



MOSAIC

# THE IMMIGRANT LENS

A Framework for  
Emerging Best Practices  
in the Employment Program  
of British Columbia

by Natasha Bailey  
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Canada 



WelcomeBC

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Natasha Bailey is a researcher and organizational development consultant.

Her work recently has focused on outcomes evaluation, and quality standards and best practices frameworks for non-profit organizations.

She began her career developing and facilitating personal development and pre-employment programs targeting a range of specialized populations including single parents, newcomers and multi-barriered women.

Her most recent projects include: the development of a quality standards framework for organizations that want to enhance their work with and for single parents; a national evaluation in Ireland of the outcomes of a type of adult learning called community education, which aims to foster social justice and pre-employment skills; and working with colleagues to carry out research about the professional career aspirations of children in a marginalized neighbourhood in Dublin, Ireland called Stoneybatter.

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For leading all the components of the Project and writing this report, our gratitude goes to Natasha Bailey. Her sharp analytical skills, rigorous methodology and unbridled enthusiasm for the Project kept us all on track and resulted in what we hope is a document that will be useful to all involved with welcoming newcomers to Canada and supporting their integration into the workforce and in particular to those overseeing and working in the Employment Program of British Columbia.

Joan Andersen  
Director of Employment and Language Programs  
MOSAIC

# 1 Executive Summary

The research presented here sought to build on and validate a previous study commissioned by MOSAIC and ISSofBC. That research documented best practices for immigrant employment services before and after the transition from the Legacy employment programs to the new Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC), hereafter called the *Legacies* research.<sup>1</sup>

This follow-up project involved case studies of two participating Employment Services Centres<sup>2</sup>, and validated provider concerns about meeting the employment needs of immigrant clients through the EPBC. It also involved compiling snapshots of how the one-stop employment programs in Alberta and Ontario cater to immigrant clients.

Through staff and client interviews and focus groups, and a survey of 100 clients, the study resulted in an Immigrant Lens Framework of best practices for meeting the employment outcomes of the EPBC for immigrant clients (see Figure 1.1). This Framework and all the practices and outcomes in it were, for the most part, highly valued by clients surveyed. Despite requiring further testing, this Framework could be piloted by other ESCs to enhance their service provision to immigrant clients. Recommendations are made to the Province of British Columbia about removing program barriers that hinder the full achievement of practice indicators in the Framework. Recommendations are made to other ESCs, career development practitioners (CDPs) and those responsible for the professional development of CPDs in relation to learning and using the Immigrant Lens Framework.

The research findings mirrored trends documented in the literature reviewed for the study. Key trends from the secondary research include: a requirement for longer-term employment support for disadvantaged groups within one-stop approaches and in complementary external programs; a need for one-stop programs to measure outcomes at lengthier intervals (up to 5 years); the centrality of effective client assessment in public employment services, particularly for specialized populations; the importance of specialist knowledge and services when addressing the employment needs of disadvantaged groups; and the necessity of organizational cross-cultural competence for working effectively with immigrant clients.

The literature and the research findings combined to create an Immigrant Lens Framework that has, at the centre, a vision for immigrant employment stemming from clarity about the unique barriers immigrant clients face. The vision of services for labour market attachment for immigrants in this Framework goes beyond “any job” to that of employment that matches their skills and strengths, with adequate financial remuneration and treatment with respect in the workplace. The outcomes of the Immigrant Lens include employment, but also entail an increase in client self-confidence and motivation. The research underscored the critical role for employment and employment services in the integration of immigrants into their community and Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> MOSAIC and ISSofBC. (2013). *Transition from Legacy Programs to the New Employment Program of BC: Impact on Employment Services to Immigrants in Vancouver*. MOSAIC: BC.

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver Northeast ESC (MOSAIC) and AbbotsfordWORKS (Abbotsford Community Services).

Figure 1.1 Immigrant Lens Framework

Approaches (Theoretical Foundations informing Practises): Environmental Context, Integration, Intercultural, Client-centred			
Practice Areas (Categories of activities that support the Approaches and meet the employment needs of newcomers)			
<b>Cultural Awareness</b>	<b>Connections to Community Resources</b>	<b>Easily Accessible and Welcoming</b>	<b>Fostering Intercultural Relationships</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff demonstrate an awareness of the client’s country of origin and first language</li> <li>ESC has sign on the wall that says “welcome” in a range of languages, and staff can say “welcome” in a range of languages</li> <li>Staff demonstrate an awareness of a range of different cultures’ beliefs</li> <li>Staff demonstrate an awareness of how communication styles can differ between Canada and the clients’ country of origin</li> <li>Clients feel that their cultural and/or religious beliefs were respected</li> <li>Staff demonstrate an awareness of clients’ age, gender, political situation in country of origin, family situation, financial situation, experience of immigration, length of time in country, transportation circumstances</li> <li>Clients are asked about family/role expectations for their job search Staff demonstrate an awareness of phenomenon of culture shock</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ESC conducts targeted outreach to ethno-specific organizations and/or other organizations working with immigrants</li> <li>Staff demonstrate an awareness of cultural associations, networks and local multicultural activities</li> <li>Clients are provided with information on professional networks relevant to their fields</li> <li>Clients are provided with information on immigrant-specific programs and community resources</li> <li>Clients are encouraged to access wider community events</li> <li>The ESC’s parent organization provides a wraparound service for immigrant clients, or the ESC has a referral agreement with an organization that can provide a wrap around service</li> <li>The ESC has a referral agreement and positive relationship with the main organizations it refers immigrant clients to</li> <li>When needed, clients are referred to English language training</li> <li>When needed, clients are referred for language testing</li> <li>Staff match clients to needed non-employment services (i.e. health, housing, settlement etc.) and make contact with these organizations on clients’ behalf</li> <li>Clients are aware of main, local settlement organizations</li> <li>Clients are encouraged to do volunteer work not related to their field</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients receive information about resources or services they need in a timely manner</li> <li>Clients see a case manager immediately</li> <li>Translation/Interpretation available</li> <li>Service limitations are in the best interests of the client</li> <li>The ESC provides flexible timing for appointments, workshops, orientation. Clients can access by email, phone or in-person</li> <li>Clients indicate that had as many appointments as necessary</li> <li>When compiling an action plan, staff offers clients a range of possible employment goals</li> <li>The ESC is welcoming to clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients know they can talk about concerns they might have in relation to racism in the workplace</li> <li>Clients feel they received individual attention</li> <li>Clients feel that they were given enough time and did not feel rushed</li> <li>Clients are encouraged to honour their own culture, “use their own accent”</li> <li>Staff reaffirm the accomplishment of moving to a new country</li> <li>Clients are encouraged to keep trying and to not give up hope in their job search.</li> <li>Clients feel no assumptions were made about them</li> <li>Staff reaffirm the value of country of origin education and work experience, get them to talk about what they are proud of</li> <li>If possible, staff describe their own experience of immigration</li> <li>Clients feel they are in a safe space</li> </ol>

Advocacy	Strategic Management	Multicultural Employment Service
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff are willing to break from regular protocol to meet the needs of clients</li> <li>2. The ESC networks with other organizations to raise awareness about the needs of immigrant clients, the issues they face and improvements that could be made to facilitate their participation in the labour market</li> <li>3. The ESC participates in media coverage to challenge stereotypes about immigrants</li> <li>4. The ESC participates in EPBC Committees, i.e. CPAC, Vancouver ESC Table and Specialized Populations Working Group to propose ways in which services to immigrants could be improved</li> <li>5. The ESC advocates to remove the barrier of Canadian experience for immigrants</li> <li>6. Staff advocates for clients with individual employers by proactively soliciting job openings, making introductions on the client's behalf, educating about equivalence of experience and tailoring working arrangements</li> <li>7. The ESC does research and industry networking for immigrants to find job leads and vacancies</li> <li>8. Staff advocates for individual clients within the EPBC and other relevant programs</li> <li>9. The ESC does research related to improving the effectiveness of employment services for immigrants and stays up-to-date on research done by others</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff hired are from diverse groups, i.e. are immigrants, from visible minority groups and reflect main ethno-cultural groups in the local area</li> <li>2. Services are available in main first languages in the local area</li> <li>3. ESC is connected to or has a partnership agreement with an immigrant organization</li> <li>4. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with ESL services</li> <li>5. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with settlement services</li> <li>6. ESC job postings specify experience working with immigrants and competency in cross-cultural communication</li> <li>7. Foreign credential evaluations, such as International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES), are integrated into the EPBC processes so that staff can easily arrange credential evaluation for clients</li> <li>8. ESC marketing and strategic plan focuses on ethnic community hubs/events</li> <li>9. ESC service delivery is shaped through staff and client consultations</li> <li>10. ESC culture does not tolerate stereotyping</li> <li>11. ESC culture supports a willingness to break from protocol</li> <li>12. ESC participates in or provides diversity training or intercultural competence training</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clients are informed about unethical local employers</li> <li>2. Staff are aware of equality legislation and labour standards</li> <li>3. Clients are told about their employment rights</li> <li>4. The ESC facilitates foreign credential evaluation, such as ICES</li> <li>5. Staff coaches the client about how to present prior work/learning experience and lack of Canadian experience</li> <li>6. Staff connects clients to opportunities to upgrade their training or retrain in a related occupation to the one they held in their country of origin</li> <li>7. Clients understand how structures and systems related to employment in Canada work</li> <li>8. The ESC simplifies, or rephrases information/documentation (i.e. the ERIQ) and/or provides language support</li> <li>9. Clients are referred to appropriate employment programs, i.e. Skills Connect or Job Options</li> <li>10. Clients' action plans take into account needs, barriers, a short-term goal (entry level in chosen field), and a long-term goal that is matched to client skills and talents</li> <li>11. Clients are aware of the steps they need to take to work in their chosen career, including if they need workplace language learning. They are also aware of how to switch to a new career if it will not be possible, or they do not want to work in the career they were in before they came to Canada</li> <li>12. The ESC has immigrant stream workshops or tailors workshops to immigrant client needs</li> <li>13. Staff use real life examples to encourage clients</li> <li>14. Staff assess clients' financial situation to gauge if they need a survival job or if they can focus full-time on availing themselves of the training or upgrading they need to attain work in their field</li> <li>15. Clients are able to talk about the barriers they feel they might experience in their job search</li> <li>16. Staff encourage practicums</li> <li>17. Staff encourage mentoring</li> <li>18. ESC offers targeted one-to-one résumé and job search support</li> <li>19. Staff encourages non-traditional jobs/options for clients, highlight misinformation based on stereotypes (about gender, perceived language ability etc.)</li> <li>20. Clients are matched to employment opportunities that are culturally and religiously appropriate</li> <li>21. Clients understand expectations related to the Canadian labour market</li> <li>22. Clients gain skills to successfully adapt to the Canadian work environment</li> <li>23. Staff educates about and encourages the importance of volunteering in client's related field</li> </ol>



## 1.1 Research Conclusions

Since this research was exploratory, the following are tentative conclusions that could be further tested with other ESCs and their immigrant clients:

- The ESCs had a clear understanding of an Immigrant Lens that reflected best practices in the literature, including social outcomes that went beyond just labour market attachment. This Lens was facilitated by a parent organization that had policies and a culture, which ensured that there was the specialist knowledge in place to implement the Lens.
- Meeting the employment needs of immigrants does require specialist knowledge and longer-term supports that are challenging to apply in the context of one-stops. Many of the practices related to this were identified in the Immigrant Lens, and valued by clients but barriers were identified to implementing them. There are supplementary services identified through the research, not provided through one-stops, that are valuable for immigrants, such as bridging programs, mentoring, and enhanced language training.
- The research did articulate an Immigrant Lens Framework that was found to be desirable by clients and could be further tested. Some of the Practice Areas are particularly important for those with lower language ability and who have spent less time in Canada including Easily Accessible and Welcoming practice and Cultural Awareness practice.
- Many immigrants need access to longer-term training interventions to ensure achievement of employment commensurate with education and experience, which is a goal desired by the clients in this research. Eligibility requirements within the EPBC hinder access. This access could be crucial for many clients who have lower language ability and cannot access other immigrant employment programs such as Skills Connect.
- There could be greater focus on service coordination and unpaid work placements within the model.
- Proposed changes to the EPBC fee schedule could enhance service provision to immigrant clients.
- Performance measures could have targets related specifically to immigrants and EPBC outcomes data could be disaggregated to this specialized population.
- The ERIQ does not support accurate assessment of immigrant clients' characteristics and distance from sustainable, quality employment. It does not include some key employability indicators for immigrants such as where the highest level of education was achieved and lack of Canadian work experience. The question for identifying immigrants is ambiguous and could be changed to be more sensitive.
- The literature and the snapshots of one-stops in other provinces suggest that tracking sustainable labour market attachment requires longer-term follow up than

currently happens within the EPBC. In EO and Alberta Works, tracking happens up to 12 months post intervention.

- EPBC policies that enhance service provision within the model are: the ability to provide Employment Support Services both individually and within a group context; availability of Short-term Orientation and Certificate Training (STOC) to all EPBC clients; relatively easy access to ICES for clients; the service provider determination of Tier; and, for eligible clients, financial and training supports.
- It is important to carry out research that elaborates those practices that are effective for specialized populations within the EPBC.
- EPBC program policy and outcomes do not articulate a set of employment values that are important to the clients who participated in this research. It could be useful for the Ministry to consider making these values visible in program policy and performance management.
- Working with immigrant clients to achieve sustainable employment involves specialist knowledge and skills, which needs to be taken into account for the continuing professional development of career development practitioners working within the EPBC.

## 1.2 Research Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the research conclusions are set out below in relation to the relevant stakeholder group: the Province of British Columbia, EPBC contractors, career development practitioners (CDPs) in Employment Services Centres, and those involved in the professional development of CDPs. Recommendations about further research are also made.

### ***The Province of British Columbia could:***

1. Work with the federal government to ensure coordination of employment services to immigrants such that additional specialized services necessary to support them to achieve sustainable, quality employment are adequately resourced, such as occupational bridging programs, enhanced language training and mentoring. Given the insecurity of funding for programs like Job Options BC and Skills Connect for Immigrants, the two levels of government could usefully consider how to continue to meet the pre-employment needs of immigrants addressed through these programs.
2. Utilize provincial funding to create a parallel funding stream for key financial supports for immigrants who are non-EI eligible. These supports would include those for self-employment, wage subsidy, and occupational skills training.
3. Integrate supplementary services that are not otherwise available into the EPBC, such as occupational bridging programs, enhanced language training and mentoring. For instance, they could be reflected as FSPS or VSFs on the fee schedule.

4. Evolve the way in which the model enables access to longer-term interventions for immigrants so that they can achieve quality, sustainable employment and avoid occupational degradation. This exercise would entail ensuring access to upgrading of language to meet pre-requisites of any occupational training needed, participation in modules and/or certificates necessary for vocational upgrading, and increasing tuition caps for occupational skills training. As part of this, consider whether or not the EPBC should record outcomes related to accessing education and training as part of performance management.
5. Make Service Coordination more visible in the EPBC as it relates to immigrants for whom this element seems to be a core feature. Making Service Coordination part of performance management or creating a billing point related to this element could increase this visibility.
6. Reflect the importance of foreign credential recognition for immigrants in EPBC policy, and offer support to Centres on how to integrate it into their service provision, and identify when it is appropriate.
7. Consider measuring program outcomes up to 12 months, at the least.
8. Disaggregate program outcomes data to immigrant clients.
9. Create a realistic performance measure for the achievement of program outcomes with immigrant clients, based on an understanding of the considerable barriers to employment identified through the literature.
10. Define sustainable employment not just in terms of how long an immigrant maintains employment, but also in terms of other criteria for quality, such as whether or not it is commensurate with education and experience.
11. Consider the extent to which program tools, in particular the ERIQ, accurately assess: immigrant client characteristics, distance from the labour market, and attitudinal factors shaped by a client's worldview. At the least, ensure that the ERIQ includes: an unambiguous question about immigrant status, source country, where highest level of education was completed (inside or outside Canada), whether or not credential recognition is needed, and whether or not the individual has any Canadian work experience. The Ministry could consider if a separate process needs to be developed for immigrants, similar to the DRENA.
12. Ensure that there is a planned evaluation/research strategy for the EPBC with consideration of how and whether or not the program is meeting outcomes with immigrant clients.
13. Emphasize the importance of unpaid work placements for immigrants within the model.
14. Continue with the proposed changes to the EPBC fee schedule, particularly as they relate to ESS.
15. Reconvene the *Beyond Barriers* conference to include the dissemination of learning from this research to EPBC contracted providers.

16. Fund the development of an e-learning module or series of workshops on the Immigrant Lens through CPAC, ASPECT and the BCCDA.

***Contractors could:***

17. Pilot the Immigrant Lens Framework in their WorkBC Centres in order to enhance their service provision to immigrant clients.
18. Consider how they could emphasize systems thinking and attend to the structural employment barriers faced by clients at both an organizational and client level such as: raising the awareness of local employers about recognition of foreign work experience; carrying out anti-discrimination awareness work in their communities; being aware of how poverty and discrimination can impact the employment trajectories of clients and asking them about that; and knowing institutional barriers that clients may encounter that are linked to ethnicity, gender, age, ability and so on.
19. Ensure regular diversity and intercultural competency training for staff and, if they do not have it, create an organizational diversity policy.
20. Integrate foreign credential recognition into their service provision.
21. In ESCs located in catchments with substantial pools of immigrants, continue to provide or consider providing immigrant stream workshops. Consider if it is possible to stream clients according to language level and have them stay in the same group to participate in core ESS workshops such as résumé and cover-letter writing and interview skills. Include an enhanced career development element as this feature may be key for immigrants who may need to switch careers in order to achieve quality, sustainable employment.

***Practitioners could:***

22. Ensure they understand the impact that culture has on career decision-making and seek to learn and practice the competencies outlined in the Immigrant Lens Framework.
23. Emphasize systems thinking in their practice by creating a space where clients can talk about any concerns about discrimination or the structural barriers they think they might face in their career development.

***Further research could:***

24. Refine the Immigrant Lens Framework in terms of the policies and procedures that an ESC should have in place to demonstrate achievement of indicators, as well as the continuing applicability of indicators in the framework.
25. Develop a self-assessment process for organizations to use to assess the extent to which they are meeting the indicators in the Immigrant Lens Framework.
26. Investigate if implementation of the Framework resulted in the achievement of Framework outcomes for immigrants, through longitudinal tracking.

27. Assess the extent to which career development practitioners working in WorkBC Centres perceive that they have the competencies necessary to implement relevant practices in the Immigrant Lens Framework.

***Those engaged in the professional development of CDP's could (Simon Fraser University, UBC, Douglas, BCCDA and BC CfEE):***

28. Disseminate this research report to their students/trainees.

29. Consider the implications of this research in any relevant working groups or fora, such as the BCCDA monthly meeting or the BC CfEE Working Group on Training.

## 2 Introduction

This project, commissioned by MOSAIC, builds on a piece of research carried out by MOSAIC and ISSofBC called *Transition from Legacy Programs to the New Employment Program of BC: Impact on Employment Services to Immigrants in Vancouver*, hereafter called the *Legacies* research.<sup>3</sup> The research identified challenges to meeting the employment needs of immigrants during the transition from the Legacy Programs to the new Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC), which is provided through one-stop-shops across the province. It also identified a series of best practices employed by participating providers pre- and post-transition to meet the employment needs of immigrant clients.

The purpose of the research presented in this report emerged from the following considerations:

- A requirement to continue to investigate if providers' concerns about immigrant clients being negatively impacted by the transition in B.C. employment services are warranted.
- The need to articulate if the EPBC model, and accompanying systems and processes, helps or hinders providers' work to achieve employment and community outcomes for immigrant clients.
- A desire to validate and refine a set of best practices or recommendations for EPBC contract holders that could assist them to meet the needs of immigrant clients through the new model.

Using an instrumental case study approach<sup>4</sup>, this research **validated** the best practices identified in the previous research through the work of two participating Employment

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<sup>3</sup> MOSAIC and ISSofBC. (2013). *Transition from Legacy Programs to the New Employment Program of BC: Impact on Employment Services to Immigrants in Vancouver*. MOSAIC: BC.

<sup>4</sup> An instrumental case study is a case study that explores an issue or can distil theory – in this case the best practices framework. Case studies are often employed to test something as a foundation for wider application or future research.

Services Centres (ESC) - Northeast Vancouver (MOSAIC) and AbbotsfordWORKS (Abbotsford Community Services).<sup>5</sup> It investigated any additional perceived effective practices that are currently in use in the Centres. The study has **refined** these practices into a logically organized Framework, The Immigrant Lens, with defined approaches, practice areas with indicators that embed these competences into the organization, and outcome indicators that can track how these best practices result in outcomes for clients. A research Advisory Group worked with the consultant to certify the rigour of the research and validate findings.

This Immigrant Lens has been considered in light of the EPBC model. It has been contextualized with snapshots of one-stop shop provision in Alberta and Ontario as those approaches pertain to immigrants there. The Framework could be used/tested by other EPBC providers to assist service provision to this specialized population. Results and research recommendations tentatively contribute to broader ongoing debates about effective practice and performance management for serving immigrants within the EPBC, quality assurance of these services and skills requirements for B.C. career development practitioners.

## 2.1 Aim and Objectives

### **The aim of the research was:**

To investigate the characteristics of an Immigrant Lens as it pertains to the WorkBC Employment Program of BC (EPBC) since its implementation in 2012, and articulate a best practices framework that can be employed to enhance employment outcomes for immigrants through the EPBC.

### **The objectives of the research were to:**

1. Explore how the term Immigrant Lens is commonly understood by service providers as it pertains to the EPBC.
2. Investigate, from a client's perspective, the ideal characteristics and attributes of an Immigrant Lens as it pertains to the EPBC.
3. Consider if having an Immigrant Lens in an employment service has an effect on attracting immigrant clients and in enhancing program outcomes.
4. Identify the emerging best practices and program policies that help define an immigrant lens, and if these enhance services to the immigrant clients of the EPBC.
5. Explore if the expected outcomes for immigrant clients are not meeting the original or intended targets and outcomes of the EPBC, and consider the possible factors that may be affecting the targets and outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> See [www.mosaicbc.com](http://www.mosaicbc.com) and [www.abbotsfordworks.com](http://www.abbotsfordworks.com). A snapshot of the two ESCs can be found in Chapter 5.

6. Make key recommendations to the Provincial Government and service providers associated with the EPBC as it pertains to enhancing services and outcomes for immigrant clients.
7. Articulate, if any, systemic characteristics of the EPBC that are barriers to the provision of effective service delivery to immigrants, or critical gaps and how they could be overcome.

## 2.2 Methodology

The research presented in this report involved both qualitative and quantitative methods using an instrumental case study approach. The methodology entailed:

1. Direct observation of participating ESCs' physical locations and websites to validate best practices identified in the *Legacies* research.
2. Interviews with four key informants, two from Ontario and two from Alberta about the one-stop employment approaches there and how they serve immigrants.
3. Three focus groups with a total of eight immigrant clients across the participating ESCs to gather their views on barriers to employment, effective employment service provision, measures of customer satisfaction and the criteria for a "good job."
4. Interviews with 13 staff members across the participating ESCs to gather their views on the approach indicators and practices<sup>6</sup> that they currently employ to meet the employment needs of immigrant clients, as well as how they would organize those practices into implementable categories.
5. Analysis of the results of the staff interviews and client focus groups. The researcher identified common strategies used by staff in order to group practices and gave each of these Practice Areas a name to reflect the strategy employed. She refined approach indicators into measurable statements about the staff, or clients, or the ESC.
6. The Advisory Group took the approach indicators and grouped them under the appropriate practice areas to ensure that the identified approaches were integrated into practice.
7. These indicators were used to develop items for the survey of 99 clients across the two ESCs to measure the perceived value of the Practice Areas identified through the qualitative phase, as well as the extent to which the practices in each area fit together. The survey also asked about whether or not clients had experienced the practices. Also tracked were demographic, employability and outcome indicators deemed a priority during the qualitative phase and in the literature. The survey sample was a convenience sample and is not

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<sup>6</sup> "Approaches" are theoretical or philosophical frameworks for service provision. "Practices" are the tasks or activities that staff engages in to implement services.

representative of all the immigrant clients across both Centres or all the immigrant clients within the EPBC. Therefore, findings are exploratory as opposed to explanatory and cannot be generalized to all immigrant clients within the Program.

8. Survey data was analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis included correlation tests to assess whether or not there were significant relationships between different variables. Factor analysis was used to assess scalability of the indicators in each Practice Area. If determined to be scalable, each area was given a total average score.
9. The researcher took the practices within each area that staff identified in their interviews and reviewed them to see if any of them were indicators in their own right. Those that were, were integrated into the resulting Framework. The rest were assigned to indicators within their Practice Area as examples of how an ESC could show that it is progressing towards an indicator.
10. The Advisory Group reviewed the Immigrant Lens Framework to validate the researcher's analysis and to suggest any changes to how indicators and practices were grouped.
11. A staff focus group was held in each ESC (N=2) to allow staff to review and comment on the Framework and then offer their views on how they perceived that the EPBC approach blocked or facilitated implementation of the Framework.

The survey sample was relatively small so a lack of correlation between important variables in the survey may be attributable to sample size. Also, this piece of research was not an evaluation so the research results are not disaggregated by ESC and any gap between desired practice indicators and actual experience of them is discussed in light of the EPBC approach and not Centre performance.

### 3 Context Review

The EPBC commenced services for any eligible unemployed or underemployed (part-time work under 20 hours per week) individual in April 2012, combining federal Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA)-funded and provincially-funded employment programmes into a one-stop shop approach.

Many countries are providing employment services to immigrants and other disadvantaged groups through one-stop employment services, including Australia (Job Services Australia), the United Kingdom (Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme) and the United States (governed by the Workforce Investment Act). An example from Canada is Employment Ontario.

The EPBC is delivered in 73 WorkBC Centres throughout the province, managed by contracted providers. The Program targets eight specialized populations, one of which is



immigrants.<sup>7</sup> How each provider caters to specialized populations within their Centre may be specific to their contract with the Ministry of Social Development, rather than prescribed by the Program. For instance, some have satellite or outreach services that target specialized populations separate from their main storefront provision. Others may have case managers specializing within the storefront.

The one-stop shop approach generally embraces a “no wrong door” motto, with centres integrating services and matching standard program components so that the client can avail of or be referred to needed supports to achieve employment (Government of Ontario, 2011). Funding models differ, but many entail fee payment for employment outcomes. The Work Programme in the UK will, eventually, solely fund providers in terms of how many clients achieve sustainable employment and are satisfied with service delivery. This payment by outcomes brings challenges, not least of which is achieving them with specialized populations and knowing what works in the context of “black box” provision (OECD, 2005; European Commission, 2012).<sup>8</sup> Most one-stops, the EPBC included, emphasize the quickest route back into employment, “[Service providers should ensure the] program principle of providing only the services necessary to support a Client in obtaining Sustainable Labour Market Attachment as quickly as possible is adhered to, and that Clients are provided needed support and services to facilitate their success” (EPBC, 2013).

The EPBC is not wholly “black box” and is service and process prescriptive, but does offer flexibility in terms of how services are organized and what practices are used to implement process. The EPBC funding model involves a mix of fixed operating fees (FOF), fees for service (VSF), financial support and purchased services (FSFS) and outcome fees paid to contracted providers.<sup>9</sup> Access to some of the services and financial supports can be based on whether or not an individual is in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) or British Columbia Employment Assistance (BCEA). The assignment to one of four Tier levels signals how much support a client may need; the higher the Tiers, the more barriers to employment. Tier assignment also dictates the fees for many of the EPBC services. Tier assignment is determined through Preliminary and Formal Needs Assessment. An EPBC form called the Employment Readiness Information Questionnaire (ERIQ) supports this process, and supports creation of an Action Plan for employment. Relevant to immigrants, this form asks the following questions:

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<sup>7</sup> According to the EPBC Glossary of Terms, immigrants are “Individuals who are not Canadian born and who have migrated from another country to settle in Canada. They must be legally entitled to work in BC to participate in the program.”

<sup>8</sup> OECD. (2005). “Public Employment Services: Managing Performance.” In *OECD Employment Outlook*. Paris: France. “Black box” is a term often used to describe centralized employment service models where there are few to none defined products and solutions. These models are meant to encourage flexibility and tailoring of services, but can also render effective practice invisible if these practices are not documented. In reality, the extent to which a program is a “black box” can be seen on a continuum, with more or less prescription of services and processes. However, practices to achieve process are usually not prescribed and providers have flexibility in how services and processes are implemented.

<sup>9</sup> The outcomes for the program are: clients become more independent, through achieving and maintaining sustainable Labour Market Attachments (LMAs) or Community Attachments (CAs) where LMA is not possible at that time; Clients receive services that are aligned with labour market needs and opportunities, and labour market services available to clients are aligned with employers’ and communities’ needs and opportunities. Recording LMA and CA are billing points in the EPBC fee schedule.

- Whether or not the individual is a recent immigrant, and if so, year of arrival
- Whether or not the individual has been looking for their first job in Canada in the last year
- If the individual perceives that being new to Canada/BC is a factor affecting their employment, or that being new to Canada is the reason they are unemployed

The Ministry has approved changes to the EPBC fee schedule, which will come into effect in 2014, and will introduce some key changes to service provision:

- Ongoing case management will be billable at the point that a client action plan has been developed and signed by the client.
- Each contractor will receive funds for administration equal to 14% of the original FOF.
- Instead of billing for each Employment Support Service (ESS), whether done in a workshop format or individually, there will be a flat rate dependent on Tier for any and all topics received.

Performance management and quality assurance for the EPBC is captured using the ICM database. Program outcomes are recorded at the time an individual attains full-time labour market attachment (LMA) or community attachment (CA) (if in Tier 4) with follow-up at four, 12 and 24 weeks after the client achieves LMA or CA. Performance measures are yet to come into effect for the Program but those now scheduled for April 2015 that are relevant to immigrants may relate to a percentage of clients in Tiers 1, 2 and 3 that maintain LMA to 24 weeks. The program also tracks the percentage of specialized populations in case management. It is not clear if the latter will have a specific target for immigrants. Currently, monthly management reports only detail how many immigrants are in active case management across the program disaggregated to Centre. No data is offered about how many immigrants are achieving program outcomes.

The following points further contextualize the EPBC in relation to immigrants:

- The bulk of clients served through the EPBC are in Tiers 2 and 3. The majority of EPBC clients are in specialized populations.
- The Ministry anticipated an increase in the number of clients in long-term interventions (i.e. training) post recession, but this increase has not taken place, despite the number of clients in Tiers 3 and 4, resulting in a situation where, "Clients from specialized populations may not be receiving services designed to support them in attaching to the labour market."<sup>10</sup>
- Non-EI clients are not eligible for financial supports for training except in the case of STOC where it is delivered as part of ESS within the Program.
- Only EI eligible clients may avail themselves of a Wage Subsidy for work experience placements.

<sup>10</sup> EPBC. (2013). Corporate Advisory Committee (CPAC) Presentation, September 25, 2013.

### 3.1 Complementary Immigrant Employment Services

It is useful to present some other non-EPBC employment services that are commonly accessed by immigrants in British Columbia. They are as follows:

**Job Options British Columbia** an employment program for non-EI eligible individuals consisting of four to six weeks employment skills training, AND four to six weeks of further skills training and unpaid, paid or subsidized work experience and follow-up support. MOSAIC runs this program for immigrants in Burnaby and Vancouver.

**Skills Connect for Immigrants** an employment program for unemployed or underemployed immigrants (if working in a sector that does not utilize prior skills and experience), from a variety of sectors, not in receipt of EI or BCEA. The program provides assessment and action planning, skills enhancement, and workplace orientation. Clients must be in Canada under five years and have intermediate language skills. This Program is run by a variety of providers including, Back in Motion, MOSAIC, Douglas College (The Training Group), Abbotsford Community Services and ISSo/BC. MentorMatch, coordinated by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC, is provided to Skills Connect clients.

**Workplace Connections** a mentoring program run by MOSAIC to connect immigrants to mentors working in their fields. Applicants must have English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) level 5 to participate.

It is worth noting that there are concerns about the continued funding of both Job Options BC and Skills Connect for Immigrants.

## 4 Literature Review

The literature review briefly outlines some key trends within areas relevant to the study including immigrant employability indicators, one-stop shops and specialized populations, and criteria for culturally competent employment services.

### 4.1 Immigrant Employment Outcomes

Sweetman and Warman (2013) report worsening labour market outcomes and poverty for immigrants in Canada despite the emphasis on selection of Skilled Workers matched to labour market needs. A quarter of all new immigrants leave Canada within five years and those from the skilled and business classes are the least likely to stay (ibid.).

Fuller and Martin (2012) debate the assertion that immigrants eventually overcome initial barriers to employment to achieve outcomes consistent with their Canadian-born

counterparts. They say: “Immigrant disadvantage persists...All too often, highly skilled immigrants experience profound occupational degradation (*Krahn et al., 2000*)” (141).

As of Census 2006, only one in five internationally educated immigrants was working in the best corresponding occupation to their education (Plante, 2010). Ten years on, immigrants are 15 percentage points behind their Canadian-born colleagues in this regard (*ibid.*). These findings are mirrored in British Columbia (Hiebert and Sherell, 2009). Fuller and Martin (2012) report that higher education and professional employment experience before arriving in Canada does not convey a benefit to skilled immigrants and instead, “the average return to non-Canadian experience has now declined to essentially zero” (147).

In Canada, the points system is a framework that is meant to address labour shortages through identification of transferable skills thus facilitating rapid entry into the country, and, hopefully, the labour market. However, in a comparison between the U.S. and Canada, Somerville and Walsworth (2009) suggest that, in part, this system falls short in utilizing human capital as many skilled immigrants do not find employment easily. In terms of employment commensurate with education and experience, Canadian skilled immigrants fare worse than their US counterparts who have to source employment before they arrive (*ibid.*).

Although changes to immigration policy are afoot, the reasons for this situation include: employer discrimination; a mismatch between federal and provincial assessment of skills needs; no agreement between the federal and provincial levels in relation to a common set of standards for credential recognition; and the requirement by many regulatory bodies and employers of Canadian work experience (*ibid.*; OHRC, 2013).

It is clear that there are significant barriers for those who arrive as Skilled Workers in Canada, but the outcomes are worse for those in other immigration categories. For instance, it takes much longer for dependents of primary skilled worker applicants and those in the Family Class to catch up in terms of average earnings; four years for Skilled Workers (primary applicant), compared to 13 to 15 years for the others (Sweetman and Warman, 2013).

The quality of labour market attachment for immigrants cannot be solely defined as any kind of successful employment outcome. It needs to be defined in terms of them finding jobs that match the education and experience for which many were selected to enter the country. Other indicators of quality also include: safety, financial and non-financial remuneration, working hours, work-life balance, potential for social dialogue, skills development and job satisfaction (Gilmore, 2009). Gilmore (2009) also notes that job stability or long-term employment is a quality employment criterion.

## 4.2 Key Indicators - Immigrant Employability

The literature identifies a variety of indicators that can facilitate or hinder quality employment for immigrants, which articulate a set of unique needs that employment

services should cater to in service delivery. These indicators are inter-related and work in concert to define an immigrant's employment trajectory:

### ***Recognition of foreign credentials and work experience***

Immigrants experience a discrepancy between immigration policies and occupational certification in Canada (Plante, 2010). The literature asserts this indicator as key to employment outcomes (Dean and Wilson, 2009). However, it is notable that the probability of recognition falls the longer an immigrant is in the country (Houle and Ysaad, 2010).

It is easier to have foreign work experience recognized than credentials. Having jobs arranged pre-arrival and/or previous Canadian experience increases the likelihood of recognition (ibid.). Rates of recognition are lower in BC (After four years, 19% have achieved credential recognition and 36% work experience recognition) than Ontario (ibid.). Recognition is easier for those who received their highest level of education in Western English-speaking countries such as the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. (ibid.; Fuller and Martin, 2012). Obviously, financing can be a barrier to credential recognition, certification and/or upgrading.

### ***Immigration Class***

According to Bauder (2005), Skilled Worker and Family Class immigrants, "have distinct and separate issues" (90). The author contests that those not in the Skilled Worker categories have a lower cultural competence placing them at a disadvantage in understanding the rules of the Canadian labour market (ibid.). Refugees rank lowest in terms of foreign credential and experience recognition (Houle and Ysaad, 2010).

### ***Country of Origin***

As can be seen with foreign credential and work experience recognition, country of origin matters (ibid.). Those immigrants who come from countries perceived to infer a disposition most closely related to Canada tend to fare better than those who are from places perceived to be most culturally distant from Canada (Fuller and Martin, 2012). Country of origin may also predict the strategies that immigrants use to achieve labour market attachment (Bauder, 2005).

### ***Ethnicity***

In particular, those immigrants who are part of visible minority groups face specific barriers to employment due to discrimination on the part of employers (Mirchandani, 2004). For instance, discrimination can result in occupational segregation (Chen and Vollick, 2012). Ethnicity interacts with country of origin in terms of an assessment of cultural distance. Different groups have different employment outcome rates.

### ***Gender and Age***

Women experience worse employment outcomes than men, particularly where they arrive as spouses or dependents of those in the Skilled Worker category (Fuller and Martin, 2012). Immigrant women have a tendency towards downward mobility in the labour market (Chen and Asamoah, 2007). Older immigrants also do less well than

younger, in part due to a perception that they are less able to adapt to Canadian culture (Fuller and Martin, 2012).

### **Acculturation Style<sup>11</sup>**

While many debate the concept of acculturation (see Section 3.4.1 below for review), researchers have proposed that whether or not there is a fit between the acculturation style adopted by an immigrant and the dominant employment culture's perception of appropriate acculturation predicts labour market attachment (Mace et al, 2005).<sup>12</sup> Acculturative stress can have a negative impact on career exploration (Shea et al, 2007). Chen and Vollick (2012) suggest that, "the inability of the immigrant to adapt to the culture and integrate into the workplace culture may result in the acceptance of jobs of lower status and remuneration" (2012). Different groups may adopt different acculturation styles (Mau, 2000).

### **English Proficiency**

The literature demonstrates that language fluency is a crucial indicator of employment for immigrants. Acculturation style and English fluency are mutually reinforcing when it comes to career decision-making (Miranda and Umhoefer, 1998). If an immigrant is experiencing acculturative stress, it can leave insufficient space for development of language proficiency. Difficulties with language use can prohibit fluency, which can contribute to further cultural alienation, which then can have a negative impact on career development (ibid.).

### **Years of Residence**

As can be seen from the literature reviewed so far, employment outcomes do improve for immigrants the longer they are in Canada and so length of residency is an important indicator for attachment (ibid.). However, one caution for the direction of causation is that the earlier immigrants engage with credential and work experience recognition, the more likely recognition is to happen. It follows that the earlier immigrants engage with employment services, the more likely they are to achieve quality employment.

## **4.3 One-stop Shop Public Employment Services**

Managing the performance of one-stop shop employment centres requires centralized controls with enough flexibility to localize services in accordance with context and using measures that prevent gaming, creaming and parking (OECD, 2005).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Acculturation is defined as "the process of culture learning and behavioural adaptation that takes place when individuals are exposed to a new culture" (Miranda and Umhoefer, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Fit is assessed through the use of an acculturation model (Berry, 1990) which posits four different acculturation styles determined by two questions: (1) Is it considered of value to maintain your cultural identity and characteristics? (2) Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with your host culture? An integration style ("yes" to both questions) predicted proximity to full employment in a New Zealand study (Mace et al, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> "Gaming" involves "artificial manipulation of outcome measures" (OECD, 2005). "Creaming" involves providers selectively working with clients with whom it is easier to attain employment outcomes. "Parking" is about the provision of a nominal level of services to those who are most distant from the labour market and focusing resources on clients who are proximal to employment.

In a discussion of the US career centres, Jacobson (2009) identifies the model as being “hobbled by poorly conceived accountability systems” and “insufficient resources” (6). In particular, the measures of: (1) achieving employment at exit, and (2) earnings achieved by clients, cannot show how the services shorten the duration of job searches to find employment (commensurate with experience and education). Furthermore, the feedback systems prevent managers’ rapid identification and resolution of problems and resource distribution. Jacobson also proposes incentives for services to select “workers who can benefit most from the service offered” (12).

A fault in many one-stop models is that follow-up intervals are not long enough to track sustainable employment (APESAA, 2012). The OECD suggests longitudinal tracking of outcomes for five years to prove increased employment and earnings and financial penalties for services where jobs prove insecure (OECD, 2005). Another key element of performance measurement is that it should take into account local environmental factors that services face in terms of the labour market and client profiles (ibid., Neault and Pickerell, 2008; Struyven and Hemel, 2009). Particularly salient in terms of specialized populations is Laurin and Wagner’s (2011) recommendation that assessing the success of Quebec’s employment services would involve research into the diversity of the client base.

Administrative burden related to compliance and ICT usage is also a key challenge identified from top to bottom, as outcome-based, “black box” models, “may need complex structures and auditing regimes to validate employment outcomes” (European Commission, 2012).

A recent review of the ICM, the database used for case management and capturing client management and performance data in the EPBC, critiques the technology because users have to jump between numerous screens to find information about the client and the database determined the service model rather than facilitating client-centred service (Queenswood Consulting, 2013).<sup>14</sup> The review concludes that the ICM was overly complex and time-consuming to use, required a lot of training and did not facilitate a 360 degree view of the client, fragmenting what should be a sequential narrative of the client’s case (ibid.).

### 4.3.1 Working with Specialized Populations

Literature about one-stop approaches in other jurisdictions offers some key lessons about working with specialized populations:

- Program aims should be articulated in terms of economic participation and social inclusion (APESAA, 2011).
- Working effectively with what are also known as disadvantaged groups includes: tailoring services, flexible delivery, recognition of social outcomes, using tools to

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<sup>14</sup> The review was carried out for the Ministry of Children and Family Development in terms of the ICM’s suitability for child protection practice, but many conclusions are relevant to the work of staff in ESCs.

structure employment services that are sensitive enough to capture and address complex needs, and additional time and resources (Flentje et al, 2010)

- Early, concentrated support accompanied by “more specialized sustained provision” has also been identified as key for those facing the greatest barriers to the labour market in the context of Jobcentre Plus in the U.K, especially for clients from ethnic minority groups (Coulter et al, 2012).
- Best practice in staffing structures in one-stops to meet complex needs can involve, stream (or Tier) specialists, function specialists, specialists in certain groups and specialist counsellors and social workers. There is a benefit to having access to specialist resources (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations-Australia, 2012).
- It is important to address vocational and non-vocational barriers at the same time, with robust connections to other relevant services (ibid.; Flentje, 2010).
- One report did suggest that ethnic minority customers could be better served through improved services generally as opposed to a distinctive approach (Marangozov et al, 2010).
- Jacobson (2009) recommends funding longer-term training to disadvantaged clients in the US one-stop model.

Flexibility and innovation are key drivers of effective specialist one-stop employment services. Flentje (2010) says “achieving results for the most disadvantaged requires additional time, resources and expertise, which in turn requires greater flexibility in funding, compliance and outcomes measurement” (11).

In other words, flexibility can be supported by less complex conditions for providing services and staff skill. A recent report about skills requirements for BC career development professionals identifies many of the challenges to flexibility contained in this review including: the model does not support a longer-term process with clients; confusion about the fee for service model and complex policies; and the need for training to use the ICM (Life Strategies, 2013).

### **4.3.2 Assessment**

Assessment is used in a number of ways within one-stop employment services. Often, models employ standard tools for assessing suitability or employability and allocating clients to service streams, based on level of need. It requires sufficient time, something that is not always evident in one-stop models (Bellis et al, 2011). Common assessment tools have been recommended (Breen, 2010). There can be challenges to client grouping. A recent report recommends that of the four Job Services Australia (JSA) streams, the second and third be collapsed since there was little difference between these two groups (APESAA, 2012).

Centralized tools for initial assessment are often provided but can be supplemented by the provider. Tailoring services is key to addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups,



but in order to do so their complex needs must be identified, something that has not always taken place in the UK. Coulter et al (2012) says: “There is some evidence that advisors are less effective without systematic support instruments, as instruments give a systematic means of assessing need...without support instruments, advisors may introduce their own typologies...these may be less robust.”

In other words, the assessment tools provided need to guide staff as to what the needs of specialized populations might be. In a report on the role of assessment in the Work Programme in the UK, Coleman and Parry (2011) suggest that: more detailed information about customer characteristics be collected than that through Job Centre Plus; more extensive and ongoing assessment be carried out, particularly in the attitudes, motivations, style and characteristics affecting sustained work for clients; initial assessments could usefully employ a statistical modelling approach to classify clients; and this modelling could also designate the level of support required.<sup>15</sup> Jacobson (2009) also indicates the need for enhancement of assessment in the US.

A review of other jurisdictions suggests some key indicators for immigrant client assessment. For instance, JSA’s job seeker classification tool has a scoring process embedded in it and asks about the client’s country of origin. The scoring is revised regularly in order to reflect the extent to which this indicator may impact the client’s job search (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – Australia, 2012). In the UK, the client’s ethnicity is self-reported for Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme. In Employment Ontario, whether or not the client received their highest level of education outside Canada, language skill and lack of Canadian credential recognition or credible work experience are all indicators that are part of the program’s performance management system.

In answer to those who have concerns about tracking this type information and/or other information related to culture/ethnicity, ethnic minority Job Centre Plus clients in the UK indicated that they were comfortable with ethnic monitoring (Marangozov et al, 2010).

### 4.3.3 Advisors

It is no surprise that advisor, or case manager, skill is heavily emphasized in the successful implementation of one-stop models. Some authors highlight the need for professionalization of the career guidance sector as a way to enhance performance of one-stop approaches (APESAA, 2012; Breen, 2010; Jacobsen, 2009). As Coleman and Parry (2012) say, “the need for skilled, knowledgeable advisors has never been greater” (48).

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<sup>15</sup> Statistical modelling usually involves tools that assess the client’s profile and barriers to employment, which are then scored to profile or target clients and assign them to client groups (such as the Tiers within the EPBC model). Otherwise advisor discretion is employed for designation to groups, as in the EPBC. Statistical modelling is used in Australia, Ireland, Denmark, Germany and the U.S. It must be used cautiously and only as one aspect of assessment. It can be helpful in early scoping and planning of service provision but does not always predict outcomes.

Some key points about advisor best practices are:

- The most effective advisors use a client-centred, collaborative approach and invite the client to tell a story, as opposed to using a process-driven, “checklist” method of assessing a client’s needs, suitability and capability (Coulter et al, 2012; Marangozov et al., 2010). Assessments should not be used as a substitute for effective interviewing skills.
- It is important to match the advisor to the profile of the client in regard to cultural background (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations - Australia, 2012).
- A problem-solving attitude and an open-mind enhances creative solutions for clients (ibid.; Bellis et al., 2011).

#### 4.3.4 A Note on Evaluation

It is evident from a review of literature about JSA and Job Centre Plus and the Work Programme that assessing the effectiveness of these programmes involves evaluation strategies that go beyond the data collected for performance management, particularly in terms of gauging the models’ capacity to meet the needs of specialized groups. JSA benefits from a planned evaluation strategy. In the UK, there are a variety of research reports done for the Department of Work and Pensions about the one-stops there.

Recommendations for evaluation of one-stops range from pilot studies and random assignment experiments to impact assessments (OECD, 2005; Jacobsen, 2009).

### 4.4 Multicultural and Intercultural Career Development

This section presents a brief review of the career development process for immigrants found in consideration of literature not just related to migrants, but also in that about multicultural service provision and services for visible minority groups since so many immigrants are from diverse cultures and ethnicities. If culture is understood as the “field of action” shaping the client’s thoughts, feelings and behaviour, we can see that employment services need to understand the “cultural-boundedness of career” (Young et al, 2007).<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.4.1 Transformative Employment Services

Working with immigrant clients to achieve employment outcomes necessitates a critical social justice perspective in relation to a number of key phenomena, including the role of employment for immigrants. The following points are important:

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<sup>16</sup> Individuals can share patterns of behaviours related to multiple cultures simultaneously. Culture is not wholly deterministic and may also be seen as a process that is shaped by the individuals within it as much as it shapes them.

## ***Employment is key to the health, human rights and integration of immigrants***

Many immigrants arrive in excellent health, which deteriorates from delayed labour market attachment commensurate with experience and education (Dean and Wilson, 2009). This situation arises due to de-skilling, loss of social status and lack of income (ibid.; Chen and Asanoah, 2007; Elez, 2014). Mental health is closely related to an individual's capacity to contribute to their community through work (WHO, 2007). Work is one of the ways that an individual gains positive recognition in their community. If the individual cannot make their contribution to the world through work, they lack recognition and, then low self-esteem results (Hottunen, 2007). Employment services may have to address the affective in their practice in order to restore hope, and positively recognize the prior skills and experience of immigrants. They may have to integrate some assessment of mental health into their practice, if it is blocking career development.

## ***Barriers to employment must be addressed at the individual and the collective levels***

Mirchandani (2004) and others suggest that the employment barriers faced by immigrants are too often seen by policy makers and service providers as something that only requires individual transformation by clients themselves through the development of skills like résumé writing or interviewing techniques. This perspective fails to take into account systemic barriers, which many see as forms of discrimination against immigrants and the denial of their human rights, sometimes on the basis of race or ethnicity (ibid.; OHRC, 2013). Services should assist employers and communities to positively recognize the skills and experience of immigrants (Mirchandani, 2004). Otherwise, "educational and career barriers that are encountered become internalized into immigrants' belief systems consequently limiting career aspirations" (Elez, 2014).

## ***Acculturation is not a linear, one-way process***

Theories of acculturation, or adaptation of immigrants to their new home, can be critiqued on the basis that they assume the dominant culture of the host country is somehow of greater value than the immigrant's culture. They also assert that an immigrant always has a choice in adapting to the dominant culture and ignore that the dominant culture may limit adaptation through structural barriers, and resulting socio-economic inequality. Too often, immigrants who are perceived to not be acculturating appropriately are blamed for it rather than seeing that the dominant culture also needs to engage in the acculturative process (Van Hieu, 2008). Employment services have a role in addressing structural barriers to employment for immigrants as well as understanding that clients' acculturative stress is a product of the society and context they are living in.

## ***Western theories of career development may be in conflict with many immigrants' worldviews***

Shea et al (2007) say these theories are "normed on White middle-class American men and emphasize individualistic culture (i.e., reverence for autonomy; equality of vocational opportunity; freedom and economic affluence to make a career choice; and

linear, progressive, and rational career making and development progress” (62). Other cultures may not think about career development in the same way. A cultural lens is important to service provision (Vispia et al, 2010).

#### 4.4.2 Unique Facets of Career Development for Immigrant Clients

The following points from the literature review outline a series of approaches and phenomena that career development services and practitioners should pay attention to in their work with immigrant clients. Attention to these facets should facilitate thinking not just about the causes of their employment-related behaviour, but also the goals of client’s actions (Young et al, 2007).

##### ***Thinking about the self and career decision-making as cultural products***

These concepts are related through the notion of self-efficacy or the belief that an individual holds that they will be successful at something (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy is a key variable in relation to career decision-making in the literature. Western culture commonly sees the locus of decision-making as the individual whereas in other cultures, particularly those that are more collectivistic, the locus of decision-making is the group and what is good for the group (Mau, 2000; Leong et al, 2010).

##### ***Taking into account the ecology of the client***

Following from the first point, practitioners working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds need to consider the extent to which the client’s community and family are shaping the client’s career development behaviour and to not see involvement of others as a failure on the part of the client to exercise free will (Shea et al, 2007; Stebleton, 2007).

##### ***Understanding the micro and macro systems that are influencing the client’s career development***

Commonly known as systems theory, the literature says that it is particularly important in culturally competent career development to be aware that institutional and societal policies can hinder or facilitate employment particularly as they relate to age, gender, ethnicity, orientation and ability (Arthur and McMahon, 2005). In particular, the stereotypes related to these characteristics can result in occupational segregation. Elez (2014) points out that, “Career transition does not happen in isolation, and is embedded in a larger network of relationships, society, and culture that enables or thwarts individual attempts.”

Concomitant to that is the advocacy role of employment services in addressing structural barriers to employment at the client and the community or policy level.

#### 4.4.3 Advisor Skills

Rush (2010) borrows from Evans (2008) to elaborate on culturally competent career counselling:

1. Establishing trust and rapport to make the client feel at ease.

2. Facilitating cultural understanding amongst clients in group situations.
3. Understanding how some collectivist cultures view goals as communal versus personal.
4. Understanding the impact of family and community on behaviour in the workplace and/or employment options.
5. Using techniques and presenting options tailored to the client's cultural milieu.
6. Understanding how such things as race, gender, age, sexual orientation and ability influence the personality of clients.
7. Being aware of how institutions can impact career development.
8. Knowing that family members or other community members may need to become involved in the process.
9. Isolating approaches to work as they relate to culture.
10. Understanding how poverty, racism and discrimination limit the field of action and choices for clients in relation to employment.
11. Being aware that clients can face discrimination from other agencies and that can affect the psychological well-being of the clients.
12. Realizing that clients need to balance life-work roles, in turn promoting leisure time and community connections.

Borrowing from social work, advisors may also need to engage in advocacy on the client's behalf (Martinez-Brawley and Zorita, 2011).

The *Complete Competency Dictionary* is an important description of job search and career planning competences within the context of BC settlement service provision (BCSAP, 2010).<sup>17</sup> Key competencies identified in this resource include: understanding the unique challenges faced by immigrants in the job search process and career transition, and promoting realistic career expectations; understanding work permit and foreign credentialing and accreditation processes; understanding how to work with low essential skilled refugees and newcomers; fostering understanding of the Canadian workplace and communication styles; assessing the client's language proficiency and placing them in services and positions appropriately, and knowing how to engage with someone who speaks little to no English.

In answer to the challenge of administrative burden of one-stop provision and that of addressing complex needs, some have called for performance to be managed through professionalization of the sector and accreditation rather than through system compliance (Government of Australia, 2011). In Canada, calls have been made at national and provincial level for both the former and the latter.

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<sup>17</sup> BCSAP. (2010). *Complete Competency Dictionary*, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development: BC.

In Canada, there are two main frameworks for quality in career development – the Canadian Council for Career Development; “The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners (S&Gs)” and the “Blueprint for Life/Work Designs.”<sup>18</sup> The former has been critiqued for being ambiguous about the training required for the multicultural competence of practitioners.<sup>19</sup>

A recent report about skills requirements for BC career development professionals identified an urgent need for training on provision to specialized populations within the context of the EPBC (Life Strategies, 2013).

#### 4.5 Culturally Competent Employment Services

No literature could be found that described culturally competent employment services from the organization’s perspective. However, generic cultural competence frameworks for health and social services were found. A summary of three tools (Olavarria et al, 2005) presents the common standards and indicators under five domains: 1) organizational norms, principles and policies; 2) asset and need identification research related to cultural competence; 3) human resources management policy and practice; 4) service and service delivery; and 5) community consultation, partnership and information exchange. Appendix B presents more detailed information on this summary framework by Olavarria et al (ibid.).

#### 4.6 Summary

The following summarizes the main findings from the literature review:

- Immigrants to Canada experience occupational degradation, which impedes integration and affects their well-being. This trend signals a crucial role for employment programs in addressing the factors causing this degradation. It also signals a need for employment services and practitioners to address the systemic barriers contributing to the occupational degradation of immigrants, such as lack of recognition of foreign credentials and work experience, ethno-racial discrimination and so on.
- Within the context of one-stop employment services, there is an identified need for longer-term training for disadvantaged clients with intensive, sustained support early on. In particular, the literature suggests that it could be crucial to assist immigrant clients with foreign credential and experience recognition early on in their time in Canada as the probability of this recognition happening decreases over time.
- Appropriate assessment of clients is crucial for effective provision of services within one-stop approaches, including assessment that identifies complex needs. The literature suggests a variety of indicators that can tell us something about the

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<sup>18</sup> See [http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career\\_dev/](http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/) and <http://www.blueprint4life.ca/>.

<sup>19</sup> Life Strategies Ltd. (2013). *Skills Requirements for BC’s Career Development Practitioners: an Exploratory Study*. BC Centre for Employment Excellence: Canada.

employment needs and employability of immigrant clients, including: immigration class, where highest level of education was attained, length of time in country, source country, ethnicity, gender, age, English proficiency, and acculturative stress.

- One-stops can struggle with accountability systems that are supported by overly complex ICT and administrative processes. They can be insufficiently resourced and may not measure follow-up at points that accurately assess sustainable employment. For instance, the OECD suggested tracking outcomes up to five years.
- The literature suggests that professionalization of career development can enhance one-stop model performance. Skills deficits have been identified across this sector in BC particularly in relation to specialized populations and the EPBC.
- It is important to have a planned agenda for research about and evaluation of one-stop shop employment services.
- Drivers of effective service provision to specialized populations in one-stops include: flexibility, tailoring of services, attention to non-vocational barriers and specialist service provision.
- Effective approaches for working with clients of diverse cultural backgrounds include: client-centred and collaborative without a check-list approach; taking a systems approach to remove structural barriers to employment - including ethno-racial discrimination; thinking about how the ecology of the client affects career decision-making; attention to the affective dimension of employment for immigrant clients; and a critical perspective on acculturation and Western career development theory.
- Organizational cross-cultural competence is important for working effectively with clients of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, and needs to be developed at all levels of the organization from the strategic to direct service provision.
- Case managers working with immigrants need to know about foreign credentialing, immigrant specific community resources and how to do a basic assessment of language proficiency.

## 5 Snapshots of One-stop Employment Services to Immigrants in Alberta and Ontario

The following is an analysis of the statutory one-stop employment services, Alberta Works and Employment Ontario, as they pertain to immigrants. Data was collected through interviews with key informants (two per province) and review of the policy manuals for each program.

## 5.1 Employment Ontario

Employment Ontario commenced in 2008. It embraces a “no wrong door” approach, with five components: client service planning and coordination (CSPC), resource and information (RI), job search (JS), job matching placement and incentives (JMPI), and job training/retention (JTR). The last three are called “assisted services.” CSPC is considered the “hub” of the service and is intended for all clients. There are no Tiers. The client’s suitability determines the suite of services needed. The higher the need, the more intensive the service provision.

Suitability indicators for the program include variables that are relevant to immigrant employability (see below) and the policy manual indicates that tailored services may need to be developed for newcomers, particularly in resource and information. Newcomers are considered to be any client who is not Canadian born and eligible to work in Ontario. One informant indicated that most EO immigrant clients have been in Canada less than three years. Another key informant said, “There was [initially] confusion about not being able to specialize [the] messaging has changed – you are there for anyone, but obviously there will be specialization in a big city [like Toronto]... if you can meet your core measures and still specialize...still remaining well known for services for immigrants.”

The funding model is based on operating funds broken down on a per unit basis as well as “flow through” funding to remove barriers to labour market participation. The model emphasizes the concept of suitability as opposed to eligibility in terms of receipt of assisted services and financial support. Suitability is not defined in terms of being in receipt of EI or IA. There are two key financial supports, a \$500 financial support to remove barriers to job searching and an Employment and Training Incentive (up to \$8000) for on-the-job training, that are available to any suitable client. EO pays the latter directly to the employer and stipulates that the employer must place, “the participant on the company’s payroll and provide the same employment terms, conditions and benefits as for all regular employees” (Employment Ontario, 2011). The policy manual for EO says, “as the EO transformation evolves, this component of the service may also evolve to include a larger role in access to and support for training” (ibid.).

Feedback from the informant interviews indicated that there is no challenge to availing of these supports, particularly if the client has no credible Canadian work references. Both informants indicated that EO is a good approach, but that there are resource issues, with one reporting that there is a risk in serving clients effectively as unit funding can decrease to reflect service efficiencies. Both informants also indicated that by itself EO cannot meet the employment needs of immigrants and it has to be supplemented with other programs that immigrants require, “[there is a] lack of recognition of the cost of an in-depth service” (key informant). While employability skills workshops are provided as part of the model, one informant indicated that tailored workshops for immigrants are desirable, but that resources do not allow for this approach. One informant mentioned a concern about the impact of the Canada Jobs Grant initiative.



### 5.1.1 Performance Management

The performance management framework for EO incorporates measures related to suitability, service impact (exited when employed, in education or in training with follow up at 3, 6 and 12 months), customer satisfaction, service coordination and efficiency. Relevant to immigrants are these suitability indicators: education/credentials from outside Canada, lack of Canadian work experience and language ability. Also of note is that service coordination is part of performance management such that supporting clients to access relevant services as part of their Employment Service Plan is an essential part of EO for each and every client.

There are no outcome targets related specifically to newcomers. Currently, EO sets a target of 69% of clients into education, training or employment. Both informants indicated no specific challenges with compliance and administrative burden and perceived centralized administrative processes as necessary to the work. One noted an issue with outcome tracking which is that if an immigrant client at any EO centre is referred to a bridging program it can be recorded as an achievement of employment attributable to the program when in reality it is a service referral.

EO data related to service plan development and performance measures is tracked through the EOIS-CAMS database. One informant felt that the reports generated from the database are useful. The other informant described importing necessary information from their own system into EOIS-CAMS so that they can have control of their own data. Both informants indicated that they had created their own forms, blended with the EO forms to track other indicators relevant to immigrant client employability, including “people’s understanding of the labour market, [have they] started the process of credential assessment, what’s their professional networks, how many in [the] network...” (key informant).

### 5.1.2 Implementation and Best Practice

Both informants said that there was suitable flexibility in the model in terms of tailoring implementation of the EO components. However, both said it could not be a stand-alone solution to meeting immigrants’ employment needs, “it has to be complemented by other [employment] services” (key informant). Both considered bridging programs as an essential service not resourced through EO. Also identified were enhanced language training and mentoring.<sup>20</sup> Informants described co-location or referral to settlement services as part of integrated provision.

One informant noted the emphasis on addressing the immediate needs of immigrants through EO as opposed to longer-term career development, “[we] don’t put people back in school, a lot of immigrants can’t afford to go back to school.”

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<sup>20</sup> Enhanced language training involves occupation specific English training. Bridging programs are occupation specific training programs that aim to help internationally trained immigrants move into their field in Canada and often involve skills assessment, academic upgrading (if required), work placement, and preparation for certification/ licensing (if necessary).

Linked to this point was a comment by one key informant about how it is easier to address immigrant clients with low needs through EO. The informant described how “much easier it is to help” clients who have higher level language skills, need bridging programs and meet the language requirements for entry to these programs. They are easily referred, but those with lower language skills who cannot access these programs need to be served through EO, “[they] have no clue about how to navigate the landscape here...unless you have programs designed to provide additional supports...EO can’t meet these targets because it doesn’t specifically address these barriers...some get jobs easily, others not.”

Both informants employ workplace specialists to carry out job development for individual clients. One provider integrates this work with employer engagement funded through other sources, and said it could be useful to fund it through EO.

Both informants also agreed that service provision required highly skilled case managers with one saying that professional development should be resourced through EO. One informant reported that expectations about caseloads were too high in EO and that they could be rolled back from 250 annually to 150 annually. Lessons identified by informants for service provision to immigrants within EO were:

- Clients could not be served solely through EO and required access to bridging programs and other complementary employment services.
- The EO services for immigrants should be located in a newcomer service Hub geared towards meeting the needs of newcomers.
- Workshops should be tailored specifically for newcomers.
- Services should be offered in the main languages spoken by newcomer clients.

## 5.2 Alberta Works

Alberta Works integrates LMA and LMDA funding to provide employment and training programs, child support services, health benefits and income support in order to *help unemployed people find and keep jobs, help Albertans with low income cover their basic costs of living, and help employers meet their need for Skilled Workers.*<sup>21</sup> The employment and training programs facet of Alberta Works contains the following components: information services (delivered mainly through statutory Alberta Works Centres), needs determination services (such as service needs assessment, workshops, exposure courses, career advising and job placement), and employability services (including employability assessments, service management<sup>22</sup> and career counselling).

All three components can be accessed through Alberta Works Centres while the latter two can also be provided by contracted service and training providers. Most programs

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/>

<sup>22</sup> Service management refers to service coordination.

or services are open to all individuals who are unemployed. Clients do not have to be on EI or IA to participate in Exposure Courses (similar to the STOC programs in the EPBC). Relevant to immigrants is that employability assessments may include the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), which is the statutory provider of credential recognition. Referral to IQAS is at no cost to the individual.

The Province contracts service and training providers to deliver programs specifically for immigrants, alongside provision through Alberta Works Centres. For instance, the Newcomer's Centre in Calgary is funded to provide first language employment services to immigrants and CCIS is funded to provide a number of training and upgrading programs. What services and training are needed is identified through a Department of Human Services assessment of labour market needs and service provider consultation.

Any Alberta Works-funded provider can conduct client assessments. Immigrants are a designated client group and assessment guidelines do reflect their needs (see below). Immigrants are deemed those individuals who are not Canadian born and eligible to work in Alberta. According to one of the key informants there is an understanding within the model that, for immigrants, the Alberta Works Centres are a source of service needs determination supporting referral of immigrants to specialized services provided by contracted partners. Another key informant indicated that some immigrants with low needs can access the services they need mainly through Alberta Works Centres where they can avail themselves of employability skills workshops and career planning. Others require the specialized services provided.

For those who are contract-funded to deliver training, the funding model is monthly payments based on contract deliverables related to client group and training outcomes.

### **5.2.1 Performance Management**

There are no program-wide targets for immigrants. Instead, the Government defines contract-specific targets with each provider through Accountability Framework Agreements. Service provision is integrated through the use of the MOBIUS database which every Alberta Works Centre and contracted provider has access to, such that any organization can add to a client's service narrative or assessment if they so choose and can see the client's service journey, "nobody owns a client" (key informant). MOBIUS and Alberta Works do not do specialized population profiles, although profile data can be captured through the database.

However, Alberta Works does report on LMA-funded programs using LMA performance measures which do ask for data in relation to: number of immigrants served; beneficiaries participating in and completing immigrant programs; number of immigrants employed post intervention or in another intervention; and number of immigrants who think that their training prepared them for employment at 3 and 12 month follow ups. MOBIUS also records the citizenship of clients as well as their status and dates related to immigration.

During assessment, no information is tracked about specific barriers experienced by immigrants. However, the assessment handbook for Alberta Works does reflect some of the needs of immigrants when it presents areas to be explored with the individual, such as: whether English is their second language in terms of both reading and writing skills; review of appropriate information to include on a résumé and questions to be asked in an interview; the link between culture and ethnicity and personal presentation skills; foreign work references; the concept of “selling oneself” as strange to someone who speaks English as a second language; cultural differences in time management; and lack of Canadian work experience (Alberta Government, 2013).

Feedback about MOBIUS was that it has, “slowed down the process [it takes] more time to do employment assessment, from 6 or 7 clients per day to 4 clients” (key informant). It is also considered to make the service provision “easier and cleaner” (key informant). However, when it comes to understanding the barriers clients are facing, the same informant said, “[it] can tell you someone is a doctor, but not that there is a minimal chance that they will work as a doctor. If the assessment is done correctly it will list the barriers to the client getting back into their profession.”

## 5.2.2 Implementation and Best Practice

One key informant indicated that as a funder, Alberta Works has “an understanding of the needs of immigrants when it comes to employment planning.” While some employment services are also co-funded through CIC and the provincial immigration branch, the message from Alberta Works is that these programs are seen to be complementary to Alberta Works programs and services rather than duplication. There is an agreed referral system between Alberta Works and immigrant employment services and Alberta Works was reported by one informant to be “always useful.”

The other key informant indicated that RFPs for contracts are not scored in relation to whether or not they are co-located with other services for immigrants, such as settlement but scored on various elements including program plan, previous experience, cost, local labour market information and ability to provide the program. This individual reported that a good portion of Alberta Works funding is provided for immigrants, but expressed a concern that the Canada Jobs Grant program could threaten current levels of provision across the entire program.

This individual also said that Alberta has been moving away from the professionalization of the career development sector in Alberta. The informant reported the following key lessons in relation to funding employment services to immigrants, “[we are] looking for specialized services dealing with immigrants and the skills to do that [in terms of] languages provided, staffing, showing an understanding of the labour market...location, accessibility to immigrant communities.”

## 5.3 Analysis

The following points summarize key findings from the snapshots:

- EO is the model that most closely resembles the EPBC approach.
- Both programs either track indicators related to or make visible in tools some of the unique employment barriers faced by immigrants, including: immigration status; length of time in country; work experience/education outside of Canada; no credible Canadian work experience; language levels; and the relationship between culture, personal presentation and communication.
- Both programs can show through their data collection how many immigrants are accessing the services and this data is part of program performance measures.
- Eligibility is less important in EO than suitability, meaning that there are key financial supports that immigrants who are not EI or IA eligible can avail themselves of. In particular they can indirectly access up to \$8000 through the Employment and Training Incentive.
- Within both approaches there is an understanding that immigrants need specialized employment services whether this is implicit, in the case of EO, or explicit, in the case of Alberta Works.
- Informants in both provinces reported that one-stops cannot meet the needs of immigrants and they need to be supplemented by complementary services such as bridging programs, tailored workshops, mentoring and enhanced language training.
- Informants indicated that one-stop centres in both provinces cater best to lower needs immigrant clients and that higher needs clients need more specialized services. One informant indicated that EO cannot facilitate longer-term outcomes for clients in terms of return to education.
- Both approaches track outcomes for clients up to 12 months.
- Informants in Alberta reported that they felt that the Government saw specialized services to immigrants as complementary to mainstream services.
- The ICT accompanying the approaches was perceived as necessary to provision. In Alberta, an informant reported that MOBIUS assisted integrated service provision. Both snapshots indicated that data collected through ICT was not always sufficient to capture the barriers faced by immigrants. Ontario service providers reported needing to blend their forms with EO forms.
- The Canada Jobs Grant initiative was a concern for informants.

## 6 Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the data collected for the study including ESC snapshots, client survey and focus group data and findings from the staff interviews and focus groups.

### 6.1 ESC Snapshots

This section contains brief snapshots of the two participating ESCs in terms of their service provision to immigrant clients.

#### 6.1.1 Snapshot of the AbbotsfordWORKS Employment Services Centre

This ESC is managed by AbbotsfordWORKS. Its parent organization is Abbotsford Community Services (ACS). ACS plans for and provides community-based social and community services for children, youth, families and seniors from all target groups. The organization has a Multicultural and Immigrant Integration Services Department that provides, amongst a wide variety of other services, general settlement services, English Language Services for Adults (ELSA), an Employment Mentors program and a Skills Connect program. ACS has an organizational diversity statement and policy that guides service delivery.

The ESC's catchment includes the census sub-divisions of Abbotsford and Upper Sumas 6. The table below gives a snapshot of key immigrant demographic and employment indicators for Abbotsford. In 2011, the employment rate for Abbotsford City was 61% and the unemployment rate was 8.5%.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 5.1 Key Immigrant Demographic and Employment Indicators - Abbotsford**

Indicator <sup>24</sup>	Abbotsford
% population immigrants	25.9% (16% of these arrived between 2006-2011)
Main source countries	India (52% of immigrants) and U.K. (7.1%)
Main non-official languages spoken at home	Punjabi, German and Korean (26,365 speak non-official language at home)
Highest level educational attainment – general pop.	19.5% (no certificate), 28.2% (high school diploma), 52.3% (certificate, diploma or degree)
Top 3 occupations for employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial, electrical and construction</li> <li>Transport, heavy equipment operation and related</li> <li>Service support and service occupations</li> </ul>
Receipt of Income Assistance (September 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>152 immigrants</li> <li>2297 Canadian-born</li> </ul>
Receipt of Employment Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2012 (all individuals in catchment)</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> National Household Survey, Focus on Geography. More recent data on Abbotsford City or the local health area covering Abbotsford could not be found.

<sup>24</sup> Data sources include the NHS 2011, Focus on Geography and Census 2011 data for Abbotsford City, as well as the 2012 Socio-economic Profile of Local Health Area 34 from BC Statistics. The Employment and Unemployment Rates for immigrants are in relation to those who indicated their highest level of educational attainment in the NHS for Abbotsford- Mission 99-012-X2011042. Rates for Abbotsford City alone were not available from the NHS releases on the Statistics Canada website. Please note that attainment is self-reported and, for immigrants, may not have Canadian equivalence, i.e. a foreign Masters degree may not be equivalent to one achieved in Canada.

Indicator <sup>25</sup>	Abbotsford
Employment Rate Immigrants	56.1% (58.6% for those who came 2006-2011)
Unemployment Rate Immigrants	11.1% (19.2% for those who came 2006-2011)
% of active case managed EPBC clients who are immigrants <sup>26</sup>	7.8%

In the main, this ESC serves immigrant clients through the Apollo Satellite, which is co-located with ACS ELSA training and some other immigrant and multicultural programs, and is in an area with a substantial pool of immigrants, mainly from Southern Asia.

In terms of validation of best practices for providing immigrants with employment services, this satellite provides (see Appendix C for the best practices checklist for Abbotsford Works): first language signage, reception and case management for prominent language groups in the area (Punjabi, Hindi and Chinese); informal marketing in places of worship for immigrants; ethno-cultural community marketing initiatives; co-location with ELSA and training services for immigrants; purchased language services and call-in interpreters; and specialized ESS workshops for newcomers.

Staff at the Apollo satellite is representative of the main ethno-cultural groups that use the services and some are immigrants themselves. All ACS staff, including those at Abbotsford Works and the Apollo satellite, receives diversity training. The ACS diversity policy stipulates that staff should reflect the diversity of the community. Job descriptions for Case Managers and the Workshop Facilitator in Apollo set out required competences for working with immigrant clients including: knowing how to do foreign credentialing, understanding how cultural biases can hinder career development practices, and knowledge of the barriers faced by immigrants in the Canadian labour market.

### 6.1.2 Snapshot of the Vancouver Northeast Employment Services Centre

This ESC is located in the Vancouver Northeast catchment, which covers Local Health Area 163. The ESC is run by MOSAIC and its partners. MOSAIC “empowers immigrants, refugees and newcomers through leadership and innovation in service delivery, community-building and advocacy”.<sup>27</sup> It is the only immigrant serving organization that is a contracted to lead service provision within one of the 73 EPBC catchments.

<sup>25</sup> Data sources include the NHS 2011, Focus on Geography and Census 2011 data for Abbotsford City, as well as the 2012 Socio-economic Profile of Local Health Area 34 from BC Statistics. The Employment and Unemployment Rates for immigrants are in relation to those who indicated their highest level of educational attainment in the NHS for Abbotsford- Mission 99-012-X2011042. Rates for Abbotsford City alone were not available from the NHS releases on the Statistics Canada website. Please note that attainment is self-reported and, for immigrants, may not have Canadian equivalence, i.e. a foreign Masters degree may not be equivalent to one achieved in Canada.

<sup>26</sup> Percentage of immigrants case managed through the EPBC is an average of those rates from the EPBC Monthly Management reports from April to November 2013. This figure may not be accurate due to the ambiguity of the ERIQ question that is meant to determine whether the individual is an immigrant or not

<sup>27</sup> See [www.mosaicbc.com](http://www.mosaicbc.com)

The table below gives a snapshot of key immigrant demographic and employment indicators for Vancouver Northeast, where possible. In 2011, the employment rate for Vancouver City was 62.5% and the unemployment rate was 7.1%.

**Table 5.2 Key Immigrant Demographic and Employment Indicators – Vancouver Northeast**

Indicator <sup>28</sup>	Vancouver Northeast
% population immigrants (2006)	55.6%
Main source country (2006)	China (48.6% of immigrants)
Main non-official languages spoken at home (Vancouver City)	Cantonese, Chinese (n.o.s) and Mandarin (93,770 speak non-official language at home)
Highest level educational attainment – general pop. (Vancouver City)	12.2% (no certificate), 19.3% (high school diploma), 68.5% (certificate, diploma or degree) (24.5% of the Northeast had a university certificate or degree in 2006)
Top 3 occupations for employed (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales and Service</li> <li>• Business, Finance and Administration</li> <li>• Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators</li> </ul>
Receipt of Income Assistance (September 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 264 immigrants</li> <li>• 1475 Canadian-born</li> </ul>
Receipt of Employment Insurance (September 2012)	1041 (all individuals in catchment)
Employment Rate Immigrants (Vancouver City)	57.2% (55.8% for those who came 2006-2011)
Unemployment Rate Immigrants (Vancouver City)	7.5% (11.3% for those who came 2006-2011)
% of active case managed EPBC clients who are immigrants <sup>29</sup>	12.5%

This ESC integrates service provision for immigrant clients into its storefront location. English language assessment and training is located in the same building. Settlement services run by MOSAIC are located down the street from the storefront location at the central office alongside Job Options BC, Skills Connect for Immigrants, Workplace Connections Mentoring and the Micro-loans program. The ESC is located in an area with substantial pools of immigrants, mainly from Asia.

In terms of validation of best practices (see Appendix C for the detailed checklist of best practices for this ESC), the Vancouver Northeast ESC provides: a website in French and English; a welcome sign in reception in multiple languages; first language reception (English, French and Spanish), and case management for prominent language groups in the area (Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, French); an immigrant workshop stream; multi-lingual marketing on radio and in newspapers; ethno-cultural marketing; and CANN marketing materials at the airport. It provides intake and orientation in English and

<sup>28</sup> Data sources include Census 2006, the NHS 2011, Focus on Geography and Census 2011 data for Vancouver City, as well as the 2012 Socio-economic Profile of Local Health Area 163 from BC Statistics. It is likely that the proportion of the population who are immigrants in the catchment is higher than this rate. The Employment and Unemployment Rates for immigrants are in relation to those who indicated their highest level of educational attainment in the NHS for Vancouver City 99-012-X2011042. Rates for Vancouver Northeast alone were not available from the NHS releases on the Statistics Canada website.

<sup>29</sup> Percentage of immigrants case managed through the EPBC is an average of those rates from the EPBC Monthly Management reports from April to November 2013. This figure may not be accurate due to the ambiguity of the ERIQ question that is meant to determine whether the individual is an immigrant or not.



French (one-on-one orientation in other languages), and can call on in-house purchased language services.

All staff at MOSAIC and in the ESC has received diversity training. Staff in the ESC represents the main ethno-cultural groups of the community it is located in. Many staff are also immigrants. Recent job postings for a Receptionist and Lead Case Manager call for applicants who possess competences related to working with specialized populations, cross-cultural communication skills and fluency in one or more of the main language groups in the catchment.

As part of the Multi Dimensional Needs Assessment (MDNA), the Vancouver Northeast Centre uses the ERIQ alongside its own form which tracks the following indicators in relation to immigrant clients: highest level of educational attainment outside of Canada; immigration or settlement challenge for the client; and whether there is a need for English training or foreign credential assessment.

## 6.2 Demographic Profile of Client Group

A total of 107 clients were sampled for this research (eight through focus groups and 99 through the client survey). In terms of the statistical data collected through the survey, the following points summarize the profile of clients (see Appendix D for a detailed demographic profile):

- The majority of respondents were female (about 65%).
- Over half (69%) were between the ages of 23-44 years.
- Fifty-five percent of respondents had been in Canada for less than five years. Notably, just over a third (32%) had been here more than 10 years.
- The vast majority of respondents were born in countries in Asian regions (82%), consistent with the catchment profiles of both ESCs.
- Seventy-six percent of respondents were university educated.
- Most respondents were in Tier 3 (53%).
- The top two immigration classes to which respondents belonged were Skilled Worker (29%) and Family Class (29%)
- Almost half of respondents (46%) had been with their ESC for less than a month. Thirty percent had been with services for 2-6 months and 17% for 7 months to 1 year.
- The main occupational groupings clients described being in prior to their move to Canada were, “business, finance and administration “ (17.2%) and “occupations in education, law, social and community services” (16.2%).
- Clients in the survey indicated using other important employment services for immigrants. Forty-seven percent had engaged in English Language Training, 30% had participated in the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program and 29% had engaged with Job Options BC. A total of 96% of clients had availed themselves of one or more of the services asked about.

## 6.3 Thinking about Employment

Clients and staff were asked questions about what quality employment outcomes were for immigrants as well as barriers to achieving a “good job.”. This section details the quantitative and qualitative data collected in answer to these questions.

### 6.3.1 A “good” job

The table below shows the words/phrases that clients selected in the survey when asked to describe a “good job.”

**Table 5.3 Words or phrases associated with a good job**

Words associated with a good job	% who agree
a. With benefits	80.8
b. Good wage	74.7
c. Workplace where I am treated with respect	71.7
d. Matches my education, skills, and strengths	70.7
e. Provides more training	63.6
f. Workplace where I am treated fairly	61.6
g. Encourages me to find new and better ways of doing things	59.6
h. Makes me able to balance work and family responsibilities	59.6
i. Is secure (long term)	55.6
j. Gives me the chance of getting a better job in the company	53.5
k. Can be part of a union	43.4
l. Located in the neighbourhood I live in	42.4
m. Workplace that celebrates difference	42.4
n. In the field I was in before I came to Canada	37.4
o. A survival job that will help me support my family while I look for something better/continue my education	35.4
p. Entry level in the field I was trained in	24.2

The table above shows the top three most frequently selected phrases were “with benefits” (81%), “good wage” (75%) and “workplace where I am treated with respect” (72%). The latter was closely followed by “matches my education, skills and strengths” (71%). Notably, less than half of respondents indicated that a “good job” was “in the field I was in before I came to Canada” (37%) or a “survival job” (35%).

Data from the client focus groups echoed these priorities, validating that a “good” job is more than just any kind of employment, and named criteria such as, “gratifying” and “[something that] you really fit into.” No clients in the focus groups mentioned that a good job was the one that they had prior to their move to Canada, perhaps demonstrating a realistic understanding of the significant barriers to this goal. As one client said he would be happy to start at entry level in his field, “I am ready to sweep in an engineering company” (engineer from Iran).

### 6.3.2 Barriers to Employment

Clients in the survey and the focus groups were asked to identify the barriers they felt they were facing to employment. The table below shows that the top three most frequently identified barriers in the survey were “not having enough connections in the job market” (58.6%), “not enough or no job experience” (51.5%) and “not enough money to upgrade my education” (51.5%).

**Table 5.4 Barriers to employment**

Barriers faced when looking for work	% who agree
a. Not having connections in the job market	58.6
b. Not enough or no job experience	51.5
c. Not enough money to upgrade my education	51.5
d. My qualifications from outside Canada are not accepted	50.5
e. Language problems	49.5
f. My job experiences from outside Canada are not accepted	40.4
g. Not enough time/energy because I am stuck in a survival job	27.3
h. Transportation problems	23.2
i. Discrimination (i.e. because of your race/sex/age/etc.)	21.2
j. Not knowing how to find a job	19.2
k. Needing help with other issues connected to getting settled in Canada (housing, healthcare, etc.)	14.1
l. Unable to find/afford childcare	13.1

Of note, is that “my qualifications from outside Canada are not accepted” was also a significant barrier for clients. Chi squared tests were run to explore the relationship between clients’ Tier level and their reported barriers to employment. Tier level was statistically significant in three instances: 1) with regards to transportation availability, 2) feeling as though they didn’t have enough experience in the Canadian job market, and 3) qualifications from outside Canada weren’t accepted. Tier 3 immigrants were significantly more likely to report having transportation difficulties. Tier 3 and Tier 4 clients were significantly more likely to feel as though they lacked enough experience in the Canadian job market.

Tier 3 clients were significantly more likely to have qualifications that were not recognized within Canada. Notably, when we examine the frequency of identified barriers for each Tier group, there are differences amongst them (see Appendix D for the detailed table). For instance, the top three most frequently identified barriers for clients in Tier 2 were “no connections to the job market”, “not enough money to upgrade my education” and “no Canadian experience.” For those in Tier 3 the top three were my “qualifications from outside Canada are not accepted,” and “language problems” tied with “no connections to the job market.” However, it is interesting to note that there was no statistically significant relationship between self-reported language level and Tier level.

Clients in the focus groups echoed the range of barriers in the table above. Some expressed their frustration with job search challenges, “why they make [it] feel so difficult when I probably could be training nurses in [the] most critical ICU...you didn’t expect them to say no because you [already] have the qualifications” (nurse from Mexico).

Staff in the participating ESCs was asked to indicate the factors impacting immigrants in relation to each EPBC Tier and echoed many of the barriers explored in the survey. Of note are some additional factors, which were not barriers per se and more about level of support required such as:

- The level of one-to-one support needed, particularly in terms of résumé writing.
- The level of difficulty facing the client in terms of recognition of prior work/learning experience.
- The types of services needed. For instance, Tier 3 and 4 clients were seen to require more in-depth career and personality assessment.

The survey data bears out that Tiering may work to indicate the level of resources, both time and otherwise, that might need to be dedicated to supporting an immigrant client to enter the labour market. It could take a case manager more time to work with someone in Tier 3 whose qualifications from outside Canada are not accepted than a Tier 3 client who needs to overcome the barrier of no Canadian experience. The data tentatively also suggests that clients in different Tiers experience a difference in the frequency with which they experience the range of barriers above. However, a larger sample size would be necessary to further elaborate on whether or not Tier level is truly indicative of the intensity and number of barriers an immigrant client is experiencing.

Relevant to a discussion about barriers to employment is data from staff about the ERIQ and the employability and demographic indicators it tracks that are important for immigrants. Staff reported that many immigrant clients require assistance to complete the ERIQ by themselves due to language difficulties. They also indicated that it would be useful for the ERIQ to track lack of Canadian work experience and whether or not the individual’s highest level of education was attained outside of Canada.

### **6.3.3 Language Ability**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their perceived level of English proficiency and, if possible, their actual Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level. Notably, very few could indicate the latter. Of the respondents, 37.1% said they had advanced English, 49.4% indicated they were at an intermediate level of ability and 13.5% reported said they had beginner’s English.

The relationship between perceived language ability and job barriers was significant in three situations: 1) language problems, 2) not knowing how to find a job, and 3) having qualifications that weren’t recognized inside of Canada.

The relationship between perceived language ability and the barrier of language problems was statistically significant. Those with lower perceived language skills were more likely to feel as though language was impeding their ability to get work.

Perceived language ability was associated with not knowing how to find a job, with less experienced English speakers being less likely to know how to find work.

Perceived language ability was also associated with having qualifications that are unrecognized in Canada. Clients with advanced levels of English were significantly less likely to feel as though their qualifications weren't recognized.

In the focus groups, clients consistently identified language ability as a barrier to employment, and staff also reported on how level of English informed decisions about Tier level for immigrant clients. Staff said that the ERIQ could usefully track the language that the client speaks most often at home.

## 6.4 Taking an Immigrant Lens to Employment Services Provision

This section reports on the qualitative and quantitative data collected about the approaches, Practice Areas and employment outcomes detailed through the staff and client focus groups and the client survey. For the final Framework of best practices that could assist employment services to take an Immigrant Lens to their work, please see Appendix A.

### 6.4.1 Approaches to achieving Employment Outcomes with Immigrant Clients

Interviews with staff members involved asking them to indicate, from a range of approaches identified in the literature, those that were fundamental to the work they do with immigrant clients and to name the ways in which someone would know they were working from that approach. These "ways" are the indicators that were grouped by the Advisory Group and researcher into the seven Practice Areas reflected in the next section. The table below shows the frequency with which staff selected an approach and the types of indicators described in relation to each one.

**Table 5.5 Approaches and indicators for achieving employment outcomes with immigrant clients**

Approach	Frequency	Types of Indicators
Client-centred	13	Collaborative approach, client satisfaction, individualized attention
Intercultural	9	Staff awareness of client culture, awareness of difference in communication styles cross-culturally, clients feel culture is respected
Systems Theory	9	Staff awareness of impact of age, gender, ethnicity/culture, financial situation on employment, attention to immigrant barriers to employment
Integrated	8	Clients understand available settlement services, referrals to appropriate programs and needed supplementary services for immigrants, attachment to English Language Training

Approach	Frequency	Types of Indicators
Ecological	5	Clients asked about family expectations for job search, number of referrals from family/friends
Anti-racism	5	Staff aware of equality legislation, clients can talk about concerns in relation to racism in the workplace

During an Advisory Group meeting dedicated to reviewing the data related to approaches and indicators, the Group recommended collapsing Systems Theory, Ecological and Anti-racism into one approach called “Environmental Context” since there was considerable repetition of indicators across these three approaches. This change was made for the Framework presented in Appendix A.

## 6.4.2 Immigrant Lens Practice Areas

The data from staff interviews and client focus groups were analyzed and sorted into seven different Practice Areas for ESCs working to achieve employment outcomes with immigrant clients. Clients’ desire for each of the indicators in each of the Practice Areas was tracked through the survey using Likert-type questions which allowed a score to be assigned in relation to the value of an individual indicator. Those values could then be aggregated to produce a score for each Practice Area, demonstrating a) the perceived value of each Practice Area, and b) the extent to which indicators in each Area related to each other.<sup>30</sup> The table below shows the seven Practice Areas and their scores from the client survey.

**Table 5.6. Averaged scores for each practice area, ordered by perceived importance**

Practice Areas	Average score
Connection to Community Resources	4.26
Multicultural Employment Services	4.10
Advocacy	3.93
Cultural Awareness	3.60
Fostering Intercultural Relationships	3.56
Easily Accessible and Welcoming	3.11
Strategic Management Practice	N/A. Not tracked through the survey as related to management and governance of the ESC

From the table above we can see that all of the areas scored above the neutral point with the “Connection to Community Resources” practice and “Multicultural Employment Services” assigned the highest value by survey respondents, although with very little difference between the scores (.16). They may also be seen as the practice areas, which had the best categorization of indicators. “Easily Accessible and Welcoming” practice scored the lowest and was only slightly above the neutral point. What this lower score means can only be considered in light of a more in-depth review of the results for this area. We now turn to the detailed results for each practice area.

<sup>30</sup> The scale ranged from 1 to 5 with 5 the highest possible score. Therefore, 3 was the middle or “neutral” point of the scale. Any score above that was considered to be of value to clients.

### 6.4.3 Connections to Community Resources Practice

The table below sets out the mean scores for each practice in this Area and the extent to which respondents received them. These practice indicators are about connecting clients to non-employment services and cultural activities.

**Table 5.7. Perceived importance of Connection to Community Resources practice**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Interested or Very Interested	% Received
a. Learning about the main local organizations that can help immigrants (MOSAIC, Abbotsford Community Services, etc.)	4.53	80.6%	76.8
b. Referral to local professional networks relevant to my field	4.46	76.5%	39.4
c. Referral to English language courses (if I need it)	4.34	75.2%	56.4
d. Referral to English language testing	4.24	67.7%	42.4
e. Referral to community programs for immigrants	4.22	70.7%	32.3
f. Learning about community events where I can meet people from lots of different cultures	4.19	67.6%	37.4
g. Support to find volunteer work not related to my field	4.02	57.1%	24.2
h. Learning about local activities where I can meet people from my own culture	3.78	57.1%	27.3

\*Scale scores range from 1-5

The table above shows that the top three valued practices in this Area for clients, were “learning about the main local organizations that can help immigrants,” (experienced by 76.8% of respondents), “referral to local/professional networks relevant to my field” (experienced by 39.4% of respondents), and “referral to English language courses, if I need it” (experienced by 56.4% of clients). Of note, is that, other than “learning about main local organizations that can help immigrants,” there are significant differences between rates of respondents indicating that they were interested or very interested in these practices and the frequency with which they experienced them.<sup>31</sup>

Data from the staff focus groups illustrated limitations to referrals within EPBC service provision. Some staff reported that there is limited availability of community resources for immigrants and that service referrals are not billable within the EPBC model so that “it discourages case managers to do so.”

Client focus group data validates the survey results. One of the priority measures of customer satisfaction described in the groups was assistance with and proper assessment for non-employment services.

<sup>31</sup> A difference of 20% or more between level of importance and frequency of experience was deemed significant.

## 6.4.4 Multicultural Employment Services Practice

Survey respondents were asked to assign value to a range of practice indicators or career planning actions that are typically only carried out for immigrant clients. The table below shows that the majority of practices in this area were perceived to be of high value to participants and had a mean score over four. The top three valued were “learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment” (experienced by 50% of respondents), “guiding me on how to switch to a new career so I could get a job in Canada” (experienced by 47% of respondents), and “learning about how Canadian employment structures and systems work” (experienced by 48% of respondents).

The top three most frequently experienced practices were “talking about both short and long-term goals” (63%), “learning about what to expect in the Canadian labour market” (57%) and “told about real life examples of other immigrants” (54%).

**Table 5.8. Perceived importance of Multicultural Employment Services practice**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Important or Very Important	% Received
a. Learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment	4.41	85.8%	49.5
b. Guiding me on how to switch to a new career so I could get a job in Canada	4.39	81.4%	46.5
c. Learning how Canadian employment structures and systems work	4.30	82.8%	47.5
d. Learning about what to expect in the Canadian labour market	4.28	83.8%	56.6
e. Helping me access specialized training to get a license or accreditation in my field	4.27	78.8%	33.3
f. Talking about employment rights and laws	4.26	78.6%	46.5
g. Talking about both short term and long term goals	4.24	83.7%	62.6
h. Talking about equality laws in Canada	4.18	65.6%	38.4
i. Making sure I won't get discriminated against in my job search	4.17	68.7%	30.3
j. Talking about what I think could be barriers in my job search	4.12	73.5%	43.4
k. Evaluating my foreign credentials	4.12	69.1%	26.3
l. Being informed about unethical local employers	4.11	69.1%	24.2
m. Finding me a mentor	4.02	51.6%	23.2
n. Practicing communication skills	3.99	70.1%	40.4
o. Referred to an employment program for immigrants only	3.96	69.4%	47.5
p. Told about real life examples of other immigrants to encourage me in my job search	3.87	73.7%	53.5
q. Finding me a volunteer placement in my field	3.93	70.6%	23.2
r. Making sure employment opportunities are appropriate in relation to my culture/religion	3.82	54.1%	22.2
s. Attend group workshops for immigrants only	3.70	54.6%	49.5
t. Talking about my financial situation	3.66	54.1%	36.4



Client focus group participants were asked to rank their top ten case management practices and the results echo the survey results as some of the practices given priority were “explaining how the job search process works and what the expectations were of me,” “helping me find ways to understand what Canadian employers want,” and “helping to understand how to operate in the Canadian workplace.”

Notably, there is, in the main, a significant difference in the frequencies with which clients indicated they thought practices were important or very important and the rate with which these practices were experienced, except in the case of “attend group workshops for immigrants only” (with a difference of around 5%). Correlation testing did show that those who have been in Canada for longer periods of time were significantly less likely to place importance on this Practice Area. Perhaps this finding, in part, explains the gaps in that some immigrants did not place importance on these practices and so did not experience (request) them. There was no correlation between length of time in service and experience of each of the practices in this area. The small sample size may account for the lack of significance, as it could be possible that rates of experiencing a practice might increase over time with the ESC.

However, data from staff sheds some light on gaps in terms of the EPBC model. Overwhelmingly, staff indicated that the EPBC model prevents discussion of achievement of long-term employment goals commensurate with experience and education, because: 1) the program records outcomes at the point that an individual gets any job, and 2) most immigrants require longer-term training or interventions to achieve this goal. For many immigrants, the first priority is a survival job, but they want to continue to work towards a longer-term goal. However, case management stops once labour market attachment is achieved.

Staff reported that the self-serve aspect of the model does not provide the level of support required by an immigrant to independently work on their long-term goal while they are employed. Some also reported that the model limits the level of follow-up support an immigrant can receive. There is insufficient time for this aspect of case management due to short intervals between follow-ups meaning that it often has to be carried out by telephone.

For those former clients who return when they become unemployed or who are able to focus on long-term goals in case management, staff reported that eligibility requirements for longer-term training and financial supports are barriers to assisting immigrants to find employment matching their skills. Another barrier was the language and workshop pre-requisites, and limited duration for STOC training. However, they did highlight that STOC could be useful for immigrant clients because “any immigrant can qualify” and it did assist clients to avail themselves of Canadian training that they could then put in their resumes.

This feedback may explain the gap between value and frequency of “talking about both short-term and long-term goals.” It may also explain the gaps for “guiding me on how to switch to a new career,” “helping me access specialized training,” and “making sure

employment opportunities are appropriate in relation to my culture/religion.” Staff identified that they do not have the time to do the more in-depth career assessments that might be required in the case of “guiding me on how to switch to a new career.” These assessments, they said, were inappropriately categorized as VSF when they could usefully be FSPS.

Some of the practices in this Area describe content that staff reflected would normally be reviewed in ESS group workshops, such as those related to learning about Canadian employment systems. Staff highlighted that this element of the model was positive because it did allow immigrants to emerge from the program with tangibles like a résumé. However, they also indicated that ESS workshop formats do not allow sufficient emphasis or follow-up on immigrant-specific content even though both Centres have immigrant stream workshops. Also, some staff reported that differing language levels affect workshop delivery. While they did not qualify this statement, the reason could be that language level affects the pace of delivery, something that cannot be consistent when there are different language levels represented in a workshop.

Staff recommended being able to stream immigrants according to language level and have those in the same stream stay together for core ESS workshops that are particularly important for immigrants such as résumé writing, cover letters and interviewing.

Staff did say that proposed changes to the fee schedule in regard to ESS topics would facilitate the repeatability that is necessary with immigrant clients in terms of core workshops.

A gap between the importance and frequency of “evaluating my foreign credentials” may be due to initial confusion about how to integrate ICES into EPBC processes, identified as a challenge in one staff interview. The Advisory Group commented that ICES credentialing is not for everyone and that clients may “value it but it is not always appropriate.”

The key message from the staff focus groups was that the “model is not serving the client the way it should.” There were perceptions that the EPBC emphasizes a “one size fits all” approach and that the model emphasizes numbers over service quality. Some staff reported bottlenecks in the service, “everything [is] so congested [you] have to do the work of five to six programs.” Since many of the practices in this area are so specific to the employment needs of immigrants, the gaps between importance of practices and experience of them may validate staff feedback.

In terms of “referral to an employment program for immigrants only,” the gaps between importance and experience may be attributed to staff data that the language and other eligibility requirements for Skills Connect were limitations to referral.

Another notable finding is the gap between the perceived value and importance of “finding me a volunteer placement in my field” and the rate at which clients

experienced it. Some clients in the focus groups also identified the importance of assistance with finding volunteer opportunities.

### 6.4.5 Advocacy Practice

The table below shows that respondents generally perceived the value of the practices that were about acting on the client’s behalf throughout the case management process to be quite high. The top three valued practices were, “provide information on available jobs” (experienced by 78% of respondents), “register me in other programs or courses I need” (experienced by 76% of respondents), and “contact employers directly to introduce me and talk about my strengths” (experienced by 22% of respondents). Less than half the sample indicated that the last three practices in the table were important or very important.

**Table 5.9. Perceived importance of Advocacy practice**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Important or Very Important	% Received
a. Provide information on available jobs	4.48	86.8%	77.8
b. Register me in other programs or courses I need	4.34	87.8%	75.8
c. Contact employers directly to introduce me and talk about my strengths	4.14	75.8%	22.2
d. Contact employers directly to educate them about how my experience is equal to Canadian experience	4.07	61.6%	17.2
e. Practice making phone calls with me	3.89	64.7%	31.3
f. Make phone calls for me for services I need (i.e. housing /health)	3.58	44.5%	20.2
g. Contact employers to organize my work schedule so it fits with my family responsibilities	3.47	45.5%	20.2
h. Sit with me while I make phone calls for interviews or to get services	3.43	38.4%	23.2

\*Scale scores range from 1-5

Interestingly, except for the top two valued practices, a third or less of respondents indicated experiencing the practices despite generally valuing them. In the case of the practices related to employers, feedback from the Advisory Group indicated that this work is generally left to job developers, and that “case managers find it hard to carry out [the] job developer role,” alongside their other responsibilities. Perhaps clients in this sample had not yet had the opportunity to engage with a job developer in their ESC. Data from client focus groups underlined the importance of employer advocacy. Participants were asked to describe their ideal ESC and one of the common features was connection with employers to set up appointments or endorse the client.

There were also some system Advocacy Practice indicators that clients were not surveyed about as they did not relate to direct service provision. They are set out below.

**Table 5.14. System Advocacy practice**

Practice Indicator
a. The ESC networks with other organizations to raise awareness about the needs of immigrant clients, the issues they face and improvements that could be made to facilitate their participation in the labour market
b. The ESC participates in media coverage to challenge stereotypes about immigrants
c. The ESC participates in EPBC Committees, i.e. CPAC, Vancouver ESC Table and Specialized Populations Working Group to propose ways in which services to immigrants could be improved
d. The ESC advocates to remove the barrier of Canadian experience for immigrants
e. The ESC does research and industry networking [for immigrants] to find job leads and vacancies
f. The ESC does research related to improving the effectiveness of employment services for immigrants and stays up-to-date on research done by others

The practices in the table above were named by some staff in the ESCs. These practices describe the work an ESC does at the structural level to remove employment barriers for immigrant clients.

### 6.4.6 Cultural Awareness Practice

Survey respondents were asked to consider the extent to which they agreed to a range of indicators about the cultural awareness demonstrated by staff and the ESC. The table below sets out the results in relation to this practice area.

**Table 5.10. The perceived importance of Cultural Awareness practice:**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Agree or Agree Strongly	% Received
a. My cultural/religious beliefs are respected	4.16	77.8%	68.7
b. A sign on the wall that says welcome in multiple languages	3.82	54.5%	47.5
c. Staff can tell me how communication styles differ between my home country and Canada	3.55	49.5%	42.4
d. Staff know about some of my cultural/religious traditions/beliefs	3.53	48.5%	49.5
e. Staff ask me something about where I'm from	3.48	37.4%	60.6
f. Staff want to know if my family's expectations for employment play a big role in my job search	3.47	44.5%	31.3
g. Staff know something about my home country (i.e. current affairs/political situation)	3.37	39.4%	43.4
h. Staff can say 'welcome' in my first language	3.27	25.3%	28.3

\*Scale scores range from 1-5

The table above shows that the top three valued practices were “my cultural/religious beliefs were respected” (experienced by 68.7% of respondents), “a sign on the wall that says welcome in multiple languages,” (experienced by 48% of respondents), and

“staff can tell me how communication styles differ between my home country and Canada” (experienced by 42% of respondents).

Each of the practices in this area were valued by respondents, although less than half the sample agreed or strongly agreed that the last four practices in the table should be a part of employment services. However, we must look more closely at the relationship between some important demographic variables and these practices to uncover why. Length of time in Canada and language level was found to correlate to the perceived value of this Practice Area. Those who have lived in Canada for longer had less interest in Cultural Awareness practices. Those who have intermediate and beginner English had a stronger desire for the practices in this Area. Thus, this Area of practice may be seen as important for immigrants who have spent less time in the country and for whom language is a barrier.

More than half of respondents had experienced “my cultural religious beliefs were respected” and “staff ask me something about where I am from” (60%). About half of respondents both valued and had experienced “staff know something about my cultural/religious beliefs” (49%). In general, we can see in this area that there is fairly strong correlation between the perceived value of the practices from respondents and the extent to which they experienced them.

This relationship may be due to a number of factors for participating ESCs. For instance, many staff are immigrants themselves, and may be from the same country/culture as clients and are very aware of clients’ cultural backgrounds. Also recruitment practices for each ESC tend to emphasize cross-cultural communication and experience working with immigrants. Thus, there seems to be a solid level of cultural awareness amongst staff within the ESCs.

#### **6.4.7 Fostering Intercultural Relationships Practice**

In staff interviews and client focus groups, a number of practices were named that related to the affective dimension of service provision and the positive recognition of clients’ cultures and prior experience. These were organized into the Fostering Intercultural Relationships Practice Area. The table below shows the perceived value and frequencies for these indicators.

**Table 5.11. Perceived importance of Fostering Intercultural Relationships practice**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Important or Very Important	% received
a. Giving me individualized, one-to-one attention	4.20	78.3%	77.8
b. Giving me enough time so I don't feel rushed	4.10	82.7%	66.7
c. Being non-judgmental	4.09	68.7%	58.6
d. Making me feel like I am in a 'safe space'	4.08	79.8%	70.7
e. Saying they will help me to remove barriers to employment	4.08	76.5%	57.6
f. Saying positive things about my home country work experience	3.91	64.3%	54.5
g. Being sympathetic about the challenges and difficulties of moving to a new country	3.91	66%	46.5%
h. Telling me I can talk about any concerns I have about racism in the workplace	3.80	57.7%	32.3
i. Talking about their own immigration experience	3.77	58.5%	39.4
j. Encouraging me to honour my own culture (use my own name on resumes)	3.71	57.2%	35.4%
k. Telling me it's a big accomplishment to move to a new country	3.68	48.4%	38.4

\*Scale scores range from 1-5

All of the practices in this area were valued relatively highly by participants. Except for “telling me it’s a big accomplishment to move to a new country”, over half of the sample thought each practice was important or very important.

The top three valued practices were “giving me individualized one-to-one attention” (experienced by 78% of respondents), “giving me enough time so I don’t feel rushed” (experienced by 67% of respondents), and “being non-judgemental” (experienced by 59% of respondents).

The top three most frequently experienced practices were “giving me individualized one-to-one attention,” “making me feel like I am in a safe space,” (71%) and “giving me enough time so I don’t feel rushed” (67%).

There was a strong correlation between the value, level of importance and experience of “giving me individualized one-to-one attention,” attesting to staff provision of a client-centred service. When tests for correlation were used in relation to demographic variables, a correlation again emerged in the case of length of time in country. Those who had been in Canada for longer placed less importance on the practices in this Area.

There are some significant gaps between those who stated practices were important or very important and the frequency with which they were experienced for quite a few indicators in this area, in particular: “telling me I can talk about any concerns I have about racism in the workplace,” “saying they will help remove barriers to employment,” “encouraging me to honour my own culture,” and “being sympathetic about the

challenges and difficulties of moving to a new country.” Perhaps staff also takes into account the length of time someone has been in Canada and use that to inform decisions about whether to employ these practices with a client, thus explaining the gaps.

Clients in the focus groups did prioritize individualized support, validating the importance of this practice. Staff focus group data did not reveal any feedback about the EPBC model and implementing these practices.

### 6.4.8 Easily Accessible and Welcoming Practice

The table below shows the value, level of importance and frequency with which practices were experienced that are about ensuring the convenience and accessibility of services for immigrant clients. We can see from the table below that the top three valued practices were “use of résumé/cover templates,” (experienced by 74% of respondents), “extra one-to-one support to tailor resumes outside of case management,” (experienced by 55% of respondents) and “a lot of appointments at the start of my job search “ (experienced by 37% of respondents).

**Table 5.12. The perceived importance of Easily Accessible and Welcoming Practice**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value*	% Important/Very Important	% received
a. Use of résumé/cover letter templates	4.29	77.8%	73.7
b. Extra one-to-one support to tailor resumes outside of case management	4.17	73.7%	54.5
c. Flexible business hours	3.89	59.6%	19.2%
d. A lot of appointments at the start of my job search	3.55	43.4%	37.4
e. Settlement services onsite or very nearby	3.53	45.5%	32.3
f. Being able to see someone without an appointment	3.43	51.5%	34.3
g. English language training onsite or very nearby	3.43	52.5%	34.3
h. Access to a translator in the Centre	3.17	39.3%	31.3
i. Case management services delivered in my first language	3.14	37.4%	37.4
j. Having a case manager before arriving in Canada	3.13	25.2%	6.1
k. Receptionist can speak my first language	2.66	21.2%	20.2

\*Scale scores range from 1-5

Except for “receptionist can speak my first language”, all the practices in this Area were valued relatively highly by respondents. Almost all the clients who said that “use of resume/cover letter templates” was important, experienced the practice. The same can be said of “case management services delivered in my first language,” “receptionist can speak my first language,” and “a lot of appointments at the start of my job search.”

In terms of gaps between level of importance and experiencing the practice, it makes sense that there is a gap for “settlement services onsite or very nearby” as neither of

the ESCs was co-located with settlement and only one with English Language Training services. Also, neither provides case management prior to arrival, although this practice would appear to be important to a small cohort of clients. The gap for “flexible business hours” is quite significant and could be a point of attention for the participating ESCs, as could “extra one-to-one support to tailor resumes outside of case management.” However, the latter may in part be explained through staff data relating to not being able to provide sufficient follow-up with clients post workshops to offer this kind of support.

Of note is that there was a significant correlation between this Practice Area and perceived language level. Those with intermediate or beginner English were more likely to indicate that they thought the practices in this Area were important. Many of the practices in this Area were also highlighted in the client focus groups.

It would appear that staff and the ESCs are, for the most part, implementing these important indicators despite the data from staff focus groups indicating frustration with the model and concerns about lack of time.

### 6.4.9 Strategic Management Practice

A Practice Area identified through the staff interviews was that of the strategic management actions that participating ESCs engage in to achieve employment outcomes with immigrant clients. Clients were not asked to rate the desirability of these practices. The indicators related to this area of the work identified by staff are set out below.

**Table 5.13 Strategic Management Practice**

Practice Indicator
a. Staff hired are from diverse groups, i.e. are immigrants, from visible minority groups and reflect main ethno-cultural groups in the local area
b. Services are available in main first languages in the local area
c. ESC is connected to or has a partnership agreement with an immigrant organization
d. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with English Language Training services
e. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with settlement services
f. ESC job postings specify experience working with immigrants and competency in cross-cultural communication
g. ICES is integrated into the EPBC processes so that staff can easily arrange credential evaluation for clients
h. ESC marketing and strategic plan focuses on ethnic community hubs/events
i. ESC service delivery is shaped through staff and client consultations
j. ESC culture does not tolerate stereotyping
k. ESC culture supports a willingness to break from protocol

Many of the strategic management practices outlined in the table above are already embedded into the participating ESCs as can be seen with the snapshots above. We can see that these strategic practices may be working effectively to enable the implementation of practices in the other areas. For instance, Cultural Awareness practice and the hiring practices of the ESCs may be related in terms of requiring competencies in cross-cultural communication. So too may staff diversity and service



delivery in main first languages support Cultural Awareness and Fostering Intercultural Relationships practices.

### 6.4.10 Priority Practices

The table below sets out the top ten valued practices from the ones asked about in the survey. The top three practices across all areas were “learning about the main local organizations that can help immigrants” (4.53), “referral to local professional networks relevant to my field” (4.46) and “learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment” (4.41).

**Table 5.15. Top Ten Valued Practices**

Practice Indicator	Perceived Value	% Important or Very Important	% Experienced
a. Learning about the main local organizations that can help immigrants (MOSAIC, Abbotsford Community Services, etc.)	4.53	80.6%	76.8
b. Referral to local professional networks relevant to my field	4.46	76.5%	39.4
c. Learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment	4.41	85.8%	49.5
d. Provide information on available jobs	4.48	86.8%	77.8
e. Guiding me on how to switch to a new career so I could get a job in Canada	4.39	81.4%	46.5
f. Referral to English language courses (if I need it)	4.34	75.2%	56.4
g. Learning how Canadian employment structures and systems work	4.30	82.8%	47.5
h. Use of résumé/cover letter templates	4.29	77.8%	73.7
i. Learning about what to expect in the Canadian labour market	4.28	83.8%	56.6
j. Helping me access specialized training to get a license or accreditation in my field	4.27	78.8%	33.3

We can see from the table above that the top ten practices across all the Practice Areas were, for the most part, practices that are very specific to immigrant job searches. Data from staff focus groups and interviews indicated the challenges to providing these practices within the EPBC. Thus, it would appear that immigrant clients value specialist service provision, but there are limitations to providing it, highlighted by the gaps between importance and frequency for: “referral to local professional networks”, “learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment”, “guiding me on how to switch to a new career”, and “learning about how Canadian employment structures and systems work”.

Staff identified that language eligibility requirements for supplementary services provided outside the EPBC such as Skills Connect further complicates meeting the needs of immigrant clients.<sup>32</sup>

### 6.4.11 Immigrant Client Employment Outcomes

Staff and clients in the focus groups articulated a range of goals desired as a result of engaging with employment services and the practices outlined in the sections above. The table below shows the results of the survey when clients were asked about their desire to reach the range of outcomes identified in the qualitative phase of the research.

**Table 5.16. Desired Outcomes Client Survey**

Outcome	Yes, I want to do this and this centre can help me do it	Yes I want to do this but do not think the centre can help me do it	I have already done this as a result of coming to the centre	No interest/not relevant
a. Increase my confidence	66.7%	10.1%	13.1%	4%
b. Feel motivated to keep trying in my job search	65.7%	10.1%	15.2%	2%
c. Get a short-term job or practicum in my field (or related field)	55.6%	17.2%	7.1%	12.1%
d. Get a good job in the field I was in (or related field) before I came to Canada	54.5%	18.2%	7.1%	6.1%
e. Have a clear picture of the steps I need to take to get my credentials recognized or upgraded	53.5%	12.1%	11.1%	11.1%
f. Get connected to English language training	53.5%	9.1%	14.1%	12.1%
g. To feel more integrated into my community and Canada	52%	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%
h. Get connected to other needed services, i.e. settlement services	49.5%	8.1%	14.1%	13.1%
i. Get a short-term job doing anything that can help me pay my bills	43.4%	12.1%	14.1%	17.2%

The table above shows that when the rates in the first and third columns are combined that the majority of participants thought all these outcomes were desirable and they thought their ESC could help them achieve these outcomes or it had already done so. The top most frequently chosen outcomes when these rates are combined were “increase my confidence” (79.8%), “feel motivated to keep trying in my job search” (80.9%) and “get connected to English Language Training” (67.6%).

<sup>32</sup> To be eligible for Skills Connect clients must have intermediate language ability.

Of note is that the majority of clients wanted to “get a good job in the field I was in, or related field before I came to Canada” but many did not think that this was a criterion for a good job. Perhaps this reflects an understanding that there are significant barriers to accomplishing this goal, but that clients are hopeful that ESCs can help them overcome those hurdles. This criterion for a good job did not include the phrase “related field” so perhaps the addition of this nuance into the item in this section makes the goal seem more attainable to respondents.

In the focus groups, clients did not describe a “good job” as one that was in the same field when they arrived. They described the aggravation of not being able to achieve this goal, “was a frustration [I] know the country needs a lot of professionals... made me feel I made a huge mistake, beginning from 0 to 100” (nurse, Mexico).

Also notable is that 66.3% of clients surveyed indicated that a goal was “to feel more integrated into my community and Canada.” The clients in the focus groups also echoed this desire, “I want [to] be able to have a steady job, will be a self-confident person, which will make me happier leaving my country...make me feel like I fit, not a stranger, part of the community” (nurse, Mexico).

The importance of the goal of integration validates the importance assigned to Connection to Community Resources practices, which involved indicators about linking clients to opportunities that could assist integration into Canadian culture. The importance of this goal may demonstrate how essential employment is for integration and the mental well-being of immigrants.

The high frequency with which clients selected “get a good job in the field I was in (or related field) before I came to Canada,” and the two goals related to getting a short-term job demonstrates that clients are validating the importance of being able to consider their short and long-term goals in employment services. The data from staff focus groups reflected on in Section 5.4.4 illustrates the challenges of carrying out this practice within the EPBC.

## 6.5 Key Findings

The key findings from the data are presented under relevant headings below. These only relate to the participating ESCs and the clients surveyed and are not representative of all ESCs in the EPBC and their immigrant clients.

### ***Clients thinking about Employment***

- The demographic findings are in keeping with EPBC program profiles and that of immigrants to Canada more generally. Respondents were, for the most part, in Canada less than 10 years with half in Canada less than five years. They were well educated with 76% educated to university level. Most had immigrated to Canada under the Skilled Workers or Family Class categories. The main occupations that

respondents were in before coming to Canada were “business, finance and administration” (17%) and “education, law, social and community services” (16%).

- Almost half of the respondents were new to the ESCs with another third having been with their service for between two to six months.
- The top three criteria for a good job were: “good wage” (75%), “with benefits” (81%) and “workplace where I am treated with respect” (72%). The least frequently chosen criteria were “in the field I was in before I came to Canada”, “a survival job” and “entry level in the field I was in before I came to Canada.” The results show that a “good job” for respondents is not just any kind of labour market attachment. Seventy-one percent of clients surveyed associate the phrase “matches my education, skills and strengths,” with a “good job.”
- The top three barriers to employment were “not having enough connections in the job market” (57%), “no job experience in Canada” (52%) and “not enough money to upgrade my education” (52%). These were closely followed by “my qualifications from outside Canada are not accepted” (51%). Staff in the ESCs reported that the ERIQ did not track some important indicators for immigrants including highest level of education outside Canada and lack of Canadian work experience.
- Tier level was significant in relation to a number of variables explored including: transportation difficulties (for Tier 3), not enough Canadian experience (Tier 3 and 4) and qualifications not recognized in Canada (Tier 3). These were also barriers that staff described using to assign immigrant clients to Tiers within the EPBC.
- Respondents most frequently indicated that they had intermediate language ability. Those with lower level English skills felt they were less likely to find work and beginner English was significantly related to “not knowing how to find a job” and “my qualifications outside of Canada are not accepted.” Those with lower language skills were also more likely to value Easily Accessible and Welcoming practice and Cultural Awareness practice demonstrating that these practices should be emphasized with these clients.
- Findings about the correlations between Tier level, language level and barriers suggests that clients matching these criteria (i.e. in Tiers 3 or 4, lower language level, not knowing how to find a job and not enough Canadian experience) could need the more specialized practices for immigrants in the Immigrant Lens Framework. However, staff data about the EPBC reflects that there are limitations to providing them. Language requirements for other employment programs for immigrants limit the referrals that ESC staff can make to them. Thus, the EPBC may be crucial for meeting the needs of immigrant clients with lower language levels facing the key barriers identified.
- Forty-seven percent of participants had used English Language Training, around 30% had used Skills Connect and 30% had used Job Options. Ninety-six percent of clients surveyed had used at least one of these services. This finding shows that employment and language services supplementary to the model are used and, most likely, needed by clients.

## 6.5.1 The Value of an Immigrant Lens

### ***ESCs are implementing an Immigrant Lens to meet the needs of immigrant clients***

- Albeit differently, the two participating ESCs offer specialized services to immigrants within the context of the EPBC and are located in areas with substantial pools of immigrants. Both have parent organizations that provide other programs for immigrants and have demonstrable competencies in meeting the needs of immigrants.
- Both ESCs were carrying out the bulk of best practices identified through the *Legacies* research. Given that the bulk of practices identified for the Immigrant Lens were named by staff themselves and were then generally deemed valuable by clients, it seems evident that having parent organizations with cultural competence ensures that the ESCs provide services that can meet the needs of immigrant clients.

### ***Clients value an Immigrant Lens to service provision***

- All of the practices in every Area except for “receptionist that can speak my first language” (score of 2.66) were generally valued highly by respondents, indicating that all the practices assessed are important best practices for the immigrant clients surveyed. The highest scoring practice areas were Connection to Community Resources (4.26) and Multicultural Employment Services (4).
- Averaged scores for each Practice Area indicate that practices in each area do relate to each other, indicating that the practices are grouped appropriately.
- Connection to Community Resources was perceived by clients to be of high value. This finding makes sense in light of the importance of the outcome of feeling more integrated in my community and Canada (66.3%), since many of the indicators in this area could facilitate integration. These findings may underline the central role of employment in the integration and well-being of immigrants.
- Multicultural Employment Services practices were also of high value to clients, showing the importance of employment services specifically for immigrants.

### ***Findings about perceived value and experience of specific practice areas***

- There were significant gaps between those who agreed or agreed strongly that the practices in the Multicultural Employment Services area should be part of provision and those who had experienced them. This gap may indicate an inability to fully implement these specialist services within the EPBC model. Staff data revealed that it was difficult to provide many of these practices as they were about longer-term training and discussion of longer-term employment goals. Staff reported that EI eligibility requirements meant that many clients could not avail themselves of the longer-term training or even short-term subsidized placements that could assist with getting employment commensurate with education and experience. Clients then focus on shorter-term entry level or survival jobs. At the point in the program

when LMA is recorded, clients are blocked from accessing further case management support that could help them work towards more sustainable, quality employment. Staff also reported insufficient resources within the model to provide the repeatability of ESS that immigrant clients need.

- In terms of Advocacy practice, there is limited capacity within the case manager role to carry out the direct contact with employers that survey respondents appeared to value highly.
- There was a strong correlation between the value of Cultural Awareness practices and clients experience of those practices demonstrating the cultural competence of staff within the participating ESCs.
- Survey findings suggest that survey respondents were receiving individualized, positive attention from staff in ESCs. This finding is indicated by the frequency with which they experienced many of practices related to Fostering Intercultural Relationships and the rates of those saying that they were important or very important. However, there could be more attention to addressing the systemic barriers clients could face in terms of discussing concerns about racism in the workplace or the removal of barriers to employment.
- Clients appear to be experiencing the actions related to Easily Accessible and Welcoming practice despite the concerns about the model from staff.
- Over half of the respondents wanted to reach every outcome asked about in the survey and felt that their ESC could help them do it. The top three goals were “increase my confidence” (67%), “feel motivated in my job search” (66%), and “get a short-term job or practicum in my field” (56%). Many also wanted to work in the field (or related field) they were working in before they came to Canada despite placing “in the field I was in before I came to Canada” quite low on the list of criteria for a “good job.” The contradiction in this finding is not easily explained by the results. The outcomes desired and criteria for a “good job” identified define what quality employment is for the clients surveyed which it appears, the EPBC may have trouble achieving.
- The lack of significance between demographic variables and other important variables in the survey, such as Practice Area perceived value, may be as a result of the small sample size for this survey.
- Clients placed a high perceived value and importance on assistance to access volunteer opportunities, but did not experience these practices frequently. Perhaps this finding is a point of attention for participating ESCs as there is a VSF-funded service within the EPBC for unpaid work experience.
- Respondents indicated that a lack of connections in the job market was a barrier to employment and then valued the practice of connections to local professional networks, which could suggest the importance of mentoring for this group.

### ***Implementing specialist services for immigrants within the EPBC***

- The top ten indicators across all the Practice Areas were, for the most part, practices that are very specific to immigrants. The top three practices across all

Areas were “learning about the main local organizations that can help immigrants” (4.53), “referral to local professional networks relevant to my field” (4.46) and “learning about skills for adapting to the Canadian work environment” (4.41).

- It could be suggested that the EPBC cannot currently meet the needs of many immigrant clients because it is precisely those practices valued by the immigrant clients surveyed – many of which were not experienced frequently – that staff indicated they were limited in providing through the model. These practices are specialized to the population such as access to specialized training, foreign credential evaluation, connection to immigrant specific resources and so on.
- Of note, is that Service Coordination is not a billable in the EPBC and that staff noted limitations to this aspect of case management for clients. Service Coordination would involve many of the practices in the Connection to Community Resources Practice Area, the Advocacy Practice Area and some of the Multicultural Employment Service Area. The results validate the importance of Service Coordination for this group of clients.

## 7 Discussion and Conclusions

This discussion considers the research results in light of the literature reviewed. This chapter is organized in sections related to the objectives of the research.

### 7.1 Service Provider Understanding of an Immigrant Lens

The research shows that participating ESCs have a clear understanding of an Immigrant Lens and that this understanding reflects best practices identified in the literature. It also shows that a service provider Immigrant Lens is necessary in employment services for immigrants. In the EPBC, these approaches and practices can be implemented in different ways, either through a satellite service or integrated into a storefront.

The data seems to infer that having a culturally-competent parent organization with a track record of working with immigrants results in an Immigrant Lens. The literature stipulates that for any organization to be culturally competent, it must implement relevant practices and procedures at all levels of the organization from governance to direct service provision. In this research, the ESC parent organizations have diversity policies and recruitment practices that ensure cultural competence of staff and organizational culture and knowledge about meeting the needs of immigrants that has translated to ESCs.

In Ontario and Alberta, key informants also identified that part of an Immigrant Lens to service provision was the provision of supplementary services such as bridging programs, enhanced language training, mentoring and connection to other needed services. They also indicated that one-stop approaches there were not sufficient to meet the needs of immigrant clients. The research here showed that many clients had or were already connected to other non-EPBC employment services, validating this

finding within the context of the EPBC. In Ontario, informants said that once core measures were met, EO valued specialist service providers. In Alberta, specialist immigrant services are funded above and beyond one-stop centre provision because these centres are seen to not be able to fully meet the needs of these clients.

The insecurity of funding for Job Options BC and the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program threatens provincial capacity to meet the pre-employment needs of many immigrants addressed through these types of supplementary services. In which case, the Province could usefully consider how these services are resourced through the EPBC or are supported by the federal and provincial governments.

## 7.2 The Ideal Characteristics of an Immigrant Lens

Data from clients shows that they value the approaches and practices asked about in the survey. Thus, these may be seen as the ideal characteristics of an Immigrant Lens that providers could usefully test in other ESCs. In particular, we have seen that clients prioritize Connections to Community Resources and Multicultural Employment Services. Again, where the data shows gaps between high levels of importance for practices and frequency of experience, there could be attention as to how these can be implemented within the EPBC.

Of note is the correlation between some demographic variables and the practices. Namely, for those with lower language levels and for those who were newer to the country, practices related to Easily Accessible and Welcoming and Cultural Awareness may be particularly important and staff could emphasize these practices with these clients.

Also notable is that clients indicated the desire to achieve a number of goals with the help of their ESC, not just those related to labour market attachment. For instance, most clients wanted to increase their confidence, feel more motivated in their job search and be connected with English Language Training. Significantly, the majority of clients also wanted, through their ESC, to feel more integrated into their community and Canada. The desire for the latter goal may bear out a key point in the literature, which is how essential employment is for integration and the social inclusion of immigrants. It also points to the central role of ESCs working in concert with other organizations to facilitate this integration.

The literature suggests that, in order to cater to specialized populations, it could be important for one-stops to value social outcomes and articulate program aims in terms of social inclusion. The EPBC does not address social inclusion through performance management or overall program goals. The research suggests that, in the case of immigrants, an emphasis on social outcomes might be welcome.

The survey sample was small so these findings need to be tested with a larger sample and it is likely that further correlations would appear that could inform service provision.



### **7.3 Does an Immigrant Lens attract Clients and help achieve Outcomes**

While this question could not be definitively answered through the research, it would appear that having an immigrant lens may attract clients and help achieve outcomes. Clients indicated that, for the most part, participating ESCs could help them or had already helped them achieve their desired employment goals and many clients indicated that they were experiencing some of the practices they deemed important.

The literature and the key informant interviews inferred that certain approaches, cultural competences and specialist knowledge are important for immigrant employment services. Since these were elements that were also identified by staff in this research, it further supports the efficacy of an immigrant lens in successfully addressing the needs of immigrant clients. However, further research with ESCs carrying out these practices, incorporating longitudinal tracking, would be the only way to find out if implementing these practices results in clients' desired goals being achieved as many of the clients surveyed had only been with the ESCs for a short amount of time.

### **7.4 Best Practices and Program Policies that define an Immigrant Lens**

The best practices are those that are included in the final Immigrant Lens Framework in Appendix A. In terms of EPBC program policies, we can see that where there was a correlation between importance of practices and clients experiencing them, the Program is offering enhanced services to immigrants. So, it would appear that, generally, the model is facilitating ESCs to implement practices related to Cultural Awareness and aspects of Easily Accessible and Welcoming practice. There appears to be sufficient flexibility in the model to ensure that clients felt they got individualized one-to-one attention and that they were in a safe space. The fact that the program does not prescribe the practices that providers should implement to cater to immigrants means that the participating ESCs can implement Cultural Awareness and other practices that have the potential to enhance service provision to immigrants. However, there are challenges to providing immigrant specific services and longer-term interventions.

Many of the practices named by staff in the Framework are echoed in the literature. This finding bears out the literature in relation to the need for skilled advisors to cater to specialized populations, such as immigrants, who have the competences articulated by authors such as Rush (2010). The research points to the centrality of professional development for career development practitioners to support their work through the EPBC with immigrant clients. This type of professional development was called for in the recent research about skills needs for the sector (Life Strategies, 2013).

Since the bulk of practices identified for the Immigrant Lens are not prescribed by the EPBC, the research also supports the importance of making visible effective practices for working with specialized populations through the model, a general point made about one-stops in the literature.

Specific policies identified that enhance service provision within the model are: the ability to provide ESS both individually and within a group context; availability of STOC training to all EPBC clients; relatively easy access to foreign credential evaluation, such as ICES, for clients; the service provider determination of Tier; and, for eligible clients, financial and training supports. It is likely that the VSF for unpaid work placement is also of benefit to immigrant clients and could potentially be emphasized to meet the value of assistance with volunteering for clients in this research.

Staff did reflect that the proposed changes to the fee schedule would make it such that workshops could be adequately tailored to immigrant clients' needs and that there would be sufficient repeatability for core one-to-one ESS that are particularly relevant, such as résumé writing, cover letter writing and interview skills.

The literature asserted that best practice for working with clients of diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds involves a systems approach. The research indicated that participating Centres could possibly explore the extent to which they are taking this approach in their communities and with individual clients, as the EPBC model does not preclude this way of working.

## **7.5 Meeting Targets for Immigrant Clients**

The research could not assess the extent to which program targets are being met for immigrant clients as there are, to date, none set in relation to this specialized population. Also the EPBC is not disaggregating program outcome data according to immigrants. We cannot tell how the Program is performing in relation to them.

The literature reviewed for this research showed how occupational degradation is often the norm for immigrants as well as the profound effects it can have on their well-being and ability to integrate. The research showed that the clients surveyed seem to be well aware that they will experience occupational degradation, because they did not describe a "good job" as one that was in the field they were in before they came to Canada. It also showed that the EPBC may unintentionally contribute to that degradation.

For instance, staff named Immigrant Lens practices that they were currently using in the EPBC, but there were sometimes low rates of clients experiencing them, particularly those that have been identified as important for immigrants, such as those in the Multicultural Employment Services Practice Area. This finding tentatively indicates that the model, such as it is, cannot fully meet the needs of immigrant clients so that they can achieve truly sustainable labour market attachment. In particular, it cannot facilitate immigrants' access to the longer-term support and training that they need to achieve the longer-term goal of employment commensurate with education and experience thereby preventing occupational degradation. This situation is due to eligibility requirements for key financial supports such as occupational training and wage subsidies. It is also due to the point at which the Program records outcomes, which for many immigrants, is at the point that they achieve short-term LMA.

Program policy only defines sustainability in terms of labour market attachment post six months of the client achieving it. The literature tells us that this follow-up interval is too short. The literature also says that quality of employment is also important and includes not only job stability, but financial remuneration, work-life balance and safety. The clients consulted for the research expressed a set of employment values that also went beyond length of labour market attachment and also included a reference to the role of employment in social inclusion (discussed in Section 6.2 above) since the majority wanted a workplace where they were treated with respect. For immigrants, it would appear important for Program outcomes and/or policy to make these criteria visible.

Findings from other jurisdictions and provinces offer some learning here. In Ontario, key informants there also suggested that, due to resource issues, a one-stop shop approach could not currently ensure access to longer-term training even though clients do have access to a Training and Employment Incentive that non-EI eligible clients in the EPBC do not. In terms of outcomes, the literature and the snapshots suggest that program outcomes could be tracked with longer-term follow up from 12 months to 5 years. The benefit of this follow-up length is that it would make visible whether or not immigrants are truly achieving sustainable, quality employment instead of short-term, survival jobs.

According to the Ministry, EPBC data shows a need for more clients to access longer-term interventions. The data suggests that the EPBC could be crucial for those immigrant clients who have lower language levels (in Tier 3) who cannot access other employment programs due to language requirements. Yet, there are challenges to ensuring access for these clients to longer term interventions. The data also suggests the importance of other supplementary employment services specific to immigrants such as Skills Connect and Job Options BC as well as occupational bridging, enhanced language training and mentoring as components of longer-term interventions for immigrant clients.

## **7.6 EPBC Systemic Barriers to Service Provision**

The main barriers elicited would appear to be related to a lack of emphasis on service coordination in the model, eligibility for certain key financial supports required by many immigrant clients, and inadequate assessment of barriers and employability indicators for immigrants.

Some of the valued practices by clients that were not experienced frequently were those that involved service coordination by staff beyond registering clients in programs or courses. Advocacy on behalf on individuals involving making/practicing phone calls to service providers and referrals to community programs were not experienced that frequently.

It would appear that service coordination is a necessary part of the work. Yet some staff said it was not carried out as much as it should be because it was not billable. In the case of EO, service coordination is seen to be the hub of the model regardless of level

of client need. Perhaps there could be more emphasis on this element within EPBC policy.

The EI eligibility requirement for wage subsidies and financial supports for training appears to be a substantial block for the participating ESCs. Access for all immigrants to these supports could: address the expressed barrier of not enough money to upgrade education; help to implement practices that clients valued such as access to specialized training; and assist the achievement desired by clients of employment in their field (or related field) established before they came to Canada.

Although the research seems to suggest that providers are appropriately assessing the factors affecting immigrant clients' employability, it would appear that EPBC tools are not facilitating them to do so, in terms of indicators in the ERIQ. We know this from the literature and from staff data, which elaborates a variety of employability indicators for immigrants missing from the ERIQ. Including these indicators would facilitate providers not familiar with immigrants' employment needs. It would also make visible the needs of immigrants across the program and accurately show their distance from sustainable labour market attachment, which could then be used to assess the EPBCs performance in terms of the target group.

At the least, whether the highest level of education was outside Canada and lack of Canadian work experience could be included. Also the question on the ERIQ of "are you a recent immigrant" is not sensitive enough to identify if the client is a member of the specialized population as it does not make operational the definition of an immigrant used within the Program, which is someone who is not Canadian-born. The question is also ambiguous. Therefore, someone who no longer feels that they have recently immigrated could say "no" but, as the literature supports, could still be facing the unique employment barriers that immigrants have to overcome.

## 7.7 Conclusions

Since this research was exploratory, the following are tentative conclusions that could be further tested with other ESCs and immigrant clients using them:

- The ESCs had a clear understanding of an Immigrant Lens that reflected best practices in the literature, including social outcomes that went beyond just labour market attachment. This lens was facilitated by a parent organization that had policies and a culture, which ensured that there was the specialist knowledge in place to implement the Lens.
- Meeting the employment needs of immigrants does require specialist knowledge and longer-term supports that are challenging to apply in the context of one-stops. Many of the practices related to this were identified in the Immigrant Lens, and valued by clients but barriers were identified to implementing them. There are supplementary services identified through the research, not provided through one-stops, that are valuable for immigrants, such as bridging programs, mentoring, and enhanced language training.

- The research did articulate an Immigrant Lens Framework that was found to be desirable by clients and could be further tested. Some of the practice areas are particularly important for those with lower language ability and who have spent less time in Canada including Easily Accessible and Welcoming practice and Cultural Awareness practice.
- Many immigrants need access to longer-term training interventions to ensure achievement of employment commensurate with education and experience, which is a goal desired by the clients in this research. Eligibility requirements within the EPBC hinder access. This access could be crucial for many clients who have lower language ability and cannot access other immigrant employment programs such as Skills Connect.
- There could be greater focus on service coordination and unpaid work placements within the model.
- Proposed changes to the EPBC fee schedule could enhance service provision to immigrant clients.
- Performance measures could have targets related specifically to immigrants and EPBC outcomes data could be disaggregated to this specialized population.
- The ERIQ does not support accurate assessment of immigrant clients' characteristics and distance from sustainable, quality employment. It does not include some key employability indicators for immigrants such as where the highest level of education was achieved and lack of Canadian work experience. The question for identifying immigrants is ambiguous and could be changed to be more sensitive.
- The literature and the snapshots of one-stops in other provinces suggest that tracking sustainable labour market attachment requires longer-term follow up than currently happens within the EPBC. In EO and Alberta Works tracking happens up to 12 months post intervention.
- EPBC policies that enhance service provision within the model are: the ability to provide Employment Support Services both individually and within a group context; availability of STOC training to all EPBC clients; relatively easy access to ICES for clients; the service provider determination of Tier; and, for eligible clients, financial and training supports.
- It is important to carry out research that elaborates those practices that are effective for specialized populations within the EPBC.
- EPBC program policy and outcomes do not articulate a set of employment values that are important to the clients who participated in this research. It could be useful for the Ministry to consider making these values visible in program policy and performance management.
- Working with immigrant clients to achieve sustainable employment involves specialist knowledge and skills, which needs to be taken into account for the continuing professional development of career development practitioners working within the EPBC.

## 8 Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the research conclusions are set out below in relation to the relevant stakeholder group: the Province of British Columbia, EPBC contractors, career development practitioners (CDPs) in Employment Services Centres, and those involved in the professional development of CDPs. Recommendations about further research are also made.

### ***The Province of British Columbia could:***

1. Work with the federal government to ensure coordination of employment services to immigrants such that additional specialized services necessary to support them to achieve sustainable, quality employment are adequately resourced, such as occupational bridging programs, enhanced language training and mentoring. Given the insecurity of funding for programs like Job Options BC and Skills Connect for Immigrants, the two levels of government could usefully consider how to continue to meet the pre-employment needs of immigrants addressed through these programs.
2. Utilize provincial funding to create a parallel funding stream for key financial supports for immigrants who are non-EI eligible. These supports would include those for self-employment, wage subsidies, and occupational skills training.
3. Integrate supplementary services that are not otherwise available into the EPBC, such as occupational bridging programs, enhanced language training and mentoring. For instance, they could be reflected as FSPS or VSFs on the fee schedule.
4. Evolve the way in which the model enables access to longer-term interventions for immigrants so that they can achieve quality, sustainable employment and avoid occupational degradation. This exercise would entail ensuring access to upgrading of language to meet pre-requisites of any occupational training needed, participation in modules and/or certificates necessary for vocational upgrading, and increasing tuition caps for occupational skills training. As part of this, consider whether or not the EPBC should record outcomes related to accessing education and training as part of performance management.
5. Make Service Coordination more visible in the EPBC as it relates to immigrants for whom this element seems to be a core feature. Making Service Coordination part of performance management or creating a billing point related to this element could increase this visibility.
6. Reflect the importance of foreign credential recognition for immigrants in EPBC policy, and offer support to Centres on how to integrate it into their service provision, and identify when it is appropriate.
7. Consider measuring program outcomes up to 12 months, at the least.
8. Disaggregate program outcomes data to immigrant clients.

9. Create a realistic performance measure for the achievement of program outcomes with immigrant clients, based on an understanding of the considerable barriers to employment identified through the literature.
10. Define sustainable employment not just in terms of how long an immigrant maintains employment, but also in terms of other criteria for quality, such as whether or not it is commensurate with education and experience.
11. Consider the extent to which program tools, in particular the ERIQ, accurately assess: immigrant client characteristics, distance from the labour market, and attitudinal factors shaped by a client's worldview. At the least, ensure that the ERIQ includes: an unambiguous question about immigrant status, source country, where highest level of education was completed (inside or outside Canada), whether or not credential recognition is needed, and whether or not the individual has any Canadian work experience. The Ministry could consider if a separate process needs to be developed for immigrants, similar to the DRENA.
12. Ensure that there is a planned evaluation/research strategy for the EPBC with consideration of how and whether or not the program is meeting outcomes with immigrant clients.
13. Emphasize the importance of unpaid work placements for immigrants within the model.
14. Continue with the proposed changes to the EPBC fee schedule, particularly as they relate to ESS.
15. Reconvene the *Beyond Barriers* conference to include the dissemination of learning from this research to EPBC contracted providers.
16. Fund the development of an e-learning module or series of workshops on the Immigrant Lens through CPAC, ASPECT and the BCCDA.

**Contractors could:**

17. Pilot the Immigrant Lens Framework in their WorkBC Centres in order to enhance their service provision to immigrant clients.
18. Consider how they could emphasize systems thinking and attend to the structural employment barriers faced by clients at both an organizational and client level such as: raising the awareness of local employers about recognition of foreign work experience; carrying out anti-discrimination awareness work in their communities; being aware of how poverty and discrimination can impact the employment trajectories of clients and asking them about that, and knowing institutional barriers that clients may encounter that are linked to ethnicity, gender, age, ability and so on.
19. Ensure regular diversity and intercultural competency training for staff and, if they do not have it, create an organizational diversity policy.
20. Integrate foreign credential recognition into their service provision.
21. In ESCs located in catchments with substantial pools of immigrants, continue to provide or consider providing immigrant stream workshops. Consider if it is

possible to stream clients according to language level and have them stay in the same group to participate in core ESS workshops such as résumé and cover-letter writing and interview skills. Include an enhanced career development element as this feature may be key for immigrants who may need to switch careers in order to achieve quality, sustainable employment.

***Practitioners could:***

22. Ensure they understand the impact that culture has on career decision-making and seek to learn and practice the competencies outlined in the Immigrant Lens Framework
23. Emphasize systems thinking in their practice by creating a space where clients can talk about any concerns about discrimination or the structural barriers they think they might face in their career development.

***Further research could:***

24. Refine the Immigrant Lens Framework in terms of the policies and procedures that an ESC should have in place to demonstrate achievement of indicators, as well as the continuing applicability of indicators in the Framework.
25. Develop a self-assessment process for organizations to use to assess the extent to which they are meeting the indicators in the Immigrant Lens Framework.
26. Investigate if implementation of the Framework resulted in the achievement of Framework outcomes for immigrants, through longitudinal tracking.
27. Assess the extent to which career development practitioners working in WorkBC Centres perceive that they have the competencies necessary to implement relevant practices in the Immigrant Lens Framework.

***Those engaged in the professional development of CDP's could (Simon Fraser University, UBC, Douglas, BCCDA and BC CfEE):***

28. Disseminate this research report to their students/trainees.
29. Consider the implications of this research in any relevant working groups or fora, such as the BCCDA monthly meeting or the BC CfEE Working Group on Training.

In conclusion, while there are some aspects of the EPBC that are working, the research shows more could be done to ensure implementation of the practices and values necessary for meeting the employment needs of immigrants. The EPBC serves an area (Metro Vancouver) that is one of the top three destinations for newcomers in the country. The Program, as part of a network of essential services for newcomers, plays a crucial role in helping many immigrants to attain quality employment, integrate, and maintain their well-being so that they can actively participate in Canadian society. The EPBC could be a leader in that regard: ensuring funding of necessary supplemental services, highlighting the centrality of service coordination within the model, and enhancing employability profiling of immigrant clients.



# Appendix A: Immigrant Lens Framework

This Framework is for employment service provision to immigrants in ESCs. The definition of immigrants for this Framework is, as per the EPBC Glossary of Terms:

*“Individuals who are not Canadian born and who have migrated from another country to settle in Canada. They must be legally entitled to work in BC to participate in the program.”*

Immigrants include individuals who belong to a variety of immigration classes, including Refugees, Skilled Workers and those belonging to the Family Class. Immigrants may have been living in Canada for two months or 20 years. They may or may not be citizens of Canada.

The practices and approaches in this Framework will help an ESC to address the unique employment needs of immigrants, which currently combine to result in: lower rates of labour market attachment for this specialized population, or lower quality attachment that may not be sustainable or matched to immigrants’ skills and prior experience.

## 8.1 Approaches

The approaches or theoretical foundations to this Framework are set out in the table below. These approaches inform and fuel the practices contained in this framework.

Approach	Description
Environmental Context (EC)	<p>Is about taking into account and working to remove situational barriers related to the systems and structures that could have an impact on an individual’s career development, i.e. gender, age, ethnicity, culture, etc. This approach is also about analyzing how an immigrant’s family and their community shape the individual’s behaviour. Career development should assist clients to balance the roles they play in relation to these systems.</p> <p>As part of the environmental context approach, employment services can address racism experienced by some immigrant clients as they engage in job searches. They can also help to undo negative effects of racism on clients.</p>
Integration (IN)	Is about interagency collaboration and providing seamless services for immigrant clients to ensure achievement of employment outcomes, i.e. co-location of services.
Intercultural (IC)	Involves a focus on the creation and maintenance of positive, reciprocal relationships across cultures through respectful, affirmative communication. Relationship power imbalances are addressed.
Client-centred (CC)	Is about starting with where the client is at and taking the whole client into account. It is about fitting the service to the person, not the person to the service.

## 8.2 Practice Areas

Each Practice Area contains a set of indicators and then examples of how an ESC could work towards achieving each indicator. Where indicators are considered to stem from one of the approaches outlined above, the acronym for that approach is in brackets next to it, i.e. “(IN)” for “Intercultural”. For the purposes of this framework:

**An indicator** is a statement about the state or condition of the ESC or clients as a group. Indicators are grouped in Practice Areas that make sense in terms of the work. Some indicators are directly related to approaches outlined above.

**Example** is a document, policy or procedure that demonstrates achievement of an indicator. It can also be a deliberative or conscious practice the ESC engages in to prove they are achieving the indicator.

N.B. This Framework reflects the data collected throughout the Immigrant Lens research and included in the results chapter of the research report. Therefore, there may be gaps in this Framework that will need to be addressed through future research and piloting of the Framework.

### 8.2.1 Cultural Awareness Practice

This category includes practices that articulate the cultural knowledge and awareness staff should have in order to provide employment services to immigrants who are from a diverse range of countries, cultures and religions.

Indicator	Example
1. Staff demonstrate an awareness of the client’s country of origin and first language (CC)	Staff take time to learn about other cultures – ask clients about where they came from; video presentation about services in reception that says welcome in different languages
2. ESC has sign on the wall that says “welcome” in a range of languages, and staff can say “welcome” in a range of languages	
3. Staff demonstrate an awareness of a range of different cultures’ beliefs (IC)	Staff know something important for client in their culture.
4. Staff demonstrate an awareness of how communication styles can differ between Canada and the clients’ country of origin (IC)	Inform and educate that Canada is different and clients do have to learn things; provide workshops, or assistance in workplace culture
5. Clients feel that their cultural and/or religious beliefs were respected (EC/IC)	Give information about different ethnic groups to clients to allow different perspective; not impose a Western individualized worldview; very sensitive to culture/diversity; share points of view from different cultures; show respect for cultures; show interest in respect cultural backgrounds; no preference for certain cultural groups; mission statement – clients see it and it is on the website
6. Staff demonstrate an awareness of clients’ age, gender, political situation in country of origin, family situation, financial situation, experience of immigration, length of time in country, transportation circumstances (EC/CC)	Understand the importance of family, culture gender in decisions for clients
7. Clients are asked about family/role expectations for their job search (EC)	
8. Staff demonstrate an awareness of phenomenon of culture shock (IC)	Assess where clients are at the acculturation process

## 8.2.2 Connections to Community Resources Practice

This area of practice is about referring clients to and from needed non-employment services. These practices are also about supporting clients' integration into the wider community and connecting them to opportunities where they can meet others from their own country or culture if they so choose.

Indicator	Example
1. The ESC conducts targeted outreach to ethno-specific organizations and/or other organizations working with immigrants (IC)	Participation in ethno-specific/multicultural events (record of)
2. Staff demonstrate an awareness of cultural associations, networks and local multicultural activities (IC)	Posters/information about multicultural/ethno-specific events; staff use a community service guide
3. Clients are provided with information on professional networks relevant to their fields	
4. Clients are provided with information on immigrant -specific programs and community resources (CC)	No. of referrals to immigrant specific programs and community resources
5. Clients are encouraged to access wider community events (IC)	No. of clients accessing wider community events; encourage clients to come to ESC resource room and participate as much as possible – see themselves as part of a group/community
6. The ESC's parent organization provides a wrap-around service for immigrant clients, or the ESC has a referral agreement with an organization that can provide a wrap around service (IN)	No. of referrals to parent organization
7. The ESC has a referral agreement and positive relationship with the main organizations it refers immigrant clients to (IN)	Staff attends main organizations' events and they attend ESC's.
8. When needed, clients are referred to English language training (IN)	No. of referrals to ESL
9. When needed, clients are referred for language testing (IN)	No. of referrals to language testing
10. Staff match clients to needed non-employment services (i.e. health, housing, settlement etc.) and make contact with these organizations on clients' behalf ((IN)	No. of referrals to non-employment services; be informed about programs to give straightforward information
11. Clients are aware of main, local settlement organizations (IN)	If clients are aware of other community services, they will also bring clients into EPBC from other service providers
12. Clients are encouraged to do volunteer work not related to their field	

## 8.2.3 Easily Accessible and Welcoming Practice

This area of practice is about how the ESC provides a flexible, responsive and convenient service to immigrants. While many of these indicators involve practices that are important to all ESC clients, they have been proven to be of great significance to immigrants in the context of the unique employment barriers they face.

Indicator	Example
1. Clients receive information about resources or services they need in a timely manner (IN)	Immediate response to questions, plan activities in advance and stick to timelines
2. Clients see a case manager immediately (CC)	Case manager can see client immediately if need is high or language an issue
3. Translation/interpretation available (IN)	In house translation/interpretation service; staff speak a range of different languages
4. Service limitations are in the best interests of the client	Allow clients to bring children; review workshop content again; search for online ESL if they cannot attend onsite; use of “hands-on learning” in workshops; alternating employers for practicums; always have room for exceptions to protocol; just knock on the right doors even though it might be a long shot to source employment/placements for clients; workshop facilitators link with case managers about individual clients
5. The ESC provides flexible timing for appointments, workshops, orientation. Clients can access by email, phone or in-person	Clients can drop-in, having reception as one point of contact for clients
6. Clients indicate that had as many appointments as necessary	Give clients more time/repeat visits, more one-to-one time
7. When compiling an action plan, staff offers clients a range of possible employment goals	Offer as much variety in available job roles as possible
8. The ESC is welcoming to clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds	Giant welcome sign on reception wall in multiple languages, <i>Canadian Immigrant</i> available in resource room/reception

### 8.2.4 Fostering Intercultural Relationships Practice

This set of indicators is about the work that staff engages in to demonstrate respect, and the value and positive recognition of immigrant clients’ culture and prior experience to foster pride and self-confidence. It is about how staff manages the affective or emotional dimension of service provision to motivate and encourage clients to overcome barriers.

Indicator	Example
1. Clients know they can talk about concerns they might have in relation to racism in the workplace (EC)	Say things are slowly changing in the country re: employers are hiring immigrants
2. Clients feel they received individual attention (CC)	Ask clients how staff can best help them – collaborative approach; use of behavioural questions to see if client is interview ready; listen carefully to what is happening in the client’s life at the moment; give clients a chance to talk in workshops whenever possible; ask clients about their personal experience of learning; be aware of how focus of client is constantly changing depending on how lives are changing; focus on the information clients share – don’t do the talking; being empathetic about client’s situation, i.e. expectations of family
3. Clients feel that they were given enough time	

Indicator	Example
and did not feel rushed	
4. Clients are encouraged to honour their own culture, “use their own accent” (IC)	Clients are encouraged to use their own name – I let them know in the beginning
5. Staff reaffirm the accomplishment of moving to a new country	Get clients to see the strength of character/accomplishment of moving to new country
6. Clients are encouraged to keep trying and to not give up hope in their job search.	Encourage clients to keep trying, keep going back; allow staff experience as an immigrant to influence practice; encourage clients to do what they want to do not what society, family, community wants; hold the hope for people
7. Clients feel no assumptions were made about them (CC)	Focus on the individual client’s story/expectations versus where they come from; actively listening; avoid comments in workshops that could trigger divisions between cultures; avoid making stereotypical remarks
8. Staff reaffirm the value of country of origin education and work experience, get them to talk about what they are proud of	Get client to talk about country of origin experience – their education, job search and move to Canada
9. If possible, staff describe their own experience of immigration	
10. Clients feel they are in a safe space	Meet clients with a smile, treat them with respect and thank them for coming; being open-minded non-judgemental; value everyone’s opinions in workshops

## 8.2.5 Advocacy Practice

This area of practice is about how the ESC works on behalf of immigrant clients at a systems level to improve labour market outcomes and service provision. It is also about the work that staff does on behalf of individual clients to help them realize the steps in their action plans and their short and long-term employment goals.

Indicator	Example
1. Staff are willing to break from regular protocol to meet the needs of clients (CC)	Regularly meet clients if there is urgency without appointments
2. The ESC networks with other organizations to raise awareness about the needs of immigrant clients, the issues they face and improvements that could be made to facilitate their participation in the labour market (IN)	Attend monthly meetings with other ESCs and other organizations as well
3. The ESC participates in media coverage to challenge stereotypes about immigrants	Directors do media interviews
4. The ESC participates in EPBC Committees, i.e. CPAC, Vancouver ESC Table and Specialized Populations Working Group to propose ways in which services to immigrants could be improved	EPBC consults the organization about immigrants; ESC promotes its translation service within EPBC
5. The ESC advocates to remove the barrier of Canadian experience for immigrants	Advocating to Ministry to address the barrier of Canadian experience
6. Staff advocates for clients with individual employers by proactively soliciting job	Talk to employer(s) about scheduling to fit with childcare; contact the employers that clients

Indicator	Example
openings, making introductions on the client's behalf, educating about equivalence of experience and tailoring working arrangements	want to work with; email employers on top of client's application to reinforce top three comments (skills and strengths); pick up phone to employers to ask if they have jobs available; go out door-to-door to employer to find what they are looking for; tell clients "go to this employer, they have a place"; create a top 50 list of employers who are aware and will make accommodations
7. The ESC does research and industry networking for immigrants to find job leads and vacancies	Job Developer/Recruitment Specialist reads labour market reports, researches companies, researches top 100 diversity companies
8. Staff advocates for individual clients within the EPBC and other relevant programs	Help EI clients get access to funding. Make a strong rationale; register clients in "Dress for Success" etc.; sit with clients while they do follow-up phone calls
9. The ESC does research related to improving the effectiveness of employment services for immigrants and stays up-to-date on research done by others	Management provides new information and engages industry experts/consultants to provide workshops

## 8.2.6 Strategic Management Practice

This set of indicators describes the work that is done at a governance or management level to support the achievement of the indicators in the other areas of the framework.

Indicator	Example
1. Staff hired are from diverse groups, i.e. are immigrants, from visible minority groups and reflect main ethno-cultural groups in the local area (IC)	Manager is member of visible minority group, for staff who are immigrants – consider their country of origin experience
2. Services are available in main first languages in the local area (IC)	Multiple language requirements in contract
3. ESC is connected to or has a partnership agreement with an immigrant organization (EC)	Parent organization has multicultural (MC) department dedicated to MC programming and services with proven track record; the mission of the parent organization supports service delivery and planning; support of parent organization as wrap-around service
4. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with ESL services (IN)	
5. ESC is co-located/has a referral agreement with settlement services (IN)	Settlement services sends emails to ESC and ESC communicates with them during monthly meetings and workshops
6. ESC job postings specify experience working with immigrants and competency in cross-cultural communication	Existing internal job descriptions and external postings list language requirements and cross-cultural training
7. Foreign credential evaluations, such as ICES, are integrated into the EPBC processes so that staff can easily arrange credential evaluation for clients	Internal presentation to staff about ICES in relation to EPBC
8. ESC marketing and strategic plan focuses on ethnic community hubs/events	ESC attends multicultural and ethno-specific events in the community
9. ESC service delivery is shaped through staff and	Pose question internally to leadership "how

Indicator	Example
client consultations	can we be most welcoming ESC to immigrants"?; involve staff in marketing plan; host annual open house; attend community events; hand out ESC brochures to organizations
10. ESC culture does not tolerate stereotyping	Diversity awards to other services; ESC (or parent organization) diversity statement and policy
11. ESC culture supports a willingness to break from protocol	Can bring individual client cases to case conference; constant connection to management re: "what could I do for this client"; mechanisms in place to support clients crisis, i.e. phone call to India to follow up with client
12. ESC participates in or provides diversity training or intercultural competence training	Participation in cross-cultural/intercultural training, diversity training for staff (records of); Employer diversity training

## 8.2.7 Multicultural Employment Service Practice

This category is about employment services that are specifically for immigrants, or are generic services that have been demonstrated to improve labour market outcomes for immigrants, i.e. mentoring. It also includes indicators relevant to addressing discrimination on behalf of individual clients as so many immigrants are from visible minority groups.

Indicator	Example
1. Clients are informed about unethical local employers (EC)	Be careful about placing clients with employers with biases
2. Staff are aware of equality legislation and labour standards (EC)	New staff receive package of all the policies including employment standards and equality
3. Clients are told about their employment rights (EC)	Educate client on workers' rights, labour standards re: discrimination
4. The ESC facilitates foreign credential evaluation, such as ICES	Case managers provide information; information provided in workshops; provide legal advocacy services
5. Staff coaches the client about how to present prior work/learning experience and lack of Canadian experience	Help clients learn how to present their country of origin experience; transferable skills; and lack of Canadian experience; and to set up overseas references; conduct various transferable/general skills assessments
6. Staff connects clients to opportunities to upgrade their training or retrain in a related occupation to the one they held in their country of origin	Match individuals to right services/training opportunities for their skills; encourage skills training – workplace language, ESL, IT
7. Clients understand how structures and systems related to employment in Canada work (EC)	Explain similarities/differences in job search process; tell clients they need to be creative, and use different job search techniques, i.e. visit companies face-to-face, tell everyone they know they are looking for work; make clients aware that things we take for granted can have a huge impact on work
8. The ESC simplifies, or rephrases	Use images, templates, role plays, scripts, and

Indicator	Example
information/documentation (i.e. the ERIO) and/or provides language support	personal experience to facilitate learning in workshops/case management; work individually with clients after workshops/during breaks if needed
9. Clients are referred to appropriate employment programs, i.e. Skills Connect or Job Options	Connect clients to Skills Connect; connect clients to Job Options
10. Clients' action plans take into account needs, barriers, a short-term goal (entry level in chosen field), and a long-term goal that is matched to client skills and talents (CC)	Position client in local area; ask client to bring list of companies they want to work for; use the wage subsidy/micro loans program; talk about, present honest, realistic picture of what is possible re: occupational goals
11. Clients are aware of the steps they need to take to work in their chosen career, including if they need workplace language learning. They are also aware of how to switch to a new career if it will not be possible, or they do not want to work in the career they were in before they came to Canada (IN)	Client agreed on an action plan with realistic employment goal; workshop content encourages and educates clients to conduct information interviews and labour information research to gain realistic perspective; workshop content prepares the client to familiarize themselves with employment standards and workplace culture; internal mentoring program
11. The ESC has immigrant stream workshops or tailors workshops to immigrant client needs (IC)	Re-frame tools and workshops incorporating credential recognition, settlement, different cultures; have two facilitators delivering workshops; client feedback used to tailor workshop programming; adapt facilitation strategies to cultural background of clients, i.e. clients from Asia won't talk as much; know who is going to be in the classroom; keep clients involved in activities that motivate them to learn about their field; encourage clients to ask questions/give opinions; make workshops dynamic/participative; use sense of humour
12. Staff use real life examples to encourage clients (IC)	Use real life examples of immigrants who have been successful; provide success stories – positive aspects of living in Canada; use stories from past clients/own experience to value prior experience and expand client's own worldview
13. Staff assess clients' financial situation to gauge if they need a survival job or if they can focus full-time on availing themselves of the training or upgrading they need to attain work in their field (EC)	Refer clients to Recruitment Specialist who has current survival jobs and other Recruiter arranges leads/interviews
14. Clients are able to talk about the barriers they feel they might experience in their job search (EC)	Clients feel they were helped to remove barriers to employment (EC)
15. Staff encourage practicums	No. of referrals to Job Options; Recruiter suggests companies that are open to practicums
16. Staff encourage mentoring	Suggest/refer to mentoring; link to professional organizations; number of referrals to local professional networks
17. ESC offers targeted 1-to-1 résumé and job search support (CC)	Ask about volunteering, training and include in resume; highlighting Canadian training and volunteering



Indicator	Example
18. Staff encourages non-traditional jobs/options for clients, highlight misinformation based on stereotypes (about gender, perceived language ability etc.)	Workshop content encourages and educates clients to conduct information interviews and labour market research to gain realistic perspective; client agreed on an action plan with realistic employment goal
19. Clients are matched to employment opportunities that are culturally and religiously appropriate	
20. Clients understand expectations related to the Canadian labour market (IC)	Explain difference between values, behaviour here and country of origin using examples; recommend information interviews; help with or do research on local, Canadian labour market; talk about importance of demonstrating self-confidence; make clients aware things are not necessarily simple, i.e learning language of the field and behaviour
21. Clients gain skills to successfully adapt to the Canadian work environment (IC)	Ask/show clients how to do own research, give homework; help with learning about Canadian workplace etiquette, teamwork etc.; practice non-verbal cues – eye contact etc; have activities, elevator speeches, etc. so clients can learn how to sell their skills; discuss appropriate behaviours in Canadian culture and reasons
22. Staff educates about and encourages the importance of volunteering in client’s related field	Source and assist with volunteer work; in-house volunteer program

### 8.3 Outcomes

The following are outcomes that come about from achievement of the indicators and the use of the approaches in the Framework. Labour market attachment is just one of a range of outcomes that staff and clients say were important as a result.

#### Clients will:

- Get a good job in the field they were in (or related field) before they came to Canada
- Get a short-term job or practicum in their field (or related field)
- Get a short-term job doing anything that can help them pay bills
- Feel motivated to keep trying in their job search
- Have a clear picture of the steps they need to take to get credentials recognized or upgraded
- Increase their confidence
- Get connected to other needed services, i.e. settlement services
- Feel more integrated into their community and Canada
- Get connected to English Language Training

## Appendix B: Standards and Sub-domains of Organizational Cultural Competence

Taken from Olavarria et al. (2005).

Domain	Sub-Domain
Organizational Norms, Principles and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to cultural competence (CC) in mission, statement and mandate</li> <li>• CC advisory committee</li> <li>• CC activities within organization</li> <li>• CC climate (welcoming environment)</li> </ul>
Asset and Need, Identification Research related to CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and knowledge of target population and their needs</li> <li>• Awareness of users and their needs</li> <li>• Identification of CC barriers and issues</li> <li>• Ongoing consultation about community needs</li> </ul>
Human Resources Management Policy and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment, hiring and retention</li> <li>• Staff composition and representation at different levels</li> <li>• Staff training on CC</li> </ul>
Services and Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic competence</li> <li>• Services</li> </ul>
Community Consultation, Partnership and Information Exchange	No sub-domains

# Appendix C: Checklist of Best Practices from Legacies Research

The table below sets out the best practices identified in the *Legacies* research and shows which ones the participating Centres are carrying out.

Practice	AbbotsfordWORKS	MOSAIC
1. Website fully in multiple languages		
2. Website with home pages in multiple languages		√
3. Link to Google Translator		
4. English only websites with Multilingual pamphlets available	√	√
5. Websites providing links to the full range of services to immigrants (settlement, housing, language training, family supports, youth programming) as well as employment services		√
6. Search feature on website (to navigate for information)	√	√
7. Link to Welcome BC website on homepage		
8. Diversity reflected in images on the website		√
9. Link to locator maps with address information	√	√
10. Link to child minding services		
11. Mission statements reflecting service to immigrants		√
12. Storefront/Satellite located in areas where there a substantial pools of immigrants	√	√
13. Signage in multiple languages	√	√
14. Languages on signage particular to prominent language groups in the community	√	√
15. Case management and/or other services provided in multiple languages	√	√
16. Use of EPBC brochures in multiple languages	√	√
17. Multilingual marketing on radio and in newspapers		√
18. Marketing in places of worship	√	
19. Presentations to ethnic organizations/ethnic community marketing initiatives	√	
20. Multilingual ads at bus stops, on buses and Skytrains		√
21. Marketing at airport in CANN materials		√
22. Co-location with language and training services	√	√
23. Co-location with settlement services	√	
24. Co-location with immigrant specific employment placement programming		
25. Co-location with volunteering and mentoring		
26. Co-location of income tax filing support		
27. Receptionist who speaks languages of prominent language groups in the area	√	√
28. Access to translation or interpretation at front desk through other staff/services in the Centre/Notice of services available in other languages	√	√
29. Registration Forms available in languages of prominent language groups in the area		
30. Case Managers and staff from various ethnic backgrounds specific to prominent groupings in the area	√	√

Practice	AbbotsfordWORKS	MOSAIC
31. Orientation sessions and one-on-one intake offered in various languages	√	√
32. Purchased language services and call-in interpreters	√	√
33. Specialized workshops for newcomers.	√	√
34. Staff receive diversity training	√	√

# Appendix D: Detailed Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

## 8.4 Overall Profile

Demographic Variable	Response Categories	Frequency	Valid Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	34	35.1
	Female	63	64.9
<b>Age</b>	23-34	39	39.8
	35-44	29	29.6
	45-54	19	19.4
	55-64	7	7.1
	Over 64	1	1.0
<b>Length of time in Canada</b>	Less than 6 months	18	19.4
	7 months to 1 year	7	7.5
	2 years to 5 years	26	28.0
	6 years to 10 years	12	12.9
	More than 10 years	30	32.3
<b>Birth Region</b>	Europe	7	7.6
	Central and South America	5	5.4
	Africa	5	5.4
	South Central Asia	41	44.6
	South East Asia	18	19.6
	Eastern Asia	16	17.4
<b>Level of Education</b>	Less than high school	6	6.1
	High School or equivalent	16	16.3
	Trade School	2	2.0
	College Diploma/Certificate	25	25.5
	Bachelor's Degree	23	23.5
	Degree in regulated profession (medicine, etc)	9	9.2
	Master's Degree	16	16.3
	Doctorate	1	1.0
<b>Tier Level</b>	Tier 1	2	2.2
	Tier 2	36	38.7
	Tier 3	49	52.7
	Tier 4	6	6.5
<b>Migrant class when first arrived in Canada</b>	Skilled Workers class	29	33.3
	Skilled Trades class	2	2.3
	Canadian Experience class	1	1.1
	Family Class	29	33.3
	Live-in Caregiver	6	6.9
	Refugee	7	8.0
	Refugee Claimant	4	4.6
	Other	9	10.3

## 8.5 Respondent Occupational Groups

NOC Groupings	Valid %
Management	6.1
Business, finance and administration	17.2
Natural and applied sciences and related	6.1
Health occupations	9.1
Occupations in education, law, social and community services	16.2
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	1
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	7.1
Sales and service occupations	7.1
Studying	11.1
Missing	19.2

## 8.6 Tiers and Self-reported Barriers to Employment

Barrier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Language Problems	1 (50.0%)	12 (33.3%)	29 (59.2%)	3 (50.0%)
Not knowing how to find a job	1 (50.0%)	3 (8.3%)	12 (24.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Qualifications from outside Canada not accepted	2 (100.0%)	11 (30.6%)	32 (65.3%)	1 (16.7%)
Not enough/no Canadian experience	0 (0.0%)	12 (33.3%)	32 (65.3%)	4 (66.7%)
No connections in the job market	1 (50.0%)	21 (58.3%)	29 (59.2%)	4 (66.7%)
Discrimination	0 (0.0%)	8 (22.2%)	11 (22.4%)	1 (16.7%)
Transportation problems	1 (50.0%)	3 (8.3%)	17 (34.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Unable to find/afford childcare	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)	11 (22.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Not enough money to upgrade education	1 (50.0%)	17 (47.2%)	28 (57.1%)	1 (16.7%)
Needing help with other issues connected to getting settled in Canada	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)	12 (24.5%)	1 (16.7%)
Not enough time/energy because I'm in a survival job	0 (0.0%)	6 (16.7%)	17 (34.7%)	1 (16.7%)

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