

Understanding the Employment Service Needs of Internationally Trained Immigrants
CIITE Research Report, Nikhat Rasheed, October 2009

The report indicates a large part of the \$900 million secured by the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement is invested in employment services for skilled immigrants, but these services do not seem to assist immigrants in any significant ways given their increasingly poor labour market outcomes.

Some key figures

- There are at least 66 government-funded bridging programs spanning over 40 professions in Ontario
- The province invested more than \$34 million in more than 60 bridge training projects to include over 100 trades and professions
- \$20.4 million invested in education and support for healthcare professionals to include doctors and nurses
- \$130 million annual investment in programs to help newcomers upgrade their language skills and find work; this is more than any other province in the country

Primary Findings

- 72% of immigrants who seek employment services at community agencies do not think their needs and expectations are met
- Over 50% of the immigrants surveyed interacted with employment counselors and just over 12% with mentors
- Immigrants rate employment counselors poorly
- 88% rate OSLT as good or excellent
- 74% rank continuing education staff the best
- 41% rank Job Connect as a good or excellent
- Resume/cover letter development, interview preparation, simulated work places were rated among the most useful activities
- Agency staff are rated most poorly for their lack of understanding of employment needs of skilled immigrant clients; gap+0.662
- Immigrants are offered low paid survival jobs by service staff
- Staff lack knowledge of job opportunities and ability to match immigrants with employers
- Most programs are generic and apply one brush stroke to all immigrants
- Lack of respect and sensitivity by staff; perception immigrants are automatically at much lower level than Canadians
- Most immigrants veer toward occupation-specific training but do not seem certain of what other types of training they should access

Immigrants and their Career Goals

- Immigrants with high career expectations – securing employment equal to or better than what they left behind - are further behind in achieving their career goals
- 75% of immigrants with lower expectations; to secure any job, are more likely to land that any job
- There is an increasingly disturbing trend; skilled immigrants are consistently being de-skilled by taking up jobs below their skills levels

- They show initiative and take multiple courses: job search, language, education, and training designed for newcomer professionals
- Successful completion of skills upgrade and training programs are not necessarily helpful in securing employment