

Temporary Foreign Residents' Experiences, Challenges, Needs and Suggestions on Settlement Services

Findings of Focus Groups with International Students
and Temporary Foreign Workers in British Columbia

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Chapter 1 Introduction

- There are more Temporary Foreign Residents coming to British Columbia, especially in Metro Vancouver. Many of them like British Columbia and would like to stay and become Permanent Residents. Yet, they encounter different challenges on settlement, employment, language, networking, and other aspects of life.
- MOSAIC, as a settlement services agency supporting newcomers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, is interested to support the Temporary Foreign Residents, especially with regards to settlement, employment, language and networking.
- A large proportion of Temporary Foreign Residents are either International Students with open work permits or Temporary Foreign Workers.
- Therefore, MOSAIC organized 4 focus groups between May 30, 2015 and June 6, 2015 and invited International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers to participate.
- These Focus Groups aim to understand participants' goals and challenges on settlement (especially on how to become a Permanent Resident), employment, language, and community connections. They also aim to understand participants' experience, opinions and suggestions regarding settlement services and preferred delivery format of these services. Our ultimate aim is to identify service gaps and improve our services so that we can better support these groups.
- This report shows the findings of these Focus Groups.

Chapter 2 Focus Groups

- Four Focus Groups were conducted between May 30, 2015 and June 6, 2015, inviting participants to share their experience, goals, challenges and needs, and suggestions on settlement services.

Focus Group Question Guide

- A meeting was held on May 12, 2015 with MOSAIC staff about the Focus Groups. Different suggestions on the Focus Groups were raised.
- Focus Group Question Guide was then drafted according to staff's suggestions as well as the *Proposed BC Settlement and Integration Services: Stakeholder Engagement Teleconference for Discussion and Feedback* (BC Government, 2015).
- Feedback on the Question Guide draft was collected from staff. The Question Guide was revised according to staff's feedback.
- After each Focus Group, slight changes were made to the Question Guide, according to participants' feedback.
- Final versions of the Question Guides for International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers are attached in Appendices 4 and 5 respectively.

Recruitment

- The Focus Group was aimed to be small in size so that participants could have more opportunities to express their views.
- The Focus Groups were promoted through personal, work or school / college / university networks, social service agencies, social media and putting up posters.

Data Collection

- Details of each Focus Group are as follows:

Table 1 Details of Focus Groups

Types of participants	Date	Time	Place	Number of participants
International Students	Saturday, May 30	11.30-1.30 (2 hours)	MOSAIC, Vancouver Northeast Employment Centre	5
Temporary Foreign Workers (Non-Caregivers)	Monday, June 1	6.30-8.30 (2 hours)	MOSAIC Headquarter	10
Temporary Foreign Workers (Caregivers)	Thursday, June 4	6.30-8.30 (2 hours)	MOSAIC Buller	3
International Students	Saturday, June 6	11.30-1.30 (2 hours)	MOSAIC Rosser	2
				(Total: 20)

- Before we started each Focus Group, we introduced ourselves, explained the aims of the Focus Groups, and suggested guidelines for the Focus Groups, including our contact details in case participants had further enquiries. Final version of the guidelines for the Focus Groups is attached in Appendix 1.
- The Focus Groups were designed to be less structured so that participants could feel relaxed to express their views.
- Notes were taken during the Focus Groups. After tidying up and summarizing the notes, findings are presented in this report.

Demographics of Participants

- Participants were invited to fill in a brief questionnaire about their demographics.
- Final versions of the brief questionnaires for International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers (both Non-Caregivers and Caregivers) are attached in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.
- According to Table 2, among the 20 Focus Group participants, 35% were

International Students, 50% were Temporary Foreign Workers (Non-Caregivers) and 15% were Temporary Foreign Workers (Caregivers). Most participants belonged to the age groups of 26-30 (20%), 31-35 (25%) and 36-40 (20%). 40% were male and 60% were female. 55% had a bachelor degree, 20% even had a master or doctoral / professional degree, reflecting high education level of participants. Koreans accounted for the largest nationality of participants (35%). This was also reflected in the first language of participants. The majority (65%) of participants were currently residing in Vancouver.

Table 2 Demographics of Focus Group participants

Variable	Classification	N	%
Types of participants	International Student	7	35.0
	Temporary Foreign Worker (Non-Caregiver)	10	50.0
	Temporary Foreign Worker (Caregiver)	3	15.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
Age	16-20	1	5.0
	21-25	3	15.0
	26-30	4	20.0
	31-35	5	25.0
	36-40	4	20.0
	41-45	1	5.0
	46-50	1	5.0
	51-55	1	5.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
Gender	Male	8	40.0
	Female	12	60.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
Education	Did not finish high school	2	10.0
	High school or equivalent	1	5.0
	College degree or certificate (2-year university)	2	10.0
	Bachelor's degree (4-year university)	11	55.0
	Master's degree	3	15.0
	Doctoral / professional degree	1	5.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
Nationality	Korean	7	35.0
	Chinese	3	15.0
	Japanese	3	15.0
	Italian	3	15.0
	Malaysian	1	5.0
	Filipino	3	15.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
First Language	Mandarin	2	10.0
	Malay	1	5.0
	Japanese	3	15.0
	Italian	3	15.0
	Cantonese	1	5.0
	Korean	7	35.0
	Tagalog	3	15.0

Variable	Classification	N	%
City currently residing	Vancouver	13	65.0
	Burnaby	2	10.0
	Surrey	3	15.0
	Richmond	1	5.0
	Coquitlam	1	5.0

Chapter 3 Main Findings

- This chapter will present the main findings of the Focus Groups.
- We realized that there were obvious differences on the experience, goals, challenges and needs, and suggestions on settlement services between Caregiver participants and other Focus Group participants. Therefore, the findings of the Focus Group with Caregiver participants will be presented separately from the Focus Groups with other participants in this report.
- Findings of Focus Groups with International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers (Non-Caregivers) were presented in the same section because these two groups often overlap with each other – Many International Students become Temporary Foreign Workers after they have graduated, many Temporary Foreign Workers go back to school, college or university after they have saved enough money, and many people are studying and working at the same time.

Focus Groups with International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers (Non-Caregivers)

Why Chose Canada?

- Participants like the environment of Canada e.g. clean, quiet and peaceful.
- They like the weather of Vancouver e.g. beautiful summer.
- They like the less stressful lifestyle in Canada, compared with the countries where participants come from.
- They like the living conditions of Canada e.g. good healthcare.
- They like Canadian study or work environment e.g. Canadian study environment encourages students to freely express themselves, or over-work is paid at workplace in Canada.
- They feel that Canadians are inclusive to diverse cultures and appreciate this.
- They feel that Canada is safer than the States e.g. less gun shooting.

- The costs of living or tuition is cheaper in Canada compared with the United States.
- A few participants have family or friend connections before coming to Canada.

Goals in Canada

- Many participants want to become a Permanent Resident in Canada.
- Many want to find a job in Canada, if possible, a good job e.g. a job matching their educational or professional qualifications and skills.
- Some want to become a professional in Canada e.g. an Accountant.
- Many want to improve their English.
- Many are interested to develop connections, especially individuals outside of their immediate circles.
- A few want to own a house.
- They want to get used to the Canadian cultures.

Challenges and Needs

Permanent Residence Application

- Many participants are interested to apply for Permanent Residence but also consider potential barriers e.g. getting a job offer, language barriers.
- Many participants find the job offer requirement of Permanent Residence application particularly difficult to fulfill – Employers can only offer jobs to Temporary Foreign Workers if Citizens and Permanent Residents cannot fill up the positions (Canada's Economic Action Plan, 2015; Government of Canada, 2015). This means that Temporary Foreign Workers have to compete with Citizens and Permanent Residents to get job offers.
- Permanent Residence application is complicated.
- Therefore, some participants are applying through immigration consultant agencies e.g. helping to fill in the application form.
- Yet, the service is expensive. The cost can be as high as \$5,000. (\$2,000 goes to the government, so the agency takes \$3,000.)

- Also, the service is not necessarily useful.
- Some participants end up relying on self by searching information online.
- However, information on government websites on Permanent Residence application process and changes are not clear enough.
- Some participants find difficult getting and renewing a visa to stay in Canada before becoming a Permanent Resident.
- For some routes of Permanent Residence application e.g. Canadian Experience Class, support from workplace is needed e.g. a reference letter. Yet, in some workplaces, especially small companies or organizations, employers provide no or limited support on Permanent Residence application.
- The process time is long so the waiting time is long too.
- “Time is the key”, suggested by a participant – By getting older, more points on application for Permanent Residence will be deducted. Yet, the Permanent Residence application process time is long.
- Requirements on Permanent Residence application become higher after recent changes of immigration policies e.g. higher language requirement.

Employment

- Foreign qualifications are not recognized, even if qualifications are obtained from English-speaking countries e.g. the UK.
- Many participants lack of Canadian work experience.
- All jobs in Canada require Canadian work experience. Without Canadian work experience, it is difficult to have the interview opportunities.
- Foreign work experience is not recognized.
- Many participants want to gain Canadian work experience, but do not know what to do. This is particularly the case in some professional fields e.g. Accounting.
- English is the key for some professions. E.g. A participant is a kindergarten teacher. She would like to teach in Canada. Yet, because of her language barriers, she is planning to go back to Japan because she cannot fully understand the needs of children in English.

- Some participants encountered discrimination in the labour market, not only from the Caucasians, but also certain ethnic groups.
- E.g. The job application of a participant was turned down by an employer who belongs to another ethnic group. Although the employer admitted that he was highly skilled, the reason why he turned his job application down was that his company preferred applicants from a certain ethnic group. Yet, the preference (or requirement) was not shown in the job advertisement. The participant said that such discrimination was particularly serious in some professional fields e.g. Logistics.
- Finding jobs is particularly difficult for participants who come from an ethnic community who does not have a strong support network helping each other.
- However, working in a workplace where is headed by people who belong to the same ethnic community as you does not necessarily mean a pleasant experience and it can also be hard.
- E.g. A participant's boyfriend worked in a company which his employer belongs to the same ethnic community as him. Yet, he was verbally abused by his supervisor.
- Some participants suggest that they are treated unfairly in their workplaces compared with Permanent Residents or Citizens.
- They are usually over-qualified for their jobs. E.g. A participant received college education on early child development. Yet, she is working only as a child daycare worker.
- They are more hard-working but are paid less compared with their Permanent Resident or Citizen counterparts.
- A participant expressed her anger about the unfair treatments. Yet, she has to stay in her current workplace because her organization provides support for her to apply for Permanent Residence.
- Many participants are unclear about their employment rights, contracts, laws or regulations e.g. their insurance or right to have breaks. Often, they just agree with everything to get or keep the job.
- Employer may give wrong information on employment rights. E.g. A participant had not finished her probation but wanted to quit her job because of health reasons. Her employer said that she could not quit the job even if she gave 3 months notice. Her employer also said that only employer can fire her and she

could not quit the job. She felt scared to quit the job and had a really hard time. She went to the labour organizations and even consulted the lawyer but all of them could not help her. After long negotiations, her employer let her quit. Yet, in the letter explaining why she quitted, her employer said that she wanted to quit because she was homesick and wanted to go home. Her employer also asked her to sign the letter and she signed. Later, she found out that indeed she could quit her job during probation. In other words, her employer gave her wrong information. She said that at that time, she did feel suspicious whether her employer gave her wrong information, yet, since she had just submitted her Permanent Residence application, she felt scared to do anything to challenge her employer.

Language

- For participants who have just been to Canada or have only been living for a short period of time (fewer than 2 years):
 - They described that when they talk to other people in English, they freeze and feel anxious.
 - Some feel particularly difficult with pronunciation.
 - Therefore, they usually only have conversation with people from the same ethnic communities who speak the same language.
- For participants who have been living in Canada for longer time (3-4 years):
 - They have no problem with English in daily life.
 - Yet, they have barriers with English at the workplace.
 - They fear that people cannot understand what they say at the workplace.
 - At workplace, a lot of technical terms are used, especially in some professional fields e.g. Accounting. Participants said that they know most of the technical terms in mother tongue, but do not know in English, so cannot express themselves well. Also, they feel that other people at the workplace may see them as less competent or less knowledgeable because of not knowing the technical terms in English.
 - For few technical terms, participants said that they do not understand even if they are translated into their mother tongue, because they do not use those terms in their mother tongue.
 - They are not confident to use English at the workplace – Even if they only make small English mistakes, they will blame themselves and lose confidence.

- They find difficult to talk to clients or customers. E.g. At the childcare centre where a participant works, she finds difficult to talk to parents. Participants feel that they particularly lack communication skills (e.g. explaining things to clients or customers) at the workplace.
- They find difficult to negotiate wage and working hours with employer in English.
- They find difficult to explain feelings or situations in English at workplace e.g. explaining to their employers how tired and over-worked they are.

- Improving English takes time, yet, people who have English as mother tongue do not understand this.
- E.g. School, college or university teaching staff cannot understand that International Students need longer time on exams, assignments and presentations, or deduct marks of their assignments because of English mistakes.

- Participants said that there are limited opportunities for them to improve their English.
- Some perceive the best way to learn English is interacting with people, yet people in Vancouver are cold and do not want to interact with them. E.g. on Skytrain, no one talks to each other, but focusing on their smart phones.
- Also, some work in an environment where colleagues or customers are from the same ethnic community e.g. H-mart in the Korean community.
- Therefore, they can only learn English by themselves e.g. listening to radio or watching TV. Yet, some find these ways less effective than interacting with people.

- Most English classes are expensive.
- For those who have been to Canada for shorter time, many do not know free English learning classes to Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students like the one offered by MOSAIC.
- For those who have been to Canada for longer time, they know and often go to free English classes. Yet, there are limited choices. Also, sometimes, free classes are not as good as those which need to pay. They know that MOSAIC and other settlement services agencies offer free or cheap English classes, but they are too basic to them.

- School, college or university does not necessarily mean an English speaking environment. In many private colleges, many International Students only speak

their mother tongues but not English.

- In theory, educational agencies screen the English abilities of prospective International Students through tests and only let those who meet certain level of English to study in the colleges. Yet, in order to admit more students so that agencies can have higher commission, they let students cheat to pass the English tests e.g. giving answers of the tests to the students.
- International Students who do not meet certain level of English but are admitted later have problems with completing their practicum or getting their licenses.
- A participant said that she does not want to do group projects with these International Students because their English is not up to standard so they cannot contribute to the group projects and she has to do all the work.

Social and Community Connections

- Most participants are alone and do not know anyone in Canada with no family or friend support.
- Some have no idea how and where to make friends.
- Many cannot find a mentor who can give advice on employment and different aspects of life.
- Also, even if there are potential mentors, a participant said that he has no time to build relationship with them. E.g. At college, professors are potential mentors. Yet, the participant is too occupied by exams, assignments and presentations, especially English is his second language, so he has no time to build the relationship.
- Many participants find difficult to meet individuals outside of their immediate circles, particularly those who have been in Canada for short time.
- Many participants would like to make friends with the local people, and some even take the initiative, yet the local people are not interested to make friends with them because they cannot speak fluent English.

Finance

- Rents and car insurance are expensive.
- Tuition fees for International Students are high, which are 2 times higher than Permanent Residents and Citizens.
- Tax in Canada is heavy. A participant even said that this is one reason which

discourages her to think about becoming a Permanent Resident in the long run.

Housing

- Renting a place which is affordable and in reasonable quality is difficult.
- It is difficult to find a good property agent. Also, agent service is expensive.
- Participants have a lot of things to consider, making finding a place to live even more difficult. E.g. They need to consider about whether the living environment is safe. Also, for those who have been to Canada for short time (fewer than 2 years), the location has to be convenient such as close to a Skytrain station because they cannot drive or own a car yet.
- Participants do not know the tenant laws or rules of houses.
- They do not know who to talk to if they have any problem or question e.g. repairs.
- Some ethnic communities help people in the same community with housing (e.g. Korean, Japanese, Chinese), yet some communities do not (e.g. Italian).
- Yet, indeed, some participants said that they are interested to live and share the house with individuals outside of their immediate circles, because in this case, they can practice their English and experience other cultures more. The problem is that for those who have been living in Canada for short time, it is difficult to meet individuals outside of their immediate circles.
- An International Student or Temporary Foreign Worker's request to rent a place may be turned down because the landlord prefers tenants from certain ethnic groups. Participants said that if the landlord said females only, this is acceptable. Yet, if he or she said certain ethnic groups only, this is discrimination.

Healthcare

- Medical Service Plan (MSP) is too expensive. Some participants choose to opt out. Yet, if they opt out, the charges could be very expensive if there is any emergency.

- No or limited information on Medical Service Plan (MSP) and hospitals are available.
- Information on how to claim expenses for extended care is confusing e.g. whether patient is eligible to claim, what can be claimed, what cannot be claimed, when to claim, where to claim, and how to claim. Even if the hospital explains this to patients, they do not necessarily understand because the information is complicated and English is not their first language.

Discrimination

- E.g. A participant encountered a local person who felt that Asian immigrants had a lot of money, so could just study and get good jobs easily, and said to her that “there should be no jobs for the Asians!” She felt that this was unfair to the Asians like her because they studied and worked hard. Yet, local people do not look at how hard they studied and worked. Local people do not like them simply because some of them have a lot of money. Yet, many of them do not have a lot of money.
- Participants said that sometimes they cannot differentiate whether things happened to them is just cultural difference or discrimination.
- Also, in the culture where they come from e.g. Korean, people prefer not making troubles, so often they just keep quiet, even if they have encountered discrimination.

Cultural differences

- E.g. The way students interact with teaching staff at school, college or university e.g. Students often challenge teaching staff in Canada but this is seldom the case in Korea.
- E.g. Some cultures (e.g. Korean) feel that people in Vancouver talk too much to strangers on public transportation but some cultures (Italian) feel the opposite.

Difficult to get information

- Some participants said that they have no time to attend information sessions etc. organized by social service agencies because they have to work or attend classes.

(A few participants thought that MOSAIC only offers services before 5.00pm during the weekdays. They do not know that MOSAIC offers some services after 5.00pm and during the weekends.)

- Some said that MOSAIC service centers are too far from their home or workplace. (Some do not know that MOSAIC has sites which are convenient e.g. at Commercial Drive.)
- Some find difficult to locate information on the MOSAIC website.

Ineligibility for Settlement Services

- Temporary Foreign Workers or International Students are not eligible for many settlement services (e.g. LINC classes) and opportunities (e.g. volunteering) because many of the settlement services and opportunities are only open to Permanent Residents.

Experience on Self-help or Seeking Support

- Participants usually only rely on their own to find the solutions to different challenges. E.g. When they have questions with regards to Permanent Residence application, they can only search information online by themselves.
- Many search information on websites e.g. looking for jobs through job advertisements on the Craigslist.
- Some ethnic communities (e.g. Korean) feel safer to search information or do networking on the Internet first before seeking support by other ways.
- Some participants seek help from friends e.g. asking them to help with their homework.
- They said that school, college or university is the best place to meet people.
- Many participants attend English classes, private English classes or English classes at school, college or university.
- Yet, many participants said that these English classes are tough with a lot of assignments and presentations. Sometimes, they cannot catch up and this reduces their confidence.
- Many participants do not know free English classes, so they paid for English classes. E.g. One participant said that if he knew that there is free English classes

like the one offered to Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students by MOSAIC, he will not sign up for the paid English classes.

- Some International Student participants know that at school, college or university, there are people who they can contact if necessary. Yet, to them, support at school, college or university is too formal for them. They prefer support to be more informal.

Suggestions on Social Services

Expansion of Beneficiaries

- Some participants suggest that MOSAIC should expand its beneficiaries to Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students, so that they are eligible for more settlement services and opportunities. They stress that they will become Permanent Residents in the future so more services should also be provided to them.

One-on-one Consultation

- Some prefer one-on-one consultation with a settlement worker, seeking advice on different matters of life (e.g. discussing about Canadian cultures, checking job application form and resume, giving information on Permanent Residence application). This is important especially because many International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers are alone in Canada.
- Although some participants have been living in Canada for relatively long time (about 3-4 years), they still want a settlement worker of the same ethnic community, feeling that a settlement worker of the same ethnic community can better understand their situations
- (Although MOSAIC has settlement workers who belong to participants' ethnic communities, they do not know about this.)

Permanent Residence Application Support

- Many participants suggest permanent Residence application consultancy service e.g. checking application form and documents.
- The service has to be in good quality but free or at least low cost.
- They would like to listen to explanation on Permanent Residence application process, recent changes etc. (This service is currently offered by MOSAIC yet participants do not know about this.)

Employment Support

- Some participants suggest job fairs. Job fairs can give them information on jobs and provide them opportunities to meet potential employers. (This is offered by MOSAIC but participants do not know about this.)
- Some participants suggest workshops on resume writing, preparation for interviews, workplace writing etc. (These are offered by MOSAIC but participants do not know about them.)
- Some participants suggest a Conversation Circle with labour market elements.
- This group gives them opportunities to practice English, learn more about Canadian labour market from each other's experience, and meet people in the group as well as potential employers.
- They would like to invite employers to share job requirements e.g. human resource representatives from Tim Hortons, or employers from specific field such as Logistics.
- Topics they would like to discuss in this group include interview preparation and resume and cover letter writing.
- They would also like to have the opportunities to role play interviews with each other in the group so that they can learn from each other's interview experience.
- They proposed to have the group during weekdays after work 6.30-8.30, or during weekends.
- Some participants would like to have a consultant on employment law, rights and regulations, who can listen to their situation and give suggestions.
- Some participants suggest workshops on rights, laws, regulations and safety in

employment (These are offered by MOSAIC, but many participants do not know about this.)

Language Support

- Some participants, particularly those who speak English more fluently, suggest the best way to learn English is through interacting with people in a group.
- However, some participants, particularly those who speak English less fluently, prefer to attend formal English classes.
- Some participants specifically point out that they need classes on pronunciation and grammar. They need qualified teaching staff who can point out their mistakes.
- Some participants would like to improve their English writing skills at workplace, especially writing emails e.g. introducing self in emails.
- For participants who have been to Canada for relatively longer time (3-4 years) and have higher level of English, they suggest that they need English classes which are more advanced.
- (However, this suggestion is difficult to be put into practice, because we need to find qualified teaching staff who can teach more advanced level of English. Also, after reached intermediate level of English, International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers should find their own ways of improving their English because the needs of more advanced English users are more diverse. E.g. Some want to learn more workplace English, while some just want general English courses.)

Networking Opportunities

- Some participants need mentors who can give information on different aspects of life and how to better settle in Canada, especially giving guidance on employment.
- The idea of a mentorship program, matching International Students or Temporary Foreign Workers with mentors who have been in Canada for longer time has been raised. Participants like the idea.
- Some participants suggest a Temporary Foreign Worker group or an International Student group doing social activities e.g. hiking, so that they can meet

individuals outside of their immediate circles and practice their English conversation skills. They prefer to have this group during the weekends.

Volunteering Opportunities

- Many participants are interested in volunteering opportunities for Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students.
- Volunteering provides them opportunities to gain Canadian work experience, meet people (networking) and improve English.
- A participant shares her experience that volunteering is highly valued in Canadian labour, which is different from the country where she comes from.
- Currently, many volunteering opportunities are limited to Permanent Residents only. MOSAIC also lacks volunteers. Perhaps there could be a program linking MOSAIC volunteering database and Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students who are interested in volunteering?

Housing Support

- Some participants are interested in a centralized housing information database for Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students. This can help them find to a place to live and share the place with other people. Sharing a place is cheaper than renting a place alone. Also, sharing a place with individuals outside of their immediate circles gives them opportunities to practice English.
- Some participants suggested that MOSAIC can act as a trusted link between landlords and tenants (i.e. the International Students or Temporary Foreign Workers). They said that often they have the money to pay the rent. Yet, a reference is usually required to rent a place in good quality. MOSAIC can help to provide this reference.
- MOSAIC can also give information on things tenants need to know e.g. tenants' law.

Advocacy Education Workshops

- A participant who is a social work student and has been living in Canada for long time suggests that barriers exist in the systems, so what MOSAIC can do is to give education on advocacy and let participants to decide on topics they are interested to advocate for.
- She added that it is important to offer education on what advocacy is because in many cultures, people have no idea what advocacy is and even does not have a word for advocacy in their language.

Healthcare Advocacy

- Participants feel that the government should pay for the Medical Service Plan (MSP) of International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers with low income. They are interested to advocate for this issue.

Education Information

- Information on transfer degree (This is available on the BC Transfer Guide website. Perhaps we can do more promotion on this because many International Students who are currently in two-year university programs may be interested in this?)

Promotion of MOSAIC Services

- Many suggestions by participants are actually offered by MOSAIC, yet participants just do not know them.
- Promotion is not only an issue for MOSAIC, but also many other social service agencies and institutions. E.g. Some UBC International Students do not know the International House of UBC which is supposed to be the major source of support to UBC International Students (UBC, 2015). Perhaps MOSAIC collaborate more with social service agencies and institutions and refer clients to each other?
- Participants suggest that MOSAIC should do more promotion and outreach.

- For International Students, MOSAIC can go to schools, colleges and universities to promote our agency and services. An International Student participant suggests us to do promotion on the first day of school, college or university. E.g. Vancouver Community College (VCC) introduces students about different services such as counselling at their college on the first day of college.
- Since many Temporary Foreign Workers first settle in a hostel, MOSAIC may promote its settlement services in hostels e.g. advertisement at hostels.
- A participant suggests advertisements on Skytrains.
- A participant suggests delivering leaflets to pigeon holes of apartments. She said that social service agencies near her home are doing this.
- Many participants suggest MOSAIC to use social media e.g. Facebook, twitter, Instagram (MOSAIC has already been offering this. Yet, participants do not know this.)

Findings of Focus Group with Temporary Foreign Workers as Caregivers

- Kindly note that Focus Group participants who are Caregivers are all from the Philippines.

Why Chose Canada?

- Many have family connections in Canada e.g. a sibling in Canada, so they sponsor the participants to come to Canada.
- A participant said that she likes that people in Canada are polite.

Goals

- Participants want to become a Permanent Resident, then a citizen.
- They want to have a better life for their family, especially their children.
- They want to apply their family to come over to Canada.

Challenges and Needs

Application to come to Canada as a Caregiver

- Paper work is complicated.
- Caregiver may have to pay for the plane tickets coming to Canada. Often, employer pays for the plane tickets but agency takes the money.

Renew papers

- Renewing papers is expensive.
- The waiting time is long.
- There is a possibility that the renewal will not be successful and the Caregiver has to leave Canada anytime.
- If the renewal is not successful and the work permit expires, the Caregivers are forced to leave Canada. It is hard to appeal. Some Caregivers end up hiding in Canada.

Permanent Residence Application

- The paper work is complicated.
- The application is strict. E.g. Even if only one question is missed on the application form, the application will not be processed or be turned down.
- The waiting time is long and the Caregiver has no idea when to get a reply.
- The process time for an application from an applicant who is single is quicker than the one from an applicant who has a family. The reason behind is likely that the government considers the potential that the applicant may bring their family to Canada later.
- Proof of fund is needed.
- Employer is not doing his or her part in the process of Caregiver's Permanent Residence application e.g. keeping tracking of records such as number of days the Caregiver worked, keeping pay slips.

- Once a Caregiver has become a Permanent Resident, they encounter challenges of having their family come over to Canada and having them to become Permanent Residents.
- The paper work is complicated.
- The waiting time is long.
- Caregiver left the family members in the Philippines, so children sometimes feel abandoned. Now, family members come over to Canada. They need to get used to each other again. Sometimes, this leads to family conflicts and divorces.
- There is no Medical Service Plan (MSP) for family members for their first three months in British Columbia, so the Caregiver needs to pay for the private health insurance of their family members.

- Caregiver needs to look for jobs for their family members. Family members cannot find jobs because of lack of Canadian experience, so end up doing jobs which do not match their skills and qualifications e.g. janitor.
- Because of policy changes, becoming a Permanent Resident is more difficult now than before.
- The application fees are more expensive.
- Application regulations are stricter.
- The waiting time is longer.
- Not all Caregivers can apply for Permanent Residence now.
- Participants consider these policy changes are unfair and describe them as burdens on “common people’s shoulders”. They have a lot of worries about the unknown policy changes in the future.

Employment

- Participants said that they and their friends who are also Caregivers are oppressed by their employers.
- Many are over-worked e.g. They work from Monday to Sunday, from 6.00AM to 10.00PM, taking care of 4-5 children on their own with no rest.
- Employer pays Caregiver below minimum wage. The right amount is written on the contract and the Caregiver has the contract and knows the right amount. Yet, employer just pays less and Caregiver accepts this because Caregivers do not want to make troubles.
- Also, Caregiver may not be aware of increase in pay. E.g. In the contract 3 years ago, the wage is \$825, but after 3 years, the pay increases. Yet, Caregiver does not know this. Employer may not know this, and even if employer knows this, he or she just does not follow or let Caregiver know.
- Employer physically abuse Caregiver e.g. slapping.
- Caregiver is locked by employer when employer is out, just like being in a jail.
- A participant said that she has a Caregiver friend who expected to work in Vancouver, but her employer asked her to move to Toronto, so she had to move and bear the cold weather in Toronto.
- Employer does not provide health care to Caregiver.
- Employer keeps Caregiver’s passport because he or she fears that Caregiver will run away.

- Sometimes, Caregivers do not know that they are treated unfairly e.g. not knowing that it is illegal for employer to pay Caregiver below minimum wage.
- More often, Caregivers know that they are abused. However, since they often just want to finish the 2-year contract and apply for Permanent Residence as soon as possible, they just accept to be treated unfairly by the employers.
- Many Caregivers do not know where to seek legal support.
- Often, Caregivers don't fight for what they are eligible for because they do not want to make troubles. E.g. A participant was over-worked. She reported this to the Canadian government and sought free lawyer support. The government eventually gave her Employment Insurance (EI). Her lawyer said that indeed she could fight for more than this. Yet, since she felt not used to dealing with this kind of conflicts, she just gave in and agreed to accept just the Employment Insurance (EI).
- There are often problems with the Caregiver agency.
- Employers are not being well screened.
- Agency does not disclose enough information to the Caregivers about the employers.
- Caregivers cannot meet the employers in the Philippines.
- Both Caregiver and employer are charged by the agency for a lot of additional charges.

Language

- Participants are interested to improve their English.
- Although many people have an impression that Filipino has high level of English and do not need language support, participants feel that there is always room for improvement. Also, they feel that if they do not practice it, they will lose it.
- They point out that the English in Canada and the Philippines is different, so language support is still needed.
- Yet, LINC is only available to Permanent Residents. Many Caregivers are not eligible.
- Some English classes are too far from where Caregivers live.

Social and Community Connections

- Participants said that many Caregivers are alone in Canada, far away from their family in the Philippines with no family support.
- Many of them do not know their neighbours because when Caregivers are working at employers' homes during daytime, neighbours are at work.
- They are indeed interested to interact with community at large.

Others

- New life in Canada: e.g. don't know where to take a bus, different cultures between Canada and the Philippines.
- Family: Many Caregivers feel guilty leaving their family behind in the Philippines. Children in the Philippines feel abandoned.
- Finance: The costs of living in Vancouver are high.
- Emotional: e.g. switching from an office worker in the Philippines to a Caregiver in Canada.
- Weather: Vancouver weather is too different from the Philippines and some participants do not feel comfortable with the weather.

Experience on Self-help or Seeking Support

- Participants feel more comfortable to seek support from the Filipino community, instead of going to social service agencies like MOSAIC. This is not just because people in the Filipino community speak the same language, but also more understand the situations of each other.
- The Filipino community does not have many social services agencies. More often, they just mingle and come together naturally. Gradually, they form into a big crowd.
- The Filipino community is good at networking, self-help, and sharing of information.

Networking - Church

- Church is a key in the Filipino culture and offers the following opportunities:
- Networking, meeting other people
- Emotional support e.g. praying, comforting each other
- Practical support e.g. telling each other the rights of Caregivers, sharing information, checking each other's Permanent Residence application form
- Social activities e.g. picnic

Employment

- Legal support e.g. A participant was treated unfairly by her employer and sought free legal support.
- Job-related workshops (for self or family members) e.g. computer, resume writing workshops in SUCCESS
- Looking for jobs (for self or family members) through the Internet, the BC Work etc.

Language

- A participant suggests the English as Second Language Book Club in Fleetwood Public Library in Surrey: Participants of this book club will be given a book to read, then they will discuss about the book. They can learn English from each other. The participant of our Focus Group who participates in this book club said that it is very helpful for her to improve her English.

Suggestions on Social Services

Legal support

- Participants suggest legal support e.g. finding a lawyer.
- (MOSAIC is offering a legal advocacy program. Participants do not know about this. They suggest us to promote this by reaching out to their community e.g.

going to the church.)

Permanent Residence Application Support

- Participants suggest services helping them with Permanent Residence application form and other documents e.g. checking their Permanent Residence application form.

Employment Support

- Participants suggest that MOSAIC can share information on employment opportunities through its employment centre.
- They also suggest MOSAIC to arrange employers and companies to reach out to them.
- Participants are interested in services helping them to switch to other jobs after they have finished their Caregiver contracts.

Language Support

- MOSAIC is offering a Conversation Circle in English for the Filipino community on Sunday. Discussion topics include politics, health, Canadian cultures, English grammar etc. Participants are interested.

Networking Support

- Participants said that they are very interested to do networking with other Filipino Caregivers so that they can know and help each other.
- MOSAIC is offering a mobile program, helping participants to interact with community at large. Participants are interested in this program.
- MOSAIC is suggesting a group for Temporary Foreign Workers (both Caregivers and Non-Caregivers) and International Students doing social activities so that they can meet people from different cultures. Participants are interested in this group.

Promotion and Reach Out

- Participants suggest that MOSAIC can promote its social services and reach out to the Caregivers as follows:
- MOSAIC settlement workers can go to the churches on Sunday morning because most Caregivers do not need to work and gather at the churches on Sunday morning. They usually spend 2-3-hours together after the worship service.
- MOSAIC can also reach out to the Caregivers at school when they bring employer's children to school (9.00AM) and picking them up from school (2.00PM). Caregivers will not stay there long though, so MOSAIC may only deliver flyers.
- MOSAIC can reach out to the Caregivers at the parks anytime, especially during the summer.
- MOSAIC can reach out to the Caregivers in recreational centers, community centers, or drop-in centers starting from 9.00 / 10.00AM.
- MOSAIC can put up advertisements about its services on the library notice board. Some Caregivers do find information from the library notice board.
- Participants suggest MOSAIC to set up a Facebook page to share information. (MOSAIC has been offering this but participants do not know.)
- There is a Facebook group called "Open Work Permit Application". It will screen whether you are Caregivers before accepting you. It is an online Filipino community and self-help group. Members usually search information for each other on this Facebook page e.g. CIC information.
- Filipinos usually welcome people who approach them. Some are more open to people who are from the same ethnic community.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

- Findings from Focus Groups validate that International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers (both Caregivers and Non-Caregivers) encounter challenges and need support on settlement (especially on how to become a permanent resident), employment, language, and networking.
- Participants want to or are interested to be a Permanent Resident, yet they also consider many potential challenges such as getting a job and language barriers.
- On top of settlement, employment, language, and networking barriers, they face other challenges and have other needs such as housing. These are all important aspects for them to stay in British Columbia in the long run.
- The Focus Groups also reveal that many challenges faced by participants are not related to their own capacity. Instead, the challenges are caused by societal constructs and systems, for example, discrimination and oppression from employers. MOSAIC may need to consider how we can better support International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers on advocacy.
- There are differences on the challenges and needs of support between participants who have been to Canada for shorter time (fewer than 2 years) and longer time (3-4 years). For example, with regards to English language capacity, participants who have been to Canada for shorter time would need language support on grammar, pronunciation and / or opportunities to interact with community at large. However, participants who have been to Canada for longer time would want more advanced language support preparing them for seeking employment and applying at workplace.
- There are also obvious differences on the challenges and needs of support between Caregiver participants and other participants. For example, with regards to challenges, Caregivers talk more about oppression from employers, while other participants talk more about language barriers.
- Many suggestions on settlement services by Focus Group participants have already been offered by MOSAIC. Yet, participants do not know about them. There is a promotion issue here. MOSAIC may need to consider doing more outreach work e.g. going to universities and colleges to reach out to International Students or going to churches to reach out to Caregivers.
- Suggestions on social services mostly raised by Focus Group participants are support on Permanent Residence application (e.g. application form checking), a Conversation Circle or English learning group with labour market elements (where participants can learn and support each other on job search and interview

as well as meet and gain mentorship opportunities with potential employers), and opportunities to meet people outside of their immediate circles.

Some additional thoughts

- Since the sample size of the Focus Groups is small, the findings may not be generalized to other International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers. However, it is at least a study which helps us gain preliminary understanding of these two groups, especially that previous limited research has been done on the experience of these two groups.
- Coming to and settling down in Canada is not easy. All participants have their strengths. They are trying hard to self help and seek support. How can we better utilize their strengths? What can we learn from their experience? For example, despite of having limited resources, the Filipino Caregiver community has a strong self-help network.
- Support and training may also be provided to service providers. Many of them lack understanding of the needs and barriers of International Students and Temporary Foreign Workers. For example, school, university and college teaching staff often does not understand the barriers of International Students, hence marks are deducted from their exams, assignments and presentations because of their language.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Guidelines

This sharing session aims to understand International Students' / Temporary Foreign Workers' goals and challenges on settlement (especially with regards to becoming a Permanent Resident), employment, language proficiency, and community connections. It also aims to understand your experience, opinions and suggestions regarding social services and preferred delivery format of services. We sincerely invite you to participate in this sharing session. Your participation will facilitate us to identify gaps and improve quality of social services.

Guidelines:

1. Everything discussed in the session will be confidential.
2. All information collected will be carefully stored and protected in MOSAIC database.
3. You can withdraw from the session anytime.
4. Please respect other participants during the session.
5. If you would prefer to write down your comments on a piece of paper, or let us know your comments after the sharing session (please see contact details below), please feel free to do so.
6. Please note that language interpretation is available upon request.

If you have any questions, or you would like to have further information on this sharing session, please contact:

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Appendix 2: Brief Questionnaire for International Students

Please ✓ as appropriate.

1. How old are you? (in years old)

- 15 or below 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35
- 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60
- 61-65 66 or above

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say / Other

3. What is your education level?

- Did not finish high school
- High school or equivalent
- Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate
- College degree (certificate or diploma)
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

4. What is your first language?

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin | <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farsi | <input type="checkbox"/> Gujarati | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi | <input type="checkbox"/> Romanian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Please specify: | | |
-

5. What is your nationality? _____

6. What is your resident city?

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vancouver | <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richmond | <input type="checkbox"/> Delta | <input type="checkbox"/> North Vancouver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> West
Vancouver | <input type="checkbox"/> Coquitlam | <input type="checkbox"/> Port Coquitlam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Langley | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> New Westminister |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Port Moody | <input type="checkbox"/> Abbotsford | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Please specify: |
-

7. How long have you been living in Canada?

- Less than 6 months 6 months – 1 year 1-2 years
 2-3 years 3-4 years 4-5 years
 5 years or above

8. Following question 7, how many months / years MORE are you planning to stay in Canada?

- Less than 6 months 6 months – 1 year 1-2 years
 2-3 years 3-4 years 4-5 years
 5 years or above

9. Are you confident in your English level?

Not confident 1	2	3	4	Confident 5
<input type="checkbox"/>				

10. Are you interested to apply for a PERMANENT RESIDENT status?

- Yes No Not sure

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire!

Appendix 3: Brief Questionnaire for Temporary Foreign Workers (For both Non-Caregivers and Caregivers)

Please ✓ as appropriate.

1. How old are you? (in years old)

- 15 or below 16-20 21-25 26-30 31-35
- 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60
- 61-65 66 or above

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say / Other

3. What is your education level?

- Did not finish high school
- High school or equivalent
- Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate
- Some university education
- College degree or certificate (2-year university)
- Bachelor's degree (4-year university)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral / professional degree

4. **What is your first language?** _____

5. **What is your nationality?** _____

6. **What is your resident city?**

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vancouver | <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richmond | <input type="checkbox"/> Delta | <input type="checkbox"/> North Vancouver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> West
Vancouver | <input type="checkbox"/> Coquitlam | <input type="checkbox"/> Port Coquitlam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Langley | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission | <input type="checkbox"/> New Westminster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Port Moody | <input type="checkbox"/> Abbotsford | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – Please specify: |
-

7. **From the current date, how many months / years can you stay in Canada based on your work permit (for example, if your permit was issued in April 2014 and is good until April 2016, you still have 11 months until your permit expires in April 2016 from the current date)?**

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months – 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 years | |

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire!

Appendix 4: Question Guide for International Students

A. Introduction

- Please briefly introduce yourself.
- Please tell us your experience before and after coming to Canada.
- How long have you been in Canada?

B. Goals

- What are your goals on settlement? Do you want to be a Permanent Resident?
- What are your goals on employment? E.g. finding a job which match your qualifications and skills
- How do you want to improve your communication skills? E.g. being able to communicate fluently at a work environment
- How do you want to expand your network in the community? E.g. knowing how to do networking, meeting mentors who can give you career support

C. Challenges and needs

- What are your challenges and needs on settlement? E.g. not knowing how to be a Permanent Resident
- What are your challenges and needs regarding employment? E.g. Unclear how to find jobs which match your qualifications and skills
- Are you familiar with your skills and strength?
- What are your challenges and needs on language proficiency? E.g. Unable to communicate fluently at a work environment
- What are your challenges and needs to expand your network in the community? E.g. Feeling isolated, not knowing how to do networking, unable to find a mentor who can give you career support

D. Social services (Social services include 1. settlement support, 2. workshops on basic employment skills, 3. language training, and 4. community connections)

- Does (or did) your school provide the following support services?
 1. settlement support (e.g. information session on becoming a Permanent Resident)
 2. employment skills workshop (e.g. career counselling)
 3. language training (e.g.

English classes) 4. support for community connections

- If your school provides these support services, have you used them?
- If you have used them, please tell us how they were beneficial for you?
- If you have not used them at your school, could you tell us why you do (did) not?
- Currently the government is not providing language training for International Students. Do you think that language training for workplace is needed for International Students?

E. Suggestions on the service delivery format

- What is your preferred delivery format of the social services?

For examples,

Online: webinars, online learning

Face-to-face: one-on-one consultation, group workshop

- Your availability? When do you prefer to have the social services? E.g. Daytime? Evening? Weekday? Weekend?
- Where would you like to have the social services?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 5: Question Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers (For both Non-Caregivers and Caregivers)

A. Introduction

- Please briefly introduce yourself.
- Please tell us your experience before and after coming to Canada.
- How long have you been in Canada?

B. Goals

- What are your goals on settlement? Do you want to be a Permanent Resident?
- What are your goals on labour market? E.g. knowing clearly your workplace rights and responsibilities in BC, finding a job which match your qualifications and skills
- What are your goals on language? E.g. being able to communicate fluently at a work environment, being able to communicate fluently in daily life
- What are your goals on social and community connections? E.g. meeting mentors who can give you social and workplace support

C. Challenges and needs

- What are your challenges and needs on settlement? E.g. not knowing how to be a Permanent Resident
- What are your challenges and needs on labour market? E.g. Unclear about your workplace rights and responsibilities
- Are you familiar with your skills and strength?
- What are your challenges and needs on language? E.g. Unable to communicate fluently at a work environment

- What are your challenges and needs on social and community connections? E.g. Feeling isolated, unable to find a mentor who can give you social and workplace support

D. Social services (Social services refer to 1. settlement services, 2. labour market services, 3. language training, and 4. social and community connections services i.e. helping clients not feel isolated, connecting clients to friends and mentors)

- Have you accessed to the following social services: 1. settlement services, 2. labour market services, 3. language training, and 4. social and community connections services
- If you have accessed to the social services, please tell us about them. What do you think about them? If they are good, why? If they are not so good, why? How can they be better?
- If you have not accessed to the social services, why?
- What are the social services you would like to receive but are not available, especially the social services related to settlement, labour market, language, and social and community connections?

The following are some MOSAIC's suggestions on the social services. What do you think?

- Formal language training to Temporary Foreign Workers, language practice with labour market elements (e.g. introducing the Canadian labour market), helping participants to be ready for jobs they want to do. E.g. MOSAIC's conversation classes
- Mentorship services for Temporary Foreign Workers who can give Temporary Foreign Workers social and workplace support
- Services preparing Temporary Foreign Workers to apply for Permanent Residence e.g. information sessions
- What is your preferred delivery format of the social services?
- Your preferred accessibility? How would you like to have the social services?
For examples,
Online: webinars, online learning
Face-to-face: one-to-one, group workshop, settlement plan (i.e. meeting up for sessions)
- Your availability? When would you like to have the social services? E.g.

Daytime? Evening? Weekday? Weekend?

- Where would you like to have the social services?

E. Recent Changes on Temporary Foreign Worker Program

- The government has recently restricted the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (Temporary Foreign Worker Program). What are the impacts on you and people around you? (Restriction refers to government's policies on favoring Canadian workers first E.g. restricting the use of non-official languages as job requirements for Temporary Foreign Workers, allowing the government to suspend, revoke or refuse to process Temporary Foreign Workers' applications in order to better protect the Canadian labour market)