



Canadian

COLLEGES &
INSTITUTES



Responding to the Needs of Immigrants

Results of the Diagnostic Survey of College and
Institute Programs and Services for Immigrants

and

Conclusions of the College and Institute
Immigration Roundtable

Final Report

The Association of
Canadian
Community
Colleges

Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada



Canada



March 2004

FINAL REPORT

**CANADIAN COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES –
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS**

**Results of the Diagnostic Survey of
College and Institute Programs and Services for Immigrants**

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**Conclusions of the College and Institute Immigration Roundtable
March 8 - 9, 2004**

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

March 2004

Canadian Colleges and Institutes – Responding to the Needs of Immigrants ACCC Background Report Executive Summary

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) is the national and international voice through which Canada's colleges and institutes inform and advise various levels of government, business, industry and labour. Under the federal government's initiative to develop an Immigration Internet Portal, ACCC received financial support from the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to conduct a diagnostic survey of Canadian colleges and institutes programs and services for immigrants, organize a College and Institute Immigration Roundtable, and develop a section of the ACCC website that profiles the types of programs and services immigrants can access through colleges and institutes. The ACCC website will then be linked to the Government of Canada Immigration Internet Portal.

Of the 150 ACCC member colleges and institutes, 46 participated in the diagnostic survey either by responding to the survey or participating in interviews, for an overall response rate of 31 percent. The results of this diagnostic survey provide a snapshot of how colleges and institutes are meeting the needs of immigrants within their communities, including initiatives that facilitate foreign credential recognition. This report also provides an overview of the barriers faced by colleges and institutes in delivering these services, the barriers faced by immigrants trying to access these programs and services, and the lessons learned.

1. Types of Programs and Services

Colleges and institutes are delivering assessment services, language training, career and technical programs, workplace and community-based training, as well as advising and counselling services to immigrants. New Canadians are accessing the programs and services offered by colleges and institutes through the internet, word of mouth and through referrals from federal or provincial government departments or local immigrant settlement organizations.

Assessment and Foreign Credential Recognition services are offered for placement into English and French as a Second Language (ESL), English and French for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs, as well as for placement into career, technical, university preparation and applied degree programs. Over 50 percent of respondents to the diagnostic survey confirmed that they had been involved in initiatives or programs aimed at facilitating Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) or specific to immigrants' prior employment. The diagnostic survey has confirmed that the main role that colleges and institutes play in FCR is that of a facilitator of credentialing processes through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) services and accessing the services of provincial and national credential assessment bodies.

Language training is one of the essential first steps in facilitating the integration of immigrants into Canadian society. Up to 71 (or almost 50 percent) of colleges and institutes located in cities across the country offer English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) programs, including English and French for academic purposes. Seventeen institutions are offering federally and provincially funded language programs, either Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) in British Columbia funded through the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services in British Columbia, or the "Francisation" program in Quebec funded by the Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration (MRCI).

Career and technical programs targeted at immigrants tend to combine technical training with occupation specific language training, and include bridging programs delivered by colleges and institutes with funding from provincial governments. The provinces of Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are the most active in funding bridging programs for foreign-trained professionals. In Manitoba, Red River College has adopted an approach that integrates immigrants into regular career and technical programs and offers extensive support mechanisms to facilitate immigrants' entry into and completion of these programs.

Workplace training is also an area in which colleges and institutes are becoming increasingly involved. This type of training includes work placements for immigrant students during their ESL or career programs, career-focused programs in a workplace setting in collaboration with a private company, or contract training for businesses or industry to upgrade immigrant employees' skills in a specific area involving technical or language skills.

Community-based training is offered through learning centres and in collaboration with municipal public libraries and community centres. For example, Vancouver Community College offers community programs in collaboration with public libraries and community centres as well as a Homefront English Program targeting mothers with young children and older immigrants.

Advising and Counseling Services are available to prospective and enrolled immigrant students to assist with program entry and completion, and to facilitate job entry. Although these are standard services provided by institutions, not specifically designed for immigrants, participants in the diagnostic survey confirmed that if colleges and institutes are to effectively deliver these services within their communities they must take into account immigrant issues. These services are being enhanced for the specific needs of immigrants by including peer helper or mentor and language partner programs that offer more one on one support for immigrant students.

2. Partnerships

Colleges and institutes are responding to the needs of immigrants within their communities by becoming involved in different informal and formal partnerships at the community, provincial and even pan-Canadian levels. Colleges and institutes responding to the diagnostic survey identified 9 different types of partnerships:

- < Community-based immigrant settlement organizations;
- < Municipal governments and committees;
- < Provincial government departments;
- < Federal government departments;
- < Employers in the Private and Public Sectors;
- < Unions;
- < Non-governmental organizations;
- < Community Organizations and Services; and
- < Other educational institutions.

3. Challenges and Barriers facing Colleges and Institutes in terms of offering Relevant Programs and Services for Immigrants

- < Effective delivery of language training;
- < Application processes that are slow and costly;
- < The high cost and resource requirements for delivering assessment services such as PLAR effectively;
- < Intra-institutional awareness of the needs of immigrants and inter-cultural sensitivity;
- < Adequate integration and support services for immigrants;
- < Financial and funding limitations that restrict college and institutes in developing new programs and services for a specific target group, such as immigrants;
- < Effective promotion of college and institute programs and services to the immigrant community; and,
- < Positioning for federal, provincial and municipal funding programs.

4. Challenges and Barriers for Immigrants to Access Relevant Programs and Services at Colleges and Institutes

- < Limited funding for higher level LINC and equivalent-type programs, as well as gaps between LINC type programs and ESL and English for Academic Purposes programs.
- < A lack of assessment and Foreign Credential Recognition services affects admissions standards for immigrants and their eligibility for financial assistance.
- < Cultural adaptation to new academic environments.
- < Restrictions and cut backs to support services such as daycare beyond the LINC or equivalent-type training.
- < Financial limitations such as rising tuition fees, insufficient support for part-time and evening studies, insufficient bursaries and scholarships for immigrants, reductions to grant funding in some provinces, and

restrictions on the number of hours immigrant students are allowed to work to access grant funding opportunities.

< Application and enrolment processes can involve long waiting lists, while intakes, transitions and progressions through programs can be complicated and lengthy.

5. Lessons Learned

Colleges and institutes identified the following lessons learned based on their experience in developing and delivering programs for immigrants within their communities.

- < **Support from college/institute senior management** is essential for the successful delivery of programs and services to immigrants as institutional resources need to be allocated to support immigrant students and all college/institute services and staff must be aware of the challenges that newcomers face in terms of language guidance and support.
- < **Application and enrolment processes** should be streamlined and institutions should adopt a more holistic approach to include language training, financial support, career planning, upgrading to Canadian workplace standards or requirements and work placements.
- < **Language** is a key factor in the successful integration of new Canadians. There is a need to expand on the levels of language training currently offered and to introduce occupation-specific language training, while offering adequate pre-enrollment counseling.
- < **Career/technical programs** need to accommodate the language requirements of immigrants. In addition to bridging programs, there is a need to build into existing career/technical programs, specialized ESL and FSL courses and additional modules on Canadian workplace practices. Immigrant students can also be integrated effectively into regular career/technical programs if adequate support services are offered.
- < **The integration of Canadian work experience** into career/technical and bridging programs is essential if immigrants are to gain essential Canadian work experience.
- < **Counseling and advisory services** have been very successful when peer helper or mentor programs are introduced. Colleges and institutes must work closely with immigrant services organizations to ensure the effective delivery of these services.
- < **Integration support services** must take into account the diverse needs of immigrants. Learning Centres provide a good model for colleges and institutes interested in offering academic and learning support services for immigrants.
- < **Inter-cultural and diversity awareness** must be increased through cross-cultural training for faculty and staff, and the development of inclusive curricula and teaching methodologies.
- < **Federal, provincial and municipal programs** provide funding for innovative programs delivered by colleges and institutes. However, these special programs cannot remain distinct and operate outside mainstream college/institute activities if they are to be financially sustainable.

6. Conclusions and Outcomes from the College and Institute Immigration Roundtable

The Immigration Roundtable enabled representatives from colleges and institutes and federal government departments to discuss future areas of collaboration. The roundtable participants recommended that a college and institute process model for the integration of immigrants be developed that would encompass a comprehensive suite of programs and services which colleges and institutes can follow and adapt when developing programs and services aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants within their communities. This model is inspired from the Maytree Foundation's "Systems Approach to Facilitate Labour Market Entry for Skilled Immigrants", and includes some initial support and integration services that could be offered initially at overseas sites and then continue in Canada. The model includes the following main components:

- < Information access for immigrants through the Immigration Portal and Overseas and In-Canada Orientation Sessions.
- < Assessment services that can begin overseas and continue in Canada: language skills, PLAR, academic credentials and professional work experience.
- < Advising and counselling services to facilitate program entry and completion and entry into the labour market.
- < Education and training programs that range from English and French as a second language, occupation-specific language training, support for entry into career/technical, applied degree and university transfer

programs, bridging programs, co-op and work placement programs, workplace training and community-based training.

< How college systems and structures need to be enhanced and the partnerships in which colleges and institutes must be engaged in order to deliver more effective programs and services for immigrants.

Immigration roundtable participants also defined a strategy which is comprised of the following steps intended to move this agenda forward for colleges and institutes:

< Create an ACCC Task Group on Immigration and possible organize a larger event for colleges and institutes such as an immigration symposium.

< Capitalize on ACCC initiatives and activities including:

- o The development of a section of the ACCC Website that profiles the programs and services immigrants can access at colleges and institutes that will be integrated into the Government of Canada Immigration Portal.
- o The upcoming ACCC Conference and International Student Symposium in Saskatoon in May/June 2004.
- o The Student Leadership Network is focusing on community partnerships as such the mentor and peer helper programs could possibly be promoted with them.
- o The sector study of colleges and institutes as employers which will be carried out in 2004 with funding from HRSDC. This study will collect data on the diversity of the workforce within colleges and institutes and how it reflects the diversity of the student body.

< Focus some advocacy efforts on increasing the awareness of the high level government committees created to address the integration of immigrants, namely the Deputy Ministers' and Directors General Committees on Integrating Immigrants into the Labour Market and the Assistant Deputy Minister Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee.

< Foster collaboration with the Ontario CONNECT project and possibly expand the project to other provinces if government funding can be provided.

< Explore funding options for the Accelerated Integration Program for Immigrants project that explores how colleges and universities can offer initial integration services from some of their overseas sites.

< Collaborate with other partners working on the integration of immigrants, namely the Maytree Foundation, Sector Councils and Affinity Group Leaders, in particular for sectors that are looking to immigration as a solution to meet skills shortages (environment, technology, trucking, tourism, construction), as well as provincial and community immigrant settlement organizations.

COLLEGE/INSTITUTE PROCESS MODEL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

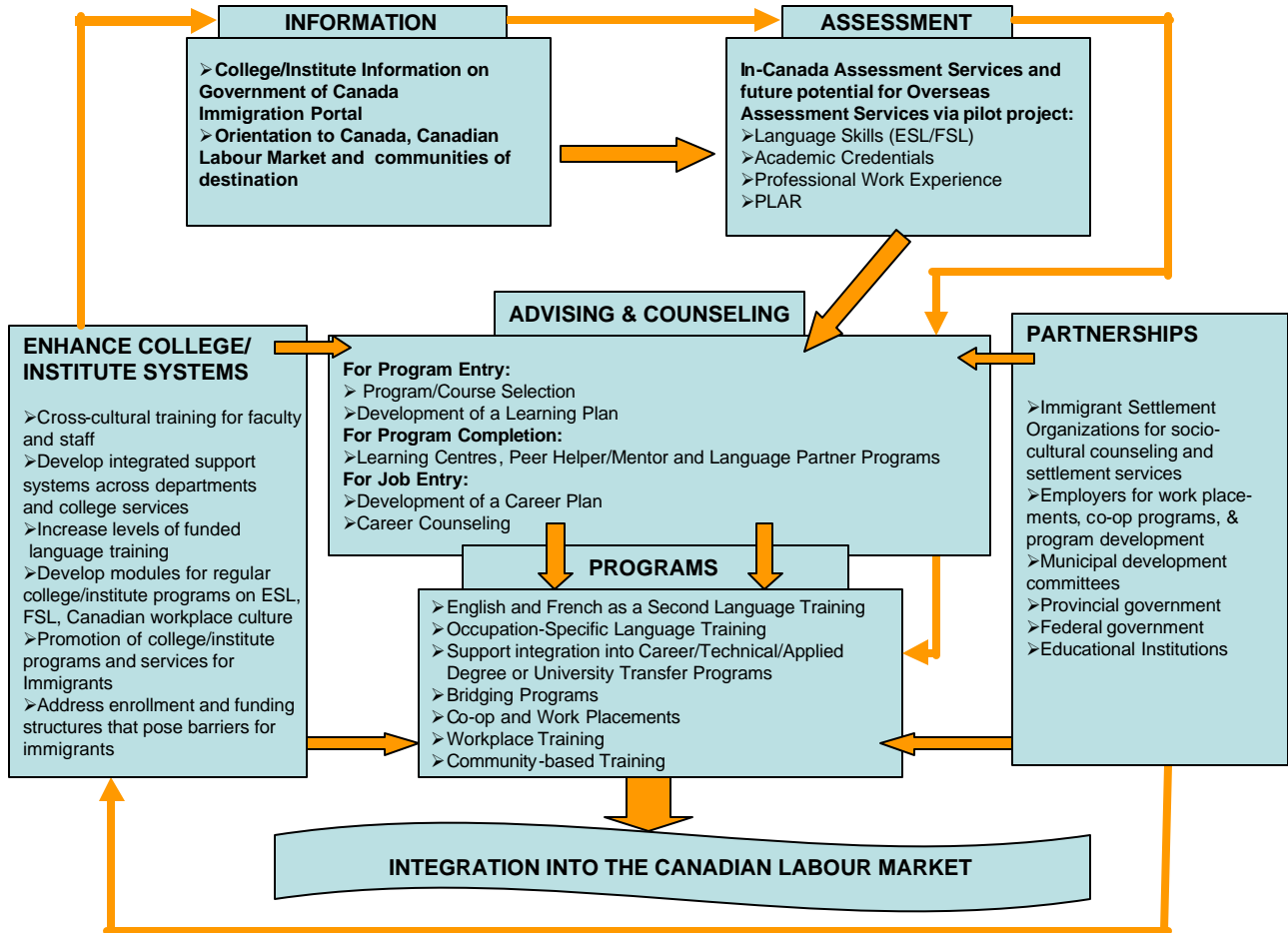


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1. Introduction

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) is the national and international voice through which Canada's colleges and institutes inform and advise various levels of government, business, industry and labour. The successful integration of immigrants into the Canadian economy and communities is a federal government priority that was reaffirmed in the government's last Speech from the Throne. As part of the Government of Canada's initiative to develop an Immigration Internet Portal, ACCC has received financial support from the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to conduct a diagnostic survey of the capacity of Canadian colleges and institutes to provide programs and services for immigrants, to organize a College and Institute Immigration Roundtable, and to develop a section of the ACCC website that profiles the programs and services immigrants can access at colleges and institutes.

Canadian colleges and institutes are well-positioned to respond to the needs of immigrants given the role of these institutions in providing learning opportunities for 900 communities across the country. Colleges and institutes have demonstrated leadership in increasing access, effectiveness and efficiency through the application of prior learning assessment and recognition principles and practices. We know that colleges and institutes have a strong mandate for and extensive experience in working with disadvantaged individuals. This funding from HRSDC has enabled ACCC to begin the process of assessing more specifically colleges' and institutes' capacity to serve Canada's immigrant population.

The diagnostic survey involved sending a questionnaire to the 150 ACCC member colleges and institutes and conducting interviews with a sample group of 20 colleges and institutes located in a mix of large and small urban centres, and some serving more rural communities. Copies of the survey and interview questionnaires are provided in Appendix 1, along with a list of the colleges and institutes that participated in interviews. The purpose of this diagnostic was to help identify the types of institution-based and on-line services and programs colleges and institutes are currently or planning to offer specifically for immigrants so that ACCC can develop a section of the ACCC website that profiles the types of programs and services immigrants can access through colleges and institutes. The ACCC website will then be linked to the Government of Canada Immigration Internet Portal.

Of the 150 ACCC member colleges and institutes, 46 participated in the diagnostic either by responding to the survey or participating in interviews, for an overall response rate of 31 percent. The results of this diagnostic give us a clearer picture of how and where colleges and institutes are offering programs and services to immigrants, and confirms that there are pockets of activity and varying degrees of programs and services offered, depending on if colleges/institutes are located in high or low settlement areas. It is interesting to note that colleges and institutes, whether they are located in high or low settlement areas, are strategic partners in municipal and provincial immigrant settlement initiatives. Most colleges have relationships and partnerships with community settlement organizations, municipal and provincial governments, and even private sector firms involved in facilitating the integration of immigrants.

The diagnostic survey concluded with the preparation of a background report that was used as a working document for the College and Institute Immigration Roundtable that took place on March 8 and 9th, 2004. The roundtable included representatives from the senior ranks of colleges and institutes with experience in the area of immigration, as well as representatives from HRSDC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and The Maytree Foundation. The objectives of the roundtable were to:

- validate the results of the diagnostic and the profile for the immigration section of the ACCC website that will be linked to the Government of Canada Immigration Portal;
- initiate a dialogue between senior officials from colleges and institutes and federal government

- representatives on how colleges and institutes can better meet the needs of immigrants;
- o develop a strategy that outlines the areas of support to be offered by colleges and institutes.

A summary of the Immigration Roundtable presentations and discussions is attached as Appendix 3.

This final report provides an overview of the:

- o programs and services colleges and institutes are offering, how these programs and services are funded, where they are being delivered and how they are being accessed;
- o partnerships colleges and institutes are involved in for the delivery of these programs and services;
- o barriers colleges and institutes face in providing these programs and services;
- o barriers faced by immigrants in accessing college/institute programs and services;
- o lessons colleges' and institutes' have learned through the delivery of programs and services for immigrants; and
- o conclusions and outcomes of the Immigration Roundtable, including a Process Model and Strategy for the integration of immigrants.

2. Colleges' and Institutes Programs and Services for Immigrants

The types of programs and services colleges and institutes are offering immigrants within their communities vary depending on where the institutions are located, the immigrant population base to be served and the needs of employers within the community or region.

Colleges and institutes are delivering programs and services such as assessment services that facilitate the recognition of foreign credentials, language training, career and technical training, workplace training, community-based training, as well as advising and counselling services.

2.1 Assessment and Foreign Credential Recognition

College and institute assessment services include English and French language assessments for entry into English or French as a second language programs, and high school and educational credential assessments for entry into college career/technical, applied degree and university transfer programs.

Colleges and institutes that participated in the diagnostic survey provided some indication of how many immigrants are benefiting from these services. Although not all colleges and institutes were able to provide such information, we can provide some indications of the number of immigrants being served. On an annual basis, the figures range from 200 immigrants assessed in smaller settlement centres to 1,000 to 3,000 in larger settlement centres.

2.1.1 English and French Language Assessments

English and French language assessments are a comprehensive review of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

Immigrant learners access ESL assessment services either directly at colleges and institutes, or through Citizenship and Immigration Canada LINC Assessment Centres or in Quebec through the provincial government integration centres (Carrefours d'intégration). The following 11 colleges serve as LINC Assessment Centres in their communities:

- < Saskatchewan: SIAST, Cypress Hills Regional College, Parkland Regional College
- < Alberta: Norquest College

- < British Columbia: North Island College, Selkirk College, College of New Caledonia, Okanagan University College, University College of the Cariboo
- < Northwest Territories: Aurora College
- < Yukon: Yukon College.

2.1.2 Assessment and Credential Recognition Services for Entrance to College/Institute Education Programs

Colleges and institutes are providing assessment and credential recognition services for entrance to career/technical, applied degree and university transfer programs through:

- < Entrance tests to assess language and mathematical skills;
- < Services from national or provincial credentialing associations;
- < Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition services; and
- < Relationship building with credentialing associations and bodies.

Provincial and National Credential Assessment Bodies

Most colleges and institutes are liaising with and paying for the services of national and provincial assessment bodies such as the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) used by the Ontario College Application Service to evaluate students, World Education Service (WES) of Canada that is partially funded by the Government of Ontario, or International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) in Alberta. For example, the Centre for Foreign-trained Professionals at Humber Institute of Technology and Applied Learning includes a credential assessment service run by WES.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Responding colleges and institutes most often cited their Prior Learning and Assessment (PLAR) services as their primary method of facilitating Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR). PLAR services already exist within many colleges and institutes and are available to all students, including immigrants. A few colleges and institutes indicated that the demand for PLAR services has increased in recent years.

Colleges and institutes also indicated that the high resource requirements and costs associated with PLAR can be a barrier for colleges/institutes to offer such services effectively for immigrants. There is some institutional resistance to colleges/institutes delivering PLAR, but if they could afford to do it more effectively, this resistance could be broken down.

Mount Royal College in Calgary has a three year HRSDC funded research project that is assessing the impact of PLAR on the placement of foreign-trained nurses into education programs and employment in nursing. The college is partnered with Ryerson University, New Brunswick Community College and the University of New Brunswick and is also collaborating with nursing associations. The project will develop a prototype for applying PLAR to the credentialing of foreign-trained nurses that could be used by other colleges and institutes.

Relationships with Credentialing Associations and Bodies

Bow Valley College has established the Employment Resource Centre for Immigrant Professionals (ERCIP) funded through Alberta Human Resources and Employment. The purpose of the project is to build relationships with credentialing associations and bodies in order to facilitate the recognition of credentials of foreign trained professionals. The centre will develop a website to allow potential

immigrants better access to information about credentialing before they immigrate so that they have a more realistic perception of what they can expect upon arrival.

In-house Transcript Evaluator

Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton provided another example of an assessment service: a in-house transcript evaluator position. This staff position is responsible for reviewing foreign credentials and making them appropriate for application to the college. The position was created as part of the college's international student services.

2.1.3 Foreign Credential Recognition

Over 50 percent of colleges and institutes that participated in the diagnostic survey confirmed that they have been involved in initiatives related to Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) or specific to immigrants' prior employment. These institutions have provided some excellent examples of provincially-funded, innovative programs delivered by colleges and institutes to facilitate FCR. The diagnostic survey has also confirmed that the main role of colleges and institutes in FCR is that of facilitators of the credentialing process through their Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) services, building relationships with credential associations and bodies, and through the delivery of bridging or fast-track transition programs which will be described in Section 2.2.4.

Colleges and institutes have adopted some innovative practices and approaches to facilitating the FCR process for immigrants. It is clear that in order to effectively facilitate FCR in many contexts and depending on the needs of the foreign trained professionals, a combination of programs and services must be offered. The diagnostic survey confirmed that PLAR and bridging transition programs must be part of the mix of services offered. However these programs must be complemented with advisory and career counseling services and collaboration with credentialing bodies

The recent HRSDC task force on the integration of foreign trained nurses concluded that even if foreign trained nurses undertake a PLAR process they will still require some transition training. As such, it was suggested that fast-track transition or bridging programs be made compulsory for FCR and include some PLAR of technical skills whenever possible. Given the high costs and time requirements associated with PLAR, and the fact that foreign trained professionals typically need some transition training, it may be more cost effective to systematically offer bridging or transition programs which integrate PLAR.

2.2 Training Programs

The types of training programs that target immigrants specifically or that have high immigrant participation rates can be broken down into four main categories: language training programs, career-focused training programs, workplace training programs and community-based training.

2.2.1 Language Training Programs

Both the diagnostic survey and an Internet search of English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) programs offered by colleges and institutes confirm that almost 50 percent or 71 institutions across the country are offering ESL and FSL programs, including English or French for academic purposes programs and courses. Of this number, 18 institutions are offering federally- and provincially-funded language programs, either **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** funded through CIC, **English Language Services for Adults (ELSA)** in British Columbia funded through the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, or the

“Francisation” program in Quebec funded by the Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l’Immigration (MRCI). The box below lists the 18 colleges and institutes that currently offer LINC or equivalent type programs.

The advantage of taking a LINC, ELSA or “Francisation” programs at a college or institute is that immigrants will be better positioned to pursue more language training programs if required or transfer into career/technical, university transfer or applied degree programs offered at colleges or institutes. ESL or “Francisation” instructors at colleges and institutes can refer immigrant students to the advising and counselling services of the college or institute so they can make a successful transition into a program that meets their needs.

<p>Colleges and Institutes that Offer LINC, ELSA or “Francisation”</p> <p>< British Columbia - ELSA Camosun College, North Island College, Northwest Community College, Vancouver Community College</p> <p>< Alberta – LINC Bow Valley College, Norquest College</p> <p>< Saskatchewan- LINC Cypress Hills Regional College, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAS T)</p> <p>< Ontario - LINC Algonquin College, Centennial College, Mohawk College, Sir Sanford Fleming College</p> <p>< Quebec – Francisation Cégep André-Laurendeau, Collège de Bois-de-Boulogne, Cégep Marie-Victorin, Cégep de Saint-Laurent, Cégep du Vieux-Montréal</p> <p>< Prince Edward Island - LINC Holland College</p>

English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) programs at colleges and institutes offer full-time and part-time instruction to students whose first language is not English or French. ESL and FSL programs vary from the beginner to the intermediate levels and generally pick up from the LINC or equivalent programs. In most cases, the length of time students spend in English or French language training is not pre-determined and students continue until their goals are reached. ESL and FSL classes emphasize language skills which will help students function in Canadian society and achieve their personal educational and work related goals.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and French for Academic Purposes (FAP) programs and courses are most appropriate for intermediate and advanced ESL and FSL students. These programs and courses are designed to help ESL and FSL students increase their English or French language skills so they can meet their academic goals for entry into career/technical, university transfer or degree programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions, namely, colleges, institutes, or universities. These programs develop English and French speaking, listening, reading and writing skills to the level needed to succeed in post-secondary education in Canada.

The diagnostic survey attempted to get a sense of the enrollment in ESL, FSL and LINC equivalent type programs. The results of the responses to this question do not enable us to provide cumulative figures on the number of learners in these programs because there are inconsistencies in how these were reported. However we can provide some examples, as follows.

Examples of Enrolments in ESL, FSL and LINC Equivalent Programs

- < **Algonquin College:** 180 learners in LINC plus 170 immigrant learners in ESL, for a total of 350 immigrants per trimester
- < **Cégep André Laurendeau:** 500 immigrant learners funded by the MRCI per year.
- < **Bow Valley College :** 900 to 1,000 ESL immigrant learners (600 full-time and 300 to 400 part-time), including LINC
- < **Camosun College:** 200 FTEs funded from college block funding, and 25 additional seats funded for a total of 250 learners, including ESLA
- < **Centennial College:** 700 LINC students funded per year, 250 to 300 immigrants enrolled in English for Academic Purposes per year
- < **Douglas College:** up to 185 immigrants (50 percent of the total enrollment) in the English for Academic Purposes program per year
- < **George Brown College:** up to 450 immigrants in regular ESL, sector specific business language programs, and preparatory courses for the TOEFL exam
- < **Grant MacEwan Community College:** 171 immigrants in full-time ESL programs, and 60 to 80 immigrants enrolled in an English for Business evening program
- < **Holland College:** through LINC the college has 42 seats funded
- < **Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning:** up to 130 immigrants in English for Academic Purposes
- < **Langara College:** over 90 students in English for Academic Purposes
- < **Norquest College:** 400 immigrant learners per session in LINC
- < **Nova Scotia Community College:** 20 to 25 enrolled in ESL program last academic year
- < **Red River College:** 393 immigrant learners last academic year, 191 enrolled this academic year as of October 2003
- < **Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST):** 117 immigrant learners in LINC (72 in Saskatoon and 45 in Regina)
- < **Vancouver Community College:** up to 6,000 immigrant learners in language programs including outreach operations with libraries etc., including ELSA
- < **Cégep du Vieux Montreal:** 300 immigrant learners funded by the MRCI per year

The following are some examples of innovative practices initiated by colleges and institutes in the area of language training:

- < **Douglas College** has a unique program available to ESL immigrant students. The Language Partner Program serves approximately 30 immigrant students in a buddy program with Anglophones at the college. This program was designed because immigrant students are looking to make contact with the host culture but find it very difficult as they lack confidence and are afraid that they will annoy people when they cannot offer quick responses. This program pairs immigrant learners with people within the college or community who are willing to converse and establish a friendship for a minimum of one hour per week.
- < The Douglas College ESL department has also established two bursaries for immigrant students that are awarded twice a year, thus serving four immigrant students.
- < **Red River College** also has a Language Partner program through which immigrant students teach Canadian students their language and Canadian students assist immigrants in practicing and improving their English.

2.2.2 Occupation-specific Language Training

The following colleges and institutes located in British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba offer full-time and part-time occupation-specific English as a Second Language (ESL) programs that are for intermediate to advanced ESL learners. These programs are designed to meet the language needs of students who have specific employment, academic, and settlement goals.

British Columbia

Vancouver Community College, Vancouver

Professional and Career English (PACE) Department offers the following programs:

- **Academic and Professional English – Self-Paced Program** offers a flexible program for non-native English speakers with a professional background from their former countries who have professional and/or academic language acquisition goals and are motivated to work at their own pace through an individualized course of study.
- **English for Health Sciences (ESL)** course is designed for second language learners who are required to obtain Grade 12 English equivalency for entry to VCC's Health Sciences programs: Practical Nursing, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Lab Assistant, Hospital Unit coordinator, Dental Assisting/Reception, Dental Laboratory Technician, Denturist.
- **English for Business and Customer Relations (ESL)** is designed for second language learners who are presently employed, have previously worked or wish to pursue a career in business, technical occupations or customer relations.
- **Combined Skills Programs** provide opportunities for second language learners at intermediate and advanced levels of English to obtain career training/worksite experience with tailored ESL instruction. Students graduate with marketable job skills, effective communication skills and cultural competence for the workplace. Graduates earn a VCC certificate and are job ready.

All programs are full-time and taught by two instructors; a skills specialist and a qualified ESL teacher. The skills instructor develops theory and practical skills and the ESL instructor develops communications skills for training and employment. Students are prepared to conduct a successful job search. The following combined skills programs are offered at Vancouver Community College:

- Home Support/Resident Care Attendant/ESL
- Culinary Arts/ESL
- Hairstyling/ESL
- Baking and Pastry Arts/ESL
- Accounting/ESL

Alberta

Bow Valley College, Calgary

Accounting Assistant – ESL Certificate

The Accounting Assistant ESL Program is a 44-week program designed for unemployed immigrants who wish to work in entry-level positions in the field of accounting but lack the language and occupational skills to do so. The program provides occupational as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) training. The ESL training is customized to ensure students learn to effectively function in a Canadian workplace and can handle the training textbooks and materials. The program includes both theory and practice of accounting principles, as well as computerized accounting software. Students will learn how to set up, open and operate a complete set of books, including the preparation of financial statements. Core business skills such as general office procedures, Microsoft Word and Excel, and common accounting software programs will also be covered.

Norquest College, Edmonton

ESL Trades

The ESL Trades Program is for immigrants with training and experience in a trade. This program enables students to develop pre-trade skills, find work in their trade or occupation, and lead them

towards becoming qualified in their field. In this program students also improve upon their English, and learn job search skills such as researching potential employers and resume writing.

Manitoba

Red River College, Winnipeg

English for Business Purposes is a program designed for students who have a background or interest in business. Students will develop language skills that will enable them to interact in a business environment or pursue further training. This advanced level program will assist students in reading and understanding business materials, writing reports, and developing business vocabulary. Oral skills will be developed through classroom presentations and discussions. Information about business will be gained through informational interviews, research assignments, business speakers, and a work experience component.

English for Health Care Aides is a program designed to assist students who require further language development to work in the health care field or to prepare for Health Care Aide training programs. This intermediate level program will help students communicate effectively in daily, social, and health care situations. Field trips, guest speakers, informational interviews, and a volunteer work experience component will assist students in gaining information about the health care aide field in Manitoba.

English for Nursing Purposes is a program designed to develop the specific language skills of students for training in the nursing field. This intermediate level program will target the vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing competencies that are commonly required in a nurse-training program. Particular attention will be paid to improving students' competencies in interacting in social situations, giving and receiving information and instructions, using language persuasively and effectively to get things done, and in constructing and understanding specific formats and texts in a nursing context. Field trips, guest speakers, and informational interviews will provide an orientation to the nursing profession in Manitoba.

English for Nursing Refresher is a six-month program designed to provide students with the necessary English language competency to attain the English language proficiency required for registration and entry into the Registered Nurse Refresher program at Red River College. This program provides a cultural orientation to nursing in Canada through guest speakers, tours of healthcare facilities, test-taking preparation, specific nursing terminology and English language development in a nursing context.

English for Professional Purposes is a program designed to assist students who require further language training to prepare for academic programs at a university or college level. This advanced level program develops the academic writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills that are required to study in post-secondary programs.

English for Technical Purposes is a program designed to develop language skills for further training and employment opportunities in the technology field. This advanced level program assists students in reading and understanding technical materials, writing reports, and developing language specific to the technologies. Oral skills are developed through classroom instruction, presentations and discussions. Information about the field of technology is gained through informational interviews, research assignments, and guest speakers.

2.2.3 Career and Technical Training Programs

Colleges and institutes offer full-time and part-time career and technical programs in areas such as health, business, technology, trades, applied and creative arts, social services, tourism and hospitality, academic upgrading, university preparation and employment-related programs such as apprenticeship. Career and technical programs provide interesting options for newcomers to Canada who are looking for training opportunities that facilitate entry into the Canadian labour market as these programs are very focused on preparing students for employment in specific professions or trades, in relation to the needs of business and industry.

The responses provided by colleges and institutes indicate that career and technical training programs targeted at immigrants tend to combine technical training with occupation-specific language training. Red River College has also developed some very innovative support mechanisms and approaches for immigrants enrolled in regular career and technical programs.

Colleges and institutes located in high settlement areas had some difficulty in assessing how many immigrant students are enrolled in career-focused programs because they have such high immigrant student populations, and they do not keep data on students' immigration status. Some examples of innovative career/technical programs, and some indications of enrollments in these programs are provided below:

- < **Bow Valley College** has 40 to 60 learners at any one time enrolled in integrated language training programs related to specific occupations. These are fairly high benchmark learners that need occupation-specific training courses. Subject areas include: accounting assistant, computer repair technology and early childhood education.
- < **Douglas College** has a Home Support/ Resident Care (HSRC) program with May and September intakes of approximately 15 students per intake. This program combines English language training and instruction by home support resident care instructors during a preparatory semester, followed by full integration into the HSRC program with adjunct courses to support learning related to language issues in the field.
- < **George Brown College** has up to 400 immigrant students enrolled annually in career-focused programs, including bridging programs for foreign trained professionals funded by the Government of Ontario in three areas: nursing, computer programmer and medical radiation technologists.
- < **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)** estimates that up to 300 immigrants attend career-focused training programs at NAIT on an annual basis in a number of programs, including laboratory and x-ray technologist programs, respiratory therapist, engineering technology, business administration and computer systems technology, accounting, finance and marketing.
- < **Red River College** confirmed that in 2002-2003, 287 immigrants were enrolled in career- focused training programs. These were not specific career programs for immigrants but regular college programs. Red River College has adopted a unique approach that puts emphasis on facilitating the integration of immigrant students into regular career programs by offering strong support services through the Diversity and Inclusiveness Initiatives Office. This office offers free workshops for immigrant students on topics such as Advanced Pronunciation, Creative Writing and Test Taking, in addition to arranging support services such as mentor and tutoring services through the college Learning Centre.

< **Vancouver Community College (VCC)** estimates that up to 15,000 immigrants are enrolled in all career-focused programs college wide, including continuing education. One of VCC's innovative programs is the Social Cultural Competencies program used in health programs to prepare health workers to better serve immigrants and also to train immigrant health care workers to get used to working in Canada by learning Canadian practices and learning to work with other cultures. This program was a separate course but is now being integrated into the curriculum for all health programs.

< **Cégep du Vieux Montréal** has 42 foreign trained nurses enrolled in a nursing program that aims to upgrade these nurses and prepare them to write the Quebec provincial certification exams. Three ministries jointly finance this program: Emploi Québec, MRCI and le Ministère de la Santé.

2.2.4 Bridging or Fast-Track Transition Programs

In recent years, colleges and institutes have become involved in the delivery of provincially-funded bridging or fast-track transition programs that facilitate foreign trained professionals' credentialing and subsequently their entry into the labour market. Colleges and institutes usually deliver these programs with funding from provincial governments and in collaboration with professional associations responsible for credentialing. Through this diagnostic survey, colleges and institutes identified some key elements which should be included in these programs in order to successfully integrate immigrants into their professions. These elements are:

- < Occupation-specific ESL or FSL training;
- < Training on Canadian workplace culture and communications;
- < Technical upgrading specific to the Canadian requirements for the profession; and,
- < Credited practical attachment or a co-op type of arrangement that would provide newcomers with Canadian workplace experience and contacts.

To date, bridging or transition programs offered by colleges and institutes across the country have focused on professions such as nursing and other health professions, engineering and technology related fields such as instrumentation, and the trades. The provinces of Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are most active in funding bridging programs for foreign-trained professionals. Some examples of these bridging or transition programs are described below.

Bridging programs for Foreign-trained Nurses

In **Alberta**, **Norquest College** is becoming involved in a practical nurse program to fast track immigrant practical nurses into the Canadian workforce. The program will prepare students to apply for licensure as a Canadian Licensed Practical Nurse.

In **Ontario**, the following colleges and institutes have received funding from the provincial government to deliver training programs for foreign trained nurses that facilitate their licensing process and integrate more smoothly into nursing positions within Ontario health facilities:

Algonquin College has a Foreign-Trained Nurse Project that is delivered jointly by its School of Health and Community Studies and Language Institute, funded by CIC.

Centennial College and George Brown College are partnering with Ryerson University, three community centres and four hospitals in Toronto to deliver the CARE Project for Nurses which provides educational and professional support for internationally trained nurses so that they may access employment in Ontario.

George Brown College delivers the Computer Programmer (Health and Financial Services) Diploma for Internationally-Educated Professionals. This program provides alternate career paths for engineers, technologists, technicians and other foreign-trained professionals who possess some computer training and experience.

The Michener Institute and George Brown College are partnering with six professional associations and regulatory bodies to deliver a project entitled Access and Options for Internationally-Trained Health Care Professionals which offers customized, modular programs leading to employment and licensing in critical health care professions such as medical radiation technology, medical laboratory technology and respiratory therapy.

In **Quebec**, **Cégep du Vieux-Montréal** has received funding from the provincial government to work in collaboration with a Montreal settlement organization and the Ordre des infirmières du Québec to deliver a bridging program for foreign trained nurses in order to prepare them to write the provincial licensing exams and facilitate their entry into the job market.

Bridging Programs for Engineering and Technology-related Fields

Cégep André-Laurendeau provides training in certain sectors to assist newcomers in adapting their competencies to the Canadian workplace in certain technology-related fields (e.g. nano-technology and instrumentation). Participants receive a certificate from the cégep confirming completion of the program and all programs include credited practical attachments.

Bow Valley College in Alberta runs the provincially-funded Work Experience for Immigrants Program as described in section 2.4. This program provides training for unemployed immigrants on Canadian workplace culture and communications combined with a six week work placement.

Humber Institute of Technology and Applied Learning runs the HRSDC-funded Centre for Foreign-trained Professionals. The centre offers a four-week program that assists foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople to find work related to their background and experience.

Cégep du Vieux-Montréal, in collaboration with the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec, has provided a bridging type program for engineers that combines technical language training, software and computer-related training to prepare foreign-trained engineers to enter the labour market.

Bridging programs for Tradespersons

In **Alberta**, **Norquest College** offers a 40-week ESL Trades program to those who possess trades skills but lack English language terminology. The program helps immigrant tradespersons develop pre-trade skills and find work in their trade or occupation. It also improves English language and job search skills, such as researching potential employers and resume writing. Graduates of the program receive a NorQuest College certificate as well as First Aid, Construction Safety and WHMIS certificates, and a letter from Apprenticeship and Industry Training listing the results of the participants' trade entrance exams.

The following are two examples of how **Ontario** colleges and institutes are delivering provincial government funded programs that assist with the credentialing and integration of foreign trained tradespersons.

Georgian College is delivering the Bridges to Employment project in collaboration with the Simcoe County Training Board, Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association and Global

Placement Services. The project prepares precision machining and tooling tradespersons to write a certification exam or qualify for an exemption from part of apprenticeship training.

Fanshawe College, in collaboration with 3M Canada Inc., is delivering a project entitled Preparation for Apprenticeship, Trades and Technology, that addresses major shortages in skilled manufacturing trades (general machinist, tool and die maker, industrial mechanic millwright and welder) by preparing participants for certification.

2.2.5 Workplace Training

Some colleges and institutes are also delivering programs and services in the workplace. This is done by including work placements for immigrants students during their ESL or career programs; delivering career-focused programs in a workplace setting, in collaboration with a private company; or by delivering contract training for businesses or industry to upgrade immigrant employees' skills in a specific area whether technical or language skills.

A number of colleges and institutes include credited work placements at the end of technical and ESL programs, including Cégep André-Laurendeau in Montreal, Bow Valley College in Calgary and George Brown College in Toronto. This is viewed as a key strategy for increasing the effectiveness of training programs by providing immigrant students with opportunities to gain Canadian employment experience.

Some examples of innovative practices in the area of workplace training include:

- < **Langara College** has a Resident Care Aid Program that is advertised for new Canadians and is delivered in the workplace so that students are put into real work situations in long-term care facilities and child care facilities and are taught on the job. This is a 17-week program that trains up to 150 people per year, with the majority being immigrants.
- < **Douglas College** has also delivered two programs through contract training for health care facilities to offer upgrading to health workers who were in danger of losing positions because of the move for credentialing in the health field.
- < **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)** provides a variation on this by delivering technical upgrading through mobile campuses. For example NAIT has provided on-site training for crane operators that had significant immigrant participation.

2.2.6 Community-based Training

Community-based training is offered through Learning Centres, and programs offered in collaboration with municipal libraries and community groups. For example, **Vancouver Community College (VCC)**, which has a very high proportion of immigrants at both of its main campuses, supports Learning Centres in public libraries that enable students to drop in to work with tutors in a self-paced manner. VCC also delivers classes in community centres, and has a Home Front English Program through which English instructors go to immigrants' homes to provide ESL training. This is mostly a service for mothers with young children or older immigrants. This program is funded through a provincial government based grant plus tuition fees.

2.3 Advising and Counselling Services

Responding colleges and institutes confirmed that counselling and advising services are offered to all students, including immigrants. Counselling and advising services are provided to assist students with program completion and to facilitate job entry. Colleges and institutes do not typically offer such services specifically for immigrants, however, the survey confirmed that in order to effectively deliver these services within their communities they must take into account immigrant issues.

Counselling and advising services provided by colleges and institutes are frequently used by immigrant students. Many institutions have enhanced their services for immigrants through services provided through Learning Centres, and innovative mentor or peer helper, and language partner programs as described below. Depending on the needs of the immigrant students, colleges and institutes are also referring students to the services of immigrant settlement organizations within their communities for additional counseling and integration support.

Some interesting examples of counseling and advising services provided by colleges and institutes to immigrant learners are outlined below.

< At **Camosun College** in Victoria immigrants learners have access to a Multicultural Counselor to whom students are referred if they are having difficulties. This counselor has a relationship with one of the community agencies that has settlement counselors. If a problem seems like it would be better dealt with in that forum then immigrant students are referred to one of these agencies.

< **Centennial College** in Toronto confirmed that college counseling services are also very cognizant of the issues immigrants face as they enter the college system and these issues are very much part of the mainstream of what the college offers through those services. In order to meet specific needs, workshops are sometimes organized that might be particularly pertinent to immigrant learners.

< At **Douglas College** immigrants typically make up approximately two thirds of the students who access regular counseling and academic and advising services. Immigrant students have full access to the Learning Centre where two thirds to three quarters of the users are English Second Language speakers. According to the coordinator of the Learning Centre, they receive support not just with English, but accounting, business math, and economics. Sometimes they need help because of their limited English or knowledge of the culture. Other times they need help because they do not have sufficient background knowledge for the courses.

< **George Brown College** has established a new service called Access Advising that replaces guidance counselors. The team of advisors work with students who have any kind of barrier, for example they lack credits, need PLAR, want to change careers, have been regretted, and work one on one with these individuals to help them to get into college. This service began in April 2003, and from May to September 2003 the college assisted 800 students. Although no specific numbers are available on the number of immigrant students, given the service area of George Brown College, a significant percentage of those were immigrants.

< **Red River College** has developed some innovative counseling services:

< First, through the creation of the Student and Community Advisor – Diversity and Inclusive Initiatives Office, that has multiple roles including a specific mandate to support immigrant learners through assessment processes, to provide counseling, to work cooperatively with immigrant service agencies and the provincial government immigration department.

- < The college also currently offers a Cultural Exchange Mentor Program where immigrant students are matched with Canadian students to enhance both students' cultural knowledge and to provide immigrant students with a Canadian mentor.
- < For immigrant students in Career Focused programs, higher level free workshops are offered such as Advanced Pronunciation; Test Taking for ESL students; Creative Writing, etc.
- < **Vancouver Community College's** Peer Helper Program helps to enhance the counseling services provided for immigrants. Peer Helpers are students who are trained by the counseling department to provide specialized counseling services to immigrants in their mother tongue, such as assistance with translation, referrals and applications.

2.4 Funding for College/Institute Programs and Services for Immigrants

Colleges and institutes that participated in the diagnostic survey confirmed that institutions are limited in the types of new programs and services they can develop for a specific target group such as immigrants. The programs and services described in this report are funded in different ways depending on the funding structures institutions have with their provincial governments, the additional sources of funding institutions can access, and the size of the immigrant client base the college or institute is serving.

Assessment services are generally funded through a mix of sources that include operating grants transferred to colleges and institutes by provincial governments, fees charged to students, and revenue from international student recruitment. In some cases, assessment services were initially developed for international students and were then made available or adapted for immigrant students. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) services are funded partly by provincial operating grants largely to cover costs for staff positions responsible for PLAR services, and partly by fees charged to students. Fee structures for PLAR services vary from one province to another, for example:

- fixed fees of approximately \$100 per course to be assessed;
- fees set at 50% of the current approved rate for the course; or
- fees based on the duration of the course ranging from \$75 to \$250 per course.

The funding sources for education and training programs vary greatly, for example:

- < English and French as a second language (ESL and FSL) are offered both as regular programs in some institutions and through continuing education in others.
 - ESL and FSL programs offered as regular programs are funded through a mix of funding sources, including provincial operating grants, tuition fees, and in some cases revenue from international students.
 - For ESL and FSL programs offered through continuing education the funding models vary between provinces. In some provinces such as Alberta, Quebec and Ontario, the tuition fee for these courses are set by the provincial government, and colleges/institutes are subsidized by the province for these courses through operating grants transferred to the institutions. In other provinces, non-credit courses are not subsidized but operated on a cost-recovery basis. The B.C. government does not directly subsidize non-credit courses. Individual institutions receive provincial funds based on their particular education plan, and each institution may choose to include non-credit activities within their resources that includes government funding, ancillary revenues, fundraising etc.
 - The LINC, ELSA and "Francisation" programs are funded entirely through CIC or the responsible provincial ministries in British Columbia and Québec. Many institutions face issues related to covering full benefit costs for employees responsible for delivering these programs.

- < Career/technical, applied degree and university transfer programs are funded through a mix of tuition fees and provincial operating grants transferred to the colleges and institutes. Tuition fee and financial support structures currently in place are limiting immigrants' access to college and institute regular programs. There is a lack of bursaries and scholarships for immigrants, and insufficient support for part-time and evening studies which many immigrants must take due to family responsibilities. Immigrants are also limited on accessing grants if they are working more than 20 hours per week. Fee structures also disadvantage immigrants in that courses offered individually are often more costly than if they are taken through a program.
- < Bridging programs currently offered at colleges and institutes in the provinces of Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are funded through provincial government initiatives aimed at facilitating foreign credential recognition. These programs are being delivered as pilot projects and are not typically integrated into regular college or institute operations.
- < Workplace training is offered on a contract, cost-recovery basis for private or public sector clients.
- < Community-based training, offered by some colleges and institutes in British Columbia in collaboration with libraries and community centres are generally offered at no cost to students and are funded through the base funding provided by the provincial government operating grant transferred to colleges and institutes. There have been significant cuts in community-based programs across the country due to overall funding cuts to colleges and institutes.

Advising and counseling services are provided to students as part of the college's or institute's regular services. Learning Centres provide complementary services to assist with program completion, that are of particular benefit to immigrant students. Advising and counseling departments, including Learning Centres, are funded through institutions' operating grants transferred from the provincial government. Additional programs developed specifically for immigrants such as peer helper or mentor and language partner programs are relatively low-cost because they rely on volunteer students. The costs to start the program and provide training to volunteers tend to be funded either through some government project-based funding or through the institution's operating budget for advising and counseling services.

2.5 Where Immigrant Programs and Services are being Delivered

The majority of programs and services are being offered at the main campuses of colleges and institutes, with some institutions also providing some limited services through regional or satellite campuses.

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) indicated that the provincial government is looking at a strategy to increase immigration, and expand immigration settlement into towns and municipalities in rural areas, as a response to the skills shortage. NSCC is well placed to support the government's strategy as it could easily support the integration of immigrants into rural communities through its 13 campuses located throughout the province. NSCC has also began a collaboration between the Metro Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), based in Halifax, and the on-line services group of the college to adapt MISA's New Beginnings program into an on-line program that could be accessible to immigrants that settle outside the metropolitan area of Halifax. The New Beginnings program is an employment service for newcomers that covers themes related to their integration into the Canadian workplace.

As indicated in Section 2.2.5 some colleges and institutes have also become involved in delivering training and services for immigrants in the workplace through the organization of work placements for immigrants students, delivering career programs in collaboration with the private sector or through contract training.

College and institutes have also begun looking at delivering some programs and services overseas for immigrants before they depart for Canada. For example, Centennial College has several sites off shore accessible to prospective immigrants. In 2003 Centennial College became involved in an initiative with a consortium of institutions (Nova Scotia Community College, Grant MacEwan Community College, Dalhousie University, York University and Athabasca University) and the Maytree Foundation to develop and submit a proposal to the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to obtain funding for a project that would determine the potential for colleges and universities to conduct assessments and training for new immigrants before they arrive in Canada.

2.6 How Programs and Services are Accessed by Immigrants

Immigrants are accessing the programs and services of colleges and institutes on their own initiative, or on referrals from federal or provincial government departments or local immigrant settlement organizations.

Immigrant-initiated Access

Virtually all colleges and institutes confirmed that immigrant-initiated access to their programs is very common. In effect, word of mouth has become increasingly common whether from other immigrants in the community, ethno cultural organizations or from immigrants contacts in their home country. For example, VCC confirmed that word of mouth is the main source for new immigrant students accessing their programs. Centennial College recently surveyed their preparatory ESL students and found that 50 percent confirmed that they found out about the program through word of mouth. They also found that another 50 percent found out about the program through the college website. Although Centennial is located in a high immigrant settlement area of Toronto, the college's survey confirmed that 94 percent of students have a computer in the home.

Referrals from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

As indicated in Section 2.2.1, 18 colleges and institutes are currently delivering LINC or equivalent programs in their community, and 11 institutions are also serving as LINC Assessment Centres. This finding confirms that all of these institutions have first year immigrants accessing their programs through referrals from CIC. Colleges and institutes which do not offer LINC-type programs, have also received referrals from CIC for regular ESL/FSL programs, but to a lesser degree. Red River College only receives CIC referrals for government sponsored refugees.

Referrals from the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development

Approximately 50 percent of responding colleges and institutes indicated that they receive referrals from HRSDC to support immigrants entering either ESL programs or career-focused programs after the first year of settlement. These referrals are often funded through HRSDC project-based funding aimed at the integration of immigrants, or through the employment insurance program. For example, the Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals at Humber Institute of Technology and Applied Learning has received such referrals.

Referrals from Provincial/Territorial Governments

Colleges and institutes from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, indicated that they receive referrals from their provincial governments. The referring ministries and departments are listed below:

British Columbia:	Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
Alberta:	Alberta Human Resource and Employment, Alberta Learning
Manitoba:	Manitoba Education and Training, Manitoba Labour and Immigration – Immigration and Multiculturalism Division
Ontario:	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Québec:	Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and Emploi Québec

Referrals from Community Immigration Settlement Organizations

Approximately 50 percent of respondent colleges and institutes confirmed that they receive referrals from community immigration settlement organizations. They also refer immigrant students back to these organizations for counseling and settlement support, as required.

2.7 Partnerships

Colleges and institutes are responding to the needs of immigrants within their communities by becoming involved in different informal and formal partnerships at the community, provincial and even pan-Canadian levels. Responding colleges and institutes have identified 9 different types of partnerships in which they have been involved for the delivery of programs and services for immigrants within their communities. Examples of these types of partnerships are described below.

Community-based Immigrant Settlement Organizations

In addition to receiving referrals from immigrant settlement organizations, colleges and institutes have informal partnerships with these organizations. Some institutions also have more formal partnerships whereby the settlement organization contracts with the college or institute to provide specific training, usually based on project funding from federal or provincial government departments. Some examples of partnerships with these organizations include:

- < **Red River College** has adopted an interesting approach to fostering its partnerships with immigrant settlement organizations both through its Student and Community Advisor, (Diversity and Inclusiveness Initiatives Office) who has a direct mandate to liaise and maintain relationships with these organizations, and through the establishment of the Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee that includes representatives from immigrant settlement organizations. Red River College also organized an immigrant forum last spring to assess what more the college could do to serve immigrants and identify relevant institutional strategies.
- < **Cégep du Vieux-Montréal** has been involved in partnerships with **CAMO Immigrant** a provincial organization and **'Hirondelle'** which provides settlement and integration services for immigrants to the Montreal area. CAMO Immigrant and Hirondelle have contracted the cégep to develop and deliver training for foreign-trained nurses. Hirondelle undertakes the initial selection of candidates and puts together groups that have similar needs i.e. foreign trained nurses. Support for lodging and child care is also provided to the students. The cégep also refers its immigrant students to Hirondelle when these students require additional psycho-social support and follow-up. **CIMOI – Centre d'intégration de la main d'oeuvre immigrante** also partners with the cégep to provide training for groups of immigrant students.

Municipal Governments and Committees

Colleges and institutes are involved in discussions at the municipal level to develop and deliver initiatives that facilitate immigrants' socio-economic integration into their communities. For example,

five metro Toronto colleges and institutes are part of the Toronto City Summit Alliance which has created an immigrant settlement group known as the Toronto Regional Immigrant Advisory Council (TRIAC). Centennial College is also a member of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance which largely focuses on attracting new immigrant businesses to Toronto.

In those municipalities and regions that are just beginning to look at increasing immigration to meet skills shortage needs, colleges and institutes are at the table offering support to facilitate the integration of immigrants through language and career training. For example, **Niagara College** responded to the survey indicating that it had very few programs and services specifically for immigrants. However, in an informal interview the college did confirm that it has become involved in discussions with the municipality and the hotel industry in Niagara with regards to the shortage of housekeeping staff in the hotels and the integration of foreign workers and immigrants. Another example involves **Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)** and its involvement in an initiative in Colchester County to bring a cluster of immigrant families to that community as part of a federal government-sponsored program to settle immigrants in rural communities by settling them in groups so that they are more likely to stay and settle. The college has offered to provide integration training and support for these immigrant families.

Provincial Government Departments

Colleges and institutes with some of the most developed and innovative programs and services for immigrants have received funding from their provincial governments through the education and training ministries or the human resources and employment ministries. Provincial governments also directly subsidize immigrant students as employment insurance learners or through tuition-based programs.

Bow Valley College is delivering some programs funded by Alberta Human Resource and Employment. For example, the Work Experience for Immigrants program is for unemployed foreign trained professionals and is mostly attended by foreign trained engineers. This is a 16 -week program comprised of 10 weeks of in-class sessions on Canadian workplace culture, functionality, communications on the job, etc. followed by six weeks of Canadian work experience. This helps participants overcome the lack of Canadian work experience. Up to 70 percent of those who complete this program find employment directly related to their previous professions. The college runs four groups per year, with each group consisting of 34 students.

Colleges and institutes in British Columbia and Quebec have strong partnerships and are contracted by the provincial ministries responsible for the ELSA and “francisation” language training programs. In Quebec, Emploi Québec also funds projects, delivered by colleges and institutes that facilitate the integration of foreign trained professionals into the labour market.

The Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CON*NECT) has partnered and received funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario for a new initiative entitled “Optimizing the Role of Colleges in Integrating Immigrants into Ontario’s Workforce”. George Brown College, Centennial College and Fanshawe College will participate as lead partners in the initial phase of the project and colleges and institutes throughout the province will have the opportunity to contribute. The project will look at the ways Ontario colleges and institutes can remove the barriers that skilled and professional immigrants face as a result of the education systems, resources and infrastructures that were not designed to meet their diverse needs. The initiative will also identify ways colleges and institutes can improve access, allow immigrants to progress through college or institute programs and facilitate entry into the workforce. Leaders in the immigration community, including The Maytree Foundation, will be involved in the project.

Holland College in Prince Edward Island is in discussions with the provincial government as the latter begins to develop a strategy to increase immigration levels in response to an impending skills shortage. Premiers in Atlantic Canada have provided funding to allow the college and institute system to take on regional initiatives. Holland College is collaborating with four other Atlantic institutions to review current programs and will be seeking HRSDC funding to conduct a gap analysis on the human resource requirements for next five years, in particular for the trades and health sectors.

Federal Government Departments

As indicated previously, 18 colleges and institutes currently have contracts with CIC to deliver the LINC program. Colleges and institutes have received referrals from HRSDC for EI funded students, and Langara College is delivering the EASE Program, a self-employment assistance program. The EASE Program puts individuals through a small business training regime, develops a business plan and launches a business with the assistance of mentors. It is delivered off campus in a needy area of Vancouver and targets minorities and new Canadians.

Employers in the Private and Public Sectors

Colleges and institutes provide training for employees in the private and public sectors, through contract training and deliver projects in collaboration with the private sector.

For example, Bow Valley College has contracts with various employers in Calgary to provide upgrading and training for immigrant employees. Langara College has partnered with a private company, BC Resident Aid Incorporated, to deliver its Resident Care Aid program.

Unions

Douglas College has partnered with the Hospital Employees Union in BC to provide academic upgrading for 60 immigrants, working in the health care field, who required ESL upgrading to enter the Registered Nursing and Licensed Practical Nursing programs.

Non-Governmental Organizations

George Brown College has established partnerships and is collaborating with non-governmental organizations such as the Maytree Foundation and ACTEW (A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women), to establish the Employment Counseling Program as well as bridging programs for Computer Programs and the CARE Project for foreign trained nurses.

Community Organizations and Services

Some colleges and institutes are partnering with community centres and libraries to deliver more informal or evening ESL classes. They are also partnering with ethno-cultural organizations to facilitate the integration of immigrant students. For example VCC has partnerships with community centres and libraries for the delivery of its ESL programs on a project-by-project basis in collaboration with immigrant service organizations.

Other Educational Institutions

Ontario colleges and institutes are partnering amongst themselves mostly on provincially funded initiatives aimed at the integration of immigrants. Some examples of these initiatives are provided in

section 2.2.4 on bridging programs. The initiative on overseas services for prospective immigrants involving a consortium of 3 colleges/institutes and 3 universities, is an example of a partnership between colleges and universities.

3. Challenges and Barriers

The 20 colleges and institutes that participated in interviews identified the challenges and barriers they face in providing programs and services for immigrants, and the challenges and barriers faced by immigrants in accessing colleges' and institutes' programs and services.

3.1 Challenges and Barriers for Colleges and Institutes

Effective Delivery of Language Training

- < Offering appropriate levels of language training that meet the needs of immigrants and enable them to enter either post-secondary education or the workforce.
- < Effectiveness of web-based approaches or distance education is limited due to the often limited language capacity of immigrants.

Application Processes

- < Provincial application processes are too costly and the speed of applications are slowed due to a lack of credential recognition.
- < Colleges and institutes need more standardized processes to govern the awarding of advanced credit to immigrant students.

Assessment Services

- < Colleges and institutes need to re-examine how they deliver PLAR given the high costs and resources required and the, at times, institutional reluctance to use PLAR.

Inter-cultural and Diversity Awareness

- < Institutions are so "siloeed" that they are not creating enough "acculturation" opportunities for immigrants across career and technical programs to enable them to understand the rules of workforce engagement, i.e. team work, chains of command, showing initiative and standard practices.

Integration and Support Services

- < Due to limited resources, colleges and institutes are dependent on immigrant settlement organizations to provide socio-cultural adaptation types of services. However, the financial viability of these organizations is often dependent on federal government funding forcing such organizations to pigeon hole their programs in accordance with federal government priorities.

Financial and Funding Limitations

- < Colleges and institutes face financial, time and physical limitations to introducing new training programs and assessment, advisory and counseling services to meet the specific needs of immigrants.

< Funding structures at colleges and institutes become barriers in that they are often based on keeping students in the classroom, whereas immigrants need to get out of the classroom and into the workforce as quickly as possible.

Promotion of Programs and Services

< Due to limited resources and funding, even colleges and institutes with significant programs and services for immigrants, are finding it difficult to promote these programs and services to the immigrant community.

< Community agencies are not always aware of the range of programs and services offered by colleges and institutes. These institutions need to do a better job of promoting their programs and services to these agencies so that they can better inform their client base.

< Although the websites of colleges'/institutes' website can be effective promotional tools, some institutions have found it difficult to provide relevant and specific information on immigrant programs and services. The Internet now contains so much information that it can be difficult for immigrants to sift through it and understand the level of service they could access at a college or institute.

Positioning for Federal, Provincial and Municipal Programs

< Colleges and institutes serving rural and remote communities need to be involved in government initiatives and strategies to facilitate the integration of immigrants into rural communities.

3.2 Challenges and Barriers for Immigrants

Language

< LINC and equivalent-type programs do not typically go to a high enough level in relation to the Canadian Language Benchmarks, to enable new Canadians to enter college/institute career programs nor do they provide sufficient occupation-specific language training that enables participants to function comfortably in the workplace.

< There is a significant gap between the levels of ESL training offered through federally-funded LINC-type programs and the Education for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs students need in order to function comfortably in career and academic programs at colleges/institutes and universities.

< Some immigrant students graduating from Canadian high schools may require ESL or EAP upgrading, however they tend to resist the ESL "label" as they do not view themselves as ESL students.

Application and Enrolment Processes

< Waiting lists for language programs, including LINC, and career and technical programs.

< The availability or non-availability of courses at any given time.

< A lack of smooth and easily understood transitions and progressions through programs.

< Lengthy application and intake processes.

< A lack of enrollment management in the area of course availability matched to assessments.

Assessment and Foreign Credential Recognition

- < The lack of recognition of credentials affects admissions standards and qualifying for funding because newcomers have to establish residency before qualifying for post-secondary education funding.
- < Colleges and institutes have difficulty in recognizing international training and employment experience for the purposes of granting advanced credits.
- < Colleges and institutes generally lack streamlined processes to help immigrants plan their careers.

Cultural Adaptation

- < Canadian academic environments may be significantly different from those of other countries.
- < Faculty may have difficulty understanding accented English or French, as may immigrant students.

Support Services

- < Daycare funding for immigrant students beyond LINC is not provided or is insufficient.
- < In B.C., provincial funding for support services for immigrants at colleges and institutes has been compromised with the closure of the B.C. Benefits Office, which provided counseling services to assist immigrants in arranging funding for tuition, daycare, books and living expenses.

Financial Limitations

- < Rising tuition fees.
- < Insufficient financial support for part-time or evening studies.
- < A lack of bursaries and scholarships specifically for immigrants.
- < Courses offered individually are often more costly than if they are offered through a program. This is a disadvantage for immigrants who may not need to follow a complete program, but may only require one or two courses to upgrade certain skills.
- < A lack of integration in planning services for new Canadians, for example, ESL students at some levels pay tuition whereas other do not.
- < Access to student funding. For example in Alberta, grant funding has been reduced from 40 to 24 months. This is not an adequate timeframe for immigrants to develop English proficiency for most occupations and then take the training needed to update or “Canadianize” their credentials.
- < If students are working more than 20 hours per week, regardless of the wage, they are disqualified from grant funding opportunities.

4. Lessons Learned

Through this diagnostic survey, colleges and institutes identified the following lessons learned based on their experience in developing and delivering programs for immigrants within their local communities.

Support from College/Institute Senior Management

- < Colleges and institutes that want to be successful in delivering programs and services to immigrants need to have visible commitment from the senior level and commitment throughout the organization to facilitate a collective willingness to support the presence of immigrants within the institution. Colleges and institutes need to allocate resources that support immigrant students. Concepts of respecting diversity and creating an inclusive environment have to become part of the organizational fabric rather than add-on's.
- < It is not just the continuing education department of the college or institute that needs to be involved, support is required by all departments, including: health services, security, support staff. It is important to make all services and staff aware that newcomers will be attending the institution and that they may need some additional guidance and support. They must also be made aware of the challenges newcomers face in terms of language and new systems and environments.

Application and Enrolment Processes

- < There needs to be a central one-stop shop where an applicant can obtain information from someone with the time to answer questions.
- < Immigrants would benefit if colleges and institutes had a streamlined process or package within the framework of a career planning approach that includes: language training, financial support, career planning, upgrading to Canadian workplace standards, and a Canadian work placement experience. St. Clair College in Windsor has introduced this type of career planning process and reports that it is beginning to make a difference for immigrant students.
- < Colleges and institutes need to take a more holistic approach that finds the most beneficial journey from assessment to training to employment.

Language is Key

Effective language training is key to the successful integration of new Canadians. Almost all colleges and institutes have indicated that they would like to either introduce or expand upon the levels and diversity of language training offered in order to facilitate the integration and credentialing of immigrant learners. The following lessons learned relate to language training:

- < Most people do not learn a new language quickly. If immigrant students are beginning at a low level, they generally run out of funding before they can advance to higher levels of language development. For example, LINC training that only goes to level four is not high enough to enable immigrants to access a good job or go on to further education. Some provincial governments have begun funding immigrant students to a higher level of language training. For example Bow Valley College in Alberta has immigrant students funded for its English for Academic Purposes course which is sufficient to articulate with other post-secondary programs.
- < Immigrant students applying to an English for Academic Purposes program need better pre-enrollment counseling regarding the length of time required to become proficient. It is difficult for the

older immigrant who has given up a career and is perhaps well-educated in his or her first language to accept that it can take as long as five years or more to develop the requisite academic language skills.

- < There is a need to be in constant touch with the language development and post-secondary training needs of the immigrant community to ensure appropriate programming and services are available to immigrant students.
- < It is important to remember not to trust the score on high school examinations in terms of an individual's ability to converse and function in English in the workplace. For example, immigrants may score 100 percent on a written exam but still have difficulty conversing and functioning in English once in the workplace.
- < Language programs that have independent language labs have provided more flexibility for immigrant learners. For example, Camosun College has a student-centered language lab that allows students to work independently, almost in a self-paced approach with instructor and instructional assistant support. This works well for immigrants who have been in Canada for some time, and who possess oral skills that surpass their written and reading skills.
- < There is a need to work with federal and provincial governments and immigrant sponsoring agencies to ensure that language training programs include aspects appropriate to the needs of particular groups of immigrants to particular areas of the country.
- < Programs such as Language Partners or Cultural Exchange Mentors have been very beneficial for immigrant students both in terms of building on their language capacities and providing them with a Canadian mentor. It has also been beneficial for Canadian students in terms of enhancing their cultural knowledge and awareness.
- < It is important to address the needs of newcomers with low levels of literacy in their original language.
- < Bridge programs should be developed for immigrant students graduating from Canadian high school who may have English writing/reading skills deficits.

Career/Technical Programs

- < It is important to determine the English language demands of career programs and use this information to set fair language entrance requirements for immigrants.
- < Career and technical training program areas need to accommodate for the language requirements of immigrants.
- < In addition to bridging programs, there is also a need to build into existing career and technical programs specialized English or French courses and additional modules that can provide immigrant students with opportunities to upgrade their understanding of the Canadian workplace. VCC's Social Cultural Competencies program, described on page 5, provides an example of how such modules can be integrated into the curriculum of regular career/technical programs.
- < Red River College has found that immigrant students in career or technical programs benefit from targeted support services, for example through higher level workshops in areas such as Advanced Pronunciation, Test Taking, Creative Writing etc.

- < More flexibility in offering programs on a course-by-course basis and/or lengthening programs with built-in supports would be beneficial.
- < Combined skills program models such as the Registered Care Program offered by Camosun College and the Langara College Resident Care Aid program have proven effective in facilitating the integration of newcomers into the workforce.
- < Colleges and institutes need to be flexible in ensuring that programs delivered will lead immigrants to employment in local workplace sectors that receive new employees.
- < It is very effective for colleges and institutes to adapt career programs that are of particular interest to immigrants. For example, in Montreal, Cégep du Vieux Montreal found that 60 to 65 percent of students in the Early Childhood Education program were immigrants. As these students already have credentials from their home countries, it would be preferable to tailor the program by including workplace specific language training, family and child-rearing values of Canadians and also of other cultures, rather than oblige students to attend a standard three year program.

Need to Integrate Canadian Work Experience

- < College and institute programs, whether occupation-specific language training or career/technical training, need to provide work experience in a meaningful Canadian context, through credited or non-credited work terms, co-op experiences or practical attachments in the workplace. This Canadian work experience is very effective in facilitating the integration of immigrants into the workforce. It is essential that college/institute programs build that bridge because immigrants cannot access those experiences on their own.
- < Programs should also provide support in areas such as resume writing and interview skills simply to meet basic transition needs.

Counseling and Advising Services

- < Peer helper programs have been very beneficial in a number of colleges and institutes. Peer helpers are students who are trained by the counseling department to provide special services to immigrants in their mother tongue such as assistance with translation, referrals and applications.
- < It can be difficult for a college or institute to respond to the needs of individual immigrant students. As such, colleges and institutes work closely with immigrant settlement organizations and socio-cultural groups to provide newcomers with psycho-social and integration support. Colleges and institutes simply do not have the resources and funding to provide such individualized support.

Integration and Support Services

- < There is no “one size fits all”. Younger immigrants have differing needs from older immigrants. An older educated immigrant has different needs from an uneducated immigrant or refugee. The older immigrant usually wants a program that will lead to employment while the younger immigrant is on the same path and timelines as a Canadian born counterpart.
- < College and institute Learning Centres also provide an interesting model for the delivery of support services for immigrants, particularly academic and tutoring support. Learning Centres have the flexibility to address specific needs and develop targeted short programs offered at low or even no

cost for students. For example the SIAST's Learning Centre developed a Basic Language Skills program that is a non-credit program without fee to try to meet the need for seamless delivery to bring immigrants to the point where they can gain full employment.

< College and institutes should provide immigrant students with a guide on what to expect from the Canadian academic environment.

Intercultural and Diversity Awareness

< As the demographic makeup of college and institute students becomes more diverse, staff and faculty have to receive training in cross-cultural awareness, diversity and inclusive environments. Curricula and teaching methodologies have to be more inclusive. Classroom and college/institute environments have to be welcoming. Staff and faculty need to become more representative of the diversity within the student body and should provide role models in promoting inclusive approaches to the delivering of programs and services.

< Based on the experience of Red River College in Manitoba, it is most effective to establish a staff position within the college which is specifically mandated to support the integration of immigrants. Red River College has a Cultural Diversity Advisor who delivers workshops to staff and faculty to increase cross-cultural sensitivity, knowledge and skills; create an inclusive learning environment, teaching methodologies and classroom environments; and adapt to different learning styles and cultural differences.

< There is a need for internationalization of campuses to help people understand that Canada is multicultural and integrating immigrants into the labour force as quickly as possible is in the best interests of all Canadians.

< Colleges and institutes need to learn more about creating a culture where immigrants feel accepted and the needs of different immigrant groups can be balanced and integrated.

< It is important to avoid stereotyping and adopt more integrated practices. For example, Langara College has a Diversity Policy and Code of Conduct that provides college staff and faculty with direction in this area.

Federal, Provincial and Municipal Programs

< In recent years, provincial and federal governments have introduced interesting programs such as the occupation-specific bridging programs described in Section 3 of this report. However, these special programs cannot be distinct and operate away from the mainstream of college/institute activities. In order to sustain the success of these programs, colleges and institutes need to find ways to embed them into regular college/institute business and activities.

< Communities need a holistic strategy for the integration of immigrants processes and a centralized structure which immigrants can use as starting and reference points. Some municipalities are developing strategic plans for economic development that include the integration of immigrants. Colleges and institutes should be involved in the development of such plans.

< Funding for the integration of immigrants tends to be annual and project-based. For example, colleges and institutes that deliver LINC programs assume there will be continuing support but the insecurity of having annually approved funding makes it difficult to undertake long-term planning.

- < College and institute partnerships with immigrant settlement organizations are also vulnerable due to the project-based annual funding mechanisms upon which these organizations depend.
- < Given their strong links with the business community, colleges and institutes should be involved in supporting municipal and provincial government initiatives in the area of business development for immigrant entrepreneurs.

5. Conclusions and Outcomes from the College and Institute Immigration Roundtable

The diagnostic survey helped to identify the types of programs and services offered by colleges and institutes to immigrants within their communities, including initiatives to facilitate the recognition of foreign credentials. It also shed some light on the barriers faced by colleges and institutes in effectively delivering these programs and services and the barriers immigrants face in accessing them. The lessons learned begin to give some direction in terms of where colleges and institutes can best make a contribution to the successful integration of immigrants, in collaboration with federal, provincial and municipal governments.

The federal government's initiative to develop the Immigration Internet Portal, and ACCC's contribution in the form of profiling the types of programs and services immigrants can access at colleges and institutes, is a first step in enhancing the collaboration between the federal government and colleges and institutes in this area. The Immigration Roundtable enabled representatives from colleges and institutes and federal government departments to discuss future areas of collaboration. The roundtable participants recommended that a college and institute process model for the integration of immigrants be developed and integrated into this report, and also identified a strategy which describes the next steps ACCC and colleges and institutes will take to move forward with the immigration agenda of colleges and institutes.

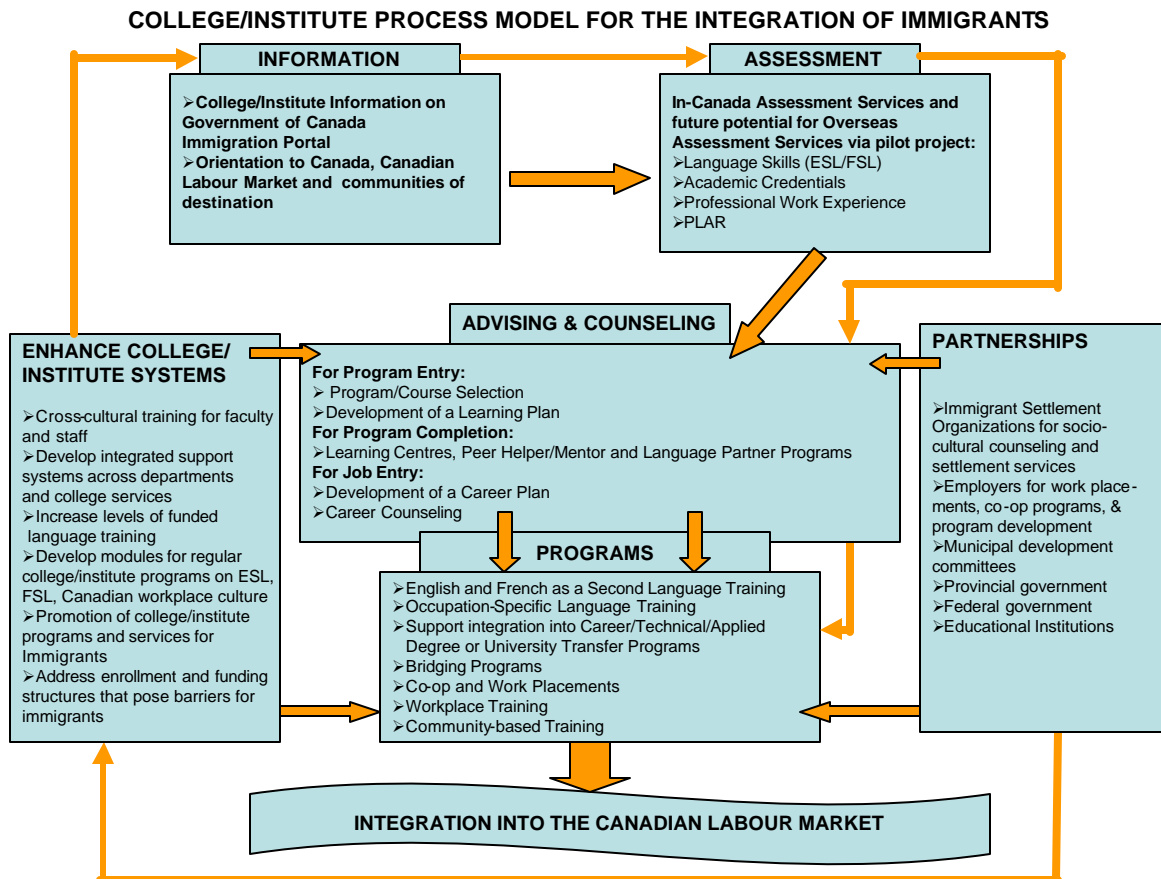
5.1 College and Institute Process Model for the Integration of Immigrants

Participants at the Immigration Roundtable recommended that a process model be developed that would encompass a comprehensive suite of programs and services which colleges and institutes can follow and adapt when developing programs and services aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants within their communities. This model is inspired from the Maytree Foundation's "Systems Approach to Facilitate Labour Market Entry for Skilled Immigrants", and includes some initial support and integration services that could be offered initially at overseas sites and then continue in Canada. The overseas pilot project refers to the Maytree Foundation and college/university consortium initiative described in section 2.5.

The model is provided on the following page and includes the following main components:

- < Information access for immigrants through the Immigration Portal and Orientation to Canada sessions.
- < Assessment services that can begin overseas and continue in Canada: language skills, PLAR, academic credentials and professional work experience.
- < Advising and counselling services to facilitate program entry and completion and entry into the labour market.
- < Education and training programs that range from English and French as a second language, occupation-specific language training, support for entry into career/technical, applied degree and university transfer programs, bridging programs, co-op and work placement programs, workplace training and community-based training.

The process model also identifies how college systems and structures need to be enhanced and the partnerships in which colleges and institutes must be engaged in order to deliver more effective programs and services for immigrants.



5.2 College and Institute Immigration Strategy

The strategy identified by Immigration Roundtable participants is comprised of the following steps intended to move this agenda forward for colleges and institutes:

- < Create an ACCC Task Group on Immigration that would be time limited and will have representation from colleges and institutes from across the country as well as external members from government and non-governmental organizations. The task group could work on policy and advocacy initiatives as well as program development.
- < Explore the possibility of organizing a larger event for colleges and institutes such as an immigration symposium later in 2004.
- < Promote the principles and priorities on the integration of immigrants among colleges and institutes by capitalizing on ACCC initiatives and activities including:
 - The development of a section of the ACCC Website that profiles the programs and services immigrants can access at colleges and institutes that will be integrated into the Government of Canada Immigration Portal.

- The upcoming ACCC Conference in Saskatoon, with college/institute CEOs, the ACCC Board, regional caucuses, and well as college/institute faculty and staff through the conference session to be delivered by representatives from George Brown College and Bow Valley College.
- The International Student Symposium to take place just before the Saskatoon conference will also address some of the issues raised at the roundtable.
- The Student Leadership Network is focusing on community partnerships as such the mentor and peer helper programs could possibly be promoted with them.
- The sector study of colleges and institutes as employers which will be carried out in 2004 with funding from HRSDCC. This study will collect data on the diversity of the workforce within colleges and institutes and how it reflects the diversity of the student body.

< Focus some advocacy efforts on increasing the awareness of the high level government committees created to address the integration of immigrants, namely the Deputy Ministers' and Directors General Committees on Integrating Immigrants into the Labour Market and the Assistant Deputy Minister Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee which has a meeting planned in June 2004. These committees provide a good opportunity to position colleges and institutes for future funding opportunities.

< Foster collaboration with the Ontario CONNECT project and possibly expand the project to other provinces if government funding can be provided. This project will look at the ways Ontario colleges and institutes can remove the barriers that skilled immigrants face as a result of the education system, resources and structures that were not designed to meet their diverse needs. The project will also identify best practices and transition models to determine how the Ontario system should be adjusted to improve access and allow immigrants to progress through college/institute programs and enter the labour market.

< Explore funding options for the Accelerated Integration Program for Immigrants project that explores how colleges and universities can offer initial integration services from some of their overseas sites.

< Collaborate with other partners working on the integration of immigrants, namely the Maytree Foundation, Sector Councils and Affinity Group Leaders, in particular for sectors that are looking to immigration as a solution to meet skills shortages (environment, technology, trucking, tourism, construction), as well as provincial and community immigrant settlement organizations.

APPENDIX 1

Interview and Survey Questionnaires

**ACCC RESEARCH INITIATIVE
CANADIAN COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES –
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO COLLEGES\INSTITUTES

Purpose of the Interview:

To assist ACCC in capturing the extent to which colleges/institutes currently respond to the needs of immigrants within their communities, as well as identify approaches for expanding and strengthening the types of programs and services that colleges/institutes are delivering to this client group. In particular we are focussing on the following objectives:

- a) to determine the capacity of colleges and institutes in delivering programs and services that benefit immigrants;
- b) to identify specific programs and services offered to immigrants by colleges and institutes to be profiled on the ACCC website and eventually linked to the Immigration Internet Portal that the Government of Canada is developing;
- c) to identify the main types of support colleges and institutes can offer to immigrants with a view to defining how colleges and institutes can further contribute to relevant Government of Canada's programs and services benefiting immigrants

PART 1: Interview Questions

- 1. You have been provided with a sample list of relationships between colleges/institutes and immigrants (see attachment Part 3). Please identify those that apply to your institution. For each one identified we also ask that you name the specific programs and/or services your college/institute offers. Are there any which have been missed? If yes, please elaborate.
- 2. Can you estimate **approximately** how many immigrants are enrolled in programs or making use of the services that your institution provides specifically for immigrants?

Career focused training programs:

Language training programs:

Other training programs:

Assessment services:

Counseling services:

Other services:

- 3. Where are these programs and services delivered?
 - o Main Campus
 - o Regional Campus
 - o Workplace
 - o Other, please specify:
- 4. Please describe any partnerships your institution has established for the delivery of programs and services to immigrants.

5. How do immigrants normally access your programs and services?
 - Self Referral
 - Referral from Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) Office (usually first year of settlement)
 - Does CIC fund these students?
 - Referral from Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) Office (beyond first year of settlement)
 - Does HRDC fund these students?
 - Referral from provincial/territorial government
 - Does the provincial/territorial government fund these students?
 - Referral from a community immigration settlement organization
 - Other, please specify: _____

6. Please describe any initiatives, programs or services your institution is involved in for foreign credential recognition. How extensive are these initiatives? Is your college/institute partnered with other organizations for these types of initiatives?

7. From past experience, do you have any concerns or issues, or are there barriers for your college/institute to provide programs and services for immigrants?

7 (a) Notwithstanding these barriers, what other types of programs or services would your college/institute be interested in offering to immigrants?

8. From past experience, do you consider that immigrants face barriers in seeking out and accessing the programs and services of your college/institute? If so, what are they and how can they be addressed?

9. Are there some lessons learned you can share with us from your college's/institute's experience in delivering programs and services to immigrants?

10. Would your college/institute agree that ACCC profile your programs and services to immigrants on the ACCC website that would be linked to the Government of Canada's Immigration Internet Portal?

PART 2: CASE STUDY

Please provide a brief (one paragraph) description of a successful program, service or project that your college/institute has delivered for the benefit of immigrants within your community or region.

Colleges are asked to submit one brief example of a successful program, service or project the college/institute has delivered for the benefit of immigrants.

1. Name of program, service or project:

2. Brief description of the program, service or project:

3. Age of the program, service or project:

4. Benefits to Immigrants:

5. Benefits to College/Institute:

6. How is the program, service or project maintained?

7. Lessons learned:

PART 3: List of Possible Relationships Between Colleges/Institutes and Immigrants

Institution:

Contact:

Please identify those that apply to your institution. For each one you identified we also ask that you name the specific programs and/or services your college/institute offers.

- special advice to pre-arrived immigrants on your web site

- service to pre-arrived immigrants at an overseas college location

- English or French language instruction for immigrants

- programs for immigrant families

- _____
- formal relationship with local settlement services provider

 - programs specific to an immigrant's prior employment

 - foreign credential recognition programs or initiatives

 - student services aimed at immigrants
 - counseling _____
 - health _____
 - financial _____
 - housing _____
 - anti-discrimination _____
 - distance education courses/services aimed at people who may immigrate to Canada

 - on-line information services for prospective immigrants

 - programs designed for immigrant employees of local company

 - part-time, evening or weekend programs for immigrants

 - programs designed specifically for skill shortage occupations

 - special services to assist newcomers to find work related to their education and background

 - other, please specify: _____

**ACCC RESEARCH INITIATIVE
CANADIAN COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES -
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS**

SURVEY OF COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES

The purpose of this survey is to assist ACCC in capturing the extent to which colleges and institutes currently respond to the needs of immigrants within their communities. The specific objectives of this research initiative are as follows:

- d) to determine the capacity of colleges and institutes in delivering programs and services that benefit immigrants;
- e) to identify specific programs and services offered to immigrants by colleges and institutes to be profiled on the ACCC website and eventually linked to the Immigration Internet Portal that the Government of Canada is developing;
- f) to identify the main types of support colleges and institutes can offer to immigrants with a view to defining how colleges and institutes can further contribute to relevant Government of Canada programs and services benefiting immigrants.

Please complete and return the survey by November 28, 2003 to the attention of Anna Toneguzzo, Senior Research Officer, Member Services and Public Policy at the following email: atoneguzzo@accc.ca If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact Ms. Toneguzzo at : 613-746-2222, ext. 3103.

1. The following is a list of possible relationships between colleges/institutes and immigrants. Please identify those that apply to your institution. For each relationship identified we also ask that you name the specific programs and/or services your college/institute offers.

- special advice to pre-arrived immigrants on your web site

- service to pre-arrived immigrants at an overseas location of your college/institute

- English or French language instruction for immigrants

- programs for immigrant families

- formal relationship with local settlement services provider

- programs specific to an immigrant's prior employment

- programs or services that facilitate foreign credential recognition

- student services aimed at immigrants
 - counseling_____
 - health_____
 - financial_____
 - housing_____
 - anti-discrimination_____
- distance education courses/services aimed at people who may immigrate to Canada

- on-line information services for prospective immigrants

- programs designed for immigrant employees at local company

- part-time, evening or weekend programs for immigrants

- programs designed specifically for skill shortage occupations

- special services to assist newcomers to find work related to their education and background

- other, please specify: _____

2. Can you estimate approximately how many immigrants are enrolled in programs or making use of the services that your institution provides specifically for immigrants?

Career focused training programs:
 Language training programs:
 Other training programs:

Assessment services:
 Counseling services:
 Other services:

3. Would your college/institute agree to let ACCC profile your programs and services to immigrants on the ACCC website that may be linked to the Government of Canada's Immigration Internet Portal?

- Yes
- No

4. **Please provide a brief (one paragraph) description of a successful program, service or project that your college/institute has delivered for the benefit of immigrants within your community or region.**

Appendix 2

List of Colleges and Institutes Interviewed

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Camosun College

Brenda Storr

ESL Programs

Douglas College

Susan Witter

President

Langara College

Doug Soo

Dean of Continuing Studies

Vancouver Community College

Moira Henderson

Vice-President Access and Education Services

ALBERTA

Bow Valley College

Mary Davison

Dean, ESL and Languages

Rene Salazar

International Business Development Associate

Grant MacEwan Community College

Kathy Higgins

Coordinator, International Centre

Gerry Nakonenchny

Dean, Health and Community Services

Celia Smyth

International Student Counselor

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

Don Yurchuk

Registrar

Red Deer College

Sean Kennedy

Dean of Student Services

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

Brian Kraus, Dean of Basic Education

Judith Nordness

Program Head, ESL/LINC, Kelsey Campus, Saskatoon

Dan Danforth

Program Head, ESL/LINC/Literacy, Wascana Campus, Regina

MANITOBA

Red River College

Patricia Bozyk

Dean, Student Services

Barb Dixon

Student and Community Advisor, Diversity and Inclusive Initiatives Office

Audrey Bonham

Chair, Language Training Centre

ONTARIO

Algonquin College

Keith Younghusband,

Dean, School of Academic Advancement and Languages

Maureen Keon

Chair, Language Institute

Doug McDougall

Director, Learning and Teaching Services

Cambrian College

Larry Bouchard

Dean, Centre for Community & Workforce Development

Ibrahim Alladin

Director, Cambrian International

Centennial College

Richard Johnston

President

Sara Katz

Director Access Programs

George Brown College

Lorraine Trotter
Director, Access Centre of Excellence

Humber College

Lois Willson
Associate Dean, Government and Community Relations

Joyce Woodend
Associate Registrar

Barbara Riach
Associate Registrar - Recruitment

St. Clair College

Virginia Machiavello
Chairperson, Applied Arts and International Development

QUEBEC**Cégep du Vieux Montréal**

Martine Blache
Directrice, Service de formation aux entreprises

Collège André Laurendeau

Manon Delisle, Coordonnatrice, Service de la formation continue et du développement professionnel
Mustapha Benarbia, Service de la formation continue et du développement professionnel

Prince Edward Island**Holland College**

Dick MacDonald
Vice-President of Student and Administrative Services and International Development

Brian McMillan
Vice-President, Program Operations

Nova Scotia**Nova Scotia Community College (CEO: Ray Ivany)**

Colin MacLean
Director of Organizational Development

Cynthia Murphy
Director of International

APPENDIX 3

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES College and Institute Immigration Roundtable March 8 and 9, 2004

Summary of Roundtable Discussions and Key Points

March 8th Presentations

Canadian Colleges and Institutes – Responding to the Needs of Immigrants

Powerpoint Presentation on the results of the ACCC Diagnostic Survey of College and Institute Programs and Services for Immigrants

Current and Future Directions in Immigrant Settlement

Rosaline Frith, Director General, Integration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

The Immigration and Refugee Act was approved in June 2002 and replaces the former Immigration Act. The new act moves from an occupation specific approach to immigration, to one that attracts workers with flexible and transferable skills needed to succeed in today's economy. Under the new Act, education and language proficiency in English or French have increased in importance for the selection process. There is currently a small portion of immigrants entering the country under the provisions of the new Act as Citizenship and Immigration Canada is dealing with a backlog of immigrants approved under the former Immigration Act.

The main source countries for immigration are India, Pakistan and China.

The profile of immigrants currently entering the country is that the majority are younger (under 40), are well educated, have significant work experience, are mainly coming to join family and friends and thus settle in the main urban centres (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal), and have a multiplicity of languages.

The federal government is aiming to increase immigration levels. Currently 225,000 per year are approved, this will increase by another 86,000.

Issues around foreign trained professionals the problem with integrating foreign trained doctors is not the lack of recognition of credentials but the lack of places for foreign trained doctors to do their residencies, in effect, provinces need to increase the number of residencies; the issue with the integration of foreign trained engineers is that there are currently not enough jobs for engineers in many parts of the country.

Challenges for the federal government for the integration of immigrants:

Changing the dispersion of immigrants across Canada to second tier cities. However, provinces and second tier cities need to voice a need for the receiving immigrants, and put plans and strategies in place to facilitate the integration of immigrants.

Low income levels of immigrants despite the high education credentials and foreign work experience.

Limited workplace language capacity is a significant barrier for the effective integration of immigrants into the economy. CIC recognizes that there is a need to strengthen and increase language training programs across the country, particularly for occupation-specific language training. CIC is trying to get more funding to enhance language training programs, in particular workplace language training. CIC also recognizes that there is a need to increase funding for higher levels of LINC training, to fill the gap between the LINC Level 4 and 8, as recommended by colleges and institutes.

Federal government departments are beginning to work more collaboratively on the integration of immigrants through the creation of the Director General Forum that brings together Directors General from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), CIC, Department of Foreign Affairs, Industry Canada, and Heritage Canada. The Prime Minister has also named a Hedy Fry as Parliamentary Secretary on Foreign Credential Recognition and the Integration of Immigrants.

Discrimination is also a big factor that impacts upon the effective integration of immigrants. CIC has found that Host Programs, such as the Peer Helper or Mentor Programs that some colleges and institutes have introduced to enhance counseling services for immigrants, are effective in reducing discrimination. CIC has

successfully implemented Host Programs in some primary schools and would like to expand this type of program to other educational levels, including colleges and institutes. It is also important to work with employers, particularly in small and medium enterprises, to sensitize them on the importance of recognizing foreign work experience and the value of hiring immigrants.

Areas to Think About

Martha Nixon, former Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) was split, with responsibilities for border security and customs moving to the Canada Border Services Agency and immigrant integration services remaining with CIC.

Integrated approaches are essential to move prospective immigrants from their first idea about immigrating to Canada to the point where they are settled in a community and working.

The Prime Minister's priorities, such as the Cities Strategy and the social economy agenda are important to monitor in relation to the integration of immigrants as they could become sources of funding in the future.

The funding nexus poses challenges as there are so many different government departments involved, the government needs to move on these issues and is looking for ideas.

Pilot projects have their limitations, and their sustainability is often questionable. It is important to propose initiatives in partnership with key stakeholders.

Foreign students should perhaps be considered as a source of potential immigrants. Colleges and institutes could become involved in the selection process of those foreign students that have the potential to become immigrants to Canada.

Immigration Portal

Donna Kirby, Director, Learning Strategies and Support Division, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)

The Going to Canada Website is being restructured and developed into an Immigration Portal. The portal is to serve as a targeted on-line tool that provides seamless services for prospective immigrants, approved immigrants and newcomers.

HRSDC approved the ACCC project to develop a section of the ACCC website that profiles the types of programs and services immigrants can access at Canadian colleges and institutes.

Examples of tools and services that will be provided on the portal include:

- translation of credential documents into English or French;
- tools for the assessment of qualifications and language capacity, including individual literacy levels;
- a document information tool and a synopsis of all documents and forms immigrants are required to complete;
- Canadian study plans;
- "E-portfolios" for immigrants.

< The development of the immigration portal is a 5 year initiative. The preliminary launch of the portal is planned for July 2004.

< HRSDC is also involved in Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR), the targeting of foreign students may be one way of addressing credential recognition issues. Although it is essential to find a way to assist immigrants in the area of FCR, HRSDC is also looking as improvements in the area of recognition of learning for all Canadians. HRSDC's priorities for enhancing the recognition of learning include:

- o Mobility of labour market credentials across provinces and territories;
- o Foreign Credential Recognition;
- o Recognition of workplace learning; and
- o Transferability of academic credits among institutions across provincial/territorial boundaries.

Sectoral Approaches and Recognition of Foreign Credentials

Corinne Prince St-Amand, Director, Skills Information, Human Resources Partnerships Directorate, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)

< HRSDC will have a more specific Workplace Skills Strategy by this fall, however the programs and activities that form the basis of a Workplace Skills Strategy include:

- o Sector Council Program;
- o Apprenticeship;
- o Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy;
- o Foreign Credential Recognition;
- o Labour Mobility.

< The Government of Canada Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Strategy includes:

- o Working with provinces, territories and regulatory bodies to address the top three priority regulated occupations – Doctors, Nurses and Engineers with a view to integrating them more effectively into the labour market;
- o Working with the Sector Councils to address the non-regulated occupations, including the development of a tool to sensitize employers to FCR issues and work towards bridging the needs of employers with the pool of approved immigrants;
- o Working bilaterally and multilaterally with provinces and territories;
- o Establishing the immigration internet portal, led by CIC.

< The following federal government departments are working collaboratively to develop a broad Government of Canada Action Plan on FCR: HRSDC, CIC, Health Canada, Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

< In addition, in every province and territory, work on FCR is being done by four ministries, immigration, education, labour and health.

< Progress is being made in the area of improving and streamlining licensure practices and procedures for international medical graduates and engineers, and HRSDC is working with the Canadian Nurses Association and the Council of Technicians and Technologists to undertake diagnostic work in FCR for their related professions.

< In terms of next steps, HRSDC aims to undertake the following:

- o further develop the research base on areas related to FCR including more specific data on immigration and skills shortages;
- o strategically target key regulated and non-regulated occupations such as pharmacists and the allied health occupations;
- o work with partners to develop a strategy to begin FCR work overseas;
- o continue to partner with and leverage the actions of others such as regulators, sector councils, employers, educators and communities;
- o maintain support to existing Ministerial tables – Immigration, Health, Labour Market and Education.

Maytree Foundation, Strategic Partners Initiative

Naomi Alboim, Associate, The Maytree Foundation

Systems Approach to Facilitate Labour Market Entry for Skilled Immigrants

< The Maytree Foundation's Systems Approach presents a comprehensive model for the integration of skilled immigrants into the labour force, and includes the following components:

- o Incentives for stakeholders to collaborate in designing, delivering and evaluating programs and services for skilled immigrants, and for skilled immigrants to access them.
- o Access by skilled immigrants to an entire suite of programs and services offered either overseas prior to leaving their home country or once in Canada:
 - Information (for example the Immigration Internet Portal)
 - Assessment Services (PLAR, Academic, Skills, Language, including Occupation-specific language, Canadian Workplace Practices)
 - Expert Advice (Labour Market Counseling and development of Learning Plans, Mentorship by Canadian practitioners)
 - Integrated Bridging Programs to Fill Identified Gaps (Academic Courses, Occupation-specific Language Training, Technical Skills Upgrading, Knowledge of Canadian Workplace Practices)

Accelerated Integration Program for Immigrants

- < The Maytree Foundation in partnership with a consortium of colleges and universities (Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia Community College, Centennial College, York University, Athabasca University and Grant MacEwan College) submitted a proposal to HRSDC to implement this project as a pilot.
- < The purpose of this project is to accelerate the labour market integration of new skilled immigrants by beginning to offer information, assessment and upgrading services and programs overseas, and then continuing in Canada as required, with ESL and occupation-specific language training, bridging programs, training on Canadian workplace practices. These programs and services would be offered using the existing expertise and overseas sites or facilities of the college and universities. This approach would also begin the linkage between potential immigrants overseas and communities across Canada.

March 9th – Discussion on Future Areas for Collaboration and Next Steps

The roundtable participants identified the main principles that colleges and institutes adhere to related to the integration of immigrants, the process to follow to move forward with the immigration agenda of colleges and institutes, including advocacy and collaboration with important stakeholders and partners that should be involved in initiatives with colleges and institutes.

Principles

Roundtable participants identified the following principles that reflect the main areas on which colleges and institutes should focus to contribute to the effective integration of immigrants into the labour market:

- < Increase awareness and understanding on the return on investment of accelerating the integration of immigrants into the labour market.
- < Contribute to the enhancement of language training in terms of the increased levels of ESL and FSL offered at institutions and to offer more occupation-specific language training.
- < Address the funding and limited capacity issues colleges and institutes are facing due to the increasing numbers of newcomers seeking out programs and services and the funding cuts institutions have faced.
- < Develop programs and services that enable institutions to meet the needs of multiple clients, and that benefit all client groups.
- < Consider international students as a possible source of immigrants. How can colleges and institutes contribute to their selection and integration?
- < Adopt a pan-Canadian approach and model that would offer a whole suite of services for immigrants, including the possibility of offering some services overseas for prospective and approved immigrants before they leave their country of origin.
- < Develop a strategy to train and hire foreign trained professionals as faculty. Teacher of adults training could be offered to foreign trained professionals and thus enable them to be employed at a college or institute as instructors, for example engineers teaching in technology areas.
- < Promote collaborative approaches to delivery so that work is not duplicated, for example, between colleges and institutes and immigrant settlement organizations and credentialing associations.
- < Address the lack of consistent data that exists on immigrants as a client base for colleges and institutes.

Process

The main steps identified for moving this agenda forward for colleges and institutes are as follows:

- < Create an ACCC Task Group on Immigration that would be time limited and will have representation from colleges and institutes from across the country as well as external members from government and non-governmental organizations. The task group could work on policy and advocacy initiatives as well as program development.
- < Explore the possibility of organizing a larger event for colleges and institutes such as an immigration symposium later in 2004.
- < Promote the principles and priorities on the integration of immigrants among colleges and institutes by capitalizing on ACCC initiatives and activities including:
 - o The development of a section of the ACCC Website that profiles the programs and services immigrants can access at colleges and institutes that will be integrated into the Government of Canada Immigration Portal.
 - o The upcoming ACCC Conference in Saskatoon, with college/institute CEOs, the ACCC Board, regional caucuses, and well as college/institute faculty and staff through the conference session to be delivered by representatives from George Brown College and Bow Valley College.
 - o The International Student Symposium to take place just before the Saskatoon conference will also address some of the issues raised at the roundtable.
 - o The Student Leadership Network is focusing on community partnerships as such the mentor and peer helper programs could possibly be promoted with them.
 - o The sector study of colleges and institutes as employers which will be carried out in 2004 with funding from HRSDC. This study will collect data on the diversity of the workforce within colleges and institutes and how it reflects the diversity of the student body.
- < Focus some advocacy efforts on increasing the awareness of the high level government committees created to address the integration of immigrants, namely the Deputy Ministers' and Directors General Committees on Integrating Immigrants into the Labour Market and the Assistant Deputy Minister Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee which has a meeting planned in June 2004. These committees provide a good opportunity to position colleges and institutes for future funding opportunities.
- < Foster collaboration with the Ontario CONNECT project and possibly expand the project to other provinces if government funding can be provided. This project will look at the ways Ontario colleges and institutes can remove the barriers that skilled immigrants face as a result of the education system, resources and structures that were not designed to meet their diverse needs. The project will also identify best practices and transition models to determine how the Ontario system should be adjusted to improve access and allow immigrants to progress through college/institute programs and enter the labour market.
- < Explore funding options for the Accelerated Integration Program for Immigrants project that explores how colleges and universities can offer initial integration services from some of their overseas sites.
- < Collaborate with other partners working on the integration of immigrants, namely the Maytree Foundation, Sector Councils and Affinity Group Leaders, in particular for sectors that are looking to immigration as a solution to meet skills shortages (environment, technology, trucking, tourism, construction), as well as provincial and community immigrant settlement organizations.