

IEP CONFERENCE



A UNIQUE FORUM FOR
Internationally Educated Professionals

The Power of Different:

*The race to bridge the skills gap
in the Toronto Region*

January 2010

Funded by



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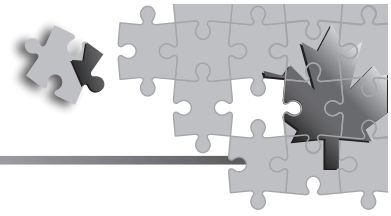


TORONTO
Economic Development, Culture & Tourism

Presented by:

PCPi

PROGRESS CAREER PLANNING INSTITUTE
www.pcpic.ca



On behalf of Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), I am pleased to present this research study to the stakeholders of the IEP Conference. The conference was conceived to bring together business, education, government, community and accreditation bodies in order to share practical information on how IEPs can access the Toronto job market in their field of work.

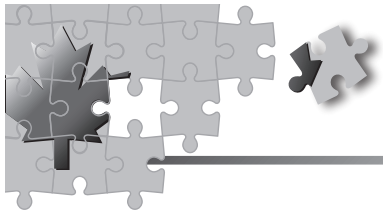
The research study takes the event to the next level by validating the international perspectives and experiences of IEPs and by examining the critical issues hindering them from filling the skills gap in the Toronto labour market.

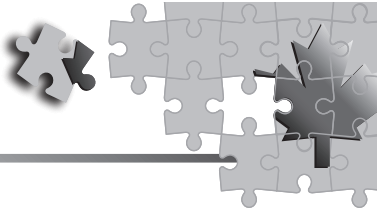
It is the hope of PCPI that by embarking on this study we will bring new levels of understanding about the issues facing IEPs in integrating into the Canadian labour market and engage decision makers, so they can collectively work on enhancing strategies that will speed processes and systems in place to break down the barriers to integrating IEPs into the labour force.

PCPI is grateful to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for funding this research, George Schrijver, WCM Consulting for undertaking the study and to all the respondents for their participation.

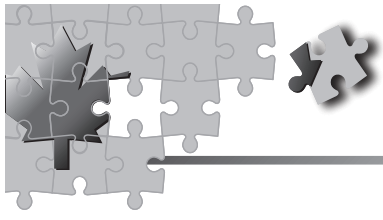
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President, PCPI

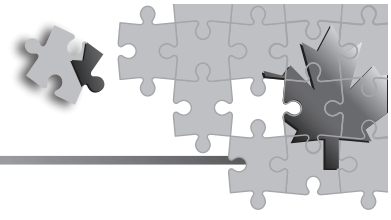






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PCPI is working to bridge the gap between employers' desires and reality, as well as the gap between employees' credentials and their job situations. Their goal is to "offer career development services for people to realize their full potential." As part of this commitment, PCPI seeks to use research, resources and expertise to help employers and Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs) identify and implement effective strategies to attain and retain meaningful and profitable employment.

In examining the issues a perspective drawn from the discipline of economic development may shed light further on the situation. The project purpose was to assess the recent experience of IEPs when integrating into the Greater Toronto Area Labour Market at a level (self-defined) appropriate to their qualifications and to build upon two previous PCPI commissioned studies. What is changing for the better and what is not, with recommendations towards achieving the goal, ***and encouraging the deployment of the full capabilities of the IEP into the economy of the Greater Toronto Area, optimizing the prosperity of businesses, the community and the IEPs themselves.***

To conduct the research IEPs, employers and service providers were interviewed to obtain a qualitative assessment as seen by those on the front-line of the current situation. Then, an extensive literature search was conducted to determine what is being done by those charged with removing the barriers to the successful integration of the IEP into the economy.

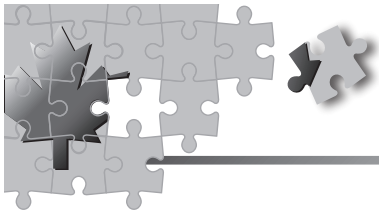
At all times in the review, conclusions and recommendations, the focus was on opportunities, to be gained or lost, with respect to the future prosperity of our economy. The IEP is examined as an 'asset' to the economy which, as with all other assets, should be deployed to the maximum benefit of the prosperity of the community. With the predicted decline in the future availability of Canadian-born, working-age persons, coupled with the urgent necessity to raise education and skills levels to meet the rapidly emerging economic challenges, the IEP offers a 'ready-made, available now' solution.

The conclusions identify that, while much is being done by those clearing the path between the employer and the IEP, the full beneficial effects of the efforts to date have not yet been felt by the under-employed IEP. Further, while larger firms have recognized the value of the IEP, appreciating the diverse capabilities that they bring to their employer organizations, smaller firms have not yet embraced this opportunity to the same extent.

Many smaller firms perceive risks as being high, especially in an uncertain economy; ironically, the IEP may be part of the solution. While this uneven uptake is understandable, the situation must be improved. As the backbone of our economy and the source of most growth, small and medium-size companies must develop and grow sufficiently to ensure sustainable community prosperity.

The recommendations will provide significant impetus towards achieving the objective of deploying the IEP, a vital resource in the challenge of ensuring our future prosperity. Encouraging the smaller firms to appreciate the competitive advantages of diversity, through low-risk or no-risk mechanisms, is a vital consideration.

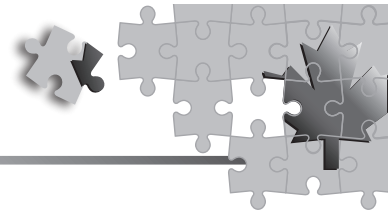
In removing the unnecessary barriers while maintaining the essential hurdles, we urge a 'zero-based' approach: create a streamlined process, devoid of inter-organizational silos, which is focused on achieving the overall objective, rather than on maintaining the status quo. Then port the essential elements of the existing processes into the new, leaving the non-value added aspects behind.



Executive Summary

Economic Development is an investment, not a cost, and good investments deserve the maximum possible funding in order to obtain the maximum return. Resource-limited thinking must be replaced with the drive to achieve the required objectives, with the commensurate level of investment.

In the present economic situation, some of these recommendations may not be popular with many in the public. This is when leadership must come to the forefront: *doing always what is needed, not always what is popular.*



Canada has one of the world's highest rates of immigration, welcoming between 200,000 and 300,000 newcomers each year. Canada prides itself on being one of the top destinations for immigrants and has a strong record of helping newcomers integrate into Canadian society while remaining richly multicultural.

These high rates of immigration strengthen the Canadian economy and deepen the talent pool available to Canadian employers. Newcomers bring an understanding of new markets, new ideas on doing business and enhance the cultural intelligence of an organization. **Most importantly, they bring skills and education.**

Two IEP studies by PCPI had revealed that there are disconnects between the IEPs' experience in getting a job and the employers' perspective on strategic workforce planning. Additionally, research conducted by the Conference Board of Canada has revealed that employers still face challenges in attracting and recruiting skilled people, in spite of the vast number of skilled immigrant professionals seeking employment in occupations deemed as having skill shortages.

Employers in Canada have good intentions when it comes to hiring and retaining IEP talent. The research report from PCPI demonstrates that the vast majority of employers are favourable to IEP-related policies and programs with nearly half having such policies in place. In particular, employers were most interested in establishing mentoring programs, supporting Canadian accreditation and licensing, and implementing acculturation courses.

Despite these good intentions, employers have not been able to implement many of these identified best practices. Even if they see the best practice as desirable, firms, especially small firms, face challenges when it comes to feasibility. These include the tight global economic situation, insufficient resources, and other demands on executive time. Additionally, there was widespread consensus that senior managers are largely unaware of the business case for hiring and integrating IEPs.

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In examining the issues, a perspective drawn from the discipline of economic development may shed further light on the situation. The project purpose was to assess the recent experience of IEPs when integrating into the GTA Labour Market at a level (self-defined) appropriate to their qualifications and to build upon two previous PCPI commissioned studies. What is changing for the better and what is not, with recommendations towards achieving the goal, and **encouraging the deployment of the full capabilities of the IEP into the economy of the Greater Toronto Area, optimizing the prosperity of businesses, the community and the IEPs themselves.**

"Immigration is one of the most pressing issues facing the labour market today. Canada's population is not increasing naturally, and our employees are aging. Immigrants have the skills and expertise to enhance and expand our labour market, and it's critical that we break down any barriers to this integration."

– Dominic D'Alessandro, CEO and President of Manulife Financial and Co-Chair of TRIEC <http://www.torontoalliance.ca/media/quotes/>, taken from the TRIEC website on June 11, 2009.



Methodology

The methodology was as follows:

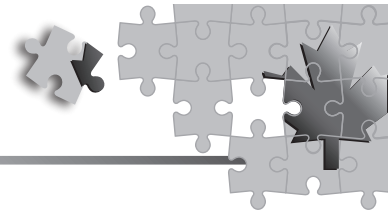
The conduct of primary, phenomenological first-person research with IEPs, companies and service providers.

A literature review of the extensive body of existing reports and information. Synopses and extracts are included in Appendix 2.

A determination of what has changed and what has not, with respect to connecting the IEP to the workplace at the appropriate level.

Drawing conclusions from the research and review.

Providing recommendations to enable PCPI, as well as the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, agencies, service providers and employers, to apply this research, their resources and expertise to help overcome the remaining barriers and bridge the remaining gaps



Primary Research

The detailed results from the IEP respondents are contained in Appendix I of this report.

A point known as data saturation arrives in most surveys. This point was reached very quickly in the primary research and was corroborated with recent secondary research sources.

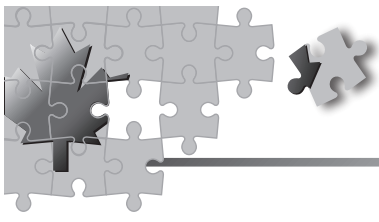
From the IEP respondents:

- Slightly more than half had found work in the field, *but not at the level*, in which they had been educated.
- Approximately 30% felt that the position obtained was commensurate with their qualifications and an equal number, although working in their field, felt that they were over-qualified and not able to realize their full potential.
- Two-thirds stated that they had been advised to obtain further education in Canada in order to achieve their professional employment goals. The range was from:
 - Acquiring English as a second language.
 - Obtaining a Canadian education in 'business'.
 - Obtaining engineering qualifications in Canada since the original credentials are not accepted here.
- Less than one quarter felt that they could reach their professional goal in this country, working at a level commensurate with their view of their credentials. The balance felt that they could not and cited various reasons:
 - Too old to return to school and not worth the investment of time and money (many lower skilled workers in Ontario are facing just this challenge today due to the restructuring of the manufacturing sector)
 - Cannot afford to. The imperative of sending money 'back home' and the necessity to hold down two jobs to accomplish this, precludes schooling. This is a vicious circle since obtaining the required schooling could permit them to earn more in less time.
 - Feeling discouraged, disappointed and, most of all, disempowered.

The factor most common to either not being able to find suitable employment or dissatisfaction with the employment they had, is a lack of recognition for their education. Some respondents had not interviewed for positions for which they felt qualified because they had been told by the governmental body that their education wasn't "from a recognized university or equivalent."

Others mentioned issues common to all jobseekers (not only IEPs), including having to upgrade skills in using technology or keeping their education "current".

Some claimed that immigrants must do more to help other immigrants, while others identified senior governments as having to do more to help new immigrants to the country. The general overtone from the interviewees included discouraged and disempowered feelings about coming to Canada and the lack of opportunity for people with credentials similar to their own.



Secondary Research

Nearly half of all immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1996 did enter the workforce. During the 1990s, the average level of education for the Canadian-born population was already lower than that of the immigrants who came to Canada (Alboim, Finnie & Meng, 2005). Now, the largest groups of immigrants who decide to come to Canada are professionals, of whom more intend to work in occupations with defined requirements for their profession (Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), 2003a).

Canada's growth, prosperity and diversity have been shaped by immigration. Increasing numbers of internationally educated professionals choose Canada due to workforce opportunity and a growing labour market, especially for skilled and regulated occupations (Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), 2003a). Recent immigrants, however, have suffered lower rates of employment and labour success compared to immigrants from previous decades (Alboim et al, 2005). Integration of internationally educated professionals must be realized in order to ensure a sustainable and diverse work force (von Zweck and Burnett, 2006).

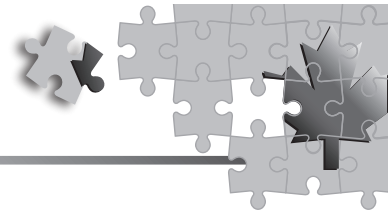
Internationally educated professionals may choose to leave their home countries for many reasons. Low wages, career advancement or opportunity limitations, poor working conditions, discrimination and oppressive or dangerous social or physical environments are all valid reasons for looking to Canada for a place to make a difference for themselves and others. Immigrants cite reasons of improved wages and benefits, better work environments and qualities of life for themselves and their families for choosing Canada as a place to live (Diallo, 2004; Grondin, 2004).

Workforce integration is promoted by Canada as the acculturation goal for individuals who come to Canada to work (CIC, 2005b). Using this type of integrative approach allows professionals to respect and retain their social and cultural identities while entering into their fields of expertise. Despite this noble goal, real workforce integration has not been attained for many internationally educated professionals. Many immigrants are unable to find and win jobs matching their qualifications, especially those with formally mandated skills and education. In 2002, less than half of professionally educated and trained new Canadians were able to work in their respective fields of expertise (Delaney, 2005).

Canada promotes and identifies itself as a country which is welcoming to people from around the world, especially in our "World Class Cities" of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Indeed, Canada's cultural diversity ranks as the most ethnically diverse in the world (Gilgoff, 2009). These cities are described as hubs of creativity and talent, attracting people from around the world (Gilgoff, 2009). Participation in the "Canadian experience" is inclusive, encouraging all to celebrate and contribute to our society and realize the benefits of diversity (Gilgoff, 2009). The Canadian value system implies that all individuals should be encouraged and supported to find and achieve their true potentials. A larger and more productive Canadian economy requires that all Canadians participate and contribute their creativity and talent.

As Canada moves from a resource-based economy to a talent and creativity based economy, how well Canada integrates and manages diversity will have an important bearing on Canada's social and economic success, and the quality of our communities, both social and business (Gilgoff, 2009).

Attracting and retaining talented immigrants as global competition for creativity and innovation intensify is vital to ensure Canadian businesses can achieve innovation and growth (Gilgoff, 2009). Whether intentionally or not, employers will lose opportunities if they continue to discredit or fail to recognize the potential of all groups in Canadian society. Canadian businesses must make the best use of the talent and experience that immigrants bring with them.



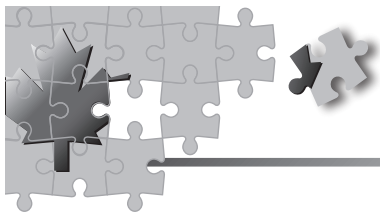
Despite being able to attract and bring internationally educated professionals to Canada, successful integration is not being realized (Gilgoff, 2009). Tax-funded programming to help internationally educated professionals has decreased, and many cannot gain recognition for the education, work experience and skills that they offer (Gilgoff, 2009). Not realizing the full potential of internationally educated professionals comes at a significant cost. Billions in lost wages, lowered productivity, diminished creativity and output are reflected in these untapped opportunities (Gilgoff, 2009).

Many studies reinforce the need to improve how professional organizations should co-ordinate policies on accepting, placing and integrating internationally educated professionals (Gilgoff, 2009).

At the same time some Canadian businesses are failing to take advantage of the potential contributions of internationally educated professionals. The disappointing experiences of some of these highly skilled immigrants make Canada less attractive to other immigrants, especially when competition to attract and retain is increasing. Improved methods to address foreign certification and recognize work experience is needed, including easier access to information from foreign educational institutions (Gilgoff, 2009). Being able to secure and productively employ top talent from all sources is vital to business success, and this goal is compatible with diversity (Gilgoff, 2009). Firms that adopt a diversity agenda will be more successful at coping with labour and creativity shortages (Gilgoff, 2009). Also, businesses that embrace diversity will find previously hidden talents and perspectives, while attracting top talent representatives from other cultures and countries. Trade-oriented businesses do not maximize international trading connections and opportunities if they do not effectively integrate internationally educated professionals into their organizations (Gilgoff, 2009).

Canada as a country already has characteristics attractive to immigrants – deep cultural and racial tensions are found less here than in other countries, and we have enjoyed some success in building a cultural mosaic of people with different backgrounds, experiences and cultures. This should make it easier for Canada to attract talented internationally educated professionals from other countries. However, obstacles including difficulty in obtaining recognition for foreign credentials and equivalent educational experience force them to accept less influential and lower creativity positions, while their talent, education, skills and experience are wasted (Gilgoff, 2009). It would be foolish to assume that these disenfranchised IEPs would not tell others about their experiences and disappointments, spreading word of their difficulty and encouraging others to “think before you come” and “don’t bother – it is no better here” (taken from two respondents in our IEP interview study). Canadian businesses risk losing some of the positive impressions that people from other countries have of Canada, making it more difficult to attract the talented people that are needed. Given that the growing international competition for talent and market holds, Canadian businesses must prove that opportunity exists here, and it is more attractive than the opportunities that exist elsewhere.

Perhaps due to disappointing experiences in finding work with Canadian businesses, more internationally educated professionals and immigrants are becoming self-employed. Young visible minorities have higher rates of ownership of small and medium sized businesses than their Canadian-born counterparts (Gilgoff, 2009). Internationally educated professionals may choose to become entrepreneurs because they feel that Canadian employers cannot offer them the same skills utilization, opportunity to be creative and productive, room for advancement and challenge they desire. This should not be surprising, since internationally educated professionals exhibit entrepreneurial characteristics when they decide to come to Canada, and it may be that these internationally educated professionals represent the most entrepreneurial members of their original countries. Canadian companies will suffer if they cannot recognize the entrepreneurial resources and abilities of newcomers, with education and experience, seeking employment (Gilgoff, 2009).



Findings from the Study

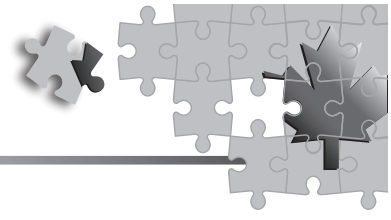
Skilled and ambitious internationally educated professionals may not tolerate having their talents and contributions “wasted”, and the “brain drain” suffered by Canada and the Canadian economy is fuelled by the loss of skilled immigrants (Schalm & Guan, 2009). Increasing global competition and the aggressive strategies of emerging economies tempt internationally educated professionals to leave Canada for more prosperous opportunities. For example, China provides many incentives including free housing, child education funding and research and development grants to attract their former residents back home (Schalm & Guan, 2009). India, another emerging economy, has created a program allowing lifelong visas to people who were born in India, or from Indian-born parents and grandparents, making it easier for them to return to live and work in India.

Schalm and Guan identify four “integration barriers” in their 2009 study: labour market exclusion, systemic discrimination, communication and language perception, and the devaluation of social capital. . These barriers are described as obstacles to the successful integration of internationally trained immigrants into Canadian workplaces.

A study conducted by Alboim and The Maytree Foundation for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy explores the poor relationship between regulatory bodies for professional associations and recognition for international credentials and work experiences of internationally educated professionals (2002). Canada has been successful in attracting many internationally educated professionals, but has not yet been able to take full advantage of their talents due to barriers including failure of regulatory bodies to recognize and advocate for proper learning and educational assessment.

Ideally, an internationally educated professional should be enabled to assess their educational attainment, language abilities, technical skills and knowledge of “Canadian” workplace customs before coming to Canada. Being aware of what to expect and possibly tackling some of the “upgrades” before coming may lead to increased satisfaction with the process and positive outcomes (Alboim, 2002). Criteria to be assessed should be related to the nature of the work desired, and focused to identify opportunities for prior learning recognition and potential gaps inclusively. If an internationally educated professional is found to have skills or educational deficits, they should be able to easily identify what would need to be achieved in order to develop a path to meet the standards in question. Also, advocating for hands-on, demonstrated skills assessment, as opposed to paper credentials, should be encouraged (Alboim, 2002).

Having access to a single and all-encompassing service (as opposed to the multitude of general and specialized, perhaps well-connected but not necessarily integrated, scattered services and sometimes incongruous and contradictory information that exists now) would ensure that each potential newcomer receives accurate information about what they are bringing to Canadian businesses and what they can expect from regulating bodies. Being able to “hit the ground running” increases competitiveness for potential employers and employees as well as reducing the time that an internationally educated professional requires to enter specialized fields. Alboim states “...no matter where an immigrant first looks – to a Visa office, immigration consultant, lawyer, licensing body – ideally he or she would be directed to the portal... provid(ing) access to as much information as possible to enable skilled immigrants for the Canadian labour market (starting overseas), creating realistic expectations and helping with decision-making” (2002).



What has been and is being done and where?

In a 2007 speech, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Monte Solberg stated that Canada must do a better job of recognizing the credentials of internationally educated newcomers.

He explains the purpose of the newly created Foreign Credential Referral Office, which has been designed to inform potential immigrants about where to find correct information about job prospects, is to refer them to have their credentials assessed, and inform them of what, if any, upgrades are required to ensure that they can succeed in their chosen fields. Solberg refers to the “Knowledge Advantage”, which he says will ensure that Canada is known for having the smartest workforce in the world. The Knowledge Advantage consists of having “the best educated, with the knowledge to innovate, the ability to collaborate, and the wisdom to keep on learning.” Also, the most skilled workforce, with elements of craftsmanship, quality and ingenuity. Finally, he refers to adaptability, which will ensure Canada’s lead in changing economic times.

A Canadian Internet portal has been created to assist prospective immigrants in making an informed choice about their migration to Canada. This portal provides information on provincial occupational licensing requirements, local labour markets in communities Canada-wide, courses available from academic institutions (bridging and upgrading), and community-based organizations providing integration services.

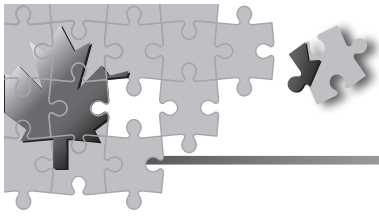
It has been suggested that academic and professional networks be used overseas to provide information to prospective internationally educated professionals about the labour market in Canada and licensing procedures. Many studies (including ours) have emphasized how important it is for IEPs to have clear and accurate information about credential assessment as well as licensing requirements and standards **before** they come to Canada. This will help to ensure that IEPs can make appropriate and informed choices about coming to Canada, and set realistic expectations about labour markets in their respective fields.

Some Canadian academic institutions offer bridging programs for internationally educated professionals. These are designed to “fill the gaps” in educational credentials and also provide language skills assessment. Bridging programs include on the job work experience, training in occupation-specific terminology, and upgrading courses. One drawback is that these programs tend to be costly and not well funded. Also, for the IEP who needs to begin work and earn pay quickly, the option of going to school again may not be feasible.

There is already some work being done nationally with regards to a coordinated effort among all three levels of government, non-governmental organizations, employers, professional associations, and licensing bodies, among others, to develop a successful nation-wide standard to foreign credentials recognition. A more coordinated system for immigrant services, eliminating unnecessary overlap and setting clear jurisdictions for different service providers would be beneficial in making the process more streamlined, economically efficient and easier to navigate.

Competency based testing may offer an alternative or adjunct to educational credential assessment.

Actively involving employers through cultural education, incentives and illustrating the value of the IEP, increases the likelihood of overcoming the more intangible barriers.



Senior Government Initiatives

This is a brief highlight of the initiatives which relate most closely to the IEP.

Under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, the Government of Canada, through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, will provide \$920 million in new immigration funding, over five years, to help newcomers integrate successfully into Ontario communities and achieve their full potential. This agreement includes a provision to involve municipalities in planning and discussions on immigration and settlement. Canada and Ontario will work with the City of Toronto, as well as the Municipal Immigration Committee, which has been established with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

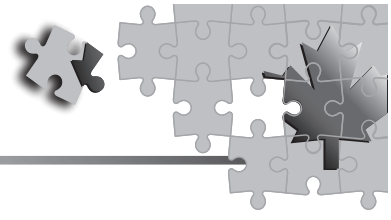
Under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, Ontario will develop a pilot Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Similar to programs already in operation in other provinces, the PNP gives the Province of Ontario the opportunity to nominate immigrants who will help to meet provincial economic priorities and specific labour market needs.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) recently allocated 25\$ million over five years to address foreign credential recognition for regulated occupations, and 10\$ million for non-regulated occupations.

HRSDC also established the Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program, with the goal of developing a consistent, pan-Canadian approach to FCR (initially focusing on nursing, medicine and engineering)

Across the country, governments at all levels, credential evaluation agencies, non-governmental organizations, employers, among others, are already engaged in some aspect of these initiatives aimed at improving the labour market integration of immigrants. A national strategy that includes multi-stakeholder involvement and policies that effectively address employment discrimination against immigrants, fill in training gaps, increase employer awareness of the benefits of hiring immigrants and provide higher levels of language and occupational-specific training is needed (HRDC, 2003).

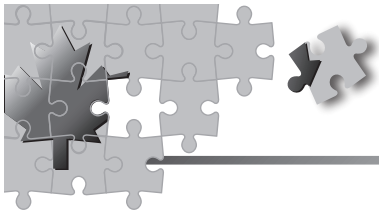
Under the Temporary Foreign-Workers Agreement, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario have signed an agreement that gives Ontario a role in managing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in that province. The agreement is an annex to the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement and is an important step in making this program more responsive to Ontario's particular needs and priorities. It emphasizes support for Ontarians first, and complements the Province's strategy of training and retraining Ontarians through programs such as the Skills to Jobs Action Plan. As part of the agreement, the governments of Ontario and Canada will work more closely to educate employers and potential temporary foreign workers about their rights and responsibilities.



Ontario has set up a website, www.ontarioimmigration.ca, which includes links to guides to living, working and doing business as a new immigrant in Canada. Included in this is “Global Experience Ontario”, which provides:

- Contact information and referrals to the regulatory body in the appropriate field of expertise
- Links to education and assessment programs to provide timely access to the best services available, as close to home as possible
- Information about the licensure and registration processes
- Knowledge about alternative professional avenues to complement skill-sets
- Information on internships and mentorships

Global Experience Ontario also assists internationally trained and educated individuals in regulated non-health professions find out how to qualify for professional practice in Ontario. It contains links to other websites with “e-career maps” to provide steps towards working in Ontario regulated non-health professions.



In other jurisdictions

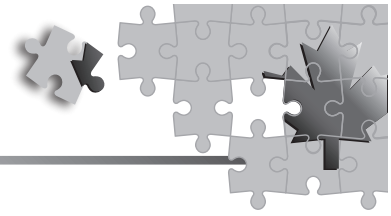
British Columbia has a “systems” approach to integrating newcomers: providing professional work experience, new training, policy and procedure review for professional regulations, and improving understanding of qualification issues and the local job market. A public campaign raising awareness to employers and workers of the benefits of workplace diversity has also been implemented. Programs include an internationally educated engineer pilot, a transition to nursing pilot and an immigrant loan program. These programs focus on capacity building, information services and networking.

Quebec has worked to increase available information for IEPs, improve access to additional training and internships, and strengthen partnerships between bodies assessing foreign credentials.

They have implemented bridging programs for IEPs in the fields of nursing, medicine and engineering and these bridging programs are in high demand. Far more IEPs need courses than can attend, and these programs are both expensive to sustain and difficult to coordinate.

Australia conducts language (common and technical) and occupational skills testing prior to newcomers immigrating to that country. Since implementation in the late 1990s, economic outcomes for skilled internationally educated professionals have improved. Australia has also created partnerships with academic institutions in foreign countries to offer Australian regulation-specific course modules for prospective immigrants. For example, someone in a partner country can attend an institution and earn courses that lead to an Australian degree in a technical or skilled field.

Conclusions

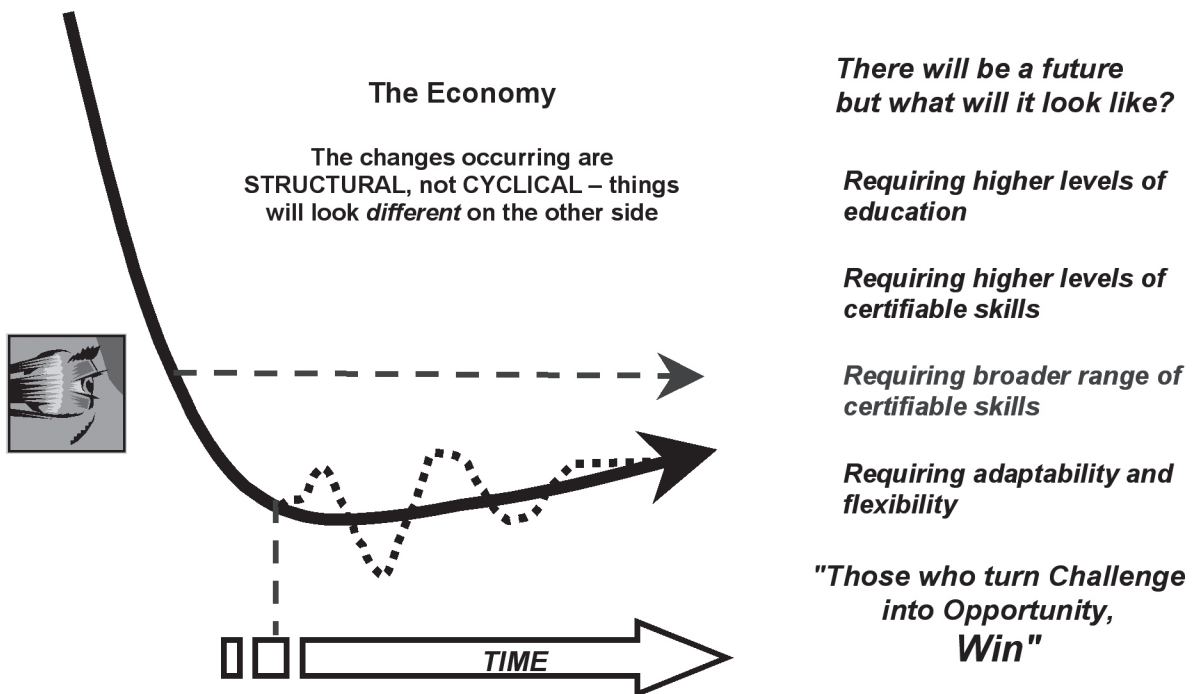


Economic Development is concerned with the most effective deployment of **ASSETS** in order to create **PROSPERITY**.

Once, prosperity-driving assets were:

- Land
- Access to markets
- The “Three R’s”: Rivers, Roads and Railways
- Raw materials
- Geographical positioning
- Low cost

For the most part, people migrated to areas that had these advantages, since that is where they could find work. Of course, if those advantages fade, then the community may be bereft of the founding source of that prosperity.





Conclusions

We can see this effect in Ontario today:

- Land for agriculture is yielding ever-lower returns for the traditional family farm. Large scale competition and the attendant economies of scale have created crushing price competition for commodity products. Further, emerging countries with far lower costs have become major sources of supply for many of these commodities.
- The same applies to raw materials, such as those derived from forestry and mining. Northern Canadian communities have struggled with this reality for several decades and the challenges are growing.
- Geographical positioning is another evolving factor. While the United States will remain the largest market for most Canadian businesses for many years to come, the relative importance of the U.S. market will diminish in the future as the 'population-rich' countries of China and India, (amongst others) become more affluent and create demand for more imported products. Those markets are not next door to Canada.
- Low cost will remain as the ultimate factor, if all else is equal. We cannot readily compete on low cost but we can ensure that nothing else is ever equal. This means continuous improvement; this means continuous and creative adaptation.

“There is a bulldozer of change sweeping the planet.

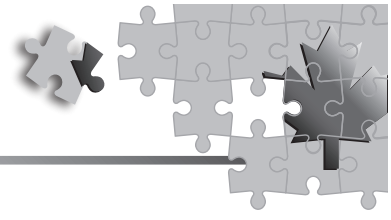
If you don't become part of the bulldozer, you become part of the road”

– Frank Ogden, Futurist

The term 'global economy' has been used over the past two decades but, to date, this has meant largely that the Western World sold goods and services to the Third World. The present economic downturn may trigger a permanent, structural change, creating a true global economy and one for which we have not yet prepared.

The Martin Prosperity Institute report on 'Ontario in the Creative Age', speaks eloquently to this matter. There is no need for further study. The old playing field is becoming hostile; a new playing field awaits, the Creative Economy. It is likely that more jobs in the future will require higher degrees of education, higher levels of certifiable skills, more adaptable skills, a broader range of skills, as well as more flexible attitudes. ***Those who turn challenge into opportunity win, and the imperative is to become prepared.***

This is not a 'doom and gloom' scenario, unless we do not respond to the challenges. It is, in fact, a golden opportunity, if the right steps are taken to compete in the rapidly emerging global economy.



The nature of the 'asset'

It has long been common-place for civic leaders to talk about their local people as being the most valuable asset of the community. While this always had a component of political rhetoric to it, the statement is becoming more of a reality than ever and the trend is unlikely to abate. In fact, the former condition of people migrating to jobs will 'turnabout'. More and more, jobs will come to people; **but only those with the required levels of education and training.**

Recently, governments in many countries have invested very heavily in hard infrastructure, in order to stimulate sagging economies. If a fraction of these billions of dollars were to be spent on this important asset, highly educated and skilled people, then those countries would reap the rewards, decade over decade.

Further, unlike concrete and steel, these assets do not 'depreciate' with age. People are one of the few self-improving assets available to a community and the investment can be paid back with large advantages. People learn, grow and create; put **many** people together and the sparks of creativity can fly, **often due to their differences.** If we all sit around the coffee shop with the same ideas, born from our similar backgrounds and shunning anything different, then new ideas are less likely to emerge. There are communities with that characteristic, but, fortunately, the Greater Toronto Area is not one. The GTA has a remarkable mix of diversity and this is the key to future prosperity. Simply, we must deploy the assets effectively and efficiently by engaging the best and brightest in moving the economy forward into the Creative Economy.

Consider that an inadequate supply of the right asset is a detriment to prosperity. All projections show that the Canadian-born population demographic is clearly on a 'downward' spiral. We have an insufficiency of younger persons with the required levels of education and skills to meet the challenges of the emerging economies.

Consider that an ineffective or inefficient deployment of the right asset is a waste of that asset. Employing highly educated and skilled persons in jobs well below their potential is very wasteful.

If it is vital to our future prosperity to have the most capable people working in our economy to meet the needs of the future, and if higher levels of education and skills are indicative of that capability, then IEPs represent a vital part of the solution to this dilemma. Fully credentialed or not, they are the 'cream' of their original population, and 'ready-made', with perhaps some polishing and fine-tuning being all that is required.

This **is not** a plea for fair and equitable treatment for IEPs. This is driven entirely by the competitive needs of the economy and, by extension, the needs of employers that comprise the economy.

If IEPs are not valuable to the economy, then why encourage them to come?

If IEPs are valuable, then effective and rapid deployment of this asset is paramount.

Businesses are responding, although unevenly

Larger businesses are responding better to the advantages that the IEP can offer and this is not surprising.

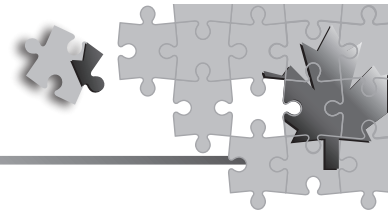
- Larger firms are more likely to have an international component to their enterprise. As a result, they see the IEP certainly as a culturally-familiar asset to be deployed to assist in business development in various countries. These same firms are also experiencing the effect of the IEP as an agent of creative change, which is a far more vital effect and an even better reason to hire them.
- The culture of the larger organization is already diverse and more accepting of difference.
- The perceived 'risk' is diluted. If the arrival of an IEP is feared to have negative consequences, then the percentage impact is more readily absorbed by the larger number of people in the organization. This posture is driven by fear, rather than reality, in the majority of cases.

Smaller firms are often less internationally focused and the risk described above is proportionately higher, or feared to be. If the IEP does not perform, then the company does not wish to be accused of discrimination if that person must be let go. Further, smaller firms tend to hire through less formal means, often recruiting friends and others known to their existing employees. Cultural mixing is not so far advanced that a broad range of candidates, from diverse origins, are made available in this manner. This is not a criticism of these smaller firms, since the concerns are understandable, and means must be found to alleviate this perceived risk taking.

We have researched no evidence to support this last contention. Regrettably, although prejudice exists within people in all sizes of enterprises, large and small, the rules enforced in the larger organizations tend to suppress some of this abhorrent effect. In the less formally structured smaller firms, this may not always be the case.

Closing “the learning recognition gap” among immigrants would add tens of thousands of skilled workers to the labour force resulting in a \$4 to \$6 billion boost per year if these positions are filled.

– Conference Board of Canada –“Findings from Securing Our Future Case Studies”, June 2008



Much is being done in many areas

Based upon our research and the many previous studies conducted, the IEP respondents are not seeing changes in their outcomes. Yet we know that much is being done by the various institutions charged with eliminating the barriers and smoothing the path:

- ...to understand the gaps
- ...to bridge the gaps
- ...to create an understanding of the differences and to promote this very diversity as the advantage that it truly is

What causes this apparent disconnect in these two realities? An analogy, with which all manufacturers and many service businesses are familiar, will serve well. In the 1960's it was common for a given production part to spend three or four weeks in the production line. The actual time spent being worked upon (adding value) was often an hour or less and the rest of the time (non-value added time) was spent waiting to be worked on, before each of the many process stages. There are many reasons for this, one of which was a fear in the mind of the station supervisor that he or she would have to send people home if they did not have such a waiting inventory of work.

Now imagine that an improvement is introduced at the very start of the production line. In order for the final process stage to see the benefits of the improvement, weeks must pass, since the line is replete with the stock of previously produced unimproved assemblies. Driven by the success of the Japanese automakers in the 1970's, new systems have been put into place over the decades which have reduced the waiting time from weeks to mere hours. Thus problems are found more quickly, solutions are implemented sooner and the end of the line sees the benefits with little delay. Manufacturers did not simply introduce incremental improvements to effect this change. The older systems, with the attendant 'silos', barriers and self-protection mechanisms, had to be torn down and replaced with a system that was designed to achieve the new goals, rather than to protect the established system. Part of this process was to reassure all concerned that an empty work station was not a cause to send an employee home.

We believe that the parallels are strong, and, once more, no criticism of those involved is intended. Collectively we need to move beyond the gradual and limited changes that take place within established systems that were not designed to achieve the new goals and re-implement our systems with those goals in mind. We do not have a generation or a decade or even many years to accomplish this. The rate of change in the economy has never been so high and it is unlikely to abate. ***We need to move with the speed of the economy and get ahead of that curve.***

Bear in mind that this is not, and never should be, a matter of lowering the bar of Canadian standards to admit people who, in another country, met different standards. ***It is a matter of providing support to capable and experienced people to meet the standards and to then deploy these people to improve our prosperity.***



Conclusions

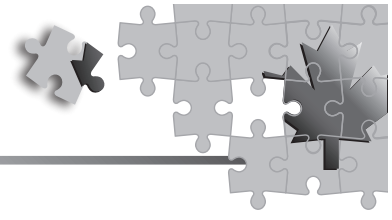
A most vital asset must not be squandered

Canadians have very positive attitudes toward diversity. We can widen this advantage in the current economic downturn, as US attitudes toward skilled immigrants may harden. If Ontario businesses do not hire these skilled workers – many of whom have more education and experience than Canadian-born – you can be sure that competing jurisdictions will. The quoted Conference Board of Canada figure of \$4 to \$6 billion is a **loss**, if we do not remove the unnecessary barriers rapidly.

The unintended consequences of not improving the present situation may be:

- Discouraging new IEPs from even considering Canada, thus losing their potential talent to other countries, and missing the intended objective. *Bad news travels fast.*
- Encouraging IEPs to come to our communities to serve as well-educated, frustrated and disillusioned workers, employed far below their capacities. The restructuring of our economy that is happening daily, and the consequent impacts on employment for the lesser educated person, is already a very tough challenge and will be so for some time to come.
- A greater propensity for adding these persons to the rolls requiring social assistance.
- Creating a 'next generation', the children of the under-employed IEP, equally disenchanting with the 'system', and who may not meet their full potential either.

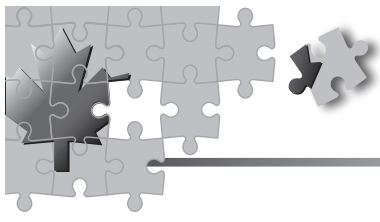
In economic development, we deplore such a waste.



The Super-Examination

The act of passing an examination alone does not provide a credential. Examinations are generally based upon a sampling of the course of study of the student. The concept is that, without knowing what the test will entail, the student must study all aspects of their courses.

Is a 'super-examination' possible within a field of study that is not a 'sample' but one which covers every aspect of the required course of study. Would this provide the credentials? This 'super-examination' can be used to cull those who have not engaged in the full course of study. While it would be a very long test, likely divided into stages, taken over several weeks, it is still far shorter and less costly than repeating a two, three or four year course of study.



Recommendations

The issues to be addressed require actions that are 'simple, but not easy'. Over-complicated solutions to simple issues rarely have effect and long lists of actions are only implemented selectively. Our recommendations are few, but may have a profound effect if implemented with vigour.

For Employers

- ... who recognize the high value of the IEP and the imperative to deploy the IEP in their organizations:

Speak with passion on the competitive advantages of the IEP to your customers, suppliers, sector association colleagues and friends at the chamber of commerce.

- ... who see the IEP as a risk in uncertain economic times

Different is good; appreciate the differences in order to leverage the advantages. Take the IEP on a 'test drive' by hiring them on a defined term contract and add 20% to their fees to cover benefit costs.

If things do not work out as planned, then the contract ends and the costs associated with the termination of an employee are avoided.

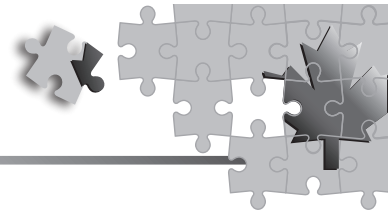
If, as is more likely, the experience is positive, then hire them as you would any other employee.

For those 'smoothing the path', take the zero-based approach

Sometimes it is better to tear down the old house, rather than use it as the base for the new dwelling since the problems associated with the old structure may undermine the effort to build the new structure.

The same applies to institutions and systems designed to achieve a particular goal. Quite naturally, but inadvertently, walls and silos are built in an attempt to protect the nature of the work being carried out. These same walls will impede progress and change. Necessary hurdles act to ensure that skills and capabilities can be vetted, while unnecessary barriers achieve nothing positive. Organizational silos and barriers can be impediments to effective, efficient and rapid action. They are also very costly, directly and in their implications.

It is essential not to engage in resource-limited thinking. The latter traps us in the present, with the resources and capacities that we have today. Instead, we must examine the 'ideal, simple path', determine how to best achieve this, irrespective of the mechanisms available today, and then bridge the gap between today and the requirements. As with many problems, the issue is 'simple, but not easy'.



We recommend taking the 'zero-based' approach. Most businesses will be familiar with this in their planning cycles. Essentially:

- Assume that there is no 'system' today by which to achieve the goals efficiently
- Do not yet consider who has to do what; just what has to be done and when
- Identify the necessary, value-added steps to enable the IEP to help our economy to prosper
- Identify the *barriers* that must be *removed* and the *required* hurdles that must be maintained, in order to safeguard *necessary* standards. *Please note the emphases.*
- Implement this system, drawing the necessary resources from the existing structures, but not import all of the old methods and processes, unless these are proven to be necessary and valued-added in achieving the current objectives

The only barrier is the concerted will to carry this out and the cost to do so. The latter must be an assessment of the public investment versus the public gain. ***Else why would we do it?***

Economic Development is an investment, not a cost

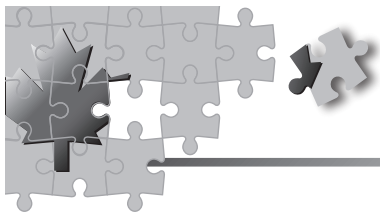
Include the means to enable the IEP to benefit from the newly identified mechanisms, by the provision of funds to port them through the tailored upgrading process, while still supporting themselves and their families. Using the asset analogy once more, this is no different than upgrading infrastructure; the investment is repaid through the prosperity that it creates.

Political will

Finally, all of this may be a tough sell in hard economic times. The majority of the public who are uninformed may not appreciate the critical future need. "Why don't we do that for our **own** people" is one such sentiment. Although an unwelcome response, the fact that the IEP has already undergone many rigours of the higher education system somewhere, might imply that they have the discipline and ambition to do so again. That is, their chances of succeeding may be higher, with commensurate higher returns for the investment made by Canada. The act of emigrating is in itself indicative of high risk tolerance and entrepreneurship characteristics – ***these are business creating characteristics.***

Leadership IS needed.

“Leadership is doing always what is needed, not always what is popular”



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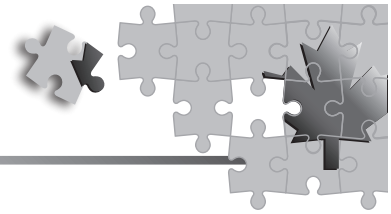
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Appendix I Consolidated Results of Primary Research with IEP Respondents

Attempts were made to contact IEPs, primarily through telephone and, in a small number of cases, through face to face discussions.

The results were:

Number of attempted contacts: In excess of 250

Interview declined: 42

Interviews conducted: 127

Information collection focused on the following questions, with the summary results shown:

1. Have you been able to find work in the field in which you were educated back home?

Yes 43%

No 57%

2. Are you satisfied with said work ie. hours/challenge? Is it a suitable position for someone with your educational background and credentials?

Yes 21%

No 76%

Unsure 2%

3. Were you asked to or told that you should upgrade your skills? Which skills were you asked to or told to upgrade?

- i) skills related to the profession itself (ie. technical skills upgrade, profession specific skills like new programming language) - 18%
- ii) skills related to mandates from professional organizations (ie. certification requirements, including educational requirements) - 14%
- iii) skills related to "culture" (ie. "Canadian" business, customs, culture) - 18%
- iv) skills related to language (ie. English or French as a second language, other languages) - 11%
- v) educational requirements (ie. education not from a recognized Canadian equivalent, not recognized at all) = 39%

Yes, asked/told to upgrade: 76%

No, not asked/told to upgrade: 19%

Not asked but did anyway: 5%

Other - see below: 10%

"companies wanted me to but I can work in my own business and make more money anyway"

"I wasn't asked to upgrade to Canadian education, but haven't found jobs that are hiring for my education level" (Master's degree in Arts)

"no I never get any interviews for business positions so I don't know if I would be asked to upgrade"

"not at all because I haven't been able to speak with anyone who would interview me and ask me to go back. If the job wanted me to go back I would while I worked there but nowhere is hiring me for that to start"

4. Do you feel that you are able to fulfill your professional ambitions? If no, why not? What barriers do you feel are standing in your way?

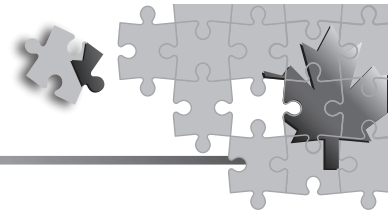
Yes 29%

No 71%

If not, why not? What barriers do you feel are standing in your way?

*** note - more than one reason may have been cited as being a barrier by each informant

- i) organizational limitations (ie. licensing, requirements for certification): 13%
- ii) other priorities (family to support, new family members): 18%



- iii) cultural issues (ie. ethnocentrism, cultural biases and negativity): 0%
- iv) educational (ie. need more education/"Canadian" education): 16%
- v) time (ie. "I am too old now to go back to school" - "it takes too long to be certified"): 9%
- vi) career change (ie. chose new profession/field): 11%
- vii) money (ie. doesn't make enough money in that job): 7%
- viii) other: 4% (see below)
- ix) language difficulties: 7%
- x) specialized education (ie. education too specialized/too "much"): 4%
- xi) labour/job market issues (ie. not enough jobs in their sector/too specialized education): 11%

Other responses

- a) "It's the exposure - for what I am trained in there are nine companies in Canada who use me. I have the skills and the knowledge; but the sectors for my job are not available, that is, they are in the hidden job market. Networking is 40-50% of the task."
- b) "No way - I work in a very low paying position to pay my rent and I can't wait to go home."

5. Why do you think that you have not been or have been successful?

Think they have been/will be successful: 38%

Think they have not been successful: 62%

Why they think that they have been successful:

Personal

"I gained confidence... a lot of newcomers don't think we can do it but after taking that co-op I understood that I have what it takes and was able to get the job."

"I am a very, very hard worker. "

"I am friendly and outgoing which is what you need to sell. I am only selling in a store though, not from an office."

Networking

"I am very positive and have taken a job at a company where a lot of people from my culture work."

Nature of Job/Skills

"For what I do the skills are always the same. Once you know how to do it, you know how to do it."

"I am a good people person. Knowing how the business works is important to hiring the right people for my teams."

"I know my field very well. I didn't have to worry about my family back home so I concentrated on finding good work."

"I know my business."

Other

"I was not successful with working because I couldn't find a job but I am successful as a parent."

"I haven't really been successful yet but I will be soon."

"I decided to start my own business instead and get to choose my own hours now and pick which things I do."

Educational

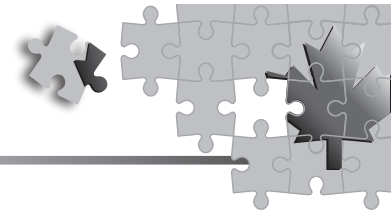
"I am upgrading my resume and skills by attending night time classes."

"My diploma is recognized here. I went to the best school in the Philippines and (have) many years of experience."

"Actually it worked out better because I can take a degree here and work when it's done."

"I have been successful because I have applied to and am attending college and then looking for real work."

"I picked a job that is in demand and fast-tracked to get certified here. It cost a lot but it was worth it. I got OSAP and am still paying it off."



Why they think that they have *not* been successful:

Education

"My school is not recognized. It is one of the best schools back home but it means absolutely nothing here."

"I guess my schooling wasn't good enough and I should have gone somewhere else if I wanted to practice, or learned something different."

"You need more education here to be an architect and find work than at home."

"I would have taken something different back home, or from a school that was recognized here."

"I have to go back to school all over again to learn exactly what I know now!"

"...because my education is not equivalent they do not allow me to write my licensing exam and I cannot practice here."

"I think to be able to do sales in Canada you need to be Canadian, like be able to understand how business and sales are done here. It's different from home."

"Economics? I don't know. My education means nothing here."

Job Market

"I think there are too many people who want to be university professors here so all I can do is what is available to me."

Certification

"Nobody told me before I came that this would be the case that I couldn't practice here like I could at home."

Over qualification

"You never know what to write on your resume - sometimes they tell me in the interview that I am overqualified. I never know whether to put everything or not."

Culture/Language

"I have called places that I apply to and they tell me that I don't have enough Canadian experience to work in business with their firms and concerns."

"Well my English is bad so I need to work on that."

Regrets

"Stay home! Go into a different field or come here for school instead."

"Don't come. It is no better here."

"I can't wait to get out of here and back to my own country."

6. What could YOU bring to a company? OR freestyle

"I speak four different languages, including English. I understand the markets in India and Pakistan and these are huge partners for Canada! I understand the customs and how people there think and work."

"I'm a hard, hard worker."

"I love being an RMT (Registered Massage Therapist) - it's my passion. I can still do it on my own but I can't call myself registered, so that means that people can't have their insurance cover my services."

"All of my education and experience."

"I think people need to find where jobs are needed and then apply for those. Immigrants should work together to help each other to find jobs too. More businesses are being started here by immigrants - they should work towards hiring other immigrants."

"I wish it was easier to practice law here but it is a competitive field... I can still work with law doing what I do now."
– had taken lower position than hoped

"Sales techniques are the same, the flow is different here and the expectations of a salesperson and customs are different."

"I am open to hiring all sorts of people and having experience with different job markets makes me aware of the skills people bring." – now working in human resources management

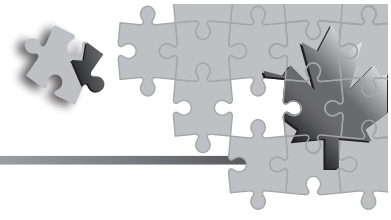
"I'm young and a fast learner and I am going to university."

"I love working with people."

"We are a very good team at my job."

"People from different places can understand others from those same cultures and share the insight with other people as well."

"Well the skills are pretty much the same so if they need health care workers I don't understand why they make it so hard."



Appendix II Consolidated Results of Secondary Research

There is a vast body of research upon which to draw. The case for the economic importance of the IEP is made time and time again with no voices of reason raised in contrary opinion.

Title: The acculturation of internationally educated health professionals in Canada

Authors: Claudia von Zweck and Pamela Burnett

Journal: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY NOW. MAY 2006. VOLUME 8(3), p 22-25

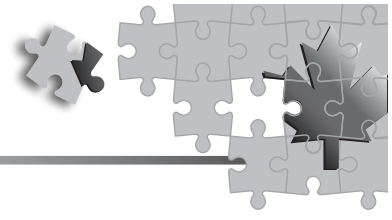
- Canada now has one of the highest rates of immigration among the thirty member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Ruddick, 2000). The aging Canadian population and falling fertility rates have led to a large dependence upon immigration for the growth of the workforce. Between 1991 and 2001, approximately 1.8 million immigrants came to Canada, an increase from 1.2 million in the 1980s (McIsaac, 2003). Over 70 percent of labour force growth in Canada was attributable to immigration in the 1990s, a rise from 13 percent a decade earlier (Ruddick, 2000)
- Professionals are now the largest group of immigrants coming to Canada, with increasing numbers intending to work in occupations that have defined requirements for entry to their professions (Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), 2003a)
- Despite Canada’s acculturation strategy, workforce integration has been unattainable for many professionals coming to this country. Many recent immigrants to Canada have not been able to access jobs that match their formal qualifications, particularly those immigrants who belong to visible minorities. Less than half of the professionally trained new Canadians who arrived in 2002 were able to work in their field of expertise in Canada (Delaney, 2005). The education received by immigrants outside of Canada frequently does not obtain the same market value in Canada (Metropolis Project Team, 2003). As a result many professionals coming to Canada have become marginalized in their attempts to work in their area of expertise.
- The Conference Board of Canada estimated that the economic impact of not recognizing the credentials of new Canadians is approximately \$2.3 billion in lost productivity (Delaney, 2005). Difficulties with acculturation in Canada also have been linked to negative outcomes such as lower motivation and community participation, reduced health status and increased social deviance and conflict (Berry, 1997)
- Approximately 40 percent of recent immigrants have incomes less than half of the median income of Canadian-born residents (CIC, 2001)

Title: Xerox Canada survey: Immigrants bring innovation

Authors:

Journal: Copyright Laurentian Technomedia Inc. Oct 2007

- Xerox Research Centre of Canada released this week a survey showing that many Canadian businesses associate diversity with innovation, despite the ongoing hiring difficulties faced by skilled immigrant workers in the real world.
- Companies often cite roadblocks to employing foreign workers, including language barriers and cost. While Hadi Mahabadi (vice-president and manager of the Xerox Research Centre of Canada) does have to front the cost of immigration lawyers and English training, he said that there is plenty of ROI to be had from increasing the diversity in one's business. (And, he pointed out, there are government programs available that pay for an immigrant's initial training, allowing companies to "test-drive" their foreign hires.)
- Many anecdotes of IEPs submitting two very similar resumes, where one had their real name, and the other a more "Canadian-sounding" name - most of the time, the Canadianized resume got a call-back, while the resume submitted under their own name was ignored.
- Earlier this year, IT industry advocacy group CATA released a report entitled "On the Road to Building an ICT Framework for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP)," which was based on two national surveys and six focus groups separately involving IEPs and employers.
- Said CATA vice-president of research Kevin Wennekes, "Instead of making a concentrated effort to hire [internationally educated professionals, or IEPs], they instead prefer to build or develop their Canadian contacts."
- Xerox Centre has reaped the reward of bucking this trend, however. Boasting a staff comprised of 50 percent immigrants from 35 different countries, Mahabadi said that his scientists average 1.5 patents per year; the Centre itself has racked up over a 1,000 patents already.
- One benefit is a stronger global connection. Said Mahabadi: "Diversity is a big help in business success, especially now that we have to compete on a global level. (Foreign workers) can understand customer needs in their part of the world. They can satisfy the needs of the culture of another world." For example, the power goes out regularly in certain parts of the world, a fact that a company might not have clued in on unless a foreign worker from there was able to share that fact with them-and then adjust design specifications accordingly.
- Said Mahabadi: "Canada has to switch from a resource-based economy, and to do that, we need to have multi-talented people in science and technology, and that means diversity."



Title: Integrating Internationally Educated Professionals: Documenting University Bridging Programs in Ontario

Authors: Schalm and Guan

Journal:

- Canada's economic apartheid has resulted in the growing social exclusion of racialized groups.
- Socially constructed opportunities and barriers within Canadian organizations and institutional processes impact the labour market integration and the overall social integration of immigrants. From the IEP's point of view, social inclusion should be the realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in their new country
- Barriers that skilled immigrants face are structural and systemic rather than individual and incidental

Social Exclusion and Integration Model

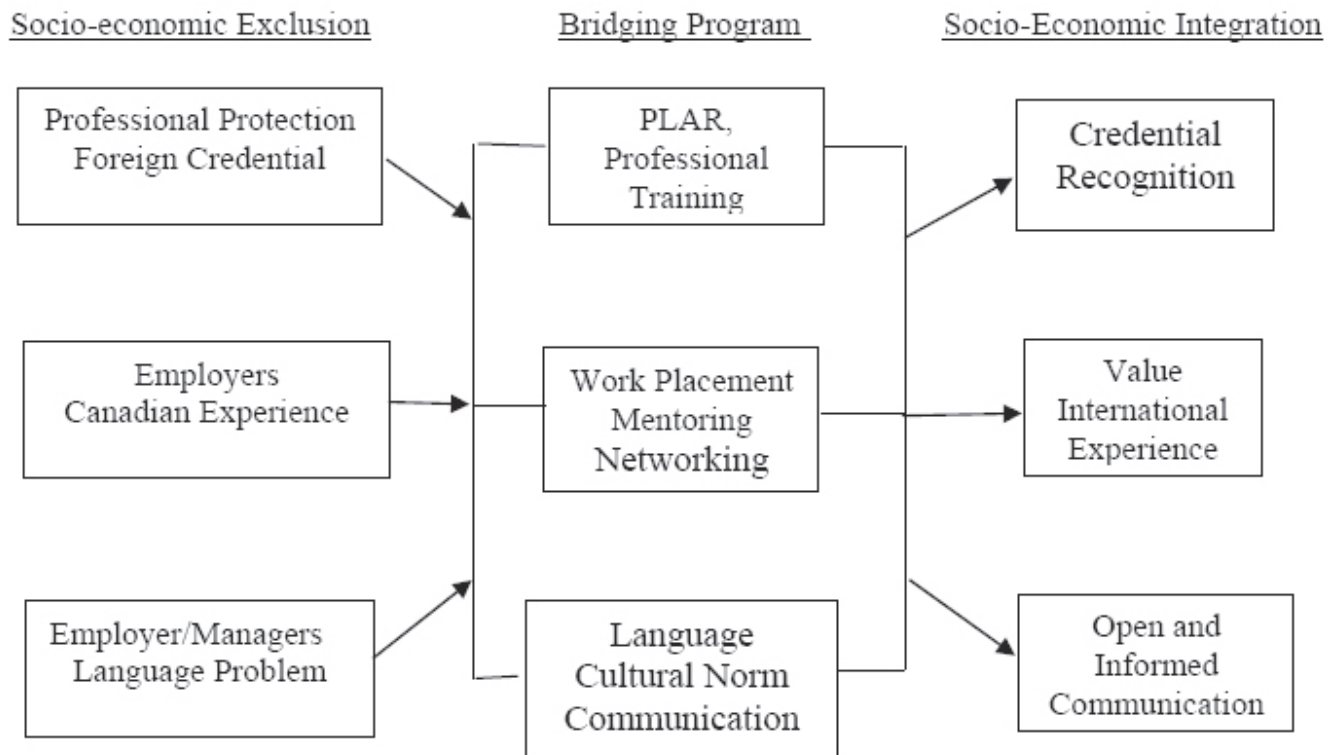
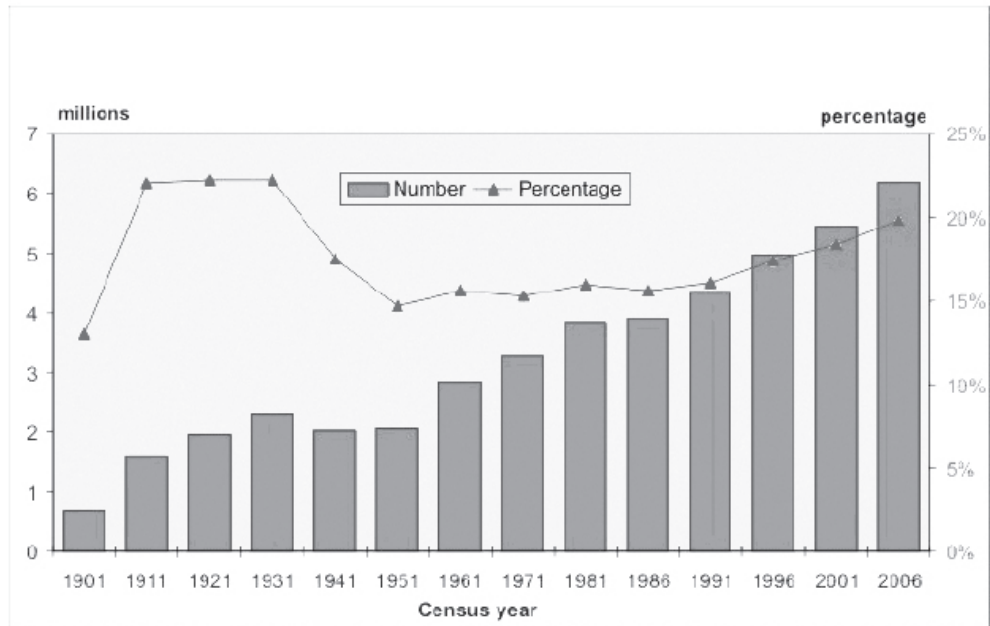


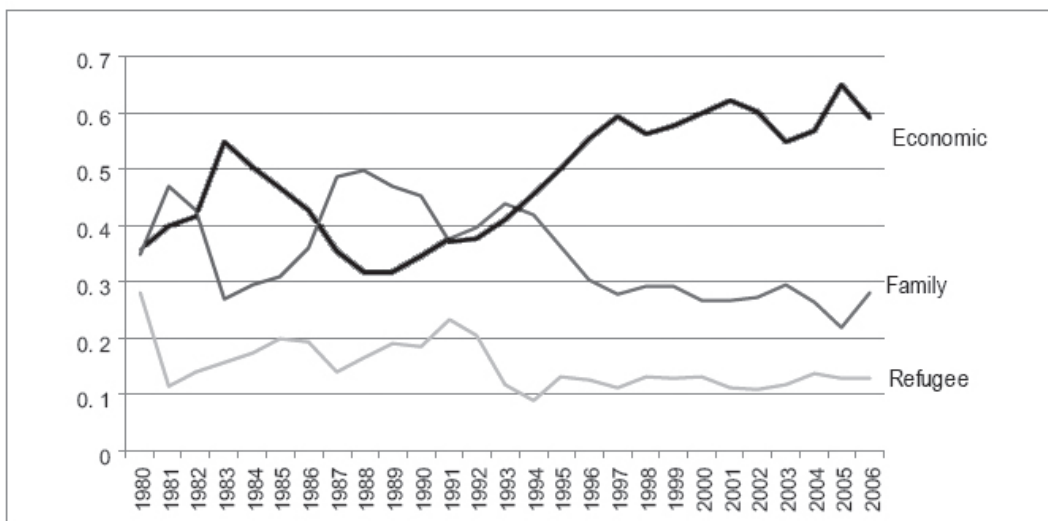
Figure 1:

Number and share of the foreign-born population in Canada, 1901 to 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1901 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 2008).

Figure 2: Canada Immigration by Category, 1980-2006



Source: Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2004.

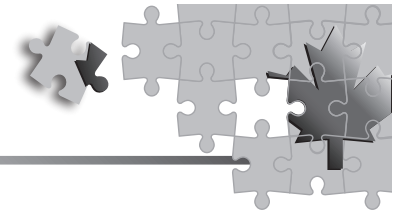
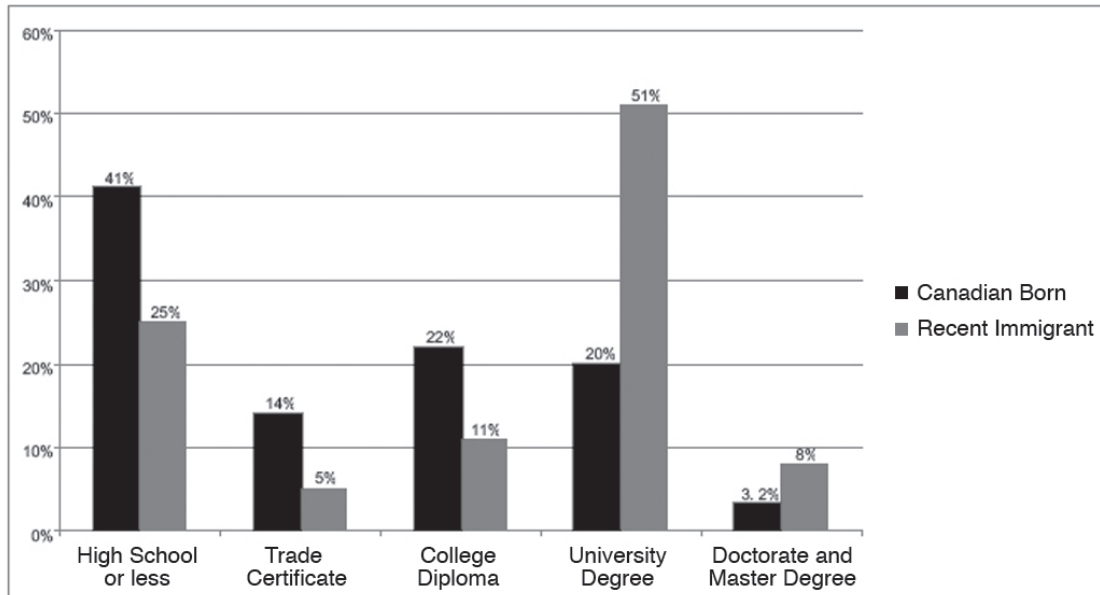


Figure 3: Education Levels: Canadian Born vs. Recent Immigrants, 2006 Census



Source: Statistics Canada, 2008a.

Figure 6: Top 10 countries of birth of recent immigrants, 1981 to 2006

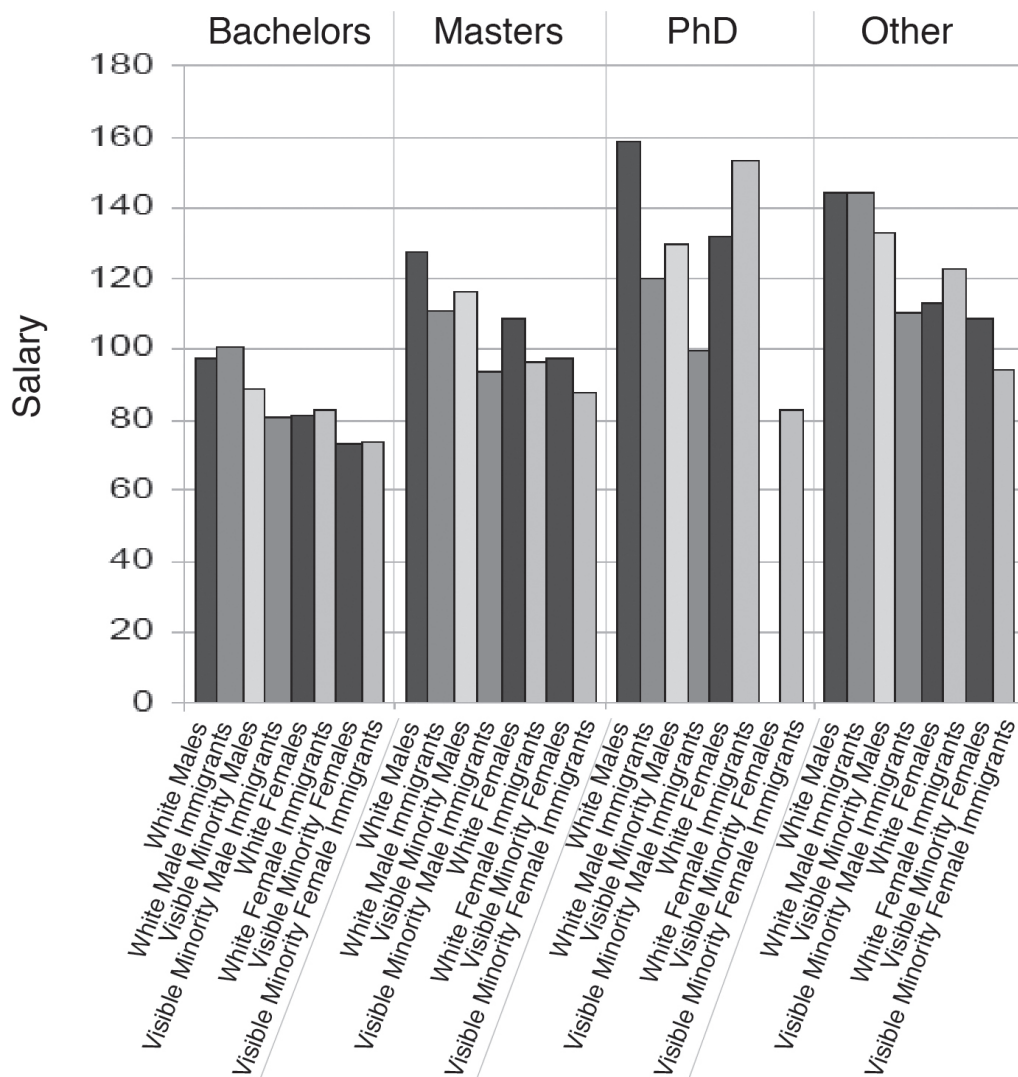
| Order | 2006 Census | 2001 Census | 1996 Census | 1991 Census | 1981 Census |
|-------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | People's Republic of China | People's Republic of China | Hong Kong | Hong Kong | United Kingdom |
| 2 | India | India | People's Republic of China | Poland | Viet Nam |
| 3 | Philippines | Philippines | India | People's Republic of China | United States of America |
| 4 | Pakistan | Pakistan | Philippines | India | India |
| 5 | United States of America | Hong Kong | Sri Lanka | Philippines | Philippines |
| 6 | South Korea | Iran | Poland | United Kingdom | Jamaica |
| 7 | Romania | Taiwan | Taiwan | Viet Nam | Hong Kong |
| 8 | Iran | United States of America | Viet Nam | United States of America | Portugal |
| 9 | United Kingdom | South Korea | United States of America | Lebanon | Taiwan |
| 10 | Colombia | Sri Lanka | United Kingdom | Portugal | People's Republic of China |

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1981 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 2008e).

Note: 'Recent immigrants' refers to landed immigrants who arrived in Canada within five years prior to a given census.

- In 2001-2006, 51% of immigrants aged 25 to 64 had a university degree, compared to 20 percent of Canadians. Some 25 percent of recent immigrants had a degree in engineering, compared to just 6 percent of Canadian-born degree holders. And 6 percent of recent immigrants had studied computer and information sciences, compared to 2 percent of Canadian graduates.
- The Employee Survey was conducted in 2007 among managers, professionals, and executives from the FP500 companies; top Canadian law firms; and Catalyst Canada member organizations. A total of 17,908 individuals completed the survey. The questionnaire was designed to cover three main categories: demographic information, career indicators, and work environment. Demographic information included gender, age, race, immigration status, educational level, and international credentials. Career indicators included earnings, organizational rank, years in organizations, and questions on career satisfaction. Work environment included questions on industries. The industries included: finance, accounting, law, manufacturing, retail, utilities, technology, and others.

Figure 7: Earnings, Education Level and Diversity Status



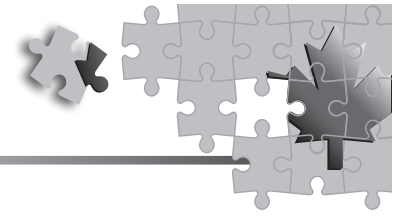


Figure 9: Career Satisfaction, Race and Immigration Status

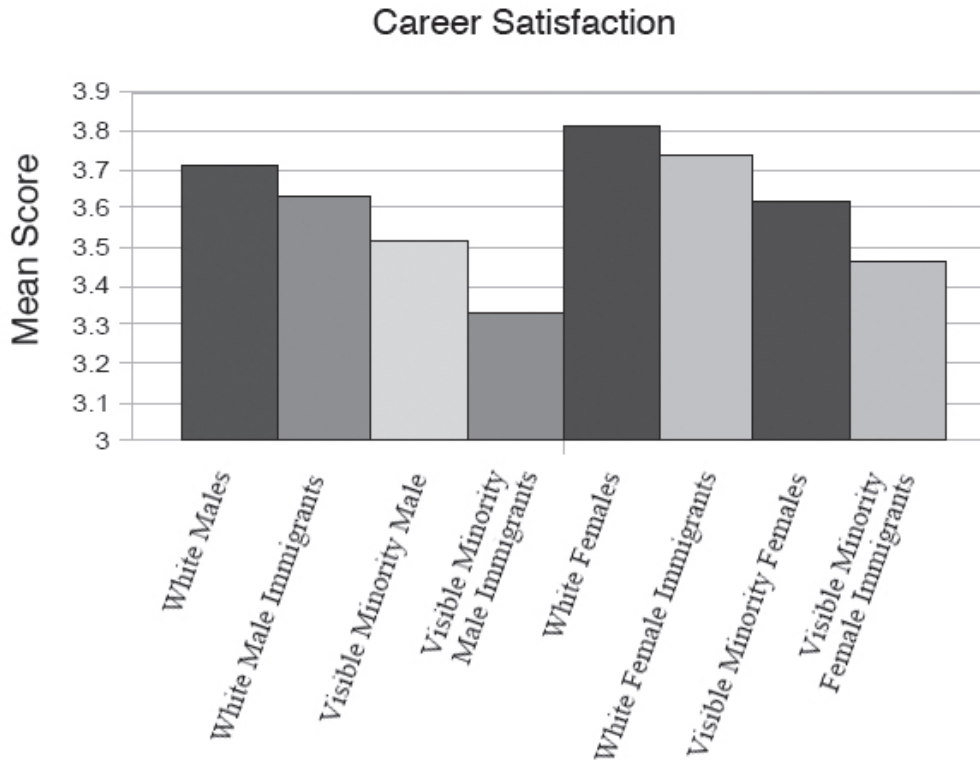
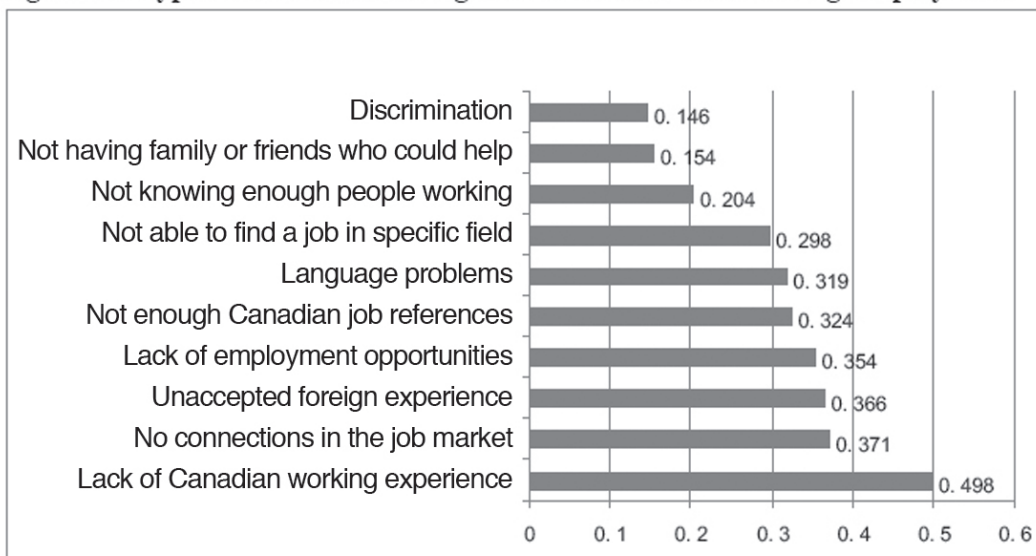


Figure 10: Type of Difficulties Immigrants Encountered in Seeking Employment



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005

Federal, provincial and territorial governments speed up foreign credential recognition for newcomers to Canada

TORONTO, Ontario, November 30, 2009 - Under the new Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, foreign-trained workers who submit an application to be licensed or registered to work in certain fields will be advised within one year whether their qualifications will be recognized. The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Co-Chair of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, and the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, today endorsed a new framework to enhance foreign qualification recognition for internationally trained workers.

The Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications is part of the Government of Canada's strategy to have the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. Recognizing foreign credentials is part of the strategy, and foreign qualification recognition is the process of verifying that knowledge, skills, work experience and education obtained in another country are comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons.

"Attracting and retaining the best international talent to address existing and future labour market challenges is critical to Canada's long-term economic success," said Minister Finley. "Ensuring that foreign credentials and qualifications are assessed and recognized in a timely manner will enable newcomers to maximize their talents."

Minister Finley and Minister Kenney thanked the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, consisting of federal, provincial and territorial representatives, for its work on the Framework.

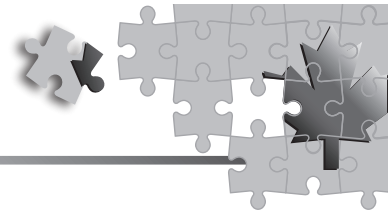
"This framework is another important step in paving the road to success for Ontario's newcomers," said the Honourable Michael Chan, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. "This builds on the plan our government already has in place to help newcomers get licensed in their field and get jobs."

The Framework follows the Government of Canada's commitment in the 2008 Speech from the Throne to "work with the provinces to make the recognition of foreign credentials a priority, attract top international students to Canada and increase the uptake of immigrant settlement programs."

The Framework states that governments across Canada will work towards better pre-arrival services, assessments that are fair, transparent, consistent and timely across Canada, and improved workforce participation services for newcomers. These services will help internationally trained workers put their training and knowledge to work sooner.

"A priority of this government has been to make our immigration system more competitive globally and more responsive to Canada's needs," said Minister Kenney. "This framework complements initiatives such as the Action Plan for Faster Immigration, as they make our immigration system better meet the needs of our labour market. We want newcomers to be able to use their skills and work to their full potential. It's good for them and good for the Canadian economy."

Minister Finley and Minister Kenney also met with community leaders in the Greater Toronto Area to discuss foreign credential recognition and its place in Canada's economic recovery. In particular, the discussion highlighted the commitments made by the Government of Canada to improve the process for newcomers to get their education, skills and experience assessed and recognized.



The Economic Action Plan committed \$50 million to work with the provinces and territories to address barriers to credential recognition in Canada. This investment will do four things:

- Develop the principles of timeliness, transparency, fairness and predictability that the federal, provincial and territorial governments set out to guide the process;
- Develop standards for the timely handling of requests;
- Identify the priority occupations for developing recognition standards; and
- Help people who want to come to Canada start the assessment process before they arrive.

The Foreign Credential Recognition Program and the Foreign Credentials Referral Office are the key federal initiatives in place to support pan-Canadian implementation of the Framework.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=499119>

New framework for determining validity of foreign credentials

By ALTHIA RAJ, SUN MEDIA

Last Updated: 30th November 2009, 11:45am

OTTAWA – The federal government has announced plans to speed up foreign credentials for new permanent residents.

Foreign-trained workers who submit an application to be licensed or to work in certain professional fields will be advised within one year whether their qualifications will be recognized, Human Resources Minister Diane Finley said.

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said every year more than 250,000 newcomers arrive in Canada with hope and expectations, a dedication to work hard to build a bright future for themselves and their families but too many find themselves “locked out” of economic opportunity in the regulated professions.

Kenney said the announcement signals “real, practical, concrete” co-operation between the ten provinces, the federal government and 400 professional licensing bodies.

The program will take three years to be fully implemented.

By Dec. 31, 2010, eight professions will be included: architects, engineers, financial auditors and accountants, medical laboratory technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists and registered nurses.

By Dec. 31, 2012, six occupations will be added, including: dentists, engineering technicians, licensed practical nurses, medical radiation technologists, physicians and elementary and secondary school teachers.

The Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications was developed with the provincial labour ministers to help Canada adopt better pre-arrival services and improve workforce participation by newcomers.

The federal government has pledged \$50 million to help professional bodies assess and recognize foreign credentials.

From the 2006 PCPI “Think Tank” document

This outlines what participants thought needed to happen in 2006 to create “an ideal future” for 2009:

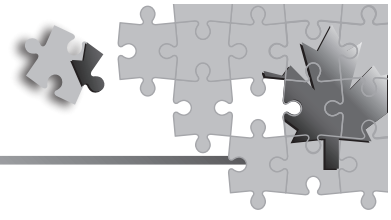
- Overhaul the immigration point system to match labour required
- Accelerate the co-operation between all three orders of government
- Create web portals with information on accreditation, licensing, personalized coaching and mentoring, language training
- Provide access to customized geographic and labour market information
- Create tighter bridging and training programs
- Develop processes through professional associations and regulatory bodies that enable certification when immigrants are still in countries of origin
- Simplify credential recognition processes so that they are easy and quick
- Make sector-specific language training available to all (and available in countries of origin)
- Develop social and professional networks for IEPs
- Provide networking opportunities and orientation to Toronto – mandatory orientation before immigrants arrive (Welcome Wagon)
- Connect high school students with IEPs – students could be mentors or assist IEPs to get to know their community
- Create holistic programs
- Take a “No wrong door” approach where service providers make accurate referrals if they cannot provide relevant information themselves

From an article in the Hamilton Spectator (opinion/editorial article)

Virtually all of us have run into variety store owners who were veterinarians in their homeland, taxi drivers who used to be doctors, or gas-pump jockeys with engineering degrees. There’s nothing wrong with any one of those jobs; what is wrong is when the person doing it is only doing so because he or she cannot break through into their profession here in Canada.

If Canada does not make use of **internationally educated professionals**, it will not only be a waste of human resources, but will also send a message overseas that Canada is not hospitable to **professionals** seeking a new home and life. That would be disastrous for the country’s immigration strategies.

It is not and never should be a matter of lowering the bar of Canadian standards to admit people who, in another country, met different (and, it must be said, sometimes lesser) standards. It is a matter of providing support to capable and experienced people who are willing to work hard to achieve Canadian certification.



Title: Re-accreditation and the occupations of immigrant doctors and engineers

Author: Monica Boyd and Grant Schellenberg

Journal: Canadian Social Trends: Statistics Canada — Catalogue No. 11-008

- The collision of national immigration policies with professional accreditation thus creates a paradox: while highly educated immigrants are recruited on the basis of their potential professional contributions to Canadian society, the re-accreditation requirements they must meet often act as barriers to the full utilization of their skills.

Title: Enhancing policy capacity on the issue of foreign credential recognition

Author: Ian Donaldson

Journal: Canadian Issues; Spring 2007; CBCA Reference pg. 55

- Problems related to foreign credential recognition are not simply labour market issues but rather can serve as an indicator of Canada's "institutional openness" and acceptance of newcomers

Title: Non/Recognition of foreign credentials for immigrant professionals in Canada and Sweden: A comparative analysis

Author: Guo & Anderssen

Journal: PCERII Working Paper Series - Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration

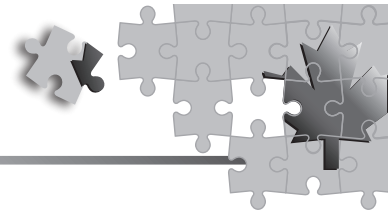
- The term 'immigrant' becomes a codified word for people of colour who come from a different racial and cultural background, who do not speak fluent English, and who work in lower position jobs.
- The social construction of 'immigrant' uses skin colour as the basis for social marking. These individuals' real and alleged differences are claimed to be incompatible with the cultural and social fabric of 'traditional' Canada, and they are therefore deemed undesirable. Immigrants are also often blamed for creating urban social problems and racial and cultural tensions in the receiving society.
- The social construction of immigrant places uneven expectations on immigrants to conform over time to the norms, values, and traditions of the receiving society.

– Canada’s immigrant selection system awards points to applicants with advanced educational qualifications. Prior to arriving in Canada, immigrants do not normally receive any reliable information about the recognition of foreign credentials. Upon arrival, they need to navigate through a complex and possibly lengthy, costly and frustrating process on their own. There is no central or national place where they can go to have their credentials evaluated. Depending on the purpose of the evaluation, immigrants may need to approach one or all of the following organizations:

- 1) provincial and territorial credential assessment services;
- 2) regulatory or professional bodies;
- 3) educational institutions; and
- 4) employers.

The outcomes of the evaluation may serve one of the following purposes: general employment; studying in Canada; and professional certification or licensing in Canada

- Small licensing bodies may need help from these organizations to determine the equivalency of foreign credentials. However, large professional associations (for example, the College of Physicians and Surgeons) usually conduct their own assessments and determine whether applicants need further training or tests in order to re-enter their professions in Canada. While professional and regulatory bodies determine the professional standing of the qualification, the assessment of foreign credentials for the purpose of academic study resides firmly in the hands of education providers (such as universities and colleges)
- Immigrant professionals may encounter a number of barriers in the process of having their foreign credentials recognized. First, they get poor information on accreditation procedures. Second, there is no national body responsible for the evaluation of foreign credentials. Third, there is no agreed-upon national standard. Educational and professional standards vary by province.
- Document verification offers no guarantee of license to those found to have equivalent education. Some accreditation processes require foreign-trained professionals (for example, in medicine) to take a certification examination in combination with language testing and/or to undertake a period of internship or practicum in the licensing country. Although successful immigrant professionals will obtain a certificate or license to practise their profession, they then need to find an employer who is willing to offer them a job. Moreover, assessments of the same credentials by different institutions are often inconsistent.
- The most important factor for lack of admission to professional occupations, and resulting downward social mobility, was the non-recognition or devaluation of foreign credentials. Basran and Zong further point out that immigrant professionals are usually caught in a ‘double jeopardy.’ In the first place, non-recognition of foreign credentials prevents them from accessing professional jobs in Canada and acquiring Canadian work experience, which subsequently makes it difficult for them to become qualified for other professional jobs
- There are wide variations in earnings among immigrants from different origins. In general, immigrant men from origins outside Europe earn anywhere between 15 and 25 percent less than most of those from European origins. However, origin-group earnings differences for immigrant women are much less than for men



- If foreign education explains part of the origin-group earnings differences, it means that Canadian employers treat schooling in certain countries of origin, mostly Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, differently from schooling in other (mostly European) countries
- The issue is particularly acute for immigrants with qualifications from anywhere other than Europe or North America
- While some studies have suggested causes for the under-valuing of foreign credentials, many have failed to question the root cause. Given the impact of undervaluation on individual identities (Gottskalksdottir, 2000), an understanding of the problem in terms of the economy is not enough. Many critical questions remain. We need to find out: Why do such inequities occur in democratic societies like Canada where democratic principles are upheld and where immigrants are, at least in policy, ‘welcome’?
- As this issue has been identified in numerous studies over a number of years, we must ask why the situation has not improved. Thus a key question is: What prevents us from moving forward?
- The following observations are offered in an attempt to provide more in-depth answers to this question. The first two considerations pertain to epistemological misconceptions of difference and knowledge; the second two relate to the ontological foundations of the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials
- Non-recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience can be attributed to a deficit model of difference. One of the articulations of multicultural societies like Canada is a commitment to cultural pluralism. However, a number of commentators (Cummins, 2003; Dei, 1996; Fleras & Elliott, 2002; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Moodley, 1995) argue that pluralism is only endorsed in superficial ways. The tendency is to prefer ‘pretend pluralism,’ which means to ‘tolerate rather than embrace differences’ (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 2). In practice, differences are exoticized and trivialised. Minor differences may be gently affirmed in depoliticised and decontextualized forms such as food, dance, and festivities. Substantive differences, however, tend to challenge hegemony and resist co-option. As a result, these are perceived by many as deficient, deviant, pathological, or otherwise divisive. It could be argued that one of the hurdles preventing the full recognition of immigrants’ educational qualifications and professional experience is the prevailing attitude toward difference. In fact, negative attitudes and behaviours toward immigrants co-exist with commitments to democratic principles such as justice, equality, and fairness. Henry et al. (2000) refer to the co-existence of these two conflicting ideologies as ‘democratic racism.’ According to these authors, democratic racism prevents governments from changing the existing social, economic, and political order, and from supporting policies and practices that might ameliorate the low status of people of colour, because such policies would be perceived as in conflict with, and a threat to, liberal democracy.
- Secondly, knowledge is used as power to keep out the ‘undesirable’. Critical theorists and postmodern scholars (Cunningham, 2000; Foucault, 1980; McLaren, 2003) maintain that: knowledge is power; knowledge is socially constructed, culturally mediated and historically situated; and knowledge is never neutral or objective. The nature of knowledge as it pertains to social relations prompts us to ask the following questions: What counts as legitimate knowledge? How and why does knowledge get constructed in the way it does? Whose knowledge is considered valuable? Whose knowledge is silenced? Is knowledge racialized? Studies (Mojab, 199; Reitz, 2001) have clearly shown that, while immigrants from Third World countries encounter difficulties with their foreign credentials and work experience, those from developed countries (in Canada countries such as the USA, Australia, Britain or New Zealand; in Sweden the Nordic countries, Germany or the USA) have relatively successful experiences. It can therefore be speculated that knowledge has been racialized. As Li (2003) rightly points out, the term ‘immigrant’ becomes a codified word for people of colour who come from a different racial and cultural background, and who do not speak the language of the receiving country fluently.

- Power relations are embedded in social relations of difference (Dei, 1996, p. 63). In Canada, this hierarchy of knowledge and power is rooted in an ethnocentric past, where immigrants from Europe and the USA were viewed as the most desirable, and those from Third World countries as undesirable.

Title: Companies embrace a diverse workforce

Terrence Belford.

Star - Phoenix. Saskatoon, Sask.:Nov 28, 2009. p. F.13

- “At the start of the next decade, the baby boomers will start to retire and leave the workforce,” Silvera says. “That means the shortage of skilled people we already face will become worse. We simply have to make best use of all the resources at our command, and that means removing any artificial barriers that can impede the entry of any Canadian into the workforce, and once there to ensure they have rewarding careers.”
- To address the lack of language skills among new Canadians, UHN sponsors English-as-a-second-language courses from the Toronto District School Board. About 41 staffers have benefited from them so far, she says. Silvera is launching a pilot project to help new Canadians gain Canadian work experience. For 26 weeks a young Guatemalan man studying human resources management at George Brown College will work with her on a volunteer basis to investigate incidents of hostility arising from diversity issues. The goal she says is to break down all barriers to inclusion.

Title: America’s best leaders - The leadership gap

Investing in Diversity

- Biases about who’s qualified for the top jobs can also keep mid-career minorities and women from being plucked for those posts. With few minorities in upper management, it can be difficult for employers to picture them there. “We see it as more a sticky floor than a glass ceiling,”

The Power of Different:

***The race to bridge the skills gap
in the Toronto Region***



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