

# **Recognizing the Prior Learning of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence**

Presenters

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# Overview of Research Project

- Background to the Research
- Purpose of the Research
- Scope of Research
- Participants
- Survey instrument
- Methodology

# Research Project

## Steering Committee's Role

- members actively involved/knowledgeable about RPL activities in Canada
- representatives from a variety of national and provincial RPL/ FCR organizations, institutions, federal and provincial governments
- defined scope of research within the limited time for the research project and participation of the Steering Committee
- made 6 recommendations for project

# Steering Committee recommended that:

1. The joint term PLAR/QR system be replaced with the term RPL (Recognizing Prior Learning ) system.
2. The RPL system for the study include PLAR and QR processes and practices as well as FCR.
3. The focus of the study be restricted to RPL systems developed within Canada.
4. The primary focus be RPL for foreign trained individuals.
5. The researcher build an advisory team of RPL experts – stakeholders in sectors from across Canada involved with foreign trained individuals
6. The researcher use this advisory team as a focus group to develop the RPL survey instrument that would be used to determine excellent practice in RPL.

# Steering Committee's Role

- assisted with creation of Principles and Performance Indicators for the RPL survey
- recommended contacts for RPL systems from provinces and territories
- reviewed and pilot tested the RPL survey
- reviewed the draft research report and provided feedback

# Development of the Survey Instrument

- Multi-Stakeholder Focus Group Members –  
Report: Page ii
- Focus Group Session to Develop a Measuring Instrument – Toronto: November 23, 2005
  - ALFI model
  - Creation of RPL Principles
    - Performance Indicators for each Principle

# RPL Principles

**Please refer to Report Appendix A - Pages 5-12**

1. **Transparency** — The RPL System has clear, well-articulated RPL processes and applications of outcomes and is easily accessed. The system must not hold out false promises to foreign-trained individuals.
2. **Values** — The RPL System reflects the organization's willingness and ability to promote barrier-free and bias-free accessibility and services to foreign-trained individuals.
3. **Pre-Advising/Counseling** — The RPL System considers the life and career goals of foreign-trained individuals prior to the RPL assessment process and provides access to information and resources to prepare for appropriate RPL and entry into practice, in a timely manner.
4. **Client-Responsive System** — The RPL System is a client-responsive system that is sustainable, cost-effective, and efficient for both the client and the system/organization.



# RPL Principles

**Please refer to Report Appendix A - Pages 12-16**

5. **Quality Assurance** — The RPL System establishes policies and procedures for providing quality services and has a systematic process for reviewing and changing these procedures to ensure that the system continuously meets the needs of all stakeholders.
6. **Evaluation/Measurement** — The RPL System evaluates /measures formal and informal learning acquired by foreign-trained individuals as it relates to their field of practice
7. **Transferability** — Recognition awarded through an RPL System is accepted within the appropriate context in other provinces /territories allowing foreign-trained individuals to transfer equivalent credentials across Canada.



# RPL Performance Indicators Report Appendix A

1. Transparency Principle - p. 5 & 6
  - 4 Performance Indicators with response details
2. Values Principle — p. 7 & 8
  - 6 Performance Indicators with response details
3. Pre-Advising/Counseling Principle — p. 9 & 10
  - 8 Performance Indicators with response details
4. Client-Responsive Principle — p. 11 & 12
  - 7 Performance Indicators with response details
5. Quality Assurance Principle — p. 12 & 13
  - 5 Performance Indicators with response details
6. Evaluation/Measurement Principle — p. 13 – 15
  - 8 Performance Indicators with response details
7. Transferability Principle — p. 16
  - 3 Performance Indicators with response details

# Interesting Uncoverings

- Database for Organizations Using PLAR/QR/FCR
- Confusion Regarding PLAR/QR/FCR
- Lack of Awareness of the “Going to Canada Portal”
- Documented Assessment Processes & Practices
- Cost for Assessment & Licensing Processes
- Supporting Services
- Transferability
- Information Sharing

# Conclusions

- Exemplary Canadian RPL Assessment Practices Report p. 87
- Exemplary Practice in all RPL Principles
- Exemplary Practice in Transparency Report p. 88
- Exemplary Practice in Values Report p. 90
- Exemplary Practice in Pre-Advising/Counseling Report p. 91
- Exemplary Practice in Client Responsiveness Report p. 91
- Exemplary Practice in Quality Assurance Report p. 92
- Exemplary Practice in Evaluation/Measurement Report p. 92
- Exemplary Practice in Transferability Report p. 93

# Recommendations I

- Federal/Provincial Governments
  - RPL databases
  - Going to Canada Portal website
  - Client-centered development of assessment processes
  - Sustainability of RPL systems
  - Credential Assessment service providers

# Recommendations II

## Organizations With RPL Systems

- Going to Canada Portal Links
- Visibility of documented intent to serve the needs of foreign-trained clients
- Development of RPL Components to reflect Values
- Collaboration to exchange RPL information

# Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA)



Halifax, Nova Scotia

# New Beginnings Work Placement

- No Canadian experience and references
- 6-week, full time professional work experience with an employer from HRM
- No cost for employers
- No obligation to hire
- Insurance and assistance provided by MISA
- Win/win situation



# Assessment Tool for Employer

- Work Placement, a “6-week interview”
- Opportunity to assess participant’s ability to interact and work with others, work ethic and efficiency
- Opportunity to assess not only technical but also soft skills through:
  - Every day interaction with participant
  - Host Employer’s 1/2 term and final evaluations
  - WP Coordinator interview with Host Employer and Participant
  - Final product/service provided by participant
- Half of participants have been hired by their Host Employer after work placement

# Self Assessment

- 100% of participants have said the WP is an opportunity to assess:
  - Knowledge about their profession in Canada
  - Transferable skills
  - Training, courses, credentials
  - Language and communication skills
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Networking skills
  - Time management
- Evaluations and WP Coordinator will provide ongoing feedback to participants

“The NBP is an excellent program that gives an employer access to very qualified people who would not normally be selected simply because of lack of awareness”.

Host Employer at Construction Management Bureau  
Halifax

“This experience has prepared me very well. Now I feel more confident about my skills and abilities. I detected some weaknesses as well where I have to put some more work. I am sure that this experience will give me a plus for my future”.

Participant, Elizabeth, Chemical Engineer at NRC

# Work Placement and RPL Principles

- **Transparency:** promotional material and website
- **Values:** advocacy and bridging relationship between immigrant professionals and employers
- **Counseling:** each participant has and is referred by an Employment Counselor prior to the placement
- **Client Responsive:** program customized to the needs and expectations of each individual
- **Quality Assurance:** all outcomes are filed in data base
- **Evaluation:** 2 Evaluations + Work Visit + POM
- **Transferability:** Canadian experience and references

# Work in Nova Scotia (WINS)

- Integrated model of employment and workplace language service delivery
- MISA and HILC
- Together with employment counselor, newcomers develop customized plans to assist them toward career goals
- Clear information through pathway documents
- Menu of options

Newcomer  
Entry

## Employment Counselling

Individual assessment, and ongoing coaching and referrals are the foundation of the W.I.N.S. program. Together with your Employment Counsellor, you will establish your goals and develop a flexible and customized plan of action by selecting from the menu of program options.

### Language Training

- **Sector specific ESL**  
currently available – ESL for Internationally Educated Health Care Professionals
- **English for Work and Business**  
workplace language skills for high level professionals from diverse employment backgrounds. Day and evening classes are available
- **Language Learning Strategies**  
for independent high level learners focusing on the language learning process and strategies to improve language skills

### Sector / Profession Specific Orientation

- An overview to the culture, values, ethics, systems and professional practice in a specific profession in Canada.
- Currently available: Orientation to Canadian Health Care System. Offered in the evening over a period of 8 weeks.

### Employment Preparation

- Three core workshops:
- Job Search
  - Working in Canada
  - Interview Skills
- Also available on demand:
- Portfolio Development
  - Computer Training
  - Finding Basic Jobs

### Employment Experience

- 8 week full time work placement in employment setting closely linked to your professional background
- Also available:
- Youth placements
  - Observational opportunities

### Mentoring

- Program matches newcomers with mentors from a similar profession to help newcomers build:
- Confidence
  - Career goals
  - Networks
  - Awareness of work cultures
  - Professional language

### English in the Workplace

- English in the Workplace offers a range of language training options, delivered on site at the workplace and customized to the needs of the employee and the workplace.
- Helps newcomers with workplace communication skills
- Pronunciation
  - Self confidence
  - Workplace reading and writing skills
  - Communicating with colleagues and supervisors
  - Understanding of Canadian work culture
  - Customer-service language
  - Life-long learning strategies

Workforce  
Integration



# Multi-stakeholder Work Groups

- A model for addressing the challenges of RPL and qualifications recognition in regulated occupations
- Profession-specific; include all key partners
- Exchange information, identify gaps, plan and develop innovative, realistic solutions, identify opportunities for collaboration, sustain momentum for positive change
- Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing
- Teaching, Skilled Trades



# Recognizing the Prior Learning of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence

- We hope this has been an informative session for you.
- Thank you for your interest.
- Please present your questions and/or comments now.