

Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women in Canada: Labour market integration experience of newcomer women in SRDC pilot projects

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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 $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 in the knowledge gathering and background component of the research project. It examines three SRDC research projects that focus on employment services. The main component involves an analysis of the experiences of newcomer women participants in Foundations Workplace Skills Project (FWSP), a three-year initiative implemented at three sites across Canada. The program model included an initial assessment of unemployed participants to identify their Essential Skills (ES) gaps in relation to the requirements of occupations they were targeting for employment, followed by occupation-specific ES upgrading to fill these observed gaps. While FWSP was not targeted at newcomers (especially visible minority newcomer women), newcomers especially women were particularly attracted to the pilot and program impacts were mainly driven by educated immigrants. Thus, the project data presents a unique opportunity to conduct an in-depth data analysis of the FWSP microdata file to examine FWSP attributes that can inform the design of the experiment for visible minority newcomer women. In addition, we identify relevant insights from two other SRDC projects that tested innovative training models with participants that included substantial proportions of visible minority newcomer women in the total sample. The *Pay for Success* project offered service providers milestone-based incentives to develop new pathways to employment based on Essential Skills training and employer engagement. We also drew useful lessons from the *Upskill* project, which involved the development and delivery of workplace Essential Skills training aligned with the business needs of employers in the tourism industry. Like FWSP, Upskill used a randomized control trial design, which allowed us to learn in the most rigorous matter about the effectiveness of the intervention.

This report is structured as follows. For each of the above SRDC projects, it provides an overview including a project description, the key project components and the innovative features. It will also describe where appropriate the impact for visible minority newcomer women and the lessons and

[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.

implications for the three-year pilot. The detailed data analysis of the experience of visible minority women participating in FWSP is presented in the appendix.

The findings from this report will be combined with the other evidence in the research project to inform the design and evaluation of a new model for helping visible minority newcomer women to successfully integrate into the labour market and Canadian society in general.

Foundations Workplace Skills Project

What is the Foundations Project?

The Foundations Workplace Skills Project (FWSP), is an initiative led by the Training Group at Douglas College, British Columbia. It was the first study to use a randomized control trial design to test the impacts of a Literacy & Essential Skill (LES) based program model targeted specifically at unemployed job seekers.

What are its key components?

The program model of the FWSP was divided into two components:

i. Portfolio development; and

ii. Skills Enhancement.

Participants started first with the portfolio development, which was slated to take place over two weeks, with approximately 60 hours of classroom learning. The goal of this stage of the program was to provide an environment where participants could:

- Identify and document their Essential Skills (including formal assessments of reading, document use, and numeracy);
- Research skill requirements related to their targeted occupations; and
- Build a realistic career action plan based on the match between their *assessed* skill levels and *required* skill levels for the targeted occupations.

The program model was designed to use Portfolio information to identify participants whose skills were below but within reach of the levels needed for their target occupations. These types of participants would then be recommended to continue to the Skills Enhancement portion, the second component of the program.

Skills Enhancement aimed to be more targeted and individualized than Portfolio development. It was intended to take place over 2 to 10 weeks, depending on the participant's needs, and offer the following core elements:

- Individual learning plans designed to address each participant's specific skill needs identified in the Portfolio;
- Mixed learning environments consisting of group sessions, one-to-one classes, and self-directed learning periods;
- Learning materials that were contextually relevant to learners' chosen occupations; and
- Follow-up assessments and debrief at the end of training with program staff.

What are its innovative features?

The FWSP aims to address policy gaps of employment services to unemployed job seekers by:

- Implementing a multi-stage training model that embeds Essential Skills assessment and upgrading within career development services, by first helping unemployed participants create an inventory of their own skills while also understanding the skill requirements of their targeted occupations, then developing individually-customized, occupationally-relevant plans to close the gap between current and required skills; and
- Involving measurements and a rigour evaluation, in the context of a randomized field experiment, to test whether this combination of services improves client skill levels and career pathfinding ability, leading to increased participation in further training and ultimately higher quality jobs. The FWSP is designed to deliver training tailored to a broad range of participant-targeted occupations in the context of the post-secondary adult education system, with no direct involvement from prospective employers.

What are the outcomes?

FWSP successfully used the Essential Skills framework to help shape participant career paths to target occupations and helped participants understand and close skill gaps. For the overall sample, the program produced impacts on measurements of career adaptability — namely career planning, career decision-making, self-efficacy and job search clarity and job search efficacy. Participants receiving the program showed significantly larger gains in these measurements than participants in the comparison group counterparts. In additional, there were significant impacts on numeracy, document use, and reading among those with skill gaps who participated in the Skills Enhancement component of the project. Participants in skills enhancement showed a large average increase in assessed scores, while matched control group members showed essentially no change from baseline.

Identification of visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP sample

Even though the FWSP surveys collected many details of participants' demographics, including gender, country of birth, year of arrival (among immigrants), educational attainment, marital status, presence of children, and the various barriers and needs to finding employment, none of the data collection effort asked for the person's visible minority status. For this analysis, we adopt a strategy that classifies immigrants from USA, Australia, New Zealand, and European countries as likely Caucasians while immigrants from other countries are deemed as potential visible minority. This strategy would misclassify some immigrants. However, given that a majority of immigrants in the sample came from Asian countries, the misclassification is likely minimal.

Out of the 452 participants, 288 were women, and 167 were likely to be visible minority immigrant women. A little over half (89) reported that they arrived Canada within five years before they participated FWSP, though many of those did not report recent arrival had a missing value on year of arrival or they arrived not much longer than five years. With lack of employment, it is questionable whether those woman immigrants who did not report recent arrival had integrated

successfully into the labour market. Therefore, we focus on all visible minority immigrant women for the analysis instead of relying on the very small sample of recent visible minority immigrant women.

How did the program impact visible minority newcomer women?

For visible minority newcomer women participating in FWSP, their outcomes were similar to the overall sample. Highlights include:

- Gains in essential skills including numeracy, document use and use of math in everyday activities at 12-week follow-up period.
- Impacts on career adaptability measures after completing the program at 12 weeks were particularly high in job search clarity and job search self-efficacy. Several of the impacts were sustained at the 12-month follow-up stage.
- FWSP did not have a significant impact on employment rate among visible minority immigrant women, it did however significantly moved about 8 per cent of participants from low to medium wage (under $20/hour) to high wage jobs ($20/hour or more).
- FWSP shifted the newcomer women's employment from less skilled occupations in sales and services to higher skilled occupations in business, finance and administration.
- Increased the proportion of newcomer who reported satisfaction about the opportunities to use their skills and experience, which reflected better alignment of skills and work.
- Although FWSP over had significant impacts on training participation, training intensity and the training associated employment outcomes, these impacts were not observed for the sub-population of visible minority immigrant women. There were some signs that those who took training were also more likely to be jobless a the 12-month follow-up period, which might suggest that it might take them longer than 12 months to settle into gainful employment.

What are the implications for a future pilot?

The lessons from the FWSP for visible minority newcomer women seem to suggest the following:

- Regardless the education and skills level, visible minority immigrant women who are looking for work can use interventions like the FWSP to help them identifying the skills they already process, the skills want by employers for various occupations and the workplace essential skills they will need, match their skills with the needed occupational and workplace essential skills, and provide the career guidance for them to integrate into the Canadian labour market.
- For highly educated or highly skilled visible minority immigrant women, it does not seem to be important for them to pursue further education or training in order to get a high wage job. This is in contrast to the general results achieved from the overall sample of the FWSP where many participants took further education or training in order to achieve higher wage. Since some literature showed that women have a higher level of career adaptability than men, it might be possible that visible minority immigrant women were more flexible to in pursuing other career

options without retooling themselves to stay in the same narrower field than their male counterparts would have done. If this hypothesis is applicable, it is important to design the labour market integration assistance differently for women and men.

- Typically assessed barriers, such as language, networking and Canadian job hunting skills are very important for highly educated or highly skilled visible minority immigrant women in having success in labour market integration, probably more so than those with less education or skills. As a result, those barriers should be addressed with appropriate services and support.
- For less skilled or educated immigrants, some career adaptability and basic skills interventions like FWSP should probably be prioritized over interventions addressing language barrier, unless they have no functional level of English or French capability. This is reasonable in a sense that many lower skilled jobs do not need very high level of language fluency. FWSP also worked better for those with multiple barriers, suggesting that career adaptability and basic skills could be a key to work around those barriers.
- Although FWSP data does not show that need of child care matters in labour market integration among those who want to work, the low proportion of visible minority women with young children in the sample (about 35 per cent among those under the age of 40) suggest that they might have withdrawn from the labour market completely. Additional supports to attract women with young children to participate in interventions like FWSP, though this analysis is not able to address the issue.

Pay for Success Pilot

What is the Pay for Success Pilot?

In 2012, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched its social innovation initiative. Under this initiative, ESDC committed to acting as a catalyst to grow promising solutions to Essential Skills training and guide them towards greater impact and stronger evidence of success. They also recognized the importance of rigorously evaluating promising approaches to build a strong marketplace of organizations with evidence of impact. In light of these commitments, ESDC partnered with Workplace Education Manitoba (WEM), the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), and the Provinces of Manitoba and Nova Scotia to launch the Pay for Success demonstration project. Pay for Success was the first Canadian test of a "pay for performance" model for Essential Skills delivery. The goal was to incentivize providers to develop innovative practices to connect individuals with lower skills to sustainable employment.

What are its key components?

The Pay for Success model is based on what SRDC knows about how to incorporate strategic changes in the design and delivery of business-as-usual employment and training services to foster the development of innovative, outcomes-based practices.

The model was designed to reward providers not only for employment outcomes, but also for helping job seekers reach a series of intermediate in-program success indicators (or milestones) believed to be associated with progress towards sustainable employment. The key components of the model are as follows:

- **Needs assessment and service planning** for all job seekers that looks at essential skills, other employability skills, and work readiness. This step determines the job seeker's starting point and subsequent milestones to be attained.
- **Preparation for employment and/or further education/training** to help job seekers transition to a state of work readiness. The specific employment preparation activities job seekers participate in depend on the steps outlined in their plan. Job seekers that are more distant from the labour market may begin with 'Ready to learn' programming (basic literacy, preparation for further learning and career development). Those who are more work ready may begin with essential skills and employability training.
- **Transition to employment or further education/training** when job seekers are deemed work-ready. The service provider works with the job seeker to identify work experiences that may lead to employment and job retention or helps the job seeker to transition to accredited education program.

What are its innovative features?

A primary goal of the Pay for Success demonstration project was to offer an alternative from the usual constraints of activity-based project funding and foster opportunities for providers to

experiment with new approaches. Current funding formulas in employment and training programs rarely give providers incentive to develop innovative approaches that foster workplace readiness and advancement. The use of performance based funding addresses this issue by ensuring that providers are rewarded for efforts that improve services for job seekers.

There are two features that stand out as innovative in this model:

1. **Alignment of employer and participant needs.** The project engaged employers from the beginning of the project to understand and define their needs and integrate essential skills training with work experience, which ensured a clear alignment between training, milestones, and opportunities for employment.
2. **Customized training.** More responsive to client need through integration of essential skills assessment and training into regular services, which means less of an 'one-size-fits-all' training, and more targeted supports for job seekers with a range of needs. Better intake and screening (e.g., early assessment of client fit to job) and better supports for transition from classroom to workplace (e.g., onsite employment coach) were critical elements in being able to respond to job seekers' individual needs. This has meant a more intentional approach to delivering services as a pathway to employment, and more demand-led thinking and responsiveness around employer needs and processes by linking curriculum development to job requirements.

How did the program impact visible minority newcomer women?

The Pay for Success Pilot Project was not specifically designed to target visible minority newcomer women, but this group made up a large proportion of one of the tested programs. Indeed, the sample for one program was made up largely of immigrants (86%), and more specifically of immigrant women (77%). Furthermore, most immigrants in the program were relatively new to Canada, with 54% arriving in 2014 or later. Of note, almost half of the immigrant participants had a university education when they entered the program, compared to only 10% of the Canadian-born participants. Barriers faced by immigrant job seekers included lower language skills, the obtainment of foreign educational credentials, and a lack of Canadian work experience.

While outcomes of the program were not examined specifically for immigrants, we can safely assume that, to the proportion of immigrants in the sample, the findings also apply to immigrant job seekers, and immigrant women job seekers. Participants achieved higher gains on average on employability indicators such as essential skills, career adaptability, attitudes toward learning, social support, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction than have typically been achieved by control groups in similar projects. Furthermore, these in-class gains were linked with success in workplace training, which in turn significantly improved participant chances of being hired.

What are the implications for a future pilot?

As evidenced by the findings of the project, this model is a promising approach for an intervention targeted specifically to visible minority newcomer women. In considering the implementation of such a model for visible minority newcomer women, the following lessons learned from the Pay for Success Pilot should be taken into account:

- Milestones are more likely to drive training innovation and produce positive outcomes when they are connected to job performance
- Sectoral and/or organizational needs assessments to identify and map business needs onto a task-based job competency framework help to develop relevant milestones for job seekers and employers
- This kind of framework incentivizes providers to customize training to target underlying occupation-specific essential skills gaps, and to develop retention supports to facilitate post-training learning transfer
- Employment success is more likely for those who enter training with relatively high levels of human capital
- Among those who left the targeted sector path:
    - Those with higher levels of education were able to leverage classroom gains in ES and career adaptability into other jobs
    - Those with lower levels of education need further intervention (e.g., placement in different sector, wage subsidies, etc.).

UPSKILL Demonstration Project

What is the UPSKILL demonstration project?

The last decade has seen an increasing volume of research that reveals significant gaps in literacy and Essential Skills (LES) among the Canadian workforce. In addition to having negative impacts on firms' productivity, research also suggests that workers suffer consequences of low literacy in the form of lower wages, reduced job stability, and even higher health risks from workplace injury. While much anecdotal evidence suggests that LES training may be helpful in eliminating these skills gaps, its use in the workplace remains low relative to the size of the apparent need. Part of the reason for low firm investments is the lack of a credible business case providing clear evidence of its return on investment.

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) aimed to fill this gap by evaluating workplace LES training with the most rigorous evaluation methods. In partnership with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), the UPSKILL project was launched in 2010. A Pan-Canadian research and demonstration project, UPSKILL utilized a random assignment design to provide the most reliable measures of the impacts and return on investment of LES training in the workplace. Over 100 firms and nearly 1,500 workers in the Accommodations sector were enrolled across the country in eight provinces. SRDC implemented the project in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC), the Training Group at Douglas College, SkillPlan, and more than a dozen other training organizations throughout the country. The decision to invest in workplace training, though complex, ultimately relates to the expected return on investment. Thus, the objective of the UPSKILL demonstration project was to provide a credible test of the effectiveness of workplace LES training by measuring its impacts on workers and firms and estimating the return on investment for all those engaged.

What are its key components?

The UPSKILL program model was built on best practices in workplace training identified through a review of promising models and through extensive consultation with workplace LES practitioners. Central features of the program design included the key role played by partnerships – with industry, unions and the government – in the implementation, alignment of the training with identified learner and business needs, and the use of transferable learning strategies and flexible delivery models that emphasize a service orientation.

The key components of the model are as follows:

- **Sector engagement**: The first stage of the implementation involved engagement of the target industry at both a national and regional level through lead organizations who acted as the liaison with firms.
- **Sector needs analysis**: In the second stage, a sector needs analysis was performed to better understand the relationship between Essential Skills and performance gaps of workers and the business needs of firms in the Accommodations sector.

- **Core curricula design – LES within a performance framework**: In the third stage, core curricula were designed for each of the target occupations, based on the findings of the sector needs analysis. In parallel, Train-the-trainer workshops were designed along with other tools to prepare and support the workplace educators to deliver the training intervention.
- **Firm recruitment and organizational needs assessments**: In parallel with the design of the core curricula, individual firms were recruited to participate in the project. The offer included up to 40 hours of Essential Skills training for each employee with wage compensation to employers for half of the release time, up to a maximum of 20 hours. The offer included a detailed organizational needs assessment (ONA) to help identify firm-specific performance gaps and business objectives, which would inform the customization of the curricula.
- **Worker recruitment and assessment**: Workers were then recruited from within each participating firm through information sessions, at which the objectives, benefits and administrative aspects of the project and the training were explained to potential participants. Participation in UPSKILL was voluntary. Assessments of individual participants' Essential Skills and job performances were conducted following the information sessions.
- **Customization and training delivery**: Workplace educators then used the results of the ONA and baseline skills and performance assessments of participants to customize the core curricula to develop a training solution for each firm and its participating employees. The training solution was then delivered to participants within the workplace, consisting of up to a maximum of 40 hours of training per participant, through a flexible and blended approach, using a combination of group, one-to-one, and self-paced learning modules customized to the specific needs of the firm and learners. Post-training assessments of skills and job performance were also conducted in order to measure gains.

What are its innovative features?

Two of the above key components of the model stand out as innovative:

1. **The sector-based approach** design and customized training, similar to the Pay for Success model, engaging one sector allowed for an in-depth understanding of sectoral needs which were then used to develop training that meets its needs at both the employer and job seeker levels.
2. The **customization of training at two levels**, namely at the occupation and workplace/participant levels, was key in achieving outcomes for both employers and job seekers. The first level of customization allowed for a strong curriculum linked to the specific occupation, with the goal of ensuring that participants make gains in essential skills, and, thus experience gains in their job performance. The second level of customization further targeted the training to meet the specific needs of that particular employer and those job seekers so that training can be delivered effectively and efficiently.

How did the program impact visible minority newcomer women?

While UPSKILL did not specifically target visible minority newcomer women, about 40 per cent of UPSKILL participants were immigrants and a majority of the sample members were women (72.3 per cent), owing largely to the number of housekeeping room attendants in the project, and the preponderance of women in occupations for this sector. In addition, subgroup analyses were done to see if/how immigrants and non-immigrants differed in their outcomes.

Overall, findings indicate that workplace LES training does, indeed, have large positive impacts on workers' skills, job performance, and a wide range of economic and social outcomes for workers and firms.

Recent immigrants represented a sizable proportion of the total sample and fared remarkably well, experiencing in many cases, what were equal or larger sized impacts than Canadian-born participants. Results indicated that immigrants benefited from UPSKILL to a significantly greater degree than Canadian-born participants in terms of Essential Skills and job performance, but not in the psychosocial changes. Immigrants experienced much larger, and rising gains from UPSKILL than non-immigrants in one Essential Skill in particular – document use. Immigrants also benefited more than non-immigrants in terms of job performance, specifically in regard to effective communication and resolving customer complaints. In terms of psychological capital, behavioural indicators of literacy practice, and social capital, non-immigrants experienced impacts that were not statistically different from immigrants.

What are the implications for a future pilot?

UPSKILL results provide compelling evidence that should support government policies and industry initiatives aiming to communicate the value of workplace LES training and encourage employer investment. The project also provided many insights on how to effectively engage employers, how best to implement such training, and on the conditions that are more likely to lead to success.

The following lessons learned from the UPSKILL demonstration project should be taken into account when considering this model for visible minority newcomer women:

- Workplace literacy and essential skills training can produce substantial return on investment for workers and firms, but it depends heavily on need and context. While the pilot showed a wide range of positive impacts, they varied dramatically based on how effectively training was aligned with context and need.
- Adopting a sector-based approach to design and implement training is a particularly effective and efficient way to design a skills and performance framework along with a core literacy and essential skills training curriculum for given occupations, which will help training practitioners achieve business alignment in a cost-effective way.
- Embedding literacy and essential skills in an occupational and business needs framework makes it easier for practitioners to achieve alignment of training with performance and

business needs. It is also critical to maximizing employer and worker engagement in learning activities – through a high degree of relevance.

- Implementation can be difficult for small firms (less than 20 employees) due to the amount of release time that employers can make available, given their current business demands. Alternative approaches that better address workplace constraints, such as training through mentorship or with off-site cluster based delivery models for small businesses, should be explored.

In sum, the UPSKILL model is a promising approach for visible minority newcomer women who are already employed, but may not have the necessary skills for career growth. Such a pilot project would require a focus on one or more sectors so that the training can be aligned with the performance framework of selected occupations.

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Appendix A: Analysis of the experience of visible minority newcomer women in the Foundation Workplace Skills Project

Introduction

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation evaluated the efficacy of a pilot program called Foundation Workplace Skills Project (FWSP) and found that it was an effective intervention for helping immigrants finding employment. The FWSP sample consists of a large proportion of immigrant women. Thus, the FWSP project data presents a unique opportunity to conduct an in-depth data analysis to examinee FWSP attributes that can help inform the design of an experiment for visible minority newcomer women. The main research questions this exploratory analysis aim to answer are:

- How did FWSP impact visible minority immigrant woman participants?
- What are the characteristics of visible minority immigrant woman participants of FWSP who demonstrated success in labour market outcomes? Who were particularly helped by the FWSP interventions?
- What are the characteristics of visible minority immigrant woman participants of FWSP who demonstrated improvements in predictor of successful labour market integration? Who were particularly helped by the FWSP interventions?

Answering these research questions would help SRDC inform the focus group interviews to understand the pathways visible minority immigrant women took in their labour market integration, the challenges they faced and the effective mitigation strategies they applied. It would also help the SRDC research team in designing the pilot program.

The next section provides an overview of the Foundation Workplace Skills Project. The third section describes the identification and profile of visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP. It serves to provide some context of the main quantitative analysis. The fourth section presents FWSP's major impacts among visible minority immigrant women which answer the first research question of interest. The fifth section presents the exploratory quantitative analysis of the potential success factors of observed labour market outcomes (answers to the second research questions) and potential success factors of a predictor of successful labour market integration (answers to the third research questions) using the FWSP sample. The last section summarizes the lessons learned from this exercise and potential implications to the focus group interviews and design of the pilot.

What is the Foundation Workplace Skills Project?

The Foundations Workplace Skills Project (FWSP), is an initiative led by the Training Group at Douglas College, British Columbia. It was the first study to use a randomized control trial design to

test the impacts of a Literacy & Essential Skill (LES) based program model targeted specifically at unemployed job seekers.

What are its key components?

The program model of the FWSP was divided into two components:

i. Portfolio development; and

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- Build a realistic career action plan based on the match between their *assessed* skill levels and *required* skill levels for the targeted occupations.

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Skills Enhancement aimed to be more targeted and individualized than Portfolio development. It was intended to take place over 2 to 10 weeks, depending on the participant's needs, and offer the following core elements:

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Identification of visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP sample

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Table 1 Visible minority immigrant women in FWSP

	Control Group	Program Group	Overall
Randomly assigned	221	231	**452**
Men	80	84	**164**
Women	141	147	**288**
Women – Canadian born	53	43	**96**
Women – Immigrant	88	104	**192**
Woman Immigrants – Likely Caucasians	6	19	**25**
Woman Immigrants – Likely Visible Minority	**82**	**85**	**167**
Not recent visible minority immigrant women	41	37	**78**
Recent visible minority immigrant women	41	48	**89**

Profiles of visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP sample

About 57 per cent of the visible minority immigrant women participants in FWSP were of the prime working age from 25 to 44 years old, and another 32 per cent were in the 45 to 54 age group. Three-quarters were married or in common law relationships; 11 per cent were separated, divorced or widowed; 14 per cent were single and never married. About 41 per cent did not have any children 18 years of age or younger; 39 per cent had children between the age 7 and 18; and 20 per cent had young children 6 years of age or younger.

The women in the subgroup are highly educated. Only 10 per cent had high school diploma or below while 90 per cent had some form of postsecondary education, and over 64 per cent had a university degree. Despite their higher educational attainment, their essential skills assessments were poor at enrolment into FWSP. Generally, Level 3 skills are deemed essential for modern day workplace. Only 18 per cent reached Level 3 of Document Use skills and 22 per cent reached Level 3 of Reading skills. However, 43 per cent of the women reached Level 3 of Numeracy skills. Since it's known that language abilities affect numeracy assessment less than the other two essential skills assessments, the numeracy result suggested that participants' cognitive abilities were higher than they had shown in the Canadian assessments of literacy and essential skills. Consider that 72 per cent speak a language other than English or French at home, many of these participants might have limited English fluency to fully function in the Canadian workplaces.

The most commonly cited barriers to employment are limited work experience (58 per cent), difficulty with English (39 per cent), and lack of job hunting skills (37 per cent). Education level (26 per cent), foreign credential recognition (28 per cent), and lack of child support (11 per cent) were also important barriers reported. It should be noted that these barriers are not typical among all visible minority immigrant women in Canada since this is not a representative sample. The participation in FWSP was voluntary and this sample consists of visible minority newcomer women who were willing to participate in the program in order to get employment. As a result, some visible minority immigrant women who lacked education recognition, child care support, or other issues might have given up on finding employment and they were less likely to participate in FWSP. Even among the participants who are willing to participate, almost 40 per cent faced three or more barriers to employment. The top three commonly cited barriers probably indicate the participant was closer to labour market than someone with multiple barriers including one of the lower ranking barriers. Indeed, after portfolio development, only half of the program group participants were referred to skills enhancement, suggesting that half of the participants simply need to identify their skills and develop an actionable plan to build their career.

Only 13 per cent of the women was in a household with another employed adult.
Eighty-one (81) per cent of participants were unemployed at the time of enrolment. Most participants were from lower income households with 59 per cent reporting less than $30,000 annual income. The majority (78 per cent) had worked before and only a small proportion was on Employment Insurance or Income Assistance benefits.

Table 2 Characteristics of participating visible minority immigrant women of the FWSP at Baseline

Characteristics	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Age (%)					
15-24	4.9	2.5	7.2	4.8	
25-34	19.5	22.2	16.9	-5.4	
35-44	37.8	38.3	37.3	-0.9	
45-54	31.7	28.4	34.9	6.5	
55 and over	6.1	8.6	3.6	-5.0	
Household Structure					
Marital Status (%)					
Married	73.7	72.0	75.3	3.3	
Common Law	1.8	1.2	2.4	1.1	
Single never married	13.8	14.6	12.9	-1.7	
Separated	6.0	6.1	5.9	-0.2	
Divorced	3.0	3.7	2.4	-1.3	
Widowed	1.8	2.4	1.2	-1.3	
Presence of Children (%)	61.1	57.3	64.7	7.4	
Presence of Young Children (%)	20.1	16.5	23.8	7.3	
Number of Children	1.2	1.3	1.1	-0.2	
Number of Adults (including the participant)	2.2	2.2	2.3	0.1	
Presence of another employed adult (%)	13.4	14.8	12.0	-2.8	
Household Income					
Less than $10,000	24.8	23.7	25.9	2.2	
$10,000 to less than $20,000	15.9	14.5	17.3	2.8	
$20,000 to less than $30,000	18.5	22.4	14.8	-7.6	
$30,000 to less than $40,000	11.5	7.9	14.8	6.9	
$40,000 to less than $50,000	8.9	11.8	6.2	-5.7	
$50,000 to less than $60,000	3.2	2.6	3.7	1.1	
$60,000 to less than $70,000	5.1	2.6	7.4	4.8	
$70,000 to less than $80,000	4.5	6.6	2.5	-4.1	
$80,000 to less than $90,000	1.9	0.0	3.7	3.7	*
$90,000 or more	5.7	7.9	3.7	-4.2	
Employment Status (%)					
Not Working, and looking for work	81.3	79.3	83.3	4.1	
Not Working, but starting a job soon	3.0	2.4	3.6	1.1	
Currently working part-time (less than 20 hours / week)	15.7	18.3	13.1	-5.2	
Ever Employed	77.6	81.3	74.1	-7.2	

Characteristics	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Benefit Usage (%)					
Receiving EI at Baseline	7.2	6.2	8.2	2.1	
Receiving IA at Baseline	11.6	12.5	10.7	-1.8	
Immigrants (%)					
Recent Immigrants	53.3	50.0	56.5	6.5	
Speak English at home	27.5	19.5	35.3	15.8	**
Speak French at home	0.6	1.2	0.0	-1.2	
Speak other language at home	71.9	79.3	64.7	-14.6	**
Highest Level of Education					
Less than a high school diploma	1.8	1.2	2.4	1.2	
A high school diploma or equivalent	7.8	4.9	10.7	5.8	
Trade/vocational or apprenticeship dipl./cert.	3.6	3.7	3.6	-0.1	
Community college or CEGEP dipl./cert.	12.7	14.6	10.7	-3.9	
University degree - Bachelor level or equivalent	47.0	42.7	51.2	8.5	
University degree - Masters level or higher	17.5	18.3	16.7	-1.6	
Other diploma, degree, or certificate	9.6	14.6	4.8	-9.9	**
Essential Skills Assessments					
Document Use					
Average Score	242.1	244.3	240.1	-4.2	
Lower Level 1 (%)	8.0	7.6	8.3	0.7	
Upper Level 1 (%)	18.4	13.9	22.6	8.7	
Lower Level 2 (%)	30.1	31.6	28.6	-3.1	
Upper Level 2 (%)	25.2	29.1	21.4	-7.7	
Level 3 (%)	18.4	17.7	19.0	1.3	
Reading					
Average Score	239.4	238.9	240.0	1.1	
Lower Level 1 (%)	8.4	8.5	8.2	-0.3	
Upper Level 1 (%)	22.8	20.7	24.7	4.0	
Lower Level 2 (%)	28.7	31.7	25.9	-5.8	
Upper Level 2 (%)	18.6	19.5	17.6	-1.9	
Level 3 (%)	21.6	19.5	23.5	4.0	
Numeracy					
Average Score	261.8	262.8	260.8	-2.0	
Lower Level 1 (%)	10.8	11.8	9.8	-2.1	
Upper Level 1 (%)	13.3	10.5	15.9	5.3	
Lower Level 2 (%)	14.6	17.1	12.2	-4.9	
Upper Level 2 (%)	18.4	15.8	20.7	4.9	
Level 3 (%)	43.0	44.7	41.5	-3.3	

Characteristics	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Number of barriers to find employment or to keep a job (%)					
1	29.2	32.9	25.6	-7.3	
2	31.7	26.6	36.6	10.0	
3	20.5	21.5	19.5	-2.0	
4 or more	18.6	19.0	18.3	-0.7	
Type of barriers (%)					
Limited Work Experience	57.8	51.9	63.4	11.5	
Difficulty with English	38.5	35.4	41.5	6.0	
Lack of Job Hunting Skills	36.6	36.7	36.6	-0.1	
Credential Not Recognized in Canada	28.0	26.6	29.3	2.7	
Education	25.5	24.1	26.8	2.8	
Others	22.4	25.3	19.5	-5.8	
Lack of Child Care Support	11.2	12.7	9.8	-2.9	
Transportation Issues	7.5	11.4	3.7	-7.7	*
Physical Disability, Injury or Illness	5.0	5.1	4.9	-0.2	
Legal Issues	2.5	1.3	3.7	2.4	
Family Issues	1.9	2.5	1.2	-1.3	
Learning Disability	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.0	
Family Member's Health	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.0	
Housing Problems	1.2	0.0	2.4	2.4	
Drug or Alcohol Problem	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Impacts of FWSP on visible minority immigrant women

The impacts of FWSP on visible minority immigrant women are very similar to the findings on the boarder immigrant subgroup. This is not surprising given that many of the immigrants in FWSP are visible minority women. Below is a summary of the major impact findings:

- The FWSP produced positive impacts on Essential Skills scores in numeracy (by 23 points) and document use (by 17 points) at 12-week follow-up among visible minority immigrant women, as well as impacts on the use of math in everyday activities (by 16 percentage points) at 12-month follow-up.
- The FWSP produced immediate positive impacts on career adaptability measures after completion of the program at 12 weeks (the percentages with a very high score in career plan and career decision making self-efficacy increased by 22 and 14 percentage points respectively, while the percentages with a high or very high score in job search clarity and job search self-efficacy increased by 28 and 30 percentage points respectively) among visible minority immigrant women. Several of these impacts were sustained at the 12-month follow-up stage:

the percentage of program group participants of visible minority immigrant women with improvement on all four scales was 16 percentage points higher at 12-month follow-up.

- Although the FWSP did not have a significant impact on employment rate among visible minority immigrant women, it did significantly move about eight per cent of participants from low to medium wage (under $20/hour) to high wage rate jobs ($20/hour or over).
- The FWSP had shifted visible minority immigrant women' employment from occupations in sales and services to business, finance and administration.
- The FWSP also had a significant positive impact on occupational skill level among visible minority immigrant women and reduced over-qualification rates. There is a 14 percentage point increase in working at a Level A occupation that requires university degree, all from participants with a university degree, while there's also a 15 percentage point decrease in jobs that require no formal educational requirements, mostly from participants with postsecondary education.
- The FWSP also reduced the proportion of participating visible minority immigrant women who reported dissatisfaction about the opportunities to use their skills and experience (by 14 percentage points), reflecting better alignment of skills and work.
- Although the FWSP had significant impacts on training participation, training intensity and the training associated employment outcomes in the overall sample, these impacts were not found among the sub-population of visible minority immigrant women. There were some signs that visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP program group who took training were also more likely to be jobless at the 12-month follow-up, which might suggest that it might took them longer than 12 months to settle into gainful employment.

Potential success factors for labour market integration among visible minority immigrant women

Based on the observed improvements in career adaptation, higher wage rate, and better perceived utilization of skills, it is reasonable to conclude that some of the visible minority immigrant women participants in the FWSP found success in their transition to the labour market. This section examines the potential factors (as measured at baseline) that predict successful labour market integration. The analysis makes use of data of all visible minority immigrant women in the FWSP, regardless of their randomly assigned program group. Because of the sample is limited in size, the analysis relies on crosstabs to explore the potential factors. Although Chi-squared tests were generated during the estimation, the analysis applied a slightly higher level of significance than the commonly used 10 per cent level.[2]

A key issue in such an exploratory analysis is the working definition of successful labour market integration. The following discussion presents the potential factors under two working definitions

[2] Any statistically insignificant result at the 10 per cent level (but significant within the 20 per cent level) is termed as "weak" or "signs" in the discussion.

— one based on wage rate and one based on higher level of self-efficacy scale. The two working definitions represent a narrower view and a broader view of successful labour market integration of immigrants.

Defining success as getting gainful employment

Although the FWSP had moderate impacts in improving the labour market integration of visible minority immigrant women, particularly in moving participants into higher wage jobs ($20/hour or over) to match with their skills, it was still difficult to define "success" with a small sample. Sometimes employment success is not reflected in high wage rates within a short follow-up period. For example, there were only nine people in the FWSP sample reported a job with a wage $20/hour or over. Therefore, it is important to examine other characteristics of "gainful" employment.

The FWSP impact study showed that the program also had moderate impacts in moving people into higher skill level occupations such as management or professional (which requires bachelor's degree). These jobs are likely to provide better long term prospects and so even though someone may not get a wage rate at the beginning, they can be considered as having early success in labour market integration. In the FWSP sample of visible minority women, there were 22 people with management or professional occupations reporting less than $20/hour.

The FWSP also shifted people to generally more skilled occupations — business, finance, and administration occupations — from less skilled occupations in sales and service or trades, transport, and equipment operators. In the FWSP sample of visible minority women, there were three people in lower skill level of occupation in business, finance, and administration with less than $20/hour wage rate. Using this working definition of success — shift to more skilled occupations — including the three individuals with potential for more gainful employment, there were 34 "successful" cases in a sample of 127, of which 22 were from Vancouver and 12 were from Waterloo-Kitchener area.

Tables 3 and 4 present how the percentages of participants who had gainful employment vary by selected factors. Highlights from the tables include:

- There were signs that having a university degree was a major factor in gainful employment (33.3 per cent for those with a university degree compared to 15.6 per cent for those without). FWSP seemed to have a higher impact on gainful employment among those with a university degree.
- Similarly, it was easier for visible minority immigrant women to obtain gainful employment if their initial document use or skills were assessed at level 2 or above. The difference in numeracy skills did not seem to matter, while difference in reading skills was only weakly related. Again, FWSP seemed to have had a bigger difference in its impacts among those with better document use or reading essential skills.
- Age did not seem to be a factor. There was also no evidence of differences based on the time since arrival in Canada.
- The use of English or French at home was weakly related to gainful employment.

- There was no evidence that marital status affected the likelihood of gainful employment. However, families with $30,000 or more household income were less likely to have gainful employment without FWSP.
- Individuals who worked previously were not particularly advantaged in obtaining gainful employment in this sample, though it should be noted that the number of participants with no work experience is very small.
- The presence of another employed adult in the household and household income were not related to the success in gainful employment.
- In general, the presence of children aged 18 or under or the presence of young children (aged 6 or under) did not have any effect on obtaining gainful employment. That said, FWSP seem to help those with children more than those without children, even though the evidence was very weak.
- The number of barriers did not seem to matter except:
    - There were signs that FWSP helped those who had more fluency in English more than those who had less English fluency obtain gainful employment.
    - The absence of job hunting skills did not seem to matter in obtaining gainful employment; however, there were some weak signs that FWSP seemed to work better among those who had some job hunting skills in the first place.
    - Credential recognition did not seem to make a difference.
    - There were signs that those with education could find gainful employment easier than those without.
    - There was not enough evidence to suggest whether the need of child care made any difference in obtaining gainful employment, since there were not many who reported needing child care in the sample. However, it seemed that FWSP had a larger impact of obtaining gainful employment among the few who need child care.

The above patterns suggest that **education** and **skills** of visible minority immigrant women are crucial in gainful employment. The FWSP seemed to be particularly helpful to highly skilled visible minority immigrant women, who might simply need some help in exploring their career options and navigating the Canadian labour market, and possibly some workplace Essential Skills upgrading. The results also implied that visible minority immigrant women who are more distant from the labour market may need services or support before taking participating in an intervention like FWSP to address barriers such as language, low literacy and essential skills, and lack of education. Finally, those who need child care seemed to benefit more from FWSP. It is possible that FWSP participants improved their understanding of the career options that may fit their skills and needs, which helped address some of their child care needs.

Table 3 Proportion of visible minority immigrant women in FWSP with gainful employment by various baseline characteristics (1)

	Gainful employment					
	Combined Sample		Control Group		Program Group	
Overall	27.0%		19.4%		33.8%	
Educational Attainment						
Education Below Bachelor's Degree	33.3%	**	21.6%		43.2%	**
Bachelor's Degree or Above	15.6%		16.0%		15.0%	
Document Use @ Baseline						
Upper level two or above	38.3%	***	26.7%	*	50.0%	**
Lower level two or below	15.4%		10.0%		20.0%	
Reading @ Baseline						
Upper level two or above	32.2%	+	17.9%		45.2%	*
Lower level two or below	22.1%		20.6%		23.5%	
Numeracy @ Baseline						
Upper level two or above	27.8%		20.0%		34.1%	
Lower level two or below	25.6%		11.4%		35.0%	
Age						
18-24	20.0%				20.0%	
25-34	19.2%		7.1%		33.3%	
35-44	34.8%		30.4%		39.1%	
45-54	25.6%		15.8%		35.0%	
55-64	25.0%		20.0%		33.3%	
Immigrant Status						
Recent Immigrant	25.0%		19.4%		29.7%	
Established Immigrant	28.8%		19.4%		39.3%	
Home language						
Neither English nor French	22.5%	*	17.4%		27.9%	+
English or French	36.8%		25.0%		45.5%	
Marital Status						
Married or Common Law	26.7%		18.8%		34.0%	
Single	26.9%		21.4%		33.3%	
Household Income						
$30,000 or less	30.3%		28.1%	**	32.4%	
Above $30,000	13.0%		7.7%		39.3%	

Notes: Variations in the percentages by characteristics were tested with Chi-squared tests. Significant levels are: "+" = 20%, "*" = 10%, "**" = 5%, "*" = 1%.

Table 4 Proportion of visible minority immigrant women in FWSP with gainful employment by various baseline characteristics (2)

	Gainful employment		
	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group
Work Experience			
Worked before	27.1%	19.2%	36.4%
Never worked before	23.1%	22.2%	23.5%
Presence of another employed adult at home			
Yes	19.0%	8.3%	33.3%
No	28.6%	22.0%	34.5%
Presence of Children (aged 18 or under)			
Had children	28.9%	17.1%	39.0%
Did not have children	23.5%	22.2%	25.0%
Presence of Children (aged 6 or under)			
Had children	28.0%	10.0%	40.0%
Did not have children	26.5%	21.6%	31.9%
Barriers			
Number of barriers			
1	30.0%	28.6% +	31.3%
2	25.6%	17.6%	31.8%
3	23.3%	0.0%	46.7%
4 or more	26.1%	30.8%	20.0%
Limited work experience			
Yes	28.2%	20.0%	34.9%
No	22.7%	16.7%	30.0%
Difficulty with English			
Yes	18.6% +	15.0%	21.7% +
No	30.4%	20.5%	40.0%
Limited job hunting skills			
Yes	22.9%	21.7%	24.0%
No	28.4%	16.7%	39.5%
Lack of recognized credential			
Yes	26.3%	16.7%	35.0%
No	26.2%	19.5%	32.6%
Lack of education			
Yes	15.6% +	6.3% +	25.0%
No	30.0%	23.3%	36.2%
Other barriers			
Yes	31.0%	7.1%	53.3% *
No	24.7%	22.2%	27.1%
Need Child Care			
Yes	36.4%	14.3%	75.0% *
No	25.2%	19.2%	30.5%
Have disability			
Yes	28.6%	50.0% *	0.0%
No	26.1%	16.4%	35.0%

Notes: Variations in the percentages by characteristics were tested with Chi-squared tests. Significant levels are: "+" = 20%, "*" = 10%, "**" = 5%, "*" = 1%.

Defining success as improving confidence in job search

The definition of success in economic integration through gainful employment is likely too narrowed. First, some of the FWSP was still in the process of settling in Canada and the 12-month follow-up survey was probably too early to measure the eventual labour market outcome. Second, some of the FWSP participants had lower skills and they might not be eligible for high wage or high skill jobs even if they found a job that made use of their skills. As a result, it is important to broaden the definition of successful economic integration. Under Bandura's social cognitive theory, one's behavioural outcomes in the social cognitive process is directly related to one's self efficacy in planning and carrying out the action. The application of the social cognitive theory suggests that we could possibly defining success through improvement in job search self-efficacy. The previous section of FWSP's impacts has shown that FWSP increased career adaptability of visible minority immigrant women substantially, and part of the career adaptability measure include job search self-efficacy.

This section examines the potential factors of success related to moderate improvement of job search self-efficacy.[3] FWSP participants who displayed improvement of 1 (out of 5) category in job search self-efficacy scale from baseline to the 12-month follow-up survey are considered having moderate improvement. The FWSP has a substantial impact of this indicator of job search self-efficacy (45.2 per cent compared to 27.9 per cent). Further examination of this working definition found that it is strongly correlated with other career adaptability measures. Those with improved self-efficacy in job search are also better in career decision making self-efficacy, career planning and job search clarity, suggesting high career adaptability. With this definition of success, there were 45 "successful" cases in a sample of 125, of which 30 were from Vancouver and 15 were from Waterloo-Kitchener area.

Tables 5 and 6 presents how the percentages of participants who had moderate improvement in job search self-efficacy vary by various potential factors. We found the following potential factors of success with this definition:

- FWSP almost double the propensity of having high job search self-efficacy.
- Educational attainment was not related to having high self-efficacy in job search. The FWSP had similar impacts on participants regardless the educational attainment.
- There were weak evidence that those with higher essential skills (e.g., upper level two or above in numeracy) experienced gains in job search self-efficacy. FWSP seemed to have a slightly larger impact among those with upper level two Document Use essential skills.
- Age was not a factor, nor was the time since arrival in Canada.

[3] The job search self-efficacy scale is represented as 5-point Likert-scale.

- There was weak evidence that those who were not using English or French at home were more likely to show improvements in job search self-efficacy. It is possible that they simply had more room to improve because they were starting at lower levels of job search self-efficacy.
- Marital status and household income, or having worked before did not seem to be related to improvement in job search self-efficacy.
- In general, the presence of children aged 18 or under did not have any effect on improvements in job search self-efficacy. There was weak evidence that the presence of children aged 6 or under was related to less improvement in job search self-efficacy, and FWSP did not help to mitigate this issue.
- The number of barriers did not seem to matter.
    - Barriers such as lack of work experience, language barrier, and limited job hunting skills, did not seem to have any effect on job search self-efficacy.
    - Those who lack a recognized credential were less likely to improve their job search self-efficacy.
    - There was some evidence that it was more difficult for those with sufficient education to improve job search self-efficacy than those without. It seemed FWSP worked particularly well to improve job search self-efficacy among those who had a lack of education.
    - Those who needed child care were less likely to improve job search self-efficacy, with the exception of those who were in the FWSP program group. The FWSP intervention might have addressed the need for child care when participants found career or job options that fit better with their needs than they otherwise would.

The above patterns suggest that in viewing successful labour market integration as improved job search self-efficacy, education and essential skills (with the exception of numeracy) of visible minority immigrant women were not major factors of success. In general, FWSP could substantially improve success by providing help in exploring career options and navigating the Canadian labour market, particularly among those with higher level of document use skills, those who use English or French at home, those who had other employed adults at home, or those who did not have young children at home. FWSP also mitigated the barriers in child care needs and the lack of education.

Table 5 Proportions of visible minority immigrant women in FWSP with improved job search self-efficacy by various baseline characteristics (1)

	Improved Job Search Self-Efficacy		
	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group
Overall	36.6%	27.9%	45.2%
Educational Attainment			
Education Below Bachelor's Degree	37.0%	27.0%	45.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Above	35.7%	29.2%	44.4%
Document Use @ Baseline			
Upper level two or above	40.7%	25.8%	57.1% *
Lower level two or below	33.9%	32.1%	35.3%
Reading @ Baseline			
Upper level two or above	42.4%	35.7%	48.4%
Lower level two or below	31.3%	21.2%	41.9%
Numeracy @ Baseline			
Upper level two or above	41.6% +	31.4%	50.0%
Lower level two or below	29.3%	22.7%	36.8%
Age			
18-24	60.0%		60.0%
25-34	20.0%	14.3%	27.3%
35-44	41.3%	41.7%	40.9%
45-54	39.5%	21.1%	57.9%
55-64	50.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Immigrant Status			
Recent Immigrant	36.4%	25.8%	45.7%
Established Immigrant	36.8%	30.0%	44.4%
Home language			
Neither English nor French	39.5%	32.6% +	47.5%
English or French	29.7%	13.3%	40.9%
Marital Status			
Married or Common Law	37.1%	27.7%	46.0%
Single	34.6%	28.6%	41.7%
Household Income			
$30,000 or less	31.8%	21.2%	50.0%
Above $30,000	42.3%	34.6%	42.4%

Notes: Variations in the percentages by characteristics were tested with Chi-squared tests. Significant levels are: "+" = 20%, "*" = 10%, "**" = 5%, "*" = 1%.

Table 6 Proportions of visible minority immigrant women in FWSP with improved job search self-efficacy by various baseline characteristics (2)

	Improved Job Search Self-Efficacy		
	Combined Sample	Control Group	Program Group
Work Experience			
Worked before	35.1%	26.9%	45.2%
Never worked before	37.5%	25.0%	43.8%
Presence of another employed adult at home			
Yes	45.0%	18.2%	77.8% **
No	35.3%	30.0%	40.4%
Presence of Children (aged 18 or under)			
Had children	37.3%	28.6%	45.0%
Did not have children	35.4%	26.9%	45.5%
Presence of Children (aged 6 or under)			
Had children	24.0% +	27.3%	21.4% *
Did not have children	38.3%	26.5%	51.1%
Barriers			
Number of barriers			
1	41.4%	50.0% **	33.3%
2	37.8%	29.4%	45.0%
3	31.0%	0.0%	60.0%
4 or more	43.5%	38.5%	50.0%
Limited work experience			
Yes	39.5%	35.3%	42.9%
No	35.7%	20.8%	55.6%
Difficulty with English			
Yes	30.8%	27.8%	57.1%
No	35.4%	30.0%	41.0%
Limited job hunting skills			
Yes	40.8%	29.2%	52.0%
No	36.2%	29.4%	42.9%
Lack of recognized credential			
Yes	27.0% *	17.6%	35.0%
No	43.2%	34.1%	52.5%
Lack of education			
Yes	50.0% +	33.3%	66.7% *
No	34.1%	27.9%	40.0%
Other barriers			
Yes	42.9%	23.1%	60.0%
No	36.7%	31.1%	42.2%
Need Child Care			
Yes	16.7% +	0.0% *	50.0%
No	40.6%	34.0%	46.4%
Have disability			
Yes	28.6%	25.0%	33.3%
No	38.7%	29.6%	47.4%

Notes: Variations in the percentages by characteristics were tested with Chi-squared tests. Significant levels are: "+" = 20%, "*" = 10%, "**" = 5%, "*" = 1%.

Implications for the pilot

The lessons from the FWSP data seem to suggest the following:

- Regardless of the education and skills level, visible minority immigrant women who are willing to work can use interventions like FWSP to help them building a realistic career action plan by identifying the skills they already have and the occupational and essential skills required by employers.
- For highly educated or highly skilled visible minority immigrant women, it does not seem to be important for them to pursuit further education or training in order to get a high wage job. This is in contrast to FWSP's results obtained from the overall sample of the FWSP where many participants took further education or training in order to achieve higher wage. Since some studies suggest that women have a higher level of career adaptability than men,[4] it might be possible that visible minority immigrant women were more flexible to in pursuing other career options without retooling themselves to stay in the same narrower field than their male counterparts would have done. If this hypothesis is applicable, it is important to design the labour market integration assistance differently for women (that further training is lesser of a priority) and for men.
- Typically assessed barriers, such as language, literacy and essential skills, and lack of job hunting skills are very important for highly educated visible minority immigrant women in finding gainful employment even with an intervention like FWSP. The design of the pilot may need to find ways to mitigate these barriers quickly.
- For less skilled or educated immigrants, some career adaptability and basic skills interventions like FWSP should probably be prioritized over interventions addressing language barrier, unless they have no functional level of English or French capability. This is reasonable in a sense that many lower skilled jobs do not need very high level of language fluency.
- Although FWSP data show that FWSP somewhat mitigate the need of child care in labour market integration among those who want to work, the results do not imply that child care is not needed. First, the proportion of visible minority women with young children in the sample is very low (about 35 per cent among those under the age of 40). Many newcomer women might have withdrawn from the labour market completely if the cost of child care is higher than what they thought they could make in the labour market. Additional supports to women with young children are probably needed on top of the labour market integration assistance, though this quantitative analysis is not able to address the issue.

[4] For example, O'Connell, McNeely, and Hall (2008), and Rocha (2012) found women have higher career adaptability. See O'Connell, D. J., McNeely, E., & Hall, D. T. (2008). Unpacking personal adaptability at work. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 14, 248–259.

Appendix B: Impacts of FWSP on visible minority immigrant women

Table 7 Selected impacts of FWSP on visible minority immigrant women at 12-week follow-up

	Control Group		Program Group			
Characteristics	Baseline	Follow-up	Baseline	Follow-up	Impacts	
Essential Skills Assessments						
Document Use						
Lower Level 1 (%)	5.3	4.0	6.1	0.0	-4.0	
Upper Level 1 (%)	15.8	16.0	20.4	10.0	-10.0	
Lower Level 2 (%)	26.3	28.0	28.6	18.0	-12.0	
Upper Level 2 (%)	29.8	26.0	22.4	33.0	14.0	
Level 3 (%)	22.8	26.0	22.4	39.0	13.0	
Average Document Use Score	249.8	254.5	246.8	268.9	17.4	**
Reading						
Lower Level 1 (%)	6.7	5.0	6.0	4.0	0.0	
Upper Level 1 (%)	20.0	20.0	16.0	16.0	0.0	
Lower Level 2 (%)	28.3	30.0	28.0	28.0	-2.0	
Upper Level 2 (%)	23.3	20.0	20.0	18.0	1.0	
Level 3 (%)	21.7	25.0	30.0	34.0	1.0	
Average Reading Score	242.3	246.3	251.4	258.6	3.2	
Numeracy						
Lower Level 1 (%)	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.0	0.0	
Upper Level 1 (%)	3.8	17.0	16.7	10.0	-19.0	**
Lower Level 2 (%)	18.9	6.0	14.6	4.0	3.0	
Upper Level 2 (%)	17.0	15.0	20.8	19.0	0.0	
Level 3 (%)	56.6	58.0	43.8	63.0	17.0	*
Average Numeracy Score	281.1	278.5	269.6	289.5	22.5	***
Career Planning (5 point Scale)	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.9	0.3	
Category - % Very High	13.8	21.0	6.1	35.0	22.0	**
Career Decision Making Self Efficacy (5 point Scale)	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.9	0.4	**
Category - % Very High	5.2	14.0	2.0	24.0	14.0	*
Job Search Clarity (5 point Scale)	3.2	3.5	3.2	4.0	0.4	***
Category - % High or Very High	46.6	64.0	40.8	86.0	28.0	**
Job Search Self-Efficacy (5 point Scale)	2.7	3.0	2.8	3.6	0.4	***
Category -% High or Very High	14.0	25.0	22.4	63.0	30.0	***

Table 8 Selected difference-in-difference impacts of FWSP on visible minority immigrant women at 12-week follow-up

Characteristics	Control Group Baseline	Control Group Follow-up	Program Group Baseline	Program Group Follow-up	Impacts	
Literacy Practice						
a. Do math (such as for household budgets, bills, … (6-point scale)	4.14	4.48	4.32	4.86	0.20	
Never (%)	1.59	3.18	0.00	3.23	1.64	
Rarely (%)	14.30	9.54	14.53	4.85	-4.92	
Less than once a week (%)	14.30	3.20	14.53	8.09	4.66	
Once a week (%)	28.60	27.01	19.38	12.93	-4.86	
A few times a week (%)	20.60	34.90	27.38	28.98	-12.70	
Every day (%)	20.60	22.19	24.16	41.95	16.20	*
Overall Career Adaptability						
Improved on all four scales		27.90		43.60	15.70	*
Improved on three		29.50		24.19	-5.31	
Improved on two		16.40		12.91	-3.49	
Improved on one or fewer		26.20		19.33	-6.87	

Table 9 Wage distributions impacts of the FWSP on visible minority immigrant women

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
Previous or current job - hourly wage quintiles (%)				
Quintile 1 ($11/hour or less)	16.10	15.36	-0.74	
Quintile 2 (More than $11 to $12.5/hour)	16.10	13.82	-2.28	
Quintile 3 (More than $12.5 to $15/hour)	21.00	12.34	-8.66	
Quintile 4 (More than $15 to $20/hour)	8.06	7.69	-0.37	
Quintile 5 (More than $20/hour)	3.23	10.77	7.54	*

Table 10 Wage distributions impacts of the FWSP on visible minority immigrant women – Jobless, previous job, and current job

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
Previous job (%)				
Quintile 1 ($11/hour or less)	9.68	13.85	4.17	
Quintile 2 (More than $11 to $12.5/hour)	9.68	3.08	-6.60	
Quintile 3 (More than $12.5 to $15/hour)	4.84	7.69	2.85	
Quintile 4 (More than $15 to $20/hour)	0.00	4.62	4.62	*
Quintile 5 (More than $20/hour)	3.23	1.54	-1.69	
Current job (%)				
Quintile 1 ($11/hour or less)	6.45	1.54	-4.91	
Quintile 2 (More than $11 to $12.5/hour)	6.45	10.77	4.32	
Quintile 3 (More than $12.5 to $15/hour)	16.10	4.60	-11.50	**
Quintile 4 (More than $15 to $20/hour)	8.06	3.07	-4.99	
Quintile 5 (More than $20/hour)	0.00	9.23	9.23	**

Table 11 Impacts on broad occupation category at 12 months

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
Previous or current job (%)				
0: Management occupations	0.00	1.54	1.54	
1: Business, finance and administration occupations	4.84	16.94	12.10	**
2: Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	1.61	1.54	-0.07	
3: Health occupations	4.84	7.69	2.85	
4: Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	14.50	10.75	-3.75	
5: Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	0.00	0.00	0.00	
6: Sales and service occupations	25.80	16.92	-8.88	
7: Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	3.23	0.00	-3.23	
8: Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	0.00	0.00	0.00	
9: Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	8.06	3.07	-4.99	

Table 12 Impacts on occupation skill level at 12 months

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
Previous or current job (%)				
Level A: University degree	1.61	15.41	13.80	***
Level B: Non-university post-secondary	14.50	15.37	0.87	
Level C: High school diploma	22.60	18.48	-4.12	
Level D: No formal educational requirements	25.80	10.80	-15.00	**

Table 13 Skill level by educational attainment

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
University degree	19.40	23.12	3.72	
College degree or apprenticeship training	9.68	12.31	2.63	
High school diploma	3.23	0.00	-3.23	
Less than high school	0.00	1.54	1.54	
Previous or current job (%)				
Skill Level A	1.61	15.41	13.80	***
University degree	1.61	15.41	13.80	***
College degree or apprenticeship training	0.00	0.00	0.00	
High school diploma	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Less than high school	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Skill Level B	14.50	15.37	0.87	
University degree	9.68	12.31	2.63	
College degree or apprenticeship training	4.84	0.00	-4.84	*
High school diploma	0.00	3.08	3.08	
Less than high school	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Skill Level C	22.60	18.48	-4.12	
University degree	14.50	12.29	-2.21	
College degree or apprenticeship training	4.84	3.08	-1.76	
High school diploma	3.23	3.08	-0.15	
Less than high school	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Skill Level D	25.80	10.80	-15.00	**
University degree	14.50	4.60	-9.90	*
College degree or apprenticeship training	8.06	1.53	-6.53	*
High school diploma	0.00	4.62	4.62	*
Less than high school	1.61	0.00	-1.61	

Table 14 Job satisfaction for those who have worked since baseline: Individual indicators

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference	
Jobless (%)	35.50	40.02	4.52	
Previous or current job (%)				
Your pay (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied (score <= 3)	32.30	24.66	-7.64	
Neutral (3 < score < 5)	14.50	9.21	-5.29	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied (5 <= score <= 7)	17.70	24.57	6.87	
The opportunities to use your skills and experience (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	25.80	12.30	-13.50	*
Neutral	14.50	16.91	2.41	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	24.20	29.24	5.04	
The opportunities to use your own initiative to make decisions (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	24.20	20.01	-4.19	
Neutral	11.30	12.32	1.02	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	29.00	26.12	-2.88	
Your job security (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	27.40	19.98	-7.42	
Neutral	11.30	13.86	2.56	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	25.80	24.61	-1.19	
Support from your supervisor or manager (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	16.10	7.66	-8.44	
Neutral	6.45	18.45	12.00	**
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	41.90	32.27	-9.63	
The opportunities for career growth and promotion (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	27.40	23.06	-4.34	
Neutral	12.90	16.92	4.02	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	24.20	18.47	-5.73	
The opportunities for learning new things and developing your abilities (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	21.00	13.88	-7.12	
Neutral	8.06	15.38	7.32	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	35.50	29.25	-6.25	
All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job? (%)				
Dissatisfied to Highly Dissatisfied	21.00	13.88	-7.12	
Neutral	11.30	16.93	5.63	
Satisfied to Highly Satisfied	32.30	27.73	-4.57	

Table 15 Training indicators and composites

	Control Group	Program Group	Difference
Training Participation Rates, other than FWSP (%)			
Have taken education or training (other than FWSP) since baseline	54.00	41.30	12.70
Career Planning and Job Search	17.50	11.15	-6.35
Have taken education or training (excluding career planning and job search) since baseline	49.20	41.26	-7.94
Job or Work-Related Skills	23.80	15.86	-7.94
Language or Literacy	17.50	15.91	-1.59
Personal Interest or to Improve Education	11.10	11.10	0.00
Other	15.90	15.90	0.00
Training intensity (Excluding career planning and job search) (%)			
No training	50.80	58.74	7.94
Less intensive training: One course only, and 40 hours or less	34.90	30.14	-4.76
No training or less intensive training	85.70	88.87	3.17
More intensive training: Two or more courses, or more than 40 hours	14.30	11.13	-3.17

Appendix C: The Foundations Workplace Skills Project research design

The FWSP research design

To isolate the effects of an intervention from all other variables that may affect outcomes of interest, a reliable counterfactual is required to provide an accurate measure of what would have occurred in the absence of the intervention. Simply comparing those who choose to receive an intervention with those who don't is not sufficient, since these two groups are likely to differ in a variety of other ways.

It is widely accepted that the best way to construct a counterfactual and thereby a measure of true program impacts is through the use of random assignment. Thus the FWSP evaluation framework utilized a **randomized control trial (RCT) design**, whereby individuals who attended intake information sessions were assigned at random to either a **program group** that was eligible to receive the intervention or to a **control group** that was not eligible.

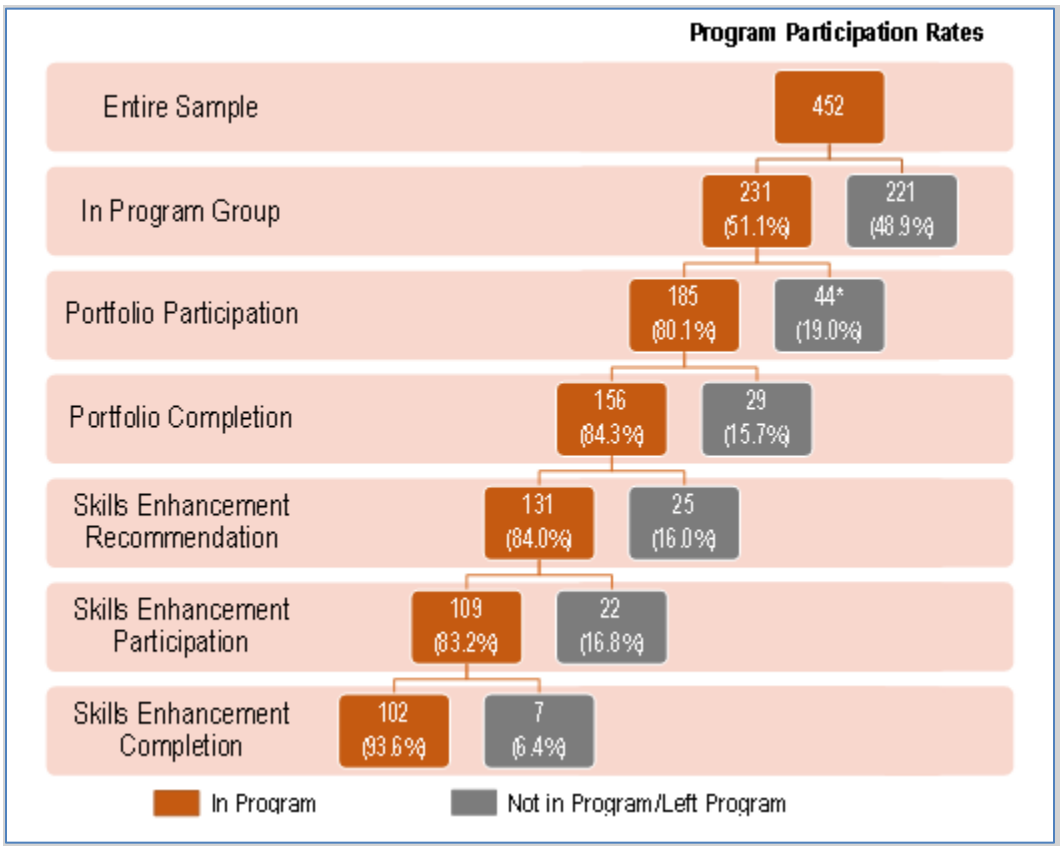
Random assignment ensures that the program and control groups do not differ systematically in terms of any characteristics that might influence the result, even characteristics that are not measured or observed. The only systematic difference between the two groups is that one is eligible for the intervention and the other is not. As a result, any differences that are observed over time in the experiences of the two groups can be attributed with confidence to the intervention, and can be labelled **experimental impacts**.

As shown in the following, some of the control group participants of visible minority immigrant women also had a successful experience in economic integration. Our analysis is guided by but not limited to experimental impacts.

Program and research participation

0 shows the overall flow of participants through the stages of the program. Starting from random assignment and following through to the completion of Skills Enhancement, the orange boxes depict those who entered the program group and completed each stage of the program, whereas the grey boxes show those who did not enter the program (i.e., the control group) as well as those who left the program at each stage.

Figure 1 Participation rates



Source: FWSP project management information system.

Table 16 shows the response rates associated with the 12-week follow-up survey and 12-month follow-up survey. Despite the much longer timeline associated with the 12-month follow-up compared to the 12-week follow-up, response rates were actually considerably higher for the former (79 per cent for the control group; 79 per cent for the program group; 79 per cent overall) than for the latter (72 per cent for the control group; 58 per cent for the program group; 66 per cent overall).

There are several reasons for the difference in response rates: i) the 12-week follow-up included not only a survey but an Essential Skills assessment which required participants to be present at the college, whereas the 12-month follow-up included only a survey which could be done online or on the phone; ii) while the 12-month follow-up offered a $50 incentive to both program and control participants, the 12-week follow-up offered the incentive only to the control group, with the result that response rates among program group members who left before completing the program were very low.

Table 16 12-week and 12-month survey response rates

	Control Group	Program Group	Overall
Randomly assigned	221	231	**452**
Responded at 12-week follow-up	159	133	**297**
12-week Response rate (%)	71.9	57.6	**65.7**
Responded at 12-month follow-up	174	183	**357**
12-month Response rate (%)	**78.7**	**79.2**	**79.0**

Research hypotheses – intermediate outcomes

The FWSP focused on using an Essential Skills framework to help shape participant career paths to target occupations, and help participants understand and close skill gaps. As a result, the FWSP research team hypothesized that that the program would produce immediate impacts on career adaptability (indicating an increased belief among participants in their ability to identify a clear, realistic career path and search for jobs in a targeted way) and Essential Skills (thus closing any skill gaps that may have hampered participants in their pursuit of their targeted occupations).

The FWSP implementation report showed that both hypotheses were supported. There were significant 12-week impacts on all four measures of career adaptability – namely career planning, career decision-making self-efficacy, job search clarity, and job search self-efficacy. Program group members showed significantly larger gains from baseline to follow-up in all of these indicators than did their control group counterparts.

In addition, there were significant impacts on numeracy, document use, and reading among those with skill gaps who participated in the Skills Enhancement portion of the program. Skills Enhancement participants showed a large average increase in assessed scores, while matched control group members showed essentially no change from baseline.

Research hypotheses – long-term outcomes

Immediate program impacts on career adaptability and skills suggest several possible pathways to longer-term success in the labour market. First, even for those who did not require further Essential Skill gains, better understanding of the alignment of their own skills with skills required by target occupations could help them define more focused career paths and job search strategies, and make more strategic choices in further training to acquire occupation-specific skills or qualifications.

In addition, for those who participated in Skills Enhancement, gains in document use, numeracy, and reading are likely to improve their foundational abilities and give them confidence to apply these skills in a variety of contexts, whether it be everyday activities or readiness for further formal education and training. The fact that the LES training they received at FWSP was integrated into a

targeted career path, with use of vocationally relevant materials, may also improve their chances of successful entry into target occupations.

Overall, better defined career paths and job search, combined with skill upgrading and better training matches, may lead to higher quality jobs and greater job satisfaction. FWSP participants may also develop a greater sense of well-being as a result of feeling more control, less uncertainty, and less anxiety associated with their future career path and attachment to the labour market.

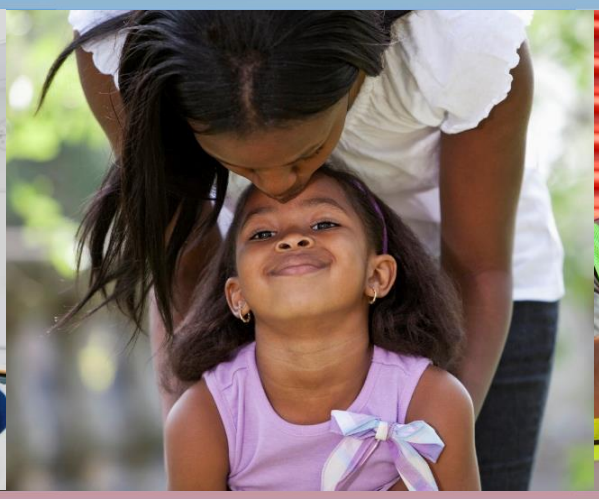
The research hypotheses associated with long-term outcomes summarized below.

Compared to the control group, FWSP participants will show:

1. Continued gains in career adaptability and use of Essential Skills
2. Higher participation in training and better training outcomes
3. Better labour market outcomes, including higher-wage jobs in higher-skilled occupations
4. Higher levels of job satisfaction
5. Higher levels of health and well-being.

SRDC 25 SRSA







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