

The study repeatedly emphasizes why it is particularly troubling that the economic well being of immigrants entering Canada has been deteriorating over the past 25 years. Below are some key arguments and stats:

- Gap between earnings of newcomers and Canadian-born individuals on entering the labour market is widening.
- While immigrants in the past could hope to close that earnings gap with time, the ability to do so today is in question.
- More newcomers are also ending up in positions that underutilize their skill sets and their unemployment is significantly higher than Canadian-born individuals
- Their low starting point has meant that the differential would remain substantial even after many years living in Canada
- These trends mean that immigrants are more likely to experience a period of living in poverty
- 35.8% of immigrant families were living in poverty 20003

Why should this be a national priority?

- Newcomers are shaping the fabric of Canadian society, particularly in the urban centres
- Almost all (94.9%) of foreign-born individuals in Canada live in a city, compared to 77.5% of Canadian-born individuals
- And almost all newcomers (97.2%) between 2001 or 2006 chose to reside in an urban centre
- Seven out of 10 new arrivals to Canada settled in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver
- 45.7% of the Toronto population, 39.6% of the Vancouver population and 20.6% of the Montreal population in 2006 was composed of foreign-born individuals
- These are some of the highest ratios for urban centres in the world and they will continue to climb in the years to come

The Impact of literacy in Canada's official languages

- Poor literacy skills in English and French is not the only reason, but is among the top reasons newcomers are faring so depressingly badly
- Language and literacy skills are absolutely fundamental and might also contribute to some of the other challenges facing newcomers
- Without an adequate mastery of English or French, foreign education and work experience will not be appropriately recognized and valued
- The declining economic fortunes of new immigrants are a clear and present danger for the Canadian economy and society

Recommendations

- Heightened use of language skills training and enhancing the effectiveness of existing language programs that are currently available should be an explicit goal of government policy
- A key issue will be assessing the extent to which the recent policies are successful
- Businesses can also play an important role in championing literacy by providing or subsidizing language skill courses and encouraging employees to improve their English and French literacy