

There is Something We Need to Talk About

Fostering Dialogue on Equitable Access to
Trades and Professions

***The Story of Capacity Canada – A National
Movement***



Capacity Canada

Building the Voice of Immigrant Professionals...Province by Province

CAPACITY CANADA IS...

Capacity Canada is a national process through which Internationally Educated and Trained Professionals work together to build community, provincial, and national capacity for dialogue amongst Canadians on the importance of equity in access to trades and professions.

Capacity Canada began as a seed of an idea in 2001, during discussions between organizations in Toronto and British Columbia. This early sharing of ideas and collaboration followed with the development of PROMPT, a Toronto-based roundtable of internationally educated professional associations and new associations being established throughout British Columbia.

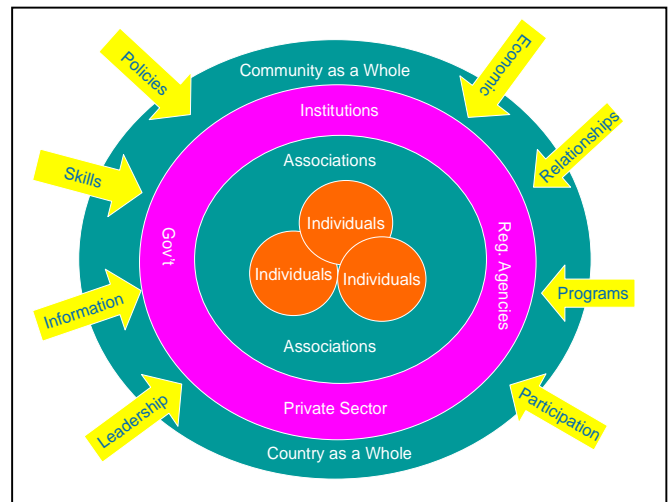
Capacity Canada helps
Internationally educated professionals come together and build a stronger voice than any one group on their own.

Internationally educated professional

In the ensuing five years, new IETPs associations formed Coast to Coast and participating IETPs “built the foundation for a national policy roundtable of internationally educated/trained professionals.” We did this by:

- building and maintaining partnerships to support inter-provincial and national activity
- organizing IETP associations in most provinces
- communicating to stakeholders such as IETPs associations, regulatory bodies, roundtables, government, media and the general public
- researching the issues and assessing opportunities for strategic influence
- building expertise for involvement in public dialogue; and
- coordinating a national process.

Capacity Building Approach



We use a ‘community capacity building’ approach to addressing the issue.’ This means that we work together as a community of IETPs, with our allies - immigrant serving organizations, governments, institutions, regulatory bodies and industry - to identify community issues and put in place meaningful solutions, contributing to an equitable Canada. It also means that our experience is valued, recognized, and listened to in the process.

CAPACITY CANADA SEEKS ...

Our Vision

Canada's capacity is strengthened by the full and equitable economic and social participation of internationally educated and trained persons.

Capacity Canada is working shoulder to shoulder with individuals and groups across Canada to find a win-win solution to skills shortages and inequitable access to trades and professions. Our mission is to effect change by providing a national voice for internationally educated and trained persons in shaping public policy on these issues.

We support Canadian professional standards and seek the opportunity to demonstrate our capacity to meet, or surpass these standards. Where additional skills are needed, we seek to work with government, regulatory bodies and institutions to ensure our membership have the skills that we all, as Canadians, demand.

I got involved because

I want to be part of the solution.

Internationally educated
medical doctor

Our ultimate goal is to have the capacity *and* the right, individually and collectively, to work in our chosen professions. In doing so, we hope to contribute our skills and resources to Canada and to fellow Canadians, and thus reverse the social exclusion experienced by our members, which often results in poverty, depression, and isolation.

CAPACITY CANADA ENAGAGES

Capacity Canada engages Canadians in making contributions at many different levels. And Canadians are getting involved for many different reasons.

First and foremost, Capacity Canada involves **Internationally Educated and Trained Canadians** from many different professions and ethno-cultural groups. Some had already been involved in IETP associations in their communities. Many got involved because they were frustrated and demoralized. When immigrant serving organizations in their community provided opportunities for individuals to come together and plan their own process, they welcomed the opportunity.

I got involved because

it is humiliating, graduating 20 years ago, there is a lot of experience that is going to waste.

Internationally educated
medical doctor

An important aspect of community capacity is **partnerships** to sustain change. Capacity Canada involves a web of partnerships, forming a network where each organization plays an important role in promoting change. Each type of partnerships fills an important role in building community capacity.

The genesis of Capacity Canada is a strong **management partnership** among organizations which initially took a leadership role in getting the process going. This partnership involved collaboration between Ontario-based CASSA and BC-based BCITP Net. Partners in BCITP Net are: Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society, MOSAIC and Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia.

I got involved because
as an immigrant serving organization, we weren't doing enough.

Immigrant Serving
Organization Representative

There are also **provincial partners** that provide a venue and a structure for individual IETPs in their jurisdictions to get involved. The provincial partners for the project include:

- Alberta Immigrant Women's Society
- Success Skills (Manitoba)
- Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, and
- CAMO-PI (Quebec)
- Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (Nova Scotia)
- Multicultural Association of New Brunswick

A recent survey showed that Capacity Canada is working effectively with each province to achieve goals.

The foundational **funding partner** for this project was Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism Program which supports activities that foster the participation of minorities in public dialogue and reduce institutional barriers. Local Multiculturalism programs are now working with each regional association to identify resources that support local organizing.

CAPACITY CANADA HAS ACHIEVED

Through Capacity Canada's life, IETPs and their partners focused on meaningful and strategic short, intermediate and long-term outcomes. Most of these outcomes have been achieved and we are moving further.

A Collective Voice

Capacity Canada represents the voice of IETPs from regulated and non-regulated professions. Across Canada, IETPs formed new IETP associations to ensure that their voice is heard. These include:

- IETP Association of Nova Scotia
- Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia
- International Pharmacy Graduates Group
- Association of Internationally Educated Engineers

Our most important achievement ...

is getting united on one front. Now we are viewed as a group of people who can push the issue, a group that is not easily discouraged. We are more capable of achieving our goals than we were individually.

Internationally educated
professional

- Nova Scotia Association of Internationally Educated Teachers
- Association of International Medical Doctors of British Columbia
- Society of Internationally Trained Engineers of British Columbia
- Okanagan IETP Association (BC)
- North Island IETP Association, (BC)

All associations are active and making a significant difference in their regions. The story of the development of the IETP Association of Nova Scotia exemplifies some of the changes occurring.

Communication and Information Sharing

Capacity Canada members share information through e-mail and a newsletter. Capacity Canada has built a national database of IETPs and IETP associations, allowing us to communicate with ease across the country. We have also developed a national website and provincial websites for British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario. A quarterly newsletter is distributed keeping IETPs apprised of current developments on the issues and in the organization.

Meaningful Research

Capacity Canada and participating associations have documented the Access to Professions (ATP) issues and opportunities for every jurisdiction across the country. Specific environmental scans have also been conducted in: Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. Capacity Canada also evaluated itself to learn what is working and not working and used the results of this research to improve its work on an ongoing basis.

Provincial Planning

Coming together with a Common Vision – one Province's experience

In 2004, a Capacity Canada Coordinator contacted Halifax-based Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) to inquire about IETPs organizing in Nova Scotia. MISA staff member, Jan Kutcher, who works with IETPs and was very familiar with their experiences in seeking employment, expressed an interest in playing a facilitating role, supporting Nova Scotia IETPs to get involved.

MISA held an initial meeting, inviting involvement. IETPs from many different professions came together with a common purpose. Self employed, internationally educated engineer, Alexandre Pavlovski stepped up to the plate and offered to coordinate the activities on a volunteer basis.

Capacity Nova Scotia is now involved in: strengthening individual associations, fostering the development of IETP leadership, coordinating multi-stakeholder roundtables for specific professions including medical doctors, engineers, and pharmacists, contributing to Canada-wide initiatives.

As a result, IETPs in Nova Scotia have been part of the solution through:

- leadership training at Dalhousie University,
- design of a communication and orientation program with the Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia that gives 3 months credit toward the Canadian experience needed
- work with the Pharmacists Association of Nova Scotia and College of Pharmacists to support pharmacists through the various levels of activity involved with licensure
- contributing their experience to the national vision through active involvement in Capacity Canada.

IETPs in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia meet regularly to plan and implement provincial activities. These plans build on information shared by other provinces and opportunities and conditions in their own provinces.

A National Network

IETP associations came together through **Provincial Roundtables**. Provincial Roundtables have been held in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia.

These Provincial Roundtables contribute to the **National Roundtable** which held its first meeting in September 2006. The National Roundtable has identified a research agenda and begun national level research.

Knowledge and Skills

Where there is community capacity, there is knowledge and skills to work together. While IETPs have strong professional skills, many are unfamiliar with the skills needed for involvement in civil society in Canada. Since the project began, IETPs acquired and applied skills and knowledge in:

- media relations
- working with government
- policy paper development
- meeting management
- networking
- research
- communications, and
- leadership.

We are applying these skills in all activities toward achieving our goals. As our skills and understanding of the Canadian context grows, our voice is stronger and we have more capacity to play a leadership role in promoting solutions.

CANADA IS CHANGING

Because of our work, our collective voice is rippling out into the community and Canadians are understanding and responding.

Knowledge Base

There are now hundreds of IETPs and allies who have knowledge and expertise on equitable access to trades and professions, an important resource base to support public dialogue. This knowledge is documented in in-depth research publications including:

- “A Review of National Immigrant Access to Professions and Trades Processes”

- “In the Public Interest – Immigrant Access to Regulated Professions in Today’s Ontario”
- A written submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services
- “In BC’s Economic Interest! The Economic Benefit of Recognizing Credentials and Full Integration of Internationally Trained Professionals in BC
- “A Review of Bridge Training Programs for Immigrants with Professional Backgrounds in Ontario – Exploratory Findings”
- “Solutions to the Medical Shortage Doctor Shortage in BC: A Plan to Integrate More Immigrant IMGs into the BC Healthcare System

This knowledge has formed the basis for presentations at:

Oksana and Patrick...could you put the province and year for the ones you are aware of?

- A national Consultation on Career Development
- Work Dialogue on Immigration and Migration
- Employment Access for Immigrants, BC
- Presentation to NETWERCC
- Immigration and Migration Dialogue Forum
- National Settlement Conference
- National Metropolis Conference
- Centre for Excellence in Research in Immigration and Settlement
- OCASI’s Professional Development Conference
- Atlantic Mayor’s Conference

IETPs empowered

As a result of the work of Capacity Canada and participating organizations, IETPs are working with other Canadians from all walks of life to better understand the issues. Some examples of our voices being heard where they were not before include:

- Engineers Matching and Placement Agreement of Cooperation between SITEBC and Canadian Manufacturers
- participation in a Physicians Forum, IMG Session, College of Family Physicians Conference
- participation in an advisory committee for a MOSAIC sponsored research project, Solutions for Access, examining the access to licensure in regulated professions in British Columbia
- presentation to the CBC program “Your Turn with the Prime Minister”
- involvement in an information meeting on Ontario’s Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act
- membership in Nova Scotia’s InNOVAcorp’s Technology Innovation Centre
- participation in a Ministry of Health consultation on internationally educated professions in Ontario

- involvement in an Association of Universities and Colleges workshop exploring best practices on universities assessment and recognition of foreign credentials in Ontario
- participation in the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network
- participation in IMG Taskforce Conference Calgary
- involvement in Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment
- consultation on the 'Removal of Discriminatory Workplace Barriers to Employment' in Ontario
- presentation to the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law: 'Making the Mosaic Work – Credential Assessment - What is to be Done?'
- involvement as a Standing Member of the IMG Integration Task Force in British Columbia

Political Will

Our political representatives work with us to ensure that the issue is heard in political debate. We have talked with Prime Ministers, Federal and Provincial Cabinet Ministers, and all of our federal MPs and provincial MLAs. They have been unanimous in their recognition of the issue and their support for our work. Even local politicians join with us in exploring issues and opportunities.

Public Awareness

Canadians are talking about the issue. The issue has attracted the attention of Canadian media and they are supporting us to tell our story. Some examples are:

- invitation to a CBC show in which Canadians could ask questions directly to the Prime Minister
- quoted in articles in the Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Toronto Community News, El Correo Canadiense, South Asian Edition, Victoria Times Colonist, Canadian Immigrant Magazine, MOSAIC magazine, Metro, and Readers Digest
- media coverage in CBC radio and TV, CTV, Omni, CKNW radio, BCTV, and Channel M
- development of the documentary "Health Care 911, The Plight of Immigrant Medical Doctors"
- participation in W-Five show entitled "Broken Promises"

Canadians are listening to our story. We are asking ourselves "why is there long waiting lists for health services when there are skilled Canadians wanting to do the work? And "why are their skills shortages when we welcome skilled immigrants every day." We are recognizing that Canada needs the skills of each and every Canadian to grow economically, socially and culturally.

Policy change

Governments and regulatory bodies are beginning to implement policy changes, informed by input from our membership. In British Columbia, the College of Physicians and Surgeons has developed a clinical trainee program. The province of British Columbia has expanded the number of residency positions available to

IMGs. Our input was also incorporated in the design of the provincial bridging program based on recommendations of BCITP Net Okanagan Region, submitted in a well documented brief entitled: "Recommendations for BC Skills Connect RFP Criteria: A Regional Perspective."

In Ontario, the report on access to trades and professions lead to a review of the appeal process. And IETPs voices were heard at an Ontario Ministry of Finance Pre-budget Consultation In Nova Scotia, regulatory bodies work with IETP associations to design programs to address the specific needs of IETPs in that province.

Canadians are finding solutions, one policy at a time.