Understanding the Employment Service Needs of Internationally Trained Immigrants

Research Report

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CON*NECT/ CIITE Project

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Executive Summary

In spite of being highly educated, skilled and experienced, in 2006, the national unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 11.5%, more than double the rate of 4.9% for the Canadian-born population. Skilled immigrants are likely to find themselves in fulltime low paid employment or in contingent work leading to huge economic losses. Reitz (2001) estimates a yearly loss of $15 billion - $12.6 billion due to pay inequity and $2.4 billion due to skill underutilization. Although they come to Ontario full of dreams, internationally trained immigrants' career goals of working at good jobs, being independent, entrepreneurial, stable and secure are often washed away by harsh reality.

Millions of tax-payer dollars are consequently spent annually on providing employment and settlement services to internationally trained immigrants in Ontario. Settlement agencies and colleges provide the bulk of these services – job search/employment programs, educational upgrading, technical programs, bridging programs, language training - with universities, school boards and private institutes providing the rest. However, employment rates do not seem to improving substantially. Thus, the impetus for the Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) project to undertake research into identifying the specific employment service needs and experiences of internationally trained immigrants. The research conducted through a bilingual online survey received 432 completed responses and brought forth some interesting findings:

- Three out of four internationally trained immigrants attend college for employment reasons regardless of whether they were affiliated with Academic Departments, Continuing Education or Workforce Skills Development/ Employment Programs.

- This was a career minded group with many participants setting a number of career goals prior to coming to Canada. The largest proportion had aspired to getting a job equal or better than their skill level. Unsurprisingly, the few who were willing to take up any job were further ahead in achieving their goal than those who continued to persevere to attain their goal of better employment. Higher order career goals such as being leaders/managers of people or being entrepreneurial, creative or innovative had a higher rate of goal change indicating that circumstances were coercing ITIs into shifting their expectations.

- Active, interventionist, resource intensive employment supports such as individualized career coaching (including assessment of strengths, aspirations, skills, mock interviews); mentorship opportunities (with peers or seniors in the workforce) and co-op/ work placements are preferred by ITIs. However, these supports are not universally endorsed as many ITIs have had poor service experiences.

- Most ITIs identify certain aspects of poor service experience. They identify staff members' lack of knowledge about their education, skills and occupational work experience as a key issue. Staff members' ability to place people or offer commensurate employment opportunities is also commonly experienced and some ITI respondents feel

that their service experience strengthens the perception that immigrant skills are not quite as good as Canadian skills.

- Immigrants expect to demonstrate their skills to an employer. However, some immigrants recognize their need for additional training in soft skill areas such as occupation-specific communications, language and technical skills, negotiation and Canadian workplace culture. However, many programs offered to them are generic and do not take into account the specificities of their professions, ITI's prior knowledge and work experience, are not located within a workplace context (arbitrarily classroom based) and are often provided by non-specialists. Thus, immigrant needs are not met adequately through existing programming.

The range of skills within the immigrant population is quite vast and this is not recognized adequately by the policy and programs. To be able to provide effective employment support services to this group, program planning, development and delivery must to take into account their specific needs and preferences.

However, in order to make policy and programming changes, the discourse around immigrant skills needs to be critically examined. The discourse simultaneously values and devalues immigrant skills – on one hand, skilled immigrants are viewed positively by society and its institutions as possessing valuable education and experience; on the other hand their skill sets are consistently devalued and assumed to be deficient, as evidenced by the unrelenting discourse on additional training and education. While there are sections of the immigrant population that may require additional training, so too are there sections that are work ready and can immediately make an impact on Canada's productivity if they are given a space to demonstrate their abilities. A more nuanced discourse is needed and appropriate processes should be developed to identify and validate knowledge or experience gaps, or indeed surpluses within the global context. Effective integration of ITI skills will be limited in nature until this issue is adequately addressed and our economy will continue to under-utilize internationally trained immigrants.

Background

The economic integration of immigrants is a key challenge as estimates of unemployment and underemployment of internationally trained immigrants across different professions are extremely high. Statistics Canada's latest research from the Labour Force Survey (2007) shows that:

> Very recent immigrants who have been in Canada five years or less, that is, who landed between 2001 and 2006, had the most difficulty integrating into the labour market, even though they were more likely than the Canadian-born population to have a university education. In 2006, the national unemployment rate for these immigrants was 11.5%, more than double the rate of 4.9% for the Canadian-born population. The situation improved for immigrants who had been in Canada between 5 and 10 years, that is, those who landed between 1996 and 2001. Their unemployment rate was 7.3% (Statistics Canada, Canada's Labour Market, 2007).

Annual estimates range from the earnings gap range from around $2.4 billion (Reitz, 2005) to $4.1-5.9 billion (Conference Board of Canada, 2001). These earnings gaps are the result of under-utilization of immigrant skills and do not include any additional earnings that may be acquired through innovation. Discounting of immigrant skills, knowledge and experience therefore costs the economy substantial amounts of money, with additional potential costs in the way of social exclusion, poverty, healthcare burden and low productivity. Canada's labour productivity has been dismal in the last few decades - 0.6% growth in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2008) and from 2000 – 2005 our productivity growth rate has been 1.3% compared to 2.5% for the United States and 2.0% for the United Kingdom (State of Working America / OECD, 2008).

Given the current recession and prediction of economic contraction of the Canadian economy by 0.5% in 2009 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Toronto Star, 2008) and that recessions are often a time where colleges see an increase in student enrolment as unemployed workers get back to school to enhance their skills (Ottawa Citizen, 2008; Ontario University Report, 2008), the economic imperative to integrate immigrants into employment through providing relevant services increases.

Millions of tax-payer dollars are spent annually on providing employment focused services to internationally trained immigrants. The signing of the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement in 2005 set out $900 million in funding for a five-year period on immigrant settlement services, of which employment services are a part. In 2006, a review of existing government funded bridging programs revealed that 66 programs were operational in Ontario, representing 40 different occupations or professions (Rasheed et al, PROMPT, 2006). As of 2006, Ontario had invested more than $34 million in more than 60 bridge training projects in over 100 trades and professions, $20.4 million in education and support that brings doctors, nurses and other health professionals working together in teams and investing $130 million annually on programs to help newcomers upgrade their language skills, settle and find work - more than any other province in Canada (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, 2006).

Much of the literature in this area is devoted to barriers to employment faced by internationally trained immigrants (Alboim et al, 2005; Reitz, 2006; CAPE 2006). However, much less is available on the specific employment service needs and experiences of internationally trained immigrants. Agrawal et al (2007) looking at the need for services by immigrants in Peel Region identify that immigrants are a very diverse group. “It is necessary to recognize that a relatively large proportion of immigrants have no extraordinary service needs. Over time, their needs are largely undifferentiated from the needs of the mainstream at large in the type and scope of services, except that the delivery of services has to be in culturally sensitive ways. The impact of ethnicity on demand for services comes into play at level of operational policies and program management, and not so much in terms of types of services.....Employment needs of immigrants are largely looked at as a matter of finding pre-existing jobs. How about being proactive and promoting immigrants’ entrepreneurship? Such a role would include programs of promoting and supporting small businesses, establishing business incubators and initiating employment development programs.”

Research on the employment service needs and experiences of internationally trained immigrants if often conducted through interviews with program or service providers and studies engaging the clients themselves are somewhat limited. Often population samples are small although there are a few larger studies such as Basran and Zong’s (1998) study in which they interviewed 404 immigrant professionals in Vancouver.

From the Ontario colleges’ perspective, limited research is available on internationally trained immigrants accessing Ontario colleges versus non-college ITIs and there is almost no existing research comparing the differences between English-speaking and French speaking ITIs in the province. For all these reasons, the CIITE project identified the need to conduct large scale data collection on ITIs to provide a comprehensive understanding of ITI employment service needs, preferences and service experiences.

Research Design and Methodology

Aim

Exploratory research through focus groups in CIITE Phase 2 identified that internationally trained immigrants prefer active employment services (job coaching and development, mentoring, employer networking, case management) to passive employment services (resume writing, job search, ESL). However, no detailed analysis was available to build client profiles for English-speaking and French-speaking ITIs or college going- vs. non-college ITIs. Thus, to aid the research into enhancing employment services available at Ontario colleges, a survey on ITI employment service needs, preferences, and experiences was designed.

Research Question

The survey was designed to bring forth a holistic and deeper understanding of internationally trained immigrants as a complex group of people with a variety of skills, education and experience. The key research question was: What employment services would best meet ITI needs and help prepare them for employment commensurate with their skills, education and experience?

Additional research questions were: Who is a typical internationally trained immigrant? What kind of educational and work experience history does this group bring? What is their work situation in Canada as compared to their home country? What have their experiences of employment services and staff been and how can they be enhanced? What are their employment service needs and experiences? Which skills do they think they need to improve upon to get commensurate employment?

Instrument Design

The survey instrument was designed in-house at CIITE using questions developed by the survey author previously and tailored to the employment service experiences of internationally trained immigrants. The questions focused not only on participant background but on customer service experiences with different staff and different programs and services provided to them through community agencies and community colleges. Both open and closed ended questions were used, including multi-point scales, rating scales and side-by-side matrices.

The survey was tested with internationally trained immigrants at Humber and Seneca Colleges during summer 2008. 22 participants in total tested the paper-based survey, sharing feedback about question design. The final instrument was ready in October 2008 and translated into French from English for Francophone Internationally trained immigrants. The survey was deployed online using a web-based survey tool www.questionpro.com for ease of data collection given the geographical spread of internationally trained immigrants and time limitations.

Ten Ontario colleges were supported through and completed ethics review processes for the survey instrument from August-October 2008 and four colleges received senior team approval to conduct the survey. Participating colleges include Algonquin College, Collège Boréal,

Centennial College, Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Confederation College, Fanshawe College, George Brown College, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, La Cité collégiale, Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology, Niagara College, Seneca College, Sir Sandford Fleming College and Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

Sample Recruitment and Selection

Convenience sampling (non-probability)[1] was used to recruit internationally trained immigrants across Ontario with prior education and/or work experience from overseas. Non-probability sampling does not require a sample universe to be complete and does not necessarily mean that it is less representative of the entire population[2]. However, representation cannot be expressed with statistical confidence and cannot be supported by computation to generate desirable statistics such as confidence intervals.

Fourteen colleges and two community agencies disseminated the electronic flyer advertising the survey to their networks to attract a large sample of college-going and non-college-going internationally trained immigrants in Ontario. Certain eligibility criteria were imposed on the sample to get respondents to self-select into the survey including the following:

- Age of majority (over 18 years)
- Status in Canada as a citizen, permanent resident/landed immigrant or refugee (transitory visa categories such as work permit holders and international students were excluded)
- Prior international (non-Canadian) education and/or work experience
- Current residence in Ontario

The initial sample size had been set at 300, with a 10% quota set for Francophone participants. The online nature of the survey, $20 honorarium for participation and relatively inclusive eligibility criteria resulted in a "snowball" effect and the sample size was obtained within 5 days. Additional funding was then sourced from the project to increase respondent numbers and a total of 432 internationally trained immigrants (including 50 Francophone respondents) completed the ITI survey. 420 released their contact information and were mailed $20 gift cards from President's Choice within the month. Overall 11.6% of the sample was Francophone (50/432 responses).

Data was analyzed in-house at CIITE using the QuestionPro tool which is capable of generating real-time simple and complex statistics including frequency, cross-tabulation and gap analyses amongst others. Data was also interpreted in-house at CIITE by the lead researcher.

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[1] Convenience sampling is used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. As the name implies, the sample is selected because they are convenient. This non-probability method is often used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample or if a sample register is unavailable. http://www.statpac.com/surveys/sampling.htm

[2] Trochim, William M.K. (2006) Research Methods Knowledge Base http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampnon.php

Timeframe

The survey was deployed online on October 17 and closed on October 30, 2008.

Limitations of Research

- The representativeness of the study sample relative to the ITI population in Ontario cannot be determined because of a non-probability sampling method was used and a register of internationally trained immigrants in the province was unavailable. Only the census can report statistically accurate data.
- Given that the research was marketed through Ontario colleges, the sample would have a much higher proportion of college-going internationally trained immigrants than the actual population. This was deliberate in order to develop profiles of college going ITIs.
- The research was a one-time survey that produced a current profile of the characteristics of internationally trained immigrants that answered this survey. The make-up of the ITI population may change over time in response to changing social and economic conditions in the province.
- Francophones made up 12% of the overall survey sample. While this was in keeping with the proportion of Francophones to non-Francophones in Ontario college system, the smaller sample size may result in higher rates of error than the English sample.
- The survey was deployed online limiting access to those who were in possession of, or had access to, a computer. Online surveys also require higher order computer skills.
- The study assumed a relatively high level of English language skills. Benchmarking conducted post-deployment identified the survey to be at an English proficiency level ranging from Canadian Language Benchmark 6-10 depending on the familiarity with the type of information asked in the survey. Due to the high language level, the research may not be entirely representative of the ITI population as a whole (a proportion of which has high English as a Second Language needs) but would be more representative of the internationally educated and trained professionals that make up 20-25% of Ontario's immigrants.
- Information collected in the study was of a self-reported nature which, depending on the subject areas being queried, may be prone to some inaccuracy as a result of less than accurate recall, lack of information, or discomfort with self-disclosure.
- The self- selection of respondents produced convenience samples that may be biased in ways that are not known.

Results: English Survey

381 internationally trained immigrant participants over 18 years of age, residing in Ontario completed the online survey taking an average of 31 minutes. 40% of the total sample participated as a client of the college system, 26% from community agencies and the remainder classified themselves as 'other' – spouses, partners and friends.

Biographic Profile

63% of participants identified as permanent residents, 34% as Canadian citizens and 3% as refugees given that legal status was restricted to these three categories only. 45% of the sample identified as female and 55% as male. 60% of those with Bachelors Degrees were women and 58% of those with Advanced Degrees were men. 42% of the sample was between 35-44 with around 21-23% between 25-34 and 45-54 years of age. 12% of those in college were 18-24 compared to less than 2% of those from the non-college sample. 75% of participants were married, 17% were single and 67% had dependents. Participants hailed from 71 countries with the top source countries being China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Colombia and Iran. 17% had been in Canada for less than a year, 23% from 1-2 years, 26% from 3-4 years and 17% from 5-7 years. 10% had been in Canada for 10 years. 66% identified as principal applicants. Participants were mainly located in the Greater Toronto Area (City of Toronto, Durham, York, Peel and Halton regions), the Ottawa valley and the Golden Horseshoe and a few participants were located in Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Barrie, Thunder Bay and Belleville (only major postcodes were mapped).

Language Skills, Instruction and Tests

This population was highly multilingual with 51% speaking 3 languages or more. Less than 6% spoke only English. After English, Hindi, French, Chinese, Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic were the top languages spoken.

Between 11-13% rated their English speaking, reading, writing and listening skills as strong as native speakers and 48-52% rated themselves as fluent. Therefore, almost a third of participants identified their language skills as less than fluent. Participants with higher education and non-college participants also identified stronger language skills across the board. 201 participants (53%) reported instruction in English during school (primary and secondary) and 264 participants (69%) reported English instruction in post-secondary education.

69% reported taking an English language test with IELTS (25%) and TOEFL (23%) being the most popular, followed by LINC assessment (14%), CLBPT (7%) and CAEL (4%). Almost 15% reported 'Other' which included ESL assessment, CLBA, college-specific placement tests and bridging program tests. Fewer than 2% took any French language tests (not unusual as this was the English sample). Although some participants reported scores for specific tests, analysis of language skills across tests which are not comparable proved extremely challenging and was not undertaken.

Educational Characteristics and Credential Assessment

60% of the sample reported having international or Canadian post-secondary education. Of this, 36% reported the highest educational qualification as Less than Bachelors (college or university certificate/ diploma), 24% had Bachelors Degrees, 7% had Postgraduate Certificates, 19% had Masters and 7% had PhD or higher (henceforth Masters and PhD have been combined as Advanced Education). Less than 2% reported industry or technical qualifications as the top credential and the remaining 7% reported 'Other' (mostly some kind of certification).

52% of the sample reported having had their educational credentials assessed for equivalency, 7% were in the process of having them done and 36% had not had their credentials assessed. 56% of college participants had their credentials assessed compared to 29% of non-college participants. 31% of all who had their credentials assessed did so from WES, 15-16% each from University of Toronto and ICAS, 10% from their provincial or national regulatory body and 28% reported 'Other' including universities, colleges, professional associations and OCAS. WES and ICAS were more popular with college participants, whereas non-college participants reported higher numbers getting their credentials assessed by University of Toronto and provincial/ national regulatory bodies.

Work Experience Characteristics, Licensing and Income

International Work Experience

94% of participants (both college and non-college) reported more than 6 months of work experience and 67% of participants reported being currently employed.

Participants had an average of 10 years of international work experience. 29% had 5 years or less, 28% had between 6-10 years, 21% had 11-15 years and 14% had 16-20 years of work experience and 9% of participants had over 20 years of work experience.

In terms of National Occupation Classification (NOC) index categories, 27% reported the majority of their international work experience to be in business, finance and administrative occupations, followed by 24% in natural and applied sciences (including engineering), 11% in health occupations, 15% in social science, education, government service and religion, 9% in sales and service occupations, 8% in occupations specific to processing, manufacturing and utilities, 3% each in arts and culture occupations, trades, transport and equipment and 1% in primary industry occupations.

Participants reported higher occupational levels prior to their arrival in Canada. 22% reported being at management occupations, 55% were in professional occupations (NOC Skill Level A), 15% in skilled administrative and technical occupations (NOC Skill Level B), 6% in intermediate, clerical or assisting occupations (NOC Skill Level C) and 2% identified as being in general labour and helpers occupations (NOC Skill Level D)[3] .

Canadian Work Experience

19% of participants reported having no Canadian work experience, 44% of participants reported an average of 2 years or less, 19% had 3-5 years and 13% had 6-10 years of Canadian work experience. 5% reported more than 10 years.

Since coming to Canada, 18% reported the majority of work experience to be in business, finance and administrative occupations, followed by 14% in natural and applied sciences (including engineering), 13% in health occupations, 21% in social science, education, government service and religion, 20% in sales and service occupations, 7% in occupations specific to processing, manufacturing and utilities, 9% in trades, transport and equipment and the 2% in primary industry occupations.

Participants reported lower occupational levels in Canada. 9% reported being at management level, 30% were in professional occupations, 28% in skilled administrative and technical occupations, 13% in intermediate, clerical or assisting occupations and a whopping of 21% as general labour and helpers. 67% were working full-time, 26% part-time, 4% reported being in casual/temporary work, 1-2% reported being self-employed or seasonal workers.

41% of participants reported currently working at a lower level and 31% at a much lower level (status and income) compared to back home. 16% reported working at the same level and 11% at a higher level. 18% of those whose highest qualifications was a Bachelor Degree compared to 11% of those with Less than Bachelors, 13% of those with postgraduate certificates and 7% of those with Advanced Education reported working at a higher level. 15% of non-college

[3] NOC Level A (occupations that usually require a university education); NOC Level B (occupations that usually require college education or apprenticeship training); NOC Level C (occupations that usually require secondary school and/or occupation specific training) and NOC Level D (pn-the-job training is usually provided for occupations) Detailed information available at http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/pdf/Matrix.pdf

participants reported working at a higher level compared to 8% of college participants. 79% of those with Bachelors Degrees, 71% of those with Advanced Education, 70% of those with Less than Bachelors Degrees and 62% with postgraduate certificates as their highest qualifications were working lower or much lower level in terms of status and income than their work in their home country.

Certification/ Licensing

64% of participants reported occupations in their home countries requiring a professional/trade. 90% of them had acquired it. 60% of participants reported their occupation required a professional/trade licence in Ontario (10% did not know) and 28% had acquired it, 58% were in the process of obtaining it while 14% were not interested.

Income/ Earnings

20% of participants reported earning no income in Canada. Of those who had earned in the past year, median income was reported at $19,000-$29,999. 35% earned less than $19,999 annually, 23% earned $20,000- $39,999, 16% earned $50,000- $59,999 and 5% earned more than $60,000.

Engagement with the College System

33% of participants whose highest education was a Bachelors Degree, Advanced Degrees (Masters, PhD or higher) or an Industry Qualification were college clients in comparison to 70% of those who had Less than a Bachelors degree and 71% of those with Post-graduate Certificates.

72% of those who attended a college-based program did so for employment reasons and 21% for educational reasons. Of those who attended college programs, 82% of those with Advanced Degrees, 80% of those with Bachelors Degrees and 70% of those with Post-graduate Certificates and Less than Bachelors attended college programs for employment reasons. Those with higher education were more likely to attend colleges to get a good job versus (24% of those with less than Bachelors attended college to increase their academic knowledge).

44% were part of the Academic department at the college, 19% in Continuing Education, 16% in workforce skills or employment programs, 5% in adult / community education including language centres and 4% in Academic Upgrading. Almost 8% did not know which college department they were affiliated with and 4% replied ‘Other’ - they were participating predominantly in bridging programs. 60% of those with Less than Bachelors and 78% of those with postgraduate certificates attended Academic programs compared to 39% of those with Bachelors Degrees and 35% of those with Advanced Degrees. The likelihood of participating in Continuing Education remained fairly constant across different educational segments at around 15-18% whereas those with Advanced Degrees were more likely to attend workforce skills/employment programs (35%) along with those with Bachelors Degrees (22%).

In terms of entry processes into the college, around a quarter were asked to present their foreign credentials for assessment, took an English language test and tested on academic or

subject knowledge. Almost 14% had to provide work history information and 3% undertook PLAR. Those with less than Bachelors Degrees were tested more on their subject knowledge (32%) compared to those with Bachelors degrees (15%) or Advanced Education (14%). Those with Less than Bachelors presented less work experience for assessment (9%) compared to those with higher education (around 15-17%) although this may be because those with Less than Bachelors are more likely to attend academic programs requiring credential assessment, and those with higher education are more likely to attend employment focused programs requiring work experience assessment.

Career Goals

Participants reported setting a number of career goals prior to coming to Canada. 31% reported getting a job equal or better than their skill level compared to 8% who reported getting any job, even lower than their skill level as a career goal. 15% reported security and stability in their jobs, 13% reported wanting to have work/life balance, 8% to be independent and leader/manager of people, 6% reported wanting to be technical or functional experts and just under 5% reported wanting to be entrepreneurial, creative or innovative and to be dedicated to a cause. Only less than 1% reported having no career goals.

35% of non-college participants reported wanting a job equal or better than their skill level compared to 28% of college participants and educational attainment did not significantly impact the choice for wanting to improve their careers. 10% of college participants identified that getting any job, even lower than their skill level, was a career goal compared to 6% of non-college participants. Interestingly, those with more education were also slightly more willing to accept employment lower than their skill level with 9% of those with Advanced Education and 8% of those with Bachelors Degrees compared to 5% of those with Less than Bachelors. Those with Advanced Education were more likely to want to be technical or functional experts (8%) compared to those with Bachelors Degrees (4%) but those with Bachelors Degrees were more likely to want to be leaders/managers of people (13%) compared to other groups averaging at 7%.

Attainment of Career Goals	Count	Percentage	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	Goal Changed
To get a job equal or better than my skill level	258	31.31%	37.89%	23.83%	18.36%	16.02%	3.91%
To get a job even if it's lower than my skill level	65	7.89%	24.62%	23.08%	18.46%	29.23%	4.62%
To be secure or stable in my job	122	14.81%	41.18%	14.29%	27.73%	15.13%	1.68%
To be a technical or functional expert	51	6.19%	39.22%	27.45%	19.61%	11.76%	1.96%
To be a leader or manager of people	63	7.65%	48.39%	14.52%	24.19%	8.06%	4.84%
To be independent	68	8.25%	22.06%	23.53%	35.29%	17.65%	1.47%

Attainment of Career Goals	Count	Percentage	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	Goal Changed
To be entrepreneurial or creative/ innovative	41	4.98%	34.15%	24.39%	21.95%	14.63%	4.88%
To be dedicated to a cause	36	4.37%	28.57%	8.57%	25.71%	37.14%	0.00%
To have work/ life balance	108	13.11%	32.41%	25.00%	25.93%	13.89%	2.78%
Did not have career goals	6	0.73%	0.00%	33.33%	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%
Other	6	0.73%	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%
Total	824						

Those who reported getting any job regardless of skill level were further along the path to achieving their goals than those who had set a goal of working at equal or better than their skill level. 29% of those who set the goal at any job reported being 75-100% along the path compared to 16% of those who had specific expectation of better work. 48% of those who set the goal at any job were less than half the way to their goal compared to 62% of those who had set the bar higher. Those who had wanted better jobs seemed to be slightly more determined than those who had set the goal at any job with a marginally rate of 'goal changed'. Higher order career goals such as being leaders/managers of people or being entrepreneurial, creative or innovative had a higher rate of goal change.

Being a college or non-college participant had only a slight impact on the achievement of employment goals if the goal was having a higher level job (42.62% of non-college participants reported being at 0-25% compared to 33% of college participants). The impact was greater if a participant was willing to accept any job (38% of non-college participants were at 0-25% compared to 11.43%). Thus, for those willing to take on any job, going to college seemed to move them somewhat closer to their career goals but this was not clearly the case for those who had set their goals higher. Of all career goals set, those participants who reported wanting to be dedicated to a cause were furthest ahead (37% at 75-100%).

In terms of ranking of goals in order of importance, clearly, getting a job equal or better to their skill level was the number 1 career goal of participants which 73% of participants ranked as either number 1 or 2. Being stable/ secure and having work/life balance were other important goals.

Career Goals	Score
To get a job equal or better than my skill level	1.57
To get a job even if it's lower than my skill level	2.55
To be secure or stable in my job	2.03
To be a technical or functional expert	2.78
To be a leader or manager of people	3.20
To be independent	2.93
To be entrepreneurial or creative/ innovative	3.26

Career Goals	Score
To be dedicated to a cause	3.65
To have work/ life balance	2.35
Did not have career goals	2.14
Other	2.20

Employment Programs

70% of participants reported taking some kind of course designed specifically for internationally trained immigrants. 39% took job search/employment programs, 28% took language improvement programs, 21% took education programs and the remaining 11% took technical programs. This sample undertook several courses – 76% took more than 1 course and 14% had taken more than 5 courses.

Those with higher levels of education were more likely to take these programs overall - 81% of Advanced Education participants reported taking some kind of course compared to 69% of those with Less than Bachelors – though, the more highly educated participants were less likely to take language and educational upgrading programs that other groups.

Job search/employment programs were usually delivered by community agencies (72%) and colleges (17%). Language improvement programs were delivered by community agencies (47%) and colleges (31%) and 'Others' (most likely private institutes) (10%). Colleges (58%) and universities (16%) and 'Other' (private institutes) provided educational programs and colleges (61%) provided the bulk of technical programs along with universities (10%) and community agencies (10%). Given the large college going population, this was unsurprising. However, the non-college segment reported mostly going to community agencies for job search/employment programs (75%) and language improvement (51%) and attending college for both educational programs (42%) and technical courses (53%).

Education (97%) and technical programs (84%) were much more likely to be occupation specific than job search/employment programs (62%) and language programs (57%).

The majority of participants reported job search programs being under 1 month in length (56%) or between 1-3 months (32%) while most participants (29%) took language programs were under 3 months in length. 13% of participants took 3-6 months language programs, 27% took 6-12 month programs, 16% took 1-2 year length programs and 10% reported being in language programs for over 2 years.

42% of participants in technical programs reported 6 months of less of training while 14% reported being in programs for over two-years. College participants were more likely to be in lengthier technical programs compared to non-college participants.

92% of job search/employment programs were reported as free to participants and 3% cost less than $100. 66% of participants reported all language programs were also free - 74% of non-college participants reported these compared to 51% of college participants. Only 13% of participants reported free educational programs– 45% reported programs costing more than $2,000 and 60% of college participants reported this, compared to 31% of non-college

participants. 16% of participants reported taking free technical programs, 16% paid $100-$500 and 32% paid more than $2000. Overall college-based programs cost participants more than non-college based programs regardless of the type of program.

Employment Service Experiences

The majority of participants had some interaction with a variety of staff members at Ontario colleges, community agencies or other places. Internationally trained immigrants connected most with employment counsellors (206 participants), career/employment services (166), LINC instructors (144), ESL instructors (139), job developers (100), Job Connect (98), Continuing Education (95), facilitators (70), academic instructors (69), mentors (57) and admissions (50). College participants had the most interaction with LINC and ESL instructors (70 each) and employment counsellors (65) and non-college participants had the most interaction with employment counsellors (158).

Participants were asked to rate their employment service experience from poor to excellent. Combining the percentage that reported each service experience positively (good + excellent) each staff type was rated. On the whole participants rated these various service experiences positively (good or excellent) from 41% to 74%. They rated OSLT at 88% although OSLT has not been officially delivered by the college system so this figure should be interpreted as an outlier and point to possible confusion by participants as being general occupation-specific language training.

Staff	Count	Positive Experience
Language Programs		
Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)	144	60%
English as a Second Language (ESL)	137	72%
Enhanced Language Training (ELT)	23	57%
Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT)	8	88%
Employment Agencies		
Employment Counsellors	206	51%
Facilitators	70	53%
In-take Counsellors	24	42%
Job Developers	100	46%
Mentors	55	53%
Academic Institutions/ Colleges		
Academic Instructors	69	71%
Admissions	50	56%
Advising	29	48%
Apprenticeship	9	44%
Career / Employment Services	166	44%
Continuing Education	95	74%
Graduate Services	23	52%
Job Connect		
Peer Tutoring/ Mentoring	14	71%
PLAR (prior learning assessment)	14	50%
Registrars Office	40	55%
Work Study	17	59%

Staff	Count	Positive Experience
Job Connect	98	41%

The top 10 services by number of people participated are analysed below. Of this list, most participants interacted with Employment Counsellors (206) and the fewest with Mentors (55). Of these service experiences, participants ranked their interaction with continuing education staff the best (74% ranked the experience as good or excellent) compared with Job Connect (41% ranked experience as good or excellent).

Staff	Count	Positive Experience	Rank
Continuing Education	95	74%	1
English as a Second Language (ESL)	137	72%	2
Academic Instructors	69	71%	3
Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)	144	60%	4
Facilitators	70	53%	5
Mentors	55	53%	6
Employment Counsellors	206	51%	7
Job Developers	100	46%	8
Career / Employment Services	166	44%	9
Job Connect	98	41%	10

Participants were asked to score their expectations of staff and the quality of interaction on a number of attributes and gap analysis was conducted. Staff members were expected to demonstrate understanding of the client's education background and work experience, regulatory/trade certification, educational/training needs, employment needs, labour market information. Staff members were also expected to be respectful, genuinely interested and able to find information that they did not know.

Quality of interaction – Staff would:	Gap
Understand my educational background/ foreign credential assessment	0.481
Understand professional regulatory/ trade certification system in Canada	0.498
Understand my work experience/ my occupation	0.531
Understand my educational/ training needs	0.568
Understand my employment needs	0.662
Understand Canadian labour market information	0.487
Be respectful and genuine interest in me	0.402
Be able to find me information if he/she didn't know	0.52

In all cases, participants' expectations exceed their service experiences and they rated staff most poorly on staff understanding their employment needs (gap +0.662), their educational/training needs (gap +0.568), their work experience/occupation (gap +0.531) and being resourceful (finding client information they did not know) (gap +0.520).

Reporting qualitatively on service experiences participants reported the following frustrations with staff:

- Offering only low paid/survival jobs to applicants
- Lack of knowledge of job opportunities and ability to place immigrants with employers
- Lack of individualized attention e.g. “they said the same thing to everyone who came for advice”
- Poor staff communication e.g. “information passed incompletely”
- Lack of knowledge of other education systems and teaching/learning styles of internationally trained immigrants
- Poor planning and curriculum instruction/teaching
- Programs were too slow and teaching guidelines were lacking
- Lack of respect and sensitivity e.g. “perception that that immigrants are at a much lower level than Canadians”

Employment Needs and Preferences

Participants rated the employment preparation activities they had participated in and rated their usefulness in helping them employment. Active employment services including resume/cover letter development, interview preparation, work placement or simulated work places and job search workshops were rated as the most useful. However, participants did not overwhelmingly endorse any employment preparation activity and had reservations relating to the quality of experience and outcomes compared to expectations.

Employment Preparation Activities	Count	% Useful or Very Useful
Resume/ Cover Letter development	273	79
Interview preparation (video-taped)	118	79
Employment resource materials	161	68
Work placement, co-op or internship	61	68
Simulated work places (practice firms)	15	67
Job search workshops	242	65
Researching employers	94	65
Mentoring	60	62
Access to labour market information and sector-specific information	140	58
Individual education counselling	51	58
Setting up informational interviews	70	58
Financial incentives / help to set up businesses	12	58
Individualized job development	84	57
Links to professional regulatory or licensing bodies	62	56
Networking opportunities to meet with investors and others	49	56
Employer networking events/ career fairs	119	49
Support for writing the licensing or registration exam	30	48
Cold calling	112	47
Self-employment/ starting up your own business workshops	19	44

Employment Preparation Activities	Count	% Useful or Very Useful
Business plan, strategy, sales, marketing etc. workshops	20	33

Participants were also asked to think about their own employability skills and score their training needs out of 5 (strongly disagree-agree-neutral/undecided-agree-strongly agree).

Employability Skills	Count	Score
Occupation-specific communication skills	360	3.483
Canadian workplace culture	362	3.467
Negotiation skills	358	3.45
Occupation-specific language skills	360	3.431
Occupation-specific technical skills	360	3.419
Cross-cultural and diversity awareness	360	3.381
Leadership	357	3.333
Computer/IT skills	363	3.309
Writing	361	3.291
Effective team work	358	3.263
Thinking skills	357	3.12
Document use	356	3.051
Leadership	357	3.333
Negotiation skills	358	3.450

Overwhelmingly, participants displayed a neutral/undecided estimation of their own training needs. The employability skills that participants scored the highest were occupation-specific communication skills, Canadian workplace culture, negotiation skills, occupation-specific language skills and occupation-specific technical skills.

Participants also ranked what they would like to do in order to find suitable employment. 28% of participants ranked starting work right away as number 1, followed by demonstrating their abilities to an employer (21%) at number 2.

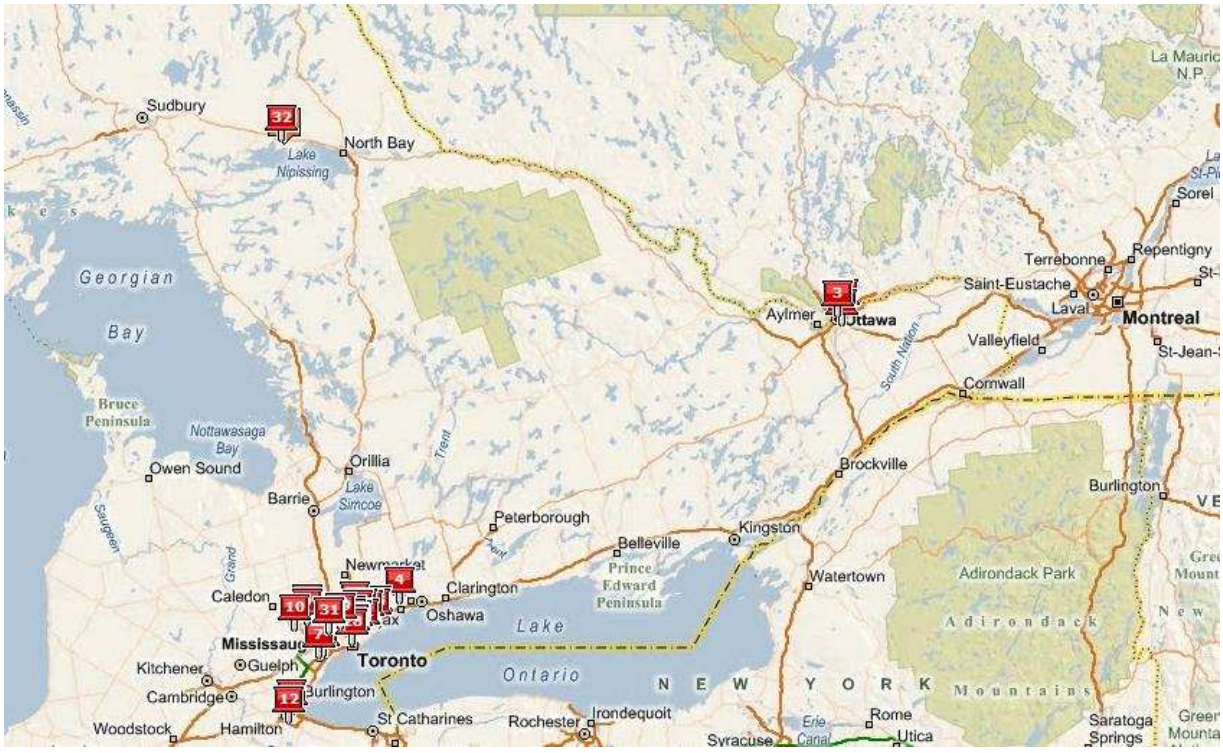
At the end of the survey, participants were able to share their employment experiences in Canada which can supply further context to the interpretation of this research (Appendix A).

Results: French Survey

51 internationally trained immigrant participants over 18 years of age, residing in Ontario completed the online survey taking an average of 42 minutes. 69% of the total sample participated as a client of the college system (much higher than the English survey), 24% from community agencies and the remainder 7% classified themselves as 'other' – spouses, partners and friends.

Biographic Profile

70% of participants identified as permanent residents, 13% as Canadian citizens and 17% as refugees. 54% of the sample identified as female and 46% as male. 48% of the sample was between 35-44 with around 20-25% between 25-34 and 45-54 years of age. 5% of those in college were 18-24 compared none of the non-college sample.66% of participants were married, 28% were single and 67% had dependents. Participants hailed from 17 countries with the top source countries being Mauritius (Île Maurice), Cameroon (le Cameroun), Haiti (Haïti), Democratic Republic of the Congo (le Zaïre), France (la France) and Morocco (le Maroc). Given the higher number of refugees, 50% had been in Canada for less than a year, 26% from 1-2 years, 6% from 3-4 years and 6% from 5-7 years. 9% had been in Canada for 10 years. 71% identified as principal applicants. Participants were mainly located in the Greater Toronto Area (City of Toronto, Durham, York, Peel and Halton regions), Hamilton and Ottawa valley and one from Northern Ontario (only major postcodes were mapped).



Language Skills, Instruction and Tests

This population was highly multilingual with 75% speaking 3 languages or more. None of the participants identified as unilingual – 25% were bilingual. After French (41%) and English (39%), Arabic (Arabe), Haitian Creole (Français créole de Hatian) and Spanish (Espagnol) were the most common languages spoken.

Around 88% of participants rated their French reading, writing, speaking and listening skills as fluent/ native speaker level, at a much higher level than English language participants. Educational level did not seem to significantly impact language level. 45 participants (88%) reported instruction in French during school (primary and secondary) and 46 participants (90%) of participants reported French instruction in post-secondary education. Francophone college participants displayed higher level of French language skills compared to the English sample.

74% reported taking an English or French language test with LINC (30%) and IELTS and Test d'Evaluation du Francais (TEF) (13%) being the most popular, followed by TOEFL (7%) and CAEL (5%). 16% reported 'Other' which included ESL assessment and TestCan (Francais). Although some participants reported scores for specific tests, analysis of language skills across tests which are not comparable proved extremely challenging.

Educational Characteristics and Credential Assessment

34% of the sample reported having international or Canadian post-secondary education. Of this, 38% reported the highest educational qualification as Less than Bachelors (college or university certificate/ diploma), 30% had Bachelors Degrees, 23% had Masters and 8% had PhD or higher (henceforth Masters and PhD have been combined as Advanced Education).

29% of the sample reported having had their educational credentials assessed for equivalency, 6% were in the process of having them done and 59% had not had their credentials assessed. 29% of college participants had their credentials assessed compared to 17% of non-college participants. 20% of all who had their credentials assessed did so from WES, 40% from ICAS. ICAS was far more popular with college participants (43%) compared to WES (14%).

Work Experience Characteristics, Licensing and Income

81% of all Francophone participants (82% of college participants and 75% of non-college participants) reported more than 6 months of work experience and 67% of participants reported being employed.

International Work Experience

Participants had an average of 7 years of international work experience. 35% had 5 years or less, 35% had between 6-10 years, 12% had 11-15 years and 9% had 16-20 years of work experience and 9% of participants had over 20 years of work experience.

In terms of National Occupation Classification index categories, 39% reported the majority of work experience to be in business, finance and administrative occupations, 10% in natural and applied sciences (including engineering), 12% in health occupations, 27% in social science, education, government service and religion and 5% in sales and service occupations, 2% in arts

and culture occupations, and 2% each in occupations unique to primary industry, processing and manufacturing.

Participants reported more varied occupational levels outside Canada. 25% reported being at management occupational level prior to arrival in Canada, 35% were in professional occupations (NOC Level A), 23% in skilled administrative and technical occupations (NOC Level B), 15% in intermediate, clerical or assisting occupations (NOC Level C) and 3% as general labour and helpers (NOC Level D).

Canadian Work Experience

28% participants no Canadian work experience, 40% reported an average of 2 years or less, 16% had 3-5 years and 14% had 6-10 years of Canadian work experience. Only 2% reported more than 10 years.

Since coming to Canada, 35% reported the majority of work experience to be in business, finance and administrative occupations, 25% in social science, education, government service and religion, 20% in sales and service occupations, 15% in occupations specific to processing, manufacturing and utilities and 5% in primary industry occupations. None of the participants with a previous healthcare experience was in a healthcare profession.

Participants reported varied occupational levels in Canada. 11% reported being at management level, 16% were in professional occupations (NOC Level A), 16% in skilled administrative and technical occupations (NOC Level B) and 58% in intermediate, clerical or assisting occupations (NOC Level C). 75% were working full-time and 25% part-time with none reporting causal, temporary or seasonable employment.

30% of participants reported currently working at a lower level and only 5% at a much lower level (status and income) compared to back home. 50% reported working at the same level and 15% at a higher level. 75% of those with Advanced Education were working at the same or higher level (sample size was small at 4).

Certification/ Licensing

41% of participants reported occupations in their home countries requiring a professional/trade. 90% of them had acquired it. None of the participants reported acquiring or not acquiring this certification. 46% of participants reported their occupation required a professional/trade licence in Ontario (12% did not know) and only 9% had acquired it, 74% were in the process of obtaining it while 17% were not interested.

Income/ Earnings

37% of participants reported earning no income in Canada. Of those who had earned in the past year, median income was reported at $19,000-$29,999. 19% earned less than $19,999 annually (lower than the English sample at 35%), 37% earned $20,000- $39,999, 4% earned $40,000-$59,999 and 4% earned more than $60,000.

Engagement with the College System

Stratification of college and non-college participants by education was not as clear as the English sample. 43.75% of college participants had Less than Bachelors as their highest educational qualification, 25% of college participants had a Bachelors Degree, 6.25% had postgraduate certificate and 26% had Advanced Education.

71% of those who attended a college-based program did so for employment reasons and 19% for educational reasons. Of those who attended college programs, 80% of those with Advanced Degrees, 33.33% of those with Bachelors Degrees, 100% of those with Post-graduate Certificates and 68% of those with Less than Bachelors attended college programs for employment reasons. Educational levels did not seem to impact the attendance at college for employment reasons (although the sample size was also small enough not to be conclusive).

Only 16% of college participants were part of the Academic department at the college, 11% in Continuing Education, 49% in workforce skills or employment programs (three times the English sample), 11% in adult / community education including language centres (double the English sample) and 3% in Academic Upgrading. Almost 8% replied ‘don’t know’ and ‘Other’ – some kind of bridging programs. 43% of those with Less than Bachelors and 33% of those with Bachelors Degrees attended Academic programs (none of the Advanced Education participants). 14% of participants with Less than Bachelors participated in Continuing Education programs (and none of the others). 75% of participants with Advanced Education and 33% of Bachelors Degree attended some sort of workforce employment programs.

In terms of entry processes into the college, 17% were tested on their academic and subject knowledge, 28% asked to present their foreign credentials for assessment, 19% took an English language test and tested, 28% provided work history information and 6% undertook PLAR. Given the limited number of responses, determinations could not be made whether processes for entry into the college system varied by educational level of the applicant.

Career Goals

Participants reported setting a number of career goals prior to coming to Canada. 23% reported getting a job equal or better than their skill level compared to 3% who reported getting any job, even lower than their skill level as a career goal. 22% reported security and stability in their jobs, 18.25% reported wanting to have work/life balance, 11% to be independent and leader/manager of people, 5% reported wanting to be technical or functional experts and just under 6% reported wanting to be entrepreneurial, creative or innovative and to be dedicated to a cause. Only 2% reported having no career goals.

21-22% of both college and non-college participants reported wanting a job equal or better than their skill level. 60% of those with Advanced Education and 19% of those with Less than Bachelors wanted to get a job better or equal to their skill level (others did not identify). 3% of college participants identified that getting any job, even lower than their skill level, was a career goal compared to 5% of non-college participants – not a significant difference. Those with higher education were more likely to want to be stable and secure in their job (20% of Advanced Education, 67% of Bachelors Degrees compared to 19% of those Less than Bachelors). Those

with Less than Bachelor expressed the need to be independent (24%) and all groups wanted work/life balance (16-25%).

Attainment of Career Goals	Count	Percentage	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	Goal Changed
To get a job equal or better than my skill level	29	23.02%	24.14%	17.24%	31.03%	20.69%	6.90%
To get a job even if it's lower than my skill level	4	3.17%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
To be secure or stable in my job	28	22.22%	28.57%	0.00%	28.57%	42.86%	0.00%
To be a technical or functional expert	6	4.76%	33.33%	0.00%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%
To be a leader or manager of people	7	5.56%	50.00%	16.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
To be independent	14	11.11%	28.57%	21.43%	7.14%	42.86%	0.00%
To be entrepreneurial or creative/ innovative	7	5.56%	28.57%	14.29%	0.00%	57.14%	0.00%
To be dedicated to a cause	4	3.17%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%
To have work/ life balance	23	18.25%	30.43%	13.04%	17.39%	39.13%	0.00%
Did not have career goals	3	2.38%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%
Other	1	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	126						

Those who reported getting any job regardless of skill level were further along the path to achieving their goals than those who had set a goal of working at equal or better than their skill level. 50% of those who set the goal at any job reported being 75-100% along the path compared to 21% of those who had specific expectation of better work. 25% of those who set the goal at any job were less than half the way to their goal compared to 41% of those who had set the bar higher (slightly lower disparity than the English sample) and their (latter's) goal had also changed more than others (7%).

Unlike the English sample, being a college or non-college participant did seem to have some impact on the achievement of employment goals if the goal was having a higher level job (44% of non-college participants reported being 0-25% along the way on this goal compared to 14% of college participants). However, if the goal was to get any job, non-college participants reported higher achievement of this career goal compared to college participants. Those who had reported wanting to be independent or entrepreneurial, creative or innovative were further along the way to their goals (43% and 57%) – a much higher rate than the English sample. However, the sample size for this question was quite small and so this should be interpreted cautiously.

In terms of ranking of goals in order of importance, security/stability and getting a job equal or better than skill level were the top goals (since 'Other' and not having goals' could not be quantified). 65% of participants ranked security/stability of work at the number 1 or 2 goals, and 54% ranked getting a job equal or better than their skill level the same.

Career Goals	Score
To get a job equal or better than my skill level	1.90
To get a job even if it's lower than my skill level	3.00
To be secure or stable in my job	1.81
To be a technical or functional expert	3.00
To be a leader or manager of people	4.00
To be independent	3.33
To be entrepreneurial or creative/ innovative	4.14
To be dedicated to a cause	2.00
To have work/ life balance	2.12
Did not have career goals	1.00
Other	1.00

Employment Programs

80% of participants reported taking some kind of course designed specifically for internationally trained immigrants. 39% took job search/employment programs, 42% took language improvement programs, 7% took education programs and the remaining 13% took technical programs. This sample undertook fewer courses overall compared to the English sample – 71% took more than 1 course and 54% had taken 2 courses.

Those with higher levels of education were more likely to take these programs overall - 50% of Advanced Education participants reported taking some kind of course compared to 29% of those with Less than Bachelors – though, the more highly educated participants were more likely to take employment programs. All groups seemed equally likely to take language programs.

Job search/employment programs were usually delivered by community agencies (52%) and colleges (29%). Language improvement programs were delivered by community agencies (55%) and colleges (17%) and 'Others' (most likely private institutes) (24%). Colleges (40%) and universities (40%) and 'Other' (private institutes) provided educational programs and colleges (67%) provided the bulk of technical programs along with community agencies (11%). Given the large college going population, this was unsurprising. However, the non-college segment reported mostly going to community agencies for job search/employment programs (45%) and language improvement (50%), attending university for educational programs (67%) and colleges for technical courses (100%).

Education (100%) and language programs (80%) were reported as being more occupation specific than job search/employment programs (63%) and technical programs (56%).

The majority of participants reported job search programs as being under 1 month in length (49%) or between 1-3 months (26%) while most participants (32%) took language programs were under 3 months in length. 21% of participants took 3-6 months language programs, 36% took 6-12 month programs, 4% took 1-2 year length programs and 7% reported being in language programs for over 2 years.

78% of participants in technical programs reported 6 months of less of training while none reported being in programs for over two-years.

100% of job search/employment programs were reported being free. 90% of participants reported free language programs (no difference for college and non-college participants unlike the English sample which had great variation in cost). 20% of participants reported taking free educational programs. 67% of participants reported that they took free technical programs, while 11% paid less than $100 and 11% paid more than $2000.

Employment Service Experiences

The majority of participants had some interaction with a variety of staff members at Ontario colleges, community agencies or other places. Francophone internationally trained immigrants connected most with employment counsellors (30 participants), Job Connect (26), LINC instructors (21), English/French Second Language instructors (15) and career/employment services (11). Only 2-3 participants interacted with other staff and this is too small a number to report on.

Participants were asked to rate their employment service experience from poor to excellent. Combining the percentage that reported each service experience positively (good + excellent) each staff type was rated. On the whole participants rated these various service experiences positively (good or excellent) from 29% to 87%. Language instructors rated the highest and career/ employment staff rated the lowest.

Staff	Count	Positive Experience
Language Programs		
Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)	21	86%
English/French as a Second Language (ESL/FSL)	15	87%
Employment Agencies		
Employment Counsellors	30	63%
Academic Institutions/ Colleges		
Career / Employment Services	11	27%
Job Connect	26	69%

Participants were asked to score their expectations of staff and the quality of interaction on a number of attributes and gap analysis was conducted. Staff members were expected to demonstrate understanding of the client's education background and work experience, regulatory/trade certification, educational/training needs, employment needs, labour market information. Staff members were also expected to be respectful, genuinely interested and able to find information that he/she did not know.

Quality of interaction – Staff would:	Gap
Understand my educational background/ foreign credential assessment	0.586
Understand professional regulatory/ trade certification system in Canada	0.704
Understand my work experience/ my occupation	0.759
Understand my educational/ training needs	0.929
Understand my employment needs	0.848
Understand Canadian labour market information	0.754
Be respectful and genuine interest in me	0.997
Be able to find me information if he/she didn't know	0.555

In all cases, participants' expectations exceed their service experiences and they rated staff most poorly on being respectful and genuine (gap +0.997), staff understanding of their educational/training needs (gap +0.929), their employment needs (gap +0.848), their work experience/occupation (gap +0.759) and understanding the labour market (gap +0.754).

Employment Needs and Preferences

Participants rated the employment preparation activities they had participated in and rated their usefulness in helping them employment. Like the English sample, active employment services including resume/cover letter development, interview preparation, work placement and job search workshops were rated as very useful. However, unlike the English sample, participants did endorse some employment preparation activities (rating them 100%) but these activities usually had very few responses (n=1-4) and therefore must be interpreted with caution.

Employment Preparation Activities	Count	% Useful or Very Useful
Individual education counselling	4	100.00%
Support for writing the licensing or registration exam	2	100.00%
Work placement, co-op or internship	4	100.00%
Setting up informational interviews	2	100.00%
Self-employment/ starting up your own business workshops	1	100.00%
Business plan, strategy, sales, marketing etc. workshops	2	100.00%
Resume/ Cover Letter development	36	86.11%
Access to labour market information and sector-specific information	23	82.61%
Links to professional regulatory or licensing bodies	5	80.00%
Interview preparation (videotaped)	15	80.00%
Job search workshops / Understanding the hidden job market	23	78.26%
Researching employers	13	76.92%
Networking opportunities to meet with investors and others	4	75.00%
Individualized job development (based on your needs)	6	66.67%
Employment resource materials (print, video, or online)	14	64.29%
Mentoring	7	57.14%

Employment Preparation Activities	Count	% Useful or Very Useful
Cold calling	4	50.00%
Employer networking events/ career fairs	7	42.86%
Simulated work places (practice firms)	0	0.00%
Financial incentives / help to set up businesses	0	0.00%

Participants were also asked to think about their own employability skills and score their training needs out of 5 (strongly disagree-agree-neutral/undecided-agree-strongly agree).

Employability Skills	Count	Score
Negotiation skills	39	4.026
Canadian workplace culture	40	4.025
Occupation-specific language skills	41	3.878
Leadership	40	3.850
Occupation-specific communication skills	39	3.795
Effective team work	39	3.795
Computer/IT skills	40	3.775
Occupation-specific technical skills	40	3.750
Thinking skills	39	3.667
Cross-cultural and diversity awareness	38	3.605
Writing	36	3.083
Document use	36	3.056
Numeracy	35	3.000
Reading text	38	2.947

Overwhelmingly, participants displayed a neutral/undecided estimation of their own training needs. The employability skills that participants scored the highest were negotiation skills, Canadian workplace culture, occupation-specific language skills, leadership and occupation-specific communication skills.

Participants also ranked what they would like to do in order to find commensurate employment. While no specific activity took a clear first place, the top ranked activity for the Francophone participants was do a work placement, internship or co-op with an employer (score 2.56) followed by take additional training or skill development (2.83), get my license or certification to practice my profession or trade (2.98), demonstrate my abilities to an employer by completing a project (3.10) and start working right away (3.46). Overall, participants were willing and expecting to complete additional work experience, training or skill development before starting work (unlike the English sample).

At the end of the survey, participants were able to share their employment experiences in Canada which can supply further context to the interpretation of this research (Appendix B).

Differences between the English and French Samples

The most predominant differences between the English and French samples were population demographics, education levels and diversity of country of origin. Francophone respondents were more likely to be refugees and they hailed from 17 source countries compared to 71 countries in the English sample. The English sample reported higher educational qualifications and participation in credential assessment processes.

Both samples reported the same rate of employment at 67% although the English sample was much more likely to be working in part-time, seasonal or contract work. 41% of Francophone participants reported occupations in their home countries requiring a professional/trade compared to 64% of English participants. None of the Francophone participants reported working as general labour and helpers unlike 20% of the English sample and they reported working more often at a similar or higher status and income level than the English sample. Given the their educational background, English-speaking internationally trained immigrants were more likely to have their skills, experience and education discounted and were more likely to work in occupations well below their previous occupations and education. However, while both groups reported the same median annual income of $19,999-$29,999 this represented a greater potential loss of income for the English sample if their potential earnings are taken into account.

Francophone participants seemed less likely to be in fulltime academic programs compared to the English sample; instead they were far more likely to be in workforce skills development programs or adult language programs. Overall, they took fewer courses than the English sample and paid fewer fees for their language programs. This may be so because of the greater demand for English language programs due to population size differences and the consequent variety in the provision, cost and perceived quality of such programs.

In terms of employment needs and preferences – both groups identified active, interventionist employment preparation activities such as individualized career coaching (including assessment of strengths, aspirations, skills, mock interviews); mentorship opportunities (with peers or seniors in the workforce) and co-op/ work placements as important although the Francophone sample seemed more likely to endorse the programs more fully. The English sample did not endorse any program wholeheartedly and qualitative responses showcase dissatisfaction with the quality of programming and teaching – this may be a result of higher expectations and educational backgrounds of the English sample. English-speaking ITIs were far more critical of the need to obtain additional training or education compared to the French sample but this is not unusual given their educational and work experience backgrounds.

Discussion

Occupational Deskilling

This research study demonstrated that internationally trained immigrant population is consistently highly qualified and experienced as is well reported in the literature. However, the study confirmed a disturbing trend: consistent de-skilling of this educated population. Whereas prior to immigration, these participants had been employed in occupational fields such as natural and applied sciences (engineering), health, business and finance and at professional and managerial occupational levels, they were likely to be employed at occupational levels well beneath their qualifications (20% as general labour or factory workers) and at jobs requiring high-school or college diplomas.

This confirms the trend that highly skilled immigrants are often utilized as low cost workers performing low skill manual assembly jobs (Slade, 2003; Basran and Zong 1998). This study also showed that a sizable proportion of internationally trained immigrants were employed in part-time, temporary or seasonal jobs although most worked in low paid, fulltime jobs. Participants reported severe socio-economic impacts including poverty through persistence in low-income survival jobs, lost income, loss of professional knowledge and confidence, family and social issues such as isolation, depression and other mental health consequences through their comments at the end of the survey on their employment experiences in Canada.

Client Needs

Participants showed initiative and reported taking multiple courses (job search, language, education and training) to help their chances at employment, sometimes spending large amounts of money. While many of them participated in free programs provided through settlement agencies, they also paid to attend colleges and university programs. Almost 15% of the English survey sample had undertaken 5 or more courses in their search for employment – a huge investment of time, energy and money. Internationally trained immigrants ranked active, interventionist employment services individualized career coaching (including assessment of strengths, aspirations, skills, mock interviews); mentorship opportunities (with peers or seniors in the workforce) and co-op/ work placements as far more useful than other activities (also reported in Rasheed et al, 2006). Therefore, any programming developed for this client group much incorporate a suite of services.

However, none of the employment preparation activities received complete endorsement and qualitative responses showed a moderate level of dissatisfaction – programs were considered generic, lacking individualized attention, were expensive and (depending on the program) did not place them into appropriate level of work. Participants interacting with job developers and employment counsellors in particular complained that they were consistently offered low paid or survival work and not jobs that were suitable to their education, skills and experience. This may be an interesting area to explore for further research as the question arises whether current work placement/ job development programs inadvertently contributing to the deskilling of this population.

Career Goals

Most internationally trained immigrants had specific career goals that they had set up prior to arriving in Canada – most often, getting a job equal or better to their skill level was at the top of the list. Interestingly, those who had the highest expectations were way behind in achieving them compared to those participants whose expectations of meaningful work were much lower. They were much likelier to be ahead in achieving their goals if the goal was to obtain 'any job'. Reinforcing this was the finding that higher order career goals such as being leaders/managers of people or being entrepreneurial, creative or innovative had a higher rate of goal change; when people realized they could not achieve their goals, they abandoned them.

Service Experiences

Participants reported mixed reviews on experiences with different service professionals. Employment counsellors and job developers fared relatively poorly when compared to language or academic instructors with other staff in-between the two groups. Participants' expectations of staff members exceeded their service experiences across all types of staff and they rated them most poorly on understanding their employment needs, their educational/training needs, their work experience/occupation and being resourceful (finding client information they did not know) – pointing to a need for increased training for staff servicing these clients.

In terms of interpreting the scores, it can be assumed that specific expectations of each service professional and what he/she may bring to the table were in-built into client ratings. Employment focused service professionals – if unable to find their clients suitable job opportunities – would invariably score poorer than academic instructors. But beyond their ability to place people in appropriate work, employment service professionals also fared much lower in their ability to understand the overall education and work experience background of internationally trained immigrants. Some participants commented that staff lacked knowledge of other educational systems and teaching/learning styles, did not communicate effectively, did not provide individualized attention, lacked the knowledge of job opportunities and ability to place immigrants with employers and demonstrated a lack of respect and sensitivity by making clients feel "that immigrants are at a much lower level than Canadians". Clearly, these are indicators of dissatisfied service experiences and all institutions serving immigrant clients should take these into account.

Employability Skills

Participants rated their own employability skills and identified if additional training would be required. Overwhelmingly, participants displayed a neutral/undecided estimation of their own training needs and did not identify any specific skill set. Of these though, the employability skills that participants scored the highest (in terms of needing additional training) were occupation-specific communication skills, Canadian workplace culture, negotiation skills, occupation-specific language skills and occupation-specific technical skills. Participants thus identified a range of 'soft skill' needs rather than 'hard skill needs' (except occupation-specific technical skills). However, their dissatisfaction with general programming available to them demonstrates that current programs may benefit from re-evaluation in terms of client needs. For example, a

quick search shows ‘language’ rather than ‘communication’ programs are available to this group. Language programs are predominantly generic in nature (LINC, ESL) although occupation-specific programs are increasingly available. However, if language programs are not set within a workplace how will participants learn to use the language effectively in that context? Thus, programs that do not integrate clients’ various needs may not be as effective as they could be.

Program and Policy Implications

Generic programming can only have limited success in meeting the needs of such a diverse population. Programs that incorporate occupation-specific communication and language, workplace culture and context and that support clients through providing a suite of services are better placed to meet client needs. However, programming is set within a policy and discourse context, which historically (confirmed through additional CIITE research on college staff) simultaneously values and devalues internationally trained immigrants’ knowledge, education, credentials and work experience. What is needed is an evolution of policy that takes into account the great variations in skills and abilities of this population (and of all populations) and to ensure processes are in place to adequately capture client needs prior to the development of programs, that client feedback is incorporated to improve them on an on-going basis and that service staff are provided with enhanced training opportunities to serve this client group.

Appendix A: English-speaking Internationally Trained Immigrants' Personal Experiences

Enclosed are a selection of experiences shared by survey participants outlining their frustrations, feelings and suggestions for improvement.

Anger

"It is dehumanising to get the jobs of a PSW after spending 30 years as an independent family medical practitioner or a security guard after having served as a President's Commissioned Officer in the Army."

"Canada does not have a lot of technical jobs (except IT and finance). Bringing in a lot of immigrants without any jobs available is a government sponsored scam. Canadian government should bring in only the people needed and not people to work as a labourer to pay for rent, food, CPP, Taxes, EI and take jobs that no Canadian would take."

Pre-arrival Processes

"I suggest that prior to landing here in Canada, immigration should make it mandatory for applicants to job-related orientation so that when they come here, they know what to expect…To avoid talents and skills being wasted, the immigration (department) may want to do some preliminary test with the applicant to see if they really qualify in terms of education and work experience. This could probably delimit growth of numerous government funded programs that are sometimes not too effective. Landed skilled immigrants often find themselves under employed (cab drivers, doing survival jobs)."

Post-arrival Processes

"I suggest that employment programs should be conducted at various levels depending upon the education level one should join a program that suits his/her background and experience. In this way he/she will get an opportunity to interact with people that are more or less at the same level, not one for looking a labour job and another looking for a highly professional job."

"Employment programs are more focussed on meeting their funder's targets and this sometimes compromises the quality of service. There is a need to have one-stop-shop services for clients."

"I come across various people who insist that lots of opportunities exist after 'breaking' into the job market. However, getting into the market is a major show-stopper and there appears to be much hesitation in recruiting foreign trained professionals despite their skills and IMHO equivalent or high competence levels. I have heard of cases where skilled people end up working at wages substantially below market rates to simply be in a job and then remain at that level for eternity. I think that undermines migrants' efforts to integrate into the workforce and Canadian society. I feel Canada should stop skilled migrant applications until such time that the job market can convincingly absorb them and therefore use their skill contributions for the larger benefit to Canada."

“Hidden-Job-Market is one of the main obstacles to match the right candidate with the right job. Some recruiters take advantage of this hidden market (play with employer/job-seeker), resulting in frustration among the talented/ skilled/ deserving job-seekers. In my opinion, all recruiting /private job-placement agencies should be banned. All job-positions should be advertised by employers directly on news-papers, job-boards or their company websites.”

“There is absolutely no help for professional mothers who want to go back to their career of choice…It will be a good to focus a bit more on immigrant mothers with post-secondary education and international work experience who want to pursue their career of origin. On line employment services will be a good idea too. It will help to those ones with one income source - like myself- who are stay-home moms and want to return to work gradually without paying baby sitters.”

Employer Resistance

“Employers in fields such as applied sciences should be more open to internationally trained professionals. Their rigidity causes them to lose out on high potential workforce that immigrants offer. This attitude has destroyed lives and dreams of several newcomers. People eventually regret having migrated to Canada.”

“My experience has shown me that the main problem in finding employment is the language barrier on the seeker side and the perception of many employers on the other side. I believe there are very many employers who do not trust the immigrant.”

“Everybody in Canada talks about Canadian Experience at the first instance. How are you going to get it when nobody is offering you employment in your field? Fields like engineering are very hard to volunteer in or do free work for somebody. Licensing procedure is lengthy and expensive which drains the energies out of foreign trained engineers.”

“The Canadian job market ignores anything that is not Made In Canada. International experience is necessarily below Canadian standards, period. To make matters worse, fear of losing their funding keeps agencies/ counsellors from admitting the problem and honestly counselling the candidates. There is no means of foreign credential assessment minimally respected by Canadian employers. Above all, the inability to talk openly and honestly with employers prevents foreign candidates from learning what inadequacies must be rectified to make oneself acceptable - whether said inadequacies are real or perceived. Fear of xenophobia charges or any sort of discomfort ensures that no true/sincere feedback is given to foreign candidates, preventing them from learning. Icing on the cake: Whenever I talk about these problems, I am immediately labelled as 'negative', which I consider a low blow to some one who's already on the floor... the message is 'There's nothing wrong with Canadian Industry, and if you cannot fit it's your problem’.”

“It appears that Canada is a very closed shop as far as employment is concerned. You need to get into a company as P/T or on the bottom rung to hear about new jobs so you can apply for a suitable position. It doesn't seem a very 'equal opportunity' way to get good staff. You really

need to know someone to get you in to the company initially, if you are from overseas this is extremely frustrating."

Discounting of Skills, Experience and Credentials

"Most foreign trained professionals are not really considered as professionals in Canada unless a Canadian Certification or Canadian Experience have been achieved or received by the individual. Even though foreign trained individuals are more capable than Canadians, respect for these capabilities and skills will not be considered unless an underlying Canadian credential has been considered."

Licensing Barriers

"I made the critical/career destroying move to Canada from the UK, on the basis of third party suggestions and advice. Being a registered engineering professional from the UK and affiliated with industry leading professional bodies, I am seeking a return to the UK in order to regain my professional status /work experience since Canada has not provided this for me."

"I have observed that there are systematic barriers to practice the professions. There seems a need to revise the rules and procedures of regulatory bodies for issuing the license to practice for foreign trained professionals. It takes many years to complete the requirements to register with license bodies for practising the profession. There should be short bridging programs for all the professions and trades so that foreign trained and experienced individuals may complete and meet the requirements of the regulatory bodies and be able to practice their professions as they used to do before immigrating to Canada. It will help Canadians to have more licensed professionals serve them, especially professionals who speak different other languages to make it easier to serve the client who have difficulty communicating with native practitioners."

Limited Successes

"Since arriving in Canada in July 2008, I started looking for IT jobs right away by submitting countless resumes online. However, I did not get any interview to my applications for over 2 months. I began to think there must be something wrong with my way of job search. Then I went to see Employment Counsellor and she suggested that attend some employment workshops for skills and assistance for my job search. Impressed by the high rate of graduates who have found employment in a short period, I decided to attend some professional programs. The program has been amazing to me that they would teach very useful skills for resume, cover letter, interviewing, networking and cold calling. After finishing the program, I resumed my job search with an effective cover letter and resume, and received my first interview call within one week. I passed two round interviews and got a full time job offer."

Appendix B: French-speaking Internationally Trained Immigrants' Personal Experiences

Enclosed are a selection of experiences shared by survey participants outlining their frustrations, feelings and suggestions for improvement.

Refugee Issues

"Mettre en place un systeme d'encadrement pour les immigrants formes a l'etranges. Doter le ministere de l'immigration et de la citoyennete d'un systeme de traitement de dossier de facon plus rapide et efficace. Nommer plus de juges francophones a Toronto afin d'accelerer les seances a la cour de justice. L'immigration prends trop de temps pour pour le traitement de dossiers des refugies. Certains agents d'immigration ne veulent pas accepter les documents rediges en langues francaises.ex:acte de naissance (birthdate certificate in French) tandis que le Canada adopte les deux langues officielles : l'Anglais et le francais). Dans la section reservee au langue ,la langue creole n'y est pas,c'est une langue qcomme toutes les autres. Je presente tres sincerement mes encouragements a tous ceux et toutes celles qui prennent cette initiave et desormais j'ai un brin d'espoir pour les nouveaux arrivants."

Post-arrival Processes

"Par rapport aux professions reglementees, il est difficile de nouer les 2 bouts du mois: payer les factures... et en meme temps payer les frais d'examen pour la reconnaissance des diplomes. Ne serait-il pas possible de prevoir un systeme de pret comme la bourse pret du gouvernenement pour permettre a ceux qui sont motives de rentrer dans leurs professions d'atteindre leurs objectifs au lieu de perdre beaucoup de temps au travail de survie qui epuise et ecarte souvent les gens de leurs objectifs?"

Employer Resistance

Si les employeurs du Canada pouvaient juste avoir une certaines consideration sur les années d'expérience de travaile des immigrants (de leurs pays d'origines), ce serait une très bonne chose bien le système de travail du Canada diffère des certains autres pays.

Licensing Barriers

Le monde du travail au Canada est comme embrigader par les ordres professionnels qui, sous le prétexte de protéger les citoyens, constituent plutôt de véritables barrières. Ils protègent les médiocres et redoutent la concurrence. Pour moi, la condition pour postuler à un poste devrait être: "être capable de..." et non appartenir à tel ordre ou groupe. Le Canada devrait faire attention si le pays veut rester dans le cercle des grands car, la compétition ne s'accommode pas de certaines pratiques, et le monde devient très compétitif.

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