



A Solid Foundation:

Expanding Access to Work Integrated Learning Opportunities

Theresa Jones

World Education Services



World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to helping international students, immigrants, and refugees achieve their educational and career goals in the United States and Canada. For more than 45 years, WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international academic credential evaluation. Through WES Global Talent Bridge, the organization joins with institutional partners, community-based organizations, and policymakers to help immigrants and refugees who hold international credentials fully utilize their talents and education to achieve their academic and professional goals. Its philanthropic arm, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund, supports catalytic leaders and organizations working to build inclusive economies and to ensure that immigrants and refugees can achieve their aspirations and thrive.

 Our Mission

We help people **learn, work, and thrive** in new places. We help society **recognize the value** of people's education and experience.

 Our Vision

Everyone is able to put their education, experience, and skills to work **anywhere** in the world.

State of Immigrant Youth

Who Are Immigrant Youth?

- First- and second-generation newcomers, refugees, and international students
- Age 17-30
- In the GTA, 80% of immigrant youth are people of colour

Immigrant youth report high levels of educational attainment yet experience challenges in long-term labour market inclusion



Quick Stats – Youth and the Canadian Labour Market

- Thirty-five percent (35%) of all newcomers are under 25.
- At the height of the pandemic, youth made up roughly 12% of the Canadian labour market while accounting for 25% of national job losses.

Sources: “Newcomer Youth: Challenges and Strengths,” AMSSA, 2016 and “Youth unemployment rate spikes amid pandemic,” National Observer, 2020.



Road to Recovery: Emerging Statistics

- As of January 2022, the employment rate of immigrant youth (15 to 24 years old) has recovered beyond pre-pandemic levels, while that of Canadian-born youth remains slightly below pre-pandemic levels.
- Employment rates among many visible minority groups (not just youth), including Southeast Asian, Black, and Filipino Canadians, rose markedly during 2021.
- Among all levels of education, irrespective of immigration status, university degree holders had the highest rate of employment both before and during the pandemic.

Sources: "Labour Force Survey" Statistics Canada, 2020-2022 and "COVID-19 in Canada: A Two-Year Update on Social and Economic Impacts," Statistics Canada, 2022

Immigrant Youth Workforce Development

Strategies and Solutions

WES Immigrant Youth Initiatives

- **National Roundtable on Immigrant Youth Workforce Development**
 - Stakeholder engagement, identifying strategies
- **National Town Hall**
 - A spotlight on youth voice, listening to their perspectives
- **State of Immigrant Youth Report**
 - Scoping the data, shaping the future

ImmigrantsThrive

Immigrant Youth in Canada:

Workforce Development Challenges

and Opportunities



Laying a Solid Foundation

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

- An education model that connects academic pursuits and employment
- A strategy to facilitate long-term labour market inclusion
- A step toward full-time employment after graduation



From Pilot to Practice: Scaling Success

- **WES Summer Experience Pilot**
- **Community Consulting Project**
- **Defining Success:**
 - Engagement
 - Mentorship
 - Empowerment
 - Bridge Building



Key Takeaways

- Immigrant youth are an underutilized source of talent.
- Despite initial shocks to their employment levels these youth have demonstrated resilience, and further improvement appears to be on the horizon.
- Youth are the leaders of tomorrow and today, and they are ready to be a part of the change they would like to see



Questions and Comments

Please enter your questions into the Q&A box.

Thank You!

Need more information?

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