ALLIANCE DES FEMMES DE LA FRANCOPHONIE CANADIENNE

Economic Profile of Francophone and Acadian Women: A Strategic Lever for Canada

REPORT



Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton

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Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC)

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PART 1

Introduction



Message from the President and Director General



Nour Enayeh, President

Leaders, builders, guardians of culture, innovators, entrepreneurs—women are the backbone of our communities. We witness the contribution of Francophone women to Canada's economy every day within our network and our communities, yet it is rarely acknowledged. In fact, until now, we lacked the necessary evidence to measure its value across the Canadian Francophone community. Determined to address this situation, the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) called on the expertise of Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) to quantify it.

Our objective was threefold: to assess the economic participation of Francophone women; to identify the systemic and structural barriers to their economic advancement; and, finally, to produce reliable quantitative data, disaggregated by region and according to several identity factors, including immigration status. The study drew on microdata from Statistics Canada to analyze and quantify the economic impact of Francophone women in Canada. A survey of the target population, conducted in collaboration with the market research firm Léger, and focus groups were used to supplement the information.

It is with immense pride that we present to you today the result of this effort: a landmark study that highlights the vital contribution of women to the country's economic development, titled ***Economic Profile of Francophone and Acadian Women: A Strategic Lever for Canada***.

The numbers it contains speak for themselves.

First, let’s highlight the annual contribution of Francophone women to the gross domestic product (GDP): $119 billion. This contribution is even greater when we take into account women’s unpaid work. In fact, according to very conservative estimates provided by the women themselves, they perform an average of 15.1 hours of unpaid work each week. This work, estimated to be worth $34 billion annually, is just one example of the systemic barriers they must overcome to reach their full potential.

The ***Economic Profile of Francophone and Acadian Women: A Strategic Lever for Canada*** goes well beyond mere statistics to explore various aspects of daily life that add to the invisible burden on Francophone women and hinder their ambitions.

This unprecedented snapshot was made possible thanks to financial support from the Government of Canada. We must now build on it, since it is, of course, only a starting point. “In our view, strength lies with women,” said Yvette Naubert. To ensure this strength is fully unleashed, we will work to implement the 14 recommendations outlined at the end of the report. We are counting on each and every one of you to contribute to this effort. Because strengthening the economic impact of women

Nour Enayeh, President
Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne

Soukaina Boutiyeb, Director General



Soukaina Boutiyeb, Director General

Little data is available on the economic contribution of Francophone women in Canada

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Francophone women living in minority communities in Canada play a vital role in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of their communities. Yet their contribution remains largely underestimated and is often overlooked in official data.

Government statistical agencies, while they produce overall snapshots of the labour market, do not take into account the complexity of intersecting identities. In fact, very little data is disaggregated by variables such as language, gender, ethnic origin, immigration status, or minority status.

This lack of evidence prevents a nuanced understanding of the realities faced by these women and limits policymakers' ability to design truly inclusive public policies. It also hinders research and advocacy efforts, particularly in political circles, where statistics are often needed to justify action.

In Canada's changing economic landscape, it is becoming crucial to better understand how these women are affected and how they contribute to the resilience of their communities. Whether they are immigrants, Indigenous, people of colour, young, older, living with disabilities, or living in remote areas, they face systemic barriers that hinder their full economic participation.

For example, according to the 2021 Census, recent immigrant women had an employment participation rate of 61.2 percent, compared to 76.4 percent among Canadian-born women, and a median after-tax income that was $10,000 lower. Although these data are not disaggregated by language, they illustrate structural inequalities that may also affect Francophone women living in minority communities, particularly when they face multiple discrimination factors.

To address these challenges, it is essential to generate robust data, not only to inform research but also to support awareness-raising efforts and the development of more equitable public policies.

The AFFC hopes to gain a better understanding of Francophone women's involvement in the Canadian economy

MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES

Mandate

Given this context, the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC) has commissioned Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) to assist it in conducting a rigorous, intersectional study aimed at analyzing the economic impact of Francophone women in Canada.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- Assess the participation of Francophone women in various economic sectors, at the national and provincial levels, using the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) approach
- Identify the systemic and structural barriers that hinder their access, retention, and economic advancement
- Produce reliable, disaggregated, and representative quantitative data to inform public policy, community initiatives, and business strategies

By documenting and quantifying these realities, the study will contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economic recovery, while highlighting the diversity of Francophone women's life experiences and contributions across the country.

Scope of the Study

The analyses focus on Francophone women living in minority communities in Canada, that is, outside Quebec.

With regard to the profile of Francophone women, which is based on census data from Statistics Canada, the definition of "Francophone" provided by the AFFC is intended to be inclusive and includes:

- People who only understand French and,
- People who understand both French and English

For the survey conducted among Francophone women, the definition is more restrictive. It includes people whose mother tongue is French, as well as people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, but who have a good command of French as an official language and who use French at home. This definition is based on the inclusive definition of Francophones used, particularly in Ontario.

Consequently, the survey sample is based on a more restrictive definition of Francophone women than the one used by the AFFC. This methodological approach aims to more accurately target the use of French in everyday life, at work, or at home, but results in a smaller sample population

The methodology combines an analysis of secondary and primary data (survey)

DATA SOURCES

Sources	Descriptions	Key Data Analyzed
Statistics Canada Census Microdata	The study is based on microdata from Statistics Canada's Population Census, which are available through anonymous, publicly available data files: • Build a sociodemographic profile of Francophone women by province and territory • Assess their participation in the labour market, their level of education, their income, and their occupational sector • Compare economic indicators between Francophone women and other linguistic groups	• Linguistic status • Minority groups • Household types • Level of education • Occupational sector • Class of worker • Income
Survey conducted in collaboration with Léger among Francophone and Acadian Canadian women	A survey was conducted in collaboration with Léger, a firm specializing in marketing and social research. The purpose of this survey was to: • Gather insights from Francophone women about their economic situation, challenges, and aspirations • Identify barriers to employment, entrepreneurship, and career advancement • Document needs related to training, work-life balance, and institutional support.	• Income and professional status • Entrepreneurship • Value of the French language • Unpaid work • Types of support to prioritize to improve the economic situation of Francophone women
Focus Groups	In addition to the survey results, three focus groups were conducted to gather insights into the individual experiences of 17 Canadian Francophone women: • The focus groups were held throughout the week of January 12, 2026 • The Canadian Francophone women selected for the panel were chosen to represent a variety of backgrounds and to maximize the participation of women from diverse backgrounds (visible minorities, gender minorities, immigrants, rural residents, etc.). The findings from the focus groups are presented in the appendices and incorporated throughout the various survey analyses as additional information.	• Value and impact of the French language • Employment in health care, education, and public administration • Unpaid work, mental load, and community involvement • Francophone women in business and entrepreneurship • Diversity, immigration, and the Francophone Community • Pay equity and purchasing power

633 Francophone women responded to the survey conducted by the Léger firm

SURVEY OVERVIEW

As part of the survey conducted by Léger, the questionnaire was distributed online to a sample of Francophone women aged 18 and older from all provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec. The respondents came from two distinct sources:

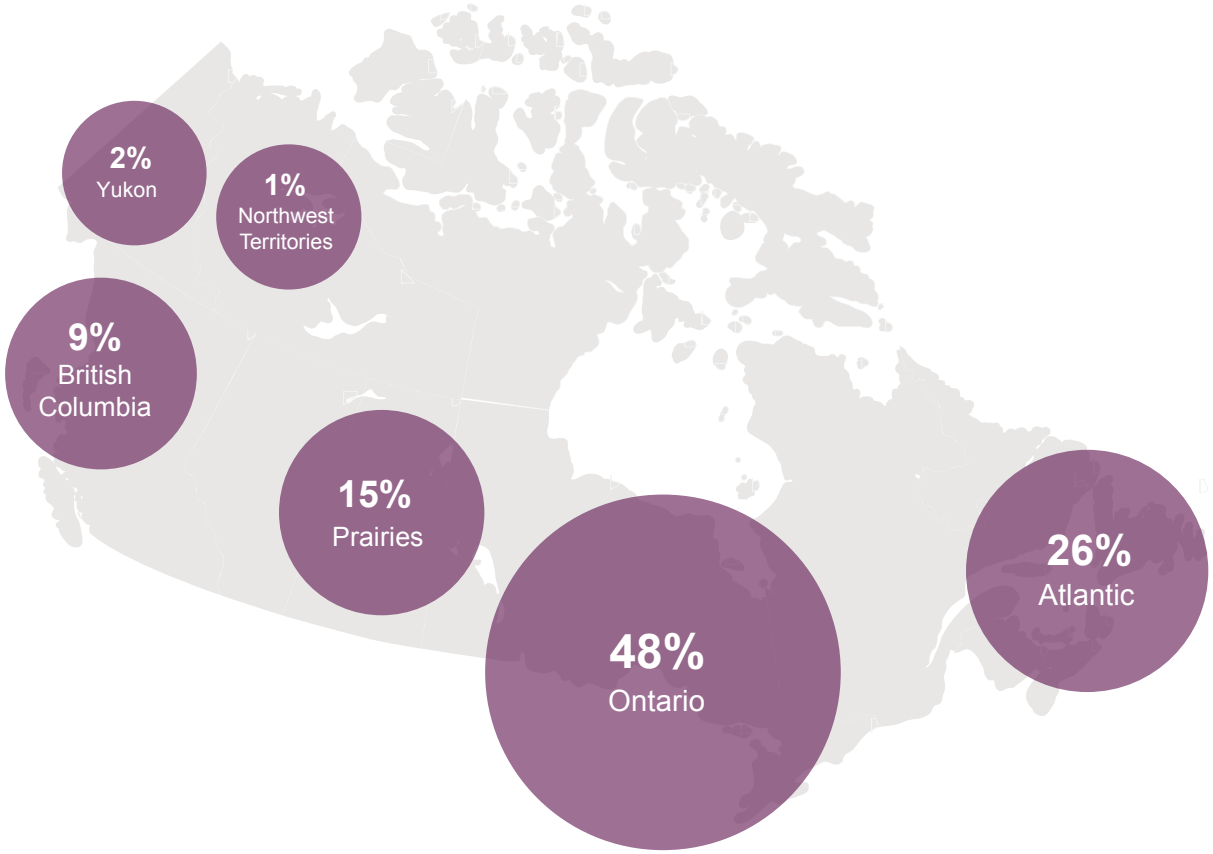
- Respondents registered to Léger's various panels
- A sample of women whose contact information was provided by the AFFC.

The sociodemographic profile of the respondents provided by the AFFC differs from that of the respondents from the panel. The latter are younger, more educated, and more likely to have studied social sciences, to live in urban areas, to have been born outside Canada, to have arrived more recently, to work in the community sector, etc.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic structure of the target population.

DISTRIBUTION OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN SURVEYED BY PROVINCE OR TERRITORY OF RESIDENCE

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in%, n=633



Sources: Survey of Francophone Canadian women conducted by Léger, analyzed by RCGT.

PART 2
Comparative Analysis

This section provides a brief overview of who Francophone women in minority situations are, based on their linguistic profile, the household in which they live, and their diverse backgrounds. More specifically, the section is organized as follows:

- **Linguistic Profile:** Snapshot of Canadian Francophone women by language profile
- **Household Type:** Distribution of Francophone women by household type
- **Diversity:** Snapshot of women from visible minority and immigrant backgrounds and of Indigenous identity, as well as women of diverse sexual and gender identities or with employment-related limitations



The majority of Canadian Francophone women living in minority communities also speak English

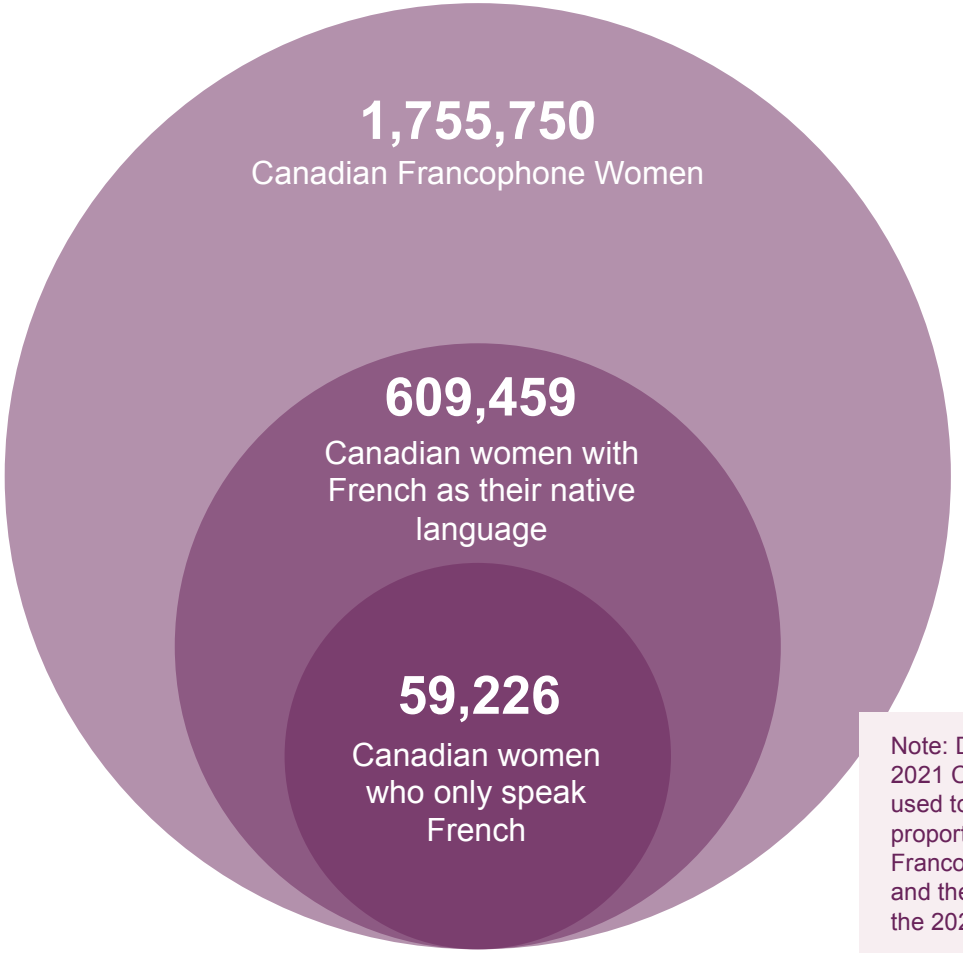
SNAPSHOT OF CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY LINGUISTIC PROFILE

Among Canadian Francophone women living in minority communities, who number more than 1.7 million, 35% speak French as their mother tongue. This subgroup is therefore estimated to number nearly 610,000 people.

Moreover, only 3.4% of Canadian Francophone women living in minority communities speak only French as their official language, which amounts to just over 59,000 people.

DISTRIBUTION OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY LINGUISTIC PROFILE

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in numbers



Note: Data from the 2021 Census were used to estimate the proportion of Canadian Francophone women, and then extrapolated to the 2025 population.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Francophone women in Canada who are in a minority situation are estimated to number nearly 1.8 million, or 5.4% of the population

OVERVIEW OF CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

With a Canadian population of 41.3 million in 2025, the provinces and territories outside Quebec will have a population of 32.2 million. Canadian Francophone women living in minority communities would thus account for 5.4% of the population.

Most of these women live in Ontario (50.3%). However, the region with the highest proportion of Francophone women is the Atlantic region, where they account for 10.6% of the total population and 20.7% of women. This is due in large part to a significant Francophone community in New Brunswick.

Overall, 10.7% of Canadian women who are members of minority groups are Francophone.

NUMBER OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY REGION

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in numbers, in %

Regions	Number of Francophone women	Percentage of Francophone women	Percentage of Francophone women in the population	Percentage of Francophone women
Atlantic	282,637	8.5%	10.6%	20.7%
Ontario	985,066	50.3%	6.1%	12.1%
Prairies	270,751	23.2%	3.6%	7.0%
British Columbia	210,222	17.6%	3.7%	7.3%
Northern Canada	7,073	0.4%	5.3%	10.6%
Total	**1,755,750**	**100%**	**5.4%**	**10.7%**

Note: Data from the 2021 Census were used to estimate the proportion of Canadian Francophone women and then extrapolated to the 2025 population.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

The proportion of Francophone women who speak only French is highest in the Atlantic region

SNAPSHOT OF CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY LINGUISTIC PROFILE

In Canadian minority regions, Francophone women whose native language is French account for 3.7% of the female population, or more than 609,400 people, with a marked concentration in the Atlantic provinces, where they make up 11.8% of the female population. In contrast, the Prairie region has the lowest proportion of Francophone women in its population, at 7%.

The proportion of Francophone women whose native language is not French is 7%. In contrast, the proportion of Francophone women who speak only French is 0.4%.

DISTRIBUTION OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY LINGUISTIC PROFILE

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in numbers, in % of the population

Regions	Number			Percentage of the population		
	Francophone Women	French-speaking women whose native language is French	Women who know only French	Francophone Women	French-speaking women whose native language is French	Women who know only French
Atlantic	282,637	161,168	35,186	20.7%	11.8%	2.6%
Ontario	985,066	329,512	22,176	12.1%	4.0%	0.3%
Prairies	270,751	76,566	1,565	7.0%	2.0%	0.0%
British Columbia	210,222	39,870	256	7.3%	1.4%	0.0%
Northern Canada	7,073	2,344	43	10.6%	3.5%	0.1%
Total	**1,755,750**	**609,459**	**59,226**	**10.7%**	**3.7%**	**0.4%**

Sources: Survey of Francophone Canadian women conducted by Léger, analyzed by RCGT.

The proportion of Francophone women living with a partner is higher than that observed in the general population

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

The majority of Francophone women in minority communities live in two-parent households with children, representing more than 862,100 women (49.1%). This proportion remains slightly lower than that observed in the general population, which stands at 43.6%. By comparison, for English-speaking women, the proportion of households consisting of a couple with children is 42.8%.

Households consisting of childless couples account for approximately 362,200 Francophone women (20.6%), which is slightly below the national average of 21.8%.

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

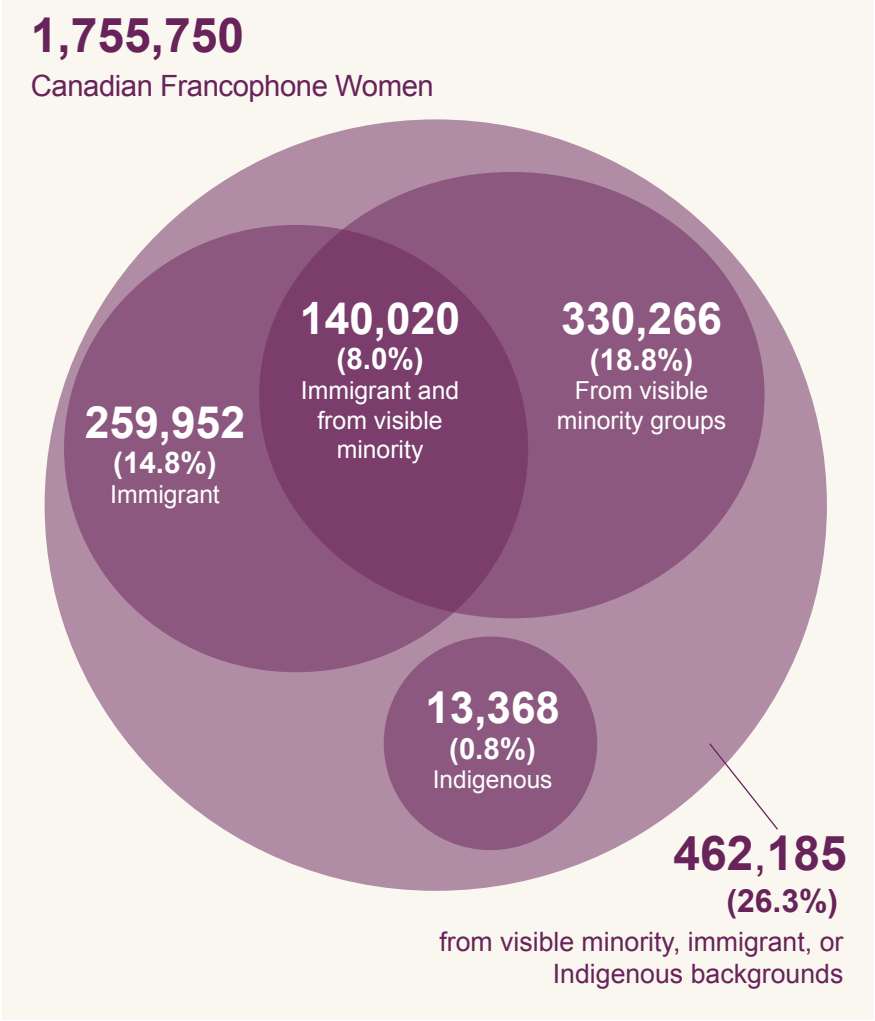
Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Household Types	Francophones		Anglophones		Total population		Number of Francophone Women
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Single	11.6%	11.3%	12.5%	11.0%	11.8%	10.2%	203,769
Shared-housing	6.5%	7.7%	8.2%	9.0%	10.0%	11.0%	114,393
Childless couples	20.6%	22.5%	22.6%	22.9%	21.8%	22.4%	362,244
Couples with children	49.1%	49.3%	42.8%	46.3%	43.6%	46.9%	862,131
Single-parent family	12.1%	9.2%	13.7%	10.8%	12.9%	9.5%	213,212
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**1,755,750**

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Nearly 462,200 Francophone women are from visible minority groups, immigrant backgrounds, or Indigenous communities

VISIBLE MINORITIES, IMMIGRANTS AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES



Francophone women who are members of visible minority groups, have an immigrant background, or identify as Indigenous account for only 1.2% of the total population.

PROFILE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FROM MINORITY GROUPS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population

Minority Groups	Number	% of Women	% of the Population
Francophone Women	1,755,750	10.7%	5.4%
From visible minority groups, immigrant backgrounds, or Indigenous communities	462,185	2.8%	1.2%
Immigrant	259,952	1.6%	0.7%
From visible minority	330,266	2.0%	0.9%
Immigrant and from visible minority	140,020	0.9%	0.4%
Indigenous identity	13,368	0.1%	0.0%

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Among Francophone women, a smaller percentage are women who belong to visible minority groups, have an immigrant background, or identify as Indigenous

VISIBLE MINORITY, IMMIGRANT AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Of the slightly more than 462,100 Francophone women who are members of visible minorities, immigrants, or Indigenous, more than 307,100 live in Ontario.

The proportion of women who are members of visible minority groups, have an immigrant background, or identify as Indigenous is lower among Francophone women than among the female population as a whole, at 26.4% versus 40.8%, respectively.

The percentage of Francophone women who are members of visible minority groups, have an immigrant background, or identify as Indigenous varies significantly by region. For example, the Atlantic region has a percentage of only 7.7%, while British Columbia shows much greater diversity, with 32.4% of Francophone women belonging to a minority group.

PEOPLE FROM VISIBLE MINORITY GROUPS, WITH IMMIGRANT BACKGROUNDS, OR WITH INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in number of Francophone women

Regions	Francophones		Anglophones		Total Population		Number of Francophone Women
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Atlantic	7.7%	7.8%	8.1%	8.5%	11.9%	12.6%	21,783
Ontario	31.2%	31.4%	28.0%	27.9%	45.6%	44.8%	307,105
Prairies	23.7%	24.8%	21.4%	21.4%	36.0%	35.1%	64,166
British Columbia	32.4%	33.7%	26.5%	26.7%	47.1%	45.4%	67,695
Northern Canada	20.8%	17.1%	32.3%	28.2%	33.0%	28.8%	1,436
Total	**26.4%**	**26.6%**	**24.2%**	**24.2%**	**40.8%**	**39.9%**	**462,185**

The next page shows the distribution of the population by visible minority, immigration and Indigenous identity.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis

The highest percentage of Francophone immigrant women is found in British Columbia

VISIBLE MINORITY, IMMIGRATION AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION BY IMMIGRATION STATUS, VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS, OR INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Regions	The highest percentage of Francophone immigrant women is found in British Columbia	Francophones		Anglophones		Total population		Number of Francophone Women
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Atlantic	Immigrants	4.8%	5.2%	3.5%	3.9%	7.3%	8.1%	13,069
	From visible minorities	3.5%	3.8%	3.3%	3.6%	5.3%	5.9%	10,009
	Indigenous	0.9%	0.7%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2,428
Ontario	Immigrants	17.6%	18.3%	14.5%	13.7%	33.4%	32.0%	169,654
	From visible minorities	23.5%	23.4%	21.2%	21.4%	34.1%	33.9%	231,095
	Indigenous	0.6%	0.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	5,502
Prairies	Immigrants	13.9%	15.5%	8.1%	8.2%	22.8%	22.0%	36,693
	From visible minorities	17.6%	18.0%	11.8%	12.4%	23.9%	23.7%	47,857
	Indigenous	1.1%	1.1%	6.3%	5.7%	5.6%	5.2%	2,837
British Columbia	Immigrants	19.7%	22.3%	12.4%	12.2%	33.5%	31.1%	39,800
	From visible minorities	19.7%	19.3%	15.7%	15.9%	35.0%	33.2%	40,909
	Indigenous	1.1%	0.7%	3.8%	3.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2,303
Northern Canada	Immigrants	12.7%	7.2%	4.0%	4.0%	9.7%	7.8%	737
	From visible minorities	6.0%	9.9%	4.6%	5.1%	6.3%	5.3%	397
	Indigenous	4.2%	0.8%	23.0%	18.9%	18.7%	16.5%	
Total	Immigrants	15.2%	16.1%	11.4%	11.1%	28.7%	27.3%	259,952
	From visible minorities	18.9%	18.8%	16.1%	16.5%	29.4%	28.9%	330,266
	Indigenous	0.8%	0.7%	3.2%	3.0%	2.6%	2.5%	13,368

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

British Columbia stands out for its high percentage of women in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

5.4% of the Francophone women surveyed reported identifying as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This figure varies noticeably across regions.

British Columbia stands out with the highest share, at 11.1%, which is more than double the national average. In contrast, the Atlantic region has the lowest share, at 3.2%.

These regional differences suggest varying regional dynamics regarding identification with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community among Francophone women.

PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=628

Regions	Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community
Atlantic	3.2%
Ontario	5.6%
Prairies	5.2%
British Columbia	11.1%
Northern Canada	5.4%
Total	**5.4%**

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

18% of Francophone women report employment barriers, with a higher prevalence in the Prairies

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

18.2% of the Francophone women surveyed reported having one or more limitations that affect their daily lives or their career paths, such as physical, sensory, cognitive, psychological, or mental health-related limitations.

The Prairies has the highest proportion at 23.7%, followed by Ontario at 19.7% and British Columbia at 18.7%. In contrast, the Atlantic region ranks lowest at 12.2%, highlighting differing regional realities regarding barriers to labour market participation.

PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FACING EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=620

Regions	Subject to Employment Barriers
Atlantic	12.2%
Ontario	19.7%
Prairies	23.7%
British Columbia	18.7%
Northern Canada	16.3%
Total	**18.2%**

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

PART 3

Report on the Economic Participation of Francophone Women

This section provides an overview of the economic participation of Francophone women living in linguistic minority communities. More specifically, the section is organized as follows:

- **Education:** Comparison between Francophone women and the rest of the population based on highest level of education achieved.
- **Employment:** Distribution of Francophone women by employment status, industry, worker category, and contribution to GDP generated by employment.
- **Income and Pay Equity:** Distribution of Francophone women by individual and household income, and perceptions regarding pay equity and purchasing power.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Percentage of entrepreneurs, main challenges faced when launching a business, and support provided.
- **Unpaid Work, Mental Load and Volunteering:** An overview of unpaid work, the value of unpaid work performed, and the impact of unpaid work.



In total, 44% of Francophone women hold a university degree, while 13% do not hold any

EDUCATION

The percentage of Francophone women in linguistic minority situations who hold a university degree is higher than that of men. Among these women, 44% hold a university degree, which amounts to approximately 554,700 women. British Columbia and Northern Canada have the highest percentage of Francophone women with a university degree, while the Atlantic region has the lowest. By comparison, 29% of Anglophone women outside Quebec hold a university degree.

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Regions	Highest Degree Earned	Francophones		Anglophones		Total population		
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total
Atlantic	No diploma	18.3%	23.1%	16.2%	19.2%	16.7%	19.9%	18.2%
	University degree	32.5%	23.1%	24.3%	18.4%	25.3%	19.5%	22.5%
Ontario	No diploma	12.7%	14.1%	13.2%	15.6%	14.8%	15.8%	15.3%
	University degree	45.4%	39.3%	30.2%	25.5%	33.7%	30.3%	32.0%
Prairies	No diploma	12.5%	13.7%	14.3%	18.1%	15.4%	17.9%	16.6%
	University degree	45.4%	33.7%	27.2%	20.5%	30.1%	24.1%	27.1%
British Columbia	No diploma	10.4%	10.7%	11.6%	14.5%	12.7%	14.3%	13.5%
	University degree	53.1%	45.4%	30.8%	24.7%	34.7%	29.7%	32.3%
Northern Canada	No diploma	13.2%	14.0%	20.8%	25.3%	26.9%	31.8%	29.3%
	University degree	56.1%	33.7%	27.8%	17.1%	26.0%	15.6%	20.8%
Total	No diploma	13.3%	15.3%	13.5%	16.4%	14.8%	16.4%	15.6%
	University degree	44.2%	36.3%	29.0%	23.4%	32.3%	27.8%	30.1%

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

A significant percentage of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals hold more than two jobs

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Among employed women surveyed:

13%
of Francophone women report holding two or more jobs.

37%
of Indigenous women report having two or more jobs; the same applies to members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

30%
of single mothers report having two or more jobs.

More than half (56%) of Francophone women surveyed are employed. More specifically, 40% work full-time and 9% work part-time. The retirement rate stands at 35%

Among employed women, 13% report holding two or more jobs. This rate is significantly higher among single mothers, 30% of whom hold at least two jobs. The situation is even more pronounced among Francophone Indigenous women and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, groups in which this rate reaches 37% respectively.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

ncophone women in Canada who live in linguistic minority communities are overrepresented in certain sectors

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY INDUSTRY

Francophone women in minority communities in Canada are primarily employed in the health and social assistance sector (18.9%), followed by the education sector (17.2%). They are notably well-represented in public administration (12% compared to 6.3% for women overall), while relatively few work in the primary sector (1.6%) and in manufacturing, construction, and public services (4.4%).

BREAKDOWN OF THE POPULATION BY INDUSTRY

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Note: For certain consolidated categories, the average salary was weighted based on the number of employees in each sector.

Industry	Francophones		Anglophones		Total population			Number of Francophone Women	Average Hourly Wage (Canada)
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Total		
Primary sector	1.6%	5.0%	2.4%	6.4%	2.1%	5.5%	3.9%	28,616	$41.06
Commercial sector	12.1%	12.4%	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%	14.4%	14.6%	212,547	$27.59
Public administration	12.0%	12.2%	6.8%	6.6%	6.3%	6.0%	6.1%	211,139	$46.39
Manufacturing, construction and public services	4.4%	18.1%	6.5%	25.3%	7.1%	24.8%	16.2%	77,278	$37.32
Information and the Cultural Industry, Arts, Performing Arts, and Recreation	5.0%	5.2%	4.1%	4.7%	3.7%	4.3%	4.0%	87,640	$34.20
Education sector	17.2%	7.9%	11.7%	4.6%	11.0%	4.5%	7.6%	301,148	$42.30
Health care and social services	18.9%	5.6%	21.8%	4.3%	21.3%	4.5%	12.6%	332,268	$34.81
Finance and insurance	4.4%	4.3%	4.9%	3.5%	5.3%	3.8%	4.5%	76,694	$44.24
Prof., scientific and technical services	8.0%	10.3%	7.5%	8.3%	7.8%	8.9%	8.4%	141,037	$48.60
Other	16.4%	19.0%	19.4%	21.5%	20.6%	23.3%	22.0%	287,382	$26.09
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**1,755,750**	**$36.40**

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01, 14-10-0064-01 and14-10-0064-01), RCGT analysis.

Several factors contribute to the overrepresentation of Francophone women in certain sectors

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Representation of Francophone Women	Explanations	Average Wage in Canada (2025)	
			Women	Men
Public administration	**Overrepresented** • Francophone women: 12% • All Canadians: 6.1%	• Proficiency in both official languages is a major asset—and even a financial one—due to language bonuses, which encourage many Francophone women to pursue these jobs • This industry offers defined pay scales and attractive working conditions for women who seek a balance between their professional and personal lives	$44.68	$48.14 (+7.7%)
Manufacturing, construction and public services	**Underrepresented** • Francophone women: 4.4% • All Canadians: 16.2%	• Non-traditional sectors (manufacturing and skilled trades) remain difficult to enter due to perceptions and biases (not being taken seriously, accent, prejudices regarding motherhood, etc.) • Some of these sectors also require higher education, which can be difficult to access in French	$33.82	$38.28 (+13.2%)
Education sector	**Overrepresented** • Francophone women: 17.2% • All Canadians: 7.6%	• Traditionally female-dominated occupations • Jobs with defined pay scales that offer attractive conditions for women and where they can naturally find their place • The lack of spots in French-language daycare centers is a major obstacle to training, employment, and work-life balance. This situation may lead some women to seek jobs in daycare or education, as these sectors generally offer schedules that are more compatible with family responsibilities • French-speaking newcomers are often steered toward the field of education	$42.30	$45.40 (+10.9%)
Health care and social services	**Overrepresented** • Francophone women: 18.9% • All Canadians: 12.6%	• Traditionally female-dominated occupations • Jobs with defined pay scales, which are generally preferred by women • French-speaking newcomers are often steered toward the healthcare field	$34.81	$36.99 (+7.8%)
All sectors			**$34.04**	**$38.64**

Sources: Focus groups with Canadian Francophone women, Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Tables 17-10-0005-01, 14-10-0064-01, and 14-10-0064-01), RCGT analysis

Immigrant women are overrepresented in certain fields

INDUSTRY SECTORS FOR FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANT WOMEN

Proficiency in English is a key factor in gaining access to skilled employment, and this issue is particularly significant for immigrant women, who may face obstacles related to the non-recognition of their credentials as well as discrimination associated with their status. As a result, Francophone immigrant women often feel compelled to accept underqualified positions upon arrival, due to limited recognition of the skills and qualifications they acquired abroad. Several testimonials indicate that Francophone newcomers are often steered toward the education or health care sectors, which contributes to an overrepresentation of Francophone immigrant women in lower-paying and less valued jobs, particularly in childcare and certain areas of education. Furthermore, the processes for recognizing degrees and skills vary greatly from one province to the next, which can result in multiple administrative steps or, in some cases, prevent individuals from practicing in regulated professions such as nursing, teaching, or medicine.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY INDUSTRY

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population

Industry	Immigrant	Non-immigrant	Total population
Primary sector	0.6%	1.8%	3.9%
Commercial sector	10.2%	12.5%	14.6%
Public administration	9.6%	12.5%	6.1%
Manufacturing, construction and public services	4.1%	4.5%	16.2%
Information and the Cultural Industry, Arts, Performing Arts, and Recreation	3.8%	5.2%	4.0%
Education sector	18.0%	17.0%	7.6%
Health care and social services	19.5%	18.8%	12.6%
Finance and insurance	6.7%	4.0%	4.5%
Professional, scientific and technical services	11.2%	7.5%	8.4%
Other	16.2%	16.4%	22.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Francophone immigrant women are underrepresented in the following sectors: commercial, public administration, primary industries, media, culture, the arts, and recreation.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), Focus groups with Canadian Francophone women, RCGT analysis.

The percentage of self-employed workers is lower for women than for men

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY CATEGORY OF WORKERS

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY CATEGORY OF WORKERS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Regions	Category of Workers	Francophones		Anglophones		Total population	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Atlantic	Employed	92.4%	89.0%	91.5%	87.5%	91.7%	87.5%
	Self-employed	7.4%	10.9%	8.3%	12.3%	8.1%	12.4%
	Unpaid family worker	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Ontario	Employed	88.5%	83.9%	88.4%	83.7%	87.7%	81.7%
	Self-employed	11.0%	15.8%	11.3%	16.0%	11.8%	18.0%
	Unpaid family worker	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%
Prairies	Employed	88.1%	82.3%	86.8%	81.7%	87.3%	81.7%
	Self-employed	11.5%	17.5%	12.6%	18.0%	12.0%	18.0%
	Unpaid family worker	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%
British Columbia	Employed	84.0%	80.0%	85.0%	80.3%	85.2%	79.2%
	Self-employed	15.5%	19.7%	14.6%	19.5%	14.4%	20.6%
	Unpaid family worker	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
Northern Canada	Employed	93.6%	89.7%	93.7%	85.5%	94.4%	87.4%
	Self-employed	6.4%	10.3%	5.8%	14.5%	5.3%	12.6%
	Unpaid family worker	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
Total	Employed	88.5%	84.0%	87.7%	83.0%	87.5%	81.7%
	Self-employed	11.1%	15.7%	11.8%	16.8%	12.0%	18.0%
	Unpaid family worker	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Canadian Francophone women represented by the AFFC generate $119 billion in GDP

CONTRIBUTION TO GDP BY CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

The contribution of Canadian Francophone women in a linguistic minority situation accounts for 4% of the total gross domestic product generated in Canada. If their sectoral distribution were comparable to that of the population as a whole, their contribution to GDP could increase by $8.9 billion.

CALCULATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN TO GDP

Total for Canada, 2025

Industry	Employment			GDP (2025)		
	Total number of jobs Canada	Number of Canadian Francophone women	Share of Canadian Francophone women	Canadian GDP in chained 2017 dollars	Estimated GDP in 2025 dollars	GDP generated by Francophone women
Primary sector	716,854	14,329	2.0%	166.9	210.1	4.2
Commercial sector	3,010,621	106,430	3.5%	250.6	315.6	11.2
Public administration	1,261,098	105,726	8.4%	168.4	212.0	17.8
Manufacturing, construction and public services	3,348,535	38,696	1.2%	417.1	525.2	6.1
Information and the Cultural Industry, Arts, Performing Arts, and Recreation	814,984	43,885	5.4%	101.2	127.4	6.9
Education sector	1,566,834	150,797	9.6%	123.7	155.8	15.0
Health care and social services	2,628,245	166,380	6.3%	191.4	241.1	15.3
Finance and insurance	882,392	38,404	4.4%	179.4	225.9	9.8
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,676,267	70,623	4.2%	168.6	212.3	8.9
Other	4,390,338	143,903	3.3%	571.9	720.1	23.6
Total	**20,296,167**	**879,172**	**4.3%**	**2,339.1**	**2 945.4**	**118.7**

The GDP figures presented here are estimates and were calculated based on the average of monthly seasonally adjusted GDP data at an annual rate, expressed in 2017 chained dollars. These estimates were then indexed based on the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between 2017 and 2025 to obtain comparable values in current dollars. The results should be interpreted with caution, as they are based on statistical calculations and conversion assumptions and do not constitute official GDP measures.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census, Tables 17-10-0005-01, 36-10-0434-02, and 18-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

The median income of Canadian Francophone women is higher than that of women in the overall population

MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME

Francophone women have a higher median income than women in the general population in all the regions presented. Overall, the median income for Francophone women is $42,000 (or $50,339 in 2025-indexed dollars), compared to $37,000 ($44,346 indexed) for women overall. The gap is particularly pronounced in Northern Canada ($89,291 for Francophone women versus $62,324 for women overall) and in Ontario ($53,934 versus $44,346). Despite this relative advantage compared to women overall, Francophone women still earn less than Francophone men in every region.

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION BY MEDIAN INCOME

Minorities in, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Francophone women have a median individual income that is 13.5% higher than that of women in the overall population, but 10.6% lower than that of men in the overall population.

Regions	Francophones				Total population					
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Total	
	Median income	Indexed income (2025)	Median income	Indexed income (2025)	Median income	Indexed income (2025)	Median income	Indexed income (2025)	Median income	Indexed income (2025)
Atlantic	$36,000	$43,147	$43,000	$51,537	$34,000	$40,750	$42,000	$50,339	$38,000	$45,545
Ontario	$45,000	$53,934	$56,000	$67,118	$37,000	$44,346	$46,000	$55,133	$41,000	$49,140
Prairies	$42,000	$50,339	$56,000	$67,118	$38,000	$45,545	$50,000	$59,927	$43,000	$51,537
British Columbia	$39,000	$46,743	$50,000	$59,927	$36,000	$43,147	$47,000	$56,331	$41,000	$49,140
Northern Canada	$74,500	$89,291	$85,000	$101,876	$52,000	$62,324	$54,000	$64,721	$53,000	$63,523
Total	**$42,000**	**$50,339**	**$52,000**	**$62,324**	**$37,000**	**$44,346**	**$47,000**	**$56,331**	**$41,000**	**$49,140**

Note: Median incomes for 2020 were adjusted to 2025 based on Statistics Canada's CPI trends. Although this method allows for comparisons in constant dollars, it has certain limitations. For example, it does not reflect changes in household structure or shifts in income distribution over time.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis

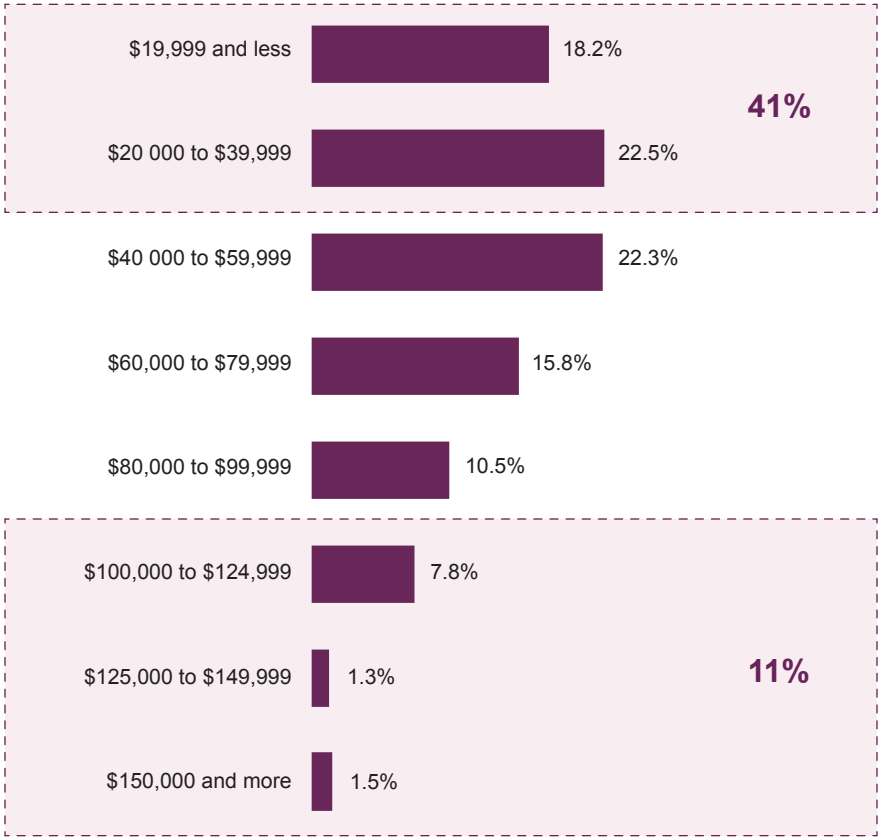
41% of Francophone women have an annual income of less than $40k, while 11 % earn $100k or more

INDIVIDUAL INCOME

The majority of Francophone women surveyed reported an individual annual income of less than $60K. More specifically, 41% earn less than $40K per year, while only 11% earn $100K or more. The Atlantic region stands out for its high proportion of women earning less than $40K, accounting for 54% of them. The proportion of women living alone and single mothers earning less than $40K is also high, at 50% and 55%, respectively. More than half of Francophone Indigenous women fall into the lowest income bracket, as do women with disabilities. Finally, among women who do not speak English, more than 70% report an income below $40K, compared to 36% among those who are proficient in English, which could suggest an economic disadvantage associated with language barriers.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL INCOME

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=548



More than 41% of Francophone women live in households with an annual income of $100,000 or more

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

One in five Francophone women surveyed lives in a household with an income of less than $40,000, while 41% of women live in households earning more than $100,000, 19% of which exceed $150,000 per year. Some regional disparities emerge in the higher income brackets. In Ontario, 24% of Francophone women live in households earning $150,000 or more, compared to 8% in the Atlantic region.

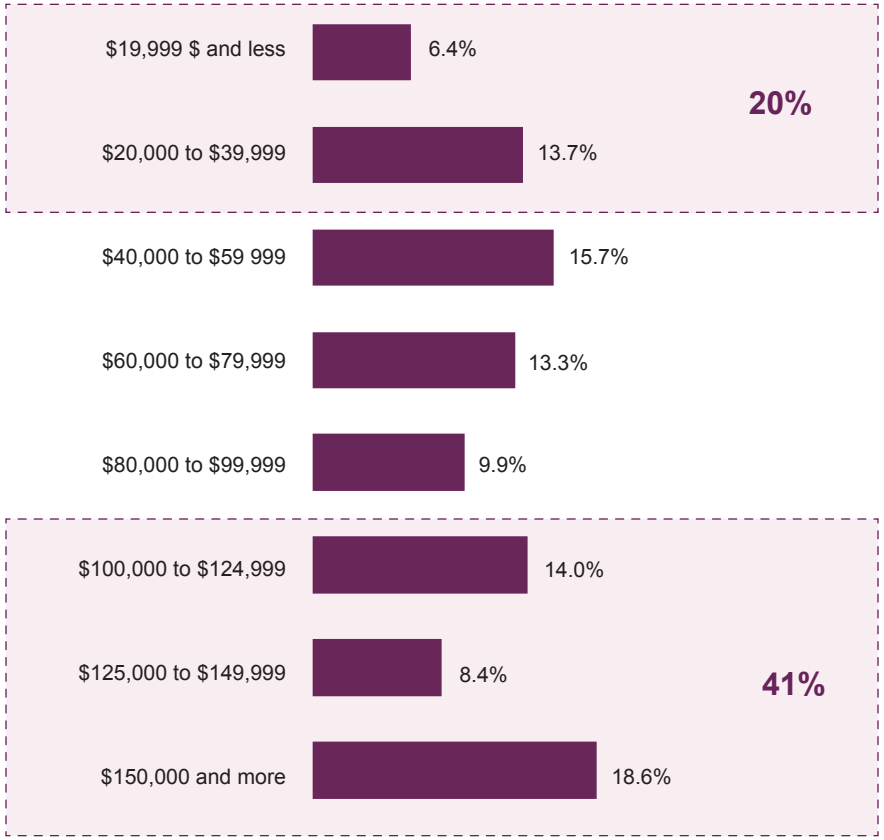
Conversely, low-income households are overrepresented among Francophone women who are members of a visible minority. 38% of women from visible minority groups live in households earning less than $40,000, compared to 16% of those who are not members of a visible minority.

Note: Additional data on income from Statistics Canada's latest census (2021) are presented in the appendices. However, these figures are based on 2020 income, adjusted to today's dollars.

According to census data adjusted for 2025 dollars, the proportion of Francophone women living in households with a family income exceeding $120,000 was 57.1%, while in the general population, these figures stood at 47.3%

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=520



The wage gap between men and women remains noticeable

PAY EQUITY AND PURCHASING POWER

Pay Equity

In terms of pay equity, pay gaps persist between men and women and are even more pronounced among Francophone women and immigrant women. Reported cases show that some English-speaking men are promoted to higher-paying positions despite having less experience, while the responsibilities entrusted to women do not always come with the corresponding job title or pay.

Furthermore, when women join forces to defend their rights in the workplace, some report being viewed negatively or facing adverse reactions. Added to this are biases related to accents, with Francophone women sometimes being perceived as less competent, which creates a double disadvantage linked to language and minority status. Immigration and the lack of recognition of academic credentials are also factors that widen the pay gap.

Experiences also seem to vary by type of setting; some observers note that Francophone community-based sectors tend to be more equitable, unlike certain private settings where disadvantages are more prevalent.

Among the ideas discussed for improving the situation, the transparent disclosure of pay scales appears to be a structure-changing measure.

Purchasing Power

The rising cost of living exacerbates these difficulties, particularly in female-dominated occupations.

A higher proportion of Francophone women choose lower-paying professions, such as those in education. Consequently, since the cost of living is higher today, these women are particularly affected, especially because their disposable income is growing more slowly than that of those in high-paying professions.

Key Takeaways

- The gender pay gap remains significant and is even more pronounced for Francophone women and immigrant women.
- Pay transparency and the disclosure of pay scales are important leverage points.
- Francophone women are overrepresented in occupations with lower pay growth, which reduces their ability to keep up with rising living costs.

Sources: Focus groups with Canadian Francophone women; RCGT analysis.

Across Canada, men earn an average hourly wage that is 13.5% higher than their female counterparts

AVERAGE SALARY BY GENDER

Note: The data presented do not allow for an analysis of the distribution of hourly wages by industry, based on women's gender and language status, due to the limited availability of such data.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOURLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY, BY GENDER

Canada, 2025, in $ per hour, gap in %

Industry	Average Salary			Wage gap (% of additional earnings by men)
	Women	Men	Total	
Agriculture	$24.61	$26.41	$25.79	7.3%
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	$48.5	$51.97	$51.34	7.1%
Utilities	$53.25	$56.76	$55.90	6.6%
Construction	$34.72	$38.40	$37.86	10.6%
Manufacturing	$31.94	$36.45	$35.21	14.1%
Wholesale and retail trade	$24.88	$30.05	$27.59	20.8%
Transportation and warehousing	$32.59	$34.79	$34.22	6.8%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	$39.74	$49.21	$44.24	23.8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	$42.93	$52.92	$48.60	23.3%
Business, building and other support services	$27.93	$29.13	$28.65	4.3%
Educational services	$40.93	$45.40	$42.30	10.9%
Health care and social assistance	$34.31	$36.99	$34.81	7.8%
Information, culture and recreation	$31.38	$36.69	$34.20	16.9%
Accommodation and food services	$20.51	$21.61	$20.98	5.4%
Other services (except public administration)	$29.45	$33.76	$31.56	14.6%
Public administration	$44.68	$48.14	$46.39	7.7%
Total number of employees, all industries	**$34.04**	**$38.64**	**$36.40**	**13.5%**

Sources: Statistics Canada (Table 14-10-0064-01), RCGT analysis.

40% of Canadian Francophone women express an interest in entrepreneurship

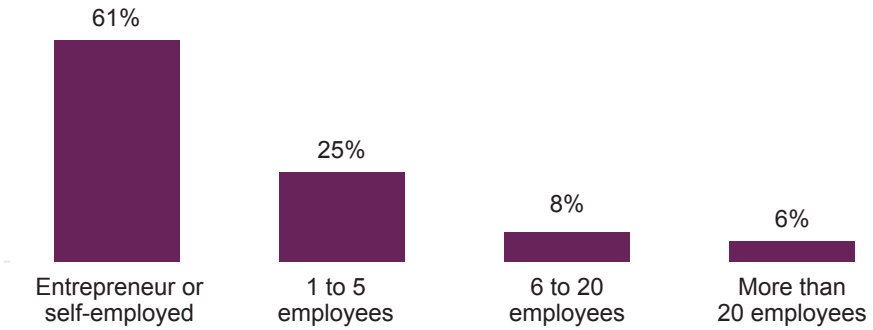
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

16%
of Francophone women surveyed, have already started their own businesses. For the majority of them (86%), the business had fewer than 5 employees.

24%
of Francophone women surveyed have already thought about starting their own business.

BREAKDOWN OF BUSINESSES STARTED BY FRANCOPHONE WOMEN, BY SIZE

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=102



Among Francophone women who hold two or more jobs, nearly half (46%) have considered starting their own business, and 24% actually own one.

The desire to become an entrepreneur is stronger among Francophone women born outside Canada; the proportion of those who have already considered starting a business is higher than that of women born here, reaching 43% compared to 19%.

40 %
of Canadian Francophone women are said to have an entrepreneurial streak.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger; analysis by RCGT.

The challenges are significant for those who do not speak English

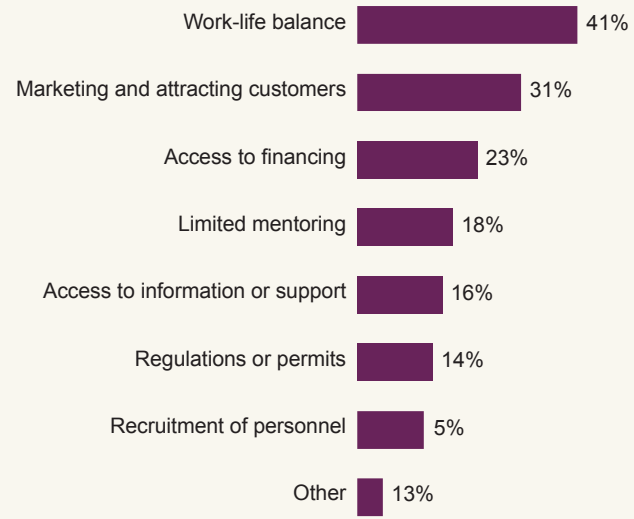
KEY CHALLENGES WHEN LAUNCHING A BUSINESS

87%

of Francophone women surveyed who had already started their own businesses, faced at least one challenge, the main one being achieving a work-life balance.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY THE CHALLENGE THEY FACED WHEN LAUNCHING THEIR BUSINESS

Canada minoritaire, 2025, en%, n=102



A large proportion of Francophone women who have already started a business report having faced at least one major challenge, the most frequently cited being the difficulty of achieving a work-life balance. Other significant challenges include marketing and attracting customers, access to financing, and access to information and entrepreneurial support.

Furthermore, all of these challenges are reported more frequently by women who do not speak English, compared to those who are fluent in it, highlighting the central role of the language barrier in the entrepreneurial process. Limited proficiency in English can restrict access to training, resources, and business networks, which are often offered primarily in that language, and contribute to lower participation in certain entrepreneurial support activities, thereby illustrating the extent of the obstacles faced by Francophone women entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, in many communities, the Francophone market alone does not allow Francophone entrepreneurs to generate sufficient revenue to ensure the viability of their businesses. As a result, these entrepreneurs are forced to offer their products or services in English and cater to an English-speaking clientele in order to maintain their operations and ensure their economic survival.

Ultimately, Francophone women with children faced more challenges when launching their businesses than Francophone women without children, which could suggest that balancing family responsibilities with their entrepreneurial journey is more complex.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger; analysis by RCGT.

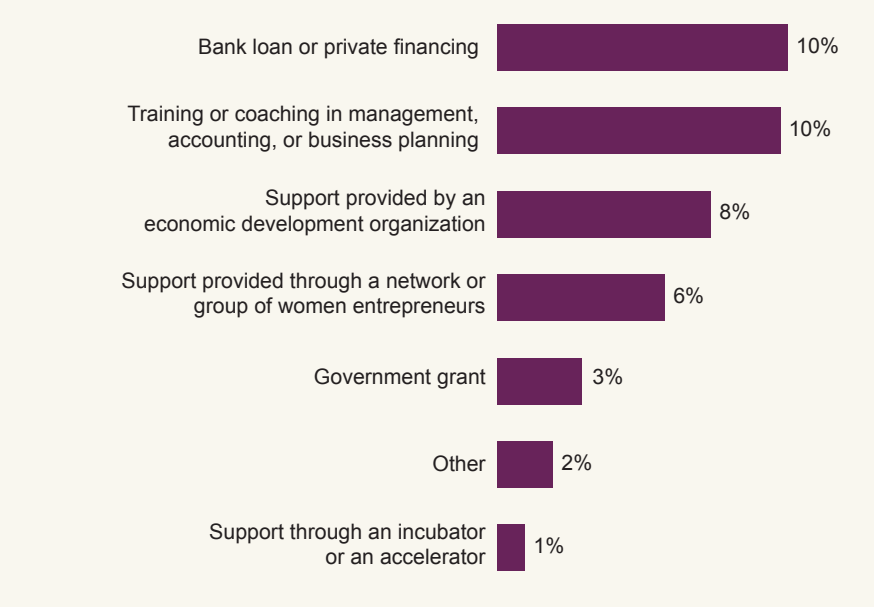
More than a quarter of Francophone women who have started their own businesses have received some form of support

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESOURCES

27%
of the Francophone women surveyed who had already started their own businesses had used at least one supporting resource.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY TYPE OF SUPPORT RECEIVED IN SETTING UP THEIR BUSINESS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, In %, n=102



Bank loans or private financing are the primary forms of support received by the Francophone women surveyed who have already launched their own businesses. Training or guidance in management, accounting, or business planning ranks second, with each being mentioned by about 10 percent of the respondents.

The percentage of Francophone women who have sought support is higher among those with a university degree, accounting for 39% of female entrepreneurs in this group. These university-educated women appear to be more familiar with these resources and are therefore more likely to use them.

In contrast, women who are not fluent in English are less likely to seek support, which could suggest more limited access to support services. More specifically, difficulties in clearly expressing financial and accounting concepts in English prolong the process when dealing with financial institutions, and some female entrepreneurs mention feeling that they are taken less seriously because of their accent. These language barriers help explain why Francophone women who are less proficient in English are less likely to seek formal support.

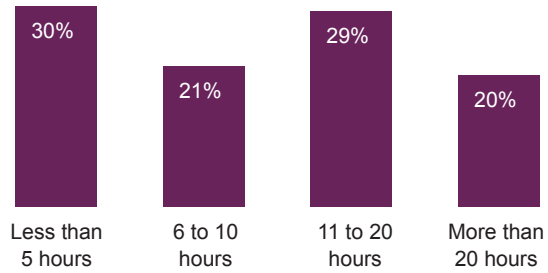
One in five Francophone women reports spending more than 20 hours a week in unpaid work

PORTRAIT OF UNPAID WORK

15.1 hours
of unpaid work is performed on average by Francophone women each week.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY NUMBER OF HOURS OF UNPAID WORK PER WEEK

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Note: Unpaid work includes caregiving, volunteer work, and household chores.

Nearly half of the Francophone women surveyed reported performing more than 10 hours of unpaid work per week, with 20% of them devoting more than 20 hours to such work. Focus groups also indicate that the actual number of hours could be higher, as many participants tend to underestimate the time spent on these activities.

This workload is even more pronounced in French-speaking minority communities. Women living in these communities are more involved in their communities to support French-language services and activities, which creates additional unpaid work. For those who have recently arrived in a province and have a smaller support network, this responsibility becomes even more demanding.

Furthermore, the weekly average number of hours of unpaid work is higher among Francophone women who are members of a visible minority, at 18.1 hours per week, compared with 14.6 hours among those who are not members of a visible minority.

Finally, women with children spend, on average, more hours on unpaid work than women without children or those living alone; single mothers perform an average of 15.9 hours of unpaid work per week, while women in couples with children perform 16.8 hours.

Note: According to the latest data released by Statistics Canada in 2022, Canadian women spent 42% more time on unpaid work than men.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, Statistics Canada (Table 45-10-0104-01), RCGT analysis.

The value of unpaid work performed by Canadian Francophone women is estimated at 34 billion dollars per year

VALUE OF UNPAID WORK PERFORMED

Indicators		Value
A	Average number of hours spent per week on unpaid activities	15.1
B	Number of weeks per year	52
C=Ax B	Average number of hours spent on unpaid activities per year	784.4
D	Number of Canadian Francophone women	1.8M
E=Cx D	Total number of hours spent on unpaid activities per year	1,377.1M
F	Average hourly wage for Canadian Francophone women	$25.00
G = E X F	The Value of Unpaid Work by Canadian Francophone Women	$34.4B
H =G/D	Average Value of Unpaid Work by Canadian Francophone Women	$19,609

Note: According to the focus groups, the actual number of hours spent on these activities may be higher than the reported estimates, due to possible underestimation by some participants. The results should therefore be interpreted with this methodological limitation in mind.

Given that Francophone women spend an average of 15.1 hours per week on unpaid activities, this amounts to 784.4 hours per year.

Applied to an estimated population of 1.8 million Canadian Francophone women living in minority communities, this total corresponds to approximately 1,377 million hours of unpaid work annually.

When valued at an average hourly rate of $25, the annual economic value of this work amounts to approximately $34.4 billion per year. These findings illustrate the substantial, yet largely overlooked, contribution of Francophone women to the economy, as well as the burden that unpaid work places on their daily lives. On average, the value of unpaid work performed by Canadian Francophone women is nearly $20,000 per year.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

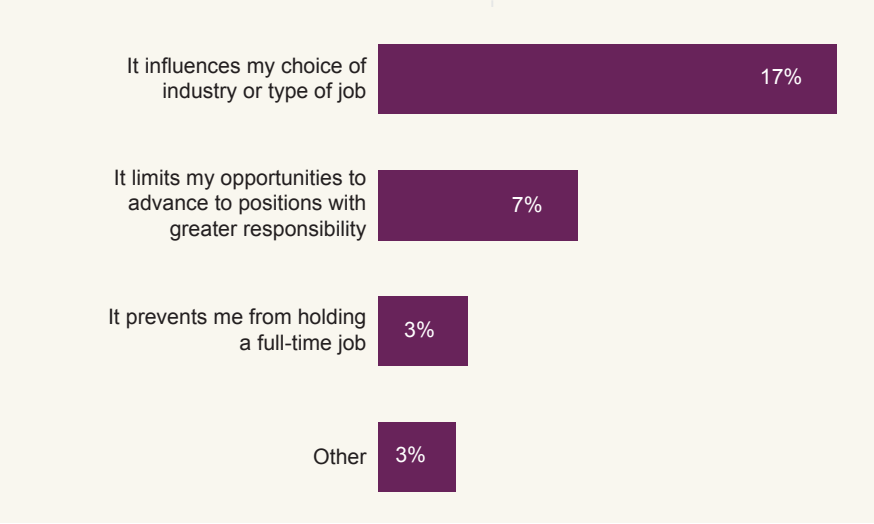
Nearly one in four women says that unpaid work has an impact on her career path

THE IMPACT OF UNPAID WORK ON CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

24%
of Francophone women say that unpaid work has an impact on their career paths.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN REGARDING THE IMPACT OF UNPAID WORK ON THEIR CAREER PATH

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=562



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

The results show that a significant proportion of Francophone women believe that unpaid work influences their career paths. In fact, 24% report that it has an impact on their career paths, primarily by limiting their choices regarding the sector or type of job, a concern cited by 17% of respondents.

Compared with younger Francophone women, a higher percentage of women aged 55 and older believe that unpaid work has had no significant impact on their career paths.

The data also indicate that this type of responsibility may hinder access to positions with more responsibilities for 7% of women. Conversely, a smaller proportion say they hinder full-time employment opportunities.

Key Takeaways

16%
of Francophone women surveyed, some have already started their own businesses. The majority of them (86%) had businesses with fewer than 5 employees.

27%
of Francophone women surveyed who have already launched their businesses have turned to at least one source for support.

24%
of Francophone women surveyed have already thought about starting their own business..

15.1 hours
of unpaid work is carried out on average by Francophone women each week.

40%
of Canadian Francophone women have an entrepreneurial streak.

24%
of Francophone women say that unpaid work has an impact on their career paths.

87%
of Francophone women surveyed who had already started their own businesses, all faced at least one challenge, the main one being maintaining a work-life balance.

PART 4

Assessment of Contributions and Barriers to Being Francophone

This section analyzes the advantages and challenges associated with being Francophone for Canadian and Acadian Francophone women living in minority communities. More specifically, the section is organized as follows:

- **Benefits of being a Francophone woman:** An advantage based on Francophone language status
- **Barriers related to Francophone women's identity:** Key challenges encountered, the impact of the language barrier on career paths, findings based on the intersectionality framework, the experiences of Francophone women in rural areas, differences among provinces and territories
- **Strategies to improve the economic situation of Francophone women:** Types of support that would help improve the economic situation of Francophone women; satisfaction with French-language resources; policies or initiatives that could help Francophone women become more economically independent



Nearly two out of three women believe that their French-speaking background has been an asset in their careers

BENEFITS RELATING TO BEING A FRANCOPHONE

65% of the Francophone and Acadian women surveyed indicated that being Francophone has given them access to professional opportunities. For example, some jobs offer bonuses for bilingual women, certain positions are open only to candidates who are fluent in both languages, and organizations give preference to individuals capable of serving a bilingual clientele, which can increase opportunities for advancement or job stability.

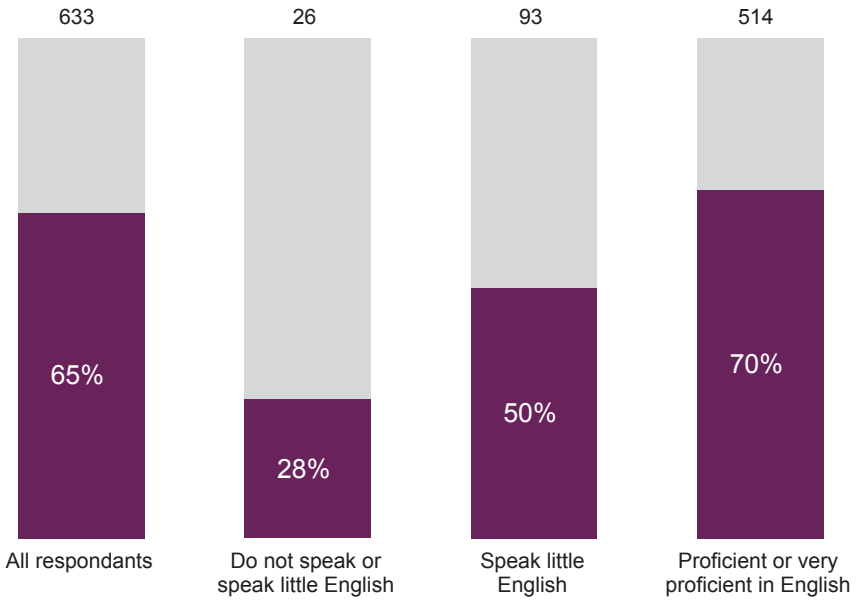
However, the women who benefit from being Francophone are primarily those who speak English well. Among Francophone women who do not speak English, only 28% report having benefited from career opportunities related to their language status, compared with 70% of those who are proficient or very proficient in English.

The benefits therefore appear to be specific to this subgroup of the population, which seems to indicate that speaking English is necessary to succeed in the workplace.

According to the focus groups, the benefits associated with being a Francophone stem more from bilingualism than from being Francophone per se.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO GAINED ACCESS TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES BECAUSE THEY WERE FRANCOPHONE, BY THEIR LEVEL OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

Francophone women report facing obstacles related to their linguistic status more often than to their gender

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

28% of the Francophone women surveyed reported having encountered obstacles in their professional or economic paths because they were Francophone. This percentage is lower, however, among those who are fluent in English.

Francophone women aged 55 and older are less likely to report having encountered obstacles in their lives related to being Francophone, compared to younger women. In fact, 22% of Francophone women aged 55 and older report having encountered obstacles in their professional or economic paths, compared to 35% of those aged 18 to 34.

Furthermore, Francophone women born outside Canada are more likely to report having encountered obstacles related to being Francophone than those born in Canada. 44% of Francophone women born outside Canada say they have faced obstacles, compared with 25% among those born in Canada.

A higher proportion of women cited barriers related to being Francophone than those related to gender. Nevertheless, 22% of female respondents reported encountering barriers due to their gender, meaning that 37% reported facing barriers related to either language status or gender.

PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED OBSTACLES IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR ECONOMIC PATHS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE **FRANCOPHONE**

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED **GENDER-RELATED** OBSTACLES IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR ECONOMIC LIVES

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED OBSTACLES IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR ECONOMIC PATHS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE **FRANCOPHONE OR DUE TO THEIR GENDER**

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

The main challenges encountered relate to barriers to advancement and limited access to services in French

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY FRANCOPHONE WOMEN IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR ECONOMIC PATHS

40% of the women surveyed reported facing barriers to career advancement in predominantly English-speaking environments, a finding that can be explained in part by the fact that documents written in French are sometimes given less weight and that speaking with a French accent can lead to judgments that hinder career advancement.

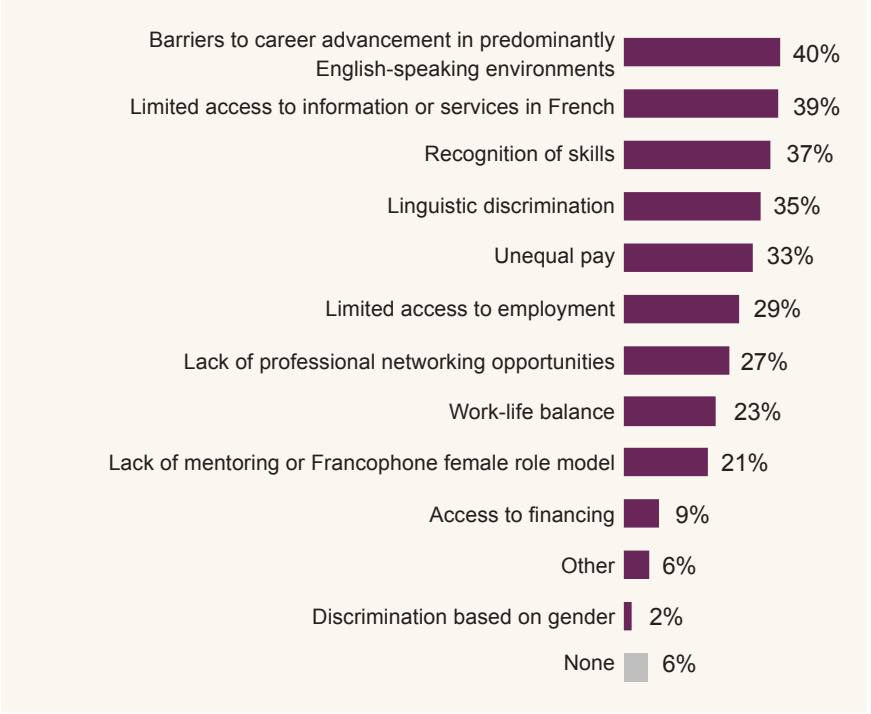
In addition, 39% of respondents cited limited access to information or services in French. Wait times for services in French are often longer than in English, and access to French-language services can remain difficult, even in officially designated areas.

The recognition of skills and language discrimination are also significant issues. The failure to recognize the credentials and work experience of some immigrant women can lead them to take jobs that fall short of their skill level, a situation that has direct economic repercussions. Furthermore, language requirements, such as the obligation to pass English proficiency tests, can force Francophone women to change the course of their careers.

According to the Francophone women interviewed, the lack of availability of spots in Francophone daycare centers is a major obstacle to education, employment, and work-life balance, even though these settings are seen as essential to the transmission and preservation of the French language among children.

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY FRANCOPHONE WOMEN IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR ECONOMIC CAREERS

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=237



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

Many Francophone women, nonetheless, report experiencing negative impacts related to their linguistic status

IMPACT OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS ON CAREER PATHS

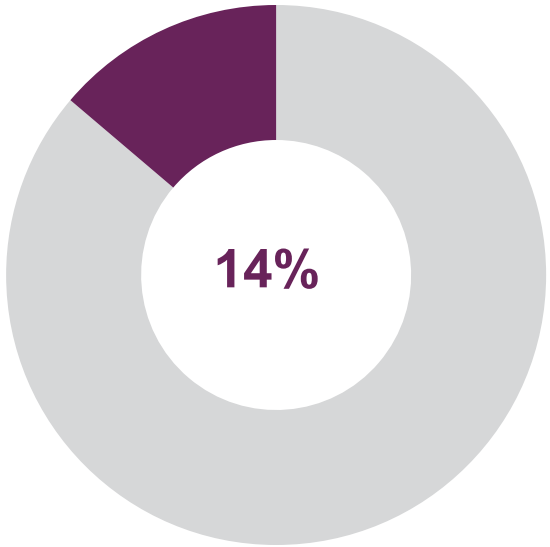
14% of the Francophone women surveyed reported that the language barrier associated with speaking French has already had an impact on their career paths, particularly by preventing them from holding a job that matches their skills or qualifications.

More specifically, 29% of Francophone women from visible minority groups report that the language barrier has already had an impact on their career paths. This percentage is significantly higher than that observed among Francophone women who are not from visible minority groups, which stands at 11%.

In response to this challenge, many Francophone women are enrolling in English courses designed to foster bilingualism. However, focus groups have revealed that access to these programs is often limited by long waiting lists, thereby delaying their integration into the Canadian labour market.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WHO REPORT THAT THE LANGUAGE BARRIER RELATED TO THE USE OF FRENCH HAS ALREADY HAD AN IMPACT ON THEIR CAREER PATH

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

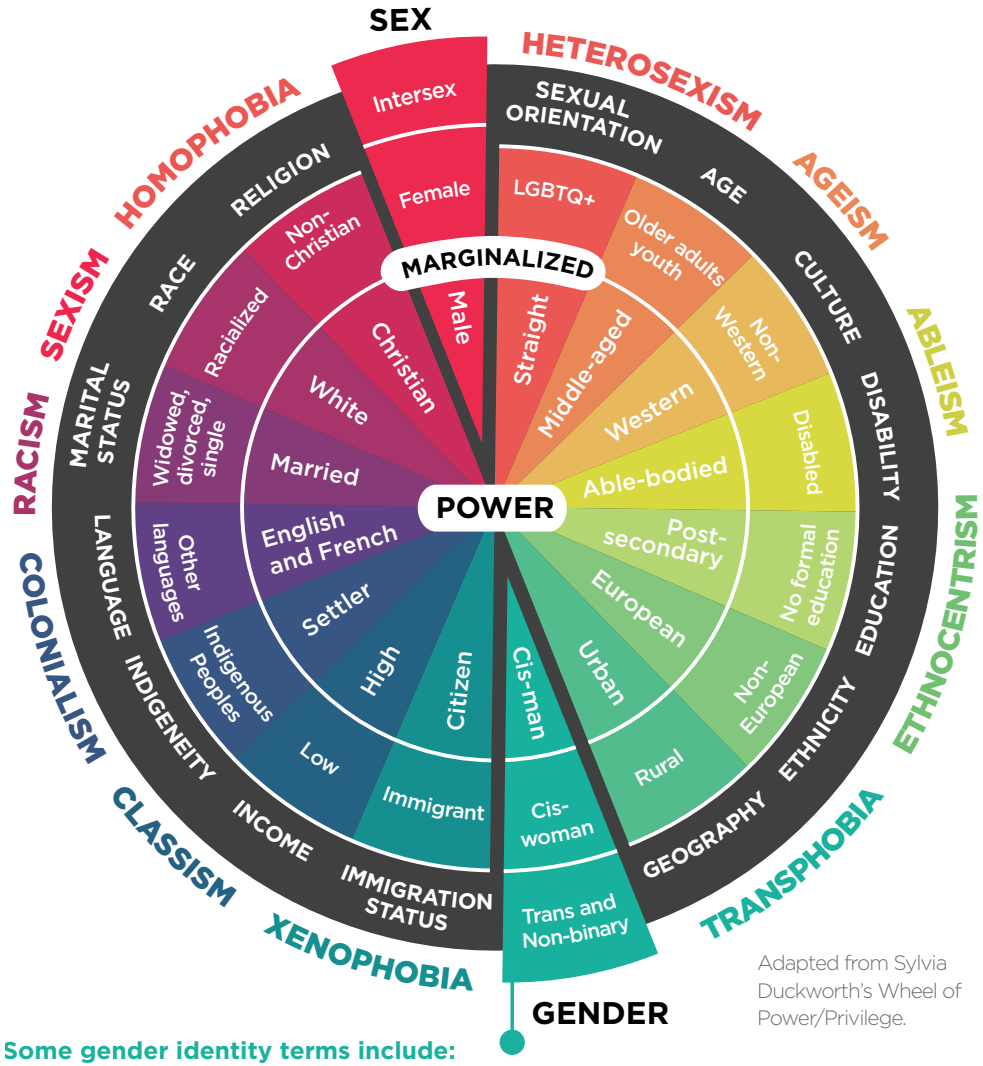
Intersectionality allows us to analyze the situation

INTERSECTIONALITY DEFINITION

Intersectionality is an analytical concept that helps us understand how a person's various social characteristics combine to shape their desitinct experiences of perspectives, barriers, or discrimination. These characteristics may include gender, language, race, immigration status, sexual orientation, age, social class, disability, and many others.

The central idea is that these identities do not simply add up. They dynamically intersect and produce distinct effects that cannot be explained by examining a single factor at a time. For example, the experiences of a Francophone immigrant woman are not simply the sum of the experiences of a woman, a Francophone, and an immigrant, but a specific reality that results from the simultaneous interaction of these identities.

This concept can be illustrated by the "Wheel of Privileges" presented by Sylvia Duckworth and adapted to the Canadian context by the New Brunswick Feminist Coalition.



Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege.

Some gender identity terms include:

Agender	Genderfluid	Gender neutral	Transgender man
Bigender	Genderqueer	Non-binary	Transgender woman

Sources: New Brunswick Feminist Coalition, Sylvia Duckworth (Privilege Wheel).

The intersectionality analytical framework has made it possible to draw certain conclusions

FINDINGS BASED ON THE INTERSECTIONALITY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

The intersectionality framework highlights that the accumulation of factors contributing to marginalization is associated with a higher likelihood of encountering barriers in one's career path. The survey data show that these barriers arise both in connection with being Francophone and based on gender, or a combination of both dimensions. The analysis also highlights that the language barrier has a measurable and increasing impact when multiple marginalized group identities overlap.

Maginalized Groups		
Belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community	Belonging to a visible minority	Living alone or as a single mother
Only speaks French	No formal education	Lives in a rural area
Indigenous identity	Subject to limited employment options	Family income less than $40k
Unable to work or stay-at-home mom	Immigrant	

The more Francophone women face multiple factors of marginalization related to gender, language, immigration status, region of residence, and family status, the greater the likelihood that they will encounter professional obstacles.

BREAKDOWN OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY BARRIER AND PART OF A MARGINALIZED GROUP

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633

Part of a marginalized group	Percentage	Has already encountered obstacles related to…			Has the language barrier previously impacted your career path?
		… being a Francophone	… gender	… being a Francophone or gender	
None	22%	22%	18%	28%	10%
1	31%	24%	18%	33%	11%
2	25%	34%	23%	44%	17%
3 and more	21%	35%	29%	46%	17%
Total	**100%**	**28%**	**22%**	**37%**	**14%**

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

Overall, women in urban areas enjoy more favourable working and educational conditions

SPECIFICATIONS RELATED TO FRANCOPHONE WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS



Speaking French opened up career opportunities for the majority of respondents, with a more pronounced effect in urban areas, where the percentage of positive responses reached 74 percent, compared with 56 percent in rural areas.



The average number of hours of unpaid work is higher in rural areas, at 16.2 hours, compared with 14.0 hours in urban areas.



The percentage of Francophone women who have held a management or executive position is higher in urban areas than in rural areas, at 45% versus 41%.



The percentage of Francophone women with a college or university education is lower in rural areas than in urban areas, at 27% in rural areas and 45% in urban areas.



Proficiency in English is high in both rural and urban areas, with a slightly higher percentage of people reporting good or very good proficiency in urban areas (83% versus 79%), while language difficulties remain more common in rural areas (6% versus 2%).



The percentage of female respondents who reported facing barriers because they are Francophone or because of their gender is higher in urban areas (40%) than in rural areas (33%).



Respondents in rural areas more frequently cited barriers to career advancement in predominantly English-speaking environments (44% versus 32%) as well as work-life balance issues (33% versus 16%), while linguistic discrimination was reported more frequently in urban areas, at 40% versus 22%.



The perception that there is a sufficient supply of services or resources in French is more widespread in rural areas, where 42% of female respondents consider the offering to be adequate, compared with 27% in urban areas.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger; focus groups with Canadian Francophone women; RCGT analysis.

Ultimately, Francophone minority varies considerably by province or territory

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

Francophones in minority communities across Canada do not form a homogeneous group. Rather, they represent a plurality of distinct realities that vary by province and territory, shaped by demographic composition, migration patterns, the institutional weight of French, and local socioeconomic contexts. These differences influence language practices, a sense of belonging, access to services, and the professional and community trajectories of Francophones.

In certain eastern provinces, particularly in the Maritimes, Francophone minority is rooted in history, especially Acadian history, supplemented by populations from more recent Francophone immigration. This coexistence contributes to a diversity of forms of French and to many different Francophone identities. Participants in the focus groups highlight the presence of several accents that coexist seamlessly. Community circles there are therefore described as more open and heterogeneous, although they are marked by issues of linguistic insecurity and the constant need to defend the use of French in public and professional settings.

In contrast, in the western provinces and territories, the Francophone minority is more closely tied to contemporary migration patterns, particularly among people from Quebec, France, or other French-speaking countries. Francophone communities are often smaller and geographically dispersed. This reality can foster close-knit networks, but also environments perceived as more homogeneous, or even more closed off, including within the Francophone community itself. The ability to maintain services, institutions, and spaces for social interaction in French therefore relies heavily on community engagement and a limited number of people.

Among Franco-Ontarian communities, the focus groups highlighted a duality. On the one hand, these communities enjoy easier access to services, Francophone networks, and professional opportunities thanks to their geographic and linguistic proximity to Quebec. However, they face challenges related to the recognition of prior learning and fragmented career paths between the two provinces, and may feel dependent on institutions located outside their province of residence.

Sources: Focus Groups with Canadian Francophone Women, RCGT Analysis.

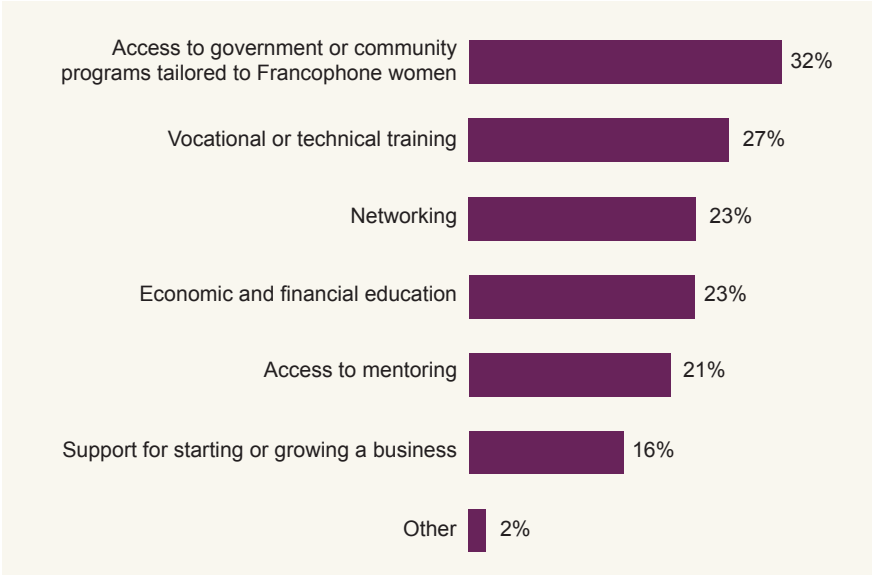
The majority of Francophone women believe that increased support would improve their economic situation

TYPES OF SUPPORT THAT CAN HELP IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

56%
of women believe that support would help them improve their economic situation as Francophone women.

MAIN TYPES OF SUPPORT THAT CAN HELP IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

Expectations regarding effective support to improve the economic situation focus primarily on better access to government or community programs tailored to the realities of Francophone women, as mentioned by nearly one-third of the respondents. Networking also emerges as an important lever, as do economic and financial education and access to vocational or technical training.

Among Francophone women aged 55 and older, only 39% believe they would need support to improve their economic situation, a lower proportion than that observed among other age groups.

On the other hand, the desire to receive support is more common among women with children. 69% of single mothers and 68% of mothers in relationships believe that support would be necessary to improve their financial situation.

Furthermore, the majority of Francophone women from visible minority groups, 80%, believe that greater access to support is needed to improve their economic situation.

Access to health care services in French remains a key issue for Francophone women

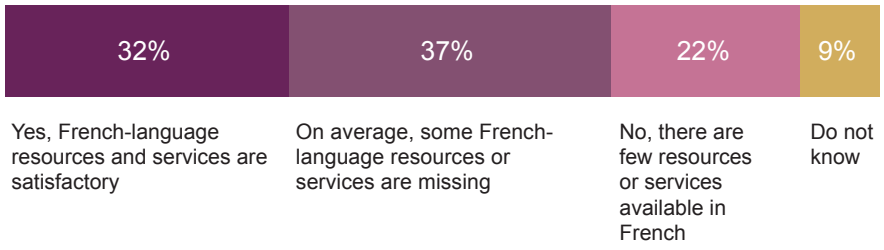
SATISFACTION WITH FRENCH-LANGUAGE RESOURCES

22% of Francophone women feel that few French-language services are available in their region, while 37% feel that certain French-language services or resources are lacking. The Prairie regions and British Columbia have a high proportion of Francophone women who consider the number of French-language resources or services available in their region to be unsatisfactory, namely 30% of them.

Among the services most frequently identified as being insufficiently available in French, health care tops the list, cited by one-quarter of the respondents. Commercial services and cultural, social, and recreational activities are also among the main services that are lacking.

PERCENTAGE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BY LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH FRENCH-LANGUAGE RESOURCES IN THEIR REGION

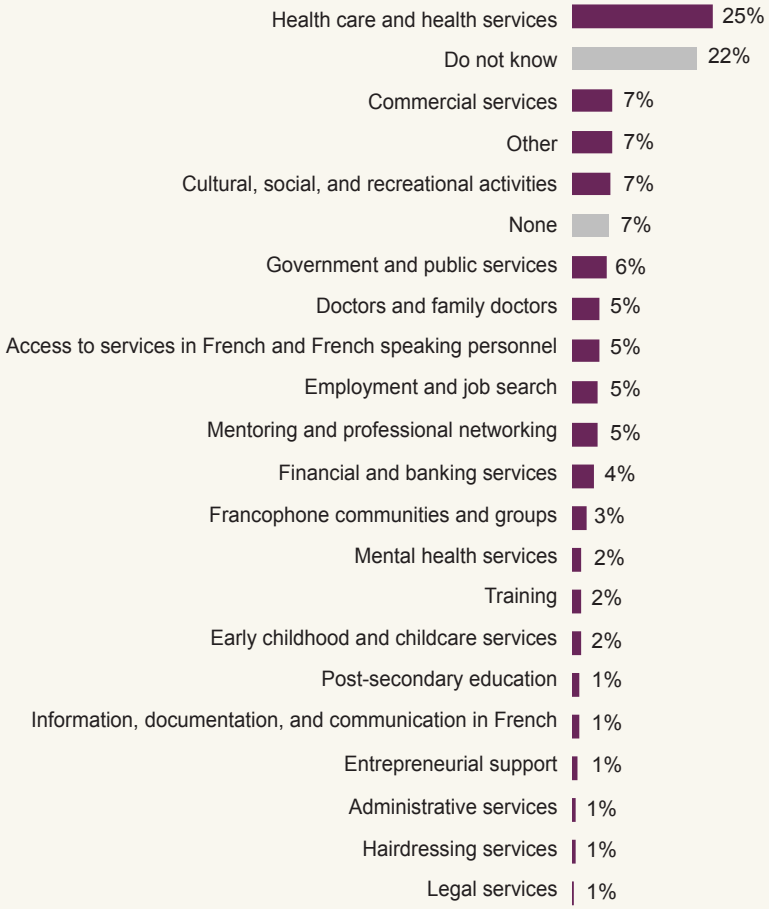
Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633



Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

MOST LACKING FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES OR RESOURCES

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=371



Membership to women's networks or groups is higher among Francophone women aged 35 to 54

POLICIES OR INITIATIVES THAT CAN HELP FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BECOME MORE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT

14%
of Francophone women are members of a women's network, group, or association.

Membership in women's networks or groups is particularly high among Francophone women aged 35 to 54 (24%) and among those living in the Prairies and British Columbia (29 %).

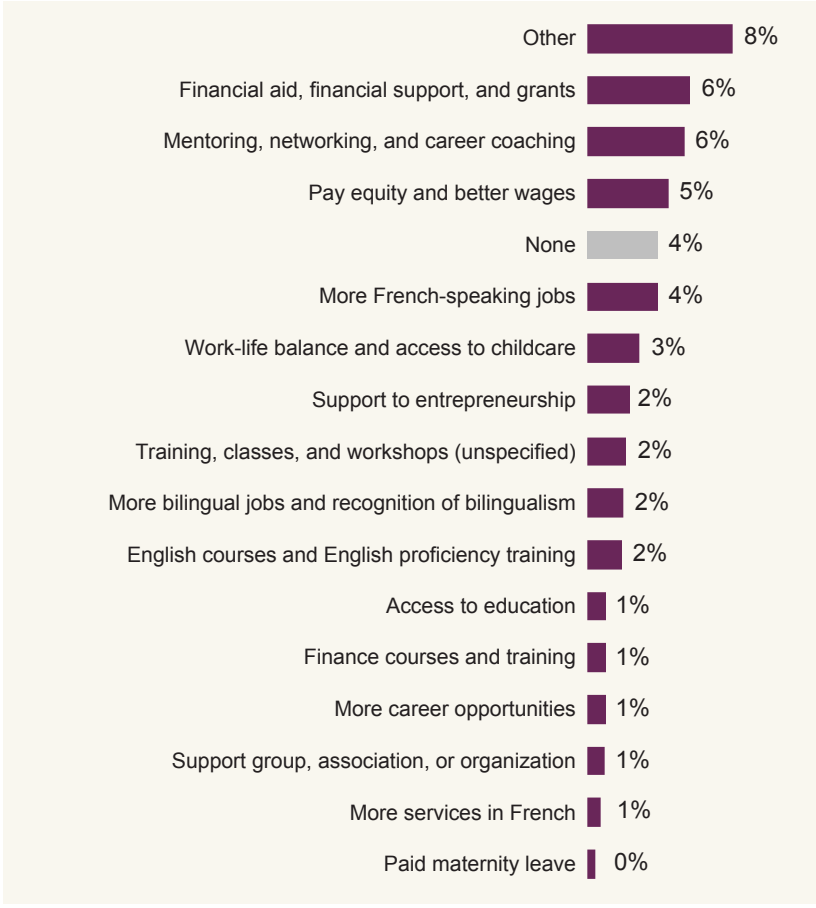
The policies and initiatives considered most helpful in strengthening the economic independence of Francophone women primarily involve financial support, which was mentioned by 6% of respondents. Mentoring and professional support also emerged as important factors for 6% of women, as did improving pay equity, which was cited by 5%.

In addition, access to a greater number of French-language jobs, as well as initiatives related to work-life balance, are also identified as key factors that can support the professional and economic trajectories of Francophone women.

Sources: Survey with Canadian Francophone women conducted by Léger, RCGT analysis.

KEY POLICIES OR INITIATIVES THAT CAN HELP FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BECOME MORE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in %, n=633

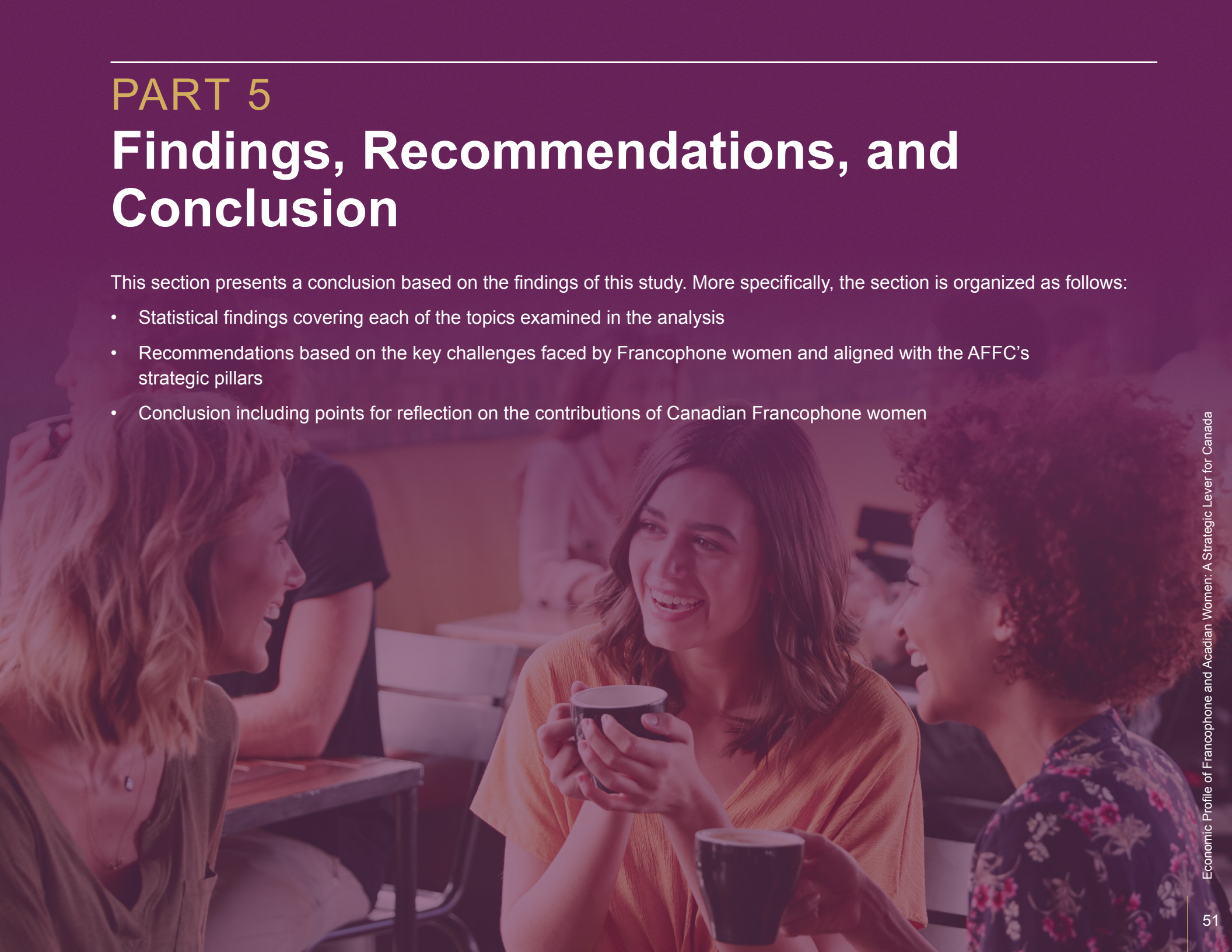


PART 5

Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This section presents a conclusion based on the findings of this study. More specifically, the section is organized as follows:

- Statistical findings covering each of the topics examined in the analysis
- Recommendations based on the key challenges faced by Francophone women and aligned with the AFFC's strategic pillars
- Conclusion including points for reflection on the contributions of Canadian Francophone women



The analyses provided an overview of the participation of Francophone women in the economy

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Topics	Findings
Portrait of Francophone women	• Overall, among Canadian women in minority situations, 10.7% are Francophone, representing more than 1.8 million people. In addition, 35% speak French as their mother tongue, representing nearly 610,000 women. • Furthermore, only 3.4% of Francophone women in minority-language communities in Canada speak only French as their official language, which amounts to just over 59,000 people (this proportion is higher in the Atlantic region).
Diversity	• 26.3% of Canadian Francophone women are from visible minority groups, have an immigrant background, or identify as Indigenous. • 5.4% of the Francophone women surveyed are members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, with a higher proportion in British Columbia (11%). In addition, 18.2% of the Francophone women surveyed have employment limitations. • The impact of unpaid work is greater for 2SLGBTQIA+ members: 48% of women in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community report that unpaid work affects their career paths, compared with 23% for non-members. • Barriers related to gender or francophone identity are more common among 2SLGBTQIA+ members: 69% of women in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community report having faced barriers in their professional or economic journey related to their gender or francophone identity, compared to 36% for non-members.
Education	• Francophone women living in minority communities are better educated: 44% hold a university degree, while for women overall, that number is 32% (28% for men).
Employment and income	• Canadian Francophone women generate $119 billion in GDP, or 4% of Canada's total GDP. If their sectoral distribution were comparable to that of the general population, their contribution to GDP could increase to $8.9 billion. • Francophone women living in minority communities are overrepresented in public administration, because proficiency in both official languages constitutes a major asset for these jobs. They are also overrepresented in the education sector. • The percentage of women earning less than $40K is significantly higher among those who do not speak English: 60 % of women who speak no English at all or who earn less than $40K compared to 32 % of those who are fluent or proficient in English. • Francophone women in minority communities have a median individual income that is 13.5% higher than that of women in the general population, but 10.6% lower than that of men in the general population. • Across Canada, men earn an average hourly wage that is 13.5% higher than their female counterparts.

119 milliards $

of direct contribution to GDP was added by Francophone women in a linguistic minority situation in Canada in 2025.

Topics	Findings
Entrepreneur-ship	• 40% of Canadian Francophone women are said to have an entrepreneurial streak, and 16% of them have already started their own businesses. • The majority (86%) of businesses started by Francophone women have fewer than 5 employees. • 87% of the Francophone women surveyed who had already started their own businesses faced at least one challenge, the main one being balancing their personal and professional lives. The proportion of women who encountered a challenge was higher among those with children than among Francophone women without children. • Just over a quarter of Francophone women who started their own businesses received some form of support, but women who are not fluent in English are less likely to seek support.
Unpaid Work	• Canadian Francophone women report performing 15.1 hours of unpaid work each week. 20% of them devote more than 20 hours to such work. However, according to focus group discussions, the actual number of hours spent on these tasks may be higher than the reported estimates, due to possible underestimation by some participants. • The average number of hours of unpaid work is higher among Francophone women from visible minority groups than those who are not. • 24% of Francophone women report that unpaid work has an impact on their career paths, particularly by limiting their choices regarding the sector or type of job, a response cited by 17% of respondents. • The value of unpaid work performed by Canadian Francophone women amounts to 34.4 B$ per year.
Benefits and Challenges of the French Language	• 65% of the Francophone women surveyed said that being Francophone had opened up career opportunities for them. However, the women who benefit from being Francophone are primarily those who are fluent in English. • Francophone women are more likely to report barriers related to their language status (28%) than to their gender (22%). • 40% of the women surveyed reported facing barriers to career advancement in predominantly English-speaking environments, a finding that can be explained in part by the fact that documents written in French are sometimes viewed as less valuable and that speaking with a French accent can lead to judgments that hinder career advancement. • However, 14% of Francophone women report that the language barrier associated with the use of French has already had an impact on their career paths, particularly by preventing them from holding a job that matches their skills or qualifications. This percentage is even higher among immigrant women. • The language barrier has a measurable and growing impact when individuals belong to multiple marginalized groups: 10% of women who do not belong to any marginalized group report that the language barrier has already had an impact on their career path, compared with 17% of those who belong to two or more groups.
Improvements to the Economic Situation of Francophone Women	• 56% of women believe that support would help them improve their economic situation as Francophone women. Improving their economic situation primarily involves better access to government or community programs tailored to the realities of Francophone women, as mentioned by 32% of respondents. • Among the services most frequently identified as being insufficiently available in French, health care tops the list, cited by 25% of respondents. • The policies and initiatives considered most effective in strengthening the economic independence of Francophone women primarily involve financial support.

$34.4 Billion

represents the value of unpaid work performed by Francophone women in linguistic minority situations in Canada in 2025.

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Several issues were also identified, which helped pinpoint certain recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF CANADIAN FRANCOPHONE WOMEN

The AFFC's mission is to mobilize and build its network to better defend the rights of Francophone and Acadian women and, in doing so, create a feminist and inclusive society. This mission is based on three strategic pillars that have inspired the proposed actions:

- Be a leading advocate for the rights of Francophone and Acadian women in Canada
- Mobilize and develop innovative capabilities within the network
- Highlight the contributions of all Francophone and Acadian women

Challenges Faced by Francophone Women	Recommendations	Leaders	AFFC's Strategic Pillars		
			Advocacy for the Rights of Francophone Women	Mobilization and Development of Innovative Capacities	Impact of Contributions by Canadian Francophone Women
Access to health care services in French remains a key issue for Francophone women, particularly in rural and northern areas, where services are more limited and where accessing services in French is even more challenging.	1. Continue exerting political pressure on the federal and provincial governments to improve the active provision of health care services in French.	AFFC in collaboration with community-based initiatives	✔	✔	✔
	2. Document regional disparities and publish comparative analyses to provide evidence-based arguments to support public decision-making. In particular, the organization could expand its efforts to collect, analyze, and publish information that highlights regional disparities, particularly in access to services, socioeconomic conditions, and health issues, in order to raise awareness regarding the challenges and needs of Francophone women.	AFFC in collaboration with community-based initiatives			✔
	3. Collaborate with Francophone professional associations (nurses, doctors, social workers, etc.) to support the recruitment and retention of Francophone staff in regions facing staff shortages.	Community-based initiatives supported by governments		✔	

Challenges Faced by Francophone Women	Recommendations	Leaders	AFFC's Strategic Pillars		
			Advocacy for the Rights of Francophone Women	Mobilization and Development of Innovative Capacities	Impact of Contributions by Canadian Francophone Women
Francophone women work mainly in the education, health care, and social services sectors, where pay scales are generally lower. Against the backdrop of rising living costs, this employment pattern leaves them more vulnerable to financial pressures, especially since their disposable income is growing more slowly than that of workers in higher-paying professions.	4. Conduct awareness campaigns to encourage employers and governments to elevate the status of female-dominated sectors by highlighting their socioeconomic importance, persistent pay gaps, and the need for greater recognition of the skills and responsibilities specific to these professions.	Governments	✔	✔	✔
	5. Support skills development programs (transition to higher-paying sectors, retraining, and continuing education) to strengthen the economic independence of Francophone women and increase their access to quality jobs.	Governments		✔	
	6. Conduct analyses on the economic impact of pay gaps in order to provide community organizations, roundtables, and institutional partners with arguments to support their demands and actions regarding equity.	AFFC			✔
	7. Lead professional networking initiatives aimed at supporting the career advancement of Francophone women by facilitating connections, strengthening the sharing of expertise, and promoting access to professional development opportunities in various sectors.	Community-based initiatives		✔	

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Challenges Faced by Francophone Women	Recommendations	Leaders	AFFC's Strategic Pillars		
			Advocacy for the Rights of Francophone Women	Mobilization and Development of Innovative Capacities	Impact of Contributions by Canadian Francophone Women
English is often still required in many settings to gain or retain skilled jobs, or to obtain support for starting a business. A French accent is sometimes viewed negatively.	8. Provide Francophone women with free or low-cost training to improve their language skills in the workplace without it becoming a personal burden.	Community-based initiatives, supported by governments		✔	
	9. Create guides for employers on inclusive practices in bilingual settings and awareness-raising tools on linguistic bias intended for employers. These tools would help organizations adopt equitable practices that promote the full participation of Francophone women.	Community-based initiatives, supported by governments	✔		
Francophone women face cumulative barriers related to gender and language, but these barriers are compounded for those from diverse backgrounds (visible minorities, immigrants, sexual diversity, disabilities, etc.).	10. Establish targeted mentoring programs for Francophone women from diverse backgrounds (visible minorities, immigrants, sexual diversity, disabilities, etc.) to support their professional integration, strengthen their networks, and facilitate their career advancement.	Community-based initiatives, supported by governments		✔	

Challenges Faced by Francophone Women	Recommendations	Leaders	AFFC's Strategic Pillars		
			Advocacy for the Rights of Francophone Women	Mobilization and Development of Innovative Capacities	Impact of Contributions by Canadian Francophone Women
The burden of unpaid work and mental load is particularly high, especially given women's central role in preserving the French language. This responsibility, which falls primarily on mothers, adds tasks such as coordination, travel, and translation that significantly weigh down their daily lives.	11. Promote public policies aimed at a more equitable distribution of unpaid work (more flexible parental leave, increased support for French-language daycare centers, etc.). These measures would help ease the daily burden on women and promote a more balanced participation in the labour market.	Governments	✔	✔	
	12. Create awareness campaigns on the economic value of invisible work, in order to recognize its real contribution to the functioning of families, communities, and the economy, and to promote lasting change in public and institutional perceptions of such work.	Governments in collaboration with AFFC	✔	✔	✔
	13. Support the creation or expansion of Francophone support networks in regions where isolation is most pronounced, thereby helping to reduce the social and economic barriers faced by Francophone women.	Community-based initiatives		✔	
	14. Offer workshops or resources to ease the language-related burden (homework clubs, bilingual resources for parents, etc.), in order to reduce daily language-related stress and make it easier to balance family life.	Community-based initiatives, supported by governments		✔	

Source: RCGT analysis.

The economic contribution of Canadian Francophone women takes many forms

CONCLUSION

Francophone women contribute significantly to the economy, both through their direct participation in the labour market in education, health care, social services, and public administration, and through their crucial role in ensuring the vitality of French-language services and maintaining community networks. This contribution is based on a twofold creation of value. On the one hand, they hold positions that are essential to social cohesion and the continuity of public services, often in settings where there is high demand for bilingual skills. On the other hand, they support an ecosystem of French-language services that facilitates the integration, retention, and mobility of the workforce in Francophone minority communities, including through entrepreneurship and structured volunteerism.

Francophone women, however, face structural barriers that limit the full conversion of this contribution into economic gains: disparities in the recognition of degrees, varying language requirements across provinces, limited spaces in French-language daycare centers, and biases related to accent that hinder access to skilled positions, wage growth, and interprovincial mobility. These obstacles result in professional downgrading, delays in integration, a high mental workload, and unpaid invisible labour, all of which reduce the time available for training, career advancement, and entrepreneurship.

Examining the economic contribution of Francophone women through the lens of intersectionality helps us understand the scope and nature of the challenges they face. The combined effects of gender, language, immigration status, region of residence, and sector of employment create cumulative barriers. Francophone immigrant women, in particular, are more likely to experience downward occupational mobility due to difficulties in obtaining equivalency recognition, restrictive language tests, and more limited professional networks upon arrival. In rural and northern areas, isolation and a scarcity of services exacerbate these effects, while in some English-speaking environments, biases related to accent result in disadvantages in terms of credibility and pay.

Direct contribution of Francophone women to GDP:	**$119 Billion**
The value of Francophone women's unpaid work:	**$34,4 Billion**

Despite these constraints, there are strategies that can enhance the economic impact of Francophone women. Sectors where bilingualism is valued serve as gateways to more stable jobs, and Francophone mentoring and entrepreneurship support networks facilitate access to resources, partnerships, and niche markets. The implementation of structural measures, such as pay transparency, a more streamlined recognition of prior learning, an increase in Francophone daycare spots, and the availability of training in French, tangibly improves their employment and career advancement prospects.

PART 6

Appendices



Glossary and Definitions

Terminology	Definition
Diversity	Diversity refers to the recognition and celebration of the various characteristics and social experiences found within a population. For the purposes of this study, it specifically includes people from visible minority groups, immigrant backgrounds, or Indigenous communities, as well as 2SLGBTQIA individuals, that is, those from gender and sexual diversity minority groups. Diversity reflects the plurality of life paths, identities, and lived experiences, and is a fundamental component of social, economic, and cultural dynamics.
Canadian Francophone women	For the purposes of this study, Canadian Francophone women are those living in minority situations in Canada, outside of Quebec. According to the AFFC's definition, women who understand only French or both French and English are considered Francophone. For the purposes of this survey, the definition is more restrictive and includes women whose mother tongue is French, as well as those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, but who have a good command of French and use it at home.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is an analytical concept that helps us understand how a person's various social characteristics intersect simultaneously to produce specific experiences, particularly in terms of opportunities, barriers, or discrimination, that cannot be explained by any single factor in isolation.
Restrictions to employment	Employment limitations refer to all functional, physical, mental, sensory, or health-related constraints that may limit a person's ability to gain employment, perform certain tasks, or maintain full and continuous participation in the labour market, with or without reasonable accommodations.
Rural area	Rural areas refer to regions characterized by low population density, limited urbanization, and a socioeconomic structure that is often distinct from that of urban centers, particularly with regard to access to services, employment, and infrastructure.
Unpaid work	Unpaid work refers to all productive activities performed without monetary compensation, including, in particular, caring for family members, volunteer work, and household chores, which contribute to the well-being of individuals and the functioning of society.

Percentage of the Population by Household Income, According to the Census

The majority of Francophone women in minority settings have a household income of less than $150,000 ($179k in 2025 dollars), accounting for 65.6% of them, while 17.0% have a household income of less than $50,000 ($59k in 2025).

These trends are similar to those observed among Francophone men and in the general population, although women are slightly overrepresented in the higher income brackets.

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Minorities in Canada, 2025, in % of the population, in numbers

Household Income	Indexed Equivalent Income (2025)	Francophone		Total Population			Number of Francophone Women
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Total	
$0-49k	$0-59k	17.0%	16.8%	23.6%	20.9%	22.3%	298,866
$50-99k	$60-119k	25.9%	26.2%	30.6%	30.2%	30.4%	454,096
$100-149k	$120-179k	22.7%	23.0%	21.7%	22.8%	22.2%	398,038
$150-199k	$180-239k	15.3%	15.4%	11.9%	12.9%	12.4%	269,329
$200k and +	$240k and +	19.1%	18.6%	12.1%	13.2%	12.7%	335,421
Total		**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**1,755,750**

Note: The incomes shown are originally for the year 2020 but have been adjusted to 2025 based on changes in Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Sources: Statistics Canada (2021 Census and Table 17-10-0005-01), RCGT analysis.

Focus Group Findings: Contributions of the French Language

French as Language Spoken at Home

- French is a professional asset in certain sectors (education, public administration, and community organizations) where it may qualify you for a bonus. French facilitates access to positions that target bilingual candidates. In many workplaces, English is even required to qualify for or retain certain positions.
- Several women report facing a disadvantage related to their accent, which leads to a loss of credibility in predominantly English-speaking environments:
    - The impact of one's accent is even greater in more rural areas, where there is less diversity.

Challenges Related to the French-Speaking World

- Administrative challenges persist, such as the failure to recognize accented characters in certain provinces, which leads to discrepancies between legal names and official documents. Problems related to accented characters in official documents can ultimately affect the identity and self-confidence of Francophone women, who are unable to have their real names recognized.
- Services offered in French are often less accessible, resulting in longer wait times and additional work (translation, follow-ups, administrative procedures, etc.):
    - The participants explained that access to services in French remains insufficient in many regions, especially rural and northern areas, which often forces them to rely on English in their daily lives.
    - Women reported that accessing care in French is often difficult, especially for those who do not speak English, which makes it harder to navigate the health care system.
- The participants explained that documents submitted in French are sometimes less well received in English-speaking circles and may be considered an annoyance.
- Language is also a source of identity and community cohesion, and a central element in cultural heritage, particularly for mothers in minority communities.

Focus Group Findings: Diversity, Immigration and Francophonie

Language Barriers and Prior Learning

- Proficiency in English is crucial for gaining access to skilled employment, but this is even more true for immigrant women, who may also face obstacles related to the non-recognition of their degrees and discrimination based on their status.
- Francophone immigrant women often have to accept jobs for which they are overqualified because their degrees are not fully recognized upon arrival:
  - Some women note that French-speaking newcomers are often steered toward careers in education or health care. For this reason, the participants point out that Francophone immigrant women are overrepresented in underpaid and undervalued jobs (e.g., childcare, education, etc.).
- Recognition processes vary greatly from province to province, leading to duplicate procedures or the inability to practice certain professions (e.g., nurses, teachers, doctors, etc.).
- French accents can sometimes lead to discrimination or a perceived lack of competence.

Systemic Barriers and Discrimination

- Francophone immigrant women face a multitude of barriers related to their gender, immigration status, and language background:
  - Reported difficulties in accessing housing and bilingual jobs, and instances of discrimination against Francophones in certain provinces (e.g., British Columbia and the Maritimes).
  - Immigrant women face even greater obstacles when they come from non-Western countries or are monolingual French speakers.
  - Increased isolation in the North and in rural areas where there is a very small French-speaking population.

Community Integration Through Local Organizations

- Francophone organizations play a major role in the professional and social integration of Francophone immigrant women (women's networks, services for immigrant women, leadership programs, etc.).
- Women from diverse backgrounds (including visible or gender-based minorities, immigrants, Indigenous women, etc.) point to a certain regression over the past five years,

Focus Group Findings: Jobs in Education, Health Care, and Public Administration

- Women are increasingly entering the fields of education, health care, social services, and public administration.
- These professions are traditionally female-dominated, which could help attract women. They are also stable fields, as the women who work in them are surrounded by other women, and these are jobs with defined pay scales that offer attractive conditions for women. They are also fields where women can readily find their place.
    - For Francophone women in education, these are indeed highly valued jobs within the Francophone community, especially with the emergence of Francophone immersion schools seeking to attract Francophone female teachers. Furthermore, for immigrant women, the fields of teaching and early childhood education are often among the first career paths suggested to them upon their arrival. This is also the case for many women who are unable to have their professional qualifications from other countries recognized (such as lawyers and doctors). Finally, teachers' schedules are easier to balance with family life.
    - For jobs in public administration, proficiency in both official languages is a major asset, including a financial one, which encourages many Francophone women to pursue these careers.
- Non-traditional sectors (manufacturing and skilled trades) remain difficult to enter due to perceptions and biases (perceived lack of professionalism, accent, prejudices regarding motherhood, etc.). Some of these sectors also require higher education, which can be difficult to access in French.
- Administrative and language requirements vary by province, which complicates workforce mobility, particularly in the health care and education sectors:
    - Some participants noted that in the Maritime provinces such as Prince Edward Island, Alberta, or the Northwest Territories, internationally trained nurses must pass an English proficiency test to practice their profession, which acts as a barrier.
- The shortage of spots in French-language daycare centers is a major obstacle to training, employment, and work-life balance, which can be considered a factor influencing employment in daycare centers or in education.

Focus Group Findings: Unpaid Work, Mental Load and Community Involvement

- Women consider that the 15 hours of unpaid work per week cited in the survey results are not sufficient, particularly because women generally underestimate the amount of their invisible work.
- Francophone women in minority communities face an increased mental load:
  - The preservation of French at home relies primarily on mothers (finding French-language activities or social contacts, passing on the language, etc.)
  - Francophone women often have to drive long distances to access French-language services for their children.
  - In many regions, living far away from family deprives Francophone women of essential family support, forcing them to build a new local support network, a process that is often more complex than simply being able to count on help from a loved one for needs such as childcare.
  - The weight of translation is also a factor to consider in family responsibilities.
- Ultimately, the burden of passing on one's native language can also hinder Francophone women's English learning and thus affect their career paths.
- French-speaking women are in high demand for board positions and volunteer work, particularly in minority and unpaid settings. This work is essential to maintaining French-language services, but it adds to their invisible workload. This burden is generally underestimated and underrecognized.
- Family and community responsibilities, which are greater for Francophone women, influence career choices (e.g., choosing a part-time, stable, or more flexible job).
- One of the solutions proposed is to involve men in the discussion, in order to foster a shared understanding of the issues related to invisible work and mental load and to promote a more equitable distribution of family and community responsibilities.

Focus Group Findings : Francophone Women in Business and Entrepreneurship

- Many women turn to entrepreneurship out of necessity rather than by choice, due to a job market that is not very accessible to Francophones, particularly in rural areas.
- Francophone women entrepreneurs face difficulties accessing financing due to financial and linguistic biases:
  - The participants note that the language barrier complicates administrative and financial procedures, slowing the growth of their businesses. Financial concepts are not expressed in the same way in French and English, which forces them to mentally translate the information during meetings with banks, proplongs the process, and makes it harder to understand. They add that financial terminology is more difficult to master in English, that financial institutions place less trust in Francophone women, and that they often feel they are taken less seriously in these interactions.
  - Business growth is limited by the need to operate in a predominantly English-speaking professional environment.
- Francophone female entrepreneurs often have to adapt their strategies so as not to be limited to the Francophone market, which is perceived as too narrow, while gaining access to the English-speaking market poses a major challenge.
- Francophone entrepreneurs often need to conduct business in English, which can prolong procedures (documentation, franchising, communications, etc.).
- Francophone business networks play an important role in supporting women's entrepreneurship, but their availability varies by region (e.g., local programs, "business sisters," etc.). As a general rule, they are less prevalent in rural areas when it comes to supporting women entrepreneurs. These networks facilitate professional development, business creation, and access to tailored resources.

Pay Equity and Buying Power

Pay Equity

- The gender pay gap still exists, and it is even more pronounced for Francophone and immigrant women. Based on the experiences of the women present, English-speaking men often secure higher-paying positions despite their lack of experience.
- The responsibilities entrusted to women are not always accompanied by the corresponding title or salary.
- Ultimately, when a group of women organizes to assert their rights, they may be treated negatively.
- Speaking with an accent creates biases in perceptions of competence. As a result, francophones are faced with a double disadvantage stemming from their accent and their status as a minority.
- Immigration and the lack of recognition of academic credentials are widening the pay gap.
- In some private sectors, Francophone women are at a disadvantage, unlike in Francophone community sectors, where the gap is perceived as smaller.
- Among the proposed solutions is the disclosure of pay scales for all employees of a company.

Buying Power

- The rising cost of living is exacerbating these difficulties, particularly in female-dominated occupations. A higher proportion of Francophone women choose lower-paying occupations, such as those in education. Thus, as the cost of living is higher today, these women are the hardest hit, particularly because their disposable income is growing more slowly than that of those in high-paying professions.



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