

# 2002-2003 Highlights

## at the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF)

**F**ounded in 1991, the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF) is a countrywide organization representing francophone groups and associations dedicated to French literacy in Canada. Over the years, the FCAF has endeavoured to interest as many groups as possible on the topic of literacy and the importance of reading and writing in French.

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### Introduction

This year, the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF) has provided an English summary of its 2002-2003 annual report. The text below provides a snapshot of the FCAF's activities in the areas of liaison, promotion, representation and communication. It is far from exhaustive, and only outlines the Fédération's core activities over the year.

Throughout 2002-2003, the FCAF worked with its committee of literacy learners which provided guidance in its decision-making and actions. The bulk of the FCAF's work focused on the following main areas:

- promotion of the right to lifelong education in French, everywhere in Canada;
- promotion of a culture of awareness and appreciation of written French at home.

### The FCAF worked with, and for, French literacy groups

In 2002-2003, the FCAF worked both with and for its member organizations. It informed them through 14 issues of its internal newsletter. It trained them by offering a management session and tools such as the communications toolkit. The

FCAF team provided training to five of its members in their provinces or territories. It also brought its members together to make their needs known in relation to the federal government's Innovations Strategy and Official Languages Action Plan. The FCAF gave them the opportunity to highlight what they have to offer.

### The FCAF promoted French literacy and French literacy training

The FCAF continued to develop new promotional and information tools. It produced a poster, a magazine, a newsletter, bookmarks, etc. It contributed to the organization of the first International Week for Adult Learners, for which it wrote and distributed an activity guide. With the assistance of its spokesperson, Daniel Lavoie, the FCAF also organized a Canada-wide contest called *Le Printemps des lettres* (a Spring of Letters). A total of 126 learners wrote a letter to Daniel Lavoie. The FCAF assembled the letters into a booklet which it distributed to 500 literacy groups and several elected officials.

### The FCAF advocated for literacy groups before the federal government

The FCAF promotes literacy in several ways. One way is through political representations. Thus, each time the

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FCAF represents its member groups before the federal government, it provides information on French literacy services. This is what the FCAF did, in fact, when consulted by federal civil servants and elected officials seeking to position literacy in Canada's Innovation Strategy. The same occurred at the consultations on the Official Languages Action Plan. The FCAF is now coordinating the family literacy activities which will be implemented.

### **The FCAF promoted a culture of awareness and appreciation of written French**

The FCAF wishes to promote the value of both written and oral French. The FCAF believes that parents are the key for transmitting values, language and a penchant for reading in French. In 2002, it therefore began work on establishing a network of experts to promote a culture of awareness and appreciation of written French. This network is now being formed. After holding numerous consultations in 2002, the FCAF succeeded in bringing together experts and researchers in 2003. It formed a training advisory committee and is working with its member groups who have expertise in family literacy. The network of experts created by the FCAF is working in different areas, but the ultimate goal is to instil a culture of awareness and appreciation of written French in Canadian francophone families.

### **The FCAF promoted clear and effective communication**

The FCAF has been interested in clear communications since 1994. Its main goal has been to maintain the reading skills of those who have recently become literate and make reading accessible to all. This led to the training courses *Écrire simplement* (Writing Simply) and *Pour des communications orales claires* (For Clear Oral Communications). In addition to its expertise in communications, the FCAF also understands the obstacles facing people with low literacy skills. Armed with its experience and skills in clear communications, the FCAF launched a business called *Communicateurs efficaces* in 2002. This year, thanks to its team of professionals in communications and teaching, *Communicateurs efficaces* became known in particular for its ability to rewrite documents in a clear and effective style. The team also provided training sessions to some 300 communicators from public, paragonovernmental and private organizations.

In collaboration with Communication Canada, the FCAF initiated a project focusing on clear

communications. At the initial stage of this project, the FCAF conducted a qualitative study on the characteristics of television announcements intended for the general public. The results of the study, called *Characteristics of TV ads for the general public that inform less literate audiences*, show that people with lower literacy skills have difficulty understanding televised messages. The FCAF also prepared a report on this study, in English and French.

### **The FCAF launched publications**

In December 2002, the FCAF launched the document *Huit champs d'intervention pour améliorer l'alphabétisme des francophones du Canada (Eight areas of intervention for improving francophone literacy in Canada)*. This document is a response to the new Statistics Canada report, *Literacy and literacy training of francophones in Canada – Results of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)*. The document produced by the FCAF and the Statistics Canada report are, in fact, the fruition of five years of work and collaboration with the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM).

### **The FCAF developed quality standards**

The FCAF began developing quality standards in its internal management practices and procedures. It began this work by redrafting its statutes and payments. It then reviewed and evaluated the positions of its personnel based on the skill requirements of each position. The FCAF also began drafting internal procedures to be applied when carrying out certain activities and tasks.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, 2002-2003 was a noteworthy year in terms of representation, particularly during the consultations held by the federal government. The FCAF has become an authority on literacy vis-à-vis the federal government. The FCAF succeeded in putting forth the needs of francophones with low literacy skills, particularly for the Innovation Strategy and the Official Languages Action Plan. In addition, on numerous occasions, the FCAF discussed the appropriate means for communicating with francophones with low literacy skills.

The FCAF is a non-profit organization. Its charitable organization number is 0932228-29.