

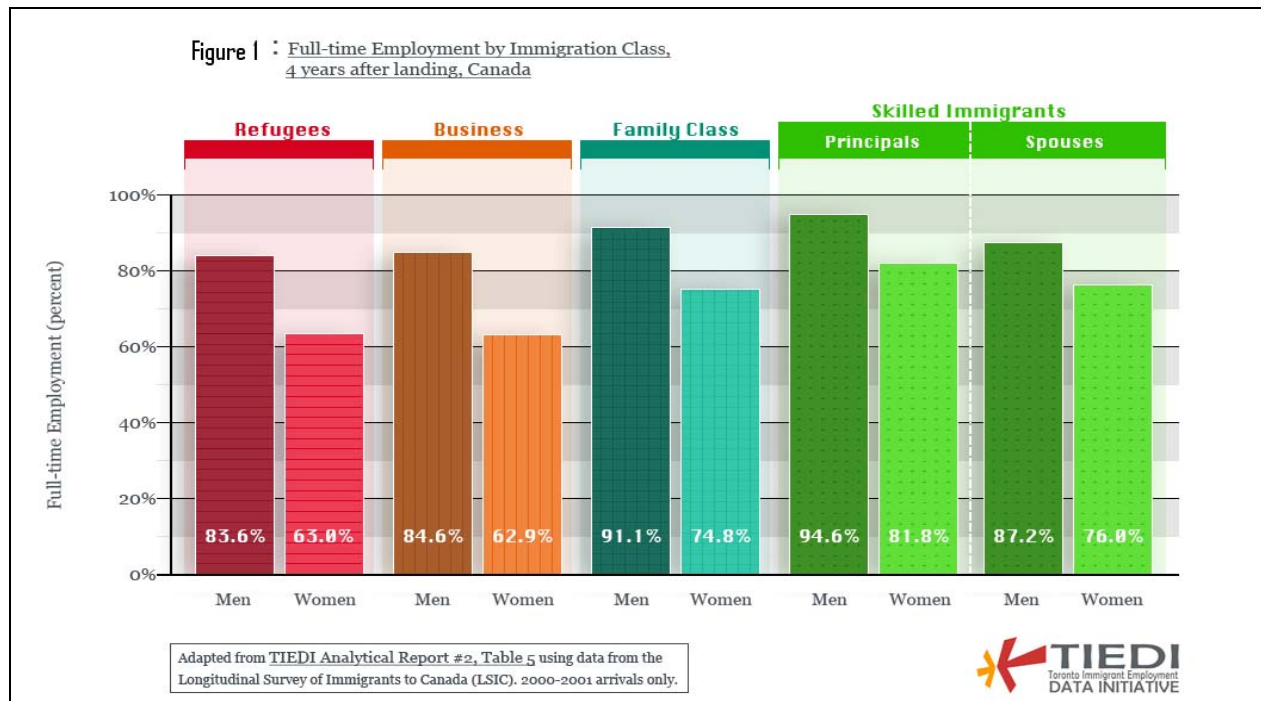
## *The ‘Gender Gap’: Findings and Directions for Addressing the Position of Immigrant Women in the Labour Market*

### What is the issue?

On average, immigrant women have higher unemployment rates, lower pay, and lower labour force participation than Canadian-born women<sup>1</sup>. Even when employed, immigrant women are more likely to be working part-time than immigrant men, regardless of immigration class (Figure 1)<sup>2</sup>. The gap is most pronounced for women who are refugees or business class immigrants.

During the 2009-2010 recession, the gender gap in unemployment between immigrant women and immigrant men widened (Figure 2). To this day, immigrant women continue to have higher unemployment rates than immigrant men, Canadian born women and Canadian-born men.

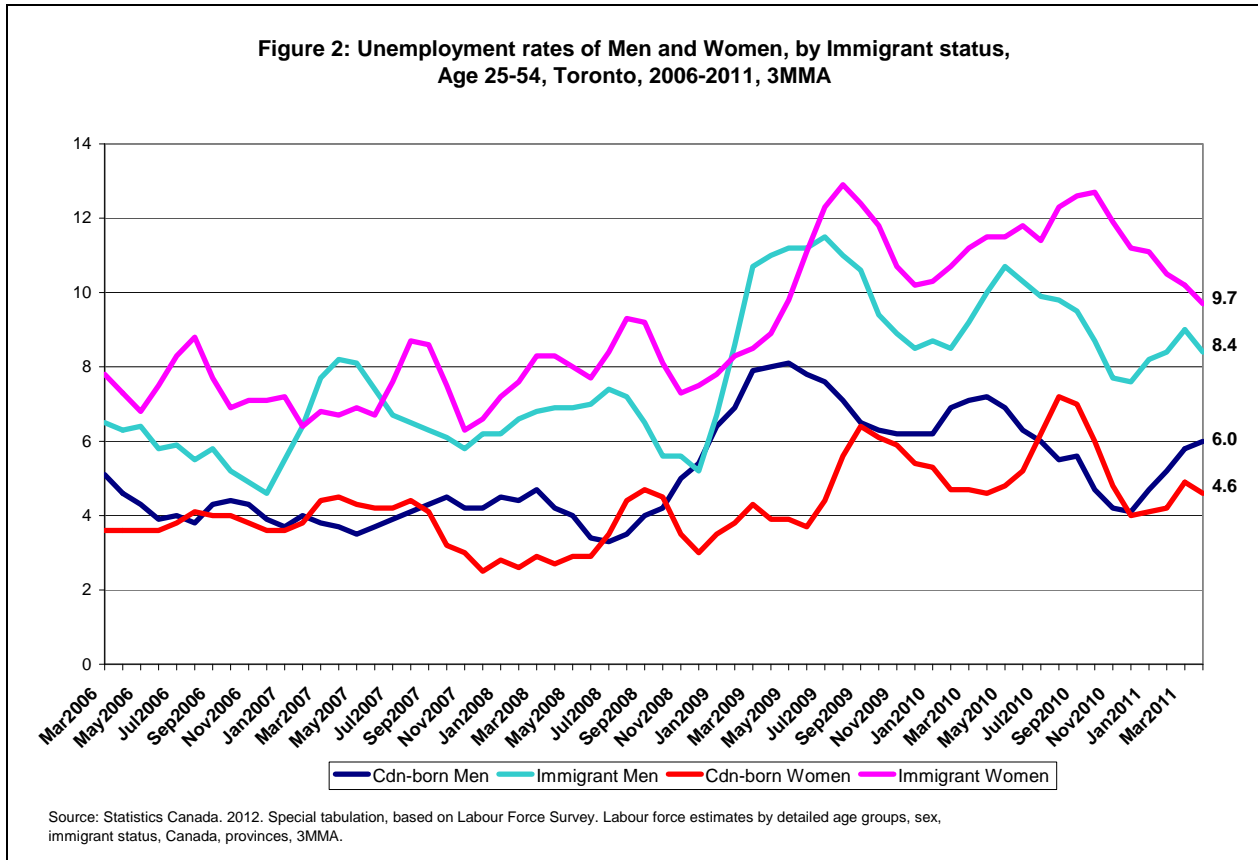
The purpose of this roundtable session is to discuss the policy and program implications of these gender gaps. How can policy makers and service providers reduce the economic disadvantage experienced by immigrant women?



<sup>1</sup> 'Do educational attainment, gender and age affect labour market outcomes of immigrants?' *TIEDI Analytical Report 16, January 2011.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Do immigrant class and gender affect labour market outcomes for immigrants?' *TIEDI Analytical Report 2, January 2010.*

**Figure 2: Unemployment rates of Men and Women, by Immigrant status, Age 25-54, Toronto, 2006-2011, 3MMA**



## What did the researchers find?

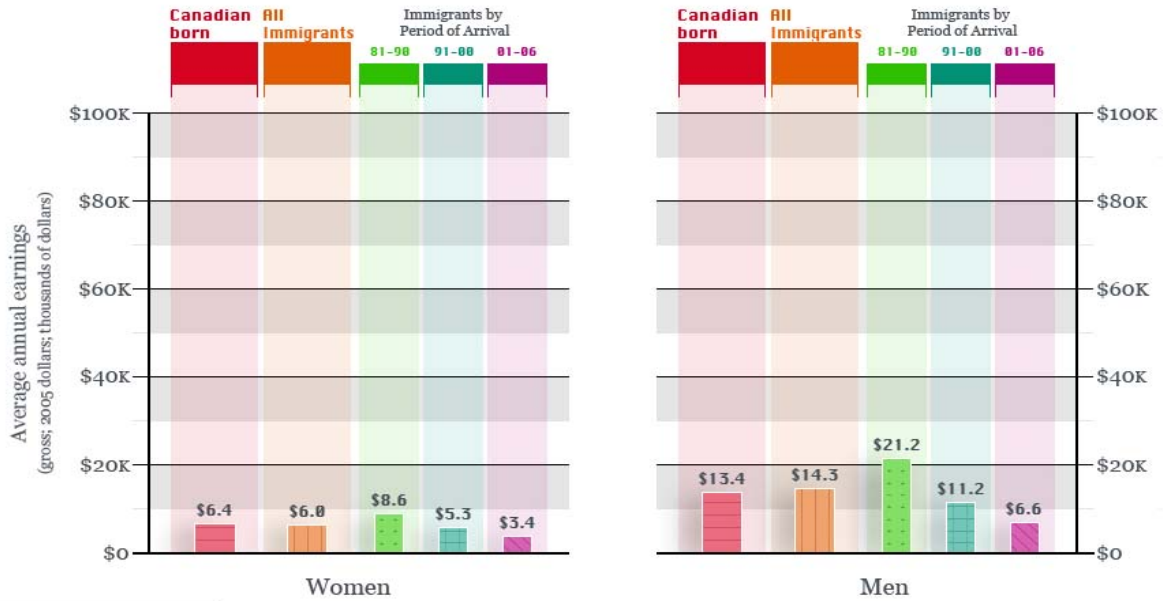
Education affects the labour market experiences of immigrant women. According to the 2006 Census data, the wage gap between the Canadian-born and immigrants is larger for adults with more education (Figure 3A-Figure 3D).<sup>3</sup> Although both Canadian-born and immigrant women earn less than their male counterparts, the earnings gap between immigrant men and immigrant women increases with education. It is also usually larger for immigrant women who settled in Canada after 1990.

- Immigrant women with college or university education have lower unemployment rates than immigrant women who are less well educated. For immigrant men, the lowest unemployment rates are found among those with trade certifications.
- For women who are university graduates, the unemployment rate for immigrants exceeds that for the Canadian-born by nearly 4 percentage points (7.8% vs. 4.1%).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 'Do educational attainment, gender and age affect labour market outcomes of immigrants?' *TIEDI Analytical Report 16*. January 2011.

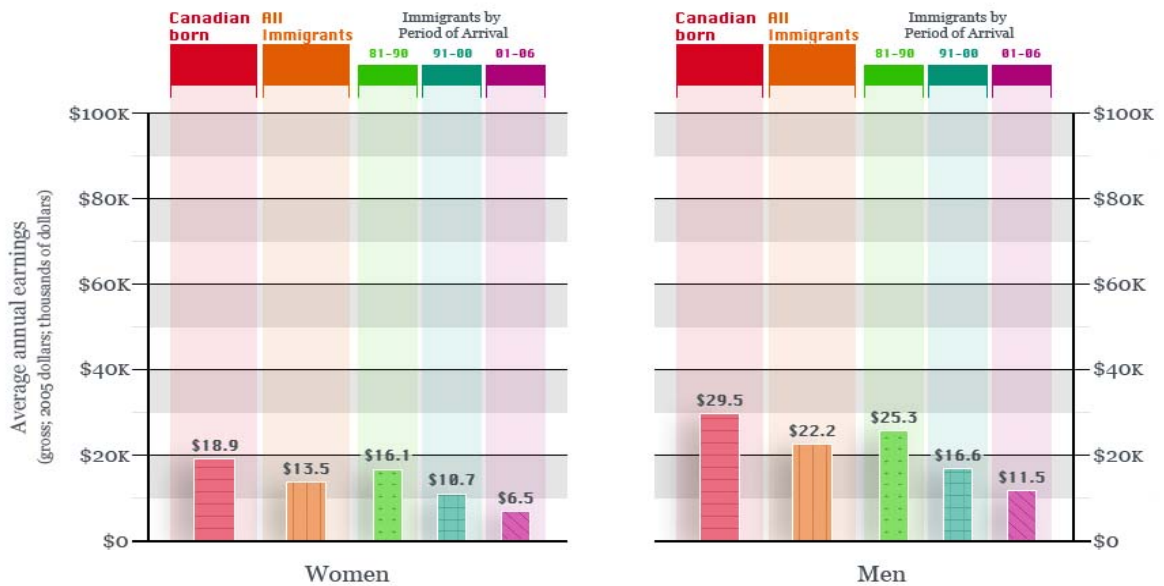
**Figure 3A:** Average annual earnings (gross; 2005 dollars) for Canadian-born & Immigrants by Educational Attainment, Period of Immigration and Gender, Toronto CMA



Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #16, Table 5 using data from the 2006 Census.

Education:  
'Less than high school'

**Figure 3B:** Average annual earnings (gross; 2005 dollars) for Canadian-born & Immigrants by Educational Attainment, Period of Immigration and Gender, Toronto CMA



Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #16, Table 5 using data from the 2006 Census.

Education:  
'High school'

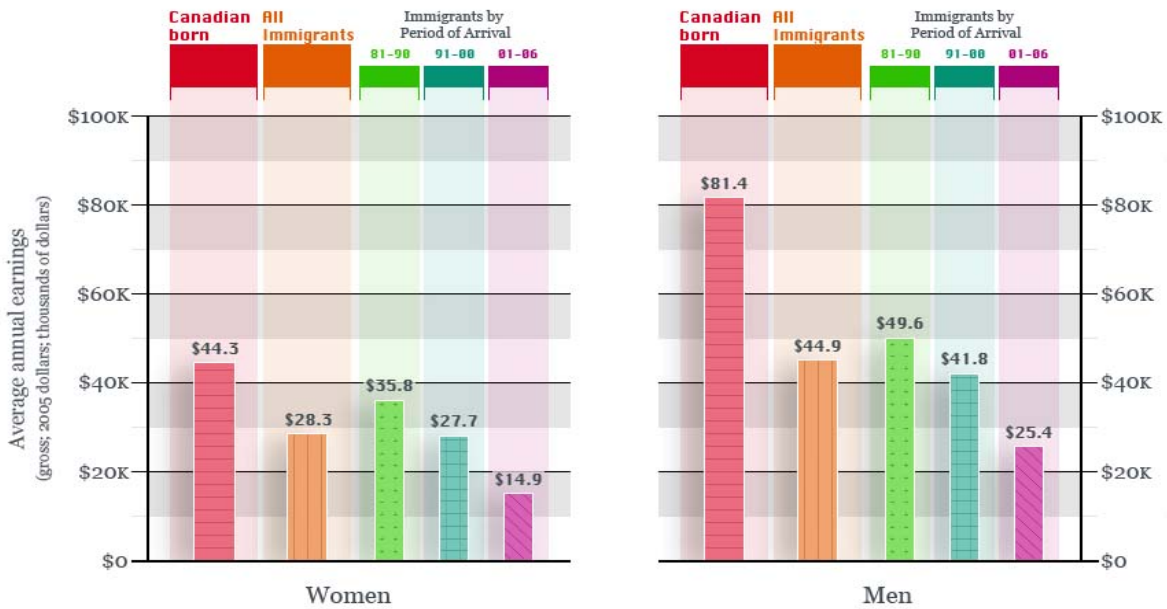
**Figure 3C:** Average annual earnings (gross; 2005 dollars) for Canadian-born & Immigrants by Educational Attainment, Period of Immigration and Gender, Toronto CMA



Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #16, Table 5 using data from the 2006 Census.

Education: 'College'

**Figure 3D:** Average annual earnings (gross; 2005 dollars) for Canadian-born & Immigrants by Educational Attainment, Period of Immigration and Gender, Toronto CMA



Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #16, Table 5 using data from the 2006 Census.

Education: 'University'

In addition to the effects of education on gender differences in employment outcomes, TIEDI research has found that,

- For each measured employment outcome, immigrant women fare worse than their male counterparts, both over time and across language skills. Immigrant women speaking English or French very well or fluently have labour outcomes much closer to those of men of comparable language skills than immigrant women with poorer language skills. Speaking English or French very well or fluently narrowed the gender gaps in participation rates, unemployment rates, duration of jobless spells and relevance of main job<sup>5</sup>. Immigrant women are also more likely to use *non-official languages in the workplace* than immigrant men.<sup>6</sup>
- Labour market outcomes differ by gender and immigration class, with the highest unemployment rates among women in the refugee class at 27.8% after four years in Canada compared with 16.5% for men in the same class.<sup>7</sup>
- Immigrant women are less likely to have their credentials recognized than immigrant men<sup>8</sup>

## Discussion Questions

1. What factors contribute to lower labour force participation, higher unemployment and lower wages for immigrant women? When examining gender gaps, how much do we need to differentiate women on the basis of their educational attainments?
2. How well do current policies, programs, and regulations reduce the disparities in employment outcomes between immigrant women and immigrant men? What policies and programs are working now and which ones need to change?
3. As the Toronto economy restructures with fewer semi-skilled manufacturing jobs and more temporary and part-time service jobs, how do policies and programs intended to address the impacts of gender roles on immigrant women's experiences in the labour market need to evolve?
4. How can policies and programs concerning education, language training, other employment supports, and employment equity address the diverse needs of immigrant women?

**About TIEDI:** Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI) seeks to assist organizations whose mandate includes the better integration of immigrants into Toronto's labour force. Website: <http://www.yorku.ca/tiedi/index.html>

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<sup>5</sup> "How do language skills affect the labour market outcomes of immigrants?" *TIEDI Analytical Report 11*, July 2010.

<sup>6</sup> "How do language skills affect the labour market outcomes of immigrants?" *TIEDI Analytical Report 11*, July 2010.

<sup>7</sup> "Do immigrant class and gender affect labour market outcomes for immigrants?" *TIEDI Analytical Report 2*, January 2010

<sup>8</sup> "What are Immigrants' Experiences with the Accreditation Process in Different Occupations?" *TIEDI Analytical Report 15*, January 2011.