

# ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN:

## COLLECTIVELY ADDRESSING BIASES IN HIRING PRACTICES



*“You bring in all these skilled workers to do survival work, it doesn’t make sense.”*

### KEY OBJECTIVE

To create equitable opportunities for immigrant women to participate fully in Canadian society.

### 3 THEMES EMERGED



Barriers to employment



HR Solutions

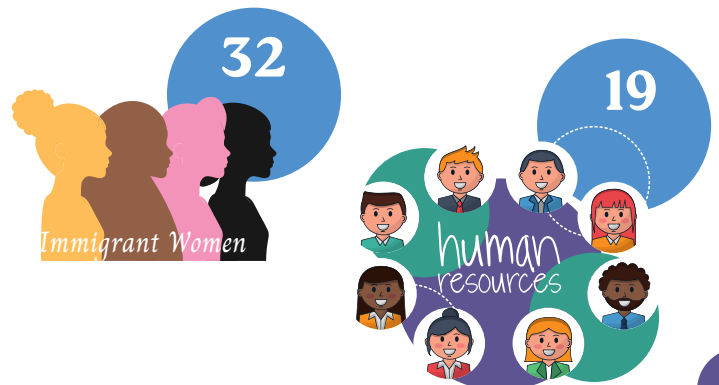


Recommendations

### BACKGROUND

Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW), in partnership with the University of Calgary and the Alberta Men’s Network (AMN), received funding from Women and Gender Equity Canada (WAGE) to carry out a pilot project to examine the anecdotal information received by ANIW on biases, racism, and discrimination in employment and hiring practices in Alberta.

The partnership, along with the guidance of the project advisory committee members, approached this problem through a community change model (Berkowitz, 1996; Lorenzetti et al., 2016), which engaged two action groups via focus group discussions





# FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## BARRIERS

### Timeline for a successful hire

|                    | IMMIGRANT WOMEN PERSPECTIVE   | EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE  |
|--------------------|---|---|
| BEFORE THE JOB AD  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gap on resume due to childcare</li> <li>No network, and haven't had to network before</li> <li>Finding and navigating job boards, LinkedIn, and Indeed</li> <li>Disqualified credentials - having to rectify/re-educate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most jobs are never posted</li> </ul>  |
| DURING JOB AD      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-writing resume to match Canadian expectations/idiom</li> <li>Strong and intimidating words deter applicants</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canadian-specific criteria/credentials</li> <li>Exclusionary language</li> <li>Strong male language</li> <li>Language criteria "fluent vs. effective"</li> <li>Unrelated job requirements</li> <li>Gaps in resume are viewed negatively</li> </ul> |
| RESUME PREPARATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canadian experience requirement</li> <li>The difference in resume formats</li> <li>Overeducated</li> <li>Survival conundrum</li> <li>Process impacts confidence and mental health</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foreign sounding names</li> <li>Lack of understanding on International positions</li> <li>Hiring manager bias</li> <li>Automated resume screening</li> </ul>   |
| THE INTERVIEW      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length and format of an interview</li> <li>Childcare</li> <li>Stress induced by cultural and language differences</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accent</li> <li>"Fit" with the rest of the team (sexist and racist)</li> <li>Cultural Differences in Communication</li> </ul>  |
| ON THE JOB         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work life balance (set work hours that are not flexible for child caring and family responsibilities)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual harassment</li> <li>Boys club culture</li> </ul>  |
| ADVANCEMENT        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lived experience and credentials from home country is not "trusted"</li> <li>No trainings provided</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See immigrant women as not "leadership material"</li> </ul>  |

Immigrant women and Human Resource professionals (HR) spoke about their experiences of finding jobs and hiring immigrant and internationally trained women. Immigrant women told their stories of arriving in Canada and beginning a job search and the long process of rebuilding a career, not all of whom are satisfied and successful.

*“the fact that you are an immigrant, they won't hire you, because they will think your English is not good enough no matter your education”*

The HR professionals spoke about the process of talent acquisition, the role of networks, and how bias and maintaining the status quo, which, in many of their perspectives, often works to exclude immigrant women.

**The result was the same – an uncoordinated system structurally excluded immigrant women from economic inclusion.**

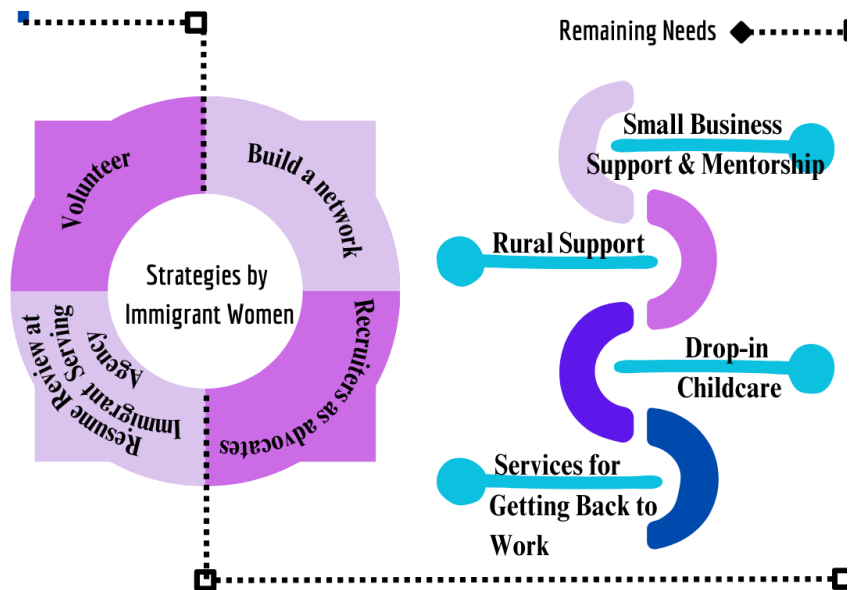


# FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

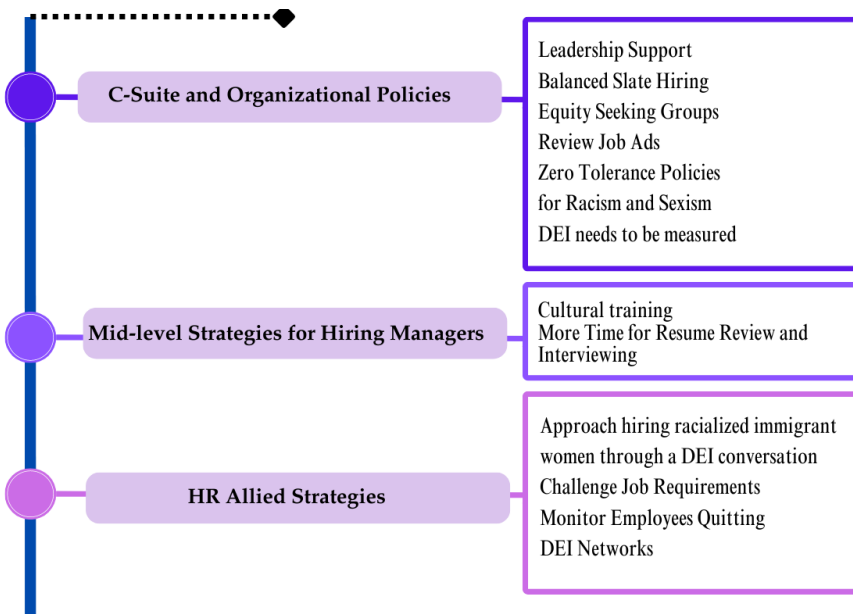
## SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Solutions and Needs from Immigrant Women

*“I was lucky enough to get a recruiter who was able to speak for me because my resume wasn’t able to speak for myself and I wasn’t able to speak for myself.”*



### Recommendations from HR allies



Throughout the focus groups, the HR professionals emphasized that they act in a consulting role to the hiring manager in Canada. As a result, they do not have sufficient authority in the hiring process to effect direct and significant change. The HR professional participants believed that multi-pronged, whole-organization change strategies are the most effective way to realize sustainable organizational change.

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

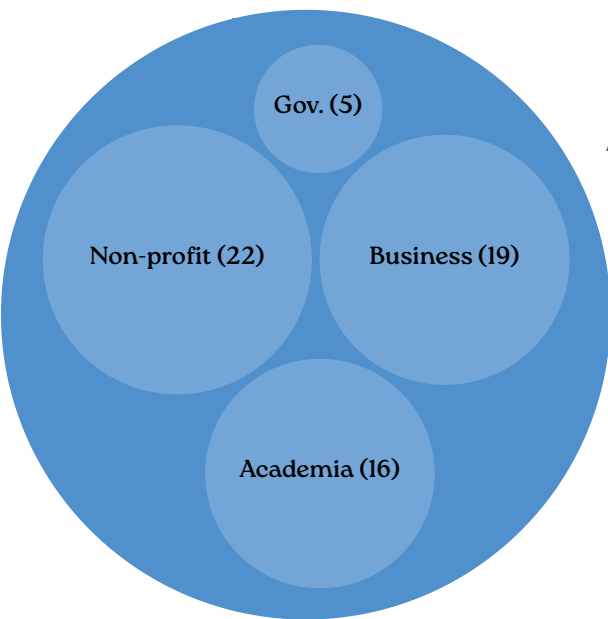
JUNE 3, 2023

## COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BIASED HIRING



The event created an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to come together to discuss and reimagine a hiring system that is working to remove the numerous barriers immigrant women face when seeking employment.

The objective of the event was to raise awareness of biases in hiring practices and how they impact immigrant women.



**62**  
ATTENDEES

## FOLLOW-UP SURVEY



The objective was to assess the changes that resulted from the conference after 2 months



**39**  
respondents



**3 themes emerged**



organizational changes



immigrant support



self-learning

*“in my personal life, having older family members who do not speak English, I have tried to be more patient and to try teach digital literacy to encourage learning and independence.”*