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# Building Welcoming Communities in Smaller Centres: Leveraging Diverse Initiatives and Collaborations



Nov 21, 2023





# AGENDA

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Welcome

2

Project Welcome - connecting skilled immigrants to smaller communities through online mentorship

3

Engaging Local Professionals in Attracting Newcomers to Small Urban-Rural Communities

4

The impact of pre-arrival services for newcomers in Saint John, NB; a practitioner's perspective

5

Conclusion / Q & A





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# Project Welcome

Connecting skilled immigrants to smaller communities through online mentorship

*Sharvari Jois*

*Ligia Chiari*



## 76-YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN HELPING JOBSEEKERS REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

- Programs for newcomers, youth, people with disabilities, the unemployed and the underemployed
- 16,000 job seekers supported in 2021 – 5500 newcomers from 137 countries
- Newcomer programs include:
  - Pre-arrival offerings since 2002 (Canada InfoNet)
  - Job search workshops for newcomers
  - Youth programs
  - Enhanced language training (ELT)
  - Mentoring programs – Group mentoring, In person and online pre-arrival mentoring



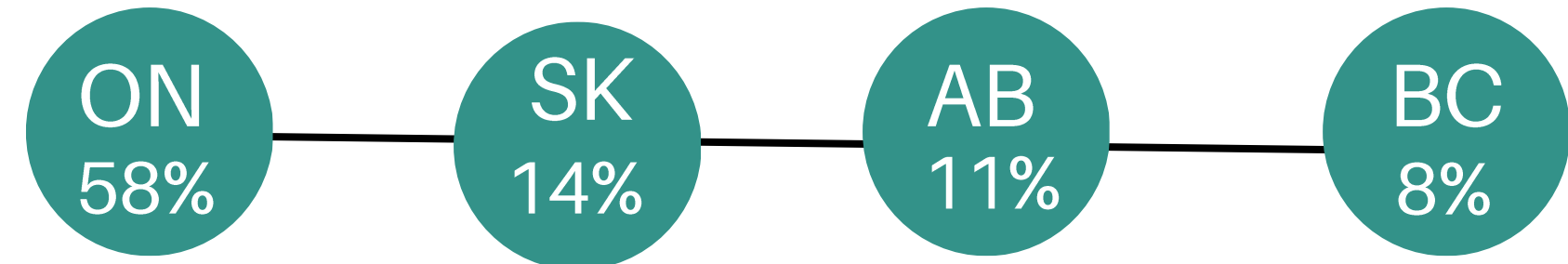
- Since 2002 offering pre-arrival mentoring support to newcomers
- Funded by IRCC since 2016

- 2400 mentoring matches
- 100% of program mentees said they will pay it forward
- 77% mentees increased their understanding of Canadian work culture and communication
- 49% of mentees indicated their participation in pre-arrival online mentoring influenced their decision about where to work in Canada.

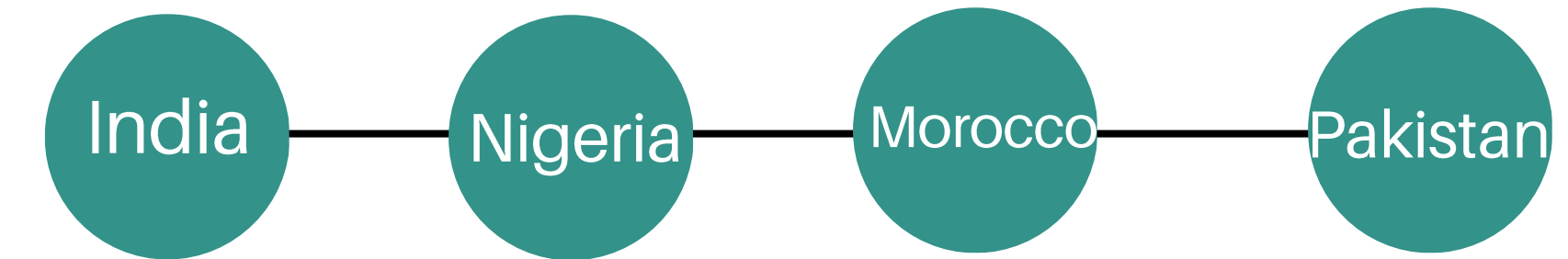
A photograph of a young man with dark hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text on the left side of the slide.

**20+ years  
supporting  
newcomers  
through  
mentorship**





### Top Destinations in Canada







### Top 4 Countries



### Top Sectors

-  Information Technology & Telecommunications
-  Educational Services
-  Healthcare & Social Assistance
-  Finance, Banking & Insurance

### Education Levels

-  60% Masters
-  31% Bachelors
-  4% Doctorate
-  6% Others

# Client Demographics



**1**

## PREPARE

- Career Planning & Counseling
- Licensure Pathways
- Job Search Strategies

**2**

## LEARN

- Virtual learning
- Online Tools
- Webinars
- Resume & Interviews



**3**

## CONNECT

- Occupation-specific Mentors
- Employers
- Settlement Services

# Canada InfoNet Pre-arrival Services



A background image showing a diverse group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter.

# Urban-centric Immigration

- 90 % of all international immigration in the past 20 years – top four gateway cities
- Attracting and retaining international immigrants is key to ensuring growth in cities
- Smaller cities have more opportunities for new immigrants: tighter labour markets, weaker past population growth
- Lower costs of living and overall better quality of life improves immigrant integration
- Win-win: balanced and diverse population growth across Canada's cities and regions is desirable. Higher average income for newcomers in smaller communities



## Project Welcome: Showcasing smaller communities through mentorship



Funded by IRCC for 2021-24 SDI round to test the impact of online mentorship on newcomers intention of where to settle



Led by JVS Toronto, delivered in partnership with immigrant serving community agencies in 4 different provinces



Participants have access to a welcome toolkit to the community and are matched with a mentor in their occupation for 8-weeks before arrival



Mentors are local volunteers who are trained and coached to help newcomers prepare for their lives in Canada



Aiming for a win-win: Empowering newcomers with fulfilling opportunities while supporting smaller Canadian communities



SOUTH OKANAGAN  
IMMIGRANT AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES



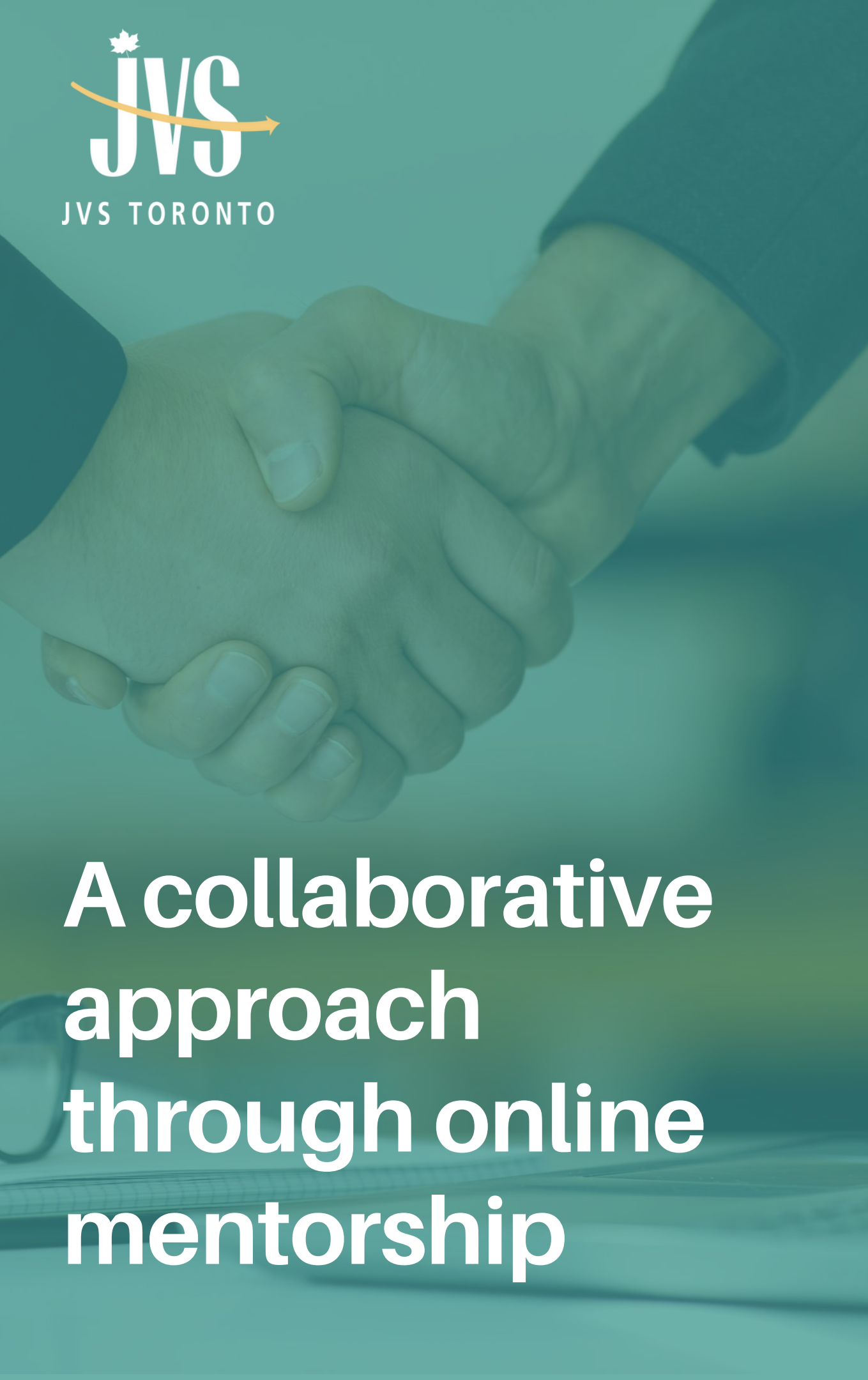
YMCA of  
Owen Sound Grey Bruce



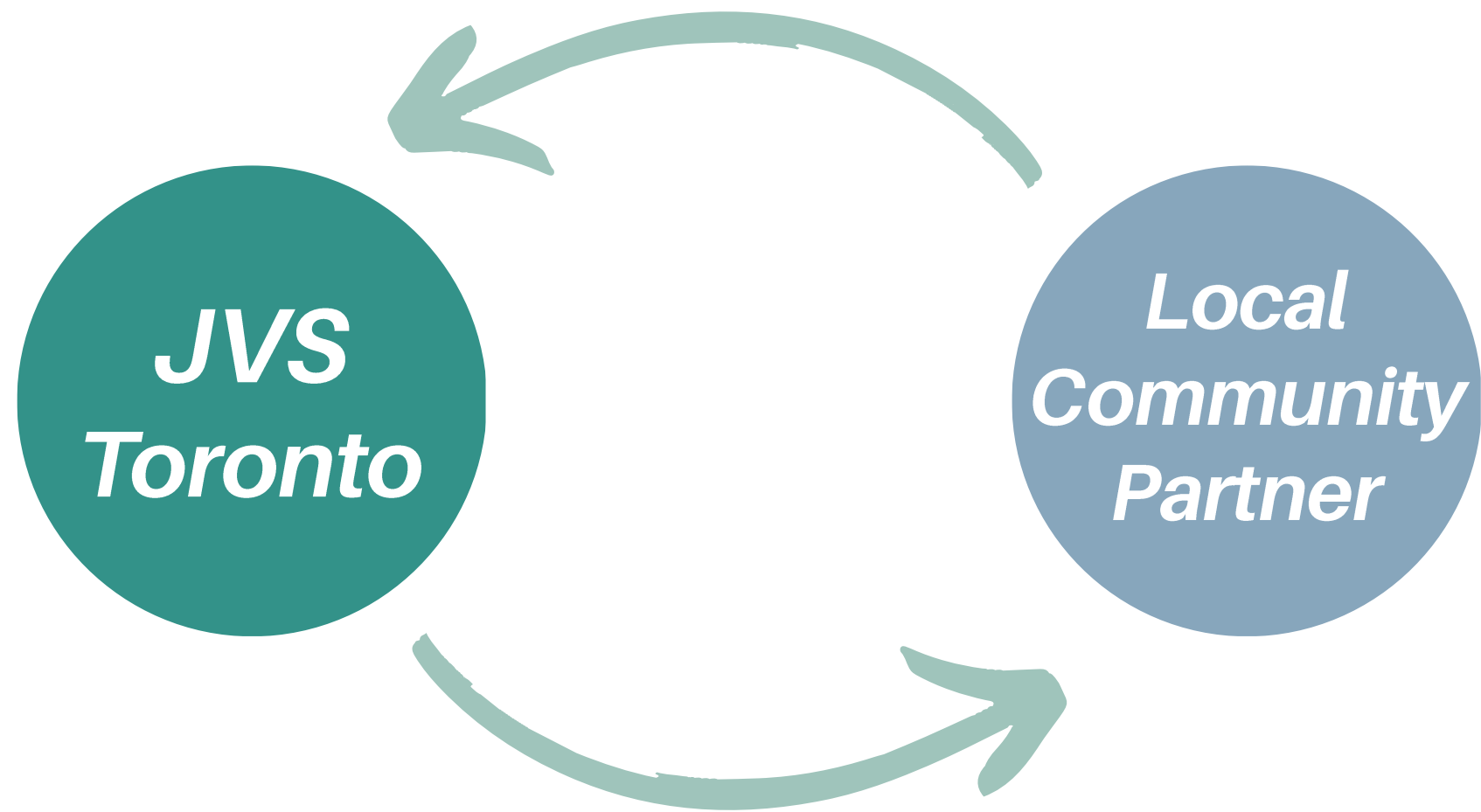
SJNC  
CNASJ | The Saint John  
Newcomers Centre  
Le Centre des nouveaux  
arrivants de Saint-Jean



Regional  
Connections  
IMMIGRANT SERVICES



# A collaborative approach through online mentorship



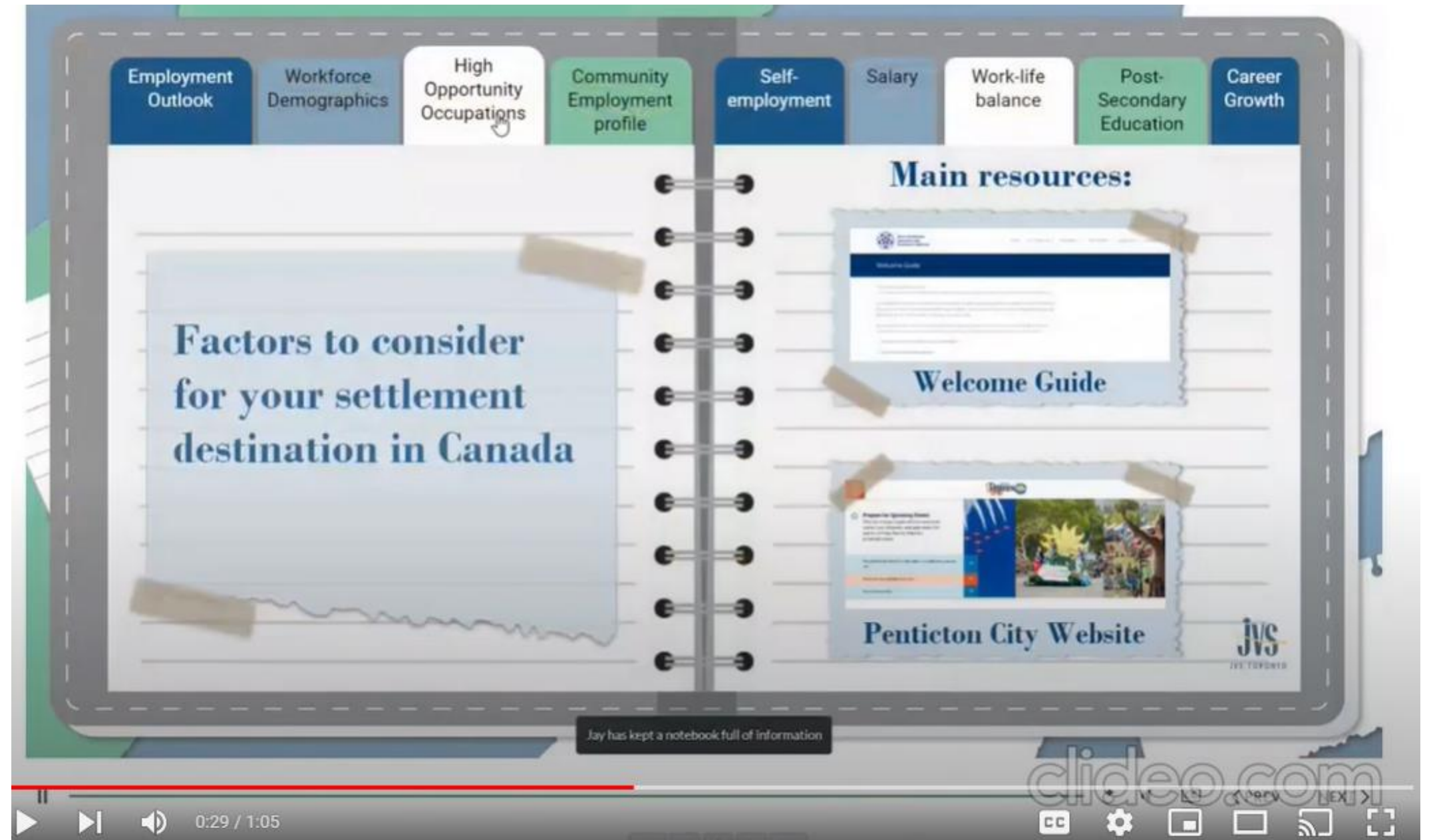
- Outreach
- Develop Welcome Toolkit
- Provide online platform
- Train partner coach on the mentoring model
- Assess and Orient Participants
- Refer Participant to the appropriate community
- Support Community Partner's Coach

- Provide content for Welcome Toolkit
- Recruit volunteer mentors
- Make occupation-specific Matches
- Monitor matches
- Report on matches
- Provide feedback to lead agency and evaluators



VIDEO

# Welcome Toolkits



Working in South Okanagan  
Self-directed online learning content

[Link](#)



# Online Mentoring



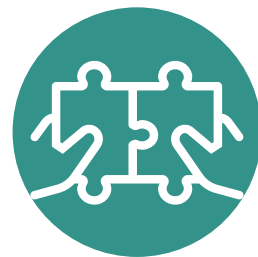
8-weeks pre-arrival partnership, employment focused



Structured and coach supported



Asynchronous, fitting for multiple time-zones



Close to 100 matches made to date



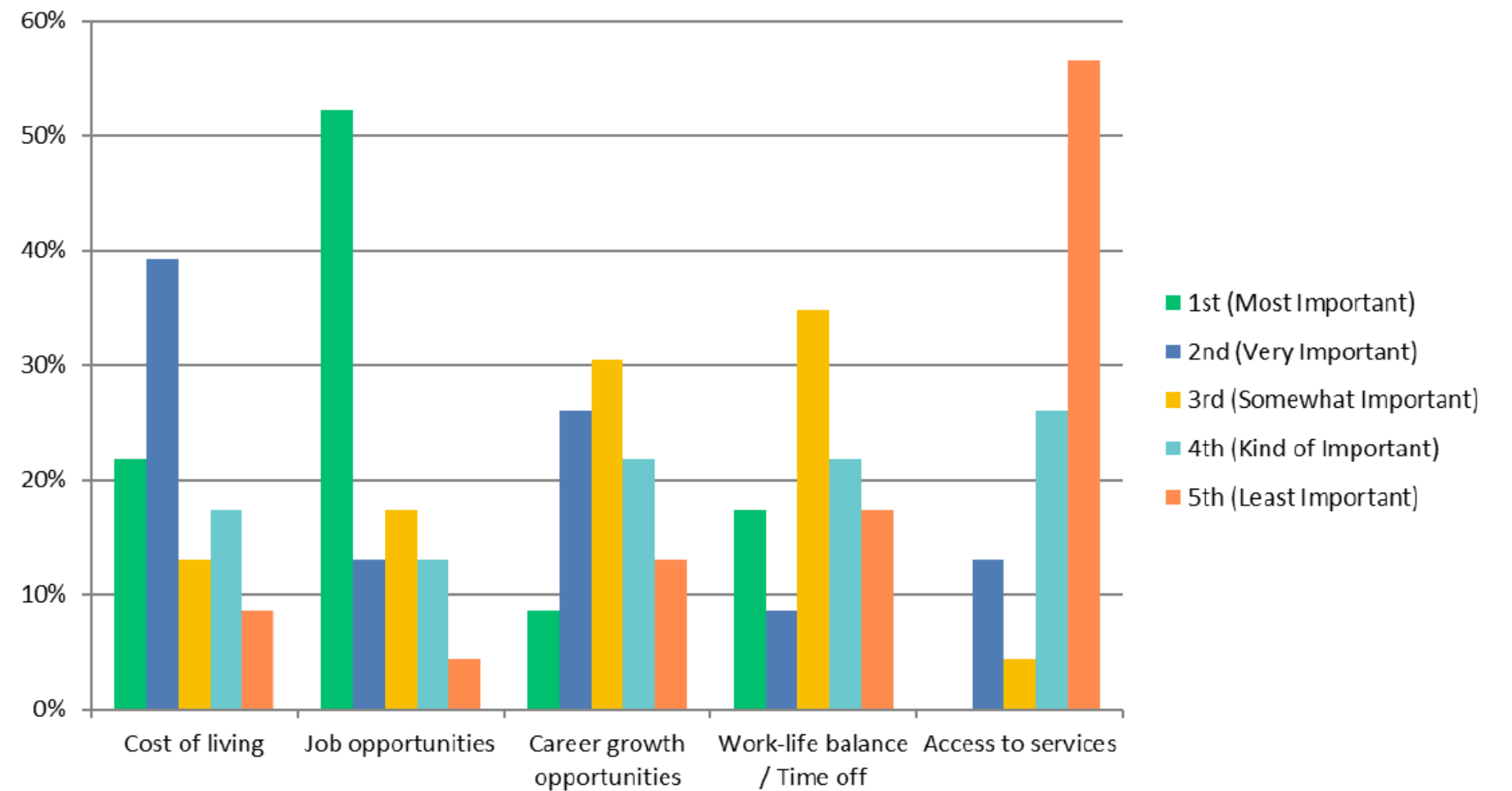
# Preliminary Results

## Key Insights



Top reasons newcomers decide to move to a small community are access to employment, cost of living, and family connections

### What factors will influence your decision on where to settle?





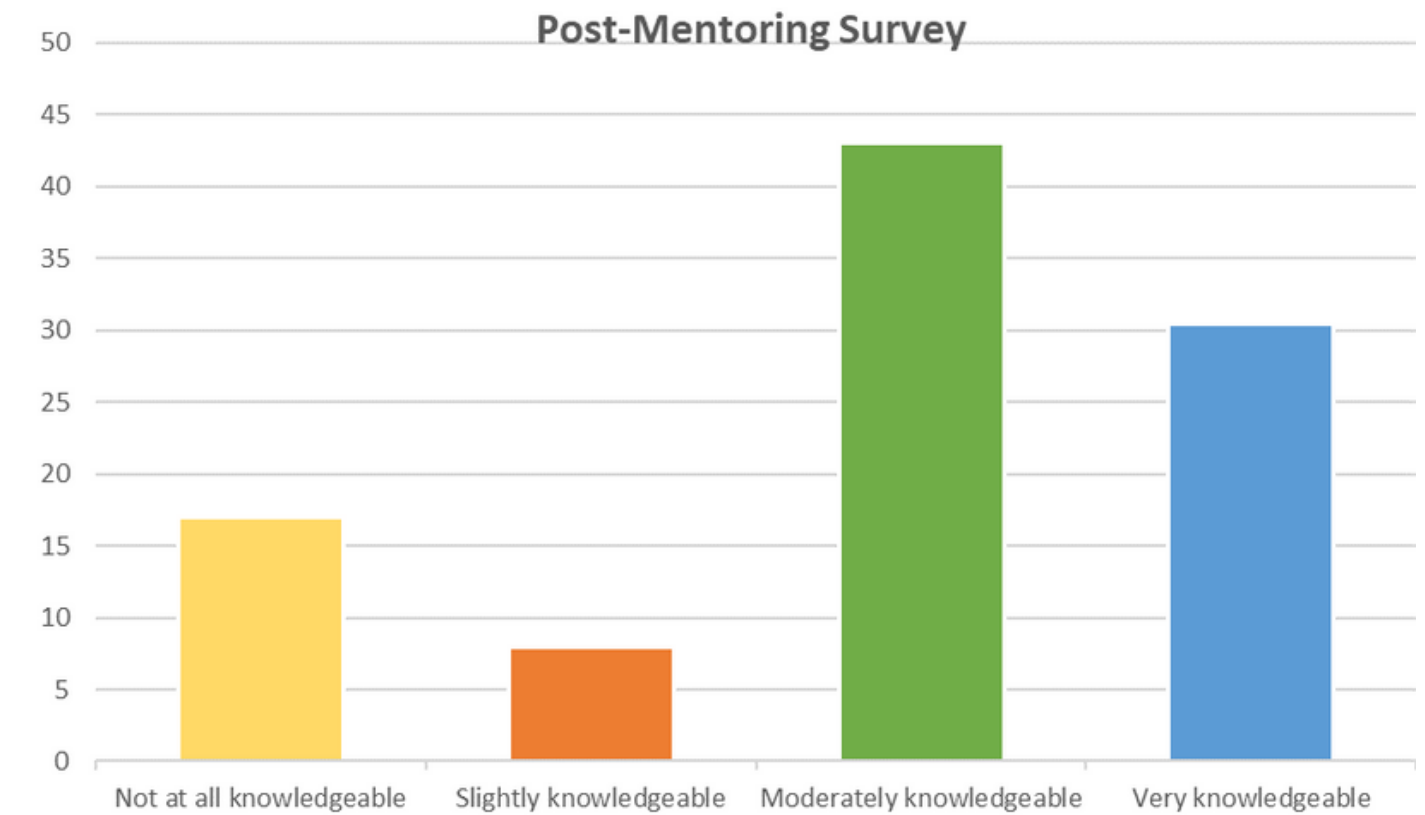
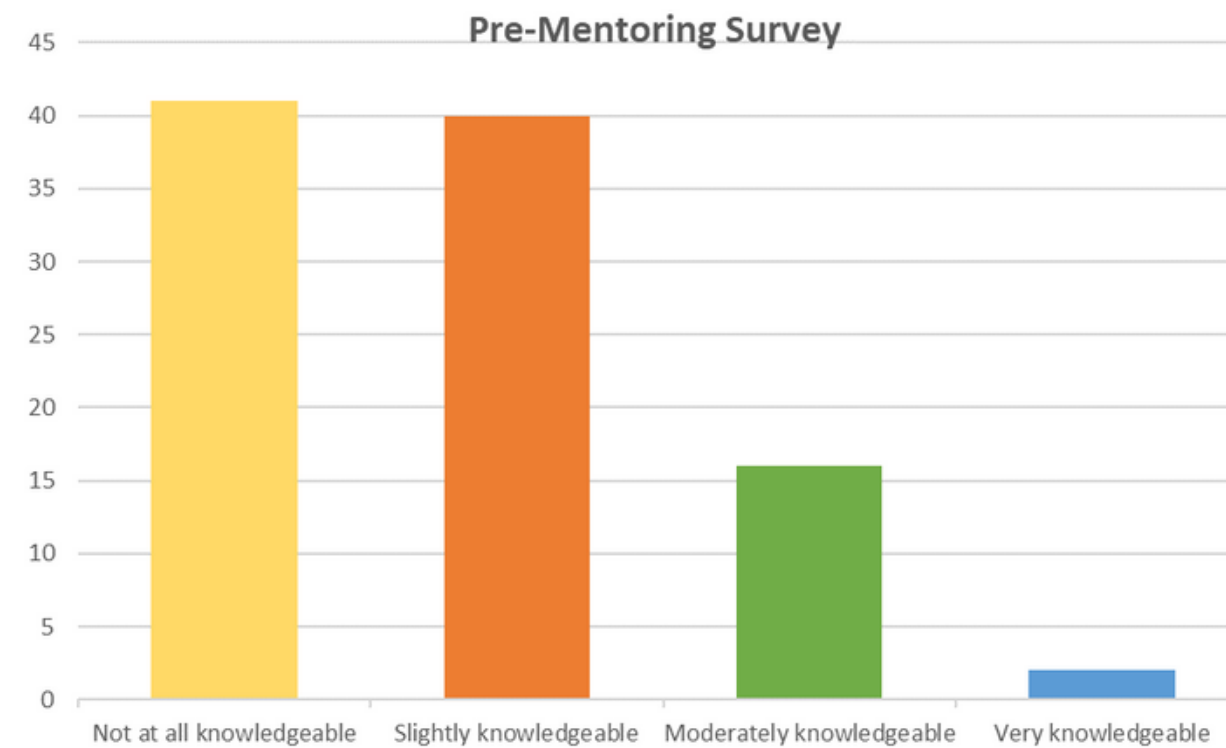
# Preliminary Results

## Key Insights



Mentees have increased knowledge of the Canadian labour market, especially smaller communities.

How would you rate your knowledge of the labour market in smaller communities?



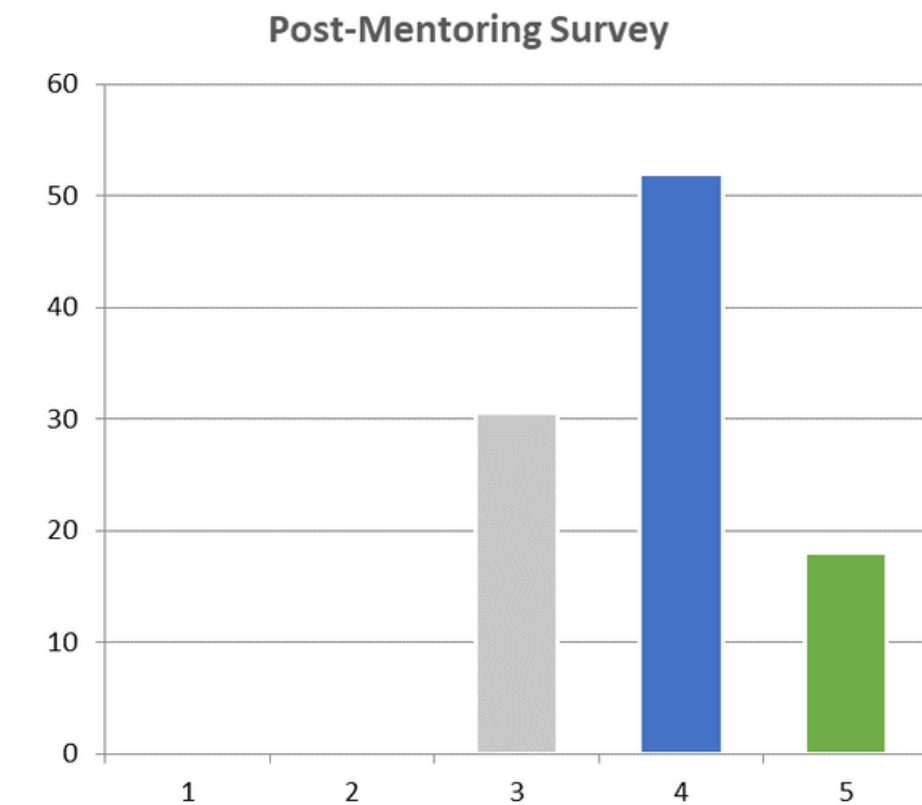
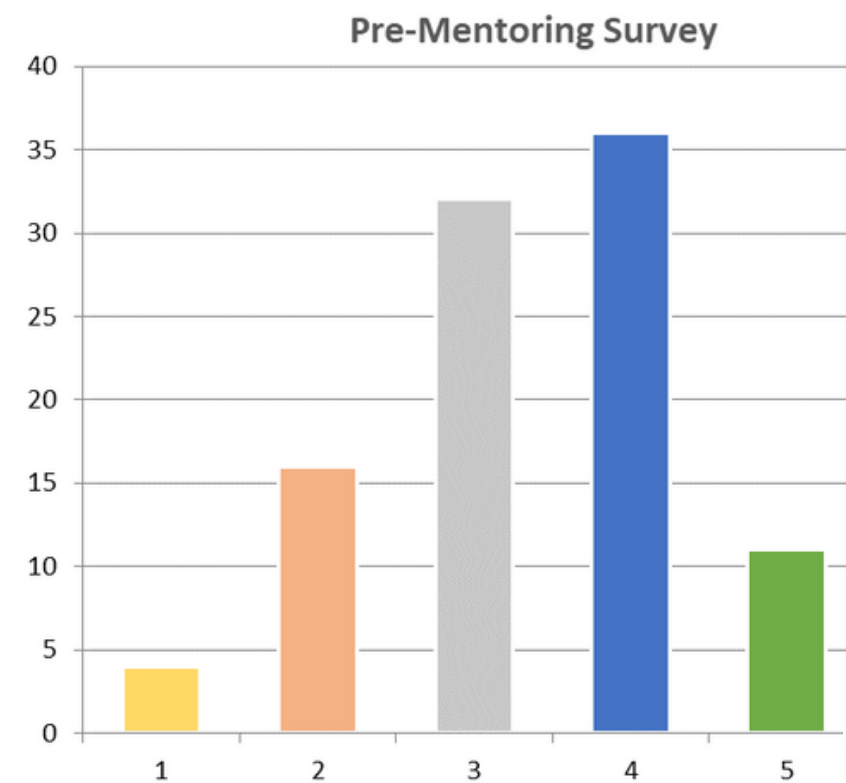


## Key Insights



Project welcome program as a whole is a good service for newcomers - successful in building their capacity and knowledge to be prepared to enter the Canadian job market

How would you rate your level of preparedness to address challenges when settling in Canada?



- Very prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Neither prepared nor unpre
- Somewhat unprepared
- Very unprepared

**Preliminary  
Results**

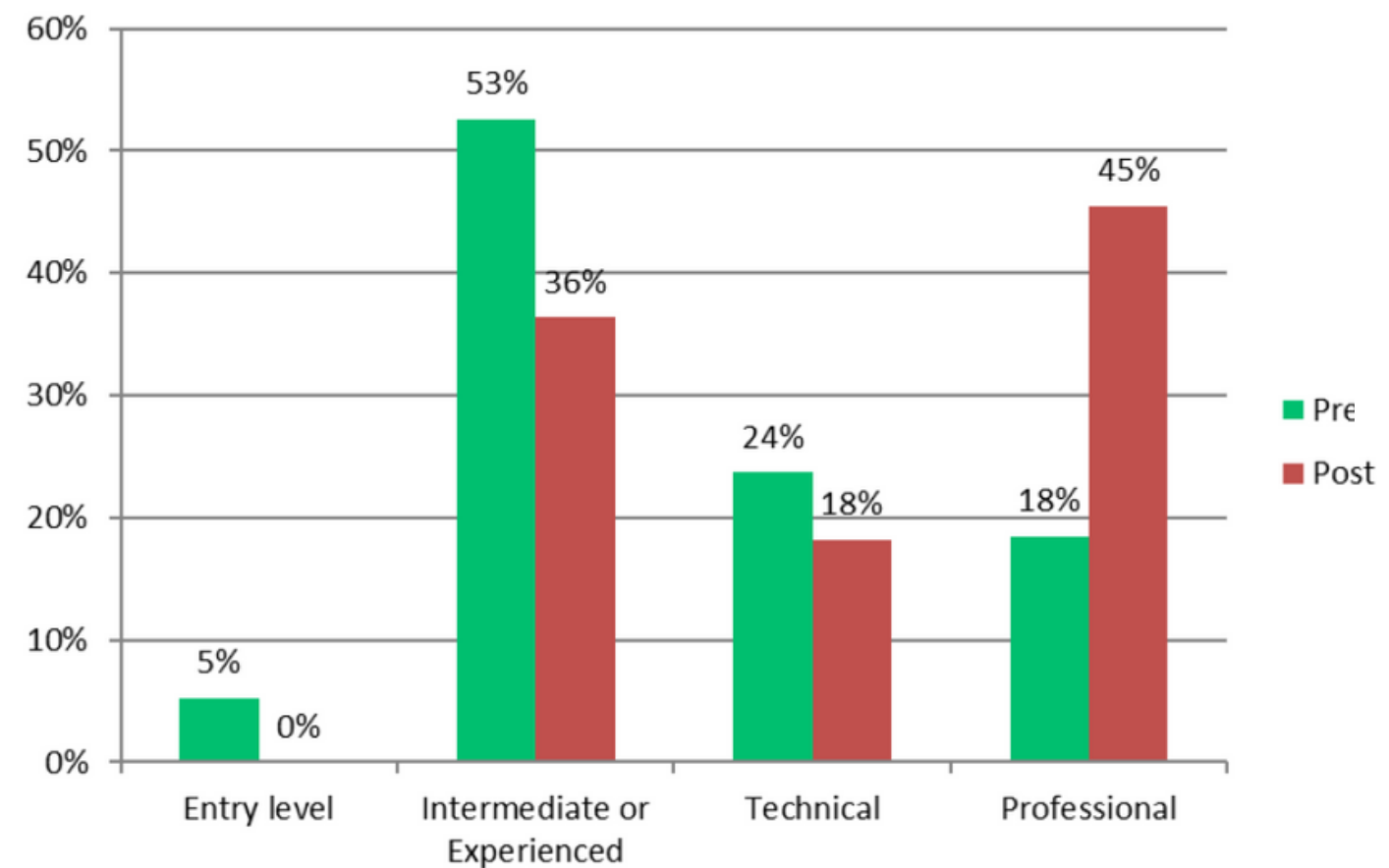
# Preliminary Results

## Key Insights



Shift in mentors' perceptions about the type of job opportunities that newcomers are looking for

What type of job opportunities do you expect newcomers to be looking for?





# Challenges & Learnings

- Mentee expectations
- Partner capacity
- Mentor recruitment & engagement
- Funding limitations
- Online platform
- PNP dictates where mentees go



# Mentee Quotes

*“The Project Welcome team is incredibly dedicated to supporting mentees throughout the process. Thank you to [the team] for the excellent orientation and going out of your way to find me a relevant mentor for a relatively niche profession. The program is well structured and thought-out.”*

*“While I was looking for opportunities, I applied the learnings I gained from my mentor/coach in Project Welcome in terms of resume/cover letter building and interviewing tips. I applied to different job postings regardless of the location as long as I am willing to relocate and it is still within my field of interest. Fortunately, after weeks of effort I got an offer to work in London, Ontario.”*





# Thank You!

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