

# CHANGING THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS QUO FOR RACIALIZED WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

presented by



# TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral and unseeded territory of the Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy'əṃ (Musqueam) Nations.

# PRESENTERS



**Lenya Wilks** – [lwilks@dcrs.ca](mailto:lwilks@dcrs.ca)

**Tina Balachandran** – [tbalachandran@dcrs.ca](mailto:tbalachandran@dcrs.ca)

---



**Ryan Drew** – [ryan.drew@success.bc.ca](mailto:ryan.drew@success.bc.ca)

**Peggy Lau** – [peggyl@success.bc.ca](mailto:peggyl@success.bc.ca)

---



**Etab Saad** – [esaad@ywcavan.org](mailto:esaad@ywcavan.org)

**Elham Ershad** – [ershad@ywcavan.org](mailto:ershad@ywcavan.org)

# AGENDA

- **Introduction and Statistics**
- **Examples of Innovative Programming**
  1. YWCA Metro Vancouver
  2. DIVERSEcity
  3. SUCCESS
- **Success Stories**
- **World Café**
- **Call to Action**

# SLIDO



Share one word that represents a key challenge faced by racialized immigrant women in the workplace.



[ic8.link/783](https://ic8.link/783)







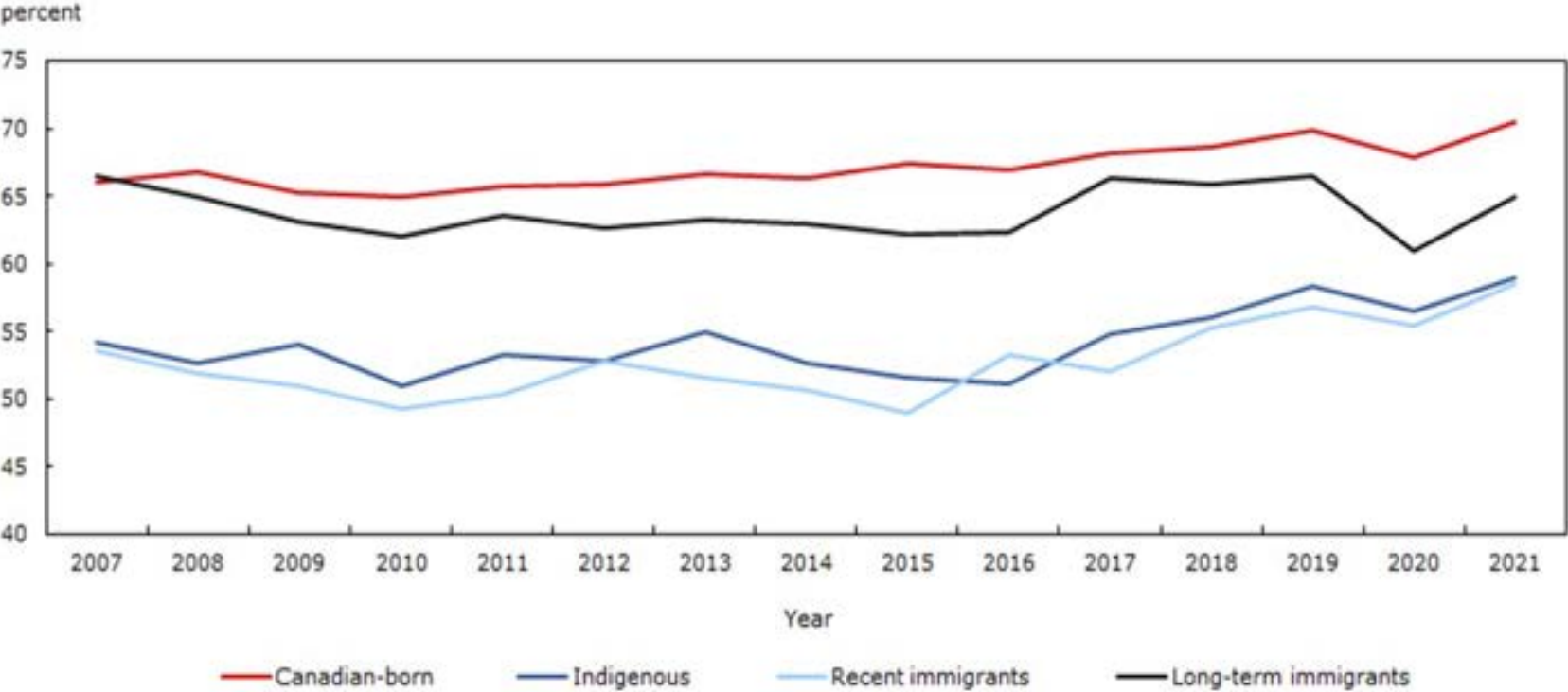
Research shows that racialized immigrant women earn less than non-racialized women and racialized men and have a higher unemployment rate. This essential workforce needs timely, adequate access to training and resources, leading to sustainable economic opportunities.

Delays and derailments in securing professional and financial stability compounded by language challenges and socio-cultural assimilation keep this skilled talent pool of professionals from contributing significantly to the Canadian economy.

This workshop will discuss the roles of employers, funders, service providers and other stakeholders in changing the status quo.

# PROPORTION OF EMPLOYED CANADIAN-BORN COMPARED TO RATIOALIZED WOMEN

**Chart 1**  
**Proportion of women employed full time in their main job, by population group, 2007 to 2021**



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, March and September monthly files, 2007 to 2021.



A background image showing the heads and shoulders of three diverse individuals: a woman with dark hair in a bun, a man with a short haircut, and a woman with blonde hair. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue banner containing the title and presenter information.

# DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

## PRESENTERS

Lenya Wilks - Senior Manager, Surrey LIP and Community Enterprise  
Tina Balachandran - Manager, Surrey Local Immigration Partnership



SURREY  
LOCAL IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP



## DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, Has been operating in Surrey and the Lower Mainland for 42+ years. We support newcomers and other diverse communities to build the life they want in Canada. Our free, multilingual programs and services in the settlement, language, employment, community engagement and mental health provide newcomers of all ages with information, skills and connections for their journey toward success and belonging. Many of our services are provided in first languages and by someone who has experienced life in Canada as an immigrant. Our social enterprises — DIVERSEcity Interpretation and Translation Services, DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre and Language Testing Centre — support this work, too.



## Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

The Surrey LIP is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change. The Surrey LIP work centers on collaboration, coordination, community, co-design, collective impact, the immigrant experience, welcoming neighbourhoods, advocacy, equality, and putting people first. Our work is graciously funded by Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada, who undoubtedly see the value of immigrants contributing to Canada's sustainability.





HEAL

Hope

Employment

Adaptability

Learning

Program Overview + Client Stories



## H.E.A.L

Supporting newcomer women who are survivors of violence or trauma

The program offers trauma counselling, short-term certificate training, skills training, substantive education and work experience. The program emphasizes empowerment, safety and confidence while providing a support network for immigrant women entering the labour market.

- Participation allowance and tuition fee support
- Individual and group workshops and one-to-one coaching
- Free occupational skills training
- Opportunities for paid work experience
- Childcare support as required
- The program is offered in English, with language support in Punjabi and Arabic

“The H.E.A.L. program has a plan for everyone, especially women, to become strong and fight for a brighter future.” — H.E.A.L. PARTICIPANT.





# Foreign Credential Recognition

Service Gap + Program Overview +  
Client stories



# Foreign Credentials Re-evaluation program for women

---

Despite an urgent need for labour market integration, skilled immigrants face multiple barriers to securing employment commensurate with their skills and experience from their home countries.

- Insufficient recognition of foreign credentials
- Barriers to working in the regulated professions
- Lack of Canadian work experience
- Cultural differences and lack of knowledge of Canadian workplace practices
- Discrimination and lack of awareness about immigrants by employers
- Absence of professional networks
- Lack of pre-migration education about working in Canada.



# Thank you

Lenya Wilks - Senior Manager, Surrey LIP and Community Enterprise  
Tina Balachandran - Manager, Surrey Local Immigration Partnership





**Presented by Etab Saad**

Associate Director, Employment and Training Services

# YWCA METRO VANCOUVER

YWCA is a registered charity, gender equity advocate, community service provider, and social enterprise operator. Our vision is to achieve women's equality, including fully realizing equality for Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people. We deliver affordable housing, early learning, child care, training and employment services, and a range of holistic programs that foster safety, wellness, and economic security.



# HISTORY

## **YWCA Metro Vancouver was founded in 1897.**

- Affiliated with the World YWCA and a Member Agency of the YWCA of Canada
- 126 years of experience delivering publicly funded services; including employment services, early learning and care, safe and affordable housing, violence prevention, health and wellness, mentorship programming, single moms services, supports for newcomers, youth education and leadership development
- 72 current and relevant programs in 178 locations virtually and in person across Metro Vancouver and across the Province of B.C.

From the beginning, we took an integrated approach towards meeting community needs.





## VISION

We boldly envision a just and equitable world for women, families and allies.

## MISSION

We advance gender equity alongside women, families, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people through advocacy and integrated services that help support personal, collective and economic well-being.





# **YWCA AFGHAN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT**

Connecting Afghan self-identified refugee women to careers and training opportunities

# ABOUT YWCA AWE

Program initial start date: March 2022

## Target group

Self-identified Afghan Women aged 19-50 with different educational and professional backgrounds.

**The curriculum is in their native languages, Dari and Pashto, and there is no need for participants to prove their educational or professional background.**

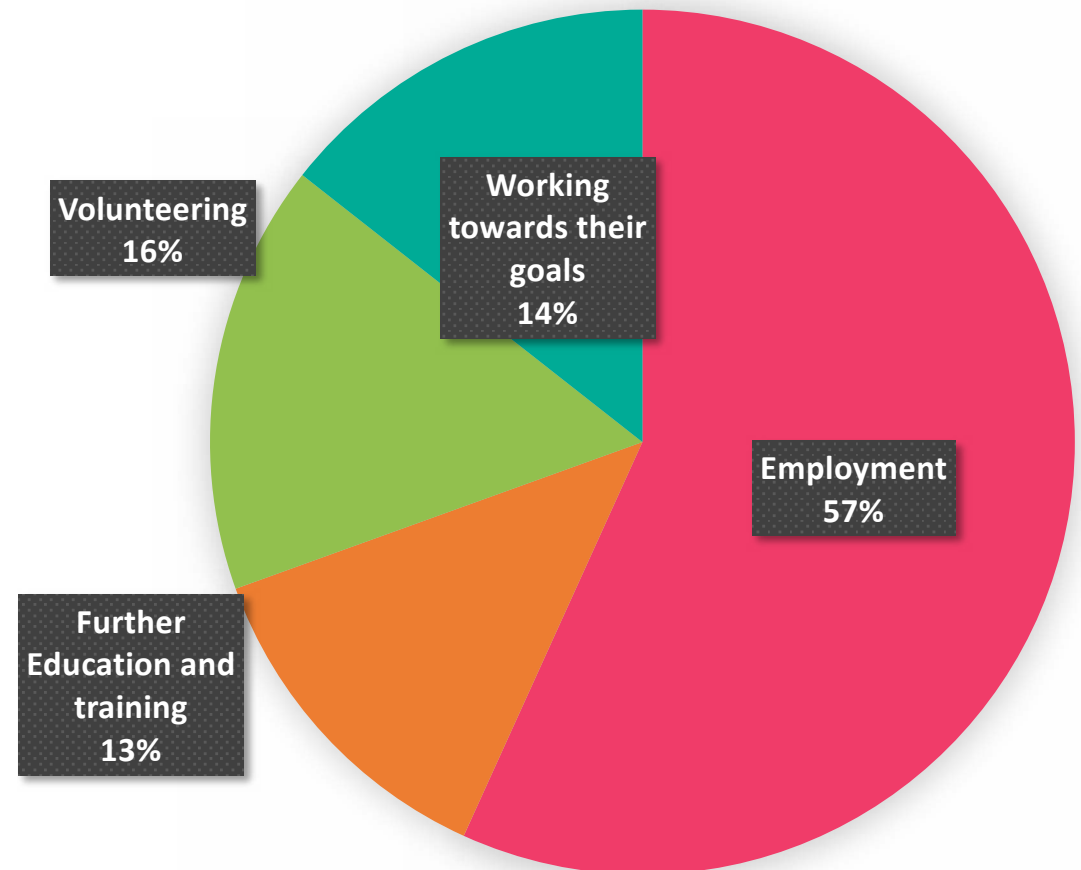


## Unique barriers to employment

Most employers accept at least LINC 4, while some clients arrive in Canada with LINC 2 and 3. Clients also join the program with little work experience.

Self-identified women served: 118

## Outcomes







# YWCA TECH CONNECT

Connecting newcomer women to careers in tech

# ABOUT YWCA TECH CONNECT

Program initial start date: August 2019

## Target group

Self-identifying women with experience in IT to secure rewarding careers in the tech industry.

**The program provides mentorship opportunities, access to community partners and networking events.**

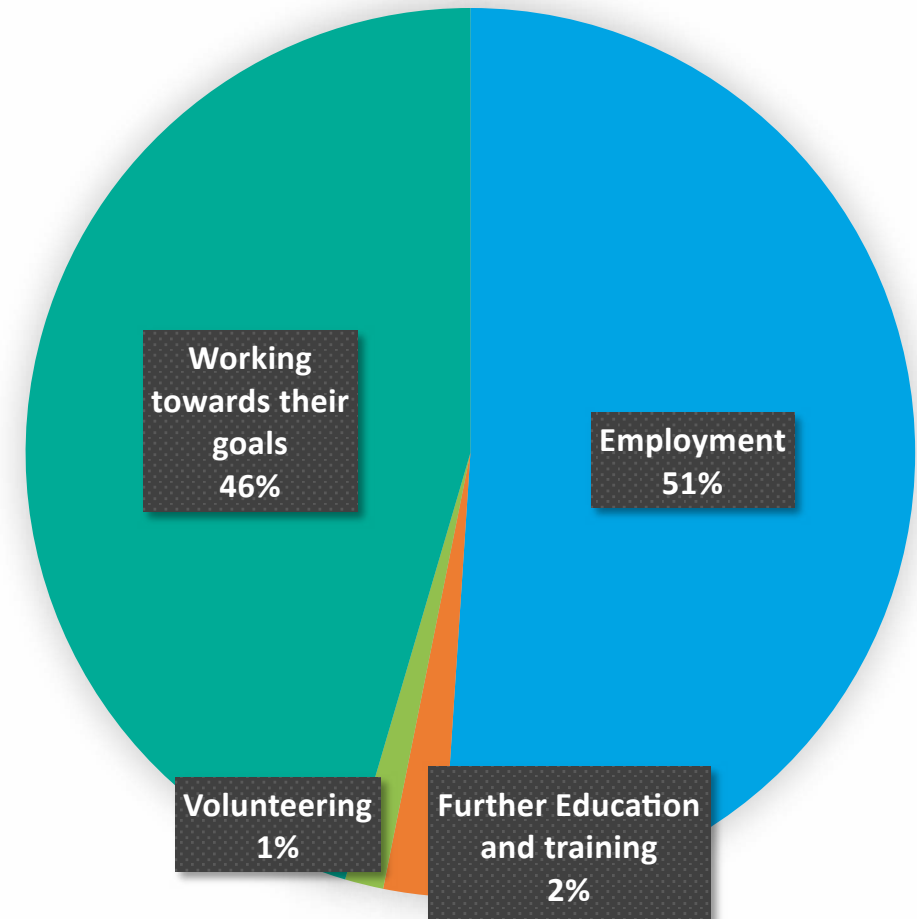


## Unique barriers to employment

- Insufficient networking and connections
- Challenges related to obtaining Canadian credentials and work experience
- Lack of technical skills
- Soft Skills development
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Re-entry after a career break

Self-identified women served: 271

## Outcomes







# YWCA AXIS

Supporting self-identified immigrant women who have experienced violence

# ABOUT YWCA AXIS

**Program initial start date: March 2021**

## **Target Group**

Self-identified women who are survivors of violence, trauma or abuse.

## **Unique supports**

It provides services across BC in 9 first languages: Farsi, Dari, Punjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Ukrainian, Russian and Tagalog/Filipino.

**The program builds confidence and resiliency through individualized training plans specifically targeted to skill development and readiness to move on to further employment training services.**



## Unique barriers to employment

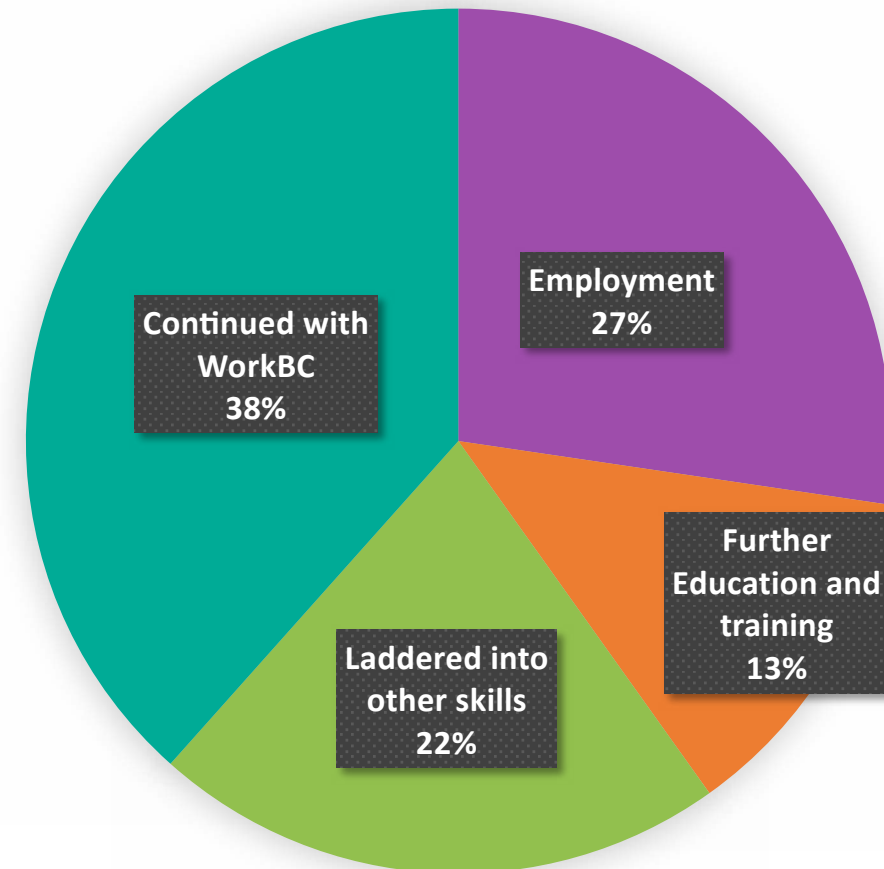
Mental health, low English literacy levels, lack of networks/community connections, lack of Canadian workplace experience and knowledge, confidence and self-esteem, housing, single parenting-childcare, financial stress, lack of essential skills training/certification

## Self-identified women served

2021-2023, 55 clients/year

2023-2026, 120 clients/year

## Outcomes







I have been incredibly blessed to have Jennilyn as my Career Advisor in the YWCA Axis program. She has the nicest and sweetest disposition and is full of encouragement and great resources. I always enjoyed meeting with her as she truly cared about my progress. She understands the challenges of finding employment in today's world, especially when someone like myself, has multiple barriers, and she cares enough to want her clients to find something they love to do, not just simply to have a job. She always kept me in mind and regularly sent me information about upcoming workshops to attend, and even found a training program that matched my passion! Many thanks, too, for the assistance I received for transit costs, it allowed me to attend in-person volunteer orientation sessions and participate as a volunteer to gain more experience. I also benefited from the 5 complimentary TELUS counselling sessions that this program offered me, as my counsellor was very compassionate and personable. Thanks to Jennilyn and the Axis program, I am able to feel more whole again, and I am certain I am en route to taking back my power!





## **YWCA ASPIRE**

Connecting self-identified newcomer refugee women to meaningful work experience



# ABOUT YWCA ASPIRE

Program initial start date: August 2019

Target group

Self-identified refugee women

The program optimizes career resources to empower participants, assisting them in launching a meaningful career in Canada.



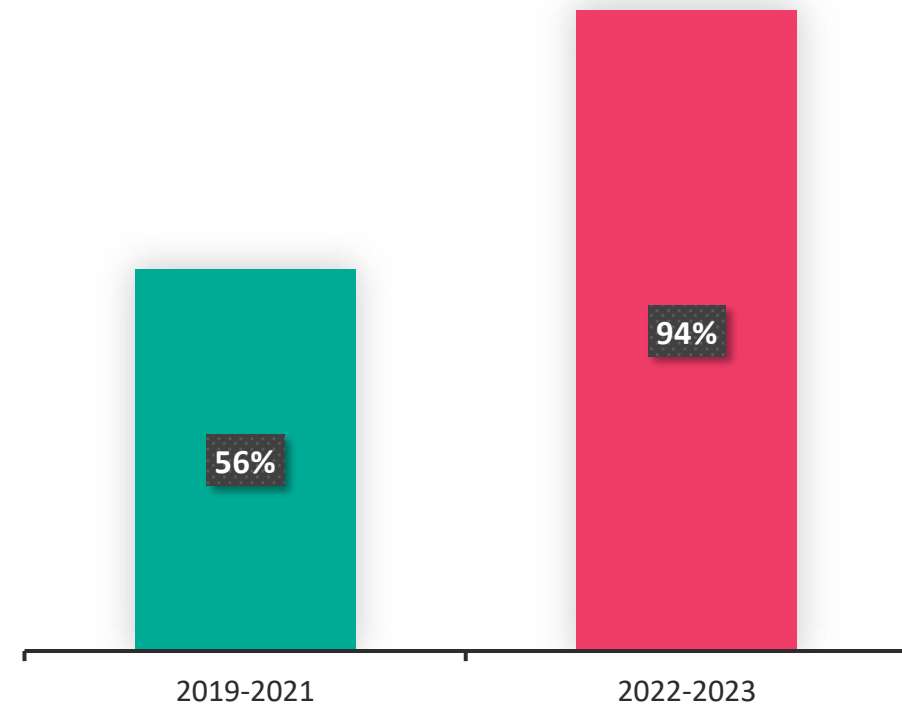


## Unique barriers to employment

Lack of exclusive wage subsidy, language, job readiness skills, knowledge, preparedness, job search methodologies and limited network in Canada.

**Self-identified women served: 96**

## Employment Outcomes





In the Aspire Program, I found a lot of information about job searching, such as how to create a complete resume and cover letter, and how important it is to make a good community to find a job. This program taught me step by step everything about Canadian culture, interview, improve knowledge, and social networking. They introduced me to some job opportunities and employers. One of the things that was very helpful to me was self-confidence. The Aspire Program showed me how to believe in my abilities and show them to employers. I learned that soft skills are just as important as education and work experience. I had a very good experience with this program and its advisors. I found some friends, I found a job, and I learned information that can help me for now and in the future. Also, this program supported me. Before, I felt alone and disappointed, but now I feel strong and confident. This support really changed my life. I'm so happy to participate in this program. I have a job now and started a new life with new experiences. My favourite thing about the program are the career advisors. They are so friendly, knowledgeable and helpful. They really changed my life with their knowledge and help. I am really appreciative and happy to know them. With their support, I could get a job, and I am hoping for the future. That is amazing for me.



# THANK YOU!



**Etab Saad**

Associate Director, Employment and Training Services

[esaad@ywcavan.org](mailto:esaad@ywcavan.org) | (778) 222 2417

# S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

**Presenter:**

**Ryan Drew – Director of Integrated Services for Newcomer**

**Peggy Lau – Program Director of Settlement & Family Services**





# Our History



S.U.C.C.E.S.S. was founded 50 years ago in Vancouver in 1973, when a group of caring community members came together to help recent immigrants settle in the region.



# Our Vision

*A vibrant Canadian society where people thrive and contribute to inclusive communities.*

# Our Mission

*S.U.C.C.E.S.S. empowers people on their Canadian journey to achieve their goals through services and advocacy that promote belonging, wellness, and independence.*



# Our Work

- We're one of the largest newcomer social service agencies in Canada.
- Founded in 1973, we have nearly 50 years of giving service to the community.
- In 2022-23, we served 77,000+ individual clients in 50 languages with 152,000+ client services.
- We have 40+ service locations across BC, Canada, and internationally in China and Korea.
- Our diverse, multicultural organization has 900+ staff members and an annual budget of \$76M+.
- Our three main services are Integrated Services for Newcomers, Affordable Housing and Seniors Care.



# Integrated Employment Services for Racialized Newcomer Women





# Integrated Women's Entrepreneurship Project

## Eligibility:

- Women who are permanent residents or Canadian citizens
- Must have a viable business idea

## Services:

- Entrepreneurial skills training cohorts
- Business workshops on a wide range of topics
- One-on-one business advisory sessions
- Mentoring sessions
- Networking events
- Government resources and updates



# Integrated Employment Training for Women (IETW)

Objectives:

Support racialized, newcomer women to increase their skill levels and knowledge in a range of areas to achieve succeed in their target career sectors.

The project test the effectiveness of using an integrated approach, which accelerates the knowledge and skills acquisition process and supports participants to increase both in a range of areas simultaneously.



# Integrated Employment Training for Women (IETW)

The Program aims to:

- Enhance racialized newcomer women's capacity to find and sustain employment in high-demand sectors
- Equip racialized newcomer women with a strong skills foundation to achieve long-term labour market success by promoting continuous skills enhancement
- Increased racialized newcomer women's confidence to participate in the labour force



# Community and Employer Engagement

- Memberships on the advisory tables
- Creating opportunities for collaboration
- Facilitate participation in leadership roles and decision making
- Organizing learning and professional development opportunities





# Thank You

Contact:

Ryan Drew – [ryan.drew@success.bc.ca](mailto:ryan.drew@success.bc.ca)

Peggy Lau – [peggyl@success.bc.ca](mailto:peggyl@success.bc.ca)





# SLIDO



In one word, describe the role you can play in changing the status quo for racialized immigrant women in the workplace.



[ic8.link/783](https://ic8.link/783)





# WORLD CAFÉ



### **The Role of Employers**

- How can employers create inclusive workplace cultures that support the professional development of racialized immigrant women?
- What are some best practices for talent acquisition and **retention** that promote diversity and inclusion?

### **The Role of Funders**

- How can funders encourage innovative solutions to address the unique challenges faced by this community?
- From your experiences, what are funder expectations while engaging the broader community to build awareness and support for their initiatives?

### **The Role of Service Providers**

- How can service providers partner or collaborate effectively to maximize their impact on this issue?
- What are the best practices implemented by successful programs? What are the considerations while creating program models?

### **Other Stakeholders**

- How can the broader public contribute to changing perceptions and promoting diversity and inclusion?
- What advocacy strategies can be employed to influence decision-makers in support of these efforts?



# SLIDO



How can we measure the impact of initiatives supporting racialized immigrant women's economic integration?

What can individuals do to support and advocate for racialized immigrant women in their workplaces and communities?

How can we promote awareness and understanding of the unique challenges faced by this demographic in the workplace?



[ic8.link/783](https://ic8.link/783)





# CALL TO ACTION



# Call To Action

- Tailoring services to meet the needs of the different equity deserving groups
- Involving key stakeholders in designing funding models that meet the demands and bridge the gaps for racialized women
- Removing eligibility barriers
- Culturally appropriate mental health support
- Long-term sustainable program funding



# THANK YOU



**Lenya Wilks** – [lwilks@dcrs.ca](mailto:lwilks@dcrs.ca)

**Tina Balachandran** – [tbalachandran@dcrs.ca](mailto:tbalachandran@dcrs.ca)

---



**Ryan Drew** – [ryan.drew@success.bc.ca](mailto:ryan.drew@success.bc.ca)

**Peggy Lau** – [peggyl@success.bc.ca](mailto:peggyl@success.bc.ca)

---



**Etab Saad** – [esaad@ywcavan.org](mailto:esaad@ywcavan.org)

**Elham Ershad** – [ershad@ywcavan.org](mailto:ershad@ywcavan.org)