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|  | **Qualitative Research On Immigration –Summer 2016** |  |

**Report on Qualitative Findings**

Submitted to

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

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Prepared By

Leger

*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.*

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# Executive Summary

Leger is pleased to present Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) with this report on findings from a series of focus groups on Immigration in Canada. This report was prepared by Leger who was contracted by IRCC (contract number B8815-170100/001/CY awarded June 21, 2016).

## Background and Objectives

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is currently engaged in planning immigration levels and Canada’s immigration priorities. The Department identified a need for qualitative (focus group) research, in order to assess the Canadian public’s views on immigration to Canada.

The main objective of the research is to provide IRCC with insights on issues which may include the following:

* Views on Canada as a country of immigration and the values and goals Canada should pursue;
* Views on Canada as a settlement country;
* Immigration levels and how potential changes in levels should impact immigration categories;
* Views/expectation of the Government of Canada; and
* Communication needs and preferences.

Public attitudes toward immigration levels are of key importance to CIC’s policies and programs. The information gained through this public opinion research will be shared throughout the Department. The research was designed to assist it when establishing priorities, developing policies and communications products and strategies, and planning programs and services.

## 1.2 Methodology

**Methodology**

A total of ten (10) in-person focus groups were held in five (5) different locations. Two separate groups were conducted in each location, for a total of 10 groups. One group was among members of the general population and the other group among recent immigrants, with the exception of Winnipeg where sessions were held with indigenous peoples.

Twelve (12) participants were recruited for each group in anticipation that in the event of last minute cancellations there would be 8 to 10 individuals attending in each group. Each group lasted approximately 2 hours.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **City** | **Composition** | **Language** | **Recruited** | **Show ups** | **Participated** | **Tentative Date** |
| Toronto, ON | Gen Pop  Immigrant | English | 24 | 23 | 20 | July 11, 2016 |
| Winnipeg, MB | Indigenous Peoples | English | 24 | 23 | 20 | July 13, 2016 |
| Vancouver, BC | Gen Pop  Immigrant | English | 24 | 24 | 20 | August 16, 2016 |
| Montreal, QC | Gen Pop  Immigrant | French | 24 | 23 | 20 | August 4, 2016 |
| London, ON | Gen Pop  Immigrant | English | 24 | 22 | 19 | August 18,2016 |
| **Total** |  |  | **120** | **115** | **99** |  |

General Population Groups: More specifically, the general public group included a good representative mix of:

* Gender
* Age
* Residency status
* Income
* Education

Immigrant Groups: The groups among recent immigrants to Canada included an appropriate mix of:

* Newcomers (less than 5 years) \* Minimum of 5 participants
* Recent immigration (5 to 15 years)
* Ethnocultural groups (varied by location according to immigration patterns)

**Aboriginal Groups: Winnipeg**

In Winnipeg, **both** sessions were composed of Indigenous peoples, with one group held with women and the other with men.

At the start of each group, Leger provided participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups ahead of time. Such details included the audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence and purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality, including the fact that tapes will be destroyed one year after completion of the project, and that participation is entirely voluntary. As well, participants were told at the time of recruitment, as well as at the start of each session, that the groups were conducted on behalf of the Government of Canada. In Montreal, where the groups were held in French, simultaneous translation to English was provided. A cash incentive of $125 was given to each participant.

## 1.3 Overview of Qualitative Findings

**Positive Perspective toward Immigration**

* Overall, the mood of the country was very positive about immigration and most participants believed that immigration is at the core of our country’s narrative.
* Participants believe Canada has a long history of openness to immigration and believe that diversity and respect for differences are important Canadian values.
* In fact, participants take pride and state that Canada needs to remain a welcoming and accepting country for immigrants.

**Canada and Immigration**

* Our first exercise asked participants to pick three words from a list of over twenty-five (half negative, half positive words) randomly distributed on a page.
* The words ‘welcoming’, ‘fair’, ‘diversity’, and ‘compassionate’ were the most often mentioned positive words. Regardless of the target group present at the sessions, the general outlook on immigration remained positive, certainly at the level of values and guiding principles.
* While some, mostly in the recent immigrant groups, did choose negative words such as complicated and slow, these were generally associated with the immigration process.
* When the word “overwhelmed” was used it was associated with system capacity as well as the international interest in immigrating to Canada.

**Benefits of Immigration**

* While fairly long lists of benefits were generated by participants, the common thread remained the contribution of immigration to the national economy.
* Almost all of the participants believed that immigration is part essential to Canada (i.e. economic benefits, population growth), obligatory (i.e.: compassionate/responsible) and contributory (i.e.: diversity, innovation, cultural enrichment).
* Participants spontaneously associated the need for immigration in Canada to fill the demands of our job market, but also as a means of creating economic growth.
* Other perceived benefits mentioned were immigration’s contribution to our declining population, cultural enrichment and the influx of newer or fresher ideas.
* The newcomer focus groups particularly insisted on the need for economic immigrants in Canada.

**Challenges and Issues**

* While the tone always remained positive across the five cities visited, some issues and challenges were voiced by both the general public and recent immigrants.
* These concerns or issues tended to be mentioned more as question marks as opposed to critiques or a disapproval of immigration.
* While both positive and negative views were voiced, this should not be interpreted to mean that some participants were favorable and others unfavorable to immigration to Canada.
* The “It is a good thing … but (…)” tended to be the most common way Canadians expressed their views.
* It should be noted that very few participants cited security as an immigration issue or concern.

The concerns most often voiced by participants were:

1) Integration issues (mostly tied to linguistic integration, and economic integration often referred to as “finding that first job”);

2) The capacity of our job market to supply enough quality employment opportunities to newcomers;

3) Our capacity to properly support and adequately educate newcomers on our laws, and “general way of doing things”, allowing newcomers to smoothly “fit in” (an individual responsibility of members of the host society directly in contact with newcomers);

4) Foreign credential recognition and the burden on professionals to “regain” their right to work in their field; and

5) System capacity issues (vetting, selection, welcoming, and proper follow ups and measurement of outcomes).

**Changing Immigration Levels and Prioritizing Immigration Categories**

**Immigration Levels**

* When asked about immigration levels, very few participants were familiar with the annual immigration figure for Canada and expressed mixed views on that current figure albeit with a common caveat that they didn’t feel that they could judge the immigration figure.
* When the suggestion was made that this figure could grow in the near future, participants who had been more vocal on the economic necessity of immigration, tended to be more supportive.
* In all locations, participants tended to trust that those making decisions regarding the appropriate levels of immigration would know what the right level should be (would have the right social and economic indicators).
* There were several comments regarding the increase in levels, and many also tied this objective with the necessity to ‘better’ disperse immigration across all regions (outside Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal).
* The concept of immigration levels reaching 1% of the total population did not generate any significant ‘pushback’ from Canadians. In actual fact, except maybe for Montreal, using the 1% figure helped Canadians make sense of the number and, for many, made it more acceptable.

**Immigration Categories**

* On the issue of immigration categories, Canadians felt the country should adopt a balanced approach; and that an increase in one category of immigrants should not negatively impact other categories.
* When looking at levels and categories, participants tended to believe that Canada should strive to be very competitive in attracting talent (economic immigration), while maintaining an enviable reputation globally for its humanitarian efforts.
* More would prioritize economic immigrants, while some also believed we should increase the number of refugees into the country.
* In all five cities, participants tended to support an overall increase in immigration levels (derived mainly from an increase in economic immigrants), if it did not compromise other immigration categories such as refugees or family reunification.
* It should be noted that immigrant groups in all cities would like to see a reduction in the backlog or an increase in levels in the family reunification category.

**Information Needs of Canadians and Basis of Potential Support for Increased Immigration Levels**

* Participants stated that, while they may be open to increased immigration, that they needed additional context which would enable them to understand current and proposed immigration levels (i.e.: Labour market needs and the immigration plan)

**Regional Differences**

* It should be noted that if the report does not directly name a region or directly reports on a noticeable difference between locations, the reader should consider that no significant regional differences were apparent. As such, much of this report will be from a national perspective, as general outlook on immigration, perspectives on changing immigration levels and concerns regarding immigration to Canada were largely the same in all five locations.
* While Vancouver sessions spent more time on economic integration of newcomers and ‘system-capacity’ issues (can our hospitals, schools and social services handle the new demand), Toronto showed more interest in measurement of immigration outcomes (Is Canada doing a good job of ensuring immigrants succeed?), Montreal focused more on selection criteria, Winnipeg spoke about housing and community services, and London spent more time on local job market issues. While these differences do exist, the general conclusions presented here apply to all locations visited.

## 1.4 Note on Interpretation of Research Findings

The views and observations expressed in this document do not reflect those of IRCC. This report was compiled by Leger, based on the research conducted specifically for this project. The analysis presented represents what Leger believes were the most salient points during the focus group sessions. All words or sentences in quotation marks are actual verbatim comments from participants. As such, these quotes do not reflect the views of IRCC. They were selected by Leger for their capacity to directly convey the views and opinions of participants, in their own words.

Findings from this qualitative research (i.e. focus groups) should be considered directional only and results should not be projected as representative of the entire Canadian population. It is intended to provide deeper insight into the underlying reasons for opinions or lack thereof.

## 1.5 Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

Leger certifies that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada’s political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research.

Additional information

Supplier name: Leger

PWGSC Contract Number: B8815-170100/001/CY

Contract Award Date: June 21, 2016

The contract value for this project is $70,466.80 (including HST).

To obtain more information on this study, please email [por-rop@cic.gc.ca](mailto:por-rop@cic.gc.ca%20) .

# Detailed Qualitative Findings

This section of the report presents the detailed findings from a series of ten focus groups regarding immigration in Canada, held from July 11th to August 18th, 2016. Sentences or words in quotation marks are verbatim comments from participants.

## 2.1 Qualitative Research Methodology

A total of ten (10) in-person focus groups were held in five (5) different locations. Two separate groups were conducted in each location, for a total of 10 groups. One group was among members of the general population and the other group among recent immigrants, with the exception of Winnipeg where sessions were held with indigenous peoples.

Twelve (12) participants were recruited for each group in anticipation that in the event of last minute cancellations there would be 8 to 10 individuals attending in each group. Each group lasted approximately 2 hours.

**General Population/Immigrant Focus Groups: Four of Five Locations**

In four out of five locations, the two groups were split between the general public and immigrants to Canada (15 years or less). The groups among immigrants needed to include a good mix of newcomers (<5yrs in Canada) and immigrants who have been in Canada between 5 – 15 years. A minimum of 5 newcomers per group were to be recruited.

More specifically, the general public group included a good representative mix of:

* Gender
* Age
* Residency status
* Income
* Education

The groups among recent immigrants to Canada were included an appropriate mix of:

* Newcomers (less than 5 years) \* Minimum of 5 participants
* Recent immigration (5 to 15 years)
* Ethnocultural groups (varied by location according to immigration patterns)

**Aboriginal Groups: One Location**

In Winnipeg, **both** sessions were held with Indigenous peoples. More specifically, participants of the first group were women and participants of the second group were men.

**Summary Table**

Twelve (12) participants were recruited for each group in anticipation that in the event of last minute cancellations there will be 8 to 10 individuals attending in each group. Each group lasted approximately 2 hours.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| **Total** |  |  | **120** | **115** | **99** |  |

**Locations and Dates of the Focus Groups**

Leger provides participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups ahead of time. Such details include the audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence and purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality, including the fact that tapes will be destroyed one year after completion of the project, and that participation is entirely voluntary. As well, participants were told at the time of recruitment, as well as at the start of each session, that the groups were conducted on behalf of the Government of Canada. In Montreal, where the groups will be held in French, simultaneous translation to English will be provided. A cash incentive of $125 was given to each participant.

Two senior moderators from Leger were used on this research, one conducted all the English language session, while the other moderator handled the French language sessions in Montreal. After each night of groups, a written debrief was sent between moderators and the video-tapes of the sessions were made available to the other moderator on Leger’s secured server for consultation. At the time of writing the report, versions were shared and modified by both moderators to ensure it did reflect the content of all the groups.

In accordance with the MRIA guidelines, and GC qualitative standards for the conduct of qualitative research, Leger provided participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups. Such details included the audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence and purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality including the fact that tapes will be destroyed according to MRIA guidelines, and that participation is voluntary. Upon arrival at the focus group facility, participants were asked to provide their written consent regarding these details.

Leger recruited participants via telephone interviews, using lists of validated telephone numbers in each location. This involves randomly calling areas in the selected locations, looking for individuals who qualify or whether they know anyone who qualifies.

All groups will take place in appropriate facilities so as to allow for audio-taping and client observation. The interviewer’s guide will be developed in consultation with IRCC.

* + Participants must meet all the requirements specified for the study in the contract or as subsequently amended in agreement with the client.
  + No participant (nor anyone in their immediate family or household) may work in an occupation that has anything to do with the research topic area. No participant may work in related government departments/agencies, nor in advertising, marketing research, public relations or the media (radio, television, newspaper, film/video production, etc.).
  + In addition, consideration should be given to excluding a participant who has worked in any such occupation in the past 5 years, as appropriate to the specific research objectives.
  + No participants acquainted with each other may be knowingly recruited for the same study, unless they are in different sessions. An exception can be made when the research requirements specify a personal acquaintance between two or more session participants (i.e. to contrast the opinions of domestic partners or business associates on the issues of interest).
  + No participant may be recruited who has attended a qualitative research session within the past six months.
  + No participant may be recruited who has attended five or more qualitative research sessions in the past five years.
  + (Winnipeg) No participant (nor anyone in their immediate family or household) has been/are associated with/work for any Indigenous/Aboriginal associations/advocacy groups/governing bodies or non-profit groups.
  + All Respondents must be able to speak, read and write in the language of the group or study being conducted.
  + The recruiter must have information readily available to inform the participant that the privacy policies can be made available on request via regular mail, by e-mail, or by providing an Internet address, as preferred by the participant.
  + The research firm must inform the client as soon as possible of any problems arising during recruiting that may require adjusting the research design or of any other issues that warrant the client's attention

As with all research conducted by Leger, contact information was kept entirely confidential. All information that could allow for the identification of participants was removed from the data, in accordance with the *Privacy Act* of Canada.

## 2.2 Perspectives on Immigration in Canada

To start discussions, focus group participants were asked to select three (3) words out of a random list of 27 words that they spontaneously associate with Immigration and Canada (see Appendix C3 in English and C4 in French). This exercise was designed to allow participants to formulate their spontaneous and initial thoughts regarding immigration without the intervention of other participants. The moderator then went around the room and asked participants to indicate which words were selected, and, more importantly, why they were selected. Out of the list of 27 words about half had a positive tone and the other half a negative tone. Here is the list of words selected by participants, regardless of the frequency of mentions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CANADA AND IMMIGRATION** | |
| **GENERAL POPULATION** | **IMMIGRANTS** |
| **POSITIVE** | **POSITIVE** |
| Diversity  Welcoming  Compassionate  Fair  Economic growth  Labour  Flexible  World leader  Pride | Diversity  Welcoming  Compassionate  Fair  Economic growth  Labour  Competitive |
| **NEGATIVE** | **NEGATIVE** |
| Slow  Complicated  Overwhelmed  Integration | Slow  Complicated  Overwhelmed  Integration  Backlogged |

The following is a list of the top most selected words, starting with the most frequently chosen word:[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Positive**

* Welcoming: A top-3 word in all ten sessions. Participants felt Canada this is a defining value for Canada and immigration as well as the Canadian character.
* Diversity: Seen as part of being Canadian, Canada is about diversity and acceptance of differences. All see this positively.
* Humanitarian: Direct references to the Syrian refugee crisis were frequent. Many felt that this was something “Canada had to do” and participants believed Canada had been a leading example when it comes to humanitarian efforts. Participants often mentioned they felt proud of Canada’s effort here and several cited Canada’s enhanced international profile and reputation
* Compassionate: Chosen alternatively with humanitarian. Again, participants believe that showing compassion is somehow the “Canadian way of doing things”.
* Flexible: Used in the general public groups, flexible referred to our capacity to remain flexible when targets are set. This allows Canada to adapt to changing needs, global conflicts or situations such as the Syrian refugee situation. Participants thought that Canada should maintain this level of flexibility. In the newcomer sessions, the reference to flexibility was tied to the actual application process
* Fair: Mostly selected in the newcomer sessions, many used this word to describe the overall immigration process. While they felt the process was long, tedious and stressful, they did express the feeling that they had been treated fairly. Several also commented on the friendly and welcoming attitude of all the agents and government representatives they had met.

**Negative**

* Overwhelmed: This word had several definitions. For the general population, many believed that newcomers and more so refugees must feel overwhelmed at the time of arrival with the task of “fitting in”, “finding that first job”, learning a new language or finding appropriate and affordable housing. In the newcomer groups, they used the word to indicate that the immigration “system” appeared overwhelmed. Newcomers often used overwhelmed and backlogged interchangeably. For a few participants, the word was also used to describe a concern or fear that Canada’s positive reputation could only increase the demand to immigrate to Canada or that their local area could be overwhelmed with the number of immigrants arriving. Concern over impact on their local area was mostly heard in London and Winnipeg.
* Slow: Mostly used in the newcomer sessions, this refers to the length of time between the first contact in their home country and time of arrival in Canada. Some also referred to their efforts in bringing close family to Canada through family reunification.
* Integration: Participants mostly expressed concerns about how they believe our communities can effectively integrate newcomers. These concerns were viewed more as a shared responsibility between the host population and newcomers. Most comments tended to be at the micro level. Comments were more about their local community, community services, neighbourhoods, and the local job market. References to more macro-level policy were seldom mentioned, outside of Canada’s capacity to help newcomers learn either of our official languages after arrival. Participants did not associate the word integration as a way of suggesting that newcomers had to “conform” to a single model of what it means to be Canadian or that they had to “leave behind” their own way of life. Comments tended to be more focused on “soft landing” and making sure that local communities provided newcomers with the support needed to more easily and quickly find their way.
* Backlogged: Used mostly in the newcomer sessions as a synonym of overwhelmed. One interesting fact is that newcomers believe the “backlog” is due to bureaucratic red tape or processes and not to the fact that Canada has set limits in the number of immigrants it may welcome, compared to the number of applicants.

**Perceived Benefits of Immigration**

Once participants had expressed which words they had chosen and why, the moderator followed up with a fairly broad values-based question about the overarching purpose of immigration for a country like Canada. Overall, participants remained very positive and believed that immigration was altogether a net positive for Canada. On a broader level, they feel that immigration is a cornerstone of the country’s narrative: “Except for First Nations, aren’t we all more or less recent immigrants?”; “My grand-parents were German and Irish, my family is immigrant”; “This country was built on successive waves of immigration.” “It’s part of who we are”; “on est comme ça, souvenez-vous des boats people vietnamien qui ont été acceuillis les bras ouverts aux quatre coins du Québec”; “le Canada est reconnu dans le monde comme une terre d’acceuil depuis toujours je crois. ”

Participants also strongly believed that Canadians have a distinct approach to diversity and a unique sense of openness to difference. For most this was part of their sense of pride. Several times, participants compared Canada to the United-States to express how Canada was “better” when it comes to being welcoming and respecting differences. As participants put it:

“Canada is like a salad while the USA is melting pot which means it is a soup.  In Canada each part of the salad is separate, with its own distinct flavour. That is our secret ingredient”

“No one expects me to get a giant maple leaf tattoo.”

“I can be a proud Canadians and my own background too”

Beyond all of these comments regarding what they believed was part of the Canadian DNA, the perceived economic benefits of immigration were invariably mentioned first when getting into the benefits of immigration. Spontaneously, participants would mention job market needs, economic growth, job creation and “broadening the tax base” as the main economic benefits of immigration. This conversation was usually followed by the population growth and/or ageing population and/or insufficient birth rate as a second-tier economic argument.

“We need immigration to ensure that our population will continue to grow. If not our economy will suffer.”

In Montreal, the argument was almost spelled out in the opposite direction: We need population growth to spark the economy. In all groups, these two perceived benefits garnered general approval. However, this discussion on the economic benefits of immigration, was often followed up with comments over what participants believed were rather tough economic times locally, either from a job creation perspective (Winnipeg, London and Montreal) or a housing perspective (Vancouver and Toronto). In Winnipeg, several comments pointed to how “times are tough” for lower income or unemployed for people in their community and some were concerned that newcomers could increase competition for housing or entry level jobs.

This third level of benefits mentioned by participants were tied to economic benefits as well, but more directed towards innovation and the sense of entrepreneurship brought by immigration. “New Canadians bring with them new ideas, new ways of seeing things or doing things.” Finally, a fourth level of benefits brought by participants could be referred to as cultural enrichment that is how immigration makes a direct contribution to our national culture. From food, to music, to the arts, participants also believed immigration was an important source of new trends and ideas being introduced into the mainstream.

“I am a Quebecer, but now with a plus because of all the cultures here.”

“Immigration makes us more multicultural and contributes to our culture.”

2.3 Challenges and Issues Related to Immigration

After discussing the purpose and perceived benefits of immigration, the moderator directed the discussion towards issues, challenges, or concerns participants may have regarding immigration.

Overall, it seemed that many participants were more forthcoming about the benefits of immigration and often, the participants had to be prompted on challenges and issues related to immigration.

While many of the challenges mentioned in the general public groups were also echoed in the newcomer groups, the latter audience also had specific concerns they wished to voice.

**“Host Population” Perspectives**

When asked to mention any concerns or issues they may have regarding immigration in Canada, many of the concerns tended to be stated as questions rather than outright critiques or rejection of the previous discussion on purpose or benefits of immigration. Even when discussing challenges, the conversations tended to remain positive.

The issue of foreign credential recognition was often mentioned by the participants. This concern went directly to the issues of immigrant selection, settlement and outcomes. Several general population participants wondered why Canada is still grappling with underemployment of skilled immigrants who have been selected by Canada to come here.

General public groups often used the word “integration” when voicing their concerns. However, they used the word to describe a number of realities. For several, the word simply meant Canada’s capacity to ensure that the outcomes of integration remain positive and that we are effective when it comes to offering a promising future for newcomers.

Many of the issues surrounding “integration” tended to focus on the initial settlement period and were tied to linguistic and economic integration. “Are we good at helping newcomers to learn English or French? Are there classes or groups available?” “It must be tough finding that first job. How can we help them make those first steps?” “It must be overwhelming arriving here and having to find work, a home, schools for the kids, learn the language, and the lay of the land?” For the most part, comments regarding the economic integration were rather empathetic and focused on the availability of local and community resources to lend a helping hand.

Closely tied to this early settlement period issue, some participants focused their attention on their local economy, which they usually described as rather stagnant. Many questioned if their local economy was strong enough to provide enough “quality” employment opportunities and, “(…) not only the jobs that we do not want to do anymore.” Several came back to this concern when the issue of immigration levels were later raised. London, Vancouver and Winnipeg participants were particularly sensitive on this issue.

Many participants also focused on our capacity to properly support and adequately educate newcomers on our laws, values and “general way of doing things”, allowing newcomers to smoothly “fit in”. Participants were not placing the burden on the newcomer but rather on the local community. Many comments were related to the host population having an individual responsibility or civic duty to be part that socialization process. “Newcomers should know and be taught that we collectively stand for some basic principles, the Rule of Law, that women and men are equal, for example? These values need to be conveyed.” “Newcomers may not be aware of certain ways people behave socially here. You would not want a recent immigrant to get in trouble because they did not know.” “Que savent-ils de notre histoire? De nos règles de conduite de base par exemple?” Again, participants asked questions regarding the type or community organizations dedicated to this, as well as support organizations dedicated to the integration of immigration into the work force.

Overall, the discussion on immigration was sympathetic to the challenges that a newcomer faces when encountering a new way of life and the associated challenges. Very few participants associated integration with “Canadian values” or the creation of cultural enclaves or an attempt to recreate their life or society in Canada.

Participants also asked questions, and admitted knowing little about our immigration system and its capacity to adequately select, welcome, and setup proper follow ups upon arrival to ensure successful settlement. While Montreal participants were rather curious about selection processes and criteria to ensure the success of our immigration policies, several Toronto, Vancouver and London participants focused more on following up and measuring the actual outcomes of immigration (how long does it take to find a first job? How long does it take to find a job in the area they were trained in abroad? How early can they afford an adequate house? Buy a first house? Success of their children in school?) “Is anyone following up at regular intervals to if our systems are working or to learn from lessons learned? “.

Within the Indigenous groups, the comments of some participants suggested that this group is one population within Canada which may have been directly impacted by current immigration levels and in particular, the recent influx of Syrian refugees.  While members of this community expressed open and welcoming attitudes toward newcomers, their own experience is shaped by newcomer knowledge of the Indigenous culture as well as the need to compete with newcomers for entry level jobs or housing.

Additionally, their concern was about the quality of services provided to their community and if service standards, compared to those offered to newcomers are “fair”. While some participants within these groups, said that the government has made a new commitment to address outstanding social and economic issues, they said that they need reassurance that they will be treated fairly.

**Newcomer Perspectives**

The concerns regarding immigration from the newcomer perspective tended to focus on economic and job market issues. Another set of concerns was tied to the actual process of immigration, but these were raised early at the time of completing the initial in-group exercise.

Several questioned the effectiveness of certain local settlement organisations dedicated to job market integration and some did not trust that these organisations were actually useful for them individually. Some also found that finding a first job was particularly difficult given their lack of Canadian experience on their resume. Many talked about the “chicken and egg” problem of “(…) you can’t apply if you don’t have Canadian experience but you can’t get Canadian experience if you can’t apply anywhere?”

But the most frequently discussed issue regarding integration from a newcomer perspective remains foreign credential recognition in Canada. In all newcomer groups, this remained the number one challenge. A high number of comments were about “how tough it was to start over again”, “I have to bus tables while I was a well-regarded mechanical engineer back home”, “my husband found it tough psychologically to remain underemployed since he followed me here to Canada.” Many believed this should be the top priority of the different levels of government when it comes to successful immigration.

Both groups spoke to the need to distribute newcomers outside the major centres so that the benefits of immigration may be shared in other parts of Canada as well as the responsibility to settle and integrate newcomers.

Although some participants cited vetting as an important aspect of the immigration process, this was within the context of ensuring the immigrant was a “right fit” for Canada in terms of potential economic immigration and successful settlement outcomes. Very few participants in either group cited security as an immigration issue or concern.

2.4 Immigration Levels and Immigration Categories

Following the discussion on purpose, benefits and issues regarding immigration, participants were then asked to focus on yearly immigration levels and how they would prioritize certain immigration categories.

**Immigration Levels and Categories**

In order to introduce the topic of immigration levels, the moderator first asked participants to guess the current number of immigrants coming to Canada each year. The purpose was then to introduce the current figure and discuss the potential of increasing these levels in the future. Few participants were able to provide a fairly accurate figure for the current levels and mentioned they had “heard or read” something to that effect. Most participants admitted they had no clue as to what the answer might be and guessed a fairly low figure (between 10,000 and 100,000 for the most part). Participants had no clear point of reference or logic in providing their guess.

“I have no idea how many immigrants come here each year.”

When the moderator provided the figure of 285,000 (taking into account the 25,000 Syrian refugees not part of the original yearly level), participants seemed surprised. However, reactions to the figure were rarely negative and seldom did participants spontaneously express that this was “too much”. When asked directly about this figure, most participants tried to run some “quick math” in their head trying to relate it to “how many does this mean for my city or community?” Most comments tended to be fairly positive and some were even “impressed” at the number. In each location, some participants invariably asked the question of capacity, but in economic terms: “Do we actually have enough jobs for people?”; “how does this relate to the number of deaths in the country, is it just population replacement?”; “Can we effectively welcome that many people here in Vancouver?

When the suggestion was made that this figure could grow in the near future, participants who had been more vocal on the economic necessity of immigration, tended to be more supportive. Conversely, those who showed greater concerns over Canada’s capacity to effectively integrate newcomers into our economy, tended to express doubts about increasing immigration levels in the future without ensuring that Canada had a sound plan to ensure that Canada could successfully integrate the additional newcomers into the job market.

In most groups, participants first looked a bit puzzled discussing an increase in levels as making sense of such large figures is not easy. As such, they tended to use local examples to make sense of the more theoretical/national level. Most believed that if they better understood ‘why’ an increase is desired, they would likely support it. Many participants tended to formulate their comments on levels as questions or “if” statements, such as: “If you tell me that this is what our job market needs, then (…)”; “If this is good for our housing market and this creates jobs in the long term, then fine”; “If we can make sure that immigrants decide to live in all regions of Canada, not just the major cities, then it’s great.” Several comments regarding the increase in levels, also tied this objective with the necessity to ‘better’ disperse immigration across all regions (outside Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal). Participants believed that this would have a positive impact on the economy of these regions that now welcome only a few newcomers and would also mean new opportunities for newcomers. It should be noted that this suggestion was not framed as an “obligation” or “mandatory” requirement prior to arrival but seen as a “wish”. Another suggestion was that newcomers could be incentivized to settle outside the top ten cities in the country.

In all locations, participants tended to trust that those making decisions regarding the appropriate levels of immigration would know what the right level should be or if immigration levels should be increased (would have the right social and economic indicators). Participants readily admitted that their limited knowledge in the area meant that their “support” for increasing levels was in part due to the fact they feel positively about immigration itself and do not have arguments or counter-arguments on the issue of increase levels.

The increase in levels was stated in two ways by the moderator: “What if it reached 300,000 or 350,000?” Then the moderator re-formulated the objective by saying that the objective would be to establish that level at 1% of the population of Canada each year. This concept of immigration levels reaching 1% of the total population did not generate any significant ‘pushback’ from Canadians. In actual fact, using the 1% figure helped Canadians make sense of the number and, for many, made it more acceptable. Again participants in all locations are “open” to an increase in immigration levels but prefaced their comments with the need to know more about the rationale for any increase or the plan to economically integrate the additional newcomers.

Some participants said that they could support an increase in immigration until they heard about any negative impacts or failed outcomes such as an increase in unemployment, crime rates or racism. Additionally a few said that their support for current or proposed immigration levels could change should they find their access to social or health services hindered by the increase in newcomer services without a commensurate increase in resources.

“I don’t care until it affects me personally or I see an increase in crime or racism.”

“I don’t care until I start hearing stories about the negative impact on Canada, our communities or our access to services.”

On the issue of immigration categories, Canadians felt the country should adopt a balanced approach; and that an increase in one category of immigrants should not negatively impact other categories.

“Immigration can’t be all about business.”

Participants, particularly in the newcomer session, would prioritize economic immigrants. When looking at levels and categories, participants tended to believe Canada should strive to be very competitive in attracting talent (economic immigration), while maintaining an enviable reputation globally for its humanitarian efforts.

“Focus on bringing in the people that we need and those which can successfully integrated into the labour force.”

“Learn from our competitors (Australia and USA) about how they attract talent.”

Discussions on categories inevitably brought forth two additional considerations: the Canadian sense of fairness and Canada’s international obligations.

**Sense of fairness**

Some participants felt that other immigration categories such as family reunification had waited while Canada dealt with the Syrian refugee crisis and said that it was only fair that they should now be seen as an immigration priority.

“We have to be fair to other immigration categories.”

“First to start off I don’t think we should lower levels in any of the categories.”

It should be noted that immigrant groups in all cities would like to see a reduction in the backlog or an increase in levels in the family reunification category. The family reunification category also generated discussions about the needs of the family members already in the country, but also about the impact on other immigration categories. In two newcomer groups, women stated how support from family members through reunification would help them go back to the job market (childcare), this fact had a positive impact on newcomer perceptions of family reunification. However, most newcomers believe that an increase in economic immigrants should be sought after.

“I understand why we had to help the refugees but we have waited our turn to bring in our family. It’s our turn.”

**International obligations**

Some participants believed that Canada should maintain, if not increase, the number of refugees welcomed into Canada. They feel that this is “part of what Canada is about” and feel rather proud about this contribution. Although theses participants favoured maintaining Canada’s obligation towards refugees, they still believed that economic considerations should remain the focus of any discussions on planning future immigration needs for the country. “Economic immigrants have to remain important as they contribute to our economy.”

In all cities visited, participants believed that if an increase in economic immigrants, while not compromising on refugees or family reunification, meant an increase in total levels; they would then support that move. However, most stated that they need to better understand “why” this increase is needed and “how well” we are currently doing at integrating newcomers.

“Are there enough opportunities to let more in... even economic immigrants?”

“Immigration levels should be tied to the economy.”

“They need to tell us how well those already in Canada are doing so that we can see that the system is working.”

Support for Multi-Year planning was generally accepted as a logical approach although a few participants said that the decision-makers and the system has to be flexible enough to turn course should the economy change or another emergency such as the Syrian crisis emerge.

**Information Needs and Basis of Support for Increased Levels**

Invariably, the discussion of increased immigration levels naturally led the discussion towards participants’ information needs in this area. For them to understand the need for increased immigration, they expressed the need to better understand the issue. Participants also stated that in order to be more supportive of increased immigration, they first need to better understand what the actual figures mean and how the government follows-up and tracks immigration outcomes. Participants in Toronto and Montreal as well, wanted to clearly understand if the governments actually measure “where immigrants are after a few years, if they are satisfied with their new life and how successful Canada has been in successfully integrating newcomers.” As well, many believe that increased levels will need to be met with an increase in support services needed to insure successful settlement.

“I need to know… what’s the plan here? If we reach the 1%, what’s the positive impact on the economy? Taxes?”

“Do we have a plan to ensure that are schools, hospitals and local services are ready to cope with increased demand?” “How would this impact the city here?”

As well, many believed that efforts to increase current levels would require changes or improvements in a number of areas:

1) An increase in settlement levels in regions outside major urban centers, as previously noted;

2) An increase settlement services (i.e. language skills, local\community job market integration services) at the local level; and,

3) Better foreign credential recognition to facilitate successful economic integration. Many tended to associate better settlement services with increased success in attracting and maintaining newcomers outside of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

One of the issues related to integration, knowing if newcomers were given the tools, information and background on what participants believe our “shared values of Canadians”. When commenting on this comment, participants did not suggest or discuss elements tied to Canadian identity, patriotism or the need to newcomers to conform to a “Canadian way of doing things.” The ‘values’ we heard were related to gender equality, fairness, compassion, empathy, to be a good law abiding citizen, to be open to difference, or to remain tolerant. etc.

**Advice on Immigration**

At the end of the sessions, participants were asked to provide one piece of advice to government on immigration. Here is a list of suggestions and/or recommendations made by participants.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Selection/Mix/Flexibility** | |
| **General Population** | **Immigrants** |
| **Right Fit** | |
| Better planning of arrivals | Better assessment of labour market readiness of immigrants before they come to Canada |
| Assess the ability to successfully integrate | Make a better selection of candidates for immigration |
| Spread immigrants out across Canada | The most important thing is the selection of candidates |
| **Right Balance** | |
|  | A balance between refugees and economic immigrants (taking into account the costs and benefits of each) |
|  | Use sound assessment to determine immigration needs |
| **Flexibility** | |
| Be flexible with regard to immigration levels/categories and commitments. | Flexibility |
| **Specific Immigration Category** | |
|  | Do more to facilitate family reunification |
| **Refugees** | |
| **Increase the levels of refugees** | We can’t save everyone. |
| **Maintain humanitarian efforts** |  |
| **Specific Policy** | |
|  | Fix what is broken (Backlog and Express Entry) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Processing** | |
| **Immigration Rules** | |
| Clearer rules which are consistently applied in a way that everyone can understand and do not change year to year | Ensure that immigration policy is evenly and fairly applied to everyone |
| Do more to educate Canadians about the immigration process/rules |  |
| **Streamline/Speed-up Processing** | |
| The cost **of running a slow immigration system** | Fix the processing system capacity and speed |
| Improve the efficiency of the processing system | Shorten the time for the process - make it more effective |
|  | Streamline the immigration processes so that it is easier for the applicant and the agents who process the applications |
| **System Capacity** | |
| Build the processing capacity |  |
| More service centres/less web site/phone call centre reliant |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Settlement** | |
| **Learning to Live in Canada** | |
| Here is what you need to know about living in Canada (Responsibilities/how to live day to day/integration) | Teach them about us before they come here |
| You are safe here – the **problems from home can stay there** | Better information for immigrants to know their rights and duties before coming to Canada |
| This is a great new opportunity |  |
| **Settlement Services/Capacity** | |
| All levels of government must work together (federal - provincial - municipal) | Hire more people to help immigrants settle in Canada |
| Improve language training and promotion of better language skills | Assess where immigrants are now in their settlement and immigration so that the services and initiatives may be evaluated to see if they are working |
| Better support integration to be successful |  |
| **Settlement Services Accountability** | |
|  | Introduce stronger regulations to monitor the work of settlement agencies and service outcomes |
|  | Develop an ongoing feedback mechanism for immigrants to provide feedback on the quality of services provided by settlement agencies |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Employment/Credential Recognition** | |
| Job creation | Do more to deal with the foreign credential recognition problem |
| Deal with the failure to speed up recognition of foreign credentials and education | Recognize foreign credentials |
| Recognition of qualifications and skills | Better recognition of qualifications and skills |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Integration/Cultural Education** | |
| Help Canadians understand the cultures that are coming here | Education, education and education for Canadians, immigrants and indigenous peoples (About each other) |
| More education to overcome cultural barriers | Be open minded |
| Become part of Canada’s open and accepting society | Be welcoming but firm about what it means to live in Canada |
| Improve community building/outreach/bridge building efforts | You can have your culture here, but learn about Canada |
| Promote integration but not assimilation | Establish a social contract |
| Tighter control of immigrants values |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Indigenous Peoples** |
| Teach them that they must respect us.  We are the First Peoples and we should be acknowledged as such |
| Build affordable housing for us (Indigenous Peoples) |
| Improve and raise awareness of the Indigenous culture among newcomers and refugees |
| Fighting stereotypes |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | |
| Follow-up on the outcomes of immigrants who have come to Canada | You must ensure that they contribute |
| Follow-ups with integration and settlement outcomes at one, three and five years | Assess outcomes throughout immigration journey |
| Gauge and measure the outcomes | Set time limits on key milestones – language acquisition, labour market integration and learning about Canada |
| Integration and successful settlement |  |
| Are they succeeding? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Canada First** | |
| Look to home first | Take care of Canada first |
|  | Home first |
|  | Invest in the people already here |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Citizenship** | |
|  | Make citizenship acquisition easier (undo some of the barriers which were introduced in recent years) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Immigration Fraud/Deportation** | |
| Deport the bad apples quicker | Ensure adequate screening to stop criminal from coming here |
|  | Monitor and catch investor fraud. |

# Appendix A – Recruitment Guide

**IRCC - GEN POP FOCUS GROUP SCREENER**

Perceptions of Canadians on the state of current events

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Leger, a marketing research company. We are organizing a research project on behalf of the Government of Canada. This research project is about some current events that are relevant to the federal government.

We are preparing to hold a few research sessions with people like yourself. In these sessions, individuals are asked to sit down with several others and give their opinions and share their ideas. We are organizing several of these group discussions, and would be interested in possibly having you participate.

Your participation is voluntary. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and the research is entirely confidential. The names of participants will not be provided to the government or any third party. May I continue?

Yes 1

No 2 **Thank and terminate**

I need to ask you a few questions to see if you fit the profile of the type of people we are looking for in this research.

**Note to recruiter: When terminating a call with someone, say: *Thank you for your cooperation. We already have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours, so we are unable to invite you to participate.***

1) **Record gender:**

Male 1

Female 2

**(Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, London: Equal number of men and women in groups)**

**(Winnipeg: Group 1 female only; Group 2 male only)**

2) Do you, or does anyone in your household, work in any of the following areas? **(Read list)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **No** | **Yes** |
| An organization that provides services to immigrants or refugees  A marketing research firm | ( ) | ( ) |
| A magazine or newspaper | ( ) | ( ) |
| An advertising agency or graphic design firm | ( ) | ( ) |
| A political party | ( ) | ( ) |
| A radio or television station | ( ) | ( ) |
| A public relations company | ( ) | ( ) |
| Federal or provincial government (Crown Corporations count as NO) | ( ) | ( ) |

**If ‘yes’ to any, thank and terminate.**

3) Sometimes participants are asked to watch videos, read a document and/or write out their answers to a questionnaire during the discussion.  Is there any reason why you could not participate?

Yes                1             THANK & TERMINATE

No                 2

TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT OFFERS ANY REASON SUCH AS SIGHT OR HEARING PROBLEM, A WRITTEN OR VERBAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, A CONCERN WITH NOT BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.

**Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, London**

4) Were you born in Canada or were you born elsewhere?

Canadian-born **Qualifies for group 1 in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and London**

Born elsewhere **Qualifies for group 2 in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and London**

**Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and London**

4a) In what year did you come to Canada?

Record year: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[AIM TO HAVE 2 – 3 NEWCOMERS – HAVE COME TO CANADA SINCE 2010]

[AIM TO HAVE REMAINDER AS CAME TO CANADA BETWEEN 2011 AND 2006]

EARLIER THAN 2006 – THANK AND TERMINATE

**Winnipeg**

4) Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)? First Nations includes Status and Non-Status Indians.

  Yes

  No Thank and terminate

**Winnipeg**

4a) Which group?

First Nations (North American Indian)

Metis

Inuk (Inuit)

5) We would like to talk to people in different age groups. Into which **one** of the following groups should I place you? **(Read List)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Under 18 | 1 | **Thank and terminate** |
| 18-21 | 2 |  |
| 22-34 | 3 | **Recruit cross-section** |
| 35-54 | 4 |
| 55 or over | 5 |

Q6b)    What was your household’s income for 2015? Was it.. **(Do not read list – Recruit good cross-section of income levels. In Winnipeg, try to have: 50% less than $40K; 50% more than $40K in each group)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| $19,999 or less | 1 |
| Between $20,001 and $39,999 | 2 |
| Between $40,000 and $59,999 | 3 |
| Between $60,00 and $79,999 | 4 |
| Between $80,00 and $99,999 | 5 |
| $100,000 and above | 6 |

8) What is the highest level of education you have attained? **(Do not read list – Recruit good cross-section of education levels)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Some high school or less | 1 |
| Completed high school | 2 |
| Post-secondary technical training | 3 |
| Some college/university | 4 |
| Completed college/university | 5 |
| Post-graduate studies | 6 |

9) As I mentioned to you earlier, we are organizing some discussion groups among people like yourself. Have you ever taken part in such discussion groups?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Go to Q.13** |

10) And when was the last time you attended a discussion group? **(do not read)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6 months ago or less | 1 | **Thank and terminate** |
| **OR** more than 6 months ago | 2 |  |

11) How many times did you attend a discussion group or an in-depth interview in the last five years? **(do not read)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Less than 5 times | 1 |  |
| **OR** 5 times or more | 2 | **Thank and terminate** |

12) What topics have you ever discussed?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(If related to immigration or refugees, thank and terminate)**

13) Thank you. We would like to invite you to participate in one of our group discussions. The discussion group will last 2 hours. Refreshments will be provided at the meeting, and you will be paid $XXX for your participation.

Would you be willing to participate in one of these sessions?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 | **Go to appropriate city and group type invitation** |
| No | 2 | **Thank and terminate** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **City** | **Locations** | **Language** | **Recruit** | **Participate** | **Dates** |
| Toronto | CV Toronto  2 Bloor St. West, 3rd Floor  Toronto, ON  M4W 3E2 | English | 24 | 16-20 | **July 11**  5:30PM  7:30PM |
| Winnipeg | Probe Research Inc.  Suite 850 – 125 Garry Street  Winnipeg, MB  R3C 3P2 | English | 24 | 16-20 | **July 13**  5:30PM  7:30PM |
| Montreal, QC | CV Mtl  507 PLACE D’ARMES, SUITE 600  H2Y 2W8" | French | 24 | 16-20 | **August 4**  5:30PM  7:30PM |
| Vancouver, BC | Smart Point Research  304-1140 Homer Street  Vancouver, BC  V6B 2X6 | English | 24 | 16-20 | **August 16**  5:30PM  7:30PM |
| London Ontario | Insight Inc.  546 Adelaide Street North London, ON N6B 3J5 there is ample street parking available on Princess Ave, two doors away from our building! | English | 24 | 16-20 | **August 18**  5:30PM  7:30PM |
| **Total** |  | **-** | **120** | **80-100** | **-** |

“Contact” Section

Someone from our office will be calling you back to confirm these arrangements. Could I please have your phone number where we can reach you during the evening and during the day?

**Name:**

**Evening phone: Work phone:**

**Thank you very much!**

**Recruited by:**

**Confirmed by:**

As we are only inviting a small number of people to take part, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to participate, please call so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at \_\_\_\_ at our office. Please ask for \_\_\_\_.

To ensure that the focus groups run smoothly, we remind you:

* To turn off your cellular phones – to avoid disruptions during the group;
* To arrive 15 minutes earlier – to have sufficient time to park/sign in;
* To bring reading glasses, if necessary to be able to go over the test material;
* To bring a photo ID to collect your incentive;
* That the session will be recorded for analysis purposes only.

**Group specifications:**

**Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto and London**

* Group 1: Canadian born.
* Group 2: Born elsewhere.
* Good mix of income for both groups
* Good mix of age (18 and above), gender and education for all groups;

**Winnipeg**

* First Nations (4 – 5
* Metis – 2 – 3
* Inuit – 2, if possible
* GR1 = FEMALE
* GR2 = MALE
* Good mix of age in all groups

# Appendix B – Discussion Guide

Sections 2 hours

Introduction 10 minutes

Word exercise in immigration 20 minutes

Purpose of immigration 15 minutes

Impact on Canada: benefits/challenges 20 minutes

Canada’s immigration levels/priorities 20 minutes

New/emerging challenges 20 minutes

Conclusion: A successful immigration system 15 minutes

**Total 120** **minutes**

**INTRODUCTION (10 Minutes)**

* Introduce moderator and welcome participants to the focus group.
  + As we indicated during the recruiting process, we are conducting focus group discussions on behalf of the **Government of Canada**.
  + The focus of tonight’s discussion will be **Government priorities**. But before we discuss these ads, I’d like to brief you on how a focus group works, for those of you who haven’t attended one before.
  + The discussion will last approximately **2 hours**. Feel free to excuse yourself during the session if necessary.
* Explanation re:
  + **Audio-taping** – The session is being audio-taped for analysis purposes, in case we need to double-check the proceedings against our notes. These audio-tapes remain in our possession and will not be released to anyone without written consent from all participants.
  + **One-way mirror** – There are **observers** representing the government who will be watching the discussion from behind the glass.
  + It is also important for you to know that your responses today will in no way affect your dealings with the Government of Canada.
  + **Confidentiality** – Please note that anything you say during these groups will be held in the strictest confidence. We do not attribute comments to specific people. Our report summarizes the findings from the groups but does not mention anyone by name. The report can be accessed through the **Library of Parliament or Archives Canada**.
* Describe how a discussion group functions:
  + Discussion groups are designed to stimulate an open and honest discussion. **My role as a moderator** is to guide the discussion and encourage everyone to participate. Another function of the moderator is to ensure that the discussion stays on topic and on time.
  + **Your role** is to answer questions and voice your opinions. We are looking for minority as well as majority opinion in a focus group, so don't hold back if you have a comment even if you feel your opinion may be different from others in the group. There may or may not be others who share your point of view. Everyone's opinion is important and should be respected.
  + I would also like to stress that there are **no wrong answers**. We are simply looking for your **opinions and attitudes**. This is not a test of your knowledge. We did not expect you to do anything in preparation for this group.

Please note that the moderator is **not an employee of the Government of Canada** and may not be able to answer some of your questions about the program we will be discussing. If important questions do come up over the course of the group, we will try to get answers for you before you leave.

* (**Moderator introduces herself/himself**). Participants should introduce themselves, using their first names only.
  + What are your main hobbies or pastimes?

**(PLEASE NOTE THAT WE USE PROBES RATHER THAN STRUCTURED QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE DISCUSSION)**

**EXERCICES 1- WORDS WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED AS POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE**

**WARM UP: WORD EXERCISE – IMMIGRATION (20 minutes)**

I have an exercise I would like to do with you now. I am going to hand you a sheet with some words that might be used to describe the **relationship between our nation and immigration**. Please choose **three words**.

AFTER PARTICIPANTS HAVE CIRCLED WORDS GO AROUND THE TABLE AND WRITE ON A FLIP CHART

Go around the table. Any why did you choose your words? DISCUSS

**HAND OUT WORD LIST [Words will not be labelled as positive or negative]**

**POSTIIVE**

1. Compassionate
2. Competitive
3. Diversity
4. Economic growth
5. Enrichment
6. Fair
7. Flexible
8. Humanitarian
9. Innovative
10. Integration
11. Labour
12. Pride
13. Revitalizing
14. Welcoming
15. World leader

**NEGATIVE**

1. Backlogged
2. Complicated
3. Lax
4. Overwhelmed
5. Failure
6. Slow
7. Unreliable
8. Unsustainable
9. Poor
10. Mismanaged
11. Over-generous
12. Narrow

Why did you choose these words? Can you explain a bit further?

**PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION (15 minutes)**

Purpose of immigration: Thinking about Canada, what is the main purpose of immigration? (15 minutes)

PROBE:

* Economic/Humanitarian/National renewal/International obligations

**IMPACT ON CANADA: BENEFITS/CHALLENGES- (20 minutes)**

Next I would like to discuss the impact that immigration has on Canada that is the benefits and the challenges.

**EXERCICE 2- BENEFITS**

On the piece of paper in front of you, please take a couple of minutes and write down all of the benefits you see associated with immigration.

MODERATOR GOES TO FLIP CHART: Ok what are the benefits you identified? How about the others, how do you feel about these?

PROBE

* Economic Prosperity
  + Address aging population/Fill labour market needs/New ideas/Innovation/job creation
* Society/Cultural impact
  + Diverse society/Inspiration/On Canadian traditions
* Settlement /Integration
  + Welcoming newcomers/Supporting integration/sense of belonging
  + Competition for resources/Community level/national level
* Canada’s reputation
  + Humanitarian obligations
  + Global competitiveness/as a country of choice for immigration

**UPCOMING CHALLENGES/ISSUES (20 minutes)**

**EXERCICE 3- CHALLENGES**

On the flip side of this same piece of paper, please take a couple of minutes and write down all of the concerns or issues you feel are associated with immigration.

MODERATOR GOES TO FLIP CHART: Ok what are the benefits you identified? How about the others, how do you feel about these?

What are the upcoming issues or challenge that Canada will face as a country of immigration. (15 minutes)

* + Global competition: International students, workers and visitors (UK/USA/Australia). What makes Canada better?
  + Agility to adjust to changing and emerging global migration needs/economic needs (In times of crisis?)
  + For immigrants/For Canada: Settlement/integration
  + Generating a spirit of welcome rather than fear. (Other countries)

**CANADA’S IMMIGRATION LEVELS/PRIORITIES (20 minutes)**

The Government uses an annual levels plan to determine which choices and priorities the Government should make when it comes to immigration. It is more than just the number of immigrants coming to Canada.

* Number of immigrants – Too many/About right/more
  + Why/Why not
  + Planning – Over several years?
* Immigration categories/priorities [Family, humanitarian/economic]
  + Difference between a refugee and a migrant

**CONCLUSION: A SUCCESSFUL IMMIGRATION SYSTEM FOR CANADA (15 minutes)**

**FINAL EXERCISE (WRITE DOWN ON PAPER TOO).**

Imagine a tourist to Canada walking around town, noticing the diversity of our Canadian population. If that tourist stopped you on the street to ask you a question about immigration to Canada, what would be your answer? (suggest that we usually answer something to showcase our country)

* Thinking about all of the things that we have talked about here and the importance of immigration to Canada, what is the most important thing for the Government of Canada to focus on so that is able to manage a successful immigration system?

# Appendix C – Word Association Exercise

Backlogged Fair Narrow

Humanitarian Unsustainable Revitalizing

Diversity Poor

World leader Flexible

Failure Unreliable Pride

Compassionate Competitive

Labour Innovative Overwhelmed

Enrichment Welcoming Complicated

Over-generous Integration Mismanaged

Lax Slow Economic growth

1. The reader should keep in mind that these exercise results remain qualitative in nature and should not be interpreted as having statistical value and should not be inferred to a broader population. We are using them to illustrate how the qualitative conversations evolved. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)