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REVIEW OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Part VII of the
Official Languages Act

2012–2013

As of July 2013, the official names of the minister and department responsible are the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, and the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

The name of the previous department, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), is used in this report in a historical context only.

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PAPER

Cat. No.: HS1-10/2013E

ISSN: 1927-2790

PDF

Cat. No.: HS1-10/2013E-PDF

ISSN: 1929-638X

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Raison d'être

The mission of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada is to build a stronger and more competitive Canada, to support Canadians in making choices that help them live productive and rewarding lives and to improve Canadians' quality of life. The Department delivers a range of programs and services that affect Canadians throughout their lives through three business lines: programs that support human resources and skills development, the Labour Program and Service Canada.

To fulfill its mission, the Department is responsible for:

- supporting a flexible, national labour market;
- increasing participation in the labour force;
- removing barriers to post-secondary education attainment and skills development;
- overseeing federal labour responsibilities;
- providing income support to seniors, families with children and Employment Insurance beneficiaries; and
- delivering other Government of Canada programs and services on behalf of other departments and agencies.

Included in these core roles are responsibilities for the design and delivery of some of the Government of Canada's most well-known statutory programs and services, including:

- Old Age Security;
- the Canada Pension Plan;
- Employment Insurance;
- Canada Student Loans and Grants;
- the Canada Education Savings Program;
- the National Child Benefit; and
- the Universal Child Care Benefit.

The Labour Program is responsible for overseeing federal labour responsibilities, including facilitating compliance with labour laws, occupational health and safety, and labour standards, as well as assisting trade unions and employers in the negotiation of collective agreements and their renewal in federally regulated workplaces. The Labour Program also represents Canada in international labour organizations and negotiates and implements labour provisions in the context of trade liberalization initiatives.

Through Service Canada, the Department helps Canadians access its programs—as well as other Government of Canada programs and services—at more than 600 points of service across the country. In addition to in-person services, the organization serves the needs of Canadians online at [Service Canada](#) and by telephone through 1 800 O-Canada and its network of program-based call centres.

Finally, through grants and contributions, the Department provides funding to other orders of government and organizations such as the voluntary and private sectors, educators and community organizations to support projects that meet the labour market and social development needs of Canadians.

Responsibilities under Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada by supporting and assisting their development, and fostering the use of both English and French in Canadian society, in accordance with Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

Note: In this document, the word «communities» refers to official language minority communities (OLMCs). The term «*official language minority communities*» refers to a group of persons that share a common language, English or French, distinct from the linguistic majority of the province or territory in which they live.

Review on *Official Languages* – Part VII

This Review covers April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 and reflects the majority of activities, including outputs and results, for the Department's actions as a whole.

Tangible results for the Official Language Minority Communities and to support linguistic duality

Departmental highlights include key initiatives that have had tangible impact on OLMC development: in the area of economic and human resources development, the Enabling Funds; in the area of essential skills development, the Family Literacy Initiative; in the area of labour market integration, the Foreign Credential Recognition Program and the Youth Employment Strategy and finally, in the area of early childhood development, the Social Partnerships Program.

The Department highlights also include initiatives that have fostered the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society; linguistic duality.

1- The Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities

The Enabling Fund is one of HRSDC's key initiatives, aiming to enhance the development and vitality of OLMCs by strengthening their capacity in the areas of community economic development and human resources development. This strengthening of OLMCs capacities is based on increasing local leadership, promoting partnerships and leveraging expertise and resources.

Twelve million dollars in funding was provided to the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) Canada and its 12 provincial and territorial organizations representing the Francophone communities outside Quebec, and to the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) representing Anglophone minorities in Quebec. The Enabling Fund's recipient organizations are networks of leaders currently numbering a total of 135 employees (101 employees supporting Francophone communities and 34 employees supporting Anglophone communities) working in 50 communities across Canada.

1.1 Enabling Fund in support of English-speaking minorities' communities

Evidence suggests that Québec's English-speaking minorities' communities are above the provincial average in terms of entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprise (SME) ownership and play an important role in supporting economic growth. The potential for OLMCs to take an even greater role in supporting the development of dynamic and prosperous SMEs that can compete in the global economy is yet to be fully realized. For this reason, CEDEC has invested heavily in the project "Building an Entrepreneurial Culture within Québec's English-speaking communities".

With provincial partners, such as the Réseaux des carrefours jeunesse-emploi, CEDEC plays a leadership role in delivering ongoing, event-based learning opportunities for Québec's youth. This has allowed over 1,700 English-speaking youth from across Québec to acquire the skills, values and motivation to become entrepreneurs.

1.2 Enabling Fund in support of French-speaking minorities communities

RDÉE Canada and its provincial and territorial organizations participated actively in and benefited from the Canada-Wide Forum on Economic Development in the Canadian Francophonie. Among the participants, approximately one third was entrepreneurs, one third represented the public sector and one third represented the community sector. The Forum was commissioned by the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie.

As part of this Forum, the executive directors and managers of RDÉE Canada and the provincial and territorial RDÉEs participated actively in developing the action plan on economic development in the Canadian Francophonie. The activities identified were in line with those of RDÉE Canada and its organizations. As a result, the network was able to effectively position itself to take part in Forum follow-ups and pursue activities in which it hopes to play a lead role. In addition, RDÉE Canada completed a feasibility study on the creation of a network of Francophone minority community business networks that will be available shortly.

1.3 Enabling Fund in support of linguistic duality

The following three initiatives have enabled the Department to contribute to its commitment to fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

Connect Atlantic – The Four Atlantic RDÉEs

The Connect Atlantic project is an initiative implemented by the four Atlantic RDÉEs under the direction of RDÉE Prince Edward Island. The project, whose mission is to improve competitiveness and enrich Atlantic Francophone businesses in the knowledge economy, has three components: the business survey, the forum and the toolbox. The forum had a media impact and encouraged Francophone businesses to pursue their business in French. This project was funded by HRSDC and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

In total, 160 Francophone entrepreneurs benefited from workshops and training in their mother tongue. Career development in one's mother tongue is a key success factor. These 160 entrepreneurs are now aware of current trends and common practices in the field of the knowledge economy. The toolbox, which is currently being developed, is a reference tool for Atlantic Francophone entrepreneurs (<http://www.atlantiquebranche.com/home>). The four Atlantic RDÉEs joined forces to obtain the funding needed to explore the needs of Francophone entrepreneurs and develop a project meeting those needs. The assessment of the forum was very positive.

Fosse aux lions [The lion pit] – Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities

Fosse aux lions is a contest intended for new entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs who want to expand or launch a new project. These individuals are invited to present their projects before a jury at a gala evening. The winner is announced at the end of the gala and receives a prize. Fosse aux lions gives visibility to Manitoba Francophone entrepreneurs, not only to the winner, but also to the finalists. For example, in 2011, even though the company Étchiboy did not win the competition, it received substantial support and assistance from a family who liked the project and the quality of the business plan. The winners

received a bursary to help them implement their idea and benefited from the visibility and recognition gained from the contest.

Heads of Francophone companies feel supported and recognized as a result of this contest and other actions by the Council. These individuals make a point of identifying their businesses as Francophone and are participating in the contest in larger numbers. On the commercial scene, their businesses are also becoming increasingly visible, including at the award ceremony for this provincial prize. The Council saw that Manitoba Francophone entrepreneurs needed support recognition and visibility, which the entrepreneurs were not always able to express clearly. The Council received invaluable support from the Chambre de commerce Francophone de Saint Boniface.

Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)

CEDEC should also be recognized for its leadership in promoting the value of the Anglophone and Francophone minority communities' contribution to the regional and Canadian economy by providing a competitive advantage in the global economy. One of the success factors was the development of positive working relationships with Francophone minority communities, and with Quebec's majority language population and institutions.

2- The Family Literacy Initiative

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) establishes partnerships with organizations working in the areas of literacy and essential skills. The Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes, the Quebec English Literacy Alliance, the Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick and the Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences received funding to carry out activities in the areas of literacy and essential skills that specifically target OLMCs. Other OLES-funded organizations, such as the National Adult Literacy Database and the Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine, have also provided and developed resources for OLMCs.

The OLES also implemented the Family Literacy Initiative under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013. The projects funded allowed for the development and dissemination of a considerable amount of family literacy tools, models, knowledge and strategies to meet the needs of OLMCs. This resulted in the development and testing of family literacy models with target groups such as newcomers, families with children of school age, new parents, fathers and exogamous families. For example, a project by the Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick made it possible to hold 32 family literacy workshops, titled "Entre parents" [Between parents], in various schools with a view to better equipping parents to meet the needs of their children and their communities. A pilot project funded by the OLES and conducted by Pluri-elles made it possible to adapt and test two family literacy programs for immigrants and newcomers who had established themselves in OLMCs in Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, in order to improve their essential skills.

3- Labour market integration and the Foreign Credential Recognition Program

With funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada of \$1.4 million dollars over three years (2010-2013), Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) implemented single-window service centres to facilitate the labour market integration of Francophone international health graduates (IHGs) in certain OLMCs.

This enhanced the implementation of various models for support services, career counselling and guidance in French for Francophone IHGs in the targeted professions (doctors, physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists). The various models were implemented in the Francophone communities of Ottawa, Winnipeg and Edmundston, allowing for the expansion and strengthening of partnerships, among other things, with professional associations and employers. Access to essential services and resources in French was improved by efficiently processing the files of Francophone IHGs in OLMCs. The CNFS developed in these communities' networks of intersectoral partners, enabling them to intervene directly at various levels in the professional integration of the IHGs. These regional programs have become single window service centres for essential integration services for IHGs in these communities, such as welcome and establishment services, refresher training and employment placement services.

As of the end of March 2013, the regional programs had monitored 148 IHGs, including nurses, midwives, pharmacists, doctors, dentists and laboratory technicians. In 2011 2012, 36 IHGs joined the health care systems of the OLMCs, while 52 IHGs did so in 2012-2013.

4- The provincial "Le français pour l'avenir" ["French for the future"] local forums – PEI RDÉE – Enabling Fund

The purpose of these local forums is to encourage young people to pursue their secondary and post-secondary studies in French in order to build a French or bilingual career in Prince Edward Island. The initiative is funded by HRSDC and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), among other organizations.

Over 500 young people in grade 9, from all of PEI's French as a first language and French immersion classes, participated in workshops and conferences on careers in French and on the importance of being bilingual when finding a first job and when pursuing a career. For the second consecutive year, the involvement of the schools has been remarkable. All the schools registered immediately to participate. The effects on parents and the media impact contribute to raising the profile of French in PEI. A good knowledge of the community made it possible to identify the correct academic level, grade 9, as the

year when the students decide whether to pursue their studies in French or French immersion. This is a deciding point in school participation.

5- The provincial economic forum: *Rendez-vous économique* [Economic rendez-vous] – Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta (CDÉA) – Enabling Fund

The *Rendez-vous économique* is an event that stimulates the competitiveness and appeal of Alberta Francophone businesses while clearly demonstrating the dynamic nature of these businesses and their contribution to Alberta's economy. This event is also when CDÉA gives out its awards of excellence, rewarding deserving businesses in the community. This initiative is supported by the Business Development Bank of Canada, among other organizations.

Approximately 150 people participated in this forum and attended the awards evening in November 2011. This number increased to 155 in 2012. Entrepreneurs leave the forum with new tools and business contacts, enabling them to bring their business to new heights. These positive effects are made possible through the quality of the stakeholders and the participation of Francophone businesses from all four corners of Alberta. The event gives Alberta's business community the opportunity to recognize the importance of Francophone businesses in the economic environment. Holding the event each year also makes it possible for it to build on its successes, grow from one year to the next and, as a result, become a must-attend event for Alberta's economic scene.

6- Strengthening of non-governmental organization (NGO) capacity for early childhood development – A Social Partnerships project

The Commission nationale des parents Francophones (CNPF) successfully completed a one-year project that ended in March 2013. The purpose of the project was to promote best practices, particularly the initiatives implemented by partners that produced positive results, making it possible to enhance the sustainability of the work that the CNPF had already completed.

The Table nationale en développement de la petite enfance francophone resulted in the strengthening of networks and the involvement of partners. The purpose of the Table was to optimize results by involving community organizations and practitioners who played an essential role in terms of cooperation, promotion and raising awareness. As a result, there was an increase in the Table's capacity to make future decisions using the information presented in the project evaluation. For practitioners and families in OLMCs, there was an increase in accessible resources and bilingual tools, as well as an increase in the capacity of OLMCs to have a positive impact on early childhood development.

7- The Youth Employment Strategy

Through Service Canada, the regions have ensured the delivery of the Department's programs under the Youth Employment Strategy. The Strategy represents the Government of Canada's commitment to helping young people in their transition into the labour market, especially young people who are facing barriers in their integration process. The target client group includes young Francophones living in OLMCs.

In Ontario, 16 young Francophones facing barriers to finding employment were able to develop the life and employability skills needed to find and retain employment under the Skills Link program. The Clé d'la Baie en Huronie, an organization committed to upholding and defending Francophone rights in the area, obtained support funding to make employment and training services accessible.

In the Western Canada and Territories Region, this program component invested approximately \$580,000 to support 40 young Francophones facing barriers to employment. The Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities also conducted two projects, receiving \$234,000 in funding to help 47 young Francophones overcome barriers to finding employment.

The Career Focus program, which began in October 2012, funded a project for Accès Emploi in Alberta to help 12 young Francophones from Edmonton. These individuals just completed their post-secondary studies and the organization is providing them with a work experience related to their fields of study to facilitate their transition into employment or their return to school.