



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND GROWING ECONOMIES**

## **Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages**

**Hon. Michael Chong  
Chair**

**MARCH 2015**

**41st PARLIAMENT, SECOND SESSION**

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

has the honour to present its

## **THIRD REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)(f) the Committee has studied the economic situation of Canada's minority linguistic communities and has agreed to report the following:





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND GROWING ECONOMIES .....	1
Introduction .....	1
1. Legislative framework and Government of Canada OLMC economic development initiatives .....	1
1.1 Legislative framework .....	1
1.2 Government of Canada OLMC economic development initiatives.....	2
1.2.1 <i>Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013–2018</i> .....	2
1.2.1.1 Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities.....	2
1.2.1.2 Economic Development Initiative .....	3
1.2.1.3 Strengthening the Language Industry and Technologies program.....	3
1.2.1.4 Official Language Minority Communities Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative.....	4
1.2.2 Canadian Heritage’s Development of Official-Language Communities Program .....	4
1.2.3 Federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements .....	5
2. Economic situation of Canada’s official language minority communities .....	5
2.1 Francophone minority communities .....	5
2.2 Quebec’s Anglophone communities .....	6
2.3 Well integrated minority economies.....	6
2.4 The impact of the regional economy on OLMC development.....	7
2.4.1 Western Canada .....	7
2.4.2 Northern New Brunswick.....	8
2.4.3 Moncton’s economic rebound.....	12
2.4.4 Ongoing problems in Quebec’s anglophone communities.....	13
2.5 Urban and rural regions .....	15
2.6 Building sustainable and growing economies.....	16
3. Planning the economic development of official language minority communities ..	17
3.1 <i>Community Strategic Plan</i> (Francophone minority communities) .....	17
3.2 Strategic Priorities Forum (Anglophone minority communities) .....	18

3.3	<i>Plan d'action intégré visant à consolider l'espace économique francophone au bénéfice des collectivités canadiennes</i> .....	19
3.4	<i>Canadian Plan for Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities</i> .....	20
4.	Promoting Canadian linguistic duality as an economic asset.....	22
4.1	How the francophone economic space contributes to Canada's prosperity .	22
4.2	Bilingualism as a business asset .....	23
5.	International markets available to official language minority communities .....	24
6.	Government of Canada support for employment assistance services and essential skills acquisition.....	25
6.1	Language clauses in federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements .....	25
6.2	Internships and mentorship .....	26
6.2.1	Internships.....	26
6.2.2	Mentorship.....	27
6.3	Literacy: an essential skill .....	27
6.3.1	National literacy and basic skills levels.....	27
6.3.2	Government of Canada literacy initiatives .....	28
6.3.3	Literacy rates in francophone minority communities and the case of New Brunswick .....	29
6.3.4	Looking forward.....	30
6.4	Access to French second-language programs in Quebec .....	30
7.	Funding and publishing research on the economic development of official language minority communities .....	31
8.	Drivers of economic development in official language minority communities.....	32
8.1	Cooperatives .....	32
8.2	Immigration.....	32
8.3	Post-secondary institutions.....	35
8.4	Tourism.....	36
8.5	Arts and culture .....	37
8.6	Entrepreneurship .....	38
8.7	Local leadership .....	40
8.8	International trade.....	40
8.9	Natural resources .....	44

9. Community economic development and employment assistance organizations .....	45
10. Conclusion .....	46
11. Recommendations .....	47
APPENDIX A : LIST OF WITNESSES .....	51
APPENDIX B : LIST OF BRIEFS .....	55
REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE .....	57
DISSENTING OPINION OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY .....	59
DISSENTING OPINION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA.....	65



# THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND GROWING ECONOMIES

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## Introduction

In February 2014, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (“the Committee”) undertook a study on the economic situation of Canada’s official language minority communities (OLMC). A growing economy that creates jobs is crucial for the vitality of OLMC.

This report summarizes common themes from the briefs received and testimony heard during the Committee’s public hearings held between February 25<sup>th</sup> and May 29<sup>th</sup> 2014.

## 1. Legislative framework and Government of Canada OLMC economic development initiatives

### 1.1 Legislative framework

Pursuant to subsection 41. (1) of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA), the “Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, subsection 41. (2) requires that positive measures be taken for the implementation of the commitments under subsection 41. (1).

Section 43 of the OLA requires that Canadian Heritage take measures to advance the equality of status and use of English and French, including measures to enhance the vitality of official language minority communities and support and assist their development.<sup>2</sup> The Department must also take measures to encourage provincial and territorial governments, the business community, labour organizations and voluntary organizations to provide services in both English and French, to foster the recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society, and to project the bilingual character of Canada abroad.<sup>3</sup>

It is within this legislative framework that the Government of Canada has implemented a series of initiatives to facilitate and promote the economic development of OLMC.

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1 *Official Languages Act* (OLA) (R.S.C. (1985), c. 31 (4th Supp.)).

2 OLA, paragraph 43(1)(a).

3 OLA, paragraph 43(1)(f).

## **1.2 Government of Canada OLMC economic development initiatives**

As the purpose of the report is not to provide an exhaustive list of federal initiatives, the Committee has limited itself to describing the key federal programs that contribute to the economic development of OLMC and those that were examined during the study.

### **1.2.1 Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018**

The *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018* has three pillars: education, immigration and communities. As part of the communities pillar, the Roadmap aims to support the economic development of OLMC. The Government of Canada expressed its economic priorities as follows:

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of strengthening official language minority communities' economic vitality and labour market participation through innovative community-based partnerships. Improving access to economic opportunities and enabling growth in business capacity in communities will provide for greater access to employment opportunities for English- and French-speaking minority communities.<sup>4</sup>

To deliver concrete results, the Roadmap contains three economic development initiatives: the Enabling Fund for OLMC, the Economic Development Initiative (EDI) and the Strengthening the Language Industry and Technologies program. The OLMC Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative can also be considered an economic development program because it relates to employability.

#### **1.2.1.1 Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities**

The Enabling Fund for OLMC, administered by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), is an investment of \$69 million over the five-year duration of the Roadmap. Its goal is to make “a sustained effort to enable community-wide economic development and to grow the economic advantages of linguistic duality.”<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the Fund supports the operations and activities of 14 not-for-profit organizations: the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité Canada (RDÉE Canada), 12 provincial and territorial RDÉEs, and the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC), which represents the interests of Quebec's anglophone communities. According to ESDC officials, these 14 professional organizations have 135 employees working at 50 different locations across the country.<sup>6</sup> They provide expertise for the development of local and community-

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4 Government of Canada, *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, 2013, p. 13.

5 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Official Languages (LANG), *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0905 (Stephen Johnson, Director General, Corporate Planning and Management, Strategic Policy and Research, Department of Employment and Social Development).

6 Ibid.

owned strategies, utilize and help develop potential in OLMC, forge partnerships and consolidate resources.<sup>7</sup>

The previous Roadmap also contained a \$69-million envelope for the Enabling Fund for OLMC.

### **1.2.1.2 Economic Development Initiative**

The 2013–2018 Roadmap also includes the EDI. Piloted by Industry Canada in partnership with the federal regional development agencies, this initiative includes an investment of \$30.5 million over the course of the Roadmap. The EDI aims to develop the business capacity of OLMC, improve the delivery of services to Canadians and enhance the capacity of small and medium-sized businesses to offer bilingual services. The EDI is seen as a competitive asset that can open doors to new markets for bilingual entrepreneurs and businesses.

The EDI's \$30.5-million envelope is distributed as follows:

- Industry Canada: \$1.6 million for the EDI for regional operations;
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor): \$4.45 million;
- Canada Economic Development (CED) for Quebec Regions: \$10.2 million;
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA): \$6.2 million;
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev): \$4.45 million;
- Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD): \$3.2 million; and
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor): \$0.4 million.<sup>8</sup>

The 2008–2013 Roadmap also provided \$30.5 million in funding for the EDI.

### **1.2.1.3 Strengthening the Language Industry and Technologies program**

National Research Council Canada is responsible for the Strengthening the Language Industry and Technologies program. With a \$10-million envelope over

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7 Ibid.

8 Government of Canada, *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, 2013, pp. 18–19.

five years, this program funds research and development to advance machine translation and computer-based processing of oral and written information in multiple languages.<sup>9</sup>

#### **1.2.1.4 Official Language Minority Communities Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative**

The Official Language Minority Communities Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative provides \$7.5 million over the course of the 2013–2018 Roadmap to help adults from OLMC gain the essential literacy skills they need to obtain and hold a job.<sup>10</sup> The previous Roadmap had also allocated \$7.5 million for a family literacy initiative. Its goal was to encourage adults to improve their skills so that they could help children do better in school and therefore make more of a contribution to the development of their community. In concrete terms, the funding supported eight new research reports, developed nine family literacy models, implemented two awareness strategies and published various promotional tools. It is important to note that Quebec’s anglophone communities did not receive funding for literacy initiatives under the 2008–2013 Roadmap.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the Roadmap, other federal programs have an impact on the economic development of OLMC and their employment assistance services. These include the Development of Official-Language Communities Program and the federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements.

#### **1.2.2 Canadian Heritage’s Development of Official-Language Communities Program**

Canadian Heritage is involved in the overall development of OLMC, and it coordinates the implementation of Part VII of the OLA by federal departments and agencies, as well as the implementation of the Roadmap.

Furthermore, the Department indirectly supports the economic development of OLMC through its Development of Official-Language Communities Program. This program includes an annual investment of \$225 million distributed among the federal-provincial/territorial agreements for minority-language education, federal-provincial/territorial agreements on minority-language services and Canada-community cooperation agreements.<sup>12</sup> By supporting a range of activities, Canadian Heritage contributes to the economic development of OLMC. OLMC are also eligible for all Government of Canada programs.

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9 Canadian Heritage, *Presentation to the Committee*, 10 April 2014, p. 10.

10 Government of Canada, *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, 2013, p. 13.

11 House of Commons, LANG, *After the Roadmap: Toward Better Programs and Service Delivery*, Second Report, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 2012, p. 67–70.

12 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0845 (Jean-Pierre Gauthier, Director General, Official Languages Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage).



### 1.2.3 Federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements

ESDC manages the federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements. Under these agreements, the Government of Canada funds provincial and territorial programs and services for unemployed Canadians who are not eligible for Employment Insurance and employed Canadians who either do not have a high school diploma or recognized certification, or have low levels of literacy and essential skills. Under these agreements, the provinces and territories determine funding priorities and decide how to allocate the funding.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the current agreements contain clauses to ensure that provincial and territorial governments consult with and take into account the needs of OLMC and provide assistance and services in the minority language where there is “significant demand” as defined in the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Economic situation of Canada’s official language minority communities

### 2.1 Francophone minority communities

According to Statistics Canada, the characteristics of Canada’s francophone community have changed a great deal over the past 50 years. For example, socio-economic inequality between Canada’s francophones and anglophones has declined. Access to minority-language education is one of the main reasons the gap has narrowed:

Among the primary drivers of change is the fact that the level of education of French-speaking minorities has significantly improved since the 1960s, especially because of the obligation to remain in school until the age of 16, and the growing importance attributed to education by governments, employers, and the general population.<sup>15</sup>

The enactment of the first OLA in 1969 and the Government of Canada’s investments in minority-language education and community development starting in the 1970s also contributed to this progress. In 1982, Canadians’ language rights were entrenched in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and subsequently recognized on numerous occasions by the Supreme Court of Canada.

The decision in *DesRochers v. Canada (Industry)* introduced the notion of substantive equality.<sup>16</sup> The Government of Canada must provide the minority with services equal to those received by the majority and ensure that these services are adapted to the needs of the community and delivered in the language of its choice.

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13 Employment and Social Development Canada, *Labour Market Agreements*.

14 *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* (SOR/92-48).

15 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0845 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Assistant Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada).

16 *DesRochers v. Canada (Industry)*, 2009 SCC 8, [2009] 1 S.C.R. 194.

Despite these advances, Statistics Canada reports that the improvement in francophones' socio-economic position has been accompanied by language transfer toward English:

...The gains that francophones have achieved over the years with regards to key socioeconomic indicators have been accompanied by a decline in the use of the French language, as evidenced by the increase in the use of English over time among those representing a very small proportion of the community in which they live.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.2 Quebec's Anglophone communities**

According to Statistics Canada, the incomes of anglophones and francophones in Quebec are generally about the same. This shows that socio-economic change has occurred among the province's anglophone population, as "the significant income advantage of anglophones in Quebec observed in 1971 no longer exists today."<sup>18</sup>

Anglophones in Quebec are highly educated. They have "higher levels of education than anglophones living elsewhere in Canada."<sup>19</sup> They also have the highest rates of English-French bilingualism: "Bilingualism rates are high in our community compared to other English-speaking Canadian cohorts with an overall rate of 66% reporting knowledge of French and English during the 2011 census. That percentage increases to more than 80% among our English-speaking youth, reflecting the investment our community has made to ensure our children can live and work in French in Quebec."<sup>20</sup>

This group is also ethnoculturally diverse. More than 35% of Quebec's anglophones are immigrants. By comparison, only 10% of the francophone population is made up of immigrants.

## **2.3 Well integrated minority economies**

The testimony heard by the Committee clearly demonstrates that OLMC are an integral part of the Canadian economy. This means that they prosper in places where economic growth is occurring. The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) explained that "successful economies are linked. The economic situation of our communities cannot be studied without understanding the economies of Quebec and Canada. When Quebec prospers, we prosper, and the corollary is true."<sup>21</sup> This principle also applies to francophone communities outside Quebec. According to the Conference

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17 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0845 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

18 Ibid., 0850.

19 Ibid., 0845.

20 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0845 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General, Quebec Community Groups Network).

21 Ibid., 0850.

Board of Canada, there is a link between population growth in minority communities and economic growth in their region.<sup>22</sup>

The reverse is also true. In regions where the economy is stagnant, some groups have trouble kick-starting their economy and remain at a disadvantage compared with the majority.

## 2.4 The impact of the regional economy on OLMC development

In order to understand the economic development of OLMC, regional dynamics must be examined. To underline the point that OLMC have diverse economic situations, which are linked to their regional economies, the Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, offered this illustration:

In the west, for example, the economy is strong, the demand for labour is high, and workers are therefore pouring in from other regions of Canada and abroad. French-speaking communities in this part of the country therefore require more resources to meet an increasing demand in services and community support.

In some regions of the Maritimes and north and southwestern Ontario, on the other hand, a challenging economy sees young people leaving for large urban centres, which threatens their communities' future and entrepreneurship.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.4.1 Western Canada

Francophone communities in Western Canada are clearly benefiting from the economic prosperity of the provinces in which they are located. For example, the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities argued that, as far as growth goes, “[Manitoba] looks a lot like the resource regions of Saskatchewan and Alberta. It is a real boom situation, with full employment.<sup>24</sup> A number of Franco-Manitoban communities are reaping the benefits of the plentiful jobs in their region:

In St. Laurent, the quite unique Metis community I mentioned earlier, the climate is pretty ideal. It is cottage country, with fishing in the lake, agriculture and a meat packing plant. St. Lazare, near the border with Saskatchewan, has the advantage of its proximity to Rocanville, where there is a large potash mine and a red-hot economy from the oil in the Bakken.<sup>25</sup>

According to the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta (CDÉA), the province's economic boom has turned its francophone communities into a new home for the many francophones from Eastern Canada who have come in search of work.

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22 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0945 (Pedro Antunes, Deputy Chief Economist and Executive Director, Conference Board of Canada).

23 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0950 (Graham Fraser, Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages).

24 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0910 (Louis Allain, Director General, Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities).

25 Ibid.

Franco-Albertan communities would like to take full advantage of their arrival to reap the benefits of more development and enhanced vitality:

Francophones arrive in Alberta every day. Many come to enjoy economic benefits, find a job or start up a business. ...We are therefore pleased to take in newcomers, but it would be better if they came as families and settled permanently.

Despite the fact that we welcome francophones with open arms, many decide to live in Alberta only on a part-time basis, moving on to Quebec City, New Brunswick or elsewhere after working for 10, 14 or 21 days. We can only wonder why they do not settle permanently with their families. We have all the infrastructure necessary to take them in: French-language schools, reception centres, employment centres, a mentoring network for entrepreneurs starting up businesses, community centres, francophone parishes, occupational activities, family activities and festivals. It would be better for Alberta's francophone community if they came as families to stay.<sup>26</sup>

Even though francophone communities in the West benefit from the arrival of francophones that are being drawn there by the booming provincial economy, it is important to note that the situation is not without its challenges. As the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out, some communities in Western Canada are having trouble meeting the demand for French-language services from the incoming francophones, especially when the latter do not have a job when they first arrive. The Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS) illustrated the problem as follows:

According to the last census, there has been an increase in Saskatchewan's francophone population. Despite that fact, we see that the immigrant and migrant populations, which often come from the larger centres in eastern Canada, have difficulty entering the labour market. Often out of despair, these people try to set up in business even though that was not their first intention.

Since we are the only francophone organization in the province that offers this service, our staff is at times engaged in a support process with these clients who are unable to start up a business.<sup>27</sup>

Clearly, Western Canada's francophone communities benefit from the contributions of francophone migrants and immigrants who arrive looking for work. However, this influx also puts pressure on French-language community services. This requires a corresponding increase in funding for community organizations and institutions.<sup>28</sup>

#### **2.4.2 Northern New Brunswick**

As the Commissioner and a number of other witnesses reported, some regions of Atlantic Canada face significant economic challenges. The Committee focused on the francophone and Acadian communities of northern New Brunswick.

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26 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0850 (Marc S. Tremblay, President and Chief Executive Officer, Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta).

27 Ibid., 0900 (Robert Therrien, Executive Director, Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan).

28 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0940 (Angéline Gionet, Director General, Wood Buffalo Region, Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta).

Northern New Brunswick is a mostly rural region whose economy is based on resource industries such as mining, forestry, peat and fisheries.<sup>29</sup> More than 70% of the francophone and Acadian population lives in this region.<sup>30</sup> Northern New Brunswick is experiencing serious economic difficulties:

...The economy of northern New Brunswick is currently faced with demographic decline, high levels of unemployment, and low literacy and education levels among the population. Although good jobs are available, businesses often have a hard time filling them.<sup>31</sup>

Like Canada's other resource-oriented outlying regions, northern New Brunswick has had to deal with "major structural changes to the economy over the past 20 years [that] mean that the region is currently in economic transition."<sup>32</sup> These changes were explained as follows:

Single-industry (mining, forestry, fisheries) centres have had their economic foundations shaken by the introduction of new technologies and competition from developing nations with lower production costs; the resulting wave of outsourcing has reduced labour needs in these sectors.<sup>33</sup>

The francophone and Acadian communities of northern New Brunswick are not the only ones facing a challenging economic environment. Indeed, New Brunswick's economic problems are not limited to one language group. They can also be placed in national context:

Northern New Brunswick is a rural resource region and, as such, faces the same challenges as fifteen or so other economic regions of Canada. Across Canada, at least 10 (of 76) economic regions have higher migration rates than northeastern New Brunswick, and 17 have higher rates than northwestern New Brunswick.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, it appears that members of the francophone and Acadian communities in the north, and especially those in the northeast, are more severely affected by these problems than their anglophone counterparts. Indeed, New Brunswick's francophones have lower average incomes than its anglophones:

...The differences in income between anglophones and francophones are normally quite small in the provinces and territories outside Quebec, and generally to the advantage of francophones in terms of both median and average income. Once again, New Brunswick

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29 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0845 (Armand Caron, President, Conseil des gouverneurs, Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick).

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, Fact sheets based on information in the following document: Maurice Beaudin et al., *Analyse des besoins et des tendances du marché de l'emploi et de la formation de la main-d'œuvre dans le Nord du Nouveau-Brunswick*, 2012, p. 4.

34 Ibid., p.3.

is the exception since the average income in that province was slightly higher for anglophones.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note that the income levels of francophones in urban areas are higher than those of anglophones. One of the reasons for this advantage would seem to be the high rate of bilingualism among francophones.<sup>36</sup> “Given that most of our population lives in rural areas, when you consider the provincial average, our salaries are lower, just like our education levels.”<sup>37</sup>

The National Household Survey revealed that, as of May 2011, minority francophones had a lower unemployment rate than anglophones, except in New Brunswick, where their unemployment rate was 12.4%, two points higher than the rate for anglophones.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, in New Brunswick as a whole, francophone women seem to be in a more vulnerable economic position, in part because of their low graduation rates:

...In New Brunswick 35% of francophone women versus 25% of anglophone females have less than a high school education, and 23% of francophone females versus 30% of anglophone females completed high school.<sup>39</sup>

The weak labour market is forcing recent graduates and skilled workers to leave the region in search of employment, a trend which has had a serious impact on northern New Brunswick. This is a province-wide phenomenon whose impact is most severe in northern New Brunswick: “From 1996–97 to 2010–11, northeastern New Brunswick lost 21,600 people (-12.7% of the labour force) and northwestern New Brunswick lost 7,500 people (-8.9%).”<sup>40</sup>

As a result we have seen a number of troubling trends. These include an exodus of young people from northern New Brunswick to the western provinces and to urban areas in southern New Brunswick. There is also the ageing population, which is one of the main reasons for smaller cohorts of skilled workers available to the labour market.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, businesses are facing major challenges, including “a shortage of skilled workers, representing one of the biggest challenges to their development. This shortage includes not only specialized knowledge, but also skills like adaptability and

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35 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0850 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

36 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0950 (Anne Hébert, Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick).

37 Ibid., 0855.

38 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0850 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

39 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0910 (Patrick Colford, President, New Brunswick Federation of Labour). Note that these statistics are for 2006.

40 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, Fact sheets based on information in the following document: Maurice Beaudin et al., *Analyse des besoins et des tendances du marché de l'emploi et de la formation de la main-d'œuvre dans le nord du Nouveau-Brunswick*, 20 March 2013, p. 3.

41 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0850 (Armand Caron).

the ability to work as part of a team.”<sup>42</sup> This situation is occurring in the context of high unemployment, a result of the seasonal labour market.

Furthermore, businesses in northern New Brunswick lack vital infrastructure:

High-speed Internet, for example, came last to the north of the province, where most francophones live. They still do not have natural gas. Limited access highways are much less common in the north of the province than in the south. Access to labour and to services is more difficult. Specialized services are more limited in the north of the province. These are additional challenges that our companies have to face, challenges that translate into higher costs. To an extent, our companies lag behind those in major centres.<sup>43</sup>

The Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick emphasized the importance of consulting communities, particularly the francophone and Acadian communities of northern New Brunswick, and taking into account their specific needs when developing national programs:

Often, programs that are constructed equally across the country and even across the province do not meet the real challenges with which the francophone community of New Brunswick is faced. We have our own unique challenges. So the programs have to be flexible and sensitive to those challenges and that uniqueness.

The RDÉE Nouveau-Brunswick is an example. Its initiatives are sensitive to the needs of the community. They are established according to those needs. That means that a program may exist for the minority francophone community although it does not exist for the anglophone community.<sup>44</sup>

In closing, the Committee found that the economy of northern New Brunswick has begun to change gradually. The slow pace of this transformation is the result of several factors. First, the transition from a traditional, resource-based economy to a knowledge economy takes time and certain tools. However, francophone post-secondary institutions were established much more recently than their anglophone counterparts.

Second, francophones and Acadians have recently gained more political and economic power:

...We may have had our elected representatives, but the positions and the departments with the most influence and the most spending power were still controlled by anglophones. In the last 20 years, we have seen many more francophone ministers responsible for portfolios like finance, economic development and transportation. Twenty years ago, that was quite rare. Departments run by francophones were more likely to be social than economic in mandate. Basically, policy was more likely to be set by anglophones, who did not always understand our realities.<sup>45</sup>

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42 Ibid.

43 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0850 (Anne Hébert).

44 Ibid., 0855.

45 Ibid., 0850.

According to Armand Caron of the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB), even though “northern New Brunswick is not well prepared for structural changes to the economy,”<sup>46</sup> the CCNB “sees a number of possibilities for training, institutional development and innovation.”<sup>47</sup>

### **2.4.3 Moncton’s economic rebound**

The city of Moncton, New Brunswick, has a remarkably strong economy. Along with Fredericton and Saint John, Moncton is considered one of the province’s economic engines. However, this was not always the case.

In the 1980s, the region lost one of its biggest employers when CN closed its locomotive shops, causing the local economy to collapse. As Moncton’s city manager, Jacques Dubé, explained, it took political will and an economic revitalization strategy to bring Moncton out of its slump:

...When the CN shop closed, an aggressive economic development agenda was pursued under the direction of highly motivated and committed political and community leaders. We pulled ourselves up by the bootstraps and got to work, starting with a local economic development summit that gathered these leaders and set the foundation for Moncton’s future.<sup>48</sup>

Mr. Dubé attributed Moncton’s economic growth in large part to bilingualism:

Over the past three decades, New Brunswick’s—and Moncton’s—economic successes can often be linked to an available skilled and bilingual workforce. Clearly, other factors also come into play, but what we’ve done rather well is create an opportunity by promoting the talents of our bilingual residents.<sup>49</sup>

He also underlined the importance of the entrepreneurial spirit and having an economic recovery plan:

Moncton has succeeded through the spirit of entrepreneurship. The private sector took charge and laid out strategies. It took the lead and guided the economy at a time when it was weak. There were a lot of job losses; almost all the businesses on Main Street in Moncton were closed.<sup>50</sup>

Today, the area’s economy is home to employers such as Radio-Canada, the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre, the Invescor Restaurant Group, the life insurance company Assumption Life and the market intelligence agency ShiftCentral.<sup>51</sup> Moncton’s success is due to business and government working together to advance the region’s economy.

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46 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0845 (Armand Caron).

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., 0855 (Jacques Dubé, City Manager, City of Moncton).

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 0940.

51 Ibid., 0900.



The goal of this section is not to critically analyze the economic problems of northeastern New Brunswick by comparing them with Moncton's successes. It would be rather difficult to compare the economic situation of a rural region that depends on natural resources and seasonal employment with that of a city with a diversified economy. Mr. Dubé recognized that northern New Brunswick is affected "because the natural resource sectors have not been as successful as they have in the past."<sup>52</sup> He added, "We haven't transitioned to secondary, primary, and tertiary transformation, say, in those industries the way we possibly could have, whether it's value-added wood or value-added fish or whatever."<sup>53</sup> Mr. Dubé also confirmed that Moncton's success has, at least in part, contributed to the exodus of skilled workers from the northeast: "First, I agree that people have left northern New Brunswick and have moved to the south-eastern part of the province. This is because there are high quality jobs and Acadian educational institutions there."<sup>54</sup>

In closing, it is worth noting that Moncton is also grappling with a labour market that is experiencing "an unemployment issue and a labour shortage at the same time. In 2015 we're looking at over 3,000 unfilled jobs in Moncton, and we have to fix that."<sup>55</sup>

#### **2.4.4 Ongoing problems in Quebec's anglophone communities**

Anglophones in Quebec also have their share of challenges. While they tend to be well educated, "unemployment among youth and English-speaking Quebecers generally is high. It's high not only in the regions; it's high in Montreal as well. We often say that Montreal is doing okay, but for youth, when we talk about them, there is a big issue around unemployment and underemployment."<sup>56</sup>

Statistics Canada reported that it has not yet done analysis on this situation: "A fact that is not clear, and very few studies have looked at, is how we can explain the fact that there are way more, in terms of percentages, English-speaking individuals in Quebec who have university degrees but their unemployment rate is higher."<sup>57</sup>

Besides the unemployment issue, the QCGN told the Committee that "anglophone Quebecers ... have a lower median income"<sup>58</sup> than the francophone majority, that "rates of poverty are higher in the anglophone community" and that "anglophones are 5% more likely to be unemployed than francophones."<sup>59</sup> Youth Employment Services reported the

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52 Ibid., 1015.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 1010.

55 Ibid., 1020.

56 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0855 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

57 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0950 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

58 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0910 (Stephen Thompson, Director, Policy, Research and Public Affairs, Quebec Community Groups Network).

59 Ibid.

same thing and asserted that underemployment is leading to more mental health problems among youth.<sup>60</sup>

Statistics Canada confirmed that anglophones' median incomes are lower than francophones', but that their average incomes are higher. Statistics Canada attributed this fact to greater income inequality among anglophones than among francophones: "In other words, English-speaking Quebecers are overrepresented in both the higher and lower income segments compared to the francophones."<sup>61</sup> The employment challenges facing immigrants may be one of the factors behind this statistic.

This set of problems means that Quebec's anglophone communities, particularly those located outside urban areas, are losing their recent graduates and workers. The Commissioner of Official Languages confirmed that this trend "is undermining community vitality and renewal."<sup>62</sup>

According to the QCGN, "the need for people in the region is to come back to jobs."<sup>63</sup> On this issue, Canada Economic Development confirmed that "the isolation of anglophone communities in the regions makes it more difficult for them to become an integral part of local business networks."<sup>64</sup>

Limited access to employment assistance services and technical training in English is exacerbating certain trends. Quebec's anglophones are underrepresented in employment sectors such as trades, transport and equipment operators; natural resources and agriculture; and manufacturing and utilities. The QCGN argued that this is the result of anglophones in Quebec not having access to English-language training for these occupations: "The English school system, the minority school system, doesn't get the resources that the majority school system gets to get that type of trades training. It's not equitable."<sup>65</sup> Still, the QCGN is optimistic. It noted that "the Canada job grant is an excellent example of where you encourage young Canadians, young English-speaking Canadians in Quebec, who can get the services in English that they need to get the technical training."<sup>66</sup>

Besides access to English-language employment assistance services and technical training, Quebec's anglophone communities are focusing on developing the identity of their youth and, more specifically, cultivating a sense of belonging to their community in order to discourage them from leaving. On this point, the QCGN made the following comment:

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60 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0910 (Iris Unger, Executive Director, Youth Employment Services).

61 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0850 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

62 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0950 (Graham Fraser).

63 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0855 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

64 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0910 (Serge Tanguay, Director General, Regional Operations Branch, Operations Sector, Canada Economic Development).

65 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0905 (Stephen Thompson).

66 *Ibid.*, 0925.

Generally, as well, our school system and our career guidance system need to ensure that English-speaking youth feel they have a future in Quebec and that they will be a part of Quebec. Of course one part is the job. But also, you have to feel that you are welcome, that you can stay and make a living here and you are recognized as being valuable to the community.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, the QCGN highlighted the importance of trumpeting the contribution Quebec's anglophone communities make to the economic prosperity of all Quebecers.

Our community is an integral part of the economies of Canada and Quebec, and we are always seeking research that helps us demonstrate our contribution.<sup>68</sup>

## **2.5 Urban and rural regions**

In addition to regional differences, the Committee noted that the economic situation of OLMC varies depending on whether they are located in urban areas or rural areas. As described above, this difference is evident in northern New Brunswick and the rural regions of Quebec.

The urban-rural divide is also present in provinces with strong economies. Take, for example, the rural francophone communities in the Western provinces. The Director General of the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities described this urban-rural dynamic as follows:

Our analysis of the situation is built on three realities, which I am going to present to you. One is urban, the second is periurban and the third is rural... We are facing more or less the same phenomenon as the world is facing: massive urbanization that has a lot of impact in the periurban zones. That clearly leaves the rural world with very few avenues for development, at least those in its own control. That is why I will tell you later about the structures we have put in place in order to ensure the viability and vitality of those communities.

There is strong urban growth. Winnipeg is a bit like Regina and Saskatoon.... You may know that, in 2013, we had an average unemployment rate of 5.3%, ranking Winnipeg third in Canada. That is a sign that, in terms of employment, we are at a very favourable point in our situation....

A lot of our francophone communities are located in the periurban zone. They are also experiencing a demographic boom, with significant population increases, though their francophone nature is somewhat in peril. Proportionally, francophones are becoming more and more the minority. In some places, they can represent 10% to 15% of the municipality.

Of course, that requires a lot of vigilance on our part to keep the ground we have gained. There again, it is because of the structure that links economic development and the territory. The notion of designated territory was developed in Manitoba in the Chartier report and was something borrowed from the Australians....

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67 Ibid., 0905 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

68 Ibid., 0850.

Unless they are able to do something about it, the areas further from the first two zones I described just now are much more vulnerable. It is really in their interests to do something about their situations with their economic development corporations, and also with all other groups involved.

In Manitoba, we are trying to work more and more with all the organizations on the ground to guarantee that rural development is effective and efficient. I will talk more about that later. There are still a lot of challenges in terms of material and human resources. The further you are from the centre, the harder it becomes.<sup>69</sup>

As the above testimony indicates, the effects of rapid urbanization are not limited to OLMC. Still, as minority groups, OLMC are more seriously weakened by the exodus from rural areas, outdated infrastructure and, in some cases, poorer services in the minority language than in the majority one.

Given the foregoing, the Committee notes that OLMC are an integral part of the Canadian economy, which is not true of all of Canada's minority groups. Their development depends on the vagaries of the regional, national and even global economic situation.

## **2.6 Building sustainable and growing economies**

The Commissioner of Official Languages stated that "there are economic development opportunities on the horizon for official language minority communities, whether in international trade, economic immigration, or other areas for entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized businesses."<sup>70</sup>

The Commissioner believes that, "to develop this potential and seize the opportunities, English- and French-speaking minority communities must nonetheless have the right tools and resources."<sup>71</sup> This implies the involvement of federal institutions that, in the Commissioner's view, "must therefore remain attentive and take these differences into account when creating programs and policies to support economic development and labour market integration. The institutions must also be flexible."<sup>72</sup> The Commissioner also underscored the importance of good interdepartmental coordination at the federal level and greater cooperation between federal institutions and the representatives of the various sectors involved in economic development.<sup>73</sup>

According to CEDEC, "the Government of Canada must recognize the considerable and undervalued potential of Canada's official language minority communities as engines for economic growth and job creation."<sup>74</sup> Furthermore,

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69 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0915 (Louis Allain).

70 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0950 (Graham Fraser).

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 0955.

74 Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation, Brief submitted to the Committee , 27 March 2014.

“investments in economic and human resource development within Canada’s OLMC should not be recognized merely as a matter of legislative obligation, but as important contributions to Canada’s long-term prosperity.”<sup>75</sup>

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) argued that communities must be actively involved in their own economic development:

...The best solutions for social and economic challenges are most often to be found in the rural and local communities themselves, as the government in fact itself recognized, in particular in its 2011 Speech from the Throne.<sup>76</sup>

To summarize, OLMC would like the Government of Canada to implement flexible, well-coordinated programs that are adapted to their needs and that recognize their economic potential. They also want the government to work with community economic development organizations to help them achieve their full potential and enhance their contribution to Canada’s economic prosperity, both domestically and abroad. According to the Commissioner, more work is therefore needed to ensure that the value of linguistic duality for economic and business activities is acknowledged and that the economic development of OLMC is encouraged so that these communities appeal to recent graduates, workers and newcomers.<sup>77</sup>

The remaining sections of this report concern the economic development priorities of OLMC and ways the Government of Canada can clear away obstacles to their development and ensure their long-term economic prosperity. Topics include economic planning; the promotion of linguistic duality as an asset for business; the development of international markets; federal essential skills programs; funding and dissemination of research to support policies and programs; support for cooperatives, immigration, post-secondary institutions, and the tourism, arts and culture sectors; and funding for community economic development and employment assistance organizations.

### **3. Planning the economic development of official language minority communities**

Planning and leadership are essential to the economic development of OLMC. They ensure that all partners are active participants and that their priorities are aligned.

#### **3.1 *Community Strategic Plan* (Francophone minority communities)**

Francophone and anglophone minority communities already have strategic plans in place that include economic development measures. In 2008, the Leaders’ Forum that emerged from the Summit of Francophone and Acadian Communities (2007) adopted the *Community Strategic Plan*, a tool to increase cooperation and engagement in francophone minority communities. In terms of economic development, the *Community Strategic Plan*

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75 Ibid.

76 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0855 (Marie-France Kenny, President, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada).

77 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0955 (Graham Fraser).

aims to accelerate the economic, social and community development of French-speaking communities in Canada.<sup>78</sup> The economic objective for 2017 is described as follows:

In 2017, the economic development of the CFA [francophone and Acadian communities] is fostered by partnership between the different levels of government, community organizations, cultural industries, and in particular, the agencies and networks dedicated to community economic development. The CFA have stabilized or grown in numbers thanks to the qualification of their workforce, development of innovative companies, job creation, and a slowdown in the youth exodus. In many cases, the resulting increased appeal serves to attract immigrants, enhance the diversity of the CFA and stimulate their demographic vitality. Joint projects and special relationships are helping to create a francophone economic space. Because it is fair to all communities and respectful of ecological balance, economic prosperity is helping to improve quality of life in the CFA. [TRANSLATION]<sup>79</sup>

In addition to the *Community Strategic Plan*, each community prepared a comprehensive development plan, and some also prepared an economic development plan. Aligned with the *Community Strategic Plan*, the comprehensive development plans are adapted to regional realities. It is important to note that the comprehensive development plans were prepared to address the requirements stemming from the Canada-community agreements and other federal programs.

### **3.2 Strategic Priorities Forum (Anglophone minority communities)**

In March 2012, at the Community Priority Setting Conference that was the culmination of the first phase of the Strategic Priorities Forum, Quebec's anglophone communities established six priorities for 2012 to 2017: access to services in English; community building; economic prosperity; identity and renewal; leadership and representation; and strong institutions.<sup>80</sup>

The strategy for encouraging economic prosperity is linked to employability:

Achieving economic prosperity depends on greater access to employment and educational opportunities for youth and adults alike. Increasing levels of bilingualism across all generations will widen long-term opportunities for English-speaking Quebecers. Crucial elements to achieve prosperity include investments in skills training, entrepreneurship, the creative economy, literacy and lifelong learning.<sup>81</sup>

Finally, the elements identified in this statement aim to counteract the most pressing problems that affect employability and economic development in Quebec's anglophone communities.

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78 Leaders' Forum, *Community Strategic Plan*, June 2008, p. 2. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

79 Ibid., p. 13. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

80 Strategic Priorities Forum – Quebec Community Groups Network, [2012–2017 Community Priorities and Enabling Strategies of the English-speaking Community of Quebec](#), p. 5–6.

81 Ibid., p. 12.

### **3.3 Plan d'action intégré visant à consolider l'espace économique francophone au bénéfice des collectivités canadiennes**

The Committee was informed that, in addition to the community strategic plans, new national plans will soon be implemented to support the economic development of OLMC. They are the *Plan d'action intégré visant à consolider l'espace économique francophone au bénéfice des collectivités canadiennes* [integrated action plan to strengthen the francophone economic space for the benefit of Canadian communities] and the *Canadian Plan for Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities*.

The first Pan-Canadian Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie (the Forum) was held in the Outaouais region in November 2012. With the involvement of 230 participants, it encouraged the involvement of the government, community and the community and private sectors by creating a Canada-wide dialogue on how to increase their collective contribution to strengthening the francophone economic space.<sup>82</sup>

The Forum was held in response to a specific request by the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie (MCCF). In 2010, the MCCF indicated that it wished to encourage greater dialogue at the national level, as well as the sharing of expertise among key stakeholders from the government, community and private sectors.<sup>83</sup>

The integrated action plan was developed further to the Forum's working meetings. It aims to establish the economic power of the stakeholders and improve their business environments and to serve as a guide for decision-makers in the Canadian francophone economic space.<sup>84</sup> The plan is based on six areas of intervention: markets and marketing, entrepreneurship, economic integration, sustainable partnerships, funding and investment, and public policies and regulations.<sup>85</sup>

According to Canadian Heritage representatives, the integrated action plan encourages residents and the business community to play a primary role:

The plan does not just call for government involvement. It also calls on the communities and the business community, which must organize its own situation. One of the factors we felt was important when we spoke at the forum was the development of an approach to encourage community empowerment. That is somewhat the responsibility of the private sector, which must state its priorities and needs in cooperation with the local communities.<sup>86</sup>

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82 Pan-Canadian Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie, *Rapport final*, 14 December 2012, executive summary. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

83 Ibid., p. 1. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

84 Pan-Canadian Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie 2012, *Plan d'action intégré visant à consolider l'espace économique francophone au bénéfice des collectivités canadiennes*, version 2.0. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

85 Ibid.

86 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0925 (Jean-Pierre Gauthier).

### **3.4 Canadian Plan for Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities**

In 2014, RDÉE Canada and CEDEC invited economic development stakeholders from anglophone and francophone minority communities to participate in an online survey about the first *Canadian Plan for Economic Development* (CPED) of OLMC. At the time of writing the present report, 1,200 people had responded to the survey.<sup>87</sup> The survey results will be released in the spring of 2015 in a document entitled *Portrait of the Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities*.

The results of this inquiry were used to prepare the 2015–2020 CPED framework, which was publicly released on 4 February 2015. The framework identifies two main objectives: supporting the creation of successful, innovative companies owned primarily by people who speak the minority official language and ensuring the availability of skilled and productive workers who speak the minority official language. The framework also sets out seven priority orientations: increasing participation in community economic development activities and entrepreneurship promotion; establishing development plans, projects and partnerships in a range of promising sectors; supporting the creation, consolidation and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); promoting investments that take advantage of regional strengths; enhancing technical expertise and essential skills; fostering the development of management and innovation skills; and supporting the creation of wealth and high-quality jobs.<sup>88</sup>

The CPED is funded by the Enabling Fund for OLMC.<sup>89</sup> Industry Canada has also contributed to the CPED by funding research to study trends in business ownership in OLMC:

The research we have funded will be used in part to help RDÉE Canada and CEDEC raise awareness among business owners and communities to determine what actions need to be taken. The recommendations and conclusions that will emerge from the economic development plan will be shared with the regional development agencies and FedNor to ensure they are taken into account in relevant programming.<sup>90</sup>

RDÉE Canada and CEDEC state that the CPED will encourage economic development stakeholders (private sector, communities, economic development organizations and all levels of government) to engage in dialogue, define OLMC economic development priorities for the next five years and align these priorities with government support programs. They would like the CPED to contribute to a more coherent course of

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87 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0910 (Jean Léger, Executive Director, Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada).

88 RDÉE Canada and CEDEC, *Canadian Plan for Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities – Framework 2015-2020*, February 2015, pp. 8–9.

89 RDÉE Canada and CEDEC, *About the Canadian Plan for Economic Development of OLMC*.

90 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0845 (Krista Campbell, Director General, Strategic Policy Branch, Department of Industry).



action for economic development in OLMC and generate tangible impacts on entrepreneurship and employability in OLMC.<sup>91</sup>

CEDEC described the CPED as follows:

The first Canadian plan for economic development of official language minority communities will provide a national, evidence-based framework and supportive environment for small businesses to expand their networks and create partnerships within and among OLMC.

This is a game changer. As one of Canada's most underutilized economic opportunities, OLMC are connecting and mobilizing to contribute to Canada's economic prosperity in new and innovative ways. Working arm in arm with our partners at RDÉE Canada and its network across the country, we are promoting this innovative opportunity far and wide, coast to coast to coast, with the goal of engaging stakeholders from the private sector, communities, economic organizations, and all levels of government.<sup>92</sup>

That said, the FCFA questioned the large number of economic development plans:

We should take the time to talk to each other. Each community has an overall development plan. Collectively, we have a national strategic plan for communities. The Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie has just held an economic development forum where they came up with an integrated plan. Another strategic plan is being done at the moment. How many strategic plans are we going to have? Can we not all get together and discuss how we are going to go about doing things?<sup>93</sup>

The QCGN also would like to ensure that the CPED is aligned with the *Community Development Plan* for the English-speaking community of Quebec:

This is a major policy initiative in a critical area of our community's vitality, which could have far-reaching effects on a number of sectors. We must ensure that the link between the CPED and our community development plan is considered during the consultation's planning and implementation.<sup>94</sup>

As regards overlapping economic development plans, RDÉE Canada said that the *Community Strategic Plan* was from 2008, "and is therefore somewhat dated now."<sup>95</sup> However, the *Community Strategic Plan* does not expire until 2017.<sup>96</sup>

As for the integrated action plan developed in 2012, RDÉE Canada noted that it "put specific emphasis on public policies and included Quebec francophones. It focused to a great extent on the impact of public policies." Moreover, it "focused more on the

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91 RDÉE Canada and CEDEC, *About the Canadian Plan for Economic Development of OLMC*.

92 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0900 (John Buck, Executive Director, Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation).

93 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0920 (Marie-France Kenny).

94 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0850 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

95 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0920 (Jean Léger).

96 Leaders' Forum, *Community Strategic Plan*, June 2008, p. 1. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

government and institutional sector and the private sector to a lesser degree. It did not go far enough in determining the actual needs of businesses and business people.”<sup>97</sup>

RDÉE Canada maintained that the CPED complements other existing plans because it “focuses more on promising projects and projects that meet the needs of entrepreneurs and the private sector.”<sup>98</sup>

#### 4. Promoting Canadian linguistic duality as an economic asset

##### 4.1 How the francophone economic space contributes to Canada’s prosperity

Increasingly, economic development stakeholders and researchers are using tools to evaluate and quantify the contribution of the francophone economic space to Canada’s prosperity. One revelation that came out of the Pan-Canadian Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie was that “there really was a great deal of strength in the economy of francophone minority communities.”<sup>99</sup> In order to measure how much francophone groups contribute to the economy, a definition is needed for what constitutes a francophone business or a francophone entrepreneur. However, “it is actually not easy to define what a francophone economic space in a minority setting is, or what a francophone company in a minority setting is.”<sup>100</sup> Ethel Côté told the Committee that the Forum is drafting a definition of francophone economic space.<sup>101</sup>

The Forum also noted that “there are 430,000 francophone businesses in Canada, which represents 18% of all Canadian businesses, and that 70,000 of them are located outside of Quebec, and that they create employment everywhere, in both rural and urban areas.”<sup>102</sup>

The Conference Board of Canada determined that, in 2006, the francophone economic space accounted for \$252 billion, or 19.5%, of Canada’s GDP.<sup>103</sup> While this figure is slightly lower than the demographic position of the francophones (22%),<sup>104</sup> it is important to note that average wages in Quebec are below the national average.<sup>105</sup>

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97 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0920 (Jean Léger).

98 Ibid.

99 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1 April 2014, 0900 (Ethel Côté, President and Chief Executive Officer, L’Art du développement).

100 Ibid., 0950.

101 Pan-Canadian Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie 2012, *Plan d’action intégré visant à consolider l’espace économique francophone au bénéfice des collectivités canadiennes*, version 2.0. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

102 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1 April 2014, 0900 (Ethel Côté).

103 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0845 (Pedro Antunes).

104 Ibid.

105 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0845 (Pedro Antunes).

“However, region by region, the francophone contribution tends to be greater than the contribution of the rest of the population.”<sup>106</sup>

Research by Professor Marc Duhamel has shown that in 2007 there were:

...approximately 430,000 francophone businesses (this figure includes self-employed enterprises, SMEs, non-profit organizations and co-operatives), accounting for just over 18% of all Canadian businesses. Some 86% of these businesses were located in Quebec. [TRANSLATION]<sup>107</sup>

Therefore, over 60,000 francophone businesses were operating in francophone minority communities.

In addition, with help from Statistics Canada, the Conference Board of Canada was able to use the supply chain to determine that francophone economic activity has a significant economic impact outside the francophone community: “We found a multiplier that is quite significant. The economic contribution of the francophone community generates \$130 billion in additional activity outside that community.”<sup>108</sup>

These new data show that the Canadian Francophonie generates wealth and contributes to Canada’s prosperity.

## 4.2 Bilingualism as a business asset

Bilingualism is also an economic driver that gives Canadian communities and businesses opportunities to succeed and set themselves apart both domestically and internationally.

The City of Moncton shared its experience of how linguistic duality helps build sustainable economies. In fact, bilingualism was one of the key factors that enabled Moncton to move from a stagnant economy to a growing economy:

...When the CN shop closed, an aggressive economic development agenda was pursued under the direction of highly motivated and committed political and community leaders.... Someone involved at the time told me recently that bilingualism was the first marketable attribute identified, and upon which we could rebuild.

Over the past three decades, New Brunswick’s—and Moncton’s—economic successes can often be linked to an available skilled and bilingual workforce. Clearly, other factors also come into play, but what we’ve done rather well is create an opportunity by promoting the talents of our bilingual residents.

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106 Ibid.

107 Marc Duhamel, *Mesurer l’espace économique francophone des entreprises et des entrepreneurs canadiens : explorations, estimations et pistes de réflexion*. Summary, Canadian Institute for Research on Public Policy and Public Administration, University of Moncton, 1 November 2012, p.2. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY] The number of francophone companies is calculated using data from Statistics Canada surveys on the mother tongue of the majority owner of the company.

108 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0845 (Pedro Antunes).

...Moncton, as a community, has embraced bilingualism, and there is an overarching realization that learning two languages is an advantage. It expands horizons, opens doors, and encourages collaboration and cultural exchanges.<sup>109</sup>

A firm commitment is needed to take full advantage of bilingualism. It is also important to view the cost of building bilingual capacity as an investment:

Some claim that bilingualism or linguistic duality is very costly in this time of deficits and budget cuts. The real question we should be asking is: can we allow ourselves to abandon the very asset that sets us apart in an increasingly competitive world? The City of Moncton sees the so-called costs of bilingualism rather as investments.<sup>110</sup>

The representative from the World Trade Centre Winnipeg also believes that public spending on bilingualism and support for OLMC needs to be seen in a different light:

...Those are dollars invested in our country and in our economic sustainability, more than anything else. We have to change our way of thinking. We have to think in terms of investments, not in terms of costs. That is what successful businesses do.<sup>111</sup>

The Government of Canada plays an important role promoting linguistic duality and can support communities and businesses that want to increase their bilingual capacity. In his *Annual Report 2011–2012*, the Commissioner of Official Languages addressed what the Government of Canada could do to encourage private companies to use French as a language of business. The Commissioner said that the federal government supports Canadian businesses when they need to acquire key skills that would give them a competitive edge in the market and should not hesitate to support their efforts to leverage and promote linguistic duality.<sup>112</sup> As a result, the Commissioner recommended that “the Minister of Industry create a support mechanism to encourage Canadian businesses to develop their capacity to operate and provide services in both official languages.”<sup>113</sup>

## 5. International markets available to official language minority communities

The Agence nationale et internationale du Manitoba (ANIM) sees bilingualism as an asset that gives the local economy increased access to international markets:

We really observed the value added that bilingualism brings. We were able to attract investment to our area, that is to say “French dollars”, as we refer to them. The anglophone majority also benefited from this.

Our main mandate was to work with the markets of the francophonie, but that mandate was quickly broadened. We organized the first international economic forum in Manitoba. The forum was not only held in French and in English, but also in Spanish. In Winnipeg, we little francophones, the seven of us who were in Saint-Boniface, were the ones who

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109 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0900 (Jacques Dubé).

110 Ibid.

111 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 1020 (Mariette Mulaire, President and Chief Executive Officer, World Trade Centre Winnipeg).

112 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Annual Report 2011–2012*, Ottawa 2012, p. 32.

113 Ibid.

brought the first international economic forum there, and the second one, in 2012. It was a manifestation of the economic strength of bilingualism.

We went after other markets. We organized something that benefited everyone, francophones as well as anglophones. Everyone profited from the arrival in Winnipeg of people who came to do business in the language of their choice, whether French, English or Spanish. These people benefited from our bilingualism.<sup>114</sup>

This statement supports data showing that the majority community also benefits from the successes of OLMC. Furthermore, it shows that some OLMC are already in a position to participate in international markets. The Government of Canada has made tools available to OLMC to ensure that they all have the opportunity to take advantage of international markets. These tools are discussed in section 8.8.

## **6. Government of Canada support for employment assistance services and essential skills acquisition**

Employment is an essential condition to economic development. However, the Conference Board of Canada asserted that, between 2001 and 2006, employment growth was slower in francophone minority communities than in the rest of Canada: “Between the two censuses, we see a general growth of 9% in employment. But that percentage was only 6% for francophone and Acadian communities. In relative terms, therefore, that is a decline.”<sup>115</sup>

### **6.1 Language clauses in federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements**

A number of witnesses emphasized that the Government of Canada can contribute to employment assistance services by protecting the language rights of OLMC in federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements. These clauses are of particular importance since the federal government has given provincial and territorial governments jurisdiction over employment assistance services.

As was mentioned previously, the majority of federal-provincial/territorial labour market agreements contain language clauses. Nevertheless, the Commissioner of Official Languages was one of many witnesses who mentioned the importance of ensuring that the agreements include consultation and accountability mechanisms to protect the language rights of OLMC:

In transferring its programs and funds to the provinces and the territories, the federal government must ensure that the provincial and territorial government are aware of the needs of official language communities and the requirement to consult these communities to fully understand their unique challenges. In that sense, bilateral agreements must contain solid language clauses and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the needs of these communities are taken into account.<sup>116</sup>

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114 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0930 (Marianne Mulcaire).

115 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0850 (Pedro Antunes).

116 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0950 (Graham Fraser).

## 6.2 Internships and mentorship

### 6.2.1 Internships

Many witnesses emphasized that internship programs play an important role in enabling recent graduates to enter the labour market quickly. Youth Employment Services confirmed that it had had “great success” with internships thanks to the Youth Employment Strategy.<sup>117</sup> The Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada (RCCFC) also pointed out the importance of internships when recent graduates are looking for jobs:

Employers are able to judge the potential of future employees. When the time comes to hire recent graduates, those employers do not have to agonize over the decision. The company internships that the colleges organize greatly facilitate post-graduation hiring. The employers can see the students and that is why, at college level, the student placement rate is excellent.

...This hybrid training, whether by distance learning or “in person” in companies or other colleges, is a new, creative way to meet the needs of the labour market.<sup>118</sup>

The Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne (AUFC) reported that “the government, especially through the National Research Council of Canada, has done a lot to increase the number of industrial internships.”<sup>119</sup> Federal regional development agencies also recognize that internships make it easier to acquire essential skills. The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario made the following statement:

...We’ve looked at working with businesses because our mandate is to work with business and economic development. We focus on internships and providing that opportunity for young people to get a work assignment or a work term with a small or a big business. Reciprocally, the business gets the advantage of having a young person, so there’s that great exchange between the two. I think internship is a good example of what governments can do.<sup>120</sup>

On another note, OLMC believe that internships are also “a vital tool for the OLMC to retain young adults seeking career opportunities in Quebec.”<sup>121</sup> The AUFC also believes that internships make it easier for graduates to return to their communities:

...While students are outside their region, they have to be able to return regularly. There are a number of co-operative programs and internship opportunities. Universities and

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117 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0910 (Iris Unger).

118 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 1010 (Laurier Thibault, Director General, Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada).

119 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0900 (Jocelyne Lalonde, Director General, Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne).

120 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 1015 (Susan Anzolin, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services Branch, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario).

121 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0910 (Iris Unger).

colleges should ensure that these young people can return to their region for these internships and co-operative programs.<sup>122</sup>

As the AUFC said regarding the federal government's support for internships, "it must stay the course."<sup>123</sup>

Given the importance of internships, several witnesses expressed disappointment that the Small Business Internship Program (SBIP) was not renewed. Administered by Industry Canada, the SBIP allowed SMEs to obtain funding to hire post-secondary students in information and communication technology programs for 12-week full-time internships. According to the CDÉA, it was "a very good program for increasing the sales and competitiveness of SMEs, which is another of the government's priorities."<sup>124</sup>

That said, the Government of Canada continues to offer national wage subsidy programs such as Skills Link, which enables employers to hire young Canadians aged 15 to 30 for projects; the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit; Canada Summer Jobs, which provides funding to help employers hire students for the summer; Science Horizons, an Environment Canada youth internship program; Career Focus, which encourages employers to provide youth with useful work experience; the Science and Technology Internship Program; the Youth Employment Program, intended for post-secondary graduates; Connect Canada, an internship program that enables graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to work on research and development projects; and Young Canada Works, which allows non-profit organizations to create internships or summer jobs.

## **6.2.2 Mentorship**

The Committee noted that mentorship programs are also very beneficial for increasing employability among recent graduates. Some Manitoba communities have already pursued this model:

...The Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities encourage these pairings between people with business experience and young people in the community.... Increasingly, we are seeing this kind of formula in all the provinces and territories, but we need to provide more support and follow-up in this area.<sup>125</sup>

## **6.3 Literacy: an essential skill**

### **6.3.1 National literacy and basic skills levels**

According to Mr. Chiasson, "the challenge of the labour shortage in Canada is not only about a physical lack of employees. It also means that a certain part of the population

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122 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 1005 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

123 Ibid.

124 Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, Brief to the Committee, 27 March 2014, p. 9.

125 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0935 (Maurice Chiasson, Consultant, MC Consultants enr.).

cannot access the labour market, and thus meet the needs of employers, because of the significant lack of basic skills.”<sup>126</sup>

The essential skills situation in Canada is an ongoing problem. The Réseau pour le développement de l’alphabétisme et des compétences (RESDAC) described the situation as follows:

Canada’s performance is less than stellar, leaving the country in a difficult situation. Canada ranks at the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] average in literacy. However, it has a higher proportion of its population at the highest but also at the lowest levels in literacy. Canada ranks below the OECD average in numeracy, and a higher proportion of Canadians are at the lowest levels in this area. Canada is rated above the OECD average in problem solving in technology-rich environments. However, 17% of Canadians did not complete the evaluation because 11% of them did not have the basic computer skills and 6% of them opted out of the computer-based assessment.

Canada has a larger proportion of adults at the lowest proficiency levels in all three targeted domains, compared with the OECD average.<sup>127</sup>

### 6.3.2 Government of Canada literacy initiatives

The above-mentioned facts explain why the Government of Canada invests in literacy programs. ESDC representatives informed the Committee that the Department’s Office of Literacy and Essential Skills acts as a national centre of expertise. It collaborates with partners and stakeholders “to influence systemic change that will lead to better labour market participation and more productive workplaces.”<sup>128</sup>

ESDC also noted that it delivers approximately \$26 million per year in grants and contributions to promote literacy, of which part is targeted specifically at OLMC.<sup>129</sup> As was mentioned previously, the 2013–2018 Roadmap includes the Official Language Minority Communities Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative. A total of \$7.5 million was allocated over five years for this initiative.<sup>130</sup> In 2013–2014, the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills supported six organizations working with OLMC.<sup>131</sup>

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126 Ibid., 0905.

127 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 6 May 2014, 0845 (Michel Robillard, Vice-President, Réseau pour le développement de l’alphabétisme et des compétences).

128 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0900 (Stephen Johnson).

129 Ibid.

130 Government of Canada, *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013–2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*, Ottawa, 2013, p. 19.

131 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0900 (Stephen Johnson).



### 6.3.3 Literacy rates in francophone minority communities and the case of New Brunswick

Despite these investments, literacy rates in OLMC are cause for concern:

...Official language minority populations tend not to perform as well as official language majority populations—except for anglophones in Quebec—but differences vary across provinces.<sup>132</sup>

One of the provinces most affected by low literacy rates is New Brunswick. According to representatives of the CCNB, the provincial economy is in decline and the exodus of recent graduates and workers has created a trend in education: “we have low literacy and graduation levels, as well as a high number of individuals who are unemployed and who do not have a diploma or a certificate.”<sup>133</sup>

Across the province, 60% of New Brunswickers aged 16 and over “do not have the literacy skills they need to function in everyday life.”<sup>134</sup> But the province’s francophones and Acadians are even worse off: there are “66% who have difficulty understanding basic written material compared to 50% of anglophones.”<sup>135</sup>

These results are linked to another problem New Brunswick faces: the under-education of its population. Statistics from 2006 show that education levels are lower in the northern parts of the province and that the northeastern part is particularly affected. Approximately 28,000 workers who are part of the labour force in the north, accounting for nearly one out of every four workers (23.3%), do not have a certificate or diploma, compared with 16.3% in southern New Brunswick and 15.2% in Canada as a whole.<sup>136</sup> Various socio-economic factors contribute to this phenomenon:

The low level of schooling in northern New Brunswick is attributable at least in part to the relative weight of traditional jobs, which generally require very little schooling, as well as to population aging (which is more pronounced than elsewhere). Another contributing factor is the exodus of young adults from the region, since this is the age group most likely to accede to higher levels of education.<sup>137</sup>

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132 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 6 May 2014, 0845 (Michel Robillard).

133 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0845 (Armand Caron).

134 Ibid., 0905 (Patrick Colford).

135 Ibid.

136 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, Fact sheets based on the following document: Maurice Beaudin *et coll.*, *Analyse des besoins et des tendances du marché de l'emploi et de la formation de la main-d'œuvre dans le nord du Nouveau-Brunswick*, 2012, p. 9. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

137 Ibid.

### 6.3.4 Looking forward

According to the RESDAC, in order to reverse these trends, skills development organizations must have access to adequate and sustained funding.<sup>138</sup>

The RESDAC further believes that people with the lowest skill levels also have the most limited access to training. Therefore, it is important to have targeted programs to enable these people to acquire basic skills and improve their socio-economic status.<sup>139</sup> The CCNB also reported a need for continuing education and argued that it is important to actively promote continuing education to the target audience: undereducated, unemployed or underemployed workers.<sup>140</sup>

Over the last two years, we have repeatedly asked the government of New Brunswick for funding that would allow us to reach people where they live, because we know they will not necessarily come knocking at our door. Our institution would appreciate help in guiding them. In some cases, they are undereducated and require guidance to help them identify which career to pursue or how to change careers. You know as well as I do that the economic foundations of northern New Brunswick have profoundly changed in recent years. The result is that many people need to change careers. This is where the provincial and federal governments could help institutions like ours.<sup>141</sup>

According to the CCNB, it would be possible to reach seasonal workers during the off-season: “People would have a lot of time ... to continue their training and fix the problems you mentioned.”<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain specific statistics relating to this situation.

According to the RESDAC, there are new needs in the areas of training, employment and skills development. Therefore, it is necessary to develop innovative policies that meet these new needs. This means designing flexible programs that are adapted to the situation of OLMC.<sup>143</sup> The Committee noted that the private sector has a key role to play in developing the technical skills needed to ensure full employment in a given region. The Canada Job Grant is a national program that helps employers train current and future employees.

### 6.4 Access to French second-language programs in Quebec

For OLMC, employability depends on knowledge of the other official language, especially in Quebec. The QCGN explained that, despite the high level of bilingualism among anglophones in Quebec, especially among young people, “there are more than 360,000 members of our community without a knowledge of French and 20,000 [English-speaking youth] between the ages of 18 and 24 without the ability to work in French in

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138 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 6 May 2014, 0850 (Michel Robillard).

139 Ibid.

140 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0850 (Armand Caron).

141 Ibid., 0915.

142 Ibid., 1005.

143 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 6 May 2014, 0845 (Michel Robillard).

Quebec. That's a pretty big number even at 20,000."<sup>144</sup> Access to French second-language programs is a problem in non-urban areas. The Committee noted the testimony of the QCGN when it appeared before the Committee for its study on French second-language programs in Canada: "Bilingualism for English-speaking Quebec is a matter of getting a job. It is an economic necessity."<sup>145</sup>

## **7. Funding and publishing research on the economic development of official language minority communities**

To be effective, the Government of Canada's programs and policies must be based on sound research. However, both RDÉE Canada and CEDEC pointed out that there is little professional research on the economic development of OLMC. CEDEC stated that this is an area in which the Government of Canada can contribute to the economic development of OLMC:

...There's a lack of focused and timely information about the economic situation of OLMC and their relation and impact on Canada's economy. This inhibits the ability of both government and the community to institute policies and programs from a sound position of knowledge. The Government of Canada should increase investments in research related to the economic situation and potential of official language minority communities.<sup>146</sup>

The FCFA argued that existing studies do not contain linguistic data that would allow communities and decision-makers to understand the economic development issues and needs specific to OLMC.<sup>147</sup>

As for research topics, the RESDAC would like to see improvements in "our understanding of the labour market and the economy within OLMC, as well as issues, challenges and best practices related to skills development by actively supporting research and innovative projects."<sup>148</sup>

Ethel Côté noted that the Forum pancanadien sur le développement économique en francophonie canadienne is interested in creating a portal (a virtual platform) that would make it easier to share research, best practices and the various tools available to entrepreneurs and community economic development organizations.<sup>149</sup>

The Commissioner of Official Languages echoed the observations made by other witnesses, stating that the economic development of OLMC is a "complex and diverse topic, yet one that's been studied very little. As the community representatives ... have

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144 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0845 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

145 LANG, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 April 2013, 1530 (James Shea, Member, Board of Directors, Quebec Community Groups Network).

146 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0905 (John Buck).

147 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0940 (Suzanne Bossé, Executive Director, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada).

148 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 6 May 2014, 0850 (Michel Robillard).

149 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1 April 2014, 1000 (Ethel Côté).

mentioned, the lack of research and data is a serious hindrance to understanding the issue and developing effective solutions.”<sup>150</sup>

That said, Industry Canada informed the Committee that it is already investing in research:

...Our role is foundational with respect to some of the research that is done for supporting a better understanding of what the conditions are for official language minority communities, how various tools are effective in building economic development plans, and best practices with respect to what communities, businesses, or individuals could be doing to support official language minority community economic development.<sup>151</sup>

Departmental officials also pointed out that many studies were carried out over the five years of the 2008–2013 Roadmap and that those that were completed were made public.<sup>152</sup>

## **8. Drivers of economic development in official language minority communities**

When representatives of OLMC appeared before the Committee, they identified both the key sectors that contribute to their economic development and the support they would need to develop these sectors. The Committee selected the following sectors to study in greater detail: cooperatives, immigration, post-secondary institutions, tourism, arts and culture, entrepreneurship, local leadership, international trade and natural resource development.

### **8.1 Cooperatives**

Representatives from Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada (CMC) shared with the Committee that cooperatives are important players in maintaining, strengthening and developing francophone and Acadian communities.<sup>153</sup>

The FCFA said that “the cooperative movement has played a very important role in many development sectors.”<sup>154</sup> The Committee recognizes that the cooperative movement plays a major economic role in the development of OLMC.

### **8.2 Immigration**

For several years, OLMC have been looking to immigration as a way to ensure their vitality. According to CDÉA, “Canada and the francophone minority communities need to take in thousands of skilled immigrants.”<sup>155</sup> In fact, economic immigration is one of

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150 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0950 (Graham Fraser).

151 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0925 (Krista Campbell).

152 Ibid.

153 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 March 2014, 0850 (Shawn Murphy, Manager, Government Relations, Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada).

154 Ibid., 0855 (Marie-France Kenny).

155 Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, Brief to the Committee, 27 March 2014, p. 9.

the four key issues identified by RDÉE Canada: “The goal here is to educate employers about hiring immigrants and, of course, to invite immigrants to settle in our communities.”<sup>156</sup>

To fully benefit from immigration, francophone minority communities have taken action: “For close to 15 years, the federation has provided the national coordination of the French-language immigration dossier within francophone and Acadian communities. In light of that, the FCFA is a choice interlocutor for Citizenship and Immigration Canada.”<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, it has developed 13 francophone immigration networks (FINs) in nine provinces and two territories:

Insofar as support for economic integration is concerned, the networks and their members have created mentorship services, immigrant-employer twinings, occupational upgrading, and in Ontario, among other things, language classes based on the needs of the labour market.

Since 2013, the FINs and their partners have also coordinated three liaison tours throughout the country to inform employers about the possibility of recruiting French-language workers abroad. A fourth tour is planned for next month.<sup>158</sup>

There are many benefits for OLMC that welcome economic immigrants:

These persons contribute to the economic development of our communities by meeting the crying needs our institutions have for labour. I am thinking of our schools that need teachers, day cares that need early childhood educators, or health care services that need medical professionals.<sup>159</sup>

However, it seems as though francophone minority communities are having trouble attracting their fair share of immigrants:

If you only look at the figures for 2012, and those of the so-called “economic” immigrant class, you will see that French-language newcomers only represent 1.3% of all the economic immigrants who settled outside of Quebec. That is a very far cry from meeting the objectives set for themselves by the government and communities.<sup>160</sup>

The Commissioner of Official Languages maintained that, in the context of a new immigration system that focuses on the economy and the role of employers, “French-speaking minority communities should be promoted as privileged partners and a significant asset in attracting and retaining newcomers.”<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, the Commissioner asserted that OLMC “are well placed to support employers, immigrants, and their families. It is therefore essential that they have the tools required to build bridges

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156 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0905 (Jean Léger).

157 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0925 (Suzanne Bossé).

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid.

161 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 May 2014, 0955 (Graham Fraser).

with anglophone and francophone employers and with the provinces in order to make the most of the new immigration system.”<sup>162</sup>

According to the FCFA, francophone minority communities lack the resources to meet their immigration targets:

However, in order to truly meet the challenge of francophone immigration, be it economic or not, we have to give ourselves the means to reach the objectives and strengthen the capability of the stakeholders who work on the ground.

For instance, although we may be pleased about the number and popularity of the francophone settlement services that have been created over the past ten years, the fact remains that these services do not exist everywhere they are needed.<sup>163</sup>

The RCCFC said it had taken steps to enable institutions to recognize immigrants’ knowledge and skills so that they can respond more quickly to labour shortages and immigrants are more employable.<sup>164</sup>

However, it would appear that immigrants have trouble obtaining language skills assessments in some regions: “Recently, a French-language newspaper in Newfoundland and Labrador reported that francophone immigrants in the province had to go all the way to Halifax to undergo French-language testing. I am only talking here of language skills assessment.”<sup>165</sup>

Mr. Dubé, Moncton’s city manager, emphasized that recruitment and reception services for francophone immigrants are well funded:

The federal government gave us money, along with the province, to put on an immigration summit and come up with an immigration strategy for greater Moncton. That strategy is going to be espoused by the greater Moncton municipalities. In fact, the City of Moncton has two full-time dedicated staffers who are focused solely on attracting immigrant. ...Their job is to make sure that immigrants coming to Moncton, who are coming through various consulates or through the programs of the Province of New Brunswick, are welcomed.

We have organizations like MAGMA, which is a multicultural organization, and CAFi, which is a francophone version of that. Those agencies are well funded by the federal government. We haven’t seen any challenges in that area.<sup>166</sup>

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162 Ibid.

163 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0925 (Suzanne Bossé).

164 Ibid., 1020 (Laurier Thibault).

165 Ibid., 0930 (Suzanne Bossé).

166 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0955 (Jacques Dubé).

### 8.3 Post-secondary institutions

Education is foundational to encouraging economic development and strengthening vitality in OLMC. Investments in minority language education by the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories have resulted in higher levels of education and improved socio-economic status for francophones in minority communities.

According to Canadian Heritage, post-secondary institutions in minority communities are “drivers of economic development in their communities.”<sup>167</sup> That is one of the reasons Canadian Heritage has invested \$122 million in post-secondary institutions through the 2009–2013 bilateral agreements.<sup>168</sup>

According to the AUFC, “post-secondary institutions are job creators as well as purchasers of goods and services.”<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, “as hubs of research and innovation, our members contribute to the gains in productivity achieved in the economies of their communities, their regions, their provinces and the country as a whole.”<sup>170</sup> The AUFC also pointed out that post-secondary institutions take on a leadership role in the community: “our institutions are partners and catalysts, rather than ivory towers.”<sup>171</sup>

Colleges and CÉGEPs, like universities, contribute to the development of OLMC. The RCCFC said its institutions are “essential partners of governments in the implementation of their employment, employability and labour force training strategies.”<sup>172</sup> They offer skills-based training programs that correspond to labour market needs. The RCCFC stated that its institutions work closely with industry representatives and businesses to offer programs of study that meet their labour force needs. For example, some companies work directly with the institutions to help fund the purchase of specialized equipment.<sup>173</sup>

The presence of a post-secondary institution offering a wide variety of programs in the minority language in a minority community increases the retention rate for that community’s recent graduates: “We must never forget that young people who have been trained in their environment, in their field of competence and in their native language, will tend to remain there and build their future in their community.”<sup>174</sup>

Post-secondary institutions in minority communities also play a role in recruiting potential immigrants through international student programs. In fact, over the last several years, francophone post-secondary institutions in Canada have welcomed more and more

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167 Canadian Heritage, *Presentation to the Committee*, 10 April 2014, p. 5.

168 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0850 (Jean-Pierre).

169 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0855 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

172 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0915 (Laurier Thibault).

173 Ibid., 1010.

174 Ibid., 0915.

international students and offered them various training and employability programs. The AUFC explained the potential of international students for francophone immigration as follows:

International students are one of the most important groups that will ensure that we have good francophone immigration. These people have been educated here. They have a good knowledge of the environment and they have often worked while studying. An international student is permitted to work 20 hours a week in Canada while studying. That helps them to integrate.<sup>175</sup>

As part of Canada's International Education Strategy, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) promotes Canadian post-secondary institutions at the international level as destinations of choice for study, including institutions in OLMC:

It is in fact an asset for Canada to offer postsecondary students the opportunity to pursue their education at Bishop's University, for example, or on the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean, places where they can improve their comprehension of one language in class and of the other in the community. Incidentally, the Campus Saint-Jean was targeted last November by a cooperation mission that the department organized to promote the development of inter-institutional agreements with representatives of postsecondary education institutions in the Americas.<sup>176</sup>

The Committee noted that the AUFC and the RCCFC work in partnership with DFATD.<sup>177</sup>

The AUFC asserted that the institutions in its network are ready to do more to contribute to the economic development of their communities. However, they need more funding to provide a wider range of services and training.<sup>178</sup> The AUFC also pointed out that "the implementation of a targeted bursary program might attract more international students to francophone minority communities."<sup>179</sup>

## 8.4 Tourism

Tourism is an important economic driver in OLMC, and through their cultural assets these communities contribute to developing the Canadian tourism industry as a whole.<sup>180</sup>

The tourism area represents excellent potential for the Canadian Francophonie. We need to enhance the francophone tourism product and to extend its outreach to the national and international levels. This becomes a kind of value-added for our country.<sup>181</sup>

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175 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 1020 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

176 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0910 (Randle Wilson, Director General, Trade Portfolio Strategy and Coordination, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

177 Ibid.

178 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0905 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

179 Ibid.

180 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0940 (Maurice Chiasson).

181 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0905 (Jean Léger).



This fact was recognized by the Government of Canada. Industry Canada stated that OLMC are a “tremendous asset ... in the federal tourism strategy, coordinated by Industry Canada.”<sup>182</sup> In partnership with OLMC, the Government of Canada has taken steps to encourage the development of the tourism industry in OLMC. The results are a national tourism strategy for OLMC and a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Tourism Commission:

With the backing of official language minority communities and of the Transat Chair of Tourism at the University of Quebec in Montreal, we have undertaken a range of research to gain a better understanding of tourism development opportunities in official language minority communities. This is one of the things that has enabled RDÉE Canada to develop a national tourism strategy for official language minority communities, enshrined in a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Tourism Commission.

The objective of this strategy is to integrate certain existing tourist attractions in francophone communities into the “signature Canadian experiences”. CEDEC is doing the same thing, with financial support from Industry Canada.<sup>183</sup>

The federal regional development agencies that appeared before the Committee also gave examples of tourism projects they undertake with OLMC.<sup>184</sup> For example, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) mentioned a project to develop a smartphone application to promote French-language tourism in Western Canada. This project was carried out in partnership with four western francophone economic development organizations. According to the WD representatives, the project has been a success: “as of March 2014, the application has been downloaded almost 6,000 times and used over 25,000 times by users from North America, Europe and other countries.”<sup>185</sup>

## 8.5 Arts and culture

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of the arts and culture sector, which, according to Canadian Heritage, “represents \$50 billion in Gross Domestic Product.”<sup>186</sup> Canadian Heritage is also aware of the importance of culture and the arts in the economic development of OLMC. The Department confirmed that many of its cultural programs “have funding or measures directly targeting OLMC.”<sup>187</sup> According to the English-Language Arts Network (ELAN), Canadian Heritage recently reviewed the support offered to OLMC and concluded that the program should give priority to three areas that

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182 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0850 (Krista Campbell).

183 Ibid.

184 The agencies that appeared were the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Canada Economic Development and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

185 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0905 (France Guimond, Director General, Operations-Manitoba, Western Economic Diversification Canada).

186 Canadian Heritage, *Presentation to the Committee*, 10 April 2014, p. 5.

187 Ibid.

are key to the vitality of these communities: “actions aimed at youth, [as well as] arts, culture and heritage, and media and communications.”<sup>188</sup>

Anglophone communities in Quebec have a vibrant arts and culture scene. In fact, “the highest concentration of artists in Canada is found among English-speaking artists in Quebec, at 0.99%, roughly 50% higher than the national average. This statistic reflects a remarkable transformation from a community of artists that was invisible and almost dead 30 years ago.”<sup>189</sup> For these reasons, the QCGN identified arts and culture as being important factors to community development.<sup>190</sup>

Given the importance of the arts and culture sector as an economic driver and as an employer, ELAN undertakes projects designed to improve economic conditions for artists.<sup>191</sup> In fact, ELAN offers training for entrepreneurship in the arts. Some workshops are offered in partnership with Employment Services for Youth.<sup>192</sup> In addition, ELAN offers French language-training to its members because it recognizes that language skills are a major factor in the career success and quality of life of English-speaking artists in Quebec.<sup>193</sup>

## 8.6. Entrepreneurship

According to Mr. Chiasson, entrepreneurial culture is in decline across Canada and in OLMC:

I came across a Business Development Bank of Canada report, released in 2012, that revealed a gradual decline in entrepreneurial performance in Canada. In short, the entrepreneurship rate has been stagnating or in decline in our country since 2005. Minority francophone communities are not immune to that trend. The stagnation, and particularly the fact that Canadians are less interested in going into business, seems to me to be somewhat of a concern.<sup>194</sup>

Furthermore, “boomer entrepreneurs are gradually retiring, leaving businesses in their wake that are closing their doors for lack of someone to take them over. The situation is making certain communities even more fragile.”<sup>195</sup> RDÉE Canada also mentioned the issue of entrepreneurial succession in its brief to the Committee:

Changes in business ownership in the OLMC is becoming a critical issue for the sustainability of businesses, communities and the official minority languages outside

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188 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 15 May 2014, 0855 (Guy Rodgers, Executive Director, English-Language Arts Network Quebec).

189 Ibid., 0850 (Peter MacGibbon, President, English-Language Arts Network Quebec).

190 Ibid., 0855 (Guy Rodgers).

191 Ibid., 0850 (Peter MacGibbon).

192 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0935 (Sylvia Martin-Laforge).

193 English-Language Arts Network, “Members”.

194 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0905 (Maurice Chiasson).

195 Ibid.

Quebec.... While succession is a solution for many business owners, it appears that most have still not developed a succession plan.<sup>196</sup>

For these reasons, Mr. Chiasson believes it is essential “that additional efforts be deployed over the coming years to give young people, and those less young, a taste for going into business.”<sup>197</sup> He added that “the self-employment enterprise model must be reinforced and supported.”<sup>198</sup>

The Committee noted that the federal regional development agencies have developed programs to promote and support entrepreneurship. For example:

In 2009, WD invested \$840,000 in the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, or CDEM, for a project that supported three priority areas for official language minority communities in Manitoba: youth retention, entrepreneurship for new Canadians, and community economic development.<sup>199</sup>

Similarly, consultations carried out by Economic Development Canada led to “the implementation of the small business support network in seven administrative regions of Quebec. Among other things, this initiative made it possible to organize 92 events and four webinars relating to regional entrepreneurship, reaching more than 1200 participants.”<sup>200</sup>

Businesses do not succeed simply because they have access to start-up funding. Entrepreneurs need to know their market and be able to assess whether there is a genuine need for the product or service they want to offer.<sup>201</sup>

Moreover, entrepreneurs have to take the time to establish a solid foundation, especially in their community: “You must also be able to invest time and energy, and to be patient. You cannot expect a business to get off the ground immediately just because you have worked on a good idea, grasped a good business opportunity, and written a business plan. It takes time.”<sup>202</sup>

Providing services in both official languages can also help businesses succeed. The President of the Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce explained that there are “business owners who do not have francophone members of our community coming into their businesses simply because they feel they cannot get service in their language. They will choose other businesses where they feel they can.”<sup>203</sup> He continued,

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196 Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité Canada (RDÉE Canada), Brief to the Committee.

197 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0905 (Maurice Chiasson).

198 Ibid.

199 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 0900 (France Guimond).

200 Ibid., 0910 (Serge Tanguay).

201 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1 April 2014, 0925 (Ethel Côté).

202 Ibid.

203 Ibid., 0925 (Darcy Griffith, President, Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce).

“People like to do business in the language of their choice. It's something that business owners here recognize....”<sup>204</sup>

### **8.7. Local leadership**

Stimulating the local economy takes more than good planning. It takes municipal elected officials who have the political will, community leaders who can take action and residents who want to be fully involved in the economic development of their community.

In addition, elected officials and community leaders must be able to diversify their funding sources by turning to the private sector. The City of Moncton was able to obtain the private sector's support thanks to its bilingualism policy:

The private sector appreciates our collaborative approach to bilingualism, for example when creating awareness with investors on the linguistic composition of our city and our region. The city's philosophy is to lead by example, which means that we encourage and value bilingualism, and by extension, the use of French in cultural and business environments.<sup>205</sup>

As in Moncton, the networks established in OLMC over the past 15 years must now produce results. Through the Enabling Fund for OLMC, the Government of Canada is supporting concrete action and looking to fund projects designed to achieve specific results:

The idea of increasing private sector participation and drawing more resources from the private sector was announced in the roadmap. That idea has in fact been around for a long time. The support fund [Enabling Fund for OLMC] was established 15 years ago, in 1999. The aim was to create capacity and to evolve. That evolution began under the last roadmap. Now there has to be a greater focus on actual results and less on core funding, although that is all related. The goal is not to have a network for the sake of having a network; the goal is to have a network in order to achieve actual results. It is in that sense that we want to see actual results in the communities.<sup>206</sup>

### **8.8. International trade**

After consulting with OLMC, the DFATD determined that promoting international trade was a priority, as was the economic Francophonie, an emerging dimension of the international Francophonie.<sup>207</sup> These were also the priorities Canada advanced at the 15<sup>th</sup> Sommet de la Francophonie in Dakar in November 2014.

Therefore, DFATD has been actively promoting the services offered by its Canadian Trade Commissioner Service to SMEs in OLMC:

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204 Ibid.

205 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0900 (Jacques Dubé).

206 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 1020 (Stephen Johnson).

207 Ibid., 0905 (Randle Wilson).

We travel across the country every year looking for new resource people and new clients, and although we normally reach out along sectoral lines, we make a special effort with OLMC businesses in all provinces and territories.<sup>208</sup>

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service is able to help OLMC businesses to “penetrate global markets or grow and diversify their exports.”<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, DFATD representatives stated that “the national awareness activities plan for the department’s executives provides for a permanent component through which the department will seek opportunities for engagement with OLMC”<sup>210</sup> and that the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service “is specifically responsible for targeting OLMC.”<sup>211</sup>

DFATD believes that having OLMC businesses participate fully in international Francophonie markets is one way OLMC can engage in sustainable economic development:

The draft economic strategy on which the members of the Francophonie are currently working will be adopted by the heads of state and government at that organization’s summit in Dakar, Senegal, in November. This is also one of the current priorities of the Minister for La Francophonie, the Honourable Christian Paradis. For example, the new strategy will help consolidate implementation of the values of the Francophonie and have a direct impact on new market development, job creation and economic cooperation among the states and communities in the francophone space. One of our key partners on this project is the Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité du Canada, RDÉE.<sup>212</sup>

Similarly, new economic agreements, such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union, provide unprecedented access to international markets. DFATD representatives confirmed that they are “very excited about the possibilities that the Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement ... will bring. You have in the EU the biggest francophone market in the world and the second biggest anglophone market in the world. So there’s something for everyone.”<sup>213</sup>

OLMC see the benefits of these economic agreements. Mr. Dubé noted that Moncton “is well positioned, thanks to our location and bilingual nature, to support centralized government back-office tasks in administration, for example and to become a key player with the launch of the CETA. Also, of course, we are fortunate to be home to a thriving sub-industry relating to translation services as well.”<sup>214</sup>

Ms. Mariette Mulaire of the World Trade Centre Winnipeg gave similar testimony:

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208 Ibid.

209 Ibid.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Ibid., 0910.

213 Ibid., 0955.

214 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0900 (Jacques Dubé).

...The federal government is currently concluding several trade agreements. We hear about them everywhere. For instance, it has just concluded one with South Korea. An agreement is also in the works with the European Union. It has been signed, in principle. This gives us an advantage at the international level. It is an element that differentiates us from other markets. We feel it and see it.<sup>215</sup>

DFATD is currently designing an awareness program to explain the potential benefits of CETA to entrepreneurs, including those in OLMC:

So at this stage we're sending negotiators across the country to anybody who requests information, and we're pushing to bring them news of the potential. For example, one went to Miramichi in January, at the invitation of the local chamber of commerce, to talk to them exactly about this issue, which is what are the new markets. And I have to say that our companies are small francophone ones across Canada or anglophone companies in Quebec.<sup>216</sup>

The federal regional development agencies are also working with entrepreneurs from OLMC to help them to expand internationally. WD confirmed that francophone companies in Western Canada already have the capacity to benefit from CETA:

A good example is in Manitoba. We have the only world trade centre that's a bilingual world trade centre. They already have established relationships with many countries that do business with the French communities. They deliver our new CBN [Canada Business Network] programming in the region.<sup>217</sup>

Similarly, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency pointed out that "in the Northwest Territories in particular the francophone association began this outreach to Europe."<sup>218</sup> This increased access is largely due to tourism, which "becomes a vehicle for some small export businesses like cottage industries and arts and crafts."<sup>219</sup>

Like DFATD, the regional economic development agencies that appeared before the Committee already have initiatives in place to tell OLMC about the potential economic benefits of trade agreements. For example, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) offers "workshops and information sessions with ACOA support to reach out to entrepreneurs to get them to start thinking about how they could be exporting to the European market in light of the agreement in principle."<sup>220</sup> Furthermore, ACOA has partnered with the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon to establish a joint economic observatory with a Canadian component and a European component. The economic data and information collected by the partners are shared through a network of chambers of commerce in the Atlantic provinces, in France and in the European Union. According to the ACOA representatives, it is "a very unique arrangement where we're combining

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215 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 May 2014, 0935 (Marianne Mulcaire).

216 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 10 April 2014, 0955 (Randle Wilson).

217 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 3 April 2014, 1000 (France Guimond).

218 *Ibid.*, 1000 (Kimberly Fairman, Senior Advisor to the President, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency).

219 *Ibid.*

220 *Ibid.*, 0955 (Wade Aucoin, Director General, Policy, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency).

Canadian and European information and making it available to business people in Atlantic Canada and the European Union to see what kinds of opportunities there are out there. We're seeing quite a bit of interest in that respect."<sup>221</sup>

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario also shares information with OLMC through symposiums: "We are working with our partners in terms of looking at other markets across the world, and RDÉE—le Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité—has really done some good work in terms of providing some symposiums for francophone business to see how they can access trade across the world."<sup>222</sup> In addition, Economic Development Canada supports regional trade promotion organizations all across Quebec that serve new SMEs interested in reaching international markets.<sup>223</sup>

In Northern Ontario, the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario has made business development a priority:

Our focus is on innovation, on assisting these small businesses to develop what they need from a marketing perspective or from a manufacturing perspective in order to be able to better access the markets and to export more. Knowing that a lot of them are working in the fields of mining and forestry, there is certainly opportunity to expand on that front.<sup>224</sup>

Post-secondary institutions also have a role to play in encouraging communities and businesses to take advantage of new trade agreements. The AUFC said that members of its network stay up to date on new agreements and are able to inform students of the various options available to them. International Baccalaureate programs are an important starting point to give youth a greater understanding of the world. These programs provide opportunities for students to participate in internships abroad, which allows them to "learn more about other countries and other workplaces."<sup>225</sup>

Lastly, the Committee noted that there is a link between international student recruitment, immigrants and international trade. Ethel Côté argued that economic immigrants help Canadian entrepreneurs reach world markets:

...We are exploring new markets through the diaspora. Many immigrants who settle in Canada still have business ties in their native countries. They are frequently interested in running a business here, in Canada, while supporting the economy back in their home country. It is often people like those who serve as links.<sup>226</sup>

Maurice Chiasson shares this point of view:

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221 Ibid.

222 Ibid., 1000 (Susan Anzolin).

223 Ibid., 1000 (Serge Tanguay).

224 Ibid., 1005 (Lucie Perreault, Director, Programs and Corporate Services, Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario).

225 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 1010 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

226 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1 April 2014, 1015 (Ethel Côté).

From an economic perspective, these other French speakers are essential in terms of entrepreneurial new blood and the labour force. They can also build bridges between various markets in Canada and abroad. Because of their origins, we believe that these other French speakers can create links among multiple markets, without being limited only to those of our national francophonie and the international one.<sup>227</sup>

Therefore, Mr. Chiasson believes that the Canadian Francophonie and government action in minority communities must promote the integration of francophones and francophiles from different backgrounds.<sup>228</sup>

## 8.9 Natural resources

Natural resources remain an important economic engine in a number of regions, including Alberta:

What industries do these francophone workers wind up in? Many obviously find jobs in the energy industry and in related services. The hotel and construction industries also attract a lot of workers. In short, francophone workers essentially occupy jobs in the energy, construction and tourism sectors.<sup>229</sup>

The same is true of Saskatchewan:

In the case of Saskatchewan ... there is a lot of work in construction. The mining sector is also very big in the province. A lot of mining development projects are under way or should start up in the next few years, in the potash sector, for example.

...The population of Canada is much more mobile today than it has ever been, and that includes youth and labour in general. Workers today have an opportunity to settle in other parts of Canada with their families, to discover them and to work there.

...I believe the main objective is above all to create wealth in Canada and to provide a higher standard of living for everyone. In this way, we are creating quite a strong pan-Canadian economy. The important thing is to understand that workers go wherever jobs are available.<sup>230</sup>

However, some regions that are having trouble rekindling their economies are hesitating to invest in industries that are making others wealthy.

Moreover, businesses that depend on natural resources “are not just in competition with each other, but with businesses from around the world. They need to innovate more and acquire more skills, among other things.”<sup>231</sup>

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227 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0905 (Maurice Chiasson).

228 Ibid.

229 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 1030 (Marc S. Tremblay).

230 Ibid., 1030 (Robert Therrien).

231 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 13 May 2014, 0920 (Armand Caron).



It is also vital for post-secondary institutions, particularly colleges, to tailor their training programs to labour market needs so that a skilled local workforce of sufficient size can be trained. The AUFC shares this view:

In most of the universities and colleges in Canada's francophonie and in our minority communities, college training is quite centred on the needs of employers. At the college level, it is much easier to determine whether there needs to be cuts in certain programs as a result of decreased demand for labour based on a number of factors.<sup>232</sup>

Technical training must also be available in the minority language. In Quebec, anglophones are underrepresented in some industries, "in particular the primary industries [and] natural resource extraction..."<sup>233</sup> According to the QCGN, the reason for this underrepresentation is that "in the sort of manufacturing, medium-sized businesses that you're likely to find in the regions, anglophones aren't trained for those jobs."<sup>234</sup> This lack of training is partly due to the fact that "the English school system, the minority school system, doesn't get the resources that the majority school system gets to get that type of trades training."<sup>235</sup>

## 9. Community economic development and employment assistance organizations

Since the 1990s, the Government of Canada has funded OLMC through partnerships that it establishes with organizations that represent the communities. These partnerships encourage a sense of local ownership of community development.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, these partnerships position the networks of associations and institutions in OLMC as the service providers of choice.

Youth Employment Services told the Committee that many community organizations that offer these services fail to meet their objectives due to inadequate funding. This situation forces minority groups to redirect their clients to seek services offered in the language of the majority. The CCS experiences the same problem: "we can support future entrepreneurs to a certain degree, but we have to direct them to an anglophone provider if they need financing."<sup>237</sup>

It appears as though rural communities are affected the most. The CDÉA said it uses information technologies to reach certain isolated communities, but it said "that does not provide quite the same level of service."<sup>238</sup> However, in general, needs are greater in rural areas. This is the case in New Brunswick and also in Manitoba:

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232 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 8 April 2014, 0915 (Jocelyne Lalonde).

233 Ibid., 0850 (Jean-Pierre Corbeil).

234 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 25 February 2014, 0905 (Stephen Thompson).

235 Ibid.

236 Éric Forgues and Michel Douvet, *Financer la francophonie canadienne: faire société ou créer un marché de services?* Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, May 2014, p. 13. [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY]

237 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 27 March 2014, 0855 (Robert Therrien).

238 Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, Brief to the Committee, 27 March 2014, p. 8.

We are facing more or less the same phenomenon as the world is facing: massive urbanization that has a lot of impact in the periurban zones. That clearly leaves the rural world with very few avenues for development, at least those in its own control.<sup>239</sup>

## 10. Conclusion

The Committee notes that the socio-economic status of francophones living in Canada's minority linguistic communities has evolved over the last 50 years, to the point that, in general, socio-economic inequalities between anglophones and francophones in the country, with few exceptions, no longer exist.

Historically, francophones living in a minority situation were at a disadvantage with respect to educational attainment, income, occupation scales and ownership of industries compared to the majority.

This gap no longer exists. For example, anglophones and francophones in Atlantic Canada earn a comparable salary, and the average salary of young francophones is higher than that of their English-speaking counterparts. Access to education in the minority language is one factor that explains this phenomenon. Canadians aged between 25 and 44 are the demographic group with the highest percentage of post-secondary degrees in Canada.

OLMC in Western Canada benefit from strong growth in the mining industry and some francophone communities in Atlantic Canada are in transition, the Committee notes that young people in Atlantic Canada are using their education and their bilingualism to their advantage.

OLMC are a key part of the Canadian economy. They benefit from a strong Canadian economy, and the Canadian economy benefits from their contributions. OLMC economies are diverse and their needs for economic development generally follow those of each region.

The Committee notes that there is still work to do. Like many rural communities in Canada, OLMC face a youth exodus to the cities. Without its youth, a community has no future.

In order to confront the youth exodus, each community must implement an action plan that maintains and creates quality local jobs for young people, ensures that the cost of living is affordable, and provides a high standard of living. They must focus on entrepreneurship and economic diversification to drive their economies.

Communities must support entrepreneurs and innovative businesses that use bilingualism as a tool for economic development. They must convince their young people to obtain an education that allows them to remain in the community, and not go elsewhere.

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239 LANG, *Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 29 May 2014, 0915 (Louis Allain).

In conclusion, Canada's OLMC have all the tools needed to confront economic challenges and must focus on entrepreneurship and the spirit of leadership in order to adapt to the new realities of the world economy.

## **11. Recommendations**

In light of the testimony heard and the briefs received for its study, and with a view to building sustainable and growing economies in OLMC, the Committee recommends the following:

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Government of Canada identify common criteria and best practices for evaluating OLMC economic development.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the Government of Canada provide adequate, stable multi-year funding to community groups working for the economic development of OLMC.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Government of Canada's Economic Development Agencies support community groups working for the economic development of OLMC.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Government of Canada promote greater cooperation between the OLMC Enabling Fund and the economic development agencies.**

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the Government of Canada implement flexible programs adapted to the needs of OLMC that take into account regional variations, the risk of assimilation, the needs of rural communities and the needs of those with economies in transition.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the Government of Canada promote bilingualism as an economic development tool to communities and that it contribute to establishing French as a language of business in Canada.**

### **Recommendation 7**

**That the Government of Canada implement a strategy to encourage OLMC to participate in international trade and that it report its progress to the Committee.**

#### **Recommendation 8**

**That the Government of Canada ensure that all bilateral agreements, including labour market agreements, include language clauses and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the provinces and territories offer OLMC services of equal quality to those offered to the majority. The Committee further recommends that the Government of Canada increase awareness in the provinces and territories of the needs of OLMC and the need to consult them as part of labour market agreements.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**That the Government of Canada promote internships, mentorship programs and entrepreneurship support through its initiatives and programs in order to support employment in OLMC.**

#### **Recommendation 10**

**That the Government of Canada, in partnership with the provinces and territories, implement a strategy to increase literacy and essential skills levels for Canadians and that this strategy include a component targeted at OLMC that is tailored to each community.**

#### **Recommendation 11**

**That the Government of Canada consult with economic development organizations in OLMC to gain an understanding of their research needs and that it implement mechanisms to share research findings with all economic development stakeholders.**

#### **Recommendation 12**

**That the Government of Canada recognize the importance of cooperatives for OLMC.**

#### **Recommendation 13**

**That the Government of Canada and Canada's French-speaking communities promote the integration of francophones and francophiles from different backgrounds into minority communities.**

#### **Recommendation 14**

**That the Government of Canada support post-secondary institutions in OLMC so that they can offer a wide variety of competitive programs that meet labour market needs, employer and communities expectations.**

**Recommendation 15**

**That the Government acknowledge the growing research capacity of Canada's French-language postsecondary institutions.**

**Recommendation 16**

**That the Government of Canada support the tourism sector and the arts and culture sector in OLMC by encouraging infrastructure development and financing.**

**Recommendation 17**

**That the Government of Canada recognize the importance of the community sector to the delivery of economic development services and as an anchor point in OLMC and that it provide community economic development organizations with recurrent funding so that OLMC receive services of equal quality to those offered to the majority.**



## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Quebec Community Groups Network</b> Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General Stephen D. Thompson, Director, Policy, Research and Public Affairs	2014/02/25	12
<b>Association franco-yukonnaise</b> Angélique Bernard, President Isabelle Salesse, Executive Director	2014/02/27	13
<b>Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada</b> Michaël Béland, Manager, Co-operative Development Shawn Murphy, Manager, Government Relations	2014/03/25	15
<b>Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada</b> Suzanne Bossé, Executive Director Marie-France Kenny, President		
<b>Youth Employment Services</b> John Aylen, President, Board of Directors Iris Unger, Executive Director		
<b>Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation</b> John Buck, Executive Director Grant Myers, Provincial Economic Development Officer	2014/03/27	16
<b>Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta</b> Marc S. Tremblay, President and Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan</b> Robert Therrien, Executive Director		
<b>Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada</b> Jean Léger, Executive Director		
<b>L'Art du développement</b> Ethel Côté, President and Chief Executive Officer	2014/04/01	17
<b>Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce</b> James Franks, Coordinator, Economic Development and Funding, City of Temiskaming Shores		

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce</b> Darcy Griffith, President Joline Rivard, Director Lois Weston-Bernstein, Business Manager	2014/04/01	17
<b>Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency</b> Wade Aucoin, Director General, Policy <b>Canada Economic Development</b> Hélène Goulet, Acting Director General, Policy, Research and Programs Branch, Policy and Communications Sector Serge Tanguay, Director General, Regional Operations Branch, Operations Sector <b>Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency</b> Kimberly Fairman, Senior Advisor to the President Yves Robineau, Chief Financial Officer, Director, Corporate Services <b>Department of Industry</b> Krista Campbell, Director General, Strategic Policy Branch <b>Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario</b> Susan Anzolin, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services Branch Paul Chayer, Manager, Strategic Policy Lucie Perreault, Director, Programs and Corporate Services <b>Western Economic Diversification Canada</b> France Guimond, Director General, Operations-Manitoba	2014/04/03	18
<b>Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne</b> Jocelyne Lalonde, Director General <b>Statistics Canada</b> Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Assistant Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistic Division Jean-François Lepage, Analyst, Social and Aboriginal Statistic Division	2014/04/08	19
<b>Department of Canadian Heritage</b> Jean-Pierre C. Gauthier, Director General, Official Languages Branch <b>Department of Citizenship and Immigration</b> Rénald Gilbert, Manager, Immigration Program, Paris, France	2014/04/10	20



<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Department of Employment and Social Development</b> Denise Gareau, Director, Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, Skills and Employment Branch Stephen Johnson, Director General, Corporate Planning and Management, Strategic Policy and Research	2014/04/10	20
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</b> Randle Wilson, Director General, Trade Portfolio Strategy and Coordination		
<b>As an individual</b> John Galbraith, Professor of Economics, McGill University	2014/05/06	22
<b>Canadian Youth for French</b> Christie Dennison, Vice-President of the Board Justin Morrow, President of the Board		
<b>Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences</b> Normand Lévesque, Director General Michel Robillard, Vice-President		
<b>Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages</b> Deni Lorieau, Commissioner's Representative, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut Region Carsten Quell, Director, Policy and Research	2014/05/08	23
<b>City of Moncton</b> Jacques Dubé, City Manager	2014/05/13	24
<b>Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick</b> Armand Caron, President, Conseil des gouverneurs		
<b>New Brunswick Federation of Labour</b> Patrick Colford, President		
<b>Canadian Centre for Refugee Employment</b> Serge Kaptegain, Executive Director	2014/05/15	25
<b>English Language Arts Network Quebec</b> Peter MacGibbon, President Guy Rodgers, Executive Director		
<b>Townshippers' Association</b> Gerald Cutting, President Rachel Hunting, Executive Director		
<b>Association canadienne française de l'Alberta</b> Angéline Gionet, Director General, Wood Buffalo Region	2014/05/27	26

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada</b> Suzanne Bossé, Executive Director Marjie Brown, Manager, Immigration	2014/05/27	26
<b>Réseau des cégeps et des collèges francophones du Canada</b> Laurier Thibault, Director General		
<b>World Trade Centre Winnipeg</b> Mariette Mulaire, President and Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Conference Board of Canada</b> Pedro Antunes, Deputy Chief Economist and Executive Director	2014/05/29	27
<b>Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick</b> Anne Hébert, Director General		
<b>Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities</b> Louis Allain, Director General		
<b>MC Consultants enr</b> Maurice Chiasson, Consultant		

## **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

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### **Organizations and Individuals**

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**Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation**

**Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta**

**L'Art du développement**

**MC Consultants enr.**

**Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada**

**Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences**

**Statistics Canada**

**Youth Employment Services**



# REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michael Chong

Chair



## **Providing responsible governance to OLMCs: The New Democratic vision**

The official opposition drew different conclusions from this study than the governing party. A responsible government is accountable for the programs it designs. This is not the case with the present government. It silences its critics and ignores proposals from the NDP. The government faces some inconvenient truths from witnesses whose testimonies are absent in the main report. Belief in a collaborative, co-operative approach with communities and government partners will address some of the shortcomings of current programs. Most of all, most witnesses said that there was inadequate, unstable funding under the current regime and that it was responsible for a host of problems that organizations working with OLMCs currently face.

The NDP fought hard at committee to include support for arts and culture infrastructure in official language minority communities (OLMC). The period of growth in artistic endeavours in Montreal's anglophone community brings new challenges. ELAN identified an infrastructure problem, in terms of both creative space for artists and theatres and galleries to exhibit their work and connect with their audience. We look forward to seeing what kinds of support the government will offer.

Our recommendation to provide adequate, stable multi year funding to community groups working for the economic development of OLMC was accepted. New Democrats proposed that the government use best practices in working with community groups and that included 3 year funding rather than the year-to-year model. OLMCs require the resources to plan for the long term. New Democrats request that funding be indexed to the cost of living, a request the government rejected.

The purpose of the study was to find ways the government of Canada can help official language minority communities build sustainable and growing economies. The government had the opportunity to address the risks of assimilation in looking at sustainability of OLMC. It chose to ignore those risks. We are optimistic that a future government may address these challenges and that there is a public record of testimony to provide a starting point for dialogue about our common future.

## **Identifying vulnerabilities to increase resilience**

By identifying vulnerabilities, we can more intelligently adopt approaches that build resilience in OLMCs. OLMCs should have programs specified to their needs. Canada's official languages are protected by law. Substantive equality for minority francophone and anglophone communities needs to be significant in the design of programs and delivery of services. The Supreme Court decision in *DesRochers v. Canada (industry)* outlines in law the "duty to provide equal services in both official languages" and that "Community economic development services be provided in both official languages." It further found that "It is possible that substantive equality will not result from the development and implementation of identical services for each language community." Understanding vulnerabilities of OLMCs allow us to address those vulnerabilities and

uphold our responsibility in law. A New Democratic government would be responsible in respecting its legal obligations to OLMCs.

The inequality in quality of services is not a new problem. The gap in quality of services has been flagged at least since 1995 but successive liberal and conservative governments have not addressed the gaps in quality.

### **Regional variations and lack of flexibility in program design**

External and regional pressures can cause vulnerabilities in OLMCs. Minority status often means that a community is more vulnerable than the majority, even when surrounded by prosperity. Moreover, OLMC in rural regions are especially vulnerable. The Commissioner of Official Languages outlined how certain communities require more resources to deal with these external pressures.

Radical mismanagement of resources sector by government created external pressures for OLMCs unforeseen by policy makers. The AFCA reported an urgent need for employment assistance services in Fort McMurray, experiencing exponential population growth. Increased demand for services requires increased funding for community organizations and institutions. The government did not adapt its policy.

Radical EI policy changes are an external pressure on OLMCs. Changes made to EI in 2012 exacerbated economic problems in New Brunswick whose labour market in the North consists in large part of seasonal jobs. Seasonal workers are now classified as “frequent claimants”, making it much harder for them to qualify for EI benefits.” As a result, “if people working in those industries cannot qualify for EI, they will have to go elsewhere to work.”

Changes made to EI were not the hallmark of an incrementalist government but rather they were radical changes with negative consequences for certain regions. The Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick argued that, in addition to not being suited to the economic situation of seasonal workers, the changes were introduced too quickly to allow industries and workers to adapt.

The government still refuses to be inclusive of topics relating to OLMC when commissioning economic development studies.

### **Adequate funding to ensure the delivery of services of equal quality**

Numerous witnesses called for increased funding in order to meet growing needs of OLMC and offer services in the minority language that are of equal quality to those of the majority. Sustained funding is necessary to make the most of past investments. Federal funding to community organizations has not been increased in 10 years. The AFCA lost its funding for employment services for francophones in 2011 with the funding going to an anglophone agency that was unable to offer services in French. The FCFA said funding is required for organizations tasked with services for francophone



immigrants. The general lack of funding jeopardizes progress made and prevents economic and government stakeholders from working with quality community partners. Regional organizations develop flexible programs for the needs of the minority community. They need to be better consulted by government to meet the challenges they face.

### **Good data and research allows for better policy**

Good data is needed to propose solutions. Organizations working within OLMCs are best placed to provide a ground truth portrait. With proper information on seasonal employment problems might be solved through targeted solutions. Anglophone communities in the Estrie region, facing an exodus of graduates and workers that is depriving the region of a middle class, is threatened by growing socio-economic vulnerabilities. Statistics Canada does not have the tools to understand this phenomena. Quebec's anglophone communities did not receive funding for literacy initiatives under the 2008-2013 Roadmap. Better data may have detected these problems earlier.

Funding for research could occur through Industry Canada's Economic Development Initiative. Federal institutions should commission studies on economic development and employability that include language questions to provide an accurate picture of the situation and of the issues encountered by official languages minority communities. It is important that there be a mechanism in place to make it easier to share research findings with OLMC.

The abolition of the long form census and a lack of support for the analysis and research necessary to understanding vulnerabilities and strengths of OLMC continue to an obstacle to responsible policy.

### **Co-operatives: a potent tool for OLMC**

The government misunderstands the role co-operatives play in economic development. The co-operative movement is an indispensable economic actor in maintaining and developing official language minority communities. The committee recommended previously that the Government of Canada incorporate the cooperative model into its socio-economic development strategies for OLMCs in the 2013-2018 Roadmap. It did not do so.

Cancellation of the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) was misguided. The annual forum organized as part of the CDI, particularly the sharing of best practices, served as a catalyst for partnerships and networking. The consequences of cancellation were very serious. Several provinces had to stop offering services.

Investments made through the CDI were minor compared with the economic spinoffs created. Witnesses emphasized that fewer financial and human resources available to Canadian cooperatives sector through Industry Canada has repercussions on the

cooperative movement as a whole. One of the consequences was the loss of sound analysis and data on the economic development of OLMCs.

### **Immigration: opportunities lost**

Immigration is a tool to revitalize OLMC. Immigrants, even with high levels of education, face “significant challenges in terms of labour market integration, recognition of foreign qualifications and opportunities for obtaining Canadian work experience. The level of poverty among immigrants impacts the economic vitality of OLMCs. QCGN shared a report on this problem in minority anglophone communities. Immigrants whose first official language is French have higher levels of unemployment than francophones born in Canada. These problems require targeted measures.

Immigrants and refugees want to contribute to the economic development of OLMC, and they are capable of contributing. The organizations working with OLMCs must be given the tools they need to help immigrants and refugees integrate into OLMC as full economic actors.

### **Solutions: Multi Year funding and an Investment Fund**

Multi-year funding allows organizations to efficiently plan for the long term. Witnesses agreed. They noted the importance of multi-year funding, such as three year funding that is stable and indexed. Funding programs should not create competition between the various provincial, regional and local organizations. There needs to be a greater understanding of how these organizations work together and how funding envelopes at each level can contribute to the overall economic vitality of the linguistic minority community.

OLMCs need the same tools and programs as majority communities, particularly as regards an investment fund (loan) program such as the fund managed by Community Futures. The government should facilitate the creation of loan funds for entrepreneurs in OLMCs that are tailored to the particular needs of OLMCs.

### **Substantive equality and the risk of assimilation**

We must ask whether the services offered to minority communities are truly equal. Steering francophones toward services offered in English does nothing to promote the vitality of the minority community or make French a language of business. By breaking the ties that link francophones to their community, it is more likely they will be assimilated into their English surroundings.

The lack of financial and human resources weighs heavily on the employees and volunteers working for OLMC organizations.

Problems in the inequality of services are felt at both the local and provincial levels. Despite the fact that some organizations have a territorial or provincial mandate, the

current level of funding does not allow them to provide economic development and employment assistance in all regions. This was certainly the case with witnesses such as the AFY, CDÉA and the CCS.

## **Conclusion**

The government wants Canadians to believe that there are no serious challenges being faced by Canada's OLMCs. This is particularly the case in the government's view toward services of equal quality. The government points out the relative equality in terms of socio-economic well being of anglophones and francophones without factoring in the risks of assimilation to these communities.

The government believes that OLMCs have all the tools necessary to confront economic challenges. New Democrats believe this is not the case and is contradicted by numerous testimonies of witnesses during the study. Adequate, multi year funding is required to keep service organizations thriving. Unfortunately adequate funding is a subjective notion to this government. At this point, some organizations are on life support due to a one-size-fits-all approach by the federal government that is not tailored to regional needs and challenges. At the very least, the government must address immediate problems such as roadmap funding envelopes for organizations arriving on time. Stable funding means predictable, on time funding.

Although there are points on which the government accepted New Democrats ideas, the government's report does not address the problems that OLMC face in responsible manner. By avoiding OLMCs potential vulnerabilities, the tools offered by the government for will continue to fall short of the objectives set by OLMCs themselves. New Democrats believe that the federal government has a greater role to play in helping OLMCs create vibrant and sustainable economies.



## **Dissenting recommendations in response to the Committee's report on the economic situation of Canada's minority linguistic communities**

### **Preamble**

There are minority francophone communities in all of Canada's provinces and territories. The historical significance of these communities is still important today, despite the high assimilation rates<sup>1</sup> in many of these communities. The *Official Languages Act* has increased French-language development opportunities in relatively large minority communities located in urban areas, but, socio-economic development opportunities are rare for francophones in rural areas. We remain concerned about the government's reluctance to commit to addressing the historic injustices that have led to the assimilation of francophones across the country.

We are stunned by how little the population knows about the French contribution to Canadian democracy: most Canadians do not understand how foundational the legal, political and social traditions of francophones were in building our society. Once again, we find ourselves fighting for funding for community organizations in minority settings, when these same communities are hanging by a thread and watching their social structures break down at an accelerated rate. Intercommunity marriages, a lack of educational resources, the inability to work in French and the lack of community structures all contribute to the assimilation of francophones in Canada. Furthermore, the allure of English, made brighter by new information technologies, cannot be counteracted unless the government makes a firm and coherent commitment to encourage residents across Canada to learn and use French.

As long as we remain unaware of the significance of La Francophonie and its historical role in maintaining our political, social, economic and judicial equilibrium, we will remain powerless observers as francophone communities slowly lose their fight to withstand the pressures they are facing from all directions.

We believe that the communities that have lost thousands of members in this struggle against assimilation could become valuable contributors once again to the common good of the country. Together, we can mitigate the threats to the linguistic and cultural survival of French Canadians by making reparation for the wrongs committed against them by investing recurrently in modern social infrastructure. We think of the thousands of francophone Métis in the prairies and regret that their fight continues before the courts. Judicial remedy cannot completely erase the negligence of the successive governments in power since French culture in Canada was first given a death sentence. Today, we are calling for a coherent investment policy from the federal government to spark francophone culture in this country!

### **Introduction to the Recommendations:**

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. "Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians". In Statistics Canada, *Language, 2011 Census Population*. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011001-eng.pdf> (consulted on February 26, 2015).

The pillars of a vibrant, modern and forward-looking francophone community are intrinsically linked to adequate funding for community and social structures in francophone communities across Canada;

Canada today has greatly benefited from the cultural duality that formed the basis of its institutions. Canada would not be a nation envied by the world without the contribution of francophones, anglophones and Aboriginal people. The cohesion of our institutions has set us apart in the free world because our three major cultures all coexist, leading us to come up with new ways to consider laws, to live together and to prosper in the understanding that we share in contributing to the common good. Our prosperity will be matched only by our generosity;

Like many of the witnesses who appeared before the House of Commons Committee on Official languages, we believe that we must implement generous and coherent language policies. Developing a language policy for minority francophone communities will require a firm commitment from the federal government to breathe new life into the communities that spoke before the Committee about their lack of resources, the oppressive weight of history and the lack of social and economic structures that meet their cultural needs.

1. The federal government must agree to make material reparations for the historical mistakes and wrongs that unraveled the cultural fabric of so many francophone communities in Canada by reinvesting in community structures recurrently in order to establish a solid foundation for socio-economic development in these communities;
2. The federal government must invest in Canadian Francophonie by decentralizing services for Canadian communities in the regions and by creating public service positions that require the knowledge and use of French;
3. The federal government must, through its economic development agencies, agree to implement a policy to award recurrent subsidies to small and medium-sized francophone businesses in Canada;
4. Francophone corporations need financial assurances with regard to community, economic and educational infrastructure development with a view to establishing long-term partnerships with provincial and territorial governments;
5. The federal government must agree to provide adequate material and financial support for legal challenges relating to minority language rights;
6. The federal government must agree to a radio and television policy for the public broadcaster, CBC/Radio-Canada, that takes into account the interests and needs of francophone communities across the country. The policy must ensure that CBC/Radio-Canada receives sufficient funding to fulfill its role in contributing to the cultural, social and economic development of francophone communities in the country;
7. The federal government must institute remedial measures for federal departments and agencies that fail to meet their obligations under the *Official Languages Act*;