

Toward a Skilled Immigrant-Construction Industry Integrated Assessment and Bridging Program

Project Report

Prepared and submitted on June 1st, 2004 by:



208 - 131 Water St. Vancouver BC V6B 4M3
Tel: 604.714-0600 Fax: 604.228-1892
www.globalframeworks.com



PO Box 1601, Comox, BC, V9N 8A2
Phone: (250) 339-7763 Fax: (250) 339-3868
www.encompassconsultants.com

**Toward a Skilled Immigrant-Construction Industry
Integrated Assessment and Bridging Program
Project Report**

Prepared for:

**S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society)
and
The British Columbia Construction Association**

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Abey Cabrera, Operations Administrator, Comren Contracting Ltd.
Al Cameron, President, Acadia Northwest Mechanical, Terrace
Bill Gyles, General Manager/President, Kinetic Construction, Victoria
Bradley Stauber, Vice President, Central Interior Mechanical, Prince George
Brian Hofler, Executive Vice President, Roofing Contractors Association
Brian Wallach, Safety Coordinator/Human Resource Manager, Greyback Construction Ltd., Kelowna
Charles Tantanasarn, Civil Engineer, Foreign-Trained Worker
Dominic Hickman, Lower Mainland Steel
Don Schouten, General Manager, Transwest Roofing Ltd.
Gay Woodward, Executive Director, BC Floor Covering Association
Jamie Nicol, President and General Manager, Complete Climate Control Inc., Kelowna
Janice Gauk, Janco Contracting Inc., Prince George
Jean-Pascal (JP) LeBerg, Technical & Training Services, Masonry Institute of BC
Jo Hart, Partner, Icon Homes, Quesnel
Ken Moreland, Manager, Sterling Crane, Prince George
Patrick Waunch, President, Rambow Mechanical, Kelowna
Phil Hochstein, Executive VP, Independent Contractors and Businesses Association
Richard Campbell, Executive Director, Electrical Contractors Association of BC/ Council of Construction Trades Association
Richard Owen, Secretary Treasurer, Interior Plumbing and Heating, Kamloops
Steve Butler, President, Competition Glass Ltd., Kelowna
Surinder Sarwara, Electrical and Avionics Engineer, Foreign-Trained Worker
Sylvia Bryant, Bryant Electric Ltd., Prince George
Terry Brown, Manager, Greyback Construction Ltd., Kelowna
Vince Furlong, Dominion Masonry, Vancouver
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Peter Liang, Manager, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
KC Chau, Employment Counsellor, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Vincent Dong, Employment Counsellor, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Ken Gordon, Employment Counsellor, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
and

Rosalind Thorn, President, Northern BC Construction Association
Debbie Hicks, President, Southern Interior Construction Association
Keith Sashaw, President, Vancouver Regional Construction Association
Abigail Fulton, Vice President, British Columbian Construction Association

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1.0 Executive Summary

The construction industry is one of the largest and most valuable economic sectors in British Columbia. It is expected to grow on par with the provincial economy, however, its competitiveness is being increasingly threatened by a critical shortage of young, skilled tradespeople. Meanwhile, BC hosts a large population of foreign trained workers whose skills, knowledge, and qualifications are grossly under-utilised.

As the skills shortages become more widespread, this disconnect between skills demand and skills supply has become a critical concern. Therefore, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. have formed a partnership to develop a comprehensive skilled immigrant /construction industry strategic plan to increase the employment of skilled immigrants among construction contractors.

In support of the development of that plan, global FRAMEWORKS Ltd. and EnCompass Consultants Inc. were contracted to conduct research with stakeholders and facilitate a strategic planning meeting which will lead to the development of a strategic planning framework.

Research Methodologies

The research has involved a combination of primary and secondary research methodologies, stakeholder engagement and strategic activities, including:

- Review of relevant literature
- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Employer surveys
- A strategic planning meeting

This report contains an outline and analysis of the findings from this research, a list of key recommendations as well as a brief evaluation of the research process. Additional observations and recommendations from the consultant team are also included.

Research Findings

Review of Literature

The specific focus of this research is relatively new and unique in the context of BC. However, there are significant digests of relevant work dealing with the broader issues of (1) immigrant employment generally and (2) employment in the construction sector. In order to build on this knowledge and experience, one component of the research involved a search and review of existing literature and resources in three areas:

- employment in the construction sector
- employment of immigrants
- employment of immigrants in the construction sector

A comprehensive list of relevant sources is contained in Appendix A and B of the report.

Key Informant Interviews

Twenty-one key informants were interviewed as part of the research process. In order to capture a broad array of perspectives, interview participants included foreign trained workers from a mix of backgrounds, employers (contractors), the Industry Training Authority as well as service providers and industry and trade associations. Effort was also made to interview people from different regions.

Each interview participant was asked questions about their experiences in hiring foreign trained workers or working as a foreign trained worker in the construction sector, the challenges they faced and advice they had for other foreign trained workers in the field, employers as well as government and service providers.

Focus Groups

The research included six focus groups - three with foreign trained workers and three with employers. A total of 78 people were involved in focus groups. Both foreign trained workers and employers were asked a similar set of questions to capture information about their experiences working in the BC construction industry. The participants' experiences and perspectives were captured under the following six headings:

- Experiences
- Services & Resources
- Challenges
- Advice to foreign trained workers
- Advice to Employers
- Promising Practices

Participant recommendations to government and service providers were also captured in these sessions. These recommendations were not reached by consensus of the focus group participants, however, there was also no disagreement voiced in the recommendation process.

Employer Survey

Surveys were sent to the membership of the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA). Each regional office sent copies of the questionnaire to their regional members by facsimile and results were sent to the BCCA head office in Victoria.

In total 85 copies of the survey questionnaire were received. These provided information with respect to employers' experience with foreign trained workers, the extent and nature of the skills shortages, key attributes employers look for in their employees, challenges and barriers that they experienced in hiring foreign trained workers, their willingness to hire foreign trained workers and services used.

A summary of key findings from the survey responses are as follows:

- 45 of the respondents (53%) indicated that they had experience employing foreign trained workers.
- 62 employers (73%) indicated that they are currently experiencing difficulty recruiting trades people.
- 'Communication skills', 'qualifications' and 'teamwork' were identified as the three most important employee attributes.
- 'Lack of communication /language skills', 'lack of certification' and 'not enough local experience' were named as the top three challenges encountered in hiring foreign trained workers.
- 'Lack of communication /language skills', 'not enough local experience' and 'inability to work as part of a team' were given as the top three challenges encountered in retaining foreign trained workers.
- 65 employers (74%) indicated that they would be willing to hire foreign trained workers.
- 51 employers (60%) indicated that they had used employer services/resources in the past two years.

Recommendations

In addition to the findings outlined above, research participants provided recommendations to government and service providers for how to facilitate the integration of foreign trained workers in the construction industry. A full list of these recommendations is contained in Appendix F of the report; and a summary of common recommendations is as follows:

- Establish and support a service that connects foreign trained workers and employers.
- Provide incentives for employers who hire and train FTW's.
- Establish a provincial body to evaluate and give accreditation to FTWs.
- Review immigration policies to ensure they reflect current labour market needs.
- Support an apprenticeship program that maintains a high level of standardized skills.
- Develop training programs that acknowledge the skills of FTW s and lead to full trades qualifications more quickly than through current apprenticeship routes (i.e. Bridging Programs).
- Educate the public, educators, parents and youth about the viability of trades as a career option.
- Encourage stakeholders to exchange information and to work collaboratively to implement solutions.
- Encourage unions to review policies to ensure that they reflect current and future industry and labour market conditions.
- Educate industry representatives and business owners about the need to invest in training.
- Explore the business case for incentives for new immigrants who settle in communities that need trades workers.
- Establish regional trades training facilities that reflect industry needs.
- Combine courses that are common to several trades to reduce costs of training.
- Provide immigrants with accurate, easily accessible information about working in Canada and clearly communicate the need for good English skills.
- Consider mentoring and job coach programs for FTWs and employers.

Strategic Planning Meeting

A three-hour strategic planning session was held on April 19, 2004 with five representatives from SUCCESS, two representatives from the BCCA and the consultant team. The purpose of this session was to review findings to date, discuss a list of top recommendations from the research, determine the priority items to move ahead and actions for how to move forward.

It resulted in the following recommendations and action items.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action Items</i>
<p>1. Provide support for a province wide process to evaluate and assess the skills of workers who received their training outside of Canada and establish or revise existing apprenticeship training to allow people with prior learning to enter trades qualification training at the level determined through the assessment system. Develop a pilot program for the assessment and training in one trade.</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a pilot program for assessment and training with one trade (i.e. one experiencing severe skills shortages) 2. Work with the ITA to ensure compatibility 3. Continue development of the a central body that includes representation from all sectors of the construction industry, all regions, union and non-union sectors 4. Develop a corresponding body of service providers and interest groups that would build on networks/initiatives already in place, i.e. EASI and include employment agencies, training/education providers and immigrant organizations. 5. Conduct research into who is doing what around prior skills assessment/competency assessments <p>Long Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have central and corresponding bodies work together to lead a series of initiatives around assessing the needs of foreign trained workers, including: 2. Conduct research into the distinct needs of the various trades 3. Develop a strategy to address assessment and training in the different trades
<p>2. Establish and maintain a process to connect construction industry and foreign trained workers, beginning with a database. The system could be expanded to also house relevant and timely information.</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore other existing models and opportunities for partnership in developing and maintaining a registry 2. Explore what type of information should be included in the registry 3. Explore ways of integrating job coaching and human resources support to the registry 4. Develop an appropriate model that fits the needs outlined 5. Long Term 6. Establish a process for maintaining the database/registry
<p>3. Encourage increased stakeholder collaboration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affirm the usefulness and need for collaborative discussions/meetings initiated by the BCCA and the formation of a cross-sector body to address issues in a

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action Items</i>
	<p>collective manner, advise government and ensure system-wide consistency and direction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Explore opportunities to expand the work of and learn from other cross-sector collaborations, i.e. EASI 3. Explore linkages/stakeholder collaborations across the province – with NGOs, Colleges, Service Providers, Immigrant Organizations 4. Identify stakeholders and organize both planning level and sector specific roundtables to discuss strategies for effective information exchange across sectors
4. Encourage a review immigration policy to make them more reflective of current labour market needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work with the Provincial Nominee Program 2. Explore the allocation of landing fees and immigrant settlement and training funds 3. Initiate methods of attracting foreign students into the trades 4. Invite immigration officials to participate in meetings and hear the needs of the industry 5. Encourage revisions to the point system to give greater priority to skilled trades people
5. Explore the business case for incentives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore tax incentives that would be of interest to employers 2. Explore loans/scholarships to support people to work while they are learning 3. Explore cost recovery incentive models – whereby training is provided at a discount/free upfront and repaid over time
6. Meet the needs of FTWs and industry for training and apprenticeship information and outreach	<i>Note: This recommendation was raised but not formally stated or analyzed during the Strategic Planning Meeting.</i>

Consultants' Observations and Recommendations

While the purpose of this final report is primarily to review and report on the research findings, there were also a number of overarching themes that became evident to the consultant team.

Above all, the research conducted for the Towards a Skilled Immigrant-Construction Industry Integrated Assessment and Bridging Program Project has underlined the need for timely and collaborative solutions to address the disconnect between skills demand and supply in the BC Construction Industry.

Other observations are:

- There is intense competition for qualified tradespersons.
- There are unmistakable regional differences with respect to skills shortages, the needs of employers, challenges and training requirements.
- There is frustration with the current apprenticeship program.
- There is growing concern among employers who feel that they are having to assume a greater proportion of the costs of training new trades people.
- Immigrants often receive insufficient or inaccurate information about qualification requirements and the local labour market.
- The immigration criteria do not reflect current labour market conditions and as a result, the skills and professions being recruited to Canada from overseas are not those that employers are looking for.
- Not all players in the construction industry realize or accept the urgency of the skills shortage and the need to better utilize the skills of foreign trained workers.
- Employers - and particularly those outside of the Lower Mainland - do not have access to foreign trained workers interested in working in the construction sector.

These observations lend support to the recommendations outlined in Section 4.4. In particular, they highlight the following five priorities:

1. Effective and continuous stakeholder collaboration.
2. Better and consistent information about skills requirements, training opportunities, available services and resources and labour market opportunities
3. Effective methods of connecting employers to the available labour pool of foreign trained workers
4. Training that reflects the needs of industry and foreign trained workers
5. Adequate supports and incentives

2.0 Project Background and Activities

The construction industry is one of the largest and most valuable economic sectors in British Columbia. It directly employs 125,000 or 7% of the province's workforce and contributes a total value of \$15 billion or 15% of GDP¹. The BC construction industry is expected to grow on par with the provincial economy, however, its competitiveness is being increasingly threatened by a critical shortage of young, skilled tradespeople.

Labour shortages in the construction sector have been anticipated for years but in recent years, they have become the reality for a growing number of employers throughout the province. As the Canadian population ages, there are insufficient young people to replace the retiring Baby Boomers in the workforce and this has meant that a large proportion of the labour force is nearing retirement. Over the next two decades, the construction trades will potentially lose more than one third of their labour force to retirement. Over the next twelve years, 67,000 openings in the construction industry are expected.

A parallel issue in Canada is the availability of the supply of skilled immigrants whose skills, knowledge, and qualifications are grossly under-utilised. Figures from Statistics Canada indicate that, in 2001, six out of ten foreign trained workers in Canada were not employed in the occupation field in which they were trained. Similarly, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that between \$4 and \$6 billion is lost annually to the Canadian economy as a result of unrecognized qualifications, particularly those of skilled immigrants².

This disconnect between skills demand and skills supply is particularly evident in BC's Construction Industry. Therefore, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. have formed a partnership to develop a comprehensive skilled immigrant /construction industry strategic plan to increase the employment of skilled immigrants among construction contractors.

¹ BC Construction Association, the Council of Construction Trades Association of BC, and the Canadian Home Builders Association of BC. July 2003. *Toward a World Class BC Construction Industry Training System: A Working Paper*.

² Michael Bloom and Michael Grant. 2001. *Brain Gain: The Economic Benefits of Recognising Learning and Learning Credentials in Canada*. Conference Board of Canada.

In support of the development of that plan, global FRAMEWORKS Ltd. and EnCompass Consultants Inc. were contracted to conduct research with stakeholders and facilitate a strategic planning meeting which will lead to the development of a strategic planning framework.

The specific activities that were undertaken in this project included:

- Review and organization of relevant literature
- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Employer surveys
- Analysis and interpretation
- Facilitation of strategic planning
- Project evaluation
- Final Report

These activities are intended to build a solid, reliable understanding of the needs of immigrants and construction employers as they relate to assessment and bridging services, promising practices, existing resources and tools, the most important services to promote skilled immigrant employment in the construction industry and the most plausible service delivery options.

This understanding will in turn inform the development of a realistic and comprehensive strategic plan and actions. Further, it will help to address this critical issue and facilitate the successful integration of foreign trained workers into the BC construction industry.

3.0 Project Methodology

The research has involved a combination of primary and secondary research methodologies, stakeholder engagement and strategic activities, including: a review of existing literature, key informant interviews, focus groups, an employer survey, and a strategic planning session. This section discusses each of these research components in greater detail; the findings of each are contained in the following sections of the report.

3.1 Review of Literature

The specific focus of this research is relatively new and unique in the context of BC. However, there are significant digests of relevant work dealing with the broader issues of (1) immigrant employment generally and (2) employment in the construction sector. In order to build on this

knowledge and experience, one component of the research involved a search and review of existing literature and resources in three areas:

- employment in the construction sector
- employment of immigrants
- employment of immigrants in the construction sector

A comprehensive list of relevant sources was built over the course of the project and was used to develop the research instruments and interview guides. (Please see Appendix A and B.)

3.2 Key Informant Interviews

A total of 21 interviews were held between April 1 and May 30, 2004. Key informants were chosen from a variety of backgrounds and occupations in order to cover the broad spectrum of relevant stakeholder perspectives.

As such, interviews included:

- 9 contractors
- 2 service providers
- 4 foreign trained workers
- 1 training authority representative
- 4 industry association representatives
- 1 trades association representative

They also included representation from different regions of the province.

The interview questions varied slightly to suit the distinct interests and concerns of the various stakeholders, but sought to elicit the same types of information and experiences. Please see Appendix C for a list of interview questions. Interview contacts were provided mainly by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the BCCA.

3.3 Focus Groups

A total of six focus groups were held over the course of the project - three with employers and three with foreign trained workers.

- **Foreign Trained Worker Focus Groups**

The sessions with foreign trained workers were conducted by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and, given that approximately three quarters of BC's immigrant population resides in the Lower Mainland, all three of these sessions were held in and around Vancouver. Two of these groups, involving a total of 25 participants from a wide mix of countries, were held in English: one included only foreign trained engineers; the other included people from a variety of construction-related backgrounds. The third group was comprised of 12 participants all from China and was held

in Mandarin. All three foreign trained worker focus groups followed the same set of questions (see Appendix D) and method of recording the discussions.

- **Employer Focus Groups**

The employer focus groups were conducted by the consultant team and were carried out in three different regions of the province: one in the Lower Mainland (Vancouver), one in the southern interior (Kelowna) and one in the north-central region of the province (Prince George). These sessions included a total of 32 employers from a variety of trades, union as well as non-union workplaces. They all followed a standard research instrument and method of recording. While the questions differed from those asked in the foreign trained worker focus groups, the discussions in all six of the sessions were captured under the same headings: Experiences; Challenges; Services & Resources; Promising Practices; Recommendations so as to enable cross comparisons and analysis.

3.4 Employer Survey

The construction employer survey was developed by the consultants and by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the BCCA (see Appendix E). It contained a total of seven questions and involved a mix of quantitative and qualitative responses aimed at obtaining information on the nature of the current and future skills shortage in the trades, experiences and challenges hiring foreign trained workers, employers' willingness to hire foreign trained workers and service and resources used.

The survey was distributed by fax to members of the BCCA through the regional offices during the week of May 3rd. Members were given approximately ten days to respond. A total of 85 surveys were completed and returned to the BCCA headquarters by May 12th.

4.0 Research Findings

4.1 Key Informant Interviews

Twenty-one key informants were interviewed as part of the research process. In order to capture a broad array of perspectives, interview participants included foreign trained workers from a mix of backgrounds, employers (contractors), the Industry Training Authority as well as service providers and industry and trade associations. Effort was also made to interview people from different regions.

Each interview participant was asked questions about their experiences in hiring foreign trained workers or working as a foreign trained worker in the construction sector, the challenges they faced and advice they had for other foreign trained workers in the field, employers as well as government and service providers (See Appendix C for a list of questions). Some common themes that emerged from these interviews are discussed below³:

Interviews with Contractors

Experiences

The most common experience among contractors from across the province was that they had minimal opportunity to hire foreign trained workers and did not know how to access this labour pool. Those contractors that did have experience reported these to be generally positive.

Services and Resources

None of the contractors interviewed use community based employment programs or other services found in British Columbia.

Challenges

- **English Skills:** In addition to the challenge of finding foreign trained workers with an interest in working in the construction industry, adequate English skills - including written skills and “construction English” - was listed as one of the most common obstacles encountered by contractors in recruiting and working with foreign trained workers.
- **Union Restrictions:** A number of contractors also indicated that their ability to employ foreign trained workers was impeded by hiring restrictions imposed by unions.

Words of Advice

Common words of advice offered to foreign trained workers who are aspiring to work in the construction sector were to:

- Build strong communication skills, both verbal and written
- Get trained in local construction methods
- Learn appropriate codes and measurements
- Look for work outside the Lower Mainland

³ The interview with the Industry Training Authority and trade association focused on recommendations and the results of these interviews are therefore outlined in Section 4.5.

- Find a mentor and build a support network
- Improve your English language skills including construction terminology

For other employers hiring, recruiting and retaining foreign trained workers, common suggestions were to:

- Be prepared to spend time and money to train new construction workers.
- Allow time for a foreign trained worker to adapt to local construction methods.
- Utilize workers who speak the same first language if you are having difficulty communicating with a foreign trained worker, especially around safety issues.
- Set measurable standards for all employees regardless of personalities or background.
- Make work experience placements and apprenticeships available.
- Recognize that training a worker is good for the industry even if the trainee leaves the company upon completion of the training.

Promising Practices

Contractors were also asked to discuss any successful practices that facilitate the employment of foreign trained workers. These promising practices included:

- **A buddy or mentoring system** to connect foreign trained workers with someone already established and working in the field.
- **Inclusive human resource practices and policies** that do not impose barriers to the recruitment and advancement of foreign trained workers.
- **Social events** that include employees and their families - so as to help new immigrants feel part of the community and develop a social network.
- **Inclusive hiring practices** in which the crew helps to determine who will be brought on as an apprenticeship.
- **Inclusive hiring practices** in which training supervisors communicate to, and include, foreign trained workers.
- **No tolerance of racial discrimination** in the workplace or by the crew.
- **Ontario's guest worker policy** which calls specifically for skilled tradespersons to come to work in Canada.

Interviews with Industry Associations

Experiences:

Industry association representatives discussed a number of common experiences with respect to the needs of employers:

- **Skills shortages vary.** One of the experiences expressed by all the industry associations was that skills shortages vary by trade and therefore the interest and urgency in hiring foreign trained workers also differs. For example, while there are no labour shortages in the electrical and plumbing trades, there are critical shortages of skilled trades people in roofing and framing, ironworks and masonry.
- **Qualification requirements differ across the trades.** For example, whereas some trades (i.e. electrical) are considered compulsory trades and require that workers be certified, the majority are not bound by these requirements.
- **Communication skills are important.** They are important in all trades, but language and reading proficiency specifically are important in those trades that involve referencing codes and regulations.
- **There is a significant need for job-ready employees.** Industry associations hear from employers about their need for employees that are job-ready and who have safety training.
- **Age is a key factor** for employers hiring in the construction sector.
- **Support for the apprenticeship program** was unanimous among industry associations interviewed.

Services and Resources

On the topic of services and resources available to facilitate the hiring and retention of foreign trained workers in the construction sector, interview participants indicated that there were limited services and tools available for employers but pointed out that industry associations themselves are active in this regard:

- Industry associations are making an effort to attract people to the trades, by expanding the scope of recruiting and developing tools to explain the qualification process.
- A number of industry associations, including the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association and the Canadian Homebuilders Association of BC (CHBA) are designing specialized training models.
- One association (CHBA) is also looking at developing a training program specifically for foreign trained workers.

Challenges

The representatives from the industry associations interviewed alluded to a number of challenges for integrating foreign trained workers more successfully into the construction industry. Some common obstacles discussed included:

- **Regional differences:** What works in the lower mainland, does not help the industry in the regions and in smaller communities. For example, while more specialized trades workers are favoured by employers in the lower mainland, in smaller communities, they need people with a broader skills base.
- **Regulations:** In changing the rules so that certification qualifications are not compulsory in many of the mechanical trades, there is no incentive for workers to pursue apprenticeships or employers to indenture apprentices.
- **Decreasing Wages:** There has been a movement towards the suppression of wages as a result of both the trend towards specialization in the trades (i.e. trades splintering) and non-compulsory trades.

Words of Advice

Based on their perception of the issues and barriers in the construction sector, industry association interviewees advised foreign trained workers hoping to work in the industry to:

- Pursue apprenticeships.
- Obtain training – take courses to improve basic English and technical skills.
- Exhibit a good attitude.

Industry associations suggested that employers:

- Spend time with new employees and support their training
- Support partnerships between industry associations and service providers.

Promising Practices

Interview participants from industry associations also referenced a few successful models and employment practices to help advance the integration of foreign trained workers. These included:

- Ontario's guest worker policy which calls for skilled tradespersons to come to work in Canada.

- Employers who invest in training.
- Pre-apprenticeship programs to bring workers into the trade as helpers (e.g. in the sheet metal trade).

Interviews with Foreign Trained Workers

Experiences

All foreign trained workers interviewed were trained as engineers, although in different countries, and none of them are currently working in their field or in the construction sector. All of the participants indicated that they had experienced extreme difficulty finding work in their field and had been told that they are overqualified for jobs outside their field.

Services and Resources

All of the participants interviewed had accessed services and programs to assist them in finding work:

- Two joined job finding clubs and found them helpful.
- Two joined a mentorship program and had mixed opinions.
- Two had become members of the professional association.

The interviewees generally found the programs they accessed to be useful but they expressed frustration that the programs did not help to connect with employers or gain Canadian experience; only entry level trades training programs provided opportunities to gain experience.

Challenges

The interviewees discussed numerous challenges in finding work in the construction sector in BC. Common obstacles encountered included:

- **Lack of local work experience:** Most employers require that employees have at least one year of work experience in Canada. This was therefore highlighted as one the leading challenges encountered by the foreign trained workers interviewed.
- **High costs of training and memberships:** While memberships in the Professional association and supplementary training were both seen to be crucial prerequisites for obtaining employment in their field of work, the interviewees found it difficult to cover these costs without having a job.
- **Mixed messages:** The interview participants expressed frustration as a result of having been given inconsistent information about the skills and experience required to work in their field in BC.

- **Lack of technical language training:** While participants were advised to improve their technical English skills, they expressed frustration in a lack of training available.

Words of Advice

Participants advised others in their position to:

- Join the industry professional association – i.e. APEGBC
- Try to gain Canadian work experience even if it is outside of your area of training.

Of employers, they simply asked that they give foreign trained workers a chance to demonstrate their skills.

Promising Practices

Based on their experience, interviewees advanced the practice of friends helping friends as a way to help foreign trained workers understand the job market and gain access to opportunities.

Interviews with Service Providers

Experiences

Both service providers interviewed have had extensive experience working with foreign trained workers – teaching job finding skills and providing training and career counseling. In addition, they both found that, while some employers do encounter difficulties working with and retaining foreign trained workers, these challenges can be easily overcome if there is will on the part of the employer.

Services and Resources

With respect to the services administered by the interviewees and other available, both have found the need to provide training and advice on technical as well as soft/work culture skills. They also expressed a similar aim to prepare their clients to find work, meet the needs and expectations of employers and retain employment.

Challenges

The challenges that these participants had been exposed to through their work with foreign trained workers included:

- **Unclear information:** Foreign trained workers often hear mixed and varying messages about what is or is not required in order to work in BC – before and after arriving in Canada.

- **Low awareness about labour market realities:** Foreign trained workers have limited knowledge about the conditions and opportunities in the local job market and in their field.
- **Language is a key barrier:** Inadequate English skills prevent employers from hiring foreign trained workers.

Words of Advice

Service providers interviewed suggest, as they do in working with foreign trained workers, that they:

- Do research about the job market and skills requirements before arriving in BC
- Be willing and open to trying new methods of job search and adapting to the work culture in BC
- Be honest about your past experience and use vocabulary to describe this experience which matches with what employers are looking for

Employers, they advised, should:

- Have a positive attitude towards hiring foreign trained workers
- Take responsibility for your employees and provide training where necessary

Promising Practices

Mentoring programs was a successful practice that was mentioned.

4.2 Focus Groups

The research included six focus groups - three with foreign trained workers and three with employers. A total of 78 people were involved in focus groups. Both foreign trained workers and employers were asked a similar set of questions to capture information about their experiences working in the BC construction industry (See Appendix D for a list of questions used in the focus groups). The participants' experiences and perspectives were captured under the following six headings:

- Experiences
- Services & Resources
- Challenges
- Advice to foreign trained workers
- Advice to Employers
- Promising Practices

Participant recommendations to government and service providers were also captured in these sessions. These recommendations were not reached by consensus of the focus group participants, however, there was also no disagreement voiced in the recommendation process.

While employers and foreign trained workers obviously have different perspectives in each of these areas, there were a number of common themes that emerged across both groups.

Experiences

Common experiences expressed across the focus groups included:

- **Physical attributes can influence hiring decisions.** The nature of the work in construction and the trades is generally physical in nature and, as a result, physical build and strength are important attributes for employers hiring for employees and foreign trained workers looking for work in the construction industry.
- **Age is a factor in hiring trades people.** Due to the physical requirements of most jobs in the construction industry, age is also an important factor that employers consider and which many foreign trained workers find to be a barrier in looking for work in the construction trades.
- **Communication can make hiring a challenge.** Due to differences in culture and language, communication between employers and foreign trained workers is a common impediment to forming and maintaining an employment relationship.
- **Community support is important for newcomers.** Both employers and foreign trained workers observed the importance of community support on the worksite or at least in the community in which they live.

Services & Resources

The majority of focus group participants had accessed services and resources to assist them with employment or training. The nature of these services varied across participants, employers and foreign trained workers. The most commonly used were:

- Both employers and foreign trained worker groups indicated having experience with the apprenticeship training and saw apprenticeships as one of the best available options for gaining Canadian experience. At the same time, they were also seen as a last resort for foreign trained workers in that they constituted a start from the beginning with no acknowledgement of prior skills and experience.

- Language proficiency training was also a service/resource used by many employers and foreign trained workers in the focus groups.

Challenges

There were a number of common challenges/barriers that were discussed by employers and foreign trained workers. These included:

- **English skills, both verbal and written:** Both employers and foreign trained workers identified English skills as being a barrier to performing on the job (i.e. reading documents and regulations), communicating on the job site and safety.
- **Lack of understanding of local codes and regulations:** In that codes and regulations vary by province as well as by country, knowledge of local requirements was also identified as a common challenge.
- **Inconsistent information is being given to immigrants prior to arriving in Canada:** Foreign trained workers and employers in the focus groups discussed the challenge posed by a lack of current labour market information and the ensuing disconnect between the occupations being attracted to Canada and the labour needs of the industry.
- **Construction techniques vary between Canada and other countries:** Just as regulations differ by country, the techniques used in the construction industry also vary by climate and industrial context. As a result, a number of foreign trained workers and employers cited different techniques as being a barrier to employment.
- **Imperial measurement system can be a problem for foreign trained workers:** Many newcomers encounter difficulties converting to the Metric system used in Canada.
- **Trades qualifications attained outside Canada are not recognized:** Both employers and foreign trained workers expressed frustration with the fact that trades qualifications from other countries are not recognized in Canada and more specifically, that there is no way of assessing these qualifications - and their relevance - in the local context.
- **There is no effective way to evaluate the skills of foreign trained workers:** Employers and foreign trained workers also expressed frustration with the lack of a standardized system for assessing and evaluating skills.
- **No ability for foreign trained workers to access training to supplement prior learning and to attain trades qualifications:** Because there is no system for recognizing and assessing foreign

credentials in Canada, instead of building on their prior skills and experience, foreign trained workers have no option but to start their training from the beginning. Both employers and foreign trained workers saw this reality as a major impediment.

- **Exams in English are not practical or accurate for testing skills and knowledge:** While language skills were seen as a common employment barrier, this challenge was compounded by a lack of practical training and testing.
- **Supervisors are not skilled in assessing and accommodating the needs of foreign trained workers as they enter the construction industry:** Many employers are not experienced or knowledgeable about how to understand and handle cultural differences that are often present with foreign trained workers. As a result, these differences often serve as barriers to their employment.
- **Union policies make it difficult to hire foreign trained workers:** A number of employers discussed challenges posed by labour policies that forbid them to hire workers – such as foreign trained workers – from outside the union.
- **The expense of integrating and training foreign workers is carried by the employer:** Particularly in light of legislative changes around training, employers claim – and express frustration – that they now bear the burden to integrating and training foreign trained workers in BC.

Words of Advice

Common words of advice for foreign trained workers seeking employment were to:

- Learn English skills that include verbal and written competence
- Learn the technical language of the trade
- Seek employment in companies that have employees who share your background
- Seek employment outside the Lower Mainland
- Take trades training
- Look beyond the Lower Mainland

Shared words of advice to employers were to:

- Be open to work experience and training opportunities
- Give newcomers a chance to demonstrate their skills
- Incorporate the foreign experience and work ethic

Promising Practices

In discussing the current challenges and solutions for enhancing employment opportunities for foreign trained workers in construction and the trades, a number of participants made reference to other successful methods or programs. These were captured as “promising practices” and included:

- Mentoring programs to connect foreign trained workers with people already established and working in the field were advanced as a promising practice that has had proven success in other industries and could be expanded in the construction and trades.
- Work experience programs to provide foreign trained workers with the opportunity to obtain Canadian experience and demonstrate their skills to employers.

4.3 Employer Survey

Surveys were sent to the membership of the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA). Each regional office sent copies of the questionnaire to their regional members by facsimile and results were sent to the BCCA head office in Victoria. In total 85 copies of the survey questionnaire were received. In order to keep the surveys anonymous, each survey was numbered and responses were recorded against the number assigned. Only the researcher who entered the data could determine the identity of the respondent. The following is a summary of the responses.

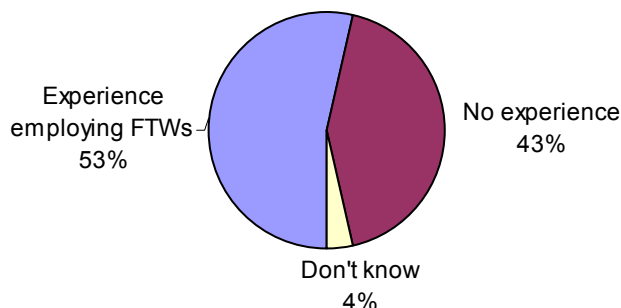
Experience With Foreign Trained Workers

Question: Has your company previously employed foreign-trained construction workers?

Response: 45 Yes 36 No 3 Don't know

45 of the respondents (53%) indicated that they had experience employing foreign trained workers. 23 of those who indicated experience are located on the Lower Mainland; 10 are in the Southern Interior; 8 are on Vancouver Island and 4 are in the Northern Interior.

Experience with Foreign Trained Workers



Skills Shortage

Question: In which areas are you currently having difficulty recruiting trades and construction professionals?

Responses: 62 Yes 23 No

62 employers (73%) indicated that they are currently experiencing difficulty recruiting trades people. The following table lists the number of shortages that these employers indicated they are dealing with.

Trade Required	Number Needed	Trade Required	Number Needed
Carpenter	119	Overhead Door Installers	2
Mechanical	45	Insulation Applicators	9
Electrical	26	Spray Foam Insulators	2
Glaziers	7	Roofers	1
Masons	43	Painters	14
Floor Layers/Techs.	16	Machinists	4
Iron Workers	65	Tile Setters	3
Labourers	46	Cement Finishers	11
Equipment Operators	9	Cement Cutters	16
Pipe Layers	8	HVAC Technicians	2
Pipe Fitters	3	Drywallers	1
Foremen	5	Plasterers	14
Gradesmen	2	Steel Stud Installers	8
Sprinkler Fitters	10	Stucco Applicators	2
Specialty Door Estimator	2	Joiners	4
Specialty Hardware Est.	1	Joiners	3
Teamsters	12	Brick & Block Layers	13
Operating Engineers	3	Elevator Technicians	1
Refrigeration Techs.	3	Sheet Metal Workers	10
Crane Operators	8	Shipper Receiver	1
Steel Fabricators	10	Estimator	1
Welders	3	Appliance Technician	1

Question: Do you foresee any additional skill shortages in the future?

Responses: 65 Yes 8 No 5 Don't Know

65 respondents (76 %) indicated that they anticipated shortages of trades in the future. Shortages were anticipated as early as six months from now in some trades and others were identified as being anticipated in 10 years. The following shows the trades identified by construction employers as those they anticipate having difficulty recruiting in the future. Included is the average number of years before a shortage of employees in the trade identified is anticipated.

Trade	Average Number Years Before Expected Shortage
Carpenters	4
Glaziers	2
Mechanical	2.75
All Trades	4.75
Concrete Finishers	2
Balance Tech.	5
Electrical	3.5
Joiners	2
Project Supervisors	10
Foremen	10
Estimators	3
Heavy Duty Mechanics	3
Pavers	3
Refrigeration Techs.	1
Sheet Metal Workers	2.5
Pipe Fitters	3.5
Yardsmen	1
Flooring Installers/Techs	1
Labourers	5
Heavy Construction Workers	1
Masonry	4
Mechanics	4
Iron Workers	5
Machine Operators	5
Plumbers	1
Plasterers	.5

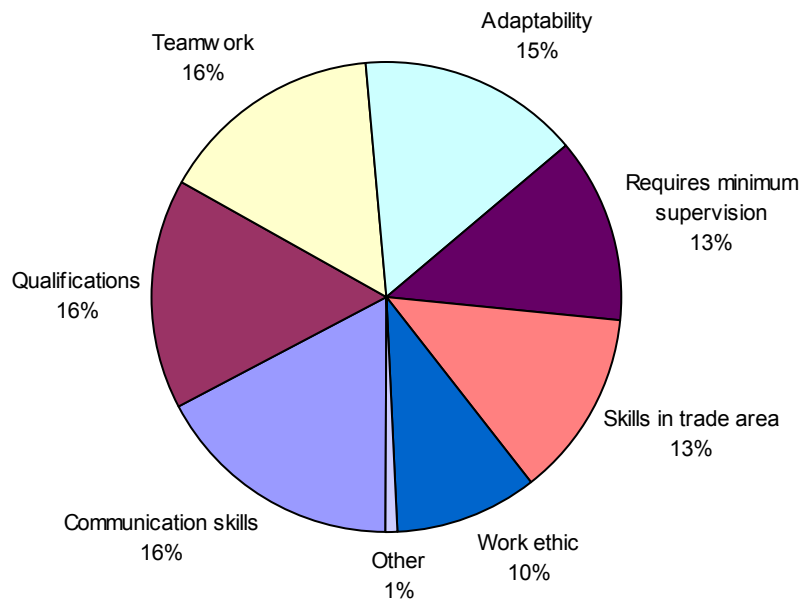
Attributes For Hiring

Question: What are the most important attributes /skills that you look for in your employees?

When asked to rank the attributes they considered most important the responses indicated the following attributes as priorities. They are indicated in the order that respondents ranked them.

- Communication skills
- Qualifications
- Teamwork
- Adaptability
- Requires minimum supervision
- Skills in trade area
- Work ethic
- Other (has driver's license, apprenticeship training)

Attributes Employers Look For



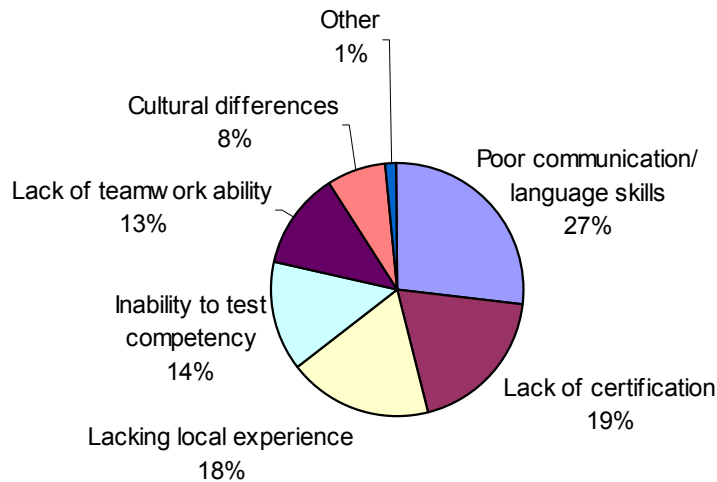
Challenges/Barriers In Hiring Foreign Trained Workers

Question: Has your company experienced any of the following challenges/barriers in hiring or retaining foreign-trained construction workers?

Given that just over half of the respondents indicated experience with foreign trained workers, many respondents were unable to complete this question. Those who could respond identified the following challenges to hiring foreign trained workers. They are displayed below the order of the number of times they were indicated as a challenge or barrier.

- Lack of communication /language skills
- Lack of certification
- Not enough local experience
- Inability to test competency
- Inability to work as part of a team
- Cultural differences
- Other

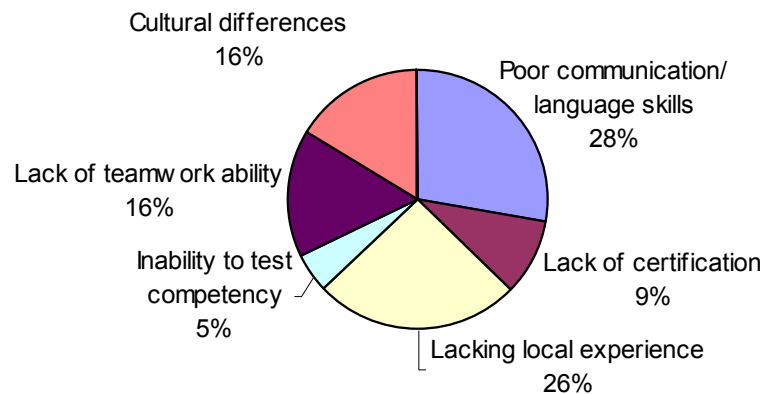
Challenges in Hiring FTWs



Respondents also ranked the factors listed in order to determine the challenges to retaining foreign trained workers after they have been hired:

- Lack of communication /language skills
- Not enough local experience
- Inability to work as part of a team
- Cultural differences
- Lack of certification
- Inability to test competency

Challenges in Retaining FTWs



While communication skills were identified as the greatest challenge to both recruiting and retaining foreign trained workers, it would appear that once foreign trained workers are hired the ability to do the job is greater than the need for certification and competency testing.

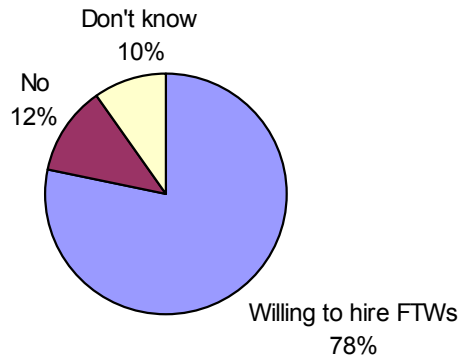
Willingness to Hire Foreign Trained Workers.

Question: Is your company interested/ willing to employ foreign-trained workers?

Responses: 65 Yes 10 No 8 Don't Know

65 employers (74%) indicated that they would be willing to hire foreign trained workers. 10 (12%) said they would not and 8 (9%) did not know if they would or would not. 2 respondents did not indicate an answer to this question.

Willingness to Hire FTWs



When asked what would make it easier for employers to hire foreign trained workers the comments can be summarized into the following six statements.

- Knowing the qualifications of the workers
- Younger workers would be given preference
- Easier immigration processes
- Modified union contracts
- A system to match workers with employers' needs
- Good English skills

Employer Services Used

Question: Have you used any employer services/resources within the past 2 years?

Responses: 51 Yes 31 No 3 Don't Know

51 employers (60%) indicated that they had; 31 (36%) had not and 3 (4%) did not know. Those who indicated that they had not used services stated that they had either tried in the past without success or that qualified trades people do not register with employment programs.

In addition to the quantified responses received from employers many added comments to their responses. A review of the comments determined several key themes:

- Official skills testing and evaluation is required
- Give priority to younger trades workers

- Align immigration policies with current needs
- Encourage youth in our country to go into the trades
- Union policies need to reflect the current situation
- Training must be available so that foreign trained workers can attain provincial standards
- Incentives could be used to supplement the cost of training foreign workers

Throughout the surveys employers have reflected the opinions expressed in the focus groups and in stakeholder interviews.

4.4 Compiled Participant Recommendations

The following table outlines the common recommendations presented by research participants. The Xs in the columns indicate that the recommendation was raised at least once during that method of data collection.

Recommendation	FTW	Industry Associations	Service Providers	Contractor Interviews	Employee Interviews	Employee Focus Groups	Employer Focus Groups	Construction Survey Comments
Establish and support a service that connects foreign trained workers and employers.			X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide incentives for employers who hire and train FTW's.	X	X		X		X	X	X
Establish a provincial body to evaluate and give accreditation to FTWs.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review immigration policies to ensure they reflect current labour market needs.	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Support an apprenticeship program that maintains a high level of standardized skills.		X		X			X	X

Recommendation	FTW	Industry Associations	Service Providers	Contractor Interviews	Employee Interviews	Employee Focus Groups	Employer Focus Groups	Construction Survey Comments
Develop training programs that acknowledge the skills of FTW s and lead to full trades qualifications more quickly than through current apprenticeship routes (i.e. Bridging Programs).	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Educate the public, educators, parents and youth about the viability of trades as a career option.		X	X		X	X	X	X
Encourage stakeholders to exchange information and to work collaboratively to implement solutions.		X	X	X		X	X	X
Encourage unions to review policies to ensure that they reflect current and future industry and labour market conditions.		X	X	X		X	X	X
Educate industry representatives and business owners about the need to invest in training.	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Explore the business case for incentives for new immigrants who settle in communities that need trades workers.				X			X	X
Establish regional trades training facilities that reflect industry needs.				X		X	X	X
Combine courses that are common to several trades to reduce costs of training.							X	
Provide immigrants with accurate, easily accessible information about working in Canada and clearly communicate the need for good English skills.	X		X		X	X	X	X
Consider mentoring and job coach programs for FTWs and employers.	X				X	X	X	X

(A complete list of the participant recommendations can be found in Appendix F.)

5.0 Strategic Planning Framework

5.1 Strategic Planning Meeting

A three-hour strategic planning session was held on April 19, 2004 with five representatives from SUCCESS, two representatives from the BCCA and the consultant team. The purpose of this session was to review findings to date, discuss a list of top recommendations from the research, determine the priority items to move ahead and actions for how to move forward.

5.2 Recommendations from Strategic Planning

Recommendations	Strengths & Opportunities	Weaknesses & Threats	Actionable Items
<p>1. Provide support for a province wide process to evaluate and assess the skills of workers who received their training outside of Canada and establish or revise existing apprenticeship training to allow people with prior learning to enter trades qualification training at the level determined through the assessment system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a broad acknowledgement of the need to address prior assessment • There are a number of assessment programs in development • There is an opportunity to build on these various efforts to develop an assessment process that covers all trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the trades are distinct • Regional representation will be difficult to achieve – particularly given that 90% of FTWs live in the Lower Mainland • Duplication of efforts 	<p>Short Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A pilot program for assessment and training with one trade (i.e. one experiencing severe skills shortages) 2. Continue development of a central body that includes representation from all sectors of the construction industry, all regions, union and non-union sectors 3. Develop a corresponding body of service providers and interest groups that would build on networks/initiatives already in place, i.e. EASI and include employment agencies, training/education providers and immigrant organizations. 4. Conduct research into who is doing what around prior skills assessment/competency assessments <p>Long Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Have central and corresponding bodies work together to lead a series of initiatives around assessing the needs of foreign trained workers, including:

Recommendations	Strengths & Opportunities	Weaknesses & Threats	Actionable Items
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Work with the ITA to ensure compatibility 7. Conduct research into the distinct needs of the various trades 8. Develop a strategy to address assessment and training in the different trades
<p>2. Establish and maintain a process to connect construction industry and foreign trained workers, beginning with a database. The system could be expanded to also house relevant and timely information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of models (other job bank and registries) to build on and learn from (i.e. T.R.A.D.E.S., and the Roofer's Program) • There is strong potential for partnerships with other programs • There is currently not a database with compiled information on foreign trained workers – and this represents an opportunity • A registry would be critical first point in connecting employers and foreign trained workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be critical that such a registry is maintained by someone with strong knowledge of the construction industry • A database will not provide employers with information that is not already in a resume – unless "human" linkages are involved • A registry is just one part – a tool – of a larger process • In order to be effective, a registry must be part of a well integrated process of connecting employers to the available labour pool 	<p>Short Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore other existing models and opportunities for partnership in developing and maintaining a registry 2. Explore what type of information should be included in the registry 3. Explore ways of integrating job coaching and human resources support to the registry 4. Develop an appropriate model that fits the needs outlined <p>Long Term</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Establish a process for maintaining the database/registry

Recommendations	Strengths & Opportunities	Weaknesses & Threats	Actionable Items
<p>3. Encourage increased stakeholder collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong appetite among stakeholders for developing solutions to address the growing skills shortages • Despite their differences, skills shortages represent a need for stakeholders to come together over issues of common concern • There are a number of cross-sector initiatives to build on • The BC Construction Association has experience in bringing parties together and is moving in this direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction industry is largely fragmented with many players that historically do not work together • Competing interests, particularly on labour issues • Growing competition for skilled workers may make it difficult for stakeholders to look beyond their immediate needs to address the issue at the system level • There is a risk of the collaborations being too high level to be practical 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Affirm the usefulness and need for collaborative discussions/meetings initiated by the BCCA and the formation of a cross-sector body to address issues in a collective manner, advise government and ensure system-wide consistency and direction 7. Explore opportunities to expand the work of and learn from other cross-sector collaborations, i.e. EASI 8. Explore linkages/stakeholder collaborations across the province – with NGOs, Colleges, Service Providers, Immigrant Organizations 9. Identify stakeholders and organize both planning level and sector specific roundtables to discuss strategies for effective information exchange across sectors
<p>4. Encourage a review immigration policy to make them more reflective of current labour market needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCCA is already working with the Provincial Nominee Committee • There are other programs and initiatives that can be built upon • There is a large pool of international students with strong English skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system for skills assessment must be in place first 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work with the Provincial Nominee Program 2. Explore the allocation of landing fees and immigrant settlement and training funds 3. Initiate methods of attracting foreign students into the trades 4. Invite immigration officials to participate in meetings and hear the

Recommendations	Strengths & Opportunities	Weaknesses & Threats	Actionable Items
			<p>needs of the industry</p> <p>5. Encourage revisions to the point system to give greater priority to skilled trades people</p>
<p>5. Explore the business case for incentives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry would likely support tax incentives • Employers would likely be amenable to training incentives - and on-the-job training incentives • Many different models/programs to learn from and build upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry would not likely embrace wage subsidy programs • Costs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore tax incentives that would be of interest to employers 2. Explore loans/scholarships to support people to work while they are learning 3. Explore cost recovery incentive models – whereby training is provided at a discount/free upfront and repaid over time
<p>6. Meet the needs of FTWs and industry for training and apprenticeship information and outreach</p>	<p>Note: <i>This recommendation was raised but not formally stated or analyzed during the Strategic Planning Meeting.</i></p>		

6.0 Consultants' Observations and Recommendations

This research has revealed a number of issues and recommendations for enhancing the integration of foreign trained workers into the BC construction industry. The purpose of this final report is primarily to review and report on these findings. However, in conducting the research, there were also a number of overarching themes that became evident to the consultant team.

Above all, the research conducted for the Towards a Skilled Immigrant-Construction Industry Integrated Assessment and Bridging Program Project has underlined the need for timely and collaborative solutions to address the disconnect between skills demand and supply in the BC Construction Industry.

Other observations are:

- **There is intense competition for qualified tradespersons.** BC employers are competing with other provinces and countries to attract skilled trades workers. There is also competition between private and public sectors.
- **There are unmistakable regional differences** with respect to skills shortages, the needs of employers, challenges and training requirements. As a result, solutions that may suit the needs of the Lower Mainland will not necessarily address the issues of smaller, more remote communities. Regional distinctions must be considered.
- **There is frustration with the current apprenticeship program.** Employers and foreign trained workers both expressed the need for the apprenticeship program to be more comprehensive in scope and to recognize the prior skills and experience of foreign trained workers.
- **There is growing concern among employers who feel that they are having to assume a greater proportion of the costs of training new trades people** and a related concern that this increased responsibility is resulting in less training.
- **Immigrants often receive insufficient or inaccurate information** about qualification requirements and the local labour market.
- **The immigration criteria do not reflect current labour market conditions** and as a result, the skills and professions being recruited to Canada from overseas are not those that employers are looking for.
- **Not all players in the construction industry realize or accept the urgency of the skills shortage** and the need to better utilize the skills

of foreign trained workers. Those players that are not planning accordingly are proving to be an impediment to those employers who want to and need to access the labour pool of foreign trained workers.

- **Employers - and particularly those outside of the Lower Mainland - do not have access to foreign trained workers** interested in working in the construction sector.

These observations lend support to the recommendations outlined in Section 4.4. In particular, they highlight the following five priorities:

- 1. Effective and continuous stakeholder collaboration.**
 - A central body should be established to ensure ongoing dialogue and communication about labour market challenges and to facilitate collaborative solutions.
 - Mechanisms should be established so as to include external stakeholders (such as immigration officials) in these discussions.
- 2. Better and consistent information about skills requirements, training opportunities, available services and resources and labour market opportunities**
 - A central body should be established to serve as an information clearinghouse for employees and employers in the construction industry. This body should conduct outreach specifically to foreign trained workers.
- 3. Effective methods of connecting employers to the available labour pool of foreign trained workers**
 - A central registry should be established to provide employers with profiles of available employees and to provide employees with leads on available jobs.
 - Job coaching and mentoring programs should be supported to help facilitate the employment relationship and mitigate the perceived risks of hiring a foreign trained worker.
- 4. Training that reflects the needs of industry and foreign trained workers**
 - Training and apprenticeship programs should be revised so as to recognize prior training and experience of foreign trained workers and expedite their transition into the labour force.
 - Training should be targeted to the regions and which meets the specific regional needs.

5. Adequate supports and incentives

- The business case of providing incentives to support the hiring and training of foreign trained workers and to support foreign trained workers interested in the trades outside of the Lower Mainland should be examined.
- The business case of providing incentives to support training generally should be examined.

7.0 Project Evaluation

The objective of the *Toward a Skilled Immigrant-Construction Industry Integrated Assessment and Bridging Program Project* was to develop a framework for a comprehensive skilled immigrant/construction strategic plan to increase the employment of skilled immigrants among construction contractors. This framework was to be grounded in a solid and reliable understanding of the issues and the BC context, specifically: the needs of skilled immigrants and construction employers as they relate to assessment and bridging services; promising practices; existing resources and tools; the most important services to promote skilled immigrant employment; and the most plausible delivery options.

This understanding was to be gained through a dynamic mix of research, engagement and strategic planning activities. Therefore the consultants' deliverables included:

1. Organization of Literature and Resources
2. 15 Key informant Interviews
3. 3 Focus Groups
4. An Employer Survey
5. Roundtable Discussion
6. Strategic Planning Meeting

Findings from these activities were to be written up and analyzed in a final report due on June 1, 2004.

The status of each of these outputs and evaluations of the results are as follows:

Activity/Output	Status	Evaluation
Organization of Literature & Resources	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appendix A of the Final Report contains a comprehensive listing of relevant literature related to employment in the construction industry; immigrant employment; and immigrant employment in the construction industry. All of the key sources are annotated. ▪ Appendix B of the Final Report contains a list of resources.
15 key informant Interviews	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The key informant interview questions were reviewed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and BCCA ▪ 21 interviews were conducted with a broad variety of key informants, including contractors, service providers, foreign trained workers, industry associations and the training authority ▪ Interview contacts were provided mainly by SUCCESS and BCCA, therefore the sample of interviewees may not be representative ▪ All foreign trained workers interviewed were engineers, although from different countries ▪ Despite numerous efforts, there was no interview conducted with a union representative
3 Regional Focus Groups	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The focus group questions were reviewed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and BCCA ▪ A facilitator guide was produced and a meeting was held to ensure standard methodological procedures were used throughout the focus groups. ▪ A total of 78 people were engaged through focus groups between April 14 and May 11. ▪ 3 regional sessions captured the distinct perspectives of employers in the Southern Interior, North-central and Lower Mainland regions of the province. ▪ 3 focus groups with foreign trained workers were held in the Lower Mainland and facilitated by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. ▪ Due to time limitations and scheduling difficulties, no employer focus group was

Activity/Output	Status	Evaluation
		held on Vancouver Island
An Employer Survey	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The survey questions were reviewed by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., BCCA and the BCCA regional offices prior to distribution. ▪ A total of 85 surveys were completed and returned
Roundtable Discussion	Cancelled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Roundtable Meeting was cancelled as it was thought that it would be better use of funds and time to conduct a focus group on Vancouver Island
Strategic Planning Meeting	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategic Meeting was held on April 19 ▪ A framework was developed and actionable items were identified
Final Report	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft was submitted to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for review on May 28, 2004 ▪ The final report, incorporating revisions, was submitted June 1, 2004

General Comments

The project timelines posed difficulties throughout the project. The two-month window allotted for the research was challenging in of itself and was further compounded by coinciding with a boom in the construction industry and the beginning of the summer high season, particularly outside of the Lower Mainland.

Despite the timing challenges, the number of participants was indicative of the interest in this topic area and their interest in finding solutions.