

triec ▶▶

Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council

Diversity Drives Success



Bridging the Gap: Immigrant Women and Their Labour Market Integration in the Greater Toronto Area

March 2022

About TRIEC

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) helps employers capitalize on the skills and experience of newcomers to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and helps newcomers secure work in their field of expertise.

In partnership with corporations, individual supporters, community organizations and governments, we work to remove barriers to the labour market and to support the retention and advancement of newcomers in the workplace.

TRIEC is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Government of Ontario, Manulife, United Way of Greater Toronto and Future Skills Centre.

© March 2022

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by TRIEC. It was made possible by the dedicated work and contributions of many people. Sugi Vasavithasan authored the report. Owen Guo carried out line editing. Debroy Chan is thanked for providing thought leadership. Other members of the TRIEC team, including past members, Helen Davies and Adwoa Buahene, provided additional comments, inputs and supports.

A special thank you to Brenda Avila, Azadeh Ghadimi, Amarachi Itua-Ojefua and Beatriz Salazar — who are members of TRIEC's Professional Immigrant Networks — for contributing their first-hand knowledge of the issues, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness to each step of the research process to help ensure findings are relevant and positioned for action.

Forum Research Inc. was responsible for collecting and tabulating employer survey data. Randal Boutilier and the 12thirteen team designed the report template.

Thanks to the Community Research Ethics Office for its helpful guidance.

Sincere gratitude to the many participants who shared their experiences and insights to help understand how the GTA labour market can become fairer for all.

Contents

Executive Summary

p 3

Why This Study

p 7

What We Know

p 8

About the Study

p 10

Who We Heard From

p 11

What We Heard

p 16

The Way Forward

p 43

Issues for Further Research

p 49

Endnotes

p 50

Works Cited

p 52

Appendices

p 57

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare gender inequalities in our economy. A long-standing issue is the disparities in immigrant women's labour market outcomes. Immigrant women, on average, have persistently lower earnings and higher unemployment rates relative to both immigrant men and the Canadian-born population.

Within this context, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) conducted an exploratory study, involving an online survey and follow-up interviews with immigrant women professionals who arrived in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) between 2011 and 2020. The data collected on their job search and workplace experiences reflect the voices of 365 immigrant women. In collaboration with Forum Research, we also surveyed 608 senior managers and managers in the region who were involved in hiring and strategic decision-making (hereafter referred to as 'hiring managers' or 'employers').

This report presents key findings on the labour market entry and advancement of immigrant women in the GTA. It explores some of the stereotypes and prejudices of work culture that may hold back immigrant women from fully applying their talents. The report closes with recommendations on a way forward, drawing on the inputs of immigrant women themselves.

Highlights

Respondent Characteristics

The women in our survey were aged 25 to 54 years and were employed or actively seeking employment. They had, on average, eight years of work experience before immigrating and nearly two-thirds held at least a master's degree. About half (51.5%) of respondents were principal applicants under the economic immigrant category. Pre-arrival, the most common professions were in business and finance (25.2%) and specialized middle

management occupations (21.9%). The majority of respondents (77.3%) were married or living common-law and had at least one child (58.4%). Nearly 4 in 5 respondents were racialized and a similar proportion spoke a language at home other than English. Their countries of origin or birth totalled more than 80.

We also heard from hiring managers at private for-profit, public and non-profit organizations in the GTA with 20 or more employees. About 44.4% of respondents represented large employers and 55.6% represented small- and medium-sized employers (with 20 to 499 employees). Hiring managers covered GTA organizations across all sectors.

Key Findings

Irrespective of surveyed immigrant women's backgrounds, the search for a job in their field in the GTA was challenging. Close to nine in 10 respondents characterized their job search as difficult. The most common driver for coming to Canada was to find better employment and nearly three quarters of respondents started their job search on arrival. Among those who delayed their job search, childcare responsibilities or pregnancy was the main reason. **For 48.2% of respondents, it took more than six months to land their first job in the GTA.**

About half of the respondents (51.2%) identified **a lack of Canadian work experience as a major barrier** to finding a job in their field, making it a more common impediment than a lack of professional references (44.1%) and networks (42.2%) in Canada. Largely due to the "Canadian experience" requirement, respondents struggled to find commensurate employment and, as a result, 57.5% opted to downgrade their educational achievements and/or experience to get their foot in the door at lower positions than they were qualified for.

Respondents also **took on unpaid work to gain experience in their fields (43.0%), changed or shortened their names (21.9%), altered their accents (15.3%) and changed their appearances (13.7%)** to “fit” perceived employer expectations. Additionally, possibly as a way to compensate for Canadian experience, about two-thirds (64.4%) of respondents **pursued or are pursuing further education since arrival.**

To help find work, **nearly all respondents used some type of employment-related service or program. Satisfaction with these supports was mixed.** Several respondents said that the supports helped them to build job search skills, understand Canadian culture and cultivate personal connections with other newcomers. However, respondents also felt that services and programs sometimes did not reflect their needs. They also recognized that the capacity of these programs and services to improve employment outcomes for immigrant women depends on the priorities set by funders and the openness of employers to diverse talent.

Despite a common belief that networking is important, **more respondents (34.0%) secured their first job in the GTA by applying for an advertised vacancy, than by relying on social connections (21.1%), job fairs (4.5%) or networking events (6.6%).** Similarly, more hiring managers said their organizations relied on online recruitment platforms, social media and their website than employee referrals, internal hiring or networking/industry specific events.

At the time of the survey, 82.7% of respondents were employed. **Two in five respondents were in lower-level jobs than they last held before immigrating,** cancelling the gains they made in their previous countries. One in five employed respondents held senior management, executive or C-level positions before immigrating to Canada, but just 7.6% held positions at these levels at the time of the survey. Even so, many respondents remained optimistic. About half of respondents believed they were on track to achieve the career

aspirations they had before arriving in Canada.

Employers have strategies to attract immigrants but fewer help immigrants grow their careers. Two-thirds (66.7%) of hiring managers at large organizations, 48.6% at mid-sized organizations and 55.3% at small organizations said they have a strategy or deliberate actions to attract immigrants. However, when it came to helping immigrants advance in the workplace, only about one-third of hiring managers surveyed said their organizations have clear communications on pathways to career advancement, recognize international training and experience for promotion, and/or provide coaching for leadership opportunities.

Gaps in employer practices show in the overall results on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

- 1. Despite diversity by gender, race and immigrant background in entry-level ranks, senior leadership is not diverse.** The most commonly cited challenge to EDI mentioned by hiring managers is a sense that action is not needed because the workforce is sufficiently diverse (27.0%), followed by a lack of awareness and data to understand any disadvantages (24.8%) in their workforces.
- 2. Intersectional factors might be ignored in workplace inclusion efforts.** Even though most (71.2%) hiring managers stated that their organizations are at least slightly aware of how intersectionality affects their work environments, EDI efforts do not seem to be directed at multiply marginalized employees. Inclusion efforts tend to focus on one type of discrimination or identity at a time. For example, 48.5% of hiring managers said that EDI efforts in their workplaces target women, but much fewer said the same of efforts toward immigrant women (5.4%) and Black immigrant women (2.5%).

- 3. Everyday discrimination in the workplace is a reality for many immigrant women.** About three in five (59.6%) respondents have experienced some form of microaggression at their workplace. Respondents felt uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated against primarily by their peers (22.2%) and customers, clients or external stakeholders (21.2%). The top reason for this was perceived to be their language or accent (34.1%), followed by their immigrant background (26.8%), race (24.2%) and gender (13.9%).
- 4. Two in five (42.4%) respondents believed they have been treated unfairly in their job.** Among those respondents who said they were treated unfairly, the most frequently mentioned reasons **related to salary/wages** (25.5%) and **promotion decisions** (14.2%). Less than a quarter of hiring managers said employees of their organization are told who is paid what salary. A lack of pay transparency leaves immigrant women and disadvantaged groups without information to negotiate, potentially contributing to sustaining a wage gap relative to the broader population. As for promotion, a quarter (24.5%) of respondents have advanced in their current workplace. However, about one-third of respondents felt that their opportunities for promotion into senior management or executive ranks were worse than those of their peers.

services to the specific needs of immigrant women professionals

- Expand eligibility criteria for government-funded employment-related programs
- Educate employers on the benefits of hiring immigrant women professionals
- Create more paid internship opportunities specifically for newcomer women
- Provide post-employment supports
- Improve employer recruitment and retention practices, including: more specificity in job postings; offering feedback to unsuccessful applicants; formal onboarding processes; accelerated pathways for career development; greater workplace flexibility; and tangible actions and results on equity, diversity and inclusion

Recommendations

Reflecting on their own experiences and those of other women, immigrant women professionals we heard from offered insights on how systems can be improved to make better use of their talents — including:

- Strengthen pre-arrival information sharing and supports
- Improve coordination and accountability of employment-related services and programs for newcomers
- Adapt employment-related programs and



Introduction & Background

Why This Study

An aging workforce means the Greater Toronto Area¹ must harness its talent pool to keep the region prosperous and strong. Immigrant women can contribute to the economy. The largest share of Canada's female immigrant population resides in the Toronto region.² About half of the Toronto region population are immigrants and half of those immigrants are female.³ On average, immigrant women have higher levels of educational attainment compared to their Canadian-born counterparts.⁴

Immigrant women face distinct challenges in entering and advancing in the Canadian labour market. They encounter downward career mobility and underemployment relative to their education and professional backgrounds.⁵ Data also shows that the earnings of immigrant women, especially those who are racialized, lag behind those of immigrant men and Canadian-born women, and their unemployment rate is higher.⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated some fault lines in the economy that had been developing over the years. For a country like Canada that advocates for gender equality on the world stage and a multicultural city like Toronto, signs of structural social inequalities should be of concern. If immigrants falter in the labour market, so too will the Toronto region. As the GTA emerges from the pandemic, there has never been a more critical time than now to hasten the integration of immigrant women into the labour market.

Against this backdrop, and our commitment to promote equal opportunities for all immigrants, this report presents recent findings obtained from surveys and interviews with immigrant women professionals. It aims to amplify immigrant women's voices by capturing their perspectives on barriers in the GTA labour market and recommendations on how to address them. Recognizing the pivotal role

employers play in the job integration process, we also surveyed hiring managers and strategic decision makers to understand how their recruitment, retention and promotion practices consider immigrants. A dual perspective allows for a fuller understanding of the workforce integration experiences of immigrant women professionals in the GTA.

What We Know

Disparities in the employment outcomes of immigrant women are well known. Immigrant women's (25-54 years) labour market participation rate (79.6%) was lower than that of women born in Canada (86.3%) and immigrant men (92.4%) in 2021. The unemployment rate of very recent (landed five or fewer years earlier) female immigrants was 12.2% in 2021, almost double the rate for male immigrants (6.4%) and 2.5 times higher than that of Canadian-born women (4.9%). For university-educated immigrant women, the unemployment rate stood at 7.0% compared to 4.6% for the total university-educated population. The unemployment rate gap relative to non-immigrants remains even for those immigrant women who landed 10 or more years prior.⁷

Being an immigrant and a woman comes with a double wage penalty. The median gender wage gap between economic principal applicant men and women admitted in 2009 widened over the 2010 to 2019 period (from \$8,000 in 2010 to \$17,400 in 2019), in men's favour.⁸ Immigrant women were also worse off when compared to their Canadian-born counterparts. In 2019, the average weekly earnings of recent immigrant women (in Canada 6 to 10 years) were 20.7% less than that of Canadian-born women.⁹

Race adds another layer of disadvantage.¹⁰ The unemployment rate was higher for visible minority¹¹ immigrant women (9.0%) compared to non-visible minority immigrant women (6.3%), based on the 2016 census.¹² Visible minority immigrant women (\$27,000) also earned less than non-visible minority immigrant women (\$36,000).¹³

Over time, new immigrants are expected to recover from the entry effect and find commensurate employment. Still, differences among groups linger. Research has highlighted correlations between race, language and income levels. One study found that the only

group paid more than white non-immigrant men was first-generation white immigrant men whose first language is English or French.¹⁴

Immigrant women face multi-layered employment barriers. Newcomers lack professional connections in Canada to help build their career.¹⁵ Employers may screen them out in hiring processes due to a host of factors, including concerns over immigrants' perceived lack of language proficiency,¹⁶ a perception that educational standards in source countries are below those of Canada's,¹⁷ and a preference for Canadian work experience.¹⁸ Previous studies have shown how racial or ethnic discrimination in hiring and in the workplace continues to hurt immigrants.¹⁹ For women, gender divisions in occupations and family responsibilities create other challenges.²⁰ These phenomena are frequently discussed in the literature. What is understudied within the GTA, however, are the nuances, stereotypes and prejudices within the work culture that prevent immigrant women from realizing their full potential.



Methodology

About the Study

This exploratory, mixed-methods study seeks to understand the job search and workplace experiences of immigrant women in the GTA. Following what Jones et al (n.d.)²¹ call an inclusion model to intersectionality, the research gives voice to the experiences and perspectives of immigrant women, including those who are racialized, and provides recommendations to improve immigrant women's labour market outcomes.

Following a grounded approach, we did not begin the study with specific hypotheses in mind. While informed by a review of the literature, the analysis primarily relies on the experiences of the immigrant women in our sample. We collected primary data in three ways:

- 1. An online survey of immigrant women** available between November 2, 2021 and December 15, 2021, in English. The survey was open to all immigrants who meet the following screening criteria: identify as a woman; immigrated to Canada between 2011 and 2020; first settled in the GTA; within the core working-age group (25 to 54 years); completed post-secondary education outside of Canada before immigrating; and currently seeking employment, underemployed or employed. The survey contained close-ended, semi-open-ended or open-ended questions on basic demographics, family and immigration backgrounds, education and professional backgrounds, job search experiences, current employment, and workplace experiences.
- 2. Interviews with immigrant women** randomly selected from those survey participants who consented to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The interviews further explored job search and workplace experiences in order to create rich accounts

and prompt participants to reflect on their own successes and challenges in detail. The interviews also allowed us to hear directly from immigrant women in the GTA about their suggestions on how to strengthen employment outcomes for themselves and new arrivals.

- 3. An online survey of employers in the GTA**, for triangulation purposes. Specifically, the survey, administered by Forum Research, targeted hiring managers and strategic decision makers in GTA organizations with 20 or more employees. Questions related to four categories: organizational profile; current workforce; recruitment and retention practices; and onboarding, development and promotion practices.

All data collection tools focused on the issues and priorities identified in collaboration with an advisory group of immigrant women professionals with lived experience. The advisory group included members of the TRIEC Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs) Women's Working Group.

The survey samples are not random. They are based on who is contacted and who chooses to respond to the surveys. **Appendix A** provides further details on study methods and limitations.

For the immigrant women sample, there were 365 sufficiently complete surveys for data analysis, together with 19 complete interviews. A total of 608 employer surveys met screening criteria and were sufficiently complete for analysis. The samples are useful in gathering insights about experiences and practices, perceived barriers and opportunities, and identified gaps and needs.

Who We Heard From

Immigrant Women

A total of 365 immigrant women professionals aged 25 to 54 years who arrived in the GTA between 2011 and 2020 and were employed or seeking employment responded to the survey, with sufficient information to allow for analysis. An overview of the demographic characteristics of survey respondents follows.

Year of Arrival

About 31.2% of survey respondents arrived in Canada between 2019 and 2020, 35.3% arrived between 2016 and 2018 and the remaining 33.4% arrived between 2011 and 2015. A more detailed breakdown by year of arrival can be found in **Appendix B** (Table 14).

Age Distribution

While all respondents were within the core-working-age population (25 to 54 years), the majority (66.6%) were aged 35 to 49 years. About 27.7% of survey respondents were aged 25 to 34 years and 5.8% were aged 50 to 54 years.

Disability

Only 3.8% of survey respondents identified as a person with a disability. Other respondents said they do not identify as a person with a disability (91.2%) or did not respond (4.9%). In comparison, in Statistics Canada's 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, 6.9% of immigrant women aged 25 to 54 years reported a disability.²²

Sexual Orientation

Nearly three-quarters (73.7%) of respondents identified as heterosexual, while 13.4% of respondents described themselves as asexual, bisexual, lesbian or gay or another identity and 12.9% of respondents preferred not to say or did not answer.

Race or Cultural Group

Almost all survey respondents (96.7%) provided information about their racial or cultural background. The largest racial or cultural

groups in the sample were South Asian (33.2%), Black (12.6%) and Latin American (11.8%). About 15.9% of respondents identified as white. See **Appendix B** (Table 15) for more details.

Regions of Birth and Origin

The top three regions of birth were South Asia (32.6%), Africa (12.6%), and South and Central America (11.8%). The top three countries of birth were India (24.9%), Nigeria (6.3%) and China (5.5%).

More than four in five (84.9%) respondents immigrated to Canada from their country of birth. The top regions of origin were South Asia (30.4%), West Asia (12.3%), South and Central America (10.7%) and Africa (10.7%). India (23.3%), United States (6.8%) and Nigeria (6.0%) were the top three countries of origin.

For a more detailed breakdown of regions of birth and origin, refer to **Appendix B** (Table 16). Note that analysis of responses based on country of birth and origin were grouped by regions because respondent numbers from some countries were too small to report.

A total of 83 countries were represented in the survey.

Religion or Spirituality

About 69.3% of respondents identified as religious or spiritual, while 19.2% were not religious or spiritual and 11.5% preferred not to say, did not know or did not answer. The majority of respondents are Christian (36.2%), Hindu (14.5%) or Muslim (14.2%). More details on the religious or spiritual background of respondents can be found in **Appendix B** (Table 17).

Of those who identified as religious or spiritual, a quarter said the practice of their beliefs requires special accommodation or time-off outside of the observed holidays.

Languages

Survey respondents spoke a total of 50 languages. The most common language spoken at home was English (17.0%). However, nearly four in five (79.7%) respondents spoke a language at home other than English and 3.3% preferred not to say.

Next to English, the most frequently spoken languages at home were Hindi (11.5%), Spanish (8.2%), Portuguese (4.9%), Urdu (4.9%) and Arabic (4.4%).

Marital Status

About three-quarters (77.3%) of respondents were married or living common-law; 6.3% were separated, divorced or widowed; 15.6% were single and never married/cohabited; and 0.8% preferred not to say. Among those who have ever been partnered, 86.8% had non-Canadian-born spouses or partners and 13.2% had Canadian-born spouses or partners.

Children and Other Dependents

About 58.4% of respondents had at least one child, 40.5% did not have any children and 1.1% preferred not to say. Of those respondents who reported having children, 38.7% had at least one pre-school-aged child, 71.4% had at least one school-aged child and 11.5% had adult children. Single parents accounted for 3.6% of respondents. About 13.4% of respondents had other family living with them (e.g., parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles, nieces/nephews or in-laws).

See **Appendix B** (Table 18, Table 19) for further details on respondents' dependents.

Immigration Status on Arrival

About half of respondents (51.5%) arrived in Canada as principal applicants under the economic immigrant category. Another 20.8% were dependents, with their spouses or partners being economic immigrant category principal applicants. Other respondents first came to Canada on a temporary permit or visa (12.6%), as sponsored family (11.8%) or as resettled refugees or protected persons (3.3%). More details on immigration category on arrival

are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Immigration Category on Arrival in Canada

Immigration Category	Frequency	Percent
Economic immigrant - Principal Applicant*	188	51.5%
Economic immigrant - Dependent	76	20.8%
Temporary permit or visa**	46	12.6%
Family sponsorship	43	11.8%
Refugee or protected person	12	3.3%
Total	365	100%

*Includes business class, Canadian experience class, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons, federal skilled trades workers, federal skilled workers, live-in-caregivers and provincial nominees.

**Includes foreign workers, international students and visitors.

Pre-arrival Employment

On average, respondents had about eight years of work experience before coming to Canada (see **Table 2**). Four in five respondents were employed in the six months before coming to Canada. About 69.3% of respondents were employed in their field of expertise, 9.9% were employed in a related field and 3.3% were employed in unrelated fields. An additional 3.8% of respondents were self-employed. The remaining 13.7% of respondents were not employed pre-arrival. They were unemployed and looking for work (3.0%), unemployed and not looking for work (3.3%), studying (3.3%), homemakers (2.2%), on parental leave (1.6%) or out of the labour market for other reasons (0.3%).

Table 2. Years of pre-arrival work experience

Years	Frequency	Percent
2 years or less	26	7.1%
3-5 years	100	27.4%
6-9 years	93	25.5%
10 or more years	146	40.0%
Total	365	100.0%

Before coming to Canada, the top five occupations of respondents were (see **Appendix B**, Table 20 for more details):

- professional occupations in business and finance (25.2%),
- specialized middle management occupations (21.9%),
- professional occupations in law and social, community and government services (12.9%),
- professional occupations in natural and applied sciences (9.0%) and
- administrative and financial supervisors and administrative occupations (8.2%).

Current Employment

At the time of the survey, 82.7% of respondents were in paid employment. Among those who were not (n=63), 84.1% were not working and looking for work, while 9.5% were self-employed/ freelancing, 4.8% were studying or apprenticing and 1.6% were in other situations.

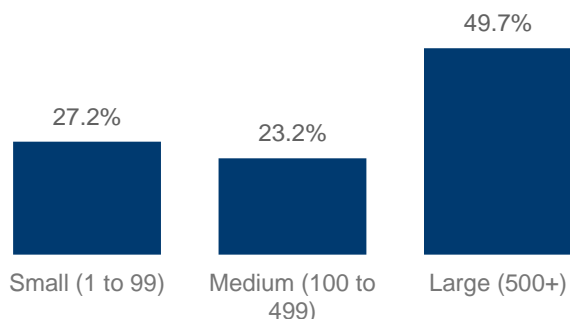
The most common industries of employed respondents were finance and insurance (24.2%); professional, scientific and technical services, such as legal, accounting and computer systems design (19.5%); and health care and social assistance (10.3%). **Appendix B** (Table 21) provides more details on the industries in which currently employed respondents work.

About half (50.3%) of respondents in paid employment work for small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as shown in **Figure 1**. Racialized respondents (45.4%) were less likely to work for SMEs than non-racialized respondents (69.1%). Respondents who speak a language other than English at home (47.4%) were also less likely than those who do not to work for an SME (64.0%).

Nearly one in five (18.5%) of respondents said their jobs do not allow them to work from home. The remainder were mandatorily working from home (26.5%), working from home optionally (21.9%), working both on-site and from home (32.1%) or had other arrangements (1.0%) at the time of the survey.

Refer to **Appendix C** for a profile of participants in in-depth interviews.

Figure 1. Respondents in paid employment by size of employer (n=302)



Employers

The employer²³ survey sample includes members of Forum Research's business panel consisted of senior managers or managers at GTA employers with 20 or more employees. Respondents were involved in hiring and strategic decision-making. About 44.4% of respondents represent large employers (500 or more employees), 29.4% represent medium-sized employers (100 to 499 employees) and 26.2% represent small employers with 20 to 99 employees.

Small employers are under-represented in the sample. Weights are not used to correct for this, but results are disaggregated by employer size in many cases. Most respondents represent private, for-profit enterprises (56.3%), organizations headquartered in the GTA (85.9%) and those with operations that extend outside of the GTA (68.7%). All industrial sectors are covered by the sample. For more details about employers, refer to **Table 3** and **Appendix D** (Table 32 to Table 34).

About 28.8% of employer survey respondents were directly responsible for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts in their organization, while 25.2% reported to the person directly responsible for EDI efforts (see **Table 4**). Another 26.6% of respondents served on an EDI leadership council or advisory group (16.8%), or were responsible for EDI in other ways (9.9%).

The remaining 19.4% of respondents did not have any EDI responsibilities or preferred not to answer. Respondents in large organizations were more likely to be directly responsible for EDI efforts than those representing small- or medium-sized employers.

Table 3. Profile of employer survey respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Employer Size		
20 to 99	159	26.2%
100 to 499	179	29.4%
500+	270	44.4%
Headquarters in GTA		
Yes	522	85.9%
No	86	14.1%
Operations		
GTA only	190	31.3%
Ontario	85	14.0%
GTA + Other province	8	1.3%
Canada	174	28.6%
Multinational	65	10.7%
Global	86	14.1%
Sector		
Public	240	39.5%
Private, for-profit	342	56.3%
Non-profit	26	4.3%
Total	608	100%

Table 4. Respondents' role in equity, diversity and inclusion in their organizations

Respondent's Role in EDI	Percent	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
I am directly responsible for EDI efforts in our organization	28.8%	15.7%	26.3% ^C	38.1% ^{CD}
I report into the person directly responsible for EDI efforts in our organization	25.2%	27.0%	25.1%	24.1%
I serve on an EDI leadership council or advisory group	16.8%	24.5% ^{DE}	15.6%	13.0%
I am responsible for the leadership and strategic direction of EDI activities in other ways	9.9%	8.8%	8.9%	11.1%
I do not have any EDI responsibilities	16.9%	20.8% ^E	21.8% ^E	11.5%
I prefer not to answer	2.5%	3.1%	2.2%	2.2%
Total	608	159	179	270

Note: Letters indicate significance at the 95% level.



Key Findings

What We Heard

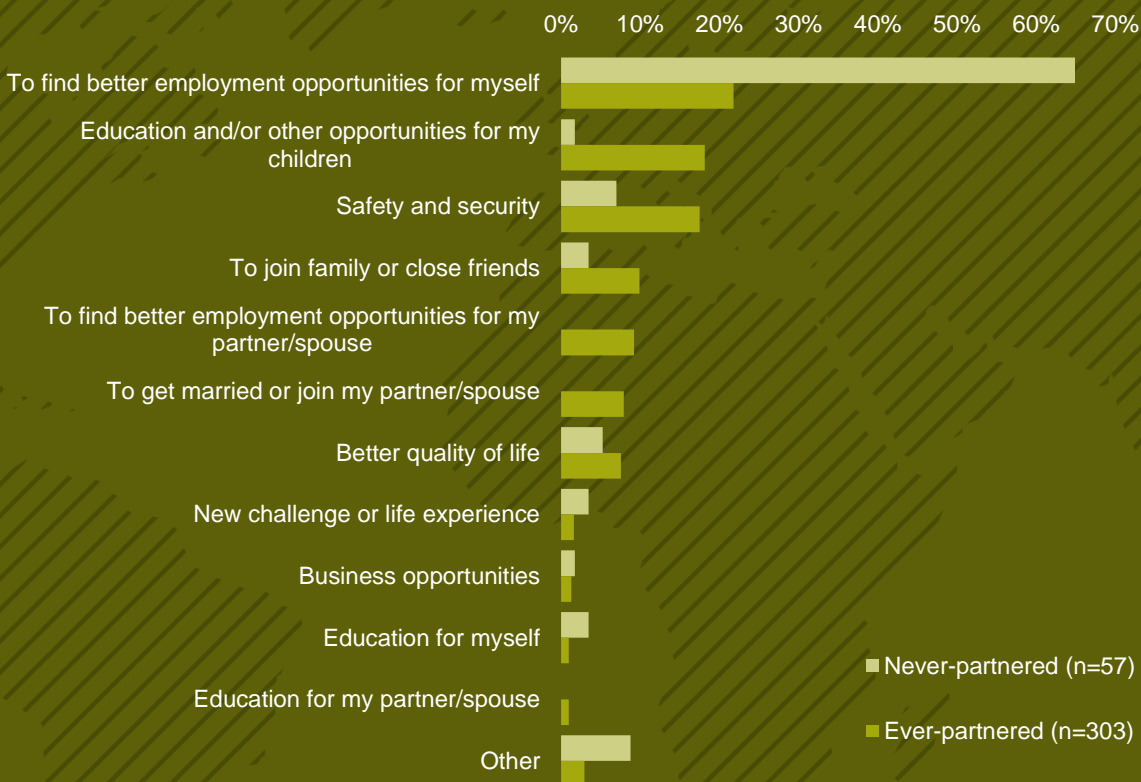
Job Search Experiences

Motivations for immigration varied but primarily centre on economic opportunities

Among female immigrants to Toronto under the economic category, the proportion of principal applicants increased steadily between 2011 and 2020, from 51.2% to 66.4%.²⁴ About half (51.5%) of survey respondents were principal applicants under the economic immigrant category, reflecting their high skills, experience and training. Consistent with this, nearly half (46.8%) of respondents made the decision to immigrate to Canada independently, evidence of their strong levels of autonomy. Another 26.8% made the decision jointly with their partner, while 24.4% came to Canada because their partner wanted to and 1.9% came to Canada because of someone else's decision.

The image of immigrant women as “tied movers” whose labour supply decisions are of secondary importance to their spouses’ is changing.²⁵ Among survey respondents, both never-partnered (64.9%) and ever-partnered (21.8%), the most frequently mentioned reason for coming to Canada was better employment opportunities for themselves. See **Figure 2** for details.

Figure 2. Main reasons for immigrating to Canada by marital (or common-law) status



Family responsibilities shape employment decisions for some

About three-quarters (77.3%) of respondents started searching for a job in their profession immediately on arrival in the GTA. Among those who did not do so (n=83), 30.1% cited childcare responsibilities or pregnancy. Other reasons are listed in **Table 5** below.

Table 5. Reasons for not looking for work immediately on arrival in the GTA

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Needed to take care of children/ pregnancy	25	30.1%
Studying/professional upgrading	14	16.9%
Wanted to take a break from work / settle in first	11	13.3%
Not confident in English language skills	7	8.4%
COVID-19 pandemic	5	6.0%
No work permit	5	6.0%
Not licensed to practice in field of expertise	5	6.0%
Continued work/activities abroad	4	4.8%
Other	7	8.4%
Total	83	100

The priorities that immigrant women establish for themselves are important to understand, recognizing that they may shift with time. A number of factors influence employment or career decisions, including individual preferences and family responsibilities. One interviewee explained how having a child affected her job search: *“I apply for lower-level jobs because I have a child and I won’t be able to leave him for a long time. The job that pays higher requires some travelling and I didn’t want that.”*

One in five (22.1%) respondents with children said that the lack of affordable childcare is a major barrier to working in their profession (see **Appendix B**, Table 22). Cities in the GTA — specifically, Toronto, Brampton, Mississauga, Vaughan and Markham — top lists of the most expensive urban areas for child care in Canada.²⁶

For some respondents, the move to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic allowed for better work-life balance, but for others added childcare and household care duties affected their personal and professional lives.

“... childcare and household care duties [took a] toll on my professional life and my mental health was intensified during the pandemic. The social networks and nets of support migrant women have, especially in early years, are minimal, and I felt quite isolated and had no clear avenues to seek additional support.” — Not-for-profit professional, originally from Ecuador, arrived in Canada in 2015

“When COVID hit, I still had to go to the site. I was scared. I double-masked myself when I was on site. But in terms of childcare responsibilities, it was good. My husband was working from home, so he would take a lot of the load. Simple things like potty training our child and teaching them to do a lot of things. With these things, COVID really helped because my husband was sitting at home. I wouldn’t want to be in a place where both parents have to go out with a child during COVID.” — Engineer, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2015

Many have experienced long-term unemployment

On net, the vast majority of respondents (88.5%) said it was difficult to find a job in their profession in the GTA. For about half of respondents (48.2%), it took longer than six months of job search to find their first job. Statistically significant differences in the length of time taken to find a first job in the GTA by respondent characteristics, such as language spoken at home and racialization, were not found (see **Table 6**). One exception is when comparing those with children to those without.

Childless respondents were more likely than their counterparts to secure a job in the first six months of searching. As one respondent explained, her job search was constrained by the need to balance care responsibilities: *“As a mom, I had many time restrictions (kid’s school) and it made the searching difficult because many opportunities in Toronto require more commute time than I was able to commit. My searching area was smaller than women with no kids.”*

Table 6. Length of time taken to find first job in the GTA after commencing search

Characteristic	Total	6 months or less		> 6 months or ongoing	
		Freq.	Freq.	Percent	Freq.
Total	365	189	51.8%	176	48.2%
Years since arrival (completed years)					
1-2 years (A)	114	56	49.1%	58	50.9%
3-5 years (B)	129	71	55.0%	58	45.0%
6-10 years (C)	122	62	50.8%	60	49.2%
Immigration category					
Economic - Principal applicant (D)	188	106	56.4%	82	43.6%
Economic – Dependent (E)	76	33	43.4%	43	56.6%
Temporary permit/visa (F)	46	22	47.8%	24	52.2%
Sponsored family (G)	43	25	58.1%	18	41.9%
Resettled refugee / protected person (H)	12	3	25.0%	9	75.0%
Age group					
25 to 34 years (I)	101	63	62.4%	38	37.6%
35 to 49 years (J)	243	119	49.0%	124	51.0% ¹
50 to 54 years (K)	21	7	33.3%	14	66.7%
Marital status					
Never-partnered (L)	57	38	66.7%	19	33.3%
Ever-partnered with non-Canadian-born (M)	263	119	45.2%	144	54.8%
Ever-partnered with Canadian-born (N)	40	31	77.5%	9	22.5%
Prefer not to say (O)	5	--	--	--	--
Children					
Yes (P)	213	95	44.6%	118	55.4%
No (Q)	148	93	62.8% ^P	55	37.2%
Prefer not to say (R)	4	--	--	--	--
Languages other than English spoken at home					
Yes (S)	291	141	48.5%	150	51.5%
No (T)	62	40	64.5%	22	35.5%
Prefer not to say/No response (U)	12	8	66.7%	4	33.3%
Racialized					
Yes (V)	290	143	49.3%	147	50.7%
No (W)	63	37	58.7%	26	41.3%
Not Known (X)	12	9	75.0%	3	25.0%

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3). | Superscript letters indicate significantly higher at the 95% level. | Statistical testing was suppressed where the filter’s effective sample size was less than 30.

Employers' preference for Canadian experience is seen as the biggest source of discrimination and a major barrier to labour market entry

About half of respondents (51.2%), regardless of immigration category or profession, identified a lack of Canadian work experience as a major²⁷ barrier to finding a job in their field in the GTA. Proportionally, more respondents identified lack of Canadian work experience as a major barrier to work in their profession compared to other types of barriers they might encounter (see **Appendix B**, Table 22 for more details).

The issue goes beyond just regulated professions. According to respondents in unregulated fields such as information technology, employers in the GTA fixate on local work experience even when job candidates have worked in well-known global firms. Those in professions that one respondent labeled as “white-dominated,” such as public relations, human resources and marketing, explained how they had to switch fields or take entry level positions because, in their view, employers simply do not believe that a person from another country will understand the Canadian market or workplace culture. About 21.4% of respondents noted that employer perceptions of their ‘cultural fit’ was a major barrier.

Immigrants and the Canadian-born population generally enjoy the same access to social rights and anti-discrimination protections in the labour market. Nevertheless, the ask for Canadian work experience is one structural barrier that exclusively affects immigrants. As shown in **Table 7**, 64.4% of respondents were asked about their Canadian work experience in an interview. Interviewees noted that employer inquiries are often indirect, while some third-party recruiting agencies overtly screen candidates based on their Canadian experience. Racialized and non-racialized respondents were equally likely to be asked about Canadian work experience. Respondents who arrived 1-5 years before the survey were equally likely to be asked about Canadian work experience as those who arrived 6-10 years before (see **Appendix B**, Table 23 for details).

“Most job postings or recruiters do not ask for ‘Canadian experience’ but it is implied, understated and in a verbal conversation you can be told that. Some job postings do mention this in different words like ‘having experience in Canadian payroll processing’ or ‘experience with Canadian Labor Code’. Or you are told we found a candidate with more experience.” — Human resources professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2019

“What I have experienced is that employers ... have not said that the reason they don’t want to go forward with an interview is because I don’t have Canadian experience. Who has told me this directly is the recruiters. They were mostly third-party recruiting agencies or freelancers who were taking my profile to employers. Some of them were really excited to see my profile and they were really excited to talk to me. They presented my profile to the employer and they came back and told me that the employer is asking for Canadian experience. Or some of the recruiters told me directly that they can’t present my profile because I have no Canadian experience.” — E-commerce professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2020

“When I came in Canada my studies and work experience were not recognized because they weren’t “Canadian.” Because it was a new environment, I didn’t know anyone so I did not have connections to recommend me for a job at their company. The only connection that I had (my husband) recommended me at his workplace. They wanted to send me to the factory to break key tags. This was what was considered good enough according to my resume. After insisting, they offered me a data entry job. In 6 months, I was offered another data entry job in a bigger company, because my Canadian experience is data entry, my previous experience doesn’t matter anymore. I am still currently working in data entry.” — Financial advisor, originally from Romania, arrived in Canada in 2018

Table 7. In a job interview in the Greater Toronto Area, have you ever been asked questions about the following?

Questions	Frequency (n=365)	Percent
Your Canadian work experience	235	64.4%
Your immigration status	173	47.4%
Your marital status	58	15.9%
The number of children you have, or plans to have children	47	12.9%
Your ethnicity or culture	36	9.9%
Your religion	22	6.0%
Your mental or physical health	20	5.5%
Your sexual orientation	19	5.2%
Your age	17	4.7%
Your gender	17	4.7%
None of the above	77	21.1%
I have not yet had any job interviews in the Greater Toronto Area	6	1.6%

When asked about the importance of Canadian experience to their organizations, hiring managers said that it is important across all job levels, especially for middle management (72.9%), senior management (72.5%) and executive / C-level (71.2%). About 59.2% of hiring managers said that Canadian work experience is important for the entry/junior level and 64.1% said the same for the intermediate level. Large employers were more likely to say Canadian work experience is important at all levels than small employers (see **Appendix D**, Table 36 for more details). In spite of this, less than one in five (16.8%) hiring managers identified a lack of Canadian experience as a reason for not extending an offer to a racialized immigrant woman they have interviewed in the 12 months prior to the survey (see **Box 1** for more details). This may reflect that without Canadian experience, many racialized immigrant women do not even reach interview stage.

Besides the requirement of Canadian work experience, implicit or otherwise, immigrant women refer to “polite”, “soft” or “undercurrents” of racism and gender-based discrimination in the recruitment process. About 15.9% of respondents said racism or prejudice in the workforce is a major barrier to finding work in their profession in the GTA. About 7.7% of respondents said gender-based discrimination is a major barrier.

“In the job interviews, interviewers mostly abide by the law and they would not ask direct questions about age, family status, religion, sexual orientation, or foreign credentials. However, it is evident through my job search and also being an insider to a Canadian employer that those aspects are determinants in the selection of a successful candidate.”

– Engineer, originally from Syria, arrived in Canada in 2018

Discrimination is difficult to measure separately from other employment barriers immigrant women face. Unconscious biases may manifest in the demeanor of interviewers and their reactions to newcomer candidates. These forms of discrimination are harder to measure and confirm. Further, hiring decisions by employers that embed biases toward immigrant women can be concealed in what seems like objective professional requirements and tend to go unnoticed. Some respondents explained how employer demands for “soft skills” might be used in discriminatory ways. For example, a market researcher originally from Oman said *“The reference to “soft skills” [is] an ambiguous term that is now being thrown around to say you’re not a typical white male professional (who might tend to be loud, brash and overconfident even when they’re wrong). This comparison needs to stop. My leadership skills are different and using a term like soft skills to try and point that out is degrading.”*

“Women are facing more discrimination versus men because they think we would accept anything just to get a job and they ask illegal questions like age and marital status, especially small companies.”

– Financial planner, originally from Rwanda, arrived in Canada in 2019

Box 1. Employers' reasons for not hiring racialized immigrant women

When asked about reasons for not hiring racialized immigrant women they have interviewed in the 12 months before the survey, more hiring managers said English language skills (34.5%) and technical skills (34.5%) compared to other reasons, which included the following (see **Appendix D**, Table 37):

- Job requires travel and visa issues arise (23.2%)
- Soft skills (21.9%)
- Difficulty with obtaining Canadian references (20.7%)
- Have too many family obligations outside of work (20.7%)
- No Canadian experience (16.8%)
- No Canadian qualifications (15.6%)
- Not the right 'cultural fit' (14.8%)

There were some differences by employer size. About 17.1% of hiring managers had not interviewed any racialized immigrant women. Hiring managers at small (23.3%) and medium (19.6%) organizations were more likely than

those at large organizations (11.9%) to say they have not interviewed any racialized immigrant women in the 12 months prior the survey. Hiring managers at large organizations were more likely than those at small organizations to give reasons for not hiring racialized immigrant women related to their technical skills, qualifications, cultural fit, soft skills and family obligations.

Familiarity with Canadian business culture, practices and norms is the only area where slightly more hiring managers said racialized immigrant women rate lower than other candidates, compared to those who said they rate higher. When it comes to professionalism and work ethic, ability to adapt to changes at work, teamwork and collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving skills and leadership skills, proportionally more employers said racialized immigrant women candidates rate higher than other candidates, compared to those who said they rate lower (see **Appendix D**, Table 38).

Several respondents believe employers' preference for Canadian work experience and other biases against immigrant candidates are baked into applicant tracking systems (ATS) employers use. One respondent, a senior manager originally from Belgium, stated, "*I applied to more than 70 jobs in one month and did not get a single interview call. At the very beginning of my search, I had applied to one job that did not require me to upload a resume or cover letter. It asked me to mail my resume to a specific person. It was this application that landed me my only interview and subsequent recruitment. I believe the ATS works against qualified immigrants.*"

More than half (58.6%) of hiring managers surveyed said their organizations use blind screening for job applications. There were no significant differences by employer size. Public sector organizations (67.1%) were more likely to use blind screening than private (53.5%) and

non-profit (46.2%) organizations. One hiring manager stated that the use of blind screening has been "the most impactful action [their organization has] done to promote diversity."

"Some employers have a long way to go to eliminate unconscious bias. Many times, there's no discrimination based on the prohibited grounds, but the attitudes of interviewers (recruiter, HR representative, hiring manager) are different towards immigrants. It could involve small things such as gasping or scoffing when they hear an accent, or a look that shows distrust or bewilderment, or other types of body language that cannot be categorized as discrimination. We have to recognize that those attitudes exist and are not acceptable."

— HR consultant, originally from Argentina, arrived in Canada in 2012

Already highly educated, many immigrant women pursue further studies after arrival in Canada

Immigrant women respondents are highly educated. Before arriving in Canada, 65.2% of respondents had at least a master's degree, as shown in **Table 8**. In addition, nearly a quarter (23.8%) of respondents held a license, trade certification or designation from a professional body in their countries of origin.

Despite high-levels of education and pre-immigration qualifications, nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of respondents pursued or are pursuing further studies since their arrival in Canada (see

Table 9). Professional licensure courses (24.9%) and college certifications (20.8%) were the most common learning investments by survey respondents. Respondents who have degrees from western institutions pre-arrival and those who do not were equally likely to pursue further studies in Canada. Canadian education may serve as a substitute for Canadian experience by helping immigrants build networks and learn about workplace practices.

Table 8. Level(s) of education completed before arriving in Canada

Pre-arrival education	Frequency (n=365)	Percent
University doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., D.Phil)	20	5.5%
University master's degree (e.g., M.A., M.Sc. M.Ed.)	218	59.7%
Degree in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, Podiatry, Chiropractic Medicine, Pharmacy	14	3.8%
Degree in Law	14	3.8%
Degree in Engineering	31	8.5%
Other bachelor's or undergraduate university degree or teacher's college	88	24.1%
Diploma or certificate from community college or nursing school	4	1.1%
Diploma or certificate from trade, technical or vocational school or business college	7	1.9%
Other	--	--

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Table 9. Type(s) of further education pursued after arrival in Canada

Type of additional education	Frequency (n=365)	Percent
No additional education	130	35.6%
University doctorate degree (e.g., Ph.D., D.Phil)	8	2.2%
University master's degree (e.g., M.A., M.Sc. M.Ed.)	23	6.3%
University bachelor's degree	18	4.9%
College certifications	76	20.8%
Additional college courses	22	6.0%
Additional university courses	22	6.0%
Professional licensure courses	91	24.9%
Other	27	7.4%

When we asked hiring managers about foreign education credentials, 55.6% said country of study is important. However, fewer thought country of study is important relative to other factors (see **Appendix D**, Table 39):

- 62.5% said international reputation of credentials is important,
- 71.2% said educational credential assessment is important,
- 71.7% said level of education is important and
- 71.9% said field of study is important.

Hiring managers at large organizations were more likely than those at small- and medium-sized organizations to say that country is important when assessing foreign credentials. Non-profits were much less likely than public- and private-sector employers to say country matters when assessing foreign credentials.

One interviewee originally from India noted that employers cast doubt on qualifications from certain countries: *“There was somebody [at a networking event] who asked me if I got my engineering degree via correspondence and I was lost. There is a huge mistrust about degrees coming from different countries. Is it true? Is it actual? They are not asking these questions for a director or manager post. They are asking these questions for a basic entry post where the person sitting next to you has a high school qualification.”*

Respondents who pursued additional education in Canada have mixed experiences. In some cases, they sought further education due to a lack of success in their initial job search. While some respondents described how Canadian education helped to get a job related to their field, others said they landed in debt and back in survival jobs. About half (48.2%) of respondents who have pursued, or are currently pursuing, additional education said they are in a job that is very related to their prior work (see **Table 10**). Some respondents may have chosen to switch fields after arrival in Canada for reasons unrelated to labour market challenges. Yet other respondents may not have completed their programs at the time of the survey.

“I was doing my job searching full time as I needed to find a job in the accounting field. I did it continuously for one year but I failed to find a job related to accounting. Then I decided to take any kind of job as my financial situation was declining, so I ended up with a job in retail. I continued to study while doing the retail job full time and worked as a tax professional part time. My Canadian education and part-time job helped me to get my current job as an administrative and accounting clerk.” — Accountant, originally from Sri Lanka, arrived in Canada in 2012

Table 10. Extent to which current job is related to education/training and previous work experience

To what extent is your current job related to your post-secondary education/training and previous work experience?	Did you pursue, or are you currently pursuing, further education since arriving in Canada?					
	Total		Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not at all related	44	14.6%	28	14.4%	16	15.0%
Somewhat related	103	34.1%	73	37.4%	30	28.0%
Very related	155	51.3%	94	48.2%	61	57.0%
Total	302	100.0%	195	100.0%	107	100.0%

“It took me one year to find a job in Canada. And it was not in my area. Then, I stepped down as assistant manager in a retail job in order to be able to do a paralegal program. So now, I’m an unemployed paralegal, trying to pay my OSAP and had to spend lots of money to do the P1 Exam only to end up again in retail. I went back to retail now as a part-time associate, but COVID affected the hours in the store.” — Lawyer, originally from the Dominican Republic, arrived in Canada in 2015

“I took a college course for 1 year just to be able to take advantage of the internship at the end of the course. I finished the course 1st of my class (94% grade out of 100%) and the college was not able to find me a place to go and have an internship. They were sending me in a factory to stick labels on boxes (this was considered supply chain internship experience). I refused. Now I have a debt of almost 15k dollars, paying back the college tuition and I’m not even working in the area of study.” — Financial advisor, originally from Romania, arrived in Canada in 2018

Some respondents explained how they could not afford to get Canadian certifications without a job. About one in five (22.5%) respondents said not having money to update their training and skills was or is a major barrier to finding work in their profession in the GTA (see **Appendix B**, Table 22 for details). The process to requalify can be long, which can complicate their financial situation.

“It was hard to find a job in Canada, despite having an MBA, because every company I reached out to didn’t accept non-Canadian qualifications. I couldn’t afford a Human Resources certification before getting a paying job.”

– Human resources professional, originally from Venezuela, arrived in Canada in 2014



Half of respondents downgraded their qualifications to overcome job entry barriers

Facing multiple barriers to career entry in the GTA, more than four in five (83.8%) respondents have taken at least one action to “fit” the culture or expectations of employers in Canada.

- 57.5% of respondents have **downgraded their educational achievements and/or experience** to appear less qualified for a position than they are
- 43.0% of respondents have **accepted unpaid work or internships** in a role related to their field of expertise to gain “Canadian experience”
- 21.9% of respondents said they have **changed or shortened their name** to sound “more Canadian”
- 15.3% of respondents sought training to help **change their accents**
- 13.7% of respondents **changed their appearances** to make their looks more acceptable to “Canadian culture”
- 9.6% have **added qualifications to their resume that they do not have**
- 8.5% of respondents took **other actions to “fit” the culture or expectations of employers**

Some respondents highlighted disconnects between the value Canadian policy puts on immigrants compared to employers’ perceptions:

“When we search for jobs in Canada from our homeland, we are painted a picture of many opportunities. We are told that Canada needs skilled people, that Canada has many opportunities, that Canada is welcoming to all - regardless of skin colour, religion, sexuality, gender identification etc. But somebody forgot to share the memo with the businesses and other Canadians. Our skills are not needed... Our labour at Popeye’s and Uber is.”

— Administrator, originally from Barbados, arrived in Canada in 2019

“I feel Canada is portrayed as a place that is open to immigrants but the job market isn’t that open. Employers should be honest enough to say that we don’t want to take you. I had a hiring manager tell me that they know I am qualified for a higher role but they need to build trust in my abilities.”

— Accountant, originally from Nigeria, arrived in Canada in 2016

Downplaying their experience and credentials is a common pathway immigrant women take to start their career. Several interviewees explained how they were advised by employment counsellors, friends and others to remove qualifications from their resume and apply for entry-level jobs. For many, occupational downgrading was a last resort:

“You get to a point where you want a job because you need to survive. When the desirable is not available, the available becomes desirable. That is the case. You are applying for a customer service role and you won’t even get called back because you are overqualified for the role. For me, that’s one of the most fundamental issues – dumbing down my resume hurts me. I put a lot of work to build myself. To get a job I am overqualified for, I have to take out everything. The HR person should know that if the person is overqualified, they are probably looking for a survival job. I don’t get that logic. Maybe employers feel that they are insulting the person by calling them for a job. But that is one of the challenging things for me. I have gone for customer service roles and I have come back mentally exhausted, defeated and crying. I was this close to just packing up my things and going back to my country. I don’t think I can take this anymore. It is cold. I am running out of the funds I came with and I can’t even get a job.”

— Lawyer, originally from Nigeria, arrived in Canada in 2019

For several respondents, downgrading their qualifications and the struggles of the job search undermined their confidence and were detrimental to their mental health. One interviewee spoke of how she and newcomers like her are often unprepared for the scale of the challenge and how, in her culture, it can be difficult for women as “pillars of the family” to seek help. Some interviewees also spoke of how they had to build up their identity and self-esteem after getting a job, in order to be successful in the job.

“I went to the US to do my PhD. So when I came here I felt as though – not that finding a job would be easier, I didn’t think that – but I thought it would have been easier than what I was hearing about what it is like to find employment in Canada. And it was horrible. That process was so traumatic that for the first time, I experienced anxiety and depression and had to be medicated for it.” — Academic (business administration), originally from Jamaica, arrived in Canada in 2015

“I wanted other people who would be going through this to learn from my experience. Every newcomer I meet, the first thing I tell them is

just get ready for a marathon, don’t think this would be a sprint. And be kind to yourself; if not, you are going to crash. I did crash. I did have to reach out for help – mental health support. I just recognize that these are not things you are told. When you are preparing to immigrate, they tell you to go and get your qualifications and get WES to accredit you and all of that. But nobody really tells you about this other part – like, how to prepare yourself, how to prepare your mind, how to handle change, how to handle rejection. Nobody tells you about that. And, for me, I feel like it is one of the biggest struggles.” — Accountant (pre-arrival), originally from Nigeria, arrived in Canada in 2016

“But for someone who comes in alone, how long are you going to deplete all your resources that you bring from back home. And not everyone is going to come with a lot of money to make sure they can survive for a year or two years. So that instability is very stressful and I’m sure that could be a reason for mental health issues. I went through a lot mentally. The struggle was real.” — Finance professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2017



Applications to advertised vacancies landed more respondents with jobs than personal or professional connections

Many respondents believed that jobs go to the most well connected job seekers and that positions are often filled even before they are advertised. Lack of professional references in Canada (44.1%) and professional networks in Canada (42.2%) were among the top barriers to finding a job in the GTA identified by respondents. However, for 34.0% of respondents, applying for an advertised vacancy led to their first job in the GTA. In comparison, 21.1% of respondents relied on personal or professional connections and an additional 11.1% found their first job through networking events or job fairs (see **Table 11** for more details).

Studies have shown that social capital, or the intensity and quality of inter-personal relationships, can facilitate immigrant integration and employment success.²⁸ The job search process in the GTA usually involves employers asking for Canadian-based references. For immigrant women without established networks in Canada, the lack of professional connections can be a barrier.²⁹

Networking has proven challenging for many respondents. In their home countries, some women formed networks organically in school or as they undertook different jobs. As their professional networks grew, they gradually had access to more people. However, when they arrived in Canada, many respondents said they did not know how to start building professional connections. They had to learn to network in new situations, which was difficult for some respondents without the confidence to manoeuvre Canadian business culture, including engaging in small talk about sports or other local topics. A lack of networking skills was not the only gap. Some respondents noted the challenge of attending events in the evening when they have young children at home. Other respondents mentioned that networking events and job fairs were geared toward job seekers in “low-skilled” or low-wage occupations, or with limited work experience in their field. Finally,

respondents who arrived just before or after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic had additional challenges to forming social and professional connections as the ways in which we interact has shifted.

Table 11. How respondents found their first job in the GTA

Approach	Frequency	Percent
Applied for an advertised vacancy	113	34.0%
Referred to an employer by a non-family mentor	39	11.7%
Personal or family connection to employer	31	9.3%
Staffing/recruitment agency	30	9.0%
Networking events/industry specific forums	22	6.6%
Community employment services	21	6.3%
Immigrant settlement agencies	19	5.7%
Continued into permanent employment from a co-op placement or internship	18	5.4%
Job/recruitment fairs	15	4.5%
Continued into permanent employment from a volunteer job	11	3.3%
Cold calls	6	1.8%
Sector councils / professional associations	--	--
Other	5	1.5%
Total	332	100.0%

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Hiring managers were asked about the channels they commonly use for recruitment. Online recruitment sources such as Workopolis and Indeed (41.8%) were the most often used channel for recruitment, followed by social media such as LinkedIn (32.4%) and the organization's website (29.4%). Large employers (34.1%) were more likely than small employers (22.0%) to use their organization's website for recruitment. Other notable employer survey results are as follows (see **Appendix D**, Table 35 for more details).

- About 29.1% of employers rely on employee referrals for recruitment. All employers, regardless of size, were equally likely to use employee referrals.
- About 20.1% of employers rely on internal postings for recruitment, which is similar for all employers regardless of size.

- Large employers (17.8%) were more likely than small employers (10.1%) to use networking events/industry specific forums for recruitment.
- Just 9.7% of employers rely on immigrant settlement agencies, 14.3% on community employment services and 16.3% used executive placement agencies or temporary employment agencies.

"... I know for sure that there are a lot of hidden opportunities in the market that are not really published online right away. And, typically, [employers] would prefer somebody based on referrals. That alone I think is a disadvantage if you are an immigrant and a woman and don't have any connections here coming to a new place."

— IT project coordinator, originally from the Philippines, arrived in 2015



Uptake of employment-related services or programs is high but user satisfaction is mixed

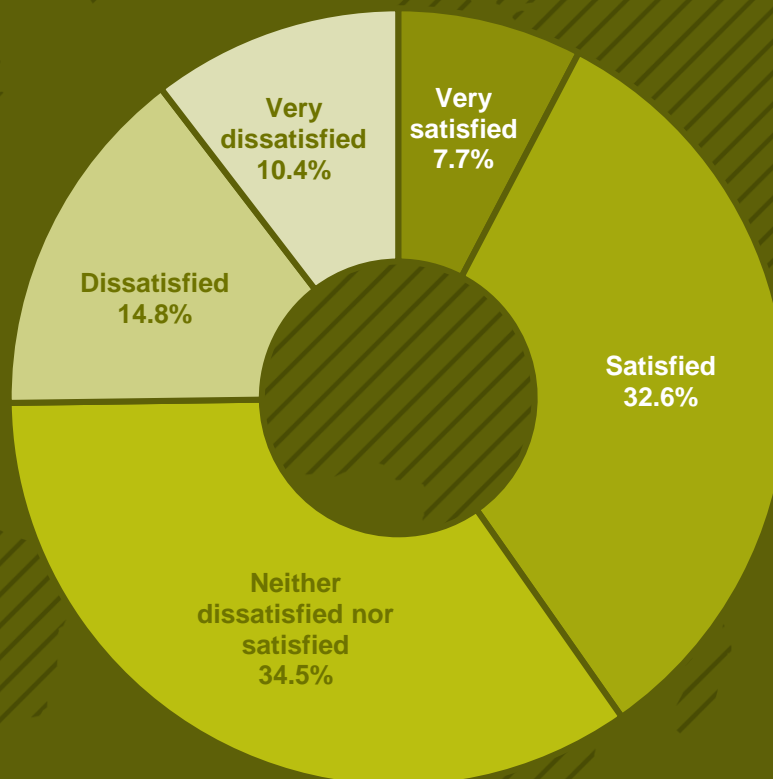
The settlement and integration needs of new Canadians are complex. Employment service providers make efforts to respond to the needs of new immigrants through quality services and programs, as funding allows. These services and programs have a wide reach. In this survey, almost all respondents (96.7%) have used an employment-related service or program to help find work in the GTA. More than half have participated in workshops to build skills in job search, resume writing and interviewing (62.5%), mentoring programs (56.7%), employment counselling or career coaching (52.6%) and networking programs or events (51.0%). See **Appendix B** (Table 24) for a list of other types of services or programs respondents have used in the GTA to support their job search.

Two in five (40.3%) respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the types of services or programs available to support immigrant women in the GTA with their job search (see **Figure 3**). About a quarter (25.2%) of respondents were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied, while the remaining 34.5% were

neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Level of satisfaction with services or programs was not related to respondents' current employment status. Several interviewees expressed that they did not expect employment service providers to find them a job and did not judge the quality of services by this criterion.

Several respondents mentioned that the services or programs have helped them to build job search skills (e.g., developing application materials, interviewing, etc.), understand Canadian culture and make personal connections with other newcomers. Some respondents emphasized that employment-related programs can only do so much, and that success in landing that first job also depends on how flexible newcomers are to considering alternative career options, how open employers are to immigrant talent and funder priorities. Respondents also highlighted several ways in which the employment services or programs they used can be improved. These recommendations are discussed later in this report.

Figure 3. Level of satisfaction with the types of employment-related services or programs available to immigrant women in the GTA



Workplace Experiences

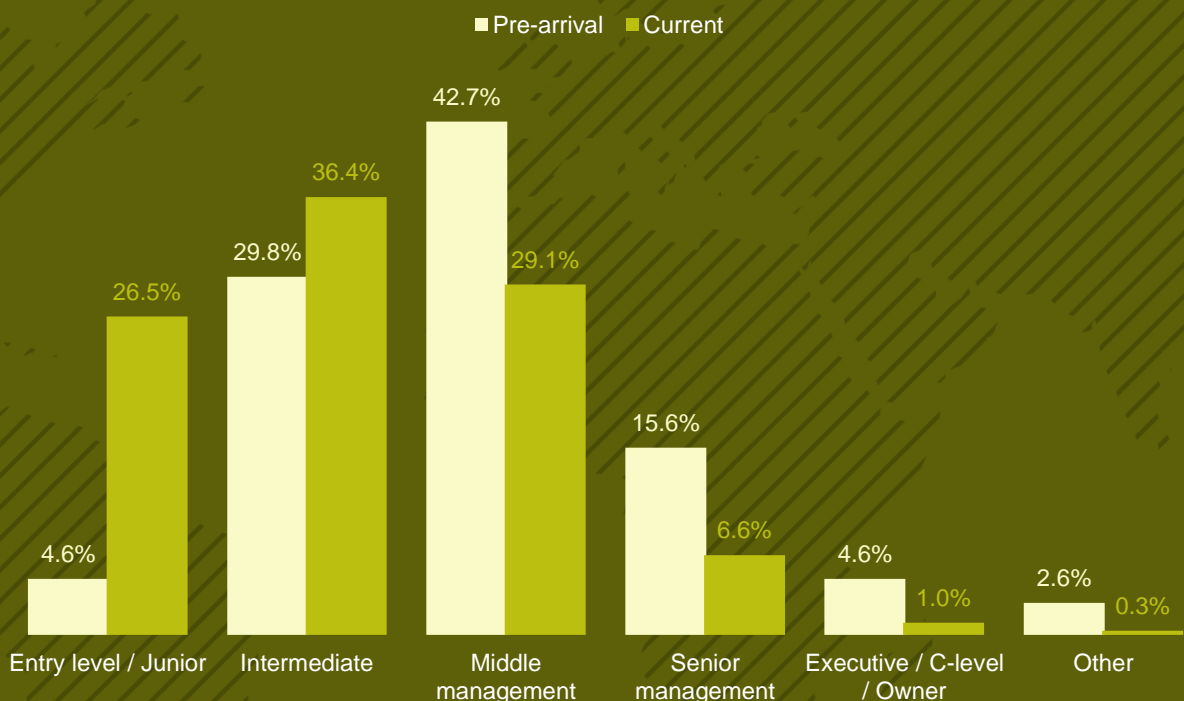
Many women accept employment setbacks to jump start their careers

The struggles that immigrant women professionals face in the Canadian labour market are cancelling the gains that they made in their previous countries. Many immigrant women professionals were driven to take entry-level jobs or jobs outside of their field for economic survival, or remain unemployed. About 41.9% of respondents held positions with lower job levels than what they last had prior to immigrating to Canada, while 26.8% were in similar job levels, 11.2% were in higher job levels and 2.7% were not possible to classify. The remaining 17.3% of respondents were unemployed (14.8%), students (0.8%) or self-employed or freelancing (1.6%) at the time of the survey.

One in five (20.2%) respondents in paid

employment held senior management, executive or C-level positions before immigrating to Canada, but just 7.6% currently hold positions at these levels (see **Figure 4**). In contrast, 4.6% of respondents in paid employment held entry level/junior positions before immigrating to Canada, compared to 26.5% of working respondents who are currently in entry level/junior positions. When asked about their level of satisfaction with their current level of seniority, 39.7% said they are very satisfied or satisfied, 36.1% of respondents said they are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied and 24.2% were neutral. In the view of one respondent, when it is difficult to get commensurate work from the get-go, many immigrants accept the status quo and do not ever move back to their field of expertise.

Figure 4. Job level of respondents who are currently in paid employment vs. job level last held before arriving in Canada (n=302)



In many respects, the majority of working respondents were in good quality employment at the time of the survey, regardless of their job levels:

- 91.1% had just one employer, while 8.9% had more than one.
- 91.4% were in full-time employment, while 8.6% were in part-time positions.
- 85.4% said that their current job is very related (51.3%) or somewhat related (34.1%) to their post-secondary education and previous work experience
- 74.8% were in permanent positions, 17.5% were in contract positions of longer than six months, 3.6% were in contract positions of six months or less and 4.0% had informal/casual work arrangements.
- 71.2% had a total income from employment before taxes of more than \$40,000 over the 12 months prior to the survey (see **Appendix B**, Table 26 for more details).

Respondents who said they are in occupations not related to their prior studies and work

(14.6%) are not necessarily in survival jobs. Even so, some of these respondents express a desire to work in their field of expertise and interest. A former climate change policy advisor from India now working in property management had this to say: *“I am still not working in the field I am passionate about and worked in before immigrating to Canada. I even offered to work for free, except for the travel expense, but no one was ready to hire me here in my field. I am grateful I have a job, but deep inside I miss my career. I miss working in my field.”*

About half (53.3%) of respondents said that, based on their current situation, they are on track to achieve the career aspirations they had before arriving in Canada. Another 28.1% said they are not on track and 18.5% said they are not sure. One interviewee noted: *“Right now, we feel like we are just building a future for our kids but we are not where we want to be as women.”*



Workplace diversity does not extend to the executive and senior management levels

Some employers in the GTA still have a long way to go when it comes to diversity across the talent pipeline. As shown in **Table 12**, about two in five hiring managers said the entry-level ranks of their organizations are well diversified in terms of gender, race and immigrant background. However, only about a quarter of hiring managers, regardless of employer size, said the same about their organizations' executive/C-level. While women are included within senior leadership teams, they are less likely to be racialized and/or immigrants (see **Appendix D**, Table 40).

"... it is not that diverse at the senior levels. Our CEO is of an immigrant background, which helps with the image, but, overall, in the decision-making levels of leadership, there is no diversity from what I can tell." — Business analyst, originally from Poland, arrived in Canada in 2017

"There's not a single senior leader that looks

like me or has any background similar to mine. It's very difficult to envision yourself moving up when all you see are a specific type of white man or woman in places of power." — Market researcher, originally from Oman, arrived in Canada in 2017

"For individual jobs, I had no problem. But when I applied for any team lead or management positions, the employers ignored my experience in my back country and need Canadian experience. How can I have this experience while nobody gives me this opportunity so far. It seems that although there is not obvious discrimination in low and mid level jobs, but the majority of managerial level jobs are limited to white women..." — Public administrator, originally from Iran, arrived in Canada in 2012

Table 12. Overall, how would you describe the diversity of your organization at the following levels? (n=608)

Category	Executive / C-level	Senior management	Middle management	Intermediate	Entry level / Junior
Gender diversity					
Not diverse	15.0%	12.5%	7.9%	6.3%	5.8%
Aspiring	27.6%	24.3%	22.7%	20.9%	17.1%
Acting towards	32.1%	37.7%	36.3%	34.7%	29.1%
Well-diversified	25.3%	25.5%	33.1%	38.2%	48.0%
Racial diversity					
Not diverse	18.9%	13.8%	9.5%	5.8%	4.8%
Aspiring	24.7%	24.2%	21.4%	19.4%	17.4%
Acting towards	31.6%	32.9%	39.3%	37.7%	30.1%
Well-diversified	24.8%	29.1%	29.8%	37.2%	47.7%
Immigrant Background					
Not diverse	23.0%	17.3%	12.3%	9.5%	6.9%
Aspiring	24.8%	22.0%	23.0%	22.4%	19.2%
Acting towards	31.1%	35.0%	36.2%	35.9%	33.1%
Well-diversified	21.1%	25.7%	28.5%	32.2%	40.8%

Note:

- Not diverse = Not currently diverse and no actions are planned or in progress to work towards greater diversity
- Aspiring = Not currently diverse and plan to work towards greater diversity in future
- Acting Towards = Not currently diverse and have taken action towards greater diversity
- Well-diversified = Our employees reflect the Greater Toronto Area workforce

Box 2. Diversity data collection

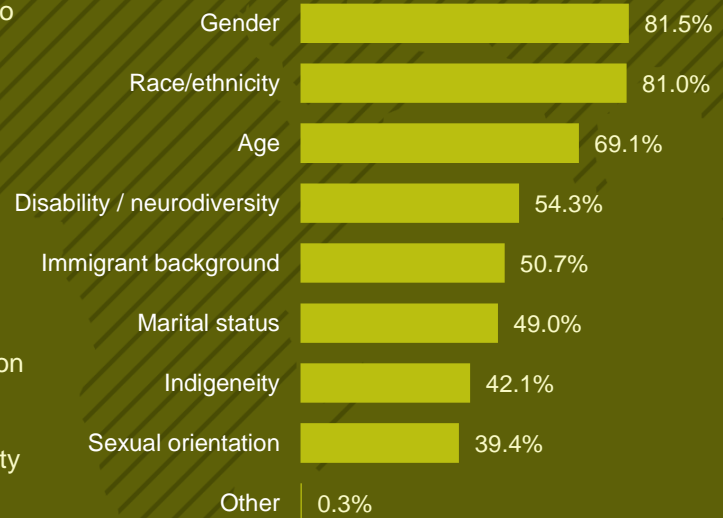
About 59.7% of employers collect data on employee diversity, and an additional 22.9% of employers did not collect this data at the time of the survey but plan to do so in future. About 17.4% of employers did not collect this data and do not plan to.

Hiring managers at small organizations (28.9%) were more likely to say that their organizations do not collect diversity data and do not plan to, compared to medium employers (18.4%) and large employers (10.0%). About three quarters (76.7%) of large employers collect data on employee diversity, which is significantly higher than medium (57.0%) and small employers (34.0%).

Amongst all employers that collect data on employee diversity (n=363), gender and race or ethnicity are the most common identity markers on which data is collected. There are no notable differences by employer size on the type of diversity data collected. However, for each identity marker, employers with global operations are

more likely than other employers to collect diversity data. Private, for profit (56.3%) employers are more likely than public sector employers (42.6%) to collect data on immigrant background.

Which of the following data have you collected on employee diversity? (n=363)



“The employer will never consider a newcomer for a senior or above level. For senior executives, they are relying heavily on headhunting firms. That is my experience in both China and the US. I was frequently being bugged by headhunting firms both in China and the US but not here in Canada because I don’t know anyone. Being international talent, I am popular both in China and the US but when I move to Canada, I have just become nobody. There is no headhunting firm coming to me because I now have a two-year gap from work and also don’t have the Canadian experience. And that is terrible.” – Marketing and sales professional, originally from China, arrived in Canada in 2016

Proportionally more hiring managers said “a sense that the workforce is sufficiently diverse” (27.0%) was the top barrier to EDI at their organizations (see **Appendix B**, Table 41). This was followed by a lack of awareness and data to understand any disadvantage (24.8%), which was said by proportionally more large employers (30.4%) than small (20.8%) or medium (20.1%) employers. See **Box 2** for information on diversity data collected by GTA employers.

More employers have strategies to attract immigrants than targeted actions to help grow their careers

Recruitment and Onboarding

More than half (58.4%) of hiring managers said that their organizations have a strategy or deliberate actions to attract immigrants to their organization. Large employers (66.7%) were more likely than small (55.3%) and medium (48.6%) employers to have such a strategy in place. Among these employers (n=355), types of actions taken to attract immigrant talent include the following:

- Train hiring managers in how to assess experience they may not be familiar with (45.9%)
- Offer volunteer or internship opportunities (38.6%)
- Job postings focus on clearly defined skills requirements (36.9%)
- Referrals from immigrant community networks (35.8%)
- Have developed formal orientation program to integrate immigrants into the workforce (35.5%)
- Targeted advertising to attract immigrant talent (34.4%)
- Partnering with settlement program(s) in the GTA (33.0%)
- Setting up mechanisms to facilitate credential assessment (29.3%)
- Secondment work for global talent (26.8%)

Large employers who take steps to attract immigrants (37.2%) were more likely than small employers were (25.0%) to collaborate with settlement programs in the GTA. They were also more likely than small employers were to have formal orientation programs for immigrant hires (41.1% versus 19.3%) and to seek out secondment opportunities for global talent (35.6% versus 14.8%).

Among those hiring managers who said that their organizations do not have a formal

strategy or deliberate actions to attract immigrants (n=253):

- 69.6% target qualified candidates regardless of their immigration status
- 31.2% do not see a need for a formal strategy to attract immigrants
- 10.3% do not think they will get a return on their efforts

About 21.7% of hiring managers said they recruit new immigrants as a strategy to address labour shortages. There are no significant differences by employer size. Proportionally, more hiring managers said their organizations would recruit young workers (32.7%) or internally train less-qualified employees (26.6%) than those who said they would recruit immigrants amidst labour shortages (see **Appendix B**, Table 42).

Retention and Advancement

About 43.8% of surveyed immigrant women said they have never left a job in the GTA. Among those who have, the main reasons included a better offer for a similar job (21.9%); dissatisfaction with management (16.2%); dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities for advancement (14.5%); dissatisfaction with job duties (14.2%); and dissatisfaction with the work environment or culture (14.0%). See **Appendix B** (Table 31) for other reasons respondents gave for leaving a job in the GTA.

In the employer survey, just 19.6% of hiring managers said their organizations track and review turnover statistics to identify issues. Large employers (23.3%) were more likely than small employers (14.5%) to monitor turnover. In addition, only 18.6% of hiring managers said their organizations do formal exit interviews with departing staff. This was similar for employers of all sizes.

Only a quarter (24.5%) of respondents have been promoted in their current workplace. Of those who were promoted (n=74), 45.9% said they were promoted without applying, 41.9% said they applied for the position and 12.2% were promoted through other processes. A large majority of respondents (88.7%) said they would apply for a higher or other position with their current employer, while 11.3% said they would not. Reasons for not applying for promotion can be both individual and organizational. Examples of individual factors included pregnancy, feeling comfortable in their present role, having been at an organization for a short time, having low self-confidence, and not wanting to stay with their employer for the long term. Examples of organizational factors included a lack of transparency in how decisions are made, no options for promotion, expectations that the salary bump would not match the increase in workload, stress and politics at senior levels, and a lack of training for senior roles.

Training and the opportunity to move up in an organization are important factors in retaining immigrant talent. To reap the benefits of immigration, employers must understand how to integrate newcomer women and facilitate their upward mobility. When asked about specific practices, tools and programs to help new immigrants advance in the workplace, hiring managers identified the following:

- Career and employment counselling (41.1%)
- Clear communication on pathways to career advancement (36.7%)
- Mentoring programs (35.7%)
- Accommodation of cultural and religious needs (35.7%)
- Coaching for leadership opportunities (35.5%)
- Recognition of international training and experience for promotion (33.7%)
- Specific training for new immigrants (26.8%)

Large employers were more likely than small- and medium-sized employers to have clear communications around career advancement (41.5%) and to recognize international training and experience for promotion (40.0%). About three in five (59.4%) employers said that all

immigrants, regardless of gender and racial background, equally benefit from these efforts. Only 6.7% of employers identified racialized immigrant women as benefitting most.

When asked how promotion decisions are made within their organizations, the most common answer given by hiring managers related to assessment of job performance (26.8%). Very few hiring managers (1.5%) said that EDI targets inform promotion decisions.

About 40.0% of employers said that EDI initiatives increased their ability to attract and retain talent. However, most employers could not identify any particular successful action taken at their organizations to promote EDI. As below, those that could identify any action mostly emphasized trainings and hiring practices. None of the respondents offered a clear explanation of how these actions have been impactful.

- Mandatory training on unconscious bias, anti-racism, anti-oppression and truth and reconciliation for all employees
- Training hiring managers on fair hiring practices
- Training staff on cross-cultural competency
- Increased emphasis on EDI by senior management
- Targeting recruitment efforts toward members of underrepresented groups
- Conducting blind interviews
- Holding events to celebrate diversity (e.g., cultural pot lucks, recognizing cultural holidays)
- Ensuring psychological safety for diverse team members and creating safe spaces for employees to express their experiences at work
- Allowing for flexible or remote working hours
- Encouraging fathers to take paternity leave

See **Box 3** for more details on the EDI policies of GTA employers.

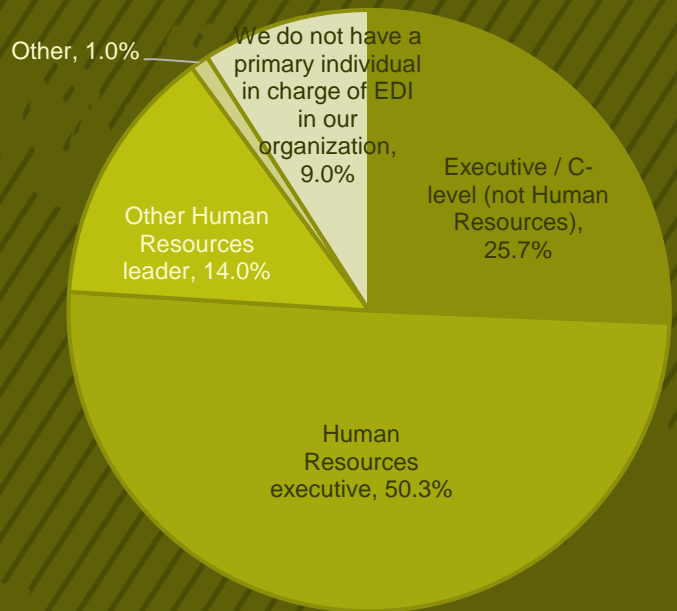
Box 3. Equity, diversity and inclusion policies of GTA employers

About 44.6% of hiring managers said that their organizations have both an equal employment opportunity policy and an EDI policy. Just 3.9% of hiring managers said that their organizations have neither. Other hiring managers said that their organizations have either an equal employment opportunity policy (29.3%) or EDI policy (22.2%), but not both. Large employers (51.1%) were more likely than small (37.7%) and medium (40.8%) employers to have both policies. Private, for profit (49.7%) and non-profits (61.5%) were more likely than public employers were (35.4%) to have both.

The most cited motivation for an equitable, diverse and inclusive workforce was to increase organizational innovation and agility (34.0%), followed by fairness and morality (32.2%) and helping employers to better understand and serve their customers or clients (31.1%). For more details, see Appendix D, Table 43. Yet turning intention into action requires more work. One interviewee commented that her organization does not know how to make use of international knowledge and experience in ways that could benefit their work: *“I find the feedback I give – and I provide an international perspective – no one cares. I have gone to the highest levels I can, and it is just smiling and nodding despite the fact that I have heard them say they would love to hear an international perspective ... Nothing has been acted upon and it is all just ‘oh okay’. There are no follow up questions. It feels like a token gesture.”*

A few interviewees noted that while their companies conduct employee engagement surveys, mostly positive results were shared broadly and follow-ups about concerns raised were rare. Other interviewees spoke about the overuse of catch phrases such as “bring your whole self to work” without defining what this means in practical and concrete terms.

Situating the EDI lead within Human Resources is often a signal that an organization is primarily concerned with compliance and legal aspects over social justice or business case motives. Only a quarter (25.7%) of hiring managers said the primary individual in charge of EDI at their organizations reports to an Executive / C-level other than Human Resources. Large employers (30.7%) were more likely than small (21.4%) and medium (21.8%) employers to say that the primary individual in charge of EDI reports to a non-HR Executive/C-level.



The organization I work for takes various initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion. However, considering the size of the company, it is not possible to evaluate if the ideologies are being enforced at the grassroots level. People do not necessarily practice what is being preached. Mandatory trainings, webinars etc. are enforced, but are they effective? I don't think so ...”

– Financial professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2017

Immigrant women face everyday discrimination at work

The intersection of multiple marginalized identities has been shown to increase workplace discrimination.³⁰ A racialized immigrant woman, for example, is likely to face similar challenges as non-immigrant women, as well as immigrant men and racialized peoples. However, she is also likely to have experiences in the workplace that are specific to her as a racialized immigrant woman. This may involve microaggressions, or disempowerment in everyday workplace interactions, which may appear innocuous at first but have a cumulative effect.³¹

About three in five (59.6%) respondents have experienced workplace microaggressions (see **Appendix B**, Table 27). For instance:

- Being patronized (e.g., told you speak English well, receive excessive praise for doing routine or simple tasks) (26.5%)
- Having their judgement questioned in their area of expertise (25.2%)
- Needing to provide more evidence of their competence than others do (21.5%)

Nearly three in five (56.3%) respondents also said that someone in their work environment has made them feel uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated. Among these respondents, 39.4% said it was their peers that made them feel this way, 37.6% said it was customers, clients or external stakeholders, 34.7% said it was their direct supervisor, 23.5% said it was senior leadership and 10.0% said it was direct reports (see **Appendix B**, Table 28).

About one third of respondents (34.1%) cited language or accent as the reason they were made to feel discriminated at work (see **Appendix B**, Table 29). Language proficiency is tied to communication skills unrelated to pronunciation and grammar. Specifically, accents have been shown to shape perceptions of who belongs in Canada and can be a basis for discrimination.³² Immigrants, especially racialized immigrants, who do not speak

“Canadian English”, may face disadvantages in the workplace.³³ In addition, many workplaces use industry-specific jargon that can be difficult for immigrants to master when their first language is not English. Slang and other nuances of a language, combined with a lack of insider cultural knowledge, may make it difficult for newcomers to use verbal and non-verbal signals (e.g., gestures, body language, tone of voice, etc.) in ways some non-immigrants may expect.³⁴

Not every uncomfortable workplace experience is seen by interviewees as discrimination. For example, one interviewee stated:

“Being a person of colour, when I joined my office, people asked me all sorts of questions. I chose to look at it from this perspective – I think they had not worked with a Black person before, so they didn’t know a lot of things. They asked me, can I touch your hair. I have been asked where did I learn to speak English. Or, people would say ‘you dress so well, did you dress like this in your home country.’ ... I chose to view it as curiosity. I did not feel the animosity coming from the people.”

“If you are in a meeting with 20-25 people, and you have someone who is an immigrant and presenting an idea but their English is a little broken – it is not terrible but it is not perfect – and maybe the rhythm of speaking is not as fast-paced as a Canadian native, then that idea is just walked over, no one pays attention. But, if 10 minutes later, a native speaker brings back the same idea, people will say, ‘oh, yeah, that’s a good point.’ I had that kind of situation happening with me.”

– University professor, originally from Brazil, arrived in Canada in 2017

Other reasons for why respondents were made to feel discriminated against at work include their immigrant background (26.8%), race (24.2%) and gender (13.9%).

Interviewees generally felt that racial discrimination in the workplace is subtle and difficult to detect. Many hesitated to describe any negative workplace situation they have experienced or witnessed as being race-based. Those who spoke about specific incidents experienced by them or others chalked it up to individual attitudes or personalities. A few respondents attributed issues to systemic failings of employers.

“Personally, I have never felt that I have been sidelined because I look different, I speak different or I practice a certain religion, I dress different. I haven’t really experienced these things. If it does happen to me, I would say it is highly nuanced to the point that I can’t even capture it. I don’t want to speculate on what other people may be thinking or how they are motivated when they speak with me or interact with me. That has not happened to me. But I have heard of people facing challenges and I can really appreciate that that can happen in different workplaces.” — Public health researcher, originally from Pakistan, arrived in Canada in 2015

“The overall culture and vision are great. Top management acknowledges the existing gaps and tries to reduce them. However, at the team level, the culture and behaviors diverge from this vision. A micro-culture was built by mid-management and peers and is hard to change as the majority benefits from the status quo.” — Actuary, originally from Côte d’Ivoire, arrived in Canada in 2017

“I was subject to racist rants and even complained to OHRC.” — Doctor, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2012

Besides households, organizations are also gendered spaces. Organizations reflect societal power structures that value traditional masculine notions of leadership and assertiveness, for example.³⁵ Hence, like racial discrimination, weak employment outcomes for women may operate through subtle everyday discriminatory behaviours.³⁶ Even after securing employment in their field, immigrant women may be overlooked for promotions and other forms of recognition of their skills and

contributions.³⁷

More interviewees spoke openly of sexism in everyday interactions in the workplace, which affect not just immigrant women but all women. Interviewees gave examples of how outspoken women are seen as aggressive, “nags” or “troublemakers,” while their male counterparts are given a free pass no matter how brash they might be. Some respondents also described how they are talked over in meetings, do not have the same weight of authority in external meetings as their male colleagues, and feel like they are generally not heard. Respondents also mentioned being turned down for jobs or rejected for promotion due to their pregnancies and being faulted for gaps in their resumes where they left a job to tend to family needs. One interviewee explained how workplace policies can be paternalistic, with employers supporting women returning from maternity leave with personal support, such as facilitating access to daycare and allowing flexible schedules, but not supporting their career growth: *“Sometimes I feel there is a disconnect here – I support you because you are a mom but I don’t support your growth. Or, I support your growth but I ignore that you are a mom and I ask more from you. There is an opportunity there for you to put it on me to decide where to put the balance – but it is not up to you to decide.”* She added that women with children are assumed to prioritize family over career, but the same is not expected of men: *“You are bombarded with that message — ‘hey, go home, take care of your kids.’ A guy across from my desk who has a child the same age as my kids will not get any of those messages.”*

Despite this, 84.1% of respondents said that, overall, they are comfortable with their workplace culture. Additionally, respondents said they have about the same access to different information and opportunities compared to other employees. This is particularly true regarding contact with clients, customers and external stakeholders (63.9% said about the same), information about internal job opportunities (65.2%) and training opportunities (62.6%). However, about 31.1% of respondents said that their chances to be promoted into middle management are much worse or somewhat worse than other employees. More than a third (36.4%) said the same when speaking about promotion into senior management or executive ranks.

Two in five (42.4%) respondents believe they have been treated unfairly in their current job. Among those respondents who said they were treated unfairly, the most frequently mentioned reasons relate to salary/wages (25.5%), promotion decisions (14.2%) and division of work-related tasks (13.6%) (see **Appendix B**, Table 30). Less than half of respondents who said they were treated unfairly have taken action (45.3%) or plan to take action (2.3%), while 32.8% did not do anything and 19.5% preferred not to respond to the question.

“I was rejected promotion because I was pregnant and [when] I lost that opportunity I felt major discrimination as a woman. But I could do nothing and [stayed] quite.” — Project manager, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2014

The vast majority (77.2%) of respondents said that their employer takes harassment, bullying and discrimination seriously. However, based on the employer survey, just 36.5% had anti-

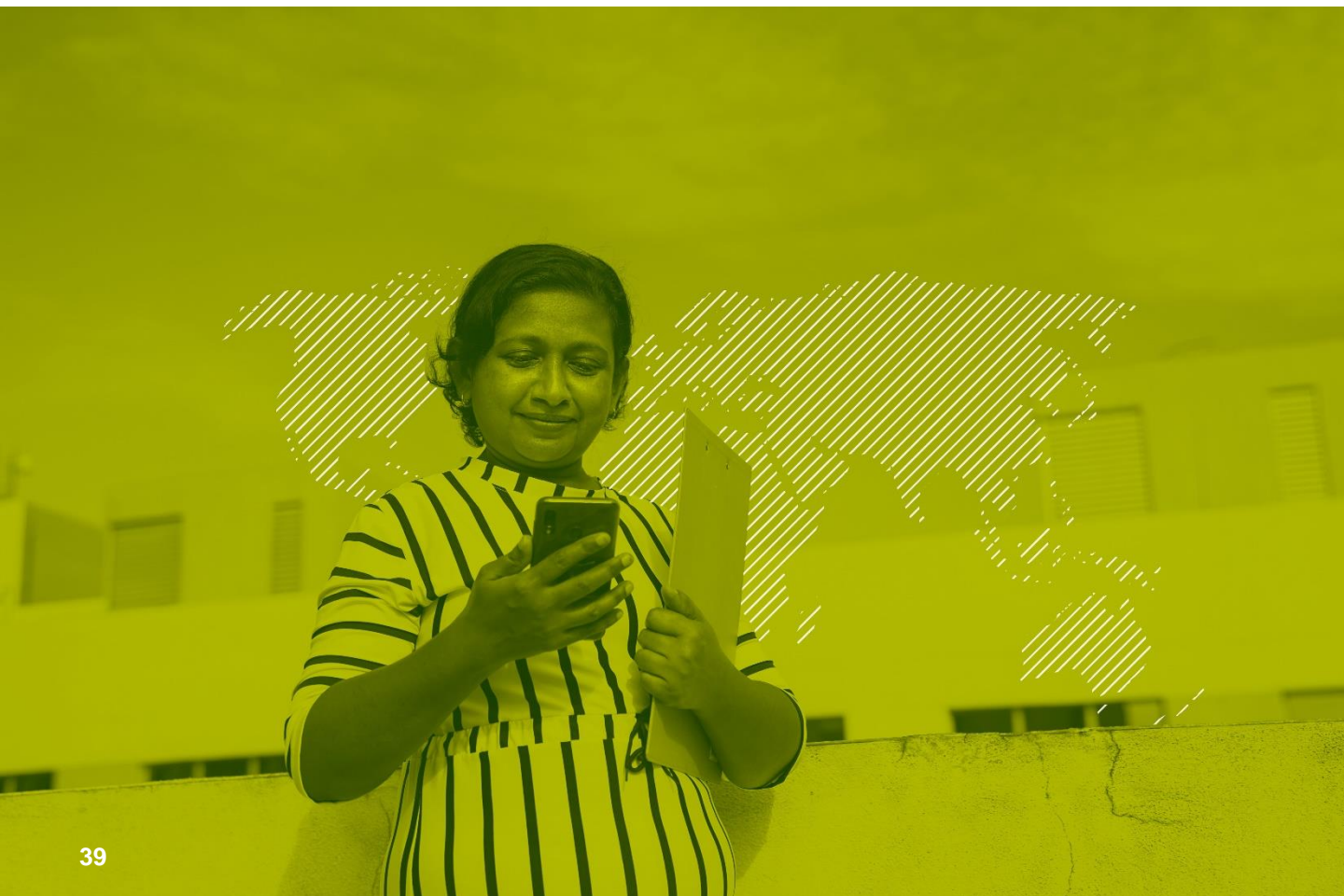
harassment, anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies in place. There were no differences by size of employer.

“The team that I am in, most of the executives are Caucasians and for a lot of them I have been able to be the non-threatening Black woman. They tell me that I am different. They don’t realize that it is a very racist thing to say but I don’t challenge them. I use it to my advantage.”

— Accountant, originally from Nigeria, arrived in Canada in 2016

“I will not say that people are not racist, but they are afraid to be racist because they fear the consequences.”

— University professor, originally from Brazil, arrived in Canada in 2017



Intersectional factors might be ignored in workplace inclusion efforts

The majority of hiring managers (71.2%) said they are at least slightly aware of how intersectionality affects their work environments. Hiring managers at large employers (80.7%) were more likely than those at small- (59.7%) and medium-sized (67.0%) employers to say they are aware of how multiple marginalizations may affect employees of their organizations. Private, for profit (77.2%) employers are more likely than public (65.0%) and non-profit (50.0%) employers to be at least slightly aware of intersectionality. Despite this awareness, overall, organization EDI policies are not directed at multiply marginalized individuals, as shown in **Figure 5**. For example, 48.5% of hiring managers said that EDI efforts in their workplaces target women, but much fewer said the same of efforts toward immigrant women (5.4%) and Black immigrant women (2.5%). In addition, while 83.4% of immigrant women surveyed said that their workplaces are respectful and supportive of employees of

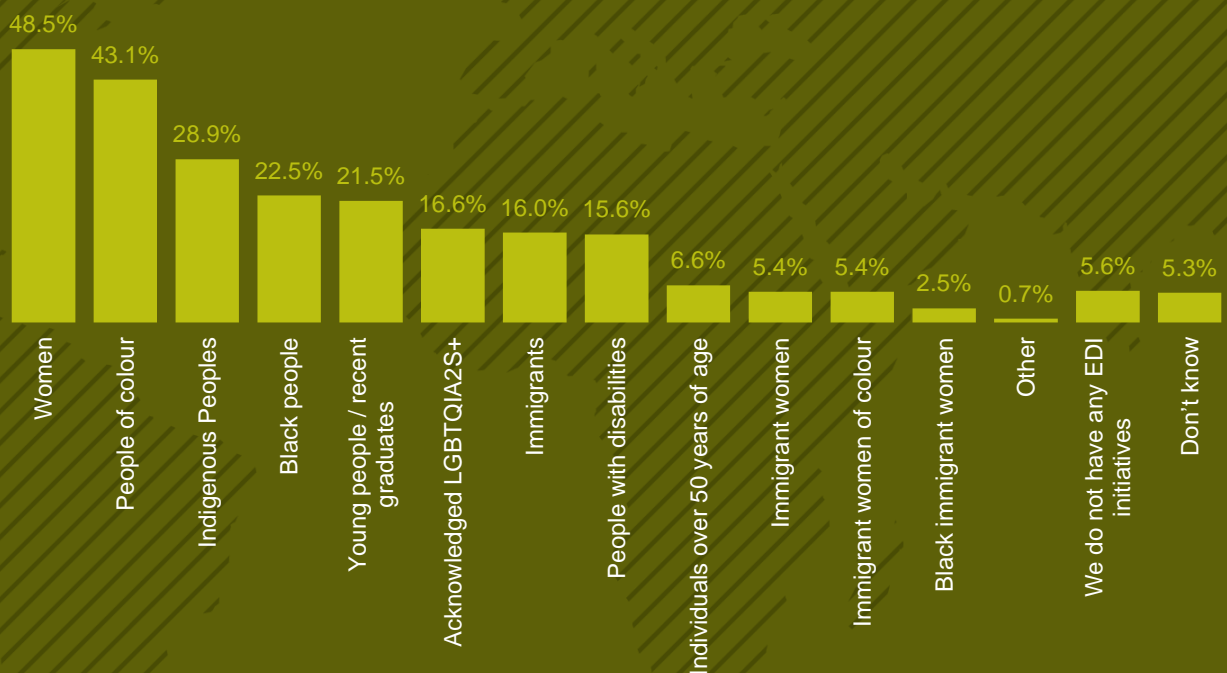
different genders, proportionally fewer said the same about:

- Employees who are Black (64.6%) or people of colour (77.2%)
- Employees who are immigrants to Canada (71.9%)
- Employees who are Black immigrant women (58.3%) or immigrant women of colour (60.9%)

"I think the major issue in the job market is not about diversity, but about inclusion. You see companies more than happy to announce that they are diverse, but they are not inclusive. As a consequence, companies improve their numbers towards diversity, but these diverse groups are not actually included and well integrated in the workspace."

— Human resources professional, originally from Brazil, arrived in Canada in 2017

Figure 5. To which groups are your organization's equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts most strongly directed? (n=608)



Pay transparency is lacking and pay gaps relative to peers in the same job exist

About 28.1% of respondents do not know how their salary compares to their peers. A similar proportion of respondents (28.8%) said they are paid less than their peers. Of the remainder of respondents, 35.8% were paid the same as their peers, 3.6% more than their peers and 3.6% were not in a position comparable to their peers.

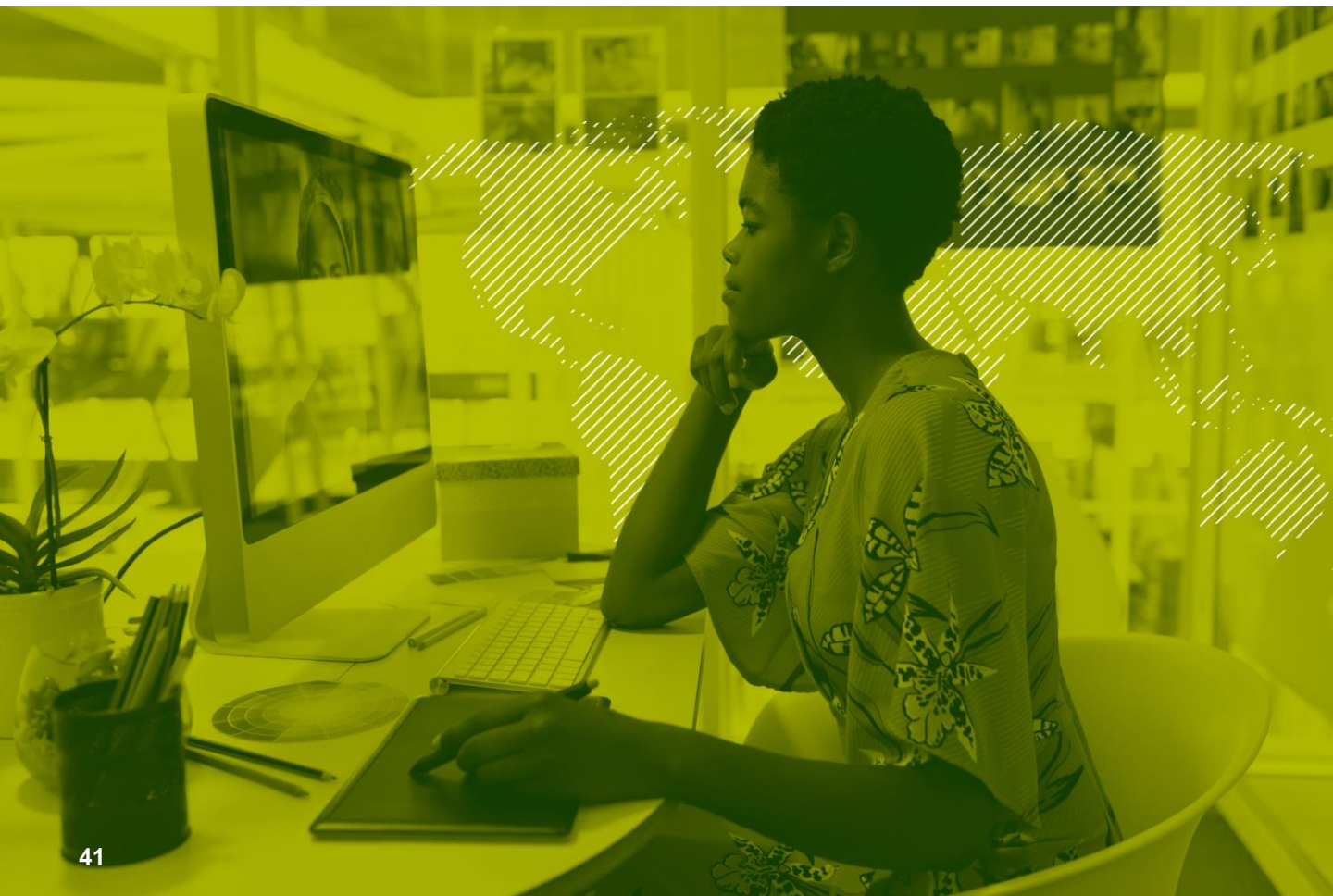
The level of pay transparency in GTA organizations varies widely:

- 22.9% of employers said that employees are told who gets paid what salary, across the organization
- 23.2% of employers said employees are told about the distribution of employee pay
- 18.4% of employers said employees are told about the pay ranges for all jobs
- 12.2% of employers said employees are told the pay range for their job
- 23.4% of employers said employees know only their own salary

About 60.4% of employers said they include pay ranges for all positions in job advertisements. Large employers (68.5%) were more likely than small (54.7%) and medium (53.1%) enterprises to say they include pay ranges for all advertised positions.

A lack of pay transparency leaves immigrant women, particularly those who may not be familiar with Ontario's pay equity laws, without negotiating power.

"When I started my work, I started as a contractor and I learned I was paid maybe half of what my other colleagues, mostly males, were paid. Initially I thought it was because they are male but then I realized it is because I am a newcomer and I didn't know the rules of the game so it was considered appropriate to underpay me just because I didn't know." — Business analyst, originally from Romania, arrived in Canada in 2017





Recommendations

The Way Forward

Immigrant women bring skills and new perspectives that can help shape an organization's performance. So how do we address some of the ongoing challenges immigrant women professionals face in entering and advancing in the GTA labour market?

Some researchers have argued that the onus for integration is too often put on immigrant women. "Provincial programs focus on retraining and reskilling, credential recognition, and language skills. While all valuable, the focus is often on immigrant women's responsibilities 'to improve' rather than on businesses' responsibilities to be more inclusive."³⁸ Many respondents to the immigrant women's survey recognized the need to understand the Canadian labour market and ensure their job applications clearly explain how their skills and experiences match job requirements. However, they note that there is little they can do alone to remove employer biases in hiring and promotion processes.

At the government levels, there are policies, initiatives and tools to promote gender equity and women's labour force participation. Both the federal government³⁹ and Ontario government⁴⁰ created task forces in 2021 to address the economic disadvantages women face. New pay transparency measures in federally regulated workplaces came into effect on January 1, 2021, a move that can help to raise awareness of wage gaps experienced by women, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Employment Insurance system modernization talks include ways to allow for more flexibility in how parental leave benefits are claimed.⁴¹ The national child-care program promises to lower costs for families. At the time of writing this report, Ontario had tentatively reached a deal with the federal government, making it the last province to sign-on.

While the Employment Equity Act (EEA) has

been in effect since 1987, it is limited in bringing more diversity into workplaces. It applies only to federally regulated industries (e.g., financial services, broadcasting, transportation, telecommunications), and immigrants are not recognized as an equity-deserving group under the EEA. Likewise, the BlackNorth Initiative, 50-30 Challenge and 30% Club Canada do not fully consider intersectionality. These initiatives are important for women and racialized peoples but do not fully address the complex ways in which identity markers shape experiences.

What follows is a non-exhaustive list of suggested actions to improve labour market outcomes for immigrant women. They are informed by the reflections and recommendations of survey respondents and interviewees. We hope they will help to further discussions already happening within the ecosystem.

Job Search

Strengthen pre-arrival information sharing

Interviewees who used pre-arrival services noted that information overload was a problem. Information shared were not tailored to their needs and they did not know how to place what they were hearing into context. Clearer and more focused pre-arrival information sharing and support can help to set realistic expectations about job prospects, plan for the time and costs associated with licensing practices and understand options for alternative career paths. To stem the devaluing and deskilling of immigrant women professionals, policy shifts must happen to attract permanent residents to Canada with the skills and experience that match employer demand.

Improve communication and coordination of available employment-related supports

Several respondents highlighted the need for better communication about the availability of

different services and programs for newcomers in the GTA, as well as enhanced coordination amongst providers. Though a large proportion of respondents did use some type of employment-related program or service, several noted that searching for programs relevant to their needs was time consuming. Respondents also mentioned that no one organization provided all the necessary information or other job search supports, but connecting to one service provider helped to learn about other service providers. Other concerns highlighted by respondents are as follows:

- Some services — such as mentoring where matches may take months or not happen at all — lack timeliness, which detracts from their relevance and usefulness.
- There are no clear distinctions among different initiatives for newcomers. One respondent noted *“letting many different organizations compete for immigrants is a poor and lazy solution”* that *“doesn’t put the immigrant (the client) at the centre and generates dissatisfaction and losses for the country.”*
- While several respondents noted that service providers have been supportive and well intentioned, a few noted that some agents treat newcomer clients as numbers and do not offer real help for clients to succeed in their careers. These respondents feel that service providers are accountable primarily to funders who focus on short-term goals and lack accountability to newcomers.

One way to improve accountability to clients is through better performance tracking. For example, metrics could include not only number of people served or number of job matches, but statistics on the number of newcomers who land commensurate employment. Further, adequate funding can help to ensure that the counsellor-to-client ratio is manageable and service providers are able to maintain a high quality of service.

Adapt programs and services to the specific needs of skilled newcomer women

Many respondents noted that employment-related programs and services primarily focus on basic tips on resume writing, online job searches, interviewing skills, networking skills and Canadian workplace culture, which can be helpful when coming from countries with different work cultures. However, respondents also noted that service providers, mentors and employment counsellors do not always keep up with the needs of immigrant women.

“I lived and worked in the United States for 8 years, received all of my education in English since I was in pre-school, and while I was open and prepared to learn about any differences [that] I might encounter in the Canadian job market/culture, I hardly found any. While Canada is certainly not the United States and differences do exist, I also certainly don’t face the same foundational hurdles that most new immigrant programs are designed to tackle. It seems like there are no programs/resources that could help someone like me ...”

— Communications Specialist/Technical Writer, originally from Honduras, arrived in Canada in 2020

Immigrant women coming to Canada under the economic category⁴² are highly skilled with significant experience. Programs and services need to be elevated to match their capacities and needs. As put by one respondent: *“... You can’t offer the same program to everybody. It is kind of counterintuitive to what the whole immigration system is. You bring people in through different categories and you have to meet them where they are rather than saying everybody has the same starting point...”*

Some respondents commented that programs steer immigrants into entry level positions or jobs unrelated to their expertise that, for women, often relate to traditional occupations (e.g., gardening, cooking, child care, customer service) or physical labour (e.g., factory or packaging work). Reliable career advisory supports for mid-career immigrant professionals with high education credentials and significant

work experience in their countries of origin are reported to be limited. Respondents noted that the focus on entry-level or survival work led them to feel less about themselves and their potential.

Several respondents mentioned that mentors, networking opportunities and job placements (e.g., co-ops, bridging programs) do not meet the needs of professionals from specialized fields (e.g., biologists, public health professionals, pharmacologists). One interviewee suggested that stronger collaborations between employment service providers and immigrant professional associations could be helpful as Canadians from the same professions and cultural backgrounds may be best positioned to give advice to newcomers on how to re-establish their careers in Toronto and navigate the workplace. Others pointed to the need for mentors and employment counsellors to receive more frequent trainings to keep up-to-date with employer preferences and in-demand skills and improve employer connections beyond entry-level positions.

“What I think needs to be improved is the quality of jobs that immigrants, especially immigrant women, can access via the programs. Most job ads I received from various programs were for sales positions or entry level positions. Many of the workshops I attended also recommend to start in lower positions or from unrelated lines of work and work our way up; however, it affected our mentality and many of us discredited our professional experience.”

— Investment analyst, originally from Vietnam, arrived in Canada in 2019

Respondents would also like to see more efforts to adapt skills building for job search and networking offered through various programs and services to the current remote work environment. Online platforms like LinkedIn are becoming more popular for job search and making professional connections. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant professional networking has shifted online,

which for some respondents has been more difficult to navigate without the necessary guidance on virtual networking skills. Other respondents called for more online forums for women to network.

Consistent with the tenets of intersectionality, no social group is homogenous and there are non-additive implications of being situated in more than one social group. Besides the pilot program for racialized newcomer women, first announced in the 2018 federal budget and extended in the 2021 budget, there are no interventions at scale for racialized newcomer women. Proven projects targeting racialized newcomer women should be scaled up and provided with a predictable stream of funding.

Expand access to government-funded employment programs

Several respondents mentioned that eligibility criteria for some government-funded programs are limited and could be expanded to include:

- older age groups for reskilling programs (which, in respondents' experiences, tend to be capped at 29 years),
- temporary residents,
- newcomers whose “English skills are not perfect,” and
- unemployed or underemployed immigrant women even if their household income surpasses a threshold.

“I approached every government funded agency to help me stand on my feet ... And every program would turn me down because they would say that your family income does not qualify. Basically, they would only help women who are below a certain household income bracket - which was ironic because what I am trying to do is stand independently and you are telling me to depend on my husband. By God's grace, I am lucky. But what if I were in an abusive relationship. So you won't help me unless I step out on the road and I am homeless. That's when you will empower me? I think the purpose of empowering women is so that they don't reach that situation. That they are well enough to stand on their own two feet and don't need to depend on others.”

— Financial professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2017

Respondents also noted that some programs do not have hours that suit the needs of newcomer women with children.

Educate employers on the benefits of hiring immigrant women professionals

In spite of the number of employment programs available to newcomers and their usefulness, many respondents said that the real problems are employers' lack of openness to newcomers in the job market and employer discrimination (e.g., ask for Canadian experience).

While the value of immigrant labour is recognized in government policy, some employers continue to undervalue international education and work experience. In Ontario, the Working for Workers Act, 2021 removes certain barriers for internationally trained individuals in non-health fields to get licenses to practice. However, even for occupations that do not have professional gatekeepers, the lack of "Canadian experience" could dim career prospects for immigrants. This despite the Ontario Human Rights Commission clarifying in 2013 that asking for it may result in discrimination. In this case, emphasis on Canadian experience is not about public safety or specialized knowledge. It is about workplace socialization and cultural capital. Employers may screen out candidates presumed not to have an understanding of "Canadian ways."⁴³

More education of hiring managers and recruiters on the benefits of hiring immigrant women professionals and ways to access them was seen as important and necessary by many study participants. This includes dispelling false stereotypes of immigrants some employers may hold. Possible actions are as follows:

- Employers who have had positive experiences with hiring immigrants could act as advocates and a resource for other employers, using their stories to illustrate the business case.
- Hiring managers and recruiters could give time for mentoring newcomers. They could share knowledge, extend their networks to immigrant women and learn more about the value of the experience immigrant women

bring. A recent evaluation of the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership (TMP) showed that the program enhances the skills and competencies of mentors to recognize immigrant talent.⁴⁴

- Reverse mentoring programs, such as the Newcomers Empowering Business Initiative run by the KEYS Job Centre in Kingston, Ontario could be explored for scale up. Under the program, immigrant job seekers act as mentors to employers to help address intercultural competency in the workplace and onboarding.
- Hiring managers could seek to learn more about how Canada selects skilled immigrants and the value of credentials from other countries, such as international rankings. In many lists, universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Singapore, China, Hong Kong and Japan rank higher than the top ranked Canadian university.⁴⁵

"The different organizations working to support immigrants have done a great effort overall. However, immigrants and the programs are only half of the equation. The other half are the employers. HR, hiring managers, company's senior management either have very low awareness or do not actively make much effort to close the gap in immigrant unemployment ... Many of us do feel highly unwelcomed and disadvantaged being immigrants during our job search process and it was a constant mental struggle ..."

— Financial analyst, originally from Vietnam, arrived in Canada in 2019

"Immigrant status, your experience if it is international, looking at your name, the fact that you are a woman of a certain colour – all of these things come into play and I would love to see more work done with employers to educate their hiring managers."

— IT professional, originally from Egypt, arrived in Canada in 2013

Many immigrant-serving organizations already have connections to employers. Bridging and mentoring programs, for example, have required close collaboration with employers in both the public and for-profit sectors. Some respondents, however, called for more facilitated job fairs and free networking events with employers.

Create paid internship opportunities specifically for newcomer women

Several interviewees in this study noted that paid internships would have been useful for them. Even if wages are low, internships can help to cover some costs, reducing the need to take on survival work. However, paid internship programs sometimes require immigrant women to compete with recent Canadian graduates. As a result, the talent pool becomes very large and, according to some respondents, without a specific focus on newcomers, they may be overlooked by employers.

Be specific in job postings about pay range and accommodations for recruits

Employers could provide a list of specific examples of accommodations they are prepared to make available to candidates. Employers in Canada generally include statements in job advertisements about being an equal opportunity employer, as well as an offer of accommodations during the application process. One interviewee noted that newcomer women often do not know what is reasonable to ask of an employer as far as accommodations are concerned, or they are afraid to ask, as it is not typical to do so in their home countries. As for pay, all job advertisements should include a specific range for compensation.

Give honest feedback to unsuccessful applicants

Hiring managers often “ghost” candidates or struggle to give direct feedback even though it may actually help candidates to learn why they are being rejected. Instead of saying something specific and useful to newcomer candidates, hiring managers may simply say they have found someone more suitable for the role. Generic feedback is of little value to newcomers trying to navigate a new system. Many interviewees noted that clear and constructive

feedback from hiring managers would have been valuable to them in their job search process.

Workplace Experiences

Formal onboarding processes

Interviewees identified orientation sessions in group settings as important to the onboarding process for newcomer women. This allowed them to get to know their colleagues and was seen as being better than having just one ‘coach’ or ‘people leader’ to go to with questions. Such actions help not only with productivity but also with building a sense of belonging and overall morale.

In the employer survey, just 23.7% of hiring managers said their organizations have formal guidelines for onboarding new employees. There were no differences by employer size.

Provide post-employment supports

The lack of support for newcomers once they start a new job in Canada was identified as a gap. Employment services and mentoring come to an end once a new immigrant lands the first job, regardless of job-match with the desired field or level. Learning how to navigate toxic workplace cultures, difficult bosses and poor work conditions, especially when they fear losing their income and reputation, can be challenging for newcomer women who may not be fully aware of their rights as an employee in Ontario. Post-employment mentoring relationships can provide support in this regard, as well as for network building and career advancement.

“How can social organizations support professionals who want to move to senior level roles? There is a serious lack of support for people who have sufficient Canadian experience and are ready to move to senior positions. They just lack the right network and support system for it. Frontline workers in most of these organizations are trained to provide only retail/survival job support and meet a target. Immigrants want to thrive not just survive.”

— Marketing and communications professional, originally from India, arrived in Canada in 2018

Accelerated pathways for career development

Many immigrants start their careers in Canada at job levels below their capacity, partly due to the “Canadian experience” requirement. The share of highly educated and experienced immigrant women working at entry levels signals a large talent pool for senior positions in future. In cases where immigrants bring substantial experience to entry-level positions, employers could consider accelerated pathways for career advancement based on performance, rather than tying promotion to annual reviews, for example. Their performance could be evaluated on a shorter timeframe.

Greater workplace flexibility

The pandemic ushered in a move to remote workplaces and flexible work schedules that allow some women to better balance their careers, alongside family responsibilities. Work-from-home job opportunities should be maintained even post-pandemic. At the time of the survey, the majority (72.2%) of hiring managers said their organizations, regardless of size, did not have flexible working hours, hybrid work and/or remote work options as part of their EDI strategies.

Show tangible results on equity, diversity and inclusion

Best practices in EDI strategies have not changed significantly in the past decade. For example, a 2014 Deloitte report highlighted the need for EDI programs to pivot from looking at single dimensions in a workplace to considering the multiple identities that employees hold.⁴⁶

EDI efforts need to go beyond slogans and mandated training programs on anti-oppression. Some interviewees called for open conversations in safe spaces to share stories and build understanding, without the fear of retaliation. Coaching, mentoring and sponsoring can help to build a network of champions to enable immigrant women’s career growth. Further, research has shown that hiring women into leadership positions can help to change gender stereotypes expressed in language.⁴⁷

When asked about changes or improvements they would like to see in their workplace, respondents said:

- Greater transparency in how policies are applied
- Better data to track progress on diversity in senior leadership
- More openness to support with training and education to prepare the talent pipeline for promotion
- Mentorship by senior leaders
- Moving beyond acceptance of different cultures to creating a sense of belonging

To monitor progress on EDI in a way that considers intersectionality, organizations must collect and compare data on different equity-deserving groups. For example, it is not enough to know how many women hold senior leadership positions, as this would not show how immigrant women and racialized women are represented. In addition, employee engagement surveys or other tools could be used to measure inclusion and belonging. Being transparent with employees about the organization’s inclusion journey is also important. Sharing timely and complete data, together with a plan to act on insights, will help to demonstrate ongoing effort and commitment. Linking performance and pay to specific targets on inclusivity could help to incentivize change. Only 21.5% of large employers, 16.2% medium and 12.6% small said they had such accountability measures in place.

“I think the first step is accepting. And I think we are at that step in Canada. In general, everyone is accepting of the fact that there are different people here and that they come with a different set of experiences, looks and so on and so forth. But I think now the ask is more than just acceptance. It is celebration. It is the belonging feeling. There is a difference between acknowledging that there is a holiday for some people on a day and celebrating it..”

— IT professional, originally from Egypt, arrived in Canada in 2013

Issues for Further Research

The results from the immigrant women's survey and interviews provide valuable insights about their job search and workplace experiences. They also reveal some areas for further investigation to inform program and policy development.

- In order to gather adequate information about job search and workplace experiences, the survey was limited to immigrant women who have been in the GTA for at least one year. This allowed for the inclusion of only a small number of immigrant women who arrived in Canada after the COVID-19 pandemic. These women may have distinct experiences with job search and remote work that are important to explore and understand.
- Several respondents spoke about the lingering mental health impacts of underemployment or unemployment. The long-term effects of initial job-education mismatch, or deskilling, whereby immigrant professionals' occupational status is lower in Canada than the level of employment they would expect with their qualifications, could be explored further — both in terms of psychological costs to individuals and productivity losses.
- Intersectional approaches are important. Sample sizes were too small to explore in-depth the experiences of immigrant women who face marginalization based on their sexual orientation or disability status. These women may have unique experiences with access to services and programs, or in the workplace, that could be further explored. In addition, the study looked only at the core working-age population (25 to 54 years). Age-based factors related to immigrant women's labour market entry and career progression could be investigated more fully.
- Immigrant women entrepreneurs and gig workers/freelancers are not covered by this study. The study looks only at immigrant women who were in paid employment or searching for paid employment. The experiences and motivations of self-employed immigrant women deserves more attention.

Endnotes

1. The GTA is an administrative area that includes the city of Toronto and regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York. The Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is defined by Statistics Canada and includes all of Toronto, Peel and York but only parts of Durham and Halton regions.
2. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Catalogue number: 98-401-X2016041. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Index-eng.cfm>; IRCC, Permanent Residents, November 30, 2021 Data. (Use and interpretation of the data are those of the authors.)
3. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Catalogue number: 98-401-X2016041. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Index-eng.cfm> (Use and interpretation of the data are those of the authors.)
4. Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0087-01, Labour force characteristics of immigrants by educational attainment, annual. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410008701> (Use and interpretation of the data are those of the authors.)
5. Ng and Gagnon (2020); and Premji and Shakya (2017)
6. Labour force characteristics of immigrants by educational attainment, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, Table 14-10-0086-01. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410008601>; Statistics Canada (2021). "Longitudinal Immigration Database: Immigrants' income trajectories during the initial years since admission." The Daily, December 6, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211206/dq211206b-eng.htm> (Use and interpretation of the data are those of the authors.); Crossman, Hou and Picot (2021); and Momani et al (2021).
7. Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0087-01 Labour force characteristics of immigrants by educational attainment, annual. <https://doi.org/10.25318/1410008701-eng> (Use and interpretation of the data are those of the authors.)
8. Statistics Canada (2021)
9. Crossman, Hou and Picot (2021)
10. Fitzsimmons, Baggs and Brannen (2020); Lightman et al (2020); Block and Galabuzi (2018)
11. 'Visible minority' is used instead of racialized group where data is based on 2016 Census data.
12. Momani et al (2021)
13. Momani et al (2021)
14. Fitzsimmons, Baggs and Brannen (2020)
15. Procyk and Dinca-Panaitescu (2021)
16. World Education Services (2019); Oreopolous and Dechief (2012); Century Initiative (2019); Magesan (2017)
17. Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005); Pandey and Townsend (2017); Picot and Hou (2019)
18. Aydemir & Skuterud (2005); WES (2019); Hou, Crossman and Picot (2020)
19. Dhiman, Wong and Yvonne (2020); Banerjee, Reitz and Oreopolous (2018)
20. Cafley et al (2020); Desjardins and Freestone (2021); Nardon et al (2021); Zhu (2016); Nichols (2020); Banerjee and Phan (2014); Nichols and Tyyskä (2015); Sakamoto et al. (2010); Hari and Nardon (2020); Ferrer and Momani (2020); Koveshnikov, Tienari, and Piekkari (2018); Roberson (2019)

21. Jones, Misra and McCurley (n.d.)
22. Burlock (2017)
23. For ease of reference, employer, hiring manager and respondent (to the employer survey) are used interchangeably.
24. IRCC, Permanent Residents, November 30, 2021 data request CR-21-0515.
25. Ferrer (2015)
26. Macdonald and Friendly (2019)
27. Other possible answer choices included “not at all a barrier”, “minor barrier”, “moderate barrier”
28. Nardon et al (2021); Procyk and Dinca-Panaitescu (2021)
29. OWHN (2017)
30. Nangia and Arora (2021); Boston Consulting Group (2019)
31. Nangia and Arora (2021)
32. Creese and Kambere (2003); Branker (2017)
33. Souza et al. (2016); Banerjee (2009)
34. Kukushkin and Watt (2009)
35. Kovesnikov, Tienari, and Piekkari (2018)
36. Roberson (2019)
37. Branker (2017)
38. Momani et al (2021)
39. Government of Canada (2021)
40. Government of Ontario (2021)
41. Press (2022)
42. An immigrant who has been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through their ability to meet labour market needs, to create their own employment or jobs, or to make substantial investment.
43. Kukushkin and Watt (2009)
44. Blueprint ADE (2020)
45. <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/choosing-university/worlds-top-100-universities>
46. Kelly and Smith (2014)
47. Lawson et al (2022)

Works Cited

- Aydemir, A. and M. Skuterud (2005). "Explaining the deteriorating entry earnings of Canada's immigrant cohorts, 1966-2000." Canadian Journal of Economics, 38(2), 641-672. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3696051>
- Banerjee, R. (2009). "Income Growth of New Immigrants in Canada: Evidence from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics." Industrial Relations, Vol. 64, No. 3. <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/ri/2009-v64-n3-ri3563/038552ar/>
- Banerjee, R. and M.B. Phan (2014). "Do Tied Movers Get Tied Down? The Occupational Displacement of Dependent Applicant Immigrants in Canada." Journal of International Migration and Integration, 16:333353. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1674197926>
- Banerjee, R., J.G. Reitz and P. Oreopoulos (2018). "Do large employers treat racial minorities more fairly? An analysis of Canadian field experiment data." Canadian Public Policy, March 2018. <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/cpp.2017-033>
- Block, S. and G-E. Galabuzi (2018). "Persistent Inequality: Ontario's Colour-coded Labour Market." Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Ontario. <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Ontario%20Office/2018/12/Persistent%20inequality.pdf>
- Blueprint ADE (2020). "TRIEC Mentoring Partnership Evaluation." <https://triec.ca/research-and-insights/mentoring-evaluation/>
- Boston Consulting Group (2019). "Beyond Good Intentions: Bringing an Employee Lens to Diversity and Inclusion in Corporate Canada." BCG. https://media-publications.bcg.com/flash/dotbcg_other/BCG-CCF-Beyond-Good-Intentions.pdf
- Branker, R.R. (2017). "Labour market discrimination: The lived experiences of English-speaking Caribbean immigrants in Toronto." Journal of International Migration and Integration, 18(1), 203-222. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s12134-016-0469-x.pdf>
- Burlock, A. (2017). "Women with Disabilities." Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-503-X. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14695-eng.pdf?st=o6YlrRNG>
- Cafley, J., K. Davey, T. Saba, S. Blanchette, R. Latif and V. Sitnik (2020). "Economic Equality In a Changing World: Removing Barriers to Employment for Women." Public Policy Forum, The Diversity Institute and Future Skills Centre. <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/economic-equality-in-a-changing-world-removing-barriers-to-employment-for-women/>
- Century Initiative (2019). "Achieving Better Integration Outcomes." <https://www.centuryinitiative.ca/reports>
- Creese, G. and E. Ngene Kambere (2003). "What Colour is Your English?" Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 40 (5), 565-573. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1755-618X.2003.tb00005.x>

Crossman, E., F. Hou and G. Picot (2021). “Are the gaps in labour market outcomes between immigrants and their Canadian-born counterparts starting to close?” Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 36-28-0001. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/36-28-0001/2021004/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=AE5gNEcO>

Desjardins, D. and C. Freestone (2021). “Double Jeopardy: COVID Further Clouded the Outlook for Canadian Women at Risk of Disruption”. Current Analysis, 4 March 2021. https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/covid-further-clouded-the-outlook-for-canadian-women-at-risk-of-disruption/?_ga=2.72292499.1676839689.1626248363-1329199817.1624113795

Dhiman, M., A. Wong and J. Yvonne (2020). “Employment services responses to labour market challenges for South Asian women: An ACCES employment study.” Working Paper No. 2020/11, Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement and the CERC in Migration and Integration. https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/RCIS/publications/workingpapers/2020_11_Dhiman_Manjeet_Wong_Ada_Yvonne_Jody_Employment_Services_Responses_to_Labour_Market_Challenges_for_South_Asian_Women_An_ACCES_Employment_Study.pdf

Ferrer, A. (2015). “Are married immigrant women secondary workers?” IZA World of Labor, January 2015. <https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/119/pdfs/are-married-immigrant-women-secondary-workers.pdf>

Ferrer, A. and B. Momani (2020). “The startling impact of COVID-19 on immigrant women in the workforce.” Policy Options, 21 October 2020. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2020/the-startling-impact-of-covid-19-on-immigrant-women-in-the-workforce/>

Fitzsimmons, S. R., J. Baggs and M. Yoko Brannen (2020). “Intersectional arithmetic: How gender, race and mother tongue combine to impact immigrants’ work outcomes.” Journal of World Business 55. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1090951618307442>

Government of Canada (2021). “Task Force on Women in the Economy.” <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/task-force-women-economy.html>

Government of Ontario (2021). “Ontario Appoints Task Force on Women and the Economy.” Government of Ontario News Release, 25 June 2021. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000407/ontario-appoints-task-force-on-women-and-the-economy>

Hari, A. and L. Nardon (2020). “Immigrant women are falling behind during the COVID-19 pandemic.” The Conversation, 2 November 2020. <https://theconversation.com/immigrant-women-are-falling-behind-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-147821>

Hou, F., E. Crossman and G. Picot (2020). "Two-step Immigration Selection: An Analysis of its Expansion in Canada." Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 11-626-X, No. 112.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/statcan/11-626-x/11-626-x2020010-eng.pdf

Jones, K. Castiello, J. Misra and K. McCurley (n.d.). "Intersectionality in Sociology."

https://socwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/swsfactsheet_intersectionality.pdf

Kelly, W. Sean and C. Smith (2014). "What if the road to inclusion were really an intersection?" A report by the Deloitte University Leadership Center for Inclusion.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-inclus-deloitte-diversity-inclusion-road-to-inclusion-really-an-intersection....pdf>

Koveshnikov, A., Tienari, J., and Piekari, R. (2018). "Gender in international business journals: A review and conceptualization of MNCs as gendered social spaces." *Journal of World Business*, 54(1): 37-53.

<https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/worbus/v54y2019i1p37-53.html>

Kukushkin, V. and D. Watt (2009). "Immigrant-Friendly Business: Effective Practices for Attracting, Integrating and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces." The Conference Board of Canada.

<https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=3278>

Lawson, M. Asher, A. E. Martin, I. Huda and S.

C. Matz (2022). "Hiring women into senior leadership positions is associated with a reduction in gender stereotypes in organizational language." *PNAS* Vol. 119, No. 9 e202644319.

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2026443119>

Lightman, N., R. Banerjee, E. Tungohan, C. de Leon and P. Kelly (2021). "An intersectional pathway penalty: Filipina immigrant women inside and outside Canada's Live-In Caregiver Program." *International Migration*, 2021;00:1-20.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/imig.12851>

Macdonald, D. and M. Friendly (2019).

"Developmental Milestones: Child care fees in Canada's big cities 2018." Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/study-reveals-highest-and-lowest-child-care-fees-canadian-cities-2018>

Magesan, A. (2017). "Closing the immigrant wage gap: Is speaking English important?" *The Conversation*, 25 October 2017.

<https://theconversation.com/closing-the-immigrant-wage-gap-is-speaking-english-important-84891>

Momani, B., R. Johnstone, A. Ferrer, N. Basir, M. Walton-Roberts, J. Hennebry, M. Finn, K. Kearney, L. Callies and J. Uszkay (2021).

"Knowledge Synthesis Report on Canada's Racialized Immigrant Women and the Labour Market." <https://uwaterloo.ca/women-work-and-the-economy/canadas-racialized-immigrant-women-and-labour-market>

Nangia, P. and T. Arora (2021). "Discrimination in the Workplace in Canada: An Intersectional Approach." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 46(2), 147-178.
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/cjs/index.php/CJS/article/view/29736>

Nardon, L., A. Hari, H. Zhang, L.P.S. Hoselton and A. Kuzhabekova (2021). "Skilled immigrant women's career trajectories during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 112-128.
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EDI-09-2020-0255/full/html>

Ng, E. S. and S. Gagnon (2020). "Employment Gaps and Underemployment for Racialized Groups and Immigrants in Canada: Current Findings and Future Directions." *Public Policy Forum*, Diversity Institute and Future Skills Centre. <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/EmploymentGaps-Immigrants-PPF-JAN2020-EN-Feb7.pdf>

Nichols, L. and V. Tyyskä (2015). "Immigrant Women in Canada and the United States." Chapter 10 in Bauder, H. and J. Shields (eds). *Immigrant Experiences in North America: Understanding Settlement and Integration*, p.248-272.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272417185_Immigrant_women_in_Canada_and_the_United_States

Nichols, L. (2020). "Newcomer women's experience of immigration and precarious work in Toronto."
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329218641_Newcomer_Women's_Experiences_of_Immigration_and_Precarious_Work_in_Toronto

Ontario Women's Health Network (2017). "Start from Zero: Immigrant Women's Experiences of the Wage Gap." Toronto: OWHN.
https://www.payequity.gov.on.ca/en/DocsEN/Immigrant%20Women%20and%20Wage%20Gap_OWHN%20Final.pdf

Oreopoulos, P., and D. Dechief (2012). "Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir? New evidence from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver."
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2018047

Pandey, M. and J. Townsend (2017). "Prior host-country work experience and immigrant labour market outcomes: evidence from Canada." *Journal of Migration*, 6:3.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313698692_Prior_host-country_work_experience_and_immigrant_labour_market_outcomes_evidence_from_Canada

Picot, G. and F. Hou (2019). "Skill Utilization and Earnings of STEM-educated Immigrants in Canada: Differences by Degree Level and Field of Study." *Statistics Canada*, Catalogue no. 11F0019M, No. 435.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019023-eng.pdf?st=mPI2LsZw>

Premji, S. and Y. Shakya (2017). "Pathways between under/unemployment and health among racialized immigrant women in Toronto." *Ethnicity & Health*, 22(1), 17-35.
<https://accessalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Pathways-between-under-unemployment-and-health-among-racialized-immigrant-women-in-Toronto.pdf>

Press, J. (2022). "Liberals eye easing access to maternity, parental leave in EI review, minister says." Toronto Star, 1 January 2022.

<https://www.thestar.com/business/2022/01/01/liberals-eye-easing-access-to-maternity-parental-leave-in-ei-review-minister-says.html>

Procyk, S. and M. Dinca-Panaitescu (2021). "Peel Region Social Capital Study." An initiative of United Way Greater Toronto, The Region of Peel, Wellesley Institute and The Community Foundation of Mississauga.

https://www.unitedwaygt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Peel_Social_Capital_Report_2021_Online.pdf

Roberson, Q.M. (2019). "Diversity in the workplace: A review, synthesis and future research agenda." Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 6, pg.69-88.

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015243>

Sakamoto, I., M. Chin and M. Young (2010). "Canadian Experience, employment challenges and skilled immigrants: A close look through 'tacit knowledge.'" Canadian Social Work Journal, 10(1), 145-151.

https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/94782/1/Canadian%20Experience%20employment%20challenges_Sakamoto.pdf

Souza, L. E. Cunha de, C. R. Pereira, L. Camino, T. J. Souza de Lima and A. Raquel Torres (2016). "The legitimizing role of accent on discrimination against immigrants." European Journal of Social Psychology, 46: 609-620.

<https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/25705/1>

[/ICS_CRPereira_legitimizing_ARI.pdf](#)

Statistics Canada (2021). "Longitudinal Immigration Database: Immigrants' income trajectories during the initial years since admission." The Daily, December 6, 2021.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211206/dq211206b-eng.htm>

Teelucksingh, C. and G.E. Galabuzi (2005). "Impact of race and immigrant status on employment opportunities in the Canadian labour market." Policy Matters (Metropolis), 22, 1-12.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253806938_Working_Precariously_The_impact_of_race_and_immigrants_status_on_employment_opportunities_and_outcomes_in_Canada

World Education Services. (2019). "Who is succeeding in the Canadian labour market? Predictors of career success for skilled immigrants." https://knowledge.wes.org/rs/317-CTM-316/images/wes-paper-employment_outcome-full-vFINAL.pdf

Zhu, Y. (2016). "Immigration policy, settlement service and immigrant mothers in neoliberal Canada: A feminist analysis." Canadian Ethnic Studies, 48(2), 143-156.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307180284_Immigration_Policy_Settlement_Service_and_Immigrant_Mothers_in_Neoliberal_Canada_A_Feminist_Analysis



Appendices



Appendix A: Methodology

Survey and Follow-up Interviews of Immigrant Women

An anonymous online survey of immigrant women professionals was programmed and administered on SurveyMonkey. It was open from November 2, 2021 to December 15, 2021. The survey included a mix of open-ended, semi-close-ended and close-ended questions. After consent was provided, the anonymous survey questionnaire starts with screening questions to assess eligibility. The research population included women who meet the following criteria:

- identify as a woman (cisgender/transgender);
- first settled in the Greater Toronto Area, from January 2011 to December 2020
- within the core working age group (25 to 54 years);
- completed post-secondary education outside of Canada before immigrating; and

- currently looking for employment, underemployed or employed in the GTA

The survey sample was non-random. Immigrant women were recruited for the survey through calls to action on TRIEC’s website, social media platforms (LinkedIn and Twitter) and email signature banner. Women mentees in TMP and PINs leaders were emailed directly. Some community partners were tagged in social media posts, which helped to encourage shares and expand reach.

The consequence of a non-random sampling approach (online convenience sampling), and the absence of sampling weights to correct for differential probabilities of selection, is that the sample of immigrant women is not statistically representative of the underlying population. Results are indicative and not generalizable outside of the sample population.

Out of a total 913 survey attempts, 365 met eligibility criteria and were valid. Reasons for exclusion are described in **Table 13**.

Table 13. Excluded survey respondents

Reason for exclusion	Frequency	Percentage
Did not consent	7	1.3%
Previously completed survey	45	8.2%
Did not complete screening questions	36	6.6%
Completed screener but ineligible	318	58.0%
Born in Canada / Prefer not to say	64	11.7%
Does not identify as a woman / Misunderstood response options	42	7.7%
Ineligible date of arrival	72	13.1%
First settled outside of GTA	51	9.3%
Not currently in the GTA / Prefer not to say	33	6.0%
Outside of core working age / Prefer not to say	7	1.3%
Did not complete post-secondary education before immigrating	22	4.0%
Not currently in paid employment nor looking / Prefer not to say	27	4.9%
Completed screener but did not start survey	7	1.3%
Started but did not complete survey	110	20.1%
Illegitimate respondents (e.g., inconsistent responses)	25	4.6%
Total excluded	548	100%

Of the 365 eligible and completed surveys, 205 (56.2%) respondents agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview. Interviews with immigrant women were conducted over Zoom. Interview participants were randomly chosen in three rounds, with stratification to ensure a mix of racialized and non-racialized immigrant women: i) after 10 days of running the survey (8 completes); ii) after 25 days of running the survey (7 completes); and iii) after the survey closed (5 participants selected but 1 dropped out and was not replaced; 4 completes). A total of 19 interviews were completed for this study. After 19 interviews, we were not identifying significant new information. Rather key themes and issues captured in prior interviews and in the open-ended responses in the survey were reiterated.

The length of the interviews ranged from 31 to 64 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded

and transcribed. A master coding framework was developed to capture important themes. Back-coding was applied when new themes relevant to the study but not considered in the initial coding framework emerged. Quotes are used only where permission was given. Some quotes were edited for length, clarity and to maintain anonymity, without altering meaning.

This component of the study was reviewed and approved by the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO228).

Survey of Employers

A survey of employers was used to understand how equity, diversity and inclusion strategies consider immigrant women. Survey questions were developed by TRIEC and reviewed and tested by Forum Research to improve validity.

Forum Research's panel is built using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) to recruit panelists (a purely random method that ensures sampling integrity). To achieve the target sample, its panel was screened based on senior managers or other managers who represent employers in the GTA with 20 or more employees and authorize or directly influence strategic or hiring decisions made by their organizations. All respondents, therefore, represent their employers based on these targets or responses.

Forum Research did an initial soft launch of the survey where about 50 responses were collected, and then data was checked before proceeding with the full launch of fieldwork. No issues were encountered during the soft launch. Periodic data checks were in place during fieldwork to ensure the accurate collection of survey responses. For example, respondents who straight line or select contradicting answers were removed.

The survey was open from October 27, 2021 to November 10, 2021. In total, more than 650 surveys were submitted, of which 608 were adequately complete for analysis. Forum Research tabulated results, including running significance tests for differences based on variables such as employer size, reach and sector. The use and interpretation of these data are entirely those of TRIEC.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the calculation of descriptive and comparative statistics. Frequency tables and cross-tabulations were prepared to describe the distribution of survey respondents by different variables. Note that results presented in tables and charts may not

add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Statistical analyses (e.g., z-test for proportions) were performed to test the statistical significance of differences in the distribution between respondents' characteristics. For both the immigrant women's survey and the employer survey, p-values of less than 0.05 are reported as being statistically significant. These results are indicative only as the online survey samples were non-random. Generalizations should be drawn cautiously.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Open-ended survey responses were also coded. The qualitative data was then organized thematically.

Advisory Group

TRIEC's PINs — a network of professional associations and partner organizations who support the development of immigrant professionals in their careers in Canada — voluntarily contributed their time and expertise gained from their lived experiences to this research. The Advisory Group includes three members from the PINs Women's Working Group and one member who belongs to a PINs association. The impetus for this study was partly derived from PINs Women's Working Group members recognizing a need for research and action to improve immigrant women's labour market experiences.

While not necessarily representative of all possible viewpoints or interests of immigrant women in the GTA, the Advisory Group was diverse with respect to the sorts of topics that were explored in this study. Members are of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, as well as professional fields. They are also diverse in terms of their family situations, immigration categories, workplace experiences and career stages.

The role of the Advisory Group was to:

- Provide inputs into components of the research design
- Offer comment and advice on draft data collection tools and analysis plans
- Provide feedback on preliminary data analysis, helping to identify any gaps in points of view that have not been heard from, or alternative interpretations
- Provide feedback on the extent to which the first draft of the report reflects relevant perspectives and meets study objectives
- Exchange ideas and information on how to act on findings
- Support with the dissemination and use of research findings

The Advisory Group was formed in August 2021 and held five meetings between its launch and February 2022.

Limitations of this Work

- Findings are based on a non-random survey of immigrant women in the GTA. Follow up interviews and a survey with employers were conducted to provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the survey of immigrant women data. They, however, do not validate or invalidate findings from the immigrant women's survey. Rather, they are designed to contextualize survey findings.
- Where relevant, comparisons are made based on different respondent characteristics. The results should be read with caution. The survey analysis allows for the inference of correlation but not causation between respondent characteristics and statistically significant differences in responses.
- The study is specific to the GTA. It may be difficult to generalize the findings from this study to other regions, particularly if there are systemic differences in labour market conditions, the selection of immigrants, the availability of settlement and integration programs and services, or other factors.
- The online survey and interviews with immigrant women were conducted in English only. Given the focus of the survey on immigrant women professionals and the criteria of more than one year of residence in the GTA, it was assumed that interested participants would have adequate English language (as well as digital literacy skills) to complete the online survey and participate in an interview.
- It was not practical to ask survey respondents about all of the ways in which multiple marginalized identities intersect (e.g., race, gender, immigration status, disability, religion, sexual orientation, etc.). For this reason, it was difficult to apply an intersectional lens within data collection and reliably make inferences.
- Self-selection bias is a potential problem with online surveys. Hiring managers from organizations that perform better on EDI may have been more likely to participate. In addition, managers/senior managers of small organizations (<100 employees) may have been less likely to take part in the survey due to a lack of time and competing priorities. Indeed hiring managers at small organizations (20 to 99 employees) were under-represented in the sample. The data is not weighted to correct for this for accuracy reasons and because results are primarily presented by size of employer. When data is weighted, it reduces the accuracy of the data, especially if repeat studies would seek to do trend analysis. Weighting up is also risky for data accuracy.
- Forum Research consistently monitors its panel to ensure quality respondents. Even so, there may still be individuals who enter panels based on how they think administrators want them to respond. These respondents are very difficult to uncover and remove.



Appendix B: Supplementary Data Tables – Survey of Immigrant Women

Table 14. Year of arrival in Canada

Year	Frequency	Percent
2011	13	3.6%
2012	22	6.0%
2013	23	6.3%
2014	26	7.1%
2015	38	10.4%
2016	36	9.9%
2017	47	12.9%
2018	46	12.6%
2019	74	20.3%
2020	40	11.0%
Total	365	100%

Table 15. Racial or cultural background

Racial or Cultural Group	Frequency	Percent
Arabic	21	5.8%
Black	46	12.6%
East Asian	27	7.4%
Indian-Caribbean	2	0.5%
Latin American	43	11.8%
South Asian	121	33.2%
Southeast Asian etc.)	16	4.4%
West Asian	14	3.8%
White	58	15.9%
Not Elsewhere Classified	13	3.6%
Prefer not to say/no response	14	3.8%
Total	365	100%

Table 16. Regions of birth and origin

Region	Birth		Origin	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Africa	46	12.6%	39	10.7%
Asia	199	54.5%	202	55.3%
Central Asia	4	1.1%	4	1.1%
East Asia	23	6.3%	25	6.8%
South Asia	119	32.6%	111	30.4%
Southeast Asia	18	4.9%	17	4.7%
West Asia	35	9.6%	45	12.3%
Australia & New Zealand	4	1.1%	3	0.8%
Eastern Europe	21	5.8%	15	4.1%
Europe (excl. UK, Eastern Europe)	12	3.3%	15	4.1%
United Kingdom	3	0.8%	8	2.2%
South & Central America	43	11.8%	39	10.7%
Caribbean	15	4.1%	13	3.6%
Mexico	6	1.6%	6	1.6%
United States of America	16	4.4%	25	6.8%
Total	365	100%	365	100%

Table 17. Religious or spiritual affiliations

Religion	Frequency	Percent
No religion	70	19.2%
Buddhist	8	2.2%
Christian (includes, but not limited to, Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Orthodox, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, United Church)	132	36.2%
Hindu	53	14.5%
Jewish	--	--
Muslim	52	14.2%
Sikh	7	1.9%
African spirituality	--	--
Don't know	3	0.8%
Other religion/spirituality	3	0.8%
Prefer not to say/no response	39	10.7%
Total	365	100%

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Table 18. Respondents with children by age group of the child

Children	Frequency	Percent
No children	148	40.5%
Age 5 or under?	84	23.0%
Age 6 to 11?	99	27.1%
Age 12 to 17?	56	15.3%
Age 18 to 24?	22	6.0%
Age 25 or older?	3	0.8%
Prefer not to say	3	0.8%
Total	365	100%

Table 19. Other dependents, parents or relatives living with respondents

Other Dependents	Frequency	Percent
Parent(s)	35	9.6%
Grandparent(s)	3	0.8%
Sibling(s)	7	1.9%
Aunt(s) or uncle(s)	3	0.8%
Niece(s) or nephew(s)	5	1.4%
No other dependents, parents or relatives living with me	306	83.8%
Prefer not to say	10	2.7%
Total	365	100%

Table 20. Pre-arrival occupations of respondents

2-Digit National Occupational Classification (2016)	Frequency	Percent
Administrative and financial supervisors and administrative occupations	30	8.2%
Middle management occupations	3	0.8%
Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services	3	0.8%
Professional occupations	224	61.4%
Art and culture	10	2.7%
Business and finance	92	25.2%
Education services	29	7.9%
Health (except nursing)	13	3.6%
Law and social, community and government services	47	12.9%
Natural and applied sciences	33	9.0%
Retail sales supervisors and specialized sales occupations	3	0.8%
Sales support occupations	--	--
Senior management occupations	--	--
Service representatives and other customer and personal services occupations	--	--
Specialized middle management occupations	80	21.9%
Technical occupations (art, culture, recreation and sport, health, natural and applied sciences)	7	1.9%
Student	6	1.6%
Prefer not to say	4	1.1%
Total	365	100.0%

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Table 21. Respondents by industry of current employer

Industry	Frequency	Percent
Accommodation and food services	14	4.6%
Administration & support, waste management	14	4.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	3	1.0%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	5	1.7%
Construction	8	2.6%
Educational services	29	9.6%
Finance and insurance	73	24.2%
Health care and social assistance	31	10.3%
Information and cultural industries	15	5.0%
Management of companies and enterprises	7	2.3%
Manufacturing	11	3.6%
Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	4	1.3%
Other services (except public administration), such as dry cleaning, auto repair	12	4.0%
Professional, scientific & technical services, such as legal, accounting and computer systems design	59	19.5%
Public administration	11	3.6%
Real estate and rental and leasing	7	2.3%
Retail trade	16	5.3%
Transportation and warehousing	9	3.0%
Utilities	--	--
Wholesale trade	4	1.3%
Total	302	100.0%

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Table 22. What major barriers did you face, or do you currently face, to work in your profession in the Greater Toronto Area?

Barrier	Major barrier		Moderate barrier		Minor barrier		Not at all a barrier	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
a) English language skills	20	5.5%	47	12.9%	87	23.8%	211	57.8%
b) Lack of Canadian work experience	187	51.2%	80	21.9%	53	14.5%	45	12.3%
c) Lack of job vacancies in my field of training/study	33	9.0%	78	21.4%	104	28.5%	150	41.1%
d) My education and my credentials are not recognized	58	15.9%	69	18.9%	67	18.4%	171	46.8%
e) Lack of professional networks in Canada	154	42.2%	96	26.3%	70	19.2%	45	12.3%
f) Lack of professional references in Canada	161	44.1%	79	21.6%	71	19.5%	54	14.8%
g) No money to update training and skills	82	22.5%	74	20.3%	79	21.6%	130	35.6%
h) Lack of knowledge about how to find a job here in my field	50	13.7%	68	18.6%	122	33.4%	125	34.2%
i) Lack of services and support to find a job	61	16.7%	62	17.0%	123	33.7%	119	32.6%
j) Lack of information about the labour market	47	12.9%	80	21.9%	125	34.2%	113	31.0%
k) Not being able to find or not being able to afford childcare	50	13.7%	35	9.6%	51	14.0%	229	62.7%
l) Employer perceptions of my 'cultural fit'	78	21.4%	85	23.3%	92	25.2%	110	30.1%
m) Racism or prejudice in the workforce	58	15.9%	78	21.4%	86	23.6%	143	39.2%
n) Gender-based discrimination in the workforce	28	7.7%	61	16.7%	86	23.6%	190	52.1%

Table 23. Respondents who were asked about their Canadian work experience in a job interview in the GTA

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Total	235	64.4%
Years since arrival (completed years)		
1-2 years (A)	68	59.6%
3-5 years (B)	80	62.0%
6-10 years (C)	87	71.3%
Immigration category		
Economic - Principal applicant (D)	120	63.8%
Economic – Dependent (E)	48	63.2%
Temporary permit or visa (F)	35	76.1%
Sponsored family (G)	25	58.1%
Resettled refugee / protected person (H)	7	58.3%
Age group (years)		
25 to 34 years (I)	60	59.4%
35 to 49 years (J)	161	66.3%
50 to 54 years (K)	14	66.7%
Marital status		
Never partnered (L)	37	64.9%
Ever-partnered with non-Canadian-born (M)	174	66.2%
Ever-partnered with Canadian-born (N)	21	52.5%
Prefer not to say	3	60.0%
Children		
Yes (O)	137	64.3%
No (P)	96	64.9%
Prefer not to say (Q)	2	50.0%
Racialized		
Yes (R)	196	67.6%
No (S)	32	50.8%
Not known (T)	7	58.3%
Languages other than English spoken at home		
Yes (U)	194	66.7%
No (V)	35	56.5%
Prefer not to say / No response (W)	6	50.0%

Notes: Superscript letters indicate significantly higher at the 95% level. | Statistical testing was suppressed where the filter's effective sample size was less than 30.

Table 24. Services or programs used by respondents to help find work in the GTA

Type of Service or Program	Frequency	Percent
I have not used any services or programs to find work in the Greater Toronto Area	12	3.3%
Employment counselling / Working with a career coach	192	52.6%
Mentorship programs	207	56.7%
Workshops to build job search, resume and/or interview skills	228	62.5%
Job placement services (i.e., services that help match you with job opportunities in your area)	134	36.7%
Sector- or occupation-focused bridging program	62	17.0%
Networking programs or events	186	51.0%
Work placement or internship programs to help you gain relevant work experience	55	15.1%
Educational counseling (i.e., advice on credentials or accreditation needed to work in occupation in Canada)	35	9.6%
Foreign credential recognition program (i.e., getting international credentials recognized in Canada)	48	13.2%
English or French language training	51	14.0%
Interpretation and translation of documents	19	5.2%
Workshops on Canadian workplace culture and norms	112	30.7%
Soft skills workshops (e.g., communication skills, leadership)	88	24.1%
Mental health supports	16	4.4%
Volunteer opportunities	5	1.4%
Other	11	3.0%
Total	365	100.0%

Table 25. Size of respondents' employers in terms of number of employees

Characteristic	Total	Size of employer					
		Small (1 to 99)		Medium (100 to 499)		Large (500+)	
		Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Total	302	82	27.2%	70	23.2%	150	49.7%
Years since arrival (completed years)							
1-2 years	93	30	32.3%	20	21.5%	43	46.2%
3-5 years	99	27	27.3%	23	23.2%	49	49.5%
6-10 years	110	25	22.7%	27	24.5%	58	52.7%
Immigration category							
Economic - Principal applicant	165	36	21.8%	41	24.8%	88	53.3%
Economic - Dependent	55	23	41.8%	8	14.5%	24	43.6%
Temporary permit or visa	34	10	29.4%	7	20.6%	17	50.0%
Sponsored family	39	8	20.5%	14	35.9%	17	43.6%
Resettled refugee / Protected person	9	5	55.6%	0	0.0%	4	44.4%
Age group							
25 to 34 years	86	22	25.6%	24	27.9%	40	46.5%
35 to 49 years	198	57	28.8%	40	20.2%	101	51.0%
50 to 54 years	18	3	16.7%	6	33.3%	9	50.0%
Racialized							
Yes	240	61	25.4%	48	20.0%	131	54.6%
No	55	18	32.7%	20	36.4%	17	30.9%
Not known	7	3	42.9%	--	--	--	--
Languages other than English spoken at home							
Yes	247	66	26.7%	51	20.6%	130	52.6%
No	50	14	28.0%	18	36.0%	18	36.0%
Prefer not to say / No response	5	--	--	--	--	--	--

-- Suppressed due to small case counts (n<3).

Table 26. Total income before taxes (Canadian dollars) of employed respondents, over the 12 months prior to the survey

Total Income (CDN\$)	Frequency	Percent
No income from employment in the past 12 months	5	1.7%
Less than \$20,000	23	7.6%
\$20,001 to \$40,000	44	14.6%
\$40,001 to \$60,000	59	19.5%
\$60,001 to \$80,000	83	27.5%
\$80,001 to \$100,000	37	12.3%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	32	10.6%
More than \$150,000	4	1.3%
Don't know	15	5.0%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 27. Have you ever experienced any of the following situations in your current workplace because of your identity?

Situation	Frequency	Percent
I have not experienced any of the above situations	122	40.4%
Being patronized (e.g., told you speak English well, receive excessive praise for doing routine or simple tasks)	80	26.5%
Having your judgement questioned in your area of expertise	76	25.2%
Needing to provide more evidence of your competence than others do	65	21.5%
Being excluded from a meeting or project that you should have been involved in	58	19.2%
Being labelled based on positive stereotypes (e.g., Asians are good at math, women are more compassionate)	57	18.9%
Often having your work contributions ignored	49	16.2%
Not getting credit for your work and ideas	46	15.2%
Being mistaken for someone else	44	14.6%
Being addressed in a less-than-professional way	43	14.2%
Hearing demeaning remarks about yourself or people similar to you	25	8.3%
Being excluded from work-related social interactions	21	7.0%
Other	8	2.6%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 28. Who in your workplace has ever made you feel uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated against?

Source	Frequency	Percent
I have never felt uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated at work	132	43.7%
Your peers	67	22.2%
Customers/clients/external stakeholders	64	21.2%
Your direct supervisor	59	19.5%
Senior leadership	40	13.2%
Employees who directly report to you	17	5.6%
Other	11	3.6%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 29. For which reason(s), if any, have you ever felt uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated at work? Was it because of ...

Reason	Frequency	Percent
I have never felt uncomfortable, out of place, judged or discriminated at work	126	41.7%
Your language or accent	103	34.1%
Your immigrant background	81	26.8%
Your race	73	24.2%
Your gender	42	13.9%
Your religion	14	4.6%
Your age	17	5.6%
Your sexual orientation	3	1.0%
Your disability	0	0.0%
Other	17	5.6%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 30. Do you feel that your current employer has ever treated you unfairly with regards to ...

Criteria	Frequency	Percent
I do not believe I have been treated unfairly	174	57.6%
Salary/wages?	77	25.5%
Promotion decisions?	43	14.2%
Division of work-related tasks?	41	13.6%
Providing resources/tools for work?	28	9.3%
Performance reviews?	24	7.9%
Providing vacation/time off?	19	6.3%
Providing trainings?	16	5.3%
The recruitment process?	16	5.3%
Working hours?	12	4.0%
Other	9	3.0%
Total	302	100.0%

Table 31. If you have left a job in the Greater Toronto Area, what were some of your reasons for leaving?

Reason	Frequency	Percent
I have not left a job in the Greater Toronto Area	160	43.8%
Received a better job offer for a similar job with a different employer	80	21.9%
Dissatisfied with management	59	16.2%
Dissatisfied with limited opportunities for advancement	53	14.5%
Dissatisfied with type of job duties	52	14.2%
Dissatisfied with work environment or culture	51	14.0%
Received a better job offer for a non-similar job with a different employer	49	13.4%
Dissatisfied with limited opportunities for skill development	42	11.5%
Dissatisfied with long hours	27	7.4%
Employer downsized due to COVID-19 pandemic	26	7.1%
Promoted out of this kind of work	22	6.0%
I was fired	18	4.9%
Employer downsized for other reasons	14	3.8%
Dissatisfied with travel requirements	11	3.0%
Relocated for reasons unrelated to my employer	10	2.7%
Other	32	8.8%
Total	365	100.0%



Appendix C: Profile of Interview Participants

No.	Age group	Immigration category on arrival	Year of arrival	Country of origin	Racial or cultural group	Family status	Work before immigrating to Canada	Main work after arrival in Canada
1.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2019	Bangladesh	South Asian	Divorced, school-aged child	Fundraiser, Middle management	Entry level/junior position, Small employer in manufacturing sector
2.	50-54 years	Economic immigrant (dependent)	2017	Brazil	Latin American	Married, no children	University professor	Intermediate level position, Large employer in retail trade sector
3.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2015	China	East Asian	Married, children aged 18+ years	Human resources professional, Senior management	Middle management position, Medium-sized employer in wholesale trade sector
4.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2015	United States of America, Jamaica	Black	Married, school-aged children	Finance professional, Intermediate	Professor, Large employer in educational services sector

No.	Age group	Immigration category on arrival	Year of arrival	Country of origin	Racial or cultural group	Family status	Work before immigrating to Canada	Main work after arrival in Canada
5.	35-49 years	Economic immigrant (dependent)	2016	Nigeria	Black	Married, school-aged children	Accountant, middle management	Intermediate level position, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
6.	35-49 years	Family sponsorship	2013	Egypt	Arabic	Married, school-aged children	Information technology business analyst, Intermediate	Middle management position, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
7.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2017	Serbia	White	Single, no children	Project manager, Middle management	Middle management position, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
8.	25-34 years	Temporary foreign worker (work permit)	2014	United Kingdom	White	Married, pre-school aged children	Urban planning, Intermediate	Intermediate position, Large employer in public administration sector
9.	35-49 years	Canadian Experience Class (principal applicant)	2017	Poland	White	Married, no children	Business analyst, Intermediate	Middle management, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
10.	35-49 years	Economic immigrant (dependent)	2015	Philippines	Southeast Asian	Married, no children	IT project coordinator, Entry level/junior	Entry level/junior, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
11.	35-49 years	Temporary foreign worker (work permit)	2017	Romania	White	Married, no children	Business analyst, Intermediate	Middle management, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
12.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2015	Ukraine	White	Married, school-aged children	Finance professional, Middle management	Intermediate level position, Medium-sized employer in health care and social assistance sector
13.	35-49 years	Economic immigrant (dependent)	2016	China	East Asian	Married, school-aged children	Marketing and sales, Executive/C-level	Not working and looking for work

No.	Age group	Immigration category on arrival	Year of arrival	Country of origin	Racial or cultural group	Family status	Work before immigrating to Canada	Main work after arrival in Canada
14.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2015	India	South Asian	Married, pre-school aged children	Climate change policy analyst, Intermediate	Entry level/junior position, Small employer in professional, scientific and technical services
15.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2020	India	South Asian	Married, no children	E-commerce, Middle management	Intermediate level position, Small employer in retail trade sector
16.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2019	Nigeria	Black	Separated, school-aged children	Lawyer, Senior management	Intermediate level position, Medium-sized employer in finance and insurance sector
17.	35-49 years	Temporary foreign worker (work permit)	2017	India	South Asian	Married, school-aged children and siblings living within same household	Finance professional, Middle management	Entry level/junior position, Large employer in professional, scientific and technical services sector
18.	35-49 years	Federal skilled worker (principal applicant)	2012	Venezuela	Latin American	Married, pre-school and school-aged children	Consultant, Middle management	Senior management, Large employer in finance and insurance sector
19.	35-49 years	Economic immigrant (dependent)	2015	Pakistan	South Asian	Married, school-aged children and nieces/nephews living in same household	Public health research, Middle management	Entry level/junior position, Large employer in health care and social assistance / Public administration sectors



Appendix D: Supplementary Data Tables – Employer Survey

Note: Superscript letters indicate significantly higher at the 95% level. | Statistical testing was suppressed where the filter's effective sample size was less than 30.

Table 32. Organizational reach by employer size

Operations	Total	Employer Size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Greater Toronto Area (GTA) only	31.3%	25.2%	35.2% ^C	32.2%
Ontario only (GTA and other cities/towns)	14.0%	22.0% ^{DE}	11.7%	10.7%
Canada only (Ontario and other province/s)	28.6%	32.7%	29.1%	25.9%
Multinational (national/regional operations act independently)	10.7%	8.2%	10.1%	12.6%
Global (high level of global integration)	14.1%	8.8%	12.3%	18.5% ^C
Other	1.3%	3.1% ^E	1.7%	0.0%

Table 33. Sector by employer size

Sector	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Public sector	39.5%	37.7%	41.9%	38.9%
Private, for-profit sector	56.3%	54.1%	53.6%	59.3%
Non-profit	4.3%	8.2% ^E	4.5%	1.9%

Table 34. Industry of employers

Industry	First mention		Multi-select	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Total	608	100.0%	608	100.0%
Accommodation and food services	82	13.5%	82	13.5%
Administration & support, waste management	36	5.9%	48	7.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	21	3.5%	40	6.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	20	3.3%	39	6.4%
Construction	45	7.4%	64	10.5%
Educational services	20	3.3%	43	7.1%
Finance and insurance	79	13.0%	111	18.3%
Health care and social assistance	42	6.9%	67	11.0%
Information and cultural industries	24	3.9%	53	8.7%
Management of companies and enterprises	19	3.1%	53	8.7%
Manufacturing	43	7.1%	78	12.8%
Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	7	1.2%	19	3.1%
Other services (except public administration), such as dry cleaning services and auto repair	9	1.5%	18	3.0%
Professional, scientific & technical services, such as legal, accounting and computer systems design	48	7.9%	74	12.2%
Public administration	28	4.6%	44	7.2%
Real estate and rental and leasing	9	1.5%	19	3.1%
Retail trade	51	8.4%	100	16.4%
Transportation and warehousing	9	1.5%	28	4.6%
Utilities	7	1.2%	19	3.1%
Wholesale trade	9	1.5%	30	4.9%

Table 35. Channels employers use most often for recruitment

Channel	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Employee referrals	29.1%	27.7%	27.4%	31.1%
Online recruitment sources (e.g., Workopolis, Indeed, etc.)	41.8%	42.8%	42.5%	40.7%
Social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)	32.4%	32.7%	40.8% ^E	26.7%
Networking events/industry specific forums	14.8%	10.1%	14.5%	17.8% ^C
Training programs	18.8%	20.8%	16.2%	19.3%
Community employment services	14.3%	18.2% ^D	9.5%	15.2%
Sector councils / professional associations	11.2%	8.8%	8.4%	14.4% ^D
Executive placement agencies or temporary employment agencies	16.3%	12.6%	15.6%	18.9%
Immigrant settlement agencies	9.7%	6.9%	8.9%	11.9%
Job/recruitment fairs	25.0%	24.5%	24.0%	25.9%
Organization's website	29.4%	22.0%	29.1%	34.1% ^C
Internal postings	20.1%	21.4%	20.1%	19.3%

Table 36. How important is Canadian work experience for each of the following positions at your organization?

Level	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Executive / C-level				
Important (net)	71.2%	66.7%	68.2%	75.9% ^C
Unimportant (net)	11.3%	17.0% ^E	11.2%	8.1%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	17.4%	16.4%	20.7%	15.9%
Senior management				
Important	72.5%	67.9%	66.5%	79.3% ^{CD}
Unimportant	9.5%	11.9%	12.3% ^E	6.3%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	17.9%	20.1%	21.2%	14.4%
Middle management				
Important	72.9%	68.6%	68.7%	78.1% ^{CD}
Unimportant	8.7%	11.9%	8.4%	7.0%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	18.4%	19.5%	22.9% ^E	14.8%
Intermediate				
Important	64.1%	56.0%	59.8%	71.9% ^{CD}
Unimportant	11.3%	13.8%	13.4%	8.5%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	24.5%	30.2% ^E	26.8%	19.6%
Entry level / Junior				
Important	59.2%	50.9%	49.7%	70.4% ^{CD}
Unimportant	17.4%	21.4% ^E	22.3% ^E	11.9%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	23.4%	27.7% ^E	27.9% ^E	17.8%

Table 37. Reasons for not hiring a racialized immigrant woman interviewed in the last 12 months

Reason	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Technical skills not at the expected level	34.5%	26.4%	38.5% ^C	36.7% ^C
English language skills	34.5%	34.0%	35.8%	34.1%
Job requires travel and visa issues arise	23.2%	20.8%	17.3%	28.5% ^D
Inadequate soft skills	21.9%	14.5%	22.3%	25.9% ^C
Too many family obligations outside of work	20.7%	10.7%	16.2%	29.6% ^{CD}
Difficulty obtaining references from Canada / we do not accept international references	20.7%	18.9%	15.1%	25.6% ^D
No Canadian experience	16.8%	12.6%	17.9%	18.5%
No Canadian qualifications	15.6%	9.4%	17.3% ^C	18.1% ^C
Not the right cultural fit	14.8%	8.2%	14.0%	19.3% ^C
Other	1.3%	0.6%	2.8%	0.7%
We have not interviewed any racialized immigrant women in the last 12 months	17.1%	23.3% ^E	19.6% ^E	11.9%

Table 38. On average, how do racialized immigrant women candidates rate in comparison to other candidates in terms of their ...

Criteria	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
English language skills?				
Higher	34.7%	28.9%	27.9%	42.6% ^{CD}
Lower	27.3%	30.2%	27.4%	25.6%
About the Same	31.6%	31.4%	40.2% ^E	25.9%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	6.4%	9.4%	4.5%	5.9%
Familiarity with Canadian business culture, practices and norms?				
Higher	30.1%	25.2%	21.8%	38.5% ^{CD}
Lower	32.2%	34.6%	35.2%	28.9%
About the Same	31.9%	30.8%	38.5% ^E	28.1%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	5.8%	9.4%	4.5%	4.4%
Technical job-related skills?				
Higher	31.9%	23.9%	26.3%	40.4% ^{CD}
Lower	21.7%	21.4%	24.0%	20.4%
About the Same	40.1%	47.2% ^E	44.7% ^E	33.0%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	6.3%	7.5%	5.0%	6.3%
Work experience?				
Higher	29.9%	20.1%	25.7%	38.5% ^{CD}
Lower	25.7%	29.6%	24.0%	24.4%
About the Same	38.8%	42.1% ^E	45.3% ^E	32.6%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	5.6%	8.2%	5.0%	4.4%
Education credentials?				
Higher	28.5%	18.9%	24.0%	37.0% ^{CD}
Lower	23.7%	26.4%	28.5% ^E	18.9%
About the Same	41.3%	44.7%	42.5%	38.5%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	6.6%	10.1%	5.0%	5.6%
Critical thinking and problem solving?				
Higher	33.7%	27.0%	27.9%	41.5% ^{CD}
Lower	18.4%	19.5%	19.0%	17.4%
About the Same	40.6%	44.0%	46.9% ^E	34.4%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	7.2%	9.4%	6.1%	6.7%
Teamwork and collaboration?				
Higher	36.0%	27.0%	28.5%	46.3% ^{CD}
Lower	16.4%	20.1%	17.9%	13.3%
About the Same	41.4%	44.7% ^E	49.2% ^E	34.4%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	6.1%	8.2%	4.5%	5.9%
Ability to adapt to changes at work?				
Higher	39.0%	27.7%	32.4%	50.0% ^{CD}
Lower	18.4%	23.3%	17.9%	15.9%
About the Same	36.5%	41.5% ^E	44.7% ^E	28.1%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	6.1%	7.5%	5.0%	5.9%
Leadership skills?				
Higher	30.9%	25.2%	26.3%	37.4% ^{CD}
Lower	22.9%	23.9%	21.8%	23.0%
About the Same	40.5%	43.4%	46.4% ^E	34.8%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	5.8%	7.5%	5.6%	4.8%
Professionalism and work ethic?				
Higher	41.4%	29.6%	38.0%	50.7% ^{CD}
Lower	13.8%	20.1% ^D	8.4%	13.7%
About the Same	38.8%	40.9% ^E	49.2% ^E	30.7%
No racialized immigrant women candidates	5.9%	9.4%	4.5%	4.8%

Table 39. How important is each of the following factors in assessing foreign education credentials to your organization?

Criteria	Total	Employer Size			Sector		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)	Public (M)	Private, for-profit (N)	Non- profit (O)
Total	608	159	179	270	240	342	26
Level of education							
Important (net)	71.7%	59.1%	69.8% ^C	80.4% ^{CD}	65.0%	76.3% ^M	73.1%
Unimportant (net)	11.5%	18.9% ^E	11.7%	7.0%	12.5%	10.8%	11.5%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	16.8%	22.0% ^E	18.4%	12.6%	22.5% ^N	12.9%	15.4%
Field of study							
Important (net)	71.9%	62.3%	66.5%	81.1% ^{CD}	70.4%	72.8%	73.1%
Unimportant (net)	10.5%	16.4% ^E	11.7%	6.3%	10.8%	10.5%	7.7%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	17.6%	21.4% ^E	21.8% ^E	12.6%	18.8%	16.7%	19.2%
Educational credential assessment							
Important (net)	71.2%	55.3%	67.0% ^C	83.3% ^{CD}	69.6%	72.8%	65.4%
Unimportant (net)	10.4%	14.5% ^E	12.3%	6.7%	12.5%	8.8%	11.5%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	18.4%	30.2% ^{DE}	20.7% ^E	10.0%	17.9%	18.4%	23.1%
Country							
Important (net)	55.6%	42.1%	46.4%	69.6% ^{CD}	56.3% ^O	57.3% ^O	26.9%
Unimportant (net)	19.4%	25.8% ^E	24.6% ^E	12.2%	18.8%	18.1%	42.3% ^{MN}
Neither Unimportant nor Important	25.0%	32.1% ^E	29.1% ^E	18.1%	25.0%	24.6%	30.8%
International reputation							
Important (net)	62.5%	50.3%	52.5%	76.3% ^{CD}	62.1% ^O	65.2% ^O	30.8%
Unimportant (net)	14.3%	19.5% ^E	20.1% ^E	7.4%	15.0%	13.2%	23.1%
Neither Unimportant nor Important	23.2%	30.2% ^E	27.4% ^E	16.3%	22.9%	21.6%	46.2% ^{MN}

Table 40. What percentage of the senior leadership (Owner, C-suite executives, Senior Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents, Directors) of your organization are ... (n=511)

Percentage of Senior Leadership	Women	Black	People of Colour	Immigrants	Racialized immigrant women
0%	1.6%	13.1%	6.5%	7.4%	12.3%
1-10%	14.9%	26.8%	20.7%	26.8%	30.7%
11-29%	25.0%	22.3%	23.7%	22.5%	24.5%
30-39%	23.3%	19.2%	22.5%	18.8%	12.5%
40-60%	21.9%	7.2%	13.3%	10.0%	6.3%
61-100%	7.8%	3.3%	4.7%	3.7%	1.4%
Don't know	5.5%	8.0%	8.6%	10.8%	12.3%

Note: Results by employer size are not presented as most differences are not statistically significant.

Table 41. Which of the following represent the greatest barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in your organization? (Select up to three.)

Barriers	Employer size			
	Total	20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Lack of awareness and data to understand any disadvantage in our workforce	24.8%	20.8%	20.1%	30.4% ^{CD}
Indifference amongst employees	22.4%	23.9%	20.1%	23.0%
Middle management resistance	18.6%	13.8%	17.3%	22.2% ^C
Lack of top-level buy-in or commitment	19.4%	22.0%	15.6%	20.4%
A sense that the workforce is sufficiently diverse	27.0%	27.0%	29.6%	25.2%
Lack of a “push” in the form of regulatory or legal requirements	23.0%	18.2%	24.0%	25.2%
Perceived cost in terms of management time	22.7%	17.0%	22.9%	25.9% ^C
Perceived financial cost of EDI programs	18.8%	12.6%	21.8% ^C	20.4% ^C
Lack of know-how to develop and implement effective EDI strategies	19.9%	14.5%	20.1%	23.0% ^C
Other	1.5%	1.3%	2.8%	0.7%
Don't know or unsure	11.8%	13.2%	13.4%	10.0%

Table 42. What does your organization do when facing labour shortages?

Actions Taken	Total	Employer size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
Hires less-qualified candidates	21.2%	23.3%	21.2%	20.0%
Internally trains less-qualified employees	26.6%	25.8%	24.0%	28.9%
Recruits younger workers	32.7%	27.7%	30.7%	37.0% ^C
Increases work hours	27.1%	27.0%	26.8%	27.4%
Changes compensation package to attract candidates	28.0%	22.0%	24.0%	34.1% ^{CD}
Offers flexible or remote work options to attract candidates, including those outside of the GTA	36.7%	25.8%	37.4% ^C	42.6% ^C
Recruits previously retired workers	17.1%	13.2%	16.2%	20.0%
Hires freelancers or independent workers	26.8%	21.4%	27.9%	29.3%
Recruits new immigrants	21.7%	22.6%	19.6%	22.6%
Automates easily replicable tasks	21.5%	10.7%	17.9%	30.4% ^{CD}
Invests in a more attractive image	21.2%	9.4%	21.8% ^C	27.8% ^C
Other	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%	0.7%
None of the above	3.6%	6.9% ^D	2.2%	2.6%

Table 43. Which of the following best describes the main reasons for equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives (EDI) at your organization? (Select up to three.)

Reason	Total	Employer Size		
		20 to 99 (C)	100 to 499 (D)	500+ (E)
Total	608	159	179	270
We believe a diverse workforce can increase our organizational innovation and agility	34.0%	29.6%	33.5%	37.0%
We see diversity and inclusion as a matter of fairness and morality	32.2%	27.0%	34.1%	34.1%
Diverse talent will help us to better understand and serve our customers/clients	31.1%	30.8%	28.5%	33.0%
We believe a more equitable and inclusive work environment will improve engagement and reduce turnover	28.9%	23.3%	31.3%	30.7%
We want to strengthen our community relations	28.1%	25.8%	27.9%	29.6%
Our Owner/CEO is personally committed to equity, diversity and inclusion	25.7%	26.4%	26.8%	24.4%
We want to enhance our public image as an organization committed to EDI	24.2%	17.6%	21.8%	29.6% ^C
We want to comply with the Employment Equity Act and other relevant legislation	23.2%	18.2%	22.3%	26.7% ^C
Other	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
We do not have any EDI initiatives	2.5%	3.8% ^E	4.5% ^E	0.4%
Don't know	2.6%	1.9%	2.8%	3.0%



triec ▶▶▶

Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council



Visit our website:
<https://triec.ca/>



Connect with us on LinkedIn:
<https://ca.linkedin.com/company/toronto-region-immigrant-employment-council-triec->



Follow us on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/triec>



Sign up online for our newsletter:
<https://triec.ca/contact-us-2/triec-e-newsletters/>