A close-up portrait of a young man with dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a dark green jacket. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

**Finding your path:  
orienting newcomers  
with technical  
backgrounds**

# The Y's Newcomers in Trades programs

Pre-apprenticeship for  
Home Renovations



Trades Talent Link





# Power of Trades



# Pre-apprenticeship for home renovation





# Build ON



# Trades Talent Link



# Agenda

- Types of newcomers' technical profiles
- Tools to identify newcomers' most marketable transferable skills
- Ways to effectively communicate viable alternative career options to newcomers



# Anas' story

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7BavQR\\_NA4&index=8&t=0s&list=PL5Whf68BOrl\\_kzJHqSJ464bUR9bBs5Wft](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7BavQR_NA4&index=8&t=0s&list=PL5Whf68BOrl_kzJHqSJ464bUR9bBs5Wft)

A new life in Ottawa





# Anas' story

Which path should Anas follow?

- Long-term career goals?
- What shortcuts can he take?
- What is realistic given his current situation?



# Anas' story

What do you do with a client like this?

- Multiple technical/hands-on careers
- A range of technical skills and experience
- New to Canada





**Skilled Trades**



# What are skilled trades?

## Skilled trades are:

- Professional occupations that require the ability to work with your hands
- Require specialized training
- Regulated provincially
- Include over 150 different occupations that are subdivided into 4 main sectors (in Ontario)



# Skilled trades career pathways

May be a viable primary or alternative career pathway for newcomers with technical backgrounds

- Ability to utilize existing skill set
- Relative ease of access
- Opportunities for career growth and development

## WARNING!

- Not for everyone!
- Not a “stepping stone” to becoming an engineer



# What are the skilled trades?





# Labour market opportunity



# Example – Canada's construction sector



# Why would newcomers consider skilled trades?



- Skilled trades people are more likely than average to have an employment situation that is desirable to a newcomer to Canada:
  - Full-time
  - Unionized
  - Self-employment



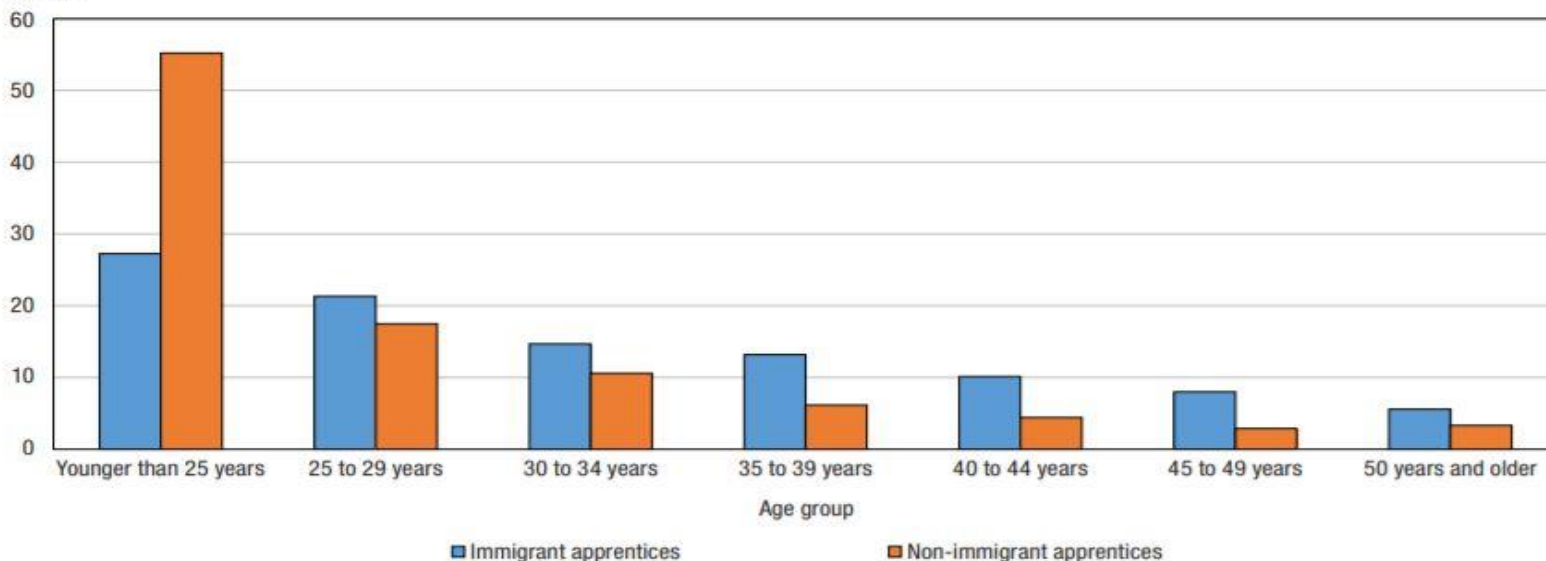
# Immigrant apprentices – 2015 National Apprenticeship Survey

Immigrants comprised about 9% of NAS apprentices overall.

Immigrants were more likely than non-immigrants to register for a program at an older age.

**Chart 9.5**  
**Age at registration by immigrant status, Canada**


percent



**Note:** Use results for "50 years and older" category for immigrant apprentices with caution.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Apprenticeship Survey (NAS), 2015.



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How do we help  
clients to find  
their path?

# Which path?



Career change  
Little to no  
related  
experience



Career  
continued  
Experienced in  
desired career



Career shift  
Some or related  
experience





# Fernand



## **Previous background:**

- Electro-mechanical Engineer

## **Career goal:**

- Continued career

## **Level of experience:**

- Experienced

## **Feasibility considerations:**

- Age: 50+
- Francophone with little English
- Not interested in re-training
- Difficulty accessing adequate proof of experience
- Employable and available to work immediately



# Skills & experience vs. job titles

What skills does the client actually have?

1. Technical skills
2. Essential skills
3. Soft skills

How does the client's experience compare to the Canadian context?



# Are skilled trades the right fit?

## Related technical professions

- Work environment/industry may be the only common factor
- Skill transferability between a technical profession and a skilled trade depend on the client's individual work experience



# Electrical Engineer vs. Electrician – Canadian context

Electrical engineer	Electrician
<b>Work environment :</b> Primarily work in an indoor office environment with some on-site visits	<b>Work environment :</b> Primarily work on-site
<b>Tasks/skills (action verbs):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Plan</li><li>- Supervise</li><li>- Design</li><li>- Research</li><li>- Evaluate</li><li>- Develop</li></ul>	<b>Tasks/skills (action verbs):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Install</li><li>- Diagnose</li><li>- Maintain</li><li>- Troubleshoot</li><li>- Test</li><li>- Interpret</li></ul>
<b>“On the papers”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Desk job</li></ul>	<b>“On the tools”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using hands-on technical skills</li></ul>





# Feasibility

Now that you understand how your client's experience fits into the Canadian context, what's the most feasible plan?

Regulated profession/trade:

- Licensing?
- “Re-training”/“upgrading”?



# Electrical Engineer vs. Electrician – Ontario context

Electrical engineer	Electrician
<b>Required professional experience:</b> 4 years of proven engineering work experience, including at least 12 months of experience under the supervision of an engineer in a province or territory of Canada	<b>Required professional experience:</b> 9000 hours (5 years) of proven trade-specific work experience
<b>Required level of education:</b> Equivalent qualifications of an undergraduate degree (in engineering) from an accredited Canadian university program	<b>Required level of education:</b> None
<b>Exam:</b> Professional Practice Exam (written)	<b>Exam:</b> Certificate of Qualification exam (multiple choice)
<b>Cost of licensing for internationally-trained engineers:</b> Approximately \$700 + translation of documents + additional technical exams (if necessary)	<b>Cost of licensing for internationally-trained electricians:</b> Approximately \$450 + translation of documents



# Electrical Engineer vs. Electrician – Ontario context

Electrical engineer	Electrician
<b>Academic requirement:</b> Equivalent of Ontario Secondary School Diploma; some specific courses (English, math, science)	<b>Academic requirement:</b> Equivalent of Ontario Secondary School Diploma
<b>Language requirement:</b> CLB 7+	<b>Language requirement:</b> None (dependent on employer)
<b>Training time investment:</b> 5-6 years (4 year undergraduate degree + 48 months of verifiable, acceptable engineering experience, at least 12 months of which must be acquired in Canada under a licensed engineer)	<b>Training time investment:</b> Up to 5 years 9000 hours of apprenticeship training (720 hours of in-school training + 8280 hours paid on-the-job training) Employer can advocate for shorter training
<b>Total cost of training in Ontario (4 years of university):</b> Approx. \$50 000 tuition plus cost of living	<b>Total cost of training in Ontario (5 years of apprenticeship):</b> Approx. \$2500 tuition minus compensation for work as an apprentice minus government incentive grants

# Considerations

Is the licensing pathway accessible to the client?

- Investment of time/money
- Ability to prove experience

If not, is “re-training” accessible to the client?

- Investment of time/money
- Ability to meet academic/language requirements

If not, now what?





# Fernand – Career shift



- Obtaining certification as an engineer or electrician not feasible
- Pursue related unregulated technical career
- Maintaining electro-mechanical equipment in an industrial environment
- Unregulated trade
- Day-to-day work in Canada is very similar to work done before immigration



# Casimir



## **Previous background:**

- Construction electrician

## **Career goal:**

- Continued career

## **Level of experience:**

- Experienced

## **Feasibility considerations:**

- Difficulty providing required proof of experience
- Francophone with little English
- Need for immediate paid employment



# Casimir – Career continued



- Experience and skills closely matched construction electrician profile
- Pursuing certification as an electrician
- Approved for Trade Equivalency Assessment process
- Obtained provisional license
- Not a straight path!
- Challenges with obtaining proof, difficulty passing exam, industry & regulatory body politics



# Junuel



## **Previous background:**

- Chemical engineer

## **Career goal:**

- Career change

## **Level of experience:**

- No formal experience

## **Feasibility considerations:**

- 7 years in survival jobs in Canada
- Access to severance package and Employment Insurance
- Looking for career longevity





# Junuel – career change



- No interest in pursuing engineering
- Exposure to and interest in automotive trades
- Labour market information and access to pre-apprenticeship training led to pursuing truck and coach technician apprenticeship
- Completed apprenticeship and obtained Ontario trade certification

# Which path?



Career change  
Little to no  
related  
experience



Career  
continued  
Experienced in  
desired career



Career shift  
Some or related  
experience



# Work values – a “foreign” concept!



**Important questions to ask:**

- 1)** Why do you want to pursue this career?
- 2)** Which work environment suits you best? (working indoors vs. working outdoors, working with people vs. working with machinery, “on the tools” vs. “on the papers”, etc.)

# Tools that help – classroom activities


**“Omelet” or “Starting a car”**- Identifying technical profiles:  
levels of experience  
what was your job, what did you do, how did you do it,  
where, how often, what tools did you use, what knowledge  
did you need, did you work alone, or in a team, etc

**Goal setting activity** - Get people on a realistic track without  
getting them discouraged

- How long is it going to take?
- How to?
- People have to see the “end goal” in order to be dedicated to a pathway to get them there







**Effectively  
communicate viable  
alternative career  
options to  
newcomers**

# Who are we talking to?

Populations who live with multiple barriers:

- Complicated past lives
- Language barriers
- Culture shock
  - Cultural norms and gender roles
  - Identity questioning
  - Difficulty integrating



# Communication context



# Communication context

## **Newcomer's reality:**

Knowledge vs. skills  
“Canadian dream”  
Technology use  
Lack of  
experience/understanding of  
Canadian realities  
Overwhelming stressful tasks  
associated with settlement  
Overloaded with information  
Impatient  
Often misinformed

## **Our assumptions:**

Low responsiveness  
Lack of proactivity  
Lack of commitment  
Underestimated challenges  
Reproducing same issues  
Lack of knowledge of  
processes and practices



# Communication context

## Information about career pathways:

- Too advanced
- Complex messages
- Unknown realities
- Unfamiliar or unusual channel
- Showing fragments vs. “big picture”

Time and information are everything!





# Culture shift

## **Newcomer perspective:**

- Skilled trades are survival jobs
- Career decisions are influenced by family and past experiences
- University against apprenticeship
- Cultural image of success

## **Canadian perspective:**

- Skilled trades are well-regarded careers
- Professional employment consulting
- Alternative career path - apprenticeship



# Open a continuous dialogue

- Having a job – what values does it imply for you, other than an income?
- To have a job, to be employed is to be a respected member of our community
- How to contribute and participate in our community
- This is the Canadian image of success



# Language to use

- Support yourself and family
- Pursuing a career, building a future
- Gaining relevant work experience
- Creating social network
- Acquiring new knowledge in new areas



# Take-home package

Need resources to learn more about  
Ontario's skilled trades?

The Y can help!

<http://www.ymcaywca.ca/Adults/employmentservices/newcomers-in-trade-programs>







**Thank you!**