NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR’S VITAL SIGNS

A province-wide check-up of the quality of life in Newfoundland & Labrador communities for 2015.

Revised Edition

A collaboration between the Community Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador and Memorial University’s Harris Centre.
Welcome

Newfoundland and Labrador’s Vital Signs 2015

Jennifer Guy (Chair, Community Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador)
Rob Greenwood (Executive Director, Harris Centre, Memorial University)

In October 2014, we released the inaugural edition of Newfoundland and Labrador’s Vital Signs, a comprehensive, reader-friendly look at how Newfoundland and Labrador communities are faring in key quality-of-life areas. The report was printed in every major newspaper in the province thanks to a unique partnership with TC Media, and received tremendous support and generated much discussion; but this was just the beginning of the conversation.

This past year, we engaged community leaders throughout the province in a series of consultations to help determine the priority areas for this second edition. Consultations were held in St. John’s, Corner Brook, and Happy Valley - Goose Bay. Participants discussed a wide range of topic areas and included representatives from business, governments, non-profits, and academia.

With direction from these consultations, the team then set to work assembling the data and compiling articles to examine, explore, and elaborate on concerns heard through the consultations. Building on last year’s thematic approach, this year’s Vital Signs takes a demographic look at the province and examines more closely issues of concern for seniors, women, Aboriginal peoples, children and youth, and families. The report also takes a more holistic look at health in the Wellness section and the financial health of individuals in the Economy section. In as many places as possible, the report includes region-specific data.

As a nationwide program coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada, it was also important for us to consider the national theme selected for this year: Sense of Belonging. As many people in this province pride themselves on a strong sense of belonging, we felt it was important to highlight this topic and expand upon how our social relationships, connection with our heritage, and sense of community contribute to our wellbeing. How is our sense of belonging changing in response to urbanization, immigration, and an aging population, and how will this affect us? This report will consider these questions at the provincial level, and we invite you to take a look at Community Foundations of Canada’s national Vital Signs report, available online, to get a broader perspective on what is happening across the country.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all of our community and corporate supporters, as well as individuals and groups who contributed to the content of the report through interviews, photos, and data, and contributing their ideas and questions during the community consultation process. We hope you will find this a useful tool in your organizations, businesses, schools, and communities to spark collaboration, inform decisions, prompt partnerships, and inspire action.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The Community Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador promotes and sustains healthy communities across our province by providing grants to a wide range of community organizations. CFNL combines a broad, province-wide reach with a grassroots focus on small organizations that can have a major impact in their local communities. The foundation’s goal is to address community problems and to enrich the lives of community members.

THE LESLIE HARRIS CENTRE OF REGIONAL POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy & Development is Memorial University’s hub for public policy and regional development issues. The Centre links Memorial faculty, students, and staff with groups across Newfoundland & Labrador, supporting active community engagement. Working with all units at Memorial, the Harris Centre builds connections, encourages informed debate and supports collaboration to enhance the Province through mutually beneficial partnerships.

POPPULATION (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</td>
<td>526,977</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Avalon</td>
<td>211,724</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avalon Peninsula (Excluding NE)</td>
<td>63,912</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burin Peninsula</td>
<td>20,938</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>15,780</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. George’s</td>
<td>20,567</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humber District</td>
<td>41,771</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>38,520</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonavista-Trinity</td>
<td>34,328</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame Bay</td>
<td>36,031</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador</td>
<td>16,146</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Peninsula</td>
<td>25,018</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunatsiavut</td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo credit: Bojan Fürst
A Village of 100

If Newfoundland & Labrador was made up of 100 people, there would be approximately...

- **49** Men
- **51** Women
- **25** Men who vote
- **28** Women who vote
- **2** Immigrants
- **8** Aboriginal people
- **20** Youth (Under 19)
- **18** Seniors (65+)
- **46** Volunteer
- **24** See their friends every day
- **6** Hectares of farmland
- **74** Tonnes of waste generated
- **6** Men living in poverty
- **8** Women living in poverty
- **68** Overweight or obese
- **7** Have a mood disorder
- **26** Eat fruits and veggies 5 or more times/day
- **48** Physically active during leisure time
- **9** Have diabetes

**Numbers only tell half the story**

*By Ailsa Craig, associate professor and department head, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts*

Measurement is not a window into the full reality of people’s lives, even when it is accurate. What we count, and how we define an issue, affects our ability to view one another as full members of shared communities.

In trying to ‘understand the issues’ it can feel important to focus on problems. But when we run only those numbers, we risk defining a community through crisis alone, and instead of understanding how people live, we only see how people struggle or die. For example, even though it’s true that LGBTQ youth are at higher risk of homelessness or suicide, even though it’s true that LGBTQ people face discrimination in housing, schooling, work, and at home, there is more to LGBTQ lives than that.

Alongside violence and discrimination, being invisible takes a toll for many marginalized populations. And that’s why what we count matters, because if we look to the numbers to better understand, we need to find better ways of counting each other in. Marginalized populations do not need to be defined by crisis—indeed, if defined in that way, we recreate the structure of inequality we hope to change.
Collaborating for Wellness

There is never a good time to be unwell. This is especially true for clientele at the non-profit community organization Stella’s Circle, which offers supportive housing, counselling services, and employment programs. Denise Hillier, director of Clinical Services, says that individuals often struggle when navigating systems to get help, especially when they experience serious and life-threatening physical health issues. According to Hillier, many clients with a mental health diagnosis often have more difficulty accessing help because they may have histories that include poverty, conflicts with the law, addictions, abuse or neglect, homelessness, incarceration, illiteracy, or learning disabilities.

“Services are often fragmented and for those with complex mental health issues, it means that some necessary services are underutilized or never utilized,” she says. “It is challenging for those who work in the health and community services sector to navigate the system. For people who are coping with mental health complexities and trying to access services, it can be an impossible task.”

Hillier is advocating for a more integrated approach to mental health for all. “Individuals should be supported through a holistic framework, which means improved collaboration and consolidation of service centres so that individuals who need health supports can access them,” she says.

“The types of supports and the intensity of the supports can make huge differences in the amount of time these people are able to successfully live in their communities and also be a part of their communities. Without those supports, some people cycle in and out of institutions, be they mental health or criminal justice institutions.”

According to Hillier, independent evaluations have shown that these intensive solutions reduced the amount of time individuals were spending in prison systems by over 70 per cent, and resulted in a nearly 40 per cent drop in the number of unnecessary hospital days.
HEALTH CARE

For every 10,000 people in the province, we have approximately:

- 14 Fast Food Outlets
- 8 Convenience Stores
- 4 Gas Stations w/Store
- 3 Grocery Stores

Of the 684 communities in NL, 84 per cent do not have a grocery store. (Healthy Corner Stores Project)

FOOD

For every 10,000 people in the province, we have approximately:

- 14 Fast Food Outlets
- 8 Convenience Stores
- 4 Gas Stations w/Store
- 3 Grocery Stores

Of the 684 communities in NL, 84 per cent do not have a grocery store. (Healthy Corner Stores Project)

In NL there is approximately 6458 sq ft of farmland per capita. That’s about the same size as a slightly oversized (60 x 110 ft) home building lot. (Statistics Canada)

Healthy Corner Stores – Healthy Communities

The local corner store is often the hub of a community – in rural Newfoundland and Labrador the local convenience store is often also the local hardware and housewares store, not to mention one of the only places to buy food. The products they offer can have a big impact on the overall health and wellbeing of a community.

“Many rural communities across the province are not large enough to sustain full grocery stores, resulting in residents depending on convenience stores,” says Kristie Jameson of Food Security Network of NL. “NL faces a host of food security issues as a result of geographic, environmental, economic, and social obstacles.” Among them, Jameson lists a reliance on imported produce (90 per cent), and a tenuous supply chain, which would leave the province with an estimated two-to-three day supply of fresh vegetables in the event of a crisis.

“There are currently two convenience stores in Branch,” says town councillor Mallary McGrath. “Until recently there were three, but one store owner retired.” The nearest grocery store is 66 km away. It is difficult for residents to travel to it and it is a challenge to entice distributors to come to Branch to supply the small stores – a prime example of a situation faced by many communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Considering Branch’s grocery issues, it is not surprising that Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest consumption of vegetables and fruits of any province, with high rates of diet-related health challenges including diabetes and obesity.

Dr. Cathy Mah of Memorial University sees the convenience store as a potential cornerstone of healthy eating in the province, especially since Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest number of convenience stores per capita of any province or territory.

This vision has led her to start the Healthy Corner Store project – a collaboration between Memorial University’s Food Policy Lab, Eastern Health, and the Food Security Network – and why they’ve selected a convenience store in Branch as their first guinea pig.

“The Healthy Corner Stores project is a way to think about the whole food system and how it works.”

For Mah, the approach means thinking beyond basic nutrition education and requests to ban the less healthy options. “They’re there to run a business, they’re not a health provider,” says Mah. “But many of them want to provide a service to their community, so we need to support that.”

“There’s a number of things we can do: thinking through their business model and the community, then looking at the policy and the economic context in that region. Those things are not solely in the control of small retailers. It needs distributors, it needs municipalities, and it requires local boards of trade and community wellness councils.”

“It needs all of those people thinking together about the food environment. It’s a system change.”

Only 25.7 per cent of NLers consume fruits and vegetables five or more times per day. (Statistics Canada)

Photo credit: Guy W. Schnitzler
Collaborating to Bring Cultural Understanding to Community Supports

The Nunatsiavut region in northern Labrador — a self-governing Inuit territory — has social and cultural needs quite distinct from the rest of the province. That’s why the Nunatsiavut Government has worked with Memorial University to create two pilot projects, as part of an effort to bring better community-based Aboriginal support to the province.

In 2009, the Nunatsiavut Government engaged Memorial University as well as community stakeholders, to offer a bachelor of social work (BSW) program to Inuit beneficiaries in Labrador. Students enrolled in the Nunatsiavut Government-sponsored four-year program received instruction in the same accredited social work program of study as students at Memorial’s St. John’s campus, except with a focus on traditional Inuit knowledge and cultural norms interwoven into the courses and teaching methods.

A total of 19 students graduated from the program, which has provided many of the region’s coastal communities with much needed trained social workers.

“This collaboration with Nunatsiavut Government, Labrador Institute, College of the North Atlantic, other Memorial departments and community partners has provided an opportunity for many people to learn from each other,” said Dr. Donna Hardy Cox, dean of the School of Social Work. “It has helped develop new ways to contribute to the social work body of knowledge and to increase cultural understanding, and has resulted in a collaborative model of undergraduate social work education. We hope the people of our province, in Labrador, will reap the benefits of the knowledge of these graduates.”

“I know the people, I know the issues, I know what to expect,” said Danielle Baikie, one of the graduates, who accepted the first-ever social work position at Nunatsiavut Government’s Department of Health and Social Development in her hometown of Nain immediately after graduation. Building on the Social Work pilot programs, the Faculty of Education’s four-year bachelor’s program for Nunatsiavut will be started in September 2015.

“When they come back to our schools, they’ll have been taught to teach keeping the Inuit-specific curriculum, culture and language in mind,” says Jodie Lane, education manager with the Nunatsiavut Government. “They’ll have been taught how to infuse Inuit knowledge and Inuit world view into everything that they do. That’s the real gem of this program.”

“They’ll have been taught how to infuse Inuit knowledge and Inuit world view into everything that they do”
In 2012 NLers produced 20kg more waste each than the national average. (Statistics Canada)

Expect More Extreme Weather
Dr. Joel Finnis, Climatologist, Memorial University

"Recent evidence indicates that '100 year storms' (a precipitation event that we'd expect to see once every 100 years) are becoming more intense. Projections from climate models suggest this trend will continue into the 21st century as a consequence of ongoing climate change. This raises significant concerns for communities across the province regarding increased flood risks and impacts, reduced life-expectancy of infrastructure, and the remapping of floodplains. The extent of observed changes varies by community, but in many cases is quite severe. In Gander, the 100 year event (for precipitation accumulated over 24 hours) has increased by more than 20 per cent since the mid-90s, while St. John's increased by roughly 10 per cent. Taken as whole, these results suggest our province is already experiencing adverse impacts from climate change and, if model projections are correct, these can be expected to intensify into coming decades."

Environment

ANNUAL WASTE DISPOSAL PER PERSON (kg) 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>720kg</th>
<th>740kg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012 NLers produced 20kg more waste each than the national average. (Statistics Canada)

COMPOST 2014-2015

In 2014-15 the province’s waste management corporation Multi Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) partnered with 11 municipalities and one regional service board to distribute 1,280 backyard compost bins throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Since 2005, MMSB has partnered with more than 100 municipalities to distribute over 28,000. (MMSB)

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE 2014-2015

In 2014-15 approximately, 200,000 litres of household hazardous waste (HHW) were collected and properly disposed of through HHW mobile collection events and permanent HHW Depots. (MMSB)

Expect More Extreme Weather

Dr. Joel Finnis, Climatologist, Memorial University

"Recent evidence indicates that '100 year storms' (a precipitation event that we'd expect to see once every 100 years) are becoming more intense. Projections from climate models suggest this trend will continue into the 21st century as a consequence of ongoing climate change. This raises significant concerns for communities across the province regarding increased flood risks and impacts, reduced life-expectancy of infrastructure, and the remapping of floodplains. The extent of observed changes varies by community, but in many cases is quite severe. In Gander, the 100 year event (for precipitation accumulated over 24 hours) has increased by more than 20 per cent since the mid-90s, while St. John's increased by roughly 10 per cent. Taken as whole, these results suggest our province is already experiencing adverse impacts from climate change and, if model projections are correct, these can be expected to intensify into coming decades."

PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES
100 year, 24 hour precipitation event, millimeters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. John's</td>
<td>123.7</td>
<td>135.8</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gander</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>119.8</td>
<td>141.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Bay</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"A 100 year storm" is a term used by scientists to classify the most severe possible weather event. This chart shows that the weather, in terms of precipitation expected during a 100 year storm, has gotten more severe over the past two decades and will continue to do so over the next 35 years. (Environment Canada, Government of NL)
It came as no surprise when Statistics Canada recently released a report stating that 65 per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians felt a “somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging” to their community – the highest percentage in Canada. Given Newfoundland and Labrador’s geographic isolation, communal fishing culture, and historic roots as its own country, it is no wonder people experience a strong sense of place here. Small, tight-knit communities hold generations of families and are dominated by a slower way of life as people take time to visit their friends and family. In fact, in Newfoundland and Labrador people take time to see their relatives and friends a whole lot more than they do in the rest of the country.

Studies have shown that feeling connected to those around you can even help you live longer and, on a broader level, can lead to lower rates of crime and more positive perceptions of health. People with a strong sense of community belonging are more likely to report being in good physical and mental health. Given that Newfoundland and Labrador is facing a serious challenge of an aging population and aging workforce, this sense of belonging and connection to those around us has important implications for the longer-term health and vibrancy of the province.

More NLers have a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to their community than other people in Canada. This strong sense of belonging is even more predominant in the Central, Western, and Labrador health regions. (Statistics Canada)

Cross-cultural learning is vital to properly welcoming immigrants and creating a shared sense of belonging. With locally learning about other cultures, and also encouraging immigrants to participate in local culture. The strong sense of belonging Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel has been created by friendliness, camaraderie, and that feeling of safety and security in your home that comes with the knowledge that your neighbours are also your friends. These are important practices that must live on by being passed on to newcomers so that Newfoundland and Labrador can grow while retaining its famed familiarity.
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION THAT IS AN IMMIGRANT 2011

NL 1.8%
CAN 20.6%

Immigrants make up a total of 1.8 per cent of the total population of NL and over 20 per cent of the total population in Canada. Immigrant refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant/permanent resident — usually someone who was born outside of Canada. (Statistics Canada)

ELECTION TURNOUT 2011

Provincial 57.3%
Federal 53%
Municipal 49%

Only 53 per cent of NLers voted in the 2011 Federal Election and over 57.9 per cent voted in the 2011 provincial election. That leaves four out of ten people who did not cast a vote. Less than half of eligible voters voted in the last municipal election (Elections Canada, Elections Newfoundland & Labrador, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador)

VOLUNTEER RATE

All Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>43.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age 15-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>53.2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age 65-74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>38.2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NL has only the seventh highest rate of volunteerism amongst all the provinces. NL youth, however, volunteer at the second highest rate in Canada (Nova Scotia, 72%), while NL seniors volunteer at the second lowest rate (Quebec, 26.3%). (Statistics Canada)

Arts

ATTRACTIONS 2015

NUMBER OF ARTS / ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION FACILITIES 2013

NL 438
St. John’s 125
Avalon 72
Burin 25
South Coast 19
St. George’s 13
Humber 24
Central 20
Bonavista 33
Notre Dame 53
Northern 31
Labrador 18
Nunatsiavut 5

Despite having 40% of the population, the NE Avalon has less than 29% of the arts, entertainment & recreation facilities in the province. Notre Dame, on the other hand, has over 12% of facilities compared to less than 7% of the population. (Government of NL)

LGBTQ

Building Safer Spaces

We are strongest together.

That is the idea behind a new initiative to build community space for the LGBTQ community. The group leading the charge is Quadrangle, a grass-roots community-based initiative. They recently conducted a series of consultations and an initial survey to determine what people would hope for from an LGBTQ community space.

“It’s important for getting to know each other, to share community space where you can be yourself and be part of what is happening,” says Charlie Murphy, one of the Steering Committee members spearheading the project.

“Shared community space is needed for meetings, for social events, to make it easier to know what services are around, and to meet people outside of a bar context.”

While continuing community consultations and research, Quadrangle also plans to organize events throughout the province. “We’d like to have pop-up events in Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor and Happy Valley-Goose Bay as well as in St. John’s,” says Murphy. “These events will create pockets of temporary space that support strong, positive community involvement, while we work toward building something more permanent.”

We are strongest together
Creating Age-Friendly Communities

Newfoundland and Labrador has the fastest-aging population in the country. This is no big surprise to most communities around the province; the outmigration of youth has been so commonplace it has been captured in folk songs. But this, combined with the aging baby boomers, and dropping fertility rates, is presenting a significant challenge to many communities. This shift in demographics is making it difficult for communities to provide services, adequate housing, and to support accessibility needs.

One community in central Newfoundland is seeing this challenge as an opportunity. “As Lewisporte is a service community in central Newfoundland, it already has services that attract retiring adults,” says longtime resident Valerie Taylor. “This would be a contributing factor that many programs involving seniors would be supported by the town.”

“It was the town’s initiative to create the Age-Friendly Council, which has been instrumental in starting programs such as Vials for Life, coffee houses with informative speakers, and initiating the start of a 50+ Club,” says Taylor, who is also the council president.

Lewisporte’s Age-Friendly Council is run by volunteers, with a mandate to provide programs that promote healthy, active lifestyles for seniors, as well as opportunities for seniors to use their volunteer and leadership skills to benefit others. Council co-chair Myrtice Alpen has seen the council involved in awareness campaigns with first responders, as well as community beautification projects and grant-writing.

“The focus is on seniors, but when you help one group of people, you impact the whole community,” says Alpen.

Seniors in Poverty

The provincial poverty rate for seniors is two-thirds (66 per cent) higher than the national rate. In different regions the rate is much higher, such as the Northern Peninsula, where it is nearly three times the national rate (40.1 per cent). (Statistics Canada)

SENIORS IN POVERTY 2011

Despite numerous health indicators and risk factors—such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, smoking, and drinking—being among the highest in the country, seniors in NL perceive their overall health much more favourably than others across Canada. (Statistics Canada)

SENIORS PERCEIVED HEALTH (Percentage of the population who perceive their overall health and mental health as very good or excellent) 2014

The median income of seniors (65+) living in the NE Avalon is slightly above the national level. However, in the province overall, seniors earn nearly 20 per cent less than their national peers. (Statistics Canada)
Supporting Vulnerable Youth

The term “at-risk youth” has many definitions in the province and across the country. Early drug use, criminal involvement, and isolation are some of the commonly noted indicators that youth may struggle to become a resilient adult. However, many experts agree that many at-risk youth in the province have actually been at-risk since birth.

“If you go to the province’s community accounts data and pull neighbourhood data on rates of high school completion, for example, you will clearly see neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty also have low levels of high school completion, and high unemployment,” says Angela Crockwell, executive director of Thrive, a division of Community Youth Network, which supports teens who live in poverty. “When a young person grows up in poverty, there are other risk factors present such as hunger, lack of access to supports, lack of access to positive role models … they will have to work much harder than other children to accomplish the same goals,” says Crockwell.

Professionals working in the field note that many young people may be forced to choose between living on the street, or living in unsafe housing where there is criminal activity taking place.

“Neither facilitates progress towards breaking the cycle, and neither represents a safe option,” says Ayon Shahed, senior manager at Choices for Youth, which serves hundreds of youth each year. “In both cases, a vulnerable young person may find themselves in a worse situation.”

“What we find is that young people are faced with impossible choices and that they need support to either navigate those situations, or begin to access better options,” says Shahed.

Choices for Youth focuses on three key life factors when aiding a vulnerable young person: stable housing, stable education, and stable employment.

“When it comes to high-risk behaviours, we believe that they are the result of instability, poverty, and stigma and that by introducing stable housing, employment, and education, young people can make better choices and work towards positive life changes.”

Across all of the island, there are proportionally fewer young people than elsewhere in Canada. Labrador, on the other hand, has a markedly higher proportion of young people than the national average. (Statistics Canada)

Unlike seniors in NL, the youth (age 17 and under) poverty rate is roughly the same as the national average. (Statistics Canada)

Unemployment for males age 15-24 is only slightly higher than the national average. However, for females in NL, the unemployment rate is over 50 per cent higher than the national average. (Statistics Canada)

Over 43 per cent of youth (age 12-19) in NL are overweight or obese - nearly 70 per cent higher than the rest of Canada. (Statistics Canada)
It Takes a Village

Investments in effective early learning programs produce benefits to children, families, communities, and to society that far outweigh the cost,” says Dr. Dave Philpott of Memorial’s Faculty of Education. “What do communities get out of early childhood education? More engaged citizens, lower rates of dropouts, fewer mental health issues, and fewer educational lags. It boosts the birth rate, it improves market participation,” says Philpott. “It’s an economic powerhouse.”

For many Newfoundland and Labrador families, daycare is becoming more necessary, more expensive, and less available. It boosts the birth rate, it improves market participation,” says Philpott. “It’s an economic powerhouse.”

For many Newfoundland and Labrador families, daycare is becoming more necessary, more expensive, and less available. Meanwhile, there is mounting research that points to the broader economic and social benefits of accessible, quality early childhood education.

One daycare facility in the province that is developing innovative solutions is Daybreak Parent Child Centre.

It is the province’s only free childcare centre, operating through an agreement with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

Its designation as a “parent child centre” is intentional. “We enroll the family, not just the child,” says Daybreak Executive Director Heather Bartlett.

Staff encourage parents and caregivers to visit Daybreak to spend time with their children in the classroom, on field trips, and during lunch time. They are also encouraged to join one or more of the many groups offered by Daybreak. These groups cover issues including home cooking, men’s and women’s issues, and support for children with fetal alcohol syndrome.

“You’re going to make a change in the child’s life by giving them good quality education,” says Bartlett. “But if you want to make lasting change, then you’ve got to work with the families as well.”

Early childhood education amounts to only 1.3 per cent of the provincial budget. In Quebec, that number more than triples NL’s at 4.3 per cent.

Early childhood education amounts to only 1.3 per cent of the provincial budget. In Quebec, that number more than triples NL’s at 4.3 per cent.

While the poverty rate for the most urbanized portion of the province is lower than the national numbers (9.8 per cent in the Northeast Avalon compared with 12.6 per cent for all of Canada), still 13.8 per cent of families are living in poverty in NL. Poverty rates for lone parent families are much higher. (Statistics Canada)

While the poverty rate for the most urbanized portion of the province is lower than the national numbers (9.8 per cent in the Northeast Avalon compared with 12.6 per cent for all of Canada), still 13.8 per cent of families are living in poverty in NL. Poverty rates for lone parent families are much higher. (Statistics Canada)

Early childhood education amounts to only 1.3 per cent of the provincial budget. In Quebec, that number more than triples NL’s at 4.3 per cent.

Early childhood education amounts to only 1.3 per cent of the provincial budget. In Quebec, that number more than triples NL’s at 4.3 per cent.

While 73.6 per cent of NL mothers with children 0-5 years work, access to ECE programs is limited. (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto)
Women's issues in Newfoundland and Labrador have always been more men than women in politics, but in 2015 one might expect a little more gender balance in the legislature. Currently, there is only one female provincial cabinet minister and only 13 per cent of all MHAs are women. However, if you look at the community level, there is no shortage of women leaders, so why aren’t more women throwing their hats in the provincial or federal political ring?

“We see a lot of women involved in municipal councils,” says Sheilagh O’Leary, provincial chair of Equal Voice, a national non-profit dedicated to electing more women to all levels of political office in Canada. “Municipalities are inherently important in the development of political careers. A lot of people who run in a municipal election will move on to provincial or federal politics.”

O’Leary says the challenge lies in making the leap to the provincial and federal scene. Women face many barriers to entering politics, from balancing traditional caregiver roles to gaining access to financial support and political networks. Managing the public perception of women in politics is also a challenge, as the media often employs negative stereotypes in the treatment of female politicians. “Often times male candidates won’t be addressed in the same way,” says O’Leary. “Women often have to look a certain way to be accepted.”

To help others overcome these obstacles, Equal Voice NL, in partnership with The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, released “Organize to Win: A Political Guidebook for Women,” adapted from the Nova Scotia council’s text. “It’s kind of a how-to guide on how to run a campaign,” she says.

Equal Voice is also working on a series of workshops across the province, connecting interested women to seasoned mentors. O’Leary, who is longtime community activist and former St. John’s councillor, credits her mentors for her success. “I hit the ground running,” she says. “I surrounded myself with people who had campaign experience.”

The average female in NL earns 70.8 per cent of the average male’s annual earnings. In the Northeast Avalon the figure is slightly higher, at 77.8 per cent. (Statistics Canada)

The average female in NL earns 70.8 per cent of the average male’s annual earnings. In the Northeast Avalon the figure is slightly higher, at 77.8 per cent. (Statistics Canada)
Keeping up with the cost of living

Corner Brook native Stephen Earle has been working for the last four years for mining companies operating in Labrador. He took the job when the industry was surging, and so was the cost of living.

“I was paying around $1500 a month for rent and bills,” he says. “So, at the time I wasn’t doing much better than living cheque-to-cheque,” says Earle, who recently switched jobs to move out of the area and avoid the problematic rental prices in Lab City, where trailers were selling for around $300K.

In the ebb and flow of the oil and mining industries, many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are struggling with the cost of living, purchasing a home, and navigating a career in the province.

“We’ve seen the same scenario hundreds of times,” says Al Antle, executive director of Credit Counsellors of Newfoundland and Labrador. “It’s pretty common down here in the trenches.”

Antle says the province’s financial situation is being reflected in the cases he sees every day, particularly in the number of people coming in his door.

Between 2008 and 2014, the number of new people seeking help at the centre dropped by nearly half, a trend Antle attributes to the strong financial circumstances in the province at the time.

“We’re a little like the fire department — you don’t need us till your house is on fire,” he says. “When the economy is in shambles, and people are struggling financially, they need the services we can provide. So, our caseload dropped from over 100 new cases per month, to about 50.”

This past summer, as oil prices plummeted and mines in Labrador fell on hard times, the number of new cases was 75 per cent higher than it was just one year previous.

“We’re also finding that the people coming in our door with debt issues owe significant amounts of debt,” he says, noting that many people in this province are guilty of overspending on a monthly basis.

“For most households, it was no problem, until recently, and the new salaries aren’t able to keep up with that amount of debt,” he says. “Canadians are taking on $1.63 of debt for every dollar earned, and people in this province are no different.”

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SPENDING 2013

- Income Tax 18%
- Gifts / Charitable Contributions 3%
- Personal Insurance Payments & Pension Contributions 7%
- Education 1%
- Health / Personal Care / Recreation 10%
- Household Operations / Furnishings 9%
- Transportation 19%
- Food 10%
- Shelter 18%
- Clothing & Accessories 5%

NLers spend roughly the same as the national average on most household expenses, except: 3 per cent less on shelter, 1 per cent less on income tax, and 1 per cent less on education, and 3 per cent more on transportation, 1 per cent more on household operations/furnishings, and 1 per cent more on personal insurance payments, and pension contributions. (Statistics Canada)
Fishing on Solid Ground

Amidst the recent volatility of oil and mineral production, the fishery has been a steadfast economic driver for Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly in rural areas. Many thought that the collapse of key groundfish stocks in the early 1990s was the death knell for rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Now, two decades later, even a trade as ancient as the fishery is showing that it’s capable of change in modern markets.

“We fished mainly cod back then, but when the moratorium came on, we were kind of left in limbo,” says Tony Doyle of Bay de Verde, who fished with his father and uncles from the 1970s until their retirement, when he became the sole owner of the enterprise. “1992 was probably the hardest year. People were leaving, re-training, but I still had my family here, my wife and two kids, my dad and mom, aunts and uncles all around. I had a lot of money invested in the fishery, so I started fishing lobster a bit harder, then lumpfish, blackback flounder, and squid … whatever we could make a dollar on to try and pay off the bills.”

That diversified owner-operated fishery has been essential to the continued life of the fishery and of rural areas of the province.

“Today’s industry has an export value of nearly $1 billion and continues to employ nearly 18,000 people. By comparison the export value of the fishing industry in NL was approximately $650 million in 1989,” says Carey Bonnell, head of the School of Fisheries at Memorial University’s Marine Institute. The rapid emergence of highly lucrative shellfish species such as shrimp and snow crab (now representing more than 80 per cent of the total landed value of the sector) and the rapid growth in the province’s aquaculture industry (particularly salmon, with an export value of nearly $200 million) have given many rural Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a place in the market.

“Processing plants contribute up to 80 per cent of commercial tax revenues to some municipalities,” says Keith Sullivan, president of Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW). “Harvesters and plant workers spend their income in places like Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor and Corner Brook. Enterprise owners spend significant amounts of money on vessel supplies like groceries and gas, and on having their boats maintained.”


Newfoundlanders and Labradorians work longer hours than their Canadian peers. (Statistics Canada)

Most NL families earn slightly less than their Canadian counterparts, however NLers have the highest Median Total Income in Atlantic Canada. (Statistics Canada)

Labour productivity refers to the average real gross domestic product produced by an hour of work. NL’s productivity is higher mainly due to the highly productive nature of the oil and gas industry (ie: it generates a lot of money for relatively little labour). (Statistics Canada)

NLers hold significantly less debt than Canadians. (Statistics Canada)

NL GDP BREAKDOWN (By Industry) 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>NL GDP (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, Oil &amp; Gas Extraction</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>10.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale/Retail Trade</td>
<td>7.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/Culture &amp; the Arts</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate &amp; Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>8.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>7.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>718%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas make up roughly one-third of NL’s GDP. This activity is isolated to relatively few areas of the province (i.e. iron ore mining in Labrador West, oil and gas in St. John’s). Whereas industries like healthcare, tourism (Information/Culture & the Arts and Wholesale/Retail Trade), and fishing (Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting and Manufacturing) remain major drivers of rural economies across the province. (Statistics Canada)
Thank You

Acknowledgements

Research Sources:
Elections Canada
Elections Newfoundland and Labrador
Environment Canada
Government of Canada
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Memorial University
Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB)
Statistics Canada

Project Team:
Lisa Browne
Rob Greenwood
Jennifer Guy
Ainsley Hawthorn
Morgan Murray
Cathy Newhook
Lauren Power
Benjamin Sturge

Contributors:
Myrtice Alpen
Al Antle
Danielle Baikie
Heather Bartlett
Carey Bonnell
Alisa Craig
Angela Crockwell
Tony Doyle
Stephen Earle
Tony Fang
Joel Finnis
Donna Hardy-Cox
Denise Hillier
Kristie Jameson
Jodie Lane
Catherine Mah
Mallory McGrath
Charlie Murphy
Kerri Neil
Sheilagh O’Leary
Dave Philpott
Ayon Shahed
Keith Sullivan
Valerie Taylor

Photography:
All photos have been provided by Faces of Newfoundland, a blog run by David McComiskey. David is a 31 year old local doctor (recent graduate of Memorial’s Faculty of Medicine) and talented portrait photographer with a passion for the rich culture and vibrant people of Newfoundland and Labrador. www.facesofnewfoundland.com

Contact Us

Community Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador
Suite 209, 31 Peet Street,
St. John’s, NL A1B 3W8
(709) 753-9899
info@cfnl.ca
www.cfnl.ca

The Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development
Spencer Hall 1003
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John’s, NL A1C 5S7
(709) 864-3143
harriscentre@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/harriscentre