



Settlement journeys toward good jobs: Intermediate outcomes and program impacts

Career Pathways for Racialized Newcomer Women pilot project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Context	2
The CPRNW pilot implementation	3
Who participated in CPRNW programming?	6
Methodology	8
Highlights of the findings	9
Lessons and implications	16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Career Pathways for Racialized Newcomer Women (CPRNW)¹ pilot project is a multi-year initiative testing targeted employment services for racialized newcomer women to support their successful integration in the Canadian labour market. CPRNW represents an innovative and holistic approach to service delivery, one which recognizes the multiple intersecting identities of racialized newcomer women. The women-only setting creates a safe space for participants to learn and share, which also boosts their confidence, essential for successful job search and job retention. The flexibility of the CPRNW services is an important aspect of the programming allowing the services to meet the unique needs of newcomer women with multiple identity factors, including those of mothers caring for children and partners with household obligations.

The 12 different CPRNW interventions, based on four service delivery models, were targeted to newcomer women at different initial distances from the labour market and with differing barriers to employment. The models ranged from offering a first Canadian work experience to those initially quite distant from the labour market to matching participants initially close to the labour market with commensurate employment, taking into account their skills, wants, and goals.

This report describes the implementation of the CPRNW pilot including the flexibility it provided to partnering service provider organizations to learn, both from their own experiences and from the other partnering service providers, and to modify their programming to better fit the needs of participants. It also allowed them to continuously adapt to ongoing changes in the labour market and to the COVID-19 pandemic by transitioning to online and hybrid programming and by providing digital support if needed.

The report also presents the outcomes of CPRNW participants in terms of their career adaptability, employment, and other outcomes beyond employment including skills, social capital, and wellness. The report concludes with four lessons learned from the research findings. They are:

1. Targeted programming for racialized newcomer women that considers their intersectional identities can effectively address their complex sets of wants, needs, and barriers and improve their labour market integration.

¹ The Career Pathways for Racialized Newcomer Women (CPRNW) pilot is also referred to as the Racialized Newcomer Women Pilot (RNWP). Until August 2021, it was known as the Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women (CPVMNW) pilot or the Visible Minority Newcomer Women (VMNW) Pilot.

2. Models that connect newcomers with employers can be highly effective but require deep and meaningful partnerships between employers and SPOs. The scale of these partnerships and systemic biases in the labour market limit the success of these models.
3. The design of an effective program for populations with complex needs can be strengthened by both purposeful stakeholder engagement and pilot testing.
4. SPOs' capacities to meaningfully serve newcomers can be strengthened through implementation research and a community of practice.

CONTEXT

On average, the labour market outcomes of racialized newcomer women in Canada are lower than Canadian-born women, particularly in the initial months and years after arriving in Canada. There are many potential explanations for these low labour market outcomes for racialized newcomer women in Canada. Reasons posited are associated with the intersecting identities of being a newcomer to Canada, identifying as a woman, and identifying as racialized or as a visible minority.

Job search assistance programs have been shown to be successful at improving job seekers' employment outcomes and, in Canada, there is a vast array of job search assistance and employment readiness programs that vary in duration from a few hours to several months and include activities such as resume writing skills, interview skills, language and other training, career counselling, and introductions to employers. However, prior to the CPRNW pilot, we are not aware of any government employment programs or services specifically targeted toward racialized newcomer women and designed to address their intersecting employment barriers.

In 2018–19, the Government of Canada announced a \$31.9 million investment to help racialized newcomer women secure employment. The CPRNW pilot project, initially a three-year national pilot which was extended until 2022–23, that tests employment programming for newcomer women who identify as racialized, is one of the three funding streams in this initiative. The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) has received funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to design, implement, and evaluate CPRNW.

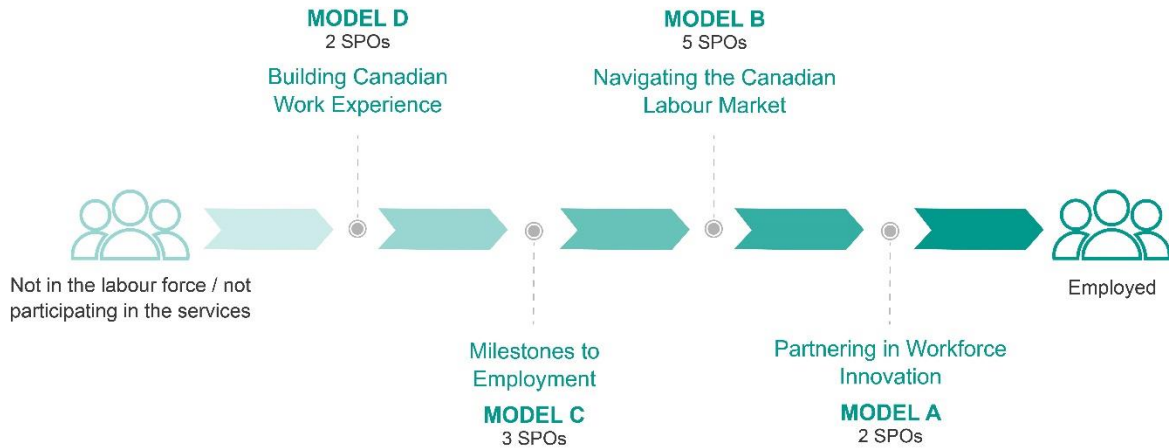
THE CPRNW PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

Figure ES1 Service provider organizations by model

<p>Model A: Partnering in Workforce Innovation</p>  <p>WORLD SKILLS EMPLOYMENT CENTRE D'EMPLOI COMPÉTENCES MONDIALES</p> <p>SEO SOCIÉTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'ONTARIO</p> <p>Innovation and performance</p>	<p>Model B: Navigating the Canadian Labour Market</p>  <p>WORLD SKILLS EMPLOYMENT CENTRE D'EMPLOI COMPÉTENCES MONDIALES</p> <p>YWCA METRO VANCOUVER</p> <p>Centre for Education & Training™ The Power of Change. The Passion for Growth.</p> <p>acces</p> <p>isans Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia</p>
<p>Model C: Milestones to Employment</p>  <p>OFE Opportunities for Employment</p> <p>MOSAIC</p> <p>Centre for Education & Training™ The Power of Change. The Passion for Growth.</p>	<p>Model D: Building Canadian Work Experience</p>  <p>YWCA METRO VANCOUVER</p> <p>isans Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia</p>

The CPRNW pilot project involved eight service provider organizations (SPOs) across Canada implementing 12 interventions based on four service delivery models. The overall goal of each model is to support racialized newcomer women in their successful integration in the Canadian labour market. The models differ by their target population (e.g., women with different initial distances from the labour market and different labour market barriers) as well as by the program activities involved. The models aim to address some of the common barriers racialized newcomer women face in their search for employment and in job retention and were designed with a Gender-based Analysis (GBA) Plus lens.

Figure ES2 Models on the distance to the labour market continuum



The GBA Plus lens ensures that, in the design of the models, consideration was given to the multiple identity factors of potential participants and how those factors may intersect and affect someone’s experience with the program and results.

Women-only programming provided a safe space for participants to share their experiences and challenges and to build social connections, friendships, and a sense of belonging. According to both participants and program staff, it also fostered self-confidence. Targeted programming also helped provide a space for women to position their goals and interests at the forefront and to prioritize their skills, qualities, and aspirations. However, some pilot staff and comparison group participants also noted drawbacks of a women-only program given that the workplace is a diverse environment that most often includes both men and women. It might be important for employment programs to have components in which diverse participants (e.g., men and women, Canadian-born and newcomers, newcomers and Indigenous Peoples) interact to better prepare them for entering the labour market.

The models are referred to as models A–D. Model A is a demand-driven approach that uses recruitment specialists working directly with employers/sectors with significant workforce needs to match them with women who have the skills, career interest, and abilities to perform the job. Model B offers support in the development of a clear career plan based on a thorough assessment of participants’ skills and provides them with opportunities to connect with potential employers. Model C takes a demand-led approach to support racialized newcomer women in finding employment in high-demand industries and sectors. One of its main components is a paid work placement. Model D consists of training, support, and paid short-term employment, including a wage subsidy to employers, to assist unemployed racialized newcomer refugee women in gaining meaningful Canadian work experience. All interventions, to differing degrees, included the following activities: mock interviews, resume writing, mentorship, a discussion of transferrable skills, employer connections, individualized support, and peer support.

During the development stage of the pilot, partnering SPOs adapted the four models to their particular contexts based on their experiences. Therefore, the specific activities implemented, duration of each intervention, language of service provision (English or French), and the specific content of workshops/training differ within each model. Moreover, SPOs have continuously made modifications to their programs throughout the pilot based on learnings and, more significantly, by moving services to virtual or hybrid delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Virtual programming provided flexibility for participants as they no longer needed to travel to and from the training location and were not required to find childcare to be able to participate. However, the online component of the programming made it difficult for a subset of participants to fully participate. Many of the interventions provided IT support, if needed, and lending programs to extend participation to those who did not have access to a computer. Nonetheless, some participants did not have the digital skills necessary to participate in the pilot programming, either at all or fully.

Individualized support and employer connections were two program components particularly appreciated by participants. However, forming employer connections is very resource-intensive and works best for SPOs that have large networks of established relationships with employers and/or a team of job developers who solely focus on engaging with employers to find potential opportunities for candidates. Staying connected to the labour market is critical. However, reaching beyond the employers that already understand the value of newcomer talent was challenging.

Even with individualized support, meeting the needs of all participants is a challenge, specifically when it comes to employer engagement in non-sector-specific models (all models except model C). Therefore, flexibility in program delivery is of paramount importance to meet the varied needs of participants. Moreover, some participants recommended post-program support, such as, on-the-job support and facilitated peer support. However, they did not attempt to contact program staff for more individual or follow-up support, implying that it is imperative for program staff to take the initiative and actively initiate contact with participants.

All SPOs implementing model B delivered programs that were closely aligned with the intended model and program staff found that an Essential Skills portfolio is a great tool for participants for identifying their transferable skills. Program staff also noted that model B might be a good program for those looking for an alternate career. All five SPOs also integrated more opportunities to connect with employers than originally designed as they felt this was needed.

Models C and D included work placements and model D provided wage subsidies for the duration of the work placements. **Work placements that met the needs of both employers and participants were difficult to find.** However, they seemed to work better for smaller

employers as many large employers' existing HR policies complicate the use of wage subsidies and/or work placements.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN CPRNW PROGRAMMING?

The 12 CPRNW interventions recruited 2,267 newcomer women who identified as racialized into the pilot programs between November 2019 and December 2022. Overall, CPRNW program participants are relatively new arrivals to Canada (they joined the pilot, on average, 26 months after arriving in Canada). However, several participants shared that they had only found out about the existence of employment programs a few years after immigrating to Canada, and how valuable it would have been to have known earlier.

Pilot participants are highly educated (82% having completed postsecondary education) and **bring substantial work experience from outside of Canada** (88% have paid work experience outside of Canada). Many have also already had work experience in Canada (47%) before joining the pilot and 21% were already working at the time of joining the pilot.

Two-thirds of participants had no young children (between 0 and 5 years of age) at home even though 61% had children (under the age of 18) suggesting that **the presence of young children may have been a barrier to accessing the pilot services and/or that mothers with young children were not interested in the programming because they were not looking for employment, possibly as a result of childcare barriers**. The childcare supports provided through the pilot did not meet the needs of most participants and the overall shortages of affordable, accessible, and flexible childcare in many parts of Canada remain a challenge to program and labour market participation.

Participants indicated various job search difficulties looking for work in Canada such as non-recognition of education and/or experience acquired outside of Canada, lack of professional networks, limited job search skills, lack of childcare, and insufficient language skills. The interventions addressed some of these barriers, but they do not address systemic barriers. Racialized newcomer women may face challenges in their integration into the Canadian labour market **including discrimination and racism** and navigating new and unfamiliar practices without the same cultural capital that native-born job seekers and employees possess.

Participants report having experienced one or more discriminatory or racist behaviours during their Canadian job search or in the workplace related to being a racialized newcomer woman. The three most common discriminatory actions are: being treated differently by colleagues (7%), receiving an unfair performance review (7%), and being denied a job position or promotion (6%). Thirty-one percent of participants state that these experiences had an impact on their physical health. The impact on mental wellbeing is more than double at 69%. For the majority of

the women who had these experiences, it also affected their level of confidence (82%). The pilot interventions were not designed to address the systemic issue of racism and discrimination. However, SPOs did discuss this reality with participants, both in one-on-one and group settings. One SPO also offered cultural competency training to employer partners.

Overall, the CPRNW pilot attracted skilled racialized newcomer women in search of (better) employment. However, reaching individuals who could benefit from the program was an ongoing challenge. The targeting of the 12 interventions, and more generally the four models, across the distance to the labour market spectrum appears to have worked relatively well with the exception of model D, which recruited a noticeable proportion of participants who already had Canadian work experience. **There are similarities in the composition of program participants across interventions, but there were also notable variations which make comparisons across interventions and models unsuitable.**

- Model A: As designed participants were closest to the labour market:
 - They were highly educated.
 - More than half had lived in Canada for over a year before joining the program.
 - More than half had prior work experience in Canada.
- Model B: As designed, participants are slightly further away from the labour market than model A participants:
 - They are highly educated.
 - Less than half of participants had work experience in Canada before joining the program (except for the YWCA).
 - Participants from three of the five model B SPOs were relatively new to Canada.
- Model C: As designed Model C participants are further away from the labour market than Models A and B:
 - They have relatively less education.
 - A minority came to Canada as principal applicants in the economic class category.
 - Participants from Achēv and MOSAIC had been in Canada the longest.

- Model D: As designed, participants are furthest from the labour market when compared to the other three models:
 - They are less educated.
 - The majority report using a language other than English or French most often at home.
 - About a third had Canadian work experience and a non-negligible minority was already working when they joined the program.

METHODOLOGY

This report provides an analysis of the changes in outcomes and the impacts of the CPRNW pilot, both on average and for women with different characteristics and experiences. In order to investigate how well the program worked and for whom, we first explore the average changes in outcomes between the baseline (pre-intervention) and three follow-up periods 3–12 months later. However, a simple comparison of participants' outcomes after the program with the value of those same outcomes before the program does not identify the impacts of the program. For example, some program participants may achieve the same improvement in outcomes over this period of time even without the program. This is especially true for program participants in the CPRNW pilot as, had they not accessed the pilot programs, they may have accessed other, in some cases similar, job search programs offered by the same service provider organization or by other organizations.

In order to measure the differences the pilot programs are making, where feasible, a randomized controlled trial was implemented. Impacts of the program for these interventions are estimated by comparing average differences in outcomes at the time of the follow-up surveys between the randomly assigned program group, that had access to the pilot programming, and the randomly assigned comparison group, that did not have access to the pilot programming. As the comparison group was randomly assigned when they joined the CPRNW pilot, they had similar characteristics to the program group. Although they did not have access to CPRNW interventions, they did have access to other employment services. As such, we are only able to estimate the additional impacts of providing racialized newcomer women with specialized services above and beyond other services they have access to and not compared to not having received any services at all.

Due to differences in the intervention design and implementation across the pilot SPOs, their target populations, and local conditions, the evaluation is conducted at three inter-related levels: the intervention level, the model level, and the overall project level. The quantitative analysis is conducted at the intervention level and at the model level (where

appropriate) while most of the qualitative analysis is conducted at the model level. The quantitative and qualitative findings are then consolidated to inform the overall project level findings. **The CPRNW pilot was not designed to identify the impacts of specific program activities. CPRNW interventions provide a holistic approach to programming.** Each activity, such as resume writing or job matching, was not developed and was not implemented in isolation. As such, results cannot be attributed to a specific activity because they depend on the other program activities received. Moreover, comparisons across models should always consider that the models targeted and provided services to women at different initial distances from the labour market and with different characteristics and barriers to labour market integration. They were also implemented in different localities with different economic conditions. For these reasons, the report does not compare the success of different interventions or models.

Methodology

- Changes in outcomes: We explore the average changes in outcomes between the baseline (pre-intervention) and three follow-up periods 3–12 months later.
- However, a simple comparison of participants' outcomes after the program with the value of those same outcomes before the program does not identify the impacts of the program.
- Impacts: Impacts of the program are estimated by comparing average differences in outcomes at the time of the follow-up surveys between the randomly assigned program group, that had access to the pilot programming, and the randomly assigned comparison group, that did not have access to the pilot programming.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS

Below is a summary of the report findings. A complete discussion is provided in the main report.

Career adaptability

Average changes in participant outcomes

Career adaptability prepares individuals to enter the Canadian labour market and find commensurate employment. **After joining CPRNW programming participants see increases in three measures of career adaptability: career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE), job search clarity (JSC), and job search self-efficacy (JSSE).** Both participants and program staff report that the CPRNW training and supports are helping participants gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to secure commensurate employment in Canada. The interventions build on participants' assets to improve their career adaptability. Resume writing, mock interviews, and mentorship and networking opportunities are all aspects of the CPRNW programming that are highly valued by participants and designed to improve their career adaptability.

GBA Plus

These average improvements in career adaptability often mask important differences for participants with different identity factors. All participants share three identity factors: being a newcomer to Canada, identifying as a woman, and as a racialized person. However, participants also differ by many important identity factors such as how long they have been in Canada, their age, whether they have children, their work experience in Canada, and immigration admission category, which can affect their experiences of the programming and how effective it is for them. For some interventions, participants initially furthest from the labour market show larger improvements in their career adaptability while for other interventions, the opposite is true.

Impacts

Over the same period, many comparison group members received similar services and supports as the program group. However, these services were not targeted to racialized newcomer women. We observe increases in career adaptability for both participants and comparison group members after joining the pilot. Overall, the increases for the program group are somewhat larger and occur sooner than those of the comparison group. As a result, **we find important impacts of CPRNW programming on career adaptability that are above and beyond the improvements in career adaptability experienced by the comparison group. These important increases in participants' career adaptability after participating in CPRNW interventions are crucial precursors to finding employment commensurate with skills and experience.**

Employment

Finding employment

Average changes in participant outcomes

Improvements in the career adaptability of participants after joining CPRNW programming, along with its direct employment interventions (e.g., job matching and work placements), should lead to the successful labour market integration of participants. We observe many participants finding employment within one year of joining CPRNW programming: **There were large increases in the likelihood of working, hours of work, and earnings of participants after joining the pilot.**

GBA Plus

These average increases in the likelihood of working, hours of work, and earnings, mask important differences across participants with different identity factors. **Overall, we see that participants initially closer to the labour market and those with fewer barriers to employment see larger increases in finding employment.** One of these barriers is having young children at home. Unlike the career adaptability findings where we do not observe differential changes for women with young children, they do see fewer improvements in these employment outcomes. These contrasting results suggest that women with young children may have been able to actively participate in CPRNW programming and improve their career adaptability. However, barriers, likely related to childcare, remain for their entry into the Canadian labour market.

Impacts

Over the same time period, comparison group members received employment-related services and also found employment after joining the pilot. Given similar improvements of the comparison group, **we do not see any statistically significant average or heterogeneous impacts of CPRNW on the likelihood of working, hours of work, or earnings.**

Good jobs

Average changes in participant outcomes

One of the objectives of CPRNW pilot programming, especially models A and B, was not only for participants to find employment but for those jobs to be **good quality jobs and commensurate with their skills.** Unlike the earlier employment outcomes, our indicators of good jobs were not measured when participants first joined the pilot. It is unlikely that many, if any, pilot participants joined CPRNW with commensurate employment. Therefore, it is important to compare any differences at the time of the first follow-up survey as these may, in part, reflect changes resulting from program participation.

Program staff from models A and B indicated that many participants were able to find employment commensurate with their education and experience. However, some program staff and participants, across all four models report that participants were sometimes encouraged to start by looking for entry level positions. At the time of the first follow-up survey, participants from models A and B are more likely than those from models C and D to have a university degree and are also more likely to have employment commensurate with their education. **We find statistically significant increases for participants in both the likelihood of having employment commensurate with education and employment commensurate with**

experience and these increases are largest and most widespread 12 months after joining the pilot.

Impacts

As discussed previously, many comparison group members found employment after joining the pilot and, like participants in the program group, some of this employment was in good jobs commensurate with their skills. We do, however, see some important differences at the time of the first follow-up survey in the percentages of comparison group members, compared to program participants, with commensurate employment. **This is suggestive evidence of the program increasing the likelihood of having commensurate employment at the time of the first follow-up survey more than the other services comparison group members may have received.** We also see many increases in all measures of commensurate employment at the time of both the second and third follow-up surveys for the comparison group.

Given all of these findings, we see fewer impacts of CPRNW programming compared to the positive changes observed in outcomes. However, we find large positive impacts of Achēv model B’s programming on the likelihood of having employment commensurate with education, employment commensurate with experience, and employment commensurate with both education and experience. We also find **a positive impact of model B CPRNW programming (all model B interventions together) on the likelihood of having employment commensurate with education and employment commensurate with both education and experience.**

CPRNW program staff reported receiving messages from participants expressing that their employment allowed them to thrive both professionally and personally. We also measure good jobs with indicators of job quality and job satisfaction. At the time of the first follow-up survey, many participants already report high job quality and job satisfaction. We further find statistically significant increases in job quality and these increases are largest and most widespread at the time of third follow-up survey. The changes in job satisfaction are mixed (we observe both increases and decreases) at the time of the second follow-up survey but we mainly see increases by the time of third follow-up survey.

Many comparison group members also report high job quality and job satisfaction at the time of the first follow-up survey. For some interventions, more program group participants report high job quality and job satisfaction compared to comparison group members. However, the opposite is true for other interventions. We also see increases, some larger and some smaller than those of the program group, in the proportion of comparison group members reporting high job quality and job satisfaction at the time of both the second and third follow-up surveys.

Given these results, **the only statistically significant impacts we observe for job quality and job satisfaction are positive impacts for Achève model B on the likelihood of reporting high job quality** at the time of both the first and second follow-up surveys.

Beyond employment

Although the primary objective of the CPRNW pilot programming was to assist racialized newcomer women in finding and keeping good jobs, the programming was also designed to improve outcomes beyond employment. **These outcomes beyond employment are just as important in participants' settlement journeys. We classify them into three themes: skills, social capital, and wellness.**

Skills

After joining the pilot, **many participants gained confidence in speaking English and increased its use in their daily activities.** Comparison group members from several model A and B interventions also see increases in confidence and usage of English/French. However, we find a positive statistically significant impact of CPRNW on confidence in English for Opportunities for Employment (OFE) model C participants above and beyond changes of comparison group members. However, we also find a negative impact on confidence in English for Achève model B participants.

Social capital

The CPRNW all-women workshops **created spaces for participants to connect and share.** Connections formed during the training immediately increased participants' social networks. Once participants find employment, connections formed at their workplaces likely increased participants' networks even more in the intermediate and longer term. **Participants from several interventions show increases in the size and diversity of their social networks after joining CPRNW programming.** In addition to developing social networks, program staff and participants highlighted that, through the program, participants were able to meet many employers, sector experts, and other participants to help with their job or careers. We see **increases in the likelihood they are able to get career help** (from people of the same ethnicity as them and from people of a different ethnicity).

Although many comparison group members received employment-related services after joining the pilot, not all may have been in a group setting unlike most CPRNW interventions. Moreover, it is very unlikely that the services they received were in a group of newcomer women. We observe fewer changes in social networks for the comparison group compared to program participants. These differences between the program and comparison groups result in several

important average and heterogeneous impacts of the CPRNW programming on our social capital indicators.

Wellness

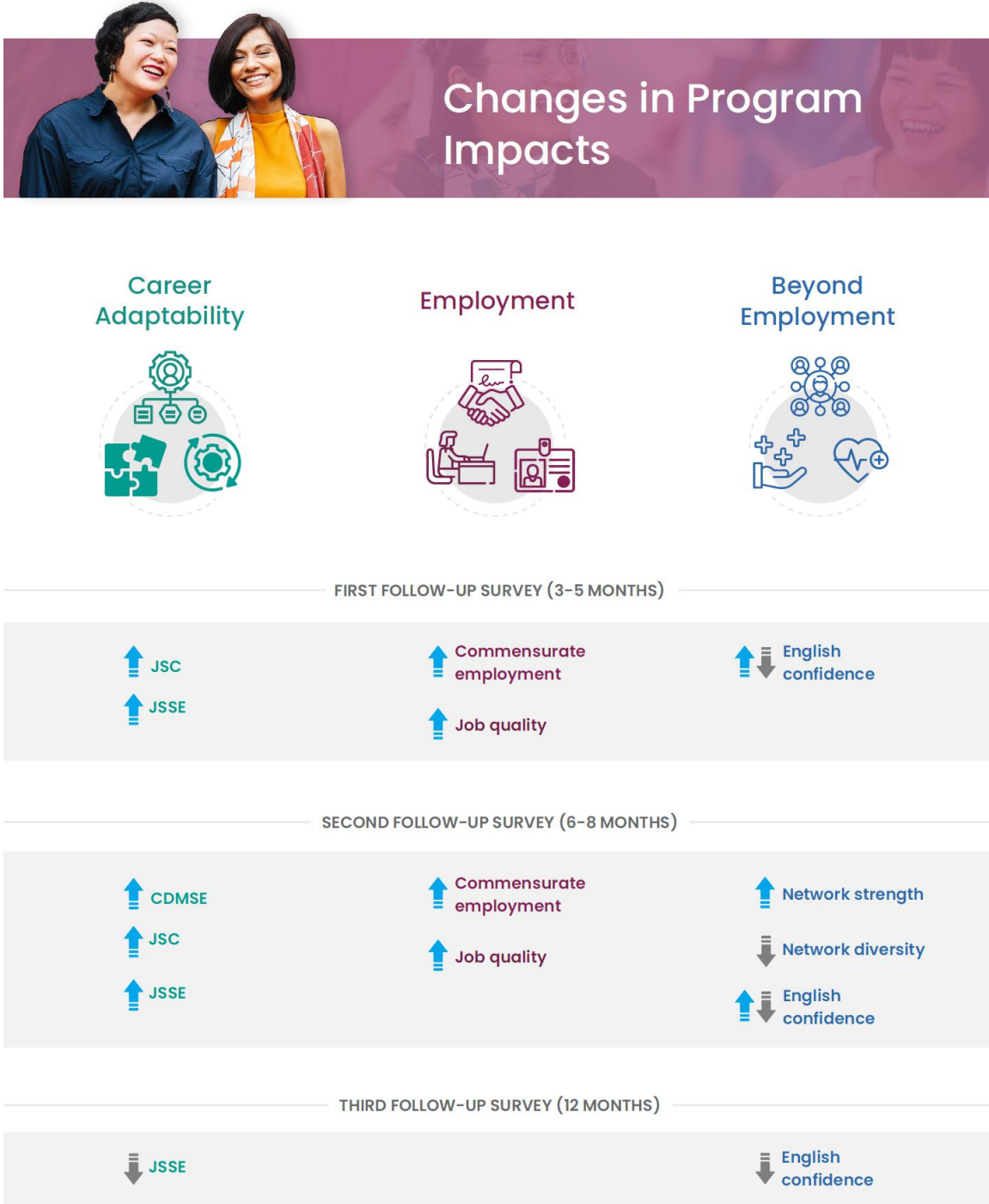
Program staff and participants across all models emphasized that the program increased participants' wellness and mental health. Program staff explained that participating in the program empowered women by allowing participants to put the focus on themselves, their skills development, and career growth rather than focusing entirely on family responsibilities. When joining the pilot, on average, participants' self-confidence was low. **We observe increases in the proportion of participants reporting high self-confidence for many interventions. These results are echoed by program staff and participants who spoke at length about increases in self-confidence from participating in CPRNW programming.** Over the same period, we observe fewer increases in self-confidence for comparison group members.

Participants report relatively high initial levels of hope when joining the pilot. However, we find decreases in the proportion of participants reporting high hope at the time of both the second and third follow-up surveys. This is also the case for comparison group members. Finally, after participating in CPRNW programming, and given the changes in outcomes and impacts on employment, skills, social capital, and wellbeing, presented previously, participants' overall life satisfaction may have improved. We do see primarily positive changes in life satisfaction for both program and comparison group members after joining the pilot. However, the changes in self-confidence, hope, and life satisfaction are not above and beyond those experienced by comparison group members.

Summary of impacts

Figure ES3 below summarizes all the statistically significant impacts of CPRNW programming on career adaptability, employment, and beyond employment described above.

Figure ES3 Impacts of CPRNW



LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The report concludes by drawing four key lessons from the findings. For each lesson, the report summarizes the evidence supporting the lesson and presents its implications for policy.

1. Targeted programming for racialized newcomer women that considers their intersectional identities can effectively address their complex sets of wants, needs, and barriers and improve their labour market integration.

Implications

- The design of programming should consider the intersecting identities of potential participants. For example, an anti-oppressive lens could be used from design to service delivery, making services inclusive and responsive to participants.
- Within programming, services should be customized to each participant. Individualized support, in addition to group training, enables SPOs to respond to the varying needs, wants, and barriers of each participant.
- SPOs require flexibility to respond to the specific needs of their clients. This flexibility is necessary from design to delivery.
- Potential clients with differing identity factors require different services. Therefore, more than one programming option should be made available. Moreover, a mechanism for determining appropriate programming should be implemented as newcomers are unlikely to know which program or service is the most appropriate for their situation. The need for newcomers to search for a program/service is ineffective. This mechanism could be implemented with a “one-stop service point” in common newcomer arrival destinations.

2. Models that connect newcomers with employers can be highly effective but require deep and meaningful partnerships between employers and SPOs. The scale of these partnerships and systemic biases in the labour market limit the success of these models.

Implications

- In the short term, the delivery of demand-led employment programs should leverage the capacities of SPOs with established networks of employers.

- In the long run, resources, including time and funding, should be provided to SPOs implementing demand-led employment programs to enable them to further develop their capacity to engage meaningfully with employers.
- A sector-based approach may be an effective way for SPOs to begin meaningfully engaging with employers.
- Employers need to play a more active role in enhancing their understanding of the value newcomers bring and to take concrete actions to ensure opportunities are accessible for newcomers.
- Systemic biases in the labour market must be addressed. The effectiveness of direct services supporting newcomers' labour market integration is limited by the labour market. Further research is needed to explore employer hesitancy in hiring newcomers, with a focus on addressing racism and discrimination. Additional research regarding ways of promoting an increased role of employers in newcomers' labour market integration and the capacity-building required for employers and SPOs that will make the biggest difference for newcomers' labour market integration is also necessary.

3. The design of an effective program for populations with complex needs can be strengthened by both purposeful stakeholder engagement and pilot testing.

Implications

- The development of programming should include a funded design phase. This phase should begin by using lessons from research and evidence to inform stakeholder engagement. Collaborations among stakeholders to identify the complex needs of the target population and potential solutions improve the likelihood of successful programming. One method to achieve this goal is through co-design. Better program implementation can be achieved when SPOs have collaborated in program design.
- Pilot programming should allow for flexibility. Firstly, pilot testing potential models should be adapted by participating SPOs to both the local context and to their clients. Secondly, flexibility during piloting, both in terms of funding use and program design, is necessary to ensure that learnings are immediately integrated into programming to improve their effectiveness.
- A GBA Plus lens should be used by SPOs in designing, delivering, and evaluating programming for populations with complex needs. SPOs need support and resources to gain knowledge and experience in this capacity.

4. SPOs' capacities to meaningfully serve newcomers can be strengthened through implementation research and a community of practice.

Implications

- Resources should be allocated to foster a community of practice to support capacity building among SPOs that are delivering similar services. This can support SPOs in the design and implementation of their programs.
- The community of practice benefits from having an external organization supporting the group in working together and understanding their common objectives. Although SPOs may and will do things differently, having a common goal helps connect the group and focus the conversation (e.g., serving the employment needs of racialized newcomer women).
- Better programming can be achieved when a group of SPOs, each with the same overall goal, partners in a pilot project with a research organization enabling each partner to use its skills and build on its strengths to provide responsive evidence-based programming to its clients.
- SPOs should be supported to form partnerships with researchers and develop their evaluation and research capacity. Evaluation and policy research must go beyond performance monitoring and consider both successes and challenges. Collecting evidence of challenges for evaluation is crucial for learning and continuous service improvement.

What's next?

Data collection for the follow-up surveys is still ongoing and scheduled to be completed in May 2024.

The next report will be published in 2025 and will present the final intermediate changes in outcomes and program impacts. It will also present a cost analysis designed to assess the pilot's economic viability.

View all CPRNW reports and communications [here](#).

Stay tuned for the next chapter!



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