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# Standing Committee on Official Languages

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Chair: Mr. René Arseneault





## Standing Committee on Official Languages

Monday, April 4, 2022

• (1540)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

[English]

Welcome to meeting number 14 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages.

[Translation]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. Members are attending in person or using the Zoom application.

[English]

Given the ongoing pandemic situation and in light of the recommendations from health authorities, to remain healthy and safe, all those attending the meeting in person should follow the directives of the Board of Internal Economy.

[Translation]

I thank members in advance for their cooperation.

A reminder to everyone, when speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When those participating virtually are not speaking, your mic should be on mute.

[English]

Should any technical challenges arise, please advise me immediately. We may need to suspend for a few minutes as we need to ensure that all members are able to participate fully.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, January 31, 2022, the committee is resuming its study on francophone immigration to Canada and Quebec.

I would now like to welcome the witnesses.

For a second time, we have Anne Meggs, former Director of Planning and Accountability, Ministère de l'Immigration de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Gouvernement du Québec.

We also have Bernard Tremblay, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Fédération des cégeps, who is appearing for the first time.

Witnesses, you have five minutes for your opening remarks. Then we will go to a period of questions from all members of the committee according to their political parties.

That being said, the floor is yours, Ms. Meggs. You have five minutes.

**Ms. Anne Meggs (Former Director of Planning and Accountability, Ministère de l'Immigration de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Gouvernement du Québec, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for inviting me to speak to you on the critical issue of francophone immigration.

I say this issue is "critical" because the number of people who use a language in their everyday lives determines its vitality and survival. In the case of French, that number is declining, in both Quebec and the rest of Canada. Let's be clear. If the survival of French is not assured in Quebec, then its continued existence outside Quebec is an illusion.

What factors influence the adoption of French in the everyday lives of allophone immigrants?

A study commissioned by the Office québécois de la langue française and published in 2013 analyzed the entire linguistic pathway of an allophone immigrant, from birth and country of origin to sometime after arrival in Canada, and even into the second generation.

The findings were very clear. Among adult allophones, the use of French in the home is associated with much more frequent use of French in public than if it is not spoken at home. This process is called "language transfer".

The younger children are on arrival, the greater the language transfer. Furthermore, 62% of survey respondents had transferred to French before arriving in Canada, while 38% did so afterward.

Transfers that occur after arrival happen quickly, half of them in the first five years.

Country of origin is another important factor: 76% of allophones from cultures that have some affinity with French use that language in their everyday lives, whereas barely 25% of those from English-friendly cultures do so.

Lastly, attendance at French-language schools is associated with everyday use of that language. This observation applies to primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

However, as three quarters of permanent immigrants to Quebec and nearly all temporary immigrants are of adult age, the vast majority of immigrants have thus been educated in French before arrival.

These findings argue in favour of measures to take in, where possible, immigrants who have already chosen French before they arrive, including children and persons from cultures that have an affinity with French, who have completed their studies in French and who already speak French at home. For people who do not yet speak French at home, it is vital that those of school age study in French and that adults be immersed in the French language and culture as soon as possible. That's difficult enough in Quebec and virtually unimaginable outside it.

At least one third of permanent immigrants fall into the family and humanitarian classes. There is no language requirement in those classes. Consequently, we must rely on economic immigrants. However, the vast majority of those admitted in that class are granted a temporary stay of a few years in Canada to study or work. Required language knowledge is determined by the language of the program of study or by the employer.

The preferred pathway is to earn a diploma or degree in Canada and then to work for as long as it takes to become eligible for permanent residence. The Canadian government facilitates this pathway by providing open work permits for graduates and their spouses.

Canada seems to have understood that temporary immigration has become the gateway, and it has introduced a type of open work permit for employers outside Quebec who recruit francophones from outside Canada. Why are Quebec employers deprived of that same privilege?

Furthermore, last year, Canada granted permanent residence outside Quebec to at least 5,000 foreign francophone students under a public-interest policy that appears to be tailor-made to draw young immigrants who have graduated in Quebec away from that province.

The high rate of refusal of study permits for immigrants entering francophone educational institutions in and outside Quebec is entirely counterintuitive. We have demonstrated how important age and academic trajectory in French are for the survival of the language. This refusal rate is also particularly unacceptable in the Quebec context. The Canada-Quebec Accord provides that Quebec may grant its consent to admitted foreign students. Those students have been admitted to programs accredited and designated by Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation. They have obtained a Quebec Acceptance Certificate from the Ministère de l'Immigration. The federal government has no right then to deny them a study permit.

If the Canadian government is serious about protecting the French language across Canada, it is essential that it encourage and facilitate the entry, across the country, of foreign immigrants who already use French, particularly in a temporary migration context.

● (1545)

Thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Meggs. You used exactly five minutes.

Mr. Tremblay, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay (President and Chief Executive Officer, Fédération des cégeps):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for inviting me.

I am Bernard Tremblay, president and chief executive officer of the Fédération des cégeps. I represent the 48 CEGEPs in Quebec, 43 of which are francophone institutions. The total number of CEGEP students is approximately 195,000. More than 7,000 international students are enrolled in CEGEPs, nearly 40% of whom come from France and 30% from francophone Africa. Admitting these francophone students helps offset the effects of demographic decline and maintain study programs that otherwise would have to be shut down for insufficient enrolment.

International students thus contribute to the richness of our social fabric. By their presence alone, they foster an open attitude toward the world, to other cultures and to a diverse range of realities for all the members of their new community. Those who remain in Quebec after completing their studies enter the labour market and form a new cohort that helps offset the glaring labour shortage in Quebec and elsewhere.

By enabling these francophone students to carve out a place in Quebec, we promote a healthy pattern of French-language settlement in our province. It is therefore understandable why the CEGEPs, which have always been significant drivers of social and economic progress, have made international recruitment a priority. However, immigration procedures have become a major obstacle to attracting and retaining those who choose to study at our institutions.

I would remind you that, last February, the Fédération des cégeps informed the members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration of the existing barriers to recruiting foreign francophone students in our network. The data that we shared at that time are appended to my written submission.

More specifically, the CEGEPs have observed that the situation of students from francophone Africa is particularly difficult. The study permit refusal rate for these applicants is very high and has been rising for several years. Between 2015 and 2020, refusal rates for the top 13 francophone African countries reached 80%. No other region in the world has comparable rates. They are so exceptional one can only conclude that applicants are being treated unfavourably based on their country of origin and the educational level to which they aspire. Refusal rates for those countries are distinctly higher when candidates are admitted to a CEGEP but decline for university graduate level studies.

The problem we are outlining for you today afflicts CEGEPs and the communities they serve. It is related to the federal government's jurisdiction over immigration and affects all francophone communities across Canada. Several questions arise. Is this situation the result of a systemic view of the immigration process involving francophone African countries or of ignorance of the francophone education system? Could it be the result of biased handling of study permits and operational issues in the immigration system? Whatever the case may be, this is a situation that cannot continue. As we have seen, it is having an impact on the regions and the programs of study offered at the CEGEPs and on the labour market, our social life, the vitality of French and especially the lives of the students admitted to our institutions. It also affects Canada's reputation as an educational destination and the entire Canadian francophone community.

The barriers to migration impede both the recruitment and retention of CEGEP graduates. Most graduates who wish to settle in Quebec apply to the Quebec experience program for workers and Quebec graduates, a program that is designed to retain skilled labour integrated in our society.

As soon as they are selected by Quebec, these graduates apply for permanent residence, but it takes more than two years for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, to process their applications. This is an incomprehensible situation, especially when you know that it takes only six months to process the applications of skilled workers selected by the federal government in provinces that have access to express entry. These long processing times for skilled workers from Quebec considerably undermine the integration and retention of these individuals and, once again, have a major impact on the reputations of Quebec and Canada.

Consequently, I have three demands for the committee.

First, I believe that study permit applications must be processed in a fair, just and transparent manner for all individuals, regardless of their country, language or the level of training they seek in coming to Canada.

Second, I believe the committee must ensure that IRCC's initiatives to promote francophone immigration do not encourage a spirit of competition among francophone communities in Quebec, Manitoba or the Atlantic provinces. It would be counterproductive to rob Peter to pay Paul.

Lastly, every program implemented to attract francophones to Canada must be administered fairly and in such a way as to increase the total number of francophones across the country.

• (1550)

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay

You exceeded your allotted time by a few seconds, but that's not a problem.

We will begin the first round of questions. Each of the parties will have the floor for six minutes.

We will begin with Bernard Généreux.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I'd actually like to know how you intend to allot time today, considering that we've had votes in the House of Commons. Are we taking a full hour for this first part and shortening the second? Are we allotting time equally?

**The Chair:** First, I will consult Madam Clerk to determine whether the technical team and our colleagues are available to stay on longer.

What you think, Madam Clerk?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Ariane Gagné-Frégeau):** We can continue the meeting for a total of two hours, until 10 minutes after the scheduled time.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** So we can sit for two hours.

Mr. Godin, that answers your question. Everyone is available to stay for two one-hour sessions for a total of two hours.

Without further ado, we will go to the period of questions, during which each party will have six minutes. We will begin with Bernard Généreux.

Mr. Généreux, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks as well to the witnesses.

Mr. Tremblay, I'd say that the CEGEPs in the regions are a dominant force in Quebec, since many of our 48 CEGEPs are located in the regions. You briefly referred to that in your testimony.

Whether in Gaspésie, Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup with the Cégep de La Pocatière and Cégep de Rivière-du-Loup and its extension in Montmagny, these CEGEPs support and enhance the vitality of our regional communities.

Do your demands, including the three recommendations that you made to the committee concerning fairness and two other elements, also apply to regional CEGEPs?

Is there a difference in your approach between CEGEPs in rural areas and those in urban areas?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** We know that, here in Quebec, we make a special effort, as you mentioned, to support efforts to attract international students to our regions.

I would say that the problem we mentioned is identical across the entire college system. Although we have more international students in our regions, I would remind you that having an adequate number of students to support the vitality of certain cohorts in certain programs is also an issue for some urban CEGEPs.

In the present circumstances, having fair processing measures for all students applying for pathways to Quebec, whether it be for regional or urban CEGEPs, is a matter of justice.

Once again, the idea is also to ensure the reputation of Quebec's CEGEPs and those of all Canadian post-secondary educational institutions. If, for example, the recruitment done in francophone Africa is perceived as a failure, that will reflect on the country as a whole.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Tremblay, you mentioned fairness for all the countries where we go to recruit students. You talked about unfavourable treatment for certain countries, particularly those in Africa. Would you go so far as to say that, to a certain degree, it amounts to discrimination?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** I don't want to impugn anyone's motives, but the results speak for themselves. We see a clear difference between the way files from certain African countries and those from the rest of the world are handled. Consequently, we think that IRCC should analyze the situation, and measures should definitely be taken to correct that difference.

I would emphasize that this difference is also related to certain countries and the college level sought. It won't come as a surprise to you that the education system in Quebec is different as a result of its college component. So you can imagine why that characteristic of Quebec is poorly understood by certain immigration officers and why it can also result in biases in the processing of applications.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Ms. Meggs, Mr. Tremblay referred to Canada's reputation. Given your vast experience and impressive pedigree, how do you view Canada's reputation in the world when it comes to choosing a host country in which to study or work?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** Canada is one of the top three countries attracting the most foreign students. Many come from India and China, which is normal.

As regards study permit applications from Africa, I've previously heard IRCC respond that the discrepancy isn't that great between anglophones and francophones. I don't think that answers the question about discrimination.

Furthermore, many refusals are explained away by saying that applicants didn't demonstrate that they would leave the country after completing their studies. That's absurd given that the federal government's clear policy for many years now has been to try to retain foreign students. It makes no sense.

Based on what I've read about rates of immigration to English and French Canada, African immigration is definitely mostly francophone, but Nigerians have also had problems. That seems to be related to the introduction of the new electronic processing system.

I still think the federal government has some work to do to explain the situation.

• (1600)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Do you see any specific discrimination here against African countries?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** As Mr. Tremblay said, the result is discrimination.

Is it intentional? I've worked in the federal government, and I don't believe public servants necessarily have prejudices. Knowing government operations, I suspect the problem is more on the process side.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Meggs. Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

We now go to Francis Drouin, who will ask the next questions.

Go ahead for six minutes, Mr. Drouin.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses who are before us today.

My questions are for both witnesses.

Mr. Tremblay, I'm looking at the appendix you submitted to the committee. The rate of refusal of applications from francophone countries is obviously quite high.

Have you spoken with the departments to determine why the refusal rate is so high? Have you been given any explanation in general or related to the CEGEPs you represent?

Is the problem more related to finances, security or something else?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Yes, we've had some discussions, and the answers sometimes surprise us. Ms. Meggs just cited some examples of reasons for refusal, such as failing to show a willingness to leave the country at the end of one's studies, whereas we're trying to retain these students.

In some cases, Quebec government scholarship holders are told they haven't shown that they're financially capable of studying in Canada. The responses we get are a bit surprising.

Ms. Meggs said that coincided with the introduction of the Chinoook system, but we've experienced those kinds of problems before. Moreover, the system definitely hasn't facilitated or improved matters.

It's hard to find valid reasons for refusal. We think it should also be noted that there are differences depending on processing centres.

The answers we get are quite hard to understand and aren't very clear. They suggest that there's been no in-depth system analysis. However, what we want is that they take the trouble to look at all the steps.

As Ms. Meggs said, even if people have all the good will in the world, the statistics speak for themselves and reveal an unacceptable result.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** Have you discussed that with your members as well?

Is it a matter of access to available services? For example, if they need to undergo biometric tests or security tests, they have to submit that documentation.

Is there a problem of access for people from certain countries who want to come and study in Canada or Quebec?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Yes, access to data from the centres processing biometric information was a problem during the pandemic, and even before then. We know there are places where data's hard to access. So, yes, there's a problem for us in that area in certain respects.

Once again, some applicants have received refusals. It should be borne in mind that these applications were accepted by CEGEPs and thus underwent an analysis. I understand that we aren't immigration officers, but there has nevertheless been an analysis of students' records before they're admitted to study here. So it's a surprise to see refusals and especially a certain opaqueness when the process is undertaken. It's often impossible to determine when we'll get an answer. So I have to emphasize here that there's something quite opaque in the system that representatives of our organization have reported many times to various departments.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** I imagine that the CEGEPs analyze applicants' level of education and ability to pay tuition fees.

Do the CEGEPs conduct the other analysis to determine whether students can support themselves no matter where they go or if they have enough to live on here? Do the CEGEPs go that far in their analysis?

• (1605)

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** The CEGEPs actually conduct an analysis of the applications they receive to determine which applicants are most likely to integrate successfully in a pathway in Quebec. Once again, we aren't claiming we conduct the same analysis as an immigration officer. That's not our role.

However, we consider the applications that have been received and try to determine which applicants are most likely to follow a pathway that will be successfully completed. We necessarily know a little about the system and we make sure we have the best applicants among those we retain.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** I have one minute left. If I could make one recommendation to the minister knowing that he would listen to me, which one would I make?

How do you think we can make changes to this system? What can we improve?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** My answer is that, first, you have to notice and recognize the problem. You have to conduct a quick analysis of the various system elements to ensure it produces an acceptable result, by which I mean a rate of acceptance and a rate of access to permanent residence comparable to those in the rest of Canada.

I think that's really what we're demanding, as well as a degree of transparency in the process.

**Mr. Francis Drouin:** All right. Thanks very much.

I finished just in time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Mr. Drouin.

You are very disciplined.

The next speaker is our second vice-chair, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is for you, Ms. Meggs.

I read an article that you wrote in which you said that there has been a dramatic increase in temporary migration. The number of people admitted to Quebec with a study or temporary worker permit has soared. The Canadian government has made what you called a precipitous change to a two-step temporary and permanent immigration system.

Don't you think that change undermines the Canada–Quebec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, which Quebec secured?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** I previously wrote that it was time for us to review the accord in the context of that change.

With respect to the temporary immigrant issue, we at least have a whole program, the international mobility program, which is not at all considered in the accord, as it was created after the accord was signed. However it's the second most important program after the study permits. So something should be done in that regard.

The particular issue with this two-step change, apart from the many aspects relating to the accord, is that some of the factors that determine the language a person will use once in Canada appear before that person arrives. However, someone who doesn't speak French on arrival has to be immersed in the French language and culture in short order.

In the case of temporary immigrants, there's no selection by recruitment pool, for example. They can't be recruited in countries whose culture has some affinity with French. There's no selection at all. As I said, there are no language requirements. Consequently, if they enrol in English study programs or work in English—which is entirely possible, even in Quebec—it can take five or six years when they file an application for permanent residence.

However, that's where the accord comes into play. If they apply through the Quebec experience program, they're required to demonstrate their knowledge of French, but I believe many of you around this table understand that passing a test in a second language doesn't mean you'll adopt it at home and use it in public.

Consequently, this change is creating specific problems for the type of francophone immigration we're discussing today.

• (1610)

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You also said the Canada–Quebec Accord provided that Quebec could give its consent to admit foreign students. Currently, students are accepted to an accredited program at a CEGEP or university by Quebec's Ministère de l'Immigration and then obtain a Quebec Acceptance Certificate from the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration. Their applications are then refused in huge numbers, as we've seen, particularly in the tables that Mr. Tremblay's has provided us.

You said the federal government shouldn't deny study permits. Do you think it's possible to introduce a procedure under which Quebec can determine that the Quebec Acceptance Certificate is definitive?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** There's a minor distinction under the Accord between a permanent and a temporary immigrant. In the former case, when a person receives a Quebec Selection Certificate, a QSC, it is very clear that he or she has applied for permanent residence first in Quebec, that Quebec has selected that person and that the federal government is required to offer permanent residence following security and health checks.

The vocabulary is slightly different for temporary immigrants. They're required to give their consent, and that has given rise to the Quebec Acceptance Certificate, the QAC. However, what would be ideal, at least from Quebec's standpoint—it might not work in Canada—would be for the same rule to apply to both QACs and QSCs, in other words, for the study permit to follow when an individual has received a Quebec Acceptance Certificate. However, that's not currently the case.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** That would be ideal.

My other question is for Mr. Tremblay.

Earlier you said we shouldn't rob Peter to pay Paul. Bill C-13 actually provides that francophone immigration outside Quebec should be promoted.

Do you think we should say "in and outside Quebec"?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** We're entirely aware of the issues pertaining to the broader francophone community outside Quebec, but I believe we want to take a comprehensive approach. We must always bear in mind the impact that choices made have on Quebec, and vice versa, in order to ensure that the Canadian francophonie remains vibrant across the country.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay.

Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu.

The next speaker, who will also have six minutes, is Niki Ashton.

Go ahead, Ms. Ashton.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses.

Thank you for your testimony today, your quite disturbing testimony.

We're well aware of the problems associated with francophone immigration outside Quebec, the labour shortages in the francophone community and in our francophone education centres, but it's truly disturbing to hear about the students you're trying to admit to francophone CEGEPs in Quebec.

Ms. Meggs, you briefly discussed processing systems. How do you think the results that were achieved before the current system was introduced compare with those we're getting now?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** I'm somewhat less familiar with the changes at the federal level.

Like everyone else, I started to see that the problems were getting bigger. Mr. Tremblay told us that had already been the case previously.

That obviously raises questions. We don't want to accuse anyone of being prejudiced, but the arguments used to deny study permits to francophones and Africans don't seem to be applied as rigorously to students from other backgrounds. I'm thinking of Indians, for example.

There have been a lot of problems in Quebec with young Indian students in their private colleges. There have been some terrible stories. Those students were taken advantage of. Yesterday, the *Toronto Star* also began publishing a whole dossier on how they were treated as cheap labour; they were manipulated and controlled by their employers, who knew the students weren't planning to study, but rather to immigrate. I think that's the issue we should really be debating. Are we trying to recruit large numbers of students solely for the \$21 billion they spend and for the cheap labour they provide to the hotel industry? It's terrible, and it's all done to meet immigration thresholds.

The federal government decided it had to raise the permanent immigration thresholds and opened the floodgates to temporary immigration. The problem is serious for both young students and workers; they don't have the same rights, and they get manipulated because employers have that leverage.

The first reason, that we aren't convinced they'll leave the country after their studies, makes no sense because we're making every effort to keep them here. The second reason is that they don't have adequate financial resources. However, according to the articles in the *Toronto Star*, the poor students have a right to work 20 hours a week during the session. That isn't enough for Indian students, in particular, or for others. So what do they do? They work illegally, which gives employers even more leverage; they can criticize them for working under the table, whereas they want to become permanent residents. Those students work for less than minimum wage.

There's never been a debate in Quebec or Canada on the use of temporary immigration as opposed to recruiting immigrants directly from abroad and granting them permanent residence on arrival. Quebec has followed Canada in making that change, but there has to be a debate. It's not necessarily a good thing for the people arriving.

It may be good for our economy and for employers, but it leaves a lot to be desired for people who arrive and don't have the same reception services as permanent residents.

I've been writing about that for three years, and I think it's really sad.

• (1615)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Of course, as you said, it really contributes to the decline of French when we fail to accept the people we should accept, who speak French, doesn't it?

I see my time is nearly up. Mr. Tremblay, I wanted to talk to you about the experience of anglophone CEGEPs. Do they have the same kind of trouble recruiting international students? Are the problems francophone CEGEPs experience specific to francophone students?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Yes, I think we should nevertheless focus on attracting international francophone students.

I understand Ms. Meggs' concerns and her desire for a debate, but I'd nevertheless focus on the fact that, in Quebec, the CEGEPs provide students with enormous support. Furthermore, the students we recruit are students bound for the regions, on paths that need labour. We integrate them through a long process, if you consider the DEC, which is a three-year college diploma. That's what we were looking for.

Consequently, we really make an effort to integrate these students, not by putting them through the short training programs that can be found in other places.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay and Ms. Ashton.

The second round of questions will begin with Mr. Lehoux.

Mr. Lehoux, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for being with us this afternoon.

My question is for Mr. Tremblay.

You mentioned that you didn't entirely agree with Ms. Meggs on the possibility of having a debate, but I found her proposal interesting. We even have a fairly big problem in the regions. Back home in Beauce, our CEGEP has three college branches, and we have a retention problem.

I understand that we haven't had a debate on the fact that we're asking them to come and study but that we allow them to work only 20 hours a week or else we tell them they didn't come to Canada for the right reasons.

I know a lot of young people who are capable of working properly for more than 20 hours a week and others whom a little work wouldn't hurt.

What's your view on that, Mr. Tremblay?

• (1620)

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Thank you because you're letting me clarify my remarks.

I obviously wouldn't want to contradict Ms. Meggs or her idea of holding a debate. I mainly wanted to emphasize the fact that our priority in Quebec's CEGEPs is to offer students from elsewhere in the world an opportunity to follow a three-year pathway to a college diploma, a DEC.

It's a process in which there's real support and a genuine which to integrate the students. By the time they've earned their diplomas, these students have put down roots in the community and already have experience that helps them integrate into the region, where they've studied. As you know, there's always a discrepancy between the major centres and the regions. We think we have the key to providing an opportunity to more international students. They arrive directly in Matane, Sept-Îles and Trois-Rivières with the hope that, after three years of training experience, they'll want to stay in that region with, in their back pocket, a diploma that they earned at one of our institutions and that is recognized in Canada.

There can obviously be shorter paths, what we call attestations of college studies, but the focus is currently on training...

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** I don't mean to interrupt, Mr. Tremblay, but where do you think the problem lies?

Ultimately, these students want nothing more than to integrate. I know some in my area; they want fit in. Shouldn't we change the regulations prohibiting them from working more than 20 hours a week? When they work on weekends, for example, they can integrate into the communities.

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** That's definitely something we could consider. I can tell you that 20 hours of work is ultimately a lot for a full-time student.

I'd tend to say that's not the biggest problem for us right now. We're really more concerned about this barrier on arrival that's associated with obtaining the study permit. That's why I emphasize this aspect. The countries most likely to...

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Mr. Tremblay, I've seen it. I spoke with the management of the CEGEP back home, and we really don't understand why everything takes so long for why there's an 80% refusal rate.

I don't know whether you have any recommendations that we could include in the report, but I think we've put our finger on the problem, and we have to find a solution. What's happening now is inconceivable.

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Definitely. Once again, I'd say we need the officers who process the files to know more about Quebec's education system. They have to have a clear understanding that a student who has university training could very well wish to get college training, that it isn't a step backward in his or her training, but rather a justifiable addition to it. That's extremely sought after in certain African countries. So one of the keys is better knowledge of the education system. We also have to ensure that, beyond Quebec's education system, we're aware that a special effort has to be made for the francophonie, since the results prove that these young people are...

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Here's a question in closing. My time is nearly up, Mr. Tremblay. I'd like you to give us some ideas for retaining these young people. This is important and it's a delicate matter.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lehoux.

The next questions will be asked by Ms. Kayabaga, who has five minutes.

Ms. Kayabaga, the floor is yours.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here today.

I'll begin with a question for Mr. Tremblay.

You said that 40% of your students come from France and 30% from elsewhere. I really wonder what you think about the fact that the largest francophone pool is in Africa and that it's the place where we have the highest refusal rate.

At your institution, 40% of francophones come from France. What do you think about extending your recruitment to include the largest francophone pool in the world?

• (1625)

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** I absolutely agree. We would clearly like to have many more students from Africa. We're making considerable efforts to connect with francophone African countries. That's why we feel somewhat frustrated when we sense that those efforts will result in study permits being denied. We think that's inexplicable, and we would definitely like to increase the percentage of African students.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Tremblay, what kind of effort are you making to connect with Africa?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** We have a lot of contacts with representatives of various countries. I could name you a dozen African countries where we organize missions. We take part in promotional fairs. We're obviously establishing ties with Canadian embassies in certain countries with delegations from Quebec.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you.

We recently heard from some African students who had filed complaints. The process is difficult in every way, whether it involves visa or college applications. Students have complained that colleges sometimes take their money and don't return it.

What do you think of the complaint we recently saw in the media?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** I find it somewhat surprising. At public colleges, which I represent, we care about reception, but also about support throughout the process. Once again, I think that following an educational path in Quebec, in a normally quite welcoming environment at our CEGEPs, is a key to success.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** If we had to increase the number of hours that international students are allowed to work, as you mentioned earlier, how many hours would you suggest?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** I would frankly find it hard to suggest a different number of hours at this point.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Do you think that increasing the number of hours of work would help students who wish to study here and who can get here but who must be able to continue earning an income here in Canada?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** I would say once again that, in my view, that's not the main problem of our international students. I don't believe the problem lies in the number of hours worked. We would like them to focus on their studies. That gives them an opportunity to integrate socially and financially, but it doesn't seem to be the stumbling block at this stage.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** You nevertheless mentioned it. So I wanted to know who benefits from it. Is it the students or someone else?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Ms. Meggs made us reflect on that situation. I think she's entirely right, but you have to bear in mind that tuition fees are nevertheless lower in the Quebec system, and there are scholarship programs, in many cases, that allow students to pay less than elsewhere in Canada. I'm not saying there aren't any financial problems, but I nevertheless think the main problem is access to and entering Quebec.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Ms. Meggs, last year, the Quebec government was reluctant to expand the regularization program for asylum claimants who were considered guardian angels during the pandemic.

Do you think that affects the rate of francophone immigration to Quebec?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** That's hard to say; it depends. Many of the people in that group come from Haiti, but it's hard to say whether that'll make a big difference in the francophonie issue.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** They are francophones, Ms. Meggs.

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** I'd say it's unfortunate.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** They're francophones and they remain in the pool.

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** They're all francophones.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Pardon me for interrupting. I'm trying to do it as politely as possible, but I have to do my job.

The next questions will come from Mario Beaulieu, who has two and a half minutes.

The floor is yours, Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** First of all, Ms. Meggs, you say that the Canadian government has introduced certain types of open work permits for employers outside Quebec who recruit francophones from abroad but that it deprives Quebec employers of the same privilege.

I've heard of many cases of that in my riding. Some immigrants told me that waiting periods would have been shorter if they had chosen to settle outside Quebec but that they absolutely wanted to settle in Quebec.

Do you know whether that's widespread? Can you tell us more about that phenomenon?

• (1630)

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** About the hiring of temporary foreign workers?

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Yes. For example, I'm talking about the fact that there are open work permits for employers elsewhere than in Quebec who recruit francophone foreign workers, but there are none in Quebec.

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** It surprised me when I discovered that there were ceilings, that this option was available to employers outside Quebec. Quebec employers complain a lot about delays in the temporary foreign worker program. Incidentally, those are closed permits. If they had the option of having open permits, if they were hiring francophones, I think they'd jump at the chance. That doesn't mean it'll be easy for them to find francophones, but I'm sure they would jump at the chance.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** You say that if the survival of French in Quebec isn't assured, the continued existence of French outside Quebec is an illusion.

Would you please tell us more about that?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** It's already hard, and it will always be a challenge to sustain the French language in North America. However, having a critical mass of francophones in Quebec will nevertheless simultaneously help francophones outside Quebec. You can't imagine you can abandon French in Quebec and maintain francophone communities outside Quebec. I was previously the chief of staff of the Minister of Francophone Affairs of Ontario, and I...

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu, that's all the time you had.

The next speaker will be Niki Ashton.

Ms. Ashton, you have 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thanks you very much.

Ms. Meggs, as you may know, the government set a target of admitting francophone immigrants representing 4.4% of total immigration between 2003 and 2023 to stabilize the demographic weight of francophones outside Quebec. As we know, the government has never met that target. The Commissioner of Official Languages suggests that the government establish a policy on francophone immigration to slow the decline and restore the demographic weight of those communities. What do you think that policy should look like?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** Ideally, we should be able to recruit immigrants directly from abroad to find people who already speak French. The problem is that, with temporary immigration, people arrive here, begin their studies in English or another language and work in English. It's unreasonable to think they'll change and adopt French at home to ensure French survives. The francophone immigration program must apply across the country; we have to start including language requirements in applications for temporary stay permits, for both studies and work. We should have temporary language requirements so we can have francophones once they become permanent residents.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** In connection with that, many people recommend a restorative target, a much higher target than 4.4%. Do you think we should raise the target in order really to restore the demographic weight of the broader francophone community?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** I spent the final years of my career working in accountability. I never encountered a situation in which increasing a target that could not previously be met changed anything. In regionalization, in Quebec, since they had only reached 15%, the decision was made to raise the target to 25%. However, they can't manage to hit 20%. If you change nothing else, raising the target will only...

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Meggs. I apologize, but you can come back to this.

We will have to suspend later to prepare for the second part of the meeting.

The next two questions will be asked by Mr. Godin and Ms. Lattanzio, who respectively have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Godin, first vice-chair, you have the floor.

• (1635)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Meggs, I find your philosophy interesting. You say we should stop raising targets when we can't reach the first one. That's not a solution, but we have to find some in order to achieve our objectives.

My colleague Ms. Ashton said there was some catching up to do in immigration. We've been missing our targets for a long time.

What do you think would be a realistic objective, not for the regular targets, but in order to catch up? In how many years could we rectify the situation and prevent the constant decline?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** I think the restorative exercise will be difficult. I don't know exactly what you want to restore or what targets would be acceptable to you. If old stock francophones outside Quebec, and even in Quebec, start adopting English, then I think it's magical thinking to believe that we can bring people in here and they'll do the same thing as native Canadians. It's difficult.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** I understand you, Ms. Meggs.

I'm interrupting because I have another question and my time is very limited.

You discussed the computer system. We're seeing an increase in refusals in francophone immigration, especially from the African continent. Earlier Mr. Tremblay said the situation was the same before the new computer system was introduced.

Can you tell us whether the same rules and criteria were transferred to the new computer system and whether the computerization phenomenon exacerbated the existing problems?

**Ms. Anne Meggs:** Yes, definitely. We often hear about algorithms that have an unrecognized bias.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Thank you.

Ms. Meggs, it seems to me you said in your remarks that Canada didn't want to retain its immigrants, but that Quebec did. There's a paradox there. You discussed an update to the Canada-Quebec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens. That's a very important point because now we're headed in the opposite direction. Given the current labour shortage, I think this is a good opportunity to bring in immigrants to study or work and to keep them here.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Godin. I'm sorry; I have to do my job as chair.

Ms. Lattanzio, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My questions are for Mr. Tremblay.

You said at the outset that the Fédération des cégeps represents 195,000 students. I imagine that number is spread over the 48 CEGEPs. Would you please break it down and tell us how many students are studying at the 43 francophone CEGEPs and how many at the 5 anglophone CEGEPs?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** When you talk about CEGEPs in Quebec, you're referring to public colleges. There are 48 CEGEPs, 43 francophone and 5 anglophone. Approximately 30,000 students attend the anglophone CEGEPs. You can immediately see the proportions. The numbers are obviously spread across all of Quebec. I also mentioned 7,000 international students. So, as you can see, there are very few of them, and we would like to admit many more.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Would you please tell us more?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** In fact, with 7,000 international students out of 200,000 students, you can understand why we take care of our international students. That's what I was referring to. That's it.

**Ms. Patricia Lattanzio:** Since we're about to run out of time, I'll ask you questions and ask you to answer me in writing if you can't manage to answer me now. I know the chair will interrupt us.

What role do the CEGEPs in your federation play in the francization of immigrants? Could you explain the steps in that process to us?

What do you think are the main obstacles to the francization of immigrants in Quebec?

**Mr. Bernard Tremblay:** Those are big questions. I just noticed that I have only a minute left. I'll have to finish providing this information later.

It's true that CEGEPs play a role in francization and I'm going to concentrate on international students, most of whom have a good knowledge of French. If French is not their mother tongue, they are nevertheless mentored throughout the process to facilitate their learning of French. There are also francization services, under an agreement with Quebec's department of immigration, francization and integration.

I'd be happy to provide further details about these services in writing.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay and Ms. Lattanzio. That's all the time we have.

Before we suspend the meeting, I'd like to thank the witnesses.

Thank you, Ms. Meggs and Mr. Tremblay, for having told us about your experience so energetically. Your testimony will definitely be very useful to us as we write our report.

I'd like to go back to what Ms. Lattanzio said. If you think you were a little short of time and believe that there is other useful information we should have, please don't hesitate to send it in writing to our clerk. Providing us with written testimony is considered evidence just as much as a spoken presentation. Any subsequent information is welcome.

So I'm going to suspend the meeting to allow the first group of witnesses to leave and for the next group of witnesses to join us for the second hour.

Thank you all very much.

• (1640)

(Pause)

• (1645)

**The Chair:** We are now reconvening the meeting.

I would now like to welcome our second group of witnesses. We have some special visitors with us today. In the second hour of the meeting today, we are welcoming, from the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, Ms. Jacqueline Djiemeni, Representative for the Greater Toronto Board of Representatives, and Mr. Boni Guy-Roland Kadio, Liaison and Political Analysis Coordinator. From the Francophone Immigration Support Network of Eastern Ontario, Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais, Coordinator, and from the University of Sudbury, Dr. Serge Miville, President and Vice-Chancellor.

You each have five minutes for your presentation. I will let you know when there is a minute left, and again at 15 seconds. There will then be around of questions during which each member of the committee can discuss things with you.

We'll start with Ms. Djiemeni, for five minutes.

You have the floor, Ms. Djiemeni.

**Ms. Jacqueline Djiemeni (Representative for the Greater Toronto, Board of Representatives, Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne):** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, committee members, thank you for having invited me to appear in connection with your study on francophone immigration in Canada and Quebec.

My name is Jacqueline Djiemeni Ngangoum, a grade 11 student at<sup>x</sup> Ronald-Marion high school. I'm from Cameroon and I immigrated to Canada two years and a few months ago.

As you know, Canada never met its 4.4% target for francophone immigration outside Quebec, and has failed to do so every year since 2008. And the most recent report from the Commissioner of Official Languages says it's unlikely the target will be met by the expected 2023 deadline.

And yet, francophone immigration is essential to maintaining the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec, and the development and vitality of francophone communities. It's also essential for educational institutions, which in many instances rely on francophone newcomers to maintain their critical mass.

That being the context, I would encourage members of the committee to give consideration to the following recommendations.

The first pertains to immigrant awareness of the realities of the host community, before and after their integration.

The second is about building capacity in minority community francophone schools so that they can become catalysts for integration in these communities.

It's important for young immigrants to understand the realities of their host communities ahead of time so that they are better prepared both mentally and financially, and better informed about the lifestyle and potential challenges and opportunities in these communities. That would help them from the moment they arrive to adapt to their host country more readily and stress-free, because they will have been informed prior to arriving in Canada.

So first of all, an awareness of the lifestyle in the host society is important. Then, a knowledge of the languages spoken in the host city and country. Lastly, it's important to know how the school system works.

Schools can promote socialization and play an important role in welcoming and integrating new francophone students. For this to happen, it's important for immigrants to have been properly received and integrated into the educational setting from the start. Not everyone is capable of expressing themselves easily or obtaining information about the new realities of the country and the school. So if a school is welcoming to students, it can play a key role in their educational and social integration.

To make a school welcoming to young immigrants, all staff at the school—including students, teachers and administration—must be collaborative, welcoming and enthusiastic. Teachers also have to be able to understand that immigrant students do not necessarily have the same educational background.

Being a member of a francophone youth organization is important in several respects. It certainly strengthened my identity, my pride in being francophone and my own role in the community, as it has for many others too. It also helps you to contribute to the development of your community, to learn and enhance your skills, including social skills, and to learn in French. My experience at the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, FESFO, is a good example of just that.

FESFO provides life experience in French beyond the school, and it enabled me to acquire new skills, organizational ability, critical thinking and leadership. It also introduced me to new people and enhanced my intellectual knowledge.

That concludes my opening address, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.

Thank you.

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Djiemeni Ngangoum, and well done, because you've still got a minute of speaking time left.

We will now move on to Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais.

Ms. Duguay-Langlais, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais (Coordinator, Francophone Immigration Support Network of Eastern Ontario):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, good afternoon. Thank you for having me here today.

As the Coordinator of the Francophone Immigration Support Network of Eastern Ontario for almost eight years now, I'd like to give you a brief explanation of what the network is all about.

The network, which has been funded by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for the past 15 years, is a program managed and coordinated by the Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton, more generally called the CESOC. It is coordinated as an indirect service institution, and does not provide direct services to francophone immigrants, but rather works to build capacity among the key immigration players, and to raise awareness among host communities. We work with just over 75 eastern Ontario organizations and institutions.

I'll get straight to the point today to convince you that francophone immigration is a key factor in the development and vitality of our francophone minority communities. We all understand and believe that. Over the years, we've been able to the federal government's growing determination to promote welcoming, integrating and retaining francophone immigrants in Canada, but the means to get there have not been optimized and we still have a long way to go.

I'd like to tell you today about certain shortcomings, and some solutions. First of all, the government apparatus needs to understand that francophone immigration is not only a sector in Canada's social fabric. The federal government can't be held wholly responsible for meeting the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's targets. Francophone immigration is an integration process, and hence it cuts across the entire structure of government, and each department needs to be, accountable in making the process successful and meeting the francophone immigration target.

I am therefore suggesting that IRCC coordinate an interdepartmental initiative whose mission will be to make all federal government departments, and the provincial and territorial governments, aware of and accountable for francophone immigration, for the process and for meeting the target.

I'd also like to address the regionalization of francophone immigration. You are no doubt aware of the fact that the most active and largest francophone communities in Ontario are often in rural and semi-rural settings, or in Ontario's far north. Many studies have shown that these communities are demographically, and hence economically, shrinking, because of the desperate labour shortages in these communities. In fact just this morning, the FCFA requested a new progressive francophone immigration target from the federal government, one that would increase from 4.2% to 12% by 2024, which demonstrates the urgency of the situation.

Newcomers all too often arrive in major centres like Toronto and Ottawa. The northern communities and smaller communities surrounding major cities are not well-known enough or considered desired locations. Francophone newcomers have often said that they learned far too late about the existence of French-speaking communities in Ontario, and about the quality francophone education available. When they arrived, they had to make snap decisions that would affect the remainder of the process: school for their children, place of residence, employment, etc. They really have to be able to make well-informed decisions and to be familiar with the opportunities in francophone communities before they arrive, or at least very soon after coming to Canada.

Francophone community organizations need to be able to organize missions abroad to promote our francophone communities and their advantages; it's important for non-francophone institutions to recommend French-language services to their clients wherever possible, or at least to promote francophone schools, communities and jobs.

In concluding, I can't fail to mention the housing crisis in Canada. It is literally jeopardizing the success of many fine initiatives that were introduced to promote the integration and retention of new residents in our communities. I am thinking, for example, of the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative in Hawkesbury, Hamilton and Sudbury, or the introduction of a second francophone support program for the resettlement of refugees in Cornwall. These are excellent IRCC initiatives, for which we are grateful, moreover, but which will never succeed as they should until the affordable housing crisis has been dealt with.

• (1655)

This is a perfect example of IRCC efforts that could be jeopardized unless other departments work with them to make them successful. When we talk about housing in connection with immigration, we are speaking more specifically about affordable housing. Canada's financial system is not really very helpful to these people. They have very limited resources. For example, they have no credit history in Canada...

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

You'll be able to answer any questions that arise as we continue.

Dr. Miville, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Dr. Serge Miville (President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Sudbury):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Standing Committee on Official Languages for the privilege of appearing here today to discuss the important issue of francophone immigration in Canada and Quebec.

I'd like to talk about three points today in my presentation. I'll begin with a review of the social function of French-language universities in minority communities. The second will address the importance of immigration for linguistic vitality in mid-northern Ontario. I will conclude with a discussion of the challenges facing French-language regional universities as they attempt to achieve their full potential, not only in terms of attracting, but also retaining, international students.

Historically, French-speaking Ontario has been perceived as a national minority or a small society. The premise at the outset is that it is an agent of its own history, an autonomous political entity capable of acting as a hub for societal integration.

A university, in addition to being a force for social, cultural and economic development, also performs a role as a medium for integration and a place for critical thinking, bringing the society in which it is located into the broader world. It means that francophone Ontario can conduct societal debates based on the franco-Ontarian societal fact. To paraphrase sociologist Joseph Yvon Thériault, while society creates the university, the university makes it possible to create society. Hence the existential importance of these institutions in francophone minority communities.

Sudbury's francophone community desperately needs immigrants to maintain its linguistic and cultural vitality and to meet the challenges of labour shortages. The Northern Policy Institute estimates "that between 46 per cent and 64 per cent of all new in-migrants should be Francophone...in Greater Sudbury" (28.2%).

But only 11 out of every 1,000 residents were born outside the region. That's one of the lowest levels in the country.

Because of its role, the university community attracts migratory populations. Regional French-language universities therefore become an essential factor that can contribute to linguistic vitality because of its inclusive social role and its ability to offset labour shortfalls.

Some systemic issues reduce the institutions' capacity to achieve their full potential. The visa issues pointed out by our colleagues, including those at the Université de l'Ontario français, are a reality. Throughout its history, Canada has always, through formal or informal mechanisms, limited access to French-language immigration. I believe we are paying the price for that today.

Reversing the trend will require major investments in university institutions, in reinventing settlement mechanisms, and in the country's migratory policies.

Postsecondary institutions can be instrumental in attracting, retaining and integrating immigrant populations in minority communities. In Ontario's mid-north, universities have unfortunately not done very well in attracting and retaining international francophone students, particularly in comparison to the successful efforts of other institutions like Hearst University.

Many of its students come from abroad. Many decide to stay. That contributes enormously to franco-Ontarian renewal and vitality in that region. Welcoming and mentoring international students plays a huge role in regions like Sudbury, and the needs are critical.

But we lack the resources. For example, the province does not provide grants for international students, which leads to a capacity imbalance between urban and regional institutions. Some are able to waive tuition fees, a difficult practice to implement to the same extent in the regions because of the high cost of education.

And yet, the immigration needs in the northern region are proportionately much greater. Because of the lack of a consistent strategy and resources, our regional French-language university institutions are simply unable to provide the services that would attract and retain the immigrant population needed to preserve and promote the linguistic, cultural and economic vitality of the French language in areas like the mid-north.

Those are the challenges we face.

Thank you most sincerely.

● (1700)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Miville.

We will now begin a second round of questions with each of the political parties. Each MP will have six minutes.

Will begin with the first vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Mr. Joël Godin, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the three witnesses, Ms. Djiemeni, Ms. Duguay-Langlais and Dr. Miville.

Let's get straight to the heart of the matter and begin with the testimony from the representative of the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, Ms. Djiemeni.

You spoke about the fact that we needed to improve the integration, welcoming, and the means available to us to treat our immigrants well. Beyond that, Ms. Djiemeni, can you tell us a little about the current situation and why francophone immigration is a problem?

**Ms. Jacqueline Djiemeni:** I haven't necessarily experienced this problem in the field, but when I arrived, I encountered it. Not all the time, but based on my experience, yes.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Thank you.

I agree with your comment. When we bring immigrants here, we need to take care of them to help them integrate. It's a cultural shock, and they need to adapt. The community needs to be welcoming. We have to deal with that, but now, our problem is that there are fewer and fewer of them for us to take care of. We need to have the means to bring in many more. You are right about the fact that we need to treat people well, but now we need to find ways to attract more of them. That was the comment I wanted to make.

My other question is for Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

You said that the machinery of government had to work horizontally to meet targets, meaning through many departments. With respect to the first point, the problem we identified is francophone immigration. I believe the key player here is the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. It's the entry door for immigrants. It's

true that afterwards, the other departments need to work with them to be as receptive as possible, as Ms. Djiemeni mentioned.

Ms. Duguay-Langlais, could you tell us a little more about your view that we need to work horizontally with the various departments to attract more francophone immigrants?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Thank you very much.

The problem may not necessarily be in terms of attraction, but more in terms of integration and retention. You are right in saying that the main department in charge of finding them, recruiting them and bringing them to Canada is the Department of citizenship and immigration. On the other hand, as soon as they are here, there are various other departments like health, the department responsible for official languages, and employment and social development. All these departments should have services for immigrants. As developers in the communities, we demand a lot from IRCC. There is, for example, the problem of housing, which is directly related to the retention and settlement of our immigrants. That's not an IRCC responsibility. Efforts are also required from the provinces and from other departments.

● (1705)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

You said something else in your presentation about allowing organizations to go and meet immigrants abroad. I think you are in the best position to convince people from abroad to come to Canada. I find it unfortunate that the department doesn't make use of your potential, talent and knowledge, because you are the best ambassadors in the best salespersons on behalf of francophone Canada.

That's something the committee could recommend.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** I hope so, and I would also like the provinces to be a part of it. The federal-provincial relationship is very important in this instance. Some provinces, like New Brunswick, pay for delegations from the communities to promote Acadia abroad. There is a provincial responsibility, but it's the federal government, after all, that needs to take the lead and encourage collaboration.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** The federal government needs to coordinate all that.

I think that your suggestion today is a good one and that we need to be realistic. We are competing with other countries, because while there is a shortage of labour here in Canada, that's also the case elsewhere. There are countries where the unemployment rate is very high. A global vision is what's needed, and perhaps then, you become part of the solution.

Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

I now have a question for the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sudbury.

Dr. Miville, You spoke about the fact that you needed up to 64% francophone immigration to maintain your current level. That's huge. Can you give us some details about that?

**Dr. Serge Miville:** The population is declining in northern Ontario. The average age is very high. We have a lot of catching up to do to replace the population because of the exodus of young people to urban centres who leave for better opportunities and for postsecondary studies. That's why a strategy is needed specifically for the regions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Miville and Mr. Godin.

Our next question will come from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Mr. Serré.

Mr. Serré, over to you now for six minutes.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to thank the three witnesses here today, who will contribute a great deal to our study.

Ms. Djimeni, I want to tell you that the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, FESFO, reminds me of my youth in high school and the leadership camps at Lake Couchiching in Orillia. That was a long time ago. If I have time, I'll get back to that.

My comments are also for you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais and Dr. Miville. I appreciate your testimony, because the previous witnesses spoke a great deal about visa offices, the current immigration problems in Canada, and targets that were not met. There is no doubt that the federal government has a lot of work to do, in collaboration with the province. But then you both looked at things from slightly different angles.

Ms. Duguay-Langlais, You talked about rural and regional community agencies.

Dr. Miville, you talked about reinventing the way we work with postsecondary institutions. I'd also like to thank you very much for the important work you have done in Sudbury and northern Ontario over the years. Can you give us more details about the federal government's recommendations for reinventing the "by and for" model for francophones in terms of the way we work with postsecondary institutions?

What role should the federal government be playing with the province?

**Dr. Serge Miville:** For us, it's clear that French-language postsecondary institutions are in the best position to ensure success for a variety of individuals, whether or not they are immigrants, and to integrate them, as part of the French fact, into a dynamic economy.

I believe that the federal government has to do some thinking about how to equip regional institutions so that they can achieve their full potential.

You are aware, Mr. Serré, that universities have four-year programs, at a minimum, during which they can contribute to the social integration and success of students from abroad. When they arrive, we can put them in contact with the cultural scene, health services, etc. We more or less serve as the hub for integration and success. We are the ones who will manage to put them in contact with

future employers. We are the ones who will equip them with the skills they need right now to make our country, our province and our regions internationally competitive.

So I believe that French-language postsecondary educational institutions have to be equipped and provided with the resources they need to accomplish all these things. That means not only investing in them, but also establishing specific regional targets to make up for lost time.

• (1710)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Dr. Miville.

Ms. Duguay-Langlais, You mentioned regional community agencies. Can you give us further details about the role of the federal government and the province in terms of enriching our communities?

We currently have thousands of students in postsecondary institutions, heading for the cities rather than remaining in regional communities. What, specifically, can you recommend as a way of encouraging students to remain in regions like eastern and northern Ontario?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** That's a very good question.

In 2021, we worked with the ACUFC, the Association of Colleges and Universities of the Canadian Francophonie, which requested a study, whose recommendations were published in November 2020. The recommendation was to meet with francophone postsecondary institutions to determine how this role might be performed.

I was very pleased to hear what Dr. Miville had to say. I think that some francophone universities care about what comes after a university education. There is also Cité collégiale, in Ottawa, which is interested in what comes next. These institutions can help us integrate people into our communities. It takes support from universities and other postsecondary institutions. They have a very important role to play.

However, some of the big universities don't seem to have any interest. But there is collaboration with postsecondary institutions. They provide us with forms of access that allow us to introduce programs, such as the new program for international students to help them access permanent residency. That, for us, is the cornerstone. This IRCC program is very important, but international students need to know about it. The universities have to allow us in so that we can tell people about the services available and familiarize them with our communities to encourage them to stay here and feel welcome.

A lot of work remains to be done with postsecondary institutions to open this door.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

Mr. Serré, you have two seconds left.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Our three witnesses are excellent.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Next, is the second vice-chair of the Committee on Official Languages, Mr. Mario Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu, It's over to you for six minutes.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Thank you very much.

I believe all of the witnesses spoke about the importance of integration. We may be bringing French-speaking immigrants into francophone communities outside Quebec, but if the assimilation rate stays at this level, it's a bit like trying to fill a bucket with a hole in it.

What do you think about this?

What more can be done to promote maintaining the language and preventing assimilation to English?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Are you asking us?

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Yes. All three of you can comment.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Good. I'll take a few moments than to give you my version.

The assimilation problem is definitely important. There is much to be done on that, particularly with francophone immigrants. We are working with some English-language institutions that accept them. In my presentation, I mentioned the importance of telling non-francophone institutions that receive immigrants, that they should inform their institutional or other services about who we are, why we are here and about the benefits of settling in francophone communities. We are in fact competing with our non-francophone partners that receive immigrants and send them to English-language schools, for example. We lose them very quickly.

We are also doing battle elsewhere. That's why it's important for us to go out and promote our communities. People come to Ontario for English. We receive francophones from some African countries who do not want to settle in Quebec because they already speak French well. So they come to Ontario to learn English. They think that living in an anglophone community and having their children go to English-language schools is the solution.

Ontario's French-language culture and image need to be deconstructed for foreigners.

• (1715)

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** An article reported that the refusal rate for foreign students in francophone universities outside Quebec, and in Quebec, was much higher than for English-language universities. Most of those who apply are rejected.

How can that be explained? Is it discrimination? Why is the rejection rate so high?

This refusal rate is closely linked to African countries, like Algeria, which have the largest pools of potential francophone immigrants.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** I have a theory about that, but I'm not sure I should really put it forward, unless Dr. Miville or Ms. Djieni would like to add something.

Well then, I'll say it today. I will dare to say it here.

The federal government really does have good intentions. I believe sincerely in the federal government's good intentions with respect to francophone immigration. There is a genuine desire to move this forward. There is the community of francophone immigrant student networks and all the programs in the community that we work with every day on behalf of francophone immigrants.

Meanwhile, there is an enormous amount of work to do. We take a small step forward and senior officials take a small step forward, but there's really huge gap. Where's the message about political will? Where is the culture of the departments, the culture of work, the frameworks and everything else? When we say we want francophone refugees, does the message get to the people doing the recruitment in the field so that we can bring them to Cornwall?

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I think it was Ms. Djieni who mentioned that the Department of Immigration has never managed to meet the 4.4% target, since 2008. That means something is not working with the senior officials. Year after year, the targets are not met and we don't see any improvement. And even now, they can't tell us why there are problems.

I would now like to say a little more about possible options. Someone spoke about the importance of a critical mass of francophones. I think that all of the studies have shown that francophone immigrants are settling in areas where there is a critical mass of francophones, which significantly reduces the risk of their being assimilated to English.

Do you think it's important to begin by choosing locations or regions where there is a higher concentration of francophones?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** I'd say so.

And I haven't in fact managed to finish my testimony, but my last recommendation was that the government set a priority on the 14 communities chosen by Canada to become welcoming francophone communities. The federal government has spent a lot of money to help us become communities. All the departments have begun to do some work in these 14 communities.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

You'll be able to continue later.

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for six minutes.

• (1720)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses here today.

As a francophile from Manitoba, and hence from outside Quebec, I'd like to thank you for your testimony, which truly reflects the messages received from our francophone communities. I believe that it's essential to have concrete recommendations in support of francophone communities outside Quebec.

I'd now like to return to something that was raised by Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

Our committee talked at length about labour shortages in education in francophone communities outside Quebec. I already told my own story to this committee. I explained how we had been trying to enrol our children in a francophone day care centre near us, but that because of labour shortages, the waiting list was rather long. We helped fund qualified staff, but unfortunately, without the support of the federal government. However, there is still a labour shortage. It has proved impossible for my children and the children of many other francophones and francophiles to attend a francophone day care centre. We have no choice but to place them in anglophone day care centres.

We lost an opportunity to educate our children in French. We are now hoping to be able to get them into French kindergarten, but we should also have been able to get them into a French day care centre.

When we speak about francophones abroad, should we set a priority on specific careers in early childhood education?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Thank you very much.

I believe that the worst thing that can happen in a francophone community is to lose a day care centre or not to have francophone child care services. Stories like these are heartbreaking, and I've heard a lot of them. A francophone day care centre just closed in Kingston because of a lack of human resources, not a shortage of clients.

I'd like to explain the following to the ladies and gentlemen around this table. I don't know if you realize just how disastrous it is when a francophone day care centre closes in a francophone community, or when a centre can't accept all the francophone children. Demographic growth inevitably plunges.

Ms. Ashton, you've just raised an extremely important point.

Our network will be organizing a forum in May to discuss the process of receiving and recruiting people from abroad so that they can be trained and then work in the early childhood field. We will be holding an international forum specifically on early childhood to show owners of day care centres, whether private or not, how to go about recruiting people internationally. We are working with the Canadian Embassy in Paris on this. It's an extremely important item on the network's agenda.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you for this information and for having reported what happened in Kingston. That's really worrisome.

I hope that the forum will be open to francophone communities outside Ontario, because the situation has been going from bad to worse elsewhere, as well.

I also have a question for Ms. Djieni on the obstacles to overcome.

What kind of obstacles do immigrants, and particularly international students, encounter when they try to complete the immigration process and acquire permanent residency?

For example, the committee heard some disturbing stories about the services provided by IRCC, including the availability of services in French and the quality of the language exams. Can you

give us your perspective on obstacles linked to the immigration system?

**Ms. Jacqueline Djieni:** Thank you for asking.

I would describe the obstacles that an immigrant might come up against as follows. I personally encountered problems related to speaking the language. Linguistic insecurity truly affects most newcomers in a country where everyone is speaking a language they do not know. It causes stress and they feel guilty for no reason.

With international students, things get more complex, because they have come here to study. That really slows them down because they need to learn the language that we speak first before they can begin their studies. That's one of the barriers they might encounter.

• (1725)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you very much.

I think we have a few seconds left.

I see that there are 15 seconds left.

Do you have other recommendations on this score, Ms. Djieni?

**Ms. Jacqueline Djieni:** I think efforts are needed to counter linguistic insecurity. It's a point that really should be taken into consideration.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** That's a useful comment, Ms. Djieni.

Thank you very much.

We've completed the first round of questions for the second hour of the meeting.

We're now beginning the second round of questions and will begin with Mr. Jacques Gourde for five minutes.

Go ahead please.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

It's excruciating to see just how difficult it will be to meet the target set for us by the government.

First of all, it's very difficult for foreign francophone students to be admitted to a Canadian educational institution. They are refused because the French exam is very difficult. I believe that 80% to 85% of our senior public servants would not be able to pass this exam. It ought to be one of the criteria required for government senior officials in Canada. That might shake things up a bit.

It is also hard to believe that these same students have to prove that they will return to their country and are not planning to stay in Canada. But when they have spent three, five or 10 years of their life studying here, they acquire Canadian skills and it would be much easier for them to find work in Canada.

The highly skilled people who come to Canada should have their qualifications recognized. They often have to start from scratch and return to school. That's another negative aspect that keeps francophones in foreign countries away from Canada.

But beyond all that, if the government were to fully exercise its political will and if all the departments were to put their shoulder to the grindstone on behalf of francophone immigration, would our postsecondary educational institutions, our CEGEPs in Quebec and our universities from one end of Canada to the other, be able to accept 35,000 or 40,000 francophone students per year?

I'd like to hear your comments on that.

Mr. Chair, please allow the witnesses to finish.

**The Chair:** To whom are you speaking Mr. Gourde?

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** To the three witnesses. Ms. Duguay-Langlais could begin.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** I'll defer to Dr. Miville, because I don't really have any data on the capacity of Canada's francophone and bilingual universities to receive francophone immigrants.

I don't really have anything to say on that.

**Dr. Serge Miville:** May I humbly suggest that in regions like northern Ontario, the hosting capacity is nevertheless much larger than the number of people they are attracting. It's not really a question of capacity here, but rather of promoting the options we would be able to offer in northern Ontario, and not just in northern Ontario. I think it's everywhere in the Canadian francophonie, even in Quebec regions. We have communities that are able to integrate people and ensure success, as well as to slow the rate of assimilation and even reverse it. We need to use our institutions for leverage.

In my speech, I described these institutions as existential questions. They will integrate on the basis of the French fact. That's their particular capacity, and uniqueness, and the side of things that ensures that the various pathways are successful in integrating the diversity and ensuring the community, economic and even demographic development of these regions. We have to work with these institutions, whether schools or the postsecondary sector, because they are the fundamental institutions, together with the family, that can build capacity in these communities. I don't think we lack capacity. The very opposite is the case. Send the people our way, because we are ready to receive them.

• (1730)

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** If there are no other comments, I have a brief question.

Students and others who decide to come to francophone Canada do not necessarily come from very rich countries, and the cost of living in Canada is very high. We talked earlier about the housing shortage, with accommodation costing from \$1,000 to \$1,500 or even \$2,000 a month in some parts of Canada. Why would newcomers working at just above the minimum wage want to come to Canada?

**Dr. Serge Miville:** Excuse me, but I would say that having someone settle in Sudbury, Caraquet or Rouyn-Noranda is less expensive than in Toronto or Ottawa.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Miville.

Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

The next question will come from Mr. Iacono, who has five minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Iacono.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses and thank them for having come to share their opinions with us today.

My first questions are for Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

Through funding under the IRCC's Settlement Program, what types of plans for the successful integration of francophone immigrants have been developed?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Generally speaking, all the settlement services for newcomers are funded by this program. The Francophone Immigration Support Network is funded by this program, as is the Welcoming Francophone Communities program, in collaboration with Canadian Heritage. There appears to be collaboration with the OLSPs, the Official Languages Support Programs. There are refugee reception programs like the Refugee Resettlement Program, which it also funds. There are certainly others as well. There are community connection programs, a lot of them, but they are all based on integration. It's important to understand that integration is covered reasonably well by some IRCC programs, but that the most important factor is retention. As for housing, work, the ability to work in the Canadian labour system, much remains to be done.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Thank you.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** I'm not sure whether I've answered your question.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Yes, thank you.

So this program is very well structured.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** The way I see it, the IRCC Settlement Program is indeed.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Okay. Your Francophone Immigration Support Network works in partnership with the Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton. Can you tell us more about the francophone meeting point program, called Point d'accueil francophone, and how it came about?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Of course.

Point d'accueil francophone is a new program that was introduced here in Ottawa. It has been a referral hub since 2020.

It receives francophone immigrants and refers them to various services. It's a collaborative structure with 10 principal partners in Ottawa: school boards, economic groups, etc.

When we receive immigrants, we refer them to other services. It's rather interesting to see that this year, despite the pandemic and the reduced number of francophone newcomers in Ottawa, we were able to meet our targets. A lot of our work was done online. We do welcome them when they arrive, but virtually.

In any event, it's a great program that has become really popular.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Can you tell us which of the services available were most helpful to francophone newcomers in settling over the long term in the Ottawa region?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** The Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton, CESOC, provides settlement services.

All the services we offer are really part of a package, because we welcome them, and prepare a personal settlement and integration plan for them. We look at their training, their abilities, their experience and their skills.

We ask them what they might be able to do and what they need to move in. We do all the work of preparing the settlement process. There are also other organizations working in economic integration that help them find jobs, and work with employers willing to provide training, etc.

So there's a lot happening...

● (1735)

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** I have one last question, since there is a minute left.

We've discuss the positive aspects, but what are the problems encountered most often that jeopardize the successful settlement of francophone immigrants?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** Housing.

Even with a job, at minimum wage or even at two or three dollars more, they are all living below the poverty line. They are below the poverty line and want to be able to pay for affordable housing. That's extremely important.

There is also a lot of work involved in job integration, such as employer awareness and providing these employers with access to new employees. Those are the two most important points.

They also need access to the francophone community. The need to know we exist. That's essential.

**Mr. Angelo Iacono:** Thank you very much, Ms. Duguay-Langlais, for your very interesting testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Iacono.

The next questions will be from Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu, please go ahead.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** A recent article talked about foreign francophone students in Ontario. The article said that at the only two French-language community colleges in Ontario, the refusal rates for study permits were 67% and 73%. The percentages were no better for universities.

Basically, there is a very straightforward solution to the problem. Why not raise the percentage that they have to accept?

Using Quebec as an example, people are accepted by a CEGEP or a university. They receive an acceptance certificate from the Quebec government. After that, 80% of them are refused by the federal government. It seems to me that it would be fairly simple to simply instruct them to accept 50% of applications from the francophone recruitment pools.

What do you think about that, Dr. Miville?

**Dr. Serge Miville:** Thank you for your question.

I believe that the federal government would be well advised to work with institutions and French-language institutions in minority communities, and with Quebec institutions, to do something about these integration and approval issues.

Work with us. We are the ones who leverage community, economic, social, cultural and even demographic development. In the regions, there are more opportunities for a successful settlement in French in a minority community. We need to work with these institutions to meet our targets.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** I don't know how to explain this to you. One witness told us that generally, there had to be 15 to 20 offers to candidates to get 20 students to accept, and that three of these students would be granted a study permit.

It seems to me that there should be a way of establishing guidelines on accepting more francophone foreign students.

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** If I may, Mr. Beaulieu, I might have a partial answer.

I promise that it will take me less than 15 seconds, Mr. Arsenault.

When I talk about the gap between public policy and the field, there is work to be done there. Those who accept and work on study permits abroad may not be particularly well informed about the current state of political will.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

We're getting to the final question for today.

Ms. Ashton, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you very much.

I have a brief question for Dr. Miville.

For some time, the federal government has been asked to provide stable support to French-language postsecondary institutions.

Do you believe that the federal government should give more stable and more predictable support to postsecondary educational institutions that have programming in French? I'm thinking in particular of your university, of the Université de Saint-Boniface and of the University of Alberta's Saint-Jean campus.

Do you think this is important?

**Dr. Serge Miville:** Thank you for asking that question.

Naturally, I believe that investing in our French-language post-secondary institutions, which are governed on the "by and for" model, will ultimately lead to better results. An institution developed on the basis of the French fact will be in a better position to generate educational success and integration, whether for Canadian citizens or economic immigrants.

Predictable funding is therefore needed. We need to put an end to project-by-project funding and to work with French-language post-secondary institutions so that they can be equipped to achieve our collective objectives.

We want to welcome people. Regional communities have the capacity receive immigrants and are most likely to be successful in helping them settle, establish a family and send their children to our institutions, thereby contributing to our vibrant economy.

Institutions based on the "by and for" model perform better than others.

• (1740)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Thank you very much.

I have 10 seconds left. Ms. Duguay-Langlais, what should the federal francophone immigration policy look like?

**Ms. Brigitte Duguay-Langlais:** It's not fair to have only 15 seconds to answer that question.

All I can say is that collaboration with the provinces is essential if the provinces are to get involved in francophone immigration. But I also think that we can expect to hear lots of other ideas on that score.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Duguay-Langlais.

That completes the round of questions. I'd like to start by thanking Ms. Duguay-Langlais, Dr. Miville, Ms. Djiemini and Mr. Guy-Roland Kadio.

Thank you for your testimony and for having come. If you think that you haven't had enough time to provide us with additional details about what you have to say, don't hesitate to send a report or something in writing to our clerk to provide us with any information you think is missing. It will be treated as if you had testified about it today. So don't hesitate to send us any additional information.

Mr. Godin has asked Ms. Duguay-Langlais to send the committee information about the 14 welcoming communities, a government program that was announced in the spring of 2019, if my memory serves me correctly, before COVID-19, I believe.

So on that note, I would like to thank our guests, who have helped us understand their views.

The meeting is adjourned.

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