



Understanding the Experiences of Immigrant Entrepreneurs to Foster Prosperity and Innovation in Saskatchewan

**Research Survey Conducted by: Ministry of Advanced Education,
Employment and Immigration**

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SINP Entrepreneur & Farm Categories

Purpose

- ❑ To create prosperity and innovation for everyone in Saskatchewan through the attraction and retention of skilled international business and farm entrepreneurs

Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program

- ❑ The SINP Entrepreneur category has recently been completely overhauled and a new process has been instituted.
- ❑ The commitment is to nominating 250 immigrant entrepreneurs between 2009-10 and 2010-11
- ❑ It is important determine what factors lead to successful business development, integration, and retention of immigrant entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan.

Research Objectives

Attraction

- Gather information about entrepreneurs (e.g., education, experience, background) and identify characteristics of target applicants

Retention

- Find out what **settlement** services are required
- Discover what **business retention** services are effective and what barriers to retention exist

Research Objectives

- Research is needed:
- When services need to be designed or improved
- To document that public money is being spent wisely (effectively & efficiently)
- When policy initiatives need to be developed or examined.

The Survey

- ❑ The SINP Entrepreneur Unit developed a survey based on contemporary research (Bauder, 2005; Clydesdale, 2008; Hiebert, 2002; Ley, 2005; Marger, 2006) and in consultation with other ISD branches.
- ❑ Qualitative and quantitative components
- ❑ Conducted by Inshtrix Research

The Survey

- The interview covered six areas:
 - Experiences prior to coming to Saskatchewan*
 - Starting a business in Saskatchewan*
 - Operating a business*
 - Life in Saskatchewan*
 - Usage of services*
 - General questions and feedback*

Method

- In-depth interviews with three groups of entrepreneurs (N=31):
 - SINP entrepreneur nominees currently running businesses in Saskatchewan (N=7: three farmers),
 - non-SINP immigrants currently running businesses in Saskatchewan (N=21)
 - SINP Entrepreneur nominees who are no longer running businesses in Saskatchewan (N=3)

Results Overall

- ❑ Participants were:
- ❑ Very positive about their life and business in Saskatchewan
- ❑ Optimistic about the business opportunities that exist in the province.
- ❑ Reported high satisfaction with living in Saskatchewan ($M=6.10$)

Retention

- ❑ 58% of the respondents plan to live in Saskatchewan indefinitely and an additional 10% plan to stay at least 5 years or longer.
- ❑ Of those who plan to stay, 40% plan to also be running their business as long as possible.
- ❑ 65% of respondents were able to recount success stories ranging from establishing a customer base to deriving satisfaction from their work and business.

Settlement

- ❑ 45% of the respondents “found out” about Canada and Saskatchewan in particular through family and friends.
- ❑ Most respondents (65%) had children, and those who had children in school were generally pleased (48%) as opposed to displeased (9.6%) with the school system in Saskatchewan.

Settlement

- 71% did not speak English before coming to Canada. 45% have accessed ESL training in Saskatchewan.
- The Open Door Society was accessed by approximately half of the respondents (52%),
 - 16% have used the Global Gathering
 - 13% have used the services of the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association

Attraction

- The most common countries of origin were China (18%), Pakistan (15%) and South Korea (13%).
- Before choosing Canada, 25.8% of participants considered immigrating to Australia and 16.2% considered the United States.

Attraction

- ❑ 58% of the entrepreneurs had a diploma, degree or graduate degree.
- ❑ 55% of the entrepreneurs had previously owned a business in their country of origin. However, two of the three failed business owners had also owned businesses previously.
- ❑ Only 6.5% are currently involved in a transnational business

Business Retention

- ❑ Lack of information about settlement, business regulations and licensing before immigrating.
- ❑ Unfamiliarity with Canadian banking and market conditions
 - ❑ 52% of participants indicated a need for some financial help (e.g., how credit works, how to apply for a business loan etc.)

Business Retention

- Most respondents received business information from family, friends and colleagues (68%). Other sources include government officials (22%), NGOs (19%) and business associations (19%).
- Only 2 (6%) of respondents said that they received business information from an immigrant consultant.

Business Retention

- 51.6% of the respondents indicated that they needed financial help when starting their business. Although a substantial net worth is required for nomination, 71.4% of SINP nominees had applied for loans.
- Nearly half of all respondents (46.4%) indicated that their business plans had changed since arriving to Canada.

Business Retention

- Only two (8.3%) of the interviewees are currently involved in a Chamber of Commerce in Saskatchewan.
- Only two (8.3%) interviewees had indicated that they are involved in business associations in Saskatchewan.

Parallel Policy Action

- An Intent Grid was developed and introduced on Oct. 1, 2009 and refined in 2010.
- This grid acknowledges and rewards applicants who seek out business knowledge, establish business networks and make efforts toward settlement (e.g., ESL classes, home ownership, etc.)

Parallel Policy Action

- The findings also corroborate the need for recent initiatives by the Entrepreneur and Farm unit.
 - Currently working with the EFS to develop information resources for current SINP nominees as well as prospective applicants.
 - Collaborating with CPS to introduce Stage 1 English training for entrepreneurs.
 - Succession pilot project aimed at matching nominees with Saskatchewan businesses for sale
 - Outreach to business and community associations

Future Directions

Research

- ❑ The current study serves as a pilot test
- ❑ Development of a year on year survey that will serve as a measure of improvement of business retention, effectiveness of services and settlement over time.

Programs

- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Resources and entrepreneur networks
- ❑ Newcomers becoming entrepreneurs