

Policy on Program Resources in French

Background

The Centre for Christian Studies does not have a history of offering programming in French although there has been some field work done in French by bilingual students. Several years ago, one student set up a field placement in Quebec but all volunteers were bilingual or spoke English as a first language so no French language support was needed or provided by the CCS. In 2003, a bilingual Anglophone student from Quebec set up a field placement in a Francophone setting. Staff encouraged the student to choose the most appropriate volunteers, regardless of their capacity in English. The student did have some volunteers on her committee who spoke little or no English, although her supervisor was fluently bilingual. In this particular case, the expense was not large since both the Mentor and the Learning Facilitator could communicate in English and French. Some portions of the field kit were translated and simultaneous translation was provided for the Field Orientation in order for CCS staff who did not speak French to participate fully. Staff recommended that the CCS continue to make available in French the resources necessary for the effective work of field volunteers. They recommended that a French language policy be developed. This matter was brought to the Program Committee which formed a small working group to develop recommendations. The policy which follows was based on the recommendations of the working group.

Statements of Principle

- The Centre for Christian Studies program is offered in English. English is the language used in programming, and CCS students need to be fully proficient in both oral and written communication in English.
- The CCS is committed to providing support so that students who are bilingual (English/French) can include Francophone volunteers in their field sites.
- The CCS policy for students who do their field work in French is unique and will not dictate the policy applied to work in other languages.

Policy on Support for Students in Francophone Field Placements

1. The CCS will provide training for Francophone volunteers who serve on field site local committees. This training will be offered either in French or in English with simultaneous interpretation. The CCS will also provide simultaneous interpretation for other required oral communication between the volunteers and CCS staff. CCS staff will consult with the students involved and together they will determine which field resources and program documents need to be translated into French. All written materials directly related to the task of the volunteers will be translated at the expense of the Centre for Christian Studies.
2. Students will consult closely with staff in the process of choosing volunteers, and give consideration to the layers of complication involved in working with different languages. Students who choose to do field work in French or bilingual settings need to understand the challenges of doing this and to see the managing of these complexities as part of their learning

experience. Some of the student's time, attention (and learning focus) will need to be directed to the task of bridging their involvement with an Anglophone institution (the CCS) in a Francophone setting (the field placement). Working in Francophone ministry and with one's denomination may pose unique challenges. The student will learn much from dealing with these challenges and it must be clear from the outset that this is part of the learning opportunity afforded by the field setting. It is important to avoid unrealistic expectations as to what the CCS is and what it can provide. The student her/himself is a major resource in dealing with language barriers.

3. The student and other volunteers will be expected to share in the responsibility for explaining aspects of the program that are not covered by French resources and documentation. The CCS will not provide simultaneous interpretation for Local Committee meetings, or for meetings between the student and their Mentor, or the student and their Learning Facilitator.
4. The staff will work with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee, who will consult with Central Council, regarding unbudgeted expenses related to the costs of translation or simultaneous interpretation.
5. Wherever possible, the CCS will draw on existing resources to assist the work and minimize the amount of translation or interpretation required by:
 - using existing French resources (e.g. worship resources available from the Ministries in French program unit of the General Council offices of The United Church of Canada or from the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Department of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada);
 - obtaining support from the Ministries in French staff of the General Council office, which offers both resources in French and translation;
 - using the resources of the United Theological College and Diocesan College of Montreal, both of which offer programming in French to help with volunteer training, to make available resources in French;
 - engaging in joint programming or partnerships with other institutions whereby a student might do a field placement in a Francophone setting and participate in the reflection, training, or volunteer training aspects of the field placement through a Francophone or bilingual institution.