



WHY ADULT IMMIGRANTS CALL THE LITERACY FOUNDATION'S REFERENCE LINES: HIGHLIGHTS

These findings are taken from a study designed to provide a better understanding of the factors in play when adults interested in furthering their education call the *Info-Alpha* and *Adult Learnline* telephone reference services. We found that immigrants made 40% of the over 5000 calls recorded in 2005. By analyzing the requests of newcomers to Québec, we hope to contribute to improving the Literacy Foundation's promotion, awareness-raising and recruitment efforts and eventually, those of other concerned stakeholders.

In the following pages we present profiles traced from an analysis of training requests according to gender, age, declared level of schooling and employment status.

COMPARATIVE PROFILES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND MEN

Women's and men's requests were generally quite similar, although with some nuances: while francization and English as a Second Language programs were important to all immigrants, francization seemed to be a bigger priority for women than for men. We will go into each type of request in more detail further on. With respect to employment status, immigrant women and men were mostly unemployed, with rare exceptions (for example, requests for postsecondary programs). Age was the only factor for which we observed a marked difference. Women were younger than men: 60% were younger than 35 and 22% were aged 36 to 45; of the men, 50% were younger than 35 and 37% were aged 36 to 45.

COMPARATIVE PROFILES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND MEN

Profile of Women	Profile of Men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two out of five women who called the Foundation's reference lines were immigrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One out of three men who called the Foundation's reference lines were immigrants.
<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabic (26%), Spanish (20%), Chinese (7%), and Creole (6%). 	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabic (30%), Spanish (19%), Chinese (8%), and Creole (6%).
<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% were under 35; 22% were aged 36 to 45. 	<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% were under 35; 37% were aged 36 to 45.
<p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9% had less than 9 years of schooling; 87% had 12 years of schooling or more; 16% had completed postsecondary studies in Québec; 59% were educated abroad; of these, 82% had completed 12 years of schooling or more. 	<p>Schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% had less than 9 years of schooling; 92% had 12 years of schooling or more; 20% had completed postsecondary studies in Québec; 60% were educated abroad; of these, 81% had completed 12 years of schooling or more.
<p>Requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21% of requests concerned francization; 18% concerned the Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS); 11% concerned English as a Second Language; 11% concerned postsecondary studies (DCS and university certificates and programs); 7% concerned the Secondary School Diploma (SSD); 7% concerned literacy/francization; 7% concerned prerequisite services; 6% concerned individually tailored training programs; 12% concerned other types of requests (job search assistance, educational materials, general information, etc.). 	<p>Requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14% of requests concerned francization; 22% concerned the Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS); 10% concerned English as a Second Language; 13% concerned postsecondary studies (DCS and university certificates and programs); 5% concerned the Secondary School Diploma (SSD); 5% concerned literacy/francization; 12% concerned prerequisite services; 8% concerned individually tailored training programs; 11% concerned other types of requests (job search assistance, educational materials, general information, etc.).
<p>Employment status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% were unemployed. 	<p>Employment status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 53% were unemployed.

PROFILE ACCORDING TO GENDER AND SCHOOLING

Slightly more immigrant women than men called the Foundation's reference lines (40% women and 30% men). Concerning schooling, immigrant men were somewhat more schooled than women, at all levels. Among women over 45, however, more than one quarter had less than nine years of schooling while there were no men in this category. On the contrary, 90% of immigrant men over 40 had completed 12 years of schooling or more.

PROFILE ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS

More immigrant men than women were employed, and this was true of all request categories. Among immigrant men, the unemployed (53%) far outnumbered the employed (40%). Still, the difference was less striking than that observed among immigrant women: over 70% of women were unemployed.

PROFILE OF ADULT IMMIGRANTS ACCORDING TO TYPE OF REQUEST

1. Francization and the Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS)

Francization is undeniably a priority for immigrants. This training request ranked first among women, constituting 21% of all requests; it ranked second among men, with 14% of all requests. Clearly, women had a stronger need for French language training than men. The majority of the women calling with this request were unemployed (71% compared to 38% of men).

More men (22%) were interested in the Diploma of Vocational Studies than women (18%). This program of study appeared to be viewed as an alternative to the recognition of a diploma earned abroad, a process which seems to be difficult to complete in the host country. In addition, a large percentage of immigrant women with postsecondary schooling were attracted to this type of training. The majority of these callers were unemployed: 72% of the women and 58% of the men.

2. English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language represented 10% of all the requests by immigrant women and men. It was the most frequently requested program, after francization and the Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), by both women and men. Twice as many women as men requested English language training, constituting two-thirds of the callers in this area. Among those requesting English as a Second Language, nearly two-thirds of the women and half of the men were unemployed.

3. Postsecondary studies

Requests about this educational level included both attestations and diplomas of college studies, and university certificates and programs. They represented 11% of women's requests and 13% of those made by men. The majority of the men interested in this level of training were employed (56%), while the vast majority of women were unemployed (67%).

Vocational diplomas (DVS) were the most popular requests. They accounted for 33% of women's requests and 41% of men's requests. This was followed by the Attestation of College Studies (ACS), representing 36% (women) and 37% (men) of all requests. More women than men were interested in university-level programs (respectively, 28% and 20% of requests).

There were no significant differences with respect to callers' ages. More than half were over 30. Still, there were more women than men over 40 (60% compared to 53%).

4. Customized training, prerequisite services and other requests

Information requests concerning customized training represented 6% of women's requests and 8% of men's requests. These mainly concerned requests about a particular course that may or may not have been part of a program (introduction to technologies, upgrading course on different software programs, remedial French course, various language courses, etc.). Just as with requests for postsecondary studies, the majority of the men were employed (60%), while the women were unemployed (67%).

As for prerequisite services, they represented 7% of women's requests and 12% of men's requests. These included equivalence tests, recognition of diplomas, guidance services, etc. Most of the people in this category were immigrant men (12%). Because it ranked fourth in immigrant men's requests, but only seventh among women's requests, we conclude that the issue of diploma recognition was of crucial importance to men; 70% of them were unemployed. This said, diploma recognition was also important to women, 68% of whom were unemployed.

Last, all the other types of requests constituted 12% of women's and 11% of men's requests. In the "other" category, we counted requests for information about financial aid or educational materials, competency cards and other questions concerning professional specialization. This category included a multitude of questions, most of which obtained a rapid response.

5. The Secondary School Diploma (SSD)

The SSD only represented 7% of women's requests and 5% of men's requests. Over 40% of these individuals were aged between 17 and 23. Two-thirds of the women and a little less than half of the men were unemployed. The personal accounts of people registered in a SSD program describe how important it was for them to complete their 5th year of high school and be able to further their education. Unlike the DVS, which is essentially an end in itself, this diploma serves as a stepping stone to other levels of training.

6. Literacy-francization

Literacy-francization accounted for only 7% of the requests of immigrants. Three-quarters of these requests came from women. All had less than nine years of formal schooling. Some 30% were under 30 and another 30% were over 50. Nearly 70% of them were unemployed. We counted very few requests from immigrant men.

An initiative of :



With the financial participation of:

