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**Transitioning Temporary Foreign Workers to Permanent Residents:  
A Case for Better Foreign Credential Recognition**

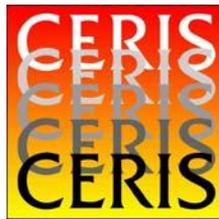
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## INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years, there have been substantial changes in Canada's immigration policies. One of the biggest changes has been the increased admission of temporary foreign workers (TFWs). This shift was made in response to the apparent inability of immigrants arriving through Canada's Federal Skilled Workers Program to quickly meet labour market needs (Picot and Hou 2009; Picot and Sweetman, 2005; Reitz, 2007). TFWs provide readily available labour for Canadian employers, and many TFWs find satisfactory jobs and working conditions, and gain access to pathways to permanent residence while residing in Canada. However, the 50,000+ TFWs (about 28% of all TFWs) employed in low-skill jobs (CIC, 2010)<sup>1</sup> not only put up with difficult working conditions, but face insurmountable barriers to permanent residence.

Many concerns have been raised by academics, labour groups, community organizations, and migrants regarding the precarious working conditions of TFWs, their exploitation by recruiters, violations of their human rights, their separation from families, employer abuse, and the lack of legal pathways available to them for permanent residence (Bauder, 2006; Sharma, 2006; Anderson, 2010; Ruhs, 2002; Hennebry, 2010; Alberta Federation of Labour, 2010; UFCW, 2011; CCR, 2012; Alboim and Maytree, 2009). These concerns are important but also difficult to address. Most recently, employers have contributed their perspectives on the critique of the TFW program, suggesting substantial reforms including a review of the TFW program for those employed at the low-skill level (TD Economics, 2012). Despite all the critiques of the TFW program, little attention has been given to examining the conditions of the TFWs who are designated as low-skilled workers. Little is known about whether there is a mismatch between their *actual* skills and those required by their jobs, and the impact of this potential mismatch on their pathways to permanent residency.

Unlike other economic immigration streams, the TFW program does not have eligibility criteria for official language proficiency, educational background, and occupational classification (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). This makes the recruitment of TFWs significantly easier for employers. The process for recruiting TFWs to Canada does not require an assessment of skills and qualifications beyond the requirements for the actual job. As a result, the kinds of jobs accepted by TFWs do not always reflect their educational backgrounds (Thomas, 2010).

The issue of a mismatch between the skills and qualifications TFWs may have and those required for the jobs for which they are hired becomes particularly important in the context of the enormous expansion in the recruitment and use of TFWs in Canada, and the creation of new pathways to permanent residence for some temporary migrants. Those arriving under Canada's permanent immigration programs are granted permanent residence as soon as they arrive in Canada, and do not have to go through any other application process to stay. TFWs, upon meeting certain criteria in Canada, including length of time in Canada, language skills and work experience, may be eligible to apply within Canada to stay as permanent residents either through the federal Canadian Experience Class (CEC) or through a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Many of the TFWs in Canada are therefore potential candidates for permanent residence. However, their eligibility for permanent residence crucially depends on the kinds

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<sup>1</sup>Another 37% of TFWs are entering Canada under the skilled categories (NOC 0, A and B), with 35% showing unstated occupation levels (CIC, 2010)

of jobs they have held in Canada, rather than their *actual* skills and qualifications. Thus, their access to permanent residence is entirely contingent upon employers recruiting TFWs into jobs commensurate with their skills and education. This paper discusses this issue and recommends that appropriate data on the *actual* skills and qualifications of TFWs be gathered to ensure that TFWs with similar skills and qualifications are employed appropriately and have similar opportunities to reside permanently in Canada.

## IMMIGRATION CONTEXT

About 20% of Canada's population was born outside the country (Statistics Canada, 2007) and every year, approximately 280,000 new permanent residents<sup>2</sup> make Canada their home. Recent changes in Canada's immigration policy increasingly reflect short term labour needs, rather than the long term imperative of nation building. Between 2002 and 2010, the number of TFWs entering Canada increased by 64%, while the number of permanent residents increased by only 22%. In 2010, more than 182,000 TFWs entered Canada (CIC, 2010).

Canada's immigrants tend to be highly educated: 70% of all working-age immigrants (15 to 65 years of age) hold at least some post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2007). Among recent immigrants, 51% had a university degree, compared with 20% in the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2008). However, despite the high levels of education of recent immigrants to Canada, they have fared poorly in the labour market compared both to previous cohorts of immigrants and to the Canadian-born. In 2006, the national unemployment rate for immigrants who had been in Canada five years or less was more than double (*i.e.* 11.5%) the rate for the Canadian-born population (*i.e.* 4.9%) (Statistics Canada, 2007). Since 2006, Canadian-born individuals have had consistently lower unemployment rates than immigrants. Immigrants have also been hardest hit by the recent recession – unemployment rates for recent immigrants reached a high of 14.3% in July 2010 (TIEDI, July 2011). Furthermore, when highly educated immigrants did find jobs, approximately 60% were not able to find jobs in their intended occupations – resulting in underemployment and a skills-mismatch (Statistics Canada, 2004: 30).

Research has identified a number of barriers for immigrants in the labour market, including lack of Canadian work experience, poor recognition of foreign credentials or work experience, language barriers, and employment discrimination (Zietsma, 2007: 13). In light of these issues, a number of efforts have been made to mitigate the barriers they face. Some noteworthy initiatives, among others, have been bridge training programs, legislation on fair access to regulated professions, mentorship and internship programs, engaging employers in immigrant integration issues and immigrant loan programs. Significant attention and focus, especially within government, has been placed on better foreign credential recognition for immigrants (Owen & Lowe, 2008).

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<sup>2</sup> The terms immigrants and permanent residents are used interchangeably in this paper.

## EXPANSION OF THE TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

The expansion in the TFW programs must be situated within the context of other immigration policy shifts that have largely focused on attracting the “right immigrants” to Canada (Shakir, 2008). Economic immigrants have been the focus of many immigration policy changes in the last ten years, for example through more restrictions on the Federal Skilled Worker Program; growth of PNPs; the two-step processes for permanent residence from within Canada for some TFWs; and admission of international students through the CEC and PNPs. For the most part, the two-step process for permanent residence is set up for immigrants employed in high skill level jobs and largely excludes TFWs employed in low-skill jobs.

It is within the context of these policy changes that the enormous expansion in the TFW program in Canada is a particularly salient issue. While many TFWs are potential permanent immigrants, the expectation for TFWs in low-skill jobs is that they will come to Canada, fill a labour shortage for a specific period of time, then return to their country of origin.

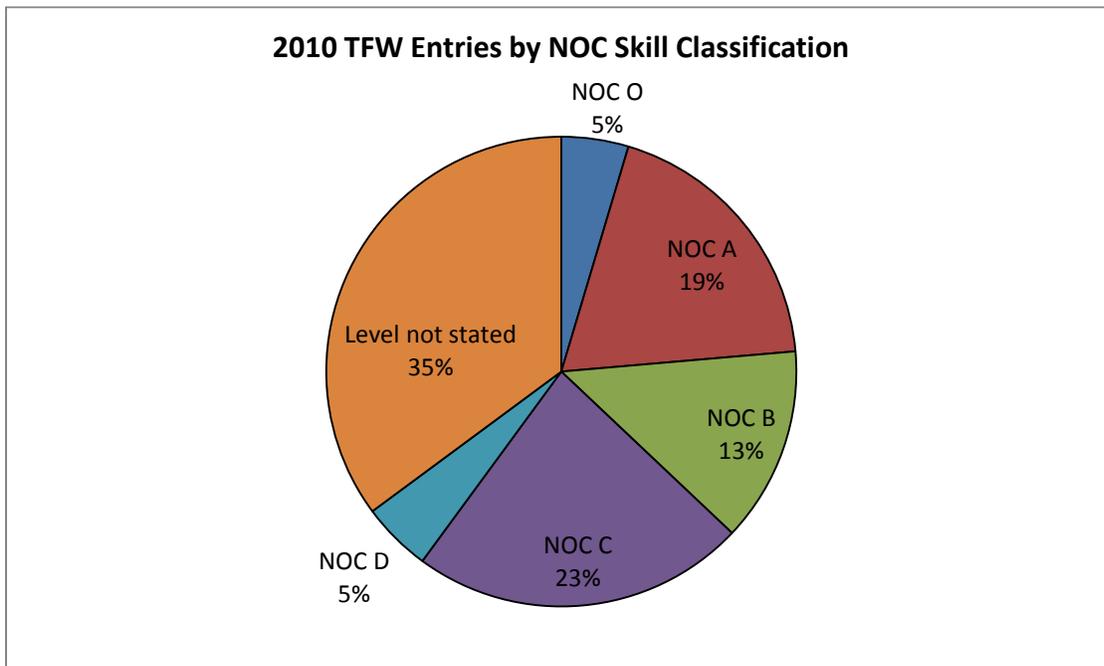
In 2006, the total number of TFWs entering Canada surpassed economic immigrant numbers. Much of the growth of the program was a result of workers filling low-skilled positions. The increase of TFWs working in low-skill positions is largely due to the launch of the *Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training* in 2002. This allows employers to recruit TFWs for positions requiring only a high school diploma or some on-the-job training (e.g. hotel cleaning, food services, care giving and meat packing). HRSDC classifies positions by skill level using Canada’s *National Occupation Classification [NOC]*<sup>3</sup> system, with low-skill positions classified as NOC C and D. By 2009, almost 34% of the Labour Market Opinions (LMOs) issued in Canada as part of hiring TFWs were for low-skill occupations. Of the top 10 occupations where an LMO was issued for hiring TFWs in 2009, 72% of those were at the low-skill level (HRSDC, 2010b).

From 2002 to 2008, TFWs employed in NOC D occupations saw the biggest growth, from only 1% (1,105) of all TFWs in 2002 to almost 9% (16,875) in 2008 (CIC, 2009) – a 16 fold increase. The number of TFWs entering NOC C positions in Canada also grew rapidly, from 28,020 to 49,573 (56%). However, for TFWs employed in all high-skill occupations (NOC O, A and B) growth during the same period was only 15.5% from 63,084 to 72,916 (CIC, 2009).

In 2010, 50,673 (28%) TFWs entered Canada to work in NOC C and D level jobs, 67,549 (37%) worked in high-skill occupations (NOC O, A and B) and a further 64,046 (35%) did not state the level at which they worked (CIC, 2010) (see graph below). The final category, level not stated, is an important one, referring to about one in five TFWs and growing annually. According to the Alberta Federation of Labour (2009), the level not stated category includes family members of TFWs “of which a large proportion are working in low-skill occupations” (AFL, 2009 as cited by Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010: 6). Taking this into account, Nakache and Kinoshita (2010) suggest that between 40 percent and 55 percent of TFWs who did not state their level of employment are those who are actually employed in low-skill occupations.

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<sup>3</sup> HRSDC’s NOC system organizes the world of work in a standardized online format. It provides descriptive information about occupations by classification (based on skill) in the Canadian labour market.



CIC, Facts and Figures 2010

## **ENTERING AS A TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER**

In order to get a work permit from CIC to enter Canada as a TFW, employers must get a positive LMO from HRSDC and provide the TFW with a job offer. All TFWs entering Canada must have an approved job offer and a work permit from CIC. However, not all TFWs require an LMO to obtain a work permit.<sup>4</sup> LMOs for NOC C and D occupations are valid for up to two years and a new LMO and work permit can be obtained within Canada for another two years.

For an employer to obtain an LMO to hire TFWs, HRSDC looks at the demand side of recruiting. This includes:

- the occupation that the foreign worker will be employed in
- the wages and working conditions offered
- the employer's advertisement and recruitment efforts
- the labour market benefits related to the entry of the foreign worker
- the consultations, if any, with the appropriate union
- whether the entry of the foreign worker is likely to affect the settlement of a labour dispute (HRSDC, 2010a).

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<sup>4</sup> Exceptions to LMO requirements are mainly for those under the General Agreement on Trade in Services and the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Recruitment firms and employers generally screen potential TFWs based on skills and qualifications required for the job. As long as the applicants meet the criteria specified for the job, there is no systematic assessment of their actual qualifications and skills. Some potential TFWs may themselves understate their skill and qualification levels in order to get a foothold in Canada. Lack of opportunities within their own countries, repressive governments, high levels of crime, poverty, discrimination based on gender, religion and ethnicity, and few immigration options are among the many complex reasons individuals might under represent their education and skills to come to Canada as a TFW.

## TFW SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS MISMATCH

Non-permanent residents working full time in Canada, the vast majority of whom are TFWs,<sup>5</sup> are more likely to have a university degree than permanent residents working full time (Thomas, 2010). It is therefore quite likely that there is a mismatch between the skill level at which TFWs are employed and their actual qualifications. This is of particular concern for those working in low-skill positions.

A study of non-permanent resident workers using the 2006 Census in Canada identified large discrepancies in the educational level required for low-skilled jobs, compared with the actual qualifications of non-permanent resident workers. In 2006, 85% of non-permanent resident housekeepers and 55% of cleaners had completed post-secondary training (Thomas, 2010). This is strikingly high, even when compared to recent immigrants whose job-skill mismatch is significant. Indeed, in 2001 25% of immigrant men and 38% of immigrant women with university education were employed in low-skilled jobs, as compared to only 12% of Canadian-born men and 13% of Canadian-born women (Galarneau & Morissette, 2004).

### Male non-permanent resident workers, 2006

| NOC SKILL LEVEL | Occupation (NOC2006)                                  | High School or less | Trade Certificate | College/University Diploma No Degree | University Degree | % of Total non-permanent workers |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| A               | Post-secondary teaching and research assistants       | 1.9                 | 0.0               | 1.1                                  | 97.1              | 6.8%                             |
| C               | General farm workers                                  | 86.7                | 5.4               | 6.4                                  | 1.4               | 3.0%                             |
| A               | University professors                                 | 0.3                 | 0.0               | 0.2                                  | 99.5              | 2.3%                             |
| A               | Computer programmers and interactive media developers | 9.6                 | 2.2               | 15.5                                 | 72.8              | 2.2%                             |
| C               | Truck drivers   | 54.3                | 15.8              | 22.2                                 | 7.7               | 2.2%                             |
| C               | Nursery and greenhouse workers                        | 89.3                | 2.4               | 3.6                                  | 4.7               | 2.1%                             |

<sup>5</sup> Other non-permanent workers may include students, refugee claimants and persons without legal status. Non-permanent resident workers are identified in the Census as those Canadian residents who were born abroad, who have never been landed or granted permanent resident status and are not Canadian citizens. See "What you should know about this study" in Foreign nationals working temporarily in Canada (Thomas, 2010)

|   |  |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| C | Retail salespersons and sales clerks         | 42.0 | 7.8  | 24.9 | 25.4 | 1.9% |
| B | Cooks  | 51.6 | 13.8 | 22.6 | 12.1 | 1.8% |
| A | Ministers of religion                        | 6.7  | 2.1  | 19.6 | 71.6 | 1.7% |
| C | Material handlers                            | 47.9 | 11.3 | 28.1 | 12.7 | 1.6% |
| D | Construction trades helpers and labourers    | 57.7 | 9.4  | 16.8 | 16.0 | 1.6% |
| A | Information systems analysts and consultants | 2.8  | 6.6  | 17.8 | 72.9 | 1.5% |

Source: Data Request, Statistics Canada 2011

According to Statistics Canada, of the top ten occupations for non-permanent resident men (excluding those occupied in agriculture, who come predominantly through the long-standing Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP))<sup>6</sup>, 31% are employed at the NOC C & D levels as truck drivers, retail salespersons and sales clerks, material handlers and construction trades helpers and labourers. Of these men, almost 39% have post-secondary credentials. For those employed in retail and sales, over 50% have post-secondary credentials (Data request, Statistics Canada, 2011).

For female non-permanent resident workers, of the top ten occupations (excluding those employed under the Live-In Caregiver Program [LCP])<sup>7</sup>, 54% are employed at the NOC C & D levels as light duty cleaners, retail salespersons and sales clerks, food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related occupations, nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates, general office clerks and cashiers. Of these women, 28% have post-secondary credentials; with 78.5% of general office clerks and about 50% of cleaners, cashiers and sales clerks holding post-secondary credentials (Data request, Statistics Canada, 2011).

#### Female non-permanent resident workers, 2006

| NOC SKILL LEVEL | Occupation (NOC2006)                      | High School or less | Trade Certificate | College/Univ Diploma No Degree | University Degree | % of Total non-permanent workers |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| C               | Babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers | 17.3                | 4.1               | 36.2                           | 42.5              | 21.8%                            |
| A               | Post-secondary teaching and research      | 2.7                 | 0.2               | 1.0                            | 96.1              | 5.4%                             |

<sup>6</sup> Categorized as "Nursery and greenhouse workers" and "General farm workers" and comprising of approximately 5% of non-permanent resident workers. Those participating in the SAWP are excluded from this analysis as they are predominantly low-skilled workers (recruited as such) through bilateral agreements.

<sup>7</sup> Categorized as "Babysitters, nannies and parents' helpers" and "Visiting homemakers, housekeepers and related occupations" and comprising 26% of all non-permanent resident workers, with 40% holding post-secondary credentials. They are excluded from this analysis, not because the issue of credential recognition is not pertinent, but because the LCP offers provision that makes it possible for live-in caregivers to apply for permanent residency after having completed two years of authorized full-time employment within three years of their entry into Canada.

|   |  |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|
|   | assistants   |      |      |      |      |      |
| C | Visiting homemakers, housekeepers and related occupations        | 15.3 | 6.3  | 36.0 | 42.4 | 4.2% |
| D | Light duty cleaners  | 42.1 | 9.7  | 28.7 | 19.5 | 3.2% |
| C | Retail salespersons and sales clerks                             | 43.2 | 4.9  | 22.7 | 29.2 | 2.8% |
| B | Early childhood educators and assistants                         | 22.4 | 8.2  | 39.7 | 29.7 | 2.0% |
| A | Registered nurses  | 3.0  | 1.4  | 39.4 | 56.2 | 1.8% |
| D | Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related occupations | 56.1 | 3.1  | 19.2 | 21.6 | 1.8% |
| C | Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates            | 15.2 | 15.4 | 34.0 | 35.4 | 1.6% |
| C | General office clerks  | 16.7 | 5.0  | 29.7 | 48.7 | 1.6% |
| D | Cashiers   | 41.8 | 8.2  | 30.4 | 19.6 | 1.5% |
| A | Financial auditors and accountants                               | 3.9  | 0.9  | 10.8 | 84.4 | 1.5% |

Source: Data request, Statistics Canada 2011

The data also reveals significant gender differences among TFWs. While about 66% of TFWs are male, their share of high-skill occupations is disproportionately large. In 2009, 81% (NOC O), nearly 75% (NOC A) and 84% (NOC B) TFW jobs were held by males. While there are fewer female TFWs, they more frequently work in NOC C and D jobs (CIC, 2009). Of the top 20 occupations by gender, 11 are categorized as NOC C and D for women, compared with only seven for men. For females, this amounts to 16% (42% with LCP) of jobs and for men NOC C and D jobs are only 8.4% (13% with SAWP)(Data Request, Statistics Canada, 2011).

If only those employed at NOC O, A and B levels are eligible for the CEC – and the majority of pathways to permanent residence – female TFWs employed outside the LCP have fewer opportunities to become permanent residents of Canada than their male counterparts.

## **OVER-QUALIFICATION: EMPLOYER PREFERENCE?**

The mismatch between qualifications and skills for non-permanent workers, many of whom are TFWs in Canada, is striking. What is more striking is that it is not always chance that leads skilled TFWs into Canadian jobs well below their skill level. Indeed, this raises the question as to whether there is an employer preference for English-speaking, post-secondary educated workers in any job – including jobs where such skills are formally considered unnecessary.

This dynamic was exemplified in Halifax at Metropolis Canada’s 2008 opening plenary, *Temporary Migration – A Solution to Labour Market Responsiveness?*, where a TFW from El Salvador spoke alongside her employer. Working as a housekeeper at the Prince George Hotel in Halifax (considered a NOC D level employment), the worker outlined the competitive recruitment process – having to take three exams and pass an interview –and gave thanks that she had studied hard and possessed a good resume. Her employer at the hotel raved about the success of the TFW program and the workers they

were able to recruit from “a whole list of potential applicants who are fully qualified,” pointing out that “sometimes [she] get[s] confused between skilled and unskilled!”

Some firms recruiting TFWs boast that they have specifically targeted workers from abroad who are highly educated and use the potential for permanent residence in Canada as a selling point. According to the Diamond Global Recruitment Group, when recruiting TFWs, pre-screening workers with the idea of future retention is important; “You should be looking for candidates who can qualify for a high-skill position down the road. For example; if you are screening for a food counter attendant, delve into your recruit’s history and extract evidence of skilled work (potentially as a cook, supervisor, etc.) and higher education” (Diamond Global Recruitment Group, 2010 website).

Another international staffing agency placing TFWs with mostly low-skill employment in Canada describes foreign workers as “Loyal and committed to their employers; exceed the qualifications required for their jobs; willing to establish long term labour relations which allow them to seek permanent residency visas to settle in Canada indefinitely; fulfill the employer's expectations” (WorkVantage, n.d.). However, what is not mentioned is that TFWs employed in NOC C and D jobs can only spend a total of four years in Canada under the program. Following this period, they are ineligible for participating in the TFWP for four years (CIC, 2011).

Reportedly, recruitment fairs are often held on college and university campuses for students and graduates to work as TFWs in Canada, including those in low-skill positions. Some recruitment agencies advertise education and skill requirements for potential candidates. For example, one Mexican agency specifies the following criteria: “Speak English fluently; are a skilled tradesperson or have hospitality experience; are intelligent, fun, and outgoing; have completed industry training in different work related subjects; have experience or are University educated” (Viva Recruitment International, 2008). Asking for English language fluency from people living in a country where English is neither used in the street, nor in publicly-funded schools, ensures that those who would qualify as TFWs would already possess a high level of education. As Thomas (2010) pointed out, of the non-permanent resident workers in Canada in 2006, 91.2% spoke English (Thomas, 2010), which is an important indicator of their educational background.

## **PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT RESIDENCE**

The federal government created the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) to provide a pathway for skilled migrants already in Canada to become permanent residents. In a backgrounder on the CEC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada states that “within this new stream, Canada is better able to attract and retain skilled and talented individuals who have already demonstrated their ability to successfully integrate into the Canadian labour market and society” (CIC, 2008 website). Launched in 2008, the CEC allows TFWs employed in skilled jobs and international students to apply for permanent residence from within Canada. To be eligible, TFWs must have at least two years of recent full-time NOC O, A or B work experience in Canada and a proficiency level of English or French based on their NOC level employment.

The CEC excludes TFWs who are employed in low-skill occupations. The only available option for TFWs in low-skill positions to gain permanent residence in Canada is to apply for a PNP, which in some provinces

enables the government to select TFWs to work in a variety of positions, including some low-skill ones. Manitoba has a large PNP which offers a pathway to permanent residence to TFWs employed in low-skill positions. In 2006, Manitoba's PNP accounted for nearly 50% (6,661) of all provincial nominees in Canada, with a substantial portion immigrating as low-skill workers. Of the top ten occupations for provincial nominees in Manitoba in 2006, 22.7% were employed in low-skill work (9% truck drivers, 7.7% accounting and related clerks and 6% cooks) (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2007).

Other than transitioning through PNPs in a few provinces, the chances for TFWs employed at the low-skill level to access permanent residence pathways are bleak. Upon completion of their work visas (a maximum of four years in Canada), TFWs are not eligible to re-enter Canada through the TFWP for four years. If they are offered a different job while living in Canada with a valid work permit, and the prospective employer is willing to process a new LMO through HRSDC, the TFW can apply for a new work permit. While awaiting approval for their new work permit, they cannot start their new job. If they successfully switch to a high-skill job for at least two years, they have access to the CEC. However, it is very difficult for a TFW to change employers in Canada, let alone shift from a low-skill to a high-skill job. If, after returning to their country of origin upon completion of the four-year period, TFWs could get new job offer and work permits at high-skill levels, they could potentially return as skilled TFWs. They may eventually accumulate enough high-skill work experience before the expiration of their work visa to apply through the CEC, but this is a long and uncertain pathway for most people.

TFWs who have returned to their country of origin may also apply for the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP). However, the limited occupations list<sup>8</sup> and the long processing times also make this a long and uncertain pathway. The work experience obtained in Canada as a TFW is usually not counted towards the FSWP application because it is not at the high-skill level. However, in some provinces in Canada, some PNPs allow applications from abroad for skilled employment and may take into account work experience in Canada.

## **HARNESSING POTENTIAL WITH BETTER POLICY DESIGN**

We know that Canada's immigrants are disproportionately under-employed, who "work far below their qualifications" (Bauder, 2003: 708). If TFWs who possessed high-skills but were underemployed were allowed to stay in Canada permanently, it is likely that they would eventually transition to more appropriate jobs. Evidence from a recent study in Manitoba, where many TFWs transition to permanent residence, shows that although many workers are overqualified for their initial jobs, there is an upward trajectory in their employment status over time (Carter, 2009: 31). For TFWs to be successful in obtaining jobs commensurate with their skills and qualifications in Canada, they require access to services and supports – for which they are currently largely ineligible in some provinces (Lowe, 2010) – and an investment in their full integration. All TFWs in Canada, regardless of their skill-level, have

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<sup>8</sup> In 2008, changes to the CICs Immigration and Refugee Protection Act were enacted to allow ministerial instructions to define the number and order of applications considered for processing through the Skilled Worker Program each year. As such, a list of occupations in demand was created and Skilled Immigrant professionals in these occupations are given priority in processing.

already started the settlement and integration process and would be well-positioned to continue this process with their families and the more stable conditions of permanent residence.

Skilled immigrants are instrumental in generating new knowledge and ideas that can be “used to innovate the production processes, raise productivity, and increase the range of products available for consumption” (Tani, 2008: 163). By not recognizing the skills and qualifications of all migrants, both permanent and temporary, regardless of where they work is, and will continue to be, a loss to Canada as well as to the individual migrants.

Canada has the tools necessary to assess the *actual* skill and qualification levels of TFWs, even before they enter Canada. As the former Minister of Immigration and Citizenship stated in a 2008 speech, “By helping immigrants find out how to get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly, especially before they enter Canada, we can improve their chances for success. That can only be good for Canada and for newcomers” (Finley, 2008). In order to effectively evaluate TFWs potential as permanent residents, appropriate data on their skills and qualifications should be gathered to ensure that they are given the opportunity to stay in Canada if they wish to. Further, this information should be considered in the various immigration streams – specifically the CEC. TFWs who are already in Canada, have high levels of education, and have already spent several years contributing to the Canadian economy and society, should not be discriminated against simply because they accepted low-skill level jobs in the first instance.

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## **CERIS - The Ontario Metropolis Centre**

CERIS - The Ontario Metropolis Centre is one of five Canadian Metropolis centres dedicated to ensuring that scientific expertise contributes to the improvement of migration and diversity policy.

CERIS - The Ontario Metropolis Centre is a collaboration of Ryerson University, York University, and the University of Toronto, as well as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, the United Way of Greater Toronto, and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto.

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## **The Metropolis Project**

Launched in 1996, the Metropolis Project strives to improve policies for managing migration and diversity by focusing scholarly attention on critical issues. All project initiatives involve policymakers, researchers, and members of non-governmental organizations.

Metropolis Project goals are to:

- Enhance academic research capacity;
- Focus academic research on critical policy issues and policy options;
- Develop ways to facilitate the use of research in decision-making.

The Canadian and international components of the Metropolis Project encourage and facilitate communication between interested stakeholders at the annual national and international conferences and at topical workshops, seminars, and roundtables organized by project members.

**For more information about the Metropolis Project**

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