

*The Voices of Visible Minorities, Speaking Out on Breaking Down Barriers*  
Conference Board of Canada, September 2004

The study used focus groups and the stories of a Pakistani geologist and a born-Canadian man of colour, to paint the picture of the types of discrimination that visible minorities face in the seeking employment, as well as in the workplace.

Key Facts and Stats

- 6 in 10 newcomers work in a different occupational field than they had before coming to Canada
- many immigrants find themselves in sales and service or processing and manufacturing occupations after they arrive
- Not only do many immigrants with degrees find themselves in low-skilled occupations, but they also earn less than Canadian-born workers, whether they work in a high-skilled or low-skilled occupation

Participants named the following as essential to the successful integration of immigrants:

- Career development opportunities in the work place
- Accountability – supervisors should be held accountable and their performance measured against the organization’s diversity policy/goals
- Canadian experience in any form
- Market knowledge of major languages
- Networking
- Mentoring
- A “can do” attitude

Focus groups also think the following issues are excuses for discrimination:

- Lack of fit
- Language skills
- Lack of recognition of credentials
- Unfamiliarity with the “Canadian Way”
- “different” standards of performance