

Help Wanted – Bridging the Gap Between Immigrants and Employers

Final Report

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Abstract

This paper presents results from a multi-jurisdictional review of academic and grey literature concerning effective policies and practices supporting immigrant labour market attachment. The paper presents an overview of the known barriers to labour market attachment at both the macro, systemic level, and at the micro, individual immigrant level. Policies and practices that address the barriers identified in each area are presented from the international and Canadian perspectives. Gaps in the research are identified, and recommendations are made.

Résumé

Ce document présente les résultats d'une revue multisectorielle des ouvrages de recherche universitaire et de la documentation grise concernant les politiques et pratiques qui sont efficaces pour soutenir la participation des immigrants sur le marché du travail. Il donne un aperçu des obstacles à leur participation qui sont connus, à la fois au niveau macro ou systémique, et au niveau micro ou des immigrants eux-mêmes. Les politiques et pratiques adoptées pour éliminer les obstacles repérés à chaque niveau sont présentées dans une perspective internationale et canadienne. Les lacunes dans la recherche sont définies, et des recommandations sont formulées.

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Glossary of Acronyms

ACCC	Association of Canadian Community Colleges
BCITP-net	British Columbia Internationally Trained Professionals Network
CAETO	Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations
CAMO	Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'oeuvre, Québec
CBITP	Career Bridge for Internationally Trained Professionals
CCLB	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CICIC	Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
CIRL	Canadian Institute for Recognizing Learning
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
CLBC	Canadian Labour and Business Centre
CME	Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
CMEC	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
CSPCT	Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, Ontario
EASI	Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants, British Columbia
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EIC	Employment and Immigration Canada
ELT	Enhanced Language Training
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center, US Department of Education
ESL	English as a second language
EU	European Union
FSL	French as a second language
GTA	greater Toronto area
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
IETPs	internationally educated and trained professionals
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMDB	Longitudinal Immigrant Database, Canada
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Canada
ISS	Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia
LASI	Local Agencies Serving Immigrants
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

LMA	Labour market attachment
LSIA	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia
LSIC	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
MDRC	Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, US
MISA	Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, Nova Scotia
NARICs	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NOOSR	National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, Australia
OCISO	Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMCI	Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
PLAR	prior learning assessment and recognition
PROMPT	Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades
SLID	Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, Canada
TCRI	Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes
TRIEC	Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, Ontario
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USNEI	United States Network for Education Information
WLTN	Workplace Language Training for Newcomers

Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

Recent studies indicate that many newcomers to Canada are facing greater challenges obtaining access to the labour market in the short-term, and reaching parity with native-born Canadians in the longer-term. Immigrants are increasingly being counted among the more vulnerable groups of Canadian society, largely due to problems finding gainful employment.

Research indicates that the types of factors limiting the ability of immigrants to find employment in Canada exist at the macro policy level, as well as at the micro level of the local labour market. The need to understand the multidimensional drivers which currently limit immigrants' economic, social, political and cultural integration into Canadian society is critical to also understanding where communities have discovered keys to their successful inclusion and integration.

The purpose of this project is to identify and critically review instruments, policies and practices related to facilitating immigrant labour market attachment and inclusion through a multi-jurisdictional literature review which will,

- Provide specific examples of provincial, federal and international programs, policies and instruments; and
- Identify key gaps in the knowledge.

This research sits at the nexus of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC's) overall vision of Canada "as a country where individuals have the opportunity to learn and to contribute to Canada's success by participating fully in a well-functioning and efficient labour market" and the specific departmental goal "to ensure that Canada continues to attract the highly skilled immigrants it needs and helps them to achieve their full potential in Canadian society and the labour market". In keeping with the department's focus on human capital, and its commitment to invest in people, HRSDC has identified two specific milestones with respect to immigrant labour market integration (HRDC 2002a: 53).

- By 2010, 65% (up from 58% in 2000) of adult immigrants have post-secondary education.
- The income gap between immigrants in the workforce and Canadian-born workers with comparable skills and education is reduced by 50%.

HRSDC has already identified the key determinants of successful integration as: language fluency, education, prior linkages to Canada, recognition of foreign credentials, labour market information, Canadian work experience, and public and employer attitudes. This study will look at which policies and practices can provide the most beneficial impact on these key determinants, as they relate to employment and the development of employment related skills.

The Context of Immigration in Canada

Canada is a nation of immigrants. In proportion to its population, Canada has accepted more immigrants and refugees since 1990 than the United States or Australia. Since 1996, Canada has admitted slightly more than 2.2 million immigrants, the highest number admitted in any decade in the past one hundred years. These immigrants accounted for the largest source of population increase in major urban centres, and also represented a substantial proportion of the total labour force growth over the decade. Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal are the three top destination settlement areas for immigrants, together receiving 72% of Canada's immigrants in 2005 (CIC 2005c).

Immigration to Canada reflects three goals set out in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*:

- to foster the development of a strong, viable economy in all regions of the country;
- to facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian residents with close family members from abroad; and
- to fulfil Canada's legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition.

Three main streams of immigration correspond to these goals: the economic stream (which includes immigrants accepted as skilled applicants under the “Points System” as well as Business Class immigrants); the family class; and refugees. In addition to these streams, people can apply to come to Canada under Immigrant Nominee Programs, Foreign Worker Programs and as an International Student.

Despite a well-developed immigration policy, Canada lacks an overarching federal integration policy that guides the integration of people arriving through these different streams in a standardized, consistent manner across the country. Economists and sociologists working in academia, government, and as part of research organizations play an important role in analyzing data to identify barriers and challenges faced by immigrants during integration, as well as to identify gaps in policy or programming. However, at the practical level it is provincial and local agencies and organizations that are confronted on a daily basis with the challenge of understanding the hurdles that newcomers face, and who develop locally-relevant and appropriate programs, services and approaches.

The Link Between Labour Market Attachment and Integration

This paper uses a conceptual four fold framework which proposes that integration:

- is a multidimensional process, not confined to the achievement of economic independence, but with the ultimate goal of the immigrant achieving belonging and citizenship and the opportunity to fulfil their human potential;
- depends on a variety of personal resources that the individual can bring to bear in developing their integration strategy;

- takes place within a socio-political and economic framework that shapes the extent to which an individual can mobilize these resources; and
- is bi-directional, taking place both at the level of the individual immigrant and at the level of the destination community and society.

The integration process involves multiple stakeholders who have different perspectives concerning the key goals and challenges involved in the process. These stakeholders include: newcomers; immigrant communities; immigrant serving organizations and associations; employers; educators; regulators; social service delivery organizations and associations; community associations; and municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments.

Stakeholders have different perspectives on who and what is an “immigrant”, which lead to different expectations about the desirability and/or the possibility of integration, and therefore suggest different policies and practices for promoting integration. The Canadian concept of an immigrant is grounded in often unspoken expectations that most immigrants have come to stay; will automatically integrate as children are born and raised, but may maintain multiple identities even as they integrate; and may need or benefit from support specific to their context as an immigrant. Overall, the Canadian concept of an immigrant is most similar internationally to the Australian, and varies more from European and American understandings.

In plain language immigrant labour market attachment (LMA) begins with getting a job. However, full LMA includes a number of not-necessarily linear, though related steps, from keeping the job; accumulating relevant work experience; getting raises on the job; getting promotions on the job; and achieving a position commensurate with qualifications. The definition of good LMA varies depending on whether the immigrant is working in a regulated or non-regulated occupation, and within these categories, varies by occupational sector. Immigrants can be found working in most sectors in Canada.

Newcomers arrive in Canada with their individual sets of skills, experiences, and backgrounds – a “toolkit” of personal resources – that can loosely be classified as their human capital (i.e. education and employment skills, language ability); social networks (i.e. friends or relatives in Canada); and financial capital that they have brought with them or left behind. For the majority of immigrants, the key to successful integration at all levels lies in their ability to mobilize these resources in order to find paid employment that can support themselves and/or their families – a “living wage”.

The connection between obtaining productive employment among newcomers and overall short- and long-term integration is clear. Literature concerning the interconnection between various determinants of health, including the link between economic hardship, stress, and well-being, indicates that where newcomers do not obtain adequate employment, there are serious implications for their health and well-being. An increasing underutilization of the skills of newcomers - skills for which many were selected - is directly connected to a significant increase in poverty rates among new immigrants and their families.

There are critical implications for the communities and cities in which these excluded populations are concentrated, which have a lot to do with social cohesion, the quality of

life that people experience, and with the values and quality of the society being built. Indicators of the lack of integration of newcomers are found in the rise of marginalized ethnic enclaves; the increase in certain types of crime; increasing poverty rates; increasing polarization between those at the bottom and those at the top of the income scale; critical affordable housing shortages; and serious challenges meeting the educational, health and social service needs of growing multilingual and multicultural populations.

Effective policies and programs aimed at promoting LMA among immigrants operate at different levels. These can be grouped according to their level of focus: the target population (general population versus immigrant-specific; individual immigrant versus ethnic group) and geographic level of implementation and responsibility (municipal, provincial/territorial, federal).

While there is very limited published evaluation research on the outcomes of specific policies which purport to promote LMA, it should be noted that there are some research programs which will in time create an evidence base which will be valuable in making a more formal comparison of these policies. Useful sources include: the Canadian Census; the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID); the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB); the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC); other longitudinal surveys conducted in New Zealand, the United States and Australia; US research from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC); data collected through the International Adult Literacy Survey series; and country comparisons through the European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index.

Systemic barriers to Labour Market Attachment and approaches to address those barriers

The changing forces of *supply and demand in the labour market* can create broad barriers to good LMA. Approaches which address this barrier include: adjusting immigrant selection criteria to reflect those skills that impact on the ability to integrate, and conducting outreach to immigrants from a particular occupational sector. In Canada these programs include: provincial Immigrant Nominee Programs; Foreign Worker Programs; post-graduation work permits for foreign students; and various efforts by individual sector councils/associations/ employers to recruit overseas.

National level *immigrant selection policies and procedures* can produce barriers which may be addressed through: adjusting the points system; tightening policies to better capture market skills; and increasing the range of programs through which immigrants can apply. Programs which relate to selection policies include: requiring pre-departure credential recognition and language testing; adjusting the points system in response to evidence-based research; and adjusting the proportion of immigrants accepted through the skilled stream, family reunification stream and the humanitarian stream.

The *jurisdictional complexity* created by the intersection of three vertical levels government - federal, provincial and municipal, and ten horizontal jurisdictions across the provinces and territories creates mobility barriers for all job seekers. Approaches

which tackle this barrier range from providing better access to information, to actual coordination between the jurisdictions. Programs which work to reduce jurisdictional barriers include: national level information systems; networks which are working from a multi-jurisdictional perspective; labour mobility programs or agreements; and occupational sector organizations streamlining access to jobs within their sectors.

Welfare and tax policies can be a barrier to LMA if they entice immigrants into a “welfare trap”. Approaches which reduce this barrier tend to either make it harder to access welfare early in the integration process, or to make it easier to get off welfare by making work a financially viable alternative.

Barriers created by the *location* of immigrant homes relative to employment and education may be reduced by addressing the concentration of ethnic enclaves in areas of low employment. Programs which deal with this barrier include dispersal programs for new immigrants and public transit development.

The lack of a standardized, coordinated, collaborative *immigrant integration system* creates barriers for immigrant labour market attachment as well. Without an overarching national settlement and integration policy aimed at facilitating long-term integration of all immigrants, efforts continue to be applied in a piece-meal fashion. Approaches to facilitating a standardized, integrated system of services include: coordinating approaches at all levels of government; developing and supporting a range of generic and specialized services; service integration; access to services based on need; and flexible approaches to location, timing and mode of service delivery.

Another significant barrier to LMA can be the *attitudes of employers* which can be positive, but also range from disinterest, to caution, to actual negative prejudice, to unawareness of the issues. Approaches to changing employer attitudes, and increasing employer understanding and awareness, include: legislation; education; and stakeholder engagement. Specific programs include: employers training; information targeted at employers; immigrant leadership development; and stakeholder partnership development.

Actual *discrimination* and general public attitudes, some of which have been influenced by the “war on terror”, create a broader barrier which is also being addressed through legislation and public education. Particular programs would include Non-governmental organizations (NGO) advocacy.

Individual barriers to Labour Market Attachment and approaches to address those barriers

The most prominent barrier to good LMA is official *language and literacy skills*. Different approaches to reducing this barrier include a wide variety of programs which create incentives for learners to acquire the language, and also programs which increase the availability of language instruction and improve the relevance of the instruction on offer. Programs highlighted include: optional free language courses; compulsory free language courses; pre-departure language training; tailor-made learning options; fast tracking applications based for successful language learners; legally binding contracts for learners, enforced through sanctions to benefits; in-the-workplace language training;

mother tongue instruction in schools; widespread basic language training; professional level language training; creating job specific language benchmarks; and providing occupation specific language training materials.

The other prominent barrier faced at the individual level is *credential recognition* which is being addressed through approaches which: simplify the recognition system; reduce the uncertainty about what credentials will be recognized; and provide opportunities to acquire new credentials. Programs which target this barrier include: creating central sources of information about credential recognition procedures; centralizing the actual recognition function; providing binding assessments of credentials; and reimbursing tuition for new studies.

The requirement for relevant, often Canadian, *work experience* is another barrier which immigrants come up against in the search for a job. Approaches which address this barrier can be divided between those which assess the equivalence of source country work experience, and those which help the immigrant to gain host country work experience. Specific programs include: on-the-job testing; special trainee positions; apprenticeships; mentorship; volunteering; bridging; co-op placements; and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

Understanding the *culture of the workplace* can be a barrier for many immigrants. Differences in work place culture are addressed through exposure to the broad issues of cultural difference or through mechanisms which relate specifically to culture in the workplace. Specific mechanisms include: civic education, workshops, seminars, websites for immigrants; diversity management training for all employees; immigrant participation in labour organizations; accepting newcomers as “denizens”; interviewing and role-playing; and mentorship.

In recognition of the critical value of *networks and connections* in getting employment, and the barriers which arise when networks are weak, various approaches have been established to develop networks among immigrants, and to introduce immigrants into Canadian networks. Programs include: building up ethnic associations as service delivery mechanisms; mentorship; bridging, job-shadowing, and creating and supporting networks of internationally educated and trained professionals whose purpose is to self-advocate.

A key component of what are often called bridge training programs is *skills upgrading or development*. Programs which respond to these needs include: sector-specific employment preparation; distance education via the Internet; career assessment and planning service; and, special loans to complete studies.

Difficulties in accessing *information about government services* is another barrier, which is being addressed mainly by increasing the information available on the Internet, but also by using immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) as information providers. Overseas Immigration Agents are another potential source of general information about Canada.

Gaps

Gaps highlighted include:

- There is a clear need for a national integration policy and framework that defines a series of multidimensional integration outcomes and indicators.
- There is a gap between public perceptions and understanding, and the reality of the role of immigrants within the Canadian economy and society in general which suggests a role for a national public education strategy highlighting role of immigrants and supporting their inclusion.
- There is a lack of documented, evidence-based outcomes research evaluating the effectiveness of approaches, services, and programs, and a specific lack of information concerning LMA challenges and solutions specific to women, youth, members of visible minority groups and particular ethnic groups.
- Services and program gaps included:
 - Underdeveloped understanding of the greater extent to which immigrants rely on family and friends, as opposed to formal services and systems of support, for information and assistance with their integration challenges;
 - Lack of formal evaluation of the effectiveness of web-based delivery;
 - Immigrants who have become citizens are an under serviced group, particularly concerning federal programs whose eligibility requirements exclude them;
 - Inadequate access to specialized/advanced professional level English training and low end more basic literacy courses;
 - Cross-cultural communications could be expanded to reach immigrants;
 - Lack of access to a consistent core of LMA services delivered across the country; and
 - A requirement for ongoing outreach to employers, regulators and educators to discuss issues and search for solutions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. **Support the Development of a National Labour Market Integration Policy Framework as Part of an Overall Immigrant Integration Framework:** Without an overarching national settlement and integration policy aimed at facilitating long-term integration of all immigrants – not only those who have “just arrived” and are not yet citizens – efforts to address the underemployment of immigrants will continue to fall short of what is required. CIC and HRSDC should collaborate with other stakeholders to develop such a framework.

2. **Use an Integrated, Holistic Approach:** Canadian innovations and identified good practices reinforce the need for holistic, integrated and systemic approaches addressing the issue of the underemployment of newcomers. The groundbreaking work of the Maytree Foundation framework and of PROMPT are excellent places to start.
3. **Champion and Support Horizontal, Inter-Jurisdictional Collaboration:** There is a requirement to facilitate and support collaboration among stakeholders in multiple jurisdictions, including all federal departments whose mandates touch labour market integration of immigrants (in particular CIC and HRSDC); and among public, private and voluntary sector departments, ministries, organizations and agencies at the federal-provincial-territorial and municipal levels.
4. **Use a Range of Approaches, Including Population-Cased and Place-Based:** US evidence suggests that programs which are “place based”, specifically public housing based programs; approach a wide range of barriers simultaneously; are flexible in addressing new barriers as they are identified; and provide different responses for different ethnic groups have the best effect in increasing LMA, in the case of welfare recipients anyway. Consider piloting place-based approaches for their effectiveness with a small number of Canadian communities that have been identified as at risk for a number of factors, including poverty, high proportions of non-official language speaking residents, high proportions of immigrants in ethnic enclaves, and so on.
5. **Engage Employers:** All evidence points to the need to get employers on board, both within the regulated and non-regulated sectors. Employers must be engaged at the local labour market assessment and development level, and as partners in program and service delivery. The Maytree “Circle of Champions” model is a good starting point for building broader employer engagement strategies at provincial, territorial and national levels, as is the WRIEN approach of housing their network within the local Chamber of Commerce.
6. **Support the Development of a Continuum of Flexible, Integrated, Standardized Services:** The challenges facing newcomers are complex, and require a range of generic and specialized services to meet the needs of all. At the most basic level, the opportunities to integrate cultural training with language training, workplace culture within general culture training, workplace language within basic language training, and job counselling with language training, suggest how integrating services can increase effectiveness. Much of this is beginning to happen in an ad hoc way, but could expand considerably. Support integrated services that address needs across a range of barriers, as opposed to those that focus on a particular barrier to the exclusion of others.
7. **Expand the Evidence Base:** There are numerous opportunities available to expand and improve the existing evidence base in order to support rational policy and program decision-making. These include:

- a) Fund studies using available sources of data and information like the LSIC¹ which afford detailed analysis of the myriad factors impacting on the short- and long-term integration process, of which labour market attachment is a central, but not isolated, component.
 - b) Support the development of concrete, standardized outcomes and indicators of labour market integration that can be used as benchmarks for program and service evaluation. These benchmarks can be used to measure progress towards the two HRSDC milestones for immigrant labour market integration.
 - c) Fund research that examines the labour market attachment challenges, and best practices, in relation to specific sub-populations, including women; youth; and different ethnic groups.
 - d) Fund studies that engage multiple stakeholders in identification of challenges and the evaluation of effective practices.
 - e) Require and support process and outcome evaluations of programs and services targeting labour market attachment.
 - f) Support the dissemination of supported research through central/networked websites within government and the voluntary sector.
- 8. Explore Different Funding Models:** Consider including multi-year funding, as opposed to only one-year project-based funding, in order to increase the sustainability and effectiveness of programs and services.
- 9. Ensure Access to Services:**
- a) Remove citizenship as a restriction on eligibility for programs and services. Eligibility should be needs based.
 - b) Support the provision of flexible and integrated services in terms of timing; location; and mode of delivery.

¹ As well, the EU Civic Inclusion Index offers a measurement model, covering more than just LMA, and may also prove to be a fruitful starting point for similar work in Canada.

Sommaire

Introduction et contexte

Les études récentes indiquent que de nombreux nouveaux venus au Canada ont de plus en plus de mal à accéder au marché du travail à court terme, et à avoir la même représentation que les Canadiens de souche à long terme. Les immigrants font de plus en plus partie des groupes vulnérables de la société canadienne, surtout en raison de leur difficulté de trouver un emploi rémunérateur.

Selon les recherches, il existe des facteurs qui limitent la capacité des immigrants de se trouver du travail au Canada, tant au niveau macro ou des politiques qu'au niveau micro ou du marché du travail local. Il est aussi primordial de comprendre les facteurs multidimensionnels qui limitent actuellement l'intégration économique, sociale, politique et culturelle des immigrants à la société canadienne pour que nous sachions quels sont les facteurs clés que les collectivités ont découverts pour réussir leur inclusion et leur intégration.

Ce projet a pour but de répertorier et d'examiner d'un œil critique les politiques, les pratiques et les instruments qui servent à faciliter l'attachement et l'inclusion des immigrants au marché du travail au moyen d'une recension des écrits intergouvernementale qui :

- donne des exemples précis des programmes, des politiques et des instruments provinciaux, fédéraux et internationaux;
- recense les principales lacunes dans les connaissances.

Cette recherche est au cœur de la vision globale de Ressources humaines et Développement des compétences Canada (RHDCC) au sujet du Canada : « un pays où chacun des citoyens a la possibilité d'apprendre et de contribuer au succès du Canada en participant pleinement à un marché du travail efficace et efficient » et « faire en sorte que le Canada continue d'attirer les immigrants qualifiés dont il a besoin et les aide à réaliser pleinement leur potentiel dans la société et sur le marché du travail du Canada ». Compte tenu de l'attention qu'accorde le Ministère au capital humain et de son engagement à investir dans les personnes, RHDSC a répertorié deux étapes précises pour l'intégration des immigrants sur le marché du travail (DRHC, 2002a : 53).

- D'ici 2010, 65 % (en hausse par rapport à 58 % en 2000) d'immigrants adultes auront des études postsecondaires.
- L'écart de revenu entre les immigrants et les travailleurs canadiens de souche ayant des études et des compétences comparables sera réduit de 50 %.

RHDSC a déjà répertorié les principaux facteurs qui détermineront la réussite de l'intégration : la maîtrise des langues, les études, les liens antérieurs avec le Canada, la reconnaissance des titres de compétence étrangers, l'information sur le marché du travail, l'expérience de travail au Canada, et l'attitude de la population et des employeurs. Cette

étude examinera les politiques et les pratiques qui pourront avoir le maximum d'avantages sur ces principaux facteurs, puisqu'elles se rapportent à l'emploi et à l'acquisition de compétences propres à l'emploi.

Le contexte de l'immigration au Canada

Le Canada est un pays d'immigrants. Selon le pourcentage de sa population, le Canada a accepté plus d'immigrants et de réfugiés depuis 1990 que les États-Unis ou l'Australie. Depuis 1996, le Canada a admis plus de 2,2 millions d'immigrants, le plus grand nombre admis en une décennie depuis 100 ans. Ces immigrants ont constitué la principale source d'augmentation de la population dans les grands centres urbains et également un pourcentage considérable de la croissance totale de la population active sur cette même période. Toronto, Vancouver et Montréal sont les trois principales régions où s'installent les immigrants, ces trois villes ayant ensemble accueilli 72 % des immigrants au Canada en 2005 (CIC, 2005c).

L'immigration au Canada reflète trois objectifs fixés dans la *Loi sur l'immigration et la protection des réfugiés* (LIPR) :

- favoriser le développement d'une économie forte et viable dans toutes les régions du pays;
- faciliter la réunification au Canada de résidents canadiens avec les membres de leur famille immédiate qui résident à l'étranger;
- remplir les obligations légales du Canada relativement aux réfugiés et maintenir sa tradition humanitaire.

Trois principales catégories d'immigration correspondent à trois objectifs : le volet économique (qui comprend les immigrants acceptés comme candidats qualifiés en vertu d'un « système de points » comme ceux du monde des affaires); la catégorie des familles; et les réfugiés. En plus de ces catégories, il est possible de déposer une demande au Canada en vertu des programmes des candidats à l'immigration, des programmes des travailleurs étrangers, et du statut d'étudiant étranger.

Même si cette politique d'immigration est bien conçue, le Canada n'a pas de politique fédérale générale d'intégration normalisée et uniforme qui régit l'intégration des personnes à leur arrivée dans ces différentes catégories. Les économistes et les sociologues qui travaillent dans les universités, les gouvernements ou qui font partie d'organismes de recherche jouent un rôle important dans l'analyse des données servant à établir les obstacles auxquels se heurtent les immigrants pendant leur intégration, et à répertorier les lacunes dans les politiques ou les programmes. Toutefois, sur le plan pratique, ce sont les organismes provinciaux et locaux qui se heurtent tous les jours à la difficulté de compréhension des obstacles auxquels font face les nouveaux venus et qui élaborent des programmes, des approches ou des services propres à leur région.

Le lien entre l'attachement et l'intégration au marché du travail

Ce document s'appuie sur un cadre conceptuel à quatre volets selon lequel l'intégration :

- est un processus multidimensionnel qui n'est pas confiné à la réalisation de l'indépendance économique, mais dont le principal objectif est que l'immigrant se sente chez lui, comme un citoyen, et qu'il ait la chance de réaliser son potentiel humain;
- dépend d'une variété de ressources personnelles que la personne peut apporter à l'élaboration de sa stratégie d'intégration;
- se déroule à l'intérieur d'un cadre économique et sociopolitique qui façonne la mesure dans laquelle une personne peut mobiliser ces ressources;
- est bidirectionnelle et se produit tant chez l'immigrant lui-même que dans sa collectivité et sa société de destination.

Le processus d'intégration nécessite la participation de multiples intervenants ayant diverses opinions sur les principaux objectifs et défis qui le caractérisent. Ces intervenants sont les nouveaux venus, les collectivités d'immigrants, les organismes et les associations au service des immigrants, les employeurs, les éducateurs, les organismes de réglementation, les organismes et les associations de prestation de services sociaux, les associations communautaires, et les administrations municipales, provinciales, territoriales et fédérales.

La définition du terme « immigrant » diffère d'un intervenant à l'autre, ce qui crée des attentes différentes quant à la volonté ou à la possibilité d'intégration, donc des politiques et des pratiques différentes de promotion de l'intégration. Le concept canadien d'un immigrant repose sur des attentes souvent non dévoilées selon lesquelles la plupart des immigrants viennent pour rester, ils s'intégreront automatiquement lorsque leurs enfants viendront au monde et ils grandiront ici, mais maintiendront plus d'une identité même pendant leur intégration, et auront peut-être besoin de soutien propre à leur contexte. De façon générale, le concept canadien d'un immigrant est assez semblable, à l'échelle internationale, à celui de l'Australie et varie un peu plus par rapport à ceux de l'Europe et des États-Unis.

En termes simples, l'attachement au marché du travail (AMT) des immigrants commence par l'obtention d'un emploi. Toutefois, l'AMT complet prévoit plusieurs étapes qui ne sont pas nécessairement linéaires, qui ont un lien entre elles, c'est-à-dire garder l'emploi, accumuler de l'expérience de travail pertinente, obtenir des augmentations de salaire, recevoir des promotions au travail, et décrocher un poste qui correspond aux qualités. La définition d'un AMT réussi varie selon le fait que l'immigrant travaille dans une profession réglementée ou non réglementée, et à l'intérieur de ces catégories, selon le secteur professionnel. Il y a des immigrants dans la plupart des secteurs au Canada.

Les nouveaux venus arrivent au Canada avec un bagage de compétences, d'expérience et d'antécédents – une batterie de ressources personnelles – que l'on peut considérer vaguement comme leur capital humain (c.-à-d. leurs aptitudes à l'éducation et à l'emploi, leur maîtrise des langues); un réseau social (c.-à-d. des amis ou des membres de leur famille au Canada); et un capital financier, qu'ils ont apporté avec eux ou non. Pour la majorité des immigrants, la clé d'une intégration réussie dans toutes les catégories, c'est leur capacité de mobiliser ces ressources afin de se trouver un emploi rémunéré qui pourra les aider ou aider leur famille – un minimum vital.

Le lien entre l'obtention d'un emploi productif des nouveaux venus et l'intégration globale à court et à long termes est évident. La documentation sur l'interconnexion entre les divers facteurs déterminants de la santé, y compris le lien entre la misère économique, le stress et le bien-être, indique que les nouveaux venus qui n'obtiennent pas un emploi convenable ont de graves problèmes de santé et de bien-être. Une sous-utilisation croissante de leurs compétences – des compétences qui ont permis à un bon nombre d'être retenus – est directement liée à une augmentation considérable du taux de pauvreté chez les nouveaux immigrants et leur famille.

Il y a des conséquences évidentes pour les collectivités et les villes où se concentrent ces populations exclues, ces conséquences sont beaucoup reliées à la cohésion sociale, à la qualité de vie des personnes et aux valeurs et à la qualité de la société en cours d'établissement. Les indicateurs du manque d'intégration des nouveaux venus sont l'augmentation du nombre d'enclaves ethniques marginalisées, le nombre accru de certains genres de crimes, la hausse du taux de pauvreté, la polarisation accrue entre les personnes au haut et au bas de l'échelle de revenu, les pénuries graves de logement à prix abordable, et les énormes difficultés de répondre aux besoins d'éducation, de santé et de services sociaux de populations multiculturelles et multilingues croissantes.

Les politiques et les programmes efficaces visant à promouvoir l'AMT chez les immigrants se manifestent à différents niveaux. On peut les regrouper selon leur niveau d'importance : la population visée (population générale c. population immigrante en particulier; immigrant en particulier c. groupe ethnique) et l'échelle géographique de mise en œuvre et de responsabilité (municipalité, province/territoire, Canada).

S'il y a très peu d'études d'évaluation publiées sur les résultats de certaines politiques visant à promouvoir l'AMT, il faut savoir qu'il existe certains programmes de recherche qui finiront par créer un ensemble de preuves qui permettront d'établir une comparaison officielle de ces politiques. Le Recensement du Canada, l'Enquête sur la dynamique du travail et du revenu (EDTR), la Banque de données longitudinales sur les immigrants (BDIM), l'Enquête longitudinale auprès des immigrants du Canada (ELIC), d'autres enquêtes longitudinales réalisées en Nouvelle-Zélande, aux États-Unis et en Australie, les recherches de la Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) aux États-Unis, les données recueillies dans la série d'enquêtes internationales sur l'alphabétisation des adultes, et les comparaisons par pays du European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index sont des sources fiables.

Obstacles systémiques à l'attachement au marché du travail et méthodes pour les contourner

Les forces de changement de l'*offre et de la demande* dans le marché du travail peuvent créer d'importants obstacles à l'AMT. Pour contourner ces obstacles, on peut notamment modifier les critères de sélection des immigrants pour qu'ils reflètent les compétences qui influent sur la capacité de s'intégrer, et sensibiliser les immigrants d'un secteur professionnel en particulier. Au Canada, nous avons les programmes provinciaux des candidats à l'immigration, les programmes des travailleurs étrangers, les permis de travail après la fin des études pour les étudiants étrangers, et divers efforts des conseils sectoriels, des associations et des employeurs pour recruter à l'étranger.

Les *politiques et procédures nationales de sélection des immigrants* peuvent créer des obstacles que l'on peut contourner en modifiant le système de notation, en resserrant les politiques de façon à mieux saisir les compétences sur le marché, et en augmentant l'étendue des programmes en vertu desquels les immigrants peuvent poser leur candidature. Les programmes qui ont rapport aux politiques de sélection exigent une évaluation des aptitudes linguistiques et la reconnaissance des titres de compétence avant le départ, modifient le système de notation pour se conformer aux recherches probantes, et adaptent le pourcentage d'immigrants acceptés dans les catégories des compétences, de la réunification des familles et des relations humanitaires.

La *complexité administrative* créée par l'interaction de trois niveaux verticaux d'administration – gouvernement fédéral, gouvernements provinciaux et municipalités – et de dix administrations horizontales entre les provinces et les territoires crée des problèmes de mobilité pour tous les chercheurs d'emploi. Pour contourner cet obstacle, nous pouvons offrir un meilleur accès à l'information, mais aussi veiller à la coordination proprement dite entre les administrations. Les programmes qui visent à réduire les obstacles administratifs sont les systèmes d'information nationaux, les réseaux qui collaborent avec de multiples administrations, les programmes ou les ententes de mobilité de la main-d'œuvre, et les organismes sectoriels professionnels qui simplifient l'accès à des emplois dans leur secteur.

L'*aide sociale et les politiques fiscales* peuvent constituer un obstacle à l'AMT, car les immigrants peuvent se retrouver dans le cercle vicieux de l'aide sociale. Afin de réduire les risques, on peut soit rendre plus difficile l'accès à l'aide sociale au début du processus d'intégration ou inciter à l'abandon de l'aide sociale en veillant à ce que le travail soit une solution fiable sur le plan financier.

Pour remédier aux obstacles créés par l'*emplacement du domicile* des immigrants par rapport à leur lieu d'emploi ou aux écoles, on peut essayer d'éliminer la concentration des enclaves ethniques dans les secteurs où le taux d'emploi est faible. On peut mettre sur pied des programmes de dispersion des nouveaux immigrants ou encore développer le réseau de transport en commun.

L'absence d'un *système d'intégration des immigrants* normalisé, coordonné et coopératif nuit aussi à l'attachement des immigrants au marché du travail. Comme il n'existe pas de politique nationale générale d'intégration et d'installation pour faciliter l'intégration à

long terme de tous les immigrants, les efforts demeurent fragmentaires. Pour faciliter la création d'un réseau normalisé et intégré de services, il faut coordonner les approches de tous les niveaux de gouvernement, élaborer et soutenir un ensemble de services généraux et spécialisés, intégrer les services, offrir un accès aux services selon les besoins de chacun, et adopter des méthodes souples quant au lieu, au moment et au mode de prestation de services.

L'*attitude des employeurs* peut constituer un autre obstacle considérable à l'AMT, car les employeurs peuvent avoir une attitude positive, mais aussi être désintéressés, prudents, non sensibilisés aux enjeux ou avoir des préjugés négatifs. Pour changer l'attitude des employeurs et accroître leur compréhension et leur sensibilisation, on peut recourir à des lois, à l'éducation, et à la participation des intervenants. La formation des employeurs, l'information destinée aux employeurs, l'acquisition de leadership chez les immigrants et la création de partenariats avec les intervenants sont de bonnes solutions.

La *discrimination* et l'attitude de la population, en partie influencées par la « lutte contre le terrorisme », créent un obstacle encore plus vaste que l'on contourne également par des lois et l'éducation du grand public. On peut notamment faire la promotion des organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG).

Obstacles individuels à l'attachement au marché du travail et méthodes pour surmonter ces obstacles

L'obstacle le plus important à un bon AMT, ce sont les *compétences linguistiques et l'alphabétisation*. Pour remédier à ces obstacles, nous proposons une grande variété de programmes qui incitent les apprentis à apprendre la langue, et aussi des programmes visant à accroître l'offre de formation linguistique et à améliorer la pertinence de la formation offerte. On propose notamment des programmes gratuits et optionnels de formation linguistique, des cours de langue obligatoires gratuits, une formation linguistique avant le départ, des options de formation personnalisée, des programmes accélérés destinés aux apprentis avancés, des contrats ayant force obligatoire pour les apprentis, appliqués par la sanction des avantages, une formation linguistique en milieu de travail, un enseignement dans la langue maternelle à l'école, une formation linguistique de base généralisée, une formation linguistique au niveau professionnel, la création de repères linguistiques propres à l'emploi, et la distribution de documents de formation linguistique propres à une profession.

Un autre obstacle important sur le plan individuel, c'est la *reconnaissance des titres de compétence*, que l'on cherche à surmonter en mettant en place des méthodes de simplification des mécanismes de reconnaissance, de réduction de l'incertitude quant aux titres de compétence à reconnaître, et d'offre de possibilités d'acquisition de nouveaux titres de compétence. Les programmes visant à remédier à cet obstacle sont la création de sources centrales d'information sur les procédures de reconnaissance des titres de compétence, la centralisation de la fonction de reconnaissance comme telle, la mise en place d'évaluations officielles des titres de compétence, et le remboursement des frais de scolarité engagés pour de nouvelles études.

Le besoin d'*expérience de travail* pertinente, souvent au Canada, est un autre obstacle auquel se heurtent les immigrants à la recherche d'un emploi. Pour remédier à ces problèmes, nous proposons des solutions qui, d'une part, peuvent évaluer l'équivalence de l'expérience de travail dans le pays d'origine, et d'autre part, des solutions qui aident l'immigrant à acquérir de l'expérience de travail dans le pays d'accueil. Par exemple, nous avons l'évaluation en milieu de travail, les postes de stagiaires spéciaux, la formation par l'apprentissage, le mentorat, le bénévolat, les programmes de transition, les stages, et l'évaluation et la reconnaissance des titres de compétence étrangers (ERTCE).

Pour de nombreux immigrants, la *compréhension de la culture du milieu de travail* peut constituer un obstacle. Pour corriger les différences en matière de culture du milieu de travail, on peut faire connaître aux immigrants les principaux problèmes que créent les différences culturelles ou élaborer des mécanismes qui se rapportent précisément à la culture du milieu de travail. Ces mécanismes précis sont l'éducation communautaire, les ateliers, les séminaires, les sites Web pour immigrants, la formation en gestion de la diversité pour tous les employés, la participation des immigrants aux syndicats, l'acceptation des nouveaux venus en « demi-naturalisation », les entrevues et les simulations, et le mentorat.

Comme on reconnaît la valeur essentielle des *réseaux et des liens* dans l'obtention d'un emploi et les obstacles qui surviennent lorsque les réseaux ne sont pas très solides, nous avons créé diverses approches pour créer des réseaux entre les immigrants et pour intégrer les immigrants aux réseaux canadiens. Nous avons des programmes d'établissement d'associations ethniques comme mécanismes de prestation de services, de mentorat, de transition, de jumelage, et de création et de soutien de réseaux de professionnels formés à l'étranger qui ont pour but principal de faire la promotion d'eux-mêmes.

L'une des principales composantes des programmes dits d'intégration, c'est la *mise à niveau ou l'acquisition de compétences*. Les programmes qui répondent à ces besoins sont la préparation à l'emploi dans un secteur précis, l'enseignement à distance par Internet, le service de planification et d'évaluation professionnelles, et les prêts spéciaux pour terminer des études.

Il est aussi difficile d'accéder à des *renseignements sur les services gouvernementaux*, un autre obstacle que l'on contourne principalement en augmentant la quantité de renseignements diffusés sur Internet, mais aussi en faisant appel aux organismes d'aide aux immigrants (OAI) comme fournisseurs d'information. Les agents d'immigration à l'étranger peuvent aussi être une source de renseignements généraux sur le Canada.

Lacunes

Voici des lacunes qui ont été répertoriées :

- Il est clair que nous avons besoin d'une politique et d'un cadre nationaux d'intégration pour définir une série de résultats et d'indicateurs multidimensionnels de l'intégration.

- Il y a un écart entre la perception et la compréhension du grand public et le rôle réel des immigrants dans l'économie et la société canadiennes en général, ce qui indique qu'il y aurait lieu d'élaborer une stratégie nationale d'éducation du grand public pour définir le rôle des immigrants et faciliter leur inclusion.
- Il manque de recherches documentées et probantes sur les résultats qui évaluent l'efficacité des approches, des services et des programmes, et en particulier des renseignements sur les problèmes d'AMT et les solutions à ceux-ci propres aux femmes, aux jeunes, aux minorités visibles et à des groupes ethniques en particulier.
- Voici des exemples de lacunes dans les programmes et les services :
 - Connaissance insuffisante de la mesure dans laquelle les migrants reçoivent l'aide de leur famille et de leurs amis, comparativement aux services et aux régimes officiels d'aide, pour remédier à leurs problèmes d'intégration;
 - L'absence d'une évaluation officielle de l'efficacité de la prestation sur le Web;
 - Les immigrants qui sont devenus citoyens forment un groupe mal servi, notamment par les programmes fédéraux dont ils sont exclus en vertu des conditions d'admissibilité;
 - L'accès insuffisant à une formation en anglais à un niveau professionnel spécialisé ou avancé ou à des cours de base en lecture et en écriture;
 - Les communications interculturelles pourraient être améliorées pour que les immigrants soient sensibilisés;
 - Le manque d'accès à un noyau constant de services d'AMT offerts dans l'ensemble du Canada; and
 - Le besoin de sensibilisation constante des employeurs, des responsables de la réglementation et des éducateurs pour parler des problèmes et chercher des solutions.

Conclusions et recommandations

1. **Soutenir l'élaboration d'un cadre stratégique national d'intégration au marché du travail à l'intérieur d'un cadre global d'intégration des immigrants** : S'il n'y a pas de politique nationale générale d'intégration et d'installation visant à faciliter l'intégration à long terme de tous les immigrants, non seulement ceux qui « viennent d'arriver » et qui ne sont pas encore citoyens, les efforts visant à remédier au sous-emploi des immigrants seront toujours insuffisants. CIC et RHDSC devraient collaborer avec d'autres intervenants pour établir ce genre de cadre.
2. **Utiliser une approche intégrée et holistique** : Les innovations canadiennes et les bonnes pratiques répertoriées renforcent le besoin d'approches systémiques, holistiques et intégrées qui permettent de remédier au problème du sous-emploi des nouveaux venus. Les premiers travaux du cadre de la Maytree Foundation et de PROMPT constituent d'excellents débuts.

3. **Défendre et soutenir la collaboration horizontale et intersectorielle** : Il faut faciliter et soutenir la collaboration entre les intervenants de plusieurs administrations, y compris tous les ministères fédéraux dont le mandat touche à l'intégration des immigrants au marché du travail (en particulier CIC et RHDSC) et entre les entreprises publiques, privées et bénévoles, les ministères, les organismes et les agences des niveaux fédéral, provincial, territorial et municipal.
4. **Utiliser une batterie d'approches, notamment en fonction de la population et de l'emplacement** : Aux États-Unis, les preuves révèlent que les programmes axés sur l'emplacement, en particulier les programmes de logement social, contournent plusieurs obstacles à la fois, sont assez souples pour contourner de nouveaux obstacles au fur et à mesure qu'ils apparaissent, et offrent différents moyens d'intervention pour différents groupes ethniques, ont le maximum d'effet dans l'augmentation de l'AMT, dans le cas des assistés sociaux du moins. Il faut penser à mettre en place des approches en fonction de l'emplacement en raison de leur efficacité dans quelques collectivités canadiennes jugées à risque pour plusieurs facteurs, notamment la pauvreté, le pourcentage élevé de résidents allophones, le pourcentage élevé d'immigrants vivant dans des enclaves ethniques, etc.
5. **Faire participer les employeurs** : Toutes les preuves font état du besoin de faire participer les employeurs, tant ceux du secteur réglementé que ceux du secteur non réglementé. Les employeurs doivent participer à l'évaluation et au développement des marchés du travail locaux et agir comme partenaires dans la prestation de programmes et de services. Le modèle « Circle of Champions » de Maytree constitue un bon point de départ pour l'établissement de vastes stratégies de participation des employeurs aux niveaux provincial, territorial et national, tout comme l'approche du WRIEN, qui héberge son réseau à la Chambre de Commerce locale.
6. **Soutenir l'élaboration d'un continuum de services souples, intégrés et normalisés** : Les défis que doivent relever les nouveaux venus sont complexes et exigent une multitude de services génériques et spécialisés pour répondre aux besoins de tous. Au niveau le plus fondamental, les possibilités d'intégrer la formation culturelle à la formation linguistique, la culture du milieu de travail à la formation sur la culture générale, la langue du milieu de travail à la formation linguistique de base et les conseils d'emploi à la formation linguistique montrent à quel point l'intégration des services peut en accroître l'efficacité. Ce genre d'intégration a commencé à apparaître dans certains cas, mais pourrait prendre beaucoup d'ampleur. Il faut soutenir les services intégrés qui répondent aux besoins d'une panoplie d'obstacles, par rapport à ceux qui permettent de contourner un obstacle en particulier à l'exclusion des autres.
7. **Élargir la base de preuves** : Il existe plusieurs possibilités d'élargir et d'améliorer la base de preuves actuelles pour soutenir une politique rationnelle et la prise de décisions en matière de programmes. Les voici :

- a) Subventionner des études à l'aide des sources de données et d'information comme l'ELIC², qui permettent une analyse détaillée de la panoplie de facteurs qui influent sur le processus d'intégration à court et à long termes, dont l'attachement au marché du travail est une composante essentielle mais non isolée.
 - b) Il faut soutenir l'élaboration de résultats concrets, normalisés et d'indicateurs de l'intégration du marché du travail qui peuvent servir de repères à l'évaluation des services et des programmes. Ces repères peuvent servir à mesurer l'état d'avancement par rapport aux deux objectifs de RHDSC en matière d'intégration des immigrants sur le marché du travail.
 - c) Il faut subventionner les recherches qui examinent les problèmes d'attachement au marché du travail et les pratiques exemplaires relatives à certaines sous-populations, notamment les femmes, les jeunes et différents groupes ethniques.
 - d) Il faut subventionner les études qui amènent de multiples intervenants à établir la liste des problèmes et à évaluer les pratiques efficaces.
 - e) Il faut créer et soutenir des évaluations des processus et des résultats des programmes et des services visant l'attachement au marché du travail.
 - f) Il faut soutenir la diffusion de recherches subventionnées sur des sites Web principaux ou en réseau à l'intérieur du gouvernement et du secteur bénévole.
8. **Explorer divers modèles de financement** : Envisager le financement sur plusieurs années, par rapport au financement de projets sur un an, seulement pour accroître la viabilité et l'efficacité des programmes et des services.
9. **Assurer l'accès aux services** :
- a) Éliminer la restriction de la citoyenneté pour l'admissibilité aux programmes et aux services. L'admissibilité doit être fondée sur les besoins.
 - b) Soutenir la prestation de services souples et intégrés quant au moment, au lieu et au mode de prestation.

² De plus, le Civic Inclusion Index, en Europe, offre un modèle de mesure qui ne couvre pas seulement l'AMT, mais qui peut aussi constituer un point de départ prometteur pour des travaux similaires au Canada.

1. Introduction and Background

Recent studies indicate that many newcomers to Canada are facing greater challenges obtaining access to the labour market in the short-term, and reaching parity with native-born Canadians in the longer-term, compared to earlier waves of newcomers (Alboim and the Maytree Foundation 2002; CIC 1999; Collacott 2002; Picot 2004; Picot and Sweetman 2005; Hum and Simpson 2004; Smith and Jackson 2002; Worswick 2004). Perhaps most disturbing are those studies indicating that immigrants are increasingly being counted among the more vulnerable elements of Canadian society, largely due to problems finding gainful employment. Poverty is a common challenge for citizens experiencing social exclusion, be they new immigrants, Aboriginal people living in cities, or people with low levels of literacy. Lack of economic access is the key to other areas of participation in the life of cities – social, political and cultural – and where barriers to participation across these areas converge, populations are at risk for a variety of health and social complications and hardships.

Having arrived in Canada the challenges have only just begun. Newcomers face numerous hurdles in their quest to settle in, from obtaining a home, employment, schools for themselves or their children, health care, and so on. Research indicates that the types of factors limiting the ability of immigrants to find gainful employment in Canada exist at the macro policy level, as well as at the more micro local labour market level, many of which are not within the immigrant's control (Reitz 1998; 2005). An understanding of the multidimensional drivers currently at work in limiting immigrants' economic, social, political and cultural access within Canadian society is critical to also understanding where communities have discovered keys to their successful inclusion and integration.

It is in the interest of avoiding the creation of an immigrant underclass that particular attention needs to be paid to rectifying the current situation for newcomers in Canada. Others have characterized the need to amend the current situation facing immigrants to Canada as a matter of human rights (PROMPT 2005b). A number of language training, bridging, mentoring and co-operative programs for foreign trained professionals have been implemented in many provinces in Canada in order to buttress the skills and resources at level of the individual immigrant. Some have been incorporated into regular practice, such as among engineers, medical doctors, and nurses. However, a number of the challenges facing newcomers are systemic in nature and beyond their individual control. Some policies, such as employment equity, are aimed at removing such structural barriers to employment among at risk groups, of which newcomers are one; however, “[b]ecause these groups are faced with employment disadvantages unlike those faced by other people in Canada, improvements in the labour market alone are not the sole solution to their structural poverty” (Lee 2000). There is a requirement to examine the range of approaches, programs and policies that can assist newcomers in becoming attached to the labour market in the short term, and in remaining engaged with, and integrated into, the labour market in the longer-term.

1.1 Purpose of project

The overarching purpose of this project is to identify and critically review instruments, policies and practices related to facilitating immigrant labour market attachment and inclusion through a multi-jurisdictional review of the academic and grey literature. Multi-jurisdictional refers to that literature originating from international, federal, provincial, and local/municipal sources.

Having identified the literature, the specific goals of the review are to:

- Provide specific examples of provincial, federal and international programs as they recognize the heterogeneity of newcomers to Canada, and address the different challenges facing immigrants according to their demographic characteristics (age; gender; source country) and resources with which they arrive (such as human capital, social network, financial capital, and so on).
- Identify key gaps in the knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of instruments, policies, and practices aimed at fostering the inclusion of immigrants.

Key questions for this review include the following:

- What are the key challenges to labour market attachment facing newcomers to Canada?
- What is the range of approaches to facilitating labour market attachment found across these jurisdictions?
- How do the identified practices vary according to the characteristics of individual immigrants?
- Given the identified labour market attachment challenges, what is missing? Are there particular population groups who are more at risk for poor labour market attachment?
- What models or good practices are currently being used or developed that HRSDC might be able to build upon in facilitating labour market mechanisms for newcomers to Canada?
- Is it possible to identify key success factors at work in those practices that appear to be successful?

1.2 Project Fit with HRSDC Mandate and Activities

This research sits at the nexus of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC's) overall vision of Canada "as a country where individuals have the opportunity to learn and to contribute to Canada's success by participating fully in a well-functioning and efficient labour market" and the specific departmental goal "to ensure that Canada continues to attract the highly skilled immigrants it needs and helps them to achieve their full potential in Canadian society and the labour market" (HRSDC 2005).

As stated in the 2005-2006 Report on Plans and Priorities, HRSDC's mission is to improve the standard of living and quality of life of all Canadians by promoting a highly skilled and mobile labour force and an efficient and inclusive labour market. Labour market integration of new immigrants is underlined as a critical issue within the department's analysis of economic and socio-demographic trends. In the light of the ageing population and declining birth rates, it has become clear that immigration has become and is expected to remain the main source of population growth. The anticipated need for a skilled and adaptable workforce requires improved efforts to attract and select immigrants with particular skills (HRDC 2002). In response to this need, the government has been successful in attracting many immigrants with increasingly higher education levels in recent years. However, these better qualified immigrants are finding it increasingly difficult to get good jobs, and are seen by the department as an under utilized human resource, which the Canadian economy can ill afford to waste in work which does not take full advantage of their qualifications and abilities. Additionally, some recent immigrants have lower skill levels than other Canadians and are now seen as a marginalized group which should be assisted to participate more effectively in the economy.

In keeping with the department's focus on human capital, and its commitment to invest in people, two specific milestones have been identified with respect to immigrant labour market integration.

- By 2010, 65% (up from 58% in 2000) of adult immigrants have post-secondary education.
- The income gap between immigrants in the workforce and Canadian-born workers with comparable skills and education is reduced by 50%.

The complementary Industry Canada document *Achieving Excellence: Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity* (Industry Canada 2002) adds important suggestions for modernizing the immigration system to respond to the need for highly skilled immigrants, to promote intergovernmental cooperation on immigrant settlement, and address foreign credential recognition.

Identifying instruments, policies and practices which will best work towards the inclusion of immigrants in the Canadian economy at a level commensurate to their qualifications and skills, is critical to developing policies and guiding further research. The department has already identified the key determinants of successful integration as language fluency, education, prior linkages to Canada, recognition of foreign credentials, labour market information, Canadian work experience, and public and employer attitudes (HRDC 2002). This study will look at which policies and practices can provide the most beneficial impact on these key determinants, as they relate to employment and the development of employment related skills.

1.3 Limitations of this paper

The scope of this project is limited by the lack of existing outcomes-based criteria by which to assess “what is working?” The majority of the approaches, policies and programs examined have never been formally evaluated, in part because they are relatively new (some still in the pilot stage), and because a number are implemented at local levels by service delivery agencies who are not adequately resourced to undertake such evaluations. At the level of “what is working”, this review therefore relies predominantly on information contained in reporting documents and through follow-up interviews.

Moreover, the scope of this project as identified by HRSDC was restricted to a review of the literature, an approach which excludes the capture of the full range of perspectives concerning “what is working” to facilitate the labour market attachment of newcomers. In particular, a central voice missing in the literature is that of newcomers themselves, because they rarely author reports or publish articles concerning those practices of most benefit to themselves. While the work of a number of key immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) who also do extensive advocacy work on behalf of newcomers in Canada was examined for this review – work that is fundamentally entrenched in the needs and voices of newcomers themselves – it is not a perfect substitute. It is hoped that highlighting the work of these organizations brings some sense of the issues as articulated by newcomers themselves.³

Finally, the literature reviewed is by no means an exhaustive listing; academic writings in this area are extensive, and it was not possible to review all of the existing material. There is however a significant degree of consensus on the key challenges, and approaches to addressing these challenges. As a place to begin future conversations with multiple stakeholders around defining what works, then, it is hoped that this document makes a significant contribution.

³ A small number of follow-up interviews was conducted with researchers, and with representatives from immigrant serving organizations and associations delivering innovative programs and services.

2. *The Immigration Context in Canada*

Canada is a nation of immigrants. This statement has been true of Canada since its birth, and this fact has helped to shape the most fundamental pieces of legislation that set Canada apart from other immigrant-receiving nations. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the policy of Multiculturalism – indeed Canada’s position in the world as a peace broker and maker – all have their roots in our diverse heritage. In proportion to its population, Canada has accepted more immigrants and refugees since 1990 than the United States or Australia. Since 1996, Canada has admitted slightly more than 2.2 million immigrants, the highest number admitted in any decade in the past one hundred years. These immigrants accounted for the largest source of population increase in major urban centres, and also represented a substantial proportion of the total labour force growth over the decade (CIC 2005c).

As a population and economic driver, immigration is an important ingredient to Canada’s future prosperity, competitiveness and well-being (Statistics Canada 2001). Not only are immigration levels currently among the highest in decades; Canada is increasingly attracting immigrants from a wider range of source countries. Between 1970 and 2000, the predominant source countries changed from Britain, the United States, Italy, Portugal and Greece, to China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. Further, Canadians listed more than 200 ethnic origins in response to the 2001 Census ethnic ancestry question. From the most recent census data, Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal are the three top destination settlement areas for immigrants, together receiving 72% of Canada’s immigrants in 2005 (CIC 2005c). At the same time, immigrants are increasingly flowing into what are termed second and third tier receiving cities, such as Ottawa-Gatineau, Calgary, and Windsor. This population influx has implications for all immigrant-receiving cities as immigrants look to adapt and apply their distinct languages, cultures, educational and professional backgrounds to their new homeland.

City	Number of recent immigrants	Percent of all recent immigrants to Canada	Percent that are visible minority
Toronto	792.035	43.3%	79%
Vancouver	324.815	17.7%	86%
Montréal	215.115	11.8%	69%
Calgary	68.860	3.8%	72%
Ottawa	63.945	3.5%	74%

Source: Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2005, p.6.

From a selection policy perspective, immigration to Canada reflects three basic goals as set out in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* (CLBC 2005):

- to foster the development of a strong, viable economy in all regions of the country;
- to facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian residents with close family members from abroad; and
- to fulfil Canada's legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition.

Three main streams of immigration correspond to these goals: the economic stream (which includes immigrants accepted as skilled applicants under the “Points System” as well as Business Class immigrants⁴); the family class; and refugees. According to recent Facts and Figures 2003, 31.2% of newcomers to Canada came under the family class; 54.7% arrived within the economic category and 11.7% came as refugees, with the remainder unspecified (CIC 2003).

From an immigrant integration perspective, programs aimed at supporting newcomers once they have arrived are delivered provincially or municipally through an array of local immigrant-serving organizations and associations. Key Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)-supported programs are developed and managed centrally, and include the HOST Program, Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC); and refugee programs such as Immigrant Loan, Resettlement Assistance, and Interim Federal Health programs.⁵ Despite the existence of these programs, and a federal mandate to assist newcomers to adapt and integrate once they are in Canada, there is still no overarching strategic integration policy as such guiding integration activities across the country. In part, this is because CIC departmental activities have been historically focused on crisis management and enforcement.

Although no longer active, a joint HRSDC-CIC initiative to address labour market integration issues was implemented to move towards a more collaborative, concerted horizontal approach to addressing the economic integration of newcomers. Called the Internationally Trained Workers Initiative, HRSDC and CIC led a multi-departmental group to address key barriers to labour market participation faced by both newcomers and foreign-trained Canadians. Nevertheless, the focus was on one, albeit key, aspect of integration – becoming employed – to the exclusion of other dimensions, when what is needed is an integrated, holistic approach to the integration experience (Human Resources and Employment et al. 2005).

⁴ According to the CIC website, “The Business Immigration Program seeks to attract experienced business people to Canada who will support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy. Business immigrants are expected to make a \$400,000 investment or to own and manage businesses in Canada. Canada has three classes of business immigrants, each with separate eligibility criteria: investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons. Each application can be made for only one class and once the application is submitted, the class cannot be changed.” <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/index.html> May 17th 2006.

⁵ See <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/menu-programs.html>. May 17th 2006.

In other words, at the practical level it is provincial and local agencies and organizations who identify the challenges facing newcomers, and who develop locally-relevant and appropriate programs, services and approaches to addressing these. Indeed, many have called for the development of settlement policy (e.g. Alboim and the Maytree Foundation 2002; Mwarigha 2002; Smith and Jackson 2002) as distinct from selection policy using a process engaging the full range of stakeholders from all levels of government, the voluntary sector, academics and researchers. In fact, considerable effort has gone into developing a closer relationship between the voluntary sector organizations who deliver integration programs, and their integration policy and program at the federal level, particularly since 2004. This Voluntary Sector Initiative-funded work resulted in fruitful partnerships and greater collaboration between the voluntary sector and federal department, and resulted in the Settlement and Integration Joint Policy and Program Council. The purpose of this council is to further the joint work, consultation and planning between government and the settlement sector, all of which may yet result in the development of an overarching integration policy framework.

3. What is the Problem? The Link Between Labour Market Attachment and Integration

This paper uses a particular conceptual framework to articulate the nature of the challenges, and potential solutions, facing newcomers to Canada (Potter 1999). First, integration is considered to be a multidimensional process that includes, but is not confined to, the achievement of economic independence, with the ultimate goal being immigrants' sense of belonging and citizenship, and the opportunity to fulfil their human potential. Second, the integration experience depends on a variety of personal resources that individuals can bring to bear in developing their integration strategies. Third, integration takes place within a socio-political and economic framework that shapes the extent to which individuals can mobilize these resources. As such, the challenges facing newcomers occur both at the more macro, structural level, as well as at the individual level of personal resources. Finally, the integration process is seen as bi-directional, taking place both at the level of the individual immigrant, and also at the level of the destination community and society (Berry 1992).⁶ This means that as the diversity of newcomers increases, there is a greater gap to close between the receiving cities and communities at the local level and these newcomer populations, as communities expand and shift to accommodate and ultimately include linguistic and cultural differences. The bi-directional nature of integration is evident at the national level as well, where there is an ongoing tension between maintaining core Canadian symbols and values, within a broader context of multiculturalism that embraces diversity and richness of experience and practice that immigrants bring.

The integration process so defined involves multiple stakeholders who have different perspectives concerning the key goals and challenges involved in the process. From the immigrant perspective, key stakeholders include newcomers themselves; immigrant communities; and immigrant serving organizations and associations who advocate on the behalf of newcomers. From the perspective of receiving communities, key stakeholders includes employers; educators; regulators; social service delivery organizations and associations; community associations; and municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments. Each stakeholder group has a unique perspective on the challenges around enhancing immigrant labour market attachment – or in effect on what exactly is the problem facing newcomers coming to Canada right now. The section below briefly sketches the integration process from the newcomer and receiving society perspective.

⁶ Berry's model of *acculturation* provides a framework for contrasting integration (optimum) with assimilation (suboptimum) and multiculturalism (suboptimum), as distinct from marginalization (usually perceived as a failure).

3.1 Defining the “immigrant”

There are a variety of perspectives on who and what is an “*immigrant*”, which lead to different expectations about the desirability and/or the possibility of integration, and therefore suggest different policies and practices for promoting integration. The Canadian concept of an immigrant is grounded in often unspoken expectations that most immigrants have come to stay; will automatically integrate as children are born and raised, but may maintain multiple identities even as they integrate; and may need or benefit from support specific to their context as an immigrant.

Canadian programs and services typically distinguish between newcomers (immigrants who are not yet citizens) and immigrants who have become citizens (called various terms). Eligibility for many federally-funded services, including those which facilitate LMA, is usually restricted to immigrants who are *not yet citizens*. Once newcomers become citizens (a minimum of three years in Canada as permanent residents), they are eligible only for those services provided to the Canadian population as a whole. Specifically, they lose access to free language instruction and other settlement services funded by the federal government. The Canadian distinction between immigrants who have citizenship and those who have not – and the impact that this has on access to programs and services – flies in the face of the reality that integration is a long-term process, not a short (three year) one.

By contrast, in much of Europe immigrants are seen as non-permanent members of the labour force and their political relationship to their receiving countries follows the *ius sanguinis* principle. Even if a child is born in a European country, if the parents are immigrants the child takes the parent’s citizenship, and is not expected to be fully integrated but instead remains a *second generation immigrant*. (Westin 2000).

Indeed, in the European Union (EU) there is an inherent hierarchy of immigrants between migrants moving between EU members, and *third country nationals* who are migrants from outside the EU (asylum seekers excluded). “The EU currently has a legal “underclass” of Third Country Nationals, who do not enjoy the same rights as EU citizens. Europe is building a “Common Space” of Freedom, Justice and Security based on the values of openness and equality, from which immigrants are partly excluded” (Gowan and Citron 2005, p. 3). Likewise, under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), different opportunities exist for certain professionals moving between Canada, the US and Mexico which are not available to migrants from other countries.

Similarly it is revealing that Canadians recognize the concept of hyphenated identities, e.g. Italian-Canadian, and accept that Canadians can maintain a multicultural identity without compromising their Canadian identity. In comparison, in France it is more expected that migrants will assimilate into a unitary cultural identity, where everyone should become “French” (Ray 2004). In the former Soviet Union, most of the new republics persist in the Soviet practice of requiring ethnic identification in the ubiquitous national passport/ID, but accept only one ethnicity regardless of mixed parentage.

Germany, and some other EU countries, used to maintain a category of migrants referred to as “*guest workers*”. It was assumed that these migrants were “going home” when they had completed their contracts, and consequently did not need active integration programs. However, many of these migrants have settled down and become permanent residents. The German state has had to recognize “guest workers” as immigrants and more recently has developed integration programs for them. (Werner 2001) At the same time, Germany also used to recognize a separate category of immigrants of German ancestry, the “Aussiedler”, who were allowed to “return” from the Eastern bloc after generations living in other countries. Despite a putative German heritage, in fact these immigrants also needed support in integrating into a culture and language which in reality are very different from the regions where they have been living. Germany has now combined the two categories and is providing integration support to both (DeVoretz, et al. 2002).

Some countries, like the UK and the US, have taken the stance that the challenges faced by immigrants are mainly the same challenges faced by native born low income minority groups. These countries approach immigrant integration as part of the larger problem of integrating an underclass, or ethnic or visible minorities, and so address integration of immigrants through generic anti-poverty programs. Many of the place-based programs which look at ghettoized neighbourhoods, or ethnic enclaves, as part of the problem spring from this approach, and so address the integration of individuals through broader neighbourhood revitalization.

Overall, the Canadian concept of an immigrant is most similar internationally to the Australian, and varies more from European and American, understandings. Comparisons of policies and practices in other countries should bear these differences in mind.

3.2 The immigrant perspective on integration

Newcomers arrive in Canada with their individual sets of skills, experiences, and backgrounds – a “toolkit” of personal resources – that can loosely be classified as their human capital (i.e. education and employment skills, language ability); social networks (i.e. friends or relatives in Canada); and financial capital that they have brought with them or left behind. The integration process itself is multidimensional. In the early stages (the first 1-5 years, often referred to as settlement) it includes tackling tasks such as finding a home; schools or child care for children; a doctor; skills or education upgrading courses; and of course, obtaining employment for one or more family members (Potter 1999; Kam 2001). As time passes newcomers’ integration goals also expand to include developing a sense of belonging and attachment through personal connections within their neighbourhood and ethnic community; engaging with the political structure; and for many, obtaining citizenship (see Alba and Nee 1998; Gans 1998; Rumbaut 1998; Goldlust and Richmond 1974; Potter 1999; Statistics Canada 2005).⁷ The subjective dimensions of integration, particularly those relating to the links between paid employment and feelings of belonging in Canadian society, are of particular interest as time in Canada increases (Tastoglou and Preston 2006).

⁷ In recent years this longer term process has come to be called integration in the Canadian context, though others have used terms like acculturation, adaptation and assimilation.

For the majority of immigrants, the key to successful integration at all of these levels lies in their ability to find paid employment that can support themselves and/or their families – a “living wage”.⁸ Entering the labour market presents many obstacles to newcomers to Canada, but also many opportunities for learning and integrating into Canadian society (Kam 2001). Even if newcomers are unsuccessful in their first attempts to find work, simply by engaging in the job seeking process they are learning how to interact with Canadian society – through coming into contact with individuals, services and agencies such as the transportation system and employment agencies. For those who are successful and find employment, there are the additional benefits of learning from colleagues and employers. All of these opportunities contribute to newcomers’ overall integration experiences.

Traditional labour market analyses of immigrant integration focus on the impact of human capital resources – education, knowledge of official languages, previous employment experience – on newcomers’ abilities to integrate into the Canadian labour market (Green and Green 1999; Reitz 2005, 1998; Green and Worswick 2004). Although since 1996 the average level of education of newcomers has increased, immigrants have faced increasing problems having their credentials recognized, and obtaining employment in keeping with their skills and previous employment experience (Collacott 2002; Picot 2004; Picot and Sweetman 2005; Hum and Simpson 2004; Reitz 2002; Smith and Jackson 2002; Worswick 2004). This has led to an increasing underutilization of the skills of newcomers (skills for which they were selected), and a significant increase in poverty rates among new immigrants and their families (Statistics Canada 2003). Current research indicates that a number of factors may contribute to the underutilization of newcomers’ skills, including a lack of available, credible information upon which employers can base an assessment of credentials and foreign work experience; racism; and bureaucratic procedures and regulations (Reitz 2002; Alboim et al. 2005).

The implications for poor labour market attachment are numerous and go beyond the individuals seeking employment, to their families. Traditional assimilation theory has held that by between ten and fifteen years after migration, immigrant earnings equalize with those of their native-born counterparts. By contrast, recent research points to a new phenomenon that sees the potential for poverty to be passed from one generation to another, especially among newer immigrant cohorts who are having greater difficulties obtaining employment (Kazemipur and Halli 2001; Picot and Hou 2003; Reitz and Banerjee 2006).

Yet, a study on the health of immigrant children showed that at present, despite high levels of poverty among immigrant children, they are doing better on mental health indicators than their poor Canadian-born counterparts. The findings indicate that poverty means different things for new immigrants and native-born Canadians. In new immigrant families, poverty may represent a transient and inevitable part of the resettlement process, while for many people in the native-born population poverty may represent the end stage of a cycle of disadvantage, despair, family dysfunction and alcohol abuse (Beiser et al. 1998). However, as

⁸ Though the economic dimension is clearly an essential part of integration, there is growing attention to other dimensions of integration that are also critical, particularly for those newcomers who do not enter the labour market. This paper of course does not address those newcomers who do not enter the labour market.

poverty becomes entrenched and becomes systemic from one generation to another, the potential for significantly poorer health outcomes for immigrants is increased.

The connection between obtaining gainful employment among newcomers, and their overall short- and long-term integration process, is clear. Literature concerning the interconnection between various determinants of health, including the link between economic hardship, stress, and well-being, indicates that where newcomers do not obtain adequate employment, there are serious implications for their health and well-being (Noh and Avison 1996; Pearlin 1989; Turner and Lloyd 1995). Though research suggests that support from family-based social networks can help to buffer this relationship, many newcomers to Canada do not have close networks of kin to draw upon (Potter 1999; CIC 2005b).

3.3 The receiving society perspective on integration

While a lack of inclusion on the scale currently being documented among immigrants has huge implications for the individual immigrants in question, there are also critical implications for the communities and cities in which these excluded populations are concentrated – implications which have a lot to do with social cohesion, the quality of life that people experience, and with the values and quality of the society being built. A key to understanding the impact of immigration on Canadian communities is the fact that nearly three-quarters (73%) of the immigrants who came in the 1990s lived in just three census metropolitan areas: Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal (Statistics Canada 2003). For Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, the yearly influx of new immigrants has a profound effect upon all aspects of their cities, from city infrastructure and services such as housing, schools, health care and other social services, to other aspects of community well-being and participation.

One indicator of a lack of integration of newcomers is found in the rise of ethnic enclaves *which are themselves marginalized* from broader Canadian society. According to Statistics Canada, “ethnic enclaves” are communities with more than 30% of the local population consisting of a single visible minority group. Between 1981 and 2001, the number of enclaves so-defined rose from six to 254, an alarming number of which consist of people whose incomes fall below the national average (Gregg 2004).

Living in an ethnic enclave is not necessarily a bad thing. At one level, ethnic enclaves play an important role in integrating newcomers into the local economy and society, acting as essential sources of social and emotional solidarity at a time when immigrants face significant problems accessing the mainstream economy (e.g. Hou and Picot 2004). Research shows that some ethnic minority groups in Canada do well economically over time, despite being geographically concentrated (such as Chinese and South Asian immigrants in Canadian cities) (Balakrishnan et al. 2005). However, other ethnic minority groups who are also socio-economically disadvantaged are negatively affected by being spatially segregated (such as Blacks and Aboriginal people) (Balakrishnan et al. 2005; Balakrishnan and Hou 1999). Thus, a discussion of whether ethnic enclaves put immigrants at a disadvantage is complex, and must include a discussion of the institutional completeness of the ethnic group, among other factors. In discussing the

relative benefits of ethnic enclaves of immigrant integration, it is important to distinguish between those enclaves which are isolated or marginalized from mainstream society, and those which are themselves integrated at multiple levels – the social, political, cultural, economic, and so on (Hou and Picot 2004; Balakrishnan et al. 2005).

Further, Canada's larger urban areas show an increase in certain types of crime (e.g. homicides, drug incidents including possession and cultivation) (Statistics Canada 2005b); increasing poverty rates (particularly among new immigrant populations and ethnic minorities); increasing polarization between those at the bottom and those at the top of the income scale; critical affordable housing shortages; and serious challenges meeting the educational, health and social service needs of growing multilingual and multicultural populations (United Way of Greater Toronto and Canadian Council on Social Development 2004). And, while these challenges are particularly serious for Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, the issues experienced in these cities are in many cases exaggerations of similar challenges playing out within the medium and even smaller Canadian cities that also receive immigrants. In many cases what is different is the scope of the changes required to social and physical infrastructures in order to accommodate the difference in the volume of immigration, but new issues emerge for communities with less experience receiving immigrants. For example, because newcomers rely predominantly on their social networks for assistance, newcomers arriving in cities where their networks are not located face different, and in some cases greater, challenges than those newcomers integrating with the support and assistance of their networks (Potter 1999; Statistics Canada 2005a). As well, where the history of migration to some smaller cities is shorter, there may also be an absence of formal services to assist newcomers in their settlement, so that some immigrants end up potentially dually disadvantaged.

4. Barriers to Good Labour Market Attachment

This section discusses the barriers to good immigrant labour market attachment. In discussing the barriers to good labour market attachment it is useful to separate the barriers which spring from the larger system from those barriers which operate more at the individual level.

4.1 Systemic barriers

Systemic barriers have been grouped into the following eight subcategories. It is important to note that these barriers can be grouped in numerous ways and this is not a definitive listing, but rather an integration of the most prominent barriers discussed in the literature reviewed.

Supply and demand in the wider labour market

The impact of supply and demand within the national labour market inevitably affects immigrants. It is a challenge to keep the preferred skills lists for immigrants up-to-date, and to balance the skills needed in the national economy (e.g. doctors) with the professional requirements (e.g. medical credential recognition which is controlled by provincial organizations) and provincial government policies (e.g. the number of places made available for foreign trained doctors to complete hospital residency requirements). As an example, these imbalances result in only about half of immigrants who worked in the health fields in their source country finding work in the health sector in Canada (CLBC 2005).

At the same time, Canadian immigration policy does not operate in a vacuum. Canadian policies interact at the international level with international labour market trends and competition from other immigrant attracting countries. While Canada is experiencing shortages of skilled labour and is seeking skilled immigrants, other countries both compete to attract international workers, and encourage Canadians to emigrate.⁹ Information Technology (IT) specialists and health workers represent two sectors where Canadian immigration is constantly playing catch-up with Canadian emigration, and is in particular in competition with the American labour market.

Immigration Selection Policies and Regulations

Selection policies and regulations are identified in the literature as impacting upon the employability of successful immigrants. Both Canada and Australia actively select for economically relevant skills and education, but there are differences in approaches. Overall, Australia has tighter criteria for entry than Canada, around age, qualifications, past employment, and language abilities. According to some, the effect of these tighter criteria is

⁹ It is important to note that the Government of Canada does not engage in international recruitment of foreign trained talent.

higher employment success. (Richardson and Lester 2004) As well, Australia conducts pre-screening and labour market alignment. The government maintains a national occupation shortage list that is updated every six months; to enter the country, immigrants must demonstrate that their qualifications fit with the listed occupations.

Other kinds of regulations may impact on employability. “Discrimination may also arise from immigration class. Somali and Ghanaian women have found that employers are unwilling to hire them with social insurance numbers that indicate they have temporary work permits rather than permanent residence” (Tastsoglou and Preston 2006, p. 7).

Canadian regulations were also portrayed unfavourably in a recent Canada Now news item which highlighted procedural barriers which require foreign students who graduate from a Canadian university to find a job within their field within 90 days, and then apply for a work permit. The permits are not automatically issued and often take about a month to process. As a result, only one in six foreign students gets a work permit and makes use of their qualifications in the Canadian market. In comparison, Britain gives all graduating foreign students an open one year work permit, making their entry into the labour market much easier. (Canada Now, CBC, April 26, 2006)

Interjurisdictional mobility

In Canada there is poor or restricted learner-labour mobility between provinces and regardless of whether you are an immigrant. Provincial regulation of professions and trades creates a barrier to labour and learner mobility in Canada, for most regulated occupations from doctors to trades people. The situation is further complicated for immigrants seeking to move within Canada, when foreign credentials have to be reassessed in multiple jurisdictions.

Indeed a significant part of the credential recognition problem for newcomers in Canada is related to jurisdictional complexity between levels of government, and between educational, regulatory and professional associations, and the lack of standardization of approach or process among the different players. For example, there are presently five provincially mandated credential assessment services which assess academic credentials for a fee, and another three services are listed on the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) website as abiding by General Guiding Principles for Good Practice. The recommendations of these services are not binding on any employer or university, and may not be accepted by another assessment service. Within the voluntary sector, immigrant settlement organizations and other associations conduct prior learning assessments to assist immigrants in identifying skill gaps, but again, these assessments are not binding. For immigrants seeking work in regulated occupations, the only bodies whose decisions are binding are those taken by provincial professional regulatory bodies, and educational institutions: professional associations regulate credential recognition in each province, while universities and colleges assess immigrants’ prior learning to determine equivalency to their own programs of study. For those seeking work in non-regulated occupations, it is the decisions taken by educational institutions and employers that are binding. And yet regardless of the sector they seek to work in, while the decisions taken by the respective bodies are binding, they are non-transferable, either inter-provincially or between educational institutions.

This brief description gives a sense of the complexity facing newcomers. Indeed, a study of foreign credential recognition within the tourism industry found that it is possible for an immigrant to present the same university degree to any or all of an educational institution, a hiring employer, and/or the licensing body of a regulated profession; and this process would need to be repeated for all of up to ten provinces and territories (Potter and Smith 2005). This barrier is then both an issue of the uncertainty of transferability and of complexity in the system.

Welfare and taxation policies

There is a debate as to whether easy access to welfare entices immigrants into a “welfare trap”, (Hansen and Lofstrom 1999; Roseveare and Jorgensen 2005) rather than quickly entering the job market, and different countries have different approaches to controlling access to welfare. Another difference between the Australian and Canadian systems is that in Australia immigrants typically cannot access benefits for the first two years they are in the country. This is posited as a possible contributing factor towards the better labour market outcomes Australian immigrants have compared with Canadian immigrants, who have shorter wait times to access benefits (Richardson and Lester 2004).

Taxation regimes have also been identified as a particular area where government policies and practices can encourage or discourage people on welfare from moving in to work, by making low wage work more or less viable.

Location, location, location

As noted above, there is a tendency for Canadian immigrants to settle in three large cities where they often have supportive social networks, as well as access to large labour markets. This puts particular pressure on entry level jobs in those markets, for instance those positions requiring lower language skills. Conversely, the lack of social networks and of established ethnic communities in areas where there are more jobs available is a barrier to new immigrants moving there, or engaging in secondary migration. Where ethnic communities are more established, they are more likely to have established parallel ethnic institutions – such as schools, places of worship, community centres and ethnic businesses. The more complex and developed these ethnic institutions – or institutionally complete the ethnic group – the more support there is for newcomers to integrate into the community (Breton 1991). The converse is of course equally true, and can be a barrier to effective integration. The high cost of housing in some places where jobs are available, e.g. Calgary, Fort McMurray, also discourages moving there to take up available lower income entry level jobs.

A practical barrier to labour market entry and attachment can be the location of immigrant homes and neighbourhoods in relation to public transport. Some research suggests that public transport investments are extremely valuable in facilitating all aspects of integration, but especially employment, and particularly in large fragmented conurbations. The location and scheduling of public transit also can be either a facilitator or barrier to immigrants taking up night school opportunities to improve language or other skills. (Ray 2003).

Post-war investments in subway and bus systems in Toronto and Montréal were noted for significantly increasing the ability of new immigrants to access employment and employment related services. This contrasts with the more recent declining investment in public transit in Toronto which has contributed to increased segregation of neighbourhoods, and “a growing spatial mismatch” between housing and employment opportunities in the Toronto area.

“The possibilities for meaningful interaction between the large number of social classes and ethnocultural groups in this city, which continues to be the primary destination for immigrants to Canada, are also much diminished.”
(Ray 2003)

Lack of integrated service delivery system that facilitates long-term integration

Linked to some of the other systemic level barriers to good labour market attachment is the absence of a coordinated system of integration services, either provincially or nationally. Jurisdictional complexity is one key reason for this, but is not the only reason. Despite efforts to the contrary, settlement and integration services – including those targeted to facilitating labour market attachment – are often delivered in a piece-meal fashion by local organizations struggling to meet huge demands with limited funding. Immigrants often arrive with little understanding of where to go for help, and are faced with a maze of services and supports with little to guide them during an extremely vulnerable period. Notwithstanding recent efforts to increase information dissemination to newcomers through electronic means, most immigrants rely on family and friends for assistance and information, not the formal systems – sources which may not lead newcomers to information that can best assist in their quest for employment (Potter 1999; Statistics Canada 2005). Eligibility for many federally-funded immigrant integration services are restricted to those who have not yet become citizens. This leaves a majority of immigrants without access to critical services and supports, in particular language training (either basic or enhanced). Overall, services and supports are often disconnected from one another; there is a lack of system navigation; and a lack of collaboration among program and policy-makers, and those delivering front-line services (Alboim and the Maytree Foundation 2002; CLBC 2004, 2005; PROMPT 2004, 2005).

Current funding models for the settlement and integration service sector reinforce service fragmentation and limit the service sector’s ability to plan effectively to not only meet, but anticipate, client needs. Funding continues to be predominantly one-year, and project-based. This means that agencies must spend considerable resources applying for funding to carry out their programming, resources that could be better allocated to direct service provision, monitoring or evaluation, for example. Further, one-year funding means that services are often unsustainable over the longer-term. Very often, projects get piloted through the injection of federal or provincial seed money, but are terminated unless community partners can be found to support the initiative at the end of the formal project period. The emphasis on one-year project funding negatively affects the extent to which immigrant serving agencies can ensure access to a full continuum of services. (CLBC 2005; PROMPT 2005a).

Employer Attitudes

Employer attitudes to hiring immigrants are a critical piece of the LMA puzzle for newcomers. Research is mixed concerning the extent to which employers are open to hiring immigrants. Some suggests that they are in principle open to hiring newcomers, but are discouraged from doing so because the process is complicated by a lack of trusted, accurate information upon which they can make decisions about an immigrant's qualifications; by multi-jurisdictional, complex processes; and by a lack of job-readiness among immigrants related to inadequate language, technical or cultural skills (YMCA Greater Vancouver 2004; Business Council of British Columbia 2004; Public Policy Forum 2004).

By contrast, a 2002 opinion survey of over 1000 Canadian business, labour and public sector leaders found that despite the recognized skills shortage, across the country when addressing organizational skill requirements "hiring foreign-trained workers was cited as "not important" by 64% of private sector managers, 55% of private sector labour, 53% of public sector managers and 43% of public sector labour leaders" (CLBC 2002). Furthermore, 72% of these managers expected problems if they hired foreign trained workers, including lack of Canadian work experience (46%), transferability of credentials (52%) and lack of official language skills (66%) (CLBC 2006).

Research related to tourism occupations is somewhat less optimistic, suggesting that employers are less willing to spend time raising the skill level of their employees and instead want "ready-made clients who can fit into their organization" (Potter and Smith 2005, p.9). Particularly in non-regulated occupations where employers are the gatekeepers to employment (compared to other professions where a regulatory body plays this role), working with employers to ensure that they have the tools and information that they need in order to be able to hire immigrants is essential. The impact of the availability of employees from other labour pools is an important determinant of employers' interest and willingness to employ newcomers as well. Some argue that the critical labour shortages being predicted in 2012 as the baby boom generation begins to retire will cause many employers to rapidly consider immigrants as a viable source of labour (Potter and Smith 2005). This at a time when it is expected that immigrants are expected to account for all net labour force growth by 2011 and for all net population growth by 2031 (HRDC 2002a).

A variety of attitudes are hidden beneath the figures quoted above. Prejudice is undoubtedly part of the picture but should not be confused with genuine difficulties faced by Canadian employers in assessing the unknown quantity of the foreign trained worker. Studies have found that employers need access to accurate information concerning accreditation and qualifications issues (YMCA of Greater Vancouver 2004). Smaller and medium-sized businesses that lack formal HR policies and practices are appreciative of agencies that provide pre-screened, qualified resources on demand (Potter and Smith 2005). In some cases employers need assistance in seeing the value-added of a diverse workforce; in other cases, they need a streamlined system that supports the hiring of immigrants and reduces some of the perceived risk, particularly in the absence of standardized accreditation processes and mechanisms.

Discrimination and the Impact of the “War on terror”

Clearly many immigrant groups suffer from general discrimination and racism faced by visible minorities everywhere. Particular groups of immigrants are facing extra discrimination on the job as a result of perceptions flowing from the “war on terror”, and “anti-terrorism” legislation introduced in 2001, such as the *Patriot Act* in the US and Bill C-36 in Canada. For instance, in the US,

“Since September 11, 2001, the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] EEOC has received more than 800 charge filings nationwide alleging post-9/11 backlash discrimination by individuals who are – or who are perceived to be – Muslim, Arabic, Middle Eastern, South Asian or Sikh. The two most common issues alleged are harassment and discharge. Nearly 100 individuals aggrieved by 9/11-related employment discrimination have received over \$1,450,000 in monetary benefits through EEOC....” (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2006).

In Canada the Canadian Labour Congress asserts, “After the September 11, 2001 attacks and while C-36 was being drafted, a number of union members who are people of colour experienced harsh or discriminatory treatment at their workplaces from their fellow workers and employers” (2005, p.9). Immigrants were disproportionately affected by particular changes to Canadian regulations.

“To obtain an airport security pass, anyone who has lived outside Canada for more than three months, in the previous five years, must provide documentation from police or security services in that foreign country.... The regulations are particularly hard for recent immigrants who have a difficult time obtaining proper documentation from their home countries.... A similar program has recently been proposed by Transport Canada for marine industry workers.” (Canadian Labour Congress 2005, p. 20-21).

4.2 Individual level barriers

Other barriers to getting and keeping work are identified which may better understood at the level of the individual. As above, this section presents those barriers most often discussed in the literature reviewed; others have been excluded from this current review in order to focus the paper.

Language and literacy

It cannot be ignored that the language most Canadian immigrants want to learn, English, is also the most popular international language. Indeed, one source commented that even for immigrants to Québec, it is understood that successful employment will require learning English as well as French. Canada is considered to have a rather *laissez faire* approach to encouraging immigrant language acquisition, compared with other countries with languages which are less common and popular internationally, (e.g. Dutch, Swedish or German), but it is argued that Canada may get away with this approach because there is a wider international incentive to learn English around the world (DeVoretz et al. 2002).

While the ability to speak English or French has always been important to full integration in Canadian society, in an increasingly knowledge based economy language abilities are becoming much more important for job seekers. A series of changes over the past 20 years makes the lack of official language skills a significant barrier in labour market attachment. Most obvious is the change in the main source countries for immigrants which is reflected in a decreasing proportion of immigrants from English or French speaking countries. Where in 1968 20.3% came from England and 12.1% from the US, according to the 2001 census, the top five source countries for immigrants arriving between 1991 and 2001 were China, India, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka (Scott, Selbee and Reed 2006). And while the Canadian immigration points system favours applicants with English or French skills, standardized tests are not applied at the time of application for some categories of immigrants.

At the same time the Canadian economy has changed markedly from the days when Canada had a predominantly agricultural and manufacturing economy and immigrants could expect to find jobs which did not require particularly strong language skills. The Canadian economy of today has very few jobs which do not require basic language skills, and even entrance to manual trades requires passing written tests demonstrating knowledge of regulations written in complex language.

While the Canadian government offers language training through the LINC program, most free classes do not take immigrants up to the level needed for professional work, and free access does not continue for immigrants once they are naturalized, and is not available to refugee claimants. Provincial governments also offer language classes, but often these do not include transportation and childcare subsidies (which are available with LINC) which present an additional barrier to attending (CSPCT 2006).

Closely tied to spoken language skills is the need for literacy. To learn the language it helps to be literate, and to become literate you certainly need some language skills. The Canadian economy has very few jobs which do not require basic literacy.

Credential recognition

Perhaps the barrier receiving the most attention in recent years is that of foreign credential recognition; this has particular implications for immigrants arriving as skilled immigrants, but also affects a significant proportion of immigrants entering within the family and refugee classes. Both research reports and the press alike are filled with examples of skilled immigrants working far below their competencies – such as foreign-trained doctors working as taxi drivers and foreign-trained engineers as general construction crew members. In 2004, close to 236,000 individuals became permanent residents in Canada, over 50% of which held some form of post-secondary credential (CIC 2005a). Yet 70% of newcomers say they encountered problems or barriers in the job-finding process such as lack of Canadian work experience, transferability of foreign credentials and lack of official language skills (CIC 2004).

According to the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 76% of all immigrants who arrived from abroad between October 2000 and September 2001 held at least one credential.¹⁰ Broken down by immigration category, skilled immigrants are not the only newcomers to arrive with credentials: despite not being admitted to Canada on this basis, almost three quarters (72%) of family class immigrants and half (54%) of refugees have a diploma or degree compared to 93% of skilled principle applicants, suggesting that these streams of immigration are in fact educated and skilled (See Table 1 below). Over 118,000 immigrants from the combined classes, or 95%, came to Canada with some form of non-professional (i.e. courses or diploma or degree) credential.

Immigration Category	Total Population (n)	Population with Credentials (n)	Type of Credentials (%)		
			Courses	Diploma/ Degree	Professional Credential
Skilled/Worker principal Applications	57,626	56,647	4	93	4
Skilled Worker Spouse and Dependents	41,390	33,591	10	86	5
Other Economic	10,466	6,547	17	75	9
Refugees	9,822	3,893	29	54	18
Total	164,203	124,587	10	85	6

(1) Other immigrants abroad not shown but part of total.
Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada – Wave one.

In the case of regulated professions, accrediting bodies in each province define and apply the standards for licensing in each profession. The field is complex because accreditation is provincially-regulated and profession-specific, resulting in numerous variations in accreditation standards and processes across the country. Credentials play a basic sorting function within the labour market, providing employers with an objective means to screen for particular characteristics of value to them – in essence, using “program completion to screen for unobserved characteristics such as perseverance” (Ferrer and Ridell 2002, p. 28). Credentials become an issue in three different situations: entry to educational institutions usually requires recognition of certificates, diplomas or degrees received from previous education; entry to regulated professions requires recognition of the results of both education and regulatory exams; and entry to non-regulated professions often requires recognition of education and previous work experience. Academia, professional bodies and employers do not necessarily use the same standards or criteria for assessment.

¹⁰ Within Canada, accreditation is defined as “the process by which an agency or association grants public recognition to a training institution, program of study or service which meets certain pre-determined standards” (EIC, 1993:39). For the LSIC survey, any pre-migration education above a high school diploma is considered a credential, which have been further broken down into three categories. ‘Courses’ refer to some courses taken either at trade school, college or university; ‘diploma or degree’ refers to receipt of a college diploma or university degree; and ‘professional credential’ refers to immigrants who hold a degree in dentistry, law etc. or a technical or professional certification.

Professional immigrants coming to Canada do not have to get recognition prior to arriving, and indeed are often poorly informed before arrival about the challenges involved in this process, which takes place independently in each province by non-governmental self-regulating bodies (CAETO 2004). While there are provincial assessment bodies which provide expert opinions, these decisions are non-binding: “The academic credential reports that are produced by these services are only advisory and do not supersede evaluations of education credentials made by professional and trade licensing bodies” (Ray 2004, p.23). Professional and trade licensing bodies, on the other hand, do provide binding assessments. However, they play a dual role of ensuring to the public that consistent standards are met by all members of their profession in terms of training and competencies and safe practices, while at the same time controlling membership numbers to maintain employment and income levels (Sobkow 2001). As the primary focus of the professional bodies will necessarily be assessing the credentials of native Canadians, many of these bodies do not have adequate resources to address quickly the more complex and labour intensive process of assessing credentials from other jurisdictions, especially internationally.

Presenting just one example of the red tape and delays that can be encountered, the Vancouver Sun recently highlighted the backlog of nurses awaiting credential recognition by the professional body for nursing in British Columbia where a substantial number of nursing posts remained unfilled, and which relies on international graduates more than any other province. An American nurse with substantial work experience and a job offer had waited eight months for her paperwork to be processed.

“The college registration process involves a detailed assessment of a foreign nurse's education to ensure it is equivalent to that of B.C. nursing schools, transcripts from the schools with exam results, employer references, character references, criminal record checks, and a medical examination to ensure nurses are healthy enough to work. Once the documentation is complete, an applicant must write an exam to prove knowledge and competence.” (Fayerman 2006).

Canadian work experience

Canadian work experience is a requirement for certification to work in many regulated professions. However opportunities for work experience prior to certification are extremely limited, even for Canadians.

Even for non-regulated trades, immigrants face barriers in that Canadian employers have difficulty assessing experience in other countries, but place a high value on work experience. Citizenship and Immigration Canada found that 60% of all immigrants who come to Canada intending to work already have experience in their home country, and in the skilled worker or business classes up to eighty percent have work experience. The percentages who have work experience from their home country were highest for the most skilled immigrants. However, Statistics Canada reports that 46% of Canadian managers who expected to be hiring immigrants felt that the lack of Canadian work experience would be a problem in hiring an immigrant, which suggests that the managers were not predisposed to consider the foreign work experience as relevant or

equivalent. (CLBC 2005) Given this discounting of foreign labour market experience, “[i]mmigrants, regardless of their age at arrival, appear to be treated like new entrants by the labour market” (Picot and Sweetman 2005: p. 22) – in essence, on par with recent native-born graduates (Ayedemir and Skuterud 2005; Frenette and Morissette 2003).

Workplace culture, norms and values

A more subtle barrier some immigrants face is identifying and adopting Canadian work culture norms, values, and practices. Work cultures differ around the world, and can be one of the most difficult things to explain and learn for new immigrants. Research indicates that the barriers facing newcomers seeking entry into the regulated professions may not be as different from those seeking employment in the non-regulated sector. Specifically, the most significant barrier facing immigrants in general relates to “soft skills” – understanding and knowledge concerning the culture of work in Canada which requires the ability to self-market and to demonstrate soft skills linked to networking, personal presentation, and ability to work within a team (Potter and Smith 2005).¹¹

Networks and Connections

Networks can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. Strong ethnic networks and connections can prove useful in sharing information among new immigrants, provided there are sufficient members of the network working in jobs which provide a bridge between the network and the wider economy. Where there are already high unemployment levels, close-knit, and in particular kinship-based ethnic networks may recycle information which does not assist newcomers in finding work, and discourages effective job searches (Potter 1999). By contrast, immigrants with networks which reach beyond their closed kinship system – what are termed bridging, or weak, ties – offer newcomers the opportunity to tap new sources of information (Granovetter 1995; Potter 1999; Kunz 2001).

Information about government employment supports and services

A lack of information about the supports provided by the government or the social sector reduces the effectiveness of those services in breaking down barriers. Barriers to immigrants accessing information about these services can include lack of official language skills and/or literacy, poorly located information centres and/or transport problems, and ineffective personal networks. Despite the expansion of web-based information on immigration, recent reports continue to articulate the existence of a lack of available, accurate, timely information available to immigrants when they most need it (Alberta Government 2004; ACCC 2004; ACCC 2005; CSPCT 2006; PROMPT 2004).

¹¹ According to a number of respondents interviewed in this study, this issue is not specific to the non-regulated sector or to tourism in particular, but rather permeates across all occupational sectors including engineering and the regulated trades.

A 2006 Ontario workshop identified specific information needs as follows:

- Improve the range and depth of information provided about basic settlement needs, and develop more diverse and creative communications methods;
- Newcomers need help to become effective advocates for their needs;
- Information sources need to be located where people live, which now includes the suburbs and smaller towns, not just the city cores;
- Agencies providing information should also be delivering services, not just shuffling people on to another place;
- There is a need to create forums that give communities voice, and allow them to communicate information about their needs and experiences;
- There should be a separate body assessing immigrant needs and evaluating existing services;
- Information about emergency services and health services should be provided early; and
- Providing understanding of laws, regulatory bodies and general legal information is a key settlement need. (CSPCT 2006).

The timing and delivery of information-provision is a relatively under-studied area: while it is accepted that prospective immigrants require accurate information *prior* to immigrating to Canada, there is less information available concerning ideal delivery mechanisms. The majority of institutional efforts at improving information-provision focus on formal means – that is, they focus on the provision of information through organizations, associations, agencies, and so on. However, research indicates that information providers must gain a better understanding of the central role that immigrant personal networks play in the integration process – including the economic component of this (Potter 1999; CIC 2004).

For example, according to the LSIC, among immigrants receiving assistance with education and training problems, 35% reported using friends, 32% reported using relatives and family, and 32% reported using the educational system as helpers. However, 65% of family class immigrants used family and relatives for assistance, almost double the proportions reported by the other categories. Just 13% of newcomers were helped by settlement organizations. Similarly, while relatives and friends dominated as helpers among immigrants who experienced employment problems, assistance from the educational system and settlement organizations was also important. Higher proportions of family class immigrants and refugees reported relatives and family members as their source of help (63% and 32% respectively), compared with 44% of skilled worker principle applicants, 37% of skilled worker spouses and dependents, and 47% of other economic immigrants. Among all immigrants, one fifth (20%) reported settlement organizations as a source of assistance with employment-related problems, principally among refugees (28%) and skilled workers (24%). This makes sense given that included in this group of settlement organizations are those related specifically to employment assistance.

Gender specific

As for all Canadian mothers, concerns about accessible, affordable, trustworthy, daycare can present a barrier to taking up work outside the home. Additionally for immigrant mothers, there may be cultural barriers to leaving their children with non-family members, and/or concerns about culturally appropriate care, which include language (especially for immigrant pre-school children who don't speak English or French), religious beliefs, and dietary concerns.

5. *Specific Examples of Good/Innovative Practice*

While some countries hope to remove systemic barriers to immigrant labour market attachment through broad policies which support employment for all unemployed and underemployed individuals, this paper focuses on those programs which target barriers specific to immigrants and particularly those which address human capital issues which fall within the mandate of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). This section looks briefly at examples of programs which respond to challenges at the system level, and in-depth at examples which respond to challenges at the individual immigrant level.

5.1 **Approaches to Encouraging Labour Market Attachment (LMA)**

Effective policies and programs aimed at promoting LMA among immigrants operate at different levels. These can be grouped according to their level of focus: the target population (general population versus immigrant-specific; individual immigrant versus ethnic group) and geographic level of implementation and responsibility (municipal, provincial/territorial, federal).

General Population versus Immigrant-Specific Programs

Policies and programs can be targeted to immigrants as a group with a particular set of challenges, or can be cast more broadly to a larger pool of people facing labour market challenges. Countries which implement programs to target unemployed or underemployed immigrants as a group separate from the general population who have LMA challenges include traditional immigrant receiving countries like Canada and Australia, but other examples can be found in various European countries. Examples of such programs include: language training, citizenship courses, recognition of overseas credentials and fostering social/cultural integration of immigrants.

Other countries rely on policies and programs which subsume the unemployed or underemployed immigrant population within the larger local population on welfare, or with other symptoms of LMA problems. The UK and the US both lean towards this approach, although some of the German policies in the hey day of the guest worker also would fall in this category.

“The United States is distinguished by a virtual hands-off approach to immigrant integration by federal and most state authorities – it is a nation with an immigration policy but no national *immigrant* policy... The United States model ... sees relatively open access to all sectors of the labour market, unrestricted access to citizenship and the fact that employers readily utilize, and frequently aggressively seek out, immigrant labour as the key elements that facilitate labour market integration” (Ray 2004, p. 5).

The kind of policies which in practice support immigrant labour market integration under these circumstances include: welfare to work, making work pay¹², neighbourhood revitalization¹³, easing the transition to work, job retention and advancement¹⁴.

Individual versus Group Programs

Interventions can also be targeted at the individual immigrant or on groups of immigrants. Individual support programs tend to address increasing levels of “human capital”, through for instance: vocational training, education, basic education, literacy and language ESL/FSL, apprenticeships, and credential recognition. On the other hand, group programs may address the experiences specific to particular countries or regions of origin, or particular groups of immigrants. These may include: support to ethnic immigrant organizations, refugee organizations, temporary workers organizations (e.g. farm contract workers), or a specific class of immigrant organizations (e.g. nannies). One of the downsides of this approach is illustrated in Germany, where charitable organizations played a key role prior to the introduction of official government policies, and extended support to ethnic groups based on religious similarities. “The result was the creation of cultures based on religious identities that many of the immigrants had not chosen for themselves. Migrants were turned whether they liked it or not into representatives of their national culture” (Geddes 2003, p. 13).

Geographic Level of Focus: National, Provincial or Municipal?

Whether governments are addressing labour market attachment for immigrants or the wider population, specific policies need to be understood within the context of the tier of government which implements them. Many of the countries examined have a federal structure and like Canada, implement policies at different levels of the federation, while others include supra-national policies like the EU, so that a fixation on national level models only can be misleading (Geddes 2003).

National policies/programs might include immigrant selection criteria, broad tax policies to make work pay, and national language standards. Provincial policies/programs might include: controlling settlement programs at the provincial level, adjusting policies about rent subsidies, and provincial credential recognition. However, while national policies may receive more publicity, in fact the policies which have the biggest influence on immigrant labour market attachment are designed and applied at the local or municipal level. In practice most immigrant support programs take place locally, and are implemented by municipal governments, in those areas where large numbers of immigrants live (ethnic enclaves), and in particular in public housing developments/projects. Immigrant

¹² Examples of welfare-to-work programs which have included significant immigrant populations are Jobs-First GAIN (Freedman et al. 2000) and Jobs-Plus (Kato 2001) in the US and the New Deal in the UK (Cabinet Office 2003).

¹³ Examples of neighbourhood revitalization programs which have benefited immigrant enclaves include Education Priority Zones in France (Geddes 2003) and the New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in the UK (Cabinet Office 2003).

¹⁴ An example of a US program which focused on job retention and advancement, and included many immigrants is WASC (Anderson et. al. 2006).

“integration into the social embroidery of the city is not a natural process. . . . Cities therefore face a special challenge and specific responsibility, different from that of the national authorities.” (Penninx 2003) An interesting upcoming report will be the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Study on Local Integration of Immigrants into the Labour Market which will look at local initiatives and local governance frameworks which support the integration of immigrants in five countries including Canada (to be published in July 2006).

To recap: the examples of good or innovative practice which follow are drawn from each of these three groupings, with an emphasis on those approaches which are *immigrant-specific*; targeted at *developing the resources of individual immigrants*; and which play out at *local or municipal* levels.

5.2 Good practices which reduce systemic barriers

At the system level, programs, mechanisms, policies and approaches that address immigrant labour market attachment challenges are concentrated within the following areas: broad labour market trends; immigration selection policies and regulations; welfare and taxation policies; multi-level jurisdictions; settlement location; and discrimination, particularly within the context of the “war on terror”. Few “systems-level” approaches, programs, policies or mechanisms were identified through the Canadian portion of the literature review. Of those that were identified, none have been formally evaluated for their effectiveness, although the Maytree framework has been adopted by numerous organizations and agencies across Canada and is perceived by many to be the “gold standard” in terms of effecting systems-level changes (See Appendix C-1).

Responding to labour supply and demand

Two approaches were identified which respond to the challenges created by an open and competitive international labour market. Some countries are *adjusting the criteria for immigrant selection* to try to capture those skills which impact best on the ability to integrate into the labour market. Other examples exist of programs which *target immigrant outreach* out to a particular occupational sector.

INTERNATIONAL

The changes in the 1990s to Australia selection criteria to require higher English language skills would be an example of adjusting selection criteria to better reflect a skill which is clearly in demand in the market.

The international hi-tech boom of the late 1990s provides a good example of *outreach to a specific occupational sector*. In response to a German shortage of Information Technology of (IT) workers represented by about 75,000 IT job vacancies, Germany launched a special program in August 2001, to provide five year “green cards” to foreign IT workers. Cards were issued based predominantly upon applications from employers who had already selected the immigrant and assessed that their abilities or credentials were appropriate to the job offered. (Werner 2001) With an initial quota of

10,000, 9,500 IT specialists took advantage of this program by December 2002. (Oezcan 2004) Likewise the US opened a special immigrant visa category for foreign IT specialists in the 1990s. It should be noted that the rapid response to the market demand in this sector was not inhibited by a rigid credential recognition process as employers were directly responsible for confirming the qualifications of the immigrant.

CANADA

Canadian programs which target outreach towards specific sectors and occupations include the Immigrant Nominee Programs, Foreign Worker Program, and International Students.

Immigrant Nominee Programs (also known as Provincial Nominee Programs): Most provinces in Canada have an agreement with the Government of Canada that allows them to play a more direct role in selecting immigrants who wish to settle in that province, and which meet their provincial labour market demands. Immigrants must first apply to the province where they wish to live; once nominated by a province, they then have to make a separate application to CIC for permanent residence. The Programs also accelerate these workers' applications for work permits and permanent residency; as such they were initially supported by the federal government as a means of facilitating greater geographic dispersion of immigrants beyond Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal.

Foreign Worker Program: The purpose of this Program is to help Canadian employers meet skills and labour shortages. HRSDC administers the Program in cooperation with CIC: the former conducts a labour market assessment and must approve the job offer, while the latter issues the work permit. A number of factors are taken into consideration in determining whether someone can enter the country as a foreign worker (CIRL 2005). Examples of workers entering through this program include live-in-caregivers, construction and manufacturing workers and seasonal agricultural workers among others. The Foreign Worker Program also allows temporary foreign workers to transfer into Immigrant Nominee Programs and thus accelerate the permanent residency process.¹⁵

International Students: There are currently four ways in which Canadian employers can hire international student graduates, three of which are through Provincial Nominee Programs (British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba), in addition to Post-graduation Work Permits. These permits offer foreign-trained students the opportunity to work in Canada following the completion of their studies. To qualify, applicants must meet several criteria, including but not limited to working in their field of study; applying within 90 days of successful program completion; and having a valid study permit and a full-time offer of employment. The length of a post-graduation work permit can vary from eight months to two years, and depends on the length of an applicant's study program (CIRL 2005).

¹⁵ The Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring at Most a High School Diploma or Job-specific Training is another variation on the Foreign Worker Program, and is specifically designed to recruit overseas workers into jobs with low skill requirements. This pilot targets an understudied pool of workers that few have considered. It is currently being evaluated and is not widely available across the country at the time of writing, though may offer a promising recruitment alternative for the future.

There is some question as to how effective each of these programs is in facilitating first finding and selecting immigrants who can fill identified skill gaps, and second hiring, training and retaining these workers within the identified occupations.

Adjusting national immigration policies

While immigration policies and procedures can be a barriers to LMA, when appropriately set they can also improve LMA. Options for policy adjustments identified include: adjusting the selection points system; tightening policies to better capture market skills; and increasing the range of programs through which immigrants can apply.¹⁶ Another way in which Canada can access a different labour market pool is by targeting CIC overseas recruitment and selection offices in specific geographic regions. Where a new priority for a particular labour market skill set emerges and can be shown to be geographically-based, a way of increasing applications from potential immigrants with the desired skills is to enhance outreach, recruitment and selection resources in those regions. This can be simpler than adjusting the selection points system, for example.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia has adjusted its national immigration policy as a tool to increase the likelihood of immigrants entering the work force. To reduce the barrier created by unrecognized credentials the Australian government instituted an immigrant selection policy that credentials must be assessed before the immigrant visa is issued. Moreover, for skilled immigrants Australia maintains a national occupation demand list that also plays a significant role in its selection policy: to be accepted, skilled immigrants must have an occupation or skill on the list of approved occupations. The Australians also have a mandatory English language requirement for skilled stream migrants and an upper age limit of 44. To encourage foreign students to use their education in the Australian labour force, foreign students who have an Australian degree do not need work experience to enter the country and immigration applicants are given extra points for having qualifications from an Australian institution. Their points system also assigns extra points for spouses' skills. (Richardson and Lester 2004).

CANADA

The Canadian Immigration and Refugee protection Act (IRPA), which came into effect in 2002, is the primary policy lever used to select newcomers to Canada which have a high chance of successfully integrating into Canadian society.¹⁷ Whether Canada's selection policy is effective is a matter of debate which normally turns on the question of how many immigrants, and of what type, should Canada admit (Adelman 2002; Collacott 2002; Francis 2002; Stoffman 2002; Li 2002; Green and Green 1999). Canadian immigration policy has been criticized by researchers in recent years for levels which are too high; a composition which is too heavily-weighted with family class immigrants who are a drain on Canadian society; and a refugee determination system which is too lax and needs considerable scaling

¹⁶ See for example the proposal by Herbert Grubal of the Fraser Institute, September 2005.
<http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/admin/books/files/Immigration.pdf>

¹⁷ As noted above, Québec has a separate policy which it manages within federally-established regulations.

back and tightening if Canada is to maintain safety within its borders (Collacott 2002, 2006; Francis 2002; Stoffman 2002).

As a labour market development tool, there are a number of researchers who see permanent immigration as a poor tool (e.g. Green and Green 1999; PROMPT 2004, 2005a), and instead see value in the role of temporary as opposed to permanent migration as a means to responding to skill shortages and encouraging the circulation of human capital and innovation. Moreover, the impact of the process of streaming immigrants into “categories” on immigrants’ actual integration trajectory, and the role that this plays in expectations for newcomers’ integration, is often unquestioned. Li (2002) has suggested that in fact Canadian immigration categories are socially constructed through the selection policy, and reinforced through programs that target immigrants of certain categories for services. Data from the LSIC and other studies suggest that immigrants make rational choices based on information available to them concerning the best way for them to enter Canada, and that Canadian immigration categories more often reflect these rational choices, rather than real differences in the characteristics of the people in these categories (including their levels of human capital) (Potter 1999; Statistics Canada 2005a).

A number of organizations have called for an expansion of the “Points System” to include non-regulated professions such as trucking or tourism (e.g. CLBC 2005), while others have articulated the need to move beyond credentials to competencies required to do a certain job.¹⁸ Québec was similarly challenged to find a better fit between the skills of those immigrants coming into the province and the labour market, and began using agents to recruit for newcomers with specific skills outside of the country. There is a strong link between these agents and the regions/cities, and as a result there is much better matching now of these immigrants with Québec’s needs (Potter and Smith 2005).¹⁹

Streamlining jurisdictional complexity

The jurisdictional complexity created by the intersection of three vertical levels government – federal, provincial and municipal – and ten horizontal jurisdictions across the provinces and territories creates mobility barriers for all job seekers. Approaches which tackle this barrier range from providing better *access to information* to actual *coordination between the jurisdictions*.

INTERNATIONAL

To counter the difficulties caused by multiple jurisdictions in credential recognition, the Australians have created a national level credential assessment process which has force in all states and territories, meaning that professionals can carry their certification across all provinces.

¹⁸ This approach is being explored by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council.

¹⁹ Personal interview, President –Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI) of Québec.

CANADA

Canada is now moving in a direction similar to that taken by Australia. In recognition of the shortcomings of the decentralized Canadian system, Prime Minister Harper announced on May 12, 2006 that funds have been dedicated within the recent budget to “create a federal agency to help new Canadians get recognition of their skills and credentials” (Harper 2006). Preliminary information suggests that the goals of the Canadian Agency for the Assessment and Recognition of Credentials will be to provide information on assessment processes for international credentials and experience for immigrants to Canada. It will work with Provinces and Territories and professional associations to ensure that foreign-trained professionals meet Canadian standards while getting those who are trained and ready to work in their fields of expertise into the workforce more quickly. The Agency will build on current federal activities and progress to-date including the Foreign Credential Recognition Program and other existing integration programming.²⁰

Adjusting welfare and taxation policies

Welfare and tax policies can be a barrier to LMA if they entice immigrants into a “welfare trap”. Two basic approaches can be identified: helping those on *welfare to move into work* and encouraging people *not to start using welfare*.

INTERNATIONAL

This paper does not discuss all of the programs which are being undertaken to address the “welfare trap”, as most programs are not immigrant specific but target a wider population. For readers interested in formal evaluations of *welfare-to-work* programs in the US, the research produced by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation is recommended (MDRC), (Freedman et al. 2000; Kato 2001; Anderson et. al. 2006).

The Australians on the other hand, have implemented national policies *restricting early access to welfare* which they feel encourage immigrants to take jobs earlier. Research from Australia suggests that a longer waiting period (2 years) before accessing social benefits, compared with Canada (3 months or less) has resulted in Australian immigrants getting jobs sooner, and keeping them longer, than Canadian immigrants (Richardson and Lester 2004).

Moving closer to jobs

Barriers created by the location of immigrant homes relative to employment and education may be reduced by addressing the concentration of ethnic enclaves in areas of low employment. Programs which deal with this barrier include *dispersal programs* for new immigrants and *public transit development*.

²⁰ This information was provided to the writers by the team that commented on a draft of the paper, June 2006.

INTERNATIONAL

In the hope of reducing the development of ethnic enclaves in Stockholm and increasing integration of refugees into mainstream society, Sweden implemented a *dispersal policy* in the 1980s which sent refugees to under-populated communities around the country. This policy backfired by creating more ethnic enclaves around the country, many of which were in public housing which native Swedes had rejected precisely because it was not located near jobs or good public transit. In the end many refugees tried to move to Stockholm because it was a better location for work opportunities and education. (Westin 2000).

CANADA

In recent years the federal government has begun to examine ways of encouraging newcomers to settle for an initial period of 3-5 years in what are called “second tier cities”, despite a number of potential challenges (CIC 2001; PROMPT 2005b). There is no question that Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver in particular are challenged to integrate the volume of immigrants that they currently receive, while other municipalities would also like a share in the skilled labour and cultural diversity that newcomers bring to Canada. These challenges include problems creating immigrant “ghettoes”, removing newcomers from critical sources of social network support and assistance to which they would otherwise have access in larger cities, and difficulties ensuring the availability of necessary settlement services in smaller communities, among others.

Immigrant Nominee Programs are seen as one mechanism to support this dispersal policy, but it is too early to know whether these will be successful over the long-term.

Improving service delivery models

The majority of this research paper focuses on particular programs or services that are delivered to immigrants. Of significance is the overwhelming lack of attention to service delivery models – the way in which these services are accessed, delivered, coordinated, monitored, supported through data and information, and so on – except in a very few instances. The work by the Maytree Foundation, PROMPT in Ontario, and the EASI Initiative in BC is highlighted here because it addresses the question of how services are delivered, and suggests key elements that must be in place in order to effect not only good LMA, but overall integration, of newcomers into Canadian society.

The Maytree Foundation proposes a systems approach to facilitate labour market entry for skilled immigrants in their field of expertise (Alboim and the Maytree Foundation 2002). Key components of the system have been identified as follows:

1. Incentives for all stakeholders to collaborate in designing, delivering and evaluating programs and services.
2. Access by skilled immigrants to a continuum of programs and services that provide:
 - information on labour market, occupational requirements and available programs;

- assessment services to identify qualifications and any gaps to be filled;
 - expert advice from Canadian practitioners; and
 - bridging programs to fill the identified gaps.
3. A leadership council to foster collaboration, identify priorities and linkages, and communicate results.

The Maytree Foundation supports numerous initiatives aimed at meeting these identified components which are described below under “Good Practices which reduce individual barriers”. What is distinct about the Maytree framework is that it is comprehensive, speaks to a continuum of coordinated services and supports, and requires the commitment and involvement of all stakeholders working on multiple levels to address multiple barriers. Other organizations have built on the Maytree model to develop local labour market strategies tailored to local realities, such as in Ottawa (CLBC et al. 2004) and Halifax (Gardiner Pinfold Consulting Economists Limited 2004).

Changing employer attitudes

Approaches which address changing employer attitudes to become more friendly towards hiring immigrants include: employers training; information targeted at employers; immigrant leadership development; and stakeholder partnership development.

CANADA

Official Canadian multiculturalism policy is based on a philosophy of *accepting and explaining cultural difference*, rather than eliminating this difference. In the Canadian private sector the process of addressing cultural difference in the workplace falls more commonly within the fields of *cross-cultural communications* and *diversity management*. Cross-cultural communication training is now frequently considered essential to Canadians working internationally, and diversity management is a hot topic in many workplaces.²¹ Many private sector consultants now offer diversity management training for organizations and cross cultural briefings for employees going overseas. There is room to expand this kind of approach to immigrants, particularly in combination within language training. While many English as a second language (ESL) teachers will effectively cover some elements in their courses, the subject is not now formally part of immigrant integration programs. Support for training both for immigrants and employers in cross-cultural communications could provide a valuable bridge in the workplace to help immigrants be more effective on the job, while helping Canadian employers deal more effectively with diversity. The University of British Columbia’s School of Continuing Education is the only institution in Canada now offering a professional development Certificate in Intercultural Studies.

²¹ See the web site for DFAIT’s Centre for Intercultural Learning, <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/magazine/menu-en.asp>

Numerous *educational initiatives targeting employers* are underway in Ontario within the Greater Toronto Area through the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and the Maytree Foundation; in British Columbia through the Looking Ahead - Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI) Initiative; in Alberta, through Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society; and in Québec through a number of networks and immigrant service agencies, to name a few.²²

Leaders for Change – A Maytree Foundation Initiative

Description: The purpose of Maytree's Leaders for Change (LFC) program is to *cultivate a community leadership base* which is reflective of the ethnic diversity within the Toronto region. Activities of the program give social activists and community leaders the opportunity to build leadership skills, to identify and reflect on critical issues facing society, and to apply new knowledge and insights in small group work with community partners. The program is now in its seventh year. The program's objective is to enhance participants' *self-knowledge, community knowledge, and leadership capacity* through involvement in action-oriented social justice initiatives which will provide a basis for further work in this field following program completion.

Information:

<http://www.maytree.com/MaytreeInitiatives/LeadershipTraining/LeadersForChange.htm#>

abcGTA – A Maytree Foundation Initiative

Description: This project addresses the current imbalance between the proportion of immigrants and visible minorities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and their relative lack of representation on the boards of public agencies, boards and commissions (abc), including those at the provincial and municipal levels, as well as within other public institutions such as hospitals, universities, colleges and so on.

This project uses two strategies:

1. Assists public bodies to identify qualified, pre-screened candidates from visible minority and immigrant communities for appointments on agencies, boards and commissions. The purpose of this is to dispel the myth that immigrants and visible minorities either lack interest in or fail to qualify for civic leadership positions.
2. Promotes selection and appointment processes that are accessible, inclusive and transparent by sharing useful tools and negotiating alternative solutions to some of the existing policies and practices; establishing alliances and partnerships with key stakeholder groups in order to create a movement for change that will lead to concrete positive results in diversity representation; providing and promoting examples of promising practices in public appointment processes.

Information: <http://www.abcgta.ca/index2.asp>

²² Three key immigrant serving organizations in Québec are: L'Hirondelle <http://www.hirondelle.qc.ca/serimmig.html>; SANQI Service d'aide aux néo-québécois et immigrants <http://www.sanqi.qc.ca/contacte.htm> ; and Service d'aide aux néocanadiens <http://www.aide-internet.org/~sanc>.

Hireimmigrants.ca - a TRIEC Initiative

Description: Among its priorities, TRIEC is working to identify the necessary partnerships, strategies and tools to make employers in the Toronto region more willing and able to integrate skilled immigrants into their organizations. This website compiles employer stories, strategies, and tools to assist Canadian employers in maximizing the talents of a readily available labour pool: skilled immigrants. Organizations are of all sizes, and represent primarily, but not exclusively, three industry sectors: business services, manufacturing services and financial services, with an emphasis on organizations representing unregulated occupations where employers have more influence in employment practices.

The website has six main areas:

- **Why Hire Immigrants:** uses evidence-based research to make the business case, provide information;
- **Employer Stories:** demystifies and personalizes the ways in which various organizations have removed barriers to the employment of immigrants in a range of areas;
- **Self-Assessment:** a tool that individual employers can use to assess how they are doing in removing barriers to the employment of immigrants;
- **Strategies:** highlights the range of strategies undertaken by the organizations profiled on the site, and in conjunction with the self-assessment tool, can assist an employer to tailor a strategy to their own situation;
- **Get Started:** provides links to some very simple changes that employers can make in how they approach the hiring of immigrants; and
- **The Learning Centre:** an interactive area where employers can interact with other users, share ideas and stories, and apply what they have learned within their organizations.

Information: <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/home.htm>

A similar initiative has been implemented in British Columbia and builds on the Maytree and TRIEC models. Called the Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI), this systems approach to reducing barriers to immigrant employment involves a broad range of stakeholders including community-based agencies, post-secondary institutions, professional and trades associations, regulatory bodies, employers, unions and the three levels of government. Similar to the Maytree and TRIEC work, the EASI “Looking Ahead Initiative” has identified information requirements for three stakeholders: immigrants; employers; and service providers.²³

Information for Employers is similar to that presented on [hireimmigrants.ca](http://www.hireimmigrants.ca), where employers are provided with the business case, ways to attract, train and retain newcomers, and to change their workplace culture (among other information).

A final example of the importance of engaging and networking with employers is found within the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN).²⁴ Like the TRIEC and EASI initiatives, the WRIEN uses a network of stakeholders to develop a regional immigrant labour market integration strategy, of which employers are an integral part. Unique to this initiative is that it is now housed within the Greater

²³ <http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca/>

²⁴ <http://www.wrien.com/>

Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce. As a result, the WRIEN has access to a far greater number and range of employers than in its formative phase, when it existed as part of a research organization (Buhel and Coady 2006).

Fighting discrimination and the impact of the “war on terror”

Few initiatives were identified through the literature review that directly address systemic discrimination within the broad public (as opposed to among employers, of which a number have been identified – see below). Overall, the response of the labour movement to this kind of discrimination seems to have been more direct and supportive than government’s response. For instance, the Canadian Auto Workers produced and distributed an educational video on human rights in the work place in response to immigrant worker discrimination after the events of September 2001.

5.3 Good practices which reduce individual barriers

A number of approaches, models, programs and services aimed at enabling immigrants to mobilize their personal resources to obtain employment were identified in the literature. These have been grouped according to how they help newcomers overcome the barriers to good LMA identified in section 5 above.

Encouraging language acquisition

As language acquisition is universally considered one of the most critical factors in getting and keeping a job, different countries have experimented with a variety of policies and practices to support better language skills. The learner is primarily responsible for language acquisition; as such, the different policy options address the language barrier through alternative ways to *create incentives* to learn the official language. Other programs *increase the availability of language instruction* and *improve the relevance of the instruction* on offer.

INTERNATIONAL

The most common incentive to language acquisition is *free national language courses* for immigrants which are available in many countries (Netherlands (Geddes 2003), Sweden (Ray 2004), Israel (Lewin-Epstein et al. 2003), including Canada. In some countries classes are optional, (Canada, Sweden) while in others they are obligatory (Australia, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands (Ray 2004). Germany also has extended that policy to provide free in-country classes in German in places like Kazakhstan for potential immigrants from their ethnic German category. Australian immigrants who have participated for 300 hours in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) are exempt from the English test otherwise required under the *Australian Citizenship Act*.

The Australian language training program includes *tailor-made learning options*, such as home study, distance learning and night lessons (Kam, Griffith and Leonard 2001).

Germany has used *fast tracking of applications* and naturalization as an incentive to master German by moving certain applicants up the queue if they reach a higher standard of German. This language testing is used in particular for the “Aussiedler” category of ethnic Germans residing in the former Eastern Bloc countries. The test takes the form of a hearing where the primary applicant must demonstrate that they learned German in their childhood. However, additional “qualified” testing is available for family members, and where the whole family speaks German well, applications can be fast-tracked. In addition, after arrival, access to naturalization comes one year earlier for those who attend an integration course. In another version of this incentive it was proposed to issue vouchers to immigrants which could be cashed for language and integration courses. If the vouchers were all used within three years, residence, work permits and naturalization would be expedited (DeVoretz et al. 2002).

The Netherlands designed a proactive system for language acquisition based on a *legally binding contract*. New immigrants are required to take a settlement test, and then based on the results agree to an education plan which includes language training along with lessons on Dutch culture, customs and politics. “[A] contract is made between the immigrant and the municipality that obligates both parties to implement the plan’s objective of the newcomer finding employment and/or continuing education in the regular Dutch system” (Ray 2004, p. 11).

Denmark also has an immigrant integration program which requires all immigrants to undertake a three year introduction program, designed around an individual contract negotiated between the municipality and the immigrant, leading towards eventual participation in the labour market. Participation is enforced by *sanctions to welfare benefits*. (Roseveare and Jorgensen 2005).

In Denmark, in 2002 a new scheme was announced to provide *in-the-workplace language training*, in cooperation with employers who received a declining subsidy to hire and train immigrants. This program combines classroom with workplace learning and proceeds from the assumption that the workplace is the best place to learn language skills which can transfer directly to employment (Roseveare and Jorgensen 2005). Of course an additional benefit is the combination of vital Danish work experience with language learning.

There is an established pedagogical debate about whether children develop better language skills if they begin in their mother tongue, or if they are immersed in a foreign language (Roseveare and Jorgensen, 2005). While Sweden offered *mother tongue instruction* in schools for many years, (in 1997 there were 120 different languages being taught in Swedish schools) they have more recently moved away from this approach and now offer immigrant children intensive special classes in Swedish (Westin 2000). Belgium on the other hand began introducing initial mother tongue instruction in schools for immigrant children in 2005 (OECD 2005).

CANADA

The federal government funds *basic language training* through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), aimed at helping immigrants to acquire the necessary knowledge of English and French languages to permit them to integrate both economically, but also broadly into their communities. LINC programs were evaluated in 2004, and it was found that while the basic training offered was adequate for some, this did not meet the needs of immigrants seeking employment in more professional occupations.

The government responded with a joint HRSDC-CIC program for *professional level language training*, the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program, which delivers labour market levels of language training and job-specific language training to adult immigrants to help them enter and remain in jobs commensurate with their skills and qualifications.²⁵ This 8-week program is currently delivered by a range of immigrant serving agencies and other organizations across Canada, such as the Workplace Language Training for Newcomers (WLTN) offered in Ottawa through LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) World Skills and Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO). Program participants are required to also engage in other programs aimed at facilitating LMA. This *integrated approach* recognizes that while language acquisition is central to LMA, individuals need a range of supports that are in essence interlinked. While not formally evaluated at the time of writing, the program is undergoing continuous monitoring and evaluation (Lindholm 2006).

Other models of delivery include in-the-workplace training, which increases the accessibility of the service to newcomers that may be employed in one location.

In a pair of complementary innovative projects, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) is working with two partners to bridge two national skills standards to *create job specific language benchmarks*. The Canadian government already has defined Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) for French and English and Essential Skills for the workplace for over 200 jobs. The CLBs are benchmarks which describe language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and are used by teachers to guide lessons and evaluate learner progress. The Essential Skills are enabling skills – for example, reading and oral communication skills – which help workers to succeed in the workplace and community, and have been defined for about 200 Canadian occupations to date. The two projects will create frameworks which compare the two national skills standards and facilitate better teaching and more effective language acquisition.

The “Online Essential Skills Resources for ESL/FSL Professionals”, implemented by SkillPlan (the BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council) will provide a web site which will help language teachers already using the CLBs to access and use existing Essential Skills resources in their classroom lessons and to effectively target lessons to the intended careers of their students.

²⁵ <http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/inet/english/elt-clna/index.htm>

The “Language Profiling of Tourism Occupations Based on Essential Skills Profiles” project implemented by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council will design a methodology for benchmarking the language skills for an initial selection of jobs in tourism. It is hoped that the methodology will then be used to develop similar benchmarks for other jobs where immigrants are expected to contribute in the future. This process will also allow language instructors to more effectively target teaching to the future workplace needs of their students.

In Ontario, the “Steps to Employment” project developed a series of *occupation-specific language training manuals* aimed at integrating orientation for newcomers to specific sectors with basic English language training.²⁶ The materials were developed specifically for newcomers with training and or experience in particular sectors, and with language skills at Canadian Language Benchmarks 4,5 (reading, writing) and 6 (listening, speaking). The materials are flexible enough to be incorporated into the core LINC program material, or as a focused (two week specialized) component. They can also be incorporated into other workshops for foreign educated and trained professionals and, because they are available electronically on the internet, can be easily used for self-study. Eighteen occupational groupings are covered by these manuals:

- Automotive Service Trades;
- Call Centre;
- Computers;
- Construction;
- Education;
- Electrical Trades and Occupations;
- Entrepreneurs;
- Financial Clerks;
- Food Service Trades and Occupations;
- Home Health Care;
- Industrial Trades;
- Logistics;
- Personal Services Trades and Occupations;
- Sales Occupations;
- Technologists and Technicians in Applied Sciences;
- Technologists and Technicians in Engineering;
- Technologists and Technicians in Health Care; and
- Telecommunications Trades and Occupations.

²⁶ All information taken from <http://209.121.217.200/main.html>, May 24th 2006.

Each workshop manual includes enough material for ten full days of instruction. Materials are grouped into two categories: 25 hours of instruction is devoted to “Orientation”, the other 25 hours to occupation-specific “Terminology”.

Simplifying credential recognition

As noted above, this barrier is both an issue of *complexity in the system* and the *uncertainty of transferability*.

INTERNATIONAL

The Australians have *simplified* the credential recognition process by creating a centralized national body. ‘The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) “provides assessment services, information, advice and promotion of fair, equitable and transparent assessment of qualifications” for holders of foreign credentials. Its mission is “to help the overseas-trained to work and study in Australia by providing information, advice and assistance in relation to the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills, and to encourage improved international arrangements for the recognition of qualifications and skills.” (CAETO 2004, p.18) NOOSR assesses some qualifications directly, but also refers immigrants to relevant professional bodies in other cases. The new federal body proposed by the Canadian government in May 2006 may follow on this model, but as of yet publication details had not been released.

Australia has also *reduced the inherent uncertainty* of credential recognition by requiring and providing the services of NOOSR before issuing an immigrant visa. “The compulsory provision for the assessment of credentials before entry to the country gives immigrants a clear understanding of what their credentials mean in Australian terms, and allows them to plan accordingly” (CAETO 2004, p. 20).

In Denmark the Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications has both *simplified* the recognition process and provides a binding assessment of qualifications for regulated professions which *removes uncertainty* (Roseveare and Jorgensen 2005).

European Union (EU) legislation has *removed uncertainty* in certain regulated sectors such as those related to medical and paramedical professions by providing for the automatic recognition of diplomas and degrees of European institutions. Under the Lisbon Convention, member states either automatically recognize the credentials of other member countries or have defined the bilateral gap between the credentials requirements of the two member countries. This leads to a clear definition of what further training will be required if a worker should move from one member state to another. Therefore, each member country maintains its own standards while providing bridging information for each individual profession between any two member countries. The convention is not applied beyond the borders of the EU, so “third country nationals” from outside the EU face the same FCR challenges as they would coming to Canada.

The EU has *simplified credential recognition* by creating a system of evaluation centres under the umbrella of European Network of Information Centres (ENIC). Within this umbrella, each country has a National Academic Recognition Information Centres

(NARICs). In many (but not all) EU countries, the NARIC will provide written evaluations of diplomas indicating to which of the host-country diplomas the candidate's most closely compares. This can be done for both regulated and non-regulated diplomas and may ease the path of the immigrant looking for recognition of their diploma from an employer. The ENIC itself provides for effective communication and information sharing between the countries. Within the EU system two specific tools have been developed to facilitate transfer and recognition of academic credentials.

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a standard system used across Europe to assess courses based on the student workload required to complete course objectives.²⁷

The Diploma Supplement...

“is a document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving international “transparency” and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. ...The DS is produced by national institutions according to a template ... composed of eight sections (information identifying the holder of the qualification, information identifying the qualification, information on the level of the qualification, information on the contents and results gained, information on the function of the qualification, additional information, certification of the Supplement, information on the national higher education system)”²⁸.

The US government has moved to *simplify* the process of credential recognition by providing a national web site for the United States Network for Education Information (USNEI) which offers a central source of information for immigrants on credential recognition, and links to further sources of information. However, the US federal government does not evaluate diplomas or credentials, but leaves that responsibility to a plethora of state bodies and employers, so in practice the US system is still extremely complex for incoming immigrants.

CANADA

At the national policy and program level, HRSDC manages the Foreign Credential Recognition Program. This Program works with provinces, territories, regulatory bodies, sector councils, post-secondary institutions, and other partners and stakeholders to develop foreign credential assessment and recognition processes that are fair, accessible, consistent, transparent, and rigorous in both targeted regulated and non-regulated occupations and sectors.

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html

²⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html

At the agency level, Canada has one national agency addressing simplifying credential recognition but has made little progress in reducing uncertainty. Credential recognition is of particular relevance to immigrants seeking work in professional, or regulated, occupations. For the vast majority of non-regulated occupations, foreign credential recognition is not an issue; rather, the challenges facing immigrants seeking access to non-regulated jobs are general employability issues (Potter and Smith 2005; 2006).

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) was set up in response to the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region (also known as the Lisbon Recognition Convention).²⁹ The CICIC is an independent organization that acts as a referral service and national clearinghouse for information on credential recognition within Canada, and internationally. The CICIC collects, distributes and organizes information that supports the recognition and portability of Canadian and international educational and occupational qualifications. CICIC networks both within Canada, through the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), and is accountable to the provincial and territorial ministers of Education on matters related to information on education and training qualifications. Internationally, CICIC works with the European National Information Centres (ENIC) and other similar organizations in other parts of the world. Like the USNEI, the CICIC does not recognize qualifications, but can provide advice and guidance to individuals seeking recognition. It is up to provincial licensing bodies and educational institutions to recognize overseas programs or degrees.

Provincially, there are a number of private sector credential evaluation services that provide expert opinion on the value of foreign credentials for employment purposes, but again these opinions are not binding. The CICIC website has links to these provincial organizations. Insofar as CICIC acts as a centralizing opportunity for information collection, dissemination, networking and policy discussion, it serves as an important model upon which to build. These provincial assessment agencies are organized as not-for-profit agencies and are in some cases mandated by the provincial governments to carry out the foreign credential recognition for their province.

There are also a number of provincially-based networks of internationally educated and trained professionals (known as IETPs) that work to advocate for streamlining, standardization and communication of evidence-based, objective credential recognition processes within their professions. These networks are linked regionally through an organization called Capacity Canada, and emerged out of two provincial organizations: the BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network (BCITP-net) and the Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT) in Ontario.³⁰ Capacity Canada works to create dialogue on the issues facing IETPs through a national policy roundtable. The importance of these local, regional and national networks in terms of facilitating labour market attachment of professionals is in their momentum and synergy. Information, best practices and approaches can be better shared through these network mechanisms, and as such these networks play an essential role in developing local,

²⁹ <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=165&CL=ENG>

³⁰ www.capacitycanada.ca/

provincial and national policy in this area. This initiative has been underway for some time: in September, the Capacity Canada Leadership Council, the transitional body currently in place, will transform into the National Roundtable, at which time the newly formed body will set its policy and begin to execute its research agenda (Buhel and Coady 2006).

Providing initial work experience

Two complementary approaches to overcoming the work experience barriers have been tried: the first, by getting a fair *assessment of source country work experience*; the second, by getting new *host country work experience*. *Prior learning assessment and recognition* (PLAR) is one Canadian approach to assessing source country work experience. A number of approaches are being used across Canada to enable the acquisition of “Canadian” work experience for immigrants. These range from encouraging newcomers to do *volunteer work* (a widespread practice), to more formalized *internship*, *job-shadowing* and *bridging* programs. Often bridging programs are meant to include these specific formalized means of acquiring work experience.

INTERNATIONAL

As a way of assessing previous work experience, Denmark has a system where a group of private companies provides immigrants with *on-the-job testing* and then issues a written certificate of demonstrated work skills that will be recognized by Danish employers (Roseveare and Jorgensen 2005).

To facilitate host country work experience, the Netherlands introduced a program that provided *special trainee positions* where immigrants could get work experience, but without full pay (Geddes 2003). Sweden has a similar trainee positions program to provide Swedish work experience to immigrants through *state subsidized employment* (Ray 2004).

In Germany the *apprenticeship system* has been increasingly opened to immigrant youth, but as a product of the highly differentiated German education system, it is harder to imitate in countries with more flexible labour markets (Geddes 2003).

CANADA

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is a method for providing consistent assessment of existing work experience (and at times educational qualifications) which is well developed in Canada and also used in the US and the UK. PLAR is defined as

“a systematic process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of learning (i.e. skills, knowledge and values)... The methods that might be used to assess prior learning include assessment of educational documents; portfolio review; demonstration or challenge processes (i.e. written/oral examinations, projects, assignments, performance observation, skill demonstrations, simulations and product assessments); standardized tests and program review” (Day 2000).

Most Canadian community colleges provide services in PLAR which immigrants can access to facilitate recognition of foreign credentials and work experience. “The process compares prior learning gained from prior education, work and life experiences and personal study to the learning outcomes of college and institute courses so that students can obtain credit equivalent to college and institute level courses” (ACCC 2006). There are some concerns however that the process is time consuming and requires more resources than many colleges have available, and that at this stage recognition through PLAR at one institution is not necessarily transferable between institutions, businesses and of course, the provinces and territories (Bloom and Grant 2001).

Bridging programs are designed to assist newcomers to in essence “bridge” the skills and experience gap between those skills that they arrive with in Canada, and those required to be employed in a given occupation in Canada. Bridging programs may also build on the results of a PLAR process or FCR process to avoid duplication of work. The purpose of bridge training programs is to help newcomers acquire the necessary skills to become employed in their occupation of choice as quickly as possible, without duplicating what they have already learned elsewhere.

The following program elements have been identified as best practices for the content of bridging programs (FurturEd Inc. 2004a)³¹:

- Skill identification;
- Training;
- Portfolio learning and development;
- Work placement and/or experience;
- Exam preparation;
- Support services; and
- Work Search and employment counselling.

Described as such, bridging programs refer to a continuum of services that support immigrants to fill skills and knowledge gaps in a variety of areas, of which work placement and/or experience is but one component. Within this approach, in essence almost all of the approaches that facilitate immigrant LMA could be considered “bridging” programs. In some cases, bridging program are offered by colleges or universities³²; others are supported by immigrant serving organizations or agencies; while others are supported through provincial ministries or professional associations. Following are some examples of bridging programs identified in the review.³³

³¹ This report is a proposed set of benchmarks and evaluation framework, one of the few evidence-based pieces identified in the literature, and serves as an excellent point from which to conduct future work in this area.

³² See http://www.accc.ca/english/services/i-services/bt_programs.htm for a listing of those provided by colleges across Canada.

³³ FuturEd (2004b) is a companion piece to the Evaluation Framework identified above, and contains an inventory of bridging programs across Canada.

In Ontario, Career Bridge has facilitated over 200 *internships* since 2000, with a hiring rate of approximately 85%, and reportedly high satisfaction rates from both interns and employers (CBITP 2004). The following key success factors were identified in relation to internship programs (Burnaby School District 41 2004, p.16):

- Securing support of employers;
- Good understanding of local labour market to ensure job opportunities are available once internships are completed;
- Linking internships with other bridging components such as mentorship, professional/enhanced language training;
- Employer outreach to promote value of internships;
- Pre-screening interns;
- Remuneration to intern, which distinguishes it from volunteer work and strengthens the commitment from both interns and employers; and
- Internship length of a minimum of six months.

Career Bridge – a TRIEC Initiative

Description: Career Bridge is an innovative internship program designed to break the cycle of “no Canadian experience, no job; no job, no Canadian experience”, and provide a crucial bridge between the international and Canadian workplace. These internships provide employers with the opportunity to observe qualified, experienced professionals in a low-risk employment environment, thereby encouraging them to consider newcomers as a viable pool of skilled resources.

Information: www.triec.ca

Wage-Subsidy Training Program – Comité d’adaptation de la main-d’oeuvre (CAMO) – Personnes Immigrantes

Description: CAMO-PI is like an equivalent to the sector councils in Canada, a leftover of the old Société québécoise de développement de la main d’oeuvre (now Emploi-Québec). The organization’s mandate is to integrate immigrants into the Québec labour force, to develop strategies with partners (employers, CSN, Conseil du Patronat, immigrant organizations, governments, etc.). They have run a number of FCR projects specific to engineers, nurses and medical doctors. One project that is particularly innovative is called “Immersion Professionnelle”. Run by immigrant service organizations, this is basically a six-month wage-subsidy program that enables newcomers to get Canadian experience in a real job environment. Wages are subsidized by Emploi-Québec. This program uses an employment counsellor who works to build bridges between the employer and the worker. Employers have the opportunity of evaluating the person’s competencies and skills in a low-risk situation; 80% of participants stay in the job afterwards.

Information: <http://www.camo-pi.qc.ca/>

Job shadowing is a less intense version of an internship. Job shadowing gives the newcomer the opportunity to see a job “in action”, and whether it is something they would like to pursue, while providing employers with a no-pressure opportunity to assess the newcomer’s job readiness and “team fit”. The following challenges were identified for job shadowing programs (Burnaby School District 41 2004, p.18):

- Too short-term in nature;
- Does not enable hands-on experience; and
- Liability issues for employers.

One job shadowing project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is part of a broader bridge training for nurses. Unique elements included extensive job shadowing hours (between 80 and 100), during which time the newcomer was able to develop more extensive relationships with colleagues working in the job setting, and take advantage of other workshops and seminars offered. The largest disadvantage relates to the absence of an opportunity to demonstrate competencies, because the job shadower must not have direct contact with patients (Burnaby School District 41 2004). This pilot project successfully shifted the success rate among newcomers taking the Nurse Examination from 33% to a rate of 66-70%.

Key success factors identified for job shadowing programs include the following (Burnaby School District 41 2004, p.19):

- Coordination with other bridging programs;
- Care in matching between shadower and shadowee;
- Solid funding base;
- Collaboration between training institutions, government, professional associations and employers; and
- Employer engagement throughout the process.

Professional associations often offer bridging programs as well, in cooperation with provincial associations and ministries. In Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (OMCI) funds a range of *bridge training programs* for newcomers in a variety of different occupations, from accounting to architecture, carpentry to midwifery; a recent announcement expanded the list of occupations included by 24 (OMCI 2006). Similar programs are offered across the country by organizations or provincial ministries. The BC Ministry of Economic Development recently funded an extensive series of pilot projects to examine a range of issues concerning the LMA of newcomers.³⁴ “Teach In Ontario” is a bridging program for teachers in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor that has been successful in moving qualified foreign-trained professionals into the workplace.³⁵ This bridging program was recently highlighted as a good practice

³⁴ <http://www.ecdev.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/IQU/resources/index.htm>

³⁵ <http://www.enseignerontario.ca/en/whatistio.htm>

at an Ontario-wide forum (CSPCT 2006). A critical component of occupation-specific bridging programs is the opportunity to acquire professional level language skills.

Research indicates that accessing bridging programs and work placements continues to be a major challenge for skilled immigrants. Despite a number of pilots and programs in place, efforts have been temporary and piece-meal, lacking in a coordinated approach across provinces. One study identified a checklist for regulators who seek to implement best practices and facilitate newcomer access to professions. The checklist focuses on ways in which regulators can form partnerships with the following (Burnaby School District 41 2004, p. 22):

- Educational institutions and community services to provide advice in bridging to employment and using vocational counsellors;
- Educational institutions who can offer occupation-specific language training; and
- Educational institutions and employers for co-op, internship placements to help international candidates understand Canadian workplace practices.

Fostering cultural integration in the workplace

Differences in work place culture are addressed through exposure to *broad cultural issues*, or through mechanism which relate *specifically to the workplace*, and may approach the issue through *reducing cultural difference*, *accommodating cultural difference*, or *encouraging understanding of cultural difference*.

INTERNATIONAL

While the Netherlands followed a multiculturalism approach from the beginning of the 1980s which encouraged immigrants to maintain their separate identity, since the 1990s it has reoriented its policies toward more actively *reducing cultural differences* by helping immigrants understand and accept Dutch culture. The new policy of “*inburgering*” which is roughly defined as “settling down”, combines the aforementioned language lessons with 100 hours of civic education on the Dutch way of life. Finland and Denmark have follow suit in introducing civic education (Geddes 2003). These courses attempt to introduce the immigrant to the full range of cultural values in the country, combining those which may be particularly relevant in the labour market with those which relate to political and social participation.

Long before Germany introduced more active immigrant integration policies, guestworkers in Germany participated in the *works council (Betriebsrat)*, a labour market institution which supported direct integration of “guestworkers” into German work culture. While guest workers in Germany were long discouraged from citizenship, they were always included with full workers’ rights in the works councils which represent labour within large enterprises in Germany. Foreign workers have been increasingly represented in works councils and have had “real influence over work time, dismissals and a wide range of other measures” (Geddes 2003, p. 14). While effective in inculcating workplace culture, the works councils had no mandate to address wider cultural integration and

so “[f]oreigners were turned into workers in Germany, but not into citizens” (Geddes 2003, p. 3).

While Sweden also supported a multicultural approach from 1975, they are now more concerned with supporting immigrants to integrate more deeply into Swedish culture and established a National Board of Integration in 1998 to promote these goals. However, the Swedes have also developed the concept of “*denizenship*”, as a way of *accommodating* those foreign citizens who live permanently in Sweden, contribute to the common good as tax-payers and enjoy the social, economic and educational rights as Swedish citizens, but who decline to integrate to the point of becoming naturalized. “Denizens” also have the right to vote in local elections. (Westin 2000).

CANADA

Individual immigrant serving agencies provide a range of *workshops and information resources* to newcomers that target the social and cultural challenges that many face when they try to find work. Workshops concerning Canadian workplace culture are offered through a number of immigrant serving organizations and are typically part of an overall skills upgrading or “bridging” program. A number of approaches described in other sections assist newcomers in practical ways to develop skills in working within the Canadian context. These include mentorship, internships, and job-shadowing. The strength of these approaches is that they are “live” and provide newcomers with concrete experiences in working in a real workplace.

Enhancing networks and connections

A critical gap for newcomers is a lack of personal connections to the labour market, particularly to non-immigrants working in their occupational field of choice. Like “Canadian experience”, a vicious cycle is triggered wherein without connections into the workplace, immigrants are essentially frozen out of informal hiring practices that rely strongly on personal connections – connections which often make the difference in getting an interview, or even getting a job offer. In recognition of the value of networks and connections in getting employment, various approaches have been established to *develop networks among immigrants*, and to *introduce immigrants into Canadian networks*. Programs include: *building up ethnic associations as service delivery mechanisms; mentorship; and bridging*.

INTERNATIONAL

In recognition of the value of social networks in facilitating all kinds of integration, including labour market integration, various countries have funded ethnic support groups. For instance, Sweden has encouraged the formation of *national ethnic organizations* and provided organizational grants and service contracts for immigrant organizations. However, these organizations are now described as top heavy and while successful at defending the interests of their members, they have been less helpful in integrating those communities into a wider multicultural society. (Westin 2000).

CANADA

A number of *mentorship programs* are active across the country, with a significant number concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area, which provide opportunities to immigrants to build connections with appropriate professional Canadians. Two organizations in particular – Skills for Change (SfC) and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) – have received accolades for their approach and programs (Conference Board of Canada 2004; Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Limited 2004).

The Mentoring for Employment Program (MEP) – a Skills for Change (SfC) Initiative

Description: The MEP is a three-way partnership between SfC, professionals working in industrial and corporate sectors in the GTA, and internationally trained newcomers. The Program provides a framework and resources to recruit, screen, train and support mentor relationships which can last up to six months. Matches are occupation-specific, cross-cultural, and experience and expertise of client and mentor. Clients receive critical labour-market information and assistance in developing personal networks. The program serves clients in the following fields: Engineering, Accounting and Finance, IT, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing, Biotechnology, Social Services, Office Administration, Teaching³⁶ and the Trades. (Conference Board of Canada 2004).

Information: <http://www.skillsforchange.org/>

³⁶ According to their website, the “Mentoring Program for Internationally-Trained Teachers (ITTs) is currently offered as a post-program support to participants who have completed the Teach in Ontario STIC program at SfC and have successfully obtained the Interim Certificate of Qualification (Provisional)”
<http://www.skillsforchange.org/mentoring/index.html>

The Mentoring Partnership – a TRIEC Initiative

Description: The Mentorship Partnership (MP) is an alliance of community agencies in the City of Toronto, Peel Region and York Region, who offer occupation specific mentoring to skilled immigrants. TRIEC works with corporate partners to recruit experienced professionals (mentors) and community-based organizations and match them with internationally educated professionals (mentees). An assessment of the mentor/mentee compatibility level is based on a number of criteria including shared educational background, similar work experience and common career goals. All mentees must be assessed to be job-ready (i.e. language skills, resume preparation, credential assessment, etc.). Both mentor and mentee receive orientation, preparing them for their respective roles, prior to being introduced. The mentorship relationship takes place over a four month period, over the course of which they will work for up to 24 hours.

Together, the mentor and client work to cover some or all of the following areas:

- Understanding Canadian workplace culture;
- Identifying skills required by market demands;
- Advice on proceeding with accreditation if relevant;
- Improving professional terminology;
- Mastering self-marketing techniques and confidence-building;
- Selecting technical skills upgrading programs and resources;
- Locating publications and workshops on recent developments in their field;
- Gathering information on local industries and potential employers;
- Establishing professional networks;
- Identifying and seizing employment or job training placement opportunities;
- Supporting and encouraging efforts to become professionally established; and
- Others as identified by the mentor and mentee.

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

A review of practices conducted by Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS) found the following key success factors in the mentorship programs it reviewed (ISS 2004, p.14):

- Local labour market analysis to identify occupations with critical mass of immigrants;
- Securing buy-in of employers and other employees;
- Recognizing mentees for their contributions;
- Taking care in developing good matches between mentors and mentees;
- Highlighting results through formal evaluation;
- Multi-year funding, rather than one-year project-based funding;
- Access to a qualified, committed pool of mentors; and
- Use of advisory committee to assist in focusing and managing the program.

Research on the tourism industry has identified two unique approaches to facilitating networking between immigrants seeking work and employers seeking employees: *job fairs* and “*speed-jobbing*” (Potter and Smith 2005). Both activities provide employers and immigrants the opportunity to interact in a no-risk environment. Immigrants get the

chance to practice their interview and other soft people skills, while employers are afforded the chance of interviewing a large number of candidates in a small amount of time. In both approaches, immigrant serving agencies pre-screen candidates and ensure that they are “job ready”: this is a critical key success factor to building ongoing, trusting relationships between immigrant serving agencies and employers. In some cases, the job fair approach is used by a major hotel chain during which the employer brings buses from the Rockies, interviews and makes offers of employment, and returns to the hotel at the end of the day with the successful candidates.

Speed-jobbing is an approach developed by an agency in Québec.³⁷ Like speed-dating, up to forty immigrants and employers congregate in a room. Using a round-robin of quick-format interviews, each candidate has 5 minutes with each employer and then moves on. Job offers can be made on the spot or after consideration the next day. Again, the reputation of the immigrant serving agency and the job-readiness of the candidates are critical success factors (Potter and Smith 2005).

Upgrading and developing skills

A key component of what are often called bridge training programs is *skills upgrading or development*. Immigrant serving organizations across the country offer similar kinds of services. A number of those are highlighted here.

CANADA

In coming to work in Canada, there are often gaps in foreign trained workers’ skills or knowledge base as they apply to the Canadian context. It is in part the purpose of the credential recognition process to identify these gaps. In addition, many of the services provided by immigrant serving agencies and organizations include a general career assessment and planning component which also serves to identify key gaps, and strategies to fill these.

Skills for Change (SfC) is a non-profit organization that provides *sector-specific employment preparation* programs to assist the employment of immigrants in Canada.³⁸ SfC uses an *integrated model* of language improvement, skills development and job search training which has become a recognized standard for the labour market integration of skilled immigrants in the following specific professions: accounting, engineering, health care and information technology (Conference Board of Canada 2004).

³⁷ Filière Employabilité is a partner of the Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI). http://www.tcri.qc.ca/tcri/TCRI_membres.html#F

³⁸ <http://www.skillsforchange.org/>

In the report "Take a Look at What's Working: Internationally Trained Workers in Canada" by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME 2003), best-practice training models specific to supporting internationally trained workers in Canada are outlined, such as:

- Tuition reimbursement for employees and spouses for skills upgrading;
- Language training on and off the work site;
- Interviewing and role-playing to determine literacy and numeracy; and
- Cross-cultural mentorship programs.

Another innovative approach to delivery of training is the provision of *distance education via the Internet* using materials previously prepared for face-to-face interactions. This approach is used by the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) in their "New Beginnings Online" project, described below. In essence, the key to many of these initiatives is the provision of flexible, multiple and varied options from which newcomers can choose in order to fit their individualized needs.

New Beginnings Online – a MISA Initiative

Description: Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) in Nova Scotia is using a distance education program to improve access to labour market information and training materials to those newcomers in more rural or remote centres of Nova Scotia through its "New Beginnings Online" project. The New Beginnings pre-employment workshop material has been used for a number of years with considerable success to help newcomers overcome the barriers related to accessing employment opportunities in Nova Scotia, as well as building job-search skills. The project is being a collaboration of the Office for Learning Technologies (OLT), Nova Scotia Community College, the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration. While the materials included in the workshop are common to other programs across the country, this initiative uses a unique delivery model that can be examined and applied elsewhere.

Information: <http://www.misa.ns.ca/WhatsNew/NewBeginningsOnline.htm>

Finally, *career assessment and planning services* offered through LASI World Skills in Ottawa also uses an integrated approach; as stated above, this integrated approach requires that program participants engage in enhanced language training specific to their occupation of choice, as well as other skills upgrading or development, training.

Career Access for Newcomers (CAN) – a LASI World Skills Initiative

Description: LASI is a partnership of the following immigrant-serving agencies: The Catholic Immigration Centre (CIC); Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO); Jewish Family Services (JFS); Lebanese and Arab Social Services Association (LASSA); Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO); Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre (OCCSC). The Career Access for Newcomers (CAN) Program is one of a number of services and programs offered by LASI. The CAN is “designed to help newcomers access employment in keeping with their skills, experience and education. Immigrants are given the tools, information and skills to conduct effective job search.” Some aspects of the Program are occupation-specific (they focus on engineers, teachers, trades, accounting and finances, and health care workers), while other aspects are more generic skill areas that cut across all occupations. Occupation-specific areas include understanding labour market trends; accreditation requirements; bridging programs (engineers). Workshops are provided on the following generic areas:

- Networking;
- Interview techniques;
- Practical workplace issues;
- Self-assessment;
- Labour market research; and
- Canadian workplace culture.

Information: http://www.ottawa-worldskills.org/ws_site/home_english1.htm

Key success factors for many skills development and upgrading services relate to both their context, and the way in which they are delivered. As identified above, integrated program delivery has been shown to produce more effective results than ad hoc programs delivered in isolation from complementary supports. Good practices in integrated program delivery include the provision of childcare to enable the participation of female newcomers; the use of modularized training and certification to support the involvement of newcomers who may be working in a “survival job” but who are working towards accreditation, skills or language upgrading in order to be able to work in their occupational field of choice; and the provision of information, workshops and training at varying hours of the week and of the day, again to accommodate the needs of those immigrants working shift-work, with children, and so on (Potter and Smith 2005). In terms of the content of skills development and upgrading, good practices include occupation-specific information, and the provision of practical workplace experience in conjunction with technical information (Burnaby School District 31 2004).

Immigrants who have international training, but need upgrading and have been accepted for accreditation programs in Canada can benefit from *loans to complete studies*. A few agencies, such as the Maytree Foundation and the Ottawa Community Loan Fund, are lending to those who would otherwise be ineligible for government backed student loans and who lack collateral for regular bank loans.

Spreading information about government supports and services

Difficulties in accessing *information about government services* is a barrier which is being addressed mainly by increasing the information available on the Internet, but also by using immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) as information providers.

CANADA

There are a number of local, regional, provincial and national websites that have been developed in recent months to fill the information gap faced by immigrants. Many of these websites provide pre- and post-immigration information. For example, the Ontario website <http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/> uses the following four main content categories: Before you Arrive; After you Arrive; Guides; About Ontario. Each is further elaborated, as follows:

- Before you Arrive:
 - Documents You Need;
 - Apply;
 - Doing Business;
 - Living;
 - Studying; and
 - Working.
- After you Arrive:
 - First Days;
 - Settling in Ontario;
 - Finances;
 - Health Care; and
 - Housing.
- About Ontario:
 - History and Government;
 - People and Culture;
 - Visiting Ontario; and
 - Weather and Geography.

A number of other provincial sites use a similar approach. These are listed in Appendix A-1.

Two sites aimed at supporting those working in the settlement sector are the federal site, Integration-net (<http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/english/index.cfm>) and At Work, Settlement.org (<http://atwork.settlement.org/ATWORK/RESEARCH/imm.asp>) for those working in Ontario. Finally, the federal government is getting set to launch its “Going to Canada: Immigration Portal”, although the timing of this launch is presently unknown.³⁹ There is no information concerning the effectiveness of these web-based sources of information.

³⁹ www.directioncanada.gc.ca

6. Identified Gaps

A number of gaps have been identified through this review of the literature and are described in this section.

National integration policy framework

- There is a clear need for a national integration policy and framework that defines a series of multidimensional integration outcomes and indicators. These should be developed in collaboration between the federal government, the provinces, and other stakeholders in order to improve the existing knowledge base, and expand the level of understanding of the myriad factors at play in facilitating or limiting labour market attachment among immigrants. Most importantly this framework must conceptualize integration in a holistic, multidimensional manner and develop indicators that reflect the full range of integration outcomes, and the ways in which the dimensions are interrelated. The range of integration dimensions, from the economic, social, cultural, to the political, is covered well within the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC).

National Public Education Strategy Highlighting Role of Immigrants and Supporting their Inclusion

- There is a gap between public perceptions and understanding, and the reality of the role of immigrants within the Canadian economy and society in general. There is a need for a better national understanding of the role of immigration within the Canadian economy. While levels of government see a definite requirement for immigrants to fill skills gaps, many members of the general public still see immigrants as competing for “our jobs”. While numerous sector councils and governing associations and organizations are positioning themselves to tap the immigrant labour pool, many of their members, in particular employers, fail to see the opportunity of immigrant labour. This gap in understanding of the existing and potential contribution of immigrants to the economy may be related to currently available information which often focuses more on the challenges, and less on the successes, of immigrants. The reality is complex, with different immigrant groups have differing levels of success. The debate about immigration is once again gaining prominence in Canada as concerns over terrorism and the production of “second generation terrorists”, or “home grown terrorists”, takes centre stage. Within this context of fear, however, the debate lacks a certain degree of balance and evidence that a public education campaign might help address.

Information and data gap

A number of gaps were identified at the level of data and information.

- Despite a wealth of academic studies examining the determinants of labour market attachment and immigrant economic integration – in essence, identifying the challenges and problems – there is a lack of documented, evidence-based outcomes research evaluating the effectiveness of various approaches, services, and programs. This is in some ways a gap between the academic, theoretical literature and applied practical literature.
- Likewise, there is a lack of specific information concerning labour market attachment challenges and solutions specific to women; youth; members of visible minority groups; particular ethnic groups, and so on.

Services/Programs

At the level of services and programs, the following gaps were identified:

- There is a lack of understanding concerning the greater extent to which immigrants rely on family and friends, as opposed to formal services and systems of support, for information and assistance with their integration challenges. As a result, it is unclear the extent to which immigrants needing assistance with integration tasks are receiving the help needed. More research is required in this area.⁴⁰
- Assumptions concerning the effectiveness of web-based communication and service delivery with immigrants appear to have skewed information provision to newcomers towards web-based delivery with little evidence to support this as an effective mechanism. The effectiveness of web-based delivery needs to be formally evaluated and programs adjusted accordingly. Additionally, consideration should be given to how government and formal service system providers can use immigrants' personal social networks as a vehicle to disseminate key information relevant to labour market, and other areas, of integration.
- Immigrants who have become citizens are considered to be an under serviced group, particularly concerning federal programs whose eligibility requirements exclude them. Integration is a long-term process that does not finish within three years, and services and programs need to reflect this reality.
- While the middle ground of basic language may be covered, more specialized/ advanced professional level English training and low end more basic literacy courses may be missing or inadequate.
- Cross-cultural communications and the related subject of workplace “diversity management” are rapidly developing fields and could be expanded to reach immigrants, maybe in combination within language training, and their employers.

⁴⁰ The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is an excellent source of data to explore these issues.

- There is at present a lack of consistent core or baseline labour market attachment services delivered across the country. Numerous projects have been piloted in various part of the country, with some broad dissemination to other areas. However, there is inconsistent application of these, which contributes to the piece-meal nature of the sector. Following program evaluation as suggested above, more consistent core services should be offered across the country to support immigrant mobility, and more timely labour market integration.
- There is a requirement for ongoing outreach to employers, regulators and educators discussing what the issues are. Recent reports continue to call for more employer engagement. The models offered by TRIEC and EASI Looking Ahead Initiative are essential foundations. This is true for both regulated and non-regulated professions. Nurturing employers who can act as “champions” in facilitating immigrant employment has been found to be extremely successful within the Toronto Region; it has also been successful among numerous tourism employers.

7. Summary/Recommendations

Six questions guided the literature review conducted for this paper. Without repeating in detail the material presented in previous sections, this section summarizes high level key findings associated with each question.

Question 1: What are the key challenges to labour market attachment facing newcomers to Canada?

The key challenges to good labour market attachment facing newcomers in general are fairly well-understood. They occur at the larger, macro or systems level, and at the level of the individual. At the macro level, these challenges result from a misalignment between available policy levers and labour market demands at the local, provincial and national levels; and the absence of any overarching integration policy with associated target outcomes and indicators that could be used to help shape the development of local service delivery systems.

At the individual level, the challenges can be summarized as the need for occupation-specific, professional-level language training in addition to basic language training; to have prior learning and experience recognized in a timely and efficient manner; for career assessment planning, and opportunities for educational and skill upgrading; for opportunities to develop professionally-based personal network contacts with colleagues actively working in the newcomer's chosen occupation; and for opportunities to acquire meaningful Canadian work experience.

Question 2: What is the range of approaches to facilitating labour market attachment found across these jurisdictions?

Based on the literature review findings, many jurisdictions outside of Canada approach the labour market challenges of their immigrant populations through often broad-based population strategies rather than through immigrant-specific ones. The Canadian approach, on the other hand, is heavily weighted in favour of targeting newcomer labour market attachment challenges as specific to immigrants, though in some cases immigrants are simply facing the same learner-labour mobility challenges as other Canadians. There are numerous initiatives underway to address the specific, individual immigrant-level barriers listed above; at the same time, there are other initiatives aimed at reducing inter-jurisdictional complexity and barriers. Critical to the success of each will be the identification of opportunities for collaboration on issues shared by those seeking solutions for the immigrant population, and those seeking solutions to the broader learner-labour pool.

Question 3: How do the identified practices vary according to the characteristics of individual immigrants?

Little information specific to how these challenges vary by demographic characteristics such as age, gender, country of origin, ethnicity, or religion was uncovered in the research process. Research into some of these characteristics would add greatly to the

ability to target programs more effectively. While a significant proportion of the initiatives underway are targeted towards skilled immigrants, if not foreign educated and trained professionals, there is a growing body of research being conducted around the labour market attachment needs of immigrants seeking work in the non-regulated sectors. Moreover, research indicates that the competency, experience and skill levels distinguishing skilled immigrants from those entering in other categories may not be as great, or even as real, as has been suggested by the ongoing public debate over “How many and of what type?”. As such, a combination of approaches that target the full range of immigrant needs, from the general to the specialized, is warranted.

Question 4: Given the identified labour market attachment challenges, what is missing? Are there particular population groups who are more at risk for poor labour market attachment?

Besides professional, skilled workers, some of the identified academic research suggests that refugees, women and youth are at greater risk for poor labour market attachment, but the review identified no significant approaches, programs, mechanisms or services targeting either of these populations. The reason for this is not clear. In part, it may be related to the current focus on addressing the more highly publicized situation of internationally educated and trained professionals, to the obvious exclusion of other sub-populations. Given the emerging attention being paid to immigrants seeking work in the non-regulated sectors, it may just be a matter of timing for the needs of some of these other groups to come to the fore.

Question 5: What models or good practices are currently being used or developed that HRSDC might be able to build upon in facilitating labour market mechanisms for newcomers to Canada?

The good practices and models identified are too numerous to summarize here, and in the absence of formal evaluations, difficult to rank. The Maytree Framework is touted as the gold standard for effective broad-based, systemic change, and has been well-adapted in pockets across the country. In terms of service and program models the TRIEC and EASI initiatives are both highly comprehensive and integrated, targeting both immigrants and other stakeholders, in particular employers.

Question 6: Is it possible to identify key success factors at work in those practices that appear to be successful?

This project identified a number of success factors common to labour market attachment programs, services and approaches. These include:

- Solutions that are locally relevant and market driven;
- Employer engagement, from labour market analysis, to planning, to program partnership;
- Flexibility of delivery, in terms of timing; of delivery model (online; workshop; face-to-face); of location;
- Integrated service delivery;

- Continuum of programs and supports; and
- System coordination.

To quote the findings of a similar study in British Columbia, practices should use the BEST model (Burnaby School District 41 2004, p. 32):

Build on partnerships, in particular employers;

Expand available internships that are paid, sector-specific, market-driven, supported by strong employer commitments and a mentoring program;

Support a range of programs in combination with workplace practice opportunities; and

Test and evaluate effectiveness of programs to ensure best results.

7.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations emerge from the review of the literature.

1. **Support the Development of a National Labour Market Integration Policy Framework as Part of an Overall Immigrant Integration Framework:** Without an overarching national settlement and integration policy aimed at facilitating long-term integration of all immigrants – not only those who have “just arrived” and are not yet citizens – efforts to address the underemployment of immigrants will continue to fall short of what is required. CIC and HRSDC should collaborate with other stakeholders to develop such a framework.
2. **Use an Integrated, Holistic Approach:** Canadian innovations and identified good practices reinforce the need for holistic, integrated and systemic approaches addressing the issue of the underemployment of newcomers. The groundbreaking work of the Maytree Foundation framework and of PROMPT are excellent places to start.
3. **Champion and support horizontal, inter-jurisdictional collaboration:** There is a requirement to facilitate and support collaboration among stakeholders in multiple jurisdictions, including all federal departments whose mandates touch labour market integration of immigrants (in particular CIC and HRSDC); and among public, private and voluntary sector departments, ministries, organizations and agencies at the federal-provincial-territorial and municipal levels.

4. **Use a range of approaches, including population-based and place-based:** US evidence suggests that programs which are “place based”, specifically public housing based programs; approach a wide range of barriers simultaneously; are flexible in addressing new barriers as they are identified; and provide different responses for different ethnic groups have the best effect in increasing LMA, in the case of welfare recipients anyway. Consider piloting place-based approaches for their effectiveness with a small number of Canadian communities that have been identified as at risk for a number of factors, including poverty, high proportions of non-official language speaking residents, high proportions of immigrants in ethnic enclaves, and so on.
5. **Engage Employers:** All evidence points to the need to get employers on board, both within the regulated and non-regulated sectors. Employers must be engaged at the local labour market assessment and development level, and as partners in program and service delivery. The Maytree “Circle of Champions” model is a good starting point for building broader employer engagement strategies at provincial, territorial and national levels, as is the WRIEN approach of housing their network within the local Chamber of Commerce.
6. **Support the Development of a Continuum of Flexible, Integrated, Standardized Services:** The challenges facing newcomers are complex, and require a range of generic and specialized services to meet the needs of all. At the most basic level, the opportunities to integrate cultural training with language training, workplace culture within general culture training, workplace language within basic language training, and job counselling with language training, suggest how integrating services can increase effectiveness. Much of this is beginning to happen in an ad hoc way, but could expand considerably. Support integrated services that address needs across a range of barriers, as opposed to those that focus on a particular barrier to the exclusion of others.
7. **Expand the Evidence Base:** There are numerous opportunities available to expand and improve the existing evidence base in order to support rational policy and program decision-making. These include:
 - a) Fund studies using available sources of data and information like the LSIC⁴¹ which afford detailed analysis of the myriad factors impacting on the short- and long-term integration process, of which labour market attachment is a central, but not isolated, component.
 - b) Support the development of concrete, standardized outcomes and indicators of labour market integration that can be used as benchmarks for program and service evaluation. These benchmarks can be used to measure progress towards the two HRSDC milestones for immigrant labour market integration.
 - c) Fund research that examines the labour market attachment challenges, and best practices, in relation to specific sub-populations, including women; youth; and different ethnic groups.

⁴¹ As well, the EU Civic Inclusion Index offers a measurement model, covering more than just LMA, and may also prove to be a fruitful starting point for similar work in Canada.

- d) Fund studies that engage multiple stakeholders in identification of challenges and the evaluation of effective practices.
 - e) Require and support process and outcome evaluations of programs and services targeting labour market attachment.
 - f) Support the dissemination of supported research through central/networked websites within government and the voluntary sector.
8. **Explore different funding models:** Consider including multi-year funding, as opposed to only one-year project-based funding, in order to increase the sustainability and effectiveness of programs and services.
9. **Ensure Access to Services:**
- a) Remove citizenship as a restriction on eligibility for programs and services. Eligibility should be needs based.
 - b) Support the provision of flexible and integrated services in terms of timing; location; and mode of delivery.

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Appendix A-1

– Selected Web Sites

Organization	Locator	Subject
Sites for researchers		
Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment	www.capla.ca	A non-profit Canadian organization that promotes the recognition and credentialing of prior learning.
Canadian Labour and Business Centre	http://www.clbc.ca/home.asp	A centre for business-labour dialogue and consensus building, publishing research on immigrant LMA.
Center for Immigration Studies, USA	http://www.cis.org/aboutcis.html	An independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization founded in 1985 - the US's only think tank devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the economic, social, demographic, fiscal, and other impacts of immigration on the United States.
Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market: Background Papers, UK	http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/ethnic_minorities/background.asp	UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit work on LMA for minorities including immigrants.
International Labour Organization - International Migration Papers List	http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/publ/imp-list.htm#34	List of papers on labour migration.
IZA - Institute for the Study of Labor, Germany	http://www.iza.org/	Includes a database for migration literature.
Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, USA	http://www.mdrc.org/	Conducting and publishing research in education, employment, welfare reform, housing, and programs for children and youth, primarily in the USA.
Maytree Foundation, Ontario, Canada	http://www.maytree.com/	The Maytree Foundation is a Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982. One of the streams of Maytrees work is directed at accelerating the settlement of immigrants and refugees in large urban centers of immigration.
Migration Information Source, USA	http://www.migrationinformation.org/about.cfm	Fresh thought, authoritative data from numerous global organizations and governments, and global analysis of international migration and refugee trends.
OECD International Migration Data	http://www.oecd.org/document/36/0,2340,en_2825_494553_2515108_1_1_1_1,00.html	Data on migration for OECD countries.

Organization	Locator	Subject
Sites for researchers (continued)		
Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT), Canada	http://www.promptinfo.ca/	PROMPT's long- term goal is to improve the economic and social integration of immigrants to Canada who are professionals and tradespeople in regulated fields.
The Foreign Policy Centre, UK	http://fpc.org.uk/topics/migration/	The Foreign Policy Centre is a European think tank launched under the patronage of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair to develop a vision of a fair and rule-based world order. Includes section on migration and integration.
Sites for immigrants		
Skills for Change	http://www.skillsforchange.org/	A non-profit agency providing learning and training opportunities for immigrants and refugees so that they can participate in the workplace and wider community.
Work Destinations	http://www.workdestinations.org/	A comprehensive source of information on regulated trades and professions in Canada, also provides information for persons considering immigration to Canada.
Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)	http://www.cicic.ca/en/index.aspx	Provides information about Canadian recognition of higher education and professional qualifications.
Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)	http://www.accc.ca/english/services/i-services/assessment.htm	Information on Programs and Services for Immigrants provided by ACCC members.
Sites for immigrant support workers		
At Work, Settlement.org	http://atwork.settlement.org/atwork/home.asp	Settlement.Org At Work is a professional development web site for those working with newcomers to Ontario.
Sties for employers of immigrants		
hireimmigrants.ca	http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/	Information and resources for Canadian employers to encourage hiring immigrants.

Appendix B -1

– Methodology

Defining Labour Market Attachment (LMA)

The way in which immigrants are conceptualized by receiving countries affects the expectations that receiving countries have for their broad integration into society, from how long they are expected to stay in the receiving country, to how “attached” immigrants are expected to become socially, culturally, politically, and of course, economically. In plain language, *labour market attachment* (LMA) begins with getting a job. However, full LMA includes a number of not-necessarily linear, though related, steps, from keeping the job; accumulating relevant work experience; getting raises on the job; getting promotions on the job; and achieving a position commensurate with qualifications. This “fuller” definition of attachment is also most relevant to those receiving countries like Canada, the US and Australia where immigrants are expected to come, and stay.

The concept of labour market attachment helps to develop a fuller understanding of the labour market than one would get by simply looking at headline figures of employment, unemployment, and inactivity. Attachment as a concept examines the individual's proximity to the labour force, and can be considered as a spectrum from fully attached workers (the employed) at the one extreme to those who do not want a job at the other (UK National Statistics 2006).

As an example of challenges of unpacking this multidimensional term, the UK government defines a selection of related terms which it sees as part of *labour market achievement*:

- *Labour market entry*. Participating in the labour market as opposed to unemployment, informal economic activity or seeking qualifications from post-compulsory education;
- *Labour market attainments*. Reaching a higher grade or status than on entry, or direct entry into professional or managerial occupational categories;
- *Labour market financial returns*. Rewards and compensation employees gain through paid employment (usually excluding non-cash rewards); and
- *Self-employment*. Not reliant on a formal employer for employment but rather on a business or partnership in which day to day control rests with the individual, or close relatives, in question.⁴²

Overall, a variety of possible key words were identified including synonyms for attachment, such as entry, participation, activity, positions, integration, assimilation, absorption, transition,

⁴² Cabinet Office, 2003, p. 11.

success, outcomes; and qualifiers for immigrant such as newcomer, migrant, migrant worker; and finally the more generic terms such as market, force, workforce, economic and employment.

immigrant	labour	market	attachment
immigration	labor	force	entry
migrant	worker	workforce	participation
migration		economic	activity
third country nationals		employment	positions
asylum seekers			integration
refugees			assimilation
newcomer			absorption
			transition
			success
			outcomes
			inclusion
			access
			achievements
			discrimination

While many of these terms seem to be used interchangeably, some distinctions can be made: *Labour market entry* refers to the minimum status of getting work, is associated with the idea of *access*. *Labour market participation* is a broader term which encompasses the activities of those people who are employed and also those who are unemployed but actively looking for work (but excludes the inactive who are not looking for work). *Participation* is associated with the ideas of *activity* and *transition*. *Labour market integration* suggests a higher order of *success*, *outcomes* or *achievements* where people not only find a job, but keep it and move up, and is associated with ideas like *assimilation*, *absorption*, and *inclusion*. Specific programs describe this in terms of *job retention* and *job advancement*. (Anderson et al. 2006) Literature exploring *labour market discrimination* is directly concerned with barriers to all of these things. Confusingly, as discussed above *integration* is also often used in a broader sense where the labour market is only one component of the wider society into which the immigrant integrates.

Regulated and Non-regulated Occupational sectors

Non-regulated occupations are those that do not require licensing or certification for employment, although in some provinces some of these occupations are apprenticeable. Examples include the majority of tourism occupations. Recognition of qualifications for non-regulated occupations is normally at the discretion of the employer although there may also be requirements for certification in order to work in some non-regulated occupations that are linked to provincial regulations (Potter and Smith 2006; Sobkow 2001). By contrast, “[w]hen a profession is regulated in Canada it is illegal to practise the occupation or use the title without being registered as a full member in a provincial

or national regulatory body. Regulatory bodies are responsible for setting the standards for entry into the profession and for registering those who meet established standards of qualifications and practice” (Sobkow 2001:10).

The definition of good LMA varies depending on whether the immigrant is working in a regulated or non-regulated occupation, and within these categories, varies by occupational sector. For instance, while it is well expected that a successful family doctor might spend her entire career working in one practice, successful software developers are expected to move between companies every few years to expand their experience. This is to say that the barriers to good LMA are not always the same in each employment sector. However, given the nature of this paper, it will not be possible to explore the full range of sectoral distinctions, and so the focus will be on mechanisms that address barriers to employment across a wide number of sectors, with sector-specific examples provided where possible.

Immigrants can be found working in most sectors in Canada. 2001 Census data showed that the five sectors which employed the largest numbers of immigrants at that time were:

- manufacturing, 191,000;
- retail, 96,000;
- professional, scientific and technical services, 80,000;
- health care and social assistance, 67,000; and
- administrative and support, waste management and remedial services, 50,000 (CLBC 2005).

Manufacturing has not only the largest number of immigrant employees, but the largest overall percentage at 9.4%.

Research Approach

For the purposes of this review, literature was drawn from three sources: academic literature from peer reviewed journals, “grey literature”⁴³ from think tanks and research bodies, and policy and program documents produced by organizations, associations and agencies representing key stakeholders using or providing labour market attachment services for immigrants. Primary searches were performed in the following databases during the months of January to May 2006, to identify both peer reviewed literature and grey literature⁴⁴:

⁴³ Non-conventional literature (NCL, also called ‘grey literature’) comprises scientific and technical reports, patent documents, conference papers, internal reports, government documents, newsletters, fact sheets and theses, which are not readily available through commercial channels. NCL specifically does not include normal scientific journals, books or popular publications that are available through traditional commercial publication channels.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_literature.

⁴⁴ For searching the literature key words were combined as follows to identify the widest combination of these words: (migra?t* OR immigra?t*) AND labo?r AND (market OR force OR workforce) AND (attachment OR entry OR participation OR integration OR inclusion OR assimilation OR access OR outcomes).

- Scholars Portal – Social Sciences;
- Ovid;
- ERIC - Education Resources Information Center (US Department of Education);
- Labordoc – the International Labour Organization (ILO) Library database; and
- Google.

Further articles were identified from references within the first articles pulled from these databases. Grey literature was identified also from references in academic articles and by directly searching the web sites of research bodies which focus on immigrant labour market integration and attachment, and associations representing stakeholders. A few follow-up interviews were held with experts identified through the literature review to obtain further information on evidence-based and innovative practices where necessary. For a list of key web sites identified please see Appendix A-1.

The Evidence Base

While there is very limited published evaluation research on the outcomes of specific policies which purport to promote LMA, it should be noted that there are some research programs which will in time create an evidence base which will be valuable in making a more formal comparison of these policies.

In Canada, there are a number of data sources that support immigrant-related analyses, although all but one have significant limitations in terms of analyzing immigrant labour market outcomes by policy class, and analyzing integration outcomes beyond the economic dimension. Both the Canadian Census and Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) support longitudinal analysis of labour market outcomes, as does the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB). The IMDB provides researchers and policy-makers with somewhat more analytic ability than the Census, particularly because it provides data according to immigrant class. However, it does not provide any additional insight into the process dimension of integration that is so fundamental to formulating a clearer understanding of the issues, and to developing appropriate social policy.⁴⁵

A fourth Canadian data source, and most useful, is the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC). Information contained within LSIC improves upon datasets now available to assess integration experiences, such as the Census and the IMDB, by including longitudinal information, identifying immigrants by class, and by capturing information that moves beyond the economic to include the social and cultural aspects of integration – information critical to understanding the immigrant integration process from which policy decisions can be made. The LSIC includes three waves of

⁴⁵ The Workplace and Employee Survey (WES), another longitudinal survey also conducted by Statistics Canada, has the potential to clarify issues concerning labour market issues and in particular the relationship between employers and employees. It is a relatively new survey which contains extensive information concerning labour market outcomes, although it does not contain information on mechanisms of labour market attachment such as programs, policies or mechanisms. See <http://www.statcan.ca/english/survey/business/wes.htm#select>.

data collected at six months, 18 months and 4 years after arrival in Canada; at present, Wave 1 data only is available for public use.

Until the LSIC, the IMDB was the only data source available containing information on integration by class of immigration – and so which was linked to policy levers. It also allows for limited analysis of integration by family unit. Like the Census, the IMDB permits the analysis of economic-related integration outcomes only. The IMDB is also the only other source of longitudinal data, but of a different kind from that collected in the LSIC. While the LSIC re-interviews the same individuals at three different points in time, the IMDB is a series of cross-sections drawn from the same original landing year cohort. In this way it tracks cohorts of immigrants over time, in which cohort membership evolves over time as individuals join or leave the group, rather than tracking the experience of individual immigrants over time.

Other longitudinal surveys are conducted in New Zealand, the United States and Australia. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) is into its second cohort of immigrants, and therefore is the most advanced of all of the longitudinal surveys.⁴⁶

A particularly useful source of evidence-based research into good practice in US LMA interventions which target low income communities including immigrants is the *Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC)*. “Created in 1974 by the Ford Foundation and a group of [US] federal agencies, MDRC is best known for mounting large-scale evaluations of real-world policies and programs targeted to low-income people. We helped pioneer the use of random assignment — the same highly reliable methodology that is used to test new medicines — in the evaluation of such policies and programs.”⁴⁷ Various large scale US government programs which support improved LMA among low income populations have been evaluated by MDRC using random assignment evaluation designs, and results are available for some research with data disaggregated for immigrant populations.⁴⁸

Data collected through the International Adult Literacy Survey series provides a detailed and rigorous cross national measure of one specific barrier to LMA. Research conducted in Canada is available through Statistics Canada⁴⁹ while comparative data on the US National Adult Literacy Survey has been published by the Educational Testing Service Highlight Education Testing Service (ETS) (Sum, Kirsch and Yamamoto 2004). These surveys comprise large scale scientific research on one critical LMA factor, and both found that lower levels of literacy are associated with higher rates of unemployment. It should be noted that the surveys are conducted in the official language(s) of the country, and so in these cases measure the immigrants literacy in English or French. This blurs the distinction between those who have low overall literacy levels, and those who may have high levels of literacy in another language but have lower official language skills. Upgrading strategies for

⁴⁶ See http://osim.inrs-ucs.quebec.ca/longit_a.htm for quick links to each of these longitudinal surveys.

⁴⁷ http://www.mdrc.org/about_what_is_mdrc.htm

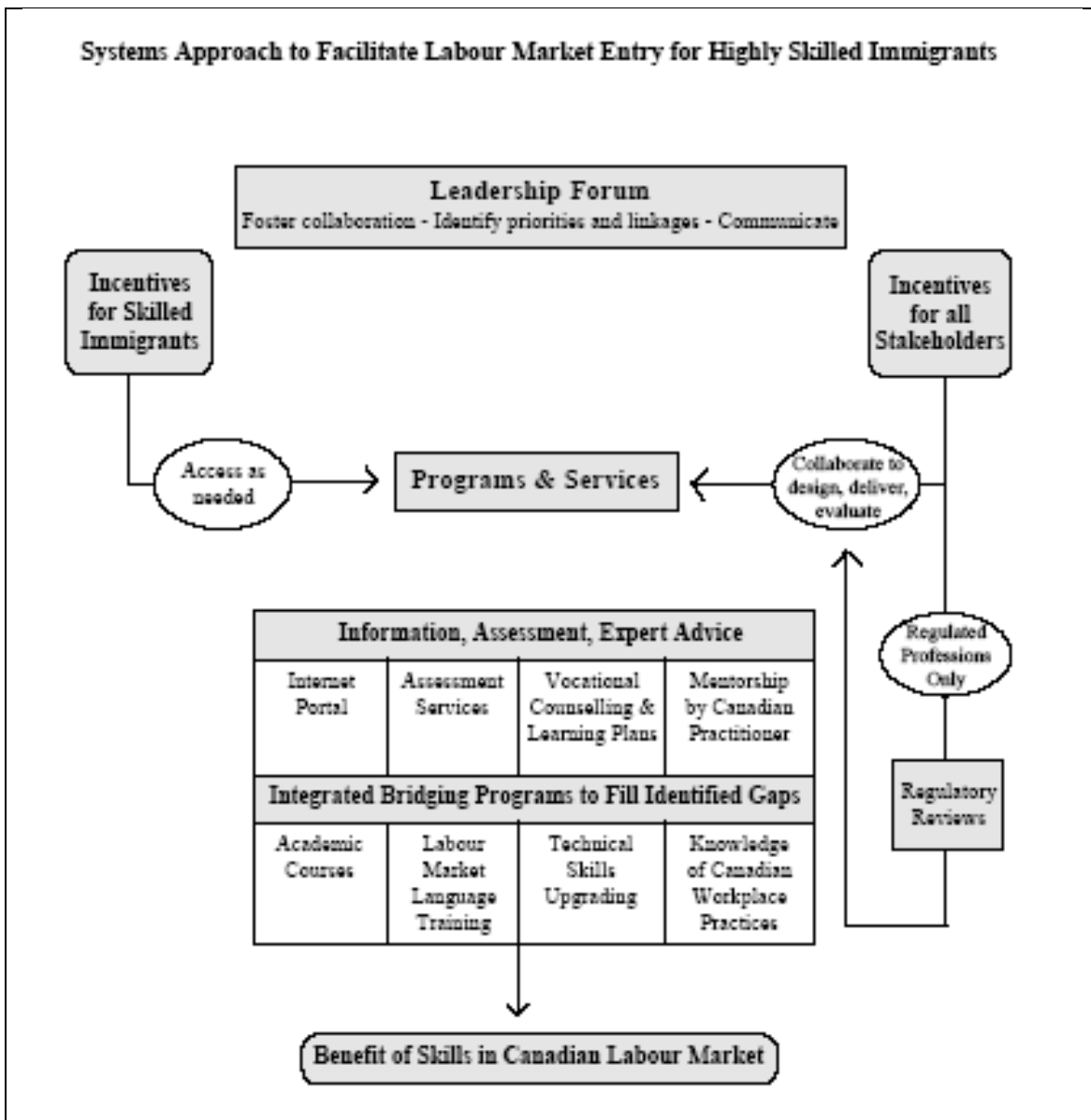
⁴⁸ <http://www.mdrc.org/about.htm>

⁴⁹ <http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4406&lang=en&db=IMDB&dbg=f&adm=8&dis=2>

these two groups would be quite different. The US survey also noted a significant gap between the immigrants reported satisfaction with their existing low literacy level and the immigrants actual need to raise their literacy level to get decent work, which mirrors findings in Canada that those with lower levels of literacy do not automatically identify that as a problem which needs addressing.

The British Council has published the broadest attempt to measure the reach of good integration practices through the *European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index*. The index is based on a normative framework which sets out a formulation of the basis for immigrant inclusion. The index assumes that immigrant inclusion requires: 1. Labour Market Inclusion, 2. Family Reunion, 3. Long Term Residence, 4. Naturalization, and 5. Anti-Discrimination. Almost one hundred specific policy indicators were developed to measure the five areas, and each of fifteen Member States has been scored against each policy indicator. The results of the first round of scoring were published in 2004, and the researchers hope to repeat the survey regularly (Gowan and Citron 2005).

Appendix C-1



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