What is the issue?
Integration of immigrants into Canadian society is strongly tied to barriers newcomers face in the labour market. Finding and securing appropriate employment and sustaining it is among the most important determinates of immigrant well-being and successful adaptation to Canada.

Primary issues are:
- immigrants continue to experience significant difficulties successfully integrating into the Toronto and Canadian labour market over both the short and longer terms;
- labour market outcomes differ by gender and immigrant class;
- immigrants experience significant problems having their professional credentials assessed and recognized resulting in occupational exclusion and underemployment; and
- dominant patterns of job search and recruitment for immigrants can negatively impact employment outcomes.

What did the researchers find?
Well Known Trends
TIEDI research findings reinforce a number of well-established labour market realities for immigrants. These include the following:
- As a group, newcomers, even after four years in Canada, have significantly higher unemployment rates than the Canadian-born, indicating deeper problems of labour market integration.  
- Principal applicants in the skilled worker class have better labour market outcomes than immigrants entering from other classes, including lower unemployment, fewer jobless spells, higher earnings, and taking less time in securing first jobs.
- Refugees experience the greatest difficulties in labour market integration among all classes of immigrants.  
- Gender differences in immigrant labour market outcomes persist. Immigrant women experience disadvantage in labour force participation rate, unemployment rate, pay, and education-job match.

Issues of credential recognition continue to be an area where immigrants experience challenges and barriers to the labour market.
- About 40% of immigrants report difficulties having their credentials accepted. Immigrants planning to work in unregulated occupations fared only slightly better than those planning to work in regulated occupations.
- Over half of the immigrants in the health sector experienced difficulties in having their credentials recognized compared to only a third in the natural sciences, engineering and architecture sector.

With regard to the process of finding and securing employment:
- Immigrants and Canadian-born use similar methods to find jobs. The vast majority had found their current position through family or friend networks followed by personal initiatives. However, immigrants who found jobs in

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2 Ibid.
3 TIEDI Report 2
5 Ibid.

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Access and Entry to the Labour Market: Entry Barriers and the Job Search Process

by Dr. John Shields, Dr. Lucia Lo, Dr. Jelena Zikic, and Joan Atlin

these ways earned less than the Canadian-born.7
• In order to secure their jobs Canadian-born and immigrant groups are required to complete many of the same tests in the hiring process.8

New Evidence

In a number of areas research and public awareness are still underdeveloped regarding immigrant labour market performance and barriers to the job market. These include the following:
• Over the initial years of settlement newcomers do see modest improvement in the matching of their training and education with their main employment, but for most immigrant classes matches are still poor.9
• Immigrants seeking work in regulated occupations four years after landing are more likely to have found work in their area of training and education than other immigrants (although their employment may not actually be in a regulated profession).10
• Less than one quarter of newcomers had checked before coming to Canada as to whether their credentials would be accepted.11
• More immigrant men than women have applied to have their credential recognized.12
• The main reasons immigrants give for not checking their credentials was lack of time (especially by family class immigrants) or that it was not necessary (mostly by principal skilled applicants and business class immigrants.13
• Employed immigrants who found their current job through personal initiative, family or friends and Canada Employment Centres had the lowest average hourly wages.14
• Immigrants who had found their current job through news stories, job fairs, the internet, Canada Employment Centre, or help wanted ads earned more than the Canadian-born who found their jobs through these means.15
• For occupational categories like management and healthcare, immigrants were more likely to be required to undergo tests (e.g. security or personality testing) than the Canadian-born.16

Policy Questions?

• Why do immigrant women face persistently lower employment outcomes than immigrant men?
• Why don’t the majority of immigrants investigate whether their credentials will be accepted before coming to Canada?
• Why do immigrants who rely on family and friends in their job search have worse employment outcomes?

9 Ibid.
11 TIEDI Report 15
13 Ibid.
14 Report 7.
15 Ibid.
16 Report 19.

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Access and Entry to the Labour Market: Entry Barriers and the Job Search Process

Figure 1: Unemployment rate by Immigration Class, 6 months, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

Figure 2: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) by Immigration Class, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

Figure 3: Percentage of main job related to Training or Field of Study by Immigration Class, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

Figure 4: Percentage of main job related to Training or Field of Study for Immigrants intending to work in Regulated and Unregulated Occupations, 4 years after landing, Canada

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**Figure 5:** Credential assessment by unregulated occupation and gender, Canada

**Figure 6:** Credential assessment by regulated occupation and gender, Canada

**Figure 7:** Highest relevance of sources of information, Canada

**Figure 8:** Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of Arrival

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Access and Entry to the Labour Market: Entry Barriers and the Job Search Process

Figure 9: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of immigration and ‘Internet’ as source of information for finding current job, Canada

Figure 10: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of immigration and ‘News story’ as source of information for finding current job, Canada

Figure 11: Most Common Tests or Procedures in Hiring Process of Current Job by Immigrant Status and Ethnoracial Group, Canada, 2005

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