

Report by Skeena Diversity Society

Date	March 21, 2018
Community	Terrace, BC
# of participants	27
# of Organizations	1

About the Participants:

Tell us a bit about your group (i.e. general social and demographic profile – i.e. seniors, youth, single mothers, people who are homeless etc....)

We focused on immigrants – particularly international students and temporary foreign workers and their stories. Participants also included other members of the community.

About the Findings:

Tell us about the types of insights and feedback received to the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you or others out of poverty?

Issues:

[Provide the results of your discussion of the issues – it should be transcribed from your flip chart notes]

- Many immigrants start their pathway to permanent residency as international students studying at a post-secondary in Canada
- Fees for international students are too high
- Not too many supports from post-secondary institutions – housing, orientation, finding part time jobs, navigating immigration system
- Lack of employers who will take on temporary foreign workers and If they do, BC labour laws are not followed – too many hours, demanding, workplace bullying – workers are completely dependent on employer
- Students and workers often use immigration agents who make lots of promises and charge too much money
- Immigrants often borrow money from family members and take many years to pay it off – which increases their struggle and financial situation in Canada
- If they access food bank and other social services they are often seen as ‘taking away from Canadians’
- Racism and distrust of temporary foreign workers is not unusual – they try to keep a low profile and find themselves living in isolation, suffer from depression which impacts their ability to work
- Too much stress
- Qualifies students who come to Canada often study in a field that is lower than their qualification from home country, afterwards they only get a job at hospitality industry – fast food, hotels, etc. working in low skill positions for another 4-5 years while they wait for their permanent residency – waste of human potential and skilled workers

Possible Solutions

[Provide the results of your discussion of possible solutions– it should be transcribed from your flip chart notes]

- Work more closely with local college: Northwest Community College (NWCC) to see how they can better support their students
- Partner with NWCC so Skeena Diversity Society can prepare in advance of new cohort of students arriving to find community support
- Share immigrant stories and increase awareness of immigrant struggles
- Advocate on behalf of international students and temporary workers – better system and better pathway to permanent residency
- Advocate for better use of human capital
- Develop a volunteer mentorship program
- Support for more outreach by Skeena Diversity to employers and their staff
- More anti racism training for employers and community

Solutions and Actions That Can Make a Difference

(a) Looking at the list of issues and solutions generated, what types of solutions did the individuals who participated in your meeting identify as most important to them ?[Each participant should received four (4) sticky dots to put on the solutions that from their perspective are most important]. Your summary report should include any of the solutions that received a dot from those that received the most dots to those receiving only one dot.

- Skeena Diversity will work more closely with NWCC – greater support for current and future students, sharing stories
- Support for more outreach by Skeena Diversity to employers and their staff
- More training for employers and community
- Share immigrant stories & matching immigrants with community members

(b)What emerged as the top 3 solutions or ideas based on the conversations and the individual priority setting?

1. Skeena Diversity will work more closely with NWCC – greater support for current and future students, sharing stories
2. Support for more outreach by Skeena Diversity to employers and their staff. Provide more training for employers and community
3. Share immigrant stories & matching immigrants with community members

The group realized that some of the issues are beyond its control, coming from the system which has so many gaps for immigrants who are here on the pathway to permanent residency. But we plan to find ways to advocate and raise awareness of these issues as well as support those currently living in our community.

Skeena Diversity would like to find ways to continue the conversation beyond this feedback as it's often a voice which is not included. Thank you for the opportunity to share the stories of immigrants, particularly temporary residents who give up so much to come to Canada. We truly appreciate SPRCBC and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for making it possible and supporting us to give additional feedback.