



Leveraging Immigrant Talent in the Labour Force

Insight from Canadian Business Leaders

Webinar: May 17, 2022

Shamira Madhany (0:02)

Welcome to today's webinar, everyone. Thank you for joining us. We have an hour together for what I believe will be a robust discussion. Today's webinar is presented in partnership with the Coalition for a Better Future, the Conference Board of Canada, and World Education Services West. I'm Shamira Madhany, the managing director of Canada and Deputy Executive Director at WES, and I will be moderating the session today. I'm delighted to be joined by an impressive panel who I'll introduce in a moment.

But before we get too far into today's agenda, I want to acknowledge on whose lands I live and work from, we use and participate in a land acknowledgement, to recognize the enduring presence and resilience of indigenous peoples and Turtle Island. It is a reminder that we're all accountable to these relationships. I'm speaking to you from Toronto, the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Wendat peoples that is now home to many diverse First Nations Inuit and Metis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, we have people joining us from right across Canada. So, I encourage you to visit native-land.ca to understand and connect with Indigenous peoples where you live and work, and you will be able to see this link in your resource section of where you are right now.

As I moderate today's panel, I invite you to be part of the discussion by actively using the chat and the Q and A features. There will be lots of time to address your questions, so please add them to the Q and A at any point. As I understand it, as of this morning, we had almost 128 registrations from all sectors, which demonstrates the importance of this discussion.

When you registered for this session, I expect that many of you looked at the bio of our esteemed speakers. So, I will keep the introductions very short. So today we have the pleasure of having the co-chairs of the Coalition for a Better Future, the Honorable Anne McLennan and the Honorable Lisa Raitt. And I know how busy both of you have been as you've gone across the country to discuss the aspiration for Canada in the long term, to



focus on sustainable economic growth that is ambitious, transformative and inclusive, and we are thrilled that you've joined us, and we look forward to hearing about your respective perspectives. We're also joined by Andrew Chunilall, CEO of community foundations of Canada, which represents over 190 local community foundations and publishes a community driven data rich report called Vital science. Faisal Kazi, our last speaker is the president and CEO of Siemens Canada, who has worked in leadership positions globally in different key areas, such as IT infrastructure, energy, and is always positioning diversity and inclusion is a core foundation for Siemens success. So welcome to all of you.

So, I'll just spend a few minutes setting the context, and then move right into the Q and A session. Our focus today is at the intersection of three themes, economic sustainability, meaningful employment and leveraging skills of newcomers. We want to make sure that these highly educated and skilled immigrants can enter the labor market seamlessly. So, we want to go deeper to imagine imagining a more inclusive economy that enables growth for those that are new to the country for business and for local and national economy. This is a critical conversation, as we face significant challenge, shortages of almost 1 million vacancies across multiple industries and other jurisdictions like the UK, Germany and Australia are facing similar issues. So, there's a global war for talent. Census data released last month shows that Canada's working age population is getting older. More than 20% of the workers are approaching retirement age. The good news, though, is that more than half of the individuals who immigrated to Canada over the last five years are millennials, making it the fastest growing population in the country. However-here's always a however-a recent study conducted by Leger and commissioned by ICC suggests that the same young, young immigrants are facing a crisis of confidence. The survey shows that fully 30% of those interviewed could leave Canada in the next two years. So, today's conversation will focus on how we can ensure that those that who are coming to Canada are able to contribute to the fullest extent and ensure that our systems and institutions are enabling the inclusion of immigrants in our society.

So, I'll now jump right into hearing from our speakers. So firstly, Ann and Lisa, the coalition scorecard looks at a wide range of indicators to measure the country's future success, from investment in innovation to measuring economic resilience and to ensuring that living standards are uplifted for all citizens. Immigration is not called out, but yet, I've heard you discuss these issues faced by newcomers. So, my question is, how do we ensure that immigrants can play a role in achieving Canada's progress on economic, social and environmental indicators over the next decade. And a big part of this question is, how can we ensure that we have long term, systemic and systematic, systematic approaches for a prosperous Canada for all so over to you Anne and Lisa.



Anne McLellan (6:20)

Thank you very much, Shamira, and let me tell everyone, Lisa, you're there. I'm here. People can't see you, but say hello to everyone so they know you're there.

Lisa Raitt (6:32)

Hi everybody. I am here and and I couldn't get into the presenter link, but I am watching the webinar with everybody else right now, so I can't see your face, and I'll know whether or not you're holding up the scorecard when I ask you to.

Anne McLellan (6:44)

All right, well, and obviously Lisa, I will turn this over to you at some point around the conversation. If you look at Lisa's referenced our scorecard, first of all, I suppose I should back up and say the Coalition for a Better Future is made up of 130 member organizations, large and small, private sector for-profit, not-for-profit and charitable and many of those organizations speak directly, Shamira, to a number of the challenges that you addressed, both in your opening comments and in your questions to Lisa and myself. It is right that the scorecard itself, which I am now holding up Lisa does not directly have a metric. We have 21 metrics that speak to inclusive, sustainable economic growth. And that word inclusive is really important for the coalition in terms of economic growth. We obviously are focused on economic growth, but it has to be the right economic growth, and that means we cannot afford either in terms of our own self-interest and well-being, but morally, we cannot leave people behind. And we need to ensure that they have the support systems, be it in the private sector or from the public sector, to achieve and that is nowhere more true than with immigrants, with new Canadians who have chosen to come here to establish a better life for themselves and their children. We do not have immigration as a separate metric in our scorecard. I think one of the reasons being that immigration in this country is so embedded in the very DNA of this country. And I'm not suggesting we can take it for granted going forward, but I really do believe, unlike a lot of other countries, we may have partisan debates about a lot of things, but I think immigration is seen and Lisa, I'm going to let you speak to this as well.

Immigration as is and has been seen as an important societal good and necessity. And so, in the scorecard, we don't flag immigration as a metric, but immigration is embedded in a number of the metrics that we have. For example, participation in adult learning, share of women in senior management positions, share of youth not in education, employment or training, as we talk about the barriers for immigrant youth in this country to ensure that they have the supports and in environment, they need to either stay in school, be in school, get the training they need, the credentialization, right. So many immigrants come to this country and want to participate to their full capacity in the economy. But in fact, we continue for decades, we have had an issue around how we acknowledge credentials in a fair way to ensure that we're not leaving productive capacity, especially of new Canadians on the table. Others of our metrics, median income from wages, salaries and commissions, average



poverty gap, income parity across genders, races and people with disabilities. The word immigration doesn't appear in any of those metrics, but those metrics, if to understand the goals we want to achieve and the progress we need to make. We need to ensure that we're looking at the numbers of people coming to this country where they're coming, how they're supported, and how we ensure that they are able to contribute to Canadian society the full extent of their productive capacity. That is a big challenge for us and but we know when you look at our scorecard around where we want to be by 2030 that we will only get there as we continue to welcome immigrants to this country, we expedite the processes by which they get to come, we increase the supports and identify the supports they need to integrate quickly and get either into school, get into the workforce, find the housing they need, and and so forth. So, I from the coalition's point of view, even though the word immigration does not appear in the scorecard, it is embedded in one way or another in our overall success. And Lisa over to you, thanks.

Lisa Raitt (11:53)

Anne, building on that just briefly, I sure I want to thank you very much for the question, because it's caused me to think a little bit more, not just about what is in the actual scorecard, but the purpose of the scorecard. And one thing that Anne and I have heard across the country with the members of the organization is their concern about having enough talent for their companies, and that is one of the items that, of course, keeps many leaders up at night in terms of wanting to make sure that they actually have the people to fill the roles that they anticipate they're going to have as the economy grows. Now, obviously we all look to immigration as the means to which to fill all of these wonderful jobs that are going to be created. However, it is a competitive landscape. So, from my point of view, the scorecard, I think, it comes something that's actually an applied learning meaning that somebody around the world can pick up this scorecard and take a look at it, and take a look at where Canada is, and what we say we're doing, and the fact we're measuring these things, and the fact that we are seeking and striving to be that society, where it's inclusive, where we're sustainable, and that we are creating economic growth, and we want you to be part of that economic growth. So, the scorecard not only serves to measure ourselves, it also perhaps becomes, hopefully, a selling feature and a calling card for Canada, writ large, in terms of competing on the international stage for talent that's going to be needed to grow our economy.

Shamira Madhany (13:23)

Perfect. I love that, you know? I mean, although I asked both of you a direct question, what I have heard is really the whole concept of embedding it in all the indicators everything that you're doing. And Lisa, I love the way you basically put it out as a calling card, or basically saying to those who want to come to us and and other jurisdictions that, you know, we may not be perfect, but we have progressive economic policies. We're amazing, and we will continue to do the continuous improvement. And, you know, here it is, in terms of our



progress in a very transparent way. So that's great. And you know, I'm sure audience members will have further questions.

Andrew, I'll now go on to you. So, there's a clear income gap between Canadian born and newcomer professionals in the workplace, and this is basically at various sectors, and it takes a little while for people to even get to the same place as Canadian board. The gap is due to income inequity, lack of understanding of how international education and skills can be transferred to Canadian workplaces, and lack of access to career growth opportunities. And we know the publication Vital Signs is the most extensive publication, and it's an amazing public publication in terms of giving people a sense of where we're at and what we could do. So, Andrew, over the last two years, especially COVID, and then, as we're just starting to move into post COVID, can you tell us what trends you're seeing? You know what's engaging for Canada's newcomer population? Conversation in relation to income, wealth and employment, and just leveraging what Anne and Lisa have said, you know, what can we do to be more intentional to leverage newcomer skills?

Andrew Chunilall (15:12)

Thank you, Shamira, I appreciate that question. You know, go back to what Anne said, which is, we want new immigrants operating at the at the height of their productive capacity. And, you know, I think one of the things that we have to talk about is that, sure, immigration is situated as part of an economic policy, we need immigration to facilitate the labor force that we want to ensure that we're competitive globally, and immigration is good for all Canadians, we know and we understand that, but we have to take a look at what, what challenges immigrants are facing when they come to Canada. And we can talk about that and under the construct of belonging. And so, if you think about belonging as a construct, the moment that we're conceived, we're attached and bonded with somebody, and that is our mother, and then we have that very distinct connection to our moms. And so, belonging isn't a nice to have. It's actually a human need in the very same way that we need food, water and shelter. And even after we're born, we develop those bonds and connections with many things around us, and all of that manifests and fosters belonging. And those things can be language, they can be food, they can be culture. They can be our family of origin. There are many markers that facilitate belonging. And when immigrants leave their country and then they come to another country, like Canada, they are leaving behind all of those attachments and markers that help to facilitate their connection to something that is greater than themselves, and that can be their community, that can be their work, their profession, it can be the region that they live in.

And so, imagine that you show up on you show up in Canada, you land at the airport, and there are many things that will feel unfamiliar, that will create a level of discomfort, and you will not have that feeling of belonging. And so, at the underpinnings of economic growth, in facilitating what Anne said about that optimal capacity people need to feel attached to Canada. And Brene Brown, who's a famous author and has written a lot on this work, she



talks about the opposite of belonging, and often says that fitting in is the opposite of belonging, because that's what you do when you're without. When you're without those very important things that facilitate that, that sense of belonging. You want to strive to fit in. You want that connection. But oftentimes we do it the wrong way. We feel as though we need to be part of the dominant culture. And I think in Canada, you know, like these are the trends that we're seeing.

You asked for some numbers from Vital Signs. Well, in 2036, 58% of Canadians could have been born in Asia had it not been for immigration of a parent or a grandparent, 16% could have been born in Europe by the time we get to 2036 so here's the challenge for us, this country, this Confederation, came together, right? Sir John A Macdonald, Jacques Cartier, indigenous communities. That's our roots, our the way that our institutions run, the way that our government operates, the systems of laws and protocols and regulations. Regulations are situated in a English speaking, French speaking Canada predominantly, while at the same time, the demographic shift is fully underway. And so, we've got to find a way to hold on to the things that make us Canada and Canadian and unique, that make this country great and strong, but allow that to also evolve, so that other other people that are coming in from different parts of the world have a relationship to us. And this is the balance between belonging and fitting in that we have to navigate. If we get those pieces right, the data demonstrates that more connected Canadians that have belonging have better economic prosperity, better social cohesion, create jobs, create businesses, do more their for their communities and give back and then so the cycle prepared. And we have a better Canada in the long run. And so, and that's hard. Belonging is hard thing to measure. Right? When we talk about belonging, we talk about a sense of belonging, a sense of it. So, it's what we see, it's what we hear, it's what we taste, it's what we touch. That is what creates belonging. And so, we have to be super aware of what immigrants are sensing when they come to a country like Canada, and being able to intervene in a way that creates belonging such that they have the social aptitude and the emotional resiliency to really engage in our economy and operate at the height of that productive capacity that Anne talked about.

Shamira Madhany (20:47)

Great, Andrew. You know, even as I'm listening to you, we basically have the scorecard, and somebody has actually got a question, can you share? Share the scorecard, and it's on the Business Coalition website, but we will make sure that we we share it, because it's a very powerful scorecard. But Andrew, you know, in terms of what you have just said, you know the fact that if you have people who have connections and who feel that they belong, you know, better economic outcomes, better social cohesion, they give back. And that all becomes really important. I think that you can measure it, Andrew, because, in fact, the reason why people leave cities or even provinces is because they don't feel like as though they belong. So, if they don't belong, they're there for a short time, they leave. And it costs the province, it costs the community, it costs the employer more because, in fact, they have to start again. So, you know, it's a very important concept that you have put on the table. So,



we'll, we'll explore that further. And again, audience members, I hope that if you have questions you want to add to that, that will be amazing.

So, we're doing a final approach. We talk about systems, I've talked about, you know, people, and now we'll talk about, you know, a real, live example. So, Faisal question for you. So, Siemens Canada is well known to for being an inclusive organization globally and in Canada, and you you know yourself, and Siemens has been very intentional about efforts to diversify its workforce and support the inclusion of staff in the workforce. So, what was the impetus for the strategy? And then I basically have, you know, another two parts. Can you share some of the specifics of the infrastructure, communication, channels, resources and programming that you have leveraged to build this particular workforce. And what I think that many of the employers in our audience will want to hear is that you see a shift in the bottom line as a result of creating an inclusive workforce where people felt great about coming to work and felt like as though they could contribute to the company and to society. So, so three questions, basically, one building.

Faisal Kazi (23:07)

Thank you, Shamira, thank you for firstly, having me here. It's a It's honor to be part of this, this panel. Yes, our vision is to become to be the most diverse and inclusive employer in Canada. And this is a journey, because it doesn't happen overnight. We believe that we do have the DNA for it, because my company, Siemens, for whom who don't know Siemens, operates in 190 countries. So, the big Siemens family is a very inclusive and a diverse family, and so we believe, I myself, have worked in many different countries and have seen the power of diverse teams coming together and co-creating things or innovating things. So that's that's our vision, that's where we want to go. And the reasons, the impetus, which you're asking me is, first, I think one thing is, which is the right thing to do, is to reflect in our organization the societies we operate in. So if Toronto has, for example, 55% a diverse population, we would like to see the same, same mix in our organization, but coming from the business angle, they have been multiple studies which have been undertaken which clearly demonstrate that diverse teams, which feel belonging, like Andrew mentioned, which which are included, perform much better than non-diverse team. So there is a real business case, business case around it.

So to your second part. So that's, that's the reason we are doing it. I think it's the right thing to do, and we want that people can, you know, bring out the complete potential what they have. And can only bring the potential, only when they feel included, only when they feel that they are supported, and they can be. They can they can be in the office place. You know, they don't need to leave their culture or the identity behind when they come into our office place. Once we can achieve that. We believe these employees are reaching their potential. So, on some of the channels and how we do this, I think one of the things which we have really taken advantage here in Canada is, is the government's immigration policy. I'm talking about pre-COVID, of course, there's been a stop on that, and things will change



again. And our global presence, so most of the diverse employees which we have at Siemens Canada are moving from another Siemens entity around the world, be it India, be it Philippines, be it Mexico, coming into Canada. And this has worked really well in two ways. One that the Government of Canada had literally supported us with a two-week work permit process, two- to four-week work permit process. And then we are getting talent which already know Siemens, which feel who have belonging with Siemens, and then coming into our organization, so we embrace them as members of the of the Siemens family. So, this is really, really work well.

What else has worked well is, from the communication on the systems, is we have tried, you know, the to address, how can we make the hiring process? How can we take out the biases, and I would also say the unconscious biases we all have. We all have unconscious biases. When we are hiring, you look at a certain name, you look at somebody from a certain school, and you will put this person in a certain box. And so, we have, we are part, proud to be part of the CLR organization, which is the organization coalition of innovation, innovative leaders against racism. We have looked we have created, together and also within Siemens, but also together with this organization, a playbook which we will be launching very soon, for the Government of Canada, for other organizations, to use, which basically removes the biases. So, use AI technology, so it removes, so once you get an application, you don't see the name, you see the qualifications, because the moment you see the name, there is unconscious bias coming in, or you see the nationality, etc. So, we are working on that. So, there is, I think, help us a lot. The other thing you know, as a as a country, we we cannot afford, we just simply cannot afford to leave talents from minority groups unutilized. So, we have made a deliberate effort to go to organizations like Onyx, which is a black talent. And we have, we are working with them to get this talent in. And I can tell you, the quality of this talent is extremely good, and we have hired quite a few people there.

Of course, they have been also issues. And I think it's a panel where we need to discuss openly. And the two things which I would like to raise, where we have seen, you know, where things could improve, where the government could help us is one around around the housing, the housing prices are very high, combined with a high tax rate. When people come here, you know, you tell them a salary, numb figure, they get impressed, but then they realize, oh, maybe 50% is going in housing. And they're not used to that. So, it's a 10. It hinders talent people. You know, I've seen people at the last minute calling off a decision, and there we, as a company, said, okay, we we will support so we have a opportunity to pay our employees an housing allowance. You say you get a housing allowance. Don't worry about the housing and we manage your package that way. But now what happens is a CRA comes on, on top of us, of the employee, and say, oh, you got a housing allowance. That's a that's a taxable benefit, so you were going to put a tax on it. So, a \$3,000 or \$4,000 home literally becomes like seven or \$8,000 and then suddenly the business case for the business doesn't work, because that's a lot. If I have to pay \$7,000 on pure housing, that's no salary,



include no benefit. So that's one thing, you know, I would like to preach that if government would CRA would not tax housing allowance, especially when we want to get down in, and the second one has been our health care system. It's not everywhere, but we have had many cases where our our talent has come in, and they do not have access to to a GP because the GPs are full and it's already in the waiting list. And that's where, where you know, people say, you know, I cannot do this. My kid, if I don't have a doctor, I have a problem. So, so these are two things that, you know, the positives and things where we could, we could improve, which have worked well. And, and, of course, we we try to do events, etc, like, you know, we are celebrating all the festivals of the different religions. We are doing a reconciliation with the First Nations. So, we have special seminars, et cetera, training. I'm going to go through a one-day training on indigenous cultures myself. It's in my management team. So, we want you know, so we are doing all those, all those good things.

Now to your very interesting question, how do you see that in the bottom line? So, it's not an easy question, and it's very difficult to link diversity to the bottom line. But what I can tell you is that these people, and there's saying which we have it builds on what Andrew said early on, belonging transforms. And if we are in departments and the divisions we have where we have created this this belonging. And especially now, I really like Andrew's comments that when people come here, they leave behind a lot of other relationships behind them. So they are craving for belonging. And then if we as employer can give that belonging, the feeling of a Siemens family, to these, these employees, I tell you, they go the extra mile, and we, as a large company like us, who operates in all sectors, with large, mega projects and difficult projects, we all come into challenging situations. World is not perfect. And I have seen time and again that our immigrant employees have stepped up, have gone, gone above and beyond. What, what, you know, what is, what was expected, and you know, and I think we always been to now, just look at COVID, you know, Siemens, Canada, we have a lot of factories. We kept on producing. We didn't shut for a single day during the whole COVID. Because we are central service provider, and our employees is a very diverse group. They understand it that's they came in, they did the right things, and so and I do believe, and I cannot quantify it now for you, but I do believe that that made, made a difference. And and I think the last point, which I observe from the cultural point of view, would like to share, if that's interesting. So, if you are, you know, living a comfortable life in your second or third generation, in a comfortable zone, you have, you know, your priorities a bit start changing. You know you you have a different view to the world. And we have seen immigrants coming back, coming into a country, you know, excited, rejuvenated, trying to start a new life. They have a different work ethic, which is, like, absolutely amazing. So, they, you know, they want to prove they want to do things. And I think this work ethic is contagious for all of us. We've been in a comfortable position and doing well over generations to see that it's a contagious thing and to, you know, motivate others as well. So, so, I think it's a it's a business case, and I definitely believe that it has positively impacted our our bottom line.



Shamira Madhany (33:16)

Thank you so much, Faisal. You know, practical example of how one company is doing many things in terms of trying to reduce bias and some practical approaches. And what you've also put on the table are some challenges where the company is trying to do more work, and there are some bureaucratic challenges. I do have some questions, and I'm going to start asking the questions in a way that's going to be slightly different from what I'm seeing here. So I'm coming back to you, Lisa, and the question here is really about innovation. And the way the question has been positioned is that we talk about innovation, but we also, at the same time ask for local experience or Canadian experience, and yet innovation is in your scorecard. So maybe, could you speak to, you know, the whole scorecard, innovation becomes an important component, and how we align, you know, new immigrants coming in and the whole concept of innovation. So it's a slightly different question than what was asked you, because I think the individual is saying to me, we need Canadian experience. And you know, that's not innovation.

Anne McLellan (34:30)

I did read the question, Shamira. So, one I would say the that, let me talk first, and about the local experience. I think that's that is a real systemic problem, and I don't even know what local experience means anymore, right? We live in a globalized world. Now, I think it probably does depend on what industry or what particular, whether it's retail or manufacturing or what have you, local experience might be important, but I think it was, I mean, let's be honest. I think it was used deliberately as a barrier in in certain situations, and an anti-competitive device, if you like. And I honestly believe that we have to get beyond that, because we live in a world where, at least for many industrial sectors, local experience is not that important. What is important is the imagination, the creativity, and actually probably that the the the perspective that comes from another culture, another country, whatever the case may be, and bringing that creativity to this country. And I just so that, and I think probably Lisa is somewhere there in the background, who wants to add to my comments. But let me say that we can no longer afford either intentional or unintentional--intentional would be discriminatory--but intentional or unintentional barriers to full participation. And one of those barriers, I think, often unintentional, but not always, was this notion that you need local experience or maybe other metrics that were put in place to not permit new Canadians to participate fully in the economy. We're going to meet our scorecard goals, and all of that has to be, I think, turned upside down, and people need to think a lot more broadly and creatively about what we need, the talents we need, to achieve our goals, both as a nation and as individuals and communities. Lisa over to you.

Lisa Raitt (37:04)

Thank you. And so, when I first I think, first of all, I would start off by saying that not all innovation is necessarily going to be good, not all of it's going to be positive. And I'll give you one example, and that's the innovation that has found its way into hiring in this country, of using artificial intelligence to scan resumes and to scan letters to weed weed out those who



aren't necessarily using the same kind of words that other people would be using. And what companies are looking for, there is a question, are they looking for talent, or are they looking for experience? And the two may not be the same. Talent may be something that doesn't necessarily have experience. So, the scorecard comes into play, because we're going to be measuring things like how we're doing across the board, in terms of salary levels, how we're doing with women, all the things that and and I talked about at the very top. And if those numbers aren't coming up or reflecting our true population, then we know that, in this case, the innovation of using AI to screen out certain candidates isn't really a good innovation, and that we should be thinking about another way of doing these things, or talking to companies or to organizations who utilize this kind of innovation to ensure that they know that they may have built in a bias there that is going to work against them to find great talent and to properly put to use the skills that people are bringing to our country. So excellent question on innovation. We're going to measure innovation. We think it's important, because it's important about how well we're doing as a country, and we need something to sell around the world. If we're phasing off fossil fuels, we need something else to sell around the world. And innovation and our expertise should be one of those things, but you have to be very careful about measuring and keeping track of the implications and the effects of the innovation, and that would be one of them that I would be a little concerned about where the talents and experience can not necessarily be measured in the way a person puts together their resume or they put together their cover letter. So, I hope that's helpful but very thoughtful question. Thank you for it.

Shamira Madhany (39:17)

Great, great question. And you know, a lot of room to be intentional and thinking about, you know, innovation versus local experience. Andrew, there is another question, so I'll start off with here, because, you know, Vital Signs is a data rich report. The question is, what kind of data and insights would help advance employer government collaboration, and, you know, I could expand it to employer government and not for profit, collaboration on immigration. What kind of knowledge would lead to more impactful partnerships? And so, Andrew, do you want to take that question and then you know, other panel members can obviously weigh in. So it's really data, data and insights, the school part. And then you, out the work that you've done. What else, and how can we develop a meaningful partnership?

Andrew Chunilall (40:06)

Yeah, well, I think Faisal already mentioned too in respect of how the Income Tax Act treats certain benefits or allowances that helps to facilitate the movement of people and bring strengthen our labor force here. And there's just the dynamics that are playing out in the world right now, which is inflation and Canada is becoming a very expensive place to live. So, I think that's where the corporate world and nonprofits and government need to collaborate. We need to find very specific ways to give immigrants the best opportunity at advancement. I'll add another, and that is builds on what we already talked about in the previous question, which is credentialization. And as Canadians, we value credentials and



we value experience and education, but we value it in a very Canadian way. We like our universities. We like how our doctors are trained, how our lawyers are trained, our accountants and how our trades are trained and developed and and we have very little appetite for foreign credentialization as carrying the same weight as Canadians, and I think a lot of that is comfort. And I think it goes back to goes back to belonging. I think all roads kind of go back to belonging, in my world. There's a certain comfort level we have when we get to work with and hire people that look like us, speak like us, have a name like ours. It just creates ease. It creates a low friction environment. And to what we talked about before, innovation rarely comes from low friction environments. You do need some level of discomfort. You do need to harness it and foster it in a positive way if you want innovation.

And I think one of the very first things that we have to do is look at credentialization, because our immigration system allows for highly credentialized people that come to this country, oftentimes with significant amounts of capital, but are faced with barriers because the credentials that they spent years working on in high caliber educational institutions in their home country are not given the same weight here. And I know that, you know, that the College of Physicians and Surgeons, I know that. You know, I belong to the, the Canadian Chartered Accountants Association. And there's the, there's many, many others that are starting to work with foreign entities, in foreign professional entities to to provide that transfer of labor and allow the credentials to transfer as well with the same weighting. So, I think if we can get government and private sector and public sector cooperation on that one very specific thing, I think we can open up the labor market and really allow people to operate at their capacity, because a lot of immigrants do come here, they do find opportunity, but they're undervalued and they're under-utilized. And we've all, we've all got the story of being in the back of a cab of somebody that who's a doctor in some other country and driving an Uber here in Canada. Those those stories are very common. We all travel. It's happened to all of us that cannot persist. We need to find ways such that people are doing the things that they were trained to do.

Shamira Madhany (43:54)

Yeah, this has been something that I think has been worked on for, for many, many years, and we are starting to make progress, and then we go backwards depending on the situation and the context. So, you know, a deeper conversation, Andrew and I hope that the scorecard can lift this. There are a couple of more questions. I'll go to the question from Nick Norani regarding the fact that she feels that three programs that help immigrant employment. And I'll just, you know, call this out, and maybe we'll get Faisal to start the response. So what he suggests is that government wage subsidies and that 87% of newcomers who get government wage subsidies actually become permanent in a company. And, you know, Faisal, you talked about, for example, a housing subsidy, and you've tried to offer that. And there are some issues. The second is a micro finance programs like Windmill.



So, Andrew, you talk about credentialing. One of the issues is cost, and it's very expensive to get recredential. So, you know, when you have a micro finance program like Windmill, it's a low interest rate. Then, in fact, it just happened to be in the board, and we discovered that for one of the occupations that I won't name here, the salary level goes up by five times, five times after they've received the loan and have gone through the process. So that's another way to help people move into and then mentorship. And mentorship becomes really important in terms of just helping people understand what it is to work in a Canadian context and really quickly assimilate. So, Faisal, I'm going to ask you this question. Siemens Canada runs a Work Integrated Learning program where we know that you reach out to post-secondary institutions and have graduates who actually come and work at Siemens for a salary, and then they become employees of the company. So could you talk to us about whether a model like this could work, for example, for immigrants. It's building what Andrew has just talked about, you know, being included in sort of society, in a company. And could work integrated learning, work for newcomers, so we could leverage their skills, and they can start making, you know, a salary as soon as they're finished.

Faisal Kazi (46:20)

Yeah, I think that's a really great point. And to your question, I think this can work, and maybe I explain how our work integrate learning works. So, we get the students in the third or the fourth year, they become Siemens employees. We pay them a salary, we help them with the tuition fees, and by the time they graduate, they are fully understand the business side, and they are working for us. And I think that is, that's a program which has worked well, we have found more than 200 almost 250 graduates. There very low retention rate, you know, as to the question asked, you know, people stay there and then they and they are performing really, really, really, really well. The other thing which it is also done is that the industry is moving faster than the curriculums in the university. So, this program also bridges this gap, because the curriculums don't change that fast. The technology is changing, so it gives them the hands on experience to be successful in the life. So, I personally feel, if there could be a program, and to be very clear, where a government would like kind of support, what integration of immigrants on a which is a business case, which is, which is, you know, very attractive for the businesses. I do believe people will will go for it. And I personally believe that the challenge which we all you know, which Andrew mentioned, which we hear in the Uber once you will give these immigrants the opportunity to prove themselves. I would, I'm a believer that large majority of those people or immigrants, will prove themselves to be really, really good in what they do, and they would be then hired and treated like other other employees. So, I think such a program, and I think the question also mentioned that the wage subsidies, 87% of the newcomers become permanent employees. I think there is something, if it's run in a structural manner, could, could, could, could work. Well, that is how I would see it.



Shamira Madhany (48:32)

Thank you. Faisal, the other question, Lisa and you guys, you could see it wouldn't the scorecard be more informative if it showed multiple countries and how we compare to them. So, for example, could we compare ourselves to Australia, to Brazil? So, you know, a very interesting question. And you know, would love to hear your thoughts around what

Anne McLellan (48:57)

Shamira, we will be doing that. Obviously, we want the 21 metrics speak to the progress or lack of progress that we will make as a nation between now and 2030 in relation to these metrics. But for example, one of the umbrella, there are two umbrella metrics, that I, Lisa and I haven't mentioned this morning, one is the Prosperity Index ranking. Where do we rank in that prosperity index, which has its own set of metrics. That is a direct comparison of Canada to other nations in the world. Um, but yes, I mean, we we see lots of charts in which we are falling behind, whether it's in relation to private sector investment, private and sector investment, specifically as it relates to R and D and other areas. And we absolutely want to know how we stand in relation to other countries, and especially countries to which we regularly compare ourselves and our direct competitors of ours in terms of providing goods and services to the world.

Shamira Madhany (50:18)

Right? Lisa, any comments from you?

Lisa Raitt (50:25)

Yeah, I would just add. I would just add to what Anne says, that for me, this score side is not only a measurement against our country, it's a measurement against herself. It's the fact that every year we're going to be taking a look to see how we've done from our baseline to our next year. So, it's self-complex, as well as comparing to other countries. And the importance is that we can always compare to other countries. So, statistics that we felt that what we're lacking is our own internal benchmarks and our own internal anchors.

Shamira Madhany (50:58)

We're about seven minutes away, and, you know, we have a few more questions here. I wonder at this point if I could ask panel members, do you want to just, very quickly, give me, like, one or two minutes in terms of, you know, final, last words that you would like to say to the audience? You have in the audience a lot of employers, settlement, agencies, you know, consultants, etc. So final few words, in terms of you know what we could do as a country, in terms of you know what's happening here, the scorecard is a transparent way to hold ourselves accountable. The whole sense of belonging is very important, because people stay, and they start contributing. We have a example, some statements around what organizations or employers can do. But if we could spend one or two minutes, and I will start with with Anne and Lisa, go to Andrew and then Faisal, some final things, because this is



just a start of the conversation. It truly is in terms of, you know what we have, just macro and micro. So, Anne, can we start with you?

Anne McLellan (52:06)

I guess I would say almost where I began, which is that I believe, and I think all our member organizations in the coalition believe, that immigration has helped build this country, it will sustain this country into the future, and we we can't sometimes, I think there's a smugness about us in terms of the fact that we're a favored nation for many people looking for a new life. We cannot afford to be smug. We know that we haven't done everything that we could do to ensure the supports and the timely integration of new Canadians. We do a good job, but we don't do a perfect job, and we need to do better. And I come back to the fact that we must do better, yes, for our own economic prosperity and our quality of life as a nation, but we have to do better for the people who come here, who choose to come to Canada, we need to ensure that we are providing them with the the things they need, the supports they need to quickly integrate to have the opportunities of whatever kind, so that they can fully use their productive capacity, not only in the workforce to grow the economy, but in their families and in their communities to help grow this nation. I think I will end there.

Lisa Raitt (52:06)

And I would add on, Shamira, that it's events like this, and I want to thank The Conference Board of Canada and yourself for having us today to talk about this important topic. It's events like this that actually inform Anne and I a little bit more on how to go back and talk to the coalition members about what we're learning and add on different aspects, because it is a collective of people with different points of view, but all striving in the same direction, or it's the same thing, which is measuring how we're doing, and ultimately have long term economic growth in this country. So, for me, listening to other people is always the important part of the beauty of this coalition, and you look forward to that today, and I want to thank you and thank the folks for questions.

Shamira Madhany (54:36)

Thank you. Andrew, 30 seconds in terms.

Andrew Chunilall (54:43)

Thank you. I think we need to find a way to honor who people are, and in this country, we've where we're coming to grips with our relationship with Indigenous people as an example and the residential school systems and that that that's the opposite of what we want to do. We really want to honor who people are and allow them to be who they are culturally, to facilitate belonging. One other quick point. I am the son of immigrants, and I watch my parents while I was growing up. I work at 60% of the ethic that they have and and I think that's a common story of children of immigrants. We saw our parents work really hard, and we work don't have to work as hard because of it. And I think that's a selling point for immigration, because, as Faisal said, there's a work ethic and there's a commitment to



being part of this country and to facilitating social and economic prosperity within it. And as an immigrant child, as a child of immigrants, I carry that too and facilitate that with my own children. So, I think that's a really positive attribute to give to past two generations.

Shamira Madhany (55:54)

Thank you, Andrew. Faisal, 30 seconds.

Faisal Kazi (55:57)

Yeah, so yes, I'll be quick. So, I think there's a talent war going on. We need immigration because we also losing talent to other countries. So, we should be aware of that. So, my only, let's say two words, would be that the immigration strategy needs to be beyond giving just work permits, but beyond that into integration. And basically, what Anne said we need the immigration policy needs to think beyond visas and work permits and PR cards. How do we integrate? That's the key, and that's where we need to focus.

Shamira Madhany (56:31)

Excellent. Thank you. So, this is a precursor to an immigration summit that's going to take place next week. We did this very deliberately, because it gives us a lot of insight and some food for thought. I'm going to first, you know, appreciate the panel members and the fact that you came and had this robust conversation, as I said. And now I will turn it over to Ian Reed, who basically is going to tell us about the upcoming summit. And so over to you, Ian,

Iain Reeve (57:01)

Thanks so much, Shamira. Thanks to Wes. Thanks for the to the Coalition for collaboration on the webinar, and, of course, to Andrew, Faisal, Anne, Lisa and to you, Shamira, for for facilitating. Indeed, we're a week away from the Canadian immigration Summit, over three days from the 24th to the 26th still time to register for that at conferenceboard.ca/events/immigration or just by Googling Canadian immigration Summit. Many similar conversations along the lines of immigrations impact on our economy, how newcomers can be better integrated into workplaces and advance their careers more successfully, along with a whole variety of other topics, including the balance between immigration and reconciliation, attracting immigrants to small and rural communities, and a great number of other topics. The agenda is there to be found. We're very excited about it, and really appreciate the chance to do a nice lead in here.

I'd also point to the fact that in the very near future, The Conference Board of Canada is going to be launching a brand-new research institute, the Center for Business Insights on immigration. This group is aiming to take the insights of businesses, of employers and organizations that represent them, to validate them through Conference Board research, and then to take those insights to bear to government and to other stakeholders that are interested in the economic integration of immigrants, how to attract talent and how to make sure that businesses are as welcoming and capable of advancing the careers of immigrant



talent as possible. So if that's of interest, please reach out to anyone within the immigration team. Myself, reeve@conferenceboard.ca, and just thank you so much again, to our audience. Great great questions, great engagements, and to everyone who is involved, thanks so much.

Shamira Madhany (58:43)

Thank you. Everybody. Have a good afternoon.

Anne McLellan (58:45)

Thank you. Bye.

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