

Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women in Canada: What we heard from visible minority newcomer women

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Since its establishment in December 1991, SRDC has conducted over 350 projects and studies for various federal and provincial departments, municipalities, as well as other public and non-profit organizations. SRDC has offices located in Ottawa and Vancouver, and satellite offices in Calgary and Montreal.

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Introduction

Budget 2018 states that employment is key to the successful integration of newcomers to Canada, supporting their financial independence and allowing them to make social connections and build and retain job skills. The Government recognizes that visible minority newcomer women[1] in Canada face significant barriers to finding and keeping good jobs. To help reduce these barriers, in 2018-19 the Government announced a $31.8 million investment, in support of a three-year pilot to provide additional programming to help visible minority newcomer women secure employment. The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) has been commissioned by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to carry out a research project to inform the design of the pilot. The valuable learnings from the pilot project will help inform a wider implementation of approaches that are found to be efficient in supporting visible minority newcomer women.

This report is one of four activities of the knowledge gathering and background component of the research project. It engages visible minority newcomer women in focus groups and interviews to gather their experiences and insights on current employment programming and their suggestions for improvements to employment programs to make services and support more aligned with their needs.

This report is structured as follows. It starts with a description of the data collection for the qualitative research. The next section presents highlights from each focus group. It ends with implications of what we heard for the design of potential interventions for the pilot.

Qualitative research

Focus groups and interviews

The project conducted the following qualitative research:

- **Focus group in Calgary.** The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) helped recruit 10 participants from their Workplace Services Programs. Most of the participants had attended one of the programs, which supports acquisition of skills, knowledge and tools in specific occupations/industries (e.g., retail, child care and food services). The focus group was conducted on October 31, 2018.
- **Focus group in Halifax.** Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) helped recruit 12 participants from their programs. The focus group was conducted on November 14, 2018.

[1] The term "visible minority" is used in the *Employment Equity Act* to define one of four designated groups. The aim of the Act is to achieve workplace equality and to correct employment disadvantages for the four groups. Visible minority persons are identified according to the Employment Equity Act as being non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

- **Interviews with participants in the Foundations Workplace Essential Skills Research Project**. With help from the training providers (Training Group at Douglas College and Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning), invitations were sent to 36 visible minority immigrant women who participated in Foundations. Three women responded to the invitations. Individual telephone interviews were completed in December 2018.
- **Focus groups from other employment-related SRDC projects.** The qualitative research also drew on lessons from experiences of visible minority newcomer women who attended the following focus groups:
    - Seven highly skilled women (mostly visible minority) who participated in Immigrant Women's Employment Readiness Connections, an employment program in the Canadian Work Experience Pilot delivered by MOSAIC in Vancouver.
    - 23 immigrant women (mostly visible minority) who attended focus groups in Surrey, BC and in Vancouver, BC as part of the EASIEST project that is funded by IRCC.

In total, the qualitative research involved 55 newcomers — 25 visible minority women recruited directly for this study and 30 immigrant women (mostly visible minority) from current employment-related SRDC projects.

Limitations

The experiences we heard from participants in the above groups reflect the local settings including the socioeconomic demographics of newcomers in the region, the network of service providers and community agencies that support newcomer settlement and integration, types of employment programs and services available and provincial policies. Generally, the findings reflect what is seen in the literature and what we also heard from stakeholders during the series of roundtable discussions held in the following months of the research project.

We acknowledge that there are likely differences in experiences of newcomer women in other regions (e.g., rural and specific cities) than those covered in this report. As well, most of the individuals who took part in the focus groups and interviews have used services. Consequently, we are missing the experiences of newcomer women who have not accessed services, especially employment services, and their reasons for not participating, which may include a lack of information, cultural norms or other factors.

Selected highlights

Calgary

- 10 women — two came to Canada as caregivers and the other women were in family reunification and humanitarian (refugees) admission classes. Several were very recent immigrants landing in 2018. Most of the others arrived in Canada within the last five years.

- Most of the women in the group are less educated and less skilled. Two women were from India, and the rest from different countries such as Peru, Mongolia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Philippines and Egypt. Most of the women were married and most have children.
- Seven of nine women mentioned receiving services from CIWA. Three of the seven also mentioned accessing services from the Centre for Newcomers and Language.

Summary

- Need information about employment programs and services — where to go, what the services do and how they can help.
- Learn how to prepare a suitable resume is important, as well as other employer engagement tools (e.g., how to talk to employers).
- Need training to focus more on practical and not only theoretical skills, which would help show practical training on resumes.
- Besides information generally provided by employment programs and services, also need information and/or training about Canadian culture, workplaces, government programs and rights.
- Training to help with pronunciation to achieve clearer communications.
- Help with addressing the acquisition of Canadian work experience (e.g., volunteering).
- Need for training to be practical and more hands on.
- Support (financial and informational) for day care and transportation during training is important.
- Good instructors and delivery staff are important; people who are respectful and work with participants and build up their confidence.
- Services and support to women who are in part-time or precarious jobs to help secure full-time or better employment.
- Women who arrived in Canada as caregivers and have no friends or networks in Canada are often vulnerable.
- Connecting and sharing information with other newcomer women.

Selected highlights from discussion

- All indicated that they wanted to work even before arriving in Canada.
- Early networks for information and social connections included husbands, relatives and friends.
- Most had limited or no knowledge about "non-profit organizations" to access employment programs and services. *"The problem is that all the newcomers, they don't know anything about these organizations. That's why the lack of resume-making and the job search, these*

problems…occurred." One woman said that lots of new immigrants don't know about CIWA, so when she meets somebody, she tells them they have to go to CIWA. One person suggested that anyone arriving in Calgary with landing papers should receive a card for newcomer or other organizations from the immigration officer. When asked, they indicated that there were no post-arrival information sessions or welcoming sessions at the airport.

- Most of the women were pleased to connect with the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association where they found different programs. One person mentioned that CIWA helped her a lot; even though she has her husband to rely on, CIWA connected her to other services and jobs. Besides the training programs, women mentioned learning about Canadian money and culture. *"It has helped so much, so I am really, really happy to (come) here in CIWA to take this opportunity for me that will help me to find a job in the future."* She said she learned a lot, especially about making eye contact when you talk to people, about culture and about rights associated to being an immigrant in Canada.
- Understanding and learning about Canadian workplace culture is very important. Organizations like CIWA and Newcomer Centre help them learn how to conduct a job search. They said that the working environment is different from back home. They all really need to know — how to apply for jobs; what abilities they need. They mentioned learning how to apply for jobs, how to speak to employers, and preparing resumes and cover letters. One woman said that in her country (Philippines), the resume is five-six pages, but here it is only two pages. One said volunteering is good — meet people and help find a job; good for personal development and for improving English.
- Besides the job search knowledge and skills provided through employment services, some also indicated the need for training that is more practical than theoretical, so they can show practical training on their resumes, especially if they don't have any internships.
- Take classes for help with pronunciation to improve communications.
- For women who came to Canada as caregivers, they indicated feeling alone without anyone except the employer. They talked about their vulnerability after landing and the risks of not being treated well or fairly by the family/employer.
- Half of the women are currently working. Three of the five are not in jobs commensurate with their skills and training. They seem to attribute the resume writing and support they received from CIWA as key to finding their jobs.
- One woman is working part-time, but it is not sufficient, and she needs income from a full-time job.
- In terms of expectations related to employment, one woman who had a job secured before arriving in Canada shared passionately, *"you're going to go and do a job, and first, in a language that is not your language. Second, you are not going to (go to) people who you already know because they're strangers, and besides that you don't have a family."* She said you need to get used to being alone and get used to a new family that you have never met before. You will need to get used to new habits here.

- Cultural norms exist, but the women need to work. *"As I'm just talking about my country, some people are orthodox, but not all. So that's what you are talking about, like they give more priority to women to stay at home instead of working. But as we've left that country, we are here, right. The main thing is everyone has to work whether its man or a woman…It's not all about the empowerment, but every women has a right to work over here. It's not all about that you have to stay at home."*
- Daycare and transportation are key supports needed for attending programs. The women appreciated the money for children's daycare and bus passes — this is a big issue for the group. One woman shared that her children were small, there was no one to take care of them, so CIWA paid for three months of daycare. CIWA helped find $2,000 per month childcare for her three children over the three-month program. Once the women transitioned into work, daycare often is still an issue and remains expensive. CIWA was helpful in securing funding. One person talked about difficulties when applying to courses that are too far from home.
- The group as a whole agreed that Canadian work experience is a major barrier to employment. *"They don't go for the fresh one. They want the experienced one. They don't want to train. They don't want to waste their time."* One person said that employers don't like "fresh people" because they believe that *"you are new to the country, you don't leave your culture at home. They believe your culture is still there with you. … There are different cultures here and back home. Most people when they arrive are still attached with culture back home. If they hire you, it's going to be hard for them to understand that you just arrived and they will need to be more understanding with you than with other people already here for years or have more experience—not in the field but more experience with Canadian people."* A few also mentioned foreign credentials recognition as another major barrier.
- Need good instructors who are respectful and work with you, and build up your confidence so that you can be confident in interviews.
- The women suggested newcomers should:
    - Talk to people and go to places to practice speaking English – *"put self out there and push."*
    - Go to the library services for ESL programs, employment services and support, sign up for other courses (e.g., cooking) at the library.
    - Attend different types of training, which is important for finding a job; learn to conduct an interview, work experience, how to talk to employers, body language, teamwork, and be more confident.
    - Volunteer if you have no Canadian experience, which can be added to resumes.
    - Need good attitude.

Halifax

- 12 women — almost all arrived in Canada within the last five years (5 in 2018, 3 in 2017, 2 in 2016, 1 in 2013, and 1 in 2011).
- Most were admitted in the skilled category: 5 economic, 2 foreign skilled worker, 2 family, and 1 refugee.
- Came from eight different countries (3 from Syria, 3 from China and then individuals from Iran, India, South Korea, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Palestine). Nine of the 12 landed in Halifax. The other three migrated from nearby regions/provinces.

Summary

- **Customization of services** – participants wish the coordinators were providing them with more personalized services and offering classes/training better aligned with their needs. Currently, participants are often sent to training they do not require.
- **Employers' info session** – is a highly useful and important tool. Even if the session does not result in employment, it provides participants with confidence, better understanding of how they fit in their industry in Canada and gives them an idea of what skills they need to improve and how to apply to jobs in their industry.
- **Canadian coordinators** – while participants appreciate the job the coordinators are doing, they feel they would be better served by talking to either a Canadian-born person or at least to someone who has experience working in Canada (implying that coordinators are also newcomers).
- **Child care is crucial** – some participants would not be able to attend training and seminars without childcare in place. It appears that finding childcare is not very difficult in Halifax unlike other cities.
- **Settlement works fine/really well** – participants were very satisfied with the settlement services provided to them. There were no issues noted; everything was clear and easy. The issues often begin with employment services.
- **Pre-arrival workshops extremely useful** – those who participated in the pre-arrival workshops found them very useful. The information allowed them to "hit the ground running" upon arrival in Canada and eased the transition and settlement in Canada.
- **Communicating the employment needs** – some participants had a hard time explaining what their career goals/wishes were, and found that some coordinators do not have the patience for that. Participants wish there would be more career counselling.
- **Canadian work experience** is the main barrier. Participants found that volunteering is a good option to gain experience. There is also some knowledge of existing programs (START) that pay employers to hire immigrants. Participants were happy to hear these programs exist, and hope that eligibility will be improved.

- **Make it easier to confirm the credentials (doctors)** – some women going through the process of obtaining their medical credentials found the process to be long and tedious. On another hand, a participant who has been in Canada for a few years stated that the process has improved vastly since she's arrived.
- **Flexibility of the career** – some participants felt that the coordinators put them into a "box." For example, if a participant has a medical degree, she would only be offered the path of becoming a doctor, and did not have an opportunity to explore alternative career pathways.
- **More time** spent with case coordinators would improve communication – sometimes participants felt rushed; coordinators took a long time to reply to e-mails.
- **Timing of the classes and course** – the timing of some courses and classes is not convenient for everyone; need to work with participants' schedules (for those working).
- One participant noted that she can find things online but what she would like is a **personal approach**, someone to guide her and help her sift through the information.

Foundations Workplace Essential Skills Workplace Research Project

- Three women responded to the interview (research project had ended over two years ago, and the intervention component at least more than three years).
- One woman is currently working full-time and also enrolled in further education; one is completing a post graduate certificate program at a college and the third is looking for work after moving to another province.
- All three did the portfolio component[2] (one did not complete because she found work after the first day). One also completed the skills enhancement, the second part of the intervention.

Summary

- All three women indicated that prior to taking Foundations, they tried looking for work but had little success. No one indicated taking any employment programs previously.
- Challenges to looking for work included: lack of the right information, knowledge on how to find good jobs in Canada, confidence and getting "stuck." Suggested approaches to address these challenges: information and guidance in job search, guidance to help explore available opportunities and understand the importance of networking.

[2] The Foundations Workplace Skills Project was a three-year initiative led by the Training Group at Douglas College, British Columbia. It used a randomized control trial design to evaluate the impacts of a Literacy & Essential Skill (LES) based program model targeted specifically to meet the needs of unemployed job seekers. There were two key components in the model: 1) Portfolio Development to help participants create an inventory of their Essential Skills, research skill requirements related to their target occupations and 2) Skills Enhancement, which offered for those who needed it individually customized skill upgrading using occupationally relevant learning materials.

- What they found useful from Foundations? Found the portfolio building useful (excellent from one respondent) for organizing ideas, resume, talking about skills and accomplishments with potential employers and laying out a pathway. *"Having a tangible product was a great thing."* Only one respondent went on to the skills enhancement component. She found the workshops informative and contained interesting content. The quality of instructors varied — some did the minimum and therefore the level was too low for her. Overall, she thought this component was helpful, but it was something she could probably have acquired on her own.
- The knowledge gained from Foundations in the Portfolio component helped one respondent figure out her path and took additional training. For one person, the Portfolio helped her keep organized; now she regularly updates her resume. The third had no comments as she left the program after the first day for employment.
- When asked what would make Foundations better, respondents said: connections with employers, placements, mentorship and networking.

Selected lessons from focus groups in related SRDC projects

Canadian Work Experience Pilot Project

- We conducted a focus group with seven highly skilled women who had or were in the process of completing the Immigrant Women's Employment Readiness Connections program[3] (IWERC) — four weeks training and a six-month wage subsidy. IWERC was designed to assist highly skilled newcomer women with backgrounds in the Accounting, Finance, Administration, Human Resources, Marketing, Business and Project Management sectors. Three came from India, two from Brazil, one from China, and one from Ukraine.

Selected highlights

- The program helped get them into a workplace (part of the second week of the four-week training) and for most, it was their first experience with a Canadian employer. Participants noted that it was different from workplaces at home. They expressed their excitement in engaging with a Canadian workplace. They also noted that each workplace environment is different. The program helped prepared them for Canadian workplaces.
- They found the interviewing information and practices, knowledge about screening tests and available resources useful.
- A couple of women stated that they recognized the need to change for the Canadian labour market, but needed the knowledge to know how to change (e.g., *"it's who you know"* and the need for good references).

[3] To obtain more information about IWERC go to https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/employment/immigrant-womens-employment-readiness-connections/

- A few women noted that diversity in their class is important. Many indicated that the connections they made in class and the ongoing peer connection/support as being very important.
- Confidence building was very important and all women said IWERC helped them gain or regain their confidence.
- Other resources besides IWERC that are needed include: referrals to other resources, partners, and/or communities; mentorship opportunities and information about other government programs.

EASIEST

Four focus groups were conducted with immigrants — two in Surrey, BC and two in Vancouver, BC — for EASIEST, a three-year project funded by IRCC that brings together Immigrant Serving Organizations in British Columbia to develop work collaboratively to develop innovative, low-cost solutions that make their services easier to access by placing the newcomer experience at the centre of the service design. Most of the focus groups were attended mainly by women and many belonged to visible minority groups. Participants were mostly recent immigrants, from a range of countries and immigration admission classes. Although the focus groups were not designed to talk about employment programs and services, a lot of the conversations centred on integration into the Canadian labour market. Below, we present summaries from each of the four groups.

EASIEST Focus Group One in Surrey

- Nine participants — seven women and two men — came from a range of countries such as Columbia, Mexico and Middle East. Most came to Canada as refugees — some are Syrian refugees sponsored by a Church. They are relatively new in Canada — length of time ranged from three months to two years.
- Most had been professionals before coming to Canada: one student and others in professions such as teachers, lab technician, translator and business professionals.

Summary

- All were pleased to be in Canada. All but one came with families but all had friends or families here.
- Those who were sponsored said sponsors played a huge role in helping them get settled. They took them to get their Medical Service Plan, SIN, family doctors, schools, banks, etc. Sponsors tend to be newcomers themselves who have been through the process.
- Usual challenges with finding a place to live and the expense that goes with it.
- All used settlement services; they found them helpful and pleasant but when referred to other services, there was a lot of duplication. They sensed that when you are sent to workshops, it is about checking boxes because that is how organizations get paid.

- Challenges with courses and workshops are in terms of timing. Most individuals are working part-time and need courses and workshops to fit with their work schedules.
- Women with small children at school are struggling to attend training because they continue past 2:30 pm and mothers have to be home for their children as their husbands and older children are working.
- Networking is very important to getting employment but they found it very hard to network and connect with employers.
- Volunteering is an important step and resulted in people finding part-time work in their fields but hard to do when you need to work to earn money.
- Lack of Canadian work experience was raised — common experiences: need a job to get it, cannot get a job without it.
- English is a challenge and many took English courses.
- Only one person mentioned difficulties with foreign credential recognition. This person is pursuing recognition as a dentist. The other participants are retraining for lower positions.
- Participants who are skilled immigrants need to get survival jobs, thus, they had to "dumb down" their resumes. They are overqualified for these jobs. Most have two resumes: one for survival jobs and one for career.
- There are challenge to adapting to life in Canada – completely different realities from home; many were refugees and went from home country to a second country and then to Canada.
- As refugees, they arrived tired and having spent most of their savings while they were waiting. They are eager to work and to start earning money and willing to take any job. Their focus is on the future and their families.
- Many are lonely. They missed community. They are however glad to be here because of the security, opportunities, for their children and a better life.

EASIEST Focus Group Two in Surrey

- Seven participants — five women and two men — came from a range of countries, Peru, Mexico, Middle East, and South Korea — and arrived between two and five years.
- There was a mix of immigrant admission classes among the group – permanent residency, economic (spouse), family and refugee. Most had been professionals before coming to Canada. Currently, one is a student, two are working in settlement agencies, and the others are in business professionals and other occupations.

Summary

- Finding a place to live and work was difficult.
- Researched work before they came, which helped but only a little — their experience was that it was more difficult than expected.

- The employment services available was geared towards entry level jobs — participants are highly skilled and need different help and support. They said they do not need help doing resumes. They need help networking and with specific skills related to their jobs — how to write reports in Canada, workplace meetings in Canada, etc. Also often they are too qualified for survival jobs.
- Big discussion about Canadian experience — didn't see how working in a store or in a survival job would help them get a job in their field. Employers want relevant Canadian experience — working as a cashier is not going to help find work in their professions. Canadian experience is just an excuse sometimes. Want programs that deliver Canadian experience. Some suggested internships. Perception is that they get what is available and not what they need; services need to be tailored to individuals. Highly skilled immigrants are needed, but government needs to give newcomers practical help with finding work and Canadian experience; newcomers found this very frustrating.
- Referring people on to other services is a bit like a merry go around. When resume workshops were mentioned, everybody laughed — they did not find them useful. Some mentioned being referred to one after another resume writing workshops.
- Immigrants are ready to work but required to do courses because of the process and the system.
- Some discussion about reducing experience and removing educational qualifications from resumes to get jobs.
- Frustration with the immigration system — if you come as a permanent resident assessed as being skilled in a needed profession, then when you arrive you are told you have to work in an entry level job — this is a big disconnect.

EASIEST Focus Group Three in Vancouver

- Seven participants — six women and one man — all are permanent residents; one is a sponsored refugee; all have children; six participants have school aged children; they have been in Canada for less than five years (one five years and the others between 17 months and three years).
- All had been professionals in home country and hold degrees.

Summary

- Found Canada expensive; all found housing expensive.
- Those with family and/or friends in Canada found the immediate post arrival easier — they had somewhere to stay in the short term and help with knowing what to do.
- Pre-arrival services were useful — government videos were good.
- They found out about services at airport but there was too much going on at that time — need to be told at different times about help available.

- All found service organizations very helpful — especially individuals working at these organizations. Settlement workers were important.
- Services needed to be more flexible, childcare was very important and they wanted courses that were part-time because of childcare responsibilities.
- Biggest barriers to employment was language — English proficiency is hugely important. All struggled to get credentials recognized.
- Some women opted to stay at home because childcare was expensive and credential process was expensive and they wouldn't earn enough. Fees for courses are a challenge — wanted them reduced or waived because the cost was a barrier to them working.
- Husbands worked and they hoped to do part-time courses. They would rather wait several months for a place in a program with childcare rather than accept a place without childcare.
- Wanted more ongoing help — peer advice and community of peer supports — message board, somewhere to ask questions and get answers in less formal language that was more accessible.

EASIEST Focus Group Four in Vancouver

- Eight participants — five women and three men — came from a range of countries: Columbia, Chile, Tibet, Philippines, Iran, Brazil, and Mexico. One was admitted in the refugee class and the others economic. Most are relatively new to Canada and have been here between five weeks and four years but mostly at least 18 months.
- All are highly educated with degrees (some graduate degrees) and all had well paying jobs before arriving in Canada.

Summary

- Pre-arrival services are important and helpful but need the same help post-arrival.
- English is a barrier to finding work but most participants had good English.
- All are professionals with experience back home. They accepted that they had to take steps backwards but not to start all over. Frustrated by employment services that seemed geared only to entry level positions. Services are not tailored to individuals. Services needed to recognise needs of newcomers as a whole and not be piecemeal.
- The gap in service provision is for newcomers with skills and experience — non-profit service providers seem geared to support jobs in lower positions.
- Reluctant to start as a cashier given they all had senior positions. Wanted a position in their field even if it was at a lower level.
- Real gap was in getting newcomers before employers — believed Canada is a country of who you know, they believed they have skills to offer but could not get beyond the application.
- Canadian experience seen as an excuse for making people start again.

- Believed there was a lack of communication between service providers.
- Different case managers wanted different changes to resumes and with no explanations for changes.
- Had to "dumb down" resumes and experience to try and find work in their field (e.g., reduced their level of experience and removed master degree).
- Mentors were useful but some were relatively inexperienced themselves and unable to give useful advice.
- Wanted help to network with other newcomers — community is important. Wanted organizations to facilitate this connection.
- All convinced that networking was the key to getting a job in their field and that is what they wanted help with.
- Time limits to accessing services need to be revised.
- Many felt frustrated and disappointed. They were fast tracked and accepted. They paid money and came with hopes only to find inappropriate support and the excuse of Canadian experience as a barrier to employment.
- Canada is supposed to be welcoming and affirming of newcomers, now they want them to be the same as Canadian-born job applicants — this is contradictory.

Implications for the design of interventions in the Visible Minority Newcomer Women Experiment

We heard from newcomer women, many who are visible minorities about their experiences with settlement and employment services. Below are highlights of changes that participants told us would help make employment services better for themselves and other newcomer women. We want to highlight some of the stronger points expressed in the interviews. They include the need for childminding while attending programs and training, assistance with Canadian work experience opportunities, access to social networks/connections to support job search including networking with employers and mentorship, raising awareness of employment services earlier in the settlement process and the need for more customized employment services and support.

Pre-arrival services

- Encourage access to pre-arrival services to be better prepared for arrival in Canada.

Awareness and access to employment services

- Provide information to newcomers early in their settlement process about employment programs and services to increase awareness and access — where to go, what services do and how they can help.

- Develop outreach strategies to deliver above information to visible minority newcomer women — '*go to where they are*.'

Employment programs and services

- Recognize settlement and integration is a process. Career and skills assessments should support individuals in their career development and that interventions should be viewed as part of the overall process and not piece by piece or in a fragmentary way.
- Flexible programs and services to recognize the diversity in visible minority newcomer women (e.g., education, experience, skills, language, culture, country of origin, immigration admission class, etc.):
    - More customized or personalized services to align with individual needs
    - Address gaps with appropriate employment programs and services for skilled and experienced visible minority newcomer women (aim to connect with commensurate positions in their intended occupations or alternate careers and not towards lower positions or survival jobs).
- Help with understanding and navigating the labour market, approaches, resources, tools and support for the career development and employment:
    - More focus on job search on intended occupations and skills needed
    - Provide tailored and practical job search skills that are aligned with individual needs.
- Engage with skilled workers early in their settlement process to help them look for work in their intended occupations before they get into low-skill jobs.
- Explore alternative career paths.
- Customize training content to adapt for language ability and other diverse needs (e.g., deliver content over a longer period).
- Place greater emphasis on engaging with employers:
    - connecting newcomer women with employers at networking events
    - develop strategies to get newcomers before employers and/or professional bodies
    - increase employer awareness and knowledge about the immigrant talent and breaking down barriers including Canadian work experience (and discrimination and racism although we did not hear about these issues directly; indirectly we heard the need for employers to adjust and better understand immigrants)
    - use recruitment agencies
    - make sure employment services had strong connections to employers.

- Programs to address the absence of Canadian work experience:
    - Job placements or work experience in occupation-specific job placements
    - Volunteering
    - Information/training to employers about the immigrant talent pool and foreign credentials and experience.
- Emphasis on social networks/connections to support job search:
    - Networking with employers, especially directly with those working in their fields
    - Mentorship — employer mentors including training for mentors to ensure the mentorship relationship is appropriate and effective
    - Peer support — sharing of information and connections.
- Navigation services — to provide information to help navigate the employment system and find services or connect with a program/agency (e.g., wayfinding).
- Interventions to support career development for part-time workers or those in precarious employment to get more gainful employment.
- Provide onsite childminding with programs and transportation allowances.
- Provide personal support to help with things like problem solving and address small issues or barriers to finding and keeping work before they get bigger.
- Include training on Canadian culture, workplaces, communications or workplace essential skills and information about government programs (e.g., taxes, RESP, Child Tax Benefits).
- Build confidence.

Program delivery

- Better integration and coordination among existing range of programs and providers including within immigrant-serving agencies and between immigrant services and generalized services.
- Refer or leverage other programs (e.g., foreign credential recognition, foreign credential recognition loans program).
- Pay attention to client engagement:
    - Ensure adequate time to allow for practitioner to develop trust and collaborative relationship
    - Trained/experienced staff to support newcomers and recognize diversity and tailor services accordingly. More specifically, practitioners who are knowledgeable and trained to support skilled workers in their employment search.
- Training needs more flexible scheduling to align with those who are working part-time and/or moms with childcare responsibilities.

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