boards generally have less of a direct role than the representatives in the implementation of the CLCs. Several school board representatives stated that the directors general of the school boards are not necessarily knowledgeable and/or supportive of CLC implementation. School board representatives noted that all school boards had to pass resolutions to approve the CLCs in their schools, but many agreed that at the time, the directors general did not realize the extent of the commitment and change that the CLCs would bring. School board representatives report that they believe the support of the board and the directors general is critical to the success of a CLC.

“When the DGs were approached, they didn’t clearly understand the commitment they had to make to support the schools.”

“The idea was a good idea but people didn’t know what it was really about. To be honest, the equipment was attractive.”

“It has to be a board commitment.”

School board representatives were asked about successes and challenges with the CLCs, as they perceive them. The school board representatives reported several unique opportunities or value-added from the CLC project. The ties with the community were most frequently mentioned, as were the opportunities to break isolation in rural areas, provide activities for students, establish a strong foundation to ensure student success, and increase English services offered to the Anglophone communities served by CLCs. Several representatives also noted that the presence of the coordinator in the school created a positive dynamic. Another noted that the school already had various community ties, but that the CLC brought all the disparate pieces together into a community learning centre. Some of the challenges identified include concern about sustainability, the demands on school leadership (e.g. paperwork and management), partnership development that supports the CLC vision, union issues, and extra staff necessary to keep schools open for extended hours.

Reflections and Summary of Question 3

Support at the school board level appears to be important in smoothing the way for CLC implementation. School board representatives noted that all school boards had to pass resolutions to approve the CLCs in their schools, but many reported that at the time, the directors general (DGs) did not realize the extent of the commitment and change the CLCs would bring. Thus, it has been a challenge for some CLCs to obtain the support they need in terms of the required in-kind contributions. Some DGs and boards are very supportive. Indeed, one board in a remote area is considering the idea of making all schools community learning centres. There was also confusion expressed on the part of the coordinators and principals as to the role of the school board representative. School board representatives also noted that a challenge in supporting the CLCs is that for each of them, the CLCs is just one of numerous dossiers for them.

3.4. Emerging Issues

Several emerging issues have arisen, some evident in the findings presented above, and some that have emerged but that do not fit neatly into one of the subquestions examined.

Importance of coordinator: Coordinators are key to CLC implementation. Principals rely heavily on their coordinators to do the work of building the CLC. It is doubtful that the partnerships and programs that CLCs are building would happen without a coordinator. Underscoring the need for a coordinator, in sites that lacked a coordinator during much of the grant period, very little activity, planning and outreach occurred before a coordinator was in place. Indeed, there was unanimous agreement among the principals that without the coordinators, CLC implementation would not happen. When asked about the coordinator's qualifications, one principal summed up the general consensus of the focus group: "Someone who knows the community first off, then has good organizational and people skills, and finally if possible, someone who knows how a school works. This last is not critical—the other two traits are." Exhibit 10 discusses the coordinator's role and functions, and some quotations that illustrate the principal's view of the coordinator's importance follow:

"If the coordinator is the wrong person, it's no good." *A principal (May 2008)*

"I lost my coordinator and had to take on all the CLC work." *A principal (May 2008)*

"With no coordinator, we staggered along. It was a waste of time and a waste of money." *A principal (May 2008)*

"I also lost my coordinator, we managed just barely to keep the CLC going but we didn't do anything new. We just kept it going. I couldn't do it on my own." *A principal (May 2008)*

"The principal should have a large say in the hiring of a coordinator. There is agreement on this." *A principal (May 2008)*

Exhibit 10: Role and Function of the Coordinator

The CLC is a small English school located in a rural English-speaking community in a town of about 700 people, but is also the hub of its region. The Anglophone population of the area is roughly 2500. Forty per cent of the population is age 45 or older. Agriculture and manufacturing are the two main industries in the area. More than 50% of the population

earns less than \$20 000 a year (2001 data). The school has been threatened with closing—the community recently lost its English secondary school due to declining student enrollment—and the CLC initiative is intended to revitalize the school as a key resource for the local English-speaking community, to help ensure that the school remains open.

At the CLC, there is a lack of clarity about, or unwillingness to assume, the roles and responsibilities by various CLC stakeholders, as well as an accompanying lack of clear direction for the CLC. The coordinator is the “face” of the CLC and has been given full responsibility by the principal for developing and carrying out any and all CLC activities and initiatives. The principal has also delegated to the coordinator responsibility for managing the highly used VCN and for being present at the school to supervise all CLC-related activities, including use of the facilities by community groups and extended-day school activities. The principal sees her primary role for the CLC as giving or withholding approval for ideas generated by the coordinator, and does not consider the CLC a major priority for the school. Teachers feel “out of the loop” and unsure of what their role should be within the CLC, which they feel lacks a clearly defined strategy. While community partners are enthusiastic about the possibilities presented by the CLC, they also view the coordinator as primarily responsible for conceiving and implementing the CLC mission. Although the coordinator is highly energetic and enthused by the success she has had in forging community partnerships, she feels the weight of responsibility for building and sustaining the CLC and is discouraged by the lack of active support on the part of the principal and other stakeholders. In addition, her limited compensated time is greatly impacted by daily management of the VCN, and some promising community partnerships are compromised by the requirement that she be present to supervise at all hours.

The CLC has great potential as a CLC, situated as it is within an isolated English-speaking community that is eager for increased local resources and community-school interaction. In order for this potential to be met, however, shared vision and shared leadership for the CLC must become a reality. The good news for this CLC, is that since the evaluation site visit, the situation has improved. The principal took over the operation of the CLC when the first coordinator resigned and realized the importance of providing support and direction. A new coordinator was hired in the spring. The new coordinator and the principal are now working collaboratively to support and operate the CLC.

Job security: Related to the issue of coordinator turnover is job security. Coordinators and principals both raised the concern that the potential instability of the position, with funding guaranteed for only three years and most positions being part-time, may lead to high turnover among coordinators.

“Coordinators need job security, or else they will move on. Sustainability of the CLC will strongly depend on making coordinators’ positions secure.” *A principal (May 2008)*

Time constraints: There was unanimous agreement that there is not enough time to do what needs to be done to build a sustainable project with most coordinators working part-time.

“I’ll be honest, yes. At my meeting, I asked how many hours? 20—and do it the way you want. But if I did 20 hours, it would go nowhere.” *A coordinator (May 2008)*

"I find it's hard to say the CLC should be open 7 days a week—and then the person in charge works 3 days a week. Something's wrong with that model—summer I enjoy the break; need the down time—but it takes a week to get back in the mode in the fall—and my partners don't stop—last year I felt we completely lost the momentum—have to reengage and restart—to this day we haven't regained what we lost last summer—not a full partnership meeting since." *A coordinator (May 2008)*

"They [coordinators] also need to be paid for more hours—it's easily a 4 or 5 day a week job. They are putting in far more hours. They also need to be able to work through the summer ... Not all coordinators are being paid during summer months—not all coordinators are being paid the same amount or for the same amount of hours per week." *A principal (May 2008)*

Importance of principal leadership: Just like the lack of a coordinator can stall implementation, the lack of principal *leadership* can impede the CLC initiative. There are varying levels of involvement and leadership of CLCs on the part of principals. When a principal is not engaged or involved in the CLC, this appears to be a source of anxiety for coordinators and can be a barrier to the full implementation of the CLC. While the principal is not generally expected to be involved in the day-to-day operation of the CLC, the principal needs to provide leadership to the CLC in order to demonstrate support for the initiative. Teachers and students need to observe the principal's support in the CLC in order to believe the CLC is a long-term endeavour. In CLCs where the principal is an active leader, the CLCs appear to be at a more advanced stage of implementation. (See also section 2a.)

A leadership change can affect implementation at the CLC; however the result of such a change can vary between CLCs. In one CLC, the introduction of new school leaders led to a loss of support for the CLC idea, with the coordinator finding it difficult to continue to build activities from the previous school year. In another case, the introduction of a new principal revitalized a CLC that was stagnating, producing a flurry of activity and progress. The arrival of the summer of 2008 brought several additional changes in principals. Coordinators report feeling like they are at a standstill while leadership change is going on and there is uncertainty about whether the new principal will adhere to the status quo. Some coordinators are looking forward to new principals as an opportunity to breathe more life into the CLC idea.

"We're at a stalemate because the principal is leaving." *A coordinator (May 2008)*

"It's not obvious for a principal to inherit a CLC school and coordinator." *A principal (May 2008)*

School board knowledge and support: An issue raised by a number of stakeholders, including the PRT, principals, coordinators and school board representatives is that the directors general of the school boards are not necessarily knowledgeable and/or supportive of CLC implementation. All school boards had to pass resolutions to approve the CLCs in their boards, but many agree that at the time, the directors general did not realize the extent of the commitment and change that the CLCs would bring. Thus, it has been a challenge for some CLCs to obtain the support they need in terms of the required in-kind contributions. Some directors general and boards are very supportive. Indeed, one is considering the idea of making all schools community learning centres. But as one school board representative noted:

"When the DGs were approached, they didn't clearly understand the commitment they had to make to support the schools." *A school board representative (May 2008)*

Governing boards: Based on site visit findings, focus groups and interviews, there is some confusion over the role of school governing boards with regards to the CLC. In all CLCs, the governing boards had to approve the CLC, and most receive regular updates on the CLC from either the coordinator or the principal. The extent of the governing board’s involvement varies according to the CLC’s level of integration into the school. In some CLCs, a governing board member sits on the CLC steering committee. In others, the CLC gives regular updates and reports to the governing board. And for still others, the CLC has virtually no contact with the governing board.

Challenges of multisite schools: Our data from site visits from CLCs with multiple schools suggest that one of the schools tends to be a lead partner, with the other schools less involved. For example, in one CLC, the secondary school is the main partner and the site at which the physical “CLC” and the coordinator are located. In another, the elementary school and adult education centre are partners in the CLC, and again the CLC is physically located in one of these schools, and it is this school that is seen as *the* CLC. The multisite schools need support to spread the initiative beyond the central location.

Exhibit 11: Multisite CLC

This CLC is located in a rural part of Québec with a shrinking and economically disadvantaged English-language community. The region has two English elementary schools and a secondary school with an English sector that decided to pool their resources in their application for CLC funding, resulting in one of several multisite CLCs funded by the project.

This multisite CLC has a single coordinator who is housed at the secondary school. Given that one of the elementary schools is quite far from the secondary school as well as the demands on the coordinator’s time in running the CLC, the coordinator has put the vast majority of efforts into the secondary school CLC, at least at the time of the site visit.

With the coordinator focused on the activities at the secondary school, the elementary school CLCs are “coordinated” by their principals, with the help of active volunteers from the English-speaking community.

Another factor that aids in the management of this multisite CLC is that it is jointly proposed and supported by the schools and a regional social service agency, whose goal is to bring needed services to isolated and economically disadvantaged English-speaking communities. The executive director of the social service agency is an active partner of the CLC and the agency’s regional focus and outreach helps tie the far-flung sites together.

An obvious advantage of the multisite CLC is the increased reach of CLC activities. As students move from the elementary schools to the secondary school, they will already be familiar with the CLC concept and activities, and this has the potential to make the CLC an integral part of students’ lives throughout their school careers.

In addition, a multisite CLC uses economies of scale to bring CLC benefits to as many students and community members as possible—a big advantage given the scarcity of funding. These economies will be a great benefit as the CLC looks at sustainability past the grant period.

There are three major challenges to this multischool arrangement, which, while reflecting the particular situation of this CLC, also have implications for multisite CLCs in other places. These challenges include complex coordination, coherence between sites, and perceptions of unequal distribution of resources between the CLCs.

The biggest challenge of coordination reported by the coordinator was staying abreast of what was happening in the other sites. The distance is an issue, as is getting good information from the elementary school principals. Having the principals take on the role of CLC leaders, while the only viable possibility in a small school, also carries the disadvantage of making communication difficult, given all the demands on a principal's time.

Coherence in the CLC program is another issue. For the advantage of students moving seamlessly from an elementary CLC to a secondary one to pay off, there needs to be enough coherence between the programs so that the students have a sense of continuity. At this point in their development, the CLCs at the different sites support activities for which they have interest and volunteers; not surprisingly, the result is that the CLCs focus on very different things.

Another challenge is making sure that each of the sites feels it is getting a fair share of the resources in terms of money and volunteers. Because the CLCs are following different paths in terms of developing activities, it is very difficult to evaluate whether the sites are receiving equitable amounts of resources.

Overall, multisite CLCs have the potential to reach more people and provide continuity of services. Having a strong sense of mission, as this CLC does through its social service partner, helps to bring coherence to a program that may be geographically distant and follow different approaches. Multisite CLCs need to explicitly address challenges such as coordination, coherence and equitable distribution of resources in order to realize their potential.

Two CLC models: There appear to be two different models of CLC integration into schools. We describe these as "parallel" and "integrated" models, and provide examples in Exhibits 12 and 13. The principal's leadership and the way the principal articulates the vision for the CLC may influence the level of integration. Whether one model is more effective in terms of building a sustainable CLC has yet to be seen as the evidence is just emerging. In the parallel model, the school and CLC coexist and assist each other, essentially viewing each other as separate, but also as partners and resources. The CLC sponsors activities that benefit the school and students as well as the community, and the school hosts the CLC and provides space and other resources. The CLC may be seen as a special program or offering, with the CLC essentially operating separately from the school.

In the integrated model, the school and CLC are more integrated or woven together: the school has been re-envisioned as a community learning centre and embraces its expanded role in the community. In the integrated models we have observed, the principal makes clear that the school and CLC are one entity, with overlapping leadership. There is also communication and collaboration between the school governing board and CLC.

Exhibit 12: Parallel Model

In this English secondary school in a predominantly Francophone city, the majority of students speak English at home, but the school also serves a linguistically and ethnically diverse population. The school offers educational concentration programs focusing on sports and the arts, as well as work opportunity programs. The school had many programs and community partnerships prior to becoming a CLC and saw the CLC grant as an opportunity to consolidate these disparate activities, partnerships and programs under one umbrella. The CLC has a spacious area to call its own in the school, though it is not prominently located within the school. It does not have a separate entrance and visitors need to enter through the front doors of the school.

The CLC can be described as parallel to the school and not integrated, that is, the CLC or its partners may hold activities but, for the most part, these are not for students. Rather, partners rent or trade for space in the CLC area of the school and use the CLC as a base for their usual work. In some instances, the organization has added to its programs or services to offer some geared toward students, for example, a language class. There are some CLC or school activities for students, but these tend to be organized by the teachers, staff or coordinator, and not by, or through, one of the community partner organizations.

The leadership of the CLC may be one contributing factor as to why this CLC operates parallel to the school rather than integrated into the school. The principal applied for the CLC grant and supported teachers in getting release time and supported requests for renovations of the CLC space. Although the principal enables the CLC, he/she did not necessarily facilitate or broadly encourage CLC implementation. The implementation efforts fall largely on the CLC coordinator. The coordinator is well known in the community and has been a leader of several community organizations in the past. The principal had delegated the day-to-day responsibilities of running the CLC to the coordinator, but the coordinator also appeared to be driving the vision and direction of the CLC, while keeping the principal informed. In addition to the groups already working in the school, such as a cultural heritage group, the coordinator used her networks to build links to the community. These links were mostly general community service and community development organizations that operated mainly in French.

As at many CLCs, the coordinator works part-time and has found it difficult to accomplish both the planning/management tasks and tasks related to organizing activities and, building partnerships and engaging students, teachers and the wider community in her limited hours every week. Community and school stakeholders noted that the principal could be more involved. To be truly integrated into the school, the principal will need to give more support to the CLC.

Exhibit 13: Integrated Model

In this remote and rural CLC, the principal supported the CLC idea and basically gave the reins to the coordinator to implement the initiative. The principal and coordinator, who are both well known and well connected in the community, used their connections to engage faithfully in the steps of the Framework for Action, beginning with defining the community, mapping the assets, and arranging a steering committee that worked together to define a vision and mission, as well as address the needs. The fact that the community members, teachers and parents all participated on the steering committee, and that activities and services were developed to meet community needs broadly defined from infants to seniors, seems to have led to the CLC becoming embedded in the community and school—a hub, really—in a relatively short time. The activities for students and the broader community at the school have helped to merge the CLC and school into one entity. The principal, while not involved in the day-to-day details of operating the activities and services, leads the CLC, of which the school is a part.

Remote CLCs: CLCs in both remote and urban/suburban areas are developing into vibrant and active centres. However, it is at the remote sites that one feels that the CLC can contribute significantly to the community's vitality, in terms of both using and developing community resources. At remote sites, we heard more from the community about the impact of having the CLC, that the CLC is now a place to go in the community for activities. (See also section 21.)

Sustainability: Most school and CLC leaders as well as stakeholders report concern regarding the sustainability of the CLC beyond the funding period. There is uncertainty about how to hold the project together after the termination of the grant funding and an awareness of the importance of making the CLC indispensable to the community in order to ensure sustainability.

Limitations

Several limitations of this report need to be addressed. Firstly, the data on sites and implementation come from Phase 1 CLCs exclusively. Future data collection will see if Phase 2 CLCs face similar challenges and develop in similar or different ways. Uneven data across sites prevented us from sometimes quantifying how many CLCs were exhibiting a particular trend or had completed specific steps in the Framework for Action. WestEd will be working closely with the PRT evaluation coordinator to address some of these limitations in the future.

Another limitation of this report relates to the constraints of and passage of time. We know from conversations with coordinators, principals and PRT members that implementation has continued to advance at many sites since our visits. We know that a few sites that had stalled implementation because they did not have a coordinator are now moving forward with new coordinators. A site with advanced implementation and a hard-working coordinator lost the original coordinator and is working with a new person, trying to make up for lost time.

One area of the project Theory of Change not addressed by this report relates to the Project Implementation Committee and the Project Resource Committee. Extensive data have not been collected on these yet. They will be the focus of additional data collection starting in the autumn of 2008.

4 | CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project has been well organized and carefully thought out in terms of development of training and support materials, such as the Framework for Action and steps to build sustainable CLCs that become community hubs. The project is complex and comprises many interrelated parts (partners, schools, boards, the PRT and the MELS). The evidence presented in this report suggests that most Phase 1 CLCs are advancing in their implementation, according to “stages of implementation” (Fixsen and colleagues); in doing so, they appear to be making progress toward the overall goals of the project. The majority of Phase 1 CLCs are in the initial implementation stage, where they are initiating change and implementing CLC elements, but practices have not yet permeated the whole organization and continued education and training are necessary; or they are in the full operation stage, where the CLC becomes accepted practice, administrators support and facilitate the endeavour, and anticipated outcomes are being realized (Fixsen et al. 2005). None of the sites have yet moved into the next stages of innovation and sustainability, when replication will happen and projects will focus on long-term sustainability and continued effectiveness.

Overall, we see that the CLCs are engaging in activities and services that promote both student success and engagement, such as tutoring activities, engaging learning through VCN and community-based learning, and much more. Overall, CLCs are also contributing to improving access to educational services and lifelong learning opportunities for the English-speaking communities they serve. They do this through courses and workshops on subjects as diverse as helping children with homework to information sessions on diabetes to Pilate’s classes, English-language community newsletters, and more. In many of the communities, especially the more remote and isolated ones, CLCs are becoming hubs for the community in a very literal sense of giving the English community a physical place to go where it may not have had one before. While great progress has been made in terms of implementation, this report also indicates there are still a number of challenges that the CLCs and PRT may want to address in order to work toward sustainability. Priority challenges include engaging stakeholders, such as teachers, to build buy-in and support for continued implementation, planning to ensure that activities and services align with intended outcomes and impacts, and enhancing leadership and reducing turnover of key CLC staff.

A quote from a CLC principal is an important reminder:

“A CLC takes time to happen. It represents a shift in culture of the school, the way people do things and how they think of their 'turf.’” *A principal (May 2008)*

Regardless of the stage of implementation, there is always room in a project to consider improvements. Based on the findings presented in the report, there are several recommendations for enhancements at the project level and at the CLC level.

Project-Level Recommendations

- Consider allowing more time during training for CLC coordinators and principals to interact with each other to share ideas and knowledge. Also allow more time for CLC school teams to work together on tasks related to CLC implementation.
- Continue to include the CLC school teams in providing input to the planning for future training sessions and events.

- Clarify and communicate the purposes and expected outcomes of all training to the participants at the outset.
- Consider improvements in documentation and clarify what documentation and reporting is required of CLCs, and communicate the purpose and importance of such forms to CLC leaders.
- Provide CLCs with increased support such as training and templates for their self-evaluation plans. Clarifying the purposes of the self-evaluation might also encourage CLCs to begin this work.
- Make use of the knowledge-base building at the CLCs in the principals and coordinators in order to enhance the network and support new CLCs and CLCs with new coordinators and principals.
- Provide training for teachers and other school staff on what community schools are and how to implement community-based learning. This kind of training could increase capacity at the school level as well as influence sustainability.
- Consider ways to support teachers to build understanding of the change process in order to help them become more active stakeholders and participants in the CLCs.
- Consider training for principals to help them become effective educational leaders of the CLCs so that they can then assist teachers in making curricular choices that align with CLC goals.
- Find ways to engage the directors general and school boards in order to build support for the project, such as distributing a newsletter to the boards and directors general, or presentations of CLC successes.
- Consider ways of helping CLCs move from being activity focused to implementing a coherent program of activities *and* services, by providing rich examples of what has been accomplished in other community schools in Canada, the United States and England.
- Consider ways of helping CLCs engage more participants beyond those in the immediate school community.
- Consider ways to assist multisite CLCs to spread activities and services beyond the central location.
- Consider ways to build support for long-term funding for the coordinator through policy change and grant seeking.

CLC-Level Recommendations

- Centres should make time for long-term planning with a view to developing a coherent and sustainable program or set of programs that work toward the overall goals of enhanced student success and engagement, support of lifelong learning, and enhanced access to services. The Framework for Action can provide guidelines and support for this process.
- CLCs should consider ways to enhance the use of their steering committees in order to support implementation and work toward sustainability. Coordinators may choose to organize into subcommittees to distribute the work or they may seek board members with particular expertise to contribute.
- Consider ways to engage teachers and to help them make the connection between the VCN, community-based learning and the CLC.

- Multisite schools should work to ensure that all school sites are engaged in CLC activities, contribute to its development and benefit from its resources.
- Consider ways to ensure that the principal and coordinator engage in information sharing and joint planning with a view to moving forward implementation.
- Consider ways of sharing successes, activities and partners with the school board and directors general in order to build support for the project.

Concluding Comments

It is evident that most schools with CLC grants have embraced the concept and are making great strides in implementing community learning centres that fit with their school and community needs. The coordinators are key contributors to the energy and direction of the implementation. They could not do this, however, without the principals' support and the training and support of the Project Resource Team. The way the CLC idea has been implemented across the sites is diverse, with some being more focused on providing activities and services to enhance student learning and engagement, and others emphasizing activities and services for a broader community. In the more remote and isolated communities, CLCs appear to be firmly on the path to becoming hubs in their communities. In the more urban communities, CLCs may not be hubs for the larger English-speaking community, but they are working to meet the needs of their communities or parts of their communities. The evidence suggests that Community Learning Centres have the potential for great positive impacts on their schools and communities. The project is still in the early phase of implementation and facing challenges, but there seems to be commitment to meet these challenges and sustain the initiative.

ADDENDUM

BY DR. PATRICIA LAMARRE

Response to the request to evaluate CLC impact on the vitality of the English-speaking community of Québec.

In the fall of 2008, a midterm report on the evaluation of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) was submitted. The report was well received by the Evaluation Committee of the CLC Project and provided a great deal of valuable information on the implementation process, however, the committee asked that a section be added to specifically address the impact of CLCs on the vitality of the English-speaking communities of Québec. This request is entirely legitimate, considering that CLC funding comes from the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*. It carries us, however, onto complex ground. In this addendum, I will briefly discuss the difficulties of evaluating community vitality and the limits of what can and cannot be done within the ongoing evaluation process, or for that matter, in any evaluation process. I will then address a question more easily answered: ***Are CLCs showing their potential to meet the challenges facing Québec’s English schools and the communities the schools serve?***

1 Background to funding and some research issues

Since 1969, the federal government has been committed to supporting linguistic duality in Canada. Over time, the shape of this commitment has become more clearly defined and in 2005, an amendment to Canada’s *Official Languages Act*⁶ formally moved the federal government’s obligation beyond linguistic duality to the development of the Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs). In other words, federal institutions are now held by the *Official Languages Act* to promote and enhance the vitality of OLMCs. In order to better understand and evaluate initiatives and the use of funding in this direction, in 2006 the federal government mandated Johnson and Doucet with a study of what research has to say about ethno-linguistic and community vitality and how it should be measured (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2006). One of the important points made by Johnson and Doucet was that the terms “community” and “vitality” are complex and multifaceted. Essentially, what is meant by these terms requires reflection and clarification at the start of any study and ideally in discussion with the OLMCs involved. They further concluded that vitality is particularly difficult to evaluate since it can be looked at from many different perspectives (individual and collective) and pertains to many different dimensions (demographic, social, political, legal, cultural, economic, etc.). Essentially then, any study attempting to measure vitality needs to be carefully defined, in particular in respect to which dimensions of vitality are to be examined and how community is to be defined—both very pertinent considerations in this specific case. There is also another problem underlying the question “*What is the impact of CLCs on the vitality of Québec’s English-speaking communities?*” At the scientific level, this question asks for proof of a causal relationship between a specific initiative and a very broad, multidimensional concept. It is simply a question that the current ongoing evaluation process cannot answer and that most researchers would be very wary of undertaking. More modest questions, however, can be asked, but as Johnson and Doucet argue:

⁶ In 2005, bill S-3 clarified the obligations of the federal government under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

“Any strategy that aims to strengthen vitality requires a thorough understanding of the situation to be changed—the starting point—so as to be able to target the destination ...” (p. 60)

The starting point for this project is a very diverse group of existing schools, each with its own set of needs and challenges, its own particular community and student population, and its own goals as to what a CLC can be and should provide, in other words, its own destination. What can be measured and what is being measured by the WestEd evaluation team is precisely this: 1) the progress being made in each of these contexts as schools move to becoming CLCs; and 2) the support they are receiving from their boards, the MELS and the PRT team in making this happen.

With this in mind, we should be careful not to impose indicators on this initiative that are not closely knit to the goals of making schools into CLCs. These goals are the following:

“The CLCs initiative is aimed at supporting the development of a diverse group of CLCs that will serve as ‘hubs’ for English-language education and community development in their respective communities, as well as offer models for future practice. Some of the key results anticipated from CLCs are:

- Provide access to the conditions deemed necessary for student success
- Respond to the particular culture and needs of the communities they serve
- Provide services that are accessible to the broader community
- Deliver a range of services that are self-supporting and sustainable over time
- Integrate existing services and resources with those available from external agencies
- Develop financial/resource partnerships that insure long-term sustainability
- Resonate within their communities as a successful response to their needs
- Demonstrate flexible and innovative approaches to service delivery”

Finally, it should also be remembered that there is a natural tension within the CLC project—or rather a balancing act—in which each CLC will have to find its way toward meeting traditional student and school-focused goals and broader community goals. Both goals must be kept in mind in looking at what is being achieved and in how we interpret progress, by those conducting the evaluation, but also by those reading and interpreting the findings of this evaluation and weighing the success of CLCs.

These cautionary words out of the way, let us look at two questions that I think can be answered:

1. Can schools, which must continue to meet their educational mandate, expand this mandate to meet community-based goals?
2. Are CLCs showing their potential to meet the challenges facing Québec’s English schools and the communities the schools serve?

In framing the question this way, we must, however, remember that English schools in Québec serve linguistically and culturally diverse student populations, including an important number from bilingual and francophone families (nearly 20% of students in English schools are French mother-tongue students) and hence the understanding of “community” will vary dramatically across CLCs. How community is talked about and how the community talks of itself within different

CLC sites might have very little direct relationship to the traditional discourse of OLMCs. In effect, in the Action Plans of the Phase 1 CLCs, only four directly mention the English-speaking community, whereas most refer to something simply called the “community.”

2 CLCs and the challenges facing Québec’s English schools

CLC funding comes from the *Canada-Québec Agreement for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*. The project itself is under the supervision of the *Services à la communauté anglophone* at the Québec Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) since education is a provincial jurisdiction. The right to official minority-language schooling, however, is constitutionally protected. In effect, in Québec, schools and school boards are the only constitutionally protected institutions under OLMC management in the province. Since these institutions are under provincial jurisdiction, their capacity to act must respect Québec’s *Education Act* and educational program. This said, within the legal framework in which schools in Québec function, it is entirely possible to transform a school into a Community Learning Centre. Furthermore, in a recent amendment to the *Education Act*, the mission of school boards was expanded:

“207.1. The mission of a school board is to organize, for the benefit of the persons who come under its jurisdiction, the educational services provided for by this Act and by the basic school regulations made by the Government.

The mission of a school board is also to promote education within its territory, to see to the quality of educational services so that the population may attain a higher level of formal education and qualification, and to contribute, to the extent provided for by law, to the social, cultural and economic development of its region.” (Bill 88, *An Act to amend the Education Act and the Act respecting school elections*)

Nevertheless, CLCs legally remain schools whose first mandate is to students and the educational program.

In Québec in many contexts, schools are the only local public institution devoted to providing services to the English-speaking community, and in some rural and remote settings, schools are quite simply the only large building in the landscape—a building which traditionally falls empty at the end of the afternoon, on weekends and over the summer months. From this perspective, schools are obviously logical and critical sites to turn to in order to ensure “community vitality,” both as social and physical spaces. In a recent report of the Quebec English School Boards Association, schools are described “as the key remaining link to the community” (QESBA, 2002). A first question that we ask is: “Can an institution with a legal mandate to provide school-aged students with schooling expand its mandate to include broader community goals (leaving the word community for each CLC to define)?

The answer, even at this very early phase, is yes. ***CLCs are indeed showing their ability to maintain their educational goals in their legal role as schools, while addressing broader community-based goals.*** As the evaluation report indicates, this is a major shift in how schools are understood and function, and requires a change in school culture, hence, a transformation that relies heavily on the support and leadership of school principals. The data provided in the evaluation report indicate that in many sites, this change is under way, but still vulnerable at this point in the process, particularly in respect to two key players: the school principal and the coordinator. As the evaluation report makes evident, the implementation of a CLC comes to a full stop or limps along if principals and coordinators do not take on leadership roles and if a viable working relationship between these two players is not struck.

This said, in many sites, this ***transformation from school to CLC is already garnering approval from the local community*** as comments from focus group meetings with parents and CLC partners show. It can even be said that in some communities, CLCs are generating a certain amount of optimism:

- It's amazing.
- We're getting there. We are gungho, but not up to capacity yet ...
- No big splash, but the little things are starting to add up ...

CLCs are also ***showing their potential to bring in, as well as bring support to, regional and local associations and service providers***, (such as Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, CEDEC, health and social services, regional Anglophone associations such as the Coasters, immigrant associations), making it easier for services to reach targeted populations. A promising finding for the CLC project is that different ***partners in CLCs report that being partnered allows them to better fulfill their mandate*** within mutually beneficial relationships:

- As a partner, we now have an arm into the community ... It makes our mandate easier ...
- It's like having a ground person in the community.
- It's the missing link ... what we needed.

In this respect, CLCs are showing their ability to strengthen associations and the communities they serve.

CLCs are also showing their structuring capacity in other ways, particularly when it comes to ***pulling together different people within a school's community and reinforcing their ties***. New forms of intergenerational communication are occurring thanks to CLCs. For example, secondary school students are coaching adults on how to surf the Web in Internet cafés set up in CLCs, while older members of the community, whose own children might have moved away, are coming back into the school as volunteers or to talk to young students about local history and disappearing skills. This new dynamic can counter some of the isolation and feelings of being a community in decline associated with the drop in demographic numbers in Québec's regions. The following verbatim illustrate this capacity of CLCs:

- It's pulling the generations together, from students to seniors ...
- I'm a grandmother and I hadn't set foot in the school since my children were there.
- It's bringing the community together but also making us more open to the region, to the outside world.

A closer relationship between a school and the community can bring benefits to the delivery of the educational program. For example, teachers in some CLCs reported that they are finding it much easier to send secondary school students out into the community to do community service since the CLC has been set up. In other CLCs, however, how to tie curriculum to the local community remains a challenge and will require the active leadership of school principals and other education specialists, as the midterm evaluation report makes clear. Educators who are realizing this potential, however, made positive comments:

- It fits with our mandate—(adult ed, guidance counselor) ... Makes life easier.
- Life is easier, the job is easier. (teachers)

CLCs are also showing their potential to improve local communication. Many CLCs have chosen to launch newsletters as one of their first initiatives, some aiming not only at local community but also at the larger region—enhancing access to information in English and about the local Anglophone community. In some CLCs, this is considered one of the main achievements of the early phase of implementation, but it would appear that the CLCs’ ability to increase communication goes beyond newsletters:

- Bringing everyone together ... Organizations. People. We are communicating more, joining forces ... We know what’s going on ... Our efforts are less scattered ... We are all going in the same direction ...
- It took what was there and improved it ... Fills a gap ... It’s like a glue ... Meshes together scattered efforts ...

It seems that CLCs are already at this early phase showing an ability to pull together communities, a critical contribution since OLMCs in Québec have not been very active in joining forces to identify needs and lobby for services.

In a very practical way, **CLCs are showing that they can provide a physical space for community life:**

- “Our biggest achievement this year? Getting the school open 24/7.”

By keeping schools open longer hours and more days in a year, many new activities become possible at relatively little cost. Here are some examples of how CLCs are opening their doors to their community:

- a space for women’s groups to meet
- badminton on weekends for children and adults in a school that normally would have stood empty
- a library that expands its collection to reach adult readers
- a permanent home for a preliteracy program for tots
- space for cultural associations to meet, such as the Highland Frasers or a choir
- rooms for immigration assistance
- an Internet café open to all
- use of the VCN to provide telehealth services for adults in the community (menopause, how to deal with bullying issues, building study skills with children, etc.)
- use of the school as a space for summer camps and community garden

In summary, CLCs are effectively bringing people in (the elderly, preschool children, women, new immigrants) for a wide range of cultural, leisure and educational activities, but the school has also been “brought out” (organization of summer camps, support for cultural activities).

It might be wise for **school boards to start considering the costs/benefits of CLCs in** weighing whether they should be making some form of financial and long-term commitment to maintaining coordinator positions in CLCs. In calculating the cost/benefits of a CLC, the number of hours a school is being used by the community and the low cost of this use should be considered: **CLCs might not be generating great amounts of new funding, but they do appear to be providing important services at relatively little cost**—relying on volunteer hours and a space that is being heated whether used or not. In the same vein, rental of **VCN equipment might not be pulling**

in large amounts of money, but it might be saving school boards important sums of travel money and person-hours as staff use the VCN for meetings without leaving their communities. It also allows students in remote areas, where a school outing to a museum or a science centre would be extremely costly, if not impossible, to now have **access to virtual visits**. These types of benefits need to somehow be calculated and considered in reporting on what is generated by CLCs.

The **VCN is also showing its ability to provide schools and communities with access not only to the larger world, but also to the neighbouring school and other English schools in the province**. The network of CLCs presently emerging should allow more of these cross-school exchanges via the VCN. There is also tremendous untapped potential for organizing exchange programs with French schools through the VCN, an aspect that deserves exploring given the challenge English schools face in providing students with the strong bilingual skills they need to stay in Québec.

For CLCs to continue into the future, however, they will need more than the community- and school-based support they are currently building. What is clearly emerging from the data is the need for school boards to make a full commitment to the CLC initiative if the project is to carry on. It would appear from the WestEd report that work on the policy level is still needed. With regard to pulling government services into the school, there would also appear to be some work needed at a higher level. As stated in a focus group meeting, principals and coordinators can do much at the local level, including build relationships with municipal governments and regional associations, but work at a higher interministerial level might also be required in fulfilling the full range of CLC goals.

In response then to the question “Are CLCs showing their potential to meet the challenges facing Québec’s English schools and the communities the schools serve,” a great deal of a positive nature can be said:

- Schools are showing that they can become CLCs that address broader community issues.
- The transformation of schools into CLCs is garnering approval from those involved.
- CLCs are showing their potential to bring in regional and local associations and service providers.
- Partners in CLCs are reporting that this relationship can be mutually beneficial, allowing them to better fulfill their mandates and reach target populations.
- CLCs are showing their potential to pull together different actors within a school’s community, reinforce ties and encourage networking.
- CLCs are clearly having an impact on local and regional communication.
- CLCs have demonstrated their potential to provide space and support to a wide range of different activities.
- CLCs might not be generating important sums of new revenue, however, they are contributing to better use of available resources (gymnasiums, libraries, rooms to meet in) and providing new services and activities to the communities they serve at relatively little cost—a factor that school boards and other agencies able to provide financial support to maintain coordinators’ positions into the future should be considering.
- CLCs are in some sites saving considerable school board money thanks to the VCN.
- The VCN is opening up new possibilities for quality education of students and for expanded services.
- CLCs are moving toward their mandate at the local level. Building higher level support (school boards, interministerial) will require attention.

In conclusion, *CLCs are showing their potential to be an effective structuring force in the communities they serve, an aspect felt to be lacking in the English-speaking communities of Québec. CLCs are already showing their ability to generate a great many benefits to the student population and to the broader population and this, at relatively little cost.* They are still, however, vulnerable and the issue of sustainability is a major concern. As the WestEd evaluation reveals, while principals play key leadership roles, their workload makes it impossible for them to take on the tasks of day-to-day coordinating, community organizing and partnership building. Securing financing for coordinators into the future is probably the biggest factor to ensure the continuing existence and success of the CLC initiative. It would also appear that the work being done by the PRT team is supporting implementation, but is also helping create a provincial network for CLCs. It seems very probable that a provincial team with this mandate will always be needed to support CLCs, and this, well beyond the implementation phase.

A school is a school is a CLC: some last comments

Recently, I summarized a number of reports on Québec's English schools and arrived at a short list of the most important challenges currently faced (Lamarre in Bourhis, 2008). From the synthesis of reports, these are:

- the demographic decline of the school-aged population eligible for English schooling
- school closures, a consequence of declining student populations
- an important number of small schools serving 200 and sometimes even less than 100 students
- stretched finances and resources to provide quality education
- pressure to meet students' need for bilingualism and biliteracy
- increasing linguistic diversity among the student population, including a large French mother-tongue population
- a broad range of challenges specific to schooling in urban/remote/rural contexts

Although CLCs cannot be expected to meet all of these challenges, one of the main areas of potential within the CLC project is its ability to find tailor-made solutions. As was recently stated about English schools in Québec:

"No one size, one curriculum, one model will fit all ... issues have to be resolved in different ways for different schools." Quebec Advisory Council (for QESBA, 2006).

In this respect, the CLC project simply fits well with the need for flexible solutions within Québec's English school system and the major indicator for the success of the project will be how well each CLC identifies local school and community needs, prioritizes and moves toward meeting these needs.

Some of the challenges facing Québec's English school system are clearly, however, beyond the scope of CLCs. Demographic decline is a case in point. CLCs, however, do have the potential to help counter some of the consequences of demographic decline. They can, for example, impede school closures and provide a better use of resources in schools with small student populations. As more resources, services and programs are brought into a school, it becomes more viable, less tied to student per capita funding. Good arguments can be made for keeping a school open if space is being used for public schooling but also for adult education, community health services and preliteracy programs for tots. New ways of tallying costs versus benefits will

need to be developed to measure not only how much new revenue a CLC can bring in, but also how much it has provided to a community and a school in terms of new services, activities and volunteer person-hours. As seen from the data, CLCs also have strong potential in forging networks and better communication within the communities served. This potential is already being translated into reality in some CLCs.

There has been much discussion in Québec regarding the importance of equipping the regions with a greater capacity to address socioeconomic and regional development concerns. CLCs hence come at a timely moment as Québec makes moves toward the regionalization and decentralization of services. The existence of CLCs provides an opportunity for the English-speaking community to voice and take charge of their own regional needs, put in place services at lesser cost and plan for the future.

At the present time, it should be remembered that there are only 22 CLCs in a school system of some 340 schools. These pilot CLCs, however, are lighting the way toward what can be done to address the challenges facing Québec's English schools and the communities they serve. The CLC initiative deserves the full support of all those concerned with the vitality of the English school system and the communities these schools serve.

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| APPENDIXES |

- **Appendix A:** Tables
- **Appendix B:** CLC Project Theory of Change
- **Appendix C:** Protocols
- **Appendix D:** Evaluation Framework
- **Appendix E:** CLC Evaluation Committee

| APPENDIX A |

TABLES⁷

Table 1 CLC and Partners (type of partner is noted in parentheses)

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B111	Comité local de développement de Chomedey (Community development)
	AGAPE (Cultural)
	Carrefour Intercultures de Laval (Cultural)
	American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) (Cultural)
	Bureau Municipal Laval, Quartier Chomedey (Government)
	Centres de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) de Laval (Health/Government)
	Résidence Chomedey (Seniors)
	Manoir St-Patrice (Seniors)
	Forum Jeunesse Laval (Youth)
	Réseau jeunes bénévoles en action (Youth)
	Maison des jeunes Marigot (Youth)
	Centre de Bénévolat de Laval (Other)
	Laval Women Centre (Other)
	Coopsco (Other)
	Home Depot (Other)
Kinatex (Other)	
B211	E-Learn (Education)
	Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC) (Community development)
	Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (Government)
	Ville de Montréal (Government)
	GRICS (Other)

⁷ Please note that in all tables, CLCs are listed by a number that identifies the CLC to the evaluators, but that attempts to maintain their anonymity to the general reader.

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B211 (cont.)	Little Burgundy Urban Mediation Project (Other)
	W.O.R.D.? (Other)
	Blue Metropolis (Other)
	Quebec Writers' Federation (Other)
	ALCC (Other)
	YMCA/Millennium (Other)
	McGill/Abela (Other)
B212	Italian Community Services (Cultural/Community development)
	Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) (Health)
	Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) (Health/Government)
	Foster Pavilion (Health/Government)
	Catholic Community Services (Religion)
	Consensus Mediation (Other)
	Educaloï (Other) McGill Placement (Other)
B311	CEDEC (Community development)
	Champlain College (St-Lambert) (Education)
	City of Châteauguay (Government)
	CSSS (Health/Government)
	Châteauguay English Community Network (CECN) (Community development)
	Helping Hanz (Other)
B312	Corporation local de développement (CLD) (Community development)
	Action Haut St-Laurent (Community development)
	Services d'accueil, de référence, de conseil et d'accompagnement (SARCA) (Education)
	Châteauguay Valley Regional High School (Education)
	Town of Huntington (Government)
	CSSS (Health/Government)
	Cub and Boy Scouts (Youth)
	PS Jeunesse (Youth)
	Carrefour jeunesse emploi (CJE) (Youth)

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B312 (cont.)	Family Resource Centre (Other)
	ADDS (Other)
	Québec Enfant (Other)
B411	City of St-Lambert (Government)
	St-Lambert Horticultural Society (Other)
	Recreation/Sports Associations (Other)
	Healthy Living Associations (i.e. Moovjam) (Other)
B511	Alliance of South Asian Community (Cultural)
	Schmooze Club (Cultural)
	West Island Black Community Association (Cultural)
	McGill University Health Centre (Health)
	Brookwood Basketball (Other)
	Literacy Unlimited (Other)
	Born to Read/Mother Goose (Other)
	ADITYA Youth Trust Fund (Other)
	New Horizons (Other)
	Leave Out Violence Everywhere (Other)
B611	Council of Campbell's Bay (Community development)
	CEDEC (Community development)
	CLD (Community development)
	Québec en Forme (Chagnon Foundation) (Health)
	Women's Wellness (Health)
	Maison des jeunes (Youth)
	Table jeunesse du Pontiac (Youth)
	Farmers' Union (Other)
	Western QC Literacy Council (Other)
	Pontiac in Motion (Other)
	Pontiac Artists' Association (Other)

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B711	CEDEC (Community development)
	Voice of English-speaking Québec (Community development)
	Jeffrey Hale Centre (Health)
	Québec en Forme (Health)
	English Reading Council (Other)
	Radio Tourism (Other)
	Choir of the Orchestre symphonique de Québec (Other)
B811	CEDEC (Community development)
	Women's Centre (Other)
	Farms Alive (Other)
B911	Caisse populaire (Business)
	Gaspé Bottling (Business)
	CEDEC (Community development)
	Quebec Federation of Home and Schools (Education)
	Club des petits dejeunerers du Québec (Health/Education)
	Canada Breakfast Program (Health/Education)
	Québec en Forme (Health)
	CSSS (Government/Health)
	Service Canada (Government)
	Town of Gaspé (Government)
	Radio Gaspésie (Other)
	Centre for Literacy (Other)
	Telehealth (Other)
	Vision Gaspé-Percé Now (Other)
New Horizons (Other)	
B912	Molson Canada (Business)
	Black Gable Farm (Business)
	Cascade Golf and Tennis (Business)
	Centre local de développement de La Mitis (Community development)
	CEGEP de Rimouski, CEGEP de Matane (Education)
	Sûreté du Québec (Government)

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B912 (cont.)	Healthy Schools (MELS initiative) (Government)
	Town Hall Committee (Government)
	Ville de Métis-sur-Mer (Government)
	Ville de Mont-Joli (Government)
	CSSS (Health/Government)
	Québec en Forme (Health)
	Local churches (Religion)
	Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) des Pinsons (Youth)
	Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence (Other)
	Gaspé Heritage (Other)
	Réseau Biblio (Other)
	Reford Gardens (Other)
	Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (Education)
	Katimavik (Other)
	Terry Fox Foundation (Other)
B10_11	Canadian Helicopters (Business)
	Air Labrador (Business)
	Coasters (Community development)
	CLD (Community development)
	CJE (Community development)
	3CI Entrepreneurship (Community development)
	CEDEC (Community development)
	Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL) (Education)
	Municipalité de la Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-Saint-Laurent (Government)
	Carrefour jeunesse (Youth)
	Quebec 4H Club (Youth)
	Côte Saint-Luc Parks & Leisure Camp (Other)
	Chevery Sports Committee (Other)
	SustainABLE (Other)

CLC	Partners/Identified Potential Partners
B10_11 (cont.)	Community Volunteer Network (Other)
	Quebec-Labrador Foundation (Other)
	Chevery Tourism Committee (Other)
	Traditional Skills Network (Other)
	Chevery Women's Group (Other)
B10_12	CSSS (Health/Government)
	Sports and Leisure Association (Other)
	North Shore Fishermen's Association (Other)
B11_11	Jewish Family Services (Other)
	AMI-Québec (Other)

Table 2 Cross-Site Analysis of Theory of Change/Action Plan*
(No indicates not mentioned in document examined)

Characteristic	B111	B211	B212	B312	B611	B711	B911	B912	B10_11	B10_12	B11_11	B511
Impacts Listed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Generic from template	Yes	Yes
Partners – Nongovernment* *some partner for activities only, some longer, more formal	Yes (e.g. AVEC)	Yes (e.g. BUMP)	Yes (Italian Comm. Services)	Yes	Yes	Yes (e.g. QFHSA, Centre for Literacy)	Yes (Centre for Literacy)	Yes (e.g. Terry Fox Foundation)	Yes (Coasters)	No	Yes (e.g. Jewish Family Services)	Yes
Partners – Government* *some partner for activities only, some longer, more formal	No	Yes (Ville de Montréal)	Yes (CSSS)	Yes (other schools)	No	Yes (CSSS)	Yes (Canada Breakfast Program)	Yes (e.g. CSSS Ville de Mont-Joli)	No	No	No	No
General community vitality present	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
English-speaking vitality present	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes (Impact listed but not detailed in activities)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Student academic success, incl. for at-risk students	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student engagement in school	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

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Characteristic	B111	B211	B212	B312	B611	B711	B911	B912	B10_11	B10_12	B11_11	B511
Lifelong learning	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Services in school or enhanced access, planned & actual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Parent engagement	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher involvement	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Health services	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Health Information	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Students in community	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Community-based learning	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Activities for Students or Others												
Youth development	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Literacy	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Sports & physical activity	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Arts, culture & history	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Volunteerism	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Entrepreneurship	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Other language	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Community volunteers in school	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Health	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Summer/spring break camps	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Popular courses/leisure activities (i.e. dance, ESL, music, etc.)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Homework program/club	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

* **Notes:**

- We did not have the theories of change (TOCs) or action plans for 3 of the 15 Phase 1 CLCs.
- In addition, another 4 sites with action plans or TOCs that were incomplete, vague or not detailed are included here.
- CLCs may be doing some of the listed activities, but may not have listed them in the theory of change/action plan reviewed.

Table 3 Activities by Centre

CLC	Education and Lifelong Learning	Youth Development	Support for Family and Community	Recreation	Access to Information and Communications Technologies	Service Integration and Access	Access to Health Services
B111	Adopt a Grandparent Cultural awareness talks				Health and nutrition speakers		Vaccination clinics Breakfast Program
B211	French language classes Hip Hop & Literacy (W.O.R.D.) Oh Me Oh Life (GRICS et. al.) Visiting Poet (Quebec Writers' Federation) Tales for Tots Postsecondary planning Montreal Shakespeare Theatre Company Guest speakers (i.e. Black History)	Internships Entrepreneurship Day Drug Awareness (SPVM) Antibullying (CCS) Liaison program with Station 15	Community/ Family Intervention (BUMP) CSSS social worker Recycling projects	Dance Karate Hockey	Sounds Like Quebec (Blue Metropolis) Digital literacy	Social skills groups	Heart Health project & survey Pedometer
B212	Study Skills Workshop	Drug Prevention Antibullying	Families in Transition	Cooking classes			Diabetes & health information
B311	Computer class for seniors			Martial Arts Hip Hop Yoga		March break camp Summer camp	
B312	Popular education courses Emergent Literacy Project	Entrepreneurship Cub scouts	Family Resource Centre Part-time daycare	Line dancing			
B411				School Yard Project			
B511	After-school program Saturday tutorials CEGEP information Preschool literacy	WIBCA Room Volunteerism	Family resource room	Basketball		Foster Pavilion Screening and referrals	Telehealth sessions
B611	Literacy program offered by Western QC Literacy Council Fieldtrip to a local farm			Aerobics classes for families Activities – Québec en Forme			

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CLC	Education and Lifelong Learning	Youth Development	Support for Family and Community	Recreation	Access to Information and Communications Technologies	Service Integration and Access	Access to Health Services
B711	Woodworking Club Peer tutoring			Fashion Show Gamer Fest Rugby Track and Field Ultimate Frisbee Guitar Club School Band		Healthy Meal Promo.	
B811			Farms Alive!	Badminton Community Kitchen Art courses Pilates Sewing workshop	Internet Café Computer courses		Telehealth sessions
B911	After-school homework assistance CLC Library Duck Nesting Boxes French, second language, instruction	Cloth bag production and sales	Gaspé Alumni Project Workshops for parents and families	Movie nights Guitar instruction Singing Dance Radio DJ	Computers – computers and technicians	Breakfast program	Telehealth sessions
B912	Volunteers read to students Homework assistance Adult and youth after-school Spanish and ESL courses Multicultural week	Public Speaking Entrepreneurship projects	Recycling Community Clean-Up Day	Bowling tournament Skiing and sliding day Québec en Forme Golf Tennis Swimming	Blue Metropolis Computers	Summer camp	CSSS conferences on health issues Doctor's Clinic
B11_11	Homework program B'nai Akiva Activities SAT prep course PSAT CEGEP Visits	Body Image Workshop Antibullying Drug Awareness Religious learning after school Volunteer at Soup Kitchen Donations organized to send to Israel	Food drives Volunteers at MADA Parent workshops Recycling project	Basketball Sports Running program		Brain Awareness Seminar National Depression Screening Day	Telehealth Skip-a-thon Nutrition Seminars

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CLC	Education and Lifelong Learning	Youth Development	Support for Family and Community	Recreation	Access to Information and Communications Technologies	Service Integration and Access	Access to Health Services
B10_11	Knowledge Exchange & Lifelong Learning Literacy Programs and Initiative Academic Enrichment Program Homework and study skills Babysitting course	Entrepreneurship, Employability & Life Skills Career Quest Smart Start: Life Skills Sessions Scouts and Rangers	Netagamiou Alumni Program Just for Parents Education & Support Program Chevery FACTS History of Chevery Lecture Series History of Chevery Exhibit LNS Language: Celebrating Coast Expressions Through Young Eyes Film Festival Community Snapshots Photo Contest Oliver Fully Loaded Writing Club Taste of the Coast cookbook/sessions Annual Artistic Awards Initiative Community Arts & Culture Profiles Chevery Arts & Culture Compendium Fond Memories of Home Community Garden Chevery 2008 Trade Show	Elementary Soccer League C.S.L. Eric Lukacs Invitational Elementary Hockey League/ tournament Adult Hockey League/ tournament Volleyball league & tournament Softball league & tournament Track & Field team & competition Dance Club/ course by VCN Open Mic Night Choir Movie night	Community Web site Chevery News Newspaper	Healthy Snacks at School Eau-Naturelle Discovery Camp Program	DOVE Sleepover for Self-Esteem Telehealth sessions CLC Well-Being Week Walking Club Healthy nutrition campaign Health promotion video development Healthy Lifestyles & Active Living Program

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CLC	Education and Lifelong Learning	Youth Development	Support for Family and Community	Recreation	Access to Information and Communications Technologies	Service Integration and Access	Access to Health Services
B10_12	Kids Summer Camp Homework Centre Babysitting Course After-school music lessons French Debate Program French Animation/Exchange Adult education courses Marine Safety Carpentry Vocational Training Course Book club	Junior Rangers Youth Centre Encounters Canada	Parent workshops International Women's Day Legal Clinic	Community Gardens Pilates Dancing Movie night Karate Volleyball Hockey Senior Bingo Senior Crafts	Gros-Mecatina Times Learn tutorial Internet café	First Aid	

Table 4 Characteristics of Schools and Communities in which CLCs are Located

	B111	B211	B212	B311	B312	B411	B511	B611
School Characteristics⁸ (Data are for the 2007-2008 school year)								
Number of students	812	286	991	307	NA	416	970	94
% of students speaking English at home	67.6%	90.6%	81.7%	93.8%	NA	63.9%	83.4%	100.0%
Socioeconomic Index ⁹ (school)	15.33	28.85	19.64	14.14	NA	9.416	9.703	21.35
Decile rank ¹⁰	5	10	7	5	NA	2	1	8
Number of full-time teachers	45.7	19.2	54.5	26.3	NA	32.1	67.2	6.9
Student/teacher ratio	18	15	18	12	NA	13	14	14
Community Characteristics¹¹								
Number of official language minority	53 390	563 940	563 940	19 558	6 360	18 535	45 670	2 540
% of population official language minority	15.70%	31.60%	31.60%	14.30%	29.50%	17.30%	36.70%	35.40%
English language most often used at work (for 15+), single response	14 678	212 153	212 153	6 103	2 550	10 308	29 793	1 018
French language most often used at work (for 15+), single response	9,443	57 033	57 033	2 855	615	3 900	5 208	95
% of minority population born in province	59.4%	51.7%	51.7%	73.1%	84.2%	53.6%	60.8%	62.7%

⁸ *Fiche-école*. MELS-DRSI printed July 15, 2008.

⁹ The socioeconomic index is a decile rank assigned by the MELS that indicates the socioeconomic situation of the students in the school. The index is made up of the mother's education level and parental economic inactivity. A rank of 1 represents the most favourable socioeconomic situation, and a rank of 10, the least favourable, suggesting a high percentage of mothers without secondary school diplomas and high levels of parental inactivity.

¹⁰ Decile rank: Schools are ranked from 1 to 10, with higher numbers indicating a higher proportion of students at risk for failure.

¹¹ *Official Language Minority Communities*, (2006). Canadian Heritage, Research Unit, Official Languages Support Programs Branch.
Pocock, J. (2006). *Social Support Networks in Quebec's English-Speaking Communities: Building Social Vitality Through Social Capital Strategies*. Community Health and Social Network, Public Health Agency of Canada.
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	B111	B211	B212	B311	B312	B411	B511	B611
% of minority population born outside province	4.1%	7.7%	7.7%	9.1%	7.2%	7.1%	6.6%	36.2%
% of minority population (15+) unemployed	7.3%	9.6%	9.6%	7.3%	6.9%	8.5%	7.0%	10.1%
% of minority population (15+) with income under \$20K	44.2%	46.5%	46.5%	41.1%	51.6%	46.7%	40.2%	55.5%
Anglophones living alone and below the poverty line	45.1%	45.3%	45.3%	36.0%	36.0%	36.0%	45.3%	35.0%
Unpaid volunteer work by Anglophones	34.4%	38.3%	34.3%	49.7%	49.7%	49.7%	48.2%	46.0%
Volunteered at a school	20.7%	18.9%	14.7%	24.2%	24.2%	24.2%	25.6%	22.0%
General state of Anglophone health (% Excellent, Very Good, & Good)	88.1%	83.4%	90.1%	86.7%	86.7%	86.7%	88.4%	82.7%
Anglophone satisfaction with access to health services	34.4%	51.0%	39.4%	40.1%	40.1%	40.1%	55.3%	42.9%
Anglophone satisfaction with access to daycare and preschool services	41.1%	68.5%	50.3%	45.8%	45.8%	45.8%	53.2%	60.1%
Anglophone satisfaction with access to continuing education services	49.2%	74.4%	60.4%	54.7%	54.7%	54.7%	76.4%	51.2%
Anglophone satisfaction with access to sports and leisure programs	49.5%	62.3%	55.3%	47.9%	47.9%	47.9%	74.7%	55.5%
Use of English with doctor in private clinic or office	73.0%	93.0%	93.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	93.0%	92.0%
Use of English with doctor at CLSC	44.0%	74.0%	74.0%	59.0%	59.0%	59.0%	74.0%	68.0%
Use of English with Info-Santé	55.0%	69.0%	69.0%	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	69.0%	42.0%

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	B711	B811	B911	B912	B10_11	B10_12	B11_11	
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School Characteristics¹² (Data are for the 2007-2008 school year)

Number of students	341	60	102	57	45	74	NA	
% of students speaking English at home	41.3%	75%	96.1%	63.6% -Elementary 79.2% -Secondary	100.0%	100% -Elementary 85.8% -Secondary	NA	
Socioeconomic Index (school)	9.725	29.38	25.45	21.10 -Elementary 23.33 -Secondary	NA	NA	NA	
Decile rank	1	10	10	8 -Elementary 9 -Secondary	NA	NA	NA	
Number of full-time teachers	21.2	4.7	10.9	7.8	8.4	10	NA	
Student/teacher ratio	16	13	9	9 -Elementary 6 -Secondary	4	8 -Elementary 6 -Secondary	NA	

Community Characteristics¹³

Number of official language minority	8 985	755	2 500	1 900	3 525	520	NA	
% of population official language minority	1.80%	8.20%	13.70%	10.40%	35.70%	91.20%	NA	
English language most often used at work (for 15+), single response	1 478	210	550	390	1 790	300	NA	
French language most often used at work (for 15+), single response	3 288	155	445	410	115	10	NA	
% of minority population born in province	50.0%	83.1%	94.2%	91.5%	82.3%	87.3%	NA	

¹² *Fiche-école*. MELS-DRSI printed June 14, 2007.

¹³ *Official Language Minority Communities*, (2006). Canadian Heritage, Research Unit, Official Languages Support Programs Branch.

Pocock, J. (2006). *Social Support Networks in Quebec's English-Speaking Communities: Building Social Vitality Through Social Capital Strategies*. Community Health and Social Network, Public Health Agency of Canada. Pocock, J. (2006). *The Baseline Data Report 2005-2006. English-Language Health and Social Services Access in Quebec*. Community Health and Social Network, Public Health Agency of Canada. Official Language Community Development Bureau. Consultative Committee for English-Speaking Communities (2002). *Report to the Federal Administer of Health*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

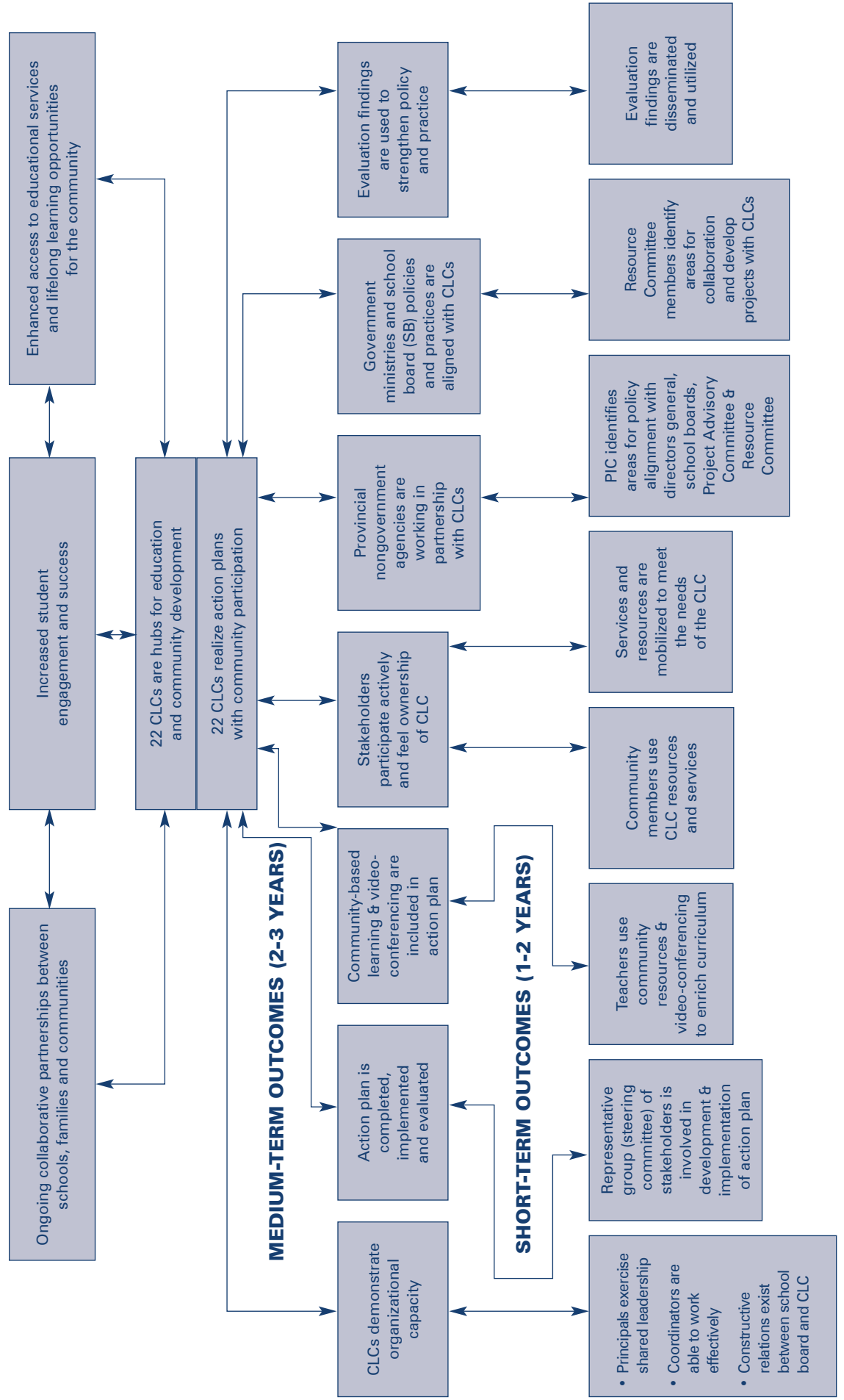
MIDTERM EVALUATION REPORT, COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES:
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	B711	B811	B911	B912	B10_11	B10_12	B11_11	
% of minority population born outside province	23.4%	12.7%	6.2%	7.1%	16.6%	12.7%	NA	
% of minority population (15+) unemployed	8.4%	13.4%	29.0%	20.6%	35.7%	29.6%	NA	
% of minority population (15+) with income under \$20K	43.2%	38.5%	62.8%	57.6%	56.8%	60.7%	NA	
Anglophones living alone and below the poverty line	41.9%	35.6%	34.8%	34.8%	31.3%	31.3%	NA	
Unpaid volunteer work by Anglophones	57.1%	51.4%	49.8%	49.8%	59.1%	59.1%	NA	
Volunteered at a school	22.0%	20.7%	26.8%	26.8%	21.8%	21.8%	NA	
General state of Anglophone health (% Excellent, Very Good, & Good)	82.6%	78.9%	78.3%	78.3%	80.2%	80.2%	NA	
Anglophone satisfaction with access to health services	26.9%	36.8%	35.4%	35.4%	49.0%	49.0%	NA	
Anglophone satisfaction with access to daycare and preschool services	9.1%	25.5%	77.5%	77.5%	46.8%	46.8%	NA	
Anglophone satisfaction with access to continuing education services	30.5%	68.6%	37.1%	37.1%	38.0%	38.0%	NA	
Anglophone satisfaction with access to sports and leisure programs	14.4%	35.1%	31.9%	31.9%	40.0%	40.0%	NA	
Use of English with doctor in private clinic or office	52.0%	79.0%	83.0%	83.0%	76.0%	76.0%	NA	
Use of English with doctor at CLSC	21.0%	72.0%	70.0%	70.0%	71.0%	71.0%	NA	
Use of English with Info-Santé	21.0%	56.0%	60.0%	60.0%	83.0%	83.0%	NA	

APPENDIX B

CLC PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE

IMPACTS (3 YEARS AND BEYOND)



| APPENDIX C |

PROTOCOLS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

School Board CLC Representative Interview Questions (Used the spring of 2008)

1. What do you see as the goals of the CLC initiative?
2. What do you see as the opportunities and challenges presented by the CLC initiative?
3. Describe your role with the CLC project.
4. What do you see as the greatest needs of your CLC(s)?
5. What are some successes you have seen so far with your CLC(s)?
6. What are some challenges you have encountered in your liaison work with your CLC(s)?
7. How often and to what extent do you communicate with the other school board members and the director general (DG) about the CLC(s)?
8. What are some of the questions, concerns or issues that other board members, the DG, or other schools in your board have raised about the CLC(s)?
9. Do you have any suggestions for improving the CLC initiative? Is there any additional support that is needed from LEARN/PRT?
10. What do you envision for the future of the CLC(s)?

PRT Interview Protocol (September 2007)

1. Describe your major current responsibilities with the PRT and how that work is progressing.
2. In terms of the PRT's role in supporting the implementation of CLCs, what are your contributions?
3. How do you understand the support you provide, from Question 2, being used by the CLC's?
4. What do you see as the most important outcome of the CLC project and how do you contribute to that outcome as a member of the PRT?
5. What challenges have you found in your role of supporting the CLCs?
6. What challenges have you had in working on the PRT as a team?
7. Who do you work with outside the PRT team and the CLC staff?
8. What will your role change for Phase 2 of the project? How do you feel about this?

9. What direction would you like to see the PRT take in its work with CLCs in the future?
10. What are your expectations and hopes for the evaluation conducted by LI/WestEd? How can we make the evaluation useful for you?
11. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

PRT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (SPRING 2008)

1. Tell me about how this past year has been for you and the project?
2. What has been the PRT's approach in general to support, training and professional development for the CLCs (coordinators, principals, school board reps)?
3. **Probe for** differences between Phase 1 and 2.
4. In what ways have YOU been working with CLCs? (visits, meetings, support)?
5. What have been some successes you've had in these interactions?
6. What have been some challenges or frustrations?
 - a. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR** - Tell me a bit about your work at the project or provincial level with the Community Table or the Resource Committee. **Probe for examples and details, challenges and successes.**
 - b. **PROJECT MANAGER** - Can you tell me a bit about your work at the provincial level, working with the MELS, the ADM, Canadian Heritage (PCH), the PIC? **Probe for examples and details, challenges and successes.**
 - c. **PROJECT MANAGER** - Tell me about your work at the school board level.
7. How do you think implementation of the CLCs is going so far?
8. Tell me about any differences you see between Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs. **Probe for some specific examples.**
9. What are some challenges that CLCs face with implementation? **Probe for some specific examples.**
10. What are some of the successes? **Probe for some specific examples.**
11. What about project impact? Have the CLCs been having impacts in their communities and schools? How do you know? **Probe for some specific examples.**
12. What about at the provincial/policy level? **Probe for some specific examples.**
13. We hear a lot about sustainability; how does the PRT see its role in supporting sustainability efforts for the CLCs? **Probe for some specific examples.**
14. What direction would you like to see the PRT take in its work with CLCs in the next year?
15. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

Focus Group With Principals (Used May 2008)

The purpose of this focus group is to provide an opportunity to hear from you, the principals and leaders of the CLC about how implementation is going, and to discuss successes and challenges. There are now 22 CLCs and each one is a little different. We want to hear from everyone—all points of view (positive and negative). We need to remind you that we, as evaluators, will not divulge to anyone or make evident in any reports what specific people said. However, we can't control what other people in the group do. Most of the time, this will probably not be a concern, because we're really trying to build an open, transparent, learning community among the sites and LEARN and the evaluators. If anyone wants to share a concern or suggestion privately, we're happy to talk with individuals by phone.

- 1) How has this year been for you in terms of the implementation and operation of the CLC?
- 2) I'd like everyone to share a success and a challenge from the past year or one that is on-going.
- 3) How do things at your CLC look now compared to what you thought your CLC would be like at this point in time?
- 4) What are some of your goals for the next year?
- 5) Tell me about the impact your CLC is having on your school (from governance to teachers, curriculum, students and outcomes) and the larger community it serves.
- 6) How has it been working with partners? Which community services are you targeting?
- 7) Tell me about the involvement of students, teachers and parents.
- 8) How is the PRT supporting you in your work implementing the CLC?
- 9) Tell me about how your action planning is going? Your plans for developing a theory of change? Plans for self-evaluation?
- 10) Tell me about your interaction with the school board around the CLC?
 - a. Tell me about communication with the school board and the school board reps?
- 11) Do you face any particular challenges from your school board, or from the MELS policy in implementing your vision? If so, what are they? What could be done to improve the situation?
- 12) I'm interested in hearing about issues of sustainability. Does your school want to remain a CLC after the grant funding ends? How does it plan to do so?
- 13) Tell me about the role of the coordinator. Do you think it is instrumental to the development of the CLC? Why?
 - a. What do you think about how the role of the coordinator is structured? Is there anything you would do differently?
- 14) Some principals are leaving their schools at the end of this school year; how do you think this may affect the CLC?

Focus Groups With Coordinators (Used May 2008)

The purpose of this focus group is to provide an opportunity to hear from you, the principals and leaders of the CLC, about how implementation is going, and to discuss successes and challenges. There are now 22 CLCs and each one is a little different. We want to hear from everyone—all points of view (positive and negative). We need to remind you that we, as evaluators, will not divulge to anyone or make evident in any reports what specific people said. However, we can't control what other people in the group do. Most of the time, this will probably not be a concern, because we're really trying to build an open, transparent, learning community among the sites and LEARN and the evaluators. If anyone wants to share a concern or suggestion privately, we're happy to talk with individuals by phone.

- 1) How has this year been for you in terms of the implementation and operation of the CLC? I'd like everyone to share a success and a challenge from the past year or one that is ongoing.
- 2) Tell me about the impact your CLC is having on your school (from governance to teachers, curriculum, students and outcomes) and the larger community it serves.
- 3) How has it been working with partners? Which community services are you targeting?
- 4) Tell me about the involvement of students, teachers and parents.
- 5) Tell me about your interaction with the school board around the CLC?
 - a. Tell me about communication with the school board and the school board reps?
- 6) How is the PRT supporting you in your work implementing the CLC?
- 7) Tell me about how your action planning is going? Your plans for developing a theory of change? Plans for self-evaluation?
- 8) Do you face any particular challenges from your school board, or from the MELS policy in implementing your vision? If so, what are they? What could be done to improve the situation?
- 9) I'm interested in hearing about issues of **sustainability**. Does your school want to remain a CLC after the grant funding ends? How does it plan to do so?
- 10) Tell me about your role as the coordinator. What do you think about how the role of the coordinator is structured? Is there anything you would do differently?
- 11) Some principals are leaving their schools at the end of this school year; how do you think this may affect the CLC?
- 12) What are some of your goals for the next year?

SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS

CLC Phase 1 Parent Protocol

- 1) What is your understanding of the purpose and goals of the CLC?
 - a. Do you see benefit for you, your family, the community? Explain.
 - b. To what extent is your community's CLC fulfilling that purpose so far?
- 2) Have you noticed any changes in your school or community since the CLC project began? Are there needs that the CLC is beginning to address?

- 3) Are there any additional school or community needs that you would like the CLC to address?
- 4) What are the challenges you have seen/anticipate in the development of the CLC?
- 5) What are the successes you have seen or anticipate in the development of the CLC?
- 6) What do you see as the role of parents within the CLC project? Have you had a role so far? Describe. (Do you feel included in the planning and implementation?)
- 7) How can parents become more involved in the CLC? What additional support do you need from the coordinator/principal/teachers?
- 8) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

CLC Phase 1 Site Visit, Student Interview Protocol

1. What grade are you in?
2. What language do you mostly speak at home?
3. What do you know about the CLC? What do you think about it?
4. How did you hear about what was going on at the CLC?
5. What have you done at the [name] Community Learning Centre?
 - a. Have you used the videoconference facility?
 - b. Have you been involved in any "community-based learning"?
6. What has been your favourite activity at the CLC so far?
7. About how many people participated in the CLC activities you've done?
8. Have your parents done anything with the CLC? If so, what have they done?
9. What else would you like to see happen at the CLC?
10. What would you tell your friends to get them to participate in the CLC?
11. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Site Visit Interview Protocol for Coordinators

- 1) Could you tell me a little bit about how this past year has been for you and your site?
- 2) What are some things that are in the works for this coming year? What are you excited about?
- 3) In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students? The community? What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC?
 - a) Use of VCN
 - b) Use of community-based learning
- 4) How is the CLC viewed in the community? What is being done to get info about the CLC out to the community? What role do you envision for the community in the CLC?
- 5) Tell me about **parental** involvement in the CLC. What is the extent of parental involvement? What role do you envision for parents in the CLC?

- 6) Tell me about how **teachers** are involved in the CLC? Are they supportive? In what ways? Do they use VCN or community-based learning?
- 7) What about the **governing board**? How has it been involved? Is it supportive?
 - a) What is your relationship with the governing board? Does the CLC have a role on the board?
- 8) Tell me about your **steering committee**. Who is on it? What does it do to support the CLC? Has it been involved in planning, developing the action plan, for example?
- 9) Tell me about the **principal's involvement** in the CLC. Does the principal exercise "shared leadership" of the CLC?
 - a) In what ways? Examples.
- 10) Tell me about your **partners**. Who are they and why were these particular ones selected? What is their role?
- 11) What about the **school board**? Is the school board/director general supportive of the CLC and your work? How so?
 - a) Have you had contact with your school board rep? In what ways?
- 12) Tell me about the successes of the CLC/your work.
- 13) Have there been any challenges you have faced in the implementation of the CLC? Please explain.
 - a) How are you dealing with them?
 - b) What further support do you need from the PRT or your school board, for example?
- 14) How do you find the setup and operation of the project, the use of the guidebook?
 - a) How have you implemented or used the guidebook? Were you able to develop the action plan? [could I have a copy]
 - b) Working relationship with principal
 - c) Relationship/involvement with the PRT
- 15) Have you/the principal/the steering committee started thinking about sustainability or planning for after the period of grant funding is over?
- 16) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

[ask for documents like mission statement, etc.]

Site Visit Protocol for Principals

- 1) Could you share what your vision was back when you first got involved with the CLC project, and whether/how that has changed over the past year?
- 2) How has this past year been for you and your site?
- 3) Tell me about your role in the CLC.
- 4) What has been implemented in terms of activities or programs and such so far? What progress has been made? What are you excited about?
 - a) What are some things that are in the works for this coming year?
- 5) How is the CLC viewed in the community?
 - a) Tell me about your partners. Who are they and why were these particular ones selected? What is their role?

- 6) In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students?
- 7) In what ways has the CLC impacted the community? What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC?
- 8) How have teachers been involved in the CLC?
 - a) To what extent are they involved? In what ways? VCN? Community-based learning?
 - b) Are teachers supportive?
- 9) What about the school's **governing board**? What is the extent of its involvement in the CLC? What is the role of the governing board in the CLC? What does it do to support or hinder the development of the CLC?
- 10) How is your school board supporting (or not) this CLC? Is the school board/DG aware of/supportive?
 - a) Have you been in contact with your school board rep? In what ways? Has it been helpful?
- 11) Have there been any **challenges** you have faced with the implementation of the CLC? Explain.
 - a) How are you dealing with them?
 - b) What further support do you need from the PRT or your school board, for example?
- 12) What has the CLC/school been doing in terms of long-term **sustainability** (after the project funding ends?)
- 13) How do you find the set up and operation of the project, the use of the guidebook?
 - a) Working relationship with coordinator
 - b) Relationship/involvement with PRT
- 14) Can you talk a little about your experiences with PRT training?
 - a) What have they participated in?
 - b) Were they useful?
- 15) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Site Visit Protocol for Teachers

1. What do you see as the *purpose* and the goals of the CLC?
2. Describe your role or involvement with the CLC (participate in planning or meetings, teach courses for the community, donate their time, etc.) so far?
3. How has the CLC impacted your role as a teacher in the school?
4. In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students? The community? What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC?
5. Have there been any challenges you have faced with the implementation of the CLC? Explain.
6. How has the principal and CLC coordinator supported your involvement in the CLC? Are there any additional supports you feel you may need?

7. Have you used community resources to enrich the curriculum?
8. Have you used any of the resources provided by the CLC?
 - a. If yes, what and how?
9. Do you have any suggestions for improving the CLC?
10. What do you think teachers in general think about the CLC?
 - a. What do you think the role of teachers should be in the CLC?
11. Are there other activities or partnerships that you think should be part of the CLC that are not currently involved?
12. Have there been any unintended benefits/consequences?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Site Visit Interview/Focus Group Protocol for Stakeholders

- 1) What is your understanding of the purpose and goals of the CLC?
- 2) What benefits does (will) the CLC bring to the community?
 - a. To what extent is the CLC fulfilling that purpose so far?
- 3) How have you/your organization been involved in the CLC project?
- 4) Have you/your organization been involved in developing the action plan for the CLC?
- 5) Tell me about the steering committee.
- 6) Is the role of the **steering committee** clearly defined?
 - a. What is its role?
 - b. What does the steering committee do?
- 7) Have you noticed any changes in the school or community since the CLC project began?
- 8) Are there needs in the community that the CLC is beginning to address?
- 9) Are there any additional school or community needs that you would like the CLC to address?
- 10) What are the challenges you have seen in the development of the CLC?
- 11) What about successes?
- 12) What do you see as the role of the broader community/community groups within the CLC project?
- 13) What do you think the CLC and its leaders are doing to address sustainability? What do you see as the future of the CLC?
- 14) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK WITH DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS

OVERARCHING EVALUATION QUESTION: IMPLEMENTATION

To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and PIC implement activities and processes designed to contribute to the capacity of the CLCs to achieve the short- and medium-term outcomes, such as developing organizational capacity, forming partnerships and developing a collaborative school culture?

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS
What is the range of support services that the Project Resource Team (PRT) and the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) are providing to the 22 CLCs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of support services provided
To what extent and in what ways is the PRT responsive to the needs and concerns of the CLCs, especially during the start-up stage? To what extent are positive, collaborative relationships established between the PRT and the CLCs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived responsiveness Types of collaborations established Perception of collaborative relationships PRT strategies or practices that are perceived as responsive
To what extent and in what ways do the PRT and the PIC support the CLCs in establishing critical connections with regional and provincial resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of support in establishing connections with regional resources Level of support in establishing connections with provincial resources Types of support
What is most useful and valuable about the technical training provided by the PRT? What are the challenges and how are they resolved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived use and value of training Perceived challenges and resolutions
In what ways does training and support through the PRT provide capacity building for constituents of each CLC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in capacity of CLCs Training and support perceived as building capacity
To what extent and in what ways does the work of the PRT/PIC focus on building a productive learning network among the 22 CLCs? What is the role of videoconferencing and use of the project Web site in supporting this work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies perceived to build a learning network Level of support for learning network Use of videoconferencing capabilities

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
<p>To what extent and in what ways do PRT/PIC activities and processes of implementation and ongoing support contribute to the individual CLCs implementing strategies focused on the following?:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities • increased student success and engagement, and • enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning for the communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRT activities perceived as contributing to implementation of strategies by CLCs • Level of contribution • Processes developed and documented • Strategies used by CLCs to improve student performance • Strategies used by CLCs to enhance family engagement • Strategies used by CLCs to foster school efficacy • Strategies used by CLCs to contribute to community vitality
<p>In what ways and to what extent does the work of the PRT/PIC support the CLCs in developing processes and infrastructures that will increase the likelihood of CLC sustainability? For example, strategies designed to build support for the CLCs in policy and practice, such as interministerial dialogue and cooperation, networking between provincial associations and their partnerships with CLCs, and contact with school boards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes developed and documented to sustain CLCs • Level of support for CLCs toward sustainability • Types of support, e.g. interministerial cooperation, networking between provincial associations and contact with school boards
<p>OVERARCHING EVALUATION QUESTION: IMPLEMENTATION</p>	
<p>To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs, led by principals and CLC coordinators, implement their action plans, including development of community partnerships and engagement, development of a culture of collaboration, and use of community-based learning?</p>	
DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
<p>In what ways do CLC participants and stakeholders understand the concept of a community learning centre and the roles they play in the CLC implementation process? To what extent do they develop a clear, shared vision of their centres?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated understanding of roles • Stated understanding of CLC concept • Shared written vision statements for centres
<p>To what extent and in what ways do the CLCs find the Framework for Action helpful and use it in the implementation process? To what extent do CLCs develop and implement the various steps in the Framework for Action?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of use of Framework for Action (FFA) • Valuing of FFA • Development of action steps • Implementation of action steps
<p>To what extent do the CLCs use and value the training, technical assistance and general support from the PRT and the collaborative relationships with other CLCs in the project? Do CLCs need assistance in areas not addressed by the PRT?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of use of PRT support • Level of use of relationships with other CLCs • Other needed assistance

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
<p>Who are the stakeholders in each CLC? To what extent are they involved in the process? How are decisions made? What is the role of the steering committee? What is the level of collaboration among the school and its partners and other stakeholders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified stakeholders • Inclusion of stakeholder groups and steering committee in development • Decision-making strategies used • Level of collaboration
<p>To what extent and in what ways are students involved in the development and implementation of each CLC? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of student involvement • Types of student involvement • Reasons for types and levels of involvement
<p>To what extent and in what ways are members of the community involved? What school/community partnerships are planned and developed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of community involvement activities/strategies planned and developed • Number of community members who use services • Frequency of use • Number of community organizations involved in partnerships with CLCs • Types of community partnerships
<p>What other collaborations serve the implementation of each CLC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other collaborative partnerships • Extent of social and other networks • Financial support from other sources
<p>What is the range of services provided by the CLCs and how does it broaden and expand over time? To what extent do these services meet the needs and gaps identified? What are the constraints, challenges and opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of services provided • Number of services for different types of stakeholders • Extent to which services meet identified needs/gaps • Constraints, challenges and opportunities identified
<p>What are the activities and exemplary practices these CLCs implement in the following areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education and lifelong learning • youth development • support for family and community • recreation, e.g. sports, and arts/culture • access to information and communications technologies (ICT) • service integration and access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to health services • Types of activities and practices in quality education and lifelong learning • Types of activities and practices that support family and community • Types of ICT available and use of ICT • Types of activities and practices that integrate service and demonstrate access • Types of activities and services that provided access to health care • Number of activities and practices in each area • Extent of communication in each area

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
<p>What is the level of parent and other community member participation in the CLC’s activities and services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents who participate in CLC activities and services • Number of other community members who participate in CLC activities and services • Level of time commitment and types of participation of parents and other community members (intensity of participation)
<p>What are the attitudes toward the school/centre on the part of parents, students and other stakeholders at the beginning of the project (e.g. value of the school/centre and its services, comfort level), and to what extent and in what ways do these attitudes change over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes toward the centre • Perceptions of value of centre
<p>What is the nature of the relationship of the school/centre and of the English-speaking community it serves, and to what extent and in what ways does this change over the life of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes toward the centre and the community • Openness to centre innovations • Inclusiveness in decision-making process • Level of community participation and measures of change over time • Types of relationships or engagement of English community
<p>What is the baseline portrait of these schools/communities prior to or in early stages of CLC implementation? To what extent and in what ways do these schools/communities change over the life of the project? Do the changes reflect the outcomes defined in the individual CLC theories of change? Have any unanticipated outcomes/changes occurred?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of above plus data from the province and the Canadian census including the following: for schools and adult education programs (including but not limited to), achievement rates on provincial exams, dropout rates, grade retention rates, enrollment levels; for community (including but not limited to), extent of English mother tongue, ethnic diversity, income and education levels, occupational characteristics • Similarity of actual changes and outcomes identified in CLC theories of change • Unanticipated outcomes

OVERARCHING EVALUATION QUESTIONS: IMPACT

To what extent and in what ways do the 22 CLCs accomplish the goals they set for themselves including the following?:

- ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities
- increased student success and engagement
- enhanced access to educational services and lifelong learning for the communities

To what extent and in what ways do the 22 CLCs show evidence of sustainability after the project funding and support end?

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
What are the types and extent of collaborations with social service, health and other networks and institutions that are established by the CLCs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number, types and characteristics of collaborative partnerships between schools, families and communities, for example, school collaborations with social service, health and other networks and institutions
To what extent and in what ways do students in the CLCs show progress in academic, health and social success, and engagement with the school community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student success measures such as improvement in achievement, graduation rates, attendance, and participation in after-school activities
What is the level and extent of participation in CLC activities and services by various stakeholders in the communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level and extent of participation in CLC activities and services by various stakeholders
What are the types and extent of educational services and opportunities for lifelong learning in the community that have been developed or enhanced by the CLCs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number, types, level of use and other characteristics of educational services and opportunities for lifelong learning developed or enhanced by the CLCs
To what extent do CLCs establish community/ constituent support, diversified funding, and formalized policies and practices that may promote sustainability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level, types and nature of community/ constituent support, diversified funding, and formalized policies and practices that are developed by the CLCs
<p>In what ways was the implementation of CLCs similar and different across communities?</p> <p>In what ways was the impact of the CLCs similar and different across communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and differences in implementation across CLCs • Similarities and differences in impact across CLCs
What further support and resources are needed to enable CLCs to remain effective, consistent and strong contributors to education and community development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional support and resources identified

OVERARCHING EVALUATION QUESTIONS: LESSONS LEARNED

To what extent and in what ways do the project’s Theory of Change and the individual CLC theories of change adequately represent the processes and outcomes of the initiative?

- What, if any, adjustments need to be made to the project Theory of Change?
- What general patterns and lessons can be drawn from the CLC theories of change?

What lessons does the project offer for policy and practice, particularly concerning establishment and support of CLCs in English-speaking communities in Québec?

DETAILED EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SELECTED DRAFT INDICATORS
<p>What factors were identified as either facilitating or hindering the work of the PRT/PIC and the CLCs?</p> <p>What other processes were associated with the more or less successful attainment of results?</p> <p>What insights can be gleaned from the project and CLC theories of change? In what ways might the project Theory of Change be modified to better capture the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors identified that facilitate or hinder the work • Processes associated with the successful attainment of results • Insights from project and CLC theories of change
<p>What lessons does the project offer for policy and practice?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project lessons for policy and practice

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Additional Questions on the School Board’s Role and on Policy

- What is the role of school boards and school-level committees in supporting (or hindering) the process of successful CLC implementation?
- What is the impact of the work done by the PRT and PIC to enhance the policy environment for CLCs?

| APPENDIX E |

CLC EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Members of the Evaluation Committee include:

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- 6) William Floch
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- 7) Geneviève Légar
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- 8) Sylvia Martin-Laforge and Kim Richardson
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- 9) Kim Geneviève Rodrigue
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