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## Economic Integration of Immigrants: Perspectives on opportunities, challenges, & solutions

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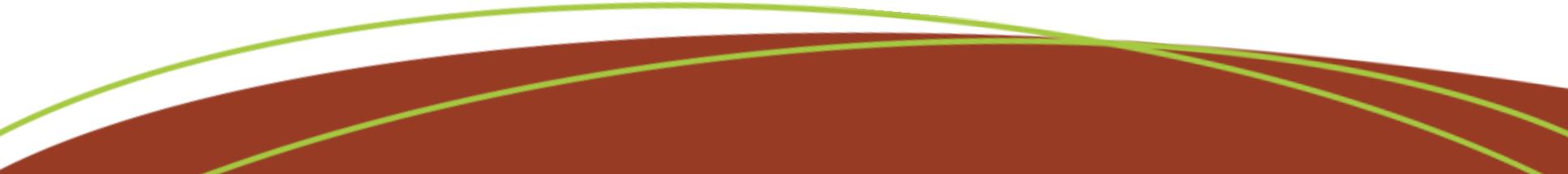


Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

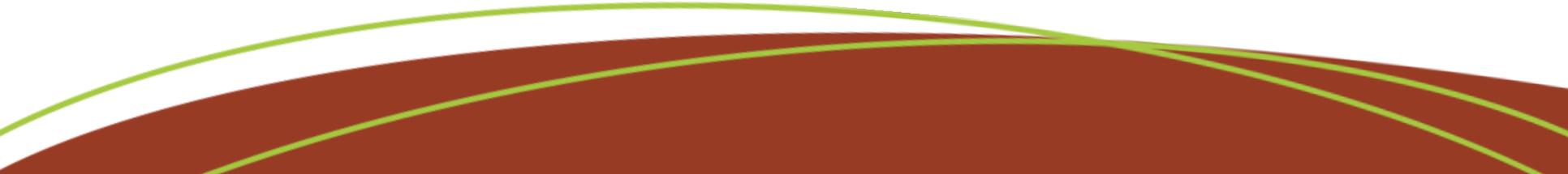
Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

Canada

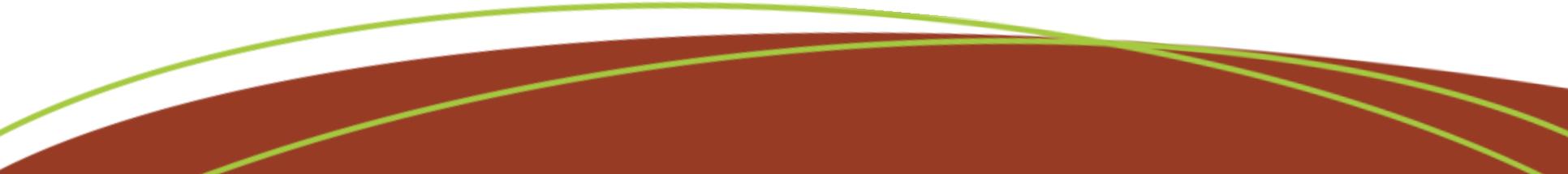
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  - The Shared View
    - The Asset
    - The Challenges
  - Perspectives on solutions
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# Our Approach

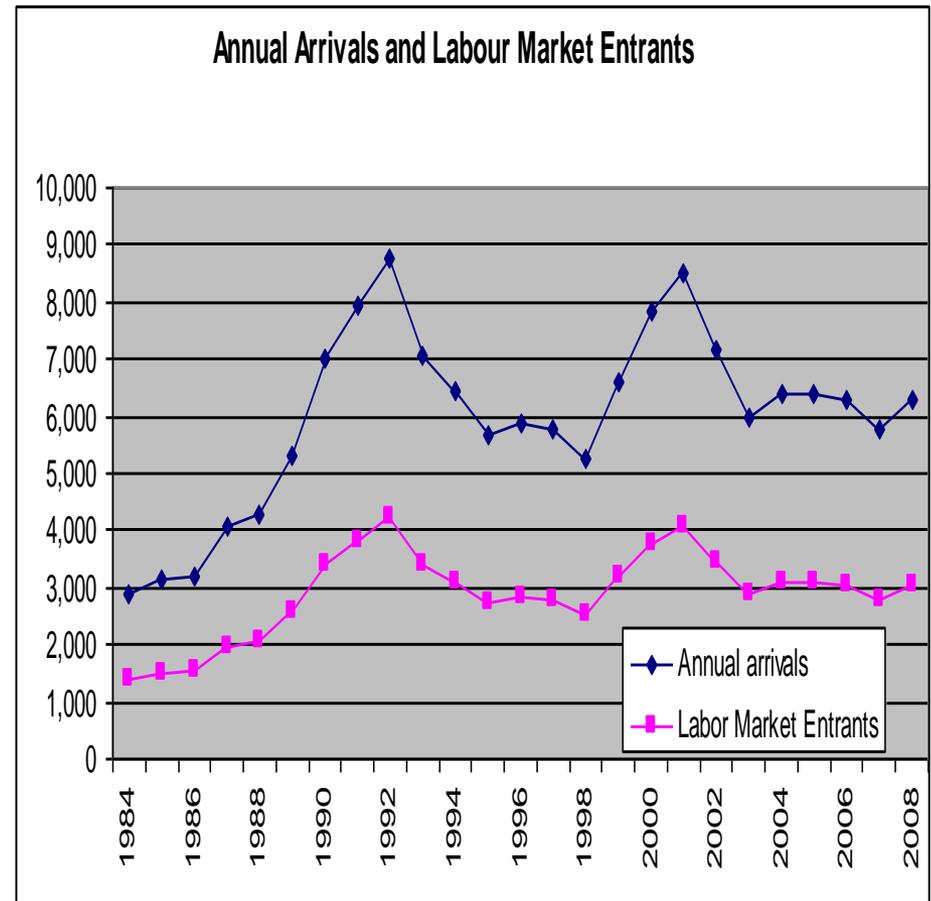
- *35 participants for a half-day session:*
    - Combination of employers, economic development thinkers/planners, and policy analysts
    - Input from key researchers and senior directors from the City of Ottawa leading development of social, environmental, and economic development planning
    - Pre-consultation documentation to help set the context and enable participants to prepare ahead of time
  - *6 small group tables (each with 6-8 people)*
    - 2 tables for employers; 2 for government policy analysts; and 2 for community economic development actors
    - Discussion on: a) awareness; b) contextual enablers and hindrances; c) challenges / barriers; d) solutions
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# Begin with the shared view

- Immigration is good for business and economic growth
  - Immigrants, in particular recent immigrants, experience high levels of unemployment and underemployment.
    - impacts negatively on both Ottawa's economic prospects and immigrants' integration outcomes
  - Coordinated actions by the following actors are needed to address the challenges:
    - Immigrants
    - Governments
    - Employers
    - Service Providers
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# The Asset: People, Resources, Knowledge, Talent and Drive

- On average, 6-7 thousand new immigrants each year
- Roughly 3-4 thousand new job seekers added to Ottawa's pool of available workforce every year
  - 80% with higher education diploma / degree in variety of disciplines – most educated immigrants in Canada
- Numbers add up over the years
- Many come with resources and are looking to invest in the Ottawa economy, buy homes, and contribute in many respects
- Drive to succeed (immigrating = manifestation of drive)

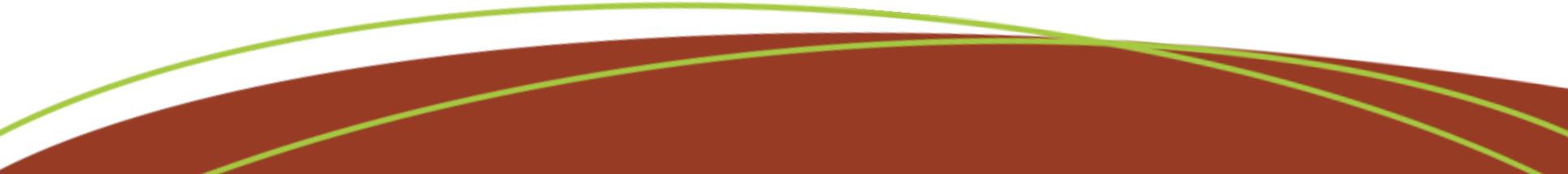


# The Challenge:

Imminent talent shortages coexist with a reality of under-utilization of immigrants' human capital



# The Under-utilization of Immigrant Talents

- High unemployment
    - Recent immigrants are 3 times more likely to be unemployed
  - Downward mobility
    - A quarter of university educated recent immigrants work in jobs requiring only high school
    - Process of de-skilling...and disadvantage
  - Underemployment
    - 59 percent of recent immigrants work in part time jobs (compared to 39 percent of the general population)
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# The Challenge

- *Barriers to economic integration*

- *Canada-wide barriers*

- Undervaluing of international experience and education
    - Requirement of Canadian experience, often used to mitigate perceptions of risk when candidates' experience is unfamiliar
    - Perceptions of inadequate language skills by employers
    - Systemic discrimination – stemming from subtle hiring practices that put immigrant job seekers at a disadvantage (e.g. expecting certain answers, hiring through established networks, etc.)

- *Barriers unique to Ottawa*

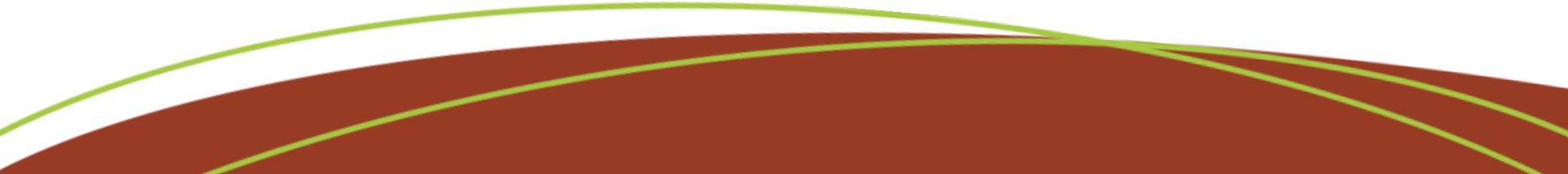
- All of the above, and
    - Government jobs can be out of reach for most immigrants due to:
      - Requirement of bilingualism by public sector employers – when language services offerings allow for either English or French, not both
      - Lengthy security clearance requirements
      - Citizenship requirement policy – and tendency to mis-implement it

# Perspectives on Solutions

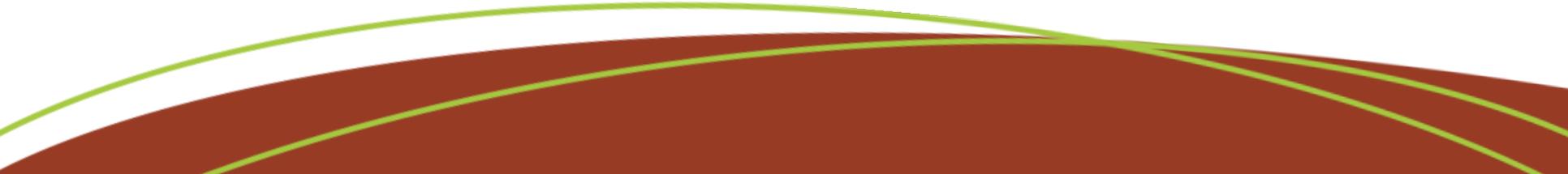
*“We tend to focus our attention on problems / barriers; not sufficiently on possibilities and progress...”*



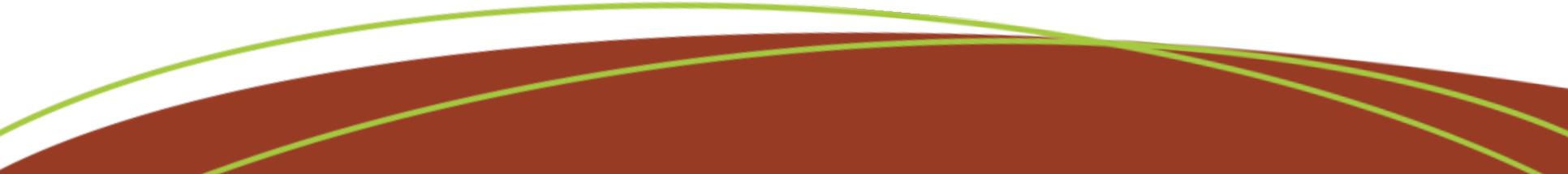
# “Progress on general awareness ..... little movement on change”

- *Employer & Immigrant support:*
    - Development of tools, guidelines and supports ... providing the dotted lines for both employers and immigrants ...
    - More training on both sides
      - For employers, middle managers; HR staff, to make hiring more fair and sensitize them to the benefits of diversity in workplaces
      - For immigrants, training on workplace integration and on un-articulated expectations
    - SMEs – huge area of potential, though more challenging as they tend to not have HR staff
    - Sharing and publicizing good practices between employers in different sectors
    - Support more collaboration between actors
- 

# Public Education / Communication / Awareness Building

- Recognize/broadcast the value of immigrant talents ... otherwise immigrants leave
  - Action most strong where employers are confronted with an “....or else” situation
    - Target sectors experiencing skills shortage and support them with immigrant recruitment campaigns
    - Prioritize public service institutions where there may be more openness - school boards, hospitals, etc.
    - Disseminate to immigrants and employment support service providers information about sectors with skills shortage
    - Work with universities/colleges to profile immigrants with local credentials and partake in broadcasting the success of their graduates
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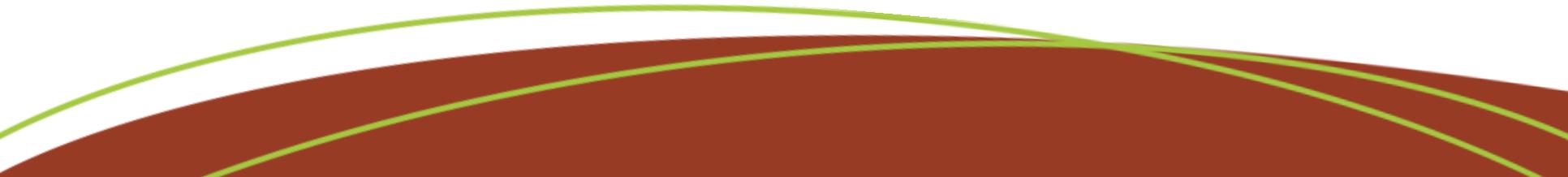
# Public Education / Communication / Awareness Building

- Flip dialogue: from “Canadian experience” to the “benefit of international experience”
  - Connect the stakeholders in a virtual space for easy sharing of information
  - So much good work is being done – we need to recognize our success
  - Create a story book on Ottawa Successes
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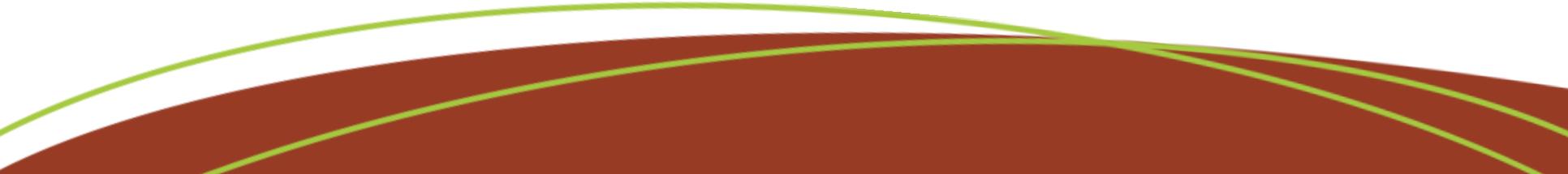
# Build-up! & Connect!

## Scale and connectivity are often the problem

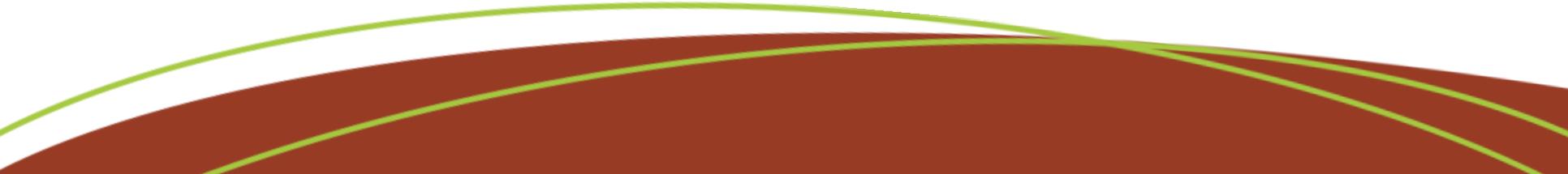
- Challenge is one of scale
  - Good innovative solutions abound – they are not at the right scale, and they maybe “creaming” due to funders’ requirement
- Challenge is also connectivity
  - Most immigrants do not know about the good services being offered



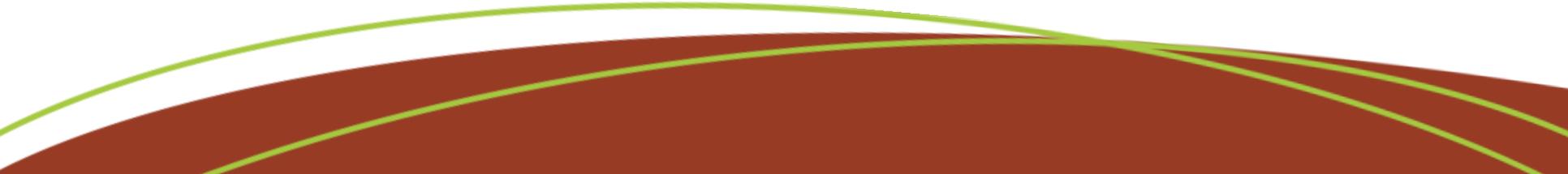
# Beyond employment: Tapping into Immigrants' Entrepreneurial spirit

- Entrepreneurship: a strong pathway to economic integration
    - Support immigrant entrepreneurs with information / technical assistance / access to loans
    - Prioritize sectors where immigrants have competitive advantages, which can enhance both Ottawa's vitality and prosperity
      - cultural industry (arts, photography, festivals, etc.)
      - import/export
      - Small scale production to cater to changing tastes (clothing, interior design, foods and condiments)
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# Beyond employment: Promoting Social Enterprises Among Immigrants

- *A Big Idea: I.S.E.E (immigrant social enterprise ecosystem)*
    - Mobilize \$25 million to build a social enterprise sector in Ottawa to compliment our current economic sectors
    - Aim to create 25,000 jobs in Ottawa - \$1000/job
    - OLIP may work with Causeway Collaborative, OCLF, United Way, Alterna and others to promote social enterprises as a solution to immigrants' economic integration
    - Social Return on this investment is as/more important as the economic return
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# What can governments do?

- Leadership and setting standards
  - Aligning plans on economic labour market development by the three levels of government and link them with OLIP
  - Policy statement is needed on the issue of immigrants' economic integration
  - Benchmarking and monitoring – we need to keep moving the yard stick
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Thank you!

Questions and discussion?



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