

“Experiences of Canadian Employers When Hiring Newcomers”

Survey report

Introduction

The Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership always aims to improve the settlement and integration outcomes of newcomers by engaging all its stakeholders – government, immigrant serving agencies, educational institutions, faith groups, and employers – in building and sustaining more welcoming and inclusive communities. Securing employment is a critical component of the newcomer integration and employers are major players in ensuring their economic inclusivity. To better understand the needs and challenges of one of its important stakeholder, employers, the Employment and Labour Market Workgroup surveyed large private sector companies with the intention to *learn about the experiences, needs, and challenges of the for-profit sector when hiring and retaining internationally trained professionals*. The survey was launched at the end of July, 2017 and took two months - August/September, 2017 to collect the number of responses determined by the Employment and Labour Market Workgroup.

The survey was completed by 30 individuals- 28 representing large private sector businesses and 2 representing not-for-profit organizations. Ninety percent of the respondents are individuals responsible for recruitment.

It is important to note that it is too small a sample to be representative of the overall views and opinions of businesses in the city of Toronto. However, it is a good portion of the segment which helps to identify predominant issues pertinent to hiring and retaining of newcomers from an employer perspective.

Summary of Findings

Newcomer Hiring

The survey results indicate that 93% of the respondents hired newcomers in the past 5 years, while 7 % did not. When asked whether they encountered problems when hiring newcomers and retaining them, 47% of the employers gave affirmatives responses and described issues in hiring and retaining newcomers.

The challenges reported by the respondents included:

- Language barrier (87%)
- Cultural misunderstandings (60%)
- Difficulty verifying foreign work experience (33%)
- Difficulty verifying foreign education and training (27%)
- Need for Canadian Workplace Culture orientation (26)

When asked about the acceptance of foreign credentials, a significant portion of the respondents (40%) reported that they accepted them **sometimes**; one of the employers (3%) reported they did not accept foreign credentials at all. The rest of those surveyed (57%) confirmed the acceptance of foreign education and training. It was encouraging to note that an overwhelming percentage of the employers (77%) accepted foreign work experience; some of the respondents (20%) reported that they accepted it sometimes and 3% of those surveyed did not accept foreign work experience when hiring.

When respondents were asked what supports would encourage them to hire newcomers, they reported the following:

- In-house training on workplace culture for newcomer hires (33%)
- In-house language training (26%)
- Help verifying foreign work experience (26%)
- Help verifying foreign education and training (14%)

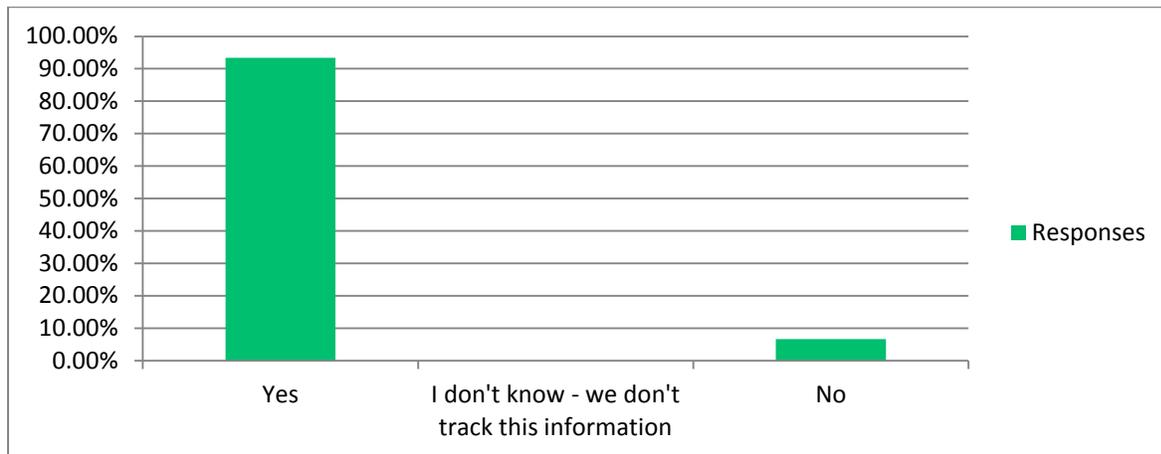
Based on this and many other surveys and studies, newcomers continue facing challenges with the lack of recognition of their foreign credentials and work experience, which impacts their smooth labour market integration. There is, of course, a need to re-examine existing immigration policies on a federal level to ensure earlier labor market integration of newcomers. However, the question is how immigrant serving agencies respond to the pressing needs of employers when hiring newcomers and provide supports, such as: language classes, workplace culture trainings, wage subsidy programs. Do we just try shaping employer behavior to newcomer hiring or do we listen to this major player and collaboratively develop pathways to labour market integration for newcomers?

Based on the analysis of the survey there is a need for constructive conversation and collaboration between the private sector and service providers. The partnership between immigrant service agencies and employers may lead to co-design and co-development of the programs and services, which could meet specific needs of employers. In the view of the supports identified by the respondents, the following is recommended:

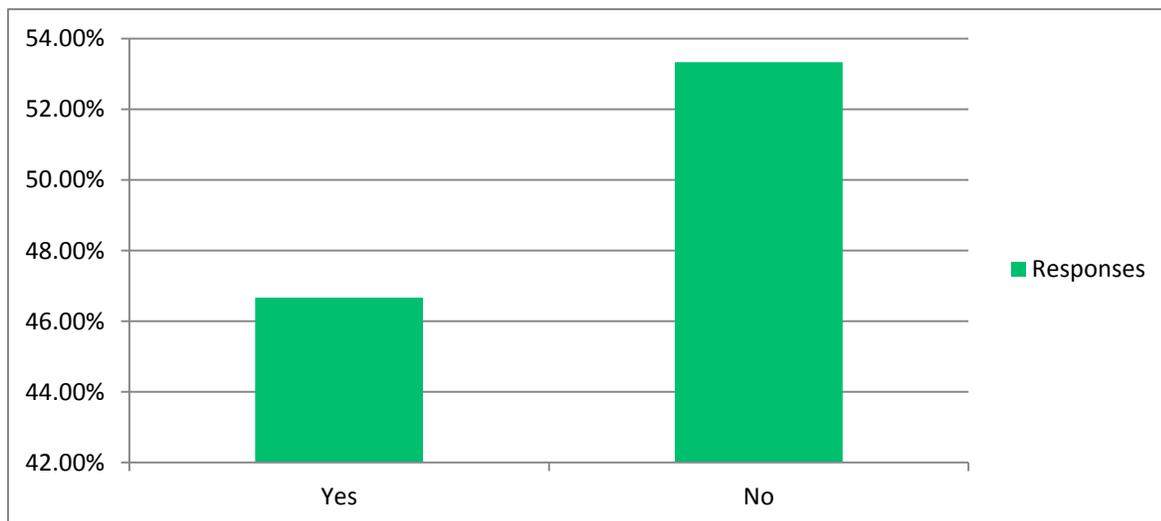
- Enhance access to the existing language and workplace culture trainings
 - Offer trainings and coaching as needed to newcomer employees at their workplaces
 - Inform employers about access to language/workplace culture training sessions after working hours
- Provide support to employers in verifying foreign work experience
 - Reference check assistance
 - Translation/interpretation assistance
- Employer engagement in design and development of the *workplace culture* trainings

Please find survey responses in graphs below

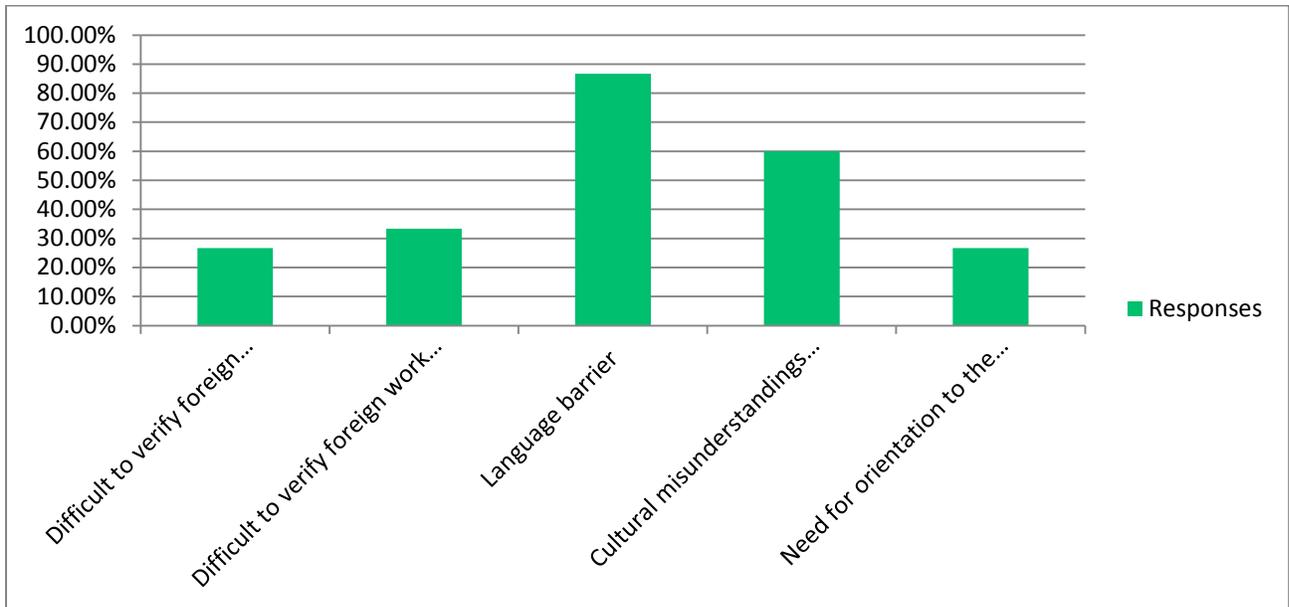
Q1. Have you hired Recent Immigrants in the last 5 years? (For the purpose of this survey, a recent immigrant describes someone who was born outside of Canada and has lived in the country for five years or less)



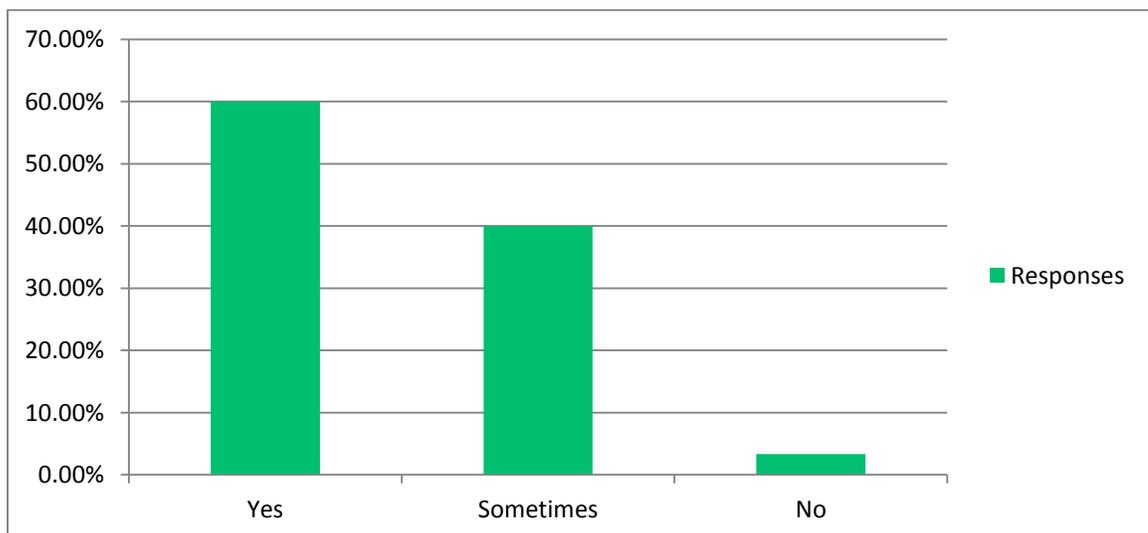
Q2. Have you encountered any issues related to hiring or retaining recent immigrants in your workplace/business?



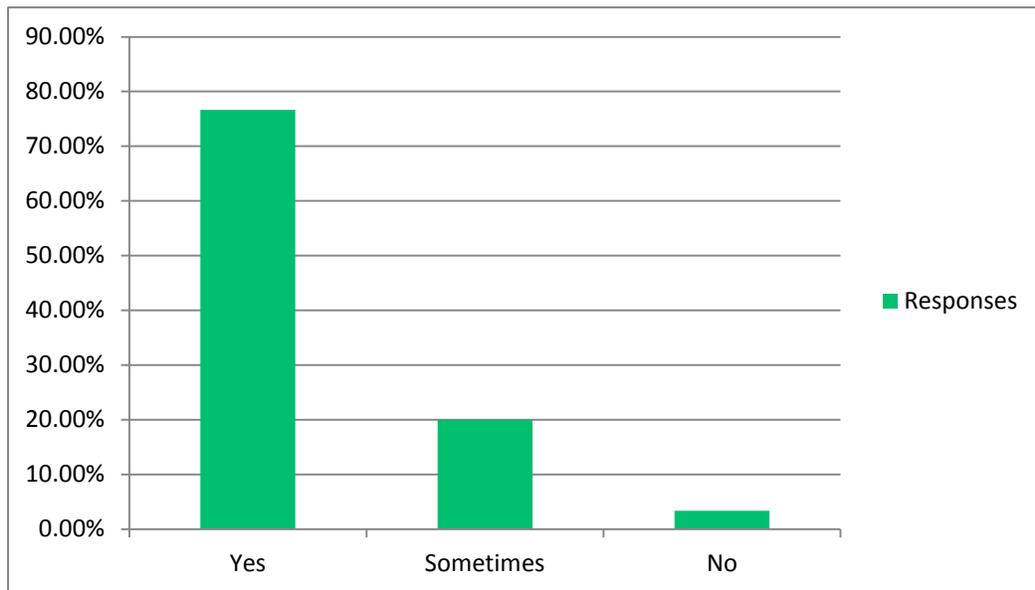
Q3. If yes, what kind of issues have you encountered? (Check all the apply)



Q4. Do you accept foreign education and/or training credentials when hiring employees?



Q5. Do you accept foreign work experience when hiring employees?



Q6. Which of the following might encourage you to hire (more) recent immigrants?

