

Bridging Skills and Opportunities: Integrating Internationally Trained Professionals in the Canadian Labour Market Through Employment Bonds and Internships

Pathways to Prosperity 2024
Session D15 (in person)
3:15 – 4:30 PM



Presented By:

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Maggie Boak – Metro Vancouver

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Land Acknowledgement - Acknowledging the unceded territories

We acknowledge that the City of Vancouver is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

This place is the unceded and ancestral territory of the həńqəmińəm and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh speaking peoples, the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and has been stewarded by them since time immemorial.

Vancouver is located on territory that was never ceded, or given up to the Crown by the Musqueam, Squamish, or Tsleil-Waututh peoples. The term unceded acknowledges the dispossession of the land and the inherent rights that Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh hold to the territory. The term serves as a reminder that Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh have never left their territories and will always retain their jurisdiction and relationships with the territory.

Agenda

- Presenter Introductions
- Workshop Introduction
- The Skilled Newcomer Training Incentive Bond Project
- Canadian Work Experience Internship Pilot
- Food for Thought – Questions to Take Away
- Contact Information
- Questions & Answers

Presenter Introductions

- **Kate Liu – Manager of Employment Programs, MOSAIC**
- **Kim Lehrer – Senior Research Associate, SRDC**
- **Larry Chan – Senior Manager of Employment Programs, MOSAIC**
- **Maggie Boak – Division Manager, Talent Management & OD, Metro Vancouver**
- **Samantha Iyere – Manager, Career & Newcomer Services, Achēv**

Workshop Introduction

Two federally funded projects aimed at supporting the workforce integration of skilled newcomers and provide valuable insights on:

- The identification and addressing of barriers to employment
- Supports and requirements needed for skilled newcomers to gain meaningful employment
- Employer perspectives on hiring skilled newcomers with limited to no Canadian work experience
- How skilled newcomers can help fill labour gaps
- How job readiness training, expanding networks, and skill utilization impact employment.



Why These Projects Are Needed:

- The number of immigrants admitted through the skilled migration program has been and will continue to rise.
- Compared to their Canadian-born counterparts, these immigrants earn less and are less likely to find employment matching their skills.
- Highly skilled immigrants with foreign university degrees frequently end up taking jobs requiring less than a university degree.
- Compared with Canadian-born counterparts, immigrants with the same qualifications suffer more to find a suitable job, making them prone to entering the workforce through undesirable jobs and leading to low economic integration.



Bond Insurance

- Bond insurance has the potential to mitigate some of the perceived risks in hiring.
- It takes the form of a contract between three parties:
 1. The principal (candidate employee)
 2. The insurer
 3. The obligee (the employer)
- The insurer provides financial guarantees to an obligee that the principal will act in accordance with the terms established by the bond.

ISANS - Vision and Mission

A community where all
can belong and grow

Helping immigrants
build a future in Nova
Scotia



ISANS Services

Distance and Online Services

ISANS provides many opportunities for immigrants to develop skills and make connections pre-arrival, online and throughout Nova Scotia

Get Settled

- Orientation services
- Settlement support
- Crisis intervention services
- Refugee support
- Family support
- Counselling
- Interpretation and translation
- Health support
- Private refugee sponsorship support

Learn English

- Literacy
- Literacy and Sign Language for deaf students
- Family learning program
- English for everyday living
- English for work and business
- Communication for healthcare professionals and engineers

Find Employment

- Employment counselling
- Pre-employment workshops
- Workshops
- Online Skills Match
- Practice interviews
- Profession-specific bridging programs
- Pathways to licensure
- Atlantic Immigrant Career Loan Fund

Do Business

- Business counselling
- Business workshops
- Networking and showcase events



ABOUT SRDC

WHO WE ARE

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is a non-profit research organization created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate new programs. Our two-part mission is to help policymakers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing these policies.

WHAT WE DO



EXPERIMENTATION

SRDC is a leader in policy experiments that rigorously test innovative program ideas and delivery processes.



POLICY RESEARCH

SRDC applies methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and new programs.



SURVEY DESIGN AND DATA MANAGEMENT

SRDC are experts in survey design and data management and has extensive experience surveying participants and following them over time.



STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

SRDC's expertise in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of a wide range of policy interventions has made us a trusted partner of funders, service delivery organizations, policy analysts, and program participants.



KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION AND WORKSHOP FACILITATION

SRDC is committed to ensuring that the knowledge gained through our projects can be put into action by funders, program managers, practitioners, and participants.



PROGRAM EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

SRDC offers a full range of program evaluation and performance measurement services addressing program design and development, delivery, outcomes, and impacts.

About Achēv

- At Achēv, we believe that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to build a better life.
- For nearly 30 years, we have dedicated ourselves to helping diverse Canadians and newcomers achieve their full potential.
- Today, Achēv is one of the largest providers of employment, settlement, language, women, youth and technology solutions services in the GTA, throughout Canada and abroad, that is committed to creating faster paths to prosperity for clients.



Programs and Services: 6 Pillars



Employment Services

One-stop-shop for all employment needs to assist in finding meaningful employment or the right employee



Youth Services

Providing access to the employment and life skills necessary for youth to achieve long-term employment, meaningful careers and a successful future



Newcomer Services

Friendly, multilingual staff are here to help provide accurate up-to-date information and referrals to programs and services in the community to meet clients' settlement needs



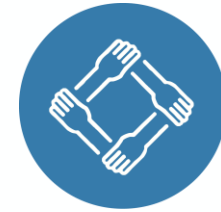
Language Services

Language assessment and training services to immigrants, and support to the language training community



Women Services

We offer programs and services to support the unique needs of women and girls as they navigate their educational, community and workforce needs.



Achēv Inclusion

We empower leaders and employers to build diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces where everyone belongs.

Skilled Newcomer Incentive Bond Project



The Skilled Newcomer Incentive Bond project intends to test an innovative approach in partnership with employers to address employment related barriers faced by skilled newcomers.

A “Skilled Newcomer”

1. Is a recent immigrant
2. Is well educated in their field of expertise and possesses post-secondary education
3. Has a minimum of 1-2 years of work experience in their field
4. Wants to reconnect with their industry after moving to Canada



Project Objectives



Facilitate the transition and inclusion of 120 skilled newcomers into the Canadian labour market by June 2025



Influence a minimum of 50-70 employers to hire and retain skilled newcomers



Provide individualized support to build a Self-Marketing Portfolio and a Career Action Plan



Connect skilled newcomers with hiring managers and employment opportunities

Intended Clientele



- Skilled newcomers and trades professionals to Canada requiring support with entering field of expertise
- Employers in Canada

Benefits to Newcomers

- Cohort based Employment Readiness and Employability Skills training covering a broad range of topics including:
 - Canadian Workplace Culture, Cross-Cultural Competence, Conflict Resolution, Employment Standards, Emotional Intelligence, etc.
 - Participants are provided with support on self-marketing, such as resumé critiques, mock interviews, and curated job search resources
- Access to Professional Development and Licensing funding
- 12 weeks of one-on-one coaching to support the job search
- Connections to employers for vacancies and/or networking and mentorship

Benefits to Employers



- Risk-free hiring of the skilled newcomers as the employers have bond coverage, if the participant does not successfully complete six months of employment.
 - Covers 50% of hiring costs up to \$10,000
- Benefit of accessing the pool of talented newcomers who are well trained with Employment Readiness training.

Benefits to Employers

- Receive additional support in the form of cultural sensitivity resources and/or training offered to ensure a positive experience for both participants and employers.
- Ongoing support and troubleshooting with employers and participants to increase retention.
- A unique opportunity to be part of an Employer Engagement and Advisory Committee [Achēv].
- Job-specific training and other career development opportunities for employees to increase retention.



Achēv Successes and Challenges

Successes

- 63% of participants employed in field of choice
- Good employer connections
- Participants finding employment on their own
- Great networking opportunities

Challenges

- Niche industries/industry broad
- Larger companies unable to accept bond



Skilled Newcomer Training Incentive Bond

The Skilled Newcomer Training Incentive Bond (STIB) facilitates the integration of internationally trained professionals with relevant employers throughout Nova Scotia.

The project includes 3 phases:

- Skills for Success online training
- Job Development
- Employment Retention

STIB Project Benefits for Employers

- STIB offers free employer insurance bond (up to \$10,000 if employment ends within the first 6 months)
- STIB has a large pool of job ready internationally trained professionals with varied qualifications and diverse experiences which saves **time and effort** in screening and recruitment
- STIB provides one-on-one retention support based on participants' needs, employers' feedback, job requirements, and providing training funds
- STIB employers have a full access to ISANS employer support programs and services



STIB Outputs (24 months)

- 120 Internationally Trained Professionals (ITPs) joined the STIB
- 27 STIB participants did not complete project (career plans change, study, etc.)
- 82 STIB ITPs employed in their field
- 14 STIB ITPs are receiving Job Development
- 39 STIB ITPs received Job Retention Support
- 20 STIB Employer Bonds

Lessons Learned

STIB participants achieved better results when they had:

- Higher level of job readiness and adaptability with managed expectations
- Great commitment to the STIB project and active engagement in training and job development

Many STIB participants referred their family members and spouses to the program

Lessons Learned

Employer Observations:

- Start up / small to medium businesses were more open to discussing the Bond, yet mostly asked for wage subsidies
- Many employers interested in the bond had new hires who were not eligible to join the STIB (ex. Work Permit)
- Trades employers due to the high turnover in the sector, favoured the STIB, but the follow up with such employers and clients was more challenging
- It was more challenging to approach big businesses with large departments and teams

Research Questions

1. Does the initiative achieve its intended objectives of encouraging reluctant employers to hire newcomers with a better cost-effectiveness than wage/hiring subsidies? If not, why not?
2. What is the profile of participants? Is this program more successful for newcomer job seekers in certain industries vs. others?
3. What types of employment outcomes/placements have been achieved (e.g., full time/part time employment; in intended, related or unrelated occupation)?
4. Are newcomer participants more likely to find skills commensurate employment, and less likely to be underemployed? Are they more likely to be working in their field or target occupation?
5. To what extent have changes occurred in participants' incomes and career adaptability?
6. To what extent did the availability of free bond insurance affect employers' perceptions (e.g., perceived risk) of recruiting newcomers?
7. Does the provision of employment readiness supports, training, and retention support make a difference in the hiring decision of highly skilled newcomers?
8. Does the provision of bond insurance make a difference in employers' decisions to hire highly skilled newcomers?

Evaluation Design

- Mixed methods case study (no comparison group)
- Survey Data (pre- and post-) from participants
- Data from employers
- Focus groups with participants
- Interviews with staff

Data Description

ISANS

Cohort	Baseline	Survey	
		Post-training	6-month Follow-up
1	13	0	11
2	13	0	8
3	11	0	10
4	10	0	6
5	9	6	5
6	11	10	6
7	13	9	5
8	10	10	3
9	9	7	0
10	18	9	0
Total	117	51	54

Achēv

Cohort	Baseline	Survey	
		Post-training	6-month Follow-up
1	4	2	3
2	8	0	7
3	10	0	4
4	11	0	8
5	18	8	6
6	19	11	1
7	11	7	0
8	22	14	0
9	11	9	0
10	18	15	0
Total	132	66	29

Profile of Participants

ISANS

Average age	40
(standard deviation)	(8)
30 years old or younger	10%
31-40 years old	46%
41-50 years old	32%
51 years old or older	12%
Female	43%
Married	85%
Have a child aged 17 or younger	61%
Economic class - principal applicant	35%
Economic class - spouse or dependent	9%
Family class	12%
Refugee	6%
CUAET	28%
Other immigration category	9%
College	4%
Bachelor's degree	22%
Graduate degree	73%

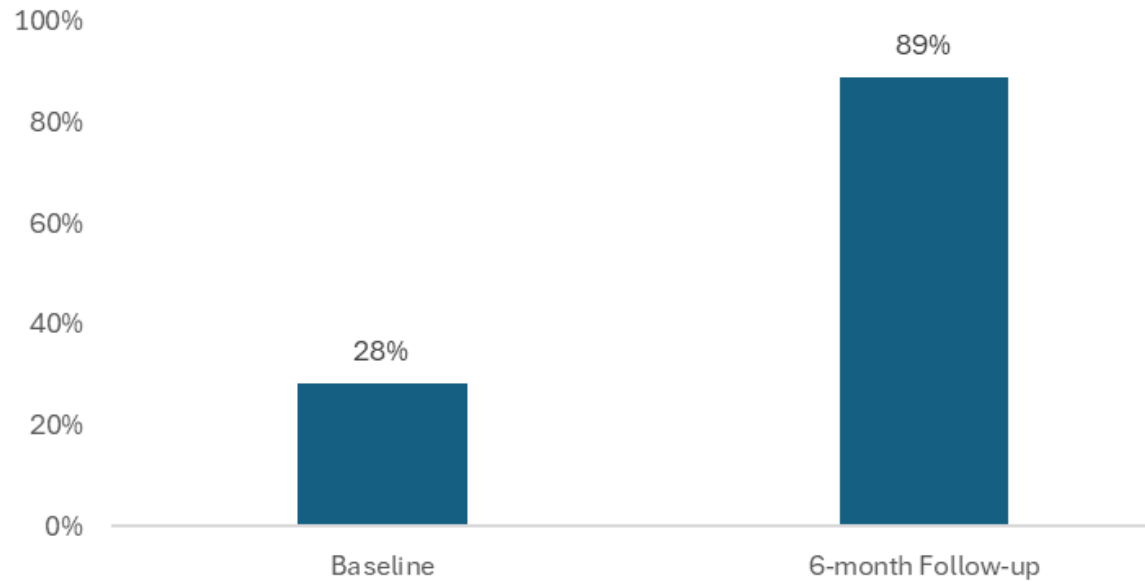
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Average age	35
(standard deviation)	(8)
30 years old or younger	22%
31-40 years old	61%
41-50 years old	13%
51 years old or older	4%
Female	55%
Married or in a common-law relationship	76%
Have a child aged 17 or younger	56%
Economic class - principal applicant	53%
Economic class - spouse or dependent	19%
Family class	17%
Refugee	6%
Other immigration category	5%
Certificate/diploma	4%
Bachelor's degree	38%
Graduate degree	59%

Employment

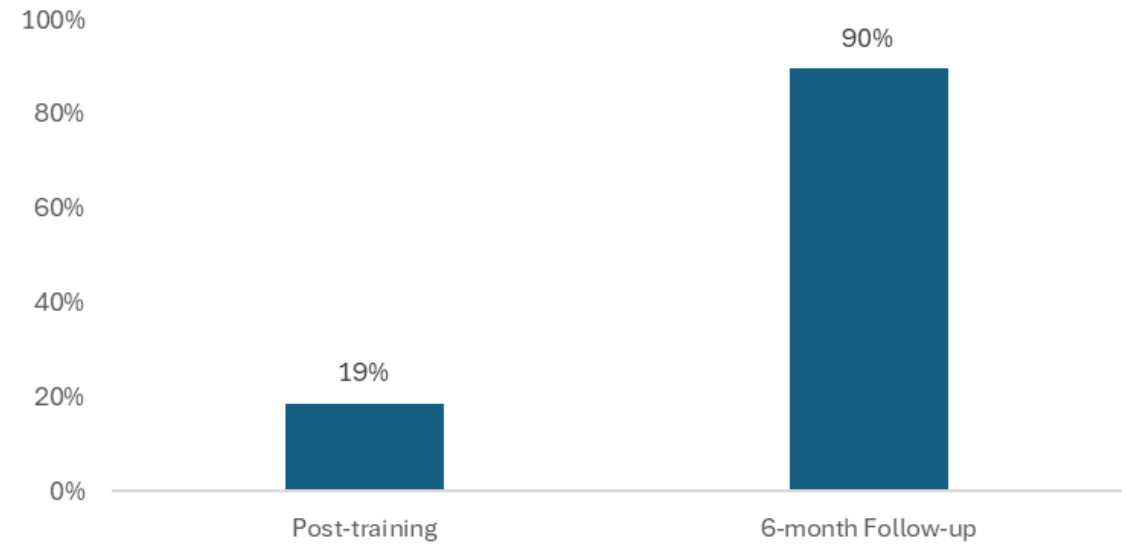
ISANS

Percentage Employed



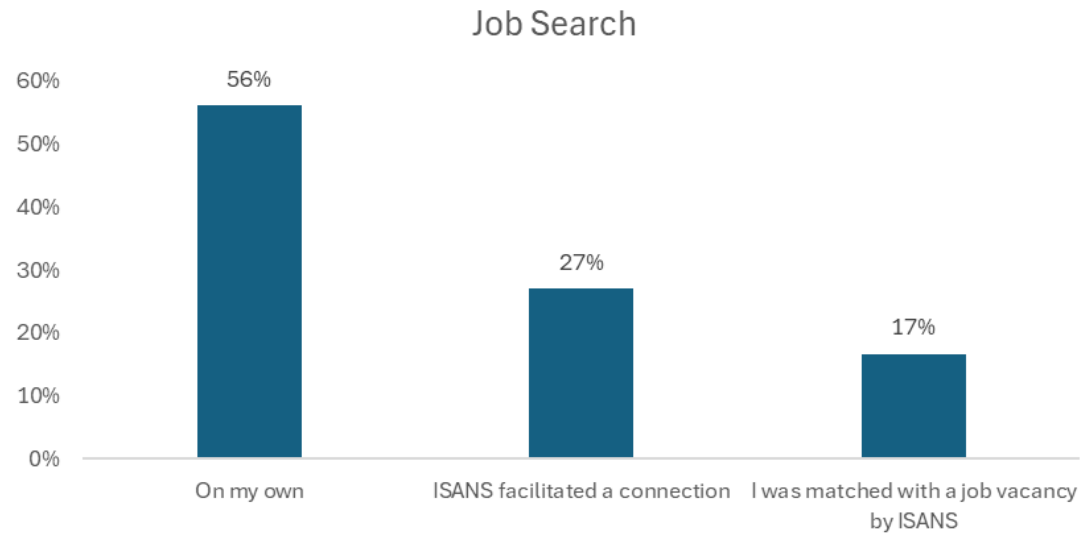
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Percentage Employed

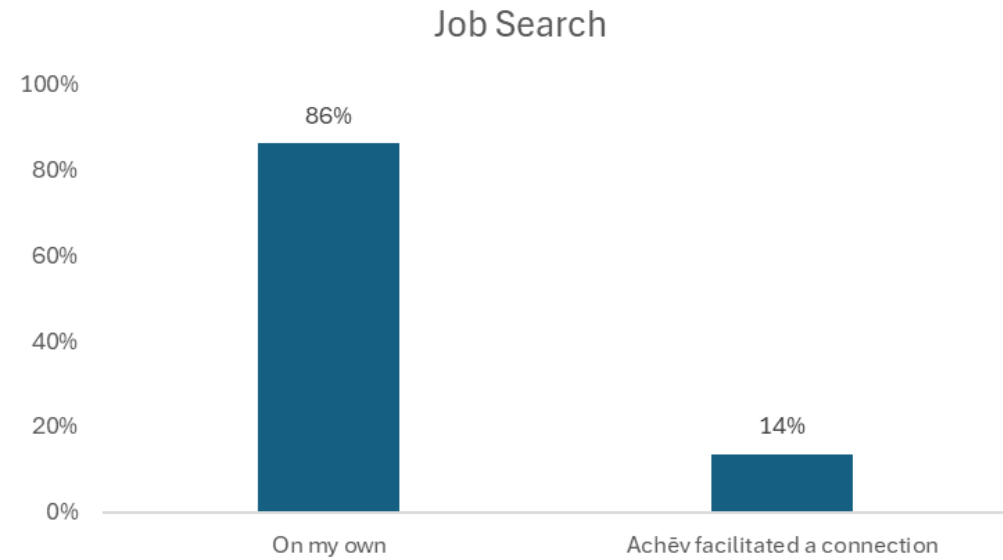


Job Search

ISANS

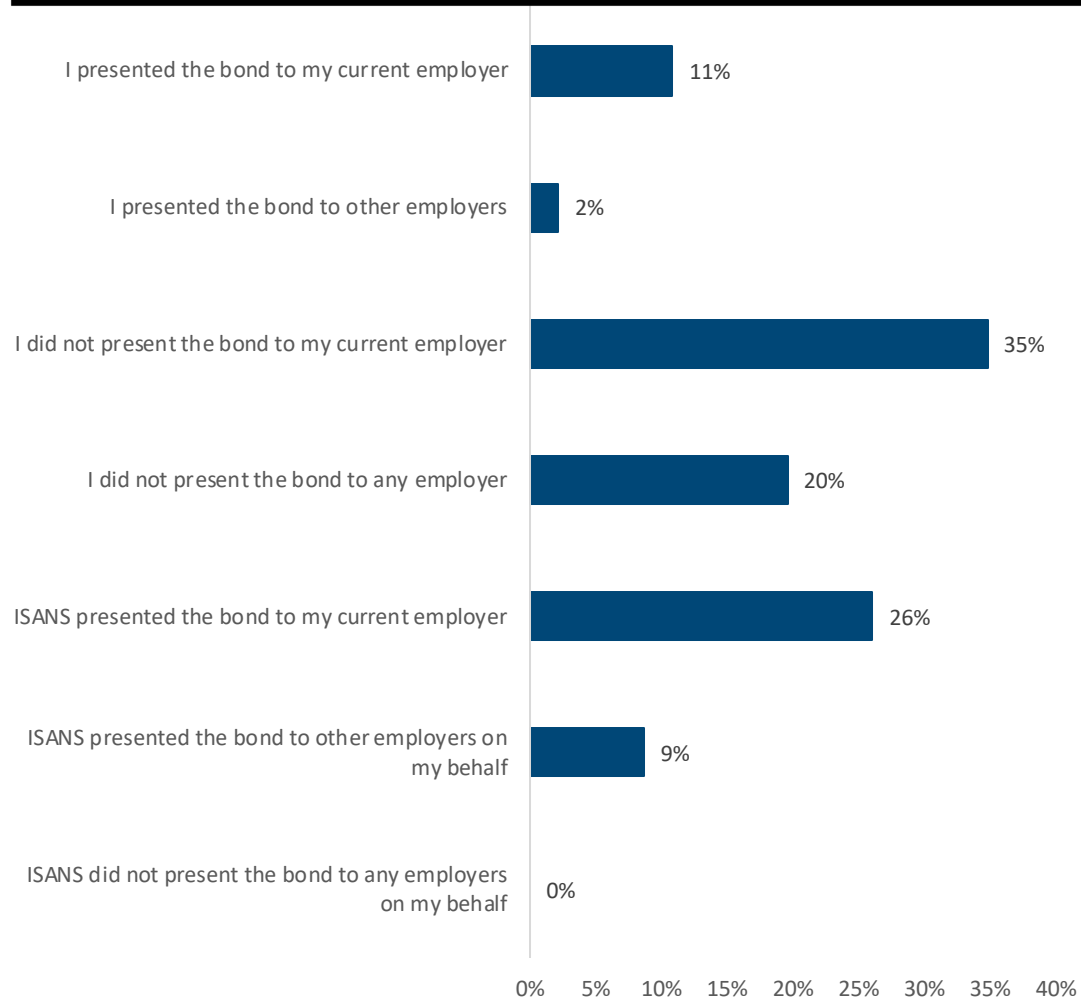


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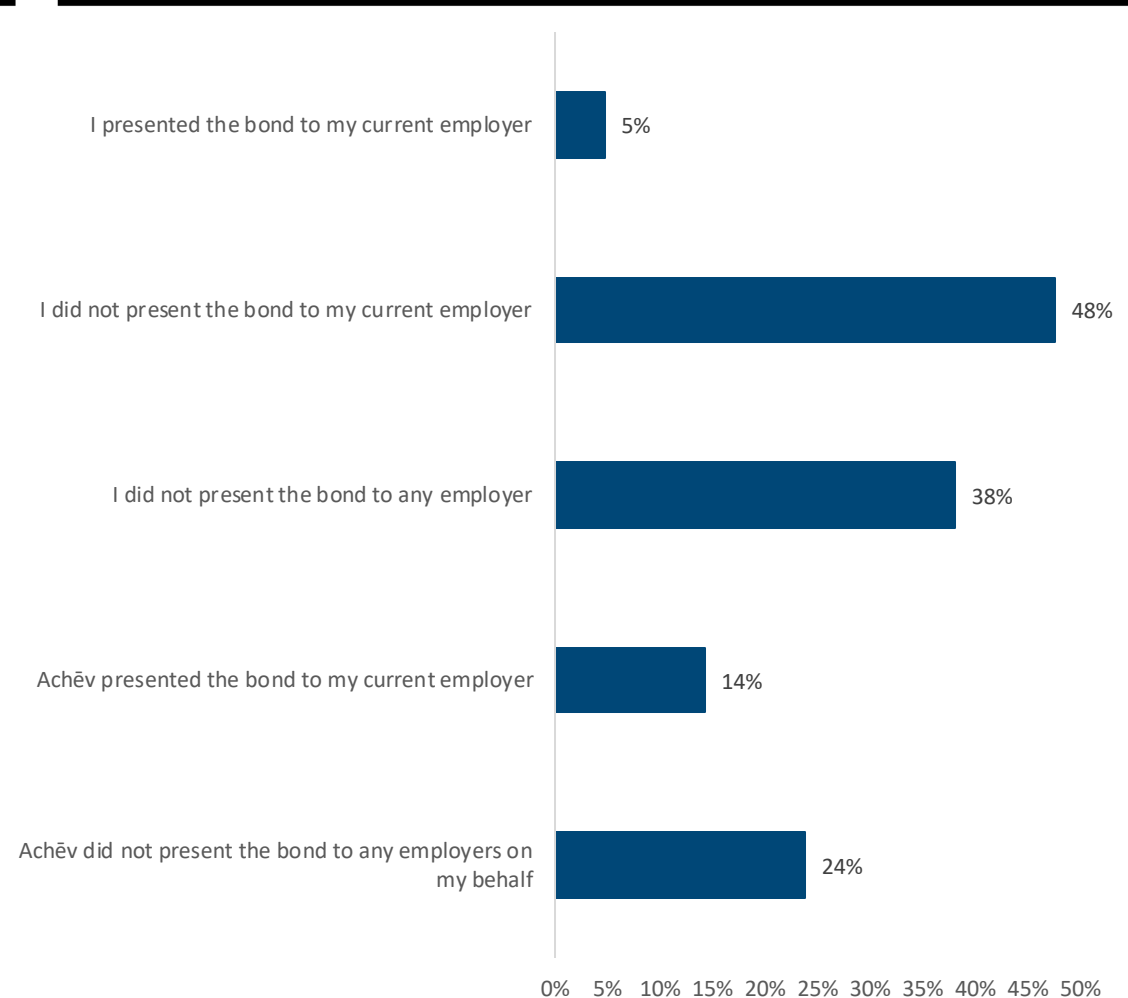


Employer Bond

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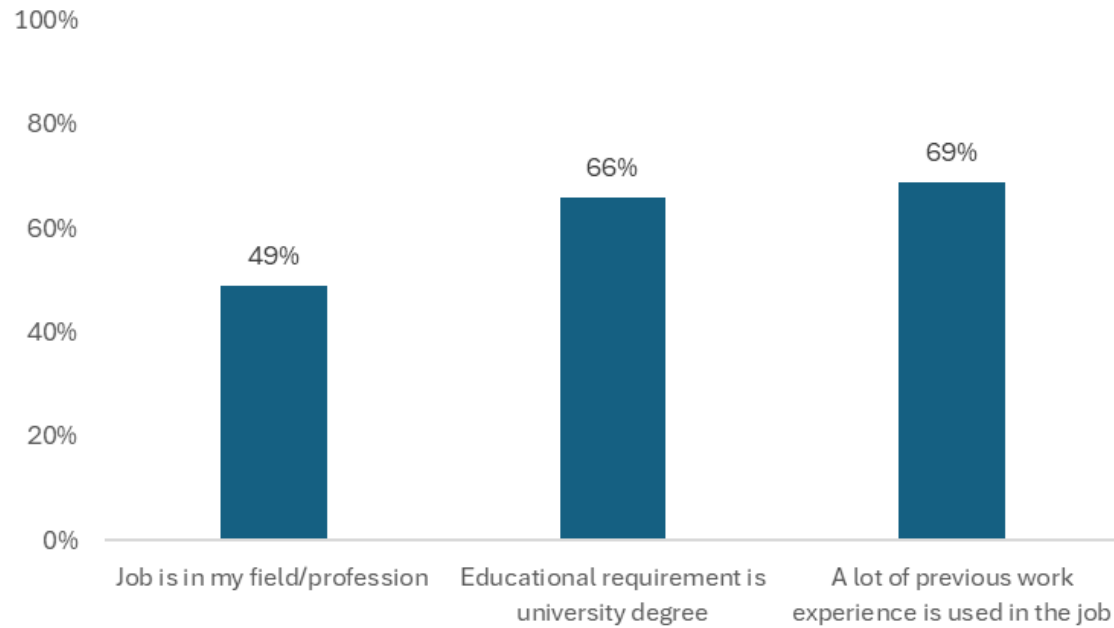


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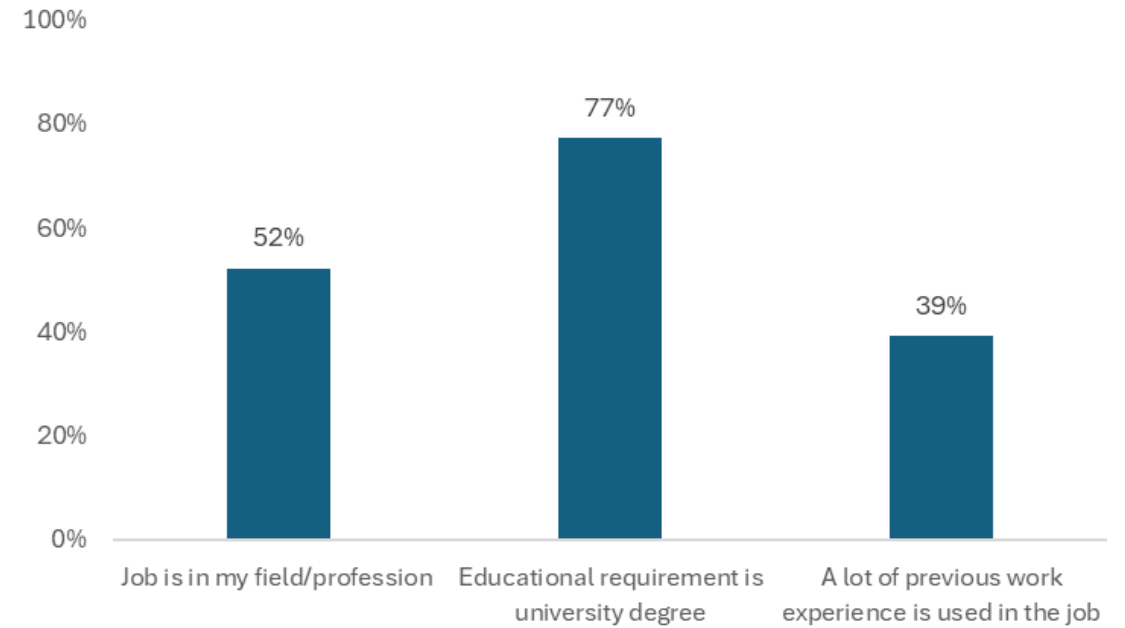


Commensurate Employment

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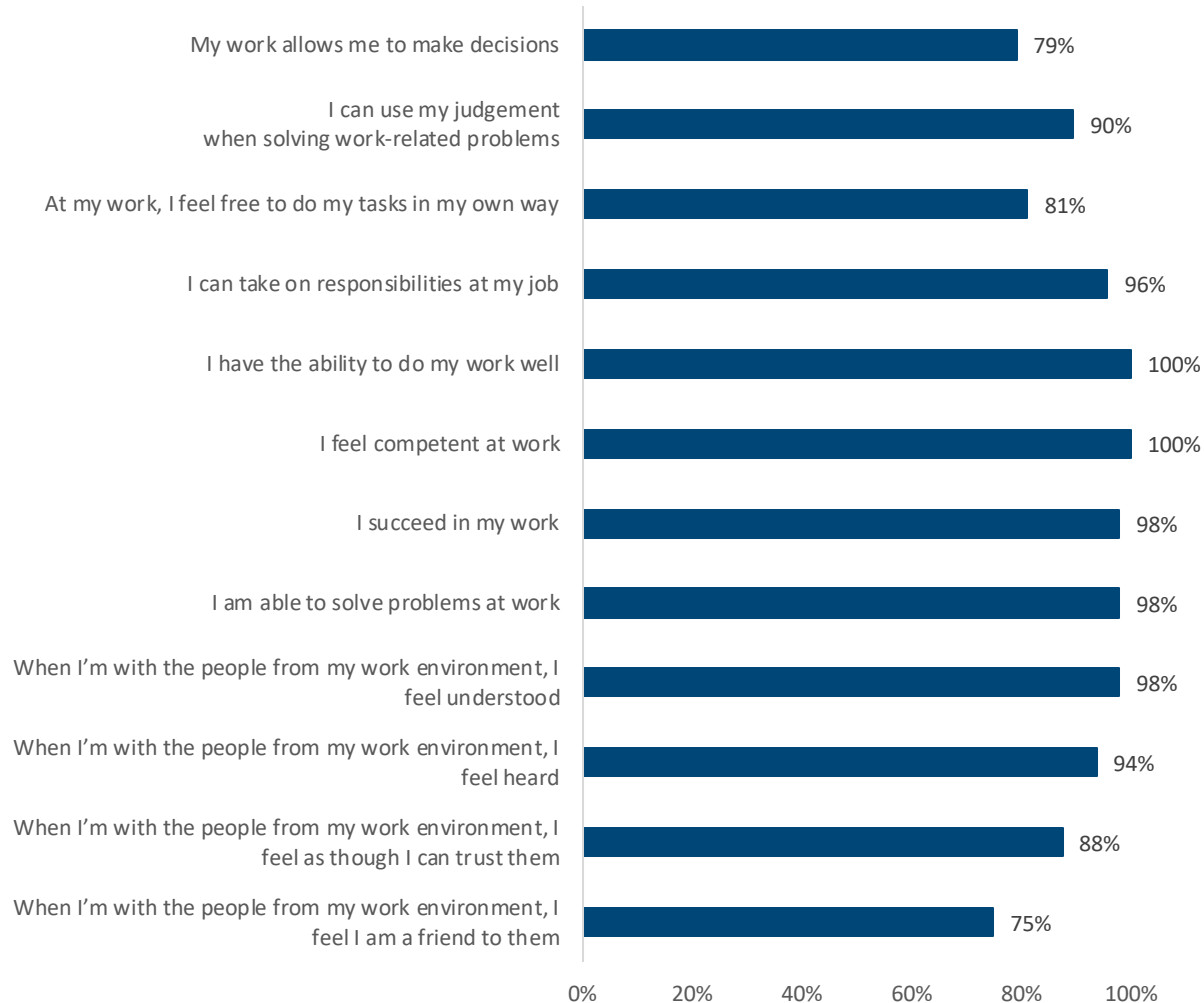


Job Satisfaction (1-7)

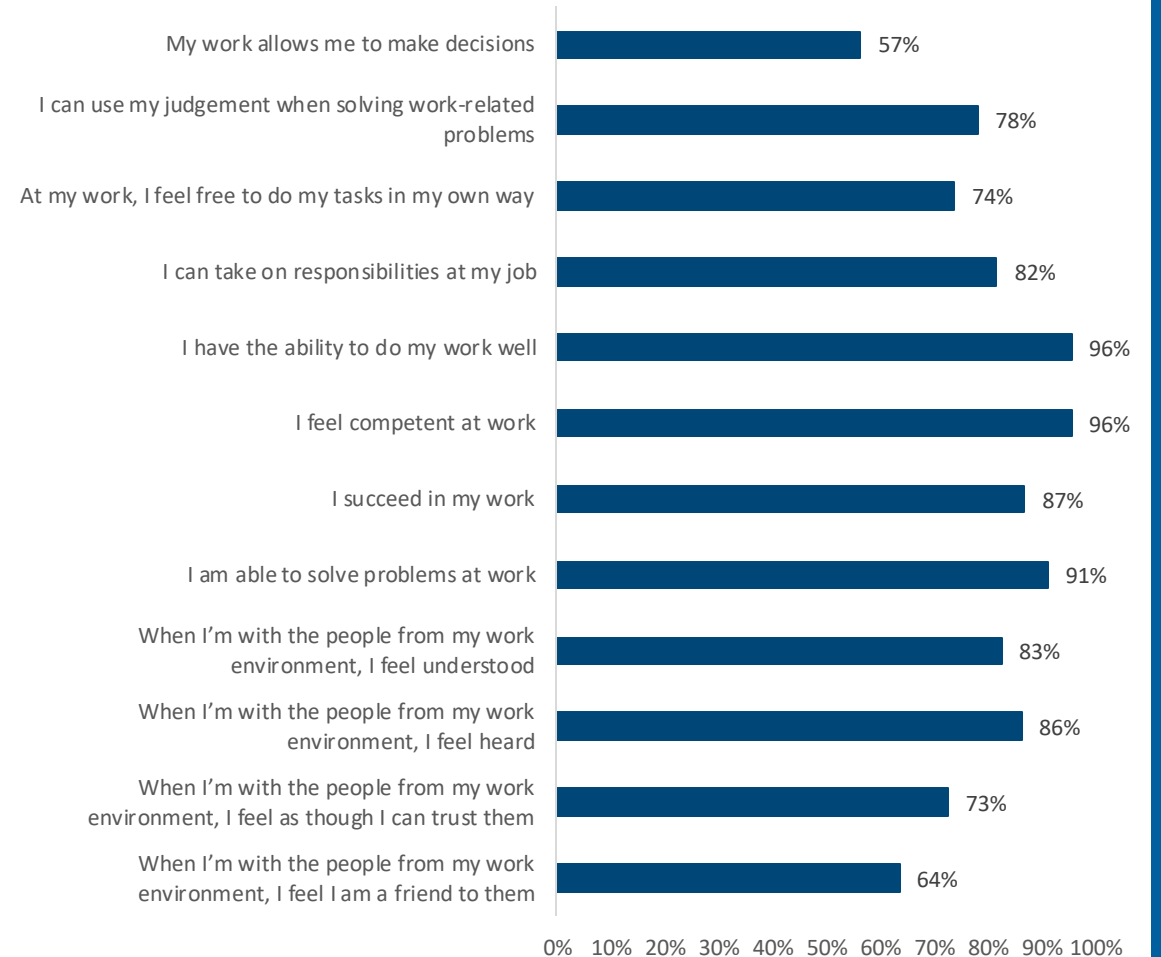
ISANS		Achēv	
Pay	4.3	Pay	4.0
Job security	5.3	Job security	5.1
Support from supervisor / manager	6.3	Support from supervisor / manager	5.5
Opportunities for career growth and promotion	4.6	Opportunities for career growth and promotion	4.5
Opportunities for learning new things and developing abilities	5.2	Opportunities for learning new things and developing abilities	4.5
Overall job satisfaction	5.1	Overall job satisfaction	4.6

Feelings about your Job (strongly agree or agree)

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MOSAIC Canadian Work
Experience Internship Pilot

WorkXP Program

Funded by the Government of
Canada's Foreign Credential
Recognition Program



MOSAIC Vision and Mission

Vision:

Together we advance an inclusive and thriving Canada.

Mission:

MOSAIC enriches communities through services and advocacy, furthering the success and sense of belonging of newcomers and individuals from diverse backgrounds.

MOSAIC Background

Serving
immigrants and
refugees since
1976

45+ programs and
services

450+ staff, 280+
volunteers, and
200+ contractors

Staff providing
services in 50+
locations



26,000 clients
served

MOSAIC Services

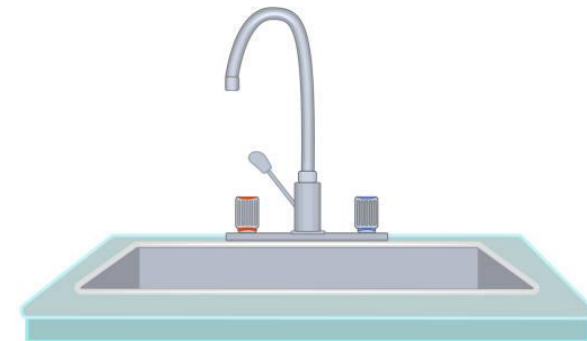
Settlement

Children,
Youth and
Family

English
Language

Health and
Refugee

Employment



WorkXP Program

- Responded to an ESDC Foreign Credential Recognition Program call for concepts (2019)
- Concept – An **internship** approach to the creation of skills commensurate employment that would provide internationally trained professionals with “Canadian work experience”
- Invited to submit a proposal for the MOSAIC Canadian Work Experience Internship Pilot (2021)
- Delivered the **WorkXP Program** (2021-2024)



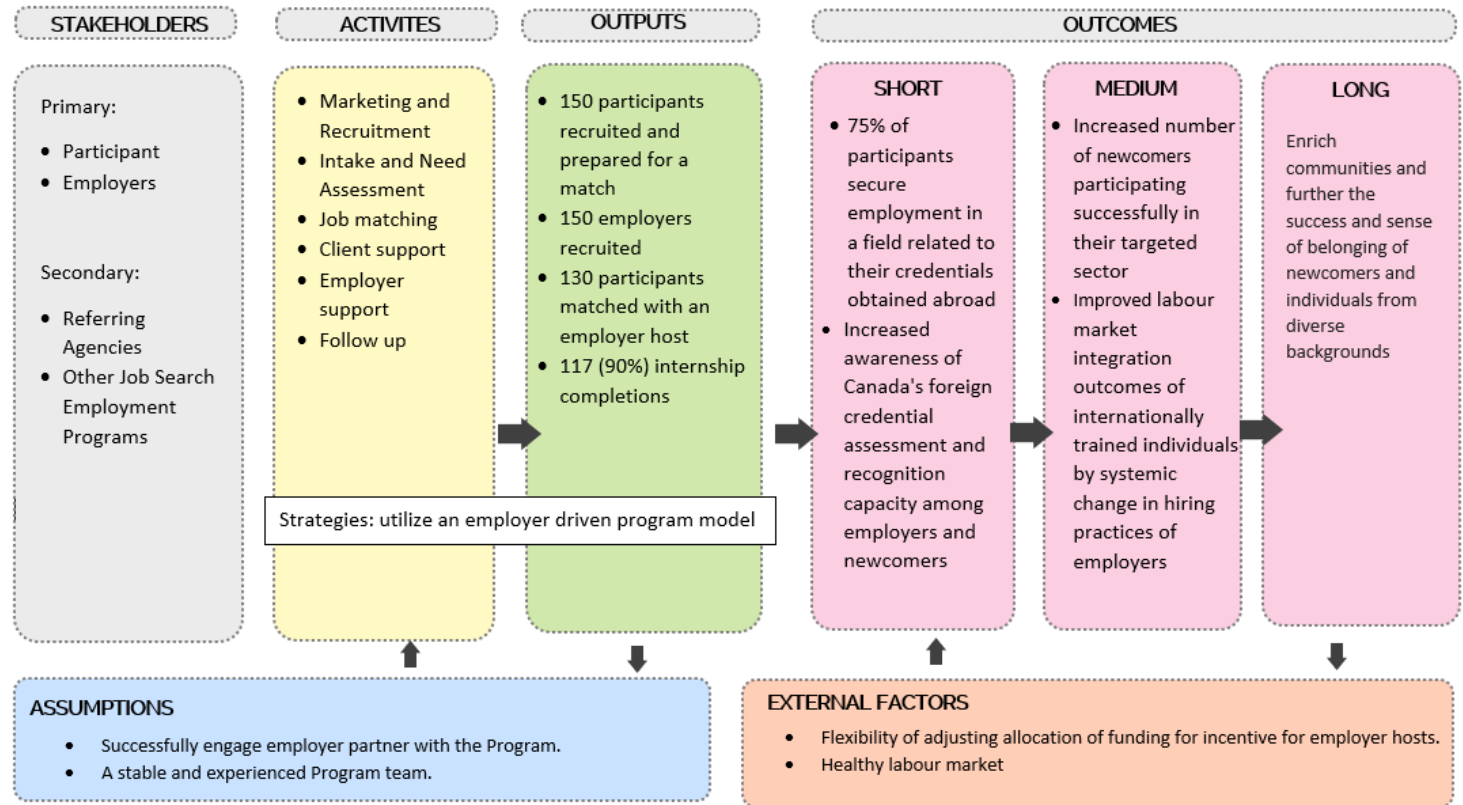
Program Objectives

- Provide newcomer professionals greater career access by making available opportunities to gain the relevant Canadian work experience that is often expected/required by local employers
- Increase the number of newcomer professionals utilizing their pre-arrival education and experience to contribute to the skills shortages in the local labour market
- Create a systemic change in how employers view internship programs to include newcomer internships and to change how newcomers gain Canadian work experience



Program Logic Model

To improve labour market integration outcomes of internationally trained individuals in targeted occupations and sectors through paid Job match.



Program Outputs

- **150** participants recruited for an internship placement
- **150** employers recruited for an internship placement
- **130** participants matched with an employers for internship
- **90%** of participants successfully complete their internship
- **75%** of participants successfully secure employment in a field or position related to their credentials obtained abroad



Program Outcomes

- Increased relevant Canadian work experience for newcomer professionals
- Increased sustainable employment and retention for newcomer professionals within the local Canadian Labour Market
- Increased employer awareness and engagement in hiring and supporting newcomer internship and employment

Program Overview

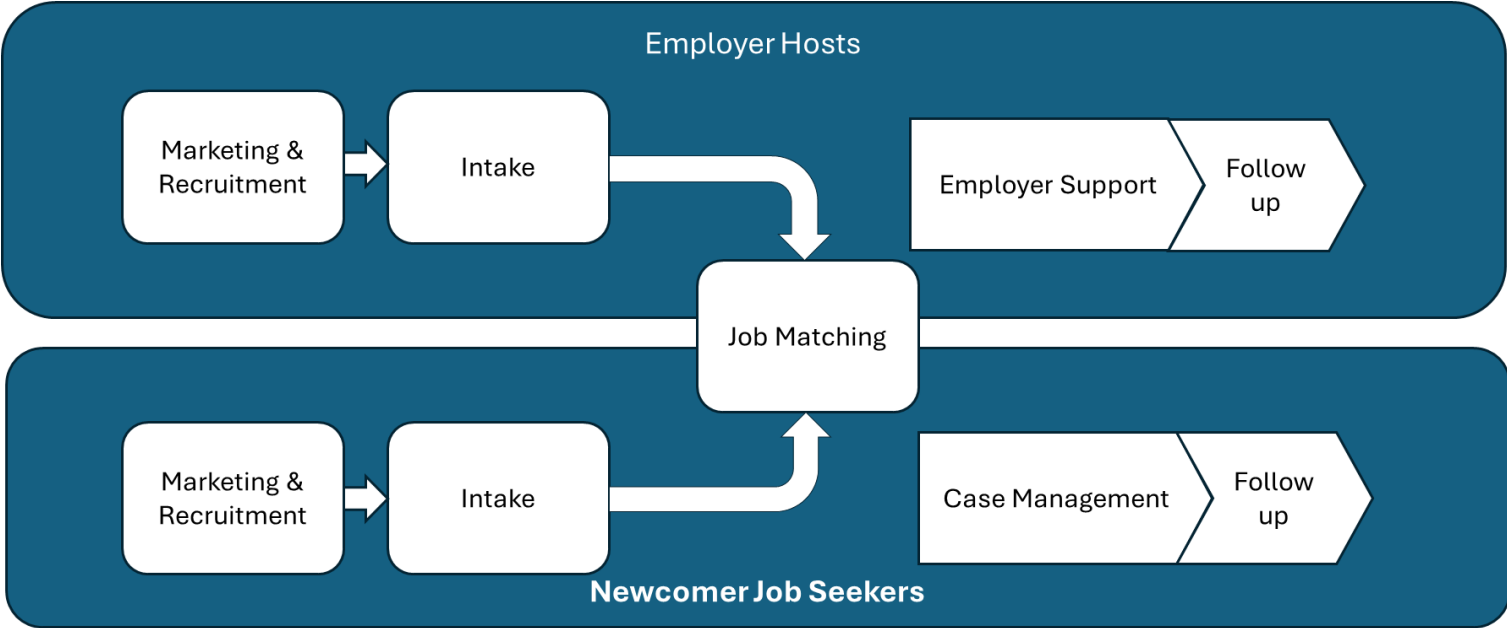
- Internship Approach
- Demand/Employer Focused Approach
- Participant Eligibility:
 - PR or new Canadian within the last 5 years
 - Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree
 - Unemployed or underemployed
 - 3 years relevant international work experience
 - Not have Canadian work experience in the same pre-arrival role/field

Program Overview

- Skills commensurate employment
- Minimum of 400 hours (10 - 12 weeks)
- \$5,000 incentive (Later increased to \$8,000)



Program Overview



Program Findings & Results

- Internship Approach
- Demand/Employer Focused Approach



Program Findings – Internship Approach

What Worked:

- Focus on learning and application of skills
- Flexibility of the internship funds
- Participant Action Plan and Internship Training Plan
- Follow-up and Coaching



Program Findings – Internship Approach

Lessons Learned:

- Internship approach does not work for all sectors/occupations
- The concept of Internships is not familiar to many employers
- Staffing is critical
- Employer recruitment prioritized over client recruitment



Program Findings – Employer Focused Approach

What Worked:

- Building on existing employer partners and employer relations team
- Minimizing administration required of the employer
- Employer Advisory Committee
- Soliciting, receiving and implementing employer feedback throughout the program

Program Findings – Employer Focused Approach

Lessons Learned:

- Financial incentives are not equally valued by employers
- Importance of understanding the employer's realities when trying to create an internship
- Do not overlook employer contributions beyond the internship



Program Results – Outputs

- **330** participants recruited for an internship placement
- **121** employers recruited for an internship placement
- **119** participants matched with an employer for internship
- **87%** of the participants successfully completing their internship*
- **76%** of the participants successfully secure employment in a field or position related to their credentials obtained abroad



Program Results – Outcomes

Increased relevant Canadian work experience for newcomer professionals

- **88%** of the participants were placed in a skills commensurate role
- **100%** of the participants received mentorship during the internship
- **88%** of the participants indicated that “I gained meaningful work experience in my field of expertise”

Program Results – Outcomes

Increased sustainable employment and retention for newcomer professionals within the local Canadian Labour Market

- **84%** of participants indicated that “I have successfully landed an internship opportunity OR have gained more confidence in my capacity to find future employment opportunities”



Program Results – Outcomes

Increased employer awareness and engagement in hiring and supporting newcomer internship and employment

- **42.6%** of the employers employed two or more interns
- **81%** of the employers indicated that the internship had a significant impact to their organization
- **98%** of the employers indicated an interest in taking on another intern in the future



Food for Thought

- What are the emerging challenges and possible solutions for understanding and changing employer mindset about hiring skilled newcomers?
- How does the immigration status affect employer perceptions of hiring skilled newcomers?
- What skills gaps have been identified by employers for skilled newcomers and what are employers willing to do to help bridge these skills gaps?
- What approaches for improving labour market integration have not worked and what are possible solutions?



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