

Breaking Down Barriers
to Labour Market
Integration of
Newcomers
in Toronto

Nan Weiner

Diversity, Immigration and Integration



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This publication was produced under the direction of Geneviève Bouchard, Research Director, IRPP. The manuscript was copy-edited by Michel Forand, proofreading was by Francesca Worrall, production was by Chantal Létourneau, art direction was by Schumacher Design, and printing was by AGL Graphiques.

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To cite this document:

Weiner, Nan. 2008. "Breaking Down Barriers to Labour Market Integration of Newcomers in Toronto." *IRPP Choices* 14 (10).

Diversity, Immigration and Integration / Diversité, immigration et intégration

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This series consists of individual *IRPP Choices* and *IRPP Policy Matters* studies on Canadian immigration policy and its challenges from a comparative perspective. Issues discussed in this research program include the relationship between sovereignty, security and border control; economic integration; and the reconciliation of economic and humanitarian objectives.

Cette série comprend des études *Choix IRPP* et *Enjeux publics IRPP* qui portent sur la politique canadienne d'immigration et ses nouveaux défis dans une perspective comparée. Les questions abordées dans ce programme de recherche touchent aux rapports entre souveraineté et la sécurité et le contrôle des frontières, l'intégration économique et la conciliation des objectifs économiques et humanitaires.

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Acronyms

ACCES Accessible Community Counseling and Employment Services	
ACIEHP Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals	
BE Bridging education	
CASIP Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally Trained Persons	
CCPE Canadian Council of Professional Engineers	
CEGEP Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel	
CICIC Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials	
CIITE Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment	
CLB Canadian Language Benchmarks	
CMA Census metropolitan area	
COIA Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement	
CONNECT College of Ontario Network for Education and Training	
COSTI Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane	
ELT Enhanced Language Training	
ESL English as a second language	
<i>FARPA Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act</i>	
FC2I From Consideration to Integration	
FCR Foreign Credential Recognition [Program]	
FCRO Foreign Credentials Referral Office	
GEO Global Experience Ontario	
GTA Greater Toronto Area	
HRSDC Human Resources and Social Development Canada	
	IBEW International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
	IMG International Medical Graduates
	ISAP Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
	JVS Jewish Vocational Service
	LASI Local Agencies Serving Immigrants
	LINC Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada
	NeCTAR Newcomers Connecting to Trades Apprenticeship Resources
	NOC National Occupational Classification
	NSP Newcomer Settlement Program
	OCASI Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
	OISE/UT Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto
	ORA Ontario Regulators for Access
	PEO Professional Engineers Ontario
	PNP Provincial Nominee Program
	PROMPT Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades
	SME Small and medium-sized enterprise
	STIC Sector-Specific Terminology Information and Counselling
	TRIEC Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
	WES World Education Services
	WLA Workplace Language Assessment

Breaking Down Barriers to Labour Market Integration of Newcomers in Toronto

Nan Weiner

Introduction

Immigrants have been settling in Canada for centuries. The pace of their integration into Canadian society has depended on many factors, but one constant has been their ability to earn a living. This can be most challenging for immigrants who arrive as adults and are ready and willing to enter the labour force immediately. Their experience differs from those of other adult immigrants who do not join the labour force and immigrants who arrive as children and are educated and socialized within the Canadian school system before entering the labour force. The focus of this paper will be on those recent immigrants who seek to join the labour force immediately upon arrival. Successful integration includes the ability to find work that uses one's education, training and experience and provides compensation commensurate with one's human capital. Economic integration therefore requires that an "immigrant's economic performance converges toward that of their native born counterparts" (Hum and Simpson 2004, 47).

Immigrants' integration into the Canadian labour force is critical to both individual immigrants' well-being and the general economy. Without immigrants there will eventually be no growth in the size of Canada's labour force (and population) and as a result little or no economic growth without substantial increases in productivity. From 1991 to 2001 labour force growth due to immigration was 70 percent for Canada, 97 percent for Ontario and 132 percent for Toronto (Lochhead 2003, 2). In the near future, all of Canada's net labour force growth will be due to immigration (Lochhead and Mackenzie 2005, 104). In fact, some in the private sector argue that the level of immigration will have to be increased to between 300,000 and 400,000 newcomers each year, from the current level of 250,000, to help the Canadian economy grow (Nixon 2005).

The focus of this paper is on the programs and supports aimed specifically at helping newcomers to integrate into the Toronto labour market. Such programs may be directed at newcomers, employers or other organizations. Programs are typically sponsored by the federal or provincial governments, but other stakeholders are also involved – for example, credential assessment organizations, regulatory bodies, employers, educational organizations and community agencies, to name but a few. That the problem of integrating newcomers is being recognized is attested to by the many initiatives that were introduced while this paper was being written. They include new programs, new partnerships, the re-organization of responsibilities and new legislation. As the process is ongoing, a limitation of this paper is that when it was finalized (in winter 2007), some programs/services had not yet been fully implemented. A second limitation is that with so many new initiatives, it is difficult to critique their effectiveness at this early stage of their implementation. The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the public and private programs and services aimed at helping newcomers overcome the barriers they face and integrate into the Toronto labour force. Toronto refers to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and not just to the City of Toronto. It is important to bear this in mind, since the greatest growth in immigration has occurred in the municipalities surrounding the city, such as Markham, Mississauga and Brampton (Statistics Canada 2008, 56).

Immigration since the 1950s has largely been an urban experience.¹ According to the 2006 census, nearly two-thirds (62.9 percent) of immigrants live in the three largest cities, compared to only 27.1 percent of the Canadian born (Statistics Canada 2008, 48). In 2006, 69 percent of recent immigrants (those who arrived between 2001 and 2006) settled in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, compared to 40 percent of those who arrived between 1965 and 1971 (Murdie 2008, 3). The Toronto area is unique in that it surpasses all other North American cities with its foreign-born population (Statistics Canada 2008, 49). Comparing data from the 1971 and 2006 censuses, Murdie (2008, 2-3) found that the proportion of recent immigrants² settling in Toronto increased from 24 percent to 40 percent (though it was higher in 2001, at 43.1 percent); for Montreal the increase was from 10 to 15 percent, while for Vancouver it was from 6 to 14 percent. Moreover, data from the 2006 census for census metropolitan areas (CMAs) show that 45.7 percent

of the population of the Toronto CMA are immigrants, compared to 39.6 percent for Vancouver and 20.6 percent for Montreal (Statistics Canada 2008), while within the City of Toronto itself, 49 percent of the population is made up of immigrants (City of Toronto n.d.[1]). Two factors explain why Toronto has such a high proportion of immigrants. First, as noted, the greatest proportion of immigrants comes to Toronto; and second, a greater proportion of them remains in Toronto 11 to 15 years after arriving than is true of other cities (Hou 2005, 9). Over half of Toronto's newcomers (56.6 percent) are in their prime working years (aged 25-54) (Statistics Canada 2008, 51). However, it is interesting to note that the proportion of prime-working-age immigrants in Toronto is lower than in Montreal (64.6 percent) and Vancouver (57.2 percent) (Statistics Canada 2008).

Of the three classes of immigrants who come to Canada – the economic (59 percent), family reunification (29 percent) and refugee classes (11 percent) (Lochhead and Mackenzie 2005, 103) – those in the economic class are found in similar proportions in the three gateway cities: 70 percent in Toronto, 68 percent in Vancouver and 73 percent in Montreal (Statistics Canada 2003). This immigrant class includes skilled workers, investors, entrepreneurs and the self-employed, along with their dependents. The majority of recent immigrants differ from previous immigrants in some respects; two key characteristics are race and educational level. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of immigrants who came to Canada in the 1990s were members of visible minority groups,³ compared to 52 percent in the 1970s (Lochhead 2005, 36); in Toronto, almost 78 percent of recent immigrants are visible minorities (Grant and Sweetman 2004, 8).⁴ This reflects a change in the source countries of immigrants; currently, more than two-thirds (68.5 percent) of newcomers in Toronto are from five source countries: China, India, the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Statistics Canada 2008, 51). In terms of the level of education of immigrants, Toronto also leads the rest of the country. At 73 percent, the proportion of working-age immigrants with university degrees is higher than in any other major metropolitan areas except Ottawa-Gatineau, where the proportion is 74 percent; Montreal and Vancouver both have 67 percent (Statistics Canada 2006a, 38). The educational level of recent immigrants throughout the country is higher than that of the Canadian-born population. At least 90 percent of skilled applicants have a university degree (as do 68 percent

of their female dependents), while only 43 percent of the Canadian-born population are as highly educated (Lochhead and Mackenzie 2005, 104). The proportion of recent immigrants who have higher levels of education is greater than that of previous cohorts because of changes in Canadian immigration policy in the 1970s.

The effectiveness of the integration of Toronto's demographically diverse immigrants has been mixed. On the one hand, there is work in Toronto, as noted in a survey of over 2,000 businesses conducted on behalf of the Public Policy Forum (Enviro-nics Research Group 2004, 1). This is supported by a comparison of Toronto's employment rate with that of other major cities. The employment rate (the proportion of immigrants who were employed at specific points in time) tends to be higher in Toronto than in other cities, with the exception of Calgary (Statistics Canada 2006b, 40). In Toronto, immigrants typically find employment within six months of their arrival (72 percent in Toronto, compared to 70 percent nationally). On the other hand, fewer than half (41 percent) find work in their intended occupation, a proportion that is lower than that of all other municipalities except Vancouver (38 percent). This may explain in part why Toronto has the lowest proportion of prime-age immigrants (65 percent) who said that their experience in Canada had met or exceeded their expectations (the highest proportion was in Calgary, at 79 percent, while the proportions in Montreal were 68 percent and in Vancouver, 69 percent, the same as the national average) (Statistics Canada 2006b, 40).

In addition, Toronto had the highest proportion of prime-age newcomers who encountered problems in finding work (76 percent, compared to 71 percent

nationally) (Statistics Canada 2006b, 40). Clearly, recent immigrants are not integrating as well into the labour force as are non-immigrants nor as past immigrants who arrived before 1961 (table 1). On all the measures, immigrants who arrived in Toronto before 1961 are more similar to non-immigrants than immigrants who have arrived more recently.

The poor integration of newcomers has costs at both the individual and the economy-wide levels. The fact that, as seen in table 1, almost 30 percent of recent immigrants live in poverty represents a huge waste of human capital. Moreover, it has been estimated that the Canadian economy loses \$3.4 billion to \$5 billion a year because the human capital of immigrants is not recognized (Bloom and Grant 2001). In addition, using education as a key factor in admitting immigrants and then not utilizing that education can only have a negative effect on Canada's reputation in the growing global competition for immigrants.

Integration into the labour market, in its widest sense, can encompass everything from seeking work to getting hired, being fairly paid and being promoted. However, integration really begins with pre-job search issues. Problems typically faced by newcomers include language barriers, nonrecognition of qualifications, and lack of understanding of norms of the Canadian workplace. Responsibility for integration lies with governments, professional/occupational regulatory bodies, employers, unions, educational institutions, community agencies for immigrants and the individual newcomers themselves. In the past decade, and especially in recent years, there has been a growing recognition among these stakeholders of the problems faced by today's newcomers. The programs and services currently available to Toronto's newcomers to address the barriers they face is the focus of this paper. Sources used include

Table 1
Indicators of Labour Market Integration of Prime Working Age Male Immigrants and Non-immigrants, Toronto, 2001 (percent)

Labour market indicators	Non-immigrants	Immigrants who arrived	
		Before 1961	Between 1991 and 2000
Labour force participation rate	93.4	92.8	89.1
Employment rate	90.3	88.6	82.4
Unemployment rate	3.4	4.6	7.5
Average full-time, full-year employment income	\$61,513	\$61,657	\$41,678 ²
Proportion below low income cut-off	7.4	7.2	29.5

Source: Based on Grant and Sweetman (2004, 12).

¹ Similar patterns are found for women (see Grant and Sweetman 2004, table 6, 13).

² While the most recent immigrants are doing less well than pre-1961 immigrants, Warman and Worswick (2004, 82) note that there has not been a pattern of steady decline. Rather, in Toronto and some smaller cities there has been a pronounced "bounce-back" effect. That is, the 1996-2000 cohort performed better in terms of earnings shortly after arriving than the 1991-95 cohort. Toronto was the only one of the three gateway cities where this happened.

academic and professional publications, the Web sites of governments and of programs and services for immigrants, conference lectures and interviews with stakeholders. Based on these sources, the next section discusses the main barriers faced by newcomers. This is followed by an examination of programs and services designed to redress the barriers affecting immigrants and employers in Toronto. The final section provides a general assessment of the current situation and outlines some policy suggestions to improve labour market integration. The paper focuses only on employment issues and not on the problems related to entrepreneurship.⁵

Labour Market Barriers Faced by Newcomers

Though recent immigrants have higher educational levels than immigrants in the past and than the Canadian-born, they are not doing as well on the measures of economic integration shown in table 1 – that is, they are experiencing lower earnings and labour force participation rates, and higher rates of unemployment and under-employment (Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005; Schellenberg and Hou 2005; Reitz 2001; Reitz 2005; Reitz 2006; Grant and Sweetman 2004; Simpson and Hum 2004). Specifically, a quarter of recent immigrants in Canada with a university degree who were employed between 1991 and 2001 had a job requiring no more than a high school education; moreover, the under-employed immigrants were paid salaries substantially below those of native-born Canadians in the same occupations (Reitz 2006, 23). International education and work experience are discounted relative to Canadian education and experience, by 30 percent and 66 percent, respectively (Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005, 14). In addition, Picot, Hou and Coulombe (2007) note that the proportion of immigrants earning a low income is more than twice that of the native-born – 32.9 percent compared to 14.3 percent. For full-time, full-year male workers, Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) find that a part of the decline in entry-level earnings is attributable to the fact that often the foreign experience of newcomers is not valued in Canada. Another part of the decline is associated with the changes in immigrants' countries of origin resulting in problems like language barriers. Undoubtedly a part of the decline is also due to the broader deterioration in entry earnings also experi-

enced by Canadian-born labour market entrants. These findings are reinforced by the fact that immigrants educated in Canada, compared to newcomers, have quite high economic returns to their credentials; immigrants who arrive at a young age have economic outcomes similar to or better than those of the Canadian-born (Grant and Sweetman 2004, 17).

Though the returns to their credentials are lower, it is likely that recent immigrants have higher expectations than their predecessors. Given their higher level of education, recent newcomers are less likely to be focused on the idea that the purpose of immigration is to benefit their children. Thus, knowledge workers come with human capital they do not want to waste, but human capital is being wasted nonetheless. A smaller proportion of recent immigrants with a bachelor's degree get jobs requiring that educational level than previous groups of immigrants (Reitz 2006, 33). Specifically, in 1996 only 35 percent of recently arrived immigrant men (arriving in last five years) with a bachelor's degree found work in knowledge occupations compared to 59 percent of native-born men; the figures for women are 28 percent and 57 percent, respectively (Reitz 2006, 33).

There is consensus about the main barriers to immigrants' labour market integration (Public Policy Forum 2006, 45; Wayland 2006; Toronto Training Board 2006; Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005; Birjandian 2005, 24; Nixon 2005, 18; Lochhead and Mackenzie 2005, 104; Environics Research Group 2004; TRIEC 2004, 3; Goldberg 2002; Centre for Research and Education in Human Services 2001, 7). These barriers are lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience; shortcomings in language and communication skills, particularly those specific to the workplace (e.g., occupational jargon); employers' requirement for Canadian experience; and discrimination.

A number of sources have collected information about the perceived barriers faced by immigrants. The results of four studies are provided in table 2. The first two studies (Statistics Canada 2005 and 2006b) interviewed immigrants; the TRIEC (2004) study collected information from a sample of newcomers and people born in Canada; while the Lochhead (2003) study surveyed public- and private-sector managers on their hiring plans. Table 2 indicates the proportion of respondents in each sample who indicated that a particular barrier was problematic. While newcomers rate the requirement for Canadian experience as the greatest barrier, Canadian-born individuals and employers are more likely to cite language issues. The credential-recognition

Table 2
Results of Surveys of Barriers Perceived by Male and Female Immigrants, Non-immigrants and Employers as Preventing Entry into the Workforce, Toronto and Canada, 2003–06 (percent)

Barrier	Prime working-age immigrants		Skilled workers (immigrants) who identified at least one problem during their job search	Newcomers ¹	All GTA residents	Employers who expect to hire
	Toronto	Canada	Canada	Toronto		
	Proportion who see this as a barrier					
Credential recognition or assessment	23	21	23	26	30	52
Language	13	15	9	31	46	65
Canadian experience required	29	26	26	34	13	46
Cultural difficulties	n/a	n/a	n/a	19	8	33
Racism	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	14	n/a
Survey	Statistics Canada (2006b, 38) ²		Statistics Canada (2005, 11) ³	TRIEC (2004, 3) ⁴		Lochhead (2003, 18) ⁵

¹ In Canada for two to five years.
² Sample: 5,994 respondents aged 24–44 years. Data from second wave of Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. Data was collected through interviews.
³ Sample: 46,500 prime working-age immigrants who looked for employment 6 to 24 months after landing. Data from second wave of Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada collected via interviews.
⁴ Sample: randomly selected sample of 1,000 residing in GTA who were asked what they thought were the two or three most difficult challenges that skilled immigrants face in finding employment.
⁵ Sample: private and public sector managers (409 private sector and 291 public sector managers).

problem was noted as the second most prominent barrier by most of the respondent groups. Each of the four barriers is discussed in turn below.

Assessment and recognition of foreign credentials and experience

Credentialing and assessment issues are not new, but they have become more critical in recent times because of the growing number of knowledge workers among recent immigrants. Credentialing is the act of certifying that someone has the skills and has passed all the requirements to be in a regulated profession (e.g., engineers, lawyers, nurses, physicians, etc.). “Assessment” is a more general evaluation of a person’s level of knowledge (or language level or educational equivalencies). Assessment may be used in the credentialing process or to ascertain a person’s level of experience – for non-regulated occupations, for instance. To help understand credentialing and assessment, it is useful to separate jobs into three categories based on the level of regulation. The vast majority of jobs – about 80 to 85 percent – are in non-regulated occupations (e.g., much of manufacturing, retail, and tourism) (HRSDC n.d.[1]); the second category consists of trades (e.g., carpenters and hairstylists) that require community college or

apprenticeship training and certification; regulated professions make up the third category. In Ontario there are 141 trades, of which 20 require mandatory certification, and there are 34 regulated professions. While much of the credential recognition problem focuses on regulated professions that tend to require higher levels of education, in the GTA more jobs require college and apprenticeship training than university education (Toronto Training Board 2006 2).⁶ In addition, immigrants in non-regulated occupations earn relatively less, compared to native-born Canadians, than do those in the professions. That is, immigrants in non-regulated occupations earn 25 percent to 34 percent less than native-born Canadians in these occupations, while immigrants in knowledge professions earn 12 percent to 15 percent less than their Canadian-born counterparts (Reitz 2006, 33). Thus the credential recognition and assessment barrier needs to be redressed in all three categories of jobs. For simplicity’s sake, the term “credential recognition” is used in the broad sense in this study, referring to both credential recognition, as defined here, and assessment.

In regulated trades and professions Canadian standards must be met through credentialing, which is a provincial responsibility administered through regulatory or professional organizations. At the same time,

however, the decision as to which immigrants may be admitted into the country is made by the federal government on behalf of all the provinces except Quebec, which makes its own selection decisions. Thus skilled immigrants are unlikely to realize that the positive assessment of their credentials made at the federal level for immigration purposes is not matched by a similar assessment for work purposes at the provincial level. This problem is compounded by the fact that immigrants may not have all the documents needed to support their credentials (Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005, 17-18).

Immigrant groups have identified the following issues related to credentialing in regulated professions (Cullingworth and Bambrah 2004, 39): non-recognition of credentials and experience; licensing fees and examinations; requirements for training and upgrading; lack of opportunities and financial support for upgrading; limited public accountability requirements for regulatory bodies; lack of a central coordinating agency or clearly accessible information to assist in the process of accessing professions and trades; gaps in employment support services; lack of policy coordination among levels of governments and their various departments; the requirement for Canadian experience to gain credentials.

From the perspective of employers, three problems are related to credential recognition. First, employers may be reluctant to hire newcomers, either because they cannot assess their credentials and are unaware of the existence of provincial credential assessment agencies, or because they choose not to use the agencies' services (Sangster 2001). Second, employers may find that there are too many organizations assessing credentials, each with a somewhat different purpose, which can decrease their value to employers (Alboim 2003, 3); for instance, colleges and universities might do an assessment for educational purposes. Third, employers may find that licensing processes are too restrictive (particularly in the cases of the health and engineering fields) and that too much weight is being placed on paper credentials rather than on experience (Sangster 2001), thus failing to meet their needs. These same three problems can be a source of frustration for newcomers as well.

Regulatory bodies and newcomers do not have the same perspective: regulatory bodies want to ensure everyone they license is competent, while immigrants want everyone competent to be licensed (Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005, 15; Cullingworth and Bambrah 2004, 39). In addition, from the regulatory

bodies' perspective, ensuring a proper assessment of qualifications from such a diverse set of sources is a huge challenge. From the point of view of newcomers, issues related specifically to apprenticeship and the trades include the fact that there are two approaches to obtaining a trade certificate: the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act* is competency based and provides employers with some flexibility in terms of how quickly they move an apprentice through the process, while the industry-based approach requires that every apprentice work a certain number of hours, regardless of how much experience the individual actually has. Newcomers are typically older than most apprentices, a fact that can have two negative consequences from the newcomers' point of view: (1) employers may be reluctant to hire older workers, and (2) apprenticeship training is typically designed for the young (Lior and Wortsman 2006, 14).

Language skills

As noted, the source countries of immigrants to Canada have changed. This has had important consequences regarding language. In Toronto, all of the immigrants who arrived prior to 1961 spoke one of the two official languages, with about 93 percent speaking that language (or both) at home. Of those arriving in the 1990s, the vast majority (approximately 95 percent) spoke one of the official languages, but almost two-thirds (64 percent) do not speak English or French at home (Grant and Sweetman 2004, 8). Yet, the current workplace requires greater literacy and language skills and, as noted, a greater number of recent immigrants are knowledge workers in sectors where greater language skills are required, as contrasted with earlier immigrants, who were more likely to work in farming, mining, forestry and other semi-skilled types of work.

Given the high level of human capital among immigrants, language proficiency issues have become more complex. While skilled applicants for immigration are encouraged to take a test from an approved testing service, work-related language proficiency cannot be tested this way, given the multitude of different working environments. In addition, typically language proficiency tests do not measure the types of speaking and listening skills that can be critical for education and work-related situations (Radford 2006). Indeed, communication skills, more than simply language skills, are critical for knowledge workers. While the ability of immigrants to speak other languages can be a benefit for an

employer, it cannot compensate for an inability to communicate verbally and in writing with colleagues within the workplace.

Language barriers are more of a problem for women than men. In their study of Southeast Asian female refugees, Beiser and Hou (2000) found that women were far less likely than men to speak English upon arrival and that this linguistic disadvantage remained a decade later. The study also found that while women tended to benefit more from opportunities such as English as a second language (ESL) classes, they had fewer opportunities to attend such classes. English-language ability was correlated with being active in the labour market and the relationship was stronger for women than for men.

Employers' requirement for Canadian experience

Employers' requirement for Canadian experience can be deconstructed into four different elements: knowledge about the Canadian labour market, institutions and ways of doing business; actual knowledge or experience needed to work in Canadian jobs; acculturation to Canada and the Canadian workplace; and a means of discriminating against newcomers. One or more of these elements may be the operating motive when newcomers are told by employers they need Canadian experience. Discrimination is discussed below, while actual technical experience falls under credential recognition. This leaves non-technical workplace knowledge and acculturation to be discussed here. Canadian norms with respect to the following may not be well understood by immigrants: how to obtain employment; the culture of Canadian workplaces; formal and informal rules may differ from those the immigrants are accustomed to and are often difficult for Canadian employers to explain to newcomers; specific codes of behaviour within particular professions; and how to obtain information about the labour market situation in Canada (for example, accreditation).

Knowledge about the Canadian labour market includes job search knowledge, but for immigrants the requirements are broader. Even before arriving in Canada, prospective immigrants need information about the Canadian labour market and a realistic picture of the demand for their skills and what it will take for them to get credentialed (if necessary); they also need a means to self-assess their education and experience for job search purposes. As noted, many newcomers arrive with the expectation that since they have been accepted as immigrants, employers will rec-

ognize their education and work experience. Often, when employers use the "Canadian experience required" barrier, it is because they assume newcomers have an insufficient understanding of the culture and norms of the Canadian workplace. From the employer's perspective, uncertainty is undesirable and hiring any new employee contains many unknowns. Employers may therefore feel more comfortable if they can assume that their new employee is familiar with the culture of Canadian workplaces. That familiarity is often assessed through the job selection process in the most cursory manner: if the prospective employee has attended school in Canada, worked in Canada (even in a short-term position) or been involved in volunteering, it is assumed that he or she has learned at least the basic Canadian norms.

Many employers would be hard-pressed to describe exactly what an understanding of Canadian culture entails, but they assume (correctly, in varying degrees) that immigrants typically do not fully possess it. In addition, employers do not see it as their responsibility to teach immigrants Canadian norms, though they may want to reap the benefits of immigration. A critical area of misunderstanding is that of communication, where there are many cultural differences. For example, those familiar with North American norms know that "Hello, how are you?" is not a question, even though it sounds like a question. Newcomers may find Canadian co-workers rude because they ask this question but do not wait to hear the answer. Something as small as this can set a pattern that leads to stereotyping and conflict. In addition, differing cultural values can affect the ways in which men and women interact in the workplace (Environics Research Group 2004).

What needs to be sorted out when employers require Canadian experience, is what it is they really need. Is it knowledge of specific legislation and codes of conduct and ethics, or is it more an issue of socialization into the Canadian workplace? Understanding the problem is key to identifying the solutions. Specific facts can be taught and tested, but socialization into the "Canadian way" requires identification of that elusive thing, "Canadian culture." There is a need for cultural awareness training (Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2005, 7) for all stakeholders (immigrants, non-immigrants, supervisors/managers) in order to increase real understanding and inclusiveness within workplaces. At a minimum, such training should include basic Canadian workplace norms (e.g., what it means to be on time), cross-cultural communication and cultural literacy (Weiner 1993).

Socialization, as used here, refers to the process of learning the norms, values and appropriate behaviours

of workplace culture. Success in most workplaces requires both technical knowledge and what has been referred to as “informal behaviours.” Education and work experience provide technical knowledge (e.g., accounting principles for an accountant) while socialization educates employees about the informal behaviours. Thus socialization helps newcomers to integrate into Canadian workplaces.

Discrimination

All newcomers may face discrimination (Wayland 2006) due to prejudice against immigrants. Those who are members of a visible minority may face additional discrimination in the form of racism. Given that since the 1950s immigrants have increasingly been people of colour, in the eyes of many, “immigrant” and “visible minority” have become almost synonymous, blurring the line between anti-immigrant discrimination and racism. In fact, 70.6 percent of Toronto’s immigrant population is now made up of visible minorities – less than Vancouver’s 77.2 percent, but higher than Montreal’s 62.1 percent (Grant and Sweetman 2004, 8). Discrimination is a critical issue in integrating newcomers into workplaces, but a full discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, since there are no government programs specifically designed to redress discrimination against immigrants. Rather, immigrants are covered by general anti-discrimination laws and programs, mentioned later in this section.

A 2006 decision by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal is directly related to immigrant issues. In *Sangha vs. Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board*, the tribunal decided that an immigrant (visible minority) candidate who was not hired because he was “overqualified” for the job had been discriminated against. Based on expert testimony, the tribunal noted that “the experience of applying for a job for which one is overqualified...is disproportionately an immigrant experience” (par. 200), and ordered the employer to cease using any policy or practice that automatically disqualified an overqualified visible minority immigrant candidate (par. 213). Spending some time in a job for which they are overqualified is seen as an acceptable way for newcomers to eventually move into positions commensurate with their skills (Public Policy Forum 2006, 33; Baklid 2004). Immigrants were consistently twice as likely to be under-employed (overqualified) as Canadian-born employees (Li, Gervais and Duval 2006).

When considering discrimination against immigrants, it is important to remember that women face additional barriers in some situations because of their gender. Such discrimination may begin during the immigration process, when men are typically listed as heads of households (i.e., principal applicants), even though the household may be headed jointly or by the woman. Women’s role as “dependents” often does not accurately describe their attachment to the labour market but it does detract from their getting the services they may need, such as language training (Klimt 2003). One study found, for example, that wives tended to work longer hours to support their families because immigrant families are unable to borrow money in the first years after arriving in Canada, even when their husbands are working full-time (Worswick 1999). Female immigrants may also face additional barriers if they work in occupations that are non-traditional for women in Canada but are typical for women in their country of origin.

Programs directed at the first three barriers are discussed in the next section. Because laws against discrimination are not aimed only at newcomers, they are simply noted here. These laws (and programs) include the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution, human rights legislation (federal and Ontario), the *Employment Equity Act*, the federal Contractors Program, and Ontario’s pay equity legislation. They are intended to address both direct and systemic discrimination. In addition, the Government of Canada has a five-year, \$56 million Action Plan Against Racism to fight discrimination and stereotyping; this is a general program that includes employment but is targeted at broader societal issues as well (Canadian Heritage 2005). Finally, the City of Toronto (2003) has a “Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination.”

Programs and Services to Address Labour Market Barriers

This section discusses programs and services available to newcomers in Toronto to address the first three barriers – credential recognition, workplace language proficiency and Canadian employers’ requirement for experience. Before discussing programs and services directed at the three barriers, two other issues must be addressed: partnerships between the various stakeholders, and the role of the City of Toronto in immigration issues.

Partnerships

Clearly, many stakeholders are needed to ensure the efficient and effective integration of newcomers. Potential stakeholders include all three levels of government, professional regulatory bodies, colleges and universities, employers (through their associations and individually), unions, community-based immigrant organizations and newcomers themselves. It is critical that there be partnerships among the three levels of government. An important development in this regard is the Canada–Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005c), which was signed in November 2005. This agreement recognizes the importance of the Ontario government in immigration matters for those who settle in the province. In addition, a role for the City of Toronto was established through the Canada–Ontario–Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006). The agreement and the memorandum of understanding set out mechanisms allowing the three levels of government to discuss immigration and settlement issues in an effort to meet their various objectives. Programs are to be designed for local situations. The agreement allocates \$920 million in new immigration funding over five years – about 30 percent for labour market integration throughout the province, and the rest for non-employment settlement matters such as housing and language training. This will increase federal funding from about \$800 per immigrant to \$3,400.⁷ Programs covered by the agreement that are relevant to the workplace are discussed later on in this paper.

Intergovernmental collaboration is also facilitated by the Federal–Provincial–Territorial Working Group on Access to Professions and Trades, which includes representatives of the governments as well as representatives of the provincial assessment services, either as members or as observers. The mandate of the working group is to share information and best practices, co-ordinate joint federal–provincial–territorial action on access to profession and trade initiatives, encourage the removal of access barriers, and support initiatives that facilitate the integration of immigrants into the labour market. Within Ontario a working group has been established to bring together provincial ministries working with regulatory bodies and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to better coordinate all the programs and services.

There are also partnerships bringing together government and immigrant groups, community organizations, regulatory bodies and unions. Five examples of various kinds of partnership are described here.

- Capacity Canada is a national policy roundtable of internationally educated professionals helping to build the capacities of provincial networks, associations and organizations of immigrant professionals (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services 2006).
- The Newcomer Labour Market Partnership is made up of 28 Canadian community organizations providing employment preparation programs for immigrants and refugees; 11 of the 28 agencies are located in Toronto.
- Ontario Regulators for Access, an association of 12 of the 38 self-regulating bodies in Ontario, is working on improving access for internationally trained professionals while maintaining standards.
- Teach in Ontario – a partnership between a regulatory body (the Ontario College of Teachers), a union (the Ontario Teachers Federation) and three community agencies (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants [LASI] World Skills in the Ottawa area, Skills for Change and Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women) – provides four types of services in Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor: information and counselling, assistance with documentation, a six-week employment preparation course and language upgrading courses.
- The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) brings together employers, labour, regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions, assessment services, community agencies and all three levels of government. TRIEC is a unique organization designed to find and implement local solutions to integrate immigrants into the Greater Toronto labour force. The organization focuses primarily on employers.

The very process of establishing partnerships can be helpful. Getting different stakeholders together has been found to reduce misconceptions and to be a good way to convey complex information (Internationally Trained Workers Project 2004, 15). However, much more needs to be done in forming partnerships among all the various stakeholders (Alboim 2003, 8). Many of the programs/services discussed throughout this paper involve partnerships.

The role of the City of Toronto

While Toronto receives more immigrants than any other city, the city has not, until recently, been involved in

intergovernmental discussions on the issue of immigration; these discussions have now been formalized by COIA. However, the municipal government has had an important impact on integration. While the city does not provide direct settlement services to immigrants, it does provide municipal services (such as libraries, public health clinics, etc.) that incorporate the needs of immigrants into their service delivery. The city has recently introduced a Web site for immigrants that provides links to government and community agency Web sites (City of Toronto n.d.[2]).

In a very important way, the city sets the tone and climate for the integration of newcomers. Graham and Phillips (2006) assessed Toronto's effectiveness with respect to diversity, which includes more than immigration (e.g., Aboriginal peoples, gays and lesbians). They found that Toronto's slogan, "Diversity our Strength," is backed up by a real commitment on the part of the municipal government and the voluntary and private sectors to integrate the city's immigrants. Graham and Phillips see Toronto as being "proactively multicultural" in terms of making multiculturalism work rather than just being a demographic statistic (17-18). Specifically, Toronto has provided "political leadership, mobilizing community resources and establishing multiculturalism-friendly governance structures – while dealing in a very focused way with troubling issues" (18).

Toronto is the only municipality in Canada to have a formal immigrant and settlement policy framework, established in 2001 (18-19). The framework states that the city will "work with all other orders of government, all sectors that make up the economic, social and cultural web of the city and immigrants to ensure that it continues to (a) attract newcomers; and (b) provide supports to enable them to develop a sense of identity and belonging and fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the City" (City of Toronto 2001). In 2005 the city released a progress report indicating that the implementation of the framework had been successful. The role of the City of Toronto has been strengthened by the *Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act* (also known as the *City of Toronto Act*), which provides the city with greater powers, including the power to enter into agreements with the federal government, and recognizes that the province and the city share policy interests in many areas (the Act, passed in mid-2006, came into force in January 2007).

Credentialing and assessment

Before discussing formal credentialing for regulated professions and trades, it is useful to recall that most jobs are in non-regulated occupations. Also, there are indications that immigrants face the greatest credential recognition difficulties in the non-regulated sector (Public Policy Forum 2006, 34). Regulated and non-regulated jobs are covered by the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Under COIA, Ontario has established a pilot PNP and a Temporary Foreign Worker Program, which enable the province to select immigrants on the basis of their ability to contribute to the Ontario economy. Ontario is the last province to get a PNP (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration n.d.[1]). This program allows potential immigrants and immigrants studying in Canada to be fast-tracked through the immigration process if they have been pre-screened by an Ontario employer who wants to hire them for a permanent full-time job. In the first year of the program, 500 individuals (and their families) are expected to be nominated. Only half of those nominees can get jobs in the GTA, while the other half have been reserved for employers outside the GTA. The program covers 20 occupations, including professionals (pharmacists, registered nurses, university professors) and skilled tradespeople in manufacturing (machinists and industrial electricians) and construction (carpenters and bricklayers). The March 2007 federal budget provided \$50.5 million over two years for all of Canada for the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. New measures will include expanding the online application system, maintaining lists of occupations where there are known shortages of workers and processing work permits more quickly.

With respect to formal credentialing, in Ontario there are approximately 34 regulatory bodies responsible for 38 professions. In 2003, 91 percent of immigrants who self-identified as professionals were covered by 10 regulatory bodies encompassing engineers, engineering technicians and technologists, accountants, teachers, pharmacists, nurses, medical laboratory technologists, physicians and surgeons, architects and veterinarians (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005).

Ontario legislation requiring a fair, transparent and expedient assessment of immigrants' credentials became effective on March 1, 2007. The *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act (FARPA)* has three components. The first is to promote a fair and transparent process by informing applicants of standards, the tim-

ing for review and fees. Applicants are to be provided with a written reason if they are not accepted, and there is to be an appeal process.⁸ In addition, it is recognized that some internationally trained professionals cannot obtain their documents from their country of origin for reasons beyond their control, and procedures will be established to use alternative sources of information⁹ and to ensure that those making the decisions are trained and knowledgeable. The second component is the appointment of a fairness commissioner to assess and oversee auditing and compliance with the legislation to ensure that regulatory bodies treat all applicants fairly. Regulatory bodies will submit annual reports to the commissioner, who will ensure that their admission practices are fair. In addition, the commissioner can audit practices of regulatory bodies every three years, or as needed. Finally, an access centre for internationally trained individuals will be established. The centre is to be a one-stop access point that will provide a range of services to internationally trained individuals, employers and newcomer service agencies. Services would also be available via email, online and by phone.

While *FARPA* is the most direct effort to change credential assessment, there are many other federal and provincial efforts aimed at solving the credential recognition problem. Before discussing these, it is useful to review this complex barrier. Some of the problems associated with it include lack of understanding of the separation of federal and provincial responsibilities related to immigration and the regulation of professions; not knowing how to obtain necessary licenses or have credentials recognized; the fact that regulatory bodies may be too restrictive, given the needs of employers; the fact that employers are unaware of credentialing services; and inconsistencies within and across provinces.

The remainder of this section focuses on the programs and services put in place to deal with the credential recognition barrier by the federal and Ontario governments.

*Federal efforts*¹⁰

Neither the federal nor the Ontario government is directly involved in assessment and credentialing, as this is done by professional/regulatory bodies. The federal government's role is to facilitate by (1) providing information to help newcomers have their foreign credentials recognized; (2) encouraging others to identify solutions; (3) supporting assessments; and (4) facilitating entry into specific occupations. Table 3

presents a summary of federal programs and services dealing with barriers (credential recognition and language) to newcomers' labour market integration.

Recently, Ottawa established the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO), which provides information on the Canadian labour market and credential assessment via the internet, by telephone and in person; these services, which in the Toronto area are offered at Service Canada centres, began in May 2007.¹¹ FCRO was allocated \$32 million for five years. Over 400,000 people have visited its Web site since it was established, and 20,000 more have called or visited the office in person.¹² The Work in Canada tool enables newcomers (and all others) to obtain information on their occupation (via four-digit National Occupational Classification codes). While it is expected that the tool will become more useful over time, it will always be somewhat limited because it is based on occupations rather than job information¹³ – something that is not made clear on the Web site. The information provided deals with the following subjects: main duties; job and skill requirements; wages; outlook and prospects (typically focused on the provincial rather than the local level, but providing useful, easy-to-understand information about the growth of occupations); job opportunities (limited to actual job openings listed in Canada's National Job Bank); training information; associations and unions; and language assistance.

To facilitate immigration from the three most important source countries – India, China and the Philippines – Citizenship and Immigration Canada has opened offices in these countries, where staff help prospective immigrants to avail themselves of the necessary information and processes related to credential recognition and immigration in general (FCRO 2007b).

While the FCRO is designed to provide clear information about how newcomers can get their credentials assessed, the Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Program is intended to improve foreign credential recognition processes (FCRO 2007a). The FCR Program was envisioned as early as 2003-04¹⁴ to foster the development of consistent, national approaches to credentialing. The program was designed to support the "development of tools and processes to assess and recognize of foreign credentials" (Treasury Board Secretariat n.d.[2]). Program funds are provided to sector councils, cross-sectoral councils, national consortia, not-for-profit organizations, professional associations, industry groups, unions, regulatory bodies, municipal governments, provincial and territorial governments, public health institutions, school boards, universities, colleges, CEGEPs and ad hoc associations.

The funds are for them to engage in research and analysis, develop tools and systems to access credentials, disseminate information and develop partnerships (HRSDC n.d.[1]). For non-regulated occupations (e.g., aviation maintenance and tourism), the FCR Program will fund projects seeking to find ways of recognizing the skills and work experience of internationally trained individuals and to increase employers' awareness of credential recognition issues (HRSDC n.d.[2]).

The FCR Program initially targeted three occupations – physicians, nurses and engineers – but this was later expanded to seven health-related occupations (e.g., physiotherapy and cardiology technology) and architecture occupations (HRSDC 2007a). Funding was granted for 66 projects between 2003 and 2006. Program funding has been renewed to a grand total of \$73 million for an additional six-year period from 2007 to 2012 (FCRO 2007a, 2007b). Some examples of projects funded with FCR funds are the development of a database of foreign institutions offering degrees in engineering (Canadian Council of Professional Engineers project); the identification of ways to accelerate the integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour force; bringing together post-secondary educators, sector councils, various levels of government and immigrant-serving agencies (Association of Canadian Community Colleges project); research to support the development of a foreign credentials recognition system for non-regulated professions; expansion of The DayPlanner, a tool for recent immigrants that provides information on foreign credentials assessment, the Canadian labour market, and career development; the Potential to Prosperity project, targeted at newcomers with engineering credentials to provide them with information related to credential assessment and recognition and to help employers verify and assess the credentials of newcomers and assist in the integration of newcomers into the Canadian workforce; and a grant of \$4.5 million to the Association of Canadian Community Colleges to provide information services in China, India and the Philippines with a view to improving labour market outcomes for skilled-worker-class immigrants by helping them prepare for integration while completing the immigration process (FCRO 2007b).

An initial evaluation of the FCR Program in early 2007 showed that it is on track, that the use of partnerships is effective but that the program needs better performance measurements and better communication of the projects funded (HRSDC 2007a).

The federal government has provided approximately \$10 million to Ontario for four years (on the basis

of COIA) to develop on-line content, tools and services designed to help immigrants integrate both socially and economically (FCRO 2007a). Linkages between the provinces and immigration, settlements, employment and other relevant Web sites are encouraged.

A general means of assessing internationally trained immigrants for non-regulated jobs is provided by a framework program called Canadian Language Benchmarks/Essential Skills in the Workplace (Public Policy Forum 2006, 24). The framework uses nine essential skills – reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, and computer use – to describe each of the occupations in the National Occupational Classification (HRSDC n.d.[3]). Such assessment techniques, which focus on what an individual knows rather than on their formal educational credentials or years of experience, are vital for non-regulated jobs, for two reasons. First, they facilitate the identification of what internationally trained individuals know and are able to use immediately on a job; second, they help identify any additional education or training gaps (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development n.d.). Ways to fill in such education/training gaps are being studied under the Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) project, along with other approaches that Ontario colleges can take to become more responsive to the needs of internationally trained immigrants.

In addition, the federal government is involved in programs aimed at integrating internationally educated immigrants into two specific professional fields – health care and engineering. The Internationally Trained Workers Initiative (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005b) is a program to assist more than 2,000 internationally educated health-care professionals (spending \$75 million over five years, starting in 2005, to assess the credentials of 1,000 physicians, 800 nurses and 500 other regulated health-care professionals). The program falls under one of the objectives of the Ten-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, which all first ministers signed in September 2004. The initiative includes a national Web site to help international medical graduates prepare to become licensed to practice in Canada. A national credential verification agency is to be established by the Medical Council of Canada to provide a single national verification process. The Canadian post M.D. education registry is to create a pan-Canadian database with information about international medical graduates to

Table 3 Federal Programs and Services to Help Newcomers Overcome Barriers To Labour Market Integration			
Program/office	Purpose	Agency/funding	Approximate number of users
Credential recognition			
Foreign Credential Recognition program	Funds stakeholders to implement projects that will facilitate the assessment and recognition of qualifications acquired outside Canada	HRSDC, \$73 million for 6 years (2007-12)	Information not compiled by HRSDC
Foreign Credentials Referral Office	Provides information on labour market and credential assessment at Service Canada centres	CIC, \$32 million for first 5 years (announced May 24, 2007)	Since 2007, the Web site has had 400,000 visits, and 20,000 people telephoned or visited the office (as of May 2008)
Canadian Language Benchmarks/Essential Skills in the Workplace	Describes occupations in National Occupational Classification in terms of 9 essential skills ¹	HRSDC, approximately \$40 million	n/a
Internationally Trained Workers Initiative	Assesses credentials of health care professionals	CIC, \$75 million over 5 years (announced April 25, 2005)	Expected to assist more than 2,000
From Consideration to Integration	Helps 12 regulatory bodies and other organizations (such as universities) improve licensing process for foreign trained engineers	HRSDC; funding to Canadian Council of Professional Engineers \$2.9 million (total) (launched January 2003)	12 engineering regulatory bodies and universities have improved licensing process for foreign-trained engineers
Language support			
Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada	Provides basic language training	CIC, \$140 million annually	50,000 annually (outside Quebec)
Enhanced Language Training	Provides language training geared specifically to various occupations plus some labour market support (e.g., workplace culture)	CIC; \$20 million per year for Canada; \$3.4 million for 2 years for Ontario (announced January 20, 2005)	1,300 in Ontario
Joint Canada-Ontario programs			
Canada-Ontario Immigrant Agreement (COIA)	Develops mechanisms for all three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – to discuss immigration and settlement issues and find local solutions. For instance, the province will develop on-line content, tools and services to help immigrants integrate both socially and economically	\$920 million over 2005-10; 30 percent for labour market integration throughout Ontario; agreement signed November 2005	n/a
Source: Documents and Web sites of the organizations, telephone conversations with officers from the federal government and community organizations.			
¹ This program is not only for immigrants.			

improve planning for the assessment, training and integration of these graduates.

In the engineering field, HRSDC is providing funding for all phases of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) project From Consideration to Integration (FC2I), which addresses the barriers faced by international trained engineers. Begun in January 2003, FC2I is to be accomplished in three phases. Phase I involved gaining an understanding of internationally

trained engineers' experience, examining provincial and territorial engineering licensing procedures, and learning from those who assist international trained engineers in their efforts to become integrated. Phase II examined licensing and a means to "make the licensing process more logical, comprehensible, consistent, defensible, and transparent to international engineering graduates and other stakeholders" (Canadian Council of Professional Engineers n.d.[2]). Phase III is implementing the 17 rec-

ommendations that resulted from phase II (Public Policy Forum 2006, 24).

Ontario efforts

Each year, 120,000 immigrants settle in Ontario. Approximately 61 percent (73,000) are adults between the ages of 25 and 64; of these adults, approximately 70 percent (51,000) are highly skilled and have post-secondary education or training. Of these skilled immigrants (principal applicants), approximately 23 percent (11,489) identified themselves as being in a regulated profession (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005, 16-17). This does not include non-principal applicants (i.e., spouses), many of whom are in nursing and teaching and require licensure. The proportion of internationally trained registrants is often about a quarter of all those who receive registration (e.g., 32 percent of pharmacists, 28 percent of architects, 27 percent of engineers, 25 percent of physicians and surgeons, and 10 percent of nurses). More than 10,000 immigrants applied for licensure/registration or certification in 2003. The vast majority are in the fields of engineering, accounting and health care (data for teachers are unavailable) (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005, 16-17). There are Ontario government programs that facilitate assessment and recognition of professional and trades qualifications and provide support to health care professions. In addition there is the newly passed legislation *FARPA*. A summary of Ontario government programs is provided in table 4.

Ontario has identified World Education Services (WES) as the primary education credentials assessment agency in the province, charged with converting educational credentials from other countries into Canadian equivalents. Since WES began operating in Canada in 2000, 42,000 people have had their credentials assessed (as of May 2008). WES, which is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, has an annual budget of between \$1.3 million and \$1.4 million (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005).¹⁵

Helping tradespeople to obtain recognition of trades qualifications and experience or to enter an apprenticeship is part of the mandate of the Workplace Support Services offices. Tradespeople with enough relevant work experience to meet Ontario standards and who pass a written examination receive a Certificate of Qualification. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has a Web site (Employment Ontario: A Guide for Foreign-

trained Tradespeople) specifying which trades require certification, whether certification is mandatory or voluntary and how to obtain certification via Workplace Support Services offices.

“Career maps” (job/career information) are available for trades and professions, with 39 career maps and 9 e-career maps providing an interactive guide through the registration process for these professions (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration n.d.[4]). These maps provide information on registration requirements, the application process (including what to do while still abroad), language proficiency requirements, academic qualifications assessments, professional studies requirements, post-secondary education requirements, experience requirements, labour market information, fees and costs for professional studies and examinations, and contact information for the relevant regulatory bodies (George Brown College 2007, 19). The interactive nature of these career maps is useful in that it leads newcomers to the information they require, based on their specific situations (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005). In addition, a concerted effort is being directed at internationally trained health-care professionals via the Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (Health Force Ontario n.d.). The centre provides services such as information about regulated health professions, ongoing career counselling (including alternative career possibilities), a library, links to education and assessment tools, information and referrals for retraining and bridge-training programs, and information sessions on the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (an assessment of clinical skills in medicine).

Given the reliance on Web-based resources, it might be helpful to have some key concepts translated into various foreign languages to ensure the accurate communication of vital information. This would help newcomers learn the correct technical terms used in Canada. As well, the graphics on the Web sites make them look good but could be problematic for those working on computers that have slow connections and are prone to crashing, as is often the case overseas.

Recognizing that direct personal assistance is beneficial, Ontario has established Global Experience Ontario (GEO) under *FARPA*. Services are provided in English and French, in person, by phone or online, to those who intend to apply to a regulatory body to obtain licensure. Information on 34 regulated profes-

sions is available. Some 2,000 clients have been served since the office was opened in December 2006.

Other provincial efforts are targeted at the health care field. In 2005/06, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care devoted \$26 million to a program designed to provide training, assessment and support for up to 200 international medical graduates (IMGs) – an increase from 90 such positions available prior to 2004. In June 2004, a centralized assessment system, IMG Ontario, was established with funding of \$26 million to streamline the process of obtaining information about assessments, training and registration. The Ontario government is investing \$1.7 million over three years in a project that will provide opportunities for 1,020 IMGs to improve their skills or find employment in non-regulated health sector careers such as research, hospital administration, medical supply companies, government policy development and forensic science. Called Sector Specific Employment Services for Alternative Health Sector Employment for Internationally Trained Physicians, it will provide bridge training so that those trained as physicians can use their medical knowledge in other areas in the health care field. This training will focus on communications and cultural competence to increase communication skills with patients in Canada, in addition to providing training on the medical regulatory, legal and ethical issues that shape the practice of medicine in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2004a; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005).

In addition to all this, the Ontario government has funded (\$11.5 million) the credential recognition and advanced standing project recommended by CIITE. Language proficiency assessment and employment preparation are also to be funded; in total, 40,000 internationally trained individuals are expected to take advantage of those services.

As noted earlier, Ontario recently instituted a pilot PNP that allows nominations to be made to the federal government on behalf of 500 immigrants who have a job offer from an Ontario employer in one of 20 occupations where shortages exist. This program has been lauded by the other provinces (Public Policy Forum 2006, 36, 37). It has even been suggested that municipalities be allowed to sponsor such a program (Public Policy Forum 2005). Both the PNP and the Temporary Worker Programs are mechanisms designed to ensure that immigration is responsive to labour market needs. It is likely that the integration

of immigrants under these programs will be easier because they will respond to expressed needs.

Regulatory bodies

Regulatory bodies are key players in the integration of newcomers. A study by Ontario Regulators for Access (ORA) found that in Ontario 87 percent of 26 regulatory bodies had instituted specific policies, practices or guidelines on issues of access for internationally trained candidates (Ontario Regulators for Access 2003), before *FARPA* was passed. In addition, ORA has developed a practical assessment tool that regulators can use to evaluate and design programs that support access to the professions by qualified international candidates, the *Regulators' Guide for Promoting Access to Professions by International Candidates* (Ontario Regulators for Access 2004). Obviously, with the passage of *FARPA*, regulatory bodies are required to ensure that they have focused on the needs of the internationally trained.

Trades

Special mention must be made of the credential recognition issue in the trades. Fifteen percent of the skilled trades workforce in Ontario will retire in the next 15 years (Crispino 2006; Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2005, 6; Ontario Chamber of Commerce 2005). At the same time, by 2007 more than a third of the jobs created in Canada will require a skilled trade designation or a college diploma (Lior and Wortsman 2006, 5). As mentioned previously, Ontario has 141 recognized trades, 20 of which require certification (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2005).¹⁶

A number of the barriers typically cited as leading to a potential shortage of skilled trade workers are not applicable to newcomers who are already committed to and skilled in a trade. Among barriers that are irrelevant for newcomers are negative perceptions of apprenticeships and trades and lack of awareness of trades as a career option. On the other hand, there are other barriers that are very relevant to newcomers, such as the cost of apprenticeships to individuals.

As mentioned above, a practical written exam has been developed in Toronto to assess the trades qualifications of those who are internationally trained – the Certificate of Qualification examination (Lior and Wortsman 2006, 13). However, this test does not measure hands-on experience; employers must assess this themselves, and it is a major challenge. Immigrating tradespeople whose documents do not indicate that they have the experience to write the exam are advised to

Program/office	Purpose	Agency/funding	Approximate number of users
World Educational Service (WES)	Provides credential recognition services	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; \$500,000 for January 31, 2008-March 31, 2010; total annual budget of WES is \$1.3-1.4 million	2000-08 – 42,000 (assessment of 54,000 credentials)
Workplace Support Services	Helps tradespeople obtain recognition of trade qualifications and experience or to enter apprenticeship training	Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; budget n/a (announced September 19, 2007)	n/a
Career maps	Provides information about licensing, certification and labour market conditions for trades and professions, 39 career maps and 9 interactive e-career maps	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; \$150,000 annually to develop career and e-career maps for regulated professions	Available to the general public so data on immigrant users is not collected
Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals	Encourages internationally trained health care professionals to settle in Ontario	Partly funded by Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; budget n/a	December 2006-early 2008 – 3,600
Global Experience Ontario (GEO)	Access and resource centre for internationally trained, provides information to newcomers on licensure and registration for 34 regulated professions in Ontario	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration under Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act; budget n/a	December 2006-April 2008 – 2,000
International Medical Graduates (IMG)	Provides training, assessment and support for international medical graduates, including IMG Ontario, to obtain information about assessment, training and registration.	Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; \$26 million in 2005/06	2005-2006 – 200
Sector Specific Employment Services for Alternative Health Sector Employment for Internationally Trained Physicians	Helps international medical graduates improve their skills and find employment in nonregulated health jobs	Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Ministry of Health and Long-term Care; \$1.7 million over 3 years (announced November 12, 2004)	2004-07 – 1,020
Projects recommended by Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE)	Provides credential recognition and advanced standing; language proficiency assessment and employment preparation	Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; \$11.5 million since 2003	Forecast 40,000
Pilot Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)	Immigration program that allows Ontario to select some of its immigrants	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; budget information n/a (announced May 24, 2007)	May 2007-May 2008 – 500; applications accepted after May 2008 during review of pilot program in spring/summer 2008

Sources: Documents and Web sites of the organizations, telephone conversations with officers from the Ontario government and community organizations.

enter an apprenticeship program (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities n.d.[2]). To meet the unique needs of newcomers, it would be useful to add a third tier level between apprentice and journey-person that would incorporate key elements of the training and licensing systems (Atlin and Pond-White 2000, 15). This would address the need for standards and avoid the frustration and humiliation that newcomers may feel when their experience is not recognized and they find themselves being trained alongside inexperienced youth.

Some services are directed at immigrant tradespeople. One program, NeCTAR (Newcomers Connecting to Trades Apprenticeship Resources), was developed by the Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiano (COSTI), a community-based multicultural agency mandated to provide services to new Canadians and their families, and is specifically designed for newcomers trying to enter the trades. NeCTAR is a bridge training program to provide information and services to internationally trained individuals seeking apprenticeship or employment in skilled trades. NeCTAR has

developed a “resource kit” for newcomers that includes *A Reference Guide to Trades Apprenticeship in Ontario* (not available online); workshops on “Becoming a Certified Tradesperson in Ontario”; and the program Pathways to Practice, for newcomers preparing for certification or apprenticeship in a variety of trades (hairstylist, automotive service technician, construction maintenance electrician and industrial millwright) (COSTI Immigrant Services n.d.).

The program partners with ACCES and JVS (Jewish Vocational Service of Metropolitan Toronto), and it has support from the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally Trained Persons (CASIP) and funding from the Ontario government. The program was designed following a needs assessment by COSTI. The NeCTAR approach is to build capacity in various social service agencies serving newcomers; over 200 staff at different agencies have been trained. In addition, there is resource material specifically designed for service providers in community agencies, including *A Facilitator’s Guide to Special Resources and Tools*. Eventually, agencies will have user-friendly resources to help internationally trained tradespeople navigate through the process from training to certification (Lior and Wortsman 2006, 13).

The Ontario Immigration Web site also has information on trades. A Toronto apprenticeship portal is being planned by the Toronto Training Board, possibly in partnership with the Ontario government, the City of Toronto, the Centre for the Study of Education and Work at the Ontario Institute for Studies on Education (OISE/UT), the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Labour Education Centre (Toronto Training Board 2006, 8).

What is working and what needs to be done in credentialing

Credentialing is a key barrier that is a source of frustration both for newcomers and for employers facing skill shortages. *FARPA* should have a major impact in this area since it requires regulatory bodies to focus on the internationally educated/trained. Many regulatory agencies had already begun this process before the legislation was enacted. Clear standards should help all stakeholders, but the regulatory bodies will bear the burden of implementation. The legislation appears to fulfill most of the standards recommended by George Thomson, a former provincial court judge who was appointed by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to review this issue as part

of the province’s concern with the integration of newcomers (Thomson 2005, viii-xxiv; see box on page 20 of the current document).

To aid regulatory bodies, Ontario Regulators for Access has identified 29 promising practices that have improved or are likely to improve access for international candidates while maintaining standards; this material is on its Web site and there is opportunity for new practices to be added (Ontario Regulators for Access n.d.). There are practices in the areas of academic credentials assessment, accountability and reporting, appeals, assessment, bridging, Canadian/Ontario experience, information, post-assessment, statistics and support. What makes this approach particularly useful is that it is interactive and ongoing, which will be especially helpful as regulators comply with the *FARPA*.

With respect to the trades, the NeCTAR program has a number of good features – in particular, the fact that it was developed on the basis of a needs assessment and involves training staff in existing community agencies rather than creating another service organization. At the same time, however, trades are unquestionably a “poor sibling” relative to the professions. For example, the Ontario Immigration Web site does not provide a direct link to information on trades when a search is made for this subject. Rather, the trades-related information is found under “Work: Working in Your Profession,” which has information for those in professional and trades occupations. Newcomers who want to work in the trades are unlikely to assume that material targeted at them will be combined with information about the professions.

Two suggestions for improvements to the credential recognition process have been made. The first is that immigrants be able to input their credentials through a Web site or a similar tool that provides realistic information about integration into the Canadian labour force (Sangster 2001). This would provide two benefits: it would help potential immigrants to obtain realistic feedback on what their integration experience will be like; and it could help speed up the process since it could be done overseas before newcomers arrive in Canada. Allowing the credentialing process to begin while the prospective immigrant is still overseas is the second suggestion. This is being done in Ontario by Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), which allows written examinations to be taken prior to immigration and issues provisional licenses to applicants who have satisfied all the licensing requirements except for the minimum 12 months of acceptable engineering experience in Canada (Canadian Council of Professional

Box 1

Criteria Used to Determine the Fairness of Credentialing Systems

Information and support for applicants

- accessible information about the registration and appeal processes
- published criteria for deciding whether entry-to-practice requirements have been met and examples of when exemptible requirements could be exempted
- support for applicants during the registration process, including any internal appeal or review, provided by regulators, other organizations, or both

Registration procedures

- reasonable fees
- timeliness
- alternative ways to confirm credentials or demonstrate competency when documents are unobtainable
- access to documents held by the regulatory body that pertain to the registration application, with exceptions for public safety reasons or where disclosure would undermine the integrity of an assessment process
- training for council members and staff who evaluate qualifications and make registration decisions

Third-party assessments

- procedural protections when regulators rely on third-party assessments of credentials, language skills, or competency internal appeal or review
- arm's-length internal appeal or review process
- notification of the basis for the initial or proposed registration decision
- the right to a hearing or the opportunity to meet with at least one decision-maker
- the right to make written submissions

Registration decisions and reasons

- clear registration decisions with sufficient reasons for the decision

Source: Thompson (2005).

Engineers n.d.[1]). Such a practice is consistent with the results of a CCPE survey of 21 employers, which found that employers are not concerned about the technical competencies of internationally trained engineers but only about their linguistic competencies (4). With this approach, PEO was able to almost double the number of P.Eng. licenses granted to internationally trained applicants, more than 60 percent of whom meet the academic requirements for licensure without writing technical exams (Cullingworth and Bambrah 2004, 39).

However, a number of the recommendations made by Alboim (2003, 3) on the subject of credentials have not been implemented. Among other things, she recommended that the provincial government provide support and incentives for the various assessment providers to work with the WES to adopt common standards for assessment; develop a common updated data bank of university and college programs abroad to determine Canadian equivalencies; conduct joint missions to new source countries of immigration to

assess their university and college programs; develop collaborative mechanisms for mutual recognition and portability of assessments across sectors and jurisdictions; develop outreach initiatives to employers to raise their awareness of credential assessment services; develop customized services for different end-users (educational institutions, regulatory bodies, employers), including the verification of bona fides of international institutions, degrees, and documents; provide training of in-house assessors; and provide full-service assessments to determine Canadian equivalencies.

Language

The federal government has been promoting language training since 1992 through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs, sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Outside Quebec, 50,000 adult immigrants receive LINC training each year at an annual cost of \$140 million. However, LINC focuses on *basic* language skills. As noted previously, more technical language training is

needed by today's newcomers working in Ontario and throughout the country. The federal Enhanced Language Training (ELT) initiative is an ongoing project, funded at the rate of \$20 million a year, to help immigrants acquire the language skills necessary to obtain and retain jobs commensurate with their level of skill and experience. This language training is geared toward engineers, tradespeople and those in health care, among others. The program combines language training with labour market support in areas such as workplace culture and job search. An investment by employers is required whenever it is workplace-based (Alboim and McIsaac 2007, 10).

In January 2005, Ottawa and the Ontario government entered into a partnership involving 13 projects (at a cost of \$3.4 million over two years) to provide job-specific language training to more than 1,300 internationally trained individuals (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005a). The projects that have been undertaken in Toronto include the development of assessment tools to identify appropriate language training programs, including an on-line assessment tool¹⁷; higher language skills training to facilitate participation in job search programs; job-specific language training and facilitation of job shadowing, mentoring and work placement (including immigrant mentors); higher-level language training in general and specific occupations (business administration/management, information technology and microelectronics, nursing, customer service, and the environment). These programs should now have been in place for some time, but specific outcomes (e.g., the number of people actually helped) are not provided on the Web. For example, the "Analysis of Program Activities by Strategic Outcome" (Treasury Board Secretariat n.d.[3]) makes no mention of these specific programs or their outcomes.

An example of a program focused on communication, rather than just language, is that offered by JVS Toronto.¹⁸ The courses, covering telephone skills, meetings and business writing in addition to workplace culture, are tailored for the IT sector, banking and engineering, and are available to unemployed internationally trained individuals whose language proficiency is assessed to be high enough (i.e., LINC level 5 or Canadian Language Benchmark level 6) (JVS Toronto n.d.). The YMCA Newcomer Information Centre also has an orientation session for newcomers about Canadian workplace culture, covering verbal and non-verbal communication, work values and expectations, work relationships, dress codes, and so on (OCASI 2006). STIC (Sector-Specific Terminology

Information and Counselling) has projects in four sectors, providing occupational terminology training (in-class and written material), sector-specific orientation, computerized profile building and career action plan development. The four sectors covered to date are accounting, automotive service mechanics, engineering and health care. Facilitator's material is also available (OCASI 2005).

Language assessment programs can be useful for newcomers, employers and regulatory bodies. This type of assessment is provided by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (n.d.), the national standard-setting body for Canadian language benchmarks (CLB), which provides the official Canadian standards for describing, measuring and recognizing the language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants. The CLB can help employers identify the appropriate levels of language proficiency required, assess employees' language potential and provide training. Prospective immigrants can also assess their language abilities on the "Going to Canada" portal of the federal government, which has a self-assessment language test (Government of Canada n.d.).

At the organizational level, some employers have addressed language issues by offering ESL programs in-house. This communicates to employees the importance of language abilities, makes it easier for immigrants to attend ESL courses and allows language specific to the workplace to be taught. There can also be a negative side to such programs: an interesting finding from a US study is that employer language classes can reinforce assumptions about gender, power, group allegiances and politeness, which could affect employees' and managers' concepts of competence (Katz 2000). One approach to ensure that language is not a barrier in hiring qualified people is used by a Toronto employer, Nanowave, Inc. The company includes an employee who speaks the candidate's language on interview panels so that technical expertise, in spite of any English language deficiency, can be assessed (Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters 2003, 7).¹⁹ Seneca College has also developed a language program that is tailored to specific businesses (Irish 2006). This program focuses on communication skills (e.g., different politeness norms) in addition to language training.

What is working and what needs to be done in language training

"Language training" is too limited a concept, even when it includes workplace-specific language. What is needed, instead, is training in "communication skills" – for

immigrants and for their co-workers, supervisors and managers. As with all aspects of culture, people do not realize that Canadian culture, as all others, has very specific rules about the appropriate way to communicate. This goes beyond knowing vocabulary and grammar. For example, cultures differ on things as subtle as appropriate eye contact between a speaker and a listener and the degree of directness that is perceived to be appropriate. Those who are too direct are typically judged as being aggressive and arrogant, while those who are indirect may be dismissed as not having good ideas. It is because such communication differences lead to judgments (typically negative) about others, in addition to miscommunication, that learning communication skills, rather than just language skills, is vital. Moreover, differences in communication style can lead to a downward spiral in interpersonal relationships that becomes difficult to overcome because the communication difficulties are presumed to be substantive rather than stylistic, and because people do not have the communication skills to overcome them. In addition, cross-cultural conflict is likely to develop between people from different backgrounds, and good cross-cultural communication skills are essential to redress conflict. The JVS Toronto program encompasses sector-specific language and communication skills, including telephone and writing skills. It also incorporates some training on the workplace culture – a good combination. Obviously, more initiatives of this type are needed. As well, it is helpful for those who will work with newcomers (co-workers, supervisors) to become familiar with different communication styles used elsewhere. To some degree, realizing that others have different communication rules – for example, about how direct to be – can help minimize misunderstandings. Such training would have to be provided by employers.

Employers' requirement for Canadian experience

The programs and services discussed in this section are assumed to address the requirement for Canadian experience. That is, these programs provide a means for newcomers to gain an understanding of Canada's culture, its labour markets and the norms of Canadian workplaces. Aspects of Canadian experience related to specific knowledge or skills needed (e.g., legislation, codes of conduct, ethics) are not covered in this paper since they have more to do with education. Here, the discussion is concerned with information about Canada and its labour force that is available to

prospective immigrants and with programs that contribute to socialization, such as networking, internship, bridging and mentoring.

Information about Canada and its labour force for prospective immigrants

Information has been touted as important in order to provide prospective immigrants with realistic expectations about integrating into the Canadian workforce (Public Policy Forum 2005, 12). Bouchard (Public Policy Forum 2006, 34) suggests that more information should be provided on (1) equivalences between foreign and Canadian skills (2) labour market information, and (3) the challenges immigrants are likely to confront upon arrival. The "Going to Canada" Web site has been developed by the federal government in cooperation with the provinces and territories as a portal to help immigrants make informed decisions about coming to Canada and to begin preparing for the Canadian labour market before they arrive. The provincial government's Ontario Immigration Web site provides information both for those overseas and for immigrants in Canada (Government of Ontario 2005). However, while the Web site is excellent in many ways, the labour market information it contains is dense and not geared to newcomers in any way. There is a great deal of information, but its relevance in helping anyone to find employment is unclear. Moreover, it is likely to be difficult to understand for those for whom English is a second language. Interestingly, one can find better labour market information on a Web site that is the result of a joint effort by the Ontario and federal governments (Ontario Job Futures).²⁰

There are government and community agencies and Web sites that provide labour market information about finding a specific job (see appendix, page 34). Naturally, job search training will help newcomers better understand the labour market. For example, the Centre for Internationally Trained Professionals and Trades People offers an intensive, hands-on, four-week program using structured activities and a group support system for a customized work search. After completion of the program, there may be opportunities for unpaid work placement or mentoring. It also includes self-marketing workshops and ongoing support during a newcomer's job search. The program, a partnership by COSTI and the government of Ontario, has been in existence for almost 12 years and is currently mandated to serve a minimum of 360 clients annually. The program also includes learning about

diversity and Canadian workplace communication. The client placement rate has recently increased from 75 percent to 91 percent.²¹ Clients must be landed immigrants or convention refugees, educated and experienced outside Canada, not employed or employed less than 18 hours per week, with intermediate to advanced English skills, actively seeking employment and with a clear employment objective.

One role of community agencies is to provide a “healthy dose of reality” and explicit help on how to navigate various systems to find jobs and get the other supports essential for full integration.²² *First Days Guide: A Newcomers’ Guide to Their First Two Weeks in Ontario* (OCASI 2008) is a good example of this. It is written at a level appropriate for newcomers seeking jobs and working in English, and offers realistic advice such as having to begin at a junior level for a first job. A publication of the Government of Ontario (*Opening Doors: You and the Job Market*) also discusses realities such as the hidden job market (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2006)

Integration is also facilitated by making the general public, and employers aware of the situation faced by newcomers. TRIEC has launched an educational campaign (hireimmigrants) to increase public awareness about the unemployment and underemployment of skilled immigrants through posters, newspaper ads and TV spots. In addition, it provides the Public Awareness Toolkit, which can be used by individuals, employers or community groups to raise awareness about integrating skilled immigrants into the workforce (TRIEC n.d.[1]).

Socialization

Socialization – learning the norms of Canadian workplaces – facilitates integration. This section focuses primarily on specific integration efforts (e.g., internships and mentoring). But it is worth noting that a potential source of some socialization, though not directly providing Canadian work experience, can be found in the many social service agencies that serve newcomers. Numerous community agencies in the GTA are involved in immigration and settlement work.²³ More than 100 Toronto-based agencies are members of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). These agencies focus on a variety of activities: training and employment, information centres, community/neighbourhood services, health centres, legal centres, etc. Many agencies focus on a specific ethnic, linguistic or religious group, or are gender-based.

Formal sources of socialization include exposure to Canadian workplaces via internships, mentoring and bridging programs, as well as exposure to Canadian norms through volunteering or education. These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but it is useful to distinguish between them: mentoring programs generally tend to link a newcomer on a one-to-one basis with someone in her/his field, while internship programs involve actually working within an organizational setting for a specific length of time. These programs can provide actual Canadian work experience. According to the Ontario Immigration Web site, bridging programs are “intended to help qualified internationally trained individuals move quickly into the labour market [by]... assessing their existing skills and competencies [and]... providing training and Canadian workplace experience without duplicating what they have already learned.”²⁴ These programs can help to fill in gaps in the education or experience of internationally trained newcomers through technical, language or cultural learning, among other possibilities. All three types of programs provide contacts for networking. Each is discussed in greater detail below.

Training

Job Search Workshops contributes to socialization by providing orientation services on the Canadian labour market in addition to job search skills. These programs of three or four days’ duration are funded through Citizenship and Immigration. Canada’s Immigrant Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) focuses on all settlement activities, and Job Search Workshops acts as its employment-related service (George Brown College 2007). The corresponding initiative at the Ontario level is the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP), which is operated by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration through community agencies and includes assistance in finding employment. The program budget is \$5.3 million a year (George Brown College 2007, 19-20).

Mentoring

TRIEC has taken the lead in the Mentoring Partnership, an alliance of community agencies and corporations in Toronto, Peel Region and York Region (Maytree Foundation 2005). TRIEC recruits experienced professionals (mentors) and community-based organizations match them with internationally educated professionals (mentee). The assessment of the mentor/mentee compatibility level is based on a number of criteria, including shared educational background, similar work experience and common career goals. Prior to joining

the program, all mentorees are assessed to be job-ready (*vis à vis* language skills, resume preparation, credential assessment, etc.). Both parties attend an orientation to prepare them for the mentoring relationship. The parties work together for a total of 24 hours over a four-month period and typically focus on the following elements: understanding Canadian workplace culture; identifying skills required by the market; advice on accreditation; improving professional terminology; mastering self-marketing techniques and confidence-building; selecting training programs and workshops; and networking. The program includes close to 50 corporate partners and boasts more than 3,000 matches made since 2004; 80 percent of mentorees in the program have found jobs (TRIEC 2007), but only 46 percent in their fields (Alboim and McIsaac 2007, 10). This is only slightly higher than the 41 percent of immigrants who have found work in their fields without taking part in such programs.

Other mentoring programs include the Skills for Change's Mentoring for Employment Program, aimed at those who have a minimum of two years's experience in their profession outside of Canada but no Canadian experience in that profession (Skills for Change n.d.). Mentorees must not have been in Canada for more than three years and must have work-ready abilities in English. They must be able to meet with their mentor for six hours a month for up to six months and spend at least 20 hours a week in active job search. Mentoring is provided for engineers, teachers and clerical workers, among others. Skills for Change also has a program called Career Transitions for Internationally-trained Medical Doctors, which includes mentoring. On average, over 200 mentor/mentoree matches are made each year. In recent years, 75 percent of mentorees have been successful in finding employment in their profession, with another 5 percent choosing jobs in another area.

The City of Toronto's Profession to Profession program, which is part of the Mentoring Partnership, matches city employees with skilled immigrants in similar professions (City of Toronto 2006). Mentors provide advice on job searching, resume writing, networking, licensing and skills requirements in 10 occupational groups. The number of mentoring relationships increased from 29 in 2004 to 77 in 2006, and the results for 2005 indicate that 66 percent of the mentorees found suitable employment, with 55 percent finding work directly related to their field. At the federal level, there is an on-line mentoring program, CanadaInfoNet Mentoring Program (CanadaInfonet n.d.). A Toronto-based initiative is the program for

sponsored by the University of Toronto's faculty of pharmacy, with links to the regulatory body (Dean and Austin 2004; Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy n.d.). The program has had 525 graduates since 2001.

Internships

As an employer, the Ontario Public Service has established an internship program for internationally trained individuals who have a minimum of three years' international work experience. In 2006-07, the program hired 72 interns working on six-month assignments (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration n.d.[3]). These paid internship opportunities are arranged through Career Bridge, a program organized by TRIEC and Career Edge, a not-for-profit social enterprise that helps organize internships for employers of all sizes (Career Bridge n.d.). Career Bridge was launched as a pilot program in November 2003, with the full program launch taking place in spring 2004. Initially, funding was provided by the Ontario government (\$1.2 million over three years) to offer internships primarily in information technology, engineering and business (finance, marketing and human resources) (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities n.d.[1]). Career Bridge is now a self-sustaining program, where participating employers pay a fee. More than 740 paid internships have been created since 2003 – about 200 a year. Approximately 200 private, public-sector and non-profit organizations have provided internships through the Career Bridge program. Over 75 percent of the interns have gained full-time employment in their professions. The demand, however, is great: almost 1,200 qualified candidates who are ready for internships could not be matched with employers (Alboim and McIsaac 2007, 9).

Bridging

The federal government has partnered with others in the development of bridge-to-work initiatives under the Enhanced Language Training initiative (HRSDC 2005b). These programs prepare newcomers for the workplace through the use of internships, temporary or permanent work placement opportunities and mentoring programs that allow skilled immigrants to network in their field of employment. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration supports bridge training programs established by others (e.g., employers, colleges and universities, regulatory bodies and community agencies) that can support bridge to licensure, bridge to training or bridge to work (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2006).

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has sponsored 60 bridging projects (about 70 percent of which are in Toronto) since 2003, at a cost of \$34 million. These programs, which encompass professions and trades occupations, were expected to benefit some 6,000 newcomers (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 2006a; Career Bridge n.d.). Table 5 presents examples of the types of programs funded.

Bridging typically refers to the acquisition of some work experience, but the term is also used for bridging programs in the field of education. Bridging education (BE) needs have been studied by the Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CONNECT) – which includes Seneca, George Brown, Centennial, and Sheridan colleges – through the CIITE Project. CIITE is exploring how college programs can build on the existing skills of internationally trained workers so the newcomers only study the components required to provide specialized bridging opportunities to upgrade their skills and/or fill in gaps where regular programs of instruction

are not appropriate (CIITE 2005). However, different funding mechanisms will be needed to recognize the colleges' role in providing bridging education programs (Alboim 2003, 5; Public Policy Forum 2006, 47). The Prior Learning Assessment process is a potential tool in identifying gaps that can be overcome by bridging education. By assessing what people know from their life experience, it is possible to identify what educational gaps can be filled through formal education courses.

Apprenticeship training

Primarily designed to provide technical skills, apprenticeship is also a source of socialization and provides information about the Canadian workplace culture. Skilled tradespeople among recent immigrants are an important source of human capital, but part of that capital is wasted when, because their credentials are not recognized, they are forced to complete an entire apprenticeship program even though some kind of bridging process would have been more appropriate.

Many of the apprenticeship programs sponsored in Ontario are directed at youth, including young immi-

Table 5
Examples of Bridge-to-Work Initiatives for Immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area

Occupation	Partner/s	Number to be served	Start date	Total funding	Focus/activities
Architecture	Ontario Association of Architects	66	June 2006	\$58,100	Provides mentoring and helps promote the value of the internationally trained among 150 employers
Carpentry	Carpenters' Local Union 27; Apprenticeship Training Trust Fund Inc.	200	October 2006	\$335,700	Helps immigrants who have construction experience in credentials assessment and to improve their education and skills so they can complete the General Carpentry Apprenticeship Program
Construction	George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology	50	October 2006	\$341,300	Provides training and support toward the graduate certificate in construction management
Early childhood education	Association of Early Childhood Educators; George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology; Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office	135	September 2006	\$871,000	Provides early childhood education training, language support, Canadian work experience and job search assistance
Engineering technology	Centennial College School of Engineering Technology and Applied Science; Sheridan College	464	Summer 2006	\$986,800	Helps improve education and skills in the manufacturing, information and communication technology sectors to fast-track immigrants into the colleges' regular programs
Massage therapy	Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology	20	September 2006	\$231,593	Provides skills assessment and clinical experience that will enable immigrants to register with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario
Nursing	York University	108	August 2006	\$789,135	Adds to existing program to provide internationally trained nurses with workplace experience and mentorship opportunities to help them become licensed

Source: Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (2006a).

grants. The programs most relevant for newcomers are listed below (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities n.d.[2])²⁵:

- *Job Connect*: This program helps people plan, prepare for and succeed in the job market, and it can help individuals on a path to higher skills training and employment. Its information and resource service provides information for internationally trained individuals seeking employment commensurate with their skills.
- *Literacy and Basic Skills Program*: Services are provided at no cost to learners, focusing on people whose literacy and math skills are below the Grade 9 level.
- *Loans for Tools Program*: Provides assistance in purchasing the tools needed for one's trade.
- *Modular training*: Workplace-based skills training, usually delivered in incremental units of short duration (modules) and accredited at each step.
- *Sector Initiatives Fund*: Designed to help industry sectors and organizations to develop training programs, standards, and materials.

Other

Networking is critical to finding a job. As reported by Lochhead (2005, 36), about a quarter of all new jobs are found through networking with family and friends, and immigrants are even more likely to rely on family and friends than is the general population. When encountering problems in finding a job, 36 percent of newcomers turned to friends and 26 percent to relatives, with only 18 percent going to educational institutions and 11 percent each to immigrant-serving agencies and government agencies (Lochhead 2005, 36). Obtaining some education in Canada is another avenue for socialization. Alboim, Finnie and Meng (2005, 14) found that while foreign education was discounted by employers, when a Canadian degree was obtained after a foreign one there was a much higher return to total schooling. This finding may support the notion that employers perceive attendance at a Canadian educational institution as providing newcomers with socialization that is useful in the Canadian workplace. When asked about how socialization gains could be achieved, a focus group of federal civil servants who are members of visible minority groups recommended getting Canadian experience, even if it is in lower-level assignments or in a volunteer capacity, in addition to some kind of Canadian education (Baklid 2004). To encourage socialization via civic participation or volunteering (Lochhead 2005,

36), the Maytree Foundation sponsors the abcGTA program ("abc" refers to agencies, boards and commissions), designed to foster the participation of immigrants in such bodies in the GTA. abcGTA has a list of qualified candidates and matches them with any vacancies that occur (Broadbent 2005, 5).

In-house diversity programs offered by employers and unions often provide useful information and/or opportunities for socialization for both newcomers and others. One union, local 353 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), has a program specifically directed at newcomers. This local's commitment includes having hired three full-time staff dedicated to training internationally trained tradespeople (Toronto Training Board 2006). Most of the applicants to the training program are engineers from Eastern Europe and China. A decision was made to focus on the Chinese applicants. Those who take the program are not charged anything, as their participation is funded by the union members (through their dues) and George Brown College. Of 100 applicants, 20 were selected for the 10-week program. The training is geared towards technical ESL, resumé writing for construction jobs and interview techniques.

Employers' programs are typically diversity-oriented, to help managers and sometimes employees be better prepared to operate in the multicultural Canadian workplace. These programs almost always deal with race and gender issues, but they can also include many other aspects of diversity (such as age, religion, or sexual orientation). While diversity programs should improve the ability of Canadian workplaces to integrate newcomers, there is no consensus about exactly what it means for a Canadian organization to be an inclusive workplace. A survey conducted for the Public Policy Forum by Environics Research Group looked at employers' perceptions of the integration of immigrants into Canadian workplaces. Focus group participants tended to be divided on the issue of who had the onus to adapt to whom: some favoured diversity programs "that recognized and accommodated cultural and religious differences, [while others] favoured making immigrant employees comply with the Canadian status quo" (Environics Research Group 2004, 4). Diversity and inclusivity should not be seen in terms of having to choose between accommodating cultural differences and upholding Canadian norms, but rather of doing what is most appropriate in a workplace where everyone is culturally literate – that is, able to understand his or her own culture and the cultures of co-workers well enough to be able to deal with cross-cultural differences (Weiner 1993).

The diversity training offered by employers and the job search skills taught by agencies do not provide the type of systematic approach to the socialization of immigrants that is associated with orientation programs (Environics Research Group 2004). One question is, who should provide such training? The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, in phase II of its From Consideration to Integration program, has established a committee to look at how the profession can help international engineer graduates acquire cross-cultural skills and an understanding of the dynamics of the Canadian workplace. Employers seek better resources on addressing the challenges of hiring immigrants, including off-the-shelf diversity training resources (Environics Research Group 2004). In addition, there is clearly a role for unions in offering diversity training to their members and to immigrants, particularly in the trades (Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2005, 38). A very promising approach is that being taken by TRIEC – working with Ryerson University to develop courses for employers on the recruitment, selection, orientation and integration of immigrants.

Gordon Nixon, President and CEO of RBC Financial Group, notes that businesses both large and small have not been doing their share to integrate newcomers. He notes that employers overlook immigrants, under-employ them and do not integrate them into the workforce well. Nixon thinks that this is due not to intentional biases, but to systemic barriers “compounded by businesses that fail to recognize the business opportunity from diversity” (Nixon 2005). There are many activities that organizations can undertake to better integrate immigrants. To do a better job of hiring newcomers, RBC Financial Group does not collect information on foreign degrees and institutions on the application, since this often resulted in recruiters overlooking qualified candidates. Rather, the organization follows up on credentials and education later in the process.²⁶ Upon being hired, a newcomer could be assigned a “buddy” or the organization could appoint an “ambassador” for newcomers (Public Policy Forum 2006, 31). This is something even medium-sized and smaller employers could do without having human resources departments.

In-house training is key to the integration of newcomers. Again, this will combine both technical training and socialization. It is interesting to note that adult education and in-house training by organizations have at least as big an impact on the creation of knowledge as the educational system (*The Economist*, 2006). Canadian employers are not doing well in that regard:

Canada ranks only 23rd among 47 countries in terms of investment by employers in employee training (Toronto Training Board 2006, 4, 15). The Toronto Training Board, in partnership with the Toronto Board of Trade, is looking into what support(s) employers require in order to invest in training their workers. This could include new policy, tax incentives and programs offered on a sectoral basis (Toronto Training Board 2006, 15).

TRIEC and Maytree Foundation programs

Toronto has a unique organization committed to the integration of immigrants into the GTA labour market: the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. A private, not-for-profit organization, TRIEC grew out of a June 2002 conference of key Toronto stakeholders representing various sectors and communities. The council was formed to respond to the city’s need to better integrate immigrants, particularly into the local labour market. Its mission statement notes that it is “to remove the barriers immigrants face when entering the labour market while at the same time helping organizations benefit from the talents and skills immigrants bring with them to Canada.”²⁷ According to Wayland (2006, 27), the features that make TRIEC unique are that it is driven by a civic coalition of multiple stakeholders, not government, though it relies mostly, though not exclusively, on government funding; that it is an organization that relies on a variety of funders (\$1.2 million budget, 20 percent of which comes from its initial funder, the Maytree Foundation); and that its activities are characterized by extensive involvement by the private sector.

One innovative initiative launched by the Maytree Foundation and Alterna Savings is a loan program for immigrants who seek employment but are unable to obtain a loan from a traditional financial institution. Loans of up to \$5,000 can be used for short-term training (up to one year) that leads to employment, as well as for credential assessment, examination and/or professional association fees. Loans are to be paid back upon acquiring a job or 90 days after completion of the training; interest rates are charged at 6 percent over the prime interest rate. Since 2001, 132 loans have been approved; 59 percent of those who have completed a training program are now employed in their field. While the success is on a small scale, the Maytree Foundation is exploring the possibility of expanding this program through public lending institutions (Maytree Foundation n.d.; personal communication from Stephanie Saunders, Maytree Loan Program Manager).

One of TRIEC's most important contributions is its programs for employers. Its hireImmigrants.ca Web site (TRIEC n.d., 2) focuses specifically on employer problems and on ways to address them. TRIEC sponsors tele-learning conferences in which employers share with other employers what works and what does not; it also organizes breakfast seminars and offers e-tips. This kind of learning is particularly helpful for small and medium-sized companies. The services offered to employers include 28 case studies posted on the Web site; 90 promising practices provided on the Web site; downloadable workshops; a downloadable bias-free interviewing process; support for staff at community agencies to better interact with employers. Employers who are innovative can be recognized with an Immigrant Success Award program (TRIEC n.d.).

What is working and what needs to be done in cultural socialization

Mentoring and internship programs work. Various mentoring programs indicate that 66 percent to 85 percent of participants find work after being mentored, though the proportion of those who find work in their professional field is lower. After only a few months, these mentorees are able to overcome the Canadian-experience-required-barrier, but it is unclear why this is so. Is it simply because these programs provide newcomers with all they need to know about the Canadian workplace culture or because they provide immigrants with an in (whereby they become known)? Are these elements working in combination or are there other determinants at work? It would be useful to know what mechanisms are at play so that efforts and resources could be targeted toward them.

TRIEC also works. Having a multi-stakeholder organization focused on integration issues for a region facilitates local solutions. In addition, TRIEC provides services for employers that are less likely to be available from community agencies. While it is impossible to be conclusive without a systematic study, it appears that employers are not doing all they need to integrate recent immigrants, particularly in the area of in-house training. Unions could also play a larger role. More is needed to provide both employers and unions with the cultural training material needed by newcomers to integrate into the Canadian workplace.

General Assessment

These are neither the best of times nor the worst of times for the economic integration of recent immigrants. The barriers identified in this paper remain significant. But the problems faced by newcomers are becoming more prominent because more people are aware of them – a necessary but insufficient condition for redressing integration problems. As will be noted later, one important issue is that relatively little program evaluation has been done in this field, and thus it is difficult to fully assess the effectiveness of existing labour market integration programs.²⁸ In this section several assessment criteria are used. First, awareness: is the problem on the radar of relevant stakeholders? Second, solution identification: have solutions been identified addressing both what needs to be done and how it must be done? Finally, solution implementation: are programs implemented and evaluated in such a way as to ensure that solutions are having the desired effects in an efficient manner?

In reviewing programs, one must also be mindful of the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), since collectively they employ the largest number of Torontonians and they do not have the same resources as large organizations.²⁹

Credential recognition

Awareness of the credential recognition problem is high. The emphasis has been on formal recognition of credentials for regulated professions, an important part of the problem but not the whole problem. Those in the trades and non-regulated professions require more attention. Generally, the credential recognition issue is still at the solution identification stage. The *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*, or FARPA requires that regulatory bodies focus on the needs of the internationally trained and the “how to” issues, while the Foreign Credential Recognition program (FCR) is designed to generate solutions.

From an occupational point of view, the CCPE provides examples of programs that are at the solution implementation stage (e.g., “From Consideration to Integration”). Even more helpful is the program implemented by Professional Engineers Ontario, which allows international applicants to begin the credentialing process overseas; those who have satisfied all the licensing requirements except for the actual work experience receive a provisional license allowing them to work in Ontario. A promising approach for those in

non-regulated occupations is to allow people overseas to self-assess their education and experience relative to labour market needs in Toronto (or other locations). However, this approach does not meet the “how to” criterion: not only is little self-assessment available, but Web sites that claim they provide labour market information are not helpful because they do not fulfill immigrants’ needs for relevant and easy-to-understand information. Many good ideas have been identified in this area, such as developing common standards for assessment, creating a database that would match university and college programs abroad with Canadian equivalencies, and going to key source countries to assess their university and college programs. These databases could be of great use in lowering the costs to immigrants and SMEs, but the how to’s and the implementation still need to be worked out.

While an enormous amount still needs to be done for credentialing professionals, there is less awareness of, and less has been done about, the needs of tradespeople and those in non-regulated occupations, which include the vast majority of newcomers. To be clear, credential recognition needs to focus on the specific needs of three groups – those in regulated professions, those in the trades and those in non-regulated occupations.

Tradespeople thinking of immigrating to Canada will find much less Web-based material directed at them. NeTCAR, a program operating specifically to integrate newcomers into the trades, has a number of good features. First, it was developed on the basis of a needs assessment and involves training staff in existing community agencies to provide the services rather than creating another service organization. NeTCAR is at the stage where program evaluation is necessary. Another possible solution is to create a third tier, a level between apprentice and journeyman, allowing newcomers to focus just on getting the education and experience needed without duplicating what they already know.

Obviously, partnerships with employers and unions are needed. An area where more can be done is in the recognition of experience rather than paper credentials. Programs that assess essential skills are not panaceas, but they may offer important resources that have not been given enough support to date, especially since recognition of formal experience is what newcomers want and employers need. This would help SMEs, in particular.

Language training

Clearly there is awareness of the need for occupation-specific language training. In addition, solutions have

been identified and some have been implemented. As noted earlier, a federal-Ontario partnership is funding a number of language training programs in Toronto, many of them related to non-regulated occupations. Language training could begin overseas if material on specific professions, trades and non-regulated occupations and on the Canadian workplace in general were available. Tapes and compact discs might be made available to those who have players so that pronunciation could also be learned. These measures would help not only newcomers but also all employers, regardless of size.

However, the language training problem has been defined too narrowly and awareness of the actual problem is low. Immigrants need to have communication skills, not just linguistic abilities. Cultural norms related to communication differ across different ethnic groups. For example, Canadians have a direct communication style, which differs from the indirect style found in many parts of the world, including the countries of origin of most of Toronto’s immigrants. Understanding that these cultural differences exist, what they are and how people with a given set of norms are likely to perceive those who have other norms can help avoid miscommunications and cultural clashes (Weiner 1993). A program focusing on communication skills is offered by Seneca College, but the challenge is how to get more organizations to implement it. Clearly, it is not just newcomers who need such training but also employees and managers in Canadian organizations.

Employers’ Canadian experience requirement

Communication skills are a part of the socialization that newcomers need in order to understand Canadian workplace culture. It has been assumed in this paper that socialization and labour market information are what is really being referred to when employers require Canadian experience. With respect to information, Web sites have become a primary source for those who live overseas and for new immigrants in Canada, along with community agencies. Web sites are at the implementation stage, and there is a need to assess their effectiveness – a subject that will be discussed later .

With respect to socialization, mentoring, internships and bridging programs also work, somewhat overcoming the barrier of not having Canadian experience. At least three mentoring programs have made their results public – TRIEC’s Mentoring Partnership, Skills for Change’s Mentoring for Employment Program and the City of Toronto’s Profession to Profession program – and they find that 65 percent to 75 percent of participants do find jobs. Evaluation is needed to learn how

the programs work. Is specific content knowledge transmitted to immigrants or are cultural norms being taught, or both? Do the programs provide a stamp of approval, a recognition of skills, a network? The answer is probably a combination of these elements, but it would be very useful to know what makes the greatest difference in integrating newcomers.

Community agencies provide valuable services focused on the various needs of immigrants. TRIEC, in particular, focuses on employers' need for practical programs. It is employers who ultimately make the hiring decisions, and they are critical players in the integration process. Canadian employers are not providing enough in-house training and orientation for recent immigrants. The training programs that TRIEC is developing in cooperation with Ryerson University should be of some help, particularly for SMEs that cannot often afford their own training sessions. An area that should be explored is the provision of orientation programs to newcomers, which could be self-guided and even offered in different languages. In addition, bridging education seems to be a promising area, but it has not been given much attention to date. It could greatly help newcomers get the Canadian-specific knowledge and skills they need without having to spend undue amounts of time or money.

Finally, programs for employers on how to help socialize newcomers and train supervisors and managers could be offered, for example, through TRIEC's tele-learning conference model as well as more traditional models. Both employers and newcomers will benefit from greater understanding of the cultural differences they are likely to encounter. Both need to know about general cultural norms that are current in virtually all Canadian workplaces, as well as about cultural values and norms relevant for different industries and for organizations of different sizes, and of course about the individual organization's specific culture. While it is useful to teach some cultural specifics, it can be more useful to teach newcomers and Canadians to be culturally literate (e.g., to have the ability to read when different cultural norms are at work). In addition, it makes sense to provide information/training in some specific areas where there are likely to be issues related to cross-cultural differences, such as different views of time, the role of authority, communication, conflict resolution and face-saving.

Partnerships

Partnerships are the most important process issue. For example, including the City of Toronto at the table is

key. A dialogue between employers and regulatory bodies about how they would operate in times of skills shortages would be useful, since shortages are inevitable.³⁰ Regulatory bodies, obviously, need to set standards for all those who want to enter the field, not just newcomers, but there is likely to be some creativity which could be tapped by reconciling employers' needs with those of regulators charged with maintaining standards. Another process issue that may or may not be working well relates to the diversity among newcomers, ethnic, age and gender differences, for instance. Many community agencies are established to serve specific populations. Would recent immigrants be better served if programs and services were offered in a manner that takes into some account relevant differences such as gender?

What needs to be done?

The general awareness of barriers has increased greatly in the last few years. They will become even more obvious as labour shortages spread among more industries and more occupations. These shortages have not affected enough Toronto employers until now to make them totally receptive to newcomers.³¹ To date, it is government and community agencies, rather than employers, that are reacting with a growing sense of urgency. Often, what needs to be done has already been identified, and it includes:

- Creating partnerships to promote a greater understanding by each stakeholder group of the concerns and needs of every other group and a willingness to work together for more efficient and effective integration of newcomers
- Sharing best and promising practices within and across stakeholder groups
- Setting standards for regulators, including an appeal process and the monitoring and auditing of opportunities for improvement (Ontario's Fair Access legislation is designed to address much of this)
- Getting more employers, professional associations and post-secondary institutions involved in mentoring, internships and bridging programs
- Providing bridging education to address cultural differences
- Improving socialization through mentoring, internships and bridging programs, and providing training for all parties – newcomers, supervisors, managers and other employees – about cultural differences and how to be culturally literate
- Offering language training and occupation-specific conferences/workshops to newcomers

- Enabling successful immigrants to provide support to more recent newcomers (matched on occupation, ethnicity, gender, etc.) (Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2003; Internationally Trained Workers Project 2004, 13-14)

However, there is a “failure of how,” as noted by the former vice-president for diversity at TD Bank Financial Group (Etienne 2006). This includes how to get credentials recognized in a timely and appropriate manner; how to get employers involved in internship, mentoring and bridging programs; how to deal with the unique needs of small and medium-sized employers; and how best to socialize newcomers into the Canadian workplace and its culture.

In addition, what is not known about current programs is what is working, exactly, and what needs to be done, where there are unnecessary overlaps and where resources are being used most effectively. We do not know how effective and efficient current government, community agency and educational institutional programs are. However, we do know that they are typically used by about 40 percent of recent immigrants who experience problems in getting work. Another how to, therefore, is how to effectively reach the more than 60 percent of newcomers who turn to friends and relatives when faced with such problems.³² A new barrier related to the how is also likely to emerge: immigrants are increasingly moving to the suburbs, but most of the community resources are found closer to the centre of the city.

All this points to the need for more program evaluation – a critical element for improving labour market integration services and supports for newcomers. Some evaluation has been done. For example, PROMPT (Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades) reviewed the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s bridge training and concluded that it had “little success in helping immigrants get jobs” (Centre for Research and Education in Human Services 2006, 27). Formative evaluations have also been conducted on the Enhanced Language Training Initiative, by CIC (CIC 2008), and on the Foreign Credential Recognition program, by HRDC (HRDC 2007a). It is time to develop a systematic program evaluation project. There is now a wide range of programs and services for newcomers related to issues that have been raised here (e.g., job-specific language training, credentialing and socialization). Many of these programs require different kinds of evaluation, focusing on both quantitative aspects (the number of newcomers arriving in various occupa-

tions compared to program capacities) and qualitative aspects (for example, how well the programs are achieving their objectives, how cost-effective they are, whether there are overlaps between different programs, whether there is appropriate accountability in the programs and what else is needed). In addition, assessment could be made of the various partnerships to understand what works well.

Early program evaluation is critical: even with the best intentions, there can be unanticipated consequences and problems during the implementation phase (Cullingworth and Bambrah 2004, 40). This means it is essential to assess the actual implementation and results, because policies on paper are a necessary but insufficient prerequisite to achieving effective integration (Birjandian 2005, 24). Given the wide range of ethnic groups who immigrate to Canada, it is necessary, over time, to ensure that the programs and services are meeting the myriad needs of these various groups, including those that are gender-specific. Clearly, newcomers from various communities and age groups and from both genders need to be involved in the evaluations.

This last point is particularly important because questions need to be addressed about the success or lack of success of the programs aimed at the various groups. Which groups are benefiting from mentoring programs? Which groups face the greatest credentialing difficulties? We need to know, across occupations and immigrant groups, whether the solutions are equally effective for all ethnic and age groups and for both genders, or whether distinct solutions would better serve newcomers – whether customized services would make sense (Public Policy Forum 2006, 48-49). It is ironic that the issue of diversity is seldom mentioned (except among community organizations), even though newcomers contribute much to Canada’s ethnic diversity.

One of the voices least heard in this research was that of employers. This may be because of the Web-based nature of the research conducted here: individual organizations may well be pouring efforts and resources into diversity programs without communicating that fact on the Internet. Still, in addition to diversity programs, which are a good start, and involvement in mentorship programs, some employers need to do a great deal more. TRIEC’s efforts to involve employers are an important resource for Toronto and the surrounding region, but more employer and government partnerships are needed (Nixon 2005). Involving employer associations and professional bodies will

probably have beneficial results. Inertia needs to be overcome to help employers make use of the internship, mentoring and bridging programs that are available. Greater union involvement is also needed.

As noted earlier, Web sites and successful programs such as mentoring need to be evaluated to learn what is working and what is not. For instance, a major research project is needed to ascertain the clarity of the Internet-based information provided for prospective immigrants and newcomers and to determine, in particular, which common misunderstandings occur within various cultural groups and occupations. The first question to address is whether prospective immigrants have access to the Internet overseas. Research found that the Internet is the primary source of information about Canada, in particular in India, the United States, Japan and Australia (FCRO 2007c). Among those countries, however, only India is a large source of immigrants to Canada. Web sites that are made attractive with pictures and other graphics may be more difficult or frustrating to access for those who have less sophisticated equipment and/or fewer ways of connecting to the Internet.

Another concern is whether the information provided is suitable for and understandable to its audiences. The first issue here is that of the reading level³³: Is the language accessible to those for whom English is a second language? Another issue is the words and terminology used; for example, do expressions such as “regulated professions” and “non-regulated professions,” “assessment,” “credential recognition” and “licensing” have the same meaning around the world? Is there a rationale for posting some material in foreign languages?³⁴ A third concern is whether the information is clear, given what immigrants are likely to know (or not know) already. The information needs to show sensitivity to the probable lack of knowledge about some aspects of Canadian life among prospective immigrants, and to be especially clear in areas where misunderstandings are likely to occur. For example, most people outside Canada are unlikely to be familiar with the various provinces, and the separation between federal and provincial responsibilities is something most prospective immigrants have yet to learn about. These matters must be clearly explained to avoid misconceptions. Fourth, many Web sites geared to immigrants are linked to others that are not, and it can be difficult to find the relevant material, particularly if one expects to be linked directly to the appropriate Web pages. There is always the possibility that some links will be out of date, but even letting people

know what to expect or how to search (e.g., key words) on a new Web site would help. Fifth, some Web sites promise information that does not seem to be available or is not helpful to immigrants (e.g., labour market data, the self-assessment language test on the Going-to-Canada Web site). Frustrating loops also raise problems. For example, one government Web page headed “Improving your Language Skills Before you Arrive” has a relevant link nearby, but on the second screen, the section “Before you arrive in Ontario...” provides some information and then directs the reader to “Learn more by visiting the ‘Learn English’ Web site,” which is the first Web site accessed. Finally, while government Web sites may be distinguishable, it is not clear how either overseas immigrants or newcomers would be able to distinguish between Web sites of community agencies and those of immigration consultants. If this is a problem, is there a need to have some kind of “stamp of approval”?

Specific evaluation projects, based on surveys and research, could also include the following:

- There is a certain amount of finger-pointing among the various stakeholders involved in the integration of newcomers. To help facilitate the necessary partnerships, it would be useful to ask each stakeholder what it feels it can do best and what assistance would be helpful.
- How can businesses partner better with government, community agencies, and other businesses?
- Why do employers feel they need workers with Canadian experience? What is the true purpose behind the requirement? Once this is determined, it will be easier to ascertain the best way for immigrants to gain the needed knowledge, experience or socialization.
- What are the best means of socializing/orienting newcomers about the norms of the workplace? Could a bridging education model be used for socialization for immigrants? Such programs could be offered through colleges, unions and professional associations.

Conclusion

The problems of immigrant labour market integration, and many of the solutions, have been identified. New federal monies will be flowing into Ontario and Toronto with the new tripartite Immigration Agreement. Getting multiple stakehold-

ers involved is proving to be essential; this has been recognized and the process is underway. However, the very existence of various new programs creates the impression that the problem is “solved” in the minds of some stakeholders, although many are well aware of the gap between current situations and desired outcomes. Also, it is clear that programs must be locally managed, since each community has its own unique issues and opportunities. Program evaluation is urgently needed to monitor the programs, to determine how well they are able to fulfill their intended objectives and how well coordinated they are, to provide information for adjustments, and to avoid gaps and overlaps. Information on successes and dead ends needs to be shared. Clearly, the programs must be able to handle larger numbers of new immigrants. As Calleja (2000) notes, the enormous sense of frustration experienced by newcomers, combined with the waste in human capital, is unacceptable.

While there has been only passing reference to this issue in the present paper, there are indications that the disadvantage that certain groups of Canadians have had to face historically (e.g., women, visible minorities and persons with disabilities) is compounded in the case of newcomers (Li 2001; Preston and Murnaghan 2005). Program evaluation must therefore include collecting information that can be analyzed to determine if the experience of male and female, able-bodied and disabled newcomers differs. Since a large majority of newcomers are members of visible minorities, this group is likely to be studied, but it would be even more helpful to analyze the data in terms of ethnicity and country of origin, not just race.

In addition, it is important to manage newcomers’ expectations realistically. It may be impossible to eliminate all frustration, but if newcomers have realistic expectations and there are programs to meet their needs, frustration will occur less. Barriers need to be removed, and this is a long-term process, particularly when the population of newcomers is as diverse as it is in Toronto. As well, small and medium-sized employers require help that is designed to meet their needs and concerns. As noted earlier, TRIEC is beginning to focus on this sector. In addition, a new book by Laroche and Rutherford (2007) provides practical advice about recruiting, retaining and promoting immigrants that would be helpful to all employers, regardless of size. Finally, small and medium-sized employers are likely to be more receptive to the idea of hiring newcomers, since 52 percent of them have indicated that they are experiencing skill shortages (Alboim and McIsaac 2007).

Canadians have taken immigration for granted. Since Canada has always had a stream of immigrants coming to its shores, many do not realize that the immigration situation has changed. Canada is now competing globally for highly skilled immigrants who are unwilling to waste their human capital. If Canada is seen as a place where it is difficult to use one’s skills, not only will immigrants choose not to come to Canada, but newcomers already in the country will leave. This is already happening. A recent study found that the immigrants to Canada who are most likely to leave are skilled workers and entrepreneurs who are highly mobile internationally (Aydemir and Robinson 2006). Canada has been primarily a land of immigrants and it must continue to welcome them if it is to continue to prosper. Canada, and particularly Toronto, must commit to integrating newcomers into the labour force by the most effective and efficient means possible. In conclusion, the difficulties facing new immigrants are not an “immigrant problem” (Wayland 2006, iv), they are a Toronto problem and a Canadian problem.

Appendix: Resources for Recent Immigrants and for Employers in Toronto

Newcomer Information Centres (NIC)
http://www.settlement.org/site/EVENTS/NIC_home.asp

A.C.C.E.S. (Accessible Community Counseling and Employment Services)
www.accestrain.com

Centre for Foreign-Trained Professionals and Trades People (COSTI/HUMBER COLLEGE)
www.cftpt.org

COSTI Immigrant Services
www.costi.org

Community MicroSkills Development Centre, Employment Resource Centre
www.poss.ca

Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning Government and Community Relations

JobStart
www.jobstart-cawl.org

JVS (Jobs, Vision, Success)
www.jvstoronto.org

OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
www.ocasi.org (416)

Seneca College – Re-Employment Centre for International Professionals
[www.senecac.on.ca/part time/main.html](http://www.senecac.on.ca/part%20time/main.html)

Skills for Change
www.skillsforchange.org/employer

YMCA of Toronto Newcomers Information Centre
<http://www.ymcatoronto.org/en/newcomers/portal.html>

Ontario Regulators for Access
www.regulators4access.ca

Employment Ontario
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/etlanding.html>

Ontario Network for Internationally Trained Professionals
<http://www.onip.ca/>

Skills International
<http://skillsinternational.ca/index-en.php>

Canadian Information Centre for International Medical Graduates
www.IMG-Canada.ca

NeCTAR
<http://www.costi.org/skilledtrades/about.php>

Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals and Trades People
www.cftpt.org/tradespersons.aspx
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=214

TRIEC
<http://www.triec.ca/>

Government of Canada “Going to Canada”
<http://www.goingtocanada.gc.ca>

CanadaInfoNet Mentoring Program
<http://www.canadainfonet.org/mentoring%20program/default.asp?s=1>

Possibilities Online Employment Resource Centre (ERC)
<http://www.poss.ca/en/neo/jobsearch>

Government of Canada, Foreign Credentials Referral Office
www.credentials.gc.ca/about/index.asp

Global Experience Ontario
www.ontariolimmigration.ca/english/geo.asp

Ontario Immigration
<http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/index.asp>

Teach in Ontario
www.teachinontario.ca

Notes

- 1 What has changed in recent years is that whereas initially immigrants were found in the city core, today they locate more and more in the suburbs. See Murdie (2008, 7-9) for a discussion of why both longer-term immigrants and more recent immigrants are moving to the suburbs.
- 2 Typically, “recent immigrants” are those who have been in Canada less than ten years.
- 3 Members of visible minorities are non-white by colour and non-Caucasian by race. The three largest groups of visible minorities in Canada are Asians, Blacks, and East Indians (people from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh).
- 4 The following statistics provide a comparison between the three gateway cities, though the figures are only a rough estimation, because they assume that immigrants from regions other than the United States and Europe are members of visible minority groups. Based on this assumption and on data from the 2006 census, 85 percent of immigrants who settle in Toronto, 75 percent of those who choose to live in Montreal and 87 percent of those who select Vancouver would be visible minorities. For Canada as a whole, this estimation process suggests that 81 percent of all immigrants are visible minorities. This is somewhat higher than the estimate that 75 percent of all immigrants who have come to Canada since 2001 are members of visible minority groups (City of Toronto 2008, 2).
- 5 Entrepreneurship is important among immigrants, since they are disproportionately found among entrepreneurs and “many of [them] started their own businesses after being excluded from large businesses and the public sector” (Public Policy Forum 2006, 30).
- 6 Only 15.7 percent of all immigrants planning to settle permanently in Canada have a trades certificate or non-university diploma, compared to 45 percent who have university education (Canadian Council on Learning 2006, 77).
- 7 OntarioImmigration Facts (accessed January 12, 2006).
- 8 The executive director of the National Judicial Institute was appointed to review issues related to regulatory bodies. Thomson (2005, xviii) strongly recommended an appeal review process that would allow appeals on the following grounds: decisions to deny registration, decisions to grant or deny provisional, limited, or conditional registration, lack of registration decisions within a reasonable time, and refusals to accept or process applications.
- 9 This is consistent with a January 2007 decision by the Ontario Superior Court requiring regulatory bodies to be more flexible in the credentialing process. The case involved a refugee from Iran, Fatima Siadat, who was unable to provide the originals of her credentials and employment record and could not obtain them since she was in exile. The Court stated that the Ontario College of Teachers had violated the Human Rights Code by not accepting photocopies of the documents (Keung 2007).
- 10 In 1990 Canada ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education. The convention promotes international mobility by advocating wider recognition of higher education and professional qualifications.
- 11 Unrelated to FCRO, but involved in providing information about studying in Canada or abroad is the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) which is a unit of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), an intergovernmental body of provincial ministers of education. This organization would have good information on the equivalency between many Canadian and international institutions of higher education. This information is stored in a regularly updated database covering more than 800 professional organizations. In partnership with the provinces and territories, CICIC also provides current information about postsecondary education systems in Canada for a variety of users, including Canadian missions and evaluation agencies abroad. CICIC helps newcomers and employers by referring individuals who want to obtain an assessment of their educational, professional, and occupational credentials to the appropriate bodies. Its mission is to collect, organize and distribute information and act as a national clearing house and referral service to support the recognition and portability of Canadian and international educational and occupational qualifications. CICIC provides on its Web site a list of all the private and public credential evaluation services that abide by the *General Guiding Principles for Good Practice in the Assessment of Foreign Credentials*.
- 12 Information provided by CIC, May 2008.
- 13 Jobs are a specific grouping of duties and responsibilities that employers require someone to do. Occupations are broader. While they capture a specific kind of work, jobs within an occupation can differ in terms of duties, responsibilities and even level within an organization. For example, the four-digit NOC code 1111, Financial Auditors and Accountants, lists 38 job titles encompassed by this single occupation. Included are jobs at different levels (student, senior, supervisor, chief accountant), those requiring different kinds of credentials (certified accountant, certified general accountant) and jobs that are specialized in various fields (cost accountant, tax accountant). While all these jobs are similar enough to be in the same occupation, they are different enough that someone trained as a certified general accountant cannot do the work of a certified accountant.
- 14 The Foreign Credential Recognition Program began at least as early as 2003-04, according to the Treasury Board Secretariat n.d.(1), although an HRSDC April 2005 news release (2005a) implies that the program was just being launched. It appears that no money was spent on the program in 2003-04 and 2004-05 (Treasury Board Secretariat n.d.[2]) .
- 15 It is not known how many people actually requested or require an assessment. Note that other assessment services can be found on the city’s Web site for newcomers (City of Toronto n.d.[3]).
- 16 For a listing of trades requiring mandatory certification, see Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities n.d.(2).
- 17 Work is being done on two new assessment tools, but as of the fall of 2007 neither was ready. The Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) is based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks and will provide a communicative assessment of language proficiency for internationally educated newcomers whose first language is not English. It is designed for the placement of candidates into bridge-to-employment programs, using the national stan-

- dard to help determine eligibility (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks n.d.). The Enhanced Language Training Placement Assessment for placement in language training and bridging programs is being developed by the Centre for Education and Training (n.d.).
- 18 The program is offered in partnership with the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally Trained People (CASIP). The participating CASIP member agencies are ACCES, the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, JobStart, Community Microskills and the Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology.
 - 19 Nanowave Inc. employs more than 100 employees and designs and manufactures microwave and millimeter wave components and subsystems used for commercial communications.
 - 20 It should be noted that the information on the Ontario Jobs Future Web site is based on National Occupational Classification codes, which provide information on occupations, not jobs.
 - 21 Statistics provided by T. Cooper, COSTI, February 5, 2008.
 - 22 Conversation with Debbie Douglas, Executive Director of OCASI, February 8, 2007.
 - 23 An assessment of community services is beyond the scope of this paper. However, their potential involvement in socialization is high; 87 percent of them provide services directly to new immigrants, while 2 percent represent and provide services to other agencies and 11 percent do both (based on a survey of 61 immigrant and refugee serving agencies in Toronto; see Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Family Service Association of Toronto 2006, 5). These agencies are involved in addressing the barriers noted in this paper: the vast majority of them (53 agencies) indicated that they provide employment and skills training, and all indicated that they provide settlement, language and literacy services. However, having services and having fully effective services are different things, as shown by a survey done by the Toronto Training Board (2006, 5). This survey found that 73 percent of the respondents (community agencies, educators, employers, unions and government) indicated that there are insufficient programs to help integrate immigrants into the labour market. A survey of agency staff identified a number of problems, including the lack of fit between the programs offered and clients' needs. A lack of resources is also noted, but it is not just a matter of funding (e.g., for interpreters), but also of how the funding is distributed. More specifically, funding tends to be for short-term projects and contracts, which hampers the agencies from being more effective (Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Family Service Association of Toronto 2006, 12; Graham and Phillips 2006, 31; Wayland 2006).
 - 24 <http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/bridge.asp> (accessed August 18, 2008).
 - 25 Apprenticeship information is available in 23 languages.
 - 26 The bank is also introducing practices to provide better banking, mortgage and credit card services to immigrants who do not have the standard credit history (Nixon 2006, 7).
 - 27 <http://www.triec.ca/index.asp> (accessed January 16, 2007).
 - 28 Citizenship and Immigration Canada is evaluating the results of Enhanced Language Training (George Brown College 2007, 17).
 - 29 At the time of writing, TRIEC was in the process of recruiting someone to work on SME issues.
 - 30 In an international survey of 33,000 employers in 23 countries, Canada ranked second in terms of the proportion of employers experiencing a labour shortage. Sixty-six percent of Canadian employers (compared to 40 percent globally) were experiencing skills shortages (Beauchesne 2006). Skills shortages in Canada were most prevalent in the following occupations: sales representatives, customer service representatives, engineers, drivers, mechanics, labourers, chefs, cooks, electricians, skilled trades and nurses.
 - 31 Conversation with Kevin McLellan of TRIEC, February 19, 2007.
 - 32 The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has started looking into this issue.
 - 33 The Ontario Web site aimed at those who are considering immigrating, ontarioimmigration.ca, appears to be the best in terms of the reading level and the use of pictures and some material in foreign languages.
 - 34 It might be helpful to have some key concepts translated into various foreign languages to ensure the accurate communication of vital information. This would help in the process of learning the correct technical terms used in Canada.

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Le Canada est d'abord un pays d'immigration et se trouve en tant que tel confronté à de nouveaux défis. Plus qu'autrefois, les immigrants sont aujourd'hui susceptibles d'appartenir à des groupes de minorités visibles et, bien que mieux instruits, ils sont financièrement plus mal en point que leurs prédécesseurs des décennies passées. De fait, les nouveaux immigrants subissent un chômage plus élevé et touchent des revenus inférieurs. Cela n'annonce rien de bon pour le Canada puisque la population active du pays ne peut s'accroître sans immigrants : de 1991 à 2001, la croissance de la main-d'œuvre a reposé à hauteur de 70 p. 100 sur l'immigration, cette proportion étant encore plus élevée à Toronto. Or les candidats à l'immigration jouissent aujourd'hui d'un horizon mondialisé qui élargit l'éventail des pays où ils peuvent s'établir. Tous ces facteurs expliquent que l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants revêt une dimension critique, notamment dans la région de Toronto où arrivent et s'établissent la plus grande partie des nouveaux immigrants.

On reconnaît de plus en plus les problèmes d'intégration des immigrants, comme en témoignent depuis quelques années plusieurs initiatives visant à les résoudre : nouvelles lois, réorganisation des responsabilités, nouveaux programmes et partenariats. Cette étude présente une vue d'ensemble des programmes et services de soutien destinés à l'intégration des nouveaux immigrants au marché du travail torontois. Ces programmes ciblent les immigrants, les employeurs ou les organismes de services aux immigrants. Ils sont généralement parrainés par le gouvernement fédéral ou la province mais y participent aussi d'autres intervenants comme les organismes d'évaluation des titres de compétences, les organes de réglementation de différents métiers et professions, les employeurs, les établissements d'enseignement et les organismes communautaires.

Quatre barrières freinent surtout l'intégration des immigrants au marché du travail : la faible reconnaissance de l'expérience et des titres de compétences acquis à l'étranger, le manque d'aptitudes linguistiques et de communication adaptées au milieu de travail, l'exigence d'une expérience de travail canadienne et la discrimination. Nan Weiner examine en profondeur les trois premières – l'analyse de la discrimination déborde le cadre de cette étude – et les programmes offerts aux immigrants de la région torontoise pour leur venir en aide.

L'auteure évalue l'efficacité de ces programmes et services selon les critères suivants : la reconnaissance des

trois barrières en question, l'élaboration et l'application des solutions ainsi que le mode d'évaluation des programmes. Or, elle constate qu'on est souvent parfaitement conscient de l'existence de ces barrières et qu'on connaît même les solutions à mettre en œuvre, mais que l'application des nouvelles initiatives (comme la *Loi de 2006 sur l'accès équitable aux professions réglementées*, ou *FARPA* en anglais) en est à ses tout débuts et que l'évaluation des programmes reste fragmentaire.

Étant donné cette faiblesse en matière d'évaluation des programmes, estime l'auteure, il est particulièrement difficile de cerner les moyens les plus efficaces d'abattre ces barrières. Mais il fait peu de doute que l'établissement de partenariats entre les intervenants est d'une grande utilité. L'étude montre d'ailleurs que l'engagement de la Ville de Toronto et du Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council a grandement contribué à résoudre certains des problèmes actuels.

Elle décrit aussi les mesures facilitantes prises par les gouvernements fédéral et provincial pour reconnaître les titres de compétences, notamment la création par Ottawa du Bureau d'orientation relatif aux titres de compétences étrangers et la *FARPA*. Sans oublier l'Initiative de la formation linguistique axée sur les professions soutenue par Ottawa. Mais il reste beaucoup à faire du côté de la formation aux communications. Davantage de programmes de mentorat, de stages et de préparation à l'emploi contribueraient aussi à dénouer l'impasse que représente l'exigence d'une expérience de travail canadienne.

Selon Nan Weiner, on a déjà défini comme suit les principales mesures qui permettraient d'améliorer la situation :

- Multiplier les partenariats ;
- Partager entre groupes d'intervenants les pratiques les plus efficaces et les plus prometteuses ;
- Établir des normes pour les organismes de réglementation, y compris en matière de procédure d'appel, de suivi et de vérification des mesures d'amélioration ;
- Élaborer des formations de préparation à l'emploi adaptées aux différences culturelles ;
- Améliorer le contenu des sites Web destinés aux immigrants, avant et après leur arrivée.

Mais le principal problème reste la difficulté d'assurer l'application la plus efficace de ces mesures, insiste l'auteure. Si bien que la clé de toute amélioration des services d'intégration au marché du travail et de soutien aux nouveaux arrivants réside dans une évaluation rigoureuse des programmes qui leur sont destinés. L'heure est donc venue d'élaborer un vaste projet d'évaluation des programmes.

Summary

Canada, which is primarily a country of immigrants, today faces new challenges. Recent immigrants are more likely to be members of visible minority groups than in the past, and while they are better educated than their predecessors of previous decades, they are not doing as well economically. In fact, recent immigrants have higher unemployment rates and lower incomes. This is a considerable problem, because Canada's labour force will not grow without immigrants: between 1991 and 2001, 70 percent of net labour force growth in Canada was due to immigration, and this figure was even higher in Toronto. Moreover, today's migrants have a more global perspective, and they thus have a wider choice of countries in which to settle. For all of these reasons, the labour market integration of newcomers in the country as a whole is critical, and it is even more so in Toronto, where the largest proportion of new immigrants arrive and settle.

The economic integration problems faced by newcomers are gradually being recognized. In recent years, many initiatives have been introduced to help immigrants overcome labour market barriers. These initiatives include new legislation, new programs, new partnerships and a reorganization of responsibilities. The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the programs and support services specifically directed at helping new immigrants integrate into the Toronto labour market. These programs may be targeted at the newcomers themselves, at employers or at organizations providing services to immigrants. The programs are typically funded by the federal or the provincial government, but other stakeholders are also involved, including credential assessment organizations, the regulatory bodies of various professions and trades, employers, educational organizations and community agencies.

Immigrants to Canada face four main barriers to labour market integration: the lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience, the need for language and communication skills specific to the workplace, employers' requirement for Canadian experience, and discrimination. While a full discussion of discrimination is beyond the scope of this paper, Nan Weiner discusses extensively the first three barriers and the programs intended to help immigrants overcome them in the Toronto context.

The author assesses the programs and services available to newcomers in terms of the following criteria:

awareness of the different barriers, the identification of solutions and their implementation, and program evaluation. She finds that while there is a growing awareness of the impediments to labour market integration, and also of the necessity and means of addressing them, the implementation of many initiatives is just beginning (with, for example, the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*, or *FARPA*). She also reports that some program evaluation is done, but not in a comprehensive or systematic way. As Weiner points out, program evaluation is essential to know what are the most effective means of providing support to newcomers seeking work. It seems clear, however, that efficiencies can be gained through partnerships among stakeholders. For instance, the study shows that the involvement of the City of Toronto and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council has been especially helpful in addressing the problems.

The paper also highlights the facilitative efforts on the part of the federal and provincial governments in credential recognition; in particular the new Foreign Credential Referral Office (federal) and *FARPA* (Ontario). The federal government is also involved in occupation-specific language training through Enhanced Language Training. However, Weiner considers that more needs to be done in communications training, and she recommends expanding mentoring, internship and bridging programs to help overcome the catch-22 requirement for Canadian work experience.

According to Nan Weiner, the steps required to improve the labour market integration of newcomers have already been identified. They include:

- Creating more partnerships
- Sharing best and promising practices within and across stakeholder groups
- Setting standards for regulators, including implementing an appeal process and monitoring and auditing opportunities for improvement
- Providing bridging education to address culture differences
- Improving the Web sites available to immigrants both before and after their arrival

However, Weiner stresses that the main challenge is to determine how to implement these steps most effectively. She concludes that the time has come to develop a systematic program evaluation project in order to continue to improve labour market integration programs for new immigrants.