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FOREWORD

To assign a value to something is to valorize it according to the Oxford English Dictionary. This study explored to what extent, and in some cases how, employers, sector councils and organizations (commonly known as Immigrant Settlement Agencies – ISAs) assess and give value to or valorize the prior foreign work experience of immigrants.

Although the current economic state of affairs points to a concern for not enough work rather than not enough workers, demographic statistics indicating that Canada’s net labour force will be replaced by immigrant workers as a result of a low birth rate and the retirement of an aging population are nonetheless still valid. It would be prudent to prepare for the moment when the economy rebounds and all employers will be looking for skilled and experienced workers, regardless of where that experience has been acquired.

Indeed, while solutions to recruitment and hiring, whether in a struggling or a boom economy, are as individual as the individual companies and jobs involved, it is the need for skilled workers to help contribute to the prosperity and success of Canadian businesses that will motivate employers to do better in recognizing the qualifications and non-Canadian work experience of immigrant workers in the medium to long term.

Major corporations as well as small businesses will all face this situation. But while large companies may be able to make the necessary investment in resources through human resource departments, some smaller businesses have looked to industry associations to develop collective approaches.

This report details and summarized these efforts to valorize foreign work experience..

I. INTRODUCTION

It is generally acknowledged that immigrants to Canada face three main barriers in their search for work commensurate with their background and qualifications:

- difficulties in having their foreign credentials recognized;
- weak English or French-language skills, particularly profession-specific language skills; and
- the discounting, lack of valorization or non-recognition of foreign work experience.

Most programs and initiatives designed to address these barriers, however, only address the first two systematically.¹

These initiatives primarily involve processes for assessing and recognizing formal qualifications, and the development and delivery of sector- and profession-specific bridging programs comprising formal classroom and laboratory training to update immigrants' knowledge and technical and language skills. Others offer workplace-based mentored or monitored training; some are a combination of both approaches. On the other hand, few seem to address the challenge of factoring a value for foreign work experience in a fair and equitable way into hiring practices.

The online Employer Resource Guide in the Lookingahead Website (<http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca/employer/>) observes:

One of the biggest obstacles for newcomers to the Canadian labour market is the focus on Canadian experience and credentials within the hiring process. Understandably, employers look for a familiar point of reference when assessing a candidate's skills and background. They look for experiences and companies they recognize on a resume or in an interview. However, this mistrust of international experience places new immigrants in a Catch 22 situation where they can't get a job without Canadian experience and can't get Canadian experience without a job. It also means employers are missing out on a valuable talent pool and the opportunity to tap into a growing customer base.

How can this Catch-22 be overcome?

II. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

At the same time as the numbers of skilled immigrants arriving under the Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP) and Temporary Worker Programs (TWP) have largely grown at an increasing rate, “[i]mmigrants, regardless of their age at arrival, appear to be treated like new entrants by the labour market”². In the same review, Picot and Sweetman note

¹ See for example Alboim, Finnie, and Meng. 2005; Alboim and McIsaac. 2007; Birrell and McIsaac. 2006; Chicha and Charest, 2008; Lopes 2004 and 2006; Picot and Sweetman. 2005; Reitz 2001, 2006a and 2006b; Weiner 2008;

² Picot and Sweetman. 2005

that “[a] number of studies indicate that the foreign work experience of entering immigrants is increasingly discounted in the Canadian labour market”, while Alboim and McIsaac (2008) report that “recent research that looks at the return on foreign work experience and education has shown that the foreign work experience is particularly discounted by the labour market”.

Employers rightly consider an applicant’s prior work experience an important factor affecting her or his ability not only to adapt to the new workplace, but also to translate practices and perspectives from previous workplaces effectively and efficiently into a new workplace culture. This circumstance requires immigrants to express themselves clearly and appropriately. As Emma Hamer, a career and performance consultant in Vancouver, states:

While a strong accent can be overcome, poor language skills effectively disqualify the candidate from all but unskilled or semi-skilled labour. An engineer, or a construction manager, or a commercial banker, who cannot communicate effectively, using the appropriate vocabulary and at the correct levels of abstraction, with his clients, direct reports and or sub-trades, or with senior management, is basically unemployable.

(E-mail to George Tillman 29 September 2008)

At the same time, employers, recruiters and hiring managers must themselves have the appropriate skills to recognize and comprehend different cultural styles of expression, and to respond effectively to these in order to reach mutual agreement with immigrant candidates about the interpretation of their experience and how it can be related to the culture of the employer’s workplace. It should be noted that Canadian candidates who have Canadian work experience but who cannot use appropriate vocabulary with clients at a suitable level of abstraction, in other words who lack essential employability and communications skills, would also be likely to have difficulty in finding employment at a managerial level.

Considerable information is available concerning processes for assessing and recognizing non-Canadian formal qualifications (i.e., trades certificates, diplomas and degrees), as well as about bridging programs that provide technical and language training to update immigrants’ knowledge and skills and mentoring to facilitate their finding jobs commensurate with their background and qualifications. An extensive Canadian literature exists on how Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) methods are used to document how knowledge and skills are acquired outside formal learning settings, including the workplace, and to indicate how they can be related to the Canadian context³. But little study or assessment appears to have been done on how, and to what extent, immigrants’ foreign work experience *in itself* is assessed and valued.

Some employers, and various stakeholders, have investigated and experimented with ways to allow immigrants to demonstrate in the workplace or in the field their knowledge, skills, and insights into their occupation. Workplace training in the information technology industry, hiring strategies in the trucking and automotive repair

³ cf. most recently Chapter 5 in Morrissey and Myers 2008.

sectors, and field placements in some engineering companies offer some examples of initiatives that try to valorize non-Canadian experience.

One practical approach is to have employers provide a clear statement in job descriptions of the extent and nature of work experience required for each identified task and responsibility, and then have immigrants demonstrate their skills and expertise, either in a simulation in the workplace or in the field. This approach allows identification of strengths, including new perspectives on how tasks can be accomplished, as well as gaps such as language problems and differences in technical knowledge.

Many provinces help trades people whose training and experience have been acquired outside Canada to obtain recognition of their trade qualifications and experience, or enter an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship recognizes two categories of trades: those for which certification is mandatory and those for which it is voluntary. In Ontario, for example, there are 20 trades for which certification is mandatory. In some provinces, immigrant trades people who have enough work experience to meet provincial standards and who pass a written examination may receive a certificate of qualification. Many of these trades are those for which highly skilled workers are in short supply and which therefore must be filled by immigrant skills. Some provinces like Alberta currently rely on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program together with apprentice certification either outside Canada or once the worker has arrived to fill skills gaps.

These efforts to understand and recognize the extent to which foreign work experience can contribute to the Canadian workplace are encouraging, but little is known about them. The current project was undertaken to compile an overview and critique of assessments and/or evaluations of immigrant labour market integration projects that valorize foreign work experience, and provide Canadian workplace experience and on-the-job training. In particular, we sought to highlight how foreign work experience is integrated into the assessment and recognition of immigrants' qualifications; how immigrants gain access to Canadian experience and/or training; and the nature of such experience and training.

III. GENERAL FINDINGS

Research and interviews identified a broad range of practices and initiatives to integrate immigrant skills into the workplace more effectively and quickly. Most assess the non-Canadian work experience of immigrants through a combination of all or several processes that include competency-based interviews, paper or computer-based competency and essential skills tests, or competence demonstrations in the field, workplace or in simulations. The template that comprises Appendix A refers to a variety of these processes.

The information from these processes is used to design orientation to Canadian workplace culture and “gap-filling” training. Very few of these practices and processes have been evaluated formally.

A small number of organizations (see those listed in the template⁴) have experimented with processes designed to help immigrants and employers develop a mutual understanding of the similarities and differences in their own experiences of the workplace in their field or industry, and for both to recognize explicitly the strengths or value that the immigrant may bring to the job. In the following sections, some examples of these experiments are described in fuller detail.

In general, this section briefly describes the main findings of the research concerning these approaches under three headings:

- a. innovative practices (including summaries of case studies);
- b. challenges; and
- c. policy, political, social or economic factors influencing initiatives.

(a) Innovative practices

Promising and innovative practices are exemplified by organizational approaches described in greater detail in the template⁵ and in the case studies⁶. Each of the case studies (and in a more general fashion the rest of the initiatives recorded in the template) illustrates the importance of recognizing that competency testing (including language testing) and credential assessment and recognition only produce a partial and instrumental understanding of the potential value of a candidate with foreign work experience. The case studies also illustrate various ways of turning employers' attention to the personal qualities and intangible know-how of individuals who have "been in the business", but in a different, foreign context. Valorizing that experience involves developing a relationship with candidates, to the degree of understanding their perspective on the industry and the personal value they see in it, and of conveying to the candidate the employer's perspective and sense of values.

The innovative approaches to valorizing foreign work experience can be understood as falling into two broad categories.

The first category comprises more or less intensive preparation for, and organizing and conducting interviews. Employers such as RBC and the Assiniboine Credit Union, some immigrant counsellors (e.g., Integration Resources), and a number of immigrant settlement agencies (ISAs – e.g., the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, LASI World Skills) train or coach immigrant applicants, recruiters, and managers in cross-cultural communication techniques to explain and understand how foreign experience relates to, and may fit into, the Canadian labour market. This approach requires that:

- immigrants learn about the cultural context of the Canadian workplace, and the general Canadian labour market, and on the operations and informal (unspoken) culture of the industry sector in which he or she wishes to work; and
- that recruiters and managers learn about the effects of cultural differences on communication.

⁴ Cf. Appendix A.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cf. Appendix C.

Both groups receive training in mirroring techniques to ensure mutual understanding between interviewers and interviewed. Some emphasis is placed on the responsibility of recruiters/managers to understand the subjective experience of immigrants and to use reflection techniques in interviews to confirm their understanding. While the solution to valorizing prior work experience will be as different and distinct as each employment context, the motivation for the solution is the same: to produce the best bottom line for both employer and employee. Six case studies illustrate this assertion.

RBC

RBC has found that successfully integrating immigrants gives a competitive advantage. It therefore conceives recruitment and hiring as a two-way street leading to mutual understanding. Recruiters and managers are trained in cross-cultural awareness and interview techniques so that they are able to ensure mutual understanding with applicants, who are asked to explain in interviews how their past experience relates to the job. Recruiters and applicants are debriefed about the interview to identify ways to improve the process.

Assiniboine Credit Union

The Credit Union Immigrant Integration Program ensures that employees and managers participated in diversity or cultural awareness training prior to starting the program. Candidates are required to have language benchmark levels (especially for speaking) appropriate for the positions. Recognizing that candidates are very overqualified for the first position for which they are hired, reasonable timelines for advancement are set out from the outset. In addition, a buddy system or mentorship is offered to new employees with someone who has previously participated in the program. Regular communication and feedback from participants is used to continually build and modify the program, and additional training (e.g. in English, in communication skills) is offered as needed.

Manulife

Manulife's human resource recruiters and their hiring managers provide clear job definitions to CareerBridge, and receives rigorous assessment of immigrant qualifications and experience, including tests of language skills, and verification of educational and work records and immigration status. Candidates must have been in Canada no longer than 3 years; have a minimum of 3 years international work experience in their field; attend a screening interview; have a minimum bachelor's degree with Canadian equivalency assessment; and lack paid Canadian work experience in their profession. They are placed in internships that are paid positions lasting for four, six, nine or 12 months. CareerBridge provides coaching guides and mentoring training and modules on their website to help hiring managers integrate foreign-trained workers. Frank communications from all parties are essential to the success of the process. Managers have gained insight and skills to help manage a diverse work force thus adding to the skill sets of the entire Manulife workforce.

The second category involves the ways that bridging programs integrate immigrants' foreign experience into the assessment of their knowledge and skills, the demonstration of competencies, résumé preparation and job-searches, customized internships and work placements, etc. These approaches generally involve carefully assessing immigrants to identify and understand the attitudes, skills and knowledge they have acquired non-

formally as a result of prior work experience, and then matching these to the specific requirements of Canadian positions in their field that are comparable in level of responsibility. Bridging programs are best established as a result of collaboration among a cross-section of community-based stakeholders, including employers, industry and professional associations, sector councils, educational institutions, immigrant settlement agencies and language and cross-cultural training consultants.

As a first step, employers carefully define in detail the practical requirements and standards of positions. Implementing organizations (sector bodies; ISAs; education institutions; professional regulatory bodies such as provincial associations of professional engineers and geoscientists, colleges of physicians and surgeons, teachers' federations, etc.; training consultants, etc.) tailor the assessment and recognition of the immigrant's full prior experience to these practical requirements. At the same time, these organizations ensure that any required assessments of competencies, credentials and qualifications, including language skills, are carried out and documented. The information from this stage is used to design internships and field placements that allow the immigrant to apply the "informal" skills and knowledge acquired in foreign experience as well as practical knowledge and skills. Employers' managers supervise/monitor the immigrant in this stage, using checklists based on standards of the sector's field and on essential workplace skills. Occupation-specific language and other skills training may also be delivered.

Implementing agencies, employers and regulators (and sometimes governments) jointly devise mechanisms that result in issuing the immigrant with a Canadian certification (either from a profession credentialing or trade certifying body, or from an employer).

Bridging programs that exemplify this responsive approach include the Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP/BC⁷), Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN⁸), the Early Childhood Educator: Internationally Educated Qualifications (ECEIEQ) Pilot, the Internationally Educated Engineer Qualification (IEEQ) program, and the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) projects and *emerit* program. Both ISTEP-BC and WIN have been formally evaluated but are the only such examples among the 29 initiatives described in the template⁹.

The Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP)

The risk for employers is mitigated through an industry based assessment process, rather than focussing on building the numbers of clients and placements. Job coaches screen both the employer and the client for each other, resulting in greater understanding of skills and expectations, and an effective job matching process. As professionals with direct experience in the construction industry, job coaches have access and credibility with employers that other agencies do not have. They coaches have a high degree of independence to implement the program in the manner that best suits their region. Joint promotion with the provincial, regional and local construction associations also provides

⁷ Cf. Appendix F.

⁸ Cf. Appendix G.

⁹ Cf. Appendix A.

legitimacy and familiarity for employers. The program manager and job coaches participate in local career networking groups and meetings, as well as making cold calling to relevant agencies and employers.

Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN)

WIN selects occupations based on areas of skills shortage identified by industry associations and individual employers. As job requirements differ among employers within an industry, customized competency profiles are developed in collaboration with each participating employer to identify specific technical and language competencies required to perform the work. Subject matter experts assess participants' skills, using hands-on assessment methods so that participants with limited language skills can demonstrate what they know and can do. Skill-gap closing is customized to the specific learning needs of individual participants and the skills requirements of individual employers. Income supports are provided to participants as required. A case manager monitors participant progress, identifies problems, and provides personal support and information to participants as issues emerge and refers them for other services as required. Employers and/or training institutions provide participants with a certificate accompanied by a list of the specific competencies (both technical and language) that have been demonstrated. The employer certificates state that the individual meets the company's entry-level standards for the specified occupation.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

The Canadian electrical experience training program ran on 12 consecutive Saturdays to enable participants, licenced electricians from China, to learn basic Canadian electrical specifications (Ontario Electrical Code) and terminology while continuing their regular employment. The IBEW then helped them find employment as electricians. The program embodied core IBEW values to endeavour to bring all people in the electrical industry together, to achieve the common goals of safety, quality and prosperity in a positive and encouraging workplace. Its immediate objectives were to get the participants into secure jobs, and to leave them feeling positive about IBEW so that after acquiring some industry experience they would return as active union members.

(b) Challenges

One of the challenges to the research for this report was that responses came primarily from organizations and individuals who had already determined that this barrier to employment existed but was not insurmountable. Employers who recognize the benefits of the foreign experience of skilled immigrants are not always those to whom this message should be delivered.

The greatest challenge to recognizing foreign work experience is thus the general lack of recognition by employers of the value of work experience acquired outside Canada or in a non-Canadian workplace. The requirement in job vacancy postings for Canadian work experience may reflect this refusal, or it may be a proxy for the need for understanding of the Canadian workplace – its values, ways of working and essential communication and leadership skills. The weak links noted between employers and other stakeholders is a lack of employer confidence in the reliability and relevance of assessments and information about immigrants' qualifications and experience that they receive from other

organizations. This lack of confidence is often reinforced the lack of direct experience in industry of most ISA staff. Feeling unable to understand how foreign work experience may relate to the Canadian workplace and contribute to it, employers refuse to consider it.

Another clear challenge stemming from these two is to develop strong collaboration among employers, organizations and institutions, particularly at local and regional levels. Every one of the initiatives identified in this project reported that direct communication and cooperation among all the parties involved was critical. All - the immigrant job seekers, ISAs, sector councils, education and training institutions, consultants and employers, etc. - had to participate fully and appropriately in the process of defining and understanding job requirements and environments, and of understanding and interpreting immigrants' prior work experience.

Although many studies and reports repeatedly emphasize the “diversity advantage”¹⁰ that immigrants with foreign experience can bring to our economy and society, and so enhance our international competitiveness, it is clear that few employers are capitalizing on this advantage, or even agree that it exists. Some of the organizations this project has contacted have commented that in their experience, while upper management advocate the recognition of foreign work experience, only recently have human resources staff begun to accept the potential of doing so. At the same time, employers who have spoken with the project feel that ISA staff in particular lack experience in industry, and so lack adequate understanding of the Canadian workplace and how to interpret employers' needs and requirements.

Consequently, raising awareness among all stakeholders and managing information pose further challenges - raising awareness about the value of foreign work experience and about Canadian workplace norms and values, and managing information to support education efforts and to sustain the engagement of everyone from immigrants to employers and the community.

To meet all these challenges effectively, the need for adequate financial and human resources must be addressed, and making effective and efficient human investments. Effective communication and well-designed and delivered education and training require important investments of time and effort and consequently of money. Immigrants often also require financial support while they learn about Canadian workplace norms and standards, and refine their skills.

These basic challenges to developing and implementing sound approaches to recognizing and valorizing the foreign work experience of immigrants set the agenda for opportunities. They also help in identifying promising and developing practices.

Unclear notion of job requirements

Some respondents suggested that a requirement for Canadian work experience might be a proxy for knowledge of Canadian workplaces, safety regulations, relevant laws and regulations, such as the National Building Code of Canada, language, communication and team-working attributes, and self-reliance. Some implied that if employers did not have a

¹⁰RBC. 2005. *The Diversity Advantage*.

clear notion of the specific skills required for a particular job, including essential or employability skills, they might use a requirement for Canadian experience as a convenient albeit inaccurate screening tool. Still others felt that one of the implicit challenges was that many employers considered foreign workers for entry-level jobs only, thus discounting the value their foreign experience could add to their expertise and their suitability for higher-level positions.

Negative attitudes

The attitude that considers anything that is not familiar as being less valuable was not evident among those interviewed but was mentioned in many responses. Raising awareness of the value of experience acquired outside Canada by otherwise qualified candidates for middle- or senior-level jobs would thus help to integrate foreign workers more quickly and contribute to employers' hiring needs. Unfortunately, it is easier to identify those organizations that have developed useful initiatives than it is to reach employers who probably need to hear about them.

Weak links among stakeholders

The initiatives described in the previous section respond to the dissatisfaction or mistrust employers have with paper-based assessments of qualifications and competencies, and of credential recognition by bodies with which they are not familiar. This circumstance highlights an important gap in programs designed to help immigrants: weak links among stakeholders, especially links between employers and ISAs. The effectiveness of the initiatives noted in the previous section correlates strongly with the direct collaboration of all stakeholders.

Limited resources

Despite strong collaboration, including support and involvement from governments, only limited resources exist to support, on the one hand, training for immigrants on how to interpret their prior work experience in terms that connect with Canadian workplace, and on the other, training of recruiters and managers on eliciting appropriate interpretations from immigrants. Increased resources are needed to integrate the experience and lessons learned from these initiatives into other programs.

Lack of direct ISA experience in industry

A third important gap is the lack of direct experience in industry of most ISA staff, which results in a lack of (or weak) understanding of workplace culture (the informal context) and how to interpret employer needs and requirements (the formal context). Coaching and guidance for immigrants by ISAs on workplace norms and culture, and in résumé preparation are too often inadequate or inappropriate.

(c) Policy, political, social or economic factors influencing initiatives¹¹

The initiatives contacted in this research, and in particular those identified as innovative, are the result of a combination of the growing experience of bridging, integration, and internship programs. Many services of this kind have been provided for decades by ISAs, with support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (CIC – ISAP)¹² and some provincial governments. The Conference Board's *Brain Gain* report¹³ and the subsequent establishment of the federal government's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program in late 2003 with a budget of \$68 million stimulated an explosion of initiatives. The federal program's encouragement of closer multi-stakeholder collaboration helped to focus attention on local social and economic conditions.

An increased openness among employers and the non-immigrant population to making meaningful accommodation to understand the experience and needs of immigrants has created an acceptance and even willingness to experiment and take unaccustomed risks in recruitment, hiring and workplace integration practices. This openness seems to arise from a growing awareness of increasing dependence on immigration to meet future labour market needs, and of the potential labour pool in immigrant communities. A 2007 Statistics Canada paper estimated that "if current immigration rates continue ... immigration could account for virtually all net labour force growth by 2011."¹⁴ Among employers, the competitive pressure in international markets also counts for much of this changing attitude.

The website of Changing the Canvas (www.changingthecanvas.org), a project of the Canadian Labour Congress, features video clips in which immigrants and staff in unions and settlement agencies describe barriers to employment they have encountered, including requirements for Canadian experience, and how they have been overcome - or not. The project aims to stimulate debate on ongoing critical questions about the barriers facing immigrants seeking to find work commensurate with their qualifications and experience. The project was made possible with funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Among employers and immigration departments, the lessons learned from the Temporary Foreign Workers program have contributed to a sense of urgency to simplify the process

¹¹ For a useful and more extensive discussion of these developing practices, see Watt, Douglas and Tim Krywulak, and Kurtis Kitagawa. 2008. *Renewing Immigration: Towards a Convergence and Consolidation of Canada's Immigration Policies and Systems*, and Morrissey, Mary and Douglas Myers. 2008. *Achieving Our Potential: an Action Plan for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Canada*.

¹² ISAP assists immigrant settlement and integration through funding to service providers to deliver direct services to immigrants such as orientation, information, translation and interpretation; referral to community resources; solution-focussed counselling; and employment-related services. These services are delivered based on a needs assessment administered by the service provider with each client at the outset of service delivery. The program also funds service providers to undertake service-bridging activities (including workshops, information sessions and one-on-one training related to the unique needs and contributions of newcomers) with mainstream community organizations, as well as special projects on an ad hoc basis. CIC also provides funds for projects aimed at improving the way settlement services are delivered through ISAP (e.g., research projects, pilot projects, conferences, program tools).

¹³ Bloom and Grant. 2001.

¹⁴ p. 7, Zietsma 2007.; and cf. part 1 above.

of recruitment, selection and labour market integration of all skilled immigrants in both regulated and non-regulated professions and trades.

Domestic and international initiatives and developing practices in the assessment and recognition of qualifications, in the assessment of learning outside formal education, and in sector/profession-specific second-language acquisition have played a fundamental role in examining established practices and in creating refinements and modifications to testing and curriculum development and delivery

IV. PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

The initiatives identified in the current project and reported in the template¹⁵, and in particular those highlighted in the case studies¹⁶, provide practical, specific examples of the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of several approaches to recognizing foreign work experience. They offer the most direct response to the lack of recognition of foreign experience.

Approaches to understanding and interpreting the specific content and meaning of “work experience” are an important and promising new development. Schematically speaking, it appears that it is effective first to have employers develop job and competency profiles or specifications that define the responsibilities, duties and tasks for each position they seek to fill. The tools and guides to employers of the Tourism and Trucking Sector Councils (see their entries in the template¹⁷) are two examples of organizations working in sectors encompassing both large employers and SMEs that urge employers to adopt this practice, and provide tools and advice for doing so.

At the same time, immigrants seeking employment must learn about Canadian workplace norms and customs, and how to describe and present their experience and qualifications to recruiters who have no experience or knowledge of how non-Canadian workplaces operate. Support for the individuals in these scenarios includes training or coaching in cross-cultural communication and awareness. The “Cap sur le monde” initiative of the Montréal Chamber of Commerce and the coaching services of Integration Resources Canada illustrate ways of providing this kind of support.

These preparatory steps lead to a trend in identifying and addressing specific gaps in the knowledge and skills of immigrants in relation to the types of jobs they are seeking. In most cases, these gaps appear to be unfamiliarity with Canadian job-specific technical and colloquial language, unfamiliarity with pertinent Canadian laws and regulations, and unfamiliarity with equipment and tools particular to Canadian workplaces. This gap identification can be carried out using flexible, hands-on assessment methods, and are agreed jointly by the immigrant and the staff administering the assessment, whether they are independent consultants, employers’ HR staff, or other organization’s or institution’s personnel. Skills- and knowledge-gap training or field placement building on the immigrant’s work experience is then designed and carried out.

¹⁵ Cf. Appendix A.

¹⁶ Cf. Appendix C.

¹⁷ Cf. Appendix A.

Every initiative contacted in this study conducts some kind of gap identification, and makes some provision for “filling the gap”. The *Canadian electrical experience* project of Local 353 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is an example of what a small organization can do with its own resources. The *Intégration des immigrants en emploi* service of the Service d'orientation et d'intégration des immigrants au travail (SOIIT), and the *Hiring Services* and on-line *ESPORT* tool of the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC) are larger community-based initiatives that manage assessments, training and placements with support from employers and governments.

Proper assessment of knowledge and experience, and the gathering of accurate information about them, are important and should be done as soon as possible after immigrants arrive in Canada. In this connection, “Global Experience Ontario” that provides information for people who intend to apply to a regulatory body to obtain licensure to work in their field and where knowledgeable staff can explain the process for licensing and registration in Ontario is an interesting example. Greater attention and care to sharing information and to identifying the most appropriate role of stakeholders in the process of recruitment, hiring and retention of immigrant workers is, therefore, an important trend, and not only for professional licensure, that underscores the importance of cooperation and collaboration to the success of any initiative.

This focus on ensuring that everyone involved knows and understands their responsibilities and those of all other participants contributes to individual engagement in the process, awareness of each situation’s uniqueness, and sustainability of the initiative. Most of the initiatives surveyed understand the importance of encouraging and maintaining this focus. For example, Ontario’s Career Edge Organization's *CareerBridge: Internships for Internationally Qualified Professionals* program, and Toronto’s TRIEC *hireimmigrants.ca* initiative illustrate the potential of such joint ventures to involve large numbers of employers.

The Ontario government’s Ontario Public Service Internship Program for Internationally Trained Individuals (IPITI) also shows how collaboration with the private sector – in this case, Career Edge – can help governments implement effective programs that recognize and build upon non-Canadian work experience. The Ontario Internship Program (OIP) illustrates how the principle of recognizing non-Canadian work experience can be integrated into a recruitment program designed to bring “fresh blood” into the labour force.

In November 2008, Maytree and the Toronto City Summit Alliance, along with a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, announced the DiverseCity project, a three year initiative in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) that is informed by two reports on the value of diversity and diverse leadership. The project embeds valorizing foreign work experience into a general strategy for creating a “more diverse leadership base” in the GTA. It is designed to expand existing professional networks, strengthen public and private institutions, advance knowledge on the role of diversity in leadership, and track the progress of its components. One example, DiverseCity onBoard, “matches highly qualified candidates from racially and ethnically diverse communities with governance

positions in agencies, boards and commissions across the GTA.” Details on all components are available from the project’s website: www.diversecitytoronto.ca/¹⁸

Additional particular developing practices that can be seen in initiatives that have developed strong collaboration among their participants include:

- flexible assessment of skills and knowledge
- targeted approaches to closing skill gaps
- re-assessment of skills as they are acquired
- documentation of skills by employers
- provision of supports for immigrant workers with special needs (e.g., emotional or other challenges)
- a “buddy system” or mentorship to immigrant workers with someone that has previously participated in the program
- regular communication and feedback from participants to continually build and modify the program

The developments observed in initiatives that have successfully helped employers to recognize and capitalize on the foreign experience of immigrant workers form a preliminary list of best practices. To these can be added:

- ensuring that existing employees and managers have the opportunity to participate in diversity or cultural awareness training prior to starting the program;
- selecting candidates with required benchmark levels, especially for speaking;
- setting out reasonable timelines for advancement given that many of the candidates are very overqualified for the role; and
- offering additional training as needed (English, communication).

The practices developed by the variety of initiatives recorded in the template¹⁹, and that have succeeded in valorizing non-Canadian work experience in ways appropriate to different sectors represent a range of opportunities for ensuring that experienced immigrants are not automatically assigned entry-level positions.

¹⁸ Krywulak and Sisco 2008. Report: The Value of Diverse Leadership, see particularly see the section “*Keys to Success*” for the *Integration-and-Learning Approach*; and Cukier, Yap, Bindhani, Hannan, and Holmes. 2008. Diversity Counts. The Importance of Diverse Leadership in the Greater Toronto Area.

¹⁹ Cf. Appendix A.

V. POTENTIAL AUDIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

Further to the analysis of the information collected in the template by means of interviews and literature searches, salient innovations and industry/field-specific factors in valorizing non-Canadian experience have been identified. In addition, the challenges and lessons to be learned in the future assessment of projects to valorize non-Canadian work experience have been noted and current best practices acknowledged. The key features of the policy, political, social or economic context that may have influenced the development of initiatives that take foreign work experience into account when recruiting and hiring foreign workers have also been highlighted.

Many respondents reacted positively to the description of the project and were extremely helpful in explaining their approach and that of their organization. Some had already embarked on activities that would recognize and value foreign work experience, realizing that the experience of foreign workers would contribute to the best interests of their organization.

An important next step will be to actively share the results of this investigation – particularly the innovative and promising practices identified – with stakeholders who can benefit from this evidence. This will go beyond simply announcing and sharing the report, and could involve a more proactive effort. The balance of this section outlines potential approaches that might be taken. Appendix D lists organizations that might be approached to be active participants in these knowledge exchange activities.

National, regional and local one-day "show and tell" meetings and symposia that bring together representatives of successful initiatives with employers, organizations and educational institutions can help to change the attitude that foreign work experience has little value or relevance to the Canadian workplace through presentations on the rationale and operations of these initiatives, and discussion of the problems and solutions they have found. Such sessions as the Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC) has already organized should be continued; those organized to focus on specific local and regional areas would be most effective in addressing the concerns of small and medium employers. Canadian and provincial organizations that represent human resource professionals should also be invited to participate and share their views and experience.

Other specific knowledge exchange activities suggested by this research might include the following:

- face-to-face meetings or symposia organized by the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre or its partner centres in the Canadian Council on Learning in which best practices and the lessons learned are demonstrated and discussed;
- presentations of best-practice initiatives at meetings of other organizations, among which priority should be given to Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, The Alliance of Sector Councils and other employer organizations and chambers of commerce;
- on-line Web casts in which a model initiative is presented;

- on-line access through a data base or Web site/page to the initiatives identified in the template²⁰;
- periodic updates about new initiatives on the Canadian Council on Learning Web site.

Some partners that the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre might wish to approach to jointly organize some of the foregoing activities would be those that are already aware of the current immigrant worker situation and have contacts within the world of employers, human resource specialists, immigrants and immigrant settlement agencies. Among these might be included the Public Policy Forum, the Canadian Policy Research Networks, the Alliance of Sector Councils and the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment.

The focus of such knowledge exchanges should not be, however, simply to share findings with other research organizations but rather to raise awareness, especially among employers and in particular small businesses, of the importance of tackling this issue, including the reasons why this is worthwhile and the processes that seem to offer the greatest gain. It is thus suggested that an effort be made to engage small business employers through their industry associations and organizations like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, municipal chambers of commerce, and service organizations such as Rotary and Kiwanis. Human resource professionals, career counsellors and immigrant settlement agencies all have provincial and national associations that should be contacted to encourage their participation in action-oriented discussions. The development of a detailed strategic communications plan, outside the scope of this report, is nevertheless highly recommended to maximize the impact of knowledge exchange activities involving these groups.

With respect to face-to-face meetings, it is further suggested that presenters and participants be encouraged to “bring a friend”; in other words, employers, particularly human resource managers, and employer organizations that might benefit from further knowledge of the benefits of valorizing non-Canadian work experience in recruitment and hiring practices.

As noted, audiences that might be usefully targeted for knowledge exchange activities focusing on the recognition of non-Canadian work experience include those listed in Appendix D. It will be very important to create opportunities to actively engage such audiences in reviewing, discussing, and promoting, practices such as those presented in this report.

²⁰ Cf. Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

Interview Template Summary

<i>Name of program/ project/ initiative/ practice/ policy/ activity</i>	<i>Lead organization/ employer/ provider/ sponsor/other</i>	<i>Contact and URL</i>	<i>Costs/ sources of funding/ mechanisms</i>	<i>Description (target groups/ stakeholders, dates/timing, location, essential skills, language, assessment categories, etc.)/ partnerships</i>	<i>Salient features / organizational dimensions / structure/ countries of origin/other details</i>	<i>Intended outcomes/issues addressed/ performance indicators/ reporting</i>	<i>Actual outcomes/ Communication plans/ strategies</i>	<i>Lessons learned/ next steps Challenges/ barriers/ obstacles</i>
None at present	CAPLA	Bonnie Kennedy www.capla.ca/FCR.php	HRSDC	<u>Proposed</u> national framework to assess immigrant learning /online portfolio development tool / expert advice from PLAR counsellors for immigrants	Expand on existing models / fill gaps in existing services / expand existing language testing / publicity and communication are key /	Integrate immigrant skills into labour force faster / Better job matches / evidence-based foreign work experience documentation / manage labour market more efficiently	None yet (in proposal stages)	Lack of recognition of skilled trades in immigration process / lack of knowledge by key stakeholders (employers) of existing tools and resources
ISTEP-BC	Construction Sector Council	George Griziotis/Rosemary Spark www.tempforeignwork.ca/	FCR Program/HRSDC	Bridge-to-work program / immigrant workers identified by ISAs/ recent or in Canada/ BC/ assessments built in/ partners are BC Construction Association / Construction Sector Council / HRSDC / Provincial Advisory Council with other stakeholders	Main feature is mentoring through industry-identified “job coaches” who are expert in construction industry/ four regional operations/ main countries of origin are China, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Indonesia	Address labour shortage construction industry/ meet employer needs (mitigate risk)/ better match of skills to jobs/ cooperation of ISAs key/ electronic information system/ multiple-issue clients	After 18 months, of 985 clients, 525 were placed and 400 remain in the industry with 400 different employers / 30% received some training	Program acts as orientation for both clients and employers/ “job coach” model works well since specific to employer needs/ intend to expand cross-Canada/need to share information better
Immigrant Centre/ Environmental Internships / AMEC	ECO-Canada	Grant Trump https://www.eco.ca/_practitioner/immigrantCentre.aspx?display=employerRequirements&section=workexp	SCP/HRSDC	Online job board/ online skills upgrading/ mainly post-secondary but not necessarily licensed professions/ upgrading can be done abroad	PLAR approach / advice to immigrants on the job search process for more information and better opportunities in the environmental sector/ subsidies to employers to hire interns to gain experience/ main countries India, China	Address labour shortage environment industry/ meet employer needs/ better match of skills to jobs / biggest issue is supplying sufficient numbers plus quality of skills	330 registrants in online program in 2 years of which 20% are immigrants / 10% Canadian employers targeting immigrants	Foreign applicants well-trained in theory (e.g., mathematics) but lack hands-on skills to apply technical info/ ECO has targeted post-sec but now looking at other levels

E-MAP	CME	Karen McDiarmid www.emap-bc.ca/	BC gov	Engineering matching service/ aimed at employers/ mentoring for immigrants/ Douglas College Practice Firm/ transferable skills important/ communication skills (CLB)	Customized resumé building/ gap analysis to identify barriers/ coach employers as well as clients/ Korea/	Address labour shortage of engineers/ meet employer needs/ better match of skills to jobs	Immigrant resource guide/ placement, hiring rates high/ will expand if funding continues	Depends on specific experience and job description/ employers have to know exactly what they need
PNP	NSNP	Margie Casallas http://www.novascotiaimmigration.com/en-page1078.aspx	NS gov	Advice to employers on how to hire immigrants/	Liaison with MISA for WINS (language instructor in workplace), 6-week job placement in field at no cost to employers	Job-skills matching	Slow start but growing because of labour shortage	Some occupations problematic / not as difficult for reg. profs. or if NOC well known/
ISS of BC Hiring Services / ESPORT	ISSBC	Laurie Sing/Cliff Bell www.issbc.org/employers/ http://www.esportfolio.com/PROJECT_SITE/	BC gov/HRSDC	Immigrant workers assessed by counsellors / language skills used as filter / job search program makes huge difference for clients but no formal evaluations (stats) since no control group	Essential skills assessment and planning tool/ supported learning program targeting specific, entry-level occupations	Job matching/ job fairs/	Some difficulty with cultural “fit”/ other ISAs had more success/	Customized résumés key/ depends on specific requirements/ employers need to review hiring practices and learn how to assess competencies
FCR Projects and Reports / emerit	CTHRC	Phil Mondor / Ramanjit Rudra www.cthrc.ca/eng/pdf/Employer_Survey_Immigrants_Tourism_Sector_Findings.pdf	FCR Program HRSDC	Inventory federal programs and ISAs / review foreign education systems / survey employer attitudes /	Employer-driven	Meet employer needs	Employers not likely to recruit immigrants but rather upgrade skills of current employees / half of employers do not require Cdn work experience although a third place a priority on it (mainly in eastern Cda)	Multi-lingual skills important to tourism workplaces/ training in Cdn work practices seen as important
Cap sur le monde /World on our Doorstep	Chambre de Commerce du Montréal	Marie-Pier Veilleux	MICC	Subsidized program to orient immigrants to Cdn workplace/	Employer-driven	Meet employer needs and labour shortage	100 traineeships in one year/ hiring rate about	Good recruitment tool for employers/

	métropolitain	www.btm.qc.ca/fr/index.aspx?u=networking-business-meetings-World_at_our_doorstep					15%/	
Member Partnership Management Framework	CGI	Donna McNeely donna.mcneely@cgi.com	CGI	Recruitment and retention policy (ISO-9001 process)	Employer-driven	Meet labour needs in highly competitive sector and address CGI “dream” of environment in which all members/employees enjoy working together Values emphasize respect	27,000 employees in 100 offices in Canada, US, Europe and Asia-Pacific	“When you join CGI you are not just joining a company, you are joining a culture unlike any other.”
Intégration des immigrants en emploi/ mentorat	SOITT	Touré Babakar-Pierre www.soitt.qc.ca	Clients/ MICC/ Emploi-Québec	Rencontres individuelles pour développer un bilan des compétences/ visites d’entreprises et références aux employeurs pour des emplois subventionnés/ stages avec ou sans bourses et emplois directs	Centré sur l’immigrant/ orientation/ conseils/ références/ contacts employeurs	Embauche de main-d’oeuvre qualifié		
Service de placement / Québec pluriel / Programme d’intégration linguistique des immigrants	SFIM	www.sfim.qc.ca/	Clients/ MICC/ Emploi-Québec	Au service des entreprises de la Montérégie et aux immigrants arrivés au Québec depuis 5 ans	Recherches d’emploi / stages en entreprise / formation linguistique et professionnelle / ateliers d’information / mentorat / banque de candidats	Placement en emploi / intégration des immigrants / promotion de l’atout des immigrants / meilleurs candidats répondant aux profils d’employeurs	Succès depuis 1991	Appuyé par le MICC, Emploi-Québec et la ville de Longueuil
Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP)	Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)	Katrina Murray, Maha Surani http://ciip.accc.ca/ ciip@accc.ca	HRSDC - \$8.3 million	Helps immigrants coming under the Federal Skilled Worker Program to prepare for labour market integration while they are still in their country of origin completing the final immigration requirements.	Provides information on the Canadian labour market occupations, and the steps required for integration; advice and guidance to assist in planning successful entry to the Canadian labour market; practical assistance in identifying and contacting Canadian	Better job matches / evidence-based foreign work experience documentation	None yet	

					organizations for further assistance. In its pilot phase, it is operating only in China, India and the Philippines.			
Immigrant Integration Program	Assiniboine Credit Union (ACU), Winnipeg	Lisa Anderson www.assiniboine.mb.ca	ACU; partial funding from Manitoba Labour and Immigration	Twice a year, 8 to 10 candidates are selected for the program, with a focus on those with previous banking experience. Candidates participate in a five-week training program to introduce them to Canadian culture and the Canadian banking system. They are then assigned to the branch of a participating credit union for a three-month, full time paid work experience. They receive customized training to prepare them for their role in the branch. They are then placed at a branch close to their home whenever possible. If performance is satisfactory, they are offered a permanent part time or full time position at the end of their work experience.	Work experience abroad treated as if it happened in Canada. Interviews used to finding out any major differences in how banking is done and what the job entailed.	To provide skilled immigrants relevant work experience in their field.	ACU takes 2 to 4 participants each cycle. 30 people hired since November 2004. 22 are currently employed (73.3% retention).	Ensure existing employees and managers have the opportunity to participate in diversity or cultural awareness training prior to starting the program. Selecting candidates with required benchmark levels, especially for speaking. Set out reasonable timelines for advancement given that many of the candidates are very overqualified for the role. Offer a “buddy system” or mentorship to new employees with someone that has previously participated in the program Regular communication and feedback from participants to continually build and modify the program Offer additional training as needed (English, communication) Diversity in our workforce attracts diversity in future applicants Members see that we value diversity and generally embrace the new employees Existing employees

								benefit from the high qualifications and expertise which builds a stronger, inclusive team Diversity is seen as part of day to day business to our members and staff Offers accessibility to skilled workers that is often overlooked by others.
Facilitation of the integration of internationally trained and experienced professionals into the Canadian workforce	Integration Resources Canada	Bruce Switzer http://integrationresourcescanada.com/	Fees from clients	Coaches immigrants on how to present themselves in interviews, to describe accurately what they bring to potential employers, and to demonstrate their capacity to work in the general area. Coaches mentors in this approach	Extensive, intensive interviews (up to 2 days) with immigrant clients	Better match of skills to jobs	Most clients have found jobs within 6 months.	Focus on immigrant's capacities and language skills; formal credentials less and networking of less importance
Talent Pool	Calgary Chamber of Commerce Talent Pool Development Society	Julie Ball www.chambertalentpool.com	Sponsors: Alberta Human Resources and Employment, HRSDC, Manpower Staffing Services, Bow Valley College, Petro-Canada, Calgary Economic Development, ToombsKWA Inc.	Conducts research and provides employers with information and contacts; identifies best practices and influences decision-makers.	Provides employers and others with information on how to evaluate foreign credentials and international education.	Increase numbers of new immigrants hired by employers	Website to be launched in fall 2008	Not yet
Foreign Competency Recognition Program	Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council (CTHRC)	Sandy Lewis www.cthrc.com/	HRSDC	Advice to employers on how to hire immigrants	Incorporation of guide on hiring and retaining immigrants into <i>Your Guide to Human Resources: Practical Tips and Tools for the Trucking Industry</i>	Increase numbers of immigrants hired and retained in the industry. Intensive follow-up pilot with three carriers in fall-winter 2008-9	Not yet	Not yet
Dentistry Qualifying Program	Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University	Dr. Joseph Murphy http://djm.ca	Participant fees (\$35,000) Faculty: \$60,000 to \$70,000 per	The program facilitates Dental Graduates of non-accredited programs in gaining a DDS degree.	An intensive summer module identifies gaps in knowledge and clinical skills. The	Awarding DDS to all participants.	From 2000 to 2004, 34 have graduated with the D.D.S. Since	Support of students in regular DDS program essential for integration; addressing

		l.dal.ca/_DE NT.htm#7	participant.		module curriculum compresses the first two years of the Faculty's dentistry program.		1998, only 2 participants have not completed the program	all specialized skills gaps in each and every year not feasible
Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN)	Operated by options4success . Sponsors: Manitoba Sector Training Network, (MSTN): Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Coordinating Committee (MAHRCC), Manitoba Food Processors Association (MFPA), Life Sciences Association of Manitoba (LSAM), Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME), and, Information and Communication Technologies Association of Manitoba (ICTAM).	Eddie Calisto-Tavares http://options4success.com/WIN.htm	HRSDC Estimated costs: first year app \$30,000 per participant; second year: \$13,000; now \$9,000. average direct cost per participant was \$17,673. payback period for direct costs is 4.51 years. The payback period for the total program cost of \$36,996 per graduate is 9.44 years.	Validates what the immigrant brings to a workplace/job through self-assessment, identifying technical and language skills and gaps through PLAR and competency demonstration, and skills enhancement training. Employers receive a complete competency profile of the skills requirements of the selected occupation(s) and have access to employment-ready newcomers with demonstrated, documented competencies.	Industry-driven; customized competency profiles are developed for each participating employer. Onsite workplace-specific training is available. The Newcomer's Guide to the Canadian Workplace. 15 participants from the Philippines, Israel, Ethiopia, Korea, India, and Sri Lanka, with an average of nine years of experience. 6 were unemployed, the rest under-employed. In the absence of Canadian work experience, participants use a "credential" provided by participating employers and WIN in future job searches.	Accelerated job placement and retention. Eight major indicators used in formative evaluation: employers size, sector and level/degree of involvement; validation by industry of competency profiles; effectiveness of information and recruitment strategies in attracting suitable participants; how fair, reliable, valid, transparent, and efficient were assessment instruments and processes; industry acceptance of assessment tools, processes, and results were accepted by industry; how flexible, customized, efficient, and effective were gap-closing methods; achievement of learning goals; acceptance by industry of documentation of learner accomplishments..	Some employers have hired on the basis of demonstrated competencies/skills and not worried about language. Skills enhancement training for most welders completed in 6-8 weeks. . 8 have bought houses. Within 2 years, the investment has been paid back in terms of individual earnings, consumption spending and taxes paid. Average hourly wages of participants increased by \$7.27/hour	Because SMEs often do not belong to industry ass'ns , personal networking by project mgmt. staff was an important source of participating employers. RPL/PLAR theory needs to be linked to practice. Recruiting through communities is a useful and cost effective method for recruiting participants CLB benchmarking was more valuable than ES profiling with respect to speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Employers are primarily motivated to participate by immediate staffing needs. Hands-on assessment activities were the best way to confirm applicant skills.
Internationally Educated Engineer Qualification (IEEQ)	Faculty of Engineering, University of Manitoba. Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of	Marcia Friesen Marcia.Friesen@umanitoba.ca http://umanitoba.ca	Manitoba Labour and Immigration (app \$100,000); Faculty of Engineering. Participants fees and costs app. \$3,500 - \$4,750. Some tuition and	University engineering courses, co-op work experience, cultural orientation, language and communication support, and professional networking.	APEGM recognizes successful completion of the IEEQ program as an equivalent to its traditional examination program. Program graduates need only one year of Canadian experience to qualify.	12 graduates/year employed within 12 months of graduation. Estimate based on 40 participants that in three years they would pay back in taxes the full costs of the program.	All graduates so far employed.	Experienced immigrants can act as supervisors of Canadian co-op work experience students

	Manitoba (APEGM)	toba.ca/faculties/engineering/programs/ieeq/index.html	living costs support is available from the province, student loans, and industry bursaries.					
hireimmigrants.ca	TRIEC	Claire DeVeale cdeveale@triec.ca www.hireimmigrants.ca/	CIC, Employment Ontario, Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP, HRSDC FCR Program, Manulife Financial, Maytree, Mike Lipkin, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Ontario Trillium Foundation, RBC Financial Group, Region of Peel, Service Canada, TD Bank Financial Group, United Way of Greater Toronto, United Way of Peel Region	Website designed to help employers "tap an exceptional workforce". It explains the benefits of hiring skilled immigrants and describes successful hiring strategies.	Provides links to local resources in regions across the country, including: ways to find job-ready immigrants through non-profit employment service agencies, organizations and/or programs; a pilot project providing SMEs with free HR consulting services; HR workshops; credential assessment services; language training; bridging and mentoring programs; government selection programs and other programs	Increase in numbers of employers hiring skilled immigrants; better understanding by employers of challenges to hiring immigrants and of strategies to meet the challenges	Consistent positive response from employers; increase in hiring immigrants	Accurate, up to date information and open communication (both providing information and listening) are essential
Employment Equity & Recruitment Department strategy	Manitoba Hydro	Michelle L. Leganchuk mleganchuk@hydro.mb.ca	Manitoba Hydro	Manitoba Labour and Immigration - policy consultation and collaboration IEEQ - source for hiring engineers	For engineers, see IEEQ above Trades workers given aptitude tests, then go into entry-level training. If they have CTTAM recognition (certificate), move up above entry-level.	Hiring more immigrants at more appropriate levels.	Very satisfied with IEEQ.	Would like to see something similar to IEEQ on the financial side, for accountants, auditors and finance managers. Have asked the government to develop a system to validate foreign-acquired skills, pointing out that industry can't do it on its own.
Early Childhood Educator: Internationally	Manitoba Child Care Program	Mavis.Lewis-Webber, Qualifications Coordinator	Government of Manitoba 2006/2007 budget: \$50,000.00 of	Individuals who have international education with an early childhood focus are provided a qualifications	Assessment/evaluation by advisor observation over several days in a placement, using a	To recognize and accept immigrants as quickly and efficiently as possible.	Process reduced from 8 months to up to 16 weeks; all participants	Conceiving process as one of classification and qualifications recognition, rather than

Educated Qualifications Pilot		mavis.lewis-webber@gov.mb.ca www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/index.html	which \$7500.00 in-kind 2007/2008 budget: \$57,500.00 of which \$8950.00 in-kind	recognition process to meet the requirements of an Early Childhood Educator. Over three years, processed 2 groups a year (or 50 people overall).	checklist based on certification standards grouped in 6 clusters. Candidates screened in a general interview to determine their suitability; generally, 2-3 years of experience required for eligibility. Characterized as an intensive screening process, rather than a training (i.e. upgrading) process.		employed	as upgrading, speeds up successful integration. Language is one of the main difficulties/challenges.
RBC Recruitment & Learning	RBC	Michael Hayden, Manager, Diversity Recruitment michael.hayden@rbc.com	RBC	Recruitment, hiring and retention processes	Never ask for Canadian experience; do not require post-secondary qualifications. Applicants explain in interview how past experience relates to the job; recruiters and managers trained in cross-cultural awareness and interview techniques to ensure mutual understanding. Feedback from recruiters and applicants about the interview used to improve the process.	Increase hiring and retention of immigrants, minorities, underrepresented groups. Capitalize on employees' international experience and skills.	No formal evaluation; anecdotal evidence indicates strategy is successful so far. Monitoring of indicators and measures such as how many are staying, exit interviews. Level of complaints to the ombudsman are low.	Successfully integrating immigrants gives a competitive advantage. Learning and applying the soft skills of cultural understanding is a big challenge. Post-interview analysis of how applicant's account etc. aligns to the actual work is crucial. ISAs need to understand that the onus is on the candidate to "paint the portrait": how s/he can fit into the workplace. ISAs must help immigrants to research the Canadian labour market and its culture, and to explain how their experience relates to it. It's a two-way street to mutual understanding.
Mentoring training for managers	Manulife Financial	Laurie Lupton, AVP, Corporate Communications laurie_lupton@manulife.com	Manulife Financial TRIEC www.triec.ca/ CareerBridge	Recruiters are encouraged and in turn encourage hiring managers to use CareerBridge as a viable source for talent as the program pre-qualifies international candidates in terms of education	CareerBridge provides Coaching Guides and Coaching Modules on their website to help hiring managers with integration.	Effective and appropriate inclusion of immigrants in workforce.	Effective and appropriate inclusion of immigrants in workforce.	From mentoring training managers have gained insight and skills to help manage a diverse work force.

			www.careerbridge.ca/	verifications, communications skills and more.				
CareerBridge: Internships for Internationally Qualified Professionals	Career Edge Organization	J. Anne Lamont, President & Chief Executive Officer www.careerbridge.ca/	Province of Ontario \$4 million start-up (2003) 42+ host organizations	Places job-ready immigrants that are legally able to work in Canada in paid positions that last for 4, 6, 9 or 12 months. Tests language skills, checks educational and work records and verifies immigration status.	Eligibility requirements: been in Canada no longer than 3 years; minimum of 3 years international work experience in field; attend screening interview in Greater Toronto Area; minimum bachelor's degree with Canadian equivalency assessment; seeking Canadian work experience in unregulated occupations such as business, technology and general management; lack paid Canadian work experience in profession; fluency in English	1,100 internships by 2008	places app. 150-200 interns/yr	Clear job definitions and rigorous assessment of immigrant qualifications and experience essential; as are frank communications
Engineers and Technologists Integration Program (ETIP)	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Karen Gabert kgabert@emcn.ab.ca Karol Adamowicz kadamowicz@emcn.ab.ca www.emcn.ab.ca/	Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Alberta Learning	Four components: Gathering Information (information about the labour market, the practice of the profession in Alberta, licensing, and job search techniques), 2. Assessment (IQAS assessment of education, TOEFL assessment of English proficiency), 3. Academic / Skills Bridging (business writing, technical terminology, TOEFL preparation, AutoCad training), and 4. Facilitated Job Search (including work experience placement).	Client-centred constructivist approach to the alleviation of personal, environmental, social, and systemic barriers faced by IEPs seeking labour market access. Includes some communications training.	Global goal: to provide labour market access that accelerates the social and economic integration of internationally educated professionals in a substantial and meaningful way; maximize the human capital of the IEPs as they strive to make Canada their new home.	Integrated Programming for Immigrant Professionals Model. The success rate of the program, based on participants' finding employment in their fields (monitored, for the most part, by telephone survey three and six months after completion of the program), has been consistently over 80%.	Immigrants (esp. prof'l s) often resist taking language training, but return later to say they need it. Skills upgrading often is more familiarization, not new learning. CLBA system allows instructors to tailor course materials to participants' CLBA levels so instruction occurs at appropriate level(s). Emphasis on prof'l certification should be secondary to preparation for meaningful employment.

Canadian electrical experience	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 353	Barry Stevens www.changinthecanvas.org	\$60,000 from IBEW local	Program running on 12 consecutive Saturdays for licenced electricians from China; taught basic Canadian electrical specifications (Ontario Electrical Code) and terminology.	Many of the 20 participants were university-trained, non-unionized, and lacking Canadian experience. The immediate objectives of the training embodied core union values	To get them into secure jobs; leave those workers feeling positive about IBEW and after acquiring some industry experience, they'll return as active members.	All participants found secure employment	Government refused to fund
Ontario Public Service (OPS) Internship Program for Internationally Trained Individuals	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration	www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/work/working/internship/ (this page refers applicants to: www.careerbridge.ca/becomeintern.asp) (see CareerBridge)	Not available, but see CareerBridge	Places qualified newcomers in six month paid assignments in the Ontario Public Service. Candidates must have a minimum of three years' international work experience and be eligible to work in Canada. Candidates are screened for employment status, language ability and educational credentials. Placements available in finance, chemistry, business administration, communications and environmental studies	Ministries, agencies and commissions submit proposals to MCI, describing their potential placements and learning opportunities. The ministry partners with the Youth and New Professionals Secretariat, Centre for Leadership and Learning, with support from Human Resources Service Delivery, in the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS).	Place up to 70 interns annually in a wide variety of fields including finance, chemistry, business administration, communications and environmental sciences.	Placed 72 interns in 2007-08; and in 2006-07. 52 of the 72 of the first wave of interns who completed the program by the summer of 2007 have found full-time professional employment, 32 of them within the OPS. By 2007-08, 72 per cent of interns had secured full-time professional employment	Clear job definitions and rigorous assessment of immigrant qualifications and experience essential; as are frank communications
Ontario Internship Program (OIP)	Government of Ontario Public Service	www.internship.gov.on.ca/mbs/sdb/intern.nsf/LkpWebContent/ePublishedHOME	Not available	A paid, two-year, entry-level employment opportunity in one of seven professional fields. Open to all graduates or soon to graduate from an approved or legally authorized college or university with a diploma or degree within the two years prior to the application, and legally entitled to work in Canada. Successful applicants demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities required for an internship in their focus area through their academic studies and related projects,	Focus Areas: Business and Financial Planning, Communications; Human Resources; Information and Information Technology; Labour Relations; Policy Development; and Project Management. Internships are available in every ministry. Interns are matched to a ministry placement and provided with a one-year contract. All interns rotate to a new assignment after 12	Hire up to 150 interns each year. Though immigrants eligible, no targets for hiring them.	124 hired in 2008; 115 in 2007 (no data available on proportion or number of immigrants) . On average, 75 per cent of interns secure ongoing employment within the OPS after leaving the Program.	

				paid and volunteer work experiences, or other activities.	months. Second-year contracts are offered when the intern's work performance has been assessed as satisfactory. Learning and development opportunities include: a comprehensive orientation to the Ontario Public Service; a specific learning curriculum for each focus area; a placement mentor who provides professional advice and guidance; and advice on how to make the most of the internship experience.		
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APPENDIX B Background to the project – methodology

To valorize something is to “give or ascribe value or validity to” it (Compact Oxford English Dictionary), “To give or assign a value to” it (The American Heritage Dictionary). This study explored to what extent, and how, employers, sector councils and organizations (commonly known as Immigrant Settlement Agencies – ISAs) assess and give value to the prior foreign work experience of immigrants. But as Faviola Fernandez of the Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT) has pointed out “...the term ‘Canadian experience’ has never been satisfactorily defined and yet it has such wide currency. As a requirement, it can only be valued if Canada has no plans to trade or connect with the rest of the world.”²¹

Since the late 19th century, immigration has been an important policy instrument in the building and strengthening of Canada’s society and economy. The current official objectives of the immigration system include promoting the growth of the economy; enhancing the skills and knowledge base of the labour force; addressing the more immediate skill and labour shortage needs of employers, regions, and sectors; offsetting the aging of the population; supporting family reunification; and offering protection to refugees.²² Most Canadians see immigration today much in the same way - as a process that aims to help reunite families, give refugees a safe haven, and provide skilled professionals opportunities to invest and settle in a new country. However, it is also seen as a process that results in PhDs driving taxis and engineers waiting tables.

Over the past decade, but especially the last three to four years, the increasing need for immigration to meet labour market needs has moved federal and provincial governments to expand mechanisms aimed at meeting employers needs, including technician and semi-skilled workers, and to encourage employers to recruit actively abroad. Starting in 1998, Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP)²³ and various programs under the Temporary Work Permit (TWP)²⁴ provisions of the *Immigration Act* have simplified employer paperwork. This involves simplification of the Labour Market Opinion (LMO) process (issuing block approvals for some companies and shortening the time to virtually zero with respect to the requirement to look for qualified Canadians before applying).

Recently, the government introduced the Canadian Experience Class to permit skilled temporary foreign workers and foreign student graduates with professional, managerial

²¹ p. 27, Lopes 2004.

²² CIC, Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2007. Available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/annual-report2007/index.asp>

²³ The Provincial Nominee Program offers accelerated immigration for qualified skilled workers and experienced entrepreneurs who wish to settle in a specific province and become permanent residents of Canada. This program is administered by a number of provinces in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The PNP selects and nominates potential immigrants for permanent residence who have the ability to become economically established and who will provide significant economic benefits to the province. Citizenship and Immigration Canada gives priority to processing permanent resident visa applications for provincial nominees and makes the final decision on these applications.

²⁴ Temporary Work Permits are needed for most temporary jobs in Canada. Every year, over 90,000 foreign workers enter Canada to work temporarily in jobs that help Canadian employers address skill shortages, or as live-in caregivers.

and skilled work experience, to apply for permanent residence from within Canada. The Canadian Experience Class allows an applicant's experience in Canada to be considered a key selection factor when immigrating to Canada.²⁵ One consequence of these alternate ways to immigrate to Canada, put in place mostly to satisfy labour shortages in Alberta and Ontario, has been an increase in the intake of workers, including some whose occupations are not even classified as NOC 0, A or B - mainly technical and technician occupations, as well as workers in semi-skilled and service occupations²⁶. The number of immigrants arriving under PNP arrangements has grown from 1,417 referrals in 2003 to 6,329 in 2007 (a 350 per cent increase in four years). The growth of TWPs has been equally rapid: from 103,426 in 2003 to 165,198 in 2007 (a 60 per cent increase in four years).²⁷ In November 2008, the Government announced that CIC would process only applications from skilled workers in high-demand occupations (such as health, skilled trades, finance and resource extraction) with at least one year of continuous full-time or equivalent paid work experience in the last 10 years, or with an offer of arranged employment or who have already been living legally in Canada for one year as a temporary foreign worker or international student. It expects this measure will reduce processing times from up to six years to 6 to 12 months. This may enable experienced workers to be integrated at the appropriate level more quickly.

In addition to significant increases in the PNP and TWP provisions, the government introduced new provisions that "will expedite the processing of select skilled worker applications to ensure that skilled immigrants can get to Canada quickly when their skills are in demand."²⁸ Canada clearly wants to see a rapid and significant increase in the numbers of immigrants arriving here that will be meeting labour market needs.

In addition to realigning the intake of a portion of those immigrating to Canada so that they will meet labour markets needs, governments are providing support to initiatives that facilitate their labour market integration

²⁵ Starting September 17, 2008, certain temporary foreign workers and foreign student graduates with professional, managerial and skilled work experience have been able to apply for permanent residence status (immigrate) without leaving Canada. An applicant's experience in Canada is considered a key selection factor. Those who have left Canada, but otherwise meet the requirements as workers or graduates, are eligible to apply provided they do so within one year of leaving their job in Canada. Graduates must have successfully completed a program of study of at least two academic years and one year of skilled, professional or technical work experience. Workers must have accumulated, in the three years prior to an application, at least two years of work experience at Skill Type 0 (managerial occupations) or Skill Levels A (professional occupations) or B (technical occupations and skilled trades). All applicants must have language abilities appropriate to their occupational skill level.

²⁶ The *National Occupational Classification* (NOC) is the nationally accepted system for describing occupations in Canada. It organizes over 30,000 job titles into 520 occupational group descriptions. NOC descriptions are structured in 10 Skill Types (e.g., 0 - Management Occupations; 1 - Business, Finance and Administration Occupations, etc.) and 4 Skills levels (A - Occupations usually requiring university education; B - Occupations usually requiring college or vocational education or apprenticeship training; C - Occupations usually requiring secondary school and/or occupation-specific training; and D - On-the-job training is usually provided for occupations. For complete details, see the NOC home page at: http://www23.hrdc_drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/groups/index.shtml

²⁷ CIC, Facts and Figures 2007. Available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2007/index.asp>

²⁸ ¹ *CIC Backgrounders: Improvements made to Canada's immigration system.*
Available at:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/backgrounders/2008/2008-03-28.asp>

Methodology of the project

In consultation with the WKLC, an information-gathering template based on recent research findings was developed to record information in a consistent and summary fashion about initiatives to assess non-Canadian work experience and its pertinence to the Canadian workplace. The completed template, including the essential information collected, comprises Appendix A.

Using the template as a guide, 27 individuals and organizations, identified with the help of the WKLC in industry, the professions, immigrant service agencies and federal, provincial and territorial governments, were interviewed to identify and capture information about initiatives to assess non-Canadian work experience and its pertinence to the Canadian workplace. At the same time, a similar search for information was conducted through websites and other secondary literature sources.

The information that was captured was vetted for accuracy and currency with individuals responsible for projects and initiatives, as well as with external experts²⁹. It was then analysed according to the typology of the template to identify salient innovations and industry/field-specific factors in valorizing non-Canadian experience. Challenges and lessons to be learned in the future assessment of projects to valorize non-Canadian work experience were also identified.

²⁹ A first draft of the report was reviewed by Yves Poisson of the Public Policy Forum. The authors are grateful for his thoughtful feedback.

APPENDIX C Case studies

Category 1 – coaching for interviews; cultural awareness

RBC's recruitment, hiring and retention processes

In its presentation to the 2005 10th International Metropolis Conference, RBC argued that “[n]ew ways to address foreign certification more effectively are needed as well as better ways to recognize foreign work experience of immigrants.” Its recruitment strategy reflects this approach. Its application form does not require applicants to have any specific qualification or degree, and does not ask for Canadian experience. Instead, applicants are asked to describe, using specific examples, how they handle client relations, and how their past experience relates to the job for which they are applying.

RBC sees that the main challenge in recruiting and interviewing immigrants lies in the soft skills of cultural understanding. Applicants whose experience appears promising are invited to interviews, in which they explain in further detail how they fulfill the qualifications of a position. For example, if the titles of their previous positions do not align with those of RBC, they are asked to clarify their previous responsibilities in concrete terms.

Recruiters and managers are trained in cross-cultural awareness, and given considerable support for it. Interview protocols require that interviewers mirror or reflect to the applicant their understanding of applicants' accounts, and ask applicants to confirm whether they are satisfied that they have been properly understood. Following the interview, interviewers and managers analyse how an applicant's account aligns to the actual work of a position. Considerable time, effort and funds are thus invested in training recruiters and managers, and in conducting and debriefing interviews.

RBC understands that recruitment is about the company's relation with the individual. Its recruitment and retention strategy includes asking for feedback from both recruiters and applicants about interviews. This anecdotal information is used to modify the process if and as needed. Rather than formally evaluating the hiring process, RBC monitors indicators and measures. One indicator is how many are staying with the company, and for what period of time. One measure is exit interviews of those leaving, to learn why, while the level of complaints to the RBC ombudsman provides a further indication of the success of the process in meeting immigrants' expectations. To date, complaints in this area are low.

RBC feels that ISAs need to understand that the onus is on candidates to “paint the portrait” of how they can fit into the workplace. ISAs must help immigrants to research the Canadian labour market and its culture, and to explain how their experience relates to it. Recruitment and hiring is a two-way street leading to mutual understanding.

Credit Union Immigrant Integration Program

Five credit unions in Manitoba belong to the Credit Union Immigrant Integration Program which is funded jointly by Manitoba Labour and Immigration and participating credit unions. The program aims to successfully integrate skilled immigrants into the credit union system, and to build a workforce reflective of the community.

Candidates must be able to work in Canada, have Grade 12 or equivalent education, and score at level 7 of the Canadian Language Benchmark (although a writing benchmark of level 6 is acceptable). They must have previous banking experience, service skills, experience in handling cash and be bondable.

The selection process starts with information sessions involving 40 to 70 interested candidates, of whom approximately 16 to 20 are interviewed. Their computer skills are then assessed. The program tends to gauge work experience abroad as if it happened in Canada. If an applicant has banking or customer service experience from another country, it is treated the same as Canadian experience. The interview is used to find out if there are any major differences (which there often are) in how banking is done and what the job entailed, but “normally it is easy to train to.”

Participants then take five weeks of unpaid training focusing on communication, culture, banking terminology, and role play to introduce them to Canadian culture and the Canadian banking system. They are then assigned to a branch of a participating credit union for a three-month, full-time paid work experience, where they receive customized training to prepare them for their role in the branch. They are then placed at a branch close to their home whenever possible. If their performance is satisfactory, they are offered a permanent part time or full time position at the end of their work experience. As of 2007, the member Credit Unions had hired 50 participants, 80 percent permanently. Many have been promoted from the member services role.

The program has developed the following best practices:

- ensuring existing employees and managers have the opportunity to participate in diversity or cultural awareness training prior to starting the program;
- selecting candidates with required language benchmark levels, especially for speaking;
- setting out reasonable timelines for advancement given that many of the candidates are very overqualified for the role;
- offering a “buddy system” or mentorship to new employees with someone that has previously participated in the program;
- regular communication and feedback from participants to continually build and modify the program; and
- offering additional training as needed (English, communication).

The program has yielded considerable benefits for the member organizations. The diversity in their workforce attracts diversity in future applicants, and individual credit union members see that the credit union organizations value diversity and generally embrace the new employees. Both members and staff also see that diversity is part of day-to-day business. Existing employees benefit from the high qualifications and expertise of the immigrant staff, which builds a stronger, inclusive team. Finally, the program offers access to skilled workers often overlooked by others.

The immigrant integration program also forms part of the general human resource strategy of the credit unions. The new Assiniboine Credit Union was recognized in 2008 as a Top 100 Employer, on the strength of the way it managed the merger of three credit unions and 24 branches, by using change management strategies, regular and in-depth communication tools for employees and an organizational development plan that involved employees at every level.

One employee, an Argentinian immigrant, was working as a mortgage administrator at Vantis Credit Union when the merger was approved. With a degree in business she wanted to become a project manager, but the smaller credit union did not have such a position. Three months after the merger, she was promoted to a new position as a project manager.

The ACU has been recognized three times as a Top 100 Employer in Canada, and was named in 2008 one of the Top 15 Employers in Manitoba.

Manulife's mentoring training for managers

Incorporated in 1887, Manulife has grown from an insurance company to a global financial services organization serving millions of customers in 19 countries and territories worldwide. Manulife is the largest life insurance company in Canada and one of the top five in the world. Manulife has received many awards that recognize the company for its overall excellence and specific achievements in areas such as corporate governance, communications, customer satisfaction, professional training and education, and charitable and community programs.

One of Manulife's five main governance principles is being an employer of choice. With respect to its human resource policies, Manulife's human resource recruiters are encouraged and in turn encourage their hiring managers to use CareerBridge as a viable source for talent as the program pre-qualifies international candidates in terms of education verifications, communications skills and more.

Career Bridge is an innovative internship program designed to address the dilemma of "no Canadian experience, no job; no job, no Canadian experience" that prevents many skilled immigrants from contributing to Canada's economy. Internships arranged through the Career Bridge program break this unproductive cycle and provide a crucial bridge between the international and Canadian workplace. Career Bridge eliminates significant

employment barriers often faced by qualified, experienced professionals who are eager and ready to resume their careers in Canada. Its internships are paid positions that last for four, six, nine or 12 months for job-ready immigrants that are legally able to work in Canada.

CareerBridge provides coaching guides and modules on their website to help hiring managers integrate foreign-trained workers. Career Bridge is operated by [Career Edge Organization](#), a not-for-profit social enterprise that has managed over 8,000 paid internships across Canada since 1996.

Manulife has found that this approach has offered an effective and appropriate inclusion of immigrants in its workforce. Moreover, from mentoring training, managers have gained insight and skills to help manage a diverse work force thus adding to the skill sets of the entire Manulife workforce.

Category 2 – integrating foreign work experience

The Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP)

The Construction Industry Immigrant Employment Program uses an employer-driven approach to recruitment, assessment, and placement of skilled immigrants in the construction industry. It is developed and delivered by the BC Construction Association (BCCA), in partnership with the Construction Sector Council (CSC), as the Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP) in BC as a pilot, designed to promote and increase the employment of immigrants commensurate with their skills, education, and/or experience, within the construction industry, and to help address current and future labour needs of both the immigrant community and the construction industry. It is guided and monitored by a provincial advisory committee made up of representatives from the CSC, the BCCA, the construction industry and labour, and cultural and employment agencies, including representation from the program's regions, and is funded by the federal government's Foreign Credential Recognition Program.

Through a program manager in the BCCA office, ISTEP manages the supply and demand for skilled workers by linking and coordinating employers and immigrant workers through four job coaches, one in each of the four regional offices of the BCCA. The job coaches have a high degree of independence to implement the program in the manner that best suits their region. Their direct experience with the construction industry establishes and maintains credibility with employers and immigrants (clients), and for the client assessment and job matching process. The direct relationship with the construction associations and their experience in the construction industry give them access and credibility with employers that other agencies do not have.

ISTEP's client assessment model has four steps, each step corresponding to a participant in the process, based upon the existing construction industry practices and expectations, and the experiences of the job coaches:

- agencies;
- job coach;
- clients;
- employers.

The job coaches develop informal or formal (contractual) relationships with the regional cultural and employment service agencies, which generally recruit the clients through drop-in, referrals or outreach. The agencies then conduct the first intake assessments, language upgrading, resume building, and/or training where applicable. The job coaches assess the skills of the clients, and match these with the needs of employers, who are directly involved in the screening process.

Job coaches' referrals of a client to the employer are usually accompanied by a verbal summary of the job and employer expectations to the client, and a verbal summary of the client's background, skills and abilities to the employer. In this way, the job coaches screen both the employer and the client for each other, resulting in greater understanding of skills and expectations.

From November 15, 2006, to April 30, 2008, ISTEP registered 985 clients, placed 525 in a work place, with 400 remaining working in the construction industry, with approximately 400 different employers. Almost one third of the ISTEP clients receive some type of training provided by the employer, a related service agency, or a trainer. Two classes of Construction Orientation & Retention for Employers (CORE) were delivered - one for ISTEP clients, and one in which ISTEP clients participated. Over 100 of the placements are in a union workplace, and 61 ISTEP clients have entered an apprenticeship. Of the clients placed in related employment, the vast majority were placed as construction labourers with carpentry, electrical, and mechanical as the most frequent trades-related placements.

Communication and promotion have been key to the success of ISTEP. Promotional items such as business cards, rack cards, brochures, CD's, a websites, folders, pens, and flashlights have been produced for distribution, following and going beyond the communications plan. The BCCA and the regional and local Construction Associations promote the program through meetings, presentations, mail outs, and other communications activities. The program manager and job coaches conduct outreach to both employers and cultural and employment service agencies through local career networking groups and meetings, as well as cold calling relevant agencies and employers. The joint promotion with the construction associations is an important element in providing legitimacy and familiarity for employers.

Almost all ISTEP clients came from countries where English is not the first language, and whose certificates and skills are not readily accredited and recognized in Canada. From the beginning, ISTEP has stressed the importance of mitigating the risk for employers,

through an industry based assessment process, rather than focussing on building the numbers of clients and placements. As a pilot project, this approach allowed the development and implementation of the program on a regional basis, and the ability to address the unique needs of clients and employers.

ISTEP assists immigrants encountering barriers to employment by providing them with skills assessment, training advice, and direct connections to construction industry employment. It addresses the needs of a construction industry experiencing and projecting shortages of skilled labour, by harnessing underutilized skills, experiences, and proficiencies already existing in the community. The program utilizes the existing resources and services of cultural and employment service agencies that recruit within the immigrant communities, and provide support services such as language upgrading, résumé building, and training.

Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN)

WIN is an industry-driven project championed by Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Coordinating Committee (MAHRCC), Manitoba Food Processors Association (MFPA), Life Sciences Association of Manitoba (LSAM), Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME), and, Information and Communication Technologies Association of Manitoba (ICTAM). Funding for WIN is provided by HRSDC. WIN aims to match labour needs in selected high-demand occupations with the documented skills of newcomers.

WIN was developed to demonstrate the possibility of creating a capacity that is industry driven and competency based, and that can assess skilled immigrants, recognize their existing skills, measure the skill gaps, close those gaps, and document the outcome. It sought to determine the components required for creating a long-term system for matching skilled immigrants with appropriate employment and to provide recommendations for next steps.

Overall, the project demonstrated the potential of Manitoba employers to recognize competencies that immigrant blue-collar workers have gained in foreign employment experience. Three occupations - welder, computer numerical control, machining setup, and maintenance mechanic - have been successfully piloted. Many of the tools, processes, partnerships, and expertise needed to sustain further programming in these occupations have been developed.

The project has seven main components. It:

- is industry driven. Occupations are selected based on areas of skills shortage identified by industry associations and individual employers) and much of the closing of the skill-gap required by individual immigrants is provided on site at participating employers' facilities.

- uses a customized, competency-based approach. Jobs are profiled to identify specific technical and language competencies required to perform the work. Job requirements differ among employers within an industry, so customized competency profiles are developed in collaboration with each participating employer.
- has a flexible assessment of skills and knowledge. Subject matter experts assess participants' skills, whenever possible using hands-on assessment methods so that participants with limited language skills can demonstrate what they know and can do. Flexible assessment methods are used. For example, applicants are not assigned assessment tasks related to skills they have already indicated they do not possess. An applicant who is clearly competent is asked to perform more challenging tasks so the assessor can get a sense of the full range of his or her skills.
- uses a targeted approach to closing skill gaps. Skill-gap closing is customized to the specific learning needs of individual participants and the skills requirements of individual employers. Strategies include customized workplace and off site options including purchased seats in existing programs; bringing external instructors to the workplace when employers lack employee development capacity; allowing participants to attend part-time to accommodate their existing employment in "survival jobs". Eight employers absorbed the cost of wages for customized workplace closing of skill gaps. Occupation-specific language tutoring is provided when required. Preparation for employment includes orientation to Canadian workplace culture and expectations.
- provides participant supports. Income supports are provided as required. A case manager monitors participant progress and identifies issues that could impede successful completion of the program. The case manager provides personal support and information to participants as issues emerge and refers them for other services as required.
- re-assesses skills as they are acquired. Participants are re-assessed on an ongoing basis as they acquire new skills. Their progress both on the job and at an educational institution is monitored and tracked.
- documents skills. Employers and/or training institutions provide participants with competency-based documentation in the form of a certificate accompanied by a list of the specific competencies that had been demonstrated, including both technical and language competencies. In addition, the employer certificates state that the individual meets the company's entry-level standards for the specified occupation.

Employers gained a number of clear benefits from the project. They retained fifteen skilled and employer-credentialed participants in positions that are difficult to fill,

increasing production capacity and reducing overtime costs. Employers found that employees worked more safely and were more easily trained and promoted as a result of their increased literacy in English. Some employers adopted the project's customized competency profiles for other training and performance management purposes. The program found that WIN enhanced employers' capability to assess, develop, and recognize the skills of immigrants and eight employers provided on-the-job closing of skill gaps, demonstrating support for WIN by absorbing the costs of wages.

Benefits for participants included moving from un- or under-employment to appropriate employment in high demand occupations. Most closed skills gaps in an average of eight weeks with an increase in average hourly wages by \$7.27/hour. Eight participants purchased houses as a result, and one family of five moved from a one-bedroom apartment to a better-located two-bedroom apartment. WIN provided a comprehensive package of services and supports that would be very difficult for individuals to access on their own. Documentation from WIN also played a significant part in the successful re-employment of participants who were laid off because of market conditions. The second of two groups of welders in the project were tested by the Canadian Welding Bureau and received a Student MIG Ticket. This designation is removed once the holder has had a specific period of employment at a workplace certified by the CWB.

Canadian Language Benchmark benchmarking proved more valuable than essential skills profiling with respect to speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Paper-and-pencil assessments were not the best way to determine the occupational skills and knowledge of immigrants, especially those with low CLB levels. Hands-on assessment activities proved to be the best way of confirming applicant skills.

The best approach to determining the supply of skilled immigrants turned out to be identifying potential participants through their cultural communities. Recruiting through communities has proven very useful and cost effective, and WIN graduates were an excellent source of appropriate referrals. On the other hand, personal networking by project management staff was an important source of participating small employers, as they often do not belong to industry associations.

The project reduced the likelihood of job loss and consequent payment of employment insurance or income assistance for participants, at an average direct cost per participant of \$17,673. Without counting the increased purchasing power of graduates, the employment generated by these purchases, and the sales and income tax revenues generated, the payback period for direct costs is estimated as 4.51 years, and for the total program cost of \$36,996 per graduate is 9.44 years.

In 2008, the Manitoba Prior Learning and Assessment Network awarded WIN a "PEARL" (Pursuit of Excellence in the Assessment and Recognition of Learning) award in recognition of the program's quality and achievements.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers – Canadian electrical experience

The IBEW was founded on November 28, 1891 in St. Louis, Missouri. It is the oldest, as well as the largest, electrical union in the world. Today, the IBEW represents 725,000 members internationally. The first Canadian local was organized in Ottawa on December 20, 1899 and the IBEW now has 100 locals representing 55,000 members in every province and territory and is very diverse. The IBEW represents members in many industries, such as utilities, manufacturing, construction, telecommunications, cablevision, radio and television, shipyards, railroads, sound and alarm, appliance repair, motor shops, sign shops, pulp and paper mills, mining and government.

The IBEW has campaigned for the fair treatment of temporary foreign workers in Canada and has created programs to help licensed electricians gain Canadian experience and get them into more secure jobs. A curriculum was created to cover basic Canadian electrical specifications (Ontario Electrical Code) and technical terminology. Although no government funding was made available, the IBEW felt the initiative was worth support. The IBEW local thus contributed \$60,000 to run a program on 12 consecutive Saturdays for licensed electricians from China. Many of the 20 participants were university-trained, non-unionized, and lacking Canadian experience.

The training embodied core IBEW values to endeavour to bring all people in the electrical industry together, to achieve the common goals of safety, quality and prosperity in a positive and encouraging workplace. The objective of the program was to get the trainees into secure jobs, encourage positive attitudes towards the IBEW in the expectation that after acquiring some industry experience, they would return as active members of the union. The program was deemed to be a resounding success as all participants found secure employment.

APPENDIX D Knowledge Exchange - Potential participant organizations

Sector councils

Construction Sector Council	www.csc-ca.org
Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council	www.cthrc.ca/eng
Information and Communications Technology Council	www.ictc-ctic.ca
Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council	www.cthrc.com
ECO-Canada	www.eco.ca

Labour unions

Canadian Labour Congress	www.canadianlabour.ca
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers	www.bacweb.org

Professional associations

Canadian Nurses Association	www.cna-nurses.ca
Engineers Canada	www.engineerscanada.ca
Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations	www.cchra.ca

Business/employer organizations

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters	www.cme-mec.ca
Canadian Federation of Independent Business	www.cfib.ca
Conference Board of Canada	www.conferenceboard.ca
Business Council of British Columbia	www.bcbc.com

Employers

RBC	www.rbc.com/careers/
CGI	www.cgi.com/web/en/home.htm
Manulife	www.manulife.ca/canada/canada1.nsf/public/homepage
Banque Nationale du Canada	www.bnc.ca
Assiniboine Credit Union	
Manitoba Hydro	www.hydro.mb.ca
McCain Foods Ltd	www.mccain.com
Associated Engineering Group Ltd.	www.ae.ca
Business Development Bank of Canada / BDC	www.bdc.ca
i3DVR International Inc.	www.i3dvr.com
Keane Canada, Inc.	www.keane.com
Providence Health Care	www.providencehealthcare.org
Replicon Inc.	www.replicon.com
Steam Whistle Brewing	www.steamwhistle.ca/contact/directory.php

Trade organizations

Canadian Forestry Association	www.canadianforestry.com
Canadian Printing Industries Association	www.cpia-aci.ca

Chambers of commerce

Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain www.ccm.ca
Toronto Board of Trade www.bot.com
Vancouver Board of Trade www.boardoftrade.com
Calgary Chamber of Commerce www.calgarychamber.com

Immigrant settlement agencies

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council www.triec.ca
Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association www.misa.ns.ca
Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia www.issbc.org
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers www.emcn.ab.ca

Government ministries of immigration, citizenship, labour, employment, etc.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml
Public Service Commission www.psc-cfp.gc.ca
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp
Immigration et Communautés culturelles Québec
www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca
Emploi-Québec www.emploi-quebec.net/anglais/
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration www.novascotiainmigration.com
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration www.ontarioimmigration.ca

Career counselling organizations

Regroupement québécois des organismes pour le développement de l'employabilité (RQuODE) www.savie.qc.ca/rquode2/
Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP) <http://onestep.on.ca>
ASPECT (BC) www.aspect.bc.ca
Canadian Counselling Association www.ccacc.ca
Canadian Career Development Foundation www.ccdf.ca/ccdf2/
Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling www.ceric.ca

Non-governmental organizations

Canadian Council on Learning www.ccl-cca.ca
Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment www.capla.ca
Association of Canadian Community Colleges www.accc.ca
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada www.aucc.ca
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks www.language.ca
The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC) www.councils.org

APPENDIX E

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APPENDIX F

List of relevant links (URLs)

5 easy steps to hiring immigrants in British Columbia

www.5stepsolution.ca

Assiniboine Credit Union

www.assiniboine.mb.ca

ASPECT (BC)

www.aspect.bc.ca

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

www.aucc.ca

Association of Canadian Community Colleges

<http://ciip.accc.ca/>

ciip@accc.ca

Banque nationale du Canada

www.bnc.ca/bnc/cda/productfamily/0,2641,divId-2_langId-2_navCode-13611,00.html

BC Skills Connect Program for Immigrants

www.cvims.org/skills_connect.php

BioTalent Canada™

www.biotalent.ca

Calgary Chamber of Commerce Talent Pool Development Society

www.chambertalentpool.com

Canada's top 100 employers - Best Employers for New Canadians

www.canadastop100.com/immigrants/

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment

www.capla.ca/FCR.php

Canadian Career Development Foundation

www.ccdf.ca/ccdf2/

Canadian Council on Learning

www.ccl-cca.ca

Canadian Counselling Association

www.ccacc.ca

Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling
www.ceric.ca

Canadian Federation of Independent Business
www.fcei.ca

Canadian Forestry Association
www.canadianforestry.com

Canadian Labour Congress
<http://canadianlabour.ca>
www.changingthecanvas.org

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters/EMAP
www.emap-bc.ca

Canadian Nurses Association
www.cna-nurses.ca

Canadian Policy Research Networks
www.cprn.ca

Canadian Printing Industries Association
www.cpia-aci.ca

Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council
www.cthrc.ca

Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council
www.cthrc.com

CareerBridge
www.careerbridge.ca

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
www.language.ca

Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain
www.btmq.ca

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp

Citizenship and Immigration Canada list of Key Immigrant Settlement Organizations
Across Canada
www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/welcome/wel-20e.asp#nwt

Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training
www.collegeconnect.on.ca/pages/general_main.asp

Conference Board of Canada
www.conferenceboard.ca

Construction Sector Council (CSC)
www.tempforeignwork.ca

Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry
http://d1m.cal.dal.ca/_DENT.htm#7

ECO-Canada
[www.eco.ca/_practitioner/immigrantCentre.aspx?
display=employerRequirements§ion=workexp](http://www.eco.ca/_practitioner/immigrantCentre.aspx?display=employerRequirements§ion=workexp)

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
www.emcn.ab.ca

Emploi-Québec
www.emploi-quebec.net/francais/

Engineers Canada
www.engineerscanada.ca

Human Resources and Social Development Canada
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml

Immigrant Services Society of BC
www.issbc.org/employers/
www.esportfolio.com/PROJECT_SITE/

Immigration et Communautés culturelles Québec
www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

Information and Communications Technology Council
www.ictc-ctic.ca

Institute for Research on Public Policy
www.irpp.org

Integration-net
www.integration-net.ca/francais/ini/vsi-isb/conference2/jpc-cmp.htm

Integration Resources Canada
<http://integrationresourcescanada.com>

International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
www.bacweb.org

LASI World Skills
www.ottawa-worldskills.org/ws_site/home_english1.htm

Looking Ahead, An EASI Initiative: Gateway to Employment for Immigrants in British Columbia
www.lookingahead.bc.ca

Manitoba Child Care Program Internationally Educated Qualifications Pilot
www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/index.html

Manitoba Immigration Career guides
www2.immigratemanitoba.com/browse/work_in_manitoba/profession/careerguides.html

Manitoba guide to all 16 bridging programs in the province
www2.immigratemanitoba.com/browse/work_in_manitoba/profession/work-recognize-bridging.html

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association
www.misa.ns.ca

National Occupational Classification
www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC-CNP/app/index.aspx

Nova Scotia Nominee Program
www.novascotiainmigration.com/en-page1078.aspx

Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP)
<http://onestep.on.ca/>

Public Policy Forum
www.ppforum.ca/fr/home/

PROMPT
www.cassaonline.com/prompt/about/contact_us.html

Public Service Commission
www.psc-cfp.gc.ca

RecognitionForLearning (RFL)
www.recognitionforlearning.ca/index_e.php

Regroupement québécois des organismes pour le développement de l'employabilité (RQuODE)
www.savie.qc.ca/rquode2/

Royal Bank of Canada
www.rbc.com/careers/

Service d'orientation et d'intégration des immigrants au travail
www.soiit.qc.ca

Services et formation aux immigrants en Montérégie
www.sfim.qc.ca

The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC)
<http://councils.org/>

Top 20 Best Employers of Immigrants
www.canadianimmigrant.ca/bestemployers/

Toronto Board of Trade
www.bot.com

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
www.triec.ca
www.hireimmigrants.ca

University of Manitoba Faculty of Engineering
<http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/engineering/programs/ieeq/index.html>

Vancouver Board of Trade
www.boardoftrade.com

Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN)
<http://options4success.com/WIN.htm>