



**ICRML**  
Institut canadien  
de recherche  
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**CIRLM**  
Canadian Institute  
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Minorities

# Evaluation of the Roadmap: Improving Programs and Service Delivery

Appearance before the **Standing  
Committee on Official Languages**

Ottawa, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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## Evaluation of the Roadmap: Improving Programs and Service Delivery

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### ***Recognizing the relevance, importance and necessity of research on the OLMCs in the next Roadmap for official languages***

I am here today to talk to you about the importance of research for supporting the development of the official-language minority communities (OLMC). Coming from a research institute, you will certainly not be surprised. However, we are not alone in seeing the importance of research. Actually, I asked myself if the research issue had been addressed by the Standing Committee on Official Languages. According to the minutes of the Committee's public sessions that are available online, several community organizations, agencies and government departments mentioned research<sup>1</sup>.

#### **List of organizations, agencies or government departments that addressed the research issue with the Standing Committee on Official Languages (June 2011 to March 2012):**

##### **Organisations**

1. Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC)
2. Association des universités de la francophonie canadienne (AUFC)
3. Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC)
4. Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM)
5. Commission nationale des parents francophones (CNPF)
6. Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS)
7. Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes (FCFA)
8. Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE)
9. Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française (FJCF)

<sup>1</sup> 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, # 1 to 32,

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/CommitteeBusiness/CommitteeHome.aspx?Cmte=LANG&Language=F&Parl=41&Ses=1>



10. Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)
11. Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE)
12. Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences (RDAC)
13. Société santé en français (SSF)
14. Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick (SANB)

#### **Agencies or departments**

1. Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)
2. National Research Council Canada (NRCC)
3. Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL)
4. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)
5. Industry Canada (IC)
6. Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD)

Many organizations expressed the need for research and evidence to carry out their activities. The need is being felt at two important levels in the projects undertaken by government agencies: during the project design and planning and during the outcome assessment. The danger of a lack of research is developing public policies or community projects that do not maximize the resources invested. The risk of error is enhanced. I quote two excerpts from testimonies heard here:

As we don't have conclusive data, we're forced to go into the field to try to identify needs in a hit or miss manner (Aurel Schofield, Société santé en français, Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 12).

Without research, there's quite a bit of, I would say, playing around before you hit on a model that's going to make a difference (Dorothy Williams, Black Community Resource Centre, Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 18).

The question I have for the government is this: does the government want to invest effectively in the communities or does it prefer to take a chance on investing in risky projects? In fact, the answer can be found in the mid-term report of the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*.

As the Government is confronted with challenging economic times, in the final year of the *Roadmap*, efforts will be made to maximize the use of public investments in the pursuit of the best possible results for Canadians. (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 16).



The government and organizations are responsible for the amounts they invest in the communities. In order to ensure maximum impact within the communities, the government must anticipate dedicating a proportion of the investments to research, studies and the gathering of evidence.

We agree with the FANE that pleaded here for strengthening the capacity of its organizations and institutions, mainly with regards to research and evaluation. I quote its representative: "... the language clauses in the transfer agreements currently do not enable the government to ensure that funding has been well spent in the planned manner, with benefits for francophone minority citizens. And yet this is taxpayers' money [...] We currently have trouble determining certain aspects such as vitality indicators, and that makes work on the ground difficult" (Jean Léger, FANE, Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 15).

If I were in the government's shoes, I would be concerned about these types of statements. He is getting ready to invest a significant amount of money in the communities. Every organization should anticipate dedicating a portion of their budget to research and evaluation in order to maximize their action. We agree with the *Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne* who recommended here "In addition, we recommend that each spokesperson for minority communities receive funding in order to be able to work with minority life researchers so that an ongoing study is conducted on the impacts of investments" (*Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne*, Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 18).

At the *Sommet des communautés francophones et acadiennes* held in 2007, the organizations and the roughly 700 participants also recognized the importance of research for the development of francophone communities. The organizations clearly understood the importance of research in efficiently achieving their goals. Certain organizations, I am talking particularly about the *Consortium national de formation en santé* and the *Société santé en français*, incorporate research in every phase of community projects they develop and implement. The research component allows for achieving the learnings and innovations that are produced in the project implementation process. This then enables the transfer of projects to other communities. This, however, involves costs and mobilizes resources that are not available to all organizations.

I acknowledge the efforts and resources dedicated by the government in the area of health research, but we will need to allocate equal resources in other sectors such as economic and social development, the development of human resources, core competencies and literacy, arts and culture and immigration.



Many stakeholders see a connection between research and the vitality and development of OLMCs. In a study sponsored by the Commissioner of Official Languages, the authors reveal the following link:

Knowledge, research and evaluation pertaining to vitality seem to be essential to enhancing it. (Office of the Commissioner of Official Language, 2006, p. 6).

Precisely because they are minorities, the OLMCs do not have the ability to do the job on their own. Support from researchers and government is essential. (Office of the Commissioner of Official Language, 2006, p. 53).

**Governments**, meanwhile, should establish mechanisms for coordination and shared governance with respect to research, and they should provide adequate funding to meet the research needs of the OLMCs, such funding to be done through the major research councils, Canada Research Chairs and the Action Plan for Official Languages. (Office of the Commissioner of Official Language, 2006, p. 57).

However, it also depends on basic research and, with this in mind, the SSHRC and the CIHR must play an important role. In 2008, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages released a report on *The Role of Canadian Federal Research Funding Agencies in the Promotion of Official Languages*. After addressing the numerous barriers and challenges facing the OLMCs in the area of research, many recommendations were made, two of which I will mention here:

- Establish a specific funding mechanism targeted at small bilingual and official language minority universities to help sustain research capacity at the professor and student levels, and provide adequate administrative support;
- Set aside stable funding for research on official languages issues and disseminate the results (CLO, 2008, Summary).

The CIHR, however, recently abandoned its research program for the OLMCs. The SSHRC also had a similar program in place that they also abandoned a few years ago. I think we should bring back these programs and that these federal agencies should be included as Roadmap partners. In part, these programs were a way of addressing the barriers facing researchers in minority communities. Why are these programs so important?

Because these competitions are evaluated by “peers”, i.e. colleagues. However, English-speaking researchers and even French-speaking researchers in Quebec know very little about the reality of minority francophones and many do not always recognize the relevance of funding these projects. Regular competitions at the CIHR or SSHRC are highly competitive and it only takes a comment that strikes a discordant note for our application to be refused. Allow me to



illustrate my personal experience with a funding application I submitted to the CIHR for carrying out a research on health services in French. One of the evaluators questioned the relevance of the research since most francophones are bilingual. These are the types of perceptions we can expect to encounter when submitting projects pertaining to the OLMCs. When the CIHR and the SSHRC develop a program that targets the OLMCs, we send a clear message that this type of research is legitimate and relevant. This is why a program targeting research on the OLMCs is needed.

Moreover, I believe we should also recognize Statistics Canada as a Roadmap partner. As pointed out by its representative sitting on your Committee, Statistics Canada plays a role in the implementation of the Roadmap by providing analyses and data that are essential to the work of departments and community organizations.

We have a lot of contact with various federal and community partners. It is quite clear that, in the context of the roadmap, Statistics Canada has received many requests for data and information for the purpose of gaining a clearer understanding of what is going on. (Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Statistique Canada, Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 27).

### **In conclusion**

The federal government must recognize research as an important component of the vitality and the development of the OLMCs. We live in a knowledge-driven society. Knowledge plays an important and strategic role in the development of the Canadian society. It plays a role that is equally important for the OLMCs.

The last Roadmap paid very little attention to research. One of the Committee members asked the Commissioner of Official Languages if the Roadmap had done enough for research and the coordination of research.

- Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Do you think the roadmap has done enough for research and research coordination? What could be done in future to overcome this lack of knowledge?
- Mr. Graham Fraser: That's a very good question. I'm reluctant to give you an answer.  
Sylvain, can you add a comment?
- Mr. Sylvain Giguère: Not really, because we haven't really looked into that aspect. We would have to conduct some research in order to answer you. (Standing Committee on Official Languages, 41st Parliament, 1st Session, no 32).



The Roadmap's research goals were timid. Research was mentioned, very briefly, for early childhood, immigration and language technologies. With regards to better research coordination, particularly between community, government and academic sectors, it was not a Roadmap goal. Yet, this issue was discussed at the Symposiums organized by the federal government on official languages research that were held in 2008 and 2011. Furthermore, the previous Roadmap has no mention of research carried out in other areas of activity and research that are just as important.

I believe more must be done with regards to research as part of an initiative aimed at developing the OLMCs. Bear in mind that research needs exist in every area of community activity. I expect that in the next Roadmap, the government will recognize the importance of research and the importance of better harmonizing the three research hubs: the academic, community and government sectors.





## References

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