



THE RIGHT SKILLS ► A PROVEN ADVANTAGE

# IMMIGRANT POPULATION PARTICIPATION IN SKILLED TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIP REPORT

2008

Canada 



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Report Overview

British Columbia is currently experiencing labour shortages in various sectors of the economy and prevailing trends suggest that the economy will be unable to respond to the shortages naturally. This highlights the importance of exploring and exploiting other sources of labour to ensure that the economy continues to be productive and competitive. This report provides information on one of the potential sources of labour, immigration, to inform Industry Training Authority's strategic initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of immigrants in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training and promoting growth in the economy.

### Characteristics of the Immigrant Population

In this study, immigrants are foreign born individuals who are permitted by immigration authorities to live in Canada permanently. This does not apply to persons who are permitted to live in Canada on a temporary basis, for example, individuals on work or student visas. According to existing statistics, the following are key characteristics of the immigrant population in British Columbia.

- The immigrant population is growing faster than the non-immigrant population.
- Immigrants are concentrated in a handful of cities in the lower mainland.
- Immigrant population is equipped to address labour shortages as majority is between the ages 25 to 64.
- Most immigrants have a good command of either one of the official languages but notable deficiencies exist.
- Most immigrants are from Asia and Europe and majority have lived in the country for more than ten years.
- Immigrants are more likely to be university educated but they are also more likely to experience lower labour market outcomes and low income.

### Barriers and Challenges

Existing literature documents a number of challenges that immigrants face in accessing or remaining in pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training. The following are the notable barriers highlighted in this report.

- Immigrant youths often do not have adequate information about career paths in trades or apprenticeship options or processes as a result of limited support from school teachers, counsellors and parents.
- High incidence of poverty in the community poses a barrier as it often results in the perceived cost of training outweighing the benefits.
- The fact that apprentices are required to find sponsors and employers to complete their training requirement can be a deterrent especially for immigrants with language barriers or limited social and family networks.

- Immigrants often encounter barriers related to their grasp of both general and technical language skills as well as their knowledge of equipments used in the trades and this can affect performance and motivation at various points of their training.
- Immigrants are often are discouraged from the trades as a result of discriminatory work place behaviour and practices.
- Standardized and easily accessible information for employers and immigrants about required certification for admission or credential assessment is not readily available in all regions of province.
- Immigrants face erosion of relevant skills as a result of unrelated survival employment choices upon arrival.

### **Programs and Services**

In Canada, there are number of programs that are designed to prepare and integrate immigrants into the labour force some of which focus specifically on the trades sector. The following are highlighted in the report: 1) Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP); 2) Skills Connect for Immigrants (Skills Connect); 3) Enhanced Language Training for Immigrants in Technical Occupations and Related Trades (ELT); 4) WoodGreen Community Services and 5) Trades Win Support Program.

### **Program Evaluation and Result**

Information on the impact and effectiveness of all the highlighted programs is quite sparse so it was necessary to focus only on important criteria with available information. The choice of the five chosen criteria is informed by the analysis as well as conversations with program mangers and counsellors. The five criteria are: scope, language training, duration in Canada, job-matching or mentoring and cost.

All five programs performed fairly well against the criteria but the ISTEP and Trades Win Support programs stand out and should be considered learning models.

## Recommendation

According to the analysis and existing research, programs and services are more likely to promote participation of immigrants in trades and apprenticeship programs and minimize attrition if they:

- are location and occupation specific;
- are in partnership with relevant stakeholders;
- involve job coaches;
- provide occupation and sector specific language training;
- do not have a duration requirement;
- do not require prior experience;
- include a mentorship or job-matching component;
- provide additional services that help reduce accrued training cost;
- have stable funding structures.

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# IMMIGRANT POPULATION PARTICIPATION IN SKILLED TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIP REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The unemployment rate in British Columbia has declined for five straight years and is at an all time low in recent years creating opportunities for wealth creation and increased standard of living. However, as various sectors expand, there is increased demand for those individuals with the right skills and the ability of the economy to respond to this demand determines the magnitude of economic growth that will be experienced in British Columbia. Like many western economies, some sectors in British Columbia are currently finding it difficult to satisfy their labour demand. Health care, educational services, retail and construction are only few examples of industries in British Columbia currently experiencing labour shortages (ALMD, 2007).

Labour shortages are exacerbated by a number of factors including the ageing phenomenon. In 1977, the median age of British Columbians was 29 but in 2007, the median age had risen to 40. The ageing population is predicted to increase by 2010 when there will more people retiring than people entering the labour market for the first time in British Columbia. The Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development expects that 652,600 jobs would become available between 2005 and 2015 as a result of the reduced workforce, retirement and deaths. Further, the total fertility rate, the average number of children per woman, has remained well below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. All of these factors suggest that the economy is not be able to address existing skill shortages naturally and must resort to other sources of labour to ensure that the province continues to be productive and competitive. Governments have increasingly begun to recognize immigration as an important source of labour for addressing current and future needs. <sup>1</sup>The provincial government recently increased the overall annual targets of the Provincial Nominee Program from 1,730 in 2007/08 to 7,000 in 2010/11. <sup>2</sup>Also, the federal government recently announced increased funding and an expansion of overseas services of the Foreign Credential Referral Office. <sup>3</sup>

Increasing the existing immigrant pool with the appropriate skills and qualification is only half the battle as the impact of immigrants on the economy is highly dependent on successful transition and integration into the labour market. Therefore, it is especially crucial that structures are in place in the different regions and sectors to address their unique needs and ensure that they are fully prepared to become productive members of the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, immigrants are foreign born individuals who are permitted by immigration authorities to live in Canada permanently. This does not apply to persons who are permitted to live in Canada on a temporary basis, for example, individuals on work or student visas.

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Nominee Program accelerates the immigration process for qualified skilled workers and experienced entrepreneurs who wish to settle in British Columbia and become permanent residents of Canada.

<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Credential Referral Office provides information, path-finding and referral services to assist immigrants in having their education and experience assessed more quickly.

Industry Training Authority is fully aware of existing labour shortages in the trades sector and the importance of supporting initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of under-represented groups including women, persons with disabilities and immigrants in prep-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training to promote growth in the sector.<sup>4</sup> However, to achieve this goal, it is important to gather the appropriate information on these different groups to ensure that evidence-based policies that benefit both the individuals and the economy are supported and promoted. This paper provides background information on one of the groups, immigrants, as it explores the characteristics of the immigrant population, barriers they face accessing and remaining in the trades sectors as well as existing programs and services in Canada.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section two provides a brief overview of the Canadian immigration system. Section three highlights key characteristics of the immigrant population in British Columbia. Section four discusses major barriers immigrants face in trades and apprenticeships. Section five details select programs and services that exist locally and regionally as well as an assessment of the different programs. Section six contains recommendations and final section is the conclusion.

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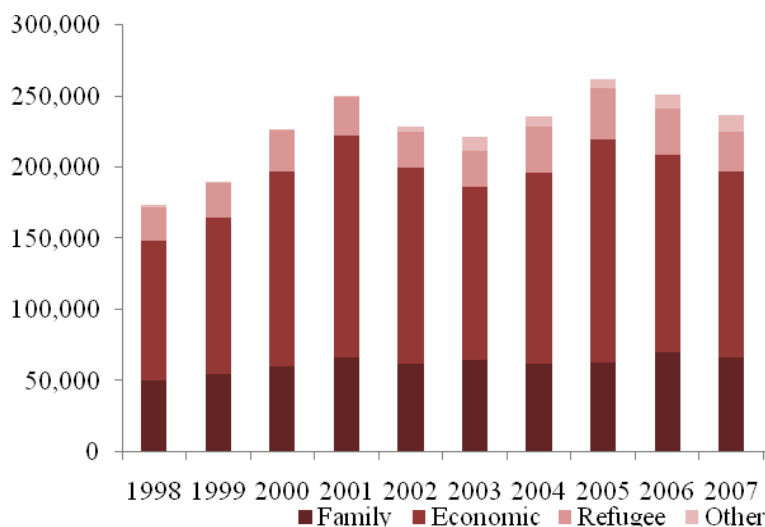
<sup>4</sup> Industry Training Authority Is the Crown Corporation responsible for governing the apprenticeship training and credentialing system in British Columbia.

## 2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CANADIAN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Canadian Immigration policy has three broad aims: family reunification, economic development and humanitarian concerns. As such, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act establishes three basic categories in which individuals can relocate to the country permanently- family class, economic class and refugee class.<sup>5</sup> The family class is comprised of foreign nationals sponsored by close relatives or family members in Canada. Economic immigrants are people selected for their skills and ability to contribute to the Canadian economy. Refugees include government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and dependants of refugees landed in Canada who live abroad.

Immigration trends and population distribution of new immigrants are displayed in Figure 1 which shows that since 1998, the overall numbers of new immigrants arriving in Canada every year increased initially but has been slightly declining since 2005. It also shows that the Economic Class has consistently been the major channel of immigration accounting for 55% of all new permanent residents in 2007.

**Figure 1: Number of New Permanent Resident Arrivals, 1998-2007**



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006

The number of immigrants arriving in British Columbia has declined for the second year in a row. In 2007, 38,941 permanent residents arrived in British Columbia, a 7.5% decrease from 2006. In addition, 60% of new immigrants that arrived in British Columbia in 2007 came through the Economic class, a percentage higher than the national percentage (WelcomeBC, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> There is a fourth category comprised of other immigrants and includes temporary resident permit holders, humanitarian and compassionate cases, retirees, persons with deferred removal orders and post-determination refugee claimants.

### 3. OVERVIEW OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

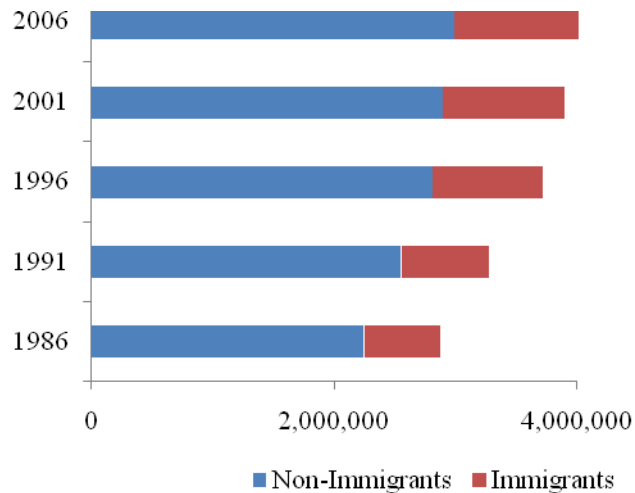
This section highlights a number of key characteristics of immigrants in British Columbia and is based on the 2001 & 2006 Censuses, 2006 Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the 2007 National Apprenticeship Survey.<sup>6</sup>

#### 3.1 Key Characteristics of the Immigrant Population

##### Immigrant Population is Growing and Concentrated in a Handful of Cities.

In 2006, the foreign born population in British Columbia was 1,119,215 representing 28% of the overall population in British Columbia. The foreign born population was significantly larger than other jurisdictions and second only to Ontario. In addition, the immigrant population is growing at a faster rate than the non-immigrant population as indicated by the higher share of immigrants in British Columbia. Figure 2 shows that the immigration component of British Columbia has been steadily increasing and grew by 77% between 1986 and 2006.

**Figure 2: Immigration and Non-Immigration Component, 1986 to 2006**



Source: BC Stats

Also, immigrants are mostly concentrated in a handful of cities. In 2006, the immigrant population in Vancouver accounted for almost 74% of all the foreign born population in British Columbia. The population of immigrants in Richmond was higher than their Canadian born counterparts; about 57% of the residents in the city were foreign-born making Richmond the top Canadian municipality with the highest proportion of immigrant population. Further, Surrey had

<sup>6</sup> All three surveys are conducted by Statistics Canada. The Census provides a statistical portrait of all Canadians and is conducted every five years. The Labour Force Survey provides labour market information and is conducted every month. The National Apprenticeship Survey is a pan-Canadian data source on apprenticeship and is conducted occasionally.

the fastest growing number of foreign born persons over the last five years among all Canadian cities. The number of Surrey residents who are foreign born increased by 31% between 2001 and 2006.

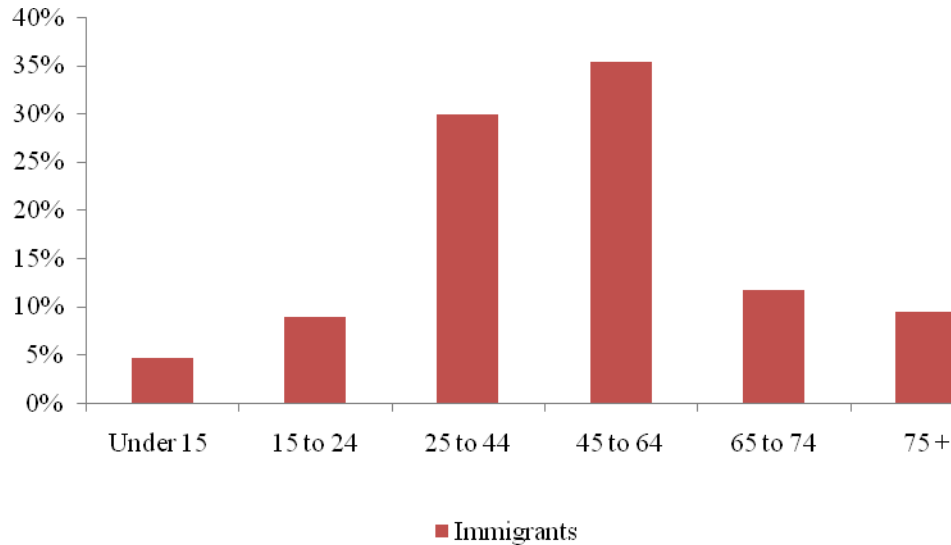
### Females Represent a Significant Portion of the Immigrant Population

The female proportion of the foreign born population was slightly higher than their male counterparts at 53% in 2006. This percentage is similar to the 2001 result which shows that 52% of immigrants in 2001 were women. In addition, these results are consistent with the national results as the percentage of women in both 2001 and 2006 was 52%.

### Majority of Immigrants are Between the Ages of 25 and 64

The age distribution shows that majority of immigrants are within the required age category to address labour shortages. Figure 3 shows that 65% of immigrants living in British Columbia in 2006 were within the ages of 25 and 64. The percentage of immigrant youths between the ages of 15 to 24 is also worth noting as it was lower than their Canadian-born counterparts (9% versus 15%).

**Figure 3: Age Distribution of Immigrant Population, 2006 Census**

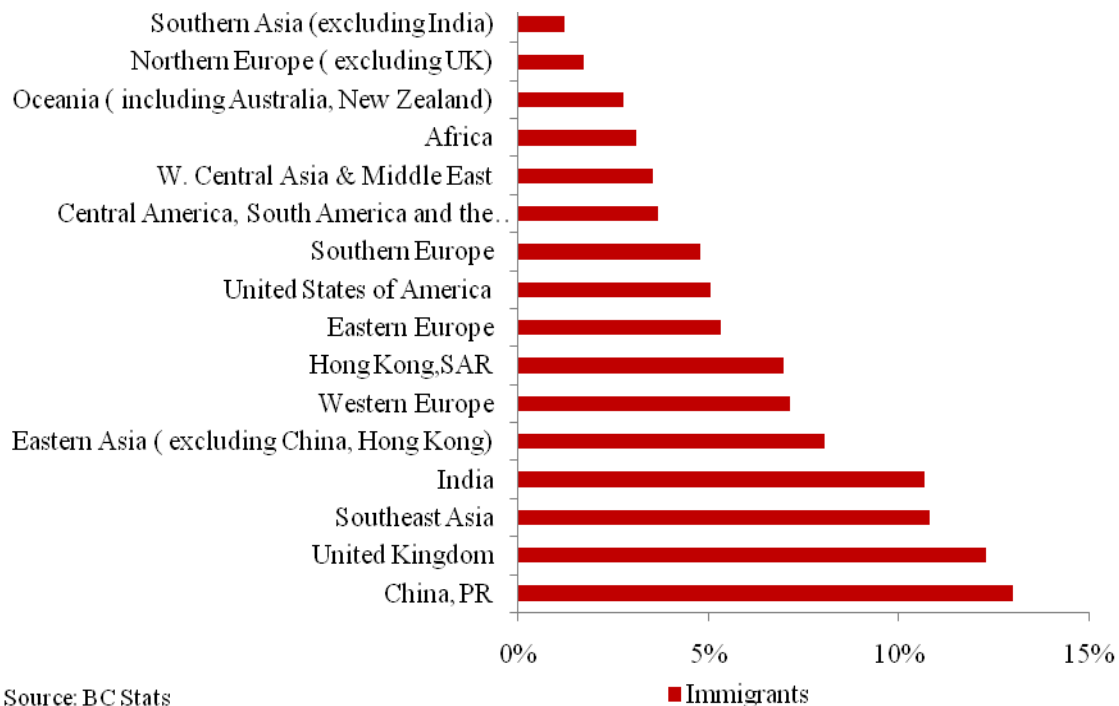


Source: Statistics Canada

## Immigrants are Mostly from Asia or Europe

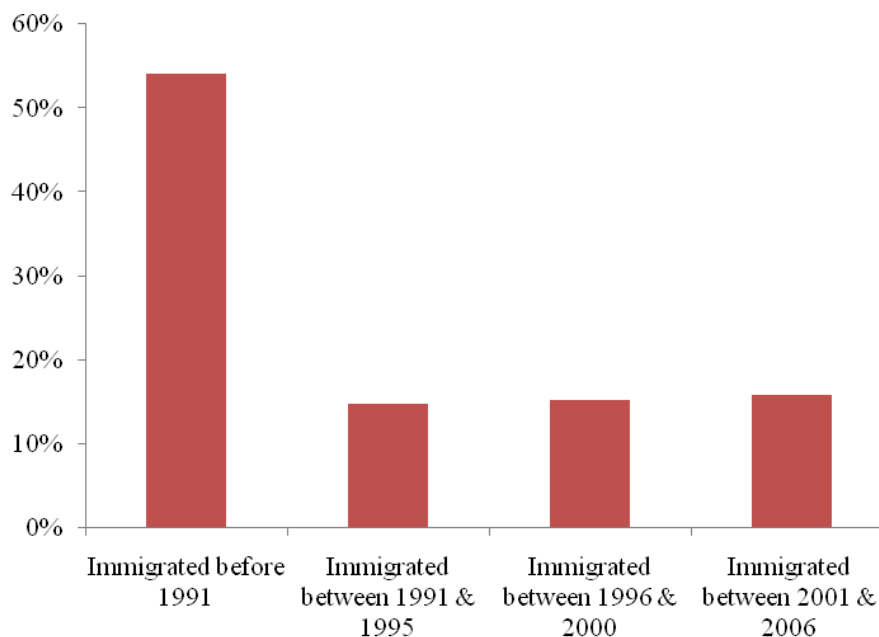
Figure 4 shows that more than half of the foreign born persons living in British Columbia in 2006 were from Asia or the Middle East; the Peoples Republic of China was the leading source country of immigrants followed by the United Kingdom, Southeast Asia and India.

**Figure 4: Immigrant Population by Place of Birth, 2006 Census**



## Majority of Immigrants Have Lived in British Columbia for a Long Period of Time

Like the rest of Canada, the majority of immigrants have been in British Columbia for a long period of time. Figure 5 shows that 54% of immigrants in British Columbia in 2006 moved here before 1991. This result is consistent with the 2006 Labour Force Survey which also found that the largest proportion of immigrants in the labour force had been in Canada for more than 10 years. A slightly larger population of European immigrants had been living in Canada for a longer time when compared to those from Asia and Africa. In 2006, around 81% of European immigrants living in BC came to Canada before or in 1991 compared to 63% of Asian born immigrants.

**Figure 5: Proportion of Immigrant by Period of Arrival, 2006 Census**

Source: BC Stats

### Most Immigrants Have Knowledge of one of the Official Languages but Notable Deficiencies Exist

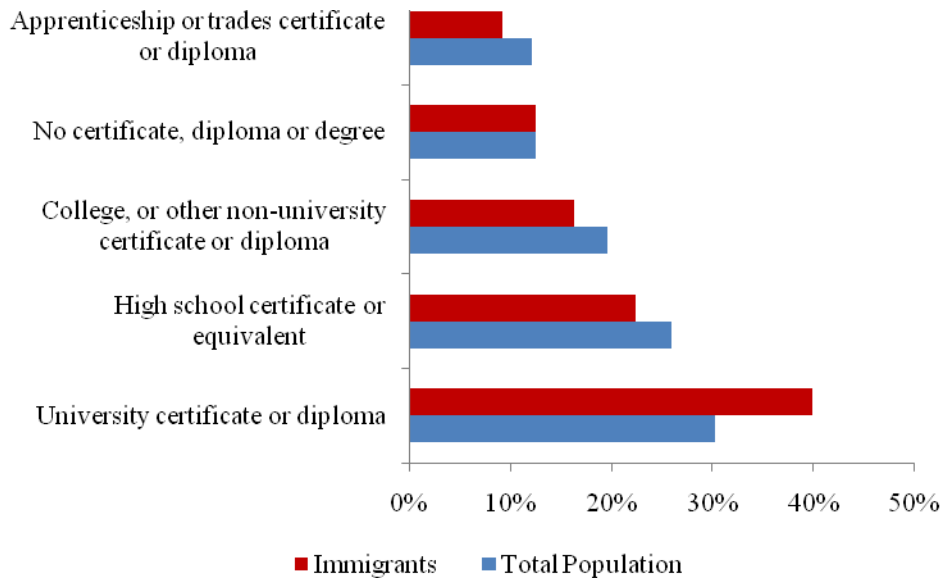
In 2006, 91% of immigrants in British Columbia reported knowledge of at least one of the official languages in Canada but 9% of the remaining immigrants had no knowledge of either English or French. Recent immigrants, those who landed between 2001 and 2006, reported an even higher percentage, 15%, of English language deficiency. In 2006, almost 50% of the foreign born population reported a non-official language as the language most often spoken at home. Immigrants are more likely to be University Educated

From Figure 6, it can be seen that the proportion of individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 that did not have a certificate, degree or diploma was the same for immigrants and total population in British Columbia in 2006. However, immigrants are much more likely to be university educated; around 40% of immigrants between the ages of 25 and 64 had a university diploma certificate or degree compared to 30% of the total population.

The figure also shows that immigrants are less likely to be occupied in the trades sector. The 2007 National Apprenticeship Survey also shows that of the immigrants considered to be long-term continuers in 2004 only 36% of them had completed their apprenticeship programs by

2007 compared to 45% of non-immigrants.<sup>7</sup> In other words, fewer landed immigrants that were considered to be long-term continuers in 2004 had completed their programs in the intervening years.

**Figure 6: Immigrant Population 25 to 64 by Education, 2006 Census**



### Immigrants have Lower Labour Market Outcomes

The 2006 Census showed that immigrants had higher unemployment and lower employment rates than the total population and these gaps differ by gender, duration in the country and education. In British Columbia, unemployment rates for non-immigrant men and women were similar in 2006, 4.6% and 4.7% respectively. However, these rates were lower than their immigrant counterparts reported as 5.4% and 7.0% respectively. Immigrants that had been in the country for 10 years or less faced even more difficulty accessing the labour market, especially women that had been in the country less than 5 years. In terms of employment, recent immigrants with a university education had an employment rate of 66% while the rate was 88% for their Canadian-born counterparts.

<sup>7</sup> Long-term continuers are people who satisfied the following three conditions: 1) were still registered apprentices in 2004; 2) had been registered apprentices for more than one and a half the prescribed duration required to complete their apprenticeship programs and 3) had not earned their certification by 2004.

## **Immigrants are more likely to Experience Low Income**

In 2006, immigrants had significantly higher incidence of low income at 18% compared to the total population at 13%. Also, of the population that worked a full year, the median employment income for immigrants in 2005 was lower than the median employment income for the total population (\$38,469 versus \$42,230). These coupled with their higher educational profile support existing research that suggests that a significant proportion of the immigrant population are under-employed and under-utilized.

### **3.2 Summary**

The demographic profile reveals a number of important facts about the existing and potential trades labour pool within the immigrant community; but beyond the data, it is also important to examine the reasons why immigrants are currently under-represented in the trades sector. In other words, how do the highlighted characteristics impede access to trades and apprenticeship programs for immigrants? The next section explores this issue by discussing specific barriers that are experienced by immigrants in accessing or remaining in trades and apprenticeship programs.

#### 4. BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

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This discussion of the barriers and challenges encountered in trades is informed by the demographic profile of immigrants as well as the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's research report, *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada- Perceptions of Barriers*.<sup>8</sup> Some of the barriers are:

First, immigrant youths often do not have adequate information or are not aware of apprenticeships. In other words, there is often a lack of support for trades among school teachers and guidance counsellors available to youths seeking information about career paths in trades or apprenticeship options and processes. Granted, this barrier likely exists for all youths but it is likely to be exacerbated among immigrant youths, especially recent arrivals who would not have developed a wide social network. In addition, a significant portion of immigrant parents are more likely to be university educated and so are probably even less likely to encourage their children to pursue careers in trades.

Second, the high incidence of poverty within certain immigrant communities as highlighted in the Census poses problems for members of these communities who seek to access or complete apprenticeship training. The perceived cost of training coupled with the need to leave employment to undergo technical training often outweighs the benefits and leaves the option of remaining in menial jobs more attractive especially for recent immigrants with dependents.

Third, to undergo the work-based component of apprenticeship programs, it is up to prospective apprentices to find employers to sponsor their apprenticeship or manage their training-to-work transitions. This can often act as a barrier and while it is not restricted to only immigrants, language barriers and the lack of family and social networks can compound these issues for immigrants and discourage them from considering or completing apprenticeship programs.

Fourth, immigrants often encounter barriers related to their grasp of both general and technical language skills which may affect performance at various stages of the apprenticeship (CLFDB, 1995). Further, immigrants often have inadequate exposure to the types of equipment or material used in Canadian trades (Atlin& Pond-White, 2000). This barrier can compound the problem and further negatively impact their motivation to stay in programs.

Fifth, immigrants are often targets of discriminatory work place behaviour and practices which often stems from limited awareness on the part of both immigrants and employers on how best to navigate the existing cultural and social divide. Further, practices such as hiring a preferred

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<sup>8</sup> Canadian Apprenticeship Forum project identifies barriers that affect the participation of apprentices, unions and employers in apprenticeships and is based on the following: an examination of more than 200 documents, interviews with more than 50 apprenticeship stakeholders and 10 focus groups in 6 locations across Canada. The report was published in 2004.

ethnic group can add another dimension to this barrier as immigrants from different backgrounds may view such workplaces as unwelcoming environments.

Sixth, standardized and easily accessible information for employers and immigrants about required certification for admission or credential assessment is not readily available in all regions of the province. This can serve as a barrier as immigrants may be prevented from entering some trades if they are unable to procure and provide the acceptable certification for admission. Also, immigrants may be deterred from entering apprenticeship programs if they are unable to receive any credential or recognition for prior learning that may qualify them to gain advanced standing. This is a crucial issue in some countries, especially developing countries, where training practices impart high levels of related competency but may not necessarily lead to formal certification (Atlin& Pond-White, 2000). All these can be especially frustrating for immigrants who have spent years in their countries of origin already working in their trade and the prospect of re-training may be too time consuming and costly.

Finally, immigrants often opt to take jobs for which they are over-qualified or which have nothing to do with their training and experience in order to make ends meet upon arrival. Overtime, their skills begin to erode and this worsens the longer these immigrants remain outside of training or work and diminishes their prospect of working in the trades.

The next section highlights select programs and services within British Columbia and across Canada that provide targeted service aimed at overcoming these barriers and promoting the participation of immigrants in the labour force.

## 5. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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Across Canada, governments and non-government organizations, as well as post secondary education institutions, offer programs that are designed to prepare and integrate immigrants into the labour force some of which focus specifically on the trades sector. Some of these programs are categorized by location below. It is worth noting that this list is by no means exhaustive as it only highlights programs that provide occupation specific programs and services. Information on other more general programs and links to other programs across the country can be found in Appendix Two.

### 5.1 British Columbia

#### *Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP)*

ISTEP is a three year pilot project created in 2006 to help landed immigrants build careers in British Columbia's construction industry and provide employers with skilled trades' workers. Job Coaches who are qualified trades people capable of assessing skills and job potential, and who understand the labour needs of industry, match suitable immigrants and employers. Only immigrants assessed as job-ready will be presented to employers. The Job Coaches also work closely with immigrants agencies that refer clients to the program. ISTEP was developed through a partnership between the BC Construction Association and the Construction Sector Council and is funded by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program.

#### *Skills Connect for Immigrants Program (Skills Connect)*

Skills Connect services began in July 2000 and consist of career assessment and planning, workplace language upgrading and orientation, skill enhancements as well as mentorship. The program assesses and bridges skilled immigrants into the workplace with a focus on five sectors of the economy: construction, transportation, energy, tourism or hospitality and health. Skills Connect program are available across British Columbia through the following agencies: Camosun College, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, Douglas College, and Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training, Multicultural Helping House Society and Back in Motion.

### 5.2 Canada

#### *Enhanced Language Training for Immigrants in Technical Occupations and Related Trades (ELT)*

ELT started in 2006 and each iteration focuses on different occupations in Calgary. The current version provides language and employment communication training to skilled immigrants with background in trades, technologist and technician occupations. The program focuses on developing technical and soft skills by offering: 14 weeks of English instruction, a 2-week

employment communication workshop, guest presentations by representatives of businesses and professional associations and a 4-week work placement or match with a mentor in the same profession. ELT is administered by the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society with funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry.

#### *Trades Win Support Program*

Trades Win Support is a one year pilot program for Millwrights, Construction, Maintenance or Industrial Electricians in Toronto that started in 2008. The program develops technical and soft skills by providing the following services: six weeks of certificate of qualification preparation, up to five weeks of employment preparation, eight-week placement and job leads and four months connection with a mentor in the same field. Trades Win Support is managed by Skills for Change, a non-profit agency, with funding from the government.

#### *WoodGreen Community Services*

WoodGreen started as a neighbourhood center in the East-end of Toronto, Ontario in 1937 and since then has grown to more than fifteen locations throughout the East end of the city. WoodGreen provides the following services: child care services, employment services, community care and wellness for seniors, housing and homelessness services, administration, mental health and developmental services and neighbourhood programs. WoodGreen offers a range of services aimed at supporting newcomers including targeted employment support services for immigrants with advanced English and whose career orientation and international training are in Accounting/Financial Services, IT, Engineering and Health Care.

### **5.3 Program Evaluation**

Existing independent evaluation information on outcomes, impact and effectiveness of all the different programs is quite sparse and so it was necessary to focus only on important criteria with available information. The choice of the chosen five criteria is informed by the demographic profile, highlighted barriers and conversations with program managers and counselors.

**Scope:** the economic situation and industries in various locations across the provinces are different and so are their labour needs and programs ought to be sensitive to those needs and requirements.

**Language Training:** immigrants face a more difficult time promoting themselves as having the appropriate education skills and relevant experience if a language barrier exists. Therefore, language training is crucial to their success as apprentices and trades persons. However, language training ought to be sector and occupation specific to ensure that immigrants acquire essential skills that would be truly beneficial to them.

**Duration in Canada:** it is recognised that recent immigrants require the most assistance in accessing the labour market; however, the nature of the immigrant population is such that a larger population are not recent immigrants. Therefore, to increase the pool of immigrants in trades, it is necessary to appeal to a larger population of immigrants and one of the ways of achieving this is to ensure that all immigrants are eligible regardless of how long they have been in the country.

**Job-Matching or Mentoring:** programs should include a mentorship or job-matching component that helps apprentices or tradespersons build their social network and find employers.

**Cost:** in recognition of the lower economic profile of the immigrant community, it is important that services are provided at no cost to immigrants. Further, programs should also come at minimal or no cost to potential employers and mentors as their willingness to participate is highly dependent on the benefits outweighing the cost.

#### 5.4 Results

Table 1 provides the result of the assessment and is color coded as follows: 1) dark green highlights denotes complete satisfaction of the criteria; 2) light green represents partial satisfaction of the criteria and 3) no highlight means the criteria is not satisfied. The results show that most programs fare quite well against the five criteria as represented by the different highlights. However, majority of the programs, 60%, are not fully inclusive as they only target recent immigrants. Also, most programs do provide some form of targeted language training, however, majority are not at the recommended level.

The Trades Win Support and ISTEP programs stand out as programs that satisfied most of the requirements. Both programs adopt slightly different approaches of bridging immigrants into the labour force and they also exhibit additional important characteristics that are discussed in the next section. It should be noted that the Trades Win Support program's prior experience requirement and included trades are more stringent. Nonetheless, both programs should be considered learning models.

**Table 1: Program Assessment Result**

	ISTEP	Skills Connect	ELT	Trades Win Support	WoodGreen
<b>Scope: Location/ Sector</b>	British Columbia/Construction.	British Columbia / Construction, transportation, energy, tourism/hospitality and health.	Ontario/ Trades and Technologists.	Ontario/Millwrights, Construction, Maintenance or Industrial Electricians.	Toronto/ Accounting, IT, Engineering and Health Care.
<b>Occupation and Sector Specific Technical Language Training</b>	Not available as a permanent component of the program. Provided temporarily through a pilot program.	Workplace and language training is offered.	Sector-specific but is very broad labour market language training.	Trade specific technical and workplace language training is offered.	Occupation specific training exists.
<b>Duration in Canada Requirement</b>	Immigrants are eligible regardless of how long they have been in the country.	Permanent residents within the last 5 years.	Permanent residents within the last 5 years.	Immigrants are eligible regardless of how long they have been in the country.	Permanent residents within the last 5 years.
<b>Connection to Employers (Job-match or Mentoring)</b>	Both services available. Mentoring is provided through job coaches.	Mentorship programs are provided.	Mentorship and work placements are provided.	Job placement and mentors in field of training are provided. A job developer works with immigrants to help them secure employment.	Provided for highlighted sectors.
<b>Cost to Immigrants &amp; Employers</b>	Immigrants: program is free but additional costs involved-licensing, certification, credential assessment. Employers: program is free for BCCA members.	Immigrants: program is free but additional costs involved-licensing, certification, credential assessment. However, some programs offer subsidies to qualified immigrants to cover parts of it. Employers: some programs are free for employers who hire, mentor or welcome clients for work experience.	Immigrants: program is free but additional costs involved-licensing, certification, credential assessment. Employers: program is free for employers.	Immigrants: program is free and no tuition is charged for exam preparation but additional costs involved- books and supplies for training. Employers: program is free for employers.	Immigrants: program is free but additional costs involved-licensing, certification, credential assessment. Employers: program is free for employers.

Source: program websites and conversation with program managers and counselors.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

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Based on the analysis and existing research, it is recommended that only programs that exhibit the following characteristics be developed, supported and promoted. It is worth noting that programs that are lacking any of these characteristics should still be eligible provided they are willing to collaborate with relevant established stakeholders that satisfy the missing characteristic(s).

**Programs should be location and occupation specific.** The economic situation in various locations across the provinces are different and so are their labour needs and programs ought to be sensitive to those needs and requirements. Programs should focus on sectors within trades in their target area with the most need as that is where most of the actual employment opportunities reside.

**Programs should be in partnership with relevant stakeholders.** In the different sectors, programs should be developed and managed in partnership with industries, industry training organizations, training providers and trade associations to promote the relevance and legitimacy of the programs and prevent duplication of services.

**Programs should involve job coaches.** Similar to the ISTEP model, programs should employ job coaches, individuals with relevant and significant trades experience that develop relationships with employers and provide personalized one-on-one service for immigrants. Job coaches should also be required to follow-up with immigrants over time to ensure their continued success in the trades sector.

**Programs should provide immigrants an opportunity to improve their English proficiency.** However, language training should be sector and occupation specific to ensure that immigrants are acquiring knowledge that would be truly useful to them. Further, immigrants should have access to these programs at any stage of their apprenticeship training and employment. Immigrants that require more intensive English training should be referred to other agencies within the province that provide language training (see Appendix Two).

**Programs should not have a duration requirement.** While it is recognised that recent immigrants require the most assistance in accessing the labour market, the nature of the immigrant population is such that a larger population are not recent immigrants. Therefore, to increase the pool of immigrants in trades, it is necessary to appeal to a larger population of immigrants and one of the ways of achieving this is to ensure that all immigrants are eligible regardless of how long they have been in the country.

**Programs should not require prior experience.** It is indeed important that programs cater to immigrants that have prior experience in trades from their home country as they are more likely

able to address labour needs in the short run. However, it is also necessary to provide services for immigrants without prior experience who are interested in pursuing careers in trades, as this pool of workers will be instrumental in building up the labour force to ensure that the province has a sustained pool of available labour.

**Programs should include a mentorship or job-matching component that help apprentices or tradespersons find employment.** It is important that this service is provided at minimal cost to potential employers and mentors as the willingness of employers to hire or mentor foreign workers is dependent on the benefits outweighing the cost.

**Programs should provide additional services.** Additional services here refer to schemes that help minimise additional costs accrued by immigrants and promote access. These services would also likely make it easier for under-representative groups within the population to consider exploring employment in trades. For example, day-care services or accommodation during technical training at reduced or no cost would make it easier for women and single parents with dependents to enrol. These services can be provided through other service providers that already have the relevant structures in place.

**Programs should have stable funding structures.** Labour needs are going to be an issue well into the future. Therefore, programs geared towards addressing the issue ought to be built on funding frameworks that ensure their existence well into the future. Further, services should be provided at no cost to immigrants and supplementary funding (in form of subsidies and grants) should be available to offset additional financial cost that immigrants accrue during training.

## 7. CONCLUSION

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Increasing participation of immigrants in trades goes beyond increasing access; it is also important that policies are in place to ensure that there is limited attrition. This requires a concerted effort of ITA, governments, training providers, regulatory bodies, professional and trade associations, unions, community organizations, industries, employers and immigrants working together to develop and promote services and programs that would not only improve the standard of living of immigrants but also contribute substantially to lessening existing and future labour shortages.

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# APPENDIX 1

## PROGRAM CONTACTS



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### **Enhanced Language Training for Immigrants in Technical Occupations and Related Trades**

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### **Skills for Change – Trades Win Support**

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### **WoodGreen Community Services**

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# **APPENDIX 2**

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES & OTHER RESOURCES**



## APPENDIX 2 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES & OTHER RESOURCES

### S.U.C.C.E.S.S

S.U.C.C.E.S.S was founded in 1973 as a non-profit charitable organization for the purpose of promoting the well-being of Canadians and immigrants. It began as a new immigrant settlement service organization which has developed into a multi-service, multicultural agency. There are 11 branches in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Immigrants are assisted with settlement, counseling to support families and individuals. S.U.C.C.E.S.S offers a comprehensive range of personalized employment services and programs to assist new Canadians achieve success in their occupations and career goals.

### Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI)

EASI began in 2003 with a vision to build a more integrated system in B.C. that better supports the needs of skilled immigrants seeking entry into the workforce. A broad range of stakeholders (regulatory bodies, professional and trades associations, unions, post-secondary institutions, non-government organizations, employer and employer associations and government) are working together through the EASI initiative. One of the services provided by EASI is an online web portal that provides information on programs, services that support immigrant employment in BC.

### Immigrant Services of British Columbia (ISS)

ISS was incorporated in 1972 as the first immigrant-serving agency in the province. Since that time, ISS has grown to the largest, multicultural, immigrant-serving agency in Western Canada. The society provides a variety of services to Lower Mainland immigrant and refugee communities and works with over 23,000 clients per year. ISS is operated with funding from clients, all levels of government and agencies (ISS is one of the largest deliverer of government-funded programs in the Metro Vancouver area). ISS provides a number of services to immigrants including: employment services, English language courses, skills training and pre-employment programs. Programs and services are offered in a number of locations including Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey and Coquitlam.

### Directions for Immigrants (DIR)

DIR is a career service and resource centre that assists internationally-educated and experienced professionals establish their careers in Alberta. Since 2004, DIR has been providing career services to immigrant professionals who are seeking assistance with their careers. DIR has an extensive network of associations, immigrant serving agencies, employers, licensing bodies' education and immigrant bridging programs. DIR is operated by Bow Valley College, the largest English as a Second Language provider in Calgary, and is funded by the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

## LINKS TO LISTS OF PROGRAMS AND PROVIDERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

### [Lower Mainland Employment Resources](#)

This is a link to an initiative funded by the Government of Canada that provides information on over 40 employment programs, services and resources across British Columbia for immigrants.

### [Work BC](#)

The link above is a document that contains a list of labour market programs and services in British Columbia grouped by specific categories. The information provided for all the listed programs includes, organization responsible, a brief description, contact information and website address.