

Spaces of encounter: Social and cultural integration experiences of French-speaking immigrants and refugees in Francophone minority communities

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January 2017



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our funders—Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P)—for funding this study. We are particularly grateful to all the organization representatives and to all our participants for their time and their generous contributions to this study. Last but not least, thank you to our assistants, who supported us through the various stages of research: Yvonne Kasine and Hafida Bencherif in London, and Joyce Akl, Méralyne Fleurant, Zac Tabler, Peter McLaren and Sara-Ève Valiquette-Tessier in Ottawa.

Ci4-178/2018F-PDF
978-0-660-26441-7

Reference number: R12-2015

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Executive summary

Our study examined the role that community spaces play in the social and cultural integration experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees who live in two Francophone minority communities (FMCs) in Ontario, namely Ottawa and London. By community spaces, we mean both physical spaces such as institutions and organizations, and virtual spaces, including social media as well as ethnic and community media. Our three principal objectives were to critically examine (1) Francophone immigrants' access to and use of these spaces to foster their participation in and their social and cultural integration into the FMCs; (2) their experiences in terms of inclusion and participation in these spaces, taking into account identity markers and their intersectional qualities (e.g. language, race and ethnicity, gender, immigration status); and (3) how the day-to-day experiences of Francophone immigrants differ according to the unique socio historic and geographic context of the FMCs.

We adopted a qualitative instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995) that combines two dialogue-based data collection methods and includes four stages with different target populations. We undertook a comparative study for Ottawa—a larger FMC with better institutional coverage—and London, which has a smaller and geographically more isolated FMC. During Stage 1, we completed sixteen interviews with key sources, eight from each city. For Stage 2, we conducted eight group interviews (four in each city) with Francophone immigrants and refugees. At Stage 3, based on the results of the group interviews, we completed six semi structured interviews, three in each city, with representatives from community spaces. Finally, during Stage 4, we organized a community meeting in each city, to which participants from the previous stages were invited, in order to present the preliminary results of the study. After the verbatim transcription of all the interviews, the data for each city were analyzed in two stages. We first analyzed the text of each interview in its entirety and then we proceeded with line-by-line inductive coding (Carspecken, 1996). Finally, the codes were organized into categories, which were used to create the thematic results.

We identified three key themes characterizing the data from the interviews with Francophone organization representatives from Stage 1. They spoke to us about the challenges they face in order to maintain community spaces, issues surrounding the (in)visibility of Francophone minority communities, and the role that these spaces play in the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants.

During the Stage 2 group interviews, participants identified a range of community spaces that played a role in their social and cultural integration into the cities of London and Ottawa. We present these spaces in this report, as well as the various points of view of participants on the subject of the role that Francophone community spaces play and how these spaces facilitated their social and cultural integration. We also discuss the data relating to the challenges that participants have overcome and their ideas as to what could be done to facilitate and further improve their integration.

The Stage 3 results served to confirm and qualify the themes identified in the two previous stages. The three principal themes during the interviews dealt with (1) the issues and challenges facing organizations serving Francophone immigrants, (2) the role of community spaces in the integration of Francophone immigrants, and (3) the challenges facing these immigrants in London and Ottawa.

During the community meeting in Stage 4, we presented and discussed the preliminary results of the study with the participants in order to verify our conclusions and to develop recommendations. We grouped our recommendations around four themes: recommendations relating to Francophone community organizations and institutions; strategies for communicating and disseminating information; recommendations for improving the nature of and access to Francophone community spaces; and suggestions for improving the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and their relationships with established Francophone communities.

Finally, we conclude that Francophone community spaces play a significant role in the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and show potential for facilitating their participation in FMCs. However, to further support the social integration of Francophone immigrants, consideration must be given to the barriers and challenges facing them, the organizations serving them, and the communities to which they belong. Additional resources are necessary to support and maintain community infrastructure as well as to reinforce the role of Francophone community spaces in FMCs.

Introduction

Our study examined the role that community spaces play in the social and cultural integration experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees who live in two Francophone minority communities (FMCs) in Ontario, namely Ottawa and London. By community spaces, we mean physical spaces such as institutions and organizations (e.g. settlement agencies, community centres, schools, homework clubs, cultural associations, daycare centres, sports clubs), as well as virtual spaces and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, other web-based networks) and ethnic and community media (e.g. newspapers, radio and television channels). Our three principal objectives were to critically examine (1) Francophone immigrants' access to and use of these spaces¹ to foster their participation in and their social and cultural integration into the FMCs; (2) their experiences in terms of inclusion and participation in these spaces, taking into account identity markers and their intersections (e.g. language, race and ethnicity, gender, immigration status: permanent/temporary, refugee, etc.); and (3) how the day-to-day experiences of Francophone immigrants differ according to the unique socio-historic and geographic context of the FMCs in this case, in light of the fact that Ottawa is a larger FMC with better institutional coverage compared to the London FMC, which is smaller and geographically more isolated.

Up until now, research on Francophone immigration into FMCs has focused primarily on public and governmental policies. However, we know less about the day-to-day experiences of Francophone immigrants in these communities, and the role and impacts of these experiences on their integration and participation. Our objective was to improve our knowledge about the integration and inclusion experiences of Francophone immigrants in two distinct FMCs by examining their access to, their use of and their participation within community spaces and how these spaces influence their integration and their engagement in the FMCs.

Within the FMCs, community spaces provide their members with opportunities to access Francophone services and to live and socialize in French. In this sense, these community spaces represent important meeting places within the day-to-day lives of Francophone immigrants, as well as between Francophone immigrants and the established Francophone community. We examined Francophone immigrants' experience of these spaces by asking the following questions:

- Why and how are Francophone immigrants using Francophone community spaces?
- How can FMCs build welcoming communities by offering spaces that allow active community participation and engagement?
- What is the role of meeting spaces in the creation of networks and social capital with members of the host community?

¹ Our study examines the experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees. We make the distinction between immigrant and refugee (as well as other immigration categories such as refugee claimant or family sponsorship) where appropriate, but we use the term immigrants in a general sense to refer to all categories combined for easier reading. We also sometimes use the term French-speaking immigrant (FSI), notably in the literature review, in order to reflect the terminology of the research examined.

- What potential do these minority community spaces offer for the development of shared interests and a Francophone identity that is inclusive and open to diversity?

These questions are aimed at better understanding how identities are negotiated in Francophone community spaces and at contributing to the development of promising practices for supporting the integration and social and cultural participation of Francophone immigrants in FMCs. In particular, the results of this research make it possible to identify the factors that make community spaces harmonious and welcoming. In addition, our comparative approach examining the day-to-day experiences and participation of Francophone immigrants in two distinct FMCs helps us understand the integrating role of these community spaces in their regional context. The results could therefore be used to develop recommendations for improving public policy and practices of interest to a number of community partners and the municipal, provincial and federal governments working with Francophone immigrants and in the FMCs. For example, based on the results, themes have been identified for creating and maintaining more welcoming and inclusive community spaces, and thus fostering closer relationships between immigrants and established communities, multiplying and diversifying communications strategies and better meeting Francophone immigrants' need for relevant information, and developing or consolidating Francophone community networks and partnerships, as well as networks and partnerships between Francophone and Anglophone organizations.

Since the start of the 2000s, Francophone immigration has become a priority of the federal government, aimed at supporting the vitality of FMCs. Several policy initiatives were put forward to help attract Francophone immigrants to minority communities and retain them (see CIC-FMC, 2003, 2006; Jedwab, 2002; MCCF, 2006; Quell, 2002; OCOL & OFLSC, 2015; SCOL, 2003; SSCOL, 2010, 2014). While the central function of economic immigration is recognized, these documents also underline the importance of social and cultural integration within FMCs, as they become more diverse.

However, researchers (Farmer, 2008; Gallant, 2010) identified a tension between the demographic function of policies promoting Francophone immigration and the implications of these policies for identity formation in a minority context. Put another way, there is a disconnect between the political and institutional discourse, which on the one hand reflects a desire to attract immigrants and to be open to diversity in the FMCs and, on the other, the practices adopted to actively include new arrivals from diverse origins into these communities. Indeed, Burstein and his colleagues (2014) had difficulty finding and assessing promising integration policies in the FMCs. Given this context, our research addresses an urgent need to study the Francophone immigrant experience within FMCs, including their day-to-day lives and their interaction with members of the established communities, in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges they are faced with during their settlement and integration into the specific context of minority communities, where the resources and services available in French may be limited and/or diffuse.

More specifically, our study brings new knowledge to the subject of the day-to-day experiences Francophone immigrants have with integration and inclusion. It does so by examining their access to, their use of, and their engagement with various physical and virtual spaces that can offer meeting opportunities in the FMCs. These spaces play an important role in the day-to-day life of French speakers in the FMCs, where from a linguistic point of view, daily experiences differ from those of members from the dominant Anglophone community

(Korazemo & Stebbins, 2001) in that they offer the possibility of speaking French and participating together socially, while living in a broader environment dominated by English. However, the contribution of these spaces to the development of community vitality may vary among FMCs depending on their context. The works of geographer Anne Gilbert (1999, 2010) highlight the diversity of Francophone minority spaces in Ontario, and more specifically the heterogeneity of the communities themselves, the diversity of their institutions and the diversity of the realities and experiences lived day-to-day by French speakers given the unique geographical and historical contexts of the communities. The diverse geography of the FMCs suggests that the experiences of Francophone immigrants will also vary—as illustrated in recent research on the subject, which suggests that the regional context (e.g. location, the size of the community, the proportion and concentration of the Francophone population, the availability and accessibility of institutions, services and resources) can play a role in the everyday community life experiences of Francophone immigrants.

For example, a case study of a non-profit community organization in Sudbury (Contact interculturel Francophone de Sudbury, CIFS) conducted by Lacassagne (2010) shows the potentially promising practice of a local community organization that has succeeded in meeting the needs of Francophone immigrants by collaborating with the institutions within the local FMC in the development of a Franco-Ontarian culture and identity inclusive of the greater Francophone community in all its diversity. On the other hand, Veronis and her colleagues (Gilbert et al., 2014; Veronis, 2015; Veronis & Couton, 2017) found that there tends to be a lack of communication between Francophone immigrants and members of the FMC in spaces for community life in Ottawa. Furthermore, they identified that despite relatively positive relationships between the two groups, many face “parallel integration.” Essentially, even if interpersonal relations between newcomers and members of the established Francophone community are positive, they are limited to the individual, rather than community, level. Moreover, Huot and her colleagues (Huot et al. 2014; Huot, 2013; Huot et al., 2013) found that the day-to-day experiences of French speaking immigrants in London are particularly difficult due to the “invisibility” of the local FMC. It is therefore difficult for Francophone immigrants to access and participate in Francophone minority institutions, even more so given their own “visibility” as members of a group of visible minorities.

Research by Dalley and her colleagues (Bélanger et al. 2015; Dalley, 2014a; Dalley, 2014b) on inclusive French-language education in community spaces, such as minority schools and homework clubs, suggests the importance of considering how interactions at the individual level contribute to the construction of discursive spaces where diversity is negotiated. Given the strongly normative ideology attached to the French language, these interactions raise questions about power relations when members of the FMC do not adhere to dominant norms. The study of Francophone minorities is therefore important, since the question, “Who decides who is ‘truly’ Francophone?” is still a subject of debate—the resulting tensions of which obscure identity negotiations and the differences that are part of the migratory journey.

In other words, a coherent community approach to encourage the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants still seems to be lacking in FMCs. Since these communities are living through a major social and demographic transformation that is not yet well understood, and the potential consequences of which are still uncertain, regional comparisons are essential in order to be able to better respond to local realities and

community dynamics. Our study offers a contemporaneous perspective on the tension between the enlargement and fragmentation of FMCs in connection with immigration through the examination of community spaces in two distinct and specific regions. Community spaces in all their diversity play an important role in meeting both the cultural and social needs of FMCs—by offering services in French (e.g. health, education) and by maintaining and promoting Francophone identity and culture (Farmer 1996). It is partly in these spaces that community diversity is experienced and that it is possible to negotiate and develop shared identities and interests. Indeed, the debates regarding Francophone immigration continue: does it contribute to the vitality and cultural enrichment of the FMCs or rather to their dissolution? The question of whether newcomers feel welcome and included in Francophone community spaces is complex and merits critical examination. Do these spaces offer opportunities for meeting, building ties, and developing shared interests and initiatives with established French speakers? How is it that these spaces facilitate social and cultural integration, as well as participation and engagement within the community? How could inclusive practices and policies be improved in these spaces?

However, in the studies mentioned above—all examining distinct regional contexts—the study of the meeting places themselves within these communities and their role remains largely unexplored. On the other hand, several studies look at various issues present in specific community spaces, such as the experiences of immigrant students in Francophone schools (e.g. Benimmas, 2010; Bisson and Ahouansou, 2011, 2013; Carlson Berg 2010, 2011), the experiences of immigrants employed by community organizations (e.g. Mianda, forthcoming), or even the possibility of immigrants mingling with the members of established communities in Francophone multi-service community resource centres (Veronis & Couton, 2017). But within these cases, the question of social and cultural participation and integration of French-speaking immigrants (FSIs) in these spaces is not thoroughly addressed. In other words, there is a gap on this subject in the literature on French speaking immigration into the FMCs.

This observation is confirmed by the results of a synthesis and analysis recently completed on research studies on immigrants within Canada’s official language minority communities (Esses et al., 2016). Although social and cultural integration appeared as a central theme among the 104 documents included in this analysis, knowledge of the potential and specific roles of community spaces is still limited.

In this synthesis (Esses et al., 2016), literature on the social and cultural integration of FSIs in FMCs can be grouped according to three principal interest centres: studies examining the role of host communities, comparative studies on different geographical regions, and studies on the experiences of immigrants on issues of identity and belonging.

Fourot (2013), for example, looks at the different approaches that municipalities can adopt in order to support the integration of immigrants, such as through sports and leisure activities and by improving access to social and cultural services. Although not the central subject of her study, these various types of activities are provided through community spaces, and therefore represent a potentially promising practice that should be better examined.

Furthermore, the title of a more recent article by Fourot (2016) even suggests the need to [translation] “redesign Francophone spaces for the present” (p. 25) given the growing diversity of FMCs through immigration. The conclusion of this recent study calls for the need to study “. . . spaces within which borders are undergoing redefinition” (p. 44; our emphasis).

This kind of redefinition is found in the results of other studies conducted throughout Canada. A study carried out in Moncton by Weerashinghe and her colleagues (2016) reveals that participants identified as having shared values, culture and language. The researchers describe a form of fluid or global citizenship and suggest that the formation of social relationships was based on shared universal values and not on cultural values. However, they also note geographical differences between the cities of their comparative study. In British Columbia, Laghzaoui (2011) indicates that FMCs are flourishing despite their distance from the Francophone centre of Canada, and describes how the emergence of a French civil society helps with the development of social and political institutions within the province. Even though the issue of social and cultural integration is addressed in the literature on Francophone immigration into FMCs, there are still questions related to factors that facilitate or hinder these forms of redefinition and fluidity.

Likewise, researchers examining the social and cultural integration experiences of immigrants often allude to the roles of community spaces, although without explicitly examining them. Research by Madibbo (2010, 2014, 2016) is concerned with the forms of exclusion suffered by Francophone immigrants in host communities, which have an impact on their sense of belonging. According to her, the concepts of belonging and identity in the literature have a tendency to be used in relation to three distinct community axes: to the ethnic community, to the greater Francophone community, and to Canadian society. Yet Madibbo (2016) shows the existence of a multiple sense of belonging and of intersectional identities (at the crossroads of migration status, ethnicity, race and language) among Francophone immigrants—belonging to one community does not preclude belonging to another. However, these multiple and intersectional forms of belonging can present various barriers and exclusions, based on racial and linguistic discrimination, for example (Madibbo, 2016). Consequently, these processes of redefinition do not play out on the community scale alone, but on the individual one as well in that they affect the intersectional identities of the immigrants themselves. Here again, however, the role of community spaces is not addressed as a central issue for better understanding of where and how these experiences are lived on a daily basis.

In summary, although some studies have taken into account the importance of various spaces (e.g. schools, community centres) in the integration of Francophone immigrants in general, and others explore the question of social and cultural integration through multiple approaches, there are still gaps with regard to knowledge of the role of Francophone community spaces in the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants in FMCs. Research on the opportunities offered by community spaces to facilitate this integration could be encouraged in order to fill this gap. This is one of the principal purposes of our comparative study of Ottawa and London, which we hope will contribute to new knowledge on this subject.

Methodology

We adopted a qualitative instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995) that combines two dialogue-based data collection methods and includes four stages with different target populations. We undertook a comparative study of Ottawa and London, two cities designated under the *Ontario French Language Services Act*. The two cities are part of the Francophone Immigration Network (FIN East and FIN Central-Southwest). In this research, emphasis was placed on the community approach to the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants in order to examine differences between regions in these processes. Ottawa enjoys a unique context, being situated at the inter-provincial border between Ontario and Quebec. The city offers a range of resources and services in French to which French speakers living in other FMCs do not have access (Gilbert et al., 2014). The city is home to one of the largest populations of Francophone immigrants outside of Quebec. For its part, London is a much smaller city with an even smaller FMC. According to the 2011 Census, the Ottawa FMC has 143,040 individuals (16.4% of the total population), while London's cohort, with 6,625 people, represents only 1.4% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2012a, 2012b). While Ottawa is a bilingual city close to Canada's largest Francophone population, London is much more isolated with regard to its linguistic geography, inasmuch as none of the surrounding municipalities are designated.

Stage 1: Context and Demographic Profile, and Interviews with Key Sources

During Stage 1, we used census data to prepare descriptive demographic profiles of the Francophone communities in London and Ottawa; these data are as recent as possible, given the continuous mobility of these populations due to processes such as secondary migration.

Next, we conducted 16 interviews with key sources: 8 from each city (see Appendix 1 for the interview guide). The purpose of the interviews was to understand the perspective of those who are in positions of leadership within the communities—such as executive directors, program managers, and board of directors members for Francophone institutions and organizations serving immigrants—in order to capture diverse points of view (see list: Stage 1).

In London, the interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organizations: Centre communautaire régional de London (CCRL) [London regional community centre]; Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO - London-Sarnia) [French-Canadian association of Ontario]; Collège Boréal; Carrefour des Femmes du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario (CFSOO) (CFSOO) [women's crossroads for southwestern Ontario]; Réseau de soutien à l'immigration Francophone région de la région Centre-Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario [regional support network for Francophone immigration for central and southwestern Ontario]; La ribambelle; the Conseil scolaire Viamonde [Viamonde school board]; and the Conseil scolaire Providence [Providence school board].

In Ottawa, the interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organizations: Economic and Social Council of Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC); Réseau de soutien à l'immigration Francophone de l'Est de l'Ontario (RSIFEO) [Francophone immigration support network for eastern Ontario]; Travailleurs d'établissement dans les écoles (TÉÉ) [Settlement Workers in Schools, SWIS] for the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de

l’Ontario [eastern Ontario public school board] and the Conseil des écoles catholiques du centre est [central-east Catholic school board]; Association des communautés francophones d’Ottawa (ACFO d’Ottawa) [French Canadian association of Ottawa]; La Cité collégiale; Vanier Community Service Centre; and the Regroupement ethnoculturel des parents francophones de l’Ontario (REPFO) [Francophone ethnic parents of Ontario].

List of organizations included in Stage 1

Type of organization	London	Ottawa
FIN	Réseau de soutien à l’immigration francophone région de la région Centre-Sud-Ouest de l’Ontario	Réseau de soutien à l’immigration francophone de l’Est de l’Ontario (RSIFEO)
Post-secondary institution	Le Collège Boréal	La Cité Collégiale
Francophone association	Association canadienne-française de l’Ontario (ACFO - London-Sarnia)	Association des communautés francophones d’Ottawa (ACFO d’Ottawa)
Community centre	Centre communautaire régional de London (CCRL)	Vanier Community Service Centre
School board	Le Conseil scolaire Viamonde et le Conseil scolaire Providence	Travailleurs d’établissement dans les écoles (TÉE) for the Conseil des écoles publiques de l’Est de l’Ontario and the Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est
Sexual assault prevention and assistance centre (CALACS)	Carrefour des Femmes du Sud-Ouest de l’Ontario (CFSOO)	
Daycare centre	La ribambelle	
Settlement agency		Conseil Économique et Social d’Ottawa-Carleton (CÉSOC)
Immigrant association		Regroupement ethnoculturel des parents francophones de l’Ontario (REPFO)

These interviews provided contextual knowledge and the perspective of organizations on the role of community spaces in the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants. Interview questions addressed subjects such as the mandates and principal activities of the organizations, the circumstances or areas of intervention that generally led them to dealing with Francophone newcomers; the relationships between the organizations and Francophone immigrants; the principal obstacles that Francophone immigrants face along with the host community and organizations, and the role of community spaces.

Stage 2: Group Interviews with French-speaking Immigrants and Refugees

For Stage 2, we conducted eight group interviews (four in each city) with Francophone immigrants and refugees. Recruitment targeted the participation of diverse people, including men and women from different countries of origin, with different immigration statuses (economic immigration, family sponsorship, refugee), settled in Canada for various periods (very recently, recently, more established), different age groups, etc. The purpose was not to be representative, but rather to obtain a diversity of opinions to gain a better understanding of the heterogeneity of Francophone immigrants, their experiences, their needs and their practices. The questions (see Appendix 2 for the interview guide) covered their access to and

use of Francophone community spaces, their inclusion experiences, and which factors had facilitated their engagement and participation within the local community.

The focus group interview is an exploratory method that is ideal for stimulating debate and discussion among participants; it enables identification of the key issues around a problem and provides an overview of the various perspectives in a single meeting (Bennet 2002; Cameron 2010; Longhurst 2010). This approach allows participants to interact among themselves and with the researchers, so as to share their experiences and discuss their interpretations of them (Cameron, 2000). This method therefore enabled us to observe the co construction of data within each discussion group in order to examine how the participants understand and interpret the daily experiences they have lived (Clock et al., 2004) within the community spaces.

In order to supplement the data obtained during the group interviews, and to help us in the analysis, we also asked participants to complete a demographics questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Here, we present a general demographic profile of the participants in the group interviews in London and Ottawa (see Appendix 4 for the detailed data).

In London, a total of 13 people participated in four group interviews (4, 5, 1 and 3 participants respectively), comprising nine women and four men. The majority of participants (eight) were between the ages of 35 and 54, with four other participants between 18 and 34. Regarding marital status, 10 of the participants were married and the other 3 were either single, separated or widowed. Of the 13 participants, 9 were born in Africa, including 3 in the Central African Republic, 3 in Rwanda, 2 in Burundi and 1 in Benin. One participant was born in Bulgaria (Europe) and three were born in Colombia (South America). Participants came to Canada under several immigration categories: four as skilled workers, two under the family sponsorship category, one as an investor immigrant, one with a work permit, and five as asylum seekers or as refugees. A large portion of participants (8) had spent less than 5 years in Canada, only 2 having spent 11 or more years. In terms of level of education, 7 participants had a graduate degree, 3 had a bachelor's degree, 1 had a high school diploma and 2 did not have high school diplomas. In terms of occupation, 4 had a full-time job, 4 had a part-time job, 3 were students, 1 managed a personal project, and 1 was unemployed. More than half (7 participants) had lived in other cities in Ontario or Quebec before settling in London.

In Ottawa, a total of 43 individuals participated in the four group interviews (13, 12, 11 and 7 participants respectively). There were 25 men and 18 women. For age groups, the distribution was as follows: 15 participants were between 18 and 34 years of age, 18 were between 35 and 54, and 6 were 55 or older (4 participants did not identify an age group). With regard to marital status, 25 were married, 8 were never married, 4 were single, 4 were separated or divorced, and 4 indicated "other." The majority of participants (38) came from Africa, while 3 were born in Haiti (Caribbean) and 1 in Belgium (Europe). Those coming from Africa were born in the following countries: 23 in Burundi, 5 in Rwanda, 4 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2 in Côte d'Ivoire, and 1 each in Congo-Brazzaville, Morocco, Senegal and Togo (with 1 participant not having identified a country of origin). Multiple immigration categories were represented: 5 participants had arrived as skilled workers, 11 through the family sponsorship category, 1 as a provincial nominee, and 26 as refugee claimants or refugees. The large majority of participants (36) had recently arrived in Canada (0-5 years), while 5 had spent between 6 and 10 years here, and 1 had arrived 11 or more years ago (1 participant did not answer this question). With regard to employment, 2 said they work full time and 4 part

time, while 35 said they were unemployed (some were students or were undergoing training); 2 answered “other” but did not specify. The participants were generally educated: 10 had a graduate degree, 13 had a bachelor’s degree, 4 had a technical diploma, 13 had a high school diploma, and 3 did not have a high school diploma. Several had lived in other cities or provinces before settling in Ottawa, including Vancouver, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; London, Ontario; and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Stage 3: Interviews with Representatives of Community Spaces

For Stage 3, based on the results obtained during the group interviews, we conducted three semi structured interviews in each city (for a total of six interviews) with representatives of community spaces. Semi-structured personal interviews are an ideal way to gain deeper understanding of the day-to-day experiences from the perspective of individuals, while gaining insight into the role of larger social structures in the formation of these experiences (Bennet 2002; Longhurst 2010).

Participants in this stage were chosen as representatives of spaces that the participants in Stage 2 had identified as having facilitated their social and cultural integration process and/or as being an important community space for them. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain more details in relation to the nature and function of these community spaces and their support role in the integration and engagement of Francophone immigrants and refugees in the FMC. The interview guide included questions in connection with the role of particular community spaces, the profiles of users and/or participants, and the effectiveness of these spaces in facilitating social and cultural integration, as well as the participation and inclusion of Francophone immigrants and refugees in the FMC (see Appendix 5 for the interview guide)

Representatives of community spaces included in Stage 3

London	Ottawa
Settlement counsellor for a Francophone non-profit organization	Project manager for a training program for French-speaking newcomers, Francophone post-secondary institution
Executive director of an Anglophone organization	Pastor, multicultural Christian church
Community liaison officer for a Francophone non-profit community organization	Settlement counsellor for a settlement organization offering services in English and French

In London, the interviews were conducted with a settlement counsellor and a community liaison officer from two different Francophone organizations, as well as an executive director of an Anglophone organization that had been cited as an important organization during the group interviews. In Ottawa, an interview was conducted with a project manager responsible for a training program for Francophone newcomers at a Francophone post-secondary institution, a pastor from a multi-cultural Christian church, and a settlement counsellor for a settlement organization offering services in English and French.

Stage 4: Community Meetings

A community meeting was organized in each city in order to share the preliminary results according to the analyses in progress and to obtain feedback. The secondary purpose was to seek comments and suggestions from participants at these meetings in order to nourish and refine the recommendations presented at the end of this report, which could be used to improve the inclusion of immigrants in Francophone institutions and the community. These meetings therefore served to verify and to complement the collection of data from the study's other methodological stages. All participants from the previous stages were invited, although the meeting announcement was also distributed more broadly in order to invite other members from the communities involved. The meetings were held strategically, just before the 2016 National Francophone Immigration Week in London and Ottawa on October 25 and 27, respectively.

A presentation was prepared for each of the meetings, including the following contents: introduction, context, research objectives and questions, methodology and methods, description of the participants, and results from stages 1, 2 and 3 (corresponding to each city respectively), as well as questions for discussions related to the main themes presented (e.g. Which issue has the highest priority? Which strategies could be used to mitigate the challenges facing community organizations?) and specific questions for soliciting feedback (e.g. What are your recommendations for promoting participation, inclusion and engagement of immigrants within the community? What message would you like to pass on to the government on this subject?).

There were nine participants present at the London meeting. The two researchers, professors Huot and Veronis, facilitated the meeting. The majority of those who attended the community meeting were participants during Stage 1 of the study. Other members of the Francophone community also attended, in particular employees from Francophone organizations who had not participated in the study but were interested in the results. On the other hand, no participants from Stage 2 (discussion groups) attended the meeting. Instead of a formal presentation followed by structured questions, the meeting was conducted rather informally, with sections of the presentation layered between fruitful discussion. Participants who had participated individually at some stage of the project generally seemed interested in knowing the synthesis of the data and the results obtained through all the methodological stages. Having had time for reflection and a chance to react to the results, participants in the meeting confirmed our preliminary analyses and elaborated further on the themes and central issues. With the help of the research assistant for the project in London, detailed notes were taken during the discussions in order to document the important points raised.

There were 20 people participating in the meeting in Ottawa. Professor Veronis facilitated the meeting with the help of research assistants from the Ottawa project. Participants included people who had taken part in stages 1, 2 and 3, as well as interested members of the broader community. Given the larger number of participants, the meeting was conducted a little more formally (the presentation was followed by discussions) than in London. Nonetheless, the atmosphere was casual and the participants were able to ask questions and interject at any time. As in London, meeting participants appreciated the opportunity to learn the preliminary results of the study and to be able to share their comments. Again, we took detailed notes of the ideas discussed so as to be able to refer to them later.

Data Analysis

The data from each site (Ottawa and London) were analyzed according to a two-step process. First, we analyzed the text of all the interviews obtained during the three stages, which were transcribed verbatim (Sandelowski, 1995; Ryan and Bernard, 2003) and read them through completely a first time to capture the meaning of the text. Then, we assigned an inductive coding to each interview, line by line (Carspecken, 1996). Finally, the codes were organized into categories, which were used to create the themes presented below.

Results

In this section, we present the results for each of the three stages of our study. For Stage 1 (interviews with key sources), we discuss three main issues arising from our results: the challenges that Francophone communities face in maintaining their community spaces, the issue of the (in)visibility of Francophone minority communities, and the role of community spaces in the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants and refugees. In Stage 2 (discussion groups), we describe the types of community spaces discussed by the participants, as well as the role these spaces play in facilitating their social and cultural integration experiences. We then present the challenges that participants experienced in this regard, as well as their suggestions for practices that could help facilitate their integration. During Stage 3 (interviews with representatives of community spaces), we develop three main themes: the issues and challenges facing organizations serving Francophone immigrants, the role of community spaces in the integration of Francophone immigrants, and the challenges that these immigrants face in London and Ottawa. But first, we present a demographic profile of the Francophone communities in London and Ottawa to better situate our comparative analysis of the two cities in their socio geographic contexts.

Context and Demographic Profile: London and Ottawa

In order to better localize and interpret the qualitative results of our study, we examined census data in relation to official languages and to immigration in the two cities. This information allows us to better understand the demographic context of the sites and therefore informs our analysis of the interviews conducted at each stage. Tables with descriptive demographic data are included in Appendix 6.

First of all, it is important to indicate that the two cities differ significantly in size and in percentage of Francophones. In 2011, 15% of the population in the Ottawa census division (131,299) had French as their mother tongue, compared to 1.4% for the London metropolitan region (6,740) (see Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 6). We also found that the Francophone population in each of the cities grew in absolute numbers during the period from 1981 to 2011. However, its proportion was in decline in Ottawa (dropping from 19.2% to 15%) and has remained relatively stable in London, with slight growth (from 1.1% to 1.4%). At the same time, we note that the proportion of the Anglophone population is also in decline, while that of other languages is growing, in both cities. We interpret this data as indicating a migratory contribution to the population of the two cities, although this influence seems more marked in Ottawa than in London.

Table 3 (Appendix 6) shows the proportion of immigrants in the Francophone population in London and Ottawa for 2006 and 2011. In the case of London, we notice a slight increase from 11.4% to 11.8%. For Ottawa, the growth is more marked, going from 8.9% in 2006 to 12.4% in 2011. Although immigration probably contributed to the growth of the Francophone community, we should emphasize that, due to its location on the border of Quebec and its status as the capital of Canada, Ottawa may also have benefited from an influx of Francophone Canadians. Tables 4 and 5 help us understand the linguistic aspect of the migratory dynamic. According to the 2011 census data, it appears that in London, French is a minority language not only in relation to English, but also in relation to “other languages” spoken more often at home, both by immigrants and non-immigrants. While the largest

proportion of immigrants cite English as the language most often spoken at home (10.7%), more immigrants speak another language (6.5%) than French (0.07%). The situation is a little different in Ottawa, where immigrants are more likely to speak another language (16.4%) than either English (10.7%) or French (2.3%), suggesting a more diverse immigrant population in Ottawa than in London. In both cities, French remains a minority language among immigrant and non-immigrant families. However, this data is taken from the National Household Survey, which entails a response bias that can be difficult to estimate.

On the other hand, it is also important to take into consideration the larger migratory dynamic in the two cities. Tables 6 and 7 (Appendix 6) inform us about the presence of the immigrant population as well as newcomers for the periods from 1991 to 2011. It is interesting to note that although the proportion of immigrants was larger in London than in Ottawa in 1991 (17.3% compared to 14.6%), the growth of this proportion was higher in the capital than in the southwestern Ontario city, reaching 25.6% in the former and 18.7% in the latter in 2011. The proportion of newcomers is also generally higher in Ottawa than in London. These figures are useful in helping us understand the migratory context in the two cities. More specifically, Ottawa shows a more marked immigrant population presence than London, which can be translated into more extensive resources and infrastructure to meet the needs of these groups.

Stage 1 Results: Interviews with Key Sources

Three key themes emerged from our analysis of the interviews conducted with representatives of Francophone organizations in London and Ottawa. These included challenges that Francophone organizations and institutions deal with in order to maintain minority community spaces, issues of (in)visibility surrounding Francophone communities, and the role that these spaces play in the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants.

In connection with the first theme, at both the London and Ottawa research sites, participants identified three main challenges that affect the role assumed by Francophone organizations and community spaces and their capacity to facilitate the social and cultural integration of French speaking immigrants. These included the issues of financing, competition between organizations, and the ability to disseminate information and meet with Francophone immigrant populations. To a certain degree, these challenges arise from the restructuring of public policies. Participants in both cities often spoke of these three challenges as being interrelated.

The second theme that arose during the interviews in London and Ottawa concerned the visibility, or rather the invisibility of the Francophone communities, as well as their services and community spaces. This (in)visibility was described as existing at multiple levels, with certain differences between the two cities, which will be illustrated below.

With regard to the third theme, on community spaces, participants also brought up the role of these spaces and the opportunities that they offer to facilitate and support the social and cultural integration and participation of Francophone immigrants in the FMCs, and they did so in multiple ways. Beyond the emphasis that some put on the importance of accessibility of community spaces in terms of transportation, costs, etc., and when immigrants have access to Francophone organizations, the majority of representatives in both London and Ottawa explained that their space offers a generally welcoming environment. The results from Stage 1

are discussed in more detail in a publication recently submitted for evaluation (Veronis and Huot, submitted). In this report, we present examples of these three themes for each city before undertaking a comparative discussion.

London

In connection with the first theme, the majority of participants mentioned funding problems, including budget cuts and a lack of long-term subsidies, which creates insecurity in the operation of the organizations. One participant said that they have several obstacles to overcome:

[translation]

Lots of obstacles, the obstacles are almost everywhere, there is a problem with funding in general, there are sometimes untimely cuts, like, you've started the fiscal year, but in the middle of the fiscal year someone makes cuts, so then people have to be let go, the programs have to be reviewed, and that just disrupts things. So for me, as executive director, the biggest obstacle in terms of operations is that one, that's basically it. (London 1 2)

Second, participants spoke of the competition between Francophone and Anglophone organizations, as well as between the Francophone organizations themselves, which can have an adverse impact on the Francophone community as a whole. For example, one participant explained that competition between organizations can harm the development of collaborations and partnerships:

[translation]

... the available funds coming in, in fact, since there are so few of us and the funds are very often limited, organizations are regularly in competition in their own area of activity. Especially in London, the dynamic is amplified when a funder decides to grant a service to one organization or withdraw it from one organization and give it to another organization for prolonged periods, it creates rifts and mistrust within the community. (London 1-5)

The third challenge concerns the ability to reach out to Francophone immigrants and inform them of the existence of services intended for them, and more generally to disseminate this information within the community. On the one hand, it was explained that advertising and promotion budgets are the first to suffer from cuts or a lack of funding. On the other hand, the dynamic context of immigration and of community-based initiatives was mentioned, and along with it the constant need to get the word out. There are always new arrivals—whose needs are both complex and diverse—who do not necessarily know about the awareness efforts preceding their arrival:

[translation]

The first [obstacle] for us is to find them, identify them and go out and look for them. Second to that would be—even when we have gone to look for them and have identified them—to really be targeting their needs. And even though 15 to 20 newcomers were welcomed the year before, the next 20 that are going to arrive, I say this a lot, the obstacle is . . . we have to start all over again, go identify needs, go find

out what isn't understood, go and really give the information that people need and take them by the hand and guide them towards integration. (London 1-6)

Others identified a lack of a coordinated approach for services within the community that would also facilitate the integration of immigrants.

In connection with the second theme, the situation in London is complex due to the lack of visibility of the Francophone community in general within the majority Anglophone population. This lack of awareness of a Francophone population's presence within a designated city harms the visibility of Francophone organizations as well as the Francophone immigrant population. This (in)visibility creates a series of difficulties for these immigrants and the organizations that serve them, thus contributing to a vicious cycle like the one described by one participant:

[translation]

We have to reinvent ourselves and try to redo things ourselves, because there are still too many people who do not know about all the services that area offered. I'm talking with the [name] school board, but I'm convinced it's like this everywhere for all services in French in the area. There are still too many people who think Ontario is just Anglophone and are surprised that, whether it's services at the provincial or federal level, that it's actually possible to get them in Ontario. They're like "hmmmm." (London 1-6)

Due to this (in)visibility, many spoke about the limited participation of the Francophone community in events and activities organized by the organizations. Often, only a small percentage of the community attends. But one rather important problem was identified in connection with this challenge, that of assimilation of French speakers, including immigrants, into the majority Anglophone community. In fact, participants spoke about the loss of potential clients to Anglophone organizations. On the one hand, it is difficult to identify Francophone immigrants because they do not necessarily come out and identify as French speakers, or they are not always recognized as being Francophone. On the other hand, since settlement services are offered in both official languages by Anglophone and Francophone organizations, newcomers often end up heading toward the former rather than the latter. These factors contribute to the dynamic of assimilation, as was explained to us:

[translation]

The second barrier that I see is a problem of socialization: socialization as in where to find this Francophone community. Sometimes people arrive who are Francophones but they do not know where to start. If these Francophones are welcomed by an Anglophone organization because the Anglophones offer services to everyone—Francophones, Anglophones, Hispanics, Arabs, Chinese—these immigrants, even the Francophone ones, will be part of that group. And generally, the organizations will keep them for themselves because they will help them, and then no one immediately connects them with the Francophone organizations that are there. That is the second major obstacle. It seems that these newcomers do not know their rights. They know that, OK, they are not told everything necessarily, that you have a right to ask for services in French. (London 1-4)

Given these circumstances, people spoke to us of the need to make the broader London community aware of the existence of the FMC and of just how many services are actually available in French. Some participants hoped that this awareness building would help combat the lack of referrals to Francophone organizations.

That being said, the Francophone organizations are not being passive about this situation, and several participants described the ongoing efforts they are making to increase the visibility of the Francophone community and to publicize the existing organizations and services. One participant stated:

[translation]

We are really doing everything we can to succeed in going out to find these clients, by creating partnerships with ethno-cultural community groups, with other non-profit organizations that are in the area. We try to present all activities . . . So by multiplying the approaches for finding where they are, we hope to be able to reach them and then show them that there are Francophones here and that we are available to provide them with services. (London 1-6)

The third issue identified in the interviews was the role of the spaces. These spaces can offer a generally welcoming environment. Because of the availability of resources and the offer of services and activities, Francophone community organizations and their premises themselves represent important spaces for immigrants. For example, several participants spoke of volunteer opportunities offered by their organizations, which can help newcomers obtain experience in a Canadian work environment, as well as opportunities to network by interacting with other people. Meetings, fairs and ad hoc events organized by these organizations also create spaces where a diversity of members from the Francophone community can meet with one another.

The majority of participants emphasized the opportunities to network and dialogue offered by community spaces. One participant explained that both professional and personal connections can be developed:

[translation]

I think . . . that the space essentially becomes a meeting point, a rallying point. There are people—when there is an event where everyone gets together—there are people who live in London but who haven't seen each other in a year or two, but they meet there, so the space serves that purpose. . . . There are partnerships created during these meetings, when people meet in this space, and then they exchange phone numbers or business cards and continue their partnership outside later, once the activity is over. So there are a lot of things that develop after that, because there are a lot of friendship connections created through these meetings and then people continue to see each other outside the office. (London 1-4)

Participants also highlighted the role of community spaces as a point of contact to the London community. One participant described how people discover their community through these spaces:

[translation]

For those who don't know, we suppose that there is [an organization] or community centre. Then, for the newcomers, the point of contact or the central points where people will go is often the library, I think that this is pretty international for everyone. People go to the library, they go to the pool, they go to the places where everyone meets. For us, that allows us to enter into a relationship with people and then to inform them about what is going on . . . , they learn if they are interested in activities in French, then this makes a chain and then everyone helps each other. (London 1-7)

In other words, these community spaces serve not only to build bridges between Francophone immigrants and the FMC, but also with the majority community.

However, it was indicated that the lack of a “one-stop” central community meeting space (offering all services in French, and not just settlement services) represents a significant challenge in a city where the services and population are dispersed, and therefore an additional obstacle to welcoming Francophone immigrants:

[translation]

To my knowledge, in London right now, the Francophone host community does not have the structure to welcome Francophones. That is my observation. There is no Francophone community specific to London or its surrounding area. It is very dispersed and very individualistic; it is not a tight-knit community where everyone speaks with one voice and implements certain hosting structures. For example, we all have organizations, we all have different mandates if a newcomer arrives. So which organization will take on the task first, and understand all of the needs entailed? (London 1-4)

Although the absence of a common space is a challenge for rallying the London FMC, several participants spoke of partnerships formed not only between Francophone organizations and institutions but also Anglophone ones, which make it possible to create spaces for meetings, coordinate programs and organize joint events.

Ottawa

The three main themes characterize the data from Ottawa, often in a similar way, but also with some notable differences, which are further discussed in the comparative discussion that follows below. In connection with the challenges of maintaining Francophone community spaces, participants indicated that funding cuts, or ad hoc funding that is not necessarily renewed, made it hard to maintain programs over the long term. Expressing her frustration in this regard, one participant stated:

[translation]

... Where is the Francophone community headed if we don't have—if those Francophone immigrants who have just arrived do not have the basic services they need for their orientation, for their integration? How are they going to get settled? Are

we just going to make them dive directly into English? You know, “go take the English course for one or two years, or three years, and then after that you’ll settle.” That’s backwards. (Ottawa 1 6)

In this excerpt, the participant clearly alludes to the impact of cuts not only on the newcomers, but also on the broader Francophone community. In other words, these cuts affect the creation, maintenance and quality of Francophone community spaces, with repercussions for the integration of Francophone immigrants in the FMCs. Following this, she spoke about the impact of cuts on staff and their daily duties, since the workers who remain find themselves in charge of clients from jobs that were eliminated.

On the other hand, participants noted that the funding problems are in turn a key factor in causing the competition between organizations, which are vying to obtain funding and to attract and retain clients:

[translation]

On top of that, we have a challenge that you find not just in Ottawa, you find it everywhere. Because [the Department] needs numbers, it makes for a kind of competition with the organizations. [An Anglophone organization] will serve the Francophone immigrant as much as possible Instead of saying, “Oh, you’re a Francophone,” and then working [with] CÉSOC, it can’t do that because the number [won’t count] for it, and it has a service in French to defend. So, these agreements between the Department and the organizations should exist, so that it is easy for them. Then they wouldn’t lose when someone says they would prefer a French-language service, because for me there is a big difference between “service offered in French” and “Francophone service.” (Ottawa 1 2)

With regard to community-based initiatives, these are subject to frequent changes, including the turnover of staff and services offered. So this involves keeping other organizations and partners up to date, as was explained:

[translation]

There really is a certain movement of staff, so our work is to constantly come back to talk about our programs and our services. . . . That is why this guide [brochure] becomes important, especially when we’re doing representation, because our training advisors are going out in the field to meet settlement agents, and will make the rounds . . . with our partnerships to talk about our service offerings. . . . Our services change, so if the funding has changed, if a new project has been added . . . then, we will change . . . our brochure. (Ottawa 1-5)

For the second theme, although the Ottawa FMC is comparatively more visible than the one in London, this issue was also discussed, though in a different way. The problem is mainly the lack of visibility for Francophone services and institutions at the Anglophone settlement agencies, which often do not direct Francophone newcomers to them. There was also the issue of a lack of awareness among Francophone immigrants of the existence of Francophone services and institutions, thus limiting their use and participation. One frequent consequence of this of (in)visibility is that the children of Francophone immigrant families are sometimes enrolled in Anglophone schools, which complicates not only integration but also the parents’ participation in the community:

[translation]

... I realized that there are a lot of parents who enrolled their children . . . in Anglophone schools whereas they themselves they're not even English, and that creates barriers . . . in terms of talking to teachers, . . . helping the child. It creates a big barrier. The parents do not go to the school, they are not involved in the lives of their children, in the children's education. (Ottawa 1-6)

In the case of this participant, she herself had the experience of having had her children enrolled in an Anglophone school, with impacts on her integration: [translation] "The organization welcomed us, the children were enrolled directly into a school. . . . that was more English. . . so that. . . it took me a while to get involved." (Ottawa 1-6)

Finally, the Ottawa participants also spoke of the third theme, concerning the role of Francophone community spaces in facilitating the integration of newcomers. Notably, emphasis was placed on the quality of settlement services aimed at familiarizing them with the Francophone community and institutions, ranging from information workshops to guided tours, social activities and job fairs with Francophone employers. In particular, they identified community centres and schools as places conducive to the involvement of Francophone immigrants. However, several participants suggested that relationships between Francophone immigrants and members of the established community were more complex. They even acknowledged that the two groups interact very little. According to one participant:

[translation]

I feel like we always tend to . . . provide services to immigrants. It's immigrants between immigrants. We don't have many services that . . . It's because the needs are not the same. . . . I think that if we created something where we share experiences, that there would be a place where native-born Canadians share an experience with their way of living, over time, because there are a lot . . . of things that are similar to immigrant culture, but we don't share that. (Ottawa 1-6)

The remarks were not always explicit, but some participants alluded to questions of discrimination, or at least of [translation] "ignorance" (Ottawa 1-3) and "a lack of awareness" (Ottawa 1-2), that do not facilitate the participation of Francophone immigrants in the established community.

However, the majority of participants insisted that there is a strong network of partnerships and of collaboration between various Francophone organizations and institutions, and to a certain degree, with Anglophone settlement agencies. This network makes it possible to better support the various needs of Francophone immigrants while avoiding the duplication of services and maximizing the effectiveness of referrals. The best example is the school-based Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program, which was set up in collaboration between the two French school boards (public and Catholic). This program operates mainly on the basis of referrals, and the majority of services are offered in partnership with settlement agencies. One participant described the attitude of organizations regarding these issues:

[translation]

They are in partnership and they're getting better and better, even the two Ottawa school boards increasingly work together under [the aegis] of the [FIN] network . . . because we want this to be more than just a competition between school boards. . . . Really, it is the idea of cooperation around a theme that operates at a second level. It's more than the number of students in my school, it's the number of children in my Francophone community. (Ottawa 1-2; emphasis added)

We will now move on to an analysis and comparative discussion of the results from both cities. While we noted important similarities in the remarks of participants from London and Ottawa, several differences arise from the data, bringing to light the influence of the unique geographical context of the FMCs in these processes.

Comparative discussion

It is important to note that the data from both cities evoke the three main themes. This signals that the challenges facing community spaces in FMCs, as well as the potential roles these spaces will play in the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants, are not unique to any one city. In other words, these spaces are subject to the effects of larger structural dynamics. However, the impacts of these systematic, structural and even institutional influences (e.g. impacts of funding policies) may manifest themselves in different ways, depending on the FMC's specific geographical context and based on factors such as institutional completeness, the strength of that completeness, the (in)visibility of the community, and the existence of networks, partnerships and cooperation among the FMC's key organizations, institutions and actors. So, while there are strong general similarities between the London and Ottawa results, it is important to point out the many different ways these themes take shape "on the ground" in each city.

Regarding the first theme (challenges), the issue of competition had different connotations for each city. We observed that the nature of this competition varied between Ottawa and London. In Ottawa, it appears that competition exists primarily between Francophone and Anglophone organizations, while in London, it occurs between the various Francophone organizations themselves, which could have negative effects on the Francophone community as a whole.

In addition, London seems to face greater and more numerous challenges, compared with Ottawa. Some participants noted a lack of French-language services in general, which forces immigrants to seek support from organizations offering services in English only. In Ottawa, the range of Francophone services is much greater because many municipal services and programs are also available in French. The question of geographical scale also came up in the interviews. Because the Francophone population of central-southwestern Ontario is geographically dispersed and relatively smaller, many organizations have regional as opposed to local mandates. They serve a large catchment area with few resources, which gives rise to several unique obstacles. Meanwhile, Ottawa's various Francophone organizations serve their community at one or more levels, from extremely local (neighbourhood) to municipal (city of Ottawa) to regional (eastern Ontario).

It appears that competition among such organizations is much stronger in London than in Ottawa. This competition, coupled with a lack of funding, makes it more difficult to reach the target clientele and disseminate information. Some participants also pointed out that this competition leads to a duplication of services, which can be confusing to newcomers who are unaware of all the programs available. Moreover, the referral process is complicated by the fact that the same services are offered by more than one organization. Conversely, the Ottawa participants often referred to the robustness of their collaborative networks and partnerships, which eases the referral process while avoiding issues such as service duplication.

The (in)visibility of the Francophone community creates a number of obstacles that can make it more difficult for newcomers to access and use Francophone institutions, services and spaces. This in turn can significantly impact the integration experiences of newcomers and impede their participation in the two FMCs.

Also regarding this second theme of (in)visibility, the London participants emphasized the efforts they make to increase the FMC's visibility. Ottawa's organizations do similar work, as indicated above, with multiple initiatives aimed at disseminating information on their programs. With respect to this second theme, however, Ottawa mainly focuses on increasing service visibility within the Francophone community as a whole and within Anglophone organizations, but not within the Anglophone community in general, as is the case in London.

In examining the role of Francophone community spaces (the third theme), participants in both cities noted the form and structure of these spaces, stressing that programs and activities must reflect the diversity of French speakers to promote a sense of community and belonging among newcomers.

The emphasis on inter-organizational collaboration under this third theme highlights the potential of networks and partnerships as a winning formula for successfully integrating Francophone newcomers in a way that has a positive impact on the immigrants themselves as well as on the greater Francophone community. That said, we noted that despite the strength of each network (particularly in Ottawa), the relationships between the various Francophone organizations/ associations and immigrants are still developing.

In summary, the three main challenges were discussed by the Ottawa and London participants, and by every type of organization participating in our study. The results highlight the challenges faced by the associative sector (including organizations serving Francophones, immigrants and Francophone immigrants) and the impact of these challenges on the vitality of Francophone community spaces. They reveal a precarious situation that makes welcoming, integrating and including Francophone immigrants all the more difficult, with repercussions for FMCs as a whole.

Stage 2 Results: Group Interviews with Francophone Immigrants and Refugees

During the group interviews, participants identified a range of community services that they have accessed and used in the course of their social and cultural integration in London and Ottawa. For each city, we will present the major community spaces mentioned by participants, and then discuss the role of these spaces and how they have helped participants with their integration. We will then explore the participants' challenges and present their opinions on what could be done to improve the integration experience. We conclude this section with a comparative discussion on the results of this study in each city.

London

The diversity of community spaces was noted by London participants, including service providers, schools, libraries, churches, volunteer opportunities, media outlets and the Internet, workplaces (especially for those working in Francophone spaces), parks, and multicultural associations and ethno cultural associations and communities (see list: Stage 2). For example, one participant listed various spaces that had been significant in her settlement and integration process:

. . . I talked to you about the activities I did during the integration process. I took part in the ACFO employment information sessions and seminar, and attended the Collège Boréal and Cross Cultural [Learner] Centre too, the community space where immigrants get help finding jobs is very important, but there is another very important community space. I would say that for me, in the first few months after I arrived, I said to myself I am now in a purely Anglophone culture, I have to integrate into some community so I can successfully integrate. So I thought, hey, I should find a church. I found a church whose members also helped me integrate into the community, along with my children and my family here in London. So I would say not only the community centres and employment centres but also the church was very important to me. (London, 2-1)

A number of participants also mentioned the renting of spaces by ethno cultural communities for celebrating various events (for example, in churches and libraries). They also noted parks where community activities are often held. Social media and other media (e.g. radio and Internet) were also mentioned as being important for the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants.

Spaces discussed by participants in Stage 2

London

Service providers (settlement services, multi service community organizations, etc.):

Settlement services

- Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario - (ACFO London-Sarnia)
- Cross Cultural Learner Centre

Community organizations

- Centre communautaire régionale de London
- Carrefour des femmes du sud-ouest de l'Ontario
- Réseau-femmes du sud-ouest de l'Ontario
- Centre d'alphabétisation et de commutation de London [London Literacy Centre]
- WIL Employment Connections
- London Employment Help Centre

Educational institutions:

- Schools for adults
- Elementary and secondary schools
 - Conseil scolaire Viamonde
 - Conseil scolaire Providence
- Post-secondary institutions
 - Collège Boréal
 - Fanshawe College
 - University of Western Ontario

Libraries

Churches

Volunteer organizations

Media and Internet

Workplaces

N/A

Parks (community events)

Multicultural associations and ethno cultural associations/communities

- African Canadian Federation of London and Area (ACFOLA)
- London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
- Union Provinciale des Minorités Raciales Francophones (UPEMRF) [provincial association for Francophone racial minorities]

Ottawa

Service providers (settlement services, multi service community centre, etc.):

Settlement agencies

- CÉSOC,
- Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- World Skills/Compétences mondiales,
- YMCA

Community Resource and Health Centres

- Vanier Community Service Centre
- Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre

Educational institutions:

- Schools for adults
- Elementary and secondary schools
- Post-secondary institutions
 - La Cité Collégiale
 - University of Ottawa

Libraries

Churches

Volunteer organizations

Media and Internet

N/A

Hospitals

N/A

Ethno cultural associations and communities

Besides the spaces themselves, participants also discussed the services, celebrations, events and activities that are offered or held in these spaces, which help facilitate integration. In London, participants listed the settlement, integration and job services and workshops offered by various community and settlement organizations, as well as multicultural community

activities and events. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of gatherings within ethno cultural communities to mark special occasions.

[translation]

I take part in anything related to the [African immigrant] community. There are “New Year’s” parties, for example. When we were young, there were events like graduations. We did everything as a community because if more than one or two people were graduating, the parents got together so that we could have a group party. Same thing for communion. We had New Year’s parties and parties celebrating our country’s independence that also brought us together with people from our community who are here in London. This way we don’t lose all the things that are familiar to us. (London, 2-2)

Playing sports with friends (e.g. basketball) and taking part in social groups hosted by community organizations (e.g. cooking and sewing clubs) also play a role in participants’ integration experiences.

In London, participants were involved in these spaces, and thus in the Francophone community, in multiple ways. For example, some participants worked for Francophone organizations, and several had volunteered (and continued to do so) at community spaces (e.g. churches or non-profit organizations). The majority used Francophone services and participated in community events, while some sat on boards of directors for Francophone organizations. However, although these spaces facilitate social and cultural integration, it is important to note the participants’ own efforts to ensure a successful integration. Participants spoke of the hours they had invested in building their networks and promoting their integration by researching information and job opportunities, volunteering, using services, and attending workshops and community and/or cultural activities. Several participants had worked to learn and improve their English, or were in the process of doing so.

In addition, participants described the role of these spaces in their social and cultural integration (see Appendix 7). In London, their involvement in community spaces had helped them become familiar with Canadian culture. They discussed the opportunities for offering and obtaining information, support and assistance, both formal and informal. These spaces helped them build networks and make contacts, which supported their integration in a variety of ways (job searches, etc.). By celebrating, socializing, discussing and sharing their experiences, they were able to meet people and forge long-term friendships. One participant explained how she saw the role of Francophone community spaces:

[translation]

There are plenty of opportunities to succeed and grow in French, opportunities for getting together and occasions for celebrating the Francophone community. We flourish when we meet other Francophones. We get together often to talk, share our experiences. I would say I truly feel Francophone in London. It’s quite stimulating because we don’t feel alone. Of course, we are in a minority community with significant pressure from the Anglophone element all around us, but we have opportunities to grow, exchange ideas, discuss and have fun. (London 2-1)

The minority community's presence helps create a sense of belonging within the larger majority community.

Francophone immigrants and refugees in London also find support for their social and cultural integration outside formal Francophone spaces such as community organizations. Social networks played a significant role for many. Participants mentioned the importance of mutual assistance within social networks made up of friends and family members in the city. For example, one participant stressed the significance of immigrant communities:

[translation]

. . . The [ethno cultural] community is so important, because you know when you're in Canada, you're living in another country, you've left your whole family behind sometimes. Some people have left war-torn countries like ours. You don't have a chance to say goodbye to everyone. But then you find yourself in a place where you might have new cousins, aunts. . . you know, people you can call your own. It gives you a new outlook and lightens the stress you feel every day. I would also say church is very important because people, when they don't have time to do other activities, they go to church on Sunday or Saturday or Monday or whenever they go. But yes, it's very important to feel like, even if you're not at home, you can still carry your values, you can still carry your beliefs with you, and instill them in your children. (London 2-2)

It can be difficult to make new friends in a new city, but many participants shared positive experiences of being paired with members of the host community through settlement services at community organizations, which allowed them to meet friends in the local community. In particular, participants also identified religious communities and children's schools as spaces that helped facilitate their integration. A few participants said it was important to keep an open mind throughout their transition and integration journey.

Participants noted a number of challenges they regularly face in their host community. Many of them can relate to the difficulty of living in a minority community. For example, most stressed the need to learn English to successfully integrate in London. Learning English is important not only for accessing the job market, but also for going about daily activities in a predominantly English speaking environment. For Francophiles in particular, the pressure to assimilate is very strong because of the lack of free French classes. It is difficult to maintain one's French skills without opportunities to practise the language. The minority status of London's Francophones was linked to a lack of bilingual services in [translation] "government structures" (London, 2-1), and to the limitations of Francophone organizations (e.g. lack of funding):

[translation]

I think the problem for Francophone minority communities is that because of the lack of funds, we're very limited in terms of group activities, despite the fact that many Francophones want to get together more often. So, if we have fewer activities and more spaces, or rather fewer spaces, that's how we lose the opportunity to practise our culture, especially for exogamous families like mine. So, I think that through churches, community organizations, there are two or three where we can go and take part in French activities, although these activities only take place once a month. So, I

think one of the things to do is to increase the number of community activities in French, increase the number of spaces in French. Otherwise, future generations also run the risk of losing their culture and language. (London 2-2)

Some participants mentioned that services and organizations were sometimes less useful than they had hoped and that organizations were not always diligent with their clients. The small number of Francophones in the region is also seen as creating particular challenges. For example, the lack of French-language churches of various denominations had prompted some Francophones to attend church services in English or Spanish.

Participants also discussed other challenges besides those specifically related to the minority community. Some of them spoke of a lack of openness on the part of the host community. Participants also recounted their experiences with discrimination arising from differences within the community (e.g. different accents, ways of speaking and cultures). The Francophone community was described as having a prideful element, where people felt rejected if they spoke in a “different” way. The separations in London’s Francophone community help perpetuate certain negative dynamics, according to participants. Most participants have had more interactions with other Francophone immigrants than with native French speakers. Many of them experienced isolation, particularly immigrants from certain countries and/or ethnic communities that are under represented in London.

Participants noted a number of improvements that could be made to better facilitate the integration of Francophone immigrants and refugees. One participant explained that although community organizations play an important role, they could better coordinate their efforts in serving the community:

[translation]

Participant: I think that community organizations need a more open attitude toward Francophones. Whenever there are activities at a community organization, only three, four or five people will show up. Why is it so difficult to reach out to Francophones? This is my perception, I think some organizations talk about integration, all the organizations talk about integration, but in reality each organization works in its own interests.

Researcher: So they say one thing and do another?

Participant: All the organizations say “We’re here for you, for integration, we support you.” Nice words! But in reality, each organization is looking out for its budget (London, 2-3)

Participants placed particular emphasis on the importance of better information sharing with a wider variety of delivery methods (e.g. blogs) and more effective orientation for newcomers (e.g. providing additional information more directly and within a more reasonable time frame). Participants agreed that more should be done to reach out to and bring together the local Francophone community. They also voiced their desire for more community events and activities and greater intercultural sharing, to build familiarity among the different Francophone groups. Participants recognized that this will require more openness toward Francophiles and Anglophones to promote the community’s growth. For example, an effort must be made to better attract Francophone and Francophile immigrants to London in order to increase the number of participants at activities, boost the number of students in schools, etc.:

. . . The Francophone community has to grow. It's like we are in a little box and we are locked inside and we only open up to those we want to and then we close ourselves up. If you don't have a minimum amount of French or a grandparent who speaks French, you are not welcome in the Francophone community and you feel like you've been rejected. And I understand it's a way to preserve and protect the language. English prevails over French right now around the world. It's a language that can easily be lost, but if we don't open our doors so that more people can speak French it will deteriorate more and more, and we'll see fewer and fewer jobs. . . . It's like refusing to grow. We always want to stay at the same level, but we have to grow and Francophones have to open the door to other people. We have the ability to grow and achieve things, but if we only want French speakers, it's not going to happen. (London, 2-2)

Beyond the Francophone community itself, participants would also like to see improved French language services in public spaces and better support for economic integration, given the lack of available jobs in French.

In addressing these complex issues and possible solutions, participants shared suggestions on how to facilitate their social and cultural integration. They underlined the importance of employment to ensuring better economic integration and facilitating more comprehensive integration; there is also a need for more community events and funding for activities hosted by (ethno)cultural communities. As one participant stated:

[translation]

More shows, of course. For people who come here right from Africa. In Africa, people like to move a lot, it's all about celebrating. Well, imagine someone who lived in that kind of environment, and then they come here to Canada. They feel like they're in jail. . . . So you're stuck. You stay home, you don't go out, you don't do anything, you're just there. People who have been here for a while, they're already used to it. That's fine. But for someone who's just arrived, I think it's pretty tough. Maybe have a get-together once a month to motivate them, for newcomers only. They could come and meet each other, exchange ideas. (London 2-4)

In addition to regular activities and events, participants also said it is important to have services that better target the particular interests of clients, in addition to the general programs and services currently available.

Ottawa

The Ottawa participants also noted a diversity of community spaces. Since the majority of participants had arrived in Canada quite recently (less than five years earlier), they mainly spoke of the settlement agencies (often more than one) that they used to access French-language reception and settlement programs and various provincial government services, including those offered through Service Ontario and Employment Ontario. Participants also said they regularly use community service and resource centres, churches, colleges and training centres. To a lesser extent, participants noted their use of libraries, and those with children mentioned schools. Participants made little mention of ethno cultural associations.

For example, one participant stated:

[translation]

In the short time I have been here, . . . I have consulted with [the newcomer centre at the] YMCA, . . . That is truly a place where they provide a lot of information, Internet access, and you can use the printer. . . . They also helped me fill out work permit application forms, . . . It's a connection you can use to find volunteer work. . . . [There is] a community health centre . . . you can get care there. . . . I use the library downtown, . . . I have a card and can take out books, CDs, and I can use the computer to print, so it's good, a good place. . . . I have also gone to church. (Ottawa 2-2)

Ottawa participants also said they use a number of settlement services (information sessions, workshops, training sessions, language classes, conversation groups, meetings with counsellors) in several different organizations and institutions, including settlement agencies in community centres, libraries, schools for children, schools for adults and colleges. They said they generally feel welcome in these spaces. They underlined the dedication of the staff, which they appreciated a great deal. Many participants acknowledged the assistance of social workers in filling out forms, navigating complex procedures and resolving family issues such as separation.

[translation]

There is the YMCA . . . which provides a lot of information, and there is a CÉSOC representative who provides a lot of services to Francophone immigrants . . . and this person helped me a lot, especially with filling out forms. . . the various forms because here you might call it. . . a country of forms and they're not easy to fill out on your own. It takes you a week, but if you get help it takes you a day. And so the YMCA is the second centre. In my opinion, these two centres helped me a lot in the beginning because you feel a bit lost and the people you know—the friends you have here—can't always help you properly so you really have to find someone, a centre, really, that's used to doing it. (Ottawa 2-2)

If we didn't have community centres, Francophone ones in particular, we would be lost. I got a lot of help from the Vanier community centre. . . . The Centre really, really made a big difference for me. . . . If the Centre had not been there, I would not be with my children, for example, because I had to write, draft letters. When you arrive here, you are a complete foreigner, completely lost. . . . For newcomers, immigrants, it is difficult when it comes to immigration, everything involving immigration is very difficult. I lived without my children for 12 years, and that hurts. You don't know where to go, you don't know who to ask. If the centre hadn't been there, I would not be with my children today. (Ottawa 2 2)

These examples demonstrate that Francophone immigrants, particularly newcomers, access and use a number of Francophone organizations and services. The testimonials also reveal the important role of these places as gateways to Canadian society and, especially, as sources of vital information for immigrants finding their way in a new community. However, a number of participants complained about the quality of service they received in various provincial government offices (Service Ontario and Employment Ontario), for example when applying for a driver's licence and particularly when accessing social assistance and training. This issue

was mainly voiced by refugees, who criticized overly lengthy procedures (for obtaining various administrative documents, accessing training, etc.) and complained that social workers did not always seem well informed about services for people who been granted refugee status.

Participants noted their attendance at various types of churches, including Francophone, Anglophone and ethno cultural churches (e.g. Congolese, Haitian). Some also had contact with their ethno cultural community and friends or networks from their home country. However, only a small number of participants said they were involved (e.g., through volunteering) in Francophone community spaces (e.g. the Vanier community centre, the Carrefour Francophone at the University of Ottawa, CÉSOC, in a senior care home, or at events). Those immigrants who are involved are mostly more established. A number of participants said they had not obtained any information on the Francophone community and its community spaces.

Ottawa participants also discussed the role that various community spaces have played in their social and cultural integration process. Settlement services and organizations provided them with crucial support from the moment they arrived until several years after they were established. Participants spoke of obtaining useful material on Canadian culture, among other information, which helped them to adapt. They also noted the help they received for their integration overall, including support for finding housing, in preparing for their job search (training, CV formatting, interview practice) and in learning English. On the topic of adaptation, other participants spoke of attending workshops at community centres on cooking and staying healthy in Canada. Those with children had attended training sessions at schools, which helped them to integrate themselves and also helped their children.

A number of participants were young adults who had arrived in Canada as adolescents. They spoke of their experience with the Ontario Ministry of Education's Programme d'appui pour nouveaux arrivants (PANA)² [support program for newcomers] in French schools. In one case, the comments were generally positive, and participants had found this program useful to them in their adaptation process. In the other case, the experience was negative, mostly because participants had been obliged to enrol in PANA at their school for four years (even after they no longer considered themselves newcomers). This was longer than they felt was necessary, and they found this practice discriminatory and stigmatizing.

As for other types of community spaces, one participant said she joined an Anglophone choir to learn English. Another sang in a multicultural choir where members practised and shared music from various cultures. The participants who volunteered said this was a good way to gain experience and meet people, especially Canadians.

Lastly, a number of participants stressed the particular importance of churches in their social and cultural integration. They said they felt at ease and welcomed in these spaces, which provided them with a sense of community:

[translation]

For me, the best place for integration up until now has been church. I mean church because I'm Haitian. I'm not saying I'm cutting myself off from my Haitian

² The Programme d'appui pour nouveaux arrivants (PANA) is aimed at students who have recently settled in Ontario. It provides them with support as they familiarize themselves with French-language instruction.

community but there are practices I maybe don't like so much, so because of that, I'm not one to purposely seek out . . . the company of Haitians. It's not that I avoid them, but I'm like "OK, you're a Haitian, pleased to meet you," but it doesn't go any further. When it comes to the Francophonie, do I gravitate toward Francophones? Well again, there is the white-black problem that exists, so thanks, but no thanks. So that's why the place I feel the most welcome is church, because I go to church, we speak the same language, . . . we share the same faith, so it really works, and I hear many people talk about the church being a centre where they also integrate. So up until now, I think the place . . . that helps me integrate the most is my church. (Ottawa 2-1)

This testimonial also reflects the perspective of many participants, who acknowledge the usefulness of ethno cultural communities but prefer to expand and diversify their networks. However, as indicated in the above quote, mingling with the "Francophonie" and ("old-stock") "Francophones" is not easy, due to what this participant refers to as the "white-black problem." These statements reflect the tenor of the discussion among the participants in all four Ottawa focus groups.

Lastly, participants acknowledged that accessing French-language services helped them enormously in their settlement and integration process, especially since the majority of them spoke little or no English upon arrival. They also said the system of collaboration between organizations is very effective and that the referrals process among service providers is firmly established, as is the sharing of information:

[translation]

I had very good experiences, especially with the Vanier community centre. . . . And it helped, I think, that they also have a referral service, which is very important because they refer you [to] other services that they don't provide, and that depends on which people you deal with. Although because I'm thinking either at the airport, or if you came over land, they also have a reception community that directs you [to] services, not only by word of mouth but there are pamphlets [that] guide you if you need services, where you can make contact. (Ottawa 2-1)

However, Ottawa participants pointed to a number of challenges. First, and almost paradoxically, many participants said that accessing information was very difficult—paradoxically because, while participants made use of many French-language services and organizations, they had difficulty accessing information. Specifically, participants said most information is available online, which can be an issue because they have trouble navigating the Web to find the information they need. We were also surprised to learn that the Ottawa participants make little use of Francophone community media outlets or social media in their integration. In short, this issue is one of (in)visibility: while Francophone organizations and services are visible, information remains invisible. It is worth noting that many participants come from countries where this type of information is seldom shared on the Internet, while in Canada an increasing amount of material is provided online.

A large number of participants said they found it very difficult to access the labour market, and many spoke at length of the various barriers (real or perceived) that prevent them from finding employment. Many see this as a language issue (the need to become fluent in English), while some perceive systemic barriers and discrimination (toward immigrants in

general and racial minorities in particular). On this topic, a number of participants emphasized that economic integration is key to achieving social integration and that the two are closely linked. They believe that finding a job opens the door to social participation: [translation] “In fact, your job is where you meet Canadians, where you get the chance to talk to people, . . . so if you don’t have a job. . .” (Ottawa 2-2).

In addition, some participants explained that despite the availability of French-language services, English dominates everyday life in their local neighbourhoods, in interactions with neighbours (or with their building superintendent), in stores, or in accessing certain services. In particular, one of the groups raised the issue of accessing health care services in French. Some participants expressed their frustration over the difficulty of finding Francophone physicians and having to discuss their health status in a second language.

The language issue also provoked lengthy group discussions on the challenge of speaking French in a minority community and the need to learn English (especially to find employment, as mentioned above). This was a complex issue, partly because some participants had expected Canada to be completely bilingual before their arrival, while others did not know that there was a Francophone community in Ottawa. However, all participants expressed the desire to become bilingual. They agreed that learning English was a requirement for integrating into Canadian society as a whole.

Because of this, some participants have mixed feelings when it comes to integrating into the Francophone community since, as a [translation] “minority” community, French speakers are constantly struggling to affirm their existence, rights and institutions. Given this context, some participants said they preferred to integrate directly into Anglophone Canadian society, which represents successful integration for many of them. One participant summed it up as follows:

[translation]

I am first and foremost Francophone but I don’t want to restrict myself to one community because I am in a country that is practically 90% Anglophone. So I tell myself, I want to be like every other Canadian, that is, someone who speaks English and French, you know, who is Anglophone and Francophone. That’s the goal! I don’t want to limit myself to being a Francophone, so I’m not taking that road because I don’t think the Francophone community will facilitate my integration. . . . Today if I’m in Canada, when I look for a job, I’m reminded that I have to speak English, OK? Or be bilingual. They don’t tell me, you have to speak French. You look at 90% of jobs or even 99% of jobs, you speak English or you’re bilingual, so I don’t see the need to have this restriction of being in an Anglophone community or in a Francophone community. I just don’t see how it’s useful. There you go. (Ottawa 2-3)

The majority of participants self-identified as Francophone, while some identified first with their home country or ethnic group and then as Francophone. However, like the participant quoted above, a large number of participants did not wish to limit themselves to the Francophone community alone and preferred to participate in more than one community. In addressing this topic, the history of colonialism and colonial power came up a number of times (in relation to the participants’ African countries of origin and to Canada). Participants recognized the oppression of colonized people, but also showed sensitivity and awareness regarding the persistence of colonial power relations in Canada today. Among other issues, a

number of participants said they did not feel very welcomed by members of the established Francophone community. While some described a certain separation between communities (due to a kind of silo effect), others spoke more explicitly of discrimination against Francophone immigrants, especially visible minorities, with racism and accent differences cited as factors.

That said, the vast majority of participants said they hoped to become more familiar with the Francophone community and to get involved in a more active way. Many of them did not know where or how to meet local French speakers, which speaks to the (in)visibility of the community. More generally, participants said they knew very little about Ottawa's Francophone community, including its history and institutions, and were more or less unaware of Francophone minority communities outside Quebec in general. A few participants commented that Ottawa's Francophone community seems to come together for a small number of regular events such as Franco-Ontarian Day and the Festival Franco-Ontarien, but that there is a dearth of other community spaces and activities the rest of the year.

Lastly, participants gave suggestions on how to help facilitate the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants. Some want to see improved access to French-language employment, at least temporarily, until they can join the English-language labour market. Others spoke of the need for more spaces to promote networking among immigrants, and between immigrants and native French speakers, as well as Canadians in general. A number of participants noted the importance of community activities for practising their French, so that children and adults alike do not lose their language skills. Many believed that French is at risk of disappearing and that it must be preserved. More generally, participants would like to see greater openness toward immigrants from the Francophone community. They would like to see more effort being made to help immigrants develop a sense of belonging:

[translation]

You talk about identifying with a community, it's true we speak French, but we live in a community that mostly speaks English. So to identify with a community, you share certain values, certain cultures. . . but the Francophone community, for us to really feel a part of that community, they have to do something to integrate all Francophones. But we hear about the Francophone community only by name. When it comes to supporting and taking care of Francophone immigrants, the Francophone community, we don't see it. So even though we speak French, we are forced to embrace Anglophone values because that's who we interact with. So the Francophone community needs to do something to facilitate the integration of Francophone newcomers, and then we will feel much more attached to this community.
(Ottawa 2-3)

Some participants even suggested reaching out to native-born Francophones to raise their awareness about the immigrant experience and the benefits of immigration, and offering "cross-cultural training" (Ottawa 2-4) in order to relieve immigrants from some of the work involved in adaptation. However, it is important to emphasize that participants also found it difficult to develop friendships with Canadians in general (not just Francophones), which may suggest that this issue affects the broader Canadian society, and not just Francophone minority communities.

Comparative discussion

Several similar themes and issues emerge from data collected in London and Ottawa in relation to the community spaces that Francophone immigrants use, the role these spaces play in their integration and social and cultural participation, and the challenges they face. In particular, we note that Francophone immigrants in both cities use a variety of community spaces (often to meet several different needs) and that these spaces support and/or facilitate their social and cultural integration in a number of ways (e.g. to meet specific needs, to transmit information, to provide training, to develop a social network, to develop a sense of belonging). In this sense, it is quite clear that community spaces play an important role and often represent a vital source of support for Francophone immigrants in their social and cultural integration into the Canadian community in general and into the local Francophone community to a certain extent. However, there are variations between London and Ottawa in this regard.

The results also indicate comparable challenges for Francophone immigrants, both in relation to the minority situation of the Francophone community and in relation to the community itself. On the one hand, the challenges arise because of the issues of the (in)visibility of the Francophone community and its services, access to employment, and bilingualism in a minority context. On the other hand, some people expressed a lack of openness on the part of the established Francophone community toward Francophone and Francophile immigrants, and even the perception of a certain discrimination or racism. Although these themes are common to both study sites, some differences appear. We would like to examine them in order to gain a greater perspective of and deepen our understanding of the role of community spaces, and of the broader context of FMCs, which can also influence the experiences of Francophone immigrants and the role of these spaces for their social and cultural integration.

One important difference between the two cities is in terms of access to French-language services and organizations, which are clearly more numerous in Ottawa, allowing Francophone immigrants there to fulfill a majority of their needs in French, while those in London sometimes have to rely on English services. Although this situation is advantageous to French speaking immigrants in Ottawa, it has repercussions for their social integration into the Francophone community. Based on our results, we have found that Francophone immigrants in Ottawa are primarily “clients” of community services and organizations, but much less often are “participants” in community spaces and activities. Conversely, according to the experiences of Francophone immigrants in London documented in this research, they are both clients and participants. In fact, those in London seemed more engaged in the Francophone community than those in Ottawa. That being said, it is important to point out that a greater majority of participants in Ottawa had arrived very recently (within the last five years) and still faced the immediate challenges around settlement, while some participants in London were more established and therefore perhaps in a more stable situation and more familiar with the native-born community. Although Ottawa participants are involved in ethno cultural communities and churches, they seem less familiar with the established Francophone community and its institutions, which may change over time.

Several factors can be cited to help us understand this dynamic. First, the small number of participants in London must be considered, along with the fact that those who participated in our research may be those who tend to get involved. With regard to Ottawa, a majority of the participants had very recently arrived in Canada and were still going through the early stages

of the settlement process, and therefore may not have been established enough to take part in the study. In addition, several Ottawa participants were in a precarious situation, many of them being refugees and seeking employment. In contrast, more of the London participants were employed.

The geographical context of FMCs may also play a role. London has a smaller and more isolated Francophone community, and has fewer services. Nevertheless, it seems that the community networks are more close-knit, with more organization of festivities and community events that offer opportunities to meet other members and develop connections. In fact, according to our results, community activities and spaces appear to facilitate networking and making social contacts. Therefore, although the Francophone community is more invisible than in Ottawa, community ties between members are more solid.

As for Ottawa, it is a larger city with a larger and more visible Francophone community, and access to more services in French. In addition, it is located on the border with Quebec and the city of Gatineau, which is very easily accessible and offers everything in French. Even though this Francophone community is more visible, it appears to be more spread out and therefore less easily accessible or identifiable. Consequently, it is less visible to newcomers or to those who do not have pre-existing connections with members of the native-born community. To a certain extent, these factors may explain some of the differences between the two cities with regard to the experiences of Francophone immigrants and their integration and social and cultural participation in London and Ottawa.

Stage 3 Results: Interviews with Representatives of Community Spaces

During the Stage 3 interviews, community space representatives confirmed several of the results obtained during the previous stages, while providing new insights including the different perspectives of those participating in this stage. The organizations selected for interviews in this stage were all of those referenced for the group interviews conducted in London and Ottawa. The three main themes addressed during these interviews were (1) the issues and challenges facing organizations serving Francophone immigrants, (2) the role of community spaces in the integration of Francophone immigrants, and (3) the challenges facing these immigrants in London and Ottawa. We will present the results for each site before proceeding to a comparative discussion.

London

In London, the interviews were conducted with individuals who worked for non-profit Francophone and Anglophone community organizations as settlement counsellors, executive directors and community liaison agents.

Once again, the issue of the invisibility of the London FMC was discussed by all of the participants in this stage. In particular, participants pointed out the difficulty of reaching and bringing together members of the Francophone community. This was described as a multi-stage challenge. To begin, one participant explained that there is no clear way to obtain the contact information for members of the FMC. Unless immigrants go through the doors of an organization to become a client or a volunteer, their presence in the community remains

unknown to the organization. As such, it is the people on the distribution lists who are contacted regarding information on available services, organized activities, etc.

In addition to this challenge, one London participant explained that even individuals who are known to the organization are not always easy to convince to participate in events and other organized activities. When asked why it is difficult to facilitate the integration of newcomers, she described the dynamic as follows: [translation] “When there are events, we have difficulty reaching them and having them confirm that they will participate in the events. And often when we have an activity, I find that people do not mix” (London 3-1). To follow up, we asked her what contributed to this dynamic, and she replied, [translation] “The native-born community is not as welcoming as it could be, and so we are often more comfortable with our own kind. We tend to stick with our own kind.” (London 3-1). In other words, even if individuals are contacted and choose to participate, there is no guarantee that newcomers will mix with the host community. The London FMC is characterized by ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, among other things, and so the [translation] “tendency to stick with our own kind” could apply to people who share the same mother tongue or come from the same country, for example.

Obstacles consequently persist due to community divisions and forms of discrimination present within the community. Three participants noted that there is a need to bring immigrants and the host community closer together. One participant spoke of this dynamic in the following manner:

[translation]

... In any case, I find that what prevents the Francophone population from integrating itself here is that it is bombarded with divisions. Bombarded with divisions in [terms] of religion. Even a Canadian immigrant who comes here from Quebec, or the Maritimes, or from northern Ontario, it makes a difference to people for some reason that I do not understand. This difference is what really hurts, because we have the ability to share a language and we don't do it because no one wants to participate at the cultural centre as a result of this division between us because we don't see each other as equals. (London 3-3)

She also noted that there are discriminatory attitudes toward different accents. In addition, the lack of a welcoming attitude was discussed. Although it is not necessarily intentional, it occurs in a systematic structural or institutional manner, due to the way that services are organized and the fact that they cannot always accommodate the particular challenges that newcomers face. One participant recognized that [translation] “[p]erhaps we are not as welcoming as we could be when they come.” She elaborated as follows as to what she meant by lack of hospitality and how to be more welcoming:

[translation]

With more activities, for sure. When they come to an activity or workshop, there is no child care. So, it can be a problem for them. We don't have child care. And I would like to come back to the barriers. These people have very large families, often with small children. So, it is difficult to ride the bus with small kids. And for the others, if they're going to school in the day, well, we close at 5 p.m. So, for the time that it takes for the children to come by bus, by the time they arrive, we are closed. (London 3-1)

In the interviews, several challenges facing Francophone immigrants were raised in connection with a number of different factors, including legal status, the presence of other extended family members in the community and the size of the family. This last element has implications for transport, child care and access to services, among other things. As was the case with Stage 1, participants listed the specific challenges for organizations serving FMCs. In particular, they emphasized the difficulty of reaching their targets; a lack of “critical mass” to offer a wider range of services, as well as the need to often work overtime in order to better serve their clients.

In response to a question concerning the existence of obstacles to the social and cultural participation or integration of Francophone immigrants, one participant explained:

[translation]

Declining numbers, that’s what it is. It makes it more difficult to get a group big enough for the activity to be in French. This is associated with funding targets, targets relating to results, sometimes relating to efficiency. It’s easier to do it in English than trying to make separate groups in French. From time to time, we have French conversation groups, but it’s on request—a group has to want to do that. So we’re going to do a conversation group with the library or other partners, but there is still the challenge of having enough critical mass so that services are cost-effective and affordable from a financial point of view. (London 3-2)

He also mentioned obstacles that the Francophone community and/or Francophone organizations face in trying to facilitate the integration of immigrants. The “lack of scale” or critical mass, in particular was mentioned in a similar manner:

[translation]

An organization that has, let’s say, ten employees. You can’t provide every service. You can’t have all the necessary skills. You can’t have what is needed for administration, to pay a salary to someone truly qualified. It’s the small size of some organizations that translates into a certain lack of capacity. (London 3-2)

Among the obstacles listed for the immigrants in the host FMC, one participant cited a lack of collaboration in some cases between organizations, which could hinder the potential role of community spaces to facilitate the social and cultural integration of immigrants. However, the importance of offering French services was emphasized. According to one participant, these spaces could be better used to bring together the Francophone communities within the greater FMC. Notwithstanding the similarities with the Stage 1 results, the commitment and dedication of frontline workers became more evident in this stage, in that they tried to serve clients in spite of the existing obstacles. In this same vein, one participant described the importance of creating an accessible space in order to promote the inclusion of clients:

[translation]

We do these things when we believe that they are really important for women. Like with [the activity], we had women who were not at all involved in the group, but they came anyway, just because they wanted to share the experience [at the event]. We did it during after-hours. We hold it in the evening, in the afternoon. . . whenever we could, whenever we had the time. And with a group like that, it’s difficult to make time for all of them to participate. When there are special things, we make sure that

everyone can participate and we do it when we can. Sometimes we work on Saturdays. We often work Saturdays and over the weekend so we can get as much participation as possible. (London 3-3)

This information allows us to refine our interpretation of the results obtained over the three stages. During Stage 2, a few participants expressed some disappointment in their experience with access to French-language services, indicating that organizations may not be making enough of an effort. However, the Stage 1 and 3 interviews gave us the context in which community organizations must operate, including the constraints that they face. It is important to recognize that despite some issues related to the quality of services offered, providers often make tremendous efforts and give all that they can to be able to meet the needs of their clients and the community.

Ottawa

In Ottawa, interviews were conducted with individuals working in various capacities with Francophone immigrants and refugees, including a project leader coordinating programs for Francophone newcomers at a post-secondary institution, a pastor of a multicultural Christian church and a settlement counsellor at an Anglophone and Francophone institution.

Competition between organizations and the lack of funding were among the significant issues discussed. According to one participant, although there are established partnerships and different organizations often meet to share information and coordinate their programs, this does not necessarily translate into concrete actions, and there is still competition between organizations when it comes to serving clients, chiefly due to funding requirements:

[translation]

People are there but they are not really genuine. . . . They observe, they stare at each other, they come to listen to others, but there needs to be action. Real issues are brought up but there are no answers, and when we talk about these issues, sometimes we get the impression that we are bothering them . . . : Where are the Francophone immigrants? . . . Why don't we have statistics so that we can plan how to help them? . . . There is a whole series of collaboration problems. . . . There needs to be instructions, there is no policy for welcoming Francophone immigrants. I hope there is such a policy in the English-speaking world. It doesn't anywhere in the Francophone world. It's basically a free-for-all. You've snagged the clients. That's great. It's like you caught them, you recruited them, you keep them for yourself. There really needs to be service and collaboration of services. I think that awareness is on its way but I'm waiting for it. . . . We should collaborate. Those working on the ground are very willing, but I don't know if this feeling really exists at the level of managing each service whether this feeling or concern is real, or just superficial. We talk, there is a real drive, but we never put it into action. (Ottawa 3 1)

This competition is reportedly as present between Anglophone and Francophone organizations as it is between Francophone organizations. Consequently, this causes problems with recruiting and referring Francophone immigrants to appropriate services. Emphasis was put on the need to truly collaborate and work together in partnership for the interests of Francophone immigrants, rather than being concerned with the interests of the organizations. However, these comments were refuted by another participant when she explained that the

role of her organization is to provide an anchor for newcomers by giving all the necessary information and referrals to the services they need. Additionally, settlement agents from other organizations are on hand in her centre one or more days per week, precisely for the purpose of making connections with other service providers—especially services in French. These different points of view add nuances to our results from the previous stages. These differences could be explained by the fact that participants held different positions in a variety of organizations.

In fact, it was explained that although the immigration policy itself is good, the methods put in place to support Francophone immigrants after their arrival are not sufficient. According to participants, more investment should be made in reception services in order to better guide and orient immigrants, particularly toward French services and the Francophone community during the first years of settlement, so that they do not end up having to seek social assistance. In other words, more investment should be made with a view to achieving better integration results (notably economic integration) in an effort to avoid economic and social costs in the long term.

Additionally, participants talked about problems associated with the dissemination of information and communication strategies more generally—touching in part on the issue of the (in)visibility of the Francophone community and services—but they also raised new issues. One participant suggested a need to invest more in different methods for disseminating information, notably through brochures that gather together all of the information that Francophone immigrants and newcomers would need. Indeed, as indicated in Stage 1, budgets for information dissemination are usually the first ones cut. In addition, this proposed solution would resolve the problems expressed by Stage 2 participants in relation to the difficulty of finding information that is only available online. But beyond the issue of information dissemination, participants indicated that this matter also involves improving communication with Francophone immigrants. For example, one participant said that some newcomers are not accustomed to seeking out information and that it would be more practical to go to them, rather than waiting for them to come to service providers. She illustrated this point with the case of library workshops, which are poorly attended by French speaking immigrants. As a result, she thought that it would be useful to go to ethno cultural communities, especially churches, to bring information to immigrants in the locations that they frequent.

With regard to the role that community spaces can play in Francophone immigrant integration and participation within the FMC, participants provided various points of view. According to one, service providers and community organizations play an important role, and even have a certain responsibility to assume this role. They are particularly well-positioned to support Francophone immigrants in their adaptation to and social and cultural integration into the Francophone community and into Canadian society overall. In this sense, they represent a community space with an advantage for contributing to these processes. More specifically, one participant emphasized the role of settlement agents—i.e. the individuals themselves—as points of connection for newcomers, who develop a strong bond with these agents over several years and turn to them for all of their needs.

Other community spaces and activities that, according to participants, could facilitate the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants are schools for adults, as well as training, networking and volunteering activities. Lastly, it was confirmed that churches offer a community space that promotes Francophone immigrant integration and social and cultural

participation and that many of them attend churches and religious groups. The pastor of a multicultural Christian church explained:

[translation]

The second thing is the church: “Where is the church?” “I want to go to pray,” or at any rate, “go look for the others.” So, it’s really this connection side. Yes, it’s spiritual, that’s true, but it’s also a social connection because people feel a need not only to be integrated but also to stay in the community. And we are a church that offers services in French because we believe that the French language is a very good language, as is the culture. We try to nurture this link. . . . That’s our vision.

Francophone people are in our heart... so in all that we do, we talk more about the Francophonie. So, people come looking for, yes, the spiritual need, but also the community side to keep that link strong. (Ottawa 3-2)

Churches therefore play several roles, not just the spiritual one. They also act as providers of information, of various services (counsellors, workshops, etc.) and of different forms of support (groups, meetings), as well as a social and cultural space. To a certain extent, community organizations and service providers work jointly with some churches, but not in a systematic manner. In the case of Ottawa, it seemed that the connection was made when frontline workers knew someone in the churches and vice versa. In this sense, churches appear to be a community space that complements spaces provided by community organizations, and it would be worthwhile for these two stakeholders to engage in more collaborations, as suggested above.

Stage 3 participants confirmed the challenges expressed in the Stage 2 discussion groups. In particular, they talked about the difficulties that Francophone immigrants face on the job market and the challenge of bilingualism in a minority context. With regard to the former, participants agreed with the idea that social and economic integration go hand in hand. With regard to the latter, although service providers adhere to the perspective that successful integration can be achieved in French in a minority context, they realize that the majority of Francophone immigrants are convinced that the best strategy is to learn English first and foremost. They therefore spend valuable time taking language courses instead of participating in training courses in French that would help them to integrate themselves in that language. This strategy seems to have poor results, however, as it takes time to acquire advanced language skills. As a result, these people often resort to odd jobs to meet their immediate needs and those of their family, and may fall into a vicious cycle where they cannot gain a sufficient command of English to obtain the type of work to which they aspire, while remaining in a precarious economic situation. In other words, learning English alone is not enough to successfully integrate Francophone immigrants if it is not combined with other forms of support (which can be in French). In summary, language and employment issues are connected in a complex manner, and according to one participant, this challenge is much more significant for Francophone immigrants in a minority situation than for other immigrants:

[translation]

The situation for Francophone immigrants is that they often need subsistence jobs. It is difficult . . . to direct them toward programs, for example, La Cité, for pre apprenticeship or pre-employment, because their position will often be: “Yes, but I

need to work now!” . . . They do not always realize the value of these pre-employment training courses. . . . They might come back later, but often when they have an immediate need . . . to find work. . . . They enter into this cycle of odd jobs, and it’s difficult to get out of it because the problem often is that they do not have the language Therefore, they cannot really be dedicated to a real job search as long as they do not have the language. So they go to school to learn English and, at the same time, they take these little odd jobs to survive. . . . And so that is another challenge for them with regard to becoming fully settled in the long term. It’s not the same for a person who comes here to Canada who is bilingual and is comfortable in both languages or who has really good English. For them, the path to integration is much shorter than the one for Francophone immigrants Given . . . their financial situation, they cannot afford to go to school full time to learn English. Even for some, going to school part time and spending all morning in school, . . . it takes up a lot of their time because they go to work after It’s still a very difficult journey for them. . . . It can have long-term consequences. So, once again, . . . their choices are limited, as are their subsequent opportunities for economic integration because, yes, Ottawa is bilingual, but Ottawa is still primarily Anglophone. (Ottawa 3-3)

To address these issues, two participants stressed the usefulness of pre-employment training courses for Francophone immigrants as a pathway for successful social and economic integration. According to one, more such training, as well as more resources, is needed to support the immigrants who take them. For example, there should be more spaces in child care. At the time of the interview, there were only 10 spaces for all of the training programs, and only for children 18 months of age or older, which meant that many immigrants (especially women) with younger children could not participate. In addition, Francophone immigrants should be better informed of the advantages of pre-employment courses (which are short-term) to help them land their first job, which would enable them to stabilize their situation and then dedicate themselves to improving their knowledge of English by taking language courses that specialize in their professional field.

In relation to the issue of discrimination, participants were somewhat divided in their views. For some, discrimination and racism do not really exist in Canadian society, at least not compared to the experiences they had in other countries. There seems to be an underlying issue of ignorance that could be remedied rather easily—with humour, for example. Nevertheless, one participant pointed out that this issue of ignorance or lack of openness in native-born communities toward Francophone immigrants seems to be due to the discrepancy between immigration policies or public policies developed by governments on the one hand, and the reality experienced in communities on the other, suggesting that more awareness is needed among established members:

[translation]

I think that there is a disconnect between the plan at the government and federal level and the plan at the public level. . . . In my opinion, it has to begin there. There must be cultural acceptance so that integration can be achieved at the social/economic level. They can bring as many people as they want, but if there is no social recognition, it is going to be difficult to integrate them economically. (Ottawa 3-3)

Lastly, participants highlighted the fact that the process of adapting to Canadian society and culture is more expensive than one might assume. For example, understanding the financial system, notably the credit-based type, takes time and education, since it is completely foreign to people from certain African countries. The same is true for seeking information (as previously indicated), nutrition, child education and the school system, as well as the schedules and social organization of daily life. The pastor of the multicultural church in particular discussed these aspects in detail and explained that the church is an important space, as it provides constant support and help.

Comparative discussion

The Stage 3 interviews served to confirm, complement and refine the results of the two previous stages. More particularly, the challenges that community organizations face were reiterated, as well as the (in)visibility of the Francophone community and services. We also obtained information that allowed us to better understand the challenges that Francophone immigrants face in a minority context along with the impacts on their integration and social and cultural participation in local FMCs.

Based on the results that we obtained in Stage 2 as to community spaces used by Francophone immigrants, we selected participants who held different positions and/or worked in different types of community spaces in London and in Ottawa. The difference that emerged between the two sites in Stage 3 stemmed from the fact that we spoke with representatives from various types of community spaces. In London, for example, we spoke with a participant who represented an English-language organization about how, given the lack of services in French, Francophone immigrants turn to their organization. In fact, it appeared that providers are able to offer essential services in French (e.g. information sessions, settlement workshops), but not more specialized services, such as sewing groups, due to lack of capacity or critical mass. These results enabled us to better understand the nature of services offered in French and any gaps in the context of a smaller and more isolated FMC, where it is often necessary to refer Francophone immigrants to English services.

We also learned that churches play an important role in the social and cultural integration of immigrants in both cities. However, due to a lack of churches in London, we were unable to interview a participant who was able to represent the parishes. This was less difficult in Ottawa, where there are more churches. The results obtained in Ottawa on this subject therefore helped us round out our understanding of the role of the various community spaces in the experiences and social integration of Francophone immigrants in a minority context.

In summary, the Stage 3 results reiterate the general themes and issues highlighted in the results of the previous stage, which happened to be relatively similar in both cities. However, taking into account the differences between the two sites, the diversity of the participants and their perspectives allowed us to deepen our understanding of the role of the specific context of each FMC in these dynamics. In the next and final section of this report, we present recommendations that could improve the role of Francophone community spaces for the integration and social and cultural participation of Francophone immigrants in FMCs.

Recommendations for improving the role of community spaces

Participants in the various stages of the study proposed several recommendations to improve the positive role of community spaces in order to better support the integration and social and cultural participation of Francophone immigrants in both FMCs. Here, we present a summary of the ideas that were discussed during the two community meetings held in October 2017 in London and Ottawa, to which we have added the recommendations obtained during the other stages. We have organized the recommendations according to four main themes: (1) recommendations for Francophone community institutions and organizations with regard to the socio-economic and political context in which they operate; (2) strategies for communicating and disseminating information in order to better reach Francophone immigrants; (3) recommendations concerning the nature of and access to Francophone community spaces; and (4) recommendations aimed at improving social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and their relationships with the established Francophone communities. Given the similarity of results between the two cities, we specify when a recommendation applies to only one of the sites. Additionally, we did not try to prioritize these recommendations according to any order of importance. Following this summary, we have added our own recommendations based on our analysis of the project data.

Recommendations for Francophone community institutions and organizations

With regard to the results of Stage 1 (interviews with key sources) and, more generally, the challenges faced by community institutions and organizations—such as problems with funding, competition and lack of collaboration—the following ideas were discussed:

- Establish solidarity between Francophone organizations in FMCs and consolidate partnerships to improve collaboration between different community organizations (Francophone and Anglophone), as well as with ethno cultural community groups (may vary according to regions, but this is particularly important in smaller communities such as London, where there are fewer services).
- Ensure lasting and sufficient operational resources for organizations, including the ability to retain qualified human resources. Overall, ensure access to more funding to be able to offer a wider range of French services in order to meet the diverse needs of French speaking immigrants (especially in small communities such as London where services in French are lacking). Possible strategies are the diversification of funding sources and/or funding specialization.
- Ensure that the needs of clients are appropriately prioritized and addressed rather than “used” for administrative and financial purposes (e.g. to reach program quotas). Although funding for organizations is important, clients should not be reduced to a number in order to meet organizational objectives.
- Government funding could be modified to better reflect the unique situation of organizations in minority situations (e.g. the fact that funds do not solely depend on the

number of clients that organizations serve in order to reduce competition for recruitment and encourage referrals).

- Reduce competition between organizations and avoid duplication of services, and optimize the missions of organizations.
- Offer reciprocal incentives (e.g. discounts on tickets, rebates for tickets from other organizations, exchange of services).
- Create a kind of one-stop shop to facilitate the reception of Francophone newcomers and provide them with access to information in a single location.
- Make employees of Anglophone organizations aware of the issue of Francophone immigration in FMCs and inform them of the existence of Francophone organizations and French services in order to improve referrals.
- Offer community promotion training workshops to employees and agents of organizations.
- Ensure reconciliation between training and direct employment.
- Francophone organizations should lobby for Ottawa city council to adopt a law recognizing bilingualism (Ottawa).
- Government must define a clear policy that supports Francophone immigration:
 - Institute measures in support of French-language settlement services in FMCs.
 - Develop measures to support Francophone immigrants in their integration process.

Communication and information strategies for reaching Francophone immigrants

Given the significant issues related to problems with communicating and disseminating information raised by participants in the various stages of the research, the following recommendations have been proposed:

- Increase the number of strategies to identify and recruit Francophone immigrants upon their arrival.
- Increase the number of communication tools and use multiple strategies to provide more information to newcomers (immigrants and refugees) according to their needs and the means available to them (e.g. social media for youth, French-language community radio, printed paper pamphlets), and better promote various community activities.
- Create French-language community radio (e.g. in collaboration with London's Western University).
- Join with Anglophone partners (organizations, school boards) for broader dissemination of information in both Francophone and Anglophone communities. More generally, better promote FMCs in Anglophone organizations (London).
- Put a one-stop shop in place to improve visibility within the greater community.

- Promote continuous networking between organizations: be present everywhere, as it seems like Francophone community organizations are scarce. Their network must be expanded.

Recommendations for improving the nature of and access to community spaces

Participants in all of the stages had suggestions for improving the role of community spaces by making them more attractive, inclusive and accessible:

- Increase the number of opportunities for Francophones to meet by planning more targeted events on fixed dates (e.g. annual activities planned around Black History Month, multicultural festivals).
- Organize diversified community events that are welcoming to everyone (e.g. families with children of various ages), as well as practical activities that would appeal to all Francophones (e.g. children's clothing exchanges and snack sharing).
- Organize festivities to welcome immigrant newcomers in order to motivate them to participate in Francophone community activities.
- Make Francophone community spaces more visible and improve access to them (e.g. carpooling initiatives).
- Create a Francophone temporary housing unit that could serve as a regional point of entry and departure.
- Promote the development of cultural and sports spaces for immigrant populations.
- Offer networking spaces for Francophone immigrants, especially with Francophone employers (e.g. lunch with employers, job fairs).
- Offer some 24-hour services.
- Offer bilingual activities that enable immigrants to also meet the larger Anglophone community, to get to know English-speaking people and expand their networks (London).
- Redefine and broaden the role and operations of traditional Francophone community spaces to better meet the needs of different groups within the community: French-language recreational programs or services (sports, culture, arts) could also target individuals with immigrant backgrounds; institutions and clubs in FMCs (e.g. Club Richelieu, ACFO) could expand their activities to attract and include Francophone immigrants.
- Adapt the cost of community activities (e.g. recreational programs) to the purchasing power of the Francophone immigrant community.
- Resolve transportation issues (London).

Recommendations for improving the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and their relationships with established Francophone communities

Based on the results of the various stages of our study, participants suggested several strategies to improve the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants in FMCs and to improve the relationship between immigrants and established members of the community. Here is a summary of the suggestions:

- Provide opportunities to bring together individuals and develop strategies to broaden the Francophone community by working together and counteract the negative perceptions of certain members, e.g. by organizing get-togethers that include several Francophone groups (established members, ethno cultural communities, Francophiles) to promote cultural tolerance. It could also be beneficial for FMCs to be more open to Francophiles and families attending immersion schools (London). In general, it would be useful to increase the openness of French-language environments to diversity in order to improve the integration of various members.
- Governments, communities and organizations should think innovatively and use a new vocabulary for referring to people in order to develop a new more inclusive and integrative view of the diversity of Francophone members in the various spaces/spheres of daily life.
- Since the social integration of Francophone immigrants is linked to economic integration, put an emphasis on creating jobs for them. More efforts should be made to cultivate employment opportunities for Francophone newcomers.
- Collaborate with administrative authorities in charge of immigrant issues (such as city hall).
- Increase the political representation and presence of immigrants in French-language institutions and organizations (e.g. board of directors).
- Conduct a comparative study of the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants in FMCs which includes individuals from immigrant backgrounds and established members of Francophone communities.

In summary, according to participants in the community meetings in London and Ottawa, FMCs should be more open and welcoming by offering a variety of services in French and by ensuring that these services are accessible. In addition, communities could organize more community events and activities that are attractive to all members—as much to newcomers as to more established individuals, immigrants and non-immigrants—in such a way as to encourage interactions between them. In order to facilitate these recommendations, and in line with the main objectives of this study, it appears that there is a strong need for community spaces accessible to all Francophones and Francophiles so that they can have contact and exchanges with others on a regular basis, and that more resources are necessary to support and maintain these spaces.

For our part, we propose several recommendations based on our analysis of the data from this project. An emerging issue at both sites is the difficulty of bringing immigrants together with members of the native-born community. In part, this situation stems from the existing silos in

the provision of services where the needs of immigrants are different from those of other members of the community (e.g. settlement services). As a result, by mainly having [translation] “immigrants among immigrants” (Ottawa 1-6), their social and cultural integration within FMCs can be impeded. However, other factors have also been mentioned which hinder this process of bringing the community together, including a certain lack of a welcoming attitude and openness among members of the established community felt by many participants, and the fact that some of these participants said that they did not want to limit their integration to the FMC alone. The question that then arises is how to bring together members of a diverse FMC in order to promote the social and cultural integration of Francophone refugees and immigrants. According to our hypothesis, we expected that Francophone spaces would play a significant role. While there is no simple answer to this complex question, we offer some recommendations related to the actual and potential roles of these spaces which could help address issues.

First, the creation of a multi-service Francophone hub or centre for immigrants and non immigrants could be considered, especially in smaller and more isolated FMCs such as London, which is less comprehensive institutionally than Ottawa. To a certain extent, such centres already exist, e.g. the Centre Desloges in London. The Centre Desloges groups together various organizations (the Centre communautaire régional de London, the Cercle des copains [circle of friends], the Paroisse catholique Sainte Marguerite d’Youville [Saint Marguerite d’Youville Catholic parish], etc.), but it is mainly occupied by the lessees’ offices, which limits the space accessible to the public. In Ottawa, the Newcomer Information Centre (NIC) is located in the downtown YMCA-YWCA (which, besides recreational services, offers several youth and family support programs, temporary housing and a daycare centre), but it is an Anglophone organization that offers French services without necessarily building links with the Francophone community. The CÉSOC, on the other hand, plays the role of a gateway to the Francophone community, but nevertheless remains an organization that serves immigrants. Only the Centre de services communautaires Vanier truly represents a centre that provides a wide range of services to both immigrants and established residents (mostly in French, but also in English) under the same roof, and with some success (Veronis and Couton 2017). Such centres could therefore be developed, especially in the smaller FMCs, which in addition to a variety of services in French, could also include a Francophone lodging unit for newcomers and a flexible daycare service, while being located in a central and accessible location (on the bus route).³ It would be useful for this type of centre to bring together the services needed for the immediate settlement of newcomers (e.g. orientation, information and job search workshops, language training), and it would serve as a one-stop shop for essential and relevant information, both with regard to settlement services and the community, as well as French-language services in general. According to our results, it seems that a one-stop shop is necessary in large and small FMCs to facilitate and increase access to information on French services to all Francophone immigrants at the various stages of their settlement and integration. However, more specialized services should remain physically separate (e.g. CALACS, for reasons of client confidentiality), while working in partnership to provide referrals. A multi-service centre such as this would also help to increase the visibility of the Francophone community and French-language services, as well as to promote bringing

³ Some YMCAs operate on this principle, offering several services in the same location and providing child care enabling families to use these services more easily.

together various members of the Francophone community (e.g. by organizing regular events such as client/volunteer appreciation days).

Another issue is that of access to Francophone community spaces. In light of the importance of churches in the experiences of participants, which was mentioned often during group interviews, it seems that they offer several positive features that could be adopted in secular spaces. First, churches represent an inclusive space where the common denominator is faith, not a place or culture of origin. Second, apart from spiritual needs, churches meet a social interaction need by offering a regular point of contact through free participation for groups of all ages with others that share common interests. This contrasts with community activities typically organized by organizations at less frequent intervals and which are not always well adapted to the needs of diverse groups (such as families). In other words, it is not enough for Francophone organizations and communities to create opportunities for participation. Some infrastructure and the necessary support must be in place before an inclusive space can be created to make this participation possible (e.g. transportation costs, child care). In addition, if Francophone spaces were more accessible to members of the community, more events would be organized spontaneously. Community members would organize such activities themselves, rather than rely on established organizations. In fact, several participants in London mentioned having to rent a space for ethno cultural activities, generally through Anglophone institutions or organizations. We have concluded that the lack of Francophone spaces that are open and accessible to all community members is a barrier that inhibits the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants in FMCs. As such, accessible Francophone spaces, such as the multi-service centres noted above, could remedy these issues while making the Francophone community more visible.

Indeed, the (in)visibility of FMCs, Francophone services and information intended for community members is one of the main issues highlighted by this project. We recommend the creation of a community liaison position in organizations to foster the development of active communication strategies with both Francophone and Anglophone communities (it is important to include both linguistic communities, especially in smaller FMCs, as was seen in the case of London). These community liaison agents could also participate in roundtables to ensure continuous collaboration between Francophone and Anglophone organizations. In fact, given the limited financial resources, we envision the creation of a community agent position whose job would be to increase the visibility of the Francophone community and services and improve access to this information. This position could exist independently of community organizations—with separate funding from IRCC, for example—or it could fit into the FIN framework, since these institutions already exist in several regions with a mission to consolidate local initiatives in connection with Francophone immigration. Moreover, organizations should consider creating an information broker position (either a position in itself or as an additional explicit task for frontline workers serving Francophone immigrants and refugees). They should also consider the physical and digital publication of a French-language brochure or guide containing all the information on French services and the Francophone community to provide newcomers with easy access to it. Such guides could be very useful and could more adequately meet the needs of individuals who are not accustomed to searching for information on the Internet—a central theme in our group interviews. Our results in fact indicate that although information is available and even communicated to newcomers, it is not always transmitted at the right time (e.g. too much information upon arrival) or in a relevant manner, and it ends up being lost on the recipient. The goal is to make

this information accessible so that immigrants can obtain it not only when they need it but also in a suitable manner. We believe that an information broker position in organizations, combined with a brochure on the Francophone community and services, could meet these needs in a more effective way. Lastly, it could also be useful to identify community champions among different groups within FMCs (e.g. in ethno cultural and religious communities, in elderly and youth groups) who could be contacted to help disseminate information (e.g. word of mouth, distributing pamphlets).

As far as the invisibility of Francophone organizations is concerned, collaborations between Francophone and Anglophone organizations could be improved through several strategies (this is necessary in smaller FMCs where services in French are limited). Firstly, Francophone community organization representatives should have access to the needs assessments of new Francophone clients who come to Anglophone agencies. Secondly, a follow-up mechanism for referred clients should be implemented to ensure that their integration process runs smoothly and to offer continuous support at various stages. Lastly, an annual collaboration and partnership assessment should be completed by organizations in order to ensure continuity of partnerships and to adjust services and programs offered according to the needs indicated by new demographic data for recently arrived groups.⁴

Another significant challenge for FMCs is the issue of competition between organizations and the redundancy of services within the same area. Several key sources have indicated that funders should take measures to avoid such situations. Some participants talked about competition between organizations, particularly between Francophone and Anglophone agencies, but also among their solely Francophone counterparts (e.g. in London). Although partnerships exist and organizations collaborate with each other, conflicts of interest and competition can develop between partner networks. It must also be recognized that competition varies with the institutional landscape, which happens to be changing at the local, provincial and federal levels. Nevertheless, organizations still compete for funding, since their survival often depends on it, and that can result in duplication of services. Overall, this dynamic hurts organizations as much as their clients and even the community as a whole. It would therefore be better to plan for and distribute funds in a manner that does not contribute to these harmful dynamics and assures that contracts are offered to organizations whose objectives are clearly in line with the services to be offered. This type of initiative is probably better adapted to smaller cities where there are fewer clients to serve and less distance to cover, and where options are more limited.

In a different vein, we would like to point out that this study focused on the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and refugees within FMCs, but this aspect of integration is not experienced in an isolated manner by immigrants in their daily lives. On the contrary, during group interviews, several participants spoke at length about the challenges they face in their economic integration, as well as their integration into the larger Anglophone community. In fact, according to these participants, it is impossible to separate their integration into FMCs from the requirement to obtain employment and learn English. In other words, our results indicate that economic integration, integration into the Francophone community and integration into the majority Anglophone community go hand in hand, and

⁴ These ideas were presented during the Annual RIF C-S-O Forum that was held on February 23, 2017, in St. Catharines by Bonaventure Otshudi, a representative of the Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton-Niagara [Hamilton-Niagara community health centre].

that programs promoting various forms of simultaneous integration (both social and economic, in both languages) should therefore be further developed and supported. For example, La Passerelle-I.D.É. (La Passerelle – economic development and integration), an organization located in Toronto, offers monthly lunches with an [translation] “employer engagement” theme to bridge the distance that separates job seekers and employers. Even though the goal of these lunches is successful economic integration, the format of the activity also encourages a more social approach with direct contact and interaction.⁵ Similarly, La Cité Collégiale in Ottawa organizes job fairs where Francophone employers from across the Eastern Ontario region are invited to meet immigrants and refugees who are on the job market. In this case as well, the event is aimed at both social and economic integration, and it also makes employers aware of the issues confronting workers with immigrant backgrounds. Lastly, it would also be useful to develop settlement programs that provide a balance between English language training and other aspects of integration, especially economic integration. This means combining integration in French and in English simultaneously, e.g. by offering both professional training and/or job workshops in French as well as English language courses (possibly part-time). The goal would be to ensure entry into the French job market in the short term, while offering the opportunity to improve English language skills in the longer term.

We would like to conclude with recommendations for future research. Clearly, our results indicate that the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and refugees into FMCs is a complex issue that needs to be examined in greater depth. While our study focused on the experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees, future research could also include members of established communities. If the goal is to improve the participation and integration of Francophone immigrants in FMCs, it seems important to better understand the experiences, expectations, perceptions and openness of receiving communities. In addition, action research projects could be planned for, the objectives of which would be to develop community projects based on common interests so as to bring the various Francophone groups closer together.

⁵ These ideas were presented during the Annual RIF C-S-O Forum that was held on February 23, 2017, in St. Catharines by Léonie Tchatat, a representative of La Passerelle-I.D.E.

Conclusion

Our study examined the role that community spaces play in the social and cultural integration experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees who live in two Francophone minority communities (FMCs) in Ontario, namely Ottawa and London. Using a critical lens, our main objectives were to better understand how Francophone immigrants access and use these spaces for the purposes of social integration, and to illuminate their experiences of inclusion and participation in these spaces, keeping in mind the socio-historical and geographical context unique to FMCs. To do so, we adopted an instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995) that combines different dialogue-based data collection methods and comprises four stages with the various target populations. We performed a comparative analysis of the results at each stage to highlight the influence of each FMC's context, given the differences between London and Ottawa (the former being a smaller and more isolated community than the latter).

We identified three key themes characterizing the data from the interviews with Francophone organization representatives from Stage 1 in both cities. In both London and Ottawa, representatives spoke to us about the challenges they face as they attempt to maintain community spaces, about issues of the (in)visibility of Francophone minority communities, and about the role that these spaces play in the integration and participation of Francophone immigrants. Although the issues appear similar in both cities, they are experienced differently due to their distinct context. Competition among organizations seemed more pronounced in London than in Ottawa, and the invisibility of FMCs is a bigger challenge in the former than in the latter.

During the Stage 2 group interviews, participants identified a range of community spaces that have played a role in their social and cultural integration in London and Ottawa. This report identifies these spaces and presents participants' different perspectives on the role Francophone community spaces play and how they facilitated their social and cultural integration. In both London and Ottawa, participants emphasized the importance of settlement organizations and service providers in their social integration and participation (especially immediately after their arrival), as well as the role played by schools, ethno cultural associations and churches, and, to a lesser extent, virtual spaces (the Internet and social media). We also examined data related to challenges experienced by participants—including access to the labour market, the links between economic and social integration, language-related challenges stemming from the (perceived and/or real) need to be bilingual, and issues of discrimination—and their ideas on what could be done to further facilitate and improve their integration. Generally speaking, the results indicate that the experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees are not very different in London as compared with Ottawa, except when it comes to accessing French-language services.

The results of Stage 3 confirmed the themes identified in the two preceding stages, notably with respect to the challenges facing Francophone organizations in both cities and the role of various community spaces in the social and cultural integration and participation of Francophone immigrants. The three main themes addressed during these interviews were (1) the issues and challenges facing organizations serving Francophone immigrants, (2) the role of community spaces in the integration of Francophone immigrants, and (3) the challenges facing these immigrants in London and Ottawa. This stage also allowed us to improve our

interpretation and understanding of the results of the group interviews and the interviews with key sources, notably regarding the relationships between Francophone immigrants and host communities.

During the community meeting in Stage 4, we presented and discussed the study's preliminary results with participants in order to verify our conclusions and to develop recommendations. We grouped our recommendations around four themes: recommendations relating to Francophone community organizations and institutions; strategies for communicating and disseminating information; recommendations for improving the nature of and access to Francophone community spaces; and suggestions for improving the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and their relationships with established Francophone communities.

Finally, we conclude that Francophone community spaces play a significant role in the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and show potential for facilitating their participation in FMCs. However, the barriers and challenges facing Francophone immigrants, the organizations serving them, and the communities they belong to must be taken into consideration in order to further support their social integration. Additional resources are necessary to support and maintain community infrastructure and to reinforce the role of Francophone community spaces in FMCs.

The results summarized above helped us meet our study's objectives, which, to reiterate, were to critically examine (1) the access and use of these spaces by Francophone immigrants to foster their participation in and their social and cultural integration into the FMCs; (2) their experiences in terms of inclusion and participation in these spaces, taking into account identity markers and their intersections (e.g. language, race and ethnicity, gender, immigration status); and (3) how the day-to-day experiences of Francophone immigrants differ according to the unique socio historic and geographic context of the FMCs. Below, we explore in more depth certain key issues raised in this report, with the understanding that the three objectives were interrelated.

In terms of access and use of Francophone community spaces, our results indicate that the experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees vary depending on the context of the FMCs. Smaller communities such as London offer fewer French-language services with a less diversified range than bigger communities such as Ottawa. The latter city's situation is unique, due to its status as the nation's capital and as the seat of the federal government, where bilingualism is more actively promoted. Given London's context, access to Francophone spaces is more limited, and Francophone immigrants must sometimes seek out services in English to meet their various needs. However, one important issue that emerged in both communities, independent of their context, is the lack of visibility of the FMC and French-language services and the significant difficulty in accessing information about them. This (in)visibility hinders Francophone immigrants in their attempts to integrate into and participate in the community. However, this problem could be resolved through a variety of communication strategies (see the recommendations). A number of key sources in each city suggested centralizing main services and information sources into a kind of one-stop, multi-service centre. This kind of approach could be particularly effective in smaller communities such as London, where services are spread out over a large geographic area and provided by a variety of (often Anglophone) organizations. That said, it would be beneficial to offer certain French-language settlement services using a decentralized approach (e.g. in schools or

through Francophone agents working in Anglophone organizations) to reach as many newcomers as possible. In addition, more specialized services should remain physically separate (e.g. CALACS, for reasons of client confidentiality). Larger communities such as Ottawa already have a number of Francophone organizations with centralized services (e.g. the Centre de services communautaires Vanier, CÉSOC), and our project participants seemed quite satisfied with them. Certain access issues were found to affect more recent newcomers as well as refugees and refugee claimants who had gone through other organizations and had perhaps not yet obtained information. The part-time sharing of settlement agents between organizations (a well established practice in Ottawa) appears to help with this issue, and the practice could be adopted in other communities. Finally, the centralization of services and information could help reduce competition among organizations and avoid the duplication of services, especially if ways can be found to strengthen collaborations and partnerships while increasing their visibility and access.

Regarding the use of Francophone spaces, we noted an interesting difference between the two sites. According to our results, Francophone immigrants in London seemed more like “participants” in the community, while those in Ottawa acted more like “clients” of service providers. There may be a number of reasons for this difference. First, it should be noted that the Ottawa discussion groups consisted of a vast majority of newcomers (less than five years in Canada), while some of the London participants had been established for a longer period. It could therefore be a question of time. Also, while the Ottawa participants were involved in a range of different groups, including their ethno cultural community and churches (ethno cultural, Anglophone, and, to a lesser extent, Francophone congregations), they noted a difficulty in accessing the native Francophone community. In addition to the issue of (in)visibility, we propose the hypothesis that London’s community, being smaller, is perhaps more tightly knit than Ottawa’s, which is larger and more diffuse. However, there may be an upside to this issue: because Francophone immigrants in Ottawa have access to the French-language services they need, they are not obliged to develop relationships with the Francophone community, given the number of possibilities for social/cultural integration and participation in this larger city. This difference between “clients” and “participants” among Francophone immigrants should be studied further for a better understanding of all its dimensions.

Our results also highlight major factors related to Francophone immigrants’ and refugees’ experiences of inclusion and participation in community spaces, in connection with identity markers and their intersections. As suggested above, the integration of Francophone immigrants into the FMC and/or its spaces does not happen “automatically,” and is not necessarily a desired outcome for all participants. Generally, participants felt welcome in the settlement agencies and various community service organizations. They also spoke of positive volunteering experiences in schools and more particularly at their churches (ethno cultural, Anglophone and sometimes Francophone). However, they alluded to feeling not particularly well treated by Employment Ontario counsellors. This was a frequent complaint among Ottawa discussion group participants. The topic of discrimination and racism in Canadian society was also raised on several occasions, generally in connection with the challenges facing immigrants as they seek employment, and, to a lesser extent, the difficulty immigrant communities have connecting with established communities.

Among other factors, this study highlighted the role played by churches in the daily life of French speaking immigrants in both cities. In addition to their spiritual role, it would appear that churches provide an important social space in that they are accessible and inclusive places that often provide support similar to that of certain service provider organizations. In this sense, churches represent a “multidimensional” community space serving several needs. In smaller communities such as London, churches sometimes stand in for ethno cultural communities when the latter are not present. In addition, churches provide immigrants with a community outside that of their country and culture. Whether they offer the opportunity to connect with persons of similar ethno cultural origins or simply to meet other people with common interests, churches provide welcoming community spaces that immigrants can choose based on their personal preferences (denomination, language, cultural affiliation, exogamous families, Francophiles, etc.). The social characteristics of churches could be adopted by other community spaces in FMCs, making them more welcoming and inclusive.

To some extent, the group discussion participants expressed a desire to better understand the native Francophone community. However, in addition to not knowing how to find this community, they sensed a lack of openness and acceptance toward immigrants. Participants also mentioned variances in the way French is spoken (accents), historical differences, and the fact that established communities mainly gather together for celebrations specifically related to the Franco-Ontarian identity (e.g. the Festival Franco-Ontarien and Franco-Ontarian Day). They also raised complex issues related to their sense of belonging. A number of participants spoke of having multiple communities (ethno cultural, Francophone, etc.) and of having arrived in Canada with certain expectations regarding their integration into Canadian society in general. Although many were uninterested in fraternizing with their ethno cultural community, a number of participants did not wish to limit their participation to a Francophone minority community. They seemed to have a good understanding of the Francophone minority’s challenges and hoped instead to become full fledged Canadian citizens by participating in the Anglophone majority as much as in other communities. In other words, our participants emphasized their multiple identities, which vary depending on the circumstances. In general, they demonstrated a desire to pursue their integration into more than one community at the same time, often strategically, so as not to limit their opportunities, and sometimes as a reaction to the lack of openness of the native-born Francophone population. For this reason, a large number of participants felt it was important to learn English, while in rarer cases families had made the decision to send their children to an English-language school to help them avoid the barriers they themselves were facing. To some extent, this issue of multiple identities/communities highlights a certain gap between immigrants’ and refugees’ expectations and those of FMCs toward immigrants, as discussed during the *Rencontre de recherche sur l’immigration d’expression française dans les CFMS* [research meeting regarding Francophone immigration to FMCs] in Ottawa on November 30, 2017 (Veronis et al., submitted).

Lastly, it is also important to mention that group discussion participants insisted on the fact that social integration cannot be achieved without economic integration, and vice versa. Although this study focused on the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants and refugees into FMCs, the participants spoke at length of the challenges they encounter in seeking employment. They believe that economic and social integration are interrelated, and that support must be provided for both simultaneously. Although it is possible to distinguish the concepts of social and cultural integration from economic integration, in the daily lives of

immigrants the two are intertwined and even mutually dependent. Immigrants require a social network to find employment and must achieve a stable economic situation before they can get involved and participate socially in a variety of social and cultural groups and activities. To make the connection with this study's objectives, by making Francophone communities more accessible and inclusive, we could help facilitate not only the social participation of Francophone immigrants, but their economic integration as well.

This comparative study has helped us better understand how context affects the experiences of Francophone immigrants and refugees in terms of their social and cultural participation in and integration in FMCs. Although our study was limited to two Ontario cities (Ottawa and London), we were able to draw a number of conclusions. On the one hand, smaller and more isolated cities and communities probably offer a narrower and/or less diverse range of French-language services, requiring immigrants to use Anglophone organizations and English-language services. This could lead to (quicker) assimilation into the dominant Anglophone community. On the other hand, larger communities have the advantage of access to more Francophone organizations and French language services. That said, independently of the geographical and socio-historical context of FMCs, this study highlights two major issues that should be dealt with to facilitate the social integration and participation of Francophone immigrants. First, the challenges related to the (in)visibility of Francophone minority communities result in reduced access, and second, there seems to be a lack of openness and acceptance from these communities toward Francophone immigrants and refugees. Although both these issues have their own complexities, we put forward a number of recommendations and strategies in the previous section to address them. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the role that Francophone community spaces can play in helping to address these challenges. By creating and maintaining Francophone community spaces that are accessible, welcoming and inclusive, we could help make the Francophone community more visible while providing the diverse Francophone population with opportunities to meet, interact and forge closer links. But to do so, we will need to rethink how these Francophone community spaces are maintained and developed, and provide them with adequate human resources, materials and funding in keeping with the specific needs and unique context of FMCs and their populations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Stage 1 – Interview guide

- 1) Please describe the organization for which you work (or where you are a member).
 - a) What is your mandate?
 - b) What are your core activities?
- 2) What are the circumstances or areas of intervention (e.g. services offered) that typically lead you to deal with Francophone newcomers?
- 3) Why do these Francophone newcomers access your organization?
 - a) How is this space used by the members of the Francophone community?
 - b) Which members of the community usually use this space (e.g. seniors, youth, families)?
 - c) Do the various members of the Francophone community interact with each other in this space (e.g. seniors, youth, immigrants)?
 - i) If so, how?
 - ii) If not, what do you think might be limiting interactions?
- 4) How would you describe the relationships your organization/club maintains with Francophone newcomers?
 - a) Do you think that your organization/club successfully reached out to them?
 - b) Do you think that they are aware of the services that your organization is able to provide them?
 - c) Do they get involved in and/or participate in your organization and/or are they represented (e.g. as volunteers, members of the board of directors or employees)?
- 5) In your opinion, what are the primary obstacles facing Francophone newcomers in terms of their social and cultural participation and integration in Francophone minority communities?
 - a) How would you characterize the relations/relationships among the various groups in the Francophone community, particularly between newcomers and those who are more established?
- 6) What are the primary obstacles facing the Francophone community in their effort to facilitate the social and cultural integration of Francophone newcomers?
 - a) What makes your planning and services easier?
 - b) What obstacles hinder your planning and services?
- 7) What role do you think community spaces can/should play in facilitating the social and cultural integration of Francophone newcomers?

- a) In your opinion, which community spaces could play such a role (e.g. schools and educational institutions, settlement agencies, community centres, sports clubs, cultural associations or libraries)?
 - b) How/in what way? Please describe/explain.
 - c) How do you think organizations/clubs can better achieve these goals?
 - d) What opportunities does your organization offer for newcomer involvement and participation and/or their representation?
 - e) In your opinion, how could relations be improved between Francophone newcomers/immigrants and the established members of Francophone communities? And how could their social and cultural integration and participation in general be improved?
- 8) What other information would you like to share on this subject?

Appendix 2: Stage 2 – Interview guide

- 1) We would like you to take turns introducing yourselves briefly and sharing a little of your experience—what country are you from, and when did you arrive in London?
- 2) What community spaces do you use?
 - a) Why? What do you do at these spaces/locations?
 - b) How often do you go there?
- 3) Do you feel welcome in these community spaces?
 - a) If so, in which?
 - i) What contributes to this feeling?
 - b) If not, where is it that you feel uncomfortable?
 - i) What contributes to this feeling?
- 4) Are you involved in these community spaces?
 - a) How so?
 - b) Are you involved in/with Francophone groups?
 - i) If so, which ones? How did your involvement come about?
 - ii) If not, why?
 - c) Do you have contact with members of the native-born Francophone community (where? in what way?)?
- 5) Do you feel that you belong to a particular group or community?
 - a) Do you feel like you are a member of the Francophone community of London, Ontario?
 - b) Why? Why not?
- 6) Do you want to be a member of the Francophone community of London, Ontario?
 - a) Why? Why not?
- 7) In your opinion, what would make the community more or less attractive for Francophone newcomers?
- 8) In your opinion, what could be done to improve or facilitate the social and cultural integration of Francophone newcomers in London?
- 9) When the time came to decide which city you were going to settle in, what factors influenced your decision?
 - a) How important was the role of language in this decision?
- 10) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Stage 2 – Demographic questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you are uncomfortable answering certain questions, leave them blank. For each question, please circle the answer that best applies or fill in the space provided.

- 1) What is your age range?
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55 +
- 2) Where were you born? _____
- 3) What is your gender? Male Female Other
4. What is your marital status?
Married
Never married
Separated
Divorced
Widowed
Other (specify): _____
- 5) Do you have children? Yes No
- 6) If so, how many? _____
- 7) Do your children live with you? Yes No
- 8) What is your highest level of education?
Did not graduate from high school
High school
Community college
Technical diploma
Undergraduate degree
Graduate degree
Other (specify): _____
- 9) What is your employment status?
Full-time
Part-time
Unemployed
Other (specify): _____
- 10) Under which category did you come to Canada?
Skilled worker
Express Entry
Family sponsorship
Immigrant investor
Work permit
Provincial nominee
Refugee
Refugee claimant
Other (specify): _____
- 11) How long have you been in London, Ontario, Canada? _____
- 12) Did you immigrate with anyone? Yes No
- 13) Did you have to wait for family reunification? Yes No

14) Are you still waiting for family reunification? Yes No

15) Did you live in any other Canadian cities before London? If so, which?

16) What country or countries did you live in before moving to Canada?

17) What is your primary mode of transportation?

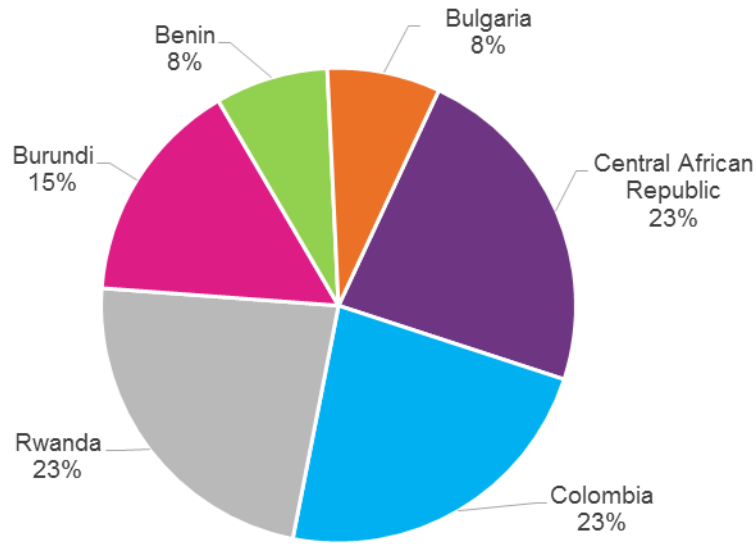
Appendix 4: Stage 2 participant profile (detailed data)

Cities	London District (N=13)		Ottawa (N=43)	
Variables				
Men	4	30.77%	25	58.14%
Women	9	69.23%	18	41.86%
Age groups				
18 to 24	2	15.38%	9	23.08%
25 to 34	2	15.38%	6	15.38%
35 to 44	4	30.77%	10	25.64%
45 to 54	4	30.77%	8	20.51%
55 and over	1	7.70%	6	15.38%
Not available	0	---	4	---
Marital status				
Married	10	76.92%	25	58.14%
Never married	0	0.00%	8	18.60%
Separated	1	7.70%	3	6.98%
Divorced	0	0.00%	1	2.33%
Widow ed	1	7.70%	0	0.00%
Single	1	7.70%	4	9.30%
Other: In a relationship	0	0.00%	2	4.65%
# Children				
0	2	15.38%	14	32.65%
1	2	15.38%	2	4.65%
2	6	46.15%	8	18.60%
3	2	15.38%	7	16.28%
4	0	0.00%	6	13.95%
5	0	0.00%	3	6.98%
6	0	0.00%	1	2.33%
7	0	0.00%	2	4.65%
8	1	7.70%	0	0.00%
Education level				
Did not graduate from high school	2	15.38%	3*	6.98%
High school	1	7.70%	13	30.23%
Community college	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Technical diploma	0	0.00%	4	9.30%
Undergraduate degree	3	23.08%	13	30.23%
Graduate degree	7	53.85%	10	23.26%
Employment status				
Full-time	4	30.77%	2	4.88%
Part-time	4	30.77%	4	9.76%
Unemployed	2	15.38%	35	85.37%
Student	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
Not available	0	0.00%	2	---
Immigration status				
Skilled worker	4	30.77%	5	11.62%
Express Entry	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Family sponsorship	2	15.38%	11	25.58%
Immigrant investor	1	7.70%	0	0.00%
Work permit	1	7.70%	0	0.00%
Provincial nominee	0	0.00%	1	2.33%
Refugee	3	23.08%	11	25.58%
Refugee claimant	2	15.38%	15	34.88%
Number of years in Canada				
Very recent (0-5 years)	8	61.54%	36	83.72%
Recent (6-10 years)	2	15.38%	5	11.63%
Established				
(11 years or more)	3	23.08%	1	2.33%
Not available	0	0.00%	1	2.33%

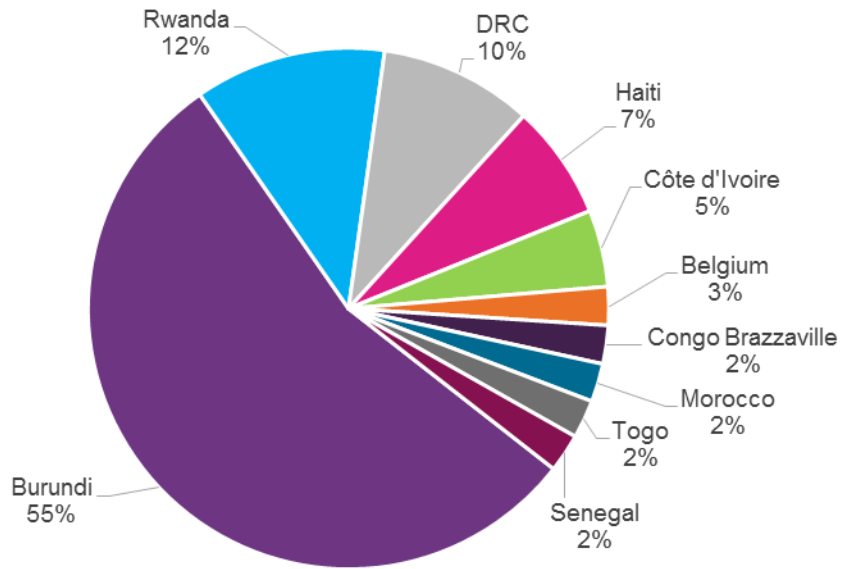
* Of these, two are pursuing undergraduate university studies.

Rounding errors

Country of origin of London participants



Country of origin of Ottawa participants



Appendix 5: Stage 3 – Interview guide

1. Please describe your role in this club/organization.
 - a. What are your main activities?
2. What are the circumstances or areas of intervention (e.g. services offered) that typically lead you to deal with Francophone newcomers?
3. Why do Francophone newcomers access your club/organization?
 - a. How is this space used by the members of the Francophone community?
 - b. Which members of the community usually use this space (e.g. seniors, youth, families)?
 - c. Do the various members of the Francophone community interact with each other in this space (e.g. seniors, youth, immigrants)?
 - i. If so, how?
 - ii. If not, what do you think might be limiting interactions?
4. How would you describe your organization's or club's relationships with newcomers?
 - a. Francophones?
 - b. Do you think that your organization/club successfully reached out to them?
 - c. Do you think that they are aware of the services that your organization is able to provide them?
 - d. Do they get involved in and/or participate in your organization and/or are they represented (e.g. as volunteers, members of the board of directors or employees)?
5. In your opinion, what are the primary obstacles facing Francophone newcomers in terms of their social and cultural integration and participation in Francophone minority communities?
 - a. How would you characterize the relations/relationships among the various groups in the Francophone community, particularly between newcomers and those who are more established?
6. What are the primary obstacles facing the Francophone community trying to facilitate the social and cultural integration of Francophone newcomers?
 - a. What helps your outreach?
 - b. What obstacles hinder your outreach?
7. What role do you think community spaces can/should play in facilitating the social and cultural integration of Francophone newcomers?
 - a. In your opinion, which community spaces could play such a role (e.g. schools and educational institutions, settlement agencies, community centres, sports clubs, cultural associations or libraries)?
 - i. How/in what way? Please describe/explain.

- b. How do you think organizations/clubs can better achieve these goals?
 - c. What opportunities does your organization offer for newcomer involvement and participation and/or their representation?
 - d. In your opinion, how could relations between Francophone newcomers/immigrants and the established members of Francophone communities be improved? And how could their social and cultural integration and participation in general be improved?
8. What other information would you like to share on this subject?

Appendix 6: Tables

Table 1: Population by mother tongue, London metropolitan area, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2006, 2011

Year	Total	English	French	Other Languages
1981	5,668	4,926 86.9%	65 1.1%	677 11.9%
1991	381,520	330,120 86.5%	5,975 1.6%	45,430 11.9%
2001	435,600	371,560 85.3%	4,935 1.1%	54,205 12.4%
2006	457,720	385,705 84.3%	5,120 1.1%	65,415 14.3%
2011	469,010	378,440 81.0%	6,740 1.4%	82,070 17.6%

Sources: Census of Population 2011,⁷ 2006,⁸ 2001,⁹ 1991,¹¹ 1981.¹³

Table 2: Population by mother tongue, Ottawa Census Division, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2006 and 2011

Year	Total	English	French	Other Languages
1981	542,095	380,860 70.3%	104,120 19.2%	57,115 10.5%
1991	671,335	455,613 67.9%	116,748 17.4%	98,985 14.7%
2001	763,790	492,680 64.5%	119,910 15.7%	151,205 19.8%
2006	801,275	508,706 63.5%	124,018 15.5%	168,551 21.0%
2011	872,450	555,489 63.7%	131,299 15.0%	185,662 21.3%

Source: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. 2015. *Portrait of Official Languages Groups in the Ottawa Area*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2015. Cat. No.: SF31-120/2-2015F-PDF; ISBN: 978-1-100-25938-3.

Table 3: Proportion of immigrants in the Francophone population, London and Ottawa, 2011 and 2006

Year	London	Ottawa
2011	11.8%	12.4%
2006	11.4%	8.9%

Sources: 2011 National Household Survey,⁶ Census 2006.⁸

Table 4: Population of London by language spoken most often at home, status and period of immigration

Year	Total	English	French	Other Languages
Total	467,260 100.0%	417,860 89.4%	1,890 0.4%	37,580 8.0%
Non-immigrants	374,875 80.2%	365,905 78.3%	1,540 0.3%	4,665 1.0%
Immigrants	87,655 18.8%	50,160 10.7%	325 0.1%	30,375 6.5%
Before 1971	25,675 5.5%	21,390 4.6%	0 0.0%	3,520 0.8%
1971 to 1980	10,825 2.3%	7,835 1.7%	0 0.0%	2,390 0.5%
1981 to 1990	14,050 3.0%	7,210 1.5%	55 0.0%	5,450 1.2%
1991 to 2000	14,675 3.1%	6,130 1.3%	110 0.0%	6,795 1.5%
2001 to 2011	22,425 4.8%	7,605 1.6%	135 0.0%	12,220 2.6%
2001 to 2005	10,520 2.3%	3,940 0.8%	75 0.0%	5,255 1.1%
2006 to 2011	11,905 2.5%	3,660 0.8%	65 0.0%	6,960 1.5%
Non-permanent residents	4,730 1.0%	1,790 0.4%	25 0.0%	2,540 0.5%

Source: 2011 National Household Survey, topic-based tabulations.⁶

Table 5: Population of Ottawa by language spoken most often at home, status and period of immigration

	Total		English		French		Non-official language	
Total	904,910	100.0%	667,750	73.8%	104,300	11.5%	97,575	20.9%
Non-immigrants	689,070	76.1%	566,575	62.6%	92,580	19.8%	15,805	3.4%
Immigrants	204,445	22.6%	96,685	10.7%	10,765	2.3%	76,770	16.4%
Before 1971	35,535	3.9%	27,615	3.1%	1,005	0.2%	5,555	1.2%
1971 to 1980	23,630	2.6%	15,355	1.7%	1,090	0.2%	5,560	1.2%
1981 to 1990	32,210	3.6%	15,800	1.7%	1,220	0.3%	12,025	2.6%
1991 to 2000	53,360	5.9%	19,860	2.2%	2,680	0.6%	24,545	5.3%
2001 to 2011	59,710	6.6%	18,060	2.0%	4,770	1.0%	29,090	6.2%
2001 to 2005	27,050	3.0%	8,715	1.0%	1,910	0.4%	12,840	2.7%
2006 to 2011	32,655	3.6%	9,345	1.0%	2,865	0.6%	16,250	3.5%
Non-permanent residents	11,390	1.3%	4,490	0.5%	960	0.2%	5,005	1.1%

Source: 2011 National Household Survey, topic-based tabulations.⁶

Table 6: Proportion of immigrants in the London population, 1991, 2001, 2006, 2011

Year	People	Immigrants		Newcomers	
1991	381,520	65,840	17.3%	9,900	2.6%
2001	432,450	80,410	18.6%	6,430	1.7%
2006	457,720	87,420	19.1%	13,025	3.4%
2011	469,010	87,655	18.7%	11,905	3.1%

Sources: 2011 National Household Survey 2011,⁶ censuses 2011,⁷ 2006,⁸ 2001,¹⁰ 1991,¹² 1981.¹³

Table 7: Proportions of immigrants in the Ottawa population, 1991, 2001, 2006, 2011

Year	People	Immigrants		Newcomers	
1991	920,857	134,750	14.6%	23,405	2.5%
2001	774,072	185,005	20.1%	25,240	2.7%
2006	1,133,633	202,735	22.0%	35,085	3.8%
2011	1,236,324	235,335	25.6%	40,420	4.4%

Sources: 2011 National Household Survey 2011,⁶ censuses 2011,⁷ 2006,⁸ 2001,¹⁰ 1991,¹² 1981.¹³

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Appendix 7: The role of community spaces discussed by Stage 2 participants

Service providers

London

. . . I've participated on several occasions, such as settlement and integration workshops, offered by various community organizations, like the ACFO, Collège Boréal, the Cross Culture Centre, which helped me become familiar with Canadian culture and also learn about organizations that offer information on how to find work in Canada or how to write a CV in English, so it took a lot of time. . . it was a process. (London 2-1)

Before coming here to London, we spoke by telephone with someone here in London to learn where the Francophones like us were, where we could find help, so someone told us about the ACFO. The ACFO helped us a lot, to us it's like the start. The ACFO helped us with the house and with school for our boys, because we needed a French school for our boys. We actually turned to the ACFO more than Cross Cultural. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

Yes, I also go to the CÉSOC and the YMCA, and these associations help us fill out documents that are required for settling, like the residence application or the citizenship application, but I also go to La Cité collégiale for the integration courses. People also go to the YMCA for the workshops on integration, orientation and job hunting. . . . (Ottawa 2-1)

Since I was receiving welfare, they gave me a great gift, they had important information, so I saw and contacted World Skills. . . . This is a good place to prepared for finding a job because they . . . had me do the workshop . . . and it was good because they taught us how to write an acceptable CV. (Ottawa 2-1)

I consulted with the YMCA. . . That is truly a place where they provide a lot of information, Internet access to the Internet, and you can use the printer, which is good. . . . They also helped me fill out work permit application forms so Ontario Works also gave me some. . . the link for finding volunteer work. (Ottawa 2-1)

. . . With the vocational integration resource base. I was taught how to write a credible Canadian-style CV, and I was also taught how to write a Canadian-style employment letter. I was taught how to do an interview. . . that's it, and I was taught how to. . . the Canadian cultural environment through this training. . . . It's a little, this training that has already allowed me to work on a plan for integration here in Canada. (Ottawa 2-1)

Community organizations and centres

London

We use, in the community, we are used to it, if there are problems and we have something we don't understand, we often go down to the CCLC, and then the ACFO, and then Carrefour des femmes as well. . . . And the women's network. (London 2-4)

In the beginning, I used the Francophone space because of the language, because for my integration I had gone through Francophone resources, I got a lot of support to participate in several. . . which allowed me to understand life in London and also to make contacts. I understand the reality of immigrants in London. (London 2 3)

Ottawa

Yes, I myself have had very good experiences, especially with the Vanier community centre, their legal aid service, I think it's really fantastic because there are times when I need a visa for one of my family members here. (Ottawa 2-1)

The Vanier community centre has helped me a lot with being able to integrate, find information. If for example you are here and you have a family that stayed behind, the centre will help you because they even helped us write letters and they send that to Immigration. (Ottawa 2-2)

There was something after school that was called Franc Succès (resounding success). It's for coaching people who have just gotten here. (Ottawa 2-2)

Community health and resources centre

London

(N/A)

Ottawa

They taught us how to feed our children and . . . Canadian cooking and . . . how to have good health in Canada, especially because food from home isn't quite like Canadian food. . . . I took part in seminars like that. (Ottawa 2-1)

Workplaces

London

I work in a purely Francophone environment that promotes French. But there are also English users, which still allows me practise, to improve my English. But I'm so fulfilled because my work is strictly in French and I write in French. I like to write good French and that makes me happy every day. (London 2-1)

Ottawa

(N/A)

Libraries

London

For me, the most ideal place was the library. . . . Because I found a lot of support for learning in English and I found a lot of programs for improving English, that allowed me to improve my English, to read, watch videos, there are a lot of materials and that helped me to improve my English. (London 2-3)

Ottawa

And sometimes there are workshops that are organized. . . . I participated in a workshop on how to set up businesses with the library. (Ottawa 2-1)

There are . . . conversation groups, mostly in English, if you want to improve your conversation. (Ottawa 2-1)

The libraries also have excellent assistance programs, that gave me a lot of information, and it helps you understand who is doing what, and where. . .

Schools for adults

London

Like me too, I started my part here at Collège Boréal; I also don't know how to read so I'm taking the course here at Collège Boréal and learning how to go to the market and for ask for everything in English. English is difficult for me. I need to take an English course at [school for adults]. That's where I take the course, it's always difficult for me. (London 2-4)

Ottawa

I still visited St. Patrick's Adult School, to improve my English and upgrade my computer skills, the computer. . . . (Ottawa 2-1)

Elementary and secondary schools

London

I think that for our boys, school has been the most important space, for them to integrate in [other city] and then here in London, in [other city] we would meet the community that comes from Colombia, so I think that was very important for our boy. They got lost at first, but here in London, the small French community, it was our boys' friends. Our boy, he lives with a Francophone he met here in London at the French school, that is, who knew, that is the only friend that he has, they left for [other city] to study there together, so they continue together. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

The children's schools often help us find information because. . . there are courses, for example, that are given in cooperation with the schools, for example, [the CEPEO]. Some information is available through these schools, in collaboration with these schools, and sometimes they inform us as parents to participate in these courses. (Ottawa 2-3)

For schools, . . . when there are courses for parents, they tell you. So that is very important, it actually helps us integrate as well, and to better integrate the children. (Ottawa 2-3)

Post-secondary institutions

London

We thought all the time about our children, here there is the possibility of going to Western University, there is Collège Boréal, the other colleges, so that's why we decided to come here, this is a larger city than [other city] especially for the university. (London 2-2)

Another place that I found very relevant was Fanshawe College. . . . Because I took a course, I made contacts to continue taking small courses just to improve my English. (London 2-3)

Ottawa

I had to go to Cité Collégiale. . . . I went, it's really good, and there's a service, an integration program . . . about employability. (Ottawa 2-1)

Churches

London

. . . But there is also another very important community space. I would say that for me, during the first few months after I arrived, I told myself that since I am now in a purely Anglophone culture, I have to integrate into a community somehow so I can successfully integrate. So I realized I had to find a church. I found a church whose members also helped me integrate into the community, along with my children and my family here in London. So I would say not only the community centres and employment centres but also the church is very important to me. (London, 2-1)

. . . I would also say church is very important because people, when they don't have time to do other activities, they do go to church on Sunday or Saturday or Monday or whenever they go. But yes, it's very important to feel even if you are not at home, you can still carry your values, you can still carry your beliefs with you, and then instill them in your children. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

You are in church, and then when we talked, he had me meet the priest, and the priest also helped me connect with people who do volunteering. (Ottawa 2-2)

You would feel much more attached to this community because, for example, I go to church, I go to a French church. At church, you feel like you're participating because they encourage you to participate. But apart from the church, the Francophone community does not see that. (Ottawa 2-3)

So, the Catholic church is one means. . . it is one means of communication that could ensure that the French language and the Francophone community grow from day to day. (Ottawa 2-4)

Multicultural association, and ethno cultural association and communities

London

I can add another space like the cultural communities, such as the community of Rwandan nationals in London. This is another space I know. Nationals from other countries also have cultural groups, this is very important, to meet up with someone from the same country, from the same culture, that helps to share experiences and to stimulate integration again because others talk about their experiences, it makes you think about making your own choices in terms of orientation, of settlement immigration. (London 2-1)

I take part in anything related to the [African immigrant] community. There are “New Year’s” events. When we were young, there were like graduations. We did everything as a community because if more than one or two people were graduating, the parents got together so that we could have a group party. Same thing for communion. We had New Year’s parties and parties celebrating our country’s independence that also brought us together with people from our community who are here in London. This way we don’t lose all the things that are familiar to us. (London 2-2)

. . . The [ethno cultural] community is so important, because you know when you’re in Canada you are living in another country, you’ve left your whole family behind sometimes. There are people who have left war-torn countries like ours. You don’t have a chance to say goodbye to everyone. Then you find yourself in a place where you might have new cousins, aunts, people you can call your own. It clears your mind and it lightens the stress you feel every day. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

(N/A)

Volunteering

London

Also, even when I’m involved with the London subcommittee for education. . . for immigration, this is another space that I have found to be truly relevant, because my trade was education in my country. But that allows me to contribute something to the initiatives. (London 2-3)

For example, I volunteer for the CCLC for women newcomers. There we do activities every Thursday and cooking once a month on Wednesdays. For the others I don’t know. . . but these are the only places where I often go to do activities. (London 2-4)

Ottawa

I volunteered at a Francophone centre for seniors and I led mutual assistance groups. This was very interesting and the beneficiaries were very happy. It was a good experience, but I didn’t continue it because I wanted to find work. It may be good to volunteer, to be involved. (Ottawa 2-1)

I volunteered at events. I find that it is an opportunity to meet Canadians and that it was really good. (Ottawa 2-1)

You see, I went to a lot of Francophone environments. I volunteered in Francophone organizations. (Ottawa 2-4)

Parks

London

I remember last year there was an event called the summer festival during the summer at the community centre on Huron. We were there with a lot of people, several centres, and all the Francophones here, like ACFO, like all the community organizations, that's the name, so we had the chance to participate and get all the information from all these organizations, because they sometimes had some services for children, for the elderly, all sorts of things like that. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

(N/A)

Media and Internet

London

When you talk about cultural organizations, I would really like to mention the radio, especially the radio, which is available with blogs. You can listen to programs that have gone on. I'm in the computer sector, and I can say that the Internet and the online information from Service Canada, for example in French and in English especially. They changed the interface about two years ago. The information is available. If you know what you are looking for, you can find it. There are blogs. I know that when you are here, you don't have time to do searches on the Internet, so blogs are extremely effective. (London 2-1)

Facebook, most of my friends and acquaintances are a kind of scattered around the world, even those in London. We do not always have the time to see each other, so we communicate through Facebook a lot and WhatsApp. (London 2-2)

Ottawa

The Internet, where I spend a lot of time in front of the computer searching for information for work but also on Canadian life, what possible services there are. . . . (Ottawa 2-2)