Trades Talent Link
Improving newcomer access to skilled trades employment
Who we are?

• **Laurie Beckstead**, Director, Trades Talent Link, YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region

• **Daniela Renderos**, Job Developer, Horticulture Pre-apprenticeship program

• **Marouane Smaili**, Employment Consultant, Build ON

Trades Talent Link is funded by IRCC through the SDI stream through to March, 2021.
Outline

• What are the skilled trades?
  – If you have your phone with you, please load the Kahoot app from the appropriate app store 😊

• Introduction; What we know

• Y Trades Programs

• What is a good job?

• Trades Talent Link
  – Research questions & project information
  – Education seminars
  – Newcomer focus groups
  – Employer survey
  – Pilot interventions
Introduction – What we know

• There is a growing labour market shortage in skilled trades in Canada, and yet a small percentage of newcomers participate in this sector.
  – Only 8.7% of Canadian apprentices are newcomers (National Apprenticeship Survey)
  – Skills Canada estimates 40% of new jobs created in the next decade will be in the skilled trades (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2017)
  – 62% of Ontario Construction Secretariat’s 2019 contractor survey respondents have experienced skilled labour shortages in last 3 years
    • Hiring immigrants is not mentioned as a solution, but when asked respondents said that they were open to new recruitment strategies
Newcomer perspective:

- Skilled trades are survival jobs
- Career decisions are influenced by family and past experiences
- University against apprenticeship
- Cultural image of success

Canadian perspective:

- Skilled trades are well-regarded careers
- Professional employment consulting
- Alternative career path - apprenticeship
What gaps have we identified?

• Between the type of candidate employers are seeking and the job-seeker who applies
  • Skills to develop to improve productivity
  • Skills needed to increase innovation and sustainability

• Between a newcomer job-seeker expectations and what they actually do on the job
What do we think we know?

**Employers:**
- Union protectionism
- “Traditional” hiring practices
- Prerequisite qualifications that are difficult for newcomers to obtain
- Precarious employment (seasonal, temporary, etc.)
- Lack of information/experience with newcomers

**Regulators:**
- Challenges of foreign qualification recognition process
- System dependent on employer participation
What do we think we know?

**Newcomers:**
- Disproportionate marketing of post-secondary options to newcomers
- Perception of skilled trades as “labour”
- Lack of information
- Cultural expectations and ideas of work/career

**Service providers:**
- Difficulty connecting effectively with trades employers
- Programs/services don’t always have expected or desired outcomes
- “Running faster than the client”
YMCA-YWCA of the National Capital Region; Skilled Trades Programs
Who are we talking to?

Populations who live with multiple barriers:

• Complicated past lives
• Language barriers
• Culture shock
  – Cultural norms and gender roles
  – Identity questioning
  – Difficulty integrating
Who is our “typical” program participant?

- Male
- Late thirties
- Post-secondary education
- Permanent resident
- Little to no prior experience in skilled trades
- Has been in Canada 4-5 years
- From Africa or Asia
Who is our typical employer?

- Small to medium-sized enterprise
- Voluntary trades (unregulated)
- Non-union
- Experiencing skills shortage
- Does not typically register apprentices
- Interested in hiring immediately
Power of Trades
Pre-apprenticeship for home renovation
Pre-apprenticeship for horticulture/landscaping
Build ON
Trades Talent Link
Service Overview – “in-class” programs

- Open to any experience level
- Financial support for tools & equipment
- Health & Safety certification training
- Employment preparation
- Job development & placement support
- Minimum Canadian Language Benchmark 5+
- Partnership with local school boards for academic upgrading, co-op credits and Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition
Service overview – “individual consultation”

- Open to all skilled trades sectors & levels of experience*
- One-on-one service
- Short-term intervention
- No language requirement to participate (interpreters available from partners and multilingual team)
- Referral to longer-term interventions
- “Action plan” created with client for future reference
- Workshops/webinars available

*Build ON services expanded in January 2019 to include engineering and related professions
Challenges

• Employer engagement (especially at the beginning of our journey)
• Participant recruitment (for example participants need CLB 5)
• Participant diversity (different CLB, skills, level of experience and education)
• Bilingual programming
• No childcare (great barrier, especially for women)
• Settlement and personal issues
What have we learned? What is important?

- Defining ourselves as supportive partners rather than competitors
- Low staff to participant ratios
- Screening/interview processes to select participant with strong motivation
- Importance of individual consultation offerings
- Redefining “positive outcomes”
- Engaging employers on an individual basis
- Focused strategies for Francophones
- Multiple funders/leveraging key partnerships
Trades Talent Link: Evaluating interventions for newcomers and employers
To make identify best practices that will address the gaps between newcomer job-seekers and Ottawa skilled trades employers who are experiencing a shortage of labour and talent.
Trades Talent Link Objectives

Research & evaluation to:

• Prove or disprove what we think we already know about newcomers and trades employers

• Demonstrate/improve the effectiveness of best practices we’ve developed
What is a good job?

1. We think we already know that good jobs exist in the trades sector, which is why our programs exist, but what is a good job?

2. Who defines what a good job is?
Research Questions

• What do newcomers consider to be “good jobs”?  
  – Education seminars, focus groups

• Are there “good jobs” in Ottawa’s skilled trades sector? Why aren’t more newcomers working in these “good jobs”?  
  – Employer surveys in years 1 & 3, interviews with survey respondents

• What can be done to improve the process of attracting, hiring and retaining newcomers in “good jobs” in trades?  
  – Employer “training” – content related to inclusive hiring practices such as language used in job ads, as well as the concepts of equity and inclusion, how language training happens and why specific qualifications (e.g. high school diploma) may be difficult for a newcomer to produce
  – YMCA-YWCA skilled trades training programs that work with employers so that we are developing clients’ skills to match the labour market needs.
Why are we doing this?

For all of our stakeholders:

• Increase access to **information**
• Allow opportunity to change **perception**
• Increase **motivation** for newcomers to pursue skilled trades careers
• Set realistic **expectations** as to what a career in trades would be like for a newcomer
Evaluation strategies and tools

Evaluation tools/strategies:

• Analysis of existing program evaluation tools and data (feedback forms, etc.)
• Implementation evaluation of mentorship and employer training
• Pre/post surveys
• Feedback forms
• Interviews
• Lessons learned discussions & documentation
• Documenting changes to our activities & trades programs

Social Planning Council of Ottawa is 3rd party project evaluator
Education Seminars
Objectives

• Give exposure to the skilled trades careers in Ontario
• Provide newcomers with the necessary information to start a career in the skilled trades
• Challenge conventional beliefs and ideas about the skilled trades
Educational Seminars

Participants evaluations:
➢ There are good careers in the skilled trades
➢ Obtained a deeper understanding of the skilled trades and its pathways
➢ Different types of jobs in the skilled trades
Educational seminars

Challenges experienced

• Low attendance at seminars offered at our Y employment and newcomer services locations

• Language barriers

How was it solved

• Going where newcomers were

• Changed the title

• Flexible delivery format

• Translation of presentation materials into various languages

• Input from ESL teachers
How employers and newcomers are disconnected?

Employers perspective gaps

• Many employers are not well informed
• Language barriers
• Job retention
• There is no access to qualified skilled workers

Most employers are willing to train employees as long as they had some skills from before.
How employers and newcomers are disconnected?

Challenges/perceptions

Newcomers

• There are misconceptions around the skilled trades
• Newcomers need more information
• Lack of Canadian experience
• Language limitations
• Little or no recognition of international experience or credentials
• There is not enough support for women
Focus Groups

Focus groups intend to obtain newcomers perceptions by asking questions such as “

• Do you think that “good jobs” exist in the trades?”,

➢ When participants were asked if they believed that there were good jobs in the trades, the answer was an overwhelming “yes”

• “What challenges/barriers have you overcome to get to this point in your Canadian career?”

➢ The two challenges that came up the most often were a lack of Canadian experience and inadequate English language skills.
Other challenges

- The expense of re-training
- Caring for children while working.
- Missing documents from the home country
Survey - Distribution of Sectors

“Check all that apply”
- 32 respondents indicated they hired in more than one sector
- Some confusion about which sector
- e.g. Some automotive thought they were “service”
  - We did not correct for this assumption because it demonstrates a lack of knowledge starting at the “sector” level (perception)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>Completed Surveys</th>
<th>Margin of Error¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>±4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>±5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motive Power</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>±5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>±4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ At 95% confidence interval
Survey - Distribution of respondents

- Disqualification; we wanted to speak to individuals with experience hiring in the skilled trades and an understanding of the skills needed.
Survey - Labour Shortages

Does a shortage of skilled labour **currently** impact the success and/or growth of your business?

- Yes: 62%
- No: 33%
- Unsure: 5%

Do you foresee a shortage of skilled labour impacting the success and/or growth of your business **over the next 5 years**?

- Yes: 75%
- No: 14%
- Unsure: 11%
Are immigrants an important source of skilled labour for your company?

- Even though the response was overwhelmingly that employers aren’t hiring newcomers – they are open to looking at different labour pools
- When asked “why”, most employers responded that newcomers aren’t applying
We asked about skills & qualifications for an entry level position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Requirement</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Secondary School Diploma</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade-specific licensing</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Qualification</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied technical skills</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established job-network</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local trade experience</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to get security clearance</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to vehicle</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can we do to connect employers & immigrants?

*Trades Talent Link, Year 2 Initiatives*

- Employer Coaching
- Mentorship Program

Apprenticeship = Good Jobs!
Case Study; Anas’ Story
Which path?

Career change
Little to no related experience

Career continued
Experienced in desired career

Career shift
Some or related experience

FEASIBILITY
Case study: Anas’ story

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7BavQR_NA4&index=8&t=0s&list=PL5Whf68BOrl_kzJHqSl464bUR9bRs5Wft
Case study: Anas’ story

• What do you do with a client like this?
  • Multiple technical/hands-on careers
  • A range of technical skills and experience
  • New to Canada
Anas’ story

• Which path should Anas follow?
• Long-term career goals?
• What shortcuts can he take?
• What is realistic given his current situation?