



# Survey of skilled newcomers who previously used employment services

**Final Report**

MAY 2021

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to survey the skilled newcomers who have recently received employment services in order to get a better sense of the needs and gaps in terms of labour market integration supports for skilled newcomers, and to identify which supports are the most effective.

Overall, employment supports and services improve labour market outcomes of skilled newcomers. Skilled newcomers appear to be satisfied with the services they received and would recommend the services to others. Employment counseling, networking events, and work placements are most associated with successful labour market outcomes.

Several lessons and areas for improvement have been identified over the course of this research:

**The Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) process is lengthy and costly** and is especially affecting newcomers in regulated professions. Service providers called for reducing regulatory barriers, investing in bridging programs and increasing the length of financial support for the FCR process.

**Awareness of services is low and newcomers are not reached in a timely manner.** Focus group interviews with service providers and survey results particularly highlighted the importance of providing supports and services customized to newcomers as early as possible, ideally before newcomers' arrival to Canada. Potential improvements could include strengthening the role of the newcomer facing government offices as a direct and reliable channel of information about available services.

**Pre-arrival employment services are important but under-used.** Ideally, the newcomers should be engaged before they arrive in Canada. Both the service providers' accounts and the survey results point to the great benefits of pre-arrival services. However, the vast majority of those who did not use the pre-arrival services did not know about their existence. Making employment services available to skilled newcomers before their arrival and promoting these services before and at the time of arrival are potential area for improvements.

**Skilled newcomer women with children face more challenges in the labour market.** Childcare was one of the main barriers faced by this group at the time of receiving services. Solutions may include better access to childcare during services and flexibility in service schedule. Virtual delivery of employment services may also be beneficial for some with the childcare responsibilities.

**Employment counselling, networking events, work placements are correlated with labour market success.** The regression analysis shows that employment counselling, networking events and work placements all have a significant positive effect on the probability of successful commensurate employment. These findings were echoed by the service providers during the focus group interviews. On another hand, training and skills upgrading services are not associated with labour market success after controlling for individual characteristics. Further research is needed to understand what type of sector- or occupation-specific training could help skilled newcomers find successful, commensurate employment. Wage subsidies may help work placement programs in certain situations, though services providers have mixed experience with its application. Further research with careful program design is needed to identify the effective form of wage subsidies.

**Targeted, customized solutions are needed for newcomers.** Increase in more targeted, specialized, customized solutions such as specialized networking events, targeted training opportunities and industry-specific mentorships is the primary improvement that newcomers would like to see. Given a diversity of challenges and issues faced by newcomers, providing a wide variety of services also would allow them to access supports for their specific needs.

## INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a key economic policy of the Government of Canada to maintain and grow the country's prosperity during a time of decreasing fertility rate and aging population. Of the 1.2 million newcomers to Canada between 2011 and 2016, three in five were admitted to Canada in the economic admission class.<sup>1</sup> Most recent economic immigrants are skilled and/or educated. Two-thirds of economic immigrants enter Canada under the federal worker programs, including skilled workers, skilled trades workers, Canadian experience class, and caregivers while provincial and territorial nominees, who are mostly educated or skilled workers, make up another 27 per cent of the group of economic immigrants.<sup>2</sup> In terms of educational attainment, 48.9 per cent of newcomers arriving between 2011 and 2016 had a university level certificate, diploma or degree compared to 22.1 per cent for non-immigrants.

Although newcomers to Canada are highly educated, many face difficulties in finding a job commensurate with their education and skills. Compared to Canadian-born workers, the unemployment rates for recent newcomers with postsecondary credentials were higher, especially for individuals with college or university credentials. Among individuals who worked full-time and for the full year in 2015, recent newcomers earned substantially less than native-born people. For example, the earnings for native-born individuals with postsecondary credentials working full-time and full-year in 2015 was on average \$92,741 compared to an average of \$61,525 earned by recent newcomers. Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada found that among immigrants in the prime working age group who searched for employment six to 24 months after arriving in Canada, 71 per cent encountered at least one barrier to gaining employment. Skilled immigrant workers reported that the lack of Canadian work experience (26 per cent) or a lack of acceptance or recognition of their foreign credentials (23 per cent) as the most serious barrier to employment (Statistics Canada, 2003).<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing the importance of helping employers understanding the credentials and competencies of skilled immigrants, the Canadian Government established the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) in 2003 to facilitate credential processes and ensure

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<sup>1</sup> The statistics and figures are obtained from multiple CANSIM tables of the 2016 Canadian Census.

<sup>2</sup> The remaining minority of economic immigrants were admitted through the federal business programs as investors, entrepreneurs, or self-employed workers.

<sup>3</sup> The population statistics were adopted from Statistics Canada (2003). *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Progress and Challenges of New Immigrants in the Workforce*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 89-615-XIE. There is no recent population statistics of the same topic, but a 2014 ESDC report of the *Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians – Summary of the Panel's Online Consultation* suggests that the barriers remain the same.

they are fair, consistent, transparent, and timely. The FCRP provides strategic financial support to provincial and territorial governments and regulatory bodies for projects that improve the foreign credential recognition (FCR) processes. Recently, the FCRP moved beyond credential recognition and started addressing the gaps in employment supports for skilled newcomers during their settlement and integration journey. For example, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) funded a pilot project with third-party service providers to provide loans and support services to help skilled newcomers navigate FCR processes, and manage costs during the journey. Based on successful pilot results, the Loans Projects became a permanent component of the program in 2017. The FCRP also funded another pilot project (2017-2020) of employment supports to skilled newcomers to help them gain their first Canadian work experience related to their professional background, education, or skills. The pilot project led to significant positive outcomes for skilled newcomers, employers, and the federal government.

The challenges faced by skilled newcomers in their economic integration have been broadly documented in the pilot projects and recent research. In addition to credential recognition and Canadian work experience, commonly cited barriers include language proficiency, cultural knowledge, discrimination, family and financial responsibilities, social capital, social integration, and isolation. Various organizations deliver services and programs to address one barrier or more with funding from governments. However, the intersectionality of the circumstances and barriers may hinder the accessibility or effectiveness of these settlement services. Newcomers with children, for instance, may find it difficult to find affordable childcare during the time they receive employment services. The multiple programs and services available from a range of organizations, particularly in the metropolitan areas, also make it difficult for newcomers to navigate and find the “right” program. The absence of a “seamless service delivery system” makes it difficult to respond to the needs of skilled newcomers in an intentional way (Integrated Settlement Planning Consortium, 2000)<sup>4</sup> and the complex immigrant service sector is a contributing factor (Türegün, Bhuyan, Mandell, and Shields, 2019).<sup>5</sup> Labour market integration services are more effective if the programs consider the needs and circumstances of newcomers in their settled community.

The evidence from the two FCRP pilot projects suggests that it is important not only to provide services for credential or skill recognition but also to include supports that address other employment-related needs newcomers face during the settlement process. The results also suggested that a more detailed examination of newcomers’ experience, from the perspective of

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<sup>4</sup> Integrated Settlement Planning Consortium (2000). *Re-visioning the newcomer settlement support system*. Toronto: Integrated Settlement Planning Research Project.

<sup>5</sup> Adnan Türegün, Rupaleem Bhuyan, Nancy Mandell and John Shields (2019) *The Immigrant Settlement Ecosystem in Canada: An Ontario Case Study – Primary Research Report*. CERIS Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement. Toronto, Ontario. Retrieved from <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/iwys-primary-research-composite-final-report.pdf>.

key labour market integration service users, could provide more insights on potential support measures that may be essential or effective in their journey to secure employment commensurate with skills.

To build on the body of knowledge, ESDC contracted the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) to design and conduct a survey study of skilled newcomers who have received Immigrant Service Agencies (ISA) services and support. The primary objective of the research project is to have a better sense of the needs and gaps in terms of labour market integration supports for skilled newcomers, and to identify which supports are the most effective.

This report presents the final analysis of the project. It starts with a description of the project approach and research methodology. It is followed by the findings of the first focus group interview with immigrant service providers to provide some context for the survey study. We present a descriptive analysis of the online survey responses and exploratory analysis of the findings. The online survey analysis results are corroborated by service providers in the second focus group interview to complete our analysis. We conclude by providing key lessons learned, including some potential future research and service improvement suggestions.



## PROJECT APPROACH

The overarching aim of this research project is to get a better sense of the needs and gaps in terms of labour market integration supports for skilled newcomers, and to identify which supports are the most effective. Through the information collected from a survey with skilled newcomers who have received employment supports services and a focus group interviews with ISA staff who delivered the support services, the project addresses six key questions:

1. What kinds of employment supports have been used by skilled newcomers?
2. What do skilled newcomers like about the supports and services they received? Are these supports and services effective in helping skilled newcomers finding employment commensurate with their skills and education? What improvements to the services would skilled newcomers recommend?
3. What challenges skilled newcomers faced during the time they participated in the services? How did skilled newcomers and service agencies handle these challenges?
4. What challenges service agencies faced when they delivered employment support services to skilled newcomers? How did the agencies address these challenges?
5. Were there any gaps or unmet needs identified in the labour market integration process? If yes, what additional supports would have been useful?
6. With reference to the experience of skilled newcomers, what are the employment support services or improvements to existing interventions that yield strong labour market outcomes?

The project relies on two data collection components:

- An online focus group interview with staff of the partner ISAs to gather their frontline perspective on services provided, including the most in-demand services, the most effective interventions, the challenges clients faced along with their strengths, the challenges staff faced in designing and/or delivering the services, and potential areas for improvement. The results of the focus group interview informed the design of the online survey of skilled newcomers. The second focus group with the service providers validated the findings of the survey and provided more context and explanations for some of the results.
- Partnering with ten ISAs across Canada, the SRDC research team designed and administered an online survey to skilled newcomers who had received employment support services with

the partner ISA six months or more before the survey. The online survey took 20 minutes to complete, with questions on basic demographics, educational attainment, professional background, and users' experience with the employment support services received; the survey also collected information about any unmet needs and potential service gaps.

Throughout the project, the research team collaborated closely with ESDC, from identification and recruitment of ISAs, to soliciting input on the draft work plan, research methodology, questionnaire, focus group interview protocols, preliminary findings, and reports.

## RECRUITMENT

The recruitment for this project consisted of two stages. First, SRDC and ESDC recruited the ISAs to participate in the focus groups and to send out the e-mails to prospective survey respondents. Second, SRDC worked with the ISAs to recruit the skilled newcomers who had participated in the services prior to July 2020.

With the help of ESDC, SRDC identified over ten ISAs across the country with extensive experience of serving skilled newcomers. The selection criteria included:

1. Type of services provided;
2. Type of clients with whom the ISA was working;
3. Number of immigrants served;
4. Geographical coverage;
5. Service and client alignment with FCRP priorities and objectives; and
6. Previous funding history and established relationship with ESDC (FCRP).

The research team has successfully obtained participation from ten organizations out of the 11 initially selected candidate organizations. The participating ISAs are:

- Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES Employment)
- ACHEV
- Halton MC
- Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

- Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)
- SEED Winnipeg
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- WIL Counselling and Training for Employment
- World Skill Employment Centre

## THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The first focus group had eight participants from seven immigrant service agencies. The focus group took one hour and mainly followed the script. We discussed the challenges faced by the providers, challenges faced by newcomers, and the programs that see the most success in terms of helping skilled newcomers find work. Three service providers followed up with an e-mail with more detailed responses to the questions asked during the focus groups.

## SKILLED NEWCOMER CHALLENGES

Foreign credential recognition, lack of professional network, language and knowledge of Canadian workplace culture have been named as some of the top challenges skilled newcomers face in finding employment. Other challenges include:

- Differences in job search tactics between Canada and the individual's home country;
- Lack of Canadian experience;
- Some participants are not eligible for funded programs, for example international students who wish to remain in Canada;
- Duplication of services – i.e., several organizations offer similar services, causing confusion, lack of transparency and difficulty identifying a clear path;
- Some newcomers are not eligible for government-funded supports, but still need help integrating into the labour market (e.g., international graduates, temporary foreign workers, clients with open work permits).

## SERVICE PROVIDER CHALLENGES

Aside from difficulties in helping newcomers overcome their barriers to employment, the focus group discussion touched upon several themes.

### Employer connection

ISAs sometimes find it difficult to connect with employers. Sometimes the employers are not receptive to hiring newcomers: they may not be familiar with their educational credits or are

wary about the cultural fit. Communication with employers is seen as one of the main avenues for improving the employment outcomes of skilled newcomers.

## Awareness and recruitment

Pre-arrival programs have been mentioned by several focus group participants as an important step in preparing the newcomers for entering the Canadian labour force. Focus group participants reported that few newcomers are aware of the prearrival services, suggesting lack of information and awareness of these supports.

Some practitioners mentioned that the newcomers are referred to them late — missing valuable time to find a job. However, some lamented the unrealistic expectations that some newcomers have about finding employment in Canada.

Overall, the service providers noted that only 20 per cent of newcomers are aware of the services, thus improving awareness of services and increasing the promotional efforts are some of the priority issues for the ISAs.

## Organizational issues

There were a number of issues and challenges that the service providers mentioned during the first focus group interview. Some deal with funding concerns, some with personnel and some with ability to offer appropriate services to skilled newcomers:

1. **Funding.** Financial constraints affect all areas of service providers operations: ability to offer needed programs or training, ability to invest in technology or hire appropriate number/type of personnel. A few providers agreed that in some cases, the current maximum loan amount of \$15,000 is not enough. Due to the funding structure, service providers sometimes need to compete for clients, which may lead to misinformation for the newcomers and inefficiencies in services access.
2. **Personnel.** Service providers mentioned the need to hire more employment counsellors as the current workload is too high in some agencies. There is also a need for more job developers and job retention positions. Finally, some service providers would benefit from a designated data analysis position.

## SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS/SOLUTIONS FOR CHALLENGES

Most service providers agreed that a “web” of programs and a holistic approach was needed for truly successful integration of skilled newcomers into the labour market. This included the number of supports that were offered through different programs. Service providers noted that it was difficult to identify one single program to which the labour market success could be attributed. However, there were several key aspects of their programs that providers believed crucial to newcomers’ success.

- 1. Working with other parties.** Service providers see their role as being a mediator between newcomers and other parties. Engaging employers, working together with employers are the key to successful labour market outcomes of skilled newcomers. For regulated professions, engagement with regulatory bodies and creating multi-stakeholder working groups that include regulatory bodies and employers have proven to help skilled newcomers obtain employment.
- 2. Skills development.** Incorporating important skills (digital skills, etc.) into programming and experiential learning through work placements have shown success according to the service providers. Customized programming, and programming for specific professions (e.g., the engineering program at ISANS) helps skilled newcomers find employment commensurate with their skills.
- 3. Loans and subsidies.** Loans and wage subsidies are generally useful, with some exceptions. One service provider noted that wage subsidies were not required for a program for skilled newcomers who recently arrived in Canada, but it was useful for women who have had a period of inactivity in the labour market. Foreign credential recognition programs and loans for accreditation programs are helpful.
- 4. Connection/communication/awareness.** Early connection with newcomers and pre-arrival services have been mentioned several times during the focus group interview. Service providers noted that those who engage in pre-arrival services tend to be better prepared to enter the labour market in Canada. Awareness of services and communication with newcomers can be an issue. Due to the pandemic, many services switched to digital programming and were able to reach a wider audience. This is especially useful in rural areas (e.g., Nova Scotia outside of Halifax).

The findings from the first focus group interview were incorporated into the online survey instrument to ensure that all key challenges of skilled newcomers’ journey of labour market integration were adequately covered in the survey. The next section presents the analysis results of the online survey of skilled newcomers who previously used employment services from the partnered immigrant service agencies of this project.

## THE ONLINE SURVEY

The analysis of the online survey of skilled newcomers who previously used employment services was used to answer the six key research questions presented above. The results of the survey analysis are split into two parts. The descriptive analysis focuses on showing the main socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents. We also discuss the services the skilled newcomer used, which services they found useful and why, what challenges they faced along the way and what were some of the labour market outcomes for this group of newcomers. In the exploratory analysis section, we dive deeper into the survey results and try to tease out some information about what services were correlated with the successes in the labour market and whether or not there are some fundamental differences in socio-demographic characteristics for those who are more successful in the labour market compared to those less successful.

## DEPLOYMENT OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey targeted skilled newcomers who had postsecondary education, who arrived in Canada within the past ten years, and who last used employment services in one of the ten immigrant service agencies before July 2020.

SRDC provided each partner ISA an invitation email with a link to the online survey. Once the online survey started, SRDC provided a weekly summary of survey response statistics of the ISA's clients to the ISA. The online survey was open for 30 days and the link was sent to over 3,800 skilled newcomers. SRDC monitored the survey responses during the survey period and ensured that the sample comprised skilled newcomers from both genders, different countries of origin, and various family types. The research team was prepared to discuss with the ISAs the need to put special efforts in recruiting other types of skilled newcomers to the survey if the sample were too dominant by certain types of skilled newcomers. At the end, the team decided it was not necessary even though the ethnicity of respondents was skewed towards South Asians.

The survey asked the skilled newcomers about their demographic information, their education and employment background. It included questions about the programs that the newcomers participated in since they have arrived, which programs they found to be useful, which programs did not help as much as they thought. The survey also asked about their employment, how they found a job, whether this employment is commensurate with their skills. The online survey also asked the respondents about any challenges they faced along the way, whether the programming helped with these challenges and what they thought worked well in addressing the challenges and what did not work at all. The full survey is included in Appendix A.

Many of the survey questions had been previously used in other immigrant focus survey or projects. New questions were created carefully to address specific topics for this project, and they have been reviewed and tested by multiple researchers to ensure the questions are clear, appropriate, and not difficult to answer by newcomers who use English as a secondary language.

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### Sample description

In this section, we provide basic description and statistics of the respondents' sample, such as demographic, and socio-economic characteristics of skilled newcomers who participated in employment services.

After some data quality checks and minor data cleaning, the total sample size was established at 532 observations, consisting of 497 completed responses and 35 partial responses. The first part of the descriptive analysis provides summary statistics (of distribution percentages) of respondents' background and demographic information.

- Of the analysis sample, 66 per cent of respondents were women and 34 per cent men.
- The age distribution is shown in Figure 1 below; the median age group was 35-39 years old.
- Out of all respondents, 82 per cent were married or in a common-law relationship, and the rest were single (never married, divorced, separated, or widowed).
- Fifty-five per cent had children under 18 years old and out of those, 88 per cent had at least one child under 12 years old. Only 1.1 per cent of the sample were single parents of children under 12 years old.
- About 71 per cent of respondents identified as visible minority.<sup>6</sup> As shown in Figure 2 below, the top three ethnicities were South Asian (48 per cent), Black (12 per cent) and Arab (9 per cent).
- The household income distribution (shown in Figure 3) indicated that the median total household income fell between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year. A significant portion of skilled

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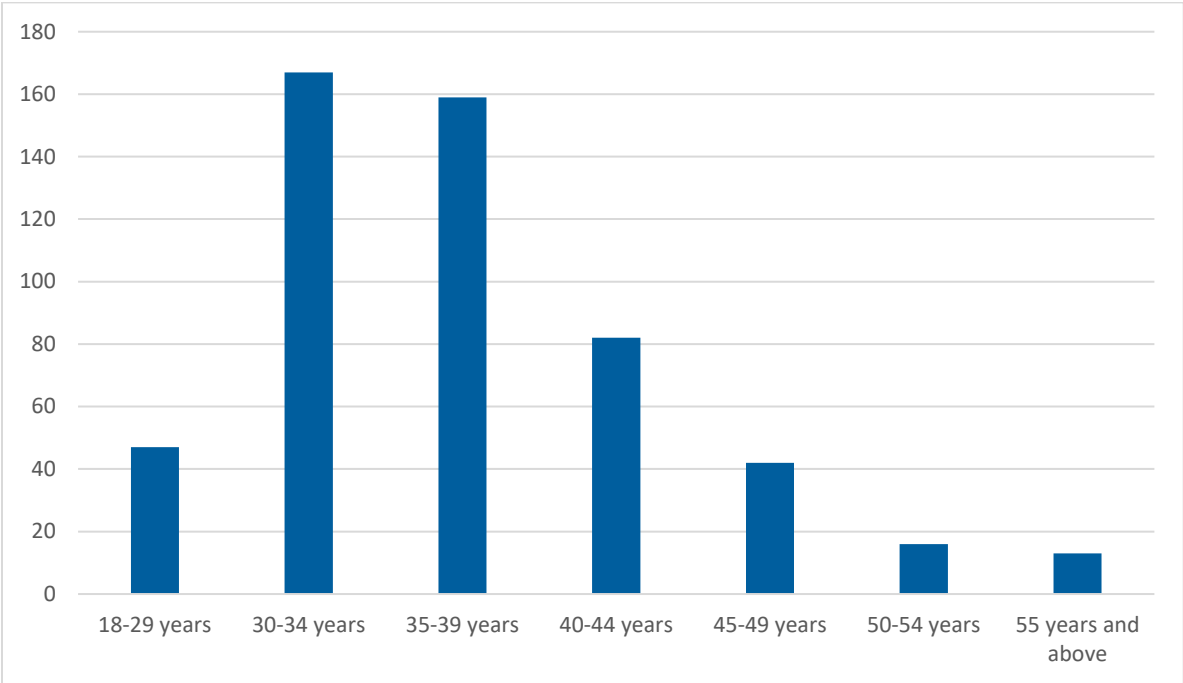
<sup>6</sup> Traditionally Canadian surveys rely on the self-identified "visible minority" to measure the proportion of respondents who are non-Indigenous and non-White. However, field experience has shown time to time the concept of "visible minority" is not well understood and it is not unusual for respondents of racialized minorities of not identified as "visible minority".



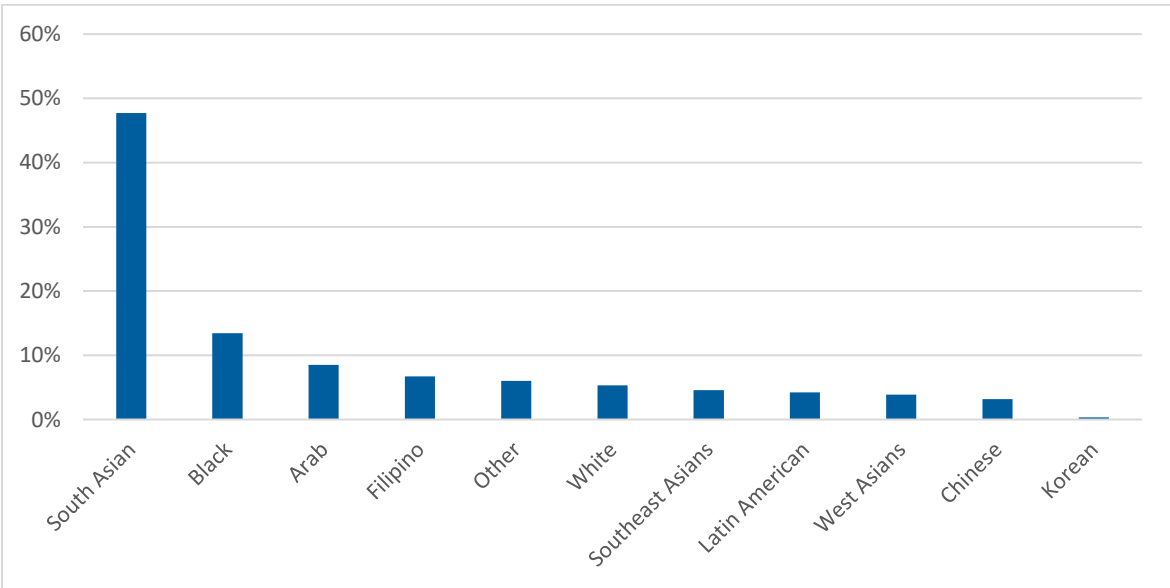
newcomers were doing relatively well financially — indeed, 15 per cent of respondents noted that their yearly household income was over \$90,000.

- Unsurprisingly, since the survey targeted skilled newcomers in English Canada, 90 per cent of respondents spoke English well enough to conduct a conversation, 9.8 per cent spoke both English and French and 0.2 per cent (one respondent) spoke only French.
- Finally, 95 per cent of the respondents had education at the Bachelor-degree level or higher. In fact, 59 per cent of respondents had a Master’s degree or higher.
- Some skilled newcomers had Canadian education: 31 per cent of the respondents received additional education in Canada. Out of those who obtained Canadian education, 16 per cent received a trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma, 4 per cent got a community college diploma, 7 per cent and 10 per cent received a Bachelor’s degree and post-graduate degree, respectively. Finally, 64 per cent received some other diploma, degree, or a certificate. Thirty-seven per cent of the respondents participated in a bridging program.
- Prior to arriving in Canada, 89 per cent of the survey respondents had a foreign work experience with a median length of six to ten years. Table 1 summarizes the top 10 National Occupation Code (NOC) categories for paid work outside of Canada. Two-thirds of the respondents had jobs in skill levels A and B (jobs requiring apprenticeship, college, or university training or higher).
- Most (61 per cent) of survey respondents arrived under the economic class category as a principal applicant. The overall distribution of the immigration category responses is shown in Figure 4. The median year of landing was 2019 but 77 per cent of the survey respondents landed in Canada in 2018 or later.

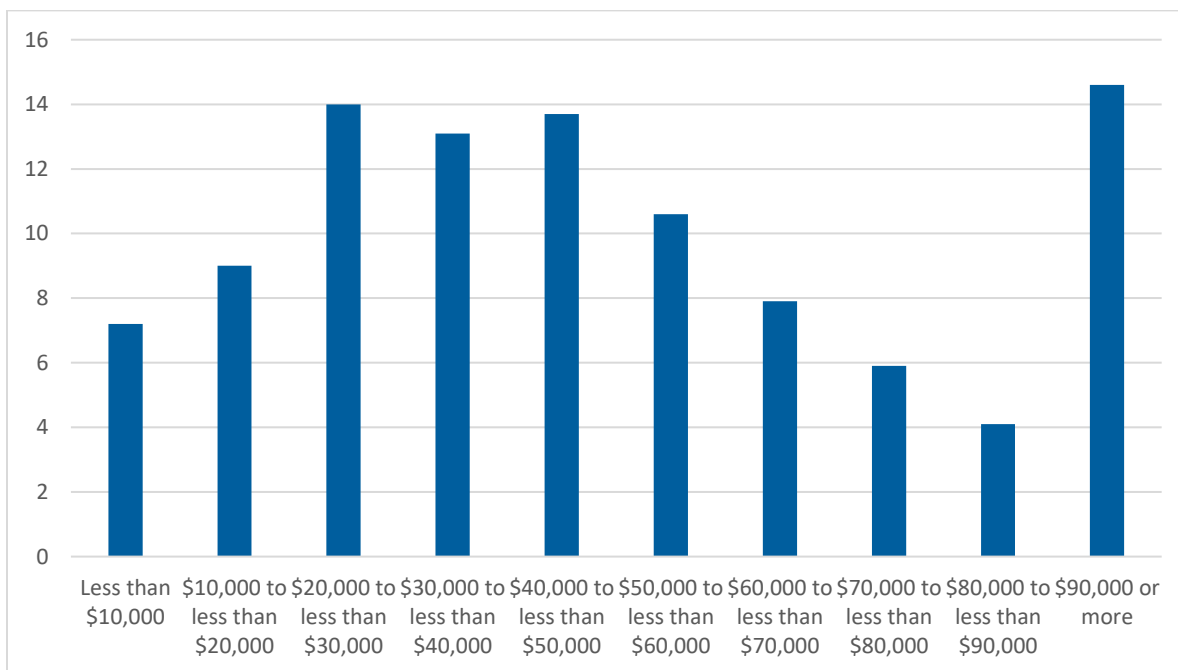
**Figure 1** Age distribution of respondents



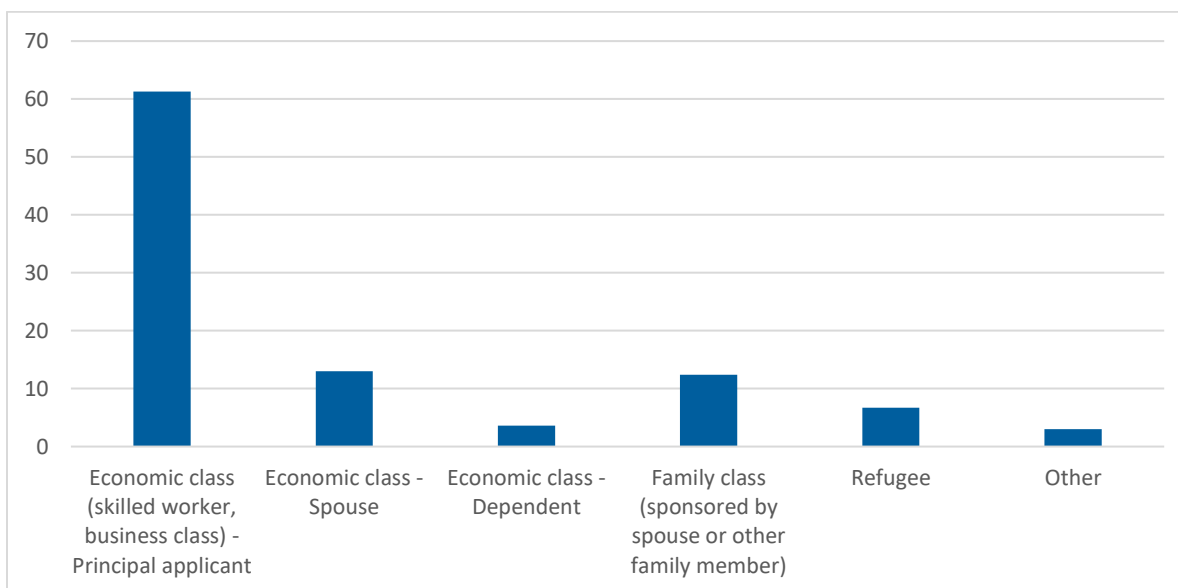
**Figure 2** Ethnicities of respondents



**Figure 3** Distribution of yearly household income



**Figure 4** Immigration categories of respondents

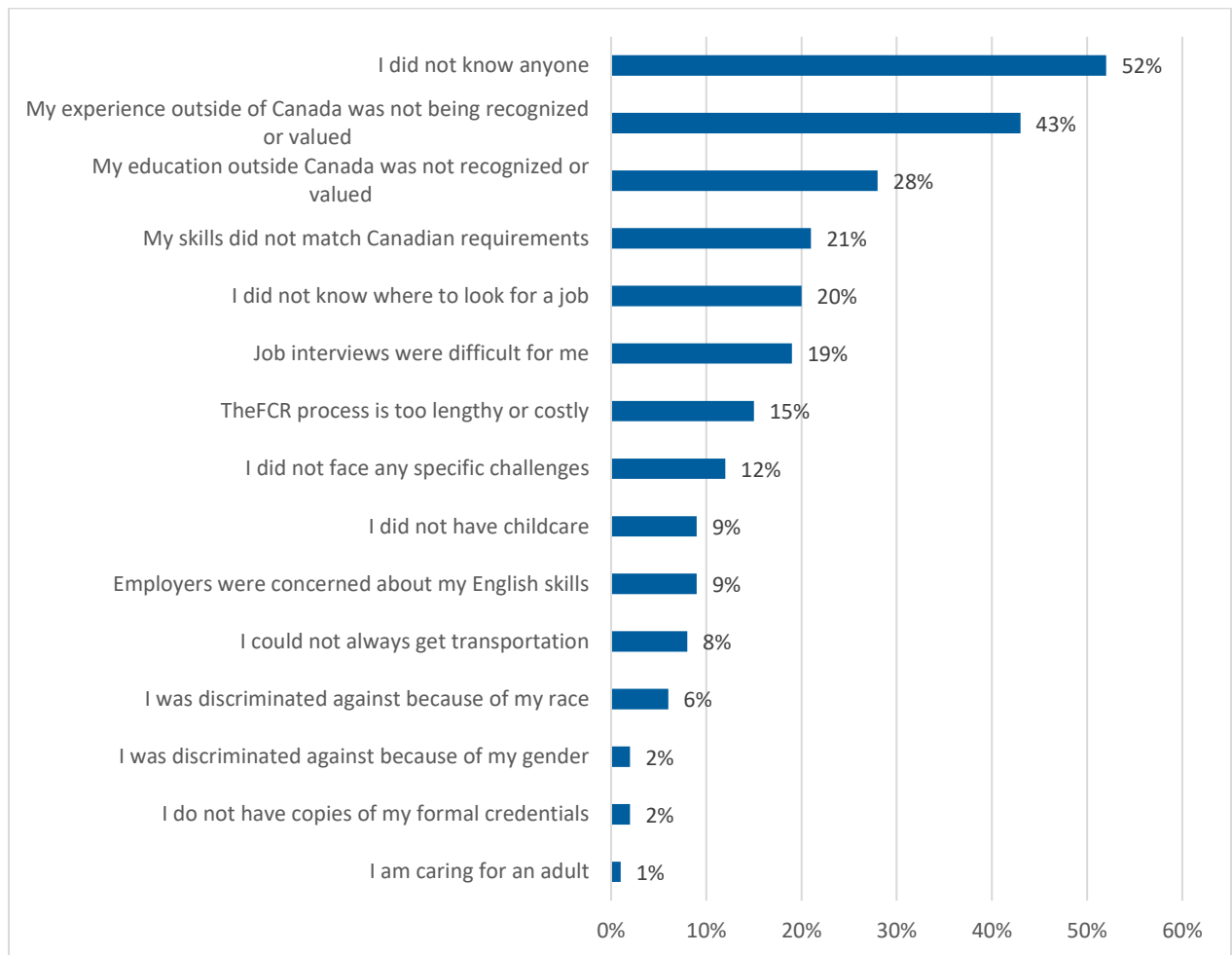


**Table 1 Top 10 National Occupation Code (NOC) categories — Paid work outside of Canada**

<b>Paid job outside Canada NOC code: Major categories</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>11 Professional occupations in business and finance</b>	58	13.3
<b>40 Professional occupations in education services</b>	53	12.2
<b>31 Professional occupations in health (except nursing)</b>	41	9.4
<b>01 Middle management occupations in administrative, financial, and business services or communication (except broadcasting)</b>	33	7.6
<b>12 Administrative and financial supervisors and administrative occupations</b>	30	6.9
<b>30 Professional occupations in nursing</b>	28	6.4
<b>13 Finance, insurance and related business administrative occupations</b>	27	6.2
<b>02 Middle management occupations in engineering, architecture, science and information systems</b>	22	5.1
<b>21 Professional occupations in natural and applied sciences</b>	22	5.1
<b>22 Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences</b>	18	4.1
<b>Other (27 other NOCs)</b>	103	23.3

Figure 5 summarizes the challenges the skilled newcomers faced in finding employment in Canada. The top three job search difficulties in finding employment were not knowing anyone, professional experience not being recognized, and education not recognized by Canadian employers. Approximately one-fifth of respondents either found that their skills did not match Canadian requirements or did not know where to look for a job, and experienced difficulties during interviews.

**Figure 5 Challenges before participating in provided services**



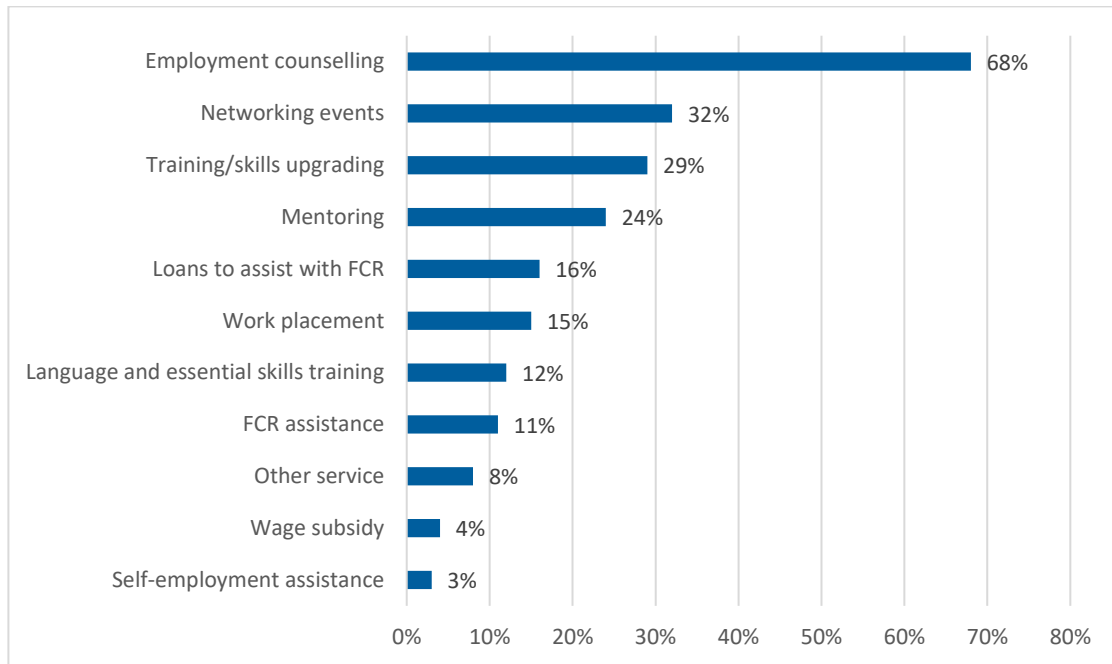
### Services used and satisfaction with the services

To address the question about the types of services skilled newcomers used and how happy they were with the services, we asked the respondents a number of questions about their service participation and satisfaction.

The period of engagement in service was generally short as 31 per cent of survey respondents used the services for less than a month. Another 37 per cent used the services for one to three months. Overall, 81 per cent of the respondents used the services for six months or less.

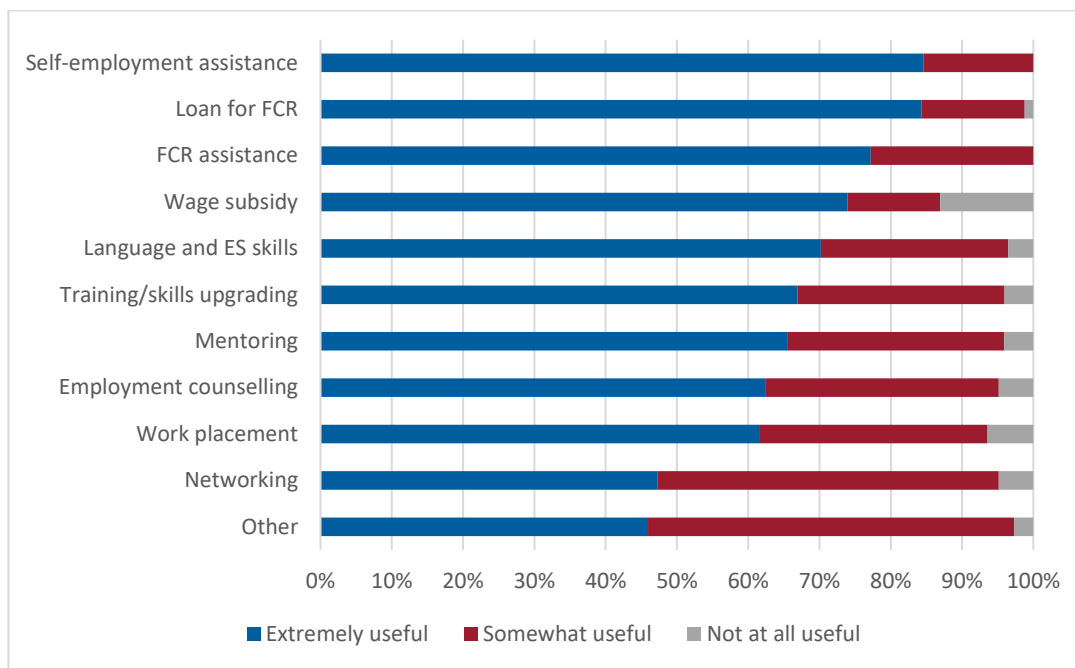
The top three services received at a particular ISA were employment counselling, networking events and the training/skills upgrading. Overall usage of the services is shown in o. The ranking of services received at any agency is virtually the same.

**Figure 6** Employment services used at the ISA distributing the survey



Only 21 per cent of survey respondents used pre-arrival services. The vast majority (92 to 100 per cent of respondents depending on the service) of the survey respondents had either already recommended or were likely to recommend all of the services they might have received. The services that were least likely to be recommended were self-employment assistance (7 per cent would not recommend), mentoring (2 per cent would not recommend) and employment counselling (2 per cent would not recommend). While these numbers are quite small, we do note that skilled newcomers who were more satisfied with the services might be more likely to complete our survey. Figure 7 provides an overview of the services that respondents found most useful.

**Figure 7 Services that respondents found most useful**



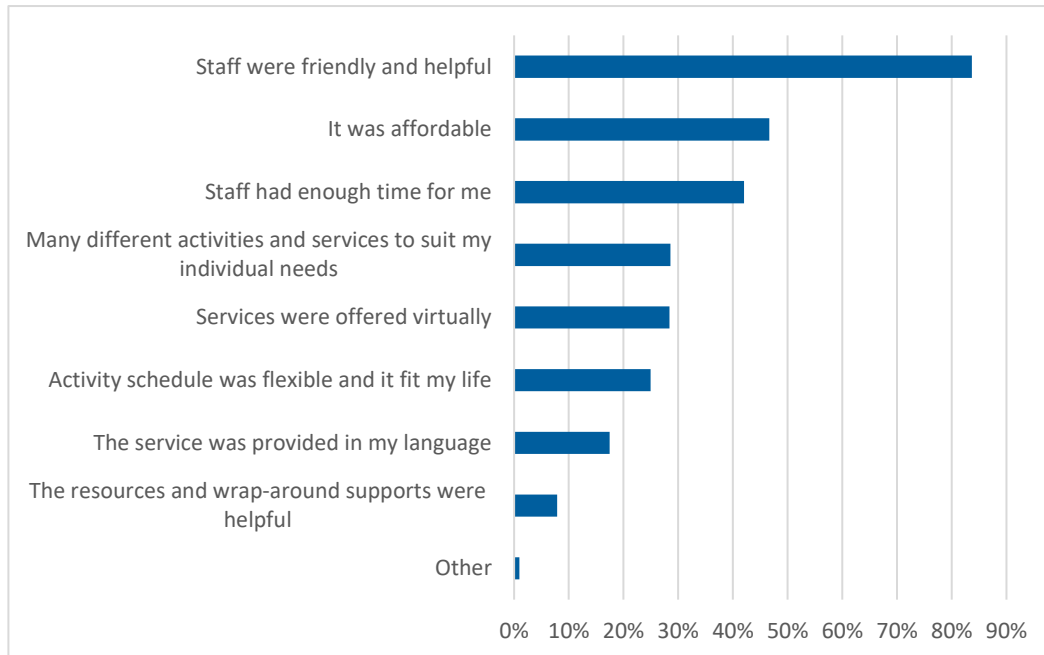
Participants found loans for foreign credential recognition, self-employment assistance and foreign credential recognition assistance to be the most useful services. The reasons why these and other services were found to be useful are summarized in Table 2, which shows that aside from the direct impacts of each service (e.g., ability to have foreign credentials recognized as a consequence of FCR assistance), there were also a number of indirect benefits. The most prominent finding is that almost all services helped the participants build their self-confidence, and the confidence boost factor was listed as one of the reasons a service was found to be useful for nine out of the ten services.

**Table 2** Top three reasons the services were found to be useful

	Foreign credential recognition assistance	Loans to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs	Training and/or skills upgrading	Work placement	Wage subsidy	Mentoring	Employment counselling	Networking events	Language and essential skills training	Self-employment assistance
<b>1</b>	Allowed me to obtain Foreign Credential Recognition	Allowed me to obtain Foreign Credential Recognition	Improved my job-search skills and abilities	Helped me find a job	Helped me find a job	Built my self-confidence	Improved my job-search skills and abilities	Helped me develop my professional network	Improved my language skills	Built my self-confidence
<b>2</b>	Built my self-confidence	Built my self-confidence	Built my self-confidence	Improved my job-search skills and abilities	Other reason	Improved my job-search skills and abilities	Built my self-confidence	Built my self-confidence	Improved my essential skills (reading, document use and digital skills)	Improved my professional skills
<b>3</b>	Helped me find a job	Improved my professional skills	Improved my professional skills	Built my self-confidence	Helped me find a job that matches my level of education and skills	Helped me develop my professional network	Helped me develop my professional network	Improved my job-search skills and abilities	Built my self-confidence	Improved my essential skills (reading, document use and digital skills)



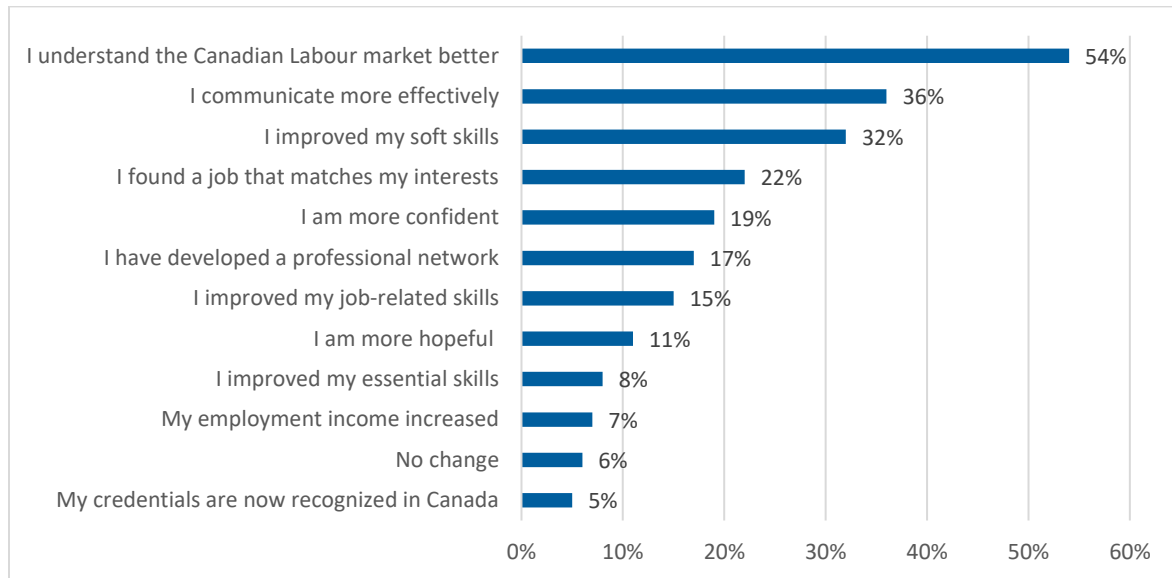
**Figure 8** What respondents liked most about the services



In terms of service delivery, the participants found the friendliness and helpfulness of staff to be one of the service’s most positive features (see Figure 8). They also enjoyed the affordability of the service, the fact that the staff had enough time to help them with their challenges, and the ability to participate in the services virtually. Overall, the service agencies were helpful in assisting newcomers to overcome difficulties and barriers, including (but not limited to) not knowing where to look for a job, not knowing anyone and not having enough skills. Respondents felt that the agencies were least helpful in providing assistance in caring for an adult, helping with interviews, obtaining childcare and locating copies of participants’ credentials.

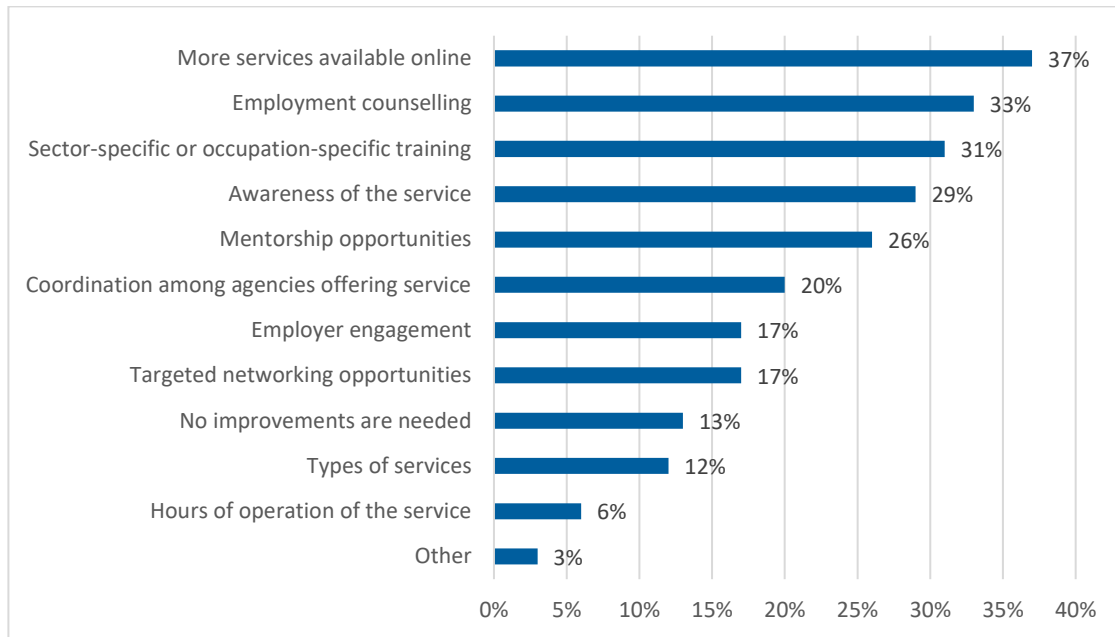
Improvements in cultural knowledge, communication skills, and soft skills were the top three areas of improvement credited by survey respondents to the services they had received. Finding a job that matched their interests and skills was fourth in the ranking, selected by 22 per cent of respondents. Figure 9 provides an overview of the areas selected by respondents as most improved due to the services received.

**Figure 9** Most significant change due to the service



Service agencies were interested in knowing how they could serve their clients better and what improvements skilled newcomers wanted to see. The top three services improvements that survey respondents wished to see were: more online availability of services, employment counselling and sector-specific or occupation-specific training. Approximately one-tenth of skilled newcomers did not think that any additional improvements to the services were needed. See Figure 10 for details.

**Figure 10**      **Improvements needed**



Some of the issues in providing employment services to skilled newcomers were how aware immigrants were of the services and how easily these services could be accessed. The next section describes the findings related to awareness and accessibility of the employment services among skilled newcomers.

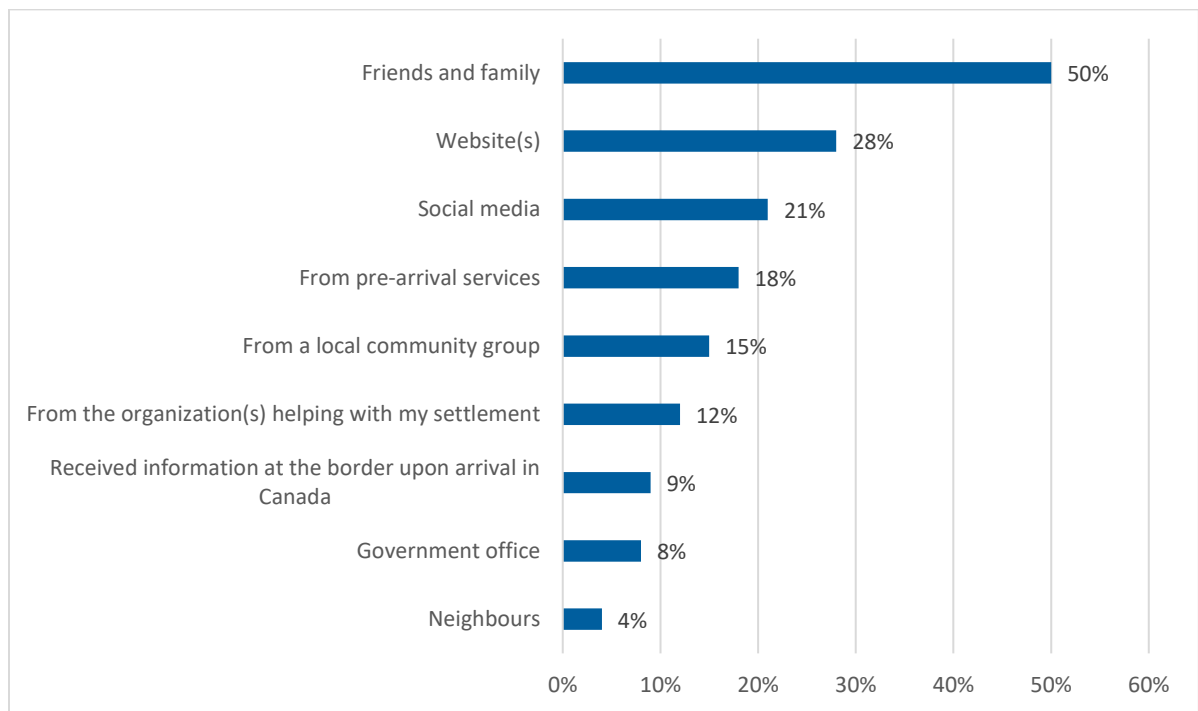
### Challenges related to service awareness, availability, and access

Service awareness was raised by the service providers during the focus group as one of the major issues in helping newcomers. To get a picture of the participants' experiences, we asked them questions about their general awareness of the services and types of barriers they faced in accessing the employment services.

Even though the survey targeted skilled newcomers who had previously used employment services, many revealed they had difficulties in learning about newcomer employment services. Forty-two per cent of respondents reported that finding information about the services was difficult or very difficult while only 34 per cent indicated that finding information about the service was easy or very easy. For other newcomer employment services, 87 per cent of respondents were not aware of the existence of free pre-arrival services and 48 per cent stated that there were services they would have wanted to use but they had not been aware of their availability.

The top three sources of information about the employment services were friends and family, websites, and social media. Only 8 per cent of respondents said they learned about the employment services at a government office and only 9 per cent received the relevant information at the border upon arrival. This once again points to issues in building awareness about available services. Service providers stated in both focus group interviews that newcomers should be getting accurate, up-to-date information about available employment services directly from the governments. Figure 11 below illustrates information sources for employment services as reported by participants.

**Figure 11** Main sources of information about employment services



The median time for accessing the services was 31 to 90 days after landing in Canada. For those who accessed the service more than a month after their arrival, the top reason for not accessing the service sooner was not knowing about settlement/employment services (63 per cent). Some did not think these services would be useful (16 per cent), while 13 per cent had not planned to work until that time, 10 per cent were focused on learning the language first and 5 per cent had already found employment. However, the vast majority (81 per cent) of these respondents said that they wished they had accessed the service sooner.

Although employment services were available to the respondents, only 40 per cent encountered no challenges in accessing them. Otherwise, the top challenges were translation or interpretation

(31 per cent) and childcare (21 per cent). Scheduling of services, housing, physical and mental health challenges, and transportation issues were experienced by 16 per cent, 11 per cent, 6 per cent and 3 per cent of respondents, respectively.

In the survey, 20 per cent of newcomers said that the ISA had provided direct support to address their challenge; 17 per cent reported that ISA had provided indirect support (e.g., provided referrals or information); and 15 per cent said that their challenge had not been addressed. For those who selected the “Other” option for this question and elaborated, many said that they had not raised the challenge they were encountering with the ISA and had managed themselves, although their reason for not seeking help was unknown. The results suggest that some did not receive the support they needed, or they did not know supports might be available to them through the ISA from which they had received services.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected service delivery and the providers had to make adjustments. Many programs switched their programming to virtual delivery, and 41 per cent of respondents reported that the activities move to a virtual delivery model made it easier for them to participate. However, 27 per cent noted that virtual delivery made it more difficult for them to participate. Other pandemic-related challenges included: 11 per cent experienced issues with childcare, 24 per cent said that the program activities were cancelled, 12 per cent experienced service delay. Only 21 per cent said that there were no changes to the services they received due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Service gaps and unmet needs

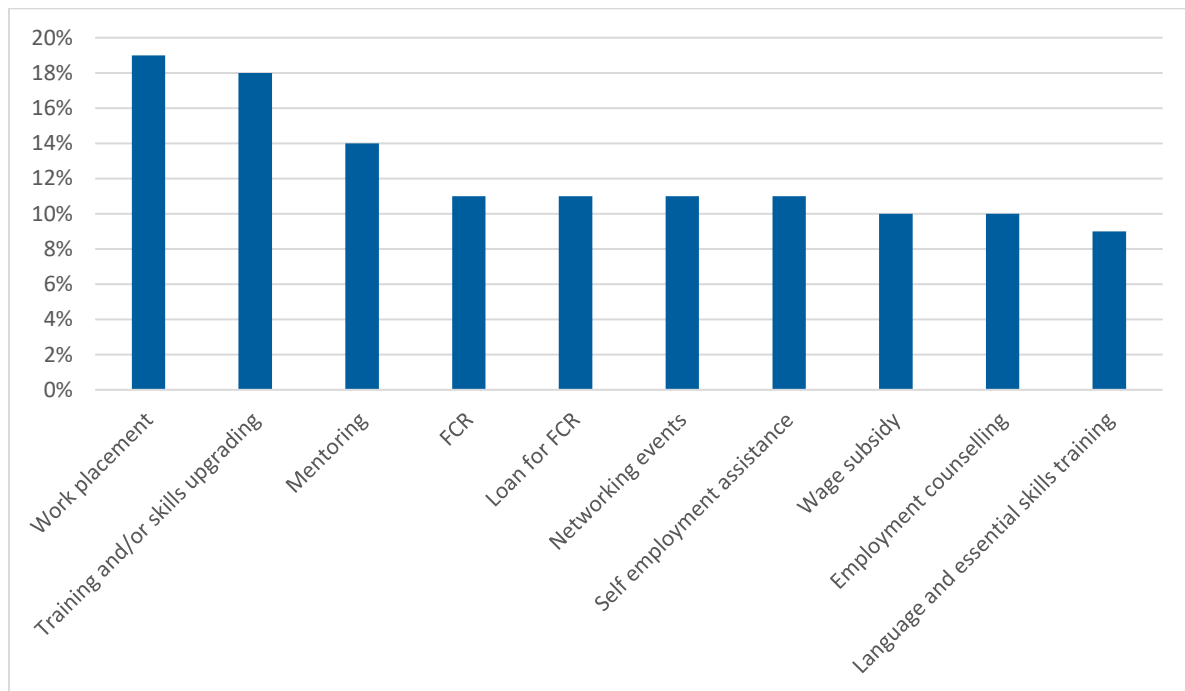
While the survey sample by construction includes only those who accessed at least some of the employment services available, there are likely services that the newcomers could not participate in either due to a barrier of some kind, or due to the availability of those services. It is important to identify the challenges that may be less likely to be addressed by the service providers, as that points to potential areas for improvement.

As previously noted, 15 per cent of respondents reported that their challenges were not addressed by the providers (directly or indirectly). For that group of the respondents, the top challenges were translation and interpretation (57 per cent), scheduling of services (32 per cent) and childcare (29 per cent). Housing (16 per cent), health challenges (12 per cent) and transportation (7 per cent) were less commonly reported issues. Overall, the distribution of challenges is not greatly different from the challenges faced by the general sample of the respondents.

The respondents were also asked to pick the services they wished they had been able to access. The most wished-for services were work placements with 19 per cent of the respondents listing

this as their top priority, followed by training/skills development (18 per cent) and mentoring (14 per cent). See Figure 12 below for additional information.

**Figure 12** Services participants wished they had been able to access



## Service outcomes

Finally, we summarize the survey indicators of employment success. We collected data on newcomers' employment, salary, whether or not their job was commensurate with their education and skills and whether they continued their career after arriving in Canada.

Overall, it appears that employment outcomes improved after the provision of services: 78 per cent of respondents who did not have a job prior to beginning the service are currently employed or self-employed. Only 21 per cent of those who were employed before the services are currently unemployed. Note, however, that this simple tabulation does not allow us to see whether this increase was due to the employment services, time, or particular respondent characteristics. We attempt to look further into this in the next section.

Furthermore, 21 per cent of those who were employed at a non-full-time job before receiving the service obtained a full-time wage job after the service, while 57 per cent of those who were unemployed before the service are currently employed at a full-time wage job. Overall, 64 per

cent of respondents who did not have a full-time job prior to the service are currently employed at a full-time job.

In terms of utilizing newcomers' educational attainment, 25 per cent of respondents improved education utilization after the service while only 12.5 per cent had their education utilization decrease. In terms of self-reported skills utilization, 30 per cent of respondents obtained a job better matched to their skills after the service compared to only 8 per cent whose skill match decreased after receiving the service. In terms of occupation-specific knowledge utilization, 46 per cent of the respondents continued their career from pre-arrival — the skill level of their current job is the same or higher as the one they had in their home country.

The positive employment outcomes are reflected in salary: 70 per cent of respondents saw an increase in their salary after the service. Conversely, only 10 per cent saw a salary decrease.

## EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

We begin the exploratory analysis by splitting the sample into two roughly equal groups — those who were more successful in the labour market and those who were less successful. First, we directly compare the survey results of these two groups to see if there are some major differences in the socio-demographic characteristics, service usage and awareness and challenges encountered in finding employment. Then, we run a multivariate analysis to see if there is a more defined link between success in the labour market and some of the employment services.

### Two-group comparison

In general, we assume that a newcomer was successful in the labour market if they are employed at a skills commensurate job, moved from a part-time or a casual job to a full-time wage job, are using their education and continuing the career they had in their home country. The section above summarizes these variables for the whole sample. Based on these characteristics, we created an index of relative success in the labour market, with those who are employed at skills and education commensurate full-time jobs deemed more successful in the labour market. We then split the sample into two roughly equal parts of more and less successful newcomers. The goal is to see whether there are any systematic differences between these groups in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, and whether there are any particular services that are correlated with the success in the labour market.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This exploratory analysis is subjected to some caveats. In particular, there may be some unobservable characteristics that influence both the success in the labour market and the probability of taking certain

First, we compare the basic socio-demographic statistics and service usage and outcome data for these two groups. Table 3 summarizes the fraction of respondents in these two groups with characteristics of interest.

**Table 3** Differences between seemingly more successful and less successful skilled newcomers — Socio-demographic variables

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Number of observations	47% of total sample	53% of total sample	
Women	69%	62%	*
Median age	35-39	35-39	
Married	83%	82%	
Has children under 18	60%	50%	**
Has children under 12 (out of those who have children)	87%	88%	
Single parent	2%	1%	
Visible minority	69%	73%	
Median household income	\$30 000 – \$40 000	\$50 000 – \$60 000	
Speak English	90%	90%	
Speak both English and French	10%	10%	
French only	0%	0%	
Bachelor's degree	41%	33%	*
Master's degree	53%	64%	**
Additional education in Canada	37%	27%	**
In Canada: Trade diploma	16%	17%	

services. Thus, we comment on the correlation between these two factors rather than make conclusions about the causation.



Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
In Canada: Community college diploma	2%	5%	
In Canada: Bachelor degree	9%	4%	
In Canada: Post-graduate degree	10%	9%	
Bridging program	32%	42%	**
Had work experience outside of Canada	85%	92%	***
Median length of experience	6-10 years	6-10 years	
Economic class as a principal applicant	58%	64%	**
Median year of arrival	2018	2019	

Note: \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ , \* =  $p < 0.1$ .

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, newcomers who were more successful (according to our definition), tended to be men,<sup>8</sup> principal applicants under the economic immigration category, not have children under 18 years old, and have a Master’s degree or higher. They were less likely to have participated in additional education in Canada but more likely to have taken bridging programs. More successful newcomers were more likely to have had a work experience outside of Canada. Interestingly, successful newcomers have come to Canada more recently on average than those who are less successful.

Table 4 summarizes the variables pertaining to service awareness, participation, and completion between the two groups. The starkest difference is in the usage of pre-arrival services, with almost twice as many successful newcomers participating in the pre-arrival services. Surprisingly, less successful newcomers are more likely to take up loans for the foreign credential recognition process, and they also are more likely to take up FCR assistance services, although the difference is not statistically significant. However, this project’s ISA partners pointed out that the foreign credential recognition process is a long one and it is possible respondents who used FCR or FCR loan had yet to complete the process at the time of the survey, contributing to the surprising results.

<sup>8</sup> The gender difference is about 7 percentage points, and it is statistically significant at the 10% level.

Successful newcomers participate in more services overall, they take about 2.4 services on average, vs. 1.9 services used by the less successful newcomers. More successful newcomers are also more likely to participate in work placement, wage subsidy, mentoring, employment counselling and networking events.

**Table 4** Differences between seemingly more successful and less successful skilled newcomers — Service usage

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Used services for less than a month	38%	30%	
Used services for 1–3 months	37%	37%	
Used services for 6 months or less	82%	80%	
Used pre-arrival services	14%	27%	***
Aware of pre-arrival services (those who did not use them)	8%	17%	***
Number of services used (avg)	1.9	2.4	***
FCR assistance	13%	9%	
Loans FCR	21%	12%	***
Training/ skills	26%	32%	
Work placement	10%	20%	***
Wage subsidy	1%	7%	***
Mentoring	18%	29%	***
Employment counselling	61%	74%	***
Networking	25%	38%	***
Language and essential skills training	12%	11%	
Self-employment assistance	3%	2%	
Other	8%	7%	

Note: \*\*\* = p<0.01, \*\* = p<0.05, \* = p<0.1.

There are differences in services awareness and access between the successful and less successful groups. Table 5 shows these differences. Successful newcomers were less likely to have difficulties in finding information about the services, less likely to encounter challenges in accessing the services and more likely to have their challenges addressed by the service providers.

Interestingly, as seen in Table 6, there were no statistically significant differences in the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the services accessed by either group of the newcomers. However, more of the less successful newcomers experienced issues with childcare and overall changes to the service.

**Table 5** Differences between seemingly more successful and less successful skilled newcomers — Service awareness and access

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Finding information about the services was difficult	50%	36%	***
Learned from government office	6%	9%	
Learned at the border	9%	9%	
Median time accessing the services	31-90 days	31-90 days	
Wish accessed the service sooner	85%	79%	*
Did not encounter challenges in accessing the services	33%	45%	***
Challenge not addressed	19%	12%	**

Note: \*\*\* = p<0.01, \*\* = p<0.05, \* = p<0.1.

**Table 6** Differences between seemingly more successful and less successful skilled newcomers – COVID-19 effect on services

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Moved to virtual delivery and it made it easier	41%	41%	
Moved to virtual delivery and it made it harder	29%	24%	
Issues with childcare	14%	8%	
Activities were cancelled	25%	23%	
Service delay	12%	12%	
No changes	18%	24%	

Note: \*\*\* = p<0.01, \*\* = p<0.05, \* = p<0.1.

**Table 7** Challenges in finding employment

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Did not know anyone	47%	56%	*
Skills did not match Canadian requirements	24%	18%	
Issues with childcare	12%	6%	**
Issues with transportation	9%	7%	
Did not know where to look for a job	19%	20%	
Did not have copies of diplomas	4%	1%	**
Education not recognized	33%	24%	**
Experience not recognized	40%	45%	
FCR process too lengthy and costly	20%	11%	**
Employers concerned with English skills	8%	9%	

Variable	Fraction of less successful newcomers	Fraction of more successful newcomers	Statistical significance of the difference
Discriminated against because of gender	0%	2%	
Discriminated against because of race	8%	4%	*
Job interviews were difficult	15%	21%	*
None of the above happened	11%	11%	

Note: \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ , \* =  $p < 0.1$ .

More unsuccessful newcomers (69 per cent) indicated that the reason they had not accessed the services sooner was because they hadn't known about them.

Two out of the three top changes due to services received were the same for both successful and less successful newcomers. The most popular change was better understanding of the Canadian labour market (61 per cent successful and 46 per cent less successful newcomers experienced this change) and learning to communicate more effectively (38 per cent successful and 33 per cent less successful newcomers indicated this). However, one-third (34 per cent) of successful newcomers credited the employment programming with finding a job that matched their interests.

## Multivariate analysis

For the second part of the exploratory analysis, we assume that the success in the labour market may be jointly affected by such personal characteristics as gender, visible minority status, education level and having children. To see if any of the employment services has a significant effect on the probability of success in the labour market conditioning on these demographic factors, and to see how these intersectional characteristics may affect the success in the labour market, we regress the indicator of the success on the personal characteristics and participation in employment services. The goal of using the multivariate analysis is to help us isolate the effects of services while keeping other variables the same.

Table 8 shows the results of this regression. We find that participating in **networking events** and **work placements** has a positive, statistically significant effect. There is a positive, borderline statistically significant effect of participation in **employment counselling** on the probability of relative success in the labour market. Note, that there is a significant negative relationship between the indicator of relative success and being a **woman with children**.

**Table 8**      **Regression on the relative success in the labour market indicator (including the employment services)**

Independent variables	Indicator of relative success in the labour market
<b>Woman</b>	0.0509 (0.0521)
<b>Visible minority</b>	0.0248 (0.0468)
<b>Has children under 18 years old</b>	0.0728 (0.0405)
<b>Women with children under 18 years old</b>	-0.229** (0.0707)
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	0.0720 (0.0708)
<b>Master's degree</b>	0.110 (0.0650)
<b>Service: FCR Assistance</b>	0.00800 (0.0793)
<b>Service: Loans for FCR</b>	-0.157 (0.0930)
<b>Service: Training and skills development</b>	0.00853 (0.0552)
<b>Service: Work placement</b>	0.0902** (0.0364)
<b>Service: Wage subsidy</b>	0.168 (0.155)

Independent variables	Indicator of relative success in the labour market
<b>Service: Mentoring</b>	0.0726 (0.0720)
<b>Service: Employment counselling</b>	0.113 (0.0623)
<b>Service: Networking</b>	0.109*** (0.0323)
<b>Service: Language and essential skills development</b>	-0.0558 (0.0532)
<b>Service: Self-employment assistance</b>	-0.120 (0.108)
<b>Used prearrival services</b>	0.105 (0.0811)
<b>Work experience prior to Canada (indicator)</b>	0.140* (0.0721)
<b>Constant</b>	0.184 (0.102)
<b>Observations</b>	455
<b>R-squared</b>	0.151

**Note:** Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

## THE SECOND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The second focus group took place after the initial analysis of the survey data. In total, 13 representatives from nine organizations participated in the second focus group interview. During the second group discussion, we presented the findings from the survey and asked participants to share their thoughts and views on these findings. In particular, we were interested in understanding the findings related to FCR participation and loan participation and how those correlated with lack of success in the labour market. We were also looking to understand why some of the respondents viewed certain services (e.g., wage subsidy) as not useful.

Overall, the findings rang true to the participants of the focus group. Some were surprised to see that only 34 per cent of the successful newcomers credited the program with having found a job that fit their interests. The general themes and comments are summarized below.

**Wage subsidy.** Some providers emphasized how important it was to provide a wage subsidy to the newcomers, and credited wage subsidy for most of the success they saw with their clients. Some noted that even though wage subsidy was not required in many cases before the COVID-19 pandemic, people relied on it more now that the labour market is more uncertain, and it is difficult to find employment. Ultimately, participants agreed that the wage subsidy was needed for some of participants but did not necessarily work for all. One provider noted that it was possible that newcomer respondents rated wage subsidies as less useful because they did not really know what counterfactual could be — i.e., they may not have been aware that they would not have gotten a job without the subsidy. Importantly, providers warned that some employers may want to “cycle” through the newcomer employees who have wage subsidy and emphasized the need for retention measures instead of just a wage subsidy.

**Types of services.** ISAs commented that they saw success with targeted programming. Many agreed that pre-arrival services, both employment- and settlement-focused, provided newcomers with valuable insights and information prior to arrival. This helped the newcomers settle in quicker and more efficiently. For skilled newcomers, bridging programs were noted as very helpful as well. In terms of the improvements to the services and the services newcomers wished they had received, the providers agreed that some — such as virtual delivery — were possible to implement. They further agreed that work placements, mentorship and skills development, the most commonly wished-for services, were not routinely offered by many agencies.

**Foreign Credential Recognition.** The participants noted that the foreign credential recognition process is lengthy and costly, especially for those in regulated professions. Note that the survey results showed that more of the less successful newcomers engaged with the FCR process and



took on loans. One potential explanation for this, offered by a focus group participant, was that some who were engaged in FCR might not be at their final, desired profession yet, and thus would be less likely to be classified as “successful” according to our definition. Overall, the organizations noted that regulatory bodies presented major hurdles for newcomers in getting Canadian accreditation, and asked whether governments were able to help on that front. The amount of the FCR loans and the timeframe associated with them may also be inadequate, especially for some professions that require substantial investment — for example, each dentistry examination costs \$9,000.

**Virtual delivery.** Service providers noted the increase in attendance and enrollment in employment services since the switch to virtual delivery. Some of this may be explained by the benefits of the virtual delivery, such as less need for childcare and transportation. Some said that the geographic area of newcomers using the services increased, with more participants living further from urban centres able to participate. They noted that digital literacy was not an issue for the skilled newcomers; however, access to hardware could be a barrier. ISAs concluded that virtual delivery is here to stay and might potentially be modified into a hybrid model. They also noted, however, that a hybrid model may require additional funding.

**Awareness of services.** The survey results confirmed what practitioners mentioned in the first focus group — that awareness of the services is low. Participants suggested that creative solutions were required to alleviate the awareness issue. Focus group participants also emphasized the importance of getting to newcomers earlier. Some service providers noted that newcomers sometimes visited regular employment service organizations (not immigrant focused) and did not receive targeted services. When they eventually did connect to the immigrant service agencies, they were often frustrated and had already spent time pursuing services not customized to their specific needs. Providers wished that the employment service agencies would be more prompt in referring newcomers to the immigrant-serving organizations equipped to help.

**Future research.** The practitioners were interested in learning more about the reasons behind the lower satisfaction with some of the services. They are interested in understanding what stakeholders were asking for, and the reasons participants find some services less useful. In general, they want to see more research within the workforce development framework, with a focus on engaging employers. Availability of such research would help the providers have informed discussion with employers during the job development process.

## KEY LESSONS LEARNED

In general, newcomers who used employment services were satisfied with the services, and the employment rates and job fit tended to improve after being enrolled in employment services. That being said, the detailed analysis shows that some groups of skilled newcomers may still struggle with challenges and barriers to employment. The analysis of the survey data and discussions with the service providers showed that there are a few areas for improvements to help skilled newcomers in their search for employment in Canada. The major lessons learned and areas for future research are summarized below.

### The Foreign Credential Recognition process is costly, and it takes a long time

The issue of cost and length of the FCR process, particularly for the newcomers in regulated professions, has been highlighted during both focus group discussions and in the survey. Indeed, 15 per cent of respondents found the FCR process to be a challenge in their work search. However, a more interesting finding came from comparing newcomers who were more successful in the labour market with those who were less successful. Less successful newcomers were more likely to engage in the FCR process, more likely to take FCR loans and more likely to characterize the length and cost of FCR as barriers.

Meanwhile, the service providers suggested that reducing regulatory barriers, more bridging programs and better, longer financial support for the FCR process would improve the outcomes and experiences of skilled newcomers in regulated professions. Although reducing regulatory barriers is likely a long-term change involving multiple stakeholders, other suggested improvements in FCR supports to newcomers with unmet needs can be researched and piloted.

### Awareness of services is low, and newcomers are not reached in a timely manner

Lack of service awareness was raised as an issue during the focus group discussions. Even though the online survey targeted those who used (and were aware of) services, the respondents had overwhelmingly learned about the services from friends and family. While “word of mouth” as an information dissemination channel in and of itself is not an issue, the concern was that it might take some time after arrival before newcomers could identify suitable services from their friends and family, and it might be even longer if they did not have friends or family in Canada. Many respondents wished they had accessed services sooner than they did. Since all newcomers interacted with the government during the immigration process, government could be a direct and reliable channel to relay service information to newcomers. Prompt referral of skilled

newcomers to specialized services by government offices or other employment services programs would also be beneficial. However, only 8 to 9 per cent of respondents had learned about the services from government offices (e.g., at the border upon the arrival or while applying for social insurance number or health card). During the second focus group discussion, service providers agreed that there needs to be a better way to reach newcomers and provide them with the correct information in timely manner.

### Pre-arrival employment services are important but under-used

Ideally, the newcomers should be engaged before they arrive in Canada. Both the service providers' accounts and the survey results point to the great benefits of pre-arrival services. However, the vast majority of those who did not use the pre-arrival services did not know about their existence. This represents a significant gap in programming and information dissemination. Making employment services available to skilled newcomers before their arrival and promoting these services before and at the time of arrival are potential area for improvements.

### Skilled newcomer women with children face more challenges in the labour market

It comes as no surprise that the group of the respondents who had less successful labour market outcomes were women with children. Often, this group of newcomers is responsible for the taking care of their children, combined with the usual barriers faced by newcomers, making it more challenging to find employment. Childcare was one of the main barriers faced by this group at the time of receiving services. Solutions may include better access to childcare during services and flexibility in service schedule. Virtual delivery of employment services has shown to be beneficial for some with the childcare responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic (SRDC, 2021).<sup>9</sup> Virtual delivery is the also the most commonly cited service improvement needed by respondents to the online survey. More research can be done to examine the benefits of offering flexible employment services through online channels as well as the cost implications to the providers and newcomers.

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<sup>9</sup> Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2021) "Can Specialized Programming Help Newcomer Women Cope with COVID-19?" *Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot Projects – Policy Briefing Note*. Ottawa, Ontario. Retrieved from [https://www.srdc.org/media/553131/cpvmnw\\_covid-19\\_briefing\\_note\\_english.pdf](https://www.srdc.org/media/553131/cpvmnw_covid-19_briefing_note_english.pdf).

## Employment counselling, networking events, work placements are correlated with labour market success while training and skills upgrading may need improvements

The regression analysis shows that there are certain employment services provided by immigrant serving organizations that are associated with better labour market outcomes. Employment counselling, networking events and work placements all have a significant positive effect on the probability of successful commensurate employment. These findings were echoed by the service providers during the focus group interviews. The analysis also shows that training and skills upgrading services are not associated with labour market success after controlling for individual characteristics. About 31 per cent of skilled newcomers reported in the survey that sector-specific or occupation-specific training needed improvement. Further research is needed to understand what type of sector- or occupation-specific training could help skilled newcomers find successful, commensurate employment. Wage subsidies may help work placement programs in certain situations, though services providers have mixed experience with its application. Further research with careful program design is needed to identify the effective form of wage subsidies.

## Targeted, customized solutions are needed for newcomers

Finally, an increase in more targeted, specialized, customized solutions is the primary improvement that newcomers would like to see. These may include specialized networking events, targeted training opportunities and industry-specific mentorships. In addition, given a diversity of challenges and issues faced by the newcomers, providing a wide variety of services allows them to access supports for their specific needs. Newcomers enjoy the friendliness of staff in immigrant-serving organizations and build self-confidence in their journey of labour market integration, suggesting that the personalized approach is important in providing effective service to skilled newcomers. Regular employment services for the unemployed may not be the best for skilled newcomers. Better coordination with government employment offices to refer recently arrived skilled newcomers to immigrant-serving organizations for customized solutions is a potential way to improve newcomers' labour market integration.

## APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

# Survey of skilled newcomers who previously used employment services

Thank you for participating in this 20-minute survey.

The purpose of this study is to determine which employment services are most useful in helping skilled newcomers find employment. This study is managed by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), a non-profit organization, and was commissioned by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). If you would like more information about SRDC, please visit our website at [www.srdc.org](http://www.srdc.org).

In the survey, you will be asked questions about your background, your education, employment, and your experience with the employment services you have used prior to July 2020 and your employment situation since then. **Your help is essential to the study. Your participation will help SRDC and ESDC understand how to enhance employment-related services for skilled newcomers like yourself.**

Participation in the survey is completely **voluntary**. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If there is any question that you do not want to answer or that you are not sure about, you can choose the "Prefer not to say" option.

Your information is **confidential**. This means that the information that you provide in the survey will be kept private and will only be seen by the research team. At SRDC, all information will be securely stored on password-protected computers. The survey is anonymous, and all reports from this research will present only group results.

To thank you for filling out the survey we invite you to enter a **random draw for one of two \$250 gift cards**. If you choose to participate in the draw, we will ask you to provide your name and contact information. SRDC will destroy all personal identifiable information such as your name and contact information by June 2021.

**By clicking “Next”, you agree to participate in the survey.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding the survey, please contact project manager Taylor Hui at [skillednewcomersurvey@srdc.org](mailto:skillednewcomersurvey@srdc.org)

**This survey will take you about 20 minutes to complete.**

\*\*\*Note for the programmer: For all questions, use the following codes:

Prefer not to say – code 98

Don't know – code 97

Not applicable – code 99

Also, Voxco variable names are denoted in (GREEN)

\*\*\*

## INTRODUCTION

**ORGANIZATION. (Q1) What is the name of the organization where you received employment services?** [\*\*\* Note to programmer: Hidden question, answer to be piped in from the survey link to each organization. Show this question only if the answer is not piped in \*\*\*]

- Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES Employment)
- Halton MC
- Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
- Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)
- SEED Winnipeg
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- WIL Counselling and Training for Employment
- World Skill Employment Centre
- Achēv (Formerly Centre for Education and Training)

**S.1. (S1) Do you have any postsecondary education (degree, diploma or certification, including trades)?**

- Yes
- No

**S.2. (S2) When did you come to Canada? \*Note to programmer: code as drop-down menus. Matrix question\***

Year \_\_\_\_\_

[\*Note to programmer: code as drop-down menus. Matrix question\*]

**S.3. (S3) When did you last used employment services at [organization]? If you do not remember the exact month, give your best approximation.**

Month \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_

[\*Note to programmer: code as drop-down menus. Matrix question\*]

[\*Note to programmer – make sure there is a page break before S.4a. Both S.4a and S.4b are to be shown on one page. Skip this page if (S.1=No or S.2 before 2011 or S.3 After July 2020); Pipe the S.4a answer to the survey completion question if the respondent provided it]

**S.4a (EMAIL\_2)** You have started the Survey of Skilled Newcomers who Previously Used Employment Services. If there is any question that you do not want to answer or that you are not sure about, you can choose the "Prefer not to say" option. If you want to take a break and continue your participation at a later time, please click the "Pause" button.

We have created an individualized survey link for you to continue if you want to take a break and come back to the survey later.

[https://survey.srdc.org/SE/99/skillednewcomers/?&p=\[PIN\]](https://survey.srdc.org/SE/99/skillednewcomers/?&p=[PIN])

For your reference, we can send you a copy of this message by email if you provide an email address in the following. It is optional.

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**S.4b (FYI)** Click the [Next] button to continue.

SCOPE

**S.4. (S4)** This study targets newcomers with postsecondary education who arrived in Canada within the past 10 years and used employment services at [organization] over 6 months ago. Your answers to previous questions suggest you are outside the study's scope. you can terminate the survey by pressing [NEXT]

Thank you for your participation.

[\*Note to programmer: skip this question and action only if not (S.1=No or S.2 before 2011 or S.3 After July 2020). If this question is shown, terminate the survey with the disposition code "screened out" afterwards.]

## Section A: Background information about you and your family

**A.1 (GENDER)** What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Other gender

**A.2 (AGE) How old are you?**

- 18-24 years
- 25- 29 years
- 30-34 years
- 35-39 years
- 40-44 years
- 45-49 years
- 50-54 years
- 55-59 years
- 60 and above
- Prefer not to say

**A.3 (MARITALSTATUS) What is your marital status right now?**

- Married or common-law
- Single, never married
- Separated, divorced, or widowed.
- Prefer not to say

**A.4 (CHILDREN) Do you have any children under the age of 18?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**A.5 (YOUNGCHILDREN) How many of your children are under the age of 5? [Note to programmer, Skip this question if A.4=No]**

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more
- Prefer not to say

**A.5 (TOTALHOUSEHOLDINCOME) Over the last 12 months, what was the total income of all the people who live in your home including all sources, before taxes and other deductions? Please guess if you are not sure.**

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 to less than \$30,000
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to less than \$60,000



- \$60,000 to less than \$70,000
- \$70,000 to less than \$80,000
- \$80,000 to less than \$90,000
- \$90,000 or more
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

**A.6 (IMMIGRATION) Under what immigration category were you admitted as a permanent resident to Canada?**

- Economic class (skilled worker, business class) – Principal applicant
- Economic class – Spouse
- Economic class – Dependent
- Family class (sponsored by spouse or other family member)
- Refugee
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

**A.7 (VISIBLE MINORITY) Do you identify as a visible minority?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**A.8 (ETHNICITY) What is your cultural or ethnic background? Please choose all that apply. Are you:**

- White
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Chinese
- Black
- Filipino
- Latin American
- Arab
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

**A.9 (LANGUAGE) Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?  
Please select one option only.**

- English only
- French only
- Both English and French
- Neither English nor French
- Prefer not to say

**Section B: Your education and training experience**

**B.1 (HIGHESTEDU) What is the highest level of education you have completed outside of Canada? Please include only education leading to a formal degree, diploma or certificate. Do NOT include language instruction.**

- Trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma or certificate
- Community (two years) college
- University degree – Bachelor level or equivalent
- University degree – Masters level or higher
- Other diploma, degree, or certificate, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**B.2 (EDUCAN) Have you completed any education at a Canadian educational institution (for example, college, university, etc.)? Please include only education leading to a formal degree, diploma or certificate. Do NOT include language instruction.**

- Yes
- No → *Go to Question B.4*
- Prefer not to say

**B.3 (HIGHESTEDUCAN) What is the highest level of education you have completed at a Canadian educational institution?**

**Please include only education leading to a formal degree, diploma or certificate. Do NOT include language instruction.**

- Trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma or certificate
- Community (two years) college
- University degree – Bachelor level or equivalent
- University degree – Masters level or higher
- Other diploma, degree, or certificate, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**B.4 (BRIDGINGPROG)** Have you taken any bridging programs in Canada? [*\*Note to programmer: add the definition below to the survey. Either as a “hover” option or just a sub-text under the question*]

**Definition:** bridge training programs are designed to offer “fast access to training and support” so that an internationally trained, professional newcomer can get a licence or certificate and find employment. The newcomer who accesses bridge training **must usually have a post-secondary certificate or degree from outside Canada and have international work experience in a profession or trade.**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

### Section C: Employment Before Coming to Canada

**C.1 (PAIDWORKOUTSIDE)** Have you ever had any paid work outside of Canada?

- Yes
- No → Skip C.2, C.3
- Prefer not to say

**C.2 (PAIDWORKOUTSIDENOC)** In which of the following occupations does your job outside of Canada best fit? [*\*Note to programmer: Use drill-down list of 2-digit NOC. Skip this question if C.1=No*]

- Select an answer... (*drill-down NOC*)

**C.3 (WORKEXPOUTSIDE)** How many years of work experience do you have outside of Canada? [*\*Note to programmer: Skip this question if C.1=No*]

- Less than a year
- 1 year to 5 years
- 6 years to 10 years
- 11 years to 20 years
- 21 years or more
- Prefer not to say

## Section D: Specific Employment Services Used

**D.1 (STARTEMPSERVICE)** You mentioned you last used employment services from [ORGANIZATION] in [S3.month], [S3.year]. When did you START receiving the service from [ORGANIZATION]? If you do not remember the exact month and year, please provide your best estimate.

*[\*Note to programmer: code as drop-down menus. Matrix question\*]*

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

The next few questions will ask you about the employment services you received at the [ORGANIZATION]

**D.2 (EMPLOYSERVICE)** Which employment services did you use at [ORGANIZATION]?  
*Choose all that apply to you*

- Foreign credential recognition assistance
- Loans to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs
- Training and/or skills upgrading
- Work placement
- Wage subsidy
- Mentoring
- Employment counselling (e.g., coaching, job search, resume, interview)
- Networking events
- Language and essential skills training
- Self-employment assistance (includes self-employment training)
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**D.3 (PLACEMENTWELCOME)** Did you feel welcome in the workplace during your work placement? [Ask only if C.11=Work placement]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

**D.4 (COVIDONSERVICE)** How did COVID-19 affect the employment services you received?  
*Choose all that apply* [Programmer's note: skip if S.3 is before March 2020]

- Participation was challenging because the service was offered virtually
- Participation was challenging because I had increased childcare responsibilities
- Participation became easier because the service was offered virtually
- Some activities were cancelled
- Services were delayed

- I was not affected
- Prefer not to answer

**D.5 (EMPLOYSERVICERECOMM)** How likely are you to recommend the following services to other skilled immigrants who are looking for support in finding employment?

[Notes to programmer: Matrix type question. Hide the items not selected in D.2.]

Options:

1. *Already recommended*
2. *Very likely*
3. *Likely*
4. *Neither likely nor unlikely*
5. *Unlikely*
6. *Very Unlikely*
97. *Don't know*
98. *Prefer not to say*

- Foreign credential recognition assistance
- Loans to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs
- Training and/or skills upgrading
- Work placement
- Wage subsidy
- Mentoring
- Employment counselling (e.g., coaching, job search, resume, interview)
- Networking events
- Language and essential skills training
- Self-employment assistance (includes self-employment training)
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**D.6 (EMPLOYSERVICEUSEFUL)** For each of the services you received, please indicate the degree to which the services below were USEFUL in your search for employment?

[Notes to programmer: Matrix type question. Hide the items not selected in D.2.]

Options:

1. *Extremely Useful*
2. *Somewhat useful*
3. *Not at all useful*
97. *Don't know*
98. *Prefer not to say*

- Foreign credential recognition assistance
- Loans to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs
- Training and/or skills upgrading
- Work placement
- Wage subsidy

- Mentoring
- Employment counselling (e.g., coaching, job search, resume, interview)
- Networking events
- Language and essential skills training
- Self-employment assistance (includes self-employment training)
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

[\*Notes to programmer: Looping D.7 through the items in [D.6] being extremely or somewhat useful]

**D.7 (REASONUSEFUL\_1-REASONUSEFUL\_10) Why was the service [D.6.item] useful?**

**Please select all that apply.**

- Assisted me in obtaining recognition of my credentials [notes to programmer: not for self-employment assistance]
- Helped me find a job [notes to programmer: not for self-employment assistance]
- Helped me find a job that matches my level of education and skills [notes to programmer: not for self-employment assistance]
- My employment income increased
- Helped me start my own business
- Built my self confidence
- Improved my professional skills [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan]
- Improved my English or French language skills [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan]
- Improved my essential skills (document use, digital skills, etc.) [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan]
- Improved my job-search skills and abilities [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan or self-employment assistance]
- Helped me develop my professional network [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan]
- Helped me develop my personal social network [notes to programmer: not for FCR loan]
- Allowed me to gain Canadian experience [notes to programmer: only for job placement and work subsidy]
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

[\*Notes to programmer: Looping D.7 through the items in [D.6] being not at all useful]

**D.7 (REASONNOTUSEFUL\_1-REASONNOTUSEFUL\_10) Why was the service [D.6.item] not useful?**

- No new information for me
- Activities were below my skill set
- Did not address my needs
- Information/activities were not relevant to my job search
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

**Section E: Before Employment Services**

**E.1 (PAIDWORKCAN) Did you have any paid work in Canada before [D.1.month], [D.1.year]?**

- Yes
- No → **Go to Question F.1**
- Prefer not to say

The following questions are about your **main job in Canada** that you worked the most hours before [D.1.month], [D.1.year].

**E.2 (PAIDWORKCANTYPE) What was the type of your job?**

- Full-time wage job
- Part-time wage job
- Freelance/contract work
- Self-employed in own business
- Prefer not to say

**E.3 (PAIDWORKCANNOC) In which of the following occupations did your job best fit?**

[\*Notes to programmer: Use drill-down list of 2-digit NOC ]

- Select an answer... (*drill-down NOC*)

**E.4 (PAIDWORKCANEDU) What level of education and/or credentials were required for your job?**

- University degree
- College degree
- Specialized training or apprenticeship training
- High school diploma
- Occupation-specific training
- On-the-job training only
- Don't know/remember

**E.5 (PAIDWORKCANMATCHSKILL) Did this job match your level of education and skills?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**E.6 (PAIDWORKCANSALARY) On average, how much was your weekly take-home salary (after taxes and other deductions) from this job?**

- \$1 to \$299
- \$300 to \$599
- \$600 to \$999
- \$1,000 to \$1,499
- \$1,500 to \$1,999
- \$2000 or more
- Prefer not to say

**Section F: All Employment Services Used in Canada**

**F.1 (EMPSERVICEOTHERORG) Have you received employment services in any other organization other than [ORGANIZATION]?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**F.2 (EMPSERVICEOTHERORG) You mentioned that you also received employment services from an organization other than [ORGANIZATION]. Which employment services did you use at any other organization? Choose all that apply to you**

- Foreign credential recognition assistance (includes bridging and sector-specific programs)
- Loan to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs
- Training and/or skills upgrading
- Work placement
- Wage subsidy
- Mentoring
- Employment counselling (e.g., coaching, job search, resume, interview)
- Networking events
- Language and essential skills training
- Self-employment assistance (includes self-employment training)
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- None
- Prefer not to say



The next few questions will ask you about ALL the employment services you have ever received in search of employment after you arrived in Canada.

**F.3 (INFOSOURCEOFEMPLOYEE)** How did you learn about the employment service(s) that you received?

- From pre-arrival services
- Received information at the border upon arrival in Canada
- From the organization(s) helping with my settlement when I first arrived
- From a local community group
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Website(s)
- Neighbours
- Friends and family
- Government office
- Other, please specify

**F.4 (FINDEMPLOYMENTDIFFICULT)** Looking back to the time when you needed help in search of employment after you arrived in Canada, how difficult was it to learn about or access the employment service(s) that you received?

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Neither difficult nor easy
- Somewhat easy
- Very easy
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**F.5 (EMPLOYMENTSERVICESATIS)** How satisfied were you with your overall experience with the employment services you received?

- Completely dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Completely satisfied
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**F.6 (CHANGEDUETOSERVICE) From your perspective, what has been the most significant change, if any, that has taken place in your search for employment as a result of using employment services? Please select up to three.**

- I understand the Canadian labour market better and I am more prepared for job search
- I communicate more effectively since I understand the Canadian workplace culture better
- My employment income increased
- I found a job that matches my interests, education and skill level
- I have developed a professional network
- I improved my job-related skills
- My credentials are now recognized in Canada
- I improved my soft skills (interviewing, networking, etc.)
- I improved my essential skills (reading, writing, digital skills, document use, etc.)
- I am more confident
- I am more hopeful
- There was no change in my search for employment because of the employment services
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**F.7 (CHALLENGE) What were some of the challenges you faced while accessing employment services? Choose all that apply to you**

- Childcare
- Transportation
- Translation or interpretation
- Physical and/or mental health challenges
- Housing
- Scheduling of the services
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- No challenge → **Go to Question F.9**
- Prefer not to say

**F.8 (CHALLENGERESPONSE) How did the agency address the challenge(s) you faced while accessing employment services?**

- Provided additional support directly (for example, provided childcare, provided bus pass, made adjustments in schedule, etc.)
- Provided support indirectly (for example, gave advice on how to find daycare, provided referrals to health services, etc.)
- Challenge was not addressed
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**F.9 (NEEDIMPROVEMENT) What needs to be improved or added to the employment services you received? Please select as many as you like. You may also explain in the space provided how would you like the service to be improved.**

[Notes to programmer: Allow open end for almost all options where appropriate]

- Awareness of the service
- Hours of operation of the service
- Types of services
- Financial support
- Coordination among agencies offering service
- Employer engagement
- Employment counselling
- Targeted networking opportunities
- Sector specific or occupation specific training
- Mentorship opportunities with professionals in my field
- More services available online
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

**F.10 (USEDPREARRIVAL) Did you use any free pre-arrival employment services before you came to Canada?**

- Yes → Skip F.11
- No
- Prefer not to say

**F.11 (AWAREPREARRIVAL) Were you aware of free pre-arrival employment services before you came to Canada?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**F.12 (LENGTHBEFORESERVICE) How long did it take for you to access employment services after you landed in Canada?**

- 0 to 7 days
- 8 to 30 days
- 31 to 90 days
- 91 to 180 days
- 181 to 365 days
- More than a year
- Prefer not to say

**F.13 (REASONNOTSOONER) Why did you not access the services sooner?** [Programmer's note: Skip this question if F.12 < 31 days]

- I did not know about settlement/employment services
- I did not think these services would be useful
- I was not planning to work before then
- I was already working
- I focused on learning the language first
- Other, please specify
- Prefer not to answer

**F.14 (WISHSOONER) Do you wish you accessed the employment services sooner?**  
[Programmer's note: Skip this question if F.12 < 8 days]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

**F.15 (NOTKNOWING) Was there any employment service that would have been useful to you, but you did not use it because you did not know it was available to you or you did not know how to access it?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

**F.17 (WISHLIST) Which employment services you did not use but you wish you had?**  
**Choose all that apply to you** [Programmer's note: skip this question if none of the F.15 and F.16 was yes]

- Foreign credential recognition assistance (includes bridging and sector-specific programs)
- Loan to assist with foreign credential recognition or related costs
- Training and/or skills upgrading
- Work placement
- Wage subsidy
- Mentoring
- Employment counselling (e.g., coaching, job search, resume, interview)
- Networking events
- Language and essential skills training
- Self-employment assistance (includes self-employment training)
- Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**F.18 (JOBSEARCHDIFF2)** Have you ever experienced any of the following difficulties when looking for a job in Canada? *Please select and rank up to three challenges that you have experienced, with 1 being most important challenge.*

- I could not get a job because I did not know anyone
- I could not get a job because my skills did not match Canadian requirements
- I could not get a job because I did not have childcare
- I could not always get transportation
- I did not know where to look for a job
- I could not get a job because I am caring for an adult (e.g., an elderly parent, an ill spouse, etc.)
- I do not have copies of my formal credentials (diplomas, certificates, other proof of education) with me in Canada
- I could not get a job because my education outside Canada was not recognized or valued
- I could not get a job because my experience outside of Canada was not recognized or valued
- The foreign credential recognition process is too lengthy or costly
- I could not get a job because employers were concerned about my English skills
- I was discriminated against because of my gender
- I was discriminated against because of my race
- Job interviews were difficult for me because I do not know a lot about work in Canada
- None of the above happened when I looked for a job
- Prefer not to say

**F.19 (JOBSEARCHDIFFICULTYHELP)** Did the employment services you received help you overcome any of the challenges you indicated above?

[Programmer's notes: Matrix type question, hide items not selected in F.18. Skip F.19 if F.18 = last three applicable options]

Options:

1. Yes
  2. Somewhat
  3. No
- g8. Prefer not to answer
- I could not get a job because I did not know anyone
  - I could not get a job because my skills did not match Canadian requirements
  - I could not get a job because I did not have childcare
  - I could not always get transportation
  - I did not know where to look for a job
  - I could not get a job because I am caring for an adult (e.g., an elderly parent, an ill spouse, etc.)
  - I do not have copies of my formal credentials (diplomas, certificates, other proof of education) with me in Canada

- I could not get a job because my education outside Canada was not recognized or valued
- I could not get a job because my experience outside of Canada was not recognized or valued
- The foreign credential recognition process is too lengthy or costly
- I could not get a job because employers were concerned about my English skills
- I was discriminated against because of my gender
- I was discriminated against because of my race
- Job interviews were difficult for me because I do not know a lot about work in Canada

**F.20 (LIKEMOST) What did you like about the delivery of the supports and services you received? Select all that apply to you.**

- It was affordable
- The service was provided in my language
- Staff were friendly and helpful
- Staff had enough time for me
- There were many different activities and services to suit my individual needs
- Activity schedule was flexible, and it fit my life
- Services were offered virtually
- The resources and wrap-around supports (childcare, transportation help) were helpful
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

**Section G: Current or recent Employment**

**G.1 (CURRENTEMPLOYSTATUS) What is your current employment status?**

*Please select the option that best describes your current situation and the job you work the most hours in (if you have more than one job).*

- Working in a full-time wage job
- Working in a part-time wage job
- Freelance / contract work
- Self-employed in own business
- On leave, but still employed
- Not working, but looking for work → **Go to Question G.2**
- Not working, and not looking for work → **Go to Question G.1a**
- Not working because I am enrolled in school/training → **Go to Question G.2**
- Prefer not to say

[Default next question: Question D.3]

**G.1a (COVIDNOTWORKING)** You said you are not looking for work currently. Is it because of the COVID-19 pandemic? [Programmer's note: Show G.1a only if G.1= Not working, and not looking for work]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

[Programmer's note: Show only if G.1= Not working, and not looking for work]

**G.1b (WILLWORK)** Do you intend to return to work or searching for work after the COVID-19 pandemic is over? [Programmer's note: Show G.1b only if G.1a= Yes]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**G.2 (EMPLOYEDCAN)** You indicated that you are not currently working. Have you been employed in Canada since [S3.month],[S3.year]?

- Yes → Go to Question G. 9
- No → Go to Question G. 27

*[Programmer's note: \*\*\* Q G.3 – G.8 ARE FOR THE CURRENT JOB]*

When answering the following questions, please refer to the job where you currently work the majority of your weekly hours (your main job).

**G.3 (CURRENTJOB)** In which of the following occupations does your main job best fit?

[\*Notes to programmer: Use drill-down list of 2-digit NOC ]

- Select an answer... (drill-down NOC)

**G.4 (CURRENTJOBEDU)** What level of education and/or credentials were required for your main job?

- University degree
- College degree
- Specialized training or apprenticeship training
- High school diploma
- Occupation-specific training
- On-the-job training only
- Don't know/remember

**G.5 (CURRENTJOBMATCHSKILL) Does your main job match your level of education and skills?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**G.7 (CURRENTJOBSTIS) Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "completely dissatisfied" and 5 means "completely satisfied", how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the aspects of your main job?**

**Please select the appropriate option for each statement below.**

**[Programmers' note: Matrix question]**

1. Completely dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Satisfied
5. Completely satisfied
98. Prefer not to say

- The opportunities for career growth and promotion
- Training opportunities
- Salary
- Employment benefits
- Support from supervisor/management
- All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your main job?

**G.8 (CURRENTJOBSALARY) On average, how much is your take-home salary (after taxes and other deductions) weekly from your main job? Please provide your best estimate if you are not sure.**

- \$1 to \$299
- \$300 to \$599
- \$1,000 to \$1,499
- \$1,500 to \$1,999
- \$2,000 or more
- Prefer not to say

[Default next question: G.17]

*[Programmers' note: \*\*\* Q G.9 – G.16 ARE FOR THE MOST RECENT JOB FOR THOSE CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED\*\*\*]*



Please think of your most recent job when answering the following questions.

**G.9 In which of the following occupations did your most recent job best fit?** [\*Notes to programmer: Use drill-down list of 2-digit NOC]

- Select an answer... (drill-down NOC)

**G.10 (RECENTJOBEDU) What level of education and/or credentials were required for your most recent job?**

- University degree
- College degree
- Specialized training or apprenticeship training
- High school diploma
- Occupation-specific training
- On-the-job training only
- Don't know/remember

**G.11 (RECENTJOBMATCHSKILL) Did your most recent job match your level of education and skills?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**G.13 (RECENTJOBSATIS) Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "completely dissatisfied" and 5 means "completely satisfied", how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the aspects of your most recent job?**

Please select the appropriate option for each statement below.

[Programmer's note: Matrix question]

1. Completely dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Somewhat satisfied
4. Satisfied
5. Completely satisfied
99. Prefer not to say

- The opportunities for career growth and promotion
- Training opportunities
- Salary
- Employment benefits
- Support from supervisor/manager
- All in all, how satisfied would you say you were with your most recent job?

**G.14 (RECENTJOBSALARY)** On average how much was your take-home salary (after taxes and other deductions) weekly from your most recent job? Please provide your best estimate if you are not sure.

- \$1 to \$299
- \$300 to \$599
- \$1,000 to \$1,499
- \$1,500 to \$1,999
- \$2,000 or more
- Prefer not to say

**G.15 (RECENTJOBLEFT)** When did you leave your most recent job?

Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

**G.16 (REASONLEFTRECENTJOB)** What was the reason you left your most recent job?

- I was let go because of the COVID-19 pandemic (including layoff and employer going out of business)
- I was let go for reasons unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic
- I left the job because of family obligations related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- I left the job because of family obligations unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic
- I left the job because it was not the right fit for me
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

## Section H: Your Life

**H.1 (SENSEOFBELONGING)** Your sense of belonging refers to how strongly you feel connected to something and that you are a meaningful or important part of something.

How would you describe your sense of belonging to:

[Programmer's Note: Matrix question]

Options:

1. Very strong
2. Somewhat strong
3. Somewhat weak
4. Very weak
98. Prefer not to say

- Your local community
- Your city
- Your province
- Canada
- Your country of origin

**H.2 (HOPE) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

“I see myself as someone who has a lot of hope for the future.”

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Prefer not to say

**Survey completion**

Thank you for taking part in the survey! Your input is appreciated and the responses you provided will help Canada improve the experience of skilled newcomers in finding employment.

As a reward for your time, you now have an option to enter the sweepstake draw of one of two \$250 gift cards. The draw will be done at the end of the project and the winners will be notified by e-mail. The odds of winning the gift card will depend on the final number of survey participants.

If you would like to participate in the prize draw, please fill out the fields below with your name, e-mail address and a phone number. This information will be kept separate and will not be used to identify your survey. Your contact information will only be used for the prize draw – it will be deleted after the draw is completed.

(NAME) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(EMAIL) E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

(PHONENUMBER) Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**END OF THE SURVEY**

