



Corinne Canevet is now living in Whitehorse.

Corinne Canevet, or The Importance Of Seizing Opportunities

A native of the Brittany region in the north west of France, Corinne Canevet works in a Whitehorse accounting firm under the territorial Immigrant Nominee Program (a.k.a. the Nominee Program).

"I'd already worked in the area of financial audits in France and I hold a Master's in Management, but my degree is not recognized in Canada, so if I want to advance or go elsewhere, I will need a Canadian degree." What complicates things is that she does not have a student visa. She has, however, applied for permanent resident status and will be able to take care of her studies once she gets it.

Serendipitous arrival

After studying in a French business school, in 2008, she travelled to Vancouver where she spent a semester at Simon Fraser University. She then returned to France to pursue her studies. "I worked in Paris for three or four years to pay off my student loans. But I already knew I wanted to go abroad. Since I'd studied in Canada and had liked it, I decided to return under the Working Holiday Program, which allowed me greater flexibility. I wanted to visit and work and then later visit again after more intensive times in Paris."

Corinne had not planned to come to the Yukon when she first visited the territory in October 2013. "I wanted to visit Canada to see if there might be a place that

would interest me. I spent three months on Vancouver Island, then someone told me about the Yukon and I decided to come."

She dropped by the Centre de la francophonie where she met an Association franco-yukonnaise employment counsellor who informed her of an available position as a waitress at a Destruction Bay motel restaurant. Even though the clientele was overwhelmingly English, the owner from Quebec spoke French. She loved the experience and began to think about the possibility of moving here. "There are many employment needs here, which spells more opportunities for immigrants than elsewhere. As well, the lifestyle is healthier and much less stressful both work-wise and in terms of travel time. Although I do work long hours, I don't waste time in traffic. I also have access to nature. Life is easy here and we enjoy a good quality of life."

Regardless, she still longed to see more of Canada, so she headed south, to the Kootenay area... only to return to the Yukon. She who had wanted to discover all of Canada, had so far only seen the West.

Return

When she returned to the Yukon a few months later, she decided to send out her CV and see what happened. "I quickly found an employer. I think the fact that I had previously lived in the Yukon worked in my favour, as opposed to someone who had never come here. We found a suitable solution with the Nominee Program."

She believes several factors helped her integrate into the labour market, not the least of which is the fact that she is bilingual and works in an English setting with n° French-speaking clients and has acquired appreciable Canadian work experience. "The Working Holiday Program enabled me to gain experience in Canada. The positions were not in my field: I worked at a hotel reception desk, did housecleaning, was a waitress... these jobs allowed me to get references here."

Born on the Brittany seaside, Ms. Canevet has always engaged in outdoor activities. "Some haven't changed; I've always love cycling and walking, which I missed in Paris. But for sure, with the seasons, my activities here

are not the same. What I like about Whitehorse is the balance between the advantages of a small town and the job opportunities one usually finds in large cities."

Connecting with the Francophone community

Corinne arrived in Canada alone, without a spouse or children. She now has an English boyfriend. She works in an Anglophone environment, most of her clients are First Nations and in the beginning, she sought to limit contact with the Francophone community.

"I wanted to improve my English and integrate into my living environment. But now that I'm more comfortable in English, I enjoy speaking French and having contact with people who share my culture."

The challenges

Like many others, Corinne Canevet had a bit of trouble on the administrative side. "It's sometimes difficult to know what the possibilities are in terms of immigration. It's hard to find what is best suited to our situation and there is little support... on the other hand, I do not believe this is unique to Canada."

Her greatest fear was having difficulty adjusting to the labour market. "I think the best approach is to not be afraid to start with small jobs or volunteering to get experience in Canada."

In terms of employment, despite her apprehensions, Corinne had n° difficulties. "We can rely on the employment centres or the services offered by the AFY. These are sometimes little things, but they can make all the difference. For example, I was concerned about my CV because I was unfamiliar with how it should be presented here. There are a number of resources for integrating the job market and I think one should take advantage of them. Actually, finding a little job here is easier than in France."

As for housing or other aspects of life, she never had any problems in particular. "In fact, it's pretty much like everywhere else." In closing, she advises newcomers to not hesitate to forge ahead! "There are numerous opportunities here because employers are always looking for serious and reliable people. There are numerous opportunities as long as you're professional... just like anywhere else."