

Employment Assistance Service Program

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Evaluation of
NEW CANADIANS CENTRE

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICE
PROGRAM

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TRENT UNIVERSITY
COMPARATIVE DEVELOPMENT 490
ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

2006-2007

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A. GENERAL OUTLINE AND INFORMATION

1. **General Description.** An examination of methodology in the evaluation of development projects and programs, and of selected case studies.
Objectives of the course are:
 - a. To introduce the techniques and methods required in assessments or evaluations.
 - b. To develop a critical understanding of the normative bases and methodological implications of different approaches to assessment and evaluation.
 - c. To provide opportunities and exposure to actual evaluation studies by:
 - (i) studying evaluation programs implemented by governmental and non-governmental organizations;
 - (ii) hosting or visiting development consultants and agencies;
 - (iii) undertaking to conduct an exercise in the evaluation of an organization.

NEW CANADIANS CENTRE PETERBOROUGH (NCC)

Is a centre that assists new Canadians in the Peterborough and surrounding areas. The mandate of NCC is:

- To support immigrants and refugees and ease the process of adjusting to a new life in Canada
 - To provide staff and facilities for settlement services required by new Canadians
 - To act and advocate and resource partner for new Canadians
 - To expand and adjust services to involving needs of new Canadians and the community by providing training to Board Members, Staff, Volunteers, Community groups and Employees
 - To promote acceptance of new Canadians through education and awareness projects
 - To increase the involvement of new Canadians as active participants in determining the direction of the agency
 - To fundraise in order to broaden and improve the quality of community services to new Canadian
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Employment Assistant Service (EAS) for Foreign-Trained Professionals

The EAS program is a program organised through NCCP, it has been designed to assist recent immigrants to Canada who earned their education and credentials outside of Canada. EAS counsellors work one-on-one with clients in the following areas: assessment of credentials and prior learning experience; translation and acquisition of necessary document; and the accreditation process.

The EAS program is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MCTU.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the evaluation project:

The main purpose of the evaluation is to look at the (EAS) program for Foreign Trained Professionals. The evaluation is to determine the success and relevance of the program in relation to:

- The milestones set out in the beginning and
 - Needs expressed by clients participating in the program.
- The key questions are:
- Is the EAS program addressing the issues of employment for our Foreign Trained Professional clients?
 - Are the needs of clients addressed and met by the program?

Key Findings & Recommendations

A total of 25 people took part in the survey for the EAS evaluation. Respondents were randomly picked from the master list of all the participants who have taken part in the EAS program from September 2005 to June 2007.

- More than 85% of respondents felt that the EAS program was positive and helped them to better understand and handle employment issues in Canada
- The evaluation established that the majority of EAS clients faced challenges in the accreditation processes. Most respondents indicated that these challenges were created by the complexities of handling socio-economic realities along with the restrictions imposed by immigration policies and regulatory bodies.
- The evaluation concluded that there is a very high level of client satisfaction with both the EAS program and the NCC staff and services.
- There is a problem with the set of indicators used to capture the success elements of the EAS program. The set indicators prioritize numbers versus social values. In essence, the milestones set out at the beginning of the project have quantitative expectations and negate the qualitative aspect of the program.
- A recommendation made in the report is that, this might be an opportune time for NCC, its funders and interested stakeholders to recast the program and reorient their objectives.
- The evaluator recommends that NCC put in place some measures to monitor its social successes and negotiate to include these social values as one of its programs' success indicators.
- A more holistic approach to measuring success of the program is needed that captures both elements of the qualitative and quantifiable aspect of the program.

Initial Response /Feedback to NCC

Context:

On Friday 24th of August, I received a request from the evaluation users (NCC) for some preliminary information gathered from the evaluation. Specifically NCC asked to know the number of clients who had participated in the survey and the percentage of respondents that were happy with NCC services. Please find initial response below.

I have designed an on-line tool for the EAS survey. The purpose of the tool is to capture and graphically represent the statistical part of the evaluation.

Please follow the link below. Login to the survey website as

User name: new Canadians

Password: centre

Click on My Surveys, then Analyse and there are two survey reports available there.

You will notice that I input question 10 data separately from the main survey. This is because it included a lot of text and quotations that I wanted to record separately. It will come in handy in the recommendation phase. If you click on view, this will give you a chance to view all the responses from the evaluation on this question 10.

The main survey, will give you the information you requested and a bit more.
But to answer your questions.

1) A total of 25 people took part in the survey. (Notice that in the on-line tool only 23 interviews were recorded.) This is because the other two interviews were with staff members (Grace and yourself) as you will recall, our interview followed a very different, more interactive format compared to the rest of the participants.

2) 95% of respondents indicated that they were happy with the information and services provided to them by the EAS counselor/s.

3) 86.4% of respondents felt that the program was positive and helped them to better understand and handle employment issues in Canada.

I hope this helps for now.

The complete report will be headed your way in about two weeks.

Please feel free to respond to this or ask for clarification on either the content or tool.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurvey_Responses.aspx?sm=aOKAbU%2bPNp4OJ7V5z8%2fV%2bMSEvItSxZzZ2yPByWBT1T8%3d

Regards.

Sam...

I opened this account specifically for NCC, its fairly easy to figure out and navigate, you can use it for future monitoring and evaluation exercises its also a good way to save data that can be printed out for annual reports e.t.c.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION PROJECT

The main purpose of the research is to look at the (EAS) program for Foreign Trained Professionals offered by NCCP through the funding of Service Canada / Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU). We would like the research to determine success and relevance of the program in relation to:

- The milestones set out in the beginning and
- Needs expressed by clients participating in the program.

The key questions are:

- Is the EAS program addressing the issues of employment for our Foreign Trained Professional clients?
- Are the needs of clients addressed and met by the program?

Analysis and recommendations:

1) Number of people who took part in the project.

A total of 25 people took part in the survey for the EAS evaluation. Respondents were randomly picked from the master list of all the participants who have taken part in the EAS program from September 2005 to June 2007. Respondents covered a broad spectrum of professional categories, educational level, age and racial backgrounds.

2) Percentage of people who indicated that they were happy with the service.

95% of respondents indicated that they were happy with the information and services provided to them by the EAS counselor/s. This positive response speaks to the level of overall client satisfaction with the EAS programs, its counselor/s and the NCC as providing the environment and spirit within which the program operates.

3) Percentage of people who felt that the program was a positive and beneficial.

86.4% of respondents felt that the program was positive and helped them to better understand and handle employment issues in Canada. This question was included to investigate the level to which the EAS assisted clients not only with the accreditation process but in helping clients understand broader dynamics of employment in Canada. The evaluator noted during the interview stage that most clients scheduled to be interviewed during evenings and weekend after they had returned home from work. This unforeseen change in scheduling indicated to the evaluator that the sample respondents who were interviewed had managed to find employment, and was taken as a positive indicator of program success.

4) **The accreditation process:**

Number of people who have started/not started the accreditation process.

Total of 65% of respondents who took part in the survey have not started the accreditation process.

20 % have started the process but are facing challenges in the process.

15% of clients have started the process and have completed with it or feel they are proceeding successfully.

What are the major challenges to starting the accreditation process and proceeding successfully?

The accreditation process is a multi-layered undertaking which requires a communicative process with academic institutions, government departments in client's home countries and professional regulatory bodies in Canada. Major challenges that most clients faced were;

High cost of the process

Length of the process

Difficulty obtaining documents from home countries.

Need for immediate funds.

In responding to the challenges of accreditation, one client highlighted the issue of social responsibilities once having landed in Canada by mentioning that he faced "many personal family responsibilities" Another respondent spoke of the dual problem of handling social responsibilities with the restrictions in immigration policies and regulatory bodies; by stating "The whole process is not practical given one's survival realities."

i. How important is the accreditation process to EAS clients?

The survey asked respondents to compare their perception of importance of the accreditation process before and after they arrived in Canada.

70% of respondents indicated that before coming to Canada, they thought the accreditation process was of minimal to no importance at all their settlement process. Once having arrived in Canada 80% of respondents see the accreditation process as being very important to their employment and settlement success in Canada. A major reason for this lack of awareness from professional immigrants coming to Canada was given as lack of information or ambiguity regarding the immigration process in Canadian immigration centers abroad. Some respondents assumed that since their academic level

and professional qualifications had been used as part of the process to determine their eligibility to immigrate to Canada, this naturally meant they were qualified to work in Canada upon arrival.

ii. What can be done to make the process easier by,

Government:

Some respondents felt that the problem lay at federal government level and spoke of the need for the Canadian government to liberalise immigration policies to make the process easier and fair for professional immigrants migrating to Canada.

NCC:

39% of respondents felt that the NCC's EAS program could do more to assist clients in the accreditation process. At this point, the evaluator got a sense that clients understood and responded to this broadly; that is, respondents took the question to be asking, how the NCC's EAS could further help clients with the employment issues in general.

Please find below are some of the suggestions and recommendation made by EAS clients:

"NCC and partner agencies should press the government so that they make information available to new immigrants before they come here"

"NCC should facilitate group workshops for specific professions so that EAS clients can learn from each others successes and failures"

"NCC should have a financial budget to help clients with the costs of accreditation"

"NCC should out-line the accreditation process online. This would give immigrants information in their home countries, to make important decisions about accreditation and immigration"

Broader analysis from the evaluation.

General level of client satisfaction with EAS program and NCC

From the information provided above as well as from the level of participant enthusiasm to take part in the evaluation. It was apparent to the evaluator that there is a very high level of clients satisfaction with the both the EAS program and the NCC staff and services. Clients who took part in the survey frequently spoke affectionately about the NCC staff and their assistance in the accreditation and settlement process. A

recommendation at this point is that NCC put in place some measures to monitor this and negotiate to include this social value as one of its programs' success indicators.

The Numbers Game:

In the proposal description of the EAS program, some of the expected results for the two year period (2006-2008) are.

- 120 clients will register in the program.
- All 120 clients will have a checklist of the barriers and challenges and processes needed to work in their field.
- 80-100 clients will have a list of the barriers and challenges that are preventing them from working in the field.
- At the end of one year 50% (60 out of 120 clients) would have in their possession a portfolio of documents required by their respective regulatory bodies/educational institutions/employers.
- At least 80% of clients will identify that the service has helped them to achieve their goals.

By observing the numerical expected results of the EAS program, it is noticeable that; although the program is meeting some of its expectations, such as; number of client enrollment and percentage of client satisfaction; the program is however not meeting some of its number obligation as outlined in the original milestones set out at the beginning of the project. Of particular note are the expectations that 80-100 clients will have a list of strategies to confront barriers and that 50% of clients would have a portfolio of documents required for the accreditation process.

The issue here is prioritizing numbers versus values in the set of indicators used to capture the success elements of the program. The milestones set out at the beginning of the project have quantitative expectations and negate the qualitative aspect of the program such as.

- 1) Clients who have been helped by the program to reflect on their employment options, given their realistic financial, immigration and family obligations.
- 2) It is important to situate the EAS program within a broader context of settlement and not just as a separate issue. Most clients responded that they view the services offered by EAS and NCC in general as helping them in their overall success of their employment and general settlement process.