



Between 2011 and 2013, the Société Santé en français, in collaboration with the Réseau Santé en français î.-P.-É. and Santé en français (Manitoba), supported two pilot projects: one in the Saint Boniface and Saint Vital neighbourhoods of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the other in Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

The goal of both projects was to improve Francophone seniors' access to health services in French through the health system's existing resources. The Winnipeg project was systemic and applied to all health services in a given area, whereas the Summerside project was restricted to long-term care at Summerset Manor





(formerly Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba)

COLLABORATION WITH

Canadian Institute for Research Université de Sherbrooke on Linguistic Minorities

Research Centre on Aging



a) National

The *Société Santé en français* coordinated the national process, which made it possible to:

work on two structuring pilot projects focused on seniors' access to services, and

conduct a study, based on documentary research and interviews, to present lessons learned when these projects were implemented in order to facilitate similar projects for other communities or other sectors with similar needs in the future.

Both pilot projects consisted of the following four phases:

Preparation

The project was defined by translating the general objectives into a concrete project, by determining, along with players in the health care system, how the work would be done, and by identifying the project partners.

Knowledge

An assessment was made of the needs of seniors, the services offered, and best practices for the organization of services, as well as the bilingual human resources available.

Action

A vision was defined for the organization of services and strategies for action were chosen.

Transfer

Project outcomes were extended and adapted to other provinces and communities, while influencing decision makers and partners.

b) Prince Edward Island

Preparation

- A steering committee was set up to direct the project and to bring together partners in the implementation of services in French as well as support services for long-term care residents. The committee reported on project progress to the department of health and Summerset Manor's management and planning teams.
- An advisory committee was set up to provide advice and play a facilitation role.

Knowledge

- Based on a previous study of the province's health services in French, we sought to increase our knowledge of the current situation by completing a portrait of seniors' needs, implementing recommendations from the study on improving long-term care services in French, and deciding on the major directions for an improvement plan and models for home care.
- We took an inventory of the language skills of the staff at Summerset Manor. We identified bilingual employees and encouraged all staff members to have their language skills evaluated.
- We determined the language of residents in order to establish the number of Francophone residents at Summerset Manor and define their language needs.

Action

- A bilingual wing of the new Summerset Manor facility was created.
- We took measures to engage Francophone residents and their families. We addressed the issue of Acadian culture.
- We ensured that there was bilingual documentation (e.g. signage).
- We encouraged all employees to take language training as needed, and offered French courses to employees.
- We involved community partners, especially volunteers. We tried to promote the twinning of volunteers with residents to establish helping relationships.

Transfer

- The project team ensured that the tools produced were shared with the Société Santé en français, the Manitoba project team, and the national research team.
- The steering committee reported on progress of the project to another manor's management since it had showed interest in the project and was considering doing a similar one.

c) Manitoba

Preparation

- The seniors project was presented to the steering committee of the "Accès santé" project, which was already underway; that project's objective was to develop a strategic plan and a business plan for organizing primary health services in French in Winnipeg.
- Since the goals of both projects complemented each other, it was agreed that the seniors project would be built on the "Accès santé" service organization plan so that we could go ahead with our pilot test to fulfill our vision for senior clients.
- A working group was formed to oversee implementation of the seniors project and report on it at meetings of the "Accès santé" steering committee.

Knowledge

- A partnership was established with a Université de Saint-Boniface research team that conducted five studies on the current situation among Francophone seniors.
- A summary of the priority issues emerging from the five studies was prepared.

Action

- A bilingual guide for managers of a long-term care facility was designed in order to facilitate the implementation of a language mandate. Once the guide was produced, we developed an internal action plan to improve services in French.
- A LEAN approach was implemented to optimize services in French using the health system's existing resources. The approach involved three key stages:

 a LEAN awareness session;
 a preparatory session to present the vision for the future of the "Accès santé" project, the current situation according to the research conducted, and a preliminary strategic roadmap proposing action strategies; and
 a Kaizen workshop enabling stakeholders involved in the continuum of care for Francophone seniors to adopt a 2013-2014 strategic roadmap to improve access to quality health services in French for Francophone seniors in Saint Boniface and Saint Vital.
- The working group carried out three priority activities that emerged from the workshop: 1) it communicated the action plan, 2) it included a leadership team responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategic roadmap within the framework of the model from the "Accès santé" project business plan, and 3) it prepared a draft of a charter for an initiation project to make it easier for Francophone clients to navigate through an integrated health system.

Transfer

- The project team ensured that the tools produced were shared with the Société Santé en français, the Prince Edward Island project team, and the national research team.
- A plan was put into place for the transfer of files and knowledge to the St. Boniface Health Centre, which is responsible for implementing the "Accès santé" business plan.

The St. Boniface Health Centre received funding to begin work in April 2013, including the monitoring of progress on the implementation of the strategic roadmap for the seniors project.



a) National

At the national level, this initiative made it possible to work in a more intense and focused manner on two structuring projects for seniors' access to services. As well, a field-research collaborative model was developed throughout the project.

The knowledge gained from both projects will support, and perhaps even guide, the preparation and implementation of future initiatives for improving and transforming the organization of services.

c) Manitoba

First, the project allowed us to gain a deeper knowledge and better understanding of the current situation of seniors, how it differs from the optimal vision of the organization of services, and the causes of the dysfunctions observed. Through the development of an action plan (in the form of a strategic roadmap - *LEAN*), we were able to identify specific ways to improve how users navigate through the services available in French. Lastly, the *Implemention Guide for the Actionmarguerite Language Mandate*, intended for managers of a long-term care facility, was written and then implemented within the scope of this project.

b) Prince Edward Island

The project directly led to the opening of a bilingual household in a long-term care facility in Summerside. This household is the result of close collaboration between project partners and the Government of Prince Edward Island, which saw this project as an important opportunity for the province's Francophone community. Through the project, work began in another part of the continuum of services to seniors, namely a study was conducted to learn more about the actual needs of Francophone seniors for home care. This study is ongoing.



Government of PEI

The national research allowed us to provide lessons learned when the two projects were being implemented. These lessons may facilitate similar projects in the future in other communities or other sectors with similar needs; a process to ensure that knowledge is transferred will be in place.

To sum up, here are the conditions that contributed to the success of the projects during the various phases, i.e. *preparation*, *implementation*, *evaluation*, *continuity* and *knowledge transfer*.

The Preparatory Phase

- This preliminary phase is critical when defining the project since it is the means by which general objectives are translated into a concrete project. This phase is intended, among other things, to determine in cooperation with health system stakeholders how they will work, in order to ascertain if a partnership is possible and if the circumstances are favourable to the project. Another purpose of this phase is to determine who will be involved in the project, to build partnerships that will be useful throughout the project, and to bring together the conditions for a joint commitment.
- It is important to have a thorough knowledge of the legal environment of the province where the project will be implemented. This is in order to be fully aware of the obligations and commitments of government authorities. We must hone in on legislative provisions that can be used by promoters to support their demands. Lastly, it is important to identify the legal rules and use them strategically in order to remind public service managers of their language responsibilities.
- Keeping abreast of the political situation is a way
 to seize opportunities to help carry out the project.
 By virtue of their ability to find concrete solutions
 to problems reported by various interested parties,
 Francophone stakeholders on the ground are often
 in the best position to help government authorities
 follow through on their commitments to health
 services in French.

The Preparatory Phase (continued)

 By taking the management context into account and using recognized service quality standards, managers can be convinced of the importance of projects in improving the delivery of health services in French, aside from the political and legal obligations.

Project Implementation

- It is important that action be part of a general method.
 This method must be applied in a flexible enough manner to allow for all the necessary back and forth between the various steps to ensure that the action is continually suited to the implementation conditions.
- Networks of local Francophone health stakeholders
 with a mostly Anglophone health system prove to
 be a fruitful and decisive resource for the project.
 These networks can be used in particular to establish
 partnerships, to facilitate project decision-making,
 and to give access to previously unknown resources.
 A national network structure, like that of health in
 French, also makes it possible to expand collaborative
 networks.
- A pragmatic approach is best as it offers solutions to concrete problems to develop the conditions needed for successful collaboration among the parties involved. In certain cases, advocacy activities may be necessary.

- An in-depth knowledge of the situation that we want
 to change and awareness of favourable conditions
 improve the chances of reaching the desired
 objectives. Before going ahead with the project, it is
 important for stakeholders to analyze the conditions
 for success. We must also reflect on the knowledge
 and information needed to carry out the project.
- We need to budget for the financial resources, expertise and time required to analyze the language situation that we want to improve in order to base action planning on solid and relevant knowledge. The promoters must also analyze needs in terms of skills and expertise. It is helpful to recruit a manager or coordinator whose task is to move the project forward.
- The **organization and planning** of activities require a great deal of flexibility in order to define what action is to be taken during project implementation. At the same time, the changing circumstances must be taken into account. It is important to clarify and distinguish everyone's role. The stakeholders must ensure that the work does not fall to a single person or a few people, that the members fully understand what they have to do, and that everyone contributes to the project. The project promoters must monitor their working environment in order to identify opportunities for synergy.

- It is desirable to properly coordinate the action phase with the knowledge phase by including knowledge transfer in the action planning. It is fitting to identify and apply an action strategy suited to all interested parties.
- A different communication strategy must be developed, depending on the stakeholder groups affected by the change, on the scope and meaning of the project changes. Project implementation relies on effective communication, which requires that each partner and everyone affected by the projects be informed of how the project is coming along. Potential problems must be solved as they arise by examining the applicability of the solutions being considered. For certain activities, it is a good idea to involve informed "champions," who will greatly contribute to the project.

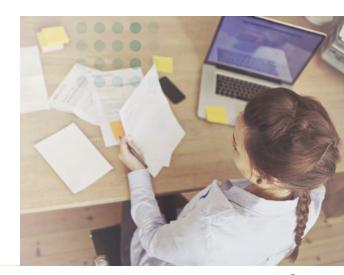
Project Evaluation and Continuity

- It is desirable to plan for an evaluation phase that will deepen the understanding of the desired outcomes, especially in terms of the means used to reach the objectives.
- The stakeholders must be aware that the project is part of a long-term process and that they are involved in just one part of it. Accordingly, a number of steps must be planned in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the project, which we hope will have a structuring effect. Starting from the project's

planning phase, its promoters must set the conditions conducive to ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes, even after the project officially ends.

Knowledge Transfer

- Knowledge transfer must be carefully planned and lead to appropriate activities.
- It is important to specify to the researchers the level of stakeholder participation in the data collection activities because these activities may potentially be rather demanding, depending on the methods used.









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The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Health Canada.