

Canada's Immigration Score: Recommendations for a win-win
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Ratna Omidvar, President, Maytree and Chair, TRIEC Board of Directors, examines the success of immigrants in the short, medium, and long terms using economic, social, and political indicators. She makes five recommendations to help Canada meet its short term labour market needs while balancing the goal of long-term prosperity.

Key ideas, facts and stats:

- In the short term, the importance of employment and attachment to the labour market is paramount in the first few years in Canada
- Between \$3.4 billion and \$5 billion would be added to the Canadian economy each year if the foreign credentials of immigrants were recognized
- Although recent immigrants are more educated than the Canadian-born, they earn less and have a more difficult time entering the labour market
- In the most recent recession, immigrants accounted for almost all net job losses and immigrant employment dropped by 17% compared with Canadian-born employment
- Many immigrants had been working in sectors other than those in which they had training and skills because their foreign credentials were not recognized, putting them even further from their original career goals
- In the medium term, indicators of immigrant success should be based less on economic success and more on the extent to which immigrants are able to integrate
- Citizenship is an important factor of integration as it enables immigrants to vote, run for office, and shape public policy
- In the long term, the success of the children of immigrants is the most important indicator of success
- The children of immigrants are more likely to obtain post-secondary education than the children of the Canadian-born parents
- The children of immigrants also have higher incomes and lower unemployment rates than their parents

Five recommendations to help Canada meet its short term labour market needs while balancing goal of long-term prosperity:

1. Immigrants arriving through the Federal Skilled Worker Program should have a language proficiency in English or French that will allow them to succeed in Canada and this language ability should be a prerequisite for skilled workers
2. Young people should be awarded more points than those with more work experience as young people have long careers ahead of them which will contribute to the Canadian economy
3. Improve digitization at Citizenship and Immigration in order to fast track applicants whose skills are in high demand and create a database that is accessible to immigration officials and employers so that they can find immigrants that the economy needs

4. Removing the occupational list of 38 will remove licensing and regulatory barriers which will allow labour shortages to be filled more quickly

5. Awarding permanent residency through the Federal Skilled Worker Program and allowing for relocation of unemployed permanent residents will create future citizens, not just fill temporary labour shortages