Evaluation of the Canadian Work Experience Pilot Projects

Final Report

June 2020

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
CWE	Canadian Work Experience
EI	Employment Insurance
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
HR	Human Resources
FCR	Foreign Credential Recognition
GBA+	Gender-based Analysis Plus
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
IRCC	Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
IWERC	Immigrant Women's Employment Readiness Connections
SÉO	Société Économique de l'Ontario
SETCAN	Skills and Experience Transitioning Canada (program name at TCET)
SRDC	Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
TCET	The Centre for Education and Training
TESN	Targeted Employment Strategy for Newcomers
TMP	TRIEC Mentoring Partnership
TRIEC	Toronto Region Immigrant Employer Council
WES	World Education Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Immigration plays a critical role in Canada's labour market and economic success. Canada selects immigrants in its Economic Classes based largely on their ability to settle in Canada and their skilled work experience,[1] with the implicit assumption that these qualifications are indicative of their ability to integrate into the Canadian labour market. However, the need for Canadian work experience repeatedly comes up as a major barrier for many newcomers seeking employment upon arrival.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched the Canadian Work Experience (CWE) Pilot Projects in 2017 to help high-skilled newcomers gain a first Canadian work experience in their professions. The CWE Pilot Projects were delivered to skilled, unemployed, or underemployed newcomers by six organizations across Canada: BioTalent Canada, ECO Canada, la Société Économique de l'Ontario, MOSAIC, the Centre for Education and Training, and Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. The organizations developed and implemented different multifaceted approaches that incorporated a range of common active labour market tools — training, work placements, employer engagement, wage subsidies, one-on-one support — as well as some less common elements such as mentoring and sectoral approaches. The pilot sites launched two-year initiatives that started between August 2017 and February 2018.

To examine and learn about the project's efficacy and effectiveness, ESDC commissioned the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation to undertake an evaluation of the CWE Pilot Projects. The design of the CWE Pilot Projects did not require the organizations to support a randomized controlled trial to determine the impact of the CWE projects on employment and other outcomes. The type of comparison groups established varied across sites, making the implementation inconsistent. Therefore, for the evaluation, the program group was defined as individuals who secured a work placement in the five sites offering work placements, while the comparison group is comprised of those who did not secure a work placement. This revised definition allowed us to balance the size of the groups and to attribute the observed differences to the effects of the work placement on participant outcomes.

This report presents key findings, including the implementation, program participation, outcomes and cost findings. It also provides recommendations on how to further develop and

[1] Government of Canada. Immigration and Citizenship. Accessed on November 4, 2019, at: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/permanent-residence/economic-classes.html

improve the interventions and implications for further policy, programming, practice, and research.

A total of 1,154 participants received services as part of the six pilot projects — 320 of these participants were part of the five sites that offered work placements (not all 320 received a work placement), the remainder were from the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. The findings below pertain only to participants in the sites with work placements and wage subsidies, unless otherwise stated.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

Program participation

- A total of 1,154 participants received services as part of the six pilot projects — 320 of those were part of the five sites who offered work placements (although not all 320 received work placements), the remainder were from the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. All sites reached their targeted number of participants.

- Participants who received services spent an average of 72 hours (or 2.4 weeks based on a 30-hour week) in program activities over the course of the program. Those who were in a program with a formal training component spent significantly more time in program activities (80 hours on average) compared to those with no formal training component (18 hours on average).

- Career development services (74 per cent), and information and training about the labour market, careers and the Canadian workplace (61 per cent) were the two most received services. Additionally, of the services received, support from a coach or case manager (100 per cent) and mentoring (95 per cent) were rated as the most useful by those who partook in them. All activities were rated as useful by a majority of participants.

- 189 participants secured work placements mostly in their field, of which 138 were placed with a wage subsidy; 51 participants did not use the wage subsidy to secure their work placements. All work placements with a wage subsidy were full-time positions, usually around 35 hours per week. The time spent in the placements closely aligned with the expected duration proposed at each site. The average amount of the wage subsidy received at four sites ranged from $4,108 to $9,789.

- Most participants agreed to participate in the research initially; however, response rates for follow-up surveys were lower than anticipated.

- When comparing the work placement and non-work placement groups across baseline characteristics, we see that the two groups are fairly similar, except that the proportion of non-work placement participants who were not satisfied with their experience in Canada was double that of work placement participants (54 per cent vs. 26 per cent, respectively).

Implementation

- While the interventions delivered by the sites varied, key features of these pilot projects were participant training, employer engagement, one-on-one support, work placement with wage subsidies, and, for some, mentoring.

- Programs were delivered as planned to the intended target group, and overall, their design met the needs of participants. Indeed, several sites indicated that there was more interest from newcomers than they could serve with the pilot projects. Building flexibility into the program and customizing the pilot models as needed was essential in meeting the strengths and needs of both participants and employers.

- Service providers found ways to engage employers in various aspects of their program; however, this required a substantial amount of time and resources. Indeed, building relationships with employers required continuous engagement throughout the program.

- Wage subsidies opened doors to engage employers, but finding meaningful placements for candidates and employers was challenging. For small- and medium-sized businesses, subsidies were instrumental in providing the necessary resources to reduce the recruitment risk of hiring newcomers without Canadian work experience in their fields.

- Participants required more support in their search for employment than originally anticipated by some service providers. These types of supports were seen as key and necessary components of the program by participants.

- While a majority of participants and employers were satisfied with the pilot projects, they also had suggestions for improvements, including:

    - Providing a work placement to everyone in the program since it is a key component to support entering employment in their field. These work placements should be real job opportunities when possible.

    - Offering structured training as part of the program or support participants in making connections with other agencies to be better prepared to enter the labour market.

- Extending the length of the work placement to 6 months (for those that were shorter than that) or even up to a year to provide a meaningful experience to the skilled newcomer.

KEY OUTCOME FINDINGS

Participant-level outcomes

- Program group participants and mentees in the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership (TMP) Program expressed satisfaction with their program and would recommend it to other skilled immigrants.

- The work placement and mentoring had a positive impact on being employed full-time in a job that offers career advancement opportunities. Indeed, 86 per cent of participants who benefited from a work placement were employed in a full-time job at follow-up versus 64 per cent for those who did not receive a work placement. Of the 58 per cent of TMP mentees that were employed at the 6-month follow-up, over 85 per cent of them were employed in a full-time job.

- Participants and TMP mentees are employed in good quality jobs (i.e., skills level commensurate with their education, duties similar to their pre-migration occupation, and higher wage sectors) at follow-up. The work placements, however, were not often directly in participants' pre-migration occupation.

- The proportion of participants reporting difficulties in finding employment in the follow-up survey was lower than the baseline results. However, a majority of participants (63 per cent of work placement participants and 78 per cent of non-work placement participants) still reported having experienced at least one difficulty in their job search at follow-up (down from 90 per cent and 99 per cent, respectively).

- Training and mentoring were associated with improved job search skills. Participants interviewed explained that as a result of their participation in the pilot, they understood the Canadian job market better, they knew where to look for jobs and how to position themselves in the job market.

- Participants interviewed talked about gaining more confidence in themselves, in their skills, and in their career development in Canada.

- Life satisfaction for participants remained fairly constant over time. However, participants with a work placement reported lower health status at follow-up in comparison to the status

at baseline. Although the results suggest health of participants deteriorated more among those with work placement and TMP mentees, it might be the result of working more: employment could be taxing both physically and mentally. Similar patterns of immediate deteriorating health of workers have been found from a few other active labour market programs.

- A majority of participants took part in further training and activities after the program.
- Training and mentoring have a positive impact on the size of the career network, while work placement is associated with an increase in the heterogeneity of the career network. A majority of participants reported having at least one to three people who they could reach out to get career advice.
- Participants interviewed reported that network building was a benefit they gained from the program. Participants who had a work placement were more likely to report that their experience in Canada surpassed their expectations (88 per cent) in comparison to individuals without job placements (59 per cent); mentoring increased TMP mentees' satisfaction with their experience in Canada – 59 per cent reported being satisfied, an increase from 7 percentage points at baseline.

GBA+ findings

- More than half of the participants were women (62 per cent, excluding TRIEC); TCET was the only site with a greater ratio of men to women – 43 per cent of participants were women.
- Women and men have both benefitted from the pilot projects, albeit in different ways. Women who took part in work placements saw a positive impact on gaining full-time employment and having their expectations met in terms of their experience in Canada, as well as a reduction in job search difficulties. Men who participated in a work placement saw a positive impact on their monthly income as well as the heterogeneity of their career network. Benefits for participants in TMP were more related to career and social networks. Both men and women in TMP saw positive effects on the size of their career network and the availability of social networks. In addition, women who took part in the TMP saw positive effects on life satisfaction and health as well.

Employer-level outcomes

- Employers were mostly satisfied with their experience of the pilot projects — they felt that the program was worthwhile. They especially appreciated being presented with qualified candidates who were prepared.
- The pilot projects allowed employers to fill vacant positions with qualified candidates through the work placements. Anecdotally, it seems that employers hired for vacant positions, and did not specifically create new jobs in order to take part in the wage subsidy.
- The wage subsidy and the work placement were key to the success of this program from the employers' perspective — especially for small- or medium-sized companies that might not have been able to hire without sharing the cost.
- There is no evidence of changes to employers' attitudes and hiring practices as a result of the pilot.

KEY COST ANALYSIS FINDINGS

- The average program operating cost per participant varied across sites from $1,278 to $11,624 (cost without the wage subsidy) and $10,376 to $19,345 (cost with the wage subsidy). Key factors such as the program design and implementation features (e.g., sectoral approach, program duration, levels of the wage subsidy and individualized support) account for most of the differences.
- We are cautiously optimistic that the evidence from the analysis suggests that a positive return to investment is likely if the analysis is observed over a longer period. More specifically, the return will be more than a dollar per dollar spent.
- The work placement with a wage subsidy costs more than the program without using a wage subsidy, though the difference is smaller than the amount of wage subsidy. Service providers seemed to be able to replace some of the wage subsidy effects with additional efforts and resources to match newcomers to employers. This evaluation, however, is not able to conclude reliably one way or the other whether the use of wage subsidy has a better return to investment.

HIGHLIGHTS — CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PROGRAM, AND RESEARCH

- The combination of services offered by the pilot projects accelerated participants' opportunities to secure a first Canadian work experience that is more related to their professions, which is likely to help them use their skills to their full potential. The pilot projects also had other important benefits for high-skilled newcomers including improved job search skills, knowledge and use of labour market information, connections with people who can help them with their career especially specific to sectors or occupations, hope and their experience in Canada.

- Wage subsidies were seen by employers as important for minimizing the risk of hiring high-skilled newcomers with no Canadian work experience, but the job matching process seemed to be key in increasing hiring chances.

- The evaluation highlights different experiences of male and female project participants in selected outcomes. Moreover, it informs policy of the importance of potential gender differences in program experience and outcomes.

- The pilot projects do not solve systemic issues such as employer attitudes, hiring practices, discrimination and the importance employers place upon having Canadian work experience.

- Future programs aimed at supporting high-skilled newcomers in obtaining a first Canadian work experience should consider taking the following into account: offering of a range of opportunities from mentoring to work placements with wage subsidies; ensuring that delivery organizations have the capacity for employer engagement of delivery organizations.

- The evaluation of the pilot projects found some very promising evidence to support the interventions. However, policy makers who consider future deployment of a similar program should be cautious about the severe limitations of this study because of the evaluation design and data collection. Important questions about the program, such as the precise causal effects of the programs, the optimal length of work placement, the efficacy of the wage subsidy component, as well as the long-term returns on investment, remained unanswered because the evaluation framework was not integrated prior to the start of the project. These unanswered questions can be addressed in future deployment of the programs when the design of the evaluation is introduced prior to the start of the program and designed alongside the intervention.

INTRODUCTION

REPORT PURPOSE

This report presents the final results from the Canadian Work Experience (CWE) Pilot Projects Evaluation. The CWE Pilot Projects sought to help high-skilled newcomers gain a first Canadian work experience in their professions. This evaluation aims to identify promising practices to facilitate the first Canadian work experience for newcomers. To do this, the evaluation explores the implementation of each of the six pilot projects that were part of the CWE Pilot Projects, outcomes and costs.

The report begins by outlining the evaluation scope and methodology. This is followed by the presentation of key implementation, program participation and outcomes findings from across all six sites. Next, we present findings from the cost study. The report ends with conclusions and implications for policy and programming. Case studies from each of the pilot sites and a literature review of the effectiveness of wage subsidies are included in the appendices.

BACKGROUND

Immigration plays a critical role in Canada's labour market and economic success. Canada selects immigrants in its Economic Classes based largely on their ability to settle in Canada and their skilled work experience[2], with the implicit assumption that these qualifications are indicative of their ability to integrate into the Canadian labour market. However, the need for Canadian work experience repeatedly comes up as a major barrier for many newcomers seeking employment upon arrival. The Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians[3] also illustrated the lack of, or difficulty in obtaining, work experience as the most significant challenge faced by newcomers.

ESDC has taken steps to address some of these barriers faced by newcomers through the implementation of the Targeted Employment Strategy for Newcomers (TESN), announced in

[2] Government of Canada. Immigration and Citizenship. Accessed on November 4, 2019, at: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/permanent-residence/economic-classes.html

[3] Government of Canada. Employment and Social Development Canada. Accessed on March 27, 2020, at: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/foreign-credential-recognition/consultations/emp-challenges.html

Budget 2017.[4] The TESN had three components: 1) pre-arrival services, 2) a loan program to assist newcomers with costs of getting their foreign credentials recognized, and 3) a pilot, called the *Canadian Work Experience Pilot Projects* to help high-skilled newcomers gain their first Canadian work experience in their professions.

Active labour market programs, such as job search assistance and support, wage subsidies and training programs, have been implemented in Canada for more than 25 years. Interest in these programs increased after the 2008/2009 recession in an effort to curb the unemployment rate. Lately, these active labour market programs have also been used as programs for integrating newcomers into Canada. The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), a non-profit social policy research organization, was retained by ESDC in January 2018 to design and implement an evaluation that will guide the collection of evidence to examine the efficacy and effectiveness of the CWE Pilot Projects. The findings from this evaluation will be used to identify lessons learned to guide future policy and program development in this area.

ABOUT THE CWE PILOT PROJECTS

The evaluation of the CWE Pilot Projects was designed to conduct a comparative analysis of six initiatives that aimed to help newcomers acquire their first Canadian work experience in their occupation. While we recognize that there are differences between each of the piloted interventions, all six have the common goal of supporting newcomers in obtaining their first Canadian work experience in their field. It aimed to gather evidence on the implementation and outcomes of the innovative approaches developed and tested in the pilot. The project targeted high-skilled newcomers who are either unemployed or underemployed and who have no previous Canadian professional experience in their field. Participants had to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents and had to have been living in Canada for less than five to seven years (depending on the project). The CWE Pilot Projects were delivered by the following six organizations across Canada:

- **MOSAIC**: organization delivering settlement, employment and other social service programs to immigrant, refugee and mainstream communities in Metro Vancouver and other parts of British Columbia (www.mosaicbc.org)
- **ECO Canada**: national organization that helps train and certify professionals for Canada's environmental sector (www.eco.ca)

[4] Government of Canada Budget 2017 Budget Plan. Accessed on August 23, 2017 at http://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/docs/plan/chap-01-en.html#Toc477707332

- **The Centre for Education and Training (TCET)**: organization delivering employment, settlement, and language services in the Greater Toronto Area (www.tcet.com)
- **Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)**: immigrant employment council serving the Greater Toronto Area by supporting organizations to become more inclusive and helping newcomers expand their professional networks (www.triec.ca)
- **La Société Économique de l'Ontario (SÉO)**: provincial network supporting full participation of Francophone and bilingual community stakeholders to foster the prosperity of Ontario and Canada (www.seo-ont.ca)
- **BioTalent Canada**: national human resources organization for the bio-economy sector (www.biotalent.ca)

The pilot sites launched two-year initiatives that started between August 2017 and February 2018.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A comparative case study approach[5] was implemented to assess the **design and implementation** of the pilot projects in terms of delivery and stakeholder outcomes and, a cost study (value for money) (Table 1). The evaluation questions for each of these components can be found at the beginning of each section on findings.

Table 1 Evaluation components

Implementation evaluation	▪ Aim of this component — to document the CWE models being tested, explore any challenges faced by the six sites, lessons learned and recommendations for the future. ▪ Findings from the implementation evaluation will also be used to interpret and nuance findings from the outcome evaluation.
Outcomes evaluation	▪ Aim of this component — to determine the short-term and mid-term outcomes for the key stakeholders in the projects: newcomers, pilot sites, employers and government. ▪ End goal is to investigate whether the CWE pilot was successful in helping high-skilled newcomers obtain employment in their fields.
Cost study	▪ Aim of this component — to inform the long-term sustainability of the pilots.

[5] Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research: design and methods. Sage Publications.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A mixed research methodology comprised of both quantitative and qualitative methods is used to answer the evaluation questions for the implementation and outcomes research (see Appendix A). Data sources for this report are outlined below in Table 2.

The evaluation was guided by a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, which ensures diversity and inclusion are part of the evaluation process. GBA+ is a method for examining how gender and other intersecting identity factors such as age, culture, language, education, income, geography, and ethnicity affect participants' experience in the pilot projects.[6]

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in the context of this project

The participants who are taking part in the CWE Pilot Projects are not a homogenous group; in fact, they are very diverse. This diversity may have different impacts on their experience in the pilot projects.

Using a GBA+ lens throughout our analysis allows the evaluation to explore in more detail how participants with differing experiences and characteristics experience the pilot projects, as these aspects can have unintended consequences, both positive and negative. Moreover, by looking at the intersectionality of factors, we hope to gain a better understanding on how such a pilot can work for all high-skilled newcomers.

Due to the small sample size, we limited our subgroup analysis for the GBA+ to men and women. In the outcomes section, results are reported for the overall sample, and subsequently for women and men.

[6] Gender-based Analysis Plus. Retrieved from: https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html

Table 2 Data sources for the evaluation[7]

Participant level		Quant.	Quali.
Baseline survey and participant information form	A baseline survey and participant information form were sent to incoming participants when they began participating in the pilot. The survey and information form collected information from consenting participants about their demographics, education and employment history, immigration experiences and career and employment outcomes after arriving in Canada.	✓	✓
Follow-up surveys	Two follow-up surveys were sent to participants. The exit survey (or first follow-up survey) repeated most of the topics from the baseline survey. It was sent when participants completed the intervention, which was either at the end of the in-class or remote training if they did not do a work placement, or the end of the work placement if they did complete one. The second follow-up survey focused on employment outcomes and was sent three months after completion of the intervention for program group participants or three months after completing the first follow-up for comparison group participants.	✓	✓
Point-in-time follow-up survey	A point-in-time survey was administered by telephone in January and February 2020 to bolster the low response rate from the second follow-up survey for the five work placement sites. This survey focused on employment outcomes.	✓	✓
Interviews and focus groups	Conducted with participants to obtain more in-depth information about the themes emerging from the surveys as well as participants' experience with the pilot training and work placements. **Twenty-nine participants provided their perspective on the program. Specifically, interviews were conducted with three participants from BioTalent, four participants from ECO Canada, three individual interviews and a focus group with seven MOSAIC participants, and four individual interviews and a focus group with eight TCET participants.**		✓

[7] Sample numbers reported are for all sites except TRIEC.

Pilot sites level		Quant.	Quali.
Monthly reports	The pilot sites completed reports and participated in calls with SRDC researchers on a monthly basis to share progress on participant and employer pilot enrollment numbers, work placements, challenges and opportunities, lessons learned and success stories. The calls provided opportunities for SRDC and the sites to discuss any data collection or implementation issues that had arisen, as well as to plan for upcoming data collection.	✓	✓
Pilot site staff interviews	Each of the six pilot sites participated in interviews in which they shared information about the pilot's implementation, participants, employer and organizational outcomes, lessons learned, challenges and successes.		✓
In-person and online forums	These two forums brought together the six pilot sites, staff from ESDC and Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the SRDC project team. The first in-person forum took place in Gatineau, Quebec, and established a community of practice where the pilot sites shared and learned about each other's projects. The six pilot sites then reconvened for a second, online forum to foster the community of practice and share further updates.		✓
Employer level		**Quant.**	**Quali.**
Employer survey	Pilot sites were asked to send a survey to employers participating in the pilot. The survey addressed employers' attitudes, knowledge, and experience regarding the employment of high-skilled newcomers. **Thirty-five employers completed this survey across all sites except TRIEC.**	✓	✓
Employer interviews	These interviews explored themes around the employers' previous experience with hiring newcomers, their participation in the pilot and their impressions of working with newcomers in this pilot. **Interviews were conducted with 13 participating employers.**		✓

Other		Quant.	Quali.
TMP evaluation report	The evaluation, including all data collection, of the TRIEC Mentoring Program was done by a third-party evaluator; SRDC worked with the third-party evaluator in an attempt to collect information from the participant surveys that would be comparable to the outcomes of interest in the overall CWE evaluation. We have used the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation Project — Final Report, which contains the third party's final evaluation results to inform this evaluation.	✓	✓
Literature review on work placement and wage subsidies	We conducted a literature review on the effectiveness of wage subsidies and work placements for immigrants as well as for other groups underrepresented in the labour market. This review has informed our thinking on wage subsidies and work placements implemented in the pilot projects. The literature review can be found in Appendix A.		✓

PROGRAM AND COMPARISON GROUPS

As in all program evaluations, a key element to measuring the impacts is to identify an appropriate comparison group — a group of individuals who do not participate in the intervention and whose experience can be taken as reflective of what would have happened to participants if the intervention had not existed. The design of the CWE Pilot Projects did not require the organizations to support a randomized controlled trial to determine the impact of the CWE projects on employment and other outcomes.[8] The type of comparison groups established varied across sites. One site created a comparison group by using participants who had participated in their other programs. Another site created a comparison group by identifying participants from the client base at another agency. The comparison groups at the remaining four sites involved participants that were in the pilot projects but did **not** receive the wage subsidy/job placement.

Because of the implementation inconsistency, we define the program group as individuals who secured a work placement (with or without a wage subsidy) for the five work placement sites throughout this report as opposed to the site-defined program group. The comparison group is comprised of those who did not secure a work placement. This revised definition allows us to balance the size of the groups and to attribute the observed differences as the effects of the work placement on participant outcomes. When comparing the work placement and non-work placement groups across baseline characteristics, we see that the two groups are fairly similar, except that the proportion of non-work placement participants who were not satisfied with their experience in Canada was double that of work placement participants (54 per cent vs. 26 per cent, respectively).

DATA ANALYSIS

Since this is the final report, we are focusing on intermediate outcomes such as employment from the three-month post program survey and the point-in-time survey done in February 2020. Data from the exit survey was used to look at results of the shorter-term outcomes, such as career adaptability.

[8] For program impact studies, randomized social experiments are generally considered to be the "gold standard" (Mohr, 1995; Orr, 1999) because they, if properly implemented, provide estimates of program impacts that are internally valid. The source of this validity is the random allocation of individuals eligible for the program into one group that participates in the program and another group that forms the comparison group. If members of the program and control groups differ in terms of important characteristics at baseline, then any observed differences in outcomes will be due both to program participation and to differences between the groups in terms of these other causal factors.

Response rate for the three-month follow-up survey was quite low and did not allow us to make reliable inferences because of the small sample size. Because of the low response rate to the three-month follow-up survey, the evaluation introduced a point-in-time survey in February 2020 to better understand the status of participants at that moment with the hope of covering more participants in the post-program measurements. The point-in-time questionnaire is basically a trimmed down version of the three-month follow-up survey with common questions for important outcomes. The point-in-time survey was a telephone administered interview.

The point-in-time survey obtained a better response rate than the three-month follow-up survey, though some participants who answered the three-month follow-up survey did not respond to the point-in-time survey. To maximize the post-program measurement coverage of participants, we derived outcome indicators using the latest available information from one of the two surveys. For example, for an outcome that appeared in both surveys, the analysis used the response from the point-in-time survey if it was available; otherwise, the analysis relied on the response, if available, from the three-month follow-up survey. For an outcome that appeared in one of the two post-program surveys, the indicator used the response available. We refer to the combined data as the follow-up survey throughout the report.

To control for potential systematic differences between the program and comparison groups, we estimated the effects of job placement through a difference-in-difference specification if the outcome indicators could also be derived from the baseline data. Specifically, we compared the change of an indicator (such as the employment level) from baseline to the follow-up among program group participants to that of the change among comparison group participants. With the assumption that program and comparison group participants would have the same trajectory without the pilot, the estimates through the difference-in-difference specification are free of confounding factors and attributable to the job placement component.

For outcome indicators that are only available from the follow-up surveys and not from the baseline, the evaluation team conducted a simple comparison of the post-program outcomes in the job placement (program) and the non-job placement (comparison) groups without controlling for any covariates. The small sample size makes it difficult to apply a multivariate regression to control for the pre-existing differences between the two groups.

Although the data collection strategy is based on a convenient sampling scheme (of whoever is willing to participate) and sampling error in theory cannot be quantified, we nevertheless calculated all standard errors and conducted statistical testing as if the sample was a random sample from the “universe” of high-skilled newcomers who are willing to participate in a work experience program. The “statistical significance” we considered were at the level of 10 per cent (denoted by *), 5 per cent (**), and 1 per cent (***) even though these are not representative of

the false positive probabilities. While not ideal, this method allowed the evaluation to assess the effects of the work placement in the most systematic way.

LIMITATIONS

The references to comparison groups made throughout this report do not suggest groups that have been created using random assignment or other quasi-experimental designs. The method used to identify a comparison group in each organization is described later in the report. It is important to note is that the "comparison groups" as designed cannot be considered as counterfactuals that truly reflect what would have happened if the projects had never existed. Consequently, the evaluation must take into account the absence of a proper counterfactual in its assessment of the impact that the CWE Pilot Projects may have had on their participants.

Since the participants are also not a random sample of the targeted population and there is no random assignment to participant groups, in theory it is impossible to estimate the sampling errors. Statistical inference reported is for reference only to help focus on the substantial differences.

Although site staff tried their best to encourage participants to complete the various surveys, there were missing data at the time of participant enrolment and the response rates were generally low. The evaluation team conducted an attrition analysis and the results showed that participants with no dependents under 18 were less likely to respond to the three-month follow-up or point-in-time surveys. Readers of the statistical analysis should be cautioned of potential unmeasurable response bias.

The analysis is also severely limited by the analysis sample size: the scale of the pilot projects was small, which, combined with low response rates made site-level analysis generally unreliable.

Many of the outcome indicators derived for this report relied on the self-reported measures from participants in various surveys. These self-reported measures may be subjected to recall bias or confounding factor bias. Some administrative data were collected but this data source was limited in measuring the outcomes of interest.

Because TRIEC's mentorship program model is different from the job placement model implemented at the other five sites and their data collection framework was also substantially different, it is not possible to properly align the TRIEC outcomes analysis with results from this analysis. We included the TRIEC results where possible, but it was difficult to make a fair comparison between TRIEC and the other sites given the substantial differences in the program design and features between the pilot sites and the TRIEC mentorship program.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

This section presents statistics about program participation, including work placements and wage subsidies, as well as statistics about survey response. The section ends with a description of the participants who took part in the pilot projects.

Key findings — program participation

- A total of 1,154 participants received services as part of the six pilot projects — 320 of those were part of the five sites who offered work placements (although not all 320 received work placements), and the remainder were from the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership. All sites reached their targeted number of participants.
- Participants who received services spent an average of 72 hours (or 2.4 weeks based on a 30-hour week) in program activities. Those who were in a program with a formal training component spent significantly more time in program activities (80 hours on average) compared to those with no formal training component (18 hours on average).
- Career development services (74 per cent), and information and training about the labour market, careers and the Canadian workplace (61 per cent) were the two most received services. Additionally, of the services received, support from a coach or case manager (100 per cent) and mentoring (95 per cent) were rated as the most useful by those who partook in them. All activities were rated as useful by a majority of participants.
- 189 participants secured work placements mostly in their field, of which 138 were placed with a wage subsidy; 51 participants did not use the wage subsidy to secure their work placements. All work placements with a wage subsidy were full-time positions, usually around 35 hours per week. The time spent in the placements closely aligned with the expected duration proposed at each site. The average amount of the wage subsidy received at four sites ranged from $4,108 to $9,789.
- Most participants agreed to participate in the research initially; however, response rates for follow-up surveys were lower than anticipated.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PILOT

In total, 1,154 participants received services as part of the six pilot projects; 320 of those were in interventions that had work placements, and 834 were from the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership (see Table 3). All sites reached their targeted number of participants.

Twenty-five participants dropped out from the pilot programs. The most common reason for dropping out of the program was obtaining a job offer. Other common reasons included dealing with family conflicts, finding and accessing appropriate childcare, going back to school, and getting terminated from or leaving their employment.

Table 3 Number of participants

	Total	Total, except TRIEC	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	TCET	SÉO	TRIEC
# of participants	1,154	320	86	71	42	86	35	834[9]
# of participants who dropped out	25	25	4	9	4	8	0	Unknown

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Overall, program group participants who responded to the exit survey indicated that they spent an average of 72 hours in program activities. Not surprisingly, those who were in a program with a formal training component spent significantly more time in program activities (80 hours on average) compared to those with no formal training component (18 hours on average).

Coaching support and mentoring were seen as the most useful components of the pilots. Figure 2 illustrates the usefulness of the range of activities as assessed by participants who responded to the exit survey. Coaching support was received by 34 per cent of respondents (see Figure 1), but was deemed by all of them as highly useful. Mentoring was also deemed as highly useful by 95 per cent of respondents who received this service. The most widely implemented activity (74 per cent of respondents indicated receiving this service) is career development, which ranked third in terms of usefulness; 83 per cent of those who received this service indicated it was mostly or totally useful.

[9] This number was reported in the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation Project — Final Report which was submitted to ESDC in January 2020.

Figure 1 Proportion of respondents who took part in each activity

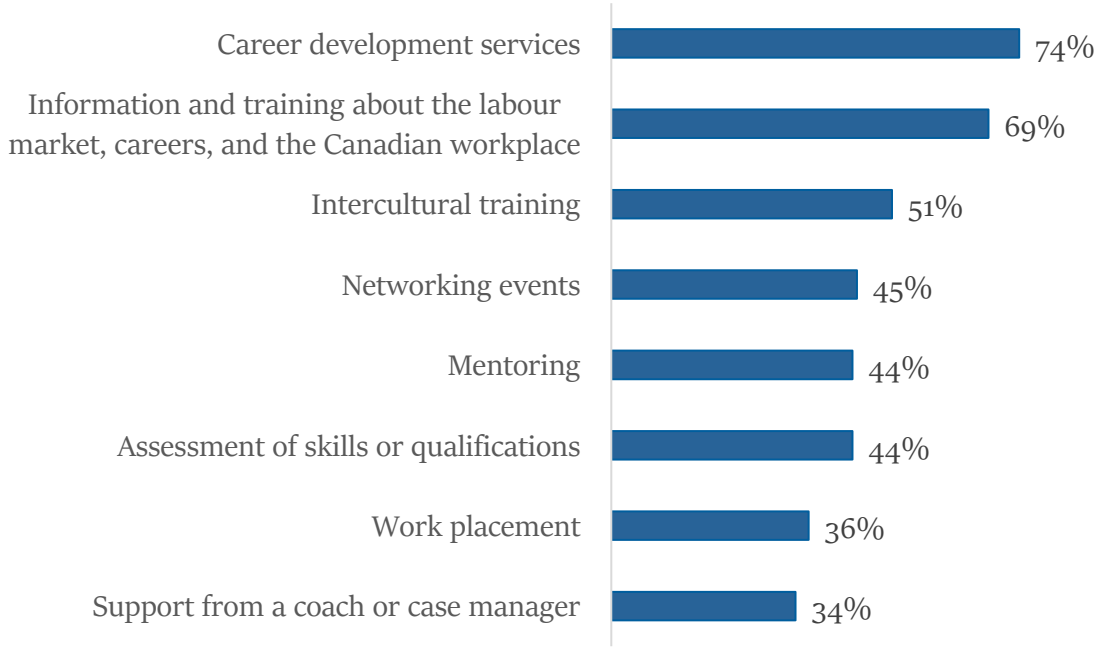


Figure 2 Activities ranked by respondents as mostly or totally useful

WORK PLACEMENTS AND WAGE SUBSIDIES

The pilot sites (except TRIEC) provided work placements for project participants that allowed them to gain a first Canadian work experience in their professions. A wage subsidy was available to employers who were willing to hire project participants. The wage subsidy offset part (about 50 per cent) of the wages paid by employers, up to a pre-determined maximum that varied by pilot sites. The table below shows selected descriptive information about the work placements and wage subsidies implemented at the five sites.

The targeted number of work placements with a wage subsidy was 172 across the five sites. In total, 189 project participants completed a work placement; 138 were placed with a wage subsidy and 51 were not. All work placements with a wage subsidy were full-time positions, usually around 35 hours per week. The time spent in the placements closely aligned with the expected duration proposed at each site. The average amount of the wage subsidy received at four sites ranged from $4,108 to $9,789. At SÉO, employers received the maximum sum of $7,840 for each participant. Of the program group respondents in the exit survey who secured a work placement, 77 per cent of the survey respondents said that their work placement was in the same field and profession as their pre-immigration occupation.

BioTalent, ECO Canada and SÉO took a more employer or demand focused approach to finding possible placements and matching with participants. BioTalent and ECO Canada aimed and reached their targeted number of wage subsidized placements. SÉO was short by one participant. Not all employers at the MOSAIC and TCET sites took up the wage subsidy. Several employers, notably larger employers, said no to the wage subsidy but provided a placement for the participant. In addition to the 189 project participants who completed a work placement, 25 participants started a placement but did not finish; reasons for not completing the work placement included dropping out of the program, personal circumstances, returning to their home country and other reasons.

Information about participants continuing with the employer after the wage subsidy had ended was not received from all sites. However, ECO Canada reported many of their participants were able to sustain their employment. To illustrate the types of placements, the job titles for the highest wage for that site as well as the lowest wage are also presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary statistics of the work placements[10]

	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET
Targeted # of Work Placements + Wage Subsidy	**35**	**30**	**28**	**35**	**44**
# Completed Work Placements	**35 (completed with wage subsidy)**	**30 (completed with wage subsidy)**	**14 (completed with wage subsidy)** **9 (completed with no wage subsidy)**	**33 (completed with wage subsidy)**	**26 (completed with wage subsidy)** **42 (completed with no wage subsidy)**
Full-time (> 30 hrs/wk)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Average duration of placement	5.7 months	6 months	5.8 months	2.9 months	2.6 months
Average Annualized Salary[11]	$50,709	$47,562	$39,138	N/A	$40,737
Average Wage Subsidy received by employers	$9,789	$9,519	$9,020	$7,840	$4,108

10 Information was calculated from administrative information submitted from the sites.

11 Annualized Salary estimated from reported average hourly wage rate and average hourly wage rate. Participants did not receive these amounts as their placements were less than a year.

	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET
# of participants continued with employers after the subsidized placement	N/A	27[12]	N/A	5[13]	14[14]
# did not complete the Work Placements, # dropped out or missing information	0	2	5	0	18
Job title of highest salary (H) and lowest salary (L)	**H: Sr. Process Development Scientist** **L: Technologist**	**H: Technical Consultant** **L: Project Manager (Communications)**	**H: Executive Assistant** **L: Marketing Assistant**	**N/A – missing information**	**H: Sr. Accountant** **L: Jr. Accountant / Financial Analyst / Insurance Agent / Project Manager**

12 Self-reported to ECO Canada by project participants.

13 Self-reported by SÉO.

14 Self-reported by TCET.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Table 5 below presents the number of participants who have completed the various surveys overall and by site. Overall, 300 individuals completed at least one research survey as part of the pilots that include work placements, and another 769 completed applications for the TRIEC pilot. Participation in the research component of the project was voluntary. As a result, the profile of participants described in the next section is derived from administrative program data and baseline survey data with **differing** participant sample sizes.

Table 5 Number of participants[15] who completed research surveys

	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET	Total, except TRIEC	TRIEC	TOTAL
Baseline survey	82	60	44	33	81	300	769	1069
Exit survey	41	22	34	14	53	164	415	579
Baseline + exit survey	41	22	34	13	52	162	415	577
three-month follow-up survey	30	3	12	3	14	62	296	358
Point-in-time survey	39	22	17	2	56	136	--	136
Baseline + follow-up survey (either point-in-time or three-month follow-up)	55	24	25	5	59	168	296	464

[15] Program and comparison participants are combined in this table. See section on Data Analysis for an explanation of the program and comparison groups used in this report.

PROFILE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AT BASELINE

> What is the profile of participants?

The profile of clients is based on all program participants who signed the informed consent form and who completed a baseline survey – 1,514 participants. It does NOT include information on participants who did not agree to participate in the research or who did not complete the baseline survey. The sample is not representative of the population of high-skilled newcomers in Canada due to the non-random selection process.

Description of the sample

Table 6 presents the key characteristics of the participants by program. More than half of the participants were women (62 per cent, excluding TRIEC); TCET was the only site with a greater ratio of men to women. Women were well represented in the program. Forty-three per cent of participants from TRIEC identified as women. About 75 per cent of participants were between the ages of 30 and 44, and the majority of participants (73 per cent; 71 per cent, excluding TRIEC) were either married or were in common-law relationships. For sites excluding TRIEC, 28 per cent of participants had dependents under the age of 18 living with them. On the other hand, this was the case for almost half the participants from TRIEC (47 per cent).

About two-fifths of the participants (39 per cent) had been living in Canada for less than a year, with the majority of participants being permanent residents, and the balance being Canadian citizens. Only a small proportion of participants from TRIEC has been living in Canada for less than a year (35 per cent) compared to the five work placement sites (59 per cent). In other words, there are more participants from TRIEC who are more established in Canada than participants from other sites.

About three-quarters of the participants fell into the immigration category of "Economic immigrant — principal applicant" when they arrived in Canada (74 per cent). Additionally, participants came from all over the world, with the greatest proportion of participants holding citizenship from India (36 per cent), followed by Nigeria (11 per cent), Pakistan (5 per cent), and China (4 per cent). Uniquely but expectedly, the top country of citizenship for SÉO was France (47 per cent).

All participants have a degree and 65 per cent have a graduate degree across all sites, making this group of participants highly educated. The most educated group came from BioTalent, 91 per cent of participants of which had a graduate degree. Thirty-seven per cent of participants, excluding those from TRIEC, had also received some education in Canada.

Before participants, excluding those from TRIEC, had moved to Canada, participants had worked in their respective occupations for an average of eight years, including roughly 38 per cent of participants reporting having worked in their occupation in their home countries for less than five years, and 38 per cent between five and ten years. A small number of participants were employed at baseline (19 per cent, includes both those who were employed in their field and those who were not), with participants from ECO Canada having the lowest proportion of unemployed (44 per cent unemployed). Participants from sites, except TRIEC, had been largely working in the professional (26 per cent) and sales (17 per cent) sectors.

The data suggests that many participants did not anticipate finding employment to be very difficult before coming to Canada (13 per cent anticipated strong difficulties). However, after moving to Canada, participants realized that obtaining employment was very challenging (60 per cent). Although many participants did in fact experience difficulties obtaining employment in Canada, a large majority of the participants indicated that they would come to Canada again (92 per cent). Furthermore, almost half of participants (46 per cent) had a limited network (i.e., between zero and three people) that could provide help with their job or career. On average, participants, excluding those from TRIEC, reported earning $1,890.75 in the month prior to taking the survey. Participants from ECO Canada earned, on average, the most ($2,386.52), while those from MOSAIC earned the least ($1,572.84).

About two-fifths (41 per cent) of participants reported that their experience in Canada had been what they expected, while 35 per cent had a worse experience in Canada than they expected. Approximately one-quarter (24 per cent) of participants had a better experience in Canada than they expected. In general, more than half of the participants (52 per cent) were satisfied with their experience in Canada (51 per cent of participants from TRIEC and up to 90 per cent of participants from SÉO). Participants were asked to rate their feelings of hope on a five-point scale, given that building on hope while going through the employment-related activities is a key ingredient for a successful job search. Sixty-four per cent of participants were highly hopeful about their futures in Canada (63 per cent for participants from TRIEC and up to 72 per cent for participants from TCET).

Table 6 Summary of participant characteristics

Participant characteristic	Findings															
	ALL		All, except TRIEC[16]		BioTalent		ECO Canada		Mosaic		SÉO		TCET		TRIEC[17]	
	N	%	N	%	N	%[18]	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Women applicants	696	**46 %**	154	**62%**	40	**62%**	32	**53%**	41	**98%**[19]	13	**76%**	28	**43%**	542	**43%**
Applicants with a graduate degree	983	**65 %**	164	**68%**	52	**91%**	43	**72%**	25	**60%**	9	**53%**	35	**54%**	819	**65%**
Applicants who are married or common law	1095	**73 %**	167	**71%**	45	**79%**	40	**70%**	30	**73%**	10	**59%**	42	**68%**	928	**74%**
Applicants who live with a dependant that is under 18	658	**44 %**	65	**28%**	15	**29%**	13	**22%**	7	**17%**	4	**24%**	26	**40%**	593	**47%**
Applicants who have been in Canada for less than a year	586	**39 %**	143	**59%**	41	**64%**	35	**58%**	20	**49%**	7	**41%**	40	**67%**	443	**35%**
Individuals who were employed at baseline	292	**19 %**	71	**29%**	25	**40%**	33	**56%**	5	**12%**	4	**27%**	4	**6%**	221	**17%**

16 We decided to present the data for all sites except TRIEC for two reasons: the TRIEC pilot comprises almost the same number of participants in all sites combined, and therefore TRIEC carries a lot of weight in the overall numbers, and TRIEC's program is different from the other sites in that it does not offer any work placements.

17 Baseline data was analyzed based on a raw dataset of TMP mentees provided by Blueprint ADE, the third-party evaluator hired by TRIEC.

18 Percentages displayed are site-specific and account for missing observations.

19 This does not equal 100% because one MOSAIC participant picked "Other."

Participant characteristic	Findings															
	ALL		All, except TRIEC[16]		BioTalent		ECO Canada		Mosaic		SÉO		TCET		TRIEC[17]	
	N	%	N	%	N	%[18]	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Individuals who thought that finding a job was going to be very/extremely difficult BEFORE coming to Canada	126	**13 %**	27	**11%**	11	**16%**	6	**10%**	5	**14%**	2	**11%**	3	**5%**	99	**14%**
Individuals who thought that finding a job was going to be very/extremely difficult AFTER coming to Canada	588	**60 %**	147	**59%**	48	**69%**	39	**65%**	21	**57%**	5	**25%**	34	**55%**	441	**60%**
Respondents who are satisfied/completely satisfied with their experience in Canada	524	**52 %**	138	**56%**	40	**57%**	31	**52%**	18	**51%**	18	**90%**	31	**49%**	386	**51%**
Respondents who would come to Canada again	764	**92 %**	192	**93%**	53	**88%**	44	**90%**	23	**100%**	18	**100%**	54	**96%**	572	**92%**
Respondents with high average hope scores (4.2 and more)	625	**64 %**	163	**65%**	45	**64%**	40	**67%**	21	**57%**	11	**55%**	46	**72%**	462	**63%**
Respondents who immigrated as "economic immigrants – principal applicant"	1095	**74 %**	182	**76%**	43	**75%**	44	**75%**	28	**68%**	16	**94%**	51	**80%**	913	**74%**

IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the key features of piloted interventions, and highlights what worked well in implementation, what challenges were faced and what lessons were learned.

Key findings — implementation

- While the interventions delivered by pilots varied, key features of these pilot projects were participant training, employer engagement, one-on-one support, job matching/work placement with wage subsidies, and, for some, mentoring.
- Programs were delivered as planned to the intended target group, and overall, their design met the needs of participants. Indeed, several sites indicated that there was more interest from newcomers and employers than they could serve with the pilot projects. Building flexibility into the program and customizing the pilot models as needed was essential in meeting the strengths and needs of both participants and employers.
- Service providers found ways to engage employers in various aspects of their program; however, this required substantial time and resources. Indeed, building relationships with employers required continuous engagement throughout the program.
- Wage subsidies opened doors to engage employers, but finding meaningful placements for candidates and employers was challenging. For small- and medium-sized businesses, subsidies were instrumental in providing the necessary resources to reduce the recruitment risk of hiring newcomers without Canadian work experience in their fields.
- Participants required more support in their search for employment than originally anticipated by some service providers. These additional supports were seen as key components of the program by participants.
- While a majority of participants and employers were satisfied with the pilot projects, they also had suggestions for improvements, including:
    - Providing a work placement to everyone in the program since it is a key component to support entering employment in their field. These work placements should be real job opportunities when possible.
    - Offering structured training as part of the program or support participants in making connections with agencies to be better prepared to enter the labour market.
    - Extending the length of the work placement to 6 months (for those that were shorter than that) or even up to a year to provide a meaningful experience to the skilled newcomer.

MODELS IMPLEMENTED

> What model is being implemented at each site?

The six sites delivered different interventions, but they were designed with the common goal of supporting newcomers in gaining their first Canadian work experience in their field. They also had similar eligibility criteria: all sites delivered their models to skilled, unemployed or underemployed newcomers who had resided in Canada for no more than five to seven years and had yet to attain a first Canadian work experience in their field. Summary characteristics of each pilot project is presented in Table 7 below. For more details on each intervention, see the case studies in Appendix B.

Table 7 CWE pilot sites

Pilot site	Name of program	Reach	Key innovative features
BioTalent Canada	Paid internship program for internationally educated professionals	National	▪ With the support of an online skills validation platform, participants can be deemed BioReady by experts in their field ▪ 6-month work placement in the bioeconomy section with wage subsidy for 35 participants
ECO Canada	Environmental immigrant bridging training	National	▪ Online bridging training module ▪ 6-month work placement in the environmental sector with wage subsidy for 30 participants
MOSAIC	Immigrant Women's Employment Readiness Connections	Local — Vancouver	▪ Program for women only ▪ 4-week in-class Canadian workplace skills training ▪ 6-month work placement with wage subsidy for half of participants
Société économique de l'Ontario (SÉO)	Programme de mentorat pour les nouveaux arrivants qualifiés dans les CLOSM de l'Ontario	Provincial — Ontario	▪ Program for French-speaking newcomers ▪ 16-week work placement with wage subsidy for 34 participants ▪ Structured workplace mentoring

Pilot site	Name of program	Reach	Key innovative features
The Centre for Education and Training	Skills and Experience Transitioning Canada	Local — Greater Toronto Area (GTA)	▪ 3-week in-class training ▪ 3-month work placement in the financial sector offered to half of participants
Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)	Evaluation of The Mentoring Partnership	Local — GTA	▪ Comparative evaluation of The Mentoring Partnership, which involves surveying 500 program participants and 500 comparison group participants ▪ Evaluation conducted by a third party

KEY FEATURES OF PILOTED INTERVENTIONS

> Is the CWE pilot being implemented as planned?

The implementation research highlighted common features across most of the models — training, work placements, job matching and employer engagement, wage subsidies, one-on-one support — as well as some unique features, including mentoring. The key intervention components are described below. Table 8 presents a summary of those components by site.

Table 8 Summary of features of pilot interventions

Feature	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET	TRIEC
Participant training		✓ Online bridging training module	✓ 4-week Canadian workplace skills training	✓ Employability skills workshops	✓ 3-week Canadian workplace skills training	
Employer engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Job matching process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Work placement[20]	✓ 6-month placement for 35 newcomers	✓ 6-month placement for 30 newcomers	✓ 6-month placement for 23 women newcomers	✓ 16-week placement for 34 participants	✓ 3-month placement offered to half of participants	
Wage subsidies	✓ Up to $11,500/ participant. Employers to contribute at least 50% of wages	✓ Up to $10,000/ participant. Employers to contribute at least 50% of wages	✓ $10/hr/ participant. Employers to contribute at least 50% of wages	✓ Up to $14 per hour to pay 50% of participant's salary	✓ Up to $13.5/hour to pay 50% of participant's salary	
Mentoring				✓ Workplace mentoring		✓ 3-month mentoring
One-on-one support	✓ Not part of initial design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other	✓ Online skills recognition certification		✓ Job club			✓ Networking events

[20] This table reflects the targeted number of placements.

Participant training

Four of the six sites developed and delivered a training component to participants. These sites already had experience delivering employment readiness training to a range of target populations. The sites built on this expertise and customized the training to suit high-skilled newcomers searching for a first Canadian work experience in their targeted sectors. Although the content, duration and delivery format of the training varied across the sites, the training served to prepare and support newcomers in attaining a first Canadian work experience in their field. Three of the four sites delivered the in-class training in small cohorts, while ECO Canada delivered its training through an online module.

From the participants' perspective, resume, and interview preparation as well as learning about Canadian work culture were deemed important elements of the training provided. Participants interviewed (whether employed or unemployed) said that they appreciated having had the opportunity to write and review their resumes and cover letters. The training also provided opportunities to meet people from different cultures, and learned about cultural differences. A couple of participants from MOSAIC specifically mentioned that the intercultural competency training was useful.

Employers interviewed echoed the benefits of the training in having well-prepared candidates who were perceived as being able to "hit the ground running" sooner than if they had not been prepared. This highlights the importance of providing training for newcomers to help them bridge the gap to the Canadian labour market from both the employer and participant perspectives.

Employer engagement

Employer engagement is a critical part of the job/mentor matching process; and as such, service providers spent considerable resources and time identifying, connecting, and engaging with employers.

Sites recruited employers in their target sectors to participate in the pilot through various channels; these included leveraging relationships with employer partners involved in the organizations' previous or other initiatives, word of mouth, cold calls, and newsletters. It takes time to develop, build and sustain employer partnerships.

Sites operating in-class training invited employers to guest speaker sessions and all sites invited employers to provide work placements for participants. Participants interviewed highlighted those opportunities to connect with employers as a key component of the program. For example, during these events, guest speakers sometimes handed out their business cards to the

participants, which allowed them to connect with the speakers and to ask further questions should they wish to do so.

Job matching process

Job matching was described by program staff as a complex set of activities supported with a broad range of techniques and approaches for employer engagement and job matching across the sites. No one site carried out the job matching process in exactly the same way.

It is important to have an appropriate job matching process to ensure employers' and participants' expectations are managed and met. The relationship between the approach and its efficiency such as the number of employer contacts before securing a job placement requires a more rigorous examination, as well as the factors that are considered to be important in the process such as an employer-focused approach (e.g., meeting the employers' needs), experience of the project staff member, network of employer contacts and communications/marketing.

"The reason why we kept going was because it gave us a head hunter, [name of person]. She was my head hunter and if I had a problem with a candidate, I could call her: "[name of person], I'm not sure about this one." Just having that was so nice. Indeed, I have all these filters, and I make them fill out all these forms, but I still can't get to the behavioural piece that's so important. So, if it wasn't for [name of person], we wouldn't have hired our last candidate. It was important to have someone who knew all the candidates, who can vet the candidates."

Employer

Site staff often forwarded applications and pre-screened candidates for employers to streamline the hiring process, along the same lines as providing human resources support — especially important to smaller organizations.

Most employers interviewed emphasized that the job matching piece was really important for them because it allowed them to tap into a pool of qualified candidates who were looking for employment in that field. More than one employer described this process as providing them with a head hunter — someone who understood their needs, who knew the skills and experience of the candidates, and who was able to propose suitable candidates.

One criticism heard from a couple of employers interviewed was that the number of candidates put forth by a service provider was low, and therefore, due to the limited options, they had to pick a candidate that did not meet all the criteria for the work placement.

Work placements

Five of the service providers facilitated paid work placements for participants with employers in the pilot models' targeted sectors. The placements provided participants with their first Canadian work experience, which was intended to be commensurate to their education, skills and pre-arrival employment background. The determination of the commensurateness of the work placements was left to the service providers and to the participants. The length of the placements varied across the sites, ranging from three to six months. Information on the number of work placements and wage subsidies was presented earlier.

Each service provider had a set target number of work placements (see the case studies for additional details). BioTalent, SÉO, and ECO Canada recruited a larger pool of potential participants and matched participants with available opportunities. As part of the program design, TCET and MOSAIC aimed to provide work placements to half of their participants. For MOSAIC, participants in certain cohorts received work placements, while other cohorts did not. TCET used a matrix to decide which participants received a work placement — they aimed to provide work placements for about half of participants in each cohort.

Participants interviewed often pointed out that this was the most important piece of the program because it would provide a first foray into working in their field in Canada, and thus, it would help set them up for a successful career in that field. One participant emphasized that programs that provide work placements helped participants stay away from taking a survival job — any job that pays the bills.

One project participant suggested that recent immigrants who do not have Canadian experience suitable for high demand occupations that *"… the government or any other organization or body allows the primary applicant of the family to be given a job around 3–6 months for a term in their own field. This will fix the Canadian experience problem and the person can work in their own field. They are professionally qualified in their own field. I hope that Canada will get rid of the concept of survival jobs. They are not necessarily bad, but people who are professionally qualified and experienced are not using their skills and are working in other fields because they have to work in order to survive."*

Participant

Wage subsidies

The pilot sites offered wage subsidies to employers that hired their participants for a work placement. The wage subsidy offset part (about 50 per cent) of the wages paid by employers, up to a pre-determined maximum that varied by pilot sites. The wage subsidy was linked to the length of the work placement, and differed across some sites ranging from three to six months. The structure of the wage subsidy varied from site to site; some provided lump-sum payments while others subsidized the hourly wage. In general, the subsidies covered approximately half of the participants' wages. The number of wage subsidies varied from site to site but, on average, the sites received funding to provide wage subsidies for approximately half the participants.

What is a wage subsidy?

A wage subsidy refers to any financial incentive given to an employer or employee with the objective of reducing the cost associated with hiring, thereby increasing labour demand. In essence, a wage subsidy is a payment made to either employers or employees to cover part of the cost of hiring/wages. According to Rotger and Arendt (2010), wage subsidies are given to employers with the intention of improving job matches between targeted unemployed groups and employers by reducing the cost of employment and improving the productivity of these employees. They also serve as compensation for the difference in individual productivity at that wage rate.

In Canada, Robertson (1994) defined wage subsidy as an active labour market plan which is concerned with creating employment and improving or conserving job-related skills.

Katz (1996) describes the main theory behind wage subsidy as follows:

- A wage subsidy decreases the cost of labor. With labour supply fixed, the decrease in cost leads to an increase in the demand for labour from the targeted group. This, therefore, affects the employment and income of these groups.

For additional details on wage subsidies, see the literature review in Appendix A.

Effectiveness of wage subsidies

Based on a literature review on the effectiveness of wage subsidies (see Appendix A for the literature review), the key effects of wage subsidies are as follows:

For employees (participants):

- General consensus that wage subsidies increase employment (in Canada, newcomers may also experience reduction in Employment Insurance (EI) benefits); wage subsidies can also have positive effects on employment for individuals with a disability
- Employees can also experience a significant rise in their earnings after participating in a wage subsidy program
- Wage subsidies may also reduce social assistance spells (can be more for men than women)

For employers:

- Hiring increases for firms that use wage subsidies
- Might encourage employers to hire individuals with disabilities; one study showed that employers agreed that in the absence of subsidies, they would not have hired people with disabilities
- Wage subsidies have positive effects on firm performance and the firm's survival (i.e., subsidized firms outperform non-subsidized firms)

One-on-one support

The sites maintained more personalized support for participants after the training had been completed. Pilot site staff met with participants one-on-one on an as-needed basis to support them in their job search. For participants that secured a work placement, staff met with them, as well as their employers, on an ongoing basis to ensure that the placements were going smoothly and to proactively address any potential workplace challenges. Staff also supported participants who did not get work placements in their search for employment. Staff interviewed described the one-on-one support as customized coaching that took into account each participant's individual situation and employment goals. Participants interviewed mentioned that the customized job search support helped them to identify job opportunities, apply for them, and prepare for interviews.

Mentoring

The SÉO and TRIEC interventions included mentorship as a key component of their models. For SÉO, in addition to the work placement, employers were responsible to provide mentors to participants. The mentor's role was to provide advice and shared experience in the participant's field and provide support in adjusting and integrating into the workplace. TRIEC's intervention was centered around mentoring and involves matching job-ready mentees with mentors in their field. Both SÉO and TRIEC have developed tools and documents to support and guide the relationship between mentors and mentees.

Other components

A couple of the sites also included other key components to their intervention. As the first step to their intervention, BioTalent participants went through an online certification skills program designed to validate their skills by experts in the field to help them find alternate career paths in the bio-economy sector. MOSAIC included a job club component — after completing the four-week training, participants in Cohort 3 (those who did not have an assigned work placement) met as a group twice a week to discuss their job search experiences and leads in a peer-supported environment led by a group facilitator. Based on feedback from employers asking for candidates to be better prepared with Canadian accounting and financial software training, TCET reimbursed the costs of technical training such as QuickBooks, Sage 500, and Taxation for the later cohorts.

WHAT WORKED WELL IN IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY?

This section presents what has worked well in the implementation of the CWE Pilot Projects interventions delivered by the six sites. Findings come mainly from interviews with pilot staff, monthly reports, interviews with employers as well as interviews and focus groups with participants.

Programs were delivered as planned to the intended target group. The six sites implemented their pilots as intended. Four of the six sites developed and delivered a training program to high-skilled newcomers who had yet to secure a first Canadian work experience in their field. The training was customized to meet the learning needs of newcomers in a specific industry or set of occupations. The sites created opportunities for participants to connect with employers by outreaching to both new and existing employer partners. Overall, sites met their target of placing about half of the participants in a work placement with a wage subsidy. The extent to which the interventions have achieved expected outcomes is explored in the Outcomes

section. Minor adaptations to the model were made to better meet the needs of participants and employers.

There was demand for the interventions. All sites reached their expected number of participants. The sites also met or exceeded the targeted number of work placements. Indeed, several sites indicated that there was more interest from newcomers than they could serve with the pilot projects. Later, with additional funding from ESDC, four sites increased their targeted number and supported additional participants. Anecdotally, service providers have let us know that they continue to receive inquiries for their program, even though the program has ended.

The features of the pilot interventions met the needs of participants. Although the model components looked different across the interventions, program staff and participants observed that the delivered components were well-suited to support the newcomers' objective of securing a first Canadian work experience in their field. Participants learned about communication, networking, and the job search process in Canada, while the training helped participants to understand the Canadian labour market and what working in their field looked like in Canada before stepping into the job itself. The training also included sector-specific job readiness training and sessions delivered by employer guest speakers. Sites noted that participants found one-on-one coaching to be one of the most useful components, particularly in terms of their job search. Some participants in interviews and focus groups said they valued the employer connections, which they may not have established on their own.

Two of the pilot sites delivered in-person training in small cohorts of 10 to 15 participants. This format provided a place for newcomers to connect and support each other, both on a social and a professional basis. The connections they developed often continued after the training ended.

Pilot sites implemented diverse approaches to successfully engage employers. The employers engaged by the sites ranged in both size and in their experience employing newcomers. According to the 35 respondents to the employer survey, most employers (71 per cent) had 50 or fewer employees, and a large majority (83 per cent) currently employ newcomers.

Since employer engagement is a key component of the interventions, pilot sites spent a considerable amount of time refining and improving their approaches to engaging employers. Pilot sites emphasized the need to be flexible and adaptable and, ultimately, they described a number of strategies that have worked well, including:

- Leveraging their experience by engaging employers with whom the sites/organizations had existing relationships and developing employer "champions" that came back to hire additional candidates;

- Leveraging the experience of participating employers by making prospective employers aware of high-profile employers currently engaged with the pilot organization or by encouraging participating employers to nudge others to participate;
- Making the business case for employers to participate by highlighting the sites and employers' mutual goals in providing skilled candidates with their first Canadian work experience. This was accomplished by matching participants' skills and qualifications to employers' job vacancies — for larger employers especially, this also meant tapping into their diversity and inclusion department;
- Highlighting the value and availability of human resources (HR) support to small- and medium-sized businesses and the benefits and available talent pool through the pilot, which often involved a personalized one-on-one approach to successfully recruit and work with these employer partners; and
- Inviting employers to engage with participants directly at guest speaker sessions and other events.

Wage subsidies opened doors to engage employers by minimizing the perceived risk of hiring newcomers. The wage subsidies worked particularly well to engage small- and medium-sized businesses. The importance of the wage subsidy for smaller companies was explained by a participant, *"My employer was a start-up company, so they also got to get a subsidy that helped them, you know, at least take a chance on an immigrant."* Some employers, usually large ones, chose to forego the opportunity to receive a wage subsidy because of the administration involved. Often these employers chose to hire

> **"It means that we are taking that chance, we are taking that leap of faith, we're saying, we want to participate in this program because it will be mutually beneficial to our bottom line and our budget. If we can get more work done and save money that would be excellent. We're always in growth mode. So how do we grow with the least cost incurred? Any opportunity that lets us do that, and we get a great candidate, too, we are open to it."**
>
> **Employer**

> **"The wage subsidy opened doors for me and gave me the opportunity to enter the job market. Without the wage subsidy, who knows when I would have found a position. This was definitely a deciding factor for my employer."**
>
> **Participant who secured a work placement**

participants for a work placement without a wage subsidy, or even outright. Those employers that did take advantage of a wage subsidy stated that the subsidies made the difference in deciding to hire newcomers without a first Canadian work experience in their field. The subsidies provided businesses with limited HR resources and the funds necessary to onboard and train participants that they otherwise would not be able to do. The value of the wage subsidy is explained here by a participant, *"I included the program in my cover letter, informing the potencial [sic] employer about the wage subsidy from the program, which raised attention of the employers, mostly small businesses that try their best to lower budgets."* Another participant summarized the value of the wage subsidy in obtaining Canadian work experience as follows, *"This program was the only way I could get to the market and start from there. I have participated in many programs, but this one was the only one who convinced a company to hire me without thinking of risks or underestimating my capabilities. Why? Because there was someone willing to pay them on my behalf."*

Job development and matching the right candidate to the right opportunity are key to finding placements and creating partnerships with employers who commit to hiring participants. Job development and matching are complex activities that involved a range of techniques and approaches across the pilot sites. No one pilot site carried out the process in exactly the same way; the sites used a range of techniques and approaches. Employer engagement is a critical part of job matching. It is important to have an appropriate job matching process to ensure employers' and participants' expectations are managed and met.

A key success factor in mentoring was the fit between the mentee and the mentor. According to a recent evaluation of the TMP, mentees who reported a positive experience were most often those who felt that they had been matched with someone in their sector and industry. Similarly, SÉO reported that a good match was key to the success of the workplace mentoring program. This good match in the work place was described as mentees being matched with someone who understands the role of mentor, who volunteered to take on the role (as opposed to being assigned to the role by the employer), who is available on a regular basis and who is not a direct supervisor.

Work placements were seen as a positive experience by most. Overall, participants indicated that the work placement experience was positive and recognized its importance in giving them the opportunity to gain Canadian work experience in their field. They were able to gain new knowledge or improve their knowledge about the industry of interest. They said that they were able to learn technical skills, as well as soft skills (i.e., how to speak with clients), and learn new programming tools. An employer explained how the work placement helped newcomers in their job search, "*When you arrive in Canada, even if you have a lot of experience in your country, very few companies or enterprises will give you the chance. This type of program*

is essential to facilitate integration into the Canadian market. There are employers who have this barrier there — if you don't have that experience, they will eliminate you the first time".[21]

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES AND HOW WERE THEY ADDRESSED?

The challenges faced by pilot sites were mainly related to adapting the interventions to the needs of participants and employers and to the context, and to ensure continuously improving the intervention. Findings come primarily from interviews with pilot staff, monthly reports, interviews with employers, as well as interviews and focus groups with participants.

The level of support participants required was not fully anticipated by sites.

Pilot sites observed that participants required more job search support than originally anticipated. With work placements being a central component of the pilot projects, sites worked to ensure that participants were prepared for the Canadian workplace before they began their placements. It often required more significant effort and resources than originally planned by organizations to prepare the newcomers. They required training and one-on-one coaching to better understand Canadian workplace culture and how to approach employers. It also took additional time and resources from program staff to provide these types of supports, and some sites were more experienced than others at providing them. However, once participants were equipped with these tools, they were more ready to complete a successful job search.

> **"People have the skills to do the job, but they don't have the skills to communicate that."**
>
> **CWE Pilot staff**

Meaningful work placements and mentoring matches that met all stakeholders' expectations required a lot of time and resources.

It appears that while participants were mostly satisfied with their work placements, they wanted more than an opportunity to obtain Canadian work experience in their field. They wanted an opportunity to work in a position that might be extended beyond the work placement term, should they meet the expectations of the employer.

Participants also explained that they wanted a work placement that was closely in line with their pre-migration occupation, not simply in the same general field. In their comments in the point-in-time survey, several participants felt that staff were, at times, finding work placements in their general field, but not necessarily closely related to their past work experience. A lot of

[21] This quote was freely translated from French to English.

employer engagement was required to be able to meet the needs of all participants in the program. One participant pointed out that the success of such a program was contingent on having a pool of potential employers that could provide work placements for program participants. In the participant's own words, "*the program is very helpful to the new immigrant professional (…) as it quickly set up a connection for them to enter the employment market with necessary re-training. But the program needs to focus more on building up good quality employer pool who can not only really provide a learning and training chance but also career advancement for the new immigrant professionals*."

Some participants' expectations for work placements were not met. Other participants had unrealistic expectations about what they would receive from participating in the pilot. In some cases, participants perceived large, well-known companies as providing better work experiences in terms of career advancement and security. As a result, their expectations for a work placement with these types of employers were high. Program staff worked to manage these expectations and inform them that most Canadian employers are small- and medium-sized businesses and should not be viewed as less desirable. Other participants simply felt that the work placements being offered to them were not a suitable match for their education, skills, and experience. In most of these cases, staff tried to accommodate and sought to match these participants to different positions. Similar challenges were experienced in the mentoring program, TMP, in which some mentees had expected that their mentors would find them a job and introduce them to their networks, while mentors wanted mentees to take a more proactive approach to their job search.

Work placements were seen as too short by some employers. Employers appreciated that qualified candidates were presented to them, but several of them mentioned that participants still required onboarding like any new employee would receive. This meant that shorter placements were seen as less than ideal for employers.

A majority of employers interviewed pointed out that longer placements, at least six months would be more useful for them to properly onboard the employee and potentially bring that person on a permanent basis. One employer highlighted that for the work placement to work, the employer needs to put time and resources in onboarding the person in the organization, like they would for other traditional hires. As described by another employer, "*You also have to invest some training resources. You have to think of it as a new employee, and every time you hire someone new, there is going to be training. If someone goes to work for a CPA firm and he has accounting background, even if he wasn't from here, there would be the same amount of training as someone from here. Things are different when you go to a new job. Anybody new is going to have a learning curve*."

Geography and timing of programming posed challenges. The national and provincial pilot sites experienced difficulties in matching local demand to talent. If a top candidate for a

work placement was not located in the same city as the hiring employer, the candidate was not considered for the opportunity unless the individual was willing to relocate, which would have posed a significant challenge, especially for participants with families. In one exceptional and successful case, a participant did relocate and settled to take up a work placement in a new city.

In terms of program timing, site staff had a more difficult time engaging with participants during the summer months and winter holiday break.

Data collection required significant resources in terms of time and efforts. For the pilot sites delivering their programs remotely, it was challenging to get participants to complete surveys. For the sites delivering their programs in person, administering the participant surveys at baseline worked well, but it was more challenging to get responses to the follow-up surveys.[22] Some of those participants that did not have access to a wage subsidy became disengaged with the pilot, making it challenging to maintain contact for follow-up data collection. It was important to enlist program staff's help in contacting participants to remind them about the follow-up survey.

WHAT IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS WERE LEARNED?

> What are the lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for future improvements in programming?

Many lessons have been learned throughout the implementation of the CWE Pilot Projects. The following lessons reflect what stakeholders observed and heard, as well as SRDC's perspective on the early findings.

Building relationships with employers requires continuous engagement. Employer engagement is a common challenge for organizations that deliver employment services and an area in which many service providers are continuing to develop their expertise. The pilot sites were required to market their new pilot projects and develop partnerships with employers, all while recruiting participants and delivering training. With a short time to set up their pilots, committing the necessary time to engage employers proved challenging and in time for the work placements to start.

Sites worked to develop partnerships with employers that could provide relevant work placements to participants with education and experience in specific occupations. For the most part, pilot sites had to allocate more resources to their employer engagement strategies over the course of the project to meet their wage subsidy targets.

[22] No honorariums were provided to participants who responded to the follow-up surveys.

Building flexibility into the program and customizing the pilot models as needed is essential in meeting the strengths and needs of both participants and employers. The pilot sites remained true to their training models while making adjustments as needed to meet emerging needs and opportunities. For instance, sites would add an extra workshop, recruit new guest speakers or develop a new webinar if they reasoned that it would improve the newcomers' experience in the pilot or chances of success in achieving their first Canadian work experience. Moreover, the training provided was customized to the needs of the group to ensure its relevance and usefulness for participants. Flexibility to meet the demands of diverse employers, as well as the needs of participants, was key for the sites.

Making efforts to assess and monitor participant engagement from the outset saves time in the long run. When asked what they would have done differently in their program delivery, sites indicated the need to assess participants' level of commitment from the beginning. Simply meeting the eligibility criteria was not enough to ensure that participants would remain engaged throughout. Engagement and interest in the program could be more thoroughly assessed during the intake process or even before, via a streamlined process of referrals through an immigrant-serving organization, for instance.

Wage subsidies helped some participants secure a work placement when the conditions were right. The large majority of employers that took advantage of the wage subsidies were small- and medium-sized businesses. For these employers, the subsidies were instrumental in providing the necessary resources to reduce the recruitment risk of hiring newcomers without Canadian work experience in their fields. As explained by an employer, the wage subsidy was "*nice to have, [but it was] not the deciding factor" (freely translated)*. Another employer explained that they are, first and foremost, looking for qualified employees, "*You're not just going to hire a newcomer over someone else because of the wage subsidy, you're going to hire them because you hope that you've picked the right candidate and they'll have some longevity with your company, and the subsidy is a bonus.*"

> **"It just made sense at that time. Those candidates that don't have that work experience, it encourages you to give them that opportunity because you have that wage subsidy. Even if someone has Canadian work experience, there's no guarantee that it's going to work out. It reduces the risk."**
>
> Employer

While a wage subsidy generally contributes in the decision for an employer to hire a candidate, other pilot components are key to increase hiring chances, as demonstrated by those sites that increased their employer engagement efforts when participants were not successful in securing a work placement on their own. Although participants were able to market themselves with the

wage subsidy that an employer would be entitled to by hiring them, the other pilot components, in particular, the sites' employer engagement and job matching efforts, made the difference in securing work placements for participants.

Pilot sites leveraged the strength of partners to fill gaps. Not only did pilot sites develop new and existing partnerships with employers, but they also leveraged partnerships with other organizations to improve the delivery of their models. The types of partners the sites engaged varied: examples include immigrant-serving organizations, community organizations, corporate partners and sector associations. In some cases, these partnerships already existed; however, new ones were also formed. Partners' roles varied — in some cases, a sector association might serve as a guest speaker while a community organization might host a field trip to highlight resources and training opportunities.

Supports beyond work placements were seen as key. A key component of the work placements was ongoing one-on-one coaching and support from program staff for participants. Staff maintained close contact with both participants and employers during the work placements to ensure that the placements were proceeding smoothly and to mitigate potential workplace issues. Sites noted that maintaining these close relationships helped to prevent work placements from ending pre-emptively.

Pilot sites, especially those that deliver settlement and employment services, were also well positioned to refer participants to wrap-around services as needed. This was particularly helpful for participants who could benefit from settlement services or other non-employment services such as housing or health services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM PARTICIPANTS AND EMPLOYERS

While a majority of participants and employers were satisfied with the pilot projects, they also had suggestions for improvements. They provided these suggestions through the interviews and also in the general comment questions of the two follow-up surveys. Their recommendations included:

- **Providing a work placement to everyone in the program** as participants interviewed saw it as the key component to support entering employment in their field. A participant describes the importance of the work placement, *"I do appreciate a lot about how the course came on my way because it made a difference on how I did my first few months in Canada. I thought that was great. But I do believe that it needs some improvement. It should be really focused on getting everyone a job. I think if the course really focuses on that, then at the end of the course, the people that have to do an internship will be... we should I think... it should*

be the goal. I think if people can get a job, then it's actually better than doing an internship." A few participants also qualified that **work placements should be real job opportunities** when possible as opposed to a short-term placement with no possibility of extension.

- Several employers interviewed recommended **extending the length of the work placement** to 6 months (for those that were shorter than that) or even up to a year so as to provide a meaningful experience to the skilled newcomer. They also mentioned that this would allow employers to fully benefit from the person hired because there is always a period of onboarding and training for new employees, which means that they are not fully productive in the first month or two.

- A few participants spoke about **including an intercultural component for employers** to give them the opportunity to learn and understand newcomers' cultures and backgrounds. They suggested that employers needed to be prepared to receive newcomer workers in the workplace.

- While participants spoke about the usefulness of having guest speakers present during the training sessions, some acknowledged that it would be even more useful **to have HR representatives or hiring managers to come speak to participants** about what they needed to do to get hired within a company. Participants also spoke about needing guest speaker sessions to be more tailored to the specific experience and needs of the group. For example, within financial services, there are many branches and sectors, and certain branches do not apply to certain people.

- Several participants interviewed who had not participated in in-class training expressed that they would like to see service providers either **offer structured training** as part of the program or support them in making connections with other agencies in order to be better prepared to enter the labour market. Although it was not the intent of this program, a few participants and employers mentioned that providing hard skills (e.g., accounting software training, language skills, etc.) would have further supported the employment goal in the project.

- Participants who took part in mentoring programs expressed that the program could be strengthened by ensuring a **good fit between the mentee and mentor**. One of the ways to ensure that this happens is to have a large pool of mentors with whom mentees can be matched.

- **Other key components** mentioned by participants interviewed included: increase or add networking opportunities, market the program more broadly so that more employers are aware, and, for mentoring participants, have more resources to guide the mentee-mentor relationship.

PARTICIPANT-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Evidence for pilot outputs and outcomes were gathered mainly from the combined follow-up dataset (three-month follow-up survey and point-in-time survey). For some outcomes, such as program satisfaction and career planning, data was obtained from the exit survey which was sent to participants at the end of the program (or a similar timeline for comparison group participants). These results were supplemented from data garnered from focus groups, monthly reports, and interviews with participants and pilot sites.

This section presents the results from the analysis of participant outcomes. The sample is small and does not allow for analysis by pilot site. However, some subgroups were explored — men, women, sector-specific sites, and sites who provided formal training. When relevant, results from these subgroups are presented. See the document titled Supplementary Tables for the results for the overall sample and these subgroups.

Key findings — participant-level outcomes

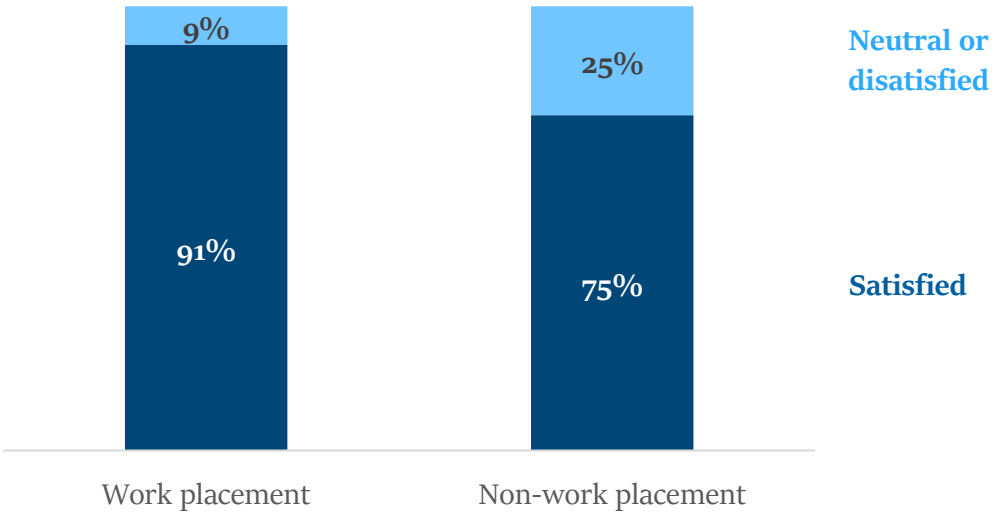
- Program group participants and TMP mentees expressed satisfaction with the program and would recommend it to other skilled immigrants.
- The work placement and mentoring had a positive impact on being employed full-time in a job that offers career advancement opportunities. Indeed, 86 per cent of participants who benefited from a work placement were employed in a full-time job at follow-up versus 64 per cent for those who did not receive a work placement. Of the 58 per cent of TMP mentees that were employed at the six-month follow-up, over 85 per cent of them were employed in a full-time job.
- Participants and TMP mentees are employed in good quality jobs (i.e., skills level commensurate with their education, duties similar to their pre-migration occupation, and higher wage sectors) at follow-up. The work placements, however, were not often directly in participants' pre-migration occupation.
- The proportion of participants reporting difficulties in finding employment in the follow-up survey was lower than the baseline results. However, a majority of participants (63 per cent of work placement participants and 78 per cent of non-work placement participants) still reported having experienced at least one difficulty in their job search at follow-up (down from 90 per cent and 99 per cent, respectively).
- Training and mentoring were associated with improved job search skills. Participants interviewed explained that because they understood the Canadian job market better, they knew where to look for jobs and how to position themselves in the job market.
- There is a small positive, but non-statistically significant, trend on hope for work placement participants; participants interviewed reported increased confidence in themselves, in their skills, and in their career development in Canada.
- Life satisfaction remained fairly constant over time; while reported health status declined. Although the results suggest health of participants deteriorated more among those with work placement and TMP mentees, it might be the result of working more: employment could be taxing both physically and mentally. Similar patterns of immediate deteriorating health of workers have been found from a few other active labour market programs.
- A majority of participants took part in further training and activities after the program.
- Training and mentoring have a positive impact on the size of the career network, while work placement is associated with an increase in the heterogeneity of the career network. A majority of participants reported having at least one to three people who they could reach out to get career advice.
- Participants who had a work placement were more likely to report that their experience in Canada surpassed their expectations (88 per cent) in comparison to individuals without job placements (59 per cent); mentoring increased TMP mentees' satisfaction with their experience in Canada — 59 per cent reported being satisfied, an increase from 7 percentage points at baseline.

SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM

Participants and TMP mentees were satisfied with the program overall, and would recommend it to other high-skilled newcomers

Overall, the majority of participants who completed the exit survey — status including employed, unemployed and others (i.e., in training and enrolled in other programs) — indicated that they were satisfied with the pilot program. Indeed, 84 per cent of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied. It seems that there was a higher proportion of participants who secured a work placement who indicated being satisfied than those who did not have a work placement (91 per cent and 75 per cent respectively, see Figure 3). A similar proportion of men and women were satisfied with their experience. A minority of program participants kept in regular contact with program staff after the program — 25 per cent of work placement participants and 18 per cent of non-work placement participants.

Figure 3 Distribution of reported program satisfaction for work placement participants compared to non-work placement participants at the exit survey



Participants also said they greatly benefited from the program and would recommend the program to others — 84 per cent had either already recommended the program to other skilled immigrants or were very likely to do so, and hoped the program would continue as it helps immigrants get through the door. Women and men were as likely to recommend the program. As one participant put it, *"[it] changed the game for me"*.

Few program participants who completed the exit survey indicated that they were dissatisfied with the pilot program (less than 7 per cent). Given that many participants decided to partake in the program because they were looking for a job in their field and the program offered job search and financial supports to gain practical experience in their field, some were disappointed when these opportunities did not materialize or did not meet their expectations. One participant explained, "*My expectation of the program was that it would link me up with potential employers and recognize my international experience as an environmental scientist and university professor of over 20 years. This was not the case, instead I was back where I started from, on my own. (…)*". Those who were more ambivalent mentioned that they gained useful skills and knowledge from the in-class training, but were disappointed that they did not secure a work placement.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Tables 9 and 10 summarize the impacts from the difference-in-difference analysis for work placement vs. non-work placement participants and by subgroup.

Table 11 summarizes the pre-post effects of intermediary outcomes that indicate employment impacts for TMP mentees.[23]

The results shown in these tables are discussed below.

[23] Comparable indicators for employment were not available for TMP; there was no follow-up survey for individuals in the comparison group.

Table 9 Summary of estimated employment impacts overall and by subgroup at follow-up

Outcome	Statistically significant? (level of significance)				
	Overall (work placement vs. non-work placement)	Men	Women	Sector-specific organization[24]	Organization that provided training[25]
Being employed	--	--	--	--	--
Being employed full-time	✓ (*)	--	✓ (*)	--	--
Being employed full-time in pre-migration occupation	--	--	--	--	--
Being employed full-time in pre-immigration occupation that is commensurate	--	--	--	✓ (**)	--
Having job search difficulties	--	--	✓ (*)	✓ (***)	--
Monthly income	--	✓ (*)	--	--	--

[24] BioTalent and ECO Canada are sector councils.

[25] ECO Canada offered online training; TCET and MOSAIC offered in-class training.

Table 10 Summary of estimated impacts for proxies to employment overall and by subgroup

Outcomes	Statistically significant? (level of significance)					
	Overall (work placement vs. non-work placement)	Men	Women	Overall (training vs. non-training)	Men	Women
Career decision-making self-efficacy scale	--	--	--	--	--	--
Job search self-efficacy scale	--	--	--	✓ (***)	✓ (*)	✓ (*)
Career planning scale	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 11 Summary of estimated pre–post effects for proxies to employment for TMP mentees

	Statistically significant? (level of significance)		
	Overall	Men	Women
Career decision-making self-efficacy scale	--	--	--
Job search self-efficacy scale	✓ (***)		
Career planning scale	--	--	--

The work placement and mentoring increased full-time employment in a job that offers career advancement opportunities

Full-time employment rates increased from baseline to the follow-up for both the work placement (an increase of 65 percentage points from 21 per cent at baseline to 86 per cent at follow-up) and non-work placement groups (an increase of 48 percentage points from 16 per cent at baseline to 64 per cent at follow-up). There is a 22-percentage point difference between the work placement and non-work placement groups — 86 per cent of participants who had a work placement reported working full-time, compared to 64 per cent of the non-work placement group. The difference is statistically significant. When looking at women only, there is a statistically significant positive impact of the work placement on full-time employment. Indeed, 81 per cent of women in the work placement group reported full-time employment at follow-up compared to 59 per cent of non-work placement women. When looking at men only, there is a 36 percentage point difference in full-time employment at the follow-up surveys between the work placement group and non-work placement group, though men in the work placement group were also substantially more likely to have a full-time employment before the program in the first place and thus the impact is not statistically significant.[26] Of the 58 per cent of TMP mentees that were employed at the 6-month follow-up, over 85 per cent of them were employed in a full-time job.[27]

As shown in Figure 4, participants who secured a work placement were also more likely to report being in a job that offered career advancement opportunities than the non-work placement group — 70 per cent compared 50 per cent respectively. This impact was statistically significant, and was also present for men, but not women. A similar proportion of TMP mentees (66 per cent) reported feeling that their job offered such opportunities.[28]

While employment rates increased more for the work placement group in comparison to the comparison group, there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of monthly income (before taxes). There is, however, a positive impact on monthly income for men in the work placement group. Male participants reported an average monthly income of $4,767 at follow-up compared to $1,924 at baseline, which is a difference of $2,844. In

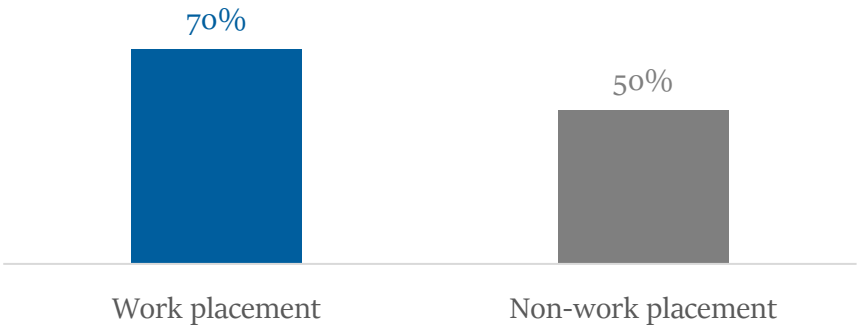
[26] Indeed, when the baseline difference of full-time employment is taken into account, the estimated impact of work placement on men's full-time employment is only 27.5 percentage points and it became statistically insignificant because of a smaller subgroup sample. Also notice that a non-trivial portion of the analysis sample with a missing gender information, and in general the missing group did not see much employment impact.

[27] TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation — Final Report. Submitted to ESDC on January 3, 2020 by Blueprint ADE.

[28] TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation — Final Report. Submitted to ESDC on January 3, 2020 by Blueprint ADE.

comparison men in the non-work placement group reported a monthly income of $3,375 at follow-up compared to $2,384 at baseline — an increase of $991. There was no impact for women.

Figure 4 Percentage of participants who reported being in a job with career advancement opportunities at follow-up; for work placement and non-work placement participants



Participants and TMP mentees are employed in good quality jobs at follow-up; however, there is no impact on being employed in their pre-migration occupation

The main objective of these pilot projects was to support high-skilled newcomers in obtaining their first Canadian work experience in their field. At the time of the follow-up survey, 16 per cent of non-work placement participants worked in their pre-migration occupation — up from 2.5 per cent at baseline — and 27 per cent of work placement participants reported the same — up from 16 per cent at baseline. While there is a higher proportion of both work placement and non-work placement participants who were employed full-time in their pre-migration occupation at the follow-up, the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant. While not statistically significant, men from the work placement group saw a slight decrease from 26 per cent at baseline to 20 per cent at follow up. In contrast, women in the work placement group saw an increase, but the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

The proportion of work placement participants and non-work placement participants who reported working in job that is commensurate with their education level[29] and that is also in

[29] For this analysis, we looked at whether the current employment was commensurate with the education level associated with the position. We used the skill level of the National Occupation Classification: https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Training/SkillLevel/f86fd63cdb604ab99a4c90c0156b3bfe?GoCTemplateCulture=en-CA

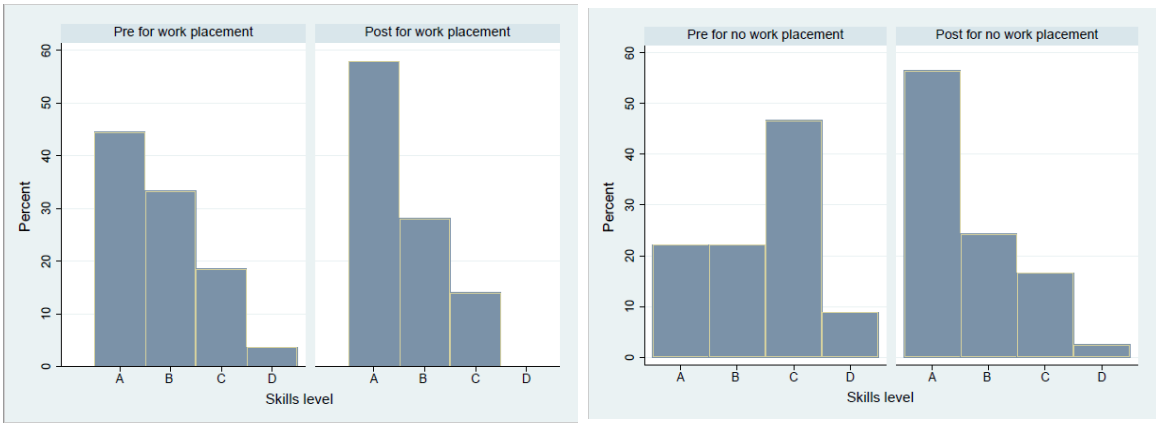
their pre-migration occupation increased from baseline to follow-up; however, the impact is not statistically significant. At follow-up, 19.5 per cent of work placement participants reported working in a position commensurate to their education level — up from 10 per cent at baseline — compared to 16 per cent of non-work placement participants — up from 2 per cent. While not statistically significant, men from the work placement group saw a slight decrease from 15 per cent at baseline to 13 per cent at follow up. Women in the work placement group saw an increase, but the impact was not statistically significant.

As for participants of the TMP, mentees were 1.28 times more likely to be employed in commensurate employment than the comparison group, however, similarly to the work placement participants, this result was not statistically significant.[30]

When looking at job characteristics, results show that participants in both groups are employed in good quality jobs in terms of skills level and occupation sector at follow-up. When looking at the distribution of skills level required for the job in Figure 5, we can see that a higher proportion of participants in both groups reported being employed in a job at level A — which are jobs usually requiring a university degree.

[30] TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation — Final Report. Submitted to ESDC on January 3, 2020 by Blueprint ADE.

Figure 5 Distribution of skills level at baseline and follow-up for the work placement group and the non-work placement group



A = Occupation usually requires a university degree
B = Occupation usually requires college education, specialized training, or apprenticeship training
C = Occupation usually requires secondary school and/or occupation-specific training
D = On-the-job training is usually provided for occupations

When looking at the distribution of participants across occupational sectors at baseline and then again at follow-up, results show a shift towards occupational sectors that typically require more skilled and educated workers. Figure 6 shows a shift in the work placement group, albeit small, to health and education, law, and social services, and away from manufacturing. Figure 7 shows a major shift to business, finance, and administration and away from sales and services for the non-work placement group.

Figure 6 **Distribution of occupational sectors at baseline and follow-up for the work placement group**

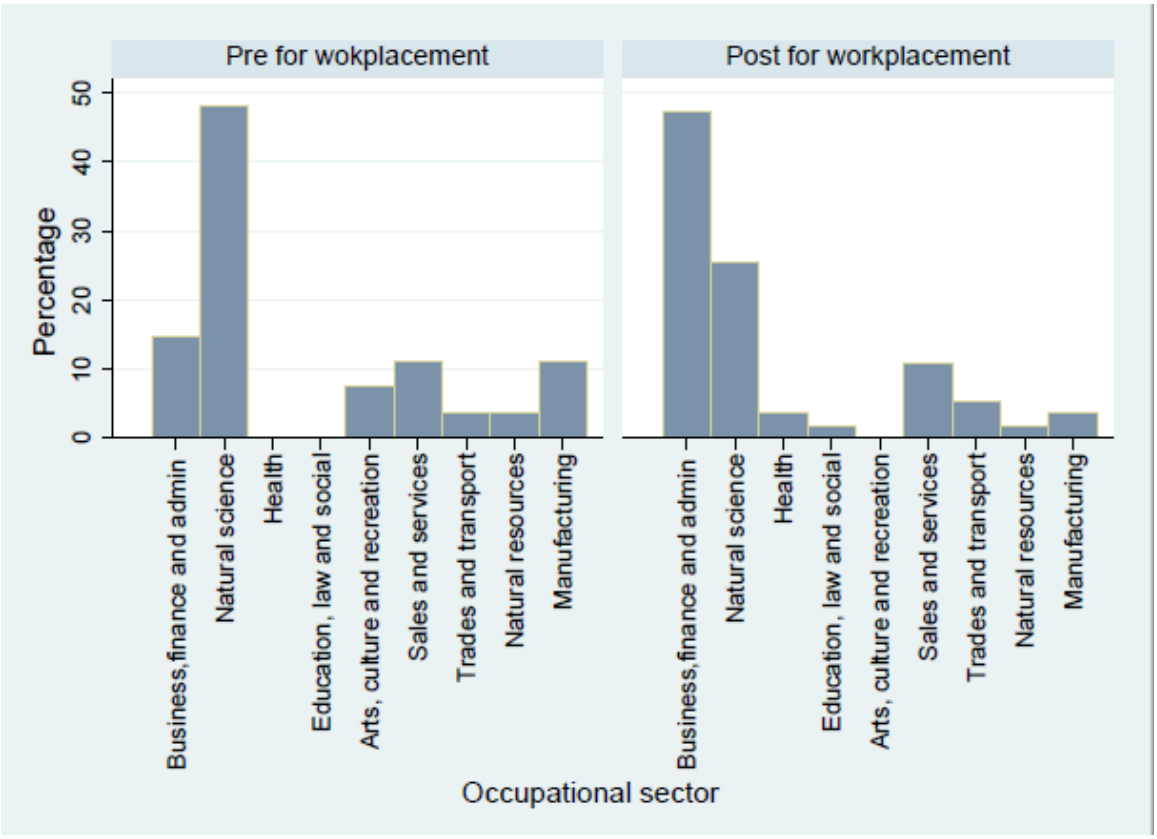
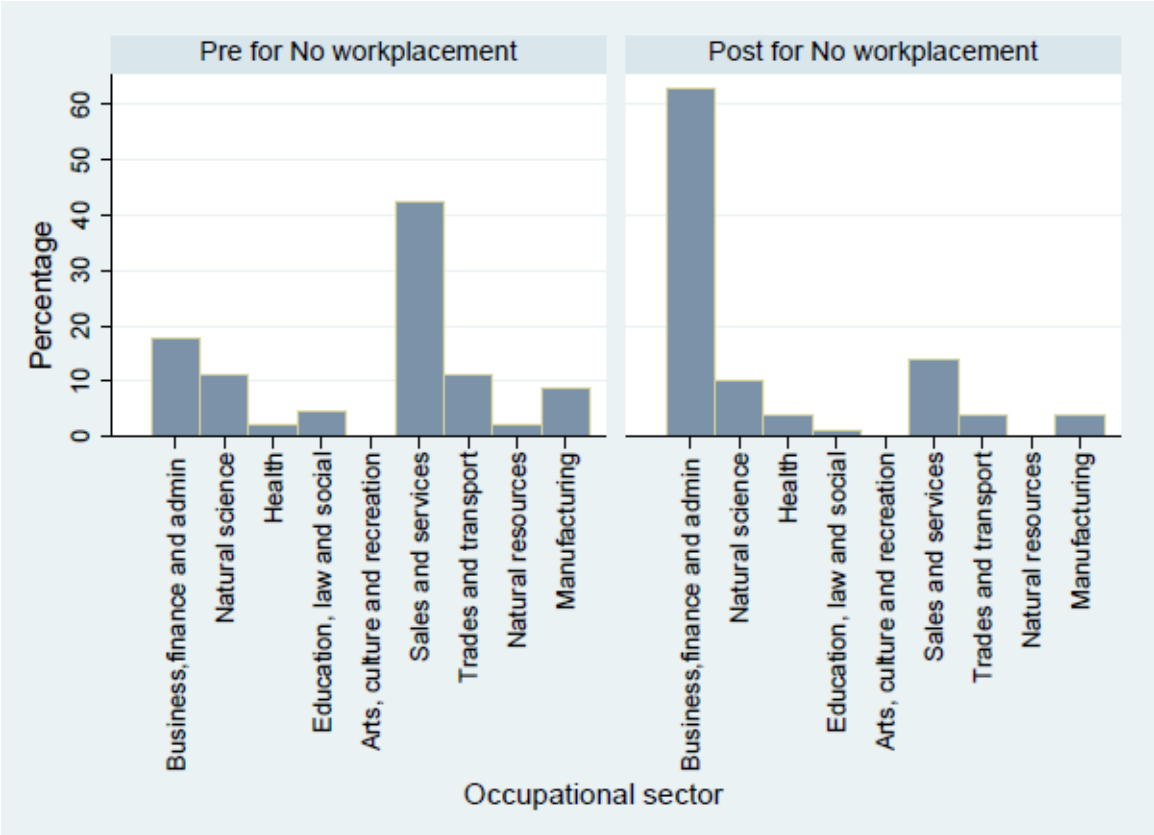


Figure 7 Distribution of occupation sectors at baseline and follow-up for the non-work placement group



When comparing how much of their previous work experience participants used in their current job, results show that a majority of participants across both groups used at least some. As shown in Figure 8, a majority of participants in the work placement group indicated using a lot of their previous work experience in their current job. A majority of TMP mentees also reported so (see Figure 9).

Figure 8 Distribution of the extent to which participants use their previous work experience in their current work at follow-up

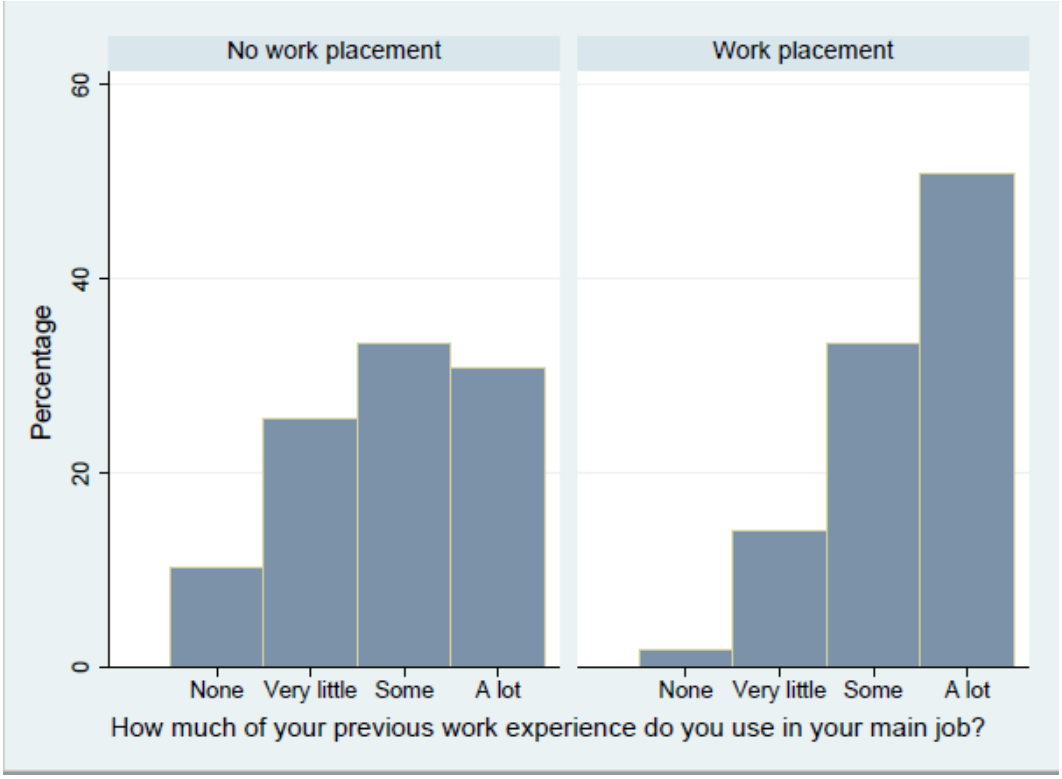
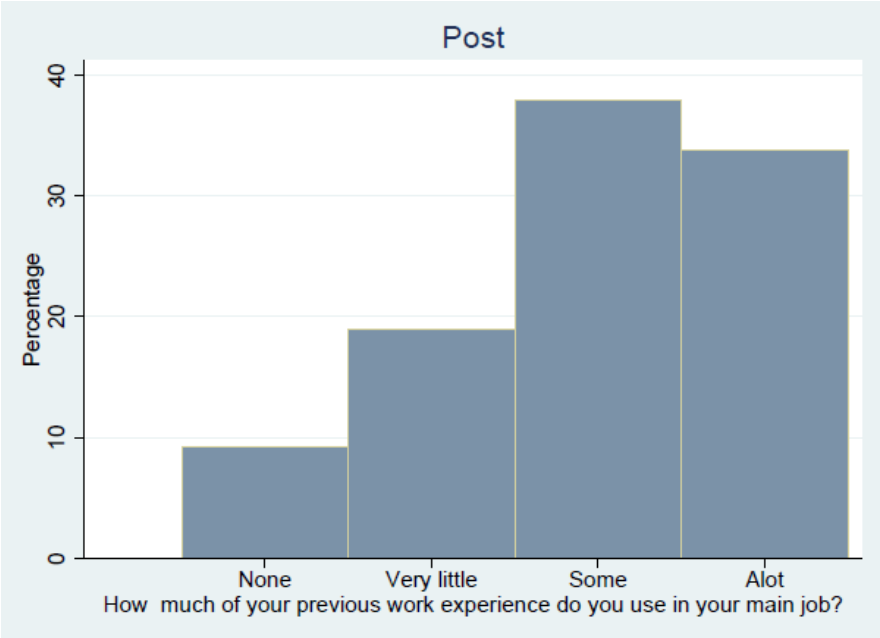


Figure 9 Distribution of the extent to which TMP mentees use their previous work experience in their current work at follow-up

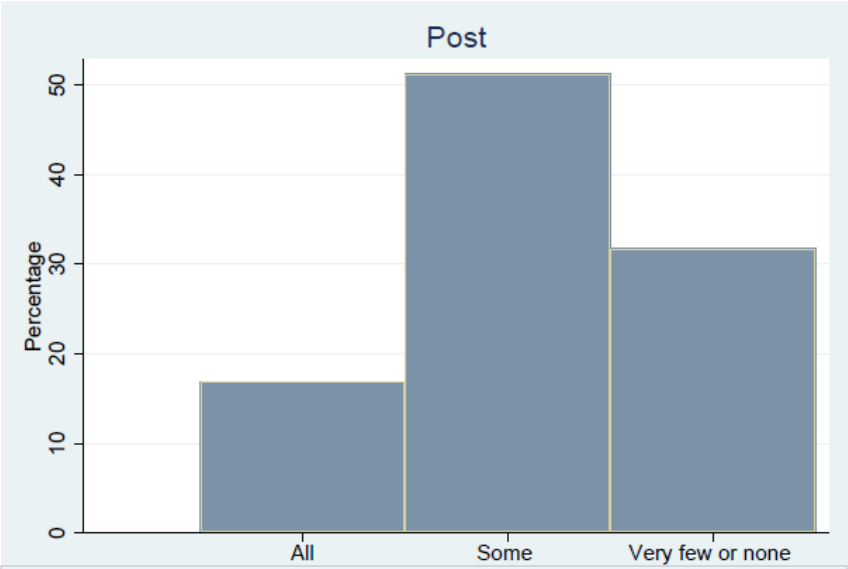


Participants were asked to describe their current main duties in comparison to the duties they held in their pre-migration occupation. Similar duties can be used as a proxy for the commensurateness of the employment — a job in which all duties are similar as before would be seen as commensurate employment, while a job in which none of the duties are similar, would not. Figure 10 shows that only one-fifth of participants in the work placement group said that very few or none of their duties were similar, while almost 50 per cent of those in the non-work placement group indicated so. Figure 11 shows that a majority of TMP mentees indicated that all or some of their duties were similar to their pre-migration occupation.

Figure 10 Distribution of the extent to which duties were similar to their pre-migration occupation at follow-up for work placement vs. non-work placement participants

Which of the following best describes the extent to which your duties were similar in type and complexity to duties performed in your job before you arrived in Canada?

Figure 11 Distribution of the extent to which duties were similar to their pre-migration occupation at follow-up for TMP mentees



Many participants still experienced difficulties in finding employment after the program

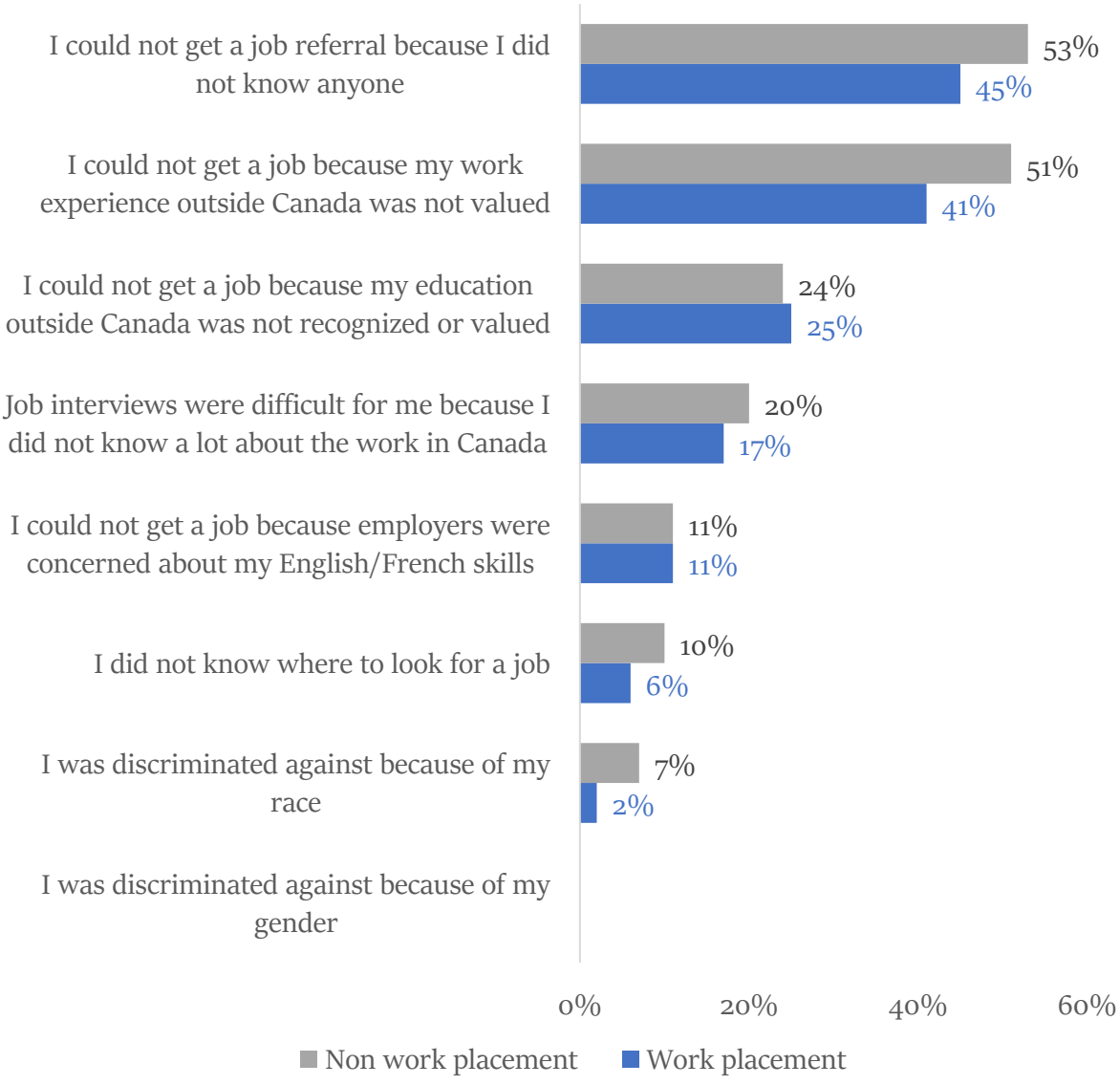
The proportion of participants reporting difficulties in finding employment in the follow-up survey was lower than the baseline results. However, a majority of participants (63 per cent of work placement participants and 78 per cent of non-work placement participants) still reported having experienced at least one difficulty in their job search at follow-up (down from 90 per cent and 99 per cent, respectively). Through interviews and survey comments, many participants spoke about the fact that they lacked references for a job within an organization. Others noted that they had to take on a survival job to support themselves and their families, and thus lacked the time to focus on their search for a job in their field. Many said that employers still placed a lot of importance in candidates having Canadian work experience. While employers interviewed mentioned that Canadian work experience specifically was not something they always looked for, they were looking for candidates who can start at a high-level right from the start. In the words of an employer, they are looking for candidates *"who can execute, people who can get it done."*

Whether participants were in a work placement or not did not seem to have a statistically significant impact on whether they reported experiencing difficulties in finding employment.

Both men and women saw a similar decrease in the proportion reporting having experienced difficulties in their job search. Women in the work placement group saw a statistically significant decrease compared to the non-work placement women.

As shown in Figure 12 below, the most commonly reported job search difficulty encountered by participants in both the work placement and non-work placement groups at follow-up was not being able to get a job referral because they did not know anyone. This was closely followed by a perception that their work experience was not valued in Canada.

Figure 12 Types of difficulties encountered at follow-up for work placement and non-work placement participants



Training and mentoring were associated with improved job search skills

While employment is a main outcome of interest for the evaluation, it may take some time for newcomers to find and secure a job even with additional help, especially jobs commensurate with their experience. To see whether there was progress towards employment, we used three scales of the exit survey: career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE),[31] job search self-efficacy (JSSE),[32] and career planning (CP).[33] There was a statistically significant relationship between job search self-efficacy and training. Indeed, training was associated with a 0.45 (a scale of 1 to 5) increase in the change in average JSSE over and above the change for participants who did not participate in training. The average JSSE score for participants who took part in training increased from 3.27 to 3.78 and from 3.52 to 3.58 for those who did not. When disaggregating by gender, there was a positive impact of the training on JSSE for both women (0.39) and men (0.48). There was no statistical significance between training and CDMSE and CP as well as between work placement and any of the three scales.

In a pre-post analysis, mentoring was also found to have a positive impact, albeit smaller, on job search self-efficacy for TMP mentees. From baseline to exit survey, the JSSE score increased by 0.29 from 3.24 to 3.53. Both men and women saw a positive impact in their average JSSE score.

Program participants interviewed reported improved job searching and job application skills. They explained that because they understood the Canadian job market better, they knew where to look for jobs and how to position themselves in the job market. In one participant's words, the program provided "a *clearer focus with insider information on how to go about using recruiters and your personal branding statement to get the best out of the job search*." Participants indicated that the program helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses, so that they could seek employment that best utilized their skills.

Participants also said they were able to develop soft skills, including confidence and resources to do informational interviews, which helped with their job search. Participants said that the

31 CDMSE assesses self-efficacy beliefs about individual's ability to perform self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans for the future, and problem solving. Source: 25-item scale, Taylor and Betz (1983). Taken from O'Brien (2003). Measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=no confidence at all that can accomplish task and 5=complete confidence that can accomplish task.

32 Job search self-efficacy assesses beliefs that the individual can perform various job search tasks effectively. Source: 10-item scale from Zikic and Saks (2009) (Question 18) as well as Côté, Saks and Zikic (2006), Saks and Ashforth (1999, 2000), Caplan, Vinokur, Price, and van Ryn (1989), Kanfer and Hulin (1985) and Ellis and Taylor (1983). Measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=no confidence at all that can accomplish task and 5=complete confidence that can accomplish task.

33 Career planning scale assesses individuals' dedication to their career as evidenced by outlining future career plans and setting and pursuing career goals. Source: 6-item scale based on Gould (1979) (with 5-point Likert scale) and Saks and Ashforth (2002). Measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

program supported them in making and improving resumes and cover letters for job applications. Specifically, some participants expressed they understood how to highlight their skills in their resumes. As explained by a participant, *"The most significant change is my resume and cover letter. There is a complete transformation of these and I feel a lot more confident in reaching out to employers."*

OTHER OUTCOMES

Tables 12 and 13 summarize the impacts on non-employment outcomes from the difference-in-difference analysis for work placement vs. non-work placement participants and by subgroup.

Table 14 summarizes the pre-post effects on non-employment outcomes for TMP mentees.

The results shown in these tables are discussed below.

Table 12 Summary of estimated non-employment impacts overall and by subgroup at follow-up

Outcome	Statistically significant? (level of significance)				
	Overall	Men	Women	Sector-specific organization[34]	Organization who provided training[35]
Hope	--	--	--	--	--
Life satisfaction	--	--	--	--	--
Health	--	--	--	✓ (negative, **)	--
Social network – composite	--	--	--	✓ (*)	--
I can easily get help with household activities	--	--	--	--	--
I can easily get specialized advice	--	--	--	✓ (**)	--
I can easily get emotional support	--	✓ (negative, *)	--	--	--
I can easily get help with my job and career	--	--	--	--	--
Career network size	--	--	--	✓ (*)	--
Career network heterogeneity	--	--	--	--	--
Satisfaction with experience in Canada	--	--	--	--	--
Experience in Canada has been as expected	✓ (**)	--	✓ (**)	--	✓ (**)

[34] BioTalent and EcoCanada are sector councils.

[35] EcoCanada offered online training; TCET and MOSAIC offered in-class training.

Table 13 Summary of estimated non-employment impacts overall and by subgroup at exit

Outcomes	Statistically significant? (level of significance)					
	Overall (work placement vs. non-work placement)	Men	Women	Overall (training vs. non-training)	Men	Women
Social network (composite score)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Career network size	--	--	--	✓ (*)	--	✓ (*)
Career network heterogeneity	--	✓ (*)	--	--	--	--

Table 14 Summary of estimated non-employment pre–post effects for TMP mentees

Outcomes	Statistically significant (level of significance)		
	Overall	Men	Women
Hope	--	--	--
Life satisfaction	✓ (*)	--	✓ (**)
Health	✓ (*)	✓ (*)	✓ (*)
Social network (composite score) (exit survey)	--	--	--
Career network size (exit survey)	✓ (***)	✓ (***)	✓ (***)
Career network heterogeneity (exit survey)	--	--	--
Social network (composite score) (follow-up)	✓ (***)	✓ (**)	✓ (*)
Career network size (follow-up)	✓ (*)	✓ (**)	✓ (*)
Career network heterogeneity (follow-up)	--	--	--
Satisfaction with experience in Canada	✓ (**)	--	✓ (**)
Experience in Canada has been as expected	--	--	--

There is a small positive, but non-statistically significant, trend for work placement participants on hope; participants interviewed reported increased confidence

When it comes to hope, we see a small positive trend for work placement participants and a small negative trend for non-work placement participants, although the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant (see Figure 13). At baseline, participants already had fairly high hope scores on a scale of 1 to 5 — 4.32 for the non-work placement participants and 4.37 for work placement participants. When looking at the average level of hope of men, both the non-work placement and work placement groups experience an upward trend (see Figure 14). This is however not the case for women; participants in the non-work placement group experience a sharper downward trend (see Figure 15).

For TMP mentees, there is a negative trend when looking at the average hope level, although the difference between baseline and follow-up is not statistically significant. When disaggregating by gender, women see a very slight increase in the level of hope while men see a decrease.

Figure 13 Hope composite score on a five-point scale, where 1=Untrue to 5=Very true at baseline and follow-up

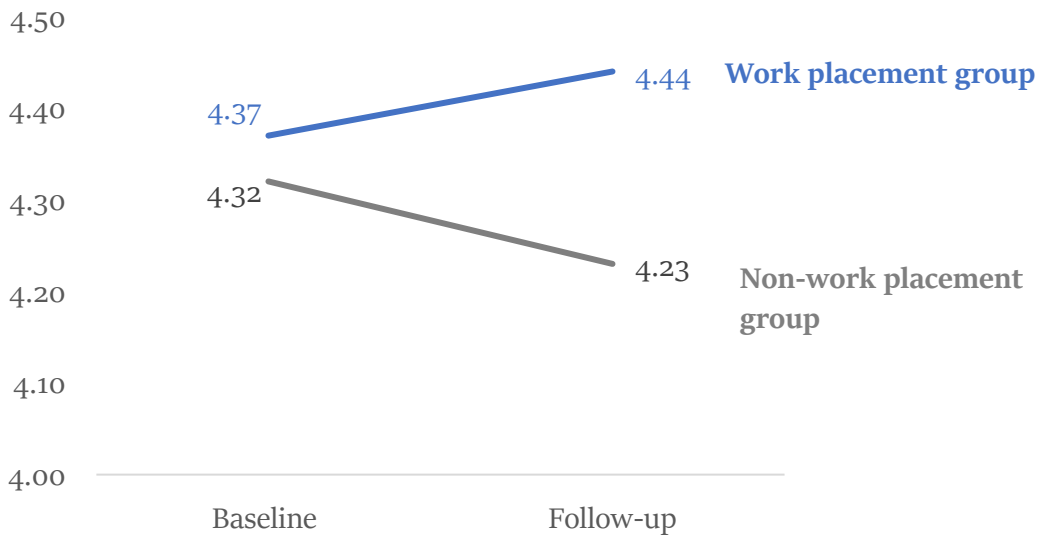


Figure 14 **Hope composite score on a five-point scale, where 1=Very untrue to 5=Very true for men at baseline and follow-up**

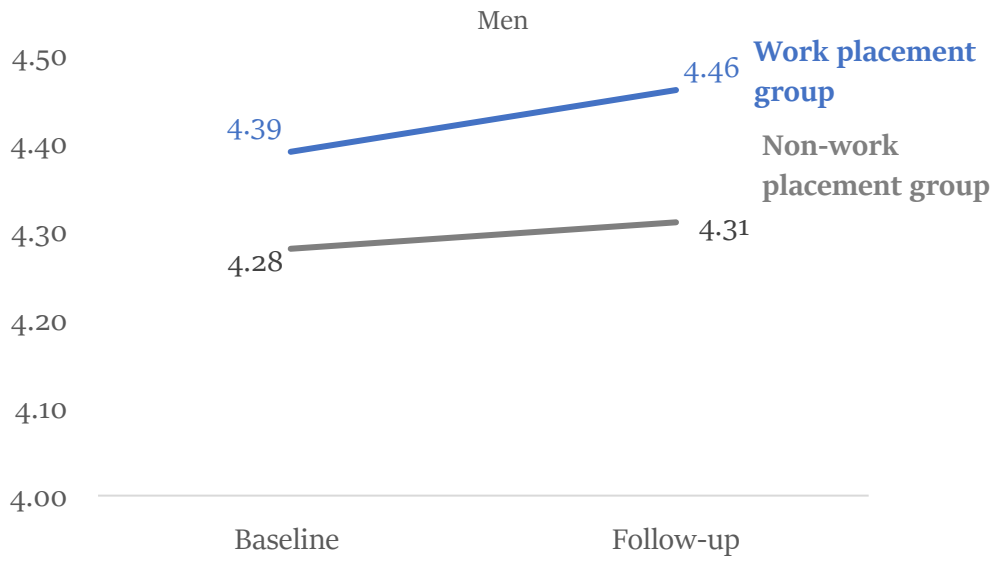
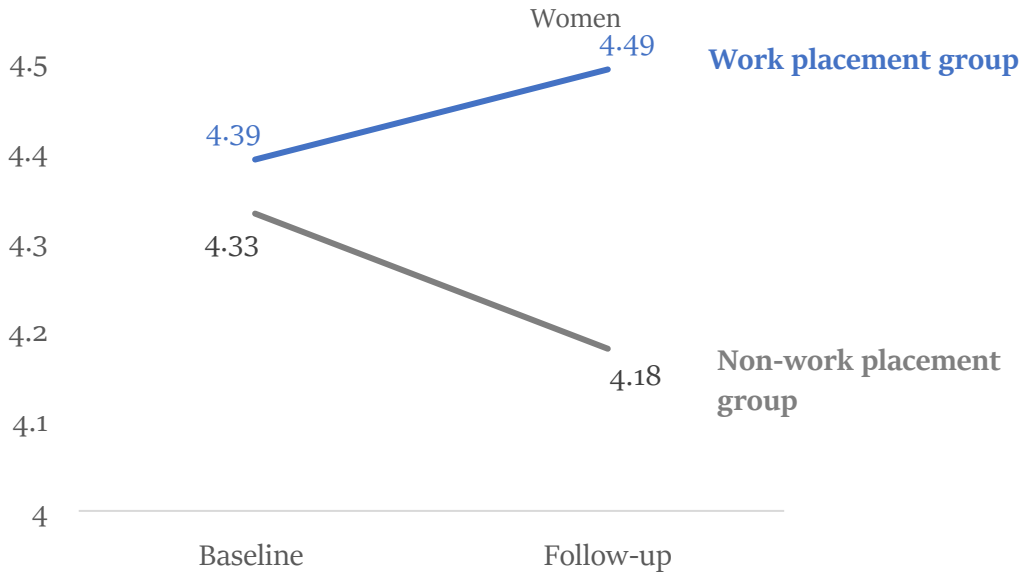


Figure 15 **Hope composite score on a five-point scale, where 1=Very untrue to 5=Very true for women at baseline and follow-up**



Participants interviewed expressed that through the program they gained confidence in themselves, in their skills, and in their career development in Canada. One participant pointed out that the program *"gave them the platform to believe in themselves."* Participants explained that with the development of connections and gaining Canadian work experience (those who secured a placement), they were able to build confidence in themselves. A participant explained how self-confidence helped with finding a job: *"I stop [sic] hesitating that I am not good enough and found a job that is really good. I knew how to pass the interview, how to create an excellent resume and how to communicate effectively in diverse workplace."*

Life satisfaction remained fairly constant over time, while reported health status declined

The life satisfaction of participants overall remained fairly constant over time. At follow-up, both the non-work placement and work placement groups reported a life satisfaction of around 7 (7.2 for non-work placement and 7.5 for work placement participants) on a scale of 1 to 10. As shown in Figure 16, at least 50 per cent of participants (50 per cent for the non-work placement group and 57 per cent for the work placement group) reported a high degree of life satisfaction (8 or over). Although participants seem satisfied with their life, the work placement does not appear to have had an impact on life satisfaction. When disaggregating by gender, results showed a similar non-statistically significant trend.

TMP mentees' life satisfaction has increased slightly from 6.55 at baseline to 6.78 at the three-month follow-up. This statistically significant difference is driven by women for whom life satisfaction increased from 6.47 to 6.89. As shown in Figure 17, there are about a third of participants who reported a high degree of life satisfaction (8 or over), and that remained fairly constant from baseline to three-month follow-up.

Figure 16 Distribution of life satisfaction at baseline and follow-up on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=Very unsatisfied and 10=Very satisfied, for the work placement and non-work placement groups

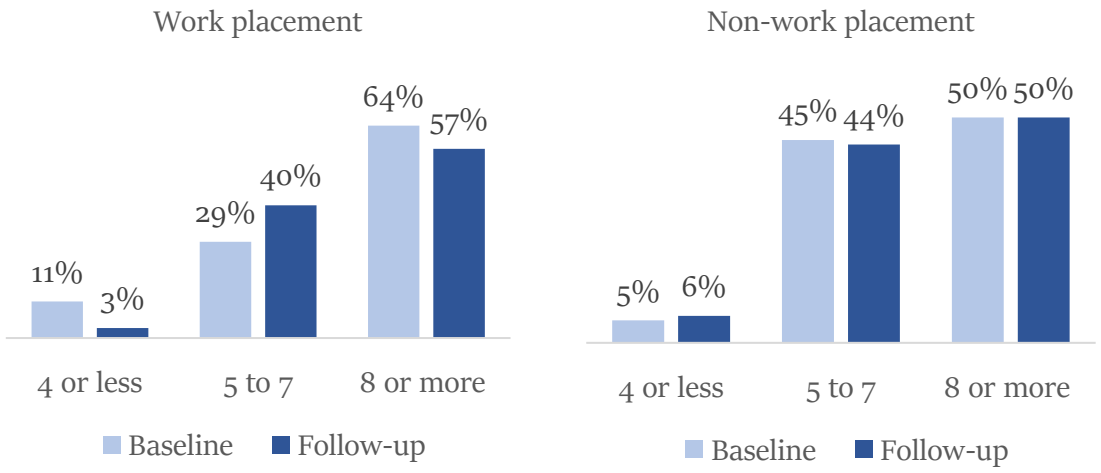
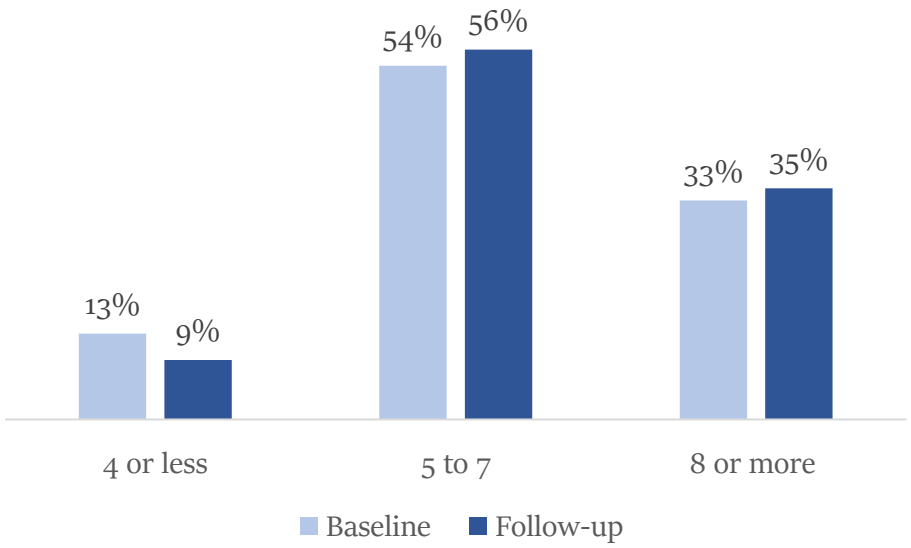


Figure 17 Distribution of life satisfaction at baseline and follow-up on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=Very unsatisfied and 10=Very satisfied for TMP mentees

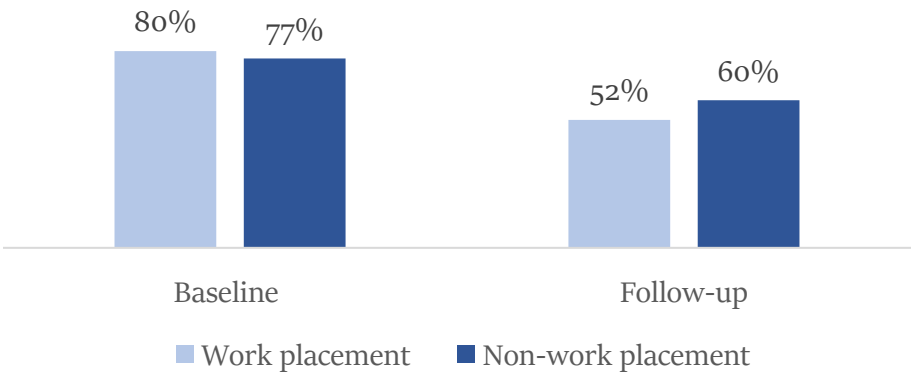


When it comes to health at follow-up, a lower proportion of participants reported that their health was very good or excellent (see Figure 18). This is true for both the work placement and non-work placement groups. There is however no statistically significant difference between the two groups. This is also true when looking at men and women separately.

The TMP data also shows a decrease in the proportion of TMP mentees who indicated that their health was very good or excellent at follow-up — from 62 per cent at baseline to 51 per cent at the three-month follow-up. This pre–post decrease was statistically significant overall and for women and men separately.

Although the results suggest health of participants deteriorated more among those with work placement and TMP mentees, it might be the result of working more: employment could be taxing both physically and mentally. Similar patterns of immediate deteriorating health of workers have been found from a few other active labour market programs.[36]

Figure 18 Percentage of participants who reported very good/excellent health at baseline and follow-up



[36] Gyarmati et al. (2014) show that participants of a Canadian workplace essential skills training program in the hospitality industry increased work hours, reduced unemployment, but also increased reports of bodily pain among participants. Also, Holmes and Rahe (1967) found that "major change in working hours or conditions" is an inventory item contributing to life stress. Other studies found that employment could be associated with improved health status (e.g., Cleland, Kerns, Tannahill, and Ellaway, 2016) but there is no consensus how employment affects health.

Cleland, C., Kearns, A., Tannahill, C. et al. (2016). The impact of life events on adult physical and mental health and well-being: longitudinal analysis using the GoWell health and well-being survey. BMC Res Notes 9, 470. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-016-2278-x

Gyarmati, D., Leckie, N., Dowie, M., Palameta, B., Hui, T. S.-w., Dunn, E., & Hébert, S. (2014). UPSKILL: A Credible Test of Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Training. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. Ottawa, Canada.

Holmes, T. H. & Rahe, R. H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. Journal of psychosomatic research, 11, 213.

A majority of participants took part in further training and activities

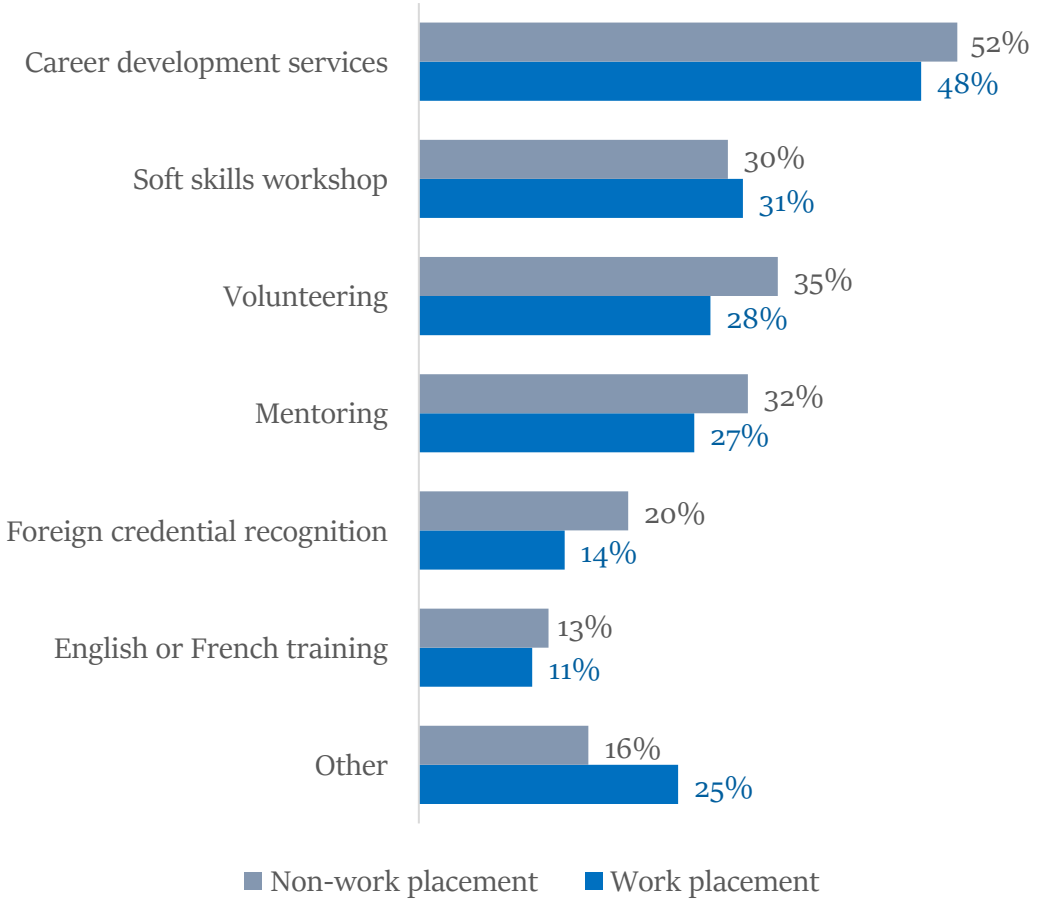
Overall, a majority of participants indicated at follow up that they had taken part in courses, supplementary education and/or training since the end of the program. A higher proportion of those who did not secure a work placement did so compared to those with a work placement; however, there is no statistical difference between the two groups (see Figure 19). When disaggregating by gender, a similar proportion of women from the work placement and non-work placement groups took part in additional courses or training. A lower proportion of men in the work placement group did so compared to the non-work placement group, although that difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 19 Proportion who took part in courses, supplementary education, and/or training since the program

A majority of participants also reported taking part in additional activities or services to help them in the job search — 78 per cent of non-work placement participants did so, compared to 70 per cent of work placement participants. There is no statistical difference between the two groups. When looking at women only, we observe a statistical difference; fewer women in the work placement group reported volunteering compared to those in the non-work placement group — 13 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively. This might be explained by the higher proportion of women in the work placement group who reported being employed full-time at the follow-up — 81 per cent compared to 59 per cent for non-work placement women.

Figure 20 presents the proportion of participants who took part in additional activities. About half of participants took part in career development services and almost a third took part in soft skills workshops. Non-work placement participants were more likely to take part in foreign credential recognition activities than work placement participants, although that difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 20 Percentage of participants who took part in additional activities since the program



Training and mentoring had a positive impact on the size of the career network, while work placement is associated with an increase in the heterogeneity of the career network

Participants interviewed reported that network building was one benefit gained from the program. All participants regardless of employment status at follow-up responded that they were able to build networks with people in similar situations to themselves, as well as connecting with potential employers. The importance of going through the program with other high-skilled newcomers was highlighted by one participant: "*It has eased the stress of job search and actually made it fun in a way… working together with a group of people with the same focus and encouraging each other.*" The program allowed participants to get to know people and make connections. For example, one participant said that she met other women in the program who sought help and support with one another.

However, when looking at the difference-in-difference results of the exit survey and the follow-up survey for the entire sample there is no statistically significant difference on social networks (composite index) between the work placement and non-work placement group. When looking at participants from programs run by sector-specific organizations only at follow-up, there is a positive impact for the work placement group on social networks (composite index) as well as on the statement *'I can easily get specialized advice'*. This upward trend might be linked to securing a work placement or obtaining more support from the sector-specific organizations. However, when looking at men only, we see a small negative impact on the statement '*I can easily get emotional support'*. This is an unexpected result and would require further investigating to understand the reasons behind it. There is no impact on women. TMP mentees saw a positive effect on social networks (composite index) from baseline to the three-month follow-up for the overall sample as well as for women and men separately. However, at the exit survey, there was no statistically significant difference.

A majority of participants reported having at least one to three people who they could reach out to get career advice; only 13 per cent of non-work placement participants and 14 per cent of work placement participants reported having no one who they could turn to for career advice. At least half the participants reported that none or few of the people who they could turn to for career advice knew each other — this indicates fairly heterogeneous career networks, which is positive. In terms of the size and heterogeneity of career networks, the only significant relationship between work placement and non-work placement participants is for career heterogeneity for men. Indeed, there is an increase in the change in the probability of having low career network heterogeneity for men, which means that their career networks are more likely to be diverse. When looking at participants from programs run by sector-specific organizations only, there is a positive impact for the work placement group on the size of their career network. The opportunity to interact with co-workers who work in the same field may have had an effect of this positive change. When looking at participants who took part in training versus those who did not, there is a statistically significant positive impact on the size of the career network for those who took part in training. This is also true for women, but not for men.

There was also a positive effect on TMP mentees related to mentoring on the career network size from baseline to exit survey and from baseline to three-month follow-up. When disaggregating by gender, this is true for both women and men at the exit survey, but only for women at the three-month follow-up. When comparing TMP mentees with the comparison group, they appeared to have been almost four times more likely to have expanded their professional networks, compared to the comparison group.[37]

[37] TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation — Final Report. Submitted to ESDC on January 3, 2020 by Blueprint ADE.

Participants who had a work placement were more likely to report that their experience in Canada surpassed their expectations; mentoring increased TMP mentees' satisfaction with their experience in Canada

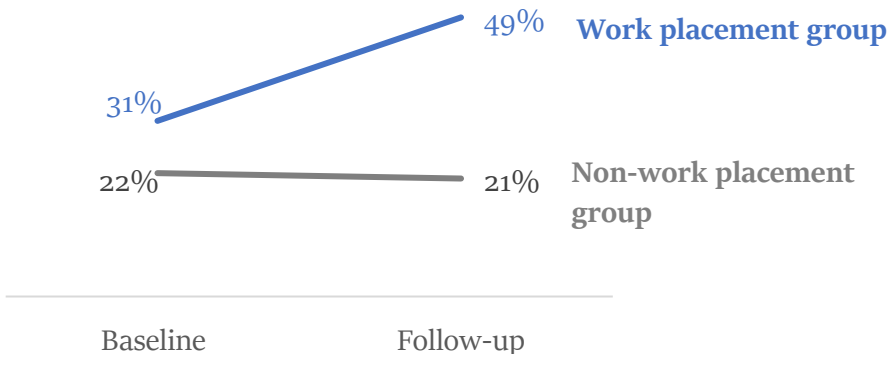
Overall, a majority of participants reported at follow-up being satisfied with their experience in Canada so far. Work placement participants reported a higher satisfaction compared to non-work placement participants — 88 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively. While positive, the difference in the trend is not statistically significant. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of participants from both groups — 94 per cent of work placement participants and 89 per cent of non-work placement participants — would come to Canada if they had to make the decision again. This is also true for both men and women when disaggregating by gender.

Fifty-nine per cent of TMP mentees reported being satisfied with their experience in Canada at the three-month follow-up, a statistically significant increase of 7 percentage points from baseline.

The work placement had a positive impact on participants reporting that their experience in Canada was better than expected. About half of work placement participants reported that their experience in Canada was somewhat or much better than expected, while only 21 per cent from the non-work placement reported so (see Figure 21). When looking at men only, the positive impact disappears, although there is a positive trend for the work placement group. This is also the case when looking at participants from sector-specific organizations. About two-fifths of work placement participants already reported at baseline that their experience exceeded their expectations.

For TMP mentees, there is no statistically significant difference between baseline and the three-month follow-up when it came to their experience in Canada being better than expected. When disaggregating by gender, this is true for men and women.

Figure 21 Percentage of participants who reported that their experience in Canada was somewhat or much better than expected at baseline and follow-up



EMPLOYER-LEVEL OUTCOMES

In this section, we present the outcomes of the pilot projects for employers. The data mostly comes from interviews done with a subset of employers who participated in these programs. The perspectives presented do not represent the perspectives of all Canadian employers.

Key findings — employer-level outcomes

- Employers were mostly satisfied of their experience with the pilots — they felt that the program was worthwhile. They especially appreciated being presented with qualified candidates who were prepared.
- The pilot allowed employers to fill vacant positions with qualified candidates through the work placements. Anecdotally, it seems that employers hired for vacant positions; and did not specifically create new jobs in order to take part in the wage subsidy.
- The wage subsidy and the work placement were key to the success of this program from the employers' perspective — especially for small- or medium-sized companies that might not have been able to hire without sharing the cost.
- There is no evidence of changes in employer attitudes and hiring practices

Employers were mostly satisfied of their experience with the pilots

Based on interviews with employers, it seems the program is a worthwhile one from their perspective. While a few of the work placements did not work as well as anticipated, employers still felt that it was a good and necessary program. They especially appreciated being presented with qualified candidates who, for the most part, were prepared. As described by one employer, he felt that sites were "*there to guide people — to bridge the gap between employers and employees"* (freely translated). Employers were also quick to praise the work of program staff. One employer described hiring newcomers as "*a goldmine waiting to be tapped*."

Many employers emphasized that the hiring process and the paperwork required for the wage subsidy were straightforward. One employer disagreed and mentioned that the program required too many resources to complete performance reviews. All employers involved did say that they would recommend the program to other businesses like them. Several of the employers interviewed hired more than one participant from the program to fill more than one position, or intended to do so but couldn't due to the limited number of wage subsidies available.

The pilot allowed employers to fill positions with qualified candidates

From the perspective of employers who were interviewed, the pilot programs were most useful in providing them with qualified and well-prepared candidates. Anecdotally, it seems that employers hired for vacant positions; and did not specifically create new jobs in order to take part in the wage subsidy. Employers had a right to choose which participant they chose for the work placement, and thus selected participants who they felt were qualified for the available position.

One employer mentioned that they had to spend less time onboarding the new hire because they were well prepared. While the wage subsidy was mentioned by many as a key factor in why they took a chance on hiring the candidates, several others mentioned that they did it because they felt it was a win–win situation — they were able to fill a position while providing a newcomer with Canadian work experience.

The wage subsidy and the work placement were key to the success of this program from the employers' perspective

For those employers that availed themselves of the wage subsidy to hire skilled immigrants, it was an important feature of the program. Several of the employers interviewed pointed out that it allowed them to share the cost of hiring someone, and a few said that they would not have been able to do so without it. This was especially true for small or start-up companies, as described by one employer: *"I have a new firm, so the wage subsidy was very important. It might not be for other employers, but as a new company, it was an important factor in deciding to participate."* Participants also recognized the importance of wage subsidies in helping them obtain a work placement. As explained by one participant, *"Maybe without the subsidy, they wouldn't have been interested in me or they would have picked someone else from the market in Canada."* While the wage subsidy was described as "a big factor" in their decision to offer a work placement, some employers pointed out that it was not *"necessarily the deciding factor."* It has been described as a "bonus" and a "nice to have."

When we asked interviewed employers how much they ideally would like the wage subsidy to cover of the participants' wages, there was no clear consensus. Some were of the opinion that 50 per cent of the wages was sufficient, and that employers needed to have "some skin in the game." Others suggested that a higher wage subsidy (75 per cent to 100 per cent) would further mitigate the risk they perceive taking in hiring a skilled newcomer. A couple of employers interviewed mentioned that the wage subsidy should be based on the level of the position — for example, a 50 per cent wage subsidy for an entry-level position might be reasonable, but a senior-level position might require a higher wage subsidy because it involves a bigger hiring risk for the employer.

There is no evidence of changes in employer attitudes and hiring practices

Prior to the pilot project, the employers surveyed and interviewed were split on whether they had hired newcomers previously. For some, it was business as usual, while for others, it was a new experience. As mentioned in previous sections, most are looking for a qualified candidate regardless of where they come from. However, unconscious bias and discrimination are quite difficult to unearth in a short interview. A few employers did highlight that hiring a newcomer helped their organization become more diverse, and that this was a step in the right direction. An employer stated, *"It means that we have a diverse workforce and inclusive workspace, which supports the culture of the organization*." Another employer mentioned that it improved their confidence in hiring someone with no Canadian work experience and that they were now more comfortable in doing so. Others had not been swayed to hire more newcomers based on their experience. Further research is needed to better understand how this type of program can support a shift in attitudes and practice.

COST–BENEFIT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The earlier sections presented findings from the evaluation of the CWE Pilot Projects to learn about the implementation outcomes and to learn about the impacts of the wage subsidy on employment and other outcomes. This section presents a cost analysis of the interventions, guided by the five cost-related questions specified in the CWE evaluation framework.[38]

- What are the total cost and costs per participant of each pilot? How do they compare across the pilot sites?
- What is the average cost of producing a unit of program output (e.g., number of participants served, training, or placements achieved; cost-efficiency)?
- What are the average costs of producing a unit of program outcome (e.g., full time/part time employment in the intended occupation) in each pilot site (cost-effectiveness)?
- How do the cost-efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness results for each pilot compare with those of benchmarked programs (e.g., Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN), PRIIME, Career Edge, etc.)?
- What is the return on investment to the society/government of Canada for each $1 spent on the program?

Key findings — cost–benefit analysis

- The average program operating costs per participant varied across sites from $1,278 to $11,624 (cost without the wage subsidy) and $10,376 to $19,345 (cost with the wage subsidy). Key factors such as the program design and implementation features (e.g., sectoral approach, program duration, level of the wage subsidy and individualized support) account for most of the differences.
- We are cautiously optimistic that the evidence from the analysis suggests that a positive return to investment is likely if the analysis is observed over a longer period. More specifically, the return will be more than a dollar per dollar spent.

[38] Throughout this section, we refer to cost effectiveness and cost efficiency, terms commonly used in cost analysis. The definitions of these terms used in the evaluation are provided. Cost efficiency: the average cost to produce a unit of direct program output. For example, the average cost to run a program per active participant or for each dollar saved by a participant. Cost effectiveness: the average cost to produce a unit of program outcome or impact. For example, the average cost to run a program per participant who received the wage subsidy.

Limitations

To answer the above questions, the evaluation team estimated the costs (or resources) needed to deliver each intervention. The cost analysis estimated the cost of each intervention based on aggregate financial information in the initial site-specific contribution agreements provided by ESDC.[39] The analysis also used the total number of participants recorded in the administrative records and an approximated allocation of resources provided by sites. There are limitations in using this method of cost data collection and analysis, including incomplete data, misinterpretation by sites on what to report, and imprecision in the submitted data. It was, however, the most feasible way to collect some relevant cost information from sites.[40] Thus, the results should be interpreted with caution.

The analysis involved only the five pilot sites that implemented job placements. It did not include TRIEC since it did not provide direct job placements; the evaluation team also did not receive useable cost information from the TRIEC evaluation. The cost analysis also excluded estimates of in-kind contributions, even though employers clearly provided assistance and received some productivity. The type and quality of the data received from sites made it difficult to incorporate this element into the analysis.

Analysis

The cost analysis estimated the average cost of activities per participant based on the resource usage and level of participation. The average cost was divided into four main categories: outreach and recruitment, training and preparation, job placement and other (wage subsidy and admin) costs. For the purpose of preparing results that can inform future implementation, the evaluation team assumed that the program components and activities implemented and received by participants will remain the same at each site, including the subsidized job placement. In addition, the average cost of operating the intervention is estimated both with and without the wage subsidy since the program design may alter the duration and subsidy amount based on findings from this evaluation.

Table 15 provides a summary of the average and total cost estimates per participant by the main activities or cost categories, as well as the overall program operating cost with and without the wage subsidy. The cost of program operations varies across sites. Key factors such as the program design and implementation features (e.g., sectoral approach, program duration, level of

[39] The information used in the analysis does not include subsequent amendments to the site budgets.

[40] Requiring sites to track and record detailed use of resources for each component/activity would have provided more accurate and completed information for the analysis. However, it would have been burdensome for the sites to do this type of tracking and not practical given the scale of the pilots.

the wage subsidy and individualized support) account for most of the differences. This is shown by the comparison of different services/supports listed under each cost category. For example, both BioTalent and ECO Canada incurred a lower cost in operations compared to the other three pilots. BioTalent and ECO Canada implemented a single sectoral approach, but more importantly, the organizations already had established relationships with employers in their sectors. MOSAIC and TCET, on the one hand, focused on similar sectors; both organizations had applied more effort in employer engagement than BioTalent and ECO Canada in order to identify placements for participants. This is evident in the average per-participant cost estimates in outreach and recruitment. SÉO, on the other hand, implemented across the province of Ontario to address the needs of official language minority newcomers, which made it challenging for SÉO to take advantage of economies of scale in its implementation. This is reflected in a higher average cost per participant for SÉO. Overall, the average program operating cost per participant for each site listed in from lowest to highest are: BioTalent ($1,278-$2,974), ECO Canada ($4,828), TCET ($6,268), MOSAIC ($6,949) and SÉO ($11,624). When the wage subsidies are included with the program operating costs, the order changes slightly: TCET ($10,376), BioTalent ($11,067-$12,763), ECO Canada ($14,347), MOSAIC ($15,519) and SÉO ($19,345). These costs, as mentioned, are estimates; they do, however, offer evidence that may inform discussions or planning for a wider implementation of the pilot.

Table 15 Summary of gross operating costs by pilot site

Activity/cost category (1)	BioTalent[41]	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET
Outreach and recruitment					
Engage & recruit participants	$170 to $259	$300	-	$810	$319
Participant selection	$80 to $ 169	$185	-	$267	$74
Engage & recruit employers	$170 to $259	$185	-	$401	$413
Total outreach and recruitment [a]	*$421 to $687*	*$670*	*$1,835*	*$1,478*	*$807*
Training and preparation					
Skills recognition	$35				
Online bridging program		$359			
Pre-employment training			$459		$987
Mentoring				$2,462	
Total training and preparation [b]	*$35*	*$359*	*$459*	*$2,462*	*$987*
Job placement					
Job search support	$86 to $338	$1,268	-	$2,557	$494
Engage employer for placement	$175 to $427	$780	-	$501	$1,975
Matching participant to employer	$130 to $383	$780	-	$1,982	$508
Setting up wage subsidy agreement	$86 to $338	$780	-	$213	$969
Post-placement follow-up and monitoring	$121 to $374	$43	-	$2,238	$279
Total job placement without subsidy [c]	*$597 to $1,860*	*$3,650*	*$4,197*	*$7,491*	*$4,226*

41 BioTalent provided a range for their resource allocation. The lower number indicated the cost of the intervention implemented. The higher number indicated what the operating cost would be if the intervention implemented the components that were identified to be needed during the program (e.g., resume preparation).

Activity/cost category [1]	BioTalent[41]	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET
Others					
Wage subsidy *[d]*	$9,789	$9,519	$8,570	$7,721	$4,108
General program admin *[e]*	$225 to $392	$149	$459	$193	$248
Program operation cost per participant [2]	$1,278 to $2,974	$4,828	$6,949	$11,624	$6,268
Program operation cost per participant + subsidy [3]	$11,067 to $12,763	$14,347	$15,519	$19,345	$10,376
Estimated total cost of the pilot [4]	$420,053 to $500,179	$557,147	$412,822	$828,484	$529,068

Notes:

1. The activity costs are based on project staff's best estimate of the resource usage. There is no detailed cost breakdown for MOSAIC. MOSAIC implemented three cohorts. Participants in the first two cohorts received job placements. Participants in the third cohort did not, although the training component was the same for all three cohorts. The program operating cost per participant presented in the table for MOSAIC is the average cost of the overall project.
2. The program operation cost per participant is the sum of items *[a]+[b]+[c]+[e]*.
3. The program operation cost per participant with subsidy is the sum of items *[a]+[b]+[c]+[e]+[d]*.
4. The estimates presented in the table may not reconcile with reported project financial numbers because of differences in attribution, in-kind contributions, and reporting methods. The per-participant costs aim to estimate the implementation cost if the program is reimplemented with all the specified activities in the intervention. As a result, the per-participant average cost estimates are not the actual financial cost per participant, which has no direct relation to the estimated total cost of the pilot since not all participants in the pilot participated in all program activities.

Table 155 also provides information to examine the cost-efficiencies of both training and work placement activities. In general, the average costs per person trained are within expectation. Moreover, the numbers reflect the program context and the type of training provided at the pilot sites. In terms of work placement, the amount of resources spent on related activities is also within expectation. However, there are substantial variations when the operating cost is compared to the wage subsidy across sites. For example, BioTalent's operating cost on job placement is about one-fifth the wage subsidy amount, while the analogous number for TCET is about one dollar for every dollar spent on the wage subsidy. However, TCET placed a substantial number of participants without the use of the wage subsidy. This may imply that service providers can achieve comparable Canadian work experience results for high-skilled newcomers by putting more resources into engaging employers and securing placements instead of wage subsidies. For MOSAIC, we were only able to estimate the pooled average cost per participant with and without the wage subsidy (latter receiving only the career/job development training). Without taking into account the amount of the wage subsidy, it is likely that the average program operating cost per participant without the wage subsidy is higher than the estimated cost per participant with the wage subsidy.

In terms of cost effectiveness, the analysis focused on the average cost to achieve post-program employment commensurate with skills and experience. In general, this calculation is determined by simply dividing the per participant cost estimate by the increased percentage of participants with post-program employment. Unfortunately, given the small sample numbers available from each site to conduct this analysis, it would not produce reliable site-specific estimates of average costs to achieve a post-program employment outcome. Instead, we assumed that each of the five pilot sites experienced a similar impact on employment (at 22 percentage points), and used this assumption to determine the average costs displayed in Table 16. It ranges from $47,162 to about $87,932.[42]

[42] The 22-percentage point increase in employment represents the likely effect of the work placement. Since the "comparison group" members might receive some training and preparation services, the 22-percentage point increase might have underestimated the true impact of the whole program. As a result, the presented cost figure per additional employment might have been overstated.

Table 16 Average costs of an induced/generated employment by site

	BioTalent	ECO Canada	MOSAIC	SÉO	TCET
Program operating cost per participant + subsidy (1)	$11,067 to $12,763	$14,347	$15,519	$19,345	$10,376
Average cost of an additional employment (2)	$50,305 to $58,014	$65,214	$70,539	$87,932	$47,162

Notes:

1. The per-participant costs aim to estimate the implementation cost if the program is re-implemented with all the specified activities in the intervention. As a result, the per-participant average cost estimates are not the actual financial cost per participant, which has no direct relation to the estimated total cost of the pilot since not all participants in the pilot participated in all program activities.
2. The average cost of an additional employment is dividing the program operating cost per-participant with subsidy with the percentage point increase in employment (at 22 percentage points). The figures presented are unrelated to the total cost of pilot since the total cost of pilot included resources spent on comparison group participants while not all participants participated in every components of the program.

It is difficult to compare the pilots' cost efficiency or cost effectiveness to other existing job placement programs for high-skilled newcomers since other programs do not publish their cost information. The most comprehensive published numbers from employment programs can be found from SRDC's Community Employment Innovation Project (CEIP) for workers in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The program operating cost per person for this large-scale three-year project was about $4,300, and the payroll subsidy was $32,000 to $37,000 (both in 2008 dollars). CEIP showed only some moderate success in inducing employment.[43] Although it is not a fair comparison given the different target populations, program contents and setting between CEIP and the CWE pilots, nevertheless this benchmark suggests the cost effectiveness of the CWE pilots does not seem to be unreasonable.[44]

[43] See Gyarmati, D., de Raaf, S. Palameta, B., Nicholson, C., and Hui, T. S-w. (2008). Encouraging Work and Supporting Communities: Final results of the Community Employment Innovation Project. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. Ottawa. Retrieved from http://www.srdc.org/uploads/CEIP_finalrpt_ENG.pdf on April 22, 2020.

[44] The evaluation team also referenced other comprehensive cost studies as further benchmarks including: (OPRE, 2019). Cost Analysis of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration. Retrieved on May 9, 2020 from https://mefassociates.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/msted_cost_analysis_nov_2019.pdf (MDRC, 2016). Encouraging Evidence on

From the government's perspective, it is important to compare the program operating costs to the potential economic benefits of implementing the pilots. Hou and Bonikowska (2015)[45] showed that newcomers with skilled work experience earned at the minimum $10,000 (men) to $14,000 (women) more every year in the first ten years after arrival in Canada. If the CWE pilots generate a similar advantage in earnings as indicated in the Hou and Bonikowska study, the cost of producing an additional employment can be easily covered by the net annual earnings increases within the first ten years in Canada.[46] Estimating a more precise return to investment for CWE would require longer-term follow-up data. However, the evidence in this evaluation is encouraging since the return to investment is likely to be positive. More specifically, the return will be more than a dollar per dollar spent.

a Sector-Focused Advancement Strategy: Two-Year Impacts from the WorkAdvance Demonstration. Retrieved on May 9, 2020 from https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/2016_Workadvance_Final_Web.pdf

45 Hou, F. and Bonikowska, A. (2015) The Earnings Advantage of Landed Immigrants Who Were Previously Temporary Residents in Canada. Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series 11F0019M, no. 370. Statistics Canada. Ottawa. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2015370-eng.htm on April 22, 2020.

46 In theory, increase in employment, work hours, and alignment between skills and the job should lead to increase in earnings or wage rate. In practice, it is very difficult to attribute any observed earnings change or difference to a particular intervention with a small sample because of earnings' large variation. This evaluation's outcome analysis is not able to produce reliable estimates of earnings impacts of the work placement nor the wage subsidy because of the small sample and short follow-up period. Since the most reliable and measurable outcome is the employment level, the cost and benefit analysis focusses on the outcome and infers the potential benefits based on other studies.

CONCLUSIONS

This section presents key conclusions from the evaluation findings.

The pilot projects provided important benefits for high-skilled newcomers

The combination of services offered by the pilot projects accelerated participants' opportunities to secure a first Canadian work experience that is more related to their professions, which is likely to help to use their skills to their full potential. Indeed, participants who took part in a work placement or in the TMP were more likely to be employed full-time in a job with career advancement opportunities. Moreover, participants overall were employed in better quality jobs in which they earned more and used more of their skills and experience; this despite the placement not necessarily being in their pre-migration occupation.

The pilot projects also had other important benefits for high-skilled newcomers including: improved job search skills, knowledge and use of labour market information, connections with people who can help them with their career especially specific to their sectors or occupations, hope and their experience in Canada.

Women and men have both benefitted from the pilot projects, albeit in different ways. Women who took part in work placements saw a positive impact on gaining full-time employment and having their expectations met in terms of their experience in Canada, as well as a reduction in job search difficulties. Men who participated in a work placement saw a positive impact on their monthly income as well as the heterogeneity of their career network. Benefits for participants in TMP were more related to career and social networks. Both men and women in TMP saw positive effects on the size of their career network and the availability of social networks. In addition, women who took part in the TMP saw positive effects on life satisfaction and health as well.

The pilot projects offered more than a work placement and/or a mentoring relationship

Obtaining a first Canadian work experience and successful integration into the labour market is a multi-step process that requires more than an opportunity to secure employment. It requires support to understand the Canadian labour market, knowledge on how to write a resume and how to succeed in interviews in the Canadian context, as well as connections to peers and professionals. The training and services provided by pilot sites in addition to work placements

and mentoring were key components of supporting high-skilled newcomers to enter the Canadian labour market.

Wage subsidies were seen by employers as important for minimizing the risk of hiring high-skilled newcomers with no Canadian work experience, but the job matching process seemed to be key in increasing hiring chances

Employers were able to fill positions with qualified and well-prepared employees. The current design of the program does not allow us to say definitely why employers decided to provide work placements for high-skilled newcomers. However, implementation research suggests that while wage subsidies were seen as an important feature in minimizing the hiring risk, the wage subsidy on its own is not enough to entice employers to hire high-skilled newcomers with no Canadian work experience when other supports, such as training and coaching, are present. The provision of an intermediary who can present qualified and prepared candidates to employers, especially smaller employers, appeared to be an important feature for employers.

The pilot projects do not solve systemic issues

The training, services and support provided by the staff in the pilot projects are not enough to address major systemic problems high-skilled newcomers face in the labour market regardless of their intended occupations such as employer attitudes, hiring practices, discrimination and the importance employers place upon having Canadian work experience.

There appears to be a positive return on investment in the longer term

Over the long-term, the evidence suggests that the types of program offered by the five work placement sites could lead to a positive return on investment.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR PROGRAMS, POLICY, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We present below key implications of the findings presented in this report.

Consider offering a range of opportunities to gain CWE

Programs that help high-skilled newcomers gain their first Canadian work experience are important. The work placement pilot projects have shown to have a positive effect on the labour market integration of high-skilled newcomers. While the evidence from the TMP is not directly comparable, it still strongly suggests that mentoring is an important support. Given that high-skilled newcomers are a heterogeneous group and require different supports, a range of strategies to help them gain Canadian work experience based on their distance from the labour market should be considered. The program could be designed with a common goal and common features, but allowing programs to adapt the model for their target group and setting. This might take the form of different comprehensive pathways that include mentoring, training, work placement with or without a wage subsidy, and additional supports for those who do not sustain employment beyond the work placement. High-skilled newcomers who are close to the labour market may need a strategic pathway that is more streamlined with fewer elements, whereas for more vulnerable high-skilled newcomers the pathway may need to be more comprehensive.

A future wage subsidy program should be delivered by organizations with solid capacity for employer engagement, or through partnerships

As highlighted in the findings above, the goal of the wage subsidy programs was twofold. On one hand, it was to support high-skilled newcomers in obtaining a first Canadian work experience in their profession; on the other, it helped employers to access a pool of qualified candidates. To better fulfill this dual goal, a future wage subsidy program should consider the capacity and experience of the delivery organizations to engage employers. In previous consultations facilitated by SRDC with stakeholders in the context of the Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot Project (SRDC, 2019), participants emphasized that strong employer engagement relies on building relationships with employers and acting as a broker between employers and newcomers who are looking for employment. This type of relationship building was described as going beyond waiting for employers to contact service providers as it involves proactive engagement and recruitment of employers. To engage effectively, program staff must be able to communicate with employers in a language they

understand and can relate to promote the business case for them to hire newcomers. It also means understanding the job requirements of the position so suitable candidates can be identified for the employer. Retention supports to both the employer and participants may also be needed. Based on SRDC's work, this type of program requires staff who have a strong understanding of the labour market and of the needs of both employers and job seekers. One way of strengthening organization's capacity to engage employers could be through partnerships. We expect that formal partnerships between, for example, sector councils and immigrant-serving agencies would strengthen programs by bringing together the expertise from both parties to meet the needs of both participants and employers.

Revisit what it means for high-skilled newcomers to be successfully employed in one's field

While participants and TMP mentees were employed in better quality jobs after the program, the results showed that they were not necessarily employed in their pre-migration occupation. There is an advantage to expand the definition of what it means for high-skilled newcomers to work in their field in Canada. One way to look at commensurate employment may be to focus on the commensurateness of skills and use of previous work experience, but not necessarily a focus on going back to the same National Occupation Classification code as their pre-migration occupation. Ensuring that high-skilled newcomers are employed in good quality jobs includes looking at features such as full-time employment, use of experience and skills, commensurateness of the job with education, opportunities for career advancement, and satisfaction with the position. For some newcomers, this perception may help them enter the Canadian labour market more quickly.

Consider designing evaluation prior to the start of the pilot projects

The evaluation for this project was designed after most projects had already developed and begun implementation of their program. While SRDC was able to work with sites to develop protocols and processes for data collection to meet both the needs of the evaluation and of each program, data collection would have been strengthened had we been able to establish these prior to programs starting. Moreover, if the goal of the evaluation is to include a comparison-group design, it would be important to clearly specify this expectation with sites at the start. This would have reduced the challenges encountered around data collection and comparison group design with a framework that designed the interventions and evaluation jointly at the start of the project.

Further research is needed

The pilot projects' evaluation framework does not address the important questions of the precise casual effects of the programs, the efficacy of some components such as the wage subsidy, nor the long-term effects and returns on investment. Further research is needed in future deployment of the programs to build upon the promising results found in this evaluation.

There is no or little evidence from this evaluation to inform ways to change attitudes and hiring practices of employers. The pilots were not designed to address this issue. Further research, including approaches to address systemic barriers of labour market integration for high-skilled newcomers would support better labour market outcomes for immigrants.

As mentioned by employers, longer placements seem desirable. Further research into the effectiveness of longer placements would bolster our understanding of the link between work experience and sustained employment for high-skilled newcomers.

While the cost study findings point at a potential return-on-investment, further research is needed to look at deeper and longer-term analysis of that return-on-investment.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Table 17 Implementation evaluation questions

IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION
▪ What model is being implemented at each site? ▪ Is the CWE pilot being implemented as planned? ▪ What challenges are encountered implementing and delivering the pilot? How do the pilot sites overcome these challenges? ▪ How do the pilots align, fit, or integrate with other full-time, part-time or temporary employment and/or integration programs? ▪ Are there unintended outcomes of the CWE, either positive or negative? ▪ What are the lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for future improvements in programming?

Table 18 Outcomes evaluation questions

OUTCOMES EVALUATION

- Does the initiative achieve its intended objectives? If not, why not?
- What is the profile of participants? Is this program more successful for newcomer job seekers in certain industries vs. others?
- What types of employment outcomes/placements have been achieved (e.g., full-time/part-time employment; in intended, related or unrelated occupations)?
- Are newcomers more likely to find employment commensurate to their skills, and less likely to be underemployed? Are they more likely to be working in their field or targeted occupation?
- To what extent have changes occurred in participant's income level, network, and their perceived self-confidence?
- Did the employer create new jobs for this initiative, or did the employer hire the newcomer into an existing job vacancy?
- To what extent did the provision of wage subsidies affect employers' perceptions (e.g., perceived risk) in recruiting newcomers?
    - Does the provision of wage subsidies make a difference in the hiring decision of a highly skilled immigrant without Canadian work experience?
    - If so, at what point does it make a difference? How much of the wages would need to be subsidized to mitigate employer risk (e.g., 25 per cent, 50 per cent, 75 per cent, and 100 per cent)?
- As a result of participation in this program, are participating employers more likely to hire newcomers outside of the CWE? What changes, if any, were there in employers' views on hiring high-skilled newcomers?

Table 19 Cost study questions

COST STUDY
▪ What are the total cost and costs per participant of each pilot? How do they compare across the pilot sites? ▪ What is the average cost of producing a unit of program output (e.g., number of participants served, training, or placements achieved; cost-efficiency) ▪ What are the average costs of producing a unit of program outcome (e.g., full time/part time employment in the intended occupation) in each pilot site? (cost-effectiveness) ▪ How do the cost-efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness results for each pilot compare with those of benchmarked programs (e.g., Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN), PRIIME, Career Edge, etc.)? ▪ What is the return on investment to the society/government of Canada for each $1 spent on the program?

APPENDIX B: LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WAGE SUBSIDIES

INTRODUCTION

Immigrants are among the driving factors for economic growth in Canada. The Conference Board of Canada forecasts that about 350,000 immigrants will be needed annually in order to meet the rising needs of the Canadian workforce. Recognizing the need for immigrants, the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced an increase in the targeted number of immigrants each year. "This measured, gradual increase will trend towards one per cent of the population in 2020, spurring innovation and representing a major investment in Canada's prosperity, now and into the future" (IRCC, 2017d).

Despite the importance of immigrants to the Canadian economy, the unemployment rate among new immigrants is relatively high (among other challenges immigrants face). According to Statistics Canada's 2016 Census, the unemployment rate among recent immigrants was 9.5 per cent in comparison to 6.5 per cent for immigrants who have been in Canada for more than five years, and to 5.5 per cent for Canadian-born residents. Most Canadian employees are unwilling to hire immigrants without any Canadian work experience despite their level of education. It is, therefore, important that immigrants have access to some form of integration programs that allows for their smooth transition into the Canadian labour force, which will impact the level of unemployment as well as economic growth.

Active labour market programs, such as wage subsidies and training programs, have been implemented in Canada for more than 25 years. Interest in these programs increased after the 2008/2009 recession in an effort to curb the unemployment rate. Lately, these active labour market programs have also been used as programs for integrating newcomers into Canada.

The objective of this literature scan is to review studies on wage subsidies and their effectiveness for newcomers or recent immigrants in getting some Canadian work experience as well as the effect of these subsidy programs on employers. Although the main focus is on Canada, studies are from both Canada, Australia and Europe.[47] The format of the scan is as follows:

[47] We focused the literature review on countries/regions with similar social contexts as Canada.

- First, the meaning of wage subsidies and the underlying theory behind theses subsidy programs as well as some features of the programs.
- The impact of wage subsidies on employees' employment and other outcomes, how employers view subsidies, and on the firm's productivity is reviewed.
- Finally, we provide some recommendations based on the literature scan on how subsidies can be implemented or modeled to meet the needs of immigrants.

WHAT IS WAGE SUBSIDY

Wage subsidy refers to any financial incentive given to an employer or employee with the objective of reducing the cost associated with hiring, thereby increasing labour demand. According to Rotger and Arendt (2010), wage subsidies are given to employers with the intention of improving job matches between targeted unemployed groups and employers by reducing the cost of employment and improving the productivity of these employees. They also serve as compensation for the difference in individual productivity at that wage rate.

In Canada, Robertson (1994) defined wage subsidy as an active labour market plan which is concerned with creating employment and improving or conserving job-related skills.

In this review, a wage subsidy refers to any compensation paid to an employer or employee to lower the hiring cost. Most of the studies, however, focus on payments made to employers. The review excludes wage subsidies that are in the form of a tax credit.[48]

Katz (1996) categories wage subsidies into:

- Actual incremental employment subsidies — provides subsidies for employment growth beyond a certain level.
- Hiring subsidies — provides temporary wage subsidies for a specific group of people. It can be general or categorical.

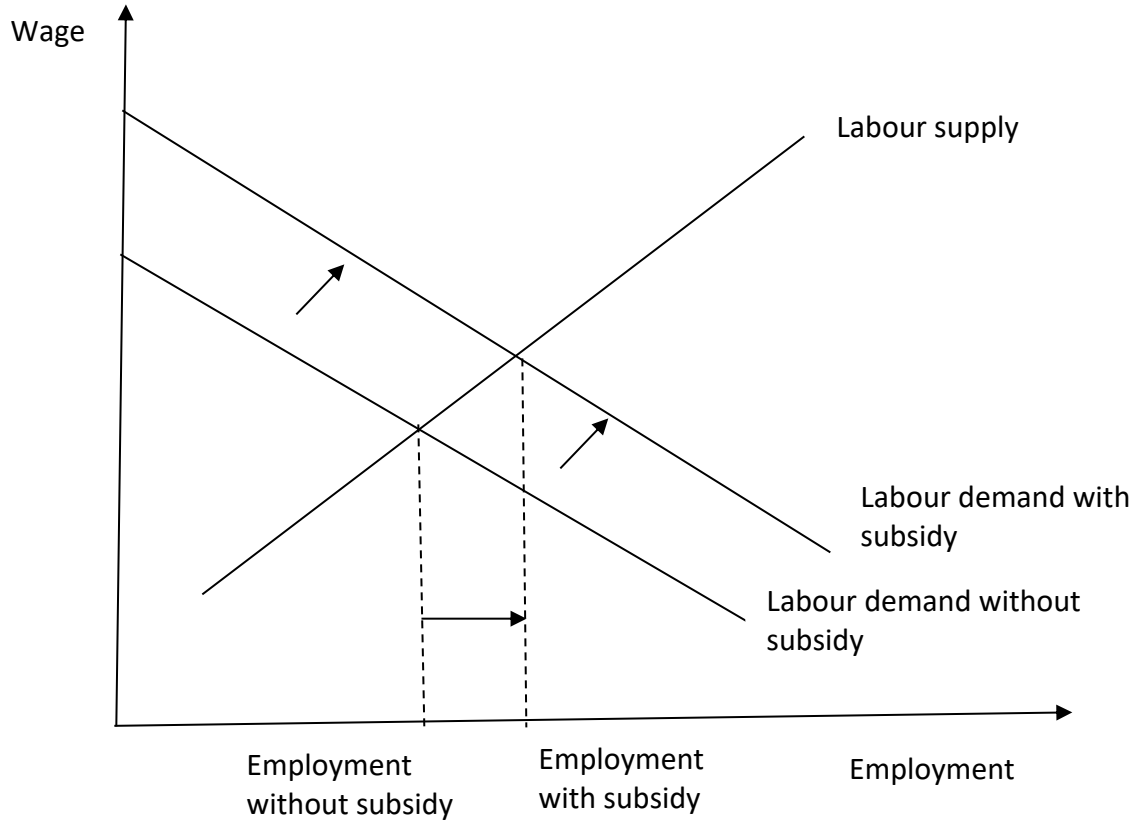
[48] This may not be entirely right as some studies do not provide details on the exact method of compensation firms receive.

ECONOMIC THEORY FOR WAGE SUBSIDY

The intuition behind a wage subsidy is grounded in simple labour-demand economic theory. The theory states that labour demand depends on the relative wage. Wage subsidies alter relative wages. When the cost of labour decreases, with labour supply fixed, labour demand increases.

Katz (1996) describes the main theory behind wage subsidy as follows: a wage subsidy decreases the cost of labour, which in turn leads to an increase in the demand for labour from the targeted group. This, therefore, affects the employment and income of these groups.

Figure 22 The effect of wage subsidy



A wage subsidy leads to an outward shift in the labour demand curve, which increases employment, as shown in Figure 22. However, the magnitude of the change in employment depends on the relative wage elasticity of labour demand and labour supply and the size of the subsidy (Borland, 2016). Employers are more likely to increase labour demand in a market where labour is in excess when offered a wage subsidy because it reduces not only the hiring

cost, but also the cost of searching and training. Wage subsidies can also allow firms to readjust expenditures and employ ordinary workers (Kangasharju, 2007).

Nevertheless, wage subsidies have been criticized for their deadweight loss. The deadweight loss has been explained as granting a wage subsidy to hire a person who will have been hired in the absence of the wage subsidy. It has also been criticized for crowding out effects where unsubsidized workers are replaced with subsidized ones. Another problem with wage subsidy is displacement. Displacement occurs when firms that do not qualify for wage subsidies are forced to shut down due to their low capability of hiring at a lower cost in comparison to firms that qualify for wage subsidies. Job growth in subsidized firms displaces jobs in firms that have no employees who are eligible for subsidies, which affects the latter's cost of production. Also, eligible employees might be stigmatized as certain employers often feel wage subsidies are a sign of low productivity. For more on the economic theory behind the deadweight loss, see Rotger and Arendt (2010).

Examples of wage subsidies in Canada

In Canada, wage subsidies are active labour market programs implemented both at the federal and provincial levels. These subsidies are often targeted wage subsidies — generally directed to a specific group of interest. The most popular target groups are individuals believed to be vulnerable in the labour market. These groups include youth, persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, and newcomers. A few examples of these wage subsidy programs are listed in Table 20.

Table 20 Some examples of wage subsidies in Canada

Subsidy	Sponsoring agency	Features of the wage subsidy	Target group
Opportunities Fund for Persons with disabilities	Employment and Social Development Canada	No features?	People with a disability
Career Focus	Service Canada	▪ Employ 8 or more recruits between 15 and 30 years old for 6 to 12 months.	Youth (15 to 30 years old)
College and Institutes Canada Clean Tech Internship	Environment and Climate Change Canada	▪ Wage subsidy up to $15,000.	Youth or graduates

Subsidy	Sponsoring agency	Features of the wage subsidy	Target group
Student Work-Integration Learning Programs	Employment and Social Development Canada	▪ Up to 50% of the wage cost per student. ▪ Up to 70% of wage cost for students in underrepresented groups.	Post-Secondary Students
Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities	Emploi Québec	▪ Hiring wages for recruits for up to 30 weeks or up to 52 weeks.	Immigrants and Visible Minorities
Employment Integration-Wage subsidies	Emploi Québec	▪ Awarded for 32 weeks, but 52 weeks for social economy enterprises. ▪ Financial assistance varies by integration difficulty of the person, type of job, and the support and supervision needs.	Income Security or Employment Insurance claimant

Source: Info Entrepreneurs.

Outside Canada, some European countries have different wage subsidy programs. The aim of these subsidy programs is similar to the subsidy programs in Canada. Table 21 provides a list of a few subsidy programs that are found in Europe.

Table 21 Examples of wage subsidies outside Canada

Subsidy	Features	Target Group	Country
Eingliederungszuschuss (EGZ)	▪ Wage subsidy and duration are determined by a caseworker and can account for as much as 50% of the monthly wage. ▪ Last up to 12 months. ▪ Extensions are granted for workers with a disability or older workers. ▪ Employer is required to employ someone below 50 years old. ▪ Employers pay reimbursement if a worker is dismissed for reasons beyond the workers' control during the duration of the work term	Immigrants	Germany
EGZ bei erschwerter Vermittlung (a variant of EGZ)	▪ In addition to the features of EGZ, the variant had an obligatory follow-up period of further employment after the wage subsidy.	Hard-to-place workers	Germany
The Danish Flexjob scheme	▪ 1/3, 1/2, 2/3 of the wage up to a cap of the minimum negotiated wage. ▪ Wage is for full-time hours. ▪ Unlimited in duration (applies as long as the worker retains the job). ▪ Participants are mainly females and older people.	Long term people with a disability	Denmark
Youth in business contract (CJE)	▪ All employers are eligible if they are willing to hire people under 22 years old who dropped out of school before completing their secondary school exam (a subsidy is a permanent contract). ▪ €225 at the minimum wage to a maximum of €292.50 per month for full-time workers. ▪ Employers received the subsidies for two years and then half the monthly allowance in the third year. ▪ No dismissal was permitted for the first three years.	Youth (under 22 years old)	France

EVALUATION OF WAGE SUBSIDIES

It is important to evaluate wage subsidies to identify their usefulness and effectiveness for both employees and employers. Empirical evaluation studies of Canadian wage subsidies are scant. There are a limited number of evaluations of any wage subsidy program which targets immigrants or recent newcomers in Canada. This review includes studies on wage subsidies in both Canada and in other parts of the world, especially Europe.

Due to the similarities in challenges faced by youth, people with a disability, and immigrants, which include discrimination, lack of work experience and low level of educational attainment, the review also includes the literature on the effectiveness of wage subsidies for youth and people with disabilities.

The main challenge in evaluating wage subsidies is the question of how to identify the labour market outcomes of these targeted groups in the absence of the wage subsidy, that is, the counterfactual outcome in the treatment effect analysis.

Employees

Studies that evaluate wage subsidies both at the micro and macro level analyze the immediate effect of the wage subsidy on participant's employment and earnings. There is a general consensus that wage subsidies increase employment (Kluve, 2016).

Employment and retention

A key finding among empirical studies on subsidy programs shows that there is a positive effect of wage subsidies on employment. For instance, a study on the Eingliederungszuschuss (EGZ) subsidy program for immigrants in Germany shows that both short-term and medium-term wage subsidies have a positive effect on labour market outcomes such as employment. Most importantly, the study did not find any significant differences in the effectiveness of subsidy programs that lasted up to three months, which are defined as short term, as compared to medium-term programs that last for four to six months.

Similarly, in Denmark, Clausen, Heinesen, Hummelgaard, Husted, and Rosholm (2009) suggest that newcomers who participate in a wage subsidy have a positive probability of being employed at a given point after the subsidy program. For hard-to-place workers (which includes newcomers), a study found that for previously unemployed individuals, their share in regular employment is 25–42 per cent higher among subsidized group than in the non-subsidized group three years after the start of the program.

In a recent meta-analysis, Butschek and Walter (2014) examine the effect of active labour market programs, which include wage subsidies for immigrants in Europe. The short-term effects (two years after the subsidy program) of private subsidized wage programs were statistically positive on immigrants' labour market outcomes such as employment. The authors also found that immigrants are often underrepresented in national wage subsidy programs.

In Canada, there are limited studies on the evaluation of wage subsidies for immigrants. One of such studies by Handouyahia, Roberge, Gingras, Haddad, and Awad (2016) concluded that targeted wage subsidies resulted in an overall positive effect on participants. These participants experience gains in employment as well as a reduction in Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in Canada. Studies in countries with similar economic policies as Canada, for example, Australia, also indicate a positive effect of the "Work Nation Intervention" subsidy on job seekers' probability of being employed even two years after the program began (Johnston, 2007).

In the literature, most studies also find significant effects of wage subsidies on people with disabilities. For instance, Gupta, Larsen, and Thomsen (2015) found that there is a positive or significant improvement in employment for people with a long-term disability groups with working capacity from 1994–2004. The probability of being employed increased by 33 percentage points. They did not find any recognizable disability exit.

Evidence on wage subsidy programs that target youth is mixed with some studies finding positive effects while others find a negative or negligible effect. For a subsidy program that typically paid 50 per cent of wages for 12 to 24 months of youth in Europe, a study in 2015 showed that program participants had an increase in the probability of being employed. In addition, these employment effects were persistent over a five-year period, although the effects decreased over time. The employment rates were 10 to 15 per cent higher for the program group. An evaluation of wage subsidies that had an "on the job" training component also found short- (four months), medium- (18 months after the start of the program), and long-term (five years after participation) increases in the probability of being employed for eligible youth.

On the contrary, in a recent systematic review by Kluve, Puerto, Robalino, Romero, Rother, Stoterau, Weidenkaff, and Witte (2017) of the effect of wage subsidies programs for youth in low-, middle-, and high-income countries showed that wage subsidies had zero and negative effects on employment and earnings in high-income countries, while the reverse was true for low- and middle-income countries. The authors noted the importance of the design of wage subsidies explaining that if the subsidy has features such as participant profiling, supervision, etc., then the wage subsidy programs were more successful as indicated in earlier studies. The authors did not find any evidence to support an increased ability to retain a job or secure a longer job duration after exposure to a wage subsidy program for the youth. Wage subsidies had no impact on hours worked.

Nevertheless, it seems that the overall empirical evidence is in line with the theoretical implications of the programs. The positive effects of wage subsidies on other population groups like youth and people with disabilities can be extrapolated to immigrants.

Earnings

Most studies that evaluate the effect of these subsidy programs also analyze their impact on participant's earnings. The main effects are that any employee finds a significant rise in their earnings after participating in a wage subsidy program.

Brisson (2015) found that wage subsidies increased the earnings of workers who have been out of the labour market for a long time by $2,700. Similarly, Handouyahia et al. (2016) examine the impact of EBSM and support the finding of a positive effect of targeted wage subsidies on earnings of all eligible individuals.

Social assistance spell

A few studies also examine the effects of subsidy programs on social assistance programs. Evaluating active labour market programs for newcomers/recent immigrants, Clausen, Heinesen, Hummelgaard, Husted, and Rosholm (2009) examine the effects of a subsidy program in Denmark that was offered to immigrants, 12 months from the beginning of social assistance spell. The wage subsidy reduces the social assistance spell by 15 months for males, and the effect is slightly lower for females, around a 10-month decrease in the social assistance spell.

Employers

Due to limited data available at the firm level, only a few studies have analyzed the effect of wage subsidies on firms. Most studies use aggregated data sets that have been criticized for the contradictory evidence these strands of studies present.

Firm's perspective, firm productivity, and hiring

As indicated, in theory underlying wage subsidies, employers can view wage subsidies as a way of increasing employment while decreasing the cost. However, some firms may not employ subsidized workers if the cost to productivity is higher than the benefits of the subsidy program for the firm. Firms, therefore, might have different perceptions about subsidy programs. In an effort to assess the employer's view, in a qualitative study, Gustafsson, Prieto Peralta, and Danermark (2014) interviewed 21 employers in Sweden who have experienced working with people with disabilities. They found that four main factors are important in hiring: attitude, matching, economic incentives, and accommodations. The attitude of employers formed as a

result of experience in hiring a person with disability affected current or future labour demand for people with disabilities. Employers also identified as important both the match between the job and personal skills and traits of the individual with a disability, and wage subsidies as compensation for the lower productivity of workers with a disability. Most employers agreed that in the absence of these subsidies, these workers would not have been hired. A few employers stated that employees' progress would lead to retention after the subsidy program.

Since firms are not only interested in a reduction in cost but also in increasing productivity, a few recent studies have evaluated the effect of subsidies on the firm's productivity and performance. There are positive effects on firm performance and even the firm's survival. For instance, Lombardi, Skans, and Vikstrom (2018) use a quasi-experimental approach to evaluate the difference in productivity of subsidized and non-subsidized firms. Subsidized firms (hire with wage subsidies) substantially outperform the non-subsidized firms in terms of various performance measures and the number of employees when caseworkers are assigned. This implies that there is a positive effect of wage subsidies on firms. Wage subsidies also have a positive effect on a firm's survival rate.

In general, studies show that employment does not increase only for employees, but employer data also support the idea that hiring also increases for firms that use wage subsidies. Using several methods that include the difference-in-difference approach, in Finland, Kangasharju (2007) found that wage subsidies increase employment in subsidized firms. The author does not find any displacement effects on non-subsidized firms in the industry. Rotger and Arendt (2010) also found that wage subsidies increase employment, a month after the wage subsidy program. They also observe an increase in ordinary employment, which could be due to the retention of subsidized workers or are due to additional hiring of workers.

This literature scan reinforces the theory that wage subsidies have a positive effect on firms or employers who opt to participate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The literature review shows that wage subsidies have a positive effect on both employees and employers. The positive effect was observed irrespective of the differences in the wage subsidy programs that were reviewed. A few studies show that the magnitude of the positive effect depends on how restrictive or generous the program is designed. For instance, wage subsidy programs that included some form of caseworker had slightly higher positive effects for participants compared to a subsidy program that did not include any caseworkers. The review supports the idea that wage subsidies help in the employment fortunes of immigrants by improving their employability and help integrate newcomers into the Canadian workforce.

- With so many subsidy programs, there is still a need for evaluation studies of these wage subsidy programs. While most studies find positive effects, more evaluation of programs can help identify program features that lead to the highest level of employment or maximum benefit.

- In Canada, despite the existence of many subsidy programs, there are limited evaluation studies, especially those targeting newcomers. There is a need for more evaluation studies and also studies that assess the long-term effects on both employers and employees. These evaluation studies will help in designing programs that have high positive effects for all targeted groups.

- In addition, some studies have shown that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of short-term and medium-term programs. Therefore, from a purely economical perspective, it seems that funding agencies can reduce the lengths of programs without any impact on the intended outcome of the subsidy program. However, further research is needed to understand whether shorter placements meet the needs of employers and employees.

Although effects can be extrapolated for different groups, it will be interesting to compare the effectiveness of a similar subsidy program that compares two different subpopulations to have some evidence for the assumption that effect sizes can be extrapolated between different groups.

CONCLUSION

In general, the review has helped researchers to understand both the theoretical and empirical evidence on how wage subsidies affect employees and employers who are engaged in the programs. In addition, the review also sheds light on the spillover effects of programs on some firms who are not participating in the wage subsidy program. The review has shown that wage subsidy is an effective active labour market program, but evaluations of these programs point to the fact that the net effect of a subsidy program is positive. Nevertheless, most studies focus on only short-term effects, and there are limited studies on the long-term effects of these programs. Also missing from the literature scan are Canadian studies on the effectiveness of wage subsidies and are even more limited for programs targeting immigrants in general and newcomers.

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APPENDIX C: CASE STUDIES — PILOTED MODELS

This section presents a more in-depth picture of each piloted intervention, including the organization implementing the intervention, as well as key implementation activities and outcomes. Specifically, we are describing the following interventions which made up the CWE Pilot Projects including TRIEC:

Table 22 CWE pilot sites

Pilot site	Name of program	Reach	Key innovative features
BioTalent Canada	Paid internship program for internationally educated professionals	National	▪ With the support of an online skills validation platform, participants deemed BioReady by experts in their field ▪ 6-month work placement in the bio-economy section with wage subsidy for 35 participants
ECO Canada	Environmental immigrant bridging training	National	▪ Online bridging training module ▪ 6-month work placement in the environmental sector with wage subsidy for 30 participants
MOSAIC	Immigrant Women's Employment Readiness Connections	Local — Vancouver	▪ Program for women only ▪ 4-week in-class Canadian workplace skills training ▪ 6-month work placement with wage subsidy for half of participants
Société Économique de l'Ontario	Programme de mentorat pour les nouveaux arrivants qualifiés dans les CLOSM de l'Ontario	Provincial — Ontario	▪ Program for French-speaking newcomers ▪ 16-week work placement with wage subsidy for 35 participants ▪ Structured workplace mentoring
The Centre for Education and Training	Skills and Experience Transitioning Canada	Local — GTA	▪ 3-week in-class training ▪ 3-month work placement in the financial sector offered to half of participants

Pilot site	Name of program	Reach	Key innovative features
Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council	Evaluation of The Mentoring Partnership	Local — Greater Toronto Area (GTA)	▪ Comparative evaluation of The Mentoring Partnership, which involved surveying 500 program participants and 500 comparison group participants ▪ Evaluation conducted by a third party

BIOTALENT CANADA: PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS

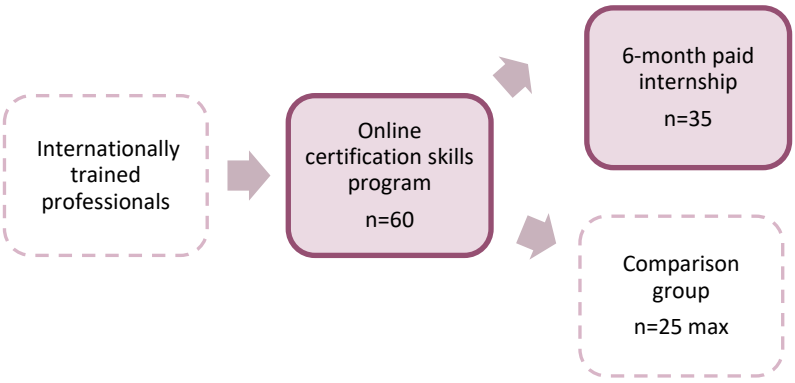
Description of the tested intervention. BioTalent's project supported the labour market integration of internationally educated professionals in the biotechnology field. Around 60 newcomers were provided with the opportunity to participate in an online certification skills program designed to validate their skills and help them find alternate career paths. Once deemed *BioReady*™ by experts in the field, 35 of them were hired in a six-month paid internship program as a way of facilitating their first Canadian work experience in the bio-economy in Canada.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. BioTalent Canada is the human resource expert for the bio-economy. They are based in Ottawa but are national in scope. In addition to offering wage subsidy programs for underrepresented groups in the bio-economy, they also, among other projects, conduct labour market information studies and work with the industry to update skills profiles. Due to the national reach of the project, most activities were done online or by phone. The pilot was delivered to a continuous intake of participants.

Comparison group. The comparison group was composed of those participants who were assessed as BioReady and did not receive a wage subsidy. The difference between program and comparison group participants is the work placement with a wage subsidy.

Key program activities. BioTalent launched its program in August 2017. The program built on the success of a previous project in which an online skill validation platform was developed and tested with newcomers with experience in the bio-economy. The key activities that BioTalent undertook were to recruit newcomers with international experience in this field to participate in the program, as well as to market the program to employers that might be interested in hiring newcomers. BioTalent also spent a considerable amount of time working with participants to get them ready to transition to employment. In total, 35 wage subsidies were dispersed to employers that hired participants. The program model is illustrated in Figure 23.

Figure 23 Paid Internship Program Intervention



Adaptations to the model. Due to some delays in launching the pilot, BioTalent obtained a four-month extension to deliver the program until November 2019 (August 2019 was the initial end date). BioTalent also made changes to how the model was delivered to adapt to the implementation reality. Initially, it was anticipated that participants would independently connect with employers and that BioTalent's role would be to administer the wage subsidy. In fact, very few participants had connected with employers. BioTalent recognized that participants required more supports, and they spent more time with each participant to prepare them for placements. This approach also required a more active engagement of the industry to find suitable opportunities.

Profile of participants. Participants in the pilot were located throughout Canada, with the majority of them located in the bio-economy hubs (Ontario and British Columbia). A majority of them came through the economic class (Federal Skilled Worker) and had been in Canada for less than two years. A great number of participants held their citizenship from India. Participants were predominantly 39 years old or younger, with the average being 33 years old. Most had at least a Master's degree, and most participants did not have education in Canada. The project attracted about 60 per cent of women. On average, participants had worked in their occupation for six years prior to coming to Canada.

How were participants matched to a work placement? The pilot acted as the bridge between employers and job candidates. The assessment was demand-focussed as it started first with employers and an assessment of their needs. However, both the employer and participant were viewed as the client in the job matching process. The project staff engaged with employers who provided them with job postings. The postings were emailed to all BioReady participants to inform them of the openings and to invite them to submit a resume to the pilot that is customized for the specific job. The process was inclusive as the staff did not want to make

assumptions on who is qualified or not for specific jobs. Participants were responsible for applying. Project staff checked resumes for errors, length, and formatting, but not for content before forwarding the documents to employers. Employers were responsible to select candidates for interviews and ultimately whom to hire. Candidates went through the employers' regular hiring process. Sometimes, employers had their own candidates; these individuals were sent the project application package. A learning plan for these individuals was then developed and approved with project staff.

The pilot identified employers offering science-based jobs or biotech companies who were hiring in a number of ways such as online job sites (e.g., Indeed.com and Charityvillage.com). Project staff contacted these targeted employers and informed them about the pilot and the talent pool of qualified candidates. BioReady participants were told to add the availability of the wage subsidy to employers in their cover letters. Participants who were conducting their own job searches reached employers who then contacted the project staff to find out more and the possibility of hiring the candidate with the wage subsidy. Project staff also reached out to employers that BioTalent had worked with previously to let them know about the wage subsidy and pilot. The pilot also marketed the program through e-blasts, which would increase the reach to employers. According to the project staff, the wage subsidy appeared to work similarly across small to large enterprises.

Project staff said it took a lot of work to find the 35 work placements compared to their other programs since participants needed more support such as understanding the Canadian labour market and workplaces. BioTalent staff thought their process worked well when job postings were sent out by them to participants and participants customized their resumes to the specific job posting. Guidance to participants on how to prepare resumes would have been helpful, as some resumes needed more work (e.g., errors, format, length and customized for the job). Project staff reported that it was difficult to provide this needed one-on-one support within the project resources.

What has worked well? BioTalent staff was pleased that they had been able to recruit participants from across the country, with larger numbers in cities that mirrored the bio-economy hubs. They were also able to generate interest from employers in the industry — although this took some time. Staff also noted that employers appreciated that participants referred by BioTalent had had their skills validated and were then ready for the job. BioTalent believes that the wage subsidy is "the way to go" to help underrepresented groups in obtaining employment in the bioeconomy sector, although they recognized that participants seemed to require more supports than just the wage subsidy. It was also seen by employers as an incentive to hire newcomers because *"it took away the perceived risk of employing newcomers*."
A participant interviewed describing his positive experience with the program as straightforward and staff as responsive and caring.

What has proven challenging? Initially, it took BioTalent longer than expected to get the project off the ground due to coordination between them and the funder. But once the program began, the biggest challenge was that participants required more support in terms of job search skills and knowledge about the Canadian workplace culture than expected. For BioTalent, this meant having to play more of a coaching role than initially planned. A program staff member reflected that this might be a problem if thinking about scaling this model. In hindsight, it was felt that there might have been a need to include support as a component of the program, either in the form of a dedicated resource for participants or by developing job search tools for participants. There were also some difficulties in matching participants and work placement opportunities when these were not in the same location. Other challenges raised included the resources required for survey follow-ups, and the fact that the wage subsidy amount was less than other programs it was offering, which has meant that some participants and employers chose the other programs instead.

ECO CANADA: ENVIRONMENTAL IMMIGRANT BRIDGING TRAINING

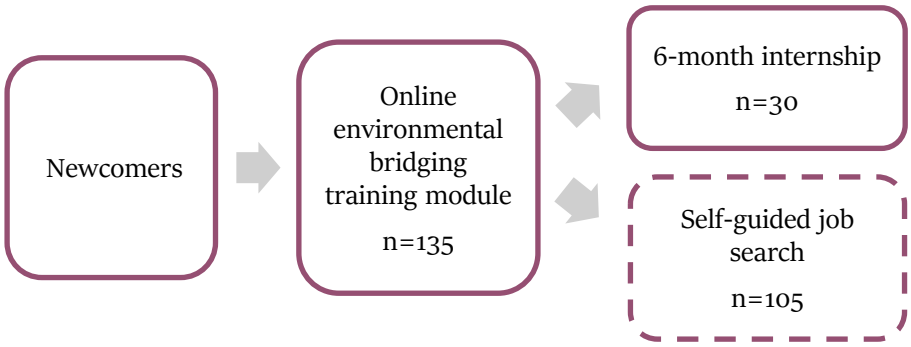
Description. This pilot project supported the labour market integration of high-skilled newcomers by facilitating their first Canadian work experience in the environmental sector. ECO Canada implemented an online environmental bridging training module to train 60 newcomers with experience in the environmental sector. The training consisted of an overview of the Canadian environmental sector, professional communications, technical writing, and a job seeker playbook. Thirty of the newcomers were then matched with an employer in the environmental sector for a six-month work placement.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. ECO Canada is a non-profit organization based in Calgary that develops career development resources and training programs for environmental practitioners in Canada. Like many of ECO Canada's programs, the Environmental Immigrant Bridging Training was delivered online and remotely to participants across Canada. ECO Canada delivers a wage subsidy program for youth, but this program marked the first time ECO Canada delivered a program with wage subsidies for newcomers. The pilot was delivered to a continuous intake of participants and was national in reach.

Comparison group. ECO Canada's target number of participants was initially 60 to 70 newcomers. Because the training was delivered online, ECO Canada decided to open registration to all eligible newcomers, increasing the number of total participants to 135. All participants in both the program and comparison groups received access to the training. Of these 135 participants, only those that engaged in a work placement with one of the 30 available wage subsidies were classified as program group participants; the remaining 105 were classified as comparison group participants if they completed the baseline survey.

Key program activities. ECO Canada marketed the online environmental bridging program to newcomers with education and work experience in the environmental sector. Participants eligible and accepted into the pilot program received access to the training module and engaged in a job search armed with the training as well as potential wage subsidy funding for an employer over a six-month work placement. ECO Canada marketed the wage subsidy component as an incentive for employers in the environmental sector to hire newcomers. In total, 30 wage subsidies were dispersed to employers that hired newcomers searching for their first Canadian work experience in the environmental sector. The program model is illustrated in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24 ECO Canada's Immigrant Bridging Training Pilot Design



Adaptations to the model. There were several changes made to the original pilot model. Initially, participants were encouraged to approach employers directly with the potential wage subsidy; however, only a few participants secured a work placement from this approach. ECO Canada recognized that participants required more support and expanded their employer engagement efforts to increase outreach and marketing efforts and implement a resume database for employers. They also tapped into their current employer partners, in particular, those employers that have been hosts in ECO Canada's Co-op Student Funding program. With additional funding from ESDC, ECO Canada increased by 20 per cent each the total number of participants (from 50 to 60) and the total number of wage subsidies (from 25 to 30). The most significant adaptation came when ECO Canada decided to accept well above the original target of 60 participants into the online training in an effort to complete the disbursement of the wage subsidies within the project timelines. ECO Canada accepted and enrolled 135 candidates into the pilot instead of the initial target number of 60.

Profile of participants. Participants in the pilot were located throughout Canada, with the majority based in Canada's larger cities and provinces and had been in Canada for more than one year. Many held citizenships from India, Nigeria, and Iran. They had earned a post-secondary degree or diploma and have international environmental work experience in the environmental sector. About half of the participants had some level of education in Canada. A little less than half of the participants were 34 years old and younger. The average age was 36 years old. There was a near 50/50 gender split amongst the participants. Participants had worked in their occupation for an average of eight years prior to coming to Canada.

How were participants matched to a work placement? Project participants were required to upload a current resume into the ECO Canada system. The participants were then given access to the online bridging training program. The offer of the wage subsidy was used to engage employers for work placements for participants who complete the program.

Initially, participants who completed the program contacted employers on their own and the availability of the wage subsidy to eligible employers. This was changed early in the pilot, with project staff taking over the contact with employers. The project staff usually reached out to three main groups at organizations: hiring managers, Human Resources personnel or Vice-Presidents. The project staff provided employers with general information about the pilot. For large companies, it was noted that the contact should be with small divisions in order to meet their specific needs.

Employers who indicated their interest in hiring a participant completed an eligibility assessment. If employers met the eligibility requirements, they were approved and notified by email. If the employer already had an individual in mind for the placement, they could forward the person's resume (if they were eligible for the pilot and completed the online bridging program) and proceed with the wage subsidy for their nominated candidate – this happened in about a third of cases. The other employers were provided access to participant candidates on the ECO Canada system. Project staff thought the wage subsidy worked for all employers, including large businesses. Project staff also thought it was important to consider the fit of the candidate with the placement as this was crucial to make the match work for both the employer and participant.

What has worked well? ECO Canada received positive feedback about the new online training. Participants noted that the mix of modules was useful for not only understanding the Canadian environmental labour market but also to learn practical skills for job searching, professional communications and technical writing. Overall, ECO Canada succeeded in its goal of disbursing wage subsidies to support 30 newcomers in securing their first Canadian work experience in the environmental sector.

What has proven challenging? It took time to engage employers with the wage subsidies and even those that were engaged did not access all of the resources made available to them by ECO Canada. These included a mix of free and fee-based training modules for environmental sector employers.

On the participant side, the flexibility of online training was counterbalanced by the challenges of a remote delivery format in which all information was conveyed over the phone and online. This led to an increase in efforts allocated to working with participants that were not equipped with basic job search skills.

Illustrative story

Lisa immigrated from Bangladesh to Canada on her own. She was drawn to the west coast and originally settled in Vancouver. Despite a graduate education and international work experience in the environmental sector, she had low expectations for finding a job in her field. "I didn't have that network; I didn't even know where to start." After a short stint of service jobs, she worked for almost a year at a social service agency, where she had been a participant. There, she heard about the CWE Pilot Projects – both IWERC delivered by MOSAIC and the Environmental Immigrant Bridging Training delivered by ECO Canada. Lisa applied to ECO Canada's pilot right away. "I was really amazed that this exists – I had no idea." Upon completing the online training, ECO Canada's staff forwarded her resume to potential employers throughout Canada. She successfully interviewed for an environmental company in another province and relocated there for her work placement. "It wasn't a difficult decision, to be honest. I was just happy that I got a chance to work in the environmental industry once again."

MOSAIC: IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT READINESS CONNECTIONS (IWERC)

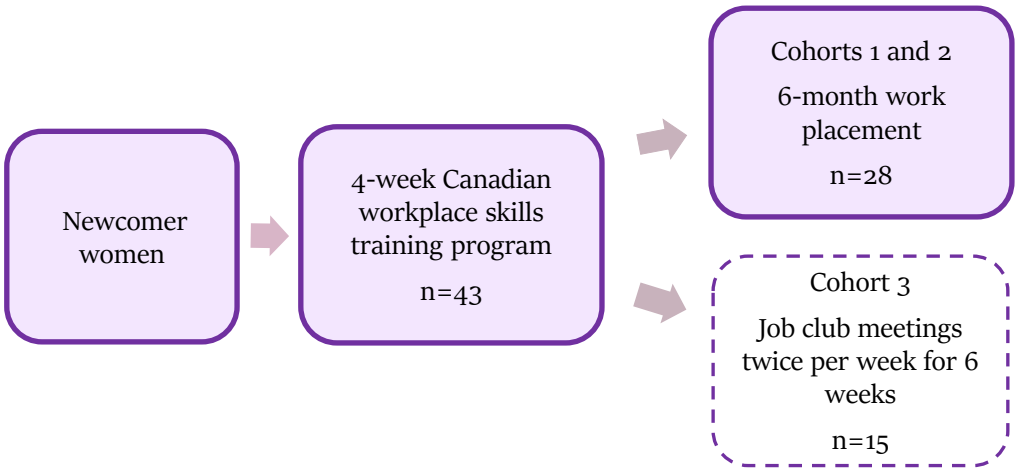
Description. This pilot project supported the labour market integration of skilled women newcomers by facilitating their first Canadian work experience in the fields of administration, business, and finance. MOSAIC implemented a four-week Canadian workplace skills training component which included innovative design thinking and intercultural competency training, job club, coaching, and other supports for 43 newcomer women. Work placements were made available for the first two cohorts of 28 women in total with some employers receiving a wage subsidy.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. MOSAIC is a non-profit settlement organization based in Metro Vancouver that serves immigrant, newcomer, and refugee communities. IWERC was delivered in-person in Vancouver to three cohorts of 14 to 15 women each.

Comparison group. All participants completed the four-week Canadian workplace skills training. The training was delivered to three cohorts. The first two cohorts of participants were provided the opportunity to engage in a six-month work placement with the potential of a wage subsidy for the employer. Participants from the third cohort engaged in a job search with the support of twice-weekly job club meetings. Of the 43 participants, 28 took part in a work placement and were classified as program group participants; the remaining 15 were classified as comparison group participants.

Key program activities. MOSAIC developed and delivered the Canadian workplace skills training program to three staggered cohorts of newcomer women with education and backgrounds in administration, business, and finance. The core feature of the training was a Design Thinking Bootcamp where the women were trained and coached in Design Thinking to help local companies solve real-world challenges. Following the four-week training, the first two cohorts of women were supported and coached in a job search process in which potential employers would have access to a wage subsidy upon hiring them. The third cohort met for job club twice a week for six weeks following the four-week training program. The program model is illustrated in Figure 25.

Figure 25 IWERC intervention



Adaptations to the model. With additional funding from ESDC, MOSAIC added an additional cohort of participants. Furthermore, because some employers hired participants from the first cohort without a wage subsidy, there were additional funds available to offer wage subsidies

to all employers that hired participants from Cohort 2. The original design supported only half of cohort 2 participants with a wage subsidy. In the end, as with Cohort 1, not all employers that hired participants from Cohort 2 made use of the wage subsidy.

MOSAIC made limited changes to the content in the four-week training between the three cohorts. After observing that the women in the first cohort would benefit from support to better market themselves, staff added a LinkedIn workshop to the curriculum for Cohorts 2 and 3. In terms of the work placements and job expectations, MOSAIC had to make some adjustments to provide the women with realistic work placement opportunities. In addition to management roles, they expanded the window of commensurate occupations to include job titles such as Administrative Assistant and Project Coordinator.

Profile of participants. The IWERC pilot project was the only all-women pilot in the CWE Pilot Projects. The participants had at the minimum a Bachelor's degree in administration, finance or business and work experience in their field of expertise. Most participants had been living in Canada for more than one year, and quarter of the participants held citizenship from India, and about one-fifth from China. A majority of the participants did not have any education in Canada. Participants were on average 37 years of age – indeed, the majority of participants belonging to the 30- to 44-year age group. Approximately one-third of the women received childcare support and financial assistance with transportation was also made available so that they could attend the four-week training. The average years worked in the participants' occupation was about ten years prior to coming to Canada.

How were participants matched to a work placement? The project staff member responsible for all employer engagement also worked with participants in recruiting and selecting them for the pilot. The process generally involved finding employers willing to hire participants, matching employers and participants and negotiating the positions and salaries with employers.

The approach to the job matching process in this pilot started with the coaching session with participants; for example, discussions about their skills, competencies, passions and dreams. The participant information was used to identify the types of companies to approach. Employer engagement started from scratch; it involved all cold calls to employers. The main sources used to find potential employers included LinkedIn, Indeed.com, referrals from personal networks, research on small and medium-size companies especially "start-ups" and cold calling. LinkedIn was noted as the most important channel.

Once the project staff member identified employers, an email was sent to the employer with information about the pilot. Employers who were interested generally responded quickly. Project staff followed up with interested employers with a call and then scheduled a meeting to provide more information about the project along with resumes of potential candidates. It was important

to get the job descriptions. The project staff prepared candidates for interviews. If the match was successful, the participant and employer both received support from the project regularly during the placement.

Project staff mentioned that marketing skills were needed to effectively engage with employers. They also suggested that employers and employees at the workplaces receive intercultural competency training. Although there was a focus on the participant in the job matching process, the project staff member worked with information from both the employer and participant, which helped to make a better match.

What has worked well? The participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the four-week Canadian workplace skills training component. They appreciated the hands-on approach to learning about the Canadian workplace. The Design Thinking workshop, in particular, proved helpful in this regard for some participants; others felt it was not relevant and would have preferred to enter into the job matching process sooner.

Overall, the training increased the women's confidence and comfort with the Canadian labour market. All participants in the first two cohorts who remained engaged with the program were successful in landing their first Canadian work experience in their field with about two-thirds of the hiring employers receiving a wage subsidy. Participants valued that the pilot was delivered exclusively to women; they also remarked that the male perspective would be useful to have because in the workplace they will be working with both women and men.

What has proven challenging? As a new pilot, it took time to engage employers and match them with the right candidates. This left some participants anxious about their job prospects and needing to realign their outlook on the types of jobs they could expect. Attracting large employers with the wage subsidy also proved to be difficult given the amount of paperwork required.

For participants with young children, funding to support childcare costs during the training was well-received but a few had no choice but to delay their job search or even decline job offers because of the high cost and lack availability of childcare in Metro Vancouver.

A few women were placed with employers that spoke the language of their home country. These women wished that communication in English was more prevalent so that they could have more opportunity to improve their language skills.

SOCIÉTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'ONTARIO (SÉO): PROGRAMME DE MENTORAT POUR LES NOUVEAUX ARRIVANTS QUALIFIÉS DANS LES CLOSM DE L'ONTARIO

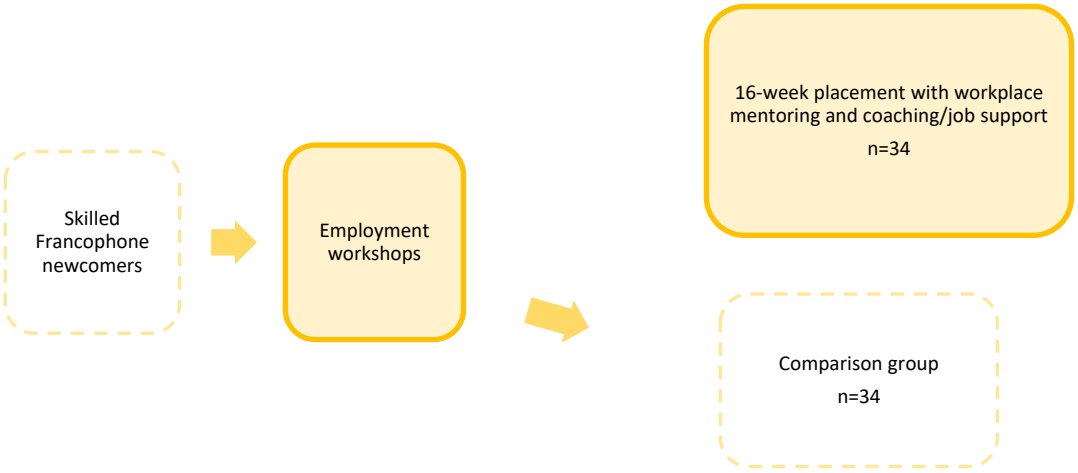
Description. SÉO's pilot project aimed to support skilled Francophone newcomers who are not working in their field to gain Canadian work experience through a 16-week structured workplace mentoring program. The 16-week mentoring program provided a wage subsidy to employers, who, in turn, were responsible to provide participants with a work placement as well as a mentor. The role of the workplace mentor was to provide advice and share experience in the participant's field and to provide support with adjusting and integrating into the workplace.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. SÉO is a not-for-profit organization that supports both bilingual francophone talent to integrate into the Ontario labour market and employers. They act as the link between francophone and bilingual employers and candidates, with a focus on highly qualified candidates. In line with SÉO's province-wide mandate, the program is provincial in scope with a focus on Toronto, Ottawa, and Northern Ontario and has a continuous intake of participants.

Comparison group. SÉO delivers other programs and identified comparison group members from their active client list. Comparison group participants were referred to their regular services, which means that they did not receive any element of the intervention.

Key program activities. SÉO has developed a structured mentoring program to be delivered in the workplace. As part of this, SÉO hired consultants to develop a practical mentoring guide. Much of its efforts have been spent on engaging with employers, big and small, with the aim of recruiting them to offer placements for participants. In-person conversations were favoured for employer recruitment. SÉO also worked to recruit a pool of qualified applicants. SÉO has held several events bringing together candidates and employers. As part of the research, a group of comparison participants similar to the program group was recruited. The program model is illustrated in Figure 26.

Figure 26 Programme de mentorat



Adaptations to the model. With additional funding from ESDC, SÉO has increased the number of participants from 10 per cohort to 17, for a total of 34 participants. SÉO has also adapted the delivery of its program to better reflect the needs of participants and employers as well as available resources. While they had initially planned to conduct in-person visits to employers' offices to follow-up on the placements, these were primarily conducted by phone. In response to mentor needs, SÉO contacted them more frequently to provide additional supports and also provided some HR support to smaller enterprises that did not have the internal capacity for such things as administering the wage subsidy or hiring participants. Once they saw there was interest in the program from larger francophone organizations, they focused more efforts on recruiting this type of enterprise than initially planned.

Profile of participants. All participants are French-speaking newcomers. About half of respondents indicated having been in Canada for two or more years and holding citizenships from France. Roughly one-quarter of the participants had education in Canada. Most respondents are from the Greater Toronto Area. One-fifth of the participants belonged to each age group (i.e., 29 years old and younger, 30–34 years old, 35-39 years old, 40–44 years old, 45 years old and older). The project has attracted a majority of women. Participants worked in their occupation for about eight and a half years prior to coming to Canada.

How were participants matched to a work placement? The work placement matching process started with employers. SÉO identified employers who were looking for Francophone or bilingual employees, and worked with them to conduct an assessment of their needs to see if they were a good fit with the program. Once these relationships were established, SÉO explained

what the program entailed, including identifying someone who internally could act as a workplace mentor. SÉO found it challenging at times to recruit employers, but they found that by going through the diversity and inclusion departments of larger organizations, rather than their HR departments, they had better engagement. Recognizing that not all employers had worked with newcomers before, SÉO offered training on the assets and challenges of hiring skilled immigrants.

SÉO would then look into its database of candidates and propose a candidate that matched the needs of the employer in terms of skills and experience. Once the contract was signed, SÉO met with both the mentee and mentor to establish a mentorship plan. Training was also provided to the mentor.

What has worked well? Program staff highlighted several components that have worked well. One-on-one coaching has been raised as being especially valuable to help participants become employment ready. Being able to provide opportunities for participants to use their skills in a job in their field has also worked well. Employer engagement was also seen as successful — according to staff, francophone employers in the GTA (the main location for the program) were aware of the program and recognized its value. In line with this, SÉO increased their base of employers that see the value of having bilingual candidates, which they see as being good for the francophone community. Wage subsidies were an integral part of their employer engagement strategy, and represented the "hook" that gets employers to listen to what the program has to offer. Staff reported that employers were interested in the wage subsidy as a way of minimizing the risk of hiring a newcomer with no Canadian experience (this is especially true for small- and medium-sized firms) but also to cover some of the costs associated with the time required for a workplace mentoring relationship for both mentor and mentee.

What has presented challenges? Early on, SÉO encountered some challenges in developing a mentorship guide that could be used by mentors and mentees to guide their relationship. The aim was for it to be a practical tool, but the product they received from the consultant they had hired to develop it was not as useful as they had hoped. SÉO has revised it and, at the end of the project, was still working on refining the guide. In some cases, the mentoring relationship has not worked as well as expected: in some enterprises, the mentor assigned to the mentee was their supervisor, which has limited the openness of the relationship, while in other situations, time available for the structured program was limited. SÉO was unsure to what extent the guide was being used by mentors and mentees. Another challenge SÉO faced was the difficulties associated with recruiting large enterprises, because the added value of the program (i.e., structured onboarding through mentoring, wage subsidy, qualified candidates) may be less clear to them. Some already have onboarding programs, others feel that the administration of the wage subsidy is more complicated than what it is worth.

CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TCET): SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE TRANSITIONING CANADA (SETCAN)

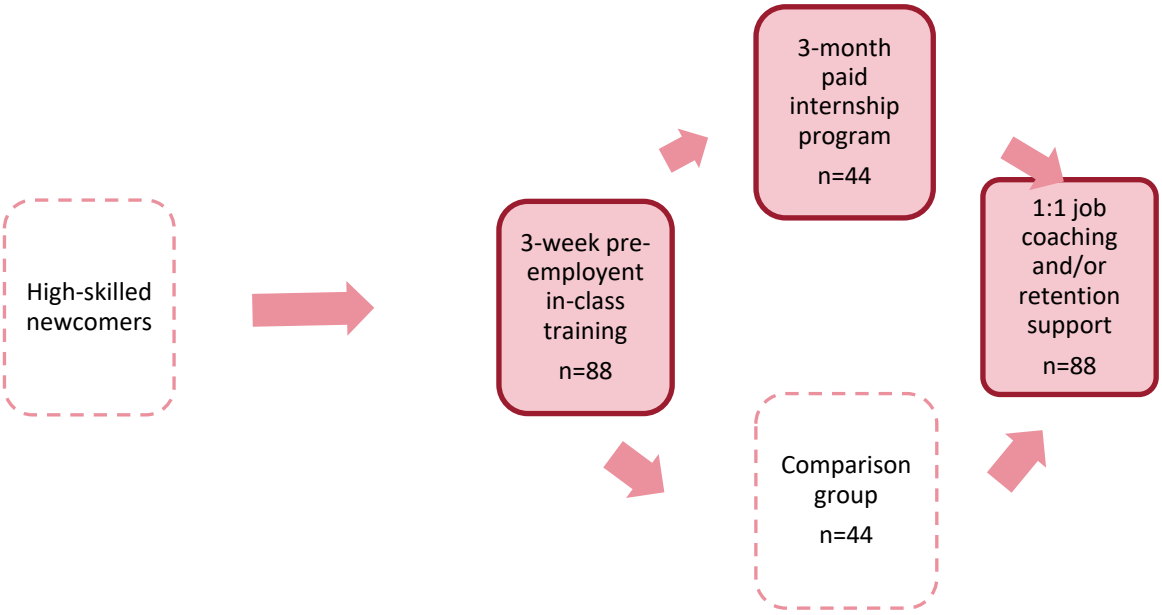
Description. The pilot project tested the impact of employment assistance measures on the integration of high-skilled newcomers into the labour market within the financial and accounting sectors. The pilot consisted of a three-week pre-employment in-class training for 60 participants to ensure that they are employment ready. The training included both group and one-on-one learning sessions. The aim was for half of participants to then placed in a three-month paid internship program to gain Canadian professional work experience. The internship program was supported by a learning plan.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. TCET is a non-profit organization that delivers employment, settlement and language services in the GTA. This sector-specific program, SETCAN, is an addition to their employment programming but emphasizes a more targeted focus on financial and business occupation. SETCAN is situated in the middle of the newcomer welcome centre and thus can offer easy access to existing wrap-around services.

Comparison group. As designed, work placements were only offered to half of participants. In practice, there have been fewer work placements taken up by participants. The comparison group participants are those who have participated in the training and in the one-on-one job coaching, but who have not been placed with an employer through a work placement.

Key program activities. TCET has developed and delivered the SETCAN program to eight cohorts of high-skilled newcomers with backgrounds in the financial sector. The team made a concerted and sustained effort to engage employers, big and small, and to gain their interest in hiring program participants through the work placement or through their regular hiring processes.

Figure 27 SETCAN intervention



Adaptations to the model. The first few cohorts led to fewer subsidized work placements being established than anticipated because employers were hiring participants without it, which resulted in a surplus of available money. TCET added an additional cohort in October 2018 and another in October 2019. Additional available funds were also used to provide supports to that cohort with no change in the model. With additional funding from ESDC, TCET increased the subsidy limit from $13.5 per hour to $15 — based on their experience, this better reflected the salary of high-skilled newcomers working in the finance sector. TCET also changed their recruitment process for participants to make it more selective in order to ensure that participants selected are those who would gain the most from such a program.

Profile of participants. A majority of participants in the SETCAN program have been in Canada for less than two years. Almost half of the participants held citizenship from India. Nigeria and Pakistan were the second and third most frequent citizenship of participants. About half had a Master's degree and a majority have more than five years of experience in their field. About a third of the participants had education in Canada. Half of the participants were 34 years old and younger. Approximately two-thirds of program participants were women. An average of the participants worked in their occupation for nine years prior to coming to Canada.

How were participants matched to a work placement? A job developer was responsible for employer engagement and finding potential placements. Project staff said they used multiple ways of engaging employers. Since employers worked with many employment service providers in the Greater Toronto Area, the job developer used a wide range of strategies in order to target

a large number of employers. This included going to previous employers the staff member worked with and their referrals, word of mouth, business and personal events and cold calling. Employers were asked about their staffing needs. Initially, the pilot looked for employers who were interested in accountants and financial analysts in business and IT. Later, the placements expanded to hybrid positions in these areas.

The job developer did not ask for a full job description as smaller companies often cannot provide these. Employers were asked about the tasks, experience, skills, and other details for the position; the job developer documented the duties for the position in five or six bullets. Next, the job developer sent two or more resumes to the employer for consideration and hiring. At the completion of the placement, employers were expected to provide three references for the employee.

The job developer noted the following opportunities and challenges in the employer engagement process:

- It was difficult to contact the HR person at the business if one did not know who this individual was;
- Hiring is seasonal — spring and fall are good for accounting and finance and summer is the worse;
- Small and medium-size businesses were more interested as they were likely to need funding more than larger companies;
- Pre-completing the application forms for employers made it easier for employers to participate in the pilot; and
- Immigrants are perceived to be more willing to listen and engage with the pilot because of their own settlement experiences.

Project staff suggested the wage subsidy worked best for employers with cash flow problems; those that cannot pay the higher wages yet. The job developer had limited time with participants, working only with participants on mock interviews. Spending more time to connect with participants would help learn more about the participants and inform the job matching process; the job developer only knew them through their resumes.

The job developer also suggested increasing the employment service provider's exposure to the corporate sector. Having a name that is familiar to employers or an established reputation with services to employers would help with the employer engagement process. Project staff also suggested that the approach to employers needed to make the business case to inform employers about the agency's services and why employers should hire from their immigrant talent pool.

What has worked well? From the perspective of TCET staff, the curriculum developed seemed to resonate with participants. The curriculum was customized to reflect the needs of each cohort: while all topics are covered, the extent to which they are covered might have differed from group to group. Participants appreciated that the curriculum recognized their experience and built on it, rather than start from the beginning again. Anecdotally, staff highlighted that some participants were able to leverage the in-class training to obtain employment, which to them speaks to its relevance. Another aspect that has been observed as working well was the ongoing customized support from the team, including job retention (for those in work placements) as issues can arise after people get employed. On the employer side, staff mentioned that especially for smaller employers, the role that TCET played in preparing, assessing, and presenting qualified candidates was well received. As explained by a staff member, *"we're essentially doing the recruitment for them."* Based on their experience, TCET staff highlighted that the wage subsidy worked best for smaller organizations since larger organizations tended to find it too burdensome for its value. Participants really valued the opportunity to talk to employers and to others in their field. The added value of those networking opportunities was explained by a participant, *"We cannot have that kind of opportunity not being in this program."*

What has presented challenges? Employer relationships — which are essential to be able to provide work placement opportunities for participants — required a lot of work to build and maintain. TCET staff has highlighted that when employers have a less than positive experience with one client, it may lead to a reluctance to offer work placement opportunities for other program participants. On the participant side, TCET has noticed that participants became more selective in their placements — specifically, many have wanted to work for bigger and more well-known international corporations, which some participants view as more secure.

TORONTO REGION IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL (TRIEC): EVALUATION OF THE MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

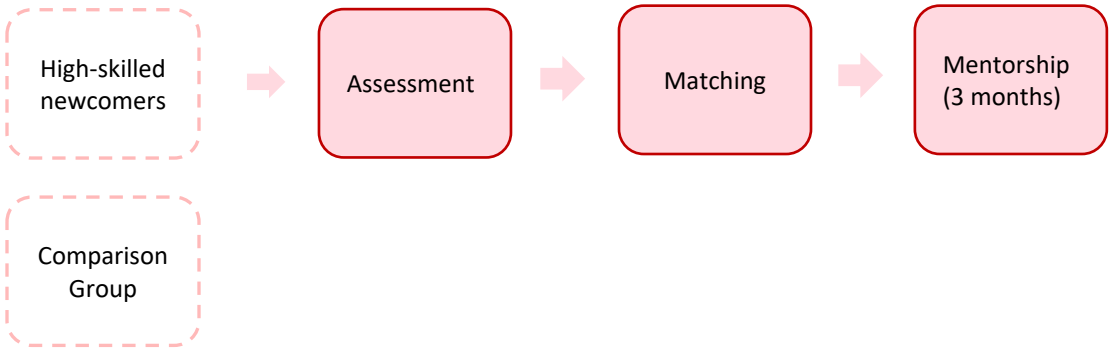
Description. The pilot project tested the value of structured mentoring interventions in facilitating high-skilled newcomers' first Canadian professional work experience in the financial and accounting sectors. TRIEC completed a comparative evaluation of its flagship program — the Mentoring Partnership (TMP) — which involved surveying 500 program participants and 500 comparison group individuals at various points during the program. A literature review on the effectiveness of mentoring for skilled newcomer professionals was also undertaken. TRIEC worked with World Education Services (WES) to recruit a comparison group. The funding received by TRIEC under the CWE Pilot Projects was for the evaluation of the program, and not for its implementation. The evaluation was being completed by Blueprint ADE, a third-party evaluator.

Pilot site profile, location, and reach. TRIEC is an organization that works to address immigrant underemployment in the GTA by supporting organizations to become more inclusive, and by helping newcomers expand their professional networks and understand the local labour market. TRIEC does not deliver direct services to clients — rather, they partner with organizations to do so. Participants recruited for the evaluation was done through continuous intake.

Comparison group. World Education Services was TRIEC's partner for this project and was responsible for recruiting comparison group participants from their client base and collecting and collating comparable data for individuals selected for the comparison group. WES supports international professionals with credential evaluations and support.

Key program activities. Since the TMP was already well established at the beginning of the CWE Pilot, most of the activities that TRIEC undertook as part of this project were related to the evaluation. Specifically, TRIEC made changes to its platform to incorporate the surveys developed in collaboration with SRDC. TRIEC was also responsible for ensuring a high response rate for the surveys as per their agreement. The program activities per se were delivered by partners as per usual. TRIEC and its third-party evaluator worked closely to conduct the evaluation of the program.

Figure 28 TMP intervention



Adaptations to the model. TRIEC obtained additional funding from ESDC to hire an additional part-time resource to support the survey follow-ups and completion rates.

Profile of participants. Due to the program structure, when participants are referred to the TMP, they are employment ready (i.e. participants obtain employment support from immigrant-serving agencies prior to being referred). Consequently, almost two-thirds of participants had been in Canada for more than one year. Participants came from India primarily, followed by Nigeria, China, and Bangladesh. Approximately three-fifths of the program participants had a

Master's degree. Roughly, three-quarters of the participants were between 30 and 44 years of age, with the average age being 36 years old for this group. About two-fifths of the participants were women.

What works well? TRIEC has refined the TMP over the course of its existence. According to staff, the program is working quite well overall, and there are key features that support its success. The TMP is offered in partnership with community and employer partners, and is, thus, part of a continuum of services that are offered to clients. Before clients are referred to the TMP, they can attend job search workshops, employment counselling, and other employment-related supports delivered by the community partners. When they are deemed ready for employment, they are referred to the TMP. The TMP is customizable and thus can be adjusted to meet the needs of diverse participants. The TMP provides resources and tools to mentors and mentees to guide them in their discussions and establish effective mentoring partnerships. TRIEC has found that one of the key ways of getting employer partners on board is to speak to their strategic objectives so that they can see the value proposition of the program. In addition, over the years, there has been continuous improvement to the program based on the regular check-ins with mentors and mentees, feedback, and evaluation results.

What presents challenges? The TMP program has been running for almost a decade, and in that time, TRIEC has refined the program to address and mitigate delivery challenges. However, one existing challenge is the increasing demand for the program. An increase in mentees requires an expansion of the number of mentors. In some sectors such as regulated professions, it is harder to recruit mentors. Due to the limited number of mentors in those sectors, it can take longer for a mentee to be matched with a mentor in their field.

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