

# Newcomer Youth and Employment: Findings from a Mixed-Methods Study in the Greater Toronto Area

Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) 2023 Virtual Workshop Series

Tuesday, March 28, 2023



Funded by:  
Immigration, Refugees  
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et Citoyenneté Canada

# GTA Youth Employment Survey

Sugi Vasavithasan,  
Research & Evaluation Manager, TRIEC  
March 28, 2023

Pathways to Prosperity – 2023 Virtual  
Workshop Series



## About TRIEC

- The **Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)** has expertise in employer engagement and has helped **130+ employers** develop more inclusive leadership teams and build more diverse and inclusive workplaces.
- Our programs and resources help integrate skilled immigrants into the workplace.
- TRIEC has a strong network of community partners and professional immigrant networks that positions us to mobilize immigrant talent from a wide cross-section of sectors.

### **Our Vision:**

A prosperous and inclusive economy in which immigrants have employment opportunities to achieve earnings and advancement reflective of their skills and experiences.

### **Our Mission:**

TRIEC convenes and works with public and private sector partners to facilitate and enable solutions to improve employment outcomes for immigrants.

# Overview



- TRIEC contracted **R.A. Malatest & Associates** to conduct a survey of youth aged 16-30 years living in the GTA.
- Data was collected between August 2022 and November 2022 across the GTA, using an online survey, research panel and intercept surveyors (17 youth).

## Key Questions:

1. Do youth feel ready to enter the workforce?
2. What challenges & strengths exist for youth entering the labour market?
3. How do youth search for employment?
4. What are youth's perceptions of their workplace?

# Who took the survey?



A total of **2,265 youth** across the GTA between 16 and 30 years of age participated in the survey — including **646 newcomer youth** and **1,619 Canadian-born youth**.

## Key Demographic Differences between Surveyed Newcomer and Canadian-Born Youth

	Newcomer	Canadian-born
Employed	57%	81%
Student	39%	22%
Resident of Toronto	72%	64%
Post-Secondary Educated	57%	76%
Part of Racialized Group	90%	57%
Between 21-30 Years of Age	74%	82%
Women+	58%	50%

# Self-evaluated workplace skills



## Newcomer Youth's Self-Rated Skills

Skill (n = 626-641)	% Positive Rating
Reading	92%*
Writing	87%*
Technology Use	88%*
Work Ethic	87%*
Continuous Learning	87%*
Critical Thinking	86%*
Verbal Communication	85%*
Working With Others	85%*
Documents Use	85%*
Numeracy	83%*

## Canadian-Born Youth's Self-Rated Skills

Skill (n = 1,553-1,590)	% Positive Rating
Reading	84%
Technology Use	83%
Work Ethic	82%
Writing	81%
Verbal Communication	80%
Critical Thinking	79%
Working With Others	79%
Continuous Learning	78%
Documents Use	78%
Numeracy	75%

**ER1. How would you rate your ability to use the following skills within a work setting in Canada?**

The response scale ranged from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents providing a positive rating (i.e., selected a 4 or a 5 along the 5-point scale). Excludes "not sure" and "prefer not to say" (n = 5-66).

\* Indicates the group with the significantly higher mean rating when tested for 95% significance with independent samples t-test analysis.

# Self-assessed career knowledge and readiness



Statement	Newcomer Youth (% agree) (n = 623-632)	Canadian-Born Youth (% agree) (n = 1,558-1,570)
I have clear goals for my career.	78%*	69%
I know what field I am interested in.	77%*	73%
I know about different kinds of jobs in my field.	70%	67%
I know how to continually develop my strengths and abilities in my field.	69%	68%

*ER2. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.*

The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents providing a positive rating (i.e., selected a 4 or a 5 along the 5-point scale). Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 14-61).

\* Indicates the group with the significantly higher mean rating when tested for 95% significance with independent samples t-test analysis.

# Job searching knowledge



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Statement	Newcomer (% agree) (n = 628-634)	Canadian-Born (% agree) (n = 1,558-1,569)
I know where to search for jobs in Canada.	64%	63%
I know how to prepare an effective resume and cover letter.	63%	67%
I know how to prepare for an interview.	64%	65%
I know what resources are available to support my job search.	53%	62%*

*ER2. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.*

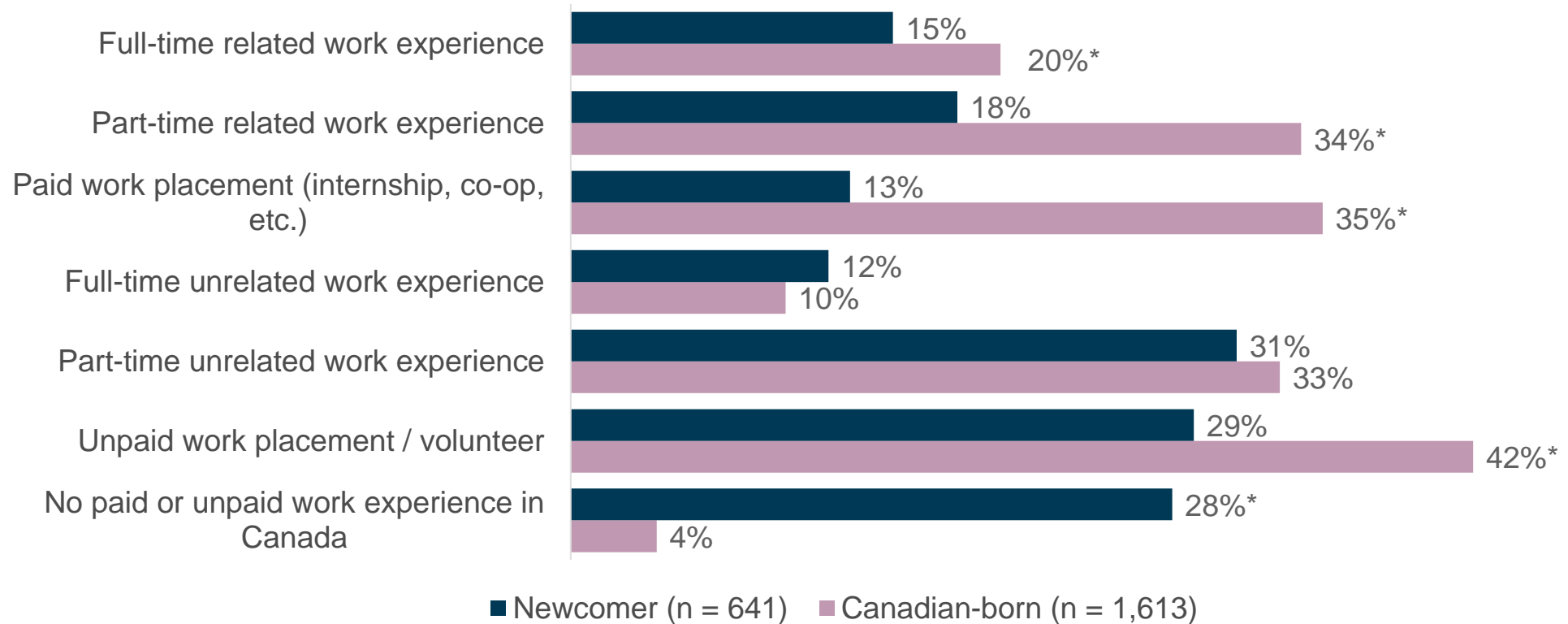
The response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents providing a positive rating (i.e., selected a 4 or a 5 along the 5-point scale). Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 12-61).

\* Indicates the group with the significantly higher mean rating when tested for 95% significance with independent samples t-test analysis.

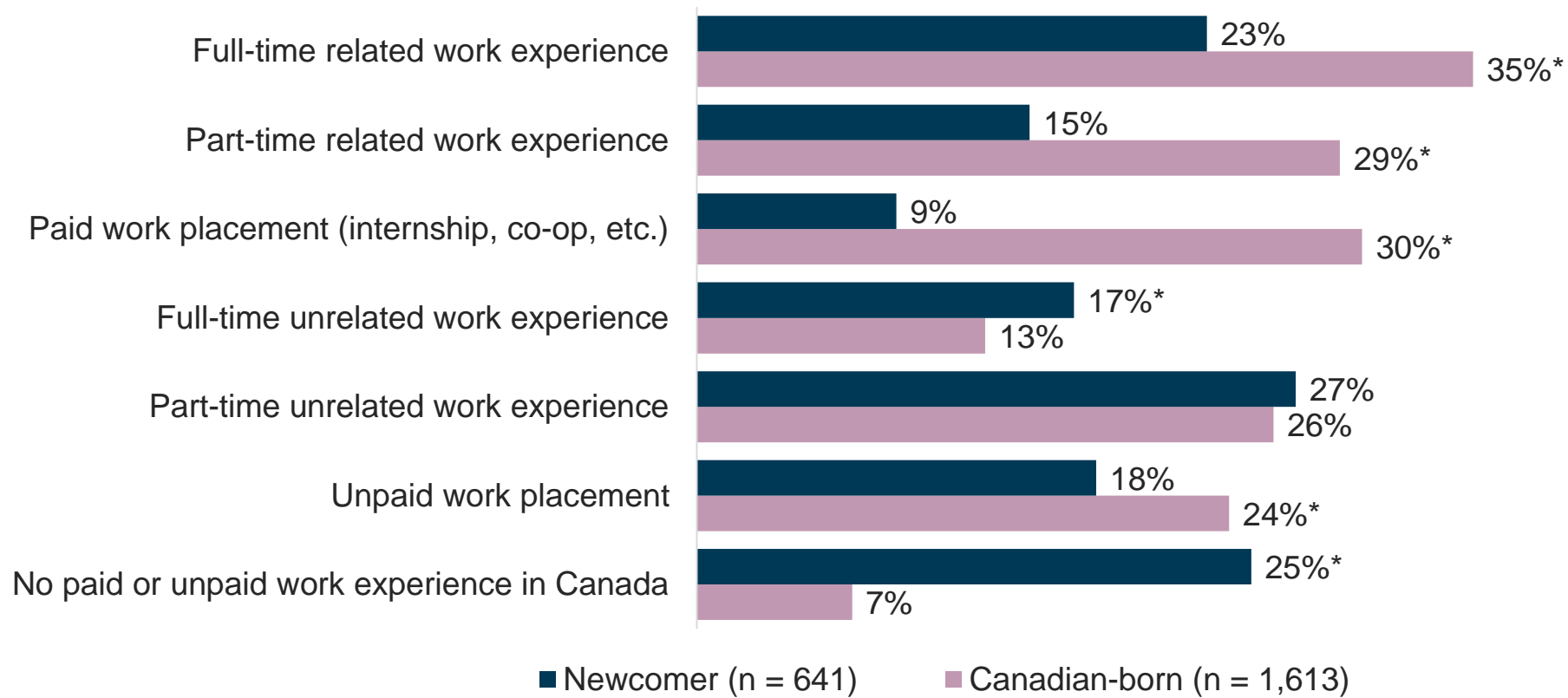


# Pre-graduation work experience in Canada



**ER3. What work or volunteer experiences have you had in Canada prior to graduating from school? Refer to your most recent graduation. Select all that apply.**  
 Note this question was only asked to participants who indicated they had completed some level of schooling (location of education was not considered).  
 Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents who have had each type of work experience. Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as participants were allowed to select more than one option.  
 \* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Post-graduation work experience in Canada



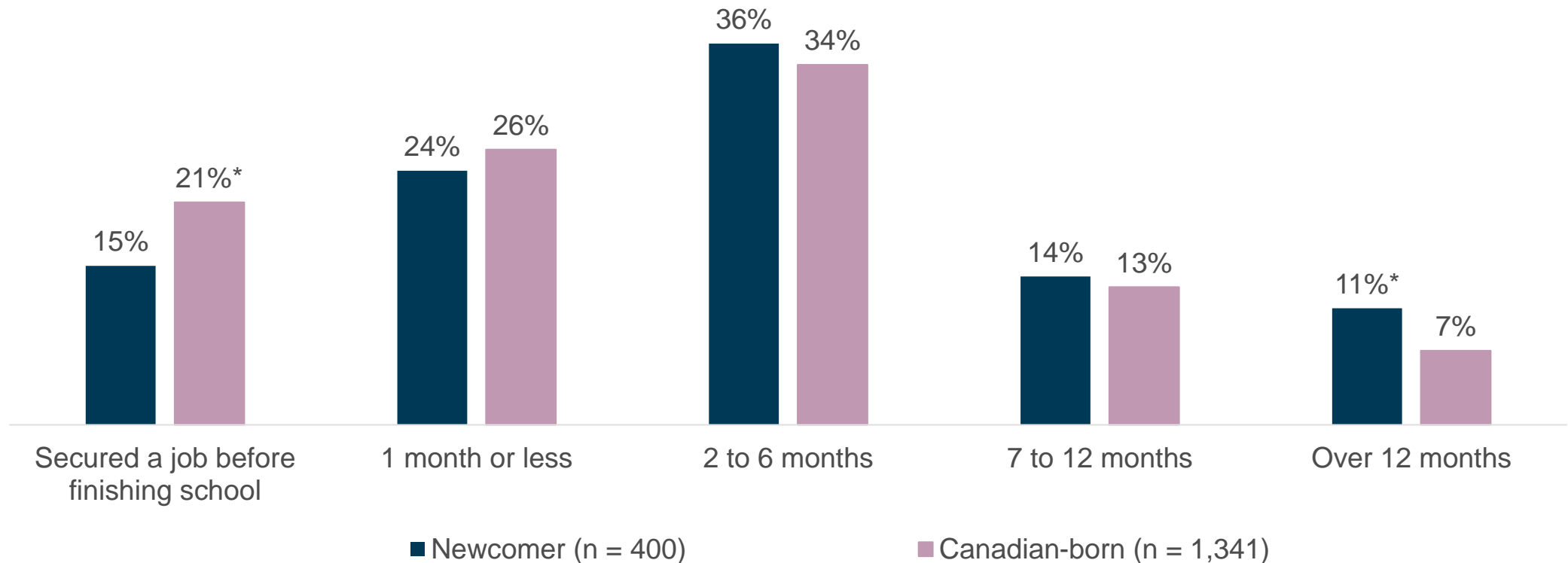
**S7. What work or volunteer experiences have you had in Canada since graduating from school? Refer to your most recent graduation. Select all that apply.** Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents who have had each type of work experience in Canada. Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as participants were allowed to select more than one option.

\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Time to find first job (in Canada)



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Employment Council



*LM1. How long did it take you to find your first job in Canada after finishing school? Refer to your most recent education. Note this question was asked only to participants with experience working in Canada. Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 106).*

\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Challenges when searching for work

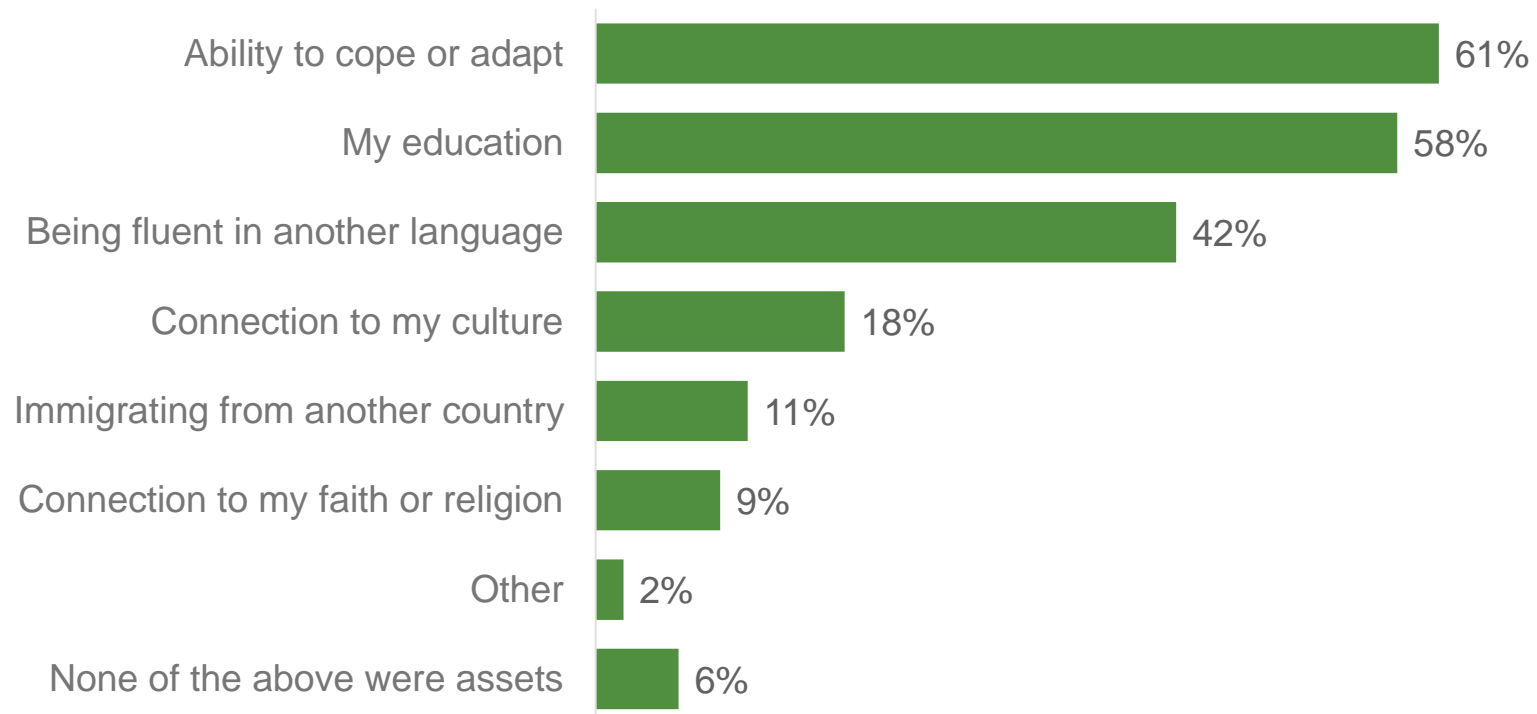


Challenge	Newcomer (% Selected) (n = 534)	Canadian-born (% Selected) (n = 1,490)
Employers do not value or recognize non-Canadian work experience	33%	-
My social network is small/limited	31%	26%
My professional network is small/limited	30%*	23%
I don't have relevant work or educational experience	26%	35%*
Employers do not value or recognize non-Canadian education	25%*	6%
Discrimination due to my race, ethnicity, culture, or religion	17%	19%
There are not enough job opportunities in my field of work/study	17%	30%*
Employers think I will not fit in with the workplace culture	14%	26%*
Employers were concerned about my English skills	13%	-
I don't know how to search for jobs in Canada	12%	9%
Discrimination due to my age	11%	25%*
I can't access employment assistance resources or services	8%	6%
The foreign credential recognition process is too lengthy or costly	6%	-
I was taking care of family members (e.g., children, parents, a spouse/partner)	6%	9%*
Other	3%	1%

**LM3. Have you faced any of the following challenges when searching for a job in Canada?** Select all that apply. Note this question was only asked to participants with experience working in Canada or searching for work in Canada. Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 168). Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

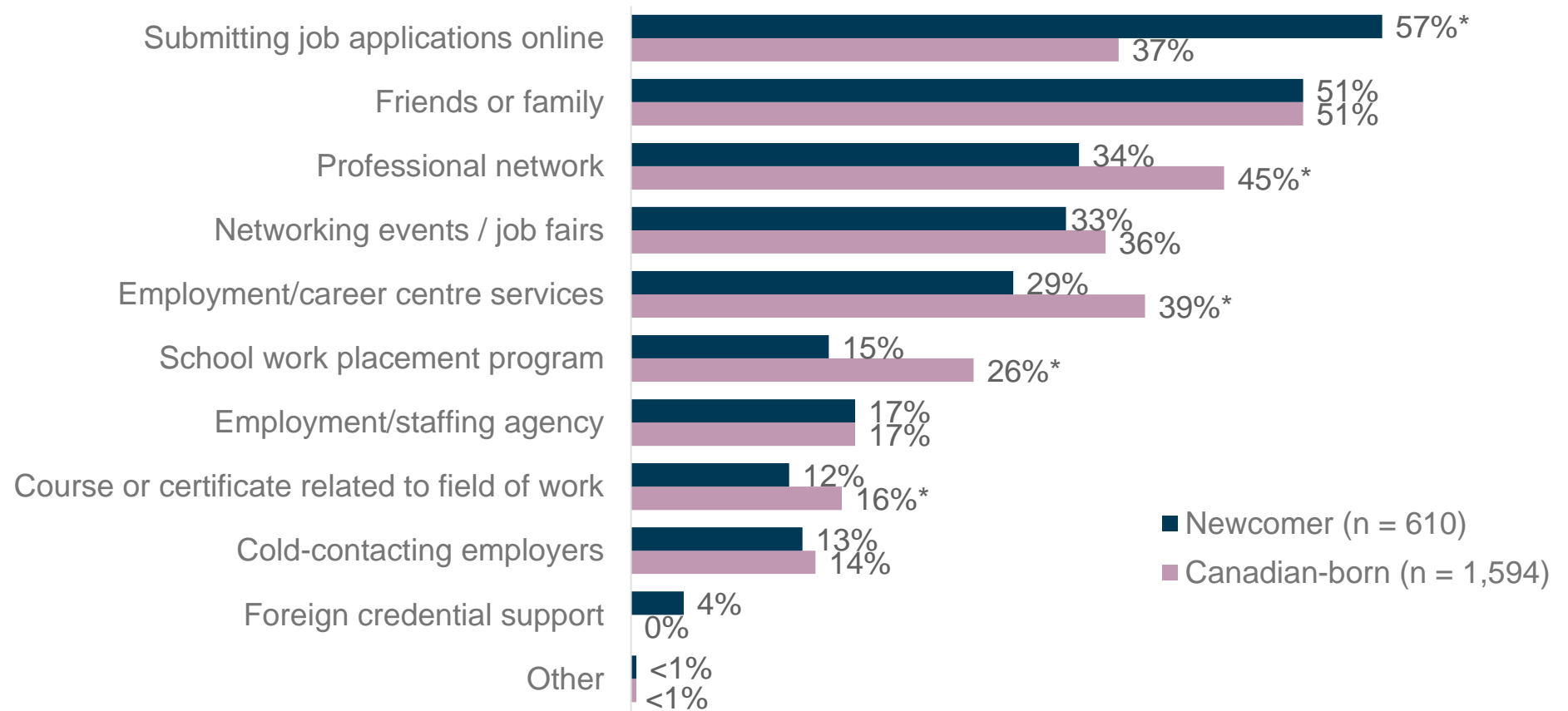
# Newcomer youth's employment assets



**LM4. Which of the following assets have helped you when searching for a job in Canada? Select all that apply.** Note this question was only asked to newcomer youth with experience working in Canada or searching for work in Canada (n=550).

Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 50). Percentages refer to the proportion of participants selecting each response option. Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

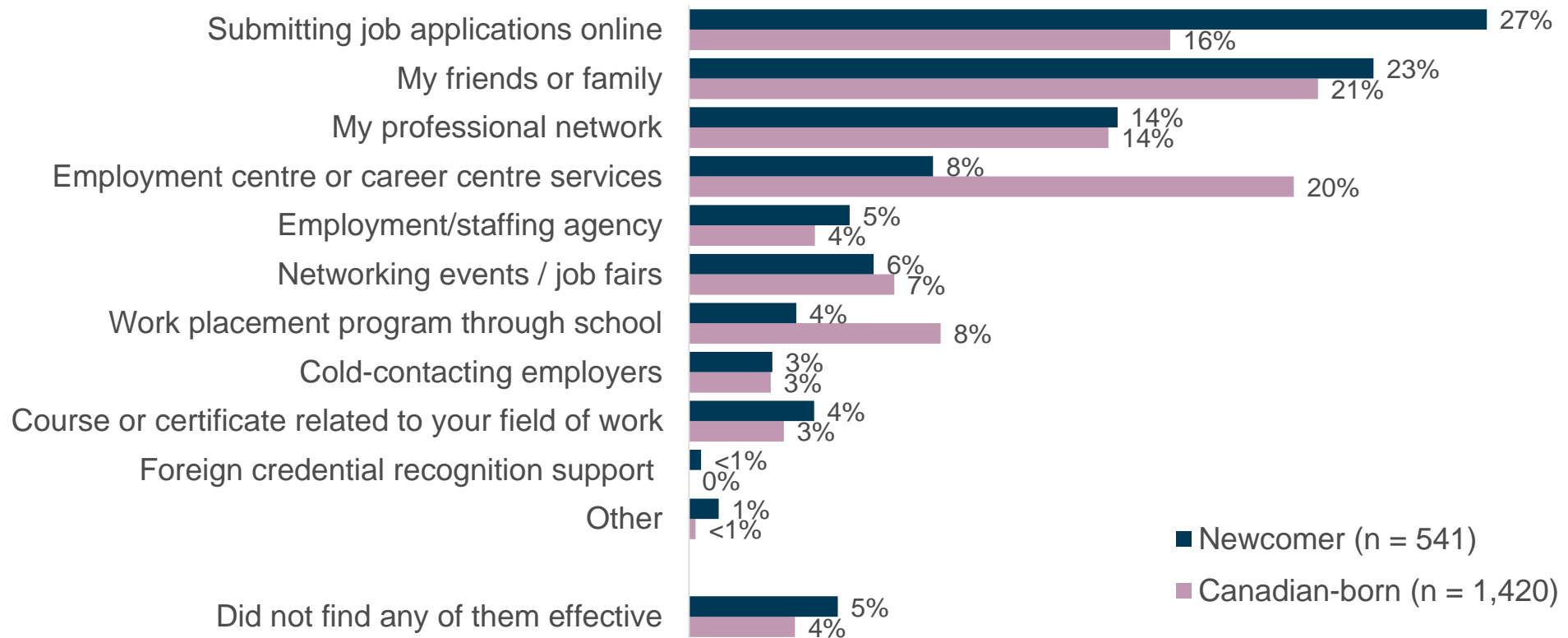
# Job searching approaches used



**ES1. Which of the following [will you use/have you used] to support your job search in Canada? Select all that apply.** Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” (n = 36). Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Most effective job searching approaches used



**ES2. Of the supports or actions you selected, what has been the most effective for your job search in Canada?** Select all that apply. Note this question was only asked to participants with experience working in Canada or searching for work in Canada.

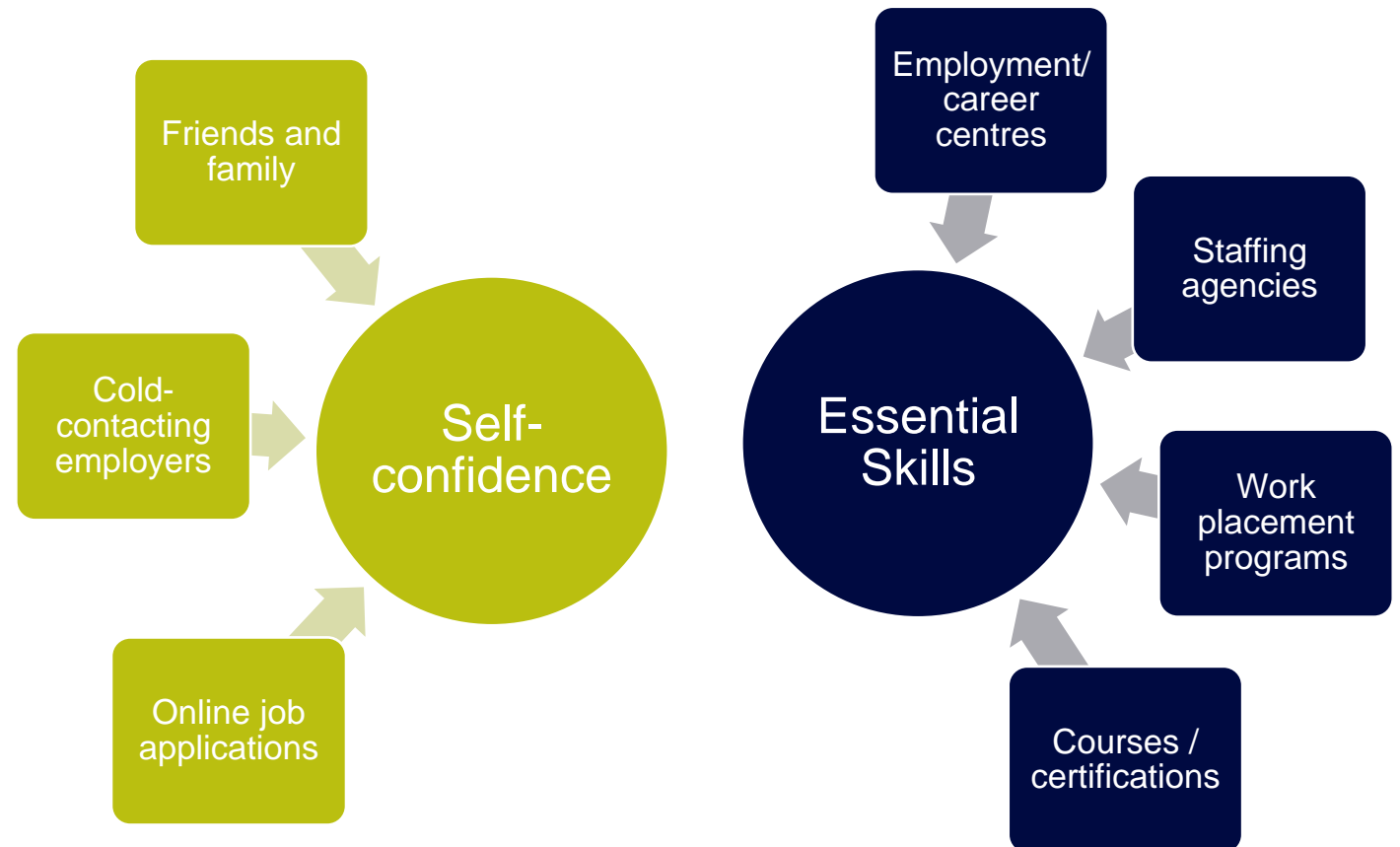
Percentages refer to the proportion of participants selecting the response option. Excludes “not sure”, “prefer not to say”, and “none of the above” (n = 79).

# How approaches and supports helped



When asked about **their most effective approach/support**, both newcomer and Canadian-born respondents typically indicated that it **helped them**:

- Find a job
- Find a job matching their qualifications
- Improve their professional or occupational skills





# Likes about employment services



## Employment Supports and Services

Networking events / job fairs

Employment/career centre services

Employment/staffing agency

Work placement program through school

Course or certification

Foreign credential recognition (newcomers only)

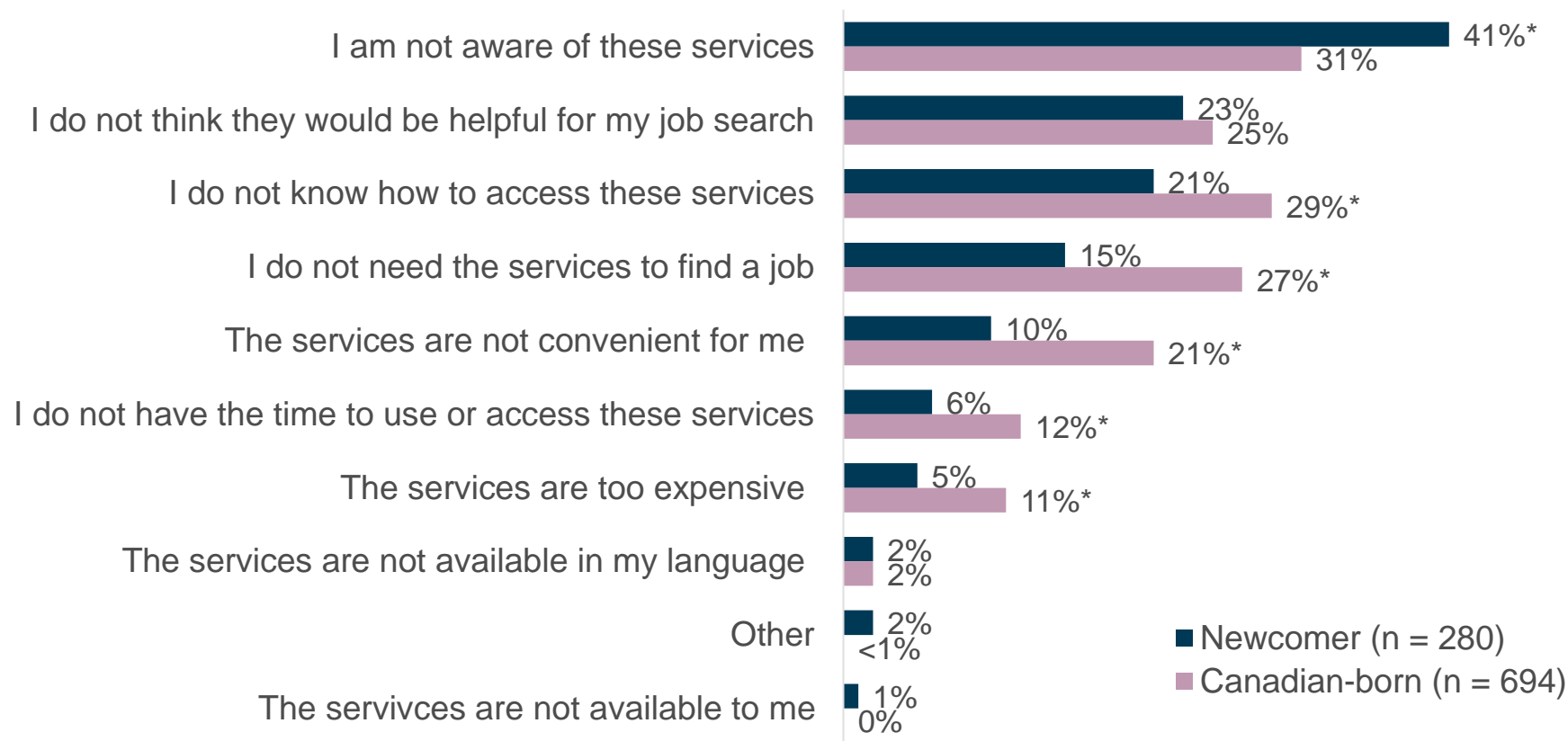
An employment support or service was considered the most effective job searching approach among 21% of newcomer youth and 34% of Canadian-born youth.

Many respondents liked that these supports and services:

- Had friendly and helpful people
- Met their individual needs
- Helped them find a job matching their qualifications

*ES4. What did you like most about this employment support (recall from ES2)? Select all that apply. n = 573-577. Excludes "not sure" and "prefer not to say" responses (n = 0-4).*

# Why employment-related services were not used



**ES5. You indicated that you did not [use/plan to use] employment supports and services. Can you tell us why? Select all that apply.** Note this question was only asked to participants with experience working in Canada or searching for work in Canada, and those who indicated they would be searching for work in Canada within the next year. Percentages reflect the proportion of participants selecting each response option. Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as participants were allowed to select more than one option.  
\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Improving employment-related services



Common recommendations for improving employment services provided by those that have used them:

## Newcomer respondents

- Supports for specific groups/demographics (e.g., newcomers)
- Provide more job opportunities
- Provide more training or opportunities to gain experience

## Canadian-born respondents

- Provide more job opportunities
- Supports for youth, students, or recent graduates

# Youth's perceptions of their workplace



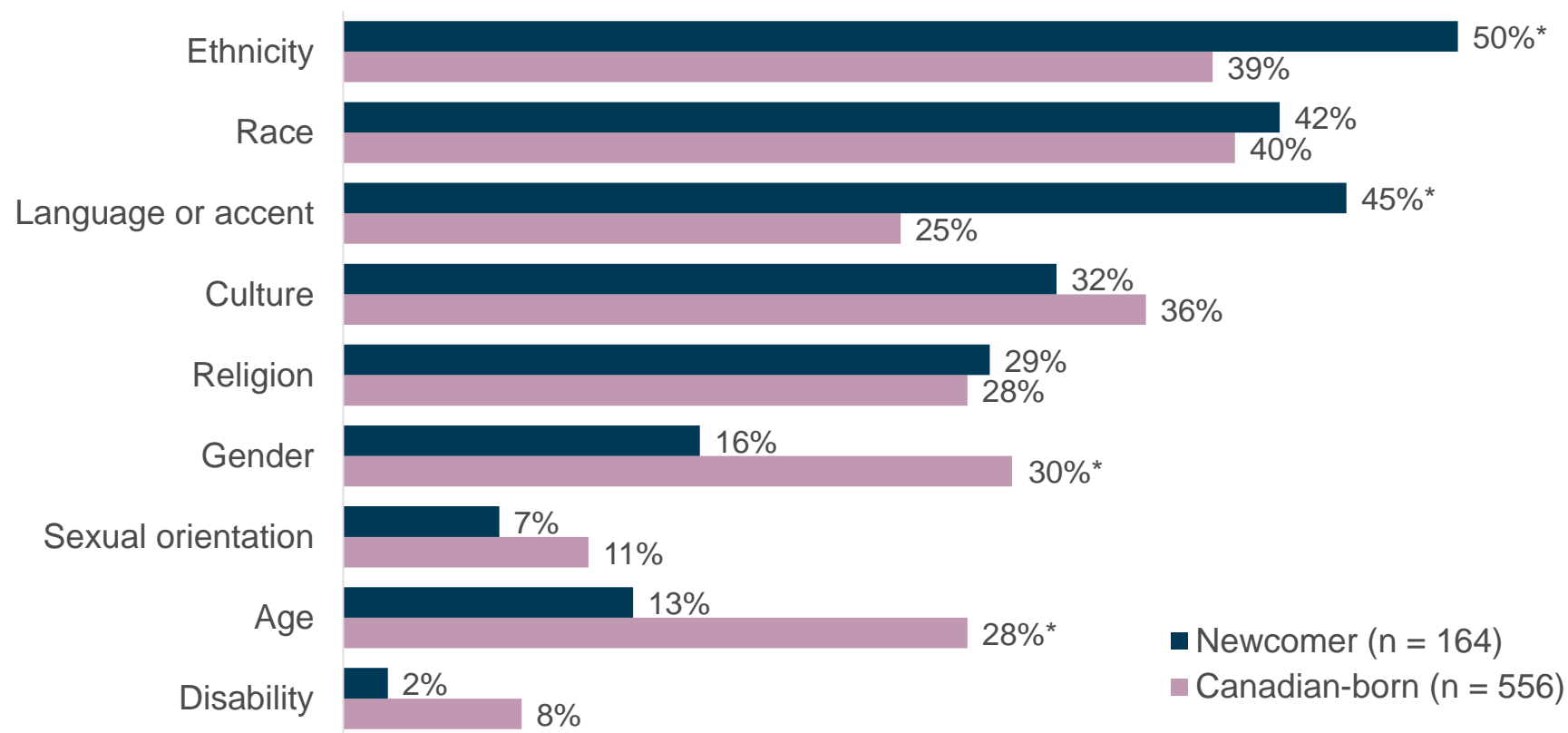
Aspect of Job	Newcomer Youth (% positive) (n=522-529)	Canadian-Born Youth (% of positive) (1,487-1,544)
Workplace health and safety	73%	70%
Match between skills and job requirements	69%	71%
Social environment	64%	67%
Work schedule	62%	62%
Opportunities for learning and development	60%	63%*
Work-life balance	53%	62%*
Opportunities for growth	48%	57%*
Pay	47%	58%*
Benefits	43%	56%*
Paid time off	40%	55%*

**WE4.** All in all, how would you rate the overall quality of your most recent work experience in Canada? **WE3.** Thinking of your most recent work experience in Canada, how would you rate the quality of the work experience on... Note WE3 and WE4 were only asked to participants with experience working or volunteering in Canada.

Percentages reflect the proportion of participants selecting a positive response to the question (i.e., selecting a 4 or a 5 on a 5-point scale, where 1 is “very poor” and 5 is “very good”). Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to answer” responses (n = 46-103).

\* Indicates groups with significantly more cases when means were tested for 95% significance with independent samples t-test analysis.

# Workplace discrimination



**WE5B. What have you been discriminated for? Select all that apply.** Note this question was only asked to participants who had experience working or volunteering in Canada. Percentages reflect the proportion of participants selecting each response option. Excludes “not sure” and “prefer not to say” responses (n = 37). Note percentages will not sum to 100%, as participants were allowed to select more than one option.

\*Indicates the group with a significantly more cases when tested for 95% significance with chi-square analysis.

# Closing remarks



## Improving employment integration for newcomer youth requires ...

- Enhanced guidance on how to effectively search for jobs, prepare job applications, and interview
- Better outreach to inform youth of the employment-related services that are available to them and how they can be accessed
- More tailored employment-related services to meet youths' diverse backgrounds, fields, and interests
- More opportunities to gain relevant work experiences
- Greater access to information or training on recognizing and dealing with workplace discrimination



# Thank you!

Project collaborators:



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# A qualitative look at newcomer youth's labour market integration in the GTA

Neda Farahmandpour, Research Manager, JVS Toronto

March 28, 2023

Pathways to Prosperity – 2023 Virtual Workshop Series



- Since 1947, JVS Toronto has empowered people to maximize their potential by providing job search support, career counselling, training, and recruitment services across nine locations in Toronto and York Region.
- Our dedicated team of employment counsellors and workforce specialists provides services to job seekers from all backgrounds and situations, including support for individuals with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, at-risk youth and mature workers.

- JVS contracted two consulting firms to conduct focus group discussions with newcomer youth who participated in the survey commissioned by TRIEC.
- JVS and KMA Consultants used a phenomenology methodology to establish a collective understanding of newcomer experiences in entering the labour market and accessing employment-related services.

# FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

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- A total of 115 youth participated in 23 focus groups

Age	# of Participants
16-19	22
20-24	27
25-30	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>

- What are newcomer youth's assets in employment integration?
- What barriers do newcomer youth face in finding and retaining employment?
- How prepared are newcomer youth to enter the workforce?
- How do newcomer youth learn and make decisions about their careers and who influences them?
- How do the community and family make a difference in helping newcomer youth transition to employment?
- How do newcomer youth see available employment-related services and programs as valuable channels to develop their employment readiness skills and prepare them for successful workplace integration?

# WHAT INFLUENCES NEWCOMER YOUTH AND WHAT ARE THEIR ASPIRATIONS?

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## Factors

- Careers and experiences before immigrating
- Salary
- Family
- Entrepreneurship
- Contributing to the betterment of society

*“I experienced the life of being a refugee child. We go through a lot of difficulties. Getting food sometimes is hard. If you’re lucky enough, you can have, like, two meals in a day. Some people go without a meal in a day. I really want to change that situation, plus also the education system - some refugee children don’t get the opportunity to attend higher level education”*

# LABOUR MARKET PREPAREDNESS

Yes, I am prepared

Existing Experience

Family Support

Currently in School

Currently Employed

No, I am not prepared

Connections and Networks

Soft Skills

System Navigation

Foreign Credentials

What I need to be prepared

Soft Skills

Job Search Skills

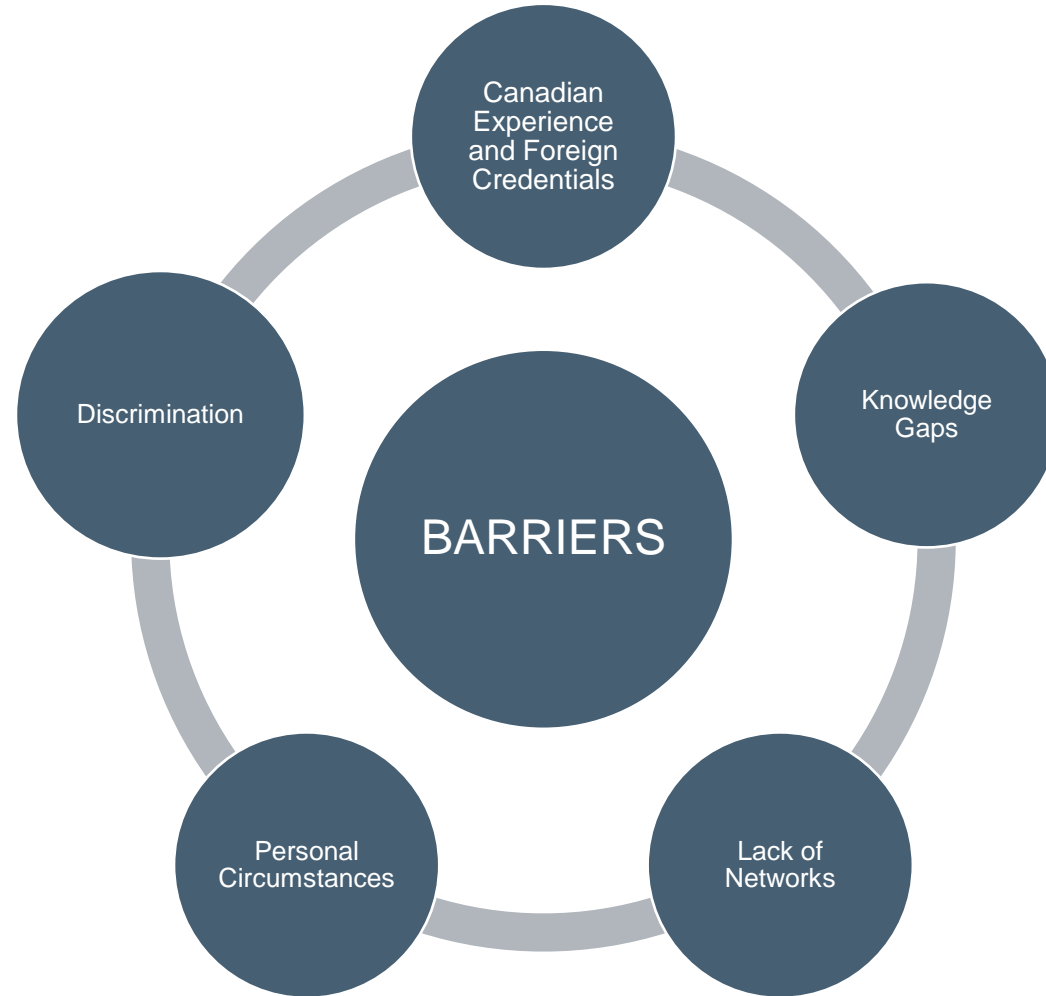
Networking and Mentorship

# ASSETS OF NEWCOMER YOUTH



“I’m highly optimistic and also a self-motivated person. Any particular hardships of life that I’ve been going through in the past or in the present as well, I still keep on saying to myself that if you have self-motivation and you do the work with perseverance and diligently, everything is going to be coming your way. There’s always light at the end of the tunnel.”

# BARRIERS FACED BY NEWCOMER YOUTH





# BARRIERS FACED BY NEWCOMER YOUTH

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“I think they [employers] are most looking for your Canadian experience. I already did a lot of interviews. What I can realize is that they’re not looking for passion and ability to give your best.”

“I’m an engineer and I have masters in engineering as well. I do have experience in my field. . . . For the time being, to maintain the expenses you need a job that at least pays you not the minimum wage. Because to be honest, the newcomers – the opportunities for newcomers here what I saw so far is only the minimum wage. Like Tim Hortons, this kind of job, okay, the newcomer will be able to work on it. But towards something related to your field and related to your expertise, wherever you go they will ask you, “Okay, do you have this Canadian experience? What does Canadian experience mean? I was working in multinational companies in different countries around the whole world.”

# EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT

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- Employers that retain newcomer youth provide opportunities for growth and create a healthy work environment which is collaborative, supportive and offers good wages.
- Managers with negative qualities and “toxic” work environments prevent employers from retaining newcomer youth.

# THE FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY

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## The Family

- Family as a source of support
- Demands of family life

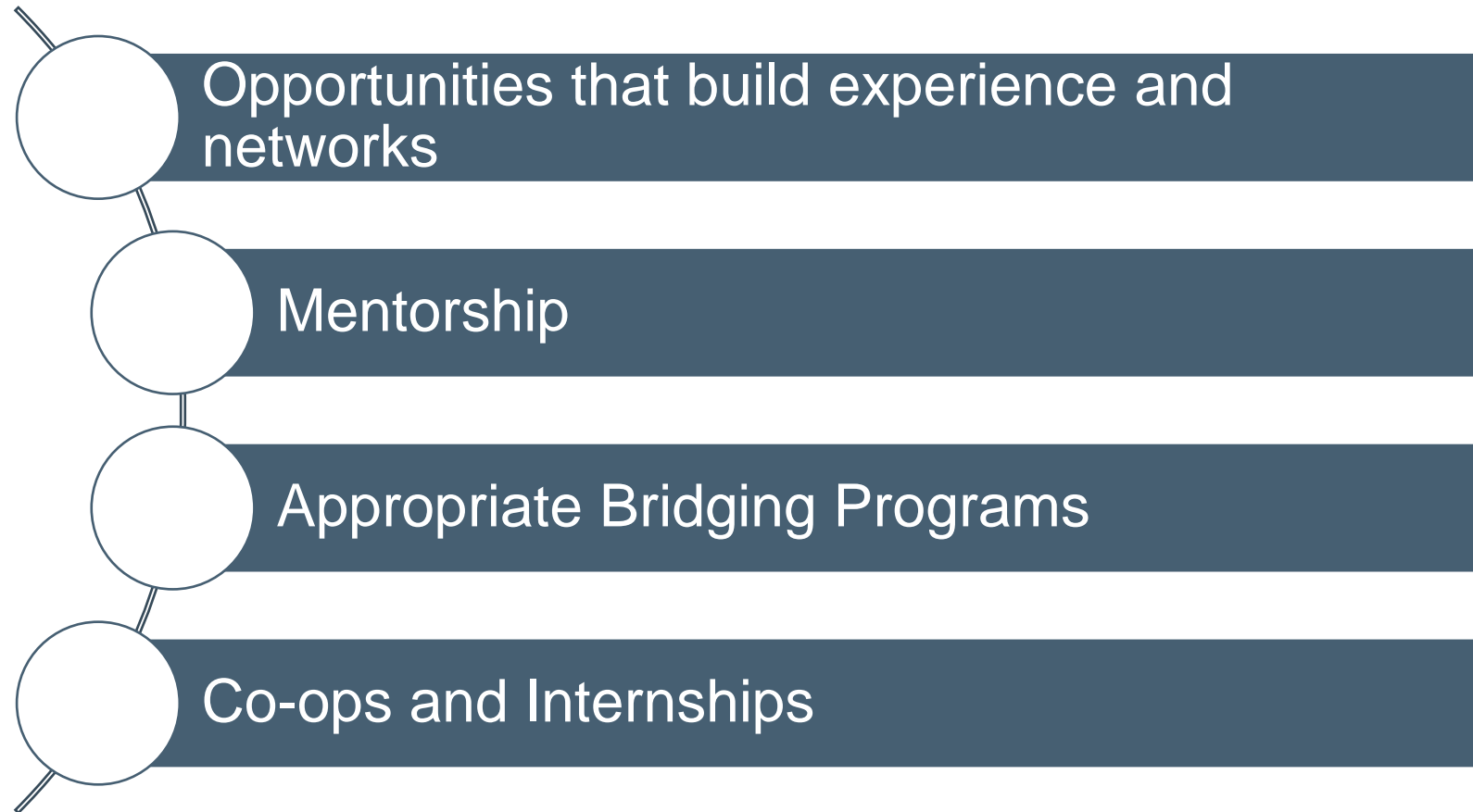
“The situation right now is kind of hard for newcomers. You have to handle your family. You have to figure out everything. The only example I can give you—the buses. Right now, we don’t have a car. Like, I have to take my mom and my dad. If they want to go somewhere, I have to take them by bus.”

## The Community

- Networks
- Communities of shared identity
- The communities that are created
- Challenges in finding a community

- Engagement is influenced by where newcomer youth are in their career journey and their age.
- Employment services have the greatest impact for those who need assistance with resumes, interviewing skills and basic job searches.
- Lack of knowledge, misunderstanding the purpose of services and a desire to navigate the labour market independently were cited as reasons for not accessing employment services.

# WHAT YOUTH WANT FROM EMPLOYMENT RELATED SERVICES



# CONCLUDING REMARKS

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- Better promotion and access for services.
- Individualize and customize employment programs.
- Connect youth to networks and communities.
- Educate the public and employers on hiring newcomer youth.
- Leverage the skills of youth.

# Envisioning the Future of Work from a Newcomer Youth Perspective

**Farzana Propa | Alma Betancourth**

*Coordinators, Research and Evaluation*

*Workforce Development*

*WoodGreen Community Services*

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**YESS  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

**2022 - 2023**

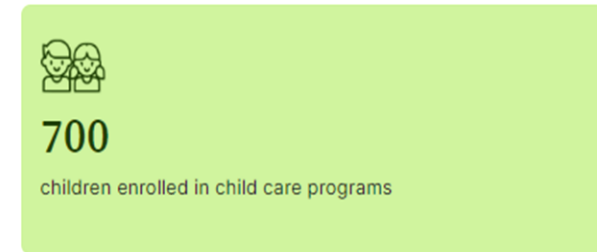
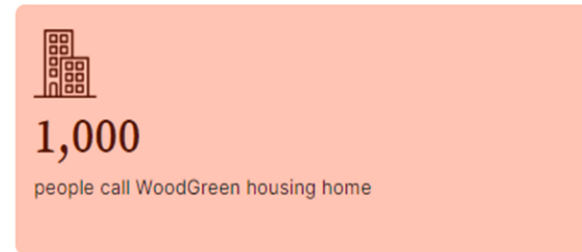
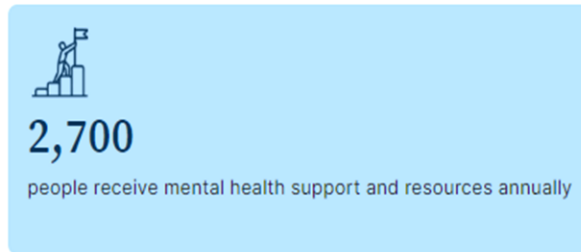
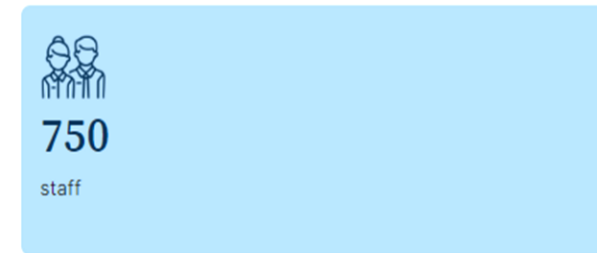
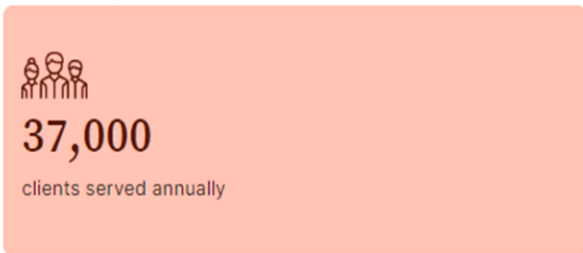


# WoodGreen Community Services

**Largest social service agency in Toronto. Serving for over 85 years.**

**Vision** A Toronto where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

**Mission** To enhance self- sufficiency, promote wellbeing, and reduce poverty through innovative solutions to critical social needs.





# WoodGreen Community Services

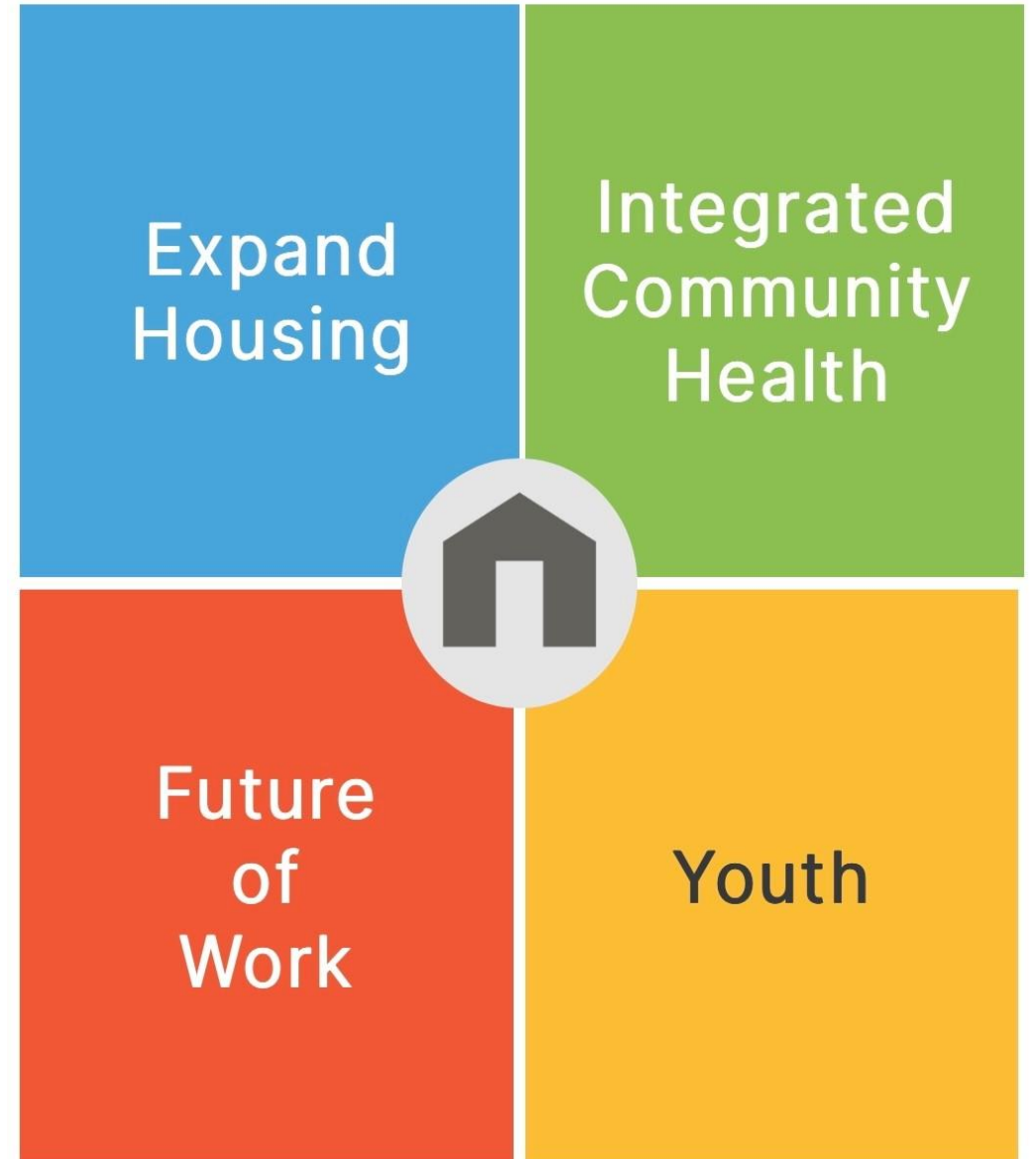
Two of WoodGreen's strategic pillars in the 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan are:

**Future of Work**

**Youth**



**YESS Research Project**



# Research Components

## Future of Work Literature Review

Reviewed 46 published documents. Following a combination of PESTEL and STEEP-V conceptual framework

## Institutional Interviews: 4

New, innovative models of youth employment programming

## Discussion Groups: 4

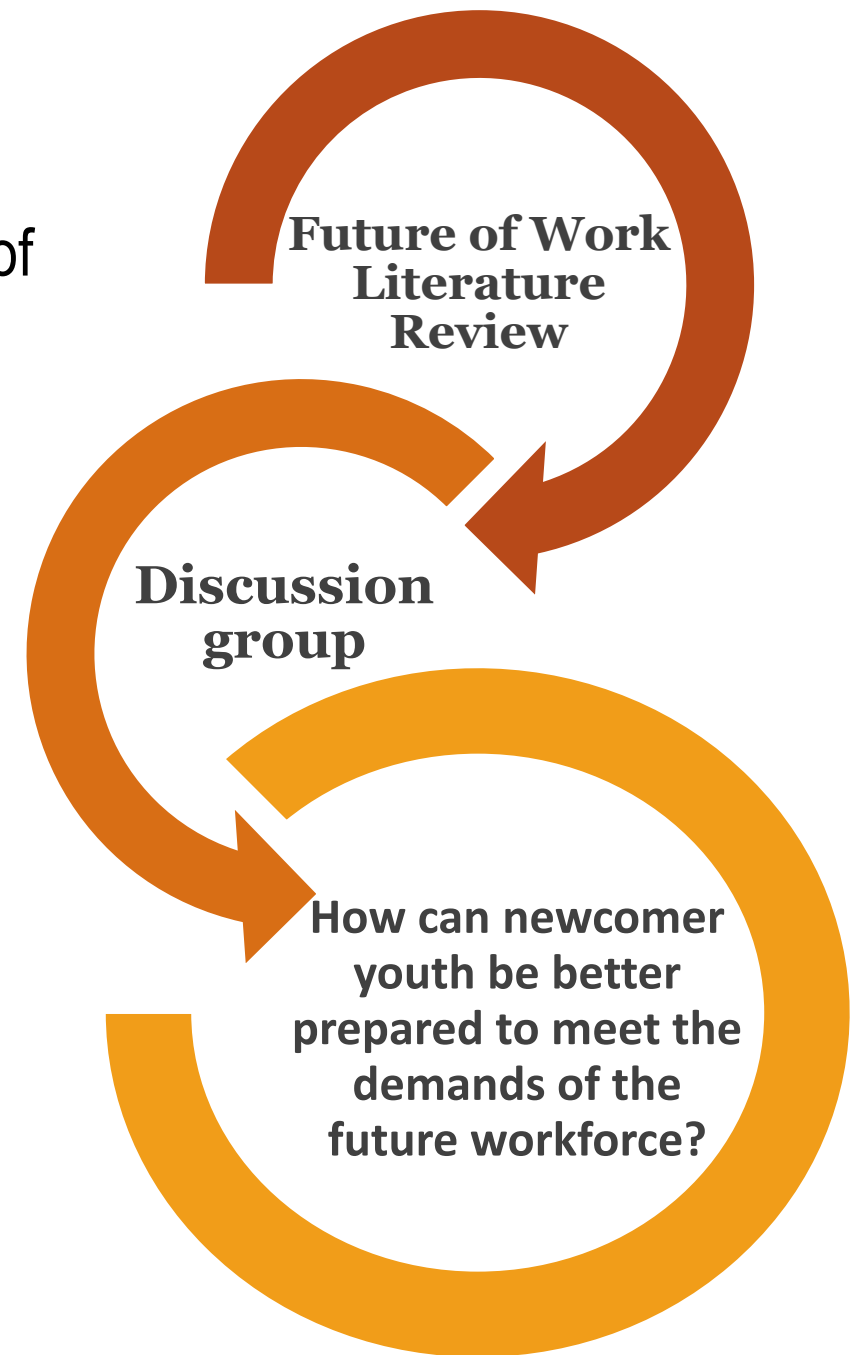
Newcomer youth representing different demographic groups

## Key Informant Interviews: 6

Employers and Educators who work with newcomer youth

## Agency Mapping: 10

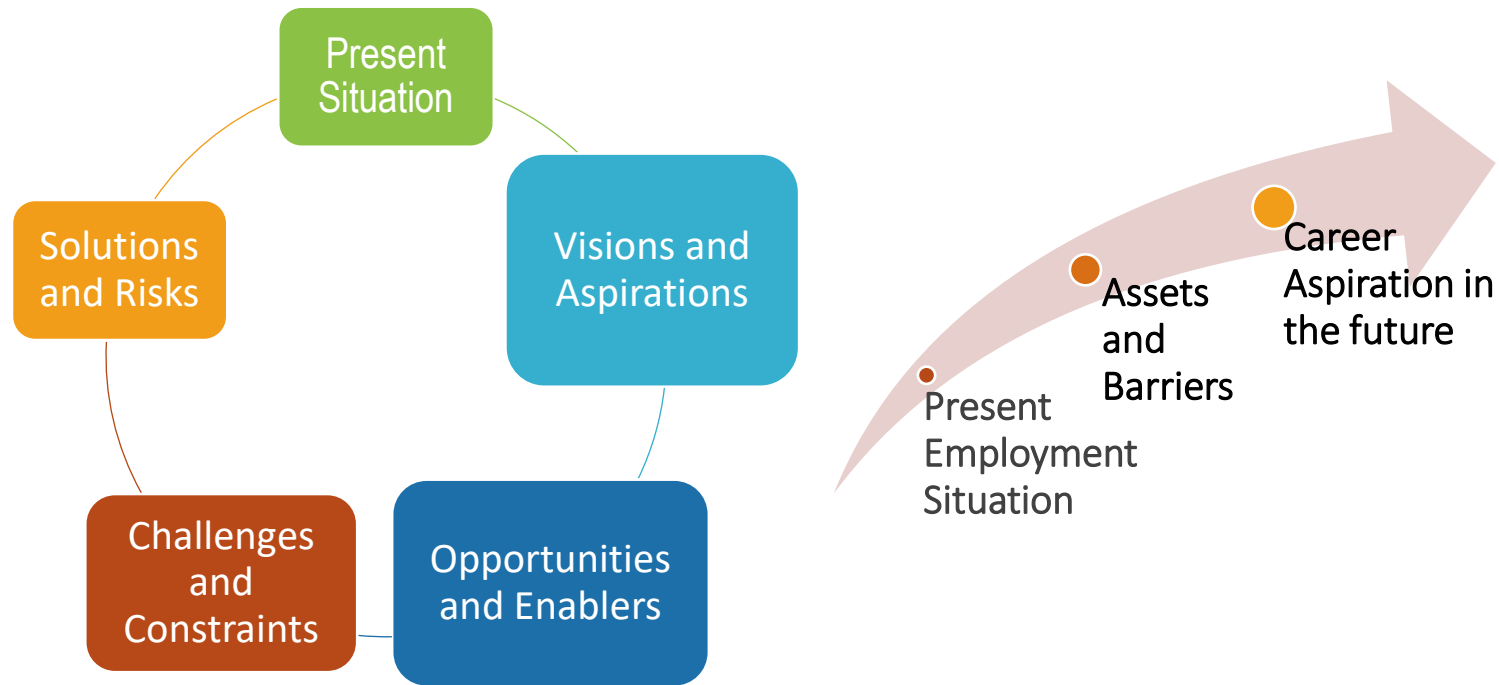
Best practices of agencies



# Discussion Group Methods

## ➤ Approach

Followed Vision Journey Exercise



## ➤ Youth Recruitment Methods

Postcard , Social media campaign & youth ambassadors



## Inclusion Criteria

- Between 16 – 30 years old
- Newcomer (landed in Canada up to 10 years ago, arrived at age 13 or older)
- Have functional English proficiency to understand instructions and materials

## Demographics

- All Female
- With NEETs
- Younger Youth (age 16 – 20)
- Mixed Youth

PRESENTED BY:  
WOODGREEN

ARE YOU A NEWCOMER  
YOUTH AGED 16 - 30  
YEARS OLD?

TELL US HOW YOU ENVISION THE  
FUTURE OF WORK.!

RECEIVE A \$75 GIFT  
CARD & CATERED  
MEAL FOR  
PARTICIPATING!

IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH:

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Employment Council  
Diversity Drives Success

JVS  
JVS TORONTO

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# Future of Work Literature Review

## Trends Impacting the Future of Employment (Pre-COVID-19)

1. Technological Change
2. Globalization
3. Demographic Change
4. Environmental Sustainability
5. Increasing Inequality
6. Political Uncertainty
7. Other: e.g., entrepreneurial spirit; creativity

[Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship , 2019](#)

## Labour Market in Post-COVID World

### The 8 Mega Trends

1. Our Lives Online
2. Capitalism in Question
3. Technology to the Rescue
4. Climate in Crisis
5. Reconciliation + Inclusion
6. Finding Meaning + Well-being
7. Shifting Power
8. Evolving Population

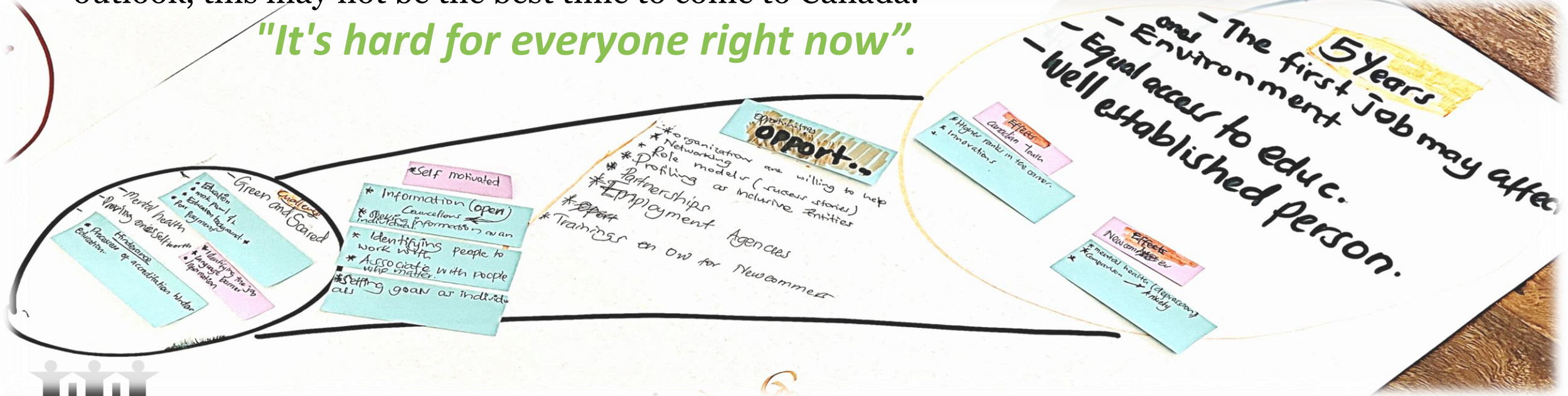
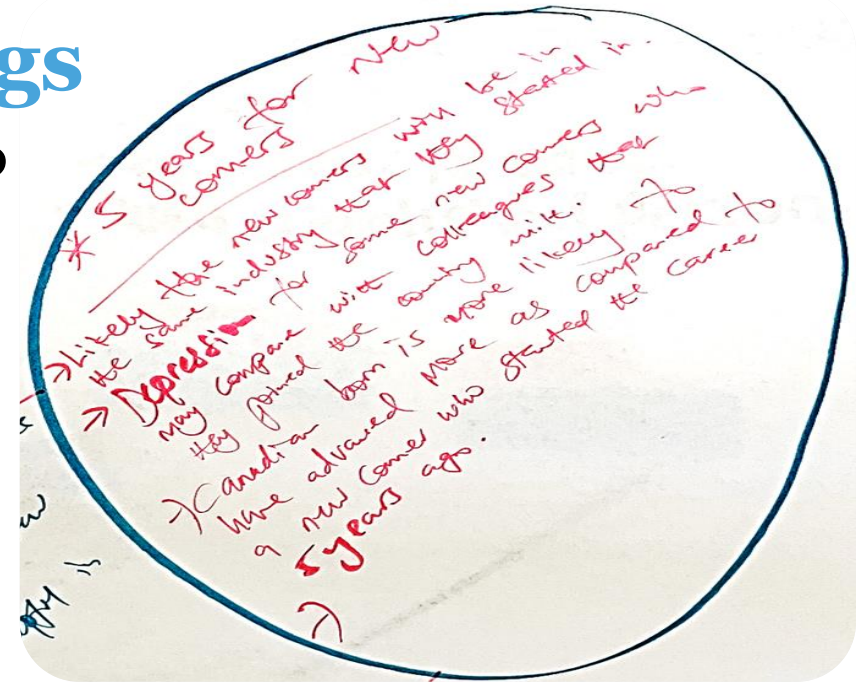
[Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship ,  
2019](#)

# Discussion Group Key Findings

## What's in the Future for Newcomer Youth?

- ✓ **Skeptical about the future:** High chances for a good number, they will stick into something they started with.
- ✓ **Optimistic about future:** Those going to school, aspirations and ambition make it hopeful.
- ✓ **Mixed impression:** Considering the economic outlook, this may not be the best time to come to Canada.

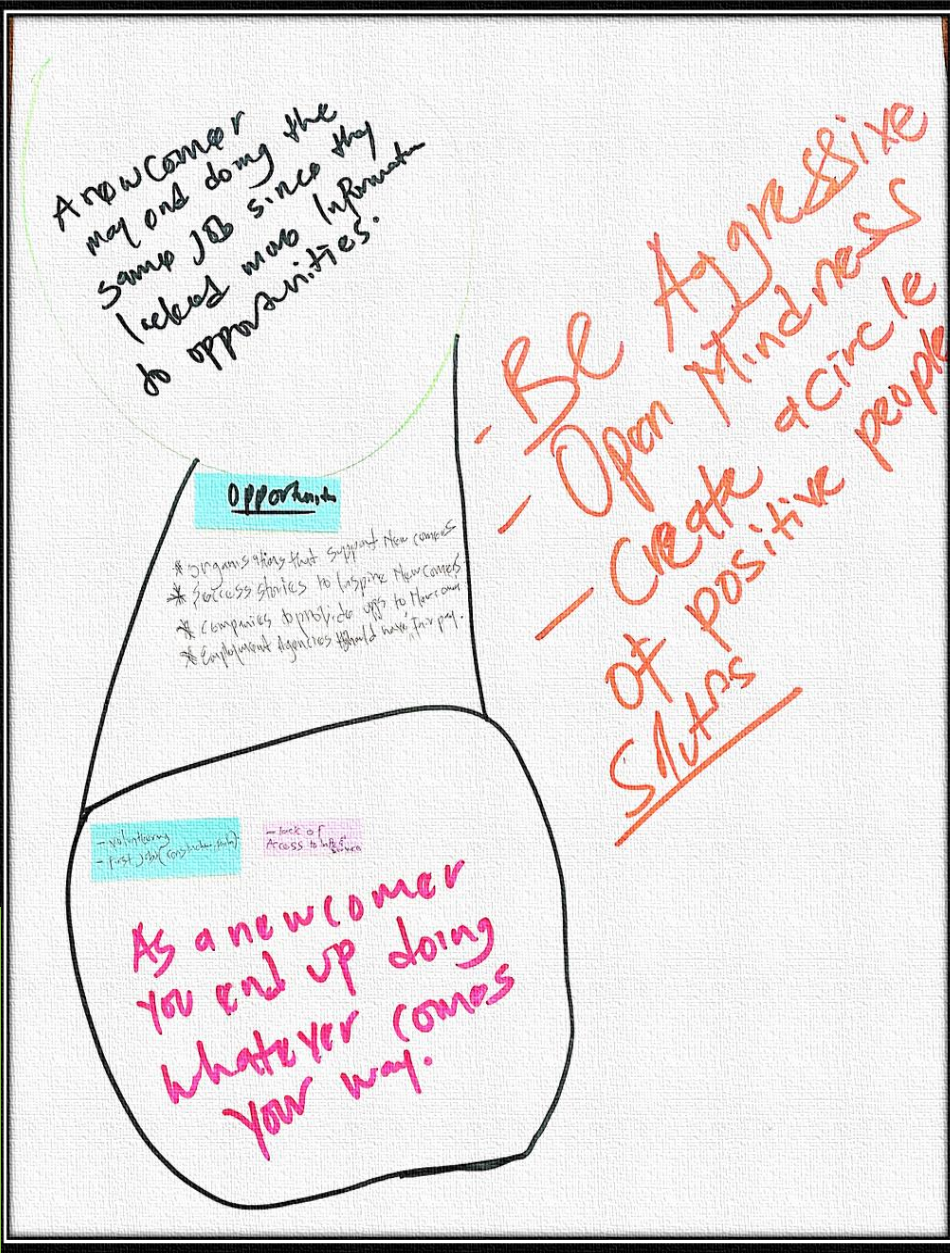
*"It's hard for everyone right now".*



# Discussion Group Key Findings

## What Assets Do They Bring In

- ✓ ability to interact and connect with others, professionalism, resilience
- ✓ better equipped to handle discrimination compared to Canadian
- ✓ knowing two or more languages
- ✓ For immigrants there's a desire you're trying to achieve something



# Key Findings: Youth Voices

## Common Themes Amongst All Groups

Lack of social networks

How newcomer immigrants navigate networking and finding social supports in their new home

Validating educational documents and credentials

Supports for newcomer youth

Finding a first job in Canada: what employment supports exist, job search strategies

Overall well-being and mental health

Newcomers' ability and concerted effort to make a personal list of assets (whether work-related or personal/emotional)

✓ Strategizing for the future barriers and challenges encountered in the job search

# Discussion Group Key Findings

## What Challenges and Barriers Are Out There?

Dealing with  
Racism and  
Classism in  
Canada

Unfair  
competition  
with Canadian-  
born Job  
Seekers

Growing  
frustration and  
disappointment

Self-doubt,  
depression

Unsuccessful  
efforts to find  
suitable  
employment

Family  
responsibilities  
and  
Commitments  
in Canada  
and/or abroad

Roadblocks  
with  
credential  
evaluation

No  
immigration  
documents

Lack of  
work/  
employmen  
t experience

Second-  
guessing the  
decision to  
come to  
Canada



# Key Findings

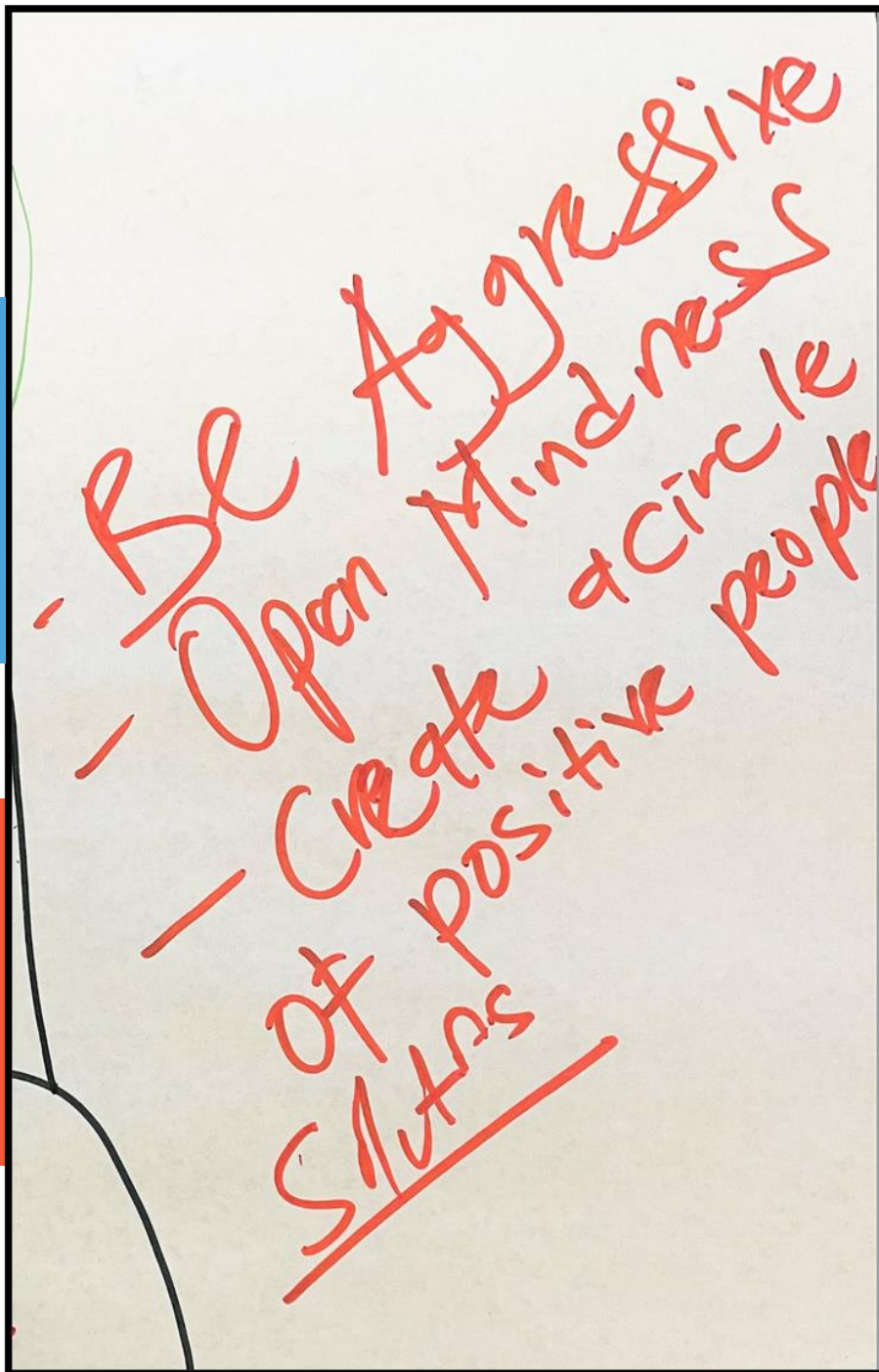
## How can newcomer youth be better prepared for the future workforce?

*"There's a success story of a person who [is] at the same position that you are. But they are now a doctor or, like, professor you know. So, I feel like maybe it's like... there's a path for us to see those success stories more often."*

*Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer Male, 27yrs*

*"Sometimes you have to think beyond what you are and be able to be open minded...Someone working in the factory will tell you factory is the best. You're going to get \$15 per hour and then they will ask you, have you ever earned that money back in your country?"*

*Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer Male, 22yrs*



# Key Findings

## How can newcomer youth be better prepared for future workforce?

*“Nowadays you see a lot of employers being congratulated because of how diverse they are. What if the same initiative can be taken for employing newcomers! So that employers can showcase much, they're applauded for that. So other businesses think about ‘Hey, newcomers are great to hire, and I'm getting applauded for hiring them.’” (Mixed Group, Male, 27)*

***Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer Male, 27yrs***

*“Am I smart? You begin to second guess yourself. It's very important to be in a community that gives you the chance to be yourself, express yourself and aim for higher goals. [An unsupportive] community takes away the little confidence that you're trying to gain. A positive community is a boost of confidence and makes you feel like ‘I'm not alone.’”*

***Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer Female, 25yrs***



# Key Findings

## How can newcomer youth be better prepared for future workforce?



*“Sometimes [newcomers] feel like you’re blocked by this wall that you can’t skip over, that you can’t navigate around.”*

*Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer LGBTQ+, 27yrs*

*“The thing about the delays is you come with a lot of energy, and you burn out during this process. Even when you get the documents, at this point you don’t want to use them at all, because, what took them so long? I feel like that’s one of the things that pushes people into doing drugs because they’re in shelters, they’re depressed, they don’t have anything to do, they’re just looking at themselves.”*

*Discussion Group Participant, Newcomer Female, 25yrs*



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# Do you have any Questions for us

