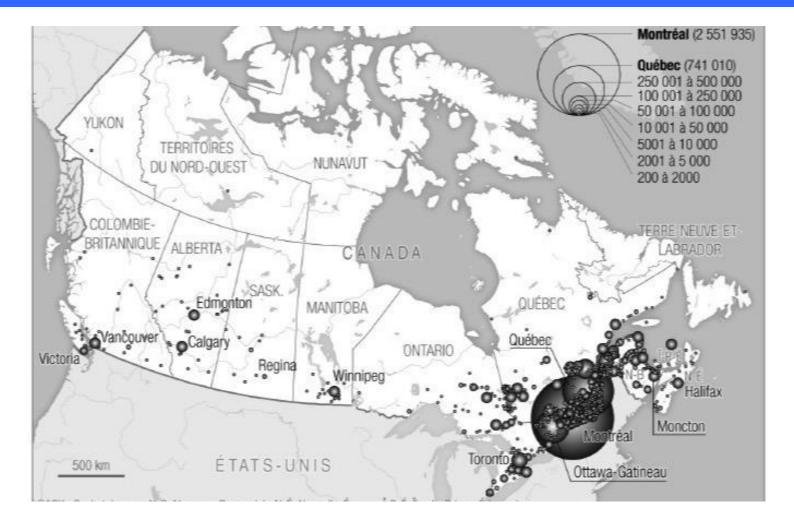
# Francophone immigration in small and mid-sized communities: Challenges and possible solutions

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

> Dr. Aurélie Lacassagne Dean, Saint-Paul University, Ottawa November 20, 2023 2023 P2P National Conference



#### Geographic Repartition of French-Speakers (mother tongue) Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census Realisation: Department of Geography, Laval University, 2019



## The vitality of FMCs: A federal obligation

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

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

https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/cor porate/publications/general-publications/equalityofficial-languages.html

« Linguistic duality and the strengthening of the country's bilingual character are rooted in the vitality of official language minority communities. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is committed to contributing to the development of these communities, as well as to encouraging Francophone immigration outside Quebec ». Francophone Immigration Strategy 2018-2023

# Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative (WFC)

Évangéline Region (PEI) Municipality of the District of Clare (N.S.) Haut-Saint-Jean (NB) Labrador City-Wabush (Newfounland & Labrador) Hawkesbury (ON) Sudbury (ON) Hamilton (ON) Région de la Rivière-Seine (MB) Moose Jaw & Gravelbourg (SK) Calgary (AB) Prince George (CB) Yellowknife (TNO) Whitehorse (Yukon) Iqaluit (Nunavut)



# WFC: Results from preliminary consultations

### Successes:

- Improved community and civic engagement of newcomers
- 2) More inclusive leadership
- 3) Better services



- 4) Better engagement of economic stakeholders
- 5) "Pollinator effect"

# WFC Challenges

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



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

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

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



### Why there is too much immigration to Canada 2022-2023 unprompted responses Environics Survey (Fall 2023)

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

### Some potential solutions

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

