



Demand for & Impact of Mentoring Newcomer Professionals: The case of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

Evaluation Findings

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Empowering Newcomer Professionals through Mentoring

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is an impactful and proven program, which **more than doubles** a newcomer's chances of securing a good quality job.

Mentoring...

Leads to good quality jobs for newcomer professionals in Canada

Newcomers who participate to the program are **2.5x** more likely to find good quality employment.*

85% of those employed after the program are in permanent and full-time jobs.



Enhances the job search skills of newcomers

Over **80%** of the program mentees report improved ability to prepare a strong job application and knowledge of interviewing processes.



Expands the professional networks of newcomers

Program participants are almost **4x** more likely to expand their networks.*



Empowers newcomer women and unemployed newcomers in their career journeys

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership has the **greatest impact** on female newcomers and for those who are unemployed.



Generates the best outcomes when preceded by other employment services

Program participants who use a **wider variety of employment services** experience better employment outcomes.



This report presents the findings from the external evaluation of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership.

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership targets immigrants who are experienced, internationally-educated professionals who are employment-ready, seeking a job in their field, but whose job search in Canada is impeded. In most cases, this is due to a lack of sector or occupation-specific “insider” knowledge and/or the absence of local professional networks. To address these challenges the program matches these newcomer professionals to Canada with a mentor who has a similar professional background. Over a three-month period mentors help their newcomer mentees to navigate the local job market and to build their professional networks in order to become more effective in their job search and career development in the GTA.

The evaluation aimed to assess the value mentoring provides in helping skilled newcomers obtain their first professional Canadian work experience in their field, along with the potential demand for mentoring.

TRIEC engaged Blueprint ADE to carry out the evaluation of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. The evaluation was funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) as part of the Canadian Work Experience Pilots Evaluation, a national initiative to gather evidence on the most effective ways to help skilled newcomers gain their first Canadian work experience in their profession.

The evaluation findings show that:

- 1) TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is an **impactful and proven program** that delivers solid employment and social outcomes:
 - a) Mentoring helps unemployed and underemployed newcomers reach their employment goals sooner, while **mitigating the effects of precarious work**.
 - i) The evaluation found that skilled newcomers who participate in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership are **2.45 times more likely** to be in **good quality employment** after 3 months than those who don’t participate.
 - ii) After finishing their mentoring partnership (at close and after three and six months), more than **85% of employed participants** were in jobs that had many features of good quality employment.
 - b) Job search skills of mentees are significantly enhanced by participating to the program.
 - i) **Over 80% of mentees** report that their **ability to prepare a strong job application, knowledge of interviewing processes and capacity to network** are improved through the program.

- c) Mentorship has a particularly positive impact on the **professional networks of newcomers**.
 - i) TRIEC Mentoring Partnership mentees are almost **four times more likely** to have expanded their professional network after three months of completing the program, compared to those who do not participate.
 - d) The Partnership has the most significant results for **female newcomers**, for those previously in finance and corporate administration, and for those who are unemployed.
 - e) Mentees who accessed a **wider variety of employment services** offered by community partners prior to receiving mentoring support experienced better employment outcomes.
 - f) **Mentors** highly appreciate the opportunity to **volunteer and give back** to society, while **enhancing their own skill set**.
 - i) **81%** of mentors improved their ability to communicate with colleagues from different cultures and **67%** had higher confidence in their ability to coach and mentor others.
 - g) **Employers** see the program as a way to enhance the **cross-cultural communication** and **leadership skills** of their employees as well as a way to fulfill their **social responsibility objectives**. They also value the program as an opportunity to **attract diverse talent**.
- 2) There is **growing demand** for TRIEC Mentoring Partnership and mentoring in general:
- a) The demand for TRIEC Mentoring Partnership has been growing rapidly since 2004, driven by:
 - i) High levels of **mentee satisfaction (89%)**, employment outcomes and positive word of mouth
 - ii) Extensive employer and community partner network
 - iii) Well-established IT infrastructure for mentoring partnerships.
 - b) **58,900 recent skilled newcomers** in Toronto, who currently have a university degree but are not in a job that requires this level of education, could benefit from mentoring.
 - c) **35-40% of all recent immigrants** to Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Halifax and London could participate to mentoring programs to facilitate their transition to the workforce.
- 3) There is **potential for scaling mentoring** and TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, contingent upon additional capacity and funding:

- a) The evaluation findings show that potential demand for mentoring dramatically **outweighs the supply of mentors and infrastructure for coordinating matches**.
 - i) The demand varies from **1,500 to 58,900** potentially eligible newcomers across the cities studied, while mentor-mentee matches range from **100 to 2,000**.
- b) There is need for **additional capacity and funding** to scale mentoring in the GTA and across Canada.

I. TRIEC Mentoring Partnership - Overview

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) works to improve employment and career outcomes for immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area. The organization creates opportunities for newcomers to expand their professional networks and navigate the local labour market. It also supports employers to become more immigrant inclusive, and benefit from the skills and talent of today's diverse workforce. TRIEC is a convenor that brings together stakeholders to develop innovative solutions to the employment challenges immigrant professionals face, including a wide range of both community and employer partners.

Since 2004, TRIEC has been coordinating TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, a collaboration of 27 employer and 12 community partners across the Greater Toronto Area, funded by the Government of Canada through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

The program targets immigrants who are experienced, internationally-educated professionals who are employment-ready, seeking a job in their field, but whose job search in Canada is impeded. This may be due to a lack of sector or occupation-specific "insider" knowledge, the absence of a local professional networks or, in most cases, some combination of both. To address these challenges the program matches these newcomer professionals to Canada with a mentor who has a similar professional background.

Over a three-month period mentors help their newcomer mentees to navigate the local job market and to build their professional networks in order to become more effective in their job search and career development in the GTA. In return, mentors develop leadership and coaching skills, gain knowledge of international business practices, and improve their cross-cultural communication and understanding.

While TRIEC is the key conveyor and catalyst of the mentoring partnerships, community partners are the key point of contact for immigrant professionals who participate in the program. Community partners are employment service providers who support immigrants to find work in their professional field. These 12 partners promote mentoring to eligible newcomers and register

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership: Community Partners

ACCES Employment, COSTI, Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre, George Brown College, Humber College, JobStart, JVS Toronto, Seneca College, Sheridan College, Skills for Change, and Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office. TRIEC also collaborates with five referral partners including: College Boreal, North York Community House, Centre for Education & Training, Tropicana Community Services, and Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services.

them to the program after they become job-ready and facilitate their matches with their mentors. Throughout each partnership coaches from the community partners support both mentor and mentee over the course of the three month period.

Program registration, matching capabilities, mentoring activities, progress and feedback is delivered and captured via a customized digital customer relationship management platform designed, built and managed by the TRIEC mentoring team, to facilitate partner collaboration efforts, program delivery and mentee and mentor feedback.

TRIEC employer partners are a community of cross-sector organizations who sign-up to support mentoring and recruit their employees as mentors. Employer partners are the largest source of mentors to the program, with a minimum commitment of 15 mentors in their first cycle, some large, long term employer partners have recruited over a 1000 mentors during their time with the program. By giving their employees the opportunity to engage with qualified newcomer professionals and provide them with guidance and support, participation in the program helps these employers build more innovative, globally competitive, and culturally competent workforces.

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership: Employer Partners

3M, Accenture, BMO, CIBC, Starbucks, Unilever, EY, KPMG, Mackenzie Investments, Manulife, Ontario Power Generation, TD Bank, Scotiabank, TELUS, University of Toronto, City of Toronto, RBC, LTI, Osler, Dentons, City of Oshawa, City of Mississauga, Loblaw, Meridian Credit Union, LCBO, Modern Niagara, and Antamex.

Since its launch, the program has supported over 18,000 skilled immigrants in the GTA and currently serves over 2,000 mentees each year. TRIEC's internal evaluation shows that **within six months of receiving mentoring through the program, 77 per cent of newcomers find work in their field or a related field.** In addition, 78 per cent of mentors say they are more willing to hire an immigrant professional after taking part in the program. The return on investment of the program has been found to be significant, with every \$1 invested in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, generating a \$10.50 return in terms of social impact.¹ In terms of economic impact, average full-time annual earnings of immigrants who completed TRIEC Mentoring Partnership and similar programs across Canada increased from \$36,905 to \$59,944, an increase of 62%.²

¹ Based on an analysis in 2015 conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in partnership with TRIEC and LEAP Pecaut Centre for Social Impact

² ALLIES-Accenture, "The results are in: Mentoring improves employment outcomes for skilled immigrants" report, (2013).

II. TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation Project

Project Overview

This evaluation project was funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) as part of the Canadian Work Experience Pilots Evaluation initiative. The Partnership evaluation objectives included:

- 1) Determining the level of demand for mentoring as an intervention within the Greater Toronto Area and in other cities across Canada
- 2) Determining the impact of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership on the career success of mentees versus a control group
- 3) Analyzing the attitudinal and behavioral shifts of mentors participating in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership towards newcomers and resulting impact on their employers
- 4) Comparing mentoring practice to other comparable interventions
- 5) Recommending considerations for a model to scale mentoring on a national level

Evaluation Scope & Methodology

Blueprint ADE was contracted to undertake the external evaluation of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. In addition, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) was appointed by ESDC to conduct an overarching evaluation of the Partnership and other pilots to gather evidence on the most effective ways to help skilled newcomers acquire their first Canadian work experience in their intended professions.

The control group was sourced in partnership with World Education Services (WES). Engagement of community partners, employer partners and immigrant employment councils (IECs) across Canada was also sought to collect feedback on the indicators for the demand for and impact of mentoring, and to formulate recommendations for program scaling.

Over 2,000 participants from TRIEC Mentoring Partnership and around 14,000 WES database members were invited to participate in the evaluation. Approximately 1,000 mentoring partnerships (mentee - mentor pairs) were enrolled to participate in the research and over 2,000 WES respondents were identified as potential control group members.

Data was collected between September 2018 – September 2019 through surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews. The table below summarizes the participation numbers across the various evaluation tools:

Data collection tool	# of surveys completed
Mentee baseline survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	834
Baseline survey (Control Group)	402
Mentee exit survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	473
Mentor exit survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	692
Mentee outcome at close survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	600
3 months follow-up survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	356
3 months follow-up survey (Control Group)	115
6 months follow-up survey (TRIEC Mentoring Partnership)	139

Key informant interviews with immigrant employment councils (IECs) and TRIEC stakeholders, including community partners, in the GTA were conducted during October-November 2018, to gather feedback and recommendations on:

- the impact and benefits of mentoring,
- key success factors for mentoring,
- demand for mentoring and resources and supports required to serve more clients.

Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted with mentee and mentor participants, employer partners and community partner career coaches during July-August 2019.

III. Impact of Mentoring

Mentees

Mentoring helps unemployed and underemployed newcomers **reach their employment goals** sooner, while **mitigating the effects of precarious work**.

Impact of mentoring on good quality employment

The evaluation found that skilled newcomers who participate in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership were **2.45 times more likely** to be in good quality employment after 3 months than individuals in the control group.

In terms of employment outcomes, the evaluation found that skilled newcomers who participate in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership were **2.45 times more likely** to be in good quality employment³ after 3 months than individuals in the control group. The employment results were also observed to increase over time, especially at six months after completing the program.

Besides employment, mentoring helps skilled newcomers to understand the job search and hiring processes in Canada, the requirements for employment in their field, and other industry trends and insights. The evaluation survey results revealed that as a result of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, the overwhelming majority of mentees felt they were better prepared for job search and employment in their profession (91%), had a better understanding of the hiring process and the requirements in their field (88%), and had learned more about the industry trends and insights (83%).

Improvements in mentee job search & networking skills	
% of Mentees	Observation
91	were better prepared for job search and employment in their profession
88	had better understanding of the hiring process and the requirements in their field
87	had better capacity to prepare a strong job application for a job in their field
85	improved their capacity to network

The mentees also observed significant gains in specific job search skills through mentoring. After the end of their mentoring partnership, 87% reported that their **capacity to prepare a strong job application** for a job in their field or profession was enhanced. Another 82% highlighted that their knowledge of **typical interview questions** and responses has improved/improved to some extent, and 85% reported that their **capacity to network** effectively improved.

Mentees in focus groups further underlined that mentors were helpful in providing sector/occupation-specific career advice, developing sector/occupation specific CVs, proof-reading cover letters and introducing them to new network connections. Some mentees in the focus groups also shared that mentors were helpful in setting expectations, providing insights into Canadian workplace culture, and providing encouragement to maintain a positive mindset as they encountered challenges in their job search.

³ Employed in a single, full-time, permanent job with benefits and opportunities for career advancement

Mentors also reinforce advice that mentees may have heard or researched, and lend it more credibility and weight. Some mentors in the focus groups reported that their advice and encouragement during the program helped mentees to achieve intermediate outcomes, like enhanced job search skills and expanded networks, as well as increasing their likelihood of finding employment.

Managing mentee expectations and supporting them to be more persistent is critical for their career success. During interviews conducted by TRIEC, mentees reported feeling more resilient in job search knowing they had their mentors support.⁴ This was reiterated by community partners during the evaluation focus groups, who stated that the support and reassurance provided by mentors to mentees when they get demotivated is critical.

The evaluation reaffirmed **the strong positive impact of mentorship on the professional networks of newcomers**. Compared to the control group members, TRIEC Mentoring Partnership mentees were almost **four times more likely** to have expanded their professional network after three months of completing the program.

Impact of mentoring on networking

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership mentees were almost **four times more likely** to have expanded their professional network after three months of completing the program, compared to the participants in the control group.

Service delivery partners of the program also cited the ability of mentors to help mentees build their networks as a factor that helps fill the gaps in other delivered programs as a complementary and final intervention before employment. Some community partners further reported that newcomers can often access the network of their mentor in a specific industry or occupation, and this helps newcomers to find a job in their field.

The evaluation also revealed that **the Partnership works significantly better for female newcomers than male newcomers**. Considering the disproportionate challenges that newcomer women face in the GTA labour market, the program is impactful in fostering their career transition. The positive effects of the program were also stronger on the employment outcomes of those previously in **finance and corporate administration**, as well as those who are **unemployed**.⁵

⁴ TRIEC Blogs: <http://triec.ca/networking-is-about-building-and-nurturing-relationships-immigrant-journey-of-sagar-shah/>
<http://triec.ca/i-want-to-become-a-mentor-myself-immigrant-journey-of-pavit-kaur/>

⁵ These findings are based on regression models that show significant positive interaction between employment outcomes and i) being a women, ii) having previous experience in finance and corporate administration and iii) being unemployed.

Mentees who **used a wider variety of employment services** offered by community partners prior to receiving mentoring support **experienced better employment outcomes**. Programming such as interview skill courses, resume writing workshops and job search skills training is associated with good quality and commensurate employment at 3 months after receiving mentoring. **Using networking programs and foreign credential recognition services in particular prior to enrollment** in the Partnership appears to be associated with **better employment outcomes** for participants.

Effects of pre-mentorship programming

Mentees who **used a wider variety of employment services** offered by community partners prior to receiving mentoring support **experienced better employment outcomes**.

The more programs and services the mentees of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership have used prior to mentorship, the more likely they are to be in good quality and commensurate employment. To illustrate, those who have participated in five different programs before are 2 percentage points more likely to be in good quality employment and 10 percentage points more likely to be in commensurate employment compared to those who have not engaged in any services prior to the Partnership.

In addition, at the baseline stage, mentees stated that the below programming (excluding the Partnership) were somewhat or very useful:

- Workshops to build job search, resume, and/or interview skills (76%)
- Employment counselling and job search assistance (70%)
- Networking programs or events (61%)
- Other mentorship programs (55%)
- Soft skills workshops (54%)

Mentors

The program offers mentors the opportunity to volunteer and give back to their community, while also enhancing their skill sets. In the evaluation surveys, mentors highlighted that participating in the program improved their confidence in their ability to coach and mentor others, including skilled immigrants (67%), ability to better appreciate the talent and experience the skilled immigrants bring to workplace (88%) and ability to better communicate and work effectively with colleagues from different cultures (81%).

Improvements in mentor skills	
% of Mentors	Observation
67	improved confidence in the ability to coach & mentor others, including skilled immigrants
81	improved ability to communicate and work effectively with colleagues from different cultures
88	improved ability to appreciate the talent & experience the skilled immigrants bring

During the focus groups, most mentors reported that they appreciate the chance to support a newcomer navigate the Canadian labour market and culture, and to address the questions and issues that arise when seeking employment in a new country. Some mentors were former newcomers themselves, who experienced the challenges first-hand and wanted to help other newcomers to navigate the labour market.

Employers

Employers see the program as a way to enhance the cross-cultural communication and leadership skills of their employees as well as a way to fulfill their social responsibility objectives. They value the program as helping them to facilitate an opportunity for their staff to give back to the community as well as a way to attract diverse talent.

Out of 8 employers that were engaged in the evaluation, all of them reported that participating in the program as mentors had improved the coaching and cross-cultural communication skills of their employees, and 7 agreed/strongly agreed that it enhanced their leadership skills. All employers also reported that participating in the Partnership helped them to achieve community engagement and diversity and inclusion objectives, along with building a brand as a good corporate citizen.

Employers also reaffirmed that the Partnership provides an opportunity for their staff to give back to the community. One employer also reported that the program is a non-traditional but effective way to attract talent, and hired mentees from the program. The employer cited that the mentees were meeting or exceeding workplace expectations.

IV. Demand for Mentoring Newcomer Professionals

Demand for TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

The demand for TRIEC Mentoring Partnership has grown rapidly since 2004. The program has matched more than 2,000 mentees in FY 2018-2019 and the total of number of newcomers who have participated to the program since inception has exceeded 18,000. While increasing

immigration numbers are a key reason for growing demand, there are also other factors that drive more newcomers to apply for the program.

High levels of mentee satisfaction has been a key driver of demand for and growth of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. The external evaluation revealed that **89% of mentees were satisfied/very satisfied with the program**. The findings also show that those mentees recommend the programs to other newcomers. The satisfaction levels further correspond to the strong employment outcomes of mentees – after finishing their mentoring partnership (at close and after three and six months), more than **85% of employed participants** were in jobs that had many features of good quality employment.

Mentee satisfaction

The external evaluation revealed that **89% of mentees were satisfied/very satisfied with the program**. The findings show that those mentees also recommend the programs to other newcomers.

Word of mouth is very influential, motivating newcomers to sign up for mentoring and other programs, and establishing an open and positive mindset about the value of these programs. This applies to mentors too, who refer volunteer mentoring opportunities to others. Some employers reported that they use current mentors who had positive experiences with the program to help recruit new mentors from within their organizations.

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is an in-demand program for community and employer partners as well. The program is currently working with 27 employer partners, 12 community partners and five referral partners. TRIEC provides managerial oversight over the program and centralized resources, along with quality assurance and organizational support to community and referral partners. The evaluation reaffirms that employers see the program as a way to enhance the cross-cultural communication and leadership skills of their employees as well as a way to fulfill their social responsibility objectives. They value the program as an opportunity for their staff to give back to society as well as a way to attract diverse talent.

Jointly with community partners, TRIEC leverages the customer relationship management platform Salesforce as a program management tool to track and manage mentees and mentors throughout their mentoring partnership, from invitation to registration to post-program evaluation and outcome surveys. Utilizing a program-specific customer relationship management

solution has been critical to TRIEC’s ability to effectively respond to growing demand for mentoring.⁶

The rapidity with which this demand is growing was identified as a challenge for TRIEC Mentoring Partnership during the evaluation. In the mentee and community partner focus groups, some participants cited long waiting times of mentees (ranging from 2 weeks to 3 months) to be matched with mentors. Community partners further highlighted that the high and increasing mentee demand for the program coupled with the low supply of mentors, affected by seasonal fluctuations, makes it challenging to bridge the two for matching purposes. Another challenge highlighted by partners was lack of resources and capacity to manage more mentoring partnerships.

Potential demand for mentoring in the Greater Toronto Area

The external evaluation estimated that around **58,900 recent skilled newcomers** in Toronto, who are currently not in commensurate employment, could benefit from mentoring.

49,200 of this number are those who are underemployed (holding a bachelor’s degree or more, but working in a job that requires less than a university bachelor’s degree) and would benefit from mentoring to secure employment more commensurate to the skills, education and experience. The remaining 9,700 are unemployed could benefit from mentoring to help them secure employment in their own or related fields. In addition, the evaluator estimated that **33% (40,760) of around 73,161 skilled immigrants** arriving to Toronto in 2019 could constitute the **potential future demand pool** for mentoring.

Potential demand in the GTA

The external evaluation estimated that around **58,900 recent skilled newcomers** in Toronto, who are currently not in commensurate employment, could benefit from mentoring.

Other studies also confirm that there is a large potential mentee pool, as many newcomers are still underemployed. For instance, in the GTA, one in two newcomer men and two in three newcomer women with a bachelor's degree have jobs that require lower levels of education.⁷ During the evaluation focus groups, community partners further reported strong and growing demand for mentoring across the GTA, with growth especially strong in areas outside of Toronto itself.

⁶ Tulan Ma and Lisette Peerlings, “Case Study: How TRIEC Leverages Its CRM Software as an Effective Program Delivery Tool,” *Techsoup Canada*, (2018). <https://www.techsoupcanada.ca/en/community/blog/case-study-how-triec-leverages-its-crm-software-as-an-effective-program-delivery-tool>

⁷ TRIEC, “State of Immigrant Inclusion in the Greater Toronto Area Labour Market,” (2018). <http://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TRIEC-State-of-Immigrant-Inclusion-Report-final-181123.pdf>

It is important to note that even newcomers in high growth sectors and occupations are not guaranteed a job, and could still benefit significantly from a mentor in their occupation. Besides workplace-related challenges, newcomers might still need to reconsider how to leverage their skills and competencies, and how they search for jobs. One of the mentees in the IT sector, who was interviewed about her experience, stated that she applied to many job posts that fit her profile and that the labour demand was there – but she did not succeed in acquiring a new position until she received mentoring support.⁸

Potential demand for mentoring across Canada

The external evaluation estimated that **35-40% of all recent immigrants to Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Halifax and London could benefit from mentoring.** This includes newcomers who have a university degree but are either unemployed or underemployed, which means working in a job that requires lower levels of education. The below figure illustrates the total current demand pool.

Potential current demand pool

City	Total - # of recent immigrants (X+W+Y+Z)	No university/bachelor's degree or higher (X)	University/bachelor's degree or higher (W+Y+Z)			Potential current demand (Y+Z)
			Fully employed (in a job requiring bachelor's degree or higher) (W)	Under-employed (Y)	Unemployed (Z)	
Toronto CMA	176,200	69,300	48,000	49,200	9,700	58,900
Vancouver CMA	56,500	24,700	12,000	17,300	2,300	19,600
Calgary CMA	41,300	14,700	7,700	16,300	2,600	18,900
Edmonton CMA	39,500	18,700	6,400	12,800	1,600	14,400
Ottawa CMA	11,900	5,000	2,300	4,600	~0	4,600
Halifax CMA	5,200	1,700	1,600	1,700	200	1,900
London CMA	3,900	1,400	1,000	1,250	250	1,500

Source: Labour Force Survey 2016, 2017 & Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data 2015-2019.

IECs noted that there is considerable variation in both the sectors in which the demand for mentors is greatest and local growth industries across cities and provinces. In-depth knowledge of both the profile of immigrant professionals and the trajectories of the local labour market is critical for the design and delivery of mentoring programs.

V. Scaling Mentoring: Challenges and Recommendations

Mentoring could be scaled at two levels, through the growth of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership in the GTA, and through collaboration around leveraging employers and other organizations running mentoring programs for newcomer professionals at the national level. Based on the insights from the external evaluation, two key challenges need to be overcome at both levels to

⁸ TRIEC Blog: <http://triec.ca/i-want-to-become-a-mentor-myself-immigrant-journey-of-pavit-kaur/>

extend mentoring support to more newcomers: Insufficient mentor supply and lack of necessary capacity and funding.

Insufficient mentor supply

The evaluation findings show that potential current demand for mentoring dramatically outweighs the supply of mentors. The demand varies **from 1,500 to 58,900 across the cities studied** while mentor-mentee matches are **only around 100 to 2,000**. In the GTA specifically, community partners noted that there is a critical shortage of mentors available in sectors such as engineering, architecture, IT marketing, media and communications pharmaceutical and medicine. IECs also confirmed that fewer than the necessary number of mentors creates an unmet demand pool across Canada. This is both a barrier as well as an opportunity for scaling.

Need for additional capacity and funding

In terms of scaling mentoring, community partners of TRIEC stated that additional funding would be required in order to hire more administrative staff and mentoring coaches, including mobile coaches, to scale their operations and extend pre-mentorship interventions. IECs highlighted the limitations placed on mentoring programs by the program eligibility criteria required by funders, which generally exclude skilled immigrants without permanent residency or those who have been in Canada for more than five years.

Recommendations for scaling TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

- **Secure more mentors in a wider range of occupations and sectors**
 - Intensifying marketing efforts on sectors with mentor gaps, as well as collaborating with current employer partners to engage a more diversified cross-section of mentors from their organizations
 - Building more relationships with new employer partners
 - Providing more information about what mentorship involves, along with more structured information and guidance, to help mentors prepare to participate
 - Improving the matching process of mentors and mentees, in terms of closer alignment with areas of expertise and sectors
- **Increase mentoring partnerships outside of downtown Toronto**
 - Using advertising to increase awareness about mentoring beyond the GTA
 - Encouraging existing employer partners to offer mentoring opportunities at branches outside of downtown Toronto to help secure more mentors across the region
- **Review mentor resources in terms of accessibility and user experience & expand in-demand content**
 - Providing more clear and accessible resources to mentors, in the form of good practice guides and protocols, on how to advise their mentees on interviewing, hiring processes and networking

- Expanding the resources available to help prepare mentors and mentees for the first meeting
- Creating a community of practice that would offer peer-to-peer learning among mentors
- Combining existing resources into an accessible and well-curated collection
- **Factor in intersectionality characteristics in programming**
 - Empowering racialized immigrant women through mentoring, who face disproportionate challenges in the labour market compared to other immigrant and non-immigrant groups⁹

Recommendations for scaling mentoring at the national level

- **Sharing of promising practices, lessons learned, content and tools among organizations that deliver mentoring programs for newcomer professionals**
 - Developing good practice guidelines and tools could support scaling of effective mentoring programs, such as a replication toolkit for the Partnership.
 - Learning materials of TRIEC and other IECs could be shared with each other and further disseminated to their respective mentees, mentors, employers and community partners, including through online portals for each stakeholder group.
 - Co-developing and implementing joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would help collect and collate standardized data and insights.
- **Advancing collaboration between TRIEC Mentoring Partnership and other IECs on partner engagement, outreach and program delivery**
 - TRIEC and other IECs could collaborate to secure employer partners and mentors from sectors where mentee demand is under-met.
 - TRIEC and other IECs could engage in joint promotion of mentorship amongst potential mentees, mentors and employers through targeted marketing and communication efforts. A national story of mentoring programs would increase the reach of mentorship and help build a brand for the practice across Canada.
 - TRIEC could collaborate with other IECs on a national database or information sharing system to facilitate matches across IECs.
- **Leveraging TRIEC Mentoring Partnership's networks, expertise and content to scale local mentoring programs**
 - TRIEC Mentoring Partnership could introduce its employer partners to other IECs across Canada to support the delivery of mentoring programs in multiple communities across the country.

⁹ Yilmaz Dinc, "How Far Have Immigrant Women Advanced in the Workplace," *Canadian HR Reporter*, (2019). <https://www.hrreporter.com/columnist/human-resources-guest-blogger/archive/2019/03/08/how-far-have-immigrant-women-advanced-in-the-workplace/>

- The program could leverage its employer engagement experience and expertise to approach larger businesses in harder-to-match sectors and deepen the engagement of existing employer partners.
- The program could curate resources and materials on different components of the Partnership, such as matching processes, for the use of other IECs.
- The program could explore additional funding sources with potentially different eligibility criteria to meet mentoring demand from skilled immigrants without permanent residency or those who have been in Canada for more than five years.

VI. Conclusion

The evaluation project provides evidence that:

- i) TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is an **impactful and proven program** that delivers solid employment and social outcomes
- ii) There is **growing demand** for mentoring and TRIEC Mentoring Partnership in particular
- iii) There **is potential for scaling** mentoring and TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, contingent upon additional capacity and funding.

Taking part in this evaluation brought TRIEC and its partners a much clearer picture of not only the impact of mentoring but the challenge of meeting the growing need of newcomer professionals and the potential for growth and cross-Canada collaboration that challenge can bring.

There is significant potential for scaling TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, as well as other mentoring initiatives. The evaluation estimated that around **58,900 recent skilled newcomers** in Toronto are currently not in jobs matching their level of education and could benefit from mentoring to improve the quality of their jobs, and **35-40% of all recent immigrants to Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Halifax and London** could benefit from mentoring to facilitate their transition to the workforce.

However, the evaluation findings show that demand, in the form of potential mentees, is dramatically **higher than supply**, in the form of available mentors. Collective action between IECs, community and employer partners on promoting and streamlining mentoring could help to bridge that gap between current delivery and unmet need for this kind of employment support.

Employer champions stand to play a major role in that potential growth, given their vital contribution in recruiting and supporting mentors within their organizations. Engaging employers in the highest need sectors, encouraging multi-city mentoring by national employers and helping employers understand the value proposition of mentoring will all be key to successful growth.

For employers already participating as employer partners, the evaluation found, the benefits are clear. Employers value the program as a way to attract diverse talent and to create an opportunity for their staff to give back. Increasingly, they see the program as not only a way to fulfill their social responsibility objectives but also a way to enhance the cross-cultural communication and leadership skills of their employees. As individuals, **81%** of mentors report improving their ability to communicate with colleagues from different cultures and **67%** had higher confidence in their ability to coach and mentor others after their partnerships.

For TRIEC, and other IECs around the country, as well as our community and employer partners, the results of this evaluation demonstrate something regularly observed on the ground—mentoring works. To a newcomer professional with high potential, the drudge of applying for jobs without success can be an incredibly demoralising experience, that is in addition to the very real financial implications and other stressors that come along with prolonged unemployment and underemployment. Being paired with a mentor in your field, who can help you to navigate the ins and outs of your industry, introduce you to key contacts to build your network and support and encourage you along the way makes a difference in the lives of new Canadians. Not only does it soften the edges of newcomer professionals' transitions to Canada but it results in better results, and better jobs for newcomers. The results of this evaluation provide those offering mentoring programs with the language and tools to quantify that impact in a very real way.

The fact that mentees did well, and that mentorship helped them feel supported and find jobs was evidenced by the positive feedback and word of mouth of mentees. Now, thanks to the results of this evaluation, the large scale impact has become more clear— participation in the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership more than doubles an individual's chances of securing a job, making them **2.45 times more likely** than a control group who did not participate in the program, **to find good quality employment.**

As those in the sector increasingly focus on how best to support newcomers and **address the rise of precarious work**, the evaluation findings, that mentoring helps lead to good quality jobs for those new to Canada, will be able to inform planning and practice. The evaluation found that after their mentoring partnership, **85% of employed participants** (at close and after three and six months) were in jobs that had many features of good quality employment.

In conjunction with the use of the other vital employment support services offered by community partners (a key factor among those who fared best in their ultimate job searches was having taken advantage of networking programs and foreign credential recognition services) the newcomer professionals who participated in the mentoring program said they grew their skills and confidence thanks to contact with their mentors. **Over 80%** of mentees report that their **ability to prepare a strong job application, knowledge of interviewing processes and capacity**

to network are improved through the program. Almost **90% of participants** are either satisfied/very satisfied with TRIEC Mentoring Partnership.

Perhaps even more significant than the skills and knowledge mentees report gaining from the program is the help with the growth of their professional networks. TRIEC Mentoring Partnership mentees are almost **four times more likely** to have expanded their professional network after three months of completing the program, compared to those who do not participate. That help building lasting professional relationships is not only key to immigrants' early opportunities in Canada but can help to put them on more equal footing with Canadian-born workers for the rest of their careers.

The positive effects of the program in terms of employment outcomes were especially noticeable among those previously in finance and corporate administration, as well as those who were unemployed when their partnership began. We were particularly struck by the findings about the impact mentoring had on the employment outcomes of women. Recent research, including TRIEC's own Building a Corporate Ladder for All: The Case for Advancing Immigrant Talent in the GTA, points to both systematic discrimination as well as the myriad of added hurdles, faced by women, especially racialized women in the workplace in Canada. For racialized, immigrant women the challenge is greater still, to be able to point to mentoring as one intervention that can help increase their access to the good quality jobs they studied and trained for is an encouraging direction for those providing employment supports.

Ultimately, the results of this external evaluation demonstrate **how and why the program works**, and the challenge and opportunity presented by the growing population of qualified, educated immigrant professionals **who can benefit from mentoring**. These findings well help to undergird the way organizations, like TRIEC, think and talk about mentoring- qualitatively and quantitatively- as something not only worth doing, but worth doing much more of.