

Francophone immigration in small and mid-sized communities: Challenges and possible solutions

Plenary session

New geographies of immigration to Canada :
immigration to small and mid-sized communities

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Geographic Repartition of French-Speakers (mother tongue)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Realisation: Department of Geography, Laval University, 2019



The vitality of FMCs: A federal obligation

The Official Languages Act's purpose is to « **support the development of official language minority communities** »

The Act describes the Government's commitment to: 1. support the **development and enhance the vitality** of official language minority communities »

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/equality-official-languages.html>

« Linguistic duality and the strengthening of the country's bilingual character are rooted in **the vitality of official language minority communities.**

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is committed to contributing to the **development of these communities**, as well as to encouraging Francophone immigration outside Quebec ».

[Francophone Immigration Strategy 2018-2023](#)

Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative (WFC)

Évangéline Region (PEI)

Municipality of the District of Clare (N.S.)

Haut-Saint-Jean (NB)

Labrador City-Wabush (Newfoundland & Labrador)

Hawkesbury (ON)

Sudbury (ON)

Hamilton (ON)

Région de la Rivière-Seine (MB)

Moose Jaw & Gravelbourg (SK)

Calgary (AB)

Prince George (CB)

Yellowknife (TNO)

Whitehorse (Yukon)

Iqaluit (Nunavut)



WFC: Results from preliminary consultations

Successes:

- 1) Improved community and civic engagement of newcomers
- 2) More inclusive leadership
- 3) Better services
- 4) Better engagement of economic stakeholders
- 5) “Pollinator effect”



WFC Challenges

- 1) Unequal engagement
- 2) Difficulty to engage more Anglophone municipal authorities
- 3) Exclusion of temporary residents from the programme
- 4) Difficulty to access: affordable housing; French health services; public transport



Challenge: Precarious situation for Francophone post-secondary institutions, engine of FMCs vitality

According to IRCC data, in 2021, the rejection rate for a study permit was:

- 68% for applicants from English-dominant African countries;
- 72% for applicants from French-dominant African countries;
- 35% for applicants from all non-African countries.



Why there is too much immigration to Canada

2022-2023 unprompted responses

Environics Survey (Fall 2023)

	2022	2023
Immigrants drive up housing prices/less housing for other Canadians	15	38
Immigrants are a drain on public finances / cost too much	23	25
Bad for economy/take jobs from other Canadians	21	25
Over-population / already too many people in Canada	19	19
Immigration is poorly managed by government/lack of screening	13	10
Threat to Canadian/QC culture (identity/language/values)	24	8
Immigrants are a security risk /risk of terroris / extremism	3	4
Too many foreign students	*	4
Immigrants are a public health risk/ Covid-19 threat	1	1
Other reasons	5	3

Some potential solutions

- 1) A true comprehensive policy to support Francophone post-secondary institutions
- 2) Alignment between different policies, particularly housing and immigration policies
- 3) Education and awareness to antiracism

