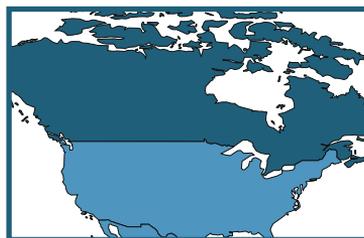


CANADA

Vikram Rai and Andrew Sharpe¹⁴¹



Abstract

Canada has an increasingly ethnically diverse population, owing to high levels of permanent immigration. Given national concern over declining labour force growth and shortages in some skilled professions, Canada's immigration policy is oriented to attract highly educated workers. At the beginning of the last decade, a large literature developed raising concerns about declining and poor labour market outcomes of recent, university-educated immigrants. This has resulted in measures to improve the labour market outcomes of recent immigrants. Underlying all of this is the system of labour market information used by employers and immigrants for labour market matching. The goal of this report is to examine how labour market information contributes to the resolution of challenges faced by economic migrants and national immigration policy in Canada, and to identify good practices from the Canadian immigration experience, which would benefit other countries.

This report makes the following observations about the Canadian immigration context and labour market information available to employers and immigrants in Canada:

- *Canada's population is aging and the proportion of the total population that is aged 15 to 64 is forecast to shrink significantly over the next two decades. At the same time, Canada's natural resource industries are experiencing rapid growth due to the world commodity boom, fuelling already strong demand for labour in Canada. In this context, immigrants are welcome. The government's current immigration target, supported by all opposition parties and the vast majority of stakeholders, is to accept 250,000 immigrants per year. These persons are*

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permitted to reside and work in Canada indefinitely, and have the right to become citizens after three years of residency.

- *Over the past three decades, the most important source countries for immigrants to Canada have shifted from Western European countries to developing countries, such as the Philippines, China and India. The shift in source countries means language instruction is a more important part of Canada's settlement programming.*
- *Employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have found that traditional methods of recruiting talent, including public advertising and informal referrals from contacts, often fail to connect them to immigrants. Research has shown that SMEs have more success in attracting immigrants through non-traditional methods, including advertising in ethnic media and seeking referrals from immigrant-serving organizations. In recent years, immigrant-serving organizations have also developed a large number of programmes across Canada to facilitate hiring of immigrants by SMEs.*
- *The most significant obstacles to success in the labour market as perceived by recent immigrants are language barriers, a lack of Canadian work experience, and difficulty receiving recognition for foreign credentials, particularly in professions regulated by sub-national governments to ensure public safety. Research has shown that there is a significant gap in the labour market outcomes, both for unemployment rates and earnings, between recent university-educated immigrants and similarly educated domestic-born workers. Access to labour market information is a comparably small factor and not a major barrier to the labour market integration of immigrants. However, improved LMI certainly alleviate more fundamental barriers and improve labour market matching.*
- *Multi-stakeholder partnerships between immigrant-serving organizations and all levels of government have become an integral part of Canada's system of delivering labour market information and providing services to newcomers to Canada.*
- *Outreach programmes that provide pre-departure information and instruction to immigrants have proven to be effective at preparing immigrants to integrate into the Canadian labour market. This has included providing orientation sessions and individual counselling sessions for those approved for permanent residence months in advance of their landing in Canada, while they are still in their source country.*
- *We identify five best practices from the Canadian experience with respect to labour market information for immigrants and employers: i) create a national organization to more effectively provide information to recent immigrants about the steps necessary to work in regulated occupations; ii) maximize the number of single-points-of-contact in Canada (also referred to in the migration literature as one-stop-shops) for services directed at employers*

and immigrants; iii) provide pre-departure orientation and training to immigrants on local labour market information, the legal requirements of immigrating to and working in Canada, and English and French language skills; iv) involve local stakeholders in the service delivery, particularly those with an interest in serving immigrant communities; and v) maintain policy flexibility in regards to immigration composition, by devolving some responsibility to provincial governments, allowing demand-based levels of entry instead of targets, and enshrining targets such that they are easily changed, for example, by placing them in policy or ministerial instruction, as is the status quo in Canada.

1. Introduction

How do economic immigrants obtain information about job opportunities in their destination country? What labour market information (LMI) is available to employers wishing to fill their labour needs with migrant workers? These are crucial questions to answer in the implementation of immigration policy. The advantages of immigration are numerous, and, given the legal and informational barriers inherent in migrating to a foreign country for employment, immigration systems that streamline these processes and provide employers and migrant workers with information are of utmost importance. The goal of this report is to examine how labour market information contributes to the resolution of challenges faced by economic immigrants and national immigration policy in Canada, in the hope that EU Member States may draw lessons from an overview of the Canadian immigration experience.

Immigration is increasingly recognized among advanced nations as a necessary policy component of a competitive and dynamic economy. The European Union is among the largest zones in the world today, and perhaps in history, that has institutionalized the movement of labour across over two dozen national borders. Canada, for its part, has admitted a large number of immigrants consistently in the post-WWII period. This was a fortuitous policy choice given that many labour market forecasts posit that all of Canada's net labour growth in the coming years will be from immigration, and other forecasts still indicate that all of Canada's net population growth will come from immigration by the year 2030. Canada is also unique in that those entering Canada to work generally become permanent residents, can work in Canada indefinitely, and usually become very integrated into the Canadian labour market. This policy context provides Canada with a significant amount of experience in designing and adopting immigration policy in response to economic and labour market developments.

To set the context for the discussion of labour market information, the report provides an overview of Canadian immigration policy and its role in the Canadian economy, and outlines recent policy changes and the current policy trajectory in the immigration field as it relates to labour market information. Labour market information, broadly speaking, encompasses the resources available to businesses and

potential workers that facilitate both job market matching and the fulfillment of legal and administrative requirements of immigration. The remainder of the introduction provides details on the Canadian economy and identifies a few salient trends that are particularly relevant to the level and composition of immigration in Canada. Section 2 focuses on how existing labour market information facilitates matching between employers and immigrants, considering both the cases of permanent residents¹⁴² or immigrants already residing in Canada and those applying for permanent residence or to be a temporary worker from outside of Canada. Section 3 considers to what extent those barriers can be alleviated with improved access to labour market information, or simply more labour market information. Finally, section 4 consists of a review of identified best practices and lessons learned from earlier in the report.

1.1. Labour market trends

Canada is still recovering from the recession that began in the last quarter of 2008 and lasted until the last quarter of 2009 (CSLS, 2012). The employment, unemployment, and participation rates have not yet recovered to their pre-recession levels. From the pre-recession peak in 2008 to the most recent data for 2011, the recession has had a varied impact on different sectors and demographic groups in Canada; the goods-producing sector experienced overall job losses, while the services sector gained in employment; women have observed a smaller increase in their unemployment rate compared to men; and those with post-secondary education had a significantly smaller decrease in their employment rates. The last observation is consistent with an overall structural shift, outside of the recession, towards employment in knowledge-based occupations, such as those in health, social science, and professional, scientific, and technical services.

Key features of the Canadian labour market include significant regional differences in employment opportunities by occupation and declining labour force growth. An aging workforce has several obvious implications for the future: greater pressure on Canadian health care, greater pressure on public pensions, and, importantly for this study, greater pressure on firms which at times struggle to meet demand for new entrants and skilled workers. Indeed, slower population growth and an older workforce mean many Canadian businesses must increasingly attract workers capable of filling their needs from abroad.

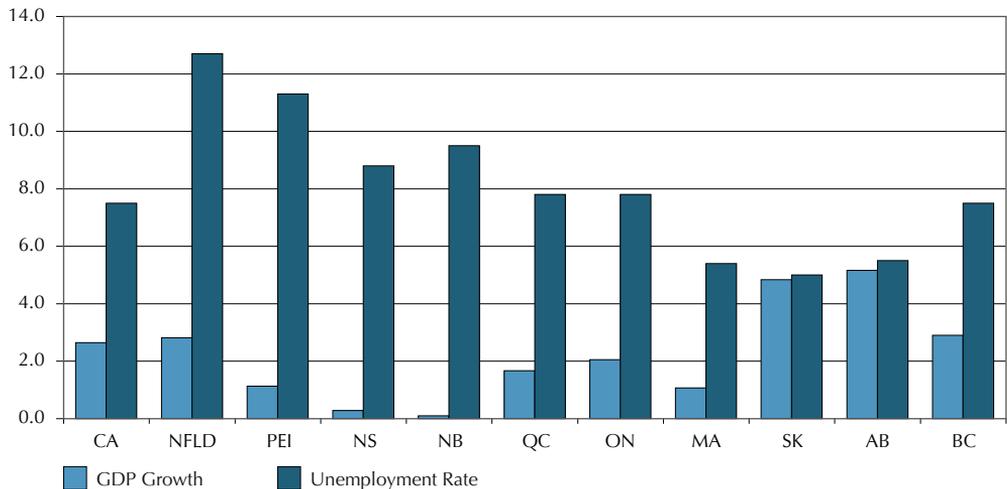
These two trends are accompanied by significant regional differences in wages, large differences in the composition of output across Canada's 10 provinces, and a persistent urban-rural wage gap. Declining population growth also means that, according to most estimates, immigration will account for all of Canada's net labour force growth in the coming years (Sweetman and Picot, 2012; Dungan and Murphy,

¹⁴² Note that "permanent residents" refers to individuals allowed to enter and live in Canada indefinitely, though they are not citizens. The term "landed immigrants," no longer in use, may be more familiar to some readers. "Permanent resident" is a status granted to immigrants entering Canada, which they would no longer hold if they became Canadian citizens.

2012). This is particularly important given that, based on projections from the Canadian Occupation Project System, there may be shortages of skilled labour in certain skilled occupations (Souleima, 2009; Ferrer et al, 2011). Projections indicate that over the next 10 years, 69.8 per cent of job growth in Canada will be due to growth in high-skilled occupations, which currently represent 62.6 per cent of total non-student employment. Furthermore, the fastest growing occupations are forecasted to be professional and technical occupations in health, natural and applied sciences, and finance (Ignaczal et al, 2011). This underscores Canada's need to attract skilled labour from abroad.

Underlying Canada's recent economic and labour market performance are significant regional differences. Figure 11.1 shows that underlying the Canadian unemployment rate in 2011 of 7.5 per cent is significant regional variation. The unemployment rate is highest in Newfoundland, one of Canada's four smallest provinces, at 12.7 per cent, while it is lowest in Saskatchewan, one of Canada's western provinces. Newfoundland is a particularly interesting case, because since the 1990s it has exploited offshore oil resource. What appears to be a lagging economy masks a strong positive trend that shows no sign of reversal: the unemployment rate has fallen from 15.5 per cent in 2009 to 12.7 per cent in 2011. This explains the seeming paradox of above average GDP growth and above average unemployment in Newfoundland. GDP growth is notably only above average in 4 of Canada's 10 provinces: Alberta and Newfoundland, which have significant oil wealth; and British Columbia and Saskatchewan, largely due to growth in natural resource sectors.

Figure 11.1: GDP growth rates (chained 2002 Canadian dollars) & unemployment rates for Canada and the provinces, 2011, (%)

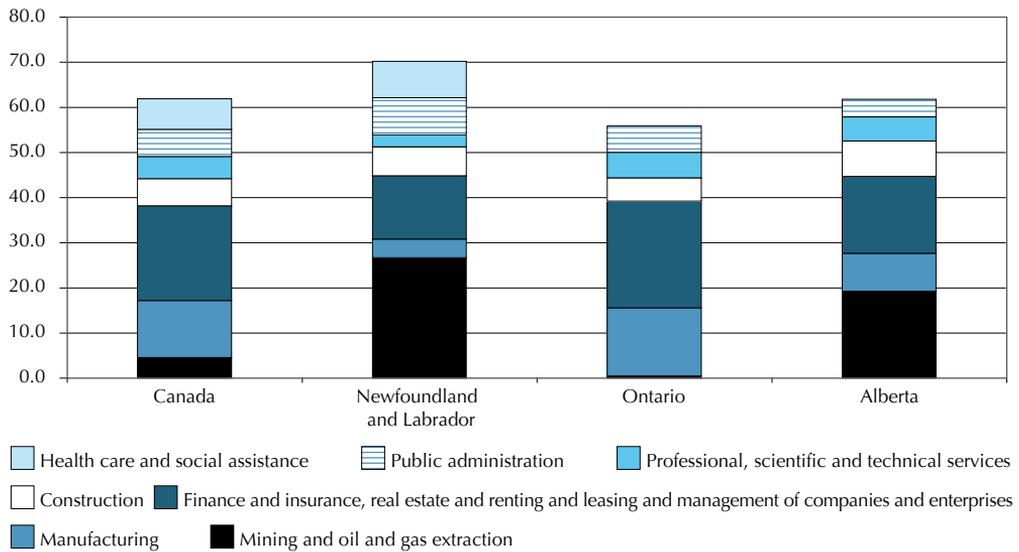


Source: CANSIM Tables 109-5324, 379-0025, and 379-0027.

The diverse economic performance of Canada's provinces is largely due to regional heterogeneity in leading industries. In the provinces with the strongest performance,

industries which are enjoying global booms, such as oil and other natural resources, are the largest, both in terms of level and growth. Figure 11.2 provides an illustration of the level of regional variation in industry structure. In Newfoundland, mentioned above, mining and oil and gas extraction comprised 26.7 per cent of provincial GDP in 2011, compared to 4.5 per cent for Canada and 19.2 per cent for Alberta, the province with the next highest share of its GDP comprised of output from mining and oil and gas extraction. This is only meant to foreshadow an important theme of this report, that provincial input and even control of the composition and level of immigration has proven to be advantageous in Canada, due to the diverse labour market needs of different regions.

Figure 11.2: Share of GDP using 2002 chained dollars for selected industries by North American Industry Classification System, Canada and selected provinces, 2011



Source: CANSIM Tables 379-0025 and 379-0027.

It is also important to recognize that Canada's workforce is aging. While the proportion of the population that is working age (aged 15 to 64) has held constant at 68 to 69 per cent between 1981 and 2011, the median age has increased from 30.6 to 39.9 years over the same time period. Furthermore, population projections given in Table 11.1 show that by 2031, the percentage of the population aged 15 to 64 will decline to between 62 and 61 per cent, given reasonable assumptions of a fertility rate between 1.5 and 1.7 births per woman and national effective immigration between 240,000 and 252,000 persons from 2011 to 2014, and between 0.60 and 0.75 per cent of the population after 2014. This does not necessarily imply that the labour force decrease will be proportional to the decrease in the proportion of population that is working age; it may be offset by a higher labour force participation rate. Nevertheless, this does underscore the pressures an ageing population is placing on Canada, and the necessity of a flexible immigration system.

Table 11.1: Population and demographic projections, Canada, 2010–2031 (thousands)

	Low-Growth Scenario			Medium-Growth Scenario		
	All ages	15 to 64	Share of population aged 15 to 64 (per cent)	All ages	15 to 64	Share of population aged 15 to 64 (per cent)
2010	34,103	23,675	69.4	34,138	23,686	69.4
2011	34,455	23,876	69.3	34,532	23,898	69.2
2012	34,792	24,004	69.0	34,922	24,037	68.8
2013	35,086	24,096	68.7	35,318	24,172	68.4
2014	35,368	24,178	68.4	35,713	24,299	68.0
2015	35,643	24,250	68.0	36,105	24,418	67.6
2016	35,913	24,304	67.7	36,495	24,520	67.2
2017	36,176	24,346	67.3	36,883	24,612	66.7
2018	36,433	24,370	66.9	37,267	24,687	66.2
2019	36,682	24,378	66.5	37,647	24,749	65.7
2020	36,928	24,372	66.0	38,028	24,797	65.2
2021	37,171	24,372	65.6	38,409	24,853	64.7
2022	37,411	24,369	65.1	38,789	24,908	64.2
2023	37,646	24,369	64.7	39,168	24,967	63.7
2024	37,876	24,373	64.3	39,546	25,031	63.3
2025	38,101	24,360	63.9	39,921	25,099	62.9
2026	38,320	24,338	63.5	40,293	25,166	62.5
2027	38,532	24,316	63.1	40,662	25,242	62.1
2028	38,738	24,277	62.7	41,027	25,310	61.7
2029	38,938	24,240	62.3	41,388	25,389	61.3
2030	39,130	24,223	61.9	41,746	25,490	61.1
2031	39,315	24,244	61.7	42,100	25,632	60.9
Annual Average Growth rate (%)	0.71	0.12	-0.59	0.39	-0.65	-0.65

Source: CANSIM Table 052-0005.

Note: Low-growth scenario assumes (M1 in original) fertility rate of 1.5 births per woman from 2014 on, life expectancy steadily trending up to 82.3 years for males and 86.0 years for females by 2036, constant national effective of 240,000. Medium-growth scenario (M2 in original) assumes constant total fertility rate of 1.7 births per woman; life expectancy trending up to 84.0 years for males and 87.3 years for females by 2036; a constant national effective.

1.2 Canadian immigration in context

The Canadian immigration system is comprised of three main categories of immigrants: economic class immigrants (referred to simply as economic immigrants throughout the report), family class immigrants, and refugees. Separate from this

is also a system of entry for temporary foreign workers. The family class typically includes family members of an economic class immigrant such as a spouses, children, parents, or grandparents. For the purposes of this study, we will examine the LMI resources available to those applying as economic immigrants and temporary foreign workers, and businesses and individuals in Canada who wish to employ economic immigrants. This subsection will provide a brief overview of the Canadian immigration system and highlight several trends pertaining to the level and composition of economic immigrants to Canada. Note that economic and family class immigrants enter Canada as permanent residents, meaning that they can remain in Canada indefinitely.¹⁴³

Overview of Canadian economic immigration programmes

The structure of the Canadian immigration system includes three programmes through which foreign workers can enter Canada, either as economic immigrants or temporary workers, one of which is relatively new. The first of the two long-standing programmes is the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP), which selects candidates for immigration through a point system that includes, among other criteria, education, English and French language skills, and prior work experience. This system prioritizes higher education, proficiency in English or French, and younger applicants; any individual who successfully applies to the FSWP is accepted as a permanent resident. Applicants are required to have at least one continuous year of full-time or equivalent employment in positions that match an occupation under the Canadian National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes 0, A, or B (meaning either management experience, or an occupation requiring post-secondary education)¹⁴⁴. After passing the minimum criteria, applicants are measured against the selection factors, which reward points based on the six categories of language, education, work experience, age, arranged employment, and adaptability. Anyone entering through the FSWP is considered both an economic immigrant and a permanent resident, meaning that they can remain and work in Canada indefinitely.

¹⁴³ It is important to be clear on the concepts of permanent resident and economic immigrant. A permanent resident is anyone who is permitted to enter Canada and remain in the country indefinitely; as this section will show, this category includes approximately 250,000 persons each year. A subset of permanent residents are considered economic immigrants; these individuals enter Canada through the Federal Skilled Workers Program (FSWP) and the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), and are legally permitted to work at any job in Canada. For the purposes of this report, we follow the Canadian convention in which “economic immigrants” does not refer to Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), who will simply be identified as TFWs or temporary workers. It is also furthermore important to clarify that in the official statistics compiled by Citizen and Immigration Canada, “economic immigrants” includes the spouses and dependants of those applying for permanent residence and any permanent resident may enter the labour force if they choose.

¹⁴⁴ The National Occupation Classification consists of five skill levels coded 0, A, B, C, and D, and 10 skill types numbered 1-9 for occupations in different sectors; all occupations are classified on this two-dimensional scale. For the purpose of this report, it is essential to understand that NOC code 0 refers to managerial occupations, NOC codes A and B refer to occupations requiring post-secondary education, and NOC codes C and D refer to occupations that do not require post-secondary education.

The second is the main programme for temporary workers, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), which allows businesses to hire a Temporary Foreign Worker belonging to a skilled occupation class matching any code. Originally, TFWs were also confined to the same NOC codes as in the FSWP, but in 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) introduced a stream for lower-skilled workers, referring to those in occupations matching NOC codes C and D, which require vocational or on-the-job training. Employers who wish to hire a temporary worker request a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), which assesses the genuineness of the job offer, ensures the temporary worker is being offered the prevailing wage, and examines proof that the position could not be filled with a domestic worker. A positive LMO would authorize the employer to hire the temporary worker. There are two smaller programmes for live-in caregivers and seasonal agricultural workers, which follow a similar structure. Anyone living in Canada through the TFWP is only permitted to remain in Canada temporarily, for a period of up to two years. However, under the new Canadian Experience Class (CEC), those who have Canadian work experience but are not permanent residents can now apply from within Canada to become permanent residents and immigrate to Canada more quickly, if they wish to remain in the country. Those transitioning through the CEC would be considered economic immigrants.

The third main programme, the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), is relatively new – the first nominee agreements were signed in 1998. The PNP allows Canadian provinces to develop their own criteria for immigration applicants and approve them, as an alternative route of entry to the FSWP. Immigrants entering through the PNP do not face any restrictions on their mobility; they have full mobility rights to move to any province. Those entering through the PNP are also considered economic immigrants and permanent residents. In addition, following an agreement with the federal government allowing Quebec to manage its own immigration levels, Quebec has its own FSWP, which is known as the Québec Skilled Worker Program (QSWP). Consequently, Quebec has no PNP, as it has no need for one.

CIC maintains targets each year for the entry of immigrants, which can serve as a rough guide of the relative size of different groups entering Canada. Of the 150,000 to 160,000 economic immigrants projected to enter Canada in 2012, between 55,000 and 57,000 are projected to enter under the FSWP, while between 42,000 and 45,000 are projected to enter under the PNP. Another 31,000 to 34,000 will enter through the Québec Skilled Worker Program. Note that not all of these individuals would enter Canada with the intention to work; in a typical year, 60 per cent of permanent residents entering Canada would intend to join the labour force. The remaining economic immigrants enter Canada through smaller programmes for business owners, investors, live-in caregivers, and individuals transitioning to citizenship through the CEC (CIC, 2012b). The FSWP can therefore be expected to encompass over a third of immigration by permanent residents to Canada, while the PNP and FSWP combined will comprise nearly three quarters of all economic immigration by permanent residents to Canada.

Finally, we would point out that not all foreigners entering Canada to work temporarily enter through these immigration programmes. There are several alternative channels through which workers enter and work in Canada temporarily, which may be considered analogous to “posted workers” in Europe; workers employed by a company in one member country which has a contract to work in another country. Occupations included in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) permit employees of foreign companies doing business in Canada to enter and remain in Canada for up to 24 months in some cases without applying for an LMO. NAFTA, which applies to citizens of the USA and Mexico, permits business people working in 1 of 60 prescribed occupations to accept pre-arranged employment in their profession at a Canadian enterprise, for a temporary period of time that varies based on the agreement. Similar provisions exist for signatories to the GATS in a prescribed list of professions.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade also has a number of reciprocal agreements called International Experience Canada with dozens of countries in Europe, South America and South Asia, that allow young professionals aged 18–35 from one of those countries to live and work in Canada for up to one year under certain conditions. This is mentioned for completeness and to provide some comparison to posted workers in the EU, which do not have an exact analog in Canada; we could not thoroughly discuss these workers without a detailed review of dozens of multi- and bilateral agreements, which is outside the scope of this report. Additionally, workers entering Canada through one of these channels would normally have pre-existing or long-held connections to the Canadian labour market or an international company with significant business in Canada, and would not face the informational challenges discussed in this report.

Trends in Canadian immigration

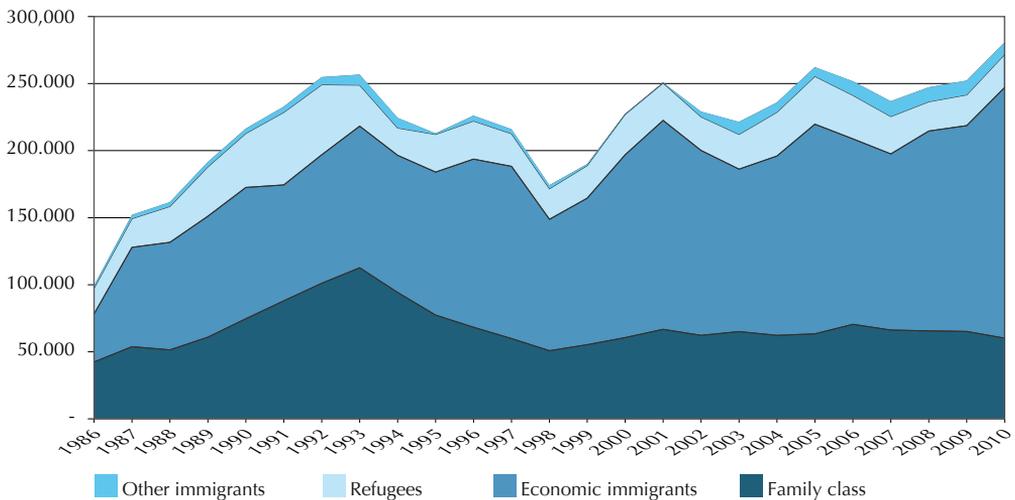
There are three immigration trends of particular relevance to this report. First, while Canada has always admitted a relatively large number of immigrants, the level has increased over the past few decades, and a large proportion of this increase is in the category of economic immigrants. Second, immigrants entering Canada tend to be university-educated and skilled, whether they are entering Canada as permanent residents or temporary workers. Third, the labour market outcomes of immigrants within the first five years of entering Canada declined at the start of the last decade, and are generally below those of Canadians with similar levels of education. This third point could well point to gaps in labour market information.

In regard to the first trend, Figure 11.3 shows that the relative proportion of economic immigrants¹⁴⁵ has increased since 1986. The level of immigration has also

¹⁴⁵ Note that since the economic immigrants category includes spouses and dependent children of principal applicants immigrating at the same time (while family class refers only to family members immigrating after a principal applicant enters Canada, begins working, and sponsors a family member’s application), not all economic immigrants are destined for the labour market. The number of permanent residents entering Canada with the intention to work has been between 110,000 and 150,000 over the past 10 years, although often more choose to work after arriving.

been increasing, in regards both to permanent residents and temporary workers. In 1986, Canada admitted a total of 99,354 permanent residents; the figure stood at 280,681 in 2010, and has been close to 250,000 for the last decade. The increase has largely been in the category of economic immigrants, which increased from 35,797 to 186,913 over the same period. Immigration to Canada is characterized by steady and relatively large inflows of permanent residents, the majority of which are economic immigrants who can stay and work in Canada indefinitely. This trend is also apparent in the short term. Of the 236,753 permanent residents entering Canada in 2007, 55.5 per cent or 131,244 were economic immigrants. In 2011, this had increased to 248,748 permanent residents, of which 156,121 or 62.9 per cent were economic immigrants (CIC *Facts & Figures*, 2011).

Figure 11.3: Permanent residents entering Canada by category of entry, 1986–2010



Source: CIC *Facts & Figures*, 2011.

Secondly, it should be observed that most foreign workers entering Canada are highly educated. A feature of Canada's economic immigration system is that workers must be skilled in order to qualify as permanent residents; in 2010, half of recent immigrants employed in Canada held a university degree (Johnson, 2012).

Table 11.2 shows the distribution of TFWs entering Canada for the year 2010 by NOC code; more than two-thirds of TFWs in recent years have entered through a specified NOC code, and more than half in the professional, skilled and technical, or intermediate and clerical categories. In comparison, TFWs entering Canada as elemental and labour workers have comprised a relatively small proportion of TFWs entering Canada.

Third and lastly, the labour market performance of recent highly educated immigrants to Canada is below that of similarly educated Canadians, and declined to some degree at the start of the last decade. There is quite an extensive literature on

this subject,¹⁴⁶ including a forthcoming CSLS study which finds recent immigrants faring poorly versus comparison groups on participation rates, unemployment rates, and earnings (Johnson, 2012). Specifically, for university-educated workers, recent immigrants (in Canada for less than five years) participated in the labour force at a rate of 75.2 per cent in 2010, compared to 81.5 per cent for domestic-born workers. This increased only to 74.7 per cent for established immigrants. Similarly, domestic-born workers with a university degree enjoyed an unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent, compared to 14.5 per cent for recent immigrants. The study also identifies a 21.4 per cent wage gap for recent university-educated immigrants compared to their domestic counterparts. Obviously, these shortcomings should be read at least as a warning sign, if not a definitive signal, that there may be some deficit in Canada's immigration policy and system of labour market information (Murray, 2010a, 2010b). The remainder of this report will explore to what extent this situation is either attributable to gaps in labour market information, or can be alleviated with more, and improved access to, labour market information.

Table 11.2: Occupational skill level of TFWs, initial entry or re-entry to Canada, 2001–2010

	Level 0 – Managerial	Level A – Professional	Level B – Skilled and technical	Level C – Intermediate and clerical	Level D – Elemental and labourers	Level not stated	Total
2001	4,729	47,689	21,258	27,377	1,173	17,412	119,657
2002	4,605	39,327	19,124	28,020	1,105	18,670	110,861
2003	4,632	30,860	16,818	28,047	1,359	21,478	103,198
2004	5,200	30,674	17,447	30,329	1,521	27,332	112,508
2005	5,506	32,650	19,836	32,929	2,401	29,333	122,662
2006	6,029	35,386	22,547	36,921	4,626	33,485	139,000
2007	6,677	34,643	27,694	45,343	10,591	39,768	164,720
2008	7,544	34,225	31,519	49,573	17,069	52,239	192,180
2009	7,400	32,685	26,609	43,453	12,233	55,886	178,268
2010	8,409	34,653	24,487	41,931	8,742	64,046	182,276

Source: CIC Facts & Figures 2011.

2. Overview of labour market information patterns in Canada

2.1. Demand side: employers' perspectives

To understand the strengths and weaknesses in Canada's LMI for immigrants, we must thoroughly explore labour market information as it stands. The purpose of this section to consider the labour market information, recruiting practices, and job search methods available to and used by employers, foreign-born workers already

¹⁴⁶ It is beyond the scope of this paper to include an extensive review of the literature on this matter, but interested readers can consult Picot and Sweetman (2012); Alboim (2010); Aydemir and Sweetman (2008); Zietsma (2010); Gilmore (2009).

living in Canada, and potential economic immigrants or TFWs that have yet to immigrate to Canada. The first half of the section (sub-section 2.1) looks at the recruiting and hiring practices of employers as they relate to immigrants. There are important differences in the methods successfully used to recruit and retain foreign-born workers, compared to those used successfully to recruit and retain domestic workers; there are also crucial interactions between employers, immigrant-serving organizations, and government departments. The second half of this section (sub-section 2.2) will examine the resources available to and used by potential economic immigrants and TFWs, including a number of important government programmes and pilot projects that have been implemented in recent years to increase access to LMI.

Labour market information for immigrants and employers comes from one of two sources. The first is a series of federal government departments and agencies, including Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and the Foreign Credential Recognition Office (FCRO). These organizations collaborate with each other and provincial government partners to provide labour market information to all market participants in Canada. A number of resources discussed will be programmes managed by one or more of these government departments.

The second source of LMI is the large number of locally managed settlement services and bridging programmes run by multi-stakeholder organizations that receive funding from a variety of sources to provide settlement and labour market integration services to recent immigrants free of charge. Multi-stakeholder programmes are growing in number due to several immigrant-serving organizations recognizing the value of having locally managed organizations with a broad funding base in a position to provide director support to recent immigrants. These organizations, characterized by some combination of private and non-profit partnerships with or without funding from any level of government, will be referred to in this report as Service Provider Organizations (SPOs). While they are not homogenous by any means – some offer both settlement services and bridging programmes, some are funded by all three levels of government, some are funded by none, and so forth – this designation is sufficiently descriptive as an umbrella for non-governmental immigrant-serving organizations. This is the same terminology used by CIC. As will become clear through this section, SPOs are an essential actor in the delivery of labour market information to immigrants in Canada.

The Canadian experience suggests that employer input in immigration policy at all levels of government and involvement with SPO is critical not just to the development of coherent immigration, but to its implementation as well. One of the key themes of the next two sub-sections will be the degree to which employers must maintain contact with outside organizations in order to have access to the international talent pool. Businesses must depart from long-practised habits and diversify their recruitment practices in order to attract foreign-born workers, whether they are already living in Canada or only in the process of immigrating. This section will consider separately

the resources available to, and practices used by, employers in recruiting permanent residents already living in Canada and are permitted to work, and in recruiting those that have not yet immigrated. As the reader will see, businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, which employ more than half of private sector workers in Canada, are much more able to recruit those workers already living in Canada, as fewer resources exist to aid businesses without dedicated human resources staff to recruit from abroad.

Labour market information and recruiting practices for hiring foreign-born workers already living in Canada

This sub-section will consider those search methods used by employers that have been successful at filling vacancies with permanent residents who have already immigrated to Canada and are legally able to begin working immediately; this population consists of foreign-born workers who are permanent residents and entered Canada as economic immigrants through the FSWP, PNP, or transitioned from a temporary status to a permanent resident through the CEC. Three broad categories of search methods are used by employers to hire economic immigrants already living in Canada. First, traditional or informal methods, including networks, personal contacts, and referrals, are still widely used. Secondly, and related to the first but distinct enough to be discussed separately, immigrant-serving organizations, called Service-Provider Organizations (SPOs) have developed a number of formal tools, networks, and job banks that more easily facilitate matching between employers and immigrants. Finally, SPOs and the federal government have collaborated to dramatically increase the amount of information available online both to employers and immigrants. This section will include a discussion of those resources and how they serve businesses, but first, we will examine recruiting practices undertaken directly by businesses.

Before proceeding, we would simply note that while the activities, programmes, and services described in this section focus on their relevance to businesses in Canada, many of them also pertain to job search methods and labour market information for immigrants; few services target exclusively employers or immigrants, and many will be discussed in both sections with respect to each target population.

Traditional recruiting methods

Small and medium-sized enterprises, businesses with fewer than 500 employees,¹⁴⁷ or SMEs, produce close to half of Canada's GDP, and employ an even greater share of Canada's private sector workers (Industry Canada, 2012). Research has shown that long-term vacancies remain a challenge that SMEs sometimes struggle to resolve (Debus et al., 2008). As many as 41 per cent of small businesses have indicated in

¹⁴⁷ Industry Canada defines small businesses as those with 1-99 employees and medium-sized businesses as those with 100-499 employees. In 2011, 5.1 million or 48.4 per cent of private sector workers were employed in businesses with fewer than 100 employees. An additional 16 per cent or 1.7 million were employed in businesses with 100-499 employees. See *SME Research and Statistics* by Industry Canada for further details.

response to surveys by industry groups that their largest challenge is a shortage of qualified workers (Debus et al., 2008). Taken together, these two observations mean that the success of both Canada's immigration policy and immigrant population depends on the ability of SMEs to recruit immigrants in response to short- and long-term labour market shortages. However, most research through the last decade indicated that many SMEs did not even realize or consider that immigrants were a potential solution to their problems (Debus et al., 2008; Bourgeois and Debus, 2006).

Traditional recruitment methods are still the most commonly used by SMEs. These include posting job descriptions online (on the company's own website or an industry group's website), in job banks, seeking referrals from current employees, and reviewing solicited and unsolicited applications (Mah. 2012; Debus et al., 2008). Unfortunately, these methods have proven ineffective at recruiting large numbers of international workers (Kukushkin and Watt, 2009). In recent years, SMEs in Canada have become more proactive in this area, partly due to the efforts by SPOs motivated to improve outcomes for immigrants in Canada but partly also due to SMEs expanding their recruitment practices. This is a concern from the perspective of efficient labour market matching; employers may not perceive or account for the loss to the labour market in effectively excluding skilled immigrants from the pool of job candidates considered, but it would improve outcomes for both businesses and immigrants if recruiting practices commonly used by businesses reached a greater share of immigrants. The remainder of this section will review the variety of programmes used to ameliorate this problem and reduce the search costs to businesses of recruiting immigrants.

Recruiting methods facilitated by SPOs

SPOs provide a wide array of services to immigrants for free, from job and language training to help establishing networks, hence the umbrella term "Service Provider Organization" used to refer to them by the Government of Canada. SMEs have more success in recruiting immigrants through agencies and networks of immigrant-serving organizations than through traditional recruiting practices. A well-known example of an SPO is the Toronto Regional Immigration Employment Council (TRIEC), established in 2003 by the Maytree Foundation and other non-profit organizations with an interest in serving immigrants. TRIEC, in addition to offering many services to immigrants that will be discussed later, also maintains a database of qualified immigrants, which employers can turn to when looking for applicants. Organizations in other cities have followed the TRIEC model and created similar councils to provide some of the same services to immigrants (Kukushkin and Watt 2009).

The best example of SPOs facilitating the recruitment efforts of businesses is Skills International, a searchable online database of screened, internationally qualified immigrants living in the province of Ontario (Skills International, 2012; Kukushkin and Watt, 2009). The database includes résumés of candidates looking for work in specific professions and occupations, collected and screened at the time of writing (Sept 2012) by 79 different SPOs and industry associations in Ontario. Employers are

also able to post job openings. In past years, Ontario was the destination for as many as 60 per cent of Canada's immigrants. While the proportion has now fallen to below 40 per cent, Ontario is still home to more than half of Canada's immigrants, making this resource available to most immigrants in Canada. Additionally, while the current contributors are industry associations and community agencies in Ontario, employers located anywhere in the country can search the database or contact community agencies for references. This database has been used widely by employers in Canada to search for qualified workers; for example, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) integrated the Skills International database in its own internal job candidate database, making it easier for their hiring managers to advertise open positions or search for internationally trained job candidates (Kukushkin and Watt 2009).

Recruiting resources facilitated by government departments or partnerships with SPOs

The common model for government-developed programmes is to develop and fund an initiative in consultation with stakeholders, and deliver the corresponding services with assistance from SPOs. All provinces provide services to businesses and immigrants facilitating labour market matching, usually through a combination of provincial and local government programmes, and support from SPOs. However, provinces and SPOs are much more likely to provide direct services to immigrants than to employers. In many cases, the connections between immigrants and employers are made through bridging programmes, which operate in a manner similar to arranged internships or development programmes that have the primary goal of training immigrants for the Canadian labour market, not giving businesses access to potential recruits, even if they serve that function at the same time. Several examples of national and local bridging programmes will be discussed in the next section. The aim of these programmes is to alleviate the difficulties immigrants face in searching for a job and making connections to employers. They fill in the gap created by newcomers' lack of contacts and smaller social networks, while reducing the cost to business of finding qualified immigrants who businesses may not reach with traditional recruiting and advertising methods.

Finally, the most widely used public job bank to connect potential immigrants and temporary workers with employers is *Working in Canada* (<http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca/>), a joint project of Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)¹⁴⁸; it is open to the general public and can be accessed from anywhere in the world. It is designed to function as a powerful hub for anyone to look for work in Canada, regardless of their age, citizenship status, or current location. At the time of writing, about 73,000 job postings¹⁴⁹ were on *Working in Canada*. Employers can use this website to advertise and recruit for free; given the economies of scale inherent in job banks, it is no surprise CIC and HRSDC strongly recommend *Working in Canada* to both

¹⁴⁸ These two organizations share joint responsibility for Canada's immigration system.

¹⁴⁹ Note that a job posting may advertise multiple job openings.

businesses and immigration applicants. While not a proactive search method for employers, *Working in Canada* does serve well as a component of any recruitment strategy that includes immigrants, as it is promoted heavily to immigrants by CIC and HRSDC. *Working in Canada* is also heavily promoted in all workbooks and guides to the immigration process made available to businesses and immigrants (FCRO 2010a, 2011b). *Working in Canada* is one of the few resources maintained almost exclusively by the federal government.

Other recruiting practices that employers use to hire immigrants already living in Canada are more traditional. Career or job fairs are still a common method of recruiting workers in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, but their popularity is diminishing due to superior returns to methods more reliant on advanced information and communication technology (Kukushkin and Watt, 2009). Nevertheless, some evidence suggests that job fairs, when promoted in immigrant communities, can attract skilled immigrants that other traditional recruiting practices do not reach (Carter et al., 2010). In addition to immigrant-serving organizations, media produced and consumed by immigrant communities have also proven to be effective recruitment platforms for businesses. Ethnic media, online or in print, takes time to develop and tends only to be a useful communication tool in areas where the immigrant community is well-established. Social media is also growing in use, since it does not suffer from the same geographic limitations, but data on its use is limited, and anecdotal evidence suggests that it is used primarily to direct immigrants to other resources discussed here (Mah, 2012).

Labour market information and recruiting practices for hiring potential economic class immigrants and temporary workers

While immigrants considered in the previous section were almost exclusively permanent residents, in this section we must consider those applying for temporary work as well as those applying for permanent residence. In general, recruitment support programmes and recruiting practices for potential economic class immigrants and temporary workers are considerably less developed than the resources for recruiting immigrants already in Canada described above. This sub-section will consider three main resources: online portals or published documents maintained by government departments; immigration consulting and referral services; and services provided by SPOs.

Those applying for temporary work in Canada can apply under one of several programmes: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), a general temporary worker programme for most occupations; the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), specifically for individuals seeking work as a full-time caregiver, normally for a very young or elderly member of a family; and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), for agricultural workers. For all categories of temporary workers, businesses are required to demonstrate that they could not fill the position with a domestic worker, normally by providing proof of some attempt to recruit domestically. This is a significant population: on 31 December 2011, over 300,000 temporary workers were present in Canada.

Employers who wish to recruit economic immigrants from abroad, who would not be entering Canada temporarily, are advised to seek an Arranged Employment Offer (AEO) from HRSDC if they wish to offer a permanent full-time position to a skilled worker. AEOs are an important feature of the FSWP; they are worth up to 15 points of a possible 100, with 67 needed to qualify for immigration, in the FSWP. As of the most recent evaluation of the FSWP, 13.5 per cent of principal applicants in the FSWP from 2002 to 2010 received an AEO (CIC, 2010b). Immigrants who enter Canada with arranged employment enjoy substantially better labour market outcomes compared to those who do not across every indicator of labour market performance. Employment earnings three years after landing were nearly twice as high for those with arranged employment, for example. However, there is comparatively little research on the pre-departure characteristics of those who receive AEOs, or the origin of AEOs. We do know that the most common positions recruited were, by large margins, senior management positions or associate/assistant professor positions (CIC, 2010b). This implies that immigrants who receive AEOs usually have existing ties to the Canadian labour market, Canadian firms, or access to a strong international social network (for instance, academia).

Online resources maintained by government departments

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FRCO) has published a document called *Employer's Roadmap to Hiring and Retaining Internationally Trained Workers* (FCRO 2011a), designed to provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with essential information and guidance on legally hiring foreign workers. The document also emphasizes that long-term vacancies in skilled occupations are likely to persist unless Canadian businesses, particularly SMEs, actively recruit immigrants.

In order for any of these matches to take place, however, employers must be in a position not only to contact those living abroad, but have enough information to make a job offer. Otherwise, recruitment of those applying for permanent residence would be a matter for the previous sub-section, since they would not be recruited until after they arrive in Canada. The methods used are varied; for multinational corporations with locations overseas, their recruitment practices do not differ significantly for this class of worker, since they have direct contact with any potential permanent resident or temporary worker. However, SMEs do not have the human resources or staff to devote to international recruitment to the same extent, nor are they as likely to have locations or contacts abroad. These organizations often use intermediaries to recruit foreign workers, both formally and informally.

Immigration consulting services

Formally, there are a number of consulting services and agencies that offer their services to employers, both on a for-profit and non-profit basis. The Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultations ¹⁵⁰(CAPIC) connects businesses with

¹⁵⁰ See <http://www.capic.ca/index.php?page=main> for CAPIC's website.

professional immigration consultants that can guide those unfamiliar with the process through hiring a temporary worker or potential economic immigrant from outside Canada. Approximately 36 per cent of applicants to the FSWP use immigration consulting services or an immigration lawyer (CIC, 2010b). Additionally, most provinces engage employment consultants, who can either arrange hiring events or put businesses in contact with organizations that can guide them to workers abroad. Industry and professional or occupational groups, such as for engineers or caregivers, also provide contacts to businesses and individuals interested in hiring immigrants, temporary workers, and live-in caregivers.

2.2. Supply side: prospective migrants

Firms represent one side of the labour market matching process. The other side of the matching process is immigrants and temporary workers. Again, we will make the same distinction, considering separately the resources available to economic immigrants already living in Canada, who are able to remain in Canada indefinitely and can legally work, and potential economic immigrants and temporary workers, who have either yet to begin the immigration process, or have yet to complete it. Labour market information for immigrants ranges from informal networks to services facilitated by SPOs and government departments in Canada, much as it did for businesses. The resources for those already in Canada are considerably more developed in this case as well, but there have been a number of interesting pilot projects and programmes co-managed by SPOs and government departments that appear to have had a significant impact on access to Canadian labour market information abroad.

Labour market information and job search methods for economic immigrants already living in Canada to find employment

This sub-section will focus on other job search strategies, information sources, and integration programmes for those who have already immigrated to Canada and can remain in the country permanently, including bridging programmes, settlement services, and language training, all of which operate with the goal of enabling immigrants to develop the formal and informal contacts that most often lead to employment. Research has identified that the most common problems preventing recent immigrants from integrating into the labour market are difficulties obtaining recognition for credentials, education, and previous work experience (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007; Zietsma, 2010; Houle and Yassad, 2010; Derrick, 2010); and difficulties learning about job opportunities because of a lack of personal contacts and networks (Carter et al., 2010). Language barriers, a third difficulty, are also commonly cited by the same literature. The labour market information that has been made available to recent immigrants for their use directly addresses these issues.

The existing services to support the labour market integration of economic immigrants already in Canada, and especially recent immigrants, fit broadly into two categories. First, there are educational programmes designed to equip immigrants

with information and skills about living and working in Canada that they otherwise would have lacked, which usually take the form of training directly relevant to either the Canadian labour market or their profession of choice; we will also discuss a specific subset of training programmes, called bridge training programmes, which target more specific challenges in integration. Secondly, settlement services assist immigrants with any issues they encounter in relocating to Canada, such as filling out immigration forms and providing documentation, opening a bank account, improving their English or French, and directing them to bridging programmes that provide explicit job training. The dichotomy between bridging programmes and settlement services is not perfect; certainly some programmes would fit the description of both, but for the purposes of this sub-section, the distinction is a useful way of organizing services available to permanent residents.

Additionally, the *Working in Canada* website is also an important tool for economic immigrants already living in Canada, but as the details are more directly applicable to those who have not yet immigrated, the next sub-section will describe the tools specifically for immigrants on the Working in Canada website, as well as other sources of information for potential immigrants and temporary workers. For those already in Canada, Working in Canada functions essentially as a job bank.

Job search methods by occupational group

There are significant differences in employment opportunities by occupation in Canada, reflected in the performance of different occupational groups after the worldwide recession that began in 2008. Most notably, while unemployment in Canada still remained above its pre-recession level at the end of 2011, over the period 2007–2011, employment in professional, scientific and technical services and public administration increased by 15.9 per cent and 12.3 per cent respectively. Additionally, in health care and social assistance, employment increased by 14.9 per cent over the same period. These three sectors together accounted for 107.1 per cent of employment growth in Canada from 2007 to 2011 (CSLS, 2012). It is therefore natural to examine whether job search methods differ in health care and social assistance from other occupations, both for Canadian-born workers and immigrants.

Across almost all job occupations and types of workers, between a quarter and half of those with jobs report learning about jobs through a family member or friend, making informal networks the most common job search method by far (TIEDI, 2011). In healthcare and social assistance, however, the job search methods that those who are employed report having used to learn about their job differ between Canadian-born workers and immigrants; immigrants are less likely to report having found their job through personal initiative, despite personal initiative being a more common search method in this field for Canadian-born workers. Table 11.3 summarizes the findings of this survey. Among Canadian-born workers in health care, 35.4 per cent report finding their job through personal initiative, as opposed to 26.6 per cent through a family member or friend. Among immigrants, however, the corresponding figures are 33.4 per cent and 39.1 per cent, respectively. This is the only occupational group

where family or friends are a more common job search method for immigrants than for Canadian-born workers (TIEDI, 2011). It would be useful to further examine job search methods by education, but because most immigrants in Canada must have some post-secondary education in order to immigrate, there is little data on job search methods by immigrants with lower levels of education.

Table 11.3: Reported job search methods for Canadian- and foreign-born workers by selected occupation and search method, per cent, 2005

	Family or friend	Personal initiative	Directly recruited	Recruitment agency	Canada employment centre
Canadian-born workers					
Management	32.7	17.3	19.6	4.7	1.5
Business, finance, and administrative	41.2	15.5	13.6	4.3	4.5
Health	26.6	35.4	17.6	-	0.8
Social science, education, government service, and religion	26.2	23.6	22.2	1.8	2.0
Processing, Manufacturing, and utilities	48.4	26.2	11.5	3.0	5.6
Foreign-born workers					
Management	30.8	21.4	17.8	5.9	-
Business, finance, and administrative	39.9	17.1	15.2	9.5	3.9
Health	39.1	33.4	13.7	-	-
Social science, education, government service, and religion	20.8	26.1	11.8	-	-
Processing, Manufacturing, and utilities	56.7	16.1	8.3	3.2	3.1

Source: TIEDI 2011.

Note: This study used survey data from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES), run by Statistics Canada, collected in 2005. WES surveys workplaces and those working at those establishments. "Foreign-born workers" refers to anyone employed by a surveyed workplace that was a permanent resident, naturalized Canadian citizen, visa holder, or temporary foreign worker. The figures reported in this table are responses to a question asking what job search method workers used to find their current job.

Training programmes and settlement services implemented by government departments

Prior to 2008, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) funded three settlement services that were available across Canada. These programmes were Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), Enhanced Language Training (ELT), the Host Program (HOST), and the Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) (Alboim 2009; Smith 2010). As these programmes were settlement services, their aim was to provide immigrants with essential information needed to

live in Canada. In 2009, ISAP and HOST were amalgamated in order to facilitate more efficient delivery of service, which will be discussed after an overview of the services provided. The essence of the services being delivered has not changed in recent years, but several of these programmes were pilot projects which have been, or are now being, redesigned for more effective and wider delivery.

Of the three CIC programmes, only ELT focuses explicitly on job training skills. LINC, run by CIC, provides only basic instruction in English and French, for free, to adult immigrants (Service Canada, 2012). While knowledge of French and English is essential to find employment, it is also important for living in Canada and as such this programme is not considered a bridging programme.

ISAP, run by CIC in partnership with non-profit and private sector organizations, primarily provides such services as needs assessments and referrals to other organizations, and local community information. HOST, run by CIC as well, is similar to ISAP in that it focuses on delivering settlement services to immigrants and partners with SPOs to deliver services (CIC, 2010c). Because of significant overlap in the goals of ISAP and HOST, in 2008, ISAP and HOST were combined into a single Settlement Program (Smith, 2010; CIC, 2010c). LINC will also be offered through this new programme. The single programme is now organized by expected outcomes and activity streams. The participation of SPOs in Settlement Programs is now based on funding requests to target a specific outcome and activity stream. The expected outcomes and activity streams, which closely align with the services and priorities of ISAP and HOST, are listed in Table 11.4.

Of particular interest to this report are the results category C and D. The model of the modernized Settlement Program is to allow SPOs to apply for funding for a project, detailing the expected results and activity streams in their application. Category C is focused specifically on funding for projects that help immigrants already in Canada find and retain employment; this includes funding for bridging programmes and labour market information sessions that provide both workplace skills and orientation and information about the Canadian labour market. Programmes such as Career Bridge could be funded under this expected result. Similarly, Category D would fund programmes such as Mentoring Partnership or the National Mentoring Initiative, which have been discussed previously. Furthermore, while ISAP and HOST were successful programmes, this new approach provides for greater flexibility in combining services, which will be better serving immigrants' needs .

In addition to those national settlement services, through Labour Market Development Agreements (LDMA) between federal and provincial governments, all Canadians eligible for Employment Insurance¹⁵¹ (EI) can benefit from job-training programmes run by HRSDC but managed locally by the provinces. Most provinces offer specific

¹⁵¹ Employment Insurance is the Canadian unemployment benefit programme; in order to be eligible, one must have worked a minimum number of equivalent full-time weeks in the previous year, the exact number depending on the area of residence and whether or not and how long ago unemployment benefits were previously received. The level and duration of benefits is determined by the length and wages/salary of prior employment.

programmes to target under-represented groups in the labour force with their LDMA funding, including immigrants. Such programmes allow economic immigrants already in Canada who qualify for unemployment benefits to participate in federally funded provincially managed job training programmes and job placement assistance when they are out of work. As such job-training programmes are managed by the provinces, the level and type of services offered differ from province to province.

Table 11.4: CIC’s modernization and amalgamation of settlement programming streams

Previous Programmes	Settlement Programme Equivalent	
	Expected Results	Activity Streams
Integrated Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)	A. Orientation Newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and understand life in Canada	Needs Assessment and Referrals —determine eligibility, assess needs, and refer newcomers to other services
	B. Language/Skills Newcomers have the language ability and skills necessary to function in Canada	Information and Awareness Services —pre- and post-arrival information
The Host Program (HOST)	C. Labour Market Access Newcomers obtain required assistance to find employment matching their skills and education	Language Learning and Skills Development —language and skills development training
	D. Welcoming Communities Newcomers receive help to establish social and professional networks	Community Connections —establish a social and professional network
	E. Policy and Program Development To ensure effective delivery and achieve comparable outcomes across Canada	Support Services —to help access settlement services

Source: Smith (2010) and CIC (2010b).

Note: There is no correspondence between previous programmes, expected results, and activity streams. Previous programmes engaged in multiple expected results and activity streams, and activities under the Settlement Program may meet any combination of results and activities.

In the province of Ontario, the Ontario Labour Market Agreement (LMA) supports new Canadians by providing bridge and language training to all immigrants, and financial assistance for those attending certain educational programmes. Support for new Canadians in Ontario represents \$33.4 million of \$193.7 million federal LMA funding in 2012 (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2012). Many of these programmes are designed to target specific professions and occupations; for example, International Medical Graduate Training provides postgraduate training and assessment to immigrants who graduated from an international medical school, offering access to a residency matching system, orientation and evaluation services in clinical settings, and advanced specialty training for physicians. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities also offers one-stop bridge training programmes that connect immigrants to many occupations, including low-skilled

occupations, to mentoring, networking, and training opportunities, which are expected to provide service to 14,400 immigrants in the 2011–2012 programme year (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2012). All provinces can use federal LMA funding to offer similar programmes to immigrants.

Bridging programmes and settlement services implemented by SPOs in Canada Service Provider Organizations are a very large part of Canada's LMI system for foreign-born workers. Non-profit organizations offer a wide variety of training and settlement services that improve immigrants' access to labour market information. TRIEC, discussed in the previous section, is a leading example of an SPO. It provides a number of settlement services to immigrants living in or near Toronto designed to give newcomers to Canada the ability to navigate the Canadian labour market. TRIEC has offered two important programmes that economic immigrants already residing in Canada can participate in free of charge. The first, Career Bridge, is run in partnership with Career Edge Organization, a national non-profit service provider established in 1996 (Career Edge Organization, 2012a). Career Bridge is essentially an intern placement programme, designed to provide assistance placing highly educated individuals with three years of international work experience in a paid internship in their profession for 4 to 12 months (Career Edge Organization, 2012b). Research has indicated that between 75 and 80 per cent of those participating in the programme found full-time employment in their field (Alboim, 2009). The purpose of Career Bridge is to provide immigrants with an opportunity to adjust or "bridge" their skills to the Canadian labour market. Over the course of Career Bridge, immigrants gain valuable experience in Canada and can begin to build a professional network.

Mentoring Partnership, the other TRIEC initiative, focuses on the same core problem: though highly skilled in their profession, the lack of a professional network and limited personal experience in the Canadian job market makes it difficult for immigrants to even be aware of job opportunities (Carter et al., 2010). Mentoring Partnership equips newcomers to Canada with the ability to find job opportunities in their field. This is done through pairing immigrants or "mentees" with a "mentor" who is an established professional in their field. Mentors commit to 24 hours of meetings with their mentee over four months, and develop a programme tailored to the individual mentee's labour market needs, including referrals to other services and information interviews. Of those who participated in Mentoring Partnership, almost 70 per cent found employment in their field within three months, and nearly 80 per cent found employment overall, comparable to the results of Career Bridge Training (Alboim, 2009). As of 2012, Mentoring Partnership had coordinated 5,800 mentorships between recent skilled immigrants and working Canadian professionals in Toronto (Mentoring Partnership, 2012).

Mentoring Partnership has in part served as a model for the National Mentoring Initiative, an effort to expand Mentoring Partnership to immigrants living in or destined for Canadian cities other than Toronto, such as Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, and Halifax. The programme is funded through a combination of public, private, and non-profit partners, including CIC, TD Bank Financial Group, the

Maytree Foundation, and the McConnell Foundation. The National Mentoring Initiative provides three services in the same manner as Mentoring Partnership: coaching, online self-development resources, and assistance in networking. Career Bridge and Mentoring Partnership are examples of the services that have been developed to improve the ability of immigrants to access labour market information in Canada. These two programmes began in Toronto, but now, many provinces administer similar services in partnership with, or by funding the activities of, SPOs (Carter et al., 2010). Because of the local nature of settlement services, directories and listings are maintained by provincial governments¹⁵² as well as by Service Canada. As in the case of EI-linked training programmes, each province has a different model and approach to providing settlement services to newcomers.

Box 11.1: The Toronto region immigrant employment council (triec) in focus

TRIEC emerged out of the Toronto City Summit held in 2002, a conference designed to bring together various stakeholders in the city to develop solutions to the city's challenges. The city summit led to the development of a working group, the Toronto Summit City Alliance (TCSA), and an action plan, which recommended the creation of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, or TRIEC, in April 2003. TRIEC was officially launched in September 2003 with support from the Maytree Foundation, an SPO that had previously argued that immigrant employment is an important part of poverty reduction in Canada (Wayland, 2007).

TRIEC began by focusing on three goals: increasing access to services that support integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market; building the capacity of stakeholders such as employers to recognize and value immigrants' skills; and working with governments on immigration programming and planning. Because of its perceived flexibility many stakeholders believed TRIEC was better equipped than local and federal governments to address the issues facing Toronto. At the time, Toronto was home to more than 40 per cent of Canada's immigrants. The labour market integration of skilled immigrants was a burgeoning policy issue for the federal government, which provided TRIEC start-up funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canadian Heritage.

In 2007, TRIEC was incorporated as an organization separate from the Maytree Foundation, having functioned up until that point as a project of the foundation, with the same director. TRIEC's funding sources have included the Maytree Foundation, CIC, the FCRO, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and a series of foundations, charities, and private sector companies (Wayland, 2007).

The services offered by TRIEC gradually evolved over time. Career Bridge and Mentoring Partnership, discussed below in this section, are two very important TRIEC initiatives that have proved useful in facilitating the labour market integration of skilled immigrants. TRIEC is also responsible for HireImmigrants.ca, a web portal that has proved successful at connecting employers and immigrants, and providing both groups with LMI. TRIEC is not unique in Canada as an SPO with a primary municipal focus. Since 2002, many cities across Canada have seen similar developments, including the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN), which developed in parallel beginning in 2002 and serves much of the same functions. TRIEC is an excellent example of how local, multi-stakeholder engagement across public and private sectors has improved access to local labour markets and labour market information for immigrants.

¹⁵² For example, Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship created Ontario Immigration, an online information portal, maintains a directory of dozens of organizations that provide some of the services discussed in this section to immigrants. Most other provinces maintain similar directories and fund organizations that provide similar services.

Labour market information for potential economic immigrants and temporary workers to find employment

This section will consider labour market information for potential economic immigrants not already in Canada, as well as those applying to become temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers, or seasonal agricultural workers. The labour market information available to potential immigrants and temporary workers takes essentially three forms: job and data banks maintained by the Government of Canada and its partners that immigrants can use to gather information about opportunities and the Canadian job market; official documents and websites that guide immigrants and businesses through the immigration process; and outreach programmes that provide individual support to immigrants abroad. The last item of outreach resources will include details on three programmes, the Canadian Immigrant Integration Project (CIIP), Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA), and the Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP), which were very effective in facilitating access to labour market information for immigrants pre-departure.

Job search methods used by temporary workers by worker type

With the exception of arranged employment, where immigrants not already in Canada immigrate because of an offer of employment, the job search methods used by those immigrating permanently prior to arrival do not differ significantly. There is currently a gap in the literature with respect to Arranged Employment Offers (AEOs); several studies, most notably Carter (2010), note that the highest-quality data sources on immigration do not include information on AEOs,¹⁵³ and so the depth of knowledge on this front is limited. The 2010 evaluation of the FSWP is the only comprehensive source of data on AEOs, and it does not provide direct information on the job search methods used by those who received an AEO. For this reason, we focus on job search methods used by temporary workers for this discussion. Temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers (who are only able to remain in Canada temporarily), and seasonal agricultural workers are set apart from those applying as economic immigrants to become permanent residents through the FSWP or PNP in one important way: they are required to have a job offer in order to enter Canada. Those applying to remain in Canada permanently, however, have arranged employment only in a minority of cases. We would expect different job search methods to be used.

Live-in caregivers are unique in that it is common for employers to recruit a live-in caregiver from an intermediary agency, often for a fee and on a for-profit basis. This also means that the foreign worker often pays a fee in order to be a part of the agencies recruiting process; this happens commonly enough that in Canada, employers are required to reimburse caregivers for any fees they may have paid to the recruiting agency which led to their hire. Optimum Childcare and Nannies Inc., NannyServices, and Nanny Canada Inc., are some examples of the private companies

¹⁵³ Carter (2010) used the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMBD), which does not contain data on AEOs. The other commonly used data set, the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrant to Canada (LSIC) surveyed three waves of immigrants. The last data release was for immigrants surveyed in 2005.

that provide this service. Some agencies provide their services to families hiring caregivers free of charge, but it is typically the case that the foreign worker would have to pay to be included in their database. Family and friends of current caregivers and previous employees are also common search methods, and are recommended as resources in CIC documentation (FCRO, 2011a). Seasonal and temporary workers are matched in a similar manner – the key difference between temporary workers and those immigrating permanently is the greater role played by employment agencies. Recruiting agencies that match workers to employers for a fee for temporary foreign workers include Workvantage and Diamond Global Recruiting Inc.

Job and data banks maintained by government departments and partners

The *Working in Canada* website is of particular use to both potential economic immigrants and temporary foreign workers, as it provides a great deal of detailed information not just on jobs available, but also on the steps immigration applicants must take both in order to legally enter and work in Canada. CIC's guidebook (FCRO, 2011b) to entering and working in Canada directs potential immigrants specifically to a section on the Working in Canada website called the *Working in Canada Report*, a personalized report containing information directly relevant both to the occupation and desired destination of the potential applicant. The website also contains detailed information on the legal requirements to immigrate to Canada and work in any particular province or occupation; users can use the interactive tool to generate a personalized report, or simply browse the website and read the information. The report is only for informational purposes.

Box 11.2: The working in Canada report in focus

The *Working in Canada Report* takes applicants through the following steps (FCRO, 2011a):¹⁵⁴

1. Selecting on occupation
 - a. Many occupations can be identified by several names, and convention dictates which names are common in Canada. CIC stresses that it is important to properly identify which occupation a potential immigrant is seeking to join.
2. Determining whether or not the occupation is regulated
 - a. Resources are now clear in alerting potential immigrants that there are special licensing requirements for many regulated occupations, including trades and professional designations. This is an important addition to the resources for immigration applicants, given that credential recognition had been an unexpected challenge for some permanent residents in the past (Zietsma 2010).
3. Determining who the regulator is (if applicable)
 - a. The *Working in Canada Report* guides potential applicants through determining whether or not they must obtain a credential or license to work in their occupation in Canada and how to do so if they must. This is important because over 400 regulatory bodies are involved in regulating all occupations in Canada, typically at the provincial level.

¹⁵⁴ A Working in Canada Report can be generated interactively by visiting <http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca>.

- b. The *Working in Canada* Report also guides potential applicants through the credentialing process, informs them of applicable fees and an expected timeframe or, if the information is not available or uniform enough to present in the report, directs them to the appropriate provincial resources.
4. Assessing whether or not they possess legal employment requirements, skill requirements, or any additional requirements specific to the occupation
5. Learning about the prevailing wages or salary of the desired occupation in the location in question
6. Reviewing detailed labour market information about the outlook of the occupation in their chosen region
7. Compiling a list of potential job opportunities from available postings in the *Working in Canada* Job Bank and contacting potential employers
8. Collecting information on continuing education and job-related training that may be necessary or advantageous
9. Exploring jobs outside of the chosen application or volunteer opportunities while the credential process unfolds
10. Finally, applying for jobs and engaging in the recruitment process, including advice on résumés, cover letters, and interviews.

Two additional information resources are worth highlighting. First, the Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO) has assembled a significant amount of labour market information in collaboration with the Canadian sector councils, a group of industry-led councils focused on skills development and industry-specific issues across dozens of occupations in Canada. Together, they have produced a series of documents called Occupation Facts (FCRO, 2012a), which contain essential labour market information for potential immigrants that was previously difficult to collect. This ranges from basic licensing information, to information on job search strategies, to directions to important professional networks.

For example, the Occupation Facts page for engineers indicates that Engineers Canada is the national organization of the twelve provincial and territorial associations that govern the licensing of professional engineers in their respective jurisdictions. The FCRO gives specific details on how to become a licensed engineer, instructions on contacting the relevant provincial or territorial association, and the documents required. There are also directions to industry-specific networks, such as the Engineering Institute of Canada's job board, which immigrants looking for work as an engineer can use to search for publicly advertised positions. Similar pages are available with information on obtaining work for a host of professions in law, health care, business and finance, natural and applied sciences, trades, and others.

Second, in 2010, the FCRO compiled *Planning to Work in Canada? An Essential Workbook for Newcomers*, the most recent version being current to 2011 (FCRO, 2011a). The workbook was prepared for CIC and is publicly available on both organizations' websites. This resource is analogous to the guide for businesses compiled by the FCRO. It provides detailed information on accessing community services while living in Canada (such as banking, health care, and so forth), improving English and French

language skills, finding employment, obtaining necessary documentation for immigration and licensing, and assessing educational credentials. The workbook also includes an extensive glossary of links to all of the online resources discussed here, including *Working in Canada*, Occupation Facts, and directories of SPOs.

Box 11.3: The federal credentials referral office (fcro) in focus

The Federal Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) is a part of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC jointly administers entry to Canada with HRSDC and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). The FCRO was launched in May of 2007 following extensive consultations with stakeholders over the previous year which yielded the conclusion that the recognition of foreign credentials was among the most significant barriers to the labour market integration of skilled immigrants. The initiative to form the FCRO in 2007 was accompanied with funding for HRSDC's Foreign Credential Recognition Program, which ran from 2007 to 2009 (FCRO, 2008).

The FCRO's chief role is to facilitate access to information about the recognition of foreign credentials. This service is delivered through call centres run by Service Canada, a federal government department responsible for delivering public services in Canada. Service Canada maintains over 300 locations that can be reached toll-free, which immigrants can call for information or referrals to information sources. The FCRO also produces and publishes resources for employers and immigrants, many of which are discussed elsewhere in this report. This includes detailed guides on immigrating and hiring, respectively, for immigrants and employers, and Occupation Facts, which is discussed later in this section. This amalgamation of information is an important feature in Canada's delivery of LMI to immigrants, as over 400 different regulatory bodies are responsible for credentialing skilled workers in Canada.

The FCRO is currently working on the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. This framework aims to guarantee that Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) is fair, transparent, timely, and consistent, despite the number of regulatory bodies and levels of government responsible for FCR. The FCRO has been focusing on different sets of target occupations in two-year spans to achieve this goal. The FCRO also works with nearly a dozen stakeholders on a variety of initiatives, such as outreach and pre-departure orientation, sector-specific guidebooks, micro-loans to facilitate FCR, research and policy development, the development of offshore examination locations for some occupations, and many others.

Pilot projects and programmes delivering services to potential immigrants abroad with SPO support

The pilot projects run by CIC, some in partnership with SPOs, are of greater interest, as they establish direct contact between potential immigrants or temporary workers living outside of Canada and Canadian businesses or government departments. The first of these, the Canadian Immigrant Integration Project (CIIP) originated as a five-year pilot project in 2005 by HRSDC, and continued as a CIC project from 2010 onwards (ACCC, 2011); in 2010, the pilot project was evaluated and judged to be a success, at which point CIIP was converted to an ongoing commitment (CIC, 2010c). The primary actor, however, was and remains the SPO partner, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC). With funding from CIC, the ACCC implements the CIIP in accordance with goals established through consultations with HRSDC, CIC, other SPOs, and the result of the evaluation of the pilot project.

The goal of the pilot project was to explore ways to provide potential applicants to the FSWP with essential orientation pre-immigration, including knowledge of the Canadian labour market, realistic expectations about post-immigration outcomes, and the ability to fully prepare for immigrating to Canada. Since the vast majority of resources are now online, a primary objective of the CIIP was to increase awareness among skilled worker applicants of important online resources. The pilot project also provided extensive referrals to SPOs such as Career Bridge (ACCC, 2012), sector councils, and regional governments with PNP streams in place that would be more advantageous. The programme expanded in 2010 to include provincial nominees as well as FSWs.

Between the launch of client services in January 2007 and the conclusion of the pilot project in November 2010, the CIIP provided direct service to 9,000 FSWs and PNs from India, China, and the Philippines, through offices established in Manila, Delhi, and Guangzhou (ACCC, 2011). An important feature of this programme is that it began as an outreach programme which automatically contacted principal applicants in the final stage of the FSWP, though response was voluntary. Once contacted, FSW applicants participated in a three-step process (ACCC, 2011): group seminars providing basic LMI about the Canadian labour market, individual counselling sessions designed to help clients produce a personal action plan for labour market integration, and referrals to SPOs that could assist clients remotely in preparing to immigrate or search for a job. Referrals were also made to post-secondary institutions to prevent immigrants from being unprepared or unable to meet unexpected educational requirements. This last point is particularly important, as the ability to seek necessary education and training had previously been identified as a major challenge for immigrant cohorts (Schellenberg and Maheux, 2007).

The LMI seminar includes information on the Canadian economy and labour market trends, integration challenges faced by immigrants (such as credential recognition and language requirements), and job search instruction. The individual counselling sessions, which take place pre-departure, are guided by each applicant's particular situation and supported by partnerships with SPOs, licensing bodies, post-secondary institutions, and regulatory bodies, to ensure each FSW applicant receives all of the information they would need prior to immigrating. Employers also partnered with CIIP to deliver information to immigrants pre-departure: during the pilot phase, this included Canada's five major banks and companies in every major sector of the Canadian economy, such as energy, health care, and IT. The services offered by employers varied, but typically include résumé advice and seminars (usually offered electronically) on job search strategies and career opportunities.

As indicated above, the CIIP provided direct service to over 9,000 clients, of the estimated 30 per cent it was successfully able to contact in its early stages (ACCC, 2011). This was in addition to having over 12,000 clients registered for the programme at the time the Government of Canada decided to continue it as an ongoing service. The response to the project from the clients surveyed was overwhelmingly positive; among other encouraging outcomes, 62 per cent of economic immigrants who

participated in CIIP prior to arriving in Canada found employment within six months of arriving in Canada, compared to 44 per cent for economic immigrants overall, so this represents a substantial improvement (Gilmore, 2009).

Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) is a similar initiative, but it is targeted at immigrants ready to obtain a visa and run by another SPO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (IOM, 2013b). COA, unlike CIIP, also does not explicitly target economic immigrants, as it includes refugees and live-in caregivers in its mandate. Similar to CIIP, the aims of COA are to provide immigrants with realistic expectations about the immigration process and life in Canada, knowledge of how to complete the immigration process and find employment in Canada, and the skills to accomplish those goals. The delivery mechanisms for COA are not as thorough as those for CIIP: COA runs almost entirely through pre-departure orientation sessions for immigrants ready to receive a visa. COA is run through 14 permanent locations managed by IOM, but the sites that serve immigrants are in Colombia, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. The most recent data published by IOM indicates that they have provided service to over 124,000 visa-ready applicants (IOM, 2013b). Though economic immigrants are a part of COA's mandate, the IOM has been primarily concerned with providing integration services to refugees, and most of their services rendered have been to refugees, who do not necessarily always seek employment, and face labour market challenges separate from those faced by immigrants.

The Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP), the third CIC programme, provides similar services, but is closer to the CIIP in the scope of the services it provides than it is to COA. Another key difference is that it is located in South Korea and Taiwan, two locations not served by COA or CIIP, and that it serves family class and live-in caregivers as well as those applying for permanent resident status. Like CIIP, AEIP employs counsellors that provide pre-departure information on the Canadian labour market, job search workshops, and other related pre-departure orientation and guidance.

3. Informational barriers to the economic integration of immigrants

The employment barriers faced by immigrants in Canada are more fundamental than informational. The most common difficulties reported by immigrants are the recognition of foreign experience, education, and credentials, and language barriers. These factors make a greater contribution to any gap in the labour market outcomes of immigrants than difficulty in accessing labour market information.¹⁵⁵ Still, shortcomings in labour market outcomes can often be alleviated through improving access to LMI, or improving the quality of available LMI. Additionally,

¹⁵⁵ The full extent to which fundamental barriers contribute to poor labour market outcomes for recent immigrants is beyond the scope of the paper, but interested readers can return to the Introduction for a selection of literature on the matter.

one informational barrier has been identified as an important factor: foreign-born workers often have difficulties learning about job opportunities in their field due to a lack of personal contacts. This section is devoted to identifying informational barriers to the labour market integration of immigrants and exploring which of them have yet to be addressed by the programmes discussed in the previous section.

3.1. Information barriers faced by employers

The majority of barriers to recruiting and hiring immigrants faced by employers are not informational in nature. However, domestic recruiting of immigrants already in Canada does suffer from a few key informational challenges. First, employers often find it very difficult to know whether or not internationally trained workers are qualified for the positions they would like to have filled. In some cases, this is a credential issue: foreign credentials, education, and work experience receive less recognition because employers in Canada are not certain that they are equivalent to Canadian credentials. Secondly, many businesses are unaware of the opportunities to recruit immigrants or temporary workers, and do not consider them in their recruitment strategy. That is an awareness issue, which is relatively simple in comparison to the other problems discussed, though changing the recruitment strategies of many businesses across the country will be a gradual process given that it is costly for businesses to do so. Third and lastly, some SMEs have been surprised by the length of the immigration and hiring process when recruiting immigrants and temporary workers from outside of Canada, a critical problem for SMEs operating on a contract or project basis while trying to fill labour shortages. Bureaucratic delays can translate into lost income for those businesses (Mah, 2012; Kukushkin and Watt, 2009).

Domestic recruiting

The first two issues pertain particularly to the recruiting of immigrants already residing in Canada, though they remain relevant in the case of potential immigrants or temporary workers not already in Canada. In regards to screening for qualified applicants, while many avenues of connecting with qualified and even pre-screened immigrants exist and have been discussed in previous sections, the resources are diffuse and decentralized. This service is normally provided to businesses by a local or provincial SPO or industry association, so there are many such examples across Canada. The combination of local employment councils, organizations such as ALLIES and Skills International, industry associations, immigration consultants, and government job banks has many SMEs requesting a single point of contact for recruitment support services and to screen pre-qualified immigrants (Mah, 2012).

Businesses have also expressed criticisms of programmes that provide job search support services directly to immigrants, for fear that adverse selection will lead employment agencies to promote unqualified applicants, but an employer-led search support system would solve that problem. This concern has been raised in several consultations and multi-stakeholder surveys (Mah, 2012). A previous study by

Sharpe and Qiao (2006) also found that user awareness and participation is critical to the successful delivery of LMI, which means that pre-screening services that are viewed skeptically by businesses are unlikely to lead to better labour market outcomes. The solution is to facilitate a higher degree of employer-led job search supports designed specifically to meet business needs, which a national single point of contact would achieve. This concern has been partly addressed by some of the programmes discussed in the previous section, such as Skills International, CIIP, Career Bridge, Mentoring Partnership, and which employers can participate in and gain first-hand knowledge of the quality of the foreign workforce.

The second issue, a lack of awareness on the part of businesses of the opportunities they have to recruit foreign-born workers, has been addressed in part by the efforts of TRIEC, ALLIES, and other SPOs and industry groups to make aware to businesses that immigrants are a powerful and large recruiting channel. The awareness campaigns by government agencies, local immigration employment councils, and SPOs should be mitigating lack of awareness on the part of businesses. As in the case of the above, continued increased awareness from businesses about Canada's immigration policies should also help diminish this difficulty. Policies to support business involvement or reduce the cost to businesses of recruiting immigrants would also support the efforts of businesses to recruit immigrants.

The third and final issue, that application backlogs discourage businesses from hiring workers from abroad, remains a challenge but is being addressed through the introduction of a series of policies that aim to give employers access to expedited and priority processing when they make a job offer to an immigrant and the development of a national framework for credential assessment. Immigrants who received an AEO, for example, immigrated on average within seven months, compared to one to two years for those who did not (CIC, 2010b). The Manitoba PNP also found ways to allow those with job offers to be approved permanent residents to enter the country and begin working much more quickly than under the FSWP (Carter et al., 2010).

Foreign recruiting of immigrants and temporary workers

Informational barriers faced by employers vary based on whether immigrants are located abroad or have already obtained permanent residence status (Mah, 2012). Among the unique barriers to recruiting from abroad is knowledge of how long the application process takes – this is related to application backlogs, which have varied around 800,000. This has translated into delays of one to two years in the time it takes to immigrate through the FSWP (CIC, 2010b). Several policy responses have been implemented or are being explored, including accelerated processes for offers of employment for highly skilled occupations, so that employers are able to hire economic immigrants within six months to one year of applying, although this does not expedite the process at all for those immigrating without job offers.

For multinational companies, there are limited differences in recruiting foreign workers living in or outside of Canada. For SMEs, the difference in difficulty becomes one of degree, not kind; the key problem is still that businesses have

difficulties determining whether immigrants are qualified or not, but this is much more difficult for SMEs hiring potential economic immigrants from abroad. The solution remains programmes such as CIIP that increase contact between businesses and immigrants without imposing significant cost on employers, and programmes that either expedite credential assessment or make it easier for businesses to assess the credentials and qualifications of immigrants.

Additionally, in the case of Arranged Employment Offers (AEOs), the informational barrier has clearly been surmounted by both parties to the transaction. As mentioned previously, those entering Canada through the federal system with arranged employment face very different circumstances than those who do not. The most common positions recruited using AEOs are senior management and academic positions, indicating that those immigrants offered those positions have connections to the Canadian labour market or an academic network (CIC, 2010b). The most extensive study on the PNP, conducted in the province of Manitoba by Tom Carter in 2010, acknowledged the use of employer-direct provincial nominees, but did not explore their origin.

3.2. Information barriers faced by immigrants and temporary workers

Immigrants have consistently reported the following difficulties, most of which should be apparent at this point: a lack of Canadian job experience; no connections in the job market; foreign experience either not accepted or heavily discounted; foreign credentials either not accepted or heavily discounted; a lack of Canadian job references; and language barriers (Schallenberg and Maheux, 2007). Discrimination has also been cited as a barrier faced by immigrants, and several studies support this hypothesis (Oreopolous, 2009; Kukushkin and Watt, 2009). Many of these barriers can be alleviated by improving access to labour market information, although they are primarily structural in nature. Many of these barriers can be traced back to immigrants being unfamiliar with the labour market in Canada.

In regards to the recognition of experience and education by Canadian employers and professional or licensing associations, the informational barriers took several forms. First, applicants have found it very difficult to determine whether or not their credentials will be recognized in Canada (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007). Second, immigration applicants have often been surprised by the cost of the credentialing process after a point at which they had already significantly invested in the process of immigrating (Alboim, 2009; Picot and Sweetman, 2012; Houle and Yssad, 2010). A study in Manitoba found that half of respondents reported that credentials or job experience not being recognized was their greatest problem; in an earlier national survey, slightly fewer than forty per cent indicated that credential recognition was their greatest problem. In that survey, more said that not having Canadian job experience was their greatest problem (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007; Carter et al., 2010).

The FCRO's work in recent years is intended not only to alleviate the informational barriers associated with gaining credential recognition, but also to facilitate immigrants and businesses in more quickly assessing foreign credentials. Future policy measures have been designed to simplify the process of credential recognition, which is currently the responsibility of over 400 different organizations across all occupations and provinces, and the complications this has created for users of the immigration system, particular SMEs and potential applicants. The FCRO is currently developing a Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications to address this problem. This is a commitment by federal and provincial governments to develop processes that will guarantee that a potential immigrant will know within one year whether their qualifications will be recognized; what, if anything, they must do to be qualified to work in their occupation in Canada; and receive direction toward occupations that they are qualified to work in. Note that the decentralized nature of professional licensing in Canada is not going to change, but these processes will be designed so that newcomers to Canada working in regulated occupations can be assessed and receive the information they need to become licensed as quickly as possible.

Discrimination has also been identified as a challenge, but one that can be remedied through awareness campaigns critical of intentionally and unintentionally discriminatory practices. Discrimination is most likely to be a problem during the recruitment process. Some research indicates that employers are less likely to invite applicants for interview if they simply have a non-English name on their résumé; Oreopolous (2009) conducted an analysis of a private data-set of 6,000 résumés, and found that 11 per cent of highly skilled immigrants with non-English names received a call back, while over 40 per cent of highly skilled immigrants with English names received a call back. Likewise, Kukushkin and Watt (2009) found that telephone interviews significantly damaged the prospects of being invited to continue in the job process for immigrants from non-traditional source countries where they would have been likely to have an accent. It is possible that this problem can be alleviated with greater employer awareness; employers who learned of this problem and stopped using telephone interviews no longer saw the discrepancy in the proportion of immigrants who received second interviews.

Discrimination is usually manifested systemically, in the form of implicit biases and conventions that create difficult hurdles for immigrants. The research in this area has broadly concluded that employers must be open to departures from conventions in recruiting, interviewing and hiring in order to avoid discrimination. This includes less reliance on word-of-mouth advertising; advertising in ethnic media; instituting culturally sensitive screening practices, such as omitting names from résumés on the first screening; working with SPOs and other groups to put in place mentoring and bridging programmes for recently hired immigrants; and liaising with professional associations responsible for credential recognition while training and assessing recently hired immigrants for competency (Kukushkin and Watt, 2009). The many services available to employers to assist in implementing immigrant-friendly recruiting processes are run by local SPOs, such as TRIEC

and employment councils in other provinces and cities, who can tailor their programmes for the local population.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the Canadian experience with immigration, we identify four best practices for other nations and interested parties to draw on. These practices are drawn from the extensive review in this report of the labour market integration of immigrants in Canada as it relates to labour market information. We have examined labour market information available to employers, immigrants already in Canada, potential immigrants, and potential temporary workers, and identified specific shortcomings in the system of labour market information that inhibit matching between immigrants and employers. We have also identified several successful programmes at assisting immigrants in settling, and bridging their prior experience to the Canadian labour market.

Before doing so, we would offer a word of caution about the portability of Canadian experience in implementing the policies described so far. As a federal state in which various levels of government routinely participate in policy development, Canada has significant experience in incorporating sub-national governments into the policy formation process. Additionally, provincial governments are constitutionally empowered in Canada to serve some of the most important functions of government today, including health care, education, and, uniquely, joint constitutional jurisdiction over immigration, perhaps making them more significant actors than sub-national governments are in other states. Finally, Canada has two official languages, significant experience and infrastructure in language assessment, instruction, and accommodation prior to implementing such services for immigrants. All of these factors combine to produce a natural fit for the best practices identified in this section, and certainly will contain lessons for any nations similarly situated.

4.1. Establish a national office for the recognition of foreign credentials

The FCRO is among the most important immigration policy innovations in Canada. Its function is essential in ensuring that professional and occupational licensing is not an impediment to the labour market integration of newcomers to Canada. Because occupations are typically regulated by professional associations that operate at the provincial level, the quantity and variety of information understandably makes it difficult for a newcomer to quickly understand whether or not they are legally qualified to work in Canada. Establishing a national framework for the assessment and recognition will not only improve access to this information for immigrants, but provide users of Canada's immigration system with reliable expectations of how long this process will take. This is an important lesson for any federal state in which occupational licensing is the responsibility of sub-national bodies.

4.2. Maximize the number of single-points-of-contact or one-stop shops

CIC's new Settlement Program is an example of service amalgamation that simplifies the process of applying for and receiving services without diluting their quality or breadth. CIIP, ISAP, HOST, and related programmes, whether they target economic immigrants already in Canada or potential immigrants outside Canada, provide those seeking services with a single point of contact for assessments, referrals, settlement services, specialized training, and job search assistance. Likewise, employers and SMEs in particular have indicated that a single point of contact for assistance in recruiting immigrants would dramatically reduce their human resources burden in hiring immigrants. While it is obviously not the case that everything can be reduced to a single point of contact, it is true that the design of Canada's immigration system is enhanced by identifying the appropriate demarcations for what constitutes a discrete service and how many points of contact are necessary. Increasing reliance on referrals can simplify initial contact, but also create bureaucratic excess that makes accessing services difficult for users, so it is important to strike the appropriate balance on this point. This is similar to the notion of a one-stop shop discussed in much of the immigration literature, but it is important that the principle of single-point service delivery be extended to the services available to employers as well.

4.3. Provide pre-departure orientation and training

The most concrete policy lesson from the Canadian immigration experience is the power of pre-departure orientation and training. Evaluations of ISAP, HOST, and CIIP all came to the conclusion that perceptions of the Canadian labour market prior to instruction were often very different from reality, and potential immigrants often lacked knowledge or easy access to knowledge of the procedures necessary to, for example, become licensed to work in a regulated occupation. Furthermore, evaluations indicated that those who participated in such programmes had higher employment rates than immigrants with the same level of education who did not participate. The three largest source countries of immigrants to Canada – and, for the foreseeable future, the three largest suppliers of immigrants to the world – as mentioned before, are the Philippines, China, and India, all countries with significant cultural and language differences. The large differences between the Canadian labour market and the labour market of source countries is at the heart of this challenge.

4.4. Involve local stakeholders in implementation

There is natural tension between this point and the first, and indeed decentralization is not without its critics. We certainly do not take the position that the potential for redundancies does not have the potential to be wasteful and confusing. But even in a more parsimonious system, critics of Canada's decentralizations and redundancies would recognize that local stakeholders have played a tremendous role

in implementing immigration policy and developing the settlement and adaptation infrastructure. TRIEC has spawned a series of city-based employment councils that provide very useful bridging programmes and settlement services which can be tailored to meet local needs by local actors, for example. Continuing in that vein, local stakeholders are well positioned to provide advice on policy development, consult with government in new policies or current problems, and assist in delivering critical services to newcomers.

In addition to local stakeholders such as TRIEC playing a critical role in the development of services, devolution to sub-national governments has also shown significant potential to improve outcomes for immigrants, even when admitting immigrants with less education on average than the federal stream, as in the case of Manitoba's PNP. The non-profit sector has played a tremendously important role in the development of immigration policy and the delivery of vital services to immigrants.

4.5. Maintain flexibility in regards to immigration policy

Canada's immigration policy has considerable flexibility with respect to both the level of immigration to Canada, and the occupations targeted by Canada's immigration policy. Occupational targets, which were initially not included when the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act was passed in 2002, are enshrined in ministerial instructions, which are much easier to change than legislation. This has made it relatively easy to expand and change the occupations which are targeted by the FSWP. Another source of flexibility is the PNP, which can more rapidly adapt to the needs of each province. Policy flexibility has made it significantly easier for the immigration strategy to adapt to Canada's changing needs.

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