

POPULATION STUDIES
RESEARCH BRIEF
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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION OF THE OVERSEAS-BORN IN THE NT

KEY FINDINGS

- NT is experiencing a gradual shift in composition of its overseas-born population. European countries of birth are making way for countries of South East Asia and Africa.
- Overseas-born have a higher employment rate than the Australian-born population.
- Some overseas-born may be underemployed: only 28.3 per cent are employed in professional occupations while 47.3 per cent are formally qualified to do so. In contrast, 42 per cent are employed in lower-skilled occupations.
- Given the skills shortages regularly experienced in the NT labour force, a range of strategies for assisting in upgrading skills and obtaining qualifications recognition should be considered. Examples are provided at the end of the research brief.

RESEARCH AIM

- To compare % shares of countries of origin of the overseas-born in the NT
- To study labour market participation of the overseas-born in the NT including whether their skills are being fully utilised

This Research Brief draws on published and unpublished data from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population and Housing provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). It was prepared by Dr Kate Golebiowska

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Background

One of the principal objectives of Australia's General Migration Program is reaping economic benefits from that migration, be it temporary or permanent. The NT Workforce List (2009) suggests that the Territory is currently experiencing shortages in 82 professional and trades occupations and recruitment shortages across several more (Department of Business and Employment 2009b). International migration is considered to be one means of filling these shortages. While attracting and retaining new immigrants in the NT is one of the NT Government objectives, it is also worth looking into skills and occupations of the resident overseas-born population. Upgrading their skills to the Australian standards may be cheaper and easier to do than in case of the newly arrived, who may additionally require settlement services and be dealing with other adjustment issues. In other words, concurrently to the attraction and retention strategy, it may be worthwhile investigating whether the locally available human capital of the overseas-born may be better tapped into. This research brief analyses changes in leading countries of birth of the overseas-born in the NT recorded by the 2001 and 2006 Censuses. It then compares data provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to establish what proportion of the overseas-born is economically active in the NT, in which industries they work, and whether their skills are being fully utilised in the NT. An analysis of country of birth can indicate whether the problems of adjustment and skills recognition are likely to be exacerbated in the future.

Research methods and data

This research brief uses published ABS regional statistics to compare the changing proportions of countries of origin of the overseas-born residents in the NT captured by the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

It then employs unpublished 2006 Census statistics and unpublished and published DIAC statistics to examine the labour market participation of the overseas-born. The focus is on their employment rate, industries of employment and whether their skills are being fully utilised in the NT. The latter is judged by comparing their pre and post-migration level of occupations as grouped in Major Groups in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO-II).

Unless noted otherwise, the data covers the period of 1996 to 2006 and reflects employment status of the overseas-born aged 15 and over, arrived in Australia during that period and recorded as usually resident in the NT at the time of the 2006 Census. The age threshold was chosen because it corresponds to the ABS definition of the labour force and makes the results relevant in terms of the labour market participation of the overseas-born.

Results

Table 1 below compares percentage distribution of countries of birth of the overseas-born in the NT at the 2006 and 2001 Censuses.

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Table 1. Overseas-born by country of birth in the NT, 2001 and 2006 Census*.

Country of birth	2001 Census**		2006 Census		% change overseas-born NT
	# overseas-born NT	% overseas-born NT	# overseas-born NT	% overseas-born NT	
New Zealand	3671	13.0	3,295	12.5	-10.2
Papua New Guinea	630	2.2	636	2.4	1.0
England	6549	23.2	5082	19.2	-22.4
Scotland	1001	3.5	783	3.0	-21.8
Ireland	364	1.3	321	1.2	-11.8
Netherlands	717	2.5	483	1.8	-32.6
Greece	1090	3.9	940	3.6	-13.8
Italy	579	2.0	440	1.7	-24.0
Thailand	441	1.6	514	1.9	16.6
Viet Nam	556	2.0	556	2.1	0.0
Malaysia	628	2.2	579	2.2	-7.8
Philippines	1745	6.2	1871	7.1	7.2
East Timor	1013	3.6	1025	3.9	1.2
Indonesia	730	2.6	764	2.9	4.7
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan Province)	351	1.2	325	1.2	-7.4
India	523	1.9	587	2.2	12.2
United States of America	1242	4.4	1092	4.1	-12.1
South Africa	352	1.2	450	1.7	27.8
Other	6076	21.5	6707	25.4	10.4
Total Born Overseas	28258	100.0	26450	100.0	-6.4

Notes: * Excludes overseas visitors.

** Includes off-shore areas and migratory.

Sources: ABS 2006, 2008b.

It can be observed that those born in England, Scotland and Ireland (Wales was not featured) represented the largest single region of birth at both Censuses. Together they represented 28 per cent of the NT overseas-born at the 2001 Census but their proportion dropped to 23.4 per cent at the 2006 Census. The second largest group were the New Zealand-born, who represented 13 per cent of the overseas-born at the 2001 Census and 12.5 at the 2006 Census. If, however, the countries of South East Asia were considered jointly, they would supersede New Zealand as the second largest group. At the 2001 Census they jointly represented 18.1 per cent of the overseas-born population and recorded an increase to 20.1 per cent at the 2006 Census. At both Censuses, the Filipino-born dominated that group. The South African-born have also recorded an increased percentage share which between the Censuses jumped by 0.8 per cent.

The proportion of the Greece-born is worth noting as they have been one of the most prominent immigrant groups in the NT, particularly in Darwin. Their proportion in the overseas-born population at the 2006 Census (3.6 per cent) decreased slightly in comparison to the 2001 Census (3.9 per cent). An even larger drop in the percentage share can be observed in the Netherlands-born. The numbers and proportions of the India-born, China-born and Italy-born remained largely unchanged between these two Censuses.

Is the high proportion of the 'other' countries of birth unusual? It appears not. This table shows countries of birth grouped as in the online ABS statistics, which was used to

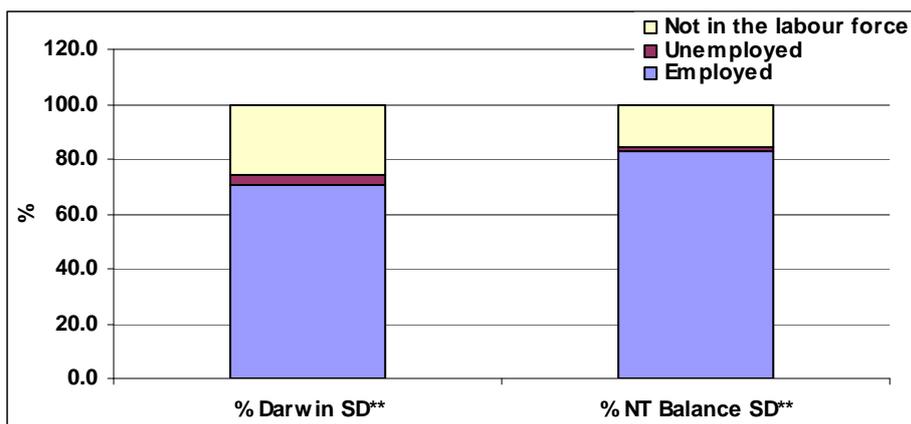
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create it. To test whether the proportion of 'other' was high, statistics showing countries of birth of the overseas-born in Australia as a whole (2006 Census) was analysed. It lists a greater number of countries because it is unnecessary to suppress small numbers. When countries that are not listed in the NT are added to 'other countries', the consolidated proportion of these 'other' in Australia is 35.2 per cent (calculations based on ABS 2007b). This illustrates that the high proportion of 'other' in the NT is not unusual.

In sum, the main feature of the overseas-born population is the continued (albeit decreasing) domination of England, Scotland and Ireland-born, closely followed by the increasing population of South East Asians (dominated by the Filipino-born) and a fairly high proportion of the New Zealand-born. Greece-born and Netherlands-born are losing their respective shares of the overseas-born populations. A gradual shift towards immigrants from South East Asia, and to a lesser degree, South Africa, can be observed.

Labour force status

Figure 1. Labour force status of overseas-born aged 15 and over, arrived 1996-2006, in NT at 2006 Census*.



Notes: * Not stated are excluded.

** SD - Statistical Division is a general purpose spatial unit; the largest and most stable one within each State/Territory in the Main Structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), ABS 2008a.

Source: ABS unpublished data, ABS 2008a.

Figure 1 illustrates that an overwhelming majority of the overseas-born were employed. The proportion of these was slightly lower in Darwin than in the rest of the NT (NT Balance). The proportion of the unemployed overseas-born stood at 4 per cent in Darwin and at 1.6 per cent in the NT Balance. The proportion of those who were not in the labour force was 25 per cent in Darwin and 15 per cent in the NT Balance. When the NT as a whole is considered (Darwin and NT Balance considered jointly, not shown by Figure 1), almost 75 per cent of overseas born were employed, 22 per cent were not in the labour force and merely 3 per cent were unemployed. This compares favourably with the Australian-born population aged 15 and over usually resident in the NT and captured by the 2006 Census. Its proportion of employed people was lower than that of the overseas-born at 67 per cent, an identical proportion was unemployed (3 per cent) and a higher proportion (29 per cent) was not in the labour force (ABS 2007a).

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Industries of employment

Table 2. Top 7 industries of employment*, overseas-born aged 15 and over, arrived 1996-2006, employed in NT at 2006 Census.

Industry of employment	% Darwin SD	# Darwin SD	% NT Balance	# NT Balance	% Total NT***	# Total NT
Health & community services	15.2	390	17	255	15.8	645
Retail trade	13.7	353	8.9	133	11.9	486
Property & business services	12.5	322	13.1	196	12.7	518
Accomm., cafes & restaurants	10	258	12.5	188	11	446
Government adm. & defence	9.4	241	17.3	259	12.3	500
Education	8.9	230	6.9	103	8.2	333
Construction	6.4	164	3.7**	55	5.4	219

Notes: * Classification used in this table is Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 93, which enables concordance between results from 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

**The top fifth occupation in remainder NT was manufacturing at 4.8%.

*** Not stated and non-classifiable economic units excluded from total figures.

Source: ABS unpublished data.

Table 2 reveals that the overseas-born in Darwin and the NT Balance were generally employed in the same industries although the specific percentage shares differed. Employment in health and community services in Darwin and in the NT Balance had the highest proportion of the overseas-born employees of all industries of employment. In NT Balance that sector came second, at 17 per cent, and was preceded by government administration and defence at 17.3 per cent. Additionally, the overseas-born were employed in industries where professional and trade skills are normally required, and those where lower level skills could be sufficient. For example, retail, property and business services and hospitality industry may not require higher level skills. Work in construction industry could involve both tradesmen with formal qualifications and current NT registrations as well as labourers.

Utilisation of skills

Considering that one of the aims of Australia's Migration Program is to deliver economic benefits, it is important to get a sense of utilisation of the pre-migration skills of the overseas-born employed in the NT. One way of doing so is to compare their pre and post-migration level of occupations to see whether proportions of immigrants employed at these levels correspond to pre-migration proportions. Table 3 compares DIAC statistics of occupations declared by the overseas-born who intended to settle in the NT during the period of 1997-98 – 2006-07 and who held permanent visas (*permanent additions*) with the 2006 Census statistics showing occupations of the overseas-born arrived 1996-2006 and employed in the NT at that Census. Australian Standard Classification of Occupations Second Edition (thereafter ASCO II) is used. Methodological and data comparison issues here mean that the obtained results should be treated as indicative rather than precise.¹

¹ The ABS and DIAC datasets are not perfectly comparable. First, the DIAC concept of *permanent additions* includes permanent offshore visas and permanent onshore visas. That means that occupations declared by these overseas-born can be either those immediately preceding migration (offshore visas), and those in which immigrants actually worked in the NT, or had formally trained in overseas, in case of the onshore visas. Second, the DIAC data is representative only of a portion of the overseas-born population because it does not include temporary long-term visa holders (ie. 457s), who are captured by the 2006 Census. Hence, Table 3 compares occupations of permanent visa holders with employed overseas-born, who could be naturalised citizens, permanent and temporary long-term visa holders. Third, although these permanent visa holders

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Table 3. ASCO II Major Groups of employment of permanent visa holders (DIAC) in NT and employed overseas-born in NT at 2006 Census.

Summary of ASCO II Major Groups	% NT Intended Residence (DIAC), Permanent additions 1997-2007	% Employed in NT, 2006 Census**, Overseas-born arrived 1996-2006
I. Managers and Administrators	7.8	5.5
II. Professionals	47.3	28.3
III. Associate Professionals	13.1	11.1
IV. Tradespersons and Related Workers	12.4	10.7
V. Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1.9	2.4
VI. Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	9.4	17.8
VII. Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	2.7	5.5
VIII. Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	3.2	10.1
IX. Labourers and Related Workers	2.2	8.6
Total Major Groups*	100.0	100.0

Notes:* Excludes inadequately described and not stated. In DIAC data, not stated (2,241) nearly equals the stated occupations (2,992).

** Aged 15 and over.

Sources: ABS and DIAC unpublished data.

To aid in understanding the above table, it is useful to recall what formal education is typically required for all nine ASCO-II Major Groups. Table 4 summarises the qualifications required.

Table 4. Summary of Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO-II).

Major Groups	Skill level	Formal education and/or training level
I. Managers and Administrators	1	Most occupations in Major Groups 1 and 2 have a level of skill commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification or at least 5 years relevant experience. In some instances relevant experience is required in addition to the formal qualification.
II. Professionals	1	
III. Associate Professionals	2	Most occupations in Major Group 3 have a level of skill commensurate with an AQF Diploma or Advanced Diploma* or at least 3 years relevant experience. In some instances relevant experience is required in addition to the formal qualification.
IV. Tradespersons and Related Workers	3	Most occupations in Major Groups 4 and 5 have a level of skill commensurate with an AQF Certificate III or IV or at least 3 years relevant experience. In some instances relevant experience is required in addition to the formal qualification.
V. Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	3	
VI. Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	4	Most occupations in Major Groups 6 and 7 have a level of skill commensurate with an AQF Certificate II or at least 1 year of relevant experience. In some instances relevant experience is

declared the NT as their intended residence, intentions can change and their actual residence in the Territory in that period cannot be immediately confirmed. Finally, since the DIAC data for 1996-97 appears not entirely reliable, for purposes of this comparison the 1997-98 – 2006-07 period is used, which does not perfectly correspond to the 1996-2006 arrivals from the 2006 Census statistics.

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Major Groups	Skill level	Formal education and/or training level
VII. Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	4	required in addition to the formal qualification.
VIII. Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	5	Most occupations in Major Groups 8 and 9 have a level of skill commensurate with completion of compulsory secondary education or an AQF Certificate I qualification.
IX. Labourers and Related Workers	5	

Note: *ASCO-II uses the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which describes levels of formal education and training. It can be found in *Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook*. See Training Accreditation Council WA (2002) and latest edition in AQF Advisory Board 2007.

Source: ABS 1997.

Table 3 reveals that proportions of the overseas-born employed in ASCO-II Major Groups I-IV (considered to be 'skilled' for purposes of Australia's General Migration Program) at the 2006 Census were lower in each case in comparison to the DIAC statistics showing occupations of permanent visa holders. The difference was small – approximately 2 per cent in all these Major Groups – except in 'Professionals', where it amounted to 19 per cent.

Proportions of the overseas-born employed in lower-skilled occupations were higher in each Major Group at the 2006 Census than in DIAC statistics. Specifically, proportions of intermediate clerical, sales and service workers, and intermediate production and transport workers practically doubled. Proportions of elementary clerical, sales, and service workers nearly tripled and proportion of labourers almost quadrupled. In sum, those employed in intermediate and elementary positions and those working as labourers (ASCO-II Major Groups VI-IX) represented 42 per cent of their total employed population at the 2006 Census as opposed to 17.5 per cent formally qualified to do so.

Access to data on employment levels of temporary visa holders in the NT, particularly the 457 visa holders would permit a fuller picture of the employment situation of the overseas-born and improve the comparability of DIAC (showing only *permanent additions*) and Census data. Such statistics classified into ASCO-II Major Groups is not immediately available for comparison, but as a way of indication the following may be considered. Of primary 457 visa holders whose nominated positions were in the NT in financial year to October 2008, the majority were concentrated in high-level occupations: 88 per cent were nominated for ASCO-II Major Groups I to IV (skilled) and merely 11.9 per cent were nominated for ASCO-II Major Groups VI and VII (DIAC 2008:22). There were no nominations for Major Groups VIII and IX simply because they are ineligible for nomination (also ineligible for permanent skilled migration). Major Groups VI and VII are considered 'concessional' and are only available to regional employers; the entire NT is eligible (DIAC 2007:16). The distribution of the 457 visas in the NT suggests that only a small proportion of nominations were concessional. Hence, the temporary visa holders were likely only minimally responsible for higher percentage shares of the overseas-born employed in ASCO-II Major Groups VI and VII revealed by the 2006 Census.

Parallel to the above analysis of statistical data, interviews with a sample of overseas-born residents of the NT were conducted and subjected to content analysis. The latter has revealed that these individuals maintained dense transnational links with their countries of origin, which have led to an increased awareness about the NT culture,

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natural environment, education, work opportunities and conditions and alike. Knowledge of cultural and business norms and practices in both societies, awareness of opportunities, reasonable (in case of non-native English speakers) command of English and fluency in one or more foreign languages and personal transnational networks represent a form of capital that could be exploited to enhance commercial and cultural benefits for the Territory. This 'tacit' capital represents a powerful reason why proportions of overseas-born in occupations where they can make an impact (principally ASCO-II Major Groups I-IV) should be increased.

Discussion

This research brief showed that the NT has been experiencing a gradual shift in the percentage shares of the countries of origin of the overseas-born from Europe to South East Asia, and to a lesser degree, Africa. One trend to watch is the narrowing percentage gap between the South East Asian-born and those born in England, Scotland and Ireland (considered jointly). It is possible that their percentage share will become equal at the 2011 Census, or the former may become superseded by those born in South East Asia.

Proportion of overseas-born aged 15 and over employed at the 2006 Census (nearly 75 per cent) compared favourably with the Australian-born population aged 15 and over, where 67 per cent was employed (ABS 2007a). This reveals that the overseas-born in the NT were more economically active than the native population. Comparison of DIAC and 2006 Census statistics in Table 3 suggests some underutilisation of skills of the overseas-born. The largest percentage share difference between the pre and post-arrival employment situation was revealed in professional occupations (19 per cent). This may be a reason for concern as the NT may have welcomed immigrants of whom nearly 50 per cent had professional qualifications, but less than one-third of them (28.3 per cent) were employed as professionals. Of further concern is that in aggregate terms, 42 per cent of the overseas-born were employed in lower-level occupations classified as ASCO-II Major Groups VI to IX, a considerably higher proportion than those whose formal qualification may have restricted them to these jobs (17.5 per cent pre-migration). Although some of these workers could have been recruited from among some lower-skilled family migrants, humanitarian entrants or dependants on the 457 visas, others could be 'failed' skilled migrants (the missing 19 per cent), who were unable to return to their original professions. In that stream, eligible occupations are limited to ASCO-II Major Groups I-IV (unless concessions are sought for regional 457 visas, or for RSMS under 'exceptional' circumstances). It appears then that the formal qualifications of some overseas-born in the NT are indeed being underutilised.

Doubled, tripled and quadrupled proportions employed at ASCO-II Major Groups VI to IX (2006 Census) in comparison to DIAC data further supports the proposed underutilisation of skills of the overseas-born. The exact percentage share gaps were different in each ASCO-II Major Group and ranged from 19 per cent to 2 per cent. Although application of overseas obtained skills in the NT was not a particular focus of interviews with a sample of overseas-born living here (2008), they have nevertheless pointed to some underutilisation of these skills. Of the overseas-qualified in the sample, 22 per cent were either underemployed or unemployed. While returning to one's level and type of employment was sometimes related to difficult personal circumstances, other principal hurdles included the cost of obtaining qualifications

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recognition (bridging courses for registered professions) and insufficient level of English. Analysis of survey data on overseas-qualified nursing professionals in the NT (collected 2007) has further revealed that in some specialist areas a higher proportion was qualified to work in a given area than the actual proportion working in such an area. This gap ranged between 4.6 per cent and 16.5 per cent (Garnett et al. 2008:79-81).

The 457 data provides a sense of distribution of temporary visa grants across ASCO-II Major Groups, which are absent from DIAC *permanent additions* in Table 3. Although this represents an approximate rather than a precise measure to gauge the employment patterns of the 457s in the NT, it nevertheless makes the DIAC statistics better comparable to the Census statistics. It reveals that a majority of nominations are made for ASCO-II Major Groups I-IV and only a small proportion is made for Major Groups VI and VII. Assuming that the 457 visa holders were similarly well represented in ASCO-II Major Groups I - IV in the preceding years, and considering that it is either difficult or impossible to nominate the overseas-born for lower-end positions, it appears that the high proportion of the overseas-born in the lower-skilled occupations revealed by 2006 Census data reflects a downward career path for some and that the 457s could have only minimally fuelled the high percentage share of the overseas-born employed in ASCO-II Major Groups VI and VII.

Growing diversity of countries of birth of the NT migrants and underutilisation of their skills calls for affordable and accessible pathways to skills recognition. This requires an acknowledgement that English language proficiency for occupational purposes will increasingly need to be addressed first as more Australian migrants are likely to be originating from non-English speaking countries. There also needs to be a recognition that these pathways are in the 'grey zone' straddling formal education and work experience, they need to include a 'cultural/workplace skills' component, and some may need to be delivered in the 'continuing adult education' style. While these pathways may be readily available in other metropolitan areas, the remoteness and small population of the NT presents both a challenge and an opportunity to develop a delivery model that could be emulated by other regional areas in the country. However, it is worth remembering that enhanced integration of the overseas-born at the local labour market will come with the 'tacit' social capital of their personal transnational networks and intimate knowledge of both home and host society's norms and opportunities, which can be exploited to enhance commercial and cultural benefits for the Territory.

Recommendations

To encourage development of a strategy to help overseas-born Territorians return to their professions and trades, Canada provides some examples of initiatives (see below) as it is currently dealing with a large scale underutilisation of all sorts of foreign skills, particularly in professional and trades occupations. There are various estimates as to how much Canada loses annually as a result of underutilisation of immigrant skills. One such estimate is \$14.8b composed of \$2.4b related to skills underutilisation and \$12.6b related to pay inequity, where immigrants are earning less than the Canadian-born in the same jobs (Reitz 2001).

Canada receives many immigrants from non-traditional immigration countries, which means that their qualifications and experience are unlikely to be immediately recognised

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as equivalent to Canadian standards, which would enable them to become employed at the same level at which they had been employed prior to migration. The same situation appears to be occurring in the NT. Numerous strategies are currently being implemented across Canada to address the issue, for example projects aimed at enabling immigrants to return to their professions (usually involving upskilling for the Canadian registration), or simply helping them get the first Canadian work experience from which they can receive a letter of reference. The Canadian federal government has also launched a national strategy aimed at helping immigrants to return to their professions (see www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/credential_recognition/index.shtml). The solutions proposed below would address hurdles mentioned by the NT-based immigrants who reported problems with their qualifications recognition.

General

Work placements and language training

- unpaid work placements for skilled immigrants arranged by immigrant support agencies. Immigrants first undergo training at the agency, taking part in their in-house programs and are then screened to ensure that their English language ability and overall readiness are at the level required by the employer, as well as that their occupational profile is suitable. Used by government agencies, educational institutions, manufacturing companies, utilities, private sector, etc. Based on on-going liaising with employers. See for example www.anc-nf.ca/work_placements.html (New Foundland), or www.centrefornewcomers.ca/employer_info.shtml (Alberta).
- paid work placements of 4-12 months for immigrant professionals to break the cycle “no Canadian experience, no job; no job, no Canadian experience”. Arranged by a not for profit social enterprise. Candidates are pre-screened to ensure that they are a good match for the hosting company. Supervisor at work acts as a coach. See for example <http://www.careerbridge.ca> (Ontario).
- occupation specific language training/upgrading offered by an immigrant support agency. See for example <http://www.anc-nf.ca/oslt.html> (New Foundland), www.hilc.ns.ca/ec_iehp.php (Nova Scotia). In Nova Scotia, cultural aspects of working in Canada are emphasised. A special course covering ‘politically correct language’, ‘non-verbal communication’, ‘social talk’, ‘humour at work’, etc is also being offered.

Bridging courses and similar programs

- bridging course for unemployed professionals integrated with work experience. Run by an immigrant support agency. The teaching component is arranged in cooperation with a local college. Funding for living expenses may be available. Funding for the whole program comes from the provincial immigration department. See for example www.centrefornewcomers.ca/business_communication.shtml and http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/RRM-CG_etcs_directory.pdf, pp.63-4(Alberta). Another example is a bridging program for engineers run by an immigrant support agency in coordination with the professional body. Contains theory and a 3-month work experience placement. Funded by the provincial immigration department See www.ccis.calgary.ab.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72&Itemid=77 (Alberta).
- workplace practice for foreign-trained professionals to enable them gain the required number of hours of Canadian work experience to qualify for the provincial registration and to help them prepare for the exams. Run by the provincial government in coordination with a local college. Fee-based but some placements may offer remuneration. See www.aved.gov.bc.ca/internationalqualifications/completedprojects.htm and www.langara.bc.ca/dcep/timeline.htm (British Columbia).

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Professional mentorship

- mentoring programs arranged by an immigrant support agency for clients who wish to be matched with volunteer Canadian professionals from their field, who assist them in their search for a relevant employment. See for example www.anc-nf.cc/mentoring.html (Newfoundland) and www.skillsforchange.org/mentoring (Ontario).

Financial assistance

- microloans for up to 2 years available to all professions and trades to help them gain the accreditation or training they need to work in their field in Canada (includes upgrading qualifications to the level from their home country – underemployed). Loans are typically \$5,000 or less and repaid with 6.25 per cent interest. They may be used for tuition fees, course materials, exam fees, qualification assessments, professional association fees,
-
- living expenses and other related costs. Funded by Immigrant Access Fund, which in turn is funded by government, corporate and private clients (i.e. federal and provincial governments, HSBC Bank, ConocoPhillips Canada, PWC, University of Calgary/Dept. of Education). See www.iafcanada.org/pdfs/FAQs.pdf and http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/RRM-CG_etcs_directory.pdf, p.65 (Alberta).
- micro-loans of up to \$ 5,000 for low-income immigrants to help them start a micro-business (ie. buy tools for private professional practice), upgrade skills, or recertify in a trade or occupation (ie. pay costs of obtaining a skills recognition such as study materials, exams, etc.). Managed by an immigrant support agency in cooperation with a local credit union. Flexible repay schedule is drawn between the three parties involved. See www.mosaicbc.com/programs_Micro-loans_Program.asp (British Columbia).
- financial assistance to immigrant professionals with unrecognised qualifications as they proceed through the licensing process set by their profession's regulatory body. Clients may be provided with 50 per cent of approved costs, up to a maximum of \$2,250, to offset the cost of assessment fees, books and exams. Funded by Manitoba Government Credentials Recognition Program. The program also helps clients obtain the necessary work experience by offering employers a financial incentive to provide full-time work related to the client's education. See www2.immigratemanitoba.com/browse/work_in_manitoba/profession/work-professionals-crp.html (Manitoba).

For specific groups

- bridging program for immigrant women who were teachers and are unemployed or underemployed in Canada. Prepares them for employment as English Second Language (ESL) teaching assistants. Includes theoretical and language training, followed by 2.5 month of practice in local public schools. Free. See http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/RRM-CG_etcs_directory.pdf, p.62 (Alberta).
- skills enhancement program for young immigrant mothers and refugees (aged 15-30) who would like to find meaningful employment in their chosen field. Run by an immigrant support agency. Includes skills enhancement component (ie. soft and technical skills), mentorship from a professional immigrant woman and a 2.5 month paid work experience to earn a Canadian reference. See www.ciwa-online.com/pdfs_other/LTSBrouchure.pdf (Alberta).

[all websites accessed 22 April 2009]

Development of new strategies to better utilise skills of the overseas-born who already reside in and are familiar with the NT would be best informed by a diagnosis of the

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current situation, which should be based on analysis of more detailed data from the ABS and DIAC. Of particular interest would be statistics on formal overseas-gained qualifications cross-tabulated with migration streams, country of origin, age, gender, labour force status, actual employment type and industry in the NT and English language proficiency. Policy makers in the NT have announced that a new *NT Employment Strategy 2009-2012* (DBE 2009a) would be launched in October 2009. The overseas-born workforce is only mentioned there in the context of attraction of skilled workers but no mention is made about how the locally available human capital of the overseas-born residents will be better harnessed. A study based on such detailed data as outlined here could inform the future development of this strategy and lead to economic benefits for the NT. A parallel study of personal transnational links of the overseas-born Territorians would enhance the understanding of potential economic and cultural benefits they could bring to the Territory.

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