

**Pan-Canadian Strategy for Francophone
Immigrant Women in Minority Communities:
Breaking Down Barriers for Equitable Integration**

JANUARY 2025

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Abbreviations

AFFC: Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne
AFY: Association franco-yukonnaise
CCNAR: Career Pathways for Racialized Newcomer Women
CDEM: Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities
CFGT: Centre francophone du Grand Toronto
CNPF: Commission nationale des parents francophones
CSF: Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
CRA: Corporations Returns Act
DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRD: Derived Record Depository
EDC: Export Development Canada
EDSC: Employment and Social Development Canada
FAAFC: Fédération des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada
FCFA: Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada
FFANE: Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse
FIN: Francophone Immigration Networks
FMC: Francophone Minority Community
FOLS: First Official Language Spoken
GBA+: Gender-based Analysis Plus

IFNÉ: Immigration francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse
ISANS: Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
ISSofBC: Immigrant Service Society of British Columbia
MOFIF: Mouvement ontarien des femmes immigrantes francophones
OFE: Opportunities for Employment
OFQJ: Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse
OLMC: Official Language Minority Communities
P/T: Provinces and Territoires
RIFA: Réseau en immigration francophone de l'Alberta
SAIF: Services d'accueil et d'inclusion francophone-SK
SÉO: Société Économique de l'Ontario
SDECB: Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique
SOFIFRAN: Solidarité des femmes immigrantes francophones du Niagara
SRDC: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
TIFF: T1 Family File
TBS: Treasury Board Secretariat
WHP: Working Holiday Program
2SLGBTQQIA+: Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and others



I want to thank the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) and the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Canada) for having prepared this community-based strategy, titled *Stratégie pancanadienne des femmes immigrantes francophones en milieu minoritaire: Briser les barrières pour une intégration équitable* [Pan-Canadian Strategy for Francophone Immigrant Women in Minority Communities: Breaking Down Barriers for Equitable Integration], in partnership with the Francophone settlement sector, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, and Francophone Immigration Networks across the country.

While immigration to Canada offers many opportunities for Francophone immigrant women, it also brings many unique challenges, such as learning and maintaining a new language, making a successful career transition, creating new networks and adjusting to changes in family dynamics. These challenges are all the greater when they are experienced in a Francophone minority context.

With this in mind, the Department chose the AFFC, an organization that represents Francophone women, to lead the development of a community-based strategy that takes into account women's realities throughout their integration journey. The Francophone Integration Pathway is at the heart of our priorities, and it would not be successful without taking into account the aspirations and needs of Francophone immigrant women.

To meet these specific needs, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has made the development of a strategy for Francophone newcomers settling in Francophone minority communities one of the flagship implementation plan actions of the *Policy on Francophone Immigration* and the *Official Languages Action Plan*.

This strategy will guide our collective efforts to enhance the vitality of Francophone immigrant women and contribute to their successful integration into Francophone minority communities.

Marc Miller

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and
Citizenship Canada (IRCC)



The Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) is extremely proud to have contributed to the Francophone Women's Immigration Strategy. We would like to acknowledge the important support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), which included official language minority communities in the development of such a crucial strategy. Our thanks also go to the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Canada) for its collaboration on employability and entrepreneurship for women newcomers.



This strategy is based on a comprehensive study carried out with the involvement of key stakeholders across the country, including the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (FCFA), the Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIF), the Table nationale en immigration francophone (TNIF), provincial and territorial Francophone and Acadian women's organizations, and the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité du Canada (RDÉE Canada). The network as a whole contributed to the study by promoting public consultations and participating in focus groups to help define the proposed objectives for each province and territory. This study was made possible by the active participation of Francophone stakeholders across the country.

In our view, this strategy strengthens Canada's Francophone Immigration Policy and other government strategies for immigration and refugee reception by expanding the range of services available to Francophone immigrant women. It is essential to consider the needs of immigrant women and adapt services to support their better integration. We cannot accept a system that overlooks their unique qualities and potential.

It is vital that Francophone immigrant women are able to thrive in a country where they are autonomous, feel included in their community, and where government bodies take their needs into account. This is essential for their successful integration into their communities. In line with the objectives of this strategy, we encourage the department to draw inspiration from its spirit and adopt the inclusive title of the Department of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada

It is necessary to implement and measure Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in all spheres of an immigration journey in order to create an enriching and welcoming experience, while promoting the active participation of immigrants in decision-making processes. In so doing, we will be moving towards a society that is resolutely more fair, inclusive and egalitarian for everyone.

Nour Enayeh
President, AFFC

Soukaina Boutiyeb
Executive Director, AFFC



RDÉE Canada is delighted to take part in the Pan-Canadian Strategy for Francophone Immigrant Women in Minority Communities and to put its skills in employment integration and entrepreneurship to good use. At RDÉE Canada, we recognize the importance of ensuring professional integration that respects the skills and professional identity of these women. Our objective is clear: to facilitate their transition and value their skills.

The strategy outlines a range of concrete measures, from pre-departure job preparation to the rapid recognition of diplomas and professional experience acquired abroad. We also advocate for professional internships to provide an enriching first Canadian experience, as well as specific mentoring programs to support these women throughout their journey.

By collaborating with various partners and raising employer awareness of the richness of diversity, we aim to create an inclusive environment where every immigrant woman can flourish and contribute fully. Your support and commitment are essential to achieving these ambitious goals.

Best regards,

Yan Plante

**President and CEO, Réseau de développement
économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Canada)**



Foreword



Foreword

This report is a national strategy for French-speaking immigrant women in minority situations, focusing on priority areas and improvements to be made in their integration process.



The Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) produced a brief in 2022 entitled “Prendre en compte les besoins des femmes immigrantes pour une intégration réussie dans les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire”¹. The study was conducted in four Canadian provinces and one territory. Building on the findings of this study, the current research aims to verify these results across all provinces and territories with French-speaking minority communities, in order to make recommendations for a national strategy.

To this end, an initial consultation took place from November 10 to December 10, 2023, via an online survey that reached 343 French-speaking immigrant women. Alongside this consultation, a review of Canadian scientific literature was carried out. This identified the main issues and potential solutions proposed by the academic community. In addition, an enhanced strategic monitoring of the international scene for the years 2022 and 2023 was carried out. This report outlines international best practices and trends regarding the integration of immigrant women in minority communities. Based on these findings, focus groups were held with women during the week of January 31, 2024.

These were used to validate the hypotheses and confirm the objectives aimed at addressing the specific needs of women in each province and territory outside Quebec. A group of women facing intersectional challenges was also surveyed (using GBA+ methodology) at this time. Finally, partners in each province and territory were consulted.

Methodology

The methodological approach is similar to that of action research. Thus, data is studied, analyzed, and immediately used to inform the ongoing research process. Continuous analysis and contextualization of the data collected enable us to identify new avenues to explore and analyze as the work progresses.

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is employed in the analysis. This approach takes into account the diverse profiles of Francophone immigrant women in minority settings. Studies show that being a woman is a discriminatory factor and should therefore be considered a key element for successful integration. Moreover, there is a growing complexity in the profiles and migratory backgrounds of these women.

¹ Beaulieu, Denise (2021).

Summary



Summary

“Thus, integrating gender issues into policy development and planning can contribute to the economic and social empowerment of individuals and promote gender equality, while their omission can expose these individuals to additional risks and vulnerabilities, and perpetuate or increase inequalities”².



Francophone immigrant women in minority settings face increased mental burdens and family responsibilities during their immigration journey. They also play a crucial role in transmitting French language and culture within their family units and communities. However, they encounter multiple forms of oppression which hinders their economic and social interaction. This situation places them in a vulnerable and isolate position. The services available do not always meet their diverse needs, and immigration policies often overlook gender and diversity dimensions. This has a direct impact not only on the immigrant women themselves, but also on their families. To overcome this situation, it is necessary to develop policies, strategies and programs that are sensitive to gender and diversity while paying special attention to the barriers these women face in their economic and professional integration.

The strategy outlined in this report is structured around **eleven chapters**. Each chapter addresses specific issues and provides objectives along with recommended tactics to tackle them. Additionally, the chapters summarize the results of the consultation, academic research, and international best practices for each area of life within the immigration journey.

This report uses the internationally recognized Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), an essential tool for advancing gender equality. GBA+ helps identify and address systemic inequalities. The integration of GBA+ in research and policy development takes into account the multiple facets of human identity and offers a more comprehensive and inclusive approach.

In Canada, the government is firmly committed to using GBA+, particularly in the development of policies, programs, and legislation, with a focus on gender equity. **However, GBA+ is not applied in the context of Francophone immigrant women in minority settings, as current programs do not account for the intersectional challenges these women face in accessing and adapting to services. The following chapters will demonstrate this, as will the recommendations related to this primary objective, which lies at the heart of the strategy.**

1

Chapter 1 outlines the importance of creating programs specific to the realities of Francophone immigrant women in minority settings, to reduce the intersectional barriers they face in their immigration journey.

2

Chapter 2 highlights the importance of including Francophone women and the organizations that represent them in the design of policies and programs, as well as in their evaluation, to ensure an equitable immigration journey.



3

Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of breaking down migration data by sex and gender to inform immigration policies. The goal is to reduce disparities. Additionally, it encourages the full and active participation of immigrant women in all aspects of social, economic, and cultural life.

4

Chapter 4 advocates providing a broad range of coherent and visible services in French, including a specific service offering for women. These services include transparent pre-departure information, a diverse range of services adapted to women's needs, and personalized integration support. "Transparent pre-departure" means that people migrating from one country to another receive clear and comprehensive information, particularly about the economic situation, recognition of their qualifications, the housing crisis, and access to French-language services in their future place of residence before they leave.

5

Chapter 5 aims to strengthen the rights of French-speaking immigrant women. Suggestions are made to ensure equitable access to legal information in French, and to raise women's awareness of their rights.



6

Chapter 6 seeks to promote the integration of immigrant women into their community life by strengthening existing services and encouraging networking.

7

Chapter 7 proposes services designed to meet the specific needs of immigrant women in their family life. From the moment women and their families arrive, this report recommends developing personalized services, with the support of a social worker, to ensure assistance is tailored to the family's needs.

8

Chapter 8 addresses the issue of access to health services in French for immigrant women, in order to reduce linguistic and cultural barriers. It is essential to better equip women navigating the host region's healthcare system, and to set up an expedited program for women's reproductive health, particularly when it comes to pregnancy or the arrival of a newborn.

9

Chapter 9 puts forward measures to promote the economic integration of immigrant women while respecting their professional identity.



10

Chapter 10 focuses on concrete initiatives to promote entrepreneurship among French-speaking immigrant women, such as awareness campaigns, networking and mentoring.



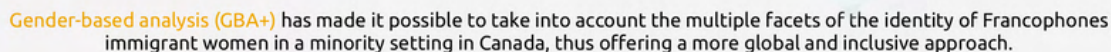
11

Finally, **Chapter 11** addresses the final step, which is the establishment of baseline indicators to measure the effectiveness of GBA+ initiatives. This step is crucial for evaluating the impacts on the different clientele groups. These indicators must be relevant, measurable, and sensitive to the diverse realities experienced by French-speaking immigrant women.

In summary, this report aims to create an inclusive environment conducive to the empowerment and successful integration of Francophone immigrant women in minority communities. The second part of the report outlines specific issues and recommendations for each province and territory, in order to clarify priorities by region.

Canada-wide Strategy for Francophones Immigrant Women in Minority Communities

11 GBA+ OBJECTIVES



The GBA+ Strategy in 11 Objectives

- Objective 1:** Design holistic, inclusive and tailored policies using GBA+, resulting in specific programs for Francophone immigrant women in minority settings.
- Objective 2:** By, for and with women and the women's organizations that represent them.
- Objective 3:** Take a comprehensive, society-wide and government-wide approach to data collection, analysis and evaluation.
- Objective 4:** Employ gender-sensitive data to inform immigration policies and practices.
- Objective 5:** Deploy a broad, coherent and visible offer of services in French, involving consultation in the settlement process.
- Objective 6:** Raise awareness and provide tools to strengthen the rights of Francophone immigrant women in minority settings.
- Objective 7:** Promote and support networking among Francophone immigrant women in minority settings.
- Objective 8:** Offer services that are free from obstacles for women, recognizing their mental burden.
- Objective 9:** Improving access to French-language health care for immigrant women in minority settings. Ensure effective integration into the workforce, respecting skills and professional identity.
- Objective 10:** Develop entrepreneurial service offerings for Francophone immigrant women.
- Objective 11:** Evaluate and monitor the implementation of GBA+ in partnership with Francophone women's organizations.

Context

The proportion of migrant women worldwide has barely changed over the past 60 years. Nevertheless, there has been an increase in the number of women opting to migrate independently, whether for professional or educational reasons, or as heads of households. Despite these advances, migrant women remain at higher risk of discrimination. They are also more likely to face unfair treatment. In addition, compared to male migrants, they may face double discrimination in their host countries, both as migrants and as women.³



Trends: Immigration and Gender Difference

The motivations and implications of human mobility are influenced by various factors, particularly social norms based on gender, ethnicity, race, age, and social class. Among these, it is clear that gender differences have a more significant impact on migration experiences. Therefore, integrating a gender perspective into policy design and planning can foster the economic and social empowerment of individuals. Moreover, it promotes gender equality. Without this consideration, these individuals are at greater risk of vulnerability, in addition to perpetuating or amplifying existing inequalities.

“Therefore, the integration of gender issues into policy-making and planning can contribute to the economic and social empowerment of individuals and promote gender equality, while their omission can expose individuals to additional risks and vulnerabilities, and perpetuate or increase inequalities”⁴.

[The Global Compact on Migration](#) and [the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#) call for a better breakdown of migration data by sex and age. Both of these agreements recognize the importance of sex-disaggregated data for identifying and analyzing vulnerabilities and capacities specific to women and men. This data highlights gaps and inequalities, while also allowing for analysis of the impact of gender norms on the differing experiences of women and men in migration processes.

It is important to emphasize and consider the often overlooked and underreported experiences of women and girls in the migration process. Gender-specific data would help to track how gender norms impact immigration experiences. It is equally crucial to track the experiences of 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals who also face gender-based vulnerabilities during the different phases of migration.

³ Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (2023).

⁴ *Idem*.

A Few Exemplary Projects

Among key initiatives, Mouvement Ontarien des Femmes Immigrantes Francophones (MOFIF) promotes economic empowerment through entrepreneurship as part of the “Envol des entrepreneures noires” program. The “Jeunes ambassadeurs de paix” program develops the leadership skills of young Francophones, particularly young immigrant women, to prepare them to become leaders and combat systemic racism. The “Cercle des millionnaires” provides a space for women to share entrepreneurial strategies and support one another. These initiatives illustrate an inclusive and intersectional feminism, aimed at enriching the community and promoting equality.

Another best practice is the “Route vers le succès” project, dedicated to the integration of Francophone immigrant women in Manitoba. This intensive program, offered by the Pluri-Elles organization, provides training in French and English, as well as workshops on budgeting, counseling, computer skills and job searching, to help immigrant women adapt to Canadian society.



Here is a list of other notable projects:

■ **A 2022 brief entitled “Prendre en compte les besoins des femmes immigrantes pour une intégration réussie dans les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire” (Taking into account the needs of immigrant women for successful integration into Francophone minority communities);**

■ **Eliminating Barriers to Employment for Muslim Women from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW);**

■ **Action civique - Femmes immigrantes francophones (ACFIF) from the Mouvement Ontarien des Femmes Immigrantes Francophones (MOFIF);**

■ **Awareness tools against violence and sexual harassment in the workplace from MOFIF;**

■ **Knowledge of the legal system from Oasis Centre des Femmes;**

■ **Socio-economic (re)integration project of Couture Petits Points Sewing (Employment-CPPS);**

■ **AFFC integration project for new arrivals.**

One project worthy of note is the “Intégration des nouvelles arrivantes dans les communautés francophones” which is a joint initiative of the AFFC, the Commission nationale des parents francophones and the Fédération des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada from 2020 to 2025. Its objective is to understand the specific needs of Francophone immigrant women, seniors and parents, support their integration and strengthen the capacities of Francophone settlement services. The project also aims to encourage the active participation of these groups in community integration.

The women's component, called Intégration des nouvelles arrivantes (INA), focuses on understanding the needs of immigrant women using Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), strengthening the capacity of the settlement sector and creating training tools to improve the welcoming of immigrant women. Needs assessments and capacity-building plans are underway to improve services for these women.

Among the partners, five member organizations were involved in this project:

■ **Les Essentielles, in Yukon.**

■ **Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique, in British Columbia.**

■ **Pluri-Elles, in Manitoba.**

■ **Mouvement Ontarien des Femmes Immigrantes Francophones (MOFIF), in Ontario.**

■ **Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse.**



International Best Practices

Defining “success” in the field of migration policy is extremely challenging, as is comparing a specific measure of success among different countries due to distinct modes of social organization and varied migration histories around the world. A major 2011 study by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group, an independent European non-profit organization, ranked 31 countries in Europe and North America according to their migration policies, using various criteria (employment opportunities, access to education and anti-discrimination legislation). Sweden ranked first, closely followed by Portugal, Canada, Finland and the Netherlands. In more recent studies, Sweden has remained in the lead in these rankings.⁵



“Swedish integration policies are evidence-based. Core services, such as healthcare, are developed and continually assessed to serve a diverse population.”⁶

Sweden's integration policies are evidence-based and respond quickly to new information. Core services, such as healthcare, are developed and regularly evaluated to meet the needs of a diverse population. Teams target hard-to-reach groups in society to ensure they receive the same services as everyone else. Gender data influences all stages of the political process. Improving gender-related indicators supports programs that meet the real needs of the target population

Despite efforts to break down migration data by sexual orientation and gender identity, it is almost never broken down by LGBTI identification, either in Canada or in the rest of the world. The key principle of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) for 2030 is to leave no one behind. LGBTI individuals are among the most vulnerable and marginalized, and they should not be excluded.

Canadian Legislative Context

The legislative context in which official language minority communities (OLMCs) operate is marked by the modernization of the Official Languages Act. Amendments to the Act aim to “strengthen Francophone immigration, increase the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities, and protect the institutions of official language minority communities. The Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028, representing an investment of \$1.4 billion over five years, seeks to change the current situation of OLMCs.

⁵ Dorling (20/7), p. 6.

⁶ Dorling (2017), p. 6.

⁷ Canadian Heritage (2023).

IRCC's Francophone Immigration Strategy has three objectives, one of which was to increase Francophone immigration to reach a target of 4.4% Francophone immigrants outside Quebec by 2023. Key initiatives have included strengthened selection tools favouring Francophone candidates, targeted promotional efforts in Canada and abroad, ongoing strengthening of Francophone settlement and resettlement services, and continued collaboration with provinces and territories.⁸

For example, 5,756 Francophone permanent residents were admitted to Canada from outside Quebec in 2020, an increase on previous years and representing 3.61% of all permanent residents admitted to Canada from outside Quebec. Of these, 71% came under the economic category, which includes federal and provincial economic programs, and more than 50% were citizens of France, Morocco and Algeria.

Since January 16, 2024, IRCC has adopted a new [Policy on Francophone Immigration](#), in which the strategy is specifically mentioned as a new measure of the continuum.

The Francophone immigration continuum described in the new Policy on Francophone Immigration includes three main stages: promotion, selection and integration. Promotion aims to attract French-speaking candidates through advertising campaigns and recruitment missions.

Selection uses permanent and temporary immigration programs, such as the Express Entry system and Mobilité francophone, to maximize admissions of permanent and temporary residents. Integration is facilitated by Parours d'intégration francophone, which offers language training, employment support and community services to help immigrants settle and thrive in the Francophone and Acadian communities.

The National Strategy for Immigrant Women is a new measure in the continuum aimed at creating a supportive environment where immigrant women can thrive and contribute fully to Canadian society, thereby ensuring successful integration at every stage of the immigration continuum.

FCFA's New Community Strategic Plan

The FCFA's Plan stratégique communautaire en immigration francophone (PSCIF) 2024- 2028, currently under development, incorporates an approach, in its preliminary draft, based on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and GBA+, aimed at addressing the specific needs of diverse groups, including immigrant women. The PSCIF foresees rigorous monitoring and evaluation of progress, with specific indicators to measure the impact of initiatives linked to ACS+ and the inclusion of immigrant women. This approach aims to ensure the active and equitable participation of women in the development and implementation of immigration policies and programs, thereby optimizing their integration and well-being in Canada's Francophone communities.⁹

⁸ Parliament's Annual Report of Immigration (2021).

⁹ Francophone Immigration Networks (2018).

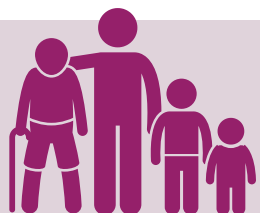
Highlights



Immigrant Women in Canada

Visible Minority

- In Canada, 67%¹⁰ of visible minority women and girls are immigrants.¹¹
- In 2011, 22% of Canada's total population of women and girls were “first-generation” immigrants; that is, born outside Canada.



The majority of visible minority women and girls are considered first-generation immigrants.¹²

17% were “second generation”, meaning Canadian-born with at least one foreign-born parent.

60% were “third generation or more”, meaning they were born in Canada and both parents were born in Canada.

- The vast majority of visible minority women and girls can speak one of the two official languages.
- Among visible minority women in the prime working age group of 20 to 64, the employment rate in 2011 was 69%. In comparison, the employment rate among women in the same age group who do not belong to a visible minority was more than 10 percentage points higher, at 79%.

Status in the Household

- According to Canada's 2006 census, more than 3 million immigrant women aged 15 and over lived in private households, which means that at that time, the majority of immigrant women were married.¹³



They lived with family members (86%):

- as a couple;
- single mother with child(ren);
- with other relatives.

- In 2006, more immigrant women (5%), particularly recent immigrants (5%), lived with relatives than non-immigrants (2%). This may be due to factors such as economic necessity, immigration sponsorship conditions or cultural preferences.

¹⁰ All percentages have been rounded off.

¹¹ Tamara Hudon (2015).

¹² *Idem*.

¹³ Canada Census (2006).

Unpaid Work at Home or Outside the Home

- Women spend more time than men looking after children in the household.¹⁴
 - In 2010, women spent an average of 50.1 hours a week on childcare, more than double that of men (24.4 hours).¹⁵
- However:



Women did not all dedicate the same number of hours to unpaid childcare. Two important factors influenced the amount of time spent on unpaid childcare:

- **the household's paid working conditions;**
- **the age of the youngest child.**



Women reported spending 67.5 hours a week on childcare when the youngest child in the household was under five. For men, it was half that number of hours (30.2 hours).



Among women currently in paid employment, single mothers spent the least time on childcare, at 26.9 hours per week. Women in couples who were sole wage earners spent more time on childcare, at 50.8 hours per week.

Women Do More Household Chores than Men

- The time spent on household chores varies among women, depending on their working conditions.
- The age of the youngest child has an impact on the amount of housework done in families with young children. As the youngest child ages, the average number of hours devoted to household chores per week decreases for both women and men. However, the gender gap remains constant in terms of the number of hours spent on household chores, as women continue to dedicate more time to these tasks.



¹⁴ Milan, Anne et al. (2011).

¹⁵ *Idem*.

Survey Results at a Glance



Survey Results at a Glance

343

Respondents

172

Mothers (52%)

72%

Responsible for the
immigration project in
their family unit

72%

Primary Applicant



Challenges of Intersectionality

The intersectionality challenges faced by Francophone immigrant women in minority settings are complex and multifaceted, resulting from the interplay between their gender identity, immigrant status and membership of a minority language community.

Intersectionality of Identities: Francophone immigrant women face a dual marginalization due to their gender and their immigrant status. Their experiences can be shaped by factors such as race, class, religion and sexual orientation, making their challenges even more complex.

Language and Cultural Barriers: For Francophone immigrant women living in a minority setting where the dominant language is not French, the language barrier can be a major challenge. They may find themselves socially excluded, struggle to access essential services such as healthcare and education, and face obstacles on the job market.

Access to Services: Francophone immigrant women may have difficulty accessing social and government services in their mother tongue. This can lead to increased exclusion and marginalization, as they may not receive the support they need to fully integrate into the host society.

Discrimination and Racism: Because of their immigrant status, and sometimes because of their affiliation with ethnic or racial minorities, Francophone immigrant women can face discrimination and systemic racism. This can manifest in various areas of their lives, such as employment, housing and social interactions.

Gender-Based Violence: Francophone immigrant women may be particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence due to their marginalized status and limited access to resources and support networks. They may also face additional barriers with regard to reporting abuse and accessing support services.

By approaching these intersectional challenges holistically and considering the multiple dimensions of Francophone immigrant women's identities, it is possible to work towards more inclusive and effective policies and programs to promote their integration and well-being in minority environments.

The consultation reveals the following intersectional challenges for the respondents:



Difficulties Encountered in the Immigration Process

The immigration process of the population surveyed shows various levels of difficulty. A significant proportion (34%) encountered major obstacles in accessing housing and healthcare. Employment services are also a challenge for 29%. For 27% of respondents, professional training is an obstacle. Another important area is access to childcare services, with 28% reporting difficulties.

When it comes to identifying moderate barriers, 29% experience challenges in finding pre-departure information, followed closely by employment support services at 27%. This statistic is closely followed by employment services at 27%. Family support services and access to health care pose moderate difficulties for 26% of immigrant women. Access to housing remains an issue for 25%. Professional training accounts for 24%. Cultural integration presents challenges for 23% of respondents. Settlement services are mentioned by 23% of the women reached by the consultation.

On the other hand, one notable finding is that the majority have no difficulties when it comes to education; that is, access to a French-speaking school for their children. This information suggests a disparity in the obstacles encountered during the immigration process. It also underscores the need to step up efforts in the areas identified as more problematic, which will be addressed in the issues raised in the subsequent chapters of this report, and to explore potential solutions surrounding the ecosystem of the country's French-language schools. The lack of clear information and visibility of available services makes it difficult to access these resources. The fact that women face major intersectional challenges in terms of access to French-language services, and that this has repercussions on their well-being as well as their physical and mental health, is an example of the important issues to be addressed.

Obstacles Related to Access and Availability of Services in French

Regarding the main obstacles encountered in accessing and making services available in French, 34% of respondents encountered obstacles involving:

- limited access to sources of information;
- language barriers; and,
- Canada's economic conditions, such as standard of living.

29% of respondents also pointed to processing times and travel distances as an obstacle.



Level of Difficulty in Finding Employment

According to their statements, 45% of respondents struggle finding a job that matches their level of skills. 38% mention difficulties in obtaining recognition for work experience abroad. 37% underline the difficulties of obtaining initial Canadian experience. Recognition of diplomas (29%) and language barriers (23%) are also significant difficulties in the economic integration of women.

Challenges and Obstacles to Entrepreneurship

Financial insecurity (45%) and lack of initial funding (45%), difficulty in finding partners (35%) and limited access to resources specifically for women (34%) are the main obstacles to entrepreneurship for respondents.

What are the main obstacles you encounter or have encountered with regard to access to and availability of French-language immigration services for women?

Responses: 264
Disregarded: 79

Percentage

Language barriers	34%
Canada’s economic conditions	34%
Limited access for information	34%
Distance	29%
Processing time	29%
Administrative complexity (bureaucracy)	27%
Financial barriers	20%
Discrimination and prejudice	19%
Qualification requirements	19%
Business hours	17%
Psychological distress and mental health	16%
None of the above	14%
Other (Please specify)	8%
Changing regulations	6%

What level of difficulty are you facing, or did you face in the following areas?

Responses: 270
Disregarded: 73

	No difficulty	Slight difficulty	Moderate difficulty	Great difficulty
Access to housing	20%	21%	25%	34%
Health services	20%	21%	26%	34%
Employment services	23%	21%	27%	29%
Childcare services	43%	13%	16%	28%
Professional training services	29%	20%	24%	27%
Access to reproductive healthcare	42%	15%	16%	27%
Psychological well-being and mental health	33%	21%	22%	24%
Legal services	42%	20%	17%	20%
Family support services	38%	17%	26%	20%
Settlement services	25%	33%	23%	19%
Parenting services	52%	12%	18%	18%
Support for cultural integration	29%	31%	23%	17%
Pre-departure information (before arrival)	25%	30%	29%	16%
Community life	32%	31%	22%	15%
Francophone school for children	67%	16%	10%	7%

Findings



Findings

Consultation with women across the country confirms Beaulieu's¹⁶ hypotheses concerning immigrant women with children, i.e. that immigrant women bear the brunt of the integration process.



A majority of participants also emphasize the mental burden that accompanies the family immigration project. They must navigate a new system, that of Canada, without any reference points. They have to follow the process of enrolling their children in school, opening a bank account, obtaining a credit card or accessing government services.¹⁷ “They feel responsible for ensuring that family members are integrating before worrying about their own progress in finding employment, professional training or higher education.”¹⁸



Today, 78% of women are primary applicants, 66% are in a relationship, 52% are mothers and 72% are responsible for the immigration project. It is immigrant women who bear the brunt of the integration process, “as they are responsible for the mental burden and the family responsibilities involved.”¹⁹

Most of these women must integrate into a new community often with “little or no social support, deal with different diets and new educational structures for children.”²⁰ These structures include daycare services as part of “the continuum of French-language education in a minority setting in Canada.”²¹ However, access to this type of services, in terms of affordability and availability, often undermines immigrant women's chances of integrating into the job market.

There are various “complex forms of oppression that marginalize [Francophone women] who find themselves at the intersection of one or more other axes of domination.”²²

Added to this burden lies the fact that these women “play a crucial role in the vitality of French in minority settings, particularly in passing the language on to children and contributing to identity-building.”²³

However, learning and using a second language is more complex and fraught with obstacles for women, since they “are more likely to face isolation, lack information, have heavy family obligations and cultural barriers, as well as having a lower level of education.”²⁴

¹⁶ Beaulieu, Denise (2021), p. 1.

¹⁷ Archambault (2021), p.129.

¹⁸ Beaulieu, Denise (2021), p. 1.

¹⁹ Canada Senate (2023), p. 31.

²⁰ Sawadogo, M. (2016), p. 11.

²¹ Deschênes-Thériault, G. (2022), p. 77.

²² Levesque, A. (2022).

²³ Canadian Heritage (2023), p. 27.

²⁴ Immigration and Citizenship Canada (2012), p. 12.

A number of obstacles also hinder the professional journeys of Francophone immigrant women. Discrimination based on gender or ethnicity plays a part in their integration process. This phenomenon is also visible in the case of racialized Francophone girls, who may “encounter challenges in terms of academic, social and economic opportunities”²⁵, and thus experience various “complex forms of oppression that marginalize Francophone women who find themselves in positions at the intersection of one or more other axes of domination”²⁶. These situations can lead Francophone immigrant girls and women to face a whole series of challenges as part of their integration journey. These “include being ‘other’ in the Francophone community, racism, institutional discrimination, misunderstanding of their situation by the host community, learning English, professional integration, family health, the discontinuity between multiculturalist ideology and practical applications”²⁷. Some immigrant women may have also “experienced major traumas in their region of origin and continue to face various situations of discrimination in their host community”²⁸, and then be confronted with the difficulty of finding Francophone and/or culturally adapted resources that can support them through the recovery process.

One observation emerges from the situation of Francophone immigrant women with regard to institutional services: These do not meet the heterogeneous needs of immigrant women whose cultural backgrounds are rich and diverse.

²⁵ Comité consultatif national en établissement francophone - CCNÉF, p. 34.

²⁶ Levesque, A.

²⁷ Melançon, J., Kikulwe, D., Akinpelu, M., et al., p. 65.

²⁸ CCNÉF, p. 34.

²⁹ Canada Senate, p. 31.

³⁰ Ba (2020), p. 17.



There is a need to develop and implement “gender-sensitive and diversity-sensitive policies, strategies and programs throughout the entire immigration ecosystem”²⁹ in partnership with immigrant communities and women. Women who settle within OLMCs often do so along three distinct pathways:

- **Voluntary: on their own initiative to improve their living conditions and those of their family;**
- **Involuntary: for reasons beyond their personal control, such as following a spouse or exile from their homeland;**
- **Educational: coming to Canada to study and deciding to stay.**³⁰

Yet the policies that govern programs and services for immigrants do not take into account the mental burden and issues of intersectionality experienced by women. Failing to sufficiently address these issues results in a number of inadequacies in the Francophone immigration ecosystem in OLMCs.

In keeping with Beaulieu's perspective, there are disparities between needs and benefits in five key areas of women's lives:

- 
- rights;**
 - community life;**
 - family life;**
 - health and well-being;
and,**
 - productive capacity, referred to
as economic integration.**

It goes without saying that, in the absence of evidence-based data to evaluate these elements, this situation undermines equity in the immigration process between men and women.

Academic research suggests several possible solutions³¹:

- 1 Increase funding for organizations responsible for integrating Francophone immigrant women;**
- 2 Support the creation of forums where immigrant women could:**
 - draw inspiration from the experience of others;
 - develop a network;
 - express themselves without the presence of their family; and,
 - share positive experiences and immigration success stories.
- 3 Access evidence-based data by collecting data in collaboration with all federal ministries to better understand the profile of immigrant populations.³²**

³¹ CCNÉF, p. 37.

³² Canada Senate, p. 47.

Economic Integration

“The (Canadian) government recognizes that immigration plays an important role in sustaining the vitality of Francophone minority communities across the country”³³.



The Canadian government points out that “economic immigrants are educated, fill targeted labour and skills gaps, contribute to innovation and diversity in the workplace, and are able to integrate easily into the Canadian workforce”³⁴.

In 2020, census data recorded nearly 4,000 Francophone permanent residents outside Quebec in the economic immigration category. This represents about 71% of all French-speaking immigrant admissions outside Quebec”³⁵.



The Canadian government's commitment to promoting the French language includes its Francophone immigration strategy. This strategy “aims to achieve three main objectives to support the vitality of Francophone communities [including] supporting the integration and retention of French-speaking newcomers and building the capacities of Francophone communities”³⁶. However, studies highlight several challenges in terms of the integration and employability of Francophone immigrants in minority settings.

A number of obstacles limit the integration of Francophone immigrants into minority communities, regardless of their gender identity. Non-recognition of foreign diplomas and professional experience, lack of work experience in Canada,³⁷ prejudice linked to immigrant status³⁸ and limited proficiency in one of the two official languages are just some of the challenges they have to overcome. The result is exclusion and inequality.³⁹ The presence of socio-professional barriers is “one of the causes of the socio-economic difficulties generally experienced by [immigrants]”⁴⁰.

³³ IRCC (2022).

³⁴ IRCC (2022).

³⁵ IRCC (2022).

³⁶ IRCC (2019), p. 3.

³⁷ Balongi, p. 21.

³⁸ CCNÉF, p. 21.

³⁹ Luxama, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Mulatris, p. 75.

Securing quality employment for Francophone immigrants in minority settings is often crucial to their integration into the community.⁴¹ It is important to point out that, generally speaking, “the economic integration of immigrant women [...] is less studied than that of men [notably because] the main target of integration policies is the integration of selected immigrants, who are predominantly men, while women arrived (in the past) more often with the status of spouse and dependent”⁴².

Immigrant women are “further weakened by the multiplicity of systems of oppression associated to gender, race, culture and religion, as well as social class, which exacerbates their vulnerabilities”⁴³.



Several factors must be considered when integrating Francophone immigrant women into the job market in a minority language context.

These can be divided into three areas⁴⁴:



Table 1 provides a non-exhaustive summary of the obstacles faced by women. It links the possible consequences associated with each obstacle and identifies the coping strategies adopted by women. The report will now look at the issues introduced individually in the following chapters.

41 CCNÉF, p. 21.

42 Houle, p. 48.

43 Manaï, p. 2.

44 Ba, p. 19.

Table 1

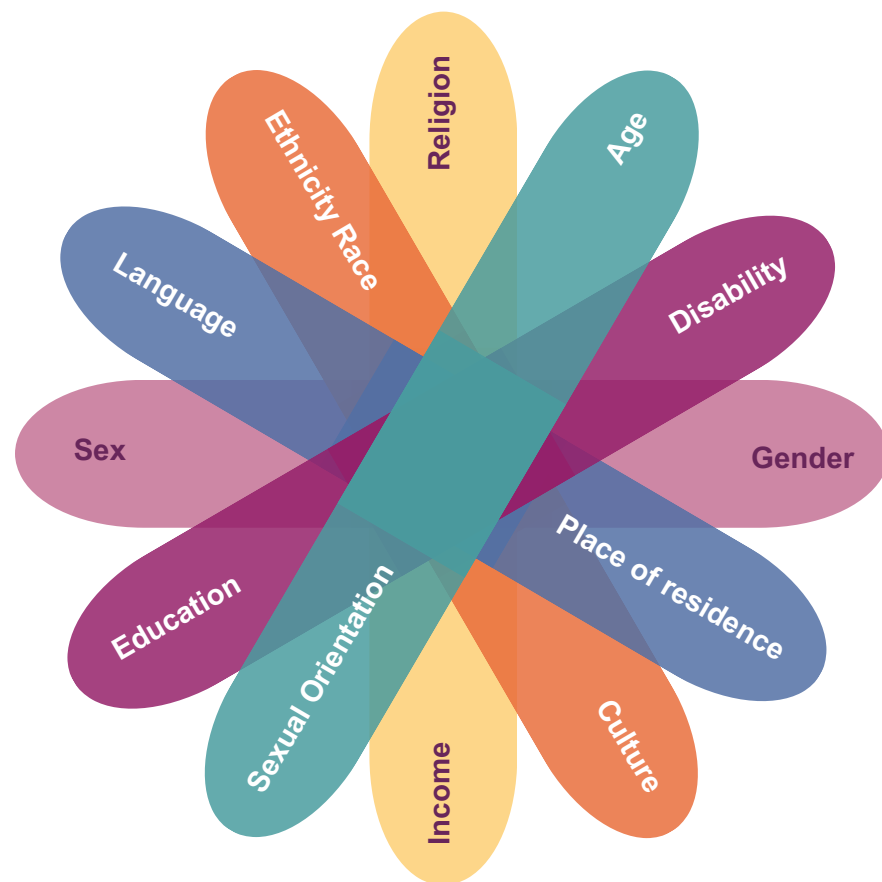
Obstacles encountered by French-speaking immigrant women in minority situations according to different spheres.

Aeras	Obstacles	Possibles Consequences	Strategies
Personal	Cultural Shock	Exclusion	
Personal/ Professional	Family Management	- Reconciling work, family and integration - Isolation - Access to daycare - Intimate partner violence	- Offer family support - Create a support network - Low-cost daycare - Address intimate partner violence
Professional	Limited Command of English	- Difficulty entering the job market - Language barriers to integrate into the host community	Provide better access to English courses
	Migration Status	- First job that does not reflect their skills and work experience - Job insecurity - Migration trauma	- Get to know the Canadian work culture - Participate in a social network - Community involvement
	No Canadian Work Experience	- Lack of work references - Financial insecurity - Accepting a job below one's skills level	- Mentoring - Start one's own business
	No recognition of prior learning	- Devaluation of skills - Socio-economic difficulties	Return to school
	Discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism, intersectionality, stereotyping)	- Low self-esteem - Health issues - Working harder/Being faultless	Build emotional resilience
Political	Limited Proficiency in English	- Difficulty obtaining information or services from different levels of government - Isolation	Seek support from a community organization
	Lack of Integration into Local and Canadian Society	- Adaptation - Isolation	Offer local programs

Sources : Luxama (2023), CCNEF (2023), Balongi (2021), Mulatris (2010), Mesana and Forest (2020)

Chapter 1: Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

Objective 1: With GBA+, design holistic, inclusive and tailored policies, resulting in specific programs for Francophone immigrant women in minority settings.



Context

Internationally recognized, gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) is a systematic method of assessing gender differences and inequalities in various areas of society. This approach aims to identify, understand and address disparities between men and women, focusing on policies, programs and practices.

Basic GBA is an essential tool for moving towards gender equality by identifying and rectifying systemic inequalities. It helps to ensure that policies and practices do not reinforce gender stereotypes, but instead promote gender equity. This approach is widely used in the fields of development, human rights and governance.

When the plus is added to GBA (GBA+), this is a recognition that groups of people are not homogeneous. Human experiences are shaped by the many realities of their identities, the context of those realities and their own experiences. Each person has numerous identity factors that intersect and create who they are. This is the “plus” which aims to examine the intersection between a group of people. For example, in a group of women, the reality of each individual can be quite varied. A GBA+ analysis with such a group can lead to an examination of various personal characteristics beyond sex or gender, such as race, ethnicity, religion, age and physical or mental disabilities, ensuring that these factors do not restrict opportunities for success and inclusion.

In short, GBA+ is a global approach that makes it possible to:



fight against social inequalities;



reflect on gender and its various inclinations;



strive for equity;



understand the factors behind discrimination; and,



plan and implement services that provide access to the same opportunities.

GBA+ and Canada

In 1995, the Canadian government committed to using GBA+ in the development of its policies, programs and legislation. Women and Gender Equality Canada plays the lead role in the government-wide implementation of GBA+. The Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) conducts a critical review of the use of GBA+. In fact, TBS has published a guide indicating that GBA+ is the appropriate method for determining whether public policies affect women and men differently.⁴⁵

In 2011, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality modernized its approach, adding the “+” to take into account other factors shaping life experience. This ministry has also formed interdepartmental committees to encourage other ministries and agencies to share best practices and lessons learned.

In 2016, the GBA Action Plan outlined measures to support the implementation of GBA+ within government.⁴⁶

It includes measures to:

1

identify barriers;

2

strengthen GBA+ capacity;

3

increase monitoring and accountability; and,

4

report on results.

⁴⁵ Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (2019).

⁴⁶ Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016-2020).

Currently, in principle, all federal government employees must integrate GBA+ into their work to ensure better equality for Canadians, making them more sensitive to specific circumstances and needs; that is, to intersectional challenges. Moreover, “[the] government recently renewed its commitment to GBA+, and is promoting the use of this tool in all federal ministries”⁴⁷.

Canadian Immigration⁴⁸

Canada's immigrant population is growing, according to estimates from the National Household Survey (2011), which counted 3,544,400 immigrant women, making up 21% of the country's female population, as shown in graph 7 below. This is the highest proportion of immigrant women in the Canadian female population in a century. If these trends continue, Canada could have around 11.1 million immigrants by 2031. Of these, some 5.8 million (52%) would be women and girls, representing 27% of Canada's female population.

The profile of immigrant women has changed dramatically over the past 50 years. Before 1971, the majority of women and girls who immigrated to Canada came from Europe (78%). In 2011, over 61% of immigrant women were members of a visible minority, compared to 19% of the total female population.

Furthermore, a change in the proportion of women immigrants has been observed over the last century. In 2004, women and girls accounted for 45% of recognized refugees in Canada. Since then, this proportion has risen, and by 2013, 50% of recognized refugees were female.

When looking at the family situation of immigrant women, it differs somewhat from that of Canadian-born women. In 2011, 57% of immigrant women aged 15 and over lived with their spouse, 4% with their common-law partner. A further 10% headed a single-parent family, and 10% lived with their parents or grandparents.

Indeed, Canadian-born women were less likely to live with a spouse (42%) and more likely to live with a common-law partner (13%). This situation was observed in all age groups, but the most significant gap was in the 15-24 age group, where immigrant women were 3.4 times more likely than Canadian-born women to be living with a spouse. Conversely, Canadian-born women aged 15 to 24 were 3.3 times more likely to live with a common-law partner.

⁴⁷ Gender-based Analysis Plus, Statistics Canada.

⁴⁸ All the data collected in this section comes from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>.



In addition, immigrant women were more likely to be single mothers than Canadian-born women (10% vs. 8%). This discrepancy was most pronounced among women aged 55 and over.⁴⁹

The collection of comparative data is essential in order to fully understand the living conditions of Francophone immigrant women versus Canadian-born women. At the time of the writing of this report, the most recent comparative data available is over ten years old. However, this data does present a clear differential of living experiences between these two groups.

There is a marked gap between the education and employment of immigrants. In 2011, 49% of employed immigrant women with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed in jobs for which no diploma was generally required.

⁴⁹ Hudon, Tamara (2015).

⁵⁰ Houle, R., and Lahouaria, Y. (2010).

⁵¹ Statistics Canada (2013), Proportion of eligible voters who voted, by sex and immigrant status, Canada, Canada.

It can be difficult for new arrivals to find employment in Canada due to many factors. Aside from language issues and the complications of settling in a new country, immigrants also encounter difficulties having their educational credentials and work experience acquired abroad recognized by Canadian employers.⁵⁰

Getting involved in an association or organization allows people to broaden their social network, including building professional connections. In 2013, immigrant women (61%) were less likely than Canadian-born women (67%) to be members or participate in the activities of an association or organization. However, the differences that emerge are in the choice of organization type. Immigrant women were more likely than Canadian-born women to have taken part in the activities of a religious group (22% vs. 15%). Civic engagement is also measured in terms of voting participation in elections. At federal level,⁵¹ there is a lower turnout among immigrant women (77%) than among Canadian-born women. At the provincial level, the voting participation levels are 75% versus 83%. And at the municipal level, there's a significant decrease in immigrant women's participation which is at 62% compared with 69% for Canadian-born women.



According to Statistics Canada, the female labour force in Canada rose from 8.1 million women aged 15 and over in 2006 to 8.5 million in 2011⁵², of whom 1.9 million were immigrants, compared to 1.7 million in 2006. In 2011, the participation rate of immigrant women (57%) was lower than that of Canadian-born women (63%). In the main working age group (25-54), 84% of Canadian-born women were part of the labour force, compared to 76% of immigrant women. This gap narrows with age.



Overall, in 2010, immigrant women earned less than Canadian-born women. Those aged 15 and over who had worked full-time for a full year had a median income of \$40,710, or \$2,065 less than Canadian-born women. However, differences in employment income differed by age group.

In addition, immigrant women had a lower median employment income than immigrant men. They receive 81% of the median employment income of immigrant men in the same age group.

The 2011 National Household Survey shows that 30% of immigrant women declared English or French as their mother tongue. It is reasonable to assume a degree of retention in their choice of official language. Among women who immigrated between 1991 and 2000 and declared French as their mother tongue, the proportion who said they used French most often at home changed little, rising from 82% in 2001 to 85% in 2011. However, it should be noted that no statistical cross-referencing between linguistic diversity and other identity factors is available. Therefore, the exact language profile of Francophone immigrant women in Canada remains unknown.

Typical Respondent Profile in the Persona Sample

Francophone immigrant woman living in an urban area in western Canada,⁵³ aged between 30 and 44. She holds a bachelor's degree and is married with children with an average age of 7.4 years old. Originally from Africa, she arrived in Canada less than 6 years ago and works full-time.⁵⁴ As the applicant, she is responsible⁵⁵ for the immigration process for the family. She arrived in Canada via the permanent resident program and currently has permanent resident status or is a Canadian citizen.⁵⁶ She has had to deal with several issues related to GBA+, including being racialized, practices a religion other than Christianity and living in a precarious financial situation.

⁵² Excludes non-permanent residents.

⁵³ 57% of respondents were from British Columbia; Alberta; Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

⁵⁴ 59%.

⁵⁵ 77%.

⁵⁶ 83%.

The main difficulties encountered by a typical respondent include:

- ▶ **access to professional services;**
- ▶ **access to housing;**
- ▶ **access to reproductive health care;**
- ▶ **access to health services;**
- ▶ **access to employability services; and,**
- ▶ **access to childcare services.**



The main obstacles encountered in accessing and obtaining services in French are language barriers, Canadian economic conditions and access to sources of information. Regarding employment, the typical respondent has difficulties with the following factors:

- ▶ **work culture;**
- ▶ **job search support services;**
- ▶ **language barrier;**
- ▶ **lack of Canadian experience;**
- ▶ **recognition of diplomas and experience in their country of origin; and,**
- ▶ **finding a job that matches their skills.**

Women living with intersectional circumstance have issues with the following, in order of importance from most to least.

-  **health services;**
-  **family support services;**
-  **psychological well-being and mental health;**
-  **employment services;**
-  **access to housing;**
-  **cultural integration assistance; and,**
-  **professional training services.**

Difference in level of difficulty (GBA+)

Women living with intersectional circumstances experience more difficulties than other respondents accessing resources in the following areas:



The same is true of barriers to **access and availability of services in French**:

- ▶ **limited access to information sources;**
over 11%
- ▶ **travel distances;**
over 9%
- ▶ **discrimination and prejudice.**
over 7%

With regard to **access to employment**, women living with multiple challenges face greater hardship than other respondents in the following areas:

- ▶ **discrimination related to physical or mental disability;**
over 40%
- ▶ **discrimination based on gender/sex;**
over 27%
- ▶ **difficulty with work culture;**
over 18%
- ▶ **discrimination based on religion;**
over 17%
- ▶ **obtaining job-search support services.**
over 9%



Barriers to **entrepreneurship** reveal greater difficulty in the following areas:



lack of initial funding;
over 11%



time and workload management;
over 6%



lack of self-confidence;
over 5%

In short, there are disparities in the level of difficulty faced by women living with intersectional circumstances compared to the overall group of respondents. It is important to take this into account in a GBA+ analysis of the immigration process.

Key Steps for Implementing GBA+

The data gathered during these consultations clearly show the importance of integrating GBA+ into the implementation of programs and services, as well as into IRCC policies and agreements with the provinces and territories, and with non-governmental stakeholders.

To integrate GBA+ into a program, service or policy, certain fundamental questions must be asked by those responsible for implementing the national strategy for immigrant women.

■ **Does the policy/service/program encourage everyone to participate? Mitigate barriers?**

■ **Does the policy/service/program have discriminatory outcomes (intended or unintended)? Are they having a positive or negative impact on immigrant women?**

It's well known that Francophone immigrant women living in linguistic minority settings experience intersectionality at its core: as immigrants, as Francophones, and as a linguistic minority. We also know, from current consultations, that they experience other realities too, such as being mothers, racialized, and practicing a religion other than Christianity. Therefore, to ensure the integration of Francophone immigrant women, it is important to build programs with full understanding of these realities. It is essential that GBA+ aims to integrate diverse gender perspectives at all levels of decision-making. Five key steps are required in implementing GBA+ to ensure the inclusive integration of Francophone immigrant women.

This report introduces the key ideas of the first five stages.⁵⁷



These first stages outline the importance of evaluating the process to identify the types of immigrant women to be supported in the initiatives. It is also essential to collect data that can help reduce inequalities and strengthen efforts to fully integrate Francophone immigrant women in Canada. Evaluation not only helps to identify data gaps but also to find alternatives to undesired outcomes.

Women's Organizations

In short, it is crucial to actively involve organizations that support Francophone immigrant women in program implementation. These organizations possess in-depth knowledge of the unique challenges these women face and are well positioned to create targeted initiatives. By collaborating closely with them, policymakers can leverage their skills and insights to develop policies that genuinely address the needs of Francophone immigrant women.

Women-Specific Programs

Based on the data gathered in this study, this report is intended, at least in part, to serve as a guide for the initial five steps in implementing GBA+. The key takeaway is the need to create programs specifically for women within the context of Francophone immigration to minority communities. The next chapters outline objectives for each phase of the immigration journey, focusing on applying GBA+ and reducing intersectional challenges and barriers faced by women.

⁵⁷ Source: <https://femmes-egalite-genres.canada.ca/fr/analyse-comparative-entre-sexes-plus/microlecons-videos/acsplus-etape-par-etape.html>.

Chapter 2: By, For and With Francophone Women

The participation of women and the groups that represent them is crucial in the design, implementation and evaluation of immigration policies for several important reasons. These include:



Diversity of Perspectives:

Women bring unique perspectives to immigration issues, often different from those of men due to their life experiences, family roles and social interactions. Their participation ensures a broader consideration of the needs, challenges and priorities of immigrant communities.



Policy Effectiveness:

Involving women in all stages of the policy process, from design to evaluation, leads to more effective and tailored policies. Their participation makes it possible to better understand the real needs of immigrant communities, and to identify more relevant and sustainable solutions.



Equitable Representation:

Immigration policies disproportionately affect women, whether as immigrant women themselves or as members of immigrant families. Their inclusion in the decision-making process ensures equitable representation and a voice in decisions that directly affect them.



Fight Against Unequal Power Struggles:

Historically, immigration policies have often been developed and implemented by men, leading to biased outcomes and gender disparities. By encouraging the participation of women and the groups that represent them, these unequal power structures are challenged, leading to a more equitable and inclusive society.



Social Justice:

The lack of women's participation in immigration policies can perpetuate existing gender inequalities and create new forms of marginalization. By enabling their active involvement, policies can be designed to promote gender equality and reduce specific immigration barriers faced by women.



In conclusion, the participation of women and groups representing them in immigration policies is essential not only to guarantee fair and effective policies, but also to combat the unequal power structures that persist in society. By adopting an approach “by, for and with Francophone women”, a more inclusive democracy and the more equitable management of immigration-related challenges can be fostered.

It is crucial that women and the organizations that represent them are not only involved in the design of immigration policies and programs, but also in their evaluation. Including their perspective throughout the process ensures a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of the real impact of these policies on women and marginalized groups. Their participation helps to identify gaps, successes and challenges, as well as the adjustments needed to continually improve policies and programs. This in turn strengthens the legitimacy and credibility of evaluation processes, ensuring that they truly reflect immigrant women's experiences and needs. Ultimately, an inclusive evaluation led by women and their representatives helps to steer policies and programs towards greater gender equality, social justice and a better response to the diverse needs of migrant communities.



Objective 2: By, For and With Francophone Women and the Organizations Representing Them.

A key goal would be to establish formal and inclusive mechanisms that allow women and the organizations that represent them to actively participate in all stages of the immigration policy and programming process, including design, implementation and evaluation. This could involve creating regular consultation forums, setting up specific working groups on gender and immigration issues, and allocating adequate resources to support their effective participation. The ultimate aim would be to ensure that immigration policies and programs are responsive and sensitive to the complex and diverse needs of immigrant women, thereby promoting a fairer and more inclusive society for all.

Here are a few mechanisms that could be implemented to ensure the active participation of women and the organizations representing them in the immigration policy and programming processes:

Setting up Work Groups on Gender and Immigration

Establish specific work groups made up of immigrant women, representatives of women's organizations and gender experts to address issues unique to women in the context of immigration, and to develop policy recommendations.

Securing a Participatory Budget

Allocate a portion of the immigration budget specifically for initiatives focused on Francophone immigrant women, allowing women and the organizations that represent them to actively participate in decision-making on the allocation of resources.

Organize Regular Consultation Forums

Convene regular consultation meetings where Francophone immigrant women and the organizations that represent them can express their needs, concerns and ideas regarding immigration policies and programs.



Incorporate GBA+ Best Practices

Inspired by the mobilizing practices of the Francophone Immigration Networks (FIN) and in partnership with feminist organizations, the AFFC can bring together projects and best practices inspired by GBA+ in order to showcase and raise awareness of inspiring field projects.

Below is a list of innovative projects and best practices among francophone women's organizations in Canada to assist new arrivals:

- Removing employment barriers for Muslim women. Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)
- Civic Action - Francophone Immigrant Women (ACFIF). Mouvement ontarien pour les femmes immigrantes francophones (MOFIF)
- Awareness tools against violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. Mouvement ontarien pour les femmes immigrantes francophones (MOFIF)
- Knowledge of the legal system. Oasis Women's Centre
- Couture Petits Points Sewing (Emploi-CPPS)
- Training and pre-employment support, including digital literacy. Women in Resource Development Inc.

Develop Skills to Work with Women

Develop capacities and retain skills within territories in order to respond and adapt activities for women, all with a flexible approach that is open to socio-cultural realities. The AFFC develops training guides and tools with a feminist lens, aimed at settlement organizations and Francophone immigration networks (RIFs), to better equip them to welcome immigrant women and better integrate them into Francophone communities in a minority setting.

Establish Gender and Immigration Advisory Committees

Establish formal advisory committees comprising government representatives, civil society and women's organizations to provide guidance on gender issues in immigration policies and programs.

It is important to share existing resources to a broader audience. Gender-specific guides have been developed by us on a range of topics, including: community leadership; the mental burden of immigrant women in Canada; and, mentoring for Francophone immigrant women. These tools can be adapted to the social and cultural context of different provinces and territories not involved in the initial project.

Some organizations that could benefit with access to these resources are:

■ **Les Essentielles (Yukon)**

■ **Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique - RFCB (British Columbia)**

■ **Pluri-elles (Manitoba)**

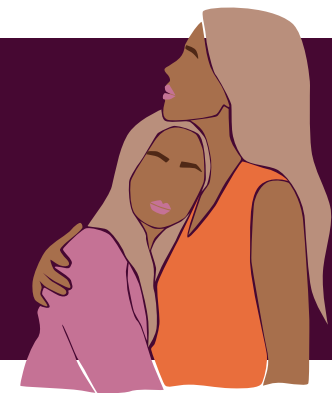
■ **Mouvement ontarien pour les femmes immigrantes francophones - MOFIF (Ontario)**

■ **Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse - FFANE (Nova Scotia)**

By implementing these and similar mechanisms, it is possible to ensure the meaningful participation of women and their representatives in the development and implementation of immigration policies and programs.

Chapter 3: Gender-Specific Data⁵⁸

Objective 3: Adopt a society-wide, government-wide approach to data collection, analysis and evaluation. Expand data collection to include GBA+ to inform immigration policy and practice.



Disaggregating migration data by sex and gender is crucial to informing migration policy to take account of the diverse realities of immigrant people. This approach, which breaks down data to allow comparisons between non-homogeneous groups, is commonly carried out by sex. However, a breakdown by gender can also reveal the specific socio-economic realities of women and people of different genders, thereby helping to fight against gender discrimination.

Data are “disaggregated” when they break down large population groups to enable comparisons between categories or groups of people who are not homogeneous. Disaggregation makes it possible to measure the variability of a population⁵⁹.

Ethical practices, such as transparent data sharing, exercised by data-producing organizations ultimately impact the formulation of gender-sensitive policies. These practices are also crucial for holding those in positions of political power accountable, while influencing the validation of data and data collection methods.

The limited data on individuals in the context of Francophone minority immigration to Canada indicates that the impacts on women have not been taken sufficiently into account in government policies and initiatives. Consequently, intersectional factors also undermine initiatives to combat stigmatization, stereotyping, xenophobia and discrimination against migrant people, considering gender, coupled with other characteristics such as aboriginal identity, ethnicity, disability, age or religion. This form of discrimination can result in limited access to health services and social protection, as well as increased barriers to exercising rights in general. Moreover, stigmatization and discrimination can heighten the risk of gender-based violence against women and people with differing gender identities.

By addressing these shortcomings in gender data collection, public authorities and other organizations involved will be able to promote the economic empowerment of immigrant women, as well as gender equality and the human rights of all immigrants.

⁵⁸ Gender and Migration Data (2023).

⁵⁹ Hennebry, J., H. KC and K. Williams, p. 2.

Similarly, data is almost never broken down by 2SLGBTQQIA+ identification. “Leave no one behind” is the principle at the heart of the 2030 [Sustainable Development Goals](#). People identifying as 2SLGBTQQIA+ are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and should not be left behind.

The work by Hennebry, J., H. KC and K. Williams outlines the five steps of a gender-sensitive approach to migration data.

- 1 Rethink categorization and formulate a gender-sensitive policies to guide the collection and use of migration data.**
- 2 Integrate ethical considerations into migration data collection.**
- 3 Build capacity and invest in data infrastructure.**
- 4 Collect and use migration data disaggregated by sex and, where possible, by gender.**
- 5 Adopt a society-wide and government-wide approach to data collection, analysis and evaluation, and use gender-sensitive data to inform migration policy and practice.**

Point 5 is particularly important here. It is important to encourage data sharing between different levels of government, and to strengthen competencies in the use of data within jurisdictions and government units, to stimulate research-based, evidence-informed policy analysis. This would also promote synergy and comparability between policy areas, geographical zones or sectors. Moreover, data enabling gender-sensitive and diversity-sensitive analyses of various policy areas and socio-economic factors are essential to eliminating structural gender-based inequalities and intersectional vulnerabilities, which can have detrimental effects on immigrants and refugees. Where possible, linking administrative data sources (such as those used for entry and admission processes, whether permanent or temporary) with other datasets (such as tax data, employment data or settlement services data) would allow for intersectional analysis and gender-based study and evaluation, spanning policy domains. This would facilitate a government-wide approach, needed to address the needs of policies and their impact on women and people of various gender identities, as well as policies from entry to those affecting economic integration and access to healthcare and social protection, among others.



In summary, it involves collecting and analyzing data on the gender-specific experiences, outcomes and processes of immigrants, while understanding how gender and individual identity factors influence all aspects and stages of migration. This includes motivations, itineraries, labour market integration, access to social protection, healthcare, justice and other rights such as property, return experiences and remittances. These aspects often result in unequal outcomes for people of all ages and gender identities, including income disparities, gaps in social protection, increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse, discrimination, xenophobia and health risks. Moreover, these experiences may vary according to other intersectional factors such as age, disability, ethnic or religious affiliation and indigenous identity.

In short, integrating gender data in the context of immigration allows for the design of more tailored programs, recognizing the specific challenges faced by immigrant women, particularly Francophone women. This promotes their full participation in all social, economic and cultural aspects of life. The goal is to reduce disparities, promote equality, and ensure that reception and integration policies reflect the diversity of migrant needs, thus contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.



Chapter 4: Immigration Process

Issues



Current policies, programs and services are not adapted to a GBA+ approach, and therefore to the differentiated needs of women.



The lack of coherence and coordination of the immigration process in French makes it difficult for women to find their way around.



The lack of transparency about living and working conditions in a Francophone minority context puts women and their families in a vulnerable position.



Scattered and inadequate information and visibility of available services make it difficult to access these resources.



The heavy mental burden associated with the immigration project and the family is a significant issue in women's immigration journeys.



Women face major intersectionality challenges in accessing French-language services.



The lack of gender-specific support within the immigration process have repercussions on the physical and mental health of immigrant women.



Racism, discrimination and prejudice impact women's experience in the immigration process.



Insufficient services for temporary residents increases the difficulties faced by immigrant women.

Objective 4: Deliver a broad, coherent and visible range of services in French, involving consultation in the settlement process and a specific service offering for women.

Offer an equitable immigration path for women. This requires an inclusive approach that recognizes and responds to the specific needs and challenges they may face. It means putting in place policies and programs that empower immigrant women, guarantee their safety and well-being, and promote their full participation in the host society. To achieve this, it is essential to provide integration services that take into account the intersectional circumstances of women, including their gender, immigrant status, language and culture. This can include adapted education and professional training programs, employment support services, access to gender-sensitive health and social support services, and initiatives to combat gender-based violence and discrimination.

By implementing these measures, immigrant women will benefit from a more equitable immigration path that recognizes their value, dignity and potential to contribute positively to their new society.

Here are the recommended strategies for achieving this fundamental objective:

A Coherent and Comprehensive French-Language Itinerary for Each Region

- Review the service offer in the form of an immigration process to ensure better coordination between service-providing organizations and information sharing. (See the Immigration Process Pilot Project by Region under development in Ontario)
- Assign one caseworker per woman/family to develop a trusting relationship. Personalized and confidential follow-up with cultural sensitivity, as well as for mothers, is recommended.

Recognition of the Shared Responsibility Between Organizations and Women to Foster Successful Integration

- Provide one case file for each woman and her family, to follow up on the success of her case and respond to her specific needs for all regional organizations.
- Assign one support worker per woman/family to develop a trusting relationship and ensure unified, mid-term guidance and support.

Develop Programs Based on Users Rather than Volume

- Developing programs based on users rather than volume implies an approach centered on the needs and experiences of immigrant women themselves. Rather than focusing solely on the quantity of services provided, this approach emphasizes the quality and relevance of programs to the real needs of users. This requires active listening and a deep understanding of immigrant women's challenges and aspirations, as well as their unique perspectives as members of their communities and as individuals.
- By adopting this approach, programs can be designed to be more inclusive, accessible and effective. By integrating users' perspectives into all stages of the program development process, initiatives can be better tailored to meet the unique challenges faced by immigrant women, and thus contribute to their empowerment and success in their new lives.

Provide Transparent Information on the Status of the French Language in each Province and Territory to Enable Women to Make an Informed Decision

- Provide transparent information on the state of the French language in each province and territory (education, health, community life, rights, economic life, etc.) to enable women to make an informed decision. The consultation revealed that people in minority communities are given a biased picture of life in Canada.

A Transparent Pre-Departure with Better Preparation for Canadian Life in French in a Minority Setting

- Financially support formal and informal networking online and in person, before and after departure.
- Informal networking refers here to groups on social media, such as French Facebook groups that exist for each region of the country, or those for Africans in Canada. We recommend formalizing and structuring social media groups for immigrants to provide a fluid and inclusive communication channel that includes people before departure and once they arrive. Social media are networking tools to be fostered.
- Create a comprehensive preparatory program including access to training (see next item) and better preparation for employment, such as work culture and preparation for entrepreneurship.
- Is focused on immigrant but the rest of the section is focused on actions to be taken by Canada.

Offer an Asynchronous Training Plan Available Before Departure and During the Integration Period

- Implement a comprehensive training program covering economic life, women's rights, housing rights, the justice system, authorities, finances, childcare, access to health services, Canadian life with other relevant topics.
- Update the training program, which should be revised every two years to ensure that content is in line with reality.
- Develop a comprehensive training program featuring synchronized (live) question-and-answer sessions on specific themes.

Provide Transitional Housing for Women with Children to Ensure a Dignified Arrival in the Country

- Providing transitional housing for women and their families will enable them to navigate the search for suitable housing for their families. For example, the Transitional Housing Project for Newcomers and Refugees in Manitoba provides dedicated support to newly-arrived immigrants.

Given the current housing crisis in Canada, it goes without saying that French-speaking immigrant women and their families are particularly affected by this situation. Families with more than one child face a challenge on two fronts. They are particularly vulnerable to abuse and poverty.

Consolidate and Promote Information on Settlement and Integration Support Programs

- Increase financial support to promote information on French-language services by region, as access to information is difficult in some parts of the country. It is recommended to transfer responsibility for promoting services to settlement services, in order to promote the region-specific immigration pathway.
- In this context, it is recommended that financial support for orientation be increased, in order to promote a strategy of common awareness of the regional services offered and to facilitate the search for information and orientation according to needs.

Offer Diversified French-Language Services Specific to the Needs of Francophone Women

- Offer women-specific services in a variety of formats. Since women, especially mothers of young children, are vulnerable to isolation, it is recommended that services be offered in various forms: online, by telephone and on site.
- Hire on-site social workers assigned to each case during its integration (1 to 3 years), especially for those most vulnerable to isolation.

Staff of Immigration Organizations Must be Trained to Assist Women

- Guarantee appropriate interventions for immigrant women. To achieve this, the staff of immigration organizations must receive training. This training should include in-depth awareness of the intersectional issues these women may face. In addition, staff should be trained to know and communicate women's rights, recognize the signs of domestic violence or any other form of abuse, and be able to provide appropriate support, while respecting confidentiality and offering appropriate resources to help these women overcome their difficulties and integrate positively into their new living environment.

Reduce the Gap Between French- and English-Speaking Services in Terms of Economic Integration

- Implement measures to improve equitable access to resources and opportunities for Francophones. For example, this could include strengthening employment and professional training services available in French, as well as promoting francophone entrepreneurship. It is also essential to make employers aware of the benefits of linguistic diversity, and to encourage them to offer inclusive working environments where French is valued. At the same time, community economic development initiatives must be supported to strengthen the francophone entrepreneurial ecosystem and foster job creation in francophone minority communities. By doing so, it will be possible to reduce linguistic disparities in economic integration and foster more balanced and inclusive economic development for all.

Foster Talent Retention by Promoting the Successful Integration of People on Temporary Visas

- Governments can encourage talent retention and foster a diverse, skilled workforce. This can stimulate innovation and economic growth, benefiting society as a whole.

Enhance Services for Temporary Residents

- Improving services for temporary residents is essential to ensure their well-being and successful integration during their stay in a foreign country. This could include a range of measures such as increasing access to health services, improving access to education and language training, and providing resources to support their psychological and social well-being. It is also important to ensure that temporary residents have access to clear and accurate information about their rights and responsibilities, as well as the resources available to support them during their stay. By strengthening the services available to temporary residents, it is possible to contribute to their well-being and success during their stay abroad.
- Enhancing the reception of people on temporary visas can help reduce immigration costs for society by promoting the successful integration of individuals already present on the territory. By investing in effective welcoming and integration programs, governments can help people on temporary visas adapt more quickly to their new lives, find employment more easily and contribute positively to the local economy.
- Encouraging talent retention by promoting the successful integration of people on temporary visas, governments can encourage talent retention and foster a diverse, skilled workforce. This can stimulate innovation and economic growth, benefiting society as a whole.

Chapter 5: Rights

Issues



Language barriers and limited access to French-language services;



Inaccessibility of legal information in French;



Lack of knowledge on rights and the legal system due to the absence of French translation of laws in certain provinces and territories;



Access to rights, support and financial resources to access the legal system;



Vulnerability and exploitation;



Pay equity;



Domestic violence and security; and,



Discrimination.

Objective 5: Raising awareness and providing tools to strengthen the rights of French-speaking immigrant women in minority settings.

Access to Legal Information in French

- Translate federal and provincial laws into French across Canada.
- Provide access to legal information in French in all provinces and territories.

■ Creation of bilingual online portals.

■ Training of legal professionals: Encourage the training of bilingual legal professionals in all provinces and territories and promote the use of French language in courts.

■ Translation and accessibility of legal reports.

Centralize

- Centralize information to facilitate research and access relevant resources.

Equitable Access to the Justice System

- Provide support to ensure equitable access to the system and enforcement of rights.
- Identify more French-speaking lawyers and legal specialists.
- Develop French-language digital tools and a service platform featuring a search for specialists.
- Develop supports to directly help immigrant women access the justice system.

Education on Women's Rights in French

- Establish awareness and education programs on Canada's laws in French, and a dedicated service for immigrant women (e.g. short asynchronous training sessions, interactive chat or telephone line). ****Such training should be updated every two years.*
- Offer in-person and online training on rights and freedoms.
- Educate women and immigration officers on the rights of immigrant women.

Support the Creation of Discussion Forums for women, With and Without Family Members

- Create a safe environment where newcomers can report problems or abuse without fear of negative consequences to their status.

Awareness

- Raise awareness among employers about pay equity and strengthen laws in this regard.
- Raise awareness among stakeholders, law enforcement and judicial authorities about the right to French language.
- Raise awareness about the diversity of Francophone women.

Fight Against Discrimination

- Raise men's awareness of women's rights.
- Fight discrimination against French-speaking immigrant women.

Services in French for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

- Create shelters for French-speaking immigrant women dealing with violence.
- Adapt and fund shelter services to accommodate French-speaking immigrant women and their children.
- Take cultural sensitivities into account in interventions.
- Fund quotas of places in shelters, with service in French.



Explanation

The international business intelligence on the subject is clear in terms of best practice when it comes to the issue of immigrant women's rights. Policies must safeguard women's rights and safety, while aiming to ensure access to services and social rights for all women.

Immigrant women need to be well informed of their rights and obligations. To this end, they need to be supported by professionals who have the knowledge and resources to assist them in respecting their rights. One of the key elements of Sweden's migrant integration policy⁶⁰, highlighted by Darling, is equality legislation protecting migrants against discrimination.



“Migrants in Sweden have better access than migrants in many other countries to the legal system and protection against discrimination. There are many laws and regulations in Sweden that prohibit discrimination against people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality. Victims seeking justice have relatively good access to the enforcement structures of these laws”⁶¹.

In a similar fashion, Belgium has set up a program to defend the rights of foreign women. Policies to integrate immigrants can include laws to counter discrimination and fight xenophobia.

Here's what international business intelligence teaches us about current best practices:

- Policies that safeguard women's rights and safety.
- Policies that ensure immigrant women are well informed of their rights and obligations.
- Staff that are properly trained and equipped to assist them with legal matters.
- Policies must aim to ensure equitable access to social services and rights for all.
- Policies that include laws to counter discrimination and xenophobia against immigrants.
- Regulatory programs for immigrants in irregular situations.

Here are a few examples:

- An annual training program on the [“Droits des étrangers”](#) in Belgium and Switzerland.
- Brazil, with its Venezuelan refugees, has introduced laws and policies to counter discrimination and xenophobia against immigrants.
- Switzerland, where an immigrant in a low-paid job in Switzerland is paid much more than someone doing the same job in the UK.
- The [AVEVI](#) project (support for victims of domestic violence) in Belgium.
- France has introduced a new plan to counter racism, anti-Semitism and discrimination, focusing on discrimination in the labour market.

⁶⁰ Migrant Integration Policy MIPEX.

⁶¹ Darling (2017), p. 7.

Misunderstanding and Education in a Minority Setting

Limited access to French-language information sources and services in Canada's minority settings has an impact on immigrant women's lack of awareness of their rights.

As Beaulieu points out in her study, it is essential to make up for this shortcoming by promoting and educating newcomers about Canadian women's rights in all spheres, such as the right to vote, the right to security, the right to access public services and LGBTI rights.

“Create audio or video capsules on different themes and topics, such as labour law, housing law, legal equality between women and men. These training courses would also contribute to promoting women's financial independence through practical advice, among other things on financial issues and the banking system and consumer laws”⁶².

Similarly, it would be desirable for those involved in women's immigration to be equipped and trained to address gender issues, to make women aware of their rights, and to be able to guide them in a process that strengthens their rights and the protection of equality.

Support the Creation of Discussion Forums

Women's rights and the community life of immigrant women are intrinsically linked, forming a social fabric where equality and the active participation of every woman are essential. By guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights of immigrant women, the foundations of a diverse and inclusive community are built. Spaces for discussion and exchange, specifically designed for these women, play a crucial role in fostering their harmonious integration, preventing isolation and strengthening their resilience. Equitable access to resources and opportunities, as well as recognition of their contributions to community life, are elements which, combined with women's rights, forge a society where every immigrant woman can flourish and contribute fully to collective well-being. Thus, by promoting the rights of immigrant women, a dynamic community that is inclusive and respectful of diversity is nurtured.



⁶² Beaulieu, p. 2.

Chapter 6: Community Life

Issues



Cultural and Interpersonal Differences

- Since French-speaking communities are in the minority, the dominant culture is English-speaking, which has an impact on community integration and the creation of social ties.



Isolation of French-Speaking Immigrant Women

- Dispersal of French-speaking communities.
- Geographic isolation and difficulties interconnecting Francophones.
- Lack of specific support networks for Francophone women.
- Need for better social integration and networking for immigrant women.



Need to educate and raise awareness on the cultural diversity of the French-speaking world



Little visibility and few resources offered in connection with the Francophone community to immigrants before their arrival in Canada



Access to Services

- Time, childcare, distance and transportation constraints hinder access to resources and activities.

Objective 6: Promote and support networking among Francophone immigrant women in minority settings.

Ensure that the Francophone and Acadian Community is Visible, Ever-Present and Welcoming

- Extend and expand The Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative that aims to forge lasting ties between newcomers and community members. These communities work to build Francophone communities united in their diversity.⁶³

Celebrating Francophone Diversity in Francophone Communities

- Raise awareness and promote the Canadian and global French culture by celebrating cultural diversity.
- Raise awareness of cultural and linguistic differences to foster understanding and tolerance.

Promote and Support Networking Among Francophone Immigrant Women in Minority Settings

- Offer travel incentives and childcare services to encourage participation in community activities.
- Facilitate the creation of formal and informal networks by maximizing new technologies (Facebook groups, Snapchat, online co-development groups, etc.), but also taking into account generational difficulties.

⁶³ The Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. January 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.immigrationfrancophone.ca/strategie-communautaire/communautes-francophones-accueillantes/>.

⁶⁴ Bilecen and Lubbers (2021); Klarenbeek (2021).

Encourage the Creation of Discussion Forums Dedicated to Women, With and Without Their Families

Promote a Sense of Belonging

Community On-site Interventions

- Have professionals (social workers) on site to intervene according to the individual needs of women and communities. One support worker per woman/family to create a trusting relationship.

Adapted training and services

- Develop more training for community workers and adapt the service offering, according to the GBA+ approach.

Long-term Sponsorship with Volunteer Families for Ongoing Support

- Encourage long-term sponsorship. Political orientations, legal and economic and frameworks, as well as the socio-cultural diversity of a host country are determining factors for social relations within the immigrant population. Structural obstacles can sometimes hinder access to strategic networks, such as job markets. Sponsorship supports women and their families in all spheres of life and integration.⁶⁴

Explanation

An aspect often underestimated, but crucial in this field of research, is gender. Evidence shows that migrant men tend to favor extended networks when seeking support, while migrant women turn more to their immediate and extended family.⁶⁵

Furthermore, marriage and parenthood can foster more frequent interactions with new social contacts, according to studies.⁶⁶

Visible, Ever-Present and Welcoming Francophone Communities for Immigrant Women

Canada's Francophone communities in minority settings are sometimes invisible, often dispersed, inaccessible or not very inclusive. The literature highlights concerns to this effect⁶⁷. The creation of inclusive Francophone community spaces dedicated to immigrants is recommended.

Here are some of the issues raised:

- Little visibility and few resources for the Francophone community among immigrants prior to their arrival in Canada.
- Limited access for immigrants to inclusive Francophone events.
- Limited access for immigrants to activities that consider the family component.
- Limited access to inclusive francophone neighbourhoods.
- Limited consideration of the immigrant perspective within the Francophone community.
- Presence of racism in the Francophone community.

Gender disparity in access to the community also has an impact on the success of integration for the whole family. Isolation, lack of guidance and insufficient social support are major obstacles to successful immigration.

To remedy this, the creation of formal and informal networks can be encouraged and facilitated, taking into account not only the gender factor, but also the migratory context, socio-economic status and social context⁶⁸. This should involve setting up programs to encourage encounters and cultural exchange, as well as initiatives to help immigrant women better understand local social conventions and engage in community activities. Informal networks, such as collective cooking activities or a Facebook group for local immigrant women, and sponsorship and mentoring should be promoted, while taking into account the family component.

⁶⁵ Lin (2000); Hoang (2011); Riosmena and Liu (2019).

⁶⁶ Ryan and Mulholland (2014); Patulny (2015); Koelet, Van Mol and de Valk (2017); and Lubbers, Molina and McCarty (2021).

⁶⁷ CCNÉF, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Tuominen, Minna.

We can draw on examples of international best practice, such as [Neighbourhood Mothers](#) in Finland and the Agir project in France, which offers access to a range of services, including childcare and family allowance.

Here's what international business intelligence teaches us about current best practices:

- Foster social networking among immigrants.
- Recognize gender disparities in immigrant women's political involvement is essential.
- Understand the needs of each generation of immigrant women.
- Promote the preservation of native culture while encouraging acceptance of the host culture, especially for younger children.
- Promoting a sense of belonging contributes to successful integration.

Initiatives to Watch:

- In Wallonia (Belgium), the integration measures: Forem's "Primo-arrivants" initiative, French language courses, "article 60" contracts with the Centres publics d'action sociale (public social action centers), etc.
- In France, the [AGIR](#) program (access to various services, including childcare and family allowances).

The consultation reveals that 50% of respondents are racialized and 49% belong to a religion other than Christianity. It is therefore imperative to continue working towards an inclusive society, where every person, regardless of gender, origin or religion, benefits from equitable support, promoting successful and fulfilling integration.

However, promoting cultural diversity and raising awareness of the various forms of racism is a factor that should not be underestimated.

Promoting a Sense of Belonging Contributes to Successful Integration

Valuing and preserving the native culture is crucial to ensuring cultural acceptance and promoting a sense of belonging, essential to successful integration. Programs should encourage activities to preserve the native culture, while fostering acceptance of the host culture, especially for younger children. It's worth noting that International Intelligence points out that it's also crucial to understand the needs of each generation of immigrant women.

Supporting the Creation of Discussion Forums for Women

The creation of discussion forums dedicated to immigrant women is of crucial importance in preventing isolation and vulnerability, while ensuring that their rights are respected. These spaces offer a place where women can freely express themselves without the presence of family members, share their experiences and concerns, thus strengthening their emotional well-being. By fostering communication and empowerment, these environments also contribute to raising awareness and ensuring respect for their rights, thereby strengthening their position within the host society.

Finally, it is important to recognize gender disparities in the political involvement of immigrants, and to identify and overcome barriers specific to immigrant women in order to strengthen their political involvement and representation.



Customized On-site Intervention

Inspired by the concept of on-site intervention, personalized on-site intervention by social workers for newcomer women is a solution worth exploring in Francophone communities in linguistic minority settings. In order to ensure that newcomers are welcomed and listened to, an onsite approach would make it possible to reach women where they are, and avoid situations of isolation, frequently observed with mothers of young children, for example. The idea of assigning a settlement social worker, who can create a trusting relationship and guide the woman and her family by referring the case to the right people, is developed further in the next chapter.

The community life and family life of Francophone immigrant women in minority settings are closely intertwined, playing an essential role in their integration and development. At the same time, family life is a fundamental pillar for these women, where they preserve their cultural identity while adapting to the norms of the host society. The experiences shared within the community have a positive influence on family dynamics, creating a balance between the two spheres of life and thus promoting the women's overall sense of wellbeing.



Chapter 7: Family Life

"When we take on the responsibility of welcoming families to our territory, we have to make sure we have enough housing and daycare, and do what's necessary to put them in a good position to find a job worthy of their skills. It's as if Canada was bringing people in before we had the social, community and economic fabric in place to welcome them in French."

- Alberta focus group participant.



Issues



Mental Burden and Communication

- Overload of family and cultural responsibilities for immigrant women.
- Lack of promotion of existing services and appropriate communication channels.
- Lack of recognition of family support by government authorities.



Access to Housing Difficulties

- Difficult access to housing for immigrant women and their families.
- Inadequate services that do not meet the needs of immigrant families.
- Lack of transitional housing for families upon arrival. Families living in substandard housing, especially those with more than two children.
- Lack of knowledge of housing regulations, leading to abuse.



Limited Access to Daycare Services

- Shortage of daycare spaces, particularly in French-speaking settings.



Family Activities

- Need to strengthen ties between immigrant families in Francophone schools.
- Difficulty for immigrant parents to participate in community activities due to lack of childcare services. Need for programs that allow parents and children to participate in activities simultaneously.
- Need for specific support for pregnant women and new mothers.

Objective 7: Offer obstacle-free services for women by recognizing their mental burden.

Personalized Services from the Moment Families Arrive

- Assign a social worker on-site to provide personalized support and develop a trusting relationship.
- Study needs on arrival and ensure regular follow-up by this worker.
- Offer a welcoming service for families at the airport.

Adapt Activities to the Needs of Women and Mothers

- Organize activities with adapted schedules and formats.
- Offer online activities to overcome travel obstacles. Make childcare available during activities, including evenings and weekends.
- Set up a 24-hour childcare service to meet the needs of the job market.

Language Accessibility and Awareness

- Develop French-language resources to meet the needs of Francophone immigrant communities.

Financial and Political Support

- Increase the amounts granted to newcomers with families.

Transitional Housing on Arrival

- Provide new arrivals with transitional housing on arrival in Canada.
- Offer specific support to families in accessing housing.
- Educate newcomers about good housing practices and laws, as well as abusive practices.

Family Intervention and Community Networks

- Strengthen family interventions through access to French-speaking schools. Organize activities and create formal and informal networks to support families, particularly through schools.
- Consolidate the network of French-language schools and daycare services, which are places where family and community services for women need to be enhanced.

Targeted Support for Immigrant Families

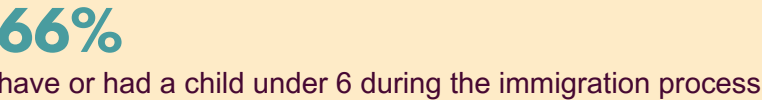
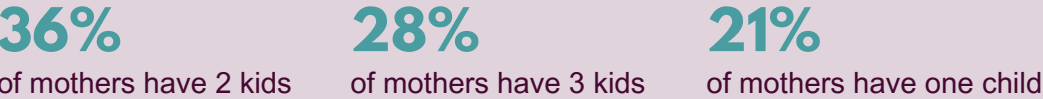
- Increase funding and recognition of tailored support initiatives.
- Offer workshops and information programs on Canadian parenting standards.

Explanation

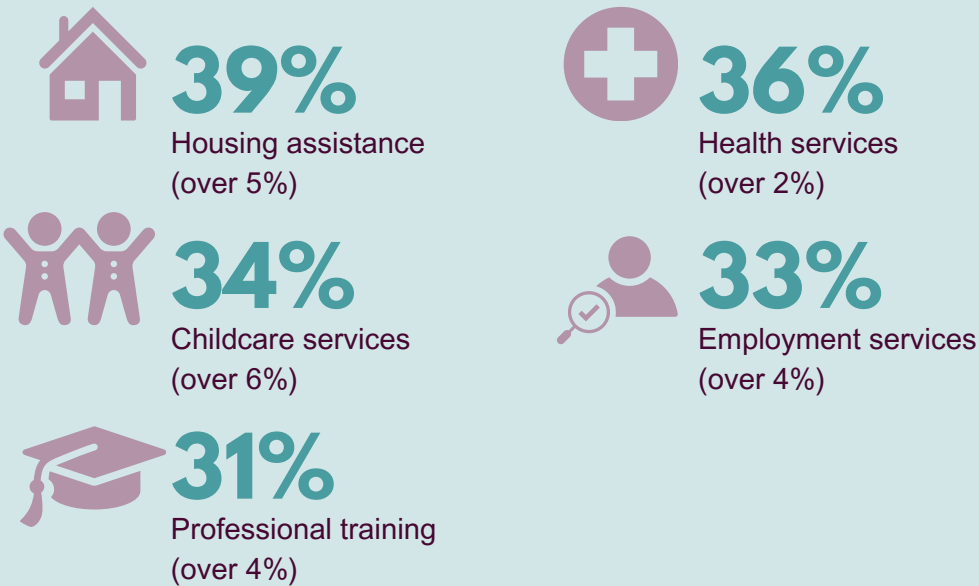
The immigration process adds to the mental burden of women, especially mothers. The success of their efforts is a determining factor in the successful integration and long-term retention of the whole family.

The results of the consultation reveal some interesting data relating to mothers.

Marital Status During Immigration to Canada



In terms of the hierarchy of challenges, immigrant mothers were confronted with intersectional challenges (the number in parentheses indicates the gap between mothers and other immigrants):



If we compare the level of obstacles faced by mothers with those faced by all respondents, we see that they face slightly higher obstacles, particularly in terms of the distance they have to travel (over 4%) to obtain services in French, and access to information (over 3%).

Review of Family Activities

Propose initiatives that promote the integration and support of immigrant women in their new community is a first step. Integrating childcare services into these activities, particularly for mothers, would enable more active participation without the worry of childcare. These childcare services could be flexible to adapt to families' specific needs.

Supporting Formal and Informal Networks

The introduction of informal gatherings alongside family activities would offer women the opportunity to forge social links in a relaxed setting, such as collective cooking sessions, community gardens and so on. These gatherings could serve as a platform for sharing experiences, solving common problems and strengthening community support. In addition, adapting services to the specific needs of mothers, such as flexible schedules and easily accessible activity venues, would help overcome obstacles to participation.

Informal networks are a positive trend in immigration. In particular, social media offers the opportunity to reach a large number of people, enabling people to exchange ideas, set up informal meetings, and ask each other questions. The online aspect provides easy access to resources, including webinars, training workshops, and discussion groups. There are many opportunities available to explore and develop for generalized networking or for targeted clientele. In fact, social media offer an opportunity to reach a large number of people, and to offer part of the service offering online (webinar, training workshop, discussion group, coffee meeting in targeted regions, etc.).

International Strategic Intelligence

International examples underline the importance of designing immigration policies that recognize and respond to the specific needs of immigrants, especially women and children.

- Policies that include educational and language support programs for immigrant parents, thus reducing the pressure on children.
- Recognizing the diversity of family structures among immigrant populations: childcare, access to education, promoting equal opportunities on the job market.
- Policies must offer empowerment programs, and social support initiatives (specific to the challenges faced by women).
- Creating integration programs that encourage communication and understanding within immigrant families.

Initiatives to Watch:

- Centre Placet at Louvain (Belgium).
- Centre Interculturel de Mons et du Borinage (Wallonie) and Local integration initiatives.
- In Flanders (Belgium), a civic integration program (AMIF) has been developed specifically for parents with low literacy skills caring for small children.
- The **AVEVI** (Accompagnement des personnes victimes de violences intrafamiliales) project in Belgium.

Chapter 8: Health and Well-Being

Issues



Access to Healthcare in French

- Limited French-language services.
- Dysfunctional interpretation and translation services in hospitals.
- Language and cultural challenges, with little sensitivity to the French-speaking world.
- Difficulty accessing reliable and accessible translation services



Women's Health Services in French

- Difficulty finding French-speaking family physicians.
- Lack of access to gynecology services in French.
- Need for information in French for pregnant women and newborns.



Language Barrier

- Difficulty communicating in the dominant local language.
- Risk of isolation due to limited language skills.
- Impact on access to services and opportunities.



Well-Being and Psychological Support

- Lack of appropriate psychological support to cope with stress of the immigration process.
- Risk of stress and social isolation.
- Need for appropriate psychological support.
- Need for community initiatives to boost mental well-being.



Equitable Access for Pregnant Women

- Lack of health services adapted for the needs of pregnant women
- Language and cultural barriers in prenatal services
- Lack of a clear understanding of medical information and legal rights by the immigrant women.

Objective 8: Improving access to French-language health care for immigrant women in minority communities.

Ensure Equitable Access by Minimizing Language and Cultural Barriers, Especially in Sexual and Reproductive Health

- Strengthen the Réseau Santé to inform and support Francophones in the healthcare system.
- Develop interpretation and translation services, including the use of artificial intelligence.
- Raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the importance of providing services in French.
- Strengthen specific services for women, particularly in the field of sexual and reproductive health.
- Facilitate access to French-language health services, particularly in gynecology and mental health.
- Establish partnerships with local schools and institutions to offer accessible health services to girls and young women.

Create an Express Program for Pregnant Women and Women with Newborns

Offer Personalized Services from the Moment Families Arrive, and Regular Follow-Up with a Support Worker to Build a Trusting Relationship

- Support women in navigating the healthcare system to ensure access to care.
- Pay special attention to the health of young girls.

Address Psychosocial Well-Being and Mental Health

- Inform immigrant women about the signs of psychological distress and the services available.
- Offer supportive listening and case management services to support the psychosocial well-being of women and their families.



Explanation

Here is a brief summary of some of the data from the consultation, which provides a portrait of the reality experienced by the Francophone immigrant women included in the sample.



34%

of respondents have experienced considerable challenges in accessing healthcare and

26%

moderate difficulty.



13%

Experience psychological distress and mental health challenges.

9%

by a family member.



27%

of respondents say they have experienced moderate challenges in accessing reproductive health care.

16%

of respondents and **20% of mothers** mention psychological distress or mental health as the main barrier to immigration.

The issues identified underline the specific challenges that Francophone immigrant women in minority communities may face in relation to their health and well-being, highlighting the need for inclusive approaches and adaptive measures to ensure their overall well-being.

Stress emerges as a prominent risk factor for the mental health of immigrants, particularly during cultural transition. Recent arrivals with lower incomes are more likely to report psychological problems and high stress levels, while negative perceptions of the settlement process are also correlated with these problems. Immigration, as a profound and non-normative life transition, requires considerable adaptation, with mental health outcomes associated with gender in particular, immigration category, region of origin and income. Women and refugees are particularly vulnerable, reiterating the importance of taking into account GBA+ considerations of socio-economic and cultural aspects to promote the mental health and well-being of recent immigrant women.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Robert, Anne-Marie, p. 27.

International Business Intelligence

- Guarantee equitable access to health services for pregnant immigrant women.
- Provide access to mental health care.
- Recognize health disparities between immigrant and native-born populations.
- Offer psychosocial support programs such as counseling, health education, etc.
- Address the challenges faced by children from immigrant families (cultural integration, mental health, mental burden, etc.).

Initiatives to Watch:

- Egypt's case by case approach to administrative facilitation (bureaucratic facilitation for Syrian refugees in the healthcare field, for example).
- Programs such as “**Pregnant in Geneva**” and “**Family Start**” (in Basel) are to be monitored.
- In the field of mental health, Switzerland also offers a wide range of programs dedicated to immigrants with mental health needs (**Association Papilio**).

Finally, it is best to equip women navigating the host region's healthcare system and set up an express program for women's reproductive health, especially in the event of pregnancy or the arrival of a newborn.



Economic Integration

STATE OF THE SITUATION

Statistics Canada data provide an overview of the economic situation of immigrant women in Canada, but do not provide data on the Francophone minority context.

“Like Canadian-born women, immigrant women had lower median employment incomes than immigrant men. The median income of \$41,187 for core working-age immigrant women was, on average, 81% of the median employment income of immigrant men of the same age”⁷⁰.

Prevalence of Low-Income Situations

In the 25-54 age group, 84% of Canadian-born women were active in the labour market, while the figure was 76% for immigrant women.

“According to the after-tax low-income measure used in the National Household Survey, in 2010, immigrant women and girls were more likely to live in low-income households than those born in Canada (...)”⁷¹.

Recent immigrant women had the highest prevalence of low income at 28%, compared to 18% for all immigrants and 15% for Canadian-born women. In contrast, the lowest prevalence of low income was found among immigrant women aged 65 and over (14%).

“This pattern [the longer the length of residence, the fewer low-income situations] was observable for immigrant women and girls in all age groups, except those aged 65 and over”⁷².

The longer an immigrant woman has lived in Canada, the less likely they are to live in a low-income situations. In 2010, for example, among recent immigrants arriving between 2006 and 2009, the prevalence of low income after tax was 28%. By contrast, this rate was lower among immigrants who arrived in the new millennium (21%) and even lower among those who arrived in the second half of the 1990s (18%). This pattern was found among immigrant women and girls in all age groups, with the exception of those aged 65 and over. The prevalence of low-income situations remained stable overall, with a slight drop only for those arriving before 1981.

⁷⁰ Hudon, Tamara (2015).

⁷¹ *Idem*.

⁷² *Idem*.

Visible Minority



11% compared to 9%

The unemployment rate of visible minority immigrant women was higher than that of their male counterparts (11% compared to 9%).

Gap Between Men and Women

“In 2014, the average employment income at entry for principal applicants in the economic category who filed a tax return in the first year after admission was \$56,000 for men, compared with \$32,000 for women”⁷³.

Immigrants in the economic category show significant differences in income by gender. Men's incomes rose by \$12,000 between 2011 and 2014, while women's increased by just \$3,000.

Women are in the majority in the caregiver category, accounting for 94% of principal applicants in 2017, reflecting the historical trend in this sector. Around a quarter of female economic immigrants are admitted as caregivers, while one in 100 male principal applicants are admitted as caregivers.⁷⁴

In 2016, immigrant women aged 25 to 54 with a post-secondary diploma in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science) had an employment rate of around 70%, compared to around 88% for non-immigrant women in this sub-population. The gap between the employment rates of immigrant and non-immigrant women widens when there are children in the household. The gap is 20% for women with three or more children, but only 8% for those with no children.⁷⁵

Representation

Recent data indicate that immigrant women are under-represented in decision-making positions, as 18% of female managers are immigrants, whereas immigrant women represent 1 in 4 Canadian workers⁷⁶.

Of the 44,360 executives identified by the *Corporations Returns Act* (CRA) from 2016 to 2018, 20,160 were successfully matched to the *Derived Record Depository* (DRD) and then to the *T1 Family File* (TIFF). Of these, 3,230 were identified as immigrants in the IMDB, representing 16.0% of all executives. Immigrant women formed the smallest group, with 660 executives (3%), followed by immigrants, with 2,570 executives (13%). Their Canadian-born counterparts were better represented in decision-making positions, with 3,890 Canadian-born women (19%) and 13,040 Canadian-born men (65%).⁷⁷

⁷³ Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2021).

⁷⁴ *Idem*.

⁷⁵ Institut de la statistique du Québec (2021), *Marché du travail et rémunération*, n° 27. August 2021.

⁷⁶ Longpré-Verret, Léa-Maude, and McKee, Ivy (2022).

⁷⁷ *Idem*.

Drop in Employment Due to the Pandemic

In 2020, only immigrant men saw their employment increase compared to 2019. All jobs were full-time, with part-time employment down slightly. Employment rose by 1.9%, but the larger increase in the labour force (+5.3%) pushed their unemployment rate up from 6.6% in 2019 to 9.6% in 2020. For immigrant women, employment fell by 3.2%. Although full-time employment increased, part-time job losses were higher. Unemployment among immigrant women rose from 7.4% to 12.0%.⁷⁸

Women who have recently immigrated to Canada have also experienced an increase in job losses due to the pandemic. Statistics show that recent immigrant women experienced the greatest increase in the rate of transition to unemployment at the start of the pandemic. Nearly 20% of recent immigrant women employed in March 2020 were not employed in April 2020, which is 7% higher than for Canadian-born women.



⁷⁸ Institut de la statistique du Québec, (2021) Marché du travail et rémunération. N° 27. August 2021.
⁷⁹ Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2021).

Entrepreneurship



Men are by far the majority of immigrant business owners, making up more than two-thirds of owners in 2010. This may be explained by the historically masculine nature of business ownership, and by men's prior experience as owners before immigrating to Canada. Women's family responsibilities and caregiving roles may also contribute to their under-representation in this immigration category.⁷⁹

In the context of the public consultation carried out as part of this study, it is interesting to note the following data in response to the following question:

What is your current professional situation and what is your desired situation?





Current Job Compared to Desired Job
Fields of Study



44%
of respondents studied in
social sciences and social
services.



6%
of respondents studied
law and legal sciences.



By asking the respondents about their ambitions, we can see some interesting future trends:

-25%
wish to leave the education sector.

+25%
wish to work in media and
entertainment.

-10%
wish to leave the social sciences and
social services sector.

+29%
wish to work in engineering.

+4%
wish to work in healthcare.

+44%
wish to work in law and justice.

+27%
want to work in agriculture and food.

+68%
wish to work in environment
and energy.

Chapter 9: Employment Integration

“Despite these high education levels, and regardless of the country in which they obtained their diploma, a higher percentage of women continue to be persistently overqualified than their male counterparts, a situation that affects visible minority women to a greater extent”⁸⁰.

Issues



Lack of Transparency and Communication in the Integration Process

- Need for pre-departure training on Canadian work culture, particularly in minority communities.
- Inform women about the value of French on the job market in their chosen province or territory, and the considerations involved in economic integration.



Recognition of Professional Qualifications

- Difficulty finding a job that matches skills.
- Difficulties in obtaining recognition for foreign diplomas. Barriers to prior learning recognition.
- Need for financial support to pursue studies or training and/or set up paid internships in businesses to ensure recognition of prior learning.



Employer Discrimination and Prejudice Against Francophone Immigrant Women

- Limited perception of employment options and persistent gender stereotypes.
- Employers need to be made aware of foreign experience and how to obtain professional references abroad.
- Employers need to be made aware of gender and race discrimination.



Access to Employment

- Lack of appropriate mentoring and accompanying programs.
- Language and cultural barriers to job search.
- Difficulty finding a job that matches skills and professional identity.
- Misperception of the job market and job requirements.



Employment Support

- Need for adapted linguistic assistance and employment integration programs.
- Inequalities in English- and French-language support programs.
- Support programs adapted to women's qualifications and immigration status.

Objective 9: Ensure effective integration into the workforce that respects skills and professional identity

Setting up an employment preparation service at the pre-departure stage

- Provide women with transparent information about the minority context and prepare them for this context in relation to economic integration.
- Organize pre-departure training on the Canadian economic and financial system and work culture.
- Provide employment support at the pre-departure stage.
- Offer English courses before arrival to facilitate professional integration.

Facilitate recognition of foreign qualifications and professional experience

- Facilitate recognition of academic credentials and professional experience. Set up recognition programs for prior learning that are quick and accessible on the job market, outside the school system.
- Create accelerated training courses for the recognition of prior learning that could be started before departure.
- Work with professional associations to facilitate recognition of prior learning.
- Provide financial support to facilitate integration into professional associations.

Fund internships intended as a first Canadian experience for immigrant women

- Obtain and maintain employment in their field of expertise.
- Establish partnerships with businesses to offer professional internships.
- Set up a support program for first work experience in Canada.

Organize networking and support for Francophone and Canadian employers

- Connect immigrant women with Francophone and Canadian employers for employment and mentoring opportunities, with resources to facilitate their integration.

Actively address pay inequalities through equitable policies and programs

- Guarantee employment equity by raising awareness and implementing legislation accordingly, as outlined in Chapter 5.

Targeted mentoring and accompanying programs

- Set up mentoring programs tailored to Francophone immigrant women.
- Offer more sustained support tailored to their needs.

Raising employer awareness and promoting diversity in the workplace

- Raise employers' awareness about the skills of immigrant women. Promote diversity in the workplace and demystifying prejudice.
- Provide employers with the tools they need to recognize foreign experience and references.

Accompaniment to help integrate into the workforce while respecting professional identity

- Providing employment support tailored to professional identity.

Collaboration and coordination of stakeholders

- Strengthen collaboration between organizations and employers.
- Strengthen coordination between employment integration organizations.



Explanation

A number of obstacles seem to limit the integration of immigrants, regardless of their gender identity. Non-recognition of foreign diplomas, lack of work experience on Canadian soil⁸¹, prejudice linked to immigrant status⁸² and limited proficiency in one of the two official languages are among the challenges faced by French-speaking immigrants. The result is the creation of a situation of exclusion and inequality.⁸³ The presence of socio-professional barriers represents “one of the causes of the socio-economic difficulties generally experienced by [immigrants]”⁸⁴.

“In 2011, 49% of employed immigrant women with a bachelor's degree or higher held a job for which no diploma was generally required, and they were more likely than Canadian-born women to work part-time”⁸⁵.

This is an alarming fact, especially as obtaining quality employment for Francophone immigrant women in minority communities is often crucial to their integration into the community⁸⁶. It is important to note that, in 2015, “the economic integration of immigrant women [...] is less studied than that of men [notably because] the main target of integration policies is the integration of selected immigrants, who are mostly men, whereas at this time women more often arrive with the status of spouse and dependent”⁸⁷. It is important to note that 72% of respondents to the 2023 consultation were applicants, while only 28% were dependents. This illustrates the importance of including women as a separate economic category.

Moreover, immigrant women are further weakened by the multiplicity of systems of oppression linked to gender, race, culture, religion and social class, which exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

⁸¹ Balongi (2021), p. 21.

⁸² CCÉF (2023), p. 21.

⁸³ Luxama (2023), p.18.

⁸⁴ Mulatris (2010), p. 75.

⁸⁵ Houle, René and Lahouaria Yssad (2010).

⁸⁶ CCÉF (2023), p. 21.

⁸⁷ Houle (2015), p. 48.



Consultation Highlights

45%

found it very difficult to find a job matching their skills.

38%

have encountered many difficulties in obtaining recognition of their work experience in their country of origin.

37%

have found it very difficult to get their first work experience in Canada.

23%

found the language barrier particularly difficult.

26%

have encountered moderate difficulties and 22% have had a lot of difficulty obtaining support services for job searches.

34%

of respondents mention economic conditions as the main barrier in their immigration process, and this figure rises to 43% for mothers with children.

20% to 24%

of mothers mention financial barriers as the main obstacles.

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and Professional Experience

It is important to facilitate access to the job market and take into account the construction of social identity and the acquisition of autonomy through employment. To achieve this, employers need to develop more detailed knowledge of the prior skills and experience immigrants, targeted by Canada's immigration policy, bring to the workplace.

“The extent of this inconsistency is such that the issue of non-recognition of the prior learning/skills of foreign-trained individuals is one of the most reported themes, in addition to the literature devoted to immigration.⁸⁸ Most analyses devoted to this subject target the consequences of this socio-professional barrier and describe it as one of the causes of the socio-economic difficulties generally experienced by immigrants”⁸⁹.

Support Program for Women's First Canadian Experience

It is important to encourage initiatives to offer paid internships in their field to immigrant women. The youth programs of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which offer financial support to young people and employers for professional internships, are a good example. The Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse (OFQJ) is also interesting in this respect. These programs are two good examples of initiatives that can be extended to Francophone immigrant women in minority communities across Canada.

⁸⁸ Watt and Bloom (2001); CIC (2002); Cabatoff (2003); Tran (2004); De Voretz 2005; Renaud and Cayn (2006); Bernard (2008).

⁸⁹ Mulatris, Paulin (2010).

Added to this is a mentoring program tailored to women to guide individuals in their cultural adaptation to the Canadian professional environment.

Finally, several respondents mentioned the need for more specialized job search services, as Beaulieu pointed out in 2021:⁹⁰ Many immigrant women need support to learn how to write an effective CV and cover letter so they can market their professional skills and experience in the Canadian job market. Few, if any, services are available to help them enter the job market. These women face a number of barriers to career advancement and a contribution to Canadian society worthy of their skills.

Networking and Support for Francophone and Canadian Employers

Inclusion through employment is crucial to building an equitable and diverse society. Collaboration between businesses and inclusion networks is essential to ensure equitable opportunities on the labour market. Policies must play a leading role in fostering partnerships between the private sector and inclusion organizations.

An inspiring example is the Swedish ***Equal Entry*** program, which establishes a directory of immigrant women's skills and those of potential employers, making it easier to put them in touch with each other. Employers are key players in the integration process, and raising their awareness through employment integration initiatives is important. By mobilizing and supporting employers, an environment conducive to the inclusion and shared prosperity of Francophone immigrant women can be created.

Other examples include RDÉE Canada's speed-jobbing and café emploi activities, to name but a few.

Training on Economic and Financial Systems and Work Culture

As Beaulieu pointed out, asynchronous training sessions on business culture, the banking and financial system and job hunting will be complementary tools to explore with women. These course will help to promote women's financial autonomy through practical advice on financial issues, the banking system and consumer laws.⁹¹

A Local Initiative to Watch

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) has conducted a major study on the challenges faced by racialized immigrant women to Canada. These women face specific barriers, and the delivery of tailored services that take into account their multiple identities and complex needs is crucial to their successful integration into the Canadian labour market. The study highlights the effectiveness of a women-only employment service, which provides a safe space for learning, sharing and building self-confidence, a key element in finding and maintaining employment.

The Career Pathways for Racialized Newcomer Women (CCNAR) pilot project is a multi-faceted initiative to test employment services specifically designed for these women, in order to assist them in their professional integration into Canada. SRDC implemented this project in collaboration with eight service organizations across the country: ACCES Employment, Achêv, Centre d'emploi - Compétences mondiales, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), Société économique de l'Ontario (SÉO), MOSAIC, Opportunities for Employment (OFE) and Metro Vancouver YWCA.⁹²

⁹⁰ Beaulieu (2021).

⁹¹ *Idem.*

⁹² Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2024).



International Business Intelligence

Recognition of Prior Learning

Exemplary initiatives in employment integration for immigrant women highlight the growing recognition of the unique challenges they face in the labour market. Countries such as Australia have introduced rigorous standards for the assessment of foreign professional qualifications, while Germany specifically targets migrant mothers with tailored training programs. Similarly, Finland has undertaken a comprehensive reform of its integration policy, emphasizing an inclusive and targeted approach for immigrant women.

The European Union facilitates the recruitment of skilled workers from other countries through its Skills and Talent Mobility package, while Pakistan provides a National Skills Passport to report the skills and qualifications of migrant workers. These initiatives underline the importance of recognizing and addressing the specific needs of immigrant women to ensure their successful professional integration.

Several international initiatives aim to facilitate the professional integration of skilled migrants, with a particular focus on the recognition of qualifications and access to the labour market. Countries such as Poland, the Slovak Republic, France, Austria and Belgium have accelerated qualification recognition processes, particularly in the healthcare, construction and education sectors. At the same time, EU cities and regions such as Helsinki, Barcelona, Leipzig and Nuremberg are implementing initiatives to facilitate the integration of migrants by recognizing their skills and offering them simplified access to the local labour market. These efforts are also supported by directives such as EU Directive 2005/36/EC. In Australia, an increase in skilled immigration quotas is planned, with greater recognition of skills and diplomas acquired abroad. All in all, these initiatives reflect a growing international desire to value and integrate migrants' skills into local economies, thus contributing to smoother integration and the efficient use of skilled labour.

Initiatives to Watch:

- Sweden's ***Equal Entry*** program lists the skills of potential migrants and employers.
- The European Commission and the introduction of a matching platform to facilitate the recruitment of skills to match market needs.⁹³
- In France, the production of a guide as part of Lab'R, the innovation laboratory of the Délégation interministérielle à l'accueil et à l'intégration des réfugiés (Interministerial delegation for the reception and integration of refugees) (Diair).
- Estonia's "digital nomads" visa simplifies administrative procedures.
- The PACIFIC WORK CONNECT program: helping New Zealand's Pacific migrants find employment.
- Australia offers opportunities for foreign professionals: foreign nurses must demonstrate that their qualifications and experience meet the standards of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- The German project for targeted professional training for migrant mothers.
- Finland and the complete reform of its integration policy with a more inclusive and targeted approach for women.
- Skills and Talent Mobility package: the EU has set up a new platform to facilitate recruitment from other countries for jobs in short supply.
- Pakistan's National Skills Passport initiative: providing comprehensive reportation of skills and qualifications to facilitate their integration into international labour markets.



⁹³ Mared Gwyn Jones, EuroNews (2023).

Chapter 10: Entrepreneurship

Issues



Limited access to entrepreneurship

- Lack of appropriate resources and support.
- Barriers related to family responsibilities.
- Need for specific programs to promote financial independence.



Diversity and adaptability of services

- Need to strengthen entrepreneurial succession among immigrant women so that they see entrepreneurship as an option.



Need to adapt services to cultural and linguistic diversity



Barriers related to immigration status and family responsibilities



Existing programs not suitable

- Current programs do not always meet the specific needs of Francophone immigrant women.



Access to an entrepreneurial network

- Need access to a network of Francophone entrepreneurs to build support and opportunities.

Objective 10: Promoting women's entrepreneurship among Francophone immigrant women in all its diversity.

Run campaigns to raise awareness of Francophone female immigrant entrepreneurship

- Promote existing business recovery services.

Set up an entrepreneurship preparation service at the pre-departure stage

Networking and mentoring by and for immigrant women

Adapting the service offering to an entrepreneurship that favors flexipreneurs⁹⁴ and social economy

- Adapt services to the specific needs of immigrant women entrepreneurs.
- Promote women's entrepreneurship in social economy as an engine of economic and social integration that contributes to society.

⁹⁴ A flexipreneur is a person who currently carries out, or aims to carry out, entrepreneurial activities in parallel with another occupation (job, family care, etc.) that generate additional income in the form of self-employment or another form of enterprise. Flexipreneurs are therefore part-time, hybrid or atypical entrepreneurs, i.e. those who combine several occupations at once, for whom the entrepreneurial project does not represent a full-time occupation. Flexipreneurs also include people with seasonal entrepreneurial projects. CFDC Shawinigan

Create collaborations with various partners to offer financial support to Francophone women entrepreneurs (start-up, expansion, recovery, etc.)

- A good example of this is **Evol**, a Quebec-based organization dedicated to the development of diverse and inclusive entrepreneurship. Evol's mission is to contribute directly to the creation, growth and acquisition of companies that wish to generate a positive impact on society. One of the selection criteria is that the company must be run by at least one person from a community under-represented in entrepreneurship (women, racialized people, immigrants, First Nations and Inuit, 2ELGBTQQIA+ and people with disabilities), and that this person or these persons must: hold at least 25% of the shares and votes, as well as a strategic position within the company. Recognized for its direct impact on increasing the number of diversified and inclusive-owned businesses in Quebec, Evol plays a leading role in entrepreneurship and actively contributes to the the economic vitality of Quebec society and the creation of a better world.

Develop Francophone business incubators and accelerators by and for immigrant women

Offer entrepreneurship support services by and for Francophone immigrant women from visible minorities

Support projects aimed at providing financial assistance to Francophone immigrant women entrepreneurs

Development of financing programs for Francophone immigrant women entrepreneurs

- Target immigrant women to support entrepreneurship in various sectors.
- Raise awareness among financial and government institutions on the importance of supporting entrepreneurship among immigrant women.

Networking, mentoring and financing

- Set up entrepreneurship readiness programs adapted to women's needs, which means by and for Francophone immigrant women
- Develop mentoring and coaching programs for and with immigrant women entrepreneurs.
- Creating networks of Francophone immigrant women entrepreneurs.

Training and Access to Resources

- Offer educational and training programs on entrepreneurship.
- Analyze existing programs with an intersectional approach.
- Implement entrepreneurship services through local organisations.
- Expand an entrepreneurship training program designed specifically for women at different stages of their project's maturity, similar to that offered by the École des entrepreneurs du Québec **Fair.e** which is offered in six provinces across the country. With asynchronous training and individual coaching, a training program aimed specifically at immigrant women would provide them with the tools they need to reduce the risk of business failure and isolation.

Statistics Canada reports that:

■ **Self-employed women represented a relatively low proportion (9%).**

■ **In 2016, around 5 % of immigrants owned an incorporated private business with employees.**

■ **Immigrant men are about twice as likely to own a business as immigrant women.**⁹⁵

Immigrant-owned businesses tend to be younger, and generally have a higher job creation rate than longer-established ones. In addition, immigrant-owned businesses slightly higher levels of innovation in terms of products and processes than other companies.

Women and Entrepreneurship

“We know that women-led businesses face more gender discrimination, sexism, unpaid work, liability and the burden of care from all parts of society⁹⁶, said Myriam Francisque, EDC’s National Inclusive Trade Manager for Black and Racialized Exporters

Studies show that by promoting gender equity and women’s economic participation in the economy, Canada could add up to \$150 billion to its GDP. Only 17% of Canadian small and medium-sized businesses are owned by women.

Knowledge hub for women in entrepreneurship, 83% of women-owned businesses are micro-enterprises with fewer than 20 employees.

The Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) presented the latest research results on **The State of Women’s Entrepreneurship in Canada 2023** for newly arrived and immigrant women entrepreneurs.

Women often engage in sideline activities or businesses that give them personal flexibility and enable them to meet the needs of their communities. **It is therefore important to adapt policies and programs to the needs of women entrepreneurs**, in order to continue to move towards a better, more inclusive ecosystem.

“We know that the Black and racialized community faces systemic discrimination, racism, lack of trust, lack of relationships with financial institutions, lack of personal community. With these factors in mind, it’s important that government and organizations create programs and opportunities for women entrepreneurs”⁹⁷.

Promoting female entrepreneurship by adapting the process and its outcome



Over the past 40 years, the number of women entrepreneurs has grown 3.1 times faster than the number of men entrepreneurs.

According to the BDC study, A World of Entrepreneurs,⁹⁸ entrepreneurship is on the rise among women, newcomers, young adults and educated Canadians. Over the past 40 years, the number of women entrepreneurs has grown 3.1 times faster than the number of male entrepreneurs. Is it the minority situation that is limiting the contribution of Francophone immigrant women to the country’s entrepreneurship?

⁹⁶ Mesana and Forest (202), p. 37

⁹⁷ Cukier, Wendy and all. (2022).

⁹⁸ Business Development Bank of Canada (2019).

At the same time, it is important to note that women and Francophone immigrant business owners have been hardest hit hardest by the pandemic and need special help. “The shortage of French-speaking and bilingual workers has increased, slowing down the expansion of our private businesses, while making it difficult for governments to find staff who can work in French”⁹⁹. Bilingualism is a specific skill that adds to the labour shortage affecting the whole country.

Social and Solidarity Economy¹⁰⁰

Few figures are available on entrepreneurship in the social economy, while international literature points in the opposite direction:

“The social entrepreneurship sector has proven itself uniquely capable of empowering women leaders in its field. Female entrepreneurs can add substantially to economic growth and poverty reduction. To shape a sustainable and inclusive recovery from COVID-19, we need to include the voices of female social entrepreneurs”¹⁰¹.

In fact, the social entrepreneurship sector has proven to be particularly capable of empowering women leaders in their field and seems to hold great interest for Canadian immigrant women. Women entrepreneurs can make a significant contribution to economic growth and poverty reduction. To shape a sustainable and inclusive recovery from COVID-19, it is necessary to include the voices of women social entrepreneurs.

⁹⁹ L’Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (2022), p. 3.

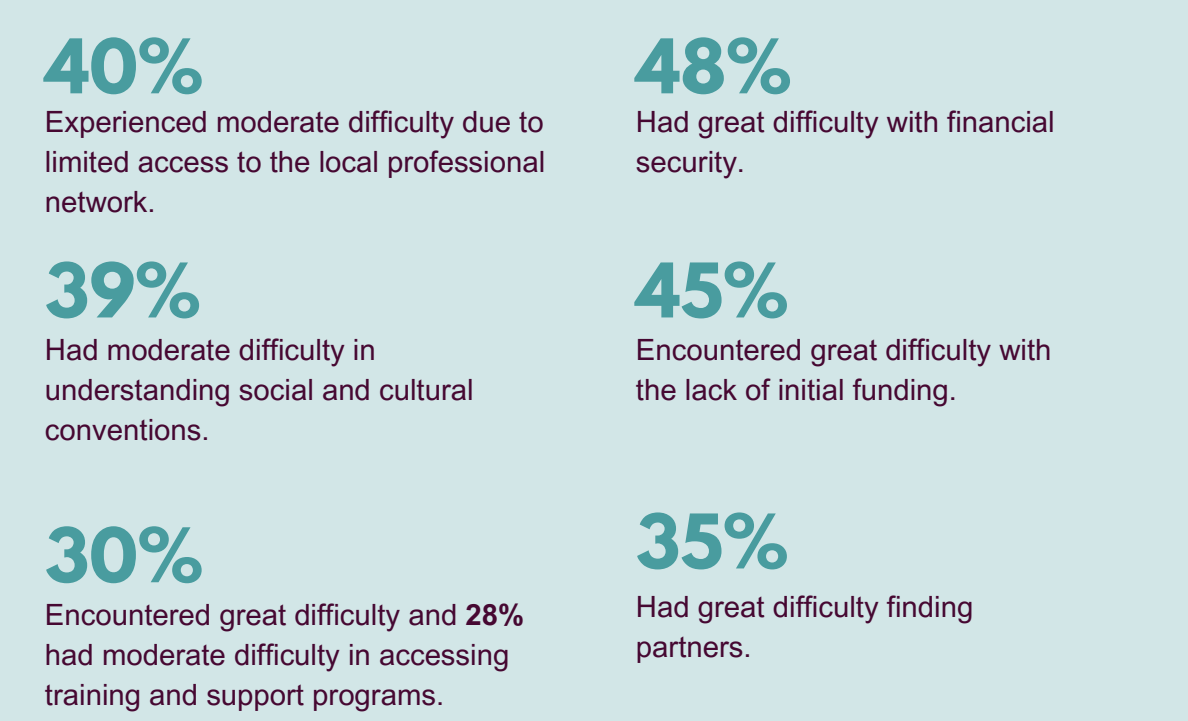
¹⁰⁰ *Idem*.

¹⁰¹ World Economic Forum (2021).

¹⁰² Raja, Pavitra (2021).

*“When we reframe the definition of success in a way that better includes and celebrates women social entrepreneurs, we curate an ecosystem that is more likely to inspire and nurture women changemakers”, says Iman Bibars, Founder, Women’s Initiative for Social Entrepreneurship, Ashoka.*¹⁰²

Highlights of the Consultation on Entrepreneurship





Possible Solutions¹⁰³

- 1 Deploy awareness campaigns and promote women's entrepreneurship among Francophone immigrant women as a means of economic and social integration that contributes to society.
- 2 Promote networking and mentoring initiatives.
- 3 Open a dialogue to support the development of regional and pan-Canadian Francophone business incubators and acceleration programs, in which women and visible minorities are actively involved.
- 4 Adapt the service offer to an entrepreneurial model that favors flexible entrepreneurs and the social economy.
- 5 Evaluate the possibility of supporting pathfinder projects aimed at supporting entrepreneurship specifically for immigrant women and French-speaking immigrants.
- 6 Offer entrepreneurial support for Francophone immigrant women from visible minorities.
- 7 Evaluate opportunities for collaboration and the most promising ways of offering financial support for entrepreneurship to Francophone immigrant women.

¹⁰³ Mesana, V. and Forest M. (2020).

International Business Intelligence

International trends in immigrant women's entrepreneurial activity are marked by a number of initiatives and programs designed to support and promote entrepreneurship.

■ WINECON, in the Netherlands, seeks to make entrepreneurship more inclusive by encouraging the participation of women and first-generation migrants. This initiative is supported by a new law on civic integration, which aims to facilitate the involvement of migrants in Dutch society.

■ Forward-Inc, also in the Netherlands, offers entrepreneurial training programs, start-up and growth support, as well as networking and mentoring, to help newcomers succeed in the business world.

■ In the U.S., social enterprise Mona helps entrepreneurs, including immigrant women, access capital, distribution opportunities, product investment, marketing and design support through its multi-channel platform.

■ Kiva is an international microcredit crowdfunding initiative to support a variety of projects, including those of immigrant and refugee women, giving them access to traditionally inaccessible financing.

■ Nova Credit, a San Francisco-based financial technology company, helps immigrant women obtain credit by using their foreign credit history to assess their credit worthiness in their new host country.



■ Programs such as the Project for the Promotion of Immigrant Entrepreneurship (PEI) in Portugal and the ENTRYWAY program in Greece provide training, technical assistance and mentoring to support migrant entrepreneurs in developing their businesses.

■ Training and advice is provided to immigrants by Startup Refugees (Finland).

These initiatives reflect a growing recognition of the entrepreneurial potential of migrant populations and aim to overcome the financial, regulatory and social barriers they face in their entrepreneurial journey.

Chapter 11: Evaluate, Measure and Monitor

Objective 11: Evaluate, measure and monitor the implementation of GBA+ in partnership with Francophone women's organizations and partners.



Establishing core indicators to measure the effectiveness of GBA+ initiatives is crucial to assessing its impact on populations from diverse backgrounds. These indicators must be relevant, measurable and sensitive to the different realities experienced by Francophone immigrant women. They must be designed and measured in partnership with women's organizations.

Where baseline indicators have been established, it is essential to ensure that they can effectively assess the impact on populations from diverse backgrounds. This may involve including criteria such as the level of user satisfaction, the representativeness of service recipients, or taking into account socio-economic, cultural and linguistic differences within target populations.

If basic indicators have not been defined, it is necessary to set up data collection methods that enable results to be measured for populations with diverse backgrounds. This could include surveys of service recipients, focus groups, individual interviews, demographic statistical analysis or case studies.

To better understand the differential effects of the initiative on the populations concerned, additional data may be required, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this report. This could include data on migratory routes, socio-economic factors, discriminatory experiences, or specific needs in terms of social and professional integration. Such data would make it possible to identify the factors influencing the integration outcomes of Francophone immigrant women, and to adapt programs accordingly.

It is important to highlight the most recent advances in IRCC's GBA+ programs. It is remarkable to note that the Ministry's service providers will be required to collect GBA+ data as early as 2025. To this end, it would be useful if the data collected could be shared with women's organizations and immigration settlement partners across the country. This way, the responsibility for collecting and measuring the GBA+ application will be shared among all players.

A three-year evaluation of each of the issues identified is also necessary to measure the improvement of the services and initiatives put in place.

Here are a few indicator examples:



Percentage of specific services designed by and for women.



Percentage of allocations, grants and scholarships for women-specific programs.



Measuring the quality and positive impact of the initiatives implemented to overcome the main challenges and barriers identified.



Measuring women's satisfaction with the immigration process.



Measuring the sense of belonging:

- Members share a sense of belonging. A dynamic community always has a strong identity.
- Members can easily connect with each other.
- Members learn and do things together.
- Members are valued for their contributions.



The number of women in leadership positions in the community
(political, social economy, community, etc.).



Percentage of GBA+-adapted programs by region.



Percentage of active Francophone immigrant women.



Median income of Francophone immigrant women.



Percentage of projects funded that support the most vulnerable groups (GBA+).



Percentage of SMEs majority-owned by Francophone immigrant women in minority communities.



Number of partnerships established with local organizations and businesses to facilitate access to employment for Francophone immigrant women.

Conclusion



In conclusion, the specific challenges and needs of Francophone immigrant women in minority communities in Canada are clearly highlighted by the issues presented in this report. These women, often faced with an increased mental burden and family responsibilities during their immigration journey, find themselves in a position of vulnerability and isolation. They face multiple forms of oppression, including intersectional challenges that hinder their economic and social integration.

Current immigration policies and programs do not always meet Francophone immigrant women's diverse needs, and gender and diversity dimensions are often overlooked. To remedy this situation, it is imperative to develop policies, strategies and programs that are sensitive to gender and diversity, and to develop a range of services geared specifically to women.

The proposed strategy, articulated around eleven objectives stemming from GBA+, aims to create an inclusive environment conducive to the empowerment and successful integration of Francophone immigrant women. Key objectives include promoting the active participation of women and the organizations that represent them in all stages of the immigration policy and programming process, as well as collecting GBA+ data and monitoring the implementation of these policies in partnership with Francophone women's organizations.

In short, the chapters on immigration highlight the importance of recognizing and responding to the needs of Francophone immigrant women in minority communities, in terms of legal, community, health and welfare, and family issues. By promoting access to rights, strengthening social and community networks and by offering adapted support to families, it is possible to foster harmonious and fulfilling integration for all.

The economic integration of Francophone immigrant women is also hampered by a number of systemic difficulties, including non-recognition of professional qualifications, prejudice by employers, language and cultural barriers, as well as difficulties in finding a job that matches their skills. These barriers contribute to keeping immigrant women in precarious economic situations and experiencing social exclusion. To ensure effective job integration that respects skills and professional identity, it is vital to put in place specific measures, such as prior learning recognition programs, paid work placements, tailored mentoring initiatives and efforts to raise employers' awareness of diversity.

Entrepreneurship also represents considerable economic and social potential, but it is hampered by barriers such as limited access to appropriate resources and support, and the lack of specific programs for Francophone immigrant women outside Quebec. To overcome these constraints, targeted efforts are required, notably by promoting women's entrepreneurship through awareness-raising campaigns, and by adapting services to meet the particular needs of immigrant businesswomen.

Moreover, strengthening networking, training, mentoring and access to financing plays a crucial role in creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurship. International initiatives and best practices at home provide inspiring examples of support for immigrant businesswomen, underlining the growing importance of recognizing and valuing the entrepreneurial potential of women and immigrant populations worldwide.

Futhermore, it is important to recognize the shared responsibility between organizations and women to foster successful integration, by offering personalized follow-up, transparent pre-departure information on life in Canada from a French perspective, and a more seamless and adapted immigration process. By strengthening the reception and integration of immigrant women, it is possible to foster their success and positive contribution to their new society, while reducing immigration costs to society and encouraging talent retention.

Finally, to ensure the equitable economic and social integration of Francophone immigrant women in minority communities, it is necessary to apply and measure GBA+ in all spheres of an immigrant's life, particularly in the design of programs by and for Francophone women. This will enable the creation of an enriching and welcoming experience that takes into account their specific needs, while promoting their active participation in decision-making processes. This will directly impact a move towards a more just, inclusive and equitable society for all.



By Region



ALBERTA

SUMMARY

The immigration journey of Francophone women in Alberta presents many challenges, including a lack of access to information about rights, isolation from community, a housing crisis, psychological health issues, and difficulties with economic integration.

Legal access in French is an issue, especially since the complexity of the law and a lack of knowledge of the legal culture leave women vulnerable to abuse.

Isolation is an issue for immigrant women in Alberta. The dispersion of Francophone communities and cultural differences can accentuate their sense of isolation. To counter this, it is essential to create formal and informal networks that meet their specific needs and celebrate the diversity of the French-speaking world.

The housing crisis is also a significant barrier. Francophone immigrant women often have difficulty finding affordable, adequate housing for themselves and their families, once they arrive in Alberta. Transitional housing for women and their families is recommended.

Mental health, discrimination and prejudice among immigrant women in Alberta are slightly higher than the national average. Accessible and culturally sensitive services, as well as mental health awareness activities, are essential to help them recognize signs of distress and take care of themselves. The importance of assigning a social worker to more vulnerable families can help alleviate these issues, as can the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity.

From an economic standpoint, women face similar challenges from one province to the next: the lack of transparency regarding employment opportunities before arriving in the country, difficulties in accessing recognition of prior learning and pay inequity are all obstacles to be considered. To overcome them, it is crucial to provide transparent information from the outset on the French language situation in Alberta, both in social services and in the job market.

Likewise, the province should facilitate the recognition of prior learning and adapt services to foster their economic integration, notably by promoting the particularities of women's entrepreneurship, such as social economy enterprises.

In short, supporting Francophone immigrant women in Alberta in their social and economic integration requires a holistic approach, adapted to their specific needs and sensitive to their diversity. This means providing accessible and adapted services, strengthening community networks and promoting their active participation in Alberta society.

Consultation Results - Social Aspects

The level of difficulty and barriers is slightly higher in Alberta than the national average, according to quantitative data collected as part of the consultation.

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

Great Difficulty



40%

Professional training services



39%

Access to housing



32%

Employment support services



30%

Psychological well-being and mental health

Moderate difficulty



44%

Help with cultural integration



39%

Family support services



36%

Pre-departure information



35%

Settlement services

Main barriers related to access and availability of French-language immigration services for women



40%

Limited access to information



40%

Language barrier



40%

Travelling distance



31%

Economic conditions in Canada (e.g. cost of living)



31%

Qualification requirements



27%

Discrimination and prejudice

Consultation Results – Economic Aspects

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty

63%

Difficulty finding a job that matches skills

60%

Recognition of work experience in their country of origin

49%

First work experience in Canada

32%

Language barrier

32%

Difficulty with professional culture

Moderate difficulty

38%

Difficulty with professional culture

29%

Recognition of academic credentials

26%

First work experience in Canada

21%

Pay equity issues

20%

Obtaining services for job search support

Level of difficulty encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty

1.

Financial insecurity

2.

Restricted access to training or support programs

3.

Language and cultural barriers

4.

Limited access to resources dedicated to immigrant women

5.

Lack of initial financing

6.

Difficulty finding partners or investors

BRITISH COLUMBIA

“Destination Canada promotes immigration in places where there is no social support in French. The physical and psychological health of immigrant women is affected after 1 or 2 years of managing the settlement environment. There's a lack of transparency about French-language social support in British Columbia.”

- Focus group participant

SUMMARY

One of the major difficulty facing women in British Columbia is limited access to information and services in French. This language barrier adds an additional weight to their mental burden, making it difficult to navigate the legal, health and social support systems. Despite ongoing initiatives, such as translating laws for women in separation proceedings and raising awareness of women's rights, this remains insufficient to ensure equitable access to legal information and the justice system, for example. Lack of access to French-language services is a major barrier to their social and professional integration and well-being.

As French is not a recognized official language in the province, lack of access to French-language services was the issue most highlighted during the consultations, as was social and cultural isolation. Strengthening formal and informal networking efforts is essential to facilitating women's integration and well-being. This involves not only family activities and mentoring programs, but also raising awareness of the cultural diversity of Francophonie worldwide.

The lack of funding and support for community initiatives, particularly for immigrant women, is a systemic problem. To remedy these problems, the participants propose a shift in funding and immigration policies, focusing on individual needs with a GBA+ approach, and providing adequate support to foster the financial independence and well-being of immigrant women.

Strengthening the role of French schools as community and support centers for families, not just students, is an important issue in the region.

Economic and employment integration is characterized by a misperception of the labour market prior to arrival. Inadequate preparation to cope with barriers linked to minority backgrounds and, consequently, language barriers are problematic. Wage inequalities and limited career advancement exacerbate these difficulties.

To address these issues, it is crucial to offer employment support tailored to the specific needs of immigrant women, both before and after their arrival in Canada. At the same time, we need to strengthen in-company mentoring programs and paid internships to facilitate their professional integration.

In addition, the expansion of the range of entrepreneurial services aimed specifically at Francophone immigrant women would improve their integration into the labour market. This should also include creating businesswomen's groups and mentoring programs.

In summary, to effectively support Francophone immigrant women in British Columbia, it is imperative to implement comprehensive solutions that address the difficulties related to access to information, rights, financial and legal support, as well as community life and health in French. This requires close collaboration between government authorities, community organizations and local stakeholders to create an inclusive environment conducive to the integration of Francophone immigrant women into their new society.

Consultation Results – Social Aspect

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

Great difficulty



46%

Access to health care



30%

Family support services



41%

Access to housing



28%

Employment support services



32%

Access to daycare*



26%

Access to reproductive health care

Moderate difficulty



31%

Parenting services



27%

Access to housing



28%

Employment support services



26%

Community life



28%

Pre-departure information

Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



35%

Administrative complexity



35%

Economic conditions in Canada (e.g. cost of living)



30%

Travelling distance



28%

Language barrier



26%

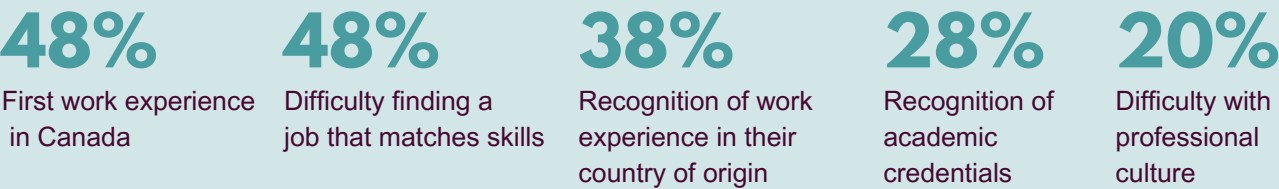
Limited access to information

* Does not include the [federal childcare access program](#), which began in 2023.

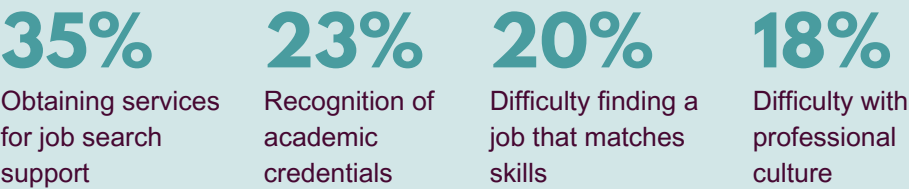
Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Level of difficulty encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



MANITOBA

SUMMARY

One of the main difficulty facing the integration of Francophone immigrant women in Manitoba is the need for a broad and coherent range of services in French to facilitate their integration. These services must be accessible and well promoted, as it is often difficult for immigrant women to access information on available services. In addition, immigrant women are faced with an often overwhelming workload when they first arrive in Canada, including personal and family integration responsibilities, job search, training, and other personal and family responsibilities.

A solution-oriented approach involves centralizing information on available services and making it accessible through digital communications, among other things.

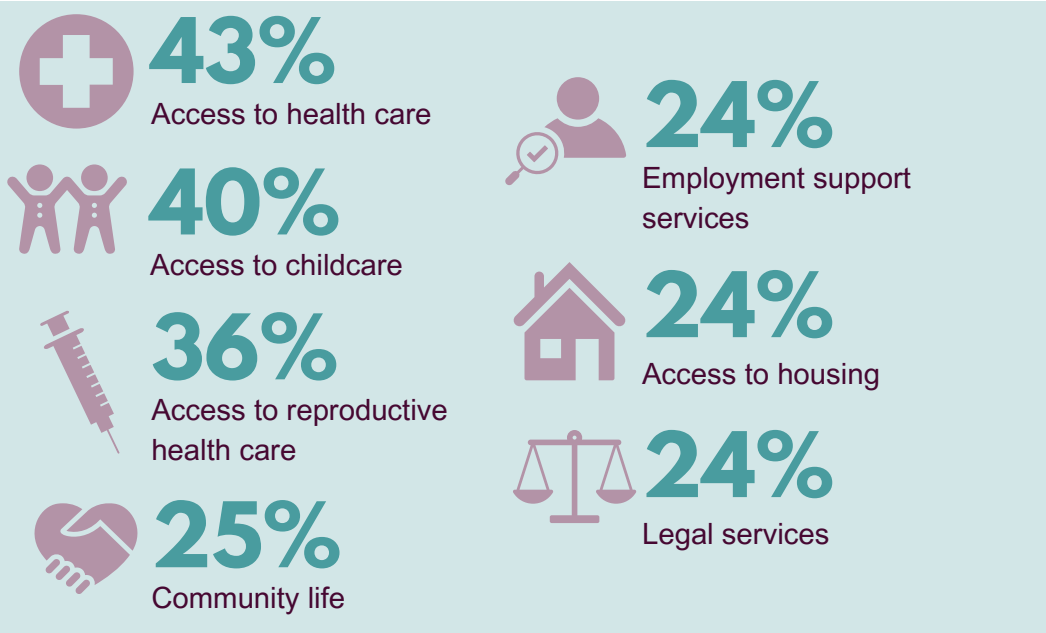
In conclusion, to overcome these difficulty, a collaborative and concerted approach between the various players involved is essential. By implementing integrated and tailored solutions, the integration of immigrant women in Manitoba can be facilitated and they can be provided with the conditions they need to thrive in their new lives.



Consultation Results – Social Aspect

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

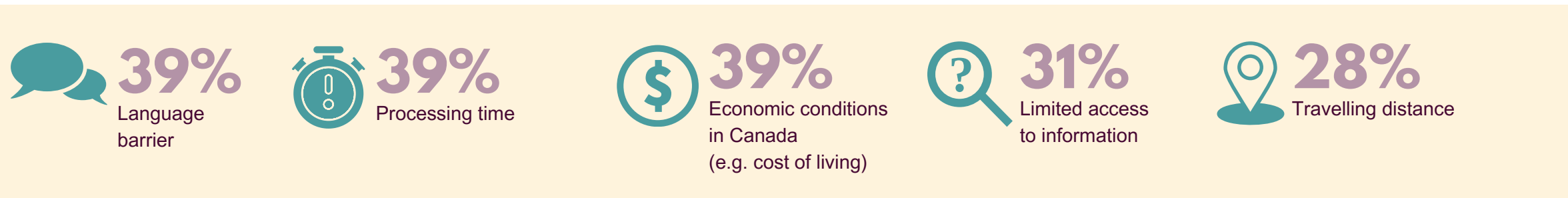
Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



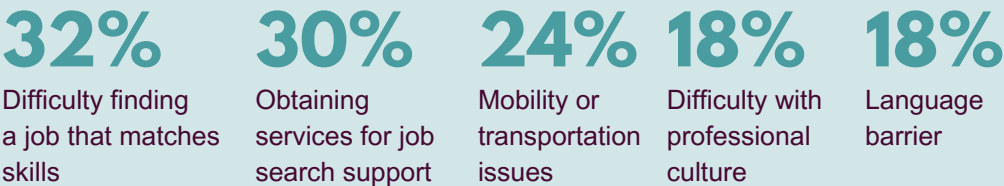
Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty

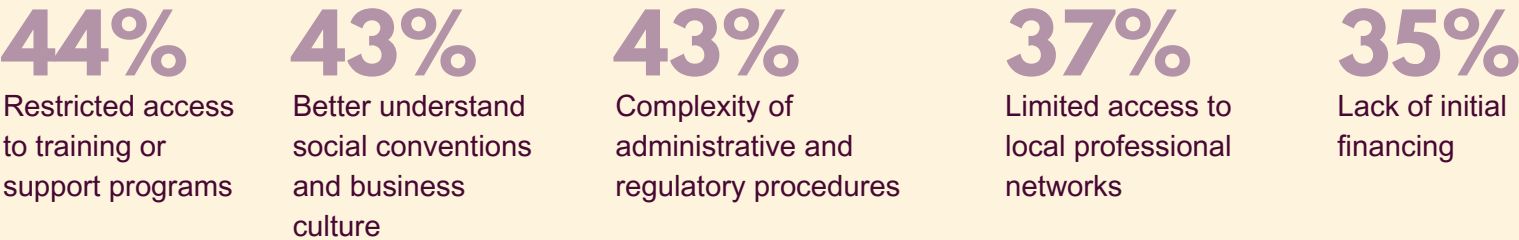


Level of difficulty encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



NEW BRUNSWICK and PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

SUMMARY

The immigration process for women in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island presents challenges in terms of fragmented settlement services, limited access to pre-arrival information and preparation, and a lack of post-settlement follow-up. Coordination between settlement organizations is difficult, and there is insufficient funding, visibility and coordination between organizations. Organization staff also need to be more effectively trained to meet the particular needs of Francophone immigrant women.

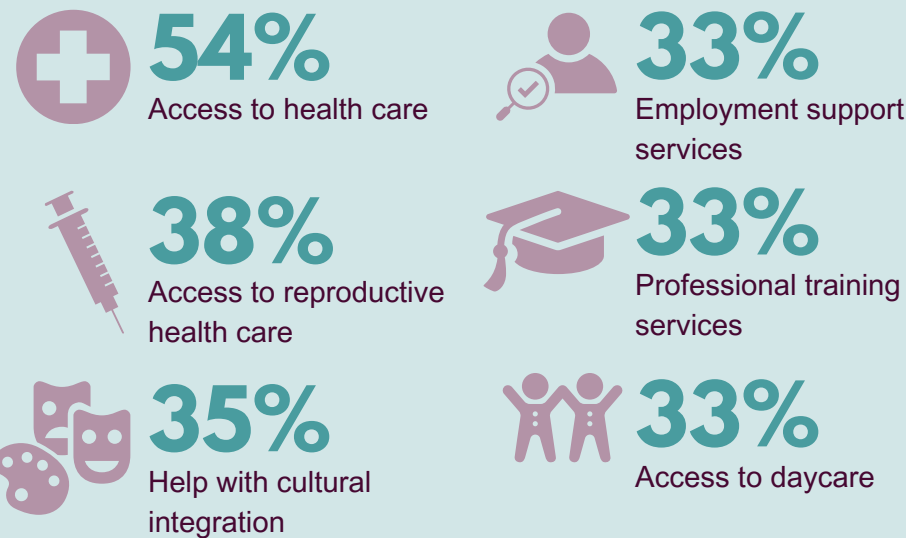
There is also a need to raise awareness about cultural differences.



Consultation Results – Social Aspect

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

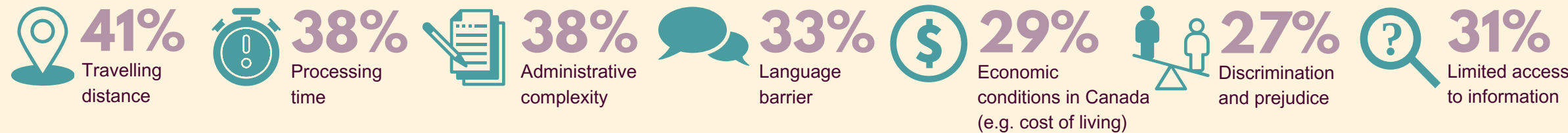
Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty

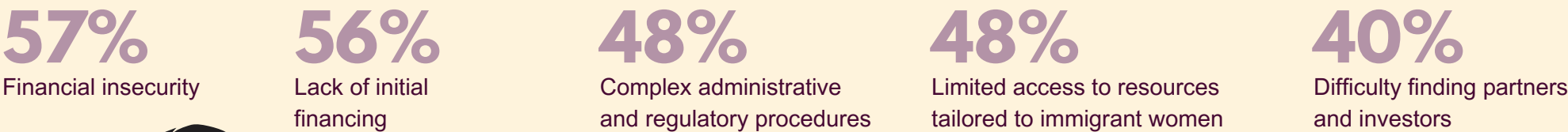


Moderate difficulty



Level of challenge encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



NOVA SCOTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND and LABRADOR

SUMMARY

The challenges faced by women in this region include a lack of awareness regarding the rights of Francophone immigrants in a minority setting, feeling invisible, a lack of French-language services in shelters for abused women and a complex immigration process with too little support.

Access to French information on women's rights is an issue in these two regions, as is common in most minority communities. Migrant training on these rights before or after arrival is therefore recommended.

With regard to the visibility of Francophone immigrant women, it is recommended to promote a diverse Francophone community through the media and social networks. Raising awareness of the host community is one solution to better integrate immigrant women into their community.

In addition, consultations with Francophone immigrant women and partner organizations highlighted the importance of consolidating information and strengthening links between francophone organizations. It is crucial to strengthen the links between francophone organizations to offer a more centralized service and better orientation of women towards the various assistance programs.

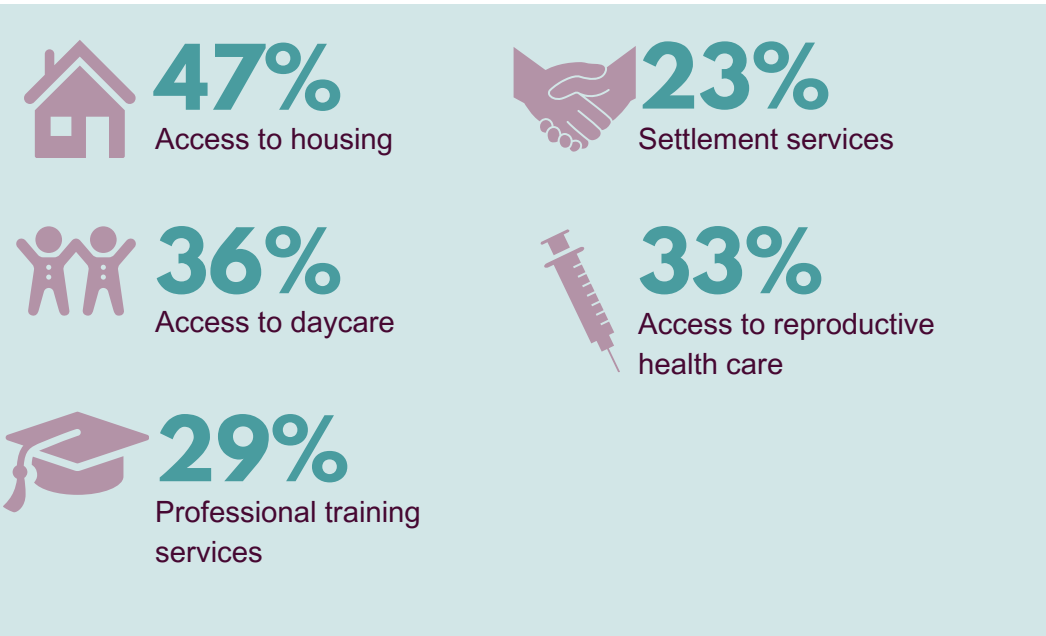
It is recommended that French-language services be added to transition houses either directly or through partnerships. To support domestic violence victims, it would be beneficial to make information on the consequences of violent acts accessible.

Finally, the lack of French-language services in the Labrador region was discussed during the consultations.

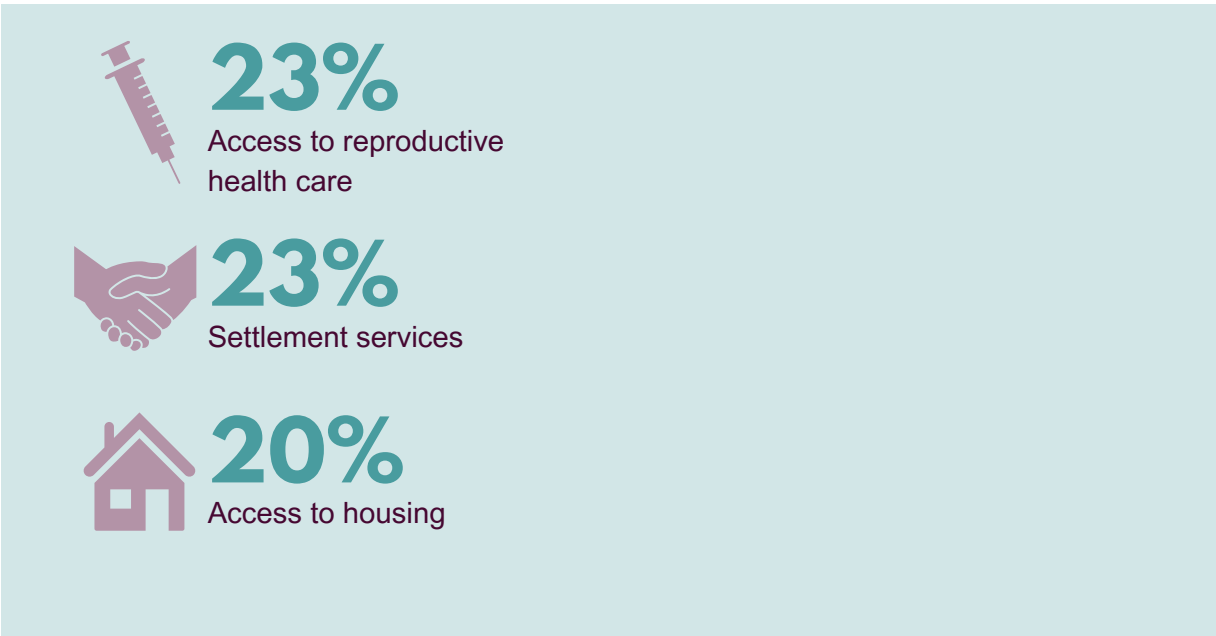
Consultation Results – Social Aspect

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

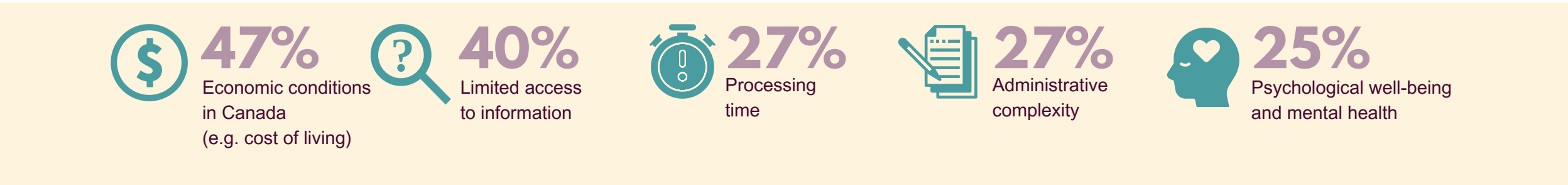
Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



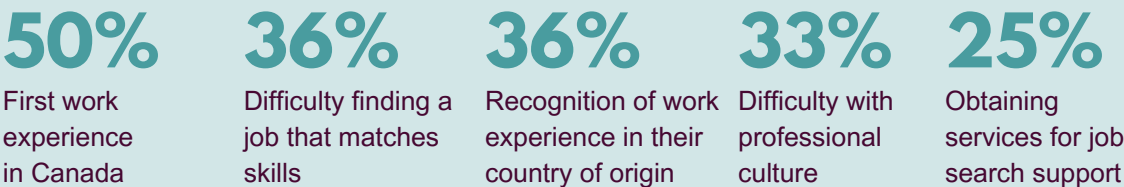
Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty

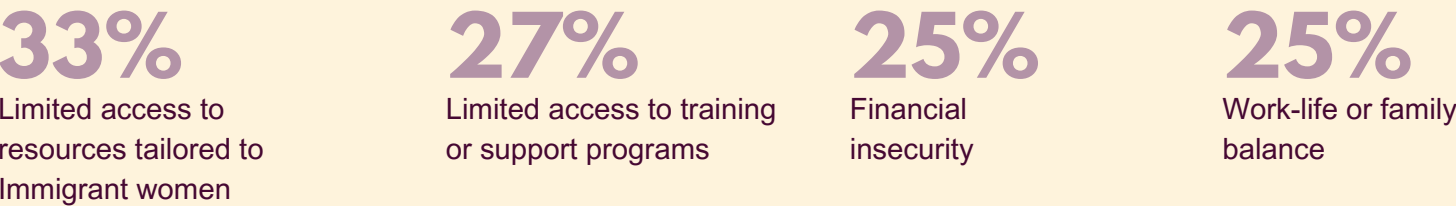


Moderate difficulty

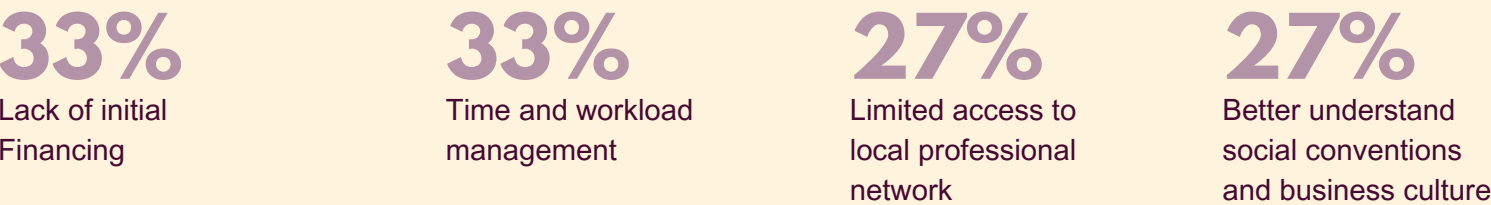


Level of challenge encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



ONTARIO

SUMMARY

Francophone immigrant women in Ontario tell us that they lack both awareness of and access to certain settlement services. Persistent wage inequalities, despite an external image of gender equality in Canada, and the significant mental burden they carry, represent major barriers to their well-being and successful integration. Finally, access to health care and social services in French remains difficult due to language barriers and systemic problems in the healthcare system.

At the same time, access to employment and entrepreneurship is hampered by discrimination, lack of appropriate resources and support, and family responsibilities. Current integration programs do not always meet the particular needs of immigrant women, and barriers to the recognition of professional qualifications are another major challenge.



Consultation Results – Social Aspect

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

Great difficulty



42%

Access to health care



33%

Employment services



38%

Access to housing



32%

Professional training services



35%

Psychological well-being and mental health

Moderate difficulty



38%

Pre-departure information



30%

Employment services



33%

Settlement services



30%

Access to housing

Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



45%

Limited access to information



43%

Language barrier



33%

Economic conditions in Canada (e.g. cost of living)



32%

Travelling distance



39%

Processing time

Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty

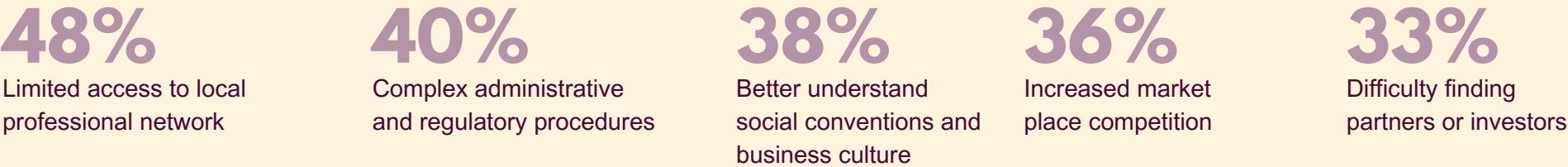


Level of challenge encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



SASKATCHEWAN

SUMMARY

The lack of coordination of available services, the dispersal of information on these services and the need to offer complete and accessible services in French are the main challenges facing immigrant women in Saskatchewan. To improve this situation, it is recommended that a French-language referral service be set up to guide families to the right services, that a French-language translation be provided for services offered only in English, and that all information on available services be centralized at a single location.

Another issue concerns the knowledge of and access to information about the rights of Francophone immigrant women. To improve the situation, it is proposed to create an online platform where organizations such as SAIF can inform immigrant women of their rights, offer information sessions accessible at different times, and to organize pre-departure webinars in native languages for better understanding.

Networking for Francophone immigrant women is also an important aspect to consider. Social activities adapted to their needs, transportation support, and a single-entry point to available support structures are recommended to promote their networking and integration.

With regard to access constraints linked to family responsibilities, measures such as increasing the number of daycare places, setting up transitional homes and developing partnerships to facilitate housing are recommended.

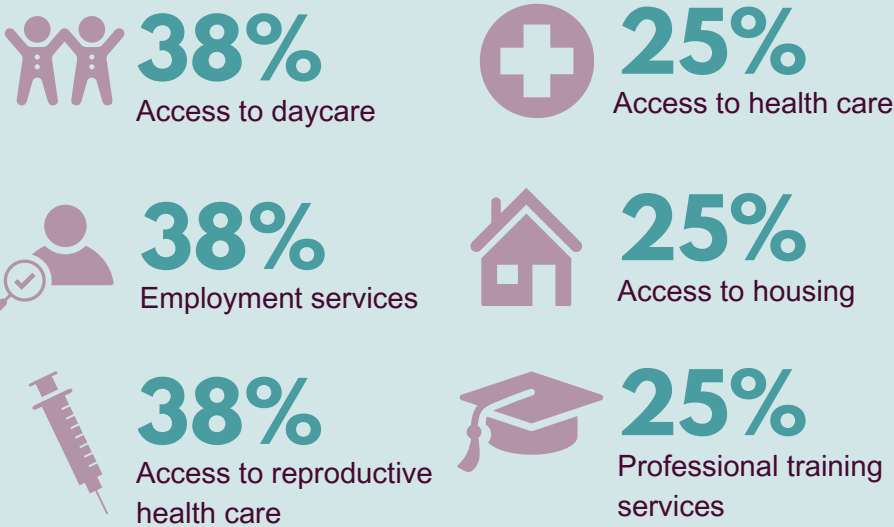
Access to French-language healthcare is also a major challenge. To remedy this, it is suggested to offer more availability for French-speaking doctors, to set up an online or telephone platform to consult a French-speaking doctor while on a waiting list for access to a French-speaking family doctor. It is also suggested that all personnel within organizations that welcome immigrants be trained in mental health issues.

In short, to improve the immigration experience of Francophone immigrant women in Saskatchewan, it is essential to coordinate available services, strengthen access to information on rights, promote networking, respond to constraints related to family responsibilities, and ensure access to health care adapted to their linguistic and cultural needs.

Consultation Results – Social Aspects

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

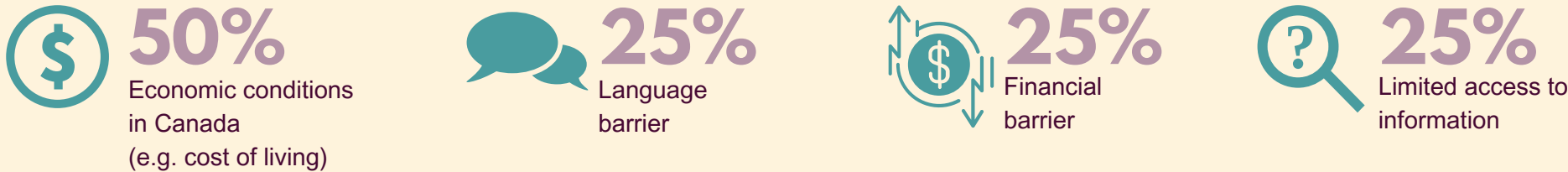
Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty

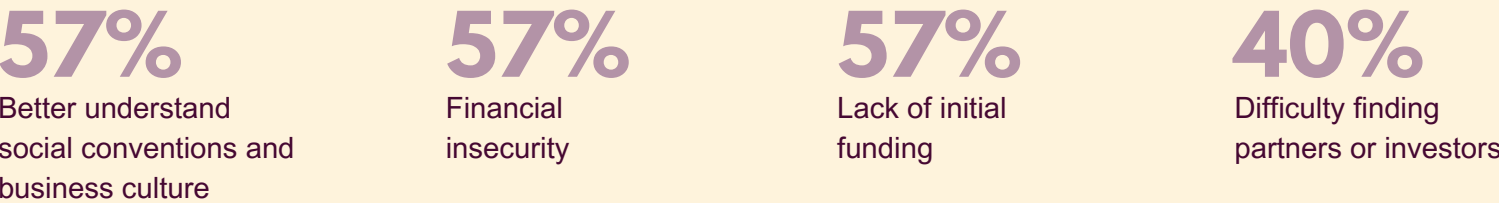


Moderate difficulty

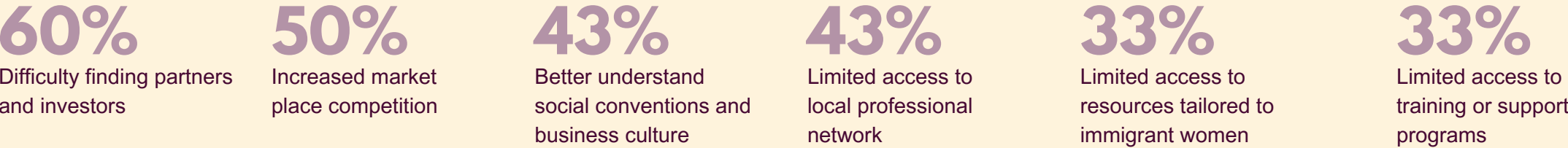


Level of challenge encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, NUNAVUT and YUKON

SUMMARY

The situation of Francophone immigrant women in Northern Canada presents a number of challenges and barriers to their social, economic and professional integration. These challenges include a lack of knowledge about the rights and restrictions associated with visa status, difficulty meeting their financial needs while complying with legal regulations, a lack of legal resources and emergency and confidential accommodation adapted to their needs, and limited resources for their specific needs in non-Aboriginal communities.

To meet these challenges, a number of solutions are being considered. It is proposed to improve access to legal information in French, to develop confidential accommodation structures specifically for Francophone immigrant women, to raise awareness on the specific needs of this population and to provide financial support for initiatives aimed at meeting these needs.

With regard to professional integration, we suggest offering professional transition programs adapted to Francophone immigrant women, facilitating recognition of prior professional experience, strengthening career guidance and employment assistance programs, and promoting female entrepreneurship by offering coaching and mentoring services specifically dedicated to this population.

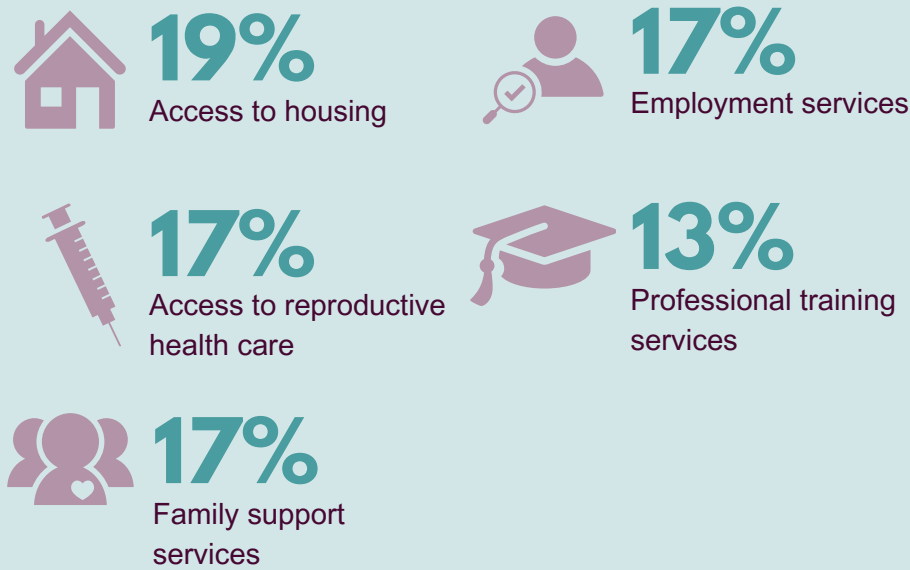
Finally, with regard to health services, it is recommended to improve access to French-language programs and services, raise awareness of sexual and mental health issues, and recruit bilingual staff in health services in order to improve access to care in French.

In summary, to improve the situation of Francophone immigrant women in Northern Canada, it is essential to implement measures aimed at strengthening their rights, their access to services, their professional integration and their overall well-being. This will require effective coordination between the various players as well as the political will to support these initiatives.

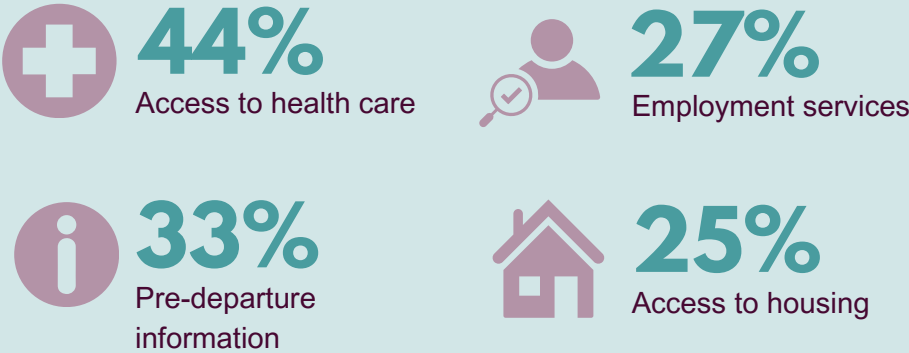
Consultation Results – Social Aspects

Level of difficulty in the immigration process

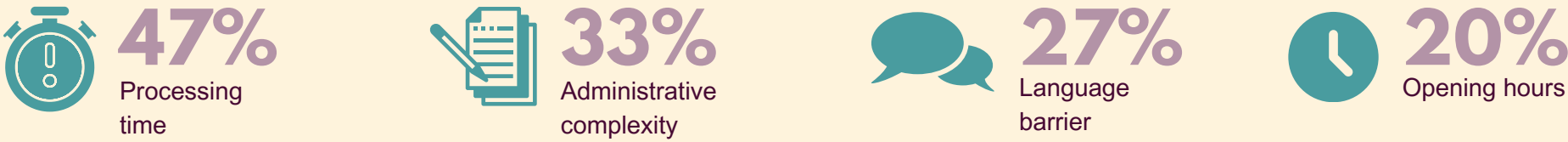
Great difficulty



Moderate difficulty



Main barriers to accessibility and availability of French-language immigration services for women



Consultation Results – Economic Aspect

Level of difficulty encountered in job search

Great difficulty

33%

Obtaining services for job search support

33%

Difficulty finding a job that matches skills

27%

Language barrier

20%

Recognition of academic credentials/ Pay equity

Moderate difficulty

33%

First work experience in Canada

33%

Mobility or transportation issues

27%

Language barrier

20%

Difficulty finding a job that matches skills/ recognition of academic credentials/ pay equity issues/lack of qualification or experience

Level of challenge encountered in business start-ups and entrepreneurship

Great difficulty

33%

Time and workload management

27%

Work-life or family balance

25%

Complex administrative and regulatory procedures

25%

Limited access to resources tailored to immigrant women

25%

Limited access to training or support programs

Moderate difficulty

50%

Better understand social conventions and business culture

36%

Feeling of loneliness in a business project

31%

Precariousness linked to the immigration process

27%

Language and cultural barriers

27%

Lack of initial financing

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