

Immigration in Canada Myths and Realities

Immigrating to a new country can be very challenging. Individuals experience “uprooting trauma”, cultural shock, loss of social support systems, changes in economic and social status, identity crises, and negative stereotyping.¹ This fact sheet focuses on common myths faced by immigrants in Canada, and some information to give you a better understanding of their realities.

Myth: *Foreign trained professionals are not as qualified as Canadian professionals.*

Reality: In 2008, over 20% of doctors working in Canada were foreign trained. Over half of the engineers working here are foreign trained, and they tend to be slightly more educated than their Canadian-born counter-parts.² Forty-two percent of immigrants have a Bachelor-level degree or higher, and they are twice as likely to have a University degree when compared to the Canadian-born population.³

Myth: *Immigrants are a burden on the Canadian economy.*

Reality: Canada's immigration policies are specifically designed to attract immigrants who are highly skilled, a



tool for improving our economy.⁴ The immigrants they attract are educated in a variety of different fields, and bring with them experiences and languages from around the world. They give Canada an edge in a highly competitive global market. For every 10% increase in immigration, Canada's exports increase by 1%.⁵

Myth: *Immigrants take away jobs from Canadian.*

Reality: Although they come to Canada as highly skilled professionals, immigrants often do not have the opportunity to compete for Canadian jobs due to the problems they face in having their qualifications recognized. In many economic sectors, there is a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Additionally, many non-status immigrants work in jobs that Canadians won't do.⁶ It is also important for us to remember that when immigration is high, the economy grows because immigrants are also investing their money into it.⁷

¹ http://www.vircs.bc.ca/settlement/common_issues.php

² <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/index.asp>

³ <http://dtp.lib.athabascau.ca/action/download.php?filename=mais/700/normacolumbusProject.pdf>

⁴

http://www.uoguelph.ca/geography/research/ffw/papers/immigrant_credentials.pdf

⁵ Green, A.G., & Green, D. A. (1999). The economic goals of Canada's immigration policy: Past and present. *Canadian Public Policy*, 25(4), 426-451.

⁶ <http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/node/15>

⁷ http://www.faze.ca/issue01/immigration_debate.html

Kamloops Welcoming Communities Program's Fact Sheets

Myth: *Immigrants bring crime to Canada.*

Reality: Actually, immigrants in Canada have lower overall crime rates than Canadian-born populations, and are less involved in criminal activity.⁸⁹

Myth: *Family class immigrants contribute less to Canada than economic immigrants.*

Reality: Family class immigrants are less likely to be low-income than skilled workers immediately after arriving in Canada.¹⁰ This may be because these individuals tend to establish themselves more easily if they are supported by their families.¹¹ We also have to remember that individuals' value cannot be ranked purely in economic terms. People contribute to a society in a variety of different ways; they are also caregivers, leaders, artists, community workers, volunteers, and elders.

Myth: *Canada has more difficulty integrating newcomers today than a century ago. Immigrants are now more diverse.*

Reality: Every generation worries that the most recent immigrants to Canada aren't integrating as successfully as previous generations. This isn't true.¹² One hundred years ago, Canada's population was very diverse. It was made up of various First Nations peoples, a significant Chinese populations, African

⁸ Statistics Canada. (2006). The dynamics of over qualification: Canada's underemployed university graduates. Catalogue No: 11-621-MIE2006039

<http://canada.metropolis.net/EVENTS/ottawa/WORTLEY%20PAPER%201.htm>

¹⁰ Garnett, P., & Hou, F., & Coulombe, S. (n.d). *Chronic Low Income and Low-income Dynamics among Recent Immigrants. Statistics Canada Analytical Studies Branch Paper Series, Volume 2007, Number 294, pp. 7, 24.*

¹¹ <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-611-XIE/89-611-XIE2003001.pdf>

¹² Oliver, F. (1901, April 12). Frank Oliver Went on to Become the Immigration Minister. *House of Commons Debates.*



Canadians, and a wide range of European immigrants.¹¹ Although having such a diverse population does create challenges, we have always been diverse, and many see it as our strength.

Myth: *Non-status immigrants are on welfare and come to Canada to use our social services without paying anything back.*

Reality: Only immigrants who have reached permanent status are eligible for our country's social services.⁵

Myth: *Non-status immigrants don't pay taxes.*

Reality: Non-status immigrants pay GST, PST, property taxes, contribute to CPP, and have social insurance numbers. Although they are not eligible to access many of the services that their taxes pay for, they still pay into them, and our economy as consumers, employees, and residents.⁵

For more information, please contact:

Kamloops Immigrant Services

448 Tranquille Rd. Kamloops, BC

Ph: 778-470-6101

Email: kis@immigrantservices.ca